

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JAN 15 1993

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Coleman-Desha Plantation

other names/site number The Oaks, HR21

2. Location

street & number Rt 62E, Oddville Pike
(one mile NE of Cynthiana)

not for publication N/A

city or town Cynthiana

vicinity X

state Kentucky

code KY

county Harrison

code 097

zip code 41031

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

David L. Morgan, Executive Director/State
Historic Preservation Officer



Signature of certifying official

Date

1-7-93

Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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4. National Park Service Certification
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I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the
National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the
National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): _____

Patrick Andrews 2/26/93

Signature of Keeper

Date
of Action

=====
5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

 5

 5

Noncontributing

 2 buildings
 1 sites

 3 Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: agricultural	Sub: subsistence
domestic	single dwelling
agriculture	agriculture outbuilding

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: work in progress	Sub:
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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other/Early 19th Century
Colonial/Georgian

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation all buildings: stone/limestone
roof house/smokehouse/springhouse: metal
barns: asphalt
walls house/smokehouse/springhouse: brick
barns: wood/log; wood/weatherboard
other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuous sheets.

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8. Statement of Significance
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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture
Architecture

Period of Significance 1812-1865

Significant Dates 1812
1827
1839

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuous sheets.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 34

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A ₁	16	738 460	4253 600	G ₃	16	737 920 4253 490
B ₂	16	738 370	4253 300	D ₄	16	738 150 4253 750

See continuation sheet.

Cynthiana, KY Quad _____

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

The boundary of the Coleman-Desha nomination corresponds with the legal boundary of property owned by Wesley & Betty Newkirk. That property is designated parcel #32 on Harrison County Property Valuation Map #115. Copy of the map portion is attached.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

The boundary of the Coleman-Desha nomination includes those portions of the farm which contain all of the contributing buildings and sites of the plantation and the surviving fields, pastures and natural resources (which remain under single ownership) that together effectively convey the historic appearance of a successful 19th century multi-commodity Harrison county plantation.

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Elizabeth Harris May

organization _____ **date** 7/6/92

street & number 3100 Connecticut Avenue, NW, #104 **telephone** (202) 667-4128

city or town Washington **state** DC **zip code** 20008

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Additional Documentation
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage
or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name C. Wesley and Elizabeth W. Newkirk

street & number 501 Dick Avenue **telephone** (513) 863-7577

city or town Hamilton **state** OH **zip code** 45013

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Coleman-Desha Plantation
Harrison County, Kentucky

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The Coleman-Desha plantation lies in the heart of Harrison County, on the upper edge of the inner Bluegrass region of Kentucky, situated approximately a mile northeast of the county seat of Cynthiana. The plantation's development is representative of the settlement of the Bluegrass region, functioning typically, as a multi-commodity plantation, devoted to many types of livestock and diversified crop production. A majority of the original structures remain with minimal alterations or additions. The nominated area is 34 acres, and includes 5 contributing buildings, 1 contributing site, and 2 non-contributing buildings. The property in this nomination includes all of the surviving structures which date from the early settlement of the plantation in the early 19th century. The contributing buildings consist of the main house and kitchen, smokehouse, springhouse, double log crib barn (sheep barn) and single log crib barn (figure 1).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The sense of isolation and cohesiveness of the Coleman-Desha plantation, typical of the Upland South plantation, is immediately apparent upon approach. The buildings are pulled away from the road yet clustered prominently together. The house holds the most prominent position, set back yet boldly addressing the road in a northwesterly direction. It sits parallel to the road, in front of and on higher ground than all of the other buildings on the complex. A long formal drive leads from the road to the entrance of the house. Deliberately placed cedar trees line the drive creating a feeling of enclosure which further accentuates the processional approach. A dry-laid stone wall runs parallel to the drive on one side, balanced by a line of trees on the other, again reinforcing the significance of the entrance to the complex. One is first presented with the formal side of the plantation, with all of the service buildings hidden behind the house, out of sight.

The complex is divided into two domains, one domestic and oriented toward the home, and the other agricultural and oriented toward the barns. The domestic domain is very ordered, totally enclosed by fences, creating a houseyard separate from the agricultural aspects of the plantation. Clustered around the house are the structures essential to domestic life, such as the kitchen, smokehouse and most likely, originally, a row of slave cabins just outside the houseyard. To the northeast of the house are traces of three garden plots where household vegetables would have been grown. Beyond these plots is evidence of former fruit orchards.

The springhouse, which bridges the domestic and agricultural domains, lays behind and slightly downhill from the houseyard. The land drops dramatically just behind the springhouse, to form a deep basin which holds the retaining pond for the spring water. Further back, behind the springhouse, begins the agricultural domain of livestock shelter, multi-purpose barns, and later additions of tobacco and dairy barns, with pastures radiating back from the agricultural structures.

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Parallel to the entrance of the complex, southwest of the stone wall, is another less conspicuous road leading to the agricultural portion of the plantation. The stone-edged agricultural road parallels the main drive, until reaching an enclosed field, which lies to the southwest of the domestic yard. The agriculture road then veers south for a short spurt until reaching the sheep barn. From the sheep barn, the road heads slightly to the east, reaching the single log crib barn, then turns to the northeast, wrapping neatly behind the domestic structures. Further along the road are a dairy and tobacco barn, which were later additions to the complex. The agricultural buildings, though in a more linear form, are clustered together in the same way as the domestic buildings.

The fields of crops and pastures rise gradually behind the agricultural center of the plantation forming a ridge to the east of the estate. This ridge marks the eastern edge of the Colemans' original tract of land, later extended by the succeeding owner, Joseph Desha. Originally, fields reached both to the north of the buildings, and south, following the natural outflow of the spring.

FEATURE INVENTORY

HOUSE: Contributing Building

The ca. 1812, Coleman-Desha house, an adaptation of the Georgian house plan, has a symmetrical 5-bay facade with a central passage and four room plan (figure 2-3). The rear facade mirrors the front, both of Flemish bond, brick construction. The side elevations are quite plain in relation to the front and back and are constructed of common bond brick. The refinement of the front and back facade is further emphasized by a finished stone foundation while the foundation of the side elevations is of much rougher stone. Although the house is double-pile, the side elevation does not emphasize its depth, with only one attic window on each side and two interior end chimneys protruding above the roof.

One enters the Coleman house into a central passage which separates public space from the more private rooms of the house (figure 4). The front left room, opening off of the central passage, likely served as the hall or room for entertaining. The front room to the right of the central passage served as the dining room, conveniently located closest to the detached kitchen, with a side door allowing easy access. Behind the dining room lies a chamber, with its main access through the dining area while a more indirect access leads underneath the stairs into the central passage. A fourth room lies behind the hall, to the left of the central passage, which likely served as an additional room for entertaining or as a library. One unusual feature of this room is that, in addition to direct access from the central passageway, the interior wall, which divides the hall and the back room, is punctured by two window openings (aligned with the front and back facades) further opening the back space. It is likely that these windows were intended for air circulation.

