

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Lassen, Henry, House

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 605 South Hoff [N/A] not for publication

city or town El Reno [N/A] vicinity

state Oklahoma code OK county Canadian code 143 zip code 74104

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title State Historic Preservation Office Date July 21, 2008

State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
determined eligible for the National Register
determined not eligible for the National Register
removed from the National Register
other, explain

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Elsan H. Beall 9.4.08

Lassen, Henry L., House  
Name of Property

Canadian County, Oklahoma  
County/State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK  
walls WOOD:weatherboard  
roof ASPHALT  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Lassen, Henry L., House  
Name of Property

Canadian County, Oklahoma  
County/State

### 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria**  
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**  
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**  
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography**  
(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

# \_\_\_\_\_

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

# \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

**Periods of Significance**

1898-1908

**Significant Dates**

1901-1904

**Significant Person(s)**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

Lassen, Henry L.

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

#### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Oklahoma Historical Society

Lassen, Henry L., House  
Name of Property

Canadian County, Oklahoma  
County/State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Less than One Acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

- |    |      |         |          |                              |
|----|------|---------|----------|------------------------------|
| 1. | 14   | 595350  | 3931970  | (NAD27)                      |
|    | Zone | Easting | Northing |                              |
| 2. |      |         |          |                              |
|    | Zone | Easting | Northing |                              |
| 3. |      |         |          |                              |
|    | Zone | Easting | Northing |                              |
| 4. |      |         |          |                              |
|    | Zone | Easting | Northing | [N/A] See continuation sheet |

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cynthia Savage, Architectural Historian, for Preservation Oklahoma Inc.  
organization Architectural Resources & Community Heritage Consulting date February 2008  
street & number 346 County Road 1230 telephone 405-459-6200  
city or town Pocasset state OK zip code 73079

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name JP Morgan Chase Bank  
street & number 1675 Palm Beach Lake Blvd., #402 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town West Palm Beach state FL zip code 33401

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to range from approximately 18 hours to 36 hours depending on several factors including, but not limited to, how much documentation may already exist on the type of property being nominated and whether the property is being nominated as part of a Multiple Property Documentation Form. In most cases, it is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form to meet minimum National Register documentation requirements. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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**DESCRIPTION**

Summary

The Henry L. Lassen House is located at 605 South Hoff in El Reno, Canadian County, Oklahoma. The original house was built prior to August 1895 by A.F. and Sadie A. Masterman. The house was purchased in April 1898 by Henry and Mary Lassen. Lassen was a prominent businessman in El Reno, being the president of the Canadian Mill and Elevator, as well as served on a variety of committees and in various political positions, including city Mayor, for the long-term betterment of El Reno. Between November 1901 and August 1904, the Lassens undertook a major renovation of the house, which included adding a third floor and an imposing two-story, wraparound porch. Selling the house in 1908, the Lassens gained possession of the house again briefly in 1914 when the third owners apparently defaulted on their mortgage held by the Lassens. The house continued to be used as a private residence through the 1940s, including being the home of locally esteemed Judge Harry Lee and Blanche F. Fogg for over twenty years. In April 1943, the Foggs sold the house to R.B. and Ethel Cox, after which the house was turned into an apartment house. More recently, several attempts have been made to rehabilitate the house which is currently is vacant and for sale.

The house is located on the southeast corner of the intersection of South Hoff Avenue and East Cooney in a historic residential area of El Reno. The 1988 architectural/historic survey of El Reno and Canadian County identified the neighborhood as the potential National Register-eligible Southeast El Reno Residential District. In addition to being a contributing resource, the Lassen House was determined to be of individual significance as an excellent example of the Classical Revival style and for its association with Judge Fogg. However, the Foggs did not move into the house until 1919, twelve years after Fogg was named the first county judge of Canadian County. In contrast, the Lassens lived in the house when it underwent the major design changes it still portrays today and Henry Lassen himself was a person of significance in El Reno.

The Lassen House is a three-story, weatherboard-clad, Classical Revival style house with a brick foundation and an asphalt-covered, flat roof with sloping sides on the north and south. There are two brick, interior chimneys on the roof, one of the north side and the other on the east. The doors are wood, glazed, paneled and the windows are predominately one-over-one, wood, hung. The third floor windows are nonoriginal, wood, single pane. The front and sides windows, as well as the nonhistoric third floor windows, are predominately three-part to reinforce the Classical Revival style of the post-1900 modifications. In the historic three-part windows, a standard, single, one-over-one, wood hung window is flanked by narrow, one-over-one, wood, hung sidelights. The porch windows are additionally adorned in the center with stained glass windows. The windows toward the rear of the house are more typical windows, some in singles, doubles or triples. All of the windows have wood sills with the majority having wood, Classical surrounds. The first floor windows have the most notable surrounds which include an entablature. The second floor windows are topped by the highly ornamental entablature which encircles the house.

The house is dominated by the front, two-story, wraparound porch. The porch has a brick foundation, weatherboard floor and tall, wood, fluted, Ionic columns. The flat, two-story porch roof serves as a third floor, outdoor, balcony area with a wood railing. On the south side of the house is a one-story,

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round sun porch and a one-story, squared, projected bay. Additionally, there are two entries on the back northeast side of the house. The entry on the north elevation has an uncovered entry porch and the other entry, located on the east elevation, includes a partial porch with a concrete-clad foundation and a flat roof.

That the 113-year-old house was heavily modified in its early years is not readily evident. The 1901 and 1904 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps clearly show differences in the house, including the addition of the two-story porch and the third floor. Also, the unusual flat roof with sloped sides is highly indicative that the third floor is not original. Overall, the original form of the pre-1901 house is not readily apparent and the exact modifications made shortly after the turn-of-the-twentieth-century are not fully known. Based on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, the imposing two-story porch and third floor addition is the most obvious result of the major turn-of-the-twentieth-century renovation. It is likely that the Classical Revival-style ornamental detailing of the house, including the fluted, wood pilasters with Ionic capitals located on the corners of the house and the elaborate entablature separating the second and third floors, was also nonoriginal but has gained historic significance of its own due to its association with Henry Lassen.

