

OREGON INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM

Historic Name: Peter Polly House  
 Current Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street: 641 NW 4TH ST  
 City: Corvallis  
 County: Benton  
 Owner: JOHN JOYNER JR, 645 NW 4TH ST #1,  
CORVALLIS, OR 97330-6412  
 Category: Building Location: Urban  
 TRS: 11 05 35  
 Quad: Corvallis  
 Map: 11535DB TLN: 2300  
 Addition: Dixon's Second  
 Block: 11 Lot: 10, 1/2 of 11

Original Use: Single-family residence  
 Current Use: Single-family residence  
 Secondary Current Use: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Building Date: c. 1875 Moved?   
 Theme: 19th Century Architecture  
 Secondary Theme: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Style: Vernacular  
 Secondary Style: Gothic Revival  
 Architect: Unknown  
 Builder: Unknown

Condition: Unknown  
 Integrity: Unknown  
 Local Ranking: NA

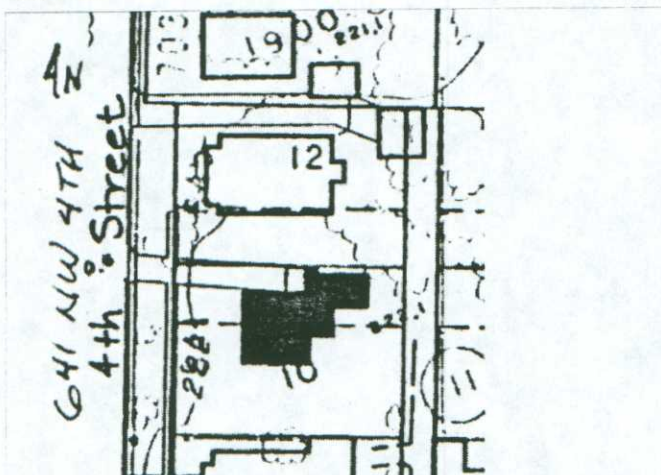
Plan Shape: Rectangle Number of Stories: 1.5  
 Foundation Material: Unknown Basement?  Porch?   
 Roof Form: Gable Roofing Material: Unknown  
 Structural Framing: Wood  
 Primary Window Type: 1/1 double hung (1890 replacements)  
 Exterior Surfacing Materials: Weatherboard  
 Decorative Surfacing: Imbricated shingles on south side below frieze board  
 Decorative Features: Refer to Statement of Significance  
 Alterations/Additions: Refer to Statement of Significance  
 Landscape Features: Refer to Statement of Significance  
 Associated Structures: Garage  
 Known Archaeological Features: Unknown  
 Setting: The Peter Polly house is located in its original location at 4th Street near Tyler, once the outskirts, but today just north of town. The historic Caton house is situated across the street.



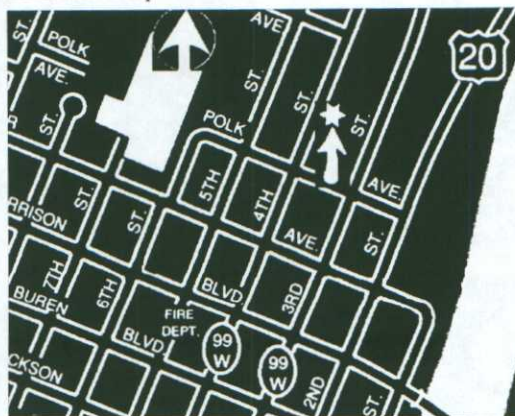
Historic Name: Peter Polly House Map: 11535DB TLN: 2300  
 Street: 641 NW 4TH ST TRS: 11 05 35 Quad: Corvallis  
 Recorder: Mary K. Weber Local Number: 259B SHPO Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Recorded: \_\_\_\_\_

OREGON INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
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Site Plan:



Location Map:



Statement of Significance:

Significance

The Peter Polly house is significant for many reasons. It is one of only two Gothic-inspired homes remaining in Corvallis in its original location. Approximately six buildings in the survey area are older than the Polly house. No early home in the city retains such a fine example of a mud-mortared, elongated brick chimney.

Though nothing is known of Peter Polly, later personalities who lived in the house, such as Joseph C. Polly, hotel keeper at the Occidental, were prominent in Corvallis business. Also, the homestead site and its association with a (c. 1857-1875) black Corvallis family has potential for historical research of a highly important nature.

