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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

JUN 17 1994

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name RICHESON, JOHN BRETT, HOUSE  
other names/site number the ROSEMARY CLOONEY CHILDHOOD HOME, MSM# 236, MASON COUNTY, KY.

2. Location

street & number 331 West Third Street NA  not for publication  
city or town Maysville, NA  vicinity  
state Kentucky code Ky county Mason code 161 zip code 41056

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
David L. Morgan David L. Morgan, Executive Director and State  
Historic Preservation 5-27-94  
Signature of certifying official/Title Officer Date  
Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
Autonette Allee July 22, 1994

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

not applicable

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

not applicable

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling,  
uninhabited due to work in  
progress.

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls brick

porches wood

roof modern asphalt shingles

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See attached continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

education

Period of Significance

1832-1880

Significant Dates

1831 house constructed

1832 house occupied by the John Brett

Richeson family

1941 Edward Richeson, the last of the Significant Person family, dies at home.  
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Richeson, John Brett

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Richardson, Thomas G.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Attached Statement

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(List the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Mason County Library, Maysville, Ky.

Virginia Archives, Richmond, Va.

the Richeson House  
Name of Property

Mason County, Kentucky  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	7	2	5	8	8	7	0	4	2	8	1	3	3	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

  
2 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

  
Maysville West Quad

3 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

  
4 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

  
 See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

See Attached Continuation Sheet

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Philip L. Breen, Jr., Owner

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 3/17/94

street & number 3250 Hardisty Avenue telephone 513-871-3827

city or town Cincinnati, Ohio state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code 45208

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Philip L. Breen, Jr.

street & number 3250 Hardisty Avenue telephone 513-871-3827

city or town Cincinnati, Ohio state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code 45208

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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DESCRIPTION OF PHYSICAL APPEARANCE: The historic John Brett Richeson House (MS-M-236), locally known as the Rosemary Clooney Childhood Home, was built in 1831. It is an L-shaped, two-story brick house, with the long part of the L resting on a stone foundation and half basement facing the Ohio River. It has a shallow pitched roof and four chimneys and descending parapet brick end walls with limestone caps. It features regularly spaced 6x6 pane windows in the front of the house and one entry door; and on the other three sides the windows are 6x6 pane but placed asymmetrically to provide natural daylight for each room. The house has six entry doors, three on each floor. It has a large front porch which faces North to the Ohio River and an L-shaped two-story rear porch which is partially enclosed on each floor.

The first floor interior is entered via front and rear doors at opposite ends of a central hall which also includes a stairway to the second floor. The front door provides access to a large front porch. Off the central hall a bedroom and bathroom are to the East side and to the West side through 9' triple doors is a parlor and in turn through 8' double doors a dining room and then a kitchen with attached bath, laundry and utility closet.

The first floor features three 10-pane french doors as entry doors each with 3-pane transom, an Italianate front staircase, three Italianate fireplace mantels and unique 2-panel interior doors and large 42"x80" windows. Baseboards, window and door surrounds, and period hardware have survived.

The second floor is reached via an interior staircase from the first floor central hall and also via an exterior staircase through the L-shaped rear porch. When the second floor is accessed via the interior staircase, it opens into a second floor central hall which connects to the master bedroom. From the hall, three more rooms and a bathroom are accessed through a locked door. This has been a separate apartment setup for quite a long time which is accessed primarily by the outside staircase for privacy. In earlier times, before the locked door was installed, the second floor was a central hall which opened onto four bedrooms and a bath.

The second floor retains its unique 2-paneled doors, large 42"x80" windows, door and window surrounds, an attractive stair railing and spindles, an Italianate fireplace mantel, original locks and doorknobs.

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The basement contains a 15'x15' room with stone walls and a large fireplace and exposed beam ceiling which was formerly used as a servant's sleeping room. The other basement room measures 15'x21' and has a dirt floor and was a storage room for food and vegetables.

The attic is a crawl space with no flooring or lighting and only a trapdoor access. There are no other buildings or structure on the subject property.

The property has deteriorated over the past twenty years and is not habitable in its current state. The plumbing is faulty and the bathrooms have been destroyed by water damage; there is evidence of numerous burns caused by faulty wiring, and there is considerable water damage throughout the house due to a leaky roof. A total restoration of building and electric, plumbing and heating systems will be required. The building is being rehabilitated according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, so the owner can obtain an Investment Tax Credit.

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The Richeson House (MS-M-236) meets National Register Criterion B - through its association with the lives of persons who were important to Maysville's past. In 1832 John Brett Richeson, an educator from Charlottesville, Virginia, purchased the subject house for his wife Mildred Richeson and their eight children. The house continued to be occupied by the Richesons and their descendants until the death of Edward Richeson in 1941. The John Brett Richeson family provided Maysville with some of the most accomplished and brilliant teachers ever known in Kentucky, and they helped to establish Maysville as a leading educational community during the period 1832-1880. Several of John Brett Richeson's children were teachers, including his sons William West Richeson and John Holt Richeson, and his daughter Ann Frances Richeson Peers, and several grandchildren. The house is significant within the historic context Education in Maysville 1780's-1900.

