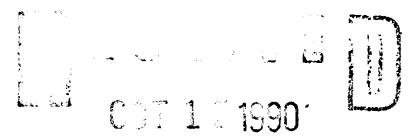


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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 Watkins-Witt House
other names/site number Arrowhill, Watkins, Albert G., House; Witt, J. O. House

2. Location

street & number 6622 West Andrew Johnson Highway N/A not for publication
city, town Talbott X vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county Hamblen code 06 zip code 37877

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>3</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>3</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. Hays Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer 10/10/90 Date
Tennessee Historical Commission
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. Amy Federman 1/31/91
 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 of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Georgian Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls STUCCO

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Located west of the City of Morristown, in the Talbott community, the Watkins-Witt House, or Arrowhill, as it is known today, is situated on a one and two-tenths acre lot in west Hamblen County on West Andrew Johnson Highway, a major roadway connecting Morristown with Knoxville. Constructed in circa 1855, the house was originally built for the family of Albert G. Watkins and remodeled by J. O. Witt in 1919. It is of solid brick construction with symmetrical window and room arrangement. The house is Georgian Revival style with Greek Revival and Italianate influences. Doric columns support the roof of the one-story portico and side porch. The windows are very large (four feet by eight feet), six over six, double hung with narrow muntins and top lintel trim of a stylized Greek key motif. The Georgian influence is reflected in the interior central hall and spiral stairway arrangement, the first and second story doorways, with sidelights and transoms of Greek Revival Style; an Italianate bracket console cornice trims the eave area.

The main square portion of the house originally contained four rooms upstairs and four rooms downstairs. The original portion of the house was built of solid brick with foundation brick being laid directly on the ground. The two walls forming the central halls are also brick and rise from a dirt foundation. In 1919, the house was extensively remodeled, with a one-story rear extension on the west side being added. The addition includes a kitchen, breakfast room, butler's pantry, maid's room, two full baths, a half bath and electric wiring. A basement was dug under the addition and an opening was made through the rear wall of the house; a tunnel was dug to the center of the house in order to install a coal furnace with a floor register in the central hall. The portico was probably added at this time, along with a porte cochere at the rear of the house. The window arrangement on the west elevation may have also been changed at this time to allow for the addition of a small bathroom in the middle of this side of the house. Stucco was placed over the original brick exterior in 1919, making it difficult to determine what, if any, other changes might have been made to the exterior window and door arrangement. There have been no other major changes to the exterior of the house since the 1919 remodeling.

The roof of Watkins-Witt House is a moderately pitched hipped roof, with a ten foot by twelve foot flat captain's or widow's walk in the center. The

See continuation sheet

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

Period of Significance

ca. 1855

ca. 1919

Significant Dates

ca. 1855

ca. 1919

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

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

The Watkins-Witt House is nominated under National Register criterion C for its architectural significance. Watkins built the house circa 1855 and lived in it during his years of service to this area in the United States House of Representatives. The Watkins-Witt House is a good example of a house built prior to the Civil War and remodeled in 1919 to its present Georgian Revival appearance. The Watkins-Witt House reflects both periods of construction. The circa 1855 construction is illustrated in the interior elements, and the 1919 remodeling is illustrative of the revival architecture of the early twentieth century.

The Watkins-Witt House is important for its association with Albert Gallatin Watkins. A. G. Watkins (May 5, 1818 - November 9, 1895) was born in Jefferson County, Tennessee, the son of Isaac Jones Watkins and Margaret Reese Watkins. Albert Watkins was the only child of Isaac and Margaret Watkins. His mother died when he was six months old. After graduation from Holston College, he studied law with his uncle, a lawyer in the State of Kentucky. A. G. Watkins met and married Louisa Brittain while in Kentucky, was admitted to the bar, and, there, began the practice of law. Following the death of his father, he returned to Jefferson County and, in 1839, began a law practice at Panther Creek. He was elected to the 26th Tennessee General Assembly in 1845 from Jefferson County. He was a presidential elector, Whig ticket, in 1848. Watkins was elected to the House of Representatives and served from 1849 to 1853 as a Whig, and served again from 1855 to 1859 as a Democrat. He was a presidential elector in 1860 on the National Democratic Ticket.