Upstairs, above the hall and fourth room is the ballroom or meeting room, which

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Coleman-Desha Plantation
Harrison County, Kentucky

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originally ran the full depth of the house but now has been subdivided into two smaller rooms (figure 5). The mantels of the ballroom are much plainer than the downstairs mantels, giving the impression of a much more informal space. This would be appropriate if this room were used more as a community meeting place than as a space for formal entertaining, which is quite plausible considering the magnitude of the space in relation to the settlement of the region during the period. It is likely that the ballroom was the largest gathering space for miles around and was used as a community space for lack of a public hall.

The walls of the ballroom are covered in entirety with a wall-painting of a rich floral and bird motif. A good portion of the wall painting toward the back of the ballroom remains intact, while the front portion has been wallpapered over but is likely recoverable. Traces of wall-painting have also been uncovered in the upstairs central passage. The wall-painting is a mixture of spongework, stencilling and freehand painting. Images of yellow trees (possibly oaks since "Desha" translates as "the Oaks" in French) with yellow birds of a fairly generic form, and green vines with red stems run the height of the room dividing the walls into panels. The trunks of the trees are identical, and appear to have been stencilled while the leaves, which have more variation, are spongework. Other portions of the wall-painting appear to be freehand painting.

Opposite the ballroom are two chambers. The front chamber, accessible directly from the central passage, is larger and more elaborate -- obviously the master's chamber. Often the private chambers of plantation houses, out of the public's view, are much more modest than the public rooms. However, the craftsmanship of the cabinetry and the grandeur of the mantel of the master's chamber matches that of the first floor, much more public rooms. The back chamber, the most modest of all the rooms, also has an entrance from the central passage, located directly in front of the landing to the attic stairwell.

A full attic tops the house which reveals more easily the construction of the house (figure 6). The attic ceiling still has the original wood slat construction infilled with mud and hair. A layer of mud-like plaster covers the timber construction. Large hewn log beams support the load of the roof. A full basement lies under the house, which is divided into two sections entered from two exterior doors which open from sets of stairwells off of the back of the house (figure 7). The two sections are further divided into rough rooms with exterior walls of stone construction and interior dividers of brick. The ceiling is supported by large unhewn logs notched to rest on the supporting walls. These spaces, completely unfinished with dirt floors, were likely used for storage.

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KITCHEN: Contributing Building

The Coleman-Desha kitchen, is a one-story, single cell structure of common bond brick construction with a stringcourse every five or six rows. Other than its brick construction, which reflects the prosperity of the Coleman family, the Coleman-Desha kitchen is representative of the settlement period Bluegrass kitchen, likely being built concurrently with the Coleman-Desha house in the early 19th century. As Amos found in a study of Bluegrass farms, kitchens found in the Bluegrass region were typically,

of log, frame, or less commonly, stone and brick, the examples remaining in the bluegrass region are commonly rectangular in form with a gable roof, stone end chimney, single entry, measure from between 14 and 16 feet (the length of a rod), and were often attached to the main house during a later period of rebuilding (Amos, 27).

The Coleman-Desha kitchen, which sits in direct line with the front facade of the house, was originally detached from the main house, connected only with a breezeway, or a porch (figure 8). The breezeway was infilled during the early 20th century, connecting the kitchen to the main house. The floors of the kitchen were originally dirt and a large cooking fireplace stood against the outer wall, with the chimney projecting outward beyond the exterior wall. Much more recently a floor has been put in but large stones remain surrounding the hearth which are likely original. Above the single room is a loft. The rafters are exposed, unhewn logs which lean against one another in support without a ridgepole.

The original kitchen room has a single window facing the front, a window and door facing the back, and a door to the side in easy access of the dining area of the house. The cooking activities often extended beyond the kitchen, with much cooking and food preparation taking place outside of the hot and confining kitchen structure. Access to the outside is oriented toward the back work area, hidden from the public, and conveniently linked by a side service passage to the house. The front facade remains closed, visually separating the work aspect of the domestic household from the formal entrance preserved for approaching visitors.

SMOKEHOUSE: Contributing Building

Behind the kitchen sits a brick smokehouse (figure 9-10). Again the Coleman-Desha smokehouse is representative of the settlement period Bluegrass smokehouse, dating from the early 19th century.

The annual curing and processing of meat (pork) took place in a building with a specific function: the meat/smoke house, a structure characteristic of agricultural complexes. The building form, a single square or rectangle of perhaps 12' to 16' dimensions, topped with a tall gable or hip roof under which the neat was hung from collar beams, joists, or rafter poles, differs little from its early 20th century counterpart. It was built of tightly chinked log; of frame clad with board and battens or riven clapboards; brick or stone (Amos, 28).

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The entrance is on the northwest, gable end, convenient to the back yard of the kitchen. The brickwork is common bond with a stringcourse every seven rows. The raised limestone foundation is wider than the brick wall forming a shallow shelf around the interior of the room. As in the kitchen, the rafters are exposed and join without a ridgepole. Inside the smokehouse remains a hulled out salt log which was used in curing the meats.

SLAVE QUARTERS: Non-Contributing Site

At the back fence line sits a tenant building with clapboard siding and a gable roof. The front portion of the current structure sits on a dry-laid stone foundation which predates the current structure and possibly exists as remnants of the foundation of slave quarters. The stone foundation indicates that the original structure had a double-pen plan with two exterior openings on the northwest eave side. The double-pen form is documented as typical of slave dwellings, with each room often housing a separate family. It is plausible that several other similar dwellings lined the edge of the houseyard, housing the remaining slaves. Although this structure can not be considered a contributing structure of architectural significance due to loss of integrity, the site has archeological potential and after appropriate archeological investigation and analysis could contribute significantly to the history of slave life in the Bluegrass region.

SPRINGHOUSE: Contributing Structure

East of the tenant building sits an early 19th century, two-story springhouse (figure 11-12). The springhouse is built into a hill with the entire lower level of drylaid stone, while the upper portion is common bond brick. One enters the upper level from the northwest gable end into a storeroom. The roof construction is unusual with a wooden plate resting directly on the brick wall under the cross beams. Above the cross beams lies another plate. The rafter is then cut at an angle to fit tightly between the plate and the ridge pole. The end rafters and cross beam are right up against the brick gable ends of the structures.

Outside, a large rock spans the entrance to the upper level, sheltering an open access to the spring water reached from below. Steps lead down to this lower level into an area cut out of the earth along the side on the springhouse. A side door on the northeast side opens into the lower portion of the building, into a stone chamber where the milk and perishables would have been stored. Stones protrude from the interior walls in various places to serve as shelves. This lower chamber leads out into a pond where the spring water is retained. The spring, which flows at the lowest level on the plantation landscape, is the origin of a major water source flowing south into Flat Run which leads eventually to the South Fork of the Licking River, which flows 50 miles into the Ohio River.

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DOUBLE LOG CRIB BARN (SHEEP BARN): Contributing Building

Southwest of the domestic domain, along the agricultural road, is the sheep barn (figures 13-15) which consists of two v-notched log cribs with a wide passageway between. Track doors on the northeast and southwest sides allow the passageway to be completely opened. The barn has been encased in more recent wood siding with a simple gable roof covering the entire structure. The v-notch construction and wooden pegs used were common to the Bluegrass area dating from the early 19th century.

