

## [Historic Marker Application: Barr Mansion]

Texas Historical Commission Staff (MHM), revised (DKU), 5/6/83, revised (FR), 8/22/83

Official Texas Historical Building Marker without post for attachment to wood  
Travis County (Order #7231)

Location: 10463 Sprinkle Rd., Austin

### BARR MANSION\*

BUILT IN 1898 FOR COTTON MERCHANT  
WILLIAM BRAXTON BARR(1864-1902)AND HIS  
WIFE, MATILDA (TILLY) BIRDWELL(1868-1951),

THIS HOME WAS DESIGNED BY AUSTIN  
ARCHITECT CHARLES PAGE. BARR NAMED  
THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY AFTER  
HIS GRANDFATHER CAPT. ERASMUS  
SPRINKLE(1813-1906), WITH WHOM HE BUILT  
A COTTON GIN AND GENERAL STORE.

WHEN COTTON PRICES FELL IN 1920, THE  
THRIVING TOWN OF SPRINKLE BEGAN TO  
DECLINE. THE HOME, WHICH FEATURES  
ORNATE EASTLAKE STYLING, REMAINED  
IN THE BARR FAMILY UNTIL 1980.\*\*

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK - 1983\*\*\*

\*1/2 inch lettering  
\*\*3/8 inch lettering  
\*\*\*1/4 inch lettering

Incise on base: PURCHASED & RESTORATION BEGUN IN 1981 BY MARK & MELANIE McAFEE

APPROVED  
*David F. [Signature]*

Texas Historical Commission. [Historic Marker Application: Barr Mansion], Text, 1983;

# [Historic Marker Application: Barr Mansion]

LHMS No. NPS-0019  
Exp. 10-31-84

# 7231

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

### 1. Name

historic Barr, William Braxton, House

and/or common Sprinkle House

### 2. Location

street & number 10463 Sprinkle Road

N/A not for publication

city, town Austin  vicinity of

state Texas code 048 county Travis code 453

### 3. Classification

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

### 4. Owner of Property

name Mark and Melanie McAfee

street & number 10463 Sprinkle Road

city, town Austin  vicinity of state Texas 78754

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Travis County Courthouse

street & number Travis County Courthouse

city, town Austin state Texas

### 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1982  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Texas Historical Commission

city, town Austin state Texas

Texas Historical Commission. [Historic Marker Application: Barr Mansion], Text, 1983;

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## [Historic Marker Application: Barr Mansion]

## 7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Barr House is a two-story, wooden frame house built in 1898 for a prominent entrepreneur of the area, William B. Barr. It lies on 7.4 acres of the original 200-acre site. The structure is noteworthy because it shows greater scale and sophistication of ornamentation than is usually found in farmhouses of the Texas countryside. While the house is largely executed in the flamboyant Eastlake style, it also displays some Colonial Revival detailing. Numbered among its more spectacular features are incised vergeboards, an attached belvedere with graceful arches, and a two-tier gallery with a profusion of delicate spindles in its friezes and balustrades. The house also has an interesting complement of outbuildings done in vernacular Carpenter Gothic.

Supported on brick piers, the Barr House is T-shaped in plan, and is covered by two intersecting, pitched roofs with gabled ends (photos 1, 2). In characteristic Eastlake style, the ridge of the roof once boasted a small wooden balustrade which, regrettably, is no longer present. The main east-west ridgeline is pierced by a rather short, corbeled brick chimney, while the original wooden shingles are now covered by composition roofing. Lapped clapboards serve as the exterior sheathing.

The front elevation, which faces north, features a prominent, ornamented gable (Photo 3). Beneath the gable, the first floor exhibits a three-sided bay window topped by an ornamental balustrade of delicate spindles, while under this railing runs a protruding cornice supported by elaborately incised brackets. The frieze below the cornice displays a series of ornamental swags, typical detailing of the Colonial Revival style. In the central section of the bay window there is a single, fixed pane of glass with a smaller stained-glass window above it. Directly atop the paired, second-story windows is located a convex hood supported by brackets at each side. The end, or face, of the gable is penetrated by a pair of small windows, is covered by fish-scale shingles, and features an unusual, semicircular vergeboard with elaborately incised ornamentation. Connected to the vergeboard by numerous radiating spindles is a thin wooden arch which forms a strikingly light motif repeated several times in the belvedere.

