

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 The Legg House

other names/site number 105-055-73019

2. Location

street & number 324 South Henderson N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Bloomington N/A ☐ vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Monroe code 105 zip code 47401

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.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title

1/21/01
Date

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]
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

4.12.01

The Legg House

Name of Property

Monroe 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

buildings

sites

1

structures

1

objects

1

2

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

EDUCATION: housing

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

work in progress-

EDUCATION: education-related

administrative offices

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19th CWENTURY: Greek Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

STONE: limestone

walls

BRICK

roof

WOOD: weatherboard

ASBESTOS

other

LIMESTONE

WOOD

Narrative Description

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

The Legg House
Name of Property

Monroe County, 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.

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

Period of Significance

1848-1901

Significant Dates

1848-1901

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

The Legg House
Name of Property

Monroe County, IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .27 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	540810	4334820
Zone	Easting	North	ing
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	North	ing
4			

☐ 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 Eliza Steelwater, PHD

organization _____ date 9/22/00

street & number 4541 Stidd Lane telephone 812-334-1107
Bloomington

city or town _____ state IN zip code 47408

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 _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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The Legg House, Bloomington, Monroe County, IN

Narrative Description

SUMMARY

The Legg House is a simply constructed, one-story, brick and frame, Greek Revival style house with strong Federal influences. The property is located about three-eighths mile east-southeast of Bloomington's downtown courthouse square and one-fifth mile south-southwest of the main gates of present-day Indiana University campus. The house, now unoccupied and in poor condition, is sited on high ground near the northeast edge of the original parcel, six acres of wooded land gently sloping toward the west. The grounds, lawn and wild shrubbery with numerous mature trees along the lot lines, now consist of a 74.5 by 155.5 foot lot at the trafficked edge of an urban neighborhood built up with houses circa 1900. Views from the house are chiefly of green space and historic homes on the east (Henderson Street) and north (Third Street, almost a block away). Two busy streets, Dunn and Atwater, are screened in summer by lot-line trees. The house is the single contributing resource on the property. It consists of eight rooms and a porch today, with significant portions built circa 1848 through 1901. Five rooms and the porch provide the house with its historical significance; three rooms and the separate pantry were created in recent years by adding a shed, enclosing one wing of the porch, and joining this enclosure to the shed. A poured concrete cistern is one of two noncontributing structures on the

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site; its crown slightly raised above ground level in the south dooryard and said to have been built before 1935. A garage west of the house was added, probably on an existing poured-concrete foundation, between 1947 and 1951.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND PRESENT CONDITION

At present, the floor plan of the Legg House is L-shaped with a full-width porch, partly enclosed, on the interior of the ell (see measured plan drawing). The composition-shingle roof of the house, originally side gabled in form, is now cross-gabled with shed roof extensions over the porch.

White-painted wood cornice is heavy and boxed around most of the roof. A plain, wide frieze band runs below the cornice across the brick east gable end only. At this east-end of the porch roof, extending from the end of the gable cornice, is a fragment of parapet wall styled as a broad frieze divided into rectangular panels (photograph 1). These two frieze bands, with the two east windows that may have been added, appear to be touches of Greek Revival "styling" circa 1870, when the style was still very popular in Monroe County. The bold but awkward touch of the Legg House's paneled porch pediment only reinforces the building's farmhouse personality. The pediment, for which no local model has been identified, may have been intended to mimic the flat-roofed wings of grander Greek Revival houses.

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The original, two-room, brick portion of the Legg House is of the hall-and-parlor house type.

Doors, windows, and brickwork on the north and south facades have been styled with a restrained, early-Federal character, except that the narrow, flat muntins of the windows and the interior chimney more commonly occur in Greek Revival styling.

The house stands mainly on a limestone-block foundation, built in three separate parts, with a one-room cellar (see drawing showing sequence of foundations). The south end of the house stands on a non-historic rock-faced, concrete block foundation. The cellar has a limestone fireplace whose flue also opens in the corner room above to a fireplace with simple wooden mantelpiece. Another interior fireplace, located in the north central room, has a well proportioned Federal style mantelpiece made of elaborately composed stock moldings. Other woodwork in the historically significant parts of the interior includes mostly original, simply crafted doors (three with openable 4 or 3 light transoms), 6/6 and 9/6 double-hung windows, built-in cabinets, deep baseboards, trim, and floors in locally milled poplar. Main-floor fireplaces are bricked in and elements of multiple heating, plumbing, and electrical systems, some of early vintage, have been added. The northeast room has a replacement floor of fir and modified baseboard trim. The northwest center room, with original 31 inch horizontal board wainscot, has two closets added between 1886 and 1901. (All measurements approximate.) At the south end of this northwest

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center room is a simultaneously constructed separate kitchen room or pantry, originally with center interior door and a tall, narrow window at either end. Nonhistoric elements of the house include the three rooms created by a porch enclosure, recently built shed, and the room between these were added here.

