

United States Department of the Interior

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Columbia Commercial District
 other names/site number See inventory for survey numbers
 Related Multiple Property NA

2. Location

street & number Roughly centered around the Columbia Public Square

NA

 not for publication
 city or town Columbia

NA

 vicinity
 state Kentucky code KY county Adair code 001 zip code 42728

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:
 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:
 X A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title Craig Potts/SHPO Date _____
Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office
 State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
 Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____
 Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
 other (explain:) _____
 Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

5. Classification

Columbia Commercial District
Name of Property

Adair County, Kentucky
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Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public – Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public – State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public – Federal

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
28	2	buildings
		district
	1	site
		structure
		object
28	3	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

NA

1 (Courthouse, Resource 31)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/financial

GOVERNMENT/court house

RELIGION/religious facility

RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/financial

RELIGION/religious facility

COMMERCE/professional

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commercial Style

Italianate

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone

walls: Brick

roof: _____

other: _____

Narrative Description

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Summary Paragraph

The proposed Columbia Commerce District is located in the heart of the city of Columbia, seat of Adair County, Kentucky. The district is centered on its tallest building, the National Register-listed Adair County Courthouse (NRIS 74000847), forming a traditional public square made by the buildings that surround the courthouse. Four streets converge to make the square: Greensburg Street, Campbellsville Street, Jamestown Street, and Burkesville Street. The district consists of 32 resources, the majority being commercial in historical and current usage. These were constructed as stores or banks, erected of bricks, and set closely against each other. The district is approximately 5.3 acres, with 29 contributing buildings (including the previously listed courthouse), 2 non-contributing buildings, and one non-contributing site.



District Setting

Columbia Kentucky is situated just to the north of Russell Creek, along the Louie B. Nunn Cumberland Parkway. The city was first settled around 1802, and has been permanently populated since then. The Public Square is made by four streets from nearby county seat towns that converge on the Adair County Courthouse: Campbellsville Street from the northeast, Jamestown Road from the southeast, Burkesville Street from the southwest, and Greensburg Street from the northwest. Most of the buildings in the area proposed for listing were built around the turn of the 20th century. A

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few, located off the Public Square proper, are residential or religious in usage. The oldest building still standing in the nominated district is resource #7, commonly referred to as the Creel Building.

Columbia Public Square inventory.

The column ADC-# refers to the SHPO's code number for the property. The first entry is ADC-56. All resources are buildings, except Resource 29, a site.

Field #	ADC-#	Status	Address	PVA Parcel #	Owner's name	Business Name in 2011 (Name in parenthesis is on survey form)
1	56	C	111 Campbellsville St.	000-319-003.00	Atlantis Enterprises	Vacant
2	57	C	113 Campbellsville St.	000-319-003.01	Atlantis Enterprises	M & M Tattoos
3	58	C	109 Campbellsville St.	000-319-004.00	Darla Burris	Rumors Hair Salon
4	59	C	103 Campbellsville St.	000-319-005.00	Steven/Nancy McKinney	Glamorette Beauty Salon
5	60	C	101 Campbellsville St.	000-319-006.00	William/Judy Nance	Judy D. Vance, Atty.
6	4	C	400 Public Sq.	000-319-007.00	William/Sharon Harris	Mouser
7	5	C	328 Public Sq.	000-321-013.00	Brenda Williams	Flower Garden Florist/Creel Bldg
8	61	C	326 Public Sq.	000-321-012.00	Loy Dwayne/ Stephen Keen	Edward Jones/Barger Insurance
9	62	C	324 Public Sq.	000-321-011.00	David Butler Trust	4 Seasons Consignment
10	63	C	322 Public Sq.	000-321-010.00	William M. Conn, Jr.	C & F Discount
11	64	C	308 Public Sq.	000-321-007.00	Clynus McClister	
12	6	C	306 Public Sq.	000-321-008.00	Grider Commercial Rentals	Bluegrass Inspections/Coomen Bldg.
13	7	C	304 Public Sq.	000-321-009.00	Fortune Street Research	Colombiana Plaza (Russell Building)
14	8	C	228 Public Sq.	000-322-009.00	First & Farmers National Bank	Radio Shack (Jefferies Building)
15	65	NC	224 Public Sq.	000-322-007.00 & - 322-008.00	First & Farmers National Bank	First & Farmers Bank
16	9	C	214-218 Public Sq.	000-322-005.00	Arnold Inc.	(Owens Building)
17	66	C	212 Public Sq.	000-322-004.00	Ellen Hingle	Café on the Square
18	67	C	206 Public Sq.	000-322-003.00	William & Mary Davis	
19	68	C	204 Public Sq.	000-322-002.00	Michael & Laura Harris	
20	10	C	200 Public Sq.	000-322-001.00	Michael & Laura Harris	
21	11	C	148 Public Sq.	000-312-014.00	Bank of Columbia	Bank of Columbia
22	69	C	144 Public Sq.	000-312-014.00	Bank of Columbia	Bank of Columbia
23	70	C	140 Public Sq.	000-312-013.00	Bank of Columbia	
24	71	C	134 Public Sq.	000-312-012.00	Daniel Antle & Lynn McLean	Columbia Theater (?)
25	72	C	104 Public Sq.	000-312-005.00	Arnold Inc.	
26	73	NC	102 Public Sq.	000-312-004.00	Charles Grimsley	
27	74	C	100 Public Sq.	000-312-003.00	David E. Bowman	
28	12	C	105 Greensburg St.	000-312-002.00	Judith Phillips	Residence
29	75	NC Site	South Monroe St.	000-312-001.00	Columbia Baptist Church	Columbia Baptist parking lot
30	76	C	201 Greensburg St.	000-304-001.00	Columbia Baptist Church	Columbia Baptist Church
31	1	C	500 Public Sq.	000-320-001.00	Adair County	Adair County Courthouse
32	3	C	404 Public Sq.	000-319-008.00	Allison Bell & Bonnie Lawhorn	(Grumsley Jeweler)

