

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received MAR 29 1982

date entered APR 29 1982

1. Name

historic Olive, Richard, House

and/or common Davis House

2. Location

street & number Court Street NA not for publication

city, town Smithland NA vicinity of congressional district 1

state Kentucky code 021 county Livingston code 139

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>NA</u> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Willie T. Rudd

street & number Court Street

city, town Smithland NA vicinity of state Kentucky

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk's Office, Livingston County Courthouse

street & number Court Street

city, town Smithland state Kentucky

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Survey of Historic Sites in Ky. has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Heritage Division, Dept. of the Arts

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 Richard Olive House in Smithland, Kentucky, is situated on the north side of Court Street, the main cross street in this small river community of approximately five hundred. Across the street is the original 1845 Livingston County courthouse. Numerous other buildings dating from the early to late nineteenth century line Court and the other streets of Smithland.

The town is located in western Kentucky at the mouth of the Cumberland River where it empties into the Ohio. During much of the last century, the town was a busy port with trade connections to Nashville; however, little commerce or industry has touched the town since the late nineteenth century and this must account for the picturesque and undisturbed quality that permeates Smithland today.

The Richard Olive House is a two-story, five-bay brick I-house. Much of the detailing is Greek Revival and substantiates the date of construction which is said to be 1841.¹ The main (south) facade is laid in Flemish bond and jack arches surmount the window openings (photos 1 and 2). Exterior brick end chimneys have been rebuilt from the attic level upward. A two-story ell extends from the north of the house and a one-story brick kitchen is attached to the ell. Because of deterioration, the kitchen has been substantially rebuilt by the present owner (photo 3). In addition, the owner has removed the screen porches from the rear of the house and the west side of the ell, also said to be deteriorated beyond repair, and enclosed that space with brick additions (photos 4 and 5).

A late nineteenth century porch on the front of the house was also in a poor state of repair, and the owner had the present one reproduced based upon an old photograph. The cornice and wood shingle roof are also more recent improvements.

Entrances on the first and second floors of the main facade are similar with engaged Doric piers and quarter-piers supporting a broad rectangular transom on the first floor and a flattened elliptical fanlight on the second level. Smaller porches with elements similar to the front porch have been added to the secondary entrances on the north and east. Windows in the east and west gable ends appear to have been added later.

With the exception of the kitchen, much of the interior woodwork remains intact. This consists of double panel Greek Revival doors, high baseboards, fluted door surrounds with corner blocks, and Greek Revival mantles. The main staircase runs up the west wall of the center passage and a second, enclosed stair is located in the northwest corner of the east room. Original hardware exists in many areas of the house (photos 6-8).

The nominated acreage consists of the lot under single ownership, including the house and a modern brick garage.

¹According to Smithland resident J. D. Clopton Sr., now deceased, Richard Olive built the house in 1841.

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 1841 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Richard Olive House is one of the most impressive examples of Greek Revival residential architecture remaining in the historic community of Smithland, a small western Kentucky river town located on the Ohio.

The area in which the residence is located is one of the earliest settled in far western Kentucky. Livingston County was established in 1798, with the county seat first established at Eddyville, later at Centerville. In 1841 the General Assembly ordered the courthouse location moved to Smithland, a river port conveniently situated on the Ohio at the mouth of the Cumberland. Incorporated in 1805, Smithland predates the founding of Paducah, which is twelve miles southwest and now the largest city in the western region of the state.¹

In the early part of the nineteenth century, Smithland was an active, growing community. "Between 1810 and 1850 Smithland was a transfer point for river travel to Washington. In its heyday, Smithland had many stores, three or four sawmills, all kinds of river supply places, three newspapers and many other facilities for its 3,000 people. Other industries in days past included a canning factory, stave plant, and shipbuilding works."²

Smithland's development was halted when the railroad by-passed the town in the 1850s and went on to Paducah, taking much of Smithland's population with it. Frequent flooding of the area also contributed to the rapid decline of the town in the latter half of the nineteenth century.³

Many historic residences remain which testify to the town's colorful history. Architecturally, this is one of the finest groupings of nineteenth century structures in western Kentucky. Among the important surviving buildings is the Olive house, which represents a transitional style, containing both Federal and Greek Revival elements. The Flemish bond brickwork evident on the front facade and the jack arches over the bays express the Federal style, while the front entrances and much of the interior trim reflect the Greek Revival.