He and his wife established their home in a rather modest log house on the family farm, but as Mr. Watkins' farm, family, and reputation grew, he built, in circa 1855, a larger, more imposing home across the road (The Talbott community is located near the Jefferson/Hamblen County boundary.). He built and lived in this home during his years as a congressman. He

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

Acreeage of property 1.2 acres

UTM References

A

1	6
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2	8	3	5	4	0
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4	0	5	0	2	3	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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Talbott, TN 163NW

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries for the Watkins-Witt House are shown on the accompanying survey map. Scale is 1" = 40'.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the Watkins-Witt House include the remaining land still associated with the house and is sufficient to protect the architectural and historical associations.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Donna G. Davis

organization N/A date September 1990

street & number 6622 West Andrew Jackson Highway telephone (615) 586-1623

city or town Talbott state Tennessee zip code 37877

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 3 Page 2 Watkins-Witt House

OWNER:

Davis, Gary H. and Donna G.
6622 West Andrew Johnson Highway
Talbot, Tennessee 37877

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house has six chimneys; two symmetrically placed flush gable chimneys on both the east and west elevations enhance the Georgian appearance. Four of the chimneys were added at a later date, including the one that serves the maid's room and possibly a kitchen cook stove, and another to serve the coal furnace. The original roofing material is unknown; the roof is presently covered with asphalt shingles.

The south facade of Watkins-Witt House is dominated by the one-story Greek Revival porch with center portico. The portico is supported by two fluted Doric columns and has a flat roof with wide modillioned overhang. A simple iron railing surrounds the balcony. The portico is floored with red terra cotta tiles set in concrete and extends the full length of the facade. The porch continues to the west with steps descending to the yard, and to the east into a sunroom, the red tiles floor the entire area. The three steps from the yard to the front portico are concrete. The front door, with transom and sidelights, is framed by two square fluted pilasters. The second story doorway is identical to the first floor doorway. The eight windows on the front facade are symmetrically arranged, four upper windows placed directly over the four lower. All windows are trimmed with lintels containing a Greek key motif.

The highlight of the east elevation is the twelve-foot by thirty-foot enclosed portico. The enclosed portico was originally open with a flat roof supported by four fluted Doric columns with matching pilasters. The wood and glass enclosure of the sunroom was added circa 1970. A single door flanked by a single window to the east provides the entrance from the front porch. Two identical windows flank the sunroom on the first floor. Four identical windows on the second floor are directly above the first floor openings.

The north elevation reflects the modern influence of the 1919 addition. A drive-through porte cochere angles toward true north, creating a forty-five degree angle with the house itself. The porte cochere addition creates a ground level covered porch onto which the lower door at the back of the central hall opens. In addition, the basement, kitchen, and maid's room doors all open onto this porch. The two first story windows and the second story window on the west side of the north elevation are identical to the other windows in the house and are lined up vertically. The center window on the second level is on a lower level than the other four and lights the interior staircase. The one-story addition containing the breakfast room, kitchen, maid's room, and the porte cochere do not have the brackets or modillions that are on the main block of the house; windows in the one story addition are also smaller than those in the main block of the house.

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The rear ell of the kitchen wing extends beyond the wall of the west elevation for the three-window bay in the breakfast room. The windows in the addition are smaller six over six double hung sashes and the bay is roofed with asphalt shingles. The main block of the house contains only six large six over six double hung windows and a smaller four over four window on the first floor. The two middle windows on the first floor, one large six over six and the smaller four over four, are off center from the upper story window.

