

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0688681

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
NOV 1 1978  
RECEIVED  
DEC 22 1978  
DATE ENTERED

**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 McCracken-Wilgus House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 327 Wilgus Street

CITY, TOWN Lexington

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 6

STATE Kentucky

VICINITY OF CODE 021

COUNTY Fayette

CODE 067

**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	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Mud Shark Enterprises (Mr. John Johnston and Mr. Bruce Pederson)

STREET & NUMBER 327 Wilgus Street

CITY, TOWN Lexington

VICINITY OF

STATE Kentucky

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Fayette Co. Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER 215 West Main

CITY, TOWN Lexington

STATE Kentucky

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Clay Lancaster's Survey for Historic Commission

DATE 1975

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Lexington-Fayette Urban County Planning Commission

CITY, TOWN Lexington

STATE Kentucky

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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 original farmhouse was built in the late 1830s facing Third Street (or Winchester Road), as shown on the 1855 Map of Lexington (Photo #1). It was a 2-story, 3-bay L-shaped common bond brick house with limestone foundation, Greek Revival window frames and brick voussoirs over 6/6-paned sashes. Most windows are now 1/1-paned. The original 2-story ell is gone except for its foundation. A later entrance has been cut into the center of the rear wall; second-story windows were once doors opening into the ell and onto its porch (Photo #2).

The house now has two 1-story, 2-bay common bond brick wings and a 1-story, 3-bay Gothic porch. The front room of the west wing which is on a brick foundation was added between 1855 and 1871, the east wing and porch in the early 1870s and the rear room of the west wing in the late 19th or early 20th century (Photo #3). Also, in the early 1870s, paired brackets and a center gable with trefoil window were added to the facade.

The front door has paneled jambs and a frame of shallow stepped moldings. Its transom has been removed but a wide bush-hammered threshold with chiseled edges survives (Photo #4). The Gothic porch has square wooden pillars, brackets and minimal spandrel decoration. A pinned cradle for the hearth is in the basement under the original section of the house.

In the downstairs hall a circular stair remembered by a neighbor is gone. It has been replaced by a later stair with landing which possibly reuses earlier spindles and rail. A line on the wall can be seen, indicating the steepness of the earlier winding spiral.

The original room to the left of the hall--as well as the hall and room above-- have unusual frames with flat surfaces and incised grooves. (Photo #5). Its window frames are mitered in corners and splayed for maximum lighting; moldings match those of the transitional mantel which has a large rectangular opening framed by slender paneled pilasters and a single-panel frieze. (Photo #6). Later high baseboards have been added. Doors opening into the room have five panels, three horizontal above two vertical ones. The floor is random-width poplar.

The room above also has a transitional mantel and a long leaf yellow pine floor. Closets on either side of upstairs mantel are 6-paneled and may be an early reuse of materials (Photo #7).

The front room in the west wing has late Greek Revival eared frames and a typical pilastered mantel.

The east wing parlor has a high ceiling (12-foot), horizontal panels under its windows, a full entablature gilded picture molding, and a gilded plaster chandelier medallion. (Photo #8). Its white marble mantel--which has a marble hearth-- has pilasters with chamfered edges and scalloped frieze. The windows and door have full entablatures; their friezes and upright members are also chamfered (Photo #9). A later door was cut on the west wall of the parlor, most likely opening onto the porch of the ell (now gone).

# 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/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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
	<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES      c. 1830

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The McCracken-Wilgus House is an excellent example of a modest brick farmhouse, built in the late 1830s when the Federal style of architecture was being superseded in Lexington by the new Greek Revival style. The main block of the house reflects this transitional period in its woodwork while its west wing interior shows the late Greek Revival style and its east wing interior, the elegance of both Greek Revival and Italianate stylistic details. The facade of the house was also made more fashionable, possibly in the early 1870s, with the addition of a gable with trefoil window, bracketed roof and Gothic porch with decorative spandrels. Added significance is attained through its association with Garrett Wilgus, a prominent local contract-builder.

Once situated on a small farm just within the 1835 city limits and facing Third Street (or Winchester Road), the house now sits on a narrow but well-wooded lot perpendicular to Wilgus Street in the center of simple frame houses in a predominantly black lower-income area. Sadly neglected for many years, the house is in the process of being renovated by its owners.