Off the southeast corner of the house is a nonhistoric, weatherboard garage. The one-story, multiple car garage has a double car opening on the north side and a single-car opening on the west. The weatherboard garage has an asphalt-covered, hipped roof and a concrete foundation. The garage was added likely around 1943 when the Foggs sold the house; although, it is possible the Foggs built the garage after 1928 to accommodate their vehicles and that of Mrs. Fogg's parents, who lived in the house next door which was constructed between 1920 and 1928. The 1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map does not include the existing garage. Previous to 1928 there were various small garages located to the south side of the original Lassen House property, all of which were gone by 1960. Due to its post-1908 construction date, the garage is a noncontributing building within this nomination.

Off the southwest side of the basement, there is a contributing, brick and concrete storm/root cellar. The historic structure extends southward from the south basement wall and includes a long, narrow corridor and a barrel-arched vault room. While there are many possibilities for use of the structure, its likely primary purpose was a combination storm and root cellar. Tornadoes are, and have been, one of the best known and most destructive weather forces in Oklahoma. The earliest recorded tornado in Canadian County, according to the National Weather Service, occurred on May 2, 1899. While the tornado had a path of just two miles, several persons were injured in it; thus, as is still true today, the construction of a storm cellar is a wise move on the part of any homeowner in Oklahoma. The entry in the Lassen House basement to the corridor connecting the cellar to the house is marked by a narrow opening, low in the basement wall. Indicative that the structure is at least part of the 1901-1904 expansion of the house, if not an original element, is that the opening is topped by a low arched, header brick header which gives all appearances of being part of the original design of the wall. The sizeable, brick, vault area has a barrel-arched roof. On the south side of the vault, there is another set of stairs which are now boarded over. Use of the structure as a storm cellar would have necessitated direct outside access. Because the opening in the basement wall does not show indication of being a later addition, the structure is believed to date to the turn-of-the-century expansion of the house and, thus, is considered a contributing resource to this nomination.

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EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The Lassen House is a three-story, weatherboard, Classical Revival style house. The building has an unusual flat roof with sloping sides. The roof is covered with asphalt. On the north side of the roof, there is a red brick, interior chimney. A second, red brick, end wall chimney is located on the east side. The house's brick foundation is laid in a stretcher bond with four dog-tooth courses on the north side, just east of the porch. The dog-tooth courses are west of the existing excavated basement area. On the back porch and the small, square projection on the southeast side of the house, the foundation is now clad with concrete.

The façade of the house fronts west onto Hoff Avenue (see photographs 1-4). The front elevation is dominated by the two-story, wraparound, wood porch. The flat, asphalt-clad, porch roof features a tall wood parapet wall which created a sizeable deck area off the third floor of the house. Not visible from the exterior, on the third floor of the west elevation, there is a single, central, double, wood door with triple windows to each side. As with the majority of third floor windows, the front triple windows have been changed from one-over-one, hung to single, fixed pane. The parapet wall is ornamented with a symmetrical pattern of recessed wood panels. The majority of panels are blank. The exception are the larger rectangular panels on the corners of the projected front section. These two panels feature a decorative wood design of a "t" over an "X". Historically, there was a decorative railing towards the inside of the parapet wall but that was removed at an unknown time. The porch roof is supported by twelve, fluted, wood, columns topped by Ionic capitals with decorative necking. Several of the capitals have fallen off the columns, revealing that the capitals are some type of composite material. The capitals are fairly typical, consisting of four volutes separated by an egg-and-dart echinus. The vertical guideline for the volutes is provided by a cathetus in each corner. The necking below the capitals is highly ornamental with anthemions and other floral designs on top of elaborate scrolls. The Attic base of the columns rest on a narrow, square, wood board. The columns are topped by a wide entablature which encircles the house. The entablature includes an architrave ornamented with a repetitive fret pattern; a plain frieze; and, an elaborate cornice decorated with dentils, a narrow egg and dart pattern, and, along the top, symmetrical, narrow, wood blocks.

The porch floor is wood and the foundation is brick laid in a stretcher bond to match the rest of the house. There is a wide wood coping along the top of the foundation. The porch wraps around on both the north and south sides of the house. On the north side, the wraparound portion of the porch is unobstructed by the house, although there are no stairs on this side of the porch. On the south side, there is a recessed secondary entry which the porch leads into; again there are no stairs off this side of the porch. The only stairs on the front porch are located in the center of the façade and are concrete with brick sidewalls. The sidewalls are capped with a concrete coping. There remains a wide expanse of concrete walk to the front of the porch stairs. The concrete sidewalk that was historically in front of the house has been overgrown with grass. The trees that systematically lined the front and sides of the house between the sidewalk have also been removed.

Beneath the porch, the façade is uneven with the first floor having two canted sides and the second floor being more squared off. The main entrance is located towards the north side of the facade and is set back from the projected front window. The entry consists of a wood, glazed, paneled door topped by a slightly recessed, wood, fixed, stained glass transom. To either side of the door, there are three-

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quarter, wood, sidelights. Flanking both sidelights are miniature, fluted columns with Ionic capitals. The columns and capitals match the larger porch columns. The capital on the south inside column has fallen off. Separating the door from the transom is a row of dentils with a second row above the transom. Above this and extending from the projected front window immediately to the south of the door is a wide ledge which forms a balconet for the second floor, stained glass, Palladian window. The balconet is supported by wide brackets which are ornamented with a wide leaf design. Along the bottom edge of the balconet and extending completely across the second floor facade, is a row of dentils tying it together with the rows of dentils above and below the entry transom. The balconet has a wood balustrade railing with different sized corner posts. Like the porch parapet wall, the corner posts are ornamented with recessed panels. The three-part window above the entry on the second floor has fixed sidelights and a fixed bottom pane in the center. The round arched, top, center pane is stained glass. The window has a wood surround, including plain wood columns separating the three sections of the window. The upper wall of the façade beneath the porch is clad with a narrow, vertical, wood siding that contrasts with the predominate, horizontal, weatherboard siding of the rest of the house.

Immediately to the south of the main entry there is a single, wood, hung, one-over-one window. As with some of the windows on the other elevations, this window has a decorative pane pattern on the upper pane and an unornamented single pane on the bottom. The window has a wide, Classical style-inspired wood surround that includes a tall entablature on the top. The window is located in a canted position to bridge the incline of the wall from the projected front window. The front window, located in the projected portion on the porch to create a bay window, is a larger, wood, single, uneven one-over-one, hung window. The top pane is shorter than the bottom pane. This window has a matching wood surround to the other first floor façade windows, including a tall entablature/header and wide pedestal/sill, although the sill is smaller than the other windows. On the south canted wall, there is another window which matches the window on the north side of the projection. Just to the south of the window and supporting the squared-off second floor, there is a large bracket identical to the ones supporting the balconet above the entry. In the squared-off second floor of the west elevation, there is a three-part window. This window matches other windows on the north and south sides of the house. It has a standard-sized, one-over-one, wood, hung window in the center. Flanking the larger center window are two narrow, one-over-one, wood, hung windows. Set considerably back on the south side, there is a second entry. This wood, glazed, paneled entry is topped by a single pane, wood transom.

The north elevation of the Lassen House fronts onto East Cooney (see photographs 4-6). The north wall is divided into three sections. The westernmost section, located under the front two-story porch, has only a triple, wood window with a fanlight and a wide wood frame. The window is located at mid-level between the first and second floors to provide light to the interior front stairs. The window consists of a standard-sized, middle, one-over-one, hung, wood window flanked by two narrow, one-over-one, wood, hung windows. The upper pane of the middle window is filled with a decorative stained glass pane. The middle window is also topped by a fanlight window. To the east of the window is a fluted, wood pilaster. The top of the pilaster is gone, revealing an area of shorter boards.

To the east of the pilaster, is the larger, middle section of the north elevation which is flush with the west section of wall but projected farther to the north than the smaller east section of the elevation. This area of wall contains two window openings on each of the three floors. There is one wood, one-by-one window in the brick foundation and decorative dogleg brickwork to the west side. The first and

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second floor windows are matching, being triple, one-over-one, wood, hung. As with the window on the west section of the north elevation, the middle windows are standard sized and the two flanking windows are narrower. Interestingly, the upper panes of the flanking windows are decoratively paned, matching a variety of other windows found on the other elevations. The first floor windows have a Classical wood surround that includes a tall, wood entablature. The second floor windows have narrow wood surrounds topped by the entablature previously described that encircles the house. The third floor windows are similar to the windows on the floors below but have been replaced in recent years so they are single pane rather than the likely one-over-one, hung. The upper wall of the third floor is ornamented with a line of dentils which wraparound the east elevation but not the south. One of the house's two brick, interior chimneys is visible on the roof of the east elevation, being located slightly to the west of center between the third floor windows. Marking the corner of the slightly projected middle section is a fluted, wood pilaster. The pilaster has an Ionic capital matching the porch columns on the front porch, including the decorative necking. The pilaster wraps around the corner and nearly obscures a single, metal, six-pane window located in the narrow protruding wall on the second floor. In the same corner locale on the third floor is a small, one-over-one, wood, hung window. The basement window in the juncture has been boarded.

The narrow rear section of the north elevation has an entry porch located on the far east corner. The porch has wooden steps, brick side walls topped by a concrete cap and a wood, glazed paneled door with a wooden screen door. The door has a classical, wood surround similar to the windows. The door is set slightly below the level of the windows on the rest of the north elevation. To the west of the porch are two basement windows. The east, wood, one-by-one, basement window is losing its wooden screen and the west basement window has been covered with plywood. On the first floor, there are two single windows. The east window is standard sized while the west window is smaller. Both windows are wood, one-over-one, hung with Classical wood surrounds. The second floor has three symmetrical, wood, one-over-one, hung windows, also with matching, wood, Classical surrounds. As on the first floor, the westernmost window is smaller than the other windows. On the third floor, there are two small, wood, one-over-one, wood, hung windows which are paired. The third floor area is smaller in this section with an open balcony area located on the east end of the floor. The east corner of the house is marked by a fluted wood pilaster with an Ionic capital and decorative necking.

The east elevation of the Lassen House is asymmetrical (see photographs 6-7). On the north side of the first floor is a partial porch that is enclosed on the south side. The porch has a flat roof supported by square, wood columns. The porch roof has a wide overhang, forming an entablature above the columns. The entablature is ornamented with a narrow row of dentils. The porch has a concrete foundation and probably nonoriginal concrete stairs that step inward and do not have side walls. The north side of the porch is open with rails along the edge of the wood porch floor. The south side of the porch is enclosed with weatherboard and four-pane, fixed, wood windows. There is one window on the east side of the porch and one on the south wall. Below the east side window, there is a wood, glazed, paneled wood door with a wooden screen door. This door provides separate access to the basement and was possibly added after the house was turned into apartments in the early 1940s. Directly behind and above the basement door in the main wall is a first floor rear entry. This door is wood, glazed, paneled and has a wood Classical surround. The door is two steps above the porch floor with the east half of the top wooden stair angled to allow entry below into the basement. To the north of the door under the porch, there are two paired, wood, hung, one-over-one windows with Classical wood

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surrounds.

South of the porch on the east elevation, located in the red brick foundation, are two wood windows with wooden screens. Both of the basement windows are one-by-one, wood. To the west of this, covering the one-story, squared bay on the south elevation, the brick foundation has been clad with concrete. Directly above this, on the first floor of the squared bay, there is a single, wood, one-over-one, hung window with a Classically-inspired wood surround. Between this window and the porch on the first floor of the east elevation are two shorter, wood, one-over-one, hung windows, also with Classical-inspired, wood surrounds. On the second floor of the east wall, there are three, wood, one-over-one, hung windows towards the south side and a matching, single, wood, one-over-one, hung window on the north side. Matching the north elevation windows, these windows have a narrow wood surround which is topped by the elaborate entablature which encircles the house. Above the second floor, perched on the bottom ledge of the third floor, is the second, red brick, interior chimney. The top of the chimney is corbelled. As on the façade, there is a deck area off the east side of the third floor. The area has a parapet wall which is not readily visible from the ground level. The third floor openings are not visible but include two sets of double, wood, French doors. Both of the proper corners of the east wall are marked by fluted wood pilasters ornamented with Ionic capitals and decorative necking. The one-story bay off the south side does not have pilasters but is ornamented with a dentilated entablature along the roofline.

Wrapping around the corner of the one-story bay on the southeast side of the house is the noncontributing, multi-car garage (see photographs 6-8). The weatherboard garage, possibly constructed around 1943 when the property was converted into apartments but definitely after 1928, has a concrete foundation and an asphalt-clad, hipped roof with metal ridge cresting. The double car opening on the north side of the building currently does not have any doors. The two windows on the east side have been boarded. The south side of the building is heavily obscured by vegetation but at least one six-over-six, wood, hung window remains in place. The wood swinging doors on the west side are present, although the door has likely not been closed in some time. In addition to the ridge cresting, the garage is ornamented with wood brackets below the wide overhanging eaves. Although connected to the house, the garage is easily understandable as a separate resource. The garage is noncontributing due to insufficient age.

