

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED  
MAY 28 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  
\* \* General William O. Butler House  
AND/OR COMMON  
Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
Highland Avenue  
CITY, TOWN  
Carrollton  
STATE  
Kentucky  
VICINITY OF  
04  
COUNTY  
Carroll  
CODE  
021  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
04  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CODE  
041

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
Miss Mary Masterson  
STREET & NUMBER  
Highland Avenue  
CITY, TOWN  
Carrollton  
VICINITY OF  
Kentucky  
STATE  
Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Carroll County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER  
CITY, TOWN  
Carrollton  
STATE  
Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky (Supplement)  
DATE  
1972  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
Kentucky Heritage Commission  
CITY, TOWN  
Frankfort  
STATE  
Kentucky  
FEDERAL  
STATE  
COUNTY  
LOCAL

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT                       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD                                 RUINS  
 FAIR                                  UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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

General Butler located his house on a low knoll at the eastern outskirts of Carrollton, still at that time known as Port William. The date of c. 1819 has been given for the house; or it perhaps was built shortly after his marriage in 1817. The siting of the house would allow views northward across the nearby Ohio River toward Indiana, as well as westward toward the town, which lies at the junction of the Ohio & Ky. Rivers. Apparently, however Butler preferred to ignore the river view (in spite of his poignant poem concerning a boatsman's horn) and oriented the house toward the town and highroad which still passes the south entrance.

The house was originally U-shaped (perhaps with a service wing at the northeast corner, as shown on the 1883 Atlas). The two main wings extended to the north, with a courtyard between open toward the river. According to tradition this court was inspired by Spanish or French New Orleans patios, observed by Butler during his campaigns with Jackson. It certainly is an unusual feature for an early Kentucky house, although not unique.

Equally unusual is the presence of two symmetrical facades at right angles, each with its central Palladian feature, one on the west facing toward town, the other to the south facing the high road that extends along the river (now U.S. Route 42) (see photos 1 & 3).

The treatment of the entrances within the Palladian framework of an arched double door with sidelights is effective, and also somewhat unusual: in most cases the fanlight, whether semi-circular or elliptical, extends over the sidelights as well. Here there seems to be a slight incongruity of scale between the complex entrances, with their keystones, molded frames, and corner rosettes, and the ample proportions but plain frames of the flanking windows.

The south and west fronts are Flemish bond with the queen closers at the corners. The jack arches are splayed. Two blind shuttered windows at the south end of the west front have been opened to flank the original fireplace between them, but the openings do not quite coincide with the original jack arches, which still exist in the wall. The north room on the west side is slightly smaller than the southwest room so the west front is not altogether symmetrical, although it appears to be so in perspective. The fenestration of the east side has been partially altered — a single opening in the dining room widened into a double one; other changes relate to the removal of the service wing. Curiously, there are no openings facing the river view to the north, although double doors lead to the original open court from the south entrance hall, and single ones from the west hall and dining room.

In the twentieth century the southern part of the court was closed in to provide a high-ceilinged room connecting the west hall, the south hall, and dining room. A wall mostly of glass faces the north, with a scalloped window in the gable. The space between the wings of the U have been filled in with a roof that is not visible except from the north (see photo 4).

(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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES Circa 1819

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Mr. Smith

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A prominent and popular military and political figure in the State and nation throughout much of his long life, General William O. Butler (1791-1880) fought in the War of 1812 under General Andrew Jackson, as well as in the Mexican War under General Zachary Taylor. As a result of his distinguished military record, Butler had great political opportunities. Butler served in both the State legislature and in Congress. He was the Democratic candidate for Governor of Kentucky in 1844 and Democratic candidate for Vice-President of the United States in 1848. A unionist, although a slaveholder, Butler was also a Kentucky delegate to the 1861 Peace Convention in Washington. Not only was General Butler known as a military figure, politician, and lawyer, but also as a poet of some talent. Probably between 1818 and 1820 he built for himself, above the banks of the Ohio River, the fine and unusual Federal-style house being nominated, in which he lived until his death more than fifty years later.

