

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

MC3176

## National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

  X   New Submission            Amended Submission

## A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

County Homes of Indiana

## B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

County Homes of Indiana, 1832-1966

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date November 4, 2016

## D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

  
Signature of certifying official

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
OF  
PRES. SERVICES  
Title

10.18.18  
Date

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

  
Signature of the Keeper

11.27.2018  
Date of Action

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Create a Table of Contents and list the page numbers for each of these sections in the space below.

Provide narrative explanations for each of these sections on continuation sheets. In the header of each section, cite the letter, page number, and name of the multiple property listing. Refer to *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* for additional guidance.

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 250 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## Section E—Statement of Historic Contexts

Context—County Homes of Indiana

### Significance

County homes in Indiana are significant for what they illustrate of the evolution in thinking of American society about the treatment of the indigent. The surviving poor asylum and county home buildings provide important insights into changing attitudes toward the poor in Indiana and many other states. Those attitudes ranged from a perspective through most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century of seeking to minimize cost of maintaining the poor in asylums and to compel all the able-bodied residents to work in the homes or on the adjacent farms to a more humane objective beginning in the 1890s of housing the indigent and disabled in comfortable facilities and easing the lives of the residents. The homes constructed between 1890 and 1940 tend to illustrate the scientific reform movement advocating for better managed asylums and prisons that spread throughout the Eastern United States and was embodied in Indiana by the State Board of Charities and Corrections. The 48 surviving asylum/infirmar/county home buildings of Indiana that existed in 2013 also illustrate the changes in architectural design to accommodate the evolving philosophies of care. The buildings evolved from simple, basic facilities adapted from residences between the 1830s and 1860s to substantial, imposing buildings constructed of brick and representative of fashionable styles.

### Origins

The origins of county homes in Indiana go back to England and the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601, which provided that local parishes should support their legal inhabitants who became paupers and other dependents, such as orphans, provided that family members could not provide care. The concepts of the Poor Law were adopted by colonists in New England and the Mid-Atlantic colonies in America. In England during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, workhouses became the primary mode of providing relief to the impoverished, who were expected to work in exchange for shelter. In the English colonies, cash payments to the destitute poor were made by local authorities from an early date. An effort was made in Massachusetts to minimize the financial drain on taxpayers of poor relief by imposing indentured servitude on adults and minors who could work. In the larger cities, a few almshouses and workhouses were opened. The aged and infirm were given shelter in the almshouses, but the able-bodied poor were expected to work for their keep in the workhouses.<sup>1</sup>

After the American Revolution, relief payments to the poor who remained in their home became the primary mode of alleviating distress among paupers. By the 1820s, concern arose among civic leaders in both Massachusetts and New York about the apparent rapid increase in subsidies to the poor (called “outdoor relief”). First the Quincy Committee in Massachusetts of 1821 and then the Yates Committee in New York State of 1824 studied the condition of the poor and administration of relief in their respective states and concluded that poverty was not justifiable in a country with seemingly limitless land and opportunities for employment. The committee decided that those who applied for relief were poor through moral failings or intemperance with alcohol. The Quincy and Yates reports both advocated the creation of many more almshouses to which the poor would be directed. Such poor houses would reform the paupers, remove them

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<sup>1</sup>Heli Meltsner, *The Poorhouses of Massachusetts: A Cultural and Architectural History* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012), pp. 7-21.

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from the temptations of drink and the outside world and provide food and shelter in exchange for labor. As the poor were shifted to almshouses, the outdoor relief payments would decrease, and taxpayers would save money. The two reports were quite influential in shaping policy for much of the nation, and a large number of almshouses were constructed in the Eastern and new Midwestern states. In Massachusetts alone, there were 180 almshouses by 1840.<sup>2</sup>

The Northwest Territory was created by Congress in 1784, under the Articles of Confederation. In 1790, the territorial authorities adopted the first law mentioning poor relief. Justices of the peace were to appoint an overseer of the poor in each township. The overseers were to notify justices of persons suffering through poverty, sickness, accident, or misfortune or disability who were hence “a wretched and proper object of public charity.” The justices were to arrange for relief. In 1795, the territory approved a law that incorporated the provisions of the 1771 poor law of Pennsylvania, based in turn on the Elizabethan Poor Law. Overseers of the poor could make tax assessments with the approval of the justices of the peace for support of the poor. Those receiving relief who were capable of working were to be sent to workhouses, where they would make rope and cloth from hemp and flax thread. Old, blind, disabled, or lame persons were to be kept in homes with public support. Overseers could also contract with persons to lodge keep the poor or employ them. Children without parents were to be apprenticed to learn a trade. A 1799 act authorized the “farming out” of the poor. Paupers requiring support would be sold for a specified period to the lowest bidder, who would engage those sold in labor. The cost of paying the bidders was to be paid by the county commissioners. When the Indiana Territory was created in 1800, it inherited the poor laws of the Northwest Territory.<sup>3</sup>

### Poor Asylums in Indiana Before the Civil War

The framers of the Indiana state constitution of 1816 included in it the following stipulation:

“...to provide one or more farms, to be an asylum for those persons who by reason of age, infirmity, or other misfortunes may have a claim upon the beneficence of society; on such principles that such persons may therein find employment and every reasonable comfort and lose, by their usefulness, the degrading sense of dependence.”<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the founders of the state adopted “asylums” on farms as the primary vehicle for public support of the destitute. At such asylums, the residents who were able would work. In 1818 the Indiana General Assembly enacted the poor laws of the territory with few changes. The overseers of the poor, which the legislature officially designated as the township trustees of each county in 1852, were given several methods to afford relief: (a) farming out poor to low bidders at public sales, (b) contracting with a person to provide housing for a pauper, (c) affording temporary financial support through outdoor relief, and (d) referral to a poor asylum.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup>David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), pp. 155-172; Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), pp. 3-36.

<sup>3</sup>Alice Shaffer, “The Indiana Poor Law and Its Administration,” in Alice Shaffer, Mary Wysor Keefer, and Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, *The Indiana Poor Law: Its Development and Administration with Special Reference to the Provision of State Care for the Sick Poor* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1936), pp. 9-14.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 16, 30; John A. Brown, *Historical Sketches of Public Welfare in Indiana and Indiana State Conference on Social Work* (Indianapolis, 1962), p. 5.

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There was decreasing public acceptance of the farming out method early in statehood. In 1825, Governor James Brown Ray in a message to the General Assembly compared the farmed-out technique to selling merchandise or cattle at a public market. He urged creation of districts in each of which an asylum for the poor, deaf, dumb, and unfortunate could be cared for. Although the legislators took no action on Ray's recommendation, the concept of an asylum as the best vehicle for poor relief was established.<sup>6</sup>

The first enabling act passed by the legislature for establishment of a county poor asylum was enacted in 1821, authorizing Knox County to build one. Although it appears that Knox County did not act on its authorization, the General Assembly in 1830 voted to permit Dearborn and Washington Counties to construct poor asylums. In 1831, the legislature allowed all counties to establish such institutions.<sup>7</sup> The oldest surviving poor asylum building, a stone structure constructed by Switzerland County near Vevay in 1832, may have been one of the first asylums to be constructed in the state.

