SPEED
LIMIT
35

Figure 2. Sunnyside, 274 West Main Street, Owingsville, BH-O-64

Figure 3. Rural Italianate I-House, Reynoldsville Road, BH-166

Figure 4. J.B. Goodpaster House, 261 West Main Street, Owingsville, BH-S-89

Figure 5. 29 Barbara Lynn Drive, Owingsville, BH-0-177

Figure 6. 47 Barbara Lynn Drive, Owingsville, BH-0-178

Figure 7. C.W. Honaker House, 121 East Main Street, Owingsville, BH-0-176

Figure 8. 299 Main Street, Sharpsburg, BH-S-13

Figure 9. Knight House, Sharpsburg, 324 Main Street, BH-S-22

Figure 10. Rural T-plan, Mt. Pleasant Road, BH-175

Figure 11. 82 East Main Street, Owingsville, BH-0-172

Supplemental Images Index

Figure 1. Floor Plan of Nesbitt House

Figure 2. Sunnyside, 274 West Main Street, Owingsville, BH-O-64

Figure 3. Rural Italianate I-House, Reynoldsville Road, BH-166

Figure 4. J.B. Goodpaster House, 261 West Main Street, Owingsville, BH-S-89

Figure 5. 29 Barbara Lynn Drive, Owingsville, BH-0-177

Figure 6. 47 Barbara Lynn Drive, Owingsville, BH-0-178

Figure 7. C.W. Honaker House, 121 East Main Street, Owingsville, BH-0-176

Figure 8. 299 Main Street, Sharpsburg, BH-S-13

Figure 9. Knight House, Sharpsburg, 324 Main Street, BH-S-22

Figure 10. Rural T-plan, Mt. Pleasant Road, BH-175

Figure 11. 82 East Main Street, Owingsville, BH-0-172

Figure 12. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps of the Nesbitt House

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

J.J. Nesbitt House
Name of Property
Bath County, Kentucky
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page Supplemental Images

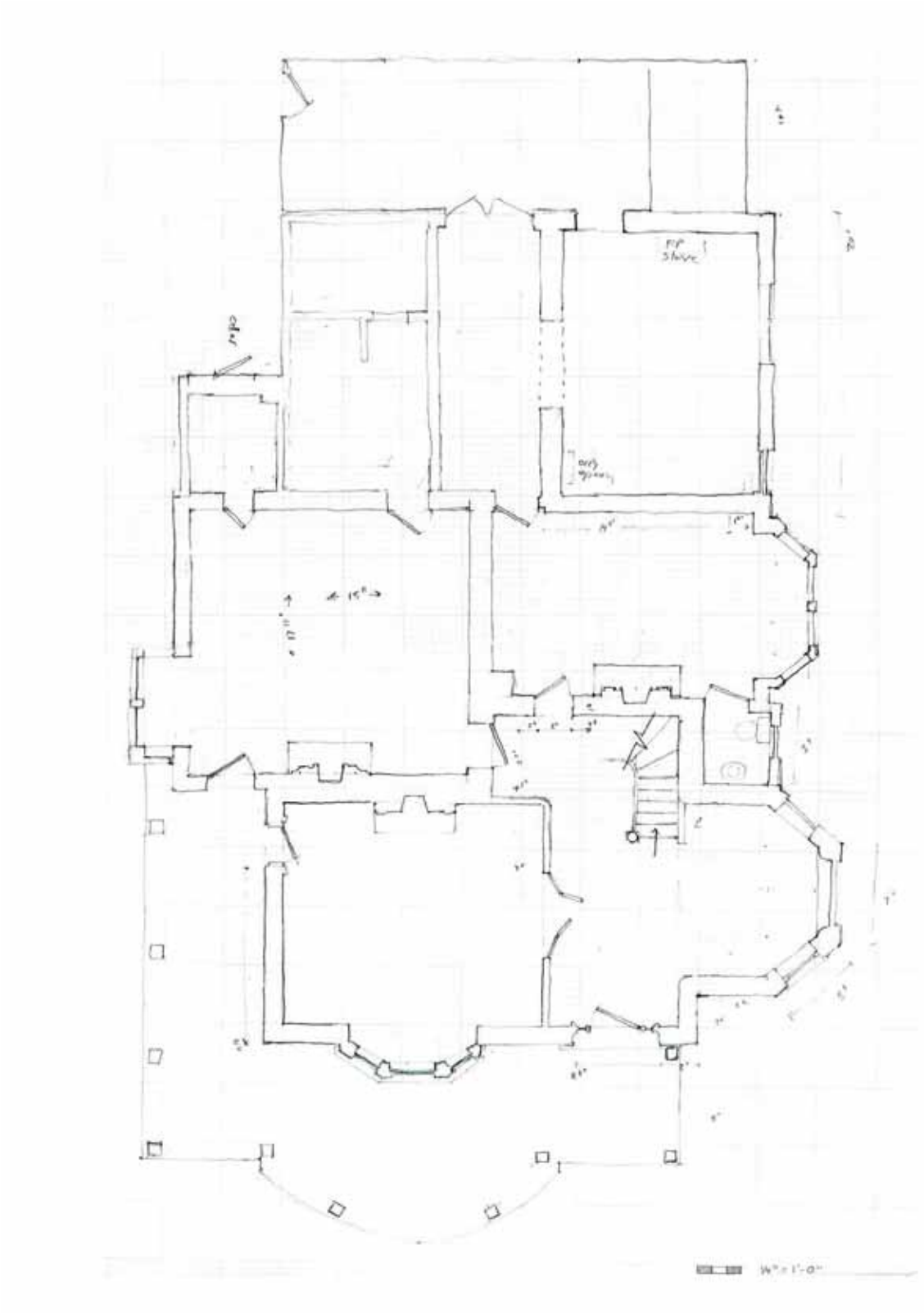
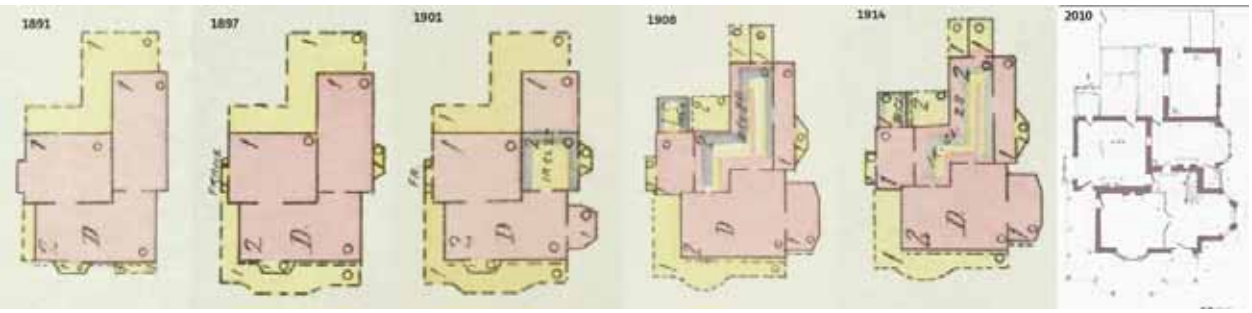


Figure 1: Nesbitt House Floor Plan

Figure 12: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map documenting changes on the Nesbitt House.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name J.J. Nesbitt House

other names/site number BH-0-87

2. Location

street & number 233 West Main Street [NA] not for publication

city or town Owingsville [ ] Vicinity NA

state Kentucky code KY county Bath code 011 zip code 40360

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**

Signature of certifying official/Title **Mark Dennen/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

Nesbitt, J.J., House
Name of Property

Bath County, Kentucky
County and State

Ownership of Property

X	private
	public - Local
	public - State
	public - Federal

Category of Property

X	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	district
0	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
1	0	**Total**

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

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Italianate
Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Brick
walls: Brick
roof: Composite
other:

Narrative Description

Summary Description

The J.J. Nesbitt House (BH-0-87) stands at 233 West Main Street in downtown Owingsville, Kentucky, a block from the Bath County Courthouse square. The house, built ca. 1877, is being interpreted for its architectural values. The nominated parcel consists of the entire legal parcel, a .35-acre area with a single contributing feature.

Nesbitt House's setting

Owingsville is the county seat of Bath County. Located in the northeastern part of the state, Bath County covers some 277 square miles of land. Created in 1811 from a portion of Montgomery County, the county was the 55th in order of formation in the state. Christened such due to the abundance of natural springs in the county, the county's topography and geology is split between the Outer Bluegrass and the Knobs physiographic regions.[i]

Construction of the house on the lot

The J.J. Nesbitt House was constructed between 1876 and 1878. In a deed dated June 20, 1876, Reuben Gudgell and his wife Vessa, sold a town lot of approximately three-fourth acres to J.J. Nesbitt for $800.00. A provision in the deed stated that Nesbitt would "within two years from December 6, 1876 erect upon the town lot…a brick dwelling house of his own occupancy." Additional language in the deed stipulates the construction of a boundary fence that both Gudgell and Nesbitt would maintain, as well as the use and the upkeep of the alley that formed the eastern boundary of the Nesbitt parcel. This alley is still extant, and known as Stacy Street. Up until the mid-twentieth century, the alley led to a farm and farmhouse; the farm originally belonged to Reuben Gudgell.

Though the builder is unknown, the brick dwelling that Nesbitt had built is a high-style Italianate dwelling with turn of the century modifications. The Nesbitt House consists of a two-story double-pile side-passage dwelling, with asymmetrical massing. Originally, the stair led to a second story of two chambers occupying the front of the house only. Later modifications resulted in two stories overall, with frame additions on the second story extending south of the main two-story block.

Description of Exterior

The Nesbitt House is laid in hand-made oversized brick in an eight-row common bond pattern. The solid masonry building rests on a brick foundation and is two bricks thick. A shallow, hipped roof, clad in asphalt shingles, covers the main two-story brick section of the dwelling; two brick internal chimney stacks sit parallel to one another on the south side of the roof.

The primary façade of the Nesbitt House (north elevation) is two bays wide, with a frame bay window on the east side of the façade, and the entry door on the west side. The polygonal bay contains three elongated one-over-one double hung sash windows; the central window is wider than the two side windows. Both the bay window and the entry door contain similar design motifs of inset panels and braided rope. The bay has inset panels above and below the windows, each containing a single raised strand of the braided rope trim. The braided rope trim wraps around the sides and top of each sash. The top of the bay window features paired brackets with foliate details on either side of the inset panels, and centrally placed above the inset panel, one smaller bracket.

[i] John Kleber,ed. "Bath County," in *The Kentucky Encyclopedia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky,1992) 60.

The half-light-half-panel entry door is flanked by five light sidelights and set within a door surround featuring inset panels and braided rope trim.

Another bay window, this one with brick surround, is located on the west elevation of the main block of the house; this polygonal bay extends off of the stair hall. This bay was added between 1897 and 1901, and is inspired by the Free Classic style. It has three windows, a centrally-placed rectangular stained glass window that faces west, and on either side, one-over-one double-hung sash windows. These windows retain brackets for shutters. The stained glass window has a rusticated stone lintel and sill, while the other two larger windows have only rusticated stone sills. A rusticated stone water table wraps around the five sides of the bay. Above the windows is a frame cornice with inset panels and paired and single brackets that are smaller and less ornately carved than those on the cornice of the second story.

The second story windows on the north façade are paired one-over-one double-hung sash with dressed stone sills supported by stone brackets. These sills are only partially visible, as they were obscured when the front porch was redone in the 1890s. The windows feature the same braided rope trim along three sides of the sash, and are topped by elaborate wooden hood molds supported by three brackets that end in delicate finials.

There is one window on the second story of both the east and west elevations of the two-story brick section of the house; as is befitting a secondary elevation, these openings have a much more simplified treatment than those on the façade. Both are two-over-two double-hung sash with entablature lintels and dressed stone sills.

The heavy bracketed cornice wraps around the east and west elevations, with only a slight variation on the front façade. It features similar inset panels to those on the first story, only these panels, which are the same width as the second story windows, include an additional centrally-placed panel. Paired brackets, with the same foliate design as the first floor bay window, and additional scrollwork flourishes, are placed to either side of the end panels on the cornice. Centrally placed block modillions are located above each panel, between the brackets.

The wrap-around porch, with its turned and chamfered wooden Tuscan columns, rests upon a poured concrete foundation. This porch was added in the 1890s. The porch has a beadboard ceiling and overhanging eaves detailed with small brackets.

The porch shelters not only the façade, but also the east elevation, where there are two secondary entrances to the first floor. One entrance is located in the southeast corner of the main block of the house, and leads into the front room.

The second is situated diagonally opposite this entry, and provides access to the back room on the east side of the house. These openings appear original. The former is a twentieth-century multi-light Craftsman door, while the door leading into the back room is a simplified version of the front entry door, with segmental arched glass in the upper half of the door and a bottom half with an inset panel. Both doors have plain stone lintels above what was likely a single-light transom that has been replaced with a wood panel.

The back room on the east side of the house was one-story originally. A rectangular bay window is located on the east elevation of this room. The bay has two central two-over-two double-hung sash

windows facing east, while the north and south elevations of the bay each have a single one-over-one double-hung sash window. The detailing on this bay is identical to the bay on the house's main façade, though more restrained. Inset panels are located above and below each window, with a single bracket between each at the cornice line.

The cornice line of the main wall of this room is detailed with the same smaller brackets found on the cornice of the main block of the house.

Access to the basement, as well as a coal chute, is located beneath this room. The coal chute, on the east elevation, is marked by a plain stone lintel, painted white, with a header course of bricks above. A human-sized basement door is located on the south elevation of a small frame addition (1901-1908) that is attached to this room.

On the west side of the house, extending south from the main two-story block, is a two-room brick portion that was originally only one-story. This section is accessed from the stair hall of the main bock of the house. The northernmost room of this section has a frame bay window on the west side that was added in 1892. The bay, built on a brick foundation, has four one-over-one double-hung sash windows, and the same inset panels and brackets found elsewhere on the house. It continues the design pattern of the main house. A brick flue pierces the hipped asphalt shingle roof of the frame second story above this room. The southernmost room is two bays wide, and the west and east walls have or are in the process of being re-laid due to failing masonry. The two openings in the west wall contained replacement windows from the 1960s and due to the failure of the masonry, were replaced with sympathetic wood clad windows.

The frame second story was added at different intervals in the first decade of the twentieth century. It is clad in a composite fiberboard, and has one-over-one and two-over-two double-hung sash windows.

Description of Interior

The Nesbitt House has a side-passage double-pile plan. The interior fabric is quite intact, with late-nineteenth-century woodwork and moldings, and a few Colonial Revival changes from the 1930s. There are two rooms on both the first and second floors of the main block of the house.

