

**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 Morgan/Skinner/Boyd Homestead

other names/site number Walnut Grove

2. Location

street & number 111 East 73rd Avenue

N/A not for publication

city or town Merrillville

N/A vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Lake

code 089 zip code 46410

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

Morgan/Skinner/Boyd Homestead
Name of Property

Lake, IN
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	
4	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
4	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

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/limestone

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

Narrative Description

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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.

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

1877 – c.1900

Significant Dates

1877

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

Narrative Description

Exterior Description

The Morgan/Boyd/Skinner House now called Walnut Grove by the present owner, stands on the south side of the old Lincoln Highway, or Sauk Trail, near the center of modern Merrillville. The original two story section of this house was built circa 1877.¹ originally the house was a symmetrical, two story, brick, Italianate structure with a low pitched hipped roof and cupola. A wood framed one story addition, circa 1900, is attached to the west end of the south elevation. A modern carport, c. 1970, was attached to the south elevation of this addition; its roof encapsulates and covers the old roof of the older addition. (photo 6) A kitchen addition was attached to the west elevation circa 1900.² The house was constructed on the summit of one of the swales of the Valparaiso Moraine in an area of low rolling hills and swampy low lands.³ Though some modifications have been made to accommodate modern development the local terrain remains much the same today as when the house was built. The property includes 5.86 acres of land containing the house and its additions (c.1877-c.1900), a pump house c.1877, granary c.1877, and milk shed c.1900. All contribute to the significance of the property. A recent grape arbor has not been counted.

The foundation underneath the older section of the house is of mortared fieldstone and provides space for a full basement. Atop the fieldstone foundation rise walls of solid red brick laid in a common bond pattern. The wood framed, clapboard sided addition on the south elevation sits on a foundation of concrete blocks; enclosing the original brick foundation piers. The one story kitchen addition attached to the south end of the west elevation is constructed of cinder block and covered with an exterior red brick veneer wall laid in a running bond. This addition's foundation

¹ This date has not been confirmed with physical evidence. The local histories give the 1877 date as when a man named Morgan, of nearby Furnessville, built the house on property owned by his daughter as a wedding gift. The deed records for the property show that a woman by the name of Sarah A. Morgan purchased the property in 1874 from descendants of the original settler Ebenezer Saxton and that she and her husband, Gilbert, retained ownership of the property until 1893. This connection confirms the link with the Morgans and the property at the time of its construction. The present owner, Paul Yurkas, states that descendants of the Boyd family, later owners, place the residence of the Saxton family near where the milk house now stands.

² Note: This circa year was chosen by information provided by Paul Yurkas as told to him by a descendant of Boyd family and a circa 1900 photo in Jan Clemens, "Boyd/Skinner House," *A Pictorial History of Merrillville*, (Merrillville Ross Township Historical Society, 1976), 1, that shows the two additions.

³ Kenneth J. Schoon, *Calumet Beginnings: Ancient Shorelines and Settlements at the South End of Lake Michigan*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 172.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

sits at grade and is constructed of concrete blocks. The east side of the main, or north, façade is recessed forming an area into which a two tier porch has been constructed. (photo1).

There are eight symmetrically placed and evenly spaced openings on the original structure's two story main façade; seven windows and the main entry door. The entry door is in the second first floor opening from the east. All windows in the house, unless otherwise stated, are original to the structure. They are 2/2 wood, double hung windows with limestone sills and double course headers forming segmental arches. All windows in the house except the western two of the main elevation's first floor have segmental arches; these two have round arches.⁴ Each window of this elevation has its original arched and louvered shutters. The oak main entry door is original to the house and is constructed in a four panel pattern with the upper two panels being full arched; the door retains its historic brass hardware including doorbell. All doors and windows around the entire structure have modern metal storm coverings.

There are three porches on the north elevation of the structure; a full width single story porch on the kitchen addition and a two tiered porch that fills the recess in the northeast corner of the house. The two porches are similar in construction but not identical. Both porches have machined three dimensional spindle work detailing in the Eastlake tradition. The two tier porch has a square pillar on both first and second floor levels that supports the northeast corner of the roof; there are no square posts on the kitchen porch. Centered on the northern edge on both levels the two tier porch is a turned and carved post; one supporting the second level porch floor and the other the roof eave. Each pillar, or post, has a scroll-sawn bracket that supports the cornice above it. Where the porch meets the brick walls of the house there is a half post, identical in detailing to the center post. Between these posts are banister rails with turned balusters and spindles. These connect between each of the turned posts and corner pillar and enclose the porch except in front of the entry where the porch stairs provide access. (photo 2)

Attached to the west elevation of the original house is a single story kitchen addition, circa 1900. The north elevation of this addition has three evenly spaced openings sheltered by the porch; two windows and a door with the door being the eastern most opening. These windows are wood, double hung, 2/2 rectangular shaped and are original to the time of the addition's construction. The multi paneled oak door with a single light of glass in the upper half is not original to this opening. The original door, now on the interior of the structure between the kitchen and dining room (moved by present owner to protect it), has a large single light of etched glass in its upper

⁴ Note: When discussing windows on each different section of the house all windows and doors to the are original to the time of construction unless otherwise denoted.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

half. Above the door is a single light transom window. The porch on the kitchen addition is a single story with a wood floor and a hipped shed roof over it. The area beneath the porch floor has been covered with a diagonal pattern wood lattice. The roof is supported by three evenly spaced turned and milled posts with a half post attached to the brick wall. The porch entry stairs are at the eastern end of the porch directly in front of the kitchen door. The stairs have three turned newel posts; two on the east side of the stairs (one on the first step and one on the porch landing) and one on the west side at the first step level. Between the porch post and the stair newels are banister rails with turned spindles between them; making handrails for the steps and these handrails enclose the entire western end of the porch. Scroll-sawn brackets support roofline where the posts attach to the cornice.

Around the entire roofline of the original house is a deep paneled frieze. On each elevation along this frieze, supporting the wide eave of the house, are four pairs of matched brackets evenly spaced with a modillion course set between each pair. A low pitched hipped roof covers the structure. On the west, south and east elevations a wide, ornately constructed, corbelled brick chimney protrudes upward from the wall where the eave joins the roof. Centered atop of this roof is a cupola constructed of wood. This is the most ornately constructed portion of the house. Each corner of the cupola is supported by an ornately carved wooden corner pilaster of the Doric order. Each face has clapboard siding, and above the window hood, wood panels simulate ashlar stone work. Centered between these pilasters on each elevation of the cupola is a set of paired 1/1, wood, double hung round arched windows. The paired windows have an elaborate surround with pilasters supporting a cornice hood, surrounded by a blind round arch lunette with raised bulls eye and panel work. Atop each pilaster is a matched pair of scroll-sawn brackets. A deep, paneled frieze board with dentil course surrounds the cupola's roofline. (photo 3) The cupola has a low pitched hipped roof and at its apex is a lightening rod.

The west elevation of the original house, besides having the kitchen addition attached to it, has five openings. The north end of the elevation's foundation has a segmental arched basement window, directly above it on both the first and second floor levels are original segmental arched windows. Another identical window is centered on the second floor and directly below this on the first floor, exiting onto the kitchen porch, is a paneled wood door with four lights (2/2) in the upper panel above which is a segmented arch transom. (photo 4) There are no windows on the west elevation of the kitchen addition. A wide molded frieze surrounds the kitchen addition; along this frieze are four sets of paired scroll sawn brackets, four on the north elevation and two remaining on the south. There are no modillion courses between these brackets. Where the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

hipped portion of the addition's roof joins the ridge of the main gable a corbelled brick chimney pierces the roof. (photo 5)

The south elevation of the house has had two additions attached its west end. A large three bay modern carport, circa 1970, covers the circa 1900 wood frame lapboard covered addition; the original roof over c.1900 addition is still intact and visible when in the loft over the carport. (photo 6). To blend this modern carport with rest of the rest of the structure the present owner paneled the area above the car entries with salvaged contemporary frieze panels. (photo 7) The c.1900 structure is thought by the present owner to have been the structure's summer kitchen. This addition has two rooms with the northern room containing an interior rest room that is accessible through the interior dining room. The rear room, accessible only from the south porch of the kitchen, is used for storage. The south elevation of the carport is wood lapboard and has a modern 1/1 metal framed widow in its gable underneath the roofs eave. All walls of the carport area are open.

