

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 Thomas, Amon Clarence, House

other names/site number A.C. Thomas House, 129-455-16204

2. Location

street & number 503 West Street N/A not for publication

city or town New Harmony N/A vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Posey code 129 zip code 47631

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.)

Patricia R. Roberts

8/1/95

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

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Amon Clarence Thomas House
Name of Property

Posey County, Indiana
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
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	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

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: hotel

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

Romanesque

Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: limestone

walls BRICK

STONE: limestone

roof STONE: slate

other METAL: cast iron

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

1899

Significant Dates

1899

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown HARRIS & SHOPBELL

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: Workingmen's Institute
New Harmony

Amon Clarence Thomas House
Name of Property

Posey County, Indiana
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	6
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4	1	7	8	7	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3

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Zone Easting Northing

2

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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 H. William Gaiser, Jr., Architect / Paul Diebold

organization Bill Gaiser Designs/Architecture date 1 October 1994

street & number 219 Oak Street telephone 812/423-3777

city or town Evansville state IN zip code 47713-1254

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 C. Scott and Nancy Ray McDonald

street & number P.O. Box 566 telephone _____

city or town New Harmony state IN zip code 47631

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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The A.C. Thomas House is a two and one-half story brick structure located in New Harmony, Indiana. The house was built in 1899. The house lot is at the southwest corner of West and Church Streets and is level, as is most of the town. In addition to the house, the lot is surrounded by an iron fence on the south and west sides which once ran along the north and east sidewalk lines. A.C. Thomas' initials are still visible on the gates of this fence. The fence is counted as one contributing structure, the house as one contributing building. There are no other resources on the lot.

The building is constructed of flush jointed red brick laid in common bond with limestone sills and lintels. Some lintels have been painted over time. The visible foundation is of rock-faced limestone, however, it is brick below grade. Exterior walls are chamfered at the corners, giving the impression of four tower conjoined to form the bulk of the house. This contributes to the fortress-like massing of the house, as does the steep hip roof which is rectangular in plan (i.e., it overhangs at the corners rather than following the chamfered walls).

The east (main) elevation is complex but essentially symmetrical (photo 1). The first floor has a central transomed doorway flanked by projecting semi-octagonal bays. The wooden main entry door has an oval light and the stained glass transom spells "A.C. THOMAS" in its design. The inside face of each bay has a single double hung one-over-one window. The porch faces have wide fixed transomed windows. The corner bays have single windows. The second story has a flat wall surface across the facade, except for the chamfered outside corners. Centered is multiple-coursed round arch opening, the arch serving to frame a transom and the rectangular opening having a walk-out window to the second story porch. The arched transom is of stained glass. Flanking this are single windows, and single windows are in each chamfered corner bay. Also enriching the second story are engaged faceted piers which spring from decorative stone corbels at mid window height. Four of these engaged piers are arranged to flank the three main openings of the second story and stringcourses visually connect them. The entablature has a plain frieze board with finely scaled dentils and a broad built in gutter-cornice. The faceted piers seem to rise through the entablature and appear as angled corners on the symmetrically placed paired dormers. Each dormer has a brick front

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**Amon Clarence Thomas House
Posey County, Indiana**

with multiple coursed round arch surrounding an arched casement window. Stone sills are continuous across the dormer faces. Dormer cheeks are of pressed metal panels in the form of a blind Moorish arcade. Dormer eaves have modillions and each dormer has an individual hip roof. The steep hip roof itself is clad in slate. Attached to this elevation is a two level wooden porch. The porch has brick foundation walls and limestone coping. The porch floor is inlaid with mosaic, forming a green border and an off-white field. Unfluted Ionic columns support the hip roof. Railings were added c.1920. A pediment projects forward. Its tympanum has classical garland and wreath stucco ornamentation. The porch ceiling is coffered. A smaller second story porch is centered over the first story porch and consists of an Ionic hemicycle. Two Ionic columns support the garland and wreath enriched entablature. The roof of this small porch is nearly flat.

The north elevation is next in importance as it faces a side street (photo 5). The main section of the house forms two massive semi-octagonal bays with a recessed central section. The western bay has a single opening in each face of its bay on the first floor, as well as basement windows. The central section has a tall round arched window at an intermediate level. Its wooden keystone forms a bracket which rises to support the deeper eaves at this point. On the second story, the inner face of the east bay has a single window, and the angled faces of the western bay have windows. Centered above the tall round arched window is a French Gothic styled brick and limestone dormer with angled corner buttresses flanking a concave arched gable. Continuous stone lintel and sill frame the fixed rectangular light. Beside this dormer, just to the east, is a tall brick chimney with brick banding.

