

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received JUL 25 1984  
date entered SEP 4 1984

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

1. Name ~~Historic Resources of~~ Owenton MRA

historic

and/or common

2. Location The incorporation limits of Owenton (1984)

street & number

2 dist + 6 ind

not for publication

city, town

Owenton

vicinity of

state Kentucky

code

county Owen

code

3. Classification Multiple Resources

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property Multiple ownership--see attached individual survey forms and continuation sheet

name

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.

Owen County Courthouse

street & number

100 N. Thomas Street

city, town

Owenton

state

Kentucky 40359

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

see also continuation sheet

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

date November 1983--February 1984  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council

city, town

Frankfort

state

Kentucky 40601

## 7. Description see also continuation sheets

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

### Survey Methodology

A comprehensive survey of the historic resources of Owenton was carried out during the months of November 1983 through February 1984. The Kentucky Heritage Council provided a survey grant for the city of Owenton. The terms of the grant and the survey were administered by the Northern Kentucky Area Development District, and the survey was conducted by Lori A. Feldman, architectural historian.

All of the historic resources within the incorporation limits of Owenton were examined, and those which met necessary historical and architectural criteria were included in the survey. Criteria for inclusion was based upon local historical significance and architectural significance as reflective of Owenton's development. In many cases, only the best examples of a particularly common period or style of building were included in the survey. Each site was photographed, mapped, and described on a Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory form. One hundred buildings were documented in the Owenton survey. Of those one hundred, forty-two are being nominated to the National Register--twenty within the Central Owenton Historic District, sixteen within the N. Main-N. Adams Historic District, and six individual buildings.

### Physical Description of Owenton

Owenton is located in the center of Owen County. Owen County is situated in north-central Kentucky, and is bordered by Carroll and Gallatin Counties to the north, Grant County to the east, Scott and Franklin Counties to the south, and Henry County to the west (see maps 1 and 2). Owenton may be reached by U.S. Highway 127 or Kentucky Highway 22. It is situated approximately 74 miles NE of Louisville, Ky.; approximately 59 miles NW of Lexington, Ky.; and approximately 60 miles SW of Cincinnati, Ohio--the nearest metropolitan areas. Owenton is the urban center of Owen County; Monterey, Sparta, and Gratz are the only other towns of significant size. Owenton consists of a central business district around the Courthouse Square and several surrounding residential neighborhoods. The area beyond the city limits is largely rural, used primarily for agriculture.

### General Historical Description

Owen County was established in 1819, from portions of Pendleton, Gallatin, Franklin, and Scott counties. It was the 62nd Kentucky county, and was named for Col. Abraham Owen, an Indian fighter and representative to the state legislature. The first county seat was Heslerville (now Hesler), to the south. In 1822, after adding land from Gallatin County to the north, the General Assembly moved the county seat to centrally located Owenton. At that time, the city was on lands owned primarily by Andrew Parker, James Gess, and William Forsee. The city of Owenton was incorporated December 18, 1828 (see map 3).<sup>1</sup>

Owen County's early settlers came mostly from Virginia and the Carolinas. The population of Owen County in 1820 was 2031; by 1830 it had risen to 5786, with 143 of those residing in Owenton.<sup>2</sup> Little is known about the appearance of the town in its early years. There was a log courthouse (c. 1822) located on the central square, and a log stray pen and jail located nearby. Adams Street (now Main) was the site of Owenton's early businesses.<sup>3</sup> The majority of Owenton's early residents seem to have lived along E. Adair, E. and W. Seminary, and N. Adams Streets (see map 5).