The south elevation has two openings in the house's foundation; a segmental arched basement window near center and a wood bulkhead door on the east end that provides access to the basement. There are four segmental arched windows; two on the first floor level; one centered and the other evenly spaced between it and the eastern end of the wall on the elevation and one window centered on the second floor and the other evenly spaced between it and the western end of the wall. The only window on the south elevation to retain its original shutters is the east window on the first floor. (photo 8) The south elevation of the kitchen addition's windows, doors, and porch are identical to those described in the north elevation description. Rising from the roof eave, just to the west of center, is a corbelled brick chimney identical to those described previously on the kitchen addition and west elevation.

The east elevation of the original structure has four segmented arch windows, each with its original shutters. The two first story windows are evenly spaced in the north end of the wall. The northern most second story window sits directly above the window on the first floor. One window on the upper level is placed just to the south of center of the elevation and the other located directly over the northern most window on the first floor. There are two entry doors on the east elevation; one accessing each level of the two tier porch located at the north end of the east elevation. These doors are identical to the one that covers the main entrance on the north elevation except they have no doorbells. Another large corbelled brick chimney rises just to the north of center of the eave at the roofline. The carport's east elevation is covered approximately

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 5 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

one third of its width with wood lapboard, the remaining two thirds, where the addition's roof is supported by wood posts, is open to the elements. (photo 9)

Interior Description

The basement is accessible from the interior of the house; through the dining room and an exterior bulk head on the east end of the south elevation. The interior fieldstone walls of the basement have been covered with a parge coat of cement. The floor is covered in paver brick. The basement is divided by a north/south wall into two rooms with the west room being slightly larger than the east. The exterior bulkhead door opening is located on the south wall of this room near its corner with the east wall. There is a small window on the north end of the east wall. The access opening into the west room of the basement is just to the south of center in the wall that separates the two rooms. The wood, open string, stairs leading to the first floor of the house are just to the north of this opening; they run east to west and are near the north/south center of the house. There is a small window centered on the south wall. On the south end of the west wall some foundation stones have been removed to allow access to the crawl space beneath the kitchen addition floor.

The main entry of the house is located on the north, or main façade, and is sheltered by the two tier porch. Entry into the house is accessed through the original large oak four panel door with its original brass hardware and door bell. The door opens directly into the northwest corner of the front parlor, there is no formal entry hall. (photo 10) The parlor, as do all other rooms on the first floor, has an eleven foot ceiling covered with embossed metal ceiling tiles. The hanging lamp is not original to the house. The floor is covered by modern wood strip flooring that has been placed upon the historic oak flooring. To the east of the entry centered on the north wall is a tall wide segmental arched window set into a rectangular frame. The window rises from within a foot of the floor to within a foot of the ceiling; this is true of all of the windows in the original house. The window and door openings are framed with a wide molded oak trim; this trim is also used for the room's baseboard. Above the baseboard on all walls, rising to about one quarter of the wall's height, is a wainscoting of bead-molded oak paneling topped with a molded oak chair rail. (photo 11) The walls above the wainscot have the original plaster. There are three oak four panel doors on the west wall, each with its original brass hardware. The north door enters into another parlor located in the northwest corner of the of the house. The middle door accesses the stairwell to the second floor and the south door provides access to the dining room located in the southwest corner of the original structure. Centered on the south wall of the front parlor is a pair of oak four paneled segmental arched doors that access a small room located in the southeast

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 6 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

corner of the house. (photo 12) The east wall of the room contains two evenly spaced windows identical to the one on the north wall. Centered between these windows, close to the ceiling, is a round embossed metal disc that covers the opening into which the cast iron heating stove would have entered the chimney. There is a small niche set into the south end of the east wall that may have originally been part of a built in fresh air chimney. Directly below this is the cast iron radiator that replaced the iron stoves as the way to heat the house.

The room to the south of this parlor, with the double doors, is as wide as the parlor but only five foot in depth. The room is trimmed the same as the parlor but does not have the wainscot. There is a window of the same style and description as those in the parlor located in the west end of the rooms south wall. Along the west end of the room a modern closet has been installed. This closet is divided with the north half accessible from the room and the southern half accessible only through the dining room. At one time before the closet was constructed this door provided a second entry into the room. The original use for this room is not easily identifiable; for its small size it has had a considerable amount of detail attention applied to it. The present owner describes this as the "mourning room;" a room designed to handle the coffin of a family member when funerals were conducted within the residence of the deceased.

The second parlor, located in the northwest corner of the original house, is accessed through the north door on the west wall of the front parlor. All wood work in this room is identical to that in the front parlor except that there is no wainscot and the wood has been painted. The flooring is the structure's original wide oak floor boards. On the east wall in the northwest corner of the room is an exterior access door that opens onto the west end of the two tier porch. This door is identical to the main entrance door adjacent to it except it has no door bell. There are two large round arch windows evenly spaced along the north wall; these windows fit into a rectangular frame like those in the front parlor. Placed between the windows two thirds the way up the wall is an enclosed opening. (upper right hand corner photo 13) This opening is connected by a ventilation duct built into the brick wall and vents into the cupola on the roof.⁵ The west wall of this room also has a large segmental arched window set into a rectangular window frame. The

⁵ This opening was part of the fresh air theory used in architecture and promoted by A.J. Downing and others during the mid-nineteenth century. Before the understanding that germs caused illness, most people believed that bad, or stale, air caused illness; the illness Malaria is literally translated to meaning bad air. Domestic advice givers preached that to be healthy people needed access to fresh air. This approach to healthy living found its way into hospital construction with architects designing "Nightingale wards" such as the one built in 1875 at John Hopkins in Baltimore. (information taken from Dell Upton's *Architecture in the United States*, New York: Oxford Press, 1998. pages 156-164)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

south wall has no openings. All walls in the room are plastered as well as is the ceiling. The ceiling in this room also retains the only piece of original molded decorative plaster; a set of two molded rings that surround the opening from which the ceiling light was suspended. (photo 14) The light fixture is of recent vintage.

The dining room is accessed through the south door on the west wall in the front parlor. The floor in this room is finished identical to the front parlor. The room is trimmed the same as the front parlor including the wainscoting. The walls above the wainscot are plastered. High on the south wall is a fresh air chimney vent that exits into the cupola. The north wall of the room has a recessed alcove at its west end that provides a space for the exterior access door to be placed in the west wall; this door opens onto the east end of the north kitchen porch. There are two oak four panel doors on the north wall; one at the east end of the wall immediately to the north of the door leading in from the front parlor and the other at the wall's west end just before where the wall turns north to form the alcove. The east door accesses the stairwell leading to the second floor and the west door provides access the stairs into the basement. In the north end of the alcove is a built in, glass front china cabinet. Though made of oak and finished as the rest of the woodwork in the room, this cabinet is from a later date. The upper and lower cabinet doors are paneled with the center section having leaded colored glass in the Craftsman/Prairie manner. The door that exits the west wall onto the kitchen porch is oak with two wood panels in the lower half and two vertical panels of glass in the upper half. Above the door is a segmental arched transom with split segmental arched lights. The original transom hardware is intact. (photo 15) The door on the south end of the west wall leads into the kitchen addition. This door is oak with three wood panels on the lower half and the upper half is etched glass with a rustic scene. (photo 16) This door was moved by the present owner from its original position in the north wall of the kitchen to protect its glass artwork. The south wall of the dining room has two evenly placed openings; a four paneled oak door on the west end and a large window on the east end. The door opens into the downstairs washroom. At one time it opened directly into the addition to the rear of the house. All of the plumbing fixtures in the room, though historic in origin, were installed by the current owner. The stained glass in the window on the south wall is also not original to the structure. On the east wall are two door openings; the north one opens into the front parlor and the south one into the closet that was formed in the east end of the "mourning room." The vintage metal ceiling of the room is not the original embossed ceiling tile; they were salvaged from a structure of the same era that was being torn down

