

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

#### 1. Name of Property

historic name Fisher, William, Polygonal Barn

other names/site number Fisher-Dykes Barn, 107-127-00014

#### 2. Location

street & number CR 850N just east of 800E N/A not for publication

city or town Bowers  vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Montgomery code 107 zip code 47940

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Richard R. Roberts*

2/3/98

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Fisher Polygonal Barn  
Name of Property

Montgomery Co., IN  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Round and Polygonal Barns of Indiana

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE: animal facility

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE: animal facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: ten-sided barn

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD: weatherboard

roof METAL

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Fisher Polygonal Barn  
Name of Property

Montgomery Co., IN  
County and State

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

#### Period of Significance

1914-1936

#### Significant Dates

1914

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

#### Cultural Affiliation

NA

#### Architect/Builder

Dain, Ellsworth

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

#### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### 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 Record # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Historic Landmarks Foundation  
of Indiana



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Montgomery Co., IN

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Near Darlington, Indiana, in Montgomery County stands the William Fisher Polygonal Barn, a ten-sided structure constructed in 1914 by an itinerant carpenter, Ellsworth Dain. The barn, located at the end of a long gravel drive that passes the large farmhouse, garage and rectangular barn in surrounded mature trees and cultivated fields. This picturesque barn retains its integrity in regard to location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, meeting all of the standards set forth in the registration requirements for multiple property nominations.

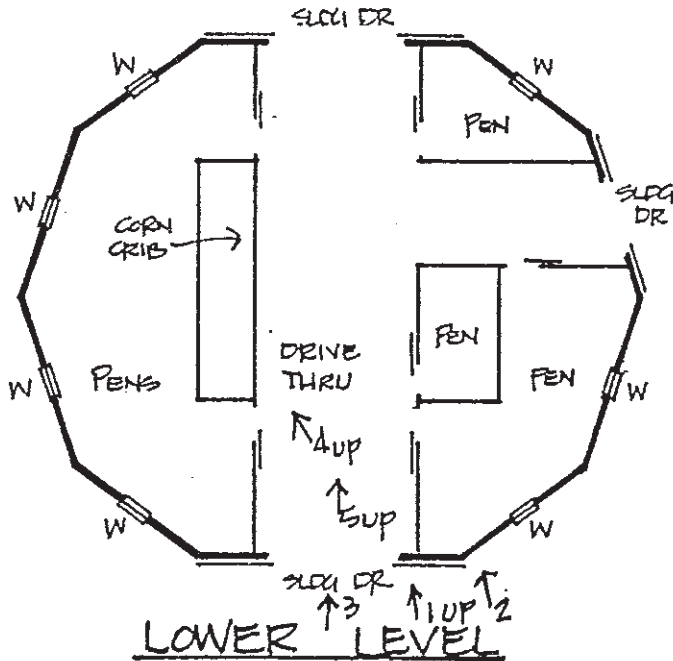
The ten-sided, two-storied barn is capped by a sectional two-pitch gambrel with flared eaves and is crowned by a six-sided cupola with a pyramid roof. Oddly, the north and south walls of the barn (which contain the main doors) were constructed twenty-eight feet wide while the other eight sides are only sixteen feet in width. Consequently, the overall shape of the barn is quite distinctive and unique, being 56 feet by 54 feet inside. The cupola contains four, four light windows with a ten light transom above each. These windows help to provide much needed light and ventilation to the upper level of the barn. The balloon framed walls of the barn rest on the poured concrete foundation and the floor has been left earthen.

The roof surfaces of the barn are covered in a red-painted standing seam metal, the only one of its kind on a round or polygonal barn in Indiana. There is a slight overhang to the eaves and the rafters are exposed. The wall surfaces are of the original vertical wood siding with decorative details that lend an aesthetic quality usually only afforded to housing. On the cupola walls (Photo 1), there is a prominent fascia board and than a 1" x 6" board some twelve inches below, followed by vertical siding. The bottoms of the siding boards between the fascia and trim boards are cut in a decorative, repeating pattern that is made up of the first board being blunt cut, followed by a circular cut that extends over the trim board, followed by a blunt cut and finally a triangular cut that also laps over the trim board. Similarly, the main walls have the trim board and fascia with the trim board located at the top of the main door height. The siding ends are cut in the same manner as the cupola (Photo 2).

