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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "NA" for "not applicable". For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name SANDERS, HARLAND, CAFE

other name/site number Kentucky Fried Chicken

2. Location

street & number Jct. U S 25-W and 25-E NA  not for publication

city, town Corbin NA  vicinity

state Kentucky code KY county Laurel code 125 zip code 40741

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Non-contributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		1	0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
n/a (see note on page 8 - 7)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official David L. Morgan Date 6-27-90  
State Historic Preservation Officer, Kentucky

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Patricia Andrews 8/7/90  
 See continuation sheet..

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet..

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commercial: Restaurant

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Commercial: Restaurant

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Commercial

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foundation Concrete/Concrete blockwalls FrameWeatherboardroof Asphalt Shingle/Flat Built-upother 

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Describe present and historic physical appearance

See Continuation Sheet - Item 7

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G n/a

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Commercial  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

Historical: 1940  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1940  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

n/a  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

Sanders, Colonel Harland D.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

n/a  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See Continuation Sheet - Item 8

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See Continuation Sheet - Item 9

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 6T) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 1 acre

UTM References

A Zone: 16; Easting: 758 730; Northing: 4094 140 Corbin, KY, Quad

C

B

D

U. S. Highway 25W & 25E, Corbin, Kentucky

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots No. 1 and 2 in Block "A" of the Lewis or Dixie Court Addition to the City of Corbin, Kentucky as shown by map or plat of said Addition or Subdivision of record in Deed Book 27, Page 638, Laurel County Court Clerk's Office, said lots each fronting 25 feet on Dixie Highway.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes only the original structure and less than one acre which includes the original parking area.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Paul Cross, Director of Special Projects

organization JRN, Inc.

date April 30, 1990

street & number P.O. Box 1257, 201 W. Seventh St.

telephone 615 381-4439

city or town Columbia

state Tennessee

zip code 38402

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Harland Sanders Cafe, Laurel County, KY

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Harland Sanders Cafe is located on the west side of US Highway 25 approximately one and one-half miles north of downtown Corbin, Kentucky. Constructed in the summer of 1940, this frame cafe was once part of the Sanders Motor Court and Cafe complex; however, the motel portion of the enterprise was destroyed in the late 1960's. It was in this cafe that Colonel Harland Sanders developed and initiated the franchising of his fried chicken which made his name a household word in America.

The cafe is a simple square frame structure covered in clapboard siding. The original siding had been removed from both side walls but was intact on the front and rear of the building. New siding was milled to match the existing original for the side walls while the rear wall remains with its original material intact. Due to severe framing damage on the front of the building, the original siding had to be carefully removed so the framing could be repaired. Once the framing repairs were completed, the original siding was replaced on the front.

A high pitched gabled roof covers the front half of the building and is punctuated with three intersecting gables on the north exposure thus creating the illusion of a functional second half story. The gable ends on both the sides and the front were trimmed so as to create the appearance of half timbered construction. Of interest is the fact that the intersecting gable ends all differ in width and height and it is not known whether this difference was by design or by construction error. The gable ends underwent numerous modifications during the years including being covered with red and white sheet metal. The original finish materials survived under one end and were kept during the restoration. The other gable ends were reproduced according to architectural and photographic evidence.

Originally a small freestanding vestibule defined the front entrance but this feature was subsequently altered with the addition of a sheet metal awning. It was later destroyed in its entirety when the awning was removed. This vestibule has been reconstructed as part of the current restoration based upon surviving architectural "ghosts" and historical photographs of the original vestibule. This doghouse shaped appendage has a very high pitched roof and contains a single leaf door with a nine light sash. As originally constructed, it was centered on the front of the building but did not align with the centerpoint of the middle intersecting gable. The purpose for this lack of symmetry is not understood; however the recreated vestibule is situated directly on the "footprint" of the original one. This vestibule envelopes the original front door opening. The original front door had been removed during the 1960's and a new door matching its configuration with a panelled bottom and a nine-light sash in the top has been installed.

