# UNITED STATES DEPARTM TOF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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#### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Brookville Historic District is well defined on the East, West, and South by the East and West forks of the Whitewater River which join to form the southern tip of the district and on the North by Butlers Run and State Highway 101. Beyond these specific definitions are the almost mountainous hills that surround the town on all sides. The forks of the river and the hill have prevented the sprawling development which often intrudes and makes some districts difficult to define. The view down nearly every street in Brookville ends in a forested hill. The town plan is a slightly modified grid superimposed on the area between the forks.

Main Street, one of the focal points of the district runs down a north-south ridge to a point several blocks north of where the forks join. A large flat area that begins two short blocks east of Main Street and ends at the East Fork of the Whitewater was the first to be developed. Two of the early settlers, John Allen and Amos Butler built mills here almost immediately after their arrival in 1808. The area to the west of Main Street is only two to three blocks wide before a precipitous drop to the West Fork of the Whitewater. It was along here that the Whitewater Canal (1836-1861) ran and made this the focus of later manufacturing development.

There are approximately 800 structures in the Brookville Historic District. About 75% of these were built prior to 1900. One characteristic that comes to notice about Brookville is the dispersal of structures from all periods of the towns development throughout the town. The sites and locations of the earliest structures indicate that while the concentration of the early settlement was in the eastern flat area there were important structures on Main Street. This indicates that the development of the town took the direction of filling in empty lots to increase concentration rather then developing in concentric circles. This was caused by the geographical definition of the town and the importance of the waterways to its development.

Most of the buildings in the area are well maintained and being used to their original intent. The major changes are reflected in remodeling such as the addition of aluminum siding, porches or rooms. In the majority of cases the original character of the buildings is remarkably well preserved and one has little trouble in identifying the period of construction. There are several small trailer courts and newer buildings but these are obscured by geographic or man-made features. Thus, the changes have had only a minor impact on the dominant 19th century character of the town.

The architecture of Brookville reflects its historic development which can generally be divided into three periods: A) 1811-1836, The Pioneer Period; B) 1836-1865, The Canal Era; and C) 1865-1913, The time of stablization and growth as a local center.

The dispersal of significant and contributory structures from all three periods makes a characteristic description difficult. Many of the residences that gives Brookville its village character are Federal and Greek Revival buildings from the pioneer period. The following structures have historical as well as architectural significance but, in most cases, are representative of design and construction in Brookville, during the Pioneer period.

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Brookville Historic District CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE

The James Brown Ray Home, 1818-20, Southeast corner of 10th and Franklin. This residence of an Indiana Governor is a simple frame Federal style building but with a unique Paladian window in the south gable end which caused quite a stir among Brookville residents when it was installed. Although some remodeling has occured this building retains most of its original character. (photo 25)

The Hermitage, c. 1818, 650 E. 8th Street. This building was considerably remodeled and enlarged in 1898 by J. Otis Adams to serve as an artists colony for such famous Indiana artists as T.C. Steele whose house and studio in Brown County are on the National Register. Much of the added portion was washed away by the 1913 flood and what remains is dominated by the original frame 1 1/2 story structure (photo 29)

Old State Bank, c. 1817, Southeast corner of Bank and Long Streets. Part of the original structure still exists, probably as a shed at the rear. It is, nonetheless, a typical Federal style one story house that is common in Brookville. (photo 31)

James N. Tyner Home, c. 1818, 900 North Main Street. This two story brick Federal town house has three voids and an off center door. It has recently been covered with aluminum siding but retains its original openings and massing. Tyner, Postmaster General under Grant, was born here and became known as the father of the Post Card. (photo 5)

Franklin County Seminary, 1828-1831, 5th and Mill Street. This two story five bay brick Federal structure is on the National Register. It was built by John P. Erwin an early builder in Brookville and was an early publicly supported secondary school. It is in the process of restoration and is a focal point in the flat ground between Main Street and the East Fork of the Whitewater. (photos 33, 34)

Old Brick Meeting House, 1810-21, located in the Cemetary at 10th and John is a good example of Greek Revival church and has been restored by the Franklin County Historical Society (photo 27)

In addition to these, more prominent buildings with historical associations, there are many smaller ones that are equally important visually. Included in this group are the two story Federal frame houses just east of the Seminary (photo 33), the row of very early (1820's) Federal buildings (one of which has been renovated and is being used as a law office) on the east side of Court Street behind the Courthouse (photo 15). There are also many small groups of 2-5 houses scattered throughout Brookville such as those in the 100 block of east 4th Street one of which (176 E. 4th, photo 36) although considerably modified, may be the oldest house in

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Brookville Historic District CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 3

Brookville (1811-14) (photo 35).

