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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

RECEIVED APR 5 1976

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old Episcopal Burying Ground, purchased in 1832 by Christ Church Episcopal, currently contains two acres at 251 East Third Street. It is in the block bounded by Walnut, East Fourth, Deweese, and East Third Streets, in a deteriorated residential neighborhood not far from downtown Lexington.

On the plat recorded at the Fayette County Courthouse, November of 1837, there were twelve burial lots or plots. States historian Clay Lancaster, "The burial plots were laid out in groups of ten flanking a 17-foot central axis; a 10-foot alley was between the blocks, with the exception of the central cross axis which was 16 feet wide." Lotholders were named on the plat, although several lots were left vacant, among which several were designated for "strangers."

The lot divisions can no longer be ascertained because of thick overgrowth and the removal of many stones. The ones that remain have suffered the ravages of neglect, time, and vandalism (see photos land 2). The inscriptions on most are almost obliterated. Broken markers and those that cannot be matched to graves are stacked in a plot enclosed by an iron fence on the west side of the cottage. The most significant marker still standing is the marble monument by Gideon Shryock over the graves of his mother and father consisting of a plain slab over a blocklike aboveground sarcophagus. The slab rests on four correct, if truncated, Doric columns on a stone plinth (see photo 3). Several graves are covered by thick slabs of concrete, approximately six feet long. Iron fences still enclose several plots which cannot be entered because of a dense tangle of brambles and weeds.

At the junction of the main cross axes (or at the center of the yard) stands the picturesque chapel which dates from 1867 (see photo 4). The design of the building has been compared by Lancaster to similar works by Lexington architect-builder, John McMurtry, although no records have been found as yet linking McMurtry to the project. As for the builder of the chapel, there is a contract deed in the Fayette County Courthouse between G. D. Wilgus, vestryman of Christ Church, and the trustees of the Episcopal Cemetery, recorded May 7, 1867, which conveys to Wilgus the east part of the church land on East Third Street, "that for and in consideration of the sum of twelve hundred dollars in hand paid by Agreement to Erect a Cottage in the graveyard of the Episcopal Church according to plans and specifications."

Back Streets and Pine Trees	(Lexington,	1956), p.	75.
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(continued)

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²Deed Book 44, May 7, 1867, pp. 356-7.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AF	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	$oldsymbol{X}$ RELIGION
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1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1699	X_ARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	X_SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	X_ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
<u>X</u> 1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	XOTHER (SPECIFY)
		INVENTION	Buri	al ground of many
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SPECIFIC DAT	ES 1837 (Cemetery)	BUILDER:Cha	pel: G. D. Wilgus	(design attributed to

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Surrounded by the bustle of inner-city activity is one particularly tranquil spot on East Third Street in the heart of Lexington. The site is the Old Episcopal Burying Ground, significant because of its characteristic Gothic Revival chapel, and because of the distinguished citizenry buried within its gates, notably Col. George Nicholas, called Father of Kentucky's first Constitution, and Thomas Hart, member of Richard Henderson's Transylvania Company that aided in opening Kentucky to settlement in the 1770s.

The land for the cemetery was sold to Christ Church Episcopal for \$750 in 1832 by Charlton Hunt, son of John Hunt and the first mayor of Lexington. The three trustees designated in the deed "to take charge of the said yard" were Richard Ashton, Thomas P. Hart, and Richard A. Curd, all prominent men of their day. Seven other members of Christ Church, in addition to the three trustees, advanced a total of \$1500 to buy the land and improve the lot as a grave-yard for Christ Church. The plat was recorded in the Fayette County Courthouse in November of 1837. (See the National Register form on Christ Church Episcopal, approved at the State level March 9, 1975.)

