

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Alexander-Ford Farmhouse

Other names/site number: DA 132/Throckmorton House

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

## 2. Location

Street & number: 5785 Highway 144

City or town: Thruston State: Kentucky County: Daviess

Not For Publication: ☐ NA Vicinity: ☐ NA

## 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:     A     B X 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

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#### 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

##### Ownership of Property

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

##### Category of Property

Building(s)

☒

District

☐

Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

☐

##### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
1

Noncontributing

5  
\_\_\_\_\_  
1  
\_\_\_\_\_  
6

buildings  
sites  
structures  
objects  
Total

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Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

DOMESTIC: single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

DOMESTIC: single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

Greek Revival  
Colonial Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick

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## Narrative Description

### Summary Paragraph

The Alexander-Ford farmhouse (DA 132), formerly known as the Throckmorton House, is a two-story brick residence constructed in the Greek Revival Style around 1850.<sup>1</sup> The house includes Colonial Revival elements added in the early-to-mid-twentieth century that contribute to its significance as well. The house is located approximately seven miles northeast of the center of Owensboro in Daviess County, Kentucky and less than one mile northeast of the community of Thruston. The house and associated domestic outbuildings are located on a 7.331-acre parcel of land (Daviess County Property Value Administrator tract number 086-00-00-055-00-000) that includes the immediate domestic yard and a gravel driveway that extends approximately .3 miles southwest to current-day Highway 144. The nominated boundary also includes three additional parcels that are historically associated with the farmhouse, but currently divided among heirs of the Deane family. These parcels include two barns associated with the agricultural history of the property. These parcels are further described in the Verbal Boundary Description section of this nomination. The property is interpreted for its architectural value, which results in one contributing building, five noncontributing buildings, and one noncontributing structure. The nominated area includes agricultural outbuildings that don't contribute directly in terms of their style, although they provide a supporting visual context for the main house's architectural expression, and so, are included.

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<sup>1</sup> The KHC/SHPO and local sources refer to this property as the Throckmorton House. While the Throckmorton family did live here, they are not the original builders nor did they make any prominent changes. The names used in this nomination include the family who we believe originally had it constructed in the Greek Revival Style, as well as the family who made prominent additions to the façade in the Colonial Revival Style.



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Alexander-Ford Farm, Daviess County, KY Latitude 37.802941 Longitude: -87.015683

### Property Setting and Site Characteristics

The Alexander-Ford farmhouse is located on Highway 144, historically known as Hardinsburg Road, in rural Daviess County, Kentucky, approximately seven miles northwest of Owensboro, near the community of Thruston. Daviess County was created in 1815 from a portion of Ohio County. The county experienced numerous changes to its borders until 1860 when it reached its present-day boundaries, after annexing land from nearby Henderson County.<sup>2</sup> Daviess County measures approximately 463 square miles and is bordered by the Ohio River on the north, Henderson and McClean Counties on the west/southwest, and Hancock and Ohio Counties on the east/southeast.<sup>3</sup> The Green River forms the western county boundary between Henderson and Daviess County.

The Alexander-Ford Farmhouse property is situated in the Western Coalfield region of Kentucky, which in this part of the county also shares characteristics with the Ohio River cultural landscape region, as defined by the Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation

<sup>2</sup> Lee A. Dew, "Daviess County," in Kleber, ed., *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, 254.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

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Office (KHC/SHPO).<sup>4</sup> (Figure 1). The region is characterized by rolling hills, valleys, and escarpments underlain by Pennsylvanian age sandstone. As the name suggests, the region contains significant coal reserves.<sup>5</sup> The settlement of the region also was largely defined by adjacency to major waterways, specifically the Ohio and Green Rivers.

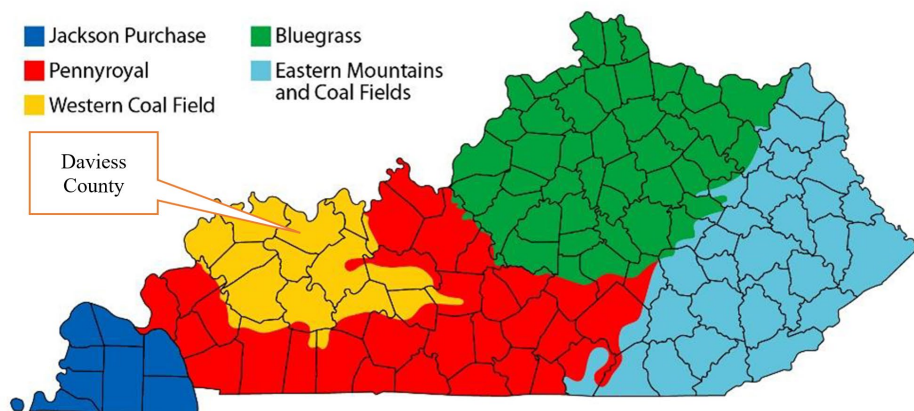


Figure 1 Kentucky Cultural Landscape Regions Map

The farmhouse sits on a rise above Highway 144, at the end of a long drive, overlooking agricultural acreage. Hardinsburg Road (Highway 144) extended east from the Old River Road, also known as Hawesville Road (KY 405). According to early twentieth century accounts, this stretch of road was celebrated for its nineteenth century genteel status as an "old road.. lined on either side with majestic forest trees, making it one of the most beautiful throughfares the best traveled person has even seen... Let me venture the assertion that no strip of ground a quarter of a mile wide and five miles long in the United States afforded habitation for a greater number of distinguished men... There lived on this small strip, one United States district attorney, one member of congress, one officer, each in the United States army and navy, two United States ministers to foreign countries, three bank presidents, two colonels in foreign wars, one cabinet officer, one circuit judge, and one United States senator."<sup>6</sup> The landscape and its associated residents were described in local newspapers in glowing terms as Beech Woods, which also referred to an individual house in the area. The area was praised for its tree-lined roads, with "plantations... owned by wealthy, intelligent people, who were famous for their hospitality..."<sup>7</sup>

Aside from its celebrated associations, the property is well-watered, as it is bisected on its northern boundary, near the farmhouse, by an unnamed tributary of Van Buren Creek, known colloquially as Deane Creek. Van Buren Creek flows into Yellow Creek, which in turn empties into the Ohio River. Typical for early nineteenth century houses in Kentucky, the Alexander-

<sup>4</sup> The KHC/SHPO cultural landscape map was developed as a planning tool to understand the built environment across Commonwealth. KHC National Register Coordinator Marty Perry developed a supplementary unpublished context for Ohio River towns that informed this assessment.

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin Mater, Arthur C Paolola, and Chandra Hansen, "Geomorphic Characteristics of Streams in the Western Coalfield Region of Kentucky," 2009. Accessed in April 2025 at <https://eec.ky.gov/Environmental-Protection/Water/Reports/Reports/NPS0205-WCoalField.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> C.W. Bransford, "'Old River Road' of Long Ago Recalled..." *Messenger & Inquirer*, June 14, 1931.

<sup>7</sup> No author, "Beech Woods of the Past: Section of Daviess County Which Was Once Very Famous," *Owensboro Inquirer*, April 10, 1910.

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Ford Farmhouse was situated near a waterway to take advantage of ease of transit and access to water for crops, stock, and the family's needs. A circa 1875 description of the "Upper Town Precinct" notes that this part of the county was among the earliest settled by Euro-Americans in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Alexander-Ford Farmhouse property was originally part of an 8,000-acre property patented to George Mason (1725-1792), who was a Virginia born statesman and an early supporter of the Ohio Company and western expansion during the settlement period.<sup>8</sup>

### **History of Ownership and Property Configuration**

The following provides information on the property's ownership history.

William Ridgley Griffith (1793-1848) and Robert Triplett (unknown) acquired 1,600-acres of the 8,000-acre Mason patent in 1831.<sup>9</sup> Both men were known as land speculators in the area as early as the 1820s. Griffith had served as the first County Clerk of Daviess County, holding the office from 1815 to 1818. After witnessing many disputes and lawsuits caused by large land claims that were poorly surveyed, often resulting in overlapping ownership, Griffith decided to study law. As an attorney, Griffith specialized in acquiring and selling land to new settlers in the area. He became quite wealthy because of his good timing.<sup>10</sup>

Triplett was considered an early entrepreneur in the area, who came to Owensboro shortly after it was established in 1816. According to a brief biography of Triplett included in *A History of Owensboro and Daviess County, Kentucky*, "Triplett was Owensboro's first major real estate dealer. In this capacity he conducted private sales, auctions of town lots and had to eject squatters from land on which they had lived and built Houses only to learn, as so many other pioneers in Kentucky did, that they either had no title or an invalid one."<sup>11</sup> Triplett was the second largest taxpayer in the county in 1834; Griffith was the fourth largest taxpayer. By 1848, Triplett was considered the wealthiest man in Daviess County; Griffith was the second wealthiest.<sup>12</sup>

In 1834, Griffith and Triplett sold 795 acres of the original 1,600 acres of land to Lawrence T. Dade (1786-1842) for \$5,401.33. Dade was born in Virginia and appears to have moved to

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<sup>8</sup> David Smith, "Notes on Griffith Family," n.d. Daviess County Public Library, Kentucky Room, Surname Files; Daviess County Clerk's Office, Daviess County Deed Book E, Page 22; Garland W. Howard, "Haphazard (Mason-Triplett-Bell House)," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1975.), Section 8.

<sup>9</sup> David Smith, "Notes on Griffith Family," n.d. Daviess County Public Library, Kentucky Room, Surname Files; Garland W. Howard, "Haphazard (Mason-Triplett-Bell House)," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1975.), Section 8.

<sup>10</sup> Lee A. Dew, Dew, Aloma W., Owensboro, *The City on the Yellow Banks*, (Bowling Green, KY: Rivendell Publication, 1988), 31.

<sup>11</sup> Hugh O. Potter, *A History of Owensboro and Daviess County, Kentucky*, (Owensboro, KY: Daviess County Historical Society, 1974), n.p.

<sup>12</sup> Lee A. Dew, Dew, Aloma W., Owensboro, *The City on the Yellow Banks*, (Bowling Green, KY: Rivendell Publication, 1988), 31.

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Kentucky directly before buying the property. He was married to Anne Mayo and they had seven children.<sup>13</sup>

Lawrence T. Dade had a house built on the property, which was mentioned in a newspaper article in 1837. A newspaper article printed in the *Richmond Enquirer* (Richmond, Virginia) announced the wedding of Dade's daughter Lucy, "Married, on the 22d of December last, at Belle Forest, the seat of Gen. Lawrence T. Dade, her father, late of Orange county, Va., now near Yellow Banks, Ky., Mr. Junius B. Alexander, merchant of Brandenburg, Meade county, and descended from the ancient family of Effingham, in Prince William county, Va., to Miss Lucy Fitzhugh Dade."<sup>14</sup> Although it cannot be said for certain, "Belle Forest" appears to refer to this property, but perhaps not the specific house on the property now.

In 1850, Dade sold 278 acres of the property to his daughter Lucy Fitzhugh Dade (1816-1864) and son-in-law Junius Brutus Alexander (1814-1893) for \$5,682.00. The deed states that the property includes, "the present residence of the said Lawrence Dade."<sup>15</sup> Junius and Lucy had 10 children.<sup>16</sup> Junius B. Alexander, the first president of the Southern Bank of Kentucky, is listed in the 1850 Census as a 36-year-old farmer with a real estate value of \$23,500.00. This value appears to be comparable to his neighbors listed in the same census, but likely far above the average citizen of Daviess County. Junius is listed with his wife Lucy and seven children ranging in age from less than a year old to 11 years old.<sup>17</sup> The same year, Junius B. Alexander is listed in the U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedules with 17 enslaved African Americans on his farm.<sup>18</sup>

Junius and Lucy Alexander sold the property and additional tracts of land, totaling 325 acres to Llewellyn Powell in 1853 for \$13,000.00.<sup>19</sup> Powell owned the property for just two years before advertising it for sale (**Figure 2**). The advertisement includes a description of the 325-acre farm "well known as the late residence of Junius B. Alexander, Esq." The advertisement describes the farm including "50 acres heavily set in timothy, 35 acres in rye, and 30 acres in clover, 75 acres are in wood, and the remainder is in prime condition for the cultivation of tobacco, corn, hemp, or small grain." The advertisement also describes the "two-story brick dwelling-house, affording

<sup>13</sup> Daviess County Clerk's Office, Daviess County Deed Book E, Page 22; Dodd, Jordan R., Et Al.; *Early American Marriages: Virginia to 1850*; Publication Place: Bountiful, UT, USA; Publisher: Precision Indexing Publishers.

Accessed online August 2024 at: [https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/102618:3723?tid=&pid=&queryid=584977b0-9fd0-4f8d-9606-0e1fdca36c9f&\\_phsrc=wog184&\\_phstart=successSource](https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/102618:3723?tid=&pid=&queryid=584977b0-9fd0-4f8d-9606-0e1fdca36c9f&_phsrc=wog184&_phstart=successSource).

<sup>14</sup> "Marriages," *Richmond Enquirer*, February 4, 1837, 3, Accessed online August 2024 at: [www.newspapers.com/image/466119234](http://www.newspapers.com/image/466119234).

<sup>15</sup> Daviess County Clerk's Office, Daviess County Deed Book F, Page 327-328.

<sup>16</sup> "Alexander Family," William and Mary Quarterly, Vol 10, No 3, 184. Accessed online August 2024 at: <http://files.usgwararchives.net/va/schools/wmmary/a4250000.txt>.

<sup>17</sup> "Junius B Alexander in 1850 Federal Census, District No. 1, Daviess County, Kentucky" Ancestry.com, accessed August 2024 at: [https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/17030059:8054?tid=&pid=&queryid=191e37b9-acb7-4f46-9642-71b63a7ae729&\\_phsrc=dbn322&\\_phstart=successSource](https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/17030059:8054?tid=&pid=&queryid=191e37b9-acb7-4f46-9642-71b63a7ae729&_phsrc=dbn322&_phstart=successSource).

<sup>18</sup> "Junius B Alexander in 1850 Federal Census Slave schedules, District No. 1, Daviess County, Kentucky" Ancestry.com, accessed August 2024 at: [https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/90395508:8055?tid=&pid=&queryid=336729d7-1956-4999-8e0b-305e1343e273&\\_phsrc=dbn324&\\_phstart=successSource](https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/90395508:8055?tid=&pid=&queryid=336729d7-1956-4999-8e0b-305e1343e273&_phsrc=dbn324&_phstart=successSource).

<sup>19</sup> Daviess County Clerk's Office, Daviess County Deed Book L, Page 185-186.

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room enough for the comfortable accommodation of a large family, a kitchen and wash-house (also of brick)." The house was described as "recently constructed," as can be seen in **Figure 2** below. This reference, along with the forensic details on the building, lends credence to a construction date of circa 1850 for the house, presumably bankrolled by the Alexander family. Agricultural buildings listed in the advertisement included, "a fine large barn for stowing grain and hay with a large extent of stabling in the basement story...a tobacco-barn, a hay press, a corn-house, and carriage house."<sup>20</sup> None of these outbuildings appear to be extant.

**VALUABLE FARM AT PUBLIC SALE.**

 INTENDING to resume the practice of my profession, I will, on the 1st day of March next, sell to the highest bidder my Farm, in Daviess county, well known as the late residence of Junius B. Alexander, Esq. 

This farm, justly esteemed the choice farm in the choice part of the county, is situated about five miles from Owensboro' and 2 miles from the Ohio river. Of the 325 acres contained in the tract, 50 acres are heavily set in timothy, 35 acres in rye, and 30 acres in clover, 75 acres are in wood, and the remainder is in prime condition for the cultivation of tobacco, corn, hemp, or small grain. The land is of the best quality and capable of as large production as any in the State. The improvements of the finest order and but recently constructed, consist of two-story brick dwelling-house, affording room enough for the comfortable accommodation of a large family, a kitchen and wash-house (also of brick), negro-house, ice-house and smoke-house, a fine large barn for stowing grain and hay, with a large extent of stabling in the basement story. Besides these may be mentioned a tobacco-barn, a hay press, a corn-house, and carriage-house. The place is supplied with water from a spring, a well, two cisterns, and several ponds conveniently located for the accommodation of stock. And a thrifty young orchard, just reaching maturity, furnishes an abundance of choice fruit.

The situation is perfectly healthy, the neighborhood agreeable, and the roads excellent. Added to this, the town of Owensboro', at the convenient distance of five miles, offers the advantages of churches, schools and excellent society.

**Terms of Sale**—One-third cash; the remainder in one, two and three years, with interest from date; the deferred payments to be secured by a lien on the property.

At the same time and place, I will sell, on a credit of six months for all sums over \$20, with approved security, a quantity of household and kitchen furniture, farming implements, sows and calves of improved breed, sheep and hogs. Also my valuable Northern stallion "Morgan Junior," and a fine young jack just ready for service.

Further particulars at the sale.

**LLEWELLYN POWELL.**  
Owensboro', Daviess Co., Ky.—f&d&wid.

**Figure 2** 1855 Advertisement from *Louisville Daily Courier*.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> "Valuable Farm at Public Sale," *Louisville Daily Courier*, February 5, 1855, 4, Accessed online August 2024 at: [www.newspapers.com/image/119166596](http://www.newspapers.com/image/119166596).

<sup>21</sup> "Valuable Farm at Public Sale," *Louisville Daily Courier*, February 5, 1855, 4, Accessed online August 2024 at: [www.newspapers.com/image/119166596](http://www.newspapers.com/image/119166596).

