

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received JUN 18 1984
date entered AUG 1 1984

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

1. Name

historic Lewisport Multiple Resource Area

and/or common

2. Location

street & number see continuation sheet

not for publication

city, town Lewisport

vicinity of

state Kentucky

code

county Hancock

code

3. Classification

Category

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

Ownership

- public
- private
- both
- Public Acquisition**
- in process
- being considered

Status

- occupied
- unoccupied
- work in progress
- Accessible**
- yes: restricted
- yes: unrestricted
- no

Present Use

- agriculture
- commercial
- educational
- entertainment
- government
- industrial
- military
- museum
- park
- private residence
- religious
- scientific
- transportation
- other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple - see continuation sheet

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hancock County Administration Building

street & number Main Street

city, town Hawesville

state Kentucky

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date Fall 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council

city, town Frankfort

state Kentucky

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Survey Methodology Summary

The Green River Area Development District is a community planning and development area, located in the northwestern part of the State of Kentucky. In September, 1983, with the aid of a grant from the Kentucky Heritage Council, the GRADD undertook a historic survey and planning project. Specific areas were identified by the State Historic Preservation Office, as priorities for historic documentation. Lewisport, a small Ohio River community in Hancock County, was identified for survey and planning work.

In October of the same year, field work was begun on the survey, and a total of thirty-four (34) sites were documented. Using Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory forms, each site was photographed, described and located on a city map. The community's most significant structures, over fifty years of age were identified, as well as several examples of the most prevalent vernacular buildings.

Research on the community and individual sites was conducted, and interviews with local citizens were held. Each site was then evaluated for historical or architectural significance and given a National Register, Kentucky Survey, or Inventory status. All of the sites given a National Register evaluation are included in the Lewisport Multiple Resource Area Nomination.

Although several of the documented structures lay in close proximity to one another, they lacked the cohesiveness to form a district. Therefore, there are seven individual structures within the community which are considered eligible for nomination. Four are commercial buildings and the remaining three, residential in nature.

Specific information on each structure can be found on the Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory form. Boundary and acreage information is provided, as well as a rough site plan. Included in the number 7 Description is a detailed description of each structure's significant features, as well as history on the site. The number 8 deals strictly with the history of the community.

Hancock County, Kentucky is a small agrarian region, located in the western section of the state. Situated on the Ohio River, Hancock is one of the smallest counties in the state, containing only 187 square miles. Her neighboring counties include Daviess, Ohio and Breckenridge; areas from which she was formed in 1829.

The topography of Hancock County is typical of Ohio River regions. The county is divided both culturally and physically between the river basin and the area at the top of the ridge. The flood plain contains some very rich soil, and quite naturally was the area first settled. The larger plantations and farms were located along the river; and because of the richness of the basin, Hancock County has always been a large exporter of agricultural products, specifically tobacco.

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Continuation sheet Resource Nomination

Item number 2 & 4

Page 1

OWNER

ADDRESS

PROPERTY

Linda Tongate

Route #1, Box 327
Lewisport, KY 42351

The Hub
Fourth St.

Isabell Toler

Route #2, Box 1955
Lewisport, KY 42351

Lewisport Masonic Lodge
Fourth St.

Lewisport Order of Masons
c/o Bruce Bradford

Route #2, Box 1280
Lewisport, KY 42351

Lewisport Masonic Lodge
Fourth St.

John and Betty Philip

P.O. Box 12
Lewisport, KY 42351

Bank of Lewisport
Fourth St.

William Covetts

P.O. Box 129
Lewisport, KY 42351

Tom Henderson House
Fourth St.

Huelette Bell

Route #2, Box 1495
Lewisport, KY 42351

Hayden House
Pell St.

Hugh DeLuce

1406 Nancy St.
Bloomington, IN 47401

Horace Patterson House
Market St.

Service Vault and
Monument Co.
c/o Ronald Raymond

P.O. Box 359
Lewisport, KY 42351

Jim Taylor Building
Fourth St.

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The southern half of the county, which comprises about two-thirds of the county, lacks the fertility of the alluvial plain. This area is composed of mostly small subsistence type farms, whose major crop is tobacco.

Historically, Hancock County has never been heavily populated. During the late 19th century, the county's population peaked at 9,200. It presently stands at 7,742. Hancock's largest period of growth occurred between 1890 and 1900, after which a period of stagnation occurred. The dramatic increase in population during the 1800s was the result of the developing coal industry in Hancock County.

Coal was a natural resource which the county contained in large quantities, and Hancock was noted as a mining center during the last half of the 19th century. The southern half of the county is at the edge of the western coal fields, and large seams of cannel coal were mined along the flood plain. This industry remained viable until the late 1920s.

Present day Hancock County can lay claim to several large and prosperous industries. In 1955 the Murray Tile Company set up operations here, and they were followed by other large industries including: National Aluminum, American Olean Tile, American Southwire, and Martin-Marietta Aluminum. The influx of these companies has provided economic stability for Hancock County, which should continue for years to come.

Hawesville, the county seat, is the largest community with a population of around 1,000. Located on Kentucky Highway 60, Hawesville is situated on the Ohio River opposite Cannelton, Indiana.

The second largest community within the county is Lewisport, located nine miles west of Hawesville. Slightly smaller than the county seat, Lewisport has a population of about 800. This tiny community is also situated on the Ohio, but was established where the flood plain is at its widest. The bank on which the community sits is very high, and fortunately, Lewisport was spared all but the most devastating of floods.

Although Lewisport was incorporated as early as 1839, her major period of growth coincided with that of the county, occurring during the last quarter of the 19th century. Although this period produced mostly vernacular buildings of the period, 90 percent of the community's architectural fabric is intact. This fact may be a result of the sluggishness of the county's economy between 1900 and 1950. During the early 20th century, Lewisport showed a decline in population, and little new development occurred at that time.

Lewisport's town plan is very similar to many other 19th century Ohio River communities. Because the river provided the strongest and most viable link

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to other trading centers, the town's growth was strongly oriented to the Ohio. Front Street, the main avenue, paralleled the river, and supported the main commercial area. The remaining streets branched out in a grid pattern from Front Street.

However, during the 1880s, an event occurred which had an effect on the entire community. During that time the Ohio River reclaimed a major portion of the bank, and with it, the buildings on Front Street. Many of the town's earliest businesses and homes were lost. Fourth Street, originally a secondary artery running perpendicular to Front, was promoted to "Main Street." It soon became the major business area.

One of the more important commercial enterprises which lost its location on the Ohio was Issac B. Hayden's mercantile establishment. Like many other merchants, Mr. Hayden moved his business to Fourth Street. Fortunately for Mr. Hayden, his residence was located several blocks from the river on Pell Street. (See Ha-L-18 and photos 9-12.) Mr. Hayden's house is one of the earliest, and most architecturally significant structures within the community.¹

Constructed in 1854, the Hayden House displays elements of the Gothic style. The building consists of a square main block, under a steeply pitched, cross axis, gable roof. Slender brick pilasters decorate the main facade. A box cornice, with returns, decorates the edge of the gable, and elaborate paired brackets decorate the soffit. A round headed window opening graces the tympanum of the front gable, but the remaining openings are capped by wood cornice heads. The main entrance element also contains segmented sidelights and a transom.

One of the most unusual structural features is the chimney placement. These paired elements project slightly from the end walls. Rising vertically from the foundation, at cornice level, they form an angle toward the roof ridge.

Probably the most significant element, and one that attracts the most attention, is the front porch. While this feature is probably not original to the main block, it is extremely well designed and finely crafted. The scale and form of the porch is sympathetic to the scale of the house, and is a most effusive feature.

¹The Hayden family is given credit for the construction of another fine Lewisport home. Ha-L-13 sits at the river's edge, near the original location of Mr. Hayden's mercantile store.

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The elaborate cornice decoration echoes the cornice on the main block, with paired brackets. The piers supporting the cornice, display beautiful millwork, which succeeds in pulling the whole effect together. A special detail is the lacy millwork below the bannister railing, which is totally intact.

Fourth Street is a mixed commercial and residential area, but the majority of the buildings flanking the avenue are commercial in nature. They range in age from the fourth quarter of the 19th century, to the first quarter of the 20th century. These commercial buildings are representative of the most prosperous period in the community's development. The heart of the business area lies about two blocks south of the river, and most of the structures within it are of masonry construction material. At one time Lewisport could boast many fine business houses, but at this time, only four can be considered significant. Of these four, only one is a wood frame structure, with the remaining three of laid brick construction.