The section to the west is more utilitarian. The first floor has a recessed side porch with portiere screen. Two transomed doors lead into the house and a window is set east of the paired doors. A small one story pantry room projects forward to define the porch on the west (this room later became a bathroom when a portion of the south porch was enclosed for a pantry). It has a basement and

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Posey County, Indiana

first floor window. Above the porch and pantry is a rooftop balcony with wood railings. One door on the back or west face of the main house section leads to the balcony, while one small fixed window and a standard window overlook the balcony. A chimney similar to the one beside the dormer rises from the ridge of the roof which is side gabled on this section.

The south elevation (photo 3) has less detail than the north elevation, but it becomes more utilitarian as one moves to the back of the house. A two story semi-octagonal bay divides this elevation roughly in half. To the east is a section with the chamfered corner bay and two vertically aligned windows which are placed close to the bay. The bay itself has basement and first floor windows on each face, but on the second floor, only the corners of the bay have windows. The bay is capped by a separate hip roof which merges with the main hip roof. To the west of the bay are single windows on each story. West of this section is frame construction, infilling a corner defined by brick walls. Square wood columns with vernacular capitals and necking moldings support the first story porch. The portiere screen and railing on the west edge are remnants of the original design. In about 1920, one bay of the first floor porch was enclosed with vertical board siding and a double hung window to create a pantry. The second floor porch was enclosed to create a sleeping porch. Wood railing similar to the other porches was removed from the second level at that time.

The west (rear) elevation has a central two story gabled section flanked by the sides of the various porches (photo 4). The gabled area has two basement windows, two first floor windows, a centered second floor window, and a multiple coursed round arched attic window. Metal sun screens have been added to the windows. The same cornice, without frieze and dentil course, define the gable roof and short returns.

The interior of the Thomas House has changed very little since construction in 1899; only utilities and the kitchen have been remodeled. The interior plan is organized around the four tower

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bays visible on the exterior, with each "tower" comprising a room inside. A central hallway is implied through the arrangement of primary openings, but only partly defined by walls. The front door leads to an entry hall or stair hall occupying the northeast polygonal room and a portion of the center of the first floor. The ornate quarter-sawn oak staircase and inglenook combination immediately catch one's attention (photos 8 and 9). The entire staircase is paneled in oak. The inglenook bench has a Moorish/Gothic ogee arched back capped with dentiled cornice upon which rest fluted Ionic columns. A portiere screen with flat rails and decorative wreath ornamentation runs between the columns. The open well, three flight stairs cascade out into the stair hall. A newel and baluster define the outside edge of the stairs. Newels are relatively plain square posts with cornice and necking moldings, but the balusters are lathe-turned with a spiral motif. The end newel has a brass columnar light fixture with globe shade. Beside the inglenook bench was a fireplace; it was removed in c.1920 but the mantelpiece remains in storage in the house.

Although most woodwork throughout the house is relatively plain, consisting of plain vertical boards and entablature style headers, the column and portiere screen motif is repeated for openings between major rooms. Most walls and ceilings are plaster, floors have tongue and groove pine boards and some have been carpeted.

The front parlor, just off of the stair hall, has columns flanking each of its openings. The back parlor has a pocket door leading to the stair hall and a portiere screened elliptical arched opening into a small music room (photos 14 and 15). The music room was remodeled in c.1920; a door to the hall was closed off and a built-in cabinet was removed and partially reconstructed in the second floor bath. The chair rail and cornice were added to the room c.1920 as well. The dining room has a large pocket door leading from the stair hall. One feature of note is the built in china cabinet with Moorish/Gothic detailing on the south dining room wall. Finishes here are typical, except for the wood paneled and beamed ceiling with lighting fixtures built into the beam intersections. A Tiffany style central light fixture hangs in the

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center of the room as well. The kitchen has been remodeled several times, most recently in about 1958. Walls and ceiling have been covered in drywall, cabinets are modern natural birch finish, counters and appliances are modern. Evidence of a 42" high wainscot for the kitchen, now gone, has been located. The original pantry was converted into a bathroom in c.1920.