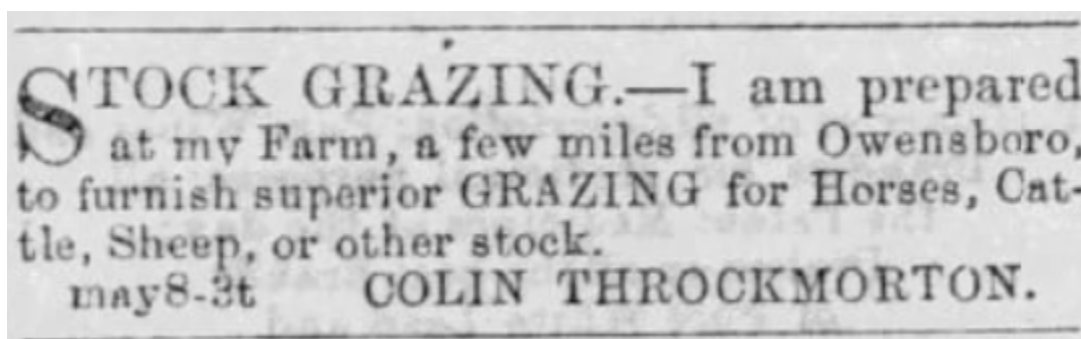
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Powell and his wife Sarah sold the farm to Major Ariss Throckmorton (1790-1867) in 1855. The property transferred to Throckmorton included 325 acres. Throckmorton purchased the property for \$13,000.<sup>22</sup> In 1861, Ariss Throckmorton transferred the property to his son Colonel Colin Throckmorton (1818-1878) and “his wife and children” through a trust for use during their lives for zero dollars. After the death of Colin and his wife the property was to go to their children.<sup>23</sup> At this time, Colin was married to Melvina Ward (1831-1897), sister of famed Louisville beauty Sallie Ward. Colin Throckmorton owned the house for 17 years until his death in 1878.<sup>24</sup> During Throckmorton’s ownership, he was a farmer, albeit of the gentleman farmer type. In 1867 he advertised grazing land for horses, cattle, sheep, or other stock (**Figure 3**).<sup>25</sup>



**Figure 3**      **Advertisement 1867, *Owensboro Monitor*.** <sup>26</sup>

Colin Throckmorton is listed in the 1870 census as a 51-year-old farmer with a real estate value of \$15,000.00 and a personal estate valued at \$4,150.00. He is listed with his wife Melvina, three children, and three additional residents who are listed with the surname Bell.<sup>27</sup>

Colin is also listed in the 1870 Census of Productions of Agriculture. The value of his land, the number of livestock he owned, his grain production, and his other products appear to be comparable with the neighboring farms also listed in the census. At this time, Throckmorton had horses, mules, milk cows, other cattle, sheep, and swine. He grew wheat, rye, Indian corn, oats, potatoes, hay, and tobacco. He produced wool, butter, and honey.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Daviess County Clerk’s Office, Daviess County Deed Book M, Page 132-133; “Ariss Throckmorton,” Find a Grave, Accessed online August 2024 at: <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/9324903:60525>.

<sup>23</sup> Daviess County Clerk’s Office, Daviess County Deed Book Q, Page 236.

<sup>24</sup> “Local News,” *Messenger and Examiner* (Owensboro), October 30, 1878, 3, Accessed August 2024 online at: [www.newspapers.com/image/375830295](http://www.newspapers.com/image/375830295).

<sup>25</sup> “New Advertisements,” *Owensboro Monitor*, May 8, 1867, 3, Accessed online August 2024 at: [www.newspapers.com/image/1008992609/](http://www.newspapers.com/image/1008992609/).

<sup>26</sup> “New Advertisements,” *Owensboro Monitor*, May 8, 1867, 3, Accessed online August 2024 at: [www.newspapers.com/image/1008992609/](http://www.newspapers.com/image/1008992609/).

<sup>27</sup> “Colin Throckmorton in 1870 Federal Census, Upper Town Precinct, Daviess County, Kentucky” Ancestry.com, accessed August 2024 at: [https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/17801636:7163?tid=&pid=&queryid=cda99b-60d6-446e-8ed8-b18496d89d1e&\\_phsrc=dbn331&\\_phstart=successSource](https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/17801636:7163?tid=&pid=&queryid=cda99b-60d6-446e-8ed8-b18496d89d1e&_phsrc=dbn331&_phstart=successSource).

<sup>28</sup> “Colin Throckmorton in U.S., Census Non-Population Schedules, Productions of Agriculture in Upperton Precinct, County of Daviess,” Ancestry.com, accessed August 2024 at: <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui->



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In 1875, Melvina Throckmorton purchased a lot with a residence in Owensboro. Although she is listed in the indenture as the wife of Colin Throckmorton, he is not included as a party of the transaction.<sup>29</sup> It is unclear if they planned to move into the city together, if Melvina was moving there on her own, or if she was purchasing it as an investment.

The 1876 Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, Kentucky lists C.S. Throckmorton as a farmer with a residence on the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Lewis Streets in Owensboro. He is depicted on the map of Uppertown Precinct No. 2 as owning 294 acres on Hardinsburg Road (current-day Highway 144) (Figure 4).<sup>30</sup> Colin Throckmorton died in 1878, still a resident of the area (Figure 5).<sup>31</sup>



Figure 4 1876 Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, Kentucky.<sup>32</sup>

content/view/277089:62398?tid=&pid=&queryid=c4e5bd6f-edc7-4e5c-ba07-f23c7c78df2f&\_phsrc=dbn327&\_phstart=successSource.

<sup>29</sup> Daviess County Clerk's Office, Daviess County Deed Book 31, Page 7.

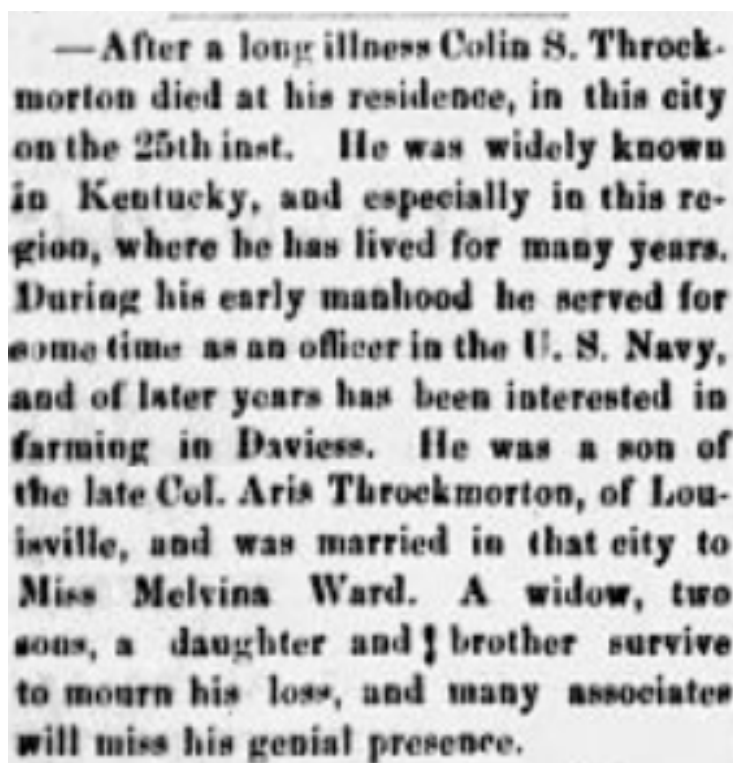
<sup>30</sup> Leo McDonough & Co., "An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County," 1876, (Reprinted, Utica, Kentucky: McDowell Publications, 1984), 29, 39.

<sup>31</sup> "Local News," *Messenger and Examiner* (Owensboro), October 30, 1878, 3, Accessed August 2024 online at: [www.newspapers.com/image/375830295](http://www.newspapers.com/image/375830295).

<sup>32</sup> Leo McDonough & Co., "An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County," 1876, (Reprinted, Utica, Kentucky: McDowell Publications, 1984), 29, 39.

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—After a long illness Colin S. Throckmorton died at his residence, in this city on the 25th inst. He was widely known in Kentucky, and especially in this region, where he has lived for many years. During his early manhood he served for some time as an officer in the U. S. Navy, and of later years has been interested in farming in Daviess. He was a son of the late Col. Aris Throckmorton, of Louisville, and was married in that city to Miss Melvina Ward. A widow, two sons, a daughter and 1 brother survive to mourn his loss, and many associates will miss his genial presence.

**Figure 5** Throckmorton's Death Announcement, *Messenger and Examiner* (Owensboro).<sup>33</sup>

Throckmorton's three children divided the acreage between themselves in 1879.<sup>34</sup> In 1882, two of Throckmorton's sons sold their shares to Samuel H. Harrison, including 225 acres for \$6,000.00.<sup>35</sup> Harrison died two years later. His real estate was sold at the courthouse door in August 1884. The advertisement for the sale states "it is known as the Throckmorton farm, and is one of the most valuable farms in the county." His widow, Josephine Phoebe Taylor Harrison (1845-1905) purchased 100 acres of his property, containing the house for \$5,500.00.<sup>36</sup>

Samuel's widow Josephine sold the property with 100 acres in 1887 to George W. Birk (1871-1932).<sup>37</sup> Birk was a tobacconist, according to the 1910 U.S. Federal Census. The industry listed for him is "buying tobacco."<sup>38</sup> Birk owned the property until 1913, when he sold it to Ruth M. Forgy (1877-1944). Forgy purchased three pieces of land from Birk, including the 100 acres "Lot

<sup>33</sup> "Local News," *Messenger and Examiner* (Owensboro), October 30, 1878, 3, Accessed August 2024 online at: [www.newspapers.com/image/375830295](http://www.newspapers.com/image/375830295).

<sup>34</sup> Daviess County Clerk's Office, Daviess County Deed Book 34, Page 302.

<sup>35</sup> Daviess County Clerk's Office, Daviess County Deed Book 38, Page 27.

<sup>36</sup> "The well-known Throckmorton farm," *The Owensboro Messenger*, August 19, 1884, 4, Accessed online August 2024 at: [www.newspapers.com/image/375915240](http://www.newspapers.com/image/375915240).

<sup>37</sup> Daviess County Clerk's Office, Daviess County Deed Book 93, Page 56.

<sup>38</sup> "George W Birk in 1910 Federal Census, 1<sup>st</sup> Magistrate District, Daviess County, Kentucky" Ancestry.com, accessed August 2024 at: [https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/8504675:7884?tid=&pid=&queryid=7b21895b-585c-4727-8628-9e92475e8b57&\\_phsrc=dbn354&\\_phstart=successSource](https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/8504675:7884?tid=&pid=&queryid=7b21895b-585c-4727-8628-9e92475e8b57&_phsrc=dbn354&_phstart=successSource).



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2” that appears to have contained the house. Forgy only owned the property for four years. She and her husband (J.N. Forgy) sold the 100-acre property to Owen Temple (1885-1941) in 1917.<sup>39</sup> Temple only owned the property for two years before he and his wife Lydia Smith Temple sold it to R. H. (Richard Hampton 1868-1956) Ford in 1919.<sup>40</sup> The property would remain in the Ford family from 1919 to 1946.

Richard Hampton Ford and his wife Minerva transferred the property to their son Ernest M. Ford (1896-1965) and his wife Irene Schenk Ford (1895-1961) in 1936.<sup>41</sup> At this point, the property was 60 acres.<sup>42</sup> Ernest and Irene had four children, including Wendell Hampton Ford (1924-2015) who became a State Senator for Kentucky in 1965, Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky in 1967, Governor of Kentucky in 1971, and a United States Senator in 1974, where he served four terms.<sup>43</sup> Ernest Ford operated a dairy farm on the property. Wendell helped his father when he lived there as a child.<sup>44</sup> An earlier house owned by the Ford family, where Wendell was born, is located in Owensboro at the corner of East 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Crittenden Street. An historical marker, placed by the Kentucky Historical Society and sponsored by the Daviess County Historical Society, is located near the house.

Ernest M. Ford and his wife Irene transferred the 60 acres with the residence to J.O. Ellis and Flora B. Ellis in 1946; the deed is nearly illegible but the description of tract appears to match that of the 1936 deed.<sup>45</sup> Only two years later, in 1948, Ellis transferred the property to Guy Moorman Deane (1901-1964) and Evelyn Siebe Deane (1909-1978).<sup>46</sup> At the time, Guy owned and operated the Daviess County Locker Service, a local processing and cooling/freezing storage facility for families who raised and stored their own meat -- among several business ventures. Guy knew very little about farming, so he immersed himself in the University of KY (UK) Extension Service and became known as an expert on “foraging,” eventually hosting multiple “UK field days” at the farm on the topic.

Guy Deane eventually bought additional tracts to amass over 200 acres of land. He raised hogs and cattle, breeding and raising around 100 calves a year.<sup>47</sup> After Guy’s death in 1964, Evelyn lived in the home and managed the farm through her son Silas Deane, Sr and daughter Deanna Miller. Following Evelyn’s death in 1978, Silas, a UK Agriculture graduate, moved into the home. Silas, Sr. turned out to be quite adept at farming, managing the farm while also working as a region-wide auctioneer and farm realty expert eventually founding his own firm, Alliance Auction and Realty Company. Silas, Sr. helped introduce no-till farming to western Kentucky with the first demonstration plots on this farm. He improved his own farm and environment by

<sup>39</sup> Daviess County Clerk’s Office, Daviess County Deed Book 98, Page 504.

<sup>40</sup> Daviess County Clerk’s Office, Daviess County Deed Book 100, Page 636.

<sup>41</sup> Daviess County Clerk’s Office, Daviess County Deed Book 139, Page 549.

<sup>42</sup> Daviess County Clerk’s Office, Daviess County Deed Book 139, Page 549.

<sup>43</sup> “Wendell Ford a Life of Service,” *Messenger-Inquirer* (Owensboro), January 23, 2015, A2, Accessed online August 2024 at: [www.newspapers.com/image/46306471/?match=1&terms=wendell%20ford](http://www.newspapers.com/image/46306471/?match=1&terms=wendell%20ford).

<sup>44</sup> Silas E. Deane, personal communication, August 20, 2024.

<sup>45</sup> Daviess County Clerk’s Office, Daviess County Deed Book 173, Page 276-277.

<sup>46</sup> Daviess County Clerk’s Office, Daviess County Deed Book 187, Page 180.

<sup>47</sup> Margaret McKinney, “Historic Home in Kentucky,” August 26, 1973, B1, Sunday Courier, Evansville, From the files of Silas Deane, II.

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cutting soil erosion by 75% which resulted in increased production by over 140%. At 79, he continues to manage the farm today.

In 2022 Silas Deane, Jr. facilitated and consolidated the purchase of the house, with a desire to refurbish the home. Silas Deane, Jr. is also a UK graduate. Silas Deane, Jr.'s career spans working in Washington, DC for then-Senator and later Vice President Al Gore, Jr. and working in the U.S. House of Representatives. Silas Deane, Jr. also was named to the UK Business Hall of Fame in April 2025. He is only the second Owensboro native to hold that distinction in the school's 100-year-old history.<sup>48</sup>

Today the house, although adjacent to other Deane family members, is located on a 7.331-acre parcel. It currently is owned by Deerwood Valley, LLC and Silas Deane, Jr., the grandson of Guy M. Deane.<sup>49</sup>

### Exterior Description of the House

The house has a rectangular footprint and was constructed around 1850. The house displays characteristics of the Greek Revival architectural style (**Plate 1**). It is oriented west. It is a side gable, five-bay, two-story, building with a fenestration pattern of W-W-D-W-W on both the first and second levels of the façade. The building is constructed of brick, laid in running bond on the façade and rear and seven-course common bond on the gable sides. The house has a parged brick foundation with a narrow crawl space beneath. The roof of the house is clad in asphalt shingles.



**Plate 1** Façade of house looking northeast. (Photo 0001).

### Front (West Elevation)

The façade of the house is characterized by a five-bay appearance and a two-story partial length portico that was constructed circa 1940. The central entry of the first level of the façade has multi-light sidelights and a multi-light transom, constructed circa 1920-1940 in the Colonial Revival Style (**Plate 2**). The single-leaf door has six panels and is solid wood; it is sheltered by a

<sup>48</sup> Silas E. Deane, personal communication, April 29, 2025.

<sup>49</sup> Daviess County Clerk's Office, Daviess County Deed Book 1088, Page 695.

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eight-pane glazed wooden exterior storm door. A horizontal wood panel is centered directly above the door resembling a lintel but appears to be decorative. It has four square wood panels evenly spaced above the entry. Ghosting on the brick on both sides of the entry indicates perhaps there was an earlier wood surround that possibly tied into the horizontal wood panel or a frontispiece. The second story entry features a porch that projects above the first-floor entry (**Plate 3**). The porch is supported by carved wood brackets and features a wood Chippendale style railing. The second-floor entry is similar to the first-level entry, with sidelights and transom. The single-leaf door has four panels and is solid wood. The second-floor entry is sheltered by double-leaf screened doors. The screened doors are flanked by flush wood piers topped with square Doric capitals. Similar engaged piers are located opposite the sidelights. The second-floor entry is topped by what appears to be a lintel, but the material could not be discerned.<sup>50</sup>

Alterations to the house since its initial construction include modifications to the facade. The two-story, frame Colonial Revival porch is a later alteration to the house. This porch was likely added in the mid-twentieth century, as discussed below. Similarly, the second level entry porch, supported by carved wood brackets and featuring a wood Chippendale style railing, appears to have been appended in the early twentieth century. The multi-light transom and sidelights of the first and second level entries also appear to date to a later period. A photograph from 1944 (**Figure 22**) indicates that the sidelights at the first-level entry were altered after their original installation. Based on material and style, these changes import features of the Colonial Revival style, dating to the early twentieth century, during the Ford family's tenure on the property.

