

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

10-30-72 (1)

1. Name

historic Lemley-Wood-Sayre House

and or common

2. Location

street & number 301 Walnut Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Ravenswood vicinity of

state West Virginia code 54 county Jackson code 035

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Kenneth Alden and Gayle Margaret Shaw

street & number 301 Walnut Street

city, town Ravenswood vicinity of state West Virginia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jackson County Courthouse

street & number Court Street

city, town Ripley state West Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Lenley-Wood-Sayre House is located at one of the most prominent intersections in Ravenswood, Jackson County, West Virginia, and is elevated above the street level on a small rise. It sits at the intersection of Virginia Street and Walnut Street, the latter being the primary thoroughfare into Ravenswood from the east.

The Lenley-Wood-Sayre House is an excellent intact example of an Italianate residence of the immediate post-Civil War period, when this style of Victorian architecture flourished in West Virginia. It is a classic example of the centered gable variety of the Italianate, a sub-type not well represented in the small towns of West Virginia.

The Lenley-Wood-Sayre House is a two story Italianate masonry (brick) structure, basically in the configuration of a cross, with a center pseudo-gable at the front elevation, on a stone foundation. The house is symmetrical in nearly every respect. The front elevation consists primarily of two bays. On the first, or ground level, the left (north) bay is dominated by a three sided projecting one story bay, surmounted by a wide elaborately bracketed cornice that upholds a crowning wooden ballustrade that is heavily decorated with a somewhat modified quatrefoil motif. Four tall narrow windows, double-hung, which are segmentally arched at the peaks, grace the projecting bay. The right (south) bay is dominated on the ground level by the small, single story porch that surrounds the front entrance to the house. It is upheld by two squared columns, heavily bracketed, and two bracketed pilasters. The porch's dentilated cornice is, like the adjacent bay, surmounted by a ballustrade that repeats the quatrefoil motif. Both bays at the second level have a single two over two window that is crowned by a segmentally arched lintel. In the small center gable is a circular window at the attic level. Wide overhanging eaves dominate the roof line at every elevation and are decorated with large brackets all around. The south, or Walnut Street elevation of the house is dominated by an elaborate "wrap around" single story porch that roofs three angles of the "cross" at that elevation. This porch is upheld by seven columns that are heavy with ornamental bracketing, or gingerbreading. The porch has a lower balustrade with the now familiar quatrefoil motif, as well as a balustrade with the same motif above the porch's dentilated cornice. This porch, in all probability the most dominant exterior feature of the property, was a c.1890 addition (the only major alteration to the exterior of the house) that, however, is in complete stylistic harmony with the architectural character of the rest of the house.

The house has a simple hipped metal roof, very low pitched, that once had an iron ballustrade (or "widow's walk") at its summit. Heavily corbelled chimneys rise above the roof line.

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Continuation sheet Lemley-Wood-Sayre House Item number 7

Page 2

At the rear (northeast) elevation of the house there is another small single story porch that is also in architectural harmony with the general characteristics of the house.

The interior of the Lemley-Wood-Sayre House is in near original condition and evidences much care by successive occupants. The heavy, dark hardwoods of the period are much in evidence throughout the interior of the house; in highly decorative mantle pieces, door moldings, the elaborate moldings on the interior of the front projecting bay, and the grand front staircase. Some interior changes did take place during the early part of this century, but did not compromise the overall integrity of the interior design. There are four major rooms on the first level; a living room, dining room, den, and kitchen, while the upper level is dominated by bedrooms. The upper floor is reached by a front staircase that rises and then turns gracefully to the second level. The staircase balustrade contains delicately turned spindlework.

There are two dependencies attached to the property, both of architectural significance, that complement the residence. There is a one story servants' quarters, a masonry structure with a simple hipped roof of metal. This building has two identical entrance doors (flanked on either side by a long narrow segmentally arched window) that suggests that originally the buildings was designed to accomodate at least two servants. The fact that there are twin chimneys to feed two fireplaces supports this concept. The building sits on a slope and at the rear elevation there is a raised masonry basement with a large central door with a heavy stone lintel over it. This door was obviously intended to accomodate a carriage. The basement served, then, as the carriage house.

The other dependency is a small one-story masonry spring house. It sits on a masonry foundation and has a low pitched hip roof with wide overhanging eaves. Its single door way replicates the windows of the residence with a segmented arch above. Both dependencies are contemporary with the residence.

This small Italiante complex is reached from Virginia Street by a long sloping brick driveway, and from Walnut Street by a concrete stairway. The property is bounded on both streets by a concrete retaining wall.

The Lemley-Wood-Sayre House is an important example of nearly pure Italianate architecture in West Virginia, and one of Ravenswood's most impressive landmarks.

