United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Sroufe House

other names/site number Shrofe-McCormick House, MS-383

Related Multiple Property NA

2. Location

street & number 2471 Mary Ingles Highway NA not for publication

city or town Dover X vicinity

state Kentucky code Ky county Mason code 161 zip code 41034

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** _X_ **statewide** __**local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

_X__**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

Sroufe House
Name of Property

Mason 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	1	buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
2	1	**Total**

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

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EARLY REPUBLIC/federal

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone

walls: Brick

roof: Asphalt Shingle

other:

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Sroufe House (MS-383) is located on Mary Ingles Highway (State Route 8) one-half mile east of Dover, Mason County, Kentucky. The brick house was built ca. 1800, expanded during the antebellum period, and expanded again around 1975. The home is located .3 miles south and west from the Ohio River and .9 miles from the John P. Parker House (NRIS 80002944), across the Ohio River in Ripley, Ohio. The property is now approximately one acre and includes two contributing buildings and one non-contributing building. The resource is being interpreted as a well-documented instance of a planned escape of three of the farm's enslaved workers.

History Site Ownership and Changes in Property Acreage

The following is a table of conveyances of this property:

Seller's Name	Buyer's Name	Deed Book #	Page #	Date	Acreage of property	Notes
Richard E. Poikus and Patricia L. Poikus	Robert J. and Dena C. Green	247	372	8/2/1992	.94	
Ronnie B. and Evelyn C. Smith	Richard E. and Patricia L. Poikus	247	369	8/10/1992	.94	Poikus divorce
Russell Richey Jr.	Rommie and Evelyn Smith	196	379	1/7/1976		
Reverend Louis Thomas	Russell B. and Anita Richey Jr.	195	218	6/27/1975	187	
		193	528 - 531	11/1/1974		Thomas Divorce
Louis Thomas	Orie Thomas	193	386	7/27/1974	.25	Louis' son Orie was born in the house
Howard Wilson	Louis and Loraine Thomas	155	210	3/20/1960	1.25	
H.B. And Mary	Louis and	140	197	8/23/1943	187	$10,250

Cordray	Loraine Thomas					
Carey and India Devore	W.E. Carpenter	116	333	2/28/1914	69	$5,660.72
Wilson and Nancy Smith	Carey and India Devore	88	438	1/27/1887	99	$2,840
Sebastian Sroufe	James Sroufe					
Adam Sroufe	Sebastian Sroufe					
	Adam Sroufe			c. 1800		

Physical Character of the Site

The Sroufe House is situated in the Ohio River Valley. The area is heavily wooded with scattered open patches of farmland. During the Period of Significance, the farmland produced crops of corn and possibly tobacco. Because of its proximity to the Ohio River, the soil was very fertile. Now, the area across the railroad tracks, in between the Sroufe House and the river, is used to produce corn. Other property around the Sroufe House is occupied by mini farms and homes. Today, the Sroufe House has a grass yard and is not used for farming.

Sroufe House & Outbuildings

View to the north from Sroufe House. Rising hill in distance is on the Ohio side

The Sroufe House is visible from the highway, and sits more than half-way back on the property. The .94-acre

property is flat and grassy. There are several large trees on the acreage around the north and west property boundaries. Walkabout Lane runs along the east edge of the property. This lane connects another property, north of the Sroufe House, with the highway.

Sroufe House (from highway)

Primary facade

Exterior Description of House (Contributing Building)

The Sroufe House was built as a two-story four-room residence. Later, but before the Period of Significance, four more rooms were added to the back side of the house, forming an el. There was another small addition to the first floor, on the end of the el, circa 1975. The architecture exhibits the Adam style, as the home features a side-gabled roof, symmetric five ranked windows with double-hung sashes, and a rectangular transom above the door.

The foundation of the house is made of fieldstone and the walls are built with bricks that are now painted. The roof was previously covered with cedar shakes, a few of which were found in the attic in 1994. They were replaced by asphalt shingles at some point. There is one chimney on each end of the original four-room home. A cellar is situated on the west side of the home, underneath the current kitchen.

The front of the Sroufe House faces the southwest, away from the Ohio River, and sits back, to the northeast, from the highway. It contains a total of six doors and twenty-two windows. The front door opens into a center hallway. Three other doors open into the back rooms from the rear porch, which is shaped like an “L.” An additional door and window are located on the back of the 1970s addition. Another door, on the second story front, once opened onto an elevated porch above the front door; this door is no longer functional, as there is no porch below.

On the front side are eight double-hung windows with 9/9 panes. There are six extant windows on the porch, where there were formerly seven. The porch window on the first floor has 9/9 panes as well, but the five windows on the second floor have 6/6 panes.

Facing the west side, there are six windows on the side of the el and one window on the side of the 1970s

addition. All of these are 6/6 except for the elongated lower right window, which mimics the first floor windows in the front of the house.

On the east side of the el, next to the porch, is an additional window. Although none of the window panes in the four-room structure are original, the layout remains the same other than the one porch window that was eventually covered. During the Period of Significance, there was a porch and door at the back of the house, where the utility room is now located. Parker explains in his autobiography that he entered the house through this door on the night of the famous escape (Parker 112).