SINGLE LOG CRIB BARN: Contributing Structure

Along this road sits another, early 19th century, barn of similar construction techniques. Modern wrappings encase a large, single log crib with v-notching raised on a dry-laid stone foundation (figures 16-19). Raised doors open into the crib from the northwest side of the barn facing the road. The floor of the crib, constructed of large unhewn log beams, covered with wide wood panel flooring, sits five feet above the ground level. On the additional three sides aisles surround the crib with a drive running the length of the southeast side of the barn behind the log crib. Amos's description of early settlement Bluegrass barns is identical to what is found on the Coleman-Desha plantation.

The most common material for first barns or storage buildings was probably log. Several configurations of log barns have been documented, although it is difficult to accurately date them due to later additions and alterations. If the unchinked log rectangle were raised slightly above the ground on stone piers, it housed corn and perhaps other grains. The single log pen stable provided shelter for stock and some grain storage...Log pens were also set singly or in pairs to support a roof that projected over stall and storage areas. When paired, the space formed between the pens sheltered machinery and formed open stalls. Early log barns, remained unchinked during most of the year with straw and other materials rammed between the spaces during winter months (Amos, 30).

2 MODERN BARNs: 2 Non-Contributing Buildings

Two later barns, likely dating from the late nineteenth century, which are not being considered in this nomination, line the road beyond the log crib barns. The first, also of log construction and dry-laid stone foundation, appears to have been used for dairy at some point. Further down the drive lies a much later tobacco barn of balloon frame construction. Behind the tobacco barn is an additional spring currently left open and used to water cattle.

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The Coleman-Desha Plantation (HR-12) is locally significant and meets National Register Criteria A and C. The property meets Criterion A and is important within the historic context **Nineteenth Century Agriculture in Harrison County, Kentucky** through the years 1812-1865. 1812 marks the birth of the estate, while 1865 marks the height of success on the Coleman-Desha plantation, as well as the end of the antebellum period. The property is a well-preserved example of a successful multi-commodity plantation and stood as one of the closest approaches locally to the agrarian ideal as that concept evolved throughout the nineteenth century. Under Criterion C the property is important in the context **Architecture in Harrison County**. The house is a locally important embodiment of a regionally prominent architectural type, the Georgian house. This architectural house type was found on the farms of the wealthy Bluegrass planter class, and so can be seen as part of a larger entity, the Bluegrass farm. Because so many early features remain on the Coleman-Desha plantation, its importance lies in its illustration of the synthesis of nineteenth century agrarian and architectural values. In addition, the plantation has archeological potential and, with further archeological research and analysis, would likely prove significant under Criterion D. Specifically of archeological interest is the site of the current tenant building, built on an earlier foundation which likely was the foundation for slave quarters. Although the structure does not retain enough of its integrity to be nominated under Criterion C, archeological research likely would reveal significant aspects of slave life in the Bluegrass.

The Coleman family first settled on the Harrison County farmstead sometime between 1810 and 1820, based on the ca. 1812 date of construction of the estate and supporting census records (Coleman, 27; 1810 Census, 1820 Census). Under their short ownership, the Coleman's never acquired enough slaves to constitute a plantation, however, their farmstead likely still qualified as one of the most prosperous in the area, having thirteen slaves on their estate in 1820, while the average Kentucky slaveowner owned less than five (Amos, 71; Hilliard, 35; Boles, 107).

The majority of the structures standing on the complex likely date from the period when the Colemans ran the plantation. The log crib barns, with v-notch construction and wooden pegs were common to the area and date from the early 19th century. The brick detached kitchen, smokehouse and springhouse appear to have been constructed concurrently with the house. No written records survive specifically from the Coleman period concerning the production of the plantation but the structures standing on the land attest to the production a combination of crops and livestock from its beginning.

The sale of the Harrison County farmstead, June 14, 1827, marks the birth of a prosperous plantation under the new control of former Kentucky Governor, Joseph Desha. The estate was to remain in the Desha family, fairly intact, for the next 150 years. In the three years following the purchase of the estate, the Desha's turned what was a successful farmstead under Coleman control into a flourishing plantation, operated by twenty-seven slaves. Joseph Desha

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gradually built up his property over the twelve years following his settlement in Harrison County, enlarging this plantation on Oddville Pike from its original 154 acres to 300 acres.

May 2, 1839 Joseph Desha indentured the plantation and eight of the operating slaves to his son Lucius Desha. Under Lucius Desha's control the plantation expanded rapidly and prospered. The Desha family belonged to an emerging class of "Bluegrass planters" or "gentleman farmers" who "dominated Kentucky agriculture and owned the majority of slaves" (Amos, 71).

Nationally, emerging social class distinctions, informed by relative wealth and power, divided society into distinct groups...a hierarchy became apparent in Kentucky, most commonly in prosperous areas like the Bluegrass...Holding fast to a significant share of Kentucky's wealth and political power were the Bluegrass planters...One of the most critical issues faced by the Commonwealth and the nation concerned slavery...The wealthy Bluegrass gentleman farmers who dominated the state agriculture also owned the majority of slaves (Amos, 71).

One example of Lucius Desha's wealth is the number and value of slaves on his plantation. In 1860, Kentucky had the third largest quantity of slaveowners per state in the nation, however still only one out of four Kentucky families owned any slaves at all, while the majority of slave owners owned less than five slaves (Amos, 71). Lucius Desha's slaves, numbering 27 in 1850 and 33 in 1861, represented a substantial portion of his wealth. They ranged in value from \$100 to \$850 each, reaching a total value of \$19,000 for 32 slaves in 1860 (Duffy-Desha Papers, Lists of Taxable Property, 1850-1853, 1857-1861).

In addition to the value of the slaves themselves, Kentucky slaveowners also enjoyed a greater property wealth than non-slaveowners with an average property value of \$8,397 as opposed to \$1,452 (Amos, 127). Lucius Desha had built his total property up far beyond the average Kentucky slaveowner, with the plantation alone making up 1050 acres of Desha's total acreage owned in 1860 worth \$52,500. The average value per farm in 1860 for Kentucky was \$3,490, while the average for Harrison County was a bit higher at \$4,517 (Amos, 88). Lucius Desha's total land holdings, based merely on acreage, placed him in the top .001% of landowners in Kentucky and the top .02% in Harrison County (Amos, 86-87).

What began as a typical settlement farm, matured into a prosperous plantation by the middle of the antebellum period. Although never reaching planter status themselves, the Colemans obviously had ample means matched by aspiration to create the built environment which could serve wealthy planters of the status of Joseph and Lucius Desha. The Coleman-Desha plantation is a testimony to the realization of the ideals and ambitions of the Kentucky settlers, the implementation of the multi-commodity plantation, and the development of an elite class of Kentucky planters.

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AGRICULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Agriculture was a predominant force in shaping the Kentucky landscape from the very beginning of the settlement period. The majority of settlers were engaged in agricultural production before venturing West and were lured to the Bluegrass by the promises of rich soil. By the 1820s Kentucky had moved from a frontier landscape to one of the leading agricultural regions in the nation.