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The names and addresses of all owners of numbered sites within the nomination (both individual buildings and buildings within the Central Owenton Historic District and the N. Main-N. Adams Historic District) are listed on individual survey forms, included as accompanying documentation. There are two additional properties which fall within district boundaries but are non-contributing elements. Names and addresses for the owners of these properties are as follows:

Site A: Jr. Class Shop/Powers Jewelry & Gifts  
101-103 N. Thomas Street

owned by John Campbell Thomas Jr.  
Rt. 6  
Owenton, Kentucky 40359

and

Jackie Thomas  
Rt. 5  
Owenton, Kentucky 40359

Site B: Owen County Public Library  
118 N. Main Street

owned by Owen County Fiscal Court  
100 N. Thomas Street  
Owenton, Kentucky 40359

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Three properties included in the nomination are already listed in the National Register of Historic Places as individual sites:

- |          |  |             |
|----------|--|-------------|
| Site 1:  | Owen County Jail<br>102 N. Madison Street      | listed 1977 |
| Site 15: | Owen County Courthouse<br>100 N. Thomas Street | listed 1977 |
| Site 33: | Highfield<br>303 N. Adams Street               | listed 1977 |

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From its beginnings, Owenton served as the government and commercial center of the county. Farmers from the surrounding rural areas would come to town to conduct business, trade goods, and collect supplies. Although the population of the county nearly doubled between 1830 and 1850 (from 5786 to 10,450), Owenton acquired only 51 new residents (from 143 to 194).<sup>4</sup>

During the Civil War years, Owenton and the surrounding county supported the Confederate cause. The Civil War marked a point of change for Owenton--the years between 1860 and 1880 were a time of growth and development. The population rose from just over 200 to approximately 650, and a corresponding population jump in the surrounding county area indicated an increase in agricultural activity.<sup>5</sup> In addition to land well-suited for raising livestock, the county farmland was able to support newly discovered varieties of tobacco. Owenton continued to serve as the commercial center, a point from which goods could be taken by wagon either to steamboats on the Kentucky River via Gratz, or to the railroad at Sparta.<sup>6</sup>

By 1870, Owenton is described as having two churches, one bank, three hotels, eight stores, twelve mechanics' shops, one tobacco drying house, eight lawyers, and three doctors.<sup>7</sup> The present courthouse had attained its current appearance by 1868; and the present jail was constructed in 1876.

The 1883 Almanac map shows the Courthouse Square, with commercial establishments around it, a tobacco house, a public school, two churches, and residential neighborhoods along most of the major streets (see map 4). The last twenty years of the nineteenth century were prosperous ones for Owenton. It was during this period that the town acquired some of its finest buildings--those found in the commercial area along W. Seminary Street, near the Courthouse, and the residences found primarily along N. Main and N. Adams Streets. They were built by businessmen and professionals who chose to live and work in Owenton, responding to the opportunities offered by Owenton's position as the commercial center of the county.

By the turn of the century, Owenton's population had reached 1000.<sup>8</sup> The center of town looked much as it does today, with an established commercial district surrounded by residential areas. A description of County Court Days--the fourth Monday of the month--gives a sense of turn-of-the-century Owenton. On those days, each month, residents of the county would come to town to transact routine court business, conduct trade, restock supplies, and visit with friends. The period between 1900 and 1915 marked the culmination of Owenton's place as commercial center for the county. During that time, new businesses were established, new neighborhoods were laid out (see map 5), and many changes began to be felt in Owenton.

Several factors contributed to the decline. Tobacco prices dropped during the first years of the twentieth century, causing many farmers to leave the area. The coming of the automobile c. 1915 brought an end to County Court Days; it was no longer necessary to set aside one day for the hard journey to town, larger metropolitan areas were now accessible, and it was easier to transport goods directly to distribution points on the railroad or river. World War I created expanded opportunities and attracted many young people to nearby urban centers. All of these factors, with the flu epidemic of 1918, left Owenton with a population of 970 by 1920, and the height of commercial success was past.<sup>9</sup>

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There has been little change in Owenton since the 1920's (see map 5). It is still the commercial and governmental center of the county, situated in a rich agrarian area. Owenton has had several expanded business opportunities during the past fifty years--the Kraft Cheese Co. opened a plant there in 1936 (it is no longer in operation), and the Elmer Davis Lake recreational area opened in 1957. Other than subdivision-type neighborhoods on the outskirts of town, there has been a minimum of new construction since the 1930's. Present day Owenton retains its late 19th--early 20th century appearance. It is an established urban community of 1400 residents, supported by small business within the town and agriculture outside the city limits.

