

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JAN 24 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name O'Bryan, George, House
other names/site number Oak Lawn

2. Location

street & number O'Bryan Avenue and Highland Avenue N/A not for publication
city, town Ridgetop N/A vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county Robertson code 147 zip code 37152

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Herbert L. Byers
Signature of certifying official Deputy SHPO, Tennessee Historical Commission Date 1/19/89

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. 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:) _____

Alvora Byers  2/23/89
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/CampDOMESTIC/Single dwellingDOMESTIC/Secondary structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single dwellingDOMESTIC/secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other/Resort Architecture

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation WOOD; CONCRETEwalls WOOD

roof ASPHALTother WOOD

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

In 1893 George O'Bryan built a summer residence in the new resort community of Ridgetop (pop. 1,225) in Robertson County. It is a frame building, one story in height that clearly portrays its original use as a summer residence. Built in the upper elevations of the Highland Rim, the house had several features that provided relief from the sweltering summer heat of Nashville, located eighteen miles to the south. It is an excellent example of a turn-of-the-century seasonal residence. Both the house and the surrounding grounds retain a high level of integrity.

The George O'Bryan House is located on a five acre wooded lot which contains the residence, the carriage house, a small frame building known as the Preacher's House, and original stone-lined, gravel-paved walkways and stone-paved paths. The lot is part of an eleven acre parcel subdivided in 1891 and sold off in five parcels for resort use. The property deed contained building and lot restrictions specifying, amongst other items, where the house had to be situated on the lot. The house stands on the far northeastern side of the lot, facing the southwest.

The 1893 O'Bryan House has a square central hall plan main block with a transverse hall spanning the entire rear elevation. Asphalt shingles cover this section's gable on hip roof. A frame section is attached to each rear corner of the main block. At the east corner of the rear elevation is a one room, square, hip roof wing that is original to the house. On the north corner is a two room wing with a gable on hip roof dating from 1896 when O'Bryan made this summer residence his year-round residence. At that time, a one room section, mirroring that on the east corner, was removed and located elsewhere on the property. Today this detached section is known as the Preacher's House. Attached to the 1896 wing is a one room section added by the Dillon family shortly after they purchased the house from the O'Bryans in 1923. The O'Bryan House rises one story from a foundation of wood pilings, the spaces in-between infilled at a later date with concrete blocks. Of frame construction, the house is sheathed in board and batten siding. The main block has two interior brick chimneys and the 1896 wing has one interior brick chimney.

The facade has a central entrance with double-leaf doors capped by a two light transom. To each side of the entrance are paired 6/6 windows and their original slatted functional wooden shutters. A veranda spans the front and wraps around the southeast elevation of the house. Projecting

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from the center is a gable roof portico with vertical boards in the gable that have been sawn to form a decorative horizontal cornice. The portico and veranda roof are supported by square posts with decorative sawn brackets. The veranda has its original slat board wooden rail, wooden ceiling, wooden flooring, and is reached by four plank steps. Due to the slope of the land, the side portion of the veranda has a raised foundation which is covered in wooden lattice.

The northwest elevation has three 6/6 windows with original shutters, while on the southeast elevation there are three 6/6 windows with shutters and a triple window added in the 1970s when a side porch at this location was enclosed.

The frame sections attached to each rear corner project from the rear of the house and form a U-plan. The square hip roof section at the east rear corner was built as a kitchen and still serves in that capacity. This section projects from the side of the main block and is on a raised concrete foundation containing a window and cellar door. It has a very small (now closed-up) window up high on the rear elevation and a window that replaced the original 6/6 window. On the inside of the U-plan, the kitchen has a new double window and a door leading from the kitchen to the wooden deck that spans that area across the rear of the main block between the two projecting sections. The porch has plank steps, a wooden lattice-sheathed foundation, a slat board rail, and a pump which is original.

The rear elevation of the main block has a central double-leaf door flanked by a single door and a 6/6 window on one side and two 6/6 windows on the other side.

Constructed in 1896, the two room wing section at the north rear corner replaced a section that mirrored the kitchen section. This wing has board and batten siding and a gable on hip roof. Two original windows and one door are located on the facade. On the rear elevation are two original 6/6 windows and two smaller 6/6 bathroom windows that were added by the O'Bryans at an unknown date. At the end of this wing is a frame one room section with a hip roof, board and batten siding, casement windows on the three exposed elevations, and an exterior door on the facade. This section, designed by an architect to blend with the house, was added by the Dillon family in 1923.