Historians have dubbed the period between 1820 and (the) Civil War "the farmers age", and Kentucky, with roughly 90% of the population living in rural areas, enjoyed its position as one of the premier agricultural states in the nation. The Bluegrass counties maintained and bettered their statewide dominance of agricultural revenue and worth...The economy for many Bluegrass farmers shifted from a regional focus to a national view: they traded cattle, horses, mules, swine, poultry, sheep and foodstuffs locally, regionally and out of state...These active distinctions of finance and tangible property manifest in distinct types of agricultural complexes. The extent of arable ground, the quality of that ground, crop and livestock diversity, the availability of slave labor, and the financial means of the individual affected both his or her success and the appearance of the farmstead (Amos, 70, 73).

The diversified use of the land created a landscape dominated by woodland pastures, interspersed with fields of varying crops, rather than an endless vista of a single harvest. Economically, this type of multi-use production was well suited to the Bluegrass, with soil rich enough to yield a variety of commodities, yet wisely not overburdened by exhaustive crops for extended periods of time. Bluegrass livestock became increasingly diversified, with farmers focusing on the stock improvement of sheep, hogs, cattle, horses and mules, among others.

Bluegrass stockgrowers established a national reputation for the finest blooded stock in horses, cattle, sheep, swine, jacks, jennets and mules, provided the base herds for stocking the new western frontiers, and supplied the plantations south with mules, horses, swine, hemp, produce, and other necessities (Amos, 70).

The Desha plantation, at the very upper end of farms of the period, is significant due to its accomplishment as a plantation of diversified production, as well in the breeding of livestock, predominant at the time.

According to the 1850 agricultural census, the crops produced on the Desha plantation consisted of hay, hemp, wheat, rye, Indian corn, oats, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes and peas. Livestock raised consisted of horses, asses and mules, "milch cows" working oxen, other cattle, sheep and swine with a total value of \$6500, while slaughtered livestock valued \$500. Other domestic commodities produced, primarily for consumption and use within the plantation, were wool, butter, and cheese (Census, Agricultural Production, 1850). When comparing the number of various livestock raised and quantities of crops produced on the Desha plantation to the average Harrison County farm, the Desha plantation again falls into the very top percentile of producers in the county (Census, Agricultural Production, 1850; Amos, 90). The Desha's used their land to its fullest, with fields and pastures dispersed throughout the

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Section 8

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Coleman-Desha Plantation
Harrison County, Kentucky

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Cynthiana surrounds, producing a "few loads" of corn on one parcel of land, feeding hogs on fertile river property, and planting rye on yet another tract. The number of acres required to produce each commodity, shows the diversified use of their land -- 54 acres for corn, 22 acres for hemp, two fields of 186 acres and 178 1/2 acres designed for rye, and grazing hogs, plus pastures for livestock and sheep, property left in oak timber, and fields for planting in wheat and oats (Duffy-Desha Papers, Lists of Taxable Property).

Many planters and "gentleman farmers" of the mid-19th century adopted progressive attitudes toward farming and economic productivity. Nationally, the birth of agricultural societies holding fairs and forming agricultural journals helped spread a more scientific approach to farming. These societies were a venue through which farmers could reach the politically powerful (Amos, 18). One example of these outreaching efforts in self-betterment within the Harrison County community, led by Lucius Desha was the foundation of the Harrison County Agricultural and Mechanical Association in 1856, which promoted development and experimentation in agricultural production. The Constitution and By-Laws of the Association, over which Lucius Desha presided, state,

the objects of this society are, the development, of agriculture, including, not only the great staples of industry and trade, but also fruits, vegetables, and ornamental gardening, the promotion of mechanical arts in all their branches; the improvements of the races of all useful and domestic animals; the general advancement of rural economy, and household manufactures, and the dissemination of useful information on these subjects (The Constitution and By-Laws of the Harrison County Agricultural and Mechanical Association).

As the founder of such a society, Desha was influential among the elite of his Harrison County community. He was a member of the elite class "who wrote to agricultural journals, corresponded between themselves, imported and bought the finest livestock available (who) comprised a small, yet very significant group, ... (and whose) agricultural activities, and... farms supply the most elaborate example of antebellum agriculture in the region" (Amos, 86).

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Architecturally, the Coleman-Desha property represents the plantation form. The distinct mentality and value system inherent to rural slave-holding life differentiates it from other social systems. The mind-set which developed and built the slave-holding community is reflected in the built environment of the plantation. While the physical layout of plantations varied from region to region, the reflection of the master's aspiration for absolute power and control within the built environment is a common thread which can be found in all plantation types. The layout of the Coleman-Desha plantation is in line with this universal "plantation type," with a distinct hierarchy set up on the landscape. Upton's description of the typical Virginia plantation is symbolic of the plantation mentality as a whole and can be easily applied to the Bluegrass plantation.

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Section 8 Page 5

Coleman-Desha Plantation
Harrison County, Kentucky

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Virginians also looked for neatness and order in their social lives. Their houses were part of a complex landscape defining and vitalizing that order, and changes in interior spaces can only be understood in the context of that whole landscape. The large planter set himself at the center of a private community that replicated in form and appearance the civic order of public society...Each part of the plantation reflected the hierarchy, with the planter at its pinnacle. The domestic buildings that served him were closest to the house, which was often set above them on a high basement. The farm buildings were carefully ordered, and in some parts of Virginia were set in parallel rows as a street with the main house on axis (Upton, 320).

Beyond representation of the universal plantation form, the layout of the Coleman-Desha plantation is, more specifically, representative of other antebellum Upland South plantations in the Bluegrass Region. Smith and Raitz describe the typical Bluegrass estate.

The plan of antebellum Bluegrass estates was broadly similar throughout the area. The buildings were clustered on a hill or vantage point near a water source, usually a free-flowing spring. A long, tree-lined drive led up to the main house. A small grove of trees usually surrounded the house, which was backed by a cluster of slave cabins or quarters, a carriage house, a summer kitchen and laundry house, a spring house, and, perhaps, a gazebo. Dark-tobacco curing sheds and hemp-fiber storage barns were in the fields, whereas buildings to house the dairy herd and to shelter the beef cattle and horses were between the main residence and the pastures. (Smith & Raitz, 225).

Amos supports this generalization, describing settlement period Bluegrass farmsteads: "the situation of the domestic area and its attendant buildings and structures was, almost universally, a geometrically defined complex with building and structures surrounding the sides and rear of the main house. The number of specialized domestic buildings depended upon the finances, number of slaves, and acreage of the owner" (Amos, 27).

On the Coleman-Desha plantation, the placement of the structures in each domain follows closely the physical landscape of the farmstead. The main house is pulled back from the road emphasizing the separation with a very deliberate processional approach, enhanced by a system of stone walls and barriers. The house sits above, both in elevation and size, the other domestic structures which are neatly tucked behind, out of the visitor's view. The domestic sphere is very close knit with the mistress able to easily observe the work taking place in the kitchen yard and smoke house, or in the gardens off to the side. Her land is fairly level and easily contained. The slave cabins create a separate sphere of their own, likely lined up along the back fence yet still within the domains of both domesticity and agriculture, thus within the reigns of both mistress and master.

The spring house also served as a meeting point of both domestic and agriculture worlds. As the source of water and storage space for perishables, the spring house was essential to domestic life. It was likely the farthest point within the plantation the women would venture to serve the domestic sphere. The agricultural chores also required the use of the spring water for daily activities. The physical obstacle of the valley, retaining the spring

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water, with a slight hill rising to reach the agricultural structures, then continuing to the fields of crops and pastures, further accentuates the separation of the two domains.

