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

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

MAY 1 9 1989

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	1				
historic name	Wells, Willi	am Bittle,	House		
other names/site number	Wells-Furnis	h House			
2. Location					
street & number	1515 SW Clif	ton Street			N/A not for publication
city, town	Portland .		····		N/A vicinity
state Oregon	code OR	county	Multnomah	code	051 <b>zip code</b> 97201
3. Classification					
Ownership of Property	Categ	ory of Property		Number of R	esources within Property
X private	_	ilding(s)		Contributing	Noncontributing
public-local	-	strict		1	buildings
public-State	sit	е			sites
public-Federal	str	ucture			structures
<del></del> •	ob	ject			objects
		,		1	0 Total
Name of related multiple pr	operty listing:			Number of co	ontributing resources previously
N/A					National RegisterN/A
4. State/Federai Agenc	v Costification		<del>-\</del>		
4. State/Federal Agenc	y Certification	$\overline{}$			
Signature of certifying offici Oregon State I State or Federal agency and	al Historic Prese	ervation Of	fice		for registering properties in the ts set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. See continuation sheet.  May 5, 1989  Date
In my opinion, the prope  Signature of commenting or		es not meet the	National Registe	er criteria. LIS	ee continuation sheet Date
State or Federal agency and	d bureau				
5. National Park Service					
I, hereby, certify that this property entered in the National I are seen as seed and seed the National I are seed as s	Register.  he National ation sheet.	Mah 2.	Powhe Na	tered in th tional Regi	e ster 16 pme, 1989
removed from the Nation other, (explain:)	nal Register.			/aanar	Date of Action

6. Function or Use				
Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  Domestic/single dwelling	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  Domestic/single dwelling			
7. Description Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (ent	er categories from instructions)		
Late 19th and Early 20th Century  American Movements/Bungalow-Craftsman	foundation walls	concrete brick; cedar shingles		
(Arts and Crafts)	roof	asphalt: composition shingles windows: leaded art glass and beveled glass		

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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#### 7. Present and Historic Physical Appearance

Location (within Portland city limits): The Wells-Furnish House is located on the corner of 15th Avenue and Clifton Street, atop Visa Ridge, in heart of fashionable Portland Heights. This completely restored house faces south onto the fifteen hundred block of Clifton Street. The 105' by 150' rectangle lot on which the house is located drops-off on three sides affording an unobstructed 270° panoramic view (from not only the grounds, but also most rooms in the house) of Portland; the Cascade Mountain Range (including Mt. Hood, Mt. Reiner, Mt. Adams and Mt. St. Helens); the Willamette and Columbia Rivers; and beyond. A high rock wall of rubble stone runs the entire length of the lot along 15th Avenue (east side of the property).

The house is surrounded by many mature trees and shrubs planted by the original owners more than eighty years ago. Two examples are the Boston Ivy covering the lower south and west sides of the house and the tall silver maple tree on the southeast corner of the lot.

Construction/Architecture Style: Constucted in the year 1910, at a cost of more than \$30,000, this magnificent three story "high style" Arts and Craft house was designed and built for Mr. William Bittle Wells; by Mr. John V Bennes of "Bennes, Hendricks, and Thompson" who was a master of blending revivalist architectural styles at the turn of the century. Mr. Wells, the founder of the Pacific Montly magazine collaborated in the design and construction of the house. This is the only house that Mr. Wells ever had built for himself. All the other homes in which he lived throughout his long and varied life were designed and constructed by and for other people. **Condition:** Functionally this house is in excellent condition. Furthermore, the house has been preserved unaltered and is in almost original condition. **Footprint**: The three story slightly "s-shaped" house with a 58' x 72' footprint, oriented with its long axis east to west, rests on a "post and pier" closed foundation (wooden 8' x 8' timbers on 12"x 24"x 24" concrete footings). The foundation is enclosed by a thick (13") concrete perimeter which extends approximately 3' above grade and is faced with pressed brick.

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The full basement was completely finished when the house was constructed and contains a laundry room, a furnace room, a 1/4 bath and two storage rooms in addition to a large open area. The basement also has a hand operated wood lift servicing two of the five upstairs fireplaces.

All windows in the basement are of ribbed glass. The basement has a northern walkout door to the back yard.

#### EXTERIOR:

First Story: The first story exterior is multi-colored "New York Tapestry" clinker pressed bricks placed in various patterns with decoratve designs throughout. Mr. Wells, through his association with railroads was able to ship a car load of bricks from New York State free of charge. According to Mr Wells, this is the only known use of New York Tapestry bricks in the Portland area.

Two wide stooped concrete stairways lead up to the two terraces. A 10' x 56' terrace runs along the front (south side) of the house. A brick porch with pitched roof and decorative brick columns covers a portion of this terrace and protects the front door. The large oak front door has a single beveled glass panel with sidelights which are also of beveled glass. A second fully covered 32' x 32' L-shaped terrace and brick porch is located at the northeast corner of the house. The living room/library of the house can be entered from this terrace through a set of french doors and sidelights of beveled glass. A 3/4" rod runs the full length of all porches to keep the tudor shaped arches from separating. The terraces and porches have over 450 turned wooden balusters. On the northwest corner of the house is a rear service porch with wood lattice and a glass windowed door leading into the kitchen.

