

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

FINAL

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Nester House  
other names/site number Family Grocerie, Union Hotel, Riverplace

### 2. Location

street & number 300 Water Street N/A not for publication  
city, town Troy N/A vicinity  
state IN code IN county Perry code 062 zip code 47588

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE: Department Store

DOMESTIC: Hotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: Sandstone

walls STONE: Sandstone

roof ASPHALT

other BRICK

WOOD

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Nester House is a rectangular, two and one-half story, front gabled, native sandstone building in Troy, Indiana. The sandstone is square cut and regular coursed on the front (south) and west elevations, whereas the east and north elevations are of regular coursed, uncut sandstone. These stone walls are 21" thick. Constructed c.1863 with a late 1870s or mid 1880s rear addition, the building is situated on Lot 1 of Block 1 at the intersection of Water and Washington Streets. Water Street is the only street in town fronting the Ohio River, the banks of which lie less than 100 feet from the building's front elevation. Directly behind the building are the tracks of the Southern Railway.

The Nester House sits on a sandstone water table. The first floor of the front elevation has four bays. The right (east) bay is an entrance. It is framed with stone pilasters which are surmounted by a plain entablature. Carved in the center of the plain frieze is "18 J.G.H. 63." This denotes the year, 1863, in which the building was completed. The initials stand for the owner of the building at that time, John G. Heinze. The other bays on this floor are windows capped with flat arches composed of stone. The second bay from the left was originally an entrance. It has been partially filled in with concrete blocks fronted with smooth cut sandstone and an aluminum framed, single hung window. All of these windows are currently covered with metal screens which the present owners plan to remove. The second story has three window openings with simple dressed stone entablatures and stone sills. The sash are missing and the openings are covered with wood shutters. Underneath the gable is a small window opening at the attic level. It has details similar to the windows on the second floor. The gable roof has a slight eave overhang under which was once a simple frieze and gable returns.

According to an 1864 drawing done by the architect, J.J. Bengle, the building originally had a hipped roof with a center-placed wood framed, gabled dormer. The second story had four windows capped with elliptical fanlights. Also featured on this elevation was a two-tiered, full facade porch. A second story fire in the late 1870s or mid 1880s probably resulted in the loss of the porch and the reconstruction of the wall and windows of the second and third stories to their present configuration, as well as the change from the hipped to the gabled roof.

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The west elevation features two entrances and two windows on the first floor and six windows on the second story. The south entrance on the first floor and the four southernmost windows on the second floor were part of the original building. According to the architect's drawing referred to earlier, the second story windows originally had elliptical fanlights. These also were probably lost with the fire mentioned earlier. The other windows and entrance are on the addition added in the 1870s or 1880s. At the rear of the building is a one story extension which is original to the addition. It has a parapet wall that rises above the extension's shed roof. An interior brick chimney breaks the roofline at the roof/wall juncture near the north end of the two story portion of the building.

The east elevation is of regular coursed, uncut sandstone. It features two entrances on the first floor and three windows on the second. The one story extension features a sloping wall on this elevation. An interior brick chimney pierces the roof near the center of the original building just above the roof/wall juncture.

The rear (north) elevation is also of regular coursed, uncut sandstone. A plain, narrow frieze runs under the gabled roof. A center placed window opening is below the gable peak with the second story window directly below it. The shed roof of the one story extension is covered with metal sheeting. Two entrances on the first floor are currently boarded over and covered with metal screens.

The interior of the first floor originally had a poplar plank floor. The previous owner filled in the basement and poured a concrete floor in what was the original building. The addition has a stone slab floor. All of the stone bearing walls are plastered. The non-load bearing walls of the original building have been removed. This portion was divided into three rooms with one large room on the western half with the eastern half divided horizontally into two rooms (see plan). The south room has a coal burning fireplace. The opening is framed by pilasters, a stove mantelpiece with a simple frieze, and mantel. The frieze is decorated with a relief star above each pilaster and a centered wreath in low relief. The plaster and lath ceiling has been removed exposing the floor joists of the second floor.

The interior of the addition is divided into several rooms. One of these rooms contains a single run stairway leading to the second floor. A narrow room behind the stairway has recently had a sheetrock partition erected toward the east end creating a small storage room. At the rear of the building is a narrow room under the shed roof of the one story extension.

