

FINAL

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections**1. Name**

historic Merrifield-Cass House

and/or common Garth Stroup Home

**2. Location**

street &amp; number 816 Lincolnway East N/A not for publication

city, town Mishawaka N/A vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county St. Joseph code 141

**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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mrs. Garth Stroup

street &amp; number 816 Lincolnway East

city, town Mishawaka N/A vicinity of state Indiana 46544

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Joseph County Recorder's Office

street &amp; number County-City Building, South Lafayette Boulevard

city, town South Bend state Indiana 46601

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**title Indiana Historic Sites and Structures  
Inventory -- City of Mishawaka has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate August, 1979 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Indiana Department of Natural Resources

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

## 7. Description

### Condition

☒ excellent  
☐ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved date N/A

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

The Merrifield-Cass house is a single family detached dwelling thought to be the oldest house in continuous use in the City of Mishawaka. The dwelling, when built in 1837, was a rectangular, one story structure with a full basement. The exterior appearance visible today is the result of the remodeling work undertaken by the Albert Cass family who, in 1867, added the second story, and moved a single story tenant house from elsewhere on the property to a location adjoining the eastern side of the two story portion of the dwelling resulting in an "L" shaped plan. The porches on the southern facade were added in 1871 and act as a unifying element on this, the front elevation.

Each wing of the structure is of wood frame construction. The western two story portion rests on fieldstone basement walls, and the eastern, one story portion on brick foundation walls. The floor beams of the two story portion are widely spaced and are hewn from black walnut trees. The siding over the entire exterior is poplar. The profile of the siding is four inch bevel with the exception of under the east porch, where it is six inch bevel. The roofing material is asphalt shingle.

The remodeling of the structure resulted in a harmonizing blend of characteristics of both the Federal and Greek Revival styles. Details more characteristic of the Greek Revival style are the very tall ground story windows, the raking cornice and simple entablature, the transom above the entry door and the main entry located on the gable end of the structure. Details more closely related to the Federal style include the lintel-type window heads, the large, six-over-six light, double-hung windows, the thin window muntins, the louvered window shutters, and the thin corner boards. Details common to both styles include the low pitched gable roof and sidelights at the front entry door.

The most readily identifiable characteristic of the structure is the porches. These later additions characterize the Carpenter Gothic style which utilized sawn bracketry and "gingerbread" trim between the porch posts.

The interior of the two story portion exhibits wide painted pine door and window trim, plaster walls, poplar floors and a cherry staircase. The interior finish materials of the single story portion are more common and plain, characteristic of their earlier placement in a tenant dwelling. One other detail worth mentioning is the two-inch difference in elevation between the original structure and the floor of the adjoining portion (a detail which we are told aggravated Mr. Cass).

There are two outbuildings also on the property, neither of which dates to the period of construction of the dwelling, although the storage barn at the northeast corner of the property is more than 50 years old. It is approximately 12 feet by 18 feet, with vertical board and batten siding and a gable roof. The storage barn was moved once from a location closer to the house and now sits on a fieldstone foundation.

## 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 checked="" 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 1837, 1867

Builder/Architect

Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Merrifield-Cass house is the second oldest known dwelling in the City of Mishawaka, and is considered to be the oldest dwelling in continuous use. It is a good local example of the Greek Revival style, with the addition of an excellently maintained Carpenter-Gothic porch. In addition, the dwelling was constructed by the man who was primarily responsible for bringing public education to Mishawaka.

George Merrifield was 23 when he moved to Mishawaka from New York in 1837. He was well educated and had been teaching in his home state since he was 18. Mishawaka was but four years old at this time, and Mr. Merrifield recognized the need for public education. He immediately opened a select school in the Methodist Episcopal Church, in which he taught "advanced classes in the ordinary branches of study, and in algebra, geometry, natural philosophy and Latin."

In 1839 Mr. Merrifield built a one room wood framed schoolhouse, the first in the city, and served as teacher here until 1846.

After he retired from teaching, Mr. Merrifield was owner and editor of the Mishawaka Tocsin for three years, until he sold it and headed west with 111 other men from St. Joseph County to seek his fortune in the California gold rush of 1849. (From this he brought home less than \$1,000, which was stolen from his study immediately after his return.)

Mr. Merrifield then served as the postmaster for eight years prior to being elected to the State Legislature. During his time in the Legislature he wrote the first history of Mishawaka, which was published in nine parts in the Mishawaka Enterprise (previously the Tocsin) in 1859.

Mr. Merrifield sold his home in 1855 and bought a farm on which he retired and became involved in commercial fruit tree growing. Upon his death in 1905, a portion of this farm was given to the city for use as a public park.

When the house was sold again in 1867, it was purchased by Mr. Albert Cass (who extensively remodeled the dwelling - see Description). Mr. Cass was a wealthy businessman who had partially owned a company which manufactured wagons and carriages. In 1864 he sold his interest in the wagon company and built a large flour mill, known as Ripple Mills, on the race in what is now downtown Mishawaka.

It is noteworthy that since the construction of the dwelling in 1837, there have been only six owners of the property, which undoubtedly accounts for its excellent condition.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Illustrated Historical Atlas of St. Joseph County, Indiana. 1875  
Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties, Indiana. Goodspeed Brothers, 1893  
South Bend and the Men Who Made It. Anderson & Colley, 1901

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.404

Quadrangle name South Bend East

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 16 568730 4612300  
Zone Easting Northing

B                    
Zone Easting Northing

C                  

D                  

E                  

F                  

G                  

H                  

Verbal boundary description and justification

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 Phil Cartwright, AIA

organization LeRoy Troyer and Associates

date May 14, 1982

street & number 415 Lincolnway East

telephone 219/259-9976

city or town Mishawaka

state Indiana 46544

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

   national    state X 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

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

date April 21, 1983

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**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Merrifield-Cass House

Item number 10

Page 1

Lot Numbered Nine of Stokes Survey in the Southwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section Fifteen, Township Thirty-Seven North, Range Three East, described as beginning at a point on the North side of Vistula Road (now Lincoln Way East) 422 feet West of the North and South line of said Section Fifteen; running thence Westerly along said lot one hundred twenty-seven and two-thirds feet; thence North parallel with said North and South center line to the St. Joseph River; thence Easterly along the South bank of said river to a point due North of the place of beginning; thence South to the place of beginning, in the City of Mishawaka.

Merrifield-Cass House  
Mishawaka, Indiana  
UTM Reference: 16/568730/4612300