The south elevation of the Lassen House is composed of two unequal sections (see photograph 1, 2 and 8). The front section, located under the front porch, contains a single second story window. The wood hung window has a decorative upper pane and a plain lower pane, matching various other windows on the west, north and south sides of the house. The window has a narrow, wood surround that is topped by the vertical wood of the upper porch wall. The edge of the west section of the south wall is marked by a fluted, wood pilaster with Ionic capital and decorative necking. The larger east section of the wall is highlighted by a rounded, one-story sun porch located off-center to the east and the squared, one-story bay on the east corner of the elevation. Both projections have an entablature simply ornamented with dentils, similar to the partial porch on the rear elevation. Spanning the distance between the two features is a flat roof. In this area on the main wall, there is a single window on the first floor which has been covered and a one-by-one, wood, basement window. This is the only visible basement window on the south elevation. On the south and west walls of the squared, one-story bay, there are no openings on either the basement or first floor level. The rounded, one-story sun

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porch features multiple, twelve-over-twelve, wood, hung windows. To the west of the sun porch on the first floor, there is a triple window. This window is similar to the first floor windows on the north elevation, including the decoratively-treated upper panes of the narrow, flanking windows. The window also has the elaborate, Classical, wood surround that matches those on the north elevation's first floor.

Directly above this window on the second floor, there are two, small, evenly-spaced, single, wood, vertical three-over-one, hung windows. These windows light the second floor interior bathrooms; as evident in the woodwork of the wall, these windows are not original to the house. They were likely added when the house was converted into apartments in the early 1940s and replaced a triple window.

To the east of this, above the sun porch, there is a triple window that matches the triple windows on the north elevation. As with the triple window on the first floor, the upper panes of all three wood, one-over-one, hung windows are decoratively divided. This window has a narrow wood surround that is topped by the ornamental entablature that wraps around the house. Above the squared bay on the west corner of the south elevation there is a triple window composed of three equal, one-over-one, wood, hung windows. These windows also have a narrow wood surround that is topped by the house's ornamental entablature. The third floor windows consist of three equally-spaced, triple windows. As on the north elevation, these windows have been replaced with wood, single pane, fixed windows. The east corner of the south wall is ornamented with a fluted wood pilaster. The pilaster is topped by an Ionic capital with ornamental necking.

#### INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

Some of the notable interior features of the Lassen House include the highly ornamental entryway, which includes the decorative, wood, front stairs (see photograph 11-12). Also of interest is the fireplace in the room directly east of the entry (see photograph 10). The first floor also features several pocket doors which remain in various stages of rehabilitation. The second floor of the house features an interesting front landing (see photograph 13). Characterizing the rest of the second floor is the long narrow hallway with various rooms off of it which probably reflects the 1940s conversion of the house to apartments with each room having private bathrooms (see photograph 14-15). Of particular historic note, is the elaborate, wood, linen cabinet located at the top of the rear stairs (see photograph 16). The third floor has been largely gutted in preparation for rehabilitation work which was not completed.

One of the most interesting features of the house is located in the basement. Considered as a separate, contributing resource, there is a storm/root cellar located off the south wall of the basement (see photographs 17-20). The cellar is accessed from the basement via a narrow tunnel. The barrel-arched cellar is fairly spacious and raises much speculation to its uses over the decades. On the south side of the cellar, there is a set of exterior stairs leading away from the Lassen House. The stairs likely allowed outside access to the storm cellar; a prudent exit means in case access through the house was prohibited due to collapse or other destruction caused by a tornado. The stairs were boarded at an unknown time.

#### ALTERATIONS

The most notable alterations to the house occurred between November 1901 and August 1904 when the third floor and two-story, wraparound porch were added to the house. It is likely the Classical Revival style detailing, including the prominent entablature along the top of the second floor and the

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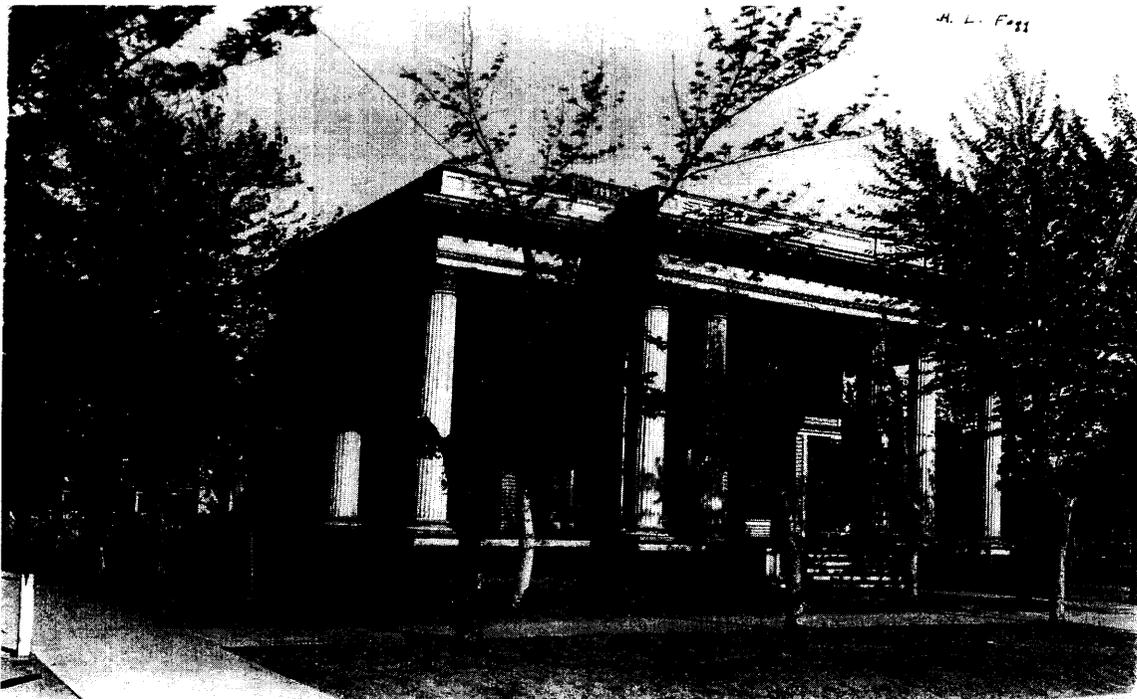
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elaborate wood window surrounds, was added at that time as well. Although the work has been attributed to noted Oklahoma architect Solomon A. Layton, there is no available historic documentation supporting this contention. Likewise, a search of the historic newspapers in El Reno during the period did not reveal a more precise date for the changes. However, because the changes clearly occurred during the period that the house was occupied by Henry Lassen, these changes are in of themselves historically significant and do not detract from the ability of the house to convey its significance.