There are two French beveled glass windows, eight art glass windows, a bow window, and numerous sash and casement windows on the first floor. In addition, a 50"x42" single plate window and three other smaller plate windows plus two shash windows are grouped together to form a semi-circular segmental arch window with radiating voussoirs on the southwest corner of the house. This window group compliments a large bow window of equal size in the same corner of the house. All windows on the first floor have concrete sills.

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<u>Second Story</u>: The siding is composed of wood shingles arranged in a shake style.

There are sash, french, plate, and casement windows with Mullioned window bands on the second floor. There is a tudor arch with decorative wood trim above the southwest sunroom window similar to the key stone design on the brick arches of the first floor. This design is also continued on the six newel posts inside the house. All windows on the second story have semi-circular cornice formed by the exterior shingle siding.

Between the first and second story there is a belt course of beaded weatherboards forming a transition between the pressed bricks of the first story and the shinges of the second story.

Third Story: This level is composed of a medium sloped gabled roof with wide eaves, unexposed rafters and five dormers (gable style with overhang and pediment) including a "double-gable" dormer on the north side of the house.

Six-pane casement windows along with either "4 over 4" or "6 over 6" sash windows surround the third story. The east and west ends of the house have a tudor arch like the ones formed by the first story brick and the second story sunroom with wheat-leaf decorations and flower ledges.

Central double chimneys (which serve the five fireplaces and oil fed hot water heating system) are located along the peak of the roof near the west and east ends of the house.

#### INTERIOR:

Overall Floor-plan: All three stories have a similar floor plan (i.e., a modified "four rooms with a central hall").

Floors: The floors throughout the house are wood. There is oak plank, running east-west, in the vestibule, entry hall, music room, living room/library, and dining room. Tongue and groove birds-eye maple, running north-south, provides the floor for the kitchen, telephone hall, pass pantry, and china pantry. The entire second story is tongue and groove birds-eye maple, except for the bath room and raised water closet which have tile over a hardwood sub-floor and the southern sunroom which has a tin floor over hardwood. The third story is tongue and groove fir. All floors are original and have been refinished.

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**Heating System**: Heating is provided by the original hot water radiator system.

Wall treatment: Both the living room/library and the music room have wide baseboards, wainscotting and chair rails up to the sills of the windows. Above the wainscotting is lath and plaster covered with wallpaper dating from the 1920's and 1930's. The wallpaper in the music room was installed circa 1922, the dining room wallpaper was hung, on or about 1912. The wallpaper in the first floor entry hall which continues up into the second and third floors has been in place since the late1930's. Some of the paint on the first floor woodwork is circa 1914. The paint was hand rubbed between coats to achieve this long lasting finish.

The Jacobethan formal dining room has Florentine arches, coffered ceiling and heavy dark oak paneling on the walls. There are two built-in lighted china cabinets with art glass leaded doors in this room. Between the china closets is an eleven foot tiled flower shelf that doubles as a window seat during the summer.

All rooms have wide detailed cornices and picture molding.

Windows/Doors/Woodwork: The leaded windows in the dining room and other parts of the house are by the Povey Brother's shop in Portland. Leaded art glass is also present in the living room/library and the doors between the entry hall and the dining room. All five sets of french doors and the front door (including sidelights) plus all the mirrors above the fireplaces are heavy beveled glass.

Almost all doors and windows have entablatures with pilasters. The single leaf doors on the first and second floors have single panels. Doors on the third floors have five panels.

The first floor doors and woodwork are oak. The second floor doors are oak and mahogany. The third floor doors are fir. All the door knobs are made of brass and/or cut glass and are original to the house.

Stairway: An exposed cantilevered staircase with bannister and handrail travels through the stairwell which is open to the third floor. The first flight runs with a quarter turn with a landing to the second story hall. From the second story hall there is another quarter turn with a landing to the third story hall. A second enclosed rear stairway (half turn with landing followed by a half turn with winder) leads from the basement to the second story.

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Fireplaces: Three fireplaces are located on the first floor: one each in the

dining room, music room and living room/library. All of the fireplaces have wide chimney pieces faced with genuine Rookwood ceramic tile surround, some of which are Majolica-styled with hand painted fruits or flowers, mantle peices and overmantal frames. Some of the fireplaces are also flanked by fluted columns. Each fireplace is a different color.

First floor description: By way of the front door one passes through a vestibule into the entry hall which includes the main staircase. The entry hall opens onto the living room/library (to the north), the music room ( to the east) and the dinning room (to the west); a telephone hall (for private telephone conversations) and a half bath with pedestal sink (to the south). The kitchen and two pantries (with an original custom copper sink) can be entered from either the living room/library (through a door way), the dinning room (through a swinging door), the telephone hall or from the north through the rear door of the house.

The dining room and entry hall can be separated by a four paneled accordion set of french doors with leaded art glass. The living room/library can be closed-off with heavy pocket doors. The division between the entry hall and the music room is formed by two large fluted doric columns.

