

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FEB 08 1993

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Mays, James Henry and Ida Owen House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number North bank Snake River, 1.2 miles west of Niagara Springs

n/a not for publication

city or town Wendell

X vicinity

state Idaho

code ID

county Gooding

code 047

zip code 83355

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

1 Feb 93
Date

John R. Hill, Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Patricia Andrews

3/9/93

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Property Name Mays, James Henry and Ida Owen House

County and State Gooding County, Idaho

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

n/a

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

Cat: DOMESTIC

Sub: single dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

Cat: DOMESTIC

Sub: institutional housing

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Bungalow/Craftsman
Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation STONE: volcanic
walls STONE: volcanic
WOOD: weatherboard
roof WOOD: shake
other _____

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

Property Name Mays, James Henry and Ida Owen House

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B. Statement of Significance

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

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1920-1926

Significant Dates

1920

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

James Mays

Architect/Builder

N/A

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

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

Primary location of additional data:

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than 1 acre

UTM References

1	<u>1/1</u>	<u>6/8/8/8/0/0</u>	<u>4/7/2/6/0/5/0</u>	3	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	4	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>

___ See continuation sheet

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda Morton-Keithley, Oral Historian
 organization Idaho State Historical Society date May 12, 1992/rev. 1/19/93
 street & number 210 Main Street telephone (208) 334-3863
 city or town Boise state Idaho zip code 83702

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:
Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

Property Owner

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

name _____
 street & number _____ telephone _____
 city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Name of Property Mays, James Henry and Ida Owen House
County and State Gooding County, Idaho

The James Henry and Ida Owens Mays house is Bungalow/Craftsmen in style, with Classical Revival details, primarily exhibited by the clustered porch columns. According to family stories, the house was originally built in 1920 as a one-story structure. By 1924, an upper half-story, lean-to, and porches had been added, giving the house its current appearance. The house plans are said to have been drawn up by Mr. Mays himself, ostensibly to have been built on property in Florida. However, the decision was ultimately made to instead retire to Mays' Idaho property where the house was constructed.

The house is a 1 1/2 story, detached, single-family residence with a moderately pitched hipped roof. The foundation and exterior walls are of random-coursed, uncut basalt rock. A full-length, open, wrap-around porch extends on the south and west elevations. On the east elevation is a full-length, enclosed porch. The house is built on a rectangular plan, four units wide by two units deep.

The roof has coursed, wooden shingles and is interrupted on the north, east and south elevations by shed-roof dormers. The south elevation is further bisected by a cross gable which extends over the porch entry. The west elevation also has a similar cross gable. The north dormer originally served as a screened porch; in recent years the exterior walls have been sheathed with wooden clapboards. A shuttered window is now centered on the north side of the dormer. The east dormer is fronted by three double windows--an awning-style window flanked on each side by a casement-style window.

The cross gable on the south elevation is centrally located, faced with wooden clapboards, and has a diamond-shaped, single-pane, glass window placed near the apex of the gable. The gable is flanked on each side with identical dormers, each with three double windows, placed in an arrangement of casement, awning, casement styles. The west elevation cross gable is also centrally located, faced with wooden clapboards, and has a diamond-shaped, single-pane, glass window placed near the apex of the gable.

On the ground floor, the north elevation has a small, dropped-roof, lean-to addition at the west end which was probably added sometime prior to 1924. The addition is sheathed with wooden clapboards and has a six-light casement-style window on its east side. The north elevation also has a single-light, fixed-sash window located approximately in the center of the side, and a double-hung (upper sash fixed) window located near its east end. The east elevation has two single-pane, fixed-sash windows and a wooden door with three panels on the lower half and single-pane glass on the upper half, leading onto the enclosed porch. In recent years, a shed-roof carport with single 4 x 4 columns and 1 x 6 railings has been added to the east elevation.

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The south elevation has two doors--one centrally located to serve as a primary entrance and the other near the east end leading onto the enclosed porch. Both doors are provided with screens. The main entry door is a modern hollow-core style, while the other door has three panels in the lower half and glass in the upper half. To the east (right) of the main entry door are two double-hung (upper sash fixed) windows and to the west (left) is a double-hung (upper sash fixed) window. A secondary entry door, located on the west elevation, is flanked on each side by a double-hung (upper sash fixed) window.

All windows and doors on the ground floor of the main body of the house feature prominent wooden lintels. The windows also have cement sills. All wooden sections of the house (clapboards, columns, window and door frames) are painted white with dark brown trim.

