

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 Adams, Ora, House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number 301-303 East Main Street

N/A  not for publication

city or town Danville

N/A  vicinity

state Indiana code IN

county Hendricks

code 063

zip code 46122

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be consider 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Adams, Ora, House

Hendricks, IN

Name of Property

County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
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.)

\_\_\_\_\_

**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: Queen Anne

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD: Weatherboard

\_\_\_\_\_

roof ASPHALT

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

Adams, Ora, House  
Name of Property

Hendricks, IN  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the 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, 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 significant within the past 50 years.

**Areas of significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1883-1900  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1883  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Adams, Ora Wilson  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

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

**Architect/Builder**

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

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination if 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Property

County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than 1 acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

2			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

4			
	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 John Warner

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 06/01/2008

street & number 5018 Broadway St. telephone 3172835450

city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46205

**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 Martha Crosley

street & number 1669 E. Main St. telephone 3177455173

city or town Danville state IN zip code 46122

**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 listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance to the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this 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 the 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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**Section 7 – Description**

**Narrative**

Ora Adams had this one-story, cross-gable Late Victorian cottage built in 1883 to provide a home for herself and her three-year-old daughter Effie on a lot sited on the southeast corner of East Main Street (SR 36) and South Wayne Street a few block east of the courthouse square. At the time of construction, the neighborhood contained primarily one-and-two-story residential buildings on the same side of East Main Street and south along both sides of South Wayne Street; a small carpenter shop was in operation across (west) from the home. Across East Main Street, north of the home, was the collection of Central Normal College buildings that comprised the campus in 1883. On the campus grounds was the recitation hall on the east side of North Wayne Street and the library/study rooms on the west side. Today, changes over time in the neighborhood include the loss of a few homes and the incursion of some modern commercial buildings west of the home but the immediate vicinity retains many residences of the same or earlier period.

The sketch map included with the nomination shows the site of the cottage in relation to other buildings of the college campus (see Sketch Map). It might be expected that the home of the college president would be a grander structure but this unassuming home reflects much of the character of its owner, simple with a touch of the upscale visible in the decorative work along the frieze of the porches and/or the simple fluting in the window and door surrounds in the interior.

EXTERIOR

Photograph 1 is a view of the west elevation and shows the general organization of the façade of the home. A brick foundation supports the original clapboard-clad exterior walls that are now covered with vinyl siding. A parge coat imitating rusticated block covers the brick on the exterior of the foundation. The porch on the left (north) extension demonstrates the original configuration of the various porches on the house. The porch on the right in the façade is no doubt a replacement for an original entry porch and likely dates to the late 1900s or early 1910s. The replacement reflects the typical evolution of wooden porches in this region that routinely required significant work after 20 years of service. The window units in the side gable and the left (north) portion of the façade are original and glazed, one-over-one. The storm windows are original. Windows in the right (south) portion are modern replacements. The entry doors in the main portion of the façade are original and wooden with single glazing in the upper portion and panels in the lower. Transoms are present throughout the house. The star detail in the frieze of the porches in the west and east façade is unique (photographs 2, 3, or 5). A copy of a period photograph, appended to the nomination, shows a group of women in front of the porch. Note the shadow of the star detail at the upper right margin of the image.

The gable front of the north elevation contains two original window units, double-hung and glazed one-over-one protected by original storm windows (photograph 2).

The east elevation contains a combination of original and modern portions. The side porch mirrors the porch on the façade (west elevation). The entry door into the front parlor is of the same construction and materials as those in the façade. The window units, except a small modern window in the left (south) portion of the elevation, are original. However, a non-period addition extends south from the original main block of the house (photograph 3). Investigation of

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the interior space and the basement indicate this addition probably encloses an original porch in the ell of this elevation.

The south elevation shows the greatest number of changes to the house through two additions. From evidence in the interior space, the very small addition at the southeast corner of the house (right side of photograph 4) appears to have been the latest addition. The addition to the left side of the elevation (left side of the photograph) enclosed what appears on Sandborn maps as a permanent extension to the main block of the house. The short flight of concrete steps visible in the photograph originally provided access to a small back porch that became part of the platform for the addition. The interior of this extension covers the framing of the bulkhead that accesses the dirt-floored basement. The window units and entry door for this addition are modern. A modern door into the basement is actually located at the extreme right of the façade and is visible in photograph 1. Two small brick chimneys grace the composition shingle roof.

INTERIOR

The interior of the house has experienced some change over time. A step into the north portion of the living space from the older wooden porch visible in photograph 6 would take a visitor directly into an unfurnished parlor that hosted many social functions during its period of significance and likely served Ora and James as the public space (parlor) used for meetings and/or entertaining. The basic integrity of the interior spaces, most architectural details, and some hardware remain. For example, original window casings, baseboards, and door surrounds are still present in the unaltered portion of the home. An original fireplace remains in the family parlor south of the formal space entered from the outside. To the right (east) of the family parlor is a large sleeping space. Original bi-fold doors separate the front and rear parlor in this portion of the interior (photographs 6 and 7). Note the fluting visible in a typical interior door surround in photograph 8. The same detail appears in the window surrounds. Typical of the period and even in this simply-decorated residence, the interior contains more stylistic details in the public spaces of the house than does the private spaces. Window sashes retain original locking hardware (photograph 9), some original door knobs and key escutcheons remain (photograph 10), two of the closets contain original garment hooks (photograph 11), and original wood-paneled doors remain throughout the house (photograph 12). Rescued from a shed at the rear of the property, this interior door is being reinstalled. Plaster walls and ceilings are original and the ceiling height throughout the house reflects original dimensions (photograph 13).