Second floor description: Off of the second story hall are two large bedroom suites with walk-in closets and built-in cabinets/drawers. Each suite includes a bedroom, sitting room with a ceramic tile fireplace, a separate sunroom (which can be shut off with french doors of heavy beveled glass) and a lavatory with pedestal sink. In addition, the master suite has an outside balcony over the first story porch and second lavatory with built-in cabinets and a one-of-a-kind shaving sink. A telephone hall, a large tiled bathroom (with tub with a large European styled shower head and complicated faucets and a "double pedestal" sink), and a separate room for the water closet are also located on this floor.

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Third floor description: The third floor has; a billiard room, a trunk room (used to store steamer trunks), a full bath with a clawfoot tub, a servants room, a large stair hall/drawing room and a smoking room/office.

Every level has numerous built in linen closets, storage closets and drawer space.

Attention to detail is evident throughout the interior. For example, even the <u>inside</u> of closets on the third floor and under the stairway have completed wood trim and molding.

Additions/Alterations: There have been <u>no</u> additions, subtractions or modifications whatsoever to the exterior of this historic house. The kitchen was remodeled in 1948. Some new appliances were added to existing cabinets in 1987. No other additions, subtractions or modifications (but for the replacement of two toilet bowls) have been made to the interior of this house.

The third story white washed walls were painted for the first time in 1987. The painted but unwallpapered walls on the second floor were re-painted in 1987. Almost all painted surfaces on the first floor (but for the kitchen which was re-painted in 1988) were last painted in 1914. As stated above most of the wall treatments are original or no later than the late 1930's.

Candidate biographies, William Bittle Wells, Oreg (May 2, 1942), 12.	gon Voter, Vol. 1	02, No. 18
Capitol's Who's Who for Oregon: A Triennial Refe Capitol Publishing Company, page 438.	erence Work, 1942	-1944. Portland:
Oregon Journal [Portland], May 28, 1964, page 2.		
Previous documentation on file (NPS):	X See continuation	sheet
preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)	Primary location of a	additional data:
has been requested	State historic pre	eservation office
previously listed in the National Register	Other State ager	ncy
previously determined eligible by the National Register	Federal agency	
designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings	Local governmen	nt
Survey #	☑ University ☑ Other	
recorded by Historic American Engineering	Specify repository:	
Record #	University of	Oregon Library
	Oregon Histor:	ical Society, Portland
10. Geographicai Data	One was tile abia ab a	1 24000
Acreage of property 0.28 acres Portland,	Oregon-Washington	n 1:24000
UTM References  A 1 10   5 2 14 0 16 10   5 10 3 19 5 16 10    Zone Easting Northing  C	Zone Easting	Northing
	See continuation	sheet
Verbal Boundary Description Lots 3 and 4 and the East	10 feet of Lots 5	5 and 6. Block 300.
according to the duly filed plat of City of Port of the County of Multnomah and State of Oregon, Lownsdale Street adjoining on the East lying Sou Lot 3 extended Easterly and Westerly of the West the public in the Plat of Cardinell Park, in the State of Oregon.	cland, filed in Platogether with that therly of the Nor erly line of a 15	lat Book 2, Page 11, Records at portion of the vacated theasterly line of the 5-foot alley dedicated to
Boundary Justification		
The nominated area of 0.28 acres encompasses the William Bittle Wells residence in 1910.	entire urban tax	x lot developed for the
	See continuation	sheet
11. Form Prepared By		
name/title Eric R. Epperson		
organization owner of nominated property		
street & number1515 SW Clifton Street		(503) 227–4616 Oregon zip code _97201
City Of IOWITPOILTAIRO	sialo	ULUGON - ZIP OOOO - 9/2UL

9. Major Bibliographical References

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B FC C		
3 🗆 C 🗆 D	E F G	
tions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
	1910-1911	
	Cultural Affiliation	
	Architect/Builder Bennes, Hendricks and I	Thompson, architect
	ally state	B  C D  B  C D E F G  Stions)  Period of Significance  1910  1910–1911  Cultural Affiliation N/A

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

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The commodious Arts and Crafts-style residence on SW Clifton Street in the Portland Heights neighborhood in Portland, Oregon was designed for magazine publisher William Bittle Wells by the firm of Bennes, Hendricks and Thompson. It was completed in 1910.

The house occupies a graded double lot at the northwest corner of the intersection of Clifton and SW 15th Avenue, extended. The two and a half story, gable-roofed rectangular volume faces south onto Clifton. From its north and east elevations may be gained a panoramic view of the City of Portland spreading to the north and east on the river plain below.

With its porch filling the angle created by the junction of main mass and its truncated perpendicular wing, the house is reminiscent to some degree of the massing of the L. B. Menefee House, designed by Bennes's firm and completed in a year earlier. But it is nonetheless distinctive in the Arts and Crafts idiom from the earlier house because of its Tudor overtones expressed in the use of common bond brick exterior (shingle siding was used above the ground story), balustraded terraces, and a variety of Tudor, basket and segmental arched openings, all intended to evoke the late medieval period, as were the heavily-mullioned, multi-paned windows.