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Harland Sanders was also involved in the oil business as a purveyor of Pure Oil products and as such the cafe originally had a distinctive blue asphalt shingle roof characteristic of that company's colors. The original roof had been removed, and a new blue asphalt shingle roof has been applied using shingles as near the original color as is manufactured today.

The extent of the front dining room is defined on the front by three original eighteen-light fixed-sash windows two of which are on the left side of the front door. Six of these panes were engraved "Harland Sanders." None of these engraved panes survived intact. However, two partial and broken panes provide evidence to reproduce six identical panes which have been installed. Another doorway to the right of the front entrance defines the location of the cafe manager's office which has its original twelve-light fixed-sash window in the front wall. An identical window was originally located on the north side wall but had been removed to accommodate a new entrance into the dining room. The existing window on the north wall was put in during the restoration and was sized and located according to existing architectural evidence. The original framed doorway into the managers office was intact but the original door had been removed. The existing door in this space matches the front entrance door and its configuration is based on historical photographs. One door located to the right of the north office window marks the location of an outside entrance to a restroom which is no longer extant. Architectural and photographic evidence revealed the location and configuration of this door which had been removed during the 1970's. As part of the restoration, a new door was installed. The only other fenestration in the front portion of the building is a six-over-six-light double-hung window located in the north gable end at the attic level. This window opening had been closed up; however the original sash survived in the attic area. The sash was restored and put back in the surviving original frame.

The rear portion of the cafe building is one story high covered by a flat roof, and basically contained the kitchen and rear dining room. The only window into this space from the north side was into the kitchen and consisted of an elongated window with three six-light sash. This window had been removed but the location of it was defined by its original framing. Configuration of the sash was determined by an historical photograph. There were originally no windows along the rear wall, and there is no surviving evidence revealing windows on the south wall.

To the rear of the frame portion of the cafe is a small masonry structure of terra cotta tile bricks. This was originally freestanding and served as the pump house which supplied spring water to both the motel and cafe. Originally there was a

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small alley between this structure and the cafe, but this area was covered over, thus joining the two structures. Since Harland Sanders made this alteration, it is being left intact. All evidence of the original pumping operation is now gone and this space had been used for offices and storage. South of the pump house and attached to it are the remains of the original septic tank with its above ground cleanouts.

The interior of the cafe consisted of a kitchen, an office, two large dining rooms, two restrooms and a model motor court room. Wormy chestnut panelling was used on the walls of both dining rooms and the office and was also used as the ceiling material in the rear dining room. Most of the panelling(90%) survived intact with the exception of that on partition walls which had been removed as well as the ceiling in the rear dining room. New panelling milled to match the original replaced the chestnut which had been removed.

A Celotex ceiling was employed in the front dining room, office and model motel room. Despite its low tolerance for wear, Celotex was also the material of choice for finishing the walls of the motel and thus for the model motel room. The original ceiling survived in the front dining room under two subsequent applications of similar material. Despite its deteriorated condition, the original ceiling was retained and repaired. Where whole tiles were missing, new tiles were cut from Celotex material and molded to match the original material. (Note: Celotex no longer makes tiles in this configuration.) All of the original wall and ceiling material had been removed from the model motel room space, and new tiles were handmade to match the original ones for this space.

Walls and ceilings in the kitchen were finished with painted plywood. Only a few pieces of the original ceiling remained in place under three replacement ceilings; however, it had all delaminated due to water damage. The kitchen was remodeled in the 1970's and only one small piece of the wall material survives. New finish plywood to match the surviving examples of the original was installed in order to recreate the finish in the original kitchen.

Nine-inch square white asbestos tiles were used as finishing flooring in the kitchen, and identical size and color tiles have been installed to replace the originals which had been removed. The office and front dining room were floored with a marbleized battleship linoleum which had been overflowed seven times. A sample of the original floor was saved and a similar floor has been installed. The rear dining room retains its original pegged random width ash floor which has been cleaned and preserved. The model motel room had carpet on its floor but all of it was removed when that space was converted to restrooms in the 1960's. An appropriate carpet has been selected for this space based on an historical photograph.

