

FINAL

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic McCormick Cabin Site

and/or common

2. Location

street & number East bank of the White River
at Blake Street _____ not for publication

city, town Indianapolis _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 11th

state Indiana _____ code 018 _____ county Marion _____ code 097

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
____ district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	____ occupied	____ agriculture	____ museum
____ building(s)	____ private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	____ commercial	____ park
____ structure	____ both	____ work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	____ private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	____ entertainment	____ religious
____ object	____ in process	____ yes: restricted	____ government	____ scientific
	____ being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	____ industrial	____ transportation
		____ no	____ military	____ other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Indianapolis

street & number City-County Building

city, town Indianapolis _____ vicinity of _____ state Indiana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office

street & number City-County Building

city, town Indianapolis _____ 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

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

The McCormick's Cabin site is a small grassy triangle of land on the east bank of the White River near downtown Indianapolis, Indiana. On June 7, 1924 several historical organizations dedicated the site by placing a huge granite boulder near the center of the island with a bronze tablet which reads, "Here stood the cabin of John McCormick, one of the first settlers in central Indiana. The Commissioners appointed by the legislature to select a site for the permanent seat of government of the state of Indiana met this cabin on the seventh of June 1820 and decided upon the location of the town afterwards named Indianapolis." The triangle is bounded on one side by the White River, on another by Blake Street, and on a third by a paved driveway. The grounds are maintained by the Indianapolis Parks Department.

A description of the land in 1820, the year McCormick built his cabin, is found in the journal of John Tipton, one of the commissioners appointed to select the site for the new capital. Tipton's entry for May 24th, 1820, reads in part, "at 1/2 p. 3. got to McCormick's who lives on the river quarter of a mile below the mouth of fall creek.... The bank of the river on which McCormick lives is 25 to 30 feet above the water at this time the country back is high dry and good soil but lumber is scarce." (Riker, p. 199)

The site of McCormick's Cabin has been well documented by several early area historians and writers, chief among whom is John H. B. Nowland who, as a youth, moved to Indianapolis with his parents in late 1820. In his Early Reminiscences (1870), Nowland tells of the time in 1821 when he and his father took a walk along the river and arrived at the home of John McCormick, "which stood where the toll-house now stands, at the east end of the White River bridge." (Nowland, p. 15) Still later in 1876 Nowland writes that the McCormick "house stood on the east or left bank of the river, a few steps below where the National Road bridge now crosses that stream." (Nowland, Prominent Citizens, p. 17) A sketch by Hoosier artist Christian Schrader, made in the 1840's of Patterson's Mill on the White River, also shows the east entrance of the National Road bridge and a small building that, while not identified, could conceivably be the toll-house mentioned by Nowland in 1870.

In another source, the house containing "two rooms, each eighteen feet square and separated by a passage eight or ten feet wide...was located on White River on a narrow wedge-shaped piece of ground lying between what is now West Washington Street and the National Road." (Eagle, p. 312) A map of Indianapolis in 1870 clearly shows this triangle between White River and the old portion of the National Road which in later years was straightened and is now Washington Street.

The present McCormick's Cabin site monument is located within the above described triangle. The topography of the cabin site has changed through the years with the growth and expansion of the city of Indianapolis. Yet, some visual features remain after nearly 160 years. A cement retaining wall has been built along White River which is approximately twenty-five to thirty feet high and compares with the height of the river bank described by Tipton in his journal entry of May 24, 1820.

Because the cabin was built on the river bank, this in itself has precluded much alteration of the site. The Old National Road, the present Washington Street, and Blake Street have all cut into the area along the river where the cabin is thought to have been built. Several factories, including an early steam mill and later Patterson Mill, have been located in the area. However, throughout the 160 year period the river bank has remained in nearly the same unaltered condition. The present grassy site has been landscaped with several shrubs and small flowering bushes, and the large granite boulder has been placed near the center as a marker.

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

Specific dates 1820

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance ~~_____~~

The McCormick Cabin Site is significant to Indianapolis and to the state as the place where a specially appointed body of commissioners decided on the location of the future capital of Indiana.

In January of 1820 the Indiana General Assembly appointed several individuals as commissioners to "select and locate a site for the permanent seat of government of the state of Indiana." (Laws of Indiana, p. 18) John Tipton was one of the men appointed, and it is from the journal kept by him that we find the following notation: "Wednesday 7th a fine clear morning we met at McCormicks and on my motion the commissioners came to a resolution to select and locate Sections numbered 1 and 12 and east and west... at 5 we decamped and went over to McCormicks our (clerk) having his riteing ready the comrs met and signed thier report..."(Riker, p. 209). McCormick's cabin was therefore the location where the commissioners did in fact reach an agreement to "select and locate a site for the permanent seat of government of the State of Indiana." The site selected became the city of Indianapolis, the most populated state capital in the United States.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Nowland, John H. B. Early Reminiscences, Indianapolis, 1870.

Nowland, John H. B. Sketches of Prominent Citizens of 1876, Indianapolis, 1877.
(see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Indianapolis West, Indiana

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

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

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at the northwest corner of Lot 25 of Blake and Ray's Subdivision of Out Lots 146 and 148, continuing south east $62\frac{1}{2}$ feet, thence south $112\frac{1}{2}$ feet to a point on the west side of Lot 25, and thence $201\frac{1}{2}$ feet along the west side of Lot 25 to the point of origin.

