

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 Secrest-Wampler House
other names/site number James Secrest House

2. Location

street & number 1816 Concord Road N/A not for publication
city or town Gosport vicinity
state Indiana code IN county Owen code 119 zip code 47433

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

AGRICULTURE: Agricultural

Outbuilding

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: I-House

MID-19th c.: Greek Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: Limestone

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

METAL

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1859

Significant Dates

1859

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Secret-Wampler House
Name of Property

Owen IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 10 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	6	5	2	5	5	0	0	4	3	5	1	7	9	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

3

1	6	5	2	5	9	1	0	4	3	5	1	5	9	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

2

1	6	5	2	5	9	1	0	4	3	5	1	7	9	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

4

1	6	5	2	5	5	0	0	4	3	5	1	5	9	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

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 Edith Sarra
organization _____ date 07-30-2001
street & number 1816 Concord Road telephone 812/ 829-0451
city or town Gosport state IN zip code 47433

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 Edith Sarra
street & number 1816 Concord Road telephone 812/ 829-0451
city or town Gosport state IN zip code 47433

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

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

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Secrest-Wampler House
Owen County, Indiana

Narrative Description

The Secrest-Wampler house, a two story brick I-house with Greek Revival details, is located on north Concord Road, about four miles south-southwest of Gosport. Concord is a rural road running north-south, bordered by small farms and single family houses. Immediately opposite the property to the west is a large nineteenth century transverse frame barn, two single pen log houses (ca. 1840), and some old white pines marking the site of the Harris house (ca. 1850), a frame house that was taken down in 1994.¹ The Secrest-Wampler house sits approximately nine hundred feet back on the east side of Concord Road, at the far end of a hay field, facing west behind a pair of Virginia pines and a giant Norway spruce--the lone survivor of a pair of spruces planted probably soon after the house was built in 1859 (photo 1).

The house is distinguished in the front by a two story Greek Revival portico, and in the rear by a one story ell with a saltbox roof line. The ell has a recessed veranda on its north side which adjoins the rear of the main section's central hallway. The foundation is limestone, and has a dressed, upper course rising two feet above ground level. A brick floored cellar with walls built of limestone blocks underlies the three rooms of the ell, while both first floor rooms of the main house as well as its central hallway, rest on their own independent limestone foundations. The windows throughout are six over six, double hung wood sash fitted with modern two pane wooden storms, and all are decorated with dressed limestone lintels and sills. All walls, both interior and exterior, and the three chimneys, are made of brick laid in common bond, triple thick on the first floor and double on the second. The roof of the ell is finished with standing-seam tin, and the roof of the main section with asphalt shingles. The interior of the house, like its exterior, reflects reliance on local materials, solid workmanship, and an aesthetic of classical symmetry and simplicity. The windows, window and door surrounds, doors, mantels, chimney-side cupboards, baseboards, and stairway are made of native black walnut, the floors of painted poplar. The walls are plaster over brick (no lath); the ceilings, plaster over lath.

Behind the house, a back door from the kitchen opens onto a square dooryard paved with bricks laid in a herring bone pattern and finished with a limestone curb. In the center of the dooryard, a limestone cap covers a hand-dug, brick-lined well. The brick paving of the kitchen dooryard continues along the north side of the ell, defining a wide path, also curbed in limestone. It makes a right angle turn in front of the steps to the veranda and runs out toward the driveway on the north. A similar, though narrower brick path with no limestone curbing runs west from the front door of the house. The brick dooryard and paths are accounted as one contributing structure for the purposes of this nomination (photo 2).

The basic structure of the house has never been altered during the nearly 150 years since it was built. Beginning in the mid-1970s, however, it stood empty for approximately fifteen years. The

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Secrest-Wampler House
Owen County, Indiana

exterior was neglected and the interior vandalized. By 1989 it was uninhabitable. Since then, it has undergone sensitive restoration. Although a few tasks remain to be completed, the property is in excellent condition.

The house has seven rooms and a floor plan typical of I-houses. The two story main section is two rooms wide and one room deep with two parlors downstairs flanking either side of a closed central hall whose U-shaped stairway leads to a second floor also comprised of two rooms, one on either side of the second floor landing. A chimney is located at each of the gable ends. The one story ell extends eastward to the rear of the right-hand or south parlor. The ell has three rooms: a dining room, kitchen, and bathroom. The dining room and kitchen are separated by an interior wall that encloses a centrally located chimney more massive in scale than the gable-end chimneys. The kitchen is in the rear; the bathroom is a small room adjoining its northeast corner. The bathroom was originally a pantry equipped with a trap door opening onto an interior stairway to the cellar.

The west or main facade of the house has five evenly spaced bays. On the first floor, two windows flank either side of a center entry door; the fenestration is repeated on the second floor with two windows on either side of a smaller center door that opens onto the second floor of the portico. Both center doors are recessed, flanked by a pair of ten-light wooden sidelights and surmounted by three-light transoms. Tuscan pilasters separate the doors from the sidelights on both floors, and the sidelights rest on raised single panel dados. The first floor door is taller than other doors in the house by about fourteen inches. It has two panels, one above the other, separated by a wide (16 inch) center rail. The door to the second floor portico exhibits the more common four panel door pattern. It and its sidelights are shorter than those on the first floor and finished with a battered molding surround. The fascia under the eaves is fifteen inches wide and trimmed with dentils.

The projecting wooden, two story portico rests on a limestone base in front of the center entry, with a single limestone step connecting it to the brick walk. The ground floor has two square, painted poplar columns with a decorative cut-out design on each side, supporting a second floor that has an identical pair of columns. The second floor columns support a cornice and pedimented gable front roof also decorated with dentil trim. This floor has a painted poplar railing and bannisters. Both porch floors are made of cypress (replacing deteriorated original poplar), and the ceilings are poplar beadboard. Echoing the large dentil trim of the portico gable and the fascia of the house itself is a line of smaller scale denticulation that decorates the fascia between the two floors of the portico. The original portico was removed down to its limestone base in 1988 because of its advanced deterioration. The original columns were saved. Though too rotten to re-use, they served as models when the portico was restored in 1996. Photos showing the portico in 1895, 1952, and 1981 served as additional sources of information for its reconstruction (photos 3,4, 5).

