**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Forsythe-Shewmaker House

other names/site number ME-139

## 2. Location

street & number _____ NA not for publication

city or town Harrodsburg X vicinity

state Kentucky code KY county Mercer code 167 zip code 40330

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this __X__ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property __X__ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

**___ national ___ statewide __X__ local**

Signature of certifying official/Title **Lindy Casebier/Acting SHPO** Date

**Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office**
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Forsythe-Shewmaker House
Name of Property

Mercer County, Kentucky
County and State

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [x] private
- [ ] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

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

- [x] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

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

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | 2 | buildings |
| | | sites |
| | | structures |
| | | objects |
| 2 | 2 | **Total** |

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/Single Dwelling
Domestic/Institutional Housing

**Current Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/Single Dwelling
Domestic/Institutional Housing

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Federal
Greek Revival

**Materials**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone
walls: Brick
roof: Asphalt shingle
other:

## Narrative Description

### Summary Paragraph

The Forsythe-Shewmaker House (ME-139) is located at _____ in Mercer County, Kentucky, on the banks of the Salt River. Vanarsdall Road is located west of the old Frankfort Turnpike, now US Highway 127, between two early communities: Salvisa to the north and McAfee, located to the south along Highway 127. The Forsythe-Shewmaker House is approximately 12 miles north of Harrodsburg, the county seat of Mercer County. The nominated parcel consists of the entire legal parcel, an 18.917-acre parcel with two contributing features, the house and brick residence for formerly enslaved workers.

**Character of the Forsythe-Shewmaker House's setting and property changes over time**

A rural property, once the center point of an over 300-acre farm, the Forsythe-Shewmaker House is located in north Mercer County, in the Bluegrass Region of Central Kentucky. Mercer County was formed in 1785 when Kentucky was still part of Virginia, and is located in the Bluegrass Region of the Commonwealth, covering some 250 square miles.

The house sits on the north side of Vanarsdall Road, west of the railroad tracks. The domestic yard sits within a bend of the Salt River, which is the state's fifth largest watershed and was an important waterway throughout the nineteenth century. The house is some 300 feet north of the road, with a circular driveway and a flagstone sidewalk leading to the front entry. A number of mature deciduous trees are located near the road and to the rear (north) of the house, at the top of the slope leading to the river. A spring is located almost directly north of the house; a concrete pumphouse was located between the spring and the house.[1]

The brick slave quarters are located on the east side of the house. A non-contributing garage and front-gable outbuilding are located on the perimeter of the east side of the domestic garage. A board fence, painted white, separates the domestic yard from what was previously the agricultural sphere. The fence runs behind the slave quarters and on the east and west side of the yard to the road.

The property has dwindled from its original acreage over the years, and changed hands several times during the twentieth century. Following the death of its builder, Andrew Forsythe, in 1886, the house and farm were occupied almost solely by tenants until the Great Depression.

In the first part of the twentieth century, the house and farm were quite neglected, its absentee owner not paying property taxes or maintaining the property, and the farm was sold as forfeit at an auction. Thomas Waller Latta purchased the farm at the courthouse steps in 1937, and his daughter, Laura Alma Latta Shewmaker and her family moved in a few years later. When the family acquired the property, the house was uninhabitable. The Shewmaker family restored the house and farm, and operated a diversified working farm at the site from 1937 until 1976. The house was been known locally as the Shewmaker House for the majority of the twentieth century. Since they were the second longest owners following the Forsythe family, the property is being nominated under both names as the Forsythe-Shewmaker House.

The property was sold to Leslie Martin in 1976. Following Mr. Martin, the property transferred in 1992 to the Brandenburg family, and finally, to the current owners.

[1] The pumphouse retains only its poured concrete foundation; the "house" portion having been demolished.

**Construction of the House**

This house rests on land originally owned by the McAfee family, pioneer settlers of Mercer County. George McAfee, Sr. received a land grant of 1,400 acres in 1781 from then-Virginia governor Benjamin Harrison. Shortly, five brothers from the McAfee family left Botetourt County, Virginia, and established McAfee Station, about five miles north of Harrodsburg. The McAfees and their relatives constructed many early homes in north Mercer County, including ME-151, ME-178 and ME-180.

Andrew Forsythe, a McAfee descendent and his wife, Narcissus McAfee Forsythe (a distant cousin, as George McAfee was her grandfather), were married in 1830. This house was built on a portion of the McAfee grant.

Construction of the house likely began in 1830 and was completed during 1831-1832. Laid in five-row common bond hand-made bricks, fired on site, the two-story five-bay-wide central passage dwelling represents the blending of the Federal and Greek Revival styles in Mercer County. The understated façade reveals little of the high-style interior finish of the house. Though the domestic yard has suffered a loss of outbuildings – the dwelling and brick slave quarters that remain convey a tangible sense of antebellum Mercer County. The house remains remarkably intact, with only a few modifications to the original "L" shaped plan and very minute changes to the interior fabric and materials.

**Description of the Exterior**

The two-story brick house rests on a continuous mortared cut-stone foundation. Laid in five-row common bond hand-made brick, the façade and other elevations have penciled mortar joints. The asphalt shingle clad side-gable roof is pierced by interior gable end brick chimneys. The central passage dwelling is one pile deep, with a two-story single pile ell, and a one-story two-pile kitchen addition. The solid masonry dwelling appears to be three bricks thick.

The house faces south, and the primary façade is the north elevation. The five-bay-wide façade has a door flanked by two windows on each side. The windows on the first floor of the façade are nine-over-six double-hung wooden sash windows with simple jack arches laid in a soldier course and wooden sills. The windows on the second story of the façade, with the exception of the central bay, are six-over-six double-hung wooden sash windows with jack arches and wooden sills. The central window on the second story is an elongated nine-over-six double-hung wooden sash window.

The central entry on the façade features double doors, each featuring a single long inset panel. Pilasters flank the doors and the five-light sidelights. A restrained architrave tops the doors. The portico sheltering the entryway has been rebuilt following the ghost lines visible on the brick; the original porch was torn off of the house in a tornado in the late-nineteenth or early twentieth century. This version of the porch has two pilasters set against the brick and four square supports out in front. The portico rests on a concrete pad clad with brick.

There are two windows, one on each story, on the west gable end. Both windows are nine-over-six; the first-story window has a solider course jack arch, while the second-story window, which appears to have been cut in after the period of initial construction, has no jack arch. Both windows have wooden sills.