Description of Architectural Component

Owenton's architectural component parallels its historical development (see map 5). The oldest part of town centered on the Courthouse Square, and stretched from Blanton St. on the north to Adair St. on the south, and from Cherry east to Bacon Alley.

There are few extant examples from Owenton's early years, 1820 to 1870. Other than the Courthouse (site 15), which was built in 1858, the only indication of early Owenton can be found in residential architecture. There are some vernacular dwellings remaining from this period, such as the Roberts-Hallam House (site 24), although all have been altered over the years, and there is Highfield (site 33), a fine residence in the Greek Revival style constructed c. 1840 on N. Adams Street.

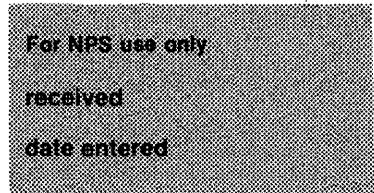
Owenton's period of prosperity and commercial success can be broken into two time frames, 1870 to 1900 and 1900 to 1925. Although a few examples from the 1870's may be found, such as the jail (site 1), built in the Italianate style, and the Ford House (site 42), built in 1870, the majority of historic buildings in Owenton date from 1880 to 1900. Most of the commercial structures found along W. Seminary Street were constructed during those years, due in part to the fire of 1893 which demolished almost all of the earlier buildings (see photos 1,2,3). These are of brick, mostly two-story, with eclectic details typical of the period, such as decorative cornices, label molds, and ironwork. Residences dating from this time range from small frame and brick vernacular dwellings with eclectic decorative elements, such as the William Lindsey House (site 39), to high-style Victorian residences, many in the Queen Anne style, such as the John M. Herndon House (site 30). Some of these buildings have been altered through modern additions such as new storefronts or aluminum siding, but most retain their original late 19th century architectural integrity.

The early 20th century was a time of continued prosperity in Owenton. During the first decade, many fine residences were built throughout the city, echoing the earlier eclectic style. Several of these can be found along N. Main and N. Adams Streets, such as the Foster House (site 31). Commercial additions from this period include both bank buildings (sites 18 and 19) on the Courthouse Square, and the Wolf Building (site 14), another eclectic example located at the corner of Main and Seminary. Two more fires, one in 1909 which destroyed the 100 block of N. Thomas, and another in 1919 which demolished part of W. Seminary opposite the Courthouse, prompted early 20th

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century additions to the central business area. The buildings on N.Thomas (see photo 10) were built c. 1915 and have storefronts typical of the period. This style, with storefronts below and apartments above, is echoed on W.Seminary Street (see photo 3), where new commercial structures replaced those lost in the fire of 1919.

The final evidence of Owenton's early twentieth century period of prosperity can be found along N.Main Street, where residences were built between 1915 and 1925. These are fine houses of brick, in an undefined style, built by businessmen and professionals. One example is the Bourne House (site 29), built in 1916.

The majority of architecture dating from 1925 to the present can be found along the outer edges of the city. Historically, expansion took place along the main streets, moving out from the center of town (see map 5). There are areas of modern intrusion to be found within the older areas of the city, but the two historic districts within the multiple resources nomination were chosen to define the most cohesive commercial section in the Courthouse Square area and an intact residential section along N.Main and N.Adams Street.

Unless otherwise specified on the survey form, all property nominations refer only to the described building.

Individual Nominations

Six individual buildings are included in the nomination (sites 37 through 42, photos 20 through 31). These are all residential buildings located outside of the designated districts, and were chosen either for their particular significance or as the best example of a particular style, type or period of building. Individual survey forms for each of these sites are included as accompanying documentation. Unless otherwise specified on the survey form, all property nominations refer only to the described building.