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Owen County, Indiana

The north elevation of the main house is dramatically tall and slender in profile. There are no windows, and the gable end chimney is flush with the wall of the house, so the viewer surveys a smooth, unrelieved run of brick, from the dressed limestone foundation to the peak of the gable approximately 35 feet above. There are heavy cornice returns, with the pattern of wide fascia boards and dentil trim continuing from the main facade along the slope of the gable and beneath the cornice returns. At four points in the center of the wall, fragments of metal footers for glass insulators mark the path of a copper ground wire that once ran up the wall to a lightning rod affixed to the chimney (photo 6).

The south elevation contains the other gable end of the house's two story main section and the side of the one story rear ell. The south gable end matches the north. It is a blind wall with flush, interior chimney, cornice returns, and dentil trim, and it too retains traces of a lightning rod ground wire. This wall adjoins that of the ell smoothly, as one continuous wall. The top of the south gable end chimney is gone, and the entire south elevation shows more signs of weathering than any others on the house (photo 7). The ell has three bays: a door with limestone lintel, sill, and a three-light transom, plus two windows of the same dimensions found on the main facade. The door has two panels, but here the panels are narrow, vertically oriented rectangles. This door was originally matched by an identical two panel door on the opposite side of the same room (the latter stolen during the house's period of abandonment).² The limestone steps that originally mounted to the door in the south facade were vandalized and have been replaced with a simple wooden stoop with two steps. To the left of the door, just below the foundation line, is a narrow, horizontally oriented cellar window surrounded by a metal window well. A second cellar window with opening now bricked in lies directly below the second, kitchen window.

The east elevation of the ell, or rear gable end, reveals the ell's unusual saltbox profile (photo 8). The cornice returns, wide fascia, and dentil trim that distinguish both gable ends of the main house are repeated here. There are two bays: a window to the left, and a door with limestone lintel, sill, and three-light transom. Originally a four panel walnut door, its upper two panels were replaced with pine at some point. In 1989, the replacement panels were removed and replaced with a single pane of glass. Three limestone steps lead from the door to the brick-paved dooryard. Directly beneath the kitchen window is a cement stairway and wooden door opening into the cellar, covered by a metal bulkhead storm door. To the right of the kitchen door, a third cellar window is separated from the dooryard by a limestone window well.

The north elevation of the ell is complicated by its incorporation of the veranda. It is also the only exterior wall that is not trimmed with dentils. The window on the extreme left-hand or east end of the facade is smaller than all other windows in the house because the slope of the roof is significantly lower on this side. The veranda, integrated under the extended roof of the ell, is twenty-two feet long, running the rest of the ell's length. Four doors and one window open onto

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the veranda from the interior of the ell. A four panel door from the former pantry opens to the left. Directly opposite it, at the west end of the veranda, a second four panel door opens into the central hallway. The north wall of the ell inside the veranda has three bays: a door on the left opening into the kitchen, to the right of it, a window into the dining room, and finally, a door into the dining room. The missing two panel door whose surviving twin is on the opposite wall of the dining room was replaced in 1989 with a pegged, poplar door salvaged from a house of similar vintage. The ell chimney is strikingly tall, built to rise high enough that smoke from its top can clear the roofline of the two story main section of the house. Because of its severe deterioration, this chimney was rebuilt in 1993, replicating the original dimensions and flues, and using bricks salvaged from another nineteenth century Owen County structure (photo 9).

The veranda was restored in 1990-91. It is made of painted poplar, with a wooden half wall, three plain, boxed porch posts, three screened bays, and a screen door. It was clear from structural evidence that this veranda was originally integrated under the roof of the ell and open to the north, but because there were no known photos of the original, the restoration proceeded upon models drawn from other mid-nineteenth century I-houses, and information given by previous tenants. Recessed ell verandas are not uncommon on I-houses. They were usually made of wood and left open, with two or three porch posts supporting the overhanging roof. Tenants of the house transformed the original open veranda into a screened porch in the 1950s. Sometime after 1968, it was further remodeled into something resembling the classic bungalow porch. All but one of the wooden posts were removed, and a thick wall of new bricks mounted on cinder blocks and finished with a concrete cap was built across the outer edge of the porch floor. In 1990, the wooden floor remained, but the heavy, unvented brick and cinder block walls it abutted had trapped moisture, and the floor was buckling badly as a result. Leaks in the roof of the ell had also led to severe rot and sagging of the ceiling. The decision was made to replicate the veranda's screened porch phase. The flooring, rotten ceiling boards, bungalow brick walls, and cinder blocks were removed, allowing access to the original poplar floor joists and the north foundation of the ell. The foundation was repointed, the crawlspace leveled and covered with heavy plastic to inhibit rising damp, then left open on the north, covered only with hardware cloth to prevent groundhogs from reestablishing their colony beneath the veranda. The original poplar floor joists and baseboards were retained, but the cross beams along the outside edge of the floor and under the eaves were rotten and had to be replaced. Two boxed wooden beams and two posts were installed and served as frames for a wooden half-wall. The floors were replaced with painted poplar floorboards, the ceiling with painted pine. Screening was hung between three bays, and a screen door creates a fourth bay directly opposite the door to the dining room.