From 1831 until 1860, all of the 92 counties in Indiana purchased farms and either constructed asylum buildings or adapted existing farm houses to asylum use. The creation of county asylums all across the state suggests that legislators and local leaders were influenced by the strong endorsement by the Quincy and Yates Committees of almshouses as the most economical and effective way of providing for the poor and improving their moral character. From the beginning, Indiana's leaders had linked the reforming qualities of an asylum for the poor with a farm, where the able-bodied residents might earn their keep. Like other states in the pre-Civil War period, Indiana mixed all types of people unable to support or care for themselves. The aged and sick men and women, destitute widows, children of poor parents or orphans, mentally ill persons, developmentally disabled persons ("feeble-minded"), epileptics, blind persons, deaf and mute persons, and unmarried mothers all were admitted to poor asylums and lived mixed together. The violent and morally depraved shared rooms with destitute widows and children. One of the major themes of reforms during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Indiana and across the country was to remove mentally ill persons, children, and deaf and blind residents from poor asylums and send them to specialized institutions. That began to happen in the 1840s, with the creation of the Indiana State Asylum for the Insane, the state Blind Asylum, and the state Deaf and Dumb Asylum, all in Indianapolis.<sup>8</sup>

One of the defining elements of Indiana poor asylums was their operation by superintendents who lived with their families on the premises. In many asylums, the superintendent's wife served as the matron, with primary responsibility for managing the asylum proper.<sup>9</sup>

The new state constitution of 1851 reinforced the 1816 provision allowing counties to establish poor asylums: "the County Boards [of Commissioners] shall have power to provide farms as an asylum for those persons who, by reason of age, infirmity or other misfortune, have claims upon the sympathy and aid of society."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Shaffer, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 17, 21-22.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 28-29, 37; Alexander Johnson, Secretary of the Indiana Board of Charities and Corrections, describes the mix of residents in his 1890 report on visits he made that year to all 92 poor asylums. See *County Poor Asylums: Construction and Management, Laws, Reports of Visits by Secretary, Statistics of County Poor Expenses* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, 1890).

<sup>9</sup>See Johnson's report on his visits to poor asylums in *Poor Asylums*.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

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The Indiana asylums of the pre-Civil War period tended to be institutions neglected by the public and deprived of funds for the maintenance and care of their residents. The attitudes embodied by the Quincy and Yates Reports tended to reflect the opinion of educated people and civic leaders across the nation. The prevailing opinion seemed to be that able-bodied poor who sought outdoor relief were morally deficient and unwilling to seek employment. They therefore did not deserve relief payments nor should they be allowed to reside in almshouses or asylums unless they worked. Since much of the tax-paying public doubted that there were insufficient jobs for all of the unemployed, there was a tendency to encourage overseers of the poor to operate asylums and farms on the lowest possible budgets. In Indiana, a system was widely used wherein the county commissioners, who oversaw the asylums, contracted with asylum superintendents who submitted the lowest bid for operating the farm. The superintendent also received by contract a set amount per resident from the commissioners annually. The result was that superintendents working by contracts were tempted to operate the farm with the least amount of investment and proper husbandry and spend the minimum on the asylum building and resident care.<sup>11</sup>

### Reform and Scientific Charity

Concern arose in Massachusetts during the 1850s over what many viewed as an incoherent system of state and local institutions dealing with the destitute, mentally ill, sick, and poor. All the entities seemed to be afflicted with inadequate results and lacked coordination of their efforts. In 1863, the state legislature created the Massachusetts State Board of Charity, to investigate the operations of state and local institutions, collect data, and make recommendations. Over the next 30 years, nine other states in the Northeast and Midwest followed Massachusetts' lead, including Indiana.<sup>12</sup>

In the Hoosier state, the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends organized in 1867 a committee to devise a system to reform juvenile offenders and improve prison discipline. The committee first investigated prisons and the need for a women's prison. In 1880 it submitted a petition to the General Assembly noting that 700 children lived in the county poor asylums of the state, together with 600 mentally ill persons, 350 "idiots" [mentally disabled], and 2700 adult paupers. The petition asked for creation of a State School for Dependent Children or for the county commissioners to be required to establish county homes for children. In 1889, the Friends recommended establishment of an Indiana Board of State Charities to oversee all "penal, reformatory, and benevolent institutions of the state, including the County Infirmaries [asylums], Orphans Homes, and jails." A bill modeled on the Ohio Board of State Charities passed the legislature the same year.<sup>13</sup>

A "scientific charity" movement took root in the United States during the same period as creation of the state boards of charities. Its main thesis enlarged on the earlier opinion of the 1820s that outdoor relief corrupted its recipients and created an aversion to the work ethic. The movement advocated the complete abolition of relief payments to the poor. By doing away with outdoor relief, the scientific charity proponents hoped to force able bodied men either to obtain employment or go to a poor house, where they would also work. The relief payments in most states after 1865 substantially exceeded the cost of poor asylums and almshouses. The

<sup>11</sup>Katz, pp. 18-19; Rothman, pp. 162-164; [Alexander Johnson], "Construction and Management of a County Poor Asylum," in *County Poor Asylums*, p. 4; *The Indiana Bulletin of Charities and Correction* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, December, 1895), p. 7.

<sup>12</sup>Meltsner, p. 71.

<sup>13</sup>Timothy Nicholson, "Thirty Years of Struggle," in *The Indiana Bulletin of Charities and Correction Quarter Ending April 30, 1897* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, June, 1897), pp. 5-11.

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scientific charity argument asserted that the relief payments could be drastically reduced as poor asylum costs went up, and a net savings for taxpayers would result.<sup>14</sup>

In Indiana, the State Board of Charities and Corrections and its staff secretaries--Alexander Johnson, Ernest Bicknell, and Amos Butler--voiced many of the same opinions as the scientific charity movement between 1890 and 1911. They did not go as far as to urge abolition of outdoor relief, which Johnson in 1890 described as an "extreme view." Rather, the hope was advanced that township trustees in charge of relief would send able-bodied men to the poor asylums, where they would either work or be invited to leave. The relief rolls would thereupon decrease. The county commissioners were urged to invest in their asylum buildings and farms, both to make them more humane for the residents, but also to make the farms yield enough vegetables, meat, eggs, and fruit to feed the residents. Any surplus produce could be sold to generate income for the asylum. Johnson expected that some farms would even become self-supporting, further relieving local taxpayers.<sup>15</sup>

The counties were making a substantial expenditure for outdoor and indoor poor relief in 1890. That year, they together cost \$869,000, of which \$430,000 went for outdoor relief and \$316,000 was the net cost of the poor asylums. In addition, counties paid \$73,000 for medical costs arising from treatment of the poor. Cumulatively, the counties had invested \$1.5 million in buildings, land, and equipment at the asylums.<sup>16</sup>

In 1890, Johnson made the first of a series of State Board of Charities inspections of all 92 county poor asylums. He developed a check list of desirable characteristics for poor asylums, based on concerns about the threat of fire, access to clean water, cleanliness and good sanitation, separation of different classes of residents, and separation of the sexes. He asserted in his first report to the board that no asylum should be more than two stories high. All should be constructed of brick and be as fireproof as possible. The kitchen and dining room should be close to the water supply, and dormitories were preferred to individual rooms for ease of supervision and keeping clean. There should be sitting rooms for men and women on the ground floor and some bedrooms for old married couples or pairs of men or women. Johnson put special emphasis on proper ventilation in the asylums and in bathtubs for regular bathing of all residents, believing both to be conducive to better health.<sup>17</sup>

On his first tour, he noted the number of acres in the farm, the acreage devoted to vegetable garden, area devoted to fruit orchards and ground fruit. Fresh vegetables and fruit were considered especially vital for a proper diet by the residents. He noted the condition and need for repairs of the main asylum building and the farm buildings. He evaluated the degree to which the asylum building met the State Board's recommendations for lay out and noted the type of lighting and heating. Whether there were bath tubs and laundry facilities was always highlighted. Johnson noted the presence of mentally ill residents and children and made recommendations for their removal, if possible, to special institutions. He concluded by noting the number of residents, the cost of operating the asylum, and the number of employees. Because many of the asylums in 1890 were constructed originally as private residences and did not meet the standards for lay out and care advocated by the State Board or were in poor states of repair, Johnson frequently recommended major

<sup>14</sup>Meltsner, pp. 72-73; Katz, pp. 37-43.