The attic lights, located on either side of the interior chimneystack, have been fitted with louvers. They also have jack arches and wood sills. There are no openings on the main section's east gable end, with the exception

of the two, four-light fixed attic lights. There is also a sunken basement entry on the east gable end; the one-bay-wide opening contains a batten door and has stone steps and stone wing walls.

The two-story one-room-deep brick ell extends north from the main block, on the west side of the dwelling. The ell has a gable end interior brick chimney stack. The ell is one-bay wide, with a nine-over-six double-hung wooden sash window on the first floor, and a six-over-six double-hung wooden sash window on the second story. Like the windows on the west gable end of the main block of the house, the first floor's nine-over-six double hung sash window appears original and has a jack arch and wooden sill. The second story's six-over-six double-hung sash window, while historic, dates from after initial construction and lacks a jack arch. Both windows have wooden sills. Another six-over-six double-hung window is located on the second story of the north elevation of the ell, on the east side of the stack.

The one-and one-half story brick kitchen, two-rooms deep with a central chimney, was once separate from the ell and main block of the dwelling; an open breezeway originally connected the kitchen to the house. That one-bay-wide breezeway was eventually closed in, and in the twentieth century, clad in brick to match the rest of the house. Today the breezeway is marked by a single doorway at the juncture of the ell and the kitchen addition. The bay contains a half-glass, half-panel door with a wooden storm door that contains a three-quarter length multi-light window with an inset panel below.

The kitchen was constructed either at the same time as the main house, or perhaps prior to the construction of the two-story portion of the house. It seems likely that Andrew Forsythe could have built the two-room, one-and-one-half story section and lived in it while the rest of the dwelling was built. According to the memoir written by his granddaughter, Forsythe "had the pick of the trees for his home, going to the forest he selected the best nature had to give. He marked them, cut them, sawed them into lumber and let the lumber season for two years before he started building the house. The brick he made on the place."[2]

The kitchen proper is two bays wide, though that fenestration has been altered over the years. Today the west elevation of the kitchen has a six-over-six double-hung wooden sash window on the north side and a larger, mid-twentieth century bay containing an eight-over-eight double-hung sash wooden window. The kitchen has a large central brick chimney located on the ridgeline. The stack provided ventilation for a double hearth. A small louvered attic light is located on the north gable end of the kitchen.

After the main house was completed, the one-and-one-half story portion functioned as kitchen and storeroom. The kitchen had "a large open fireplace with pots hanging on the crane. The cooking was originally done in the fireplace. Later a large stove was added to the kitchen to make the cooking easier. Adjoining the kitchen was the storeroom where barrels of flour, meal, sugar, molasses, cans of lard, shoulders and hams of meat and supplies of vegetables were kept." The cooking portion of the kitchen is the southernmost room (now used as a den) while the storeroom was the northernmost room (now used as the kitchen).

The loft above the storeroom was the sleeping quarters for the cook, at first a slave, and later a domestic worker. The loft was accessed by a winder stair located beside the chimney stack. In addition to the sleeping loft, the storeroom has a cellar space used as a root cellar and additional storage.

A modern frame porch constructed in the 1980s is located off of the north gable end of the kitchen.

[2] Jean Forsythe Memoir, dated 1954. Copy on file at the Harrodsburg Historical Society, Forsythe family file. Harrodsburg, Kentucky.

A two-story enclosed porch wraps, in an L shape, around the north wall of the main block of the house and the east wall of the ell. The east elevation of the porch and the remainder of the first story of the porch is clad in brick and the second is frame; originally, the entire porch was frame. The porch dates to the initial construction or very soon afterwards; the floorboards (visible from the basement) are mill sawn with cut nails, and there is some undercutting visible, meaning the porch dates from either the 1830s and is contemporaneous with the construction of the main house, or the 1840s.The first floor of the porch was constructed at the same time as the main house, and the second story added later.[3] During the nineteenth century, the end of the upstairs porch was utilized as a weaving room.[4]

There is one window on both floors of the east elevation of the porch; each window is a six-over-six double-hung wooden sash window. The north elevation of the porch has one nine-over-six double-hung sash window on the first story, and a six-light fixed light and six-over-six double-hung sash window on the second story. An exterior brick flue is also located on the north elevation of the enclosed porch.

The portion of the porch that wraps against the ell of the house is one-bay wide. A nine-over-six double-hung wooden sash window is located on the first floor, while a six-over-six double-hung sash window is located on the second story.

The kitchen originally had a lattice frame porch on the east wall; that porch was framed in and enclosed before World War II. The kitchen addition has been reroofed, so the roofline of the original masonry portion and the frame porch are now seamless. The roof, like that of the main house and ell, is clad in asphalt shingles. The fenestration on the east elevation of the porch on the kitchen now reads as window/door/window/window. The windows are six-light casement windows, while the door is a half-glass, half-panel door.

## Description of the Interior

The Forsythe-Shewmaker House has a central-passage plan and is one room deep, with a one-room, two-story ell and a two-room deep kitchen. The interior fabric of the house is remarkably intact. There are five main rooms, not counting the central hall and the enclosed porch, on the first floor, and three rooms on the second.

The double-leaf doors open onto the central hall with the open staircase on the left (west) wall. The doors have raised panels on both the exterior and interior; this particular treatment is repeated in the two doors leading to the front chambers off of the hall.

The stair rises up the west wall to a landing on the north wall. The landing is centered in the hall; a window lighting the landing was located on the north wall but was covered up with the extension of the rear porch to two stories sometime in the late-nineteenth century. Though not visible from the central hall, the opening remains on the other side of the wall, visible from the back porch. The stairs then move up the east wall to a landing in front of the central bay on the second story.

Double doors, identical to the front entry doors, with bulls eye detailing at the corner blocks and a surround detailed with fluting lead from the front hall onto the enclosed rear porch.

[3] The second story of the porch covers up an original window on the north wall of the main house.

[4] Jean Forsythe.

The stair is perhaps the most stylistically Federal element found in the interior. The banister is very plain, and the delicate spindles supporting it are almost devoid of any embellishment. The baseboard on the stair wall differs from the rest of the baseboard trim in the hall; it is not as high nor is it as finely finished. With the exception of what runs along the bottom of the stair wall, the baseboard in the central hall is 17 inches high with two graduated levels and a rope molding at the top near the wall.