The plan for the original portion of the house incorporates two large, identically-sized, central halls on both the first and second stories. Upon entering the door on the downstairs south entrance, the twin parlors are on the right. The baseboards, door facings, and doors are original to the circa 1855 house. The baseboards are twelve inches high; the door and window facings are ten inches wide. The two parlors are mirror images of each other and are divided by an eight foot tall by ten foot wide pocket door. The rooms have twelve foot ceilings and the large double hung windows are also arranged identically in both rooms. However, the entrances to the hall are not identical; the south parlor had an open six foot wide doorway to the hall, while the north parlor's hall access is via a door surmounted by a transom. The flooring is oak strip laid over the original heart of pine floor. Each room contains a fireplace with a wooden mantel; all the woodwork is painted. The parlors each contain a set of French doors opening to the east sunroom.

The central hall on the first story ends at the spiral staircase, which rises to the second floor and continues to the attic room on the third floor. The door exiting the north side of the house is located under the spiral staircase. The back wall of the hallway is curved to the same degree as the spiral staircase and the woodwork, including door and window facings. The window between the first and second stories is recessed into the curved window trim, and the spiral stairs are "floating" as they pass diagonally upward across the window. The stairs have dark painted treads and railing, with white balusters and risers. Sawn scroll trim is located on the stringer and is painted white. The under side of the stair is enclosed with paneling and also painted white.

To the left of the front entry is the library with a two panel door with transom. This room contains the original bookshelves and woodwork, wooden mantel, and a built-in safe added in 1919. This room has three of the

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Section number 7 Page 4 Watkins-Witt House

large windows. The walls in all of the original portion of the house are plaster over brick and wooden lathe. The plaster is reinforced with hog or horse hair.

The back room on the left of the hallway was the formal dining room and was originally sixteen feet by twenty-eight feet. During the 1919 remodeling, approximately six feet were taken from this room to make a powder room. The powder room is on the outside wall and the hallway created to get from the central hall to the powder room contains the chimney, added from the coal furnace, and the original fuse box panel. The dining room contains similar woodwork to the rest of the house and a fireplace with a wooden mantel, flanked by two of the large double-hung windows. The dining room contains two entrances to the 1919 addition; one is a swinging door into the butler's pantry, the other, probably the original back door to the house, leads to the breakfast room. The breakfast room contains oak strip flooring and a three-window bay. The butler's pantry and breakfast room open onto the kitchen which is floored with the same tile found on the exterior porch floors. Behind the kitchen is a small maid's room with a small fireplace and its own bath; the bath is probably a circa 1945 addition. The maid's room is accessible only from an exterior entrance. Also located just off the kitchen is a small laundry room. All rooms in this portion of the house are plaster over wooden lathe.

