

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 96001506

Date Listed: 12/20/96

Tolleth House
Property Name

Ada
County

Idaho
State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Paul R. Lynn

Signature of the Keeper

12/20/96
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

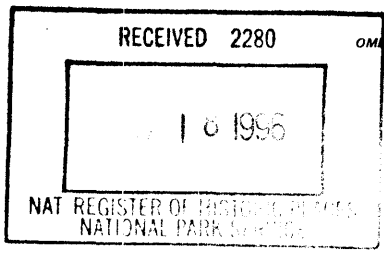
Period of Significance:

The period of significance is amended to read: 1907-1909.
[This period reflects the property's significant associations with Meridian's early twentieth century "boom period" of rapid expansion and prosperity.]

This information was confirmed with Mike Bedeau of the ID SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)



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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions 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 any 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 Tolleth House
other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number 134 E. State Avenue n/a not for publication
city or town Meridian n/a vicinity
state Idaho code ID county Ada code 001 zip code 83642

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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] Signature of certifying official 20 Sept 96 Date
John R. Hill, State Historic Preservation Officer
State of 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 commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:) _____

[Signature] 12/20/96

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Property Name Tolleth House

County and State Ada County, Idaho

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

n/a

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: n/a

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: Specialty Store

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Materials (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD: Weatherboard

roof SYNTHETICS

other _____

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

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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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
<u>COMMUNITY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT</u>	<u>1907-1946</u>	<u>1907</u>
<u>ARCHITECTURE</u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
	Cultural Affiliation	
	<u>n/a</u>	
	<u></u>	
	<u></u>	
Significant Person	Architect/Builder	
<u>n/a</u>	<u>Unknown</u>	

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

Property Name Tollesh House

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9. Major Bibliographical References

(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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one

UTM References

1	<u>1/1</u>	<u>5/4/9/2/5/0</u>	<u>4/8/2/8/8/7/0</u>	3	<u>///</u>	<u>////////</u>	<u>////////</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>///</u>	<u>////////</u>	<u>////////</u>	4	<u>///</u>	<u>////////</u>	<u>////////</u>

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 John L. Bertram, Principal
 organization Planmakers date May 15, 1995
 street & number 417 S. 13th Street telephone (208) 336-1438
 city or town Boise state ID zip code 83702

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Gwen and Brenton Alger
 street & number 120 E. State Avenue telephone (208) 888-3653
 city or town Meridian state ID zip code 83642

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Narrative Description

The Tolleth House is a two-story, frame dwelling located at the northwest corner of State Avenue and East 2nd Street in Meridian, Idaho. The house fronts on State Avenue and sits on four 30-foot wide lots. The grid street system includes concrete sidewalks and parking strips on which large maple trees stand. The immediate neighborhood is principally residential in character. The property is in excellent condition and has had very little alteration since its construction.

The home's floor plan is an irregular compound plan with five units and thirteen exterior corners. The house forms a front-facing T plan with a one-unit kitchen and porch ell at the rear of the building. The structure is three and one-half units deep. The second bay width is two units with a bay window on the east.

The house is a two-story frame building of wood-stud construction with shiplap siding. The building features a poured-concrete foundation and a partial basement. It has a steep-pitched cross-gabled roof and parallel gables on the west elevation. At the back is a one-story kitchen with gabled roof. Attached to the kitchen is a glassed-in sun porch with shed roof. All the gables have flared eaves and all eaves are boxed. A wrap-around porch on the front of the house has a dropped shed roof. Composition shingles cover the roof. The chimney is located on the ridge near the rear of the house.

Windows are one-over-one double-hung sash. Two five-panel doors with a beveled glass light open at each end of the front porch. The south (front door), has side wood panels with a single beveled window. Decorative details are simple. An east-facing bay window on the first floor is graced by projecting corners on the second floor. The cornice features a wide frieze board with simple narrow molding band. The wrap-around porch supports are square piers which are slightly tapered. The house has shiplap siding and corner boards. Shiplap siding is also found under the gables along with decorative surrounds of the attic windows/vents. A simple crown molding is found over the windows and doors.

The house is divided into four sections, the first bay includes a stairway and living room; the second bay is a dining room and bedroom; the third bay is the kitchen; and the fourth is a back porch. The second floor includes three bedrooms and a bathroom. Stairs to the partial basement are on the back porch. The house has no fireplace, heat being generated by a central coal furnace and ducts. The furnace has been converted to oil.

