

FINAL

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 **McClain, John W., House**

other names/site number **063-514-45048**

2. Location

street & number **1445 South County Road 525 East** N/A  not for publication

city or town **Avon**  vicinity

state **Indiana** code **IN** county **Hendricks** code **032** zip code **46123**

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 36CFR 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.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

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 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:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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):

**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
- district
- site
- structure
- object
- landscape

**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.)

N/A

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

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling  
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSIST Agricultural

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK  
 walls BRICK  
 roof ASPHALT  
 other CONCRETE

**Narrative Description**

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

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)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1876-c.1920

Significant Dates

1876

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic 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:

McClain, John W., House  
Name of Property

Hendricks IN  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

16	548940	4399940
Zone	Easting	Northing

      3 

Zone	Easting	Northing

2 

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      4 

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See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title William Gulde  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 01-02-2004  
street & number 28 N. Ritter telephone 317/322-3841  
city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46219

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Paul and Susan Wood  
street & number 1520 East 80th Street telephone 317/253-7761  
city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46240

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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John McClain Home

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

The John McClain House is a two and half story brick dwelling. (See Photo 1) In style the home is Italianate with a low-hipped roof that formerly contained a "widow's walk." The irregular shaped home currently has an early twentieth-century one story wrap-around concrete block and pillar porch. (See Photo 2) Ghosts of the previous nineteenth-century Italianate porches can still be seen along the brickwork on the western and southwestern facades. (See photo 3) The home sits on a brick foundation and is positioned on a hill that overlooks former meadows and farmland. The exterior is clad with brick. Ornamental wooden brackets supporting widely overhanging eaves are located each corner around the home. (See Photo 4) Historic photos reveal that more brackets existed at one time along the roofline. The current owners possess these brackets and they are now in storage. They will be placed upon the home again during the renovation process.

The western facade is six bays wide with three of those bays recessed. The most prominent of the bays are the three central ones. (See photo 5) Each story contains two long double hung windows, two over two lights, and a limestone sills at the base. Each story contains one door with the lower story door hosting a rounded transom above it. The second story door used to open onto an Italianate balcony. The first floor wooden door is original and has two curved windows in it. The top panel window of the door is long while the bottom rounded window is smaller. The owners possess the identical door for the second story. This door was removed when the early twentieth-century porch was added. All of the windows and door openings retain their original sash or doors, though they are currently boarded shut. All windows have a limestone sill and are rounded at the top with vertical bricks. All of the windows and doors retain their wooden doors. Three oblong-shaped windows sit above each bay just below the roofline of the home. A wooden frieze sits just under the eaves of the home. Vestiges of a prior remodeling exist just under the eaves as a previous owner added aluminum soffit panels. The current owner is in the process of removing this addition. Metal gutters and downspouts were added in the mid-twentieth century replacing early wooden box gutters. (See Photo 6) The wrap-around front porch sits atop a concrete block foundation and the porch roof is supported by six ornamental fluted Doric columns. The columns rest upon concrete block piers. Staggered basket-weave-laid concrete blocks sit along the edge of the porch. The porch roof slopes down from the base of the second story windows. This roof is clad with asphalt shingles. The southwestern bay contains an original wooden door with two panels of glass. This door matches the other front doors. This door has an arched transom above it and a window above it on the second floor. The window is identical to other windows on the house and is double hung, two over two lights, with a limestone sill and a wooden frame. This bay is capped off by a wooden oblong attic window. There are two recessed bays on the north side of the western facade of the home. The first of

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John McClain Home

these recessed western facades is two stories and one bay wide. Both the upper and lower story windows identically match the other western facade windows. An oblong attic window sits above the second story window along the roofline. The wooden frieze with wooden brackets continues along this part of the facade under the eaves. The most northern of the western facades is part of the one story addition. It is one bay wide with one window. The window is double hung, two over two lights, has a limestone sill and is rounded at the top with vertical bricks. It currently has a metal awning over it.