The Hub is a small rectangular, wood frame commercial building located on Pell Street, just off Fourth. (See Ha-L6 and photo 4.) The fact that this late 19th century wood frame commercial building has survived is unusual. However, it is the architectural integrity of the building which makes it unique. Although the Hub is vernacular in style, it is representative of a type of commercial building which was popular during the last half of the 1800s. Although at one time these buildings were well represented on "Main Street U.S.A.", due to fire and demolition, few exist intact.

Probably constructed between 1895 to 1900, the Hub displays an original store front, topped by a front parapet covered in decorative tin. The simple interior boasts a tongue and groove ceiling.

The other three commercial buildings are representative of a more common late 19th century building. These structures consisted of rectangular masonry blocks, decorated with cast iron details.

Two of the buildings, the Lewisport Masonic Lodge, and the J. B. Taylor Building have retained much of their original integrity. (See HA-L-2 and Ha-L-3 and photos 1-3.) It is safe to suppose that both buildings were built around the same time, as they share a common wall, and no division exists between the iron store fronts. This store front, which is totally intact, was cast at the Southern Foundry in Owensboro. Although the two buildings are not the same height, their metal cornices display the same details. The J. B. Taylor Building, however, has retained the metal window hoods on the second level openings. It is possible that the missing hood molds on the Masonic Lodge were similar. Jason J. Cooper, an Owensboro architect, is credited with the Masonic Lodge Building, which is in good shape, and houses a viable business. The Taylor Building, on the other hand, is empty and in need of repair.

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Located about one block north is the Bank of Lewisport building, constructed in 1896 (see Ha-L-9 and photos 5 and 6). Although the cornice has been removed, the bank has retained an original George Mesker iron front. The configuration of the store front is also intact, with display windows and transom elements. The interior also has been well preserved, with a beautiful pressed tin ceiling.

These commercial buildings are representative of a most important period in Lewisport's history, and are the vestiges of a once bustling trading community.

Although Lewisport was established during the early 1800s, no buildings constructed during that period in the town's development exist. As previously mentioned, the Isaac Hayden building, constructed in 1854, is considered to be the earliest structure in the community.

Like the commercial area, the residential neighborhoods are reflective of the period during the late 19th century, which brought about the largest growth. The T-plan, one-story center passage and two-door, two-room tenant house are the most prevalent house forms. Most are of wood frame construction, and all are vernacular in style. However, there are some houses in the community which are particularly unique, and deserve special mention.

The Horace Patterson House, which was constructed around 1900, is located just off Fourth Street, one-half block south of the river (see Ha-L-14 and photos 7 and 8). This graceful structure has been altered little since construction, and displays a variety of original details. Local tradition contends that the construction costs for the Patterson House amounted to \$900. The house was later owned by a local farmer named Bloomer Banks.

While the Patterson House is basically a vernacular structure, the superb craftsmanship and originality of the details make it unique. The wrap-around porch is the most flamboyant feature. Beautifully crafted millwork forms an upper apron, supported by delicate turned posts. The bannister below is given a lacy effect with a variety of spindles. This entire feature is intact, down to the decorative pendants.

The house displays stained glass window details in the projecting "T", and every gable boasts fish scale shingling and millwork. This entire composition is capped by a hipped roof covered with diamond shaped shingles.

Approximately three blocks south on Fourth Street, is the Tom Henderson House (see Ha-L-30 and photos 13 and 14). Constructed around 1915, this brick structure displays many details of the Dutch Colonial style. One of the best known elements of this uncommon style is the roof form. The Henderson House is capped by a steep double pitched gambrel roof, with a slight overhang. This roof form is echoed on the oversized dormers. The wrap-around porch, while not incorporated into the roof overhang, is an

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integral part of the overall composition.

The window openings are simple, and the main entrance and corresponding side window are capped by transoms. The tympanum of the end gable boasts a round headed attic opening.

The Dutch Colonial influence in architecture did not become a strong trend in America, and was not as popular as some other Victorian styles. Therefore, the Henderson House is significant in its uniqueness. It is also another good representative example of the period of growth in Lewisport. As Lewisport was a center for trade for the rural area, architectural trends were imported along with other goods and services. The Henderson House stands as an example of the widening of Lewisport's horizons during the first part of the 20th century.

