

RECEIVED

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 an 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 Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio

other names/site number Avent Cabin

2. Location

street & number Jake's Creek Trail not for publication

city or town near Elkmont, Great Smoky Mountains National Park vicinity

state Tennessee code TN county Sevier code 155 zip code 37377

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

Edward Lewis
Signature of certifying official>Title

11/12/93
Date

Edward Lewis, National Park Service
State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Herb T. Hagan
Signature of certifying official>Title

11/3/93
Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, TN Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Mayna M. Avent

11/7/94

Avent, Mayna Treanor Studio
Name of Property

Sevier, Tennessee
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Cultural/Artist Studio

Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/outdoor

Recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Log Cabin

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: stone - fieldstone

walls: wood: poplar logs with cement

chinking

roof: metal: sheet aluminum

other: chimneys: fieldstone

porch: wood - poplar

Narrative Description

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

See 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.)

Property is: N/A

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Art

Period of Significance

1919 - 1940 (Art)

1850 (architecture)

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Avent, Mayna Treanor

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

See 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): N/A

- 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:

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Avent, Mayna Treanor Studio

Name of Property

Sevier, Tennessee

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 21 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	2	6	5	2	7	0	3	9	4	6	9	8	0	
Zone	Easting				Northing											
2	1	7	2	6	5	8	9	0	3	9	4	6	9	0	0	

3	1	7	2	6	5	9	5	0	3	9	4	6	7	0	0	
Zone	Easting				Northing											
4	1	7	2	6	5	8	6	0	3	9	4	6	5	7	0	

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 Douglas J. Harnsberger, Architectural Historian

organization Harnsberger and Associates date May 1, 1993

street & number 108 N. 1st Street telephone 804/648-5040

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23219

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Mr. Randall Pope, Superintendent

street & number 107 Park Headquarters Road telephone 615/436-5615 Xt203

city or town Gatlinburg state Tenn. zip code 37738

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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co., TN

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The cabin is a one room log cabin with a simple gable roof, and a partially enclosed porch that extends along the southeast side of the structure. An attached kitchen shed extends from the structure on the east elevation. The hand-hewn poplar log walls are chinked with wood, mud and mortar. The interior is horizontally divided by a railed sleeping loft, supported by hand-hewn poplar timbers. The loft extends over one-half of the first floor and is accessible by a wood ladder. The stone fireplace is located at the northeast wall of the house. A window and a paned door located on the southeast wall help to provide external light. A plank door on the northwest wall serves as the cabin's main entrance.

The cabin is located about one mile south/southwest of the Elkmont community. It is accessible on the Jake's Creek trail by automobile to approximately two hundred yards from the house. A foot path winds down to Jake's Creek; over traces of the old Elkmont Road, crosses over the Creek by footlog, and up the ridge where the cabin is located on a steep bluff. Located in a small clearing surrounded by forest, a path leads from the cabin to an outdoor shower, bathing area and privy. Retaining walls exist near the cabin, notably at the northeast side and northwest side, where steps leading to the creek are joined. Water emanating from a spring above the cabin supplies the cabin's needs.

Naturally occurring features add colorful dimension to the site. The "thinking rock", a large rock and hemlock tree in close proximity, is located some 40 feet to the north of the cabin. A mature balsa fir tree, planted by Jim Avent in 1926, is located near the bluff and has been repeatedly clawed and marred by bears.

Frank Avent bought the cabin for \$200 from Steve and Eva Owenby, who had received it from Eva's parents, Sam and Minnie Cook, as a wedding gift. Mayna began using the cabin as a studio in 1919 and continued to do so for over 20 years. In 1926, Frank and Mayna Avent gave the cabin to their son, Jim Avent. In an effort to improve the cabin for his mother's use, Jim Avent made several alterations to the building. To improve illumination, he installed two large openings: a window at the southwest elevation, and at the southeast wall, a door providing access to the porch. He further added a fireplace and stone chimney at the northeast wall. The roof was rebuilt and covered with tar paper. A new pine floor replaced the original floor and a loft was created over the main room of the cabin from reused poplar boards. Additionally, the porch was enlarged and enclosed with screening and a new separate kitchen shed was built at the northeast of the building. The

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gravity flow water system, still in use, was also installed at that time.

Additional repairs and alterations followed. When a bear demolished the kitchen outbuilding in the 1940's, the remnants of the kitchen shed were moved to the main cabin. In 1972 several other small alterations took place. A new sheet aluminum roof replaced the asphalt roof. Deteriorated log timbers notably below the large windows, were replaced with matching hand-hewn poplar logs. Similarly, deteriorated floor joists were removed and replaced. One half of the porch was enclosed as a part of the kitchen and a storage room and new door were added to the kitchen. A propane stove replaced the kerosene stove. Half the loft was removed to improve light and air circulation at the ground level and to provide heat circulation into the loft. Most recently in 1982-83, additional deteriorated logs in the northwest corner were replaced with matching hand-hewn poplar timbers.¹

Ownership of the cabin and its 18 1/2 acres of land was transferred to the National Park Service in 1932. A lifetime lease was given to James Avent and his wife Jeannette. He subsequently transferred the lease to his children, Jacqueline and James Avent Jr. The son surrendered his interest in 1972. The lease was held by Jacqueline Avent and Mayna Avent MacKinnon for the following twenty years until its expiration in 1992.

The Avent Cabin and site is an important physical symbol of the life and work of a significant American artist. As the artist's studio and lodging, the cabin memorializes the artistic life of Mayna Treanor Avent. The mountainous site reflects the physical features, panoramas and aura of this nationally recognized artist's work. In addition, as a rare surviving example of the region's earliest log dwellings built by the original settlers to Great Smoky Mountain region of Tennessee, this humble structure also represents an important American vernacular building type.² For the modern visitor, the cabin remains a poignant reminder that before the logging of the virgin forest, there was a time when man lived in harmony with these beautiful mountains.