Built in 1867, the small chapel in the center of the yard has been used as a sexton's and caretaker's cottage and home for assorted tenants. Called Carpenter's Gothic in style by architectural historian Clay Lancaster, it has a steeply pitched roof, lacy bargeboards, and characteristic gable windows. Several plots enclosed by decorative iron fences, magnificent trees and dense foliage enhance its setting. The cottage has been compared by Lancaster to buildings designed by Lexington architect-builder John McMurtry (notably to McMurtry's Elley Villa, also located in Lexington), but proof of McMurtry's involvement has not as yet, been substantiated.

The Old Episcopal Burying Ground has been called Lexington's Westminster Abbey because so many of its illustrious citizens repose there. The original lotholders recorded on the plat include such notables as Henry Clay, and wealthy businessmen and city leaders John Brand and Benjamin Gratz; although some, such as Henry Clay, are known not to be buried there. In the nineteenth century many bodies were moved there from family and other cemeteries.

¹Clay Lancaster, Back Streets and Pine Trees, p. 74.

(continued)

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	Courier-Journal Roto				
	Floyd, William Barro		ky Artists. I	exington: Transylvan	ia Printing
	Company, 1968,	pp. 3, 54.		(gontinu	ıed)
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Acting

DIRECTOR OFFICE OF ABCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ACTING EEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Form No. 10-300a (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Episcopal Burying Ground

ITEM NUMBER

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PAGE 2

Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky 1971 State Kentucky Heritage Commission 104 Bridge Street Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

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Episcopal Burying Ground

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PAGE 2

The chapel, converted at a later date to a sexton's or caretaker's cottage, is constructed in the form of a T with the width of the stem and crossbar fitting into the main axes of the cemetery plan (see photo 5). The chapel itself is the stem of the T; in the crossbar are the vestry room on the west side and the record room on the east. Originally there may have been a porch or lean-to at the rear (see map 4). There is currently a rear addition containing a kitchen and bath with a shed behind (see map 5).

Although it is common-bond brick rather than frame, the chapel has trim in what is often referred to as the Carpenter's Gothic style. The facade has a hooded doorway trimmed with a bargeboard as are the gables under the steeply pitched roof; the "jig-saw" bargeboards are "encrusted with half-round moldings and turned pendants: similar to Cottage Garden. (Cottage Garden was a small former gardener's cottage in the Carpenter's Gothic style to which the bankrupt Lexington builder John McMurtry and his family moved in 1857.) Dramatic pinnacles originally soared skyward from the apices of the roof; only one over the front door remains in perfect condition (see photo 6). A small trefoil window pierces the gable of the facade, and small diamond-shaped windows appear in the east and west gables of the crossbar. A massive triple and a single chimney stack rise from the junction of the crossbar and stem.

The interior of the small building is very simple. The focal point of the front room or chapel is the cast-iron chimney piece of Gothic design with arched fire opening (see photo 7). Built-in furniture with octagonal piers showing evidence of McMurtry workmanship can be seen in the vestry room on the west side of the crossbar and in the record room on the east. ⁵ The presses on either side of the fireplace in the vestry room were used for hanging vestments and are crowned in a castellated design with turreted finials (see photo 8). On either side of the fireplace in the record room are simple cabinets with shelves (see photo 9). The sloping roof forms the ceiling of the three rooms, giving the interior a feeling of spaciousness.

³Clay Lancaster, Back Streets and Pine Trees, p. 75.

⁴Ib<u>id.</u>, p. 75.

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PAGE 2

A partial list of tombstones was compiled in 1925 by Alice Trabue of the Colonial Dames Society and recorded on the Register of Kentucky State Historical Society. The most famous Kentuckian to lie in the cemetery is Col. George Nicholas (1754-1799), a veteran of the Revolutionary War, member of the Virginia House of Delegates, called Father of Kentucky's 1792 Constitution, and Kentucky's first Attorney General. Of Col. Nicholas and the first Constitutional Convention of the State, Governor Morehead said: "It abounded in talent, integrity and patriotism and George Nicholas was its brightest luminary."