The rectangular one story kitchen addition attached to the west elevation of the original structure is accessed through the south door on the west wall of the dining room. This addition is divided

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 8 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

into two rooms. The small rear room at the west end was designed as a pantry and is entered through a door in the north end of the dividing wall. This narrow room has a segmental arched window set into a rectangular frame centered in the wall at both the north and south ends. The window and door trim are less ornate than the molded trim in the older portion of the house and project Craftsman styling. This is true throughout the kitchen addition. The oak wainscot is of the same beaded paneling as in the older section of the structure but less meticulously finished and rises about half way up the plaster walls. (photo 17) There are two openings on both the north and south exterior walls. The east openings on both walls are doors, each with a large transom light, the west openings are windows identical to those in the pantry. The doors exit onto the addition's north and south porches and retain their original brass hardware with the door on the south wall still having its original door bell. The kitchen floor has its historic wide slat oak floor. The plumbing and utilities in the kitchen, though period pieces, are not original to the house. (photo 18) The ceiling is covered with embossed metal ceiling tiles; this carries into the east room of the addition. These metal tiles are vintage but are not original to the room. The large east room of the addition is finished identical to the west pantry room.

The rear room of the addition on the south elevation of the structure is accessed through a door that opens on the east end of the south kitchen porch. There is a small room with modern 1/1 window centered on the east wall and another identical window to the south of the entry on the west wall. The walls are finished with plasterboard and the room's trim is negligible. On the south wall of the room is a door and stairs that access the storage area above the carport.

The second story of the house is accessed via the stairs set between the dining room's north wall and the second parlor's south wall. The stairs are not wide and climb in one flight to the second story landing. The stairwell is not highly finished. It has plain oak handrails and carpeting on the stairs. At the head of the stairs on the second story landing is an ornately carved newel post and cap with a molded hand rail and carved balusters that separates the stairwell from the landing. (photo 19) Running east/west parallel and just to the south of the stairwell is a hall with three doors that access to the other two bedrooms and the bath on this floor. The walls are plastered and the hall has an eleven foot ceiling. On the west wall of the landing just to the south of the stairs is a segmental arched window identical to those on the first floor. On the north side of the stair landing located in the hall's north wall is the entry door into the master bedroom; the transom above the door has a light of frosted glass. The second level of the two tier porch as well as the nursery, both located in the northeast corner of the floor, are only accessible through the master bedroom. There are two doors on the south hall wall; one just to the east of the landing enters into a bedroom located in the southwest corner of the floor and the other, near the east end

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 9 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

of the hall where the wall turns north, opens into the second story bath. The third door enters a bedroom through the north/south wall at the east end of the hall. All of the doors opening onto the hall are the original four panel wood doors, each with a fixed transom filled with stained leaded glass. (photo 20)

The master bedroom, the largest room on the second floor, sits in the northwest corner of the structure. It is accessed through a door on the north side of the second story landing. The nursery, in the northeast corner of the floor is accessible only through the master bedroom. Both rooms are finished with the same base board, door and window trim that was used on the first floor. The walls of both rooms are plaster and the flooring in both rooms is oak plank and original to the house. Counting the entry door there are four doors within the master bedroom; two on the south wall and two on the east wall. On the south wall the entry door from the hall is located on the west end of the wall and a door accessing a closet located at the walls east end. The doors on the east wall of the master bedroom are evenly spaced with the south door accessing the nursery and the north door providing exterior access to the second story of the two tier porch. All of the door openings have their original four panel oak doors and brass hardware; they all have been painted white. (photo 21) The closet door on the south wall of the master bedroom is narrower than the other three doors and the door leading to the porch is approximately six inches shorter than the other three doors which is due to restrictions caused by the ceiling height of the porch. Both rooms have large segmental arched windows identical to those on the first floor. There are three windows in the master bedroom, two evenly spaced on the north wall and one near the south end of the west wall, and three in the nursery, two evenly spaced on the north wall and one centered on the east wall. The ceilings are modern acoustic tile drop ceilings the original eleven foot ceilings remain above these tiles and are visible in the closet. (photo 22)

On the south side of the second story hall, located in the southwest corner of the structure, is a bedroom and directly to the east is the second floor bathroom. It appears that at one time these two rooms were one large room. The non-load bearing partition wall dividing this into two separate rooms was installed at an undetermined time. The window and door trim in both rooms are identical to that used in the rest of the house; the trim in the bedroom has been painted while the trim in the bath is stained and varnished.

The hall entry for the second bedroom is located on the east end of the room's north wall and is the original doorway. The opening has by a four panel door identical to the ones in the master bedroom. There is a segmental arched window, identical to those in the rest of the structure, set into the east end of the south wall near the non-load bearing partition wall; there are no windows

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 10 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

in the west wall. The walls are plastered and painted and the floor is covered by the original oak planking. The ceiling has been lowered as in the master bedroom.

The bathroom hall is accessed from the bathroom through a door in the east end of its north wall. The door is identical to the others on this floor. Besides the entry door there is a narrow four panel door located at the south end of the bathroom's east wall; this door leads to the attic area and the room within the cupola on the roof. There is a segmental arched window in the south wall located just to the east of the room's center. The floor is covered with modern linoleum tile. The north and west walls are covered with a modern beaded oak wainscot. The lower half of east and south walls of the room are covered in linoleum tile and the upper halves of all walls are covered with modern patterned wallpaper. The ceiling is covered with embossed tin tiles that are not original to the house. The iron clawed bathtub is original to the structure; the other plumbing fixtures, though period pieces, are not original to the house.

The third bedroom on the floor is located at the east end of the hallway in the southeast corner of the house. The floor is covered with the original oak planks. This room retains its original wood baseboard, window and door trim; all have been painted. There are two four panel wood doors in the room. One is the entry door with transom located on the north end of the west wall. The other is located on the east end of the south wall and provides access to a small hall that runs east/west and connects with the stairs going into the attic and cupola. There is one segmental arched window centered on the east wall of the room. (photo 23) The outline of the stairwell leading to the cupola can be seen on the south end of the west wall. This has been enclosed and a small closet created in the space beneath stairs. This closet is covered with a small painted wood batten door. (photo 24)

The attic area and cupola are accessed via the set of north/south stairs set between the bath and the third bedroom. The stairwell can be entered either through the bath or the hall behind the third bedroom. This is a narrow set of stairs and they are constructed of unfinished wood. They rise approximately eleven feet to a landing at the attic area. The attic is as large as the entire original structure but has limited height due to the slant of the roofline. A small wood platform covers the area where a person can stand, this is directly under the cupola. The ceiling joists and roof rafters are exposed. (photo 25) A small wood ladder rises from the platform into the southeast corner of the cupola. The cupola sits in the center of the roof of the two story portion of the house. The lantern has an eleven foot ceiling. A set of paired round arched windows are centered on each elevation; these are trimmed the same as the windows on the first and second

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 11 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

floors. The floor is of pine planks. A solid, short height wall guards the stair opening. The walls have been covered with plaster and painted. (photo 26)

The property contains three other historic contributing structures; the old milk house located to the west of the house, the granary located southwest of the house and the pump house located near the southeastern corner of the house.

The old milk house (photo 27) is a rectangular wood framed structure constructed c. 1900. The walls are covered with narrow width shiplap siding. There are two entry doors into the structure, one on the east side of the north elevation and the other on the south end of the east elevation. The east elevation has two widely spaced windows, each opening into a separate room within the structure; this is repeated on the west elevation. There are no openings on the south elevation. The north elevation has a hipped roof and the south elevation is gabled ended. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Two ventilating fans sit on the ridge of the roof. The interior has wood, unfinished flooring and is in need of some repair. The interior is divided into two rooms with the northern most room being about one third of the length of the structure. This room appears to have been used as an office/workshop. The larger room at the south of the building was used for storage.

