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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

OCT 12 2005

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Handy Farm
other names/site number HR-115

2. Location

street & number US 62 not for publication NA
city or town Cynthiana vicinity X
state Kentucky code KY county Harrison code 097 zip code 40211

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant

nationally statewide locally (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

David L. Morgan 10-6-05
Signature of certifying official David L. Morgan, SHPO Date

Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| I, hereby certify that this property is: | <u>for</u> Signature of the Keeper | _____ Date of Action |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet. | <u>Edson H. Beall</u> | <u>11-25-05</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet. | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____ | _____ | _____ |

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| _4_ | _0_ | buildings |
| _ | _ | sites |
| _1_ | _ | structures |
| _ | _ | objects |
| _5_ | _0_ | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N. A.

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N. A.

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

- Cat: AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE Sub: animal Facility
- Cat: AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE Sub: storage
- Cat: AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE Sub: agricultural outbuilding
- Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

- Cat: VACANT/NOT IN USE
- WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation stone
- walls : Brick, Wood Shingles
- roof: Asphalt shingles
- other: Stone

Narrative Description

(Please see continuation sheets)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Please see continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

___ Agriculture ___

Period of Significance

___ 1820-1920 ___

Significant Dates ___ 1820 ___

___ 1848 ___

___ 1883 ___

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

___ N.A. ___

Cultural Affiliation

___ N. A. ___

Architect/Builder

___ Unknown ___

9. Major Bibliographical References

(For citation of books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form see continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) 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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 114.99 Acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | Cynthiana Quad |
|---|-----------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| A | <u>16</u> | <u>737 400</u> | <u>4253 400 N</u> | |
| B | <u>16</u> | <u>737 340</u> | <u>4252 000 N</u> | |
| C | <u>16</u> | <u>736 640</u> | <u>4252 750 N</u> | |
| D | <u>16</u> | <u>736 820</u> | <u>4253 340 N</u> | |
| E | <u>16</u> | <u>737 140</u> | <u>4253 580 N</u> | |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Billy Fowler
organization NA date July, 2005
street & number 380 Oddville Sunrise Road telephone 859-234-5110
city or town Cynthiana state KY zip code 41031

Property Owners

name City of Cynthiana
street & number PO Box 67 telephone 859-234-7153
city or town Cynthiana state KY zip code 41031

name Harrison County
street & number 111 South Main St. telephone 859-234-7136
city or town Cynthiana state KY zip code 41031

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Description

The Handy Farm (HR-115) lies at the north-eastern edge of Cynthiana, seat of Harrison County, Kentucky. The property currently consists of approximately 115 acres, which includes the main residence, three barns, a corn crib and a number of hand-operated water pumps. The area proposed for listing includes approximately 115 acres.

The house and farm buildings sit within a slightly larger tract, approximately one-hundred-twenty total acres that are being planned for development into a community recreational park. Five acres within these one-hundred-and-twenty acres have been deeded to the Board of Health where a new Local Health Department Building is being constructed. There have been some walking trails constructed on the acreage by the owners, City of Cynthiana and Harrison County, along with a small building to house restrooms and concessions, for the park, that also is under construction near the edge of the property. For the park, a number of trees have recently been planted.

While the property exhibits its identity as a productive farm, several historic features that once stood at the site no longer are extant or changed. Colonel William Brown would have had built the original one-and-one-half-story main residence shortly after acquiring the property in 1816. He most likely also had the ice house built and possibly some of the other structures, such as the log building, (later turned into additional living quarters and referred to as the carriage house), the old smoke house, the cellar to the west of the main residence and the brick structure that was located to the rear of the residence. This brick structure behind the residence was enlarged during the twentieth century and used for additional living quarters; locals regard it as a slave quarters. Except for the main residence, these early features have been lost to time and man's destructive hand. The main residence, however, was enlarged in the later part of the nineteenth century, which allowed it to continue as the main residence, which it had already served as for some 65 to 70 years.

Inventory of extant features

The **Handy House**, also known as the Colonel William Brown House or the Joel Frazer House, is the focal point of the farm. The dwelling is approached by a winding drive to the crest of the hill, has boarded windows as well as late-nineteenth-century and twentieth-century modifications, but the original early-nineteenth-century form is still visible. Constructed after 1816 for Colonel William Brown and later owned by Dr. Joel C. Frazer, the core of the house was a one-and-one-half-story five-bay-wide Federal double pile dwelling on a stone foundation. The main facade (south elevation) is laid in Flemish bond; the brick on all of the elevations has been painted, as has a small portion of the limestone foundation. The central entry is articulated with a fanlight and sidelights as well as a detailed fluted wooden surround. The windows are topped with jackarches. Most of the horizontal wooden bars of the arched basement lights, that were typical of Federal-era dwellings, remain intact. A flat roof porch stretches across this elevation, sheltering the three central bays. It has plain wooden supports and a turned, open rail balustrade at either end.

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The north elevation features an interesting full-length porch with a semi-vaulted ceiling. Portions of this porch have been sheathed in aluminum siding, but the symmetrically spaced squared wooden supports with open capitals appear original, though the open-rail balustrade may be a later modification. Local historians view this porch as part of the original construction that once had a full length bench, with the wooden supports for the bench still existing in the brick wall (Harrison County Historical Society, Handy House Video).

W.T. Handy purchased the property in 1883 and owned it for 33 years. He probably remodeled the house during the 1880s by adding two wings, enlarging the second floor to its current full size, and adding the cupola.

One-story additions or wings extended from both the east and west elevations. Today, only the east-side wing survives, though the ghost lines of the western addition are visible on the main house. The eastern elevation, built on a raised stone foundation, has both a brick and frame section, and judging from the stone piers, a porch projected eastward from this addition. The two-bay wide addition currently has a hipped asphalt shingle roof, in place of the original metal roof, and the frame section is clad in asbestos siding. Circa 1905 and circa 1935 photos indicate the frame section of the eastern addition was a sun-porch (the windows from this porch were removed and remain stored in the house). These same photos show the southern portion of the western addition was an open porch. Both of these porches, as well as the front and roof of the main porch, had the same turned, open-rail balustrade previously mentioned. There is a one story, one-bay-wide frame addition projecting to the north of the east wing. Built on a concrete block foundation, it was likely added in the twentieth century to house updates such as the bathroom which currently occupies this addition.