Two staircases lead to the second floor, the main stairs and the back stairs beside the kitchen. The second floor has a centrally placed hallway which opens to four major rooms, a bathroom, and a rear bedroom (originally the cook's quarters). Again, the major rooms correspond to the "towers" or polygonal bays. Woodwork for the second floor matches that of the first floor for door and window moldings, however, only the hall has oak, while the same pattern of woodwork in pine was used in the private rooms (photo 19 shows typical woodwork on the second floor). Ceilings in second floor rooms have been covered in drywall or fiberboard. Some ceiling work was done in the 1940s, and some after the 1969 earthquake. Several bedrooms have closets, while one closet and a hall linen closet were combined to make a bathroom in about 1920. The original bathroom was updated in about 1920, and it was modified to include a linen closet (photo 17).

The attic is mostly unfinished, except for a small room over the cook's quarters. The original water holding tank remains in the attic. The basement is concrete floored with exposed brick walls. It is very utilitarian in nature, although a temporary kitchen was built in the basement for use during the 1958 kitchen rehabilitation. Cistern holding tank and pumps remain in the basement. Radiators provided heat throughout the house and still function. Various removed fixtures or portions of woodwork remain in the basement.

With few exceptions, the Thomas House is remarkably intact.

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Posey County, Indiana

Section 8-Statement of Significance

An impressive combination of Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, and Neo-Classical Revival influences, the A.C. Thomas House is a well detailed turn of the century mansion unique in the small town of New Harmony, Indiana. In addition to its significance under Criterion C, the Thomas House generally reflects a period of redevelopment in New Harmony spurred on by the discovery of oil in Posey County and the strength of agricultural industries such as milling.

The design of the A.C. Thomas House combines a number of significant domestic architectural trends which were popular in the 1890s. The overall massing and plan of the house reflect the Queen Anne style, while the use of heavy masonry and multiple coursed round arch openings recall Romanesque Revival architecture. The classically detailed porches are Neo-Classical Revival in style. Several elements, such as the Chateausque north dormer, suggest Gothic influences as well. The level of detail is carried through to the interior, which has a stairhall/foyer combination with inglenook seat, a common plan element of the late Queen Anne period. Woodwork shows Queen Anne influences, consisting of a column and portiere screen motif for primary openings. Again, this woodwork style is Queen Anne in concept, but the details used combine classicism and Gothic/Moorish sources.

The Queen Anne style is thought to have originated with the Centennial Exposition of 1876, when the English built several pavilions in the manner of the early 18th century, or Queen Anne period. However, one could note Henry Hobson Richardson's design for the William Watts Sherman House (1874) as a nascent example of Queen Anne. A free American interpretation of the Queen Anne period substituted wood construction for masonry. Wood was plentiful in North America and with industrial age machinery, all manner of turnings and carvings could be mass produced. Exteriors were asymmetrical, often featuring curved or polygonal bays and a vertical emphasis. Plans were more open than the preceding Italianate style, with openings sometimes having no doors, but

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rather screens between rooms. The Queen Anne style was most popular in Indiana from 1885 to about 1900.

Romanesque Revival architecture can be categorized into two periods, the first phase occurring before the Civil War and promulgated by German-trained architects. In the 1880s, however, the last and most enduring phase of the Romanesque Revival style was started by American architect Henry Hobson Richardson. In the 1870s and 80s, Richardson used the strength of Romanesque architecture to define landmark buildings. After his death in 1886, architects carried on his style and it became popular for public buildings until about 1900. Comparatively few homes were built in the style, but the influence of the style is sometimes seen in the use of masonry, especially heavy round arches or rock-faced stone details.

Neo-Classicism was rediscovered at the turn of the century. The Columbian Exposition of 1893 (Chicago), planned by Daniel Burnham, included grand Neo-Classical Revival buildings which became the model for urban development for years to come. These pavilions, and those of the 13 original colonies which were to be "colonial" formally acknowledged America's renewed interest in classicism. Classical motifs were easily added to Queen Anne homes by way of porch details and use of classical moldings.

The combination of these styles on the A.C. Thomas House may have been inspired by the various builder's pattern books of the time. The William Kerr House in Randolph County (NRHP, 10-1-87) was designed by George Barber and Company, a mail-order house design firm. Dating from about 1896, the Kerr House also combines Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival influences, although its massing is more clearly Queen Anne than the Thomas House. Other pattern books of the time show combinations of classical moldings applied to Queen Anne types.