An airy double gallery runs around the recessed, main part of the house on the north (front), east, and south (rear) elevations. The first- and second-story porches are decorated alike. In both cases, the principal supports are pairs of slender, rounded posts which resemble the turned legs of late-Victorian furniture (photos 1, 4, 5). At the top of each post there is a frieze-like row of graceful spindles which parallels the edge of the porch. In addition, a cut-out, rectangular panel is fixed between each pair of posts near the top, and the frieze of spindles is supported, at its juncture with each post, by an incised, fan-shaped bracket. The porch balustrades are composed of two rows of thin, rounded balusters of which there are twice as many in the top row as in the bottom. Adding to the complexity of the house is a two-story belvedere which projects outward from the attached galleries at the northeast corner of the house (photos 2, 4). On its north and east sides, on both floors, are found thin, horseshoe-shaped wooden arches. Each arch is connected to its supports by delicately-turned spindles which form a design of radiating spokes.

Texas Historical Commission. [Historic Marker Application: Barr Mansion], Text, 1983;

## [Historic Marker Application: Barr Mansion]

NPS Form 10-800-a  
(3-82)OMB No. 1024-0018  
Exp. 10-31-84United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
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The gables of the east and south elevations are more simply decorated than the main, front gable (photo 4). Their main features are a single pair of small windows, a covering of fish-scale shingles, and a small, incised vergeboard near the peak. The roof of the west elevation has a distinct eave garnished with small, but elaborate, brackets (photo 6). The gable on this end of the house exhibits the only arched window used in the structure, and is unexpectedly interrupted by a brick chimney emerging from its peak. The windows throughout the house are of the double-hung type with one-over-one lights, and have a modest decorative pediment with raised ornamentation. An interesting feature of those windows not covered by porches is that their screens are placed inside the window jambs on small, wooden tracks.

Asymmetrical in plan, the Barr House features a central hallway with an ornate, open-newel staircase constructed largely of rare, East Texas curly pine (Photo 7). On the east side of the hall is a large parlor, highlighted by an ornate fireplace and over-mantel also of curly pine. On the west side are a living room and dining room, separated by a pair of pocket doors which can be opened to create a large space. Approximately the same arrangement of rooms is repeated on the second floor, where the bedrooms are found. Transoms are featured in all rooms. A general renovation of the house by its present owners is almost complete, and is being carried out in a manner which will restore the architectural integrity of the structure.

The Barr House has an unusually complete assemblage of outbuildings. While the original detached kitchen and barn have been lost, there remain a fine carriage house in the form of a Greek cross (photo 9), servants quarters, and a privy house (photo 10). During the Great Depression the old smokehouse was moved against the rear of the main house to form a rear ell; it now serves as kitchen (photo 8). These wooden outbuildings are designed in a vernacular Carpenter Gothic mode, and feature rows of connected circles or wave patterns below the eaves, as well as fancy pendants at the corners (photos 8, 9). The outbuildings are in only fair condition. Apparently constructed at the same time as the main house, they contribute to its overall character.

Texas Historical Commission. [Historic Marker Application: Barr Mansion], Text, 1983;

# [Historic Marker Application: Barr Mansion]

## 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		
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<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

Specific dates 1898

Builder/Architect Charles Page

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Built in the last decade of the 19th-century for a prominent local businessman, the Barr House is a fine example of late-Victorian architecture in Texas, with striking ornamentation in the Eastlake and Colonial Revival modes. William Barr, the owner, founded the adjacent town of Sprinkle and helped develop his part of Travis County into a prosperous farming and commercial area. It is also noteworthy that the Barr House was designed and built by a prominent Austin architect, Charles Page, at the beginning of his career. The house has, then, both architectural and historic significance and interest.

William Braxton Barr was born in 1864 to John and Cremora (Sprinkle) Barr. A native of Virginia, young Barr was brought to Texas in the 1870s by his widowed mother and grandfather, Capt. Erasmus Sprinkle. In his teens William Barr embarked upon his business career, running a general store which his grandfather had begun. In 1883 he married Matilda (Tilly) Valona Jane Birdwell. Going on to acquire a considerable acreage in Travis County, William Barr wrote to Washington, D.C., requesting that the fledgling settlement developing there be named Sprinkle, after his grandfather. The proposal was accepted and the town was born.

As Sprinkle prospered, Mr. Barr opened a large mercantile store, built a blacksmith shop, and ran a 10-stand cotton gin. In the operation of these establishments he employed a working force of some 25 men. He was also a buyer of cotton and had extensive holdings in real estate. Included in the latter was the farm of 200 acres in which the house nominated here is located. Mr. Barr hired Charles Page, a young architect from nearby Austin, to design his new home on the farm, which was duly finished in 1898. Charles Page soon became an architect of some local fame, and designed a multitude of public buildings throughout the state. Projects with which he is associated in Austin include the Travis County Courthouse (1930), the United States Courthouse (1935), and the Texas School for the Deaf.