The southern facade is divided into three sections with the central section containing a brick chimney flanked by two bays. (See Photo 7) There are two windows with limestone sills and rounded arches on the first floor and second floor of this part of the facade. Each window is wooden and double hung with two lights over two lights. A square opening has been added below the eastern first floor window of this section along the foundation to serve as a place to put coal. This square opening leads into the basement. Two oblong wooden windows exist above the second story windows. A wooden frieze and wooden brackets sit just below the eaves. A metal downspout comes down and rests on the nearby porch roof. The western section of this facade contains no windows or doors on either the first or second story. This section contains no oblong attic windows, but does have the wooden frieze and brackets along the roofline. A metal downspout feeds down along the western edge of this section. The wrap around porch dominates the lower story of this facade. Three concrete fluted Doric columns are visible along this side as are the staggered concrete blocks along the edge of the porch. Three concrete steps lead into the porch. Ghosts of the previous Italianate porches can be seen on this section. (See Photo 3) The eastern section of this facade is one story and has one rounded window at the first story. The window frame is wooden and is double hung, two over two lights, and with a limestone sill base. A basement exists under both this section and the central section. Two basement windows exist on this side and are rounded with two rows of vertical brick. The sloping roof along this section has asphalt materials. (Photo 8 and 10)

The northern facade is divided into three sections with the western section containing a brick chimney and no bays. The chimney is centrally located in this section. No oblong attic windows exist on this section, but the wooden frieze continues just under the eaves. A metal downspout proceeds two stories onto the ground along the very western edge of this section. The central section of the northern facade is two stories and two bays wide. On the lower story of the central section is a door that opens up to a former porch. A metal awning currently rests above this door. The remaining lower story window and two windows on the second story are wooden with limestone sills and rounded arches. Each window has two lights over two lights. The second story windows are located just above the first floor bays. Two oblong wooden attic windows are located under the roofline. A wooden frieze continues along the roofline and under the eaves of this section. The eastern part of this facade is one story and is one bay wide. The window is double hung, has a wooden frame, and is two lights over two lights. The wooden frieze under the eaves has deteriorated on this section, but the owners intend to restore this

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John McClain Home

feature. (See Photo 9) There are no basement windows on any section of the northern facade.

The eastern facade has a one-story addition (c1880) with the two-story part of the original home visible above the lower floor. The lower floor is five bays wide and has a partially hipped roof sloping up to the second floor of the rest of the home. Most of the roof of the addition is corrugated metal while the two sloping sides are clad with asphalt shingles. (Photo 10) Some of the bays are bricked in due to an addition (now removed) that used to be on the back of the home. The present addition housed a dining room and a kitchen. Two doors on either end of this lower section are wooden and have rounded vertical brick arch above them. Both doors have limestone sill bases. The southern door has a limestone stoop below it. The southern door currently has a metal security door that was installed about twenty years ago. One long window remains on this part of the addition and is located by the southernmost back door. The window is double hung, with a wooden frame, and has two lights over two lights. There is a basement window just below this window. Another basement window is located just north of this window. It is not located under any window. A metal downspout comes down next to the long window into a cistern. The wooden frieze and metal guttering has deteriorated on this section, but the owners intend to repair and restore this section. Part of the original home exists on the south of the eastern facade. It is one bay wide and contains one door on the lower story and rounded window with a limestone sill on the second story. The door is wooden and now has a metal security door in front of it. There is a rounded transom above the door. The window on the second story is double hung with a limestone sill and a rounded vertical brick arch above it. There is a wooden frieze below the eaves. There are wooden brackets along the roofline and evidence that other brackets used to exist. The owner possesses these brackets and intends to place them back in the original location. A metal downspout comes down just beside the second story window and then jogs below it where it follows the corner of the home. (Photo 11)

The interior of the home contains many of its original features. There are six rooms downstairs each with ten feet, four inch ceilings, unpainted woodwork around the doorways and windows, unpainted wooden baseboards, poplar paneled doors, wood floors, and transoms over each doorway. (Photos 12 and 13) One of the finest interior features is in the front entryway where a rounded staircase spirals to the second floor. (Photos 14, 15, and 16) The staircase is completely intact with numerous balusters and a curved wooden railing leading down to an ornamental octagon newel. (Photo 17) The kitchen or the lowest northeastern room in the home is the most altered. Very few cabinets remain and the room is largely empty. (Photo 18) Linoleum covers the floor of this room. The steep back staircase is accessible through the kitchen. An ornamental fireplace, although not currently in the home, will soon be brought back into the front parlor. The owners are in possession of this grand feature that contains four ionic columns, two of which flank a beveled mirror. The fireplace will rest around smoothly glazed original tiles.

