

PH0200000

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 11 1975
DATE ENTERED	JUL 30 1975

**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



The Locust

AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

LaGrange Road off KY 146

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Pewee Valley

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

04

STATE

Kentucky

VICINITY OF

CODE
021

COUNTY
Oldham

CODE
185

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" 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	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Citizens Fidelity Bank & Trust Co.

STREET & NUMBER

500 W. Jefferson Street

CITY, TOWN

Louisville

VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Oldham County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

LaGrange

STATE

Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE

1971

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

Kentucky

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Locust is located between Highway 22 to the northwest and Highway 146 to the southeast. The Louisville and Nashville Railroad runs parallel to Highway 146. The front of the house is approached through a beautiful tree-lined drive, which gave the place its familiar name.

The west wing of the house is constructed of stone and is believed to have been built circa 1819 (see sketch 1, A). The stone facade faced northeast onto Rollington Road which is now the rear entrance. The corners of the west wing are reinforced by flush quoins, which are repeated around the door and window on the east side. The original portion of the house was ell-shaped and consisted of seven rooms with twenty-two-inch-thick stone partitions. There was a kitchen and hall downstairs and sleeping rooms aloft. In the kitchen was a baking oven. The ceilings in the old section are eight feet high.

A brick addition was made around 1834. The addition adjoins the house at the east side of the rear ell of the original structure.

The second 19th-century addition which is in fact larger than the original portion, is said to date from 1834 and to have had Federal architectural traits. The grandiose proportions, an ample square-headed entrance, and plain millwork all suggest, however, a mid-19th century date. This part of the complex has a low-hipped roof and two chimneys on each side. There was a central hall with two rooms off each side and an enclosed stairway at the right and to the rear of the house (see sketch 1, B). There was also a fireplace in each room. The ceilings in the brick portion are eleven feet high. It was probably at this time that the main entrance to the house was reoriented to the southeast.

Many other additions and alterations took place over the years, but it is uncertain when they occurred. It is known that in 1903 Powhatan Wooldridge expanded the east front room of the 1834 addition to make a library. He installed a large part-brick and part-stone chimney. It is probable that he also added two rooms off the rear of the back east room of the 1834 addition.

The probable ell of the early portion was altered, perhaps in 1903 or earlier, to contain a single large room whose tongue-in-groove timbered ceiling extends up under the roof. This room also has an interesting late 19th-century mantelpiece.

Like the portico at George Washington's Mount Vernon, which it superficially resembles, the north portico serves at first glance to unify the interesting diversity of openings in the facade of the oldest wing, most of which have a variety of sills and lintels apparently dating from different phases of alteration.

The older wing is linked to the rear portion of the main block by an enclosed porch whose main feature is an enormous rustic stone chimney.

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

SPECIFIC DATES **circa 1819; 1834**

BUILDER/ARCHITECT **unknown**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Locust is located in the rural community of Pewee Valley, Kentucky, ten miles east of Louisville. Pewee Valley developed as a popular summer resort for the wealthy families of Louisville in the late 19th century. The town was easily accessible by train, for the Louisville & Nashville Railroad runs through the town. Although the railroad has been superseded by highways, it retains both a sense of identity and rural landscaping. The Locust is an interesting example of the evolution of architecture in Kentucky. The house spans several different periods, from the early settlement through the Victorian era to the 20th century. The house is important in the history of Pewee Valley and is one of the few remaining grand houses in the area. Like many places in Pewee Valley, it is associated with the Little Colonel stories by Annie Fellows Johnston. The house is the fictional home of the Little Colonel's grandfather who was in real life Colonel Weissinger, Civil War veteran and lawyer. Hundreds of people still drive by today to view the house that was made famous in Annie Fellows Johnston's stories.

The property on which the Locust is built was originally part of a 4,000-acre land grant which was granted to Samuel Beall in 1784 by Patrick Henry. Beall sold several hundred acres of the land to George Nicholas (? - 1799), the prominent lawyer and first Attorney General of Kentucky. Nicholas never paid the purchase price and contracted 200 acres to Robert Wooden, who took possession of the land during Nicholas' lifetime and made valuable improvements on it. The date of the deed is 1819. It is indicated that this is probably when the stone portion of the house was constructed, although there is a tradition that this structure and the stone springhouse nearby date from considerably earlier.