Present day Lewisport, with a population of about 800, is a sleepy river village. It bears little resemblance to the bustling trading center of the late 19th century. However, the architectural fabric of the community stands as a testament to the previous prosperity, and should be preserved.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1896 **Builder/Architect** Jason J. Cooper

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Lewisport Multiple Resource Area is composed of a small group of architecturally significant buildings in the tiny Ohio River community of Lewisport, Kentucky. The association that these structures hold with the development of the community is important. Although they do not represent the earliest period in the town's development, they are symbolic of the affluence experienced by Lewisport during the latter part of the 19th century. The buildings themselves are significant as being fine examples of 19th century architectural trends, as expressed in vernacular buildings.

Around the fourth quarter of the 18th century, the area of Western Kentucky, which is now Hancock County, was first being settled. John Lewis, one of the first white men to explore here, surveyed the area between the Salt and Green Rivers in 1788. He took a particular liking to the region near Yellow Creek on the Ohio River, so in 1799 he and his bride took up residence there. The small settlement was soon known as Little Yellow Banks.

By 1829, the area surrounding Yellow Creek had grown considerably, and during that year Hancock County was created by an act of the Kentucky Legislature.¹ The settlement of Hawesville, ten miles upriver, was named county seat.¹ The Little Yellow Banks settlement had also grown considerably in this time, and in the 1830s, John Lewis filed a town plat in the Hancock County Courthouse. In 1839, a charter was officially granted, and the town of Lewisport was incorporated.

From its inception, Lewisport's situation on the Ohio River determined that it would be a local shipping point for surrounding areas. The county seat at Hawesville, established earlier, already served in this capacity. With the development of Lewisport as a trading center, Hawesville's sphere of influence was somewhat diminished. During the 1840s, Lewisport was a hub of commerce for the settlements in the western sector of the county. The Lewisport trading community was made up of seven rural neighborhoods including: Lewisport, Waitman, Troy, Bend, Adair, Cullen, Martindale, and Tywhapita Bottoms.

Several factors were responsible for the community's growth and development during this period. First, the town was at the heart of some of Hancock County's richest agricultural land. The river plain surrounding Lewisport

¹Hawesville was officially incorporated in 1836.

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produced much fine tobacco. Also, the abundance of good, local timber reserves helped establish a profitable lumber business. For many years timber, timber products and tobacco were the area's main exports.

The third factor, and one which played an important role in the economy of the entire county, was the development of the coal industry. During the 1840s, the mining industry took hold in Hancock County, and it was a strong force behind the county's growth until the early 20th century. Although many of the larger mines were located near Hawesville, the Falcon Mine, the second largest in the county, was just east of Lewisport.²

Although Hancock was not known as a large slave holding county, there were several large plantations within its boundaries. One of the most powerful planters was Robert Costain Beauchamp. A native of Bourbon County, Beauchamp moved to Hancock County in 1827, and purchased 160 acres near Lewisport. Beauchamp's holdings grew to 5,000 and at one time he had a total of 90 slaves, making him the largest slave holder in the county.³ It is probable that the plantation's close proximity to Lewisport had an effect on the town's growth.

By the beginning of the fourth quarter of the 19th century Lewisport had reached a prominent point in her overall development. This period was one of affluence for the community, and certain events indicated a promising future for the town. With a population of 308 in 1870, Lewisport had grown into the second largest population center in the county, rivalled only by the county seat.

The community's business area was growing and new industries were opening up in the community.

The land on which the community sat was known to contain large amounts of high quality clay. During the 1880s a factory was opened to manufacture the clay into queensware, a type of dinnerware. Although not highly successful, the industry continued production for many years.

²The Falcon Mine was in the Adair neighborhood.

³Hancock County had a few large plantations, but these few carried much political weight. In 1840, plans for the construction of a cotton mill in Hancock County were proposed. Because of opposition from the planters, the mill was built in Cannelton, Indiana, across the river. The mill played an important role in the economic development of Cannelton.

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Some of the businesses and institutions operating in the community included: the Pell Brothers Reliable Bargain House, on the corner of Pell and Fourth Streets; the I.B. Hayden General Merchandise Store; Horace Patterson's "Live and Let Live" drug store; and A.B. Howe's grocery store. Lewisport's first and only banking institution, the Bank of Lewisport, opened its door to the public in 1896 (see Ha-L-9). These were just a few of the many commercial concerns which served Lewisport during the latter 19th century. However, several events which occurred around the turn of the century soon changed the community's economic picture.

