United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

 historic name  London Tuberculosis Hospital

 other names/site number  LLL-131 District Five State Tuberculosis Hospital

 Related Multiple Property  Kentucky State Tuberculosis Hospitals, 1946 – 1950

2. Location

 street & number  85 State Police RD

city or town  London

 state  Kentucky code  KY county  Laurel code  125 zip code  40741

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this ___ 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 ___ 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  ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 ___ A  ___B  ___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

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
London Tuberculosis Hospital
Laurel County, KY

5. Classification

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

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

Category of Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- [ ] contributing
- [x] noncontributing

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

Kentucky State Tuberculosis Hospitals, 1946 – 1950

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Health Care – Hospital

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Government/Public : Government office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- foundation: Continuous Poured Concrete
- walls: Brick, common bond
- roof: Flat
- other:  

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2
London Tuberculosis Hospital

Name of Property                   County and State

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

Located in London, Kentucky, the London Tuberculosis Hospital, also known as the District Five State Tuberculosis Hospital (LLL-131), consists of a 4-story main hospital building featuring brick in a running bond pattern and a flat roof covered in a composite material. Once part of a five-building sanatorium complex built from 1946 – 1950, the London Tuberculosis Hospital resulted from Kentucky’s statewide public health campaign against the spread of tuberculosis. Nestled on a hill with trees around, the main hospital building has been repurposed as government office space. The area proposed for listing is a 15.84-acre parcel with 1 contributing building and two non-contributing buildings.

History & Character of the Site

As documented in the 1945 Report on Sites for the Tuberculosis Sanatoria Commission of Kentucky, a twenty-two acre plot of land located “at the junction of Highway 25 and 80 and one mile from London” was selected for the District Five State Tuberculosis Hospital (Hartstern, 48). At the time of purchase, the site was on the side of hill with virgin timber. The woods were cleared for construction with a portion left to provide a secluded feel to the site. Over the years, the parking lot has expanded around the main hospital building, but the forested, hilltop setting remains intact and recalls the era of sanatoria when bedrest and fresh air were believed to provide a therapeutic effect.
On March 17, 1944, Governor Simeon Willis approved the passage of House Bill No. 147 that divided the state into six tuberculosis sanatoria districts, allowed for the construction of sanatoria, and created the Tuberculosis Sanatoria Commission of Kentucky (Hartstern, 1). Government funding provided for the expansion of Louisville’s Hazelwood Sanatorium and the erection of five new 100-bed sanatoria throughout the Commonwealth (Schulman).

Architect Fred J. Hartstern recommended to the Tuberculosis Sanatoria Commission that London, in Laurel County, be the site of the new District Five State Tuberculosis Hospital. London scored high on a series of factors, including accessibility, population within highway distance, and elevation, and consequently secured the right to house the new tuberculosis hospital (Hartstern, 48). Once the site was chosen, construction of the new sanatorium at London commenced in 1946 and a cornerstone was laid on July 19, 1946 to commemorate this occasion. Over the next four years, contractors from both locally and out-of-state, specifically Ohio, completed work on the London Tuberculosis Hospital. A.L. Coupe Construction Company of Louisville assumed responsibility for the general construction of the main hospital building as well as all cabinetry and millwork, while J.D. Jennings of Louisville constructed the auxiliary buildings. Other contractors were commissioned for an assortment of projects, including heating, plumbing, electrical, elevators, lighting fixtures, equipment, roads and drives, and outside utilities (Commonwealth of Kentucky). The result of this contract work was a sanatorium complex exemplifying both local and regional workmanship. Although separated from the other state tuberculosis hospitals, London adhered to the same standard five-building layout – main hospital building, director’s residence, staff residence, nurses’ residence, and combination boiler house and laundry – designed by architects John T. Gillig and Fred J. Hartstern of Lexington and John F. Wilson of Louisville (Hunter).

The London Tuberculosis Hospital signaled a modern approach to tuberculosis treatment and prevention in Kentucky. Medical Director and Superintendent John S. Wisely gave voice to the optimism and hope instilled in the new sanatorium: “There is every indication that the new hospital program answers an urgent public health need and should play a decisive role in community efforts to achieve adequate control of the disease, perhaps within the next decade.” (Tuberculosis Sanatoria Commission 1950-1951 Annual Report, 103). As a source of community outreach, the London Tuberculosis Hospital hosted meetings for public health nurses in District Five to learn about the operation of the hospital and how to improve relations between the sanatorium and local health departments. These meetings were sponsored by the Kentucky Tuberculosis Association, State Department of Health, and State Tuberculosis Commission (Tuberculosis Sanatoria Commission 1952-1953 Annual Report, 14). The London TB Hospital also disseminated knowledge of tuberculosis treatment and prevention through an educational film, lectures, and pamphlets (Tuberculosis Sanatoria Commission 1953-1954 Annual Report, 18).

