

P11002 4550

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Kentucky</b>
COUNTY: <b>Johnson</b>
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE <b>MAY 3 1974</b>

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**John C. C. Mayo Mansion and Office**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Third Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Paintsville**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
**7**

STATE: **Kentucky**      CODE: **21**      COUNTY: **Johnson**      CODE: **115**

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

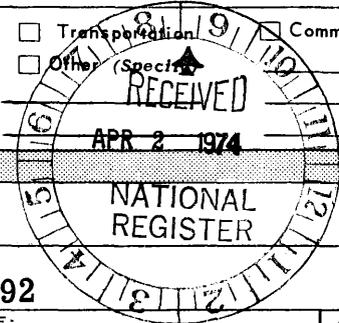
OWNER'S NAME:  
**Diocese of Covington**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1140 Madison Avenue, Post Office Box 192**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Covington,**

STATE:  
**Kentucky**

CODE:  
**21**



**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Johnson County Court House**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Court Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Paintsville,**

STATE:  
**Kentucky**

CODE:  
**21**

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1971**       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Kentucky Heritage Commission**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**401 Wapping Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Frankfort,**

STATE:  
**Kentucky**

CODE:  
**21**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

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DATE

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Mayo Mansion is a three-story, forty-room brick building with a full basement that was constructed between 1905 and 1912 at a cost of \$250,000. Its architect was Herman Geisky of Ashland, Kentucky. The dominant feature of the front facade is a two-story colossal-order portico. Decorative bands appear beneath the Ionic capitals of the portico's eight stone columns. Festoons and dentils adorn its entablature. Within the portico the three-bay facade has a central doorway on each floor that is flanked by wide sidelights; the door on the second floor opens onto a balcony that has a decorative railing. Three gables appear above the portico; the outer ones contain lunette windows; the central one is a dormer enhanced by a similar lunette in the pediment.

The side wall of the Mayo Mansion is three bays in width. The outer two bays have end gables composed of pediments containing arched windows. The first story of the recessed central bay displays an attractive curved porch with a roof that is supported by smaller versions of the portico's Ionic columns. The decorative motif of the entablature is repeated at the top of the second story of the central bay. A Dormer appears on the third floor of this bay. All of the corners of the building have stone quoins which provide contrast to the red brick walls and the red tile roof. The foundation and lentils are also stone. The grounds surrounding the building are beautifully landscaped and enclosed by a stone fence.

On the first floor of the Mayo Mansion was a large central hall which could be reached from either the front or side door. Opening onto the hall on the left, were a drawing room, dining room, kitchen, pantry, and back stairway; on the right were a drawing room and music room; at the rear of the entrance hall was a family breakfast room. The library, which was located at the front side entrance was paneled with the finest wood; above the dado and extending around the room, scenes were painted on burlap, depicting Mayo's dreams of the potential of the great coal resources that lay hidden in the mountains of eastern Kentucky. Many considered the music room to be the most beautiful. Its ceiling was painted in soft pastels with garlands of roses, harps, cupids and birds. The second floor was reached by a wide beautifully carved stairway. There were seven bedrooms on the second floor. On the third floor were additional bedrooms and a ballroom. Centrally located in the spacious ballroom was a large double fireplace. On the walls of the ballroom were painted scenes of the hills, flowering redbud and dogwood, shrubs and flowers, with a beautiful waterfall on one of the walls. The murals and paintings on the walls and ceilings were done by artists from New York and Philadelphia.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |                                       |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |  |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry    | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Literature  | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In the isolation of the eastern Kentucky Highlands, John C. C. Mayo built a home that was the zenith of architectural achievement in its place and time. Today it remains one of the most outstanding structures in the region. The Mayo Mansion is an impressive three-story brick building containing 40 rooms and a full basement. Skilled artists and artisans were recruited to construct and decorate it. The overhead tram used to transport building materials was an interesting accomplishment in the field of engineering and was the first of its kind in eastern Kentucky.

John C. C. Mayo was a dreamer and a doer, seemingly inspired and was capable of inspiring others. In his whole scheme of having his dream fulfilled his office was central. Here he met and planned--often with his engineers and foremen, often with businessmen and politicians of the state, often with the capitalists of the eastern United States. The office was a thing apart and many are the stories, a mixture of fact and fiction about those office gatherings and how his thought processes were stimulated and how he cast the spell of his dreams over others and influenced big decisions by stockholders from the Eastern states to spend large sums of money on railroads and coal land.

