

STATE: **Kentucky**  
 COUNTY: **Scott**  
 FOR NPS USE ONLY  
 ENTRY DATE: **DEC 2 1974**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Payne-Desha House**  
 AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Governor Joseph Desha House; Robert Payne House**

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Kelly Avenue**  
 CITY OR TOWN:  
**Georgetown** CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
**6th**  
 STATE: **Kentucky** CODE: **21** COUNTY: **Scott** CODE: **209**

**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"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**James R. Hamilton**  
 STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Hamilton Oil Company, Paris Pike**  
 CITY OR TOWN:  
**Georgetown** STATE: **Kentucky** CODE: **021**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Scott County Courthouse**  
 STREET AND NUMBER:  
**East Main Street**  
 CITY OR TOWN:  
**Georgetown** 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

PH 1001360

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NATIONAL REGISTER

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input 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	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Payne-Desha House was constructed c. 1815 with the east side overlooking the Royal Spring Branch and much of Georgetown. It is of Federal style, five-bay in width with an upper story and three dormer windows within the hipped roof. The exterior was originally unadorned field stone, later stuccoed. The shuttered windows set off a recessed entrance, in front of which is a jigsaw portico, another later addition. The side porch is identical in design to that of the front except for the railing.

The house has twelve rooms, wide-plank ash floors and high ceilings. The central hall is divided by an unusual arch and measures 54' by 12'. An elliptical stairway is situated at the far end. Several hand-carved mantels with sunburst design and beaded and fluted woodwork are evident. The arch, stairway and mantel are Federal and original to the house. There are three distinct basements which housed the servants.

It was during the late 19th century that the Victorian changes were made, which included elongation of the windows, installation of deep window sashes, the addition of cast-iron hood molds over the windows, brackets along the roofline and Victorian molding on the woodwork. The door facings and entranceway were also altered.

An indistinct photograph in B.O. Gaines History of Scott County seems to indicate a high gable over the porch. It is not known whether it was original to the house or dates from the Victorianization.

Other changes were initiated ten to fifteen years ago in which the upstairs interior was finished and the dormers added.

Despite the alterations, the interior remains intact and the overall character of the exterior retains its Federal proportions and original dignity.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**4. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **C. 1814**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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Built on a bluff overlooking the Royal Spring Branch is the Payne-Desha House, notable as being the last home of Governor Joseph Desha, controversial Kentucky politician and soldier. Originally granted to Captain Daniel Gano for services during the Revolutionary War the first purchaser of the land on which the structure stands was General John Payne (1764-1837), an early resident of Scott County (1786) and father of the builder of the house. Payne was a veteran of the 1791 Indian wars and, during the War of 1812, served as a brigadier general of the second brigade of the Kentucky militia. He commanded the Light Dragoons in the battle of the Thames, a decisive victory against the British and Indian forces in October, 1813. The outcome was to re-establish the American military frontier in the Northwest and to effectively extinguish the Indian menace in that region. During his later years Payne was elected state senator from 1830 to 1832.

His son Robert was also a veteran of the battle of the Thames--one of the volunteers known as "Forlorn Hope" who drew the first fire from the Indians hiding in the brush across from the swamp near the battle ground. It was Robert Payne who, c. 1814, built the house on his father's property near the Royal Spring Branch. Not long after construction was completed, however, he and his wife moved to Missouri. The twenty-acre tract was bought by Benjamin Smith in 1821 from the Bank of the United States, which had gained title from John Payne. Seven years later the house was acquired by Governor Joseph Desha.

