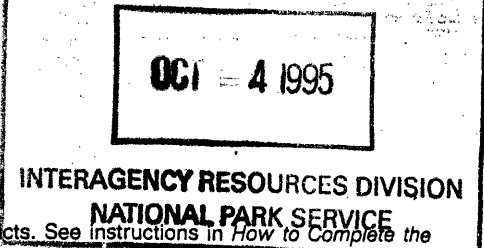


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Finney Hotel

other names/site number McKinney Hotel/BT-W-7

2. Location

street & number State Highway 403 N/A  not for publication

city or town Woodbury N/A  vicinity

state Kentucky code KY county Butler code 031 zip code 42288

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

David L. Morgan, SHPO and  
Executive Director, KHC 9-20-95  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Kentucky Heritage Council: State Historic Preservation Office  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

11-7-95

Entered in the  
National Register

FINNEY HOTEL  
Name of Property

BUTLER, KENTUCKY  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: hotel

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER; I-house

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE; CONCRETE BLOCK

walls WOOD: Weatherboard

roof METAL: Tin

other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property

County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

**Period of Significance**

1890-1931

**Significant Dates**

1890, 1931

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Jones, J.R. (builder)

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

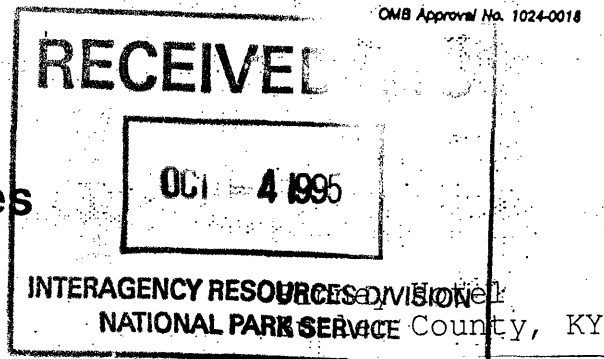
Western Kentucky University



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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1



ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Finney Hotel (BT-W-7) is a two story wood-frame building located near the Green River in the town of Woodbury in Butler County, Kentucky. Woodbury, a town of eighty-five residents, is located at the site of Lock and Dam #4. No longer operating, the 8.59 acre lock and dam complex is now a recreational park owned by the Butler County Historical Society. The park grounds include the Finney Hotel, a U.S. Corps of Engineers Superintendents House built in 1913 and a one-story Corps office building circa 1889. Built in c. 1867 on less than one acre, the Finney Hotel has a rectangular I-house plan and a side-gabled roof. The front, facing east and slightly askew to the river, is symmetrically composed with an elevated ground floor porch. This nomination consists of one contributing building.

The hotel is centrally located in Woodbury. The lock and dam sits six hundred feet north and Highway 403 thirty-five feet south of the hotel (see figure #1). Sited within a small dell, the rear of the hotel abuts an incline leading up to the Corps office building and Superintendent's House (the latter currently houses the Green River Museum). Because the river frequently flooded, a boardwalk stretched from the hotel to nearby businesses, the post office (no longer extant) and the lock and dam. The boardwalk was torn down circa 1950 (Ima Gene Bryant, October 20, 1994). The Finney Hotel is currently owned by the Green River Museum.

The Finney Hotel is elevated 4' 2" and is supported by stone piers at each corner of the structure and infilled with concrete block. Exterior siding on the hotel consists of wood clapboards with four-and-one-half inch reveals, excluding the rear facade siding of eleven inch wide fiberboard. Windows are two-over-two double-hung sash throughout the front with a 1:2:1 composition on the front six bays (see photo #1). The south facade has two bays of windows, the north has one bay of six-over-six double-hung sash windows (see photos #2-3, respectively). Fenestration on the front facade includes two symmetrically placed doors on both the first and second stories. A forty-three foot porch centrally spans the front facade and includes turned balusters and five square posts. The first-story doors exit onto the porch while the second story doors exit onto a flat, shingled porch roof. Historic photographs suggest that the original structure had a one-story porch and that a second-story porch with two entrances was later added (see photo #4). The second-story of the porch was removed sometime in the 1940s. Fenestration on the rear addition includes six-over-six double-hung sash windows, one on each end and four along the rear

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elevation, and a door exiting from the kitchen (southwest corner of the building).

The gabled hotel roof is a tin roof of a medium pitch. The hotel has a rear, external stone chimney servicing the dining room and a central brick chimney located asymmetrically between the first and second bay. Originally there was an additional interior end chimney on the north side, facing the river. This chimney, since removed, serviced a stove located on the second floor.