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The model motor court room is a most interesting interior feature. Its front wall was built to replicate the front of a motor court room and had a window, door, window flower box and was topped with an imitation blue shingled roof. In the 1960's the space was converted to restrooms and subsequently the window was replaced with a mirror. This model motel room also had a non-functional restroom, and the designated closet space was utilized as a phone booth for cafe patrons. Though the interior had been gutted, all of the original wall framing was left intact.

Appended to the rear of the model motel room was the original ladies' restroom. The location of these facilities was a marketing strategy to assure that women patrons of the restaurant would be exposed to the amenities of the Sanders Motor Court rooms. The original restroom was removed in the 1960's in order to expand the rear dining room. The existing reconstruction of this space is based on surviving architectural evidence in the floors, walls, and ceiling.

Both the interior and exterior of the structure have been carefully analyzed, recorded and restored. Surviving architectural evidence along with historical photographs provided the basis for restoration decisions. Interviews were also conducted to help assure accuracy in restoration decisions and to help verify the evidence found elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> A professional paint analysis consultant was retained to determine the paint colors and textures originally employed on the building. Every effort was made to preserve existing original fabric and where replication was necessary, original materials were matched in color, size, and texture.

Most of the original fabric of the building has survived intact despite changes made to update the cafe through the years after Harland Sanders sold it. The partition walls for the office and men's restroom had been removed, and one interior wall for the kitchen had been moved to expand the kitchen area. Two partition walls for the original ladies room had been removed to enlarge the dining area, and the model motel room was partially modified by dividing it into two restrooms. Using surviving architectural evidence, all missing walls have been reconstructed in their original locations. Significant structural repair was required to the building's exterior framing due to damage resulting from poor site drainage. Every effort was made to retain original framing material and where possible it was shored or added to as opposed to being removed. Approximately 85% of the original framing remains in place.

As this resource stands today it retains at least 80% of its original fabric. Changes that were made by the original owner which survived to the initiation of the

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<sup>1</sup>Interviews were conducted with Colonel Sanders' widow, his two daughters, the first restaurant manager of the Harland Sanders Cafe, and several other former employees.



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restoration effort were retained. Where original materials could not be salvaged due to their condition or due to health considerations (i.e. asbestos), examples of each were saved as part of the project record. All work was carefully recorded with photographs and video done on a daily basis. The structure survives today with its integrity and most of its original fabric intact.

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See page 8 - 7 for explanation of relation between Harland Sanders Cafe and Corbin M.R.A.

The Harland Sanders Cafe in Corbin, Kentucky is nationally significant in the history of American commerce. It is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A as the birthplace of not only the fast food chicken restaurant industry, but the fast food restaurant industry as well. The Harland Sanders Cafe is also nominated under Criterion B because it was the restaurant in which Colonel Harland D. Sanders developed Kentucky Fried Chicken the product and began Kentucky Fried Chicken the commercial enterprise.

The Harland Sanders Cafe was operated by Colonel Sanders from 1940-1956. When the restaurant opened in 1940, the elements which would result in the worldwide growth of Kentucky Fried Chicken as a fast-food chain were all in place: Colonel Harland D. Sanders, his special fried chicken recipe, and a new and much faster cooking technology which he was utilizing to fry his chicken. The Harland Sanders Cafe is the site where Harland Sanders became "The Colonel" and learned to promote himself and his products using that image. The Harland Sanders Cafe is the site where Colonel Harland Sanders perfected his secret recipe of 11 herbs and spices for Kentucky Fried Chicken. There he first used the new technology of pressure cookers in 1940 to fry his chicken. The Harland Sanders Cafe is the oldest original site still remaining and functioning as a restaurant which relates to any of today's Quick Service Restaurant or Quick Service Chicken Restaurant concepts.<sup>1</sup> It is also the only surviving restaurant facility that was operated by Colonel Sanders.