On the first floor, the stairhall and front room feature original plaster ceiling medallions and original woodwork, with the exception of the Colonial Revival mantel in the front room.

The bay window in the front room contains the same intricate detail as the exterior, with the addition of squared raised panels as well as rectangular inset panels. The braided rope wraps around the interior of the window sash. The baseboard in the front room is 18 inches high. A large opening leads from the stair hall into the front room; in the 1930s, double fold French doors were added.

The open staircase curves against the south wall of the stair hall. It features turned and fluted balusters and scrollwork on the carved tread ends. Underneath the stair, on the south wall, a four-panel door with inset panel above leads into the northernmost room of the rear portion of the house. It also features original baseboard and chair rail. The mantel in this room is likely a replacement from first two decades of the twentieth century. The highly stylized carvings suggest an Art Deco influence, while the fireplace surround dates to the 1930s.

The rear room on the east side of the house retains an original mantel, highly detailed woodwork on the bay window, and 17-inch high baseboard.

The second-story chambers in the front portion of the house feature much less architectural detail than the more public rooms on the first floor. The small room above the stair hall has replacement baseboard, and was unheated. The other room, which is above the front room, has a simple baseboard that appears original, but the chimney stack has been covered up. The four-panel doors each have transoms that have had the glass replaced with a wood panel.

The rear frame additions on the second story consist of three rooms and a bathroom. The woodwork features four panel doors and bulls eye trim. The room leading into the frame additions from the stair has a stained glass transom.

Changes to the Nesbitt House, 1878-1930

Once the home was completed in the 1870s, J.J. Nesbitt did not cease his effort to fashion a residence that met changing needs and conceptions of appropriate living space. The house continued to change during his 51-year tenure. Five version of the Sanborn maps of Owingsville show the property's changes from 1891-1914 (Figure 12, Supplemental images).

The earliest known graphic representation of the Nesbitt House appears in the 1884 *Atlas of Bath and Fleming Counties*. The current house footprint (see figure 1, supplemental images) corresponds with its representation on the 1891 Sanborn: a one-pile-deep two-story masonry section, with two one-story extensions to the rear (south). The wrap-around porch had not yet been constructed by 1891, rather a small frame porch sheltered the front entry, while another porch stretched along the east side of the main block of the dwelling. These small, likely flat roof porches over the front and side entries were typical of the Italianate period. An L-shaped one-story frame porch is located on the east and south elevations.

The 1897 Sanborn shows the addition of the curved wrap-around front porch that replaced the earlier 1878 porches. The bay window on the west side, in the room behind the stair hall was added in 1892. The graphic evidence of these two changes does not precisely match the physical evidence on the house. The porch and bay window today seem to date to the 1890s, yet do not exactly conform to the rendering on the map. This calls into question the accuracy of the Sanborn map's representation of the property.

A second phase of building occurred between 1897 and 1901. The room behind the stair hall received a frame second story, and the stair hall bay window was added. By 1908, the frame second story had been extended, and a two-story frame addition containing stairs had been added (on the south elevation). These stairs allowed access to the second story without having to enter the front of the house.

Additionally, the small one-story frame shed-roofed addition behind the east side rear room had been constructed; oral tradition holds that this addition housed a bathroom. Two small one-story frame additions extend off of the south end of the west side of the house. Very little difference can be seen in the Sanborn views of the property from 1908 and 1914.

Changes to the Nesbitt House, 1930-Present

Very few changes occurred to the Nesbitt House between 1914 and 1966, when it passed out of the Nesbitt family. In the 1930s, the widow of J.J. Nesbitt, Mollie Lee Nesbitt, followed the local trend of “updating” some of the interior features with Colonial Revival style elements. The first owners after the Nesbitt family extended the frame porches seen at the rear of the house in 1914 to a full-length enclosed porch covered by a shed roof. This was done in the 1960s. Shortly thereafter, the shed roof porch that extends to the east off of this enclosed porch was added.

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.
- [x] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1876-1930

Significant Dates

Ca. 1878; ca. 1891; 1930

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Period of Significance (justification)

The National Register convention for the Period of Significance, for an architecturally significant property, is the date of construction. That convention has been followed in this nomination.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

NA

Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The J.J. Nesbitt House (BH-0-87) meets the first term of National Register Criterion C. It possesses the distinctive characteristics of the Italianate style, blended with later, sympathetic modifications that drew inspiration from the emerging interest in classical styles. Its significance is evaluated within two local contexts, the first being the "Architectural Styles in Bath County, Kentucky, 1850-1930." The 1890s additions and later-twentieth-century interior alterations to the Nesbitt House will be explored in this nomination within the context "Late Victorian, Neoclassical and Colonial Revival Styles in Bath County, Kentucky, 1890-1930."

The Nesbitt House also shows the translation of Italianate style into a house plan typically perceived as an urban plan, the side-passage. This house plan provided greater privacy and separation of space than the more-commonly built central passage plan. The side-passage plan was favored by the elite of Bath County, both in Owingsville and outside the city limits, throughout the nineteenth century. Nesbitt, the son of a locally influential lawyer and a lawyer himself, was an educated and wealthy man in a small Outer Bluegrass town. Construction of the dwelling began when Nesbitt was 30 years old, and employed the Italianate style in a highly detailed and ornate fashion. His house was a statement of his social standing and grasp of the fashions dominating the Bluegrass as a whole. Nesbitt lived in the house from its completion in 1878 until his death in 1929; his widow continued to live in the house until 1938. The later modifications to the house show that Nesbitt was continuing to respond to national trends, but in a manner that respected the core of his high-style Italianate dwelling.

Historic context: Architectural Styles in Bath County, Kentucky, 1850-1930

Research Design

There are only six resources listed in the National Register in Bath County; all were listed over 30 years ago. Only two of those listings were dwellings; both houses were constructed in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. No evaluation or examination of the broad patterns of development within Bath County has been conducted to date.

Consequently, very little context development for the county has occurred. A county-wide survey was conducted from 2006-2008 under the direction of the author of this nomination. That project resulted in the documentation of 780 properties, consisting of 3 resurveyed properties and 777 newly surveyed properties. The results of that survey will be used as a basis for understanding the development of the Italianate style in Bath County. A brief context of the development of Bath County, with an emphasis on Owingsville, and the domestic architectural evolution within the county, will be presented in this nomination. This context will lay the groundwork for understanding the significance of the Nesbit House.

In order to further evaluate the Nesbitt House, a context was written that explores the characteristics and chronology of the Italianate style nationally and within Kentucky's Bluegrass Region. Sources employed for this context include the general historical references, architectural histories and Clay Lancaster's *Antebellum Houses of the Bluegrass*. A comparison with other Italianate dwellings in Bath County helps place the Nesbitt House into its local architectural context.

Finally, though the stylistic details that adorn the additions made to the dwelling between 1891 and 1901 are compatible with the Italianate style, they incorporate the new Neoclassical and Queen Anne styles, with hints of the coming Colonial Revival style. The latter style influenced some of the changes on the interior of the house. Local house design in the late-nineteenth century did not exhibit the stylistic purity expressed in architectural guide books. Rather, Bath County's designers, builders, and owners seemed comfortable with the eclecticism that prevailed nationally in house design, well into the twentieth century. Thus here, several styles that occur locally are treated in one context. This context of the late Victorian and revival styles was written to further help understand the period of significance of the Nesbitt House from 1876-1930.