The east elevation of the house's main section has six bays: two windows on the first floor, and four shorter windows on the second. Two of these latter are directly above the first floor windows, the other two are off to the left of them (one opening out of the middle landing of the

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central stairway, and the other from the south bedroom). A fifth bay on the second floor is prevented by the high ridgepole of the the ell. Wide fascia boards and dentil trim run the length of this elevation (photo 10).

The original roofs of both the ell and the main house were made of walnut shakes. The ell was reroofed in the 1930s with corrugated tin laid directly over the shakes.³ The roof on the main section of the house was redone with asphalt shingles in the 1960s, also without removing the shakes. By 1989, the tin roof on the ell was heavily rusted and leaking, the shakes beneath it rotten and in some places missing. The long north slope of the ell roof makes it particularly visible, so when it was re-roofed in 1993, standing seam tin was chosen as a roofing material that would be both aesthetically pleasing, and a historically appropriate substitute for shakes which were deemed too much of a fire risk in a rural volunteer fire district. The original purlins beneath both roofs were still in good shape and impressively wide, suggesting they were made from first-growth walnuts (photo 11). These were therefore left in place, and they remain beneath both the current ell roof, and the less visible, shallow-pitched roof of the main part of the house, which was redone in asphalt shingles in 1997.

The interior of the house displays a high degree of historical integrity. Except for the kitchen and former pantry, each room retains its original random width, painted poplar floorboards. In each room and the central hallway, the plaster was repaired rather than replaced, though ceilings and some walls in the former pantry, kitchen, and north bedroom had to be stripped down to the lath or base coat and replastered. Missing interior doors were replaced with four panel walnut or poplar doors salvaged from other sites. Notable among these replacements are the three matching, pegged walnut doors with painted grain opening into the central hallway. These were salvaged from the neighboring Harris house. The original walnut baseboards, window, door, and cupboard surrounds in the two parlors and the central hallway are more elaborately detailed than the woodwork in the ell and the second floor, which is quite plain. The stair treads and original newels and handrail appear to have been the only woodwork that was originally shellacked and left unpainted over the years. The rest of the woodwork was covered with lead paint, all of which has been stripped since 1989, and either repainted or finished with tung oil.

The central hallway is airy and spacious. Because its rear door opens onto the ell veranda and directly opposes the front door, it provides a natural passageway for cooling breezes from the west in the summer. The first flight of the U-shaped stairway rises along the north wall of the hallway to a landing between the floors. A window directly above this mid-floor landing on the east wall allows further cross-ventilation. The shorter second flight mounts the south wall to a landing in front of the door to the second floor portico. A scalloped stringer detail decorates the stairway; the risers and wall stringers retain their original white paint (photos 12, 13). The window above the mid-floor landing and the door surrounds on both floors have been repainted white. There is a closet beneath the first flight of stairs. The original walnut handrails and bannisters were destroyed

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in the early 1980s, along with four turned walnut newel posts which survived only in unsalvageable pieces. These pieces provided models for the stairwell restoration in 2000. Current newel posts and handrail are also of walnut, custom turned with originals as models, and finished with tung oil. The bannisters are simple square poplar posts, painted white.

The room to the north of the central hallway on the first floor is the fancier of the two parlors. It is graced with four full-sized windows, and a round plaster ceiling medallion where reportedly, a silver or nickel plated chandelier once hung.⁴ The fireplace is on the north wall, flanked on either side by built-in clothespresses. In 2000, the firebox and brick hearth were rebuilt, the chimney lined, and new pegged walnut four panel doors made for the presses. The classically simple, almost severe mantelpiece suggests the Federal style, its only ornamentation being the fluted pilasters that support the plain wide faceboard and mantel shelf (photo 14). It is mirrored by an exact counterpart in the south parlor across the hall. The south parlor lacks a ceiling medallion, and has built-in shelves instead of presses on either side of its fireplace.

The dining room is distinguished by its larger fireplace. The taller, deeper firebox here embeds two iron footers intended to support an iron cooking crane, now missing. The mantelpiece is also taller and wider than the parlor mantels, and completely unadorned. The doorway to the kitchen opens to the right of the fireplace; on the left, there is a built-in cupboard (photo 15).

In the kitchen, a separate flue services a stovepipe in the west, chimney wall. There is a built-in cupboard on the north side of the chimney wall. The floors in this room and the former pantry had been taken up by a previous owner and were replaced in 1989 with new, random-width poplar floorboards. The kitchen and pantry were first plumbed in the 1940s: a water line was run into the cellar from the well, entering the house through the floors of the kitchen and pantry. The interior stairway to the cellar was removed at that time, and the pantry converted to a bathroom.⁵ In 1989, the room was replastered, refloored, vented, and equipped with early twentieth century fixtures (clawfoot tub, pedestal sink, porcelain stool). The water line from the well was plugged, and a new water line brought into the cellar through a trench connecting the house to the water main on Concord Road.

The two second floor bedrooms are sparse in details. Each room has a stovepipe in its chimney wall, and the south room has a pair of matching built-in chimneyside cupboards. The north room is the only room in the house besides the bathroom that does not have built-ins. All woodwork in the second floor rooms except for the cupboard surrounds appears to have been originally painted and is painted now.

Because of the vandalism the house suffered in the 1970s and 80s, all the windows had to be replaced. With one exception, the original pegged walnut six over six double hung windows had already been replaced by the mid twentieth century with modern two pane wooden sashes.⁶ The

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only surviving original sashes were in the window on the north side of the ell, where they had been protected from the weather by the veranda roof. This window was retained and reglazed, and served as a model for custom milling six over six double hung pegged walnut windows for the rest of the ell and the south parlor in 1989. These windows were then hand glazed with antique glass salvaged from the Harris house. Wooden two pane storm windows were made for all the windows in 1990. The windows in the north parlor, and all second floor windows were replaced with six over six double hung clear pine windows with modern glass in 1997. The original walnut frames and muntins of the four sidelights and four transoms were repaired and reglazed with antique glass in 1989 and 1999.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Secrest-Wampler house is eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criterion C. The house is associated with locally prominent men of two successive generations in Washington Township: Captain James Secrest (1827-1882), farmer and veteran of the Mexican and Civil Wars, and Millard Fillmore Wampler (1855-1938), a gentleman farmer descended from families associated with the founding of Gosport and its early commercial success. The house is significant as a remarkably intact example of an I-house with strong Greek Revival influences. It beautifully illustrates transitions in I-house design in the mid nineteenth century, when changing circumstances of transportation and the availability of materials and amenities brought new kinds of prosperity to Owen County.