The first floor is a single pile in depth with a rear one story addition (see figure #2). The single pile consists of a central passage with two bays to the left and one to the right. The facade originally consisted of six bays, the bay furthest left on the south side is a two story addition built sometime before 1907 with a door entering from the front porch. The central passage, also opening from the front porch, contains stairs and access to an added bathroom located in the rear addition. The bathroom was built after 1910 and was preceded by a screened in rear porch. The fireplace, currently sealed, is located in the left lateral bay adjacent the two-story addition. The second story is similar to the first floor plan with no fireplace but instead two stove chimneys, one in the north bay and a stove pipe connection to the central chimney. The hotel's kitchen, dining room and only bathroom are located in the one story rear addition built prior to 1907. The right end bay, adjacent the bathroom, is a living space with a door exiting outside.

The interior fabric of the hotel has largely been concealed by paint or carpeting, but wainscotting, i.e. a chair rail, remains throughout the first and second floor. Walls and ceilings are plastered (with substantial deterioration) and exposed wood floors have no remarkable stylistic treatments. The heating system consists of the fireplaces and stove flues. The hotel is in fair condition but the front porch is partially collapsed and structurally unsound. The interior is filled with debris and in general disrepair.

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Butler County, KY

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Finney Hotel (BT-W-7) in the town of Woodbury in Butler County, Kentucky, meets National Register Criterion A and is significant within the historic context: The Development of Woodbury, Kentucky, 1867-1931. The property is important from c. 1890-1931 because it illustrates the economic development of Woodbury as a turn-of-the-century river town. The hotel is the only nineteenth century commercial building remaining in Woodbury.

The emergence of commercial development in Woodbury is intimately associated with the improvement of the Green River as a navigable river. The river begins in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, flowing west and then north across west-central Kentucky, 370 miles to the Ohio River (Crocker 1976, 1). Early in the nineteenth century the Commonwealth of Kentucky recognized the importance of the Green River as a potentially significant commercial shipping corridor for flat boats and steamboats. Subsequently, in 1828 Kentucky established a Board of Internal Improvements. The board requested that the United States Army Engineers survey the Green River, as well as all rivers in Kentucky. As a result of those efforts Kentucky initiated a slackwater - or canalization - project to improve navigation on the Green and Barren Rivers up to Bowling Green (Johnson 1974, 142). Four lock and dams were constructed along the Green River and one on its tributary, the Barren River. This lock and dam project, including #4 constructed in Woodbury in 1839, was the first of its kind in the nation (Johnson 1974, 142).

Like many outlying river towns in Kentucky, Woodbury enjoyed substantial economic development due to the opening of the Green River to commercial navigation. River traffic in the area of Woodbury began earnestly in 1839 with the opening of Lock and Dam #4 and completely ended in 1965 when the dam was breached. The economic vitality of the town closely paralleled the improvement of the Green River and subsequent increases in the volume of traffic on the river. Indeed, from 1898 - after further improvement of the lock system - to 1906, total commercial and passenger shipping on the river quadrupled (Johnson 1974, 144). Further, the absence of alternative transportation systems, such as rail service and improved roads, in Butler County made the river a convenient and timely transportation corridor (McDowell 1893, 21). Economic growth in Woodbury peaked in the 1920s and tapered off dramatically in the early 1930s. The Finney Hotel was one of many Woodbury businesses which benefitted from the river traffic, and is the only extant commercial structure from the nineteenth century.

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Well before the construction of Lock and Dam #4, Woodbury was a sizable rural river community for its time, developing even as Butler County was being formed in 1810. Still, the town grew significantly after the completion of the lock and dam. As early as 1877 Woodbury boasted a cooper shop, a three story mill house, a packing house, an axe handle factory, three tobacco barns, a tailor, a shoemaker and two physicians (Gazetteer 1876). Before 1900 two hotels, one of which was the Finney Hotel, were established - presumably to meet the increased commercial activity. In terms of population and number of businesses, Woodbury even outpaced Morgantown, the county seat located five miles downstream. By the early 1920s, Woodbury had a bank, an IGA grocery store, an automobile dealership, an ice cream parlor and other businesses (Butler Co. Historical Society 1987, 35).

The hotel, likely built by J.R. Jones in 1867 (Butler County deed book L), was an integral part of Woodbury's commercial development as a river town. The hotel gained business in essentially two ways. First, tourists and workers on the Green River steam and packet boats often spent the night at the hotel or simply enjoyed a home cooked meal. Second, inland customers and salesmen, who patronized the growing Woodbury business district, frequently lodged overnight at the hotel before returning home the following morning or travelling to the next town to sell goods.