The front room on the west side of the house was described in a memoir written by Andrew Forsythe's granddaughter as "the parlor." The door leading into the parlor from the hall has raised panels on both side of the door. This extremely high-level of finish is not common, and required not only a very skilled craftsman, but substantially more wood, which translates into additional expense. The door has a configuration of three horizontal panels on the top half of the door, and two vertical panels on the bottom half. The door surround features bulls eye corner blocks and alternating fluted and beveled moldings. The door jamb has inset panels.

The parlor itself has the highest level of finish, and the most purely Greek Revival inspired detailing in the house. The room measures roughly 20 by 20 feet, and has white oak floors and three windows. The baseboard stands 18 inches high with graduated bevel moldings. The window surrounds are identical to the door surround, with bull's eye corner blocks and alternating fluted and beveled moldings on the architrave. The mantel's classic composition features two columns at either end, a central frieze panel and a broken cornice shelf. This mantel, like the raised-panel doors, is remarkably similar to the details in Gideon Shryock's 1835 Orlando Brown House in Frankfort, Kentucky (FRFC-25).

The east-side front room is referred to in Jean Forsythe's memoir as the "family room, a large room, 20 by 20 feet with spacious closets, a high mantel and two windows, an open fireplace with big wood back logs, made this room cheerful in the winter."[5] The closets mentioned by Forsythe are presses built on either side of the chimney stack, with detailing more closely linked to the Federal than Greek Revival, with the beading on the edge of each door and the squared inset panels. The mantel is plainer than that of the parlor, lacking the central frieze panel and broken cornice shelf.

The two-story ell contains the dining room, described by Jean Forsythe as follows: "The dining room opened into the parlor. This too had closets that extended from floor to ceiling. One side held the old fashioned gold band china. The other press was filled with preserves, jellies, pickles and canned fruits."[6] The mantel in the dining room is not original to the house, but was salvaged from an earlier McAfee house (now destroyed) located on the farm. James Shewmaker installed this sunburst mantel in the house in the 1950s. Locally attributed to noted craftsman Matthew Lowery, the mantel features paired colonettes at either end supporting entablature imposts with a sunburst motif, and a broken cornice shelf. The closets or presses on either side of the chimneystack are still in place, though the east side press was opened up to allow access to the kitchen once the breezeway was enclosed.

All of the rim locks on the doors in the house are Carpenter locks imported from England. This type of lock, patented in 1830, features brass knobs and a characteristic embossed circular brass seal bearing the royal seal of England, signifying that the company had an official patent. Carpenter locks, due to their "imposing appearance" and relative affordability, became popular for use on the front entry door of houses in the United States in the 1830s and 1840s. The use of the locks on every door within the house, however, suggests Forsythe's deliberate intent to showcase his level of economic attainment.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

The upstairs of the house, naturally, features more restrained woodwork treatment, with the exception of the room known as the "tramp's room." This room is located over the dining room in the ell, and accessed originally through a back staircase. Prior to the Shewmaker's tenure in the house, this room was not accessible from the main part of the house. James Shewmaker cut a doorway through the west side upstairs front room in order to use the room as a bedroom for his two sons.

According to Jane Latta Shewmaker Brother, in the nineteenth century the room was set aside for visitors to the house, and the separate entrance provided privacy and safety for both guests and the family. While the chimneystack has been closed up in this room, an existing press to the side of the stack is almost identical to the presses in the downstairs family room. The baseboard in the tramp's room is 14 inches high, compared to the very spare eight-inch high baseboard in the two front rooms on the second story.

**Description of the Slave Quarters (Contributing)**

The brick slave quarters are located just northeast of the dwelling. Divided into two pens, the structure is just two bays wide, with two doors on the south elevation leading into each of the pens. Both rooms were heated by interior gable end brick chimneys. It rests on a dry laid stone foundation and has an asphalt shingle roof. Four-light fixed windows light the loft space. The back wall began collapsing in the late 1990s, due to the removal of bricks for other projects on the property. It been rebuilt as a frame wall by the current owners.

**Description of Garage (Non-contributing)**

To the east of the dwelling is the two-bay wide frame front garage, built by James Shewmaker in the 1950s. Clad in boards and batten, it rests on a poured concrete foundation. Sliding wooden doors are located on the south gable end.

**Description of Front-Gable Outbuilding (Non-contributing)**

Behind (north) the garage is a front-gable, vertical board outbuilding moved to its current location in the 1950s from elsewhere on the farm. Resting on a dry-laid stone foundation, the one-bay wide structure has a metal roof and is used for storage.

**Changes to the Forsythe-Shewmaker House since the Period of Significance**

The changes observed in the Forsythe-Shewmaker House since its construction are typical to rural properties in central Kentucky. The most typical change is the enclosure and/or expansion of porches. In this case, the rear "L" shaped porch (original to construction or shortly thereafter) was raised to two stories sometime after the Civil War, functioning more as part of the house proper than a porch. In addition to its height change, the first story of the porch received a veneer of brick in the twentieth century.

The one-story portico on the façade has been reconstructed following the ghostlines of the original, destroyed in a tornado in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

The open breezeway between the main house and the kitchen was enclosed in the early 1940s. The kitchen originally had a lattice frame porch on the east wall; that porch was framed in and enclosed before World War II. A window on the west wall of the kitchen was enlarged in the mid-twentieth century. A modern frame porch constructed in the 1980s is located off of the north gable end of the kitchen.

Interior changes include the modernization of the kitchen, the addition of indoor plumbing for bathrooms and change in room function. Otherwise, the interior is intact.

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

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

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

Property is:

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

### Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

### Period of Significance

Ca. 1830

### Significant Dates

Ca. 1830

### Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

NA

### Cultural Affiliation

NA

### Architect/Builder

Unknown

**Period of Significance:**
The Period of Significance is the year of the house's construction, which is a conventional choice within the National Register evaluation system. The interpretation of the house's original design emphasizes the messages it communicates about design changes that parallel changes in agriculture and social life in Mercer County, as the settlement era had ended and people in this part of Kentucky were establishing a more complex and enduring social system.

