

P11022/951 DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

JUL 11 1975

DATE ENTERED

AUG 28 1975

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

James R. Lemon House

AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1309 Main Street

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Benton

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

01

STATE

Kentucky

VICINITY OF

CODE
021COUNTY
MarshallCODE
157**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

Ronald Cage Lucas

STREET & NUMBER

1309 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Benton

STATE

Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Marshall County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Benton

STATE

Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky (Supplement)

DATE

1974

— FEDERAL STATE — COUNTY — LOCALDEPOSITORY 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 Lemon House is located on the east side of the main street that leads south from the courthouse square of Benton, the county seat of Marshall County. It is less than a block from the center of town, set on a fairly wide lot near the street and slightly below its level.

The present owner, in the process of restoration, has made an intensive study of the evolution of the structure, which provides interesting information on the date of the introduction of certain fashions and utilities into residential architecture of the region.

As built about 1872 the house was an extended one-story frame structure, with single rooms flanking a central hall in the front block, a long ell on the north side, and a dining room projecting slightly toward the south at the rear of the ell before the kitchen. The main block has a gable at the ends of the somewhat steep roof, and there is another gable over the south end of the dining room. The projecting portion of the dining room was surrounded on three sides by a wooden porch with turned posts. There was also a small porch at the northeast corner, serving the kitchen, and a small inset porch behind a cistern between the front block and the dining-room porch.

Originally, there was a white picket fence along the road and a small covered stoop at the main entrance. The exterior was painted white with dark green shutters and doors, and the roof was of wood shingles.

The interior was quite plain, with floors of wide oak plan, shaded hanging kerosene lamps, white china doorknobs, and plain woodwork of oak boards, some of it painted to imitate grained wood (only a closet door with a primitive sponge-like pattern preserves this finish).

When the Lemons sold the house around the turn of the century the new owners, Mr. and Mrs. William Johnson, made some additions and "modernized" the house about 1905. The front fence was removed, a porch put across the front of the house, the shutters removed, and all the windows except the four on the front reduced in size. The shingle roof was covered with a dark green tar shingle. The front hall was combined with one of the adjacent rooms, the attic stairs removed, and other slight changes made. A bedroom and bath were added behind the old parlor (over the cistern). The original painted plaster walls were replaced with tongue-and-groove paneling, then papered. Electricity and inside plumbing were added at this time. The lights were bare bulbs hung from the twelve-foot high ceilings, with strings to turn them on and off.

The present owner purchased the house in 1973, and has attempted to make reasonable changes, restoring the house as much as possible to its original 1872 appearance while retaining some features of the 1905 remodeling. The front porch was removed and a

(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 type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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

1874; 1905

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the James R. Lemon House rests on its association with Lemon, important in the area of music because of ^{his} contribution to the preservation of Southern Harmony. This method of choral singing is performed a capella and based on the fasola method of musical notation. (Notes were given a diamond, square, or triangular shape that identified pitch within the scale or octave. It was an easily learned method of sight-reading music.) Although now virtually extinct, Southern Harmony was a very popular form of religious singing in the early 1800s.

Southern Harmony had its origins in the singing schools which seem to have begun in New England around 1770 and spread southward. One such singing group in Kentucky was that organized by James Lemon (1848-1919). Lemon was born in North Carolina and as a child traveled with his parents over the Appalachian Mountains to Marshall County in western Kentucky. Along with the furniture and the children, the Lemons brought with them to their new home a copy of the Southern Harmony and Musical Companion, a popular songbook of the day written and published by "Singing Billy" Walker (1809-?).

Walker had written the book with his brother-in-law Benjamin White. In his youth Walker became affiliated with the Welsh-Baptist Church and was apparently exposed to the religious songs which had their root in British folksongs rather than the more common German. Most of the tunes or variants of them were already in America circulating with secular words. As folk hymnody the music was carried by the Calvinist Revival fires or "New Awakening" first to New England, then south to Virginia and South Carolina, and "west" to Tennessee and Kentucky. A little later, as illustrated by Lemon's "Big Singing," the singing schools and their printed collection of the same folk music were to travel the same route.