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<sup>50</sup> Entry to the second level porch for more detailed photos of the exterior of the door and its surround were not permitted due to safety concerns.

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**Plate 2      Façade entry, first level. (Photo 0002).**

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**Plate 3      Façade entries, first and second levels. (Photo 0003).**

Windows throughout the façade of the house, with the exception of the entry sidelights and transoms, have 6/6 simulated divided light (SDL) vinyl sashes, stone sills, stone lintels, and louvered wood shutters. A circa 1940 porch spans the width of the central three bays of the façade and is topped by a poured concrete cap. Three concrete steps access the porch and it is supported on a rusticated concrete block foundation. Four square wood piers extend from the concrete porch to the lintel level of the second story windows and are topped by a gable front pediment that is clad in vinyl siding. The roof of the porch meets but does not cross the central ridgeline of the house. A narrow wood cornice board extends on either side of the porch roof projection.



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**Side (North and South) Elevations**

Both gable sides have interior brick chimneys and are void of openings. Brick on both gable sides is laid in seven-course common bond. Both gable ends feature vinyl clad raking cornice boards (**Plate 4** and **Plate 5**).



**Plate 4** North elevation, looking southwest. (Photo 0004).

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**Plate 5**      **South elevation, looking northeast, attached 1980s bathroom addition to right. (Photo 0005).**

### **Rear (East) Elevation**

The rear of the Greek Revival mass of the house has a central entry on the first floor, on the opposite end of the hallway from the first-level façade entry. Currently that entry provides access to a rear sunroom addition. There are two doors north of the rear central entry. One has double-leaf multi-light interior doors and provides access to a rear dining room addition; the northernmost one has a single-leaf door and provides exterior access (Plate 4). South of the central entry are two additional entries. One entry provides access to the sunroom addition; the southernmost entry provides access to a rear bathroom addition. There are four second level rear windows; these windows are evenly spaced like those on the façade. Windows on the second

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level of the rear of the house are similar to those windows on the façade, with 6/6 SDL sashes, stone sills, and stone lintels. The rear windows do not have shutters. An entry centered on the second level of the rear of the house currently provides access to an upstairs bathroom addition. This mid-twentieth century bathroom addition extends outside of the footprint of the original Greek Revival mass of the house. It is unclear if this opening originally existed as a window or door. Two rows of corbeled brick stretchers extend along the rear of the house at the cornice line.



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### Interior Description of the House

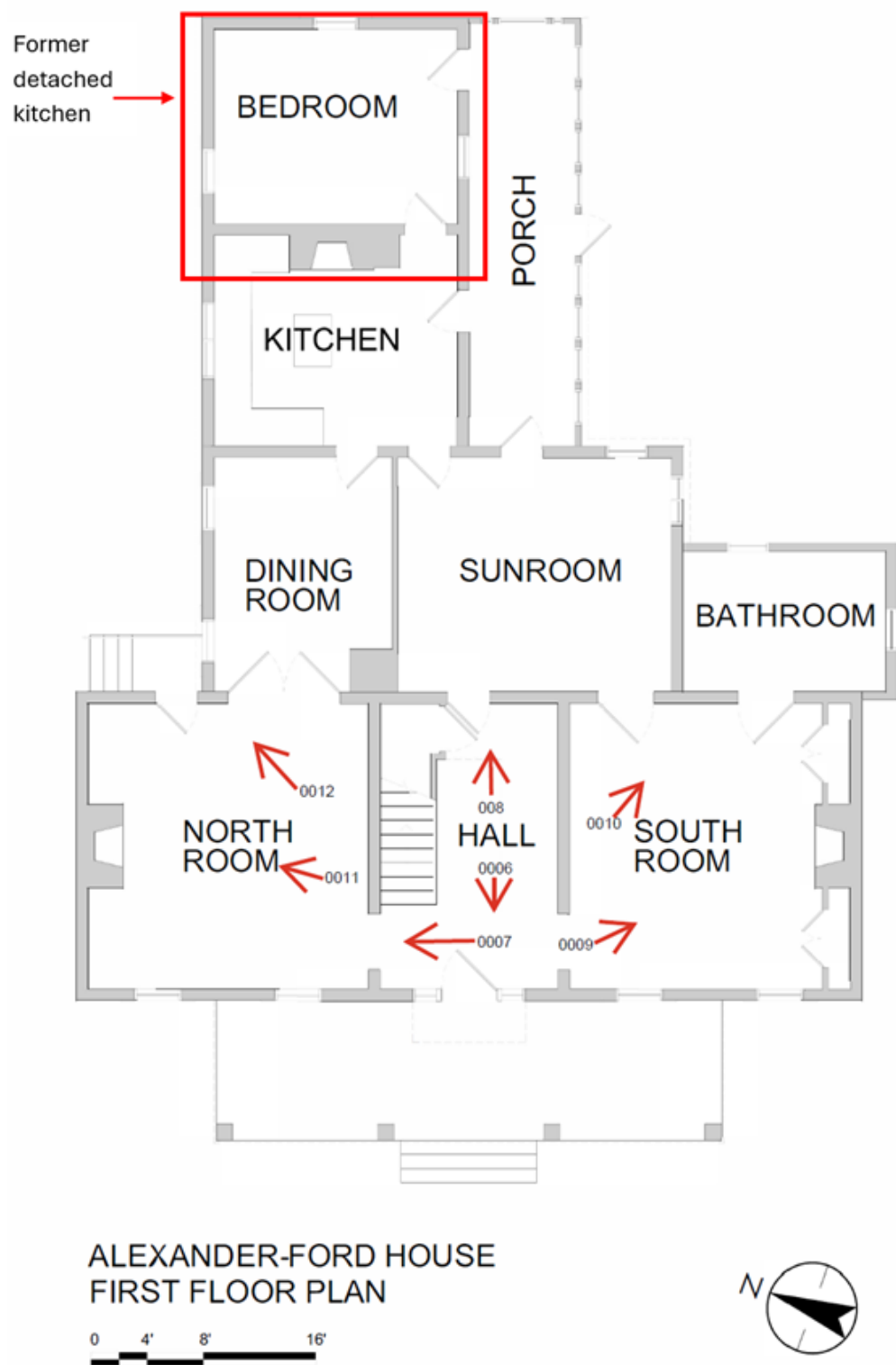


Figure 6 First-Floor Plan with Photo Locations.

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The first-floor entry of the house opens into the central hallway (**Figure 6, Plate 6, Plate 7, and Plate 8**). Doors to the right and left off of the hallway lead to the north and south rooms. Straight ahead is a centered door that leads into the rear sunroom addition. Along the north wall of the hallway is a staircase that leads upstairs. A small bathroom is located beneath the staircase. All entries in the hallway, with the exception of the bathroom, have battered casings with eared architraves.



**Plate 6**      **First level, façade entry. (Photo 0006).**

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**Plate 7** First level, entry to north room, and staircase. (Photo 0007).



**Plate 8** First level, central hallway and staircase, looking through to sunroom addition, door left accesses bathroom beneath stairway. (Photo 0008).

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The south room has a fireplace with a marble mantle that features drop pendants. A narrow band of egg and dart molding spans between the pendants (**Plate 9** and **Plate 10**). The fireplace is flanked by presses. Similar to the hallway, doorways in this room have battered casings with eared architraves. Windows in this room also feature similar trim, which is characteristic of the Greek Revival style. This room also features paneled wainscoting. Although some of the wainscoting appears to be original, some more modern embellishments have been added through the use of wood and resin appliques. Plaster has deteriorated in one area of the room and reveals brick directly beneath.



**Plate 9** First level, south room with marble fireplace mantle, presses, and wood wainscoting.



**Plate 10** First level, south room. Left door to sunroom addition, right door to bathroom addition.



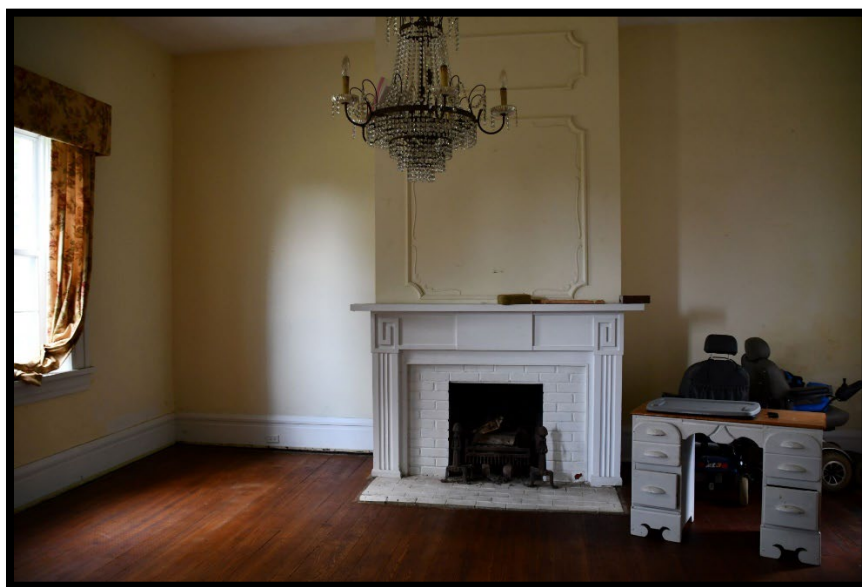
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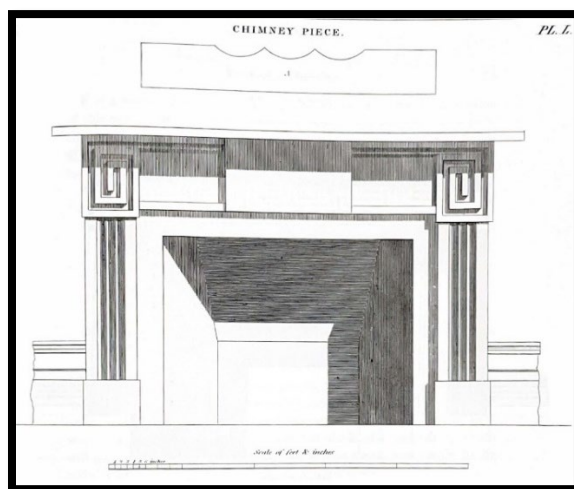
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The room north of the central hallway also has a fireplace (**Plate 11, Plate 12, and Figure 7**). The fireplace is brick, with wood fluted pilasters and a wide frieze that features geometric detailing on each end. The geometric detailing is characteristic of the Greek Revival style and was widely used based on builders' guides, specifically Asher Benjamin's 1830 and 1844 *Practical House Carpenter*.<sup>51</sup> Unlike the south room, this room does not feature wainscoting or presses. Perhaps the wainscoting was removed, or this room originally served as a less formal space.



**Plate 11** First floor, north room, fireplace. (Photo 0011).



**Figure 7** Chimney Piece from Asher Benjamin's 1830 and 1844 *Practical House Carpenter*.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Asher Benjamin, *The Architect or Practical House Carpenter*, (Boston, Massachusetts: L. Coffin, 1830, revised 1844), Plate 50.

<sup>52</sup> Asher Benjamin, *The Architect or Practical House Carpenter*, (Boston, Massachusetts: L. Coffin, 1830, revised 1844), Plate 50.

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**Plate 12** First floor, north room, double leaf door to dining room addition, single leaf door to exterior. (Photo 0012).

The north room has two doorways on the east wall. One double leaf door leads to the dining room addition. The other door leads to the exterior. Both doors have trim that does not exactly match, but closely replicates the architraves and casings of other entries throughout the original mass of the house. Windows in this room have trim that matches that of the south room.

From the central hallway, the staircase follows the wall upstairs, then turns south at a small landing to access the second floor. A door at the top of the stairs on the rear wall of the house accesses the rear bathroom addition. The floorplan for the second level is the same as the first, with a central hallway and a north and south room. The second level façade entry is similar to the first level, with battered casings and eared architraves (**Plate 13**).

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**Plate 13      Second floor, façade entry. (Photo 0013).**



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Both the north and south room on the second floor feature fireplaces flanked by closets (**Plate 14**). Windows and doors throughout the north room have battered casings with eared architraves. Both fireplaces have square pilasters and a simple frieze with mantel. The south room closets have battered casings, but corner blocks instead of ears within the architrave.



**Plate 14** Second floor, north room fireplace and flanking closets. (Photo 0014).

### Rear additions to the house

Additions to the rear of the house made during the period of significance include a first-floor one-story dining room, a first-floor one-story kitchen, a first-floor one-story sunroom, and an upstairs bathroom. According to the current owners, prior to their ownership (before 1948), the house reportedly had a detached brick kitchen with a breezeway connecting it to the house. This brick kitchen appears to have been attached to the house with two small additions (kitchen and dining room) over time (**Plate 15** and **Figure 6**). The easternmost brick portion of the rear addition to the house (east of the chimney) currently incorporates a bedroom on the main level. The interior walls of this bedroom have been covered with wallpaper. A fireplace in the basement below this bedroom may be an indication that this was used as a detached kitchen at one time (**Plate 16** and **Plate 17**). The firebox in the basement (on the east elevation of the chimney) has been infilled, but the brick arch is still evident. The opposite side of the fireplace in the basement (on the west elevation of the chimney) has what appears to be a warming rack, but the brick has been repointed and altered making it difficult to discern the original configuration.



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**Plate 15** Rear additions, looking south, detached kitchen located east (left) of chimney, current kitchen and dining room located west (right) of chimney, second level bathroom visible on rear of house. (Photo 0015).



**Plate 16** Basement level of detached kitchen, fireplace (on the east elevation of the chimney) enclosed but lintel visible. (Photo 0016).

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**Plate 17** Basement level of detached kitchen, warming rack (on the west elevation of the chimney), note repointed brick. (Photo 0017).

A rear addition west of the chimney currently serves as the main kitchen in the house. This addition, which likely (along with the dining room addition described below) enclosed a breezeway between the house and detached kitchen. The current kitchen was in place prior to when the current owners' family acquired the property in 1948. This addition likely dates to the early twentieth century. The kitchen addition incorporates a small fireplace on the west elevation of the reported detached kitchen wall, which is directly above the warming rack area of the basement. The current fireplace in the kitchen area has been heavily modified and likely was not originally used as a kitchen fireplace for the reported detached kitchen.

West of the kitchen is a dining room addition that attaches to the rear of the original mass of the Greek Revival house. The dining room has double-leaf, multi-light doors that access the original room of the house north of the central hallway. This addition was in place prior to when the current owners' family acquired the property in 1948. The dining room addition likely dates to the early twentieth century.

A sunroom that has also served as a bedroom is attached to the south side of the dining room addition. The sunroom attaches to the rear of the original mass of the Greek Revival house through a door into the central hallway as well as a door into the room south of the central hallway. The sunroom also attaches to the west elevation of an enclosed porch off the kitchen (described in the section below, Changes to the Property Since the Period of Significance) (**Plate**



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**18, Plate 19, and Plate 20).** This addition was in place prior to when the current owners' family acquired the property in 1948. The sunroom addition likely dates to the early twentieth century.

A bathroom was added to the rear of the second level of the house during the mid-twentieth century. It is accessible by a door located in the second level central hallway directly at the top of the staircase (Plate 20). This bathroom addition is outside of the original footprint of the house and was added prior to when the current owners' family acquired the property in 1948.



**Plate 18** Shed-roof porch enclosing south elevations of detached kitchen and current kitchen. (Photo 0018).

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**Plate 19      Rear sunroom addition, enclosed porch to the north (right), bathroom addition to the south (left). (Photo 0019).**

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**Plate 20** Rear enclosed porch along south elevation of detached kitchen, upper bathroom addition visible, note aluminum carport. (Photo 0020).

### **Other Resources within the National Register Boundary**

In addition to the house, there is a well, a garage, a shed, a carport, and two barns located within the National Register boundary (**Figure 8, Plate 21** through **Plate 25**). These resources are not eligible under an architectural context, but several might be considered contributing under an agricultural context. In particular, the well, the garage, and barns may be eligible as important contributing resources, should an agricultural context and analysis be appended to this nomination at a future date.



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**Legend**  
[Red line] Alexander-Ford House NRHP Boundary  
Field Site  
● Contributing  
● Non-Contributing

0 375 750  
Feet  
(At original document size of 8.5x11)  
1:9,000



Project Location  
Daviess Co., KY  
7.5' Topographical Quadrangle Owensboro East, KY (1981)

Title  
**Alexander-Ford House (DA 132)**

5785 Highway 144  
Owensboro, KY 42303

Lat. 37.802941, Long. -87.015683

Disclaimer: This document has been prepared based on information provided by others as cited in the Notes section. Stantec has not verified the accuracy and/or completeness of this information and shall not be responsible for any errors or omissions which may be incorporated herein as a result. Stantec assumes no responsibility for data supplied in electronic format, and the recipient accepts full responsibility for verifying the accuracy and completeness of the data.