The home was a working farmhouse from 1859 to 1930, the latter being the approximate date of Millard Wampler's retirement from active farming. After that, the Wampplers leased the house and farm to share-cropping tenants. In 1970, the surviving heirs of Millard Wampler sold the farm to Kenneth Welty for its timber, and from that time, the house itself fell into decline. Tenants lived in it for a few more years, but after the mid-1970s, the house stood empty until 1989 when the present owner bought it and a fraction of its original acreage.

The property was once part of a 240 acre farm created by Captain James Secrest. The farm and its stately brick house were the result of a decade of expansion in both children and acreage on the part of young Secrest. Nineteen year old James returned to Gosport from the Mexican War in 1848. He had just served a year as a private under Captain Jesse I. Alexander in Company B, Fourth Indiana Volunteers, which saw action at Vera Cruz and Puebla in the spring of 1848.⁷ The following year, he married fourteen year old Louisa Wilson, and the couple began married life in the Concord neighborhood household of James' father Beson Secrest (1799-1862).⁸ Beson and his brothers John and Messer Secrest were among the earliest white settlers in Washington Township.⁹ Emigrating from Kentucky in 1818, all three of the brothers bought land along the White River in the Concord neighborhood and farmed there most of their lives. At least one

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member of the family seems to have been quite ahead of his time in his politics. James' uncle John Secrest distinguished himself upon his death in 1873 by bequeathing his entire estate (minus the family burying ground) to the county to establish a fund to build a school for African-American children. "The colored race," he stated, "has been an oppressed people and now in the town of Spencer is taxed to build a school house in which they have no benefit. I therefore bequeath [my estate] to partly remunerate them for past wrongs."¹⁰

James Secrest is remembered as "a shrewd businessman [who] ...accumulated more than a modest fortune as a cattle buyer and land owner."¹¹ Land transfer records indicate that he was systematically buying up acreage from his neighbors along Concord Road throughout the 1850s. The Secrest-Wampler farm was put together out of four different parcels. Secrest acquired an initial forty acres as early as 1852 from Harrison McHenry, who had bought it as an original landgrant from the U.S. Government only eight years before. In 1855, he purchased the adjoining eighty acres where the house would be built; in 1857 another eighty from the heirs of pioneer George Overstreet, and a final forty from Jefferson Wampler in February 1859.¹² By the spring of 1859, he had two sons, a daughter, and 240 contiguous acres. The house was built sometime between 1855 and early 1860. Family legend has it that it was completed in time for the birth of James' and Louisa's fourth child, Martha J. Secrest (1860-1951), who was four months old at the time of the 1860 census.¹³ Martha was, by her own account, the first child born in the house.¹⁴ The builder is not known, but it may have been Richard Gilbert, the brick and stone mason from North Carolina who opened the area's first limestone quarry (see below).¹⁵

The U.S. Eighth Census of Agriculture (1860) describes the farm as 240 acres of improved land that was home to \$2000 worth of livestock (10 horses, 15 milch cows, 4 oxen, 32 head of cattle, 100 sheep, and 250 pigs). The farm produced 2000 bushels of wheat and 300 of oats, 400 lbs of wool, 250 lbs of Irish potatoes, \$200 worth of orchard products, 300 lbs of butter, and 8 tons of hay. Another 140 acres also owned by Secrest elsewhere in the area produced an additional 200 bushels of wheat, 200 bushels of oats, and 2000 bushels of corn. It was an impressive operation, particularly in contrast to the farms of the previous decade.

The relative size of the Secrest farm in comparison to the older farmsteads it absorbed reflects more than the business acumen of young James. By 1852, northeastern Owen County was on the threshold of the railroad era. The New Albany and Salem Railroad linked Gosport to Louisville in 1853, and Gosport to Chicago in 1854. Its coming catalyzed almost immediate shifts in commercial patterns of northern Owen and Monroe Counties. Until 1869, when the Indianapolis and Vincennes Railroad came through Spencer, Gosport would remain the only town in Owen County with rail service. The town had been at the center of the White River's thriving pork and cattle-packing operations already for almost twenty-five years. But for the decade and a half between the building of the two railroads, Gosport boomed as it never had before. For a time,

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Spencer, the Owen county seat, languished, and bypassed villages like Mount Tabor across the river on Bean Blossom Creek, once the commercial center of Monroe County, fell into a rapid and irrevocable decline.

The railroad also had a tremendous impact on the area's fledgling limestone industry. Although Richard Gilbert had opened Monroe County's first commercial quarry near Mount Tabor as early as 1827, and the 1840s saw the establishment of another surface quarry at the mouth of McCormick's Creek in Owen County, in an economy dependent on flatboats and oxcarts, quarrying remained a limited concern.¹⁶ The potential of the railroad to change all that was not lost on certain local entrepreneurs. In 1855, Ensebius Stine platted Stinesville along the tracks of the New Albany and Salem Railroad, and by 1860, the new town could boast three or four quarries operating in its vicinity.¹⁷

The size of James Secrest's Concord Road farm, as well as the architectural qualities of the house built on it (on the latter, see below) owed much to the railroad. Farmers in the rich bottom land of the Concord neighborhood now had easier means for bringing farm products to market. Small homesteads, carved laboriously out of the primeval deciduous forest in the first three decades of white settlement in the Gosport area (1820-1850) were absorbed into larger farms like James Secrest's. The mid 1850s saw the creation of other benchmarks of prosperity in the Concord neighborhood. The Concord School opened its door to its first students in September 1852, on an acre in the northwest corner of what would become the James Secrest farm. In 1856, Concord Christian Church was established on the acre adjoining the school (James became a member on April 11, 1859).¹⁸ The building of the Secrest-Wampler house thus coincided with significant economic and cultural shifts as the area transformed itself from a river-centered, agrarian frontier community oriented towards markets along the Ohio and Mississippi into a booming railroad community that would, at least for a time, benefit enormously from direct rail access to industrial markets in the north.

