

PHO 35 3922

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUN 28 1976
DATE ENTERED	NOV 7 1976

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

****** Shady Side (Clifton and James Keith Thomson House)

AND/OR COMMON

Pebble Brook

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Paris Pike (U. S. 68)

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

4 miles east of Lexington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

06

VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

CODE

021

COUNTY

Fayette

CODE

067

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mrs. C. G. Raible

STREET & NUMBER

Paris Pike

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Fayette County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

STATE

Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE

1971

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

Kentucky

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located on the southeast side of the Paris Pike, one mile east of Lexington, is the Thomson House, built circa 1792 with an 1838 addition. The house, which is set back several hundred yards from the road, is well shrouded with large trees. The integrity of the house remains intact despite the encroachment of a sales pavilion and track for thoroughbred horses on neighboring property.

The original portion of the house is believed to have been a low-ceilinged, two-story, four-bay brick structure which probably faced east, toward the Johnson Road (see photo 4).

In 1838 James Keith Thomson added the present main block to the (south) west end of his father's house, facing west toward the Paris Pike. The "beautifully proportioned facade," as Newcomb calls it, has three wide bays defined by narrow two-story pilasters supporting a full dentillated entablature that embraces the gabled portico across the middle bay, but does not continue beyond the corner pilasters on the sides, although the corner pilasters and entablature also occur on the rear (photo 3). This lack of full-scale integration of Grecian features with the basic form of the house, could also be a sign of transitional design justifying the early date (although it is still difficult to explain away the elaborate staircase). The portico has a rather narrow pediment and rests on attenuated, paired, unfluted Ionic columns. The recessed entrance is framed by pilasters and entablature. All five windows on the facade appear to be triple, but in fact the second-story sidelights seem always to have been blind. There are paired lookout windows in the end gables.

The interior of the Greek Revival block is one-room deep, with two large, almost square rooms flanking a wide central hall. The staircase is a splendid example of what appears to be a mid-19th-century type: it forms a fine continuous spiral from first floor to third-floor attic, with the edge of the spiral defined by unique triple rows of beads, a massive octagonal newel at the base, a single developed baluster on each step, and elaborate stringers at the ends of the steps.

Other features of the main block, such as the "eared" door and window frames, are typically Grecian. The fine Federal mantel in the left parlor was brought from another house, but the equally handsome mantel in the present dining room (part of the 1790s house) was discovered behind a wall during remodelling of the room to give it a more Georgian flavor.

(continued)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1790s; 1838

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Shady Side is located four miles east of Lexington on the Paris Pike, one of the oldest roads in Kentucky and part of the northernmost link in the Natchez Trace. (In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, goods were shipped from Lexington to Maysville, an important shipping point on the Ohio River, on the Paris Pike.) The original portion of the house was built circa 1792 by Clifton Thomson, a prominent citizen of Fayette County. In 1838 Thomson's son, James Keith Thomson, a respected farmer and stock raiser, added the handsome Greek Revival block which faces the road. In the 20th century, the farm and house was the residence of the famous thoroughbred breeder, John Hay Whitney. In many respects a typical Bluegrass country estate, Shady Side is particularly interesting because of the incorporation of the earlier structure within the mid-19th-century building.

In his Ante Bellum Houses of the Bluegrass (1961), architectural historian Clay Lancaster introduces Shady Side as his prime example of the characteristic Greek Revival residential type in the Bluegrass. He summarizes the type as follows:

A two-storied house, with the entrance sheltered by a pedimented tetrastyle portico the height of the house itself, and corresponding pilasters incorporated in the brick walls. Columns are arranged in pairs and pilasters coupled at the corners. The column shafts are usually unfluted. Like the earlier round piers, they are constructed of wedge-shaped bricks, but are covered with stucco and painted. Bases and capitals are normally of wood, although acanthus leaves of the Corinthian are of cast iron. The front windows have triple lights, the shutters of the wider central void, when open, obstructing the narrow side lights. A transverse hall crosses the main block of the house, which may be either one or two rooms in depth, and a service ell extends behind. This species of house remained in fashion from the late 1830's until the mid-1860's, appearing in several distinct versions and undergoing slight modifications, with a tendency toward ornateness and a heightening of proportions during the later phase, . . . The Fayette County examples are divided into several groups according to the order of the portico, of which the first, and most pleasing, is . . . Ionic. The earliest is Shady Side (pp. 88-89).