The house changed owners many times after 1834 when Robert Wooden sold it to John Howell. In 1850 the estate, which included a number of slaves, was auctioned. The auction was the result of a suit filed by the owner's wife, Ann Gough, against her husband and his heirs. It took place in compliance with an order of the Oldham County Court. After the auction the house changed hands several times, until 1857 when Jonas H. Rhorer purchased the property. Rhorer, like many of the prominent residents of Pewee Valley in the late 19th century, was from Louisville and had a number of large landholdings in the area. Apparently in 1873 Rhorer encountered some financial difficulties as did so many others, because he mortgaged the land to S. J. Hobbs and again in 1876 to J. T. Speed.

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The Locust

Although one-story tall, the front portico is perhaps intended to resemble that at Mt. Vernon, particularly with its "Chinese Chippendale" balustrade, no doubt an imitation of that added to George Washington's portico by Bushrod Washington in the early 19th century and removed during a later restoration.

When the Martins purchased the house in 1941, they made extensive changes in an attempt to restore parts of the house to their earlier appearance. They removed several rooms that had been added onto the rear. At some point over the years the stone and brick work of the house had been covered in stucco. The Martins had it removed and the stone and brick mortar was repointed. In the interior of the house they replaced later doors with the originals, which were found in an outbuilding, and removed the enclosed stairway.

The bedroom reputedly used by the Little Colonel is in the oldest section, the west wing. The room has a little door opening onto a balcony which can be seen to the left of the present entrance of the house.

In spite of the mid-20th-century attempts to unify the various wings and to evoke a hypothetical early date of construction, the rambling structure retains both inside and out, an interesting sense of diversity, particularly in the contrast between the relatively small low, ceilinged chambers of the northwest portion and spacious rooms of the later main blocks. The changes in orientation are also reflected in the intricate series of passages and changing levels that connect the wings.

