

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAR 23 1976
DATE ENTERED	APR 21 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

**** HISTORIC**
Jack Thomas House

AND/OR COMMON
The Gardner Place

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
108 East Main Street

CITY, TOWN
Leitchfield

STATE
Kentucky

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

___ VICINITY OF
CODE

COUNTY
Grayson

CODE
085

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Apartments

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Mrs. Jacqueline Jones Barrier

STREET & NUMBER
1219 Whitney Drive

CITY, TOWN
Columbia

___ VICINITY OF

STATE
Tennessee 38401

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Grayson County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Leitchfield

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Jack Thomas House is located a block east of the courthouse square of Leitchfield, county seat of Grayson County in western Kentucky (see Map 2). The town is a very small one, although recent development has caused sprawling expansion on the north side of the town and along a strip leading to the Western Kentucky Parkway on the south. The Thomas house is on the south side of a short block, virtually a cul-de-sac, that ends just east of the house, blocked by the former two-story city hall, with a sharp drop into a ravine beyond. On this short block are also the city jail and the former police headquarters. There are parking lots immediately east and west of the fairly large lot on which the house is situated. The property includes an open field to the south, beyond which lies the local hospital, a one-story brick structure in need of space for expansion.

The Thomas house is set only a few feet from the sidewalk. There is a fine but dilapidated castiron fence on a stone base between the house and the sidewalk. Several large trees still stand on the property, which is slightly wider on the west side of the house. Since the house faces north and the sidewalk is several feet above the street at this point, it is difficult to photograph the facade effectively (see photo 1).

It is believed that the original portion of the house is the one-story brick wing that later functioned as an ell to the main block. This early structure probably had two rooms on the first story arranged on the hall-and-parlor plan, with a low loft above. There was a chimney at the south end, now truncated by the frame addition above, flanked by small square lookout windows in the attic. Traces of these, as well as other openings in the south wall, remain in the brickwork (see photo 3). Presumably there was another chimney at the north end of the original house, which faced east toward the old road along the top of the cliff. Under the ceiling of the two-story gallery that was added to the western side of the early structure when the second story was superimposed remains the original cornice. It has two recessed rows of brick set with their corners out to form what might be called diagonal dentils--a vernacular version of the classical Georgian cornice also found elsewhere in the area. Although the interior woodwork and window-frames have been altered, three original doorframes survive in the oldest portion of the building. A frame with fine panels in the recess is approximately centered on the original east front; finely reeded frames are on the east front south room and the center of the west side of the ell.

Although it is the ell that constitutes the basis for the claim that this is the oldest brick residence in Leitchfield, the large two-story five-bay brick front block must also have been added at an early date on stylistic grounds. The evidence consists mainly in the brickwork around the square openings which were inserted later: the main entrance and window (or door) above were originally of "Palladian" form, having a central semicircular fanlight with narrow straight-topped sidelights. Some of the curved and all the adjacent

(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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1810; 1870s

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Jack Thomas House incorporates the earliest brick house in Grayson County and is the second oldest residence still standing in Leitchfield, the county seat. Grayson County was formed in 1810, and Jack Thomas became under rather colorful circumstances the first county Circuit Court clerk, as well as clerk of the Grayson County court, that same year. He held these positions until 1851. The original portion of the house was probably built shortly after 1810 and faced east; it is now the first story of the ell of the larger two-story north block, which also appears to have been of early date. The house later belonged to George H. Gardner, a prominent local merchant who was probably responsible for the conversion of the residence from the Federal style to conform with late 19th-century Victorian taste. In spite of these alterations, however, the building retains certain tell-tale early features--such as traces of superimposed Palladian doorways on the facade--very rare in the western part of the State. The later additions, particularly a delicate castiron front porch, also have a charm of their own.

