

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
Old Morrison Building; Morrison College  
AND/OR COMMON  
Old Morrison Building

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER West Third Street between Upper and Broadway, campus of  
Transylvania College  
CITY, TOWN Lexington  
STATE Kentucky  
VICINITY OF  
COUNTY Fayette  
CODE 021  
CODE 067  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT Sixth  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Office of the President, Transylvania College  
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Lexington  
STATE Kentucky  
VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER  
Fayette County Court House

CITY, TOWN Lexington  
STATE Kentucky

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
Inventory of Historic Assets

DATE  
in progress  
FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN Frankfort  
STATE Kentucky

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old Morrison Building stands on the northern side of West Third Street, the southern boundary of the present campus of Transylvania College, about midway between its intersections with Upper Street (east) and Broadway (west) in Lexington, Kentucky. The landmark building, fronted by a curving driveway and broad lawn, faces south toward Gratz Park, where the first buildings constructed for the college once stood. Old Morrison is the oldest building on the present campus, excepting the Patterson Cabin, a log structure which pre-dates the school and has occupied several sites (including one in Ohio). The majority of the college buildings, located east, north, and west of Old Morrison, date from the mid-20th century.

The design for Old Morrison was produced in 1830 by Gideon Shryock, who was to become known as one of America's most talented architects in the Greek Revival style. Then in his 27th year, the young Shryock had already become famous throughout Kentucky for his capitol building at Frankfort (1825-27). Construction was begun early in 1831 and, after various delays, was completed about June of 1834.

The finished building consisted of a rectangular main block with eastern and western wings, all of brick covered with concrete. It stood on a high basement, making it three stories above ground, and carried a flat roof. At the center of the front elevation was a two-story pedimented Doric portico supported on six massive fluted columns. Bold parotids (or antepodia) were set before the first and second columns at either end of the portico, flanking a broad flight of steps; the parotid to the east now contains a small chapel created by one of the school's fraternities, that to the west the tombs of two former professors. Windows were square-headed, doublehung sash, recessed slightly. The single windows at each level of the narrow eastern and western elevations of the wings were set in a recessed vertical panel topped by a round arch. Interior detailing included marble fireplace surrounds and hearths, classical moldings and cornices, and random ash floors. Stairways were located at the eastern and western ends of the main block. The largest interior space was the chapel, a rectangular room with rear balcony, which occupied both the second and third floor levels at the center of the building.

Remodeling in the early 1880's resulted in significant exterior changes in Old Morrison. The main roof was raised to a gable; Queen Anne chimneys with corbelled tops were added; and eye-brow caps were installed above the windows. At the end of the century, six tall, round-arched windows of stained glass were constructed for the chapel. The next major work occurred in 1948, when the chapel was renovated, its pot-bellied stoves removed, and chairs replaced by theatre seating. In 1962 Old Morrison was extensively restored following the original plans for the building. The \$175,000 project included removal of the gabled roof, eye-brows, and Queen Anne chimneys, replacement of exterior woodwork, doors, windows, mortar, and the concrete covering, and extensive foundation repairs.

On January 27, 1969, fire swept through Old Morrison, leaving only the exterior walls intact and those stained by smoke and water. Because of the symbolic value

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" 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 1831-34; 1971

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Gideon Shryock

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Transylvania College, chartered by the Virginia Legislature in 1783, was the first educational institution established west of the Alleghenies. At the height of its influence, during the first quarter of the 19th century, Transylvania rivaled both Harvard and Yale, training men who played major roles in the development of the South and West.

Old Morrison, constructed in 1831-34, is the oldest extant building on the Transylvania campus (excepting a log cabin which pre-dates the school). The three-story brick building faced with concrete is also an outstanding example of the Greek Revival designs produced by Gideon Shryock. Old Morrison was altered during the 1880's but restored, following the original plans, in the 1960's. After fire swept the building in 1969, leaving only the exterior walls intact, the interior was completely reconstructed.

### Historical Background

Transylvania College grew out of an act by the Virginia Legislature in 1780 which set aside 8,000 acres of confiscated Tory lands in the County of Kentucky for "a public school or seminary of learning." Twelve thousand acres were added and a charter granted in 1783. Transylvania Seminary, a grammar school, was opened in the Danville home of David Rice, one of its trustees, in 1785. Three years later the school was transferred to Lexington and its name changed to Transylvania Academy. In 1794 the school moved into a building constructed for it by the Transylvania Land Company, a group of Lexington citizens, on a site between Mill and Market Streets in what is now Gratz Park (adjoining the present campus). Following a dispute over doctrinal matters the same year, the Presbyterian members of the board of trustees seceded and established a rival school, the Kentucky Academy, at Pisgah, 11 miles west of Lexington.

