

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 14 1987

date entered SEP 10 1987

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

1. Name

historic Brown, Will Q., House and Wash House Number of contributing resources: 2
and or common Same Number of non-contributing resources: 2
(non-historic garage and woodshed)

2. Location

street & number 274 South Main Street N/A not for publication
city, town Riddle N/A vicinity of Fourth Congressional District
state Oregon code 41 county Douglas code 019

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Clinton E. and Emogene L. Atherton
street & number 274 South Main Street, PO Box 126
city, town Riddle N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97469

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Douglas County Courthouse
street & number 1036 SE Douglas Street
city, town Roseburg state Oregon 97470

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Cultural & Historic Resources
Inventory of Riddle, Oregon has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date June, 1984 federal state county local
depository for survey records Douglas County Planning Department, 205 SE Jackson
city, town Roseburg state Oregon 97470

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Will Q. Brown House is located on the west side of Main Street on a bench overlooking Cow Creek. It was originally built as a single family home but it also housed Will Q.'s office and workroom (for drafting table, maps, blue prints, etc.). The house was also used by the local Protestant Episcopal Church for baptisms, marriages and church services prior to construction of the Parish Hall in 1922. The commodious, two-story frame building is Riddle's finest example of Queen Anne architecture and it is generally well preserved. The main rectangular, two-story volume is gable-roofed and has a lower, two-story ell at the rear, or west elevation. The long axis is oriented east-west. A one and one-half story rectangular mass is incorporated on the north elevation. It has a hip roof that extends to create a wide recessed veranda. The eaves of the porch are supported by columns on cast-in-place, truncated pillars and a knee wall. The veranda encircles the house from the middle of the west elevation to the north and a portion of the east elevation. On the east, or front elevation of the single-story section, is an eyebrow, or or curvilinear dormer.

The original roof was shingles with metal hips and ridges, but when the former owner had the house reroofed in 1981, shakes were used with Boston hips and ridges. The roof of the two-story portion is a gable with boxed eaves having full cornice returns. The gabled ends are shingled. The second story wall, over hanging the first, is shingled, whereas the first story wall is sheathed with one inch by six inch shiplap. Fenestration is varied. Typically, windows are one-over-one, double-hung sash with diapered leaded panes in upper sash. There are polygonal window bays on the first floor of the south elevation and on the second story of the east elevation. The front door has an oak frame with a large bevel light. The house rests on a concrete perimeter foundation 40 inches above grade. The house has three stuccoed brick flues with tapered caps.

The Brown House is locally distinctive as high style architecture showing the influence of the Colonial Revival. Hallmarks of the Queen Anne/Colonial Revival style are the variegation of materials, roof forms and window openings, the flared base courses of the upper story, the use of narrow weatherboards on the ground story, and the use of an eyebrow dormer and a keystone oval vent in the east gable end.

The interior of the house is intact and finished in the Arts and Crafts tradition with fine woodwork and built-in cabinetry. The front door is a 3'6" x 8' oak door with a single light of beveled glass. The ceilings in the downstairs are 10' and all the doors are 8'. There are three oak pocket doors, one is 4' x 8', the second is 4'6" x 8' and the third is 5' x 8'. The door from the dining room to the butler's pantry is a 2'8" x 8' seven-panel swinging door, oak on the dining room side, to match the woodwork in the dining room, and fir on the butler's pantry side, to match that woodwork. The door from the entry to the back hall is the same construction; oak on one side, fir on the other. On the main floor there are three fireplaces. The one in the living room and the one in Will Q.'s workroom are ornately designed cast iron intended for burning coal. The third, located in the dining room, is constructed of brick imported from France and designed for burning wood. On each side of the dining room fireplace is a built-in china cabinet with a diamond patterned leaded glass door. Reportedly, the oak used for colonades, doors, baseboards, picture molding and the main stairwell was imported from the East Coast. The upstairs has standard 8' ceilings and 6'8" doors. Three of the bedrooms have flue outlets for wood burning stoves and two of the bedrooms have lavatories. Another stairway leads from the kitchen to the rear bedroom, which was the maid's quarters.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

The only major changes to the interior of the house have been in the kitchen. Wall cabinets, base cabinets and modern appliances have been installed to make the kitchen functional. Will Q.'s office has been made into a library with oak bookshelves on two walls. On the outside, the back porch has been enclosed to make a laundry room and a glass enclosed breakfast room has been added off the kitchen.