<sup>15</sup>[Alexander Johnson], "Construction and Management of a County Poor Asylum," pp. 3-5, 15; Alexander Johnson, *The Almshouse: Construction and Management* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1911), pp. 1-6; Amos Butler, *Indiana A Century of Progress: A Study of the Development of Charities and Correction 1790-1915* (Jeffersonville, IN: Indiana Reformatory Printing Trade School, 1916), p. 139.

<sup>16</sup>[Johnson], "Construction and Management," p. 3.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 4-7.

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rehabilitations or replacement with new buildings. A majority of the asylum buildings in 1890 were of brick construction, showing a steady movement from frame residences after the Civil War to larger structures especially designed for asylum use. The largest asylum buildings were found in the counties containing the principal cities of the state. The Marion County asylum was the largest, containing 240 residents. The county with the fewest residents was Starke, with seven. Many rural counties housed between 25 and 30 residents, while a handful sheltered as many as 60 residents.<sup>18</sup>

The farms ranged in size from less than a hundred acres to up to 350 acres in 1890. Most encompassed at least 200 acres, which was devoted principally to raising crops, with some land used for timber growth and harvest, and small parcels for the vegetable garden and orchards.<sup>19</sup>

The State Board of Charities soon after its establishment began to hold regular State Conferences of Charities and Correction and published a quarterly bulletin. At the conferences, superintendents of poor asylums, county commissioners, and representatives of the many state hospitals and institutions gathered to discuss common problems and hold round tables for their specialized areas. Out of the conference proceedings, frequently published and disseminated by the State Board, movements for more legislation developed. Of special concern to the board and many conference attendees were (a) removing children from the unsavory influence of the poor asylums and placing them in foster homes or orphanages, (b) removing the mentally ill from the poor asylums and sending them to the regional state hospitals for the mentally ill or to new county mentally ill asylums, (c) decreasing outdoor relief and increasing the numbers of the poor sent to the asylums, (d) increasing accountability of superintendents and county commissioners by requiring them to keep statistics and accounts on their operations and reporting them to the State Board, (e) decreasing the turnover of asylum superintendents due to political patronage, and (f) creating county level Boards of Charities to visit and report on county asylums and jails. All of these concerns were addressed through the passage of new legislation between 1895 and 1899.<sup>20</sup>

In the two decades after 1899, most children were removed from asylums; many, but not all mentally ill and developmentally disabled persons were sent to state institutions. Outdoor relief expenses did indeed drop significantly, producing substantial overall savings on poor relief in most counties. Superintendents were given four-year terms and could only be removed for cause, and County Boards of Charities were appointed in all counties and began to make their own visits to poor asylums.<sup>21</sup>

The result was that the poor asylums in most counties became increasingly inhabited by the elderly, infirm, and truly destitute adults. Public attitudes and those of the commissioners and superintendents changed in early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Instead of concentrating on saving money in operations, the focus shifted to making a

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<sup>18</sup>[Johnson], "Secretary's Visits to the Poor Asylums of Indiana," *County Poor Asylums*, pp. 15-59.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Nicholson, p. 13; *The Indiana Bulletin of Charities and Correction Quarter Ending April 30, 1897*, pp. 81-100; *The Indiana Bulletin of Charities and Correction Quarter Ending January 31, 1899* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, March, 1899), pp. 6-12; "Proceedings of the Seventh Indiana State Conference of Charities and Correction. Indianapolis, November 15, 16 and 17, 1898," in *The Indiana Bulletin* (Indianapolis, September, 1899), p. 23; *The Indiana Bulletin of Charities and Correction. Fiscal Year Ending October 31, 1899* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, December, 1899), pp. 1-18; *The Indiana Bulletin of Charities and Correction Quarter Ending January 31, 1900* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, March, 1900), pp. 2-10.

<sup>21</sup>*The Indiana Bulletin of Charities and Correction Quarter Ending January 31, 1899*, pp. 6-12; "Proceedings of the Seventh Indiana State Conference of Charities and Correction. Indianapolis, November 15, 16 and 17, 1898," *The Indiana Bulletin* (Indianapolis, September, 1899), pp. 25-26.



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comfortable, “home-like” atmosphere for the residents. By the 1920s, there was more emphasis at state conferences on superintendents concentrating on administering the asylum to provide proper care of the residents, as opposed to operating the farm to maximize its productivity and striving for self-sufficiency. Increasingly, the asylums were being called “county homes” or “county infirmaries,” to remove the public stigma associated with being sent to the poorhouse or asylum.<sup>22</sup>

A 1922 visit by the State Board of Charities staff to all 92 asylums showed dramatic changes from 1890. First, the repeated recommendations of the Board secretaries for counties to replace badly deteriorated and poorly planned asylums had resulted in construction of several substantial, fireproof buildings following the standard plan recommendations of the State Board (see Section F). Also, by 1922, nearly all of the asylum buildings had electricity; steam or hot water heat with central furnace; indoor plumbing, toilets, and bath tubs; and even porches. In 1890, all had been lighted by kerosene or gas lights, heated by wood-burning or gas stoves, and rarely possessed indoor plumbing. Several in the earlier year were of frame construction and were considered “fire-traps.”<sup>23</sup>

Also during the 1922 visits, it was evident that producing food for residents was still considered to be a primary purpose of the farms. The county commissioners in many counties were making needed investments to update barns, silos, and other farm buildings, as well as equipment. The outbuildings in use at farms included such structures as a cattle barn, horse barn, hog houses, chicken houses, corn crib, milk house, silo, and tool sheds. A few farms now had garages for automobiles. The numbers of residents reported at asylums for 1922 had dipped slightly for most counties since 1890. Marion County now had 195 residents, while Starke was up slightly, at 10. Several rural county homes now had less than 20 residents.<sup>24</sup>

During the 1920s and into the 1930s, several counties replaced asylum buildings with new structures, due to fires and to a desire to replace deficient or obsolete designs. Examples include Parke, Wells, and Whitley Counties.<sup>25</sup>

### Decline of County Homes, 1935 to 2016

County homes, as most poor asylums in Indiana were called by the 1930s, were dealt a body blow by the passage of the federal Social Security Act in 1935. The old age pensions that the law created were excluded for residents of public institutions. Many of those living in county homes were able to leave and live elsewhere with their Social Security payments. A large number of almshouses and county homes across the country closed during the late 1930s and 1940s as their number of residents declined. The county home in Indiana did not disappear because a significant number of home residents had chronic diseases and could not leave. After World War II, as private nursing homes were established for increasing numbers of infirm elderly patients, some county homes were converted to county-operated nursing facilities. Others remained homes for the ambulatory elderly. Economic viability was increased in 1950, when the Social Security Act was amended to

<sup>22</sup>See W.H. Williams, Jr., “The County Farm as a Model Farm,” in *The Indiana Bulletin of Charities and Correction*. Number 120 (March, 1920), pp. 124-125.

<sup>23</sup>See Figures 2 and 3, illustrating the modern, fireproof asylum for Adams County of 1901, cited by Johnson in *The Almshouse: Construction and Management* of 1911. Also see the 1922 report of visits to the 92 asylums by a representative of the Board of State Charities in *The Indiana Bulletin*. Number 131 (December, 1922), pp. 233-330.

<sup>24</sup>1922 report of visits to asylums.

<sup>25</sup>Kayla Hassett, “The County Home in Indiana: A Forgotten Response to Poverty and Disability,” (Muncie, Indiana: Master of Science of Historic Preservation thesis, Ball State University, 2013), pp. 93, 122, 124.