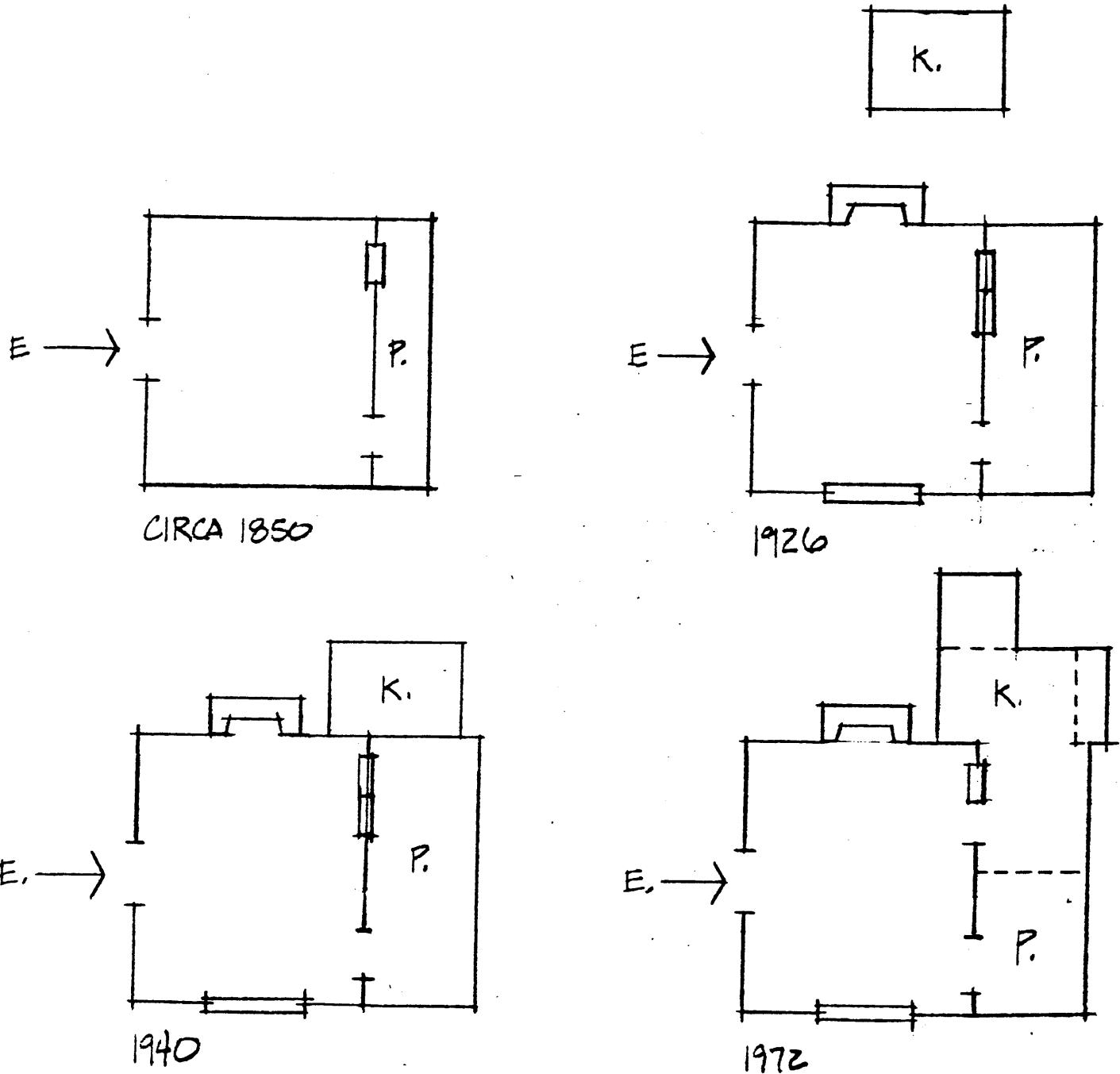
¹ See Photograph No. 1.

² Edited from a narrative report written by Walter and Mayna Avent Nance, May 1, 1993.

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Continuation Sheet**

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Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co., Tennessee



PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION

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Section number 8 Page 4

Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co., Tennessee

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Avent Cabin is a primitive log dwelling situated approximately one mile south of the Elkmont community in the Great Smoky Mountains of eastern Tennessee. It is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places because of its significant association (under Criterion B) with the noted regional artist, Mayna Treanor Avent, who utilized the cabin as her summer studio retreat in the early twentieth century. The cabin is also significant under Criterion C as a rare surviving mid-nineteenth century log structure representative of the pioneering architecture once prevalent in this mountainous region.

Mayna Treanor Avent (1868-1959) was a regional Anglo-American artist whose work is nationally recognized.¹ Her paintings are represented in the collection of the Smithsonian Institute's National Portrait Gallery and she is cited in the American Art Directory of 1932 and the 1940 edition of Who's Who in American Art. She is one of Tennessee's most esteemed artists. In 1907 she was awarded the gold medal by the Nashville Art Club and has been widely recognized through state and national exhibitions. Her paintings and drawings are exhibited in the Tennessee Fine Arts Center at Cheekwood in Nashville, Tennessee, and the Morris Museum, Augusta, Georgia, and in important private collections throughout the South. Among her well-known works are several portraits, such as "The Brown Madonna," and landscape compositions, such as "Tennessee Wheatfield" and "Off Franklin or Nolensville Pike, Nashville."²

An excerpt from the catalog, Tennessee Painting - The Past, profiles the life and work of Mayna Treanor Avent:

"Mayna Treanor Avent was the daughter of Thomas O. and Mary Andrews Treanor. She was born on September 18, 1868, at Tulip Grove Mansion, across Lebanon Pike from Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, near Nashville. Study at Cincinnati was followed by two years at the Julian Academy in Paris. In 1891 she married Frank Avent, a Murfreesboro attorney who later served as State Railroad Commissioner for many years. He died in 1941.

¹See Appendix I for letters documenting her national stature as an artist.

²See Appendix II for representative catalog entries.

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Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co., Tennessee

"Avent taught painting in Nashville for many years and exhibited throughout the United States. Besides Tennessee, she painted in Massachusetts and South Carolina. She produced oil and watercolor paintings, drawings and wood block prints in the Japanese manner. She was commissioned by Vanderbilt Medical School to do a portrait of Dr. W E. Garrey, Chairman of the Physiology Department. She was particularly noted for her portraits of blacks. She was more prolific, however, at still lifes and landscapes, Tennessee wheatfields being one of her favorite subjects. She was a member of the Nashville Studio Club, the Nashville Artists Guild, and the Centennial Club, which in 1951 held a retrospective exhibition of her sixty-eight year artistic career. She died at Sewanee, Tennessee on January 2, 1959."

The Avent Cabin is essential to understanding the life of the artist and the setting that inspired her work. It provides an important physical record of the artist's life because other structures associated with her, namely her Nashville home and studio, no longer exist. Because of her long association with the Avent Cabin, it is an essential symbol of this important American artist in the context of her work. The summers spent at the cabin contributed significantly to her oeuvre. The inspiration of the landscape renowned for its awesome beauty³ is reflected in her sketches, prints and paintings.⁴

Mayna Treanor Avent was born and raised in Nashville, Tennessee. Although she traveled to France to complete her training at the Academie Julian in Paris in the 1880's, she held closely to her regional ties throughout her life, returning to Nashville thereafter to embark upon her artistic career. Important among her works are the landscape and portrait paintings inspired and executed from approximately 1919 to 1940 during her annual summer residence at the cabin. From that remote location she was influenced by the primitive beauty, simplicity and isolation of the Jake's Creek Valley, Elkmont, and the surrounding communities and people. In a 1934 wood block, the artist captured the natural beauty of the Avent Cabin and surroundings in a wildly polychromed composition entitled "The Log."⁵

³Hutchins, R.E., Hidden Valley of the Smokies, Dodd, Meade and Co., New York, 1971.

"See artist paintings "Indian Pinks in the Smoky Mountains" and "Old Smoky" for the representative landscapes.

⁵See Appendix II for reproductions of the artist's work.

