

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JUL 21 1976  
DATE ENTERED NOV 7 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

**\*\*** Clay Hill (Magoffin-Thompson House)

AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

433 Beaumont Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Harrodsburg

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

06

STATE

Kentucky

VICINITY OF

CODE

021

COUNTY

Mercer

CODE

167

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. Willard Gabhart

STREET & NUMBER

433 Beaumont Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Harrodsburg

VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Mercer County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Harrodsburg

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

Clay Hill is set on a narrow ridge that extends south of the Central Kentucky town of Harrodsburg. The front of the house looks down on the old road from Harrodsburg to Danville; looks down over rolling fields to the east. The setting is very prominent and has remained unspoiled with sweeping lawns and large old trees.

Clay Hill in its original form was a large two-story block with symmetrical one-story wings set back some distance from the facade. The brick is laid in Flemish bond with queen closers at the corners; the mortar is grooved and outlined in white. The front has five bays, the wings two, with an additional entrance on the south wing. There is a relatively short kitchen ell off the rear of the south end of the main block. The foundations are of local stone (see photo 1). The rear of the house is higher above the ground than the front.

The large windows of the facade have six-over-six pane sash and are generously spaced both vertically and horizontally, without a belt course. Except for the main entrance the openings have plain frames and shaped sills and lintels set within the wall surface with header-and-stretcher jack arches. The rear fenestration is somewhat irregular and there are only attic lookouts on the end-walls of the main block and wings.

The doorway, attributed to Matthew Lowery, a local cabinet-maker, is one of the most handsome in Kentucky. Above is a recessed fan-light with thirteen panes said to represent the thirteen original colonies. On either side reeded Doric columns on reeded pedestals support the beaded archivolt and entablature that is decorated with rosettes, sunbursts, and rows of beading (see photo 2). The interior casings framing the tri-panel door and fanlight have vertical bands of reeding.

The most unusual feature of the exterior is the arcade across the rear. According to Rexford Newcomb, "Arcades similar to this are also found at Pleasant Lawn, in Woodford County and Shawnee Springs, an estate about five miles from Harrodsburg (see the National Register nomination form for Shawnee Springs, Mercer County, forwarded to Washington June 17, 1976 ). The arcades at Clay Hill and Pleasant Lawn are carried on brick columns; that at Shawnee Springs on simple brick piers" (Architecture (1953), p. 54). Unlike those at Pleasant Lawn the arches at Clay Hill are regularly spaced and disposed so as to frame the rear entrance with its arched opening. The arches, framed by shaped brick, have radiating voussoirs and are set directly on sturdy stuccoed brick columns on octagonal bases. The effect is rhythmic but rather dense than delicate. One might suspect the arcade to have been part of the Grecian alterations if those at Pleasant Lawn, whose other details are clearly Federal, were not directly part of walls and so indubitably original. There is evidence that the brick walls under the arcade were stuccoed at one time, because the original chair-rail remains intact in this area (see photo 4);

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

SPECIFIC DATES      1812; portico 1850s      BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Clay Hill, built by Beriah Magoffin, Sr., about 1812, was not only the birthplace and early home of his son, Governor Beriah Magoffin, Jr. (1815-1885), but sports one of the most interesting combination of architectural features in the State. Magoffin, Sr., was a prominent and wealthy citizen of Harrodsburg; his son was an outstanding lawyer, and able Governor during the difficult early years of the Civil War, and a prosperous farmer. The house is a splendid Federal mansion with exceptionally fine woodwork attributed to Harrodsburg cabinetmaker Matthew Lowery, and has a handsome and unusual brick arcade at the rear, and an incongruous but intrinsically expert Greek Revival portico on the facade. It is one of the major landmarks of the historic town of Harrodsburg.

Beriah Magoffin, Sr., was originally from County Down, Ireland. He became a successful merchant in Harrodsburg--one of the oldest communities in Kentucky, if not the earliest permanent settlement--and president of the Commonwealth Bank of Kentucky. He married Jane McAfee, daughter of Samuel McAfee, one of the earliest settlers from Virginia in Mercer County.

