

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JUN 25 1980  
DATE ENTERED AUG 11 1980

**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

James J. Sweeney House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

121 East Fifth Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Owensboro

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2

VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

CODE  
021

COUNTY

Daviess

CODE

059

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

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

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

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

**PRESENT USE**

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

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Dr. David Young

STREET & NUMBER

121 East Fifth Street

CITY, TOWN

Owensboro

VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Daviess County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Owensboro

STATE

Kentucky

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE

Summer 1977

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		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located on the northwest corner of Fifth and Lewis streets in Owensboro, Kentucky, the James J. Sweeney house lies to the south and east of the business section of downtown Owensboro in a mixed commercial and residential area. Owensboro (population 51,400, 1970 census) is located on the Ohio River, approximately ninety miles downriver from Louisville.

Facing southward, the 1893 Queen Anne structure is a pyramidal roofed block composed of brick with rough-faced stone trim (see photo 1). The three-story polygonal tower on the southeast corner dominates the facade. A polygonal bay projects from the east elevation. Window openings are of various shapes and sizes with an assortment of decorative eclectic elements (see photos 2 and 3). Beveled and stained glass is used lavishly throughout the house. The entrance is sheltered by a pedimented porch consisting of fluted columns and an intricately carved gable (see photo 4).

The interior retains the original woodwork, parquet floors, hardware, and lighting fixtures. The entrance hall has a colorful tile floor (see photo 5), a tile fireplace with a gas grate (see photo 6), and intricately worked ornamental latticework. Fireplace surrounds in the parlor and the dining room are also tile and the elaborately turned and carved mantels remain intact.

The nominated acreage consists of the city lot under single ownership.

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

SPECIFIC DATES      1893                                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      Drach and Thomas

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The James J. Sweeney house ranks among the finest extant examples of late nineteenth century domestic architecture in Owensboro, Kentucky.<sup>1</sup> Constructed in 1893 by the Louisville architectural firm of Drach and Thomas, the building embodies the basic elements of the Queen Anne style, displaying a polygonal tower and projecting bays. Details include stained and beveled glass, parquetry floors, colored tiles, and elaborate interior woodwork. Owensboro has relatively few architecturally or historically significant residences remaining in the downtown area, and this fact coupled with the local awareness of and pride in the house render it a community landmark.

Situated on the Ohio River, Daviess County was formed in 1815 and is one of the largest counties in the state in area. Owensboro, the county seat, was incorporated in 1817 and developed during the nineteenth century as a market for tobacco and a center for distilling bourbon whiskey. By the turn of the century, the city boasted twelve distilleries and twenty-five tobacco stemmeries.

The original owner of the house, James J. Sweeney, was an Owensboro lawyer. He began his practice in partnership with his father William N. Sweeney, a prominent local attorney, and his brother William C. Sweeney. At his father's death in 1895, James Sweeney entered into partnership with William F. Ellis. Sweeney's residence was designed by the Louisville architectural firm of Drach and Thomas who a few years later, as Drach, Thomas, and Bohne, designed the D. D. Bogard house (listed in the National Register 22 May 1980) one block to the north.

Having functioned as a residence for over seventy years, the house was converted into a restaurant during the last decade. However within the last year, the Sweeney house has been resold and the present owner is currently rehabilitating the building for use as a private residence again.

<sup>1</sup>Owensboro and Daviess County were comprehensively surveyed by the Kentucky Heritage Commission in 1977.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Collins, Lewis and Richard. History of Kentucky. 2 vols. Reprint ed. Berea, Kentucky: Kentucke Imprints, 1976.
- History of Daviess County, Kentucky. Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co., 1883.
- Kentucky State Gazetteer & Business Directory. 1879-1880; 1883-84; 1895-96.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Owensboro East

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 490420 4180300  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B                 
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C               

D               

E               

F               

G               

H               

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot # 2, Block 5  
 Owensboro Property Identification Map 1-2. Outlined in red on map.

## 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

Charlotte Schneider, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Kentucky Heritage Commission

DATE

June 1980

STREET & NUMBER

104 Bridge Street

TELEPHONE

(502) 564-3741

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Donna C. Hopkins

TITLE

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

6-19-80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. Ray Juce  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

8/11/80

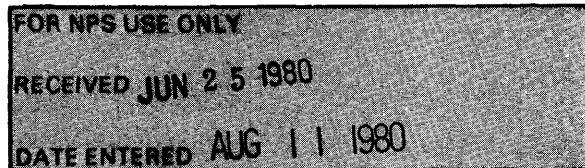
ATTEST: Kristin O'Connell  
 CURATOR

DATE

7/24/80

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



James J. Sweeney House

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

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Levin, H., ed. The Lawyers and Lawmakers of Kentucky. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1897.