William Orlando Butler, born in 1791 in Jessamine County, Kentucky, was the son of Percival Butler and Mildred Hawkins Butler (a sister-in-law of Colonel John Todd, killed at the Battle of the Blue Licks in 1782). Percival Butler came to Kentucky in 1784. He had served under Generals Washington and Lafayette in the Revolutionary War. Percival Butler was one of the brothers who served in the Revolution of whom General Lafayette said "when he wanted something well done, he ordered a Butler to do it." (D.A.B., p. 371). He also served as the first Adjutant General of Kentucky, continuing in that position for almost twenty years. In 1796 Butler moved to the confluence of the Kentucky and Ohio Rivers at what is now Carrollton, Kentucky, where he established the Butler homestead on the south side of a hill on a large farm nearby (see below).

William O. Butler attended Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky. Immediately upon graduation in 1812, he began the study of law under Robert Wickcliffe, a prominent Fayette County lawyer. With the outbreak of the war against Great Britain, Butler interrupted his studies to enter the army as a corporal. He was attached to Winchester's army which was sent to the relief of Fort Wayne. Butler also took part in both battles of the River Raisin on January 18 and 22, 1813, when the British and Indians surprised and essentially slaughtered the American forces. Although Butler escaped death, unlike many of his comrades, he was wounded and taken as a prisoner to Fort Niagara. When paroled months later, Butler returned to Kentucky and raised a company of men which he led under Jackson against Pensacola. Butler played an important part in the Battles of New Orleans, leading a night

(continued)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Atlas of Carroll & Gallatin Counties, Kentucky. Philadelphia: D. F. Lake & Co., 1883.

Collins, Lewis. History of Kentucky. Maysville & Cincinnati: Lewis Collins and J. A. & U. P. James, 1847.

(continued)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	6	6	5	8	7	6	0	4	2	8	2
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING									

B 

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING									

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

Mary Cronan and Walter Langsam

October 1975

cf

ORGANIZATION

Kentucky Heritage Commission

STREET & NUMBER

104 Bridge Street

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.

SIGNATURE

*Ebened W. Melton*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 1-7-76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ACTING

*Jay R. [Signature]*

DATE

5/28/76

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

ACTING

DATE

5-24-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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General William O. Butler House

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The west entrance is approached by means of two large stone steps; those on the south have been replaced with concrete, although several stone steps that led down to the road (originally at a higher level than at present) still are in place at the end of the walk.

The interior of the house consists basically of seven rooms, all fairly square except for the narrow west hall. The south hall, about 18 feet deep, is flanked by two parlors with pairs of windows facing south and mantels at the west and east ends (the west parlor has the two additional modern windows on the west side mentioned above). The west hall is barely wider than the Palladian entrance feature, where double doors and fanlight are actually slightly narrower than those in the south front. The chamber at the northwest end of the U has windows only on the west side and formerly a mantel on the north.

The presumed original dining room north of the east parlor has its fireplace on the north, with a possibly original cupboard to one side. The kitchen at the northeast end of the U has an open rough-cut beam ceiling several feet lower than the 11 or 12 feet of the other rooms. This permits a loft room above, with a "tent" roof, reached by a small enclosed stairs. The large kitchen fireplace is gone. Probably this was only the winter kitchen; the summer kitchen would have been in the demolished service wing.

The woodwork of the house is consistent and virtually intact throughout. There are slight variations in the moldings from room to room, although each room is uniform throughout (except, in the case of the door from the east parlor to the dining room, which appears to have been inserted later). The difference between rooms is not clearly hierarchical, variations being slight and in no apparent sequence.

Throughout, there are combinations of robust reeding, shallow panels, and concentric corner blocks. The motifs are set in the two Palladian-motif entrances, whose "pilasters" have concave reeding. Other portions of their door and window frames are panelled and there are wooden "keystones" above. The doors throughout are fairly low and wide, with six panels. The west parlor has reeded frames, the east parlor panelled. The window openings have raked, panelled sides, and there are two panels under the parlor windows. There is chair-railin throughout, with horizontal grooves located at different levels in various rooms. The mantels are quite plain, slightly different, of the shelf-and-frame type. None of the mill work is obtrusive; all is harmonious and precise. All trim is painted white at present. Ash floors survive in the parlors.

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In spite of the encroachment of other houses in the vicinity (one of which necessitated the elimination of the service wing), the Butler house remains prominent, situated between the built-up section of "downtown" Carrollton and the handsome houses set back on large lots that line Highland Avenue to the east. Among them all, this "unpretending one-story house," as an 1878 biographer put it during the General's lifetime, easily and elegantly holds its own.

