

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FINAL

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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 *PERSON - GRIFFITHS USE*  
Pierson-Clippinger-Jillson-Griffiths House

AND/OR COMMON  
Kemper House

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
1028 North Delaware Street

CITY, TOWN  
Indianapolis

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
11th

STATE  
Indiana

VICINITY OF  
CODE  
018

COUNTY  
Marion

CODE  
097

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana

STREET & NUMBER  
3402 Boulevard Place

CITY, TOWN  
Indianapolis

VICINITY OF

STATE  
Indiana

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Marion County Recorders Office

STREET & NUMBER  
City-County Building

CITY, TOWN  
Indianapolis

STATE  
Indiana

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
Survey of Indianapolis and Marion County

DATE  
1977

FEDERAL STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS  
Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission

CITY, TOWN  
Indianapolis

STATE  
Indiana

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Kemper House is a one-and-one-half story, five-bay detached dwelling of balloon frame construction on a low brick foundation. The plan is generally rectangular in shape (short end to street), with two formal rooms on each side of a central hall in front and three rooms at the rear. (See sketch plan) All exterior siding and decorative elements are of wood; siding consists of 1x4 inch boards laid horizontally with 3/4 inch channels between, giving the appearance of stone coursing.

Built in 1873, the house is a stylistic hybrid. Some elements of Second Empire architecture are present, including the use of grouped columns, a symmetrical plan and front elevation, decorative roof dormers and other roof embellishments. Classical Greek influence is seen in the pediment over the door and in the denticulation.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION: EXTERIOR

Front elevation is dominated by a full-width, five-bay porch with grouped columns in 2's and 3's. The central doorway is marked with an exaggerated Greek pediment which projects in front of and above the porch. Detailing of column capitals, window frame in pediment and molding on either side of doorway uses crisp geometric shapes of cut wood. Entablature contains sawn-wood boards below cornice which are reminiscent of Greek dentils and a decorative sawn-wood frieze. Design for cut-work in frieze can be found in an 1873 architect's patternbook, Victorian Architecture by A.J. Bicknell and W.T. Comstock.

The low hip roof with deck is decorated with low, cut-wood cresting around entire perimeter and deck. Other roof decoration is found in symmetrically-arranged chimneys (capped with paired terra cotta chimney pots) and symmetrically placed dormer forms. These diminutive "dormers" are round-arched and decorated with curved cut-wood ornament in the Second Empire manner, but contain no glass and do not function as windows.

Fenestration is regular with tall-proportioned windows (10 ft.) with double-hung sash; a single large pane of glass fills each sash. Window trim consists of wide boards with chamfered edges and simple incised design framing top and sides, plain sill below and projecting box cornice above. The central entry projects into the porch area approximately one foot beyond fenestrated wall. This projection contains double doors and their surrounding woodwork. Each two-panel door is about 7 ft. tall and contains an elongated etched glass panel over a small, square wood panel. A heavy rope molding forms a common vertical element between the two doors. Above is a transom light of clear glass, the shape of which is reflected in glass door panels and in windows in pediment above. Door trim on each side carries the same incised design and chamfered edges as window trim; there are forms pairs of stylized pilasters, each topped with "capitals" of simple cut-wood circles.

The south side of the building is highlighted with two projecting bays. One bay near the front of the house contains three windows set at obtuse angles; the other just to the rear of the first has four windows forming a rectangular plan. (see sketch plan) Other windows in the house are found singly with the exception of one pair on the north wall; most have decorative moldings like those on the front elevation with the addition of cut-wood scroll work on top edge of window cornice.

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The rear portion of the house has a small back porch next to which a new kitchen has been added. The date of the addition was not recorded; siding matches original; window trim is less ornate.

**INTERIOR**

The front door opens into a long hall, disclosing a symmetrical room arrangement typical of Victorian residential architecture with French influence. The center hall is flanked by parlor and dining room on the south side and music room and library on the north. Each of these four rooms has a high (12 ft) ceiling with heavily molded cornices and base boards. Windows rise from floor to ceiling and form a three-sided bay window in the parlor and a four-window, rectangular bay in the dining room. Doors are 10 ft. tall, containing six panels; pairs of doors open from entry hall into the two front rooms. These pairs are surrounded by elaborate shouldered architrave trim of Greek influence. Hardware is brass; doorknobs have delicate, fan-like design radiating from center point. Ceilings in each room contain plaster rosettes; lighting fixtures (originally gas) are mounted in each. The parlor and music rooms have marble mantles; there are no fireplaces in dining room or library. The four rooms described above were restored and furnished in 1973 (see History section); none of the furnishings are original.

Behind these four formal rooms is a five-room curate's apartment. Ceiling height drops to 9 feet to accommodate two rooms in the attic space above. Rooms which serve as curate's dining and living rooms were probably used as bedrooms and kitchen in the original single-family dwelling. Opposite the back porch is a dog-leg stair with winders which leads to bedrooms and a sitting hall in the attic space. These rooms were not a later addition. The only other room at this level is located at the other end of the attic, over the front porch; said to have been used as a children's playroom, this small (5x5 ft) room occupies the space formed by the entryway pediment. A ladder elsewhere in the attic leads to the roof deck.

