

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Cedar Crest

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Cedar Crest Road N/A not for publication

city, town Topeka vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state Kansas code 20 county Shawnee code 177

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name State of Kansas

street & number State Capitol

city, town Topeka N/A vicinity of state Kansas 66612

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds

street & number Shawnee County Courthouse

city, town Topeka state Kansas 66603

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date N/A  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state

## 7. Description

Condition  
 excellent     deteriorated    Check one     original site  
 good     ruins     altered     moved    date N/A  
 fair     unexposed

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Cedar Crest sits high on a hill on the outskirts of Topeka surrounded by its original 244-acre tract of land. When the house was completed in 1929, it stood about three miles outside the city limits. Since that time housing developments and the construction of Interstate 70 have altered the environs of the property but have not encroached on Frank Pitts MacLennan's beautiful farm. The large, elegant period revival house has changed little since its days as the MacLennans' home. The exterior is essentially unaltered as is the first floor. The second and third floors have been slightly altered periodically to accommodate the needs of the inhabitants. It has served for its entire history as the home of distinguished Kansans, housing the prominent editor of the Topeka State Journal first, and subsequently the governors of Kansas. This nomination encompasses the residence and the 20 acres that accompany it. The other 224 acres of the original farm are now a public park.

Cedar Crest is three stories tall and has a full basement. It is built of stone and brick, stuccoed over. Originally the stucco was a buff color, but in 1975 it was painted a glaring white. The front facade is five bays wide. A three-story polygonal tower occupies the central bay and wall dormers cap the other four. At the west end of the house is an exterior end chimney and a screened-in porch with flagstone floor. There are two more chimneys on the north slope of the east end of the roof. All three have decorated chimney pots. The quoins, basement, and window surrounds on the ground floor of the front facade are all exposed stone. The roof is covered with Pennsylvania slate. Most of the windows throughout the house are metal casement windows.

One enters Cedar Crest through a stone-framed doorway set in the polygonal tower. In the stone pediment above the door is carved a thistle, emblem of Scotland. This motif is repeated throughout the house and is even found on the gutter downspouts.

The gracious entrance hall lets onto the living room-library, the dining room, the study, and a broad stair. To the east of the dining room is a small but light and airy room that was originally used as a breakfast room. Today it serves as a conservatory. The kitchen is directly behind the dining room. It was entirely remodeled in the early 1960's.

The combination living room and library at the west end of the house is paneled in walnut. Contemporary descriptions say that the floor was constructed of uneven pegged oak boards laid over concrete. The entire first floor is carpeted now. This room has built-in bookcases on three walls, and a marble fireplace on the fourth.

The most notable decorative feature in the dining room is the molded plaster which runs around the circumference of the ceiling and across the width of the ceiling dividing it into four even panels. This painted relief design

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includes thistles, primroses, grapes, and pears.

The study is the roughest of the rooms, having been designed by Frank MacLennan for himself. The fireplace surround is of rough-cut stone. The heavy wood mantel has medallions of various designs (including the thistle) carved into it. These are reputedly early printer's marks. Bookplates of authors are painted on the walls. The crest of the MacLennan family and of the fraternity of Beta Theta Pi are carved into the paneling.

The broad stair that leads upstairs from the entrance hall is lighted by a bank of leaded and hand-painted windows.

The functions of the rooms on the second floor have remained unchanged since the MacLennans resided there, although there have been some minor changes in space configurations. This floor has always served as bedrooms and baths. The third floor originally held a large recreation room "suitable for parties and dances" and cedar closets but is now partitioned into two smaller rooms, a bath, a cedar closet, and attic space.

Throughout the house, one notices the broad expanses of windows and through these the beautiful view of the surrounding countryside. Through these Frank MacLennan watched the sheep which grazed in his pastures, and the plant life that he painstakingly collected for and cultivated at Cedar Crest. The November 20, 1933, State Journal reported that because of MacLennan's active interest in rare shrubs, trees and bushes he probably had "more varied displays of plant life on his farm than anywhere in Kansas."

Although altered somewhat to accommodate its present function Cedar Crest retains its original feeling of an elegant but comfortable country retreat. The major features of the house and grounds are intact, rendering it easy for the observer to imagine what it was that had so captivated Frank MacLennan with his country home.

# 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/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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1929 **Builder/Architect** Wm. D. Wight

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Cedar Crest, the chateausque mansion built for Frank Pitts MacLennan in 1929, is a well-preserved example of the period revival architecture popular in the 1920's. Its significance derives not only from its architectural merit but also from the prominence of its original owner and its current function as the Governor's mansion for the state of Kansas.

Frank Pitts MacLennan was one of that long line of prominent newspapermen who have played an integral role in the civic and political affairs of Kansas. He was editor and publisher of the Topeka State Journal from 1885, when he bought it at auction, until 1933, when he died. A highly respected newspaperman and citizen of Topeka, he numbered among his friends presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Warren G. Harding. Kansas Senator Arthur Capper was a very close personal friend for more than forty years.

Both MacLennan and his newspaper were held in high esteem. The respect that his colleagues held for him was indicated by his serving as a vice-president for the Associated Press in 1910 and 1911, and by his being elected to the board of directors of the AP in 1919. He served on the board until shortly before his death. The State Journal of April 23, 1919, reported that "of the fifteen directors of the Associated Press Mr. MacLennan is the only one residing in the territory between the Mississippi river and the Pacific coast states and north of Houston, Texas to the Canadian border."

MacLennan was a city booster. He was constantly involved in projects that he felt would improve Topeka. He never benefited financially from any of them. Among his undertakings were the organization of a bank, financing and promoting a hotel, and publishing Camp and Trench for the soldiers at Fort Riley during WWI. One of his pet projects was establishing the "Topeka Drive" which would take motorists on a scenic tour of the outskirts of Topeka. Although it was publicized extensively the Drive did not take hold.

The tributes at the time of Frank MacLennan's death in 1933 are indicative of his prominence as a journalist and as a citizen of Kansas. He was lauded from as far away as New York City by the New York Times and the New York Evening Post. The tribute from Senator Capper stated that "a fine newspaper, a group of first-class newspaper men and women, and a splendid civic life are monuments to this great publisher and great citizen." Chief Justice Johnston commented that "he is entitled to be classed as a state builder."

One of the accomplishments of which MacLennan was most proud was the construction of Cedar Crest. On February 28, 1928, Frank MacLennan bought

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244 acres of farmland from D. H. Forbes. The State Journal reported that the property consisted of the tract of land "four miles west on the Sixth avenue road, extending from that road north three quarters of a mile to the Kaw river, and situated between the David Page place and the Security Benefit grounds, on Martin's Hill." MacLennan paid \$61,000 for that acreage. The site was described as having an entrancing view of the Kaw river and surrounding country. The Scotch pines on the slope of the western hill were planted by Mr. Forbes in the spring of 1881. "Later Mr. Forbes set out the stately ash trees that line the avenue leading from the Sixth avenue road to the house now on the summit of the property. . . ." The house referred to in that 1928 article was torn down, along with another house and barns and outbuildings, to make room for the MacLennans new home.

The prominent Kansas City architect William Drewin Wight was hired to design the house. In the 1920's historical styles were freely adapted and up-dated to suit contemporary ideals of design efficiency and stylistic simplicity. Cedar Crest was designed in the tradition of French and English country houses. The combination and stylization of various European influences resulted in a distinctively American suburban residence with enough references to the past to lend it respectability and enough modernization to render it in keeping with New World housing trends.

The MacLennans were living in the house by October of 1929, but so far the exact date of their occupancy has not been pinpointed. Frank MacLennan was able to enjoy his country house for only four years. He had not been in good health when he moved into the house and died at Cedar Crest on November 18, 1933, at the age of 78.

After Frank MacLennan's death his wife, Madge Overstreet MacLennan, continued to live at Cedar Crest. When Mrs. MacLennan died on November 13, 1955, she left Cedar Crest and twenty surrounding acres to the state for use as the Governor's mansion. The remaining acreage was designated as MacLennan Park. After long and often bitter debate, the legislature finally accepted the gift in 1957, but no money was appropriated for remodeling the mansion until 1961.

In 1962 Governor John Anderson and his family moved into Cedar Crest. He has been succeeded by governors William Avery, Robert Docking, Robert Bennett and John Carlin in that residence.

THIS STATEMENT REFLECTS CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

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Last Will and Testament of Madge MacLennan, Probate Court, Topeka, Kansas

Kansas City Star. November 16, 1947.

Kansas City Times. October 30, 1947, October 31, 1947.

Topeka Capital. November 1, 1925; October 20, 1929.

Topeka Daily Capital. November 19, 1933, p 1.