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Sevier Co., TN

Because the Avent family chose to preserve the cabin in its primitive character, the structure retains much its original historic fabric and integrity.⁶ Built around 1850 and occupied by the Ownby family for several generations the cabin was purchased by the artist's husband, Frank Avent in 1918. In addition to its significance as an artist's studio, the cabin is associated with an interesting regional folk history, recorded in a journal containing the notes of travelers and friends who stayed there between the years 1936 and 1993. This unusual tradition, which was encouraged by the owners, recorded the experiences at the cabin and surroundings, and expressions of thanks for the lodging. These documents add a rich social history dimension to the last half-century of the cabin's existence.⁷

The Avent Cabin is the last pioneer structure to survive in its original location along the banks of Jakes Creek,⁸ and has been in continual use since the time of its construction in the mid-19th century.⁹ ¹⁰ The single-pen cabin design is a compact and efficient domiciliary unit whose architectural integrity remains substantially intact. Succeeding generations of inhabitants frequently modified this type of structure by the addition of doors, porches, lofts, lean-to sheds, second floors, extra windows¹¹ and even second pens¹² to meet their changing needs.

⁶See photographs and slides of the cabin.

⁷Examples of journal entries are given in Appendix III.

⁸One other 19th century cabin has been relocated to a new site in the Elkmont community.

⁹ Russell, J.T., Call Me Hillbilly, Russell Publishing, Alcoa, Tenn., 1974.

¹⁰ The first cabin on Jakes Creek was built by Jacob Hauser, for whom the creek is named. Hauser initially came from Pennsylvania to Knox County, Tenn., where he was listed as a resident in the U.S. Census of 1840. His cabin was probably constructed between 1840 and 1850, when he was listed as a resident of Sevier County in the U.S. Census of 1850.

¹¹ Morgan, J., The Log House in East Tennessee, University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1990, p.69.

¹² O'Malley, J.R. and Rehder, J.B., "The Two-story Log House in the Upland South: Journal of Popular Culture, 11:904-915, 1978.

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Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co., Tennessee

Viewed in this context, the sympathetic alterations that were made by the artist more than 50 years ago to accomodate the requirements of her profession, are typical for this building type. These changes now constitute an important physical record of the cabin's continuous occupancy and vaired use for more than 140 years.

The Avent Cabin was built in the first historical epoch of the Great Smoky Mountains in the middle of the nineteenth century, when settlers crossed the mountains from the Carolinas. The Cabin was home for generations of the Ownby Family, one of the original pioneer families that settled in the Elkmont region. Originally intent of searching for gold, these early pioneers developed a subsistence agricultural economy in the mountain terrain. Small areas of the forest were cleared for apple orchards, potato and corn fields and for bee-keeping.¹³ Water mills, powered by Jake's Creek, were also established along the waterway. This small scale agricultural life sustained the Appalachian pioneer economy, and was and integral part of the region's early development.

The growth of the logging industry that marked the region's second historical epoch¹⁴ decimated most of the forest along Jake's Creek. With the founding of the Little River Lumber Company in 1901, the wooded landscape of Jake's Creek was clear-cut. New logging camps were built and thousands of logs were transported along railroads, sluiceways and waterways.¹⁵ With the denuding of the land complete by the 1930's, most of the remaining pioneer structures were disassembled by the National Park Service and the land was allowed to reforest. When the last operating farm was destroyed in 1980's, the Avent Cabin remained the only original pioneer home along Jake's Creek.

The third and final historical period began when the cabin was incorporated, in 1932, into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park at the time of its creation.¹⁶ Since then the cabin has gradually regained much of its original forested setting, even though the types and distribution of flora differs markedly from

¹³ Ramsey, B., Honey for Sale, Unpublished manuscript, 1976.

¹⁴ Lambert, R.S., Logging on Little River (1890-1940), East Tennessee Historical Society Publications, 33, 1961.

¹⁵ Weals, V., Last Train to Elkmont, Olden Press, Knoxville, Tenn., 1991.

¹⁶ Campbell, C. Birth of a National Park in the Great Smokies, University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1966.

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Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co., Tennessee

those found in the Virgin forest.¹⁷ As a consequence, the cabin and its setting more closely resemble their original character than at any time in the recent past.

The Avent Cabin is a rectangular 16 foot by 23 1/2 foot, single-pen structure made of large, hand-hewn poplar logs interlocked with half dove-tail corner joints. Subtle differences in the corner notches reflect the cabin's raising by a communal group with multiple "cornermen", as was the usual practice.¹⁸ Although poplar logs were used for the construction of only 5% of the 19th century log dwellings, in adjacent Blount County¹⁹ poplar would have been the natural choice at the higher elevation of Jakes Creek. Although milled timber, cut by portable steam powered circular saws first became available in the area in the 1850's²⁰ and sash cut timber was available even before that time,²¹ the remote location of the cabin as well as cost would have precluded the importation of milled lumber for frame construction. The virgin forest along the creek held abundant stands of poplar, that are known to have included some of the largest specimens in the Smoky Mountains.²² The timber logs were cut, felled, and shaped with axes, adzes and hand saws from trees taken near the construction site. All other building materials were carried to the site on foot paths, which today remains the only method of access. The cabin has no electricity. An outdoor privy substitutes for indoor plumbing. (modern, NC)

¹⁷ Weals, V., Op. cit.

¹⁸ Owsley, F.L., Plain Folk of the Old South, Louisiana University Press, Baton Rouge, 1949, pp.106-107.

¹⁹ Morgan, J., Op. cit.

²⁰ Kerr, J., East Tennesseean, 10 Feb., 1858.

²¹ Morgan, J., Op. cit.

²² Weals, V., Op. cit. One day during the summer of 1909, the largest poplar tree in the Smoky Mountains was felled less than 1000 yds. from the cabin site at the confluence of Jakes Creek and Tulip Branch. Its 32 foot girth was so great the log had to be blown up with powder for processing.

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Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co., TN

The primary facade of the cabin remains unchanged in its original appearance. The front door measures 2'8" X 5'9" and is composed of three finished planks that are attached to battens with a large number of square nails of the type that first became available in the region in the 1830's²³. When the loft was constructed in 1926, random width planks cut by circular saws were taken from the inner walls of the cabin and used for floor boards. Originally, there was only a single window in the cabin with a single sash and six lights, measuring 1'9" X 2'4".

²³ Patrick, James, Architecture in Tennessee, 1768-1987, University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1981.

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Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co., Tennessee

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Campbell, C., Birth of a National Park in the Great Smokies, University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1966.

Hutchins, R.E., Hidden Valley of the Smokies, Dodd, Meade and Co., New York, 1971.

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Morgan, John, The Log House in East Tennessee, University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1990.

O'Malley, J.R. and Rehder, J.B., "The Two-story Log House in the Upland South", Journal of Popular Culture, 11:904-915, 1978.

Owsley, F. L., Plain Folk of the Old South, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1949.

Patrick, James, Architecture in Tennessee, 1768-1897, University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1981.

Ramsey, B., Honey for Sale, Unpublished manuscript, 1976.

Russell, J.T., Call Me Hillbilly, Russell Publishing, Aloca, Tenn., 1974.

Weals, V., Last Train to Elkmont, Olden Press, Knoxville, Tenn., 1991.