**Figure 8 Resources Within the National Register Boundary.**

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A- Brick Well (NC Structure)

The brick well likely dates to the construction period of the house and is located approximately 40 feet north of the house.

B- Garage (NC Building)

This small one-story frame garage was constructed circa 1925. The front gable building is clad in rolled asphalt sheathing and has a corrugated metal roof.

C- Shed (NC Building)

This frame one-story building is a circa 2020 prefabricated shed, used for storage. The front gable building is clad in vinyl siding and has no foundation wall.

D- Carport (NC Building)

The aluminum carport, located directly east of the house, was erected during the past ten years. It has an aluminum frame and a metal panel roof.

E- Stock Barn/Dairy Barn and Silo (NC Building/Structure)

This transverse frame stock barn was constructed circa 1940. The frame barn is clad in vertical boards/metal panels and has a metal sliding door on its central bay. The interior features hay feeding racks and a hay fork track, used to load hay and feed into the top floor for feed storage. A circa 1960 silo is situated directly adjacent (west) to provide modern feed storage facilities for the stock and dairy operations.

F- Tobacco Barn (NC Building)

This transverse frame crib barn was constructed circa 1940. The frame barn is clad in vertical wood boards and has an open side aisle addition for equipment storage on its west elevation. The building sits on concrete posts and has interior racks for drying tobacco.



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**Plate 21**      **Brick well (NC structure) north of house.**



**Plate 22**      **Garage (NC building), located south of house, looking northeast.**



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**Plate 23** Garage and frame shed (NC buildings) located south of house, looking south.



**Plate 24** Barn and silo (NC building) located south of house, looking east.

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**Plate 25      Barn (NC building) located west of house, looking southeast.**

### **Changes to the property since the Period of Significance**

The Alexander-Ford Farmhouse has experienced few modifications to its setting and physical features since the period of significance. The setting remains rural, agricultural in nature. The surrounding farm remains in production, albeit with row crops, and not as pastureland for dairy and tobacco fields as it would have been at the end of the period of significance. The farmstead includes fence rows, farm roads, and vegetation. Only two domestic buildings were demolished by the Deane family in the late twentieth century. One building was a frame house used by enslaved people and/or tenant farmers. This building was located adjacent to the main house. There was also a tenant house in the agricultural fields to the west of the main house that was also demolished during around the same time. According to the Deane family, these buildings were both in poor condition and suffered storm damage. In addition, a brick bank barn, located north of the house, burned during the 1960s. Only portions of a brick wall and the banked earth adjacent to it remain.

Other alterations since the period of significance include the enclosed shed-roof porch along the south elevations of the joined detached kitchen and current kitchen (Plate 18). This porch was open when the Deane family acquired the property. They enclosed it with windows during the 1990s, creating the enclosed porch area.

The newest addition to the house is an additional first-floor bathroom that was added in the 1980s. The bathroom is attached to the east (rear) elevation of the original Greek Revival mass



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of the house. This addition also is attached to the south side of the sunroom (Plate 19). The bathroom is accessed through the southernmost door in the room south of the central hallway of the Greek Revival mass (Plate 10).

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

### Criteria Considerations

- ☐ 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

Architecture

### Period of Significance

Ca. 1850 and Ca. 1940

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**Significant Dates**

Ca. 1850

Ca. 1940

**Significant Person**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown



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## Statement of Significance

### Summary Paragraph

The Alexander-Ford Farmhouse (DA-132) meets National Register Criterion C in the Area of Significance of Architecture within the contexts of “Greek Revival Style Architecture within Daviess County, Kentucky, 1830-1860” and “Colonial Revival Style and the Genteel South in the United States, 1880-1955.” The house is an important example of a locally significant farmhouse with two major building campaigns that led to its present appearance as a five-bay Greek Revival Style farmhouse with Colonial Revival Style façade updates. The importance of the architecture is directly related to its setting within the Old River Road area of Daviess County, which is an important nineteenth and twentieth century genteel agricultural landscape, discussed below. The farmhouse was constructed circa 1850 at this location to participate in this elite environment and then updated again in the early twentieth century to recreate an older, albeit nostalgic Southern Colonial ideal, as discussed below. The house was not the sole property in this area that did this. The context identifies several farmhouses which were revised during this time to include Colonial Revival style façade revisions; however, none of them were quite as successful in conveying this ideal as the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse. Its two-story porch with second-story balcony successfully tells the story of a Greek Revival house with important genteel associations that was revised in the early twentieth century to continue association with those ideas, which by that time, had become colored by nostalgia.

### Historic Context: Greek Revival Style Domestic Architecture within Daviess County, Kentucky, 1830-1860

#### *Background: Old River Road in Daviess County, Kentucky*

As described above in Section 7, the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse was constructed and updated in an area known as Old River Road or the Beech Woods.<sup>53</sup> Old River Road appears to correspond to what was known as Hawesville Road (KY 405) and sections of Hardinsburg Road (Highway 144) near Thruston. The area was historically characterized by its cultured inhabitants, large commodious houses, significant farm acreage, and scenic environs near the Ohio River. While no nineteenth century accounts have been uncovered of the importance of its early settlement, it is clear that by the early twentieth century, this storied past had achieved epic proportions. A 1931 newspaper article observed that, “But let it be recorded for the inspiration of future generations that Owensboro, KY., in the long ago, had a settlement that for beautiful women and gallant men rivaled even the celebrated communities above mentioned [Savannah, GA and Charleston, SC].”<sup>54</sup> The news article goes on to wax poetic about the bucolic beauty of the area and its important occupants, which included the Throckmorton family, who lived on the Alexander-Ford farmstead (DA-132); the Crutcher farm (DA-142), constructed by Thomas Clay, brother of General Green Clay who settled in the area circa 1810; the estate of William Bell (DA-157), known as “Haphazard,” whose residence was constructed, in part, by Owensboro land

<sup>53</sup> A few news articles refer to the area as Beech Woods. According to a 1995 account, the countryside beyond Yellow Creek as known for its majestic ben trees and fine plantations. See Glenn Hodges, “Community History,” *Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer*, February 14, 1995, 3.

<sup>54</sup> Bransford, “Old River Road of Ong Ago Recalled...” *Owensboro Messenger & Inquirer*, June 14, 1931.

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speculator, Robert Triplett; the farm of Colonel Algernon S Thruston, of whom the community of Thruston was so-named; and Colonel Justus Varien who came to Daviess County in the 1840s and constructed his Greek Revival style house (DA-140) adjacent to the Alexander-Ford farmstead.

If it is accepted that location is one of the most influential aspects of real estate desirability, then this location was among the most sought-after nineteenth century addresses in Daviess County for the fashionably wealthy. According to early twentieth century accounts, this stretch of road was celebrated for its nineteenth century genteel status as an "old road...lined on either side with majestic forest trees, making it one of the most beautiful throughfares the best traveled person has even seen... Let me venture the assertion that no strip of ground a quarter of a mile wide and five miles long in the United States afforded habitation for a greater number of distinguished men... There lived on this small strip, one United States district attorney, one member of congress, one officer, each in the United States army and navy, two United States ministers to foreign countries, three bank presidents, two colonels in foreign wars, one cabinet officer, one circuit judge, and one United States senator."<sup>55</sup> The landscape and its associated residents were described in local newspapers in glowing terms as Beech Woods, which also referred to a house, for the area's tree-lined roads, with "plantations... owned by wealthy, intelligent people, who were famous for their hospitality..."<sup>56</sup>

Into this setting, the Alexander-Ford farmhouse was constructed and henceforth updated with a fashionable early twentieth century style.

*Background: Greek Revival Style*

The Greek Revival Style, which emerged in the early-to-mid-nineteenth century, was particularly influential in the United States during the 1830s through the early 1860s. This style, which rapidly supplanted the late-Federal Style, was part of a broader movement that embraced classical Greek elements. For Americans in their young country, the Greek Revival symbolized the values essential to a new country: democracy, civic virtue, and the ideals of ancient Greece.<sup>57</sup> Greek Revival Style was particularly popular in areas that were experiencing permanent Euro-American settlement during the 1830s through the 1850s. The style was brought with settlers moving west to Kentucky, Tennessee, and the Midwest. According to Virginia and Lee McAlester in *A Field Guide to American Houses*, "the largest surviving concentrations of Greek Revival houses are found today in those states with the largest population growth during the period from 1820 to 1860. These are, in descending order of growth: New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Virginia, Massachusetts, Indiana, Missouri, Tennessee, Alabama, Wisconsin, Georgia, Mississippi, Michigan, Texas, **Kentucky**, and Louisiana."<sup>58</sup>

<sup>55</sup> C.W. Bransford, "'Old River Road' of Long Ago Recalled..." *Messenger & Inquirer*, June 14, 1931.

<sup>56</sup> No author, "Beech Woods of the Past: Section of Daviess County Which Was Once Very Famous," *Owensboro Inquirer*, April 10, 1910.

<sup>57</sup> Kentucky contains many examples of transitional Federal-to Greek Revival architecture, constructed mostly in the 1830s into the 1840s. In some instances, an earlier Federal period house was updated with Greek Revival details, but there are examples of custom-built examples that incorporated both styles in one construction period.

<sup>58</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 182.

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According to Clay Lancaster, in *Antebellum Architecture of Kentucky*, the Greek Revival Style differed from previous architecture in a significant way. Unlike its predecessor the Federal Style, which developed out of characteristics of the colonial Georgian Style, Greek Revival was relatively novel. It is weightier and, as Lancaster describes, more masculine than the Federal Style. The Greek Revival Style incorporated new elements in architectural motifs such as wide architraves and frieze boards, massive columns, and other bulky components. Rather than slowly evolving out of the Federal Style, Greek Revival incorporated new components that replaced the intricate fanlights and carved elements of its predecessor. As Lancaster explains, “the architectural theme of the outer building infused itself through the interior. The objectives were bigness, spaciousness, graciousness, security, and consistency.”<sup>59</sup>

The availability of architectural books that emphasized the Greek Revival Style had a significant impact on both the design of domestic architecture and the widespread adoption of the style. The first reference work widely available to ordinary builders and carpenters was John Haviland’s three volume work, *The Builder’s Assistant* (1818-1821). This was followed by the more influential works of Asher Benjamin and Minard Lafever.<sup>60</sup>

The Greek Revival Style first appeared in Benjamin’s sixth edition of *The American Builder’s Companion*, published in 1827. This was followed by a more thorough treatment of the architectural style in Benjamin’s *The Practical House Carpenter: Being a Complete Development of the Grecian Orders of Architecture* in 1830. This book focused on discrete architectural details (doorways, lintels, dormers, fireplaces, friezes, etc.) and, although the 1830 book lacked house designs and elevations, it was very popular with eighteen editions brought to print through 1857.

Minard Lafever published his *The Modern Builder’s Guide* in 1833. Unlike Benjamin’s books, Lafever included both discrete architectural details as well as two complete house designs. This book proved to be quite popular, resulting in seven editions printed through 1855. Lafever also published *The Beauties of Modern Architecture* in 1833 which included elevations and views of various ancient Greek temples. This 1833 book resulted in five editions that were in print through 1855.

Both Benjamin’s and Lafever’s books were specifically intended for practical use by carpenters and builders and can be credited with spreading the popularity of the Greek Revival style throughout the country. This credit is owed based on the large number of book editions and copies sold and is evident in the many constructed designs illustrated in the book plates.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Clay Lancaster, *Antebellum Architecture of Kentucky*, (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 182.

<sup>60</sup> John Haviland, *The Builder’s Assistant, Containing the Five Orders of Architecture*, (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: 1818, 1819, 1821); Asher Benjamin, *The American Builder’s Companion, or a System of Architecture Particularly Adapted to the Present Style of Building*, (1806, 1814, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. 1827) (New York, New York: Dover Publishing, Inc., (reprint) 1969); Asher Benjamin, *Practice of Architecture*, (Boston, Massachusetts: Author and Carter Hendee & Company, 1827, 1833); Minard Lafever’s *The Modern Builder’s Guide*, (New York, New York, 1833).

<sup>61</sup> Daniel D. Reiff, *Houses from Books – Treatises, Pattern Books, and Catalogs in American Architecture, 1738-1950: A History and Guide*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 46.

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In Kentucky, the Greek Revival style was adopted by both urban and rural communities, particularly during a period of economic growth and social change. The state's rich agricultural economy, driven by tobacco, hemp, as well as fine stock and horse breeding, allowed for prosperity that supported the construction of grand houses and public buildings. Wealthy landowners, merchants, and other elite members of society in rural Kentucky sought to emulate the grandeur of classical architecture to symbolize their status and embrace the democratic ideals associated with the American Republic. According to Talbot Hamlin's history of Greek Revival architecture in America, "...in Kentucky, as elsewhere, the Greek Revival appears as the great unifying American style of its time...it became the authentic voice of the new country west of the Alleghenies as it was the expression of the best thought of the older regions farther east."<sup>62</sup>

In rural Kentucky, Greek Revival houses were often large one or two-story buildings with one-to-two-story porches that offered both aesthetic appeal and practical benefits, providing shade in the hot summers. The use of local materials, like limestone and brick, was common, and the style was often adapted to fit the regional climate and available resources. While Greek Revival architecture was more prominent in wealthier areas, its influence permeated Kentucky's vernacular architecture. For smaller houses, the style might manifest in simpler elements like the use of columns on the porch or pediments above doors, rather than in grand, full-scale temple-like façades. These adaptations were often a way for Kentuckians to participate in national cultural trends while respecting modest budgets and the limited design vocabulary of local builders.

*Previously Recorded Greek Revival Style Domestic Architecture in Daviess County, Kentucky*

The KHC/SHPO survey database was queried to develop a list of comparable properties for the Alexander-Ford farmhouse and to develop an idea of how the Greek Revival Style, especially those examples with Colonial Revival Style façade alterations, was executed in Daviess County and Owensboro.<sup>63</sup> As this property is both a Greek Revival house and a house with Colonial Revival Style details, properties in both style categories were examined to hone down a list of approximately 62 resources. The original query contained all buildings with Greek or Colonial Revival Style coding. From this list, ten buildings were removed that were not domestic architecture, which included primarily churches, a college building, two commercial buildings, and a rectory. Further edits were made to the list removing federal period houses, mistakenly coded as Greek Revival or Colonial Revival, and Greek Revival Style houses with Italianate details. The final list was culled for examples of two-story, central passage Greek Revival Style houses with Colonial Revival Style updates. Some examples in this category were difficult to see clearly, due to the quality and size of older contact prints. These examples were removed from consideration due to a lack of visual evidence. The list included below contains central passage two-story Greek Revival Style houses that are similar in appearance to the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse that may or may not have Colonial Revival details. Interestingly, the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse was miscoded as Colonial Revival, likely due to the imposing two-story Colonial

<sup>62</sup> Talbot Hamlin, *Greek Revival Architecture in America*, (New York, New York: Dover Publication, 1944), 249.

<sup>63</sup> It should be noted that the style categorization was often not reviewed prior to its entry into the KHC/SHPO database which results in many buildings that are not examples of the style

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Revival porch. The final list of comparable properties is included below in **Table 1** and shown in map format in **Figure 9**.