Many of these structures both individual and in a group have features that are found more often in Brookville than elsewhere in Indiana. There is a mode of fenestration, although common further east, could in Indiana almost be called the "Brookville Style". The consists of a four void, balanced house of 1 1/2 or 2 stories, either frame or brick that has small windows, much wider than they are tall under the eves on the second story. Houses at 25 W. 10th (photo 2) and 32 W. 3rd (photo 19) are exemplary of this style.

It is the abundance of these small structures that gives Brookville its essential visual character and provide a very complementary setting for the larger buildings which came after.

In 1836 buildings and business in Brookville started to boom as the Canal Era began. For some thirty years, the Whitewater Canal, running from Hagerstown to the North through Brookville to Cincinnati, would be the key to much activity in Brookville. The canal basin (photo 22) at the south end of town and the remains of some locks (in the Whitewater Canal Historic DIstrict) to the north are visible evidence of its existance. Many of Brookville's larger and more substantial homes and some of the commercial and public buildings were constructed during this period. There was also a boom in manufacturing and processing of goods brought on by the easy transportation of the canal. Paper Mills were an important part of this development. The paper was shipped to Cincinnati via the canal.

The following list of structures, although not complete is illustrative of the kind of building and the life style in Brookville during the Canal Era.

The Franklin County Courthouse, 1853-1859 remodeled, 1910-12 and 1973 still reflects the qualities of Edwin F. May's design. This substantial brick building is a good example of Indiana Courthouses and is a focal point in the Main Street part of the District. (photo 14)

St. Michaels Catholic Church, 1857-68 remodeled in 1901. Designed by Edwin F. May, this structure has elegant massing that is particulary evident from the rear today as many of the details that characterize May's work were removed in a 1901 remodeling. (photo 38)

The Howland-Farquahar-Goodwin Home, 1855, 813 Main Street. This Greek Revivial home has been well maintained and has lost little of its original design. A two story five bay brick structure with a dominant semicircular portic is one of the monuments on the North end of Main Street. It is significant to note that this building and its carriage house are now being used as a residence, offices, and plant for Wilson's Feed Store. This

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#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Brookville Historic District
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 4

adaptive use, although not done under the direction of a preservationist, is particulary good. (photo 7)

O'Byrne Home, (House of Judges), 1855, 912 Main Street. This 1 1/2 story brick home with many Greek revival features is typical of many Brookville homes but on a somewhat larger scale. It is known as the House of Judges because four judges have lived there at various times. (photo 4)

Oregon Hotel, c. 1840, S.E. corner of 2nd and Main. This simple structure was built to serve the canal trade. (photo 21)

John A. Matson Home, 1843, 932 Main Street. This home of two men who were defeated in gubernatorial elections is a 1 1/2 story Federal style brick building with parapet gables and paired chimneys in the gable ends. This, combined with the dormers and size of the building make it one of the imposing structures on Main Street. (photo 3)

Coker F. Clarkson Home, 1843, N.W. corner of 5th and Franklin. This modest one story brick structure has a unique modified hip roof that residents maintain is original. It was the home of a noted political and journalistic family. (photo 12)

<u>Valley House Hotel</u>, 1842 West side of Main across from Courthouse. Built in 1842 on the site of the Old Brookville Hotel this balanced Federal style structure of three stories has some simple brackets along the cornace and is the oldest operating hotel in Indiana. (photo 13)

Presbyterian Church, 1855, N.W. corner of 6th and Church. This church, possibly designed by Edwin F. May, has dentils that are typical of May. The windows have **Italiana**te details that indicate that this structure is transitional. It is a good example or building styles and techniques of the periods. (photo 9)

These homes along with many others from the period form the second layer in the architectural development of Brookville. In many of these buildings the differences from the earlier period come in their reflection of greater prosperity and refinement.

Often the proportions and massing of these later houses are basically the same as the early buildings and it is the addition of deocration which deferentiates the two periods. This leads to greater visual unity across Brookville.

The highest concentration of structures from one period occures along several blocks of Main Street, where buildings or modifications from the later part of the 19th century are dominant.

The Fries Home, designed by John Burkhart, a local architect, is a dignified and carefully detailed Italianate structure built in 1873 anchors the southern end of the high part of Main, being dominant as one comes up the grade to the ridge from the south (photo 20).

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Brookville Historic District

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 5

Just a block north of the Fries House the ornate and intact Franklin County Jail, designed in the Italianate style by G.S. Bunting (1881-88) (photo 20) completes the visual emphasis of this southern part of the Main Street business area (photo 14).

