

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

FINAL

For NPS use only  
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 Nelson, The F. P. House

and/or common "The Towers"

## 2. Location

street & number 701 E. Seminary N/A not for publication

city, town Greencastle N/A vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Putnam code 133

## 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"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" 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
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other multi-residence

## 4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Howard M. Harmless

street & number 2016 Fairway Drive

city, town Greencastle N/A vicinity of state Indiana 46135

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Recorder's Office, Putnam County Courthouse

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Greencastle state Indiana

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Sites and Structures  
title Inventory of Putnam County has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date Summer, 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Department of Natural Resources

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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 <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The F. P. Nelson House is a large, Italianate style home located on a spacious lot just south of downtown Greencastle, Indiana. A two story, painted brick home with an irregular plan, the Nelson House features a stone foundation and a hipped roof. Elaborate stone and wood detailing is employed throughout the exterior of the house.

The main (south) facade features a projecting entry pavilion and a two story polygonal bay. The entry pavilion is located near the center of the facade, and features paired, rounded-arch entry doors contained in a recessed, round-arched entryway on the ground floor. This entryway is flanked by pilasters and surmounted by a large, projecting, segmental-arched pediment with an ornately carved keystone, supported by elaborate ancones. The second floor level of the pavilion contains a pair of segmental-arched, one-over-one, double-hung windows with plain sills and elaborately carved and bracketed hood molds. A wide frieze appears over the second floor windows and continues around the house, containing small, segmental-arched attic windows with heavy hood molds. Large, elaborate brackets with pendants flank the attic windows with smaller, scroll-cut modillions appearing at regular intervals between the brackets. The very wide overhanging eaves feature a cyma recta cornice.

Immediately east of the pavilion, the south facade features paired, one-over-one, double-hung windows on both floor levels. Window and cornice treatment here are identical to that employed in the pavilion. Limestone quoins are used on the corners of the building's main facade.

West of the pavilion, the south facade features a single segmental-arched window on each floor level and, on the southwest corner, a two story polygonal bay. Constructed of stone, this bay also contains segmental-arched windows with heavy hood molds identical to those used throughout the main facade.

Historic photographs show that a large tower with a bell-cast mansard roof originally appeared over the entry pavilion. A smaller tower roof also appeared over the polygonal bay. Both of these towers were of French Second Empire-style design, and featured dormer windows and iron cresting. Both towers have since been removed. Other elements which have been lost include the side porches on the east and west facades, and the second floor balcony with wrought iron balustrade just below the paired windows on the south facade. Decorative finials have also been removed from the apices of the south facade's window hoods. A large addition was made to the rear of the building after it was made into apartments in 1931. It is similar in scale to the original structure, with a hipped roof and a bracketed frieze. Windows in this section are much reduced, however, and lack the ornamental hood molds. Cornice and frieze detailing is also less ornate on the addition.

The interior of the house has seen some minor modifications but still features the original wide woodwork, panel doors, and molded plaster cornices. Only four of the original 16 fireplaces remain; these feature cast iron surrounds typical of the period. The main stairway features turned and fluted balusters, elaborate brackets, and a large, ornate newel post.

Originally, a large carriage house was located at the rear of the house; this structure was razed several years ago. The home's wrought iron fence has also been removed. Two non-contributing frame garages currently stand at the very rear of the large lot. Both date from the early 1930's.

# 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/	
<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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	

Specific dates 1871-75

Builder Architect Unknown

**Statement of Significance (~~in one paragraph~~)**

The F. P. Nelson Home is significant for its architecture and for its association with Franklin Pierce Nelson, one of Greencastle's most prominent citizens. The house is an imposing Italianate structure with extensive stone and wood detailing. Constructed between 1871 and 1875, it remained the home of Franklin Nelson, Greencastle's first millionaire, until his death in 1896. Later used by DePauw University as a home for the University President, the building is currently an apartment house.

Franklin Pierce Nelson was born in Kentucky in 1821, and came to Indiana with his parents before the Civil War. He became one of the most successful grain farmers and cattle breeders in the area, and was later a director of the city's First National Bank. Well-known for his support of community, religious, and educational causes, he also served on the Greencastle City Council. He was thought to have been the first millionaire in Putnam County.

After Nelson's death in 1896, the house remained in the family until 1903, when it was sold to DePauw University. From 1903 until 1924, the house was used as a residence for the University President. After 1924, the building was used first as a reception hall for University social functions, and later as a fraternity house. DePauw sold the building in 1931. It has been used as an apartment house since that time.

When constructed, the Nelson House featured a large, mansarded tower over the entry pavilion, and a smaller tower roof over the polygonal bay. In his book, Indiana Houses of the Nineteenth Century, Wilbur Peat makes specific mention of such Italianate homes with French Second Empire-inspired towers, saying that they may be regarded as a transition style found during the era when the Italianate style was giving way to the "Franco-American" mode. The towers have been removed, transforming the house into a well-detailed, purely Italianate style structure.

