

PH0157110

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 22 1975
DATE ENTERED	JUL 30 1975

**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

"Edgewood"

AND/OR COMMON

"Edgewood"

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

310 South Fifth

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Bardstown

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

02

STATE

Kentucky

CODE

021

COUNTY

Nelson

CODE

179

**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
- \_\_\_ MUSEUM
- \_\_\_ COMMERCIAL
- \_\_\_ PARK
- \_\_\_ EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- \_\_\_ ENTERTAINMENT
- \_\_\_ RELIGIOUS
- \_\_\_ GOVERNMENT
- \_\_\_ SCIENTIFIC
- \_\_\_ INDUSTRIAL
- \_\_\_ TRANSPORTATION
- \_\_\_ MILITARY
- \_\_\_ OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. John W. Muir

STREET & NUMBER

310 South Fifth

CITY, TOWN

Bardstown

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Nelson County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Bardstown

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		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Ben Hardin House is a large brick structure located on a sizeable tract of land at the head of Fifth Street in Bardstown. The house consists of two distinct parts, erected at different periods. The older wing (west), constructed c. 1815, is three bays in width and contains the kitchen and dining room. It presently has a two-story enclosed porch attached to the rear.

The three-story main block, set a few feet to the front of the right wing, was built between 1819 and 1822. The most outstanding feature of the facade is the handsome entranceway on the west end with its large fanlight and sidelights. Directly above the doorway is a window, smaller than that of the other bays, with sidelights and fanlight matching that of the entrance. Voussoirs are found above all bays, including the eight windows on the eastern end of the block.

A twentieth century addition to the front is the two-story Greek Revival portico supported by four Tuscan columns set on pedestals which replaces a one-story Victorian porch added between 1852 and 1887. One of the early marble steps is still used at the front leading up to the entrance with the initials "BH" incised.

The interior includes a large hallway with elliptical stairway to the right rear. The handrail is cherry. To the left are 25' by 26' double parlors separated by a fanlighted archway, an arrangement rare in Kentucky. Fine mantels and chairrail survive in both rooms.

Upstairs to the front left is the master bedroom, one of unusual size in Kentucky, 25' by 26'. There is a smaller bedroom to the rear left and a small room to the right front.

At the back of the main block is a one-story porch.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1815

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

"Edgewood," a fine example of Federal-Georgian architecture, is best known as the home of Benjamin Hardin (1784-1852), noted Kentucky lawyer, member of the Upper and Lower House of the Kentucky Legislature and former member of the U. S. Congress.

Ben Hardin was born in Pennsylvania but moved with his parents as a child to Washington County, Kentucky. He received a primary education, studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1806. Hardin began his law practice in Elizabethtown and Bardstown, moving permanently to Bardstown in 1808. Bardstown was a stately, quiet town, one, which in the very early days of the 19th century, rivaled Louisville and Lexington as a social and educational center.

Hardin proved himself an able attorney and was appointed in 1810 as the district prosecutor, quickly earning a reputation as a debator of considerable skill. He was elected to the State House of Representatives in 1810 and again in 1824. He was elected to the U. S. House of Representatives as a Whig in 1818, 1819, and 1833. He served in the State Senate from 1830-33 (Biographical Directory, p. 1005).

Hardin was known in political circles as an aggressive and tenacious fighter, a quality most ably demonstrated in the 1820s during the debate over the relief issue. This contest "which at times approached Civil War," involved a complicated financial situation which found a large number of Kentuckians in debt and unable to make payment. The relief faction (1820-1824), which included Governors John Adair (1820-1824 ) and Joseph Desha (1824-1828) and a majority of legislators as well as the populace favored a two-year period of replevy. Replevin legislation was passed in 1820, but ruled unconstitutional in cases brought before the Clark County and Fayette County judges. The Court of Appeals upheld the decision, encouraging the Legislators, who sought to replace the high justices with a "New Court." Hardin was a member of the anti-relief forces upholding the Old Court, which was eventually reinstated in 1827 (Clark, 145 - 146).

Hardin is also remembered for his opposition to the chartering of the National Bank while a member of Congress in 1816. Disagreeing with John C. Calhoun and Henry Clay, Hardin believed the bank unconstitutional and delivered his views in the House vociferously and at length. Later in 1833 and in an equally biting and sarcastic manner, Hardin reversed his



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position and supported the cause of the Bank against "King Jackson," as Hardin called him on the "stump." Said John Randolph of Hardin's performance, "Hardin is like a kitchen-knife whetted on a brick. He cuts roughly, but cuts deep." (Little, p. 62.)

Because Hardin was such a controversial figure, even among members of his own party, Governor William Owsley asked Hardin to resign as his Secretary of State in 1846 following his appointment in 1844. The rift between Owsley and Hardin prompted Hardin to lead in the fight for constitutional reform at the State Constitutional Convention in 1849 of which he was a member. Three years later Hardin died at Bardstown.

However unpleasant Hardin appeared in public, at Edgewood in the security and privacy of his home "good humor and hospitality were in the ascendant," wrote an acquaintance. "The household was a miniature republic, where the worthy always found ready and hospitable admittance, and were treated with perfect equality." (Little, p. 594.) He had built the house around 1815, a few years after his marriage to Elizabeth Barbour in 1807.

Some of the more famous of the Hardin children include a daughter, Lucinda, who married John L. Helm, later Speaker of the House of Representatives, twice Governor of Kentucky, and President of the L & N Railroad. Their son, General Ben Hardin Helm, officer of the Confederate Army, was born at Edgewood on June 2, 1831. He married Emilie Todd, sister of Mary Todd Lincoln.

On one occasion, in a meeting with General Helm, Abraham Lincoln told Helm that Colonel Hardin was "the only man of whom he had ever heard that he would give his house and lot to have known."

Ben Hardin's son Rowan Hardin, recruited Company "C" Fourth Regiment to Mexico in 1847, but saw no service of note. In 1851 President Filmore appointed him Secretary of Legation to Guatemala. During that year in a secluded spot in the mountains of the Isthmus of Darien, he was murdered by an unknown assassin. With Captain Hardin's company in Mexico was Jasper W. Muir, a junior law partner of Ben Hardin, and grandfather of the present owner of Edgewood.

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In December, 1853 a year after Ben Hardin's death, the house was sold to Judge T. P. Linthicum. While under the Judge's ownership, General Leonidas Polk made his headquarters at Edgewood during the Confederate occupation of Bardstown by Braxton Bragg's army.

Later owners of the house include Ludwell McKay and heirs; Orville Arnold; and C. P. Rapier. In 1935 it was purchased by Harry Tuer. Four years later the old residence passed to H. R. Kendall. Since July, 1957, Edgewood has been owned and occupied by Bardstown banker John W. Muir and family.

Edgewood is more than the "old-fashioned, hospitable, warm-hearted Kentucky home" that it has been described, The Hardin family who built it were participants in some of the most vital issues affecting Kentucky and the nation. The history of the family and the house gives a broad understanding and perspective of life in Kentucky in an earlier age.

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