

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUL 3 1978
DATE ENTERED NOV 20 1978

**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
Owingsville Commercial District and Courthouse Square

AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *Main & Court Sts.*

Portions of Main, Slate, and Jefferson and all of Vimont, NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN and Court Streets,
Owingsville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
07

___ VICINITY OF

STATE
Kentucky

CODE
021

COUNTY
Bath

CODE
011 ✓

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	___ AGRICULTURE ___ MUSEUM
___ BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	___ UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL ___ PARK
___ STRUCTURE	___ BOTH	___ WORK IN PROGRESS	___ EDUCATIONAL ___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
___ SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	___ ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
___ OBJECT	___ IN PROCESS	___ YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT ___ SCIENTIFIC
	___ BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	___ INDUSTRIAL ___ TRANSPORTATION
		___ NO	___ MILITARY ___ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
(See continuation sheet.)

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Bath County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Owingsville

STATE
Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky/Supplement

DATE

1971/75

___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN

Frankfort,

STATE
Kentucky

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input 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

Owingsville, Kentucky (1970 pop. 1,381) is situated in the center of Bath County. The region around the town is agrarian and there is no industry. Owingsville, then, is strictly commercial and residential, in addition to serving as the county seat of Bath. The town stretches along a plateau 1,000 feet above sea level, one side overlooking the rolling uplands to the east and south that serve as the foothills of the Knobs Region.¹

The district involves the downtown commercial area, excluding older residences to the east and west that will be nominated at a later time. Buildings abutting those boundaries on Main Street are recent constructions that do not contribute to the district's integrity; nor are those buildings facing the eastern end of Jefferson Street from the north visually related.

The majority of the district's components are physically described below, with historical information included for most buildings:

South Side of Main Street Proceeding East

The Methodist Church (see photo 1 and site 1 on map 2) was erected in 1845, the lot it occupies having been sold in 1843 by Sylvanus Bascom to trustees of this congregation for the purpose of erecting a house of worship. In its original state, this brick building, whose main facade is laid in Flemish bond, was a simple rectangular edifice with a gable roof, a boxed cornice, and cleanly cut lancet windows. The stone trim above the lancets was added later, at which time a square tower was appended on the front. The tower has a ~~battlemented~~ ^{DEVELOPED} parapet, and its upper level is pierced by three stepped louvered windows. A rectangular plaque above the tower's stone band in mid-section has been removed.

The Colonel Thomas Deye Owings House (see photo 2 and site 2) was entered on the National Register January 9, 1978. This building was constructed as a residence between 1811-14, and its design is attributed to Benjamin Latrobe. The northeast corner was altered in 1905 for adaptation as a bank. (For further information, see National Register nomination form.)

Located in the center of Owingsville's commercial district is the Bath County Courthouse (see photos 3 and 4 and site 3). The building is the third county courthouse, the second on the same site. Contracted by Frederick Vischer, it was completed in 1866 at a cost of \$34,000. Originally the front facade was unbroken and an unadorned door served as the main entrance. During 1903-04, drastic changes

¹Lewis H. Kilpatrick, "Historic Owingsville," The Kentucky Magazine, p. 316.

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/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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The buildings composing the Owingsville Commercial District and Courthouse Square include the core of the downtown business district which, along with the economic and historical importance the area represents to the community and to the county, contains the greatest concentration of late 19th century Victorian commercial buildings in Owingsville and Bath County. Also included in the district is the 1866 county courthouse, one of the oldest standing courthouses in eastern Kentucky. The 1814 residence of one of the founders of the town, Colonel Thomas Deye Owings, for whom the community was named (listed on the National Register January 9, 1978), is within the nominated area.

