Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

RECEIVED

FEB 1 5 1978

SE	E INSTRUCTIONS IN HO			18
1 NAME	TYPE ALL ENTRIES	S COMPLETE APPLICA	BLE SECTIONS	
				•
HISTORIC	Hoover (Thomas Benton) House		
AND/OR COMMON				
LOCATIO	PN .		-	
STREET & NUMBER	irst Street, between	n Adams and Washingto	on Streets BURLICATION	
CITY, TOWN	Fossil	VICINITY OF	congressional dis	
STATE ()regon	CODE 41	COUNTY Wheeler	CODE 669
CLASSIFI	CATION			
CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRE	SENT USE
DISTRICT	PUBLIC	X.OCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEÚM
_XBUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTURE	ВОТН	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	EPRIVATE RESIDEN
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION		ENTERTAINMEN	
OBJECT	IN PROCESS	X_YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
•	BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTEDNO	INDUSTRIAL MILITARY	TRANSPORTATION
	OF PROPERTY			
NAME F	Robert E. and Nadine	I. Conner		
STREET & NUMBER	PO Box 8			
CITY, TOWN	Fossil	VICINITY OF	oregon 97830	
LOCATIO	N OF LEGAL DES	CRIPTION		
COURTHOUSE. REGISTRY OF DEED	os,etc. Wheeler Count	v Courthouse		
STREET & NUMBER				
CITY, TOWN	P. 17		STATE	<u> </u>
C DEDDECE	Fossil NTATION IN EXIS	STING STIDUEVS	Oregon 97830	
TITLE	IVIATION IN EAR	SIING SOK VE 13	•	
	Statewide Inventory o	of Historic Propertie	es.	
DATE	October 1977		STATECOUNTYLOCA	NL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS		c Preservation Offic	ce	
CITY, TOWN	Salem		Oregon 97310	



CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

__EXCELLENT X_GOOD

__FAIR

__DETERIORATED

__UNEXPOSED

RUINS

_unaltered

XORIGINAL SITE
___MOVED DATE_____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The home built by Thomas Benton Hoover in 1882 is a simple, two-story frame building, T-shaped in plan, with steeply-pitched gable roof. The house occupies a 66x168-foot lot fronting First Street in the heart of the small Columbia River Basin Plateau community of Fossil, Wheeler County seat. The Wheeler County Courthouse lies two blocks to the south on Adams Street.

There appear to have been two early additions in the southeast corner of the house, filling in the area between the main north/south-running block and the easterly ell. The first of these was two stories in height and shed-roofed; the second was a hipped roofed single-story addition.

The house is clad with clapboards, and present roofing material is asphalt shingles. Two stove chimneys are the only features above the roof line. Febestration is regular. The elongated windows are fitted with double-hung sash with four lights over four. The transomed entrance is offset to one side on the north end of the main block. The opening above it, a door, is believed to have been intended by the builder to open onto a porch deck, which was never provided.

The house was acquired by the present owners in 1974. It had been neglected,/poorly maintained for many years. Over the past three years, the owners have painted exterior and interior, repapered plaster walls, upgraded plumbing and surface-mounted electrical wiring, and repaired the picket fence. A "minimal" framework porch with deck was added to the entrance. A dilapidated screened back porch was removed and replaced, and an 8x16 foot flagstone patio was laid.

Interior trim is simple and intact. Tongue-in-groove wainscoting in kitchen, dining room and living room has been repaired. Among the minor modifications made by the current owners were the lowering of the kitchen ceiling and the addition of two kitchen walls to conceal plumbing.

A dilapidated barn on the adjoining lot to the west was torn down. A detached work shed atop a brick cellar to the rear of the house collapsed. It was reconstructed with lumber salvaged from the barn. Poplars lining the property are historic plantings. The current owners cleared the yard of blackberry vines and planted flowers, shrubs, fruit and nut trees.

SPECIFIC DATES 1882 BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown						
		INVENTION	•			
1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	X_POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_OTHER (SPECIFY)		
X1800-1899	COMMERCE	X_EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	_TRANSPORTATION		
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER		
1600-1699	ARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE		
1400-1499	_ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE		
PREHISTORIC	_ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION		
PERIOD	Af	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The simple, two-story clapboarded house built in Fossil by Thomas Benton Hoover in 1882 is significant as the last building extant which is associated with one of the community's first settlers, the man who served as first postmaster, first mayor, and who gave the town its name.