An important element in the growth of Woodbury was the U.S. Corps of Engineers' decision in 1888 both to take over the operations of all locks on the river (formerly of private ownership) and to locate their headquarters for the entire Green River Navigation System in Woodbury. These steps resulted in the building of a substantial sub-station complex with a support staff of almost eighty personnel. Federal control of the system facilitated an increase in both passenger and commercial shipping and spurred additional development in farming and manufacturing along the river (Johnson 1974, 144). The Finney Hotel, like other business interests along the river, benefitted from this navigational enhancement until the onset of the Great Depression.

During the prosperous years in Woodbury, the hotel was owned and operated by Lethia Finney, a widow from Riverside, Kentucky. Lethia Finney bought the hotel in c. 1911 and owned and operated it with the help of her daughter, Bessie Finney, until Lethia's death in 1945 (Tape recorded interview with Ima Gene Bryant, October 20, 1994). The hotel received a variety of guests: government workers from the lock and dam, tourists, farmers sending tobacco and other goods down stream, traveling salesmen as well as residents of Woodbury. Some came to the hotel only for Mrs. Finney's dinner, for which she was well known (Tape recorded interview with Irlene Hines, 30 September 1994). The hotel also served as a home-away-from-home for older residents unable to live on their own. As a child, Ima Gene Bryant remembers an elderly woman who, despite owning a house a short distance from



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the hotel, spent her nights with the Finney's because "she didn't like living alone" (Ima Gene Bryant, October 20, 1994).

The river was not only a source of commercial growth, it also played a central role in creating a sense of community. Ima Gene Bryant and Irlene Hines, both granddaughters of Lethia Finney, fondly recall the steamboats bringing tourists to Woodbury, while enroute to Mammoth Cave. Mrs. Bryant remembers the arrival of visitors as festive events, "When they came through, everybody went down to the river to see the strange people" (Irlene Hines, September 30, 1994). The showboats were particularly memorable for Mrs. Hines and Mrs. Bryant. Such steamboats as the *Chaperon* and the *Enterprise*, making annual stops in Woodbury, announced their arrival by playing calliope music a mile or two before docking. According to Mrs. Bryant, everyone went to see the showboat. The fact that the showboats stopped in Woodbury and that the town was so enthusiastic about their arrival, suggests the vital role the river played in the development of Woodbury. Both Mrs. Hines and Mrs. Bryant doubt that the hotel would have been in existence without the busy river traffic.

The river boom of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was substantially dampened by two factors: the onset of the Great Depression and the introduction of the automobile and the development of highways. In 1931 the packet service to Woodbury ended and newly constructed highways by-passed the town leading to subsequent closing of local businesses (Crocker 1976, 26). When the road system through Woodbury was developed, it was too late for the hotel because the salesmen, who previously lodged or dined at the Finney Hotel, bypassed Woodbury for bigger towns (Ima Gene Bryant, October 20, 1994). Decline continued with the gradual departure of the U.S. Corps of Engineers from the Woodbury sub-station, further depriving the town of consumers and the hotel of dinner or lodging guests. By 1950 the hotel, once bustling with river workers, tourists and salesmen, had become a private residence (Butler Co. Historical Society 1987, 35).

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Within the historic context of transportation and commerce, the Green River dramatically impacted the commercial and cultural development of Woodbury, Kentucky. The Finney Hotel highlights the connection between river transportation and commercial growth. Because steamboating on the Green River outlived its usefulness, the destruction of the last river boat in 1931 can be used as a marker for the end of economic development in Woodbury (Johnson 1975, 243). Thus, without the traffic on the river the need for a hotel in Woodbury declined to the point where the

Finney Hotel was eventually sold as residential property. Today, Woodbury is solely a residential community and, importantly, the Finney Hotel is all that remains of Woodbury's nineteenth century commercially built environment.

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Butler County, KY

## Bibliography

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Johnson, Leland R. Falls City Engineers: The History of the Louisville Corps of Engineers. Louisville: U.S. Corps of Engineers, Louisville District, 1975.

McDowell, Nicholas. Tenth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Agriculture and Labor Statistics of the State of Kentucky. Louisville: The Bradley and Gilbert Co., 1893.

Russ, Lois, ed. Butler County, Kentucky: A History of Butler County, Kentucky and its People. Morgantown, Kentucky: Butler County Historical and Genealogical Society, 1987.

-----Kentucky State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1876-1877. Louisville: R.L. Polk and Co., 1876.

## Interviews

Bryant, Ima Gene. Tape recorded, 20 October 1994, Bowling Green, Warren County, Kentucky.

Hines, Irlene. Tape recorded, 30 September 1994, Morgantown, Butler County, Kentucky.

## Section number 10 Geographical Data

## Verbal boundary description

Lots 27, 31 and one-half of 26, 30; Block 608 of original townsite plat of Woodbury, KY.