The exterior of the house is virtually unchanged since 1896. The only known changes are the new kitchen windows, the 1923 addition, and the enclosure of a small side porch. The house retains the design features of its original intended use as a summer residence. Prominent features

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include the numerous large windows, the numerous exterior doors, the central hall with double doors at each end to provide cross ventilation, the spacious veranda on the front, the open deck at the rear, and functional shutters for closing up the house when not in use.

On the interior, features indicating its construction as a summer residence include eleven foot high ceilings, thin wooden partition walls, only two rooms with fireplaces, and the very simple wood trim. The original house had no electricity, no central heat, and no inside plumbing. Electricity and heat were installed in the 1920s. The original method of heating was a kerosene furnace with vents cut into the wood floor and covered with wooden grates. The O'Bryans added two bathrooms soon after the 1896 wing was built and in the 1920s a bathroom was built in the main block of the house.

The house's interior retains many original features such as floors, woodwork, mantels, doors, hardware, and wallpaper. The woodwork in the house is extensive and the majority of it is very simply made. Even when more elaborately detailed features, such as chair and picture rails or ceiling coffers, are executed they are made of unworked two-inch-by-six-inch or two-inch-by-four-inch boards. The only stylish features in the house are the two original mantels. Although the woodwork is simple, the skill of the woodworker is evidenced in the pegged construction of doors, the cherry flooring, and the beautiful pine doors at the rear of the central hall.

The unaltered ten foot wide central hall is flanked by two rooms per side. Four built-in corner cupboards with beaded vertical board doors are found next to the double doors at either end of the hall. The front three light entrance doors are painted, while located at the rear of the hall are beautiful pegged natural pine double doors. These doors are divided into three panels - the top and bottom are vertical boards and the central panel has diagonal boards. Extensive woodwork of the hall includes cherry flooring of two inch wide boards, two-inch-by-six-inch boards dividing the ceiling into rectangular panels or coffers, plain board door surrounds, beaded wainscotting with molded chair rail above and a quarter round molding below, and boards dividing the side walls into panels. Wallpaper fills the paneled areas and is original to the house. A six panel door opens off the hall into each of the four rooms.

To one side of the hall are the parlor and the dining room. At the front of the house is the parlor which has three windows. On the side wall is a fireplace with projecting chimney breast and a wooden mantel with slender columns supporting the mantel shelf. The mantel has a plain frieze and a

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coffered overmantel with an inset beveled mirror in the center. The hearth and architrave are of brick and there is a modern insert. This mantel is perhaps the most elegant design feature of the house. Original woodwork in this section includes cherry floors with four inch wide boards, a picture rail on the wall abutting the hall, plain board door and window surrounds and cornice, and quarter round baseboards. The wallpaper on the ceiling is original, while that on the walls is of a later date.

The dining room has two side windows and three doors, one leading to the parlor, one to the central hall, and the other to the rear transverse hall. Original woodwork in this room includes the three and one-quarter inch wide cherry floors, the window and two of the door surrounds, beaded wainscotting, molded baseboard, and a chair rail. Features that are not original are the wallpaper, one door surround, and the ceiling paneled in dark wood.

On the other side of the central hall are the Martha O'Bryan Room and the guest room. The Martha O'Bryan Room was named after Martha because this is where she spent her summers between 1893 and 1898 and where she lived year round between 1899 until her death in 1910. Original features in the Martha O'Bryan Room are the three and one-quarter inch wide board floors of cherry, hall door and window surrounds on the three windows, molded baseboards, a chair and picture rail on the wall abutting the hall, and a fireplace with stone hearth and insert (added in the 1920s) located on the northeast wall. The wooden mantel is much simpler in design than that of the parlor. It consists of pilasters supporting a plain frieze and mantel shelf. Flanking the fireplace on both sides are six panel doors that were added in the 1920s. One leads to a bathroom installed at that time and the other leads to a closet. The room retains its original wallpaper.

