

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Bryson, (J.R.), House
and/or common

2. Location

street & number 242 NW Seventh St. not for publication
city, town Corvallis vicinity of congressional district 1st
state Oregon code 41 county Benton code 003

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Apartment Bld.

4. Owner of Property

name Judith Headington / Robert Reiman /
street & number 219-A NW Seventh 3510 NW Grant
city, town Corvallis vicinity of state Oregon 97330

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Benton County Courthouse
street & number 120 NW 4th Street
city, town Corvallis state Oregon 97330

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Inventory of Historic Properties has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1976 federal state county local
depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office
city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The substantial Italianate house built in Corvallis for prominent attorney, mayor, and county judge John Rodell Bryson, c. 1882, is a two-story wood frame structure with a brick foundation and basement. Irregular in plan, it measures 45x60'. Its hipped roofline is broken by two brick chimneys with belted brick courses near the top. The roof has boxed eaves supported by console brackets with pendants. The frieze and brackets are decorated with incised scroll saw ornament, and a second tier of the frieze is formed of zigzag molding. The siding is shiplap. The original windows are primarily one-over-one, double hung sash windows with hooded lintels and a one-story polygonal bay window project from both the east and the south elevations. The porch on the east side is supported by four sets of coupled square columns. The front (east) entry is a double leaf door with molded panels and has a segmental arched transom light. Fluted pilasters frame the entry.

The front entry opens into a hallway containing a freestanding curvilinear stairway, open at the string, with turned ballusters and newell post and shaped handrail. Hardwood floors are found throughout the first floor, and access is gained to the parlor, sitting room and dining area from the front hall. The parlor in the southeast corner of the house has a window bay area in the eastern wall and a plastic ceiling medallion three feet in diameter. The parlor opens west into the sitting room through two oak sliding pocket doors. The sitting room has oak wainscoting and molding on all four sides. It also has a window bay on the south and a fireplace with oak mantel, moldings and shelf. The dining area has a built-in china cupboard with beveled, leaded glass doors.

The second floor has softwood floors and ten-foot ceilings throughout. A transom can be found above each of the original doors. All of the original windows have the original louvered softwood sliding blinds.

The house was altered c. 1912 by three additions and the enclosure of the northern side of the porch. The additions included: a one-story addition above the east (front) porch, one above the northwest porch, and a two-story addition on the southwest corner. The addition over the front porch could be removed to return the principal facade to its original appearance. The house was subdivided in 1920 into apartments, but care was taken to retain most of the finish work, original door and window trim, and all special features.

The house is situated at the southwest corner of the intersection of 7th and Van Buren in a residential neighborhood and presents its east and north elevations to public view. The majority of the neighboring structures date from the early 1900s. The site lies within the original Dixon land donation to Marysville, which later became the city of Corvallis, and the house lies approximately three blocks northwest of the Benton County Courthouse, and the Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan (Corvallis Arts Center), both properties dating from 1889 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	<u>XX</u> law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	<u>XX</u> architecture	<u>XX</u> education	___ military	<u>XX</u> social/
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	humanitarian
<u>XX</u> 1800–1899	<u>XX</u> commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
___ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	<u>XX</u> politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1882 **Builder/Architect** Joseph Emerick, carpenter (likely attributed)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John Rodell Bryson House, built c. 1882, is significant for its historic associations with the early economic and political growth of Corvallis, county seat of Benton County, Oregon. It is generally held to be the most imposing of the few examples of the Italian Bracketted Style remaining in Benton County, and its fine detail and craftsmanship are noteworthy.

J.R. Bryson was born in 1853, the son of Matthew Bryson who emigrated to Brownsville, Oregon from Pennsylvania in 1851. Bryson attended Corvallis College and was graduated in 1874. In 1876 he was admitted to the bar and he set up his practice in Corvallis. In February 1881, Bryson purchased Block 16 of the County Addition to Marysville (Corvallis) from Thomas J. and Mary E. Conner. The architect for the structure that was subsequently built is as yet unknown. An entry in Bryson's books indicates that the probable carpenter for the structure was Joseph Emerick, the carpenter for several other Italianate structures in Benton County.

J.R. Bryson was "a public spirited citizen...closely identified with (Corvallis') growth and development..."¹ between 1876 and 1896. He was involved in the political, educational, judicial and economic growth of Corvallis during this time. His first public position was his appointment as city recorder in 1879, and from 1880 to 1882 he served two terms as mayor of Corvallis. During this time he was directly involved in the passing of several significant city ordinances including: an ordinance preventing the disposal of rubbish on roads or alleyways (1879), an ordinance requiring city prisoners to work on civic improvements during their imprisonment (1880), and the licensing of liquor outlets (1881). Also during this period, Bryson was involved in: giving access to Corvallis to the Western Oregon Railroad (1879), allowing Albert Ray to construct the American Speaking Telephone in Corvallis (1880), and the passing of the ordinance to erect the Corvallis Water Works for the benefit of the citizens. Between 1882 and 1886, Bryson also served as county judge for Benton County, a term marked by "a businesslike and satisfactory administration,"² Following his term as county judge, Bryson "firmly refused many earnest requests to accept political offices..."³ although his "...quietly expressed opinion carried great weight."⁴

Educationally, J.R. Bryson was closely associated with his alma mater, Corvallis College, which by this time had become Oregon Agricultural College and would later become Oregon State University. Following his term as county judge, Bryson became secretary of the building committee for Oregon Agricultural College. As secretary, Bryson was instrumental in the construction of many buildings including Benton Hall, the oldest building on the Oregon State University campus:

Judicially, Bryson was "a lawyer of high rank and enjoyed a large and lucrative practice" marked by a "scrupulous integrity and sound judgment."⁶ The height of Bryson's legal career came in 1896 when, along with Judge McFadden of Corvallis, he represented Bonner and Hammond before the Oregon Supreme Court in their attempt to purchase the defunct Oregon Pacific Railroad Company for a nominal \$100,000. The Railroad countered by claiming an attempt to defraud was made because the railroad had a face value of many times that amount. The Supreme Court ruled that because over four years had elapsed with no successful offer from the public, and because the railroad had a responsibility to its creditors, the railroad had to be sold to the highest bidder. This court case set a national legal precedent; insured the continuation

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Beaver Yearbook. Portland: Kerns and Abbott Co., 1919. p. 362-363.