The agricultural structures are clearly set back from the domestic, yet they wrap around all of the other structures forming a final boundary to the built environment, creating a sense of containment and security. The terrain of the agricultural domain is a bit rougher and the structures are more spread out than that which is found in the domestic domain. The built form reflects the more dispersed work patterns of the agricultural sphere with scattered fields and undulating terrain standing in contrast to the contained domestic world. Thus, the physical landscape further emphasizes both the built and perceived division between the domestic and agricultural spheres of the plantation, without disrupting the cohesive whole.

The main house is architecturally significant as a prime example of the Georgian house form, prominent in Kentucky in the 19th century. The Georgian house was well established in Middle Virginia during the late 18th century. By the mid-19th century, the Georgian house had become prominent on Kentucky estates, a result of the westward migratory trend which brought Virginians to settle in Kentucky. The plan of the Coleman house is very similar to eighteenth century Virginia houses described by Dell Upton.

The developed social structure in the mid-eighteenth century house, then, consisted first of a hall, a formal, public room set off from the direct access to any other room in the house. Next was a dining room, a semi-public space that mediated between outside and inside. It was from the private chamber and often had an exterior door facing the kitchen outbuilding, thus connecting it to the service system of the household as well. In this sense, the dining room was the heart of the family's house, as opposed to the hall which was the center of the family's landscape. The most private first-floor room was the chamber, often only accessible through the dining room. The fourth space, the central passage, or entry, controlled circulation (Upton, 323).

This plan, which Upton terms the "social molecule" of Virginia eighteenth century houses, was carried from Virginia to the Bluegrass and adapted by the builder of the Coleman estate. Although the Coleman house draws more directly from the Georgian house form, adopting the full four room plan and central passage, the social relationships which existed in the three room plan translate into the Coleman house. In addition to the three room and central passage typical of the eighteenth century Virginia house, the Coleman house had a fourth room directly behind the hall, to the left of the central passage, which likely served as a library or second room for entertaining.

Glassie sees the acceptance of the Georgian form -- the central hall, the separation of rooms, and the growing distinction made in room use -- as an indication of the inhabitants' increased desire for privacy (Glassie, 65). Prior to the Georgian form, hall-and-parlor or I-houses were among the popular houses built. Hall-and-parlor houses consisted of only two rooms, with doors entering each, both spaces requiring a mixed use of what today is considered

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private and public activities. The I-house, introduces a central hall between the two spaces which allowed for a little more privacy, however the two spaces still hosted a variety of public and private activities. The Georgian house, further divided the space, creating rooms specifically for entertaining, and rooms specifically for sleeping. The separation of space in the Georgian house is an appropriate extension of the hierarchy of space set up within the plantation itself. The central hall can be seen as an extension of the processional drive, limiting access to parts of the house, as the drive limited access to parts of the plantation.

One unique feature of the Coleman house, is the wall-painting covering the upstairs ballroom, with recent traces also being uncovered in the upstairs central passage. The mere magnitude of the wall-painting indicates that an itinerant painter did the work rather than a resident of the house. The painting is an interesting mixture of spongework, stencilling and freehand painting, allowing the itinerant artist much room to experiment with different techniques. The repeated pattern rather than the typical scene painting or isolated pattern is a very unusual form of wall-painting, and Williamsburg stencilling specialists have never seen wall-painting patterns similar to those of the Coleman-Desha ballroom (Newkirk interview).

Beyond the idiosyncrasies of the Coleman-Desha plantation, it serves as a well preserved example of nineteenth century life in the Bluegrass, with the core complex remaining virtually unchanged since the late 1800s. Its study provides the scholar with prime examples of nineteenth century Bluegrass construction techniques, as well as reveals the social relationships and values of the inhabitants.

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Coleman-Desha Plantation
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Section 9 Page 2

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Coleman-Desha Plantation
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Photographs Identification Page 1

Coleman-Desha Plantation
Harrison County, Kentucky

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All of the attached photographs have the same following information:

1. Property: Coleman-Desha Plantation
2. Location: Cynthiana Vicinity, Kentucky
3. Photographer: Elizabeth H. May
4. Date: Summer 1990
5. Location of Negatives: Elizabeth H. May
3100 Connecticut Avenue, NW, #104
Washington, DC 20008

Photograph 1: Main House
View looking south
Building 1 on site plan

Photograph 2: Main House
View looking west
Building 1 on site plan

Photograph 3: Kitchen
View looking northwest
Building 2 on site plan

Photograph 4: Smoke House
View looking southeast
Building 3 on site plan

Photograph 5: Smoke House
View looking west
Building 3 on site plan

Photograph 6: Spring House
View looking southeast
Building 5 on site plan

Photograph 7: Spring House
View looking west
Building 5 on site plan

Photograph 8: Sheep Barn
View looking south
Building 6 on site plan

Photograph 9: Sheep Barn
View looking west
Building 6 on site plan

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Photographs Identification Page 2

Coleman-Desha Plantation
Harrison County, Kentucky

- =====
- Photograph 10: Single-Log Crib Barn
View looking southeast
Building 7 on site plan
 - Photograph 11: Single-Log Crib Barn
View looking south
Building 7 on site plan
 - Photograph 12: Single-Log Crib Barn Interior
View looking northeast
Building 7 on site plan
 - Photograph 13: Overall View of Coleman-Desha Plantation
View looking west
Includes buildings 1,4 and 5 on the site plan