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allow federal assistance payments to be made for destitute aged, blind, or disabled persons who were patients in public institutions.<sup>26</sup>

By 1954, the number of county homes in Indiana had decreased to 82. In that year, the Indiana State Board of Health found that 70% of the residents or patients were 65 years old or older, 80% were ambulatory, and the most frequent afflictions were behavior disorders, senility, heart disease, or arthritis. As the former asylums became old age homes, the farm operations increasingly were seen as distractions from the mission of elderly care, and most were ceased and land used for other purposes or sold.<sup>27</sup>

In a few counties after World War II, the shift to county-supported old age homes was accompanied by replacement of aging facilities with new buildings designed for the altered mission. In Lake County, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century poor asylum complex near Crown Point was replaced in the late 1950s with a new Lake County Convalescent Home. In Columbus, the Bartholomew County Asylum and farm was sold and a smaller old age facility without a farm constructed within the city in 1958. Similar, modern buildings were constructed in Jefferson County in 1953 and in Howard County in 1957.<sup>28</sup>

Since 1960, the number of county-run homes has declined dramatically. With the advent of Medicare and Medicaid in the 1960s, the “safety net” formerly provided by counties for their infirm, indigent residents who are aged has been replaced by a system of federal and state assistance which has allowed many to live in private facilities or in their own homes. By 2015, the number of homes operated by counties had dropped to 10.<sup>29</sup>

In 2013, there were 48 county home buildings remaining in the state. The 38 buildings not operated as county homes have been adapted to new uses or are vacant.<sup>30</sup>

## Section F—Associated Property Types

### 1. The Home Design Adapted to an Asylum

#### Description

The first purpose-built poor farm dwellings reflect the vernacular housing types with which builders were familiar. The oldest surviving poor asylum building in Indiana and one of the first asylum buildings to be used is that of Switzerland County. Constructed in 1832 from nearby field stone, the Switzerland County example closely resembled a residence of a prosperous settler. Its design followed the popular, vernacular, center passage tradition of an oblong shape, and symmetrical five bays across the façade. A similar vernacular design was used for the former Wayne County Asylum near Centerville in 1847. An architect, Emsley Ham, designed the building, so it probably was constructed for asylum purposes. Built of brick with the same oblong shape and

<sup>26</sup>Clyde F. Snider, *Local Government in Rural America* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1957), pp. 411, 418-23.

<sup>27</sup>Morton Leeds (comp. and ed.) *The County Home in Indiana* (Indianapolis: Indiana State Commission on the Aging and Aged, 1960), pp. iv, 1.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 10-14; Hassett, pp. 64, 69.

<sup>29</sup>Hassett, “Survey of County Homes,” pp. 24-124; “County Homes Facility Listing,” September 28, 2015, provided by Chris Overman, Superintendent of Parkview Home, Frankfort, Indiana.

<sup>30</sup>Hassett, pp. 24-124.

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five bays across the façade, the Wayne County Asylum appeared to be a farm house from the road. A porch across the façade is an early 20<sup>th</sup> century addition.<sup>31</sup>

The façade of former Henry County Asylum, constructed in 1855-60, is similar in appearance to the buildings in Switzerland and Wayne County. The brick façade has five symmetrically arranged bays, with side lights for the entry, but an Italianate cornice typical of the late 1850s appears above the second story. Its institutional purpose is evident at the rear, where a large gabled wing extends perpendicular to the front section. The rear wing appears to have been designed for the rooms of the residents of the asylum. The front section looks as though it was intended for the residence of the superintendent and his family. The Henry County Asylum represents a lay out that became common to all later asylum: a central or front pavilion serving as the superintendent's residence, and a rear wing or wings containing the sleeping rooms of the asylum residents. At the end of the rear residential wing of the Henry County building is a one-story brick addition from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, possibly intended for the dining room and kitchen.<sup>32</sup>

A final residential example is the former Daviess County Asylum, constructed in 1864. This design is a double-pile vernacular residence. The façade has five symmetrical bays, but instead of an uninterrupted gable roof, a transverse gable appears above the entry. The appearance from the road is again, of a farmhouse.<sup>33</sup>

### The Home Design Adapted to an Asylum—Significance

The early asylums in Indiana styled as residences illustrate the initial conception of a poor asylum as a home for the destitute poor. There were as yet few models for public asylum designs in a frontier and settlement society, so it was natural for early county commissioners and the architects and builders they hired to turn to the familiar design of residences. Despite the desire by taxpayers in most counties from the beginning to be frugal in their expenditures on the poor, all the surviving pre-1865 asylum buildings were constructed of brick or stone. This suggests a long-term commitment to housing the indigent in these counties. According to the 1890 report of Alexander Johnson, in that year, there were many examples of one or two-story frame houses built or adapted for asylum use. Today, there appear to be only two former asylum buildings of frame construction that exist: the c. 1860 former Owen County Poor Asylum at 1555 S. US 231, Spencer, Indiana<sup>34</sup> and the 1896 former Brown County Poor Asylum building at 357 E. Main Street in Nashville, Indiana.

These residentially styled asylums are significant under Criterion A as the oldest surviving manifestations of the indoor relief system for the poor practiced in Indiana. They illustrate the use of vernacular house types as the initial guide for asylum designs. An asylum building, such as that in Henry County, may be significant under Criterion C as an example of how the residential prototype was being adapted by the 1850s for the management of larger numbers of asylum residents. The example set in Eastern states, such as Massachusetts, of a central or front section affording a residence for the superintendent and his family and a rear wing or side wings devoted to rooms for the residents may have influenced the design of the Henry County Asylum.

<sup>31</sup>See photos in Hassett, pp. 111-12, 119-20. Other early asylums include one at 1917 Telegraph Hill Road near Madison (Jefferson County) and Tri-County Home in Jackson Township, Fayette County.

<sup>32</sup>See Hassett, pp. 61-62.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 47-48.

<sup>34</sup>replaced in 1878 by the former asylum on 3795 State Road 43, Spencer, Indiana.

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The Home Design Adapted to an Asylum—Registration Requirements

To qualify for registration, asylums with home designs should have been used as poor asylums by their counties sometime between 1832 and 1966. A property not built for asylum, infirmary, or county home use, but adapted as such can be eligible if it served a significant length of time and its use as an asylum/infirmary/home can be documented (see below). The use by the county as an asylum must be documented through professionally recognized research techniques, such as property records, official reports, or similar items. In the statement of significance for such a property, under Criterion A, applicants should provide an explanation of how the county came to build the asylum and how the county commissioners operated the asylum during the period of significance. If Criterion C is cited for significance, the nomination should document the design and construction by the county and if possible by an architect or builder. Criterion C-related poor farm houses can be eligible as examples of a style or work of a master, with the requisite documentation and comparisons. If the building was purchased for asylum use, that should also be documented and described.

With respect to integrity, a building nominated should retain its exterior character from its period as an asylum. The interior should provide a clear indication of the division of functions between the superintendent's residence and the sections devoted to circulation, resident sleeping rooms, dining, and socializing. It is expected that county homes long out of their intended use may have updated bathrooms and kitchens. Eligible homes will retain corridor, sleeping rooms, and public spaces to a good degree. Retention of interior finishes and woodwork adds greatly to a poor farm residence's integrity and often to its architectural integrity. If there are surviving farm buildings, they should retain at least their exterior character from the period of significance. Sufficient significance is attached to the principal asylum buildings to qualify their properties for nomination, regardless of the degree of survival by farm buildings.

## 2. Asylum Buildings with T-Shaped Plans

### Description

Of the surviving asylum buildings, six—Marshall, Owen, Randolph, Scott, Steuben, and Union—illustrate a plan type used occasionally in Indiana between 1865 and 1900. The type placed the superintendent's residence at the front of the building and a resident's wing at its rear. In most cases, the plan formed a T. In the case of Owen, the superintendent's residence extends beyond the walls of the resident wing. In the case of Randolph, the superintendent's residence projects slightly from the side elevations of the rear wing, but the resident wing has two projecting pavilions near the rear of the wing, forming a cruciform plan. In Scott and Steuben Counties, the ends of the superintendent's and the resident wing run continuously toward to the rear and are met by extensions at right angles, forming a T. The Union County plan forms an I.<sup>35</sup>

The separation of men and women, a prime concern of the asylum/almshouse movement nationally in the 19<sup>th</sup> century—was achieved by placing a different gender on each floor of the resident wing.<sup>36</sup> To provide some privacy and family life for the superintendent, the matron, and their family, a residence at the front that could be

<sup>35</sup>See photos in Hassett, pp. 79-80, 91-92, 99-100, 105-106, 107-108, 115-116.

<sup>36</sup>In Randolph County, the men and women were placed on the same floors, but with a partition wall at center dividing them.

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separated from the residents was considered desirable. By the 1890s, under the influence of the Indiana State Board of Charities, new asylum buildings, such as in Randolph County, were being provided with separate

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dining rooms and sitting rooms for the two sexes. In all of the surviving examples of this type, brick, masonry-bearing walls were used for construction, undoubtedly for a degree of fire resistance.

Virtually all of the 19<sup>th</sup> century asylums included cells for the confinement of mentally ill residents who needed restraint. Sometimes cells were included in the asylum building, such as at the Randolph Asylum. Increasingly, under the influence of the Board of Charities, separate cell buildings were considered desirable. Such a cell building exists at the Owen County Asylum and possibly at Randolph County.

Of the surviving T-shaped asylums, the Randolph County property retains the most farm buildings: a horse/cattle barn, hay barn, chicken house, machine shop, and two garages. Marshall retains a frame bank barn with a cupola, Scott has a hay barn, and Owen County a milk house. Steuben and Union Counties retain no farm buildings.

#### Asylum Buildings with T-Shaped Plans—Significance

The surviving asylums with T-shaped plans illustrate the growing financial commitment of counties in Indiana after the Civil War to provide adequate quarters for their indigent poor. The plans provided for separation of the superintendent's residence and office from the sleeping rooms and daily existence of the residents.

The period covered by the T-shaped plan asylums was also one in which architects who specialized in public buildings were increasingly retained to design asylum buildings. For example, William S. Kaufman of Richmond, the architect of the 1899 Randolph County Asylum, designed school buildings in the Richmond area. Wing and Mahurin of Fort Wayne, the architects of the Marshall County Asylum of 1895, had an extensive practice involving city halls, public libraries, and poor asylums. Larger budgets allowed for architectural embellishments, such as turrets, stone voussoirs for arches over entries and windows, and brick corbel tables.

These types of asylums are significant under Criterion A because they illustrate the evolution of public thinking on what was adequate care for the indigent poor in each county. They may be significant under Criterion C as outstanding examples of the work of the architects involved or of period styles, such as the Romanesque Revival.

#### Asylum Buildings with T-Shaped Plans—Registration Requirements

To qualify for registration, asylums with T-shaped plans must have been designed as county asylums and used as asylums, infirmaries, or county homes between 1865 and 1966. The design for and use by the county as an asylum must be documented through professionally recognized research techniques. In the statement of significance for such a property, under Criterion A, applicants should provide an explanation of how the county cared for the indigent poor before construction of the nominated building(s), how the county commissioners came to build the nominated asylum or infirmary, and how the county operated the asylum during the period of significance.

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With respect to integrity, asylums with T-shaped plans must retain their exterior character from the period of significance and enough of the interior plan, materials, and craftsmanship to provide a clear sense of the use for indigent care and of the daily life for the superintendent, matron, and their family. Sufficient significance is

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attached to the asylum buildings to qualify their properties for nomination, regardless of the degree of survival by farm buildings. Previously, the Marshall County Asylum was listed individually in the National Register mainly for the superintendent's residence, which had lost much of its rear resident wing. If farm buildings survive, such as in Randolph County and Marshall County, they should be included as contributing parts of the nomination. Surviving cell buildings should also be included.

### 3. Asylums with Tripartite Plans

#### Description

Thirty of the surviving 48 county homes were designed with tripartite plans. All but one of these homes was built between 1868 and 1945. The exception is the former Howard County Home, built with a Modern design in 1957, following the tripartite plan.<sup>37</sup>

The origins of the tripartite plan are almost as old as the idea of almshouses or poor asylums. In Massachusetts, noted early American architect Charles Bulfinch designed the Leverett Street Almshouse in Boston of 1800 with a three-part plan consisting of a gabled central pavilion, joined on either side by symmetrical wings (see Figure 1). The central pavilion presumably was intended for the superintendent's residence and a chapel or dining room, while the wings could provide segregated quarters for men and women residents. From that point forward, the tripartite plan met one of the prime concerns of the almshouse and poor asylum movement: separation of superintendent and residents and separation of men and women. Advocates were particularly concerned about illicit sexual contact between men and women and the chance of pregnancies among women. The Bulfinch plan made contact much easier to control and prevent.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>See Hassett, pp. 24-124

<sup>38</sup>Meltsner, pp. 90-91.

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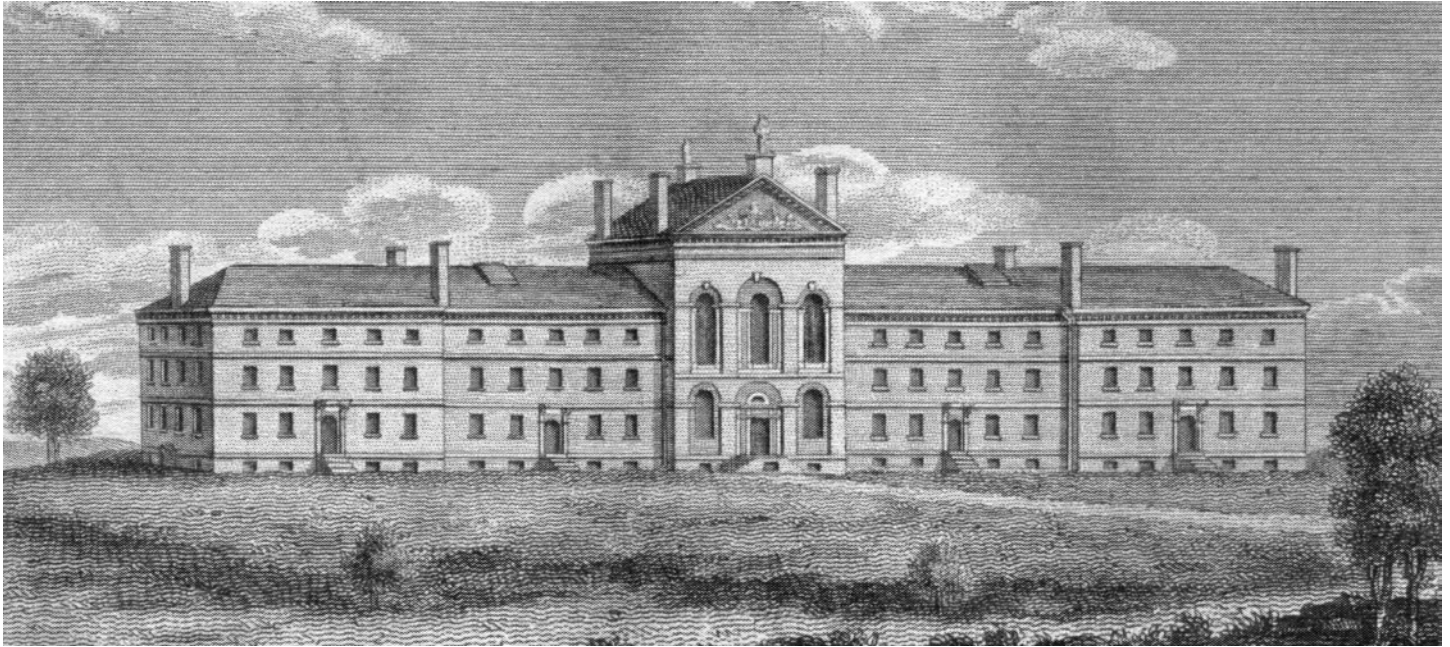


Figure 1. Design of Leverett Street Almshouse in Boston by Charles Bulfinch, 1800

Source: Meltsner, *The Poor Houses of Massachusetts: A Cultural and Architectural History*, p. 90.

In Indiana, the first two surviving asylums to feature a tripartite plan in its original design were the Hendricks County Poor Asylum of 1868-69 and the Noble County Poor Asylum of 1871. The 1868 Hendricks County design, a mixture of Greek Revival and Italianate features, was somewhat unconventional—originally the central superintendent's residence and the flanking men's and women's buildings were constructed as separate structures, with no internal connections. In Noble County, the cross shaped plan for the brick, Italianate-style building provided for a projecting rectangular front pavilion containing the superintendent's residence and adjoining it at its rear a men's wing and women's wing. Beyond the intersection between the superintendent's and resident wings was a fourth wing containing service functions. The Hendricks County Asylum was also different in that it was constructed in two stages: the brick superintendent's residence and residential buildings were constructed in 1868-69, and in 1877, the residence and resident buildings were connected and a large addition constructed at the rear containing the dining room, kitchen, and additional resident rooms.<sup>39</sup>

More typical after 1871 were asylums designed with tripartite plans. In the Knox County Asylum outside Vincennes, architect Joseph K. Frick of Evansville designed a three-part plan consisting of a large projecting front pavilion containing the superintendent's residence and at its rear two wings containing the women's and men's rooms. At the intersection of the three brick wings were two-story assembly halls for men and women. The 1881 design was a mixture of Italian Renaissance and Greek Revival detailing.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup>See Hassett, pp. 85-86; visit to Cypress Manor (Hendricks County Home), May, 2016; preparation of National Register nomination for Hendricks County Poor Asylum.

<sup>40</sup>Hassett, p. 69; visit to Knox County Home, May, 2016.

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As previously noted, during the 1890s the Indiana State Board of Charities campaign gathered momentum in its efforts to improve asylums and draw the poor from outdoor to indoor relief. The concept of modern facilities with upgraded levels of comfort and health began to influence steadily the architectural designs sought by  
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county commissioners as they replaced inadequate buildings. Alexander Johnson, secretary of the Indiana State Board, tirelessly promoted the tripartite plan and recommended a fourth part—a wing housing the dining, kitchen, and laundry facilities at the rear. As the image of poor asylums changed from a place where people dreaded to go to one in which the deserving destitute would be housed, counties took more pride in the appearance and quality of the structures. Architects were given larger budgets. Two especially impressive designs of the 1890s were those created by Wing and Mahurin for the Sullivan County Asylum of 1896 and the Kosciusko County Asylum of 1895-96.<sup>41</sup>

The Sullivan County building was a picturesque composition in which a detached superintendent's residence with central tower and corner turret projected forward of two symmetrical wings with projecting corner pavilions with steep gables adorned with corbels. The Kosciusko County building was another picturesque composition, in which a central superintendent's residence with corner turret pavilions and central gable dominated a vista in which subordinate pavilions containing men's and women's wings were revealed on either side. Stone voussoirs were used effectively at the central entry, while brick dentils and arches over the windows produced aesthetically pleasing elements at lower expense.

During the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the tripartite plan continued to define nearly all of the new asylum or infirmary buildings. Johnson, who by 1911 had become general secretary of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, published a book that year providing guidelines for almshouses (and poor asylums), drawing in part on his Indiana experience. *The Almshouse: Construction and Management* continued to preach the values of separating functions, rigid separation of the sexes, and a separate residence for the superintendent, matron, and their family. He used as illustrations for desirable designs floor plans from two Indiana asylums, those from Adams and Orange Counties. Figure 2 shows a perspective view of the façade for the Adams County Poor Asylum of 1901, designed by Cuno Kibele of Muncie. The brick asylum featured a central superintendent's pavilion, with wings extending on either side to projecting end pavilions. An E-shaped plan was the result. Figure 3 shows the first floor plan, in which the men's and women's wings were mirror images, with duplicate functions completely separated. Johnson also pointed to the provision of hospital rooms on each floor for medical care, as a desirable feature.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup>Johnson, *The Almshouse: Construction and Management*, p. 17; Hassett, pp. 109-10; visit to former Kosciusko County Home, May, 2016.

<sup>42</sup>Johnson, *The Almshouse*, pp. 16-36.



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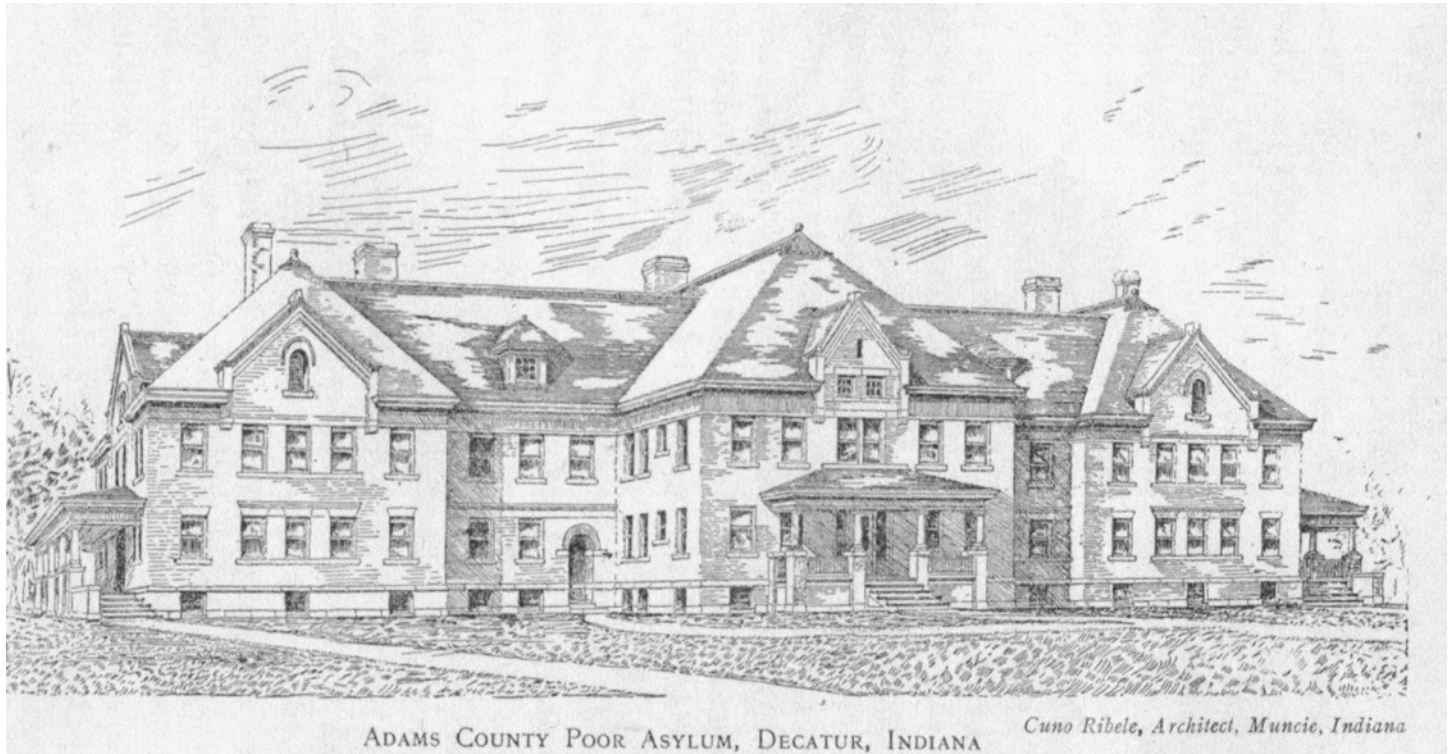