Jack Thomas (1790-1865) seems to have been fortunate in his family, friends, and colleagues. He was an early protégé of Major Benjamin Helm, County and Circuit Court Clerk of Hardin County and member of a wealthy and influential county family. He was also a distant relative, lifelong friend, and close colleague of Samuel Haycraft, Jr. (1795-1878), lawyer, State Senator, Hardin County Court and Circuit Court Clerk, and chronicler of Elizabethtown, county seat of Hardin County from which most of Grayson County was formed. It is to Haycraft that we owe most of our knowledge of Thomas' life and career.

According to Haycraft, Jack Thomas was one of the sons of Hardin Thomas and Hetty Garrard, a daughter of one of the first Baptist preachers in Kentucky.* Hardin Thomas' mother's family, the Hardins, were from Pennsylvania. His father's family included several prominent persons, but Hardin Thomas himself was apparently best-known as a pious, honest, and industrious farmer in the Elizabethtown area.

The following obituary letter is in Haycraft's characteristic Victorian literary style (for which he was noted in his own day), but the depth of his feeling as well as many of the circumstances of Jack Thomas' life nevertheless come through effectively:

*See the National Register nomination form on the Severn's Valley (First Baptist) Church in Elizabethtown, listed on Dec. 31, 1974.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Biographical Encyclopedia of Kentucky of the Dead and Living Men of the Nineteenth Century. Cincinnati: J. M. Armstrong & Co., 1879.

Collins, Lewis. Historical Sketches of Kentucky Maysville, Kentucky: The Author, 1847.

Collins, Richard H. History of Kentucky. 2 vols., Covington: Collins & Co., 1874.

Hathaway, Beverly West. Inventory of County Records of Kentucky. (continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately 2 acres
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	5,6,2	5,5,0	4,1	4,8	1,4,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING				
C							D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Walter E. Langsam, Architectural Historian

MC

ORGANIZATION

Kentucky Heritage Commission

DATE

March 8, 1976

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

Eldred W. Mellon

TITLE

DATE

3/16/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Acting

Charles R. ...

DATE

4/21/76

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

4-19-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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splayed bricks remain in the wall (not visible in photo 1). Also, at the rear of the central hall was a smaller door with a round-arched top (now bricked up) under the stair landing (see photo 2). On the rear of this block exists the original brick cornice with only one row of diagonal dentils. The front is laid in Flemish bond and the sides and rear in common. The slightly projecting brick foundations are a single brick higher than that of the older wing. The front block has inset centered chimneys and only attic lookout windows on the end walls.

Presumably when the north block was added the original was adapted as a service wing.

A striking feature of the construction of the house is the log joists that support the first floor. Visible in the basement under the main block, they are of absolutely uniform dimensions, three-quarter round (flattened on top) and stripped of their bark.

Aside from the simple staircase (much of which is presently--but not necessarily permanently--enclosed to separate apartments on the first and second stories), with its landing over the rear round-arched door, no original woodwork is observable in the main block. Evidence of chair-railing remains in the cupboards that flank the chimneys, however.

In the 1870s or '80s the house was considerably altered, although all the original walls remain. A shallow three-bay castiron porch of considerable appeal was added at the north entrance: its six supports consist of open bundles of rods jointed regularly every foot and a half or so. The Palladian sidelights were bricked up and the central openings made rectangular on both floors. The front (north) wall was slightly raised, the presumed dentillated cornice removed, and paired Italianate brackets placed under the eaves. The eaves were also extended over the gables on the ends. The front windows were lengthened and large four-pane Victorian sash inserted. Bracketted castiron lintels were added on the front, those on the first floor having rather handsome ornamental cresting. The rear door was bricked up, as has been pointed out, but otherwise the rear (south) facade of the main block was not "modernized" like the front.

Probably at the same time, a frame addition was placed over the brick ell. On the west side of the ell, the materials are unified by the two-story gallery which has plain posts and an outside stairway within it. (One-story porches and a small bathroom wing on the east side of the ell are of recent construction.)

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A thorough Victorianization of the interior also took place in the 1870s or '80s, with all woodwork being replaced by heavy but plain moldings of the period. There are a number of typical round-arched castiron mantels and grates throughout. At the turn of the century other slight changes were made. The front entrance has opalescent glass panels on one side and there is a mantel of the period in the northeast corner parlor.

It may be pointed out that the lack of early interior features might allow greater freedom in the adaptation of the inside of the house for new functions, since the alterations, many of which are about a century old, are not distinguished in themselves. The combination of early and 19th-century features on the exterior, however, has considerable interest of its own.

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Elizabethtown, July 9, 1865

Editor Louisville Democrat:

I have just learned that my old friend and relation, Jack Thomas, Esq., departed this life at his residence in Leitchfield, Grayson County, Ky., on the 5th day of July, 1865.

If a man could imagine how he would feel on losing one-half of himself, and yet survive, it might probably approximate my sense of bereavement, by this dispensation of Providence.

Jack Thomas and myself commenced this world poor boys together in the early existence of the state. He was born on the 7th day of February, 1790. His father resided in a house the joiner's work of which was done by Thomas Lincoln, father of the President.

While Jack was at school (in town) the late Ben Helm, Esq., needed a deputy in 1807 or 1808. He went to the schoolroom and examined the copy books; the result was that my friend, a ruddy, handsome lad, was chosen as deputy, and a better choice could not have been made in searching the state.

In October I entered the same office and at once fell in love with Jack, and from that day until the day of his death he and myself were inseparable and devoted friends.

In May, 1810, he was appointed clerk of Grayson Circuit Court; also in the same year clerk of the County Court. Soon after (in 1817) I became clerk of the courts in Hardin County. We commenced an interchange of services, he assisting me three terms in Hardin and I assisting him three terms in Grayson each year.

This interchange continued many years, and if I knew any man to the bottom of his soul it was Jack Thomas. He carried his heart in his hand--open, generous, frank. If he knew of anything of the arts of duplicity, concealment or deception, I never knew him to avail himself of it. He was a gentleman of the olden time. In due time we each had a family, and each of our houses was the other's welcome home.

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Until he was down by disease he was the personification of innocent hilarity and cheerfulness; his house was the seat of refined and generous hospitality, and nobody could know Jack Thomas as I did without loving and admiring him. He was proverbially an honest, upright man—liberal and charitable to a fault, making all his associates around him easy and happy.

He was fortunate in the choice of a wife, Miss Jane Hundley, who proved to be in the truest sense of the word a helpmate indeed, and for more than fifty years stood by him, the true hearted, painstaking, assiduous and profitable wife and devoted Christian. They literally lived for their children and united their counsels for promoting their interest, their chief aim being that they might occupy a respectable stand in society. The family consisted of five sons and three daughters, who all surround their father with many grandchildren.

The season of joy to the united couple was the periodical family gatherings as the sons and daughters stole off from the busy turmoils of life for a season of repose under the parental roof. Aye, those were seasons of happiness that were felt by others as well as the household and enlivened Leitchfield, and suffice it to say that in the close of life he could look back upon his descendants without the pain of seeing a solitary blot and the most of them pushing forward and making their mark in the world....

Samuel Haycraft

The first term of the Grayson Circuit Court was held in May 1810 in the woods where Leitchfield now stands, and the Hon. Henry B. Broadenax was the first Circuit Judge. An account of the first Circuit Court has been left in the handwriting of Edwin Thomas, Sr., who was a son of Jack Thomas, and who succeeded him as county and circuit clerk of Grayson County. Edwin Thomas obtained the information from his father, who was present at the first term of the Grayson Circuit Court. Edwin Thomas held these two offices for a period of twenty-nine years, making the tenure of office of Jack Thomas and Edwin Thomas a total of seventy years.

The first Circuit Court held in the county was organized and held in Leitchfield in May, 1810, in the woods on top of the hill northwest of "The Big Spring," and east

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of where Daniel Barton's house stood, now Harvey Jackson's. A square plain poplar table, carried to Town by an old Negro man named Harry, the slave of Lewis Willis, was sat down by the side of a big log, and the Court was opened and held by Judge Henry P. Broadenax, the Circuit Judge of the Judicial District, and two associate Judges named Ewing and Keller, citizens of Grayson County. These two associate Judges were called "teasers" for the Circuit Judge and would occupy seats on the bench with the Circuit Judge or not as they pleased. The first thing done after Court was called to order, the Judge appointed Ben Hardin, of Bardstown, Ky., Commonwealth's attorney, who was dressed in a suit of home made buck skin clothes, who was sworn by the Judge.