The influence which William Barr achieved in the small community of Sprinkle was great. He was an effective entrepreneur and was active politically, even though he never ran for public office. He is also remembered for having owned 30 head of fine mules, as well as what was said to be the finest span of black, matched driving horses seen in this part of the country. William Barr died prematurely in 1902, at the age of 38 years. His death occurred just before the successful construction of a railroad through town which he had long worked to obtain, and for which he donated a station site. The community flourished until the Great Depression. By 1940, however, there remained only a school, a store, and a population of 10 souls. Today the "gingerbread mansion," as the Barr House was called, is the main reminder of those days. While located on the outskirts of Texas' capital city, the Barr House has an essentially rural environment. It is surrounded by pastureland and a few older and less substantial residences.

Texas Historical Commission. [Historic Marker Application: Barr Mansion], Text, 1983;



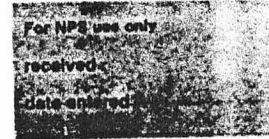
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NPS Form 10-800-a  
10-801

OAS No. 1084-0018  
Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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The history of the Barr House is mainly a family affair. Although William Barr lived only four years in the house which he had built, his widow, Tilly, resided there a half century after his death. After Mrs. Barr died in 1951, the house was lived in by her daughter and son-in-law, Chellie and Frank Jamison. Their daughter, Chellie Graves, kept the house till 1980, when it was sold to Mark and Melanee McAfee, who are the present owners.

In sum, the Barr House is a memorial to the defunct hamlet of Sprinkle, once a thriving Central Texas community. It is a memorial, too, for William Barr and his family, who played a controlling role in this rural area at the turn of the century. Finally, it is an important structure from an architectural point of view. One of the first commissions of Austin architect Charles Page, the Barr House is a fine example of Eastlake decorative style, and is quite an unusual survival in its rural environs.

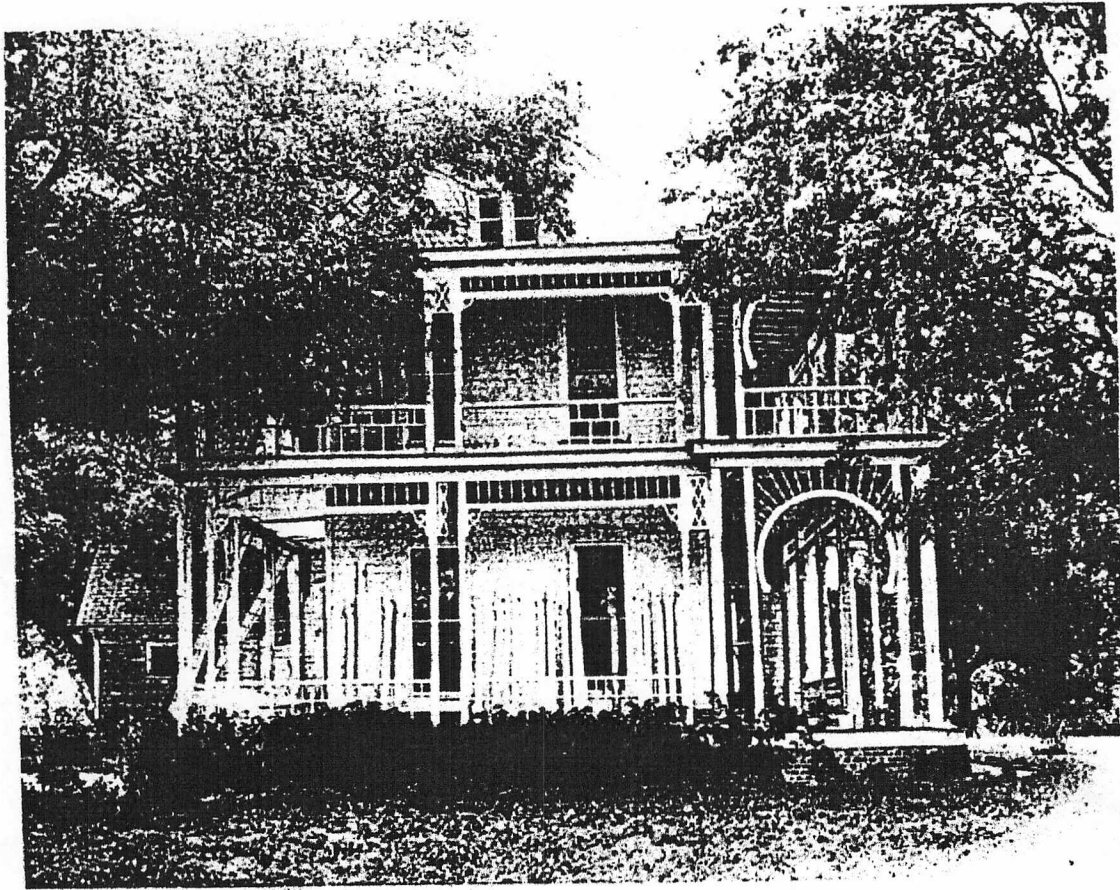
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Texas Historical Commission. [Historic Marker Application: Barr Mansion], Text, 1983;

