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MEME: LITERATURE, DRAMA, MUSIC

Form 10-300 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR (Dec. 1968) NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

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7.	DESCRIPTION				44				
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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Ellen Glasgow House is a two-story, rectangular brick structure with a hipped roof and interior chimneys. Its three-bay front is faced with stucco, and has a single-story entrance porch with two Greek Doric columns. The house was built in 1841 for David M. Branch, in a style which is transitional between Federal and Greek Revival. It was the residence of the novelist Ellen Glasgow from 1887 to 1945. A rectangular ell was added to the rear of the house in approximately 1900. A carriage house stands behind this extension.

The interior of the house is designed around a central hallway. Double parlors are to the right of the entrance. To the left are a library and dining room connected by sliding doors. In the rear of the dining room, a doorway leads into the extension, which contains the pantry, kitchen, and servant's quarters.

A veranda extends across the rear of the original portion of the house. The garden is sparsely planted, but is little changed in outlay, except that the carriage house has been enclosed by a picket fence.

Upstairs, two large rooms are on each side of the hall. The northwest room is a study in which Miss Glasgow did most of her creative work. The southeast chamber was her bedroom. Both rooms retain the wallpaper which she imported from England.

Structurally, the property is virtually unchanged since Miss Glasgow's time. The major exception is the carriage house, which has been remodeled on the interior to serve as an office. Changes to the main house include: replacement of wooden floors with linoleum tile in the basement and in some of the rooms in the extension; the exchange of a marble mantle, formerly in the basement, with a wooden one, originally in the extension; and the repainting of all rooms except Miss Glasgow's bedroom and upstairs study.

Only a few of the novelist's furnishings remain: a gilt-edged mirror, a refrigerator, a collection of china dogs, and several framed honorary degrees. The chandelier in the front parlor belonged to the original owner of the house, but was not used by Miss Glasgow, and was returned to the house subsequent to her residency.

The property is owned by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. It is administered by the William Byrd Branch of the APVA. The house is leased to the University Center in Virginia, Inc., an academic services organization, which uses the library and dining room as its offices. The President of the University Center resides in the bedroom and study formerly used by Miss Glasgow. The other upstairs bedrooms serve as lodgings for students. The University Center allows interested members of the public to visit the interior of the house on a restricted basis.

8.

PERIOD (Check One of N	lore as	Appropriate)					
Pre-Columbian	16th Centur	у 🗌	18th Centui	у 🗌	20th Century	X	
15th Century		17th Centur	ry 🗌	19th Centui	у		
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Communications		Literature	X	itarian			
Conservation		Military		Theater			
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Ellen Glasgow is among the most significant of this nation's twentieth century novelists. Her works, such as Barren Ground and The Romantic Comedians have a scope, wit and realism which give them enduring interest and which made them an influence on the development of American letters. All except one of her nineteen novels are set in Virginia, and together they comprise a social history of that state from the 1850's through the writer's own times. Her primary concern, however, was not the manners of a region, but rather human nature itself. The theme which unifies her work is the survival of essential values in the face of adversity, pretension, and change. The house at One West Main Street was almost continuously her home from girlhood until her death in 1945. its relatively unchanged condition, it commemorates her life and the urban millieu which some of her best novels depicted.

Biographical Sketch

Ellen Glasgow was born in Richmond in 1873. She was a delicate child, and received much of her education at home. In 1888, her family moved to the residence at One West Main Street. Miss Glasgow began writing while still very young, but destroyed her earliest full-length manuscript. first published novel appeared in 1897. Although her realism ran counter to the popular taste of the era in which she began her career, Miss Glagow quickly achieved a wide audience. Early critical reception of her work was generally favorable, although it was not until the publication of Barren Ground in 1925 that she became known as one of the major writers of her time.

With the appearance of The Sheltered Life in 1932, Miss Glasgow reached the peak of her reputation. In This Our Life was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the best novel for 1941. Perhaps as a reaction to the adulation which it received during her lifetime, Miss Glasgow's work suffered a period of relative neglect after her death in 1945, although it continued to be the object of serious scholarship. A revival of interest in her as a personality occured in 1954, with the publication of her autobiography, The Woman Within. While estimations of Miss Glasgow's fiction vary, she is clearly a major literary figure.

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Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED SES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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COUNTY	
City of Richmond	
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8. Significance: Ellen Glasgow House

The critic J. Donald Adams has written:

"I ... rank her among the best we Americans have produced. In one respect she stands pre-eminent. She is the wittiest novelist in our history, bar none, and one of the best stylists..."

Although she travelled frequently, and sojourned for a time in New York, the house at One West Main Street was Miss Glasgow's home throughout her productive life. As she remarks in her autobiography: "This is the square gray house \dots where I have written all my books, with the exception of <u>Life and Gabriella."</u>

^{1.} Rouse, Blair, Ellen Glasgow, p. 138

^{2.} Glasgow, Ellen, The Woman Within, p. 26