But railroad linkage to the rest of the nation brought national woes closer to home as well. When Abraham Lincoln issued his call for men to fill the ranks of the Union Army in 1861, James Secrest responded. Because of his experience as a veteran of the Mexican War, he was commissioned Captain, commanding Company G, 38th Regiment of Indiana Infantry Volunteers on September 16, 1861. The immediate threat was Morgan's raiders in Kentucky. The 38th marched into Kentucky south of Louisville, where they joined forces with Sherman, and passed the winter encamped (losing many men to typhoid during the long, cold winter of '61-62--including James' 18 year old cousin, John Secrest). The regiment spent the spring and summer of 1862 patrolling Kentucky, Tennessee, and even dipping down into Alabama, chasing guerilla bands and missing the main action (another regiment they'd marched with was sent to Shiloh while the 38th encamped near Nashville, guarding rail lines). Secrest resigned his commission as

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Captain on September 14, 1862. It was still a full month before the regiment saw its first real battle near Perryville, Kentucky, in October 1862.

James returned from Kentucky, and life on the farm continued through the war, punctuated by the death of one son at home--nine year old Thomas in 1864--and the birth of another, James E., the same year. A depression settled over the country in the immediate post-war years, but the family weathered it well. Another son, Charles, was born in 1866, and in 1869, the Secrests moved to a house in Gosport, presumably to facilitate the higher education of their burgeoning family. The Census of 1870 lists James as pursuing the dual occupation of farmer and trader, with a combined real and personal estate valued at \$43,500. His eldest son William is away "at school" (at Ladoga, Indiana from 1869, and later at Earlham College in Richmond).¹⁹

Then came the Panic of 1873, a banking crisis thought to have been caused by over-speculation in railroads and land. Many farming families were hard hit by it and by the longer depression that ensued in the following decade. James Secrest's great grandsons relate that the family "lost nearly everything" in the Panic of 1873.²⁰ In January of 1874, they sold the Concord Road farm, and son William cut short his studies at Earlham.²¹ Somehow though, James seems to have landed on his feet. The family continued to reside in Gosport, adding another son, Wayne, in 1875. An article from the Owen County Journal of December 20, 1877 suggests something of the tenor of those times. It describes a reunion of Mexican War veterans in Gosport. The table was set by, among others, "Mrs. Secrest and daughters." Of the 85 names originally enrolled in Company B, Fourth Indiana Volunteers, James Secrest was one of only seven responding. The group resolved to petition the U.S. government in the following terms: "...the Mexican War veteran soldiers now living are few in number, and aged, and a large proportion of them are in indigent circumstances, and are unable, physically, to make a comfortable living for themselves and families...the Congress of the U.S. is hereby earnestly requested to pension the Mexican soldiers, and that a copy be furnished our Representative in Congress, the Hon. M.C. Hunter."²²

In 1879, the family moved again, this time to Spencer, where James was elected City Marshal on the Republican ticket in 1880. His son William became Constable. "Captain James Secrest, well known in these parts," died two years later in 1882, aged 55, "of rheumatism," the Bloomington Republican Progress reports.²³ He is buried in Riverside Cemetery in Spencer, where his star-shaped nameplate occupies a prominent place of honor in the front of the Soldiers Pavilion.

Fortunately for later generations, the farm and its brick house passed through only a brief series of intermediary owners till it came into the hands of one of Gosport's wealthiest and most influential families. Millard Fillmore Wampler was twenty-three in November 1878 when he bought the place. Married just two years to Sarah Jesse Regan, daughter of a Morgan county physician, he had one son, Millard Regan Wampler, born to the couple in May. Like his four siblings,

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Millard Fillmore Wampler was well-educated and raised in comfortable circumstances. He had six years of preparatory education in Indianapolis at Northwestern Christian University and another two years at Earlham College, where he overlapped William Secrest's foreshortened stay by one year.

The same Census of 1870 which found the Secrest family well-off and living the life of absentee landowners in the town of Gosport, paints an even rosier picture of their Wampler neighbors. Millard's mother was Jane Alexander, daughter of Abner Alexander, who came to the area walking from North Carolina in 1819, with a wife, two children and for assets, only one "sorry looking horse and a dollar bill."²⁴ He wintered over with Ephraim Goss, another North Carolinian who'd beat him there by two years (and thus exercised the prerogative of naming the settlement after himself). Both men profited from the land, other settlers joined them, and the two men platted the town of Gosport in 1829. By 1870, Abner's daughter Jane was living on Main Street in an imposing brick Second Empire house with a copper roof. She was a wealthy widow with three sons, two daughters, a domestic servant, and an estimated real and personal estate valued at \$71,000, almost twice that of James Secrest's "more than modest fortune."