Modifications which have occurred to the house since the Lassens sold the property include a monochrome white exterior paint job, the post-1928 construction of the garage off the southeast side of the house; replacement of the second floor windows on the west side of the south elevation; likely alteration of the second floor configuration to accommodate separate apartments with private baths; the addition of new concrete steps and partial enclosure of the rear partial porch and, the replacement of the third floor windows with single pane, fixed, wood windows. The first four changes more than likely occurred during the early 1940s when the function of the property changed from being a private residence to apartment house. The changes to the third floor windows were probably made in the late 1990s when the then-owners of the property began an extensive rehabilitation project, apparently to convert the house into a bed-and-breakfast, which was left unfinished.

Overall, the Lassen House retains its ability to convey its historic significance as the home of locally important, civic-minded, businessman Henry Lassen. The most significant alterations to the house transpired during Lassen's tenure at the house. The later modifications have not substantially altered the feel of the house, nor its significance as the best remaining resource in El Reno associated with Lassen.



Lassen House, c. 1912, Photocopy obtained from El Reno Carnegie Library, El Reno, Oklahoma

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

**SUMMARY:**

The Henry Lassen House, located in El Reno, Canadian County, Oklahoma, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its association with Henry Lassen. The period of significance for the Lassen House extends from 1898, when the Lassens purchased the house, to 1908, when they sold the property and moved to Wichita, Kansas. Henry Lassen was a prominent businessman in El Reno who contributed significantly to the development of the town during the period of significance through a myriad of activities. Notably, as expressed upon his passing, Lassen did not seek public recognition for his good works, instead content to achieve the desired goal while continuing work on other needed community aspirations.

As president of the Canadian Mill and Elevator, Lassen operated a major industrial concern in El Reno and Canadian County from 1894 until 1905. In addition to serving as Mayor of El Reno from 1905 through 1907, Lassen was instrumental in the 1904-1905 construction of the town's Carnegie Library and, in 1902-1903, a new electric power and light company. Lassen and his wife Mary purchased the subject house in 1898. Between 1901 and 1904, the Lassens undertook a major renovation of the house which apparently included construction of the elaborate two-story wraparound porch, the addition of a third floor and the application of Classical detailing, including a highly ornamental entablature and fluted, wood, pilasters with Ionic capitals, on all elevations. The Lassens continued to live in the house until June 1908. At that time, the Lassens moved to Wichita, Kansas, where Lassen and his partner C.M. Jackman had founded another major milling operation. In the late 1910s, Lassen also financed construction of Wichita's acclaimed Lassen Hotel. Notably, the Canadian Mill and Elevator in El Reno burned in the mid-1930s; although reconstructed by the then-owner, the current Mill and Elevator does not possess any association with Lassen. As such, the Lassen House remains the best, extant resource associated with Henry Lassen in El Reno.

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE:**

Henry Lassen was born on September 10, 1861 in Westerohrestedt, Germany. When Lassen was about 18 years old, he immigrated to the United States. According to the passport application he filed in 1899, Lassen came to the United States in August 1880 on the Anchor Line from Glasgow. Thirteen years later, Lassen indicated he sailed from Hamburg in September 1880. Both forms state Lassen became a Naturalized Citizen of the United States on January 13, 1899 before the District Court at Guthrie, Oklahoma Territory. Standing about 5 feet, 11 inches tall, Lassen had an oval face, blue eyes, an irregular nose, round chin with a dimple, light blond hair and a light complexion. In both 1899 and 1912, Lassen sported a moustache.<sup>1</sup>

Previous to coming to Oklahoma, Lassen resided in Iowa and Nebraska. It is unknown exactly when Lassen moved to El Reno, Oklahoma Territory. It is likely he arrived in El Reno previous to the January 29, 1894 incorporation of the Canadian Mill and Elevator. The formation and growth of the Canadian Mill and Elevator was a notable undertaking for the community of El Reno. Although there

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<sup>1</sup> Passport application, Henry Lassen, 1899 and 1912 (retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.com>, February 2008).

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was already a mill and elevator, the El Reno Mill and Elevator, operating in the community for two years previously, the Canadian Mill and Elevator quickly grew to be a major industrial concern in the town.

The Canadian Mill and Elevator marketed its flour under the brand of "Big C." The original capacity of the mill was 150 barrels of flour and 50 barrels of meal with the elevator having a capacity of 20,000 bushels. In 1898, the same year the Lassens purchased the house, the mill was remodeled, increasing its capacity to 500 barrels of flour and 200 barrels of meal per day. In 1903, the company again increased their storage capacity with the construction of a new, steel, 50,000 bushel elevator in El Reno. This brought the total storage capacity of the Canadian Mill and Elevator to 250,000 bushels. As noted at that time, "This is no small business enterprise to have El Reno as headquarters." By early 1905, the company operated elevators in El Reno, Hennessey, Okarche, Union City, Cereal (later Banner), Piedmont, Richland, Calumet and Hinton. In August 1905, the Canadian Mill and Elevator was sold to James and John Maney, well-known Oklahoma City businessmen. This included the elevators in El Reno, Okarche, Union City, Cereal, Calumet, Hinton, Smithton, Richland and Piedmont. The reportedly \$150,000 deal was described as the "Largest transfer ever made in El Reno."<sup>2</sup>