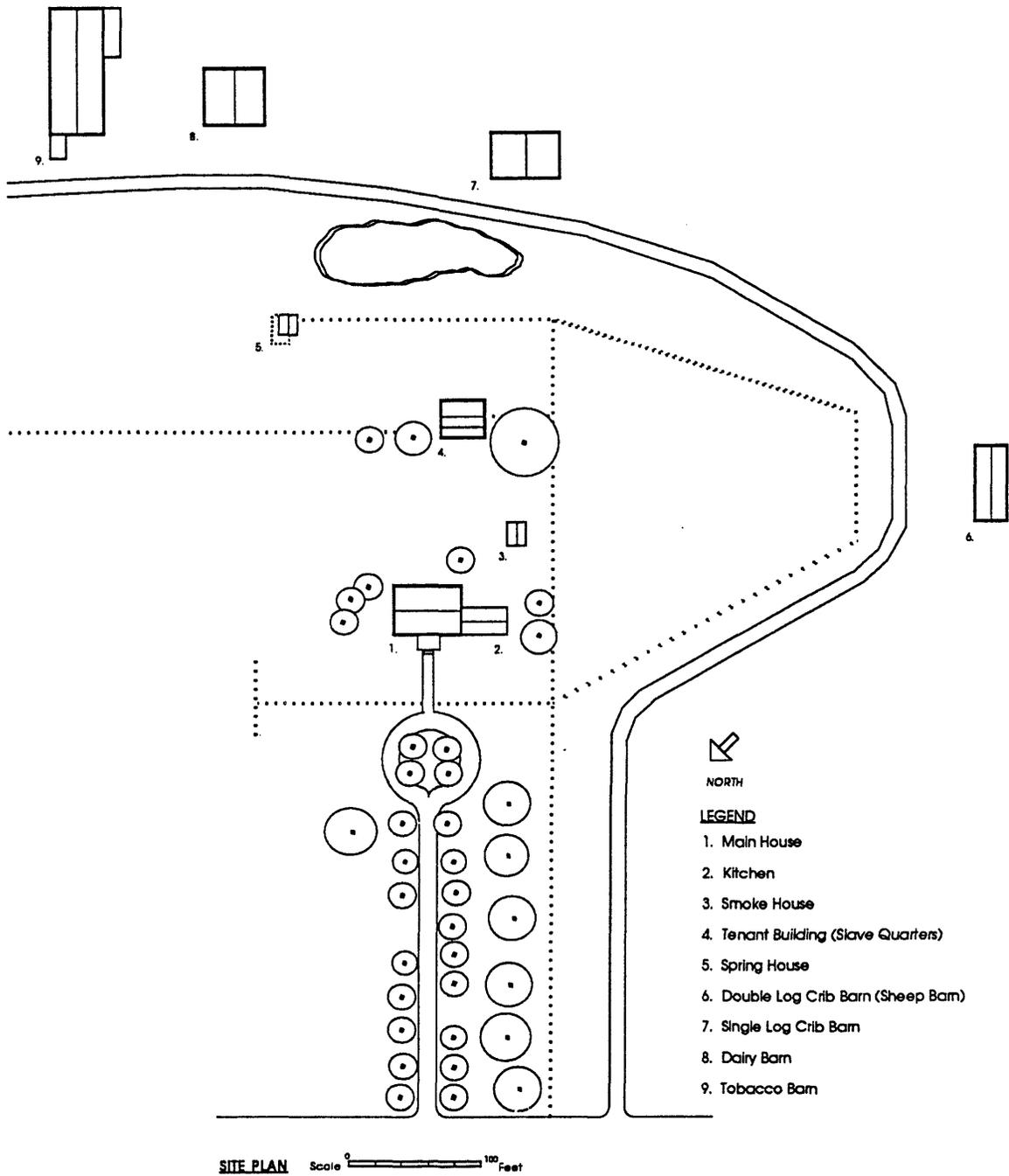
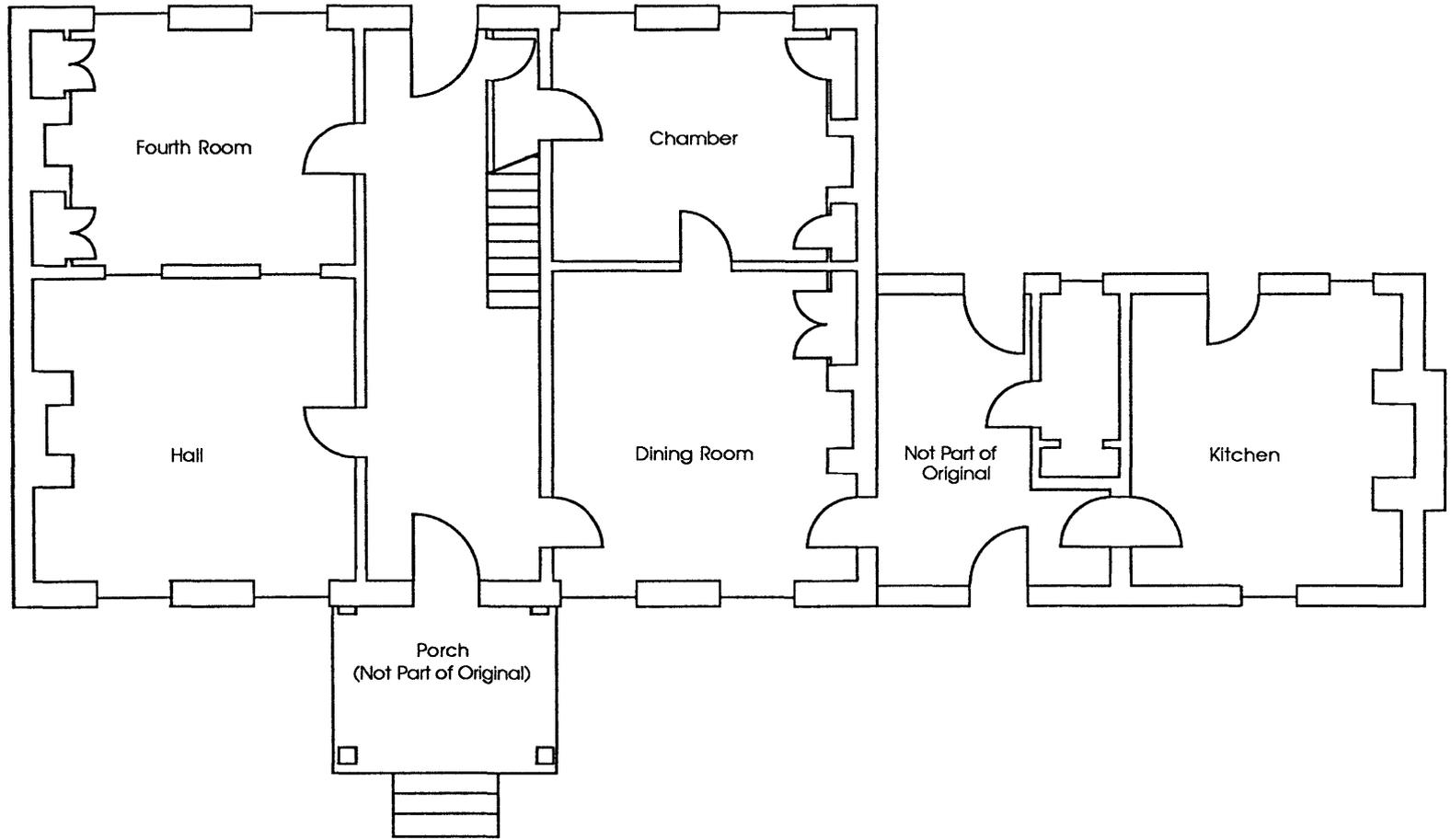


Figure 1.