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Section number 10 Page 11

Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co., Tennessee

Verbal Boundary Description

The following verbal boundary is excerpted verbatim from the "Deed of Conveyance", dated March 10, 1933, conveying the cabin and its irregular 21 acre site from James and Jeanette Avent to the State of Tennessee:

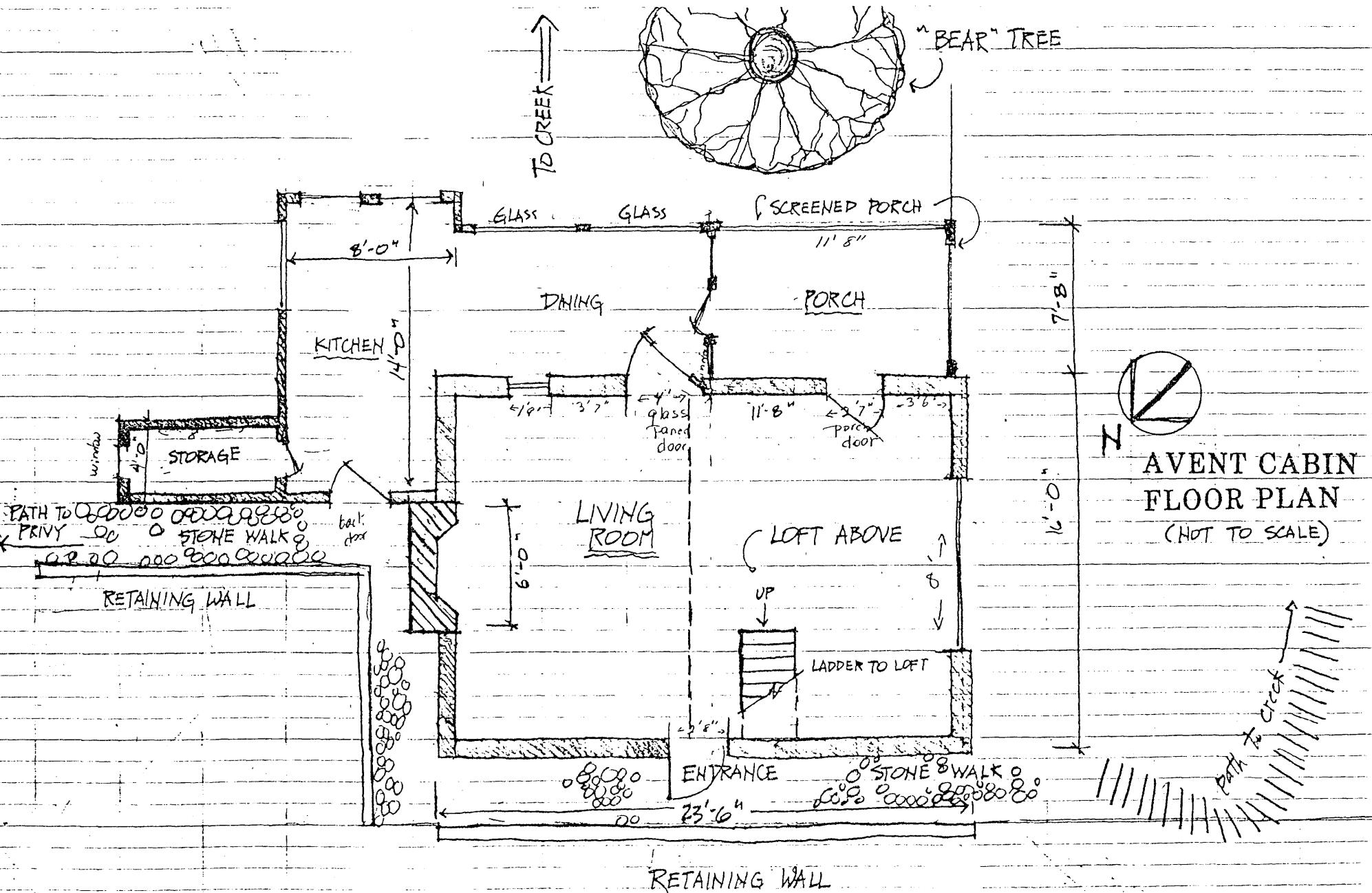
"THAT WHEREAS, on the 10th day of March, 1933, the parties of the second part sold and conveyed to the party of the first part the following described property:

BEGINNING on a corner to the lands formerly owned by John Trentham and Bert Ownby, formerly a waterbirch on Jakes Creek; thence with and up Jakes Creek and with a line of lands formerly owned by the Little River Lumber Company S. 1 deg. W. 100 ft; S. 10 E. 336 ft; S. 31 W. 435 ft; S. 25 W. 90 ft.; S. 5 deg. W. 45 ft. to a corner of lands owned by Mary M. Avent; thence with the lines of said last named tract and lands formerly owned by Sam R. Cook; N. 66 deg. W. 425 ft; N. 49 W. 479 ft; N. 48 deg. W. 335 ft; N. 45 deg. W. 381 ft. to a double chestnut, a corner of said Cook and also a corner of the Bert Ownby tract; thence with the lines of the Bery Ownby tract N. 78 E. 658 ft; S. 71 E. 420 ft; N. 83 deg. E. 585 ft. to the beginning, containing 21 acres, located in the 11th Civil District of Sevier County, Tennessee."

Reference on the deed is made to "Map Tract 569", however, this map does not accompany the deed record today.

Boundary justification

The land parcel conveyed in the 1933 Deed of Conveyance represents the exact boundaries of the cabin property owned by the Avents during the significant period of Mayna Treanor Avent's residency at the cabin (1919-1940). The artist's experience with the immediate landscape surrounding the cabin is directly linked to these once private property boundaries.



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Section number Photos Page 12 Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier CO., TN

PHOTOGRAPHS

Avent Cabin
Near Elkmont, Sevier County, Tennessee

Photos by: Mayna Avent Nance
 1704 Park Ave.
 Richmond, Virginia

Date: March 1993

Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission
 701 Broadway
 Nashville, TN 37132

View from south below cabin site on path to creek, 1926 photo
#1 of 14

Portrait of Mary Avent Adams (cabin right background before window
installation), 1918 photo
#2 of 14

View from south taken from old railroad bed, 1929 photo
#3 of 14

West elevation
#4 of 14

View from east to kitchen shed
#5 of 14

View from west of northwest (rear) elevation
#6 of 14

View from north of rear elevation
#7 of 14

View from south of screened porch
#8 of 14

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Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier County, TN

Interior, view to south wall of living room
#9 of 14

Interior, view to kitchen from porch
#10 of 14

Interior, view to porch from kitchen
#11 of 14

Interior, view to west wall of living room
#12 of 14

Interior, view to loft ladder and ceiling joists
#13 of 14

Portrait of Mayna Treanor Avent, circa 1920's photo
#14 of 14

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

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Continuation Sheet**

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 93001575

Date Listed: 2/7/94

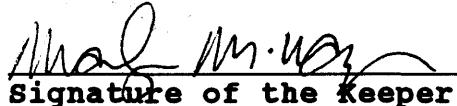
Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Property Name

Sevier
County

TENNESSEE
State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

2/7/94
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section No. 2

This nomination is amended to show that locational information about this property can be published; the not for publication box was checked through oversight.