Within a few years of operation, maintenance and improvements were required at the London site. Over the course of 1952, the maintenance department planted fifteen red maple and gum trees, seeded more lawn, and continued landscaping efforts. Construction also finished at the coal bin with new storage space to function as the hospital truck’s garage (Tuberculosis Sanatoria Commission 1952-1953 Annual Report, 20). Major plant and ground maintenance issues arose within five years of opening. London, as well as its fellow hospital sites, required repair of moisture damaged walls, new roofing, additional storage construction, and repair/replacement of steam lines (Tuberculosis Sanatoria Commission 1955-1956 Annual Report, 20).

The arrival of bronchoscopic and surgical clinics at the London Tuberculosis Hospital ensured that patients could receive local consultations rather than journeying to the surgical center at Louisville’s...
London Tuberculosis Hospital
Name of Property

Laurel County, KY
County and State

Hazelwood Sanatorium. With the development of local clinics at all sanatoria, the waiting list for surgery was eliminated and patients received surgery immediately upon arrival at Hazelwood (*Tuberculosis Sanatoria Commission 1955-1956 Annual Report*, 2).

Despite the effort to expand the mission of the hospitals, the twenty-year anniversary of the tuberculosis state sanatoria saw the 112-bed capacity of London Tuberculosis Hospital and its fellow sanatoria underutilized (*Tuberculosis Sanatoria Commission 1969-1970 Annual Report*). Obsolete by the mid-1970s, the set of Kentucky Tuberculosis Hospitals were decommissioned as the medical community embraced drug therapy over regimented bedrest in a hospital setting. The Commonwealth’s 1975 *Plans for General Renovation, New Boilers and Steam Distribution, renovation of T.B. Hospitals* successfully closed the sanatoria chapter in Kentucky.

London Tuberculosis Hospital transitioned from a sanatorium into a government office building. The spatial arrangements of the main hospital building served as an asset for this type of adaptive reuse and gave credence to architectural historian Annmarie Adams’ observation that “hospitals of the 1950s and 1960s tended to look like office buildings” (Adams, 130). Created by government funding, the continual presence of the Commonwealth has ensured maintenance at the London site over the years. Although the auxiliary buildings have been razed, the main hospital building remains in good condition with its exterior relatively unchanged since its creation. The hospital exemplifies mid-century modern medical architecture with pre-war Art Deco touches woven throughout its physical fabric. A product of the firm of Gillig-Hartstern and Wilson, well known for their design contributions to Kentucky’s college campuses, the London Tuberculosis Hospital echoes twentieth-century institutional architecture found throughout the Commonwealth.

**Main Hospital Building Exterior**

The main hospital building at London Tuberculosis Hospital consists of a modified cross/t-shaped plan. Composed primarily of brick in a running bond pattern, the main building is multi-story, with the back cross-section the highest at four stories. The hospital’s flat roofs are trimmed with coping caps while scuppers filter rain into metal gutters. The combination windows on all elevations contain stone sills. On the two-story front façade, the windows are articulated in bays flanking the main entrance. The metal gutters visually divide bays of window into sections on each elevation. The original solaria, one located on each of the four floors, highlight the use of windows to provide fresh air and a view of the landscaped grounds.