The history of the house goes back to 1826 when the land was purchased from James Megowan by John McCracken and his wife, Emily Watt McCracken, who emigrated from County Derry in Ireland to America in 1801, settling in Lexington in 1811. They sold 21+ acres between Third and Fifth Streets to Garrett Wilgus in 1865. After Wilgus and his wife died in the 1890s, the property was subdivided. Wilgus Street itself was built ca. 1906, as it appears for the first time in that year's City Directory.

Garrett D. Wilgus was a prominent contractor-builder of his time. Son of William Wilgus, veteran of the War of 1812 from New Jersey, and brother of John B., 'self-made' merchant and banker, he was also the nephew of Asa Wilgus, local builder famous chiefly for alteration of architect Benjamin Latrobe's plans for the Senator John Pope House on Grosvenor Avenue.

Garrett began in the business of stone and brick masonry with John Young and Evan Lilly at age fifteen and was on his own, making and laying brick three years later. Perrin's History of Fayette County, Kentucky reports that he employed from 4 to 42 bricklayers and 1 to 16 sets of brickmakers and did an annual business from \$10,000 to \$75,000. Buildings for which he did the brickwork include St. Paul's Catholic Church, an 1880s addition to the Easter State Hospital, the black Christian Church (probably

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Lancaster, Clay. Vestiges of a Venerable City, Section III, p. 58 (to be published in 1978, by Lexington-Fayette County Historic Commission)

Lexington City Directories: 1890, 1893, 1895, 1898-99, 1902, 1906-07, 1908.

History of Fayette County, Kentucky, edited by William Henry Perrin. Chicago, Illinois, 1882, pp. 734-35, 752, 654.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. .19 acres (8100 sq. ft.)

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 6	7, 20, 6, 00	4, 21, 36, 0, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

On city lot bounded by 330 and 336 Chesnut Street on the west, 329 Wilgus Street on the north, Wilgus Street on the east, and 325 Wilgus Street on the south.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE: Mrs. James Park, Jr.

ORGANIZATION: Lexington-Fayette County Historic Commission DATE: August 29, 1978

STREET & NUMBER: 253 Market Street TELEPHONE: (606) 252-2504

CITY OR TOWN: Lexington 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: *Eldred H. Melton*

TITLE: State Historic Preservation Officer DATE: 10-24-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION DATE: 12-22-78

ATTEST: *Ann H. Gilmore* DATE: 12/22/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

the one on Constitution Street), and other buildings now gone: a former Opera House, Phoenix Hotel, the E.L. & B.S. Railroad freight depot, etc. At one time his brickyard was on his property as in 1884 he advertised the opening of Chestnut Street on through his old brickyard out to Seventh Street.<sup>1</sup>

Wilgus later had a coal and feed store and depot for the sale of building materials. He married Agnes C. Monks of Lexington in 1858 and had fourteen children. His 1893 obituary claimed he had made and lost two fortunes during his lifetime.<sup>2</sup> Lexington City Directories show that the Wilgus family remained at 285 East Third (now 327 Wilgus) until at least 1895; by 1898 his daughter Lucy Wilgus Luxon, her husband Thomas C., bookkeeper and salesman, and their family were here. By 1902 Irvine Prather, bookkeeper, and family resided at 421 East Third (formerly 285).

The residence, one of the oldest farm houses in the vicinity of the downtown area of Lexington, is presently undergoing sympathetic restoration by the owners.

<sup>1</sup>Lexington Transcript, November 19, 1884, p. 3, col. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Lexington Transcript, February 18, 1893, p. 4, col. 1.