West side

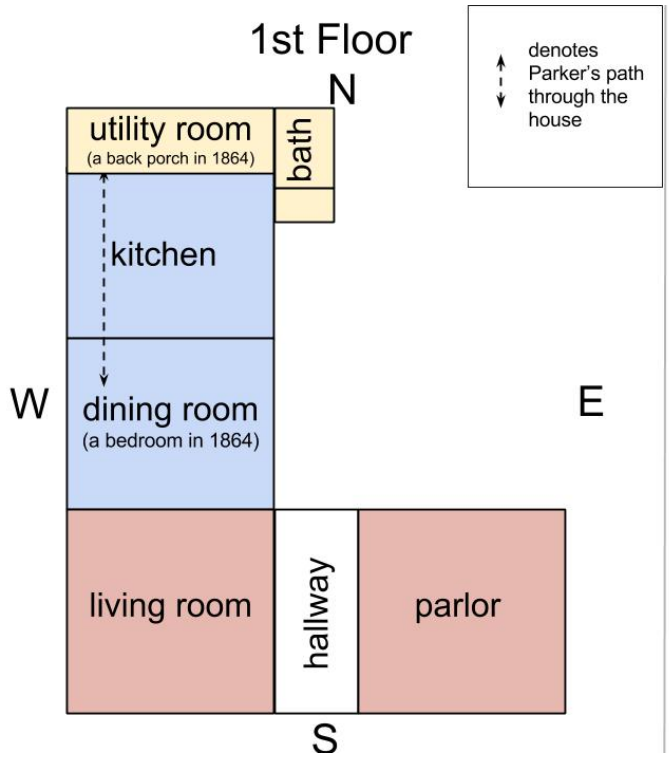
Back side (on left) and east side of ell (at right)

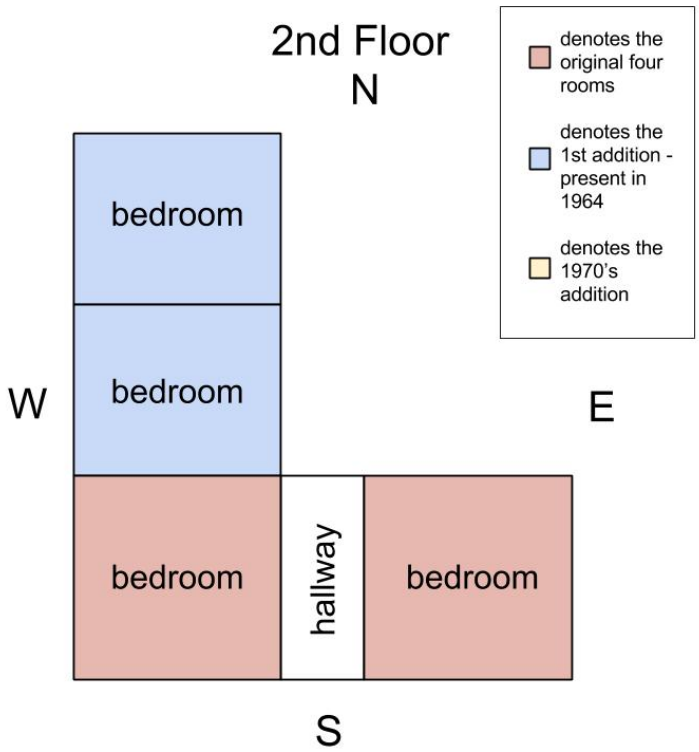
Interior Description of House (Floor plan below)

The center hall opens into a parlor on the right and a living room on the left. From the hall, a staircase leads to the second floor hall. The curved railing on the staircase is carved from one piece of wood. On each side of that hall is a bedroom. These are the four original rooms of the house. The living room on the first floor and the left bedroom on the second floor are adjacent to the el, which holds the present day dining room, kitchen, and two bedrooms on the second floor. Past the kitchen, in the 1970s addition, is a utility room, a bathroom, and a closet.

Interior Room

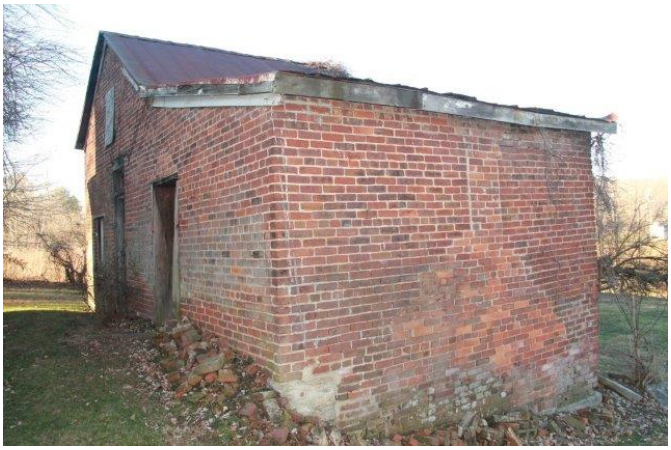
One-story 1970s addition





Secondary Building (Contributing Building)

Standing behind (north of) the Sroufe House is a second contributing building. The use during the Period of Significance is unknown, but it is thought to have been a kitchen or a residence for the owned workers. It is also possible that the original homeowners lived in this smaller building during the construction of the main house.