Behind the Martha O'Bryan Room is the guest room reached through a door off the hall. This room has a six panel door leading to a bathroom (shared with the Martha O'Bryan Room) and a six panel door leading to a closet. The room retains its original baseboards and door and window surrounds, but there is modern wainscotting, carpet, and wallpaper. On the rear wall of this room are two doors. One originally lead to a hall in the 1896 wing, but was boarded up in the 1970s and was made into a recessed bookshelf. The other door leads to the transverse rear hall in the main block.

Stretching across the rear of the main block is a room known as the Lamp Hall because, before the house was wired for electricity in the 1920s, the owners kept their oil lamps on the counters. This hall originally spanned only three-quarters of the way across the rear of the house and had a covered porch comprising the final quarter on the east end. However, in

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the 1970s the partition wall was removed and the porch was enclosed with a wall containing a triple window. Linoleum covers the floor the entire length of the hall. On the wall abutting the dining room, central hall, and guest room is the original wide board vertical wood paneling. On the rear wall are central double doors which line up with the central hall to provide cross ventilation. Found on each side of the rear double doors are counters with cupboards and drawers below. To one side of the entrance are two 6/6 windows and, to the other side are a 6/6 window and a door. Installed in the counter on this side is a 1920s sink said to have been used for flower arranging.

At the end of the hall behind the dining room is the opening to the kitchen. Built in 1893 to serve that same function, it has some original wall paneling and one original window. Alterations include enclosing one small window, changing one 6/6 window to a double window, replacing the original door to the deck with a modern door, and the addition of modern linoleum flooring, sink, and cupboards. The original wood cook stove stands on a new brick hearth on the southeast kitchen wall.

At the other end of the Lamp Hall are two doors, one leading to what is now a pantry and the other leading to the 1896 wing. This area underwent some changes in the 1970s. The pantry door originally led to a hallway in the wing. This hall had a door to the guest room in the main block, an exterior door, and doors to the study and George O'Bryan's bedroom in the 1896 wing. The last owners removed the partition wall between the hall and the study, combining the two rooms into one large room. A closet was then built and was reached via the original hall door. A new door was cut into the wall next to the original door to provide access from the main block to the wing. The door to the guest room was closed up, but the exterior door remains.

At this same time, several alterations occurred in the enlarged study and the George O'Bryan Room. In both rooms, the mantels were removed (one is in storage) and massive stone fireplaces replaced them. Other alterations in the study include new wide board horizontal paneled walls and ceilings. The cherry floors remain, as do the doors which lead to a bathroom (built by the O'Bryans) and to George O'Bryan's bedroom, which has been carpeted and has a modern plaster ceiling and modern vertical wall paneling. On the rear wall, a door leads to a bathroom (abutting the bathroom off the study), and a door on the side wall leads to the gun room, a small room built by the Dillon family in 1923. The owners are planning to undertake some restoration in the 1896 wing, such as removing the modern wall paneling.

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Two outbuildings remain on the property. One is known as the Preacher's House because it was often used to house preachers who were visiting the Highland Chapel across the road. The building was originally part of the main house, but was removed in 1896 when O'Bryan expanded the house. It is of frame construction, one story in height, and has a hip roof. The house is sheathed with its original board and batten siding and the interior retains its original woodwork. The other building on the property dates from the O'Bryans' tenure and served as a carriage house. It is of frame construction, one story in height, two bays wide, and has a shed roof. The carriage house retains its original wooden double doors. Both buildings are contributing resources.

The yard of the George O'Bryan House is a contributing site because of the existence of original landscape features. Several of the existing trees and plantings appear to date to the O'Bryan family's occupancy of the house. Another feature of the yard is the paths constructed by the O'Bryans. One gravel-paved path lined with stone slabs leads out from the front steps of the residence and curves over to a gate that opens onto O'Bryan Avenue. An identical path leads from the study door of the 1896 wing to the front of the property near the former location of tennis courts.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
COMMERCE
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1893;1896
1893-1912 (George)
1893-1910 (Martha)

Significant Dates

1893

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

O'Bryan, George & O'Bryan, Martha

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The George O'Bryan House is significant under National Register criteria B and C for its association with prominent Nashville businessman, George G. O'Bryan, and with his sister, Martha O'Bryan, who was known for her work in education and charity. It is also significant as a notable example of nineteenth century resort era architecture. Under criterion B, the property is significant during the years when George and Martha O'Bryan resided there. George O'Bryan began in the dry goods business in Nashville before the Civil War and, after returning from the war, he began a dry goods manufacturing business which is said to be the second only to Levi-Strauss as the nation's oldest maker of overalls. Although sold out of the family in 1922, the business is still in operation today. George O'Bryan's sister, Martha, is credited with establishing the first kindergarten in Nashville and, most importantly, she is known for her charitable work in Nashville where she is referred to as the city's "First Lady of Charity." The house displays many features that convey its intended use as a resort cottage. Most of the interior and exterior features are original and, although converted to a year-round residence, the alterations are minimal.

