

PH0024392

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

| | | |
|------------------|-------------|--|
| STATE: | KENTUCKY | |
| COUNTY: | LIVINGSTON | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE | |
| | MAY 24 1973 | |

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:
The Gower House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Water Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Smithland, Kentucky 42081

| | | | |
|----------|------|------------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| Kentucky | 21 | Livingston | 139 |

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure | <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both | Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" 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"/> Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Comments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious | To be summer residence. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | | |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
David Hoy

STREET AND NUMBER:
2100 Jefferson

CITY OR TOWN:
Paducah

STATE:
Kentucky 42001

CODE:
21

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Livingston County Court Clerk's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:
Court Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Smithland

STATE:
Kentucky 42081

CODE:
139

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE OF SURVEY: 1971

Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Kentucky Heritage Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
401 Wapping Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Frankfort

STATE:
Kentucky

CODE:
21



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

| | | | | | |
|-----------|---|--|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One) | | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins |
| | (Check One) | | | (Check One) | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Originally the Gower House was a rambling, welcome respite for the weary traveller, and was situated on the south bank at the confluence of the Cumberland and Ohio Rivers. Built about 1780 the architecture is described as Georgian or Early Federal, similar to that of colonial New England homes, taverns, and hotels.

All wall structures are 16 inches in depth and solid brick. The foundation is formed of limestone rock, some measuring as large as three by six feet.

The Gower House was constructed in a U-shape with verandas overlooking the center courtyard. A mineral well which is still in use today was situated in the center of this area. A fire in 1857 destroyed half the building, leaving the present L-shaped structure.

There are presently twelve rooms, each containing a fireplace with the original, hand-hewn and decorated mantles still intact. All woodwork, including doors, floors, chair-rails, and baseboards, is hand-hewn; most of the original 1 1/4 inch flooring remains. The window sills are from large trees, planed to a 4 inch thickness, and secured with large wooden pegs.

The facade of the house, which overlooks the junction of the rivers, has ten windows, complete with the original shutters, and two first floor doorways, of pioneer-era style.

This inn's physical condition is quite well preserved, and the stately old hotel presents a most imposing sight to passersby on the Cumberland and Ohio Rivers.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



3. SIGNIFICANCE

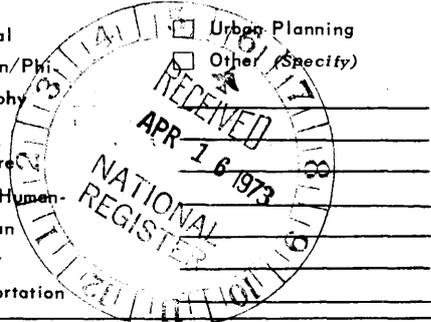
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **circa 1780**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Gower House, historically, is quite outstanding inasmuch as many of the original records are no longer in existence, having been destroyed in a courthouse fire in 1831.

The Kentucky Historical Society authenticated the following facts before placing the bronze marker in front of the Gower House in 1966, and which bears the following inscription:

Erected about 1780: one of the luxury inns built to accommodate the travelers on the Ohio River. Host to many celebrities of that era, including President James K. Polk, Zachary Taylor, founder American Red Cross, Clara Barton; authors Charles Dickens and Lew Wallace; and Henry Clay. Lafayette was a guest here in May of 1825 while on his triumphal US tour.

On the reverse side of this state marker is this statement:

Ned Buntline, pen name of Edward Z.C. Judson, author of Western stories and marker of the "Buntline Special" revolver, came to Smithland to publish his works; lived here in 1845.

There are many Western Kentucky legends surrounding the history of the Gower House. It is a fact that these historical figures visited the frontier town of Smithland, and it is reputed that they were guests in the famous old hotel;

- Abraham Lincoln
- Andrew Jackson
- Aaron Burr
- John James Audubon
- Benedict Arnold

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

(Continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. The American Rifleman, April, 1955, pp.24-25
2. Article by George Tipton Wilson in September, 1965 issue of Sun Democrat, Paducah, Kentucky.
3. Dictionary of American Biography, X, pp.236-237.
4. Kentucky State Historical Society Register, XXXIII, pp.120,127,234.
5. Letter to Ky. Historical Society from previous owner, Mrs. Rhea C. Zanone, Feb. 7, 1966, Smithland, Kentucky.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

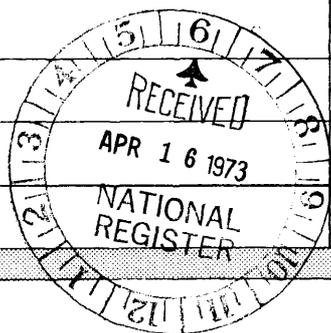
| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | | | OR | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | | | | |
|--|----------|---------|-----------|---------|---|---------|-----------|---------|---------|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | | LONGITUDE | | LATITUDE | | LONGITUDE | | |
| | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds |
| NW | ° | ' | " | 37° | 8' | 37" | 88° | 24' | 18" |
| NE | ° | ' | " | | | | | | |
| SE | ° | ' | " | | | | | | |
| SW | ° | ' | " | | | | | | |

UIM
16/375240
4111520

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than 10 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: David Hoy, Owner

ORGANIZATION: _____ DATE: Dec. 1, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER: 2100 Jefferson

CITY OR TOWN: Paducah STATE: Kentucky CODE: 21

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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:

National State Local

Name Mrs. Simeon Willis

Title State Liaison Officer

Date April 12, 1973

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

Robert M. Utley
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 5/24/73

ATTEST:

W. Bradford
Acting Keeper of The National Register

Date 5/17/73

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

| | | | |
|------------------|--|-------------|--|
| STATE | | KENTUCKY | |
| COUNTY | | LIVINGSTON | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | | | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | | DATE | |
| | | MAY 24 1973 | |

(Number all entries)

There is also a legend that General Ulysses S. Grant and his troops drank from the Gower House mineral well, watered their horses, then camped on the bank of the Ohio River in front.

It is a well-known and accepted fact among residents of this area that Henry Clay held court at the Gower House during the time it served as the County Courthouse, following the Salem Courthouse fire in 1831. In the heat of the summer, court was held beneath the branches of the "Old Judge Elm," which stands majestically before the Gower House, and that is reputedly the tree upon which the first hanging in the state of Kentucky was executed.

An official document, in the possession of the owner of Gower House, dated February 3, 1862, designates James Zanone, at that time owner of the Gower House, a Mail Messenger, thereby instituting a mail depot in the inn, where mail was conveyed via the riverboats.

Other bits of local folk-lore consider the Gower House to be the oldest standing structure along the Ohio; state that Jenny Lind once sang within its portals; and that Zachary Taylor was informed of his election to the Presidency during a respite at the Gower House on his return to Washington, D.C. Pioneer families tell of the celebration that followed the announcement, when their ancestors delivered accolades to the new President of the United States of America.