The granary (photo 28), c. 1877, is the largest building on the property and is oriented east to west. It is a gable end structure and is constructed like a transverse frame barn. It is covered with a modern vinyl siding. Large modern, multi-paneled roll up doors are centered on both the east and west elevations; the door on the east elevation has a fixed four light transom above it. Underneath the gable on both the east and west elevations are two wood double hung 2/2 segmental arched windows. There are no openings on the north and south elevations of the structure. The interior has an earthen floor. Along the south wall of the first floor of the interior are a series of wood bins that stored the grain. Along the north wall, in the eastern two-thirds of the structure is a storage room. A two landing stairwell occupies the northwest corner of the structure providing access to the loft. The loft is one large room with a floor is constructed of pine boards. The gabled roof is covered with asphalt shingles. A large weathervane/lightning rod sits at the east end of roof ridge and the spinner blade is a silhouette of a bull. This structure is in very good condition.

The pump house (photo 29), c. 1877, is constructed of the same brick as the main house. This tall structure is approximately eight foot square with a door centered on the north elevation facing

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 12 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

the house, near where the original rear door into the house was located. A small fixed 2/2 segmental arch window is centered in the south elevation; it has a wood sill and a segmental arch constructed using two rows of header brick. The interior of the structure is one room with a brick-lined well centered in the floor. The floor is constructed of pine boards and is in need of some repair. A gable end roof caps the structure and is covered with asphalt shingles. The exterior of the structure is in good condition the interior floor needs replacing.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 13 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

Statement of Significance

The Morgan/Boyd/Skinner house, called Walnut Grove by the present owner, meets National Register criterion C. It is an outstanding example of a Late Victorian Italianate rural residential architecture and the only remaining Italianate structure in Lake County, Indiana that included a cupola in its construction. This residence was built as a retirement home by a retired Chicago lumber dealer. When constructing the house the Morgans incorporated several current technologies of the time such as fresh air circulation, inside running water, and stoves, not fireplaces, to heat the structure. This circa 1877 brick house has no peers in Ross Township and very few in Lake County, Indiana.⁶ The period of significance for this property spans the years of 1877 to c.1900, including the date of construction of the house, its significant additions and date of the construction of the outbuildings. The Morgan's built and resided in the structure until 1898 and from 1898-1979, the property was owned by the Boyd/Skinner family, descendants of early pioneers in the area.

The house sits on land that has been part of the historic landscape from pre-historic times. It is part of an area today known as the Calumet Region, a geographical area along the southern shore of Lake Michigan created by the glaciers during the ice ages. The area has produced evidence of use by various Paleo-Indian groups as well as the later Woodland Indian societies.⁷ The house sits on the south side of the historic Sauk (Sac) trail; the main east/west trail between the Mississippi River and Detroit during the Woodland Indian period. In the vicinity of the home the Sauk Trail was transected by the Potawatomi trail that connected with trails leading from Lake Michigan to the north and the Kankakee River to the south.⁸ One early history of the region states that sixteen Indian trails intersected at this point, which made this a well visited area.⁹ At this intersection was an area used for ceremonial dancing and burials and one of the largest Indian settlements in the Calumet region.¹⁰ Up to the 1830s this settlement was known as McGwinn's village, after the Native American chief who resided in the village.¹¹ This land

⁶ Indiana Historic Sites and Structure Inventory, *Lake County Interim Report*, (Indianapolis: Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 1996), xxviii.

⁷ Kenneth J. Schoon, *Calumet Beginnings: Ancient Shorelines and Settlements at the South End of Lake Michigan*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 46-51. Hereafter referred to as Schoon.

⁸ Schoon, 50.

⁹ T. H. Ball, *Lake County, Indiana: from 1834 to 1872*. (Chicago: J. W. Goodspeed, 1873), 68. Hereafter referred to as Ball.

⁹ Schoon, 172.

¹⁰ Ball, 68.

¹¹ Ball, 153.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 14 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

belonged by treaty to the native nations who resided there until the Indian Removal Act of 1830 forced their removal to lands west of the Mississippi. By 1834 most of the Indians had been removed and the area was open for settlement and their lands were being sold by the government.

An early European settler into the area, Jeremiah Wiggins, settled near McGwinn's village in 1835.¹² The site became known as Wiggins' Point in the years after the Indians had departed the area. Histories of the area say that Wiggins laid claim to the land, but this must have been by squatter's rights since no deed of title could be found. The first deed of individual ownership of the property is to an early pioneer, Ebenezer Saxton. He was deeded the land by the State of Indiana in 1847 when he purchased the property for \$500.00.¹³ The property until the purchase by Mr. Saxton had been owned by the Wabash and Erie Canal Company.¹⁴ It had been part of the swamp lands that the United States government had given the State of Indiana to sell for for the development of canals.¹⁵ The Saxtons moved into the cabin of Jeremiah Wiggins where they remained for many years clearing and farming the land.¹⁶ This property remained in the Saxton family until the spring of 1874 when it was purchased from them by Sarah [and Gilbert] Morgan of Chicago for \$4000.00.¹⁷

The Morgans are the property owners who built the house. No historic records can be found that accurately document the year the house was constructed, but local history claims the construction year as 1877.¹⁸ The title records show that the Morgans owned the property from 1874 to 1893. The Morgans had the financial means to erect a house of this quality. Gilbert and Sarah Morgan had settled in Westchester Township in Porter County during the 1850s. The 1860 census has them there near the Coffee Creek post office and lists their five month old child as being born in

¹² Schoon, 172.

¹³ *General Index of Deeds*, Grantee Book 1, Pg. S, Lake County Recorder's Office, Crown Point, Indiana

¹⁴ *Deed Book Recorder Book E*, p. 297. Lake County Recorder's Office, Crown Point, Indiana.

¹⁵ *Early Land Sales and Purchases: Lake County, Indiana 1837-1857*, (Valparaiso, IN: Northwest Indiana Genealogical Society, 2006), 2.

¹⁶ William Frederick Howat, ed., *A Standard History of Lake County and the Calumet Region*, vol. 1, (Chicago: The Leweis Publishing Company, 1915), 53, 183.

¹⁷ *Deed Book Recorder Book 21*, p. 138. Lake County Recorder's Office, Crown Point, Indiana.

¹⁸ Jan Clemens, edited 1991 by Elaine Denta, *A Pictorial History of Merrillville*, Merrillville/Ross Township Historical Society, 2002. Hereafter referred to as Clemens.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 15 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

Indiana.¹⁹ Coffee Creek would eventually become the town of Chesterton.²⁰ Gilbert lists himself on the 1860 census as a “Lumberman” with a personal value of \$1300.00. In 1862 Gilbert helped to establish and build the Methodist Episcopal Church in Chesterton.²¹ By 1869 the Morgans resided at 303 North Avenue in Chicago and Gilbert is listed as a lumber merchant.²² The 1870 Edward’s Chicago Directory has him relocated to 47 Menomonee Street in Chicago.²³ On the 1870 United States census Gilbert is listed as a “Lumber Dealer” residing at the Menomonee Street address and is listed with assets valued at \$46000.00, making Mr. Morgan a fairly substantial man in 1870 dollars.²⁴ The fateful combination of date and location would put the Morgans in a position to be looking for a new residence: the October 1871 Chicago Fire would destroy the Morgan’s Menomonee Street home.²⁵

The Lake County deed records for the property show that Sarah Morgan purchased the property from the Saxtons in 1874. Local lore says the Saxton cabin at that time stood where the milk house now stands. Why Gilbert did not sign the property deed at the time of purchase is not known. He is listed on the 1880 census living there as a retired farmer.²⁶ Gilbert had the finances in 1870 to retire comfortably. How the Chicago Fire affected his fortunes is not known. Yet, one has to wonder how the fire had affected the Morgans choice to move to back to northern Indiana. When they relocated they did so with a degree of class. The home reflects a good deal of refinement and probably cost a considerable sum to build. The Morgans did not remain on the farm very long; in August of 1893 they sold the property to a John B. Litchford from Iowa.²⁷ The

¹⁹ U. S. Census Office, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Westchester, Porter, Indiana; Roll M653_289; pg. 457.* Available online at: <http://search.ancestrylibrary.com>. Accessed 4 April 2009.