Education in Maysville 1780's-1900

The Richesons' contribution to education in Maysville, Kentucky spanned a fifty-year period (1832-1880) when little or no public education, especially at the high school level, was available to a large portion of the population living in the Kentucky frontier. For perspective, the population of Mason County, Kentucky, including Maysville in 1850, was about the same as it is today, 18,000 people. And until the arrival of the Richesons in 1832, there were few opportunities for intellectually gifted students to attend high school and prepare for college. The Richesons' reputation as educators quickly spread and, through them, Maysville became an education center attracting excellent teachers and drawing students from the surrounding counties and states. Ultimately, several other private schools were established in Maysville to serve the growing demand.

Upon coming to Maysville in 1832, John Brett Richeson and his son William West Richeson, in partnership with professor Jacob Rand, founded and operated for several decades the Maysville Academy, also known as the Rand-Richeson Academy. The Academy was the first successful secondary school in Maysville and specialized in preparing young men for university level studies. It attracted as students, many eminent men who ultimately became nationally known and respected:

Ulysses Grant, Civil War General and two-term U.S. President  
William Nelson, Civil War General who was shot and killed in Louisville  
by Jefferson Davis over a personal dispute  
Walter Newman Haldeman, Editor and founder of the Louisville Courier  
John J. Crittenden, accomplished jurist and politician  
Thomas Nelson, U.S. Minister to Mexico  
Henry M. Stanton, Poet Laureate  
Ormond Beatty, educator and President of Centre College  
and many, many other locally prominent graduates of the Academy.

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John Brett Richeson died in 1855 but his son William West continued to serve as principal of the Maysville Academy until about 1865. Later William West tutored students at his home and operated Rosemont Academy, and in 1876 William West was named principal of Maysville's first public high school.

In order to understand the Richesons and the quality of their work, it is helpful to know more about John Brett Richeson's life and experiences before his move to Maysville. Certainly the 45 years that he lived and taught in Virginia were his formative years and are probably predictive of how he approached his work of educating and influencing his students in Kentucky.

John Brett Richeson was born in King William County, Virginia, in 1787. His father was Colonel Holt Richeson, Revolutionary War Veteran, a lawyer and Delegate to the Virginia Assembly.

John Brett Richeson was a brilliant student and he was proficient in all subjects. He was probably tutored at home, as was the custom in this period. At the age of 13 years, he was sent to Richmond, Virginia, to live in the home of Mr. Samuel Pleasants, owner and editor of the Virginia Argus. This association did much to stimulate young John's scholastic inclinations and he excelled in his studies, especially with mathematics and languages.

John Brett Richeson married Mildred Ragsdale in 1811. In their lifetime they would have 10 children, although two died in childhood. Mildred Ragsdale was the daughter of Drury Ragsdale, also an officer in the Revolutionary Army. Drury Ragsdale was one of the Organizers of the Order of Cincinnati in Virginia; he was a Magistrate and Commissioner of Peace for King William County, Virginia.

John Brett Richeson loved learning and teaching, and was very involved in the teaching of his own family. Perhaps this was passed on to him by his own father, who was thought to have studied law at William & Mary College and who emphasized the importance of education to his son and who arranged for his tutoring, both at home and with Samuel Pleasants in Richmond. Likewise, John Brett Richeson was involved in tutoring his children at home. His first child, William West Richeson, was an especially gifted student like his father. In order to prepare William West for the University of Virginia and perhaps to accustom him to the collegiate atmosphere that he would soon enter at an early age, the entire Richeson family moved to Charlottesville, Virginia. There John Brett tutored other youths who were preparing to enter the University while his own son was studying under his supervision too.

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His son, William West, entered the University of Virginia at age 16 and completed the four-year program at age 18. Since the founding of the University of Virginia over 160 years ago, William West Richeson is the only student to have graduated at age 18.

In Charlottesville a friendship developed between John Brett Richeson and Thomas Jefferson, the former President of the U.S. and founder of the University of Virginia. It is not surprising that this relationship flourished, considering their superior intellects and their mutual commitment to higher education. In fact, John Brett Richeson was at Monticello, Jefferson's home, when his famous friend died July 4, 1826.

In Charlottesville another close friendship developed between John Brett Richeson and Martin Marshall, a nephew of John Marshall, Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. This was a relationship that would ultimately lead the Richeson family to migrate to Maysville, Kentucky. Martin Marshall lived in Washington, Kentucky, a frontier community which was located about four miles from Maysville. While visiting Virginia, he persuaded John Brett Richeson to move to Kentucky. And so in 1831, immediately upon the graduation of his son William West Richeson from the University of Virginia, the entire Richeson family moved to Maysville.

Soon after coming to Maysville, John Brett Richeson and his wife Mildred and their several children moved into their recently built home on West Third Street at the corner of Lower Street. In this house lived a family of teachers. John Brett Richeson, his sons William West and John Holt, and his daughter Ann Frances were all teachers. Perhaps some of the later children were teachers, too, although this is not discernible from the records. In this house John Brett Richeson continued his practice of tutoring students. And, as previously mentioned, he and his son William West, in partnership with Jacob Rand, operated the Maysville Academy.