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John McClain Home

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The second story now contains five rooms although originally only three existed. The ceilings on this floor are over nine feet. (Photo 19) One upstairs bedroom has been carved into a bathroom, small room, and a hallway. (Photo 20) A large unfinished attic covers much of the house. Much of the woodwork on the second story has been whitewashed.

There is a small basement located under the southeastern part of the home. The room located in the basement is twelve feet by nineteen feet, three inches with a six feet, six inch ceiling. There is a dug out crawl space area roughly seventeen by seventeen feet. A coal furnace was located in the basement and there are still remnants of a coal bin along the south wall of the basement.

Several large trees grace the property. All of the outbuildings have been destroyed over the years due to storms or neglect. A tall silo still exists on the eastern edge of the property. A small stream down a ravine borders the home to the south.

Although the property has remained in the same family since its construction in 1876, it has endured years of neglect. No person has lived in the house since 1998. Some attempts at modernizing the home has occurred over the years. In the mid-twentieth century, a bathroom and two closets were added to a downstairs parlor. The current owners are in the process of restoring this room by removing these alterations. A back brick outbuilding near the rear of the home completely collapsed c1975. Some of the exterior brick on the main part of the home and on some of the chimneys is in a state of deterioration. Several of the ornamental wooden brackets have fallen off, but the owners have retrieved them so they can hang them back up again. The ceiling of the wrap around front porch has been removed and some of the ornamental concrete blocks of the porch have deteriorated. A side porch on the northern part of the home no longer exists. One significant barn, which had been on the property since the 1850s, was destroyed by a windstorm in 2000. Despite the deterioration and neglect, the home still retains most of its original interior and exterior features.



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John McClain Home

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

The John McClain House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, as a locally outstanding example of an Italianate-styled Indiana farmhouse. The McClain property is also historically noteworthy; the land has been held by the family since 1832, as has the house since its construction in 1876.

The McClain Home embodies the Italianate style with its low-pitched roof, large decorative brackets under the eaves, and its tall narrow windows. The interior of the McClain House is remarkably intact despite over a century of use and recent minor deterioration. It retains characteristic Italianate-era moldings, still unpainted, and a classic Italianate staircase. The upper floor door and window surrounds may have been painted originally. The first floor plan is original and characteristic, with formal parlors, front and back stairs, and separate outside entries. Only a former upstairs bedroom was compromised in about 1920 to create an indoor bathroom. Hundreds of Italianate homes like the McClain Home were constructed in Indiana between 1850 and 1880. While Italianate buildings may be found in numerous cities and towns, many prosperous farmers of the time period also constructed these houses, whose style was viewed as less formal, rural, and picturesque.

The McClain Home was one of three Italianate brick farmhouses constructed along Hoadley Road<sup>1</sup> north of Plainfield and southwest of Avon, Indiana. Only two of those houses currently stand. South of the McClain Home sits the Hornaday House (1880). Like the McClain Home, the Hornaday House, is a large, two story brick Italianate home that sits upon a bluff overlooking the meadows and farms of Washington Township in Hendricks County. Also like the McClain House, owners of the Hornaday House appear to have replaced their original porch with a columned porch in the early 1900s. The Hornaday House was rated as "outstanding" in the Hendricks County Interim Report (1989), while the McClain House was rated as "notable," likely because of the relative state of repair of the homes at that point in time. Only three other representative homes in Washington Township were identified with the Italianate style in the Interim Report; however, the others are more representative of vernacular traditions. Many homes and much of the farmland is now host to suburban sprawl and new housing complexes. The McClain Home is one of few remaining Italianate homes in all of rural Hendricks County as farms fall prey to land developers of strip malls and zero-lot-line housing additions.

Michael McClain first settled the land upon which the home is located in 1832. He built a log cabin not far from the current home. He and his wife raised nine children on the

<sup>1</sup> The road is now called County Road 525 East.