The Judge then announced that the appointment of a Clerk of the Circuit Court was the next thing in order, and asked if there were any candidates or applicants for the office. My father, Jack Thomas, and James W. Thornsberry, both young men, stepped forward and said they were candidates for the office. Judge Broadenax then said, "Gentlemen, the Constitution of Kentucky requires that before you can be appointed to the office of Clerk of a Circuit or County Court, you must be twenty-one years of age, and have a certificate of your qualification for the office from the Judges of the Court of Appeals. Now gentlemen, are each of you twenty-one years of age, and have you the required certificate?" Mr. Thornsberry responded that he was twenty-one years of age and had the required certificate, and handed it to the Judge. Jack Thomas said that he was only twenty years old and that he did not have any certificate of his qualification. Judge Broadenax then said, "Mr. Thomas, agreeable to the Constitution of Kentucky you are not eligible to be appointed Clerk of this Court, and therefore I shall cast my vote for Mr. Thornsberry."

The two associate Judges, Ewing and Keller, then asked Ben Hardin, the Attorney for the Commonwealth, if there was any way that they could lawfully vote for or appoint Mr. Thomas Clerk, and Mr. Hardin said you can appoint him Clerk Pro-tem, until he arrives to the age of twenty-one, and gets the required certificate, and thereupon the two associate Judges voted for Jack Thomas, and he was declared the Clerk Pro-tem of the Grayson Circuit Court.

Jack Thomas was from Elizabethtown, Ky, being a Deputy Clerk in the office of Ben Helm, then the Clerk of the Hardin County and Circuit Courts. Judge Broadenax had sent to the state of Virginia for young Mr. Thornsberry to come here and he would appoint him Clerk of the Grayson Circuit Court.

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The decision of Mr. Hardin made Judge Broadenax mad, and he said to Mr. Hardin, "If I had known that you were going to make that kind of decision I never would have appointed you Attorney for the Commonwealth."

The Judge as soon as he had fully organized the Court by swearing and charging the Grand Jury, he directed the Clerk to note upon the records his absence from the bench, and always after that he would open Court and then direct the Clerk to note his absence until Jack Thomas arrived to the age of twenty-one years, and produced in Court a Certificate of his qualifications from the Judges of the Court of Appeals. He then appointed Jack Thomas Clerk, which office he held until May, 1851.

In spite of the ad-hoc nature of the first circuit court in Grayson County as described above, both the county and the circuit courts were, of course, among the major institutions of early Kentucky life. The county circuit courts were established in 1802 to replace the district courts (as they were then known) and the quarter-session courts that had been inherited from Virginia when Kentucky became a State in 1792. In general, their power was over all cases at common law and chancery; power to award injunctions, habeas corpus, and appeals from felony and roads cases. They usually met two or three times a year in each county within their territory, whereas the county courts met during most of the other months. The circuit courts were staffed by judges who were not justices of the peace.

The role, however, of the county circuit courts must be seen in the context of the local county court system which, as Robert M. Ireland describes it in his useful monograph, The County Courts in Antebellum Kentucky, was intimately involved with the every day realities of life in the Commonwealth:

The county courts affected the people of antebellum Kentucky more profoundly than any other governmental institution. . . . The business of the county courts was substantial, encompassing executive, legislative, and judicial functions. The most significant and sometimes controversial elements of the jurisdiction of the courts were wills and estates, the poor and the vagrant, guardians and apprentices, ferries, milldams, bastardy, emancipation, Negro felonies, the fining of officers, appeals from magistrates, roads, taxes, appropriations, towns and patronage. . . . The miller, the apprentice, the land speculator, the profligate, the vagrant, the poor, the taxpayer, the orphan, and the slave all dealt with the local tribunals. The business of the

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courts encompassed a series of legal specialties in combination with significant prerogatives of government and patronage.