Thomas Benton Hoover (1839-1896) was born in Platt County, Missouri. He emigrated to Oregon via wagon train as a boy of five, accompanying his father, Jacob Hoover, and step-mother. The elder Hoovers settled a donation land claim of 640 acres on the Tualatin River, in the vicinity of Hillsboro, in Western Oregon. In 1864 young Hoover married Mary Jane Chambers, daughter of a neighboring settler. The latter, James Washington Chambers, traveled east of the Cascades to the unsettled interior of the Columbia Basin Plateau in 1869 for the purpose of scouting ranch land. Claims for four families, including his own and that of his daughter and son-in-law, Thomas B. Hoover, were established in the vicinity of a tributary of Thirtymile Creek in present-day Wheeler County which would become known as Hoover Creek. The families traveled part way to their new location by boat, coming up the Columbia River from Portland to The Dalles. From the latter cross-roads on the Columbia, the parties traveled overland with their wagons and livestock, encountering but two prior settlers in the remote region of the Columbia's tributary--the John Day River. With none but Indian trails to follow, the 118-mile final leg of their journey took three weeks to negotiate.

Upon his arrival in 1870, Hoover improved his claim on Hoover Creek with a cabin of logs, whip-sawn beards and hand-hewn slabs of local sandstone: This first dwelling place of Hoover's was enlarged and improved over the years until the family relocated on nearby Butte Creek. The cabin remained standing until 1948. In 1881 Hoover and Thomas Watson went into partnership and opened the settlement's first store. It is reported that Indians from the Warm Springs Reservation who camped in the neighborhood each spring while gathering camas roots and sheep's wool from barbed wire fences traded at the store. A building known as Hoover and Watson Hall was located on Lot 1 of the same tract upon which Hoover's two-story house, the subject of the nomination, was completed in 1882.

From the time he established himself in the John Day country, Hoover assumed naturally various civic duties. He was named Justice of the Peace, and, having petitioned for a post office at the settlement, he was sworn in as postmaster by a neighboring Justice of the Peace in 1876. According to family tradition, which is in turn supported by an entry in Oregon Geographic Names, Hoover himself named his station "Fossil" in 1876. Investigating a sudden landslide on his ranch, Hoover discovered the fossil remains of prehistoric mammals. His find is said to have attracted the immediate interest of Thomas Condon Oregon's foremost pioneer geologist and paleontologist who had made the first important discoveries in the fossil beds of the John Day Valley during the years Condon was a

"Pacie Vnowledge of Fossi	PHICAL REFE	KENCES	
Portland, granddaug			Mrs. Elmer A. Frank, Jr.,
Fossil <u>Journal</u> , miscellan prior to 1900.	eous historical a	rticles reproduced	from the newspaper's files
Glimpses of Wheeler Count		continued)	
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DA	A Т А		
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY	16,632 sq. ft.	(3/8 acre)	
UTM REFERENCES 550			
A 1, 0 7 1, 9 2, 5, 8 ZONE EASTING C	4, 9, 8, 6, 4, 7, 0 NORTHING	B ZONE EASTING	NORTHING
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIP	TION		
Lot 3 and S½ Lot 4,	Quimby Addition	to Fossil.	
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LIST ALL STATES AND C	OUNTIES FOR PROPERT	IES OVERLAPPING STATE	OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
11 FORM PREPARED E	BY		
Mrs. Robert E. Conn	er	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
ORGANIZATION			DATE
		_	
STREET & NUMBER		0	ctober 1977
STREET & NUMBER PO Box 8			TELEPHONE
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Form No. 10-300a (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Hoover (Thomas Benton) House, Fossil, Wheeler County, Oregon

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

Congregational minister at The Dalles 1862-1870.

Thomas Benton Hoover also was a County Commissioner and director of public schools. He was named Fossil's first mayor following an election that took place at Hoover and Watson Hall in 1891. The first town council rented Hoover's hall for a meeting place at the rate of \$1.50 per month. Hoover kept his post as Mayor until 1895. A year later, his oldest son, William, was voted into the office. The first born of the Hoovers' seven children, Annie Jeriah, married W. W. Steiwer, another prominent citizen of Fossil whose descendents are equally influential in the county.

The subject property was continuously owned by Hoover's descendents until 1974, at which time it was acquired by the current owners.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE]

McArthur, Lewis L., <u>Oregon Geographic Names</u> (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1974), 290. Entry pert. to Fossil.

Interviews with Patricia Frank, granddaughter of Thomas Benton Hoover, and Lester Reinhart, brother-in-law of Thomas Benton Hoover's son, Tom Hoover, Jr.

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