

PH0017446

DATA SHEET

Form 10-300 (Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Kentucky

COUNTY: Garrard

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY DATE: MAY 6 1975

1. NAME

COMMON: Pleasant Retreat

AND/OR HISTORIC: Governor William Owsley House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: U.S. 27 - Stanford Pike, 1/2 mile south of Lancaster on U.S. 27

CITY OR TOWN: Lancaster

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 5

STATE: Kentucky CODE: 021 COUNTY: Garrard CODE: 079

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"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input 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"/> Pork <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: William Kirby Peter

STREET AND NUMBER: 202 Maplewood Drive

CITY OR TOWN: Lancaster

STATE: Kentucky CODE: 021

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Garrard County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Lancaster

STATE: Kentucky CODE: 021

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: 021

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

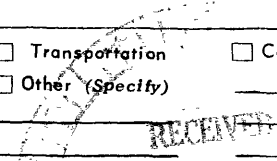
STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY



7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Pleasant Retreat is situated on a hill-top at the edge of a fine farm with rolling terrain. The old Lancaster-Stanford Road (Route 27) has been straightened, bringing it closer to the house and changing the elevation of the road, but the relationship of the impressive house to the road remains essentially intact.

From physical evidence it appears that the house was built in two stages. The original main portion seems to have been an asymmetrical two-story rectangle with entrance hall to one side of two rooms on both stories. This portion has fine Flemish bond brickwork with queen closers, rather rough limestone foundation with ridged mortar, narrow doors with square transoms and no sidelights, stone lintels with slightly angled ends, and hand-pegged woodwork. Probably dating from this same phase of construction was a detached one-story kitchen to the west of the main house, with huge chimney. Stylistically, one would be tempted to date these portions of the building around 1800 or even earlier (perhaps conforming to Jacksman's ownership).

In a separate construction campaign the main block was made quasi-symmetrical with the addition of a two-story wing to the east. In fact, the placement of the windows does not match that of the earlier portion, where they are closer to the entrance, probably to allow inclusion of the chimneys and closets within the block at the west end. The later wing has common bond brickwork even on the north front, smooth well-fitting ashlar foundations, and no lintels but a row of headers on end over the windows. This addition consists of a large room on both floors. The remaining space at the southeast corner is filled by two ample stories of porches with colossal square brick piers. The upper gallery has a plain wooden railing. These porches constitute living spaces within the main block of the residence, but occasion an odd gambrel effect of the roof on the east end, allowing for a third story under the roof. On the north front the well-proportioned cornice which "returns" before the corners unifies the roofline.

Perhaps when the main block was enlarged the detached kitchen was also amplified and connected to the house by means of enclosing the "dogtrot" or breezeway. (The kitchen wing has since suffered other alterations, but retains a massive double chimney.)

Also at the time the southeast porches were added the two-story north entrance porch may have been created in order to impose a deceptive symmetry on the facade. The closely-spaced square
(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1819 and later**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

"Pleasant Retreat" is distinguished as the country home of William Owsley, Congressman, Governor of Kentucky, and Associate Justice on the State Court of Appeals who played a crucial role in the notorious "old court-new court" or Relief Controversy of the 1820s. Owsley owned the 250-acre farm and lived there while practicing law in nearby Lancaster from 1819 until 1837. The house, with its prominent site and two-story porches, has long been a landmark on the main route south from Lancaster, the county seat of Garrard County.

Part of the land on which the farm is situated originally belonged to Henry Pawlding, noted for laying out the town of Lancaster and assisting in having it established as the county seat. In 1797 Pawlding deeded this land to John Jacksman. After Jacksman's death in 1819 the property was sold to William Owsley.

Owsley was born in Virginia in 1782 and the following year was brought to Lincoln County by his father. The future governor studied law under Chief Justice of the State Court of Appeals John Boyle and, after he obtained his license, began the practice of law in Garrard County. His success was immediate. He was elected a representative to the State Legislature and "became so favorably known to the public as a legislator and lawyer, that, in 1812, when he was only thirty-one years of age...Governor Scott appointed him to the supreme bench of the State..." (Collins p. 492)

Owsley resigned from the Court of Appeals in 1813 in consequence of a law reducing the number of judges to three. A vacancy occurred shortly after and he was immediately re-appointed. Owsley was to serve on the court during one of the most critical periods in Kentucky's history. The economic situation was unstable and continued to worsen until 1824 when the state found itself in a "moral, political and financial panic..." The inflationary boom years after the War of 1812, the nationwide Panic of 1819 were responsible for the condition which resulted in an explosion of emotions in

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Calico, Forrest. History of Garrard County, Kentucky and its Churches.
 New York: The Hobson Book Press, 1947.

Clark, Thomas D. History of Kentucky. New York: Prentice Hall,
 Inc., 1937, pp.205-207.

Clift, G. Glenn Governors of Kentucky. New York: The Hobson Press
 1942.