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PAGE 2

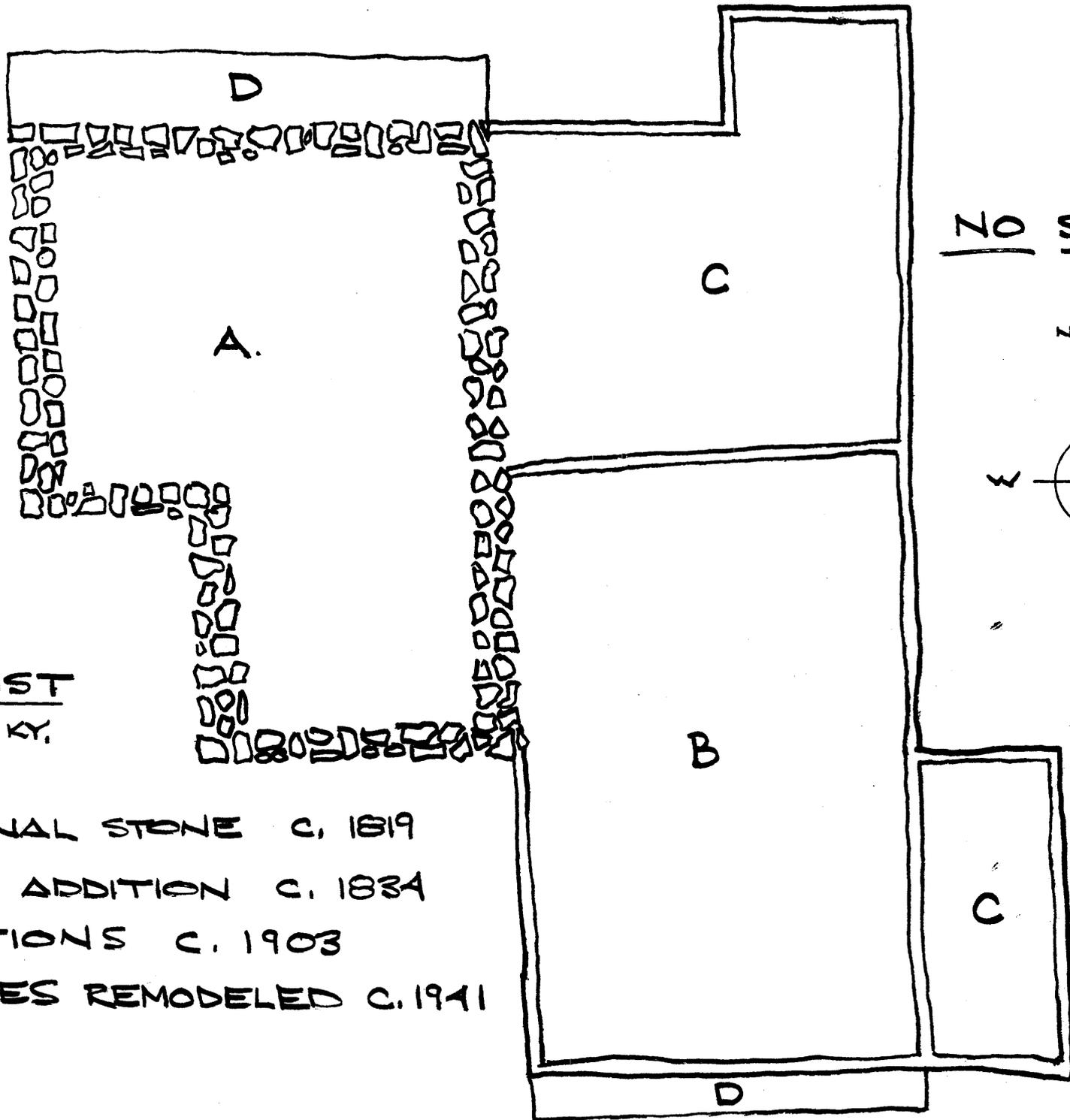
The Locust

In 1882 The Locust was left in trust to Mary K. Harris, the wife of Thomas A. Harris. Harris was a Confederate Brigadier General and later served as a Confederate State Senator from Missouri, his home state. During the latter part of the Civil War he was a member of the Confederate mission to England. After the war he came to Kentucky as an engineer in the construction of what is now the L & N Railroad from LaGrange (just east of Pewee Valley in Oldham County) to Cincinnati, Ohio.

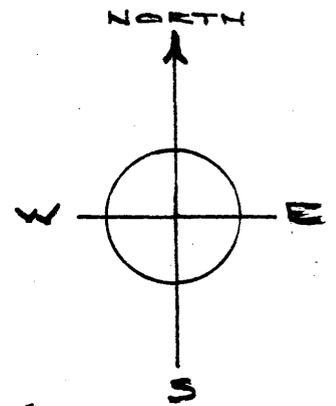
Colonel Weissinger was living at The Locust in 1894 when Annie Fellows Johnston made her first visit to Pewee Valley and received the impressions which inspired her to write the Little Colonel stories. The novel, The Little Colonel, which was made into a movie in 1939 starring Shirley Temple, revived the nostalgic image of Pewee Valley and The Locust for several generations. The series consists of light stories which follow the development of a mischievous little girl into a young lady. The stories actually take place in the late 19th century, but Annie Fellows Johnston recreates a nostalgic mood of ante-bellum days, when leisure and hospitality were the most important things in life and entertaining was done on a large scale.

The Locust, as the fictional home of Colonel Weissinger became a symbol of this style of life. The stories attracted a great deal of attention in America and abroad when they were published at the turn of the century. Many people still come today to see the house where the Little Colonel's grandfather lived. Although Colonel Weissinger never actually owned The Locust, he rented the property during the 1890s when Pewee Valley was a favorite summer resort for many prominent Louisville families.

In 1903 Harris' widow sold the house to Powhatan Wooldridge, who retained possession of it until 1941 when Mr. and Mrs. Carl Martin purchased it. The Martins were very interested in the history of the house and made extensive changes in an attempt to recreate the mood of the house in the 1890s when the Little Colonel stories were written. At the death of Mrs. Martin in 1973 the estate was put in trust at the Citizens Fidelity Bank in Louisville and is now for sale. It has been vacant for the last two years.



NO SCALE



THE LOCUST
PEWEE VALLEY, KY.

- A. ORIGINAL STONE C. 1819
- B. BRICK ADDITION C. 1834
- C. ADDITIONS C. 1903
- D. PORCHES REMODELED C. 1941

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME

HISTORIC

The Locust

AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Pewee Valley

___ VICINITY OF

COUNTY
Oldham

STATE
Kentucky

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE Atlas of Jefferson and Oldham Counties, Kentucky. Philadelphia: Beers
& Lanagan, 1879.

SCALE

50 rods to the inch

DATE

4 REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES