

PH 0193341

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 21 1975
DATE ENTERED JUL 1 1971

**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
Chenoweth Fort-Springhouse
AND/OR COMMON
Site of Chenoweth Massacre

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
North side of Avoca Road (approx. 0.4 miles west of Aken Rd.)
CITY, TOWN
Middletown
STATE
Kentucky
VICINITY OF
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
04
COUNTY
Jefferson
CODE
021
CODE
111

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Dr. Frederick C. Reiss (leased to the Standard Materials Division of Martin-Marietta Corporation)
STREET & NUMBER
Medical Arts Building
CITY, TOWN
Louisville
STATE
Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Jefferson County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
Fifth and Jefferson Streets
CITY, TOWN
Louisville
STATE
Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky
DATE
1971
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Kentucky Heritage Commission
CITY, TOWN
Frankfort
STATE
Kentucky

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

The Chenoweth springhouse was built circa 1786 by Richard Chenoweth, architect of two early forts at the Falls of the Ohio. It was constructed out of stone so that it could also be used as a refuge in case of Indian attack. The Chenoweth Fort or Springhouse was erected just above a branch near its intersection with Chenoweth Run in eastern Jefferson County. The stream is now muddied and overgrown into a marsh, filled with the runoff of the nearby quarries; the springhouse is now separated from Chenoweth Run by both a road and a little-used, partially elevated spur of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. In spite of the devastations of the quarry, the immediate site of the springhouse is relatively unspoiled; there are no visible intrusions in its vicinity.

Like other early Jefferson County springhouses, the structure is set into an embankment over the spring, with the lower story entered from the side at the level of the spring itself, and an upper story reached from the higher part of the slope. The upper entrance must originally have been reached by a plank from the top of the slope, according to Pirtle's account of Mrs. Chenoweth's activities during the massacre.

Aside from the two entrances, on the south and east sides, there are two openings on the west side--a square one in the gable and a wider one below (see photo 1)--and another on the north. The openings have plain wood frames pegged at the corners. Wood strips were set vertically in the openings and locked in place by the masonry above. Remains of a cooling trough have been uncovered around the floor at ground level. The masonry, which has recently been loosely mortared, was laid of random ashlar local limestone with larger squared stones at the corners in an alternating quoin pattern. A rough jack arch is formed over the entrances. The large scale of the masonry is all the more impressive for the size of the structure and its early date.

The roof and flooring on the second story burned several years ago. The windows and door frames remain and are believed to be the original. Part of the exterior walls were pointed, probably prior to World War II.

The structure was partially restored by Historic Middletown, Inc., during the summer months of 1972. Restoration, based on an old photograph of the structure, included replacement of stones which had fallen from the walls, pointing of some of the interior walls, and replacement of some window and door headers.

The Jefferson Freeway, a four-lane limited access super highway, is presently planned to be constructed approximately 0.2 to 0.4 miles from the structure. The Kentucky State Highway Department has expressed an interest in acquiring the Chenoweth Fort-Springhouse as part of the proposed "mini-park system." Further restoration and action to preserve it are desperately needed.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
___PREHISTORIC	___ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	___COMMUNITY PLANNING	___LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	___RELIGION
___1400-1499	___ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	___CONSERVATION	___LAW	___SCIENCE
___1500-1599	___AGRICULTURE	___ECONOMICS	___LITERATURE	___SCULPTURE
___1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	___EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	___SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	___ART	___ENGINEERING	___MUSIC	___THEATER
___1800-1899	___COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	___PHILOSOPHY	___TRANSPORTATION
___1900-	___COMMUNICATIONS	___INDUSTRY	___POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	___OTHER (SPECIFY)
		___INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

c. 1786

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Richard Chenoweth

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Chenoweth Fort-Springhouse was built circa 1786 by Richard Chenoweth (1734-1802), designer and builder of early forts at the Falls of the Ohio. Chenoweth was one of the original trustees of Louisville and one of Kentucky's first political leaders. The spring was the site of an Indian massacre of the Chenoweth family in 1789. The horror of the Chenoweth Massacre and other attacks in 1789 caused the pioneers to apply extreme pressure upon the Federal Government to invade the Indian territory in order to protect pioneer settlers west of the Alleghenies from further Indian attacks. The invasion of the Indian territories resulted in St. Clair's defeat and eventually General Wayne's victory over Indian tribes in the Old Northwest Territory.

Richard Chenoweth was born in Baltimore County, Maryland in 1734, the son of John Chenoweth, Jr., and Mary Smith. In 1773 Richard Chenoweth married Margaret McCarty of Hampshire County. He was a carpenter and builder by trade. Chenoweth and his family were members of the group which floated down the Ohio River on flatboats under the supervision of General George Rogers Clark. They landed on Corn Island at the Falls of the Ohio opposite what was to become Louisville, Kentucky, on May 27, 1778.

After capturing Kaskaskia (1779) Clark sent orders to the soldiers remaining on Corn Island to build a fort on the main land. Richard Chenoweth was the architect and builder of the fort. Fort-on-Shore was constructed on the highest bank of the river, near a spring. The fort was about 200 feet long and 100 feet wide having eight log cabins on the east and west sides. It was nearly completed by December 25, 1780, when the settlers had a dance to celebrate Christmas.

In 1782 Clark began another fort some distance up the river from the first one. Once again Chenoweth was contractor for the work or the materials or both. This led to his financial failure, because Virginia refused to pay him for it. The fort was to become Fort Nelson after it was enlarged by regular soldiers.

Richard Chenoweth was the Sheriff of Kentucky County, Virginia, in 1782. This indicates that he held the oldest commission of justice of the peace, making him the first sheriff in Louisville, as well as in what was later to become the state of Kentucky.

In 1785 Chenoweth became part owner of a tract of land on one of the tributaries of Floyd's Fork (twelve miles east of Louisville and a few miles northeast of what is

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Draper Manuscripts. 3CC14 Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

Guthrie, Blaine, Jr. "Captain Richard Chenoweth - A Founding Father of Louisville,"
The Filson Club History Quarterly (April 1972) Vol. 46 No. 2, p. 147.

(continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 acre

UTM OK
HL

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,6 63,0 7,0 4,2 3,5 8
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B [] [] [] [] [] []
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Blaine A. Guthrie, Jr., Trustee

MC:WEL

ORGANIZATION

Historic Middletown, Inc.

DATE

October 9, 1972

STREET & NUMBER

12901 Urton Lane

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Middletown

STATE

Kentucky 40243

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Eldred W. Mellor

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer DATE *5-9-75*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

7/1/75

ATTEST:

DATE

JUN 27 1975

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Chenoweth Fort-Springhouse

now Middletown). Chenoweth built there a substantial and for that time a good sized log cabin. He also erected the stone springhouse, making it a fortress in case of attack by Indians and putting in a loft entered from below by a ladder. He cleared a considerable amount of land and was raising crops and had built fences by the summer of 1787.

In the summer of 1789 a band of sixteen Indians crossed the Ohio River from Indiana to Louisville to raid the settlers. On the evening of July 17, the band burst in on the Chenoweth cabin while they were seated at dinner. In his book James Chenoweth, Pirtle includes this account of the massacre as told by Richard Chenoweth's son, James, who was present at the time: "In a few days, Mother was strong enough to tell us of her dreadful experience. When the Indians broke in upon us, we all ran in every direction and Mother had started toward the spring-house, when she was shot between the shoulder blades with an arrow. She stumbled and fell on her face. The Indian followed her, and probably supposing her dead, drew the arrow out, putting his foot on her back as he did so. He then began his triumphant work of scalping her. He first wound her long hair around one hand in order to get a better purchase. Then with 'the very dullest and jaggedest knife that she ever felt,' he cut the skin around her head just below the hair line. With both hands wrapped in her hair and with his foot on her back, he tore off the entire scalp, leaving her bare skull dripping blood from a thousand little blood vessels. To finish his work, he gave two blows from the butt of his tomahawk.

"She was conscious all this time, which seemed weeks to her. She suffered agonies beyond description without a shriek, or groan, or murmur. She wanted so much to live for such of her family as might escape, so she pretended to be dead. She lay in this place until the Indians had left. She then tottered toward the spring-house, falling from weakness and pain from her wounds. She struggled on until she came to the plank which led to the door in the garret of the spring-house. Here she fell, unable to rise and walk the little distance on the plank. She lay there trying to gain strength. A bright light, caused by the Indians' attempt to burn the house, and their loud whoops, as they rushed about finishing their dreadful job, kept her conscious. The light gave her a clear view of the narrow plank. But at this time she was not able of herself to walk across. Then there came into her mind a flash of memory brighter than the flames of her home, a dear but almost forgotten hymn,

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Chenoweth Fort-Springhouse

'Jesus can make my path to shine.' She rose and walked across the plank to the spring-house. In telling her story she always said she knew this was an inspiration from her Saviour, and therefore as an act of faith, like Peter walking on the water, she rose and walked the plank unto salvation. Was there ever such a martyr? Among the pioneer mothers of Kentucky she may have had an equal--she had no superior. She suffered from her wounds for a long time but finally fully recovered. However, she was a curiosity to see without hair, or any place on her head for it to grow." (pp. 37-39)

When the rescue party arrived they discovered that the house had been set on fire, but the fire had burned out and all the live stock had been slaughtered. They found several of the children dazed but alive and Richard and Peggy in the fort.

This was the most severe attack in Kentucky during the series of Indian raids of 1789 which led to St. Clair's Defeat and, finally, victory over the Indian tribes in the Old Northwest Territory by General Wayne.

Richard and Peggy Chenoweth fully recovered from their wounds. Chenoweth continued to practice farming and house-building until 1802, when he was killed by a falling timber at a house-raising. His wife lived for twenty more years and bore him two more children. After her husband's death she lived near Big Spring, five miles east of Shelbyville, Kentucky.

During the drouth of 1908 the Chenoweth spring was still flowing and supplied many families from miles around with fresh cool water.

The Chenoweth Fort-Springhouse is probably the oldest standing structure in Jefferson County, Kentucky. It is of architectural interest, as an example of Kentucky pioneer stonework, built by one of the first and most important builder-architects in the future State's history.

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Chenoweth Fort-Springhouse

"Indian Affairs," American State Papers. (Washington, 1882) Vol. I.

Johnston, J. Stoddard, ed. History of Louisville from its First Settlement to the Year 1896. Chicago: American Biographical Publishing Co., 1896. Vol. I, p. 47.

Pirtle, Alfred. James Chenoweth, The Story of One of the Earliest Boys of Louisville and Where Louisville was Started. (Louisville, 1921).