

William Hobson House
102 S. Depot Street

THE ORIGINAL OWNERS

This Federal style house was originally built for Capt. William Hobson in 1823. Capt. William Hobson (1788-1853) moved from North Carolina to Virginia and arrived in Green County in 1796 under the guardianship of his uncle, Jonathan Patterson. Apprenticed to Thomas R. Slaughter, Greensburg's first saddler, Hobson later volunteered for the War of 1812 and served Greensburg as trustee of the town, justice of the peace, trustee of the New Athens Academy and director of the Branch Bank of Kentucky.

The home is better known as the home of Capt. William Hobson's son, General Edward Hobson, who obtained the house from the heirs of his father in 1860.

Edward Henry Hobson was born in Greensburg on July 11, 1825. He was educated in the common schools of Greensburg and Danville, Kentucky. He worked for his father who was a successful merchant in Greensburg. In 1846, Hobson enlisted for service in the war with Mexico (1846-47), serving as Co. A of the 2nd Kentucky Infantry, and during the war was promoted to 1st Lieutenant, for bravery.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Hobson enlisted in the Union army and began recruiting a regiment of soldiers in the Green River area. This regiment became the 13th Kentucky Infantry and Hobson its Colonel. The 13th moved south with Gen. Don Carlos Buell and fought at the Battle of Shiloh. In November 1862, Abraham Lincoln made Hobson a brigadier general. After service in Mississippi and Tennessee, he returned to Kentucky.

Only July 6, 1863, Hobson was ordered to leave Munfordville, where he had been training troops, to find Gen. John Hunt Morgan, the "Thunderbolt of the Confederacy." After a skirmish at Marrowbone, he pursued Morgan through Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio. On July 26, Hobson's forces defeated Morgan at Buffington Island, Ohio ending Morgan's Great Raid into the North.

On June 11, 1864, Hobson and Morgan met again at Cynthiana, Kentucky. After a spirited resistance, Hobson's outnumbered force of 900 was captured. It is said that when Morgan approached Hobson, he smiled and said, "General, we meet again!" as Hobson handed over his pistols. Though, Hobson was defeated, his defense allowed Union soldiers to catch up and defeat Morgan the following day.

Hobson was mustered out of service in September of 1865 and returned home to Greensburg to engage in business.

He joined the Radical Republicans and unsuccessfully ran for clerk of the state Court of Appeals, a bitterly divisive campaign that foreshadowed the following year's elections for Kentucky's governor and congressional seats. His support of the controversial Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments cost him the election. Hobson was a candidate for the US House of Representatives from Kentucky's 4th District in 1872, but again was defeated. He was a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1880, serving as a vice-president of the convention, and was a strong supporter of Ulysses S. Grant's candidacy. President Grant rewarded Hobson by appointing him the district collector of internal revenue. In 1887, he became president of the Southern Division of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway. He became very active in the Grand Army of the Republic, and died in Cleveland, Ohio, at one of their encampments. He was married to Katie Adair, a niece of Kentucky Governor John Adair. He died September 14, 1901 and is buried at the family cemetery in Greensburg.

THE HOUSE

Exterior

The Hobson House is a **Federal Style** brick one and a half story structure with a **central passage** and service ell.

By 1776 the **Federal Style** was a new style of architecture created in Scotland by the Adam Brothers. The style was based on houses and palaces in Italy like Nero's Golden House in Rome. Identifying features of the federal style are the fan light over the door, symmetry, classical Greek detailing, Palladian windows, double hung sash windows, internal spaces of hexagonal or oval or circular forms. It was given the name "federal" because the style became popular in the early decades of the United States. It was basically Georgian with Adamesque enhancements. The most commonly recognized Federal building would be the White House built in Washington DC in 1800, with Greek-revival portico and the famous "Oval Office".

Central passage meaning the front door opens into an enclosed central passageway, off which doors lead into separate rooms. The house has an attached ell that extends to the rear of the house. There are two external chimneys centered at each gable end and a third fireplace in the dining room.

