

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FINAL

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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 Bentel, George, House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Northeast corner of Brewery and Granary N/A not for publication

city, town New Harmony N/A vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Posey code 129

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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Art Gallery

4. Owner of Property

name Mary Jane Steele

street & number 1906 Bellemeade

city, town Evansville N/A vicinity of state Indiana 47714

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Posey County Recorder

street & number Posey County Courthouse

city, town Mt. Vernon state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Harmonist houses were of either frame or brick construction, but all were standardized and mass-produced. The Bentel House is brick. Timbers were prepared and marked, and when a house was to be erected, the parts were taken to the site for assembly. Connected by mortise and tenon joints, the parts were anchored by driving kiln-dried hardwood square pegs into round holes in the poplar framing. With the passage of time and exposure to moisture in the atmosphere, the pegs would expand to assure a tight fit. Roof rafters were built as individual trusses, with the weight being carried to the outside walls. Thus, interior walls were not affected by snow, wind, or temperature changes. Roofs were wood shakes. The Bentel House roof is wood shake, but the shake dimensions are not historically accurate.

The fireplaces were built to one side of the house, allowing the center beam to be continuous, but the chimney was corbelled so that it penetrated the roof at the ridge, eliminating the cricket and flashing problem. The center load of the house was carried on the intersection of the interior walls, rather than on the chimney. The fireplace of the Bentel House has been removed, however.

The ceilings of both the first floor and the attic were insulated with "Dutch biscuits," eighteen-inch boards that were wrapped in straw and mud. The ends of the wood were tapered to fit into grooves in the ceiling rafters. This also acted as a fire barrier. These biscuits are still in place in the Bentel House.

Downstairs were located in the entry hall, kitchen, and living room. The Bentel House's original walls were removed between hall and kitchen. The entry hall acted as a cold air lock, and also contained the ladder-type stairway with closets beneath. The Bentel House has the only original stairway in New Harmony. All of the reproductions have been copies from it.

The living room ran the width of the house, with one window in each of the outside walls. The window to the north has been made into a door. The north window in the kitchen was also made into a door to the attached, one-story frame addition to the original building. The window sash are not original. The door from the kitchen to the addition has been closed to make an apartment of the addition.

Upstairs, the rooms were originally the same as downstairs. The Bentel House's original wall was removed between the stair room and the north bedroom. All walls have been returned to their original positions. There are two original doors inside, and the outside entrance has its original door, although the upper wooden panels have been changed to glass. The poplar floors are original everywhere except in the living room.

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 checked="" 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 c. 1823

Builder/Architect Rappites

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bentel House is significant as an excellent example of the Harmonist house. It was the home of George Bentel, the Rappite cooper. It is located one block from the building now designated as the cooper shop by Historic New Harmony.

New Harmony is unique in the history of 19th-century American communal experiments, because it was the scene of both religious and secularly inspired utopian communities. Harmonie, Indiana, was founded by followers of George Rapp in 1815, who had moved there from their first community in Harmonie, Pennsylvania. The Harmonists were religious refugees from Wurttemberg, Germany, dedicated to life in a harmonious, cooperative society. In 1825 they returned to Pennsylvania and sold the village to Robert Owen, who renamed it New Harmony and attempted to develop a communistic society. By the end of 1826, however, that experiment had failed.

The Bentel House was constructed during the Rappite period, using standardized, mass-produced parts for which the Harmonist structures are noted. The house demonstrates the skill and ingenuity of the Harmonists through excellent design and solid construction. The Bentel House is the only Harmonist house to retain its original staircase, and it also retains a high proportion of its other original features.

The Historic District was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1965. That District, however, includes only a portion of the Rappite buildings that still stand. There are two frame Rappite houses, in addition to the Bentel House, located on the north side of Granary that are on their original sites.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Blair, Don. Harmonist Construction. Indiana Historical Society Publications, Vol. 23, No. 2. Indianapolis, 1964

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre
 Quadrangle name New Harmony, Indiana-Illinois Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	1 6	4 1 8 3 6 0	4 2 2 0 5 1 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 57, McClure's (43 x 1116½') W. Pt., Town of New Harmony, Posey County, Indiana, as recorded in Deed Record #89, Page #78

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 Mary Jane Steele

organization Owner date 9-8-1983

street & number 1906 Bellemeade telephone 812/476-5072

city or town Evansville state Indiana 47714

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. T. Costello*
 Deputy Director, Dept. of Natural Resources, for
 title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date August 7, 1984

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