A few years after the Southern Harmony was published in 1835, White, who had received no credit for co-authorship, published his own collection or compilation, The Sacred Harp (1844). This book was eventually to surpass the Southern Harmony in popularity in the Deep South, although Walker's publication was better known during the first half of the 19th century. In buying 600,000 copies over a period of twenty-five years, southern rural people seem to have appreciated its value. Prior to the Civil War it was so popular that it was kept in stock in the general stores along with groceries and tobacco.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Lemon, J. R. Lemon's Hand Book of Marshall County. Benton: By J. R. Lemon, 1894, pp. 82-83.

Mayfield Messenger, December 27, 1969, p. 8.

"Old Harp Singing"(LP) and Introduction on record jacket by Sidney Robertson Cowell.

"Sacred Harp Singing." Issued by the Library of Congress.

(continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/4 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	37,96,0,0	4,07,94,7,0	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
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mrs. Corinne Whitehead, County Representative

GM:WEL

ORGANIZATION

Kentucky Heritage Commission

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

Route 9

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Benton

STATE

Kentucky 42045

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.

SIGNATURE

Edward W. Milton

TITLE *State Historic Preservation Officer* DATE *7-7-75*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST:

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

August A. Connally
AUG 28 1975

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

W. H. H. H.
AUG 22 1975

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James R. Lemon House

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stoop approximately the size of the original put in its place. The front door, in its original frame, was restored except for the use of solid wood panels rather than glass panes. The shutters and wooden fence have been reinstated. The gable over the front entrance, although apparently not original, has been retained. Inside, the central hall has been restored, the fireplaces reopened, and mantels put back. The rear wing combines features of both the 1872 and 1905 construction, with two sides of the dining-room porch remaining. The north side of the ell has been adapted as an apartment.

Altogether the house has little architectural distinction and virtually no ornament (except in the later front gable), but its history tells us a good deal about the scale, functional requirements, and evolution of a substantial town residence in a western Kentucky county seat in the later 19th century.

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Lemon married in 1873, and set up housekeeping in Briensburg where he taught school. In March 1874 he moved to Benton and entered the drug business. His public career included an appointment in 1885 by Governor S. Knott on the State Board of Equalization and was elected to the same position the following year. In 1890 he became the proprietor and editor of the Tribune-Democrat (later becoming the Benton Tribune). A few years later he bought the Mayfield Daily Messenger, which he operated until his death in 1919. During the 1890s he served as master commissioner of Marshall County, judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and postmaster. "He has lived a life of an energetic hard-working business man, and never drank whiskey, chewed tobacco, or gambled, and was always punctual to comply with his contracts" (a description he wrote of himself in Lemon's Hand Book of Marshall County, 1894).

It was during the 1880s that Lemon embarked on promoting an annual gathering to sing the songs and preserve the memories of an earlier era. The first Big Singing was held in 1884 and has continued to this day.

The land on which Lemon constructed his house was purchased in the late 1860s from Judge Dycus. A log house on the property was removed. The residential area in which the Lemon House was constructed was a somewhat exclusive section where the professional and affluent resided. It was the scene of weddings, teas, receptions, political gatherings, church activities, and literary gatherings. Most of these homes are gone now but the Lemon house remains--one of the oldest in Benton and the only one in which any attempt has been made at restoration.

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White, Benjamin F. Original Sacred Harp 1844-1971. Cullman, Alabama: Sacred Harp Publishing Co., Inc., 1971 (originally published 1844).

"White Spirituals." (LP) Southern Folk Heritage Series.

Walker, William. The Southern Harmony. Edited by Glenn C. Wilcox. Los Angeles: Pro Musicamericana Reprint, 1966. (Originally published 1835).