Although the interior of the south portion of the house has received some modern renovation for present day conveniences, the spaces retain much of the original interior details in the way of ceiling height, casing material, and spatial arrangement. On the right side of the rear section of the house, in the ell formed by the cross-gable, is an addition containing a bedroom; the exterior of this space is visible in photograph 4. Another bedroom, to the rear of the original kitchen in the south half of the building, incorporated the rear porch. The exterior of this addition is also visible in photograph 4. The modernized kitchen occupies the traditional space in the rear of the building and except for modern appurtenances retains the same spatial configuration as the original. Many of the door and window surrounds in these spaces have reduced fluting detailing. Fluting in the old kitchen space is non-existent as would be expected in a utilitarian portion of a



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house such as this. If the two additions were removed, the interior and the exterior would reflect all of the original dimensions existing when the Joseph family resided there. Transoms above the interior and exterior doors remain in place.

SUMMARY

The Ora Adams' house retains significant architectural integrity. The modern alterations of vinyl siding, windows in the renovated portion at the south end of the building, and the addition of the bathroom in the south portion do not detract from the overall ability of the house to convey its association with the life and important events surrounding Ora Adams.

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**Section 8 - Statement of Significance**

The Ora Adams House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with events surrounding the development of a highly qualified corps of teachers for Indiana's common schools. In broader terms, it reflects the growth of educator training in the region in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and the house is the only extant physical remnant of the first campus buildings of Central Normal College (CNC) in Danville, Indiana. The house also is significant under Criterion B for its association with Ora Adams, sole proprietor of Central Normal College – the second independent (non-state supported) normal school established in late-nineteenth-century Indiana. According to available information, Ora Adams was the only female to hold such a position in the history of Indiana's independent normal schools. The college provided dedicated teachers, many of whom later advanced to higher positions in education in the state and the region, to Indiana's common school system for a period of nearly 70 years. Other graduates of Central Normal College reached prominence in careers in the law, the medical profession, and the world of business.

The first settlers in Hendricks County established their small farms along White Lick Creek in the southern part of the county circa 1820. Named for Indiana Governor William Hendricks, the county was organized on 1 April 1824. Danville, platted on 20 October 1824, reputedly carries the name of the brother of pioneer Circuit Court Judge William W. Williams. The National Road reached southern Hendricks County in 1830. One source from the time noted that the thoroughfare (actually only a muddy trace with trees stumped down low enough to allow wagons to pass over them) was characterized by, "one continuous procession of immigrants to all parts of the west, [that] added ... to the rapid settlement and development of that portion of Hendricks County." The decades of the 1840s and 1850s witnessed slow growth in the county but by 1859, Danville's incorporation as a town and the establishment of the Danville Academy, operated by the Methodist Quarterly Conference, defined its role as the dominant community in the region.<sup>1</sup>

The next two decades brought great change to Danville. Population grew to nearly two thousand citizens; commercial activity around the town square increased significantly; and in 1878, the arrival of Central Normal College (CNC), to its location just east of the courthouse square, heralded an event that would dominate or affect many aspects of community life for the next seven decades.<sup>2</sup>

Local citizens were proud of the fact they retained their moral equilibrium in the face of all this progress. College administrators and students actively supported community temperance efforts. Throughout the 1880s, Central Normal catalogues proudly announced that "there is not a single saloon within ten miles of the town," no doubt an inducement for enrollment by serious-minded students focused on getting their education. In 1890, students and faculty of Central

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<sup>1</sup> John R. McDowell, ed., *The History of Hendricks County: 1914-1976* (Danville, IN: The Hendricks County Historical Society, 1976), 160 and 487; *History of Hendricks County, Ind.* (Chicago: Inter-state Publishing Company, 1885), 273; and U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Decennial Census*, 1840, 1850, and 1860.

<sup>2</sup> *Atlas of Hendricks County*, 51; *Hendricks County Republican, Danville, Indiana*, Volume 1 (Danville, IN: County Seat Genealogical Society, 2001), 210; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Decennial Census*, 1870.



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Normal College involved themselves in efforts to thwart the licensing of a saloon in Danville and Ora Adams acted as a steering committee member.<sup>3</sup>

Originally organized in Ladoga, Indiana in 1876 with Warren Darst and W.F. Harper as the associate principals, Central Normal College and Commercial Institute offered courses in preparatory subjects, teacher's training, commercial skills, and college-level course work. Early enrollments were small in numbers but by late 1877, the principals sought larger facilities to accommodate a rapidly growing student population. After visiting several central Indiana communities, Harper met with local leaders in Danville who had the former home of the Danville Academy to offer as a new facility for Central Normal. The Danville Academy closed its doors in 1868.<sup>4</sup>

Teacher education and training, a primary reason for Central Normal's existence, became a dominant issue in Indiana after the approval of the new state constitution in 1851. That is not to say that a small corps of professional educators in Indiana ignored the professional development of teachers prior to this time; rather the constitution added impetus to an already recognized need. Earliest attempts at teacher training centered on such institutions as the State University (Indiana University), the State Normal School (now Indiana State University), De Pauw University Normal School, and the Richmond Normal School. Other teacher education venues included county institutes, township institutes, and teacher's reading circles. The teacher education programs at De Pauw and the Richmond Normal School ceased to exist in 1890 and 1887 respectively after very short durations. Some responsibility for professional teacher training in the closing decades of the nineteenth century shifted from universities to independent normal schools.<sup>5</sup>

On the surface, establishing a school for educating teachers appears to be a simple task, but one example clearly proves the opposite is true. As early as 1838, the trustees of Indiana University accepted the responsibility for creating "a professorship to prepare teachers for the common schools" but years of discussion failed to muster either funding or popular support for this endeavor. In 1852 at the direction of the trustees, a normal school opened at the university and a broad curriculum offered courses that included work in a model school. The ultimate objective was to prepare its graduates to take and successfully pass an extensive examination. The newly-opened normal school at Indiana University ceased to function in 1858. For the next 32 years "departments" of education opened and closed at the state's preeminent university with a regularity that was frightening. In 1886, Indiana University established a Department of Pedagogies under the direction of Superintendent Boone of Frankfort, Indiana. The success of this venture relied on a broader concept of educating teachers in subject matter not solely focused on pedagogy. According to all reports the new department achieved its initial goals and a few

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<sup>3</sup> Central Normal College and Commercial Institute *Catalogue*, 1883-1884, no page: College catalogues, 1885-1890, passim.

<sup>4</sup> McDowell, *History of Hendricks County, Ind.*, 103; *Prospectus of the Central Normal School, Ladoga, Indiana*, 1876, cover page. Available at the Indiana Historical Society, Smith Library.

<sup>5</sup> Richard G. Boone, *A History of Education in Indiana* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1892), 407-436.

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years later graduate-level instruction became available.<sup>6</sup> Determining the educational needs of future teachers and meeting those needs was no small task.

Indiana's independent normal schools, a generic that encompassed a plethora of courses of study, proliferated during these closing decades of the nineteenth century. At one time during the period Indiana had 15 such centers of education. Curricula varied depending on the self-determined mission of the founders. Common to all these institutions was the fact they were private (not state supported) and existed on the fees derived from students. Uniform offerings in course matter were not common. Collectively, however, they all offered high school level courses that may have served to prepare the student for future college level work, business courses, special training in music, fine art, elocution, and oratory, and, finally, classical and scientific college-level courses. Central Normal and other independents also offered professional instruction in law, medicine, and teaching.<sup>7</sup>

Unlike many of its independent contemporaries, Central Normal did not stay in its original location. As Mr. Harper, an associate principal along with Mr. Darst sought a larger facility for the college so too did Danville seek a tenant for the vacated building of the Danville Academy. Harper accepted the offering of the new location from the citizens of Danville. On 10 May 1878 a wagon train manned by Danville citizens moved the property, faculty, and a majority of the students of the Central Normal College from Ladoga to Danville. One of the faculty members who moved to Danville was an instructor by the name of Franklin P. Adams, a graduate of the National Normal School in Lebanon, Ohio. The folks in Danville were ecstatic about the addition to their community and Ladoga felt it had been bamboozled by its neighbor to the south. A lesser version of the college in Ladoga remained in existence for a few years but closed its doors for a lack of students.<sup>8</sup>

Community involvement in the change of venue for the college was preeminent in the selection of Danville. Local citizens raised \$10,000.00 through public subscription, bought the old Danville Academy building from the local Methodist Episcopal Church, and presented it to Mr. Harper who became the sole proprietor of the college and all its property. For reasons never determined by his contemporaries, Mr. Harper packed his bags and left for parts unknown "out west" and Franklin P. Adams, at the request of his fellow faculty members, became the president and sole proprietor of Central Normal College in 1878.<sup>9</sup>

The next five years in the life of CNC set the stage for the future. Adams, a hard-working and dedicated individual, combined his responsibilities as president and as a teacher. Enrollments steadily increased and by 1880, full-time student population averaged 300-400 annually. Adams recruited new faculty members and expanded the curriculums in each of the departments. Faculty members and students acted in concert to support the efforts of the college and an almost familial relationship formed between the two groups that served them and the community well. The

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 382-386.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 434-435.

<sup>8</sup> Julian D. Hogate, *History of Central Normal College* (Danville, IN: 1925), 2. This is a small pamphlet which appears to have been published by the college for some undetermined purpose. Available at the Indiana Historical Society, Smith Library.

<sup>9</sup> McDowell, *The History of Hendricks County*, 104.