Secondary Building (shot looking north)

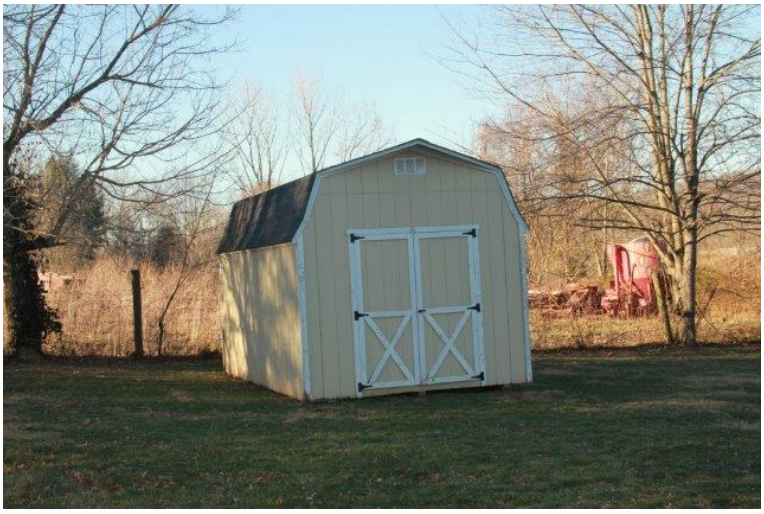
Secondary Building, at right (shot looking west)

On the south side, there is one window to the left of the two doors, which each open to a room, and another window above the left door. The latter window indicates that there might have been a loft in this building. The structure is divided into two rooms by an interior brick wall. A simple wood door connects the two rooms. The

right room has brick walls and a wood floor that has collapsed. The left side has plaster walls and a dirt floor. Homeowners sometime in the late 1900s covered the existing brick walls on the left side and removed the wood floor in order to use the space for storage. On the exterior of the north side of the building a fireplace remains. On the east side, a fireplace was removed and newer bricks were inserted in its place. The outline of the fireplace is still visible.

Wood storage building (non-contributing)

A wood-walled gambrel roofed storage building of recent vintage stands to the north of the two historic buildings.



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.)

- [X] 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.
- [ ] 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

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.)

Ethnic History--Black

Period of Significance

1864

Significant Dates

1864

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 a single year, 1864, during which John P. Parker assisted Celia Brooks, her husband, and her baby, Louis Porter Sroufe, to escape from bondage under Sebastian and Mary Ann Sroufe, owners of the house. Parker mentions three times in his autobiography that the corn was growing and was high enough to hide himself and Celia's husband, so the event clearly took place during the summer (Parker 110 – 111). By the summer of 1865, the Civil War had ended and all enslaved people had been freed. Since Louis Sroufe was born in February 1864, it is evident that the Underground Railroad escape at the Sroufe House took place during the summer of 1864.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) NA

Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The Sroufe House (MS-383) meets National Register Criterion A. It is significant within the context Underground Railroad in the Borderlands of Kentucky and Ohio. It is a dramatic episode that is recounted in John P. Parker's autobiography and has further believability because the principals within the event were known to each other. The Sroufe House will become Kentucky's first property listed primarily due to its association with the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was an important network for those wishing to escape the institution of slavery, but the secretive nature of the movement has made it a challenge to verify. J. Blaine Hudson has written a well-documented history of the network, *Fugitive Slaves and the Underground Railroad in the Kentucky Borderland* (2002), analyzing its existence within professional tests for credibility. Unlike the typical narrative of an Underground Railroad claim, part of the significance of the Sroufe House episode is that the story does not depict the Sroufe family as abolitionists or as sympathetic to the cause of liberating enslaved people. In this instance, the Sroufe House gained its association with the Underground Railroad in opposition to the owners' interests. Since the incident was documented in a published autobiography, *His Promised Land* (1996), and the details are supported in other primary sources, this site has a credible connection to the Underground Railroad.

The Beginning of Slavery and the Underground Railroad in America

In 1619, Africans were first traded to English colonists in Virginia for use as enslaved laborers. Later in the 17th century, all of Britain's colonies counted enslaved Africans as part of the population (National Park Service, Stevenson 27). These laborers became an integral part of the economy, mostly in the agricultural south. Northern merchants also profited from this human trade and from exporting products made by the enslaved. Well after the Revolutionary War, the United States continued its dependence on slave labor to harvest cotton, tobacco, and rice (National Park Service, Southeast Region).

By the time the American Revolutionary War ended, all of the northern states had abolished slavery or had planned to do this through a series of acts. However, free African Americans and fugitive slaves in the north still risked being sold into slavery in the south (National Park Service, Gara 7).

The majority of northerners generally agreed that slavery should not exist, while most southerners wished to uphold this institution to retain their profits. Tensions arose between the two regions of the country over the issue, eventually leading to the Civil War.

From the time that people were enslaved, they looked for ways to become free, so there is no official starting date to the Underground Railroad movement. As abolitionists became increasingly passionate about ending slavery, greater numbers of people joined the movement to aid and assist

freedom seekers. By the 1830s, the abolitionists became more outspoken in fighting for emancipation, and the network of people helping fugitives began to strengthen.

“The Underground Railroad dwells in national imagination as a well-known yet poorly understood icon of American lore” (LaRoche 1). The Underground Railroad was an illegal and secretive movement of people aiding fugitive slaves on their journey to freedom land. Freedom seekers were usually bright, strong, and clever. Many of them devised ingenious plans for their escapes. They traveled by foot — sometimes even by train, boat, or wagon — and contrary to popular beliefs, there were not always specific routes for them to follow. They often had to figure out which way to go on their own, using the North Star or geographic features as a guide. The abolitionists involved in the Underground Railroad provided invaluable information and assistance as well. Abolitionists included both northerners and southerners, both whites and blacks, both free and enslaved.