The historic significance of mills and elevators in Oklahoma, Canadian County and El Reno has been established in the Multiple Property Document "Grain Storage and Processing Facilities in Western Oklahoma, 1889-1950." To understand Lassen's impact on El Reno, it is important to put his primary business into historic context. During the years immediately following the turn-of-the-twentieth century, "The output of Oklahoma's flour mills...(was) something enormous and the products (were) distributed from the British provinces on the north to the gulf states on the south." Additionally, "...a vast amount of Oklahoma flour (went) into the export trade and (was) no small factor in the ports of Galveston, Baltimore and New York." Regional buyers were also critical with "Indian Territory, Arkansas and the Texas Panhandle all purchas(ing) Oklahoma flour...". Wheat itself was also an important agricultural commodity with Oklahoma wheat being "...shipped to foreign markets via Galveston." During the time period, Oklahoma wheat enjoyed a "...high reputation abroad..." because of its high quality. The importance of milling and grain storage at all economic levels during the first decade of the twentieth century is summed up by:

There are but few manufacturing industries in America in which more capital is invested than in that of milling, and there is none that calls for more mechanical and business ability. This statement (was) easily verified by an examination of government statistics and a review of the almost phenomenal evolution of the milling system in the past quarter of a century. In Oklahoma, in particular, milling is one of the leading manufacturing industries and Oklahoma flour and other mill-stuffs have been a potent factor in advertising the new state all over the civilized world.<sup>3</sup>

Related to his position as president of the Canadian Mill and Elevator, Lassen also served as president

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. See also The El Reno (Oklahoma) Daily American, 6 June 1903 and 8 July 1903; The El Reno (Oklahoma) American-News, 10 August 1905; and, The Daily Oklahoman, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), 7 May 1905 and 10 August 1905.

<sup>3</sup> George Carney, "Grain Storage and Processing Facilities in Western Oklahoma, 1889-1950," Multiple Property Document, (Available Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), 2000. See also The Daily Oklahoman, 12 January 1904 and 10 May 1907.

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of the Oklahoma Grain Dealers' Association in 1901-1902. In this capacity, Lassen in October 1901 traveled to Des Moines, Iowa, to attend the National Grain Dealers' Association meeting. Lassen, representing the southwest district of grain dealers, presented one of four regional responses in the opening events of the convention. In January 1903, Lassen presented a very persuasive nominating speech at the Oklahoma Grain Dealers' Association meeting which resulted in the election of E.D. Humphreys, owner of the El Reno Mill and Elevator, to the position of president. By involving himself in these activities, Lassen not only promoted the development of his profession and company but also El Reno and Oklahoma. One of the primary purposes of the Grain Dealers' Association was the inspection and grading of grain to ensure quality. This, in turn, contributed immeasurably to the popularity of Oklahoma wheat locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. By serving in positions of authority at both the Territorial and national levels, Lassen promoted Oklahoma grain and the viability of El Reno as a manufacturing center.<sup>4</sup>

The business founded by Henry Lassen and C. M. Jackman continued to prosper throughout the twentieth century, albeit under different ownership after 1905. Notably, on July 1, 1935, the Canadian Mill and Elevator caught fire. While it is not known how much of the turn-of-the-twentieth-century mill and elevator remained at that point, the entire mill complex was devastated in the blaze that also sent "...red hot sheet iron fragments on the residential neighborhood north to a distance of six blocks." Twenty homes were damaged, as well as numerous automobiles parked by spectators who did not realize the shower of blazing embers was falling on their unattended vehicles. While the company rebuilt a new mill within fifteen months of the blaze, the association between Lassen and the Canadian Mill and Elevator was forever lost.<sup>5</sup>

The Mill and Elevator was not the only business enterprise in El Reno that Lassen was the president, and apparent primary financier, of. In early January 1902, Lassen, along with C.M. Jackman and John A. Masters, purchased the El Reno Electric Light and Telephone Company from W. Story Sherman. Just over a week later, Lassen, Jackman and Masters were granted a Territorial charter for the renamed El Reno Light and Power Company of El Reno, with a capital stock of \$150,000. The new corporation had the immediate goal of constructing "...a building for the installation of an entirely new equipment of modern machinery – engines, dynamos, etc." The new building and equipment was estimated to cost almost \$30,000 and upon completion was expected to provide El Reno with "...one of the best and most dependable electric light and power plants in the southwest." The new plant was expected to "...furnish current for light and power every minute in the year." El Reno's new power source went into operation in late 1902. Sometime after this, Masters sold his interest in the corporation to Lassen and Jackman and left El Reno in search of a comparable town to build another plant. A "...practical electrical engineer..." Masters obviously provided the technical expertise to make this business venture a success. Not finding another place as desirable as El Reno, Masters began negotiating with Lassen and Jackman to purchase the entire El Reno plant in mid-1903. The \$60,000 deal included a \$31,000 cash payment and was concluded on August 20, 1903. Lassen's tie to the venture, however, was forever recorded in the 1903 El Reno city directory which lists Lassen as

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<sup>4</sup> The El Reno American-News, 13 November 1902 and 29 January 1903. See also The Des Moines (Iowa) Leader, 25 September 1901 and 2 October 1901.

<sup>5</sup> The Daily Oklahoman. 1 July 1935, 2 July 1935 and 13 September 1936.

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president of the Canadian Mill and Elevator Company and the El Reno Light and Power Company.<sup>6</sup>

In March 1906, Lassen was also one of the incorporators of the El Reno Opera House Company. Other charter members of this company included E.W. Riley, R.S. Trulock, W.I. Goff, H.C. Bradford, H.A. Wilson and Hal Townsend. This company was chartered with a \$35,000 capital stock. There is not much else known about the opera company at this time.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to contributing to the economic well-being of the community, Lassen also aided the long-term betterment of El Reno by financing or otherwise supporting many needed community amenities. For example, in early 1903, Lassen pledged \$1,000 to support the effort to entice the St. Louis, El Reno and Western Railway Company to lay a line through El Reno and Canadian County. This railway company was a subsidiary of the St. Louis and San Francisco (Frisco) Railway Company. Lassen headed the list of more than a 150 local contributors of this cause and was one of nine who pledged \$1,000. Notably, Lassen was also on the four member Right-of-Way committee who "...took a drive over the survey of the El Reno and Western ...to learn what encouragement will given the right-of-way purchasers." Thus, he was also instrumental in drumming up support for the enterprise outside of the immediate confines of El Reno.<sup>8</sup>