**Criteria Considerations: NA**

## Statement of Significance

**Summary Paragraph**

The Forsythe-Shewmaker House (ME-139) meets National Register Criterion C, embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type and period of architecture: domestic architecture in the second quarter of the nineteenth century in rural Mercer County, when houses were turning from settlement-era (Georgian and Federal) styles toward Greek Revival expressions. The Forsythe-Shewmaker House is an important local example of transitional Federal-Greek Revival architecture for more than just pure design. The changes it exhibit parallel development in the agricultural economy of the Inner Bluegrass, as well as larger social changes which those increases in the agricultural economy supported. The house's interior exhibits fashionable architectural styles and finishes within its form: a central-passage I-house with ell additions. Both the form and the finish of this house tell us about building decisions, about building hierarchies, and about how the 1830s were a pivotal time economically, socially and agriculturally for Mercer County's citizens. The significance of the Forsythe-Shewmaker House can be more deeply understood by examining how wealthy agriculturists used house form and style to enhance their social standing and ensure their role in the local economy.

## Historic Context: Architecture in Mercer County, Kentucky, 1792-1840

Antebellum Agriculture in Mercer County

The first permanent settlement west of the Allegheny Mountains, of English speakers, was led by James Harrod, a Pennsylvania hunter and explorer, in 1774. Harrod and 31 men laid off lots near a spring, naming the new town Harrodstown. [7] The Virginia legislature created Mercer County in 1785 from a portion of Lincoln County. Harrodstown became the county seat and was renamed Harrodsburg. The county today covers 250 square miles, and is bordered by Washington, Boyle, Garrard, Jessamine, Woodford and Anderson Counties.[8]

Mercer Country is situated in the Inner Bluegrass physiographic region, which contains "undoubtedly the best agricultural land in the state."[9] Settlement-era agriculture in Mercer County (1785-1800) focused primarily on subsistence. The primary task of the settlement era farmer was to prepare land for productivity. As soon as land was cleared, farmers planted corn, as it fed both people and livestock. Few, if any, outbuildings were constructed, and almost none from that period survive today.

Farmers in the Bluegrass soon realized a disadvantage to developing market-based agriculture: the central part of Kentucky was land-locked. A lack of roads and navigable waterways made the early exportation of surplus crops nearly impossible. Mercer County had an advantage over the rest of the Bluegrass, with its location on the Kentucky River. Harrods Landing (later renamed Warwick Landing) was improved, with warehouses to store tobacco and hemp for shipment south.[10] Despite the blessings of this corridor, the return on hogsheads of tobacco was low, for those which survived the arduous river journey—only two to three cents a pound.[11]

[7] Helen Powell, ed. *Historic Sites of Harrodsburg and Mercer County, Kentucky.* (Frankfort, Kentucky: Harrodsburg-Mercer County Landmark Association and the Kentucky Heritage Council, 1988), 10.

[8] John Kleber, ed. "Mercer County," in The Encyclopedia of Kentucky. (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky 1992: 627.

[9] Karl Raitz, "The Bluegrass" in *Kentucky: A Regional Geography*, ed. P.P. Karam (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publish. Co., 1973), 53.

[10] Powell, 11.

[11] Richard Troutman. *The Social and Economic Structure of Kentucky Agriculture, 1850-1860*. Dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1958.

The county's 1800 total population stood at 9,646 residents; the population of enslaved people was 2,316. In 1810, the county had 12,630 residents, with enslaved workers making up over 25 percent of the total. The 1820 census tallied 15,587 residents, 3,825 of them enslaved. During the 1820s, Mercer County's agriculture began to show a movement beyond subsistence to a more commercial mode of farming. The interest in improving agriculture led to establishment of agricultural societies, fairs, and journals. For instance, the Mercer County Agricultural Society was established in 1838.[12]

Between 1830 and 1860, the efforts of Bluegrass farmers moved the level of agriculture forward. Kentucky became a major supplier of livestock to the south and the east – hogs, mules, and horses were major exports. Hogs constituted a vital role in Kentucky agriculture. Swine could be found on almost every farm in the Bluegrass regardless of farm size, because hogs were hardy animals that required less care than other livestock, and could transport themselves to available markets, eking out sustenance in the most unlikely of spots. Unlike beef, pork would keep once it was salted and cured. Mules also bolstered the state's economy, trade and image. Central Kentucky farmers worked to improve mule bloodlines. In the first part of the nineteenth century, "improved lineages of jackasses, propagated solely for the siring of mules, began to emerge." [13] The cotton and sugar markets of the deep south that made the rearing of mules "one of the most profitable occupations engaged in by the American farmer." [14]

Mercer County held 881 farms in 1850, with 145,735 acres of improved farmland and the average farm containing some 165.4 acres. In 1850, the cash value of livestock in Mercer County was $627,086, compared to $453,803 for Boyle County and $200,196 in Anderson County.[15] The number of farms had dropped to 777 by 1860, but the total improved farm acreage had increased to 151,513 acres, with the average farm size falling to the 20-100 acre range.[16]

Accumulation of acres both enabled the antebellum farmer to make a living and to provide for his family. It was also the key to assuring his place in society. Riesenweber, in her nomination of Hamilton Farm in Washington County (NR, 1993), defined a Middling Farmer as one who "owned over 100 acres of land, a substantial log, frame or masonry house, and a few slaves." [17] Another Kentucky writer suggested that "in the Bluegrass, no man was considered a well-to-do-farmer unless he owned at least five hundred acres of good land." [18]

Christine Amos provides a more concrete definition of a middling farmer in her overview of the Bluegrass Cultural landscape. Amos identifies "at least three distinct sub-types of agricultural complexes" that are ranked depending upon the "financial standing and market scope of the agricultural unit, and the size, development and location of that unit."[19] Within this hierarchy, following the gentleman farmer is a "second significant farm type," the successful middling farmer that had a farm between 100-500 acres.[20] This farmer owned "a dozen or

[12] Powell 74.
[13] G. K. Renner, "The Mule in Missouri Agriculture, 1821-1950" *Missouri Historical Review* 4 (July 1980): 435.
[14] Clark, "Livestock Trade Between Kentucky and the South, 1840-1860," 570.
[15] Christine Amos, *The Bluegrass Cultural Landscape: A Regional Historic Overview* (Frankfort: Kentucky Heritage Council, 1988), 74-75; Historical Census Browser 2009.
[16] Thomas Clark, *Agrarian Kentucky*, 45.
[17] Riesenweber, 1.
[18] Francis Garvin Davenport, *Antebellum Kentucky: A Social History, 1800-1860* (Oxford: The Mississippi Valley Press, 1943), 5.
[19] Amos, 85.
[20] Ibid., 88.

less slaves, a modest amount of stock, probably the majority not purebred but possibly cross-bred with local imported stock." [21] The livestock of this middling farmer consisted of cattle, horses, mules, sheep and swine. Much of the farm was given over to pasture, though likely a smaller percentage than the large grazing pastures of the gentleman farms. Census data from the 1860 agricultural census provided the background for Amos' determination. [22]

During 1830-1860, middling and upper-class farmers in the Bluegrass began to construct specialized farm outbuildings. Detached kitchens, meathouses, ice houses, spring houses and slave quarters were built. The growing market in mules and horses meant that some farmers were dedicating stock barns to their stabling. The spatial configuration of domestic yard and agricultural yard began to shape as well, and wealthy farmers were able to manipulate their landscape to present the best view possible to the public.