The wealth was the legacy of her late husband and Millard's father, the legendary Hezekiah Wampler (1805-1866). The son of pioneers who came from Germany via Virginia, Hezekiah Wampler's career reads like a Horatio Alger story. The family had settled on a farm in Monroe County when Hezekiah was fifteen. Six years later, when his father's health began to fail, Hezekiah went to work in a Bloomington distillery to help pay off the family debt and save the farm. By the time of his father's death, Hezekiah owned the farm. For a time during the same period, he ran a general merchandising store in Mount Tabor, hauling his own goods by wagon from Louisville, but removed to Gosport in 1841 where he proceeded in very short order to make a fortune manufacturing flat-boats and barrel staves and shipping pork, cattle, and grain down the White River to markets in Memphis and New Orleans.²⁵ In many ways, his career overshadows those of his three well-educated sons, though Clinton and Millard would go on to become highly successful farmers, and Asahel, the youngest, would study law after his graduation from DePauw University and serve several terms as Indiana State Senator (Democrat) before leaving politics to become a cashier of the Gosport State Bank.²⁶

Millard, true to his gentrified upbringing, maintained his primary residence in Gosport during the first decade of ownership of the Secrest-Wampler farm. The Census of 1880, as well as Blanchard's 1884 History find him still residing in town with his wife, son, an infant daughter (who would die at the age of two), and one Martha Sloan, a domestic servant.²⁷ Millard's wife died in 1885, and he remarried in 1889 to school teacher Mary Collins, by whom he had two more sons and a daughter. It was soon after this second marriage that Millard left Gosport to settle down to full time life on the farm. A photograph from 1895 shows Millard and Mary, with Millard, Jr. and the three younger children (Lucille, Harry, and Donald) in front of the Secrest-

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Wampler house (photo 2). Here Millard would stay, farming and raising the second batch of children, a widower again after Mary's untimely death in 1912. These were times of great stability in the Concord neighborhood. Farmers prospered. In 1904, partly through the intervention of Millard's brother Asahel, at the time State Senator, the neighborhood was further linked to Gosport by the building of an iron bridge across the White River where the Secrest ferry had once run. Slowly the county entered the automobile era.

By the late 1920s, the Concord neighborhood was beginning to show clear signs of the kind of shifts the automobile and improved roads encouraged. Like a number of other one-room schoolhouses in the county in this period, Concord School closed in 1928. Now even the very youngest of neighborhood children made the easy journey by car or wagon into Gosport for schooling. Concord Christian Church ceased holding services around the same time. Around 1930, Millard Wampler, now 74 years old, retired from farming and moved back into Gosport, this time to live with his daughter Lucille and her husband Clarence Davis. The farm was rented to a series of share-cropping families who tried, with at times little success, to keep crops going during the record hot, dry summers of the Great Depression.²⁸ Millard died of a heart attack on a Sunday morning in February 1938, having spent the previous day "in his usual good spirits. As was his habit, he spent most of the day down in town at various business places and played his usual rounds of pool at the pool halls."²⁹ Funeral services were conducted at the Whitaker Funeral Home, the same copper-roofed Second Empire house Millard's father Hezekiah had built for his family in 1845. After Millard's death, Lucille, herself newly widowed and childless, continued to manage the farm from Gosport. Beginning in 1940, the long Thompson occupancy which lasted well into the 1960s, saved the place from neglect as well as the kind of benevolently-meant remodeling that might have taken place had the house been owner-occupied.

The Secrest-Wampler house thus survived into the twenty-first century in a relatively unaltered state. It is an outstanding embodiment of the vernacular I-house tradition brought to southern Indiana by settlers from the Carolinas and Virginia where the I-house first became popular as a domestic building style in tidewater communities on the eve of the Revolutionary War. The I-house has been called by some the first Federal house type, but its roots are in fact traceable to the domestic architecture of southwestern England.³⁰ In the U.S., the form has been distinguished by its amenability to subsequent architectural styles. I-houses with Greek Revival and Italianate details were built across the upper South and the middle region of the Midwest throughout the nineteenth century, especially in Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa (hence the coinage "I" house).³¹

Spencer boasts an especially fine, stylistic hybrid example of wooden frame I-house design in the c. 1855 Robinson House, with its Greek Revival, Gothic, and Italianate stylistic elements. Closer to home, the Secrest-Wampler house was companioned on Concord Road by another brick I-house locally known as "the sister house." Located on property owned by the Cantwell family since 1881, the sister house was probably built around the same time or slightly later than the Secrest-

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Wampler house, possibly by the same builder (brick and stone mason Richard Gilbert) for Samuel and Eliza Lukenbill, who owned the property from 1856 to 1880. The sister house was torn down in the early 1970s, but John Cantwell remembers it as an almost exact mirror image of the Secrest-Wampler house except for a few details: cherry was used for the interior woodwork instead of black walnut, and the corners of the house's main section sported limestone quoins (photo 16).³²

The coming of the railroad to Gosport provoked changes in local domestic architecture. Because it remained unaltered for nearly a century and a half, the Secrest-Wampler house provides an unusually intact record of some of these transitions.

Structurally, the Secrest-Wampler house retains vestiges of traditions that predate the I-house type. This can be seen in the house's foundations. Each of the two rooms plus central hallway that form the main segment of the house is built upon its own separate limestone foundation which in turn supports unnecessarily massive brick interior walls--a structural quirk reminiscent of the double-pen house, an older, log-house type associated with building traditions of the Upland South. The double pen house was probably the most popular house type in Owen County from the earliest years of white settlement into the twentieth century, with builders gradually applying the form to frame houses (including I-houses) where both pens were built at the same time.³³

Another feature of the Secrest-Wampler house that recalls earlier patterns of domestic life can be seen in the larger dimensions of the fireplace in the dining room, and the iron footers for a pot crane embedded in its firebox. It appears that Louisa Secrest intended to supplement the kitchen cookstove with old-fashioned open-hearth cooking.

Overall, however, the Secrest-Wampler house elegantly realizes the more modern I-house tradition in brick construction. Its massive limestone foundations bespeak the wealth of the Secrests, and their ambition to create a homestead that would weather many generations. Local legend holds that the bricks were made and baked on site from clay deposits still visible on the now wooded property behind the house, but the foundation stones and lintels would have been hauled by oxcart from quarries in the newly platted town of Stinesville. Exterior trim details are assertively Greek Revival in style, and almost all of them (the denticulation, the cornice returns, lintels and sills of cut limestone, the upper course of dressed limestone for the foundation) are consistent on all facades of the house including the rear, where builders often simplified or eliminated trim details to save time and cost.

Interior details also suggest affluence and amenities unknown in the area before the railroad. Every room but one is equipped with built in chimney-side cabinets. Each of the house's three chimneys is double-flued, so that in addition to the three rooms with fireplaces, each of its three other large rooms could accommodate a stove. Thus, every room in the house except for the pantry was designed to be equipped with some direct means of heating--either fireplace or stove--a luxury

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impossible in the area before the railroad made stoves easily transportable.³⁴

The Secrest-Wampler house is a closed central passage I-house, a subtype of the form that emphasizes a departure from earlier house types where distinctions between private and communal spaces in the interior of the house were not so sharply drawn. Henry Glassie associates the closed central passage I-house with the rising economic and cultural aspirations of upwardly mobile builder-owners, and their eagerness to highlight distinctions between neighbors and family, outside and inside, formal and informal.³⁵ Unlike double-pen, or hall-and-parlor houses where the front doors give immediate access to rooms with hearths, entry through the front door of a closed central passage I-house leads the visitor into a closed hallway, a formal space meant only to serve as an anteroom or pass-through to the "halls."

Because it has been so little altered over the decades, these patterns of interior use, of formality versus intimacy, can still be clearly seen in the Secrest-Wampler house. Its central hallway communicates with the rest of the house by three doors and a stairway. The most immediate door is to the left, opening into the fancy parlor where country funerals and weddings took place, and proper company would be led for formal visits. The door to the right leads to the south parlor, a room of much greater intimacy by virtue of its communication with the ell's dining hall and kitchen-pantry. The door immediately opposite the front door, at the rear of the hallway, leads directly onto the veranda. In warm weather, this rear door would have been left open, extending the length of the hallway into a half-open space that communicates with all three rooms of the ell through another triplet of less formal doors. The daily use made of the ell and south parlor is dramatically apparent in the heavy wear visible on the mantels and fireplace surrounds in these rooms--with the greatest wear noticeable on the dining room's larger fireplace surround. The mantelpiece in the fancy parlor, by contrast, is still today almost completely unmarred.

The rare integrity of structure, detail, and patterns of wear in the Secrest-Wampler house render it one of the county's most valuable examples of the mid nineteenth century rural I-house, a house built in the best fashion of the 1850s, when the railroad was making nearby Gosport a bustling town. Its links to outstanding individuals in two successive generations of the Gosport area further evoke northeastern Owen County's early heyday as a center of commerce, agriculture, and rising cultural aspirations.

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---. Oral history passed from Iris Thompson to Edith Sarra, January 19, 1990.

---. Oral history passed from Morris Franklin to Edith Sarra, July 29, 1996.

---. Oral history passed from John Cantwell to Edith Sarra, March 9, 2001.

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1877. Quoted in Owen County History and Genealogy, vol. 3, no. 3 (Summer 1994): 60.
- U. S. Bureau of the Census. Eighth U.S. Agricultural Census for Owen County, Indiana. (1860).
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census for Owen County, Indiana. (1850; 1860; 1870; 1880).
- Zollinger, Vivian. "Owen County Ancestors." Spencer Evening World. Tuesday, July 13, 1993. p. 6.

NOTES

1. Owen County Interim Report, p.38-39, describes the Secrest-Wampler house and the farm opposite it as they were in early 1994.
2. Oral history passed from Iris Thompson, tenant of the house from 1940-1969, to Edith Sarra, 19 January 1990.
3. Oral history passed from Morris Franklin and siblings, tenants of the house in the early 1930s, to Edith Sarra, 29 July 1996.
4. Iris Thompson remembered the chandelier being removed by Lucille Wampler Davis, just prior to the Thompson occupancy in 1940.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Blanchard, p. 622-32.
8. Owen County Census for 1850, p. 192.
9. Blanchard, pp. 688-89.

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10. Photocopy of John Secrest's will in the Secrest family file, Owen County Public Library, Spencer, Indiana.

11. Zollinger, "Owen County Ancestors."

12. Abstract of Title. George Overstreet's grave, with footstone and inscribed headstone can still be seen on a section of the original farm now owned by Thomas Lochovic.

13. Owen County Census for 1860, p. 16, and Leas, "If Old Houses Could Talk."

14. Oral history passed from Jack and Larry Leas to Edith Sarra, February 15, 1990. Jack, Jim, and Larry Leas were all grandsons of Martha Secrest Leas, and great-grandsons of Captain James Secrest.

15. Richard Gilbert and his son James, both masons, are listed as living in the Beson Secrest household in the Owen County Census for 1850. Since it was common practice for builders to board with the families they were building for, Vivian Zollinger speculates they may have built the Secrest-Wampler house.

16. Monroe County Interim Report, p. xvi, and Owen County Interim Report, p. 38.

17. Monroe County Interim Report, p. 13.

18. Owen County Indiana: A History, pp. 92-95. See also The Churches of Christ in Owen County, Indiana (Rev. A.T. Groot: Spencer, IN, 1935), p. 94.

19. Owen County Census for 1870.

20. Leas, "If Old Houses Could Talk."

21. Abstract of Title. On William Secrest's education, see Owen County Democrat, April 5, 1917 (photocopy in Secrest family file, Owen County Public Library, Spencer, Indiana).