(continued)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			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
NW	° ' "	° ' "	37°	36'	33"
NE	° ' "	° ' "	84°	34'	49"
SE	° ' "	° ' "			
SW	° ' "	° ' "			

16/713560
 4165000
 CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **4 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

RECEIVED
 JAN 2 1975
 NATIONAL REGISTER

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Patricia Ballard** WL;GM

ORGANIZATION: **Garrard County Heritage Commission** DATE: **7-26-74**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Garrard County Public Library**

CITY OR TOWN: **Lancaster** STATE: **Kentucky 40444** CODE: **021**

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 Cedric W. Meeter

Title State Liaison Officer

Date 1-15-75

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

[Signature]
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 5/6/75

ATTEST:

[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 5-2-75

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Kentucky	
COUNTY	Garrard	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE
		MAY 6 1975

(Number all entries)

"Pleasant Retreat"

7. Description (continued)

Page 2

piers of this typical provincial Greek Revival portico have been rebuilt and currently rest on a concrete slab over a masonry foundation. The gable features a delicate lunette window. The piers support a flat cornice and have shallow square abaci instead of capitals. By analogy to other houses in the area (such as nearby "Colonial Acres") it seems likely these porches and therefore probably the other additions date from the middle of the 19th century--perhaps during Anderson's, Hart's, or Myer's ownership of the property--although local tradition attributes the whole structure to Owsley.

Part of the rear (south) wall of the main house is bulging and the brick shows deterioration. The exterior surfaces have recently been painted red. The upper windows retain six-over-nine pane sash, but the longer windows of the first floor have been replaced by two-pane late 19th-century sash.

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

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Kentucky	
COUNTY Garrard	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 6 1975

(Number all entries)

"Pleasant Retreat"

Page 2

8. Significance (continued)

the 1824 race for governor. The overriding issue was the state's role in securing relief from debts.

In a previous session, the legislature had attempted to give relief by passing an act permitting debtors to endorse their notes "Notes of the Bank of Kentucky or its branches will be accepted in discharge of this execution." If the plaintiff refused to accept this endorsement, the defendant could replevy for two years. The Court of Appeals was placed in the midst of the controversy with their ruling in 1823 that the act was unconstitutional.

The judges were labeled "usurpers, --tyrants, --kings," but the three men held their ground. The legislature was unable to amass sufficient votes to remove the judges, so a law was passed to abolish the old court and institute a new court. The "old court" denied the law's constitutionality and continued to sit as the legitimate court of appeals. "Never before," wrote Lewis Collins, "did the fires of discord burn more fiercely in any civil community. Never before was a State so near anarchy, revolution and ruin." (Collins, p. 492).

The chaos could not, of course, continue. The issue was brought before the people in the 1825 state congressional election in one of the most emotional and fiercely-fought elections in Kentucky's history. The result was a victory of Owsley's old court party by a large majority in the house. The senate, however, remained attached to the new court.

In the election of 1826 both parties were again arrayed in the final struggle for control of the senate. The old court party triumphed and at the ensuing session of the legislature, the reorganization was repealed, and the three old court judges, John Boyle, chief justice, William Owsley and Benjamin Mills, associate justices, were re-established.

In 1828 Owsley resigned from the Court and retired to private life at Pleasant Retreat to practice law. He subsequently represented Garrard County again in the State Legislature. Finding the Garrard County house to be inconvenient for his new duties, he sold it in 1837 to Simeon H. Anderson and moved to Frankfort.

(continued)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Kentucky	
COUNTY	Garrard	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE
		MAY 6 1975

(Number all entries)

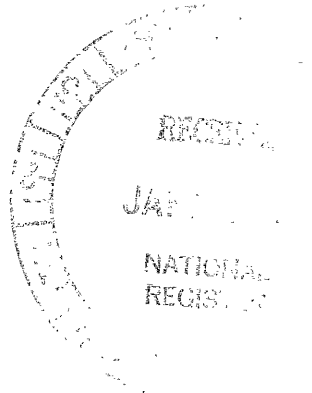
"Pleasant Retreat"

8. Significance (continued)

Page 3

Owsley ran for governor in 1844 and won "after one of the most exciting and hard fought contests ever witnessed in the State," according to Collins. He was elected by the greatest majority ever obtained by a gubernatorial candidate up to that time. Governor Owsley died on his farm near Danville in 1862.

Simeon Anderson, the succeeding owner of Pleasant Retreat, was an attorney and native of Garrard County. He represented Garrard County in the legislature in 1828 and was elected to Congress in 1839. After having lived at Pleasant Retreat for fifteen years, Anderson died in 1852 and his heirs sold the house to John P. Hart. In 1855 Hart sold the property to John Y. Meyers and it has remained in the locally prominent Meyers and Farras families since that date.



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

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Kentucky	
COUNTY Garrard	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 6 1975

(Number all entries)

"Pleasant Retreat"

9. Major Bibliographical References (continued)

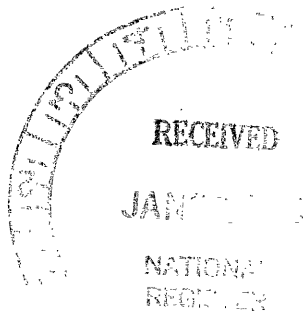
Page 2

Kinnaird, Dr. J. B. Historical Sketches of Lancaster and Garrard County. Lancaster: Central Record, 1924.

Lancaster Woman's Club, eds. Patches of Garrard County. Danville: Bluegrass Printing Co., 1974, p. 218-220.

Morton, Janice. "Governor William Owsley!" The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, vol. III (January, 1948), pp. 25-29.

Potts, Eugenia Dunlap. The Song of Lancaster, Kentucky. Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1876.



This is another view of the William Owsley Home on U.S. 27 South of Lancaster . This was copied from an old one cent post card published by McRoberts Drug Store, Lancaster and printed by Ed M. Fox, Danville, Kentucky, printed in the early 1900s.



GREENING 1199
LANCASTER, KY.

Home of 2 Ex GOVS. Robt. P. Letcher, 1840-41
William Owsley, 1841-48