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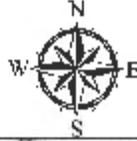
Adair County, Kentucky
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Jeffrey L. Feese, PVA
424 Public Square
Counthouse Annex, Suite 2
Columbia, KY 42728
Office: 270-324-3673



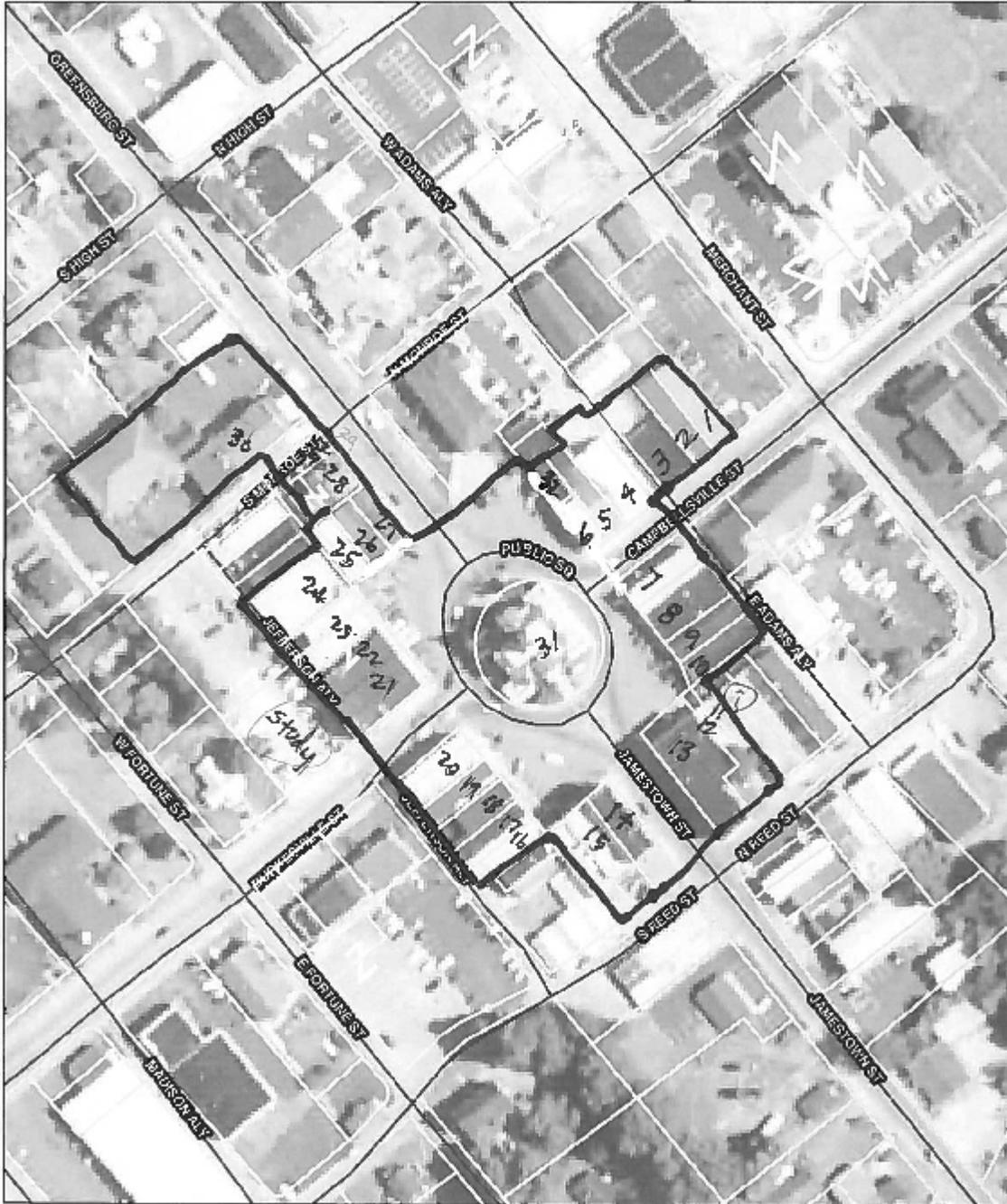
**Adair County
Property Valuation Administrator**