The main entrance distinctly identifies it as a tuberculosis sanatorium. A large two-story stone-faced portico prominently displays the bronze seal of the Commonwealth of Kentucky above the entranceway. The date that construction started on each building, under the administration of Governor Simeon Willis, is commemorated through a limestone cornerstone on the façade. A muted row of dentils adorn the lintel above the door. Although the metal words “SANATORIUM” have since been removed from the lintel, the double-barred cross remains etched into the stone flanking the front door as a symbol of the crusade against tuberculosis that was adopted by tuberculosis prevention associations. The two double-barred crosses on the façade mark the main hospital building as a tuberculosis sanatorium.
Art Deco influences can also be seen through the use of geometric design elements and steamship glass. The main portico is framed by a geometric cornice carved into the stone. Echoes of this design appear in the parapet brickwork of the front section’s roof, cornices of the secondary rear entrances, and the elaborate two-story steamship glass of the rear staircases. While the stone portico served as the original main entrance, six other entrances provided secondary access to the main building. These include four (two rear and two side) on the ground level of the main hospital and two in the front three-story section of the building. The two rear entrances feature graduated brick porticoes with cornices comprised of stone geometric elements. A two-story bay of steamship glass above each rear entrance illuminates the staircase at the ends of the building. One of the rear entrances is pushed into the interior by two bays to accommodate the south-facing solaria at that end. These large airy solaria, with interior glazed-tile walls, present a modern take on the sleeping porches and sunrooms found in early tuberculosis sanatoria.

Main Hospital Building Interior

In anticipation of the dedication of the new tuberculosis hospitals opening, local newspapers published descriptions of the interior special arrangements and décor of the facilities. A tour of the Glasgow Tuberculosis Hospital from *The Glasgow Times* offers the most thorough description of the interiors of the main hospital building and auxiliary buildings as they appeared upon opening in 1950. Since all five new tuberculosis
sanatoria followed a standardized architectural and design scheme, this account illuminates how the London site’s interiors originally looked and functioned to promote health and recovery.

In the original hospital design, yellow glazed tiles adorned the walls while dark brown/red tiles made of asphalt, ceramic, and quarry materials covered the floors. The first floor housed “offices, a reception room, a morgue, a room for physicians, an x-ray room complete with a dark room, a gymnasium-size kitchen, five cold storage rooms, and employees’ dining room and a nurses’ dining room” (The Glasgow Times). Examination rooms, operating rooms, dental clinic, and a beauty/barber shop enabled the hospital to maintain isolation of its patients from the healthy populace. Four stainless steel mop wagons and a large stock of cleaning supplies enabled the staff to keep the hospital disinfected and sanitized. In accord with strict tuberculosis sanatoria regulations, one of the five large cooling units in the ground-floor kitchen was used for garbage, because the health department stipulated that garbage could only leave state hospitals if frozen or cooked. In addition to the fully-equipped first-floor kitchen, each floor boasted a kitchen equipped with dishware and cutlery. Dishes prepared from the main kitchen were placed on food carts, carried on elevators to the various floors, served on steam tables, and eaten in dining rooms. The color scheme – cream, terra cotta, blue, green – of these dining rooms varied by floor.

The top three floors of the main hospital building contained wards with sterilization/warming stations, telephone booths in corridors, strategically placed fire extinguishers, and electric exit signs. Patient sleeping quarters was divided into wards of two-to-four bedrooms on the top three floors. Steel casement windows allowed for optimal light and air flow into these patient rooms. Solaria provided further exposure to fresh air and sunlight:

Ambulatory and wheel chair patients also have the privilege of new vistas from deep, glassed-in solariums found at the end of the three patient floors. Here a lounge atmosphere prevails, with chaise lounges, club chairs, tables, and adjacent lavatory and toilet. (The Glasgow Times).

Non-Contributing Elements and Other Changes

A one-story flat-roofed addition and one-story gable-roofed garage shed have been attached to the cross-section wing of the main hospital building. These two structures, painted to match the brick exterior of the main hospital building, blend into the setting and do not substantially take away from the appearance of the hospital. The presence of a small chain-link fence around an electrical unit next to the front entry portico demonstrates some upgrades to the facility to meet modern needs. While the addition, garage shed, and fenced-in electrical unit are not original to the site, they do not overwhelm the façade.
London Tuberculosis Hospital

Name of Property

Laurel County, KY

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. [X]
- Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- 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.
- Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Property is:
  - Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
  - Removed from its original location.
  - A birthplace or grave.
  - A cemetery.
  - A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
  - A commemorative property.
  - Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance

Constructed from 1946 to 1950, the London Tuberculosis Hospital operated as a tuberculosis sanatorium from 1950 until approximately 1975. Its period of significance dates from 1946 to 1975 to encompass the construction phase and active sanatorium phase of the London site.

