

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 Fowler, Solomon, Mansion
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1105 West Vistula Street N/A not for publication
city or town Bristol N/A vicinity
state Indiana code IN county Elkhart code 039 zip code 46507

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]
Signature of certifying official/Title
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

8.8.03
Date

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
- landscape

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	2	buildings
1	0	sites
2	1	structures
1	0	objects
5	3	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: Granite

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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE _____

Period of Significance

1868-c.1930 _____

Significant Dates

N/A _____

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation

N/A _____

Architect/Builder

Unknown _____

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:

Elkhart County Historical Museum _____

Fowler, Solomon, Mansion
Name of Property

Elkhart IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.7 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	597320	4618990	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

2				4			
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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lynette Johnson
organization _____ date 11-01-2002
street & number 1105 West Vistula telephone 574/ 848-0136
city or town Bristol state IN zip code 46507

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 David & Lynette Johnson
street & number 1105 West Vistula telephone 574/ 848-0136
city or town Bristol state IN zip code 46507

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 number 7 Page 1 *Solomon Fowler Mansion, Elkhart Co., IN*

Section 7 – Description

The Solomon Fowler Mansion, 1869, is a 4,000 square foot, two-story, brick, Italianate house sited on a 4.72 acre parcel. The land faces onto Vistula Street, also known as State Route 120. This stretch of Vistula is on the west outskirts of the small town of Bristol; a subdivision of a dozen or more post-1945 is across the road, adjacent to the meandering St. Joseph River. The mansion was placed roughly 100 feet from Vistula, and its spacious lawn is studded with mature walnut and cypress trees. The semi-circular front drive is lined with dogwood trees and evergreen hedges. A granite fence marks the front of the property; the stone is similar in craftsmanship and coloration to the foundation work. A broken tombstone in the front yard is another oddity of the property. It reads "Cordelia, wife of Joseph Wheeler, died 1849." The source of the stone is unknown, since Cordelia's grave at the local cemetery has a proper stone that appears to have weathered the same amount of time.

The 4.72 acre parcel is the original size, and never appears to have been a working farm. However, likely as a convenience, several outbuildings permitted some agricultural activity, including a barn, windmill, and a small building dating from the 1940s. Only the well and pump served by the windmill remain. Foundation stones of the barn are visible behind the house. A small reflecting pond lies on the east side of the property. It was built from leftover granite from the foundation, and dates from before 1946, according to Gardner family records. In this area, a large wooden trellis and arbor structure once stood. A stone barbeque grill from the 1920s still stands just south of the pond. The Sudboroughs, owners in the 1920s, built a tennis court on a concrete slab behind the house. A later owner built a small service building behind the house, near the court, in the 1940s. In the 1960s, a pool and pool house were built. In all, the property includes five contributing resources - the house (building), stone fence (structure), the pump and well it once served (object) and the property itself, with its foundations, mature landscaping, barbeque grill, and the reflecting pond (all features of one site) and the tennis courts (structure). The contributing resources add to the property, by contributing to the estate-like qualities of the grounds, and because they predate 1945. Non-contributing resources include the pool and pool house (structure and building), and the non-descript service building from the 1940s. Non-contributing resources are either too recent to contribute to the history of the property, or, have no distinction.

The main block of the house is roughly forty feet square and rests on a granite foundation topped by a dressed limestone water table. The symmetrical front elevation is five-ranked with five round arched openings on each level, and faces roughly north. Windows are two-

