

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: West Virginia	
COUNTY: Wirt	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME	
COMMON:	Burning Spring Complex
AND/OR HISTORIC:	Rathbone and Karns Wells

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN:			
Burning Springs			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
West Virginia	54	Wirt	105

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME: See Continuation Sheet.			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:			
Wirt County Courthouse			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE	
Elizabeth	West Virginia	54	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY:			
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION						
CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE						
<p>The stretch of river between Burning Spring Run and Nettle Run today is heavily wooded, but here and there among the trees glimpses are afforded of summer cottages, each with about an acre of property.</p> <p>Drilling and pumping equipment still marks the spot of the 1917 Mellon Well, fairly close to the mouth of Burning Spring Run. About one third the distance toward Nettle Run a plugged pipe nearly ten feet in height marks activity at that spot. At the bend in the stream marked "Oil Lott" on the 1963 map, a small wooden crib marks the site of a well.</p> <p>The Little Kanawha River, according to "old-timers," has eaten into the northern bank several feet since 1860, so that some of the early wells may be now under water or sand.</p> <p>In 1860 the area was farm land and relatively clear, except for oil derricks, as indicated in one of the accompanying photographs.</p> <p>The Rader Hotel is the only building in the reserved area more than 75 years old. To the casual tourist, except for this building and an occasional cottage, this area would appear almost primeval.</p>						

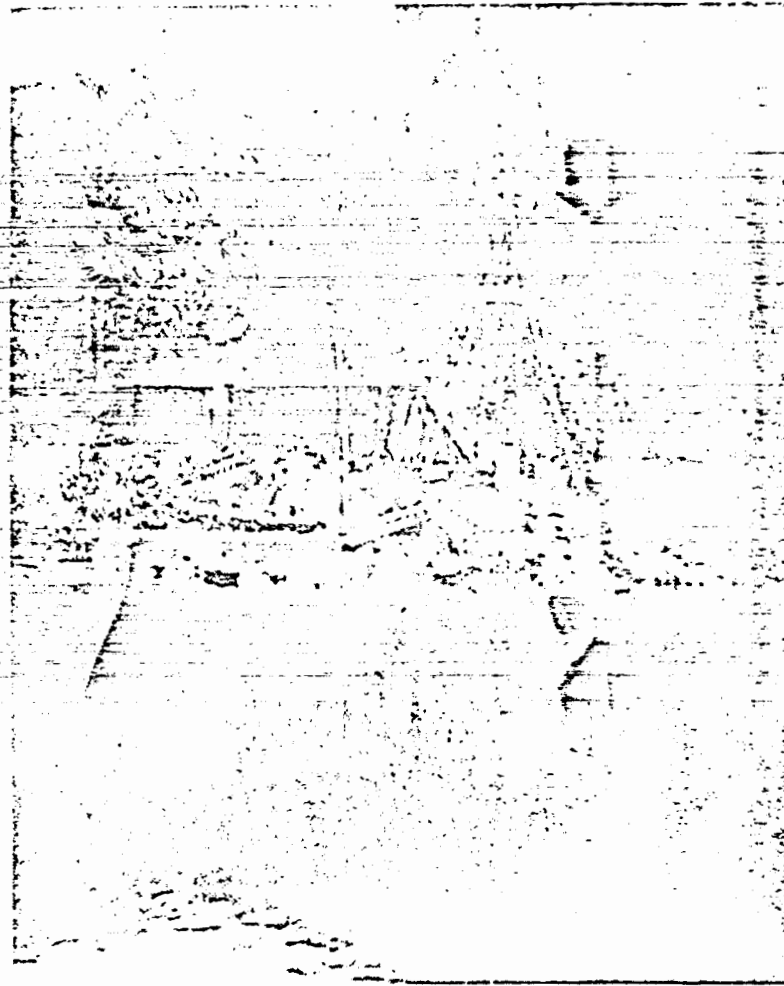
SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE			
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1860			
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Military		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE			
<p>The land along the Little Kanawha River between Burning Spring Run and Nettle Run is at the focal point of the origin of the world's second great oil field, springing up only months after the Drake Well in Pennsylvania, which was brought in on August 26, 1859.</p> <p>"At the outbreak of the Civil War there were but two producing oil fields in the world, Titusville and Burning Springs."<sup>1</sup></p> <p>"Burning Springs is the first military oil objective in the history of warfare,"<sup>2</sup> having been destroyed by General William E. Jones on May 9, 1863 with a loss estimated by operators of that day at 300,000 barrels. In fact, despite the silence of history on this point, 'Burning Springs was the most important industrial complex in enemy hands destroyed by the Confederates in the course of the War.'<sup>3</sup></p> <p>The site being nominated witnessed the drilling of several wells, two of particular importance that precipitated a rush to West Virginia that created a town (Burning Spring) of 5,000 overnight.</p> <p>From the standpoint of its effect, the single most important well next to Drake's was the second drilled by the Rathbone Brothers, J. V. and J. D., and J. N. Camden, in the summer of 1860, which produced 40 or 50 barrels an hour and stirred the imagination and dreams of hungry eastern investors. The Rathbones gave substance to their dreams in 1860 and the following year, when they "surveyed their entire 600 acres at Burning Springs into one-acre parcels, and offered to lease one acre to all comers for a royalty of the production."<sup>4</sup></p> <p>Another important well in oil history is that worked by an Allegheny County, Pa. man, Sherman D. Karns, at the mouth of Burning Spring Run, which he got into production late in February of 1860. His lease from the Rathbones, contracted on February 20, can be regarded as the first south of the Mason and Dixon line. The well had been drilled in 1832 for salt. It was salt that had brought the Rathbones from New York City in 1840, but it was Karns' well that shifted their attention to the possibilities of oil, just then coming into its own as an illuminant and lubricant, due in part to the scarcity of whale oil. The Rathbones were already selling medicinal "Rock Oil."</p> <p>The Rathbones then drilled the first two of many wells a few rods north of Burning Spring Run and forged a family tradition in oil that led to</p>			
1. Louis Reed, "Conflict and Error in the History of Oil," <u>West Virginia History</u> , Vol. 25, No. 1 (October 1963), p. 21.			
2. <u>Ibid.</u> , p. 26.			
3. <u>Ibid.</u>			
4. <u>Ibid.</u> , p. 22.			