While popular myths hold that the Underground Railroad was a movement of Quakers helping weak African Americans escape slavery, African Americans played a crucial role in the Underground Railroad as well. Freed blacks remembered the extreme hardships of being enslaved, the danger and difficulty in escaping, and the thirst for freedom. They understood the fugitives' position and their need for assistance. There were also enslaved workers who did not attempt to escape slavery themselves, perhaps because they feared being caught and sold into harsher conditions in the deep south, but who aided fugitive slaves from slave territory. These connections, along with the desire to help the movement for their own race, motivated free and enslaved African Americans to aid freedom seekers.

The Underground Railroad during The Civil War

During the Civil War, Kentucky attempted to remain a neutral state. When the Confederacy tried to take the state, only five months into the war, Kentucky decided to be formally recognized as part of the Union, as long as farm owners could continue to own their workforce. While this compromise satisfied the most wealthy property owners in Kentucky, it proved increasingly difficult in the 1860s for the state to maintain slavery while fighting for the Union, which was trying to dismantle that system.

With both sides asserting their respective views on the right to own humans during the Civil War, the Union’s enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act, a law requiring the return and punishment of runaway slaves, became diminished. In addition, the “boundary between slavery and freedom became 'fluid' as the Union army moved into and through Confederate territory” (Hudson 50). Therefore, an increasing number of slaves fled to reach freedom in northern states.

Mason County (Kentucky) to Brown County (Ohio) Underground Railroad Route in the

Borderlands

Blaine Hudson identified the Mason County to Brown County route as one of four major Kentucky to Ohio routes that were commonly followed by freedom seekers. The other three common borderland routes included the following: Boone County (Kentucky) to Hamilton County (Ohio), Greenup County (Kentucky) to Scioto County (Ohio), and Greenup County (Kentucky) to Lawrence County (Ohio) (Hudson 105). John P. Parker was conveniently located on the route from Mason County to Brown County and was experienced enough to successfully use the most practical trails in that area.

Along the route from Mason County to Brown County, whites, blacks, free, and enslaved people rallied around the cause of abolition. Parker worked especially closely with the Reverend John Rankin and his sons. The Rankin's home, visible from the Sroufe House, was situated on top of a large hill in Ripley. Each night, the Rankins would shine a light to indicate their willingness to aid freedom seekers. After rowing into Kentucky to rescue the enslaved and rowing them to Ohio, Parker would often deliver them to the Rankin household. There, the Rankins would provide them with food and clothing. Rankin and his sons would then lead the freedom seekers further north.

Although Parker worked primarily with white abolitionists such as John Rankin, there were several other African American abolitionists that influenced the Underground Railroad in the borderlands. Everyone in the Mason County to Brown County network developed the route and used it, along with their expertise, to accomplish their mission.

Arnold Gragston was an African American who rowed fugitives across the river from Kentucky to Ohio. However, Gragston did so while he was still in bondage (Miller 220). He was owned by John “Jack” Tabb and lived on Tabb's plantation in Mason County. Gragston was allowed to hire himself out to others for extra money and therefore learned his way around the borderlands. He made three to four trips a month for several years and estimated that he helped around two or three hundred people. In a Federal Writer's Project interview, he recalled, “[I guess] I could be called a 'conductor' on the underground railway...there was a lot of slaves always a-wantin' to get free, and I had to help 'em” (Narrative of Arnold Gragston). Gragston and his wife headed for freedom several months before the end of the Civil War and eventually settled in Detroit (Narrative of Arnold Gragston).

John W. Hudson was a free African American that assisted freedom seekers in Ohio. He worked with and was paid by a network of white abolitionists. Hudson lived in Sardinia, approximately 25 miles north of Ripley, and served as a critical link at the end of the Mason County – Brown County route (Hudson 124).

Ripley, Ohio

The city of Ripley, Ohio was founded in 1812 by Virginian Colonel James Poage. He named it Staunton after his hometown, but in 1816, the name was changed to Ripley to celebrate War of 1812 commander General Eleazar Ripley (Ripley's History).

In his autobiography, John P. Parker states that when he first moved to Ripley in 1845, it was “as busy as a beehive. There was no town along the Ohio River except Cincinnati that was in its class. There was a group of live men there that made it the center of industry and finance” (Parker 97).

Parker worked with a team of white abolitionists, called the Ripley Abolition Society, whom he mentions in his autobiography (Hudson 124). “Amidst this commercial activity lived and moved the little group of old-time abolitionists. They were by name Dr. Alexander Campbell, Rev. John Rankin, Theodore, Tom, and Eli Collins, Tom McCague, Dr. Beasley, [and] Rev. James Gilliland. The undoubted leader was Rev. John Rankin” (Parker 99).

Before the 1820s, two free African American settlements were founded in Ripley. These settlements also contributed to Ripley's famous Underground Railroad network. According to Hudson, “the work of Rankin and his associates, while in the foreground of Underground Railroad history and legend, was made possible by African Americans laboring in the background” (Hudson 124).

This team of collaborators, including the free African Americans, was a large factor in Parker's successful career of aiding fugitive slaves. Due to this group of anti-slavery devotees, Ripley was one of the most critical cities for the Underground Railroad in the entire country. Their network was so strong that they successfully aided hundreds—some claimed thousands—of escaping slaves across the borderland. Therefore, Parker and the team of abolitionists in Ripley greatly contributed to the national movement known as the Underground Railroad.

