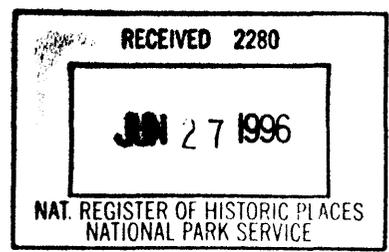


NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 10-90)
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

OMB No. 1024-0018



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cooper, Judge John E., House
other names/site number MO-351

2. Location

street & number 709 N. Main St. not for publication NA
city or town West Liberty vicinity NA
state Kentucky code KY county Morgan code 175 zip code 41472

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant X locally.

David L. Morgan 6-14-96
Signature of certifying official David L. Morgan, SHPO and Executive Director Date

Kentucky Heritage Council, the State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register Edson H. Beall 8-1-96
 See continuation sheet. entered in the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain):

Boe Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

private

Category of Property (Check only one box)

building(s)

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National

Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: I-House

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: log

roof: Asphalt shingles

walls Aluminum siding

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

X B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Criteria Considerations : NA

Areas of Significance: Government

Period of Significance: 1872-1896

Significant Dates: 1872, 1883

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Builder: Cassity, Thomas Jefferson and Cassity, Reuben

Significant person Judge John E Cooper

Narrative Statement of Significance (on continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(on continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

Primary Location of Additional Data: State Historic Preservation Office

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone:	
1	<u>see at right</u>	3	___	___	___		Easting: 301 390
2	___	4	___	___	___		Northing: 4199 560
___	See continuation sheet.						West Liberty Quad

Verbal Boundary Description and Boundary Justification (on continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joe Nickell
organization _____ date April 29, 1995
street & number PO Box 67 telephone _____
city or town West Liberty state KY zip code 41472

Property Owner

name Robert E. and Christine Gevedon
street & number 709 North Main St. telephone 606-743-1850
city or town West Liberty state KY zip code 41472

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Description of Property

The Judge Cooper House (MO - 351) is a two-story, frame, central-hall "I" house (Hudson 1993, 213) located at 709 North Main Street in West Liberty, Kentucky (pop. 2,000). The house is situated on an approximately square residential lot at the corner of North Main and Helton streets. Erected ca. 1872-73 (not 1870 as some sources state) it is widely regarded as the oldest extant house in West Liberty (W. L. Nickell 1988, 76). It currently has Kentucky Landmark status (Macintire 1993).

The property was acquired in 1872 by Judge John E. Cooper (see Morgan Co. Deed Book 10, p. 81) who soon had the house built there as his family residence. Construction was done by Thomas Jefferson Cassity, aided by his teenage son Reuben Cassity who later helped build the West Liberty Christian Church in 1907 ("Cooper-Pelfrey House" 1972).

The Cooper house was built upon log sills, which remain underneath. Originally the dwelling consisted of the four front rooms, each 16 by 20 feet with a 10-foot ceiling. Each room was heated by a fireplace vented by an internal chimney at either end of the house. The original woodwork was yellow poplar, the exterior weatherboarded, the interior of wood-lath-and-plaster construction. The flooring was of six-inch yellow pine boards. Wooden pegs were used to fasten the woodwork and the staircase (Stacy n.d.; Stacy and Nickell 1972, 105). The gable roof featured overhanging eaves.

Contrary to reports that Judge Cooper sold the house in 1876 (Stacy and Nickell 1972, 105), he and his wife Maggie S. actually continued to reside there for over a decade. In fact, the Coopers owned the house for 26 years, selling it in 1896 to John P. Salyer (Deed Book 17: 389). Salyer died tragically the following year in a fall down the stairwell. (Stacy 1973)

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The house remained in the Salyer family for several years and subsequently had five owners (listed as follows with date and deed book: page number): Custer Jones, 1928 (60:345); H. C. Rose, 1930 (63:343); Oscar Pelfrey, 1935 (67:586); Harold Hammond, 1985 (141: 355); and the present owners, Robert E. and Christine Gevedon, who acquired the house and property in 1991 (155:45).

Over the years, as with most old houses, alterations and additions were made. In 1904 the front porch, which originally was the same length as the upstairs porch (one bay across), was extended to its present length (Hudson 1992, 213). In the early 1930's some back rooms were removed and the present rear addition was put on. One small outbuilding, a garage, was added to the grounds near the southwest corner of the house in 1951. Major rehabilitation work took place in 1970 when the original flooring was covered with new pine and a period carpet was installed (Stacy 1973). Further alterations were done by the Hammonds after they acquired the house in 1985. They covered the exterior with aluminum siding that nevertheless retained the old weatherboarding look.

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Statement of Significance

The Judge Cooper House meets National Register eligibility criterion B for its association with the important eastern Kentucky politician and jurist, Judge John E. Cooper.