Magoffin, Sr., acquired about 1,000 acres of land from Jonathan Clark, brother of George Rogers Clark. Clark had purchased it from Issac Hite, whose company followed Captain Harrod's in the exploration and settlement of Kentucky in the spring of 1774. Hite preempted the land at that time. It was on this land that Magoffin, Sr., built his house.

Magoffin's distinguished son, Beriah, Jr., was born at "Clay Hill" in 1815. He was graduated from Centre College in 1835, and then from the law department of Transylvania University. After graduating, Magoffin practiced law in Jackson, Mississippi, for two years. In 1840, he returned to Kentucky and married Anna N. Shelby, granddaughter of Isaac Shelby, the first Governor of Kentucky. Magoffin and his wife lived in Harrodsburg for the rest of their lives in a mansion built for him by his father. (The house was destroyed.) Beriah, Jr. was appointed police judge by Governor Letcher. In 1846, 1848, and 1856, he was Democratic candidate for President Elector, either for his district or for the State at large, and was elected in 1856, casting his vote for Buchanan. In 1850 Magoffin was elected to the State Senate. Magoffin ran for Governor in 1859, defeating Joshua Bell. Beriah Magoffin, Jr., served as Governor through the most eventful and

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Newcomb, Rexford. Architecture of Old Kentucky. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1953.  
Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society. Vol. 10, No. 30, 1912.  
The Biographical Encyclopedia of Kentucky of Dead and Living Men of the late 19th Century  
 Cincinnati: Armstrong & Company, 1878.  
 Additional information from Mrs. Willard Gabhart and Mrs. James Knieghtly.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2 acres  
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	6,9,0	0,7,0	4,1	8,0	9,6,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING				
C							D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mary Cronan, Historian; Walter E. Langsam, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Kentucky Heritage Commission

DATE

July 1976

STREET & NUMBER

104 Bridge Street

TELEPHONE

(502) 564-4452

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

*Edna W. Nelson*

DATE

July 15, 1976

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Attest: *James P. ...*  
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

11/9/96

ATTEST: *W. ...*  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4/2/76

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Clay Hill

CONTINUATION SHEET

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such a treatment (like that at Pleasant Lawn) suggests that the arcades were originally perceived as extensions of the interior rather than an applied exterior features like most porches.

A colossal tetrastyle Ionic portico with a full entablature was added across the center three bays of the facade in the 1850s. The pilasters which abut the outside edge of the second-bay windows have raised seams down the center (see photos 1 and 3).

The interior layout of Clay Hill consists of the one-room deep central-hall plan. In the east wall, the hall opposite the front entrance, is another similar door, opening onto the arcade. Off the hall on the northeast side is an enclosed stairway, open at the top. The door frames and chair-railing in the hall are decorated with delicate rope moldings.

Between the hall and the north parlor under the stairway is a small partitioned area, originally used as a men's powder room. The north parlor mantel is the most elaborate in the house (see photos 5a and 5b). It is of the Federal style with a reeded edge on the shelf and gougework below. In the raised center panel is an oval sunburst linked to the deeply carved rosettes on the side panels by graceful curves formed of reeding. The panels are supported by fine paired fluted columns.

The original chair-railing remains in the south parlor. The mantel is less ornate, having reeding below the shelf, and an oval sunburst in the raised center panel. On each side are smaller paired vertical sunbursts supported by paired reeded pilasters. To the right of the mantel is a large built-in-cupboard with a round arch and keystone. The moldings have paired grooves. The tri-panels of the cupboard doors reflect those of the front entrance. Below the chair-rail are three doors with double vertical panels. In the center of the west wall, several feet above the chair-rail, is a small molding presumably for a portrait.

Off the south parlor on the east is the dining room. The mantel has little ornamentation, with only small vertical sunbursts on the sides. A built-in-cupboard, composed of three doors above and two doors and a row of drawers below, is on the left of the fireplace (see photo 7).

(continued)

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The bedroom on the south side of the second floor has reeded casements and rope moldings. The mantel has reeded triglyphs above and reeding below, supported by double reeded pilasters (see photos 7a and 7b).