Topeka State Journal. April 23, 1919; February 28, 1928; March 1, 1928, p1;  
March 5, 1928, p1; March 8, 1928, p1; November 20, 1933, p1; November  
17, 1955, p1.

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Approximately 20 acres surrounding the Governor's Mansion beginning on the south side of the new driveway at Fairlawn Road, thence north 200 meters, thence west 430 meters, thence south 110 meters, thence S.E. 80 meters thence east 370 meters. The house and 20 acres being designated in Madge MacLennan's will for use as the Governor's mansion and grounds, and being accepted by the state as such.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(see continuation sheet)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 20 acres

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

Quadrangle name Topeka

UMT References

A	1 5	2 6 2 6 5 0	4 3 2 7 5 3 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 1 5	2 6 1 2 2 1 8 1 0	4 1 3 2 1 7 3 1 4 1 0
E	1 1 5	2 6 1 2 2 1 2 1 0	4 1 3 2 1 7 5 1 3 1 0
G			

B	1 5	2 6 2 6 5 0	4 1 3 2 1 7 3 1 4 1 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	1 1 5	2 6 1 2 2 1 2 1 0	4 1 3 2 1 7 4 1 2 1 0
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification  
(see continuation sheet)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

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

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nora Pat Small, Architectural Historian

organization Ks. State Historical Society date 3-30-82

street & number 120 West Tenth St. telephone 913 296-3251

city or town Topeka state Kansas 66612

# 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 [Signature]

title Ex. Director and Ks. State Historic Preservation Officer date March 29, 1982

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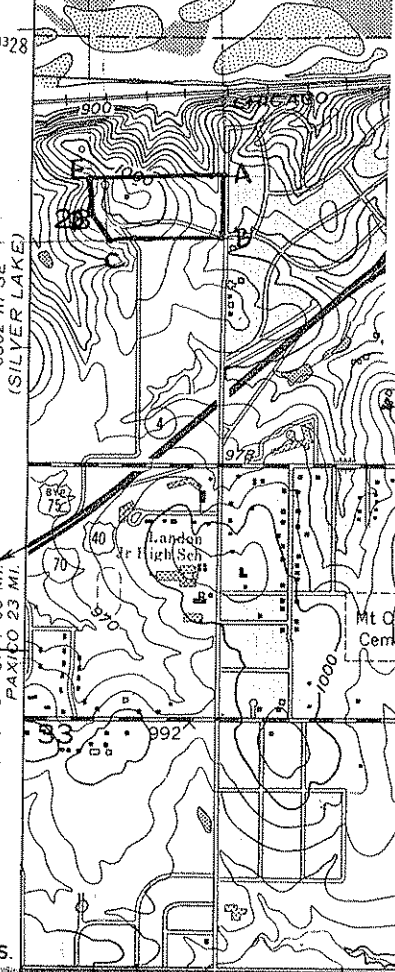
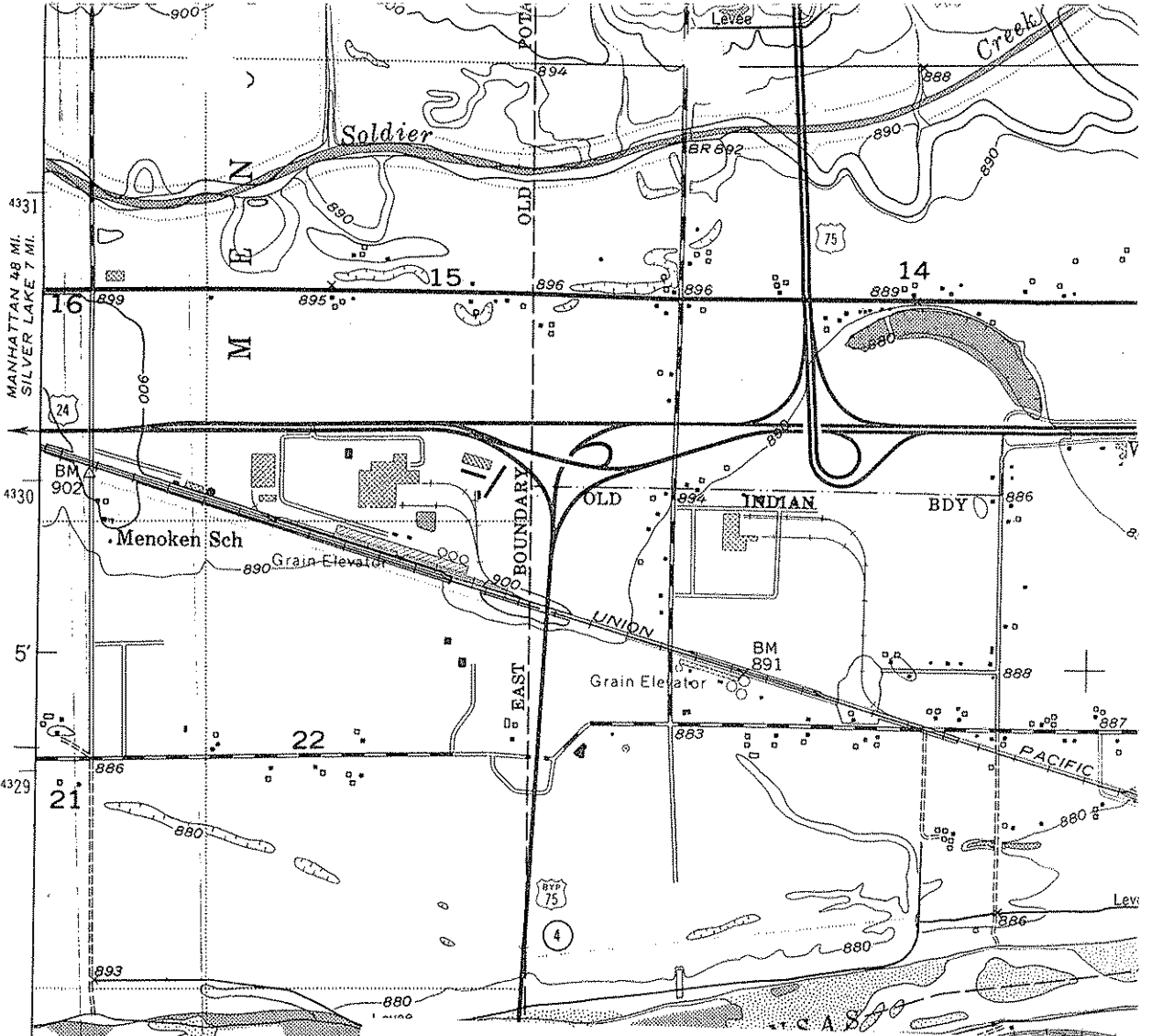
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