## Verbal boundary justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Finney Hotel.

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Continuation Sheet**

Finney Hotel  
Butler County, KY

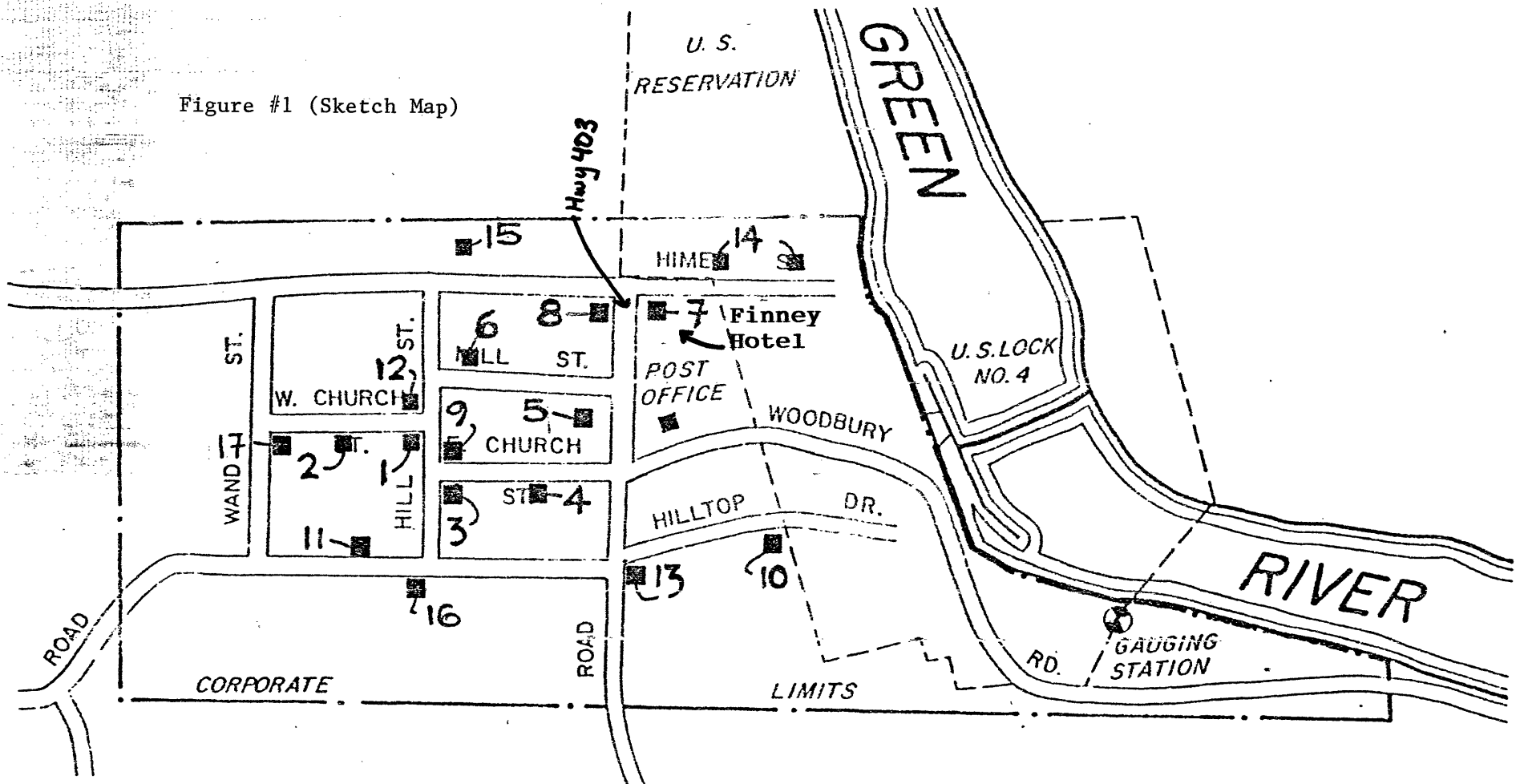
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Photographer: Photos 1-3 by Wayne Gannaway, Sept. 1994; negatives with photographer.

- #1: East facade, main entrance - looking west
- #2: South facade, rear entrance - looking northeast
- #3: North facade, side entrance - looking south
- #4: Photographer unk., circa 1900; Kentucky Library, Western Kentucky University; east facade, main entrance - looking west

Figure #1 (Sketch Map)

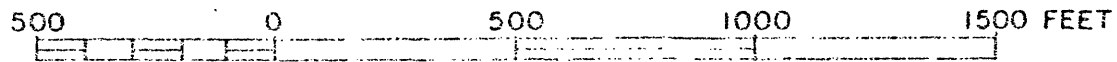


HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY 1984



# WOODBURY

BUTLER COUNTY  
KENTUCKY



Finney Hotel  
Butler County, KY  
Photo #4

