

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED APR 17 1985

DATE ENTERED MAY 31 1985

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Harry S Truman National Historic Site

AND/OR COMMON

Truman Home, Summer White House, Gates/Wallace/Truman House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

219 North Delaware Street

CITY, TOWN

Independence

STATE

Missouri

VICINITY OF

CODE
29

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5

COUNTY
JacksonCODE
095**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

☒ DISTRICT
☐ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC
☐ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED
☒ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE
☐ COMMERCIAL
☐ EDUCATIONAL
☐ ENTERTAINMENT
☐ GOVERNMENT
☐ INDUSTRIAL
☐ MILITARY
☒ MUSEUM
☒ PARK
☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ OTHER:**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office

STREET & NUMBER

1709 Jackson Street

CITY, TOWN

Omaha

VICINITY OF

STATE

Nebraska 68102

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Jackson County Courthouse Annex

STREET & NUMBER

306 West Kansas Street

CITY, TOWN

Independence

STATE

Missouri 64050

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

1. Harry S Truman Historic District, National Historic Landmark
2. Harry S Truman Heritage District

DATE

1. February 23, 1972 (Federal)
 2. 1974 (Local)
- ☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

1. National Register of Historic Places
2. Ordinance 3407, Office of the City Clerk

CITY, TOWN

1. Washington, D.C.
2. Independence,

STATE

Missouri

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

—EXCELLENT

X GOOD

—FAIR

See following text

—DETERIORATED

—RUINS

—UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

—UNALTERED

X ALTERED

CHECK ONE

X ORIGINAL SITE

—MOVED

DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Harry S Truman National Historic Site comprises the residence of Harry S and Bess Wallace Truman as well as several associated support structures. The Harry S Truman National Historic Site boundary coincides with that of the Truman home (HS-01) proper at 219 North Delaware Street on Lots 2 and 3 of James F. Moore's Addition to the City of Independence, Jackson County, Missouri. The national historic site is rectangular, measuring 175 by 225 feet, or .77 of an acre, and is situated on the southeast corner of North Delaware Street and Truman Road. The land is mostly level with a slight eastward slope. An iron picket fence (HS-03) surrounds the property on three sides while the property is largely open on the east. The "barn," or carriage house (HS-02), stands to the southeast of the Truman home. An alley, which parallels the property on the south, connects the barn to North Delaware Street. An asphalt driveway leads north from the barn to Truman Road. Several other historic structures are present including a pergola (HS-04, in ruins) and the site of the Secret Service security booth (HS-06), a flagpole (HS-08), a gas lamp (HS-09), a sundial (HS-07), a cistern (HS-10), and a birdbath (HS-05).

THE TRUMAN HOME (HS-01)

The 2 1/2-story, 18-room Truman home can best be described as an eclectic Victorian style. The white bevel sided balloon framed house, set on a random coursed limestone foundation, was constructed in several phases. The original portion, or kitchen wing, which includes the kitchen and abovestairs storage areas, was constructed prior to the Civil War, probably circa 1850.¹ It features a truncated gable roof, covered with sheet metal at the top and composition shingles on the slopes, and a large screened and open air porch at the east and south elevations.

The main body of the structure was constructed as two primary additions to the kitchen wing in 1867 and 1885. The two additions are virtually indistinguishable at the exterior due to the complimentary decorative elements and asymmetry of massing. The principal portion is topped by a metal decked dentiled "widow's walk" and grey composition shingled mansard roof with four gabled dormers fitted with jalousie windows. The trim of the projecting eaves of the main roof features a molded fascia and decorative frieze work adorned with heavily ornamented wooden brackets set directly above the second

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 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-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

1. circa 1850

1. unknown

SPECIFIC DATES 2. 1867 3. 1885	BUILDER/ARCHITECT 2. George Porterfield Gates 3. James W. Adams
--------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Harry S Truman National Historic Site is of national significance because it was the home of the 33rd President of the United States of America, Harry S. Truman. The residence at 219 North Delaware Street was the home of Harry S Truman from his marriage to Elizabeth Virginia ("Bess") Wallace on June 28, 1919, until his death on December 26, 1972. It was from this house that Truman launched his aborted business career as a haberdasher and then turned to politics, successively serving as Jackson County Judge (1923-25); Jackson County Presiding Judge (1927-35); United States Senator (1935-45); Vice President of the United States (1945); and President of the United States (1945-53). While it was necessary for the Truman family to live in Washington, D.C., for long periods during the senatorial and presidential years, the Trumans eagerly anticipated returning to 219 North Delaware Street for summers, vacations, and holidays. When President Truman was home at the "Summer White House," the eyes of the nation and the world were focused there.

HISTORY

George Porterfield Gates, the grandfather of Bess Wallace Truman, was born April 2, 1835, in Lunenburg, Vermont. In 1853, the family moved to Port Byron, Illinois, where they engaged in the lumber business. In 1860, G. P. Gates married, and six years later, following the lead of his father and brother, Gates moved his family to Independence. Gates purchased Lots 2 and 3 of James F. Moore's Addition on June 20, 1867, for \$700.¹ Although family tradition dictates that Gates built the original home on the property at 219 North Delaware Street, archival and structural investigations suggest that an earlier structure existed.² The second, or 1867, addition came as a result of the expanding Gates family--three daughters, Margaret ("Madge"), Maud, and Myra Gates (born in 1862, 1864, and 1866 respectively). The couple subsequently had two sons, G. Walter (born in 1868) and Frank E. (born in 1871) Gates. From charred roof rafters and a family tale, it is apparent that fire(s) changed the configuration of the Gates house in

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet 9, pages 1 to 4.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .77
UTM REFERENCES

A 15 376920 4327900
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property corresponds with the boundary of the Harry S Truman National Historic Site occupying city Lots 2 and 3 of James F. Moore's Addition, Independence, Missouri. It measures 175 by 225 feet in size.