One of Lassen's most momentous community development actions was his support and enthusiasm for construction of a Carnegie Library in El Reno. By the end of February 1904, the plans for a new public library building, as well as \$12,500 in funding from philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, was awaiting action of the library board. Composing the library board in 1904 were Henry Lassen, president; Dr. J.W. Taylor, vice-president; Silas Reid, secretary; and L.C. Montgomery, treasurer; Will Edger and A.J. Gerrer, members. Although Lassen initially offered three lots of land in the Capital Hill area of El Reno for construction of the library, the new building was finally located at the corner of Wade and Barker avenues, where it remains at the present time. The second, final, location was central to downtown, thus making it desirable for a variety of reasons. Unlike the Lassen lots, it was necessary to purchase the "Ricker & Springs lots." The lots were valued at \$3,500 but the owners agreed to sell for \$2,000. This created a bit of a problem when the citizens of El Reno were not immediately forthcoming with the necessary funds. In late February 1904, the library board determined that the library would be located on the Lassen lots, unless the residents of El Reno raised the money necessary within a week. In anticipation of a mass meeting in early March 1904, it was announced in the local newspaper that Lassen "...consented..." to the change in location of the library. As further inducement, Lassen indicated that he would also contribute money to acquire the other lots, as long as other El Reno citizens "...show(ed) sufficient interest in the question to raise..." the required money. Lassen explained his position with

I want the library built, and for that reason donated my lots. If the citizens are satisfied, I am, but if they show a preference by contributing to purchase these lots, I will do my part. I want the building – it will be a great thing for El Reno, and I am for

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 10 January 1902 and 19 January 1902. See also The El Reno Daily American, 9 August 1903 and 20 August 1903.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 15 March 1906.

<sup>8</sup> The El Reno (Oklahoma) Globe, 16 January 1903. See also The El Reno American-News, 12 February 1903 and 21 May 1903.

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El Reno and no particular part of it. But I want to see the library built, and built at once. If these lots are purchased before next Monday night, the building will doubtless be built on the corner of Wade and Barker.<sup>9</sup>

Despite Lassen's "generous" monetary donation to the purchase of the lots, the collection of money from other community members did not move as quickly as hoped for by the library board. In mid-March 1904, less than a thousand dollars had been subscribed from forty-four entities, including \$50 from the Canadian Company Mill. Finally, in mid-April 1904, Lassen withdrew his donation of the lots in the Capital Hill area in order to spur action on the project. With the Lassen offer off of the table, the library board was then forced to circulate a petition asking the city council "...to provide some way of getting the location." If the city council refused to act, the money received from Andrew Carnegie would then need to be returned to him "...with an explanation as to the reason the money cannot be used, and thus El Reno will lose another public building on account of a dissatisfied and impatient citizenship." Although not all of the details are known, by mid-May 1904, the contract for the new library building was let to the local firm of A.C. Kreipke and construction started fairly rapidly after this. The library formally opened its door in mid-June 1905. Due to other local political commitments, Lassen no longer served on the library board at the time of the building's opening. Nonetheless, Lassen was instrumental in pushing this project, which resulted in a permanent educational and architectural landmark for El Reno, to completion. The building continues to serve the community as the public library and, according to the National Register nomination for the building prepared in 1980, was the oldest Carnegie Library built in Oklahoma Territory that continued to function as a library.<sup>10</sup>

Politics were another area in which Lassen made a contribution to El Reno's development. In addition to serving as the Territorial Committeeman for the Republican party of Canadian County, Lassen was elected to the office of Mayor of El Reno in April 1905. The three-way fight for Mayor was made all the more bitter as "...several farmers who had real or fancied grievances against..." Lassen came to town and actively campaigned against him. With a majority of 82, the local newspaper described Lassen's win as a "Landslide." Although the course of Lassen's two-year term as Mayor was apparently not without bumps, from the beginning Lassen intended only to serve one term.<sup>11</sup>

As noted previously, Lassen sold his primary business in El Reno, the Canadian Mill and Elevator, just four months after being elected Mayor. The following year, Lassen, along with C.M. Jackman, started construction on a new "...mammoth..." milling operation in Wichita, Kansas. This mill would eventually be called the Kansas Milling Company and by the mid-1960s be the largest flour mill in Kansas and the seventh largest in the United States.<sup>12</sup>

The Lassens primary residence apparently remained in El Reno through at least part of 1908. For reasons that are unclear, in November 1907, Henry Lassen deeded several properties in El Reno to his

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<sup>9</sup> The El Reno Daily American, 27 February 1904, 1 March 1904 and 2 March 1904.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 17 April 1904 and 9 May 1904. See also The Daily Oklahoman, 13 May 1904 and Kent Ruth, National Register Nomination for the "Carnegie Library," El Reno, Canadian County, Oklahoma, (Available Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), March 1980.

<sup>11</sup> The El Reno Democrat, 6 April 1905. See also The El Reno Daily Globe, 20 April 1905 and The Daily Oklahoman, 4 August 1906.

<sup>12</sup> The Wichita (Kansas) Beacon, 1906. See also The Wichita Eagle and the Wichita Beacon, 4 December 1966.

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wife Mary Lassen. Included in the \$25,000 deal was the Lassen House, located on Lots 17 through 22 of Block 152. Just over four months later, the Lassens sold the Lassen House to Helen K. Bradford for the sum of \$10,000. Notably, the Lassens reserved possession of and the right to occupy the house free of rent until the first day of June 1908. As all five of the Lassen's children, consisting of Mrs. Lassen's two children from her first marriage, Frances (16) and James (14) (McInnes – later Lassen), and the Lassen's three children, Teresa (11), W. M. Henry (10) and Henry A. (8), would have been school-age at that time, it is likely the Lassens sought to remain in El Reno until the end of the 1907-1908 school year.<sup>13</sup>

In April 1908, the Bradfords mortgaged the property to Mary Lassen. Just over a month later, the mortgage was assigned to Henry Lassen. In early October 1914, Henry Lassen acquired title to the house again through a Sheriff's Deed. At the end of the following month, the Lassens, who were still residing in Wichita, Kansas, sold the property to Albert G. and Stella Morrison for \$4,500. It is unknown why the value of the property dropped more than half between the years the Lassens initially sold the house and the second time they sold it. As with the Bradfords, the Morrisons also secured a mortgage on the house from Henry Lassen.<sup>14</sup>

