

FINAL

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Dixie Garage  
other names/site number Nash Garage

2. Location

street & number SR 56 and Sinclair Avenue N/A  not for publication  
city or town West Baden Springs N/A  vicinity  
state Indiana code IN county Orange code 117 zip code 47469

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

m.c. St D-SHPO 7-23-01  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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      |
| 0            | 0               | structures |
| 0            | 0               | objects    |
| 1            | 0               | Total      |

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and EARLY 20th CENTURY  
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Commercial  
Style  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
walls BRICK  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof ASPHALT  
other CONCRETE  
GLASS  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 COMMERCE \_\_\_\_\_  
 ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1918-1932 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1918-1920 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Charles E. Ballard \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

Orange County Government Building \_\_\_\_\_

Dixie Garage  
Name of Property

Orange IN  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

|   |      |         |          |   |      |         |          |
|---|------|---------|----------|---|------|---------|----------|
| 1 | 16   | 533600  | 4268200  | 3 |      |         |          |
|   | Zone | Easting | Northing |   | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| 2 |      |         |          | 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 Cynthia Brubaker  
organization Preservation Development Inc. date 02-28-2001  
street & number 218 North Rogers Street telephone (812) 336-2065  
city or town Bloomington state Indiana zip code 47404

## 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 HLEI West Baden, Inc.  
street & number 340 West Michigan Street telephone (317) 639-4534  
city or town Indianapolis state Indiana zip code 46202

**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.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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### Narrative Description

#### Summary Paragraph

The Dixie Garage is located at the northwest corner of State Road 56 and Sinclair Street in West Baden Springs, Orange County, Indiana. The Dixie is a large one-story brick structure, square in plan, with a barrel-vaulted roof, curved parapets along the front (east) and rear (west) facades and piers around all four facades. The structure fills most of its original site: lots 51, 52, and 53 in the West Baden Springs Addition to the town of West Baden Springs; and is surrounded by other structures within 100 feet on all four sides. State Road 56, or Broadway, is the main commercial thoroughfare in West Baden Springs with mostly residential structures along its northern section and mostly commercial structures along its southern section, near the Dixie. The Dixie Garage fits a typology of auto-related architecture, including car sales display space as well as garages for storage and repair, that were built in the 1920s as automobiles grew in popularity and were increasingly driven to this historic resort town.

#### Setting

French Lick Township, where the two resort towns of French Lick and West Baden Springs are located, is situated on an elevated but poorly drained stretch of the Mitchell Karst Plain in Orange County, southwestern Indiana. This land if not cleared for settlement would be covered by mixed hardwoods with riparian canebrakes. Ice Age glaciers almost but never quite reached the region's surface of bare limestone bedrock. The rock, carved into caves, sinkholes and a few narrow valleys, is permeated by myriad salty springs and watercourses. Names of some of these features, such as "French Lick" and "White River," indicate both their mineral content, sought by people and animals, and the blue-white or green-white cast the minerals gave to the water.<sup>1</sup>

The towns of West Baden Springs (formerly West Baden) and French Lick are sited about one mile apart and 10 miles west of the county seat, Paoli. Both resort towns are built along the steep sides of a valley, averaging perhaps two-tenths of a mile wide, forming the course of French Lick Creek. Elevations in the valley average 450-500 feet. Hills rise to about 700 feet throughout much of the area, suggesting a once rather level surface of bedrock. The town of West Baden Springs stands due east across the valley from the West Baden Springs Hotel, which backs up to the valley wall on the west. The hotel grounds, towns, and most of the region are subject to

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<sup>1</sup> Marion T. Jackson, ed., *The Natural Heritage of Indiana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), esp. 77-78; John A. Jakle, *Salt and the Initial Settlement of the Ohio Valley* (Ph.D. thesis, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1966), 23-26.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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dramatic episodes of flooding. On the valley floor and roughly following the north-south orientation of the valley, both a railroad track and a through road connect French Lick on the south with West Baden Springs on the north. The Dixie Garage, placed west of the road and east of the railroad track, is located on flat land at a point in the southern half of West Baden Springs where the valley floor widens.

During its period of significance, the Dixie Garage was surrounded on the west, north, and east by single family homes, with the Hoosier Club Hotel to the south. Over the years, most of those residential structures were replaced with commercial structures. The historic commercial district of West Baden Springs was clustered to the north and east of the Dixie Garage. Currently, the town's commercial district stretches along State Road 56 and includes the Dixie Garage building.

The Dixie Garage has concrete sidewalks immediately adjacent to the building on the east and south with grass plots between the sidewalks and the street curbs. A combination of gravel, grass, and other plant matter abuts the building on the north and west. A curb cut off of State Road 56 and gravel drive to a house, now demolished, abuts the building to the north. A gravel alley runs north-south at the rear (west) with gravel and overgrown drives to two different levels of vehicle entrances on the rear facade.

### Exterior

#### General Characteristics

Painted brick walls rise above 18" of exposed concrete foundation to concrete-capped parapet walls on the east and west, and to the eave of the barrel-vaulted roof on the north and south. The textured brick was unpainted until around 1955. The brick walls are divided into multiple bays by partial-height brick pilasters with concrete caps. All of the bays on the south and east, and the first bay on the north, contain window or door openings. The west elevation has an array of garage door and window openings, and a large chimney. The roof covering is asphalt sheeting.