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The second floor has a long, central hallway running north and south down the length of the building. All of the non-load bearing walls are intact but most of the plaster and lath has been removed revealing the poplar studs (see plans). The original (c.1870-80) door frames with plain trim are still intact. The east side of the original building is divided into two rooms. Between these rooms is a wood paneled pocket door, added c.1890. A simulated wood grain is painted on the door. The south room has a coal burning brick fireplace on the east wall. On the west side of the hall, this portion of the building is divided into three rooms. The rear section of the second floor contains the stairway leading to the third floor and three small rooms; two on the west side and one on the east side. The east room contains another coal burning fireplace on the north wall. Its opening is framed by wooden pilasters surmounted by a wide, plain frieze capped with a simple mantel shelf.

The stairway leading to the third floor retains its wood balustrade with turned balusters. The third floor or attic level is open with no partitions. Wide wood planks cover the floor joists except for the area close to the roof and wall junctions which is uncovered and exposes the floor joists.

A one story, rectangular brick building stands just east of the main structure (photo 6). This building is believed to have been a bathhouse for the hotel. Evidence of its function as bathhouse/restroom were found in the westernmost bay, which housed toilets (since removed). It appears to have been built in c.1890, and is counted as a contributing building.

The bathhouse rests on a poured concrete foundation with large aggregate exposed. Walls consist of red face brick laid two courses thick. A low gable roof, now covered with corrugated sheet metal, shelters the bathhouse.

As mentioned earlier, the westernmost bay housed a restroom. The exterior wall is wood frame; the brick bearing wall is recessed about six feet behind (east) this, creating a small chamber. This construction detail may have been done to effectively separate the bathrooms from the rest of the building.

There are three openings on the south side. To the west, a rectangular door is set in a segmental arched opening. This leads to a small room at grade.

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Towards the center is a paneled door with lights also in a segmental arched opening. This door is reached by a sandstone platform which is about 2' above grade. A window is placed to the east. This door leads to a larger room. The north side of the building has no openings. The interior has no original details intact.

The open area east of the hotel and south of the bathhouse was used as an open-air entertainment site. A bandstand or porch-like structure may have stood in this area at some time. Turned posts now stored in the attic of the Nester House may have been part of this structure.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
COMMERCE

Period of Significance  
1863-1911

Significant Dates  
1863  
1873

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Nester House is significant under Criterion A for its association with commercial traffic on the Ohio River from 1863 to 1911. Throughout much of its history, the building served as a commercial establishment catering to river travelers. It is the last surviving riverfront commercial building in Troy, Indiana, and one of a few extant stone commercial buildings from the mid 1800s extant in Perry County.

Perry County, located in southwestern Indiana, was founded in 1814, two years before Indiana achieved statehood. All of the county's southern boundary is formed by the Ohio river. The town of Troy was laid out in 1815 at the confluence of the Ohio and Anderson rivers. It was one of the first settlements below the falls of the Ohio River. It was the county seat until 1818. Because of its location, the town was an important river shipping point.

Although steamboats had been plying the Ohio since 1811, travel on the river was difficult during the first few decades of the nineteenth century due to the presence of the falls near Jeffersonville. Attempts to construct a canal on the Indiana side around the falls were unsuccessful. The problem was overcome with the opening of the Portland Canal near Louisville, Kentucky, in December 1830. The canal allowed for more downstream travel and the Ohio became the major transportation, especially for farmers shipping their products to market.

Traffic on the river reached its peak between the years 1850-1860. After 1860, the railroads began to replace river travel as the major form of transportation, particularly for passenger service, as trains could travel to the interior of the country and had a more reliable timetable. River traffic remained important locally for those river towns and adjacent areas not serviced by a railroad. As the first railroad did not reach Troy until 1888, the Ohio River remained an important transportation link for the small community.

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Troy served as one of the stops for packet lines running between Cincinnati, Louisville, Owensboro, and Evansville, Indiana. To accommodate these lines, two wharfboats were established in Troy. One was located at the foot of Harrison Street and was referred to as the upper wharf. The second, or lower wharf, was located at the foot of Washington Street. The wharfboats were in operation at least as early as 1850 and as late as 1911. The wharfboats were used for the loading and unloading of freight, passengers, and mail.

Local businessmen took advantage of the river trade. One such entrepreneur was John G. Heinzle. Heinzle had purchased Lot 1 of Block 1 in the town of Troy in May 1849 for \$344. The lot's proximity to the Ohio River made it a prime location for a commercial establishment. It is unclear whether in the early 1860s, Heinzle had a building constructed on the lot or merely remodeled an existing building. The date of 1863 above the main entrance reflects the year that the work on the building was completed. The building's 1863 design is attributed to J. J. Bengle, the inventor of the railroad perspective machine. The vernacular building of native sandstone suggested a southern influence with its two tiered, full facade porch.

Heinzle began operating a grocery store from this location. The building's proximity to the wharfboats provided Heinzle with a steady supply of customers. One source even suggests that Heinzle owned one of these wharfboats, thereby strengthening his ties with the river trade. Heinzle later began to operate a hotel from the building. Shortly after his death in 1871, his widow, Elizabeth, leased the building to one Balthauser Bauer. At this time the building was leased, it was known as the Union Hotel. In 1873, the Cannelton (Indiana) Enquirer reported that Mrs. Heinzle and her brother Jacob Hahn were refurbishing the hotel.

In 1876, Elizabeth Heinzle married Jacob Nester and the two of them operated the hotel until Jacob's death in 1894. An October 1885 issue of the Cannelton Enquirer and Reporter stated that Nester was at his newly opened hotel, the New and Old Union Hotel. This may be referring to the addition at the rear of the building or the modifications made after the fire on the second floor. At some time before Nester's death, the hotel was referred to as the Nester House. A faded sign painted on the front facade of the building still bears evidence to this name. In 1895, Isaac Dunn bought the Nester House from Elizabeth Heinzle Nester.

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The waterfront hotel catered to salesmen and other river travelers of the day. It was a natural gathering spot for both locals and transients awaiting the river vessels. After the arrival of the railroad, the hotel's nearness to the tracks and depot made it convenient for railroad travelers, too. During the time that the Nesters owned the hotel, the original portion of the first floor was used as a lobby, bar, merchant showroom, and dining room. The extension served as a kitchen, storage, and servants area. The second floor was divided into eight rooms, two of which were occupied by the Nesters. The third floor provided sleeping quarters for local miners and other single men.

The year 1911 has been chosen as the end of the period of significance as this was the year that the last wharfboat in Troy ceased operation. Also in that year, the hotel changed owners and then changed owners again in 1920. The building continued to be used as a hotel in the 1930s and as sleeping rooms in the 1940s and 1950s. It was used as a storage building for a construction company from 1968 to 1988. In 1988, James and Joyce Efinger purchased the building. It is their intent to rehabilitate and partially restore the building and to use it as a small, community museum, and to possibly use the second story as living quarters.

The Nester House has enough basic integrity to recall its role in local commerce. The second floor retains wall patterns indicating the function of a hotel, with small rooms opening to a central hall. Although lath and plaster have been removed, door and window moldings remain intact. It would be feasible to return the building to its late 1880s appearance.

The Nester House is the last surviving example of a waterfront commercial building in Troy, Indiana. Formerly, Water Street had at least three stone commercial buildings fronting the Ohio River. Several other old commercial buildings are extant in Troy, but they seem to date from about 1900 or later, and do not appear to be related to river commerce. Two houses in Troy may date from the town's river trade era, but they do not directly represent commercial development in Troy. National Register status would recognize Troy's contributions to local commerce associated with river travel. It would be the first property in Troy listed on the National Register and would serve as a source of encouragement to the Efinders and others wishing to preserve Troy's history.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Baertich, Frank. History of Troy, Indiana, Utica, Ky:  
McDowell Publications, 1983.

De La Hunt, Thomas James. Perry County, A History. Indianapolis:  
W. K. Stewart Co., 1916

Efinger, Joyce. "Nester House - Troy, Indiana," Unpublished  
Manuscript, including references to the Cannelton Enquirer  
and the Cannelton Reporter.

History of Warrick, Spencer, and Perry Counties, Indiana. Chicago:  
Goodspeed Browsers & Co., 1885.

Palmer, Charles K. "Ohio Valley Commerce, 1787-1936, "Indiana  
Magazine of History, June 1937, Vol. 23, pp. 153-170.

See continuation sheet

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Recrd # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:  
National Register Files

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than one acre

**UTM References**

A 

1	6
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5	1	7	1	0	0
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4	2	0	5	0	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Lot 1 of block 1 in the town of Troy, Indiana.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

This is the historic property boundary.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title James and Joyce Efinger  
organization Owners  
street & number R. R. 1, Box 215  
city or town Cannelton

date 7/14/89  
telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
state IN zip code 47520

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## Bibliography (continued)

Reference Guide to Indiana. St. Clair Shores, MI: Somerset  
Publishers, 1977.

Weintraut, Linda. "Transportation Context for Seventeen Counties  
in Southwestern Indiana, 1670-1890." Resource Protection  
Planning Process Document; Indiana University-Purdue University  
at Indianapolis, 1989.