The O'Bryan House is located in Ridgetop, a former resort community on the Davidson-Robertson County line at the crown of the Highland Rim. First settled as a farming community, the Ridgetop area began to attract wealthy Nashvillians as a retreat from the sweltering summer heat of Nashville. Daily train service to Nashville allowed businessmen to commute to work from Ridgetop to Nashville in the morning and then return to Ridgetop in the evening.

The "enclosure" was one of the earliest parcels developed for resort use in Ridgetop and was an "especially prestigious" section of the resort. It is said that the development established Ridgetop as a summer resort. It was developed by Dr. Dan Blakemore and W. M. McGill of Nashville who purchased eleven acres of land, enclosed it with a white picket fence, and then subdivided the parcel into six tracts. Across the front of the six parcels and included within the fenced enclosure was a common park area. Stipulations in the property deeds of the enclosure mandated the property owners

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A
 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 # _____

See continuation sheet

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 5 acres

UTM References

A

1	6	5	2	0	3	2	0	4	0	2	7	6	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Greenbriar 307 NE

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Margaret Slater
organization N/A date 10/5/88
street & number 1833 Welcome Lane telephone (615) 741-5363
city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37216

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to erect a dwelling house "designed and intended" for summer residence at a specified location on the lot, to agree to participate financially in maintaining the fence around the eleven acres, and to notify other property owners in the enclosure of any intended sale. Another stipulation forbid having poultry or livestock on any portions but the rear of the land.

The Ridgetop area flourished and reached its peak as a resort between 1907 and 1915. During this era several prominent Nashvillians summered in Ridgetop, and with them they brought their sophisticated social life. The area had numerous summer residences, a hotel, a boarding house, and a lake. For recreation, there was a bowling alley, tennis courts, a golf course, and a community assembly hall where Nashville orchestras performed and the resort dwellers danced the night away. Other activities included croquet and horseback riding. World War I brought the resort era in Tennessee to a halt and, in Ridgetop, summer houses were either converted to year-round residences or torn down to make way for new housing. Although a modern highway today cuts through the core of Ridgetop, the community remains small and mainly residential with narrow winding and hilly streets off the highway providing access to the area houses.

The 1893 George O'Bryan House is one of less than a dozen original summer residences remaining in Ridgetop. O'Bryan was born in Franklin in 1832. In the 1850s he moved to Nashville and earned his living as a salesman for a wholesale dry goods firm. The 1857 Nashville Business Directory lists G. G. O'Bryan as a partner in Washington, Bryan & Co., Wholesale Dry Goods Dealers. One year later, O'Bryan married Lucinda Bryan, the first of his three wives.

After serving in the Quartermaster Corps during the Civil War, O'Bryan returned in 1865 to Nashville and reentered the wholesale dry goods business. He formed a partnership with his brother, Joseph, and their retail and manufacturing business operated under the names of Morgan, O'Bryan, & Co., O'Bryan and Washington, and, by 1880, O'Bryan Brothers. Several sources credit the O'Bryans with forming the first overalls factory in the south and the second in the United States after Levi-Strauss.

The first offices of O'Bryan's company were on the public square. Their original concept called for the manufacture of Duck brand overalls, but because that brand name was found to already be in use, the name was changed to Duck Head, the name by which it is still known today. In the early years, manufacturing was done at their public square location and in private houses where women would assemble the pre-cut overalls. O'Bryan's business flourished and this prominent businessman was able to provide his family with a comfortable lifestyle.