Stylistically the Tolleth House presents elements of Queen Anne design such as an irregular ground

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plan, multi-gable roof and wrap-around front porch. The house also features American Four-Square influences, including greatly simplified decorative treatments, square tapered porch columns and gables with flared eaves. The interior of the house retains extensive Queen Anne influenced oak and fir woodwork. The exterior and interior are intact with few alterations to the house. Minor alterations occurred in 1972, including removal of porch railings and replacement of wood porch with concrete. Some shiplap siding has been removed along the roof line of the wrap-around porch. The interior configuration of the building has not been altered except for adding a bathroom on the second floor. Woodwork is intact with the exception of removing some crown molding which is now stored in the basement, awaiting reinstallation. Along the alley is a modest garage that once served as a carriage house. Nearby, there formerly stood an outhouse. A hand-dug well which once supplied house water is now used for irrigation.

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Statement of Significance

The Tolleth House is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A as it is associated with the expansion and development of Meridian, Idaho during the first decade of this century. Built in 1907, the house is significant as an example of one of the earliest and largest "middle class" frame houses built in the small town of Meridian. More specifically, the house is associated with the rapid growth and development of Meridian between 1906 and 1909. The building is also eligible for listing under Criterion C as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a particular period in architectural history. The Tolleth house is a stylistically transitional building, that is it exhibits characteristics of both the exuberant late 19th century Queen Anne style and the emerging early 20th century aesthetic which emphasized simplicity in design and ornamentation.

Historical Significance

Rural settlement began in the Meridian area in the mid-1880s. Most settlers emigrated from farming communities in the Midwest. Farming conditions in Meridian, however, were poor due to lack of adequate water for irrigation. Efforts to secure a steady supply of water hampered growth in the area until Settler's Ditch was completed in the early 1890s. A rail spur connecting the Union Pacific/Oregon Short Line main track at Nampa with Boise was completed through the area in 1887. At that time a rural post office, originally named Hunter, was established at the present site of Meridian. Initial traffic at Hunter was so minimal that the railroad did not establish a siding or depot.¹

The first signs of development at Hunter came in 1892 with the establishment of Meridian Odd Fellows Lodge. The lodge took its name from the Boise Meridian which transects the area from north to south. In 1893 the lodge built a two-story frame lodge hall near the Hunter post office and surveyed a town plat.² The town adopted the name of the lodge hall. Initial growth was slow. By 1903, however, there were more than 200 inhabitants. In that year Meridian was incorporated as a village.³

¹Bird, Annie Laurie. *Boise The Peace Valley*. Canyon County Historical Society, 1975, 366-368.

²ibid, 368-369.

³ibid.

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Meridian experienced a "boom" period from 1906 through 1909. The rapid expansion of the town was triggered by the expansion of the Boise Valley Interurban Railway to Meridian. This provided greater passenger and freight service to the town. The railroad also constructed a large siding, offering much better handling facilities for fruit and other products. Better transportation resulted in a period of rapid civic expansion and improvement. Electric lights were installed in 1908. Two new brick churches were dedicated in 1908 and 1909. Several substantial brick commercial buildings were built including the F.W. Compton Building, Meridian Hardware, and the Merchants Exchange Bank. Growth during this period was so substantial that the 1904 two-story brick school had to be supplemented by construction of the Meridian Rural High School in 1912.⁴

The Tolleth House, built in 1907, is a structural legacy of this phase of Meridian's growth. Prior to the development boom, houses built in Meridian were primarily modest one-story Folk Victorian structures.⁵ It was not until the expansion of the local economy during the boom that substantial "middle-class" housing began to appear. The Tolleth House was a wedding present from Harry Tolleth to his wife Della. In 1905, at the beginning of the boom, Tolleth sold a 40 acre farm north of town for \$4,000. He used the proceeds to invest in a mercantile business and a home for his family.⁶ The house he built was a typical suburban design of this period. It was very up to date, being one of Meridian's first homes to incorporate electricity and central heating.⁷ It was taller and larger than most of the other houses in Meridian and occupied a spacious corner lot. It was not, however, overly ostentatious--particularly in its conservative exterior decoration. These are the hallmarks of a house built by an up-and-coming local merchant to impart an air of security and stability to his clientele and community.

Harry eventually became sole proprietor of the store, renaming it the Tolleth Mercantile Company. By the 1920s it was renamed again to Tolleth's Grocery. Harry and Della Tolleth lived in this house until Harry's death in 1935. After Harry died, Della sold off the remaining inventory in the store and leased the building for a state-operated liquor store. Della lived out her life in the house, and during her active years she rented rooms to female teachers and provided lunch for local female

⁴Ibid, 372-374

⁵Hill, Lila and Davidson, Glen W. *They Came To Build a Community: A History of Meridian, Idaho and the People Called Methodists*. Meridian, Idaho, 1986, 174.

⁶Interview with Gwen Alger, April, 1995.

⁷Ibid.