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Thomas Krasean, Field Representative

organization Indiana Historical Society

date August 16, 1979

street & number 315 West Ohio

telephone 633-5277

city or town Indianapolis,

state Indiana (46202)

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

James M. Ridenour

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

date 4-24-81

For HCRS 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
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet Major Bibliographical Ref. Item number 9 Page 1

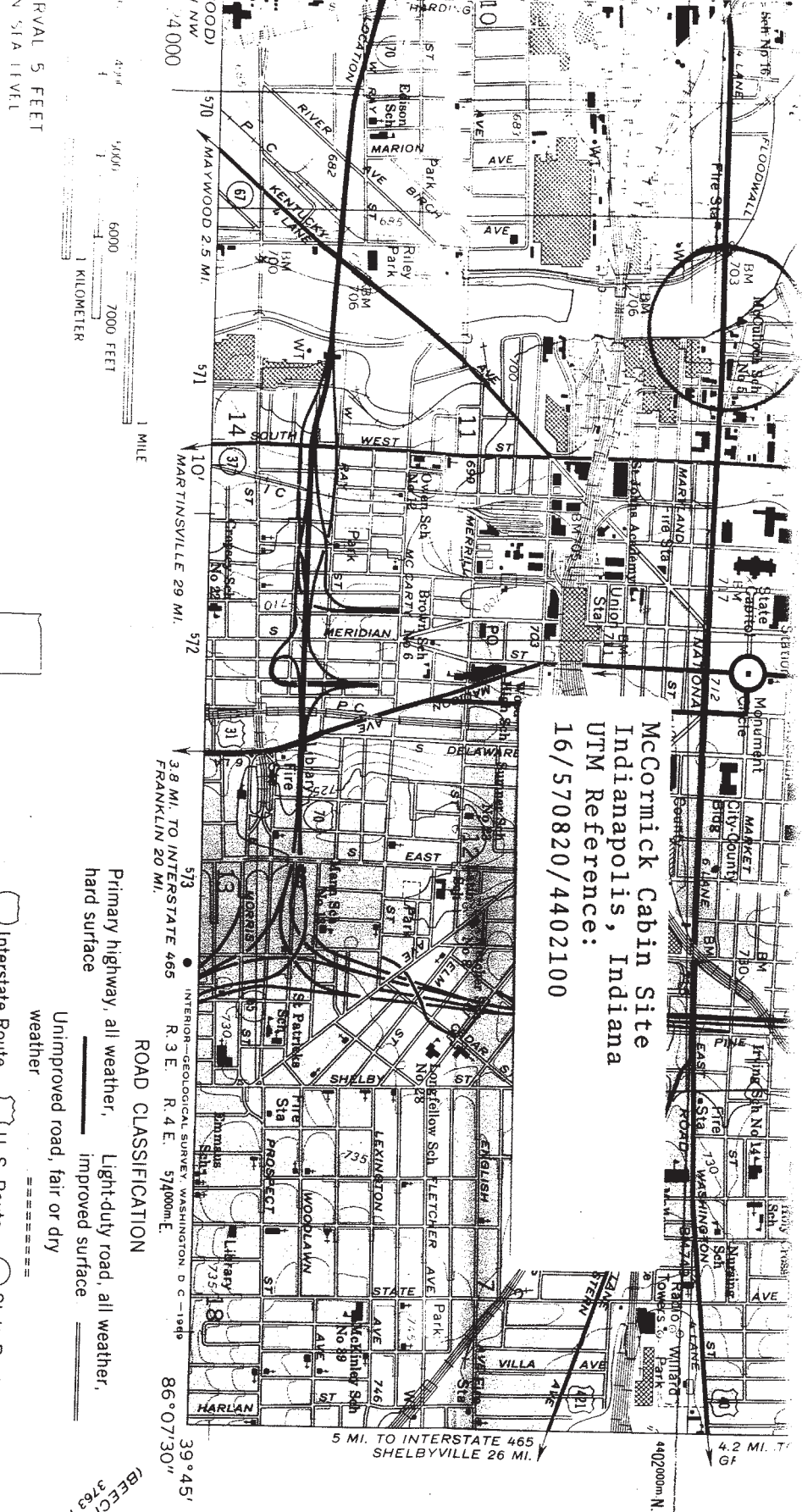
Dunn, Jacob P. Greater Indianapolis, Chicago, 2vols., 1910.

Riker, Dorothy (Ed.) The John Tipton Papers, Indiana Historical
Bureau, 3 vols. 1942.

Eagle, Cathrine "The McCormick Family, First Settlers of Indianapolis,"
Indiana Magazine of History, Vol. XXI #4, December, 1925.

Laws of Indiana, 4th Session 1819-1820, Jeffersonville, 1820.

McCormick Cabin Site
Indianapolis, Indiana
UTM Reference:
16/570820/4402100



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Primary highway, all weather, hard surface
- Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
- Unimproved road, fair or dry weather
- Interstate Route
- U. S. Route
- State Route

INDIANAPOLIS WEST, IND.

N3945—W8607.5/7.5

1967

AMS 3763 I SW—SERIES V851

MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
SOURCES, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204
AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

QUADRANGLE LOCATION



(BEECH GROVE)
3763 II NE