The Richeson home on West Third Street was one of the earliest grand homes in Maysville and in all of Mason County. The quality of its construction, its overall size and its architectural features are impressive, even by today's standards. Certainly in 1831 it must have stood out in this frontier community where the average resident was still living in a log cabin or small frame structure. The home was ideally located at the crossroads of the Western Frontier, with the Ohio River at its front door and the Maysville Road providing access with Lexington and Frankfort, and the National Road to the North of the Ohio River connecting Maysville with Chillicothe and Columbus, Ohio.

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Given these circumstances and the reputation of the Richesons and their many prominent associations, it is logical to assume that the home was the setting for many social gatherings and a regular destination for the stream of visitors that was moving through Maysville in that period. Not only was this in the style of the Virginian families from which both John Brett and Mildred Richeson descended, but it was also the way in which educated and prominent people obtained information and kept up with current events. It was also customary of tutors such as John Brett Richeson to expose their students to new thinking and to practice their languages (especially French) with the many Europeans who were visiting the American West in the 1800's.

John Brett Richeson's wife Mildred died in 1850 and his death followed hers in 1855. His obituary from the Maysville Eagle reads in part: "John Brett Richeson enjoyed the universal esteem and respect of the community and the confidence of a large circle of friends. He was, in truth, one of 'nature's noblemen' and was remarkable for his universal urbanity and unflinching kindness of heart."

William West Richeson died in 1880 and the Biographical Encyclopedia of Kentucky makes reference to him as follows: "Professor William West Richeson, the famous Master of Rosemont, will long be remembered in Kentucky as one of the most successful and accomplished teachers ever known in the State."

John Brett Richeson's home passed on to his children and in turn their children who continued to serve the Maysville community in a variety of professions and a more than average number of teachers, principals, librarians and volunteer workers. The last of the Richeson family, Edward, grandson of John Brett and Mildred Richeson, died at home in 1941.

Rosemary Clooney, singing star of radio, motion pictures and television, was born in Maysville and lived in the Richeson House in the late 1940's. In 1953 the city named the adjacent street in her honor when her first movie The Stars are Singing premiered at the Russell Theater.

In 1980 the house was designated a Kentucky Landmark by the Kentucky Heritage Commission. It is also classified as an Historic Site, MS-M-236, in Mason County, Kentucky.

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Of note, the Maysville Academy was built ca. 1829 by Thomas G. Richardson, a local contractor. Originally constructed as a residence, it was converted to a school building, complete with belfry, in 1832 when Professors Richesons and Rand began to operate the Academy. Additional classroom space was added to handle the swelling enrollments in the 1830's and 1840's. In 1865 the Academy was sold to Joseph H. Dodson, a local grain merchant, who removed the belfry and razed some of the outbuildings and converted the property back to a residence which remained in his family for several years. In 1865 Professor William West Richeson began to teach students at his home. We don't know what became of Professor Rand but he may have retired or tutored students in his home, as did Professor Richeson. The structure was remodeled into a rooming house in the 1940's. Currently it is vacant and showing considerable deterioration. An extensive restoration will be required to save this property for posterity.

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Reference List and Sources

- (1) Source: The Delaware Tree and Some of its Branches  
Charles Burrill Ryan (1940)
- (2) Historic marker located at the Maysville Academy
- (3) Historic marker located at Bridge Street, Maysville
- (4) History of Mason County - Clift
- (5) Tourist brochure published by Maysville Tourism Commission
- (6) Historic Washington, Kentucky by Edna Hunter Best (1944)  
Chapter 3, Page 44
- (7) Maysville, Kentucky by Jean Calvert and John Klee
- (8) History of Mason County by Jean Calvert and John Klee
- (9) Richeson Family Genealogy files prepared by George Harrison  
Sanford King, Fellow, American Society of Genealogists,  
Virginia Archives, Richmond, Va.
- (10) Maysville Eagle and Maysville Independent Newspapers

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The nominated area is situated in the First Ward of the City of Maysville, Kentucky, on the corner of Third Street and Lower or Schultz Street, and bounded on the South by Third Street, on the North by the Property of H.M. Walker, on the on the West by Lower or Schultz Street, and on the East by lots of Thomas Neal, deceased, now the Hubbard lots.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

"The area nominated encloses the property which is historically associated with the important persons, John Brett Richeson, his son William West Richeson, and other members of the family. The property is the urban lot which the Richesons owned and inhabited while they performed their important educational work in Maysville."

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 94000733 Date Listed: 7/22/94

John Brett Richeson House  
Property Name

Mason County KY State  
County State

N/A  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*Robert Lee*  
*for* Signature of the Keeper

July 22, 1994  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

Statement of Significance: Under the Significant Dates section of the nomination form, 1941 is removed.

This information was confirmed with Marty Perry of the Kentucky State Historic Preservation Office.

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DISTRIBUTION:  
National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)