United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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 Brombacher, Max and Claire, House
other names/site number Hemlock Hill

2. Location

street & number 571 East Main Street
not for publication N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Transylvania code 175 zip code 28712

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this □ 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 □ meets □ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant □ nationally □ statewide □ locally. (□ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
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 □ See continuation sheet.
□ removed from the National Register □ other (explain):

Signature of Keeper Date of Action/Action
5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- [x] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- [x] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property

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Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) Historic Architectural Resources of Transylvania Co, 1820-1941.

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: Domestic Sub: Single dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: Work in progress Sub: 

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)
Other: Rustic

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
foundation Other: field stone
roof asphalt
walls Other: field stone
other 

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

☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1940

Significant Dates

1940

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wright, William Benjamin; Wright, James Robert; Wright, Joseph Few (stonemasons)

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

☐ 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 #

Primary Location of Additional Data

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: ___________________________
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

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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: Amanda Blosser

Date: February 1, 2001

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: Gary and Anne Himes

Phone: 828-884-2011

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.
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Max and Claire Brombacher House, Transylvania County, NC

Narrative Description

Set on a wooded, sloping site of approximately one-half acre on the west side of East Main Street in Brevard, the Max and Claire Brombacher House is bounded by other early and other mid-twentieth century residences. The Max and Claire Brombacher House stands out as a unique, rustic dwelling with notable stonework that is quite different from the typical work of the Wright brothers stonemasons. Only visible when at the property line, the Brombacher house sits at the rear of the lot with a large lawn in front. The front elevation faces southeast and the rear northwest, but for clarity the elevations will be referred to as south, north, east, and west. The main approach to the house is from East Main Street via a driveway that ends at the garage on the west side of the house, then forms a U-shape and exits the lot on Wilson Road. Two small outbuildings, a cottage and shed, sit to the north of the driveway close to the northern, or rear, property line.


Facing east, this one-story, stone, rustic style house has an overall rectangular massing with a pyramidal asphalt roof over the south block and a side-gable over the north wing. A gable dormer, clad in weatherboards, punctuates the roof on the south side. A projecting porch with a shed roof is located on the east or front facade of the house sheltering the front entrance. An exterior end stone chimney extends above the roofline on the north side and an interior chimney is on the east side. Windows are six-over-six sash; multi-lite casement windows in the north wing or Great Room; a small four-lite casement in the basement and a one-over-one sash in the south wall of the basement. The foundation is stone load bearing walls.

The exterior stone is dark, jagged and stacked vertically in a random pattern with little or no mortar showing. All of the stonework is similar with the exception of the interior fireplace in the bedroom. This fireplace stonework is laid randomly but with a smooth face and beaded mortar.

The prominent element of the front or east elevation is the porch with posts and a solid skirt of the same stone as the house. Another unusual element of the porch are the locust pole beams and the pine decking that serve as the ceiling. Stone steps lead up to the front porch on the eastern side to the front door that is a Dutch door with hammered Arts and Crafts style hardware. The north, or side, elevation, is two bays wide with the exterior end chimney in the middle of the two bays. The west, or rear, elevation is four bays wide. There is a bank of multi-lite casement windows on the north wing and the rear entrance. The rear door is similar to the front and features the same hardware. There is a set of three stone stairs, semi-circular in shape, at the rear door. A stone path follows the southern and western side of the house from the driveway to the rear door. The south, or side, elevation of the house is two stories high, two bays wide, and has a full basement. The ground level of the house has six over six windows and on
the basement level, double garage doors. There is also a small four lite casement window at the basement level.

The main south block of the house is basically a square shape with a central hall and two rooms on either side (See Exhibit A, floor plan). The kitchen and a bedroom are located on the western side of the house, and a study and bedroom on the eastern side. A bath with dressing room adjoins the bedroom on the western side. Between these two bedrooms is an double opening fireplace and stone chimney which features a split log mantel. At the end of the central hall is a small bathroom. The bathroom is tiled. Walls in the all the rooms are knotty pine paneling. The floors are oak. Doors are typically two-panel with the hammered Arts and Crafts style thumb latch hardware. The bedroom on the western side has two closets on the northern wall. The kitchen located at the rear of the house was probably remodeled by a later owner. The floors are linoleum and the walls are plaster. A small alcove connects the kitchen to the northern wing. The rear entrance is also located in this alcove.

There is a full basement below the main block of the house that is a garage and workroom. A set of enclosed stairs between the kitchen and hall serves as the access to the basement. The house also has an attic accessible by a set of pull-down stairs in the central hall. The attic is unfinished and has been used for storage.

The north wing is a unique feature of the house and is reminiscent of a great hall. At the northern end of the room is a large fireplace with a split log mantel. The eastern and western walls have banks of multi-lite casement windows. The walls are paneled with knotty pine paneling and the floors are pegged oak. This floor is modern and was probably added in the late 1960s or 1970s. The false drywall ceiling with applied beams running east to west was also a later alteration. Originally, the ceiling was vaulted and similar to that of the porch with exposed locust pole beams and pine decking. The two lantern-like Arts and Crafts style light fixtures are original. Built-in bookshelves that surround the fireplace and built in window seats are on the eastern and western walls below the casement windows.

