

HISTORY OF THE JACK THOMAS HOUSE

Jack Thomas was the first county court clerk of Grayson County. Jack was married to Jane C. Hundley November 12, 1812, and they spent their entire married lives in Leitchfield, where they raised their family of ten children. Somewhere between 1812 and 1814, they built the first brick residence in the town and also the county. It faced east on what is now Clinton Street looking out over the valley below. It had two rooms downstairs, with a loft above. The downstairs area now holds the kitchen and dining room.

Around 1825 a two-story addition was added. The main block is a two-story five-bay brick section, with its front door and window above having originally been in Palladian window format. The addition consisted of two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs, with a spacious entry hall and a beautiful walnut staircase to an upstairs hall. The entrance of the house was changed to face on East Main Street. Later another two rooms were added upstairs in the back over the lower original two rooms deleting the loft. This area of the house is now the Museum Annex and storage areas.

After the death of Mr. Thomas, his wife continued to live in the house until her death in 1872. Both Jack and his wife now reside in the Thomas Cemetery located just a block from the Jack Thomas House on Clinton Street. The

Thomas Cemetery is one of Leitchfield's oldest cemeteries and is also maintained by the Grayson County Historical Society.

The house was then sold to William Evans, who ran a general store in Leitchfield. In 1884, the property was sold to George H. "Bent" Gardner.

George, the son of Abram S. Gardner and Mary E. Showers was born near Elizabethtown on October 22, 1842. January 19, 1871, he was married to Cynthia Richards and they reared six children together. He was in the general merchandise business for the early part of his life eventually opening his own store in Big Clifty in 1867 under the firm name of G. H. Gardner & Bro. Gardner founded and became president of the Leitchfield Deposit Bank in 1871. In 1874 he was elected Sheriff of Grayson County (a post which he held multiple times), and he purchased a steam flour mill in 1881.

Other owners of the property were Ralph McCoy, Lawrence Witten, Winnie Witten Jones, and Jackie Jones Barrier. The Leitchfield Deposit Bank, now the Cecilian Bank located in the Southeast corner of the Public Square, bought the property from Mrs. Barrier. The house was scheduled for demolition to make way for a larger parking lot for the bank.

It was at this time that the Historical Society became involved and made arrangements with the bank to buy the

house. With the help of the Leitchfield Woman's Club, the City of Leitchfield, Grayson County, and many other donors, the money was raised and the house was saved.

After several years of renovation, the house was opened to the public. For a time the upstairs was divided into apartments and rented and the parlor downstairs was rented to various people as office space. After the loans were repaid, the Society ceased renting activities and restored the house to its current state. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 and remains today as Grayson County's most popular historical tourist attraction.

MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

The house is now a museum and research library for Grayson County as well as the home of the Grayson County Historical Society. The library contains over 150 family histories and over 500 volumes relating to Grayson County.

The museum is comprised of artifacts from Grayson County and its families and even has an original couch in the parlor from Jack Thomas. Upstairs houses the largest collection of family quilts in the county, some dating back to the early 1800s. All items have been donated or on loan from fellow Graysonites. The house has one employee, our librarian, who is available for research for a small fee.

LINK TO THE LINCOLNS

In 2013, while performing repairs on the back door of the Jack Thomas House, Mike Fleener presented the idea that the door was original to the house due to its pegged construction and joinery. Fleener immediately contacted Thomas Lincoln carpentry expert Steve Haaffn of Indiana. He and fellow Lincoln furniture expert Leo LaSoto of Maryland then came to inspect the door.

Lincoln was well acquainted with the Thomas family due to his work on Hardin Thomas' home in Elizabethtown. Also, Thomas' brother Mordecai Lincoln lived in Leitchfield at the time the house was built. It was the opinion of the experts that the door, the window, and the casings in the original part of the house all appeared to be the work of Thomas Lincoln. The door is currently on display in the museum and is to be featured in an upcoming book "With These Hands" by LaSoto.

DIRECTIONS TO THE JACK THOMAS HOUSE:

From the Western Kentucky Parkway take exit number 107 to state highway 259. Proceed north on 259 (South Main Street) to the Grayson County courthouse on the Public Square. At the courthouse take the first right onto East Main Street. The Jack Thomas house is on the right, at the corner of East Main Street and Clinton Street. Handicap access is at the rear of the building and parking is in the bank lot.

JACK THOMAS HOUSE HOURS:

The Jack Thomas House and Buchanan Log Cabin are open to the public for tours and research:

Tuesday - Friday 10:00am – 4:00pm

The Jack Thomas House is closed Thanksgiving weekend and through the Christmas – New Year's holiday. The house is also closed any time that the local schools are closed.

TOURS AND RESERVATIONS:

Guided Tour of House - \$4.00

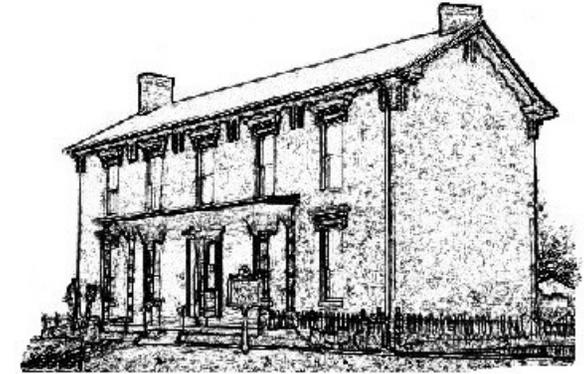
Guided Tour of House & Log Cabin - \$5.00
**Children Under 10 Free w/ Paid Adult*

Group Tours (15 or more) - \$15.00
**Free to Civic Organizations and School Groups*

Meeting Room Rental - \$25.00

Wedding Inside & Out - \$150.00

Wedding Inside OR Out - \$100.00



THE HISTORIC JACK THOMAS HOUSE

122 EAST MAIN STREET
P.O. BOX 84
LEITCHFIELD, KENTUCKY 42755

The Jack Thomas House is the oldest brick house in Grayson County and is on the National Historic Register. It is owned and operated by the Grayson County Historical Society.

270-230-8989

www.jackthomashouse.org