The county and the county seat were established in 1811, with hopes of rapid growth and expansion. Bath, named for the numerous mineral springs within its borders, was fortunate in containing deposits of iron ore in its east and southeast sections. During the early 19th century, six iron furnaces were in operation in Bath County that during this period provided most of the iron needed west of the Blue Ridge. From this source all of Kentucky received its iron and iron products until richer deposits were discovered in the North, which was also found to be cheaper to transport to other areas. The Kentucky iron industry was slowly phased out of business.¹

Owingsville was founded by one of the important figures in the iron manufacturing industry, Thomas Deye Owings, who donated 168 1/2 acres to the founding of the town. Owings' residence, the oldest building within the district, is located near the center of the nominated district on a corner lot immediately west of the courthouse. It is not known, however, if the current location of the courthouse is on the original site of the 1811 courthouse contemporary with the Owings' House.² It is known, however, that the second courthouse, constructed in 1832, was built on the present site.³ That building burned in 1866 & was replaced by the present structure at a

¹ Richards, p. 89; Coulter, p. 745.

² Local tradition has it that the first courthouse was on the present site. Elizabeth Garr, in her history of county courthouses, states that the original courthouse was at a different location but also stood in the center of what is now Main Street (Garr, p. 24).

³ Bath County Memories 1811-1974, p.

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

An Atlas of Bath and Fleming Counties, Kentucky. Philadelphia: D. J. Lake and Co., 1884.

Bath County Memories 1811-1974.

(continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately 8 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	2,5,7,8,4,0	4,2,2,5,4,0,0	B	1,7	2,5,7,8,7,0	4,2,2,5,2,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,7	2,5,7,6,4,0	4,2,2,5,1,6,0	D	1,7	2,5,7,6,1,0	4,2,2,5,3,6,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The far west boundary is marked by the west side of the Methodist Church, east to the middle of the block between Main and Coyle Streets, around the rear of those buildings facing Court Street on the west and south, further east to encompass the Bath County Jail, north and then east to include a former dwelling adjacent to the Old Bath Academy's site, west along Main, then north along Henry Street's west side, west along North Court's south side, north to include those buildings (continued)

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

Daniel Kidd, Architectural Historian; Gloria Mills, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Kentucky Heritage Commission

DATE

April 1978

STREET & NUMBER

104 Bridge Street

TELEPHONE

502/564-3741

CITY OR TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

Kentucky

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

Charles W. Miller

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

6/29/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Charles W. Miller
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Charles W. Miller
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *Jann H. Gilmore*
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 4-20-78
DATE 11/17/78

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Owingsville Commercial District and Courthouse Square

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- ✓ Bath County Fiscal Court, Bath County Courthouse, Owingsville, Kentucky 40360
- ✓ Mrs. Ewell Shrout, West Main Street, Mt. Sterling, Kentucky
- ✓ James B. Davis, 247 West Main Street, Owingsville
- ✓ Bath Lodge #55, Free and Accepted Masons, Post Office, Owingsville
- ✓ Ms. Marjorie Boyd, Vimont Street, Owingsville
- ✓ Andrew Denton, 592 W. Main, Owingsville
- ✓ Roger A. Byron, 114 Court Street, Owingsville
- ✓ Mrs. Lillian Stamper, Post Office, Owingsville
- ✓ Mrs. Dewey Harmon, Owingsville
- ✓ Brooks Byron, Route 3, Owingsville
- ✓ Bath County Memorial Library Board, Mrs. LaRue Byron, Chairman, Main Street,
Owingsville
- ✓ Ralph Crouch, R.F.D. 1, Sharpsburg, Kentucky
- ✓ Mrs. Phyllis Byron, Owingsville
- ✓ John H. Elliott, West Main, Owingsville
- ✓ Mrs. E. V. Brother, Richard Brother, P. O. Box 612, Owingsville

- ✓ Earl Snedegar, Owingsville
- ✓ Mrs. David Clark, Owingsville

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were made by extending the central three bays 4 1/2 feet towards the street and by adding an attic level to this section. The entrance bay of slight projection was given emphasis through the addition of two colossal columns with Corinthian capitals. These rest on massive plinths and support a broken pediment. Windows of the created pavilion's second level were altered to have semicircular heads. The opening above the entrance was given an iron balcony for the use of the court crier.