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O'Bryan served as a deacon in the First Presbyterian Church in Nashville and, circa 1870, the church appointed him chairman of the outreach committee whose work resulted in the founding of a new church in West Nashville, the Moore Memorial Presbyterian Church (today the Westminster Presbyterian Church, with a membership of over 2,000). O'Bryan served for twenty-five years as superintendent of the church's Sunday school.

In 1871 O'Bryan married his second wife, Susan Woods O'Bryan, who lived for only four more years. In 1878 Agnes Woods Thompson became O'Bryan's third wife. O'Bryan's family included seven daughters and one son who did not survive infancy.

George O'Bryan desired a summer house away from the heat of Nashville and in 1893 he purchased Lot #1 in Blakemore and McGill's newly subdivided eleven acres in Ridgetop, known as the "enclosure." In the property deed dated May 1, 1893, O'Bryan agreed to build a house on the lot to be completed within ninety days. The deed stated that the front of the house should be thirty-one feet from the front of the lot and that it was to be built of "dressed lumber and covered with either shingles or metal roofing." Other stipulations included the placement of stables and the privy, the latter of which would be "thoroughly cleansed and disinfected with lime or some other disinfectant at least twice a month during June, July, August, and September of each year the house is occupied."

O'Bryan built a frame house with six rooms, a central hall, a transverse hall across the rear to provide ventilation, numerous windows, a large front veranda, and side and rear porches to enhance the enjoyment of the pastoral setting of Ridgetop. The porches also were the focal point of socializing for the O'Bryan family. On his property O'Bryan built servant's quarters (gone), a stable (gone), and a carriage house (extant). Brick and stone paths (extant) wound through the beautifully landscaped grounds, and one path led to the tennis court (gone) at the front of the property. A short time after O'Bryan completed his house, his neighbor's house, located on Lot #2, was destroyed by fire. The owner chose not to rebuild and eventually sold the lot to O'Bryan.

In 1896 O'Bryan moved his family to Ridgetop because two of his daughters were ill and he felt that the higher elevation and fresher air would be beneficial. Since the cottage was to be his year-round house, O'Bryan felt that he needed more space. In 1896 he removed one of the original wings at the rear of the house and added a two room section which eventually had indoor plumbing. The one room section that was removed was relocated elsewhere on the property and was used to house preachers visiting the

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Highland Chapel across from the O'Bryan House. George O'Bryan was instrumental in forming the Highland Chapel, a non-denominational church still serving the Ridgetop community today. He commuted to Nashville daily to run his successful overalls business until his death at eighty years of age in 1912.

George's sister, Martha M. O'Bryan, is also significant, in Nashville history particularly, in the field of social work. Born in 1836, at the age of nine she began attending the Nashville Female Academy, where her sister Fannie taught. Martha joined the faculty after she graduated.

When Union troops occupied Nashville in 1862 Martha and Fannie fled the city and lived at the house of General Robert and Susan O'Bryan Williams in Mississippi. While there, Martha met and became engaged to marry Captain John Beall, a wounded Confederate soldier who was recuperating at the William's house. Beall later returned to active duty but was captured and hanged as a spy. Martha was devastated by Beall's death and "was never seen again in anything except mourning weeds." She is said to have dedicated the remaining years of her life to Beall's memory.

After the war, Martha and Fannie returned to Tennessee and opened the Nashville Select School for Young Ladies. The school was located in their brother George's house on McLemore Street. Fannie died in 1874 but Martha continued to operate the school until 1880. After 1880 Martha became principal of the Nashville Academy on Broad. Martha had begun her charitable work while she was a teacher and principal and after she retired in the 1890s she "devoted the balance of her life to religious and philanthropic works in the city." Her brother had given her a horse and buggy as a retirement gift and Martha became a familiar site on the North Nashville streets where she administered to the underprivileged and distributed food and clothing she had received from her friends.

Martha spent her summers at George's Ridgetop house and commuted daily to Nashville by train. In the late 1890s she made Ridgetop her year-round residence, but continued her daily commute to carry out her charitable work. She was affiliated with the First Presbyterian Church and, as part of their outreach program, taught Sunday school and a sewing class at the Adams Mission in North Nashville. Martha was also a home missionary who visited the residences of the people served by the mission in an attempt to better understand their living conditions. These poor conditions greatly distressed Martha and, to remedy the situation, in 1894 she organized and became the first president of an organization of women known as The Gleaners. Under Martha's leadership, the organization addressed the concerns of North Nashville.