To the rear of the dog-leg stair is a large kitchen, added after the house was built. This room constitutes the only major alteration to 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 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 type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1873

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Kemper House rests on its unusual and well-preserved architectural features. The structure is a unique example of High Victorian architecture, utilizing Second Empire and Greek forms as well as detail of an original character. The house is also significant on a local level for its association with Indianapolis citizens - William Jillson, a businessman, John Lewis Griffiths, Consul General to Liverpool and London.

### ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Kemper House is a unique example of the excellence of the builder's art in the 1870's. Although the builder's name is unknown, the house itself offers testimony to his expertise. Although small in size, the formal rooms have extremely high ceilings and tall-proportioned windows and doors, displaying the Victorian love of height. Symmetrical in massing and plan the structure uses a variety of surface textures and calls upon different styles of the past for its ornamentation. The house is distinguished by the excellence of craftsmanship found in wood detail and the skill of the builder in manipulating diverse forms into a unified whole. The builder's expertise gave the relatively small house a visual impact as important to the streetscape as the impact of the larger mansions which once surrounded it.

Today the house retains virtually every piece of its original detail; its integrity has not been compromised in any way by the addition at the rear. No house of similar caliber is known to exist in the Indianapolis region. Great numbers of the prestigious houses of Delaware Street have succumbed to the wrecker's ball - Kemper House is an important reminder of the past glory of this area of Indianapolis.

### HISTORY

The first owner of the house was a businessman, Charles C. Pierson. He commissioned construction of the house but sold it only one year after it was built to Annie L. Clippinger and her daughter and son-in-law, Mary and William M. Jillson. The three moved into the house in 1875, and remained there for 16 years, until 1891. Jillson was a locally important businessman, a partner in the plumbing and hardware supply firm, Knight and Jillson.

The next important owner was John Lewis Griffiths, one of Indiana's most notable orators. Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths owned the house for 17 years, from 1897 to 1914. Griffiths served in the Indiana House of Representatives in 1886 and 1887 and ran unsuccessfully for Governor in 1892 and 1896. In 1897 the Griffiths moved to 1028 Delaware Street and soon after, he rose to national prominence. After campaigning for Theodore Roosevelt's presidential election, he was offered the post of Consul General to Liverpool and began his job there in 1905. Griffiths was notable for developing a new concept in the operation

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of consul generalships; previously, these posts had been passive positions with few duties. Griffiths took a more active role, studying such important issues as old-age pensions, town planning, unemployment pay, profit sharing and health insurance. In 1909 he was promoted to Consul General of London, holding this position until his death in 1912. Although he spent only seven years (1897-1904) in the house on Delaware Street, his ownership continued until 1914, and many citizens of Indianapolis knew the house as the "Griffiths House" for many years.

The house changed hands four times after 1912. In 1962 it was purchased by the late Eli Lilly, notable Indianapolis philanthropist, and given to the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis for use as a curate's home and place for small gatherings. During 1962 and 1963 Lilly financed restoration and redecoration of the home, purchasing fine furnishings of the Victorian period for use in the four front rooms. Lilly dedicated the house to the memory of the Reverend Jackson Kemper, the first Episcopal Bishop to serve in Indiana. Bishop Kemper's duties in the state spanned the fourteen years from 1835 to 1849.

In 1977 the Diocese granted title of the property to the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, stipulating that it continue to be called "Kemper House" in the Bishop's memory. The Foundation uses part of the house as their local Indianapolis office and maintains the formal rooms as a museum facility.

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# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bicknell, A.J., and Comstock, W.T. Victorian Architecture. Watkins Glenn, New York: American Life Foundation, 1976.

Lilly, Eli, comp. Kemper House. Indianapolis: Studio Press, Inc., 1963.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 6	5 7 2 4 4 0	4 4 0 3 7 2 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Cynthia Durko Lynch

ORGANIZATION

DATE

August 10, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

3640 Middlefield Drive

CITY OR TOWN

Indianapolis

TELEPHONE

(317) 924-3806

STATE

Indiana

# 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

*Joseph D. Cloud*

TITLE Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 1-24-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER.

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



4405  
47°30"  
4404  
T. 16 N.  
T. 15 N.

*Prerison-Clippinger  
Jillson-Griffiths House  
(Kemper House)  
Indianapolis,  
Indiana  
U.T.M. References  
16/572440/4403720*

4403  
4.2 MI. TO IND. 100 GREENFIELD 19 MI.  
4402000m N.  
5 MI. TO INTERSTATE 465 SHELBYVILLE 26 MI.  
39°45'  
86°07'30"

10' MARTINSVILLE 29 MI. 572 573 3.8 MI. TO INTERSTATE 465 FRANKLIN 20 MI. INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. — 1970 R. 3 E. R. 4 E. 574000m E.

**ROAD CLASSIFICATION**  
 Primary highway, all weather, hard surface \_\_\_\_\_  
 Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface \_\_\_\_\_  
 Unimproved road, fair or dry weather \_\_\_\_\_

○ Interstate Route    ◡ U. S. Route    ○ State Route



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

**INDIANAPOLIS WEST, IND.**  
N3945—W8607.5/7.5

1967

AMS 3763 I SW—SERIES V851

*(BEECH GROVE)  
3763 II NE*