Print Date: December 07, 2012
Aerial Date: Summer 2012



Maps to be used
for identification only,
NOT for conveyance

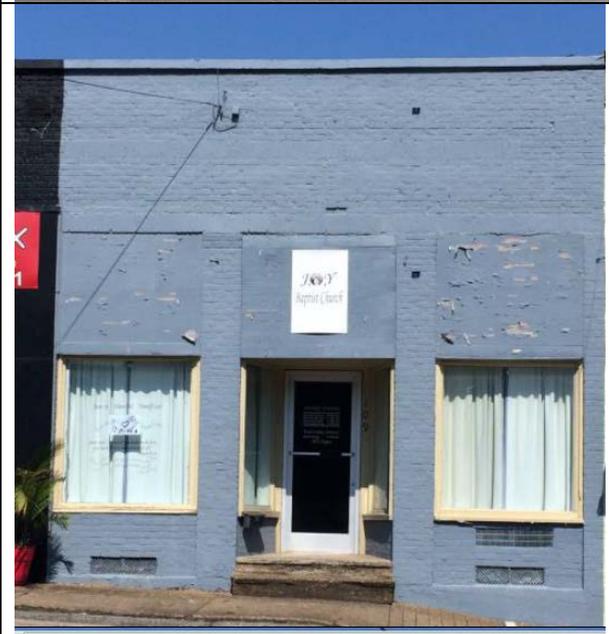
1 inch = 125 feet



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Description of Individual Buildings in the District

	<p>Building # 1 faces southeast on Campbellsville Street and is currently not in commercial use. The building has a flat roof and is squat brick. It has painted brick. Non-historic elements include the pent-roof awning and a wheelchair ramp. The building was built sometime between 1929 and 1941, as it does not appear on the 1929 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, but does on the 1941 Sanborn map.</p>
	<p>Building # 2, currently JOY Ministries, faces southeast along Campbellsville Street and shares walls with Resource #1 and #3. The building is similar to Resource #1 and #3, as it is a squat brick commercial building with a flat roof. The building has very little stylistic decoration at the cornice or other places on the façade. The two windows appear to have been reduced in size to about 60% of their original height, losing any transom or bulkhead that they might have once had. The building was constructed sometime between 1929 and 1941, based on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.</p>
	<p>Resource #3, currently Rumors Hair Salon and Body Detox, also faces southeast along Campbellsville Street and shares a wall with Resource #2. It is similar in styling as both Resource #1 and #2, a squat brick commercial building with a flat roof. It too was built between 1929 and 1941, per Sanborn Maps.</p>

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Resource #4 faces southeast on Campbellsville Street. The building is of brick construction and has an exaggerated gable roof with vertical metal sheets on the front façade. It is the only building within the district with this style roof. It was built between 1941-1960. Given its relatively late date of construction, the window system is possibly original.



Resource #5 is a flat-roofed one-story red brick building, with a simple decorative style. This building was also built 1941-1960. The front façade is composed of brick solid and glass filling the void. It has almost no decorative elements, such as trim or cornice flourishes; its design consists mainly in its basic solid-void contrast.



Resource #6 forms one corner of the Public Square and Campbellsville Street, facing southeast. This building was constructed around 1900 by a Mr. James Garnett. It is a two-story flat-roof brick structure. The entrance is located on the corner and contains a double-door topped by a transom. A corbelled brick cornice spans the two primary façades. All openings are slightly segmented arches, capped by a projecting brick molding. On this site in 1812 stood the Lampton Tavern, owned by Lewis Lampton. Mr. Lampton was the uncle of Jane Lampton, Mark Twain's mother. (Survey Form). The upper story windows retain their historic wooden one-over-one double-hung sashes.

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7 The Creel Building

The Creel Building is the oldest standing building on the Public Square. It was originally built by Elijah Creel as a storehouse in 1817, but has housed many different businesses over the years of its existence. It operated as a tavern in the 1830s, and later as a hotel. It was in this structure that the first case of cholera was detected in the town in 1873. The Citizens Bank was also operated from this building in the early 1900s (Notes on the Public Square). The structure is a two-story brick structure with a pitched roof. The principal façade is the gable façade and is capped by a brick parapet, which gives it the look of a flat roof building. The door is recessed in the left corner. The second floor has three evenly-spaced windows. On top of this, is the parapet with three slightly recessed brick panels with corbelling.



Resource #8 seems to have been constructed sometime between 1929 and 1941, as it appears on the 1941 Sanborn map, and shares an almost identical construction with Resources #9 and #10. The building is a short one-story red-brick commercial building with a flat roof. The building has held various businesses since its construction, and is still fully utilized today. The business name appears in a subdued panel above the transom level, where second-story windows might go. That panel is created by brick bonding, and is flush with main brick surface of the building. Windows on the storefront have thin metal frames. A flat-roof awning is suspended above the entry and display windows.

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Resource #9, currently 4 Seasons Consignment, rests between similarly designed Resources, #8 and #10. The building was also built between 1929 and 1941 and is a one-story red-brick commercial building with a flat roof. The area above its covered transom contains a subtle panel made of brick, in which the sign for the business rests, with a simple traditional corbelling treatment defining the upper reach of the panel. A horizontal metal cover suspended over the entry is held in place by three metal arms. The storefront arrangement appears historic.



Resource #10 is along the Public Square, and continues much of the design of next door Resource #9. The building is a flat roofed red brick commercial building, built between 1929 and 1941.

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Resource #11, currently Dirty Dog Grooming, sits adjacent to Resources #8, #9, and #10. This resource was also built sometime between 1929 and 1941. The building is a short brick building with a flat roof. Its mouse-tooth cornice suggests that it might have been constructed closer to 1929, though vernacular designs might have persisted in this area for longer than elsewhere. The transom area is not open to light. A horizontal metal cover overhangs the entry. While the upper portions of the building look older, the large metal-framed window and adjacent door look much more modern.