Development of Bath County, with a Focus on Owingsville, 1770-1880

The Licking River, which runs along the northern and eastern boundaries of the county, ferried EuroAmerican settlers into the area that is now Bath County by around 1771. Along the River lay many salt and mineral licks; these attracted plenty of animals, which in turn attracted hunters to the area.[ii]

Slate Creek, which roughly divides Bath County north to south, also divides the county along social and economic lines. The land to the west and north of Slate Creek is generally more productive and fertile than the land to the east and south of the Slate Creek Valley. Bath County was well timbered, particularly the east side of Slate Creek. The abundance of building materials meant that log construction was the primary method of building during the settlement period. Around 30 log dwellings from the first half of the nineteenth century were recorded in the county survey; other log dwellings may well be present, but were not conclusively identified as such.

Agriculture was a mainstay of the local economy. Like other Bluegrass counties, hemp, corn and tobacco were important early crops. After clearing enough land for cultivation, the first crop planted was corn, which had several advantages for life on the frontier. Transporting goods in a land-locked state had its difficulties, and excess corn could be distilled into whisky, which was a marketable good easily transported and preserved. The mineral springs of the county also played an important role in the development of Bath County during the settlement and antebellum periods.

Another vital natural material, which drew many settlers and speculators to the area, was the county's plentiful deposits of iron ore. The eastern and southeastern sections of the county were underlain with rich percentages of iron. The first iron furnace erected in the county was the Old Slate Furnace, also known as Bourbon Furnace, constructed in 1790 by Jacob Meyers. Four years later, the Lexington market was being supplied with iron goods from Bath County. Thomas Dye Owings, for whom the county seat of Owingsville is named, emigrated to Bath County from Maryland in 1800 to manage the Bourbon Furnace.[iii] The smelting of the iron ore and the manufacture of iron-related products in Kentucky was synonymous with the furnaces of Bath County during the first part of the nineteenth century.[iv]

[ii] J.A. Richards, *A History of Bath County, Kentucky*. (Yuma, Arizona: Southwest Printers, 1961), 41.
[iii] Kleber, 455; Richards, 497.
[iv] Thomas Uriah Fann, *An Economic History of Bath County, Kentucky*. (Lexington, Kentucky: Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Kentucky, 1937), 132.

The iron ore industry prompted the legal establishment of the first town, Owingsville, in 1811. Located on a ridge above Slate Valley and Prickly Ash Creek, the land for the county seat was donated by Owings and Richard Menefee. The first auction of town lots took place in the summer of 1812.[v]

The earliest houses were described as unhewn log buildings, usually one story in height with puncheon floors and gable roofs. The simplest dwellings were single pens, but other common plans included hall-parlor, dogtrot and saddlebag plans. Log construction continued throughout the nineteenth century in Bath County, and today can appear indistinguishable from later frame dwellings.[vi] Four log dwellings are still extant in downtown Owingsville, including BH-0-5, BH-0-72, BH-0-85 and BH-0-74. The latter is part of a row of connected buildings adjacent to the downtown commercial district.

Owings' own house (BH-0-1), a Federal-style dwelling in brick, was constructed ca. 1814. Located at Main Street and the Courthouse square, the brick dwelling was a statement of Owings' wealth, status and taste. Architectural historian Walter Langsam offers some support in the nomination form for the local claim that the house was built from a design given to Owings by Benjamin Henry Latrobe.

Residential construction in either log or frame were fiscally conservative building decisions in the first few decades of the nineteenth century. Both were cheaper than brick or stone; all four types of construction existed at the same time during the settlement period in the Bluegrass Region. Clay Lancaster notes that "in this period of rapid expansion, frame construction fit the tempo of the times." The ready availability of timber made frame a logical choice, and was the more finished alternative over log construction. Frame construction would continue to be the dominant construction method in Bath County throughout the nineteenth century.[vii]

The population of the county grew steadily over the first few decades of settlement. The first census after the county's formation, in 1820, tallied 7,961 residents.[viii]

The 1830s began a phase of agricultural expansion for Kentucky and the country as a whole. The years between 1830 and 1860 should be remembered as a time of great advances in farming and society in Kentucky's Bluegrass. The 1850s, in particular, saw great prosperity in Bath County's rich agricultural areas. Bath County's accessibility to the east, and particularly the markets of Virginia, was pivotal for many area farmers.

Although Bath County had many more small farms than some of the Outer Bluegrass counties like Montgomery, those farms were remarkably productive and competitive. The 1850 Census reported 1,018 farms in the county, with a cash value of $505,993 for the livestock. This amount surpassed the same tally for neighboring county of Fleming, more than the Inner Bluegrass county of Woodford, and stood at only slightly less than the value of livestock in Montgomery and Clark counties, both of which were livestock powerhouses before the Civil War.[ix]

---

[v] Richards, 113.
[vi] Ibid, 43.
[vii] Clay Lancaster, *Antebellum Architecture in Kentucky.* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 29.
[viii] University of Virginia Census Browser, 2010.
[ix] Ibid.

In tandem with increased crop yields and larger numbers of livestock was a growth in residential construction. A number of Greek Revival dwellings, both masonry and frame, were constructed in Bath County between 1845 and 1860. Most of these are clustered in and around Owingsville and Sharpsburg. Population grew as well, from 9,763 residents in 1840, to 12,115 in 1850, and only two fewer residents in 1860 than a decade earlier.[x]

Transportation networks began to improve at this time as well. The Owingsville and Big Sandy Turnpike Company was chartered in 1835, while the first macadamized road in the county opened in 1849, providing relative ease of transport between Sharpsburg, and the smaller community of Bethel.[xi]

In 1850, Owingsville had 300 residents, two schools, two churches, two taverns, a post office and five stores. At the eve of the Civil War, the vernacular vocabulary in Bath County centered on the ubiquitous I-house, which became the symbol of economic attainment for local farmers.

The I-house form was not restricted to rural areas, though the lateral reach of that form could appear squeezed on a modest-sized urban lot. During this period, several houses were constructed in Owingsville. The brick Richarts House (BH-0-175) has a central passage and boasts an impressive temple front portico. The Daughtery House (BH-0-69) is a one-and-one-half story brick Greek Revival dwelling. A frame example is the Brother House (BH-0-68), a one-and-one-half story central passage plan with Greek Revival detailing. The J.A.J. Lee House (BH-0-4) presented an unusual form in brick—a front gable house with Greek Revival detailing—locally attributed to Gideon Shyrock, architect of Kentucky's 1827 capitol (Old State House, National Historic Landmark, 1971).

The Civil War divided many families in Bath County, but there were few military engagements in the county. Federal troops quartered in the courthouse in Owingsville, and when Confederate troops attempted to force them to leave, a stove started a fire that consumed the building. The Federal government paid for the replacement courthouse, completed in 1869.[xii]

In 1870, the population of Owingsville stood at 550 residents. [xiii] Transportation, which still did not include a rail line, involved daily stage coach runs to Mt. Sterling and Sharpsburg. Three times a week a stage ran to Maysville in Mason County. The professional class in Owingsville had grown to include 11 lawyers (Nesbitt among them) and two doctors. There were six groceries, a number of dry goods stores, three churches, and three schools.