The bedroom on the north side has a plain mantel and a built-in cupboard on the left. To the right of the fireplace is the small door of the woodbox and to the right of that is a narrow door which leads to the fifteen-inch wide stairway that extends to the unfinished attic.

The south wing, entered through doors from both the south parlor and the dining room, originally housed the kitchen. Now converted with a large sitting room, it still retains a tremendous brick fireplace with a crane. The entrance on the east wall has a Greek Revival frame.

Originally the one-story wing on the north side of the house was a traveler's room, accessible only from a door on the back porch. In the 1940s a door connecting the north parlor and the wing was added, as well as a small brick addition off the east end of the north wing.

Another recent addition is a two-car garage located on a low level between the kitchen wing and rear ell at the southeast corner of the house. The roof of the garage forms a concrete patio enclosed by a Victorian iron railing (see photo 5).

The standing-seam roof of the entire structure perhaps applied when the portico was added, utilizes 60 pounds of pure zinc. Throughout the house, except in the kitchen, the original white ash floors remain.

Situated southeast of the house is a brick smokehouse. Adjacent to the smokehouse on the south is a two-story, four-bay brick slave quarters, with exterior end chimneys. Paired doors with double panel Greek Revival doors are centered in the facade. The windows which consist of six-over-six panes have plain sills and jack arches above (see photo 8). An icehouse with a conical roof was originally located southwest of the slave quarters.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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exciting period of the State's history, until, finding his views and acts as a strong Southern sympathizer at utter variance with the dominant party in the Legislature, he resigned. While in office Magoffin favored armed neutrality for the state and issued a proclamation to that effect. He resigned August 18, 1862, and retired to his home in Mercer County. Magoffin was elected to the State legislature in 1867, but resisted holding public office in his later years.

In 1812 Magoffin, Sr., built the splendid Clay Hill. The original house had a large two-story main block flanked by one-story wings--a massing that might be considered transitional between the usual late Georgian single block and the developed Federal single-story on English basement pavilioned form. Clay Hill, moreover, sports one of the three or four known early 19th-century brick arcades in Central Kentucky: here a one-story wing across the rear, no doubt originally oriented toward the family plantation.

The original cabinet-work is among the finest of the Federal Period in Kentucky. The front entrance (restrained in scale and proportions, yet exquisite in detail) is also somewhat transitional. The fluted Tuscan columns on pedestals have not yet suffered the extreme decorative attenuation of most Federal orders and the entablature is also quite "correct". But the frieze features an array of Adam-inspired round and oval sunbursts, carved with great virtuosity, like many details of the interior. It is assumed that the cabinet-maker and carpenter responsible for the beautiful woodwork in the house was Matthew P. Lowery. Lowery settled in Mercer County about 1800 and worked in and around Harrodsburg for the next forty years. Lowery owned property in the vicinity and turned out many artistic and stylish mantels and presses, cupboards, and other items of interior trim. His work was of Federal style following the precedent set by the Adam brothers in England, yet with certain idiosyncrasies of an almost primitive characteristic. Adam motifs are subjected to extreme abstraction in being adapted to the cabinet-maker's stock of tools. Thus, at Clay Hill stylized triglyphs and even swags are reduced to vertical grooved patterns within the surface.

The next owner of "Clay Hill" after the Magoffin family was John B. Thompson, whose father J.B. Thompson was elected U.S. Senator in 1851. A.G. Kyle is listed as the owner of the property in 1876. The present owners are Mr. and Mrs. Willard Gabhart, who have completely restored the house.