Physical Description

The Peter Polly house (c.1875) is a 1 1/2 story wood frame Gothic Vernacular house arranged on a traditional rectangular plan (east-west) with a one story utility wing on the north elevation. The house remains in its original location and fronts west towards 4th Street.

The steeply pitched gable roof carries boxed eaves and a wide rake board. Plain cornerboards are flush to the wall siding. The house remains covered with the original horizontal weather board siding. Cornice head window surrounds are set flush to the siding (a characteristic of early Oregon houses), but all sashes have been replaced with one-over-one double hung panes. (This replacement probably occurred in the 1890's.) These windows have cornice head trim. A triple window on the south elevation is not original. This locality formerly contained a bay window. The bay was added between 1890 and 1895. An original 6-over-6 double hung wood sash window remains on the upper story, east (rear) elevation.

The front entrance to the house was possibly shifted from the utility wing to the west gable end of the house between 1890 and 1895, and a porch the width of the gable end was added. Later, this porch was replaced with the small sloped roof porch found above the transomed front door. Fish scales below the wide frieze board on the south elevation were probably added in the 1890's.

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The one-story kitchen/utility wing appears original and certainly pre-dates 1888. An extension on the north end of this wing was removed sometime between 1927 and 1949. (It was probably a wood shed/store room.) The wing today has shiplap siding, a back (east) porch enclosed beneath a sloping roof, and a flat front porch roof. Windows, like the main part of the house, have been replaced. The four-panel front door has been modified.

A highly significant early characteristic of this wing is the mud-mortared brick chimney situated at the juncture of the house and utility wing. Contained within the wing, the chimney rises tall above the main roof gable. On the interior, the fireplace and chimney structure was recently unenclosed (i.e., wall covering removed), but the fireplace opening remains bricked-over as it has been for many years.

The interior of the Polly home retains little in the way of original features. It appears that upper floor stair access has been moved, probably from the main part of the house to the utility wing.

Though the Polly place was once a small farmstead, today no original outbuildings remain associated with the house. A one-story auto garage built from re-used lumber, is found directly to the north east of the house, as are two old fruit-bearing trees. A barn once sat in this locality and possibly the shiplap siding from this barn was used to build the garage. A two-panel door, an 1850's feature, is found on the garage today.

#### Historical Background

The Peter Polly house was probably built in 1875. This was the year Polly purchased lots 5, 10, 11 and 12, Block 11, Dixon's Second Addition from Hannah Gorman for \$1000.00.

Hannah Gorman was a black "wash woman" from Tennessee. She had obtained the lots through Eliza Gorman (possibly her daughter) a "mulatto seamstress" whose ownership of the lots traced back to 1857, the year she purchased them from William F. Dixon. Eliza Gorman is reported to have helped Mary Stewart sew the first flag in Benton County. The valuation of the Gorman lots was \$300.00 to \$500.00 from 1860 to 1875, indicating an insubstantial home may have been situated upon these lots.

Little is known of Peter Polly, except that he hailed from Marion County, Oregon, at the time of purchase. (His name was not found in Benton County Census records.) Besides the house and barn (which was erected on lot 5 to the east of the house), numerous outbuildings were built on the property. In 1892, Polly sold the homestead to Joseph C. Polly (relation unknown) for \$1200.00.

Joseph C. Polly was a Benton County pioneer from Indiana who came to reside in Yaquina precinct near Oysterville in 1867. Later, in 1879 in Corvallis, J. C. Polly built the Occidental Hotel in partnership with a man named Youg. The Occidental was a Corvallis landmark until 1927 when the wood frame structure gave way to the brick Hotel Corvallis.

J.C. Polly, a single man when he purchased the homestead, later married a woman from Kentucky named Nancy. The couple had a son, Arthur. Nancy was proprietress of the Occidental Hotel upon its official opening in 1881. Though J. C. Polly may have had connections with the Peter Polly house once he became a Corvallis resident and businessman, he did not purchase the homestead until 1892 and then sold it to James and Caroline Hayes (well-to-do about Corvallis) in 1893.

The Hayes in turn sold to the Chipman family in that same year. The Chipman's ran the Chipman Restaurant and Bakery at 115 N 2nd Street in Corvallis for many years. They lived in the Polly house on 4th Street at least until Clarence Chipman died in 1923. The Chipmans probably made the 1890's changes to the home.

#### Sources Consulted

Historic Name: Peter Polly House  
Street: 641 NW 4TH ST  
Recorder: Mary K. Weber  
Recorded:

Map: 11535DB

TRS: 11 05 35

Local Number: 259B

TLN: 2300

Quad: Corvallis

SHPO Number:

OREGON INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
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2. Corvallis Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1888-1949.
3. Benton County Assessment Records, Benton County Courthouse, Corvallis, Oregon
4. Benton County Census Records, 1860, Benton County Historical Museum.
5. Fagan, David, An Illustrated History of Benton County Oregon, A. G. Walling, p. 480.
6. The Weekly Corvallis Gazette, April 25, 1879. (announcement for Occidental Hotel)
7. Corvallis Gazette Times, November 19, 1924, "Pioneer is Visitor".
8. Polk's Benton County Directory, 1913:
9. Probate Records, Clarence Chipman, Case numbers 1830 and 1895, Benton County Courthouse, Corvallis, Oregon.

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**CORVALLIS, BENTON COUNTY, OREGON  
BUILDING AND STRUCTURE  
INVENTORY FORM**

CORVALLIS PRESERVATION SOCIETY, INC.  
CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY 1983-1984

INVENTORY NO: 259B  
ROLL/EXP: 8B/ 18,19

Form Prepared By:

NAME:

DATE: Sanders Chapman  
3-30-84

**identification**

BUILDING ADDRESS: 641 NW 4th Street

COMMON NAME:

HISTORIC NAME: Peter Polly House

BUILDING TYPE/USE: Residence

*Legal Description*  
ADDITION: Dixon's Second  
MAP NO: 11 5 35 DB  
BLOCK/TAX LOT NO: 11/2300  
LOT NO(S): 10, (1/2) 11

*Current Owner*  
NAME: Charles S. Wilson  
ADDRESS: P. O. Box 928  
CITY: Corvallis STATE: Oregon  
753-7733  
ZIP CODE: 97339 PHONE: 752-4201

**data**

CONSTRUCTION DATE: c. 1875

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNATION:

Gothic Vernacular

**a.** RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND FEATURES

garage

**b.** HISTORIC PHOTO/SOURCE LOCATION

**c.** FORMER USE OF LAND

1850: W. F. Dixon Donation  
Land Claim

**d.** FORMER USE(S) OF PRESENT BUILDING

SANBORN MAP REPRESENTATION: 1888, 1890, 1895, 1912, 1927, 1949

**status**

- NATIONAL REGISTER  
 STATEWIDE INVENTORY  
 1982 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
 1979 WOMANS CLUB SURVEY

**significance**

- NO  
 YES  
 POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT  
(see continuation sheets)

# CORVALLIS CULTURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY FORM

ARCHITECT: Unknown

BUILDER: Unknown

## e. physical description

The Peter Polly house (c.1875) is a 1½ story wood frame Gothic Vernacular house arranged on a traditional rectangular plan (east-west) with a one story utility wing on the north elevation. The house remains in its original location and fronts west towards 4th Street.

The steeply pitched gable roof carries boxed eaves and a wide rake board. Plain corner-boards are flush to the wall siding. The house remains covered with the original horizontal weather board siding. Cornice head window surrounds are set flush to the siding (a characteristic of early Oregon houses), but all sashes have been replaced with one-over-one double hung panes. (This replacement probably occurred in the 1890's.) (see continuation sheet)

## photograph

INVENTORY NO:

259B

ADDRESS:

641 NW 4th Street

ELEVATION:

WEST

VIEW TO:

EAST



PERIOD: The Settlement Era

THEME: 8d1, 2c

## f. historical background

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## continuation sheet

INVENTORY NO: 259B

E. Physical Description:

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(see continuation sheet #2)

## CORVALLIS CULTURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY FORM

## continuation sheet #2 INVENTORY NO: 259B

F. Historical Background:

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# CORVALLIS CULTURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY FORM

## g. significance

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## h. context

The Peter Polly house is located in its original location at 4th Street near Tyler, once the outskirts, but today just north of town. The historic Caton house is situated across the street. Some of Corvallis' oldest homes are in the general vicinity.

## i. condition

Poor

CURRENT ZONING:

Central business

THREATS TO PROPERTY:

Deterioration/Neglect

