

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received JAN 12 1983  
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Nitta Yuma Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 5028, 5040, 5044, <sup>and</sup> 5051 Nitta Yuma not for publication

city, town Harrods Creek vicinity of ~~Congressional District~~

state Kentucky code 021 county Jefferson code

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership (see continuation sheet)

street & number

city, town Louisville vicinity of state Kentucky

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jefferson County Courthouse

street & number 531 W. Jefferson

city, town Louisville state Kentucky

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Survey of Historic Sites in Ky. has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1977  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council

city, town Frankfort state Kentucky

## 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Nitta Yuma Historic District is located on bluffs above the Ohio River in the northeastern section of Jefferson County, Kentucky eight miles from Louisville. Nitta Yuma is an Indian phrase meaning "high ground." This small residential district consists of four houses, three of which were built in the neo-classical styles of the early 20th century. The fourth house is a ca. 1870 vernacular farmhouse. The area is magnificently landscaped and was designed by F.L. Olmsted, Sr. The district has no intrusions. These four structures form the core of the original historic area as other houses have been destroyed by fire and have been replaced with mid-20th century dwellings.

This area was acquired in 1890 by three prominent Louisville businessmen who wanted to form a summer enclave for their families. They purchased land from the estate of James Todd, a Louisville attorney. The businessmen were: George Garvin Brown founder of Brown-Forman Distillers Corp.; Charles Peaslee and William Frederick Booker who were both associated with the Peaslee-Gaulbert Co. which produced paint, lamps and oil. They hired the assistant engineer of the City of Louisville, Major Joseph D. Claybrook (1843-1921) to build the roads at Nitta Yuma. He lived in the Todd House (JF566), a vernacular farmhouse, until his death. Claybrook was a military man, an engineer and a physician although he did not practice medicine. He was superintendent of the building of the Louisville Southern Railroad and the Mexican Central Railroad and was superintendent of the Portland Canal, appointed by President Cleveland. He was married to Mary Louise Booker, one of the members of the Booker family who founded Nitta Yuma.

The four houses are situated in the landscaped grounds which, according to family tradition, were designed by F.L. Olmsted. The residences are set back in the landscaped setting from an undulating road framed by a stone entrance.

The oldest of the structures is the Todd House (JF566) a two-story frame, vernacular farmhouse built ca. 1870. The residence has a central gable and porch supported by columns across the front. The west side of the house has a bay window. There have been frame additions made to the house in the early twentieth century which are compatible with the original dwelling. The house has recently been sensitively renovated.

The Alex Galt Robinson house (JF567) is an asymmetrical two-story frame house built in the neo-colonial revival style. The roof line is pierced with gables and dormers. A large Palladian-type window highlights the facade. The entrance is framed by fluted, Ionic pilasters and protected by a detailed porch across the facade. The interior woodwork is of a high caliber. The house was built in 1905 and was designed by a well-known Louisville architect, E.T. Hutchings. Hutchings (1886-1958) worked on numerous buildings in Louisville including Central Presbyterian Church and the Woman Club. He studied architecture at the University of Kentucky, Cornell University and in Germany and England. The house is in excellent condition and is still in the family that originally built it.

The Gill House (JF568) is a large two-story frame house in the neo-colonial revival style. It has a colossal Tuscan-Doric portico on the north side of the house. A semi-octagonal bay projects under the portico. The main entrance is

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
			<input type="checkbox"/> science
			<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
			<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
			<input type="checkbox"/> theater
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

<b>Specific dates</b>	1870-1929	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Multiple
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**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Nitta Yuma Historic District comprises a unique landscaped enclave which is eligible under criterion C as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the period of the early twentieth century. These properties were originally part of a Multiple Resource Nomination but it was requested by the Kentucky Review Board that they be evaluated by the National Register staff before final submission to establish eligibility. The National Register staff stated they would be eligible and made suggestions for the final form. The Nitta Yuma Historic District is comprised of four houses three of which are neo-colonial revival in style. It is in an idyllic setting overlooking the Ohio River. The entire area was acquired in 1890 by three prominent Louisville businessmen who wished to set up the area as a vacation compound for their families. The narrow gauge railway and later the interurban could bring the men out while the women and children remained for the summer. The Nitta Yuma Company was incorporated with each family paying expenses and sharing in the benefits - for example, a gardener kept the garden and orchards and delivered his vegetables and fruit to each home everyday.

According to family tradition the grounds were landscaped by Frederick Law Olmsted. Olmsted was in Louisville in the early 90's consulting on Louisville's Park system. Although there is no documentation on Olmsted's early involvement, the Messrs. Brown, Booker, and Peaslee would have met him. A record at Olmsted Association shows a 1956 involvement with Nitta Yuma and it seems unlikely they would have used an out-of-town firm unless there had been previous work.

A Subdivision Plat from 1919 shows the area as laid out with roads, dwellings, gardens and orchards. (See Map 2) Structures marked with Nos. JF-566, 567, 568 are extant and are being nominated, others have been destroyed and 569 was built after 1919.

One of the three houses is occupied by descendants of the original families. Nitta Yuma represents a unique feature in suburban development in Jefferson County in the early 20th century. It is the only enclave of this type in the county.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Art Work in Louisville, Chicago, 1903.  
 Burlingame, Lucy White Booker, Nitta Yuma, 1962, unpublished paper.  
 Jefferson County Deed Books.  
 Jefferson County Plat Book 2, p. 284, 285.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 30 Acres  
 Quadrangle name Jeffersonville

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>9</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	B	<u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u> <u>1</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> <u>1</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u>	D	<u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>9</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>
E	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	F	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
G	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	H	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary consists of four property lots in Block W7, Lots 18, 19, 24, 25.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth F. Jones, Administrator  
Jefferson County Office of  
 organization Historic Preservation and Archives date November 12, 1982  
 street & number 100 Fiscal Court Building telephone 502-581-5761  
 city or town Louisville, state Kentucky

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Mary Curran Opper  
 title State Historic Preservation Officer date 1-3-83

For NPS use only  
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
John Nelson Byers Entered in the National Register date 2/10/83  
 Keeper of the National Register  
 Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief of Registration

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Property Owners-Nitta Yuma Historic District

Allen Dodd  
5028 Nitta Yuma  
Harrods Creek, Ky. 40027

R.C. Wilson  
5040 Nitta Yuma  
Harrods Creek, Ky. 40027

Mrs. Elbert Gary Sutcliffe  
5044 Nitta Yuma  
Harrods Creek, Ky. 40027

Martin Sweets  
5051 Nitta Yuma  
Harrods Creek, Ky. 40027

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capped by a triangular pediment and framed by Ionic pilasters. A series of green houses exist behind the house. The residence dates from the early twentieth-century and is in excellent condition.

The Robinson Brown House (JF569) is a one-and-one-half story asymmetrical brick residence which has been painted white and is in excellent condition. Dormers and gables highlight the tile roof which resembles cedar shingles. Sidelights grace the door. The house was built in 1929 and the architect was a local architect William Arrasmith (1898-1965). This was one of his early residential commissions. He was also the designer of the Louisville Greyhound Bus Station (demolished), Greyhound Bus Stations in Evansville, Indiana and Washington, D.C. and the terminal at Bowman Airfield in Louisville. Arrasmith was a graduate of the University of Illinois in 1921.

The four structures fit together into the landscaped setting of Nitta Yuma to form a unique enclave.

There are other new houses further along the Nitta Yuma Road but they are not visible from the older section. The historic structures are melded together not only by family ties but by the fine early 20th century buildings and by the high quality of the landscape.

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Interview Amelia Payne Sweets Runyon, November 5, 1982

Taylor, Hewitt, "Harrods Creek", The Herald Post, 12 September, 1936.

Smith, Katherine, Louisville Times, 23 February, 1903.

Telephone interview with Dr. Charles Bevrige, Editor: Olmsted Papers, Washington, D.C. November 5 and 12, 1982.

Telephone interview with Elizabeth Banks, Olmsted Associates, Brookline, Massachusetts, November 5, 1982