

FINAL

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park 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 NPS use only
received
date entered

## 1. Name

historic The Free Church

and/or common The Powers Church

## 2. Location

street & number Old Road 1 North (County Road)

N/A not for publication

city, town Angola ☒ vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state Indiana code 018 county Steuben code 151

## 3. Classification

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

## 4. Owner of Property

name Powers Cemetery Association, c/o LaMar Powers

street & number 214 E. South Street

city, town Angola N/A vicinity of state Indiana 46703

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Steuben County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Angola state Indiana

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic American  
Buildings Survey

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1982 ☒ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records National Park Service

city, town Washington, state D.C.

## 7. Description

### Condition

☒ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☒ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved

date N/A

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Free Church is located in a rural setting on Old Road 1 North, near Angola in Steuben County, Indiana. Built in 1876, it is a frame structure covered with 4" wide clapboard siding and rests on a fieldstone foundation. The building is basically rectangular in plan; a three-story, square tower topped with a spire presents the sole deviation to this plan as it projects out to the west. The building has a simple gable roof that was originally covered with shingles; the current standing-seam metal roof was installed sometime in the 1940s. A brick chimney with a concrete cap appears on the ridge of the roof near the center of the building.

The building is dominated by the spired tower, which contains the sole entryway on the ground floor level of its west facade. This entry consists of a large double doorway featuring paired six-panel doors surmounted by a four-light rectangular transom. It is protected from the weather by an awning roof decorated with scalloped molding and supported by a pair of elaborate scroll-cut brackets. The second floor level is slightly reduced in size and contains a single round window in the center of its west facade. The third floor of the tower is identical to the second in design but is again reduced in size. An octagonal belfry made up of louvered panels appears above the tower's third floor and houses the church bell. This belfry also forms the base for an octagonal spire, decorated with 16 rows of scalloped molding arranged longitudinally around the spire's circumference. The spire originally terminated with a cross-shape weather vane, but this feature is now missing. A wide, plain architrave and frieze, and a cyma reversa cornice molding appear below each roofline on the tower, and all cornerboards on the tower are treated to resemble pilasters.

The rest of the structure, consisting of a one-story rectangular unit with a simple gable roof, features roofline trim and cornerboard treatment identical to that found on the tower. The north and south facades of this unit both consist of three equal bays containing large nine-over-nine double-hung windows. Identical windows are also used on the east and west facades.

The interior of the building remains basically unaltered. The original pews, providing seating for approximately 200, are still in place, as is the speaker's podium. These furnishings are of oak with butternut inlay, and are thought to have been built locally from native timber. The original Victorian wallpaper remains above the wainscoting on the north, east, and south walls; extensive plaster repairs necessitated the removal of this paper from the west wall, which is now painted. Illumination is provided by the original oil-lamp chandelier, which hangs over the center of the room. Two cast-iron stoves, installed shortly after the building was completed, remain the only source of heat. Two pump organs associated with the church remain in the building. One of these, an 1885 model produced by the Cottage Organ Company of Chicago, was recently restored, while the other, built ten years earlier, will be repaired in the near future.

## 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 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 checked="" 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** 1876

**Builder/Architect** Calvin Powers and Winn Powers

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Free Church is significant for its architecture and for its association with one of the area's earliest settlements. The church is a small frame structure which has remained basically unaltered since its construction in 1876. It is the only building remaining from the Powers Settlement, a community begun in 1836 by members of one of the county's most prominent pioneer families. Although regular use of this church ended in the 1920s, the building has been kept in good repair by descendants of the original builders.

Architecturally, the building is a vernacular structure with eclectic detailing. The exterior features Greek Revival and Italianate design elements, combined in a sensitive and picturesque manner. Except for a change in roofing materials, the exterior remains unaltered. Similarly, the interior retains almost all of its original features, including pews, podium, organ, stove, lighting fixtures, and even the majority of its Victorian wallpaper. Overall, the building remains an unusual example of local architecture, and has retained its integrity to an exceptionally high degree.

The church was erected in 1876 by Calvin and Winn Powers, two of four brothers who came to settle in the area. Calvin and his brother, Clark, are acknowledged to be among the first settlers in the township, having arrived in the area from New York in 1836. The other two Powers brothers, Winn and Stephan, brought the rest of the family to the area the following year. The four brothers came to own several hundred acres of land and became active in local politics, business, and industry. They actively encouraged others to settle in the area, and established the township's first school in 1838. They also constructed a saw-mill, gristmill, and ashery, which supplied the necessities of pioneer life and employment for newcomers to the area. The land on which the church and adjacent cemetery are located was donated by Clark Powers in 1838, but construction of the church building was not begun until 1876, when funds and material for the project were solicited from the area residents by Winn Powers. The Free Church, so named because it was nondenominational, was used regularly until the 1920's, when the community began to lose its population to neighboring towns and eventually became too small to support a church. The congregation disbanded in the late 1920's, and for the next 30 years the church was used for weddings, funerals, and family reunions. From the late 1950's until 1976 the church was unused, but since 1976 the building has once again been made available to the local community for tours, summer musical programs, and nondenominational services.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Amidon, Viola Powers & Lee Earl. The Powers Family. 1939.  
Atlas of Steuben County. Chicago: J. H. Beers & Company, 1880.  
History of Steuben County. Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co., 1885.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Clear Lake

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	6	6	8	0	0	7	0	4	6	1	1	3	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Beginning at a point 50' due east of the northeast corner of the building, then proceeding due south 86', then proceeding due west 140', then proceeding north 136', then proceeding due east 140', then proceeding due south 50', to the point of beginning.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marcia Powers, Co-Chairman

organization Powers Church Restoration Committee date July 30, 1981

street & number R. 4, Box 131 telephone 219/665-5498

city or town Angola state Indiana 46703

## 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

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 2-12-83

**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