#12 The Coomen's Building
This is a one-story two-bay brick structure with a parapet wall. Three brick piers divide the façade, connected at the top by a corbelled brick cornice. Shop fronts with plain brick above the lintel occupy the rest of the façade. A canvas awning covers the entire first floor of the building. It is located on the same site that was the law office of Benjamin Selby around 1825 (Survey Form).

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#13 The Russell Building

J.O. Russell constructed the department store building, with offices upstairs in 1909. When Russell's business moved to the building on the corner of the Square and Burkesville Street, it came to be occupied by various other businesses until Lerman Brothers moved their department store to the site, where it remained until it went out of business in the 1980s (Notes on Columbia Public Square). This structure is a three-story brick commercial structure with a flat roof and corbelled brick cornice. The center bay contains a door on the first floor flanked on each side by large glass store front windows. On the second and the third floor, the middle bay contains a single sash window, flanked on each side by three evenly spaced windows. All openings on the second and third floor are slightly segmented, capped by a projecting brick molding, and consist of one-over-one double hung sash windows.



Resource #14 stands at the corner of the Public Square and Jamestown Street. It is traditionally called Field's Corner, also commonly called the Jeffries Hardware Corner. This site was first developed by a Mr. John Field, who operated businesses there throughout the early 1800s. Local historians hold that the first Columbia post office operated on or near this location (Notes on the Historic Columbia Public Square, Michael C. Watson). Known today commonly as the Jefferies Building, the Jeffries Hardware Building, or recently the Radio-Shack building, this structure was built around 1900-1901, and has housed various businesses since that time. It is a commercial structure, with a flat roof and a plain projecting brick cornice. The door is centered on the first floor, flanked on each side by plate glass windows. Four evenly-spaced windows span the second and third floors, capped by slightly-segmented projecting brick lintels and non-historic windows with one-over-one sash light configuration.

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#15 The First and Farmers Bank

The First and Farmers Bank is located on the original site of the older parent business: First National Bank. Many different businesses operated in the location of resource #15 until 1903, when the original First National Bank building was built. The building does not show any historic building material on the primary façade.



#16 The Owens Building

Built around 1895, it is a two-story flat-roofed structure. A decorative brickwork cornice spans the façade, below which is a corbelled brick frieze in a saw-tooth pattern. The segmental arched window openings are capped by cast iron lintels. It looks very much like the other buildings in this part of the square which were built around 1895 (Survey Form). This building is currently vacant.

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Resource #17 contains a very similar architectural style to resources #16, #18, #19, and #20. The building is a two-story flat-roofed structure, constructed with brick around 1895. Resource #17 is currently vacant, but is commercial in the historical and modern use.



Resource #18 is a two-story flat-roofed brick structure, constructed around 1895. The building is similarly styled as many on the Public Square. Resource #18 is fully utilized as a commercial building to this day. It has an elaborate projecting metal cornice, along with a decorative arched brick cornice below it. The upper story's four windows have carved limestone hoods over one-over-one double-hung sash windows with stone sills. A shed-roof metal awning hangs from the sill level, covering the area from the store to the street the entire width of the building. The building has a double-door entry, with both doors centered yet separated somewhat. Two banks of non-historic multi-light display windows flank each door. This is one of the most highly styled and intact buildings in the district.

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Resource #19 is a flat-roofed two-story brick building, built around 1895, like most of this side of the Public Square. It is currently utilized as a law office. Much of its appearance follows the design of building 18, next door, from the projecting awning level and above, though this building has only 3 windows in the upper level. The main difference between the two buildings occurs at the store front level. This building has two entrances—one at the center and the other at the far right side of the façade. Large plate glass windows flank the central doorway on either side.



The Firestone Corner is located on the edge of Burkesville Street, and is the location of Resource #20. This area was also historically a place of business since the early days of the city. Most of the original buildings on this lot, from Burkesville Street to the First and Farmers National Bank, were destroyed by fire in the late 1890s. As such, all the currently-standing buildings were constructed around 1895 (Notes on the Historic Columbia Public Square). Resource #20 is a two-story brick structure with a flat roof which occupies a corner lot. The front of the building is capped by a projecting cornice supported by ornate brackets (not visible in photo at left). A corbelled sawtooth brick frieze is below this. A projecting shed-roofed awning covers the transom area. The historic display windows appear to have been replaced, though the entry door, with sidelights and a narrow transom, appears historic, perhaps original.

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Resource #21 is currently occupied by the Bank of Columbia. This site has been the general location of the bank since 1866. The original banking house was destroyed by fire in 1921. The new building was erected from brick and stone (Notes on Columbia Public Square). Built in 1922, this Neo-classically-styled building is two stories high and constructed from brick. It has a slightly-projecting brick cornice, and stands where the Bank of Columbia once stood (Survey Form). Its second-floor windows are one-over-one double hung sash. The first floor has 8-over-8 double hung windows, topped by a transom and with a stone spandrel below the sill. On what appears to be the third floor are panels implying windows.



Resource #22, is also currently occupied by the Bank of the Columbia. An interesting diversion from the architectural norm in Columbia, resource #22 has two columns spanning the front of the building which appear similar to Roman Tuscan in their style. Resource 21 and 22 both give good local instances of neo-classical styling.

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Resource #23 is located next to the Bank of Columbia. Wooden structures previously occupied this space during the early years of the twentieth century, but they, along with the original Bank of Columbia building, were destroyed by fire in 1921. Resource #23 was built sometime between that fire in 1921, and the creation of the 1929 issue of the Sanborn Map Company's map of Columbia. This building served as a secondary City Hall building during this time, but appears to have been in commercial use by the time of the 1941 issue of the Sanborn Maps. Resource #23 is a three story brick building with a flat roof, typical of the other commercial buildings around the Public Square.



#24 The Columbian Theater
This structure has gone through several owners and periods of dormancy; it has been vacant since 2009. It is a two-story building, which had been the center of entertainment in the area of Columbia during its years of operation. Built in 1947, the Columbian Theater is one of the most architecturally distinctive buildings on the Public Square, yet it is almost entirely hidden from view from the square due to its alleyway location. Its marquee, slick-faced tile façade, and lack of fenestration are drawn from Moderne styling.

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Resource #25, currently Acapulco Grill, stands in a line adjacent to resource #23. Resource #25 is a two-story red-brick building with a flat roof. Its upper floor windows look as if they are replacements, in pairs of 2, each with a 6-over-6-light sash configuration. The storefront level seems to retain a slightly better amount of its historic design than the upper floor windows do. The cornice is made of overlapping ceramic tiles.



Resource #26 is a two-story white-brick building with a flat roof, but no upstairs windows visible. It gives a nod to the way in which buildings during the post-WWII era attempted to effect a new façade, by installing an aluminum grillwork on the second floor, giving a monolithic appearance of tall Modernist buildings in other urban areas. These applications of metal sheets are often referred to as “slip covers,” and render their buildings non-contributing, at least until they reach 50 years of age. It is not known whether this slip cover was installed before or after 1966. The first-floor level of this building also lacks the feel of other historic buildings in the downtown, further leading to the non-contributing evaluation. The building’s scale and subdued design makes it compatible with the rest of downtown, if not contributing to the historic sense of time and place. In a few years, the building’s contribution might be re-evaluated.

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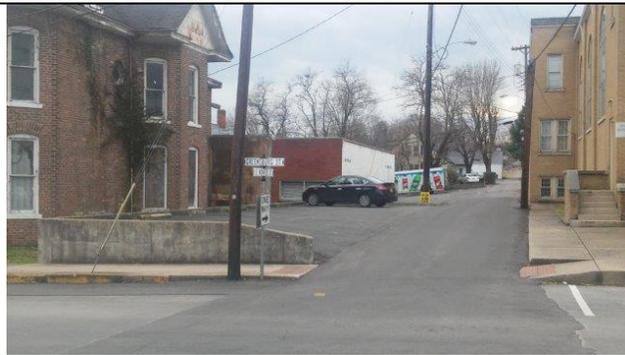
The rounded corners, stucco walls, glass block windows, and shiny first-floor wall panels of Resource #27 makes it stand out as an architectural anomaly on the square. It is a two-story building occupying the entire corner of the Public Square and Greensburg Street. It is located on the same location where the childhood home of Jane Lampton, mother of Mark Twain, once stood. That original structure was later demolished, and the materials used to construct resource #28. Resource #27 appears to have been built during the late 1940s, based on existing photographs of the building and its absence on the 1941 issue of the Sanborn Maps. Originally built as a diner or restaurant, it has served as an auto parts store, and currently houses a photographer's business.



#28 The Butler House was built in approximately 1880 (Survey Form). It was constructed from the brick of two older demolished buildings. The first of these older buildings was the girlhood home of Jane Lampton, wife of John Marshall Clemens, and mother of Samuel Clemens "Mark Twain." The Lampton home was also later used as a doctor's office. The second building, which was later used to construct the standing building, was a brick store house constructed by Ben Lampton (Notes on Columbia Public Square). The Butler House is a two-story brick structure that has a truncated hip roof with a projecting two-story bay window, capped by a triangular pediment roof located on the far right. Each side of the bay window has a very slight segmental arched window. A one-story porch spans the rest of the front. Two other bay windows are located on the left and right facades.

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Resource #29 is a parking lot located in between resource #28 and resource #30.



#30 Columbia Baptist Church
The Greek Revival style structure that currently stands at this location is the fourth built on the same site. It was completed in 1929. Six Doric order columns hold up a projecting portico, the dominant feature of the building. The second floor of the main façade has 5 full-arched windows, and the main floor has two double doors and three pairs of windows. The church's window frames were crafted by the Sandusky Lumber Milling Company in the 1930s. The back wing of the structure, containing classrooms, was finished in 1958. The first Columbia Baptist Church was built in 1844, containing only one room. It served as a hospital for sick Civil War soldiers. The second Columbia Baptist Church replaced the first in 1879. In 1915, a third church was built and burned down in 1928 (Columbia Walking Tour).

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#31 The Old Adair County Courthouse

Built in 1885, the courthouse was designed as a replacement for the original courthouse building, which stood in the same spot. Currently (September 2016) the historic courthouse is a vacant building, with no functioning governmental or judicial purpose. The original red brick has been painted a cream white, but not other evident architectural modifications have been made. It is an example of Victorian style architecture, and was designed by the McDonald Bros., and built by the Columbia Stone Company and William Henry Hudson. It was listed on the National Register in 1974 (NRIS 74000847).