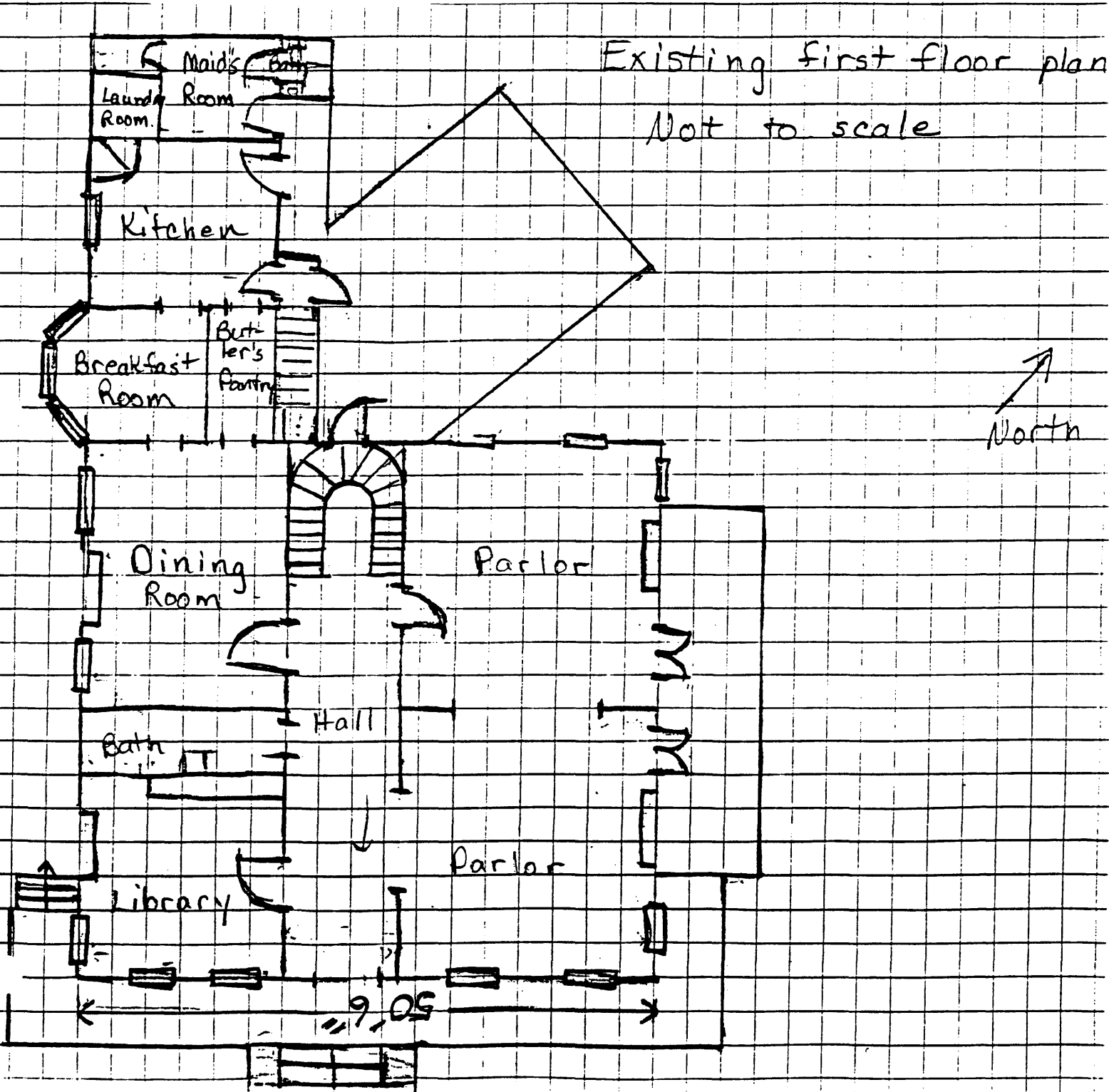
The second story hall opens on the south side, via a paneled door with sidelights, with transom to the top of the front portico. There are four bedrooms on the second floor. The 1919 remodeling added a bathroom between the two bedrooms on both the west and east sides of the house. Cedar-lined closets were also added. Originally, each bedroom contained a fireplace, but two of the openings were closed when the bathrooms were added. None of the windows on the second floor appears to have been altered due to the addition of the bathrooms. The doors which were added in 1919 (for bathrooms and closets) were very well done and are almost identical to the original doors.

A well/ice house and a garage were built in 1919; both buildings are of stucco with hipped roofs. The well/ice house is in good condition; however, the garage may have some structural problems. Both buildings contribute to the property.