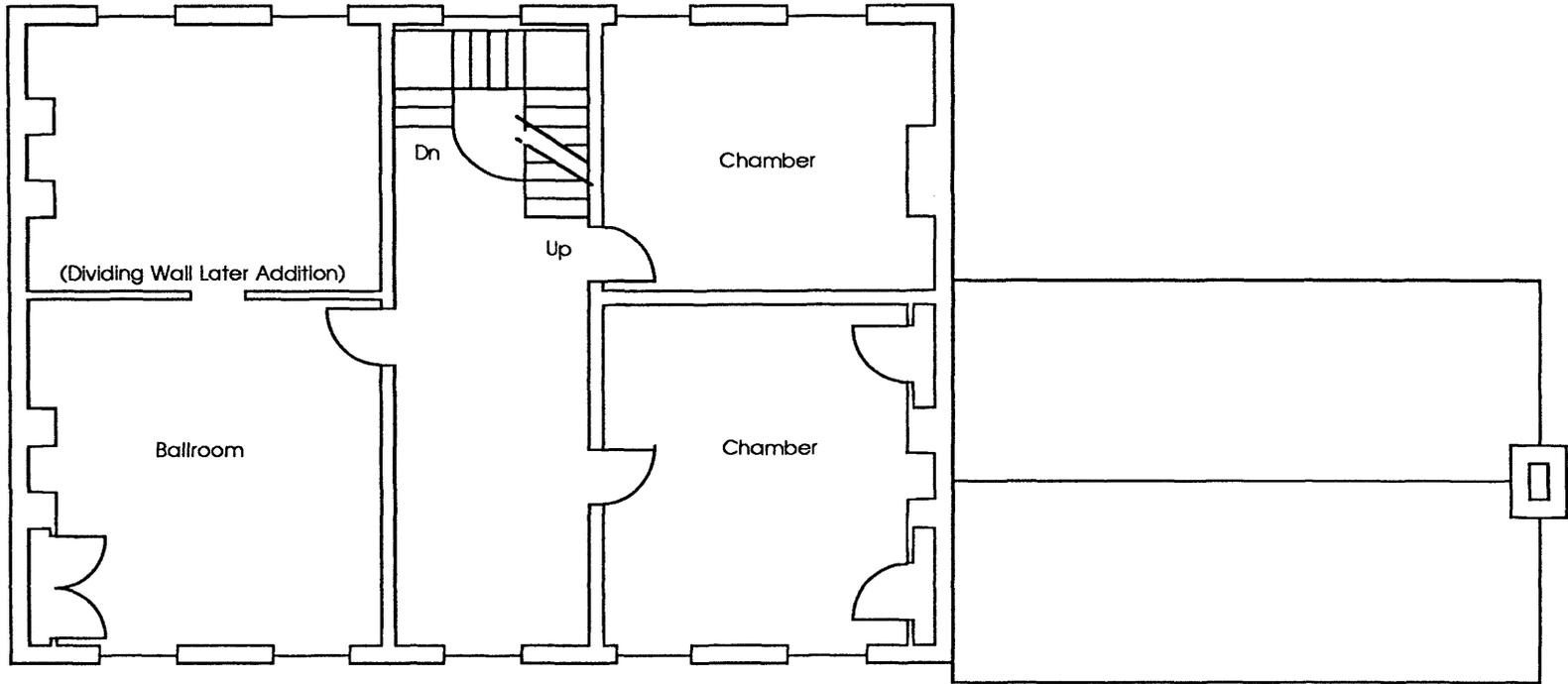
Figure 4.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Scale 0 10 Feet

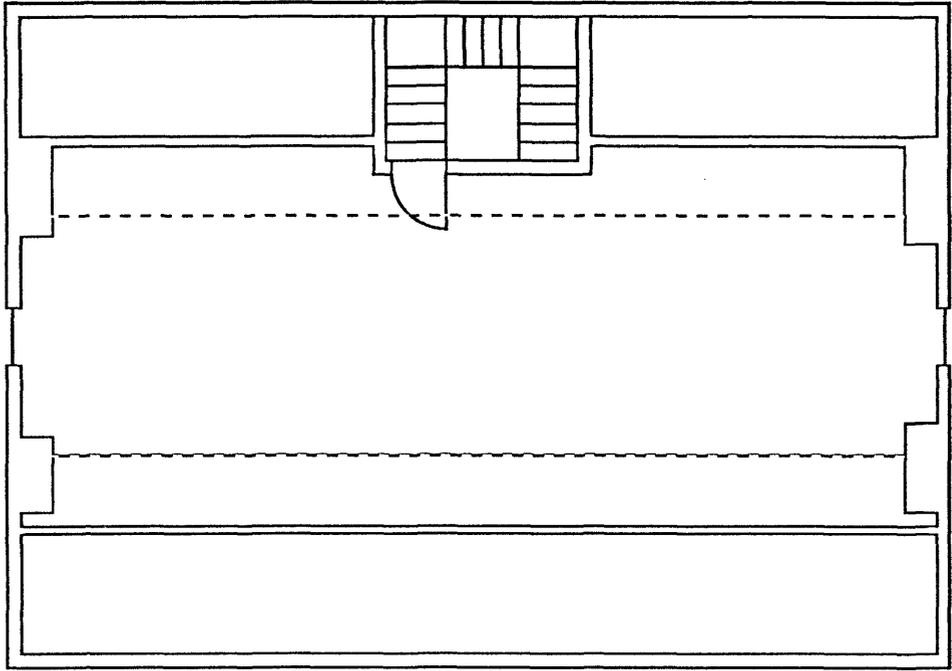
Figure 5.



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

Scale 0 10 Feet

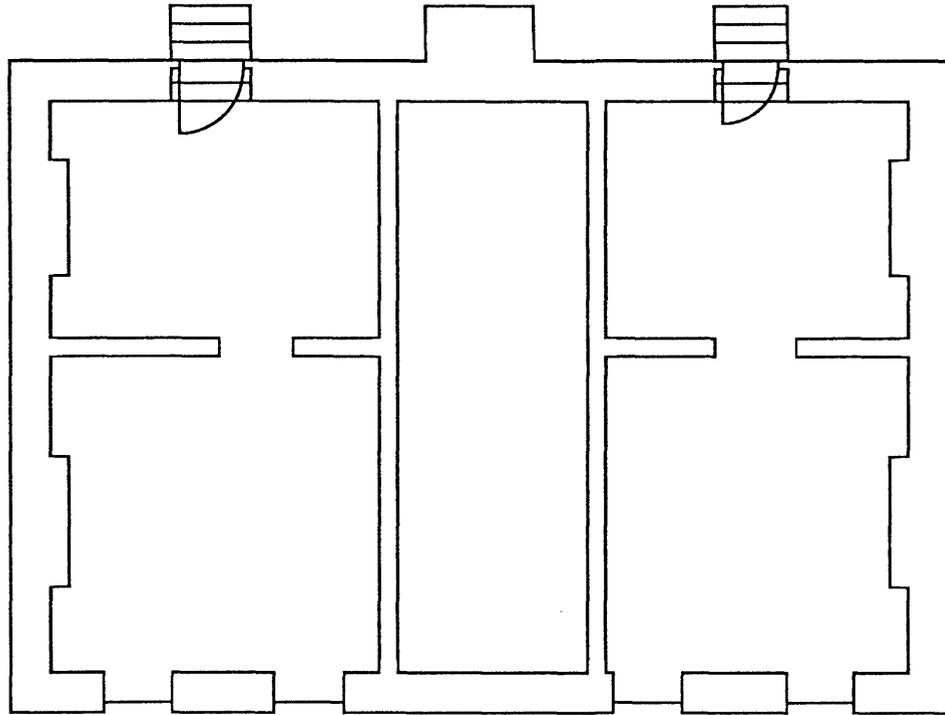
Figure 6.



ATTIC PLAN

Scale 0 10 Feet

Figure 7.