Resource #32 is a commercial building constructed around 1890. It is a four-bay two-story brick structure with a flat roof. The end bay on each side contains docks with transom. All openings are segmental and capped by a projecting brick molding. A corbelled brick cornice tops the building. This commercial building shares some design features with other buildings found around the Public Square in Columbia with an important difference: the lack of display windows. The building's two ground-floor entry points are single doors, each at the far edge of the façade, along with a lack of a commercial building's display windows. The building has double-hung one-over-one-light sashes on both first and second floors, giving this building more the feel of a duplex or an office, than the look of a retail establishment. This historic façade arrangement shows that the public square consisted in more than buildings serving a retail function.

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8. Statement of Significance

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1895-1966

Significant Dates

1895, 1900, 1908

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Jane Lampton, Dr. Nathan Gaither, Theodore O'Hara, Jesse James,

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Stone & Hudson (builders)

McDonald Brothers (architects)

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

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

Period of Significance: The years 1895 to 1966 encapsulate the time span during which the majority of the oldest contributing buildings within the proposed Columbia Commercial District were constructed; and the time during which they had the greatest impact on the city of Columbia.

Criteria Considerations: NA

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Summary Paragraph

The Columbia Commercial District meets National Historic Register Criterion A. It is significant within the context Commerce & Community Development of Adair County, Kentucky, 1895-1966. The Columbia Commercial District has served as the economic center of the city and county for the majority of their history. Columbia's downtown exists as an artifact of 19th century town planning. The buildings on the Public Square make a clear and dignified, yet modest statement of the hierarchy of local affairs. Columbia serves as Adair County's political seat. Four roads wander into the town from nearby county seats, converging unambiguously on the public square. At the center of this commercial carousel stands a grand statement of government, the 1885 courthouse, the town's most stylized construction. Adair County never had a railroad running through the county, which kept Columbia from being re-configured to accommodate the rail traffic. The Cumberland River runs through the northern portion of the county—six miles and too far away for it to have much impact on the transport of goods and people from Columbia, and certainly not a corridor that affected the town's landscape. Columbia's early downtown buildings arose when its roads—the only way in and out of town—were first built. When asphalt roads appeared in the first half of the 20th century, Columbia's downtown took its present shape, with all lots in the downtown built upon. Very few commercial buildings in Columbia outside of the rather compact district. The commercial district provides the most intensive use of the town's urban lots, and except for the courthouse, those lots were devoted to commerce.

Columbia was able to thrive despite the lack of railroads. By the 1920s, railroads had completely reshaped the counties of Kentucky. However, Columbia, along with a few South Central county seats, did not have any railroad service. These few counties, including Wayne, Russell, Casey, Metcalfe, Monroe, Clinton, and Cumberland, offer a valuable insight into understanding the process behind the development of county seats before the time of railroads. Columbia is noteworthy because its commerce was able to thrive and become influential, just like its counterparts with railroads, such as Greensburg, the county seat of adjacent Green County.

Historic Context: Commerce and Community Development of Adair County, Kentucky

Columbia was originally settled in 1789, by Colonel William Casey, and other Revolutionary war veterans, who were granted land as payment for their services during the war. Adair County was created in 1801 from Green County, and Columbia was named the county seat after early land holders—Creed Haskins, Dan Trabue, William Caldwell, and James Walker—donated the land for the Public Square of the town (Early Columbia). That Public Square has become the center for commerce and community for the town of Columbia. The Public Square's Market Days established the place as the familiar local center of retail trade.

Columbia thrived as the local economic and political center. The central square housed so many craftsmen--shoemakers, saddlers, tailors etc.—keeping the business shops occupied (Early Columbia). Because Columbia's businesses needed to have supplies shipped to them, in the town's early days, hauling raw materials to the downtown, and hauling manufactured goods from was its own business. Supplies and merchandise were hauled by teams of horses and a wagon. Supplies from the east coast came down the Ohio River to Louisville or Cincinnati and were then transported

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overland. Even after the railroad industry penetrated counties north and west of Adair County, making the movement of commercial goods by rail more efficient, raw materials and retail goods arriving by rail to nearby Lebanon, Greensburg, or Campbellsville then had to be hauled to Columbia by pack animals (Early Columbia). It is hard to overstate the benefit that the railroad gave to Kentucky communities in the 3 decades after the end of the Civil War.

Greensburg, in particular, was greatly affected by the coming of the railroad. In fact, the residents of Green County made a petition to the County Court, in 1851, asking that the county subscribe to the Capital Stock of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company under the condition that that the Louisville and Nashville Railroad cross through Green County. In 1869, after many negotiations with the county court, the railroad was built by the Cumberland and Ohio Railroad Company, which later was sold to the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company. The railroad did a lot for Greensburg, in particular. People immigrated into the county seat and fresh produce from the area was more easily sent to markets in bigger cities. The railroad cut out the use of the Green River, which was often tedious to navigate with supplies (A History of Green County Kentucky).

Columbia had a different experience through the late-nineteenth century. Unlike Green County, Adair County did not have “railroad fever,” and did not petition for a railroad. In the 1870s, there were some surveys taken of Adair County, at least one by the Cincinnati Railway Company. These planning efforts did not result in a railroad’s construction in Adair County. The Cincinnati Railway Company, which had north-south lines in central Kentucky that could have come to Adair County, had trouble competing with the Louisville & Nashville line (The Cincinnati Southern Railroad). The Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company never pursued the surveys taken of Adair County, probably because they already had south central Kentucky routes through nearby Barren and Green Counties, and thought it unnecessary to go through Columbia.