This information was provided by the Tennessee SHPO (2/7/94)

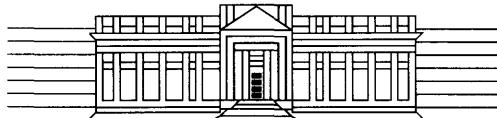
DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

APPENDIX I:

LETTERS OF PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

- a) James C. Kelly
Assistant Director for Museum Programs
Virginia Historical Society
Richmond, Virginia
- b) Susan Fisher Sterling
Curator of Modern and Contemporary ART
The National Museum of Women in the Arts
New York, New York
- c) Louise Keith Claussen
Director
Morris Museum of Art
Augusta, Georgia
- d) James A. Hoobler
Curator of Art and Architecture
The Tennessee State Museum
Nashville, Tennessee



VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Center for Virginia History

22 April 1993

Mr. Jerry L. Rogers
 Keeper of the Register
 National Register of Historic Places
 P.O. Box 37127
 Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Dear Mr. Rogers:

I am writing in support of the effort to place on the National Register the cabin, almost in its original 1850 condition, that was used as a studio by the noted painter Mayna Treanor Avent during the prime of her career. Women artists labored under serious handicaps during the first half of this century, and it is rare that a structure related to the most creative period of a woman artist's life survives. In Mrs. Avent's case it is especially appropriate that her rural retreat survives rather than her urban home and studio because, although versatile in many media, and an accomplished portraitist, outdoor scenes were her specialty and greatest legacy.

It is a further blessing that, when Mayna Avent acquired the cabin, she left it virtually untouched, creating only one window to illuminate her painting. Although I cannot speak with absolute authority on this next point, my experience suggests that virtually all cabins in the Elkmont area that survive have been extensively modernized.

I was for nine years the Chief Curator of the Tennessee State Museum and in that capacity organized major exhibitions called Landscape and Genre Painting in Tennessee, 1810-1985 and Portrait Painting in Tennessee, each accompanied by a catalogue. Inevitably, Mayna Treanor Avent was represented in both exhibitions and in neither instance did any woman artist have more works included. Catherine Wiley, Ella Hergesheimer, and Mayna Avent were the best Tennessee woman artists of the first half of the twentieth century and I am pleased to give my support to the worthy effort to place on the national register that wonderful cabin in which she did much of her best work. Preserving this early cabin at Elkmont is an especially felicitous way of recognizing Mrs. Avent's work and worth.

Sincerely,

James C. Kelly
 Assistant Director
 for Museum Programs

JCK/meh

The National Museum of Women in the Arts

1250 New York Avenue, N.W.

202-783-5000

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RECEIVED

Washington, D.C. 20005-3920

April 21, 1993

Mr. Jerry L. Rogers
Keeper of the Register
National Register of Historic Places
Post Office Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Dear Mr. Rogers:

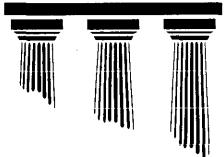
I am writing at the time to ask you to consider favorably the nomination of Mayna Treanor Avent's studio to the Register. Avent was an important artist in Tennessee through the 1940s. She worked in many genres including landscape, portraiture and still life in an Impressionist style. I am glad to know also that, according to James Hoobler of the Tennessee State Museum, Avent was the first professionally trained woman artist in the region--an important figure in art in Tennessee, to be sure.

In light of Avent's historical significance, I hope you will consider this nomination favorably.

Sincerely,

Susan Fisher Sterling
Susan Fisher Sterling
Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

SFS/tbs

MORRIS
MUSEUM of ART

April 23, 1993

Mr. Jerry L. Rogers
Keeper of the Register
National Register of Historic Places
P.O. Box 37127

Dear Mr. Rogers:

I am writing in support of the nomination of Mayna Treanor Avent's mountain studio to the Register. Mrs. Avent's work is included in the collection of the Morris Museum of Art, a new museum whose focus is painting in the South - from antebellum portraiture to contemporary works.

This artist is important to the history of painting in the South, working as she did at a time when few women in this region were able to receive professional training or to work in their own studios. The Morris Museum of Art recently included one of her works in a show entitled "A Sense of Time and Place: Works on Paper," which was shown in Greenville, S.C., and Asheville, N.C.

Because our museum is establishing a Center for the Study of Southern Painting, which will in time attract scholars studying the history of painting in the South, interest in artists such as Mayna Treanor Avent, their lives, their works and yes, their studios, can only grow stronger.

Therefore, I encourage your consideration of this particular studio for recognition.

Sincerely yours,

Louise Keith Claussen
Director



THE TENNESSEE STATE MUSEUM
505 Deaderick Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37243-1120
Phone 615-741-2692 / FAX 615-741-7231

15 April 1993

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APR 10 1993

Mr. Jerry L. Rogers
Keeper of the Register
National Register of Historic Places
P. O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Dear Mr. Rogers:

Please consider the nomination of Mayna Treanor Avent's studio to the Register favorably. Mrs. Avent was an important Tennessee artist at the turn of this century. She worked in landscapes, portraiture, and still lifes. A sub-genre she worked in was what was called then Negro Studies, which means she painted portraits of African-Americans. These are particularly good. Her landscapes tended to be in the Impressionist style, and can be quite lovely.

As a woman working in the South, as a professional artist she was a pathfinder for future generations of women. As such I exhibited her in an exhibition on Tennessee women in 1985. In my opinion she is an important transitional figure in art in Tennessee and the South. She was one the first professionally trained woman artists in this region, and her influence extended well into this century. For this reason she is worthy of recognition.