A unique aspect of construction is found in the basement area of the house. The basement, constructed of stone, includes three fireplaces at the base of the house chimneys and one corner room segregated from the rest of the basement by stone walls with horizontal wooden-barred windows. A good number of the original wooden bars remain in place today, although some have been removed to facilitate installation of heating ductwork. The fourth chimney base is in this room and shows no evidence that a fireplace ever existed in it. Entrance to this room was from within the basement area by means of a wooden door. The door itself has since been removed, but the door frame remains in place. The whole of the basement is divided by stone walls into three separate sections, with the above-mentioned corner room being a part of one of the sections. Access to this section is by means of an exterior door that once was approached by stone steps from the yard west of the house. The steps have been removed, leaving an earthen ramp from the yard down to the door. Access to the center section was from this western section. The door frame between these sections remains, although the door has been removed. There is a stairway from the center section to the first floor of the house. Careful examination indicates that this stairway was not original and was added by cutting through the floor to gain access to the basement.

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It appears that the eastern section of the basement was accessed by means of a door to the rear or north side of the house. This door now leads, by means of a passage way under the back porch, to the area under the twentieth-century bathroom addition. There are currently two floor-to-ceiling openings through the stone wall from this section to the middle section; these appear to have originally been windows, most likely with horizontal wooden bars as seen in other areas of the basement, which would have segregated the eastern section of the basement from the rest of the basement.

The woodwork throughout the original portion of the first floor is of very high quality and of a design typical for the Federal period in which it was constructed. Brackets used for "barring" the double front entry doors remain intact. The dining room mantel is a fine example of early-nineteenth-century wood work that is further described as an Adams style mantel; it has double pilasters coming up, reeded. It has urn carvings on it, the double burst carved in the middle: and it is walnut. There has been a door added between the dining room and central hallway which does not contain woodwork consistent with the rest of this area. Access from the rest of the house to the dining room would have originally been through the drawing room located north of the dining room. There are two exterior doors from the dining room. One leads to the rear porch and the other to the western yard near the basement entrance. It is likely that the residents and guests normally accessed this room through the drawing room in the early years of the house. Servants would probably have used one of the exterior doors to serve meals, which were likely prepared in the basement or possibly in a summer kitchen separate from the house.

The second floor contains fine examples of Victorian woodwork that is consistent with the era of its remodeling. The same video mentioned above describes the mantel in the master bedroom as a fine example, in walnut, of Victorian design. It has carving of oak leaves, molding around the top, shelving, beveled mirrors and beautiful tile work.

The cupola remains unfinished. An elevated walk-way once surrounded the interior of the cupola; it has been removed. There is some plaster damage in parts of the house, as well as some minor damage to the stair balustrades. Some of the mantles have been stored off-site for their protection from vandals prior to securing the house. In spite of these problems the interior of the house remains in very sound and relatively unchanged condition from the time of construction—1818 for the first floor and basement and 1880s for the second floor and cupola.

Located west of the house are three barns and one corncrib. These buildings represent several years of farm evolution, possibly dating as far back as 1830. The oldest of these buildings is the middle of the three barns, an **English-type Barn**. Bill Macintire of the Kentucky Heritage Council describes the barn as having...

the entry centered on the long side rather than at the gable end. Inside, the framework of the central part building consists of hand hewn timbers joined and braced with pegged mortises and tenons. Careful examination of the barn reveals that this central portion is an early barn of the English barn type, a common Antebellum type of barn, now rather unusual to find surviving in central Kentucky. Construction of this building is most likely before 1850, perhaps as early as the 1830's. Additions to the barn extend out on both ends of the central core and a shed is appended

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to the back of the whole. The earliest additions, to the sides, are also timber frames, with circular sawn material present, and appear to be approximately 1860-80. The shed to the back probably dates to the late 19th-early 20th century (2005 Field Report).

The entire barn is sided with what is commonly referred to as barn lumber similar to that found on barns throughout this area and has a metal roof of the type that is also common to many barns throughout the area. The main entry mentioned by Macintire faces south with a drive through and out the rear of the barn. The original or central part included elevated floors on each side of this drive supported by hand hewn log joists. The floor to the west of the drive remains intact and evidence is present to show where the eastern floor and joists were removed. This central core remains on stone piers with the end additions on continuous stone foundations while the rear addition is on wooden posts. It is reasonable to conclude that Brown was most likely the owner who had the antebellum barn constructed prior to moving with his family to Illinois in 1832. His untimely death in 1833 and the fact that the farm was not finally disposed of in settlement of the will until 1848 would have made it unlikely that the barn was built during those years.

The barn located closest to the house appears to have been added by W.T. Handy as a **breeding stable** for trotters and was described in the Harrison County *Courier* in a Dec. 22, 1888 article as being an entirely new and rather expensive structure. Some stalls have been removed and some of the doors that exited from each stall to the surrounding barn yard have been eliminated. However, many of the stalls and corresponding exterior stall doors, along with the loft above these stalls, once used for feed storage, remain intact today. The eastern side of the barn has been converted for use as a tobacco barn and a shed has been added to the exterior at the southeast corner which was used as a shop during part of the twentieth century. The main entry also faces south with a drive through to the rear entry with both being located in the gable ends. Once again this barn is under a metal roof and sided with barn lumber. Although this barn, as with all the barns, is painted black, evidence exists in this barn that leads one to believe that the color of choice for the barns was once red. The main portion of the barn is rectangular in shape and utilizes pegged mortises and tenons. However the shop addition appears to be notched posts with supports and braces nailed in place. The shop is on concrete block foundation whereas the original barn appeared to have been constructed with posts set into the ground. Most, if not all of these posts appear to have been repaired with concrete blocks at ground level.