In 1889, the Louisville, St. Louis and Texas Railroad, a subsidiary of the Louisville and Nashville, opened a line through Hancock County. This rail line, which passed through both Hawesville and Lewisport, actually began in West Point, Kentucky, and never reached Texas.⁴ Although this new form of transportation slightly reduced the community's dependence on the river, a major disaster dealt Lewisport the greatest economic blow.

Front Street, the town's main avenue, running parallel to the river, was Lewisport's primary commercial thoroughfare. Most of the community's important business houses were located on this street. In 1882, the Ohio River, which had been determinedly eating away at the bank for many years, totally reclaimed Front Street. With the street went several important businesses and homes.⁵ The loss of Front Street, which was symbolically Lewisport's connection to the river, was a blow from which the town was never to completely recover.

Other smaller events which affected the town include a major fire during the 1880s and a decline in the usually strong tobacco market. This decline in demand produced a slight depression in large tobacco producing areas, such as Hancock County.

The decline in the coal industry, however, was probably the single biggest factor in the retrogression of Lewisport. Coal had been the stabilizing factor in Hancock County's economy since the 1840s. The demand for the resource began deteriorating after the Civil War, and many of the county's major bituminous seams were exhausted by the early 1900s. Also, the strong

⁴West Point is a small Ohio River community, located west of Louisville.

⁵Many of the businesses moved their locations to Fourth Street, which became the principle commercial area.

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demand for Cannel coal, which Hancock originally produced in abundance, was gone by the late 1800s. In 1899, the state mining inspector's report declared that the Falcon was the only producing mine in the county.⁶ Some of the remaining mines continued to operate until the 1920s, but the Great Depression succeeded in closing these.

In general, around 1900, not only Lewisport, but the entire county's population figures were changing. In fact, a nationwide imigration to urban areas was occurring. Industrialization offered for many the chance for a better way of life, and many fell prey to the lure of the city. Many small farms were abandoned, and rural communities across the country reflected this change. Hancock County proved no different. In 1900 a county population of 9,214 was recorded. By 1955 the total number had dropped to 5,069.

During the 1950s Hancock County was given a second chance for economic revitalization. The county's prime Ohio River location was being recognized for the potential it held, so in 1955 the first major industry, the Murray Tile Company, opened a plant near Lewisport. This industry, which manufactured ceramic tiles, helped to stabalize the community's economy, and began a turning point for renewed growth and prosperity of the county.

Murray was just the first of many prosperous industries to locate in Hancock County. They are responsible for the transformation of the county, and the stabilization of her economy. With the aid of industrial taxes, Hancock can now point with pride to improved schools, better roads and an improved way of life.

The community of Lewisport remains to some extent, a sleepy village reflecting more of its past than present. Physically, little has changed in the community in the past eighty to one hundred years. The recognition of significant buildings within the community, and the recording of the role they played in the development of Lewisport needs to be recognized.

⁶At this time, the Falcon mines were shipping 8,000 tons of coal annually.

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Books

Hartford, Ellis Ford and James Fuqua Hartford. Green River Gravel. McDowell Publications, 1983.

Newspapers

Hancock Clarion, Sesquicentennial Edition, September 6, 1979.

Hancock Clarion, Sesquicentennial Edition, October 25, 1979.

Hancock Clarion, Sesquicentennial Edition, December 27, 1979.

Unpublished Manuscripts

Clinton, Charles A. "A History of Hancock County," unpublished masters thesis.

WilhoYTE, Susan. "A History of Hawesville," unpublished manuscript.

Interviews

Interview with Rose Pell Henderson, in Lewisport, Kentucky on Friday, March 23, 1984.

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Lewisport Multiple Resource Area
State Hancock County, KENTUCKY

Conceded August 8/1/84

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. Bank of Lewisport

Submitted for

Keeper

RETURN 5

Attest

2. Hayden, Isaac B., House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byrum 8/1/84

Attest

3. Henderson, Tom, House

Submitted for

for Keeper

Delores Byrum 8/1/84

Attest

4. Patterson, Horace, House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byrum 8/1/84

Attest

5. Pell, Joe, Building

Submitted for

for Keeper

Delores Byrum 8/1/84

Attest

6. Lewisport Masonic Lodge

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byrum 8/1/84

Attest

7. Taylor, J. B., and Son
Feed Store

Submitted for

for Keeper

Delores Byrum 8/1/84

Attest

8.

Keeper

Attest

9.

Keeper

Attest

10.

Keeper

Attest