Most serious elements of deterioration of the house, noted in greater detail below under construction phases, includes cracking of the foundation and one brick wall, rot and termite damage along sills, and extensive water damage to roof, exterior brick, and interior plaster.

The Legg House, built mainly over a 20 year period circa 1850-1870, with minor modifications circa 1900, marks several stages of Bloomington's architectural and historical transition from frontier settlement to urban, university-dominated county seat. The house is rare in Monroe County as a modest, one-story, brick hall and parlor house combining Greek Revival touches with an overall Federal character.

The Legg House shares the hall and parlor characteristics of a large room or "hall" and a smaller room considered the "parlor." However, in the case of the Legg house, the single principal door

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opens into the smaller room rather than the hall and it can be considered a variant of the form.

CONSTRUCTION PHASES OF THE LEGG HOUSE

Original portion of the house circa 1850 (between 1848 and 1853)

The two brick rooms are original; porch as well as cellar and wood-framed rooms were added later. Walls are constructed of common bond (American bond), hand molded, red brick on a low foundation of roughly quarried and coursed limestone blocks, about 20 by 10 inches and of variable height, having multiple rock faces. (The foundation is cracked at the northwest corner.) The roof, approximately 3:4 in pitch, is framed with the older technique of rafter beams (about 4 by 4 inches) on about 4-foot centers, rather than 2 by 4 inch stud rafters on 16-inch or 24-inch centers. Shingles are supported by spaced wide and narrow boards covering the rafter beams. On the north facade, a 37.5-inch wide formal entry door with 4-light side-opening transom has an unusual panel pattern of 3 cross panels above and 2 vertical panels below, separated by a 14 inch wide lock rail. Sill is a single piece of smooth-faced limestone 50 inches long. Both door and three evenly spaced windows (openings 39 inches wide by 72 inches tall) have wooden sills and 6/9 lights with narrow trim and muntins. Window and door lintels are early Federal in style, a flat-arched brick soldier course (no keystone) that is slightly fanned. On its east (gable-end) wall

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the house has two evenly spaced windows (openings 37 inches wide by 84 inches tall), longer than the north windows, having 6/6 lights with narrow trim and muntins. The east windows do not match the north windows, being longer in proportion, without lintels, and having shallow wooden sills that appear to have been crudely notched into the brick wall. Judging from this evidence and the serious cracking of the wall, these windows may have been added, probably by about 1870.

Interior walls of the two rooms are of horsehair plaster, formerly wallpapered and now painted over a brown-paper layer. Ceilings, about 9 feet high, may have been replastered. Water damage to wall plaster is extensive. The north door and one north window open onto the parlor or smaller of the two original rooms (approximately 12 by 16.5 feet), which has no fireplace opening. This room has a south exterior door paneled similarly to the north door but slightly smaller and lacking a transom. Original floor has been covered with 3-inch fir, raising the level, and molding of the deep baseboard replaced with makeshift pieces. An interior door near the south end of the brick partition wall, to the south of the fireplace, leads from parlor to hall. The hall or second room ("north-central" on the plan drawing) is larger (approximately 16.5 by 17.0 feet) than the parlor or front room. The hall is lighted by two of the three north windows. On its east wall is a door, probably let into the existing brick wall, that leads to the frame addition. The hall retains its

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original variable-width poplar floor and 1-foot-deep baseboard with top and bottom moldings. It has a fireplace with Federal-style wooden mantel on the interior wall. Filling the space to the left of the fireplace is a 7.5-foot-tall, built-in, poplar-wood storage cabinet, simply constructed.

The south wall of the hall has two exterior doors. Of these, the west door is probably original, close in height and width to the door on the south parlor wall. The batten of this door has a single large light above two panels with center muntin. This door and the parlor door, both unusually low at about 75 inches, are placed roughly equidistant from the partition wall between rooms. The hall's other (east) door is almost 80 inches tall and was probably added later. Its original appearance is obliterated by a relatively recent, window-sized cupboard above an infill panel.

Principal Additions circa 1870 and Minor Modifications circa 1890

A cellar, two wood-framed rooms, and an L-shaped porch were added to the house between 1863 and 1872. The original brick house was built over a crawl space. When the limestone-block cellar was added west of the gable-end of the house, the old and new foundations appear to have been joined by removing one original foundation course *under the existing brick end wall*. The new foundation course, which also completed the east wall of the cellar, was simply mortared to the remaining course of the existing foundation. This new course, in running bond, was tied in at the

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corners to the adjoining two cellar walls, so that all cellar walls are in effect composed of two courses. But where brick and frame parts of the house come together the mortar joint that separates the stones of the new course from those of the old course run all the way from sill to ground. The mortared limestone block used in cellar construction is roughly quarried with multiple rock faces. It is somewhat smaller than that of the original foundation, roughly coursed with irregularities created by smaller blocks.

