

P40356841

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAR 10 1976
DATE ENTERED JUN 3 1976

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

*need ** Wm*

Alf T. Ringling Manor and R. T. Richards Circus Winter Headquarters

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *S of Oak Ridge*
Berkshire Valley Road at Intersection
Manor Drive and Hard Bargain Road

CITY, TOWN

Jefferson Township (Oak Ridge)

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

13th

STATE

New Jersey

CODE

34

COUNTY

Morris

CODE

027

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Capuchin Fathers OFM

STREET & NUMBER

Berkshire Road

CITY, TOWN

Oak Ridge P. O.

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Jersey

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Morris County Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER

Court Street

CITY, TOWN

Morristown

STATE

New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Proposed Morris County Planning Board Inventory
(NJHSI 1589.2)

DATE

1974

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Morris County Planning Board

CITY, TOWN

Morristown

STATE

New Jersey

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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 Alfred Ringling Estate is divided by Berkshire Valley Road. The estate consists of the mansion, a boathouse, a power house, a carriage house, a water tower, and a barn. All structures are of the same material and style indicating the date of construction sometime prior to World War I.

The Ringling Mansion is a large classical revival style building faced with cobblestones. The sub-structure is reinforced concrete with walls two feet thick. The formal entrance to the mansion has a projecting massive portico supported by four large columns. The interior originally had 26 rooms on three floors, but was recently renovated to accommodate the current occupants. The first floor had a kitchen, a pantry, dining room, ballroom, bar, a conservatory, and a music room. The second floor had two sun decks, eight bedrooms and a number of bathrooms. The third floor half a ballroom, card rooms, and a stage. The facilities were in the basement which also had a wine cellar. While the interior has been somewhat altered sections still reflect the eclectic tastes of the well-traveled Ringling and the sometimes gaudy tastes of this circus owner.

The boathouse opens into Lake Swanannoa which was created by Alfred Ringling using a smaller pond. The boathouse also reflects a classical revival style and is similar in construction to the mansion, although much smaller in size. The power house and carriage house also resemble the mansion in style, if not in size and elegance. The power house is 50 feet by 30 feet and 20 feet high. The carriage house is 80 feet by 30 feet and 30 feet high. The tower, which is behind the carriage house on a knoll, is a circular cobblestone faced concrete structure 81 feet high and 61 feet in circumference at the base with a domed circular roof.

The barn is a one story cobblestone faced structure 61 feet long and 25 feet wide.

A few years after Ringlings' death in 1919 the Estate was sold and subdivided into smaller parcels of land.

The manor was adopted as a country club for a short time, but the Great Depression forced that operation out of business.

In 1933 the Manor was used briefly by Max Schmeling and his managers as a training camp for the Baer-Schmeling heavyweight championship fight.

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CONTINUATION SHEET #1

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Of late the Manor house has been occupied by the Capuchin Fathers OFM (a religious group). The other buildings, save the barn which is presently used for manufacturing gliders, are vacant.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-present	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES - ca. 1913

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Alfred T. Ringling was one of seven brothers out of the small town of Baraboo, Wisconsin who in their lifetime organized and performed in the greatest tented amusement enterprise in the world. Ringling's palatial estate at Oak Ridge, New Jersey was built around 1913 and, in addition to being Alf T.'s residence, became the winter headquarters for the R. T. Richards Circus.

The Ringling Brothers Circus, organized in 1884 was the largest circus in the world four years later; surpassing in magnitude even the Barnum and Bailey Circus. In 1907 the Ringlings bought out the Barnum and Bailey Circus and currently operates under the name Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus.

Alfred T. Ringling around 1913 decided to make his residence in an isolated region of Morris County, New Jersey where he purchased some 600 acres and erected a \$500,000 mansion.

Ringling lived here until his death in the fall of 1919. During his residence in the manor many famous circus performers, entertainers, and other notable visitors were attracted to Ringling Manor.

Alfred's son, Richard, only 21 years old at the time, was outfitted by his father in 1917 with a motorized circus. While the circus, named R. T. Richards Circus, lasted only two seasons and was a dismal failure, it was a pioneering effort in an attempt to travel overland by automobile and truck. Formerly mobilized by train the Richards Circus was a recognized gamble from the beginning. During its short-term operation, however, the circus probably wintered at Ringling Manor. Further evidence suggests that the Manor may have served as the northeastern base of the Ringling enterprise. This is substantiated by the obituary of Alfred T. Ringling in the New York Times which read, "The estate is winter quarters for a large part of the circus equipment and animals."

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Bradner, Fred, The Big Top as Told to Hartzell Spence
1952. (pp. 124-6).
- Ringling, Alfred T. Enter the Ringlings and Their Circus
1900
- Plowden, Gene; Those Amazing Ringlings and Their Circus
1968 (pp. 131-2)
- The Advance. Dover, New Jersey. May 27, 1965, May 28, 1965.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 18 acres
UTM REFERENCES

A	184	540630	4539880	B	18	540960	4539560
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	18	540340	4539610	D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Terry Karschner, Historian - Curator

July, 1975
DATE

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Section, Department of Environmental Protection

STREET & NUMBER

Box 1420

TELEPHONE

(609) 292-2023

CITY OR TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection

DATE

January 5, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

6/3/76

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

6-2-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

RBR for WJM 6-2-76

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The Beacon, Paterson, New Jersey. July 20, 1967

The Sunday Herald, Passaic, New Jersey. September 2, 1962.

The Paterson Evening News, Paterson, New Jersey, July 12, 1965.

Headly, Joseph W. Papers, Private manuscripts in possession of
Mrs. Joseph W. Headley Weldonford, Mine Road, Oak Ridge, New
Jersey.

verbal information derived from Stuart Ackerson, Cozy Lake Road,
Oak Ridge, New Jersey.

New York Times, Obituary, October 22, 1919 (p. 17)

Encyclopedia of Biography, Volume X (pp. 99-100).

Alfred T. Ringling

Bandwagon, "The Alfred T. Ringling Estate, Winter quarters of
R. T. Richards Circus at Oak Ridge, New Jersey by Warren
H. Wood, June, 1967.

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10. Geographical Data - Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the northern point of the Lake Swannanoa Large Dam proceed south along the dam to the circular driveway surrounding the Manor House. Thence, proceed west along this road to Berkshire Valley Road. Thence, proceed north on Berkshire Valley Road approximately 100 feet to a small dirt road. Thence, proceed east along this unpaved road to the 780 foot contour. Thence, proceed north along this contour to another unimproved road. Proceed west on this road to the back property line of a row of houses lined somewhat perpendicular to the road. Thence, proceed along the back property line of these modern houses to Berkshire Valley Road. Thence proceed west to Lake Swannanoa. Thence, proceed southwest along the lake to the point of beginning.