Sincerely yours,

James A. Hoobler
James A. Hoobler
Curator of Art & Architecture

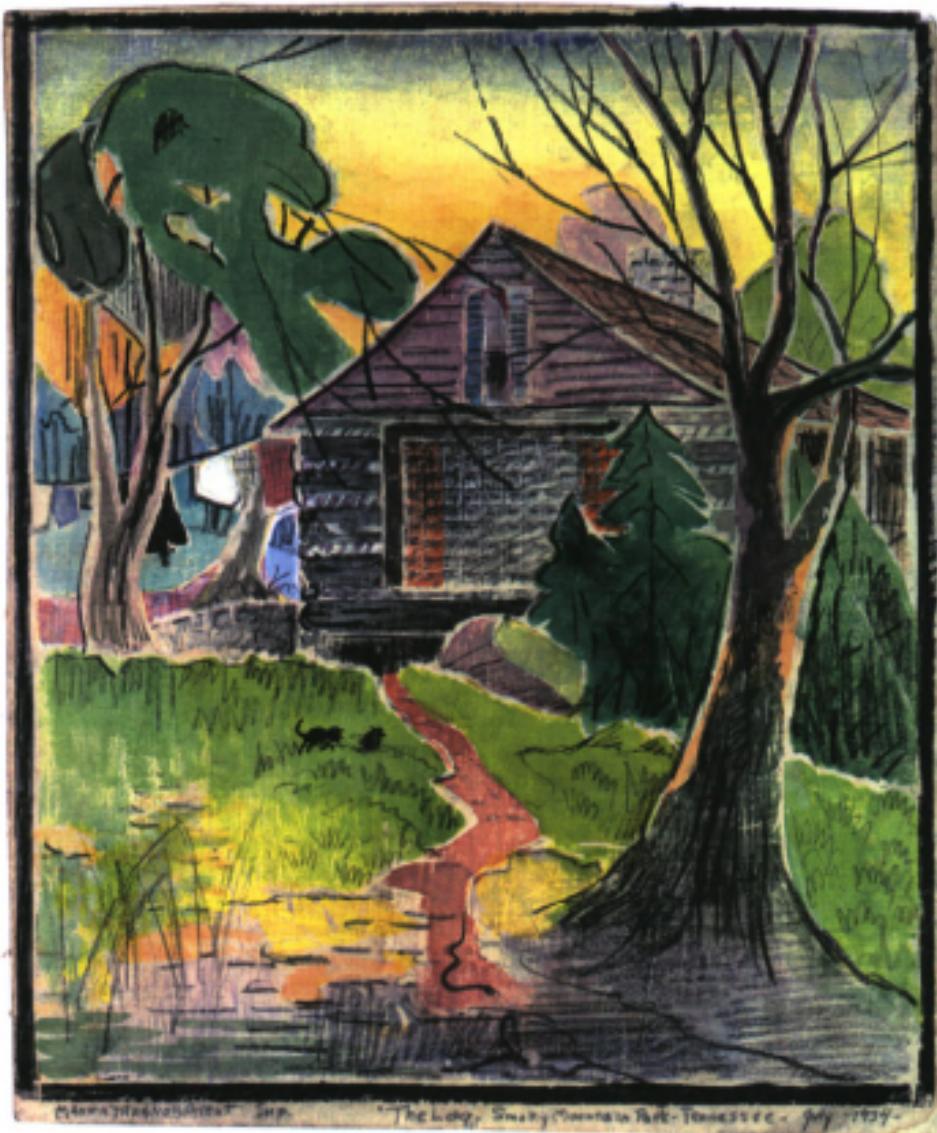
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MAY 18 1993

TENN. HISTORICAL COMMISSION

APPENDIX II:

WORKS BY MAYNA TREANOR AVENT



Appendix II: Illustration No. 1
"The Log" Woodcut. July 1934

Ref.: Tennessee Painting—The First (catalogue of an exhibition at the Tennessee Fine Arts Center at Cheekwood, May 22-July 31, 1960); *Dictionary of American Artists, 19th and 20th Century* (Poughkeepsie, N.Y., 1982; repr. from 1929 *American Art Annual*), 18; Nashville Tennessee, January 3, 1959 (obit.).

58. *The Brown Madonna*

Oil on canvas, 29½ x 24½ in.
Signed lower left: Mayna T. Avent
Not dated but ca. 1936
MR. AND MRS. JAMES M. AVENT

The fact that the title of this painting is not the name of the sitter places it between portraiture and genre painting. It is of a specific individual, Mrs. Avent's cook, whose name however has not come down to us, but it was painted for the artist, not the subject. In that sense it was intended as a generic idealization of a type rather than as a portrait.

Prov.: Artist to her son, the lender.



58

59. *Ellen Stokes Wemyss* (1895-)

Oil on canvas, 43 x 34 in.
Signed lower right: Mayna Treanor Avent
Not dated but ca. 1906
ELLEN STOKES WEMYSS

She is the daughter of Walter and Nellie Treanor Stokes, and niece of the artist. She attended

Belmont, Mrs. Brown's School and graduated from Miss Annie Allison's school in 1913. During World War I she worked at a canteen and portrayed Joan of Arc in a Liberty Bonds parade. In 1925 she married Livingfield More and moved to River Falls, Alabama. He died in 1934. In 1939 she married William Hatch Wemyss. He died in 1973. They restored Fairvue, a National landmark built in 1832 in Gallatin, Tennessee. She was Regent of the Ladies Hermitage Association 1951-55. She helped to save Cragfont, another historic house, a project of the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities; she is a trustee of the A.P.T.A., Sumner County Chapter. She was also first chairman of restoration of Tulip Grove, home of her grandfather Treanor, the father of the artist. In 1970 she won the Amy Angell Collier Montague medal for Civil Achievement by the Garden Clubs of America. She wrote *Granny Happy's Cookbook*, which is sold to benefit Cragfont.

Ref.: Hoobler, *Distinctive Women*, no. 63, p. 18; Louise Davis, "Ellen Wemyss didn't let 'protected era' slow her down," *Tennessee*, June 15, 1986, H-2.

Exh.: *Distinctive Women of Tennessee*, The Parthenon, Nashville, January-February, 1985.

Repr.: Hoobler, *Distinctive Women*, 63.



59



50



51

101

Appendix II: Illustration No. 3
"Tennessee Wheatfield" and
"Off Franklin of Nolensville Pike, Nashville"
Tennessee Historical Quarterly, Vol. XLIV,
Summer 1985, Number 2

MAYNA TREANOR AVENT 1868-1959

Mayna Treanor Avent was the daughter of Thomas O. and Mary Andrews Treanor. She was born on September 17, 1868, at Tulip Grove Mansion, across Lebanon Pike from Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, near Nashville. Study at Cincinnati was followed by two years at the Julian Academy in Paris. In 1891 she married Frank Avent, a Murfreesboro attorney who later served as State Railroad Commissioner for many years. He died in 1941.

Avent taught painting in Nashville for many years and exhibited throughout the United States. Besides Tennessee, she painted in Massachusetts and South Carolina. She produced oil and watercolor paintings, drawings and wood block prints in the Japanese manner. She was a member of the Nashville Studio Club, the Nashville Artists Guild, and the Centennial Club, which in 1951 held a retrospective exhibition of her sixty-eight year artistic career. She died at Sewanee, Tennessee on January 2, 1959.

An anecdote of Avent's early life recounts how she was given an armful of magnolias and decided to paint them at once. Finding no unused canvas about, she removed a wooden door panel and painted on it, later explaining "Magnolias just won't wait!" Besides still lifes, her favorite subjects were landscapes (especially Tennessee wheatfields) and Negro studies.

Ref.: *Tennessee Painting—The Past* (catalogue of an exhibition at the Tennessee Fine Arts Center at Cheekwood, May 22-July 31, 1960); *Dictionary of American Artists, 19th and 20th Century* (Poughkeepsie, N.Y., 1982; repr. from 1929 *American Art Annual*), 18; *Nashville Tennessean*, January 3, 1959 (obit.)

50. *Tennessee Wheatfield*

Oil on canvas, 25 x 30 in.

Signed lower right: Mayna Treanor Avent

Not dated

MR. AND MRS. JAMES AVENT (son of artist)

51. *Off Franklin or Nolensville Pike, Nashville*

Oil on canvas, 22 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 28 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.

Signed lower right: Mayna Treanor Avent

Not dated

MISS JACQUELINE AVENT (granddaughter of artist)



"INDIAN PINKS IN THE MOUNTAINS"

circa 1930
oil on canvas
22" X 31 1/2"

Owned by Mr. & Mrs. Charles Cornelius, Jr.
Brentwood, Tennessee

APPENDIX III: JOURNAL ENTRIES

ACCOUNTS OF VISITORS TO AVENT CABIN

Labor Day week-end, 1979
Dan, Marnie, Bet, Paul, Andy, Mito,
Yumiko Hama, Mary Engle



A-#1 Rest & Recreation —
AS ALWAYS
with love, ~~Paul~~ & Paul

Brisk Morning
Jakes Creek, September 3, 1979

Fog on the ridge becomes mist
In the near trees decades arrange
Silverberry, hemlock, and oak,
Sleep as an entry foregained.

Paul Ramsey

昭和54年9月3日

雨が下りてこの汚れを洗い去る
のようにはじめに降る。2003。
山を四方にいたる木々に囲まれ
100人とある山小屋。そろそろ
火で食事し、ハモの下でくつろぎ
やれやれの絵を描いていた。バス
トランジットで製作12初日
晴れ。2003.9.3. 2003.9.3.
7:00を出る。

浜田美子

It is raining hard as if it
would wash away all the dirt
of the world. ~~at~~ ^{stands alone} a cabin surrounded
with trees with mountains in
all directions. It is really a
very luxurious, precious moment
when we dine with the light
of lanterns, ~~and~~ relax on the
hammock, ~~and~~ each of us paints,
weaves a basket, or play musical
instruments as he wishes. Thank
you for this wonderful time.
Yumiko Hama

12/31/75

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR
THE USE OF YOUR CABIN FOR
ONE NIGHT. IT WAS QUITE
UNINTENTIONAL AND WE WOULD
NOT HAVE DONE IT UNDER
ANY BUT THE MOST EXTRA-
ORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES. WE
WERE FORCED TO DEPART THE
APPALACHIAN TRAIL FOR ELMONT
VIA MARY RIDGE TRAIL DUE TO
VERY BAD WEATHER. UPON
ARRIVING AT JAMES CREEK
WE FOUND IT UNCROSSABLE.
WE TRIED TO WORK DOWN
THE CREEK TO ELMONT.
ALSO IMPOSSIBLE. VERY WET,
VERY COLD, AND SLIGHTLY
OVEREXPOSED WE ATTEMPTED
TO ATTAIN THE RIDGE AND
FOLLOW IT DOWN. THEN
WE SPOTTED YOUR CABIN.
THANK YOU AGAIN.

This note was found along w/ the
3\$ in payment for their cut, dry
scrub and wood used.

Roger Lutken
Margalee Lutken

May 29 -
June 1, 1965

Home of our honeymoon.
With the Traverses on their second.
Also the snakes.

Will bring our children here to
see the beginning of life.

Floyd to North Carolina
from Nashville.

Mack Travers
Sylvia Travers

We found it in the dark at 10:00 pm
thanks to a big A I carved on the tree
last year - exactly 0.8 mile from the gate.
Were helping Roger & Margalee to
close. One long hike up the hill
behind here - through the brambles. Don't
recommend it. Thanks for a happy time!

Tuesday, 18 July 1978

161

Ed & John Gisselbar & my wife
from Ed & (Glad) Holland - Driehoek, 29
spent here an afternoon & evening as
Guests of our dear friends Mr. & Mrs.
Heba & Thomas Rogers. We were really
very lucky people to be brought by
them to this unique place high up
in the Smokies something we
would never have dreamed of ever to
come true. This log cabin in its
rural setting where nature sings its
lullaby really is a refuge for all
those who seek some peace and
and rest for the body and the mind
a happiness which we wish many
many enjoy in future as we have
enjoyed it now.

In grateful remembrance
For ever love
John

July 2-7, 1947 The happiest "vacation" we have ever spent.

May and Harold Smit
Each time we come, this spot grows more lovely.

July 17th - August 1st, 1948 Another happy fortnight of rest and relaxation in the midst of beauty - all the gift of our friendships. May and Harold Smit

August 7 to August 20, 1950

The friendliest vacation, with friendliest cabin, in the beautiful mountains!

Henry and Anne Rens, and
a host - Joann, Bob, Maggy and
Mark

August, 1950

Hawkins wonderful time - making
up the place.

John and
(X) Lois Smit
Burrell O'Malley

17/8/50
Paul Hamilton

(Editors Note: I could not find out the exact date of publication of this column. However, I believe it was written sometime during the summer of 1928 . It was published in The Nashville Tennessean. Although my Grandfather does not mention anyone by name, he is writing here about Mayna Treanor Avent, a personal friend of the family back during the years when their summers were spent at Blue Blanket Lodge, his summer home on Blanket Mountain near Elkmont, Tennessee.)

--T.H. Alexander III, November 1, 1992

"I Reckon So"

By T.H. Alexander

Recently a New York artist sojourning at Union Springs, Ala., wrote that he had been searching for an idea for a studio and found it in a recent dissertation here on log cabin architecture.

It happens that this column is written from an artist's log cabin studio high up in the heart of the Great Smoky Mountains, 4,000 feet above sea level. It is the summer home of a well known southern artist whose son, now in China, remodeled it for her.

So many southern readers have written sympathetically of their own desire to go back to the soil and live in a log cabin for the summer- they were kind enough to say the urge was planted in them by the column's rhapsodies on the Great Smoky Mountains- that it may be of sufficient interest to describe this abode.

The cabin is made, of course, of huge logs. I am told it costs several hundred dollars to build a log cabin now, but logs were not dear when this one was constructed. Perhaps when it was built the Battle of Kings Mountain, fought not so far away across the mountains,

was a vivid memory in the minds of many mountaineers for it must be more than a century old. The logs are fine and straight, hewn out by hand with the mark of the ax and the adz. The smoke of many winters of wood fires have colored the rafters to a rich golden brown. The Saxons, who were singularly fond of "draining an ale horn under the smoky rafters of a roof" would have been intrigued by the rafters of this cabin. To get the last drop in the ale horn, they would have cast their eyes upward and beheld the noblest rafters in all the southern shires. They are none of your synthetic rafters as in hotel grill rooms.

And the logs are chinked with honest southern mud. I blush to state the roof has yielded to modernity. The old roof of rough country shingles wore out and has been replaced with the composition kind so highly recommended in the advertisements.

The fireplace would put the American Radiator Company to shame. It is of proportions only to be described as noble, built of natural cobble stones rounded by the ceaseless churning of the mountain brook down in the valley in front of the cabin. Someone wore out a good mule hauling them upon the mountains. The andirons, and they'd call them dogirons up here, seem to have done yeoman service for long years- none of the ornamental trifles of the city bungalow. The pothook would make an antique collector weep for joy. The mantel above is of Chinese red and on it are candlesticks brought back from China by the artist's son, an official of the Standard Oil Company.