Despite their great powers, the courts were not without countervailing institutions. The governor served as a check on their dispensation of county patronage. The legislature delegated and withdrew the courts' authority and on occasion established superseding agencies such as cities, incorporated towns, and turnpike companies. The Court of Appeals and the circuit courts, when duly petitioned, reviewed their judicial decisions in most of the areas cited above⁷. (Ireland, pp. 3, 10, 18-34, 171)

The circuit courts' power of review concerned not only conflicts between counties or their courts, but also larger jurisdiction in many of these areas, sometimes enroute to the Court of Appeals. Even prior to the judicial reform effected by the Constitutional Convention of 1849, many of these areas--such as vagrancy in 1839 and prosecutions for alleged felonies against slaves in 1819--were increasingly placed in the hands of the circuit courts. Thus, not only the county courts, but the circuit courts and the county circuit clerks, such as Thomas, who handled the local business of the courts between sessions, were much involved with the life of the community and had a considerable degree of responsibility for the welfare of their fellow citizens.

It is believed that Jack Thomas built the first part of his house in Leitchfield shortly after becoming court and circuit court clerk. This, the first brick house to be erected in Grayson County, was probably the rear ell of the present brick house and is now submerged beneath later frame additions above and on three sides. The original wing faced east, presumably toward the old road that ran along the cliff on that side. It was a low one-story two-room building with a loft above. The south gable end retains traces of lookout windows, the chimney, and other openings now bricked up (see photo 3), and the interior has been much altered. Three fine early doorframes--two reeded and one panelled--survive, however, and under the ceiling of the porch attached on the west side is the original dentillated brick cornice--a feature found particularly often in the early 19th-century construction in southwestern Kentucky (see also the National Register nomination form on the Cedars The Benjamin Lone Rogers House⁷, an 1840 farmhouse near Leitchfield, approved at the State level on October 21, 1975).

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Probably within the first quarter of the 19th century Thomas added a large two-story brick wing north of the original structure facing onto East Main Street a block from the courthouse. The north facade is close to the street, suggesting the urbanistic ambitions of the town's first citizens. This wing must have been a superb Federal structure. Again, Victorian alterations have obliterated most of the early interior features and changed the apparent character of the exterior. Nevertheless, enough of the original brick survives to prove that there were originally two fine Palladian features--the entrance below with a window above--in the center of the five-bay north facade (see photo 1). (There was also a smaller round-arched door without the Palladian sidelights at the rear of the central hall under the landing of the staircase; it too is now bricked up; see photo 2.)

The original treatment of the north facade is a rare, if not unique arrangement in surviving early Kentucky architecture, although it fits within the context of Federal design in the State, which often features almost playful superimpositions and variants of the Palladian motif. In most cases, however, the Palladian pattern of a semicircular arch flanked by narrower rectangular openings was assimilated into a semicircular or elliptical fanlight on at least one story, or there was some other arrangement of the doorcase with the Palladian feature only on the second story. Such treatments of Palladian or pseudo-Palladian features is particularly characteristic of the early brick townhouses and mansions in Bardstown in nearby Nelson County (see, for instance, the National Register nomination form on Edgewood /The Ben Hardin House/ in Bardstown, listed on the Register July 30, 1975), as well as in central Kentucky as a whole.

Whereas these refined classical features indicate the elegance of the original design of the Jack Thomas house, the presence of dozens of absolutely uniform logs as floor joists under the main block suggests the vast choice of timber (for which Grayson County was noted) the builders still had on the barely-developed frontier.