The building still exhibits the ornate features and fine craftsmanship which made it one of the county's finest homes. The elaborate window hoods, the segmented pediment over the main entry, and the quoins on the south facade are all made of carefully carved limestone. Notable wooden elements include the ornate brackets and modillions which appear on the frieze. An imposing, rather formal-looking structure on a large lot, the Nelson House remains a prominent local landmark.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Manhart, George B., Depauw Through The Years. Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1962  
 Peat, Wilbur, Indiana Houses of the Nineteenth Century. Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, 1967  
 Sweet, Wm. Warren, Indiana Asbury-DePauw University 1837-1937. Chicago: The Abingdon Press, 1937

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Greencastle

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	6
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5	1	1	9	9	0
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4	3	8	7	8	2	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

B 

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 Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Please see continuation sheet

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Debra D. Fox, Grad. Assistant

organization Ball State University date 11-23-81

street & number 10554-D Long Wharf Square telephone 317/899-3451

city or town Indianapolis state Indiana 46236

## 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 J. M. Redenour

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 5-16-83

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

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

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

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date entered

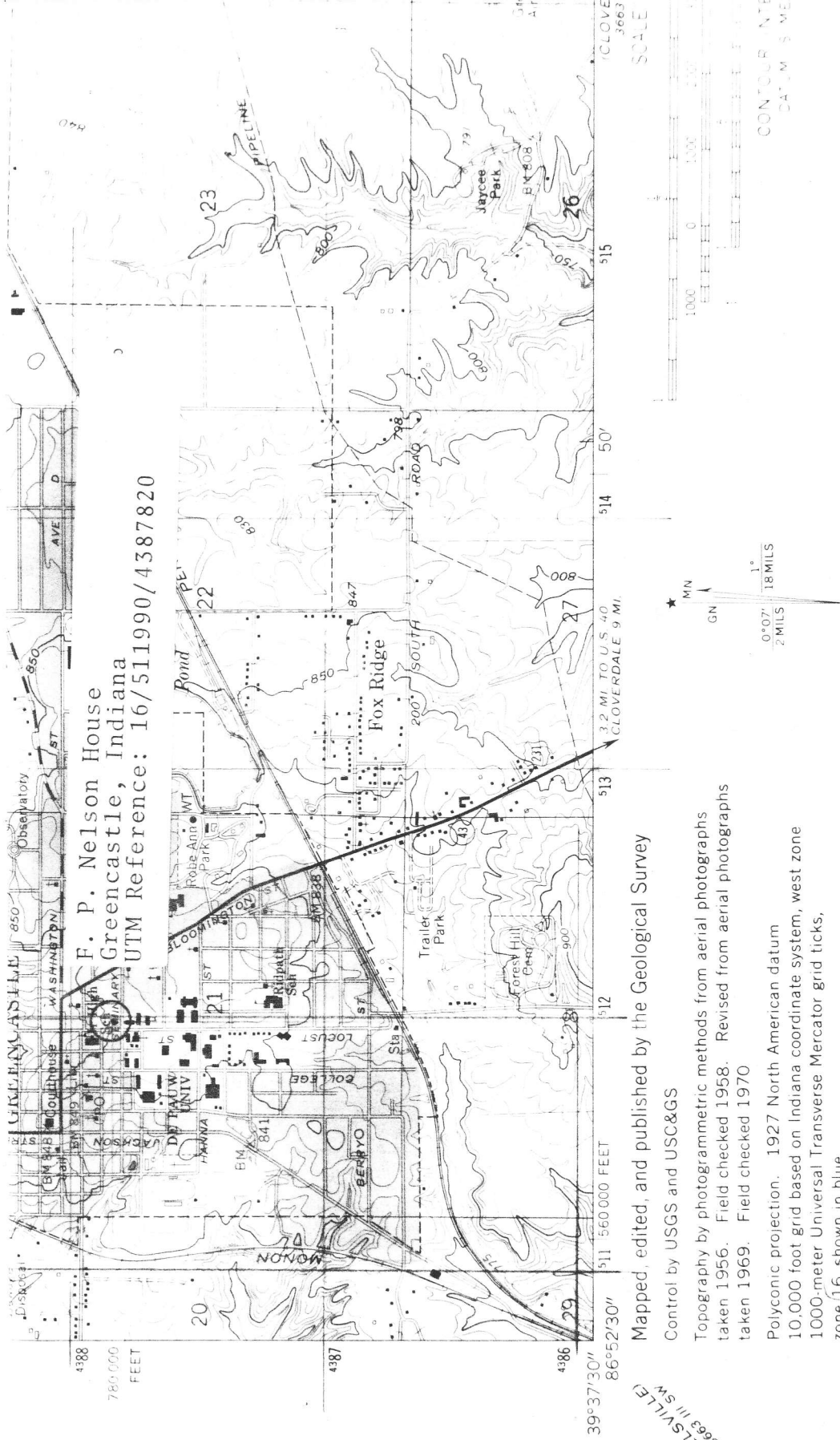
Continuation sheet F. P. Nelson House

Item number 10

Page 1

A part of Lot 52 in the Eastern Enlargement of the Town, now City, of Greencastle, described as follows, to wit: Commencing at a point in the South line of said lot 100 feet East of the Southwest corner of said lot, running thence North, parallel with the West line of said lot, 370 feet, six inches; thence West, parallel with the South line of said lot, to the East line of Arlington Street in said city; thence South with the East line of Arlington Street to the South line of said lot; thence East with the South line of said lot to the place of beginning.





F. P. Nelson House  
 Greencastle, Indiana  
 UTM Reference: 16/511990/4387820

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1956. Field checked 1958. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1970

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000 foot grid based on Indiana coordinate system, west zone  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
 zone 16, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked  
 Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown

UTM GRID AND 1970 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



UTM GRID AND 1970 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET  
 SCALE  
 1000 0 1000 2000  
 CONTOUR INTERVAL  
 DATUM: NAD 83

THIS MAP COMPLES WITH NAT O  
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL S  
 AND INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS