

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

8/5/85  
SEP 16 1985

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

1. Name

historic Chief Richardville House and Miami Treaty Grounds

and/or common Indian House and Forks of the Wabash

2. Location

street & number West of Huntington on U.S. 24  
and IN 9/37 N/A not for publication

city, town Huntington X vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Huntington code 069

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Luke Scheer, Sr.

street & number 1018 Guilford Street

city, town Huntington N/A vicinity of state Indiana 46750

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds Office

street & number Huntington County Courthouse

city, town Huntington state Indiana

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

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Forks of the Wabash is the point where Little River enters the Wabash River. The area included in this nomination comprises approximately 46 acres, including the Indian House, and is a portion of the 250 acres owned by the Luke Scheer family. Since the property was acquired in 1943 from the descendants of Chiefs Richardville and LaFontaine, the scenic quality of the area has been preserved, and no cutting has been allowed.

Trees line the banks of this tract. An eight-acre island is included, with a corn field rimmed by tall sycamores. At its downstream end is a grove of large cottonwoods. The area includes the site of the former Miami Inn, which was destroyed by fire in 1956. No new construction has been permitted.

The 1833 Chief Richardville House is a simple three-bay, asymmetrical house of frame construction. The front portion of the original "L" shaped structure is two stories high, with the rear portion one and a half stories. A 12 foot by 12 foot, one-story addition was attached to the rear of the building in c. 1880. The building has recently been renovated by the Huntington North High School Junior Historical Society, after having stood vacant for about 20 years. In 1978, the group received a Young Preservationist Award for the project from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The exterior of the building has clapboard siding, and a gabled, wood-shingled roof. The original windows were six-over-six, some of which have been replaced with single-pane windows. The front entry, located in the righthand bay, is typical of the Greek Revival style, framed by pilasters supporting a simple entablature. Most of the glass in the transom and side lights is original. There are one-story, covered porches on the side and rear of the building.

The house has been painted in what are believed to be the original paint colors throughout. The exterior has been coated with a solid color oil base stain, in a russet color with a cream color for the trim.

On the interior, the house has three fireplaces, located in the first floor living room, the original kitchen, and the second floor master bedroom. With the exception of the middle room downstairs, all of the floors appear to be original.

The side entry hall has an open stairway. The stair banister and newel post are black walnut and are original. Each step has two walnut balusters slightly curved at the top. Most of the lower balusters are new replacements. Much of the woodwork is walnut as are the panels of the Christian doors. Some of the woodwork appears to have been originally grained in an oak finish.

There are two main bedrooms over the main portion of the house, and two back bedrooms for servants which are only accessible from a steep back stairway leading up from the kitchen. The ceilings in the bedrooms and hall have been extensively repaired. Plaster has been patched with walls being left in almost their original condition.

The only outbuilding to the house is a relatively recent "outhouse" with a concrete floor.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Treaty Grounds: 1826–1845

**Specific dates** House: 1833      **Builder/Architect** N/A

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Chief Richardville House, and Miami Indian Treaty Grounds (Forks of the Wabash) have major historical significance for Indiana and the Old Northwest. The region was once dominated by one of the most important Indian tribes in American history, the Miami Nation, and the sites under construction provide an important reminder of that tribe's once great prestige and influence. By the 1700s the Portage Path between the Maumee and the Wabash Rivers was a major French trade route. The Miami Indians controlled the traffic on that route. The Chief Richardville House, built in 1833, was the home of the last two principal chiefs of the Miamis and was the first frame house constructed in the area.

Three major treaties, concluded in 1834, 1838, and 1840, that provided for removal of the tribe, were negotiated at the nearby Treaty Grounds. The tribe boarded canal boats at this site for the journey to a new reservation west of the Mississippi in 1846.

The Forks of the Wabash was the western terminus of the overland path linking the Maumee River and Great Lakes System with the Wabash River and Mississippi Valley System. Early inhabitants of the region probably developed the Portage Path about 11,000 years ago. Prehistoric evidence includes signs of early agriculture, indicating some settlement in the region. The prevalence of loose flint rock, and reports from early white visitors to the region that the Miami Indians called the region below the Forks "Father Flint," suggest that, prior to the extensive introduction of the metal implements, local Indians found the site a prime source of material for weapons and tools.