2. **Cottage. Non-contributing. c. 1940s**

Sitting to the south of the house is a small one-story, three-room frame cottage built into the hillside as a law office for the Brombachers' son in the 1940s. The cottage has been altered substantially. All the windows and doors have been replaced, vinyl siding added, deck and concrete foundations added.

3. **Shed. Non-contributing. Modern.**

Sitting just to the north of the cottage is a small one-room shed. It is rectangular in plan with a gable asphalt roof with exposed rafters. The exterior is clad with German siding and the building has a concrete foundation. The only opening is a pre-fabricated door on the east façade.
Max and Claire Brombacher House, Transylvania County, NC

Statement of Significance

Summary

The Max and Claire Brombacher House, built in 1939-1940, is significant in the city of Brevard as an excellent example of a small group of important stone and rock structures built between 1915 and 1943 in Transylvania County. Attributed to the Wright brothers, local stonemasons, the Max and Claire Brombacher House is particularly distinctive in that its irregular, jagged-edge stones are not typical of the Wrights' conventional technique. It appears the stonework style may have been chosen by Claire Brombacher, and its fine execution demonstrates the versatility and high quality of the Wright brothers' craftsmanship. The historic context for the house is more fully documented in "Historic and Architectural Resources of Transylvania County, North Carolina, including the Incorporated Towns of Brevard and Rosman, ca. 1820-1941," Building and Rebuilding in Transylvania County, War to War 1917-1941, and the house meets the registration requirements for Property Type 12, Stone and Rock Masonry Construction in Brevard and Pisgah Forest. The Brombacher House is eligible for listing under National Register Criterion C for the significant method of construction and the period of significance is 1940, the date of construction.

Historical Background and Social History Context

Located in the mountains of Western North Carolina, Transylvania County ranks as one of the most scenic counties in North Carolina and covers 379 square miles ranging in elevation from less than 1,200 feet to 6,000 feet. One third of the lands in the county are uninhabited forest. The boundaries are formed by Henderson County on the east and northeast, the Blue Ridge Parkway and Haywood County to the northwest, Jackson County to the west, and South Carolina on the south.

The rugged mountain landscape hindered the development of good transportation and encouraged isolation into the twentieth century, but Transylvania County's forested slopes and beautiful waterfalls also encouraged the growth of tourism and the establishment of resort colonies, summer camps, and forest preserves. Brevard, the county seat, grew slowly until 1895, when the Hendersonville & Brevard Railroad arrived and allowed the community to compete with neighboring towns served by the railroad. The town grew from 350 people in 1898 to nearly 600 people by 1900. The extension of the railroad to the southwestern part of the county stimulated the growth of industry and tourism at Rosman and Lake Toxaway, and boosted Brevard's fortunes in the process. The railroad was important to the growth and progress of Transylvania County.

13 Ibid, 325.
The Brevard Board of Trade promoted tourism by extolling the temperate winters and mild summers in the “Land of Waterfalls” and the beautiful “Sapphire country.” Several hotels and many more boardinghouses catered to the tourist industry. As the national summer camp movement developed, a national camping handbook identified Brevard as “the most important center for camps in the South.” The years of 1895 through 1916 were pivotal for Transylvania County, for it was during this period that the full potential of the natural resources became clear.

Transylvania County continued to grow through the 1920s as Western North Carolina experienced a land speculation boom. The natural resources and the improved means of transportation brought individuals who came for either financial prosperity or for the restorative nature of the mountain environment. Unlike Buncombe County to the north, where land speculation boomed, the Brevard Chamber of Commerce advertised: “Land for home and industrial operations is to be obtained at surprisingly reasonable prices, this section as yet having been untouched by the speculator. Ample supplies of building materials obtained locally make the building and owning of a summer home in Brevard a cheap and profitable investment.” In the 1930s, the Great Depression brought the county economy to a standstill, as it did throughout the entire country. The county slowly but steadily recovered in the years leading up to World War II, and the tourist and second home industries played an important role in Transylvania County.

It was during this recovery period, that Max and Clair Brombacher purchased land in the East Main Street residential area of Brevard. In 1939, the Brombachers, residents of West Palm Beach, Florida, began building a summer residence which would stay with the family until the 1960s. They remained seasonal residents in the house until Claire’s death in 1955. After she died, her husband and son, Alan, inherited the house, but Max Brombacher spent little time there and returned to Florida.

The Brombachers were most likely responsible for the design of their home, and Erwin Galloway and C.R. Sharp may have been the contractors, although this has not been fully documented. Max Brombacher worked as the general manager for the Breakers Hotel in West Palm Beach, Florida, and was familiar with the Grove Park Inn in Asheville. Construction on the house began like any other project and the stonemasons started with well-matched and mortared stones typical of other Wright brothers’ houses. Mrs. Brombacher, however, made them tear it down and begin again, stating that she wanted “the house to look like it grew

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6 Transylvania County Deed Book 72, p 296.
7 Transylvania County Death Records.
8 Interview with James Morrow by Amanda Blosser, Gary and Anne Himes, 13 January 2001. Mr. Morrow is neighbor and friend of the Brombachers.
9 Ibid.
there.”10 She wanted no mortar showing and no square corners, citing the Grove Park Inn as an example.11

Alan Brombacher continued to live in the house part-time after inheriting it. In 1963, he sold it C.E. Cochran.12 Cochran rented the house for many years and finally sold it to Frank and Ruth McIntosh in the late 1960s. The McIntoshes remained in the house for many years, updating the kitchen and adding the floor in the north wing. The current owners purchased the house from the McIntoshes and are currently restoring the house.

Architecture Context

The residential neighborhood on the eastern side of downtown Brevard is a collection of stylish twentieth century architecture. Houses in the East Main Street neighborhood features styles such as Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival. The Brombacher House located at 571 East Main Street stands out as one of the most architecturally distinctive houses in the neighborhood. Built in of local stone, it shares an important architectural feature with many other buildings constructed in the county.

One of Transylvania County’s significant architectural legacy from the years between the world wars is the body of work by local stonemasons. Stone was readily available to builders and typically came from three sources in the county: small quarries, fields, and streams and rivers.13 From the earliest European settlement of the county, stone was commonly used in chimneys and foundations and throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it was used for houses, retaining walls, walkways, steps, and other landscape features.14 Because stone was so plentiful it is quite natural that it would appear in the built environment.

The Wright Brothers were the best known of the stonemasons active in the county from the 1920s to the 1950s. The three brothers, William Benjamin Franklin “Doc” Wright (1878-1936), and James Roberts (1895-1959), and Joseph Few “Joe” Wright came from Hendersonville in 1919, where they and three other brothers learned their trade from their father, James Robert Wright.15 According to family tradition, the three brothers who came to Brevard, worked in

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12 Transylvania County Deed Book 146, p 316.
pairs, as a trio, or alone, as the job demanded. They gained a reputation for excellence during their life and many buildings have been attributed to them.

The earliest known work of the Wright brothers is St. Phillips Episcopal Church (NR 1997), located on 397 East Main Street, in Brevard. The majority of the Wrights other work are residences and include the Clement House, the Charles Edmund Orr House, the J.S. Bromfield House, the William McK. Fetzer House, and the Albert and Miriam Silversteen House. In addition to these residences, the Wright brothers are credited with the construction of the Brevard College Fence and Gate (NR 1993).

Unlike other works attributed to the Wright brothers, the Brombacher House is not laid in their convention stonework. It features dark, jagged cut stones vertically stacked with little or no mortar showing. The stonework of the Brombacher House has often been compared to the stonework of the Grove Park Inn, built in 1913, in Asheville, and as family legend states, the Grove Park Inn was a source for the style.

Built as a great rustic hotel like the mountain lodges of Yellowstone Park, the Grove Park Inn was built during the tourist boom of the early twentieth century, when urban dwellers came to the mountains, “yearning for the simple life amidst the unspoiled nature.”16 Influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, when early twentieth century resort builders turned to natural materials and simple forms to complement the mountain setting.17 The natural character of materials often was the principal focus of the design and out of this came a regional architectural character. The regional character was expressed “in a preference for picturesque, romantic, and rustic designs and natural materials, most often displayed in resorts and residences.”18 Landmarks like the Grove Park Inn were models which were repeated in smaller versions. The Brombacher House is one of the smaller versions influenced by the regional architectural character that came about in Western North Carolina during the early twentieth century. Stone masonry appeared throughout Western North Carolina in the first half of the twentieth century, but “the sophistication and large number of these buildings in Transylvania County set it apart as one of the most important locations of the twentieth century stone buildings in North Carolina.”19

18 Ibid, 59.
Section 9  Page 1  Max and Claire Brombacher House, Transylvania County, NC

Major Bibliographic References


Thompson, Deborah, and Davyd Foard Hood. *Historic and Architectural Resources of Transylvania County, North Carolina, including the Incorporated Towns of Brevard and Rosman, circa 1820-1941 Multiple Property Documentation Form, National Register of Historic Places*, 1993.

Transylvania County Deed Books and Vital Records.
Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description
The boundary for this nomination is shown on the accompanying tax map. The nominated tract is approximately one-half acre. PIN 8585.07.7884.

Boundary Justification
The property includes all of the lot originally associated with the property.
Final Photographs

The following information applies to all of the photographs, except where noted.

Name of property: Brombacher House
571 E. Main St
Brevard
Transylvania County
North Carolina

Photographer: Amanda Blosser

Date of photos: See photo back for dates

Location of original negatives: Division of Archives and History
One Village Lane,
Asheville, North Carolina 28803

1. Main, or east elevation, camera facing west
2. South elevation, camera facing northwest
3. Porch, camera facing northwest,
4. Interior, Great room, camera facing northeast,