

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received JUL 22 1982  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

Received 2/10/82 on part of Constitution  
H D

1. Name

historic Sayre Female Institute/Sayre School

and/or common Sayre School

2. Location

street & number 194 North Limestone St. n/a not for publication

city, town Lexington n/a vicinity of congressional district

state Kentucky code 021 county Fayette code 067

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Sayre School

street & number 194 North Limestone

city, town Lexington n/a vicinity of state Kentucky

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Fayette County Courthouse

street & number 251 West Main Street

city, town Lexington state Kentucky 40507

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date October, 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Heritage Division - Kentucky Department of the Arts

city, town Frankfort state Kentucky

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" 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		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Sayre School, located on North Limestone Street, just north of the commercial downtown and adjacent to the Constitution Historic District (nominated to the National Register of Historic Places) is a fine Greek Revival/Italianate building that is the heart of the Sayre School campus. Facing Limestone Street, the building is a four-story, three-bay, Flemish bond brick house that is Greek Revival with Italianate changes. The house began as a two-story, three-bay Greek Revival residence and soon after its construction, two more floors and the Italianate details were added. All windows on the facade are triple, with the first floor ones framed by pilasters and topped by a large frieze and cornice. A handsome castiron porch, probably locally manufactured, remains very much intact. When the upper two floors were added, making the building suitable for a girl's school, the paired brackets supporting the overhanging eaves were added. There is a three-story ell dating from the 1850s at the back of the house and an enclosed porch stretches in a L-shape across the rear. The interior of the building is very much intact with a transverse hall flanked by double parlors on one side and two smaller rooms with a hallway between them on the other. Original mantels, parlor frieze, stairway, and random width flooring are all intact on the first floor. Woodwork on the second floor is less elaborate than the first floor with doorways detailed with Greek "ears". The basement also has "eared" woodwork and the rear entrance to it has sidelights. The building is attributed to architect Thomas Lewinski, with the alterations being attributed to John McMurtry.

\* \* \* \* \*

This building was originally designed by Thomas Lewinski as a residence for E.P. Johnson in 1846. It was two-story, three-bay, Flemish bond brick built on a high English basement. A decorative band of brick runs around the house between the basement and first floor level. The center bay of the house projects slightly forward and there are brick pilaster strips at the edges of the facade, forming recessed panels between them. The front facade windows are all triple windows with multi panes, the center section being six-over-six pane and the sides being two-over-two pane. Windows on the first floor are flanked by pilasters and topped by a large frieze and cornice. The doorway is recessed with two pairs of Ionic fluted columns, the outside ones are flanked by pilasters and topped by a deep entablature. The door has a transom and sidelights and the recessed entry area has a frieze with egg and dart details and dentils and a anthemion pattern motif tops the frieze. This doorway is similar to a design by Minard Lafever (plate 80-B, the Modern Builders Guide). Wide stone steps are set between antepodia leading up to the entrance. A handsome castiron porch, with cresting that is suggestive of acroteria, remains very much intact. This is a fine example of a castiron Greek Revival porch and may have been cast locally, perhaps by the Bruen Foundary. The house originally had a hipped roof and probably a cupola atop it, according to an engraving made before the upper two floors were added. The house was made four stories by David Sayre, founder of Sayre School, for use as the school building. The additions were made sometime in the late 1850s or the 1860s, enlarging the building to make it more suitable for a girls' school. The seam between the second and third floors is clearly visible. Paired brackets with acorn drops and Gothic piercing support the overhanging eaves. There is a Palladian window in the garret beneath the gable in the center bay and rectangular, triple section, iron grilles are in the other bays of the garret. The square cupola atop the house also has a triple window in all four sides and pilasters at the corners, as well as paired brackets supporting the overhanging roof. There are

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1846, late 1850s      **Builder/Architect** Thomas Lewinski and John McMurtry

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)** Sayre School, located on the east side of North Limestone between Pleasant Stone and Templeman Alley, is a Greek Revival/Italianate four-story, three-bay, brick building that has served as an educational institution for over one-hundred and twenty-five years. The building, which sits back from Limestone, was originally built in 1846, designed by Major Thomas Lewinski, as a residence for Edward P. Johnson, who lived there only ten years before selling the property to David Sayre, founder of Sayre Female Institute. Sayre, a major benefactor of the school and other educational and church related institutions in the area, hired architect John McMurtry to add two more floors to the building, resulting in its fine Italianate details. Many of the architectural details, such as the interior frieze and crown mold, and the exterior castiron porch, are excellent examples of the period. The school, which has been part of the Lexington community since 1857 and has been in operation as an education institution ever since. Soon after Sayre's founding it became the leading institution of its kind in the area. Other education facilities that existed in the area at the time were small and often run from the residence of the instructor. St. Catherine's Academy, which was located on North Limestone a couple of blocks from Sayre, was an excellent academy but ceased operation and its buildings were removed some time ago. Other good private education institutions in the area came and went, none having the longevity of Sayre. (The first public school in Lexington was opened in 1834. However, the public school system did not become fully developed until the late 19th century.) The building is architecturally intact and remains today essentially as it was in the 1860s.