The Miami Nation moved into the area about the end of the 18th century as the powerful Iroquois Tribe, weakened by warfare, reduced its area of control. After the founding of Detroit in 1701 and the establishment of French military and trading posts throughout the Mississippi Valley System, the Wabash-Maumee portage became the principal trade route connecting Quebec and New Orleans. The prevalence of French traders and soldiers throughout the region, and the close, even intimate, association that they developed with members of the Miami tribe had major impact upon the history of the area.

One of the several French families that dominated trade in the Old Northwest during the 18th century was the Drouet family. Claude Drouet de Richerville, of minor French nobility dating to the 12th century, came to New France in 1686. By the 1730s several of his sons were engaged in the western trade. A grandson, Antoine-Joseph Drouet de Richerville, traded at Kekionga or Miamitown, now Fort Wayne, between the 1750s and 1770s.

By the same period, one Miami family controlled transportation on the Portage Path. This control provided the family with revenue from the movement of furs and trade goods and gave them prominence within the tribe. By the late 1750s, Tecumwah, sister of Little Turtle, the principal chief of the Miamis, directed the portage business.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approx. 46 acres

Quadrangle name Bippus, Indiana

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u>
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D	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u>
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G	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Please see continuation sheet

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jean Gernand and Mary Kelsay

organization Huntington North H.S. Junior Historical Society date October, 1978

street & number 450 McGahn Street telephone 219/356-6104, Ext. 34

city or town Huntington state Indiana 46750

# 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 J. M. Redman

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 6-27-85

For NPS use only

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

Kathleen W. Anderson date 9/16/85  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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Chief Richardville House and

Continuation sheet Miami Treaty Grounds

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Tecumwah and Antoine-Joseph Drouet de Richerville had by 1760 established a relationship that produced, it is believed, four children including Jean-Baptiste Drouet de Richardville, born in 1761. By all accounts, Tecumwah was an extremely able individual who apparently devoted her time to insuring that her son became principal chief after her brother died. When Antoine-Joseph returned to eastern Canada sometime during the 1780s, she raised Jean-Baptiste herself. Beyond thoroughly training her son, she is believed to have stage-managed the event that gave Jean-Baptiste a reputation for bravery and assured his election as principal chief, the saving of a white captive from burning at the stake.

Richardville needed no false reputation. He spoke fluent French, Miami and English and, although shy, was well-respected. He took part in most of the major events that occurred in the region after he came of age. Richardville, for example, was part of the Indian force that defeated General Harmar in 1790. Better known, possibly, as a diplomat than a warrior, he was signatory to the Treaty of Greenville in 1795, the Treaty of Fort Wayne in 1803, and the Treaty of Grouseland in 1805. The Miamis elected Richardville head chief in 1813.

Chief Richardville continued control of the portage. This control, his extensive land holdings, and the bonuses he received from the United States government each time he signed a treaty, insured his personal wealth. By 1841 his estate was valued at almost one million dollars, and some observers considered him the wealthiest Indian alive. Historians generally consider Richardville to have been an excellent chief. Although he lined his own pockets and took care of family and friends, he also arranged good terms for other Miamis and staved off removal of the tribe for many years.

By 1831, the pressure of white settlement around Fort Wayne became too great, and Richardville moved the tribe westward to the Forks of the Wabash. The frame house now known as the Chief Richardville House was built in 1833. The structure is distinguished as the home of the last two principal chiefs of the Miami Nation in Indiana. It is believed to have been the first frame house constructed in the area. Most of Huntington County in 1833 was dense wilderness with only an occasional log cabin as a sign of white settlement. Only four white families lived nearby in what is now the city of Huntington.