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

Ron Cockrell, Research Historian/Alan W. O'Bright, Historical Architect 01/29/85

ORGANIZATION

Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

DATE

(402) 221-3426

STREET & NUMBER

1709 Jackson Street

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Omaha

STATE

Nebraska 68102

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES ☒

NO ☐

NONE ☐

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ☒ National ☐ State ☐ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

Chief Historian NPS

DATE

April 7, 1985

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Beth Gossens

DATE

5/31/85

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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floor window jamb trim and corner trim. One over one double hung windows are predominant.

The prominent west facade is marked by a two-story bay window featuring multipaned colored glass set in wood muntined double hung windows. The bay window is capped by a bell cast sheet metal clad roof with projecting eaves. A multipaned colored glass casement window with a pedimented hood is set within wing walls formed from the bay window roof. A gabled roof with decorative verge boards extends over and above the bay roof. A similarly detailed gabled roof also exists at the south elevation.

From the west bay window a veranda stretches north then curves east and continues to a two-story north bay window which is characterized by a saw-toothed horseshoe-shaped ornament set within the plane fascia of the bay windows' gable roof. This highly ornamented veranda features a mansard parapet, jigsaw frieze boards, four types of brackets, and perpendicular lattice skirts. A second two-bay porch of the same characteristics, but without a parapet, protects the south entry into the living room.

The main or west entry into the house is situated just north of the west bay window of the 1885 addition. The double leaf nine-foot tall doors features Eastlake style detailing with etched glass panes. The entry leads to a small ceramic tile floored vestibule bay and finally to another set of Eastlake enriched doors. These doors open to a central hall which is adorned with Lincrusta-Walton wainscoting. The primary double landed, U-shaped stairway at the south wall of the central hall features Lincrusta-Walton along its rake, a highly ornamented wooden baluster, and a newel post capped by a feminine statue holding aloft a globe shaded lamp.

The home is in good condition.

BARN/CARRIAGE HOUSE (HS-02)

This white 1 1/2-floor heavy timber framed structure with a shallow limestone foundation measures approximately 24 by 32 feet. Its date of construction is unknown, but probably dates to the late 1860s or 1870s. The barn was adapted as a garage before 1914.² The gable roof is sheathed in wooden shingles and crowned with a louvered

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square cupola at the center of the ridge. A gablet is centered on each roof leaf at the eave line. The south gablet features two loft doors. Loft doors also exist at the main gable ends. Two six-pane fixed windows and two shuttered openings grace the east and west facades respectively at the ground floor. The structure has a concrete floor. Overhead rolling garage doors enclose the two-car bays. Vertical board and batten siding is the predominant sheathing material.

The barn/carriage house is in fair condition.

FENCE (HS-03)

This black painted picket fence constructed of stock steel tube and bar set in concrete footings was erected in November 1949, at the insistence of the Secret Service to protect the Truman property from potential souvenir hunters.³ The fence encloses the property except at the alley driveway entry and the back yard of May Wallace's adjacent property to the east. A small portion of the fence extends to the Wallace home. Three pedestrian gates exist at the barn/carriage house (HS-02), the west main entry, and the Wallace home. The double leafed driveway gate is inset from Truman Road with curved fence sections. Both the driveway and west main entry gate locks are operated electronically from inside the home.

The fence is in good condition.

PERGOLA (HS-04)

The pergola was built after 1924 to accent Madge Wallace's rose garden.⁴ Composed of eight doric hollow wooden columns projecting from a cut stone base and red brick edging, diamond-shaped lattice-work enveloped the east and west ends of the rectangular pergola while the central bay of the structure remained open. The columns were topped by a square wooden framework crossed by rafters with decorative ends. The original pergola was claimed by a windstorm before the presidential period (1945-1953) and was rebuilt on the same foundation. The second pergola was also claimed by a severe storm, but was not rebuilt. It was removed before 1970.⁵

Only the stone and brick pergola foundation is extant.

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BIRDBATH (HS-05)

The birdbath is an integral component of the pergola complex since the original construction in the mid-1920s.⁶ The birdbath is of poured concrete and stands 3 1/2 feet high. While the stand remains in place in the center of the pergola, the circular basin in recent years was placed on the ground to avoid damage.

The birdbath is in deteriorated condition.

SECRET SERVICE SECURITY BOOTH (HS-06) SITE

A small guardhouse or security booth was built by the Secret Service to the immediate west of the barn/carriage house (HS-02) in late 1945 at an estimated cost of \$1200.⁷ The structure, which measured 10 by 12 feet,⁸ consisted of two rooms: a bathroom on the east and an observation room on the west for two Secret Service agents. The observation room was surrounded on three sides by large square windows from which to survey the Truman home (HS-01).⁹ The white clapboard structure with asphalt-shingled gable roof sat useless after January 20, 1953, and was hauled away in 1962. It was taken to a farm and used as an outbuilding where it was subsequently destroyed.¹⁰ An electric meter which serviced the booth is visible on the west facade of the barn/carriage house near the site of the security booth.