It is probable that the third barn, which is located farthest from the house, was also built by Handy. Due to its design, it has been speculated that this barn was originally built as a **burly tobacco barn** (for which it was used until recent years) most likely in the late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century. This barn has a stripping room shed addition at the southeast corner as well as a full length shed addition along the western side. As with the other barns, the main entrance faces south and leads to a drive through to the rear entrance. As is common with area tobacco barns, both of these entries are on the gable ends. The main or original, rectangular portion, as in the other barns, utilizes pegged mortises and tenons. This portion has wooden posts for the foundation with concrete block foundations for both additions.

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The additions to this barn once again used notched posts with nailed braces and supports as the method of construction. Metal roof and wood barn lumber are once again the materials used to cover the exterior.

North of the barns is a fourth remaining farm building that appears to have been built in about the same time period as the tobacco barn. This building is a frame **corncrib** on stone piers with side-overhang cart sheds and a side-gable metal roof.

There are **hand-operated water pumps** atop three of the **four cisterns/wells** that supplied water to the farm. One with a hand pump is located near the oldest barn; and the other three are located near the main residence. None of the other domestic outbuildings which were once located near the main house has survived. There is a mound in the rear yard that is said to indicate where an ice house once existed, as well as a depression in the west side yard where the cellar was located. Future archaeological investigations could provide more information concerning these features as well as others that once existed, such as slave quarters, graveyards and trotting track.

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Statement of Significance

The Handy Farm (HR-115) meets National Register Criterion A and is significant within the historic context "Agriculture in Harrison County, Kentucky 1820-1920." The area on top of the hill at the Handy Farm that includes the historic structures of Brown/Frazer/Handy house, rare early English Style Barn, late-nineteenth-century breeding stable barn, and late-19th- or early-20th-century tobacco barn, along with the open field that flows downward to the creek and highway below, capture the story of farming in Harrison County throughout the period of significance. The Handy Farm is an excellent example of a family-owned-and-occupied farm and exemplifies prosperous agriculture in Harrison County, Kentucky, 1820-1920.

Historic Context: Agriculture in Harrison County, Kentucky 1820-1920

Census data was reviewed to reveal population and economic trends in Harrison County during the contextual period. This information was very helpful in defining how agriculture changed and remained important within the county during the period of significance. These records show a steady growth in Harrison Co. population, from 4,350 in 1800 to 13,779 in 1860. This decennial growth trend was interrupted once in 1840 and again by the Civil War indicated by a drop in 1870. The population growth recovered by 1880, with 16,504. The population of the area peaked at 18,570 in 1900 and then declined to 15,798 by 1920.

These same census records show the annual value of products in manufacturing in Harrison Co. to also be on the rise, from \$134,810 in 1850 to a peak of \$851,250 in 1870, when those values begin falling through 1920 and beyond. The estimated value of all farm products would climb from \$989,917 in 1870 to \$1,472,477 in 1900 and on to \$6,748,052 in 1950. The value of farming implements and machinery increased more than 621% between 1850 and 1920, from \$109,984 to \$683,725, while the cash value of farms in the area increased more than 768% from \$3,420,627 in 1850 to \$26,290,228 in 1920. It also appears that farms were being divided during this time from 1,130 total farms in 1850 to 2,424 in 1920. The acres of improved land in farms varied upward and downward during this same period to end in 1920 at 134,880 which was nearly the same as the 137,883 acres of 1850.

From these figures we can see that during the period from 1850 to 1920, Harrison County's size remained stable and the population remained relatively stable. The value of manufacturing goods declined while the value of agricultural goods, along with the number and value of farms, increased during these same years. The interesting conclusion to make is that even though manufacturing output was deteriorating in the later part of the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth centuries, farming was doing quite well, resulting in a further entrenchment of agriculture as the primary occupation within the county.

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The history of the Handy Farm

The Handy Farm began its journey through time when Col. William Brown acquired two parcels of land totaling 333.5 acres along the banks of Flat Run Creek (now known as Betsy Creek) in 1816. Col. Brown was not only helping to build the community of Cynthiana, he was also building the family farm which would eventually come to be known as the Handy Farm.

The success of Brown’s farming operation can be seen in the county tax records that indicate that this farm became a successful stock farm with as many as 120 horses, mares and mules in 1824 and 136 in 1828. Available records of that era do not record crop data or data concerning other farm animals. It is, however, reasonable to assume that sufficient crops were grown on this farm along with animals necessary to support the family and staff, as well as the large horse population of the farm. This successful launch of the farming operation by Brown would be the beginning of what would evolve into one of the best known farms in Harrison County.

Dr. Joel C. Frazer, purchaser of the farm in 1848, was also a professional man. He was a well known and respected physician in the area who, like Brown before him, would most likely not have worked the farm himself. A review of tax and census records for the Joel C. Frazer years indicate that he continued to raise horses but on a somewhat smaller scale, with the number varying from 25 to 48 throughout his tenure. This was nevertheless a significant number, as evidenced by the census records which show 48 horses on his farm compared to 8 average per farm in Harrison County in 1850 and 40 compared to 6 in 1860.

Further review of the records reveals that the doctor’s farm was a diversified operation with a variety of crops and animals. The charts below not only indicate this diversification but also reveal the significance of this operation as compared to the county averages. It seems that no matter the undertaking, in all but one instance, that of butter & cheese production in 1860, Frazer was producing well above the county average. This successful diversification by Frazer can be seen as the second phase of the evolution of the farm, an evolution which continued throughout the period of significance.

| Census Year | Location | Value/Acre | # Horses | # Cattle | # Sheep | # Hogs | Bu. Wheat | Bu. Corn | Bu. Oats | Lbs. Butter & Cheese | Tons Hay |
|-------------|--------------------------|------------|----------|----------|---------|--------|-----------|----------|----------|----------------------|----------|
| 1850 | Frazer Farm | \$45.05 | 48 | 41 | 100 | 75 | 400 | 4000 | 250 | 500 | 15 |
| 1850 | Av. Harrison County Farm | \$17.00 | 8 | 10 | 20 | 36 | 39 | 1239 | 120 | 180 | 3 |
| 1860 | Frazer Farm | \$68.12 | 40 | 40 | 58 | 57 | 500 | 4000 | 600 | 50 | 20 |
| 1860 | Av. Harrison County Farm | \$29.62 | 6 | 8 | 12 | 23 | 155 | 947 | 110 | 12 | 2 |

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Continuation Sheet

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Handy Farm
Harrison County, KY

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Much of the farm's prime land was occupied by Union soldiers, who named their site Camp Frazer, during the Civil War. This most likely did not cause much of a personal hardship, since Frazer as a Union sympathizer allowed this occupation and the area was Union occupied during most of the war years, except for a couple of brief visits by Confederate General John Hunt Morgan and his cavalry.