Varying with the fall of ground toward the west, the cellar is approximately half underground and half above. On the ground-floor south wall, a staircase that is probably contemporaneous with the cellar, although a hand rail has been added, leads down. The door to this staircase is framed with beams rather than studs. The door batten (about 33 inches wide by 78 inches high) has two vertical panels above a single lower panel. The cellar's interior dimensions are approximately 17 by 20 feet, with a height of 75 inches floor to bottom of joists. Interior mortar joints are flush with a scored line. Floor is dirt, wet or flooded after rains, with a recently added concrete strip at the bottom of the stairs. The cellar ceiling is formed by joists and flooring for the room above. The cellar is lighted by windows 28 inches tall by 32 inches wide, one on the north wall and one on the west wall, whose upper edge is the sill plate of the room above. A ledged batten door at the north corner of the west wall opens onto a stair of single-block

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limestone steps flanked by roughly made brick and limestone-block retaining walls. Small openings have been punched through the east and south cellar walls at their upper edge to allow running of heating pipes for a radiator heating system.

The cellar is notable for its large size, full height and massive walls with limestone-block fireplace on the south wall. This fireplace, about 6 feet wide, has a self-mantel that is cracked along mortar joints. The supporting arch over the fire hole is formed of two large pieces of limestone shaped to form the two halves of a shallow arch. The fireback is shallow, with a backsloping smoke shelf. There was formerly a cooking crane, whose iron support loops are still embedded in the left sidewall of the fire hole (Bensinger interview in Barcenas, 1977).

A third section of stone foundation, running southward from the corner room, is merely butted and mortared against the south cellar wall. Given this independent construction it is possible that the cellar was used for a period of time before the room above it and the room above the third foundation were built. The cellar could have been roofed near ground level or topped with a lean-to room, perhaps a kitchen. But the present two main rooms of the addition, circa 1870, were roofed at the same time, to judge from interior roof structure visible in the attic crawl space. Rafters (2 by 4 inches, spaced at 16 inches and braced with collar beams) are covered in

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continuous, probably original roofing planks. This roof over the two added rooms is distinct from, and of later date than, the beam-raftered roof over the original brick rooms.

To construct the corner (northwest) room of the addition, a sill beam was laid on the south cellar wall and north-south joists notched into this beam. These joists carry the floor of the corner room across to a sill beam resting on the north cellar wall. The other added room, by contrast, has east-west joists resting partly on the third section of coursed foundation, which is composed of still-smaller limestone blocks than those of the first two foundations. This third foundation, running around the north and west sides of the second added room, is supplemented on its south and east sides by beams on limestone piers. The north-south beam runs from a pier next to the south cellar wall to another pier at the southeast corner of the addition. Both floor joists and another set to carry the porch are deeply notched into this north-south beam.

From this evidence of porch joists notched into the beam along with interior joists, it appears that at least the section of the porch running east-west was built together with the major room addition. The porch also has a north-south wing (now enclosed as a kitchen) that was likely built at the same time. One end of this porch wing is supported by a brick foundation, either stacked loose or having lost most of its mortar. Porch columns and most or all of the flooring are

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replacements, but an original column was found in the cellar. This square column, about 7 by 8.5 inches in section, is 77 inches long including a typical Greek Revival capital composed of stock moldings. The shaft is composed of 5/4 inch boards; the base is missing.

Both wings of the porch are shed roofed with ceilings of plaster (extensively water-damaged) over wood lath. Recently added walls crudely enclose the north-south porch wing. The roof of the east-west porch wing, still open, is supported by a beam notched into the south brick wall. The roof of this porch wing is disguised by a curious wood-framed parapet wall about 2 feet high running from brick wall to lower edge of porch roof. This parapet, now sawn off, apparently turned a corner originally and may have extended across the porch facade. The inside face of the parapet is clapboard. On the outside face, the parapet's cornice matches that of the main gable end, and a frieze-band, decorated with rectangular panels, is joined to the plain frieze-band of the main gable end. This gable-end apparently never had a gable return on the south side to match that on the north, but was intended to join a porch. (A similar design can be seen on the Mitchell house, 1835, described above, even though the Mitchell porch is not full length.)

The L-shaped porch spans the original brick and added frame portions of the house built during its historically significant era, and this composition was very likely complete before the house

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changed ownership in 1872. The two added rooms ("northwest" and "northwest center" on the plan drawing) were visually related to the original two brick rooms not only by a continuous porch but also by two pairs of windows, spaced somewhat equally, one along the north wall and one along the west wall of the frame addition. These windows, each about 34 inches wide by 70 inches high, are double hung with 6/6 lights (similar in proportion to those of the original windows) and narrow trims and muntins similar to those of the earlier windows. The fact that the south end of the addition was a service area is announced by its rear (west) door onto a 4 by 4 foot covered service porch. South of this door, also is a plain 1/1 window, tall and narrow at 24 inches by 69 inches. On the porch or east-side facade, a pair of doors are spaced along the wall, and another 24-inch-wide opening appears to have been a matching window (now converted into a door opening) to the one on the west facade. The somewhat later date of the addition is suggested by differences in door design: Instead of the low openings, narrow surrounds, and very wide lock rails of the original doors, the doors in the addition have openings at about today's standard height of 80 inches. Trim is wide and lock rails are relatively narrow, with paired panels and center muntins above and below.