The four-sided clock and bell tower crowned by a hip-rolled dome was installed during 1903-04 also. This tower achieves a height of 102 feet and enables the courthouse to be the tallest building in the county.

Immediately east of the courthouse is the site of the Old Bath Academy, demolished in July 1976. Further east of the Academy's site is a charming one-story brick building constructed in the mid-19th century (see photo 5 and site 4). This former dwelling is four bays wide and has relatively wide chimneys on either end. Below the boxed cornice are corbelled bricks that create an effect of dentils. Now used for commercial purposes, the building retains much of its exterior's original flavor. The house was the former residence of Thomas and Martha Shrout. Shrout (1863-1930), a native Bath Countian, was a well-known businessman in Owingsville who constructed several of the commercial buildings included in the district (Wonn).

The late-19th-century Bath County Jail (see photos 6,7 and site 5) reverberates, in a sense, the massing of the courthouse. This two-story, hip-rolled building is also of brick construction, and its centered square tower has a pyramidal roof--each side being broken by a pedimented dormer. The boxed cornices of the building and tower are supported by modillions. Windows of the first floor have pedimented hoodmolds while those of the second are flat. To the south is a one-story polygonal addition, and at the rear is a two-story, shed-roofed appendage.

In 1916 the International Order of Odd Fellows erected an impressive brick building southwest of the courthouse on Court Street (see photo 8 and site 6). The first floor has been used as rental space since its erection, but the I.O.O.F. retained possession for only five years, selling the building in 1921 to the Bath Masonic Lodge which still uses the second floor as a meeting hall. Cast-iron elements including pilasters and a thin fascia survive on the street level. The three bays of the upper level are divided by brick pilasters, and emphatic corbelling is below the heavy entablature.

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East of the Masonic Hall and directly behind the courthouse are five similar small buildings (see photo 9 and sites 7,8,9,10,11), all erected between 1922-23 for Thomas Shrout. The street levels have been altered for changing retail purposes, but the upper levels, with zinc-clad entablatures and brick parapets separating the buildings, remain intact. One of these housed the post office from 1922-63.

North Side of Main Street Proceeding West

The northwest corner of East Main and Henry Streets (see site 12) is occupied by a nondescript building erected in 1967 for the Farmers Bank.

East of the bank is a one-story double-building built in 1895 for Benjamin F. Perry to house his hardware business and his daughter's millinery shop (see photo 10 and site 13). Both sections retain cast-iron pilasters with Neo-Grec detail. Perforated discs pierce the attic level, and small modillions uphold a wooden cornice.

The Owingsville Christian Church, set back from Main Street (see photo 10 and site 14), was erected in 1894 on a lot purchased two years earlier from Mr. I. Grant for the sum of \$126.88. This Victorian Romanesque edifice is composed of a gable-roofed central section flanked by square towers of differing dimensions. The entrance tower on the west has a pyramidal roof, and the larger bell tower on the east is crowned by an octagonal spire. The dominant element is a fanciful equilateral arched window. This and all other openings are emphasized with rusticated stone trim. The smaller tower probably inspired that added to the Methodist Church (see photo 10).

The Ramsey-Lacy Building (see photos 10, 11 and site 15) is a brick construction erected in 1895 to house two separate businesses. Cast-iron elements survive on the street level, and there are perforated discs and recessed panels with saw-tooth masonry in the upper level. At the apex's center is a gabled projection flanked by two pyramidal pinnacles.

What was built in 1894 as the Goodpaster Clothing Store (see photo 11 and site 16) is a 1 1/2-story brick building with a corbel table in the second level's center, and a cast-iron entablature above. The eastern half of the street level is sheltered by an incongruous canopy, but pilasters and a fascia of cast iron have been retained.