Having died in 1863, Frazer did not live to see the end of slavery. His grandson Joel H. Frazer who is listed as the farm's next owner would, however, be the person to transition the farm from slave to wage labor. He, like other local farmers, had to reorganize his approach to farming in the absence of an unpaid workforce. Joel H. Frazer was most successful, continuing to successfully operate the farm for another twenty years. The younger Frazer seems to be the first professional farmer to own and occupy the Handy Farm. A local precinct map of 1877 lists Joel H. Frazer as the owner of Ridgeway (Handy Farm) and lists his occupation as farmer.

Census and county tax records reveal Frazer's labor practices from 1870 and 1880. The 1870 census records \$960.00 spent for farm labor, with no distinction as to what race received the money. However, the 1880 census records \$300.00 spent on farm labor, with all of that being to "Colored" and none to "White". A review of the chart below will help illustrate the change in acreage of the farm throughout the years following the original Frazer's death. The reduced size to 164 acres in 1880 would tend to be compatible with the reduced labor dollars recorded that year versus that of 1870. It should be noted that the 1880 census recorded only 142 acres for the farm but tax records for that year as well as previous and later years recorded 164 acres. To compare this chart with previous charts indicates that the value per acre in 1870 dropped significantly from that of 1860. Although not shown in the previous chart, the acreage also fell for the same time period, from 734 acres. These reductions are no doubt the result of the aftermath of the Civil War. As was the trend at the time, the farm was further reduced in size. At the same time the farm turned from being a totally diversified farm to being one that was more concentrated on specific grain crops and swine. This shift in direction by the newest owner, Joel H. Frazer, can be seen as a very successful move. This is very apparent by comparing the value per acre increase of 105% from 1870 to 1880 for the farm, to the county value per acre which decreased for the same time period. It seems that Joel H. Frazer had now provided the third evolutionary phase of this farm, by successfully transitioning to a more streamlined and dedicated operation while providing a means of income for area residents. It appears that this operation also provided a means of income for the newer citizens (freed slaves) of the county, those blacks that once were slaves had now become wage earners.

| Census Year | Location | Value per Acre | Farm Acres | Total Cattle | Swine | Bush. of Wheat | Bush. of Corn |
|-------------|---------------------|----------------|------------|--------------|-------|----------------|---------------|
| 1870 | Frazer Farm | \$48.78 | 369 | 54 | 30 | 400 | 1000 |
| | Harr. Co. Avg./Farm | \$29.89 | 134 | 7 | 14 | 52 | 607 |
| 1880 | Frazer Farm | \$100.00 | 164 | 5 | 30 | 900 | 1200 |
| | Harr. Co. Avg./Farm | \$26.23 | 105 | 6 | 15 | 133 | 544 |

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Continuation Sheet

National Park Service
Handy Farm
Harrison County, KY

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William T. Handy purchased the 165-acre farm from Frazer in 1883 for \$18,000.00. It is assumed that Handy purchased the farm complete with equipment, animals, crops and etc. since tax records from 1880-1884 record the value of the farm as \$9,800.00. This assumption would place the value of farm stock, stores and etc. at \$8,200. Local tradition is that Handy remodeled the house during the 1880s.

Tax records for that time period reveal an increase in property value of \$3,320.00 from 1884 to 1888 after having been stable for several years prior and then remaining stable for several years afterward. It is known that one barn was built during this time and assumed that the rest of the increase was a result of the remodeling of the house, thereby supporting the conclusion that the remodeling took place when speculated. It is not known at this time if Handy, who continued to operate the farm, actually worked the farm or if he hired all the necessary help. It is, however, reasonable to speculate that he would have needed a great deal of help to continue the farming tradition that had been developed over the years. Handy not only accomplished this, he also built the place into a nationally known trotter breeding establishment.

Agricultural census data is not available for the years that Handy owned and occupied the farm and county tax records have only been located for a few of those years. The county tax records were reviewed in an effort to determine the significance of his operation as compared to other trotter breeding establishments within Harrison County. These records indicate that Handy was in a transitional period for the first few years. For that reason comparisons were not made for those early years.

Tax records for 1888 and 1890 indicate that his operation was in the top three trotter breeding establishments in the county. One large farm owned by James L. Patterson listed 42 geldings, mares & colts for 1888 which was the most for the county that year. Since these tax records did not distinguish between trotters and common or mixed breeds, the average value was used to reveal if the horses were of a common type or trotters.

As shown in the chart on the next page, Patterson's horses were valued much lower, therefore indicating that they were of a more common type, leaving the Handy, Wilson and Cromwell farms as the top three. Other important facts shown in the chart is the value of the land per acre, which places the Handy Farm at the top of this list in 1888 and tied for the top spot in 1890. A review of the value of the geldings, mares and colts place Handy second only to his business partner and owner of Abdallah Park race track for trotters, W.H. Wilson.