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community became actively involved in the day-to-day lives of the students through their interactions with downtown businesses, through its role as the provider of room and board for the majority of Central Normal's students, and in later years, through its participation in college-sponsored recitations, programs, and holiday celebrations. The college did not have dormitories for its student population. Later, the college offered limited boarding facilities but the practice of boarding with local families continued for years. The average cost for boarding with a family in the mid-1880s was \$2.00 per week; rent for a room in a private home cost \$.50 a week.<sup>10</sup>

The requirements of his two major areas of responsibility took their toll on the life of Franklin Adams. After shepherding the college through a trying period of continuous growth, both in size and academic credentials, Adams, according to one contemporary account, "overtaxed his strength" and died on 25 November 1882 at the age of 30 years. During his tenure he guided the college, recruited students, and added to the faculty with well-known members of the teaching profession including one from the National Normal School in Lebanon, Ohio. The National Normal School, under its president Alfred Holbrook, championed the educational methods first envisioned by Johann Pestalozzi, a Swiss pioneer in teaching methodology. Franklin Adams, a grammarian by training, studied the methods employed by Holbrook at the Lebanon campus and applied them to his efforts and the teaching methodology of his staff at CNC. The college faculty sought and attained high standards.<sup>11</sup>

Adams untimely death created a void in the world of Central Normal College that required immediate filling. Central Normal College was the second oldest private "independent normal school" in the state; by 1882, its position in the hierarchy of normal schools operating in Indiana required a smooth transition to assure continuity in its operation and its role in the community. All independent normal schools suffered from a lack of funds (cash flow) due to their reliance on student fees. Central Normal's usual fiscal challenge became more compelling with the death of its primary leadership. According to some accounts there occurred a "deathbed" request by Adams that his wife assume his duties as president of the college. Another commentary on Adams' death notes, "no one presumed to take his place but ... [by] unanimous wish of the faculty, his bereaved companion took upon herself the name which he had worn." Whichever account is correct is immaterial because the fact remains that Mrs. Ora Adams became president and sole proprietor of Central Normal College in January 1883, a position held by no other Hoosier woman of the period.<sup>12</sup>

Today, the assumption of a presidency of a college by a female seems commonplace. However, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, it was significant. Its full impact is apparent when a few historical facts concerning this period are considered. It was not until 1879 that Congress passed legislation to allow women to practice law in all federal courts. In 1886, all

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid; *The Central Normal Post*, 1884, 4; C.A. Hargrave, "The Central Normal College," May 1913. This is a copy of an unpublished document included in the cornerstone of the new county courthouse constructed in 1913.

<sup>11</sup> Hogate, *History of Central Normal College*, page 2; *Central Normal Post*, May-June, 1886, 1; *The History of Warren County, Ohio* (Chicago, IL: W.H. Beers Co., 1882), 747.

<sup>12</sup> *Central Normal Post*, May-June, 1886, 2; John V. Hadley, ed., *History of Hendricks County, Indiana* (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Company, 1914), 165.

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but seven states finally permitted divorce on the grounds of cruelty. In 1895, fourteen states still considered a wife's wages the property of her husband; in thirty-seven states, a married woman had no legal right over her children; and only four states allowed women to vote in general state and federal elections. In light of this, Ora Adams' assumption of her husband's responsibilities in 1883 takes on a new importance.<sup>13</sup>

Ora Adams had help in her administration of the college. A few years earlier, Franklin Adams had recruited a colleague from the National Normal School in Lebanon, Ohio, to join the faculty. Professor John A. Steele, a highly-respected man of education, taught classes and acted in the capacity of vice-president of the college for nearly four years. When Franklin Adams died and Ora accepted the position as president, Professor Steele remained vice-president and focused on some of the nuts and bolts of running the college while Ora focused her talents on "employing the faculty" and acting "as a sympathetic advisor with instructors and students." In other words, Steele, and his successor Professor Charles A. Hargrave, counted on Ora to give guidance and "found her advice to be based upon good judgment and they consulted with her daily."<sup>14</sup>

It appears that Ora assumed the role as president with a broad understanding of the workings of the college but directed her personal talents to provide cohesion between the administrative details and the important aspect of interpersonal relations. A common philosophical thread throughout much of the research material indicates the leadership of Central Normal College believed in a familial environment, dependent on personal responsibility and a collective sense of involvement, within which to educate its student rather than employment of the "birch switch" to motivate. Ora knew of her husband's future plans and provided stability through the transition of presidents.

The decade of the 1880s proved to be critical to the future of Central Normal. A few years after Frank Adams' death, John Steele developed a deadly case of tuberculosis and, after a long struggle, died in 1885. Charles A. Hargrave, a former student and graduate of the college, took over Steele's duties as vice-president. Rocky though the road may have seemed to those running the college, it prospered and the student rolls continued to grow. The academic year 1883-84 appears to have been a "banner year" in the history of the college. Graduates from this class included a future Indiana governor, Samuel M. Ralston, two future higher-court judges in the persons of E.W. Felt and J.W. Spencer, and future Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chas. A. Greathouse. Full-time student enrollments were around 500 per year in the mid-1880s; by 1889, 683 students filled the rolls of the college. In 1884, the student body included representatives from 14 states and one territory.<sup>15</sup> If a full accounting were possible, the list of graduates of Central Normal College would include the names of hundreds of prominent educators, jurists, and successful businessmen in Indiana and around the region.