The brickwork features a **Flemish Bond** pattern where the headers (end) and stretchers (horizontal length) alternate in a single course. The next course is laid so that a header lies in the middle of the stretcher in the course below. You will see each header is centered above and below the stretchers. Flemish bond, also known as Dutch bond, has historically always been considered the most decorative bond. The masonry construction also contains jack arches as a structural element to provide support at openings in the masonry. Jack arches are composed of individual masonry elements cut or formed into a wedge shape that efficiently uses the compressive strength of the masonry in the same manner as a regular arch.

Like many Federal style buildings in Kentucky, this house was updated to reflect the Greek Revival style of the antebellum period with the addition of a four Ionic column front portico and a two Ionic column portico at the side entrance. Other details include elaborate cornice and dentil molding surrounding the home's exterior.

In 1901 the ell of the home was rebuilt/remodeled. In 1952, an addition was made to the home to fit another ell inside the original ell. A two car garage was connected to the house with an arched breezeway at this time as well.

Interior

Floors---Tongue and groove boards were used in grander American Federal homes. Floors are finished yellow pine (or possibly chestnut) and oak on the main floor, painted pine on the second floor. The first floor would likely have been all the same but when the ell was rebuilt in 1901, the two rooms in the ell were changed to oak. The floors in the 1952 addition were oak and vinyl tiles.

Fireplaces and Surrounds---Shallow fireboxes. Most burned logs on firedogs (andirons.) Fire surrounds (mantles) were typically painted wood with marble slips. More decorative surrounds had a taste for neo-classical motifs such as vases, swags, garlands and mythological scenes. Iron firedogs were most common but in grander houses brass firedogs embellished with neoclassical urns and spherical finials were more usual.

Ceiling height-13' 8" in the original house. 11'2" in the addition.

Plastered walls and ceilings---Plaster consisted of a mixture containing gypsum and fiber and glue that was pressed while hot into metal molds. It was typically then painted light hues of pink or green or blue.

Dado (chairrail), Cornice and Baseboards--- By the beginning of the 19th century, most of the ornamentation in the plasterwork was gone. Dado and cornice work was used in a simple form. Deep but simple molded baseboards complete the trim. All trims were painted.

Arches---Niches with curved casings were common thanks to carpenters' pattern books that became widely circulated by the late 1700's.

Windows and Shutters---Eight over eight or six over six double hung sash windows. The number of panes, the size of the glazing bars and the placement of the windows are indicative of the Federal style home. Louvered shutters very much in keeping with the era and the style of the home.

Eight panel front door---Stands 9' tall. Note the iron mountings built into the door surround for the board that secured the door.

Six paneled doors---Most were made of pine, maple, poplar or cypress. Enhanced by wide door surrounds. The addition of paneling elegantly solved the problem of thick walls. All but the finest timbers were painted. Doors range in width from 34" to 45.5". Wide doors were sometimes referred to as coffin doors to allow a coffin to pass through the door. Interior door height ranges from 5'7" on the second floor to 6'7" on the main floor. Doors in the addition are standard height for doors today.

4 plank doors---used upstairs on children's rooms. These doors have iron hardware as opposed to brass hardware on the doors on the first floor.

Wall thickness---Approximately 18 inches in the original structure. Solid brick with plaster finish.

Staircase---This open string staircase is simple in appearance yet complex in the design of the counter-levered overhang. The first set of treads has been replaced. These would have been the same as the foyer and the two front rooms. Plans are to restore these to match the original wood.

Painted walls and woodwork---Paints were typically hand mixed. Usually a simple whitewash. Color pigments were added to give an ochre yellow or red, blue or green or limewash, which had slaked lime as the main constituent and had disinfectant qualities. A more glossy finish came from paints which contained oils, waxes or even milk. These paints were used for indoor woodwork.