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Continuation Sheet

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Handy Farm
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| Year | Farm Owner | Acres of Farm | \$ Value per Acre | Stallions | Avg. \$ Value of Stallions | Geldings, Mares & Colts | Avg. \$ Value of Geldings, Mares & Colts |
|------|----------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| 1888 | J.L. Patterson | 1035 | \$40.00 | 1 | \$130.00 | 42 | \$38.00 |
| | W.H. Wilson | 74 | \$75.68 | 2 | \$1,750.00 | 37 | \$86.49 |
| | J.W. Cromwell | 125 | \$48.00 | 1 | \$1,000.00 | 35 | \$74.29 |
| | W. T. Handy | 164 | \$80.00 | 1 | \$500.00 | 27 | \$75.00 |
| 1890 | W.H. Wilson | 75 | \$80.00 | 21 | \$714.29 | 67 | \$104.48 |
| | J.W. Cromwell | 312 | \$43.27 | 1 | \$1,000.00 | 40 | \$62.50 |
| | W.T. Handy | 164 | \$80.00 | 3 | \$666.67 | 36 | \$85.56 |

It is documented that Handy dissolved this breeding stable to take his sick wife to Florida for recovery in late 1891 (Dec. 12, 1891 New York Times). Documentation has not yet been found to indicate who cared for the farm in his absence or when he and his family returned. A photograph of Handy and family in front of the Handy House which appeared in *The Cynthiana Log Cabin* on November 11, 1905 confirms the family did in fact return. There is also no documentation that Handy restored his well-known breeding stable. The horses sold at auction in settlement of the Handy estate in 1916 do not appear to be of the type that would have been sold had he been in the trotter breeding business at that time. The onset of burley tobacco as a cash crop in this area, would make it reasonable to speculate that Handy would have had the burley tobacco barn constructed just prior to the Florida trip, or shortly after returning with his family. The 1886 county tax records revealed that Handy grew 10,000 pounds of tobacco during one of the transitional years. The 1890 tax records reveal that he once again grew tobacco with 5,000 pounds listed and 4,000 listed the following year, indicating that he may have used the tobacco crop to supplement his trotter breeding business. It is also possible that Handy had the corncrib constructed about the same time as he had the other farm buildings built.

A large gap exists in the records with the only further records located being of the Handy estate sale of November 29, 1916 which included in addition to the “the desirable W. T. Handy farm on the outskirts of Cynthiana”, three head of horses which brought from \$40 to \$105, a team of work horses at \$380, milk cows, three heifers, eleven black yearling steers, twelve red yearlings, 3-year-old steers, seven meat hogs, eight shoats, two sows and pigs, corn in 50 barrel lots, baled hay, loose hay and farm implements and tools. It was noted that this was the first time corn had sold as high as \$5.00 per barrel in Harrison County since shortly after the Civil War. The sale was reported to have totaled \$35,000, with the farm bringing \$29,397. The farm was described as “...contains 164 acres, a large colonial mansion, barns stables, etc...” (Cromwell, p. 97). The details of this sale, along with comments about the desirable farm and the high prices, provide further evidence that this farm was seen as an important Harrison County farm. Additionally, the mention of barns and stables further supports the view that Handy added the burley tobacco barn during his ownership.

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The farm had undoubtedly been known as the Brown Farm and the Frazer Farm, as well as being known as Ridgeway and Chestnut Hall through the years, with Handy being the owner who named the place Chestnut Hall. Even though this farm had seen multiple owners, the name that has stuck is the Handy Farm, which has stayed with it into the twenty-first century.

General History of the Handy Farm

The Handy Farm has had 10 owners in this order:

- 1816 Colonel William Brown and heirs
- 1848 Joel C. Frazer
- 1863 Joel H. Frazer
- 1883 William T. Handy
- 1916 Clarence LeBus
- 1932 W.H. Willis
- 1937 Mr. Peak and Mr. Florence
- 1945 Dr. Charles Swinford and heirs
- 1998 local farmers
- 2002 City of Cynthiana and Harrison County governments

Lucinda Boyd says of Colonel William Brown in *Chronicles of Cynthiana*, "During the first third of the present century, the most eminent member of the Cynthiana bar after William K. Wall was, no doubt William Brown...He became very wealthy, owning 1,000 acres of land and many slaves" (p. 73).

Brown was born in Frederick County, Va., April 19, 1779. He attended common schools and moved with his father to Bourbon, County Kentucky in 1784, and to Cynthiana about 1795, two years after the town had been established. He studied law and was admitted to the bar and began to practice in 1807. He served in the War of 1812, first as a captain and then as a colonel. In 1816 he participated in the board of commissioners who planned and oversaw construction of the second Harrison County courthouse. He was elected a member of the State House of Representatives, then gained election to the Sixteenth Congress (March 4, 1819-March 3, 1821), where he served with fellow Kentuckians Henry Clay and Thomas Metcalf in the session famous for the Missouri Compromise. He moved to Jacksonville, Morgan County, Ill., in 1832, where he died October 6, 1833 (Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=B000947>; Perrin, p. 239 & 304).

In addition to his notable political undertakings, William Brown was a trustee of Harrison Academy, one of the first institutions of learning in the community. The *Cynthiana Democrat* Special Edition of June, 1896 states,

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The Cynthiana Graded City School is the continuation of Harrison Academy, which was founded in 1804, under a legislative charter approved December 22, 1798. The trustees were granted six thousand acres of vacant land located on the south side of Green river. One stipulation was that the lands should revert to the State, if the trustees did not within ten years establish a school with at least twelve scholars. Harrison Academy was organized in the sixth year after the charter was granted.

The article goes on to discuss the first building being located at the present location of the "Old Cemetery" and to further discuss a sufficiently commodious school building which was erected in 1820. This building served the Academy until 1851 when it was replaced the next year by a much larger building. The City Council, on the 14th of May, 1872 passed an ordinance to establish a graded public school in the city of Cynthiana. The trustees of Harrison Academy transferred the interest of the county to the City Council. Perrin speaks of William Brown and others as trustees of Harrison Academy purchasing land in May of 1817, this being the same land where the new building was completed in 1820 (Perrin, p. 280).

Brown was so highly thought of by local citizens that he was appointed Chairman at a meeting of a group of citizens at the Tavern of Mr. George Picket in Cynthiana in January 1815. This meeting was being held to take under consideration the measures adopted by the Banks of this state in stopping the payment of specie. Resolutions adopted at this meeting served to fully support the banks in this matter (Kentucky Gazette, January 16, 1815).

Harrison County deeds indicate that Brown acquired the property, now the location of the Handy Farm, in 1816 from William Coleman and R. Naylor (Deed Book, Book 5, page 45 and Book 4, page 492). It is not documented exactly when the house was built. However, with the substantial wealth and local esteem that he had accumulated, along with the 1820 census indication that Brown owned 14 slaves, his need for a substantial house and farm suggests the possibility that the main residence on the farm at the focus of this nomination was built shortly after 1816 but prior to 1820. A review of Harrison County tax records for this period reveals an unexplained increase in value of \$4,550.00 for the Flat Run property owned by Brown between 1818 and 1819. This unexplained increase could be evidence that the residence was completed during 1818.