The three blocks north of the courthouse and the north end of the block across from the courthouse contain the major concentration of the three four story brick buildings with a heavy bracketted cornices so typical of the adaption of Italianate features to commercial structures (photos 8, 19, 11, 43).

Many, but not all, of the store fronts have been altered on the first story. Enough remain to give a clear idea of what the street once was. Several buildings on the west side of the street appear to have been built by the same person using very similar materials.

This section of town has a unity that is typical of many Main Streets across Indiana and the country. Brookville's Main Street is complemented by significant structures from all periods and by an interesting concentration of public and private structures at either end.

For example, two homes built as a rectory and a convent in 1878-79 for the Catholic Church with Patrick Ryan as the architect that strengthen the visual unity and interest of the 1000 block of north main (photo 1). These are simple and dignified Italianate structures that have kept most of their architectural integrity.

As the careful observer looks at Brookville and moves about town a sense of time and place for almost any period from its pioneer orgins to the present can be found by looking for buildings that represent the proper period. There are few structures that intrude and most of these are the same scale, setback and general feeling so as not to destroy the unity of the town.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of Brookville as a Historic District comes from two complementary resources. Not only does Brookville contain an unusual collection of structures representing all aspects of the towns development but, as an important center for settlement with a land office and as one focus of activity on the Whitewater Canal, played an important role in the lives of an inordinate number of men who became important state and national leaders.

The architectural heritage of Brookville is significant because it is highly illustrative of buildings from all of its development. It perhaps has the highest concentration of very early houses of any town in Indiana and has many examples that are exceptionally well preserved.

Part of the architectural significance of Brookville stems from the importance of local artisans who modeled their work on popular Eastern styles. James P. Erwin builder of the Franklin County Seminary, (1828-1831) was by trade a brick-mason and constructed this two story structure in the Federal Style using detailing that is reministant of that found in Virginia. A later local architect, John Burkhart, a self taught person, who from 1865 to 1915 designed many buildings in the district including the James Fries residence. As an engineer of the county he designed over ten covered bridges. John Buntz, also self taught, built many commercial structures along Main Street from 1890 to 1913.

Edwin F. May the most important professionally trained architect in Brookville, designed several public buildings and churches and is credited with several others. The Courthouse (1852-1855); St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church (1857); the Presbyterian Church (1854-1855) were all designed by May. He went on to design other Courthouses across the state as well as the present State Capitol Building (1878).

The definition of Brookville by the two forks of the Whitewater and the surrounding hills make it an easily recognizible district with clear limits. Looking down almost any street in Brookville the view ends in forested hills which led a timeless quality to the many made features close at hand. It is perhaps these sharp boundaries that have allowed Brookville to develop and a unit rather than sprawling across available land.

<u>Historical Significance</u>: Brookyille, platted August 8, 1808 and incorporated in 1814 clearly reflects the growth of an Indiana community from the pioneer period to the present, but because of factos like its geographical location, it has attracted men who significantly in the history of Indiana and the nation.

The Historical Significance represents three period:

A. 1808-1836. This community was one of the first interior Hoosier communities open for settlement as a result of the Greenville Treaty (1795) and served as an entry point to

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE

interior lands when later treaties opened more territory for settlement. Located forty miles from Cincinnati and the Ohio River, its Whitewater River, whose forks join at Brookville, made transportation easy. In 1811 the Whitewater was declared a navigable stream by the Indiana Territorial Legislature. In 1819 it had a Federal Land Office which was removed to Indianapolis in 1825. This period not only saw development of a pioneer community but the attraction of citizens significant in the political and cultural development of Indiana.