Dover and Mason County, Kentucky

The first home in Dover was built ca. 1784 – 1786 by Jeremiah Washburn and his son, Cornelius “Neal.” The single-story log cabin served as an outpost against attacks from Native Americans and wild animals. The house was called Washburn's Blockhouse or Station Trail because pioneers, including Daniel Boone and Simon Kenton, would spend the night there while on the trail from Ohio to Kentucky. Using this log cabin as a base, Arthur Fox Sr. surveyed the land with assistance from the Washburns. His son, Arthur Fox Jr., officially founded the town of Dover ca. 1818 and named it after the city in England where his father had lived before emigrating to Kentucky (Mason County Genealogical Society 72 – 73; pt. 1).

While the origin of the name Underground Railroad is not certain, one theory suggests that the term originated in Mason County, just east of Dover in a small town called South Ripley (Miller 2). A fugitive slave named Tice Davis was on the run with his owner and bounty hunters behind him. He swam across the river and quickly hid behind bushes. When his owner could not find him, he said that

Davis must have used an "'underground road'" (Peeke 379).

John W. Anderson, a slave trader in Mason County, used the port at Dover to ship enslaved people further south to Natchez, Mississippi and New Orleans, Louisiana. Anderson would buy captives in the local area and hold them chained in his slave pen on his farm. "He led sad processions of the enslaved down Walton Road to the dock at Dover, Ky., and, from there, down river to Mississippi where he sold his human stock" (Artifact Description). At the height of his career in the late 1820s and early 1830s, Anderson was a leading Kentucky dealer. In three documented sales of humans in 1832 and 1833, he reaped $38,000 (Tenkotte 27). While Anderson died in 1834, his story lives on as his slave pen was installed in 2004 as a primary exhibit at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio.

By the 1840s, "Dover was the principal leaf tobacco market in the world." The firm of Tabb and Lyon (Langhorne Tabb Sr. and Anderson Lyon) bought three million pounds of tobacco per year. The tobacco was shipped from Dover to New Orleans and Boston (Mason County Genealogical Society 9; pt. 3).

Two fires devastated Dover in the 1850s. According to the April 22, 1854 *Perrysburg Journal*, "The town of Dover, Ky., was laid in ashes on Thursday. The two principal business squares were consumed – 4 large tobacco warehouses, filled with the weed, seven stores and five grocery establishments. The fire commenced about 10 A.M., and raged until 4 P.M. The loss is estimated at $100,000. Dover had about 700 inhabitants, and is some ten miles northwest (downriver) of Maysville, on the Ohio River. Only a few dwellings in the place were saved" ("Heavy Fire").

The October 26, 1858 *Cleveland Morning Leader* reported that "W. E. Tabb and Company's flouring mill at Dover, Ky., was burned Friday. There were 18,000 bushels of wheat and 800 barrels of flour in the mill. The upper floor gave way under the great weight and fell upon the boilers when the fire ignited, Loss $40,000" ("Valuable Mills Burned"). With the Sroufe House located just east of Dover, it was spared from the devastation of the two fires.

By 1860, there were 14,451 white people living in Mason County. According to the slave schedule, slave owners totaled 779 people. There were 3,765 enslaved workers reported on the 1860 slave schedule; 2,903 of those people were recorded as black and 862 were noted as mulatto. There were also 227 free blacks and 158 free mulattos. The enslaved made up around 21 percent of the total Mason County population (U.S. Census).

Located in Mason County about seventeen miles from Dover was Washington, a well-developed and populous city in Kentucky at the time. The Sroufe family had connections to the founders of Washington. The earliest deed of Washington recorded Simon Kenton selling land to Arthur Fox and William Wood. William Wood was the uncle of Hannah Wood, wife of Adam Sroufe (Mason County Genealogical Society 71; pt. 1). The slave auction that inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe to write her famous novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* took place in Washington, Kentucky.

The Sroufe Family

Adam Sroufe (1770 – 1833) and his wife Hannah Wood (1775 – 1833) were the first couple to reside in the Sroufe House just east of Dover, Kentucky. Adam moved to Kentucky and married Hannah on November 19th, 1791, while Kentucky was still a part of Virginia. The couple had two sons, Sebastian (1807 – 1884) and Amos, along with four daughters. After they married, Sebastian and Amos each had a son named James. Sebastian, his wife Mary Ann Buskirk (1814 – 1880), and their children, including their son James K. Sroufe (1847 – 1917), were the second family to live in the Sroufe House. The other James, son of Amos, had lived in Dover previously, but he had moved to Bracken County by the 1860 census (1860 Census Bracken County).

In 1854, Sebastian Sroufe and a business partner James Howard filled out an application to be able to operate a ferry from Dover to Ripley on the Ohio River (Book P 371). The Bee and Times newspaper mentioned the Sroufes having owned the ferry upon his death. “Mr. Shrofe in his early life was a river man, at one time owning the steamer Spray, running in the Maysville and Cincinnati trade. He was afterwards proprietor of the Ferry at this place.”

On the 1850 census, Sebastian reported that he was a farmer and that he and his wife had six children, including James, the youngest (1850 Census Mason County). The 1870 census recorded that James, a civil engineer, was the only child left living with his parents (1870 Census Mason County). The fact that the census logged James as an engineer corresponds with Parker's story that James worked for him in the iron foundry.

There is also documentation through the years that Sebastian Sroufe and his family owned slaves. The 1840 census noted that several enslaved workers belonged to Sebastian Sroufe, including three males and two females in addition to one free African American laborer (1840 Census Mason County). In his autobiography, Parker stated that the Sroufe family “owned several people” during the Period of Significance (Parker 106). Even after emancipation, in 1870, Sebastian hired two teenage black servants to live on his property and work for him (1870 Census Mason County).