#### East Elevation

The main facade (east elevation) is distinguished by crenalations in the broad-arched parapet that line up with the partial-height pilasters below. The openings between the pilasters were shortened by raising the concrete sills and filling in with brick below circa 1955. Glass block replaced wood-framed large single-light glass with a three-light transom above in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> bays (from south to north), also around 1955. The center (4<sup>th</sup>) bay has a recessed, centered entrance door at the top of a small, recessed flight of stairs, flanked by two sections of glass block that return to the recessed entrance with curved outside and inside corners. A two-

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 3 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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light aluminum storm door hangs in the entrance over a wood door with a large single-light glass panel. The inner door appears to be original. The 6<sup>th</sup> bay has a wood paneled overhead garage door with 8 wood panels over 16 glass panels over 16 wood panels. A 1935 postcard image of the Dixie looks to have had a garage door opening in this location with the sill at street level. Various openings have been cut into the glass block in all of the bays including double-hung wood frame windows covered with plywood and louvered grills. The brick facade is in fair to poor condition, with paint peeling in some places, and mortar and brick deterioration at the parapet level. Originally there was also a gas tank, indicated on the 1925 Sanborn, and a gas pump, shown in the 1935 postcard, in front of the building.

### North Elevation

The north elevation has one window opening in the 1<sup>st</sup> bay (easternmost) that matches those in the majority of bays on the east elevation described above. The westernmost bay has a smaller window opening that has been bricked in. The brick facade is in fair to poor condition, with peeling paint, staining from roof water run-off, and small trees growing up against the wall at the west end. The eave, visible here and on the south elevation, is unadorned and without gutter or downspout. The asphalt sheet roofing ends at the edge of the rusting sheet metal coping.

### West Elevation

The broad-arched parapet of the west elevation is capped by a continuous concrete coping with no crenalations. This facade is also divided into bays by partial-height pilasters with concrete caps, however unlike the other three facades, this one does not have pilasters at the outer edges near the corners. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> bays have window openings that are covered with sheets of plywood. The 3<sup>rd</sup> bay has a multi-paned steel sash window that is covered on the inside. There are garage door openings in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> bays each with a conglomeration of doors and coverings. The center (4<sup>th</sup>) bay is a loading dock with a drive that slopes down to below grade at the building facade with concrete retaining walls on either side. There are painted metal pipe rails on top of the retaining walls. A large square chimney attaches to the wall in the 6<sup>th</sup> bay and rises above the parapet another third higher than the wall at that point. A smaller chimney rises above and behind the parapet above the pilaster that divides the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> bays. The brick facade is in fair to poor condition, with peeling paint and vines growing across most of its area.

### South Elevation

The brick wall and eave detail of the south elevation matches that of the north elevation described above. The window openings in all but the 2<sup>nd</sup> bay (from the west) match those in the majority of bays on the east elevation described above, although only the easternmost bay

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 4 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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originally had the wood-framed window. The other windows were originally multi-paned steel sash. The 2<sup>nd</sup> bay has a section of glass block on the westernmost 2/3's and a recessed entrance door in the east side of the bay. The condition of the brick here is poor with sections of missing brick above the pilasters at the eave and along a section at the east end at the eave.

### Roof

The barrel-vaulted roof is currently covered with asphalt sheeting, but is punctured through in at least one location in the southeast section of the roof. Three roof ventilators penetrate the surface in the northeast section of the roof. A centered clerestory running the length of the building (east-west) with ventilators on the roof of the clerestory structure was visible in the 1935 postcard image of the Dixie, and in photographs from 1955. An interior drainage system has been disabled and roof water drainage is currently running down the masonry walls, which contributes to their deterioration.

### Interior

#### General Characteristics

The interior is a clear span nearly open rectangle, which is made possible by the bow string steel trusses that rest on interior pilasters. The concrete floor is lightly covered with debris and some water. It has two levels: higher on the south 2/3's of the building; and lower on most of the north 1/3. The exposed painted masonry walls have deteriorated paint, graffiti, and excess moisture conditions in many locations. The north and south walls are evenly divided by 5 pilasters on which rest the 5 trusses. Each of the trusses are cross-braced in three locations along their length (north-south). Wood roof rafters rest on the tops of the trusses, run in the east-west direction, and are pocketed into the east and west masonry walls. A lack of proper ties between the outer and inner wythes of brick on the east and west masonry walls coupled with the expansion of the wood rafters has caused the outer wythe of brick to delaminate at the parapet level, a condition which will be addressed by the current owners. Wood cross bracing runs between the rafters and wood decking is attached to the tops of the rafters. Various exposed conduit, electrical boxes, fluorescent light fixtures, and other detritus runs along the walls, between the trusses, or hangs from the trusses.

A two-story concrete block structure is located within the garage, centered against the east wall. The first level is divided into various rooms and toilet rooms with wood frame walls and dropped metal grid ceilings with lay-in tiles in some locations. The second level is accessed by a concrete block and poured concrete stair along the outside west wall of the structure and by a wood frame stair along the outside south wall of the structure. The second level is partially divided with a



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 5 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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painted clay structural tile wall and the steel truss that passes through this area. A metal cage, presumably from a lift or elevator of some kind, is attached to the north end of the outside west wall. Although some materials found in this two-story concrete block structure appear to be original, or at least historic, others are of newer construction. It is possible that some type of structure originally existed in this location, presumably for office purposes, but it has been altered by replacements and/or additions of elements.