Additional information on Jack Thomas' son Edwin, who succeeded his father as county and circuit clerk and also lived in the residence on East Main street, is given in the 1878 Biographical Encyclopedia of Kentucky of the Dead and Living Men of the Nineteenth Century:

Edwin Thomas was raised in Litchfield /sic/, and received an ordinary English education. At the age of fifteen he began to write in the clerk's office, under his father; from 1841 to 1851, was deputy clerk, and has since been continually elected

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clerk by the people. In politics, he belonged to the Whig party until its dissolution, and, since the war, has been identified with the Democracy, taking a prominent part in all the political movements of his county, having been for fifteen years Chairman of the Democratic Executive Committee. He is one of the most thoroughly well informed men, and is the standard authority, on political matters and general business history, of the county. He has never been married.

Mrs. Jack Thomas lived in the house until her death in 1872, when it was sold to William Evans, who ran a general store in Leitchfield. In 1884 the property was sold to George H. ("Bent") Gardner. Gardner warranted a biographical notice in Kentucky, A History of the State, one of a series published by Perrin, Battle, and Kniffin. The Grayson County volume was published in 1886, shortly after Gardner bought the house.

George H. Gardner, son of Abram S. and Mary E. (Showers) Gardner, is the fifth of thirteen children, and was born near Elizabethtown, Ky., October 22, 1842. His parents were born and married in Virginia, and after marriage drove in a buggy to Elizabethtown, Hardin County, where the father opened a tailor shop. He continued so engaged for several years; was then appointed sheriff of Hardin County and served eight years. He resided on his farm, five miles northwest of Elizabethtown, until October, 1851, when he moved to Stephensburgh and embarked in the general merchandise business, which he continued until his death, September 13, 1876. George H. was reared in Stephensburgh, and assisted his father until twenty-one years of age, when he went to Munfordville, Ky., and entered the employ of F. A. Smith, a general merchant of that town, with whom he remained three and one-half years. In April, 1867, he went to Big Clifty and formed a partnership with his brother, Thomas S. Gardner, in the general merchandise business under the firm name of G. H. Gardner & Bro., and continued the partnership for seven years. In August, 1874, he was elected sheriff of Grayson County, and re-elected in August, 1876. After the expiration of his term he was engaged in various speculations until May, 1881, when, in partnership with his brother, he purchased a steam flouring mill, in which business he is interested. In August, 1884, he was again elected sheriff of the county, and is the present incumbent. In 1874 he became a member of Lodge 236, A. F. & A. M. January 19, 1871, he was married in Hardin County, by Rev. Collier, to Cynthia, eldest daughter of John and Louisa Richards. By this union six children were born: Harvey S., John A., Wilber F., Thomas H., Frank S. and James Stanley. Mr. and Mrs. Gardner are members of the Methodist Episcopal and Christian Churches, respectively.

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Gardner later became the founder and president of the Leitchfield Deposit Bank.

Either he or Evans must have added the interesting castiron entrance porch, raised the front cornice and inserted brackets, superimposed a frame wing on the original brick ell, and made other changes including the replacement of the Palladian doorways by square ones, in an effort to bring the design up to contemporary standards. Many of the earlier houses of central western Kentucky seem to have been rebuilt in the 1870s or '80s, probably as a result of the impact of the railroads. As a consequence, very few indeed of the early buildings preserve more of their original fabric than the Thomas house. Richard Collins, in his updating of his father Lewis Collins' 1847 Historical Sketches of Kentucky, describes Leitchfield in 1874 as "a thriving town on the Elizabethtown and Paducah railway; incorporated Feb. 5, 1866; population in 1870, 314, but in Jan. 1873, over 500; it contains an elegant new court house," and so forth. Thus, the recasting of the house seems to have been part of a general wave of prosperity at the time.

After Gardner's death the property passed to his daughter, Lucile Gardner Cannon, who sold it in 1920.

In recent years, because of its location--once so advantageous--this house has become no longer suitable as a private residence and has been treated as rental property. Moreover, the land has great commercial value and the property is much in demand for parking. Nevertheless, the present and recent owners have expressed an interest in having it preserved, preferably as an institution serving the public, perhaps as a museum or library of the history of the area. Fortunately, a considerable amount of community interest has been shown in restoration and appropriate adaptive use of the town's major landmark.

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