\* \* \* \*

The land on which this building was built was originally outlot number eleven, a five acre tract laid out circa 1791, when the lots for the city were recorded. An earlier building, which was demolished when the present 1846 building was constructed, had been built by George Nicholas in the 1790s. Nicholas was a prominent lawyer, served as a colonel in the Revolutionary War and was an influential member of the Virginia Convention. When he came to Lexington he continued to practice law, was the first professor of law at Transylvania and the first attorney general for Kentucky. He died in Lexington in 1799, age 55. The property was sold about 1806 to Thomas Hart, Jr., who had a rope walk on the rear of the property. The Hart family continued to own the property, Hart's widow living in the earlier house until the 1830s. Mrs. Eleanor Hart sold the property to Edward P. Johnson, who apparently tore down the earlier house, a small part of which may remain, and built the present one in the 1840s. He hired Thomas Lewinski as the architect for the building. Lewinski also designed Christ Church (listed on the National Register, October 21, 1976), commercial buildings and several residences, including some for members of the family of Henry Clay. Lewinski was born in London of a Polish father and an English mother and came to this country in the 1830s. He was working in the Lexington area by the 1840s, continuing to work in the area until the mid-1850s and doing some amount of work for even a decade after that.

Edward P. Johnson lived in the house until 1855 when he sold the house and its surrounding

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1 acre

Quadrangle name Lexington East

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A 

1	6	7	1	9	8	8	1	5	4	2	1	3	9	10	10
Zone	Easting			Northing											

B 

Zone	Easting			Northing											

C 

Zone	Easting			Northing											

D 

Zone	Easting			Northing											

E 

Zone	Easting			Northing											

F 

Zone	Easting			Northing											

G 

Zone	Easting			Northing											

H 

Zone	Easting			Northing											

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The Sayre School boundary begins at a point (4) approximately 180 feet north of the northeast corner of Limestone and Pleasant Stone and proceeds southeast along a line 360 feet to a point (1); thence 125 feet southwest to a point (2); thence 360 feet to a point (3) on the east side of North Limestone Street (see continuation sheet)

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bettie L. Kerr, Historic Resources Administrator

organization Lexington-Fayette County Historic Commission date May 3, 1982

street & number 253 Market Street telephone (606) 255-8312

city or town Lexington state Kentucky 40508

# 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Mary Susan Oyer

title State Historic Preservation Officer date July 12, 1982

For NPS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	Entered in the National Register
<u>Delores Byrum</u> Keeper of the National Register	date <u>8/19/82</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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National Park Service**

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Fayette County, Kentucky

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corbels in the recessed sections of the cupola, repeating the same treatment of the main mass. The roof of the cupola has a small pediment over each of the four sides.

The house has a three-story ell at the back (east side) of the house and an enclosed L-shaped porch runs across the rear and beside the ell. This porch was originally a two story, open gallery with brick piers and wood pilasters and had a third story added. It has brackets, that match the others on the main mass, supporting the overhanging roof. The rear ell has a brick foundation and appears to have been separate from the house. There was probably a covered dogtrot, possibly a part of the gallery, that was later filled in. This ell was originally a one-room, two-story, building that was later raised to three stories, the seam of this addition being visible on the east side. Some Greek Revival woodwork remains inside.

On the south side of the house is a one-story, sloped roof ell which could be a remaining part of George Nicholas's earlier residence which stood on this site prior to the present structure. The ell has two early, built-up mantels in it, although no other interior details remain.

The interior of the house is divided into a transverse hall with double parlors on the north side and what would have originally been two rooms of the same size on the opposite side. A hall was created on the south side of the house, running perpendicular to the center hall, resulting in a smaller room in the front. The double parlors have large triple windows that are part of the system of the walls and are framed by pilasters and an entablature that runs up to the ceiling and has egg and dart details and large dentils in the cornice. Above this is Anthemim motif crown molding. The parlors are divided by sliding doors between pilasters and door frames are topped by a heavy entablature. The rear parlor window has hinged panels at the bottom and the window goes up allowing access to the gallery. High baseboards are throughout the first floor. The mantelpieces in the parlor are identical and have pilasters with decorative panels culminating in a spade-like point, reflecting something of the Gothic mode. Mantel spandrel has a Tudor arch, which is repeated in the iron surround. Both parlors have a recessed circular modillion panel with egg and dart detail, but the centerflowers that were similar to a Lafever pattern are gone. The hall has an open well staircase with simple rail and an open stringer with delicate applied scroll-like motif on the step-ends. Rooms across the hall from the parlor have plainer trim, with Greek eared door frames topped by a simple entablature and jambs with chevron panels, also to be found on the second floor. The floor plan on the second is like that on the first except for the addition of a small room in the front of the hall, overlooking the lawn. The third and fourth floor have very plain woodwork and the same floor plan, consisting of large rooms, suitable for classes or dormitory use. The basement also has eared woodwork, an early staircase banister is on the basement stairs and floor is bricked. The exterior rear entrance to the cellar is eared and has sidelights.