Notes

<sup>1</sup>Houchens, pp. 21-26 and Almanac 1964, pp. 32-33.

<sup>2</sup>Almanac 1964, p.23.

<sup>3</sup>Houchens, p.22.

<sup>4</sup>Almanac 1964, p.23.

<sup>5</sup>Almanac 1964, p.23.

<sup>6</sup>Houchens, p.66.

<sup>7</sup>Almanac 1964, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup>Almanac 1964, p.23.

<sup>9</sup>Houchens, pp. 100-130.

# 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 checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The forty-two buildings that comprise the multiple resources nomination for Owenton represent the largest cohesive group of late nineteenth and early twentieth century urban architecture in Owen County. These buildings directly reflect the history and development of Owenton as the county seat and commercial center of the county.

The majority of the nominated buildings are located within the two designated districts. The Central Owenton Historic District is a commercial area, located in the center of town around the Courthouse Square. The N. Main-N. Adams Historic District includes most of Owenton's finest residences. In addition, there are six individual nominations representing more of Owenton's best residential architecture (see map 6). Resources from all periods of Owenton's history are represented in the nomination. Major periods of significance include early history, 1822 to 1870; late nineteenth century development, 1870 to 1900; and early twentieth century development, 1900 to 1925.

## Early History, 1822 to 1870

Owenton was named as the county seat in 1822, and was incorporated in 1828. Little is known about the early appearance of the town, and few buildings from the first fifty years remain. The present-day appearance of Owenton does not reflect the original plan, however, with the central Courthouse Square and commercial district surrounded by residential neighborhoods (see map 3). The original courthouse was of log, built on the same square in 1822. It was replaced by the current courthouse, built in 1858 (wings added 1868) in the Greek Revival style (see site 15, also photos 9 and 11). The Courthouse is the only non-residential building remaining from Owenton's earliest years. It was listed in the National Register in 1977, and its original appearance has been preserved.

Other examples from the early history period are all residential. Most notable is Highfield (site 33), built by Willis Roberts c. 1840. Located at the bottom of N. Adams Street, this fine residence recalls Owenton's early years when private homes were built on large parcels of land on the outskirts of the city. Highfield employs eclectic details with Greek Revival styling, and retains three of its original dependencies at the rear.

Unlike Highfield, the remaining early residences reflect local vernacular style. All are located within the N. Main-N. Adams Historic District, and all have been altered through later additions. Both the Roberts-Hallam House, c. 1860 (site 24, also photo 13) and the Roberts-Doty-Smith House, c. 1850 (site 25, also photo 12) are simple frame dwellings that have been enlarged and updated. Both have later 19th century porches with the decorative detail typical of the Victorian years. The Bright House, c. 1868 (site 22, also photo 13), recalls its simple vernacular appearance from the front, but has later 19th century additions to the rear. The Teal House, c. 1840 (site 21, also photo 1) has undergone many changes over the years, but retains its decorative wooden lintels on corbel blocks over the windows. The Duncan House (site 26, also

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photo 12) was originally a small brick one-story dwelling, built c. 1860. In 1905, the house was enlarged and the decorative elements, such as shingle trim and bargeboard, were added at that time. Despite the changes made to these early residences, all retain a sense of their original architectural integrity and reflect the appearance of Owenton in its early years.

Commercial Development, 1870 to 1900

After the Civil War, Owenton experienced a rise in population, primarily due to businessmen and professionals settling in town to serve the needs of the surrounding county's increasingly successful farmers. Owenton was a center from which goods could be transported to distribution points on the river or railroad line. Farmers coming to town to sell their produce would stock up on supplies and transact banking and other personal business.