The open porch on the west and south elevations is approximately six feet wide, has a wooden deck, and is defined by a low outer wall of irregular-coursed, rough-cut basalt rock, capped with cement. The porch roof is supported by clusters of one, two, or three Tuscan columns, made of wood. A wrought-iron hand rail centered on the three steps leading to the main entry is not original to the house.

The Mays house is located near the Snake River south of Wendell in south-central Idaho. It sits well below the canyon rim on a grassy terrace overlooking the river. The area is sparsely populated and agricultural in nature; the house itself is quite isolated. The house is surrounded by fields and what remains of lawn and flower gardens. Although most of the outbuildings and orchards associated with the original ranch are no longer extant, the house's setting and landscaping remains agricultural.

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The James Henry and Ida Owen Mays house is eligible under criterion B as the only surviving property associated with James Mays' role in the commercial development of the area. Mays' endeavors, which included fruit raising, dairying and recreational use of the Snake River canyon area of south-central Idaho, typified early exploitation of the river for commercial and recreational purposes. His establishment of a fish hatchery at Crystal Springs, the first of its kind in the area, marked a short-lived, but significant effort which demonstrated the commercial potential of the hatchery business. The impact of the hatchery is still felt in the present commercial and recreational development of fish hatcheries by private and state entities.

Mays was born in Tennessee in 1868. As a young man, he travelled to Kansas, attended Kansas State Normal School, and later graduated from the University of Michigan law school (Bachelor of Laws, 1895 and Master of Laws, 1896). In addition to practicing law, Mays also sold life insurance and at various times lived in Chicago, Illinois; Dubuque, Iowa; and Indianapolis, Indiana. In 1902, Mays and his first wife, Sarah Elizabeth Randels, moved to Salt Lake City, Utah where they raised their five children. He found extensive coal deposits in Utah and was prominently involved with the U.S. Fuel Company, his primary source of income. Mays apparently continued to travel to the Midwest and about 1911 met Mrs. Ida Owen in Chicago, with whom he fathered seven additional children.

Mays was elected a Democratic congressman from Utah in 1914, 1916, and 1918. Ida Owen and her children lived with Mays in Washington, D.C. while Sarah Elizabeth remained in Salt Lake City with her children. He did not run for re-election in 1920. He seems to have continued to claim residency in Utah; in fact, one daughter recalls that at the time of his death, he was planning to run for governor of Utah. The Idaho ranch seems to have been developed as a secondary residence and recreational get-away for himself and as a home for Ida and their children. Mays and Sarah Elizabeth divorced in 1924. Mays died at the ranch house on April 19, 1926 and was buried in the Gooding, Idaho cemetery.

Mays began to purchase the Snake River canyon properties in 1913, buying both deeded land and applying for at least one patent in his own name. The property would eventually total over 1,000 acres, include more than four miles of river frontage, and consist of four inter-connected units--Crystal Springs, Niagara Springs, the ranch house, and the dairy.

The first purchase of property was in the Crystal Springs area. At that time, access to the property was limited. A visitor would approach from the south, travel down a long grade, and cross the Snake River on a ferry. During these early years, Mays and his family lived in a lava rock house built for them (no longer standing) when visiting the property. This was also the site where the trout hatchery would be developed. In later years, after Mays' death, a hired man who was caretaker of the hatchery and general ranch assistant lived in the Crystal Springs house.

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The Niagara Springs property was purchased in 1915. Apple and cherry orchards were located in the vicinity and water from the springs was used farther down the valley (delivered via canals) for household use and power generation at the ranch house (after it was built in 1920) and for irrigation. Two small houses were built at Niagara Springs, and there was also a "spring" house used by the family for picnics and overnight stays during the summer months. These houses are no longer standing.

With his retirement from Congress in 1920, Mays is said to have considered building a home on property he owned in Florida. He sent Ida and the house plans to Florida but she did not like the heat and chose to live in Idaho instead. The property on which the ranch house would be located was purchased about 1917, and construction of the lava rock house began in 1920. It is not known who was responsible for the actual work, but the materials were readily available in the local area. The peach orchards were in the immediate vicinity of the ranch house, as was a bunkhouse (no longer standing) for the seasonal fruit pickers, and a fruit cellar.

The interior of the house has been extensively altered in recent years with lowered ceilings and removal and addition of walls; but family members recall that the ground floor originally contained a kitchen, dining room, large living room with lava rock fireplace, bathroom, and one bedroom. A small room was added to the north elevation to provide additional sleeping space. The second floor was added by 1924, again to provide additional space for the growing family. It has undergone virtually no changes over the years and contains three bedrooms, a screened sleeping porch (which has since been covered with clapboards), closets, and attic storage space.