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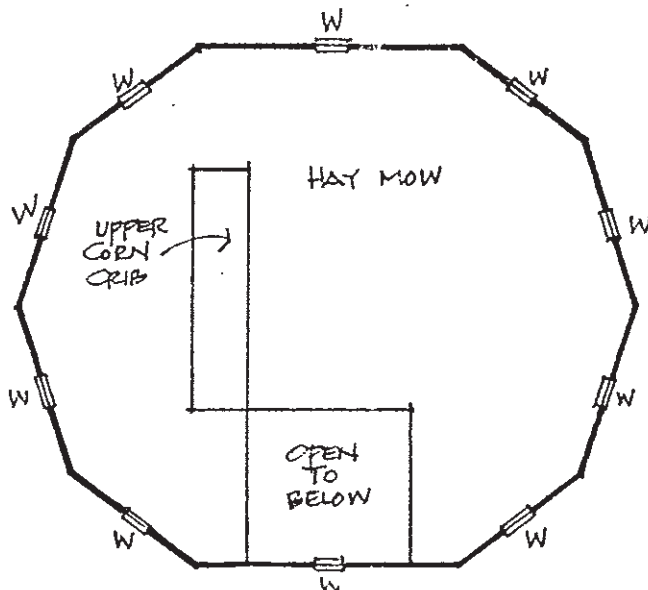
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Note: W=window

UPPER LEVEL  
no scale



## FISHER (DYKES) BARN

1914. 10-SIDED  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, IN  
SUGAR CREEK TOWNSHIP

↑1= Photographic Key

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Montgomery Co., IN

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The principal or south facade (Photo 3) is characterized by a large central doorway. The doors are now missing but the overhead track on which they slid is still present. Located above the door is a four light window. Proceeding around the barn in a clockwise manner, the next four sides (sides 2 through 5) have nine light windows (three rows of three panes) centered on their faces. The sixth side contains another main door like that one on the south, complete with a four light window above. The seventh side contains another nine light window and the eighth side contains another large opening similar to the other two on the north and south. The remaining three sides contain centered nine light windows. The upper level openings are all centered on each wall face in the region between the trim and fascia boards. In the upper level centered over the doorways are four light windows. The other wall sections contain fifteen light windows (three rows of five panes) centered above the lower level examples. All of these openings combine to give much needed light to the barn's interior.

The interior of the barn (see floor plan) is efficiently arranged with the central north/south drive and an additional drive that links the main drive to the door on the northeast. Along either side of the main drive are support posts that support the floor joists of the upper level and pens are constructed on both sides. On the west side is a long and narrow corn crib (that extends into the upper level) with pen space between the crib and the outside walls. On the east, just inside of the south door, are two pens nestled into the space between the outside walls and the drives. One of the pens is irregularly shaped due to the angles of the exterior walls and the other pen is a rectangular one constructed at the northwest corner of this region. On the north side of the east drive is the final pen. Originally, there were eight or nine stalls on both sides of the drive with the west being reserved for horses and the east for milk cows. However, in 1941 due to mechanization, most of the interior pens were reconfigured and the corn crib was added, and thus the arrangement seen on the floor plans was created.

The upper level is reached by a portable ladder and is comprised of the upper corn crib (Photo 4), a raised center section to accommodate the main drive and an open area to the lower level located on the south end of the barn. There is a high timber framework above this open area (Photo 5), that facilitated the moving of hay and straw to the upper level. The framing system of the roof is quite interesting with the north and south sections resembling standard stick roof framing for a gabled roof. The other roof sections that comprise the east and west halves of the barn meet the north and south sections in pie shaped wedges that are framed similar to a hip roof and are braced midway down by posts that extend to the corn crib on the west and the lower supports on the east. The cupola's light source and framing can

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also be seen in Photo 5, whereby the straight roof framing of the north and south were extended over the cupola's base, creating a web-like support network.

Aside from changes that have garnered their own significance through time, the William Fisher Polygonal Barn is amazingly close to its original appearance.



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The William Fisher Polygonal Barn, located in Sugar Creek Township of Montgomery County, Indiana, is significant under Criteria A and C for its association with the development of round and polygonal barns in Indiana (see historic context, "Round and Polygonal Barns of Indiana.") The Fisher Polygonal Barn is significant for its ten-sided plan and unusually refined exterior ornamentation. The barn is an important and direct link to the agricultural development that occurred in the state from 1850 to 1936 (and beyond) and has changed little since its construction in 1914, with the exception of the interior reconfiguration sometime around 1941. The period of greatest significance of the barn was from 1914 to the late 1930s when round and polygonal barns lost their popularity. By 1936, round and polygonal barns were considered obsolete and the last round structure was built in the state to replace a 1915 round barn that had burned (Grant County, Richland Township, extant).