In 1834, 1838, and 1840, the Miami Nation and the United States government negotiated major treaties, providing for land cession and eventual removal of the tribe, at a site near the Chief Richardville House now known as the "Treaty Grounds." In the treaty of 1834, the United States Government recognized Chief Richardville's ownership of a large tract of land running down from the Forks of the Wabash, including the site of the present Chief Richardville House. The basis for the arrangement was a grant of land given the Chief's mother years earlier by the French government. The Indians made further land cessions in treaties signed in 1838 and 1840. In 1841, the Miamis finally acceded, at Richardville's urging, to government demands that the tribe move to a reservation west of the Mississippi River. This decision was made during a council meeting held on the Treaty Grounds, and, in 1846, when the Indians finally departed Indiana, they boarded canal boats at those grounds for the sad journey westward.

Richardville died in 1841 at the age of eighty. He willed the land, confirmed his in the 1834 treaty, including the Chief's house, to his descendants. His daughter, Catherine, thus became the owner. She was married to Francis Lafontaine who was also elected the new principal chief. Lafontaine resided in the Chief Richardville House until 1846 when he led the tribe to its new reservation.

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He then returned to Indiana where he died the following year. Catherine lived in the home until her death, and the descendants of Richardville retained ownership of the property until 1943.

The Chief Richardville House and Miami Indian Treaty Grounds are some of the few remaining signs of a major part of the early history of the Old Northwest. The grounds here under consideration, retained by Richardville's descendants until 1943, are the last remnants of his once extensive holdings in the area. Left relatively undisturbed, they represent the central and primary area of the Treaty Grounds, where the Miami met annually to receive their payments from the government prior to their removal in 1846. Together with the Richardville House, they are a significant cultural resource for the community, the state, and the nation.

ADDENDUM, June, 1985

Although several locations immediately west of Huntington were used as gathering areas for the Miami Indians, the site which retains the best integrity and which was used most consistently for the annual governmental payments and treaty negotiations is the area identified as the Treaty Grounds at the Forks of the Wabash. Occasionally, annuities were dispensed by the government to the Indians at locations just south of the river, and later another area about a mile north and west of the Richardville House was also used as Indian payment grounds. However, the land at the Forks of the Wabash on the north side of the river was used most frequently, and historical records include frequent references to the use of this area for various meetings of the Miami Indians. The infrequent use of the other sites, as well as their alteration through farming and modern development, decreases their significance relative to the Treaty Grounds. The Treaty Grounds remain as a relatively unaltered area which was most consistently used for negotiations and payments by the federal government to the Miami Indian Nation, from 1826 to 1845.

Because of the temporary nature of the annual Indian gatherings, the precise boundaries of the encampment changed each year. Although the occupied area changed from time to time, the center of the gathering was usually toward the east end, at the forks of the Wabash. Historical accounts frequently mention council meetings being held at the forks of the Wabash directly across from the Richardville House. The camp would extend from that point to the west along the north side of the river to take advantage of a number of river springs which provided water for daily needs. The area included in the nomination is that portion which corresponds to 19th century maps. While it is possible that at times the Indian Council may have occupied a larger area, the land included in the nomination represents the core of the property which was most consistently used over the years.

No archaeological investigations have been conducted at the treaty grounds. The treaty grounds and Richardville House present a unique opportunity to recover historic archaeological data important to our understanding of the historic Miami occupation of the region to, and post-dating, their removal by treaty from Indiana. Such data in undisturbed and recoverable context will provide a basis for testing hypotheses and answering questions concerning enculturation of the Miamis, their subsistence patterns, lifeways, trade networks and economic systems, and numerous other critical research areas. In addition, archaeological investigations may provide a much needed base of diagnostic material culture and site patterning data useful for comparing with contemporary Euro-American sites and distinguishing them from Miami Indian sites of the period from the early 1830s to the late 1840s. Archaeological investigations at the Richardville House and within the treaty grounds boundaries should greatly increase their interpretive value and explanatory potential.