SUNDIAL (HS-07)

Immediately north of the center of the pergola (HS-04) is a concrete stand. The stand accommodated a metallic sundial which became missing sometime between October and December 1982. The sundial's inscription read: "My Face Marks The Sunny Hours. What Can You Say of Yours?" The sundial has stood in this approximate position since the 1920s. It was formerly in the center of four rose beds separated by grass walkways. The area was covered with sod immediately prior to World War II.¹¹

The sundial base is in deteriorated condition.

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FLAGPOLE (HS-08)

The steel flagpole measures just over 34 feet high and is on a spot in the northwest corner of the front lawn selected by Bess Truman and her mother, Mrs. D. W. (Madge) Wallace. The standard was a present to the Truman family from the city of Independence to commemorate Harry S. Truman's first homecoming as President on June 27, 1945. Two days previously, the flagpole was set in cement. The first flag was raised at 9:00 a.m. on June 26.¹²

The flagpole is in good condition.

GAS LAMP (HS-09)

The 6-foot gas lamppost stands on a concrete base and illuminates the front and north yard of the Truman home (HS-01). The black, cast aluminum light features solid brass accents. Called the "Gettysburg," the gas lamp was presented to the Trumans in 1964 by Hadco Products, Incorporated of Littlestown, Pennsylvania. The gas lamp is a replica of the mid-19th century handcrafted fixtures indigenous to New England. Independence Gas Service Company workmen installed it at the residence free of charge on June 24, 1964. A trench for the gas line was dug to the northwest corner of the property.¹³

The gas lamp is in good condition.

CISTERN (HS-10)

The subgrade cistern lies beneath the kitchen porch floor just east of the porch stair. The date of construction is unknown, but it served as the home's initial water supply, storing water from a spring beneath the property. The cistern's use was discontinued and capped with concrete in 1926 when it was feared the spring was contaminated.¹⁴ The visible portion of the cistern, constructed of pargetted brick, has an outside diameter of approximately three feet. The subgrade depth, diameter, and construction is unknown.

The visible portion of the cistern is in fair condition.

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HISTORIC OBJECTS AND FURNISHINGS

The Truman home (HS-01) contains a wealth of historic objects and furnishings which reflect the successive Gates-Wallace-Truman occupancy. The home, complete with its contents, and support structures were bequeathed to the Federal Government by the estate of Bess Wallace Truman. The historic objects, together with the structures, provide valuable insight into the lifestyle of President Harry S Truman and his family. The contents of the Truman home are significant for the purposes of this nomination and an inventory is being compiled.

NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE:

BICENTENNIAL HISTORICAL MARKER

The black cast aluminum sign stands six feet high and four feet wide and features raised white lettering. It stands near the flagpole (HS-08) on the northwest corner of the lawn. Similar to other such signs throughout Independence, the historical marker was installed by the American Bicentennial Commission of Independence in late April 1976, with the permission of Bess Truman.¹⁵ It reads: "TRUMAN HOUSE Built about 1867 by George Porterfield Gates, a mill owner. President Harry S. Truman and his wife, Bess Wallace Truman, granddaughter of Gates, made this their home from the time of their marriage in 1919. The 'Summer White House' from 1945 to 1953."

The historical marker is in excellent condition.

NOTES

1. Chain of title review by Historian Pauline S. Fowler of Independence, and 1984 National Park Service physical structural investigation. See also Ron Cockrell, Chapter Two, "The Trumans of Independence: Historic Resource Study, Harry S Truman National Historic Site, Independence, Missouri" (Omaha: Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service, 1984).
2. Mrs. H. H. (Ardis) Haukenberry, Interview, Independence, Mo., June 14, 1983.
3. Robert Ferrell, ed., Off The Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 167; and Fencing-Up the

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Summer White House," Examiner, 23 November 1949, 1, Mid-Continent Public Library, North Branch, Independence (hereinafter cited as MCP Library).

4. Mrs. George P. (May) Wallace, Interview, Independence, Mo., June 14, 1983.

5. Ron Cockrell, "Oral History Interview with Mrs. Margaret Truman Daniel at the Harry S Truman National Historic Site, Independence, Missouri, November 17, 1983," transcript (Omaha: Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service, 1984), 25; 35 (hereinafter cited as Cockrell, "Oral History Interview with Margaret Truman"); and Truman Library Photo Archives No. 71-860.

6. Cockrell, "Oral History Interview with Margaret Truman," 25.

7. "Expenditure of Federal Funds In Support of Presidential Properties," Fifteenth Report by the Committee on Government Operations, May 20, 1974, Union Calendar No. 490, 93rd Congress, 2nd Session, House Report No. 93-1052, 51, folder-Presidential Properties, Vertical File, Harry S. Truman Library (hereinafter cited as HSTL).

8. "A Quiet Truman Day," Kansas City Star, 21 December 1945, file-HST Christmas 1945, Kansas City Star Library (hereinafter cited as KCSL).

9. Cockrell, "Oral History Interview with Margaret Truman," 31.

10. Robert Sanders, Interview, Independence, Mo., June 30, 1983.

11. Cockrell, "Oral History Interview with Margaret Truman," 24; 47.

12. "Flag Pole Gift For Truman Yard," 25 June 1945, 1, and "City Is Scrubbed Up and Shined For Visit of Its Favorite Son," 26 June 1945, 1, Examiner, MCP Library.