Adair County was not the only south central Kentucky County, nor Columbia the only county seat, to be overlooked by the railroad companies. A block of seven counties adjacent to Adair—Wayne, Russell, Metcalfe, Monroe, Clinton, Cumberland, and Casey—did not have railroad service, and had to manage their economies without that transport system. Casey County did have some railroad traffic in 1885 when the Cincinnati and Green River Railway Company was organized. The railroad company placed a few tracks in Yosemite, in order to reach the lumber resources of Casey, Adair, and Russell counties. However, by 1893, the lumber had been depleted and the railroad deteriorated, making “no permanent contribution toward the development of Casey County” (Casey County, Kentucky 1806-1983). Casey County’s seat, Liberty, was especially unaffected by the railroad.

Besides the slight exception of Casey County, the south central counties continued to move goods, and conduct commerce, as they had for generations—by river, particularly the Cumberland River, and overland on roads that were often unusable.

Columbia’s Commercial History

Columbia’s Commercial District is very intact and has been fairly unchanged over the years. There were some fires and other natural causes through the years that altered buildings and forced them to

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be rebuilt, but many of the commercial buildings are still the same. The district has remained architecturally unaltered by fast food chains, or strip malls, etc., which many commercial districts cannot say. Driving through Columbia's Commercial District and Public Square, a person feels as if they are able to see the history of Columbia.

The practice of law has always been incredibly important to the life of Columbia, as the town has been the seat of Adair County for most of its existence. The Adair County Courthouse has, both in the original and current building, housed numerous criminal and civil cases throughout the history of the county. Resource #31, the current Adair County Courthouse, has been the dominate architectural feature of the city ever since it was built, and has served as a lynch pin around which the rest of the city has revolved, grown, and changed. Constructed by the McDonald Brothers in 1885, resource #31 has, like many other small county courthouses throughout rural Kentucky, served as the primary visual example of law and order throughout its existence.

The oldest building in the proposed district, resource #7 or the Creel Building, was built in 1816. It has operated as various businesses, taverns, and shops throughout its long life. It operated as a tavern in the 1830s, and later as a hotel. It was in resource #7 that the first case of cholera was detected in the town in 1873. Three members of the Winfrey family of Columbia died of cholera inside the building (Survey Form). It is also within this building that noted poet Theodore O'Hara is believed to have written one of the verses of "The Bivouac of the Dead." The Citizens Bank was also operated from this building in the early 1900s (Notes on Columbia Public Square). In addition, both resource #7 and resource #8 have been buildings of vital importance to the commerce of the area since their creation, housing multiple different businesses and stores. Almost every building standing on the Public Square has at one time housed a business.

Resource #21, the Bank of Columbia, has been the economic powerhouse of the area throughout the history of Columbia. For decades, it was the only bank in town, and even today continues to be of vital importance to the people of the city of Columbia and the surrounding area. It is also tightly connected to the general history of the city overall. While the original building has long been gone, it was the Bank of Columbia building that the James-Younger Gang robbed in 1873. Cashier R.A.C. Martin was shot and killed during the robbery. Many recall this episode as a day when national attention on the bandit group was focused on Columbia.

The year 1816 marks the construction of the oldest building in the proposed district, resource #7, Elijah Creel's building. The year 1885 marks the construction of the resource #31, the Adair County Courthouse. The year 1895 marks the construction of various different resource in the proposed district, many of which were constructed just after a fire which occurred in 1894; these include resource #9, #66, #67, #68, and #10. The year 1900 marks the construction of resource #14, the Jeffries Hardware Building, and the year 1908 marks the construction of resource #13, the Russell Building.

Resource #28, commonly known as the Butler House, was originally built in approximately 1880 (Survey Form). It was constructed from the brick of two older demolished buildings. The first of these older buildings was the girlhood home of Jane Lampton, wife of John Marshall Clemens, and mother

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of Samuel Clemens "Mark Twain." The Lampton home was also later used as a doctor's office. A few physicians who worked here were Dr. Nathan Gaither, Dr. Samuel B. Field, and Dr. Melvin Rhorer. Dr. Gaither served as a U.S. Representative, was a member of the Kentucky Legislature for several terms, and was also a member of the Kentucky Constitutional Convention of 1850. The second building which was later used to construct resource #28 was a brick store house constructed by Ben Lampton (Notes on Columbia Public Square).

Evaluation of the Commercial Significance of the Columbia Commercial District within the Context of Commerce & Community Development of Adair County, Kentucky, 1880-1966

In review, Columbia serves as a glimpse into the past, unlike other county seats, which were altered by the arrival of the railroads. Railroads became an integral part of the commerce of many Kentucky towns, specifically Green County, which touches Adair County, to the northwest. Despite the lack of railroads, Columbia was able to thrive due to it being a crossroad to so many other towns, and because of its function as county seat. Commerce began with wagons, pulled by horses, carried supplies to and from Columbia until the arrival of the automobile and truck.

The years 1880-1966 have been chosen as the Period of Significance for the proposed district because this is the time during which the majority of the most unique contributing resources within the proposed district were constructed, entered into active operation, and continued being important in their commercial operation. The city of Columbia is unique among its neighboring communities such as Greensburg and Campbellsville because of how much architectural variety it has in its existing buildings. This is primarily due to the sporadic and isolated fires which happened every few decades in the city. Different portions of the city were burned and rebuilt at different times, leading to an interesting visual collage of styles and influences. However, the years established as the proposed district's period of significance are important because they contain the construction of the majority of the characteristic, two-story flat-roofed commercial buildings which are the trademark of the Public Square's aesthetic.

Evaluation of the Integrity of the Columbia Commercial District's Significance in Light of its Physical Character

This nomination identifies which part of Columbia Kentucky retains the strongest evidence of commercial development during the historic time period of 1880-1966. The proposed boundary of the Columbia Commercial District defines that area. With this district meeting Criterion A, the integrity evaluation will focus upon how the property maintains associations with commerce. The factors which reinforce this sense of the district's significance will be integrity of location, setting, materials, design, and association. If the district retains integrity of location, setting, materials, and design, then it will have the core integrity factor—integrity of association—and its physical presence today will be said to convey its historic significance. The conclusion that the district possesses integrity of association will make the district eligible for listing.

The district retains integrity of **location**. The buildings that a town or city constructs are important because they most fundamentally create the place where human interaction occurs and where community development can take place. How that city maintains and preserves those structures provides evidence of how much that specific commercial center means to them and how much they

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are willing to preserve it. Despite the damage done by age, deterioration, natural disasters, and even owner choice, to a few buildings in the district, the Columbia Commercial District retains integrity of location. New Castle has the highest density and retention of historic commercial buildings than any other city in Adair County.

Certainly the Columbia Commercial District contains integrity of **location** because it has never moved from its environment. This may seem a minor preservation accomplishment, but if place is the most basic locus of our historic thoughts, then this place has endured with commercial activity, not displaced by development and landscape changes elsewhere throughout the county. Unlike many other Kentucky towns, especially county seats, modern strip development seems comparatively lacking in this town. The absence of that rival activity makes the Columbia Commercial District especially powerful as a commercial place.

The parcels within the Columbia Commercial District have not been altered much since the Period of Significance. The paving of streets and addition of city sidewalks altered parcel sizes some over time, but no drastic changes were made. The fact that density and parcel size remained stable over time indicates that community development and planning decisions revolving around commerce established a sufficient integrity of **setting**. Development opportunities flourished due to Columbia's collection of commercial places. General stores and law firms opened up within the business district, supporting each other and receiving support from the county courthouse. Businesses in the town square catered to the demand of services needed by residents and nearby rural farming families. Much of the building stock that constitutes the commercial district was constructed in the late-1800s and early-1900s, when Columbia matured as the center of commerce in Adair County. The courthouse square continues today with a strong intactness of setting, with most of the buildings still being used to house commercial uses. Not much has changed in the quality of the setting since the end of the Period of Significance (1966) to rob the district of its ability to demonstrate the property's significance. Since 1966, most new development in Columbia has been residential and outside of the commercial district.

The integrity of **design** of the district is realized by sufficient retention of a high number of the district's individual buildings. Each building is evaluated for its ability to contribute to the district's sense of function and time. These constructions made during the Period of Significance illustrate the lives and commercial values of the town residents. The design showcases locally-crafted materials that were used to build several of them. Unlike many other county seat towns and commercial centers established around the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Columbia was not altered by the introduction of steamboat traffic after 1820, nor by railroad expansions in the late-19th century. Thus, Columbia has been enabled to continue using the buildings with much of their early form and configuration. This allows the town to look much as it had during the Period of Significance. While it is clearly a county seat town, there is an aspect of a crossroad community about Columbia. As a district, its design does not look entirely different from a very successful crossroad community. The district retains a vibrant sense of its overall design identity. Although some of the buildings are still vacant and a few are in need of major rehabilitation and repairs, the quality of design is still intact and once the dilapidated buildings are rehabilitated, they will serve new purposes once again.

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Some parts of the Columbia Commercial District have a lower integrity of **materials** than design. Several of the buildings have been altered from their original design. On some, great detail and attention was paid to restoring them to their historic look. A few of the historic commercial buildings within the district require some rehabilitation and new materials added for support and infrastructure. Today the integrity of materials for the Columbia Commercial District is rather high for a county seat's commercial core.

The integrity of **feeling** names the way in which one can sense the historic nature of the commercial built environment encompassing them, when they are standing in the heart of the district. This feeling is definitely strong and very much alive, more so than in any other incorporated city or unincorporated town in Adair County. The feeling one would have walking in the core of the Columbia Commercial District would not be much different from that feeling which one would have felt in 1966.

Since the New Castle Commercial District exhibits integrity of location, setting, design, materials and feeling, it therefore contains integrity of **association**. Since this strong link to an association with events in commerce, and the district's contribution to the patterns of history in Adair County have been made, it is thus concluded that the Columbia Commercial District is eligible for National Register listing.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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www.columbiabaptist.com

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 1, 3-12, 56-76.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 5.3 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 _____
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Katrina Rhodes
organization Lindsey Wilson College date 9/1/16
street & number 210 Lindsey Wilson Street telephone 270-231-7852
city or town Columbia state KY zip code 42728
e-mail Katrina.rhodes@lindsey.edu

Photograph Identification:

Name of Property: Columbia Commercial District
City or Vicinity: Columbia
County: Adair
State: Kentucky
Photographer: Katrina Rhodes
Date Photographed: September, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of ____.

Property Owner:

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____