- B. 1836-1865. The canal's prosperity continued Brookville as a leading Hoosier community. By 1839 Brookville had to its credit three Indiana governors, another became governor in 1861, one lieutenant governor, three U.S. Senators, three representatives in Congress, three Indiana Supreme Court Judges and leading Indiana newspaper editors, as Milton Gregg, John Scott and CHarles W. Hutchen. The canal resulted in economic stability with building booms, a stop to emigration, a German migration and an agriculturally based economy. During this period, John Matson ran for governor and Abram Hammond became governor. Its newspaper, the Indiana American, under Coker F. Clarkson, became a leading Whig organ in Indiana with a circulation in excess of 2000 and the paper under Rev. Thomas A. Goodwin also espoused temperance.
- 1865-1913 reflected a period of stablization due to transportation. The canal failed and a railroad along the tow path replaced it. Turnpikes brought about the rise of small Thus Brookville lost its hold on leadership in the Whitewater Valley since transportation tended to detract rather than attract exclusive hold on the valley's economy. Its three paper mills, a furniture factory and several carriage factories reflected the only industry of the community. In 1885 the Brookville Academy of Science was founded, which became the basis of the Indiana Academy of Science. The county's scenery brought about the establishment of an artist's colony from 1896-1913+. J. Otis Adams, Theodore C. Steele, William Forsyth, and Edwin Fulwider all painted in Brookville, that at one time a Cincinnati newspaper called Brookville the "Barbizen of Indiana". Important in Brookvillle is its pride. In 1892 the "Scotus Gaul Picti" was established as a forerunner chamber of commerce. Its only requirement for membership was the belief that "Brookville was the greatest town on earth". The flood of 1913 materially altered Brookville, not so much in the loss of buildings but in modification of the transportation insulated Brookville by by-passing it. Urbanization aided in the process, until today, when the Brookville Lake may begin a new era of development.

The following list reflects the important residents of Brookville in various fields of endeavor to local, state and national development.

NATIONAL (see sketches in the Dictionary of American Biography - DAB)

Coker F. Clarkson, 1811-1890, editor of the Brookville Indiana American, 1833-1853 and Iowa State Register, Des Moines, noted agriculturalist and political leader. His sons Richard and James S., also noted newspapermen and political figures were born in Brookville. (DAB 164-5)

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Brookville Historic District
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 4

James Noble Tyner, Brookville native, Postmaster General in Grant's administration and father of the Post Card.

Isaac Blackford, John T. McKinney and Stephen C. Stevens all resided in Brookville at one time in their career and all were Indiana Supreme Court Justices. In fact, in the early 1830's, the entire bench was from Brookville.

George A. Chase, educator, was principal of the Brookville, Franklin County Seminary, a founder of the Indiana Teacher's Association, and receiver of honorary degrees.

Hiram Powers, sculptor, spent his youth in Brookville.

J. Otis Adams, Theodore Steele, William Forsyth, Otto Stark and Edwin Fulwider noted Indiana artists, all practiced their art at the Hermitage in Brookville, making Brookville an artist's colony 1898-1927.

Brookville represents a unique and significant combination of clear architectural features combined with interesting and strong historical assocations. There features compliment one another to make Brookville a town which vividly illustrates Indiana history.

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Brookville Historical District
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 3

James B. Eads, 1820-1887, engineer and inventory, builder of the Eads Bridge, St. Louis, and hetties at the mouth of the Mississippi, was educated in Brookville, (DAB V 587-89)

John Henderson, 1795-1857, lawyer and U.S. Senator (Mississippi) was a shoemaker in Brookville 1815-1821. (DAB VIII 527)

James Noble, 1783-1831, lawyer and U.S. Senator from Indiana 1816-1831, lived in Brookville and practiced law there 1810-1816. (DAB XIII 538-9)

John P. St. John, 1833-1916, educator, governor of Kansas, Prohibitionist canidate for U.S. Vice President. He was born, raised and educated in Brookville. (DAB XVI 303-4)

Jesse B. Thomas, 1777-1853, Indiana Territorial Judge, U.S. Senator from Illinois, plated Brookville as a speculator, 1808 and named the town. (DAB XVIII 436-7)

David Wallace, 1799-1859, Indiana Governor and U.S. Congressman from Indiana, operated the Brookville Hotel in Brookville and was a lawyer there 1822-1832. (DAB XIX 368-9)

Lewis Wallace, 1827-1905, Lawyer, soldier, diplomant and author born and raised in Brookville. (DAB XIX 375-6)

#### STATE

James Brown Ray, 1794-1848, Indiana governor, 1825-1831, rose to political prominence in Brookville, 1816-1822, when elected to Indiana Senate.

Noah Noble, 1794-1844, Indiana governor, 1831-1837, lived and practiced law in Brookville 1816-1825.

Abram A. Hammond, raised in Brookville, was Indiana governor 1860-61.

James A. Matson, Democratic canidate for governor, 1888, was a Brookville native. He was the son of James A. Matson.

Rufus Haymond, Brookville resident, 1827-1891, was a doctor there, founder of the Brookville Academy of Science and the Indiana Academy of Science.

Thomas A. Goodwin, Brookville native and raised there, Methodist minister, journalist and prohibitionist. Operated <u>Indiana American</u>, Brookville, 1853-1857 and Indianapolis 1857-1872.

Amos W. Butler, Brookville native and resident, naturist and Secretary of the Indiana State Board of Charities. Noted penal reform advocate.

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