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

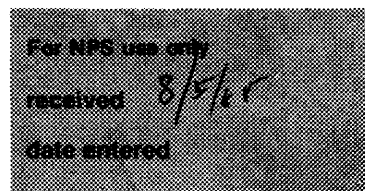
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Chief Richardville House and

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**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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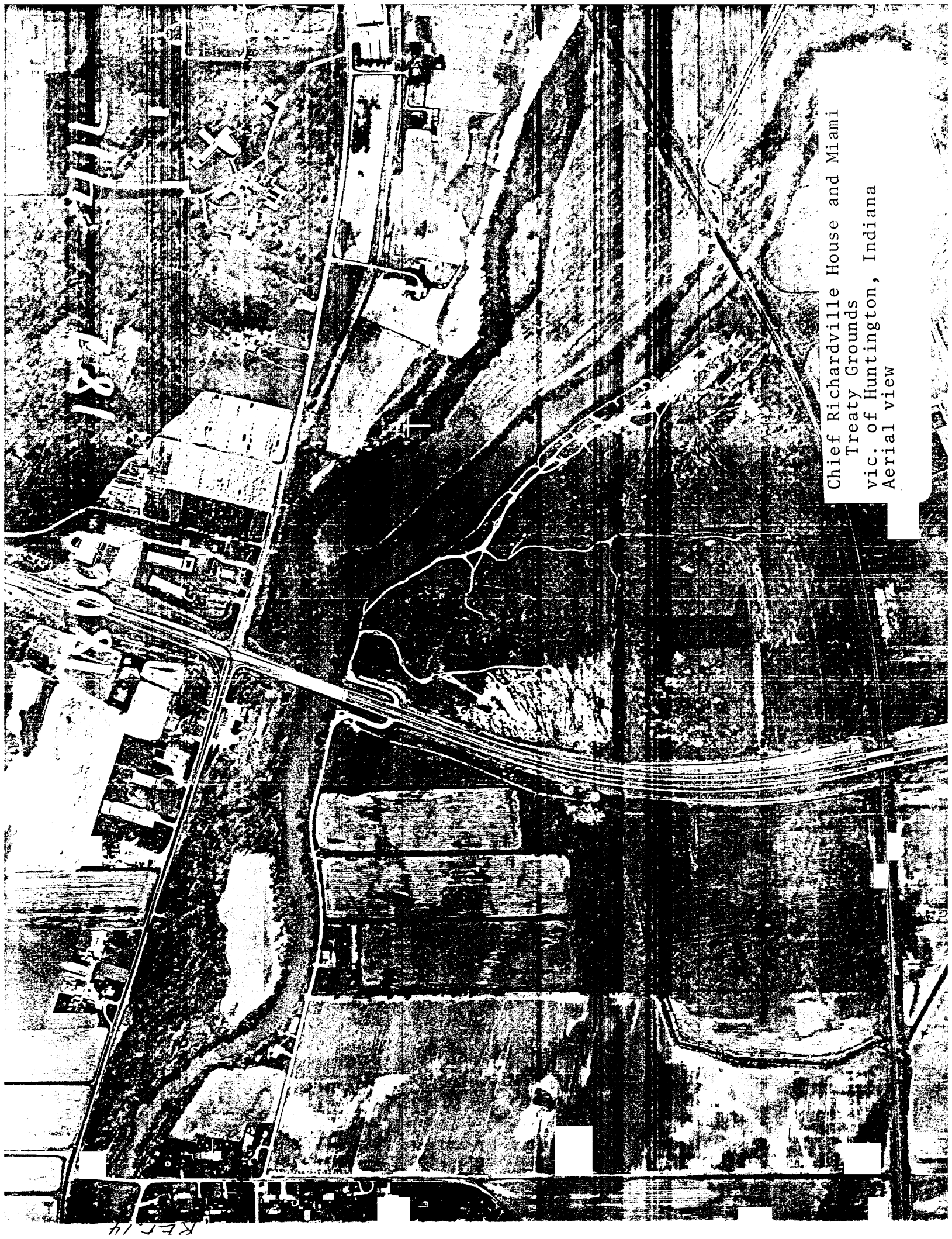
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date entered