The building remains very much intact and today serves as the central building for campus offices, having retained its school use for over one-hundred, twenty-five years.

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grounds to David A. Sayre. Sayre hired architect John McMurtry to add two floors to the building, making it more suitable for use as a school. McMurtry (1812-1890) was one of the leading architects of the area, having designed over two hundred buildings, most of them residences. Many were in the Greek Revival style with some being excellent Gothic and Italianate.

David Sayre founded the school in 1854 and it first met in a building at the northwest corner of Mill and Church Street. The school was originally known as the Transylvania Female Academy, but within a few short weeks the name was changed to the Sayre Female Institute. Henry V. D. Nevius, pastor of Walnut Hill Church and principal of Walnut Hill Seminary on Richmond Road, was made principal. The school had a number of trustees, some of whom were: J. C. Johnson, H. T. Duncan, W. A. Dudley, Robert Peter, M.D., Hon. J. C. Breckinridge, R. Higgins, and David Sayre, all of whom were leaders in the community. David Sayre was made chairman of the board. The school was started to "afford to young ladies a liberal and finished education in all those branches of useful and elegant learning which contribute to the accomplishment of the female sex."<sup>1</sup> The school moved to their North Limestone location in the fall of 1855 and the alterations to the building are said to have been made by 1857, although it could have been slightly later.

The school had several distinguished principals over the years, including Major Henry B. McClellan, who was principal from 1870 until 1904. Under his leadership the "standards and scholarship were raised" and Sayre had its most prosperous years until the mid-twentieth century.

David Sayre was born in New Jersey in 1793 and apprenticed in the silver business, coming to Lexington as a silversmith in 1811. In the 1820s he founded a broker's office, establishing the firm of David A. Sayre and Co. By 1829 his business had become exclusively that of banking. He amassed a large fortune and gave a great deal of money to schools and churches of the community as well as to Sayre. He made, according to Charles Kerr's History of Kentucky, over three million dollars of clear profit during his lifetime. He gave large sums of money to Centre College, the Orphans Society, McChord Church and others and was active in civic affairs. He died in September of 1870, age 77.

After the turn of the century Sayre continued as a fine school for young ladies but had some difficult times as the years went by. The school managed to stay open during the depression and in 1942 the name was changed to Sayre School, it having been coeducational for many years. In the 1940s the school's future seemed uncertain but today Sayre is a firmly established college preparatory school. Its main building, which is being nominated, is located at the center of the campus and serves as both its visual and functional focal point, housing administrative offices.

1. Coleman, J. Winston, Jr. History of Sayre School. Lexington: Winburn Press, 1954.  
p. 2.

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Coleman, J. Winston, Jr. History of Sayre School. Lexington, 1954.

Lancaster, Clay. Ante Bellum Houses of the Bluegrass. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961.

\_\_\_\_\_. Vestiges of the Venerable City. Lexington: Lexington-Fayette County Historic Commission, 1978.

Lexington City Directories

Lexington Maps and Views

Lexington Newspapers

Perrin, William Henry, ed. History of Fayette County, Kentucky. Chicago: O.L. Baskin and Co., 1882.

Sanborn Insurance Maps

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and follows property line 125 feet north to the point of origin, thereby incorporating the main building and its circular drive approach with brick walk and trees. The other campus buildings are 2-story brick, built in the 1960s and 1970s. (See Map 1.)





HOUSTON

ALLEY

ACADEMY

ALLEY

STREET

CONSTITUTION

STREET

TEMPLEMAN

ALLEY

986

975

4

1

3

2

WIMSTONE

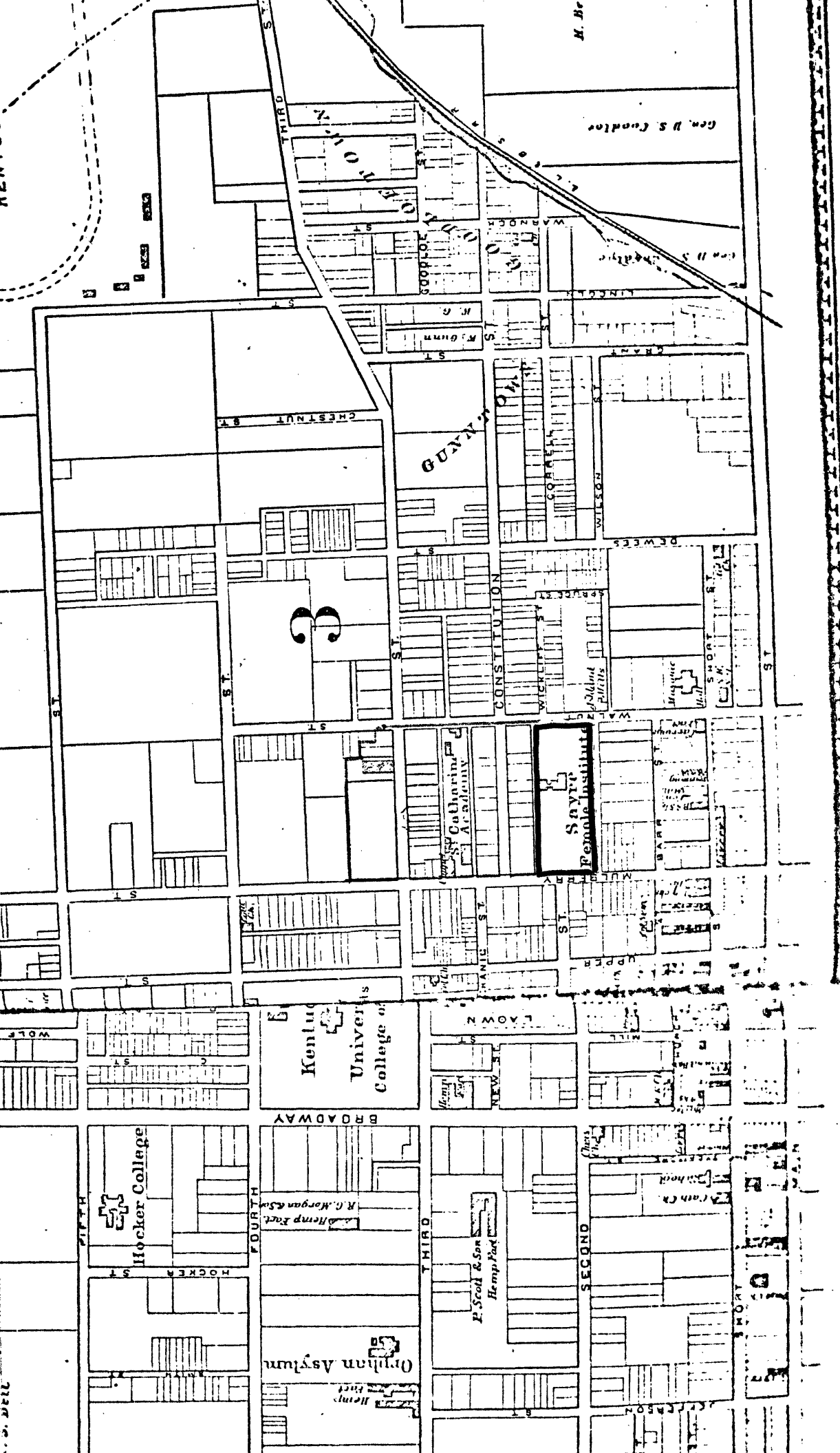
PLEASANT

STONE

STREET

Sayre School  
Fayette County, Kentucky  
Urban-County Planning Commission Map  
Current  
Scale 1" = 100'  
Map 1 of 5

Nominated area shown in red.



**Female Institute**

Kenton University College of Arts

Hocker College

Orphan Asylum

P. Scott & Son  
Hemp Pack

SECOND

THIRD

FOURTH

BROADWAY

NEW ST

WALNUT ST

WICKLIFF ST

CONSTITUTION ST

WILSON ST

GRANT ST

WARNOCK ST

GOODLOE ST

THIRD ST

CHESTNUT ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

SHORT ST

UPPER ST

MIDDLE ST

LOWER ST

WALNUT ST

DEWEES ST

GRANT ST

WARNOCK ST

THIRD ST

M. Be

Gen. U. S. Coulter

Gen. U. S. Coulter

Lincoln

Grant

Dewees

Wickliff

Constitution

Wilson

Grant

Walnut

Upper

Middle

Lower

Walnut

Upper

Middle

Lower

Walnut

Upper

Middle

Lower

Walnut

Sayre School  
Fayette County, Kentucky  
D.G. Beers & Company  
1877  
Scale  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1 mile  
Map 4 of 5