According to Gene Marvin, Jr., Mayo Mansion was a 'gathering place for the rich as well as the poor--a magnet that attracted the dignitaries, statesmen, politicians, and business giants. It was the scene of gala parties that helped brighten the dreariness of Appalachia where the amenities of social life were almost obscure because of the remoteness and never ending struggle for survival by the hardy mountaineers." John C. C. Mayo, Jr. recalled that "the family did a great deal of entertaining with gay dancing, laughter and frivolity along with heaping tables of the latest in culinary assortments and drink."

John Fox, Jr. was one of the guests at Mayo Mansion and while he visited there he worked on one of his manuscripts. Fox was a famous author of novels and short stories about life in the Kentucky mountains and blue-grass area, including The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come and Trail of the Lonesome Pine.

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

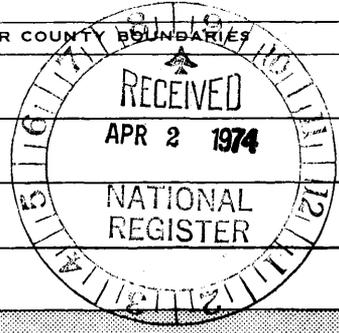
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		37 48 59	82 48 30	
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

UTM  
17/340820  
4186770  
CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **3 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Edward R. Hazelett**

ORGANIZATION: **Johnson County Historical Society and Johnson County Representative of Ky. Heritage Comm.** DATE: **11-20-73**

STREET AND NUMBER: **1215 Stafford Avenue**

CITY OR TOWN: **Paintsville, Kentucky** STATE: **Kentucky** CODE: **21**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: **Ann Simeon Wilcox**

Title: **State Historic Preservation Off.**

Date: **March 29, 1974**

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

*A. P. Montague*  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: **5/3/74**

ATTEST:

*Wm. H. ...*  
Keeper of The National Register

Date: **5.2.74**



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**DESCRIPTION - Page 2**

7. Construction of the John C. C. Mayo Mansion was a tremendous undertaking. The long period of construction according to John Mayo, Jr. was due to the fact that the limestone used in the construction was quarried from his grandfather's farm (Thomas J. Mayo) which was across Paint Creek one-half mile from the building site. Stones from which the large majestic columns were hewn were hauled on sleds which reached their destination by the laborious straining of ten yoke of oxen. The transportation had to be done in dry weather when Paint Creek was nearly dry. Smaller stones were transported by eastern Kentucky's first manually operated overhead tram, which extended three-fourths of a mile and was suspended thirty feet in the air. A derrick was used to lower the stones to the ground. The stones were then cut by a dozen Italian stonemasons who moved from Cincinnati, Ohio to Paintsville to live five or more years to help build the mansion. Carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers and artisans of all crafts were recruited from Ashland, Huntington and other regions.

A small brick building was built over a nearby stream for use as a generating plant. An elevator shaft and lighting fixtures were also installed when it was learned that electricity would soon be available in the area. In addition there were two gazebos. Water was pumped electrically from a large cistern that was fed by an artesian well and downspouts from the roof.

John C. C. Mayo lived in this house for only three years before his death in 1914. The Mayo family moved to Ashland, Kentucky in 1917 because of the isolation and lack of roads in the Paintsville area. They took much of the mansion interior with them to Ashland. (Mr. John C. C. Mayo, Jr. has offered to return the original interior work to the Mayo Mansion if the house is restored.) The mansion was then occupied for a short time by the Methodist Church which operated a school there. According to an undated newspaper clipping, at one time a business school and dancing academy were operated on the first floor of the mansion with apartments on the second and third floors. In the 1930's it was purchased by E. J. Evans, who was employed by Mayo's Coal Company. Since 1941 the property, including both the mansion and the office, has been owned by the Covington Diocese of the Catholic Church and is known as Our Lady of the Mountains, serving as a school for grades 1 - 8 and as a convent. Currently there is a great deal of interest and enthusiasm in a project to preserve and restore the Mayo Mansion as a life museum for the Eastern Kentucky Highlands. Projected plans call for using the office, after being fire-proofed, to house historical documents, manuscripts, ballads, songs and books by writers of eastern Kentucky.