The Harrison County Historical Society, Handy House Video describes the dining room mantel as one of the most magnificent in Harrison County. This sort of craftsmanship was most likely only available to persons like Brown, who possessed substantial wealth.

A number of local citizens have provided documentation in form of testimonials that chains and shackles were once attached to the stone walls in the basement of the main residence but outside the corner room mentioned earlier. The stories that have been handed down from generation to generation repeating that these chains and shackles were used to confine slaves. As for the segregated room, some speculate it was used for storing foods, wines, ciders and etc. However, there is one report, made to the

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Handy House Committee by Freedom Time, a consulting firm specializing in slavery history, dated February 16, 2005 that disagrees with this analysis. This consultant believes the segregated room was used as a slave jail or pen. His speculation is that the heat from nearby fireplaces in the basement would have made the room undesirable for food storage. The consultant feels the cellar that was once located in the yard west of the house would have been the most logical place to store the food products. County tax records reveal that Brown's slave ownership varied upward and downward from as few as 10 to as high as 27 during the period from 1817 through 1833. This apparent buying and selling of slaves would have created the need for a means of confining unknown, unruly or un-trusted slaves. It is probable that the basement was used as work space for the slaves; possibly for their housing and that at least some slaves were confined in the basement by means of chains and shackles and possibly penned in the corner room.

After the death of Col. Brown in 1832 the farm remained in the hands of his heirs until it was sold, at final settlement of Brown's will, to Joel C. Frazer in July 1848 (per deed). Perrin described Frazer as "One of the best remembered names in Cynthiana and Harrison County... though he died nearly twenty years ago in 1863" (p. 308). Dr. Frazer began practice in 1817, and also amassed considerable wealth, as evident by his ability to purchase the farm as well as being listed as one of the nine largest slave owners east of the South Fork Licking River in Harrison Co. He owned 16 slaves, with a valuation, \$6,400 between 1849 and 1852 (Cromwell, p. 30, 69 & 70). Perrin continues to speak of Joel Frazer to not only say that he married Mrs. Ruth Warfield in 1822 and that she died two years after marrying Dr. Frazer. He goes on to say that the Doctor was still reading and practicing, and having attended medical lectures at Transylvania University, graduated in medicine in 1824. After graduation, he moved to St. Charles, Mo., intending to establish himself there. Due to a lack of need, Frazer and several other young professional men found it impossible to pay their hotel expenses. As a last resort they decided to get into a skiff, without saying "good-bye" to anybody, and to float down the river to some more favorable locality. Young Frazer, however, revolted at the last minute and refused to proceed, although the other men continued without him. "With Dr. Frazer, the whole scheme was, no doubt, only a piece of pleasantry, for he was, all his life, the embodiment of wit and merriment." Locals today speculate that this was more a testament to his honor rather than merriment, this honor which guided him to make the right decision in St. Charles was also partly responsible for his becoming so well known and liked in this community in later years. He soon returned to Cynthiana where he married his second wife, Nancy Sanders in 1826. "For a Few years his practice seems not to have been great, though he carefully remitted all the dues left unsettled with his St. Charles creditor. To improve his business, he removed to Paris, Ky., in 1833, but returned to Harrison Co. in about a year. All this time his character as a physician was constantly rising, for he was devoted to the science of medicine and fond of the practice." Perrin later states that he soon found himself able to purchase the fine farm (330 acres) and residence once owned by Col. William Brown. He later died at the age of sixty-five, not very old, but he had been eminently successful, both financially and professionally. In addition, he was beloved as a citizen and greatly respected by the profession. Boyd also describes Dr. Joel Frazer as the only physician of Cynthiana who ever treated people afflicted from imaginary diseases with signal success. When called to see a malingerer, he gave him or her his deepest sympathy, and dosed him on bread pills carefully coated, which always brought about a cure (Perrin, p. 309; Boyd, p. 95-97).

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In August 1861, the Union men of Harrison Co., supported by the Paris Western Citizen, approached Dr. Joel C. Frazer, a popular physician and Desha's neighbor to run against Lucius Junius Brutus Desha for representative of Harrison County in the state legislature. Desha, who was a supporter of John C. Breckinridge in the 1860 presidential election, was the States' Rights candidate for representative. The Paris newspaper pleaded of Frazer "We hope his patriotic impulses will induce him to be a candidate." Dr. Frazer declined the offer. Later in June 1862, Frazer was, however, instrumental in causing Desha to be released on bond rather than to be imprisoned while Desha awaited trial on treason charges. Dr. Frazer was one of two doctors that provided affidavits that Desha was "laboring under a disease which if he is subjected to confinement in prison will likely result in his death." It also appears that Frazer was instrumental in acquiring the parole of Desha in October 1862. Desha had been imprisoned since July 26 of that year. Dr. Frazer was one of several Union men of Harrison Co. that vouched for Desha. It seems that the local men were like many Kentuckians who believed it was going too far to imprison civilians without a proper trial.

Dr. Frazer, a Union Sympathizer, permitted one of the first Union camps in the state to be constructed on much of the land west of his home in the fall of 1861. This camp was a part of both of Morgan's raids to Cynthiana, one in 1862 and another in 1864 (Penn, p. 28-31, 51-52, 58-61 & 80-86). The fact that one of the area's largest slave owners was also a union sympathizer is likely explained by the promise made to Kentucky and other border states, by Lincoln, to allow slavery if they would not join the confederacy. Records that Frazer entertained the Union officers in his home have not been found, but a Union Soldier from Arkansas fell wounded near the Frazer house, and was taken to the house and hidden in an attic area near Frazer's daughter's bedroom. It is said that the soldier not only recovered from his wounds but remained in Harrison County and has descendents here today (Penn p. 86; Harrison County Historical Society, Handy House Video).