Inside, the two main added rooms, other than having 9-foot plastered ceilings and poplar wide-board floors, appear quite different from each other. As a result of the foundation and floor joist

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design, the floor boards in the two rooms run in different directions. The corner or northwest room, almost 17 feet north-south by 20 feet east-west, is more formal in feeling because of its paired north windows, plastered walls, and brick fireplace with plain wooden mantelpiece on the south interior wall. The room's interior shape is made irregular by a jutting staircase enclosure, finished with a cabinet, to the left of the fireplace. The space between this enclosure and the fireplace is filled by shelving to the depth of the fireplace. To right of the fireplace, a 4-panel door with 3-light, side-opening transom leads from this room into the other main room of the addition.

This northwest center room, roughly 14 feet east-west by 18 feet north-south originally, has a very plain, horizontal-board wainscot 31 inches high with plastered walls above. This utilitarian wall treatment and the large number of doors (5) suggest that the room was a work area, probably with kitchen uses. About 1890, two closets about 2 feet by 6 feet were added to the south wall of this room. These closets flank a center doorway (with batten missing) leading to a separate end room about 5.5 feet deep and the width of the main room. Evidence in the attic indicates that the partition wall between this room and the main room is original. The small room, with 24-inch wide windows at east and west ends and no window or door on the south, may have been used as a pantry.

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On the west wall of the main room, going south, are one of a pair of large windows, the rear door and service porch, and--in the end room--the narrow pantry window described above. Opposite, on the east wall, two circa 1870 doors, one with missing batten, open onto the porch. The northernmost of these became the entry to the house only later, presumably during the 1890s when Henderson Street on the west was brought into service. Except that it lacks a transom, this door matches the rear entry door with 1 large light above a vertically divided panel. The revised entry point and added closets reflect use of the building as a boarding house circa 1890.

Recent Alterations

During one long period of ownership 1929-1951, the house assumed its present form. A shed-roofed room (about 9 by 9 feet) was placed on a rock-faced concrete block foundation south of the house in line with the porch. The north-south wing of the porch was enclosed and joined to this end room by means of north-south support beams and a roof. The porch enclosure became a kitchen, which still has a sink unit that may date from the 1930s, and the middle room housed a gas furnace. The former pantry of the 1870 addition was partitioned into a smaller pantry (with window made into a door into the kitchen) on the east. Subject to archaeological evidence, a bathroom on the west, approximately 5.5 by 10.5 feet, was undoubtedly the first in the house.

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The house was rented from 1964 to 1993, since then it has stood vacant. Significant rotting and termite infestation of sills, especially observable at south corners, may date from this time.

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The Legg House, Bloomington, Monroe County, IN

Narrative Statement of Significance

SUMMARY

The Legg House is historically significant circa 1848-1901 for its association with Bloomington's first period of urbanization, beginning when frontier conditions had only recently given way to the dignities of a town. The original house (1848-1854) in its simplicity of plan and detail suggests a farmhouse--one story, two rooms, a few stylistic references to the Greek Revival applied with Federal-era restraint. The locally unique Greek Revival parapet wall on the rear porch, added apparently "for show" between 1863 and 1872, may have been a retired farmer's response to Bloomington's increasingly elaborate architectural fashions as the town grew. Adding to architectural significance is the largely local craftsmanship of all historically significant portions of the house, from hand-pressed bricks and locally quarried limestone to poplar beams, planks, and moldings. The Legg House has an interesting relationship to Indiana University through its property history beginning in 1820 as Seminary Lot #74, and later through President William Lowe Bryan (born 1860), who visited his grandparents at the Legg House when he was a boy and returned to the house for meals around 1890, when the house was a boarding house. Circa 1900 replatting of the parcel as grid-patterned urban lots resulted in the area's becoming an urban neighborhood, ending the house's original quasi-rural context and its period of significance.