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 checked="" 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
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
				Local History

Specific dates: 1871-72

Builder/Architect

Tanzy Brown, Builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Lemley-Wood-Sayre House, located at 301 Walnut Street, in the town of Ravenswood, Jackson County, West Virginia, is locally significant as one of the finest intact examples of Italianate architecture in the region.¹ It is also significant as having been home to individuals significant to Jackson County history and to West Virginia literature.²

Explanatory Notes

1. The Lemley-Wood-Sayre House, sitting on a small rise above the intersection of one of Ravenswood, Jackson County's most prominent meeting of streets, is a significant intact example of almost pure Italianate residential architecture. Constructed on a perfectly symmetrical cross plan, the house displays nearly every aspect of the classical Italianate style. Widely overhanging eaves are supported by decorative brackets; the metal roof is simple hipped and low pitch; tall, narrow windows, arched above; small single story porches with elaborately decorative posts and ballustrades; these are all prominent elements of the pure Italianate residential style that are exhibited by the Lemley-Wood-Sayre House. A more detailed description of the property can be found in Part 7.

The Lemley-Wood-Sayre House is regarded as the finest example of its type to be found in Ravenswood or in Jackson County. It is, in fact, among the finest examples of Italianate residential architecture in this region of the state of West Virginia.

2. The Lemley-Wood-Sayre House has been home to and associated with a succession of individuals significant to the history of Ravenswood and of Jackson County. The house (and the two outbuildings) were constructed about 1871-72 for Thomas Hart Benton Lemley. While it is not certain exactly when the house was constructed, it is known that Lemley purchased the lots in July of 1871 and the tax records for 1873 clearly indicate that the buildings were then present. T.H.B. Lemley was the proprietor of "Lemley's" in Ravenswood during the latter part of the 19th century which, among other items, specialized in the sale of carpets and shoes. "Lemley's" also contained an apothecary shop where drugs were dispensed. T.H.B. Lemley also played a prominent role in local public affairs, serving as a justice of the peace in the early 1880's, and was County Clerk of Jackson County from 1885 to 1889.

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Continuation sheet Lemley-Wood-Sayre House Item number

8

Page 2

Lemley employed locally prominent builder Tazzy Brown to construct the buildings. Stonemason William Pruder and plasterer and bricklayer Richard Plover aided Brown in the work of construction. Pruder obtained the stone for the house at nearby Hemlock quarry.

Lemley sold the property to Mary Wells in 1889. Apparently the property was involved in a legal dispute in 1898 and Wells lost the property as the result of a suit brought by one C. L. Brown and others. Brown was also locally prominent, serving in the West Virginia House of Delegates 1883-85 and as a member of the West Virginia Senate 1885-89.

The property was purchased in 1900 by Warren Wood, a prominent West Virginia educator and author. He established the Ohio Valley Commercial Institute at Ravenswood, after having conducted a summer school in Middlebourne that is said to have been "the forerunner of the first county high school in West Virginia." (Comstock, see 9). Wood was the author of Tragedy of the Deserted Isle (1909), an account of the Aaron Burr-Harmen Blennerhassett "conspiracy". More importantly, Wood authored When West Virginia was Rent in Twain (1914), an account West Virginia statehood movement during the Civil War. Wood also published a book of verse, Voices from the Valley (1918) and Representative Authors of West Virginia (1926), the latter of which is still a standard reference work.

Wood sold the property to O.C. Kneeream and his wife Sally in 1913. The Kneereams lived in the property until their deaths, after which it was obtained by D. F. Sayre and his wife Edna Sayre, members of the very locally prominent Sayre family, in 1937. The Sayre family was one of Jackson County's founding families and has continued to be of influence throughout the county's annals. Passing to Hilda Sayre, the property remained in the Sayre family, with whom it is locally associated, until 1980.

The Lemley-Wood-Sayre House is significant as an excellent example of Italianate residential architecture that makes it one of Jackson County's outstanding architectural landmarks, as well as being significant for the succession of important individuals who have lived there and made their mark on Jackson County and West Virginia history.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Ambler, Charles H. & Summers, Festus P., West Virginia, the Mountain State, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1958
Early History of Pioneer Days in Jackson County, Ripley, W.Va., Delta Kappa Gamma International, 1976

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .8 acre

Quadrangle name Ravenswood, W.Va.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 17 434100 431111310
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at the intersection of Walnut Street and Virginia Street, being the northeast corner of said intersection; thence with a line of Virginia Street north 112 feet to a stake; thence leaving Virginia Street at right angles and running in an Easterly direction