Over the past four decades, fast-food restaurants have proliferated across the American landscape as their operators have sought to make their products more accessible to Americans by developing convenient locations. In the restaurant industry, these are known as Quick Service Restaurants [frequently abbreviated QSR]. They include such concepts as McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Taco Bell, Burger King, Hardee's, and many others. All these restaurant chains have come to share several characteristics: they provide familiar products of predictable quality, at convenient locations, and above all else, they do it quickly. In 1989 total sales in the QSR industry were \$69.5 billion.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The original McDonald's brothers restaurant which started that concept was actually forced out of business by Ray Kroc's McDonald's Corporation itself, and was by 1986 a music store. See John F. Love, McDonald's: Behind the Arches. New York, Bantam Books, 1986., p. 201.

<sup>2</sup>Source: NPD CREST data on the restaurant industry, 1989. When it is realized that all these QSR concepts began essentially after 1950, some idea of their meteoric growth as well as their significance in American commercial life may be obtained.

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Within the QSR industry there are several segments: hamburger, chicken, Mexican, pizza. The Quick Service Chicken Restaurant [QSCR] segment consists of Kentucky Fried Chicken, Church's, Popeyes, El Pollo Loco, Bojangles, Mrs. Winners, Famous Recipe, and others. QSCR sales in 1989 were \$6.1 billion, with Kentucky Fried Chicken the segment leader in sales.<sup>3</sup>

These categories are crucial to establishing the significance of the Harland Sanders Cafe. The history of fast food in America has not really been consolidated. John Love's book on McDonald's is at present without parallel among the other recognized fast food concepts. There is no question that American restaurant chains date back to 1921 with White Castle and restaurant franchising to 1935 with Howard Johnson's. But Joseph Monninger in an article in American Heritage has pointed out that these were not true Quick Service Restaurants: they did not emphasize or provide speed of service to customers. White Castle featured the technology of steam cooking hamburgers and Howard Johnson restaurants had menus built around the distribution of ice cream products. Howard Johnson developed an important tool which would be used by Harland Sanders and other fast-food franchisors, namely the sale of proprietary items to franchisees.<sup>4</sup>

The growth in number of locations of true Quick Service Restaurant chains such as Kentucky Fried Chicken and McDonald's was stimulated by several major and widely recognized social trends in American life which began in the 1950's and 1960's: the increasing mobility for Americans that the automobile created, the increasing number of families where both spouses worked, an increasing demand for convenience and speed of service that complemented Americans' busy schedules, and the penetration of television sets into American households. The fact that a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant in New York provided the same products as one in Los Angeles made possible efficient advertising on national television networks in addition to local television markets such as Louisville where a number of Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant sites might be clustered. Television, together with continued use of radio and print media, created more awareness of the advertised brand, more demand for its products, and thereby even more locations. The Colonel ceased operating his restaurant in Corbin and began franchising full-time at precisely the right time to ride the crest of these trends, as did Ray Kroc of McDonald's and other Quick Service Restaurant pioneers.

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<sup>3</sup>Source: NPD CREST data.

<sup>4</sup>See "Fast Food" by Joseph Monninger, in American Heritage, April 1988, pp. 68-75.

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Harland Sanders' fried chicken was prepared in the 1930's in his earlier restaurants in Corbin using a spice recipe for the breading that was a carefully guarded secret. However, the recipe of eleven herbs and spices later trademarked as Original Recipe™ was perfected in the Harland Sanders Cafe, as the Colonel relates in his biography.<sup>5</sup> Even fifty years later, in 1990, spices continue to be mixed by two separate companies in order to protect the Colonel's Original Recipe™, still Kentucky Fried Chicken's flagship product.