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The J. T. Kimbrough Building (see photo 11 and site 17) was built in the 1890s as a rental property. The street level contains a recessed entrance flanked by display windows with cast-iron pilasters separating these openings. The second level is a particularly handsome composition. There are three rectangular windows which have semicircular transoms surrounded by corbelled bricks. An emphatic corbel table is below a fascia, and atop this is a brick parapet containing three recessed panels.

Immediately west is another 1890s building erected for J. T. Kimbrough, this one to house his pharmaceutical business. The upper level is dressed with rusticated stone and contains a large Diocletian window (see photo 11 and site 18).

The neighboring building was constructed in 1893 as a bank and offices, and is currently the location of the Bath County Memorial Library. The upper level has been severely altered by the application of an asbestos front, but conscientious citizens are urging that this be removed and that the original facade be exposed (see photo 11 and site 19).

The Honaker Building (see photo 11 and site 20) adeptly occupies the northeast corner of Main and Court Streets. It was constructed in 1918 and has suffered few exterior alterations. Initially, this two-story brick building with a wooden street front that turns the corner served as a grocery. This evolved into a confectionary and restaurant that became Owingsville's "gathering spot" between the two World Wars. The Court Street side's second level is notable for its intricate brickwork.

At the northwest corner of Main and Court is the substantial A. W. Fratman Building, erected between 1871-72 (see photo 12 and site 21). The first floor, whose cast-iron street front is much intact, has houses a succession of businesses. The second level was originally an opera house where small stage shows were produced. This building boasted its own lighting system before electricity was introduced to Owingsville. Colored panes of glass surround the upper sashes of all windows, and a strong cast-iron entablature faces Main Street.

Adjoining the Fratman Building on the west is the Elliott Building, a two-story brick construction most probably dating from the 1890s. The street level is

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recessed, with support for the over-hang being provided by two fluted, slender columns of cast iron. The upper level contains three windows that have rough stone lintels at their heads and sills. The crowning element is a cast-iron, modillioned entablature. Various businesses have occupied the Elliott Building's first floor, while the second has generally been leased by physicians and dentists (see photo 12 and site 22).

A building bearing many similarities to that discussed above is two doors east (see photo 12 and site 24). Presently known as the Harmon Building, this brick construction also has two stories and three bays. More importantly, though, its second floor's over-hang is supported by two cast-iron columns like those of the Elliott Building. In addition, the entablature treatment is the same. One is led to believe that the 1 1/2-story building (site 23) between these must have replaced a building which completed a grouping of three similar facades.

Further west are several buildings dating from the early 20th century. These are all of brick construction and compose the northwest extent of Owingsville's commercial area (see photo 12 and sites 25-28).

Facing North Court from the west and Jefferson Street from the north, there are five buildings whose dates of construction range from 1909-23 (see photo 13 and sites 29, 30, 31, 32, 33). All are of brick and achieve a similar height. The most conspicuous is the Tom Shroust building which has two oculi in the second level and three sections of crenellation.

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cost of \$34,000.⁴ The contractor was Frederick Visscher.⁵

With the demise of the iron industry in Bath County in the mid-1800s, the town and the county has seen little growth, and hence, the rural character of the area has been retained.

During the last quarter of the 19th century, the downtown commercial area suffered three major fires in 1873, 1891 and 1893. The fire occurring in 1893 apparently devastated the downtown commercial district.⁶ As before, owners rebuilt, with many of these late 19th century structures surviving today. A number of the buildings date to the early 1900s. A variation of scales, styles and materials are represented by the remaining buildings. The 1920s Shroul Buildings (see photo 9) form a pleasing unified row, while buildings on the north side of Main (see photo 10 and 11) demonstrate a diversity of late 19th-century treatments. The Methodist Church (see photo 1) is an interesting example of architectural evolution. Built in 1845 as a chaste rectangular box of brick with a gable roof, its later-added stone trim and battlement tower were obviously inspired by the 1894 Christian Church (see photo 10).

The number of intrusions in this district amount to only five. The total number of buildings involved are thirty-nine, so the intrusions are surprisingly few. The most substantial building is appropriately the courthouse (see photo 4) whose clock tower dominates the townscape. To its southeast is the late 19th-century jail, an Italianate building that is unimposing, but which is reciprocal with the courthouse.