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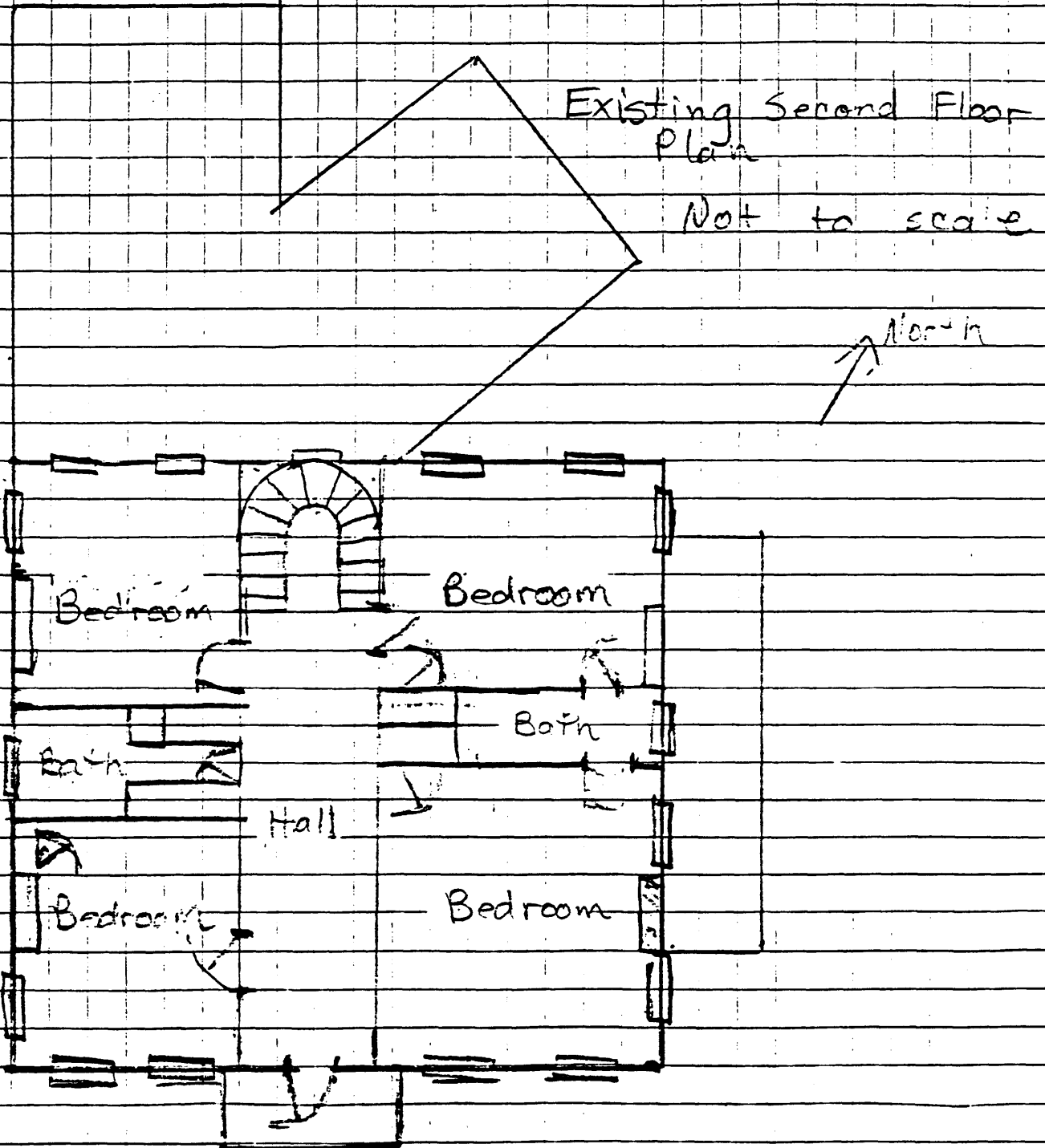
Section number 7 Page 5 Watkins-Witt House



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Section number 7 Page 6 Watkins-Witt House



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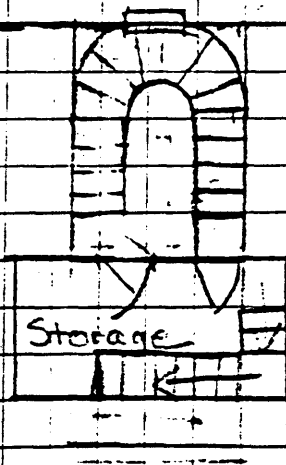
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Existing attic
plan

Not drawn to
scale

North



Attic

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entertained frequently and many of the furnishings used by the Watkins family were brought from Washington. The home was the setting for many community social events and parties. Even today, Watkins-Witt House reflects the tastes and lifestyle of Albert Watkins. Although the exterior of the house has been remodeled, the house still retains the basic floor plan of the Watkins House with its large front hall, library, with its original woodwork. The doors, plaster walls, windows, and winding staircase are from the original, circa 1855 construction. The only changes in the appearance of the interior of his home have been the addition of bathrooms on both floors and the subsequent doorways, including an extra doorway in the front hall and one upstairs. The landscape immediately surrounding the house has also remained basically the same. Watkins-Witt House remains situated in approximately the same relationship to the highway as it did when Mr. Watkins' daughter reportedly teased the Union soldiers by singing "Dixie" and other Confederate tunes from her front porch.

