

NR 4-18-85

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

1. Name

historic William Nicholas Straub House

and or common Straub-~~Cheney~~ House

2. Location

street & number 531 Perry

N/A not for publication

city, town Helena

N/A vicinity of

state Arkansas

code 05

county Phillips

code 107

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Tom and Gail Cheney

street & number 531 Perry Street

city, town Helena

N/A vicinity of

state Arkansas

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Phillips County Courthouse

street & number Cherry Street

city, town Helena

state Arkansas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Helena Historic Resource Survey

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

date 1979

federal state county local N/A

depository for survey records Phillips County Library

city, town Helena

state Arkansas

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY

Possessing no dominate stylistic influence, the design of the William Nicholas Straub House is an eclectic mix of features borrowed from the Shingle and Colonial Revival styles. Constructed in 1900 by the Lyle Brothers, this two-and-a-half story Helena residence is significant for its unusual composition, the most striking feature of which is the crenelleted front tower.

ELABORATION

Located in the section of Helena listed on the plat map as "Old Helena", the Straub House occupies the central third of Lot 298 in the same block as the Public Library. In close proximity to a number of turn-of-the-century residences, it is located only three blocks from Cherry Street, the main thoroughfare of Helena.

Not representative of any single architectural trend, the Straub House is a uniquely eclectic vernacular design. Two-and-a-half stories in height, the structure rests on a stucco-covered brick foundation. The first floor is constructed of brick, which has always been painted, while the second floor is sheathed in shingles. The gable roof is intersected by a front and side cross gable and two interior brick chimneys.

The asymmetrical front is the most peculiar elevation of the house. A full one story front porch is supported by three Ionic columns. Concrete steps replace original wood steps. The simple entrance, located at the left, consists of a single wood door with a large single pane of glass, and a transom. A stone lintel above the transom is repeated above all first floor fenestration. A two-sided projection to the right of the entrance has a pair of one-over-one double-hung windows. A multi-paned pair of French doors and transom replace an original large window, which was removed in 1929 following the death of Mr. Straub. This alteration was brought about by the fact that no existing entrance was wide enough for the coffin.

The second floor of the front elevation is sided with shingles. Dominating this facade is a curved crenellated projection, penetrated by three double-hung windows. This projection extends from the left corner of the structure. A cross gable to the right of the tower functions as a dormer, since it does not extend from the main wall. The gable end is articulated by gable returns and a horseshoe-shaped attic window. Two double-hung windows are centered in the wall to the right of the tower.

The side (west) elevation is asymmetrical, with an off-center three-sided gable projection, the rear slope of which merges with the rear slope of the principal gable roof. A beltcourse separates the first and second floors. Five windows are located on the first floor, and four windows on the second floor. The large gable end has a diamond-shaped attic window, while the end of the gable projection has a horseshoe-shaped attic window.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1900 Builder Architect Lyle Brothers-Builders

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SUMMARY

The William Nicholas Straub House on Perry Street in Helena combines an unusual mix of styles which creates a truly unusual residential structure in this small town in Eastern Arkansas. Borrowing from the Shingle and Colonial Revival styles, the house which Straub built for himself in 1900 is a significant eclectic vernacular design.

ELABORATION

This house was built by William Nicholas Straub in 1900. Located in the same block as the Phillips County Library and only three blocks from the main street in Helena, Cora and Nicholas (Bebe) Straub were near all the activity of this prosperous town". This section of Helena, listed on one plat as "Old Helena", is in the area laid out in 1821 by Nicholas Rightor and Sylvanus Phillips.

At the time the house was built, the trying days of the Civil War and Reconstruction were in the past and Helena was a thriving community. Evidence of the prosperity of the times is reflected in past editions of the Helena World. Turn of the century editions of the newspaper picture a prosperous and growing town surrounded by fertile farming land and the Mississippi River. This modern up-to-date city was well lit by both gas and electricity, had a more than adequate water supply, a sewer system, an annual supply of 100,000 bales of cotton, saw mills, oil mills, woodworking plants, churches for all religions, schools with high standards, an opera house, a racing track, telephone service, a brick works, seven hotels, an ice company and well stocked stores.