The Colonel's biography tells us that from the beginning of the Harland Sanders Cafe's operation in 1940, he was using a new technology to fry his chicken. He utilized the recently invented pressure cooker in a conscious effort to serve more customers by delivering orders more rapidly.<sup>6</sup> He also modified the pressure cooking process by the installation of specially designed pressure release valves which allowed chicken to be removed immediately after the cooking cycle. This technique enabled him to prepare chicken in 9 minutes that had formerly required 30 or more minutes of cooking time in a skillet. America's Quick Service Restaurant revolution had begun.<sup>7</sup>

By 1952 others had heard about his recipe and cooking technique and Harland Sanders had his first licensee, Pete Harman in Salt Lake City, Utah. Since the first McDonald's licensee was in 1953 and Ray Kroc did not begin franchising for McDonald's until 1954, the beginning of the franchising of American fast-food restaurant concepts can therefore be dated to the period during which Colonel Sanders operated the Harland Sanders Cafe. His fourth franchisee, Ted Cullen, was added when he

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<sup>5</sup>Sanders, Harland. Life as I have known it has been Finger Lickin' Good. Creation House, Carol Stream, Illinois, 1974, p. 90, 91. Cited hereafter as Finger Lickin' Good.

<sup>6</sup>Finger Lickin' Good, p. 97. The passage states that the Colonel learned about pressure cookers while buying the equipment for the kitchen in his new cafe during the period of rebuilding the Harland Sanders Cafe after his earlier restaurant was destroyed by a fire in 1939.

<sup>7</sup>In the late 1940's the McDonald brothers created fast walk-up service by redesigning kitchen and service areas to speed food preparation and by simplifying their menu. Harland Sanders' use of pressure frying to speed customer service predates their restaurant redesign by several years. See Monninger, op. cit., p. 74. Information on the Colonel's use of pressure release valves was provided by Ona Mae Barbati, his first restaurant manager in the Harland Sanders Cafe.

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stayed in the Sanders Motor Court in 1954 and ate the Colonel's fried chicken at the Harland Sanders Cafe.<sup>8</sup>

Corbin was therefore the parent site of not only Kentucky Fried Chicken and all Quick Service Chicken restaurants but also of the "fast-food" restaurant revolution which has so changed American eating habits. Corbin was also the launching pad for fast-food franchising. The Colonel had a number of franchisees for his product, which was already called Kentucky Fried Chicken, at the time he ceased operating the restaurant in 1956 and began to develop additional franchises full-time. His franchise package included the rights to use the name "Kentucky Fried Chicken," his Original Recipe™ spices, and his pressure frying technology. Franchisees received pressure cookers, shipments of spices,<sup>9</sup> and training in their kitchens by the Colonel himself.

The Harland Sanders Cafe in Corbin was also the birthplace of the image of "Colonel Sanders" so well known to American consumers. It was while he was still in business at this location that he capitalized on his designation as a Kentucky Colonel and created the image of the white-suited elderly southern gentleman that was so well received by the American public. By the time of his death in 1980, Colonel Sanders was "one of the most widely recognized individuals in the nation."<sup>10</sup>

Colonel Sanders came to occupy a unique niche in American commerce. Of how many individuals could it be said that they created a business enterprise and exerted as much influence upon its operations and marketing development as Colonel Sanders? He created first the product and the process, then created the distribution, and finally created the consumer demand for Kentucky Fried Chicken. After the sale of his company in 1964 and the formation of a Kentucky Fried Chicken National Advertising Cooperative, he was featured in millions of dollars worth of television advertising until his death in 1980.

In order to understand what was born at the Harland Sanders Cafe, it is necessary to see where his creation is today. The Colonel founded a commercial enterprise, Kentucky Fried Chicken, which today includes 8,000 outlets worldwide with

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<sup>8</sup>Ray Kroc signed his agreement to franchise the McDonald's concept in 1954. Colonel Sanders began to add other franchisees to Pete Harman in 1954. See Love, *op. cit.*, p. 52, and "He was an American original...He's irreplaceable." by Elinor J. Brecher, in Louisville Courier-Journal, December 17, 1980.

<sup>9</sup>When the Colonel was not satisfied with the quality of products being sold by a franchisee, he returned to the operator's restaurant, repossessed the pots and on occasion personally painted over the "Kentucky Fried Chicken" signage himself. Interview with Jeannie Litterst of KFC Public Affairs.

<sup>10</sup>"Fast Food" by Joseph Monninger, in *American Heritage*, April 1988, p. 75.