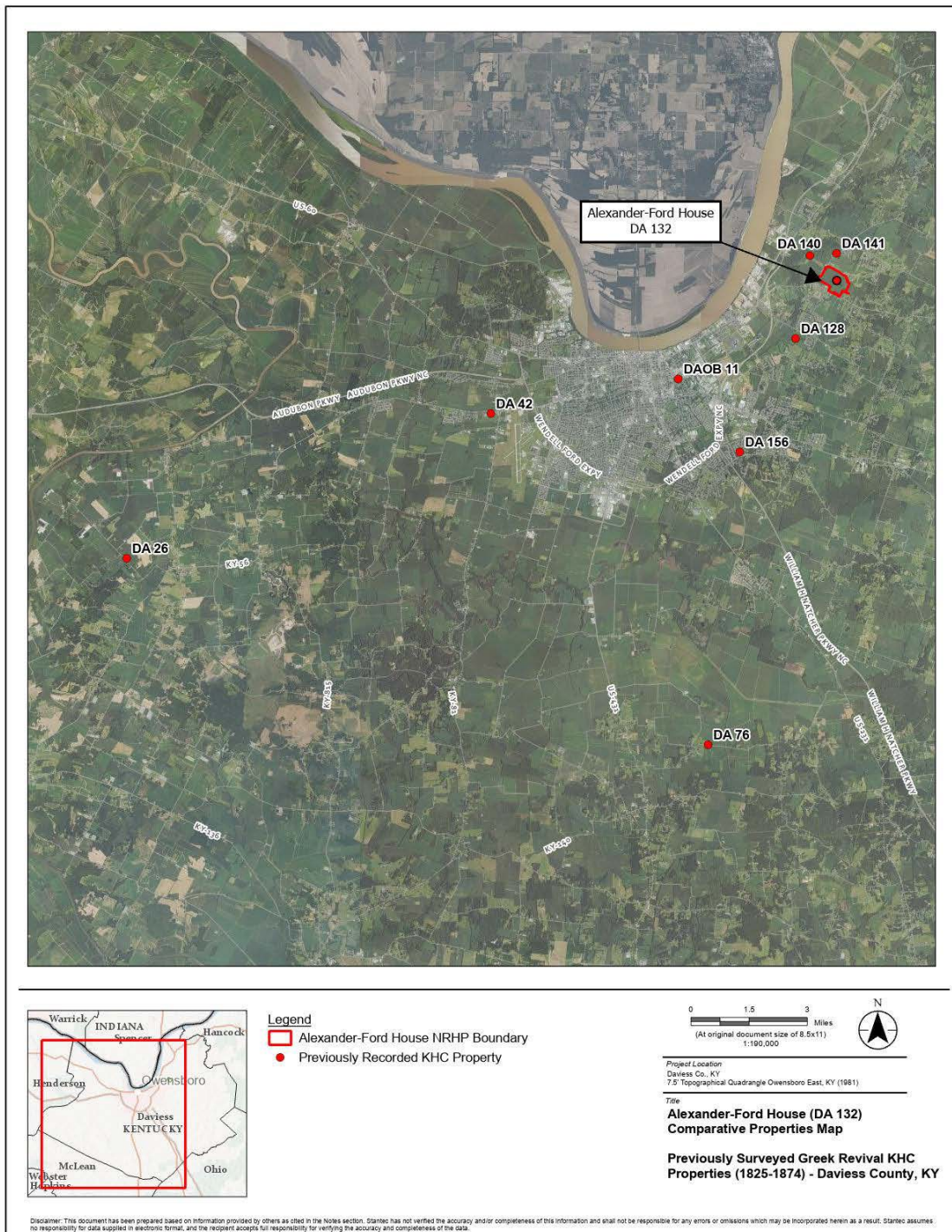
**Table 1. Previously Recorded Daviess County Greek Revival Houses (some with Colonial Revival Style Elements)**

KHC Site No	Historic Name (approx. year constructed)	Location	NRHP Status	Photo
DAOB 11	FELIX GRIMES HOUSE (c. 1860)	1301 LEITCHFIELD RD	NATIONAL REGISTER (DEMOLISHED)	
DA 26	CALHOUN HOUSE (c. 1860)	POND RIVER RD	UNDETERMINED (EXTANT)	
DA 42	CARLIN-BARTLETT HOUSE (c.1835)	RT 56	MEETS N/R CRITERIA (DEMOLISHED)	
DA 76	FIELDS HOUSE (c. 1845)	RT 81 ROME	UNDETERMINED (DEMOLISHED)	
DA 128	NEWTON HOUSE (c. 1847)	WEST SIDE REID RD S OF JCT WITH HIGHWAY 144	UNDETERMINED (EXTANT)	See below
DA 140	JUSTE NICOLA VAIRIN HOUSE (c. 1840)	KY 405	UNDETERMINED (EXTANT)	See below
DA 141	SENATOR THOMAS C MCCREERY HOUSE (c. 1840)	KY 405 THRUSTON RD	MEETS N/R CRITERIA (DEMOLISHED)	See below
DA 156	JOHN MCFARLAND HOUSE (c. 1830s)	2732 FAIRVIEW DRIVE	MEETS N/R CRITERIA (EXTANT)	See below



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**Figure 9** Previously Recorded Daviess County Greek Revival Houses (some with Colonial Revival Style Elements).

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These properties were analyzed as thoroughly as possible without field work. The small sample of Greek Revival houses in Daviess County is intended to be representative, though is not a comprehensive portrait of the population of comparable houses in Owensboro and Daviess County. Brick examples have proven to have greater endurance and popularity than frame examples. Most of these houses exhibit symmetrical, two-story façades, and all but one is five bays wide (the McFarland house, DA 156, is three bays wide). This preference for two-story symmetry may indicate a conservative embrace of the Greek Revival Style and an adherence to forms familiar on earlier Federal Style houses.

Of the eight comparable properties listed above, the majority are brick, two stories in height, and feature(d) a central passage plan. Four properties stood out as potential comparatives, due to their Greek Revival Style architecture with early twentieth century updates: DA-128, the Newton House; DA-140, the Vairin House; DA-141, the McCreery House; and DA-156, the McFarland House. All four of these properties are located east of Owensboro, near or within the Old River Road area, as can be seen in **Figure 9**, and are further described below.

The Newton House (DA-128) stands less than two miles south of Alexander-Ford property. Constructed circa 1847 (**Figure 10**), the house was built for Colonel William Newton, who was born in Culpepper County, Virginia. Newton came to Daviess County in 1809 and worked for his father as a collector. He became Deputy County Sheriff, and eventually the County Sheriff. Newton constructed the house for his daughter Mary J. Newton in 1847. The house has many similarities to the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse: two-story height, side-gable orientation, five-bay façade, a central passage entry, interior gable end chimneys and an early-twentieth century full-width porch.<sup>64</sup>



**Figure 10 The Newton House (DA-128).<sup>65</sup>**

<sup>64</sup> Rebecca G. Rapier, Cultural Resource Analysts, Inc., "Kentucky Historic Resources Individual Survey Form DA 128," 2004.

<sup>65</sup> Rebecca G. Rapier, Cultural Resource Analysts, Inc., "A Cultural Historic Survey of the Proposed Northeast of Owensboro Telecommunication Tower Site, Northeast of Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky," 2004.



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The Thomas Clay McCreery house (DA-141, demolished circa 1980s) was constructed around the same time as the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse as well (**Figure 11**). The McCreery house was located approximately one-half mile northwest of the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse along current-day State Route 405. Thomas McCreery attended Centre College in Danville, and St. Joseph's College in Bardstown. He studied law in Frankfort in 1838 and 1839, then returned to his birthplace of Daviess County reportedly constructing the house circa 1840. Thomas McCreery went on to become a United States Senator from 1868 to 1871 and from 1873 to 1879.<sup>66</sup> Although of frame construction, the McCreery house featured the same overall massing as the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse: two-stories tall and five bays wide. The McCreery house also had a side-gable roof. The floor plan, with a central passage and flanking side rooms, also resembled the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse. The front porch of the McCreery house was added circa 1910.<sup>67</sup>



**Figure 11 Thomas Clay McCreery House (DA-141).<sup>68</sup>**

Similar to the Alexander-Ford farmhouse, John H. McFarland purchased land from Griffith and Triplett, during the 1830s. McFarland constructed his house (DA-156) circa 1830 southeast of Owensboro, approximately five miles southwest of Alexander-Ford Farmhouse (**Figure 12**). The McFarland House is similar to the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse in that it also is a brick side gable

<sup>66</sup> Jerry Long, compilation of Thomas Clay McCreery history, accessed October 2024 online at: <https://wckyhhistory-genealogy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/McCreery-Thomas-Clay-1816-1890.pdf>.

<sup>67</sup> Mrs. David Orrahood, "DA 141 Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory," 1973.

<sup>68</sup> Mrs. David Orrahood, "DA 141 Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory," 1973.

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dwelling with interior end chimneys. The most substantial difference is that the McFarland House is three bays wide instead of five.<sup>69</sup> The house received a full-length one-story porch circa 1940, which was heavily altered in the later twentieth century. The interior details of the McFarland House are unknown.



**Figure 12      John H. McFarland House (DA-156)<sup>70</sup>**

Finally, the Juste Nicola Vairin house (DA-140), which is located across State Route 405 from the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse, is located less than a mile away, in the “Old River Road” area, as described above (**Figure 13**). This house was constructed circa 1840 and updated in the early twentieth century with a Colonial Revival Style broken pediment entryway and a (removed circa 1975) Colonial Revival front porch that rested on a rusticated concrete block foundation wall (**Figure 14**). The original house is a two-story, side-gable, five-bay, brick house with interior end brick chimneys similar to the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse.<sup>71</sup> French born Juste Vairin came to Daviess County from New Orleans following the death of his wife Sarah Wright in 1839 with his daughters.<sup>72</sup> Vairin had reportedly been a “bodyguard” to Napoleon Bonaparte in 1813 and served as second lieutenant at the Battle of Waterloo. This farm also became well-renowned for its most famous twentieth century resident - Spend a Buck, a 1985 Derby winner. Spend a Buck

<sup>69</sup> Mrs. David Orrahood, “DA 156 Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory,” 1974.

<sup>70</sup> Mrs. David Orrahood, “DA 156 Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory,” 1974.

<sup>71</sup> ACW and NCP, “DA 140,” Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory,” 1971.

<sup>72</sup> Stan LeMaster, “Napoleon’s Body Guard Built County Home in 1842,” *Messenger and Inquirer*, Owensboro, October 6, 1969, B1, accessed October 2024 online at: [www.newspapers.com/image/375805372/?match=1&terms=napoleon%20bodyguard](http://www.newspapers.com/image/375805372/?match=1&terms=napoleon%20bodyguard).

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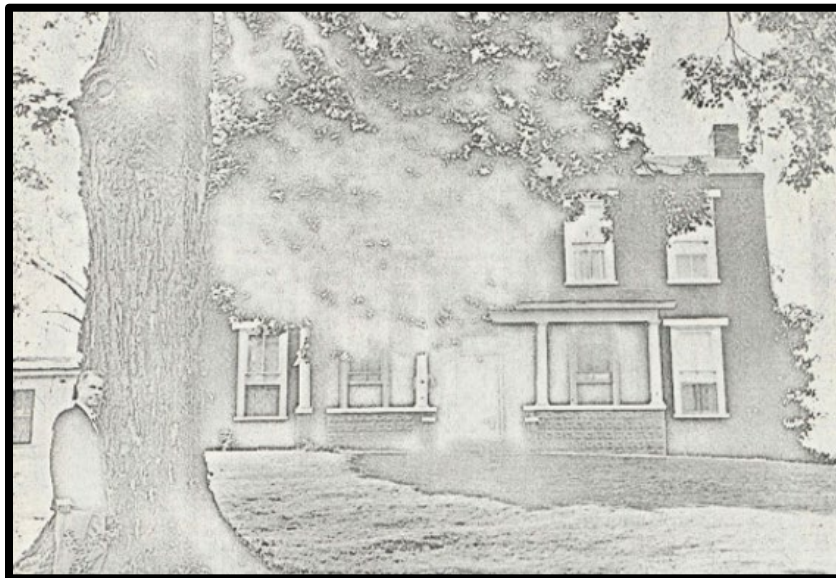
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became the eventual namesake of the farm he was born on in 1982, then known as Irish Hill.<sup>73</sup>  
The property is shown directly adjoining the Alexander-Ford farmstead in the 1876 Atlas of Daviess County in Section 7, Figure 4 above.



**Figure 13** Juste Nicola Vairin House (DA-140).<sup>74</sup>



**Figure 14** Juste Nicola Vairin House (DA-140), showing porch later removed.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Beck Glenn, "Daviess County's Derby Connection," *Messenger and Inquirer*, Owensboro, April 1, 2019, accessed April 2025 online at: <https://www.owensborotimes.com/features/2019/04/daviess-countys-derby-connection/>

<sup>74</sup> "Spend a Buck Farm," *Messenger-Inquirer*, Owensboro, KY, July 6, 1986, 1C.

<sup>75</sup> ACW and NCP, "DA 140," Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory," 1971.



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### *Analysis of Greek Revival Style in Owensboro and Daviess County, Kentucky*

Inspection of the style in the KHC/SHPO database and on-the-ground observations indicate that Greek Revival Style in Daviess County does not deviate from examples in the Central Bluegrass region, but in fact emulates them closely. The similarity in overall form and style of these Greek Revival houses in Daviess County, in addition to location/setting, is an indication that builders desired to be seen as part of a genteel social environment. Their translation of the style through frame and brick on the exterior as well as stylized detailing on the interior through door, window, and chimney surrounds gives an interpretation of a broader pattern of architecture.

The adoption of national Greek Revival style and forms in Kentucky by the 1840s was an accomplishment. Lumber and brick had to be produced in developing Owensboro or on the site itself. Builders had to develop a level of craftsmanship to shape the construction materials into the final form. Design ideas had to diffuse from cultural centers into this area, which still was plagued by inadequate roads and other infrastructure.

Many of these “early adopters” brought the Greek Revival ideas with them to Kentucky. Colonel William Newton and Junius Alexander, both from Virginia, and Felix Grimes, from Pennsylvania, as well as Juste Nicola Vairin, from Louisiana via France, would have seen examples of Greek Revival architecture elsewhere before coming to Kentucky. Builders’ guides such as John Haviland’s *The Builder’s Assistant* (1818-1821), Asher Benjamin’s *The American Builder’s Companion* (1827) and later *Practice of Architecture* (1833), and Minard Lafever’s *The Modern Builder’s Guide* (1833) provided detailed examples of the style in plasterwork, fireplace surrounds, architraves, and columns.<sup>76</sup> Alexander and his counterparts in Daviess County would have access to such publications and would have seen examples of these architectural features in other residences and in public buildings.

The Daviess County expressions of the Greek Revival style are simplified when compared to the house plans included in Minard Lafever’s *The Modern Builder’s Guide* (1833). Lafever’s two house designs are freer than the houses found in Daviess County, which are conservative by comparison in their strict massing and symmetry. One of Lafever’s designs has a narrow two-story, three-bay front-gabled section with one-story, side-gabled wings to either side (**Figure 15**). Lafever’s other design shows a two-story house with monumental porches at the sides (**Figure 16**). This second design introduces asymmetry on the front, six-bay façade where three bays of one end are recessed from the three bays on the other end, and where a one-story, front-gabled porch shelters only the center-most of the three recessed bays.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> John Haviland, *The Builder’s Assistant, Containing the Five Orders of Architecture*, (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: 1818, 1819, 1821); Asher Benjamin, *The American Builder’s Companion, or a System of Architecture Particularly Adapted to the Present Style of Building*, (1806, 1814, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. 1827) (New York, New York: Dover Publishing, Inc., (reprint) 1969); Asher Benjamin, *Practice of Architecture*, (Boston, Massachusetts: Author and Carter Hendee & Company, 1827, 1833); Minard Lafever’s *The Modern Builder’s Guide*, (New York, New York, 1833).

<sup>77</sup> Minard Lafever’s *The Modern Builder’s Guide*, (New York, New York, 1833).

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Figure 15 Lefever's *The Modern Builder's Guide*.<sup>78</sup>

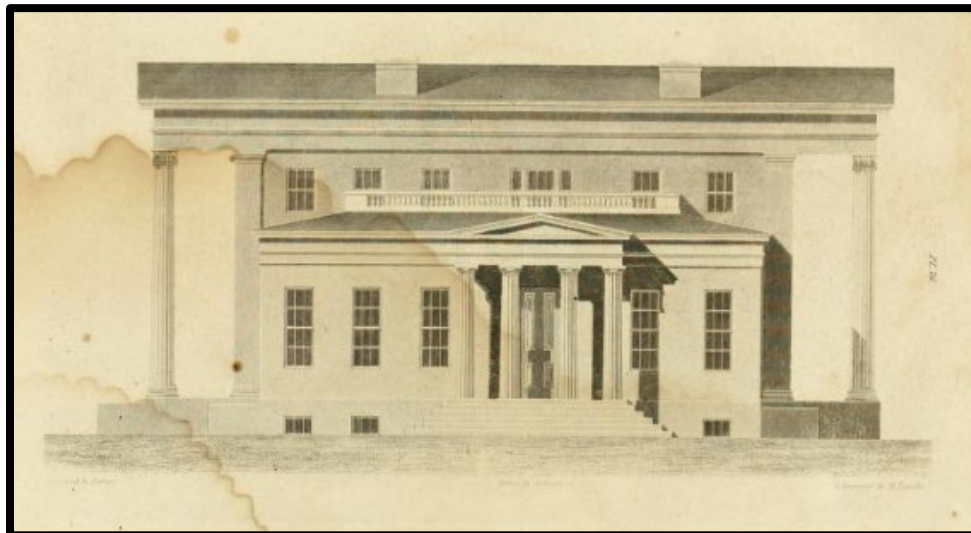


Figure 16 Lefever's *The Modern Builder's Guide*.<sup>79</sup>

Looking beyond form and symmetry, Greek Revival houses in Daviess County generally lack the intricate enrichments on exterior surfaces shown in Lefever's and Benjamin's published designs. Those absent enrichments include carved palmettes, applied rosettes, anthemias, and highly embellished entablatures. The evidence available that remains with the extant Greek Revival style houses of Daviess County suggests a preference for a modest level of exterior enrichment,

<sup>78</sup> Minard Lefever's *The Modern Builder's Guide*, (New York, New York, 1846), Plate 75.

<sup>79</sup> Minard Lefever's *The Modern Builder's Guide*, (New York, New York, 1846), Plate 76.

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extending so far as to indicate a preference for simpler Doric order columns rather than the more ornate Ionic or Corinthian orders.

Collectively, the form, symmetry, and exterior embellishment of the Greek Revival style houses in Daviess County suggests that homebuilders wished to demonstrate their affluence. The question is whether they intentionally avoided what would have been perceived as a showy exhibition of wealth or whether local construction skills simply did not allow greater levels of elaboration. The overall form and symmetry might have been appealing as an architectural allegory for a perceived order in the businesses and personal affairs of the residents within. This adherence to symmetrical forms exhibited on the later examples built in Daviess County is notable when compared to the increasing popularity of asymmetrical examples of romantic styles—the Gothic Revival and Italianate styles. As noted earlier, adapting published designs to eliminate costly embellishments was a way for Kentuckians to participate in the cultural trends of the time without the heavy expense or access to more elaborate craft work, unless they had a highly skilled enslaved person who could provide this expertise. A study of the interior features of each of these resources in Daviess County may provide better insights, including whether subdued embellishments carried through from the exterior to the interior as well. It is without question that the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse is one of few extant examples of a Greek Revival style farmhouse with intact interior details in Daviess County that remains available for study.