A number of members of the pioneer Hart family are buried in the Old Episcopal Burying Ground. On the monument in the family lot is the name of Col. Thomas Hart who, with his brother Nathaniel, was a member of the Transylvania Company which bought from the Cherokees in 1775 a vast territory between the Ohio, Kentucky, and Cumberland Rivers stretching as far east as the Cumberland Mountains. Thomas Hart was also the fatherin-law of Henry Clay. Descendants of John Bradford, who established the Kentucky first newspaper west of the Alleghenies, kie near the cemetery entrance. wife and eldest son of General Leslie Combs rest there; the son, Franklin, was assassinated in 1844 in a Texas land dispute. Gen. Combs was a prominent lawyer, member of the Legislature, and state auditor, who distinguished himself in the War of 1812. Rhoda Vaughn, who was said to have been the first child born at Boone's Fort in 1776, is buried in the cemetery. Local burghers of note included: Michael Gaugh, builder and partner of Mathias Shryock; Richard Ashton, coachmaker; Samuel Pilkington, merchant; Thomas Huggins, grocer; and Thomas K. Layton, brickmaker and layer. "Peggy" Moore, widow of the Rev. James Moore, first President of Transylvania and founder of Christ Church, also reposes there.

The need for a burial ground in the city of Lexington was never more evident than in the summer of 1833, just one year after the Christ Church had made its purchase, when the cholera plague struck. Over 1500 persons were stricken, 502 of whom died. The parish of Christ Church lost nearly one-third of its members. It is surmised that William "King" Solomon, the heroic vagrant celebrated by James Lane Allen in "King Solomon of

²G. W. Ranck, History of Lexington (Cincinnati, 1872), p. 43.

³J. Winston Coleman, Jr., <u>The Squire's Sketches of Lexington</u> (Lexington, 1972), p. 37. See also Nancy D. Baird, "Asiatic Cholera's First Visit to Kentucky." <u>The Filson Club History Quarterly</u>, XLVIII, 3 (July 1974), 228-40.

⁴Frances Keller Swinford and Rebecca Smith Lee, The Great Elm Tree (Lexington, 1969), p. 80.

Form No. 10-300a (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Episcopal Burying Ground

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PAGE

Kentucky" wielded his shovel in the Episcopal Burving Ground when others fled. The Reverend London Ferrill, former slave and noted Baptist preacher, whose own funeral in 1854 was attended by over 5000 persons (second in size to Henry Clay's), also remained in the city to comfort the stricken and bury the dead. J. Winston Coleman, Jr. writes that Ferrill is buried in the Old Episcopal Burying Ground. Perhaps his body lies in the plot with his first benefactor in Lexington. Thomas Hart, who allowed Ferrill to preach in the weaving-room of his home. 5

Among those dving that summer and buried in the cemetery were John Postlewaite, who opened a tayern at the corner of Main and Mulberry in 1797, later the Phoenix Hotel. He was a town trustee, justice of the peace, member of county court, and one of the members who organized the Episcopal Church parish in 1808. Elizabeth Bosworth Smith was buried by her husband, Bishop Benjamin Smith of Christ Church, who was one of the few to report for regular services that summer. One of the few clergyman who continued regular services and ministrations throughout the plague.

Mathias Shryock, father of Gideon and Cincinnatus, well-known Kentucky architects, also perished in the plague. The story is that his son Gideon and a friend fashioned his casket and dug his grave. Later, Gideon erected a small Greek-Doric monument to honor his father and mother. The memorial is patterned after Transvlvania University's Morrison College, the largest example of Gideon Shryock's work in his hometown.

Bodies of some Christ Church members were removed to the Episcopal Burving Ground from the churchyard on Market Street in 1847, the year construction on the present church building got under way. Among them was John Grimes, protege and pupil of Matthew Jouett and artist in his own right. Jouett's portrait of Grimes hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art; works by Grimes can be found in central Kentucky and Nashville, Tennessee, homes.

In 1849, the Episcopal Burying Ground was again used for victims of a cholera outbreak which claimed some 345 lives in Lexington. Professor S. F. Bonfils, a former officer in the army of Napoleon Bonaparte, died during the siege; he had joined the faculty at Transylvania about 1830. His body was later removed from the Episcopal Burying Ground to Morrison College at Transylvania. The year of 1849 was also the date of the opening of the Lexington Cemetery on West Main Street, 6 during which time the cemetery received the bodies

⁵J. Winston Coleman, Jr., The Squire's <u>Sketches of Lexington</u> (Lexington, 1972),

p. 46. $^6\mathrm{See}$ National Register form for Lexington Cemetery, Lexington, Fayette County, Kentucky. On the second major outbreak see also Baird, "Asiatic Cholera: Kentucky's First Public Health Instructor, 'FCHQ, XLVIII, 4 (October 1974), 327-41.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Episcopal Burying Ground

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of many who lost their lives during the cholera outbreak. Through the years many have removed ancestors' remains from the Old Episcopal Ground to the newer and larger Lexington Cemetery, discarding or leaving behind the gravestones. However, burials continued to take place in the Third Street cemetery until about 1870.

The Old Episcopal Burying Ground has been known by various names since its beginning; these include Old Episcopal Cemetery, Old Christ Church Cemetery, and Old Christ Episcopal Cemetery. Interest and restoration efforts concerning the chapel and cemetery have been sporadic. Several volunteer groups, including the Colonial Dames, Lexington Garden Club, and ladies of Christ Church have endeavored to clear the grounds, mending and returning some stones to their rightful graves and repairing the fences. The cottage was renovated in 1947 with the help of Clay Lancaster, architectural historian. Despite periods of neglect and the ravages of time, weather, and vandalism, the Old Episcopal Burying Ground survives. "The quaint brick chapel and weathered gravestones are visible reminders of the littler cemetery's connection with much of Lexington's early history and many of its prominent pioneer citizens."

Ann Lemert, "Time, Weather, Vandalism--Yet This Much Remains," <u>Lexington</u> Herald-Leader (June 15, 1969), p. 63.

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Episcopal Burying Ground

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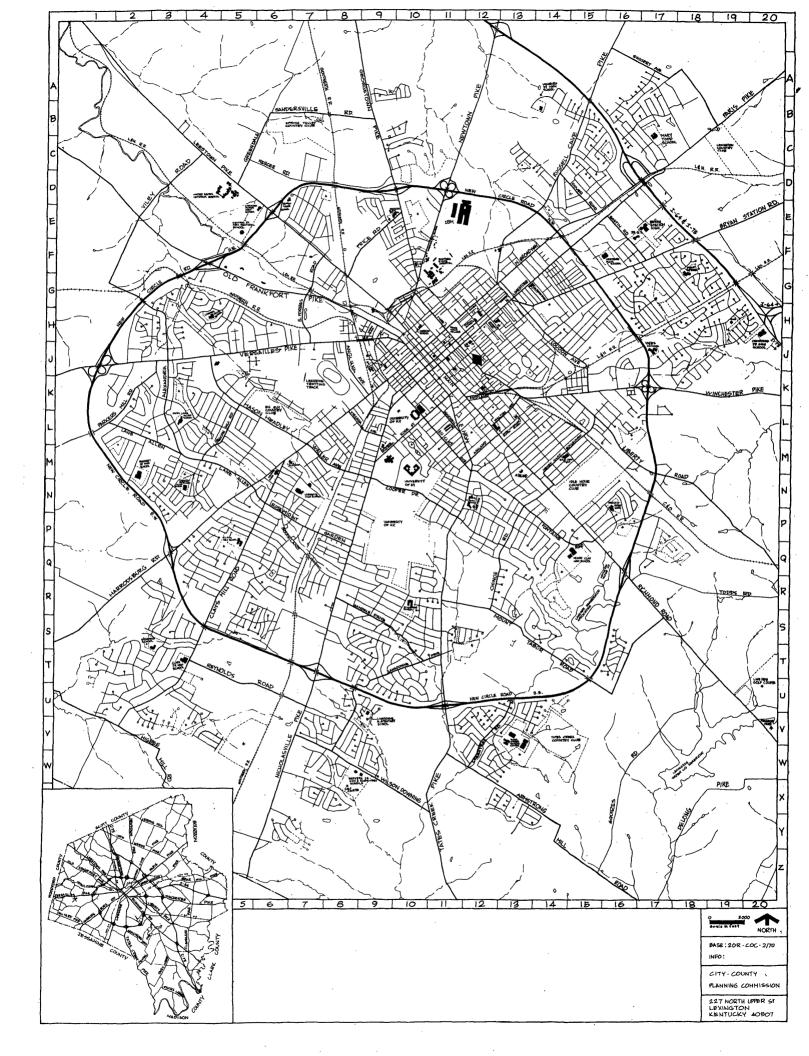
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY 1976 APR 5 RECEIVED JUN 24 1976 DATE ENTERED

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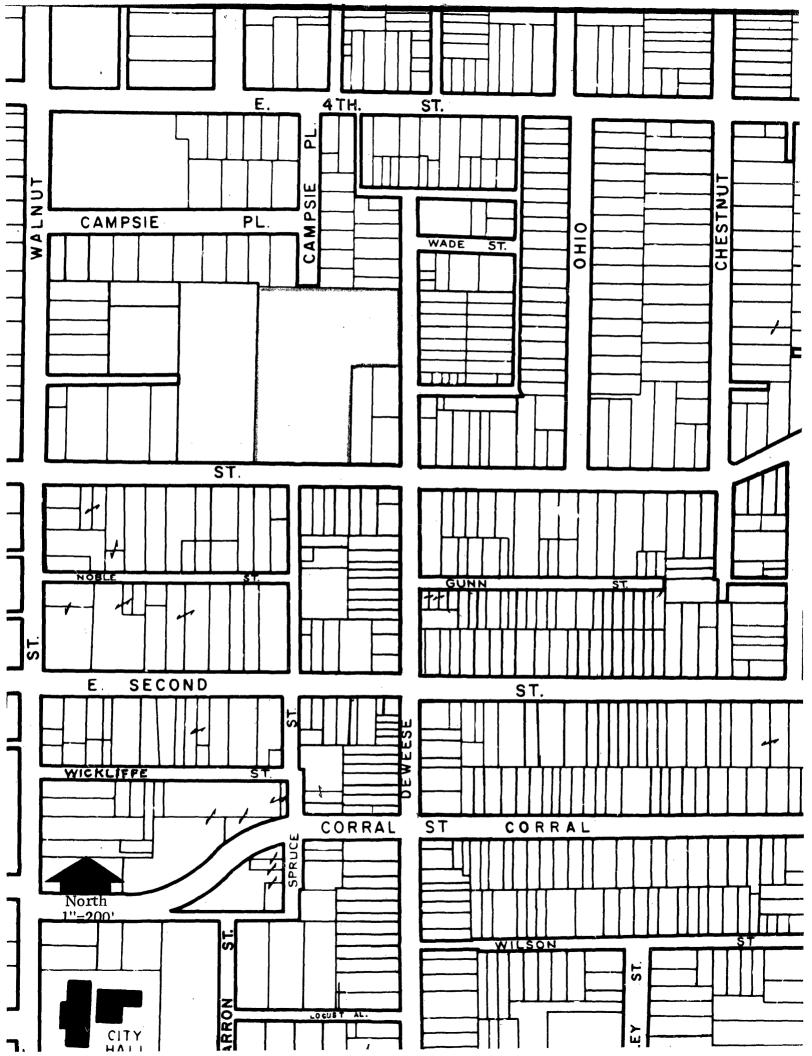
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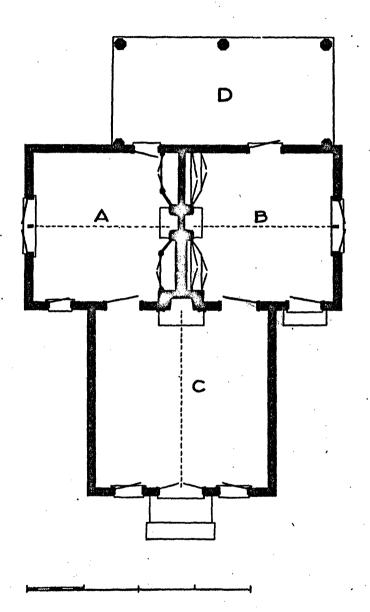
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

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AND/OR COMMON Old Episcopal Burying Ground

2 LOCATION

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Lexington

Fayette 251 East Third Street

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE

Plan of chapel from Back Streets and Pine Trees, Illustration 37, p. 76.

Conjectural restoration by Clay Lancaster.

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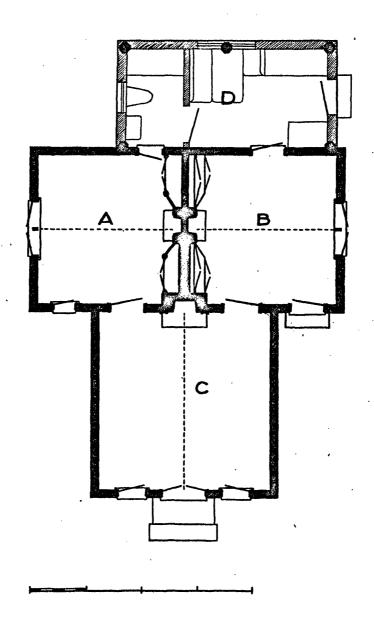
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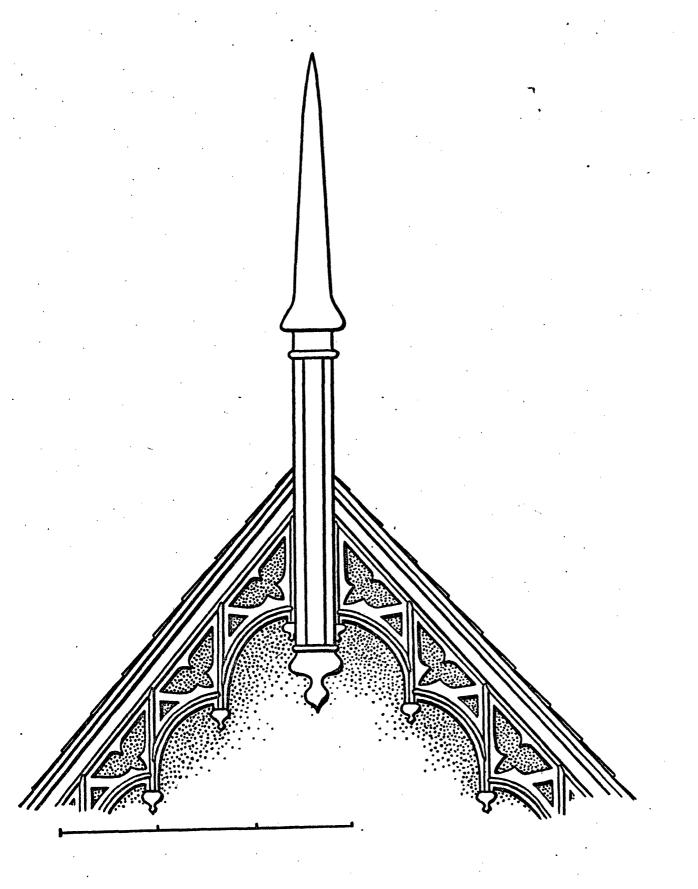
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CITY, TOWN	VICINITY OF	COUNTY	STATE
Lexington		Fayette	Kentucky
3 MAP REFERENCE	E .		
SOURCE Clay Lanc	aster		
Plan of chapel with mod	ern addition from Back Str	eets and Pine Tree	es. p. 76.
Unknown	DATE 1956		1
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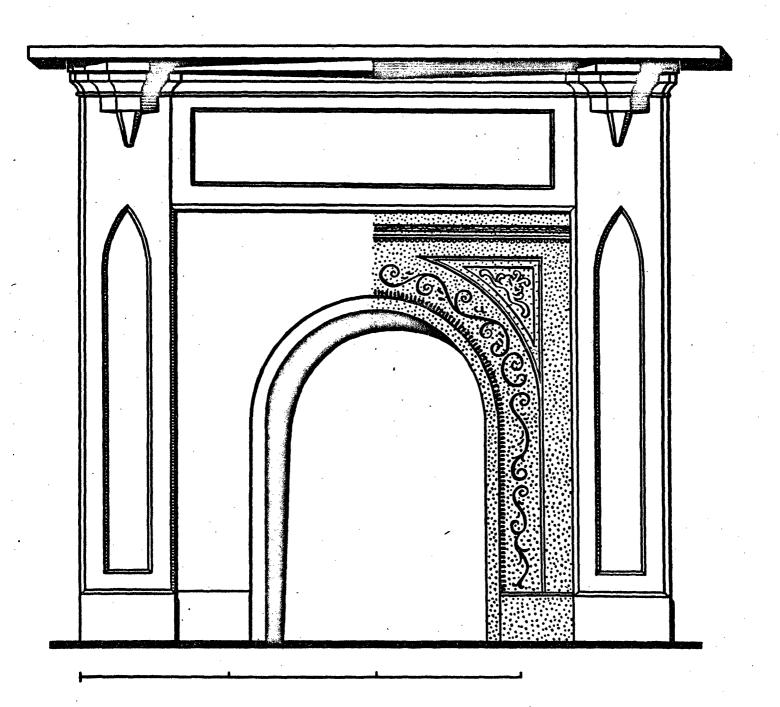


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Detail of bargeboard and pinnacle on facade of chapel. Mea by Clay Lancaster, 1947.		l. Measured drawing	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
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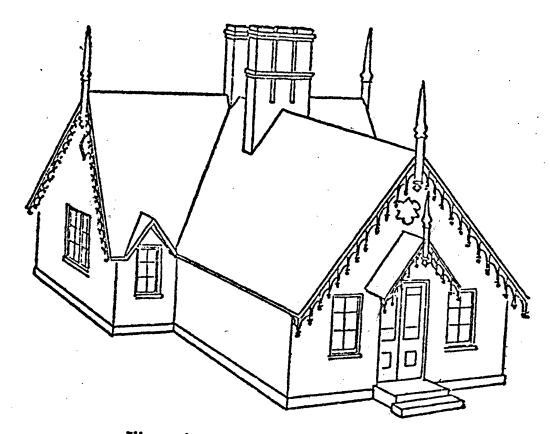
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Detail of chimneypiece in chapel (front room). Measured drawing by Clay Lancaster, 1947.

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Illus. 36. Episcopal Cemetery Chapel.

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NAME

HISTORIC

Episcopal Burying Ground

AND/OR COMMON

Old Episcopal Burying Ground and Chapel

LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Lexington ___VICINITY OF

COUNTY Fayette STATE Kentucky

PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Clay Lancaster, Back Streets and Pine Trees, Illustration 36, p. 74. DATE OF PHOTO

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DESCRIBE VIEW DIRECTION ETC IS DISTRICT CIVE BUILDING