The house in its present form is one of the most striking examples in Kentucky of

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Clay Hill

CONTINUATION SHEET

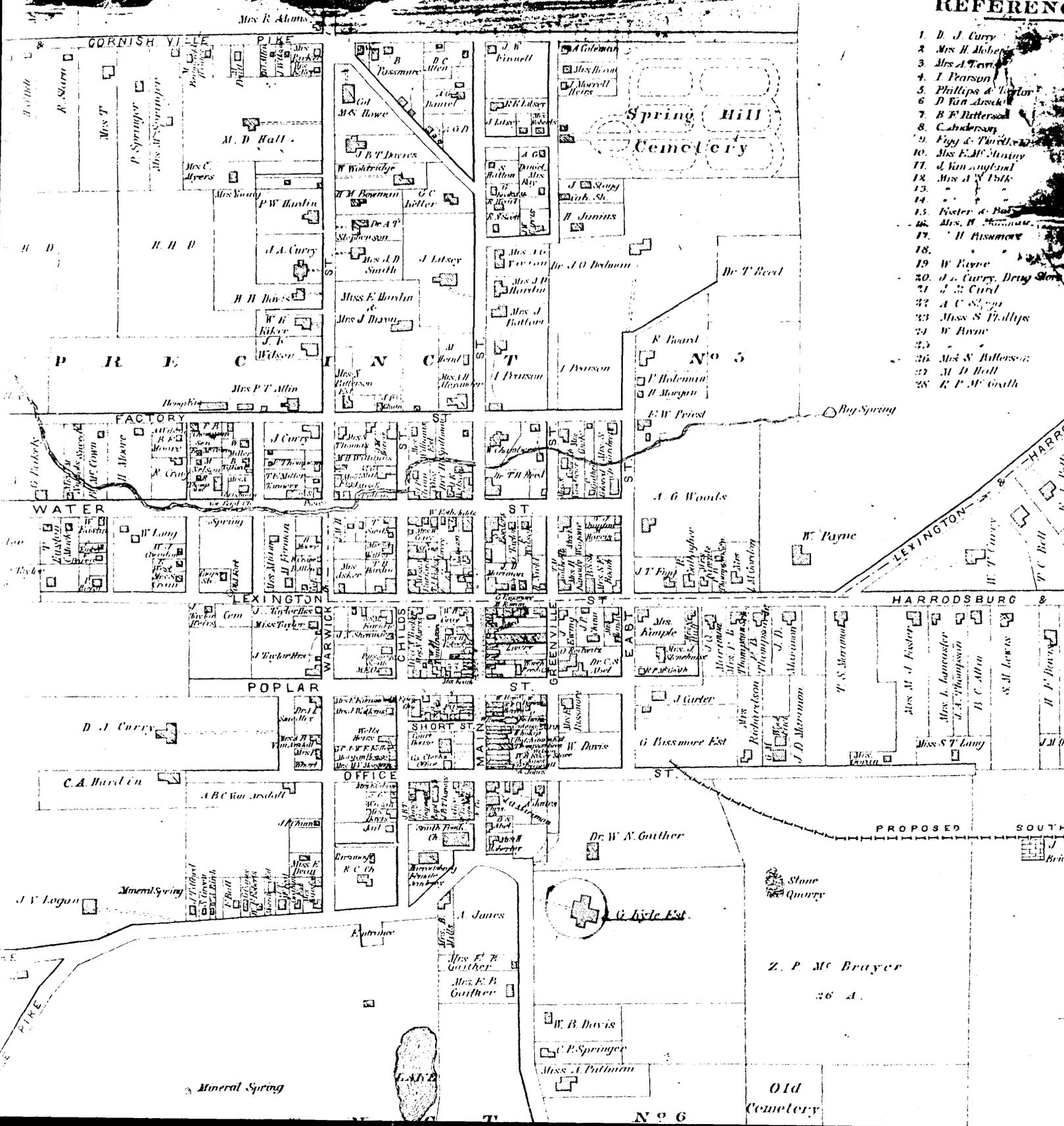
ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 3

the rage for Grecian architecture in the second quarter of the 19th-century. It must have been toward the middle of the century that a flat-topped three-bay portico with matching entablature was superimposed on the five-bay central block of the house. As Rexford Newcomb put it in 1953, "This staunch old master was sadly marred by the addition of a tetra-style Ionic portico during the Greek Revival period" (Architecture, p. 53). Since, however, the Greek features are unusually well-proportioned, correctly detailed, and applied without physical alteration of the original structure (in fact, the lack of transition between the flat Federal end-gables and the plastic entablature that rests on it is a startling sight from the sides), we may now look on the characteristic mid-century phenomenon of stylistic transformation with more sympathetic eyes. On its still extensive grounds, and remarkable well-maintained, Clay Hill is both handsome and instructive.