The interior of the house, rivaling that of the Menefee residence, is sumptuous Arts and Crafts, a traditional evocation of medieval great hall, complete with wainscoting, beamed ceiling, Rookwood ceramic tile chimney fronts (some with Della Robbia garlands), and, in addition, leaded art glass, decorative plasterwork and elaborate overmantel carvings. The Classical column screen is employed at hallway entrances to formal rooms on the ground story, and fluted columns of the Ionic order are used as chimney piece framements. Art glass and lighting fixtures by such master craftsmen as Povey Brothers Studio and Fred Baker contribute to the high quality of interior finish work.

The house is locally significant in the category of architecture under Criterion C. It also is proposed for nomination under Criterion B for its association with William Bittle Wells (1872-1965), who held the property for a brief span of three years before being compelled to sell it to finance a new printing business. Wells is a noteworthy figure in Oregon history as founder and first editor of The Pacific Monthly, published in Portland beginning in 1898. As a combined literary and regional booster magazine, The Pacific Monthly played a part in the upbuilding of Portland and the Northwest during the Progressive era, and its pages were illuminated with vignettes embodying the Arts and Crafts aesthetic based on "honest" or sound workmanship. While living on Clifton Street, Wells entered into a new printing and publishing venture which cost him the loss of his house. While by no means the residence of longest occupancy by Wells in Portland, the Clifton Street house is arguably the one most importantly

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associated with him. It was the only house designed expressly for Wells, and apparently with his participation. It is the one which embodies his aesthetic ideals and best represents the culmination of his distinguished and enterprising publishing career. From 1917 onward he was involved exclusively in the insurance profession.

William J. Furnish, who acquired the property from Wells in 1912, was a prominent businessman and politician who had been the Republican nominee for Governor of Oregon in 1902. His son, retail drug merchant Eldon Furnish, and the younger Furnish's heirs continued in the house to 1987, at which time the property was acquired by the current owners.

William Bittle Wells, is best known in Oregon history as the founder and first editor of <u>The Pacific Monthly</u>, a magazine which in 1907 merged with <u>Sunset</u> to become <u>Sunset</u>, the <u>Pacific Monthly</u>. Correspondence of the late Martin Schmitt, curator of special collections of the University of Oregon Library, dated September 1, 1960, attests to Wells's historic contribution to a sense of regional identity in the Pacific Northwest during its period of upbuilding. "You have done more for this region than our whole collection of governors and certainly most of our senators and representatives," he remarked not altogether extravagantly.

It was while living in the Clifton Street house that Wells ended his connection with <u>The Pacific Monthly</u>, the long standing achievement of his career, and embarked in 1911 on a venture to produce fine color printing. Wells & Company, Publishers and Printers, proved highly expensive. Wells sold out in 1915 and ended his publishing career soon thereafter.

Wells was a native of Virginia; his birth date, June 23, 1872. His secondary school days were spent in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. When his father, Dr. G. M. Wells, brought his family to Portland in 1889, young Wells attended Portland High School and commenced his career in publishing by starting the school newspaper, The Student, which he wrote, edited and managed from 1889 to 1892. While attending Stanford University, Wells worked as associated editor of the Daily Palo Alto, from 1894 to 1897. He was graduated with honors in literature and education and planned to become an educator. In 1898, however, he returned to Portland and started a magazine partially financed by Charles Ladd. The first edition of The Pacific Monthly was issued in October, 1898, with Wells as editor as well as half owner.

The Pacific Monthly, following in the tradition of The Overland Monthly, became the outstanding national magazine of the Far West. It promoted regional talent through its articles and illustrations. It encouraged immigration and attracted business to the Pacific Northwest. Its chief competitor was <u>Sunset</u>, started in

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1898 in San Francisco by the Southern Pacific Company with Charles K. Field, a Stanford graduate of 1895, as its first editor. In 1907, after Ladd had purchased Wells' interest in their partnership, came the merger of <a href="The Pacific Monthly">The Pacific Monthly</a> and <a href="Sunset">Sunset</a>. Wells served as Northwest area manager of the magazine and special representative of the passenger department of the Southern Pacific Railroad. It was while taking charge of community publicity for the Harriman lines that Wells had decided to set up his own printing plant to do the fine color work required for the illustrated literature. The Southern Pacific Company sold its combined magazines to publisher L. W. Lane in 1911, and Wells poured his resources into Wells & Company. He sold out in 1915. After one more venture as manager of the locally produced <a href="Better Cooking Magazine">Better Cooking Magazine</a>, William Bittle Wells left the publishing business for good. From 1917 onward he worked successfully as an insurance underwriter. He died in Portland in 1965, at the age of 93.

The house designed for William Bittle Wells also ranks importantly in the body of work by the partnership of Bennes and Hendricks. John Virginius Bennes (1867-1943) is among the noteworthy figures in Oregon architectural history, best known, perhaps, for his residences reflecting the influence of the Prairie style, of which his own house and the A. H. Maegly House in Portland are the leading examples, and for his numerous buildings for the Oregon State System of Higher Bennes was born in Peru, Illinois, but moved with his family to Chicago at an early age. His father, John Virginius the elder, spelled his surname as Benes and was the uncle of Edward Benes, President of Czechoslovakia. Owing to that connection, the young Bennes attended the School of Fine Arts in Prague, Bohemia for a year. He also studied at Chicago University. commenced independent practice as an architect in Chicago before moving to Baker, Oregon in 1900. In 1906 he relocated to Portland, where he centered his practice until he retired to Los Angeles in ill health in 1943. In 1907 Bennes commenced an association with Oregon State University of nearly thirty years duration. As University architect, he planned and designed the modern campus between 1915 and The various partnerships of Bennes's career were as follows: Hendricks & Tobey, 1907-1909; Bennes, Hendricks & Thompson, 1910; Bennes & Hendricks, 1911-1913, 1925; Bennes & Herzog, 1925-c. 1930. Bennes closed his office 1941. He had been active in the Oregon (later Portland) Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and served as chapter president in 1922.

While John V. Bennes came of age in Chicago in the period 1868-1900, and in his early career emulated the work of such leaders of design as Daniel H. Burnham and Frank Lloyd Wright, his was the traditional Beaux Arts training. His residences display the mastery of historical detail and, very often, the frank eclectic admixtures of style so fashionable in the early 20th Century. The Wells House on Clifton Street is noteworthy in that, in it, the Arts and Crafts idiom with Tudor touches was more or less consistent throughout, from exterior to interior. It, along with the L. B. Menefee House, also in the Portland Heights

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neighborhood, and the Goldsmith House in the Nob Hill area, represents the best design in the high Arts and Crafts style in the considerable volume of Bennes's residential work in Portland.

The brass wall and overhead lighting fixtures throughout the house were designed by Fred C. Baker (1887-1981). Baker's artistry in brass and bronze architectural fixtures was unmatched, locally. During his long and productive career, his firm produced lighting fixtures for the major public buildings of his day in Portland, and many buildings elsewhere in the state. His work can be found in the Pittock Mansion, Paramount Theatre, Temple Beth Israel, in Portland, and in the Oregon State Capitol, Salem and Timberline Lodge on Mt. Hood. Baker worked in close association with architects in his projects in order to create fixtures of appropriate style and character.

Ornamental window glass and glazed door panels throughout the house were designed by the Povey Brothers Studio of Portland, leading manufacturers of art glass in Oregon from the 1880s to 1920.

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#### Bibliography:

#### Wells

Wells Unpublished Biography, University of Oregon Collection Oregon Historical Society, Vertical Files

#### Furnish

William Furnish, Oregon Historical Society, Vertical Files
Authur H Bone, Memoirs and Times of Walter M Pierce, Oregon
Historical Society, 1981

Oregon Historical Society Vertical Files

#### John V. Bennes

Clark, Rosalind, <u>Archtecture Oregon Style</u> (Portland: Professional Book Center, 1983) pp.136-139

Ferriday, Virginia Guest, <u>The Last of the Handmade Buildings</u>, (Portland: Mark Publishing Co., 1984) appedix.

#### House

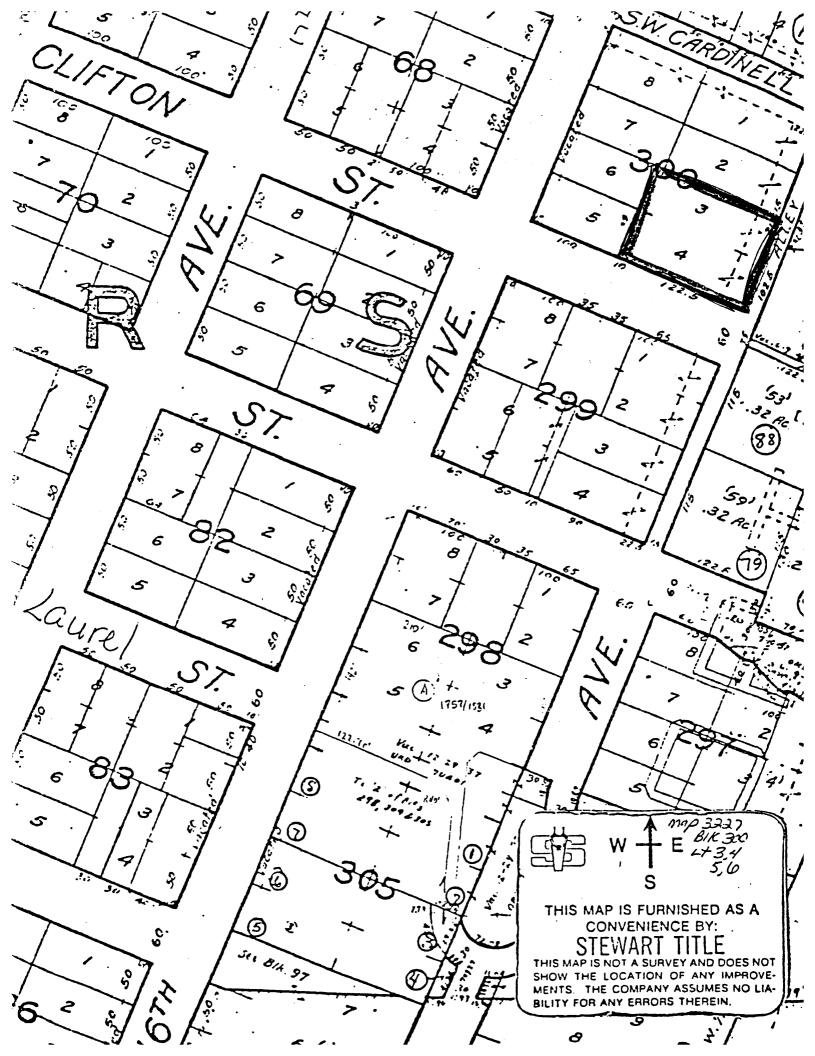
City of Portland Buildings Bureau microform and card files
Bates, Philip, <u>RESIDENTIAL PORTLAND IN 1911</u> (photograph), OHS
Collection

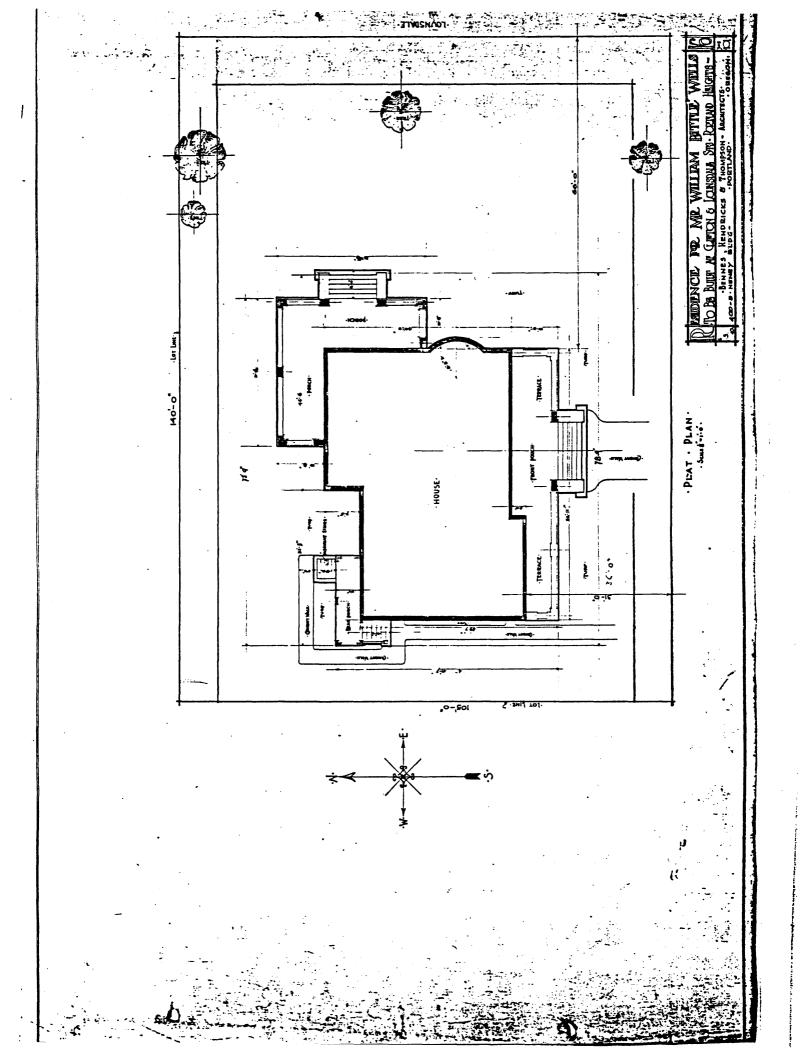
#### Miscellaneous Notes

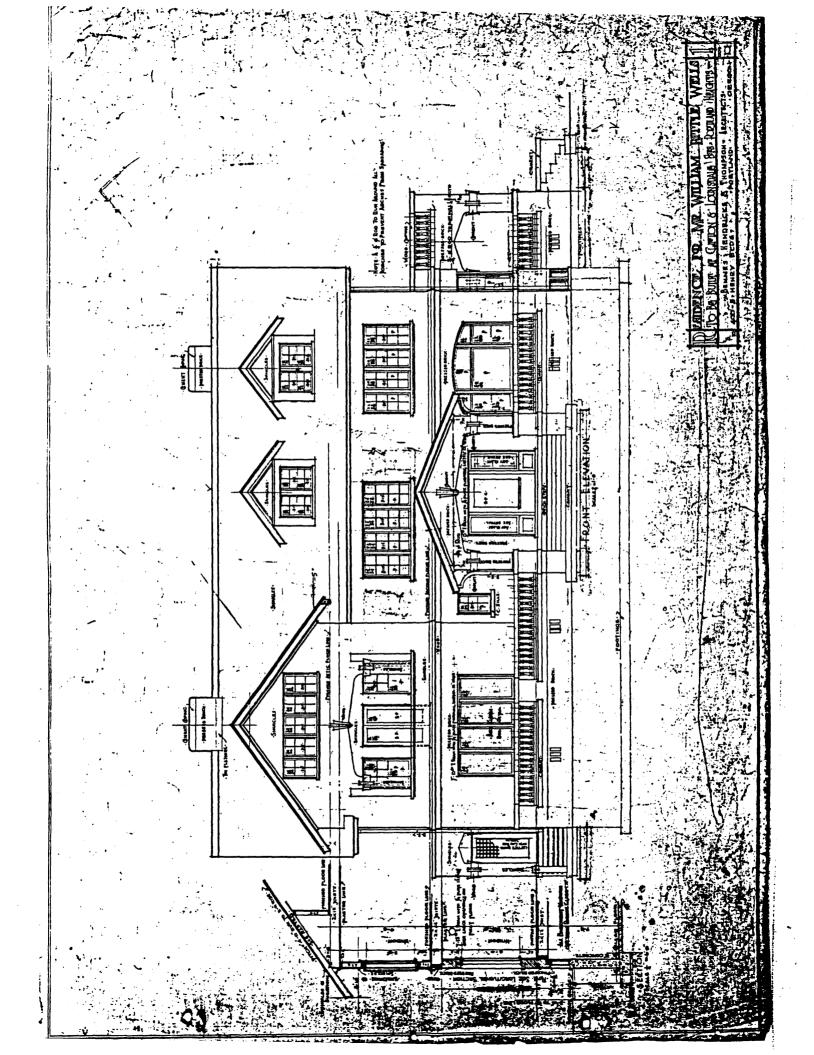
Conversations with members of the Furnish family having lived in the house.