Kentucky never had as many enslaved workers as her southern counterparts. The lack of a plantation system, with a single, demanding crop like cotton, meant less demand for laborers, and the success of livestock in the Bluegrass did not depend upon comparable amounts of enslaved labor. The average Mercer County farmer counted only two to three enslaved laborers among their holdings during the period 1830-1850. Andrew Forsythe owned 13 enslaved workers in the 1850 census and 10 years later, he owned 20; the census indicated that he had five houses for these workers. Forsythe also owned 500+ acres, as recorded in the 1850 census. These figures place Forsythe in a small group of Mercer County farmers. Based on his acreage, his enumeration of wealth, Forsythe could credibly count himself among Mercer County's elite. This led him to select a house that conformed to such a status.

**House Plans and Characteristics of Upper Class Farmers' Houses in Mercer County, 1800-1860**

The characteristics of the dwellings built by Mercer County farmers during the period 1800 to 1860 is based on an examination of Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory forms, the survey of county conducted in the late 1980s, NRHP work in Mercer County, and the author's own field work in the region.

Cultural traditions informed and influenced all builders, including Andrew Forsythe, as they began to consider constructing homes in the 1820s. As part of an prominent pioneer family, Forsythe was not only familiar with the many McAfee houses in the county, but as a man who traveled widely in the south and across the state, he was exposed to architectural trends not only taking place in Lexington and Frankfort, but also in the deep south. Settlement-era Kentucky held "considerable rewards to the enterprising members of the middle classes who were anxious to rise in the world, and the spirit of speculation was strong among them." [23]

Established patterns of migration and diffusion show that a majority of settlers came from the Piedmont and Valley regions of the Carolinas and Virginia, where they were familiar with the traditions of the Tidewater. Many were able to create a version of the plantation system of the southern planter. They also inherited the "big-house frame architecture, quarter cabins and other settlement features of the old Tidewater Plantation."[24]

[21] Ibid., 88.

[22] Ibid., 89.

[23] Thomas Perkins Abernethy, "Frontier in Perspective," in *The Southern Frontier: An Interpretation* Eds. Walter D. Wyman and Clifton B. Kroeber (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), 136.

[24] Fred Kniffen, "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion," in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture* Eds. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 23.

Thomas Perkins Abernethy, in his study of the southern frontier, maintains that though "it was Presbyterian and democratic to a degree, the Kentucky Bluegrass came to be more like the Tidewater of Virginia than the Valley." [25]

Early Tidewater Virginia houses were constructed from necessity – shelter was the utmost concern, not style. But as that region developed, so did the architectural language of its inhabitants. One of the most common house plans, beside the single pen, is the hall-parlor house, which is one of the earliest European-derived house plans. The most common arrangement of hall-parlor plans is that of two rooms aligned end to end, with fireplaces at one or both gable ends. The high-end examples had a fireplace in each room; other early structures had only one heated room. The hall was an all-purpose space; usually the larger of the two rooms, while the parlor, usually with a higher level of finish, was reserved for entertainment, sleeping or display of the family's finer possessions, such as portraits or silver. After the 1830s, hall-parlor plans became associated with household of less affluence and stature.[26]

Due to early settlement, North Mercer County experienced a good deal of construction between 1770 and 1800. Several of these early houses, almost all located on the Salt or Kentucky Rivers, are still extant. The siting of the houses is a key element – most of the homes located on such pivotal waterways (particularly on the west side of the Frankfort Turnpike and on the Salt River) were part of early land grants, and all but guaranteed a successful farming operation, with fertile land and access to the river for water and transportation purposes.

The academic Federal style, classified as ranging from 1780 to 1820 nationally, is the earliest period style most commonly encountered in Kentucky.[27] Characterized by restraint, elegant, thin and straight lines on moldings and woodwork, and typically symmetrical, Federal-style buildings in the Commonwealth are typically rectangular or square in plan. Floor plans employed include hall-parlor, side-passage and central passage. Many Federal-style dwellings are brick, laid in Flemish bond, with a side-gable roof. Windows typically boasted double-hung sash in six-over-six, nine-over-nine and twelve-over-twelve configurations. Muntins are typically thin, and lintels and sills are plain and restrained.

Andrew Forsythe's uncles constructed homes associated with this first period of construction in Mercer County. John Armstrong McAfee, a great-uncle, built a double-pen dwelling south of Forsthye's farm, near the Frankfort Turnpike (ME-151B, NR 1989).

John Armstrong McAfee House (photo: 1989)

[25] Abernethy, 136.

[26] Gabrielle M. Lanier and Bernard L. Herman, *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic: Looking at Buildings and Landscapes* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 16.

[27] Cyril M. Harris. *American Architecture An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1998), 123.

The dwelling consists of a log pen next to a timber-frame pen, each pen with its own stairs and no communication between the rooms on the second story. While log was certainly an important building method for early settlers, many members of the McAfee family built in more permanent materials, such as stone, in the late-eighteenth century.

Closer to Salvisa, another great-great-uncle, James McAfee, built a stone hall-parlor house on the site of McAfee Station (ME-180, NR 1983) on the Talmage-Mayo Road. According to local history, the home was "modeled after the family home in Curmagh, Ireland."[28] A great-uncle by marriage, John Jackson McGee, built a two-story hall-parlor stone house on what is now the Jackson Pike (ME-178, NR 1983), on land "originally included in a grant from Patrick Henry."[29]

James McAfee House (1983 photo)

John Jackson McGee House (1983)

These houses, both strategically located on the Salt River, have minimal Federal detailing in their original rooms. A brick hall-parlor house, located near the Kentucky River and the former shipping point of Warwick, is the Moses Jones House (ME-9, NR 1979). Constructed between 1790 and 1811, the one-and-one-half story brick dwelling, all elevations laid in Flemish bond, has a hall-parlor plan. Another early brick hall-parlor dwelling, roughly two miles from the Forsythe-Shewmaker House, is Millwood (ME-168, NR 1976), built by Daniel Brewer in 1795 on the east bank of the Salt River. Brewer, a farmer and operator of a mill on the Salt River, had the façade of the four-bay wide house aid in Flemish bond. The millwork on the house is attributed to noted Mercer County carpenter Matthew Lowery.

Moses Jones House (1979 photo)

Millwood (1976 photo)

[28] Powell 30.

[29] Powell 27.

The Georgian plan, which was introduced in middle Virginia around 1760, did not mean an abrupt departure from the old traditional plans.[30] Instead, builders encountering the Georgian plan designed houses with "the rules of the old competence." The lack of demand for the double pile house gave rise to an innovation that took the front half of the Georgian plan as its model. The central hall I-house type was born, "the most common type from the old Tidewater, across the Southern Mountains, out through the Bluegrass and into the lower Midwest."[31] The plan or the form of a dwelling is an important indicator in how its occupant functioned socially and how his dwelling needed to function spatially.

The introduction of the central hall not only gave rise to a new housing type, but also was an evolution in the idea of space. Spaces "are powerful entities to the people who build and occupy them, and for that reason changes in spaces are sensitive indicators of changes in their occupants' attitudes."[32] The central passage affected accessibility, visibility and rearranged the domestic spatial hierarchy. Hall-parlor houses had few social buffers, and the activity of the household was open to all, an arrangement that fostered inclusion, which was not always welcome.

This became particularly true in the slaveholding south. The central hall plan allowed a separation of space and social order within the house that echoed the separation of space elsewhere in the landscape. Among the farmers and townspeople of Andrew Forsythe's socioeconomic class, the "symmetrical two-story house became an emblem, and passages became a social necessity." [33] Most builders in Mercer County in the antebellum period followed two house forms – the "I-house and its single-story counterparts."[34] The central hall plan has become associated with the ubiquitous I-house, which dominated the Bluegrass landscape. As it moved southward, the I-house "became symbolic of economic attainment by agriculturists."[35]

Beginning in the 1820s, wealthy residents in both Harrodsburg and in the rural areas of the county, started to construct central passage dwellings. The majority of the extant examples are one-and-one-half story dwellings. Fountain Blue (ME-129, NR 1989) is a one-and-one-half story brick central passage Federal style house with one-story wings or pavilions to either side of the main block.[36] The double-pile house has interior gable end chimneys and interior woodwork by Matthew Lowery.

In 1830, Nathanial Burrus, located west of Forsythe on the Vanarsdall Road, constructed a one-and-one-half story brick central passage dwelling (ME-144, NRHP 1984). In detailing, it adheres much more to the Federal style, with restrained, almost plain interior woodwork. The entryways on both houses are very similar, except the Forsythe-Shewmaker House has the double entry doors and a larger overall scale.

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[30] Ibid., 25-26.

[31] Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia*, 89.

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

[33] Edward Chappell, *Unfinished manuscript on survey of Montgomery County* (Frankfort: Kentucky Heritage Council, 1978), 11.

[34] Ibid., 9.

[35] Fred Kniffen, "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion," in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture* Eds. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 9.

[36] Listed in the NRHP in the Multiple Resource Area, 1988.

Boise House/Fountain Blue (1988 photo)

Around 1840, Peter Dunn constructed a one-story brick central passage dwelling (ME-150, NRHP 1989) with two side wings just south of McAfee.[37] Dunn entered farming around the same time as Forsythe, and began to accumulate his farmland in 1822. According to a previous survey form, he was "active raising horses, pork packing, and banking." This Greek Revival dwelling, while on a smaller scale than the Forsythe-Shewmaker House, bears one element in common – the detailed panel doors.

During the 1830s, the Greek Revival style began to edge out the Federal in popularity, though across Central Kentucky, a common trend is that of a transitional dwelling that combined Federal and Greek Revival motifs. This melding of styles resulted in a dwelling with a Federal-style façade, with either a one-story portico or porch, simple lines, and very little ornament. The interior, however, contains woodwork with Greek Revival proportions and (often) detailing; but occasionally, the woodwork might equal that of the Greek Revival style in scale, but will combine Federal-era motifs with Greek orders.

Chronologically, the Greek Revival style typically follows the Federal style, though many vernacular builders combined details of both in their dwellings. The Greek Revival style is commonly observed as spanning the years from 1820 to 1860, but the style continued to inspire local builders into the last three decades of the nineteenth century. The style "did not become the prevailing architectural fashion in the eastern United States until the 1830s, and a decade later in Kentucky." [38]

The main elements of the Greek Revival style in Kentucky include heavy and bold moldings and motifs; use of the Greek orders (often in porticos or porches with large columns), windows accented with entablature lintels and larger panes of glass than Federal style windows. The Greek Revival style found favor in public buildings in Kentucky before it was applied to domestic buildings. The state has few dwellings built in the style before 1840.[39]

**Background on Andrew Forsythe**

Though recalled by his granddaughter as a "self-made man," Forsythe had general advantages over much of the surrounding population. Born in Mercer County on December 24, 1795, Andrew Forsythe was the grandson of one of the original five McAfee brothers who settled in the area in the last half of the eighteenth century. His mother was Jane McAfee, who married Matthew Forsythe, a native of South Carolina who arrived in Kentucky with General Adair.

[37] The Peter Dunn House, listed in the

[38] Clay Lancaster. *Antebellum Architecture in Kentucky*. (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 182.

[39] Lancaster 207.

Forsythe was also the nephew of Robert Breckinridge McAfee, a native of Mercer County and veteran of the war of 1812.