Four and a half years after buying the house, the Morrissons sold the north four lots on which the Lassen House was situated to Blanche F. Fogg. The same June 1919 day, the Morrissons sold the south two lots of what would have been the Lassen House lawn to Cora B. Fryberger, Blanche Fogg's mother. The Morrissons mortgage to the Lassens was not released, however, until September 1919, three months after the sale of the house to the Foggs. Blanche Fogg and her husband, Judge Harry L. Fogg, continued to reside in the Lassen House until March 1943. At that time, the Foggs sold the house to R. B. and Ethel Cox who turned the home into an apartment house. The Coxes jointly owned the house until February 1949 when, as part their divorce settlement, Ethel Cox received title to the Lassen House, as well as several other pieces of property. Ethel Cox remained owner of the Lassen House through the 1960s.<sup>15</sup>

Six months before the Morrissons sold the property to the Foggs and Frybergers, Henry Lassen passed away at home in Wichita, Kansas. The cause of death was recorded as apoplexy. Notice of his January 2, 1919, death not only made the El Reno papers but also the Oklahoma City paper. In respect to his memory, and remarkably even after the Lassens having been gone from the El Reno community for more than ten years, the El Reno city offices closed the Monday afternoon of Lassen's funeral in Wichita. According to the El Reno paper, "Mr. Lassen came to El Reno when the town was in its beginning and played a large part in the building of the town." The El Reno paper also printed the tribute titled "Citizen by Every Test" that was published in the Wichita Beacon about Henry Lassen. Written by Henry J. Allen, this article discussed Lassen's contribution to the communities in which he lived:

Henry Lassen was a public utility. Men turned to him for help in community

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<sup>13</sup> Grantor/Grantee Records, Canadian County Clerk's Office, Canadian County Courthouse, El Reno, Oklahoma. See also United States Federal Census, 1900 and 1910 (retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.com>, February 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

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matters as naturally as tho (sic) he had been licensed to spend his time helping the public.

If sometimes we made a pack-horse of him it was because he did everything that was asked with such care and simplicity that oftimes (sic) we forgot even to thank him, which is probably the highest compliment you could pay him. He never seemed to care for the reimbursement of gratitude. He was a simple unassuming man who did big things apparently without realizing it. As a public spirited citizen you always felt sure of him. His quality and work was so well recognized that every man knew where he would stand in relation to any matter which concerned the welfare of the nation, the state or the city. He was the sort of a friend a community learned to lean upon without analyzing the reasons for its perfect confidence. Everybody knew his love of the community was like the weakness man have for favored children, and everybody presumed upon it.

I have seen few happier men then Henry Lassen was New Years eve when they opened the Hotel Lassen and the dream which the community had been dreaming so long came true. There was no vanity or self-gratification in the moment for him. His joy was that the community possessed the thing it had longed for and that he had been able to help bring it about, and the community accepted the give of his services in the spirit in which those services had been given.

No man ever passed out of life in Wichita leaving behind him more genuine affection, more simple gratitude for what he was and what he did than Henry Lassen. Henry Lassen was lifted from the stern realities of the north country; the country of flaxen-haired men who patiently bore heavy burdens and nevertheless saw great visions. He was fused into the melting pot of American life with such a strong warmth that he immediately became one of those who gave body and power to the nation where hard work, genius, patriotism and vision (were) the test of citizenship. The patient, powerful shoulders now rest.<sup>16</sup>

As was apparently his way, Henry Lassen made a significant but quiet contribution to the betterment of El Reno, as well as Wichita, Kansas. The above description of Lassen's activities in Wichita were similar to his undertakings in El Reno. Lassen not only encouraged El Reno's growth and development by operating a major and successful industrial concern but also by providing the money and impetuous to improve the light and power company, organize an opera company and build a fine public library. Taking it one step further, Lassen also served a term as city mayor; thus, he went beyond merely financing various aspects of El Reno's development by taking a position of leadership within city government. As the best, extant resource in El Reno that has a clear association with Henry Lassen, the Lassen House is eligible for the National Register under the area of social history. Through his recorded deeds, as well as those actions which did not make the annals of history, Lassen significantly contributed to the betterment of society in El Reno.

**THE LASSEN HOUSE AND MASTER ARCHITECT SOLOMON A. LAYTON**

Reportedly the turn-of-the-twentieth century expansion of the Lassen House was designed by master

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<sup>16</sup> The El Reno American, 9 January 1919.

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Oklahoma architect Solomon A. Layton. However, no historic documentation supporting this contention was located during the research for this nomination. Layton is first listed in an El Reno city directory in 1903; at that time, he worked for the architectural firm of William H. Riley and Company. Layton is not listed in the 1901-1902 El Reno directory. In 1899, Layton is listed in the Denver, Colorado, city directory as a patternmaker for the Denver Engineering Works Company; thus, Layton was clearly not residing in El Reno when the original pre-1895 house was constructed or when the Lassens purchased the house in 1898 as previously claimed. The first known mention of Layton in the El Reno newspapers occurred on August 18, 1903 when Layton was noted, along with W.H. Riley, as being a member of the Shade and Grounds committee for the Harvest Home Jubilee. Layton remained associated with local, long-time architect Riley through at least May 1904 when bids were solicited for construction of a public school designed by the firm of Riley and Layton. Little information is available concerning W.H. Riley and his body of work has also not been studied. By June 1905, Layton was apparently operating his own architectural firm in El Reno. Subsequently, Layton moved his office to Oklahoma City where he continued to practice until his death in the early 1940s. Even if the Layton designed the modifications made to the Lassen House between 1901 and 1904, it was likely that the work was done under the auspices of W.H. Riley's firm and there are other, more impressive examples of Layton's firm's work in El Reno, such as the El Reno High School (NR 2000) or his own house in El Reno located at 415 South Evans Avenue.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ballenger and Richards, *Denver City Directory*, 1891 and 1899. See also *The El Reno Daily American*, 18 August 1903; *The El Reno American-News*, 9 May 1904; and, *The Daily Oklahoman*, 22 June 1905, 7 January 1906 and 3 June 1906.

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Lots 19 through 22, Block 152, Jensen's Part of El Reno Original Town, El Reno, Canadian County, Oklahoma.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundaries include the property historically associated with the Lassen House, minus the lots located to the south which were sold separately in 1919 with a house subsequently being constructed on them during the 1920s.

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**PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

The following information pertains to all photograph numbers except as noted:

Photographer: Cynthia Savage  
Date of Photographs: 16 July 2007, 24 December 2007 and 10 February 2008.  
Negatives: TIFF Files