²⁰ Weston A. Goodspeed, *Counties of Porter and Lake Indiana; Historical and Biographical*, (Chicago: F. A. Battery & Co., Publishers, 1882), 163. Hereafter referred to as Goodspeed.

²¹ Goodspeed, 160.

²² *Edwards Official Chicago Directory*, 1869. (Chicago: Edward and Company Publishers, 1869), 630. Directories available on microfilm at Valparaiso Public Library Genealogy and History Room, Valparaiso, IN.

²³ *Edwards Official Chicago Directory*, 1870. (Chicago: Edward and Company Publishers, 1870), 585. Directories available on microfilm at Valparaiso Public Library Genealogy and History Room, Valparaiso, IN.

²⁴ Note: Using a value set by the Department of Labor Statistics and the Bureau of Living Conditions Statistics that a \$1.00 between the years of 1875 and 1900 could buy what it took \$15.00 to buy in 1991 Mr. Gilberts wealth in 1870 would be equivalent to \$790,000.00.

²⁵ *Richard’s Illustrated and Statistical Map of the Great Conflagration in Chicago, 1871.* Available online at <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/su/maps/chifire/G4104-C6S3-1871-R533.html>. Accessed 20 April 2009.

²⁶ U. S. Census Office, *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880. Ross, Lake, Indiana; Roll T9_291; Family history film: 1254291” pg. 543.2000: Enumeration District:69 Image: 0500.* Available online at: <http://search.ancestrylibrary.com>. Accessed 4 April 2009.

²⁷ *Deed Book Recorder Book 67*, p. 95. Lake County Recorder’s Office, Crown Point, Indiana.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 16 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

Morgans then relocated to 6953 Parnell in Englewood district, a middle class suburb of Chicago, not far from where the Columbian Exposition was then being held.²⁸

Litchford did not own the farm very long either. In 1898 he sold the property to the twin Boyd brothers, Eli and Levi.²⁹ It was during their tenure in 1902 that they sold to the C&O Railroad the right of way that cuts across the southwest corner of the property and in 1912 the old Sauk Trail passing in front of the house became the famous Lincoln Highway. It was also the era, according to a Boyd/Skinner descendent, when the kitchen addition (and possibly the addition to the south elevation) was added to the structure. Levi Boyd never married and the property passed to Alex, the son of Eli, in 1924.³⁰ According to a descendent of Alex's wife, Lea Flora, Alex died soon after they were married. Lea Flora Boyd received title in 1926 and included her new husband, Olind Skinner, on the title.³¹ Olind Skinner, after Lea's death, maintained the property until his death. In 1979 the present owner purchased the estate.³²

The Italianate style dominated American architecture between 1850 and 1880.³³ The style came out of the Picturesque movement that influenced architecture from the 1840s until the turn of the Twentieth Century. It was a movement that looked away from the formal ideals about architecture that had dominated the Classic Revival movement in the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth centuries. The movement looked towards the romantic past for inspiration.³⁴ Italianate houses of this movement in America usually followed the informal rural models of this movement.³⁵ Architectural historian Wilbur Peat writes that the intent of the style "was to achieve comfort and livability along with informality and a degree of picturesqueness."³⁶ The Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House is a fine example of the Late Victorian Italianate style that

²⁸ *The Lakeside Annual Directory of the City of Chicago 1895* (Chicago: The Chicago Directory Company, 1895), 1235.

²⁹ *Deed Recorder Book 84*, p. 506. Lake County Recorder's Office, Crown Point, Indiana.

³⁰ Clemens, 112.

³¹ *Deed Recorder Book 375*, p. 114. Lake County Recorder's Office, Crown Point, Indiana.

³² *Real Estate Transaction Records; document 544904*. Lake County Recorder's Office, Crown Point, Indiana.

³³ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 212. Hereafter referred to as McAlester.

³⁴ Cyril M. Harris, *American Architecture: an Illustrated Encyclopedia*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998), 246.

³⁵ McAlester, 212.

³⁶ Wilbur D. Peat, *Indiana Houses of the Nineteenth Century*, (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1962), 117. Hereafter referred to as Peat.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 17 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

incorporates several contemporary technical innovations, such as inside running water, fresh air ventilation and heating with stoves instead of open fires into its construction.

The Italianate style began in England and was established in the United States by the 1840s where the style became extremely popular. Pattern books published from the 1840s to 1880s by architects such as A.J. Downing, Calvert Vaux, Samuel Sloan and A.J. Bicknell bolstered the appreciation of the style. The style relayed beauty and elegance without being formal used the style in numerous and varied ways including residential, commercial and civic buildings. In 19th century Indiana architecture, the Italianate style was one of the most common architectural styles found in the state.³⁷ The Italianate decorative attributes, i.e.: a wide entablature, heavy scroll brackets supporting wide eaves, narrow double hung windows with full or segmental arched lintels are clearly visible on the structure.³⁸ The two tier porch is one of the structure's most highly ornate decorative attributes. The cupola with its paired round arch windows and carved pilasters is the most highly decorative attribute of the house.

While the exterior appearance of the chimneys gives a different impression; the home has no fireplace. The home was originally heated by exterior vented cast iron stoves in each room; covered ports in various rooms provide evidence of this. Not only did the use of stoves allow for better radiant heating but by having no fireplace and no open fire they provided a degree of fire prevention. Also by using stoves it was less costly to construct the home since no fireplace hearths had to be built. Often high end Italianate homes would incorporate fireplaces for aesthetics, but this one does not. It is possible this was intentional considering what the Morgans had experienced with losing their home to the Chicago Fire. At some later point in time the home owners, probably the Skinners, installed a boiler and used hot water for heat installing radiators throughout the living quarters of the structure.

Historic records do not disclose an architect or a builder for the house. Italianate popularity was at the height of its in 1877 and many published pattern books promoted and sold architectural plans for the style.³⁹ Mr. Morgan, with his experience in the lumber business, could have acted as his own contractor and builder. However, the home's construction would have required a great

³⁷ State of Indiana Department of Natural Resources website. Department of Historic Preservation and Archaeology; DHPA Home; Identifying Historic Resources; Architectural Styles; Italianate located @ <http://www.in.gov/dnr/historic/4267.htm>. Accessed 24 April 2009. Hereafter referred to as DHPA Web.

³⁸ DHPA Web. Accessed 24 April 2009

³⁹ Peat, 117

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 18 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

deal of craftsmanship knowledge in brick masonry and carpentry. The joinery of the home's interior is the result of high quality work and constructed from choice materials.

An easily accessible water supply has always been part of the structures history. A cistern was constructed along the south side of the structure where the south addition and carport now stand. Some of the cistern's stones are still visible from the crawl space underneath the kitchen addition. This water supply system was later improved when a pump house and windmill were built near the southeast corner of the structure.

The design of the house incorporated one the more current trends in healthy residential living: fresh air ventilation and circulation. Ventilation and the circulation of fresh, pure, healthy air were considered by many social reformers and doctors of the era to be essential to maintaining good health. Before the germ theory of disease was accepted the common belief was that foul or stale air was the major causes of illness. It was believed that good air alone could prevent illness and that good ventilation in a home helped especially in the maintenance of the health of women and children who spent more time confined to the indoors.⁴⁰ The association of good health and fresh air during the mid-nineteenth century had helped create the movement out of the dirty, unhealthy city and into the fresh, clean and healthy suburbs. The concern that malodorous vapors could be trapped in buildings soon brought architectural solutions to counter the concern. Andrew Jackson Downing addresses the concept of ventilation in his 1850 book *The Architecture of Country Houses*.⁴¹ Providing adequate ventilation throughout the structure was the answer. United States Army physician John S. Billings and architect John R. Niese applied this fresh air concept into the design of the John Hopkins Hospital between 1876 and 1885. They installed "aspirating chimneys and large windows throughout the structure into their design. The large windows would provide fresh air and chimneys drew the foul air out through the roof."⁴² These types of wards were known as Nightingale wards because of their endorsement from the pioneer in nursing. The Morgans used this same concept when constructing their home. Vents in the dining room, office and front parlor and the large windows throughout the structure caused a chimney effect that kept the house fully ventilated and free of harmful foul air that was exhausted through the cupola.