Andrew Forsythe took advantage of the many waterways in Mercer County to build up his capital while a young man. He was 17 years old when the war of 1812 commenced, and for the eight years after that, he built up his capital by transporting goods down the Kentucky River and across country on the Maysville Road. Forsythe would "fill a flat boat at Oregon with produce, take it down to New Orleans, sell it and then walk home."[40] He also hauled goods from Lexington to Maysville and back, and traveled to Eastern Kentucky via horse, delivering the "doings of the Legislature to the County Seats."[41]

In 1820, Andrew Forsythe purchased "on credit 190 acres of land, ten miles north of Harrodsburg, near Salvisa."[42] Four years previous, his uncle, Robert McAfee, founded and laid out the town of Salvisa.[43] From that time forward, Forsythe turned his attention to farming. During the 1820s and 1830s, farmers in Mercer county continued to improve their land, and increased their farming operations chiefly through an expansion of livestock holdings.

A review of the Mercer County tax records show that in 1826, Forsythe owned three slaves and his total tax assessment was $150. Two years later, he was recorded as having 196 second-rate acres on the Salt River, seven slaves and his tax assessment had increased dramatically to $1,808.[44] The first rate land was generally considered to be that of the central area of the state and the alluvial basins. Second rate soils "rested on a thinner soil base and were less productive," and the third rate land was defined by "steep ridges and hot and dry mountain and knob plateaus." [45] It seems probable that Forsythe had improved his land holdings by at least one building in 1828, based on the increase in his taxable value, lending credence to the theory that the two-room kitchen has been constructed by that time.

By 1830, Forsythe's tax rate increased again, as his property was assessed at a value of $2,200, and he owned eight slaves. This is not likely due to the completion of his house, but rather the addition of acreage to his farm – his holdings increased from 196 acres to 246 in 1830, and by 1831, to 250 acres. The construction of his dwelling completed by the time the tax assessment was conducted in 1834 meant that Forsythe was assesses at $3.530, and his cattle were valued at $50. He also owned 10 slaves.

In the fall of 1835, the country was on the verge of another economic crisis, the depression of 1837, which was a financial panic induced by a reduction in the flow of British capital investment. This triggered an extended economic depression, lasting from 1837 to 1843. Beginning in the mid-1840s, the economy improved, and

[40] Jean Forsythe.

[41] Ibid.

[42] William Henry Perrin, J. H. Battle and G. C. Kniffin. *Kentucky: A History of the State.* (Louisville, Kentucky: F. A. Battey and Company, 1888), np.

[43] McAfee served as state legislator and then as lieutenant-governor of Kentucky during the administration of Governor Desha. In 1833, President Andrew Jackson appointed McAfee "chargé d'affaires of the United States to the Republic of New Granada."

[44] In 1793, land began to be assessed on a valuation system. Under this act, land was divided into three classes or rates, based on the quality of the land, though much of the assessment was arbitrary, depending on the standards of the particular tax assessor. It wasn't until 1805 that the Kentucky legislature arrived at a definition of first-rate land, which was identified as "that being around Flemingsborough, Washington in Mason County, Cynthiana, Mt. Sterling, Paris, Winchester, Lexington, Georgetown, Versailles, Nicholasville, Richmond, Lancaster, Stanford, Danville and Beargrass." This system remained in place until 1837.

[45] Clark, *Agrarian Kentucky*, 5.

Forsythe purchased more land and expanded his farming operation. In 1847, he owned 525 acres of land, seven slaves, eight horses and mares, one mule and 35 cattle. His total assessed value was $11,075.

During the 1850s, Forsythe's net holdings continued to grow. At a time when the average slaveholder in Mercer County owned less than five slaves, he averaged around a dozen slaves. The average farm size in Mercer County in 1860 was between 50 and 99 acres; only 16 individuals, including Forsythe, owned farms between 500 and 999 acres.[46]

In the 1858 tax records, Forsythe was taxed for one town lot, which was valued at $150. In addition to purchasing a lot in town, perhaps used as rental property, Forsythe owned 693 acres and was a major livestock dealer.[47] His farm would continue to prosper until he died in 1886 at the age of 91 years.

## Evaluation of the Significance of the Forsythe-Shewmaker House within its Architectural Context

The Forsythe-Shewmaker House represents a pivotal period in Mercer County's history. The upheaval associated with the War of 1812 was over; with the improving economy, landowners were expanding their holdings and improving their agricultural operations. Along with investments in land and new farming techniques, the construction of a house within the regional vocabulary of style and taste, propelled a farmer's status upward.

Unlike the many one-and-one-half story brick dwellings constructed in the eighteen teens and 1820s in Mercer County, Forsythe chose to construct an imposing two-story brick dwelling as the center point of his farm on the Salt River. The central passage plan allowed the necessary separation of space with a slave-owning household. In addition, Forsythe built a substantially sized brick dwelling for his domestic slaves within the domestic yard. The choice of brick over the more-commonly utilized log or frame for slave quarters was another statement of Forsythe's prosperity. The two brick dwellings, situated very close to one another within the domestic yard, could leave no doubt as to the affluence of the owner, either to travelers on the road, the river or visitors to the house.

This being a time of change, Forsythe combined familiar elements of the Federal style – the restrained façade and lack of ornamentation – with an interior designed to impress upon visitors the means of its owner. The inset panels, and the beveled and fluted moldings – all could have well been inspired by pattern books like Minard Lafever's *The Young Builder's General Instructor*, which was published in 1829. All of the first floor rooms feature high-style woodwork for the day, as well as the "tramp's room" on the second story. The wallpaper in the parlor, which existed well into the twentieth century, was imported from France and installed in 1832. Every door received Carpenter rim locks from England.

The proportions and massing of the Forsythe-Shewmaker House are more Federal than Greek Revival, especially when compared to three listed Greek Revival dwellings in Mercer County. It does not have the

[46] Historical Census Browser 2011.

[47] Mercer County Kentucky tax records.

proportions of Lynnwood, Walnut Hall or Glenworth, with their massive porticos and double-pile plans.[48] But neither does the house follow the precedent set by the Federal-era brick dwellings of the 18-teens and 1820s, or the circa-1830 Nathanial Burrus House, who was one of Forsythe's closest neighbors to the west.