# REFERENCE

1. D. J. Curry
2. Mrs. H. Robert
3. Mrs. A. Taylor
4. I. Pearson
5. Phillips & Taylor
6. D. Van Asselt
7. B. F. Ritterson
8. C. Anderson
9. Figg & Threlkeld
10. Mrs. E. M. Monty
11. J. Kim England
12. Mrs. J. W. Dink
- 13.
- 14.
15. Foster & Bell
16. Mrs. H. R. Ransome
17. H. Ransome
- 18.
19. W. Payne
20. J. L. Curry, Drug Store
21. J. C. Curd
22. A. C. Spring
23. Miss S. Phillips
24. W. Payne
- 25.
26. Mrs. S. Ritterson
27. M. D. Hall
28. R. P. M. Gault



Clay Hill (Magoffin-Thompson House)  
Harrodsburg, Kentucky.  
Mercer County.

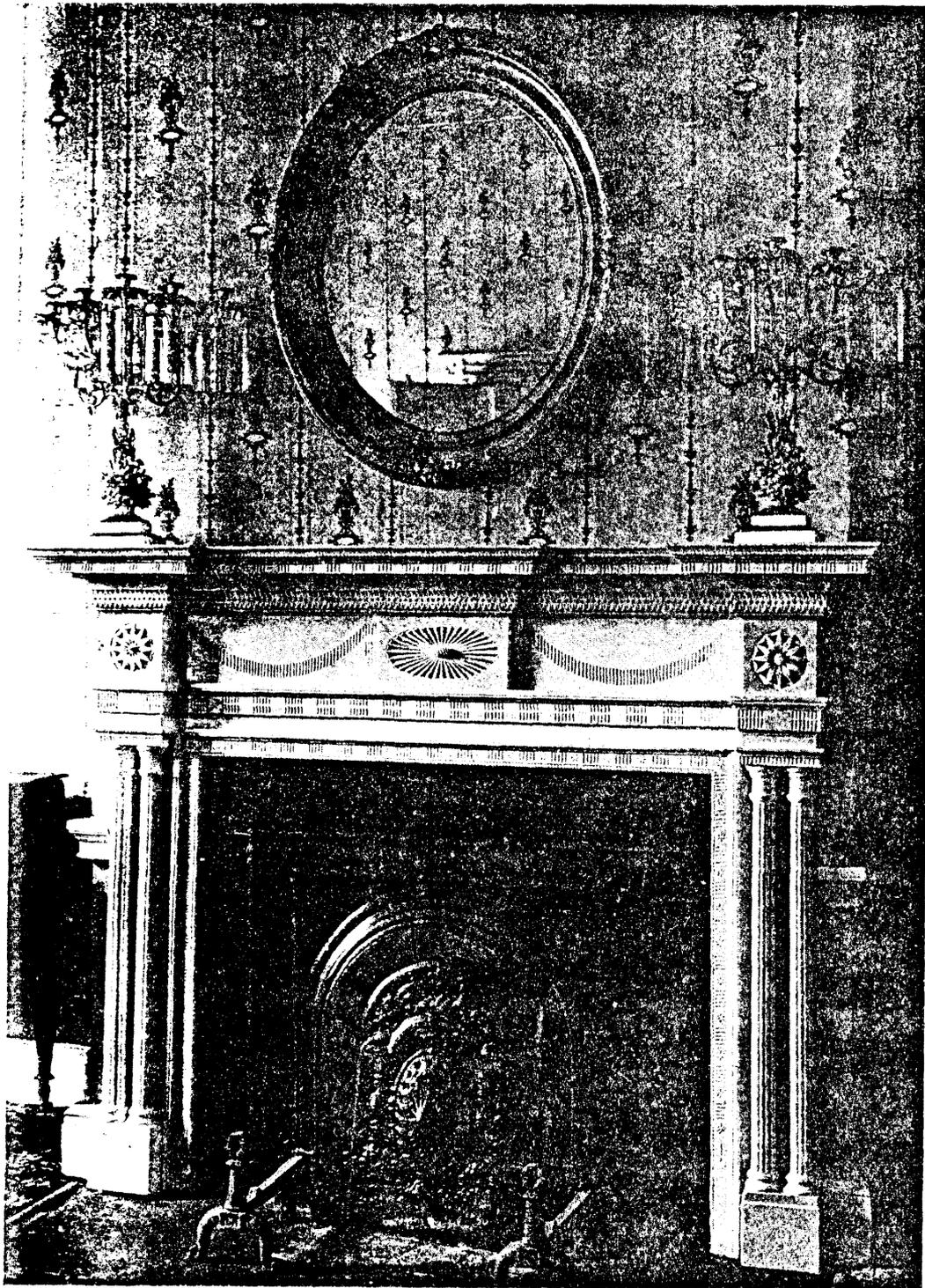
Map of Boyle and Mercer Counties,  
Kentucky. Philadelphia: D.G. Beers  
and Company, 1876.

Map 2.

Clay Hill is circled in red and listed  
as the A. G. Kyle estate.

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**PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER**



*Parlor Mantel*

CLAY HILL, HARRODSBURG



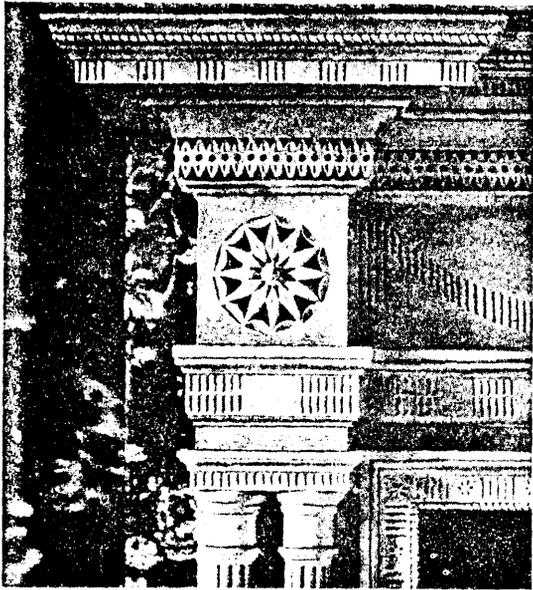
Clay Hill (Magoffin-Thompson House)  
Harrodsburg, Kentucky  
Mercer County

Photo 5a  
Newcomb, Rexford. Old Kentucky  
Architecture. New York: William  
Helburn Inc., 1950.

Photo of mantel in the north parlor.

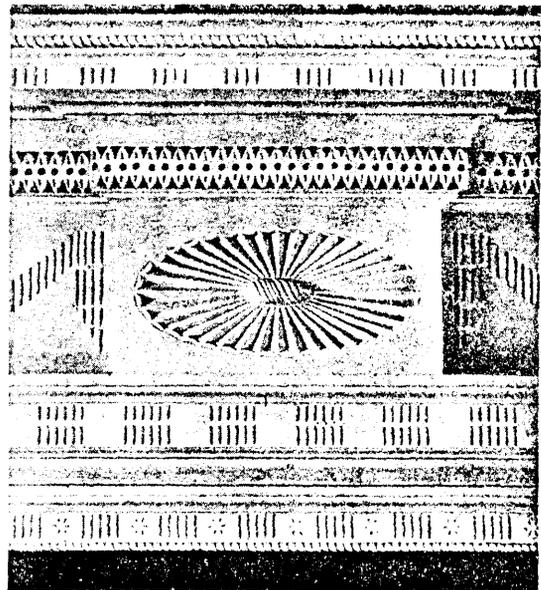
NOV 7 1976

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*Detail, Parlor Mantel*

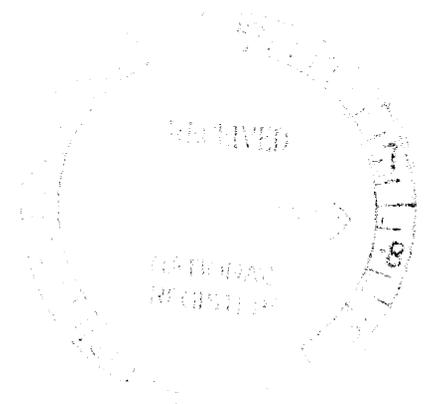
*Photo by Author*



*Detail, Parlor Mantel*

*Photo by Author*

CLAY HILL, HARRODSBURG



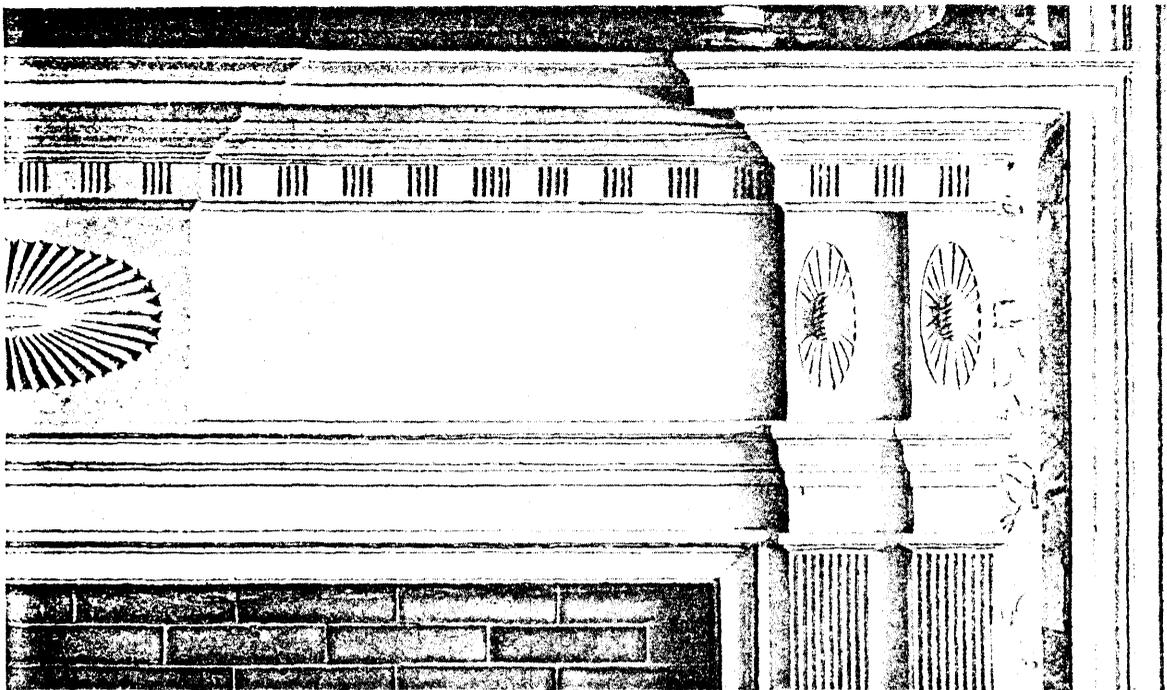
Clay Hill (Magoffin-Thompson House)  
Harrodsburg, Kentucky  
Mercer County

Photo 5b  
Newcomb, Rexford. Old Kentucky  
Architecture. New York: William  
Helburn, Inc., 1950.

Details of the north parlor mantel.

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*Detail, Bedroom Mantel*



*Upper Bedroom—Door*

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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Clay Hill (Magoffin-Thompson House)  
Harrodsburg, Kentucky  
Mercer County

Photo 7a  
Newcomb, Rexford. Old Kentucky  
Architecture. New York: William  
Helburn Inc., 1950.

Photo showing details of the  
mantel in the south bedroom.

Photo 7b  
Details of woodwork in the south  
bedroom.

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