⁴⁰ Clifford Edward Clark, Jr. *The American Family Home, 1800-1960*. Chapel Hill NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 101

⁴¹ Dell Upton, *Architecture in the United States*, "Ventilation" (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 156. Hereafter referred to as Upton.

⁴² Upton, 157.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 19 Morgan/ Boyd /Skinner/ House, Lake County, IN

The structure was built as a rural residence and remains today much the same as when built. It is not a structure that reflects the economic success of the original pioneer farmers who homesteaded the land, but reflects the success that the builder had achieved as a result of his success in the lumber business which he started in the Calumet Region in the 1850s and brought to prosperous fruition in the nearby city of Chicago. Returning to the Calumet Region upon his retirement to enjoy his success, Gilbert Morgan built this fine home. The structure is as imposing example of the Italianate style in Lake County, Indiana today as it was when first built in 1877. It is the best example of the use of this Late Victorian Italianate style remaining in the county. The homes beauty along with the use of contemporary technical innovations makes this eligible under criterion C of the National Register.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 20 Morgan/Skinner/Boyd Homestead, Lake County, IN

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 21 Morgan/Skinner/Boyd Homestead, Lake County, IN

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 22 Morgan/Skinner/Boyd Homestead, Lake County, IN

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Morgan/Boyd/Skinner House are described by their legal description: City of Merrillville, Lake County, IN parcel number 45-12-15-301-003.000-030. The site contains 5.876 acres.

Boundary Justification

These boundaries were selected because they are the property boundaries of current ownership, and including all contributing buildings associated with the house.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number PHOTO LOG Page 23 Morgan/Skinner/Boyd Homestead, Lake County, IN

Morgan /Skinner/Boyd House, Lake County, IN.

All photos unless otherwise identified were taken by Gregg Abell on March 24, 2009.

CD on file at Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Department of Historic Preservation and Archaeology.

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------------------|
| 1. | exterior-west elevation | view to east |
| 2. | exterior-front porch detail | view to southwest |
| 3. | exterior-cupola details | view to east |
| 4. | exterior-north kitchen porch door details | view to east |
| 5. | exterior-main façade | southeast perspective |
| 6. | interior-summer kitchen | view to north |
| 7. | exterior-southwest perspective | view to northeast |
| 8. | exterior-southeast perspective | view to northwest |
| 9. | exterior-east elevation | view to west |
| 10. | interior-parlor | view to northwest |
| 11. | interior-dining room | view to east |
| 12. | interior-parlor | view to south |
| 13. | interior-office | view to northwest |
| 14. | interior-office | view to east |
| 15. | interior-dining | view to north |
| 16. | interior-dining | view to west |
| 17. | interior-kitchen pantry | view to northeast |
| 18. | interior-kitchen | view to south |
| 19. | interior-2nd floor hall | view to west |
| 20. | interior-2nd floor hall | view to east |
| 21. | interior-master bed room | view to southeast |
| 22. | interior-master bed room-old ceiling | view to south |
| 23. | interior-3rd bed room | view to southeast |
| 24. | interior-3rd bed room | view to southwest |
| 25. | interior-attic | view to northwest |
| 26. | interior-cupola ceiling | view to northwest |
| 27. | exterior-milk house | view to southwest |
| 28. | exterior-granary-southeast perspective | view to northwest |
| 29. | exterior-pump house | view to north |

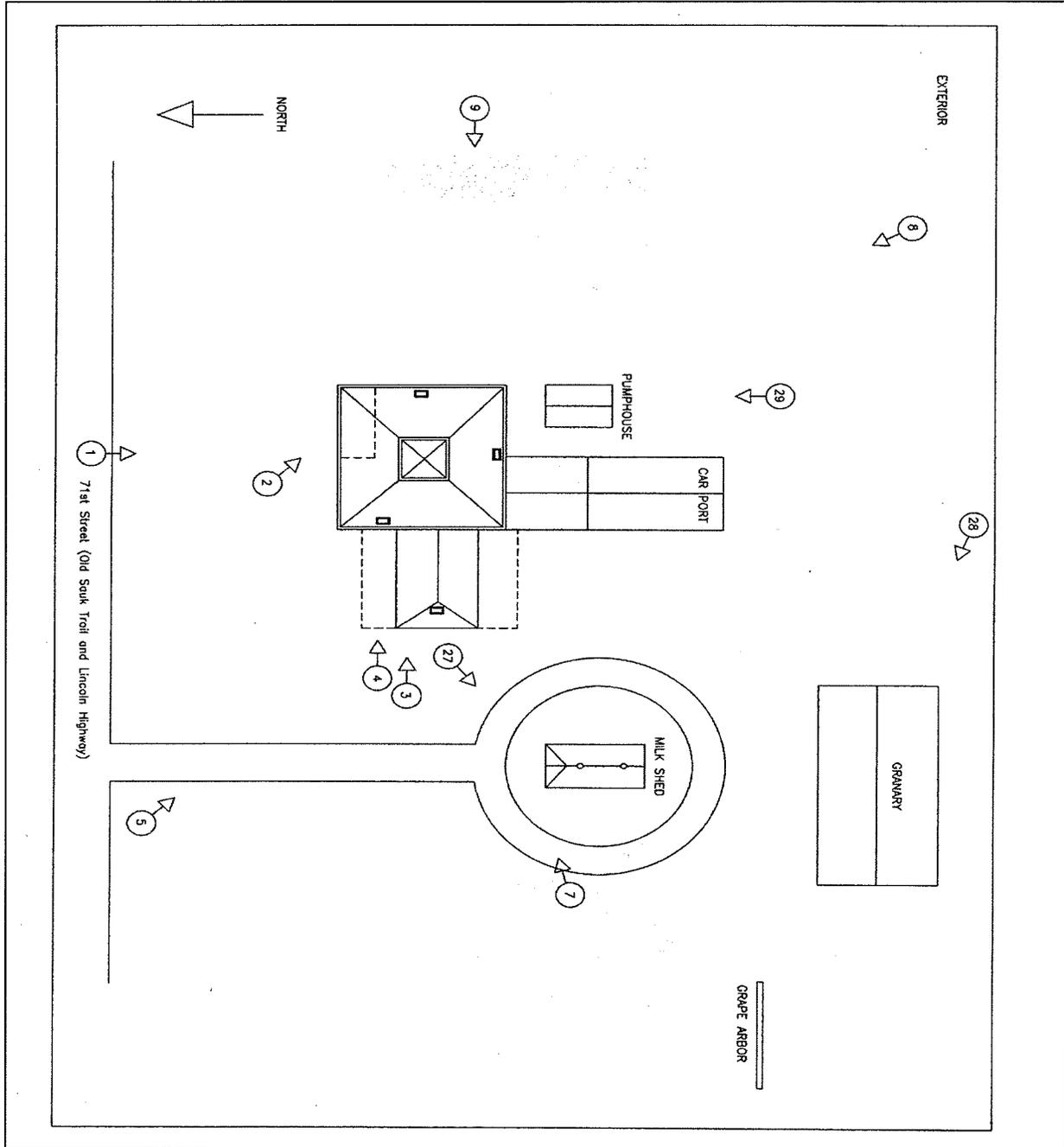
Exterior

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number PHOTO MAP Page 24

Morgan/Skinner/Boyd Homestead, Lake County, IN



Basement

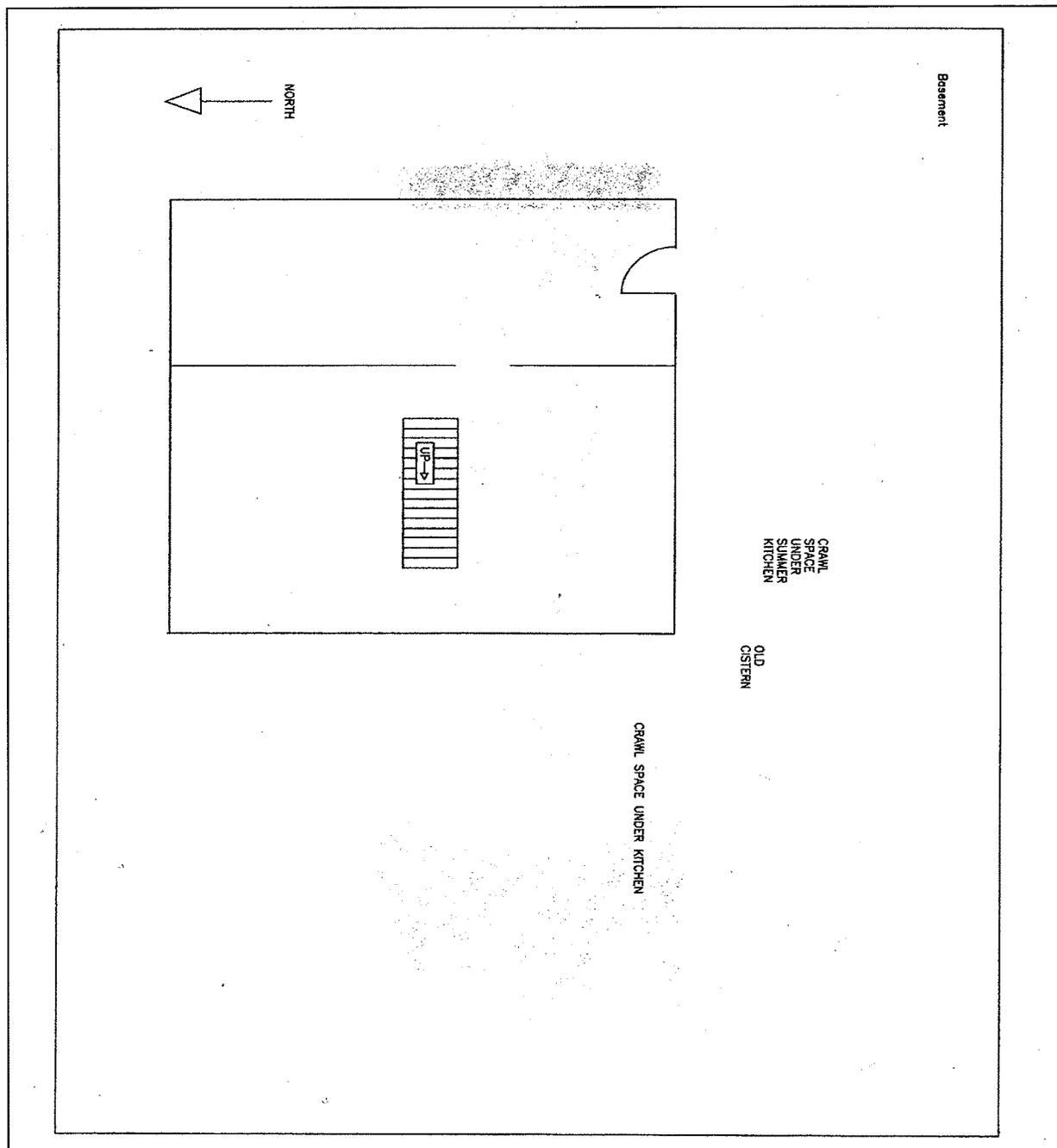
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number PHOTO MAP Page 25

Morgan/Skinner/Boyd Homestead, Lake County, IN

First Floor



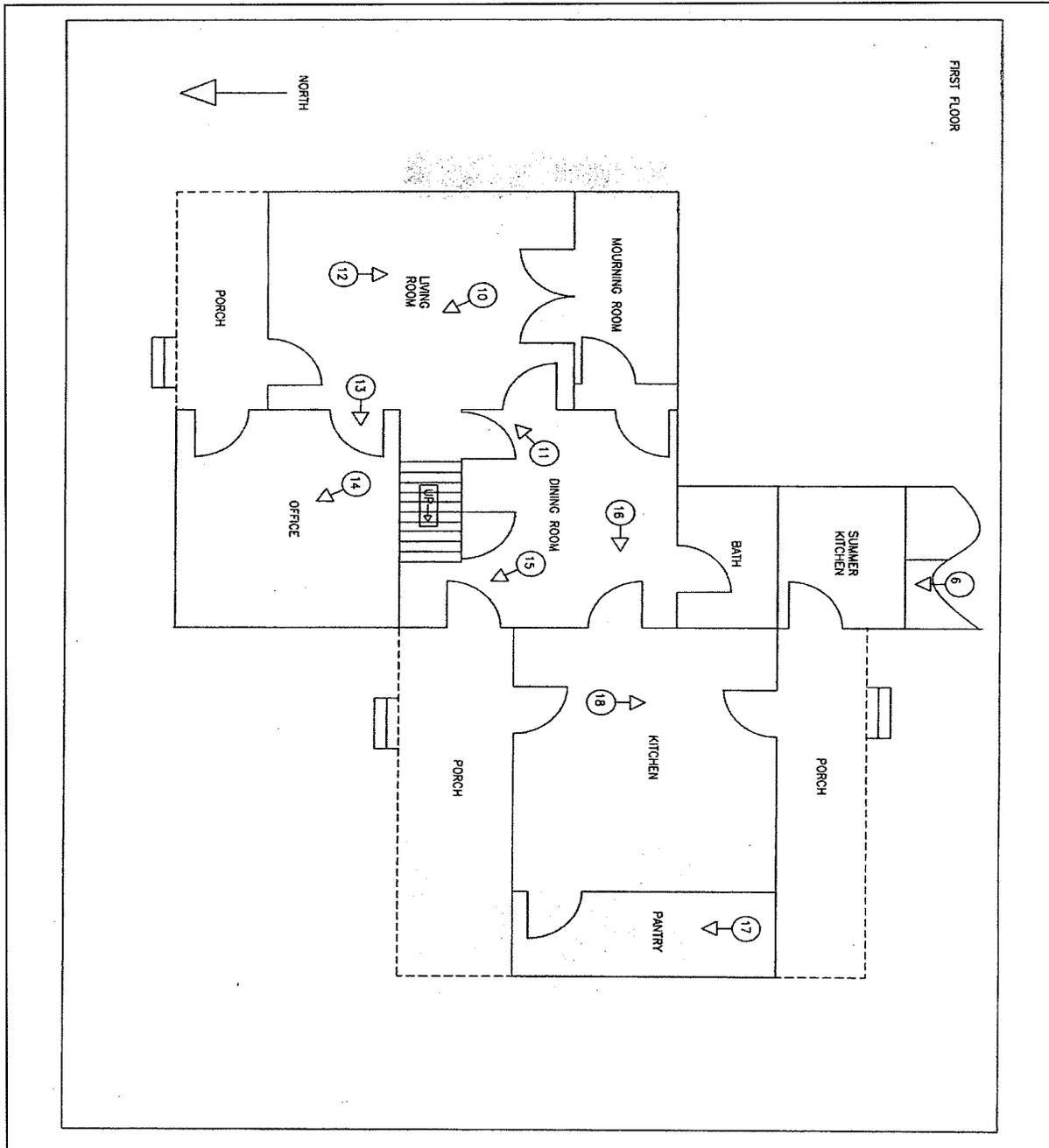
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number PHOTO MAP Page 26

Morgan/Skinner/Boyd Homestead, Lake County, IN

Second Floor

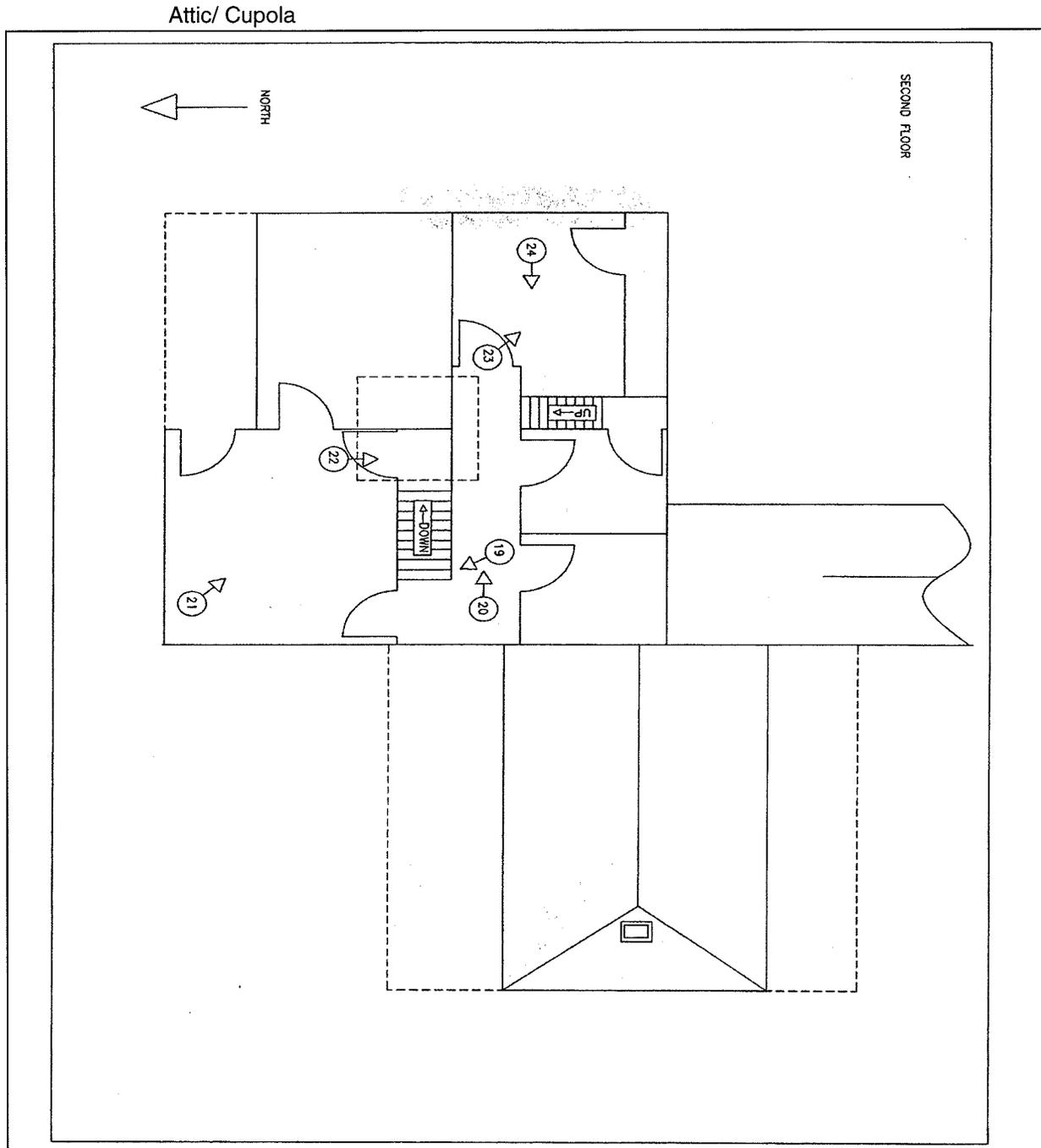


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number PHOTO MAP Page 27

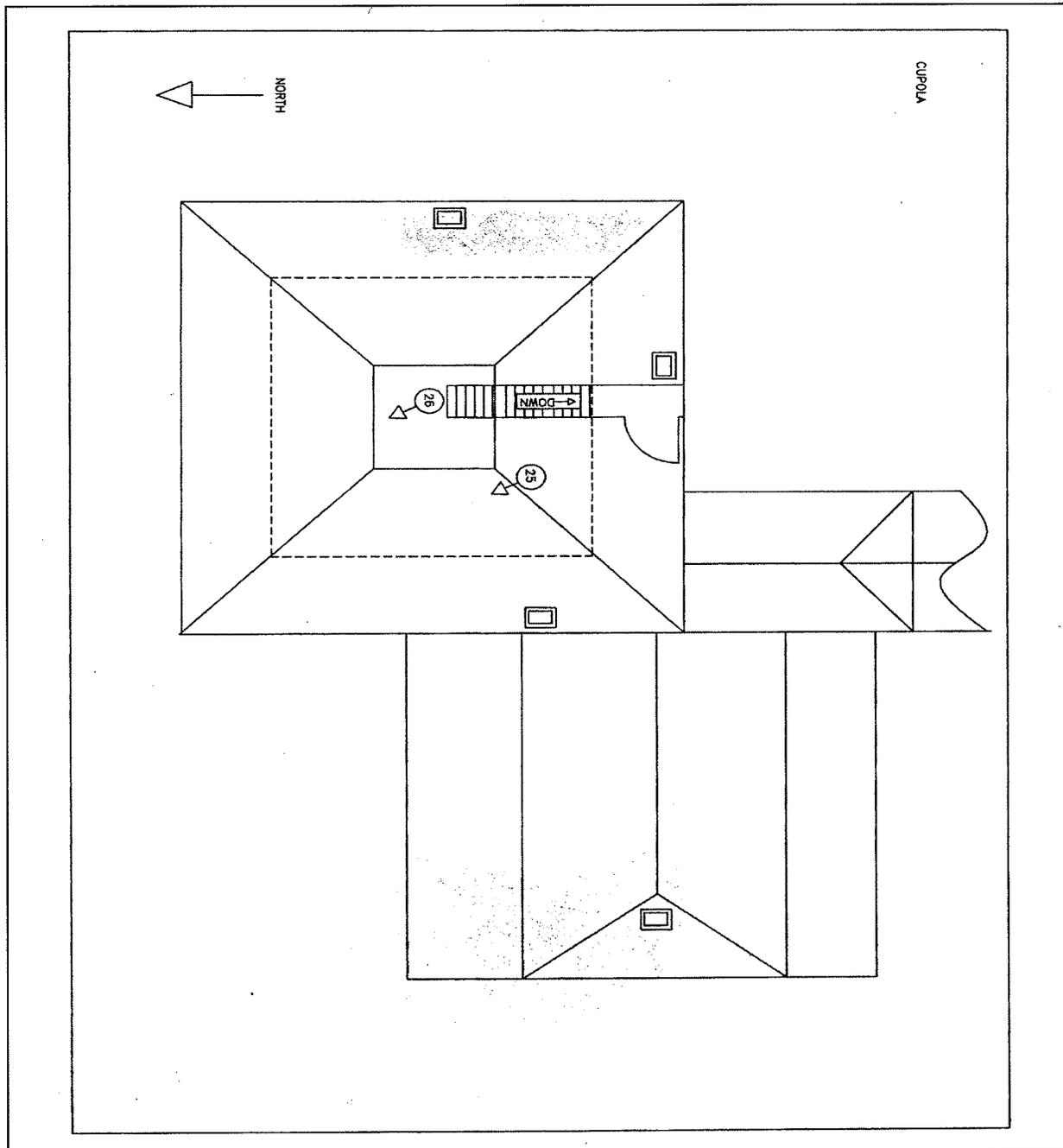
Morgan/Skinner/Boyd Homestead, Lake County, IN



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number PHOTO MAP Page 28 Morgan/Skinner/Boyd Homestead, Lake County, IN





Morgan/Skininer/Boyd Homestead, Lake Co.,
IN photo 2



Morgan/Skininer/Boyd Homestead, Lake Co., IN photo 5



Morgan/Skininer/Boyd Homestead, Lake Co., IN photo 7



Morgan/Skininer/Boyd Homestead, Lake Co., IN photo 9



Morgan/Skininer/Boyd Homestead, Lake Co., IN photo 10



Morgan/Skininer/Boyd Homestead, Lake Co., IN photo 12



Morgan/Skininer/Boyd Homestead, Lake Co., IN
photos 19, 27 and 28 (top to bottom)

