

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

For NPS use only

received SEP 6 1984

date entered OCT 4 1984

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Opel, John, House/ ~~Green Tree Hotel~~

and/or common Bochelman House

**2. Location**

street & number St. James Street, south-east of  
Jasper, off State Road 162 N/A not for publication

city, town Jasper X vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Dubois code 037

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Rohleder

street & number R. 4, Box 629-K

city, town Jasper X vicinity of state Indiana 47546

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Recorder

street & number Dubois County Courthouse

city, town Jasper state Indiana 47546

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town state

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Green Tree Hotel is a two-and-one-half story, Federal style house constructed of brick laid in common bond with sixth row headers. The simplicity of the main facade is only slightly relieved by a saw-tooth patterned cornice formed by bricks set at an angle. The foundation of the building extends two feet from the grade and is constructed of large blocks of local stone. The first story of the principal (east) facade is dominated by a central double door with a simple 12-light transom. The door, as well as all windows, has a sandstone lintel and sill. The original nine-over-six light windows have been replaced with one-over-one. Interior chimneys are found at both ends of the house.

The original second story single door, which was centered above the first story double entry, was removed at some point after the date of the historic photo. (Photo 1.) A balcony had already been removed at the time of the historic photo.

The rear (west) of the house has a repetition of the brick saw-tooth cornice, as well as the center double door with transom. A small 18' x 20'9", one-story kitchen ell is located at the northwest corner. The kitchen has an exterior chimney on the west facade. A shed-roofed porch extends across the back of the house.

At the south end of the house is a barrel-vaulted stone cellar. (Photo 4.) At its greatest height, the vault rises seven feet, nine inches from the floor. This area was originally intended for wine-making and storage. The cellar floor is brick.

The first floor contains two rooms on either side of the center hall, while the kitchen is in the ell at the northwest corner of the house. The interior woodwork is mostly original and in fine condition. The stairway, located in the center hall, is of simple Federal design. All interior doors are original, as is some of the brass hardware. There were only two fireplaces constructed in the house; both are still operable. The kitchen fireplace has a cooking crane in place and the parlor fireplace retains its original Federal style mantel.

Originally, the four first floor rooms (all except the kitchen) had stenciled walls. All downstairs examples have been essentially destroyed over the years, due to the application of paint and wallpaper.

Upstairs stenciling has fared somewhat better. The second floor contains three rooms and a center hall. The large (29'8" x 19'1") ballroom has the most remarkable decoration found in the house. Central in the ceiling is a circular, hand-painted design (Photo 5) approximately eight feet in diameter. Because of irreparable water damage it was recently necessary to remove the original ceiling plaster. With the help of the Folklore Institute at Indiana University, the design was photographed, measured, and traced, and has been reapplied to the new ceiling. Because of extensive water damage, all exterior wall stenciling has been lost. However, each upstairs room retains at least one interior wall with original, unrestored stenciling intact. (Photos 6 and 7.)

The third floor of the house is a finished attic originally used for servants' rooms. On one wall is a yet-undeciphered inscription, apparently in German. It includes a very clear date of 1860.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** Built ca. 1850      **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The architectural significance of the Green Tree Hotel is found in its fine rural Federal style and the barrel-vaulted wine cellar, similar to those found in Germany. The unusual and unique examples of mid-19th century stenciling found in the interior give artistic significance to the structure.

John Opel arrived in southern Indiana from his German homeland in 1847. At that time, he purchased land in Du Bois County and soon thereafter began construction of the house. The earliest specific reference to the building is 1858. The building was used as a hotel as well as family home until Opel sold the house and surrounding farm in 1870.

The Green Tree Hotel's plain Federal facade, with only a simple transom and a finely-executed, saw-tooth cornice for relief, is typical of the type found in rural settings. Federal style is less common in Indiana rural areas than in states to the east because of the slowness of settlement in central and northern Indiana, due to the difficulty with Indian land titles, and in the south central area due to more rugged terrain. By the time Indiana settlers could afford substantial dwellings, the Greek Revival and Italianate styles were more popular. This fine Federal home, constructed at this later date, reflects the personal tastes of the owner rather than the contemporary popularity of the style.

The barrel-vaulted wine cellar constructed at the south end of the house is, as far as published sources indicate, unique in Indiana. No other examples exist in the Folk Architecture Collection at Indiana University. There are several known examples in the Pennsylvania German areas, but these are all associated with buildings of much earlier dates, at least one hundred years previous. Opel would have been familiar with such wine cellars in his German homeland.

The stenciled walls found in the second floor of the house date from the construction of the house. Studied carefully, by faculty at Indiana University's Folklore Institute, the stencils seem to be entirely different in character from later Victorian stenciling or other examples of folk art found elsewhere in the United States. It is believed by Dr. Warren Roberts, of Indiana University, that the stencils and free-hand paintings are the work of a German immigrant, trained in the technique before departure from his homeland. Dr. Roberts has failed to uncover close German parallels, although similar design types were common in rural Germany during the first half of the 19th century. A robust and colorful folk art tradition among the German Catholics in southern Indiana is beginning to come to light. The decorations in this house make a valuable contribution to folk art in Indiana.

Opel sold the property to John Fred Bocheman in 1870. This German-born farmer owned the property until 1919. A variety of owners, all involved in agriculture, lived in the house until the Joseph Rohleders purchased the house and surrounding three acres in 1976. They have been involved in careful restoration since the time of purchase.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name HUNTINGBURG

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	6	5	0	8	1	8	0	4	2	4	6	5	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary lines are located ten feet from and parallel to the exterior walls of the house.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Warren E. Roberts, Professor

organization Folklore Institute  
Indiana University

date Sept. 20, 1977

street & number 504 N. Fess

telephone 812/337-5864

city or town Bloomington

state Indiana 47405

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*W. M. Redlin*

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

date 8-27-84

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*Melores Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 10-4-84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Continuation sheet John Opel House

Item number 9

Page 1

Bacon, Richard M. The Art and Craft of Wall Stenciling. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1977, p. vii.

The Jasper Courier, November 17, 1858, June 22, 1859, April 2, 1869, June 25, 1862, June 27, 1863, July 8, 1865.

Pennsylvania Folklife, Autumn, 1968, p. 30, shows two under a Pennsylvania house built in 1696 while Pennsylvania Folklife, Winter, 1968-69, pp. 4-6, shows one under a Pennsylvania house built in 1736. (Re wine cellar.)

Waring, Janet. Early American Stencils on Walls and Furniture. William R. Scott, 1937, p. 22, pp. 48-50.