The Elizabethtown, Lexington and Big Sandy Railroad reached the county in 1880, extending eastward from neighboring Mt. Sterling, which the line reached in 1872. In 1882, that line became part of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, linking the county not only with the rest of Kentucky but also the East Coast.[xiv]

[x] Ibid.
[xi] Fann, 52.
[xii] Kleber, 60.
[xiii] Fann, 31.
[xiv] Ibid.

Italianate Style in Bath County, Kentucky, 1860-1900

The Italianate style, along with the Gothic Revival style, first appeared in the United States in the 1830s and the 1840s. These two architectural styles fit within a general growth within European and American fine arts termed "Romanticism," which drew from different wells than the ones that had watered the decorative arts of the early Republic era.

The designers of Italianate style took their inspiration from the rural and rambling country estate houses of Italy. The buildings are generally cubic or rectangular and have a shallow hipped roof. Characteristics of the style include brackets at the cornice line or on porches, long, narrow windows with molding and ornamental lintels or hood molds, and an overall emphasis on verticality. The pattern books of Andrew Jackson Downing greatly popularized this style in the 1840s and 1850s.[xv]

Farm journals and pattern books disseminated the style, the advent of balloon framing helped popularize it, and the growth of rail lines also helped spread it after the Civil War. The technique of balloon framing made the construction of houses asymmetrical forms much more feasible than had the rigidity inherent in heavy timber frame construction. Local builders utilized national pattern books, tailoring a house to the owner's specific tastes and pocketbook, and ornamenting traditional house forms with machine-produced architectural elements, like brackets and spindles.

By the 1860s and 1870s, the Italianate style was firmly entrenched in America, and would continue to influence architecture in Kentucky until the turn of the century.

At least one architectural style book divides Italianate buildings into six subtypes defined by a prominent feature of the building's massing: the hipped roof, the centered gable, asymmetrical, towered, and front-gabled and town houses.[xvi] Italianate examples found in Bath County can be separated into four categories defined by the building's plan and form: a T-plan (asymmetrical) dwelling embellished with Italianate features; such as a elongated windows, angled bay windows and brackets; an I-house, an essentially symmetrical form with a central passage, embellished with Italianate detailing, such as brackets and a cupola; a centered gable type, of which one was found in Owingsville; and the rectangular cuboid with a hipped roof, to which the Nesbitt House belongs.

The Italianate Style as Found Locally

The majority of Italianate houses in Bath County occur in the county seat Owingsville, with a few other examples in Sharpsburg and out in the county. Most are of frame construction, with either a traditional I-house appearance with central passage, or are T-plans. The T-plan is a variation on the I-house – one of the rooms beside the central hall was moved forward and a second room placed behind it, resulting in an irregular front façade and a T-shaped plan if seen from above. Both rooms of the T- were accessed by the central passage.

Eleven dwellings, including the Nesbitt House, were identified in Bath County as strong examples of the Italianate style. This group does not include the dozens of houses across the county that have isolated features associated with the Italianate style, such as a few brackets, or elongated windows. The influence of Italianate and other Victorian-era styles started late and lingered for over 40 years in Bath County, which seems to be the case in other Outer Bluegrass counties as well. William Macintire

[xv] Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 211.
[xvi] Ibid.

observed that in Kentucky, "the tall and narrow window proportion becomes particularly pervasive, showing up even on extremely modest dwellings of the early twentieth century."[xvii]

These dwellings with eclectic accumulations of design influences can be studied as vernacular phenomena. They tend to combine elements from Romantic styles with later Victorian influences, such as Queen Anne. In fact, the influence of the Gothic Revival style in Bath County is much more widespread and persistent than the Italianate.

While the Italianate style began to appear in Kentucky in the 1840s, its spread across Bath County did not begin until the 1870s. Six of the identified Italianate houses are located in Owingsville, and two of them are in close proximity to the Nesbitt House.

Sunnyside (BH-0-64, figure 2, Supplemental Images Sheet 1), a circa 1875 frame centered-gable Italianate dwelling, is located at 274 West Main Street in Owingsville, across the street from the Nesbitt House. This example is essentially one of the McAlester's subtypes, a central-passage I-house, with a center projecting gable. The dwelling is a straightforward high-style interpretation of the Italianate, with a heavy bracketed cornice, a flat-roof cupola, and hood molds over the elongated paired windows. An example of a rural wood frame Italianate I-house without the center gable is the dwelling off of Reynoldsville Road (BH-166, figure 3, Supplemental Images Sheet 1). The two-story, three bay wide dwelling has elongated six-over-over double-hung sash windows and a very elaborate bracketed cornice.

The J.B. Goodpaster House (BH-0-89, figure 4, Supplemental Images Sheet 2), a brick Italianate dwelling located at 261 West Main Street, two lots east of the Nesbitt House, exemplifies the most common path the Italianate style took in Owingsville. The one-pile deep T-plan has a bracketed cornice, tall narrow windows with stone sills and lintels, and a later curving porch very similar to that of the Nesbitt House.

Three other Italianate T-plans in Owingsville are clustered together at the other end of Main Street from the Nesbitt House. A local resident speculates that they are the result of a single builder, which is highly likely given the similarities between the three, but further research is needed to verify this claim. Two of these are frame: 29 Barbara Lynn Drive (BH-O-177**,** figure 5, Supplemental Images Sheet 2) and 47 Barbara Lynn Drive (BH-0-178, figure 6, Supplemental Images Sheet 3). They feature angled bay windows on the façade, bracketed cornices, simple window hoods, and in the case of the latter, a projecting one-story enclosed entryway (with double door topped by a transom), flanked by a small porch to the side.

The third Italianate T-plan is embellished with more detail: the brick C.W. Honaker House (BH-0-176, figure 7, Supplemental Images Sheet 3) at 121 East Main Street. The bay window, hood molds and porches are more highly realized versions of the Italianate style. This dwelling predates the two frame examples discussed previously and likely served as the inspiration for their construction.

Sharpsburg, the next largest town in the county, has two Italianate T-plan dwellings, one at 299 Main Street (BH-S-13, figure 8, Supplemental Images Sheet 4) and the Knight House at 324 Main Street

[xvii] William Macintire, *A Survey of Historic Sites in Rural Marion and Washington Counties, Kentucky.* (Frankfort: The Kentucky Heritage Council, 2009), 74.

(BH-S-22, figure 9, Supplemental Images Sheet 4). The former is a two-story frame that could well be described as a Folk Victorian rather than Italianate, but it does possess a rectangular bay window with brackets on the façade and elongated windows. It is a slightly later example, probably 1890s, than the previously discussed resources. The latter is a two-story brick T-plan, has the familiar angled bay window on the façade, scrolled brackets at the cornice, and elongated windows with stone lintels and sills.

A rural Italianate T-plan (BH-175, figure 10, Supplemental Images Sheet 5) is found on the Mt. Pleasant Road, not far from Bethel. This two-story frame example rests on a stone foundation, and has an angled bay window on the façade. One of the elongated windows retains an eyebrow lintel, and the cornice line features brackets and delicate diamond shaped carving.

