

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received APR 4 1984  
date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic McKay/Thornberry House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number South Hampton Road \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Owensboro  vicinity of

state Kentucky code county Daviess code

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mr. & Mrs. Randall Shutt

street & number Route #1, Box 343

city, town Philpot  vicinity of state Kentucky

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Daviess County Courthouse

street & number Second Street

city, town Owensboro state Kentucky

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1977  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council

city, town Frankfort state Kentucky

## 7. Description

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

The McKay-Thornberry House is located about ten miles southeast of Owensboro in rural Daviess County, Kentucky. The nearest post office is located in Philpot, a tiny crossroads community, some three or four miles south of the house. This area of the county is composed of a slightly undulating, fertile landscape, with many small creeks and springs. Although presently agricultural in nature, the area is changing, and subdivision of the farmland is becoming more popular. The house sits on a small rise, near a branch of Caney Creek, facing south.

The McKay House, a transitional Greek Revival to Italianate style structure, was constructed during the 1840s. It is a one story, double pile masonry building, with a center passage plan. The symmetrical five bay facade displays seven course common bond brick work, as do the remaining elevations. Double interior end chimneys flank the main block, and a rectangular 20th century wood frame ell projects from the rear. It is a one story addition covered in board and batten siding.

The symmetry and form of the main block follows the Greek Revival style. The main facade is a totally balanced composition. The entrance is flanked by four window openings, and this symmetry is given further emphasis by the tetra-style portico. The window openings contain 6/6 lights, and are capped by carved wood lintels. The main entrance element contains a segmented transom and sidelights and this is flanked by slender pilasters supporting a simple cornice. This element is showcased by the fabulous pedimented portico. Supported by two sets of front piers and a set of engaged piers, the portico displays a fanciful group of details at the cornice.

Sets of elaborate brackets run the length of the cornice and portico. In these elements, the Italianate influence can be detected. Each bracket is a purely decorative element which indicates the move from the strict classicism of the Greek style. Another unusual group of details are the button flowers which are positioned along the interior of the cornice overhang. These effusive little elements replace the more classic dentils, and also indicate the general movement toward the Italianate.

These tendencies are echoed on the east elevation in a smaller flat roofed portico, which shelters the side entrance. It is a miniature version of the main portico, minus the pediment and the extra set of piers. The east entrance is topped by a simple transom.

All of these delightful elements, while singly important in their design, are given more significance by their originality. Each detail is totally intact, and together they add to the unique quality of the house.

The interior woodwork imitates the Greek Revival style more than the Italianate. The window and door trim reflect the exterior entrance element with pilasters and a plain cornice. Paneled aprons sit beneath the window openings, and the sidelights in the main hall. A wainscote covers the lower wall surface in the main hall and two adjoining rooms.

(See continuation sheet)

# 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/		
<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** C. 1845-50      **Builder/Architect** John McKay

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The McKay-Thornberry House is a transitional, Greek Revival-Italianate style structure, built in the 1840s. The house is a well executed example of these stylistic trends, as interpreted in Daviess County. The elaborate details exhibited throughout are high quality, and finely crafted. The McKay House is one of a small number of mid 19th Century structures extant in Daviess County, and one of the best examples of this transitional style. Although this area of Kentucky was settled early in the 19th Century, few pre-1850 structures have survived.

Local tradition states that three McKay families came to this area of Daviess County from Virginia in the early 1800s. They established holdings near some springs, and planned to build a hotel.<sup>1</sup> John McKay owned this plot of land prior to 1835, and constructed the house during the 1840s.

The house was retained by the McKay family until 1867 when it was purchased by J. F. Head. Mr. Head was a teacher, born in Nelson County in 1841. He attended St. Mary's College, and purchased 106 acres of land in the Curdsville precinct (Southeastern Daviess County) in 1867.

In 1907, David D. Thornberry (1869-1957) purchased the house, and his name is the one most commonly connected with the site. Thornberry represented Daviess County as a state representative.

