

PH0117373

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Kentucky
COUNTY: Harrison
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE DEC 31 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:
Monticello

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Thomas Jefferson Megibben House; Dr. Henry W. Bromley

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Monticello Heights

CITY OR TOWN:
Cynthiana

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
6th

STATE: Kentucky CODE: 021 COUNTY: Harrison CODE: 097

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Agricultural
 Commercial
 Educational
 Entertainment

Government
 Industrial
 Military
 Museum

Park
 Private Residence
 Religious
 Scientific

Transportation
 Other (Specify)
Home for Elderly Persons

Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Franklin Howard, Jr.

STREET AND NUMBER:
Monticello Heights

CITY OR TOWN:
Cynthiana

STATE: Kentucky CODE: 021

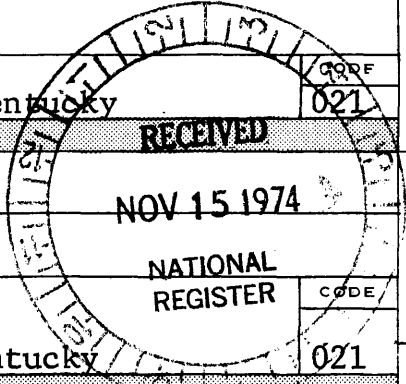
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Harrison County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Cynthiana

STATE: Kentucky CODE: 021



6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE OF SURVEY: 1971
 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Kentucky Heritage Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
401 Wapping Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Frankfort

STATE: Kentucky CODE: 021

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: _____

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered (slightly) altered			<input type="checkbox"/> Moved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Monticello was built in about 1883 for Thomas Jefferson Megibben at a reputed cost of \$300,000; the builder is said to have been the L. P. Hazen Company of New York and Cincinnati. The property, now considerably reduced by subdivision, then contained 93.76 acres. The site remains a prominent one with fine views over the town of Cynthiana and with unencumbered grounds, which slope away from the house on nearly all sides down toward the Licking River. The mansion was originally approached by a long curving drive that led to the formal facade facing town. At present, however, a more direct route leads to the lengthy porte-cochère and porch (now partially closed in) at the rear between the main block of the house and the extensive service ell. Tradition has it that the design was considered at the time to be "English-American," and that the bright red pressed brick was imported from England; each brick is said to have been wrapped individually at a cost of 10¢ apiece.

The building, designed by the firm of Samuel Hannaford of Cincinnati, consists of a hipped-roof rectangle and ell with an extraordinary amount of surface variation.

The main facade overlooking the town (Photo # 1) contains innumerable windows grouped in both horizontal and vertical units. To the left are superimposed bays with grouped dormers evoking a "Palladian window." The tallest gable most clearly shows the inspiration of Richard Norman Shaw's fashionable "Queen Anne Revival" style with its curved Baroque volutes, pilaster strips, urns, and circular ventilator. This picturesque gable surmounts an enormous two-story bay with pilasters at the corners. The main entrance is de-emphasized at the roofline, where there is only a partially gabled row of strip windows with a tiny "eyebrow" vent above. But the interest shifts here to the second-story segmental arch (probably once sheltering an open loggia) with its prominent stone keystone, and to the elaborate porch entrance of the first story. This porch, with its turned posts, spindlework, and wrought-iron balustrade, turns the corner of the house below yet another gable, this one bifurcated by a tall decorated chimney flanked by windows inset with colored glass. In spite of the tremendous variety of openings, textures, and planes, the composition as a whole is remarkably well organized, lacking perhaps only a clearly defined climax.

S E E I N S T R U C T I O N S

(Continued)

6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian; 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1883**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | osophy | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Monticello was the creation of two men: Thomas Jefferson Megibben and Samuel Hannaford. The former, who named his mansion and estate for obvious reasons (both namesake and site), provided an ideal patron for one of the most prominent Cincinnati architects of the day.

Cynthiana is the county seat of Harrison County, on the northern fringe of the Bluegrass area of Central Kentucky. Located on the Licking River, which rises in Kentucky and joins the Ohio at Covington, and on the old road between Lexington and Cincinnati, the town is oriented toward both directions. Megibben, an Ohioan by birth, moved to Cynthiana at the age of 18 and resided there the remainder of his life, while maintaining contacts with the Northern Kentucky area across the Ohio River from Cincinnati. It was here that he was instrumental in founding the world-famous Latonia Race Course (originally Jockey Club), where he raced several early thoroughbred winners, bred on his farm at Cynthiana. The source of his fortune, however, was the typically central Kentucky industry of distilling whiskey. Ironically, a later owner of Monticello, the Reverend Dr. Henry W. Bromley, was one of the nation's foremost prohibitionists.

Like Megibben, architect Hannaford and his firm bridged the Ohio in his commissions. An 1883 advertisement in the Kentucky State Gazetteer and Business Directory, which gives Hannaford's office as "Room 18, Bradford Block, Cincinnati, Ohio," lists seven buildings as "References": five of them in Kentucky; the remaining two are the Cincinnati Music Hall and the Grand Hotel, also in Cincinnati, two of the major architectural commissions of the period. Heading the list is "Honorable T. J. Megibben's Residence, Cynthiana, Kentucky."

According to an 1892 biography, Thomas J. Megibben came to
(Continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Kentucky State Gazetteer and Business Directory (1883-84) p.4.
Perrin, William, ed. History of Bourbon, Scott, Harrison and Nicholas Counties. (Chicago: O. L. Baskin & Co., 1882).
The McGinness and Scott Families and Their Branches (Pittsburgh: Murdoch, Kerr & Co., 1892).
 Article from The Cincinnati Enquirer Sunday Magazine (June 25, 1933).
 Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) (Los Angeles, 1956).
The Cynthiana Democrat (Anniversary Edition, Aug. 7, 1969; July 16, 1970)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

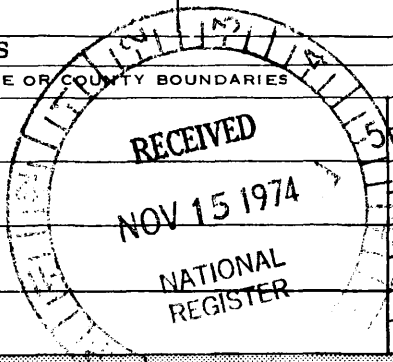
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
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NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

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4251590
(1)

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **9.5 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Thelma Taylor (Assisted by Ellen Bach)**

ORGANIZATION: **Harrison Co. Representative, Ky. Heritage Commission** DATE: **Sept., 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER: **(WEL)**

CITY OR TOWN: **Cynthiana** STATE: **Kentucky** CODE: **021**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: Eldred W. Melton

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: 11-8-74

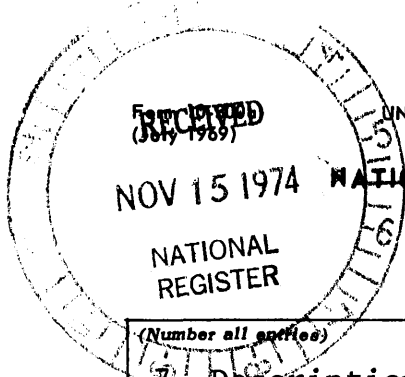
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

W. R. Moore
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 12-31-74

ATTEST: Wm. H. ...
Keeper of The National Register

Date: 12-31-74



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Monticello

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7. Description (continued)

The rear view (Photo # 2) shows most clearly the elegant moldings, wooden spindlework, shaped brick edgings, terracotta panels of garlands, manneristically elongated windows with shallow segmental arches, swelling vertical keystones, shaped tiles of the roof, and above all the elaborate chimneys.

The interior remains entirely consistent with the exterior in spite of some alterations, such as the insertion of elaborate bathrooms. A variety of woods--cherry, walnut, golden oak, mahogany, rosewood, all claimed to have been imported from England--are used to advantage in floors, wainscotting, window and door-frames, elaborate mantels with turned and coved shelves, and other built-in cabinet work. The wainscot consists of rather plain, well-proportioned rectangular panels with carved and turned details confined tastefully to points of emphasis (Photo # 3). Details include sunburst motifs, rosettes, and some Aesthetic floral reliefs. Greek key frets are also used in the parquet flooring. The tilework of fireplace facings and hearths is characteristic of the 1880s, with contrasting colors and daisy patterns. There are numerous colored-glass panels in window transoms and occasionally in such unexpected places as directly over a bedroom mantel. The complexity of the dining-room inglenook, with elaborate mantel flanked by shuttered windows and cozy builtin seats, is held together by the large semicircular arch that divides it from the main space (Photo # 4).

The special glory of the interiors is the frescoing on ceilings and friezes (most of the walls above the wainscotting have been overpainted or papered, although some original wallpaper survives). An Italian artist is said to have been imported to paint these lavish decorations, which do have a Baroque flavor somewhat at odds with the relative severity and predominantly English inspiration of other features. The dining-room ceiling, for instance, has appropriate still-lives of Caravaggesque fish, fowl, fruit, and other foods set into trompe-l'oeil cartouches with delicately-scaled stencilled panels between golden oak beams (Photo # 5).

The music room has the most imaginative ceiling (unfortunately somewhat damaged by water leaks in recent years) (Photo # 6). Lush strapwork interspersed with roundels of musical instruments and clusters of musical cupids (perhaps inspired by Pompeian

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Monticello

7. Description (continued)

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murals) surrounds an illusionistic painting of blue sky with billowing clouds, dainty birds flying, and tendrils dangling over the not-altogether convincing balustrade. This masterpiece is said to have been painted with the artist himself hanging, a la Michelangelo, from a hammock swung below the ceiling.

The third floor originally included a large ballroom, later partitioned into smaller chambers. A brick and stone tenant house and a large coachhouse remain on the property.



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Monticello

8. Significance (Continued)

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Cynthiana in 1849, at the age of eighteen, to join an uncle, Nelson Megibben, in the distilling business. Several years later Thomas and a brother established the Excelsior Distillery at Cynthiana, and about 1873 the Edgewater Distillery.

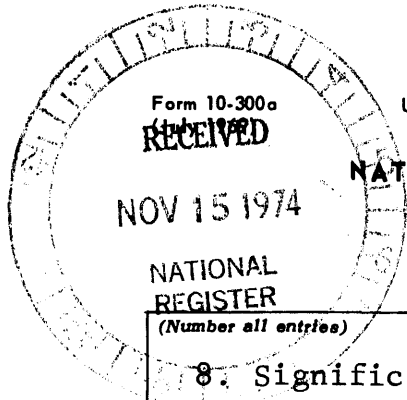
It was at this period in the early 1870s that T. J. Megibben acquired his first thoroughbred horses and utilized his extensive landholdings in Harrison County as a stock farm for running and harness horses and blooded cattle. He was said to have maintained fifty runners and one-hundred trotters and roadsters. Megibben was president of the Kentucky Horse Breeders Association of Lexington, the Short-Horn Cattle Breeders Association of Chicago, Illinois, and the Agricultural and Mechanical Association of Harrison County. Probably to provide an efficient means of transportation for his livestock, he was the first projector and president of the Kentucky Union Railroad.

Megibben's most famous association, however, was with the Latonia Racetrack of Covington, Kentucky, of which he was president from its organization in 1881 until his death. Latonia's first winner, the spirited Markland, was a colt of Megibben's equally celebrated Springbok, winner of the Belmont Cup in 1873 and the Saratoga Cup in 1874. One of his many brilliant offspring, Snowbok, was a great jumper until he broke his neck during a steeplechase in the last day of the first running at Latonia. It is said that Megibben abandoned the training of jumpers thereafter.

Megibben also represented Harrison County for two terms in the Kentucky legislature, and Robertson, Nicholas, and Harrison Counties for four years in the State Senate.

An obituary summed up Megibben as "undoubtedly, the most public spirited man that ever figured in the history of Harrison County. Kentucky does not present a more striking exemplification of the old maxim, 'Industry brings its own reward,' than in the life of this gentleman who, by his own efforts, became the most prominent farmer, distiller, thoroughbred stock-raiser, etc., of Harrison County, and, indeed among the first of Central Kentucky." Beginning with a farm of 200 acres in 1859, he built up his landholdings to 2,800 acres at the time of his death, being then the largest landowner in the county. He was also known for

(Continued)



Form 10-300a

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Monticello

8. Significance (Continued)

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his personal and business integrity, modesty, and philanthropy.

Megibben built Monticello in the early 1880s at the height of his prosperity after he became the beneficiary of a whiskey tax windfall (he controlled several warehouses of whiskey exempt from the newly-imposed tax). After his death in 1890 the property passed into the hands of his widow and other members of the family (which included six orphans raised with the Megibbens own children), and eventually became a "high-class" boarding house and hotel. In 1923 the house and grounds were bought by the Rev. Dr. Bromley and his wife.

Henry Walter Bromley was born at Glencoe, Kentucky, in 1879. He died at Monticello in 1957. During his long career he had been minister, scholar, lecturer, prohibitionist, aviator, college professor, editor, lawyer, college trustee, and evangelist, among other activities. An ardent Methodist, he has been called a "minor league Billy Sunday," although his religious proclivities did not prevent his becoming an almost equally ardent aviator, piloting his own plane to a series of revivals all over the country.

As a prohibitionist, Dr. Bromley is credited with writing Kentucky's model local option law. As editor of "The American Statesman," a tabloid published at Covington, he directed the forces against repeal of national prohibition in their futile efforts.

Bromley's revivals were financially successful and permitted him, along with the patronage of a wealthy Philadelphia woman, to purchase Monticello in 1923 and restore much of its former splendor. Although his widow, who died in 1960, had hoped that the place would be used as a community center, her wishes were not carried out, and the house has passed through several hands since then.

According to the Witheys, the architect Samuel Hannaford (1835-1910) in his long career, assisted by his sons in later years, was responsible for a great number of the major business and public buildings in Cincinnati and elsewhere in the Midwest. Born in England, Hannaford was brought to Cincinnati at an early age and received his architectural training there. One of his

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Monticello

8. Significance (Continued)

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earliest commissions was the Cincinnati Music Hall (1878), for which he and his then-partner Edwin Proctor won a national competition. A spectacular High Victorian Gothic structure apparently much indebted to the rival competition entry of Van Brunt and Ware (the avid American promoters of the doctrines and details of French architect-restorationist-theoretician E.-E. Viollet-le-Duc), the Music Hall has been the center of the city's musical life for almost a century thanks to its superb acoustics and admirable facilities for circulation. A decade later the Hannaford firm designed the impressive Richardsonian Cincinnati City Hall (1888-93) which, like Music Hall, has recently returned to local favor.

Like several recently-discovered residences in Covington, Monticello seems to represent a transitional stylistic phase between these two major public designs. An outstanding example of the American adaptation of Richard Norman Shaw's brick "Queen Anne" Revival or "Free Renaissance" manner, it retains some Victorian Gothic verticality and brittleness of details, while tending toward the simplified massing and flexible surface treatment of H. H. Richardson's popular adaptation of Romanesque forms. Nevertheless, Hannaford's historical sources in Monticello are almost exclusively classical in inspiration, whether early 18th-century English and American colonial on the exterior, or Renaissance and even Italian Baroque on the lavishly decorated interior. Relatively unaltered inside and out, and magnificently sited overlooking Cynthiana from a nearby hilltop, Monticello is one of the major surviving late 19th-century mansions of the Midwest, and an apt representation of both its original owner's and its architect's ambitions.