Born in Pennsylvania in 1768, a descendant of French Huguenots, Desha moved with his family to Kentucky in 1781 and then to Tennessee the following year. In 1792 Desha married and settled in Mason County, Kentucky. From 1794-1797 he served in the Indian Wars under General Anthony Wayne and General William Henry Harrison. His war record and his amiable

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Bevins, Ann B. "Former Governor Built Georgian Home in Scott," August 18, 1964, The Lexington Leader.  
 Coleman, J. Winston, Jr. Historic Kentucky. Lexington: Henry Clay Press, 1967, p. 142.  
 Collins, Lewis. Historical Sketches of Kentucky. Published by Lewis Collins, Maysville, Ky., 1847, pp. 87-93, p. 515.  
 Johnston, J. Stoddard. "Col. Asa Payne." The Georgetown News, September 20, 1898.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	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	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		38 ° 12' 47"	84 ° 33' 47"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

UTM  
16/713330  
4232.010  
C

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **One acre**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: **Ann B. Bevins, Scott County Representative** GJM

ORGANIZATION: **Kentucky Heritage Commission** DATE: **May 12, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER: **401 Wapping Street**

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

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

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 8-16-74

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

W. A. Mortensen  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 12/2/74

ATTEST:

George F. Emery  
 Acty. Keeper of The National Register

Date Nov. 26, 1974

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Payne-Desha House

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8. Significance (continued)

personality rendered him popular with the populace and from 1799 to 1802 he represented Mason County in the Kentucky State House of Representatives and from 1802-07 in the State Senate. He was elected as a Democrat to the United States Congress in 1807 where he continued in that body until 1819. In the intervening years Desha also fought in the war of 1812 as Major General of Volunteers, serving under General William Henry Harrison in the battle of the Thames.

Desha ran for Governor in 1820 and lost, but won four years later on the "relief" issue precipitating, according to Lewis Collins, "the most embittered and violent conflict of parties, which has ever occurred in Kentucky." (Historical Sketches of Kentucky, Maysville: Lewis Collins, 1847, p.87.) Involved was a complex international monetary situation concerned with specie versus paper money in payment for debt. The debtor class demanded relief and was successful in electing a pro-relief governor and legislature in 1824. Once in office Desha attempted to provide relief on the "replevin issue" by appointing a new Court of Appeals when the existing court declared his replevin act to be unconstitutional. For a time, until 1826 when the matter was resolved in favor of the old court party, two courts of appeal sat in session.

Another controversy in which Desha was involved during his term in office was the internal improvement tax, transferring the proceeds from schools to road building. Profits from the roads, he stated, would be devoted to education. Schools were to suffer many years afterward because of his action.

Controversial to the last, Desha, in 1828 when newly elected Governor Thomas Metcalfe appeared at the Governor's mansion, refused his admittance. He announced that Metcalfe, a former stonemason who had laid the foundation of the Governor's Mansion, was a common workman and had no business in the dignified office of the Governor of Kentucky.

Desha retired from public life in 1828 to a farm near Cynthiana in Harrison County, Kentucky, which he purchased in 1829. He later sold his Harrison County estate, now known as Howk House

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Payne-Desha House

8. Significance (continued)

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and bought in April, 1841, the Robert Payne House in Georgetown and the surrounding five and one-twelfth acres. He most probably moved to the town to be nearer his son who was engaged in the practice of medicine there.

Desha did own other properties. In 1828 he purchased "The Oaks," an estate located one and one-half miles east of Cynthiana, for his son Lucius. Although the Governor never lived there, it was and still is associated with the Desha family. The Payne-Desha House, however, is more accurately identified with Governor Desha.

Desha died October 11, 1842 and was buried on a hill on his Georgetown farm, as was his wife. Within a few years the farm passed from Desha family ownership and, in the late 19th century, eventually came into the possession of Judge James Y. Kelly. It was Judge Kelly who made the more radical alterations in the house and divided parts of the property into building lots upon which residences were erected. Because of the subdivision of the land, the Legislature passed an act in 1897 ordering the remains of Governor Desha and his wife to be disinterred and reburied in the Georgetown cemetery.

This fieldstone house as well as being an interesting structure architecturally, is important because of its historic links to a noted early Kentucky family and to a political figure who was to have considerable influence during a very critical period in Kentucky's history.