Beginning at a point where the southern right-of-way line of U.S. Highway 24 intersects the eastern boundary of the property belonging to Luke Scheer; thence in a southerly direction along said property line to the northern bank of Little River; thence along the northern bank at normal stage of the Little and Wabash Rivers to an intersection with the western boundary of the property belonging to Luke Scheer; thence in a northerly direction along said property line to the southern right-of-way line of U.S. Highway 24; thence along the southern right-of-way line of U.S. Highway 24 to the intersection of the highway with a private lane leading from the highway north to a five-acre "farmette" property owned by others; thence in a northerly direction along the eastern edge of said private lane to the southern boundary of said five-acre "farmette" property; thence in an easterly direction along said property line to a point where it intersects with the western right-of-way line of Indiana Highway 37 (U.S. Highway 24 By-Pass); thence along the western right-of-way line of Indiana Highway 37 to a point where it intersects the southern right-of-way line of U.S. Highway 24; thence along the southern right-of-way line of U.S. Highway 24 to the place of beginning, containing approximately 46 acres.





1881 JUL

Chief Richardville House and Miami  
Treaty Grounds  
vic. of Huntington, Indiana  
Aerial view

REF 14

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

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The Treaty Grounds site is predominantly wooded with two large, open grassy areas. One of the open areas is located in the middle of the site adjacent to the river. The other open area is in the northeast corner of the site adjacent to U.S. Highway 24 and State Road 37. In the early 19th century, the treaty grounds included open areas as well as wooded portions. There are probably more trees today than there were 150 years ago. Historical accounts indicate that the Treaty Grounds contained at least one log structure which apparently served a dual purpose as a trading store and Council House. During times of annual governmental payments to the Indians, distributions were made to between 70 and 80 Indians. Some of the individuals were housed in the Council House while most occupied tents. Some years, during the payment times, white traders came into the area and erected makeshift shanties from which they dispensed their wares.

To date, no archaeological investigations have been conducted at the Richardville House or within the boundaries of the treaty grounds. The potential for intact subsurface archaeological deposits is high, given the length and intensity of the historic environs. Intensive archaeological investigations may provide substantive data to permit the continuing interpretation and explanation of the Richardville House and the treaty grounds through time.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ~~PROPOSED MOVE~~ *Additional Documentation*

PROPERTY NAME: Chief Richardville House and Miami Treaty Grounds

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: INDIANA, Huntington

DATE RECEIVED: 11/14/97 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/29/97  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 85002446

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: Y PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Additional documentation submitted - on 12/17/91 the National Register approved a proposed move of the house. The building was moved in 1992. The State has forwarded <sup>2</sup> new photos of the building after the move, a new verbal boundary description, new acreage figure, and USGS map.*

RECOM./CRITERIA *accept additional documentation*

REVIEWER *Patrick Ardum* DISCIPLINE *Historian*

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE *12/24/97*

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

### HISTORIC FORKS OF THE WABASH, INC.

A part of the West One-Half of Tract 1 in the Reserve of Ten Sections, Township 28 North, Range 9 East, Huntington County Indiana, granted to John B. Richardville described as follows: Commencing at the intersection of State Road 9 (Huntington Bypass) with the centerline of Highway 24, west of the City of Huntington, Indiana; then 200 feet N 71 degrees 58 minutes W, along the centerline of said highway 24, to a "+" in the concrete median; thence 75.35 feet S 18 degrees 02 minutes W to a steel tube on the South right-of-way line of said highway, said tube being the point of beginning of this description; thence 276.4 feet, N 70 degrees 05 minutes 20 seconds W along said right-of-way; thence 217.1 feet, N 71 degrees 58 minutes W along said right-of-way; thence 617.41 feet, N 71 degrees 44 minutes along said right-of-way; thence 105.5 feet, S 1 degree E; thence 144 feet, S 85 degrees 32 minutes E; thence 290 feet, S 66 degrees, 02 minutes E; thence 119 feet, S 10 degrees 30 minutes E; thence 195 feet, S 26 degrees 47 minutes E; thence 271 feet, S 67 degrees, 52 minutes E; thence 315.3 feet, S 82 degrees 26 minutes E to right-of-way of State Road 9; thence 274.2 feet, N 19 degrees 01 minutes 41 seconds E along said right-of-way; thence 130.1 feet, N 25 degrees 05 minutes 08 seconds W along said right-of-way to the point of beginning. All in Huntington Township, Huntington County, Indiana and containing 7.25 acres, more or less.