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2 *Solomon Fowler Mansion, Elkhart Co., IN*

over-two wood sash, wood jambs are rounded. The arches are double coursed and have plain stone keystones and stone sills. The center bay arch on the ground floor crowns at the same height but is broader to accommodate the main entrance. A small limestone stoop and stone steps access the entry, the ornamental railings are recent additions. The entrance arch also differs in that it is triple coursed. The double leaf front doors are recessed nineteen inches behind flush wood storm doors with half lunette transom. The jambs of the recessed area are finished with moldings breaking the area into panels. Each actual front door is quarter-round at the top, nine feet high, with a glazed light over a molding-edged panel. The second floor has five windows. Open scrolled paired brackets mark the space between windows and the home's corners (photo 9). The brackets reach nearly to the spring line of the arches, and each attaches to a mutule-like block under the projecting, wood eaves. A relatively narrow cornice molding makes the transition from brick wall to wooden eaves. The house has a built-in guttering system, forming a distinct cornice above the bracket work. The moderately-pitched hip roof is covered in asphalt shingles. Originally, the roof appears to have been covered in wood shingles, and a large cupola was centered on the roof. The cupola had three arched windows on each face, and a bracketed roofline like that of the main house. The cupola was removed in the 1950s.

The east elevation lacks the symmetry of the front, but none of its finish (photos 1 and 7). A one story, semi-hexagonal wooden bay window stands toward the north corner of this elevation. It has two windows facing east and one each on its flanks. The wall is blank, due to flue placement, for rest of this half of the elevation. The rear half has two windows. The second floor has one window aligned over the bay window, a blank section, then, two windows on the back half that align with those below. The bracket type and spacing continues as per the front elevation, even though the window spacing is asymmetrical. Two evenly spaced massive paired chimney stacks punctuate the roofline. Each has recessed and raised brickwork panels and corbelled tops, and they were parged or stuccoed at some point. The owners recently removed the parging from one chimney and restored it.

The west elevation likewise continues the degree of finish of the front, but, like the east elevation, it lacks symmetry. Here the first floor has only two openings, in what would be the second and fourth bays, while the second floor has three openings, the northernmost bay being blank. The chimneys and brackets are like those of the east elevation.

The rear or south elevation of the house has a one story, brick, shed roofed kitchen wing. The rear wall of the main block of the house has five arched openings, one on either side of the kitchen wing, and three on the second floor – one centered, and one each toward either corner. The kitchen wing is original to the house. The garage section of the kitchen wing

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3 *Solomon Fowler Mansion, Elkhart Co., IN*

appears to have been a summer kitchen originally. Its walls are painted white. The east flank has a wooden porch at its junction with the main block, sheltering an entrance. This porch appears in early photos, with more robust square columns. Also, the porch foundation and floor were rebuilt with concrete at some point. The rectangular windows under the porch, on the rear wing, were originally arched, but are now a series of three flat topped windows. A small square window is south of the porch. The west side of the kitchen wing has a granite base for a stoop entrance near the main block. This entrance is segmental arched, rather than the round arches elsewhere on the house, as is a broader opening to the south leading to the garage. The garage opening was added in about 1950.

The house has a center hall, double pile plan. The main entrance opens into a large stair hall (photos 10-13). Wood floors, plaster walls, and original woodwork remain throughout. The narrow board oak floors are of the Craftsman era and were added over the pine floors. Doorways in the stair hall were trimmed in simple boards with architrave (or archivolt) moldings, all painted. Baseboards are high (about one foot) with shoe mold, baseboard with incised groove in the center, and elaborately molded cap. Ceiling height on the first floor is eleven feet. The grand stair features an Italianate era walnut railing with octagonal newel. The newel has an octagonal base, the inset burlled walnut panels have triple lines of bead work on their reveals. The transition to the newel post is deeply turned, the post itself is tapered and octagonal, with similar inset beaded panels. The newel top is also deeply turned and the handrail is molded. Balusters are plain turned with beaded top and urn profiled bases. Stringers, treads and nosings are painted. The stairs rise nineteen steps and make a 180 degree turn to the right at the top, the railing continues down the second floor hall, and the stairs double back to rise to the attic level.