3rd Ward

J. Mc Cracker  
35

J. Mc Cracker

WINCHES

5th Street

STREET

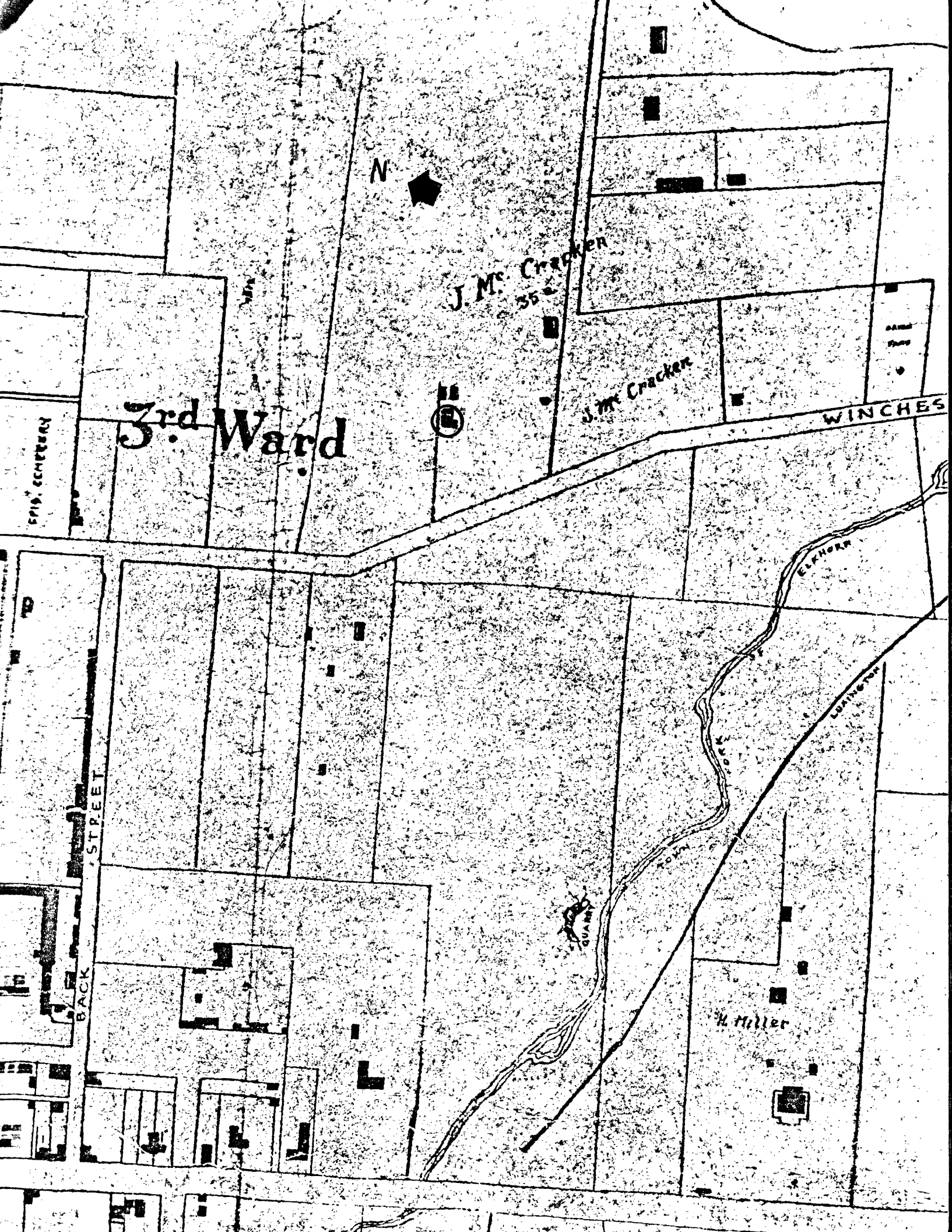
BACK

ELKHORN

QUARRY

LOADING

H. Miller



McCracken-Wilgus House  
Lexington - Fayette County, Kentucky  
Map 2  
Hart-Mapother Map of Lexington