The Colonel Thomas Deye Owings House is attributed to B. H. Latrobe. Constructed between 1811-14, this mansion originally consisted of a single huge rectangular block whose high roof is punctuated only by two interior chimneys. The northeast section was transformed into a bank in 1905 and a differentiation was accomplished by adding an emphatic entablature atop the bank section. This is quite a handsome element itself.

⁴The courthouse was accidentally set afire by Federal troops bivouacked in and around the building May 22, 1864. The new courthouse was constructed with indemnity funds from the Federal government for destruction of public property.

⁵Richards, p. 56; Bath County Memories, p. 64.

⁶Ibid, p. 19.

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The arrangement of streets within the Owingsville Commercial District and Courthouse Square is rather unique in its own right, yet is actually a variation of the Lancaster square, first documented in this country at Lancaster, Pennsylvania.⁷ To be a true adaptation of this plan, however, Main Street should disjunct between Court and Henry Streets, and Vimont Street should continue further south--Vimont and Henry meeting and forming a right angle. Also, the courthouse should occupy the center of the large disrupting block that would thus be created. Even though Owingsville's street arrangement is an impure derivation, it is not without useful effects. The term "Main Street plan" could almost be applied here, for the courthouse is (in a sense) treated like commercial structures that line the street. The Bath County Courthouse is essentially a facade building best viewed from Main Street immediately north. Yet its cruciform shape is evident as one travels around it on Court, Vimont, and Slate Streets. Characteristics of Owingsville that do coincide with the Lancaster (or Philadelphia) plan are that "the property lots bordering the Square - Public Ground are filled with commercial structures, including a Masonic Temple (in this instance an I.O.O.F. Building)," as was often the case.⁸ Thus, Owingsville's downtown is a combination of the Lancaster and Main Street plans--an unusual arrangement.

⁷Paul Haynes, "The North Carolina Courthouse Square," Carolina Dwelling, p. 176.

⁸Carolyn Torma, "Typology of Kentucky Towns," p. 1.

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Material submitted by Mr. Richard Brother, Frankfort; Mrs. Mildred Wonn, Owingsville, 1977.

