



# MOORELAND HOUSE

A Rich History

Construction of Mooreland House began in 1891 and took five years to complete at a cost of \$50,000. Its builder, Daniel Lawson Moore, was a Harrodsburg native and a descendant of an old and influential family of the South. The house was built as a wedding gift for his second wife, Minnie Ball of Woodford County. The architect of this impressive mansion is unidentified, but it can match the quality of similar grand houses of this style anywhere in the country. There are 17 rooms on two floors, which display a variety of stained-glass windows, parquet floors, and elaborate plasterwork.<sup>1</sup>

A true late 19<sup>th</sup> century mansion, Mooreland is constructed of native limestone and brick, the front of the building being entirely of stone. Each block is carefully tooled, with ribbing or bush-hammering laid with pink mortar. If you wonder what it would be like to enter the house in 2010, you're in luck! When the house was up for sale in March of 2010, the Historic Properties website featured Mooreland House's listing. They included a vivid walk-through of the house, beginning the description as you approach the house from the outside. The website also has pictures of Mooreland House before it was left to neglect and decay. Courtesy of Wayback Machine<sup>2</sup>, an archived page of this listing is available at:

[https://web.archive.org/web/20100311014518/http://www.historicproperties.com/detail.asp?detail\\_key=nchar023](https://web.archive.org/web/20100311014518/http://www.historicproperties.com/detail.asp?detail_key=nchar023).

The house has been put on the market multiple times in the past 10 years with a listing price of more than \$1,000,000. Originally, the property extended over 45 acres, but the bank subdivided the parcel into 2.947 acres consisting of the main house and a tenant house. The house has been left to the elements for so long, that the last time the house was listed, the asking price was only \$49,500.00.

To understand the grandeur of this mansion, you have to put it in the context of the era in which it was built. The house cost \$50,000 to build over a five-year period. In today's dollar amount, that is almost \$1,380,703.30.<sup>3</sup> That may not seem like much—since the house was

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1 Quoted from <https://books.google.com/books?id=MNSXIIefxq4C&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false> (Page 64)

2 Located at [www.archive.org/web](http://www.archive.org/web), The Wayback Machine is a digital archive of the World Wide Web, founded by the Internet Archive, a nonprofit library based in San Francisco. It allows the user to go "back in time" and see what websites looked like in the past. Today they have 20+ years of web history accessible and work with 625+ library and other partners through their Archive-It program to identify important web pages.

3 Taken from [in2013dollars.com](http://in2013dollars.com), a reference website maintained by the Official Data Foundation.  
<https://www.in2013dollars.com/us/inflation/1891?amount=50000>

recently listed for less than that at \$1,175,000.00—but keep in mind that the cost of living has changed dramatically in the past 130 years.

The average **DAILY** wage for a Bookkeeper in 1891 was \$2.00<sup>4</sup>, which (assuming you work 261 days per year—every day except weekends) is a yearly salary of \$522. The average **HOURLY** wage for a Bookkeeper in 2020 is \$17.68<sup>5</sup>, which (assuming you work 40 hour weeks all year with no unpaid vacation) is a yearly salary of \$37,440.

It would take you 37 years to pay off a house at the price of \$1,380,703.30 on a 2020 Bookkeeper salary. To achieve that time line would require you to use your entire yearly salary without including interest charges or taxes.

It would take you 96 years to pay off a house at the price of \$50,000.00 on an 1891 Bookkeeper salary. To achieve that time line would require you to use your entire yearly salary without including interest charges or taxes!

### **A (VERY) BRIEF FAMILY HISTORY**

Moore's first wife was Henrietta "Retta" McBrayer Moore who died at the young age of 31. They had three children together, May, Wallace and William, before she was summoned to eternal life in 1882. Moore's second marriage to Minnie Ball (she was 15 years his junior) sired two daughters, Anita and Minnie, a pianist and artist also known as Minerva.

Moore was a man of many hats. Not only was he a colonel, but he earned his law degree, he served as state senator, owned D.L. Moore Distillery, was President of Mercer National Bank, owned a sawmill in Mississippi, a cattle ranch in Colorado, and several cotton plantations in Mississippi. On one plantation, The Mounds, sat Moore's magnificent winter mansion.

He was also a philanthropist. Among his many charitable works was paying off the Harrodsburg Library debt. As a nature lover, Moore made many trips to the Rocky Mountains where he appreciated the spiritual uplift of the region's solitude.

Upon her husband's death, the second Mrs. Moore took over all the business dealings of the Mississippi, Colorado, and Kentucky properties. Much of her time was taken up with the exacting duties of the Mooreland Mansion Farm, where they grew Burley tobacco and fine livestock.<sup>6</sup>

Colonel Moore was a big part of Kentucky history and elsewhere. If you want to read more about him and his fascinating history, two good resources are "History of Kentucky and Kentuckians,

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4 [https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/75-yrs-american-finance-162/chart-5373?start\\_page=36](https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/75-yrs-american-finance-162/chart-5373?start_page=36)

5 Taken from payscale.com as of 11/19/2020 [https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Bookkeeper/Hourly\\_Rate](https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Bookkeeper/Hourly_Rate)

6 <https://oldhousesunder50k.com/save-this-old-house-c-1891-ky-abandoned-castle-like-mansion-for-sale-the-mooreland-mansion-under-50k/>

Volume 3” written by E. Polk Johnson in 1912, and “History of Kentucky, Volume 5” written by Charles Kerr in 1922.

If—for some unknown reason—you cannot get your hands on books from 1912 and 1922, they have been scanned and archived in the Open Library<sup>7</sup>. The following links will take you directly to the pages about Daniel L. Moore.

“History of Kentucky and Kentuckians, Volume 3”

[https://archive.org/details/bub\\_gb\\_FXQUAAAAYAAJ/page/n671/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_FXQUAAAAYAAJ/page/n671/mode/2up)

“History of Kentucky, Volume 5”

<https://archive.org/details/historyofkentuck05kerr/page/332/mode/2up>

In May of 2020, Frank and Kerry Paden purchased Mooreland House with the purpose of restoring her to her glory. Their website [www.moorelandhouse.com](http://www.moorelandhouse.com) is a blog dedicated to this journey of restoration.

**And the story continues . . .**

[www.historicalhomesofamerica.com/post/sold-abandoned-kentucky-gilded-age-castle-finds-buyer](http://www.historicalhomesofamerica.com/post/sold-abandoned-kentucky-gilded-age-castle-finds-buyer)

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<sup>7</sup> Located at <https://openlibrary.org>, Open Library is an on-line project intended to create “one web page for every book ever published.” Open Library is a project of the Internet Archive, a nonprofit organization. To date, they have gathered over 20 million records from a variety of large catalogs as well as single contributions, with more on the way.