At the other end of the room, 35 feet away, is the pride and joy of the household. It is a window 10 feet wide and six feet high. It is framed by flaming orange curtains. You see, it is a real studio after all and the beauty and light of the mountains flood the room and the palette of the artist.

Some mountain mother made yards of home-spun on the spinning wheel in the corner- a real antique with a wheel almost four feet in diameter. The only modern notes are the fishing rods, the shotgun, the thermos jug and the flashlight.

Down across the side of the mountain, a couple of city blocks away, is the kitchen and there the antique note wanes except for a "step" stove with a distinctly back-woodsy atmosphere. It is equipped even with modern plumbing.

Up here in the Smokies water gushes out at less than the touch of Aaron's rod. The Smokies have the coldest and purest water, I am quite sure, in the whole south. The spring is high up the mountain side and is ice cold. Some inventive genius built a stout wooden box, stuck a pipe in the end, ran it to the kitchen and had as perfect a water system as any city. Down in the valley a busy health officer examined 89 springs and found 88 of them infected with either typhoid or colitis germs, but up here in the tall mountains , away from any human habitation, and with none above, the water would put the distilled water companies of the southern cities out of business were it possible to pipe it down.

No one can really appreciate gas and electric ranges until they have cut wood for the insatiable maw of a country stove. The punishment below of country boys who have erred in this life will be cutting stovewood. Of this I am certain, though it seems to be regarded in some parts of the mountains as effeminate work and is frowned upon in masculine circles as being menial and unworthy, even as low as catching chubbies when one could be casting for rainbow trout. But just the same it is work and whenever the stove fire goes out I always have a column to write in haste before the mail rider comes.

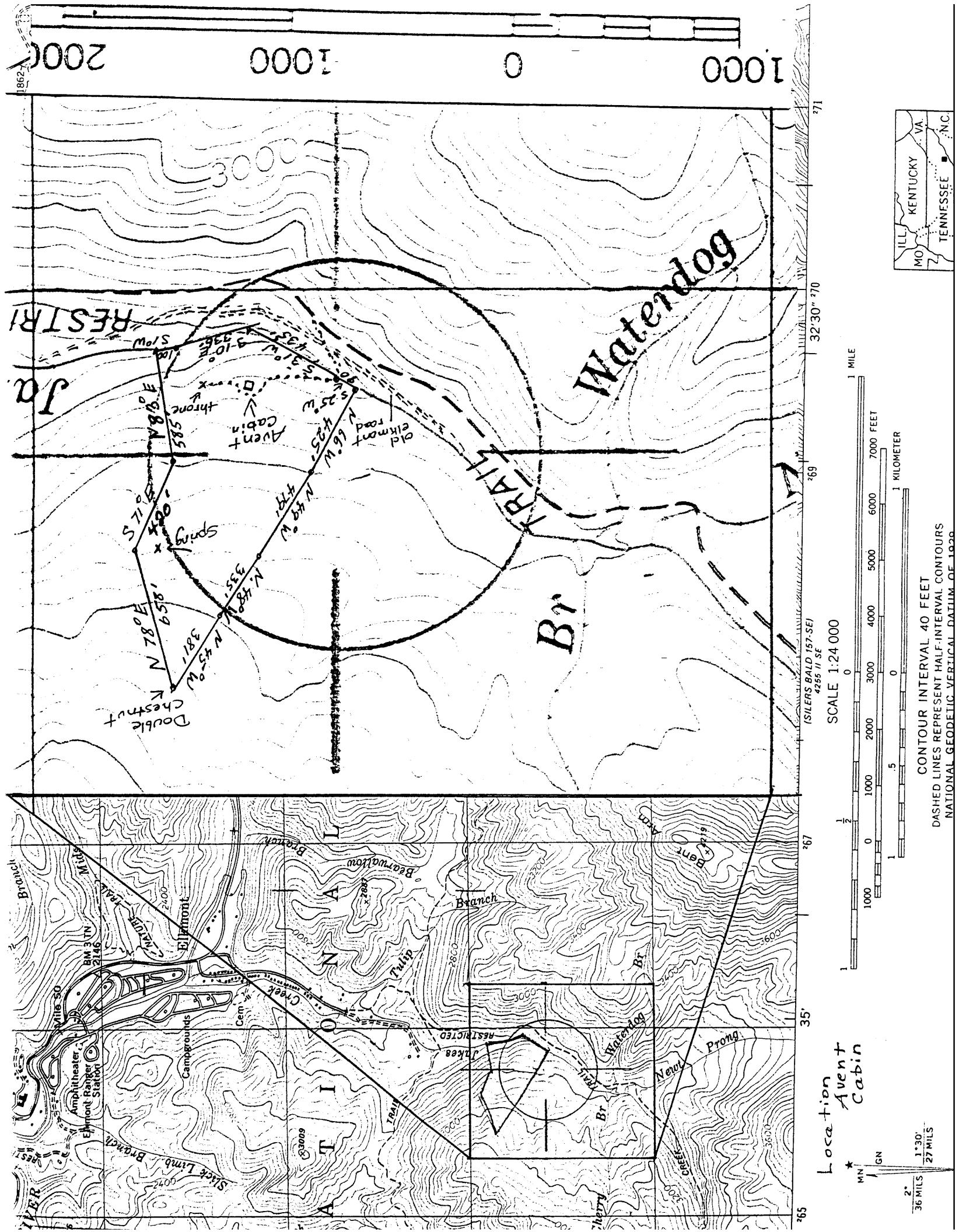
And on all sides are the towering mountains. Of them the Shepherd King might have sung," I will look to the hills whence cometh

my redeemer."

Mount LeConte, more than 6,500 feet high, covered with virgin timber such as the pioneers first gazed on, stands as the most awe-inspiring mountain east of the Rockies. True. Mount Mitchell is a few feet higher, but Mt. Mitchell rises from a tableland, already high and thus its height is dwarfed, while LeConte stands to itself, rising from a point no so high above sea level, a tremendous mass of rock and earth, more than a mile high.

Clingman's Dome, 6,680 feet high; Siler's Bald, Blanket Mountain and scores of lesser peaks puncture the clouds in this mountain wonderland. It is one of the few primitive spots left in all of Eastern America. Believers in conservation may thank the states of Tennessee and North Carolina that it is being preserved in all its primitive beauty as a playground for all the south. The time will come, and it won't be long, when the southerner who has not seen the Smoky Mountains will be unlettered in the natural lore of his native land.

Well, soon we'll be traveling home. The Littlest Little Boy cried today because there are no street cars to ride out to the zoo to see the monkeys. The fall campaign beckons. I wonder what they're saying about Al (Smith) back in the city?





Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co TN

#1 of 17



Avent, mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co TN

2 of 14



Avent, Mauna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co TN

#3 of 14



Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co TN

#4 of 14



Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co TN

#5 of 14



Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co TN

#6 of 14



Avent, Mauna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co TN

7 of 14



Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co TN

#8 of 14



Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co TN

#9 of 14



Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co TN

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Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co TN

#11 of 14



Avent, Mayna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co TN

12 of 14



Avent, Mauna Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co TN

13 of 14

A.vent, Mana Treanor, Studio
Sevier Co TN



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