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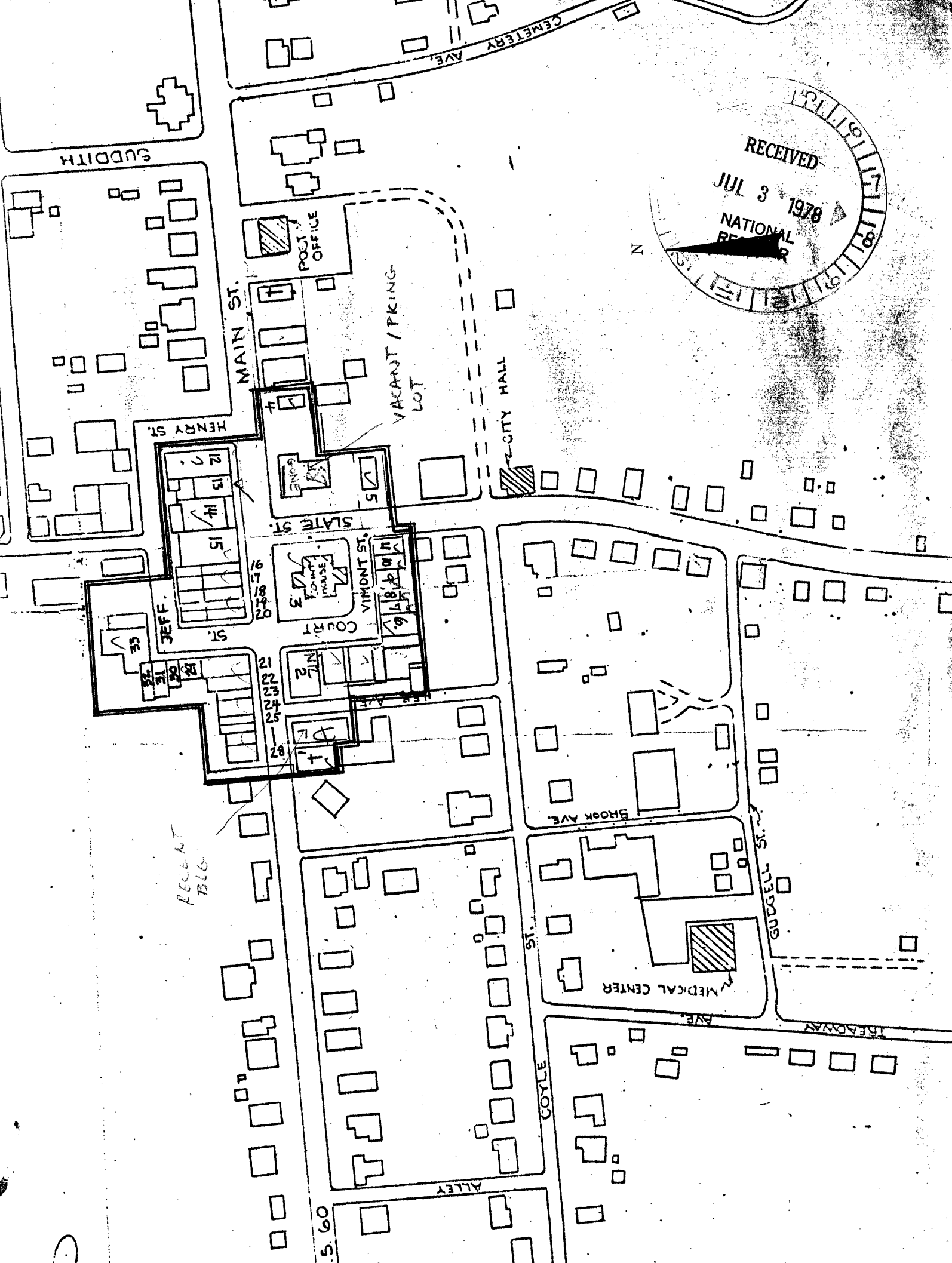
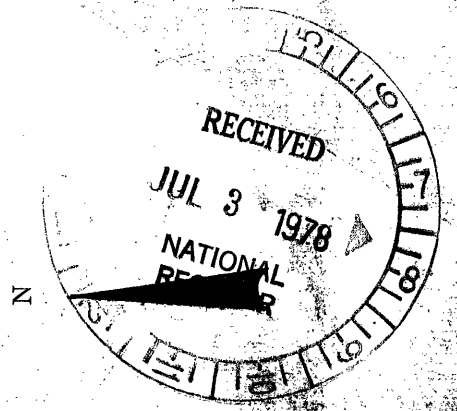
Owingsville Commercial District and Courthouse Square