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John McClain Home

property, including John Walker McClain born in 1842. The elder McClain died in 1856 leaving his fourteen-year old son John to manage the farm chores. In 1876,<sup>2</sup> John W. McClain erected the two-story Italianate home on a small hill overlooking the farmland and meadows of the original three hundred acre farm.<sup>3</sup> Local workers fired brick for the house by using clay from the McClain farm.<sup>4</sup>

McClain raised hogs and cattle and planted corn and wheat. In 1889, he married a relative, Sarah Elizabeth McClain. They had two daughters and he continued to farm until his death in 1911. One of his daughters, Ora McClain Briner and her husband, Harry R. Briner moved into the home to help the widow Sarah McClain with the farm. In 1920, Sarah McClain added electricity and indoor plumbing to the house.<sup>5</sup> Mrs. McClain passed away in 1954 at the age of 90.

The Briners continued to raise hogs and Guernsey cattle and added a one hundred-acre maple syrup farm in 1920. The sugar camp located west of the house contained over one thousand trees for tapping. By the early 1950s, the Briners produced hundreds of gallons of maple syrup each year and shipped their product all over the United States.<sup>6</sup> The Briners also planted corn, wheat and sorghum on other acres of the farm.

Upon the death of Harry Briner in 1983, the house passed to Martha Freeman, the daughter of Harry and Ora McClain Briner. Mrs. Freeman successfully nominated the home to the Indiana Register of Historic Places where it was listed on October 28, 1982. Correspondence from the local preservation office and Mrs. Freeman reveal that the home was to be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, but due to Mrs. Freeman's health and age, the nomination process was not completed.<sup>7</sup> On April 30, 1987, the home and the farm was certified by Lt. Governor John Mutz as having been in the same family for over one hundred years.

By the 1990s, the once grand home was in need of repairs. In 1998, Martha Freeman passed away and the home remained in estate until 2003 when Susan Wood, the daughter of Martha Freeman and the great granddaughter of John W. and Sarah McClain inherited the home and several acres surrounding the house.

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<sup>2</sup> A journal kept by John Walker McClain indicates that the home was completed September 15, 1876. A board in the attic has a worker's last name and a date: "Pollard, 1876."

<sup>3</sup> The current owners possess the original sketch of the home done in 1876.

<sup>4</sup> Pauline Bayer, "Mrs. Ora Briner, and Indiana Pioneer Member," Plainfield Messenger, April 11, 1963, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Notes from Martha Freeman taken in 1982 for the home's placement on the State Register of Historic Places.

<sup>6</sup> Margaret Stephenson Moore. "Hoosiers Who Do Things." Indianapolis Star. April 19, 1942, p. 33.

<sup>7</sup> Correspondence is included in the appendices of this document.

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John McClain Home

Most of the home's original Italianate features remain. The interior of the home remains largely unchanged as well. The most significant change done to the home occurred at the turn of the nineteenth century when the Italianate porches were removed and a Craftsman era porch added. Ghosts of the original porches are still outlined in the brick. The home retains all of the original brackets<sup>8</sup> that support the widely overhanging eaves. All of the woodwork, wood floors, a fireplace, and a curved staircase remain intact and in good shape. All of the rooms retain their original ceiling height and the front parlor still contains an original ceiling medallion. The original layout of the home remains in place with the exception of one upstairs bedroom that has been converted into three smaller rooms to include a bathroom. The immediate setting around the home remains largely the same with tall trees and a drive along the south side of the home. While the home is a work in progress, John W. McClain would have no trouble recognizing his home today.

The McClain Home stands today as a testimony to the rewards of a productive farm and represents the agricultural era of Indiana's history. John W. McClain, like several other farmers in Hendricks County profited from the sale of crops and livestock in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and managed to keep the home and farm in place for generations of McClain descendants. McClain heirs did not cave into the temptation of selling the home to investors as did most of their neighbors. Today the home is an architectural gem among a sea of modern developments.

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<sup>8</sup> The homeowners possess the smaller brackets that existed in between the larger ones. These minor brackets are currently in storage.

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John McClain Home

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Land within the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of the northwest quarter of section sixteen (16) in Township 15N, Range 1E, Hendricks County, Indiana, as follows: The west boundary is the east edge of the pavement of CR 525 East, the south boundary is a line parallel to but 100' south of the south wall of the McClain House, the north boundary is a line parallel to but 100' north of the north wall of the McClain House, the east boundary is the west edge of a creek immediately behind the McClain House roughly five acres.