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\$5.3 billion in sales in 1989. Kentucky Fried Chicken is also the largest international restaurant system, with 3,000 units in its international division. Kentucky Fried Chicken is the fourth most memorable brand in the United States out of 672 analyzed in one recent study.<sup>11</sup> Another study of symbols and graphics in American advertising concluded that recognition of Colonel Sanders' face was "uniquely strong throughout the United States and in all major population subgroups."<sup>12</sup> Colonel Sanders' face—and the name of his home state, Kentucky—adorned in 1989 advertising with a value estimated at \$160,000,000 in the United States, and also the packaging necessary to present his products to 640,000,000 U.S. customers in that same year. The system which began at the Harland Sanders Cafe in Corbin, Kentucky in 1940 also provided jobs last year to over 150,000 KFC employees at any one time in the United States, and helped maintain an incalculable number of jobs for employees of suppliers and distributors to the food service industry.

Harland Sanders was born in Henryville, Indiana in 1890, the eldest of three children. When he was six, his father died and his mother was forced to go to work as a seamstress and in a tomato processing factory. Harland Sanders was given the responsibility of managing his two younger siblings and cooking the meals for the family. Although he worked in a variety of jobs, by the time he was 40 Harland Sanders had settled into the service station and restaurant business. In 1930, Sanders moved to Corbin, Kentucky and operated a service station on US 25, or "Dixie Highway" as it was then called. Harland Sanders served travelers between Detroit, Cincinnati, and Columbus, and Chattanooga, Atlanta, and Miami. Sanders also entered the restaurant business at his gas station. He would cook the noon and evening meals for his family, but if some hungry customers came to the station, he would sell them his home-cooked meal and cook another for his family.<sup>13</sup>

In 1931 Harland Sanders moved to a site across the road and combined a service station and a dining area. He and his food became very well known, and in 1935 the Governor of Kentucky made him an honorary Kentucky Colonel. In 1937 he was President of the Kentucky Restaurateurs Association. In 1939 his restaurant was listed in

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<sup>11</sup>1988 Survey by Landor and Associates. Quoted in Kentucky Fried Chicken's magazine, The Bucket, Volume 30, Number 2, 1988, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup>Symbols and Graphics Retention Study, Conducted by Advertising Age magazine and the Arizona State University College of Business, 1988. Only 10 of 116 graphic symbols tested achieved overall levels of recognition comparable to the Colonel's face and the KFC bucket.

<sup>13</sup>"Colonel Harland Sanders: From Corbin to the World," printed in the KFC Bucket, Volume 22, Number 1, 1980, page 4.

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Duncan Hines' Adventures in Good Eating.<sup>14</sup> That year, a disastrous fire totally destroyed his restaurant and part of his motel, which was one of Kentucky's first motel operations. On July 4, 1940, the rebuilt Harland Sanders Cafe reopened for business. Although Harland Sanders' motel no longer stands, the restaurant has survived for 50 years and is the subject of this nomination.

In the mid-1950's word came of a new highway, Interstate 75, which would divert traffic from the Colonel's busy intersection. Colonel Sanders' restaurant and motel business suffered an immediate devaluation, and in 1956 he sold his business at auction for just barely enough to pay his taxes and outstanding bills.<sup>15</sup> At that time the Colonel already had a number of franchisees. With only his social security to live on, the Colonel and his wife, Claudia, loaded their car with seasonings and an array of pressure cookers. They set out to sell more franchises for Kentucky Fried Chicken. By 1964 Colonel Sanders had more than 600 outlets selling his products. Deciding the business was more than he could handle, he sold KFC to Jack Massey and John Y. Brown. Subsequent owners have been Heublein, Inc., R.J. Reynolds, and Pepsico. Today there are 754 Kentucky Fried Chicken franchisees in the United States.