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The Whitneys added a discreet one-story bedroom wing south (west) of the main block, and other changes, such as the enclosure of porches, installation of a modern kitchen and bathrooms, have been made through the years. Nevertheless, the west facade (now painted white) remains intact and the sequence of construction visible on the exterior.

There are remains of a few outbuildings near the ell and several unobtrusive modern service structures on the property.

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The 1838 block of the house, facing the Paris Pike, conforms in nearly all particulars to Lancaster's generalized description, being of the type one-room deep (the dining room is in the ell formed by part of the 18th-century house). Curiously, however, the main staircase, rather than being transitional from the early 19th-century Federal period, is one of the more advanced: its two-story spiral is lavishly enriched in the mid-Victorian Italianate manner. Since the high dentillated entablature extends only across the front and therefore appears to be an after-thought, it is possible that some of the Grecian features date from later--say, the mid-1850s-- than the original construction of the west block. (A house with a similar staircase is The Elms, Fayette County, built in 1854 by John McMurtry.)

Clifton Thomson, born in October 1761 in Spottsylvania County, Virginia, was the fifth son of William Thomson (whose father, Samuel Thomson, an Anabaptist, was a native of Wales) and his second wife, née Rodes. In 1788, Thomson married Mary Ragland. They had seven children. After the death of his first wife, Clifton Thomson married Eliza Ford in 1810; they had two children of whom the younger was James Keith. (Another brother, William Z., married Sarah Quarles of Hurricane Hall, the Quarles-Thomson House, listed on the National Register April 22, 1976.)

Clifton Thomson came to Kentucky around 1791 and settled on the east side of Lexington on the heavily traveled Lexington-Maysville Pike. A year later he constructed a two-story brick house. Clifton Thomson died in 1833 during a cholera epidemic. An obituary which appeared in a local paper, The Lexington Observer and Reporter, called him an "aged and highly respectable citizen."

Upon his death, Thomson left the house to James Keith Thomson, who had been born at Shady Side in March 1816. Thomson was raised in the house and continued to live there the rest of his life, operating the 400-acre farm.

In 1839 James Thomson married Susan T. Ford, daughter of James and Ann Ford of Bourbon County. They had one child, James C. Three years after the death of his first wife in 1852, Thomson married his wife's younger sister, Mildred A. Ford. By his second wife Thomson had another son, Frank. In 1868 James K. Thomson died and left the property to his wife and their youngest son. Mrs. Thomson is listed as the owner as late as 1882.

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The house and farm were purchased in 1933 by John Hay Whitney, a business magnate and one of the leaders in the thoroughbred horse industry (see the National Register nomination form on his nearby house, Fairlawn/Greentree (Thomas Hughes House), approved at the State level October 21, 1975). Whitney eventually renamed the place Mare's Nest, reportedly because of his long litigation over the title to the property.

The house was later owned by Leslie Combs, II, and John Hanes, other prominent thoroughbred breeders. The house was purchased from Combs and Hanes in 1961 by Charles G. Raible, who was also involved in the racing industry.

Although a number of alterations and additions have been made by these and other owners through the years, the main block remains a fine example of the typical Bluegrass Greek Revival country residence, one of a series of variant designs often attributed to John McMurtry (1812-1819), Lexington's prolific mid-19th-century architect-builder. The incorporation of the earlier building as the rear ell of the new house is particularly interesting here, and the different characters of these elements have been generally recognized and preserved by later owners.

The house's location on the Paris Pike is a significant one. From its beginning in the late 1700s to the present day, the Pike is the central axis of the gentleman's horse industry in the Bluegrass, although it is threatened by both the widening of the road and commercial development at both ends.

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Newcomb, Rexford. Old Kentucky Architecture. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1953.

Perrin, W. H., ed. History of Fayette County. Chicago: O. L. Baskin Co., 1882,
pp. 793-794.