Lipscomb, Alexander B. The Commercial History of the Southern States. Louisville: Press of John P. Morton, 1903.

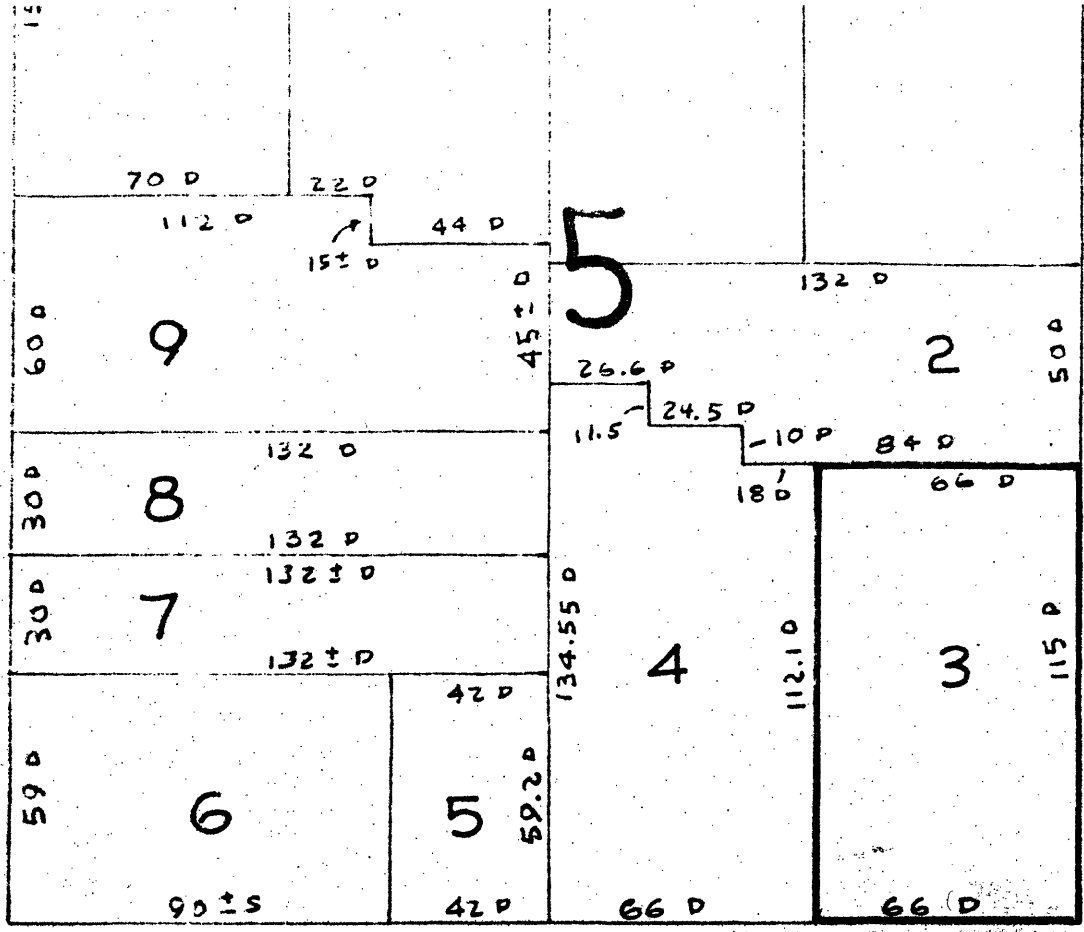
Louisville of Today. Louisville: Consolidated Industries Co., 1895.

Potter, Hugh O. History of Owensboro and Daviess County, Kentucky. Louisville: Herff Jones-Paragon Publishing, 1974.

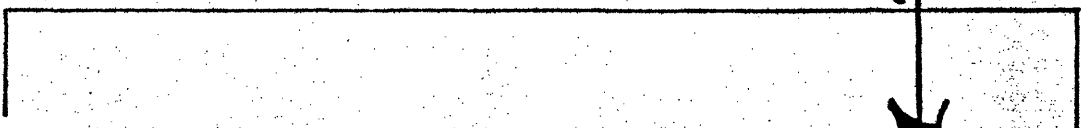
The Inland Architect and News Record. Vol. XXI, No. 5, June 1893.

DAVIES

LEWIS



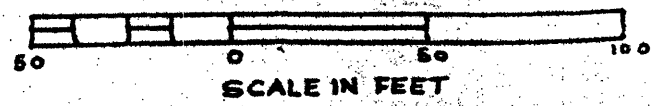
Fifth Street



PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION MAP  
OWENSBORO

1-2

JUN 25 1980  
AUG 11 1980



REVISIONS

James J. Sweeney House  
Owensboro, Kentucky  
Property Identification Map (1955)  
1 inch=50 feet