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attack on the British General Pakenham (December 23, 1814), enabling the American defenses to be established at Chaumette. He also participated in the major conflict on January 8, 1815. After the battle Butler supported General Jackson in his disagreement with New Orleans authorities. General Jackson recognized Butler's distinguished services by naming him to a position on his staff in 1816, which was formerly held by Butler's brother, Thomas, and was greatly disappointed at the loss of such an able military figure when Butler resigned from the army in 1817.

Upon his resignation from the army, Butler returned to Kentucky where he resumed his study of law. Butler settled in Port William (now Carrollton) where his family had moved in 1796. (The site of the Butler family homestead is the present site of the General William O. Butler State Park. Located in the park is the house built in 1825 by Thomas Butler, William's brother, on the site of the house built in 1796 by their father, Percival.) William O. Butler married Eliza J. Todd, the daughter of General Robert Todd of Fayette County. Probably about 1819 he began construction of the present house overlooking the Ohio River on what is now Highland Avenue, but was then the eastern outskirts of town. Butler enjoyed a successful law practice as well as representing Gallatin County (incorporating the present Carroll County) in the Kentucky legislature in 1817, 1819, and 1821. According to the D.A.B. he became "one of the most prominent and best-liked Democrats in the state" (p. 371). In 1830 he was elected to Congress, serving four years. At the end of his term in 1844 he ran as the Democratic candidate for Governor of Kentucky and according to the 1878 Biographical Encyclopedia: "was probably the most able and popular man the Democracy had ever run for that office" (p. 122). Although he drew a large number of Whig votes, he was defeated by William Owsley. (See the National Register form on Pleasant Retreat, Owsley's house near Lancaster, Garrard County, Kentucky, listed May 6, 1975.)

At the beginning of the Mexican War in 1846 William Butler was appointed Major-General of Volunteers, and was second in command at the battle of Monterey where he was wounded. A year later he joined General Winfield Scott's command at Mexico City and in 1848 succeeded him as chief commander of the army, which position he held until peace was established. After the war he received two swords in recognition of his service at Monterey, one from Congress and the other from the people of Kentucky. In the 1848 Presidential election he was the Democratic candidate for Vice-President on the ticket with General Lewis Cass (former Secretary of War under President Jackson). Butler did not take an active part in the campaign and was defeated. After the war Butler did not resume his law practice, but concentrated his efforts on farming.

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Although Butler was a slaveholder, he was a staunch unionist and opposed the extension of slavery. He was a Kentucky delegate to the 1861 Washington Peace Conference. (The Conference, called by the Virginia legislature, was a last attempt at compromise. The conference was called in hopes that it might propose revisions to the Federal Constitution which might appeal to the seceding states, but the attempt failed.)

In his early years, Butler was a poet of some renown. Many of his poems appeared in State journals. A book of his poems called The Boatman's Horn and other Poems was published in 1835. General Butler died in August 1880.

In 1888 Judge Richard Masterson purchased the house. Judge Masterson was a descendent of one of the first settlers of Carrollton (see the National Register form on the Masterson House, Carrollton, Carroll County, Kentucky, listed on the National Register July 1, 1975). The house is now owned by his granddaughter, Mary Masterson.

Not only is the U-shaped floor plan unusual, but the almost completely intact exterior and interior woodwork varies with remarkable subtlety from room to room. The rooms themselves-- including two parlors flanking the rear south hall, a narrower west hall with a room beyond, a dining room on the east with a low-ceilinged kitchen and mezzanine beyond-- are all nearly square, with slight variations in proportion and placement of openings. It is said that at least two similar fine houses in the area were built (later) by the same man, a Mr. Smith. He seems to have been a fine but unostentatious craftsman.



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Green, T. M. Historic Families of Kentucky. Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1889.

"General Percival Butler and General William O. Butler." The Biographical Encyclopedia of Kentucky of the Dead and Living Men of the Nineteenth Century. Cincinnati: J. M. Armstrong & Co., 1878, p. 37.

"General William Orlando Butler." Dictionary of American Biography, p. 371.

Historic Homes of Carroll County (Pamphlet).

Popular Portraits with Pen and Pencil, 1848.

The Courier-Journal Magazine. (Louisville, Ky.) July 24, 1975.

Additional information from Mrs. Rex Diuguid and Miss Mary Masterson, Carrollton, Kentucky.

