

445

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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received
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 William Lowry House

and/or common Kniese-Chaudhuri House

2. Location

street & number Kniese Road not for publication

city, town Bentonville vicinity of congressional district 9th

state Indiana code 018 county FAYETTE ~~Wayne~~ code 041

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Genevieve Chaudhuri

street & number 5435 Claybourne Street, Apt. 801

city, town Pittsburgh vicinity of state Pennsylvania 15232

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Auditor's Office, Fayette County Courthouse

street & number Central Avenue

city, town Connersville state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Fayette County Historic Sites & Structures
Inventory - In progress has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records Division of Historic Preservation, 202 N. Alabama Street

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" 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

The Lowry House is a five-bay, one-story L-plan gable-roofed, brick Federal cottage. It has three rooms in the original portion of the main floor, one-room twentieth-century additions on the east and west sides of the rear (kitchen) wing, a two room finished basement, and a floored attic. It is a superb example of early Indiana domestic construction, not only because it has undergone only minimal alterations, but because of its excellent and well thought out detailing.

The house is part of an unused farm complex on a farm of 140 acres, primarily consisting of flat ground in intensive cultivation in northern Fayette County. There is but one other early building in the complex: a drive-through corncrib; in addition there are a pole barn, hog house and various hog shelters. A collapsed shed near the house is all that remains of domestic-related outbuildings. The house site, including a yard which extends about 100 yards to the road and the buildings consists of approximately one acre.

The front elevation faces south, toward the road, and has a center door with four-light transom which opens into the westernmost room. There are windows in the remaining four bays. The rear wing is that of the kitchen, two bays--one door and one window--on either side. The east addition replaces an open porch which partially filled the ell with the main block. The west addition is a large enclosed kitchen porch. Both additions are in advanced states of decay.

The facade of the house is worked in Flemish bond; the rest of the house is 1:5 common bond. The mortar joints are quite narrow: less than $\frac{1}{4}$ " , and are struck or specially tooled. The bricks are typical in size and appearance for the era, and presumably were fired nearby. All openings with the exception of those in the attic are or were spanned by single course flat arches (those of the basement windows have been reworked). The attic windows echo these flat arches with a rowlock course above each.

The roof is standing seam metal over wood shingles nailed to sawn sheathing. The gable ends are flush with the end walls and retain their original raking trim: a tapered board with a bead at the lower edge. The lower edge of the roof was apparently extended about four inches in the twentieth century. It was probably at that time that the frieze facade was replaced: it is a plain board with a simple machine-made molding at the soffit. The frieze of the rear side of the front section is partially obscured by boards nailed over it, but appears to be a plain board about 8 inches wide with a bead along the lower edge. The frieze of the west side of the kitchen is a single board about 14 inches wide, the lower two inches of which are molded. The latter is the most weathered of the present friezeboards, and though rather out of proportion is probably original (a very faint line of white paint runs along the facade about 14 inches below the roofline: evidently a ghost of the original frieze).

With one exception, sash throughout the house was nine light over six. None are entirely intact: the muntins are gone but their mortises are visible in the rails. The east window of the kitchen is intact and is six over six. The difference is due to the fact that the window originally looked onto the porch.

There are chimneys at each of the gable ends. The west and north chimneys are single flue; the west one has two flues and consequently is larger. All three are in bad condition but appear to be substantially original.

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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The plan is simple: two rooms side-by-side in the front section, with one in the back behind the west room of the front section. The front door opens into the westernmost room. Like the other rooms, it has a fireplace with mantel, chimney cupboard and chair rail. A narrow door on the south side of the fireplace opens into a very narrow stair which turns and leads to the floored but unfinished attic. The west room probably served as the main living area. The detailing is better than that of the kitchen, but not so good as that of the parlor. The mantel is plain but finely detailed and nicely proportioned. Its width indicates that it could have been used for cooking purposes; the fireplace has been bricked up and plastered over, making investigation difficult without exploratory demolition. The chimney cupboard on the north side of the fireplace has three-panel doors above, two-panel below. The break occurs at chair rail-height. The cupboard is enframed with the same molding as that used on the doors and windows in the room: a beaded board with bevelled and beaded molding at the periphery.

The east room is a beautifully-conceived space. It was undoubtedly the parlor: the formal character is marked by the great care in relating all the parts to one another, and by the fine quality of the details. Note that the presses echo window sizes, and that the chair rail is very similar to the window trim. The mantelpiece is nicely proportioned, with reeded colonnettes and reeded tablets on the facing board. In an area where mantels of this period are almost without exception quite plain, this mantel is highly notable.

The kitchen has a large cooking fireplace with a simple mantel flanked by rather unusual cupboards which have counterspace.

The basement is reached from an outside door on the west end of the house. At that point it is about 3½ feet below grade. It is brick-floored and whitewashed. Its east room appears to have been principally used for storage, while the west room served as the summer kitchen. It has a cooking fireplace and the remnants of a beehive bake oven (the back of this oven extended through the west wall, and can be seen in an arch of broken bricks just above grade outside. There are two small windows on the south side, the westernmost of which was originally about two feet longer. This, and the presence of bricks well below present grade indicate the possibility that a brick-paved kitchen yard existed at this end of the house.