The final path that the Italianate took in Bath County is the rectangular cube, which is represented by two seemingly identical houses: the brick Nesbitt House and the frame dwelling at 82 East Main Street (BH-0-172, Figure 11, Supplemental Images Sheet 5). The latter has a footprint very similar to the Nesbitt House, although it lacks the detail and ornamentation of the Nesbitt House. It is a side-passage two-bay-wide dwelling, with a recessed side entry, and like the Nesbitt House, a secondary entrance into the main front room. The hipped roof is clad in asphalt shingles. The elongated windows (with replacement sash) have simpler wooden lintels than the Nesbitt House. This example also did not experience the addition of Italianate-styled bay windows and expansion of the stair hall like the Nesbitt House. According to a former owner, the dwelling was built in the 1880s, and it is depicted on the 1886 Sanborn map of Owingsville. It is tempting to view BH-0-172 as a smaller, less costly copy of the Nesbitt House.

The evolution of the Italianate style in Bath County appears to be focused on two different concerns: the form and plan of the dwelling, and the amount and clarity of the design and its accompanying details and ornament. The majority of the Italianate dwellings discussed in this section appear to have been constructed between 1870 and 1880, prior to the arrival of the railroad in Bath County. The elite of Owingsville, despite the lack of reliable roads and a rail line, were well-versed in the trends of the surrounding Bluegrass. Though Nesbitt was undoubtedly familiar with the Italianate style as the building expression of the upper class, he did not build the house, he merely paid for it, and ensured that his vision was translated. Though little information is available about the builders who executed the property owners' vision, they were skilled craftsman, on par with the builders/architects of the Inner Bluegrass. More research is needed to determine the amount of hand work versus machine made elements in the Italianate dwellings in Bath County, and the sources of the woodwork and other architectural details. It is not known whether mills in Bath County were producing these materials prior to the establishment of Salt Lick in 1884, or whether materials were procured from lumber companies in Mt. Sterling, Winchester or Lexington.

Late Victorian, Neoclassical and Colonial Revival Styles in Bath County, 1890-1930

The end of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth saw a range of styles being interpreted in the buildings of Bath County. Rarely were dwellings built in only one style; usually, a range of styles were combined together, such as the ones discussed in this section.

Queen Anne, one of the later style subsets of the Victorian period, ranged in popularity nationally from 1880 to 1910. Its emphasis on shape and decorative detailing, often with machine-made stylistic

elements such as brackets, window hoods, spindlework, and textured shingles, all of which were applied to plain exteriors, made it particularly appealing to the expanding middle class. The Queen Anne style was popularized through pattern books, but especially by the expanding railroad network, "making pre-cut architectural details conveniently available through much of the nation."[xviii]

The railroad finally reached Bath County in 1880. The town of Salt Lick, one of the stops (and the largest) of the line, was platted in 1884. Numerous timber industries began to grow and expand in and around Salt Lick, taking advantage of the railroad to ship lumber out, but also to produce the woodwork increasingly in demand in the 1890s with the expanding influence of the Queen Anne style.

The combination of polygonal bays (already seen in the Italianate examples in the county), classical details such as dentils and brackets, stained glass windows, rusticated stone lintels and sills are all details seen in Queen Anne influenced dwellings in Owingsville. Examples include the frame T-plans at 426 West Main Street (BH-0-57) and BH-0-90, on the opposite side of West Main Street, both of which feature gables detailed with fish scale shingles and decorative brackets and bargeboards, Additional examples include BH-0-171 and BH-0-180.

The Free Classic style is a transitional style between the Queen Anne and the revival styles, including Colonial Revival and Neoclassical. Many Free Classical dwellings have a form and massing similar to that of an American Foursquare, but with the addition of two-story polygonal bays, towers and other decorative details that are clearly Victorian. Details such as block modillions, dentils, Palladian windows and classical columns are common on Free Classic dwellings. Examples within Owingsville include the two-story masonry dwelling at 530 West Main Street (BH-0-50) which has a two-story polygonal bay on the facade, Corinthian columns and details including stone sills and lintels, and stained glass transoms. Another masonry example is located on the edge of Owingsville (BH-202) and features block modillions at the cornice line, front gable dormers with decorative detailing in the gable and transoms with stained glass. A frame Free Classic dwelling, with a two-story polygonal bay, is at 453 West Main Street (BH-0-92).

The Neoclassical style is typically thought to extend from 1895 through 1950, and is often thought to be synonymous with the Colonial Revival style, which developed during the same period. A national interest in the architecture of the colonies was awakened with the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876. The Chicago's World Fair of 1893, centered on a classical theme, featured architect-designed buildings with dramatic, semi-circular porches and columns in the classical orders. The exposition was covered widely in the press, and images and drawings of the "new" style filtered out into all areas of the country.[xix]

The one-story wrap-around curved porch that Nesbitt added to his Italianate dwelling between 1893 and 1897, drew from the Neoclassical style. Though the curvilinear nature of the porch, and the Tuscan capitals are traits of the Neoclassical style, the chamfered lower portion of the porch columns is a hallmark of the Queen Anne style.

Wherever amalgamation of styles influenced Nesbitt's modifications to the exterior of his dwelling, he certainly inspired his neighbor two lots to the west. J.B. Goodpaster (BH-0-89) added an almost

[xviii] McAlester, 268.
[xix] Ibid, 344.

identical one-story Neoclassical porch to his Italianate dwelling between 1903 and 1908. The porch has a higher sense of the Neoclassical style than the one at the Nesbitt house, with Ionic columns and an elaborate cornice line featuring dentils and modillions, both traits of the Neoclassical style.

A smaller version of this porch can be found on the one-story frame T-plan at 426 West Main Street (BH-0-57).

Between 1897 and 1901, Nesbitt made his final stylistic modification to the dwelling. Additional alteration to the building occurred after 1901, in the form of the construction, rebuilding and enclosing of rear porches, and the expansion of the second story. A polygonal brick bay, on a stone foundation, increased the size of the stair hall. This bay, with its stained glass window, and brackets, echoes the stylistic details showing up on the Free Classic dwellings being built at the time.

The Free Classic style was a transitional style, and was nationally supplanted by the Colonial Revival style. According to McAlester, the period of influence for Colonial Revival is 1880 to 1950, and the style's rise was fueled by an interest in the dwellings associated with the colonial period, particularly English and Dutch houses on the Atlantic seaboard. The first proponents of this style, which was seen as simplified and classically motivated response to the Victorian era, were professional architects. Richard Morris Hunt's house, Sunnyside, in Newport, Rhode Island, dating from 1870, has been identified by architectural historian Vincent Scully as the "first built evidence of colonial revivalism to exist anywhere."[xx]

As the name implies, the style draws on colonial styles, including Georgian and Adam, for inspiration in detailing entrances, cornices and windows. Most windows are double hung, typically with six, eight, nine or twelve lights in both sashes. Elaborate door surrounds, with broken pediments, dentils and pilasters, are common. The style became simplified nationally during the 1940s and 1950s, and was adopted wide-scale in the suburbs.

The Colonial Revival style was slower to catch on the south, especially in rural areas of Kentucky, where late Victorian style persisted into the second decade of the twentieth century. There is only one dwelling in Owingsville identified as Colonial Revival; the one-and-one half story brick dwelling at 330 West Main Street (BH-0-61) is five bays wide, with a fanlight over the central door and a denticulated cornice.

While the representation of dwellings built in the Colonial Revival style in Owingsville may not be high, the style was readily accepted as an accent to pre-existing houses. The antebellum brick I-house at 312 West Main Street received a "Mt. Vernon" style porch in the twentieth century, while the frame T-plan at 408 West Main Street has a temple front portico with fanlight that almost overwhelms the small dwelling.

