

FINAL

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Jacob Straus House

AND/OR COMMON

Louis Levy House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

210 South Main Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Ligonier

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fourth

STATE

Indiana

CODE

018

COUNTY

Noble

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
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES, RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES, UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mrs. Louis L. (Ruth Todd) Levy

STREET & NUMBER

210 South Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Ligonier

VICINITY OF

STATE

Indiana 46767

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Noble County Court House, Office of County Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

Orange Street

CITY, TOWN

Albion, Indiana 46701

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" 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 Jacob Straus House is located in Ligonier, Indiana, at the intersection of Main and Third Streets. Built in 1898-99, the wooden clapboard structure combines elements of the neo-classical style and neo-colonial mode. The main (east) facade suggests the colonial influence. A large porch extends the length of the building and features lower and upper balustrades which link paired columns with Ionic capitals. The porch roof has a decorated swan's neck pediment over the entrance. Medallions and finials complete the porch embellishments. There are pilasters with Ionic capitals at the four corners of the building, which has an overall square shape. A plain cornice with dentils supports a truncated hipped roof. There are three gable dormers above the main elevation. Two side chimneys flank these dormers and there is another chimney at the rear of the house. The symmetry of the main elevation is broken by a semi-circular projecting bay to the left of the center entrance. Access to the porch roof is through a center entrance with shell-decorated fan.

The south elevation suggests more of a neo-classical style of architecture. Three central bays on the first and second floors are covered by a two-story portico. Four columns and four pilasters with Ionic capitals support a decorated monumental pediment. There are medallions above the columns, and dentils decorate both the portico cornice and pediment. There is also a balcony with a railing. The first floor has two windows with monumental pediments which flank the portico. There are small, diamond-shaped windows above the first floor windows.

While the north side has irregularly placed windows, a symmetrical impression is provided by a one-story portico over a drive. The portico is supported by paired columns. Above the portico is a three-sided projecting bay. The windows in this bay have fanlights. The roof on this side has a hooded, curvilinear dormer with two windows. There is a single oval stairway window toward the rear.

The rear (west) elevation is the most irregular of the sides. There is a three-sided projecting bay at the second story with a single window below. The roof has one double window, hipped dormer and a round, curvilinear dormer. The original enclosed entrance projecting from this side was enlarged sometime in this century to provide for additional kitchen and bath facilities.

There have been few alterations in the structure. Aside from the above-mentioned addition to the rear, the major exterior change has been the removal of the balustrade around the roof deck. The other changes have been interior "modernizations" of fixtures.

The property also contains a large, two-and-a-half-story frame garage. The garage repeats many of the features from the house, such as a hipped roof, hooded, curvilinear dormers, pilasters at the corners, and a projecting bay above the garage doors.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1899

BUILDER/ARCHITECT H. L. Ottenheimer

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE** The Jacob Straus House is significant for its architecture and its associations with the Straus family. The structure was designed by Chicago architect H. L. Ottenheimer. Ottenheimer's creation is noteworthy since it combined two architectural styles in one structure. The main elevation is a statement of the neo-colonial style which was becoming popular at the turn of the century. The truncated, hipped roof, swan's neck pediment, bay windows, large porch, and dormers indicate the neo-colonial influence. In contrast, the south side portico and window treatment are part of the neo-classical mode. Use of the neo-classical features is notable not only in its combination with neo-colonialism but also since it is a style that was applied more often to public or quasi-public buildings. The Straus House was the first example of the neo-colonial (and probably of neo-classical) style in Ligonier.

The structure was constructed from May, 1898, to March, 1899, for Jacob Straus, who had been a leader in the town's development. Straus' older brother, Frederick William, was the first of the family to settle in Ligonier. He and another peddler immigrant named Soloman Mier, came to the small Indiana community in 1854. The opened a general store and soon prospered. Both men were German Jews, and they encouraged their brethren to come to northern Indiana. The result was an unusual concentration of Jews in this small, Midwestern town.

Jacob Straus was among those Jews who were induced to settle in the community. Born in Laufersweiler, Germany, in 1830, he migrated to Indiana in the 1850's. He had studied business practices and upon his arrival with another brother, the three Strauses established the Straus Brothers General Store. They were soon successful and expanded their activities by establishing a buggy factory and buying and selling land. Increasingly, people came to them for financial advice and capital.

Realizing the opportunities in financial activities, they sold their general store in 1868 and founded the Ligonier Citizens Bank. The two older brothers retired in 1884 from the Ligonier Bank, moved to Chicago, and expanded the family's financial activities elsewhere in the Midwest. Jacob Straus managed the Ligonier Bank until 1892 when he, too, moved to Chicago to assist with the family's growing financial activities. The Straus brothers were responsible for establishing banks in Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Ontario, Canada.

In 1898 Jacob Straus retired, moved back to Ligonier, and built the house at Main and Third Streets. During his years in Ligonier, he was a leader in the business, religious, and social life of the community. He took an interest in the town's public schools, and donated a significant portion of the funds raise to complete a Carnegie Foundation grant for a library. He was a leader in the local Hebrew Congregation and served as its president for many years. Until Straus' death in 1914, his house was the setting for numerous parties and social events in the community.