Figure 2. Perspective view of 1901 Adams County Poor Asylum by Cuno Kibele

Source: Johnson, *The Almshouse: Construction and Management*, p. 18

One of the most elaborate of the tripartite plans was constructed by Clinton County in 1918-19, after a fire destroyed the previous building. Architect Charles W. Nicol created an extended design to accommodate 50 residents. The building composition consisted of the familiar central pavilion, projecting forward, flanked by symmetrical wings meeting end pavilions also extending forward. The brick building was given a mixture of Arts and Crafts and Neo-Classical detailing and a clay tile roof. The structure was completely fireproof, with a reinforced concrete structure, terrazzo floors, and a minimum of wood trim.<sup>43</sup>

A handful of new infirmaries/county homes built in the 1920s and 1930s favored the Georgian or Colonial style. The Parke County Poor Asylum, designed by Carroll O. Beeson in 1930, is an elegant evocation of Georgian detailing, with central superintendent's pavilion and symmetrical side wings.<sup>44</sup>

The last two homes built with the traditional tripartite plans, the new Adams County Home of 1942-43 and the Howard County Home of 1957, used the familiar three-part composition, but with Modern detailing and materials. The Adams County building was constructed of poured concrete, while the Howard County structure was International Style.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup>Visit to Parkview Manor (formerly called Clinton County Home), May, 2016.

<sup>44</sup>Visit to former Parke County Asylum, May, 2016.

<sup>45</sup>See Hassett, pp. 26-27; 63-64.

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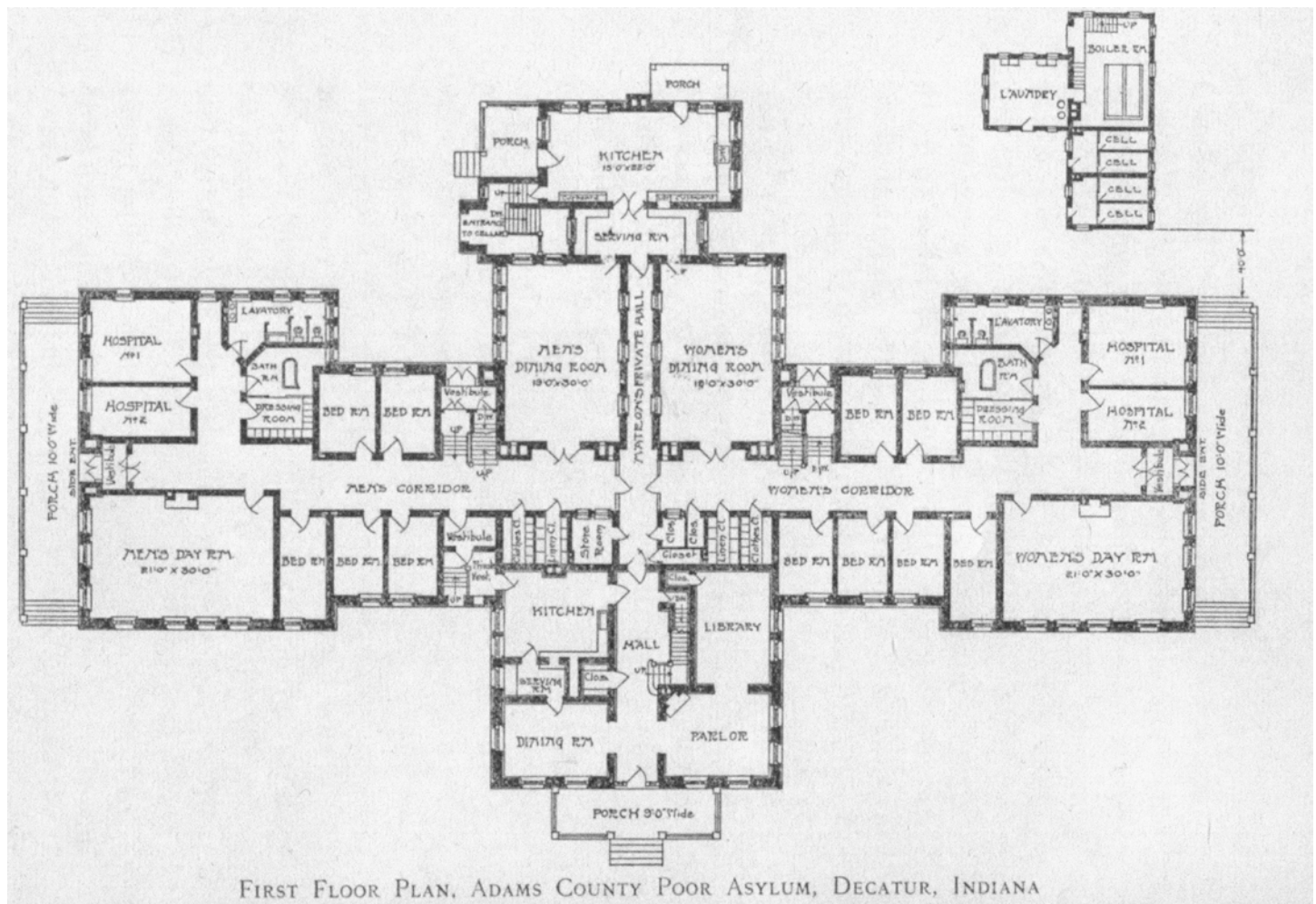


Figure 3. First Floor Plan, 1901 Adams County Poor Asylum

### Asylums with Tripartite Plans—Significance

Asylums built with the tripartite plan are significant under Criterion A as surviving illustrations of the State Board of Charities' vision of modern, humane, and attractive poor asylums for the destitute in society. Most have architectural significance and would also qualify under Criterion C as notable, if not outstanding examples of the work of major late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century architects in the state, such as Wing and Mahurin, Charles Nicol, and Carroll Beeson. Several also have architectural significance as superior examples of picturesque designs using plan and historical detailing to create effective compositions. Examples include the Sullivan, Kosciusko, Clinton, and Parke County Asylum designs.

### Asylums with Tripartite Plans—Registration Requirements

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To qualify for registration, asylums with tripartite plans must have been designed as county asylums and used as asylums, infirmaries, or county homes between 1865 and 1966. The design for and use by the county as an  
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asylum must be documented through professionally recognized research techniques. In the statement of significance for such a property, under Criterion A, applicants should provide an explanation of how the county cared for the indigent poor before construction of the nominated building(s), how the county commissioners came to build the nominated asylum or infirmary, and how the county operated the asylum during the period of significance.

