

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic John M. Hamilton House

and or common

**2. Location**

street & number 502 South Clayton \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Bloomington \_\_\_ vicinity of

state Illinois code 012 county McLean code 113

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> museum</span>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> park</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <span style="float: right;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> religious</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> scientific</span>
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> transportation</span>
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> other:</span>

**4. Owner of Property**

name Paul Thewlis

street & number 502 South Clayton

city, town Bloomington \_\_\_ vicinity of state Illinois

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. McLean County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Bloomington state Illinois

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Inventory of Historic Landmarks-McLean has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date December 1973 \_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Illinois Department of Conservation

city, town Springfield state Illinois

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The house is of wood, two stories high, and has an irregular ground plan. The foundation is of brick. The siding of the house is white painted clapboards

The house consists of a two story central core with a gable roof aligned east and west. There are extensions on each side of this central core. On the west, or front, the side of the house facing Clayton, is a single story porch which extends around the west and north sides of the central core. The porch is supported by white wooden columns. The front door is located in a semi-hexagonal projection with windows on both sides which extends out onto the porch. South of the front door are two square topped windows.

Projecting north from the central core is a two story wing with a gable roof aligned north and south. Extending from the east, or rear, of the central core is a two story wing which is not as high as the main part of the house. It has a gable roof aligned east and west. Extending even further to the east is a single story section containing the rear entrance. At the northeast angle of the house is a small rectangular projection with a flat roof which is only one story high. Extending south from the central core is a glassed in single story porch which extends around the southeast corner of the central core but does not reach all of the way to the front of the house.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	

**Specific dates** 1872

**Builder/Architect**

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

This was the home of John M. Hamilton, nineteenth governor of the state of Illinois, from 1872 until March of 1883 when he moved into the governor's mansion.

John Marshall Hamilton was born on May 28, 1847 near the town of Richwood in Union County, Ohio. In 1856 he moved with his parents to Roberts Township in Marshall County, Illinois. He served briefly in the Civil War and attended Ohio Wesleyan University, graduating in 1867. Upon returning to Illinois he taught Latin at Illinois Wesleyan University. In 1870 he was admitted to the Illinois bar and the following year formed a partnership with John H. Rowell. In 1876 Hamilton was elected to the state senate and in 1879 became president pro tem of that body. The following year he was nominated by the Republicans for lieutenant governor and swept into office along with Shelby M. Cullom.

In 1883 Cullom was elected to the United States Senate and Hamilton, only 35 years old, became governor of Illinois. His tenure as governor was marked by spirited debate over the Harbor high-license bill and by labor difficulties in Madison and St. Clair counties. In 1884 he maneuvered briefly to secure his own nomination for reelection, but not being able to gain the support of key party officials he withdrew to support Oglesby's election.

After his tenure in office Hamilton never returned to live in Bloomington. He became a prosperous and respected lawyer in Chicago, frequently speaking in support of Republican candidates, but never again seeking important state office.

Hamilton died in Chicago in September of 1905.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Moses, John. Illinois, Historical and Statistical. 2 vols.; Chicago: Fergus Printing Company, 1892

Portrait and Biographical Album of McLean County Illinois. Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1887. pp. 179-180

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

### UTM References

A 

Zone	Easting							Northing	

B 

Zone	Easting							Northing	

C 


D 


E 


F 


G 


H 


### Verbal boundary description and justification

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title William D. Walters, Jr. Asst. Professor

organization Dept. of Geography date December 20, 1977

street & number Illinois State University telephone

city or town Normal state Illinois

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE ILLINOIS

Date Entered SEP 6 1978

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Hamilton, John M., House	Bloomington McLean County

Also Notified

Honorable Charles H. Percy  
Honorable Adlai E. Stevenson  
Honorable Edward R. Madigan

**COPY OF CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION**

ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

ML-H-16

NR

220084

1. Name of site:

Common

Historic ~~Residence~~ John M. Hamilton Home

2. Location:

Street and number

502 S. Clayton

City or Town

Bloomington  
County

Township

Range

Section

1/4 Section

Zip Code

3. Classification:

Category (check one)

- District
- Building
- Site
- Structure

Integrity (check one)

- Altered
- Unaltered
- Moved
- Original Site

4. Ownership

- Private
- Public

Status (check one)

- Occupied
- Unoccupied
- Preservation work in Progress

Access to Public

- Yes
- Restricted
- Unrestricted
- No

Present Use ( check one or more)

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Entertainment
- Government
- Industrial
- Military
- Museum
- Park
- Private Residence
- Religious
- Scientific
- Transportation
- Other (specify)

5. Ownership of Property

Owner's name

Street and number

City or Town

State

County

Phone Number

Zip Code

6. Description

Condition

- Excellent
  - Good
  - Fair
  - Deteriorated
  - Ruins
  - Unexposed
- Is there a program of preservation underway?  Yes  No

7. Historical Themes: (check one or more of the following)

- Archaeological Site (Pre-Columbian)
- Archaeological Site (Post-Columbian to 1673)
- French Influence 1673-1780
- Illinois Frontier (1780-1818)
- Illinois Early (1818-1850)
- Illinois Middle (1850-1900)
- Illinois Late (1900-present)
- Famous People Hamilton-1847-1905 (give names & dates)

POLITICAL AFFAIRS



8. Specific Date:

Areas of significance (check one or more of the following)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (historic)     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (pre-historic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Military             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture               | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication             | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation              | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industry                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invention                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture    |   |

Brief statement of significance: (include all names and dates.) Use additional sheets if necessary. Possible home of the 19th Gov. of Illinois (1833-1885). The address was obtained from W. C. Townley.

9. Form prepared by:

Name and title: KS Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Street and number: \_\_\_\_\_

City or town: \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for references for a particular site. When filling out the Survey form, please list according to the following example, published references to the site for which forms are being completed. If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly deduct from the Survey's task.

Bibliography

Robertson, Robert, Of Whales and Men. New York, Alfred K. Knopf, Inc., 1954.



NAME OF SITE: John M. Hamilton Home (ML-H-16) *NR*

LOCATION: 502 S. Clayton, Bloomington

OWNER: Paul Thewlis  
502 S. Clayton, Bloomington  
Phone: 829-1856

POINTS OF INTEREST: Home of the 19th. governor of Illinois.

DATE: 1872

NOTE ON DATE: 1872 is close to the date of construction but may not be exact. In May of 1871 James Clark bought the land on which this house is located from William Dimmett, the subdivider of much of Bloomington's near east side for \$524. Clark was a dealer in hides, pelts, wool, and furs who in the 1870-1871 directory is listed as living at 407 E. Washington. The next directory, 1872-1873, puts him at 501 S. Clayton. Either the **street** number is in error, or Clark built another house, this one, across the street from 501.

That Clark built this house is suggested by the \$1,000 debt he had incurred which Hamilton assumed when he bought the house from Clark and more forcefully by the selling price of \$2,400 which Hamilton paid for the land in May, 1873. In 1888 Hamilton sold the house for \$2,500. The land in question was a double lot and on a corner so land value equal to about twenty percent of the total selling price of land and is assumed; this is not an unreasonable value for the 1870's.

BUILDER: The person most closely associated with the early history of this house was John Marshall Hamilton who was born May 28, 1847 near the town of Richwood in Union County, Ohio. In 1854 his father, Samuel Hamilton, loaded his six children into a covered wagon and moved the family to Roberts Township in Marshall County, Illinois. In youth he had almost no

formal education. Hamilton's entry into politics came at age Thirteen when he saved his money to buy a uniform and march with the Wide-Awakes at Magnolia. Later he was to claim that he had been rejected three times by the army because of his youth. In 1864 he did serve for one hundred days with 141th Illinois Volunteer Infantry.

Following the war he taught school briefly and then attended Ohio Wesleyan University, where he graduated in 1867. Hamilton then came to Bloomington and taught Latin at Illinois Wesleyan University. He also read law with the important firm of Weldon, Tipton, and Benjamin. In 1870 he was admitted to the bar and the following year married the daughter of an Ohio Wesleyan professor of Greek. In October of 1871 he formed a partnership with J.H. Rowell and in the next few years the firm was as deeply involved in politics as it was in the law. In 1876 Hamilton was elected to the state Senate where he attracted attention for his youth, energy, and his die-hard support of John A. Logan for the United States senate.

In 1879 Hamilton was elected president pro tem of the state senate. The following year he was nominated by the Republicans for Lieutenant governor and was swept into office along with the popular Shelby M. Cullom. In March of 1883 when the term of Bloomington's David Davis expired, Cullom was elected to take his place and John M. Hamilton became governor. He was thirty-five

years old, looked younger, and was said to be the red haired governor of the state.

While Hamilton was governor the legislature thrashed out the details of Harber high-licence law which probably attracted more attention than any other single issue of the 1880's; this bitterly contested act imposed license fees of not less than \$500 per year on taverns and greatly reduced the number of such establishments operating in the larger cities. In May of 1883 Hamilton sent the state militia to Madison and St. Clair Counties to quell labor troubles. A year later while the governor was working in his office in the executive chamber of the state house a bullet came crashing through the window narrowly missing Hamilton. Some blamed anarchists or miners hot for reverage while others put the responsibility on boys shooting pigeons in the street below.

As his term drew to a close Hamilton maneuvered to have himself nominated for election as governor. When he saw that the tide had turned against him Hamilton was outwardly gracious and stepped aside to support Oglesbey but the Pantagraph reported that in private:

"Hamilton is said to be furious over the conduct of his appointees, who have been urging him to make a fight, and at the same time are knifing Hamilton on the quiet. It is said that he will in a few days erect

a guillotine and take unto himself a few official heads." (March 28, 1884, p.1).

After Oglesbey's nomination the young ex-governor never returned to Bloomington to live. Instead he moved to Chicago, where he had made influential friends, and settled into a profitable legal practice. Yet his ties with McLean County were not at an end. He returned often to speak. Perhaps the best remembered occasion was in October of 1896 when a jammed Cole's Opra House heard him denounce the doctrine of free silver and its young prophet who was soon to speak at Franklin Park.

STRUCTURE: The home is a two-story wooden structure of irregular shape and restrained design. The chief ornament comes in the Ionic columns of the porch and around the front door. When Hamilton moved into the governor's mansion this home was rented and served various tenants until March of 1888 when it was sold to John L. White who may have onely used 502 S. Clayton as rental property. Since then it has seen many owners and the recent ones have been unaware that anyone of importance lived in the house.

#### REFERENCES

Deed Record, McLean County, Book 88, p. 233 (James Clark buys land); Book 90 p.336 (Hamilton buys); Book 151, p.299 (Hamilton Sells).

"Governor Hamilton," Pant. Jan. 13, 1883, p.3.

Hist, 1879, 791-792.

"John M. Hamilton's Rally," Pant. Oct. 27, 1896, p.7.

P. & B., 1887, 179-180.

"A Startling Story," Pant. March 25, 1884, p. 4. (Shooting).

"Withdraws Name," Pant. March 28, 1884, p.1.