13. Mrs. Elizabeth Safly, HSTL Librarian (information from Gas Service Company in Independence), conversation, July 11, 1983; Lew Waltz, National Sales Manager, Hadco (Division of Craftlite, Inc.) to Randall J. Pope, Acting Regional Director, National Park Service, Midwest Region, letter, September 20, 1983; Cockrell, "Oral History Interview with Margaret Truman," 46-7; and, Robert Sanders, Interview, Independence, Mo., June 30, 1983.

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14. Mrs. George P. (May) Wallace, Interview, Independence, Mo.,
June 14, 1983.

15. "Bicentennial Signs Placed," Examiner, 23 April 1976, 1B,
folder-Truman, Harry S 1976, Vertical File, HSTL.

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an unknown manner in these post bellum years.³

In 1885, G. P. Gates commissioned Independence's most noted builder and architect, James W. Adams, to build a 2 1/2-story facade which fronted on North Delaware and enveloped the west and south part of the 1867 structure with a unifying architectural style. The project involved "Fourteen rooms, water and gas" systems and was the most expensive Independence residence built in 1885 at \$8,000.⁴ Finishing touches such as fancy porches, windows, doors, mantels, lights, and a slate roof were in place by mid-1886.⁵ The third, or 1885, addition was constructed after G. P. Gates became one of Independence's leading businessmen as a partner in the Waggoner-Gates Milling Company, manufacturers of Queen of the Pantry Flour. Gates wanted to live in a house that would reflect his prominent standing in the community and serve as a comfortable retirement home.

Gates's oldest daughter, Madge, married David Willock Wallace on June 13, 1883. The ceremony took place at the First Presbyterian Church while a reception followed at the bride's parents' house at 219 North Delaware Street.⁶ David W. and Madge Wallace lived two miles away at 117 West Ruby Street where their first child, Elizabeth Virginia ("Bess"), was born on February 13, 1885. In April 1887, the family sold the Ruby Street home. Plagued with financial problems, the Wallaces lived for a short time in the Gates house before settling in another home two blocks away at 608 North Delaware Street.⁷

In December 1890, Bess Wallace and Harry S Truman first met at Sunday School at the First Presbyterian Church. For Harry Truman, it was love at first sight. Six-year-old Harry and his family had recently moved to Independence in order for Harry, brother Vivian, and sister Mary Jane to go to school. In 1896, the Trumans relocated to a home on West Waldo Street, an important move because the house, only a few blocks from North Delaware, enabled Harry and Bess to attend the same school. The childhood friends remained classmates until graduating from high school in 1901.⁸

Tragedy struck the Wallace family on July 17, 1903, when Bess's father committed suicide. David W. Wallace's death caused profound changes in his family's life. Madge Gates Wallace took her four children, Bess, Frank, George, and Fred, to Colorado Springs, Colorado, to live with an uncle for almost a year. When the Wallaces returned to Independence in 1904, they were welcomed to their new home, spacious

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219 North Delaware. Shortly afterwards, George P. and Elizabeth Gates converted an area off the living room into a bedroom and bath for their own quarters leaving the upstairs to the Wallaces. Madge Wallace used the space above the kitchen as a sitting/sewing room where her children could congregate at night without disturbing their grandparents who retired early to bed.⁹

One of the frequent visitors to the sitting room was Harry Truman. Truman's relationship with Bess Wallace had lapsed since high school. The Trumans moved away from Independence in 1901, and Harry worked in a succession of clerical and banking jobs in Kansas City before joining his family on the Grandview farm in 1906. Harry and Bess renewed their acquaintance in 1910 at Harry's initiative. Visiting his aunt and uncle, Joseph T. and Ethel ("Ella") Noland, who lived across North Delaware Street from the Gates-Wallace house, Harry immediately volunteered when Aunt Ethel announced she had a cakeplate to return to Madge Wallace. To his delight, Bess answered the door.¹⁰

The incident began a nine-year courtship. Truman became a frequent weekend visitor. He slept at the Noland house, but spent most of his time across the street. Harry kept in constant touch from the Grandview farm through a barrage of letters, confessing in 1913, "It seems like a hollow week if I don't arrive at 219 Delaware at least one day in it."¹¹ The 20-mile trip to Independence was facilitated in 1914 when Harry purchased a 1911 Stafford which he parked in the Gates-Wallace barn (HS-02) during each visit.

Harry's desire to make a more lucrative living than farming and Bess's family obligations kept the couple from getting married. Bess felt it was her duty to look after her elderly grandparents and chronically ill mother, and to help raise her youngest brother, Fred. The courtship continued on into 1917 at which time Truman enlisted in the Army. On July 11, 1918, he was commissioned to command Battery D, 129th Field Artillery, 35th Division of the Army National Guard.¹²

While Harry was fighting in France, Bess's grandfather died after a prolonged illness. George P. Gates's funeral was held at the family home on June 27, 1918. While his will provided that the estates' executors (other relatives) had the right to sell his property, Elizabeth Gates and the Wallaces stayed on.¹³ Upon Harry's return to the United States, he married Bess Wallace at Trinity Episcopal Church on June 28, 1919. A reception followed at the Gates-Wallace house. After their

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honeymoon, the Trumans returned to 219 North Delaware to begin married life. The decision to live in the Gates-Wallace house was largely a result of Madge Wallace's delicate health, aggravated by chronic sciatica, which worsened that summer. From a financial standpoint, until Harry established himself in a profession, the arrangement was ideal.¹⁴

Harry abandoned farming in favor of merchandising to support his new wife. Experienced by running a canteen in wartime, Harry joined with Eddie Jacobson to open a men's furnishings store in Kansas City. "Truman & Jacobson" opened in November 1919 with Eddie the buyer and Harry the salesman. While the first year proved lucrative, the postwar price deflation forced the business to liquidate to satisfy creditors. Truman refused to declare bankruptcy, struggling more than a decade to repay his debts.¹⁵

The business failure, although bitter, was cushioned by Harry's resourcefulness and an invitation to enter the political arena. It was late 1921 when Jim Pendergast, an Army buddy, suggested that Harry consider seeking the Democratic nomination for judge of the Jackson County Court in the Eastern District. In early 1922, as the store began to flounder, Jim's father, Mike Pendergast, the brother of Jackson County Boss Tom Pendergast, also encouraged Truman to run. This time, Harry threw his hat into the ring.¹⁶

Politics was not new to Harry Truman, however. Upon the death of his father in 1914, Harry inherited his position as road overseer in Washington township. He was also appointed Postmaster at Grandview, a job he held in title only; the position and salary went to a local widow.¹⁷ This prior political savvy helped him win the primary and election in 1922. As Eastern Jackson County Judge, an administrative position similar to a county executive, Judge Truman was not unknown to receive job-seekers in the first floor library of his home.¹⁸

Next to marrying Bess, the second most important event in the life of Harry S Truman was the birth of his daughter. Bess, 39, refused to go to a hospital, preferring instead to deliver her baby in the comfort and privacy of her family home. In the four years of her marriage, Bess had miscarried twice. During a bitter snowstorm on February 17, 1924, a 7-pound girl was born in their second floor east bedroom. The proud parents had no furnishings for their daughter because of Bess's superstition and previous child-bearing disappointments. Little Mary

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Margaret, dubbed "Margie," spent the first days of her life sleeping on two pillows in the opened drawer of a bureau.¹⁹

Margaret's birth was the highlight of 1924, while the remainder of the year saw sorrow and defeat. Elizabeth Gates, 83, died three months after her great-granddaughter's birth. Most of her estate went to an invalid son who had no use for the Independence home. Madge Wallace purchased the family home on October 4, 1924, from the trustees of her father's estate for \$10,000.²⁰ The next blow came when Judge Truman lost his bid for re-election in November. A split in the Democratic Party between the "Goats" (Pendergast faction) and the "Rabbits" (Shannon faction) saw the Rabbits actively supporting the Republican candidate. Following his defeat, in the two years he was out of office, Truman sold memberships to the Automobile Club of Kansas City and participated in savings and loan ventures.

In 1926, Harry ran for presiding judge. Truman won the primary and election handily and began a 4-year term in January 1927. He initiated an ambitious road building program which promised that no one in the county would live more than two miles from a paved road. Judge Truman's record of honesty, hard work, and positive results led to his re-election in 1930. Truman's statewide acclaim prompted Missouri Democrats to encourage the Presiding Jackson County Judge to run for the U.S. Senate in 1934.²¹

Politics intruded directly at 219 North Delaware only rarely. One instance that county administrative matters were brought to the house came on September 3, 1932. A form signed by Missouri Governor Henry S. Caulfield authorizing Kansas City's application for \$300,000 in unemployment relief from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation arrived for Truman's signature. Truman was not home at the time, but did sign it later, thereby making funds available to depression-struck Kansas Citizens.²² While Margaret was attending elementary school, a kidnap scheme was foiled. For nearly a year, Margaret was escorted to and from school. The sanctuary of the back yard playground, a popular spot for nine neighborhood girls, gave Bess Truman the assurance of knowing where her daughter was.²³

Harry Truman's November 1934 election to the Senate changed the Trumans' lives. At noon, on December 28, 1934, the two Truman automobiles pulled out of the driveway bound for Washington, D.C., with 10-year-old Margaret clutching a bedraggled Raggedy Ann doll. Madge

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Wallace stayed behind, but was not left alone. Her youngest son, Fred Wallace, and his family continued to live with her. Bess and Margaret came back to live there more than half the year during the summer and fall to care for Mrs. Wallace and for Margaret to attend school. In January, they went back to the capital. Senator Truman returned frequently, but his time was split between his home and official trips throughout the state. Only when the war emergency forced the Congress to remain in session in 1941 did the Trumans remain nine months of each year in Washington. When the Fred Wallace family moved to Denver in 1942, Madge Wallace closed up her home the following year and moved to Washington, too. For the next decade, the family home remained closed except during the summers and other vacation periods.²⁴

Truman's nomination as President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's vice presidential running mate in 1944 dramatically altered the Trumans' lives. They and their Independence home were thrust into the lime-light. Returning home from the Democratic convention, the Trumans greeted 3,000 friends, citizens, and well-wishers in their back yard. For more than two hours on the evening of July 24, 1944, the Trumans stood inside the rose-covered pergola (HS-04) and shook hands with a seemingly endless line of people.²⁵

Nine months later, on April 12, 1945, Harry S Truman succeeded Roosevelt as President. National attention focused on the Truman family and their home. Two-nineteen North Delaware was hailed as the "Hyde Park of the West." For six weeks in the spring of 1945, roofers, carpenters, and painters worked feverishly to ready the old house for the First Family's arrival. Neighbors helped supervise the painting of the home a brilliant white trimmed in Kentucky green.²⁶ Mayor Roger T. Sermon approved the gift of a flagpole (HS-08), stating that the "Summer White House" should not be without a standard from which to fly the Stars and Stripes. It was installed on June 26, the day before the President's first official visit to his home town.²⁷

Becoming the First Family's residence necessitated several structural modifications to the family home. In late 1945, the Secret Service built a small security booth (HS-06) adjacent to the barn (HS-02) for the two permanent agents assigned to guard the home. Despite Secret Service pressure, the black picket fence (HS-03) was not installed until November 1949. It was erected only after former President Herbert C. Hoover warned that, if Truman wanted to keep his

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house in one piece, he had to fence out the souvenir-minded public. In April 1950, the President had the rear porch refloored, extended six feet, and screened-in. This area became the Trumans' favorite place to spend time relaxing, eating, and visiting friends.²⁸

The summer homecomings were eagerly anticipated by the First Lady, Margaret, and Madge Wallace. Bess especially saw her home as a refuge away from the demands of living in the White House, a place the President's family called "The Great White Jail." Harry was forced to spend most of his time in the capital during the hectic postwar years. Whenever he could, however, the President flew west to be with his family aboard the appropriately-named presidential plane, The Independence.²⁹

Whenever Bess and Margaret were away in Independence, Harry either wrote or called them on a regular basis. An historic telephone hook-up was made between Berlin and the Summer White House on July 18, 1945. Attending the Potsdam Conference, the President called his wife via transatlantic radiotelephone, marking the first call between Germany and the United States since 1941.³⁰

Presidential visits to Independence came regularly at Christmas, except in 1947 and 1952. Truman-Wallace tradition dictated that gifts were opened before the 14-foot tall Christmas tree in the living room followed by a large, formal dinner at noon.³¹ Holiday trips included a lot of work for the President, however, as he spent time working on the nation's budget and the annual State of the Union message. Each Christmas Eve, Truman addressed the nation over the radio sending seasons' greetings and lighting the National Christmas Tree in Washington via telegraph key. On such occasions, very few journalists were allowed inside the house and few photographs were taken.³²

On October 31, 1948, Harry Truman completed his famous "Whistle-stop Campaign" in Independence. The following night, election eve, national politics centered on 219 North Delaware as President Truman delivered his final speech of the 1948 campaign to a national radio audience. Seated in the living room, Harry Truman gave the most inspiring and crucial speech of his life. He summarized the purpose of his "Whistlestop Campaign," explained the issues, and told the American people that the Democratic Party was "the party of the people," compared to the Republican Party, "the party of privilege."³³ If enough Americans listened to the broadcast and were inspired to vote, the speech may have contributed to tipping the election in Truman's favor.

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The home was virtually surrounded by the national press corps on the night of the election. Reporters anxiously awaited an admission of defeat which never came. The President was not even home; he had taken advantage of a Secret Service decoy to slip away.³⁴

Harry came home to celebrate his 31st wedding anniversary and to visit with his family the weekend of June 24 and 25, 1950. He was reading in the library shortly after 10:00 p.m., on June 24, when the telephone in the central hallway rang. Secretary of State Dean Acheson told the President that North Korea had invaded South Korea. Truman authorized Acheson to call for an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council. As East-West tension heightened, rumors of war caused world attention to focus on Harry Truman at the Summer White House. A call from Acheson the next morning confirmed that an all-out invasion was underway. Truman called on the Joint Chiefs of Staff to prepare recommendations for him upon his immediate return to Washington, D.C. The blatant act of aggression flew in the face of the administration's security guarantees and the Truman Doctrine of containing the spread of communism.³⁵ Before his hasty departure from home, the President revealed to his family his determination to answer the threat by committing U.S. forces.³⁶

An informal press conference, the only such event at the Truman home, was held prior to the lighting of the National Christmas Tree on December 24, 1951. From the first floor library, Truman told reporters that he would "use all the laws on the books" to keep the steel mills operating and avoid an imminent nationwide strike. He implied that he would invoke the emergency provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act for an 80-day anti-strike moratorium and/or a Federal seizure of the steel industry. Referred to the Wage Stabilization Board at Truman's request, Harry added that he hoped management and workers would keep the mills operating in the national interest.³⁷

In what the Trumans planned as their last visit home before leaving the White House in January 1953, they voted in Independence in the fall 1952 election. November 4 was a special day for Harry Truman as he walked with Bess and Margaret from their home to mark a ballot on which, for the first time in 30 years, his name did not appear.³⁸ The death of Madge Gates Wallace on December 5, 1952, in her White House bedroom, however, necessitated a sad homecoming. A private funeral service was held three days later at 219 North Delaware. The Trumans returned to Washington the next day.³⁹

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Harry and Bess Truman left Washington, D.C., immediately following the inauguration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower on January 20, 1953. Private citizens once again without Secret Service protection, both were eager to return to 219 North Delaware for a well-deserved rest from the rigors of public life. The Trumans' train pulled into the Independence depot of the Missouri Pacific Railroad on the evening of January 22. Nearly a quarter of Independence's population braved the winter weather to welcome their famous neighbors home. In the vicinity of the depot were more than 8,500 enthusiastic people, while along the route and in front of the former Summer White House were another 1,500.⁴⁰

With the death of her mother six weeks before, Bess Truman was the new mistress of 219 North Delaware. Madge Wallace's estate was divided equally among her four children. In July 1953, Harry and Bess purchased the other interests in the house which was appraised at \$25,000. The deed gave the property to both partners "as an estate by the entirety with right of survivorship."⁴¹

Retirement did not mean idleness as the couple immediately began a process which they termed "modernization." Years of neglect while the family was away had taken their toll on the home. During the ensuing years craftsmen worked in nearly every room, transforming the house to suit the Trumans' own tastes. Bess was in charge, but always sought her husband's approval on everything from wallpaper to paint colors, carpeting to sofa covers. The changes were not major: bookshelves for the library, shoring-up the main floor, renovating the attic and basement, paving the driveway, rescreening the windows, and numerous small repair jobs. Harry and Bess emphasized to the workmen that they wanted the modernizations to be economical while not significantly altering the home's appearance.

Rooms were re-wallpapered, carpeting was laid, and Bess was charged with fitting their Washington furniture, mementoes, and gifts into the existing decor of Gates-Wallace heirlooms.⁴² They paused on May 27, 1955, to be interviewed by Margaret Truman, the guest host on Edward R. Murrow's 30-minute "Person to Person" television show. It was the first time the American people had ever seen the inside of the home.⁴³

The fence (HS-03) around the property was retained, although by 1961, Bess was glad when the Secret Service booth (HS-06) in the back

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yard was hauled away.⁴⁴ When the Secret Service returned in 1965 following congressional authorization, the Trumans refused to permit them to rebuild the booth. At one point, the agents were evicted from their command post in the barn/carriage house (HS-02) and returned only after the Trumans were coaxed to relent by President Lyndon Baines Johnson.⁴⁵

The Truman home served as the base from which Harry concentrated his energy on a labor of love: building his presidential library. Harry spearheaded the fund raising program, traveling across the nation for speaking engagements. Receptions for the groundbreaking (May 8, 1955) and dedication (July 6, 1957) were held at the Truman home. Four hundred invited guests attended the dedication reception including former President Herbert C. Hoover, U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren, Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn, Mrs. Franklin D. (Eleanor) Roosevelt, and Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson.⁴⁶ In the year between the Library receptions, a wedding reception for Margaret and E. Clifton Daniel was held at the home following their widely publicized April 21, 1956, wedding.⁴⁷

Two-nineteen North Delaware was also Harry Truman's literary base. While Harry wrote much of the rough draft of his memoirs at his office in the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, the work assumed actual shape at the Truman home. There, Bess served in a familiar capacity as editor and critic. The preface to the first volume, Year of Decisions, was finished at 219 North Delaware on August 5, 1955.⁴⁸ The second volume, Years of Trial and Hope, was published in 1956.

Upon completion of the Harry S. Truman Library, .7 mile north of his home down the Delaware Street corridor, the former President spent almost all of his time in Independence. From his office, Harry assisted in the organization of the archives and museum exhibits. At noon, he usually came home to eat lunch with Bess before going back to work in the afternoon. Returning home in the evening, Harry napped before dinner and then spent the evening with Bess reading or listening to music. It was a quiet, peaceful "retirement" for the couple. Both looked forward to each visit by the Daniels and their grandsons. A nursery in the second floor front bedroom always awaited them.⁴⁹

A 1964 fall in the upstairs bathroom triggered Harry Truman's decline from good health. Afflicted by vertigo, trips to his office at the Truman Library and customary neighborhood walks became rare. The

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former President spent most of his time reading in the first floor library.⁵⁰ Bess was a master at keeping disruptions at a minimum. When the old slate roof finally had to be removed in the summer of 1969, Bess refused to have the water damage to the interior repaired because she feared the noise and mess would disturb her frail husband.⁵¹

In the two decades since Harry Truman's retirement from the White House, he played an important role in national politics as an elder statesman of the Democratic Party. Syngman Rhee, President of South Korea, stopped by the Truman home on August 5, 1954, to thank the former President on behalf of the South Korean people for his support during the Korean conflict. Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson visited him in Independence.⁵² Presidential running mates Hubert H. Humphrey and Edmund S. Muskie came seeking Truman's endorsement and advice in 1968.⁵³ Even Truman's political arch-enemy, incumbent President Richard M. Nixon, visited 219 North Delaware on March 21, 1969, when their bitter feud finally ended.⁵⁴ Celebrities like Bob Hope and Maurice Chevalier also journeyed to visit the Trumans in their home.

The most significant presidential visit came on October 11, 1968, when Lyndon Baines Johnson paid his sixth visit during his presidency to 219 North Delaware. In tribute to Harry S Truman's role in helping realize the birth of the United Nations, President Johnson signed Proclamation 3878 designating October 24 an annual "U.N. Day" in the United States. Johnson also signed Proclamation 3879 praising Truman for his participation in helping create the U.N. Both documents were signed in the Trumans' living room.⁵⁵

Harry Truman died December 26, 1972, in Kansas City's Research Hospital at age 88. Bess never considered leaving Independence. She wanted to remain in the house where she and her husband had found such happiness and comfort. Living alone for almost a decade, the furniture and personal items were left much as they were before Harry's death. It was as if the home had been frozen in time.

Bess Wallace Truman died in her beloved home on October 18, 1982, at age 97. Buried beside her husband in the courtyard of the Truman Library, Bess Truman bequeathed her residence to the Federal Government. On December 8, 1982, Secretary of the Interior James G. Watt, acting under authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935, signed Desig-

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nation Order No. 3088 declaring 219 North Delaware the "Harry S Truman National Historic Site." Congressional authorization followed when President Ronald W. Reagan signed P.L. 98-32 on May 23, 1983. The enabling legislation for the Harry S Truman National Historic Site is to "preserve and interpret for the inspiration and benefit of present and future generations the former home of Harry S Truman, thirty-third President of the United States."

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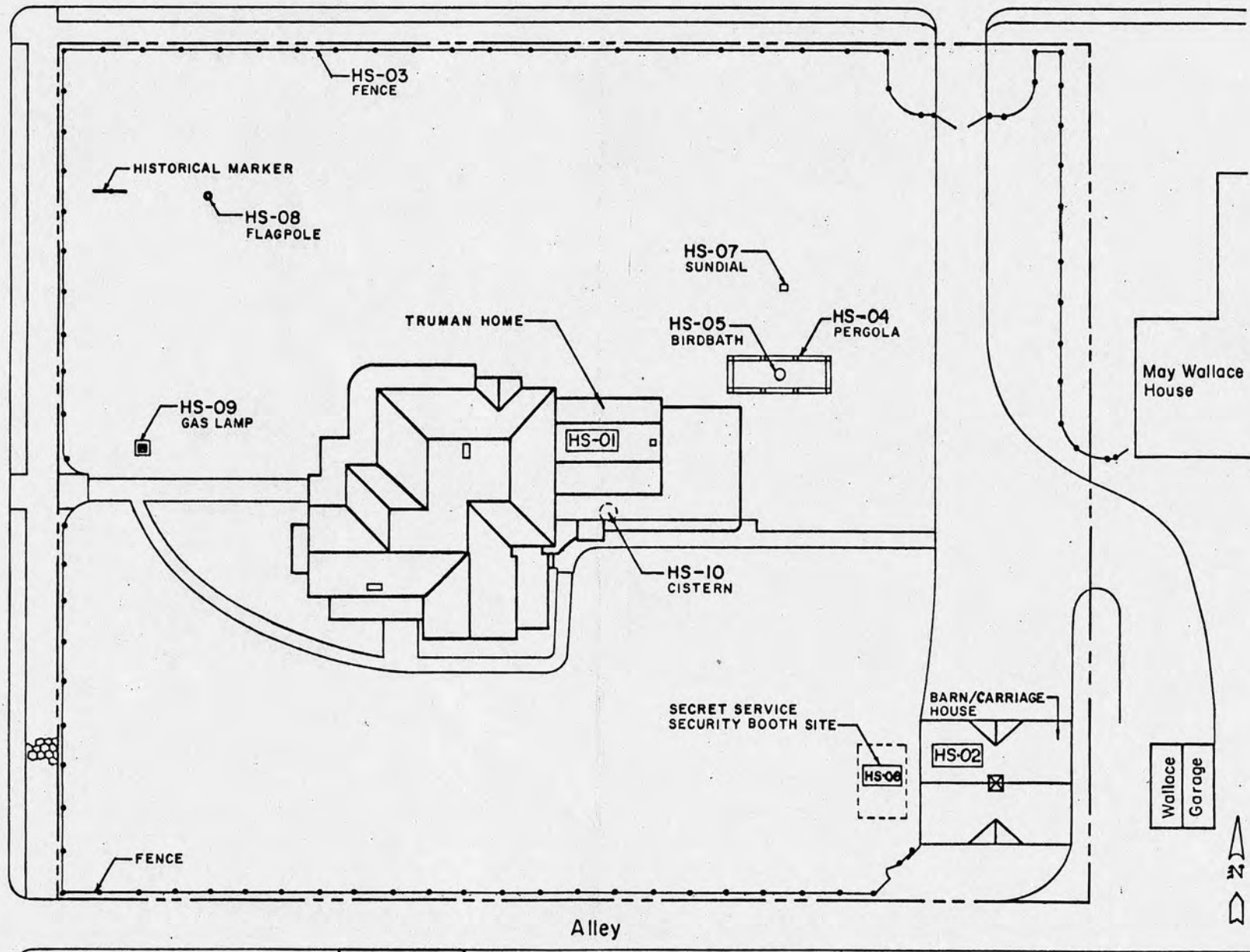
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Warranty Deeds for Lots 2 and 3 of James F. Moore's Addition. Jackson
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Truman Road

North Delaware Street



SITE MAP

HARRY S TRUMAN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Photo Log:

Name of Property: **Truman, Harry S, National Historic Site**

City or Vicinity: **Independence**

County: **Jackson County** State: **MO**

Photographer: **Jack E. Boucher**

Date

Photographed: **Mar. 1983**

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 15. View from NW corner of N Delaware St and Truman Rd.
- 2 of 15. Truman home, facing W.
- 3 of 15. Truman home, facing S.
- 4 of 15. Truman home, facing E.
- 5 of 15. Truman home, facing N.
- 6 of 15. Truman home, living room, facing W.
- 7 of 15. Truman home, parlor/music room, facing N.
- 8 of 15. Truman home, Library, facing E.
- 9 of 15. Truman home, dining room, facing S.
- 10 of 15. Truman home, kitchen, facing W.
- 11 of 15. Barn/Carriage House, secret service booth (to right), facing SW.
- 12 of 15. Fence, facing N.
- 13 of 15. Pergola and birdbath, facing N.
- 14 of 15. Birdbath and pergola, facing S.
- 15 of 15. Sundial, facing SW.





