Mr. Watkins served with Andrew Johnson in the House of Representatives. They represented adjacent districts and Mr. Johnson mentions Mr. Watkins in several of his letters to his family. Mr. Watkins was a slaveowner (eleven or more slaves), as were many of his constituents, and his pro-slavery stance brought him into conflict with his former colleague, who would later become President of the United States. The ill will borne of the divisiveness of Civil War caused Johnson, while he was acting as Military Governor of Tennessee, to write to General Sherman, "They (Albert Watkins and Joe Heiskell) are bad men and have exercised a dangerous and deleterious influence in the country and deserve as many deaths as can be inflicted upon them. They are extensively connected with influential persons throughout that region of the country. Powerful influences will be brought to bear in favor of releasing them upon paroles and bonds." Mr. Watkins, at this time, was imprisoned in Knoxville and charged with treason. With the passage of time and cooling of tempers, Andrew Johnson, acting as President, was to sign Albert Watkins' pardon on October 17, 1865.

Financially, the Civil War brought ruin to the Watkins family, as they were forced to sell their home and farm in 1867 to settle debts assumed during the war, including a \$5,000 bond incurred during the period of his arrest by Union authorities. Their son, Carlo, was killed in the Battle of Murfreesboro and their oldest son, Isaac, was blinded as a result of exploding gun powder during a battle in Virginia, shortly before the close

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of the war. When the Watkins family was forced to move in 1867, they moved into a smaller house in the community. There is no evidence of this house's being in existence today.

Watkins converted to the Methodist faith in 1866 and was licensed to preach that same year. He began this new career at Watkins Farm preaching from the front porch. Watkins began serving various pastorates in what is today the Holston Methodist Conference. Louisa Watkins died in 1884 and Mr. Watkins remarried to Lucretia A. Caldwell of Rogersville, Tennessee, in 1886 and moved to Rogersville. When he died there in 1895, his body was returned to Jefferson County for burial.

The Watkins-Witt House is the only known extant house built by Albert Gallatin Watkins. Although there has been historical remodeling of the house, it still retains the basic form, original windows and exterior doors, as well as retaining several interior features, as it did when Watkins resided in the house. The interior of the house retains its central hall plan, staircase, woodwork, original doors, fireplaces, and bookshelves from the 1855 period.

After the Watkins' family sold the house in 1867, three families owned it before it was purchased by J. O. Witt in 1919. The house was allowed to deteriorate during the period between 1867 and 1919, eventually being used as a tenant house with the upstairs bedrooms being used to dry wheat. In 1919, J. O. Witt, a prominent local banker and owner of the mill at Talbott Station, purchased the deteriorating house and remodeled/restored it for his new wife. Witt reportedly spared no expense, using the best materials and technology of the times. Since there was no rural electrification in East Tennessee at that time, he added a Delco Electric Generator and battery system in the basement to provide for the electric lights. He added two full and one half baths and added a kitchen, pantry, breakfast room, and maid's room to the back of the house. Utmost care was taken to retain the original interior appearance of the house. The electrical lines were run in conduit, which were recessed into the brick walls and plastered over. Plumbing lines were also recessed into the brick and then plastered over. The plaster used was even the sand-finish plaster originally used. As a result, the rooms retained their pre-electrical and plumbing appearance. When doors were added for the bathroom access from the hallway, transoms and woodwork were installed to match the original.

Mr. Witt was forced to sell the house just four years after buying it, when he found himself in financial trouble due to poor investment in grain futures. The house has changed hands eight times since 1923.

