

1667

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Himler, Martin, House
other names/site number MT-1

2. Location

street & number NA not for publication
city, town Beauty NA vicinity
state Kentucky code KY county Martin code 159 zip code 41203

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official David L. Morgan
State Historic Preservation Officer, Kentucky Heritage Council
State or Federal agency and bureau

10-4-91
Date

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official
State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Patrick Ardus

11.21.91

for Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH/EARLY 20TH CENTURY

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Craftsman

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Wood Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other NA

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Period of Significance

1922-1928

Significant Dates

1922

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

Himler, Martin

Architect/Builder

NA

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Kentucky Heritage Council

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	7
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3	7	3	3	7	0
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4	1	8	8	7	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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Kermit, W. VA.-KY. Quad

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property being nominated is less than one acre of a three-acre property identified on Martin County Property Valuation Administrator Map 53 as parcel 27B. The nominated area consists of only the flat yard area, in the middle of which the house sits, and the stone-lined stairway rising to the house.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated area contains the significant resource, i.e., the Himler House, and the narrow margin of flat land surrounding it. The wooded and sloping hillside outside the nominated area has not been developed. That area contains no apparent evidence of historic use, and so, is not nominated in association with the house.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title L. Martin Perry, National Register Coordinator

organization Kentucky Heritage Council date August, 1991

street & number 677 Comanche Trail telephone 502/564-7005

city or town Frankfort state Kentucky zip code 40601

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Himler, Martin, House (Site MT-1)
Martin County, Kentucky

Section number 7 Page 1

The Martin Himler House (MT-1) is a two-story wood-frame and weatherboarded residence occupying a narrow ledge on a steep hill overlooking Beauty (formerly Himlerville), an unincorporated town in Martin County, Kentucky. Beauty is two miles west of Warfield, a town on the Tug Fork River which serves as the boundary between Kentucky and West Virginia. The county's rugged terrain is typical of the Appalachian Highlands cultural landscape region. Built in 1923 with rectangular plan and a gambrel roof, the residence faces northeast. It is asymmetrically composed, but is balanced in door and window spacing. The yard area is very restricted and the primary feature outside of the house is the deteriorated stone stairway leading down from the front porch. This nomination, the first for Martin County, consists of one contributing building.

In this cultural landscape of Kentucky are few historic residences designed by architects or of pretentious appearance. Within all of Martin County, the Himler House's size and siting distinguish it despite a very muted stylistic expression. Its styling places it within the national popular housing movement of readi-cut, factory-made houses. Its large size and rambling plan set it apart from more modestly scaled houses, loosely termed Dutch Colonial due to their gambrel roof treatment.

The Himler House sits upon a foundation of brick which supports the entire house. The foundation encloses a crawlspace and some limited storage under the kitchen area. Windows occur in an irregular rhythm around the house, often in six-over-six or four-over-four double hung sashes. The house's two brick chimneys lay against outer walls, on the southeast and northwest sides.

The front porch is supported by five Doric columns. The rhythm of the first floor's facade is double window, door, double window and bay window. The primary facade is defined by the horizontal planes of the porch roof, a shed roofed dormer, and the roof ridge. The rear side (southwest facade), bears similar horizontal divisions. The two sides (northwest and southeast) are narrower and are dominated by the gambrel and chimneys.

As is apparent on the attached sketch plans, each floor of the dwelling's interior is divided into three general areas defined by use and circulation pattern: an entry bay that splits left and right bays. The entry bay contains the entry hall, stairs, stairhall, and bathrooms. The left bay has a dancing room and a porch on the first floor and two bedrooms on the second. The portion of the house to the right of the entry bay is long, and is divided by a narrow hallway. The first floor hall is flanked by the living room and dining room on one side, by two bedrooms on the other, and terminates at the kitchen. On the second floor the hallway separates four bedrooms, two on each side, and terminates in a bathroom. The kitchen and pantry extend the house's basic rectangular plan to the northwest. This arrangement groups the house's public areas closer to the entry and locates the service areas to facilitate movement, e.g., the kitchen and pantry flow easily into the dining room.

The house shows little sign of alteration. The original door from the dancing room to the back porch has been sealed. A stairway from a back upstairs bedroom to the kitchen, typically the access to the kitchen for servants, has been closed. The house is in good condition on the main floor but is showing signs of deterioration from neglect in some of the second floor areas.

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Martin County, KentuckySection number 8 Page 1

The Martin Himler House (MT-1) in Martin County, Kentucky, meets National Register Criteria A and B and is significant within the historic context Company Towns in Eastern Kentucky, 1847-1945, a study being completed by the SHPO. The property is important in the area of Social History from 1922-1928, when it was Himler's home and focal point of his efforts in improving coal town operations. Himler is important for establishing Himlerville, a town cooperatively owned by its miners. This experiment resulted in living conditions that exceeded those of any other company-owned coal mining town in Kentucky, and placed the town second to only one other such location nationwide. While Himler's town failed within a few years of its inception and inspired no other known examples, it was an important quest for remedies to the unfair treatment of miners in more conventional coal towns. The town was placed into the hands of receivers in 1926 and dissolved shortly afterward. Consequently, the town's remaining historic resources have deteriorated so that district nomination is not recommended. The Himler House is the most significant resource within the town because of its high degree of physical integrity and because of its close association with Himler and his grand plan.

The establishment of Himlerville came at a time of heightened social conflict. During and shortly after the first World War and Bolshevik Revolution, immigrants nationwide encountered distrust and violence. The climate of the eastern Kentucky and West Virginia coalfield from 1919-1921 also was clouded by bloodshed in Matewan and episodes in Logan County, West Virginia, both within 30 miles of Himlerville, and, slightly further to the southeast, the Bluefield Wars in West Virginia. These confrontations climaxed the ongoing mistreatment of the immigrant labor force in coal company towns, which involved segregation by ethnic group into poorer housing and disadvantageous working conditions (see, e.g., Mulrooney: 115-119). For immigrant miners, the situation was especially acute in Kentucky and West Virginia because such workers constituted a numerical minority. Himlerville was an alternate approach to unionization among efforts to resolve the problems of workers and immigrants in 1920s America.

Himlerville represents the boldest of Martin Himler's many efforts to bring justice to his Hungarian countrymen. Himler was a journalist in Europe during the first decade of the twentieth century. His concern over the plight of the worker resulted in articles exposing injustices against Hungarian Jews. Those he accused threatened to retaliate against him and his mother. He left for the United States in 1907 to escape persecution, but intended to continue his writing on this continent (Koblass: 6/9/76, p. 21; 6/16/76, p. 18).

Himler initiated the Hungarian Miners' Journal (Magyar Banyuaszlapp) to give platform to his political views. The weekly struggled during its early years. It attracted few advertisers and was not supported by its \$1.25 yearly subscription price. During periods between 1907 and 1920, Himler subsidized his operation and obtained source material for future articles by working in Virginia coal fields. Once he conceived and published the idea for a mine town cooperatively owned by the miners, circulation picked up (Koblass: 12/10/75, p. 6; 6/9/76, p. 21).

With the backing of HMJ capital, Himler began to invest in coal mining equipment and operations in the vicinity of Warfield, Kentucky, two miles east of the nominated resource on the Tug Fork of the Big Sandy River. Early in 1920 the HMJ began to refer to the Himler State

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Himler, Martin, House (Site MT-1)
Martin County, Kentucky

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Bank and the Himler Coal Company, both identified with Warfield. Himler's business interests also extended into West Virginia, where he had plans drawn for a tipple in Kermit, across the Tug Fork from Warfield.

Himler did not allow his coal mining activities to distract from his political interests. In one of his few English-language editorials, he chastised the sheriff of Logan County, West Virginia, twenty miles east of Warfield-Kermit, for charging a Mr. Tevan with conspiring to incite communistic activity among workers and for asking him to leave the county. Himler explained that Hungarians were not communists but did advocate cooperative effort, looked to establish independent banks, and sought to further Americanize themselves. Himler speculated that the Logan County authorities were merely doing the bidding of mine operators in that county. He argued that Tevan and others were seen as trouble-makers because their activism undermined the exploitative practices of the owners, who benefitted at the expense of their workers (HMJ: 9/30/20, p. 1).

The company had turned a profit by operating what Himler regarded as "the worst coal mine in West Virginia" (HMJ, 7/28/21) in Kermit for two years after 1919. By 1921, stockholders had invested \$2,000,000 in the company which allowed purchase of new equipment. Himler relocated the operations to the other side of the Tug Fork, two miles west of Warfield, Kentucky. Here, Himler began to materialize his dream of the cooperatively owned mining town.

Ownership of the company was kept egalitarian, with no person owning more than 1% of the stock. Decisions about the town's development was made by a Board of Directors comprised of eleven miners. Himler proclaimed:

"The company is owned by 2000 miners and it is the greatest single experiment in the way of cooperative industrial undertaking and--since these miners are mostly Americans of foreign origin--it is also the greatest single Americanization movement in the country." (HMJ: 7/28/21, p.1).

Many features of the town were in place by the end of 1921. The company paid more than \$200,000 for a bridge over the Tug Fork in Warfield to take its product to market. An amusement hall was completed which played two films per week and had an electric player piano and bowling alley. The fortunes of the town and magazine became inseparable, so in October of 1921 the Hungarian Miners' Journal began publishing in Himlerville (Koblass: 10/8/75, p. 11; 10/22/75, p. 12. 3/10/76, p. 7; 5/5/76, p. 14; HMJ: 10/27/21, p. 1)

The following year the power house was activated, which lit the tipple, powered the mine cars, illuminated the streets, businesses, and homes of the miners. More than 100 houses were erected by 1922, and more were underway. The company store housed a clinic, which included a doctor, two nurses, and a part-time dentist, some of whom were graduates of the University of Budapest. Children rode the train to Kermit for schooling until a grade school was completed in 1926. St. Stephens Church was the place of worship for the predominantly Catholic miners (Koblass: 10/22/75, p. 12; 11/26/75, p. 3; 1/28/76, p. 14).

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Life in Himlerville was seen as luxurious in contrast to other coal towns. The houses had electricity, natural gas, and indoor plumbing. These utilities were unusual, some even unheard of, in coal towns. Leifur Magnusson's survey of company housing in 1920 found natural gas and electricity in 22.3% of the company-owned housing in the soft coal areas of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama. In the same area, only 1.0% of the houses had inside toilets (Magnusson: 46-48).

In addition to physical niceties, activities in Himlerville aimed at making community life more pleasant. A Betterment Committee was established to settle grievances in the town. Yearly contests for most beautiful yards were conducted. The clinic was the first professional health facility in the county. These features caused the U.S. Coal Commission to find Himlerville to be the nation's second most liveable coal town at the conclusion of its survey of 713 communities (U.S. Coal Commission: 1432; Koblass: 7/14/76, p. 16; Martin County Fair Bicentennial: 40-41).

The house occupied by Martin Himler was luxurious by the standard of his townspeople, but not as ostentatious as housing for managers and owners of other mine towns. The house is simple--even plain--in its design and interior finishes. The house stands out in the community more because of its size than for its design. The many bedrooms, bathrooms, and public use rooms show that the dwelling served as a house for the community, rather than as a monument to Himler himself. One feature of the structure, its servant stairway linking the kitchen with an upstairs bedroom, suggests that Himler may have enjoyed amenities that were beyond the reach of his neighbors.

A coal industry slump plagued Kentucky producers in 1925-26. This could not have come at a time when Himlerville was more vulnerable. The company had overextended its capital resources when this cut-back in coal purchases occurred. The company went into receivership shortly after. A devastating flood of June 28, 1928 washed many of the town's houses into tributaries of the Tug Fork, killing any chances for a rebound. Himler had moved some weeks before the flood to Columbus, Ohio, to seek medical treatment and to concentrate more fully on the Journal (Koblass: 4/7/76, p. 5). Later, he worked as an FBI agent and, near the end of his life, served as a translator at the Nuremburg Trial (Martin County Fair Bicentennial: 41).

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Martin County, Kentucky

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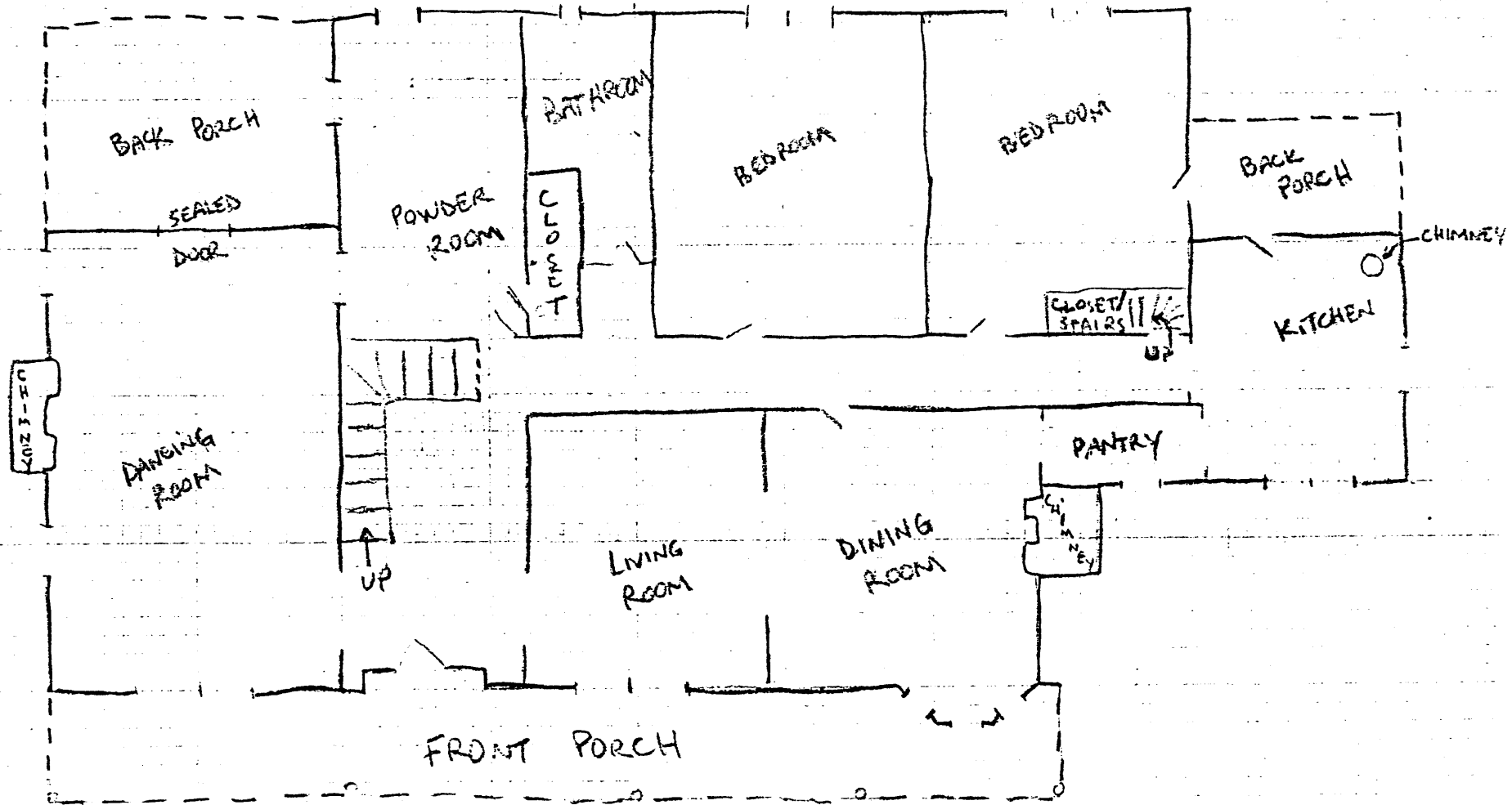
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United States Coal Commission