A modern dairy barn (no longer standing), milk house, and frame house (no longer standing) were also a part of the ranch, located about a mile down river from the ranch house. The barn was a lava rock structure with a frame second story; it was destroyed by fire in 1980. The milk house, also of lava rock, was located directly over running water in a canal, to keep the milk and cream cool. Only the walls of the milk house remain standing. Ranch foreman A.S. Henson lived in the frame house. Additional apple orchards were situated in the vicinity of the dairy. Pastures for the cows and horses were spread throughout the ranch, and Mays planted long rows of poplar trees to serve as wind breaks for the various orchards.

Fruit from the orchards was sold in local markets for cash income. Larger grocery stores in the area would send trucks to the orchard to pick up produce, while the family would deliver fruit themselves to the smaller stores. In later years, leftover produce was often given to nearby hospitals, and during World War II, local people came to the orchards to pick their own fruit, often bartering for the produce. A listing of cash receipts deposited into the "farm operations account," as prepared by the executors of Mays' estate on January 1, 1927, shows numerous entries from the sale of cherries, grapes, apples, peaches, cream, hides, and a few hens and hogs.

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Local cafes and restaurants--Park Hotel, Rogerson Hotel, Manhattan Cafe and Tom's Cafe in Twin Falls; U.S. Cafe in Gooding; Club Cafe in Burley; and Royal Cafe in Buhl, among others--are listed in the accounting as having purchased trout from the estate. A daughter recalls that fish were also shipped by train to San Francisco. After the mid-1930s, commercial production at the fish hatchery ceased and the ponds were used simply as a local fishing "hole." A tin can was placed along the road for local residents to deposit 25¢ when going to fish in the trout pond.

Family members also recall the abundance of wildlife on the property--geese, ducks, wild turkeys, deer, cougars and coyotes. Mays apparently enjoyed having people around him and often invited business associates to spend time at the property for hunting and fishing. Several small houses, presumably those located at Niagara Springs, were built and used as guest housing.

Of the many structures built during Mays' ownership of the property, only the ranch house and walls of the milk house are standing today. But the use of the land, as envisioned by Mays, remains much the same. The ranch house and dairy barn properties are currently owned and managed by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and are noted for their hunting and fishing opportunities. The house is used as a seasonal residence by Fish and Game employees. Although the many fruit orchards on these portions of the property are no longer standing, fruit production does continue to be an important source of income in the surrounding area.

While Mays' development of the orchards took place in a context of a young, but pre-existing fruit industry in the region, his exploitation of the springs for hatchery establishment was the initial effort of its kind. The longlasting impact of the hatchery business is evident in a number of private and state owned stock ponds that are located in the vicinity of Crystal Springs and Niagara Springs today. Mays' original fish hatchery at Crystal Springs is no longer standing, but a modern privately-owned hatchery is located at the site. It stocks fish in the adjacent Crystal Lake, owned by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, as well as supplying fish for other commercial needs. Parks and Recreation currently operates state-owned property at both Crystal Springs and Niagara Springs for public use in "put and take" fishing, picnicking, birdwatching, hunting, and camping.

Clearly, James Mays laid the foundation for the future development of the fish industry in this region of the Snake River canyon area of south-central Idaho, and the house that he built for himself, Ida Owen and their children, is the sole remnant of these activities.

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conversation with Jim Mays (grandson) and Howard Bean, Gooding, Idaho, March 18, 1992

Gooding County records, Gooding County Courthouse -- Deed Records, Decree of Distribution of Estate, Probate Records, Last Will and Testament

Idaho Statesmann, The, Boise

Legacy of Light: A History of Idaho Power Company, Susan M. Stacy, Idaho Power, Boise, 1991

telephone conversation with Julie Mays Keeley (daughter), Ann Arbor, Michigan, April 20, 1992

Times-News, Twin Falls

Wendell Irrigationist, The, Wendell

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Section number 10 Page 1 Name of Property Mays, James Henry and Ida Owen House
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Lots 1 and 6, NE1/4, NE1/4 Section 9, T9S, R15E

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the house which historically has been associated with the Mays ranch.



James and Ida Owen Mays House
Gooding County, Idaho

Linda Morton-Keithley
March 1992

Idaho State Historical Society Library and Archives
View from the south ~~west~~
EAST



SNAKE RIVER WMA
HEADQUARTERS

James Henry and Ida Owen Mays House

Gooding County, Idaho

Linda Morton-Keithley

March 1992

Idaho State Historical Society Library and Archives

View from the Northeast



James Henry and Ida Owen Mays, House
Gooding County, Idaho
Linda Morton - Keithley
March 1992

Idaho State Historical Society Library and Archives
View from the West / Southwest