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In 1939, Helen Topping Miller, a noted and prominent author and civic leader in this community, and her husband, Roger Miller, purchased the house. The Miller family lived in the house from 1939 to 1958 and gave it the name "Arrowhill." Helen Topping was born in Michigan and her marriage to Roger Miller, a newspaper publisher, brought her to Talbott, Tennessee. Helen Topping Miller wrote many of her forty-nine novels and children's stories while living at Arrowhill. She was chosen as "The People's Choice" for Sears publications for two years. Her stories appeared in Ladies Home Journal and other leading magazines. She was also very active in the affairs of her community, serving as director of the recreation board, organist at the Episcopal church, Sunday school teacher, and member of various ladies clubs. From 1954 until her death in 1960, she had published seven historic novels with a Christmas theme, one each year. One of these novels, "No Tears For Christmas," is based on the Christmas season of 1863 at Arrowhill, or the Watkins-Witt House, as it was known at that time. Mrs. Miller's books have been translated into several foreign languages and have enjoyed a wide circulation and readership. Although the association of the Watkins-Witt House with Helen Topping Miller is less than fifty years, in 2008 when the period of significance reaches the fifty-year requirement, re-evaluation of its significance under criterion B may be reconsidered and the name of the property changed to "Arrowhill," by which it is better known in the community.

Under criterion C, the Watkins-Witt House is significant for architecture in the Talbott vicinity of Hamblen County as a good example of a Georgian Revival style house. The Watkins-Witt House shows the evolution of a circa 1855 house into an early-twentieth century Revival house. The designer and builder of the original construction, and its remodeling, are unknown, but the proportions and symmetry of the house indicate a knowledge of design on the part of the builder. The house is of solid brick construction; the brick was hand made on the premises. The rafters are joined with mortise, tenon joints, and wooden pegs. Many of the doors are original to the house and the wide woodwork is also original. The form of the house, the floorplan, and the window and door arrangement all reflect the earlier circa 1855 construction. The 1919 remodeling is reflected through the stucco finish on the exterior of the house, the interpretation of the Classical elements in the porches, and the porte cochere. The Watkins-Witt House is the only identified house of its vintage and construction method/style with subsequent remodeling that blend both the circa 1855 construction and the early-twentieth century remodeling in Hamblen County.

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Two other houses in Hamblen County are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: Barton Springs (NR 5/22/78) and Rural Mount (NR 7/30/75). Barton Springs, constructed in the early 1800s, is a log, weatherboard, covered L-plan house with very little architectural embellishment. Rural Mount, built circa 1799, is a stone house with a brick addition, built in 1830, and frame addition, built in 1910. Barton Springs and Rural Mount reflect a much earlier period of residential construction in Hamblen County. Located in neighboring Jefferson County is Fairfax (NR 4/13/73), a house similar to the Watkins-Witt House in form. Fairfax, a classic Greek Revival style house, built circa 1840, is a brick, hipped roof, central hall plan house with similar window trim, captain's walk, and similar arrangement of chimneys. The Watkins-Witt House reflects a later period of development in Hamblen County than those of Barton Springs and Rural Mount, and, while similar in plan and design to Fairfax, Fairfax is a purer example of Greek Revival style, while the Watkins-Witt House reflects both the circa 1855 form and the later Georgian Revival remodeling.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2 Watkins-Witt House