The son of a Virginia landowner who later moved to Magoffin County, Kentucky, Cooper was born June 4, 1836. He graduated from the A. & M. College of Kentucky University, and later practiced law in Morgan County. There he married Margaret S. Turner (daughter of Andrew and Berthena Turner) in 1859. (Stacy 1973; Morgan Co. Marriage Reg. 1)

Like others of the region who had fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War, Cooper--who had been wounded at the Battle of Ivy Mountain--found himself politically favored, and he would come to be one of the most important political and judicial figures in the region.

Cooper first served a term as county attorney, then was elected state senator from 1871 to 1875 (Hazelrigg 1876). It was at this time, circa 1872-73, that he built his now-historical home. He may have actually designed it himself since he is known to have drafted the "plan and specifications" for Morgan County's third courthouse in 1876 (Cooper n.d.).

In 1876, Colonel John Thomas Hazelrigg said in his locally famous Centennial Address that Cooper was "still living in the county, full of hope and promise, now engaged in the practice of his profession as a lawyer, and is distinguished for his zeal and energy with which he represents the interests of his clients. Although young in years, he has taken a front rank in his profession and bids fair to enroll his name among the first jurists of the commonwealth."

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Cooper fulfilled Hazelrigg's expectations. In 1883 he was chosen to fill out the term of Circuit Judge Robert Riddle. He moved to Mt. Sterling, Montgomery County, at this time (although retaining ownership to his West Liberty home until 1896). Judge Cooper was subsequently renominated for the new term and repeatedly reelected thereafter. In all, he served twenty-two years as circuit judge, retiring from office in 1906 and dying the following year on December 22. As Judge Edward C. O'Rear, a judge of the Kentucky Court of appeals, later wrote in his celebrated A History of the Montgomery County Bar (1945), Judge Cooper served his district as circuit judge "longer than any other man." This alone is a measure of Cooper's political prominence in the district.

That he had also been county attorney and state senator before, therefore adds to the stature he attained. Few of Cooper's political contemporaries from Morgan County (apart from two who became U.S. Congressmen, William Preston Taulbee and John Wycliffe Kendall) could even come close to matching his political attainments--let alone his judicial accomplishments.

Judge O'Rear said of him: "He was a vigorous executive, and worked as hard on the bench for the whole term of his service as at any time whilst at the bar. He not only adjudged the law in his courts, he administered it. A rugged type, powerful physique, dignified bearing, he gave to each case before him the most painstaking investigation." O'Rear noted that he never wore spectacles, "Though he read every paper in every case submitted to him, and every authority cited, and prepared with his own pen the instructions to juries, his orders and judgments."

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Architecturally, the house does not fit a stylistic category because its design is very simple and has little applied decoration. The house would have made a strong impression locally in the 1870s, however, due to its frame-and-clapboard composition, size, and completion in a single construction campaign.

Much of the nineteenth century Morgan County housing followed local as opposed to national design sources. The pioneer period of Morgan County lasted well into the antebellum period. Population increases between 1840-1850, and again from 1880-1920, gave impetus to construction activity and introduced housing designs beyond that confined to subsistence (David and Jarratt: 50-51). The Judge Cooper House, appearing relatively shortly after the Civil War, falls into the later phase of the first wave of housing construction locally.

Log construction was dominant through much of the nineteenth century, and was commonly practiced until the 1930s (David and Jarratt: 50, 62). Boxed and balloon frame became more common in the 1880s (David and Jarratt: 53) and are thought to have become more prominent than log sometime during the 1890s (Hudson: 6). Judge Cooper's house would have been recognized as an impressive place just on the basis of its surface materials.

In addition to materials, its locally grand size would have signaled its fineness, as well. Many of the houses locally were built in successive construction phases. Single-cell and double-cell houses were erected out of log, and later, typically, a boxed-or balloon-frame addition would be grafted on, and perhaps at that point the entire structure covered in clapboards. The locally prominent vernacular design processes produced simple house plans, the saddlebag and I-House types being most common (David and Jarratt: 53-56; Hudson: 5-7).

With a tolerance locally for an incremental approach to construction, Judge Cooper's house would have stood out for having been completed all at once. While its immediate completeness might have been somewhat unusual locally, its I-House plan was in keeping with the norm locally. The impressions it left on members of Morgan County's community would have implied power and accomplishment without being accused of showiness.

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References

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10__ Page 1__ Cooper, Judge John E., House
name of property
__Morgan County, KY
county and State

=====
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The property corresponds to the entire parcel identified by the Morgan County Property Valuation Assessor Office as Map # 106-03-07-001

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

This is the property which today contains the historic resource, the house, with which the significant person, Judge John E. Cooper, is associated. Additional acreage which may have been associated with and/or owned by Judge Cooper, adjacent to the nominated area, has lost its integrity of association through changes made after the period of significance. The .43 acres proposed for listing is a parcel which has the greatest ability to recall Judge Cooper because that parcel has undergone the least change, and retains integrity of setting, location, feeling, and association.