Although no other New Harmony homes of the 1890s compare to the eclectic sources of the Thomas House, it may be compared to several larger homes of the period in Posey County. Several

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outstanding examples of Queen Anne cited in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory are the Chadwick House on Church Street and the Fitton House on South Main Street. Both are more typical examples of Queen Anne, although the porch of the Fitton House takes on classical proportions and columns. The Lichtenberger House on West Tavern Street has Stick Style influences. During the 1880s and 90s, many commercial buildings on Main Street were built or rebuilt. The City Building, 1900, is Romanesque Revival in style, while others have Queen Anne influences. The Workingman's Institute is perhaps the best example of Romanesque Revival in town and dates from 1894. It is evident from this context that the various influences found in the design of the Thomas House were or would soon be visible in the community in a variety of sources. None of these other designs, however, combines these late 19th century trends into a successful statement in the same manner as the Thomas House.

The growth of New Harmony in the late 19th and early 20th centuries is also reflected in the above cited buildings. Most often noted for its role in early settlement, including the religion-based Rappite community and Robert Owen's utopian experiment, New Harmony developed into a commercial center in the late 1800s. Coal and oil deposits played a role in the resurgent economy of the area. The Wabash and Ohio River valleys had richer farmland than most of southern Indiana, contributing to the viability of small towns like New Harmony. Lastly, agricultural pursuits such as grain milling or timber harvesting anchored the economy.

The Thomas House reflects this period of new growth in New Harmony. Amon Clarence Thomas had this house built in 1899. Thomas was involved in many enterprises in Posey County. In 1886, Thomas was one of three incorporators of Corbin Milling Company, a New Harmony company dating back to 1846. He was made secretary-treasurer at the time. In 1899, the mill was overhauled, and in 1906, Thomas was made general manager. Thomas also served on the board of the (New Harmony) Workingmen's Institute, later becoming its longest-term and oldest member. Thomas was the director of the

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**Amon Clarence Thomas House
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New Harmony Banking Company. Although A.C. Thomas retired in 1913, he remained active in the community, serving as county chairman for the Council of Defense during World War I.

His fine home on West Street was said to be a center of social life in the community. Even though Thomas was a several term chair of the First District Democratic Party committee, his family entertained William Taft during a southern Indiana campaign tour. Long before the historic significance of New Harmony was widely understood, Thomas personally directed and guided tourists to the town's historic sites. The home remained in the Thomas family until 1994.

The current owners occupy the house while offering bed-and-breakfast lodging to visitors.

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Amon Clarence Thomas House
Posey County, Indiana

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Henning, Lisbeth L. survey coordinator. *Posey County Interim Report, Indiana Historic Sites & Structures Inventory*. Indianapolis IN: Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, 1985.

Thomas Archives. New Harmony IN: Workingmen's Institute.
(See Continuation Sheet, Section 8, pp. 2-5)

Posey County Deed Record Book 34. Mt. Vernon IN: Posey County Courthouse, 1898.

Posey County Deed Record Book 47. Mt. Vernon IN: Posey County Courthouse, 1898.

Posey County Deed Record Book 52. Mt. Vernon IN: Posey County Courthouse, 1937.

Posey County Deed Record Book 53. Mt. Vernon IN: Posey County Courthouse, 1939.

Posey County Record Book C-3. Mt. Vernon IN: Posey County Courthouse, 1881.

Posey County Record Book C-15. Mt. Vernon IN: Posey County Courthouse, 1927.

Posey County Record Book C-16. Mt. Vernon IN: Posey County Courthouse, 1916.

Posey County Record Book H-1. Mt. Vernon IN: Posey County Courthouse, 1887.

Posey County Record Book H-4. Mt. Vernon IN: Posey County Courthouse, 1894.

Posey County Record Book H-10. Mt. Vernon IN: Posey County Courthouse, 1911-1920.

Posey County Record Book 18. Mt. Vernon IN: Posey County Courthouse, 1927.

Posey County Will Record Book B. Mt. Vernon IN: Posey County Courthouse, 1927.

New Harmony Democrat. New Harmony IN: New Harmony Democrat, 15 September 1942.