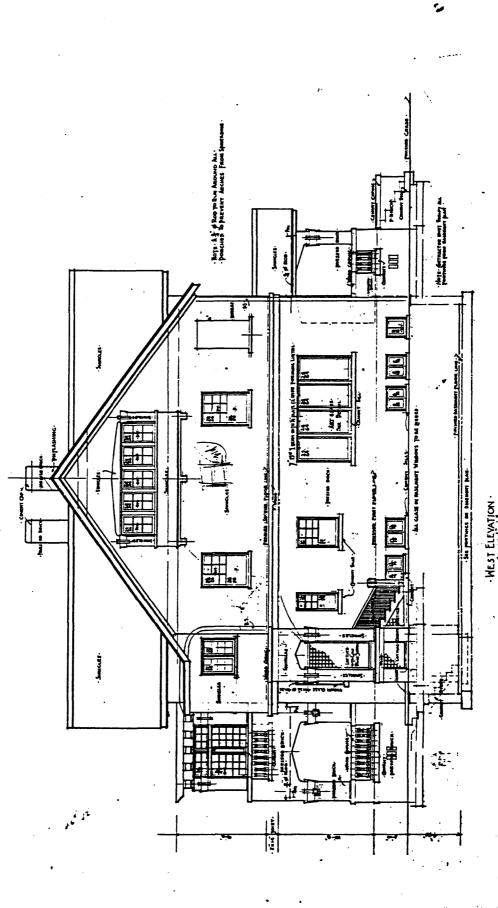
#### Photographs

Oregon Historical Society, Aerial view of Portland Heights 1910's University of Oregon special collection of the papers of W B Wells photographs of house interior and exterior views.