Directly behind the house, is a brick wash house built in 1894 during the time the property was occupied by a hotel. (The builder's name and the date are inscribed in the concrete floor of the building). The wash house is a 15' x 18' brick building with a 15' x 18' stud and shiplap shed attached on the south side. The shed originally had a brick fireplace with a large cast iron kettle for heating water for washing. The fireplace was removed at some unknown date, but the foundation for it is still there. The brick part of the building was adapted for food storage and was equipped with shelves for home-canned items and racks with hooks for hanging meat. The wash house is located directly behind the main house and is oriented on a north-south axis. The entrances are on the east side. The foundation is a perimeter brick foundation on a poured concrete floor. The walls are locally made brick laid in a Flemish bond and the shed is stud and shiplap. The shingle covered roof is a bellcast gable with unenclosed, overhanging eaves. The windows are two-over-two, double-hung sash and the doors are four-panel, single leaf doors. It appears that the shed attached to the south elevation of the wash house is original, or at least an addition of early date. The only alteration has been removal of the fireplace. The north wall of the building is now covered with ivy. A two-car garage, built in 1984 and a woodshed, built in 1986 are non-historic, non-contributing features.

Of the two acres surrounding the Will Q. Brown House, nearly half the area is taken up with the house and yard. On the back of the lot, Brown had a barn, carriage house, garden and fruit trees. Of the fruit trees, three apples, a pear, an apricot and an almond are still living and producing. The barn and carriage house are now gone and that area is used for additional garden, more young fruit trees, berries and grapes. Around the house are several lilacs, a kolkwitzia (Beauty bush) and a flowering quince that were planted by the Browns. Also, three trees along the street that show in a 1908 photograph are still growing.

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

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
1904–1921	Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The house on South Main Street in Riddle built for mining engineer William Quartus Brown in 1904 is locally significant under Criterion C as the best preserved and best designed example of architecture in the Queen Anne style. Its north elevation is dominated by a hip-roofed colonnaded veranda which encircles the room used by Brown as an office and workroom. A photographic view of the property taken in 1910 shows that the house has changed very little in 80 years with the exception of replacement of the shingle roof with shakes by a previous owner in 1981. More recently, a glass-walled breakfast room was added to the south elevation, and a back porch has been enclosed.

The house, completed when optimism still prevailed concerning the potential of Brown's nickel mining claims, bears the hallmarks of the Queen Anne style and shows also the current influence of the Colonial Revival. Distinctive stylistic features are flared and overhanging second story exterior clad with shingles, while weatherboards are used on the ground story; there are also an eyebrow dormer, polygonal window bays, a keystone oval vent in the primary gable end, and windows having leaded glass panes. The interior is finished in the tradition of the English Arts and Crafts with fine wood work, including built-in cabinetry and chimneypieces.

The brick wash house, a legacy of the property's earlier use by a hotel, is the only subsidiary structure remaining from the historic period of Brown's occupancy. Its concrete floor bears the inscribed construction date of 1894 and the name of W. H. Huggins, brick mason who erected buildings for Brown at the site of his nickel mine. The barn and carriage house which once occupied the two-acre property are no longer standing. Remnants of the original orchard remain. A recently-constructed garage and woodshed are non-contributing features.

The building also is noteworthy under Criterion B as the building most importantly associated with Will Q. Brown (1851–1936), Stanford-educated geologist who came to Oregon in 1881 as a geological surveyor for the U. S. government. Brown was undisputably a prominent figure in the South Umpqua region, one who founded the local mining industry and contributed substantially to it despite the fact that the potential of his claims was not fully realized in his lifetime. With the backing of his father and another Oakland, California capitalist, Edson Adams, Brown invested in nickel mining claims in Douglas County's Cow Creek Valley from the 1880s onward. Over the ensuing decades, Brown struggled to develop a productive mine and ultimately failed to attract and hold investors. Among prospective investors was Thomas A. Edison, American inventor, whose interest lay in developing a process for economically recovering nickel from low grade ore. While serving as promoter and manager of the claims, Brown invested in small blocks of real estate in Riddle and ran a stage line to Canyonville in association with his son, Harvey, from 1914 to 1921, at which time the family left Riddle for Roseburg. Brown's son and daughter-in-law had joined the elder Brown in living in the house on Main Street until that time.

In about 1882, J. B. Riddle, the town's founder, constructed a small hotel on the nominated site. The hotel was destroyed by fire and the lot was sold to Annie M. (Nichols) Brown,

9. Major Bibliographical References

Historic Resources of the City of Riddle, Oregon, Douglas County Planning Department, 1984.
 Roseburg Plaindealer, October 17, 1904, page 1. Documentation of construction date.
 Strobridge, E., Church of the Ascension Diamond Jubilee, 8-10, 43.
 Strobridge, Bill and Elaine, "Will Q. Brown: The Man and His Mountain," Pioneer Days in the
 South Umpqua Valley, Vol. 18 (August, 1985), 3-37; Vol. 19 (August, 1986), 13-21.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2.10

Quadrangle name Canyonville, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A

1	0
---	---

4	7	0	4	2	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	7	5	4	8	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

 Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property, located in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 24, T. 30S., R. 6W., Willamette Meridian, in Riddle, Douglas County, Oregon is a rectangular lot measuring 232.32' x 383', bounded on the east by South Main Street, on the west by Roseburg Lumber Co., and on the south by Third Street, and on the north by Tax Lots 75361

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries and 75362. It is more particularly described:

state	N/A	code	county	code
state	N/A	code	county	code

state	N/A	code	county	code
-------	-----	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Clinton E. Atherton

organization N/A date January 1, 1987

street & number 274 South Main Street telephone (503) 874-2772

city or town Riddle state Oregon 97469

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date August 11, 1987

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 9-10-87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

the wife of Will Q. Brown. Mrs. Brown was the daughter of donation land claimant, Israel B. and Isabella (Riddle) Nichols. The only surviving remnant of the property's use for a hotel site is the detached wash house constructed of bricks that were made locally and laid in a Flemish bond. The brick layer was W. H. Huggins, who later would construct buildings at Brown's mining site.

William Quartus Brown was born July 4, 1851 in Oakland, California. He was the son of Harvey Brown, a wealthy attorney and land speculator in Oakland. Will Q. graduated from Stanford University with a degree in mine engineering; specializing in geology and mineralogy. In 1881, he was employed by the U. S. government to assist with a geologic survey of Josephine County.

The legendary story of the discovery of the nickel ore is that in about 1865 a shepherd (or prospector) found the bright green rock on "Old Piney" and, thinking it might contain copper or tin, samples were sent to Will Q. Brown, a mining expert who was then working in Josephine County. His analysis showed the ore not to contain copper or tin, but six percent nickel. The following is quoted from the San Francisco Bulletin June 20, 1882:

Some years ago a prospector while searching for gold and silver in the hills around Cow Creek, Douglas County, Oregon, came across a heavy dark ore which was pronounced by an assayer in Portland to be 'an extraordinary rich tin ore.' While collecting this ore, the miners came across large quantities of a beautiful bright green rock which they imagined was copper, but which was declared by the same assayer to contain nothing of value and it was thrown aside as worthless. Last year, a piece of this 'worthless green rock' came into the possession of a gentleman (Will Q. Brown) who sent it to San Francisco for analysis, and when it proved to be a silicate of nickel and magnesium almost identical with the ore found in New Caledonia, he made further examinations of the locality and finally purchased all of the nickel bearing property in this locality. The peculiarity in this deposit of nickel ore is the fact that hitherto this variety has never been found in large amounts anywhere but near Noumea in New Caledonia, and should this deposit prove to be as extensive as the present developments promise, the value of this discovery to the Pacific Coast states can hardly be over estimated. . .

In 1881 further tests of the ore convinced Will Q. and his father that a mountain of wealth existed in the Cow Creek Valley. Action proceeded rapidly. Will Q. had the mining expertise and his father, Harvey, had the legal knowledge and contacts for financial support, which he received from Edson Admas of Adams Express Company in Oakland. Admas supplied the capital for a one-half interest in the property and profits.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

In 1882 and '83, the Browns had filed claims on or acquired existing claims amounting to 980 acres and were combined under the name of "Oregon Nickel Mines." Another group of claims were filed by the Riddles and Brown, and was called the "Riddle Nickel Mining Co.," which later was sold to "International Nickel Mining Co." of Illinois and Will Q. was named Superintendent of the new venture.

These were economically depressed times for the U. S. and Riddle was no exception. The first major industrial enterprise in the Cow Creek Valley arrived in a period of critical need, and the residents were jubilant. First constructed was a sawmill, then a brick kiln. A small village was quickly established with cabins to house 50 or 60 workmen. More than 100 local men were employed creating a payroll of \$3,000 to \$4,000 a month and with locally purchased materials, added over \$7,700 to the Riddle economy per month.

By 1892, all of the smelting equipment was on site or in the warehouse in Riddle awaiting completion of the buildings.

In 1893 and 1894, the economic depression turned into panic. The stock market fell, banks failed and International Nickel went into receivership.

In 1899 another attempt was made to finance the operation and a New York investment group sent a group of specialists, including Thomas A. Edison, to Riddle to evaluate the property. Will Q. showed the group the various test sites and furnished them with the requested information. They were satisfied that everything was as described and the New York group took an option on the property, but the various claim holders couldn't agree and the group withdrew their offer.

In 1902, Will Q., in anticipation of the mine eventually being developed, started buying property in Riddle. He bought the Riddle Grocery first, keeping it as a rental until 1923. Next he bought Lots 1 & 2 of Block 14 where he built a garage, which was leased until 1914 when he deeded it to his son. He bought Lots 1, 2, 3 & 4 of Block 8, the lot where the present Igloo tavern is and the site of the present Post Office where he constructed a brick building for a meat market.