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workers. Della died in 1975.⁸

Architectural Significance

The Tolleth House serves to demonstrate a significant shift which occurred in American architectural design in the first two decades of the 20th century. From 1880 to 1900 the dominant national architectural style for domestic structures was the Queen Anne. This style can trace its origins to mid-19th century England where a renewed interest in early 18th century English building traditions, particularly those popular during the reign of Queen Anne, began to emerge. Queen Anne buildings demonstrated a distinctly non-classical aesthetic--emphasizing irregular massing and varied uses of materials, textures, and color. This stylistic movement migrated to the United States beginning in the late 1870s. As it merged into American design, the initial English character of the Queen Anne style was adapted to local tastes and conditions. Most notable was the use of milled lumber rather than masonry and the liberal application of other popular stylistic motifs, particularly the use of intricate jig-sawn wood decorative elements. The resulting stylistic merger produced buildings which adopted the English aesthetic of irregularity and variety in combination with extravagant use of a profusion of readily available mass-manufactured wood building materials.

By 1900 American tastes began to change. The Queen Anne style reached its peak in the economic boom of the 1880s. The boom ended with the Panic of 1893 which resulted in one of the worst economic downturns the nation ever faced. When prosperity returned at the beginning of the new century, the extravagant trappings of the Queen Anne began to be viewed as a visible reminder of a frivolous and even vulgar time in American history. People began to feel slightly embarrassed about the showy brashness of many Queen Anne homes.

This perception was enhanced by a change in architectural tastes and stylistic preferences. Beginning in the 1890s several architectural trends emerged which advocated a more refined, less extravagant approach to design. Following the Columbian Exposition in 1893, classical modes reminiscent of those popular in the late 18th and early 19th centuries were presented as a rational approach to the perceived excesses of the Queen Anne. In Chicago, the followers of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright advocated a return to rational design based on functional demands. On the West Coast architects began to develop architecture on the hand crafted aesthetic espoused by the Arts and Crafts Movement which resulted in the Craftsman style. While originating in different parts of the nation and drawing on somewhat dissimilar antecedents, all of these movements advocated a simplified approach to design and decorative treatment. Irregularity and excessive ornamentation were to be avoided.

⁸Ibid.

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This new aesthetic approach was eventually incorporated into vernacular domestic architecture. By the second decade of the 20th century, the extravagances of the Queen Anne had given way to the new simplicity across the spectrum of American architecture. This change, however, was by no means abrupt. Tastes and styles change slowly and incrementally. It is as a demonstration of the transition from one set of design preferences to another that the Tolleth House is significant.

As can be seen, the house retains several broad characteristics of Queen Anne design. The plan and massing of the building is typically irregular and asymmetrical. The lower portion of each of the street elevations is dominated by a long porch which wraps around the corner of the building. The central hipped roof is interrupted by no less than four projecting gables. The primary elevation is dominated by an offset projecting mass topped by one of the aforementioned gables while the east elevation presents a similar element with the addition of a recessed first floor bay. These are all quintessential Queen Anne characteristics.

Despite its Queen Anne ancestry, the Tolleth House also demonstrates several key elements of simplified design. Most notable is the lack of virtually any decorative surface treatments. The house is clad from foundation to roof line in simple uniform shiplap wood siding. Corner boards and window framing are extremely plain as are the moldings used on the porch, cornice and gable verges. Indeed the only decorative treatments which can be ascribed to an identifiable style are the flared eaves and the tapered square porch columns, both of which are vaguely characteristic of the Craftsman tradition. Interior finishings are also simple, featuring plain oak and fir moldings and fixtures. As such the Tolleth House is a true demonstration of a transitional structure, retaining elements of the 19th century tradition while embracing a design aesthetic for the 20th century.

Conclusion

The Tolleth House retains a significant degree of historic integrity. It is one of a very few structures remaining in Meridian which is associated with the significant town development boom of 1906-1909. As such it is an excellent candidate for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. Further, the building is an excellent example of the transition from the highly decorative late 19th century architectural traditions to the new emphasis on simplicity advocated at the beginning of the 20th century. As such, it is also eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C.

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Bibliography

Bird, Annie Laurie. *Boise The Peace Valley*. Canyon County Historical Society, 1975.

Evening Capitol News, May 8, 1908.

Hill, Lila and Davidson, Glen W. *They Came To Build a Community: A History of Meridian, Idaho and the People Called Methodists*. Meridian, Idaho 1986.

Ellis, F. W. *The Story of Meridian*, Idaho Magazine Vol. 1 # 3, March 1904.

Meridian Rural High School, 1928 Annual.

The Meridian Times, September 23, 1910, May 7, 1920 Pg.1, col.3.

Meridian Tribune, May 7, 1909.

The Idaho Statesman, April 10, 1903, November 6, 1905. April 10, 1905, February 21, 1906.

Sanborn Insurance Company, City of Meridian maps 1907, 1912 and 1923.

Department of Commerce and Labor--Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910-Population. Also referenced 1900 U.S. Census.

Interview with Gwen Alger, April, 1995.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 7,8,9 and 10, Block 5, F. A. Nourse's 2nd Addition, Meridian, Idaho

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Tolleth House.