Criteria Considerations

NA
Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The London Tuberculosis Hospital, also known as the District Five State Tuberculosis Hospital (LLL-131), individually meets National Register Criterion A. The former sanatorium is significant for its association with Kentucky’s public health campaign to eradicate tuberculosis, as detailed in the MPS historic context, “The Anti-Tuberculosis Movement in Kentucky, 1907 – 1975.” Although Kentucky formed a tuberculosis commission in 1912, sanatoria largely remained in the hands of local and county organizations for the next three decades. The state’s construction of five 100-bed tuberculosis hospitals in the late 1940s marked a transition from smaller county-operated sanatoria to larger modern district hospitals. Plagued for decades by a large percentage of tuberculosis cases, Kentucky sprang into action after World War II health inspections exposed the poor health of its citizens. In 1945, Kentucky initiated a state-wide effort to curtail tuberculosis deaths in the Commonwealth. Aided by the 1940s discovery of the antibiotic streptomycin, the sanatoria offered a modern cure to thousands of TB patients. The effective triple therapy drug treatment of tuberculosis eventually led to the decommissioning of the tuberculosis hospitals in the mid-1970s. The London Tuberculosis Hospital illustrates Kentucky’s mid-twentieth-century response to the tuberculosis epidemic and is a valuable piece of early modern hospital architecture in the Commonwealth.

The London Tuberculosis Hospital bears significance in the area of healthcare, specifically Kentucky’s public health campaign to cure tuberculosis. In the early-twentieth century, it was believed that the tubercle bacilli could survive in household dust and that sunlight offered a way to destroy the bacteria lingering in the built environment. Light and air ultimately became intrinsically linked to the Anti-Tuberculosis Movement. Margaret Campbell, in “What Tuberculosis did for Modernism: The Influence of a Curative Environment on Modernist Design and Architecture,” contends that “light and air, and specifically sunlight, were influential in the interpretation of modernist hygienic ideas for the design of flat roofs, balconies, terraces and recliner chairs” (Campbell, 470). The modernism reflected in the London Tuberculosis Hospital and its fellow sanatoria combined hygienic and environmental knowledge. When the state hospitals were constructed in Kentucky, the medical community and public still directly connected architectural design and environment with the treatment of tuberculosis. That association proved short-lived as the introduction of the triple therapy treatment diminished the need for sanatoria by the 1950s (Campbell, 487). Despite this poor timing in construction, the Commonwealth’s decision to fund state sanatoria, rather than let treatment remain in local hands, demonstrated a view in the power of medical and scientific progress, as well as showing that policymakers felt it was in all citizens’ interests to expend tax funds to combat this wide-spread public health threat.


The historic context is detailed on the Multiple Property Documentation Form, Kentucky State Tuberculosis Hospitals, 1946 – 1950. All five district hospitals, and a sixth in Louisville, performed a significant public health service to Kentuckians until the era of antibiotic treatments made hospital treatment obsolete. The MPDF has required these elements for an eligible property—a main hospital building with a modified cross/off-center T-shaped plan, stone-faced portico with double-barred crosses, and south-facing solaria; running bond
brickwork; concrete foundations, and stonework—and the London Tuberculosis Hospital possesses all of those elements.

Registration Requirements
To be eligible for registration under Criterion A, a property must be associated with significant events or trends in history. The London Tuberculosis Hospital demonstrates state-wide significance in the area of healthcare to the Commonwealth. The seven qualities of integrity (location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association) authenticate the historical identity of the former sanatorium site. The London Tuberculosis Hospital retains the following characteristics:

The original location chosen by the Tuberculosis Sanatoria Commission and documented by Architect Fred J. Hartstern in the 1945 Report on Sites for the Tuberculosis Sanatoria Commission of Kentucky is still maintained. The main hospital building sits on its original construction site. The building’s cornerstone, dated July 19, 1946, marks how long the building has remained intact.

The setting reflects both the landscaping and site composition of the 1950s sanatorium complex. Expanded parking lots around the building do not affect the setting greatly. The property looks largely unchanged from its sanatorium days.

The design produced by the architectural firm of Gillig-Hartstern and Wilson is evident in the main hospital building that mirrors those at the other district sites. The London Tuberculosis Hospital underwent routine maintenance to address issues related to roofing, moisture, water pressure, landscaping, and storage. Annual maintenance did not compromise the character-defining elements of the original hospital design. These intact elements include the imposing facades with tuberculosis sanatorium symbols, the south-facing solaria, the steamship glass-lit stairwells, and the hallways.