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When Martha died in 1910 her obituary stated that "No woman was more active in alleviating distress or succoring the needy than she." After her death, The Gleaners opened a free clinic and named it in honor of her. All eight Presbyterian churches in Nashville joined in support of the Martha O'Bryan Center. In addition to serving as a health clinic, the center was a place for instruction in homemaking, Bible study, and child care. Still in operation today, it is said that "Martha O'Bryan's tradition of caring lives on every day through the programs and volunteers at the Martha O'Bryan Center.

After Martha and George O'Bryan's deaths in, respectively, 1910 and 1912, the O'Bryan family retained ownership of both the O'Bryan Brothers overalls business in Nashville and the Ridgetop house. Upon the death of George O'Bryan's wife, Agnes, in 1922, the O'Bryan heirs sold both the business and the Ridgetop house. In April of 1923, W. W. and Susie Orr Dillon purchased the house. The Dillons at that time added a small room onto the 1896 wing. Later owners were James Wharton, Edwin Davis, and, today, the property is owned by Steve and Penne Driver.

Under criterion B, the period of significance for the house and its association with George O'Bryan is from 1893 until 1912, the period when it was built and lived in by George. During this time, the O'Bryan Brothers overall business was a prominent, successful, and enduring Nashville enterprise owned and operated by George and his brother Joseph. In addition, George was involved in the affairs of the new Ridgetop resort community and was instrumental in bringing the church to the resort. Besides the house, there are no other extant resources associated with George O'Bryan.

For its association with Martha O'Bryan, the house's period of significance under criterion B is from 1893 until 1910, the years when Martha spent her summers and later resided here year-round. During this time, she became known as the "First Lady of Charity" through her work with the poor in North Nashville. There are no other extant resources associated with Martha.

The years of significance for the O'Bryan House under criterion C are 1893 and 1896, the year it was constructed and the year it was converted for year-round residential use. The house possesses architectural significance as an example of turn-of-the-century resort architecture in Ridgetop, where only a handful of the original cottages remain. These cottages "often consisted of at least four bedrooms, living room, dining room, a large porch, and servant's quarters, and most were of the American Picturesque or

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O'Bryan, George, House

Bungalow style." The majority of the remaining Ridgetop cottages have been altered through the addition of aluminum siding, removal of ornamental trim, addition of modern materials, structural changes, and interior changes. The O'Bryan House is notable because it still conveys its intended resort use, has had minimal alterations, and appears to be the most intact example of Ridgetop resort architecture.

Only one property is individually listed on the National Register as an example of a resort era summer residence. That property is Wrenn's Nest (NR 3/13/86) in Grundy County, a summer house built in the Queen Anne style. Other resort-era architecture listed in the National Register includes the Monteagle Sunday School Assembly Historic District (NR 3/25/82) and Beersheba Springs (NR 3/20/80), both with church affiliations and both in Grundy County. Other properties are the large resort hotels and manager's house of Red Boiling Springs (NR 9/11/86) in Macon County and the now-abandoned Primm Springs Historic District (NR 7/5/85) in Hickman County.

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O'Bryan, George, House

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O'Bryan, George, House

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary for the George O'Bryan House is shown on the accompanying Robertson County tax map and is illustrated by a solid line. The map is drawn at 1" = 100'. The property consists of Lots #1 and #2 in the Blakemore and McGill Addition. The two lots are bounded on the southeast by O'Brien (O'Bryan) Avenue, on the southwest by Highland Avenue, on the northwest by the property line of lot #3 of the Blakemore and McGill Addition, and on the northeast by an alley.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