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## [Historic Marker Application: Barr Mansion]



Texas Historical Commission. [Historic Marker Application: Barr Mansion], Text, 1983; (<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph491551/> : accessed February 20, 2015), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas.

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Texas Historical Commission. [Historic Marker Application: Barr Mansion], Text, 1983;

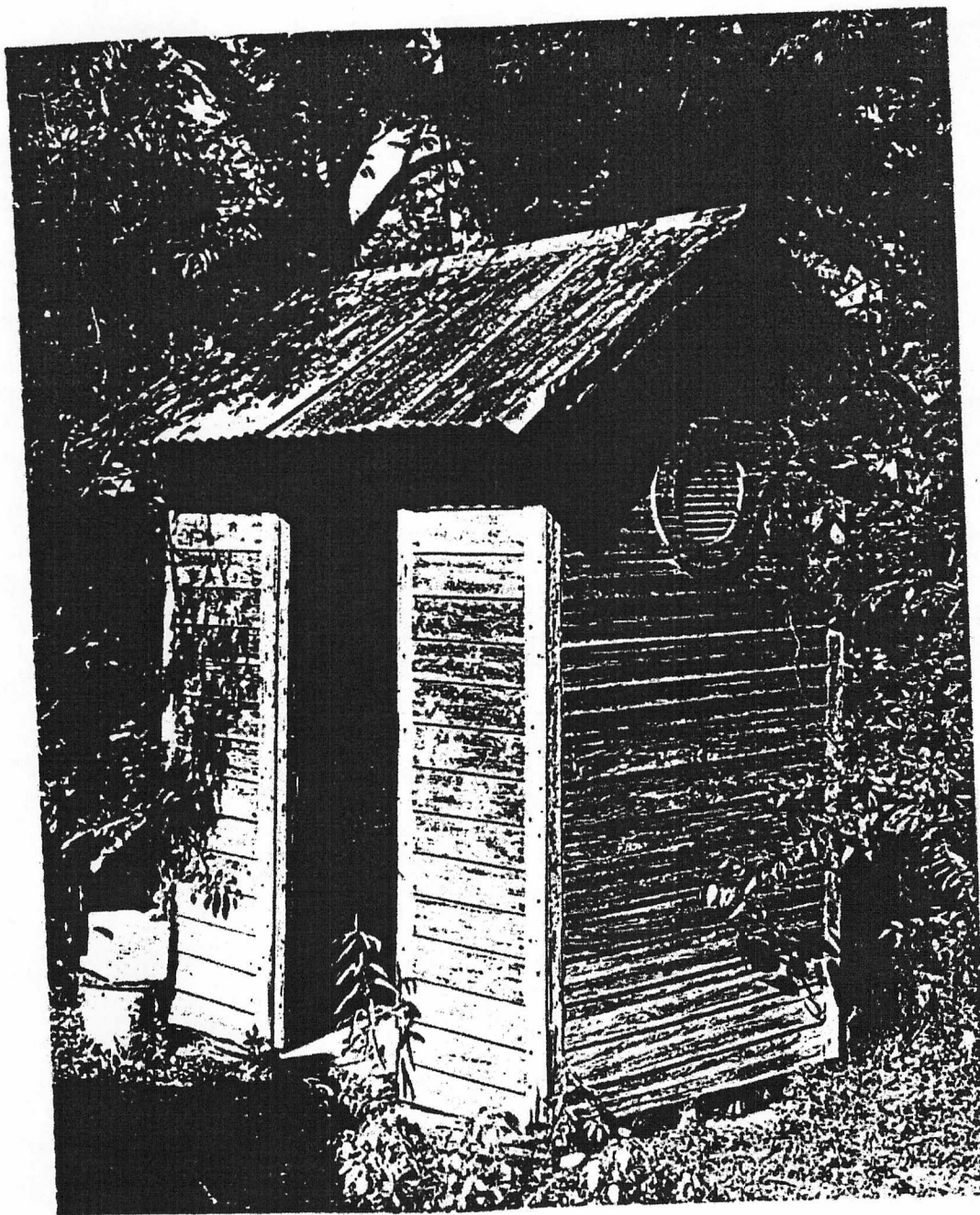
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[Kitchen]