### **Historic Context: Colonial Revival Style and the Genteel South in the United States, 1880-1955.**

While the Greek Revival Style served as “the great unifying American style of its time” during a period of western expansion, the Colonial Revival Style was an early twentieth century effort to unify the country struggling with the aftermath of the Civil War. According to Richard Guy Wilson in *The Colonial Revival House*, “Part of the international neoclassical recovery of Greek and Roman architecture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was the American love affair with giant columns, which grew in intensity as columnar porticos were placed on banks, stores, and houses of all sizes and configurations.”<sup>80</sup> This fascination was not exclusively an appeal of a style. Wilson continues, “the association of Southern colonial architecture with large columnar porticos began in the 1890s, fed by the myth of the ‘Old South’ as a land of romance and large plantations ruled by benevolent masters with happy slaves toiling the fields. It was one of the more bizarre interpretations of colonial-era architecture, commonly called the ‘Old Southern Colonial.’ The term meant, quite simply, large houses with huge two-story columnar porticos.”<sup>81</sup>

As the South grappled to recover from defeat in the Civil War, they came to adopt social structures that suggested not a broken region, but one of power. Jim Crow laws began to be passed as early as 1892 with the Separate Coach Law.<sup>82</sup> The ideal of a southern genteel culture was promoted through literature and histories that continued to tout a romanticized south that once held great wealth and status. Wilson explains that “in this mythic re-creation, the Southern

<sup>80</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, 2004), 50.

<sup>81</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, 2004), 50.

<sup>82</sup> John E. Kleber, *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1992), 809.

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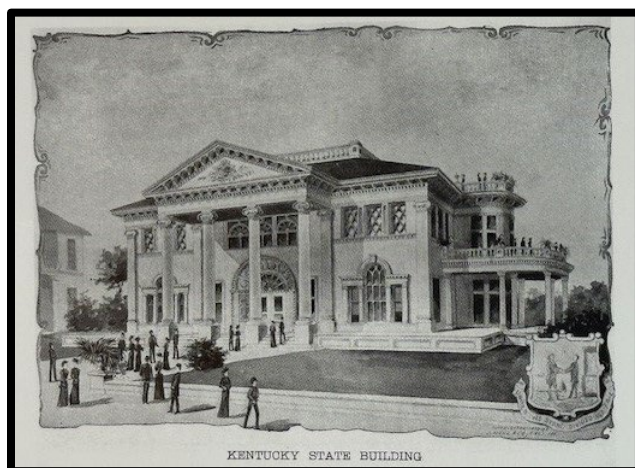
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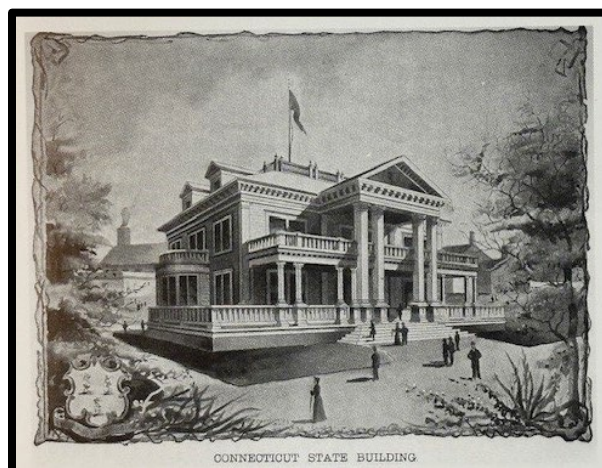
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plantation house of the colonial period became closely associated with a large columnar portico, even though such a feature normally did not appear until well into the nineteenth century.”<sup>83</sup>

The 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition also contributed to the understanding of “Southern Colonial” architecture for a larger audience. State buildings at the fair, including Kentucky and even Connecticut, which were described as “southern,” featured porticos supported by large two-story columns (**Figure 17** and **Figure 18**). Wilson points out that even two years after the exposition, journalists for architectural publications were still writing about the two-story porticos displayed at the fair. One commented on the St. Louis fair building, which included a columned two-story portico, “almost part and parcel of the southern colonial...savors more of the southern Colonial architecture than its sister style of the Northeastern States.”<sup>84</sup>



**Figure 17: Kentucky State Building, World’s Columbian Exposition, 1893.**<sup>85</sup>



**Figure 18: Connecticut State Building, World’s Columbian Exposition, 1893.**<sup>86</sup>

The use of the large columnar portico continued throughout the twentieth century to denote the genteel South. McAlester defines the style within a period of 1880 to 1955, explaining that “the economic depression of the 1930s, World War II, and changing postwar fashions led to a simplification of the style in the 1940s and ‘50s (**Figure 19**). Unlike late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century southern Colonial Revival architecture, mid-twentieth century examples are most often of the side-gabled type with simple stylized door surrounds, cornices, or other details that merely suggest their colonial precedents rather than closely mirroring them.”<sup>87</sup> Wilson also contends that the link between “Southern colonial-era architecture with giant columns continued well into the 1950s.”<sup>88</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, 2004), 50.

<sup>84</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, 2004), 50.

<sup>85</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, 2004), 51.

<sup>86</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, 2004), 51.

<sup>87</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 326.

<sup>88</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, 2004), 51.



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**Figure 17** Example of “simplification of the style” during the 1940s.<sup>89</sup>

### *Colonial Revival Style in Owensboro and Daviess County, Kentucky*

As mentioned previously, several early twentieth century newspaper articles memorialized Daviess County’s halcyon past, prior to the economic and social upheaval of the Civil War and the Great War (World War II). Observers in 1910 and in 1931 reflected on the old River Road area and its storied past.<sup>90</sup> A 1910 article, which appears to be closely aligned with Old Southern Colonial ideals, suggests that, “This section [of Old River Road] was noted for the number of large farms, great landed estates, ornamented with fine houses and dotted with negro [enslaved African Americans] cabins. While they did not grow cotton as you would notice a little farther down south, nevertheless you could hear the old southern plantation songs in the tobacco and corn fields”<sup>91</sup> Whether these ideas fueled Colonial Revival Style updates on the houses along River Road in an attempt to revitalize an idealized Southern Colonial past or if updates using the new Colonial Revival Style itself contributed to an interest in the area’s antebellum past is unknown. It may well be a combination of factors, in addition to post-Civil War-era reconstruction, that revived these ideas. Either way, Southern Colonial ideas appear to have had an influence on extant architecture in Daviess County, especially in the Old River Road area, as far as can be determined from available KHC/SHPO data.

<sup>89</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 333.

<sup>90</sup> Bransford, “‘Old River Road’...” *Owensboro Messenger & Inquirer*, June 14, 1931; No author, “Beech Woods of the Past: Section of Daviess County Which Was Once Very Famous...” *Owensboro Inquirer*, April 10, 1910. Accessed online in April 2025 at: <https://wckyhistry-genealogy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Old-River-Road-of-Long-Ago-Recalled.pdf>

<sup>91</sup> No author, “Beech Woods of the Past,” *Owensboro Inquirer*, April 10, 1910.

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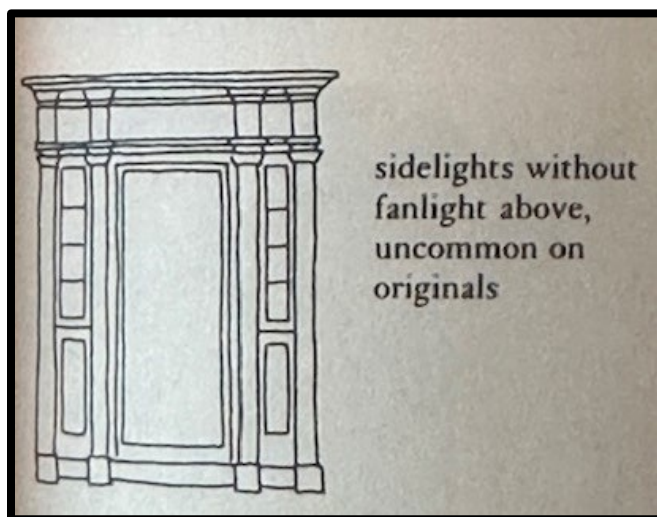
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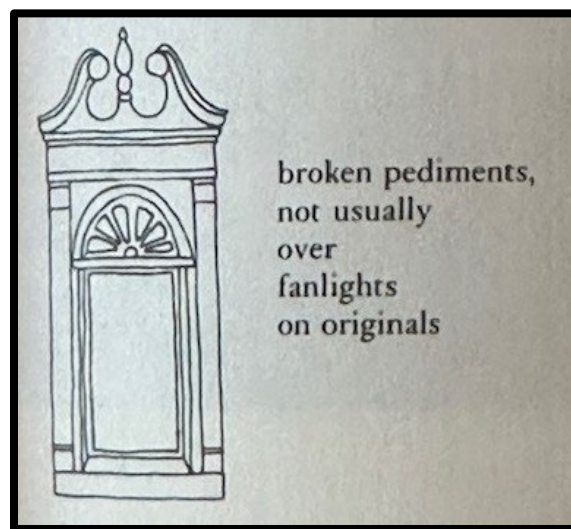
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The previous section developed a list of Greek Revival Style houses, some of which experienced façade updates in the early twentieth century Colonial Revival/Old Southern Colonial Styles.<sup>92</sup> Common Colonial Revival treatments added to facades included accentuating the façade entryway. A decorative frontispiece that included an ornamental pediment (broken or closed) and engaged columns as well as sidelights was popular during this period (**Figure 20** and **Figure 21**). More elaborate façade embellishments included the addition of a partial width or full width porch with classical columns. These porches, typically one-story in height, ranged in size from being centered on the entry, to spanning a number of central façade bays.<sup>93</sup>

Similarly, Colonial Revival elements were added to the first-level and second-level entries of the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse (Plate 3). These entries, with multi-light transoms and sidelights are indicative of the Colonial Revival style and likely date to the Ford family's tenure at the house, as described below. When added, these elements would have rejuvenated the feeling of the house, adding fashionable updates of modern trends. Alternatively, the two-story portico strayed from the Colonial Revival "norm." Although the two-story portico appears to have been added later than the entry embellishments, as described below, it was added at a time when the Colonial Revival style of architecture was still prevalent. Although in keeping with the style's penchant for columns, porticos, and embellished entries, this two-story portico makes the earlier embellished entryways appear subdued. The slender square columns and massive towering enclosed pediment make a strong impression. This difference is not a coincidence; it's an intentional impulse to promote status.



**Fig. 18: Colonial Revival entrance with sidelights.**<sup>94</sup>



**Fig. 19 Colonial Revival frontispiece.**<sup>95</sup>

<sup>92</sup> The present study is not focused on describing Colonial Revival Style domestic architecture in Daviess County, but rather the expressions of Greek Revival architecture that were updated with Colonial Revival stylistic elements as part of a phenomenon of romanticizing elite mid-nineteenth century farmhouses and their socio-economic settings. As such, a study of Colonial Revival new construction is out of scope for this study.

<sup>93</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 182.

<sup>94</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 325.

<sup>95</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 325.

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Four farmhouses, located adjacent to one another along the Old River Road or nearby, appear to have experienced façade updates in the Colonial Revival Style in the early twentieth century. None of the sample houses acquired a two-story porch. Three examples gained a one-story porch (DA-141, DA-156, and DA-128), and one of them received a broken pediment entryway along with a smaller one-story porch in the early twentieth century (DA-140) (**Figure 10, Figure 11** and **Figure 12**). None of these four examples have/had a porch that was two stories in height and included a pediment. The McCreery House (DA-141) has a relatively well-proportioned circa 1910 porch; however, it was single story with a pediment and unable to be examined further, as it was demolished in the 1980s. Images of the house illustrate this entry porch with an enclosed pediment, as well as engaged columns, both are hallmarks of the Colonial Revival style. The Newton House (DA-128) also features a one-story porch, but it is the full width of the façade and is rather subdued. The Newton House also features engaged columns. Similarly, the John H. McFarland House (DA-156) also featured a one-story full-width façade porch. Alterations made to the porch during the later twentieth century make it impossible to determine the architectural characteristics.



DA 128 Newton House



DA 141 McCreery House



DA-156 McFarland House

These full-width porches, though common features added during the Colonial Revival style, exhibit a trend in architectural fashion but are less ambitious in their intent to promote a standing in society. The Juste Nicola Vairin house (DA-140) exhibited Colonial Revival style through the addition of a stylized frontispiece complete with broken pediment, perhaps the most quintessential feature of the style. The frontispiece in particular was easy to apply once machine-made versions became readily available. This was true for multiple Colonial Revival features, including columns, cornices, pediments, etc. Once these elements became mass-produced, they became less detailed and a craftsman was no longer required to create them.

An inspection of these properties from the KHC/SHPO database demonstrates that the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse had Colonial Revival updates that were more extensive and of higher style or at least more effusive than the other nearby examples. While the Alexander-Ford porch is awkward in proportions, the mere presence of the pediment and overall size was likely intended as a dramatic statement that communicated status and power.

#### *Alexander-Ford Farmhouse Colonial Revival Changes*

Forensic evidence, along with archival and property owner accounts, indicate that the front porch addition and entry modifications at the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse were added during the early-

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to-mid-twentieth century. These modifications coincide with the Ford family's tenure on the property, which is discussed further in the next section. The overall scale, material, craftsmanship, and style of the second level balcony with wood Chippendale style railing as well as the multi-light transom and sidelights of the first and second-floor entries indicate that these elements predate the two-story portico, but post-date the Greek Revival original construction date. It seems likely that these elements were added by Richard Hampton and Minerva Ford when they acquired the house in 1919, coinciding with the earlier period of Colonial Revival's popularity.

The two-story portico, however, features square-shaped rather spindly wooden columns, which lack decorative details expected in the earlier period of Colonial Revival Style, such as stylized capitals and bases. The pediment itself has been encased in vinyl and seems out-of-scale with the support columns. The pediment, too, lacks decorative detail expected from the earlier Colonial Revival time, such as a dentiled cornice line. Overall, the portico has an appearance of awkward proportions that link it to a later construction date than the rest of the house, but squarely within the mid-twentieth century time period. The porch may have been added when Wendell Ford and Jean, his new wife, moved to "his family farm in Thruston" in 1942 or it could have happened slightly before that time.<sup>96</sup> It was in place when the Deane family purchased the farm in 1948.

### *The Ford Family's Changes at the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse and Genteel Culture*

As discussed in more detail below, the Ford family, an important family of politicians and public servants from Western Kentucky, occupied the farmstead from 1919 to 1946. During this time, the family rose from modest farmer/public servant origins into a family with a legacy of state and national political achievements. Three generations of the Ford family inhabited this Greek Revival House, and in so doing, reconceived it once again into a country seat for a well-established genteel southern family, following early twentieth century design trends.

The Colonial Revival era changes to the façade seemingly occurred during the family's tenure on this property. The style of both the earlier and later Colonial Revival additions on the façade, discussed in the prior section, indicate dates well within the family's ownership.<sup>97</sup> A newspaper photograph of Ford siblings Reyburn, Betty John, and Wendell Ford sitting on the porch step from 1944 depicts a portion of one of the portico's square columns, indicating its presence by that time (**Figure 22**).

<sup>96</sup> Glenn Family Funeral Home/ No author, Obituary for Senator Wendell H. Ford, accessed online in November 2024 at: <https://obits.glennfuneralhome.com/senator-ford>

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Richard S. Ford (son of Wendell's brother Reyburn who passed away in 2020), November 23, 2024, indicates that there is no one alive who remembers the changes to the house.



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**Figure 20** “Siblings Reyburn, Betty John and Wendell Ford in front of their House in Thruston in 1944.” Note column above Reyburn and ghosting left of door that remains today.<sup>98</sup>

Richard Hampton (R.H) Ford, the first family member to own the property, began public service as early as 1916 when he was elected president of the newly formed Farmers’ Cooperative Tobacco Association.<sup>99</sup> The group formed in Owensboro with around 400 farmers on the heels of the Western Kentucky tobacco wars and the government’s breakup of the American Tobacco Company. The association was formed to unite three tobacco organizations located in Daviess, McLean, Ohio, and Hancock Counties into one district, done in an attempt to pool their product rather than following the loose-leaf auction method that started in Lexington in 1904. Being president of the association would have required R.H. Ford to be a savvy and trusted negotiator as well as a level-headed mediator.<sup>100</sup> He held the position for one year and did not seek reelection in 1917.<sup>101</sup> Upon his retirement, the farmers that belonged to the association adopted a resolution in his honor stating, “We, the farmers of the Green River district, in regular

<sup>98</sup> “The Boy from Yellow Creek, Folksy charm turns ‘peanut’ into politician,” January 16, 1999, 30, *Messenger-Inquirer*, Accessed online August 2024 at:

[www.newspapers.com/image/379958244/?terms="richard%20hampton%20ford"](http://www.newspapers.com/image/379958244/?terms=).

<sup>99</sup> “Mass Meeting on November 11 To Consider Tobacco Situation in this District,” November 3, 1916, 2, *The Messenger*, Accessed online December 2024 at:

[www.newspapers.com/image/375740733/?match=1&terms="r.h.%20ford"](http://www.newspapers.com/image/375740733/?match=1&terms=).

<sup>100</sup> “Tobacco World,” February 5, 1916, Accessed December 2024 at:

[https://archive.org/stream/tobaccoworld36phil/tobaccoworld36phil\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/tobaccoworld36phil/tobaccoworld36phil_djvu.txt); John Klee, “Tobacco Cultivation,” in John Kleber, ed. *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992, 884-887.

<sup>101</sup> “Jess Gregory Will be Chosen New President,” February 4, 1917, 11, *The Owensboro Messenger*, Accessed online December 2024 at: [www.newspapers.com/image/375751699/?match=1&terms="r.h.%20ford"](http://www.newspapers.com/image/375751699/?match=1&terms=).

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convention assembled, tender to our retiring president, R.H. Ford our sincere thanks for the way in which he has managed our affairs during the past year, thereby securing the best price that we have ever received for our tobacco. We appreciate the many sacrifices that he has made in our behalf.”<sup>102</sup>

By the summer of 1917, R.H. Ford was serving as chairman of the Board of Drainage Commissioners in Owensboro.<sup>103</sup> By 1918, R.H. Ford was president of the Board.<sup>104</sup> Ford maintained his role as president of the Board of Drainage Commissioners until 1925.<sup>105</sup> R.H. Ford’s involvement in public service on the local level likely influenced his son Ernest Ford, who entered politics on the state level.

Ernest Ford, born in Daviess County, served in the Kentucky House of Representatives (one term) and was an assistant clerk in the House for four terms, from 1932 to 1936. Ernest Ford also was on the Kentucky Public Service Commission. During this time, he and his family, including son and future U.S. Senator Wendell Ford, also born in Daviess County, lived in Frankfort. Ernest’s son Wendell even served as an honorary page in the Kentucky House of Representatives, giving his first public speech there at the age of eight. Upon their return to Owensboro, the family returned to Ernest’s boyhood House (Alexander-Ford Farmhouse), which was transferred to them by Ernest’s father, R.H. Ford. They began farming, raising dairy cattle, and growing tobacco. Sons Reyburn and Wendell quickly transitioned to farm life, but during his days as a public figure Wendell had no qualms about lamenting the fact that he was not a fan of the early mornings and long days that went along with farming. During his childhood, he and his brother milked around 16 cows before going to school each morning. The two brothers also raised between five and six acres of tobacco every summer.<sup>106</sup>

While firmly embedding his family to farm life after his return from Frankfort, Ernest continued to pursue civic duties. In addition to farming, Ernest was an insurance executive. Through this career combination, he continued to maintain a presence in his community, while also continuing to farm on a rather small scale at an important historic farmstead.<sup>107</sup> Between 1940 and 1956, Ernest Ford was the Daviess Democratic Party chairman. After only nine years back in Owensboro, Ernest served in the Kentucky Senate between 1945 and 1953. In 1946, during his time as state senator, Ernest and Irene sold Alexander-Ford Farmhouse. This may have been

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<sup>102</sup> “Jesse Gregory is New Head of Association,” February 7, 1917, 3, *The Owensboro Messenger*, Accessed online December 2024 at: [www.newspapers.com/image/375752340/?match=1&terms="r.h.%20ford"](http://www.newspapers.com/image/375752340/?match=1&terms=).

<sup>103</sup> “Final Step Taken in Panther Creek Drainge (sic) Project,” June 5, 1917, 10, *The Owensboro Messenger*, Accessed online December 2024 at: [www.newspapers.com/image/375514197/?match=1&terms="r.h.%20ford"](http://www.newspapers.com/image/375514197/?match=1&terms=).

<sup>104</sup> “Drainage Letting,” October 4, 1918, 8, *The Owensboro Messenger*, Accessed online December 2024 at: [www.newspapers.com/image/375810537/?match=1&terms="r.h.%20ford"](http://www.newspapers.com/image/375810537/?match=1&terms=).

<sup>105</sup> “I.C. Winstead to Resign as Ditch Commissioner,” October 10, 1925, 5, *The Owensboro Messenger*, Accessed online December 2024 at: [www.newspapers.com/image/376093179/?match=1&terms="r.h.%20ford"%20drainage](http://www.newspapers.com/image/376093179/?match=1&terms=).

<sup>106</sup> “The Boy from Yellow Creek, Folksy charm turns ‘peanut’ into politician,” January 16, 1999, 30, *Messenger-Inquirer*, Accessed online August 2024 at:

[www.newspapers.com/image/379958244/?terms="richard%20hampton%20ford"](http://www.newspapers.com/image/379958244/?terms=).

<sup>107</sup> Based on the property history detailed above, and the fact that the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse is known locally for its association with previous owner and farmer Throckmorton, it has been considered an important historic farmstead throughout its time. The farmstead was considered important during the Ford family’s ownership and continues to be considered this way today.

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coincidence, but perhaps this move back to the city limits of Owensboro was in line with his next position. In 1958, Ernest entered local politics, serving as the city manager of Owensboro from 1958 to 1959.<sup>108</sup>

### Evaluation of the Alexander-Ford House Within the two Historic Contexts

The architecture of the Alexander-Ford farmhouse gives us a powerful view of Kentucky at two points in time. Its importance as a circa 1850 Greek Revival House provides us a glimpse of Kentucky that had emerged from its frontier status. By the 1840s, Kentucky began to take its place among the nation's states, especially those in the east, whose development had been underway far longer. By the 1840s, the earliest settlements in the US were already centuries old, where Kentucky's first places with European settlement were no more than 70 years old. Kentucky's Greek Revival constructions provided a message that the Commonwealth had reached a critical mass in its evolution. The Greek Revival became the state's first style to announce Kentucky's arrival on a national stage. The Greek Revival identity of the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse conveys this announcement. Among the houses remaining in Owensboro and Daviess County, the house exhibits the signature elements of the style, which display strength, self-composure, endurance, and rationality—key qualities needed to tame the frontier which settlers encountered as they poured into Kentucky starting in the 1770s.

The house was updated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with a Colonial Revival porch and interior modernization. While the house's Greek Revival style pointed to the accomplishments of Kentuckians who wrestled an existence from the harshness of nature, the Colonial Revival style, seen most obviously in the porch on the Alexander-Ford House, is interpreted as arising from an interior battle. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, American states, including Kentucky, who identified with the Confederate cause found solace in these oversized front porches. That feature became iconographic for Southerners, identified with the romantic power of genteel Southern culture during the era of the plantation. While the two styles are different, they have compatible meanings. The Greek Revival of the 1850s was triumphant, the Colonial Revival of the 1920s exhibits a longing for the triumphant. The house's design is significant for its symbolic content, more so than for its purity to a single era of design.

Connecting the two chosen styles, along with the biographies of their owners and the important location that this occurred within (Old River Road area), indicates a desire to participate in a genteel domestic society associated with the Old South. By the 1920s, this desire can be seen as more nostalgic and focused upon a mythic image of the Old South, just as the Greek Revival contained symbolic meanings reaching back to the ancient Greek Republic, for those crafting new Republic as late as the 1850s in Kentucky.

In the area of significance of Greek Revival Architecture, the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse is an important example of a type. The overall weightiness of the brick exterior with rectangular footprint, as well as the stylized interior detailing, is an interpretation of a type of architecture

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<sup>108</sup> "The Boy from Yellow Creek, Folksy charm turns 'peanut' into politician," January 16, 1999, 30, *Messenger-Inquirer*, Accessed online August 2024 at: [www.newspapers.com/image/379958244/?terms="richard%20hampton%20ford"](http://www.newspapers.com/image/379958244/?terms=).

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that was considered part of a unifying American style. Unlike its predecessor, the Federal Style, Greek Revival incorporated components that were bulkier and spaces that embodied “bigness” as well as grace. The Alexander-Ford Farmhouse, with symmetrical facade, central passage plan, brick exterior, stylized chimney surrounds, and battered casings with eared architraves, displays this combination of bulky yet elegant architecture that defines the Greek Revival Style. The overall form, plan, materials, and character-defining features of the Greek Revival Style exhibited in the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse come together as an important local instance of this type of architecture. In addition, through use of the Greek Revival Style, this farmhouse enabled its owners to announce their standing in society, as communicated both through its architecture and through its location in an elite farming area known as Old River Road or the Beech Woods.

In the area of significance of Colonial Revival architecture, early-to-mid-twentieth century updates to the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse’s façade are an important example of the use of fashionable architecture to communicate status or standing in the community. First, the overall scale and stylistic manifestation of the Alexander-Ford façade updates, specifically the porch, appears to be among the more fully realized Colonial Revival Style example, in the Old River Road area of Daviess County. As discussed above, none of the other examples included a two-story porch with pediment. Most included modest examples of the style, such as a broken pediment or a smaller one-story porch with no pediment.

Second, if we assume that architecture is a means for signaling a family’s status, then both the purchase of an important antebellum farmhouse as well as the alterations to the house would seem to well-represent the Fords’ ambitions to return to farm life, while maintaining the economic and social standing of a government official and politician. Although we cannot know for certain their intentions, it seems likely that the family utilized architecture to communicate the status of an early-to-mid-twentieth century gentleman farmer/public servant. As discussed in the 2019 “Heartland/George and Fanny McLeod House” nomination to the National Register (NRIS 100004004), the early-to-mid-twentieth century gentleman farmer was someone who “participated in this genteel antebellum farming landscape as gentry, removed from the actual farm labor, partially bankrolling it from other urban professional and industrial sources. As central Kentuckian J. Winston Coleman suggests nineteenth and early twentieth century success at the law, politics, or some other such profession nearly always resulted in purchase of a country seat in the Inner Bluegrass, with farming as an avocation. This type of purchase and/or construction of a fashionable country house meant that you had officially ‘made it.’”<sup>109</sup> While Daviess County is not the Inner Bluegrass, the same markers of status hold true. Daviess County was the ancestral House to the Ford family and to own such a property meant that the family had achieved a genteel country status.

With 60 acres of land, portions dedicated to less than 20 dairy cows, and five to six acres of tobacco, farming was more of a hobby than a livelihood for the Ford family. Ernest likely saw farming as a continuance of his childhood, but also as a way for he and Irene to raise children, ensuring that they had an appreciation for hard work, community, and public service. As a public figure, Ford’s professional identity varied from the previous owners of the House. Their social

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<sup>109</sup> Rachel M Kennedy, “Heartland Farm/George and Fanny McLeod House” *Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places*, 2019, Section 8, 55.



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and economic standing would have prompted him to apply architectural features to his house in an effort to broadcast this standing. In adding the two-story columns with portico, Ford turned a classic brick Greek Revival box that served as the nucleus of a farm into an embellished Old Southern Colonial estate, beckoning genteel images of the past and connecting the family to that storied past. It also allowed him and his family to broadcast their social standing, within a Southern agricultural landscape.

The Alexander-Ford Farmhouse provides a type of autobiography on a specific period and location in history. In particular, it provides insight into local interpretations of the Greek Revival and the Colonial Revival Styles as expressed in the Upper South. Taken together, this house is an excellent example of the ideal of the Old South, expressed through domestic architecture.

### **Integrity Considerations**

The Alexander-Ford farmhouse has retained sufficient integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association for listing in the National Register. The farmhouse appears much as it did at the end of the period of significance, circa 1940, and successfully presents an important Greek Revival Farmhouse with Colonial Revival Style updates in the Old River Road area.

The Alexander-Ford farmhouse has not been moved and remains in the same location, adjacent to Deane Creek atop a rise on the farm property. Therefore, it retains integrity of **location**. Although the farmstead associated with the Alexander-Ford farmhouse has been divided among heirs over time (with the intention of eventually combining the tracts again) and experienced loss of a few farm buildings, the house retains its agricultural setting in the midst of an active farming landscape, albeit for row crops, and not tobacco and stock. The house remains associated with the old River Road (KY 405) as well as the Hardinsburg Road (KY 144) which are major storied thoroughfares into and out of Owensboro from surrounding rural areas. As a result, the Alexander-Ford farmhouse retains integrity of **setting**.

The farmhouse retains sufficient integrity of **design**. The overall symmetry, massing, and plan of the original Greek Revival mass of the house and to the design of the Colonial Revival elements have been retained. The side gable form, and five-bay central passage appearance remain on the exterior. The central passage floor plan with attached service ell remains intact with a few additions to its form, as can be seen in Figure 6 in Section 7. The main changes to the Greek Revival form occurred during the period of significance at the rear of the property to provide an additional bedroom, kitchen, and sunroom. The method by which this was accomplished was to attach a detached kitchen with breezeway to the main body of the house. This one-story alteration, within the period of significance, neither overwhelms nor strays from the Greek Revival ell form. A small circa 1980 upstairs bathroom addition was appended to the second story after the period of significance. This addition bumps out slightly from the main body of the house; however, it is diminutive and not substantial enough to impact the overall integrity of design. The design of the Colonial Revival style porch and entryway modifications are also intact. The porch retains its circa 1940 partial width appearance with four square columns topped by a simple pediment. The Colonial Revival Style modifications to the entryway, which include

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sidelights/transom and a prominent second story porch, supported on wood brackets with a Colonial Revival Style railing.

The farmhouse maintains integrity of **materials** and **workmanship**. The exterior has its original brick work, lintels and sills, and Greek Revival interior detailing such as the chimney surrounds, architraves, mantels, wainscotting, presses, hardwood flooring, plaster, and trim, as can be viewed in the photos in Section 7. As well, the Colonial Revival exterior updates, such as the two-story wooden front portico, the multi-light wood and glass sidelights and transoms, the Chippendale style railing, and the carved wood brackets remain intact from the period of significance. The main modern alteration to the house's materials and workmanship was the removal of earlier windows and replacement with vinyl SDL sash. Given that these sash have lights and are double-hung, they at least maintain integrity of design; however, integrity of materials and workmanship has been lost.

The Alexander-Ford farmhouse retains sufficient integrity of **feeling** and **association** because of its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship. The original Greek Revival mass with Colonial Revival updates as well as its retained setting and location allow the farmhouse to continue to express the social standing and genteel agricultural environment that the farmhouse was constructed in and maintained to convey.

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### *Maps*

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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): DA-132

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## 10. Geographical Data

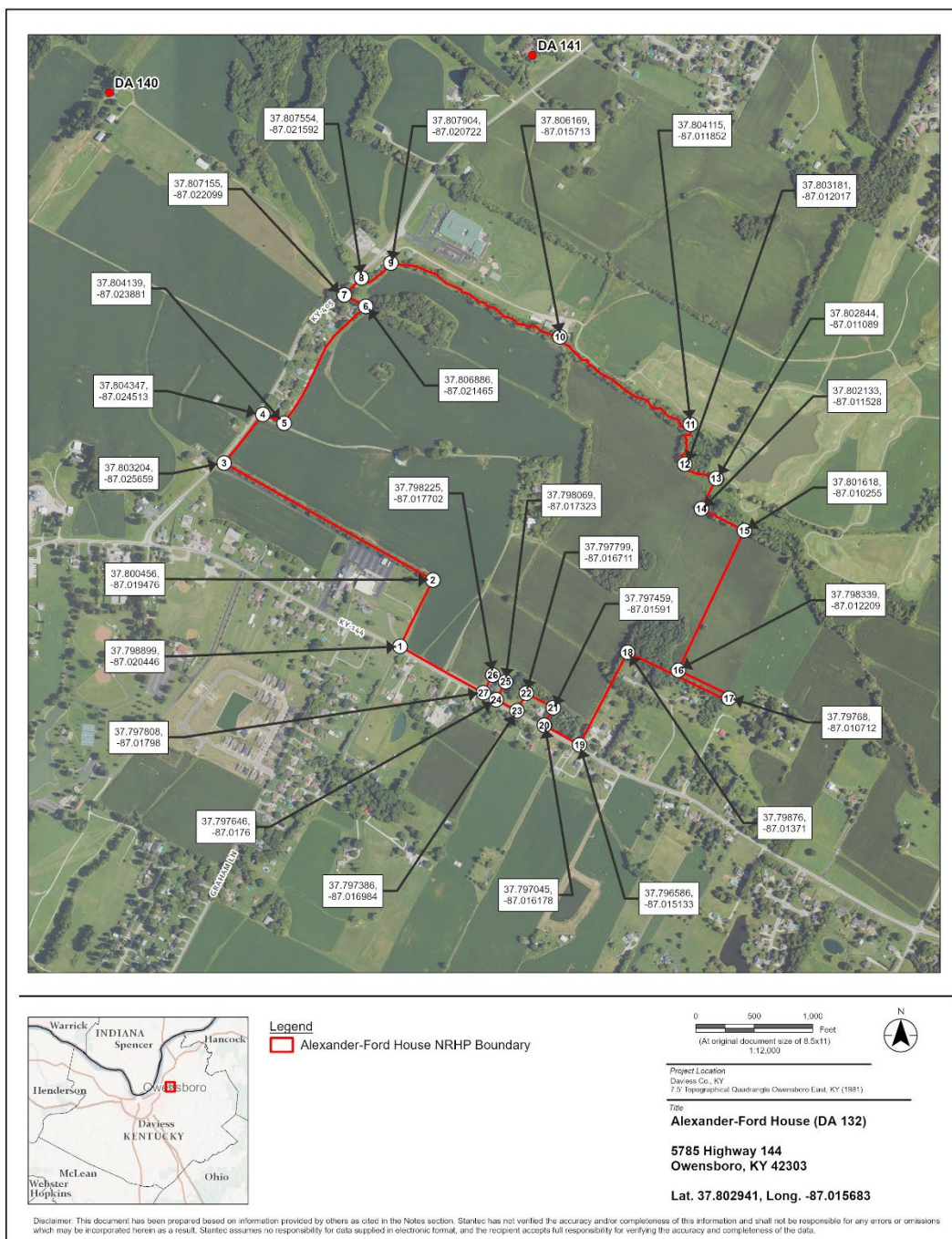
Acreage of Property 233.487 acres

Alexander-Ford Farmhouse

Name of Property

Daviess County, Kentucky

County and State



## Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 37.798899 | Longitude: -87.020446 |
| 2. Latitude: 37.800456 | Longitude: -87.019476 |
| 3. Latitude: 37.803204 | Longitude: -87.025659 |
| 4. Latitude: 37.804347 | Longitude: -87.024513 |
| 5. Latitude: 37.804139 | Longitude: -87.023881 |

Alexander-Ford Farmhouse

Daviess County, Kentucky

Name of Property

County and State

6. Latitude: 37.806886	Longitude: -87.021465
7. Latitude: 37.807155	Longitude: -87.022099
8. Latitude: 37.807554	Longitude: -87.021592
9. Latitude: 37.807904	Longitude: -87.020722
10. Latitude: 37.806169	Longitude: -87.015713
11. Latitude: 37.804115	Longitude: -87.011852
12. Latitude: 37.803181	Longitude: -87.012017
13. Latitude: 37.802844	Longitude: -87.011089
14. Latitude: 37.802133	Longitude: -87.011528
15. Latitude: 37.801618	Longitude: -87.010255
16. Latitude: 37.798339	Longitude: -87.012209
17. Latitude: 37.79768	Longitude: -87.010712
18. Latitude: 37.79876	Longitude: -87.013710
19. Latitude: 37.796586	Longitude: -87.015133
20. Latitude: 37.797045	Longitude: -87.016178
21. Latitude: 37.797459	Longitude: -87.01591
22. Latitude: 37.797799	Longitude: -87.01671
23. Latitude: 37.797386	Longitude: -87.01698
24. Latitude: 37.797646	Longitude: -87.01760
25. Latitude: 37.798069	Longitude: -87.017323
26. Latitude: 37.798225	Longitude: -87.017702
27. Latitude: 37.797808	Longitude: -87.01798

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927    or    ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The selected National Register boundary contains 233.487 acres, encompassing four parcels divided between Deane family members. These parcels are legally recorded as Deane Acres Farms, LLC (086-00-00-055-03-000 and 086-00-00-055-02-000); Brian and Whitney Deane Payne (072-00-00-012-03-000); and Deerwood Valley, LLC (086-00-00-055-00-000). The farm was divided among heirs per a plat map in February 2014, recorded in Daviess County Plat Book 44, page 48.