The Colonial Revival style proved popular as an interior finish. Many houses along Main Street have Colonial Revival interiors, with Greek Revival mantles and mouldings removed in the 1930s and "updated" with Colonial Revival woodwork. Two of the mantles in the Nesbitt House date from the Colonial Revival period, as do the double-hinged French doors.

[xx] Cynthia Johnson. "Weehawken." *Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places*. Copy on file at the Kentucky Heritage Council. Listed 2007.

Personal Information on J.J. Nesbitt

James J. (sometimes also referred to as John James) Nesbitt was born in Owingsville, Kentucky on March 22, 1846. The son of James M. Nesbitt and Mary Calk Nesbitt, J.J. graduated from the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Lexington in the 1860s. He followed his father into the legal profession and was admitted to the Bath County Bar in 1873.

In 1868, Nesbitt married Mollie Lee, the daughter of James Andrew Jackson and Maria Lee, who lived in the circa 1840s dwelling on the north side of Main Street (BH-0-4). Mollie Lee was also the granddaughter of Raccoon John Smith, one of the leaders in the reformation movement in Kentucky that began with the revival at Cane Ridge in 1801. Smith, who had been raised in the Baptist Church, founded the Owingsville Christian Church and also led churches in Montgomery County.

In the 1876 Business Directory of Owingsville J.J. Nesbitt is listed as a lawyer. The 1880 Federal Census lists Nesbitt, 33, as a lawyer along with the members of his family: his wife Mollie, their five-year old daughter and four servants. In addition to his law practice, Nesbitt served as the Master Commissioner of the Bath County Circuit Court, as a state representation for Bath and Rowan Counties from 1885-1887 and a member of the Masonic Lodge of Owingsville.

Nesbitt also acquired numerous parcels of real estate and during the 1890s and first decade of the twentieth century, which helped Owingsville expand its offerings for middle and lower income residents. In the April 30, 1896 edition of the *Owingsville Outlook*, there are two references to Nesbitt and houses he was constructing. The first states that “J.J. Nesbitt has about completed a tenement house in Harrytown suburb. It will be occupied by Deny Reid, of color.” The second entry reads “J.J. Nesbitt has commenced work on his new cottage residence on the Mrs. Brooks lot on Main Street. It will be a neat, pretty structure.”

Nesbitt and his wife had one child, Daisy Nesbitt Strader, who lived in the house until transferring it to her children in 1966.

Evaluation of Architectural Significance of the Nesbitt House

The Italianate style did not begin to bloom in Bath County until after the Civil War. The construction of the Nesbitt House between 1876 and 1878 signified that it was the chosen style of the prosperous, educated elite in Owingsville. Nesbitt would have been familiar with the centered front gable central passage dwelling “Sunnyside” across the street from where his house would eventually be built. Deed evidence suggests the C.W. Honaker House (BH-0-176) was built prior to 1876.

During his time at the Agricultural and Mechanical College in Lexington, Kentucky, Nesbitt would have been exposed to the proliferation of the Italianate style in that inner Bluegrass county. Commencing construction of the his house only three years after being admitted to the bar, Nesbitt was making a declaration of his place in the local hierarchy of bankers, lawyers and merchants in Owingsville.

The detailing on the Nesbitt House, both on the exterior and the interior, is very ornate, and though there are some elements that likely were machine-produced locally, other features suggest

production by a craftsman. The stylistic details on the Nesbitt House are at the very top echelon of the Italianate dwellings in Bath County.

The Nesbitt House is a locally significant example of the Italianate style, but it is also a reflection of the evolution that most of the historic resources in rural Kentucky undertook. Nesbitt's involvement in civic matters of the day, his involvement in politics, and his relative wealth in a very small county-seat town meant that he remained well-informed of trends and fashions. The decisions he made about the style of his house not only influenced his neighbors and friends, but in turn, Nesbitt would borrow ideas from his equals. He did so, however, in a way that never overshadowed the original core of his dwelling, and continued the high-style interpretation of the Italianate.

A brief mention in the newspaper Owingsville Outlook dated September 1, 1892 mentions that "J.J. Nesbitt is having a bay window put in his house." Next door, Nesbitt's neighbor at 205 West Main Street (BH-0-86, a Gothic Revival dwelling from the 1860s) was in the process of constructing "a large addition" to his dwelling – an addition with a bay window remarkably like the bay window on the east elevation of the Nesbitt House.

The bay window that Nesbitt added in 1892, centered on the west elevation, continues the design motif of the original house, with inset panels and brackets. The next building phase for the Nesbitt House was the removal of the small Italianate porches between 1892 and 1897, and the construction of a new porch in the Neoclassical manner. Finally, the expansion of the stair hall between 1897 and 1901 alludes to the transitional Free Classic style. Interior finishes reflect the growing popularity of the Colonial Revival style in the 1920s and 1930s.

The architectural landscape of Owingsville today displays a historic willingness to draw from myriad nationally popular styles to create buildings that defy simple stylistic categorization. The Neoclassical is seen in very limited examples in Bath County during the last decade of the nineteenth century and first decade of the twentieth. The Queen Anne and Free Classic influence is seen in numerous small frame examples (mostly T-plans) across the county. The Colonial Revival style did not become widely accepted in the county until the 1930s, and even then it was overshadowed by the Craftsman style. The residential district along West Main Street in Owingsville, which remained relatively static from 1880-1900, began to be expanded with the construction of numerous bungalows and American Foursquares between 1900 and 1940.

In 1893, a disastrous fire swept through downtown Owingsville; almost decimating the commercial district, and resulting in over $100,000 in losses. Though the Nesbitt House, two blocks from the Courthouse, was unaffected, the fire and subsequent rebuilding cast a pall over the economy of the small town. In the February 22, 1894 edition of the *Owingsville Outlook*, it is noted that "residences are in demand in town, notwithstanding the hard times."

Large, substantial dwellings like the Nesbitt House, the Goodpaster House and Sunnyside, were not as prevalent in Owingsville after 1900. A handful of American Foursquare and Free Classic dwellings were constructed, but during from 1890 through 1950, the preferred mode of construction was for simpler, smaller structures.

It is important to remember the local context of Bath County. Though it prospered during the decades before the Civil War, the post-bellum period saw little growth outside of very restricted areas.

The iron ore industry breathed its last gasp in the mid-1850s. Natural resources, like timber, propelled the economy of the county for a while, particularly with the W.J. Fell Stave and Lumber Company, which prospered from 1890 until 1903. Although I-64 runs through the county, the economy remains focused on farming. Owingsville, this small, county-seat town, geographically limited by its location on a scenic ridge, bypassed by the railroad, and dependent upon an agricultural economy, nevertheless managed to produce some domestic architecture on par with examples found in Inner Bluegrass counties.

The Nesbitt House is but one example of an architecturally significant dwelling in Owingsville; in this case, one that merges a highly-realized sense of the Italianate style with later Revival modifications.

Evaluation of the Integrity of the Nesbitt House

A house in Bath County evaluated to be a good example of a particular style or of continued architectural development will be eligible for the National Register if it retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling. All 7 integrity factors of the Nesbitt House are discussed here.

Location

The Nesbitt House retains a high level of integrity of location. The dwelling has not been relocated and it retains its general relationship with its urban lot. At the time of its construction, the location, two blocks from the Courthouse Square, and on the Main Street (also the Owingsville and Mt. Sterling Turnpike) was highly desirable. The courthouse square, besides being the legal hub of the community, was also the commercial and political center of Bath County.