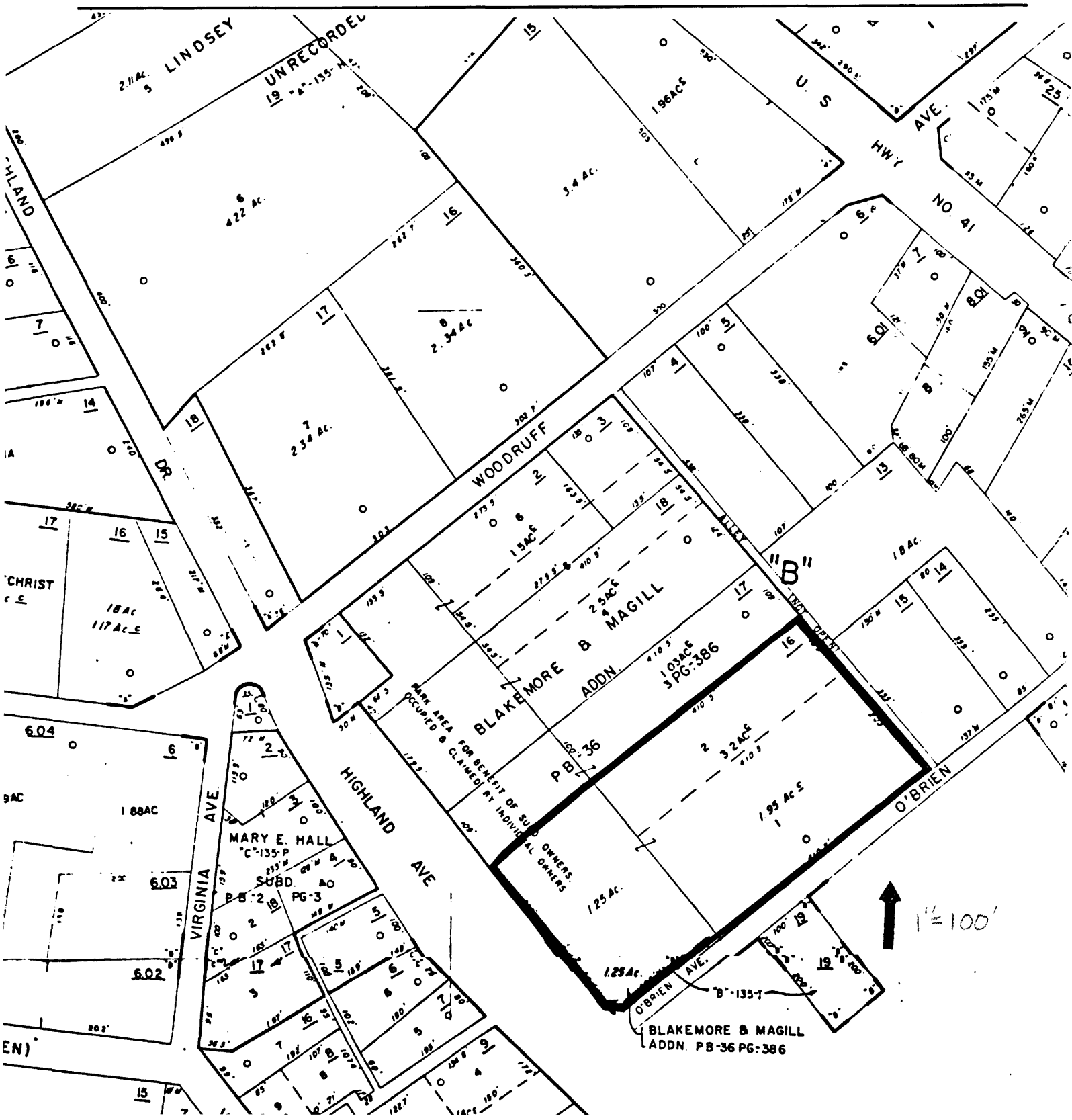
The boundary for the O'Bryan House is drawn to include all property historically associated with the O'Bryan family summer residence in Ridgetop. It provides a historic setting and includes historic landscape feature associated with the property.

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O'Bryan, George, House

O'Bryan, George, House
O'Bryan Avenue and Highland Avenue
Ridgetop, Robertson County, Tennessee
Photo by: Margaret Slater
Date: October 1988
Neg: Tennessee Historical Commission

Facing northeast, view of southwest facade
1 of 8

Facing south, view of northeast elevation 1896 wing at right
2 of 8

Facing northwest, view of facade veranda, southeast elevation, kitchen wing
3 of 8

Facing northeast, view of northwest elevation and two rooms of 1896 wing
4 of 8

Interior, view of mantel in parlor
5 of 8

Interior, detail of double doors at rear of front hall and double doors to rear deck
6 of 8