The materials and workmanship of the original construction is displayed in the main hospital building. Notable features include decorative brickwork, stonework, and ceramic-tiled hallways. The physical fabric of the exterior main hospital building is of utmost importance, as this was the ornate focal point of the complex.

The feeling and association of the London Tuberculosis Hospital is illustrated through its unique sanatorium appearance and secluded landscape. The health-care function of the site ceased in the mid-1970s, but the layout and design easily identify the main hospital building as a former tuberculosis sanatorium. Originally attributed to the Anti-Tuberculosis Movement, the double-barred crosses on the front entry portico now share similar meaning with the American Lung Association that has since adopted the symbol. The presence of a cornerstone and the seal of the Commonwealth of Kentucky also help identify the continuing role of the state government at the site. Development surrounding the hospital has been kept to a minimum, reinforcing the sense of seclusion present during the sanatorium phase at the site. Currently open as a government office building, the London Tuberculosis Hospital exudes a sense of daily activity and use reminiscent of its sanatorium past.

With these integrity factors, the London Tuberculosis Hospital is eligible for the National Register.
London Tuberculosis Hospital
Laurel County, KY

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography


*Kentucky Sanatoria Commission Records Collection*. Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives. Frankfort, KY.


“Tuberculosis Hospital Dedication Section.” *The Glasgow Times*. Thursday, August 24, 1950.


London Tuberculosis Hospital

Name of Property

Laurel County, KY

County and State

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:

X State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____LLL-131

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 15.84 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

NAD 83 Coordinates (See Continuation Sheet)

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London Tuberculosis Hospital ___________________________ Laurel County, KY ___________________________
Name of Property County and State

**Verbal Boundary Description**
The London Tuberculosis Hospital is located on State Police Road near the intersection of Highways 80 and 25 in London, Kentucky. Interstate 75 resides less than a mile to the west of the hospital. The nominated property includes the main hospital building and 15.84 surrounding acres on the land parcel #050-20-00-002.00 owned by the State of Kentucky. A non-contributing building located north of the main hospital building has been excluded from the nominated property.

**Boundary Justification**
Historically, the London Tuberculosis Hospital encompassed a five-building sanatorium complex on a 22-acre plot of land. Over time, the property lost all its auxiliary buildings to razing. The 15.84-acre nominated property is composed of the majority of the original acreage and the main hospital building. Aside from some parking lot expansion, the property retains its original forested aesthetic.

11. Form Prepared By

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View of the front entry portico façade

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View of the front portico, front wing, and front elevation, facing southwest

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View of the side elevation, facing south

4 of 15  
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View of the side and rear elevations, facing southeast

5 of 15  
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Detail view of the side and rear entrances, facing east
London Tuberculosis Hospital

6 of 15  KY_LaurelCounty_KentuckyStateTBHospitalsMPS_LondonTBHospital_0006
Detail view of the north rear entrance

7 of 15  KY_LaurelCounty_KentuckyStateTBHospitalsMPS_LondonTBHospital_0007
View of the rear elevation, facing east

8 of 15  KY_LaurelCounty_KentuckyStateTBHospitalsMPS_LondonTBHospital_0008
View of the south rear entrance and sun porches

9 of 15  KY_LaurelCounty_KentuckyStateTBHospitalsMPS_LondonTBHospital_0009
View of the rear elevation, facing northeast

10 of 15  KY_LaurelCounty_KentuckyStateTBHospitalsMPS_LondonTBHospital_0010
View of the rear elevation and side sun porches, facing northeast

11 of 15  KY_LaurelCounty_KentuckyStateTBHospitalsMPS_LondonTBHospital_0011
View of the sun porches, facing north

12 of 15  KY_LaurelCounty_KentuckyStateTBHospitalsMPS_LondonTBHospital_0012
View of the south front elevation, facing west

13 of 15  KY_LaurelCounty_KentuckyStateTBHospitalsMPS_LondonTBHospital_0013
View of the front wing and entry portico, facing north

14 of 15  KY_LaurelCounty_KentuckyStateTBHospitalsMPS_LondonTBHospital_0014
Detail view of the front entry portico, facing northeast

15 of 15  KY_LaurelCounty_KentuckyStateTBHospitalsMPS_LondonTBHospital_0015
Detail view of the cornerstone on the front entry portico

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Commonwealth of Kentucky

street & number

telephone

NAD 27 Coordinates

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London Tuberculosis Hospital
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Laurel County, KY
County and State