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	MAY 3 1974

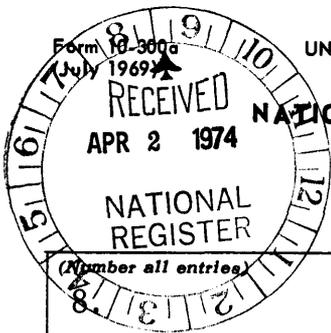
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7. DESCRIPTION - Page 3

The Office -- Herman Geisky was also architect of the office, built during the period (1905 - 1910) of the same red brick and white stone as was being used in the mansion. It is one and one-half stories, a low building 82'x37' with a broad, 3-bay porch 37'x12'. The side porch is 13-1/2'x9-1/2'. The office building is trimmed with rough limestone lentils as in the mansion. The center of the facade is emphasized by a gable with broque-curved parapet that breaks through the low-hipped roof with its wide dormers. An ornamental sunburst motif crowns the front gable.

The building is both ornamental and business-like in appearance. From its very beginning it was Mayo's official office. There are five rooms and two baths downstairs, four rooms and two baths upstairs. The woodwork is fine dark oak as found in the mansion. Each room has an open fireplace with oak mantle. It is in splendid condition and is in use as part of Our Lady of the Mountains School.





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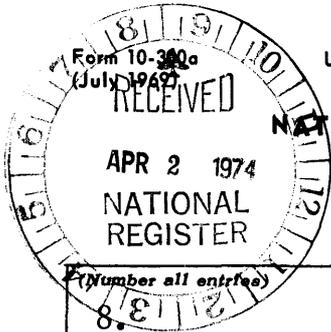
**SIGNIFICANCE - Page 2**

John Caldwell Calhoun Mayo began his adult life as a school teacher who earned \$40.00 a month then through brilliant business judgment amassed a fortune within the next 20 years. He was born at Gulnare in Pike County, Kentucky on September 16, 1864, the son of Thomas Jefferson Mayo and Elizabeth Leslie Mayo. The Mayo family moved to Johnson County in 1868 and John C. C. Mayo attended the local schools. He attended Kentucky Wesleyan College, teaching mathematics to earn money for his college expenses. After he graduated, Mayo returned to Paintsville, studied law and was admitted to the bar. Between 1883 and 1889 he taught school in Johnson and Pike Counties. He spent his summer vacations purchasing coal lands at nominal prices and by 1890 he had acquired 30,000 acres. At this time he sold one-third of his holdings to E. T. and A. R. Merritt for \$60,000 and \$10,000 in notes. In addition, they offered him \$16.00 an acre for any other land he could buy. Although the panic of 1893 hurt Mayo, his company, The Sandy Valley and Elk Horn Coal Company, survived. Around the turn of the Century, Mayo worked for several years to persuade people to build a railroad up the Big Sandy Valley. In 1901 he organized the Northern Coal and Coke Company, receiving \$250,000 in cash and one-fourth interest in the organization in return for the coal lands conveyed. By 1902 Mayo had made his first million dollars. Between 1904 and 1912 Mayo built and furnished the Mayo Mansion at a cost of \$250,000. In 1910 and 1911 his company sold 100,000 acres of land for \$4,500,000. After the extension of the railroad up the Big Sandy River Valley his fortune continued to increase until it totaled an estimated \$20,000,000 at the time of his death on May 11, 1914.

A friend and associate, Daniel E. O'Sullivan wrote of Mayo: "He has diverted millions into a hitherto barren land. He has lined its valleys with railroads, peopled its desolate mountains with workmen and brought the products of its forests and its mines to the markets of the world. Out of that hitherto inaccessible country he has carved a principality as rich, in its way as Golconda . . . . "

In a recent speech Paintsville Mayor John Chandler said: "Who else but John C. C. Mayo could signify the fierce pride, gutty determination and independence of our Highlands people. What other structure (Mayo Mansion) could exemplify the net wealth and erupting times that came with the first bloom of the mountains when thousands came to dig the rich, black seams of coal. What else (proposed eastern Highlands life museum) could provide the whole panorama of this new era when men and women changed a wilderness into a dynamic industrialized civilization. "