Clark, Robert Carlton. History of the Willamette Valley, Oregon. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1927. III, p. 14-17.

"John R. Bryson" Corvallis Gazette, 28 May 1897. (see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one (100.42x116.37')
Quadrangle name Corvallis, Oregon **UTM NOT VERIFIED** Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>110</u>	<u>4791110</u>	<u>4934725</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Tax Lot 12200; Lots 5 and 6, Block 16, County Addition to Plat of Marysville (Corvallis), Benton County, Oregon. Sec. 35, T11S, R5W, W.M.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rusty Gorman

organization _____ date February 26, 1979

street & number 330 SE Viewmont telephone 503/752-6347

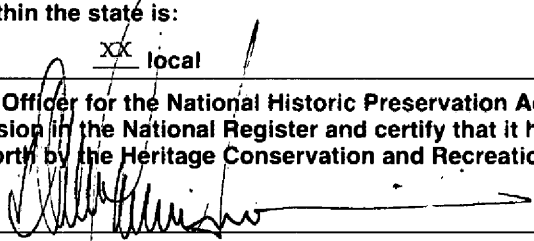
city or town Corvallis state Oregon 97330

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

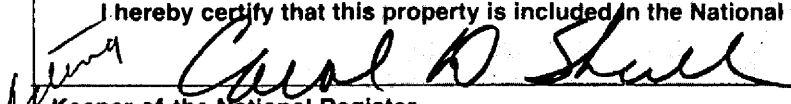
The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title SHPO Designee date September 20, 1979

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
	date <u>11-15-79</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest: <u>Kristin O'Connell</u>	date <u>11/13/79</u>
Chief of Registration	

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED	MAY 5 1979

Bryson (J.R.) House

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of the railroad, which was "regarded as a most fortunate circumstance to the citizens of the Willamette Valley,"⁷ and catapulted Bryson into statewide fame.

Bryson also was involved with the economic atmosphere in Corvallis as the lawyer for the Hamilton, Job and Company Bank. This locally owned and administered bank failed on June 18, 1893, as a result of a national and local recession. J.R. Bryson represented the bank as a legal council even though he himself had been a heavy speculator in the bank. Bryson was in large part responsible for soothing public sentiment. In spite of the hostile interests involved, Bryson "discharged that trust...to the eminent satisfaction of every creditor and debtor,...(which was) a monument to his business capacity and integrity."⁸ Bryson was so respected in Corvallis that, following his death in 1897 at the age of 43, "all the business houses were closed and flags on public buildings floated at half mast."⁹ The house stayed in Bryson family ownership until it was sold as a private residence in 1906.

In 1912, the house was purchased as a chapter house by Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority. The only significant renovations came at this time and grew out of the sorority's need for room. During this period the house also briefly served as the storage place for the first cooperative store in Corvallis, a fraternity/sorority cooperative. This cooperative later was expanded and moved in 1919 to the Old Managers Cooperative Market building. In 1920 the house became an independently-owned apartment house, and it has continued to be operated as such to the present day.

Architecturally, the structure is understood to be Benton County's grandest extant Italian Bracketted home. Historic views of the Bryson home confirm the elegance of the structure and the quality of craftsmanship that went into its construction. The addition over the east porch could be removed to return the east facade to its original appearance. The decorated frieze and brackets, the coupled-column porch, the ceiling medallion, the interior wood blinds, and the free-standing staircase are among the outstanding features which remain wholly intact.

Presently, there is an option on the Bryson home (now an apartment house) held by the Women's Institute of Financial Education (WIFE). This recently-formed corporation dedicated to the financial education of women and their families, is attempting to obtain nonprofit, corporate tax exemption. The executive director of WIFE, Judith Headington, is one of the present owners of the Bryson home as an apartment house. It is her wish to secure National Register certification as well as nonprofit status and open the Bryson home to the public as the home office of the Women's Institute.

1. "John R. Bryson" Corvallis Gazette, 28 May 1897.
2. Ibid
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
5. "The Last Sad Offices", Corvallis Gazette, 25 May 1897.
6. "John R. Bryson," loc cit
7. "The Supreme Court," Corvallis Gazette, 26 June 1895.
8. "The Last Rites," Corvallis Times, 29 May 1897.
9. Ibid

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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Bryson (J.R.) House

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"The Last Rites" Corvallis Times, 29 May 1897.

The Last Sad Offices" Corvallis Gazette, 25 May 1897.

Morrow, Robert G, reporter. "Farmers Loan and Trust Company Versus the Oregon Pacific Railroad Company" Oregon Reports. San Francisco: Bancroft-Whitney Publishers, 1896. p. 44-72.

Scott, Leslie M. "The Yaquina Railroad, The Tale of a Great Fiasco" Oregon Historical Quarterly, Volume 16 (1914-1915) p. 228-245.

"The Supreme Court" Corvallis Gazette, 26 June 1895.

Interview with Mrs. Marie Keene, former member of Kappa Alpha Theta Socority, Corvallis, Oregon, February 23, 1979.