Lexington-Fayette Co. Historic Comm.  
1855

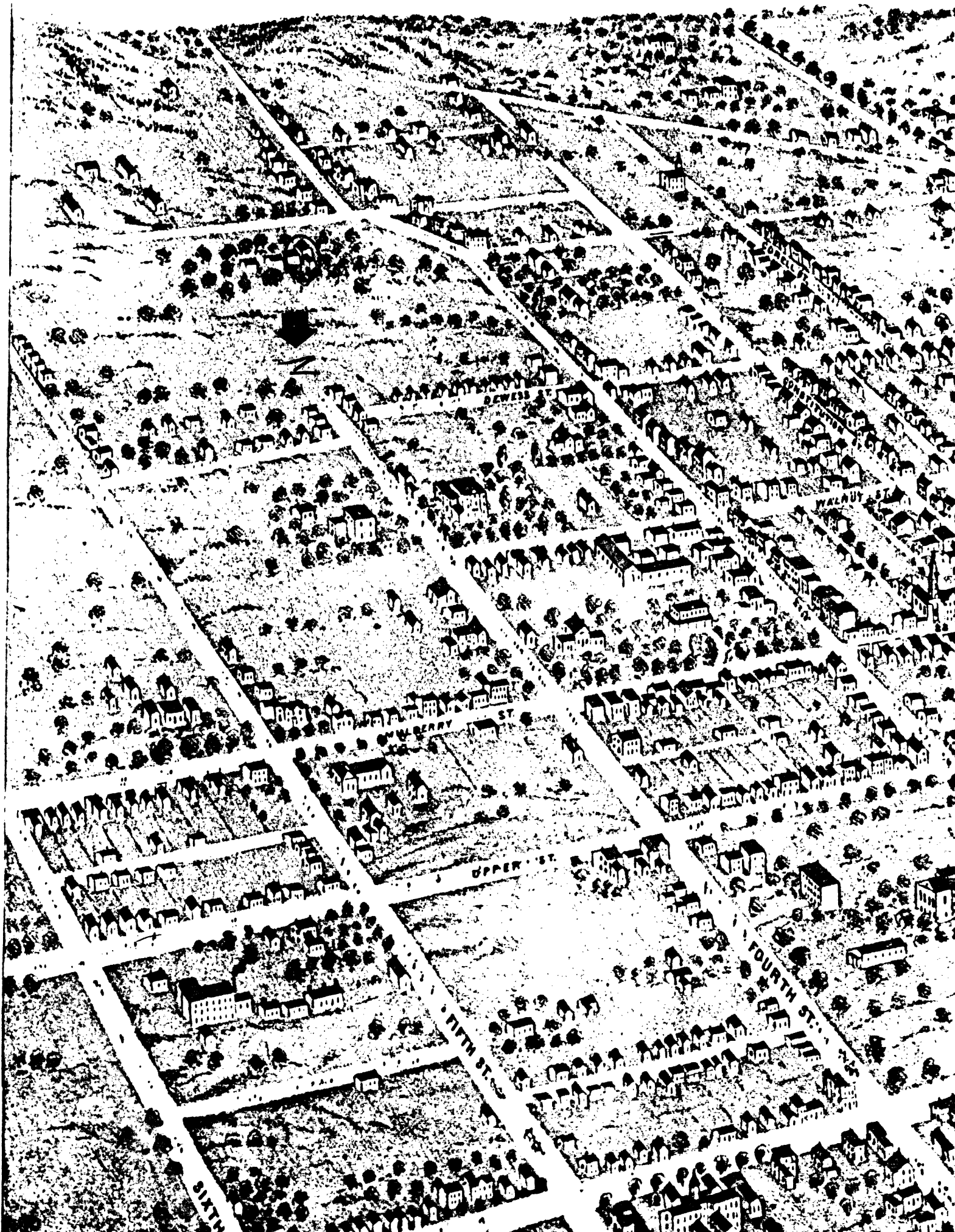
Scale Unknown.

Site outlined in black.

DEC 22 1978

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McCracken-Wilgus House  
Lexington-Fayette County, Kentucky  
Map 2  
Birds Eye View of the City of  
Lexington

DEC 22 1978

Lexington-Fayette Co. Historic Comm.  
1871

Scale unknown . NOV 1 1978  
Site outlined in black.



ENGMAN AV

E 5TH

E 4TH

CAMPSIE PL

E SECOND

CITY HALL

ST

ELM TREE

OHIO

PENBERTON ST

MAPLE AV

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ST

ST

E 5TH ST

ST

ST

ST

OHIO

CHESTNUT

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WILGUS AV

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THOMAS ST

GRINSTEAD ST

MESSTICK ST

NELSON ST

MC CRACKEN

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FORD PL

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POLBROOK ST

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McCracken-Wilgus House  
Lexington-Fayette Co., Kentucky  
Map 4  
Lexington-Fayette Co. Planning Comm.

1972

$\frac{1}{4}$ " = 2,000'

Site outlined in black.

DEC 22 1978

NOV 1 1978