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Section 9-Bibliography-continued

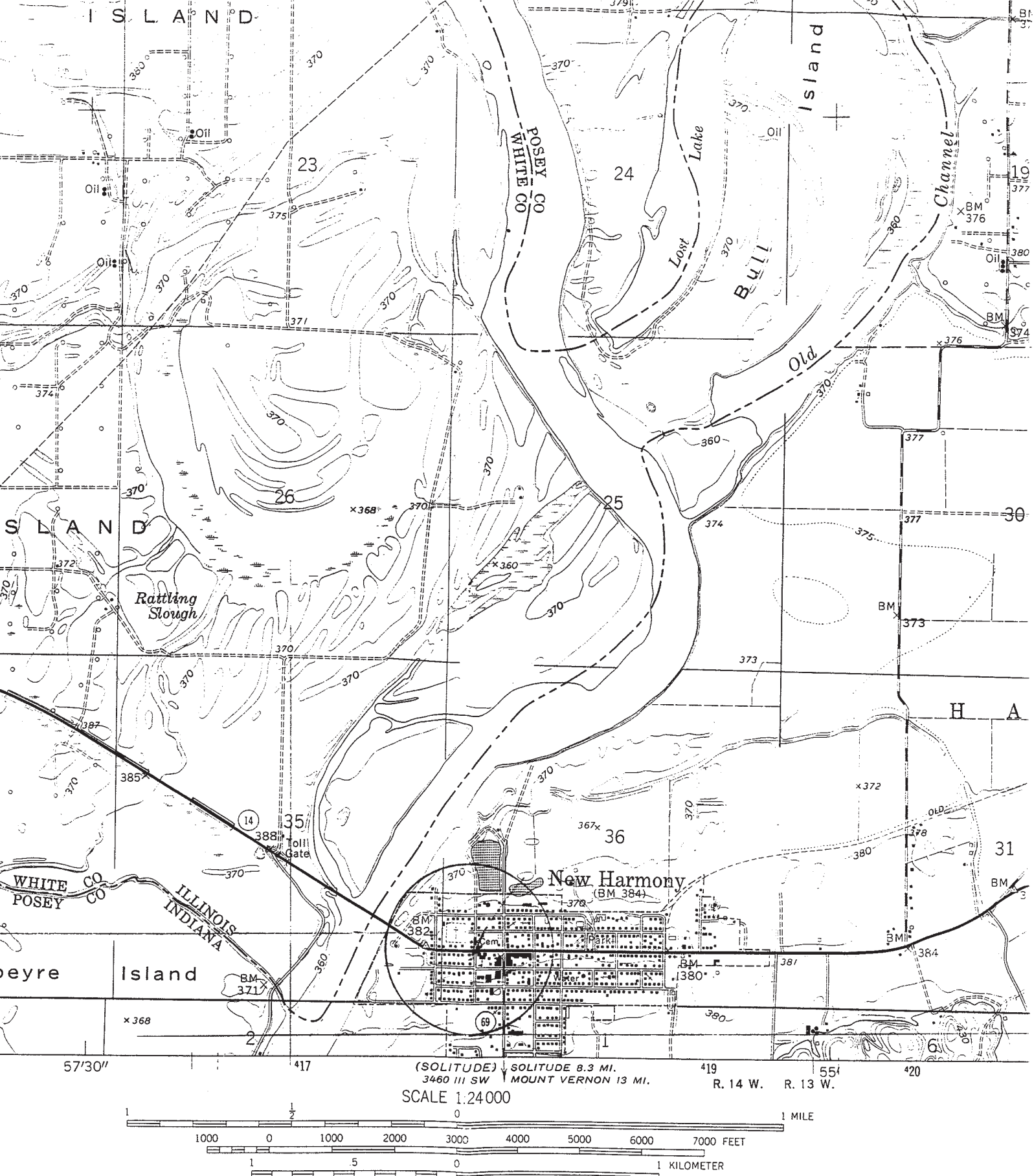
Reece, Clyde Lee. Who's Who in Evansville. Evansville: Burkett-Walton Co., 1932. (p. 193 has bio of Thomas)

Section 10-Geographical Data-Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 9 of Arthur's Western Enlargement, town of New Harmony, Indiana.

Boundary Justification

This is the historic property boundary.



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
 DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
 INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204
 AND BY THE STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, URBANA, ILLINOIS 61801
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



Revisions shown in purple compiled in Indiana agencies from aerial photograph source data. This information not field