Originally built to house 80 cars, the Dixie Garage was altered to serve as a skating rink in the 1940s, then a bottling plant in the 1950s, then a wood manufacturer in the 1980s. These changes in use account for the changes in the floor levels, window and door openings, and interior floor plan and electrical service.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 6 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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### **Narrative Description**

#### Summary Paragraph

The Dixie Garage is a characteristic example, unique in design in the Springs Valley, of buildings conceived specifically to combine the sale, servicing, and storage of automobiles during the pre-Depression 20<sup>th</sup> century. The scale needed could not readily be achieved by earlier storefront building types and so led to design solutions that are characteristically "modern." In a new economy of middle-class consumerism, automobile-related business buildings were oriented to the retail customer and required a persuasive presentation. But these buildings made use of economically feasible industrial architectural technology like the truss roof and steel-sash windows, as well as newly available picture windows, to meet the need for open, well-lighted interior spaces that also had the quasi-industrial function of auto repair. The one-story brick Dixie, built between 1918 and 1920 under the patronage of Charles E. "Ed" Ballard, is also important for its association with Ballard. This wealthy operator of resort gambling casinos nationwide also owned the West Baden Springs Hotel between 1922 and 1932 and masterminded much of the valley's later phase of resort tourism and accompanying business speculation. In terms of broad historical patterns, the Dixie Garage is locally significant in the area of commerce as both a new building type and a new marketing approach—one that used the prestige of national brands such as Auburn and Nash to identify a local business. In the area of recreation and tourism, the Dixie is a locally rare, fully developed expression of a resort town's response to increasing tourist as well as resident use of the auto. Although the Dixie hung on into the 1930s as an automotive business, its period of significance (1918-1932) ended when closing of the West Baden Springs Hotel terminated the town's resort economy and customer base.

#### Historical Background: Pre-History to 1918

From the earliest known human visits to the French Lick area, its abundant salt springs shaped the area's economic use and made it part of a network of roads.<sup>1</sup> Hunters followed the movements of both prehistoric and modern buffalo species in spring and summer as these herds, in search of salt, beat wide paths through the forest east of their prairie homes. Early European explorers used and described these remarkable "buffalo traces," sometimes 100 feet or wider, as well as licked-down wallows of salty clay up to half an acre in extent. The licks attracted not only buffalo but deer, small mammals, parakeets, and bees.

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<sup>1</sup>Jakle, *Salt and the Initial Settlement of the Ohio Valley*, 13-56. The following discussion is based on Jakle's report and on Jackson, *Natural Heritage of Indiana*.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 7 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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With abundant game and inhospitable terrain, areas like French Lick were hunting grounds, not sites of settlement. Such areas may have been hunted to exhaustion by the time Native American nations, between 500 and 1500 AD, developed sedentary ways of life in other parts of the future Indiana. Eventually, the return of game to the French Lick area again brought hunters, both Iroquoian peoples and the first Europeans. French explorers, fur traders, and missionaries had arrived by the late 1600s.

For the next hundred years, travelers described buffalo as incredibly numerous. As Europeans displaced Indians by force, buffalo travel routes made paths for European exploration and settlement. The French and their Indian allies were defeated by the British in 1763, the British 20 years later by the Americans. The lucrative French trading center of Vincennes, on the falls of the Wabash 50 miles west of the future French Lick Township, became the capital of the Indiana Territory in 1787. In 1800, some one-third of Indiana's European-American population of about 6,500 lived around Vincennes, and another thousand at Jeffersonville.

Although the name French Lick implies that the French were present in Orange County, the area was likely named by George Rogers Clark, camping there during his expedition of 1786-1787 to subdue Indians in the new Northwest Territory, including Indiana.<sup>2</sup> Clark may have borrowed the name from a French Lick on the Cumberland River in Tennessee. Land survey of the Indiana Territory as called for under the Land Ordinance of 1785 began circa 1805 with location of Indiana's initial survey point seven miles south of Paoli, or roughly ten miles southeast of what is now French Lick.

With Native American resistance broken after the battle of Tippecanoe (1811), European-American settlers came quickly. The future Orange County, organized 1816, was named by Quakers from Orange County, North Carolina. These settlers, along with African-Americans, were among the area's earliest. Both groups probably valued Orange County for settlement less as lucrative farm land than as "free soil," as an area safe from Indians and—in part because of travel routes based on buffalo traces—as an accessible and well traveled location. With the

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<sup>2</sup>Excellent sources for early history are given in John W. O'Malley, *The Story of the West Baden Springs Hotel* (Master's thesis, Loyola University, Chicago, 1957), 4ff. See L. C. Helderman, "The Northwest Expedition of George Rogers Clark," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* XXV (1938), 317-334; Joseph Karol, "The French at French Lick, Fact or Fiction?" *Indiana Magazine of History*, June 1954, 139-144; "Narrative of John Heckewelder's Journey to the Wabash in 1792," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* XII, 173-174; "Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny, 1781-1795," *Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Memoirs* VII (Philadelphia, 1860), 299; Harlow Lindley, ed., *Indiana As Seen By Early Travelers* (Indianapolis, 1916), 521.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 8 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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influx of population, Indiana gained statehood in 1815. As part of facilitating the new citizens' subsistence, the 1816 Enabling Act provided that thirty-six sections known as French Lick Township in Orange County be reserved for gathering salt. Entrepreneurs tried both surface kettle extraction and boring to deep water, but persistent effort remained disappointing, and in 1833 the land went on sale to the public at \$1.25 minimum per acre.

The closest Orange County town in those years was the nearby county seat and Quaker-founded settlement of Paoli. But in 1828 Dr. William A. Bowles, an early Paoli land speculator acting through his father Thomas, bought land in French Lick Township. Dr. Bowles's intentions for the property are not known, and his strange career was eventually to culminate in his being tried for treason and nearly hanged in 1864 as a Confederate sympathizer. Along the way, he became a state legislator and may have tried several enterprises on the French Lick property before opening a hotel near one of the springs around 1845.<sup>3</sup> When called the following year to serve as a lieutenant in the Mexican American War, Bowles leased his hotel to another of the colorful frontier characters of the day, John Lane.

John A. Lane (1811-1884), a patent medicine seller from Jefferson Valley, New York, came to Orange County in the late 1840s. He acquired the lease of the French Lick House and must have done well enough to decide, when the lease expired, to open a second hotel. Lane found a site on French Lick Creek one mile north of the French Lick settlement. He christened the future town "Mile Lick," and by about 1855 had opened his own hotel, the Mile Lick Inn. "Mile Lick" soon became West Baden, after the German spa of Wiesbaden. Bad feeling between Bowles and Lane over the lease of Bowles's hotel meant that the West Baden Inn was begun in a spirit of ill-natured competition. But it was the presence of the two hotels together, both grandly conceived, that probably created the necessary amount of activity and amenity that ultimately established the area as a resort destination.

