

DHφ364967

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED NOV 9 1976
DATE ENTERED APR 11 1977

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

Jonathan Cowherd, Jr., House

AND/OR COMMON

Beechwood

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Route 4 (5 3/4 miles ^{West} ~~east~~ of Campbellsville) *off R220*

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF Campbellsville 05

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Kentucky

021

Taylor

217

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis K. Corbin

STREET & NUMBER

Route 4

CITY, TOWN

Campbellsville

VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Taylor County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Campbellsville

STATE

Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky (Supplement)

DATE

1971

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

Kentucky

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Jonathan Cowherd, Jr., House, built around 1840 for use as a plantation residence, was located on an estate consisting of over 2,000 acres on the Little Pitman Creek in south-central Kentucky. The surrounding countryside has remained rural, with the only modern development being the numerous gas wells to the southeast. The house is off Highway 793, with the closest community being the county seat Campbellsville, 5 3/4 miles to the east. The house faces west on an eminence overlooking a stream in a small ravine near its junction with Little Pitman Creek.

Although lacking specifically Greek Revival exterior features, such as pilaster strips or porticoes, the mass of this two-story house has a cubic quality that evokes the Grecian vogue of the second quarter of the 19th century; this is emphasized by the fairly low hipped roof and the treatment of the east side which probably then, as now, faced the visitor as he arrived, giving the illusion that the two-story portion of the house is square rather than L-shaped in plan. The original cornice, of which only a fragment remains in the inner corner of the two-story "L," projected upward in three sections (see photo 4). It somewhat resembles the layered affect of the front gable of a Grecian country store at Montpelier in eastern Adair County, in the same region as the Cowherd house. There are no other exterior details with specifically Grecian features, but the total plainness of the inset window frames and the square main entrance is not characteristic of earlier architecture in Kentucky. Nor is there any evidence that the woodwork of the main block has been altered, either inside or out.

The two-story, L-shaped, brick structure with its hipped roof, simple lines, and block-like massing retains a marked Georgian appearance. The front (west) facade has little adornment with the exception of the large Greek Revival entranceway (see photo 1). The double-door is enframed by a transom and sidelights and is now sheltered by a small gabled frame porch added by the present owners. Until recently a stone slab served as the front step, and there has been no evidence uncovered of an original porch. Windows have plain frames set under brick jack-arches. The foundation of the house is of stone.

One particularly unusual feature of the house is the placement of windows on the south wall (see photo 1). The chimney for the front parlor prevented symmetrical location of the bays; the three windows were therefore installed on the back two-thirds of the wall, leaving a noticeable gap on the front one-third of the wall.

The interior displays one of the most consistent and impressive examples of vernacular Greek Revival architecture yet studied in the State. (A cursory survey of nearby 19th-century buildings did, however, turn up some features in the 1850s Ebenezer Presbyterian

(continued)

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 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1840

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Jonathan Cowherd House is an early brick "country" residence located in Taylor County on the western fringe of the Bluegrass. Its unsophisticated Grecian features attach architectural significance to the site--"American primitive" at its most impressive. Originally part of an estate of over 2,000 acres, the property has been drastically reduced, although the surrounding countryside remains rural.

Jonathan Cowherd, Jr. (1755-1844) was born in Culpeper County, Virginia, the son of a close friend and neighbor of President James Madison. The President's name appears on Orange County records as a witness to legal transactions of the Cowherd family. Jonathan's grandfather, James Cowherd, was from England, arriving in Virginia in 1688.

Jonathan Cowherd, Jr., and his brother James moved to Kentucky in 1796, settling on a large tract of land on the Pitman Creek in Green County. The first settlement in the county, Pitman's Station, dates to around 1780 and was located close to the Green River near the mouth of Pitman's Creek about five miles below Greensburg. Taylor County, formed out of the northeast half of Green County, was not established until 1848 (Collins, Vol. II, p. 725).

The area in which the Cowherds chose to establish their farm was fertile and productive. It has remained primarily agricultural, with no large towns, although Campbellsville, the county seat, is now within five miles of Cowherd's farm (Perrin, p. 729). The land was in part inherited from their uncle, James Cowherd, who was killed during the French and Indian War. James was single and by the time his death was established, his father had died; consequently James' estate was heired and administered by Jonathan Cowherd, Sr., his oldest brother.¹

¹The land claimed by Jonathan Cowherd, Jr., and his brother James in 1796, was specified in the will of Jonathan Cowherd, Sr., probated February 24, 1806, giving his son Jonathan 1,166 acres, and his son James 1,000 (Madison County, Virginia, Will Book 4, pp. 175-176).

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Madison County, Virginia, Will Book 4, pp. 175-176.

Nesbitt, Robert Lee. Early Taylor County History. Campbellsville: The News-Journal, 1941.

Newton, Mrs. Edythe Cowherd. "Cowherd Genealogy," pp. 45-47, 160, 161.

(continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 9.5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 6	6 3 9 7 4 0	4 1 3 3 1 8 0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

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

Bryan Cowherd

ORGANIZATION

GM

DATE

September 1976

STREET & NUMBER

1249 Meadow Lane

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

Kentucky

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

Eldred W. Muelton

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 11/3/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

CHIEF

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

4/11/99

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

3/28/77

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Church in adjacent Green County that resemble those of the Cowherd House in their crude power; moreover, at least one mantel in Clay Hill (the Sanders-White House) north of Campbellsville in Taylor County has a somewhat similar boldness, although more elaborately detailed; see the National Register form (approved October 10, 1975). Although there are no elaborate details in the Cowherd house, there is a considerable degree of subtlety in the manipulation of a minimal vocabulary of round and square forms to permit variations between rooms. The trim becomes increasingly plain as one moves from the impressive central hall and parlor to the living quarters and upstairs bedrooms.

The front hall features not only the spiral staircase with its unique, almost absurdly stylized marbelized risers and baseboards, but also tall portals with rudimentary cornices above (see the rear door under the stairs shown in photo 5). The parlor on the left has still taller window frames, with entablatures up against the ceiling and slightly tapered pilasters with curved corners. The high baseboards have both convex and concave moldings; all this woodwork may also originally have been marbelized, and has a strikingly architectonic affect.

The right front chamber has the boldest treatment with large square raised cornerblocks around the window and door frames, and particularly on the huge cupboard. Beneath the corner blocks are rather narrow flat tapered pilasters set on rectangular bases. The panels under the windows are also flanked by blocks. The frames in the dining-room behind the right parlor have a pedimental effect, with a shallow triangle between flush corner blocks.

The upstairs bedrooms are reached by means of the spiral staircase whose marbelized baseboards extend around the upper landing with its almost circular wall, and also by means of a modest back stairs from the dining-room. The woodwork upstairs is plainer, but there is still variation among the mantels and trim. The cupboards beside the fireplaces are again huge, with frames about a foot wide.

It seems probable that the present kitchen ell is all that remains of an earlier house, although there is no tell-tale evidence. The brick seems slightly thicker and less

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smooth-surfaced, and the joint with the east wall is not flush. Thus it seems likely that the main block only was either enlarged or built new on its fine stone foundations in the mid-19th-century. Unfortunately, the wide doors at either end of the enclosed "dogtrot" between the main block and the old kitchen have recently been narrowed and the original frames removed; from older photographs, however, it appears that they were as plain as those on the main block and the kitchen. The plank floor of the old kitchen at the north end of the ell has been removed because of termites, but the wide brick fireplace with its segmental opening remains.

Although there are no firm dates for comparable construction in the area, it seems possible that the main block was constructed shortly after the death of Jonathan Cowherd, Jr., in 1844, especially as the property did not leave the family until 1860 on the brink of the Civil War.

Although the outbuildings near the house were removed in the 20th century, an ample log-structure barn is some distance to the northwest of the house.

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An additional grant was awarded Jonathan Cowherd, Jr., for his participation in the American Revolution. He enlisted for a twelve-month tour of duty during the summer of 1775, serving as private in Captain Abraham Buford's Company, Colonel Stephen's Virginia Regiment, which marched to Williamsburg to defend the seaboard and was in the Battle of Great Bridge near Norfolk, Virginia. He again entered the service June 13, 1781, and served as Lieutenant in Captain Elijah Kirtley's Company under the command of Major Robert Powell's Virginia Troops, and was discharged December 15, 1781. He married Elizabeth Henry Kirtley in Culpeper County, Virginia, in April 1777. (The Buford, Kirtley, and Cowherd families of Virginia had by this time intermarried, and continued to do so once various branches had settled in the Bluegrass region of Kentucky.)

Cowherd was evidently active in the affairs of his community, serving on the county courthouse building committee. (Built by Thomas Metcalfe, the Green County Courthouse is one of the oldest, most architecturally significant courthouses in Kentucky. It was placed on the National Register April 10, 1972.) He was also one of the last three judges on the bench of the Green Quarter Session Court.

It is not absolutely certain that Cowherd built Beechwood. It is known that he was insane for several years prior to his death at the age of eighty-nine in 1844. A Green County Court record shows that on June 10, 1831, the Court appointed John Barrett to take charge of his estate (Newton, p. 45). There is the possibility that the house was built by his children Drucilla (1796-1865) and his son Colby (1805-?) who inherited the property from their mother. Drucilla and her brother never married (Newton, p. 47). The estate passed out of the family in 1860, when the property was sold to Charles Patterson, Jr., for the sum of \$13,500. Charles Patterson's wife was the daughter of General James Allen, the first lawyer admitted to the Greensburg bar and the county's first county court clerk. The property has since changed ownership several times and was purchased in 1964 by the Dennis Corbins.

The house has special interest as one of the more impressive examples of vernacular Greek Revival architecture in the State. The interior wood trim, such as the high baseboards, the cornices, the treatment of window and door frames, the mantels, all portray variations of a rudimentary Greek Revival style no longer commonly encountered in early 19th century historic structures in Kentucky.

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Orange County, Virginia, Deed Book 13, p. 404; Deed Book 15, p. 244.

Perrin, W. H., J. H. Battle, and G. C. Kniffin. Kentucky, A History of the State.
Louisville: F. A. Battey & Co., 1887, pp. 729-730.