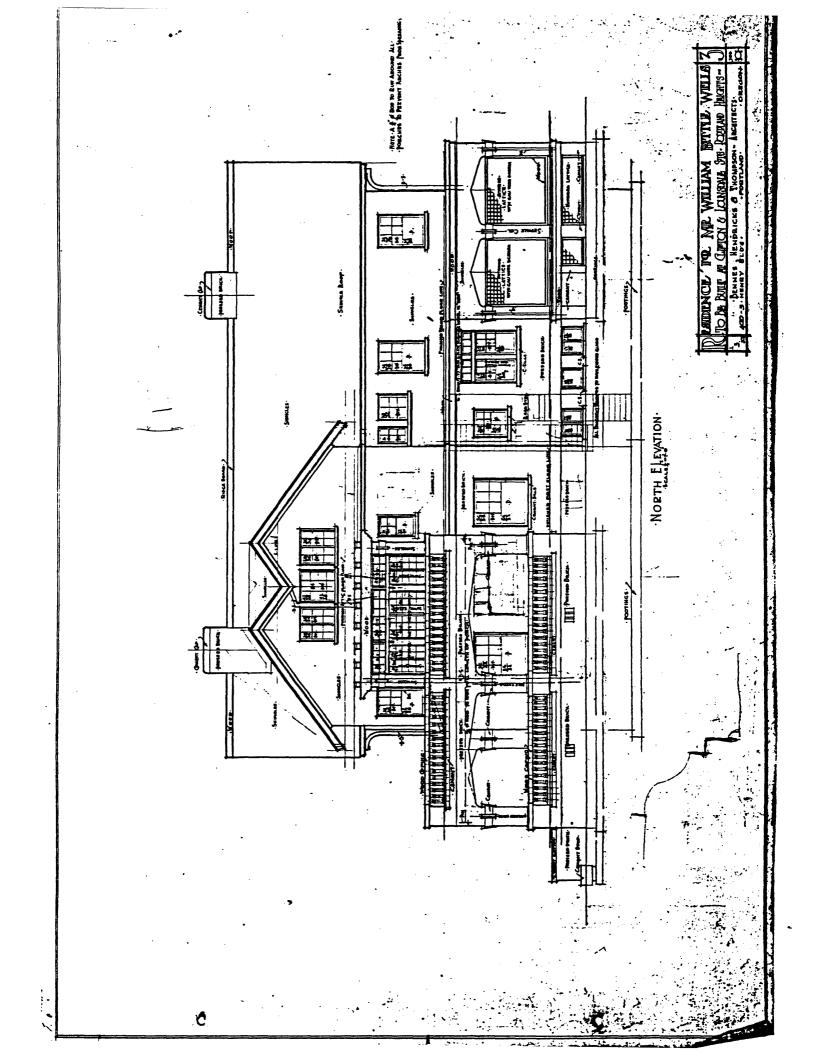


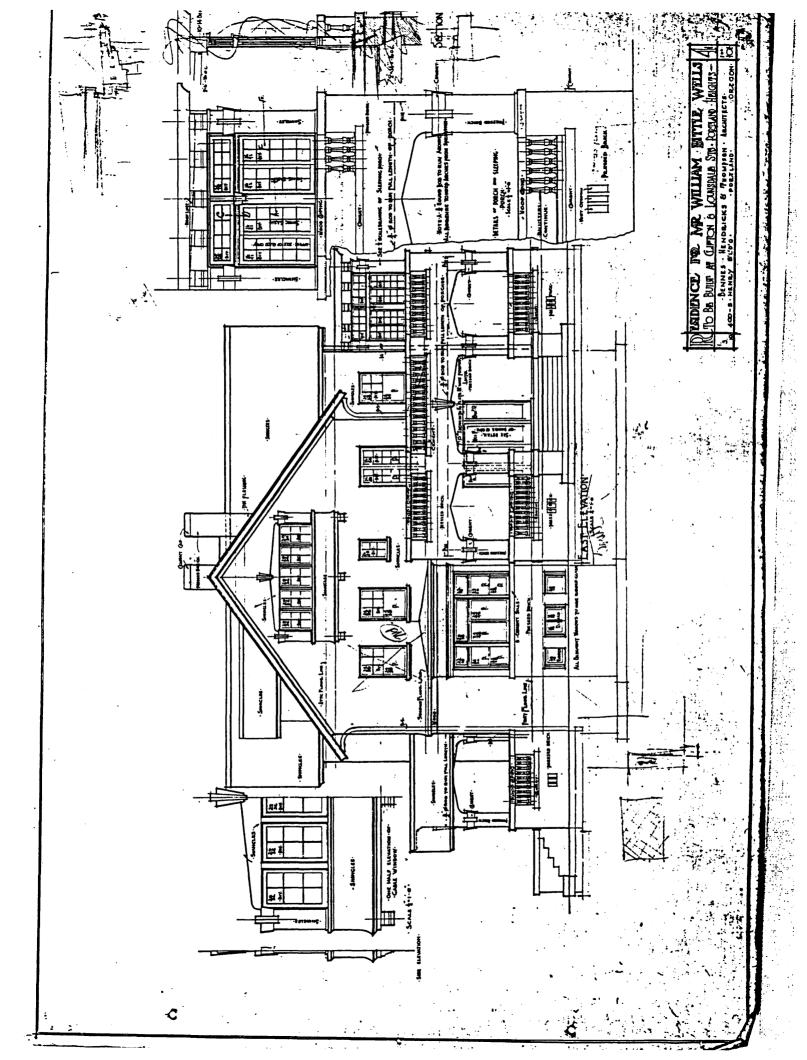


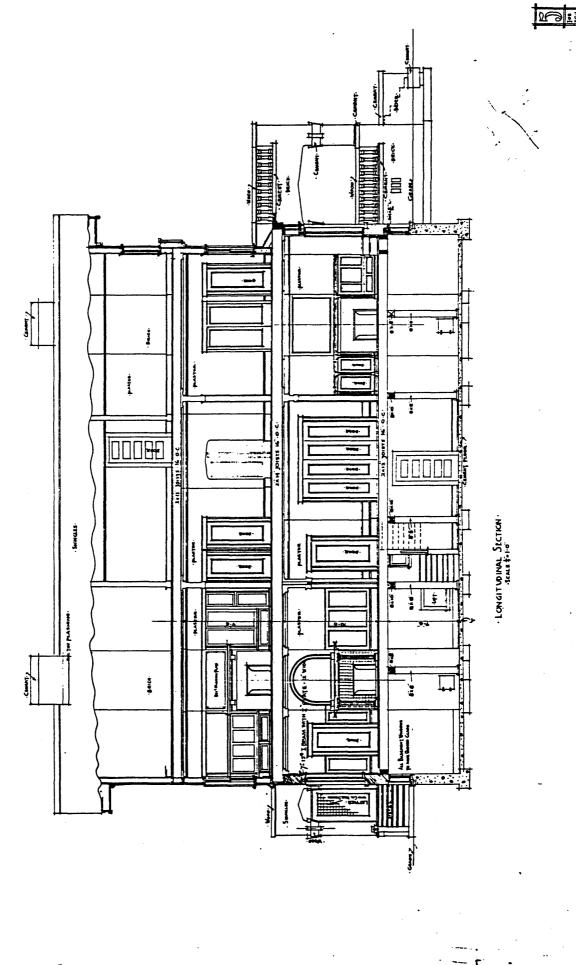


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PITTLE WILLS







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