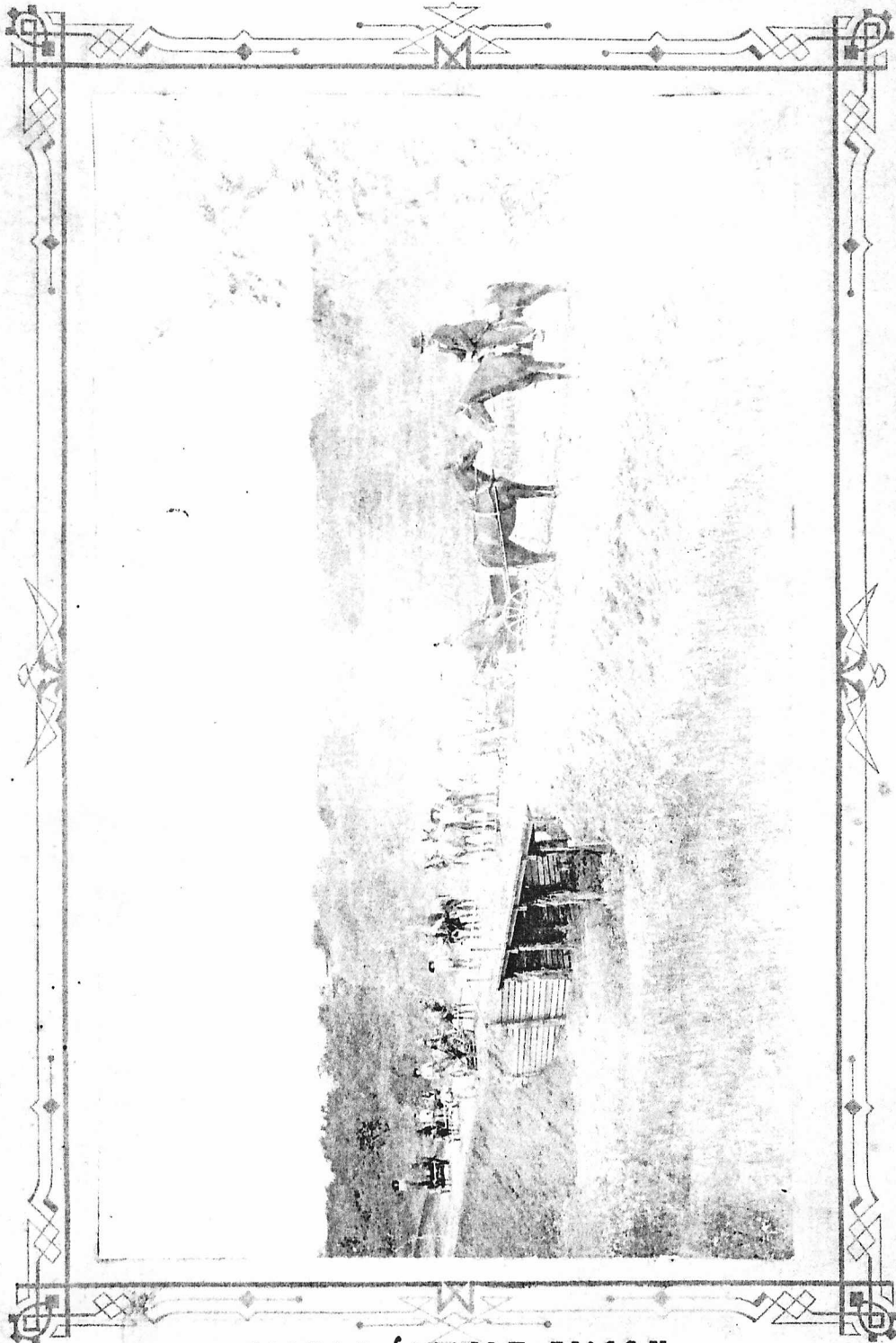
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Texas Historical Commission. [Historic Marker Application: Barr Mansion], Text, 1983;

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Austin History Center

W. B. Barr in buggy