

PH0024295

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Kentucky

COUNTY: Hardin

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY DATE: JUL 1 2 1974

1. NAME

COMMON: Brown Pusey House Community Center

AND/OR HISTORIC: Hill House: "Aunt Beck's"

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 128 North Main Street

CITY OR TOWN: Elizabethtown CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 02

STATE: Kentucky CODE: 021 COUNTY: Hardin CODE: 093

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC		
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Agricultural
 Commercial
 Educational
 Entertainment

Government
 Industrial
 Military
 Museum

Park
 Private Residence
 Religious
 Scientific

Transportation
 Comments
 Other (Specify): Community use; Historic Library

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: City of Elizabethtown

STREET AND NUMBER: City Hall

CITY OR TOWN: Elizabethtown STATE: Kentucky CODE: 021

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Hardin County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER: Public Square

CITY OR TOWN: Elizabethtown STATE: Kentucky

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

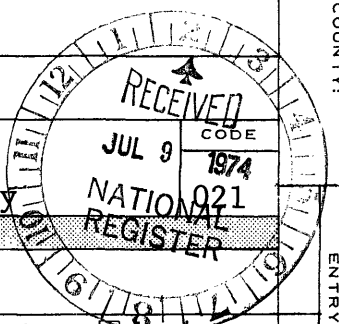
DATE OF SURVEY: 1971 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Kentucky Heritage Commission

STREET AND NUMBER: 401 Wapping Street

CITY OR TOWN: Frankfort STATE: Kentucky CODE: 021

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: Kentucky

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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Hill-Brown Pusey House Community Center is located one block from the Public Square of Elizabethtown. Although, according to Haycraft's History of Elizabethtown (1869), Hill arrived in Elizabethtown in 1818, Haycraft's rather unclear comments seem to indicate that Hill did not build this residence until several years later; the traditional and locally accepted date of construction is 1825. As restored in 1923, the main structure is a fairly typical Kentucky late Georgian-Federal house. The facade is of small-scaled Flemish-bond brick. The five bays are widely spaced; the second-story windows have 6-over-6 panes; the considerably larger windows of the first story have 9-over-9 panes and slightly curved segmental lintels consisting of two rows of headers. The basement window openings have similar arches of single stretchers. The central entrance doorway has narrow fluted pilasters, a horizontal cornice, and a rectangular transom. It is presently entered by means of a cement-coated stoop with iron railing. There is no architectural cornice. The narrow end-walls of this single-pile structure are unfenestrated and each has a single inset chimney in the center.

Some of the interior woodwork, door, and window frames, mantels and large wooden buttons at the sides of the windows to hold back curtains, are said to be original.

The "Pusey Room" to the left of the front of the house was rebuilt in 1923 from an earlier structure (perhaps one of Hill's additions for his hotel), utilizing some of the original brick. It is elaborately fireproof and is entered through a mantel from the main house.

A number of small one-story brick buildings were erected along the back of the property, presumably when Hill converted his residence into a hotel about 1850. These were connected to the main house by a two-story wing and by continuous galleries. They were rented as guest quarters, and it was in one of them that General Custer and his wife stayed in 1871-73. The galleries gave covered access to the dining room in the main house, where transient guests were also housed. All these outbuildings are now gone. The area of the site behind the Community Center forms part of the attractive Cunningham garden which was named in honor of the parents of Mrs. William Allen Pusey.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **c.1825**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Aside from being a substantial and well-restored example of Kentucky Federal architecture, the Hill-Brown Pusey House has been associated with many interesting events and persons or prominence.

According to Samuel Haycraft, who lived across from the Hill-Pusey house for some 70 years, "About the year 1818, John Y. Hill, a tailor, emigrated from Virginia and followed his trade for a few years, but finding stitching too slow a business for a man of his active business habits, he commenced trading in horses. Having built a residence at the corner of Main and Poplar Streets and finding the horse trading did not profit, he then commenced burning brick and building houses... When he quit building, it was estimated that he had built about one-fourth of Elizabethtown. He was a popular man and was elected to the Legislature (from Hardin and Meade Counties in 1832-33). He was a man of untiring energy, none more so unless we except his wife, to whom he was married shortly after he built his residence. She was Rebecca D. Stone, now universally called Aunt Beck. (At an unspecified date, perhaps about 1850,) Mr. Hill concluded to make some additions to his house and convert it into a hotel. No sooner said than done, the hotel opened under favorable auspices. Everything was as neat as a pin, and when a traveler came he was politely met at the door by the landlord in his peculiar, complacent manner, armed and led into a sitting room, and the stranger felt as if he was in a gentleman's parlor. The place had no tavern smell about it, and if ever two little folks were found together who each played their part like clockwork, it was found in John Y. Hill and his wife. They had a fine run of custom, and Aunt Beck's art of coffee making was spread far and wide. But Mr. Hill labored in the vocation too hard.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hardin County Records, Deed Book # 78, page 192.

Samuel Haycraft, A History of Elizabethtown, Kentucky, and Its Surroundings (published in serial form in The Elizabethtown News in 1869; collected and published in book form in 1921-22 by the Elizabethtown Women's Club; reprinted by the Hardin County Historical Society, Elizabethtown, 1960), pp. 81, 82, 84, 103.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

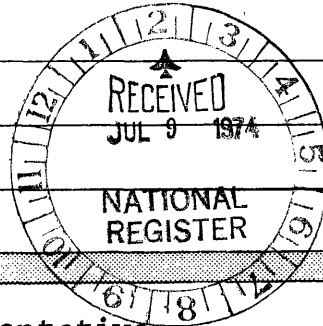
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		37 ° 41 ' 39 "	85 ° 51 ' 27 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

UTM
16/600770
4172290
CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **Less than 10 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Mrs. Margaret Richerson, County Representative

ORGANIZATION: **Kentucky Heritage Commission** DATE: **11/3/73**

STREET AND NUMBER:
209 Elizabeth Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Elizabethtown** STATE: **Kentucky** CODE: **021**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Eldred W. Melton

Title State Liaison Officer

Resubmission Date 7-1-74

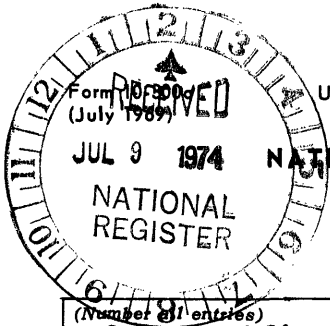
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

A. B. Winters
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 7/12/74

ATTEST:
Ronald M. Greenberg
Keeper of The National Register

Date 7-12-74



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STATE Kentucky	
COUNTY Hardin	
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8. Significance (continued)

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If he had commenced ten years sooner he would have accumulated a comfortable fortune. His valuable life came to a close by over-exertion. He died on the 1st day of August, 1855, and the town felt that a greater calamity could not have happened them. After his death and up to this day Aunt Beck has kept up the house and has proved herself to be a woman of extraordinary administrative ability. She frequently threatened to close her house and quit the business, but she has found that the only thing she does not know how to do and she cannot quit." (Haycraft, pages 81-82).

Among other prominent buildings in Elizabethtown, Hill built the Baptist (originally joint Baptist-Presbyterian) Church which still exists behind the Brown-Pusey house garden.

Twenty years later General George Armstrong Custer lived in one of the small brick structures at the rear of the Hill House while he was stationed in Elizabethtown with his regiment. Custer commanded a Union Army post at Elizabethtown from summer 1871 till spring 1873. The post was one of many created in the hectic days following the Civil War in Southern and border states to control the Ku Klux Klan, break up illegal distilling, and enforce the reconstruction acts. Since there was no Klan activity and little illegal whiskey-making, Custer and two battalions of horse soldiers led a relatively quiet life. With time on his hands he concentrated on acquiring fine Kentucky thoroughbreds for his troops. The stay became so boring he requested a transfer to the Dakota Territory. A large crowd of Elizabethtown people gathered to see the general and his men loaded onto a special train. Custer and each man took with him a blooded Kentucky Thoroughbred. They were riding those same fine Kentucky mounts four months later when they met their destiny at the Little Big Horn.

In a letter from Custer to his wife before she joined him in Elizabethtown, he described the Hill House and its hostess: "I enjoy this old-fashioned hotel with its quaint landlady who is everything in one. The meals are not so dreadful; applesauce and hot biscuits at each meal and I have an appetite for both." (Merington, PP. 239-40)

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8. Significance (continued)

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The Puseys were nephews of "Aunt Beck" Hill. They were Quakers whose family is said to have come to America with William Penn. Both William A. and Brown Pusey were prominent physicians; the former was president of the American Medical Association in 1923. The Browns, after whom several generations of Pusey males were named, were also leading citizens of the area. A grandfather of Dr. A. M. Pusey and Dr. Brown Pusey was among the earlier settlers and was killed at the battle of Blue Lick.

The Pusey family gave the house to the City of Elizabethtown in 1923 to be used as a community center. A large assembly hall was added to one side and a small wing reconstructed as the Pusey Room for the display of mementoes of the family. A genealogical and historical library, dining room and kitchen are also located in the building, which is widely used by the community. Although the center is owned by a public trust, a private apartment is also located in the house on the second floor, the rent used for the upkeep of the center.



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9. Major Bibliographical References (continued)

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Letters from the period of Custer's stay in Elizabethtown survive mainly in Marguerite Merington, ed., The Custer Story, The Life and Intimate Letters of George A. Custer and his Wife Elizabeth (N.Y.: Devin-Adair Co., 1950); also quoted in The Elizabethtown News (June 24, 1921).

Theodore J. Crackel, "Custer's Kentucky: General Armstrong Custer and Elizabethtown, Kentucky, 1871-1873," The Filson Club History Quarterly, XLVIII, 2 (Louisville, Ky., April, 1974), 144-55, including "Some Brief Bibliographic Notes (on Custer)."

Blueprints for the restoration and other materials relating to the house are preserved in the library of the Community Center.