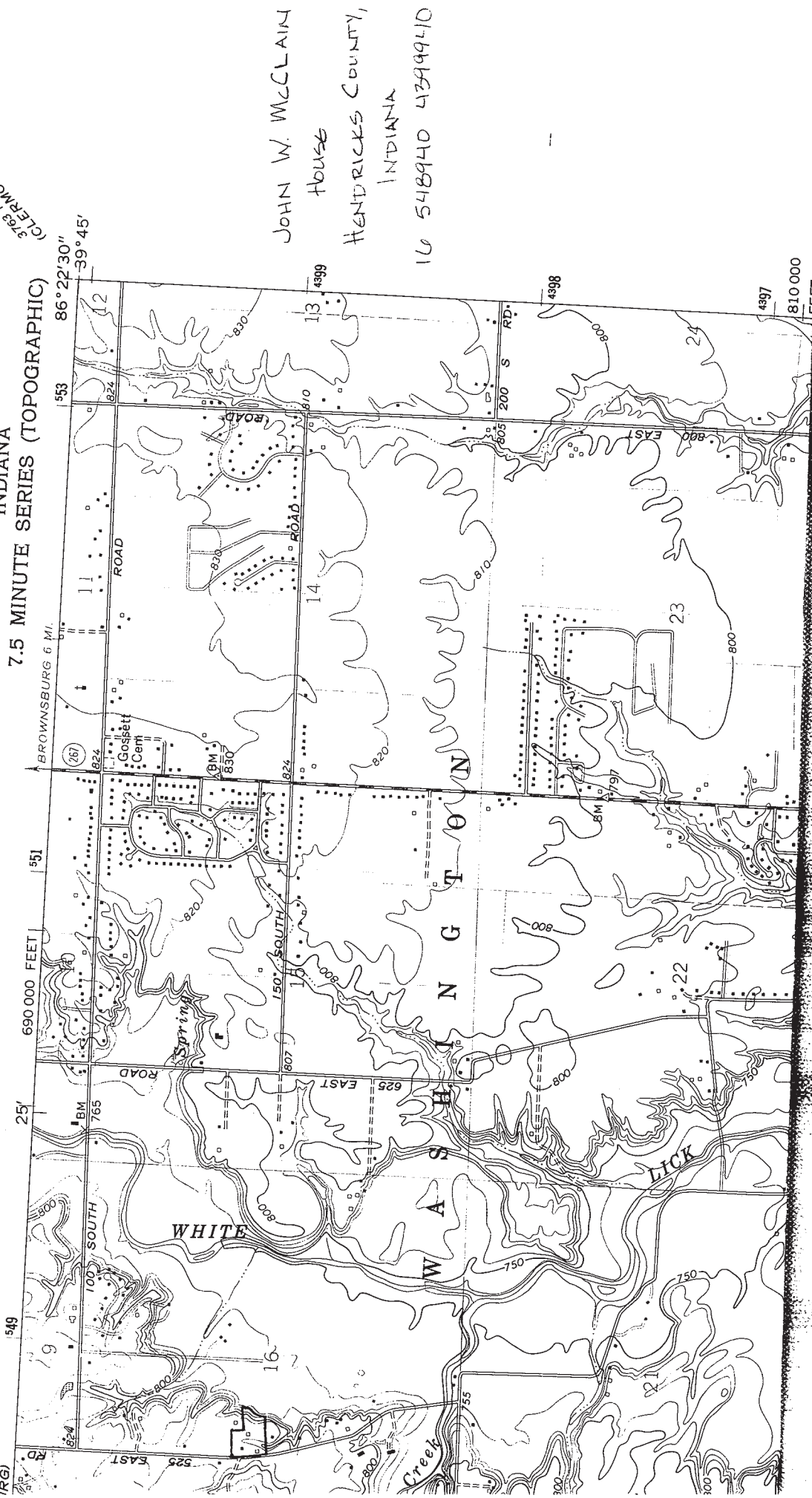
**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the house and the surrounding land of five acres. A large silo exists on the property but is not included in the boundary.

INDIANA  
JRAL RESOURCES  
INDIANA

PLAINFIELD QUADRANGLE  
INDIANA  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

3763 N SE  
(CLEMONT)



JOHN W. McCLAIN  
HOUSE  
HENDRICKS COUNTY,  
INDIANA  
16 548940 4399410

4397  
810 000