The Olive house dates to Smithland's era of expansion. According to local information, it was constructed in 1841 by Richard Olive, an early settler of Livingston County. In 1856, it was sold to T. M. Davis, a prominent local merchant. The house was subsequently inherited by his son C. B. Davis, who, in turn, gave it to his daughter Katie Davis Love.⁴

¹ Richard Collins, A History of Kentucky, II, p. 478.

² Paducah Democrat, May 14, 1950.

³ Leslie McDonald, Echoes of Yesteryear, p. 102.

⁴ From information provided by Mrs. Gabe McCandless, Smithland, Kentucky, 1978.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

Richard Olive House
Livingston County, Kentucky

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

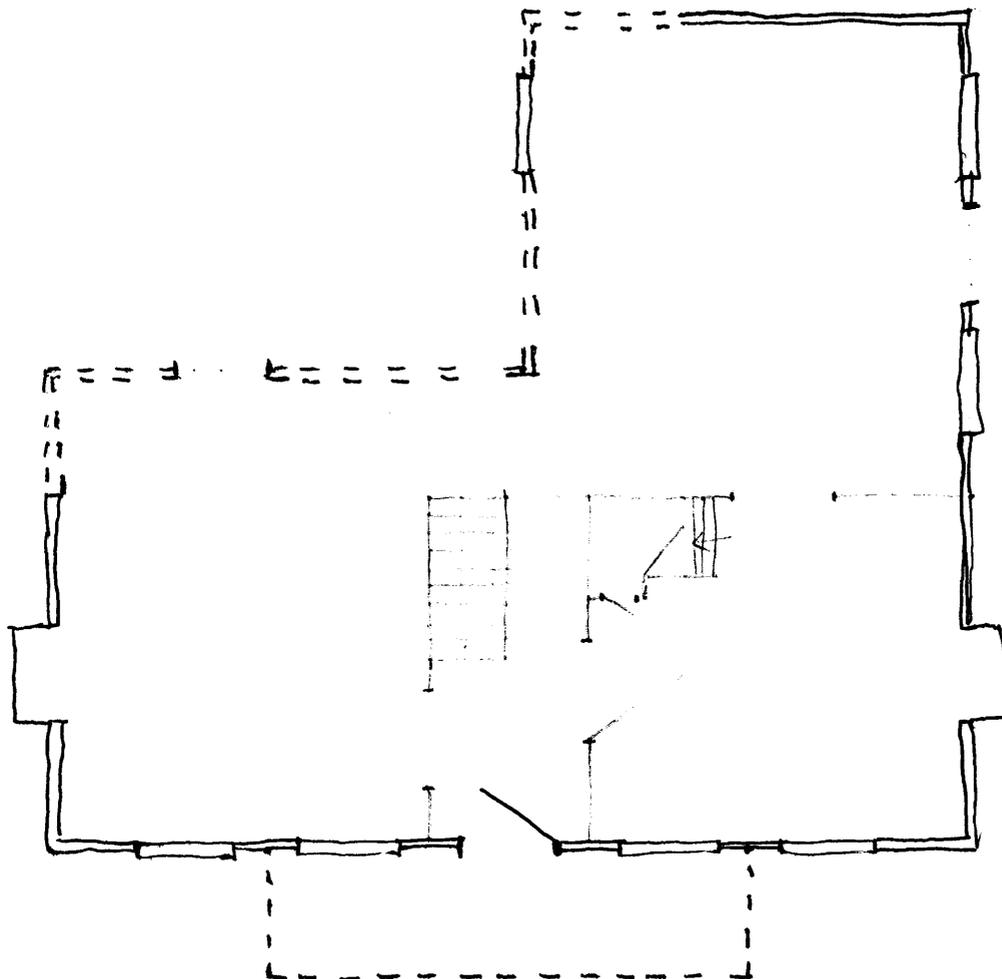
Bibliography (continued)

Information provided by Mrs. Gabe McCandless, Conant Hill, Smithland, Kentucky, 1978.

McDonald, Leslie. Echoes of Yesteryear. Smithland: Livingston Ledger, 1972.

Paducah Democrat. May 14, 1950.

Steamboat Days of the Cumberland. Smithland: Livingston-Ledger, 1974.



Richard Olive House
Livingston County, Kentucky

No Scale
Sketch Map Floor Plan
Charlotte Worsham
Heritage Division

Map 1