To the west is a parlor. It has a similar level of finish to the stair hall. Perhaps a surprise, the eight foot by three foot round arched windows are framed by rectangular defined openings of architrave surrounds, with skirt panels marked out by raised moldings underneath. A recessed, round arched panel makes the transition. First floor windows originally had wooden shutter blinds. These had been removed, however, the present owners have purchased some of the original blinds and hope to reinstall them. On the back (south) wall of this parlor, double doors once led to the area now used as a kitchen – originally it may have been a dining room. The doors were removed at some point and a large mirror installed to fill the opening. Photo 16 shows the mirrored doorway, the W.D. Emerson Square Grand Piano in this photo is believed to be an original furnishing of the house. The mantelpiece on the west wall is original (photo 15). It has a round arched firebox, paneled spandrels, scroll-cartouche keystone, an ogee-shaped shelf, and was built of faux marble finished slate. The firebox has a cast iron insert and a valve that modified the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4 *Solomon Fowler Mansion, Elkhart Co., IN*

air flow from a basement fireplace to this one. Another item of note, the ceiling gas light fixture (photo 14) is original and has been wired for electricity.

The east parlor has the same type of woodwork as the west parlor, with additional element of the bay window space in the northeast corner of the room (photo 17). The interior of the bay window has not only architrave surrounds for the bay opening and its windows, but molded-edged recessed panels on the jambs and ceiling as well. The ceiling panels were laid out in triangles and parallelograms to conform to the semi-hexagonal plan of the bay. The mantle in this parlor, located just south of the bay window, differs from the other parlor's. It is more classic in inspiration, with flanking pilasters, and an entablature-supported shelf. This room also differs from the others in that it is carpeted, however, the oak flooring underneath is in good condition.

A dining room adjoins the east parlor by way of large, nine-foot high double doors. The large, glass fronted built-in china cabinet indicates the room's intended use as a dining room. The mantelpiece matches that of the east parlor.

The kitchen stands at the back of the house. The kitchen has modern appliances and cabinets. The walls have wide wood paneled wainscoting below a chair rail, and wallpapered plaster walls above. An ornate glass and metal ceiling fixture in the kitchen may have once occupied the front parlor (photo 18).

Two doors from the back of the main block lead to the one story rear section. The first room in this section was likely the original kitchen. This room suffered water damage and it was subsequently remodeled. Ceilings were lowered, walls were paneled, and linoleum installed over the plank floors. This room now houses a laundry area and a partitioned bathroom. The garage behind this laundry / mudroom area has a cellar door to the basement, with a pulley system for raising the doors.

The second floor has four bedrooms and a bathroom. Floors are wood plank, ceilings are about twelve feet high. Door and window surrounds are similar to those downstairs, but less elaborate; windows lack the paneled skirt on this floor, instead they have wooden sills with a molded apron. Hall doorways are transomed. The bathroom is at the foot of the stairs from the first floor. Part of the floor is slate, and the walls are wainscoted in slate. 1950s floor tile covers the rest of the floor. Fixtures include a modern sink, and a shower and tub from before 1946. This room may have been a bathroom originally.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7&8 Page 5 *Solomon Fowler Mansion, Elkhart Co., IN*

Each bedroom has a fireplace with wood mantelpiece. The firebox openings in all upstairs bedroom fireplaces were sealed off and plastered over at some point. All upstairs windows have original wooden shutter blinds.

Continuing upstairs, one reaches a door to the attic. The attic is unfinished. A short flight of stairs in the attic once led to the cupola.

A cellar hatch in the garage or a doorway in the mudroom / laundry area lead one to the basement (photos 19 and 20). The plan of the basement echoes the main floor, due to the masonry construction of the house. There is a central passage dividing four rooms, and round arched openings connect the spaces. Walls are brick (interior walls) or rough coursed granite (exterior walls). The floors were cobblestone, but a past owner added a layer of concrete over the stone. A tunnel or trough in the floor is lined with brick, it was partially filled with concrete when the floor was installed. Likely, this trough allowed water into the basement for washing, cooking and/or cooling of dairy products.

Section 8 – Statement of Significance

The Solomon Fowler Mansion is the best example of Italianate domestic architecture in Bristol, Indiana, and is among the best remaining examples in Elkhart County. Fowler, a successful merchant and investor, built the house to enjoy in retirement with his family. The house meets Criterion C as a locally outstanding example of Italianate architecture.

Prior to the mid-19th century, American builders relied on vernacular housing forms to fulfill the needs of their clients. Carpenter's manuals might provide the basis for the classical orders of architecture, for doorways, moldings, and staircases. But the elevations and plans often owed a great deal to vernacular forms within a builder's culture. With the advent of the Gothic Revival and Italianate designs, fostered by A.J. Downing and Calvert Vaux in the 1850s, home builders began to venture from vernacular types to designs that reflected the growing significance of pattern books.

Houses like the Solomon Fowler Mansion, 1869, mark a transition between popular and vernacular architecture. Not only do the exterior and interior have all of the characteristics of Italianate design, but the degree of craftsmanship seen here marks a high style example. Exterior Italianate elements include round arched windows, deep eaves supported by wooden brackets, porches, and a bay window. While not specifically Italianate, the tall brick double chimney stacks add a picturesque, vertical note in keeping with the style. The Fowler House had no tower such as are common on larger Italianate homes, however, the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6 *Solomon Fowler Mansion, Elkhart Co., IN*

cupola provided a strong vertical emphasis (until it was removed). The interior also showcases Italianate architecture: the stair rail and newel, architrave style woodwork, and paneled bay window interior were common on finer homes of the period. Despite its high style aspirations, the plan of the house is vernacular: a center hall, double pile plan with roots in the Georgian era. Unfortunately, the builder remains unknown.

Bristol has a handful of examples of Italianate architecture. The earlier Greek Revival period is more easily remembered, since the town and its environs have several noteworthy examples, including a well-designed "basilica" type house. Washington Township and Bristol have six houses, and several commercial buildings that have some elements of Italianate design. Most of these are wood frame, upright-and-wing or gabled ell houses with traces of Italianate inspiration – hooded, arched windows, wide, plain entablatures, porches with modest bracket work. The most comparable is a house at 611 E. Vistula, a two story brick "villa" house with bay windows, hooded windows, bracketed entablature, and square-posted front porch. As one resident of Bristol summarized in about 1920, "there were three homes worthy of special attention...only two of which remain, the Milburn House (611 E. Vistula) and the Sudborough House (the nominated property)." (Mosier, p. 1.)

Granted that Bristol was platted in 1835, the sophistication of its Greek Revival houses from the 1840s and 50s might seem surprising. The New English settlers of the area came with more financial resources, and, the richness of the prairie soil yielded surplus crops quickly, especially wheat. Indiana, one of the new western states, provided a significant amount of wheat to Eastern markets before the Plains states were settled. The site of Bristol – at the confluence of the Little Elkhart and St. Joseph Rivers – allowed entrepreneurs to set up mills and the waterways fostered transportation of goods.

Edward Bonney preceded developments in Bristol with construction of his wooden grain mill a few miles east of the town's site in 1832. Bristol would have as many as seven grain mills by the late 19th century. Solomon Fowler was one of the entrepreneurs who hoped to profit from the grain trade in Bristol. He was raised in New York state, where as a young man he worked on a farm. Later he ventured to New York City and opened a grocery store. Prior to coming to Indiana 1836, he was involved in the oil trade with Henry Coffin. He opened a general store in Bristol with Owen Coffin, later partnering with A.K Kline and William Probasco. Fowler built a warehouse in Bristol in 1841 and made a good profit from its sale one year later.