Design

The Nesbitt House has a very high level of integrity of design. The historic massing and floor plan remain intact. The fenestration pattern is unaltered, the hipped roof and porch are all intact. These features together convey the basic design pattern known as Italianate style. The frame porch additions at the rear of the dwelling, and the front porch, have become associated with the house since its construction, and are compatible with Italianate style. The front porch is inspired by the Neoclassical style, while the bay window on the stair hall draws on the transitional Free Classic style. Two mantels in the interior were “updated” during the Colonial Revival period, and a set of double-hinged French Doors were added between the front parlor and stair hall. The house’s integrity of design conveys the sense of architectural change and evolution that is an important aspect of the local architectural reality. The Nesbitt House’s dominant Italianate stylistic identity is clear, but much of its design value comes from the careful application of later stylistic layers. This layering of styles over time is not confined to Bath County, but is a prominent practice within it.

Materials

The integrity of materials at the Nesbitt House is very high; many of its materials remain unchanged since their installation from 1878-1930. All of the original windows on the main block of the house, and the east and west elevations of the rear portion of the house, with the exception of two openings in the east, rear first-floor brick ell, are intact. The many ornate exterior details, including window,

door and cornice ornamentation, chimneystacks as well as the porch, are unchanged. The interior is also highly intact, with original plaster work, woodwork and floors in the four rooms that make up the core of the dwelling (the front room and stair hall, and the room behind each of them). Water damage on the east side of the frame second story necessitated replacement of plaster with drywall. Some baseboards in the second story were replaced in the 1930s/1940s for the running of electrical wires.

Workmanship

The Nesbitt House has a high level of integrity of workmanship. The mouldings and trim work around the windows, at the cornice line, and on the interior display a high level of finish and detail. Whether machine or handmade—possibly a combination of the two—the craft that went into producing the elaborate expression of the Italianate style at the Nesbitt House is very intact.

Setting

The Nesbitt House retains a medium level of integrity of setting. Nineteenth-century outbuildings, visible on the historic Sanborn maps, have been demolished, and the mid-twentieth century development has occurred to the south of the parcel, where there was originally a farm. These changes have certainly given the environment surrounding the house a different feel than it had upon construction, but these changes do not interfere with our ability to recognize the Italianate style and subsequent stylistic overlays. The aesthetic effect was not dependent upon on-site or extra-site setting. The Nesbitt House retains its place in the residential streetscape of Owingsville, and its relationship to the neighboring historic dwellings.

Feeling and Association

The Nesbitt House retains a high level of integrity of feeling and association. The integrity of design, materials and workmanship, as discussed above, provide the feeling that came from a high style creation such as the Nesbitt House. It provides a strong view of residential life of a social elite in the county seat town in an outer Bluegrass County of Kentucky in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The Nesbitt House is clearly still associated with the Italianate style and later architectural styles and their interpretation in Bath County in the late-nineteenth century, during Nesbitt's ownership and occupancy of the building.

The historic J.J. Nesbitt House and its proposed boundary are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a well-preserved, significant example of Italianate architecture with sympathetic historic modifications, in Bath County, Kentucky.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Fann, Thomas Uriah. *An Economic History of Bath County, Kentucky*. Lexington, Kentucky: Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Kentucky, 1937.

Johnson Cynthia. "Weehawken." National Register nomination. Copy on file at the Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort. 2007.

Kleber, John E., ed.*The Kentucky Encyclopedia*. Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky,1992.

Lancaster, Clay. *Antebellum Architecture of Kentucky*. Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky,1991.

Lanier, Gabrielle M. and Bernard L. Herman. *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic: Looking at Buildings and Landscapes*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

Langsam, Walter. Colonel Thomas Deye Owings House. National Register nomination. Copy available at Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort. 1978.

Macintire, William. *A Survey of Historic Sites in Rural Marion and Washington Counties, Kentucky.* Frankfort: The Kentucky Heritage Council, 2009.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998.

Richards, J.A. *A History of Bath County, Kentucky*. Yuma, Arizona: Southwest Printers, 1961

The University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center Historical Census Browser. Electronic document, http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/index.html/,accessed 2010.

Upton, Dell. "The Origins of Chesapeake Architecture," in *Three Centuries of Maryland Architecture: A Selection of Presentations Made at the 11th Annual Conference of the Maryland Historic Trust* (1982), 50.

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:

__x__State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____**BH-0-87**_____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .35 acres

UTM References
Owingsville Quad map.
Coordinates below from 1983 NAD

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	257 429	4225 409	3			
2				4			

Verbal Boundary Description

"Being and lying on the South side of West Main Street and beginning at a point in the center of West Main Street directly in line with the West boundary of the Alley known as Shady Line; thence running in a straight Southerly direction 205 feet along the line of Shady Lane to the Northeasterly corner of the Virginia Peed property line; thence running in a straight Westerly direction 75 feet along the Virginia Peed line to the Southeast corner of the Mrs. Ewell Shrout line to a point in the center of West Main Street; thence in a straight line along the center of West Main Street; thence in a straight line along the center of West Main Street 75 feet to the point of beginning and known as 233 West Main Street."

Boundary Justification
The property proposed for inclusion on the National Register by the current nomination includes the .35 acre parcel associated with the J.J. Nesbitt House. This nominated property retains the historic dwelling constructed by J.J. Nesbitt in the Italianate style with later Revival modifications. The proposed boundaries provide an appropriate setting for understanding the significance of the design and construction of this house to the history of architecture of Bath County within both periods of significance. The boundary includes the domestic yard and maintains the historic setting in which the house was constructed.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Janie-Rice Brother, Senior Architectural Historian

organization Kentucky Archaeological Survey date

street & number 1020A Export Street telephone 859-257-1944

city or town Lexington state KY zip code 40506-9854

e-mail janie-rice.brother@uky.edy

Additional Documentation

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Additional items:** Figures that consist in images of floor plans, comparative houses, and Sanborn Map plans.

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: J.J. Nesbitt House

City or Vicinity: Owingsville

Nesbitt, J.J., House
Name of Property

Bath County, Kentucky
County and State

County: Bath County **State:** Kentucky

Photographer: Janie-Rice Brother

Date Photographed: February 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1. **View of façade (north elevation) of Nesbitt House, facing southwest.**
2. **Aerial view of Nesbitt House from north side of West Main Street, facing southeast, showing façade and west elevation.**
3. **View of west elevation of front of Nesbitt House, showing bay window added to stair hall between 1897 and 1901. Facing southeast.**
4. **West elevation of Nesbitt House, facing northeast.**
5. **View of east elevation and façade of Nesbitt House, facing southwest.**
6. **View of south elevation of Nesbitt House, facing northwest.**
7. **Detail of entry door on façade of Nesbitt House, facing southeast.**
8. **View of bay window on façade of Nesbitt House, facing south.**
9. **Detail of bay window on façade of Nesbitt House, facing east.**
10. **Detail of brackets and trim on bay window on façade of Nesbitt House.**
11. **Detail of cornice line and hood mold on second story window, Nesbitt House façade.**
12. **Detail of Nesbitt House east elevation bay window, facing west.**
13. **View of interior of Nesbitt House, showing staircase.**
14. **Detail view of interior trim on the Nesbitt House façade's bay window.**

Property Owner:

name Jason and Carie Wells
street & number P.O. Box 1221 telephone
city or town Owingsville state KY zip code 40360