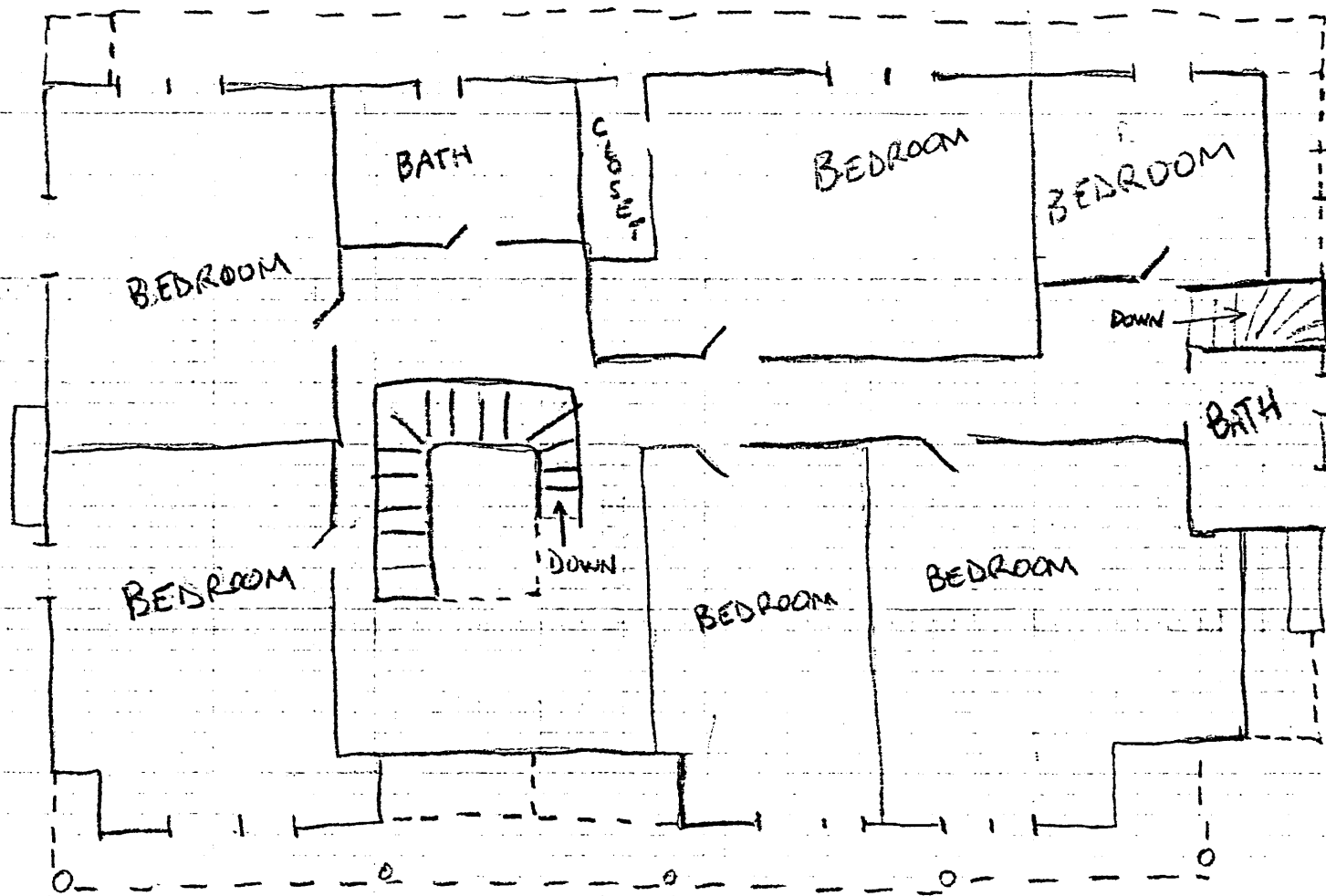
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HIMLER HOUSE
 MARTIN COUNTY, KY
 1ST FLOOR PLAN

APPROX. SCALE
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

— | — | — WINDOWS
 ————— WALLS
 - - - - - ROOFLINE



HIMLER HOUSE
 MARTIN COUNTY, KY
 2ND FLOOR PLAN

APPROX. SCALE



— | — WINDOWS

—— WALLS

- - - - ROOFLINE

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91001667 Date Listed: 11/21/91

Martin Himler House Martin KY
Property Name: County: State:

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

12/13/91
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Marty Perry with the KY SHPO has clarified that the date given as the date of construction (1923 - item 7, p.1) is incorrect. The building was constructed in 1922.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Martin County, Kentucky

For All Photos

Historic Name: Himler, Martin, House (Site #MT-1)
Location: Martin County, Kentucky
Photographer: L. Martin Perry
Negative Location: Kentucky Heritage Council
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
Date Taken: June 25, 1991

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>View or Elevation</u>
1	View to southwest
2	View to north
3	View to northwest
4	View to east
5	Interior, camera faces west