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**SIGNIFICANCE - Page 3**

In a Report to the Governor of Kentucky, August, 1973, Mrs. Simeon Willis, the Executive Director of the Kentucky Heritage Commission, wrote:

"Here stands the Mayo Mansion, a symbol of the once great wealth produced by one man's dreams of opening up this part of Kentucky by building railroads. It calls to mind the fabulous story of John C. C. Mayo and his lovely and exceptionally intelligent wife, Alice, who for a long period of time, alone, believed in those dreams, and helped them to become reality. John C. C. Mayo made the greatest of all contribution to the land and to the people he loved. Because of what he did entire towns were planned and built according to plan, a great many years ago before planning was known about elsewhere. And gloriously, here is a people who have learned to appreciate their great heritage and in the reclamation of this heritage are determined to restore the John C. C. Mayo Mansion and Office at Paintsville and make of it a "Life Museum" of eastern Kentucky heritage."

The impact of Mayo's life on the development of the entire eastern Kentucky area is reflected in the statement of Harry LaViers III on August 17, 1973, as follows:

"Central Kentucky is west of eastern Kentucky. The people who settled in central Kentucky, the bluegrass area, bypassed eastern Kentucky because their purpose was agriculture. Eastern Kentucky was not really settled until 1875 - 1880, a hundred years after it was explored and a hundred years after central Kentucky was settled. It was settled for a good reason--to provide coal for the country. For eastern Kentucky to exist at all and for the coal industry to develop, railroads had to be built through the mountains. So, John C. C. Mayo, a coal and railway baron who pioneered in coal and railways in eastern Kentucky, influenced the culture, life, transportation, banking, business, education, and economics in an entire area affecting thousands of people."

After machinery was introduced affecting the coal industry and reducing employment in the mines, and after oil replaced coal as fuel to a great degree the coal industry and eastern Kentucky fell upon sorry days and hard times. Yet, this in no way minimizes the impact of Mayo's life

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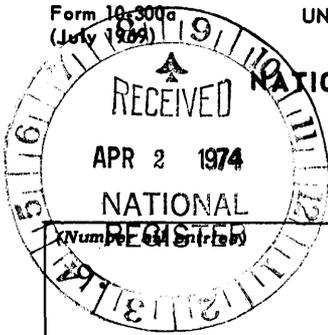
(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE - Page 4

upon a significant period in eastern Kentucky's development. Today, 1974, when the whole nation faces oil shortages, and fuel crises, the coal industry and railway system in eastern Kentucky created by John C. C. Mayo are facing a rebirth. Kentucky lead the nation in coal production in 1973, with eastern Kentucky producing over 105 million tons of the state's total of 127 and a half million tons of coal. The trains are loaded and rolling again; coal is 'king' again, and gasification of coal is on the horizon, as a significant solution to a major national crisis. Thus, Mayo's dreams for eastern Kentucky may prove to have been more 'prophetic' than any man dreamed of. His influence promises to determine once again the destiny of the Appalachian area of Kentucky and conceivably the destiny of a way of life of the nation.



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BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Address by Paintsville, Kentucky Mayor John Chandler. Delivered at meeting of Eastern Kentucky Committee of Kentucky Heritage Commission at Jenny Wiley State Resort Park, November 2, 1973.
2. Buckingham, John E. John C. C. Mayo, Manuscript, 1947.
3. Connelley, William E. The Correspondence of William E. Connelley, 1902-1914.
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5. Minutes, Eastern Kentucky Committee of the Kentucky Heritage Commission, August 17, 1973.
6. Report to the Governor of the Commonwealth by the Kentucky Heritage Commission, August, 1973.
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9. Undated newspaper clipping.
10. Interview with John F. Williams, retired Vice-President, Ashland Oil and Refining Company, February, 1974.
11. Newspaper Clipping, "Kentucky Leads Nation In Coal Production 127 Million Tons," The State Journal, Frankfort, Kentucky, March 13, 1974.
12. Newspaper Clipping, "Governor Ford Signs Coal Research Bill," The Courier Journal, March 16, 1974.
13. Interview with John C. C. Mayo, Ashland, Kentucky, Son of John Caldwell Calhoun Mayo, builder and first owner of the Mayo Mansion, March 18, 1974.