BASEMENT PLAN

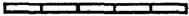
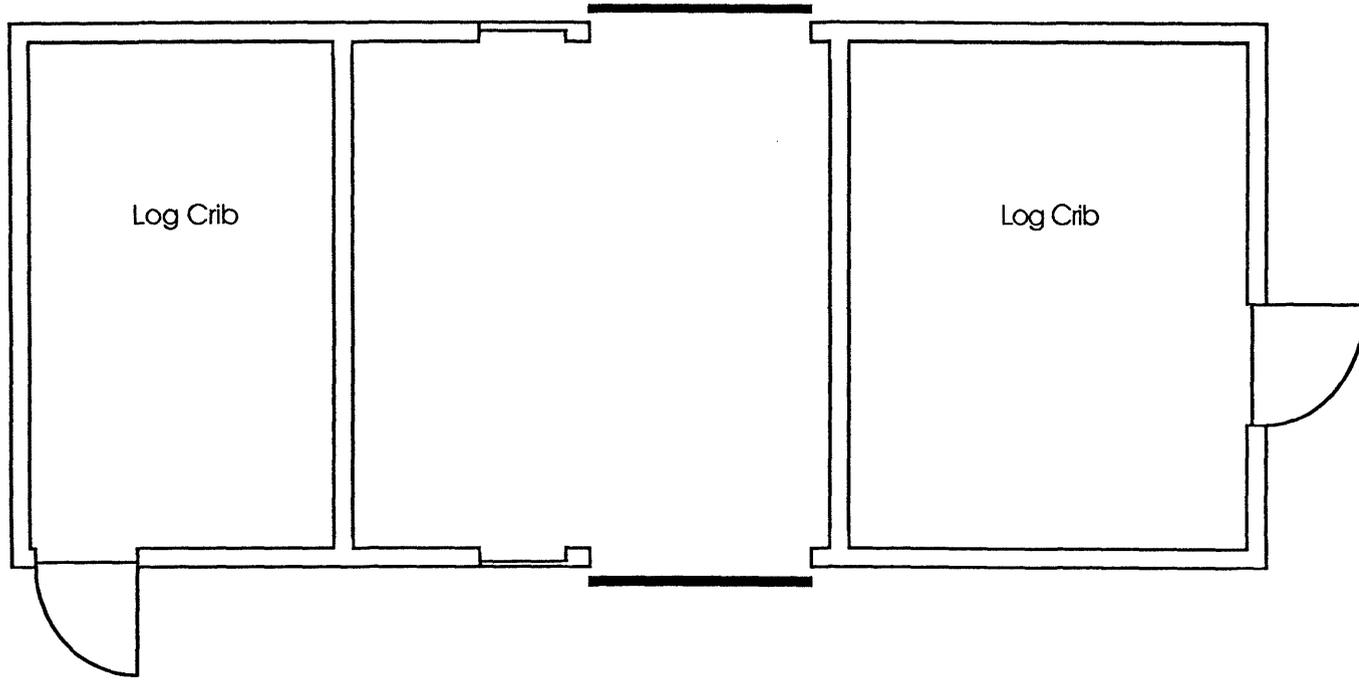
Scale 0  10 Feet

Figure 15.



DOUBLE LOG CRIB BARN (SHEEP BARN) PLAN

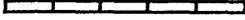
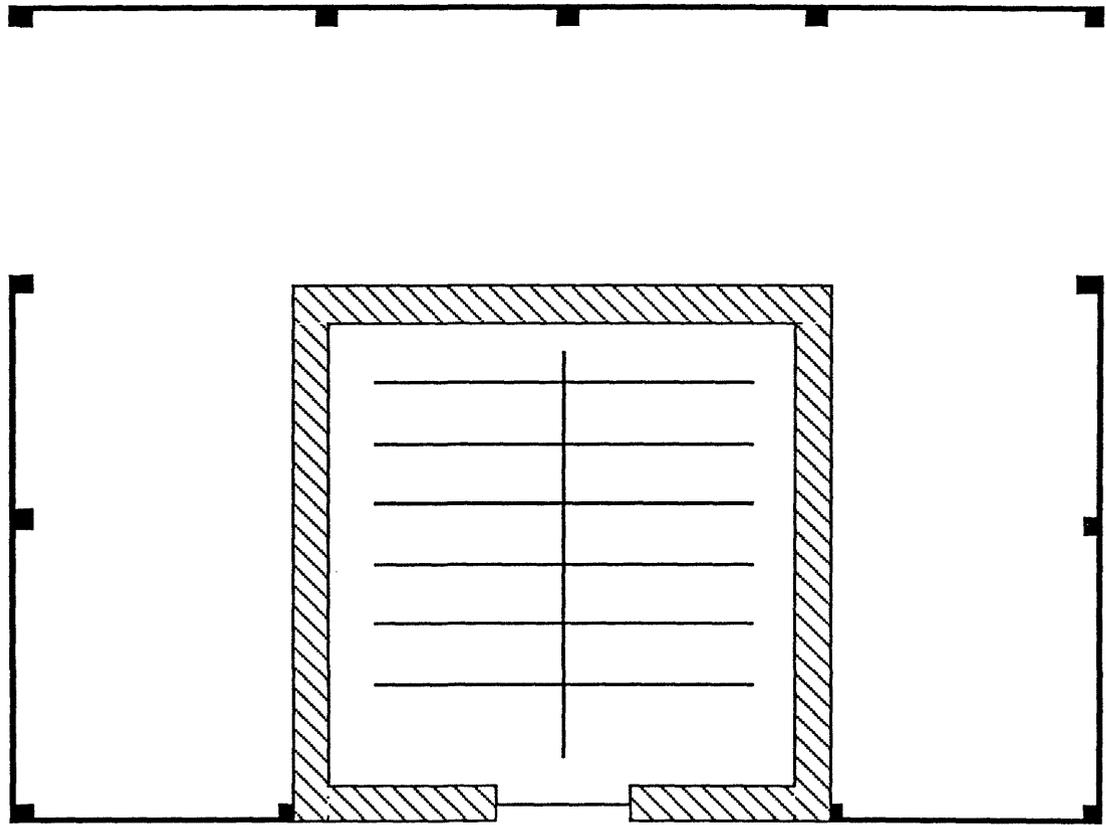
Scale 0  10 Feet

Figure 19.



SINGLE CRIB LOG BARN PLAN

Scale 0  10 Feet

MAP

SEE
MAP
102
PARCELS
33

US 62

32.01

EASTSIDE
ELEM

33

32.07
KY 392

32.06

32.05

32.04

32.03

37

COLEMAN-DESHA PLANTATION
HARRISON County, KY
PORTION OF PVA MAP #115
Approx. Scale 1"=400' (1:4800)

N ↑

35

36

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 93000045

Date Listed: 2/26/93

Coleman--Desha Plantation
Property Name:

Harrison
County:

KY
State:

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Jan Patrick Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

3/3/93
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Technical oversight in Section 7, page 1, was clarified through a phone call to the Kentucky SHPO. The slave quarters is a non-contributing site. The nomination is officially amended to include this information.

DISTRIBUTION:

**National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 93000045 Date Listed: 2/26/93

Coleman--Desha Plantation Harrison KY
Property Name: County: State:

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

6/10/93
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Additional clarification about the resource count of the nominated property was necessary. The correct count consists of:

- Four contributing buildings Two non-contributing buildings
- Two contributing structures One non-contributing site

The nomination is officially amended to include this information.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)