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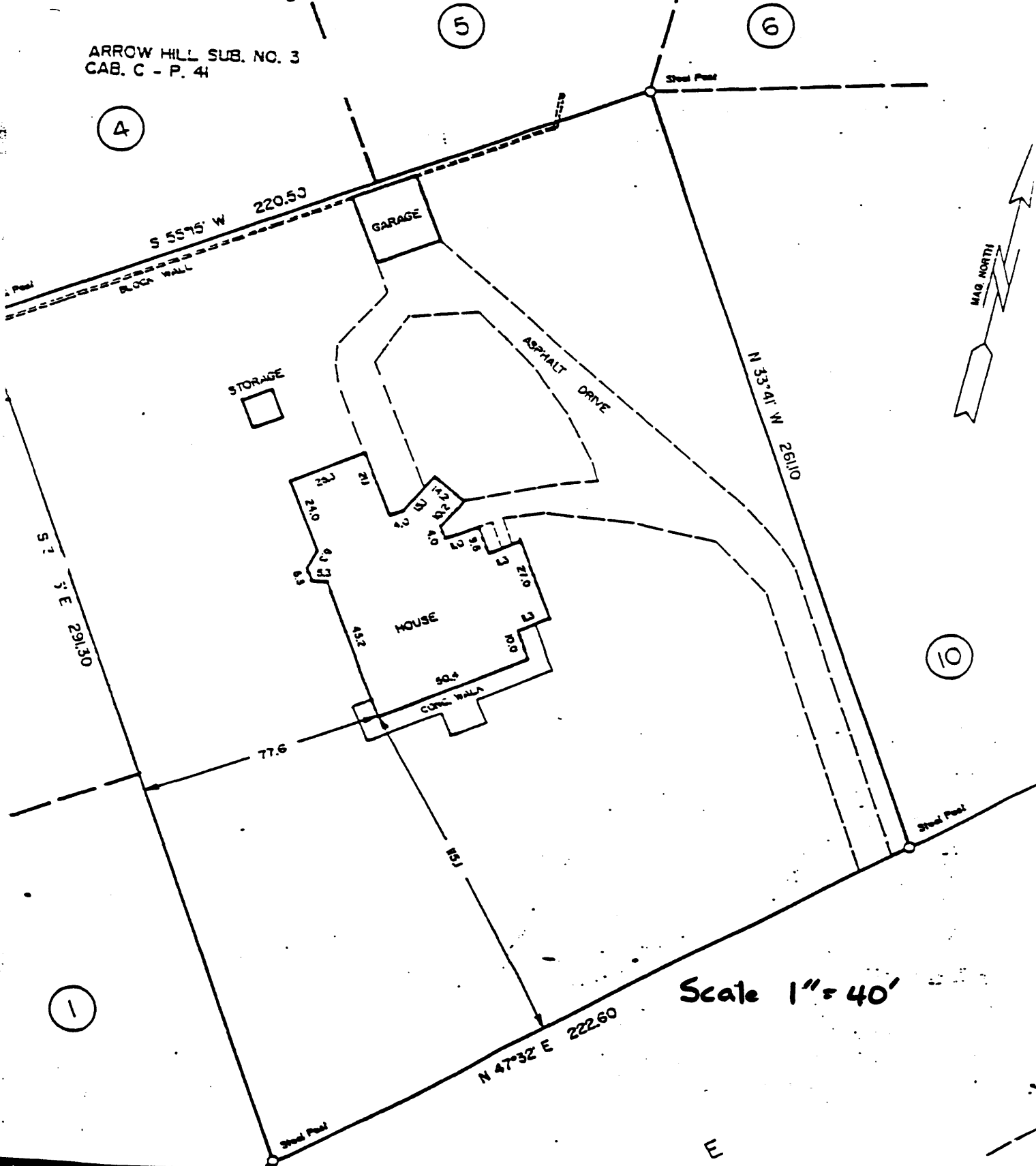
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Section number 10 Page 2

Watkins-Witt House

ARROW HILL SUB. NO. 3
CAB. C - P. 41



Scale 1" = 40'

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Continuation Sheet

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Watkins-Witt House
6622 West Andrew Johnson Highway
Talbot vicinity, Hamblen County, Tennessee
Photo By: Gary H. Davis
Date: November 1989
Neg: Tennessee Historical Commission
701 Broadway
Nashville, Tennessee

Facing north, south facade, west elevation
#1 of 10

Facing northeast, south facade
#2 of 10

Facing northwest, east elevation, south facade
#3 of 10

Facing southwest, north elevation
#4 of 10

Facing northeast, west elevation
#5 of 10

Lower central hall and stairway
#6 of 10

Pocket doors, west parlors
#7 of 10

Northwest parlor fireplace and French doors and transom
#8 of 10

Garage, facing northwest, south elevation
#9 of 10

Well/Ice House, facing north, south facade, west elevation
#10 of 10

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Section number Photos Page 2 Watkins-Witt House

HISTORIC VIEWS

South facade, facing northeast, ca. 1925
#1 of 2

South facade and west elevation, facing north, ca. 1925
#2 of 2