The baby involved in the escape was named Louis (also spelled Lewis) Porter Sroufe. On his Social Security Application, Louis Sroufe's mother was listed as Celia Brooks and his father was listed as James K. Sroufe, the son of Sebastian. Celia's husband was not Louis' biological father and his name has yet to be discovered. February 3, 1864 was Louis Sroufe's birthday as listed on his Social Security Application. Therefore, he would have been around four to six months old at the time of the Underground Railroad event. Along with other censuses, the application verifies that Louis was born in Dover, Mason County, Kentucky (U.S. Social Security).

Louis Porter Sroufe (February 3, 1864—July 6, 1951), decades after the events discussed in this nomination.

Celia Brooks' name was recorded on the 1870 Federal Census as living in Portsmouth, Ohio. She was named a 27 year old mulatto female that was born in Kentucky around 1843. Her son, Lewis, was listed as a 6 year old mulatto (1870 Census Scioto County).

John P. Parker

Born into slavery in 1827, John P. Parker was owned by several people as a child and young adult (Parker 19). He unsuccessfully attempted to escape on numerous occasions. Eventually, he entered a deal with a white widow; she bought his freedom and he worked to pay her back, with interest (Parker 66). Upon earning his freedom in 1845, Parker moved to New Albany, Indiana and then to Cincinnati, Ohio. There, he became involved in the Underground Railroad. In 1848, Parker married Miranda Boulden. They moved to Ripley, Ohio in 1849 (Parker 8). The couple raised six children, all of whom received a college education. The family home stands next to the Ohio River and became a National Historic Landmark in 1996.

Even after his move to Ripley, Parker continued his work on the Underground Railroad. John P. Parker assisted hundreds of enslaved workers, including the family owned by the Sroufes, to reach freedom through an escape to the north. In comparison to the white abolitionists working on the

Underground Railroad, the free blacks working on that network, including Parker, risked much more. If caught in that illegal operation, a person could lose family members back to bondage and have earnings and possessions confiscated. By contrast, white abolitionists caught in the operation would have simply been forced to pay a fine or spend time in jail. Parker had aided hundreds of freedom seekers and his activity in the effort had gained sufficient awareness to result in a $1000 bounty on his head.

In addition to being a black abolitionist, he was an extremely successful businessman. He worked in a foundry and before the Period of Significance, he and business partner William Hood bought their own iron foundry called Phoenix Foundry and Finishing Shop. A newspaper ad read, “A first rate Finisher, and the best Moulders in the country do the work at the Phoenix” (Phoenix Foundry). Parker employed whites and patented inventions, both a rarity for blacks in the 1800s.

A history of Brown County, Ohio written in the 19th century described John P. Parker as follows. “Mr. Parker is a man of a social, genial temperament, one with whom it is pleasant to meet, at any and all times. His hand is always extended in welcome, and his heart is open to the poor and oppressed. As a man, a citizen, a neighbor, and a friend, he holds a high estimate, and in death his name will go down honored, respected and beloved by all” (History of Brown County 80).

The Underground Railroad and the Sroufe House

During the Period of Significance, the Sroufe House was occupied by Sebastian and Mary Ann Sroufe and their family. The Sroufes owned several of their workers, including Celia Brooks, her husband, and her baby, Louis.

Sebastian Sroufe's son, James, a young white man, worked for John P. Parker, a black man. James had questioned Parker about whether he worked on the Underground Railroad. James dared Parker to help some of his father's enslaved workers escape. Parker took this as a challenge and became determined, regardless of the obstacles that he would face (Parker 106).

Parker rowed across the river to the Sroufe property in a skiff, to scout out an enslaved worker to rescue. After two failed night-time attempts, Parker finally met with Celia's husband to speak about an escape and provide the man with instructions. The man expressed his trust in Parker, as he was well aware of his reputation. The man explained to Parker that he would not escape without his wife and baby and that he needed a week to prepare (Parker 108).

Parker reminisced, “Strange as it may seem, on the morning of the day I was to meet the man and his family, the Kentuckian chided me about not being able to run away with any of his people. I told him I was too busy with the foundry to give attention to outside affairs. He chuckled to himself over the matter as if it was a good joke on me” (Parker 109). That night, Parker arrived to the designated meeting location on the Kentucky side of the river, but the man did not appear. Parker continued on to

the Sroufe property and used the half-grown corn fields to sneak up to the log cabins. The man came from his cabin and hid in the corn field where he explained his troubles to Parker. Sebastian and Mary Ann Sroufe had suspected that this couple would attempt an escape. Knowing that they would not leave without Louis, Sebastian took the baby to sleep in his own bedroom. The master also kept a lit candle and pistols in the bedroom as a precaution (Parker 110).

Parker and the man went into the cabins and found Celia. Parker first tried to convince the couple to escape without the baby, but they refused. Parker then suggested that the husband could rescue the baby, but the husband was too afraid to do so himself. Third, Parker asked Celia to rescue her baby. She almost agreed, but the husband insisted that Parker be the one to venture inside the house. Celia described the layout of the house and Parker delivered instructions to the couple (Parker 111 - 112).

Leaving their quarters, Parker entered the house from the back porch. He walked through the kitchen and then into the sleeping room (Parker 112). Parker said, “At the door I hesitated, for I felt I was taking my life in my hand in opening it” (Parker 113). Parker grabbed Louis from the further side of the bed, waking Sebastian. Parker saw the candle go out and he heard pistols fall to the floor. He quickly ran out of the room, through the kitchen, and out of the house (Parker 114).

Sebastian fired a bullet that flew over Parker's head. Hearing the shot, Celia and her husband panicked and started running the opposite direction, toward the corn field and the cabins. Parker remembered, “I yelled as I went by them that I had the baby, and if they wanted it, they would have to follow me” (Parker 115). The couple caught up with Parker and, together, they went to the skiff. Parker heard James calling out warnings. He said, “I heard the voice of my employee shouting the name of the man in the bottom of the boat, warning him to come back” (Parker 115).

The enslaved man was hiding in the bottom of the skiff as Parker rowed the family across the river and brought them to his fellow Underground Railroad worker on the other side (Parker 115). He quickly returned home and arrived shortly before Sebastian, James, and another man came looking for the freedom seekers. They had come to his house suspecting that Parker was the mastermind of the escape. The men searched Parker's house. Parker explained, “I knew the longer I kept them busy with me the less likely they were to find their people” (Parker 116).

The white men had not seen the face of the man who had rescued Celia, her husband, and Louis. Their only clue was a pair of shoes that were accidentally left behind outside. The next morning at the foundry, James questioned Parker about the shoes but had no proof that they belonged to him. Sebastian and James set out to ask the shoe clerks in town to whom they had sold those shoes. Parker quickly ran to his clerk, asking him to remain silent if questioned. The clerk complied, and Parker was never connected with the escape, nor did James Sroufe ever go back to work at Parker's foundry (Parker 116 - 117).

Validity of John P. Parker's Autobiography

Frank Moody Gregg, *Chattanooga News* reporter from Ripley, Ohio, was very interested in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* Wishing to learn more about the true stories that inspired the novel, Gregg began to interview people who might have been involved, including the son of Ripley's famous abolitionist John Rankin. Knowing that Parker often worked with the Rankins, Gregg interviewed John P. Parker at some time in the mid- to late-1880s about his time as a slave and as an Underground Railroad worker. Although Gregg did not uncover very much about Eliza's story, he became fascinated with Parker's story.

His Promised Land is a transcript of Gregg's interview with Parker. His memoirs are considered a valid primary source, since both the interviewer and the other man present, Frank A. Stivers, were long time friends of Parker, and he most likely would not have embellished or lied about aspects of the story to friends. According to editor Stuart Seely Sprague, "It would have been hard for Parker to maintain a front during the many hours of this lengthy interview in front of two old acquaintances" (Parker 14). Comparing Gregg's writing in other works to that of Parker's memoirs, historians feel that Parker's voice is accurately represented in *His Promised Land*. "Parker's language is more specific, detailed, and vivid---it has the slight rough edge associated with oral history . . . The beauty of Parker's imagery and the precision of his language is rightly attributed to Parker's own stylistic mastery and to the incredible life he lived" (Parker 15).

Evaluation of the Sroufe House Escape within the Context Underground Railroad in the Borderlands of Kentucky and Ohio

Although surrounded by other abolitionists in Ripley, Ohio, John P. Parker was a most accomplished liberator of people in enslaved condition. Most of the other abolitionists waited readily for freedom seekers to knock on their doors. Then, they would generously provide shelter and food before communicating instructions or transporting freedom seekers to the next safe house. In contrast, John P. Parker bravely rowed across the Ohio River and into the slave territory many nights to search out and rescue slaves. While both acts were illegal and risky, the latter was more dangerous. Bounty hunters often patrolled closer to the river on the Kentucky borderland and likely searched specifically for Parker to claim the $1000 bounty on his head (Parker 128). In the case of the Sroufe House escape, Parker entered not only the property of the slave owners but also their bedroom. Especially since he was a free black and risked being sold back into slavery, these situations were unimaginably dangerous. Parker risked the loss of his own life and the lives of his wife and six children on a frequent basis. No other freedom worker in Ripley faced such extreme consequences.

Primary accounts of the Underground Railroad, especially from African Americans, are very rare since helping freedom seekers was a secret and illegal act. Therefore, the documentation of Parker's story is extremely valuable.

Evaluation of the Integrity of the Significance of the Sroufe House Escape in Light of the Physical Materials of the Property As It Stands Today

The Sroufe House has undergone various changes since the Period of Significance, such as the removal of the front and back porches, the covering of a window, and the addition of the utility room. Still, the building's basic character is recognizable. The house continues to present itself as an 1800s home, from simple realities such as its location, to more complex conceptions, such as its associations with the Underground Railroad escape.

After 150 years, the Sroufe House is still situated in its original location on the original foundation, demonstrating its integrity of **location**. One key aspect of the site's identity, within the Underground Railroad story, is its closeness to Ripley, Ohio and to the Ohio River. Until the 1860s, the property was a farm whose enslaved workers could literally see a place where they could end their bondage and achieve freedom. The integrity of location results less from the buildings on this property remaining unmoved, and more from the place standing so close to two worlds—one of enslavement for the farm's African Americans, the other, a desired relief from that condition of bondage.

The landscape surrounding the house retains an integrity of **setting**. The land surrounding the farm today remains in agricultural use, as it was during the Sroufes' tenure. One can observe today, within the setting, the pace and focus of rural life. By the time of the 2010 census, Dover's population was tabulated at 252 residents (2010 Census). Although the town's population has dwindled since the Period of Significance, the small town survives as does its rural character and feel. The Ohio River has grown in width and depth since 1864, but the landscape of the banks and surrounding land remains the same. John P. Parker's home in Ripley also continues to stand in its original location, a short distance from the Sroufe House. The relatively unchanged town of Dover, landscape of the Ohio River, and home of Parker contribute to the relatively unchanged character of the Sroufe House location today.

While the purpose of the standing outbuilding is unknown, the structure contributes to the setting, and thus to the identity of the site, as an antebellum farm.

In John P. Parker's autobiography, the integrity of **design** is confirmed. Parker recounts the layout of the house twice in his memoir. The first time, he shares the home's layout as told to him by the woman he was helping to freedom. "The woman, who was a servant in the house, described its interior, which was very simple indeed. From the small porch at the rear of the house, she said a door opened into a large living room," as opposed to a sleeping room. "From this a door led into the sleeping apartment where the child was to be found" (Parker 111-112).

The second time, he is in the midst of recounting the rescue itself. "Crossing the porch, I came to the

kitchen door, which I found unlocked as the woman told me. Raising the latch I pushed it open and entered the room. I was careful to leave the door wide open so that my retreat in that direction was assured" (Parker 112). He then explains that he walked across the kitchen floor and opened the door to the sleeping room.

These descriptions match the interior layout of the Sroufe House. It is clear that Parker entered through the back of the el, on the north side. He walked through what is still used as a kitchen to enter the bedroom, which now functions as a dining room, and proceeded to take the baby. Other than the back porch that was replaced with the utility room, the building's design corresponds to its design during the Period of Significance.

With the exception of the roof and the 1975 addition, the Sroufe House's integrity of **materials** is intact. Although the asphalt shingles on the roof were added after the Period of Significance, the original stone foundation and brick walls are in excellent condition and they speak to the fine craftsmanship of the early 1800s. The original chimneys, doors, and window frames also signify the integrity of materials. In addition, the original brick walls and wood doors of the secondary contributing building provide a continuity of the property's material identity as well.

The Sroufe House continues to maintain its integrity of **association** as the site of a famous Underground Railroad event. Close to the Ohio River and a short distance away from free territory, the borderland of Kentucky served as a prevalent area for Underground Railroad activity. "Kentucky became central to the history of slave escapes by virtue of its place and the physical and political geography of the young United States. For the same reasons, Kentucky and the states along its northern border became central to the Underground Railroad – and the Ohio River became a veritable River Jordan, the 'Dark Line' between slavery and nominal freedom" (Hudson 5). The Sroufe property is part of this Kentucky-Ohio Underground Railroad history.

The Sroufe House also contributes to the national history of the Underground Railroad movement. This part of our country's history is often overlooked and misinterpreted; there are few primary sources because the act was illegal and the stories are seldom placed in context. The fact that the story of this site was recorded by Parker himself in a primary source is remarkable. The rescue at the site involved John P. Parker, a famous and extremely successful abolitionist. Therefore, the Sroufe House is also associated with the national history of the Underground Railroad.

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Year: *1850*; Census Place: *District 1, Mason, Kentucky*; Roll: *M432_212*; Page: *18A*; Image: *377*.

Year: *1860*; Census Place: *District 1, Bracken, Kentucky*; Roll: *M653_357*; Page: *184*; Image: *184*; Family History Library Film: *803357*.

Year: *1870*; Census Place: *Dover, Mason, Kentucky*; Roll: *M593_486*; Page: *301A*; Image: *17*; Family History Library Film: *545985*.

Year: *1870*; Census Place: *Portsmouth Ward 4, Scioto, Ohio*; Roll: *M593_1265*; Page: *612B*; Image: *564*; Family History Library Film: *552764*

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): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .94 acres

Sroufe House
Name of Property

Mason County, Kentucky
County and State

UTM References
Maysville West quad
All Coordinates calculated via ArcGIS Explorer
Coordinates according to NAD 27: Zone 17, Easting: 251012.48 , Northing: 4292659.87

Coordinates according to NAD 83:

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	251018.83	4292867.18	3			
2				4			

Verbal Boundary Description
The Sroufe House property begins at the Mary Ingles Highway (Highway 8) and includes an area roughly shaped like a rectangle and including .94 acres. The area proposed for listing corresponds with the property defined by the Mason County Property Valuation Administrator (PVA) under the account number 030-00-00-001.01.

Boundary Justification
The area proposed for National Register listing has integrity of setting, and has strong associations with the important historic event, the freeing of 3 people formerly owned by Sebastian and Mary Ann Sroufe.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Catherine Bache
organization Girl Scouts of Kentuckiana date
street & number 2115 Lexington Rd telephone 502-423-0440
city or town Louisville state Kentucky zip code 40241
E-mail catherine.bache@icloud.com

Photographs:

Name of Property: Sroufe House
City or Vicinity: Dover vicinity
County: Mason
State: Kentucky
Photographer: Catherine Bache
Date Photographed: 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number:
1 of 11: Main façade from highway, shot to northeast

2 of 11: Main façade, shot to northeast
3 of 11: Rear ell and rear side, shot to west
4 of 11: West side of house, shot to southwest
5 of 11: west side of house, shot to east
6 of 11: east side of historic outbuilding and back side of house, shot to southwest
7 of 11: south and east side of historic outbuilding, shot to north
8 of 11: house and historic outbuilding, shot to west
9 of 11: non-historic outbuilding, shot to north
10 of 11: view of Ohio hills, shot to northeast
11 of 11: Interior view

Property Owner:

Name Robert J. and Dena C. Green

street & number 2471 Mary Ingles Highway telephone 606-882-2011

city or town Dover state Kentucky zip code 41034

- Sroufe House
  Coordinates: 38.749441, -83.864958
  38-44.940N, 83-51.919W
  USNG 17SKC 5099 9282