<b>9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES</b>			
<p>Lee, Howard B. <u>The Burning Springs and Other Tales of the Little Kanawha</u>. Parsons, W. Va., 1968.</p> <p>Reed, Louis. "Conflict and Error in the History of Oil," <u>West Virginia History</u>, Vol. 25, No. 1 (October 1963), pp. 21-26.</p> <p>Thoenen, Eugene D. <u>The Petroleum Industry in West Virginia, 1860-1900</u>. Morgantown, 1956.</p> <p>Reed, Louis. <u>The Oil Mill in Wirt County</u>. Ms., 1969.</p> <p>Roberts, Glen W. <u>Early Oil Development in West Virginia</u>. Ms, 1923.</p> <p>Rolston, Julian K. <u>The First Decade of the Petroleum Industry in the Mid-Ohio Valley</u>. Ms, M.A. thesis, 1948, Marietta College, Marietta, Ohio.</p>			
<b>10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA</b>			
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY		LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES	
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	LATITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds
NW	38°59' 31.38"	81° 19' 15.80"	°   '   "
NE	38°59' 31.38"	81° 19' 04.56"	°   '   "
SE	38°59' 01.58"	81° 19' 04.56"	°   '   "
SW	38°59' 01.58"	81° 19' 15.80"	°   '   "
APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: <u>20.70</u> acres			
LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
<b>11. FORM PREPARED BY</b>			
NAME AND TITLE:			
Clifford M. Lewis, S.J.			
ORGANIZATION			DATE
Wheeling College			August 15, 1970
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE	CODE
Wheeling		West Virginia	54
<b>12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION</b>		<b>NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION</b>	
<p>As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u>Dallas B. Shaffer</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dallas B. Shaffer</p> <p>Title <u>State Liaison Officer</u></p> <p>Date <u>February 15, 1971</u></p>		<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____ Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____ Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date _____</p>	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**THE ORIGINAL RATHBONE WELL**