From the 1850s through 1880s, the two hotels were favorite gathering places for county residents. The initial Monon railroad route of 1887, with especially good connections to and from Chicago and Louisville, immediately opened the French Lick and West Baden hotels to region-wide tourism.<sup>4</sup> In April of 1887, the *Paoli Republican* reported with surprise that guests

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<sup>3</sup>Richard W. Haupt, *History of the French Lick Springs Hotel* (Bloomington, Indiana: Master's thesis, Indiana University, 1953), 30-77, cited in O'Malley, 11, note 28.

<sup>4</sup>The Monon was formed in 1883 through one of many railroad mergers of the period. "Monon," formerly Bradford,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 9 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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were already arriving; in June, that many visitors were first-timers; and by the end of the month, that both major hotels planned to build large additions at the end of the season. Seven past and present investors in the West Baden Springs Hotel lost no time in filing the plat for a town, which was recorded on July 23, 1888.

Speculation in land and business ventures would be as enduring a part of the resort economy in the Springs Valley as were profits from tourism and gambling. Once the town established itself as a destination during the 1890s and other hotels were built to supplement the big hotel, additions to the original town began to be platted. The West Baden Springs Company's own addition, recorded July 31, 1902, was placed adjacent to the original town on its south side. The common boundary and north end of the subdivision was an unopened, east-west running right-of-way called "Apple Street" on the Sanborn maps of 1913 and 1925. South of the addition was the Colonial Hotel, built before 1906. Lots planned for the West Baden Springs Company's addition ran three blocks north-south and filled an irregular east-west space spanning the railroad tracks and Harrison Avenue on the west, Broadway in the middle, and County Road 1129 on the east. Speculative trade in lots went on at a brisk pace, but actual building on the lots—mostly along Broadway—was slow. The subdivision's largest single land use, the Dixie Garage, would not appear until circa 1918.

In 1902, effects of the automobile era on the Springs Valley were still in the future. West Baden and French Lick as destinations were created by the coming of the railroad, not by the invention of the automobile. In the 1890s, when the two resorts were already attracting tourists from the Midwest and beyond, few except the rich owned automobiles. The first published accounts of even luxury tourism by car did not appear until around 1910. Only after Henry Ford and other independent automobile makers settled a patent dispute in 1911 did mass production of automobiles begin.<sup>5</sup>

Travelers in these years were still arriving in West Baden and French Lick by train. At the beginning of the decade, the town was almost untouched by the existence of automobiles, its hauling, goods delivery, and very likely mail delivery, done by horse-drawn dray or wagon.

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is a town in White County through which both parent companies' routes passed.

<sup>5</sup>For a bibliography of tourist accounts, see Carey S. Bliss, *Autos Across America* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1972). Theodore Dreiser's *A Hoosier Holiday* (New York: John Lane) appeared in 1916. For automobile history, see Richard A. Wright, *West of Laramie: A Brief History of the Auto Industry*. Internet publication ([http://www.comm.wayne.edu/staff/wright/auto history/00.html](http://www.comm.wayne.edu/staff/wright/auto%20history/00.html)), Detroit: Wayne State University, 1998.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 10 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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Visitors and residents alike got around by horse and buggy, if not on foot. The West Baden Springs and Colonial hotels, relatively far from the passenger depot, had their own vehicles, drivers, and "livery," a barn or stable where horses could be boarded and horses and buggies hired. Another commercial livery is shown on the Sanborn map of 1906 for West Baden at the southeast corner of Main and First streets. A "buggy repository" (with lodge hall upstairs) was located on the west side of Harrison Avenue north of the downtown, and a blacksmith's shop was located next door. Four years later, the 1910 census enumerated seven drivers of horse-drawn vehicles, but only one employee in an automobile-related occupation—a private chauffeur, William Kirby, who probably worked for the owners of the West Baden Springs Hotel.

It was still an event when James A. Felknor of West Baden took delivery of a garage for his automobile in 1913. Felknor, dry-goods-store owner and early Springs Valley land speculator, bought the galvanized metal garage "in sections all ready for setting up," according to the *Springs Valley Herald* of March 13, 1913. Details of the Sanborn map published in this year also suggest the beginnings of automobile impact on West Baden. Horses were far from gone, but they must have been banished to the outskirts of town and beyond, where quarters for the John Robison Circus, purchased in 1915 by Ed Ballard, would soon replace the "livery and auto storage" that formerly was part of the Colonial Hotel. A new livery was built just north of the Colonial even as former commercial liveries nearer to the town center became storage buildings for feed and other bulky items.

By the time these former liveries were rebuilt as garages, changes in the wider world had made a difference in the atmosphere of Springs Valley resort towns. "Taking the waters"—the activity on which the valley's tourism was founded—had been discredited as a health benefit.<sup>6</sup> Emphasis and profit, shifted to a more forthright enjoyment of the Valley's most exciting tourist activity, gambling. World War I, which began in 1914, was a source of American prosperity during the three years the country remained non-combatant. The West Baden Hotel was to suffer setbacks, partly from the cost of an ambitious building program and partly from being commandeered as a war hospital 1918-1919, but the valley as a whole had begun on its years of greatest success. Except for brief periods—American involvement in the war (1917-1918) and the economic recession of 1921—tourists came with more disposable income. Certain town residents even found themselves among the rich who wintered in Florida.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>An influential expose of patent medicines was published as early as 1905: Samuel Hopkins Adams's *The Great American Fraud* (New York: Collier and Son).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 11 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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As late as 1920, most American travel was still by train. Yet the automobile had become integral to American society as the middle class gained an increasingly broad base of membership. Automobile ownership and automobile tourism functioned as both conspicuous consumption and consumerist mode of self-expression. Managing an automobile dealership and automobile selling were emblematic of the opportunities for financial success that newly corporate America had to offer. Henry Ford's low-priced Model T (circa 1908-1927) accounted for 40 percent of American automobile production in 1913—when a Ford dealership had already come to French Lick—and democratization of automobile ownership can be seen in the astronomical increase of automobile ownership from one-half million in 1910 to eight million in 1920. This was the context in which the Dixie Garage was built in West Baden, sometime between 1918 and 1920.

### The Dixie Garage and its Site

The land parcel that was to contain the Dixie Garage consisted of lots 51, 52, and 53 in the West Baden Springs Company Addition. These lots ran north from Sinclair Avenue, the southern boundary of the subdivision, between an alley on the west and Broadway on the east. In 1902 and 1903, all of the lots were acquired from their original owner, the subdividing company, by Charles E. "Ed" Ballard.<sup>8</sup> Ballard was perhaps the most remarkable and certainly the wealthiest of the little group of frontier eccentrics, colorful characters, and movers and shakers that in 50 years transformed West Baden and French Lick from former buffalo wallow to nationally known mineral-springs resort.<sup>9</sup>

Ed Ballard (1874-1936) was the son of a bankrupt and embittered farmer from Hillham, Indiana, a small town just across the county line from West Baden. Ballard, who quit school after fourth grade, worked at various jobs including saloon porter. By the time he was about 20 years old Ballard had saved enough to purchase a saloon of his own—variously said to have been called "West Baden Saloon and Restaurant," "Spring Number Eight," and "The Dead Rat"—located on

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<sup>7</sup>For the West Baden Springs Hotel during these years, see O'Malley, *West Baden Springs Hotel, 73-77*. Reports of locals' trips to Florida can be found in the *Paoli Republican* and *Springs Valley Herald*, various dates.

<sup>8</sup>Deeds of 18 September 1902, 23 September 1902, 31 July 1903, and 2 September 1903. Two of these transactions were the sale of lot 53 to Adam and Mary Burton, who then sold it to Ed Ballard and his brother Logan (James L. Ballard, c.1884-1925). The brothers jointly owned several of the lots.

<sup>9</sup>By 1899, nationally known humorist "Mr. Dooley" (Peter Finley Dunne) had mentioned West Baden in the same sentence as Paris, France. Dunne, *Mr. Dooley in Peace and in War* (New York: Greenwood, 1968 [c. 1898]), 158; cited in O'Malley, *West Baden Springs Hotel*, 28, note 57.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 12 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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Harrison Avenue on the future site of the Homestead Hotel. Featuring roulette and cards as well as lunch in his saloon, Ballard not only made a profit but also attracted the attention of another self-made man: Lee Sinclair, owner of the West Baden Springs Hotel. Sinclair invited Ballard to manage the hotel's new casino, and this was the enterprise on which Ballard founded his fortune.<sup>10</sup>

Around 1900, Ballard began buying up property and mortgages in the Springs Valley. In 1913, Ballard married Dollie Finrock (born c. 1891), niece of Lester H. Sutton, manager of the West Baden Springs Hotel.<sup>11</sup> The couple had at least three children. In 1915, when Ballard must already have been wealthy, he bought three circuses, Hagenbeck-Wallace, Sells-Floto, and John Robison, retaining ownership until 1928. Robison's established winter quarters in West Baden, and around the same year Ballard acquired Brown's Hotel in French Lick—a hotel that had been established chiefly as a site of gambling convenient to the French Lick Springs Hotel. The circus apparently offered gambling also. Owning the circus as well as Brown's Hotel put Ballard in control of the Springs Valley's most lucrative gambling operations.

Almost inevitably, the West Baden Springs Hotel, deeply in debt, became Ballard's within a few more years—about 1922. During the 1920s Ballard ran gambling operations in resorts nationwide, including Miami Beach, Florida, Hot Springs, Arkansas, Saratoga Springs, New York, and Mackinac Island, Michigan. Ballard assigned management of the West Baden Springs Hotel to his attorney, Perry McCart. Ballard continued to own the hotel until the Depression forced the West Baden Springs Hotel's final closing in 1932. This event brought the Springs Valley's resort-era economy to an end.<sup>12</sup>

In his property dealings from about 1900 to 1930, Ed Ballard associated family members as well as other partners with many of the ventures, and later conducted transactions under the ownership

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<sup>10</sup>For Homestead Hotel, see Camilla Deiber, National Register nomination of Homestead Hotel, submitted 20 August 1997. Details of Ed Ballard's life are based in part on 1955 interviews by John W. O'Malley and Joseph T. Tobin of W. W. Cave, a longtime friend of Ballard. Interview material is presented in O'Malley, *West Baden Springs Hotel*, esp. 79-86. Also see Charles E. Ballard, *The Ballards of Indiana* (Peru, Indiana: C. E. Ballard Literary Trust, 1984).

<sup>11</sup>Sutton and Finrock are enumerated in census manuscripts for West Baden town, 20 April 1910.

<sup>12</sup>For some local effects of the stock market crash of 1929 and ensuing Depression, see O'Malley, *West Baden Springs Hotel*, 89-92.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 13 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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of his firm, Lost River Investment Company. Except for gambling operations, Ballard tended not to manage his businesses personally. A typical transaction was construction of the Homestead Hotel (1913), probably stage-managed by Ed Ballard although it was his cousins, Harry, Norman, and Manda Ballard, who sat on the board of directors. In 1919, a quitclaim deed ceded ownership of the hotel to Lost River Investment, which held the property until Ballard liquidated most of his Springs Valley holdings circa 1932.<sup>13</sup>

Construction of the Dixie Garage followed a pattern similar to that of the Homestead Hotel. Ed Ballard's future Dixie Garage parcel may have been planned from the beginning as the site of a commercial enterprise, or the idea may have belonged to Dr. Fred D. Arthur of West Baden. In 1917, when Arthur bought lot 53, a half-interest in lots 51 and 52, and other property in the West Baden Springs Company's subdivision, he was a 43-year-old physician. Arthur worked as house doctor for the Homestead Hotel. Between 1917 and 1920, Fred Arthur and Ed Ballard orchestrated an exchange in which Ballard sold the Dixie site to Arthur, Arthur apparently built the Dixie, and Arthur then sold a half-interest in the resulting property, including lots 51-55, to the Lost River Investment Company. Arthur's 1920 sale deed contained the first mention of improvements on these five lots, and the price of a half interest in the improvements alone was \$15,000. Most or all of these improvements would consist of the Dixie Garage, built between 1918 and 1920.<sup>14</sup>

The Dixie is one of two commercial garages still standing in the town of West Baden Springs. The other is the former Central Garage (now United Auto Service). The Dixie and the Central, located at the southeast corner of Broadway and First streets, were each built on the site of a livery stable. The 60-car Central has not been documented, but it and the Dixie are probably within five years of each other in date of construction. The Central Garage was a Chevrolet dealership, storage facility, and repair garage listed in 1928 to G. L. Bedster, who was the business proprietor if not property owner.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Deiber, Nomination of the Homestead Hotel.

<sup>14</sup>Deeds of 27 August 1917, 12 June 1918, and 11 December 1920. Ballard sold one lot to an apparent intermediary, Frances Davis, by deed of 6 December 1910. Davis then sold the lot to Fred Arthur in 1917. Previous improvements to lots 53 and 55—a livery and a dwelling—as shown on the 1913 Sanborn map would not have accounted for the 1920 sale price.

<sup>15</sup>R. L. Polk and Company, *Polk's Indiana State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1928-1929* (Indianapolis, IN: R. L. Polk and Company, 1928), entry for West Baden. Another Bedster, L. W., was listed as proprietor of the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 14 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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The Central has the appearance of a transitional design solution—a vernacular commercial building adapted to, rather than intended for, the scale and uses of automobile servicing. Most of the building, on a downtown site sloping downhill toward Broadway, is two-story, constructed of unpainted red brick. Present-day drive-in doors on the front facade may originally have been either doors or windows. Technologically, the building has modern elements in the original steel sash (remaining exposed on south facade only) and roof framing, noted on the 1925 Sanborn map as being steel trusses supported by piers. But the building's front facade relates more closely to 19<sup>th</sup> century Main Street styling with its hipped roof behind a stepped parapet, residential-scale upstairs windows above larger ground-floor openings, and chamfered corner entrance. Unlike many 19<sup>th</sup> century front business facades, however, the Central's was not detailed with proportional divisions, bays, or recesses. The combination of lack of detail, a two-story, small-entry design, and the size needed to accommodate automobiles creates a facade of ambiguous scale whose proportions remain awkwardly unresolved between height and width.

Like the Central Garage, the 80-car Dixie Garage had steel sash (now mostly replaced) and a truss roof—the bowstring or Whipple type in this case—on interior piers. The Dixie's curved rather than angled roof admitted light through a centered clerestory (now removed). Architecture of the one-story Dixie, in contrast to that of the Central Garage, belongs firmly to the 20<sup>th</sup> century in its striking breadth-to-height proportion. Breadth is emphasized by a rhythmic, full-width treatment of the front facade under a locally unusual, broad-arched parapet wall. The upper half of this elevation is unadorned and nearly all elaboration confined to the lower half. Here, windows or doors and exterior structural pilasters alternate in a band extending all the way across. A cornice detail of square notches at intervals—crenelation adapted to a curved surface—each notch at a point directly above a pilaster, subtly contributes to rhythm.

The Dixie Garage was not centrally located and, except for visitors at the hotel across the street, was an unlikely target of pedestrian drop-in trade. The Dixie's location on the through road, the presence of gas pumps, and the building's original bold display windows, however, would have attracted motorists. A postcard dated 1935 showed the then-unpainted brick building, in apparently original condition, with identical large-paned display windows (plus one or more large doors) across most of the front and at the front corner of the visible side wall. A single-width glass entry door was set asymmetrically into one of these windows at two-thirds height. Each of the now-altered facade openings occupied nearly all the space between a pair of the building's pilasters. The whole of this glassed area defined a purpose-built, amply proportioned

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Chrysler agency and also appeared in the 1920 census manuscript as "automobile salesman."

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 15 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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space for showing automobiles for sale. Part way around the larger rear portion of the building, smaller, multi-paned, steel-sash windows continued the pilaster-window-pilaster rhythm while signaling in their less decorative appearance that the area was devoted to utilitarian purposes of parking, storage, and repair. There may originally have been a main entry door in the center front opening, one of two that are hidden by awnings in the postcard photograph. A "Garage" sign extended forward from the wall over the central awning. A globe-topped gas pump, one of two present historically, can be seen through foreground shrubbery of a lot across the street.

Notably, the rhythmic, window-and-pilaster treatment of the Dixie's walls resembles that of the Homestead Hotel's south or lobby facade—where large-paned windows with heavy muntins occupying the full space between exterior pilasters are deployed all the way across the facade, with a glass entry door set into the window glass. The design kinship and professional design quality of the Homestead and Dixie separate these two buildings from other remaining hotels and garages in West Baden. Since Ed Ballard was involved in creating both the Homestead and the Dixie, he may have hired the same designer for both. Ballard had great financial resources, was long connected with the West Baden Springs Hotel and its endless rebuilding projects, and would have been more aware than many local entrepreneurs of current design trends outside the town.

The Dixie is a somewhat smarter and better proportioned, but characteristic, version of buildings designed for new, large-space functions during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Enterprises such as movie theaters and automobile-related businesses brought architectural elements from the producer to the consumer phase of the industrial revolution. The profit orientation of these enterprises did not justify the design and construction costs of traditional methods that might have been used to create a church or concert hall. The large, open interiors these enterprises needed fell somewhere between the massive industrial scale created in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and constricted retail venues of the same era. Movie houses and auto-related buildings adapted technology such as the roof truss from first-generation industrial designs including bridges and railroad stations. Where operations required strong light, numerous factory-type windows could fill the space between support piers. In the case of the garage-dealership, newly available "picture windows" gave full-length unobstructed views of the largest objects yet displayed indoors for retail sale—automobiles.

As shown on the 1925 Sanborn map, when the combined towns' population was given as 2,800, the Dixie was among at least nine public garages, or automobile servicing facilities, in the Springs Valley. Garages were also operated by the West Baden Springs and French Lick Springs hotels. Storage capacity of each of these 11 garages was noted on the Sanborn map, furnishing a total of 394 automobile spaces in French Lick and 225 in West Baden. Most of the garages were

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 16 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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constructed after 1913. Only two, constructed later than the Dixie, had greater than its 80-car capacity. The one still standing (though vacant and fire-damaged), on Main Street in French Lick, is a 160-car concrete block building constructed in 1925 or 1926.

By the time of the 1920 census, the occupational description "teamster" had become ambiguous—driver of a team of horses, or driver of a multiple-horsepower truck? Even if all nine teamsters and draymen still drove wagons, more residents of West Baden had work relating to automobiles and trucks than to horses. Two residents were automobile agents or sellers; three were garage mechanics. Four residents were truck drivers, with three of these working for one or more hotels. With the increase in local wealth, the number of chauffeurs had grown to five.

By 1925, visitors had probably begun arriving in the Springs Valley by car. Improvements to automobile operating systems and automobile comforts, rather than improvements to roads, are the likely reason for more auto travel. Still, the Indiana Department of Conservation, like other public and private agencies, responded to demand by producing state maps for automobile tourists. On these maps, West Baden and French Lick were shown as points of interest—"One of the fashionable resort places of the country [with] large hotels"—that could be reached by branching off the main road either south from Indianapolis or east-west between Louisville and St. Louis. (These former state roads became U.S. 50, Indianapolis-St. Louis, and U.S. 150, Louisville-St. Louis, a year or two later.) Most of the route, like most of Indiana's roads at the time, was untreated gravel with a few paved stretches of ten miles or so.<sup>16</sup>

The year 1929, until the October stock-market crash, set the record for automobile sales at 3,848,937, a total that would not be regained for 20 years. It is not clear how many automobiles, especially luxury automobiles, could be sold to the Springs Valley's population of around 2,800, or how many visitors would choose their vacation site as a place of purchase. But display windows full of automobiles provided, at a minimum, a conversation piece and advertisement both for the automobile brand and for the garage's other services. At different times between 1913 and 1929, Auburn, Chevrolet, Chrysler, Ford, and Nash, and probably others, were represented in dealerships. The 1920 census manuscript for West Baden shows that James Felknor, owner of a dry goods store who bought himself a residential garage in 1913, had

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<sup>16</sup>Indiana Department of Conservation, Publication No. 27, *Where Shall We Go? Map Showing Points of Interest in Indiana*. The map was continued through revisions of which the 1925 edition was the third. For automobile tourism and road conditions see John A. Jakle, *The Tourist* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), esp. 101-145.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 17 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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become an "automobile agent," and Ford had had a dealership in French Lick since 1913 or earlier. Records are not available for all years, but the Dixie is known to have been a Nash dealership in 1927, an Auburn dealership in 1928-29. Both auto brands may have been on sale simultaneously. One Thomas G. Ellis managed the Dixie Garage in these years. Ellis lived in Paoli as late as 1924, when his name appeared in a lease agreement for another garage, this one in French Lick.<sup>17</sup>

Within hours after the 1929 stock market crash was announced, guests began leaving the Springs Valley. For a while afterward, residents might have been able to hang on to hope for their jobs and businesses, but only until the final closing of the West Baden Springs hotel in 1932 deprived the area of much of its economic base.<sup>18</sup> Like many other businesses the Dixie Garage appears to have died a slow death between 1932 and 1939, parallel to the decline of the Auburn Automobile Company whose auto dealership the Dixie had been. The Dixie's profitability in those years is unknown, but local informants state that it continued to operate as a storage, parking, and repair facility and a Whippet or Plymouth dealer. Ed Ballard died in 1936 without selling off the Dixie Garage as he had done most of his Springs Valley investments. In 1939, however, the Lost River Investment Company gave up all or part of their interest in the garage for \$4,000, a fraction of its pre-Depression sales price. By 1940, the Dixie building housed a portable skating rink.<sup>19</sup>

The Dixie would not serve as a garage again. C. L. Drabing, formerly associated with Dixie manager Thomas Ellis in the lease of a French Lick garage, held a share in the building for a few years with Andy E. Cope; Norman Hendrix and Claude Moore were later investors. Meanwhile, the interests of the Lost River Investment Company, which may have retained a share in the Dixie, passed in part to Ed Ballard's nephew Jim. Jim was the son of Ed's younger brother, James Logan Ballard, who died about 10 years before Ed. The French Lick Valley Corporation, with whom Jim Ballard was associated, bought the Dixie in 1946 for use as a 7-Up bottling plant.

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<sup>17</sup>Wright, *West of Laramie*, for 1929 automobile sales figure. "Lutes and Apple, Agents," advertised Fords in the *Springs Valley Herald*, e.g., 13 March 1913. For other local dealerships, see Indiana Highway Department, unpublished plan-profile working drawings of Broadway in West Baden, 1927; R. L. Polk and Company, *Indiana State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1928-1929*.

<sup>18</sup>Interviews of Glenn Marlette and Laff Prow, West Baden Springs Hotel employees, by O'Malley, West Baden Springs Hotel; 89-92 for effects of the crash.

<sup>19</sup>Deed of 21 January 1939. Additional information about the Dixie's later fate from interview of Mary Jean Bateman and Dow Henson by Cynthia Brubaker, West Baden Springs, 29 November 2000.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 18 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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Photographs from 1955 show the building, still unpainted, with a French Lick Valley sign on the facade. The clerestory centered east-west along the roof can still be seen. But remodeling the next year, also shown in photographs, included removing the clerestory during re-roofing, replacing some steel sash with glass block, and painting the brick exterior. The bottling plant closed during the 1960s, and only one further use—a "Wood Design" firm during the 1980s—is known. In 2000, the former Dixie Garage was purchased from Jerry Fuchs by HLF West Baden, Incorporated, an entity of the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana dedicated to restoring West Baden Spring's grand resort hotel and remaining elements of the town's historic landscape.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 19 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 20 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 21 Dixie Garage, Orange County, Indiana

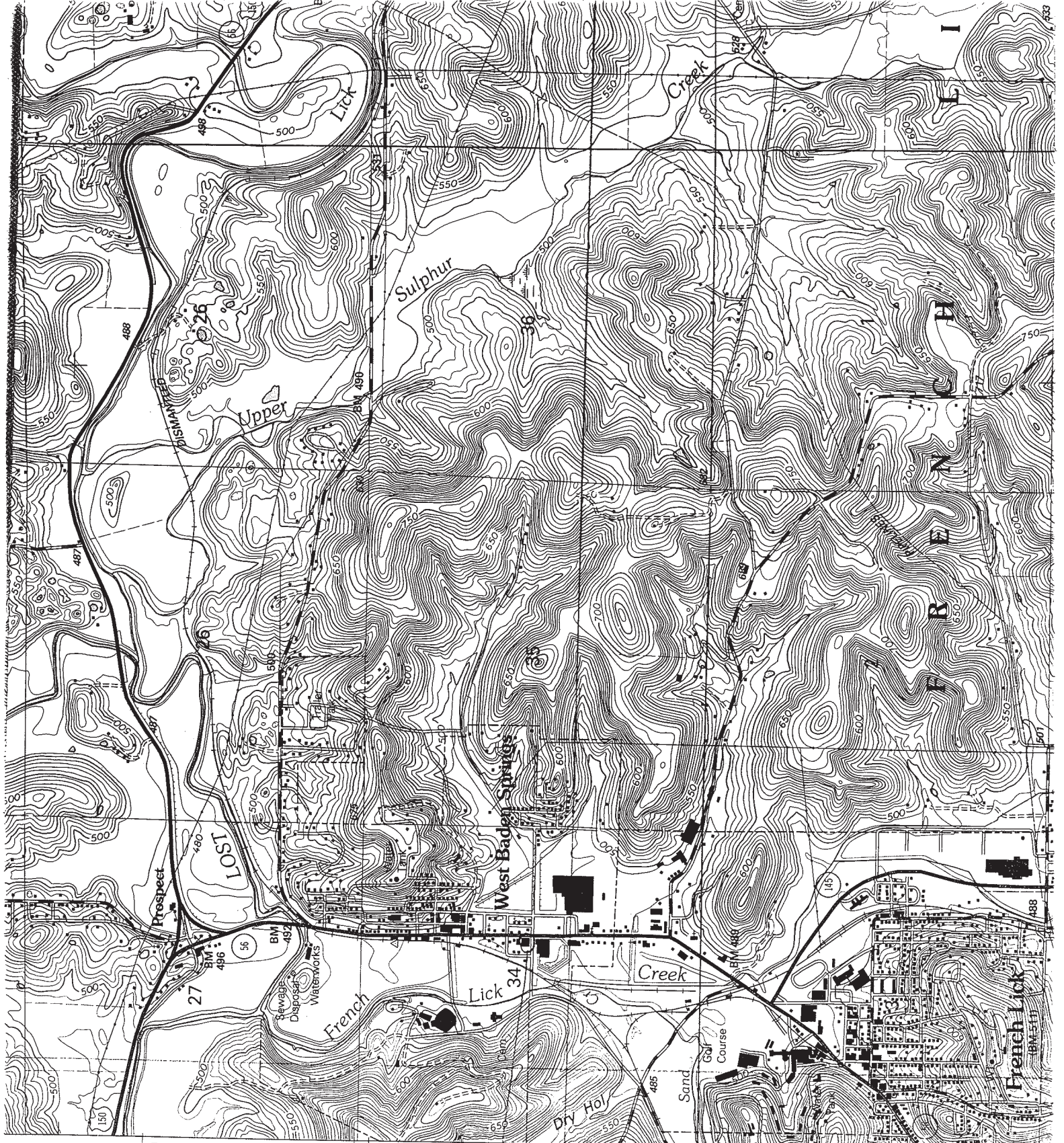
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### Verbal Boundary Description

Lots number fifty-one (51), fifty-two (52), and fifty-three (53) in the West Baden Springs Addition to the town of West Baden Springs, in the County of Orange, and State of Indiana.

### Boundary Justification

This boundary description includes the Dixie Garage building and matches the parcel that was originally and historically associated with the building.



DIXIE GARAGE  
 WEST BADEN SPRINGS  
 ORANGE COUNTY  
 INDIANA

10 533600  
 4268200

32' 30"