In answer to this need, the central business district around the Court-house Square was comprised of a variety of commercial buildings (see map 4). Only three of the present buildings on W. Seminary predate the fire of 1893, and all were damaged to some extent. Although the Kemper, Ransdell and Co. Drugstore (site 3, also photo 3) dates to c. 1880, it is difficult to determine its original fabric. This building survived the 1893 fire and another in 1919, and currently retains its 1920's appearance. The other two survivors are Herndon's Hardware Store, c. 1892 (site 10, also photo 2), and the Farmers' National Bank Building, c. 1885 (site 9, also photo 2). Both are fine examples of late 19th century commercial style. The bank was built in the Italianate style, with a decorative cornice and hood molds over the windows. Herndon's is still in use as a hardware store (now Minch's) and retains its original architectural integrity on both the exterior and interior.

The fire of 1893 demolished the remainder of the 100 blocks of W. Seminary Street, but businessmen were quick to rebuild. A major addition to the business area was the new Masonic Lodge (site 7, also photo 3), built in conjunction with the IOOF in 1894. This large eclectic building housed the lodge halls on the upper level and was rented for commercial use below. The IOOF also built another building for commercial rental, at the corner of Seminary and Madison, in 1898. It is also done in the popular late 19th century eclectic style, with corbeled brickwork and other decorative details (site 2, also photos 5 and 6).

A group of professional men--doctors and lawyers--built their offices c. 1895 in the heart of the central business district (site 8, also photo 2). Although constructed as two separate buildings with a common fire wall, a common front facade was remodeled in the early 20th century. Other commercial buildings along W. Seminary that add to the late 19th century appearance of the district include the Fullilove Building, c. 1898 (site 11, also photo 1); Berthel's Restaurant, c. 1898 (site 12, also photo 1); and the Henry Block, built by Dr. D.S. Henry in 1899 (site 6, also photo 3).

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Owenton as Government and Religious Center, 1870 to 1900

Owenton served not only as the late 19th century commercial center, but also as the government and religious center for the surrounding county. In the spirit of building that prevailed during the period, two major buildings were constructed in Owenton.

The new Owen County Jail, designed by H.P. McDonald of Louisville and built in 1876, replaced an earlier facility (site 1, also photos 5 and 6). The small Italianate building is a focal point of the Central Owenton Historic District, and has been listed in the National Register since 1977. No longer in use as a jail, there are plans to renovate it for county offices.

The second major addition was the new First Baptist Church, built on N. Main Street in 1896 (site 32, also photo 17). The oldest portion of the building is Gothic Revival; later additions have been made to the east and south.

Residential Development, 1870 to 1900

Many of the businessmen who had commercial buildings in town also built fine residences. Most of these are located within the N. Main-N. Adams Historic District, but several examples have been nominated as individual sites. The earliest example from this period is the Ford House on S. Main Street (site 42, photos 30 and 31), built in 1870 to replace an earlier family home. This residence reflects an attempt to copy an earlier style of building, perhaps modeled after the c. 1840 Highfield on N. Adams Street.

H.T. Herndon, owner of the hardware store on W. Seminary, built his home on N. Adams in 1892 (site 35, also photo 19). It is a large frame Queen Anne, with all of its intricate decorative detail intact. On the neighboring lot is the J.B. Martin House, constructed in 1894 (site 34, also photo 18). Mr. Martin, connected with the First National Bank of Owenton, had his residence built in the Victorian Gothic style; it remains the finest example of that style in Owenton.

Also on N. Adams Street is the E.E. Settle House (site 37, photos 20 and 21), built c. 1880. This small frame vernacular residence has had many additions to the rear but retains its original appearance on the front, with particularly unusual carved wooden label molds over the windows. Mr. Settle was a lawyer and part owner of the Owenton Herald. His partner, William Lindsey, built his home on W. Seminary Street (site 39, photos 24 and 25). This small Victorian residence, c. 1880, retains its original eclectic details such as the scalloped bargeboard.

