

"Cross Keys Tavern"
Six Miles from Shelbyville
Shelby County, Kentucky

RH-
HABS No. 20-21
HABS
KY,
106-SHELBY.V
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 20
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
G. M. Grimes, District Officer
304 Martin Brown Building
Louisville, Kentucky

Name of structure: "Cross Keys Tavern"

Location: About six miles from Shelbyville, Shelby County, Kentucky, on U. S. No. 60.

Owner or custodian: Mrs. Sarah B. Tinsley

Address: Shelbyville, Shelby County, Kentucky

Date built: 1800
(approx)

Architect or builder:

Present condition: Excellent *NOW DEMOLISHED*

Number of stories: Two stories

Material used in construction: Foundation: Native stone.
Exterior walls: Original part of logs, now covered with weatherboards and plastered inside. Subsequent additions: frame, weatherboarded and plastered inside.
Interior partitions: Frame, plastered.
Floors: Wood, random width ash and yellow pine.
Roof: Frame construction, covered with wood shingles.

Description: "Cross Keys Tavern" is among the finest architectural and historical of the early inn buildings extant in Kentucky.

The following is quoted from Geo. L. Willis' History of Shelby County, Kentucky: "In the year 1800, they (Adam and Mary Fulton Middleton) came with the dawn of the century to Kentucky, settled in a little hut, near where the house that figures herein is located, and he for a time plied his calling, that of a blacksmith. The stream of travelers

who poured down the old dirt 'State Road', suggested to young Middleton the idea of a tavern, and he bought the log structure that had served as such before, from a man across the road, hung up two immense brass keys on a tree at the roadside and called his inn the 'Cross Keys Tavern'.

" * * * It was an historic inn with an historic bar, an historic table of good things, a cheerful landlord, a roomy barn and barnyard, and continued so until the State Pike was built and even rumors of war began". (Published in Kentucky Progress Magazine, Fall, 1933, Vol. VI, No. 1, page 27)

It is estimated that the "Cross Keys Tavern" sheltered ten thousand travelers between the years 1800 and 1825; that they represented every State of the Union east of the Mississippi River.

After the death of the pioneer, Adam Middleton, two of his sons stayed at the old tavern. They married sisters and lived as one family for fifty years.

"Cross Keys Tavern" is now owned and operated by Mrs. Sarah B. Tinsley and her two daughters as a fashionable hostelry, still retaining the atmosphere of the colonial days.

G. M. Grimes
Revised 1936 H.C.F.