With the arrival of the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad in the 1850s, Bristol had a secure transportation route for the grain coming to town. The railroad not only

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8&9 Page 7 *Solomon Fowler Mansion, Elkhart Co., IN*

benefited grain production, but it greatly aided the owners of the extensive orchards and berry fields in and around Bristol. Fowler formed the Bristol Hydraulic Company to build a dam, races, and a mill. William Palin, William Hall, A.P. Wright and William Probasco were partners with Fowler; Palin was president of the firm for a time (after the lawsuit and foreclosure of mortgage), and the Fowlers bought the property on which to build their Italianate house from Palin in 1869. The gristmill was a five story structure, supplied with power by a 280' long dam with a six foot fall. The project was complete by 1867; that year, Fowler built a large flour mill. Likely, this was a steam mill since Fowler was also owner of the Bristol Steam Flouring Mills. He also built a furniture factory, the Bristol Furniture and Manufacturing Company, in 1870. Within a few years, however, a lawsuit by a nearby miller, John Boyer, was filed over the decline of useful power for his mill further upstream on the Little Elkhart. Shortly before Fowler's death in 1877, a disastrous fire destroyed the mills and furniture factory. Some years later, the dam washed out or was removed after years of deterioration. Attempts to rebuild the mills and lure other water-powered industries to Elkhart in the 1880s failed.

Befitting his status in the business community, Fowler chose to build his new home across Vistula Street from the flour mill. Newspapers credited Fowler with a great degree of Bristol's economic growth in his obituary in 1877.

Martha Fowler continued to reside here until her death, along with Cordelia J. Clark, a niece of the Fowlers, and Martha's mother, Nancy Clark. In 1904, the Fowler's niece, Cordelia J. Clark, formally inherited the house. She taught in local schools in the 1880s. She married Fred H. Sudborough, and Cordelia and her family remained owners until 1936. The Sudboroughs added estate-like improvements to the grounds, such as the tennis courts and barbeque grill. Harry and Pearl Stutsman bought the property in 1936 and lived here until 1946. Pearl was a widow when she sold the house to Stewart and Laura Gardner. The Gardners sold to the Boger in 1962; their daughter Susan (Boger) Dibley and her husband Michael assumed ownership in 1990. In 2002, David and Lynette K. Johnson bought the house. The Johnsons plan to reconstruct the cupola, as well as continuing a strong general maintenance program.

Section 9 - Bibliography

Abstract of title, compiled by David and Lynette K. Johnson.

"Bristol Correspondence," *Elkhart Review*, April 29, 1869, page number unknown.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9&10 Page 8 *Solomon Fowler Mansion, Elkhart Co., IN*

“Bristol from 1863 to 1879 as Recalled by an Old Bristol Boy,” *Bristol Banner*, August 8, 1930, page number unknown.

Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, *Elkhart County Interim Report*, 1978.

“Obituary of Solomon Fowler,” unknown paper, unknown date.

Jean Ann Young, ed. *Tales of a Hoosier Village, A History of Bristol*. Bristol, IN: Wyndham Hall Press, 1988.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. Census of the Population, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, entries for 1105 W. Vistula, Bristol, IN.

Section 10 - Geographical Data, Verbal Boundary Description.

In Elkhart County, State of Indiana, to-wit:

A part of the South Fraction of the Northwest Quarter (NW1/4) of Section Twenty-Seven (27) in Township Thirty-Eight (38) North of Range Six (6) East, being more particularly described as follows, to-wit:

Commencing at a stake at the northeast corner of lands owned by William Cox in 1869 (now being the David Cox Estate) and running easterly on a line being the center of the Vistula Road, 3 Chains and 5 links; thence south 21 ¼ degrees east 10 chains and 93 links; thence west 6 chains and 86 links; thence north 8 chains and 94 links to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification

This is the historic property boundary.

Sec 10 Geographical Data
 Fowler, Solomon Mansion
 Elkhart County, IN

HI LBI SH T
 PLAT BOO

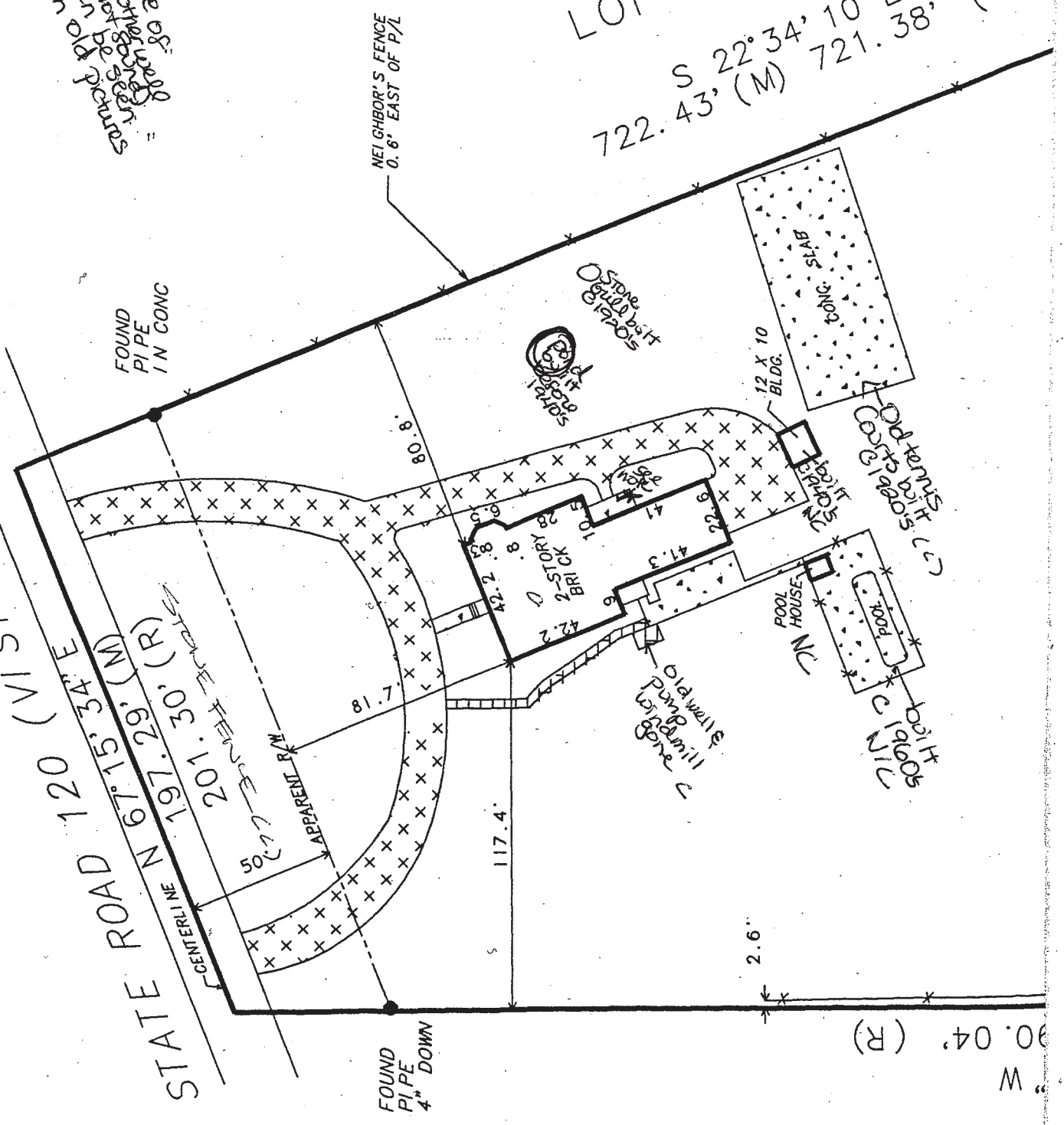
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Picture of old map
 shows
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LOT 1

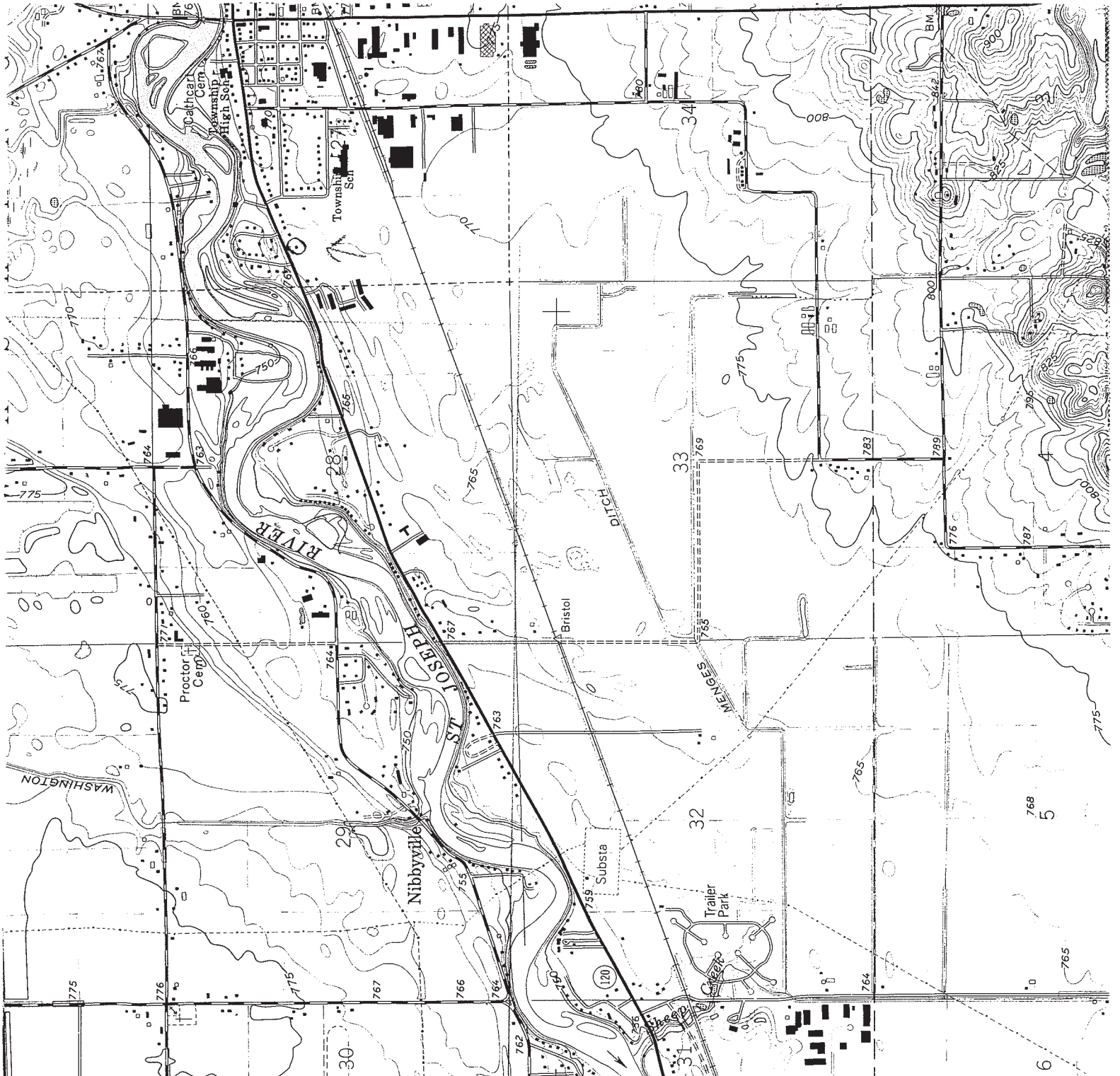
S 22° 34' 10" E
 722.43' (M) 721.38' (R)

STATE ROAD N 120 (VI STULA ST.)
 STATE FENCE
 CENTERLINE
 67.15' 34" E (M)
 167.29' (R)
 210.30' (R)
 201.10'



LOT 55

90.04' (R)
 " W



SOLOMON FOWLER
 MANSION
 ELKHART CO. IN
 16 59732D 461899D

42'30"

T. 38 N.
 T. 37 N.
 ELKHART (U.S. 20) 4.5 MI.
 3867 III NW
 (ELKHART)