The farm passed to an heir following the death of Joel C. Frazer. Cromwell speaks of this inheritance by saying "...we know that his grandson, Joel H. Frazer, inherited it..." (Cromwell, p. 98). An 1877 map of Harrison County lists Joel H. Frazer as the owner and also lists his occupation as farmer. Joel H. Frazer and his wife sold 165.3 acres, including the house, to William T. Handy on November 26, 1883.

Handy became another legendary figure associated with the property. Boyd describes his ancestry to include a wealthy Philadelphia merchant who gave thousands of dollars to the patriots to build ships during the American Revolution, and a lawyer father who authored reports bearing his name. She says, "W.T. Handy is the youngest commissioned officer in the Yankee army, having received his commission in the seventh year of age, in 1862," an appointment made by Ohio Governor David Tod, naming Handy "Aide-de-Camp to Governor, Cincinnati, Ohio" (Boyd, p. 113-116).

W.T. Handy and his family lived here thirty-five years, until the death of Mrs. Handy (Cromwell, p. 97). It was W.T. Handy that changed the name of the farm from Ridgeway to Chestnut Hall. He remodeled the house by adding wings to the two sides, enlarging the second floor to its current full size, and adding a cupola. Stories are told that Handy would sit in a chair on the elevated walkway around the

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interior of the cupola and watch his horses being trained on the track that was located to the rear of the house. The Harrison County *Courier*, in Dec. 22, 1888, describes Chestnut Hall as “a nursery of the trotter”. This article goes on to say,

Mr. Handy means to draw buyers to him by demonstrating that he does breed and make ready for the road and track the class of harness horses most desirable....He has not entered upon the business as a past time, but as a serious life work, which must necessarily draw largely upon his time, his patience and his purse. The main barn is an entirely new and rather expensive structure. The stalls are spacious and are so arranged as to easily [be] kept warm and snug in winter and well ventilated in summer...In the second story of this barn is stored the feed... A second barn is of older date and design, but such changes have been made in it as to make it conform to the requirements of a modern first class breeding establishment.

It is almost certain that the third barn and farthest from the house was added in the late 1800s or early 1900s, after tobacco became a major crop. Surely the remodeling of the house not only provided a larger place for his family but aimed at impressing his clientele for trotters. The barn located closest to the house with many of the stalls still in place today is probably the barn described as new in 1888. The older barn has been inspected by Bill Macintire of the Kentucky Heritage Council, who speculates that “...this central portion is an early barn of the English barn type, a common Antebellum type of barn, now rather unusual to find surviving in central Kentucky. Construction of this building is most likely before 1850, perhaps as early as the 1830’s” (2005 field report).

The *Courier* article talks of the famous Sultan being purchased by W. T. Handy in partnership with W.H. Wilson of Abdallah Park, Cynthiaiana’s own famous race track, established in 1875. Sultan, along with Handy and Wilson, are mentioned in three separate *New York Times* articles dated March 6, 1890, December 12, 1891 and January 22, 1892. The last of these is notice of an auction of over 50 head held in New York City to “close out the TROTTING STUD of Messrs. WILSON & HANDY, Cynthiaiana, Ky.” The auctioneers arranged to have Sultan, in whom Wilson retained ownership, taken to New York and placed on exhibition to heighten interest in the sale.

Clarence LeBus was the next owner of the Handy farm, purchasing it November 29, 1916 and retaining it until his death. R.H. Wills is listed as the next owner of the Handy Farm, purchasing it from the Clarence LeBus estate in January 1932 (Cromwell, p. 97). R.H. Wills, like Handy before him, was also a well-known breeder of trotters. Wills owned the farm about five years, and was most likely the last owner to occupy the grand old house. Two gentlemen, a Mr. Peak and Mr. Florence were the next owners.

Peak and Florence owned the farm until 1945, when it was sold once again to a doctor, Dr. Charles Swinford. Family members tell that Swinford said, as a small boy, that he would one day own the Handy Farm (Conversation with Charles (Doc) Swinford, 02/13/2005). Dr. Swinford owned the property until his death, and it was sold in his widow’s estate in 1998, but had shrunk to 120.99 acres.

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A group of local farmers purchased the property and used the dwelling to house itinerant agricultural workers.

The City of Cynthiana and Harrison County governments purchased the house and surrounding acreage in 2002. These two government bodies have since donated five acres of land for the purpose of building a new local health department, which is currently under construction. The remaining acreage is planned for development of a family style recreational park on the site.

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Handy Farm Bibliography

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- Agricultural Census, Harrison County, Kentucky, 1850, 1860, 1870 & 1880
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- Harrison County, Kentucky, Individual Property Tax Records, various years, 1817-1891
- Harrison County Deed Book 5, p. 45; Book 4, p. 492; Book 45, p. 384;

Newspapers:

- The Courier*, Dec. 22, 1888
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- Kentucky Gazette*, Jan. 16, 1815
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- Gore, Jerry. Report from Freedom Time to Handy House Committee, Feb. 16, 2005
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Verbal Boundary Description:

The area proposed for listing includes 114.99 acres and is designated by the Harrison County Property Valuation Assessor with the map number **102-0000-031-00-000 (Deed Book 264, page 714)**. The property was for many years a 120-acre parcel, and recently a 5-acre parcel was removed from it, a property given map number **102-0000-031-02-000 (Deed Book 269, page 476)**. That 5-acre parcel is **not** proposed for listing.

Boundary Justification:

The area proposed for listing includes the contributing structures and farm fields that historically and visually are related to the property during the period when it achieved its significance. The farm involved an extensive acreage in the nineteenth century, and continued at more than 100 acres of size in the twentieth century. Thus, the proposed boundary for the National Register encloses the primary area that has been historically associated with the property and with which Harrison County residents identify the important people who owned the farm.