Nicholas Straub, father of the original owner, came to this country from Germany in 1862, and founded a general mercantile business, N. Straub and Sons Mercantile Company. In 1890, he founded Straub Pressed Brick Company. He is reported to have been a prominent member of the community.

William Nicholas Straub, following in his father's footsteps, was very involved in community affairs. In 1900, he was on the Board of Public Affairs for the city government of Helena. He was treasurer of the Helena Chamber of Commerce that same year. Mrs. Straub, his wife, was Cora Rider from Pennsylvania. Shortly after her marriage and move to Helena, she convinced her brother, Paul Rider, to move also. He worked for Straub at the Straub Mercantile Company.

Straub died in 1929. His widow asked her brother and sister-in-law to live with her. Rider died several years later leaving the two widows in the house until the early 1950's when Mrs. Straub died and left the house to Mrs. Rider. The present owners acquired the house in 1983.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Latour, Ark.-Miss.

Quadrangle scale 1:62,500

UTM References

A

15	7	21	0	25	38	23	0	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

Center 1/3 of Lot 298 of Old Helena.

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 Gail Cheney (edited by AHPP staff)

organization None date March, 1985

street & number 531 Perry telephone 338-9269

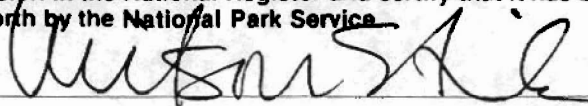
city or town Helena state Arkansas

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 Arkansas State Historic Preservation Officer date March 13, 1985

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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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The rear (south) elevation is dominated by a two-story porch that extends across the back of the structure. Constructed c. 1910, this frame addition rests upon a foundation similar to that of the main structure. The flat roof has a wide overhang that is supported by exposed rafters. The first floor of the porch is open, with the exception of a small enclosure at the southeast corner. The second floor is an enclosed sleep porch, clad with shingles, and features a continuous band of double-hung windows on all three sides.

The (east) side elevation is asymmetrical with an irregular placement of windows. The focal point is a 4 1/2' x 15' arched double-hung window positioned at the location of the interior stair. The fixed arched upper sash originally contained stained glass. Other fenestration includes a fixed square window that illuminated the small front vestibule, a double-hung window on each of the two floors, and a diamond-shaped attic window.

The plan of the Straub House consists of small irregularly shaped halls and rooms. The ceilings of the first floor are eleven feet in height. Beautiful oak floors and woodwork are located throughout the house. Window and door surrounds range from simple to more elaborate architrave mouldings with corner blocks. All hall doors on each floor possess transoms.

A small vestibule directly inside the front door is separated from the main stairhall by a single wood and glass door with transom. Occupying the two-sided front projection is a built-in oak bench. The oak stair features the large arched window at its landing, a rail of turned banisters and carved square newel posts.

The principal rooms on the first floor include a parlor with a white painted mirrored mantel and tile surrounds, a large dining room with a similar classically-detailed oak mantel and a kitchen, the only room with a regular rectangular plan. Three bedrooms, one in the tower, are located on the second floor. Ceilings are 10 1/2' in height. Two bedrooms possess fireplaces. A small stair leads to a spacious floored attic.

Many of the light fixtures are original to the house but have been relocated. There have been no significant interior alterations.

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Continuation sheet

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1. Past issues of the Helena World on microfilm at the Helena Library
2. Mrs. Etta Rider, sister-in-law to the original owner and past owner of the house.
3. Mr. John Robinson, Architectural Historian, Memphis, TN.
4. Abstract Company, Helena.
5. Mrs. Annetta Beauchamp, Phillips Co. Historical Society.
6. Past issues of the "Phillips County Quarterly."