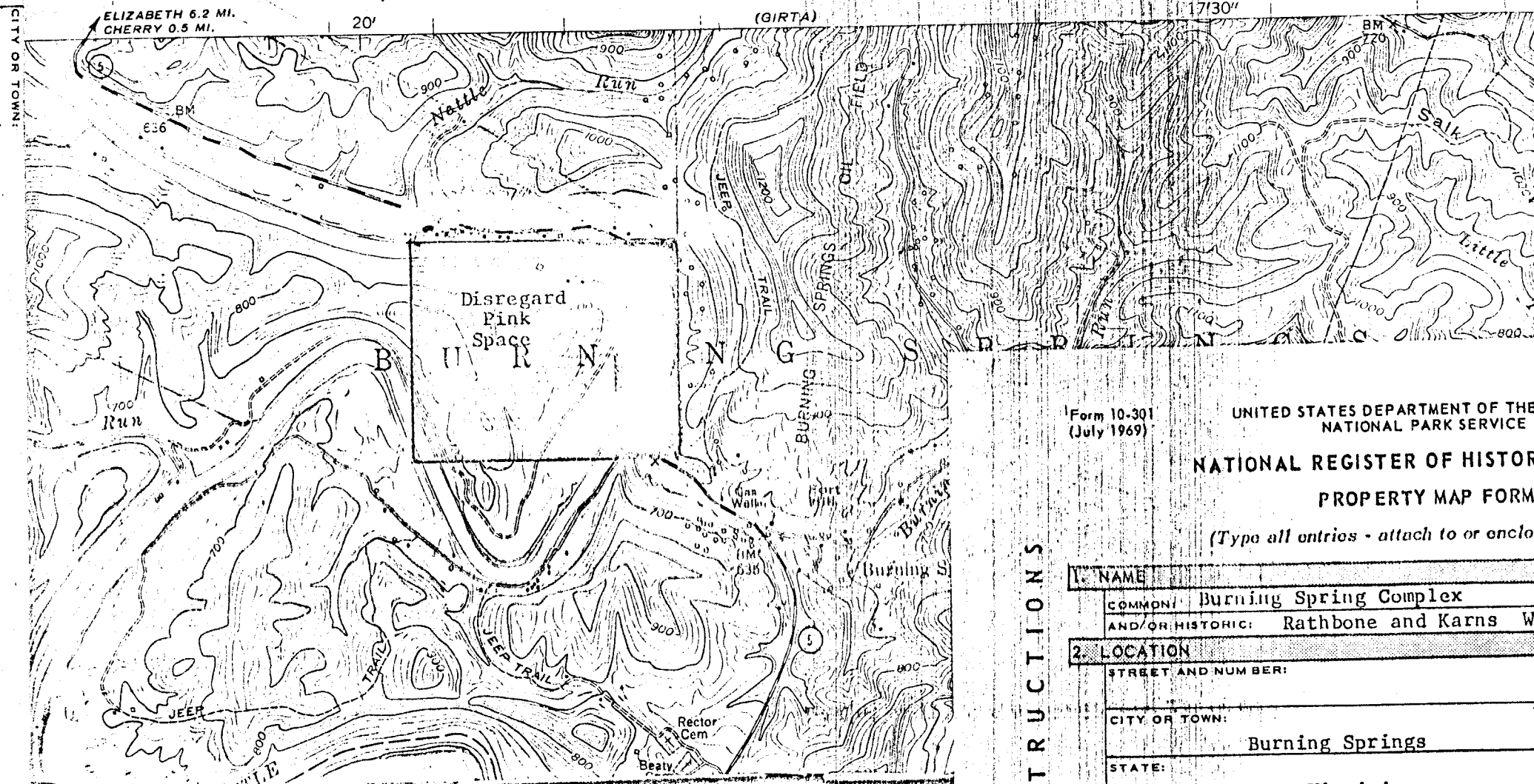
David A. Roberts came from near Baltimore to Burning Springs in 1860 and became a successful oil producer. He passed this picture on to his children. It is now owned by his granddaughter, Mrs. Helen Marsh (Mrs. Gordon) White of Lowell, Ohio. Mrs. White is the daughter of the late Senator Harvey Marsh and his late wife, Mrs. Kate Roberts Marsh, of Parkersburg. Note the small walking beam. No spring pole. Standing on the opposite side of the river, with this picture in hand, one is able to locate almost the exact site of that ancient well by the sloping contour of the hilltop in the background.

N.E. LAT. 38°59'31.38"  
LONG. 81°19'04.56"

N.W. LAT. 38°59'31.38"  
LONG. 81°19'15.80"

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
REPRESENTED BY THE  
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
AND OTHER STATE AGENCIES

S.E. LAT. 38°59'31.38"  
LONG. 81°19'04.56"



Form 10-301  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC  
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose)

1. NAME	COMMON: Burning Spring Complex AND/OR HISTORIC: Rathbone and Karns W
2. LOCATION	STREET AND NUMBER: CITY OR TOWN: Burning Springs STATE: West Virginia
3. MAP REFERENCE	SOURCE: U. S. Geological Survey Burnings Springs Quadra SCALE: 1:24000 DATE: 1957
4. REQUIREMENTS	TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS 1. Property boundaries where required.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