The Lowry house has been uninhabited for well over a decade, and has suffered both from neglect and vandalism: the latter is recent but is the more serious. Powder post beetle damage has caused the parlor floor to collapse, and plaster damage resulted from part of the roof's having blown off. There is considerable mortar deterioration throughout, which caused the basement fireplace to partially collapse (at no danger to the rest of the structure). Vandals, however, have quarried portions of the house for its brick: two courses have been removed from the southeast corner of the facade,

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seriously weakening it, and at the northeast corner a large hole has been made in the gable, at somewhat less peril to the structure. Two small places on the facade have had one course removed, and a small area of the west wall is missing.

Remarkably, no architectural details have been removed, making the house a prime candidate for sound, if extensive restoration. Considerable stabilization work has been done, looking forward to the day that restoration can begin in earnest.

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 checked="" 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 c. 1825

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The primary significance of the Lowry House lies in its existence as a fine example of the small Federal farmhouse. Locally, very few early buildings have such integrity of design as this, and though craftsmanship in the area seems to have been better before about 1840, this house is still superior to those few of its contemporaries still standing. The detailing throughout is excellent, and is nicely related to the well-proportioned whole. Any alterations to the house are superficial in nature and are usually quite obvious; those few bits of missing detail seem to have corresponding examples extant in the structure. The house could thus be good for study, and will be easy to document. It is rare to find a house of such early date with so few alterations or losses of fabric.

It is important to remember that this house was built at a time when the first settlers, as the Lowrys were, were just beginning to build permanent structures. The Lowrys were among the first to settle in the neighborhood; the balance of section 21, where this farm is located, was not granted until the early 1820's. Most of the houses in the immediate area were built after about 1870, while a few date from c. 1850. The house at Schrader-Weaver Woods, built about 1825 is the only contemporary building there that this writer is aware of. The isolated nature of the Lowry homestead makes this house the more unusual because of its notable refinement.

Support for the presumed date of construction can be found in an examination of the house. Flemish bond facades are locally restricted to a period from about 1825, when the first brick buildings were being constructed, to about 1835. The interiors show no taint of the simpler detailing which became prevalent in the 1830's; though neither the building nor the details are by any means elaborate, the abundance of beading, extensive use of moldings in the woodwork, and the coordination of proportions throughout all point to a date around 1825. Some of the framing timbers, such as floor joists, appear to have been cut with a two man saw rather than having been milled. Lighter pieces of framing, such as the sheathing, seem to have been cut at a mill, leading one to the conclusion that the heavier members were too much to haul over the practically nonexistent roads. It is not known what mills were in existence around 1825, but the nearest mill-adaptable stream is about five miles away, and the nearest town of any size about six.

In March of 1825, Lowry sold a 20 acre strip off the north of his quarter section. The abstract does not disclose the consideration involved in this sale, but property values at that time were about \$10 per acre. It is quite possible that monies thus gotten would have been used for the construction of the house. The high quality of the craftsmanship indicates that some cash was probably involved in hiring a mason or carpenter.

Very little can be discovered about William Lowry or his family. Lowry was among the first to settle in Fayette County, having been granted the property this house is on in 1813. He was a farmer, and aside from having settled, seems to have contributed little to the development of the county. In the 1850 census he listed Pennsylvania as his birth-place, and apparently came to Fayette County via Ohio: in the same census his eldest son

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gave that state as his birthplace. The other four children were born in Indiana. It is quite possible that Lowry did not settle here until some time after purchasing the property, as that eldest son was born in 1815. Lowry was, however, listed as a resident of Harrison Township in the census of 1820. In 1823 Posey Township, where the Lowry house is located, was formed from part of Harrison. As there is no evidence that Lowry owned any other property at that time, it is safe to assume that he was in residence on this farm then.

William Lowry lived on the place until his death in the 1860's, and the farm remained in the hands of his family until the late 19th century. In 1907 it was purchased by Oliver H. Beeson, and has been passed through the family to the hands of his granddaughter, the present owner.

9. Major Bibliographical References

United States Census, Fayette County, Indiana: 1820, 1830, 1840, 1850.

Early Landowners in Fayette County. An unpublished manuscript in the Fayette County Library, Connersville, Indiana.