A review of Franklin Adams' estate clearly indicates there was no house available for Ora, and her daughter Effie, to occupy after his death. Evidently, Franklin and Ora planned to

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<sup>13</sup> Christina K. Schaefer, *The Hidden Half of the Family* (Baltimore, MD: The Genealogical Publishing Company, 1999), 2-3.

<sup>14</sup> "Officials of Fifty Years," *Jubilee Number College Quarterly*, December, 1928.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* "Holds Fast to Economy in Education Doctrine," *Indianapolis News*, 26 June 1926, 21; *Hendricks County Republican*, 1 May 1884, 3.



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build one eventually because he bought Lots 1 and 2 of Block 23, in the city of Danville in April 1881 for the sum of \$500.00; the present site of the house is on a portion of Lot 1 of the same block. While Ora inherited the other physical entities of the college soon after Franklin's demise, she was without a home of her own until late 1883 when the house was finished. After she moved in, the house became not only home for the mother and daughter but the site of various social functions including a wedding of a former student, discussion groups concerning artists and composers, farewells for departing staff and faculty, cultural pursuits, and on a more somber note, the final domicile of John A. Steele. Steele, the one-time vice-president of the college, died in the house in 1885. The college newspaper reported that, "he [Steele] could hear the sound of music in the chapel [across the street from the cottage]... and it was a source of pleasure to him to be so near the school..." Steele developed tuberculosis in the early 1880s, went to Florida to attempt a recovery, but returned to Danville where he resided in Ora's house during his final months.<sup>16</sup>

Ora Adams' discharge of her duties as president included more than just the social and cultural side of the equation. She actively involved herself in details of operating the college in a debt-free, Christian environment. Singular shortcomings of private normal schools were their reliance on student fees to defray the costs of salaries, facilities, maintenance and improvements. Throughout her tenure, Ora recruited students and handled most of the correspondence with potential attendees, she supplemented her own salary through sales of a book on grammar that Frank Adams published during his lifetime, and she managed the affairs of the college in such a manner that most histories of the institution make a point of commenting on her frugality, commonsense, and her ability to keep costs down so that tuition requirements favored the student. One of the greatest selling points for attendance at an independent normal school was the reduced cost of completing course requirements.<sup>17</sup>

By many accounts, Central Normal enrollment in the mid-to-late 1880s fluctuated between 400-700 full-time students and a variable enrollment of anywhere from 1200 to 1500 per year. Variable enrollments were the result of active teachers enrolling for only one or two terms in an academic year to continue their course work for licensing or taking advanced courses to increase the breadth of their certification. Ora involved herself in many aspects of operating the college. She chose wallpaper and paint for improvements made to the main classroom building, ordered the replacement of drafty windows with modern sashes "hung on weights," and made the decision to change out the roof on the main college building, all in spite of limited funds.<sup>18</sup> Ora's involvement included decisions on major expenditures of limited funds and on the more mundane like wallpaper selection.

The tenure of Ora Adams' presidency can best be characterized by its continued growth in the number of students, the expansion of curriculum, the involvement of its faculty in area

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<sup>16</sup> *Transfers of Real Estate in Danville Indiana, 1881-1913*, no page. Located at the Auditor's Office, Hendricks County Government Center in Danville; "Editorial Notes," *Central Normal News*, July 1883, 4; *Hendricks County Republican*, 259 and 111; "Social and Surprise" *Central Normal News*, October 1885, 3; "Earth's Labors Ended," *Central Normal News*, July 1885, 1.

<sup>17</sup> "Signs of Prosperity," *Central Normal News*, October 1885, 2.

<sup>18</sup> "Paper and Paint," *Central Normal Post*, November-December 1889, 3; Boone, *A History of Education in Indiana*, 321-322.

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educational endeavors, and finally, the visible results of maintaining a level of excellence in preparing students for a life in the “outside” world after college. The curriculum of the Preparatory Course in Medicine expanded to include sufficient material to mirror the “First Year of a Three Years’ Course in any Medical College.” Planning for a newly organized law department occurred on her watch. In the 1910s, the noteworthy results of this course and others became obvious to all when four graduates of Central Normal occupied state-level court positions and others served on the utilities commission, as the state geologist, and as the superintendent of public instruction. By the 1920s, the roster of notable graduates included professors and administrators in all state colleges, and in universities as far away as California and Idaho. Logan Esarey, the preeminent historian of Indiana, was a graduate of Central Normal College. The graduates constitute a long list of successful individuals that also served in government or directed large businesses. Many of these successful people no doubt reflect to some extent the result of educational and cultural experiences encountered at Central Normal. Not merely an academic institution, the college and its leadership created an environment in which students learned the benefits of diligent application of an education, developed a desire to serve, and the worth of a Christian life. Students saw faculty members involve themselves in local activities such as discussion groups on various subjects, teacher’s institutes, women’s suffrage, and public programs during celebrations of national holidays. Perhaps the most telling statement about Central Normal’ role in education in the state appeared in an *Indianapolis News* article published in 1926. The article states, “More teachers in the public schools of Indiana have been trained at Central Normal College, the records show, than have been trained in any other school in the state.”<sup>19</sup>

Life changed for Ora Adams again in 1889. In July of that year, Ora Adams married James A. Joseph, a one-time student and a graduate of Central Normal, in her home on East Main Street. Ora, desiring to return to her pre-presidency life as a homemaker and mother, turned over the reins of the presidency to Professor Charles A. Hargrave in 1889 and appointed her husband as Secretary-Treasurer to learn the ropes of running the college. She remained the sole proprietor and while her official title may have changed, her hand in the management of the college continued. In 1890, Joseph became the president and continued in that position until 1900. He oversaw the completion of a new brick building in 1891, planned during Ora’s tenure, which included music and art rooms, the bookstore, office space, and a large library. (See attached copies of several postcards showing the recitation hall and the chapel. The building on the left is the chapel (1890) and the one on the right is the recitation hall.). Throughout the decade of the 1890s, Central Normal furnished highly qualified teachers for the common schools of Indiana; the faculty grew both in numbers and qualifications, graduates of the various courses made their way into the workforce as businessmen and professional in other fields. Ora Joseph provided guidance

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<sup>19</sup> “Advertisement,” *Central Normal Post*, July-August 1889, 3; “Nine C.N.C. Men Now in the Indiana State House,” *Central Normal College Quarterly*, December 1914, 1; “Graduates Win Fame,” *Indianapolis News*, 7 August 1926, 4; “Holds Fast to Economy in Education Doctrine,” *Indianapolis News*, 26 June 1926, 21; *Central Normal News* and *Central Normal Post*, 1885-1900, passim..



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in the management of the college as a whole and the students in particular. Her presence was visible in campus and off-campus activities in the community.<sup>20</sup>

The dawning of the twentieth century brought more change to Central Normal College. Failing health and other circumstances caused the Josephs to offer the college for sale in early 1900. James spent a number of months in negotiation with Dr. C.H. Chapman, an educator from Washington State who evinced an interest in college ownership. For some unknown reason, the sale of the college to Dr. Chapman fell through. Although not discussed in detail in contemporary newspapers but implicit in the community's action was its desire to resolve the college situation in favor of the town and guarantee the future of the institution. Eighty local citizens formed a stock company to purchase the college from Ora and James Joseph for the sum of \$12,000.00. There is no direct evidence that Ora did or did not have an "office" in the house. Ora no doubt had an official place of business in the main college building but various sources clearly indicate that college-related activities occurred in the house throughout her ownership. Ora, her house, and the business of Central Normal College were inseparable. In late 1900, Ora A. Joseph transferred title of a portion of her property to the new owners; the final transfer of title occurred in late 1901. Subsequent to the sale, the Josephs moved to Kansas City, Missouri. James died in 1918 and a few years later in June 1926, Ora died at the home she shared with her husband and daughter. Her obituary in *The Danville Gazette* noted, "For many years, Mrs. Joseph was prominently connected with the social and educational affairs of Danville," and was in the final accounting "...an estimable woman..."<sup>21</sup>

The 40 years after the departure of the Josephs were generally prosperous for Central Normal College. There were periods of reduced student population, the years surrounding World War I and during the Depression particularly, but the college continued to produce dedicated school teachers and educators, practitioners of the law, and business people who carried high ethical standards and a will to succeed from the academic world into the real world. At one time in the mid-1920s student enrollments reached a record high of nearly 1300 persons. The college's silver anniversary in 1923 was cause for celebration and an occasion for a gathering of past graduates who met to reaffirm their support of the college and dedicate themselves to its future growth. Poor management and declining enrollments after the Depression and World War II led to the college being taken over by the Northern Diocese of the Episcopal Church in 1945; the new owners changed the name to Canterbury College. The new management failed to change the downward trend and the college officially closed its doors in 1951.<sup>22</sup>

**Summary**

Ora Adams Joseph was an "estimable woman." She guided the college through a period of turmoil after her husband Franklin's death and as the president of the college proceeded to lead

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<sup>20</sup> "The New Building," *Central Normal Post*, July-August 1890, 3; "The New Building," *Central Normal Post*, September-October 1890, 3.

<sup>21</sup> "Central Normal College," *Danville Republican*, 30 August 1900, 1; "Former College Head Died at Kansas City," *The Danville Gazette*, 16 May 1918, 1; "Death of Mrs. Joseph," *The Danville Gazette*, 3 June 1926, 1.

<sup>22</sup> McDowell, *The History of Hendricks County*, 105.

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during a period of prosperity. The discharge of her duties necessarily combined hard-headed commonsense with the care a mother would have for her child; Ora never wanted the position of president but when asked to undertake the responsibility she excelled. Her tenure as president of the Central Normal College can be summed up in the words of a letter to her written by the Lieutenant Governor of Indiana, Ira J. Chase, in the spring of 1889. To paraphrase, Chase congratulated her on the state of the college and complimented her on “your wise Christian management of the institution [that] has gone far to bring it up to its present state of prosperity.” Chase closed his letter with a final paragraph that began as follows: “I can but regard the progress of the school phenomenal and hope you may see it yet more and more a power for good in education and morals.”<sup>23</sup>

The house that Ora built stands as a memorial to a relatively ordinary woman who succeeded in extraordinary circumstances. She served as the glue that held the college and its faculty together when it may have been easier to close the school and move on to raise her daughter. Ora gave her word to her dying husband, Franklin Adams, and she kept it.

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<sup>23</sup> “Lieutenant Governor Chase of Indiana,” *Central Normal Post*, May-April 1889, 3.

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**Section 10 - Geographical Data**

**Boundary Description**

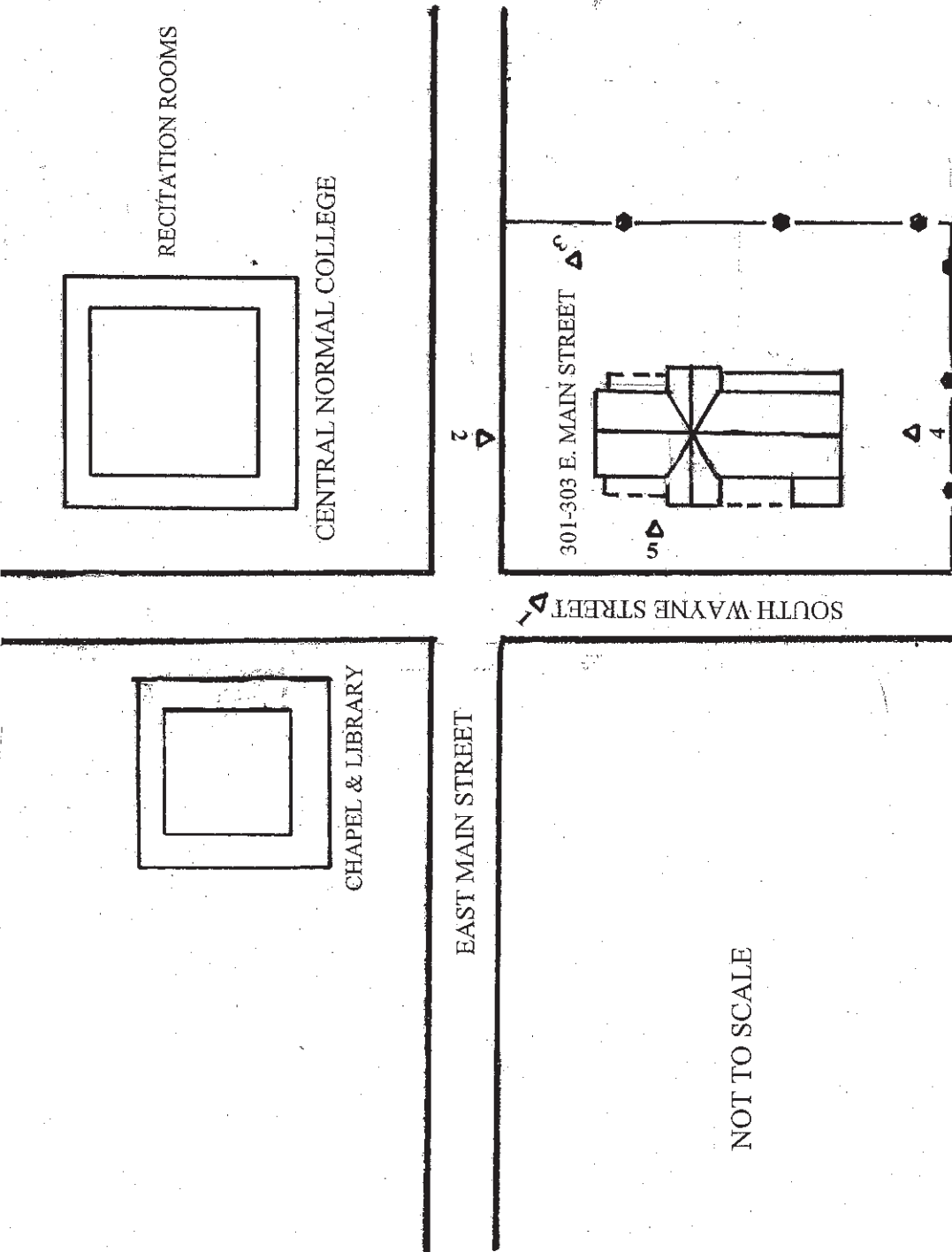
From the start point at the east curb of the southeast corner of the intersection of South Wayne Street and East Main Street proceed east along the south curb of East Main Street for approximately 80 feet to the intersection of the south curb with the east property line of the northwest one-quarter of Lot 1 Block 23; turn south and proceed along the east property line for approximately 110 feet to its intersection with the rear property line; turn west and proceed along the rear property line for approximately 80 feet to its intersection with the east curb of South Wayne Street; turn north and proceed along the east curb of South Wayne Street for approximately 110 feet and close on the start point at the southeast corner of the intersection of South Wayne Street and East Main Street.

**Boundary Justification**

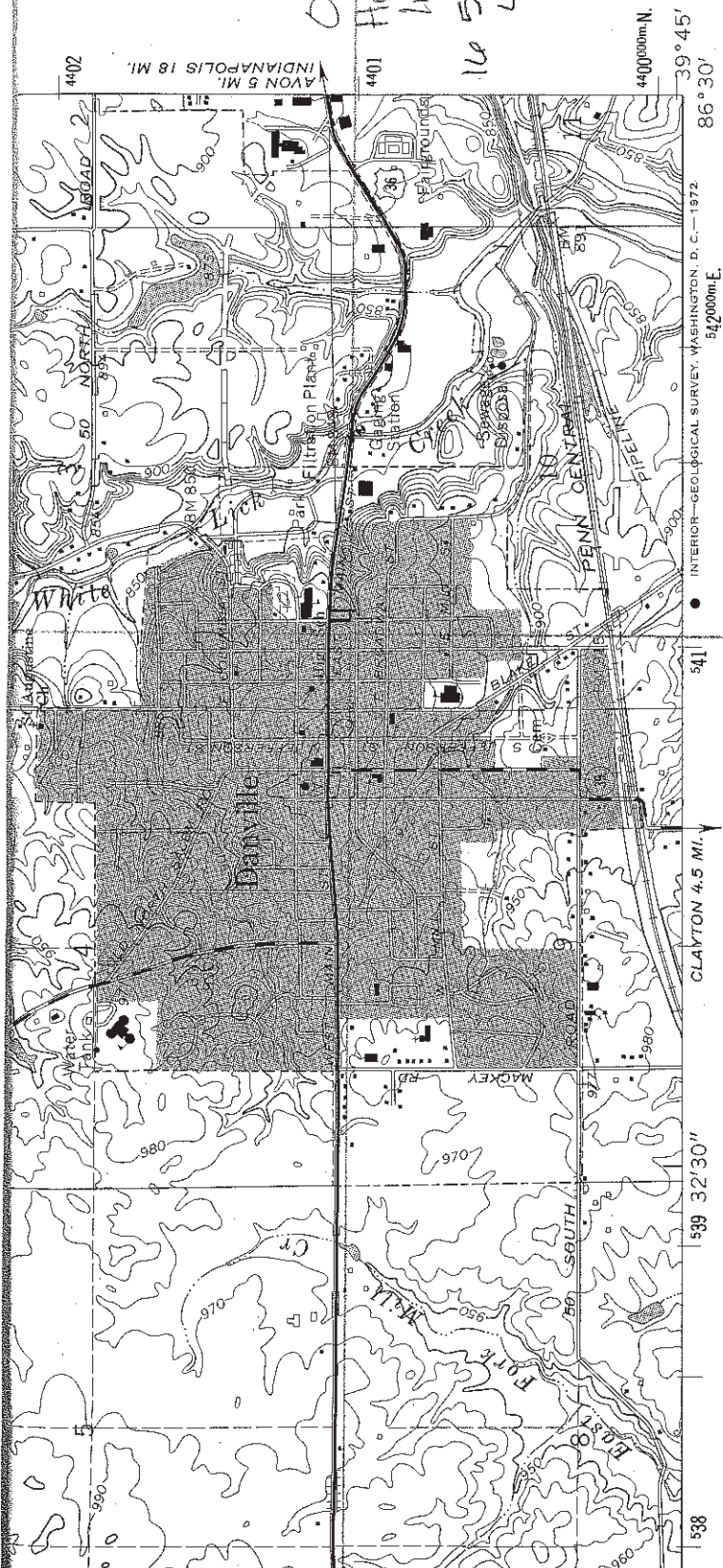
The boundary approximates the surveyed limits of the west one-half of Lot 1, Block 23 of Danville, Indiana.

# ORA ADAMS HOUSE

Danville, Hendricks County, Indiana, 46122



Ora Adams House  
 Hendricks Co,  
 Indiana  
 16 541040  
 4401030



(PLAINFIELD)  
 3763 III NW

INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C.—1972  
 542000mE

541

CLAYTON 4.5 MI.

539 32'30"

538

4400000mN  
 39°45'

86°30'

AVON 5 MI.  
 INDIANAPOLIS 18 MI.

50 NORTH

50 SOUTH

50 WEST

50 EAST

50 NORTH

50 SOUTH

50 WEST

50 EAST

1 MILE

5000

6000

7000 FEET

1 KILOMETER

5000

6000

7000 FEET

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway,  
 hard surface.....

Secondary highway,  
 hard surface.....

Light-duty road, hard or  
 improved surface.....

Unimproved road.....

Interstate Route U. S. Route State Route



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

DANVILLE, IND.  
 N3945—W8630/7.5

1970

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