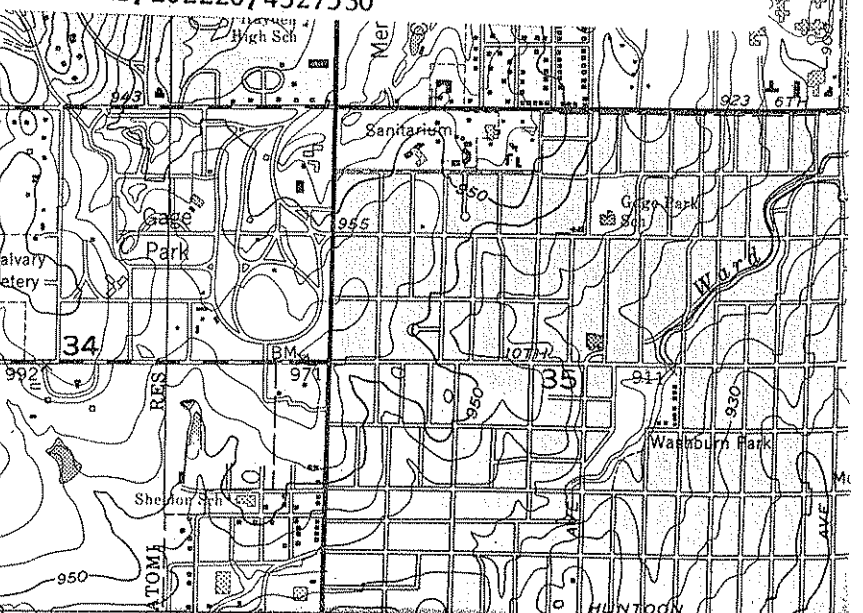




Cedar Crest, Governor's Mansion

Topeka vicinity, Kansas  
Shawnee County

- UTM References:  
 A: 15/262650/4327530  
 B: 15/262650/4327340  
 C: 15/262280/4327340  
 D: 15/262220/4327420  
 E: 15/262220/4327530



A, B, C, D