By 1964 Colonel Sanders could have rested on his considerable achievements and his financial settlement from the sale quite comfortably. However, the years from 1964 until his death in 1980 were among the busiest in his life. People in Corbin who knew the Colonel during the early years still talk about his support for local charities. In these last years, living up to his motto, "a man will rust out quicker than he will wear out," the Colonel became a goodwill ambassador as well as a commercial spokesman for Kentucky Fried Chicken around the globe. He worked tirelessly for a number of charities and children's hospitals. He helped construct a geriatric wing for Jewish Hospital in Louisville. Canadian franchise fees were put into a trust fund for orphans. His favorite cause, however, was the March of Dimes, for which he raised millions of dollars. At the time of his death he had won virtually every major award in the restaurant industry, and other important awards such as the prestigious Horatio Alger Award.

Harland Sanders Cafe serves as a landmark that pinpoints the birthplace of the Quick Service Restaurant revolution in America. It was in this structure that Sanders' concept for serving tasty food on short notice was first fully developed and franchised. It is undeniably the earliest effort at fast food franchising in

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Finger Lickin' Good, p. 88.

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Section number   8   Page   7   Harland Sanders Cafe, Laurel County, KY

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America. It is the only commercial site built and operated by this great American entrepreneur who achieved worldwide recognition for a product and an image he developed and marketed. Finally, it is the oldest original restaurant property surviving in its original configuration associated with the origins of the fast food industry in America.

The Sanders Cafe does not represent the historical contexts developed within the Corbin M.R.A. While the Cafe has a Corbin mailing address, it is located outside of the Corbin city limits, that area embraced by the M.R.A. (listed 3/28/86). The M.R.A. cover form identifies architecture, education, and commerce from 1902-1928 as significant themes. This nomination identifies a later period of commercial development (1940) and a different geographical level (Nation) as the framework of evaluation.



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Harland Sanders Cafe, Laurel County, KY

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of Kentucky Fried Chicken Corporation Marketing Research Department.  
Brecher, Elinor J. "He was an American original...He's irreplaceable."  
Louisville Courier-Journal, December 17, 1980.  
"Colonel Harland Sanders: From Corbin to the World," KFC Bucket,  
Volume 22, Number 1, 1980.  
CREST data on the restaurant industry, 1989. Research subscribed to by  
Kentucky Fried Chicken Corporation, Louisville, Kentucky.  
Lantor and Associates. Survey of Brand Recognition in America. 1988.  
Quoted in Kentucky Fried Chicken's magazine, The Bucket,  
Volume 30, Number 2, 1988.  
Love, John F. McDonald's: Behind the Arches. New York,  
Bantam Books, 1986.  
Monninger, Joseph. "Fast Food." American Heritage, April 1988,  
pp. 68-75.  
Sanders, Harland. Life as I have known it has been Finger Lickin' Good.  
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PHOTOS

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

Harland Sanders Cafe, Laurel County, KY

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Photo #1

Name: Harland Sanders Cafe  
Photographer: Sheila Onkst  
Date: April 16, 1990  
Negatives: JRN, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1257  
Columbia, TN 38402  
Photo of facade and South Elevation  
with camera facing Northwest.

Photo #3

Name: Harland Sanders Cafe  
Photographer: Sheila Onkst  
Date: April 16, 1990  
Negatives: JRN, Inc.  
P. O. Box 1257  
Columbia, TN 38402  
Interior photo showing the front  
of the Model Motel Room. Camera  
facing Southwest.

Photo #2

Name: Harland Sanders Cafe  
Photographer: Sheila Onkst  
Date: April 16, 1990  
Negatives: JRN, Inc.  
P. O. Box 1257  
Columbia, TN 38402  
Photo of the interior of the Front  
Dining Room showing opening into the  
office and kitchen. Camera facing  
North--Northwest.

Photo #4

Name: Harland Sanders Cafe  
Photographer: Sheila Onkst  
Date: April 16, 1990  
Negatives: JRN, Inc.  
P. O. Box 1257  
Columbia, TN 38402  
Interior view of the Rear Dining  
Room. Camera facing West.

**United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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Name:	Sanders, Harland, Cafe
Photographer:	Bill Cheatham
Date:	May 15, 1990
Negatives:	JRN, Inc. Post Office Box 1257 Columbia, Tennessee 38402
View:	Photo of Facade