An act of the Kentucky Legislature in 1798 (the Virginia county had become a separate State six years earlier) merged the two academies to form Transylvania University, again located in the Gratz Park Building. Its first A.B. degree was granted in 1802.

The University developed rapidly and by 1821 had become one of America's largest educational institutions, with an enrollment larger than Dartmouth or Princeton, about equal to Harvard, and only a little less than Yale. Transylvania's law school, where Henry Clay taught from 1805 to 1807, trained many of the leading figures in the legal and political life of the South and West, among them Isaac Shelby, Stephen Austin, Cassius M. Clay, and Jefferson Davis. The medical school,

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Cubberley, Ellwood P. Public Education in the United States (revised edition, Boston, 1934).
- Lunger, Irvin E. "Transylvania College: Its History and Its Future," Kentucky Historical Society Register, October, 1958.
- "Old Morrison Reopens," The Rambler (Transylvania student newspaper), May 9, 1971.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	71,994,0	42,142,8,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the national historic landmark designation for the Old Morrison Building of Transylvania College in Lexington, Kentucky, follow a line parallel to and ten (10) feet beyond the foundation line of that building, including the entrance steps and flanking vaults.

### 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 Polly M. Rettig, Historian, Landmark Review Project; original form prepared by Frank B. Sarles, Jr., Historian

9-16-60

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1100 L Street, NW.

202/523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Washington

District of Columbia

## 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 N/A National Historic Landmark

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

9/8/83

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

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**CONTINUATION SHEET** Description

ITEM NUMBER 7

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of the building to the school, plans for its repair were made immediately. The work, directed by John T. Gillig, Architect, was completed in 1971 and a second dedication of Old Morrison held in May of that year. The exterior of the building was thoroughly cleaned and a new concrete covering applied. The reconstructed interior is, in effect, a new fireproof building within the 1834 shell. Original fenestration, floor levels, and room arrangements have been maintained with the exception of a 25 percent reduction in the size of the chapel to allow creation of additional office space.

Architectural detailing and furnishing are consistent with those of the original interior and construction materials, including random ash flooring, have been duplicated where possible. A new basement has been excavated and finished for storage and service areas, and an elevator installed near the southwest corner of the main block. Offices which formerly housed the History Department (third floor of the east wing) have been converted to a museum, displaying Transylvania's valued collection of early scientific apparatus. Now in excellent condition, Old Morrison has returned to its role as administrative center of the college.

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Old Morrison Building  
CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

established in 1799, boasted one of the finest faculties in America and graduated 2,000 physicians in its first 60 years. Among its distinguished professors were Samuel Brown, a pioneer in smallpox vaccination; Charles Caldwell, who brought the school an outstanding medical library and a valuable collection of scientific apparatus; Benjamin W. Dudley, the most eminent surgeon in the Mississippi Valley; and Constantine Rafinesque, listed as "Professor of Natural History and Botany and Teacher of Modern Language," who was considered by many contemporaries to be the most eminent scientist in America.

Following the destruction of the central college building by fire in 1829, the trustees contracted with Gideon Shryock to design a replacement, to be located on land to the north of the Gratz Park site. Then in his 27th year, Shryock had already become famous throughout Kentucky for his capitol building in Frankfort (now the headquarters of the Kentucky Historical Society). Construction of the new building, to be known as Morrison College (now Old Morrison), was made possible by a bequest from Colonel James Morrison, who had served as chairman of Transylvania's board of trustees. The building was to have been completed in 1832 but numerous problems, including an epidemic of cholera in Lexington, delayed construction. Commencement activities were held in Morrison College in November 1833, although the building was still unfinished. The final details of construction appear to have been completed by June of the following year.

During the Civil War Transylvania was closed and Morrison College, along with other buildings on the campus, was commandeered for use as an army hospital, first by General Nelson of the Union Army and later by General Smith of the Confederate Forces. Old Morrison returned to its role as administration building in 1865 when Transylvania merged with another school and reopened as Kentucky University. In 1878 the agricultural and mechanical departments of the University withdrew to form a separate college, the initial unit in the present University of Kentucky. The name Kentucky University was discarded in favor of Transylvania University in 1908. The medical school, which had been transferred to Louisville, was discontinued in the same year and the law school closed in 1912. With the decision to concentrate on teaching the liberal arts at the collegiate level, the University discontinued its preparatory department in 1914 and began to function under the name Transylvania College. Legally, however, the college operated, as it still does, under the control of Transylvania University.

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