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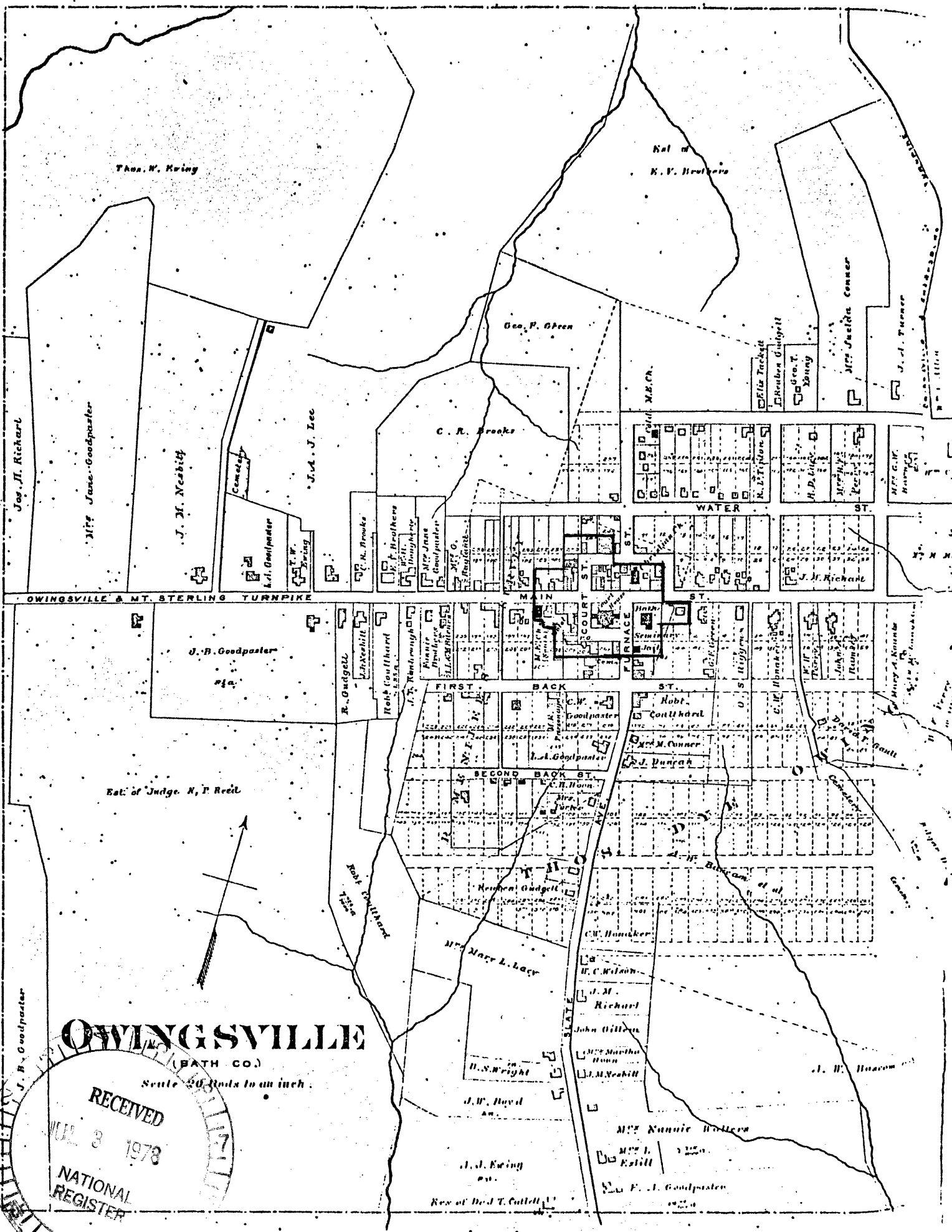
facing Court Street North, then west to include the rear of those buildings on the north side of Main up to, and across from the Methodist Church.



Owingsville Commercial District
and Courthouse Square
Bath County
Kentucky
Map 2.
Owingsville City Map

District outlined in red. Numbers
correspond to those mentioned in
text.

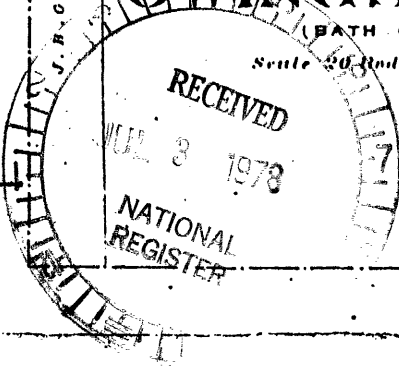
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OWINGSVILLE

(BATH CO.)

Scale 50 rods to an inch



Owingsville Commercial District
and Courthouse Square
Bath County
Kentucky

An Atlas of Bath and Fleming
Counties, Kentucky. Published by
D. J. Lake & Co., Philadelphia,
1884.
20 Rods to One Inch

Map 3. District outlined in
red.

NOV 20 1978