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The period of significance for the Legg House opened in Bloomington with the building of a second courthouse; the state "seminary's" upgrade to university status; and Bloomington's connection by stagecoach to Louisville on the south and Indianapolis on the north. The six-acre Legg land parcel went on the market as Seminary Lot #74 when part of the federally mandated "seminary reserve township" was released in 1820 for private purchase. The Legg parcel was traded repeatedly before being initially developed between 1848 and 1854. Compared to parcels in more southerly parts of the township, the Legg land at the township's northern edge was favorably located for both small-scale farming and speculation related to urban growth. The parcel was near Bloomington's downtown, the north-south road (now Old State Road 37), and the original Indiana University campus. The railroad arrived in 1854, running north-south just west of the road. By 1886, when the expanded Legg House was purchased for use as a boarding house patronized by university students, the settlement pattern of Bloomington was established as it exists today, with industry and workers' homes on the west side and the university and upper-middle-class homes on the east side. Later platting of Loudon's subdivision as a street grid with urban residential lots, developed around 1900, brought the Legg property to its present dimensions of 74.5 feet by 155.5 feet. The setting for the house and grounds has been modified only slightly since then. Two historic houses on the west were demolished during the 1960s to

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cut a curved connector street between Dunn to the west and Atwater to the south, and traffic increased with the establishment of Atwater and Third, to the north, as paired east-west arterials.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, 1794-1848

Only two years after Indiana statehood, the city of Bloomington was established in 1818 as the seat of Monroe County. The area's earliest known inhabitants would have been Native Americans from one of the Mound Builder cultures, sedentary farmers and extensive traders who occupied the Mississippi and Ohio valleys and were succeeded by members of the Miami, Delaware, and Potawatamie groups. Indiana as part of the Old Northwest passed from French to British, then American, control at the end of the Revolutionary War. The western lands became the first possessions--territories--of the new government, and it was in order to govern them that Congress established the township-and-range survey system and set up the guidelines for future statehood. Once Native American resistance was crushed at the battles of Fallen Timbers (1794) and Tippecanoe (1811), eternally land-hungry American settlers poured into the Northwest Territory, settling Indiana beginning in the south.

Monroe County was surveyed in 1812. Permanent European-American settlers are said to have located on county parcels the year before land was officially placed on sale in 1816, the same

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year Indiana was granted statehood. Also in that year, an act of the U. S. Congress provided that one township in each state should be dedicated to use as a "seminary of learning." In Indiana, President Monroe designated Township 8 North, Range 1 West, as the Seminary Township--called by this name locally and also called Reserve Township and, later, Perry Township after the hero-admiral of the War of 1812. Four full sections of this township were reserved: 4, 5, the west half of 3, east half of 6, west half of 9, and east half of 8 (all adjacent because of the numbering system used for sections). Part of the township was to be used as a campus and part made into 80 lots of assorted size, the proceeds of whose sales would help to finance the university. The ten acres of "Seminary Square," intended as campus, extended south near the present-day route of College and Walnut avenues between present-day Second and First streets.

Shortly thereafter, in 1818, Bloomington was founded with a sale of lots around the newly constructed log courthouse. Bloomington's founders, soon numbering 23 families, came from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. In Bloomington they continued their Appalachian-influenced culture with its predilection for mixed small farming even on marginal land. Within this near-subsistence economy, most of Monroe County's earliest settlements would remain tiny, isolated service centers. Bloomington was destined to differ, however, once it was designated both county seat and site of Indiana's "seminary of learning." These roles furnished means for

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getting by beyond the usual adjuncts of smallholding, such as storekeeping or quickly founded industries like the sawmill and ironmongery. The profit of these and other occupations would eventually be enhanced by limestone and furniture industries but, above all, by growth of the "seminary of learning." At the beginning, however, the county, township, and village governments provided the greatest economic advantage by offering numerous appointments and opportunities for service, from surveying to saloonkeeping.

Spatially, the slow-starting future university did not develop quite as expected. Only two buildings had been constructed in the early 1820s, an instructional building and the president's house. As early as 1820, squatters had appeared in the part of Seminary Square not in use. The squatters' position was soon legalized by joint action of the state General Assembly and the Trustees of the State Seminary, who agreed to appraise and sell unused lots through a specially appointed commissioner. This commissioner, James Borland, and the Seminary agent, William Alexander, are the first whose names appear on the parcel that would become the site of the Legg House. The parcel was first sold to town founder Asher Labertew in 1826, one year before sales were officially authorized. The parcel is described on Labertew's deed as:

six acres off the eastern end and parallel with the eastern boundary line of a certain lot of ground lying within the section sold for the use of the State Seminary and designated on

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the plat thereof, which is duly recorded in the Recorder's Office of Monroe County, Indiana, and appears as Lot. No. 74.

Labertew held the parcel for only 3 years, apparently as a speculative investment that did not pay off during his tenure. The next owner of the unimproved parcel, one Stephen Roach, engaged in property transfers during the 1840s that are not clearly recorded. Subsequent owners, David Browning, his heir Mary Browning, and then James D. Robertson, became embroiled in a lawsuit over the lot mortgage of \$152.73 at 10 percent annual interest. Robertson acquired the land at the ensuing sheriff's sale for \$125. This time the investment was profitable, and Robertson was able to sell the property in 1848 to one George M. Legg for \$235, slightly less than the appraised value of \$250.

Speculative activity on the future Legg parcel reflects Bloomington's rapid development before the Civil War. In the space of 30 years, 1818-1848, Bloomington passed from frontier outpost to government center and nascent college town. By 1848 a new, two-story courthouse had been built, and a stage coach line plied the road known today as "Old State Road 37" between Bloomington and Indianapolis. The seminary (officially become a "university") had 50 students, and fashionable Bloomington residents located nearby on the streets to the northwest. The 6-acre

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Legg parcel, Seminary Lot 74, was soon to become the first house located in the wooded, still rural area to the east.

HISTORY OF THE HOUSE AND ITS SITE

An increase in value from \$235 to \$1,000, and the mention of a \$300 mortgage on "premises" within lot 74, point to construction of the original Legg House between 1848 and 1853. Then-owner George M. Legg is not listed in the 1850 census manuscript of the township, but William Legg, aged 32, is listed with his wife Mary and two young children. Locations except by enumeration district were not indicated in the census manuscript, but William may have been a son or other relative of the owner who lived on and farmed the parcel. If so, it is typical for the area's economy that William would combine farming with another occupation--"factor," or broker, probably for a local crop or for salt, whiskey, or one of the county's other modest export products.

The one-story brick, two room house initially built on the parcel was sited very near the parcel's northeast edge, which was both the northern boundary of Perry Township and the route of Third Street, Bloomington's southernmost street circa 1850. The north side of the house, indicated as the formal side by its relatively elaborate entry door (whose limestone sill is not greatly worn

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even today) into the smaller room or front parlor, was only 225 feet, approximately, south of Third Street. Two doors on the south side of the house, one leading to each of the two rooms, may well have been used more often. They faced toward the bulk of the parcel, where fields and at least some outbuildings would be located. This configuration--formal face to the road, family face to the land--is in keeping with Bloomington's lingering rural character, as is the simplicity of the architecture--an English folk type, in this case hall and parlor, given touches of current architectural style.

Two unit, one-story house types--double pen, central passage, and hall-and-parlor-- persist in Monroe County, even in the historical city area, from the 1820s until the early 1900s. Most common are double pens--typically, two equal-sized rooms with a door into each and a symmetrical facade. Less common are central passage examples--two rooms divided by a hall, creating a symmetrical facade with center door. As few as a dozen of these may survive, about equally divided between rural and urban examples.

Roughly equal in number are surviving one-story, hall and parlor houses--one room larger than the other and a door into the larger room. Hall and parlor houses were built from 1830 (Van Buren Township, County Survey # 40060, log-built) to 1920 (Clear Creek Township, #37011,

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frame). Within Bloomington's urbanized area, only the Legg House and one other, later example can be found (Mary Gray cottage, 1870, 1329 South High Street, City Survey #105 05500276).

Stylistically closest to the Legg House is the Federal-style Mitchell House, 7008 Ketcham Road, in relatively rural Clear Creek Township to the south. The Mitchell House (1835; Monroe County Historic Sites and Structures Inventory #50035) bears striking similarities in detail to the Legg House besides the fact that both were built as one-story, brick, hall-and-parlor buildings with an early-added, shed-roofed rear porch. Both Mitchell and Legg houses have interior chimneys, a wide frieze band below the cornice, door transoms, and a predominance of double-hung 6/6 windows with delicate muntins. Most curious is the similarity of a gable end featuring only one cornice return, with a plain cornice and frieze ending at the other eave. The Mitchell House does not share the later Greek Revival touches of the Legg House, which reflect the popularity of this style in both urban and rural parts of the county from 1850 to 1900 (surviving examples).

On February 20, 1854 the Legg property was sold for \$1,000 to Jesse Carsaw, who was probably part-owner of the Carsaw and Andrews Monument Company circa 1850-1860s. The parcel size was then 3.75 acres, a portion of the northwest corner having apparently been sold previously.

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After less than 3 years, Carsaw sold the property to Colonel John McCrea for \$1,300. McCrea was 59 years old, married, with two teenaged children at home at the 1860 census, when he gave his occupation as "farmer and merchant." McCrea was a member of the embryonic Baptist church, president of the Monroe Agricultural Society, and active in wartime affairs, giving pro-Union talks and acting as Provost Marshall when the county dealt with the anti-draft protests of 1863.

McCrea, though remaining a county resident, sold the former Legg property in 1863 for \$850, down from his purchase price of \$1,300, but the parcel that McCrea sold was only "one acre and 1/8, more or less," located at the northeast corner of Seminary Outlot 74. This corner was at Third and the future Henderson streets, and the new configuration would have cut off all remaining arable part of the parcel south and west of the house. The property in its new character as simply a setting for a house was purchased in 1863 by James Whitaker.

Whitaker was a retired farmer who was to live at least 2 years beyond the remarkable age of 84 that he reported in the census manuscript of 1870. Whitaker lived with his wife Deborah, aged 82, who must have died before him since he sold the house subsequently as an unmarried man. The Whitakers were prosperous enough to keep a 22-year old live-in servant, Rossanna Nellinger

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(spelling approximate). These Whitakers were probably the grandparents of future Indiana University president William Lowe Bryan (born 1860), who remembered visiting his grandparents at the former Legg house. Bryan, who was a small boy at the time, remembered approaching the house along a wooded path from Third Street--still the only nearby street--and entering by the north door.