Abstract of Title (a part of the S.E. quarter of Section 21, Township 15 N., Range 12 E.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approx. one acre

Quadrangle name Connersville

Quadrangle scale 7.5 min. series

UMT References

A

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6	5	5	3	9	5
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4	3	9	9	2	3	5
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 Zone Easting Northing

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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Louis Joyner, President

organization Neighborhood Preservation Service date August 1980

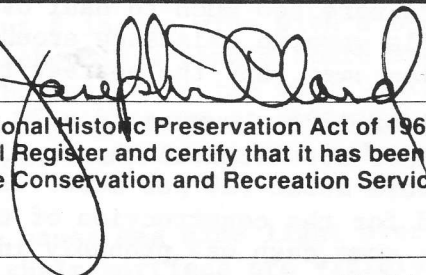
street & number R. R. #1, Box 182-B telephone (317) 855-5347

city or town Centerville 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 12-16-80

For HCRS 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

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Continuation sheet William Lowry House

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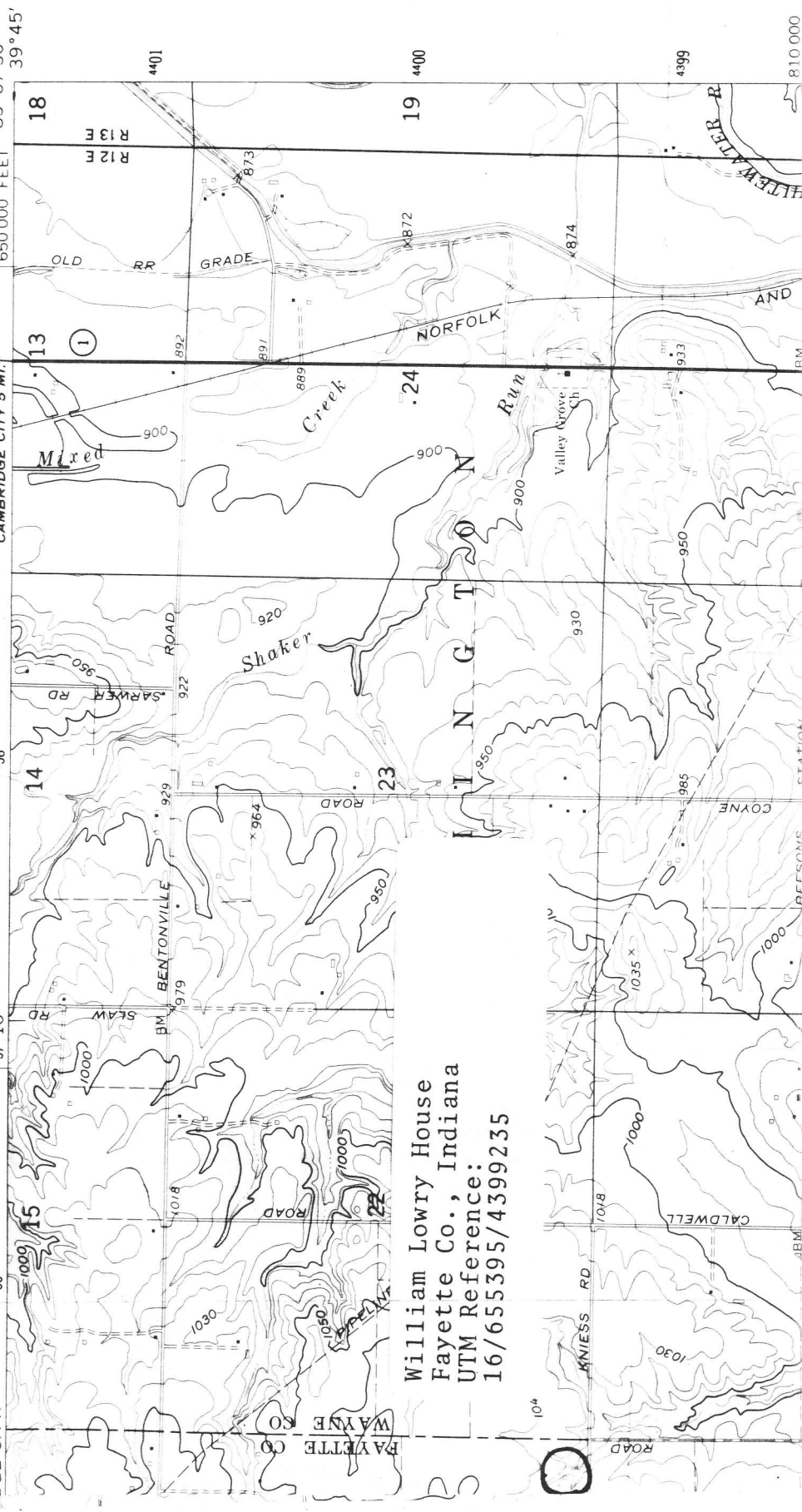
Starting from a point where the north-south fence row which runs to the west of the house meets the road; thence north 150 yards to a point; thence east 100 yards to a point; thence south 150 yards to the road; thence west 100 yards to the place of beginning. Encompassing the house, corncrib, yard, land and small field in front of the house.

3963 1 SE
(JACKSONBURG)

CONNERSVILLE QUADRANGLE
INDIANA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

INDIANA
NATURAL RESOURCES
FAYETTE CO., INDIANA

CAMBRIDGE CITY 5 MI. 658
1657 10' 656
1650 000 FEET 85° 07' 30" 39° 45'



William Lowry House
Fayette Co., Indiana
UTM Reference:
16/655395/4399235