Since 1899, Thomas A. Edison had complete faith in the viable development of the mine. He had devised a process for recovering nickel from the low grade ore and had no doubts as to the quantity and quality of the nickel ore on the mountain. He had also invested in the International Nickel Company. The front page of the Roseburg "Plain Dealer" gave the following report on November 16, 1905:

It now begins to look as though 'the Wizard' Thomas A. Edison would take hold of the now famous Oregon Nickel Mine. Negotiations are pending and are something more than gossip.

But this latest attempt of Will Q. to get the mine going again failed apparently because the company could not come to an agreement with some of the claim holders and the option was dropped.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 4

In 1906, Will Q. was 55 years old and justifiably discouraged. The mine improvements were in a sad state of disrepair. He was still Oregon's resident manager for Edson Adams Oregon Nickel Mines and he had his own property, but was having little success in promoting the mine. On December 18, 1909 his wife Anna died. In 1912 his daughter Gussie married David Weaver and in 1913 his son Harvey married Edna Hartley. In 1914 Harvey and Edna moved into the Brown house with Will Q. and Harvey started a daily stage line delivering mail and passengers from the Riddle railhead to Canyonville, Days Creek, Perdue (Milo), Tiller and Drew. Harvey drove the stage line until 1920. During this time, the mine was still foremost in Will Q.'s mind and he made frequent trips to the east and to Europe trying to get financing to reopen the mine. In 1915 a forest fire burned over "Old Piney" and ravaged the location of the village. In 1921 Will Q. and his family moved out of Riddle and the Brown House was rented and never again occupied by a member of the Brown family.

During his remaining years, Will Q. was spry and mentally alert, though he seldom spoke of the mine. He had cancer, but died in February, 1936, from a fall down the stairs of the Weaver home in Roseburg.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the M. A. Hanna Company obtained the last of Will Q.'s mining property from Edna Hartley Brown and the other heirs. They built a smelter and started a large scale mining operation which, up until they closed in January of 1987, employed over 600 people.

Although Will Q. never lived to see his dream come true, his 55 years of dedication to "Old Piney" were not in vain.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

Beginning at a point South 34° East 2.09 chains from the point where the westerly boundary of Main Street intersects the South boundary of the town of Riddle as platted and recorded, thence South 34° East 3.52 chains to a stake; thence South 59° 40' West 5.83 chains to a stake; thence North 30° West 3.52 chains; thence North 59° 40' East 6.09 chains to the place of beginning, containing 2 and 10/100 acres, according to the survey made by W. E. Briggs, August 4, 1892.

T. 30. S. R. 6 W.

NW SW





Brown, Will Q., House and
Wash House (1904, 1894)
274 South Main Street
Riddle, Douglas County, Oregon

1 of 8 Historic view, 1910
Thornton Photograph looking south/
southwesterly at house and wash house.

Copy Negative: Douglas County
Historical Museum
Roseburg OR 97470

Old Will Q Brown house of Riddle OR.



Brown, Will Q., House and
Wash House (1904, 1894)
274 South Main Street
Riddle, Douglas County, Oregon

2 of 8

East and north elevations.

Clinton Atherton Photo, 1987
274 South Main Street
Riddle OR 97469



Brown, Will Q., House and
Wash House (1904, 1894)
274 South Main Street
Riddle, Douglas County, Oregon

3 of 8

East (front) elevation.

Clinton Atherton Photo, 1987
274 South Main Street
Riddle OR 97469



Brown, Will Q., House and
Wash House (1904, 1894)
274 South Main Street
Riddle, Douglas County, Oregon

4 of 8

South and east elevations.

Clinton Atherton Photo, 1987
274 South Main Street
Riddle OR 97469



Brown, Will Q., House and
Wash House (1904, 1894)
274 South Main Street
Riddle, Douglas County, Oregon

5 of 8

West and south elevations, showing
recent glass-walled breakfast room
addition.

Clinton Atherton Photo, 1987
274 South Main Street
Riddle OR 97469



Brown, Will Q., House and
Wash House (1904, 1894)
274 South Main Street
Riddle, Douglas County, Oregon

6 of 8

West elevation, showing enclosed
porch.

Clinton Atherton Photo, 1987
274 South Main Street
Riddle OR 97469



Brown, Will Q., House and
Wash House (1904, 1894)
274 South Main Street
Riddle, Douglas County, Oregon

7 of 8

North and west elevations of detached
brick wash house.

Clinton Atherton Photo, 1987
274 South Main Street
Riddle OR 97469



Brown, Will Q., House and
Wash House (1904, 1894)
274 South Main Street
Riddle, Douglas County, Oregon

8 of 8
East and north elevations of wash
house.

Clinton Atherton Photo, 1987
274 South Main Street
Riddle OR 97469