The price of \$2,400 for which Whitaker was to sell the Legg House in 1872 suggests, even allowing for postwar inflation, that major improvements had been made. The Whitakers' tenure 1863-1872 is the probable date range of construction for the cellar, two-story wood frame addition, and L-shaped porch of the house. It is likely that the additions were completed not long after the original house since stylistic and materials changes between the two portions are not great. For example, use of locally milled poplar is continued in flooring and other woodwork; later windows are proportioned and trimmed similarly to earlier ones. Whitaker's one remarkable departure from the overall stylistic restraint of the house is the parapet wall at the east end of the porch, described in detail in Item 7 above. This parapet was probably more extensive originally than now and must have been striking. Although interior chimneys and broad frieze-bands were not unusual back in 1850, and those of the Legg House are probably original, the added touch of the decorated parapet further emphasizes the house's kinship with the Greek Revival style. The

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parapet was probably considered an update as well as, with the addition, underlining farmer Whitaker's prosperity. It is fitting that this enlarged and improved building should have been purchased from Whitaker by another well-to-do Bloomingtonian, John W. Davis.

Davis was 51 years old and his wife Catharine 45 when they bought the former Legg property for \$2,400 in 1872. Davis and a partner, Benjamin McGee, owned a retail clothing store that offered in-house tailoring, which was Davis's lifelong trade. As of the 1880 census, the Davis family and 4 children (or 3 children and another young relative) lived together in this 4-room house, probably using the "northwest central" room of the addition for food preparation (and perhaps bathing) and using an outdoor privy as toilet. At most, heating by this time may have been accomplished with cast-iron stoves vented through one or both of the main-floor fireplaces. The Davises, who remained in Bloomington as late as the early 1900s, sold the house for \$3,000 in 1886 to Martha J. and John W. Denton.

By the time that a spectacular fire raged in Bloomington in 1883, razing the new university buildings, it can be speculated that the Legg House was already obsolescent and could not continue to be sold as a prestigious property against the competition of newer architectural styles and factory-made components of greater comfort offered by newer houses. But the fire

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precipitated Indiana University's move to "Dunn's Woods," a parcel east of Indiana Avenue. As one of the final pieces in Bloomington's mature urban layout, this move created changes in residential fashion. The stylish neighborhood was now located on Bloomington's east side, north of the university. Large houses along Fourth Street (Old Crescent University District in the Interim Report (City of Bloomington, 1988, pages 27-28) and other locations near the new campus were soon converted to boardinghouses, and the same fate befell the Legg House after its purchase by the Dentons. The same William Lowe Bryan who had visited the house as a child now, during the early part of his university career circa 1890, lived with friends in a house nearby and took his meals at the Dentons'.

Boarding use may have been taken its toll on the Legg House, which underwent only minor changes during this period--the addition of two closets in the north-central room and a change in the "official" entry to the Henderson Street side. In 1901, the end of the Legg House's period of significance, the house sold for a greatly reduced price of \$1,400 to Joseph Harbison and his wife. At this time the lot was reduced to its present size of 74.5 by 155.5 feet, and the streetscape context of the house began to resemble its present state, with circa-1900 houses on either side.

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The Harbisons lived in the house for at least 28 years. In 1929 their daughter Mary purchased the house for \$3,500 from her father. Mary lived in the house until 1951 with her niece, Mary Roddy, a physical education instructor at Indiana University. Further, noncontributing changes to the house undoubtedly took place during this long occupancy. The concrete cistern was probably installed by the 1920s, and the addition comprising a shed attached to the main house by a porch enclosure completed before 1935. Probably the end room of the addition was then converted to a bathroom and pantry and the enclosed porch made a kitchen. Harbison and Roddy built the present 1-1/2 story garage at an unknown date for their automobile, using the garage's loft area for storage. At some point the house, including its brick portion, was painted yellow.

The house, in a "much abused" condition (perhaps worn, or poorly maintained by its ageing occupants) was purchased for about \$9,000 in 1951 (although the deed does not reflect this price), according to its new owner. Mrs. Florence D. Bensinger, who culminated a long career at Indiana University as head of its medical library, lived in the house from 1951 until 1964. Bensinger experimented with 3 different heating systems, perhaps including the radiators still present in most rooms, and ended with a gas forced air furnace. Not surprisingly, she reported that the house, still uninsulated at present except for blown material in the attic crawl space, continued to be cold in winter.

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Bensinger also did considerable exterior and interior decorating. She painted the house its present gray and may have added an unknown quantity of gingerbread trim, of which one fragment remains as a decorative bracket in the angle where the east end of the porch roof meets the east brick wall. More of this material is stored in the house.