## Daviess County, Kentucky

County and State

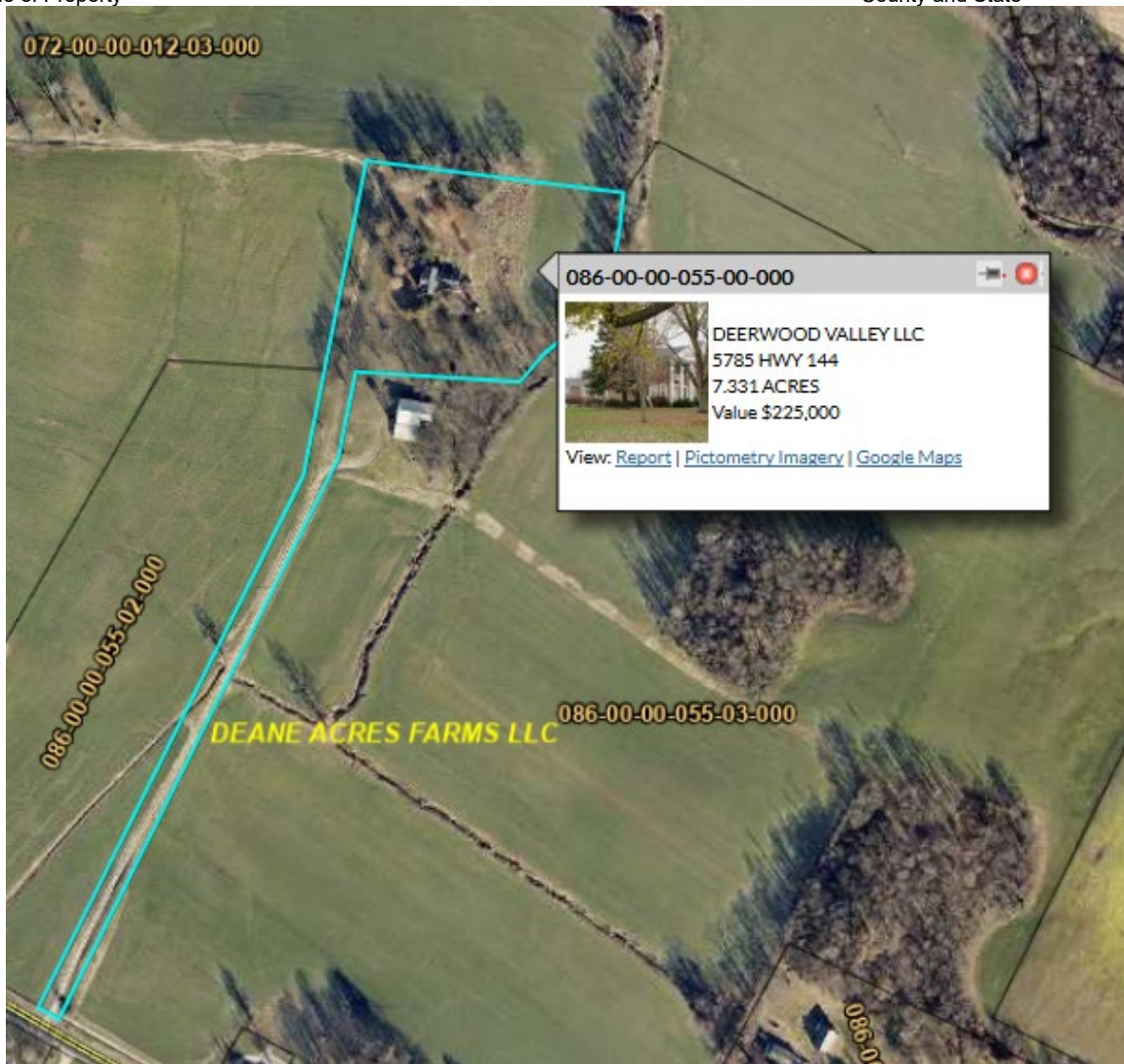
page 72

Alexander-Ford Farmhouse

Daviess County, Kentucky

Name of Property

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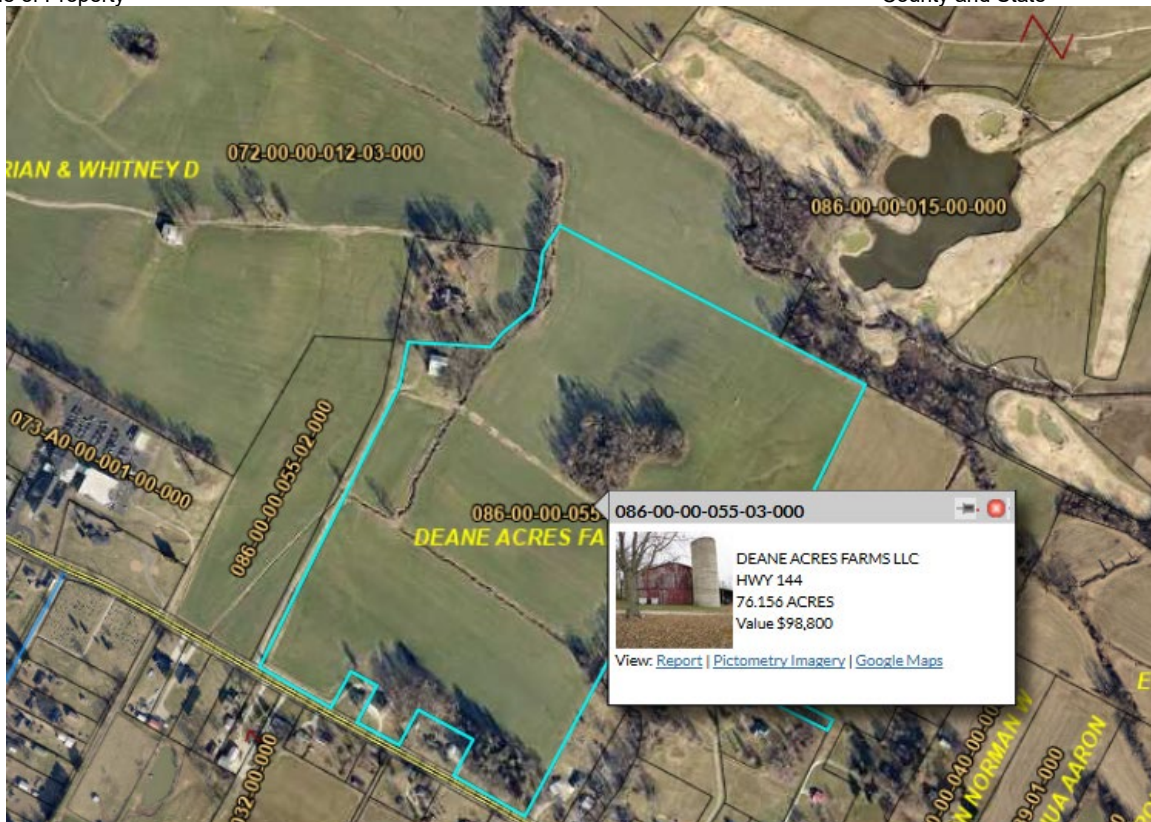


Alexander-Ford Farmhouse

Daviess County, Kentucky

Name of Property

County and State





Alexander-Ford Farmhouse

Name of Property

Daviess County, Kentucky

County and State





Alexander-Ford Farmhouse

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### Boundary Justification

The selected National Register boundary contains 233.487 acres historically associated with the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse during its period of significance (circa 1850 – circa 1940). There is sufficient integrity of setting, as demonstrated above, on the approximately 233 acres to permit listing of the entire farm acreage. The farmstead's main boundaries remain largely unaltered. Original tree lines, vegetation, and Deane Creek have furnished the context for this farmhouse since the nineteenth century. As such, the entire historic acreage was chosen to provide an appropriate setting for recognizing the architectural value of the Alexander-Ford Farmhouse as a farm house.

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Rebecca Gatewood, Rachel M. Kennedy, and Jason Flatt

organization: Stantec Consulting, Inc

street & number: 10420 Bluegrass Parkway Suite 10420

city or town: Louisville state: KY

zip code: 40299-2208

e-mail becky.gatewood@stantec.com

telephone: 502-330-9952

date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Photo Log

**Name of Property:** Alexander-Ford Farmhouse

**City or Vicinity:** Owensboro

**County:** Daviess

**State:** Kentucky

**Photographer:** Rebecca Gatewood

**Date Photographed:** August 20, 2024

### Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 20: Façade of house looking northeast.

2 of 20: Façade entry, first level.

3 of 20: Façade entries, first and second levels.

4 of 20: North elevation, looking southwest.

5 of 20: South elevation, looking northeast, attached 1980s bathroom addition to right.

6 of 20: First level, façade entry.

7 of 20: First level, entry to north room, and staircase.

8 of 20: First level, central hallway and staircase, looking through to sunroom addition, door left accesses bathroom beneath stairway.

9 of 20: First level, south room with marble fireplace, presses, and wood wainscotting.

10 of 20: First level, south room, left door leads to sunroom addition, right door leads to bathroom addition.

11 of 20: First floor, north room, fireplace.

Alexander-Ford Farmhouse

Daviess County, Kentucky

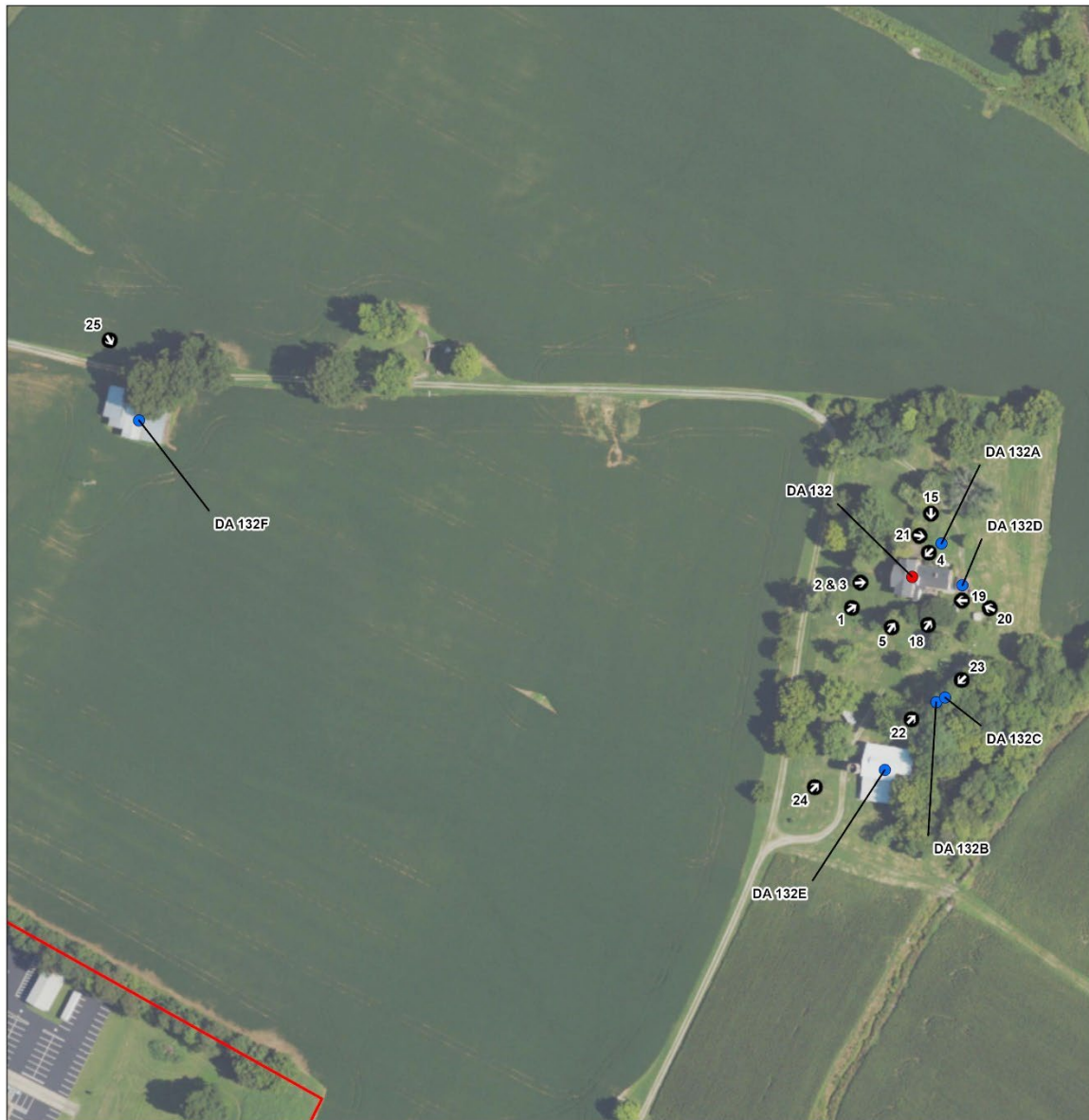
Name of Property

County and State

- 12 of 20: First floor, north room, double leaf door to dining room addition, single leaf door to exterior.
- 13 of 20: Second floor, façade entry.
- 14 of 20: Second floor, north room fireplace and flanking closets.
- 15 of 20: Rear additions, looking south, detached kitchen located east (left) of chimney, current kitchen and dining room located west (right) of chimney, second level bathroom visible on rear of house.
- 16 of 20: Basement level of detached kitchen, fireplace enclosed but lintel visible.
- 17 of 20: Basement level of detached kitchen, warming rack, note repointed brick.
- 18 of 20: Shed-roof porch enclosing south elevations of detached kitchen and current kitchen.
- 19 of 20: Rear sunroom addition, enclosed porch to the north (right), bathroom addition to the south (left).
- 20 of 20: Rear enclosed porch along south elevation of detached kitchen, upper bathroom addition visible.

Alexander-Ford Farmhouse  
Name of Property

Daviess County, Kentucky  
County and State



- Legend**
- Alexander-Ford House NRHP Boundary
  - Field Site
  - Contributing
  - Non-Contributing
  - ⊙ Photo Point and Direction

0 105 210 Feet  
(At original document size of 8.5x11)  
1:2,500



Project Location  
Daviess Co., KY  
7.5' Topographical Quadrangle Owensboro East, KY (1981)

Title  
**Alexander-Ford House (DA 132)**

**5785 Highway 144  
Owensboro, KY 42303**

**Lat. 37.802941, Long. -87.015683**

Disclaimer: This document has been prepared based on information provided by others as cited in the Notes section. Stantec has not verified the accuracy and/or completeness of this information and shall not be responsible for any errors or omissions which may be incorporated herein as a result. Stantec assumes no responsibility for data supplied in electronic format, and the recipient accepts full responsibility for verifying the accuracy and completeness of the data.



Alexander-Ford Farmhouse

Name of Property

Daviess County, Kentucky

County and State



Alexander-Ford House, Area map.