The original owner of the barn was William Fisher, a local farmer who constructed a beautiful Queen Anne frame house on his property, followed by the ten-sided barn. Mr. Fisher was a prominent citizen who dominated the area, as evidence by the decorative details on both the house (constructed in 1913) and the barn, with the barn details being executed by Ellsworth Dain. Dain was an itinerant carpenter who travelled the land offering his services in exchange for room, board and a small cash payment. The details range from an unusual metal roof to siding patterns, fascia boards and the multi-light windows. Timber used for the construction of the balloon frame was native oak, cut and milled nearby. Originally, the lower level contained eight or nine stalls on both sides of the central drive with houses on the west and milk cows on the east. The interior was reconfigured around 1941 and now there is one large pen on the west along with a corn crib and three smaller pens on the east. The upper level, as originally intended, is still in use for the storage of hay, straw and grain.<sup>1</sup>

Ownership of the property is both an interesting and a sad tale. Mr. Fisher tried to expand his farming operation and began buying up additional land with his house, barn and acreage as collateral. Around 1920, a depression hit the farming community which caused Mr. Fisher to default on his loan and the farm and barn went to the bank at Crawfordsville. The bank at Crawfordsville owned the property until 1937 when Clarence N. Dykes, a local farmer,

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purchased the farm and its buildings. Dykes maintained the property and in 1979, his son J.A. inherited the farm. J.A. Dykes is the current owner and an ardent admirer of the barn and continues to care for and maintain both the house and barn.<sup>2</sup>

In Indiana, of the 219 round and polygonal barns that were constructed, only two were ten-sided examples. Aside from the Fisher (Dykes) barn, the other ten-sided example can be found in Madison County's Union Township (extant). In addition to the unusually low number of ten-sided examples, this barn is unique in that the main facades on the north and south are wider than the other eight sides. Both the north and south walls are twenty-eight feet wide, allowing for easy access to the central drive while the other eight sides are sixteen feet wide. This results in an overall dimension of fifty-six feet by fifty-four feet, a shape slightly skewed from a true circle.

The William Fisher (Dykes) Barn is a fascinating and unique example of a polygonal barn, being one of two ten-sided barns built in the state and the only one with unequal sides. The barn also has an unusual metal roof and decorative details that fit in nicely with the adjoining farmhouse. The barn has all of the essential physical features that it possessed at the time of its period of significance from 1914 to the mid 1930s. Although the barn has aged and has undergone changes, the changes do not significantly affect the historic integrity of the structure. For these reasons, the Fisher (Dykes) barn stands, as it has for almost eighty years, as a reminder of agricultural development in Indiana.

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Montgomery Co., IN

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## ENDNOTES

1. J.A. Dykes, owner of the Fisher (Dykes) barn, Darlington, Indiana. Interviewed by Jerry McMahan, 25 October 1991.
2. Ibid.

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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dykes, J.A. Owner of the Fisher (Dykes) barn, Darlington, Indiana.  
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Hanou, John. Research compiled on Indiana's round and polygonal barns from  
1986 to present. Archived at Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana,  
340 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202.

Intensive architectural survey of Indiana's round and polygonal barns.  
Conducted June to August 1991, conducted by Jerry McMahan, areawide  
survey of round and polygonal architectural and historical resources.

Soike, Lowell J. Without Right Angles, The Round Barns of Iowa. Des Moines,  
IA: Iowa State Historical Department, Office of Historic Preservation,  
1983.



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Fisher Polygonal Barn  
Montgomery County, Indiana

Verbal Boundary Description

The Fisher Polygonal Barn is located in the SW of Section 22, T20N-R3W in Sugar Creek Township of Montgomery County, Indiana. Referring to the site plan, beginning at a point one foot north of the northeast corner of rectangular barn on the property (Point A), then proceed east 50 feet to Point B, then proceed north 175 feet to Point C, then proceed west 150 feet to Point D, then proceed south for 175 feet to Point E; Point E being in line with Points A and B, and proceed east 100 feet to Point A.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes only the nominated barn. The application is to recognize the significance of the barn only; at a later point in time, a separate application to recognize the whole farm could include the significant house and other outbuildings.

WILLIAM FISHER POLY-  
CONAL BARN  
MONTGOMERY CO., IN  
UTM  
16521500 4445400