Facing northeast, carriage house
7 of 8

Facing north, Preacher's House
8 of 8

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O'Bryan, George, House

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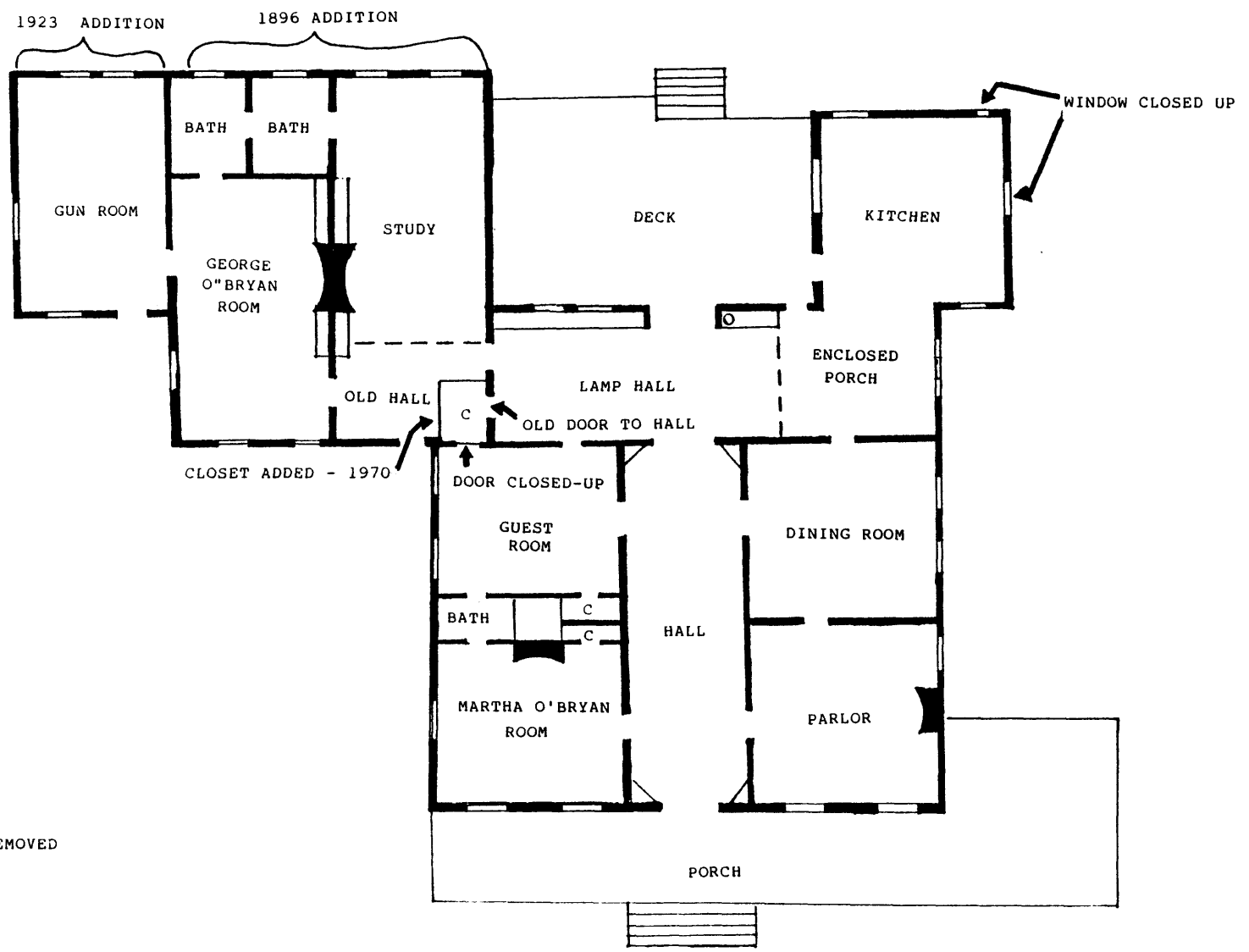
Historic photograph before 1896 addition. The small room at the left became the Preachers House.

FLOOR PLAN
 GEORGE O'BRYAN HOUSE
 RIDGETOP, ROBERTSON COUNTY,
 TENNESSEE
 NOT TO SCALE

CARRIAGE HOUSE ↗



↖ PREACHER'S HOUSE



C = CLOSET

----- = WALL REMOVED