The McKay-Thornberry House is one of the finest examples of the transitional Greek Revival to Italianate in the area. The structure's symmetry and form display Greek Revival influence, but the exterior details reveal Victorian tendencies. The cornice detail is fanciful with elaborate brackets and sawtooth molding. Small decorative bell flowers serve in place of the more classic dentils.

Special mention should be made of the two intact porticos. The porticos, although formal in their form, contain the same fanciful molding as the cornice. Both elements are important to the significance of the structure, in their unaltered originality.

The interior molding is more reflective of the Greek Revival influence with wainscoting and pedimented door trim. The mantles are simple, but classic in their form.

The McKay-Thornberry House has passed through many hands through the years. It has been lovingly and carefully restored to former glory by the present owners.

<sup>1</sup>This information came from Mrs. Jane Gilbert, a descendant of one of the former owners. No documentation on a hotel has been found, but there is evidence of some springs near the house.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Maceo, KY

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	6	5	0	2	9	4	0	4	1	7	9	1	6	0
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 nominated area is less than one acre. The boundary lines are 60 feet from, and parallel to the foundations of the building.

### 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 Jayne C. Henderson, Preservation Specialist

organization Green River Area Development District date

street & number 3860 U.S. Highway 60 West telephone (502) 926-4433

city or town Owensboro 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 Mary Connor Appel

title State Historic Preservation Officer date March 30, 1984

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

date 5/3/84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



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Continuation sheet    Daviess County, Kentucky  
McKay-Thornberry House    Item number 10

Page 1

Records

Daviess County Tax Records, Courthouse, Owensboro, Kentucky.

Daviess County Census, District 1, 1850. Courthouse, Owensboro, Kentucky.

Daviess County Real Estate Transfer Books. Courthouse, Owensboro, Kentucky.

Interviews

Interview with Mrs. Elmer Gilbert, September 14, 1983.

Books

History of Daviess County, Kentucky. Unigraphic, Inc.  
4400 Jackson Ave. Evansville: 1966. Chicago: Interstate Publishing  
Co., 1883.

KENTUCKY HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY SUPPLEMENT  
BOUNDARY AND LOCATION INFORMATION

Historic Property Name McKay-Thornberry House Site # \_\_\_\_\_  
Multiple Resource/Thematic Nomination Title \_\_\_\_\_

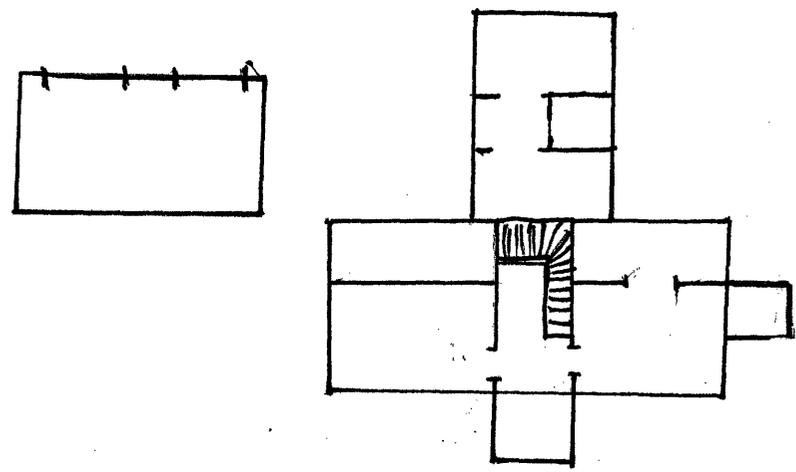
U.T.M. Coordinates - List multiple UTM's if property is ten or more acres.

A. 16 502940 4179160 D. \_\_\_\_\_  
B. \_\_\_\_\_ E. \_\_\_\_\_  
C. \_\_\_\_\_ F. \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal Boundary Description \_\_\_\_\_ Acreage less than one acre

The nominated area is less than one acre. The boundary lines are 60 feet from, and parallel to, the foundations of the building.

Sketch of Site Plan (Showing outbuildings, structures, landscape features and the site boundary as described above.)



Official Courthouse Property Reference: