

PH0353876

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 17 1976
DATE ENTERED	OCT 14 1976

**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



Fairlawn (Greentree) (Thomas Hughes House)

AND/OR COMMON

Greentree Farm

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Paris Pike (U.S. 68), 6 miles northeast of Lexington

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

6

VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

CODE

021

COUNTY

Fayette

CODE

067

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

John Hay Whitney; Mrs. Charles Shipman Payson (deceased)

STREET & NUMBER

Greentree Farm, Paris Pike

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Fayette County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

West Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

STATE

Kentucky

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historical Survey and Plan for Lexington and Fayette County, Kentucky

DATE

1970

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

City-County Planning Commission, 227 North Upper Street

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

STATE

Kentucky

(continued)

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Greentree is located on a slight rise on the (south) east side of the Paris Pike, a particularly scenic road characterized by stone fences, majestic trees, rolling green fields, handsome barns, and stately houses that shelter the owners of some of the greatest horse operations in the world. The house faces (north) west toward the road in superbly landscaped and maintained grounds.

Records show that the land on which Greentree stands was owned as far back as 1816 by Edward C. Payne, and that the land or farm was known as "Elkton," although no records have been found that indicate that a building stood on the site at that early a date. On close examination of the present house, however, the north wing shows signs that it could have been the remains of an earlier structure (photo 3). This wing has a basement; the principal mass of the 1850s house does not. The brick in this wing is softer, appearing to be of an earlier date, and the addition of an asymmetrical side wing such as this was not the normal practice in Greek Revival-style architecture in the Bluegrass. Also, the stone springhouse northeast of the house shows some architectural evidence of being pre-1850 construction (photo 11).

The main portion of the present house, built in the 1850s for Thomas Hughes, was then known as "Fairlawn." The house has been attributed to architect-builder John McMurtry.<sup>1</sup> Though the name has changed, much remains the same as when Hughes originally built it approximately 125 years ago. This 2½-story Greek Revival edifice has a colossal-order portico supported by four Corinthian columns with castiron capitals (photos 1-2). The brick work of the cubic mass is of common bond with each eighth course laid in Flemish bond. On the facade and two sides are brick pilasters whose capitals, according to Clay Lancaster, "are simple enough not to compete with the columns of the portico."<sup>2</sup> Those at the ends of the front are paired, reinforcing the closer spacing of the outer pairs of columns of the portico. The pilasters on the sides are regularly spaced. The two lower floor front windows are triple-sash, while the windows on the second floor are the same height but are single-sash. All the windows of the main block of the house have original plain stone sills and lintels. The heavy entablature that encircles the house features dentils consisting of individual wooden blocks, and this design is carried over to the porch pediment. There is a large recessed four-square front doorway typical of the Greek style. The classical apparatus is supported on a fine ashlar-faced stone foundation and projecting watertable.

The north wing, which may be the remains of an earlier structure, has the addition of a type of sun room, exposed on three sides, these sides having Georgian-style windows (photos 3-4). This addition was made after the Whitneys purchased the house in 1926. The other major change made by the Whitneys has been in the rear wing. Besides a one-story addition placed

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<sup>1</sup> Clay Lancaster, Back Streets and Pine Trees, pp. 47-48.

<sup>2</sup> Clay Lancaster, Antebellum Houses of the Bluegrass, p. 141.

(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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input 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 1850s

BUILDER/ARCHITECT John McMurtry

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Greentree is one of the most noted and characteristic horse farms of the Bluegrass region in central Kentucky. It is located six miles northeast of Lexington on the famed and historic Paris Pike (U.S. 68) that descends from the Ohio River at Maysville into the heart of Kentucky and then proceeds southward into Tennessee. Often considered the major axis of the horse industry in America, the Paris Pike between Lexington and the town of Paris in Bourbon County to the north has no more prominent nor handsome estate than Greentree, centerpiece of the Whitney family farms. The relation between the handsome Greek Revival house and its outbuildings, between the superbly landscaped residential grounds and the functional agricultural setting around them, is nowhere surpassed.

The main house and at least one outbuilding were built in the 1850s by Thomas Hughes, who called the place Fairlawn. They have been remarkably well preserved (only the brick of the portico pilasters, for instance, having been painted), in spite of slight and barely detectable alterations made by the Whitneys after they acquired the property in 1926 and renamed it Greentree.

The main residence itself is typical of the white-columned Greek Revival country house in the Bluegrass yet has considerable distinction in execution. Architect-builder John McMurtry (1812-1890), to whom the design is attributed by Clay Lancaster on convincing stylistic grounds, erected numerous such dwellings around Lexington, many of them very similar except for slight variations in each. At Greentree the Corinthian columns of the colossal portico, dentilated entablature, paired end pilasters in the facade, triple "Davisean" windows on the first floor, all represent choices among a series of variables at McMurtry's disposal. Yet this is one of the most consistently Grecian designs attributed to McMurtry -- bold yet chiselled in outline, lacking the Italianate or Gothic (except, oddly, in the plaster rosette over the graceful three-story spiral staircase) features that often mar the purity of the provincial builder's concept of the neoclassic style. Of particular interest in the interior is the undivided parlor, whose uninterrupted span is made possible by an unusual king-post truss in the attic two stories above.

Many of the owners of Fairlawn/Greentree (sometimes also called "Elkton") have been both colorful individuals and leaders in the horse industry, not only locally, but in the international field as well. The Whitneys, who have owned the property for fifty years,

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Fairlawn/Greentree (Thomas Hughes House)

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Title: Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky (Supplement)  
Date: October 1975 Local  
Depository for Survey Records: Kentucky Heritage Commission  
Frankfort, Kentucky

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at the back of this rear wing and a new side entrance, the roof of the original two-story rear wing has been raised (photo 5). Interior inspection shows that the roof rafters are relatively new, and there are visual indications of an original lower roof under the present high roof of the rear wing. This was probably done to create better circulation and make the back wing more comfortable in warm weather. (The roof structure of the fairly high hipped roof of the main block includes an interesting king-post truss over the double parlors on the south side of the house.)

The interior of the original main house is, states Clay Lancaster, "severely formal." There is a wide center hall, and, "at the end of this hall, a graceful stairway of walnut winds upwards to the attic"<sup>3</sup> (photo 6). As one looks up through this dramatic, cantilevered, spiral staircase, one can see a plaster rosette centerpiece with, oddly, a somewhat Gothic character, on the ceiling of the third floor (photo 7). From this rosette hangs the chain to support the hall and stairway light. The cornice and ceiling of the long hall are decorated in an elaborate but standard leaf-style plasterwork with recessed panels framed by egg-and-dart molding; this motif is carried over into the double parlors.

The double parlors are on the right side of the hall (photo 9). There is no dividing wall in this majestic room whose ceiling support is carried by the large wooden truss in the attic. The double fireplaces have shallow round-arched marble mantels which appear to have been installed at a slightly later date. The woodwork is of the heavy Greek Revival style, and the door frames throughout the main block of the house are extremely effective with heavy cornices befitting the mass created by room sizes and ceiling heights. The left side of the center hall houses the original sitting and dining rooms. These rooms find the same uses today. The older north wing houses an additional dining room. The back wing has a large modern kitchen, servants' rooms, and on the second floor overflow guest rooms. Upstairs in the main block are high ceilings similar to those below, random-width floorboards, simple Grecian mantels, and built-in closets with 2-panel doors.

There are three outbuildings on the immediate grounds. The two-story stone spring-house with its pegged window frames appears to predate 1850 (photo 11). A two-story, four-room brick building with center chimney is close by and could well have been built at the time of the main house (photo 12). It was obviously used to house servants or farm workers. On the south lawn of Greentree is a one-story brick cottage built in the 1850s; its central gable and dentillated cornice echo those of the main house to which it is set perpendicularly (photo 13). For many years, this building was used as the farm office, but now is a guest house.

<sup>1</sup>Clay Lancaster, Ante Bellum Houses of the Bluegrass, p. 141.

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have made contributions in many areas of endeavor -- financial, political, diplomatic, athletic, cinematic, philanthropic -- but it is their prominent role in the distinctive agricultural-commercial-cultural-social world associated with the Bluegrass that specifically concerns their lifestyle and holdings at Greentree Farm.

The land on which Greentree is located was owned in 1816 by Edward C. Payne. Tradition has it that the Payne family acquired the original tract as a grant from the King of England in reward for military service in the French and Indian War. In 1834 Thomas Hughes purchased the land from Payne. When Hughes died in 1862, the house and land passed into the hands of his wife, Sarah, and subsequently to their daughter, S.C., who was married to J.B. McCreary, a former governor of Kentucky. In 1874 the McCrearys sold the property to S.C.'s brother, William T. Hughes, who was at one time "one of the most substantial farmers in Fayette County."<sup>1</sup> Hughes, however, was in financial distress and subsequently sold the property to John W. George that same year to satisfy his debtors. Hughes met with an untimely end when one of his debtors, his uncle, unaware of Hughes' arrangements to pay his debts, shot him one morning as he was driving to his new home in Danville. Hughes' uncle then shot himself when he learned of his nephew's arrangements.

The next owner, John W. George, is said to have been a gambler and a stockbroker who spent most of his time in New York. Perrin's History of Fayette County, Kentucky lists a Joseph George, possibly John's father, as "living 7 miles from the city on the Maysville Pike on a farm of 276 acres of fine land called 'Elkton.'"<sup>2</sup>

In 1896 Greentree's long association with horses began. John T. Hughes, a well-known horseman, purchased the property for \$27,500.<sup>3</sup> According to Perrin, Hughes developed a passion for raising fine horses early in life. He "turned his attention to breeding and training blooded coach and harness horses... and was acknowledged to be the largest dealer of matched horses in Fayette County."<sup>4</sup> The world famous show horse, Rex McDonald, was raised and trained at Elkton Stock Farm.

<sup>1</sup> Lexington Morning Herald, September 29, 1901, p. 11, col. 3.

<sup>2</sup> William Henry Perrin, History of Fayette County, Kentucky, p. 784.

<sup>3</sup> Deed Book 109, p. 364.

<sup>4</sup> William Henry Perrin, History of Fayette County, Kentucky, p. 364.

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John T. Hughes, an aged and wealthy bachelor, died in 1924, leaving a large part of his estate valued at half a million dollars to three Negro servants, among whom were Ellen Davis, his black mistress, and Robert Henry Hughes, their son. Hughes' will reads: "I devise and bequeath to Ellen Davis, my faithful servant, my home farm on the Maysville Pike...the contents of the house on said place, the farming utensils and wagons..., such work stock as she may need and a black saddle mare, named Red Belle H." <sup>5</sup> Hughes also willed Ellen Davis \$500 for a tombstone to be erected in the black cemetery on Seventh Street. Hughes' will made front page news in the Lexington Herald on August 19, 1924, when distant cousins filed suit. The cousins lost the contest, however, when the will was unanimously upheld in May 1925 by a Fayette County jury.

In February 1926 Ellen Davis sold the property to Payne Whitney. The Whitney family's association with the horse industry began with Payne's father, W.C. Whitney, a financial genius who was also Democratic national party boss in the late 1800s, Secretary of the Navy under President Cleveland, a polo player par excellence who helped establish the reputation of American polo, organizer of the Saratoga Association for the Improvement of the Breed of Horses, initiator in American racing of the unique policy of racing for racing's sake, and author of The Whitney Stud. W.C. Whitney was associated in Kentucky with LaBelle Stud on the Old Frankfort Pike where he had "over \$300,000 worth of thoroughbreds, among them the best stallions and broodmares in the world."<sup>6</sup>

Payne's brother, Harry Payne Whitney, also amassed an impressive reputation: as a horseman his horses have won Kentucky Derbys, Preaknesses, Belmonts, Latonia Derbys, Futurities, and so forth, as well as many races abroad. Harry Payne's son, C.V. Whitney, currently operates a horse farm on Bryan Station adjoining Greentree.

After Payne Whitney's death not long after purchasing Greentree, his wife developed an interest in racing. She became known as the "the first lady of the American turf," and in 1938 she was the first woman to be made guest of honor at central Kentucky's annual Thoroughbred dinner. Two of her horses, racing under Greentree's colors of pink and black, won the Kentucky Derby -- Twenty Grand in 1931 and Shut Out in 1942.

<sup>5</sup> Will Book 13, p. 364.

<sup>6</sup> Lexington Morning Herald, February 3, 1904, p. 1, col. 5.

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As the former Helen Hay, daughter of John Hay, the distinguished ambassador to the Court of St. James and Secretary of State under President McKinley, Mrs. Whitney grew up with certain advantages. As a child she lived in Washington and played cribbage with Mrs. McKinley, the President's wife; while living abroad she was presented at Court in both London and Rome. Her grandfather was Dr. Charles Hay, an eminent physician who had been graduated from Transylvania University in Lexington. Mrs. Whitney's two children, John Hay Whitney and the late Joan Whitney (Mrs. Charles Shipman Payson) inherited Greentree. In keeping with family tradition, John Hay Whitney and Mrs. Payson have established notable reputations; both are listed in the 38th edition of Who's Who In America. Besides Mrs. Payson's participation in civic affairs (past president of United Hospital Fund, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City Lighthouse, St. Mary's Hospital in Palm Beach), she was president of the New York Metropolitan Baseball Club.

In 1956, John Hay Whitney was appointed ambassador to the Court of St. James by President Eisenhower. While in England, he acquired control of The New York Herald Tribune through Whitney Communications Corporation of which he became chairman of the board. He was also chairman of the board of Selznick International Pictures when that company produced "Gone With The Wind" and "Rebecca," both Academy Award winners. One of his philanthropic ventures is the \$10,000,000 John Hay Whitney Foundation established in 1949 to provide educational scholarships.

John Hay Whitney is also a leader in the nation's thoroughbred industry. In 1963 he was guest of honor at the Thoroughbred Club of America's annual dinner in Lexington, Kentucky. Tom Fool, "The Horse of the Year" in 1953, and Capot, in 1949 came from his Greentree stable. And Greentree continues to bring fame to the Bluegrass region. Foolish Pleasure, the 1975 Kentucky Derby winner, will be sent there to stud.

Thus, over the last half-century, the Whitney family and their horses have maintained at Greentree a tradition that goes back to before the turn of the century and epitomizes a tradition that extends in the area almost two centuries. The house Thomas Hughes built shortly before the Civil War remains not only a symbolical, but also a functional focal point of the thoroughbred horse industry in America.

Greentree is undoubtedly one of the great showplaces of the Bluegrass. The house and grounds are maintained in impeccable fashion. From the roof, one can see one of America's great vistas--rock walls, ancient trees, the finest thoroughbred horses, purebred cattle, and other quintessential elements of country life on a Bluegrass horse farm.

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Lancaster, Clay. Back Streets and Pine Trees. Lexington: Burr Press, 1956, pp. 47-48.

The Lexington Herald, May 28, 1925, p. 1; October 27, 1930, p. 1; January 3, 1943, p. 22;  
September 8, 1963, p. 23; October 18, 1963, p. 1.

The Lexington Morning Herald, February 3, 1904, p. 1, col. 5; September 29, 1901, p. 1,  
col. 3.

The Lexington Leader, May 3, 1974, p. 33.

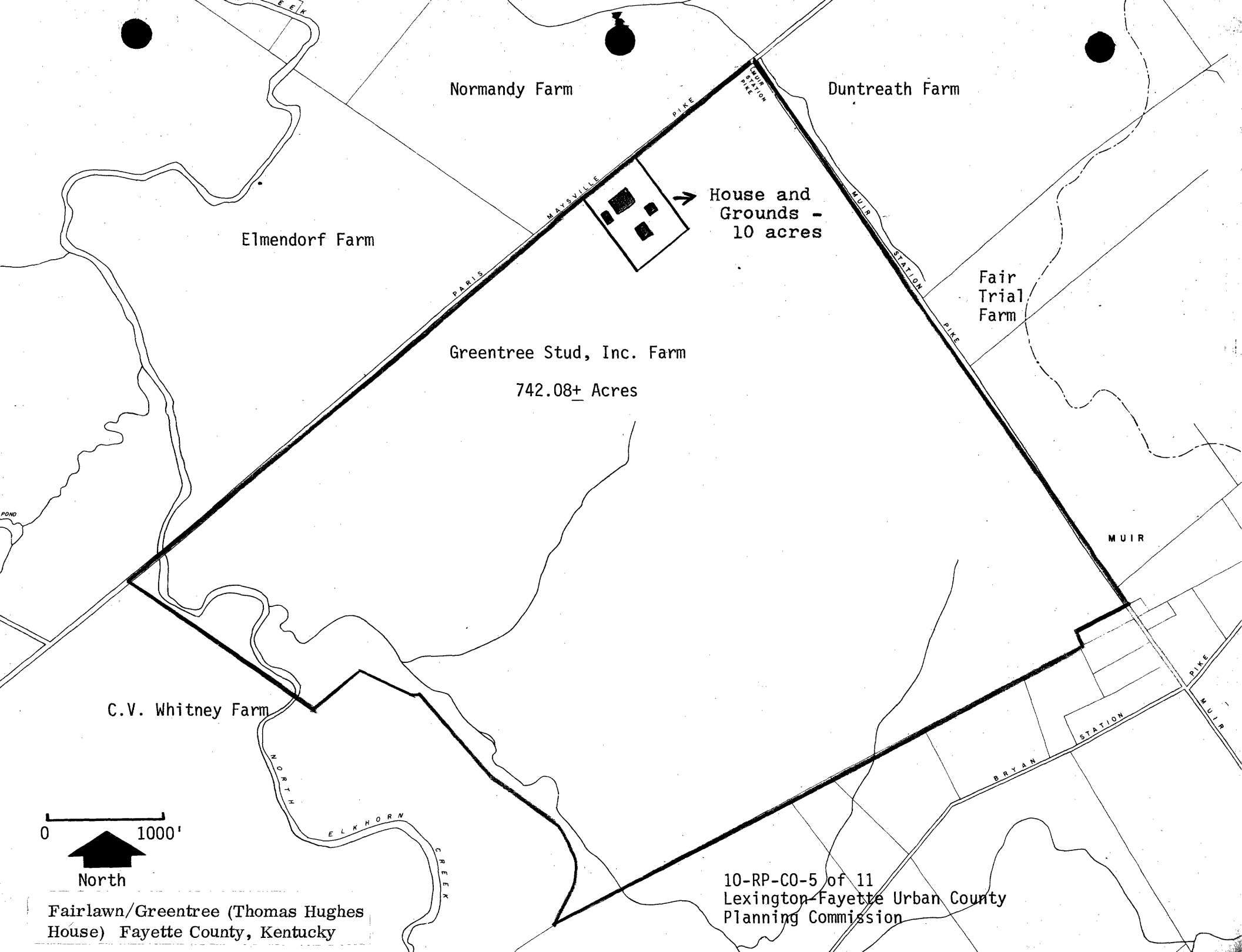
Newcomb, Rexford. Architecture in Old Kentucky. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1953.

Perrin, William Henry, editor. History of Fayette County, Kentucky. Chicago: O.L. Baskin  
and Co., 1882, pp. 364, 784.

Thomas, Elizabeth Patterson. Old Kentucky Houses and Gardens. Louisville: The Standard  
Printing Co., 1939.

Will Book 13. Fayette County Courthouse, Lexington. p. 364.





Normandy Farm

Duntreath Farm

Elmendorf Farm

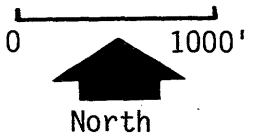
Fair Trial Farm

Greentree Stud, Inc. Farm

742.08+ Acres

House and Grounds - 10 acres

C.V. Whitney Farm



Fairlawn/Greentree (Thomas Hughes House) Fayette County, Kentucky

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Lexington-Fayette Urban County  
Planning Commission