The L.O. Cox House, c. 1880, on N. Main Street (site 38, photos 22 and 23) is a large frame residence, built in the popular Victorian eclectic style. Mr. Cox was a member of one of Owenton's best-known merchant families. His elegant house looks much the same today as when it was first constructed, with architectural integrity almost completely intact.

Two more residences on N. Main Street reflect the late 19th century affluence of their owners. J.C. Hartsough, respected Owenton undertaker and businessman, built his small frame Queen Anne c. 1890 (site 23, also photo 13). Another Queen Anne, this one of brick, was built c. 1890 by J.M. Herndon

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(site 30, also photo 16). The house is in excellent condition and fully reflects its original appearance with art glass windows, decorative porches, and corner tower.

Other well-to-do families chose to build homes in other neighborhoods than N. Main-N. Adams. An unusual Queen Anne residence, in excellent condition, can be found on S. Main Street. Built by the Gibson family c. 1890, it has a wealth of late 19th century detail (site 40, photos 26 and 27). The art glass windows, added c. 1930, enhance earlier decorative elements such as the intricate woodwork, patterned slate roof, and paneled chimneys. The McKay House, c. 1895 (site 41, photos 28 and 29), is a good example of eclectic style, with its elaborate carved wooden gable end and art glass windows.

## Commercial Development, 1900 to 1925

Owenton's commercial prosperity continued into the early years of the 20th century, and a number of commercial additions were made to the central business area near the Courthouse Square at that time. Some of the early 20th century buildings were a continued response to the fire of 1893. The Knights of Pythias built their lodge hall in 1903 at the SW corner of Seminary and Main (site 14, also photo 1). The building is in the same popular eclectic style as earlier examples on W. Seminary, and was designed for lodge use on the upper story with the lower level rented for commercial purposes. A small brick building was constructed next door, also in 1903. Built for Otho Carroll as a barber shop, it is of indeterminate style with simple eclectic detailing (site 13, also photo 1).

The Peoples' Bank Building (site 19, also photo 10) was erected at the NE corner of N. Thomas and Bryan Streets in 1902. This large brick building with richly detailed front facade also housed the post office, local telephone exchange, and a variety of other commercial functions. To its east, on W. Bryan Street, is an early 20th century store building, constructed c. 1903 (site 20). Although changes have been made to the facade, this small commercial building adds to the early 20th century sense of time found at the NE corner of the central business area.

The adjacent block of N. Thomas Street, across from the Courthouse, experienced a destructive fire in 1909. All of the commercial structures on this block post-date the fire. The First National Bank built its new facility on the north end of the block in 1909 (site 18, also photos 8 and 10). An example of early 20th century eclectic style, the bank was remodeled in 1965 but retains much of its early appearance. The neighboring two commercial buildings were constructed c. 1910-15. Charles Marshall built his Ford dealership next to the bank, with the car lot to the rear (site 17, also photos 8 and 10). Although the building has a new storefront, it is an integral part of this early 20th century block. The Fullilove Building, next door (site 16, also photo 10), also adds a sense of style and time, with its typical design of street level store and apartment above.

That same building style can be found at the opposite end of the central business area, on W. Seminary Street. A fire in 1919 destroyed the western part of the block opposite the Courthouse, and new stores were built to replace those lost. The Arnold Building (site 5, also photo 3) is the only concrete

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structure in the Central Owenton Historic District. Built in 1920, it has new siding on the lower level but retains its original sense of scale and design. Next door, Mollie Stonestreet built her store c. 1922 (site 4, also photo 3) in a similar style.

## Residential Development, 1900 to 1925

The early 20th century commercial prosperity again translated to residential architecture. Many businessmen and professionals chose, once again, to build along N. Main Street. These fine residences, ironically, replaced earlier 19th century homes demolished to make way for progress. The earliest example is Dr. Foster's House (site 31, also photo 16), built at the turn of the century. An elegant brick residence, it recalls many popular 19th century eclectic details such as the art glass windows and decorative cornice.

Two early 20th century examples can be found in the next block of N. Main Street. The Bourne House, built in 1916 (site 29, also photo 15), is an indeterminate modern style with many decorative details. The Schoolfield House, built in 1922 (site 27, also photo 15), is similar. Both residences integrate well with the surrounding late 19th century examples, due to similarity of scale, materials, and richness of design.

Two related examples are connected with Owenton's religious aspect. The site between the Bourne House and the Schoolfield House had been occupied by the First Christian Church since 1870. When the early church building burned in 1914, it was replaced by the present one. Designed by Frankfort architect L. Obermarth in the Classical Revival style, the church was built in 1915 and completes the early 20th century atmosphere of the block (site 28, also photo 15). On N. Adams Street, H.T. Herndon sold a portion of his property to the Baptist Church. The parsonage (site 36, also photo 19) was built there in 1904, and reflects an earlier style of building through its simple eclectic design.

## Conclusion

The 1920's marked the end of Owenton's commercial prosperity--due to a variety of modern technological advances and a drop in population--and there has been little change in the architectural component of the town since that time. Owenton still serves as the government and commercial center of Owen County, and the present-day city, particularly the downtown area, appears much the same as it did in the early part of the century.

The majority of Owenton's late 19th and early 20th century buildings are still in active use. Because it remains historically intact and continues to reflect its original sense of time, Owenton's architecture stands as an important and informative historical record of a small Northern Kentucky commercial center.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References see also continuation sheet:

Atlas of Owen County, Kentucky. D.J. Lake and Company, 1883.

Carr, Elizabeth. History of Kentucky Courthouses. National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Kentucky, 1966.

## 10. Geographical Data see map 8; see also continuation sheets

Acreeage of nominated property 4.0 Acres in Central Owenton

Quadrangle name Owenton 15.5 Acres in No. Main/No. Adams

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References See Individual Inventory Forms

A 

Zone	Easting			Northing			

B 

Zone	Easting			Northing			

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** Boundaries for the Multiple Resources Area are the incorporation limits of Owenton (see map 5). See continuation sheet for boundary descriptions of Central Owenton Historic District and N. Main-N. Adams Historic District (see maps 6,7). See survey sheets for individual boundaries.

**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 Lori A. Feldman, Architectural Historian

organization Northern Kentucky Area

Development District

date March 1984

street & number 7505 Sussex Drive

telephone 606/283-1885

city or town Florence

state Kentucky 41042

## 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Mary Curran Appel

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date May 31, 1984

For NPS use only

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

date  

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date  

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Hist. Resources Owenton Item number 9

Page 2

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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date entered SEP 4 1984

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 1 of 1

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Owenton Multiple Resource Area  
State Owen County, KENTUCKY

*Area - ok - CD 9/4/84*

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. Central Owenton Historic District

Entered in the  
National Register

*for* Keeper

*Delores Byers 9/4/84*

Attest

2. North Main-North Adams  
Historic District

~~Substantive Review~~

Keeper

*Wm Duhie 9/4/84*

Attest

3. Gibson House

**DOE/OWNER OBJECTION**

~~Substantive Review~~

Determined Eligible

Keeper

*Eligible - Wm Duhie 9/4/84*

Attest

4. Cox, L. O., House

~~Substantive Review~~

Keeper

*Wm Duhie 9/4/84*

Attest

5. Ford House

Entered in the  
National Register

*for* Keeper

*Delores Byers 9/4/84*

Attest

6. Lindsey, William, House

Entered in the  
National Register

*for* Keeper

*Delores Byers 9/4/84*

Attest

7. McKay House

Entered in the  
National Register

*for* Keeper

*Delores Byers 9/4/84*

Attest

8. Settle, E. E., House

Entered in the  
National Register

*for* Keeper

*Delores Byers 9/4/84*

Attest

9.

Keeper

Attest

10.

Keeper

Attest