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Section number _____ Photo Identification _____ Page 1

Same information for all photos:

Name: Handy Farm

Location: Harrison County, KY

Photographer: Sharon Fowler

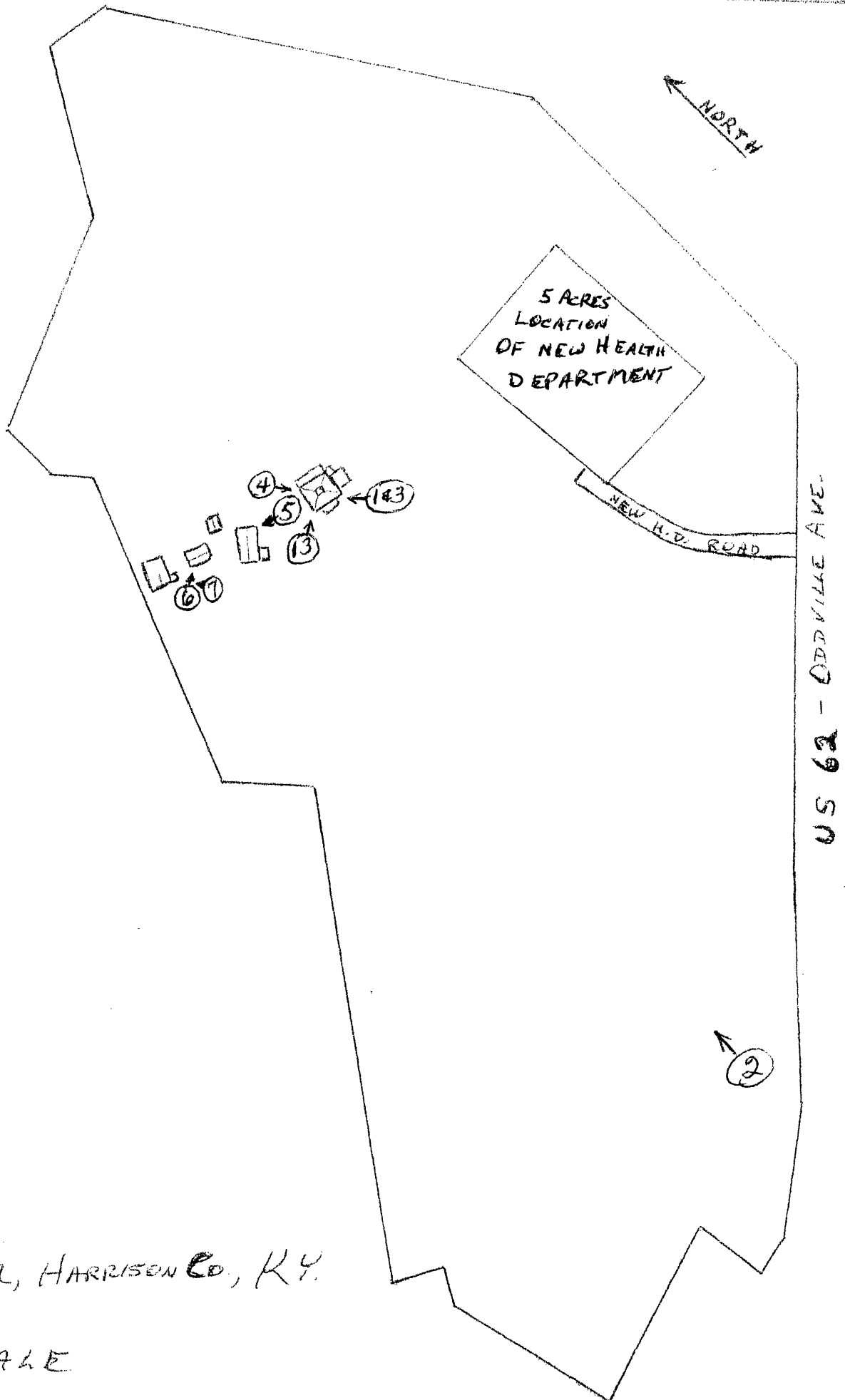
Date: July, 2005

Location of Negatives: Negatives in photographer's possession

Photograph-specific information:

Photo # Photo Direction and Content:

- Photo 1: to northwest: circa 1905, W.T. Handy & family in front of main residence
- Photo 2: to northwest: creek in foreground tobacco barn at left, antebellum barn center, breeding stable barn right, main residence far right
- Photo 3: to northwest: front with porch & east end of house, eastern wing addition on right
- Photo 4: to southeast: rear with porch & west end of house, ghost lines visible from western wing addition, top of basement door barely visible on left corner of west wall, two hand-operated water pumps west of house
- Photo 5: to west: breeding stable barn with shop addition at left, corn crib at right, municipal water tower on adjacent property
- Photo 6: to northeast: antebellum barn with hand-operated water pump, northwest corner of breeding stable barn at far right
- Photo 7: to northwest: tobacco barn with stripping room addition on right and shed addition at left, support structure for municipal water tower on adjacent property at far left
- Photo 8: to northwest: interior of antebellum barn elevated floor with hand hewn joist and stone piers
- Photo 9: to west: interior detail of mortise and tennon framework of antebellum barn
- Photo 10: to southeast: interior of tobacco barn detail of mortise and tennon framework
- Photo 11: to north: interior of breeding stable barn showing intact stalls with loft above
- Photo 12: to west: interior of breeding stable barn looking out one of the stall doors to barnyard
- Photo 13: to northeast: main residence front porch to right & rear porch to left showing ghost lines from western wing addition
- Photo 14: to northeast: dining room mantel, built in cabinet at left
- Photo 15: to southeast: dining room mantel, built in cabinet at left, western exterior door barely visible behind open cabinet door
- Photo 16: to southeast: second floor Victorian mantle
- Photo 17: to north: interior central hallway with stairway and rear exterior door, doorway to rear parlor barely visible at far right
- Photo 18: to south : interior central hallway with front entrance, doorway to front parlor barely visible to left, doorway to drawing room barely visible to right
- Photo 19: to south: wall with entrance and two horizontal-barred windows to corner room in basement, exterior horizontal-barred window visible through doorway
- Photo 20: to west: basement fireplace near corner room and near western exit door, exit doorway barely visible in upper right
- Photo 21: to northeast: north exit door from eastern side of basement to passageway under rear porch, hand hewn log floor joists visible above doorway, second fireplace to right
- Photo 22: to southeast: third fireplace, hand hewn log floor joists visible at upper right, one of the exterior basement windows at right



HANDY FARM, HARRISON CO., KY.

NOT TO SCALE