On January 20, 1964, the retired Bensinger sold the house for \$15,000 to its present owner, Indiana University. The university apparently acquired the property as part of a policy of land acquisition during a decade of expansion for American universities. The house was used as a rental by university employees and students until 1993, when it was allowed to remain vacant, but was never given a university function. The appearance of the house today, surrounded on three sides by empty lots, was created by demolitions circa 1970 when a connecting street was pushed through between Dunn and Atwater.

1 NPS Form 10-900a
(8-88)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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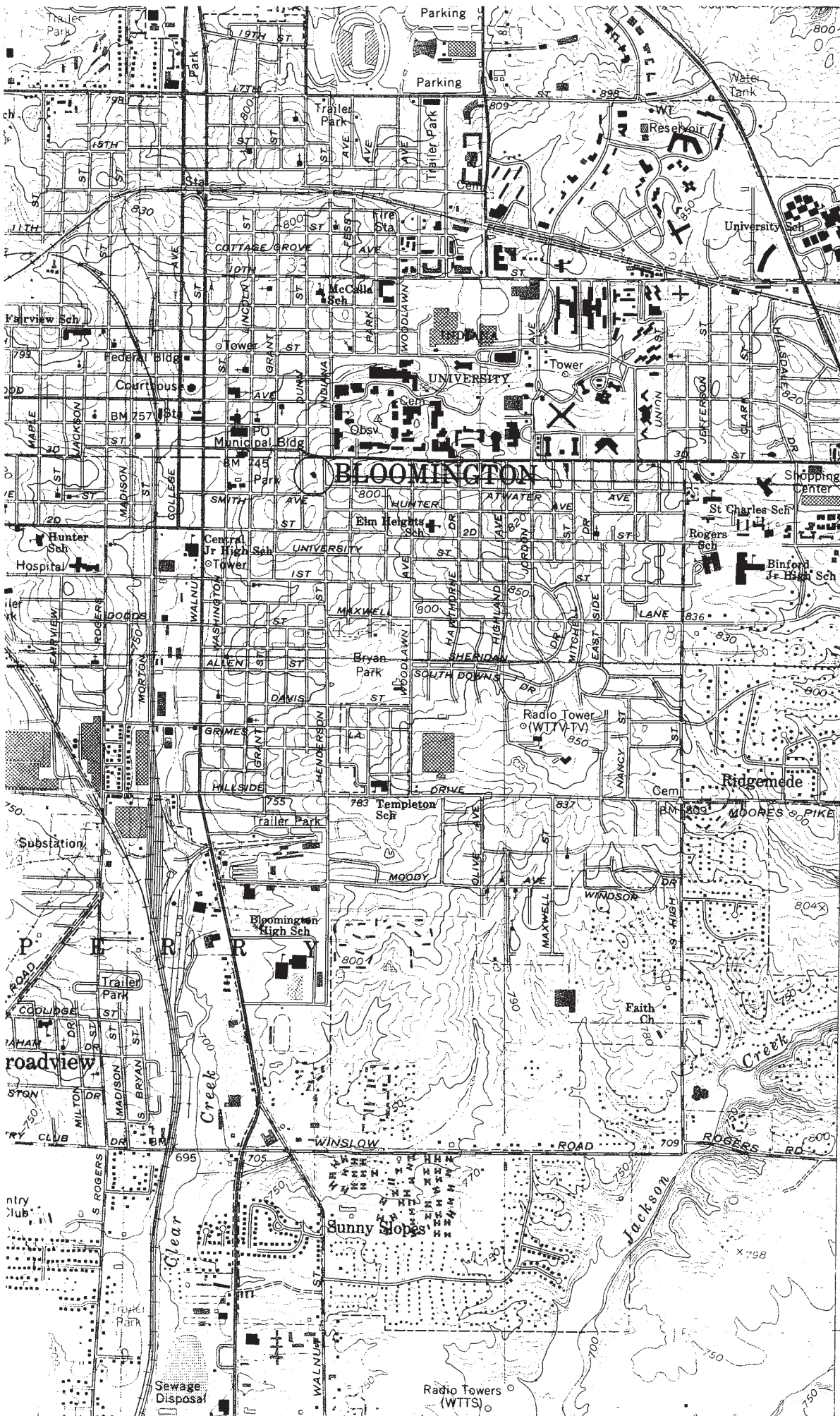
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10. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Part of Seminary Lot Number seventy-four (74) in the City of Bloomington, Indiana, bounded as follows: to-wit: Beginning at a point on the West line of Henderson Street in said City, 187 and 85/100's feet North of the Southeast corner of Lot Number One (1) in Loudon's Subdivision of a part of Seminary Lot Number 74; running thence West 155 ½ feet to a stone; thence North 74 ½ feet; thence East 155 ½ feet to the West line of Henderson Street; thence South with said line 74 ½ feet to the place of beginning.



UNIONVILLE 7 MI.
BELMONT 9 MI.
COLUMBUS 34 MI.

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