The Nathanial Burrus House (ME-144, NRHP 1984) is a one-and-one-half story brick transitional Federal/Greek Revival dwelling. Burrus was a large landholder and slaveholder, yet he followed earlier forms in the construction of his dwelling. He was also of an earlier generation than Forsythe, and built his house toward the end of his life. Its inspiration seems to draw from the generation before, with understated Federal detailing and finish. The scale, also, looks back to the hall-parlor houses of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

There were, of course, substantial two-story dwellings that Andrew Forsythe would have known, among them being the settlement-era homes of his relatives, the McAfees. Outside of the rural context, Clay Hill (MEH-25, NRHP 1976) is an imposing two-story brick Federal-style house (with a later Greek Revival portico). Of the 37 frame, stone, or brick houses built between 1800 and 1824 in Mercer County, only nine rural dwellings were two-story.[49]

Between 1825 and 1849, 62 houses were constructed in both town and county (not including the buildings at Shaker Village). Only four of these houses, including the Forsythe-Shewmaker House, were two-story brick houses built out in the county. Both ME-59 and ME-123 either predate or postdate the Forsythe-Shewmaker House; only the Tobin House (ME-40) could serve as a comparison.[50] Constructed around 1832, the two-story brick central passage house is stylistically not as finely finished as the Forsythe-Shewmaker House. The asymmetrical façade was laid in Flemish bond, which was losing favor by that time, and all of the style influences were credited to the Greek Revival style.

Andrew Forsythe, at the beginning of his married life, constructed a substantial two-story transitional Federal/Greek Revival house that combined the exterior restraint of the Federal houses he knew well with heavy moldings of the emerging Greek Revival style, lightened by a nod to the Federal style with the staircase and beaded presses. The dwelling, combined with the brick slave quarters on its northeast side, provided the perfect backdrop to a farmer who would expand his landholdings and climb the socio-economic ladder of the landed gentry in Mercer County in the decades before the Civil War.

[48] Daniel Kidd and Mary Cronan Oppel. *Three Greek Revival Houses of Mercer County: Lynnwood, Walnut Hill, Glenworth.* National Register of Historic Places nomination. Copy on file at the Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, Kentucky. Listed 1978.

[49] This number was taken from the presumed extant resources in both Mercer County and Harrodsburg, but not at Shaker Village. This number excludes log dwellings, included in the KHC Historic Sites Database.

[50] The Tobin House has been demolished since the time of its survey in 1986.

**Evaluation of the Integrity of the Architectural Significance of the Forsythe-Shewmaker House**

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

The Forsythe-Shewmaker House retains a high level of integrity of *location*. The dwelling has not been relocated and it retains its general relationship with the Salt River to its north and the Vanarsdall Road to its south. The siting of the house on a gently sloping hill above the Salt River was a shrewd decision by Andrew Forsythe. As a frequent traveler on the poorly-maintained roads of the day, he was well aware of the potential the river offered for moving goods to market.

The house retains its integrity of *design, workmanship* and *materials.* Changes since the 1830s to the dwelling's original materials, floor plan, shape and form are minimal. The transitional Federal/Greek Revival detailing is unmistakable, from the façade to the treatment of the architraves and mantels on the interior. The finishes, from the floors to the plaster walls and woodwork, remain the same. The historic massing and the floor plan, so essential to conveying Forsythe's standing within the agricultural elite, remain intact. The enclosure of porches and the breezeway do not detract from the house's significance, these are common evolutionary practices, and help tell the story of passing generations.

The Forsythe-Shewmaker House retains a medium level of integrity of *setting*. The agricultural pastures across Vanarsdall Road and to the east and west of the domestic yard provide a sense of the rural setting that has defined the property since its period of significance, though the substantial acreage once associated with the Forsythe-Shewmaker House has dwindled to only the nominated 18.917 acre parcel. The land that was once part of Forsythe's holdings, however, remains in agricultural use. Many of the outbuildings present and maintained during the second-longest ownership period that of the Shewmaker family, were demolished after the property was sold in 1976. Despite the loss of these outbuildings, and the addition of two structures from the 1950s, the property is easily recognizable as a rural farmhouse.

These changes have certainly given the environment surrounding the house a different feel than it had during its heyday as Andrew Forsythe's prosperous farm, but these changes do not interfere with our ability to recognize the transitional Federal-Greek Revival style and its interpretation in the two-story brick central-passage house.

The Forsythe-Shewmaker House retains a high level of integrity of *feeling* and *association*. The integrity of design, materials and workmanship, as discussed above, provide the feeling of the well-to-farmer who had the house constructed and managed the successful farming operation. The extraordinarily-intact house is a statement about what was considered to be a fashionable and well-executed in a farming context in Mercer County in the antebellum period. The Forsythe-Shewmaker House is clearly still associated with the interpretation in the transitional Federal-Greed Revival style in Mercer County in the 1830s.

The historic Forsythe-Shewmaker House and its proposed boundary are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a well-preserved, significant example of transitional Federal-Greek Revival architecture in Mercer County, Kentucky.

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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): ME-139

Forsythe-Shewmaker House | Mercer County, Kentucky
Name of Property | County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 18.917
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

| | | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | | 3 | | | |
| 2 | | | | | 4 | | | |

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

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Janie-Rice Brother, Senior Architectural Historian
organization Kentucky Archaeological Survey date November 2011
street & number 1020A Export Street telephone
city or town Lexington state KY zip code 40506
e-mail

## Photographs:

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

Forsythe-Shewmaker House
Name of Property

Mercer County, Kentucky
County and State

## PHOTOGRAPHY LOG

All photos:
**Forsythe-Shewmaker House, ME-139**
Mercer County, KY
Janie-Rice Brother, Photographer
2011
CD at Kentucky Heritage Council (SHPO)

1 . Façade (south elevation) of Forsythe-Shewmaker House, facing north.

2. West elevation of Forsythe-Shewmaker House, showing ell and kitchen, and façade, facing northeast.

3. West elevation of Forsythe-Shewmaker House, showing (left to right) porch addition, kitchen, two-story ell, and west gable end of front block of house. Facing east.

4. Façade and east gable end of Forsythe-Shewmaker House, facing northwest.

5. East and north elevations of Forsythe-Shewmaker House, showing two-story "L" shaped porch and kitchen. Facing southwest.

6. Interior of central hall on first floor, facing north, showing staircase and double doors leading onto original back porch.

**7.** One of the double raised-panel doors in the house, this one leading from the parlor into the central hall. Facing east.

8. View of the parlor, showing the mantel and window trim detail. Facing southwest.

9. Dining room in two-story ell, showing McAfee house sunburst mantel and presses. Facing northeast.

10. West and south elevations of slave quarters, facing northeast.

11. Non-contributing buildings, including front-gable outbuilding and garage, facing east.

**Property Owner:**
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____