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name title Michael J. Pauley, Historian

organization Hart and Pauley, Consultants

date July 15, 1985

street & number 4651 Victoria Road

telephone (304) 744-9342

city or town Charleston

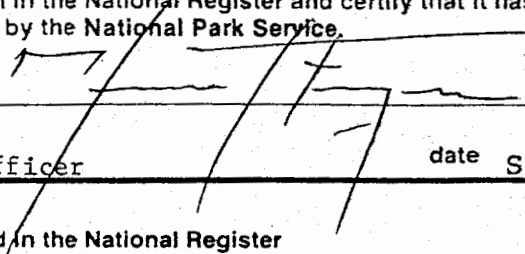
state West Virginia 25313

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 State Historic Preservation Officer

date September 11, 1985

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

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date entered

Continuation sheet Lemley-Wood-Sayre House Item number 9

Page 2

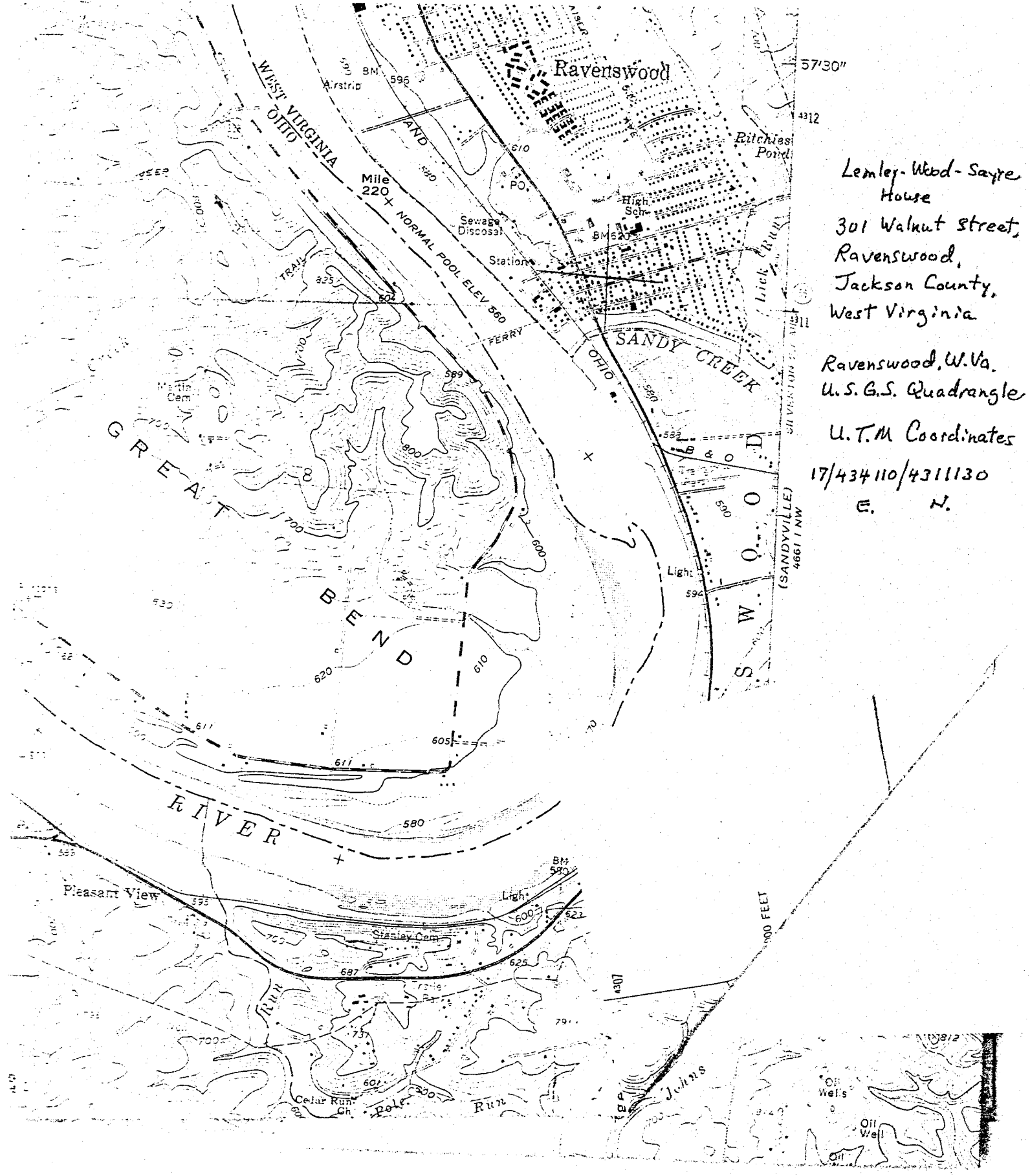
Jackson County Deed Books, Book 172, p. 465

Moore, Dean W., Washington's Woods, A History of Ravenswood, W.Va.,
Parsons, W.Va., McClain Printing Co., 1971

West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia, Comstock Publishing, Richwood, 1976

Item 10, Verbal Boundary Description, Continuation

to any alley; thence with the western side of said alley in a southerly
direction 110 feet to Walnut Street; thence with the line of Walnut
Street to the place of beginning, comprising all of City Lots 101 and
102 of the City of Ravenswood, Jackson County, West Virginia.



Lemley-Webb-Sayre
House
301 Walnut street,
Ravenswood,
Jackson County,
West Virginia

Ravenswood, W. Va.
U.S.G.S. Quadrangle

U.T.M Coordinates
17/434110/4311130
E. N.