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22. "Reunion of the Surviving Veterans of the Mexican War." Owen County Journal, December 20, 1877.
23. Bloomington Republican Progress, December 20, 1882. Microfilm in Monroe County Public Library, Bloomington, Indiana.
24. From an undated and unsigned typescript in the Wayne Township file of the Owen County Information drawer of the Owen County Public Library, genealogical research room, Spencer, Indiana.
25. Blanchard, pp. 901-02.
26. Anecdotes about "Ki" Wampler, his indomitable spirit and business know-how as well as his quirks, abound in Owen County. See Kline, Fact and Folklore, pp. 39-40, for the story of Hezekiah's ventures into the printing of his own currency.
27. Blanchard, p. 902.
28. Interview with Morris Franklin and his siblings, July 29, 1996.
29. Gosport Reporter, February 17, 1938. Photocopy in Wampler family file in Owen County Public Library, Spencer, Indiana.
30. Glassie, pp.118-131.
31. Kniffen, "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion."
32. Oral history passed from John Cantwell to Edith Sarra, March 9, 2001.
33. Owen County Interim Report, p.xvii.

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34. Monroe County Interim Report, p. xv.

35. Glassie, pp. 116-121.

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Verbal Boundary Description

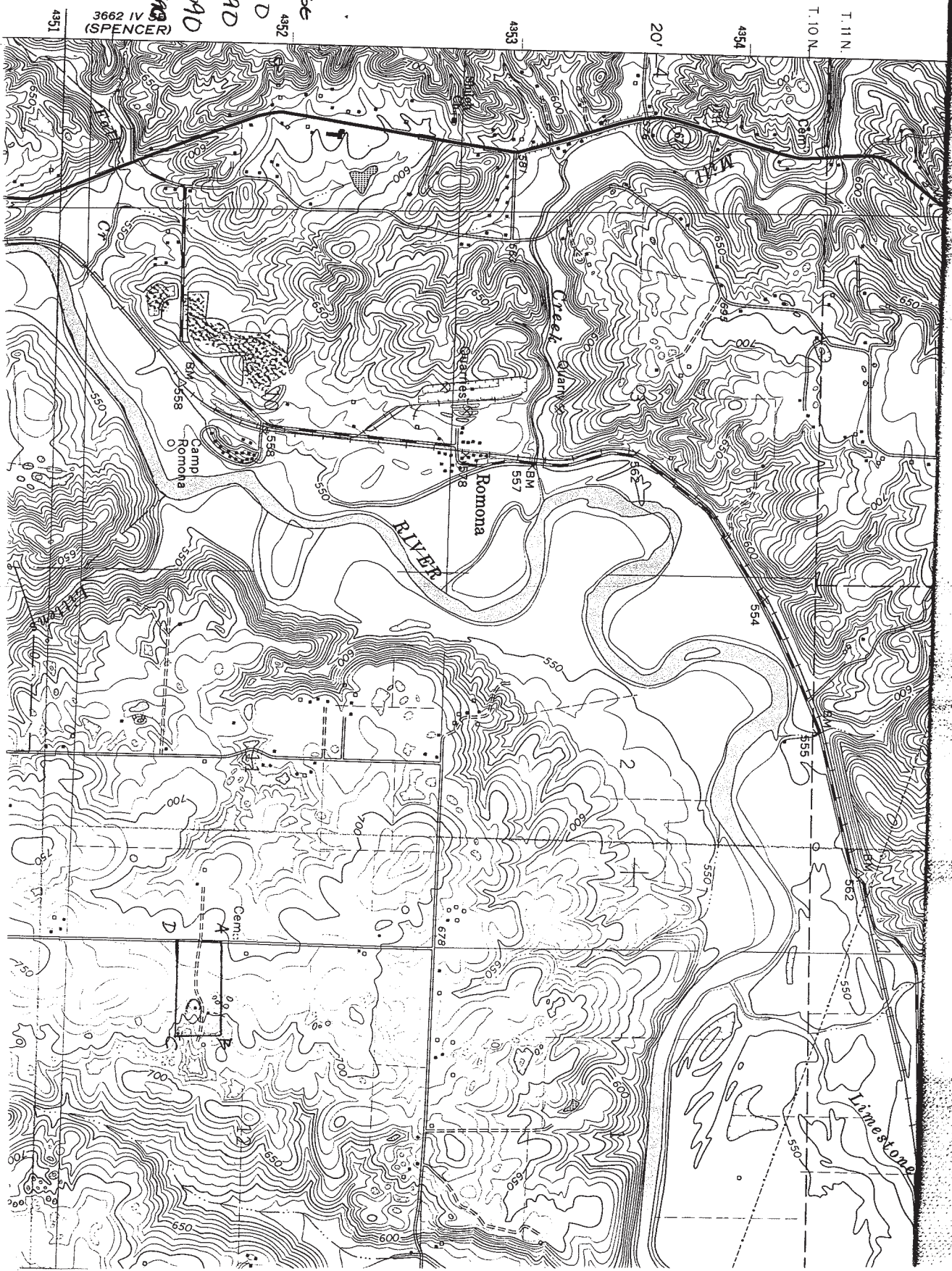
A parcel comprised of 9.89 acres located in the northwest corner of the Southwest quarter of Section 12 Township 10 North, Range 3 West in Owen County, Indiana. *

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the Secrest-Wampler house and enough of the surrounding hayfield and woodlot to preserve the original relationship of the house to Concord Road and the community, which includes the former Concord School to the immediate north, and the remains of the Harris farm and cemetery immediately west. It is only a fragment of the original quarter section plus half quarter section that once constituted the Secrest-Wampler farm.

* The boundary is shown on the attached aerial map.

SECRET-WAMPYER HOUSE
+ 16 525500 435179D
3 16 525910 435179D
2 16 525910 435159D
> 16 525500 435159D



T. 11 N.
T. 10 N.

20'

4354

4353

4351

3662 IV
(SPENCER)