

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Brittan, Patrick Henry, House

and/or common Brittan-Dennis House

**2. Location**

street & number 507 Columbus Street        not for publication

city, town Montgomery        vicinity of        congressional district 2

state Alabama code 01 county Montgomery code 101

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<u>      </u> district	<u>      </u> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<u>      </u> agriculture	<u>      </u> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<u>      </u> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<u>      </u> park
<u>      </u> structure	<u>      </u> both	<u>      </u> work in progress	<u>      </u> educational	<u>      </u> private residence
<u>      </u> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<u>      </u> entertainment	<u>      </u> religious
<u>      </u> object	<u>      </u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<u>      </u> government	<u>      </u> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<u>      </u> yes: unrestricted	<u>      </u> industrial	<u>      </u> transportation
		<u>      </u> no	<u>      </u> military	<u>      </u> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Dennis

street & number 867 Coliseum Boulevard

city, town Montgomery        vicinity of        state Alabama

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Courthouse

street & number Washington Avenue

city, town Montgomery        state Alabama

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Alabama Inventory has this property been determined eligible?        yes  no

date 1970-present        federal  state        county        local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery        state Alabama

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Brittan-Dennis House is a one-story, brick structure that reflects the influence of the Italianate style in its bracketed eaves, low hipped roof, encircling veranda and etched ruby-glass sidelights and transom. It is located in a residential-light commercial neighborhood near a house museum complex (The Ordeman-Shaw House, NRHP 5/13/74) and faces south on a small lot partially enclosed by a low, brick retaining wall across the front and a higher brick wall along the west. A brick walk leads to the front veranda which is shaded by two magnolia trees.

The plan is that of a T with a U-shaped veranda encasing the broad stem and terminated at the cross bar. The deep frieze and projecting cornice of the low-pitched, hipped roof rises above the veranda. Paired drip brackets support the simple box cornice and alternate with rectangular latticed ventilators. The brackets are repeated on the veranda which is supported by slender, widely-spaced square columns with modified Doric capitals. The balustrade has been removed, but probably consisted of a simple rail with square balusters. The house rests on a solid brick foundation but brick piers interspaced with brick lattice support the porch. A shed roof addition to the rear of the house appears to have resulted from partially bricking over an original frame porch soon after construction was completed. The central portion was left open until the late 1950's when it was enclosed with wood. A small frame bathroom was attached to the west of the central portion in the early decades of this century.

All windows are 6/6, double-hung with flat brick arches and projecting brick sills. The shutters have been removed. The central door is framed with sidelights and a small transom of etched, ruby glass. Paneled pilasters and a bracketed entablature complete the framing. The single-leaf door has long arched panels above small rectangular ones. Secondary entrances flank the T-stem and have double-leaf doors with arched upper lights over recessed panels, large three-light transoms and simple framing.

Few interior alterations have taken place. A central hall, flanked by two square rooms (approximately 17 feet), opens into a large rear room probably used for dining. To either side are large (21 feet) square bedrooms which open onto the veranda and front rooms and contain one of the most unique features of the house - closets with rounded corners. The rear, enclosed porch rooms were both originally partitioned, but the room to the east is now open. With the exception of the front hall, all interior walls are masonry. The house retains its original 6 inch wide flooring, plaster wall finish, molded baseboards and four-paneled doors. Some of the porcelain door knobs remain. Five of the six mantels remain, but all chimneys have been removed above the roofline.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Brittan died in 1868, but in 1863 his wife, Ora, had deeded the house to their daughter, Kate, the wife of John T. Simpson. Mrs. Simpson sold the house to Charles W. Norton the same year she received it. Later owners included George W. Hughes, a conductor of the Western Railroad and Lewis Nickle, a grocer. The current owners, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Dennis, have owned the property since 1957 and for many years operated an antique shop there. Today (1979), the house is on the market and a local preservation organization is interested in acquiring it for restoration.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

Specific dates 1858

Builder/Architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Brittan-Dennis House is one of the finest brick cottages of the mid-nineteenth century remaining in Montgomery and an excellent example of the way in which the Italianate style was first adapted to the local house types in the city. This structure is also significant because it was the home of Patrick Henry Brittan, newspaperman, Quartermaster of the State of Alabama for a brief period, and Alabama's Secretary of State from 1859-1865. Brittan's wife, Ora, acquired the property in 1857 and the house was built the following year. Solidly constructed of brick, the Brittan House was probably one of the more pretentious in this neighborhood, that was once composed primarily of frame structures.

Brittan was born in Virginia in 1815, the son of Irish immigrant George Brittan who died when his son was three years old. After learning the printing trade in Washington, D. C., P.H. Brittan worked in Columbus, Georgia as a printer until 1843 when he moved to LaFayette, Alabama where he found the LaFayette Tribune. In 1847, he came to Montgomery and subsequently owned an interest in the Montgomery Advertiser, and the Advertiser and State Gazette. The latter became a daily in 1850 and in 1853 was the first state paper to adapt its presses to steam printing.

From 1850-1856, Brittan had been state printer and in the latter year he gave up this office, sold his interest in the Advertiser, and started the Daily Messenger, a non-political paper devoted primarily to local news. During this period of intense railroad activity, Brittan promoted the Alabama-Florida Railroad, a line which was proposed to run through Montgomery to the Gulf. The Daily Messenger merged in 1858 with the Confederation and the staunchly Democratic editorial policy of this organ brought it into opposition with William Lowndes Yancey and the Southern League, while giving strong support to the national party and the Buchanan administration.

Brittan's own political career apparently began when he ran for mayor of Montgomery in the early 1850's and was defeated. Although there was some support for his running in 1856, he refused to do so; one of his reasons being that he was already a state office holder. The position to which he referred was that of Quartermaster General. He had been appointed to the post by Governor John A. Winston on January 21, 1856. Brittan served in this capacity until his election in December, 1859 by the General Assembly of the State of Alabama to the office of Secretary of State. He was successful in subsequent elections and remained in the latter office until 1865. Even though the Civil War was in progress during most of his administration, papers and documents of the period indicate that Brittan carried out the routine jobs and requirements of the Secretary's position.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property 37 acres

Quadrangle name Montgomery North

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

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

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Scott's Plat; 77 feet by 210 feet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary Ann Neeley, Landmarks Foundation/ Jack Stell and Ellen Mertins  
 organization Alabama Historical Commission date September 27, 1979  
 street & number 725 Monroe Street telephone (205) 832-6621  
 city or town Montgomery state Alabama 36130

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Miss B. Howard J.  
 title SHPO Alabama date Sept. 27, 1979

For HCRS use only  
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
 date 12/13/79  
 Keeper of the National Register Sally J. DeLoach  
 Attest: (u) A Duime date 12/10/1979  
 Chief of Registration

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Advertiser and State Gazette: November 13, 1849 - November 10, 1851.

Brittan Family Folder: Library, Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

Brittan File: Manuscript Room, Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

Confederation: June 14, 1858 - October 30, 1858.

Montgomery City Directories: 1859-60; 1878.