With respect to integrity, asylums with tripartite plans must retain their exterior character from the period of significance and enough of the interior plan, materials, and craftsmanship to provide a clear sense of the use for indigent care and of the daily life for the superintendent, matron, and their family. Sufficient significance is attached to the asylum buildings to qualify their properties for nomination, regardless of the degree of survival by farm buildings. If farm buildings survive, such as in DeKalb and Clinton Counties, they should be included as contributing parts of the nomination. Cell buildings for mentally ill residents should also be included.

#### 4. Modern County Homes, 1953-1959

##### Description

For the few new county homes built after World War II, the aesthetic of Modernism was foremost. Three buildings exemplify Modernism and the changed conception of the mission of county homes after the war. The earliest, a substantial addition designed by A.M. Strauss of Fort Wayne in 1953 for his 1925 main building at the Allen County Infirmary, contained additional rooms for patients receiving medical care. The main, three-story section was given a brick veneer with minimal detailing, flat roof with projecting cornice, and banks of windows at the corners. The second example, the Howard County Home of 1957, could also be classified as a late tripartite plan design. The architect, Kenneth Williams of Kokomo, used traditional materials—brick and stone—for the exterior veneer, but minimal detailing to create a Modern or International Style character. The final example, in Columbus, the former Bartholomew County Home (1958), was perhaps the only asylum or county home in Indiana to be designed by a nationally-known architect, the noted Modernist Harry Weese of Chicago.<sup>46</sup>

Weese used a U-shaped plan to incorporate the three traditional elements of county home design: a men's and women's wing and at center a dining room. All else was uniquely his own, with a courtyard and columned veranda providing an outdoor focal point for the composition. The detailing was spare, with brick and wood used as exterior veneer.

A major difference between post-war and pre-war county home design was the absence of a superintendent's residence as a part of the composition. None of the three surviving examples includes residential quarters for the superintendent.

##### Modern County Homes, 1953-1959—Significance

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., pp. 28-29, 63-64; visit to former Bartholomew County Home, May, 2016.

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The three county homes with Modern designs have some historical significance under Criterion A in illustrating the changed mission of many county homes in Indiana after the changes invoked by the Social Security Act. Primary significance would fall under Criterion C, in providing illustrations of the Modern or International Section number F Page 18

Style as applied to a particular type of public institution. The work of Strauss in Fort Wayne and Weese in Columbus are especially interesting examples of their work applied to the needs of the county home.

### Modern County Homes, 1953-1959—Registration Requirements

To qualify for registration, post-war county homes with Modern designs must have been designed as county homes and built between 1945 and 1966. The design for and use by the county as an asylum must be documented through professionally recognized research techniques. In the statement of significance for such a property, under Criterion A, applicants should provide an explanation of how the county cared for the indigent poor in the previous asylum or infirmary building before construction of the nominated building(s), how the county commissioners came to build the present building(s), and how the county operated the asylum during the period of significance.

With respect to integrity, post-war Modern county homes must retain their exterior character from the period of significance and enough of the interior plan, materials, and craftsmanship to provide a clear sense of the use for indigent care and of the daily life. Sufficient significance is attached to the asylum buildings to qualify their properties for nomination, regardless of the degree of survival by farm buildings.

## 5. Poor Asylum Farm Buildings

### Description

Most of the focus of poor asylums and later county infirmaries and county homes was on the principal building, in which the residents lived. Nevertheless, from the very beginning, all such asylums and homes operated also as farms, the chief functions of which were (a) to provide sufficient food to feed the residents; superintendent, his family, and hired help; (b) to produce sufficient meat, dairy products, crops, vegetables, and fruit to be sold outside the farm and hence off-set the subsidies that county government supplied to the asylum/home operation; (c) to provide work for those residents who were able. Work to earn one's keep was an early and fixed idea behind the poor asylums of Indiana. It is unclear from the reports compiled by Alexander Johnson in 1890 after his visits to all 92 poor asylums how many of the residents engaged in labor connected with the farm operations or household tasks within the asylum buildings. There are frequent references to hired hands to assist the superintendents in farming or hired domestics to help the matrons cook, clean, and do laundry.

Evidence of residents working is provided by Thomas A. Pearce, Superintendent of the Jennings County Poor Asylum in the 1897 State Conference Proceedings of the *Indiana Bulletin of Charities and Correction*. Pearce reported that he assessed each person's capacity for work and assigned them tasks suited to their mental or physical capacities. Some worked in the asylum garden, others worked with horses, and some cut firewood. One male resident attended to the cattle and helped milk the cows. Another cleaned out the horse stable and watered and curried the horses that weren't working. A third looked after and fed the hogs. Elderly male residents who were "too feeble to do anything else" pared and dried fifteen bushels of apples. Pearce used male residents to assist him and his two hired hands in harvesting, cutting up, and husking the corn crop. Inside the asylum building, two women residents did all the cooking, another woman "did the cellar work," two or three

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women washed and dried the dishes, and a “dining room girl” took care of the table. Two women acted as chambermaids, one of which was partially mentally ill. Three men ran the laundry washer and wringers, while

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three women sorted the clothing and did the boiling, rinsing, starching, and hanging up of clothes. Other women did the ironing, scrubbing, patching, and darning of clothing.<sup>47</sup>

The following year, the Rev. T.H. Banks, Superintendent of the Grant County Poor Asylum, reported that he had found able-bodied male residents who were loafers when he first took his position, but he insisted that all who ate and slept in the asylum and able to work on the farm should do so. During his first year as superintendent, he raised 3,000 bushels of corn on the 200-acre asylum farm; all the work was done primarily by male residents.<sup>48</sup>

Johnson’s descriptions of poor asylums in 1890 suggest the uses made of the farms adjacent to the asylums proper. Nearly all included gardens and orchards for producing vegetables and fruit that could be used to feed the residents. Many included both wooded sections and tillable land. In a period before gas and coal or even central furnaces were used in poor asylums, wooded areas were sources for firewood to feed stoves for heating and cooking. Acreage of farms varied considerably, from as few as ten acres to a few of 300 or more acres. The farm buildings generally speaking could service both animals raised for meat or dairy and the harvesting and storage of crops. The 1922 report of the Board of State Charities of Indiana listed the farm buildings then in use on the Fulton County Poor Asylum: on a farm containing 180 acres of “good land,” the farm buildings included a barn, hog house, cattle barn, and an old tool shed.<sup>49</sup> The Jay County Infirmary, which still operates, is one of the few county homes that still operates a farm. In 2013, its farm buildings included a basement barn, hay feeder, hay barn, garage, tool shed, blacksmith shop, slaughter house, chicken coop, and a windmill.<sup>50</sup>

Farm buildings surviving on current or former county home properties may pre-date or post-date construction of extant main residential buildings. If a barn, hog house, etc. were in good condition and serviceable when a new asylum or infirmary residential building was constructed, the county often would continue to use the farm structures. Likewise, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, new farm buildings were sometimes erected to replaced deteriorated structures or to update farming techniques.

Most extant farm buildings on former or current county home properties reflect local agricultural practice and vernacular types, especially those constructed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>. After 1900, the influence of research, agricultural practices periodicals and literature, and sanitary laws increasingly affected farm building design. For example, the influence of Purdue University Cooperative Extension recommendations can be seen in construction of separate granaries, concrete floors in milking parlors, a separate milk house for storing milk, etc. In the March, 1920 *Indiana Bulletin of Charities and Correction*, Superintendent W.H. Williams, Jr. of the Delaware County Poor Asylum reported that they had just built a new hog house “after the United States Government plan,” with the design ensuring that sunlight would shine in

<sup>47</sup>Thomas A. Pearce, “Value of Regular Employment for Poor Asylum Inmates,” State Conference Proceedings, *Indiana Bulletin of Charities and Correction. Quarter Ending April 30, 1897* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, June, 1897), p. 95.

<sup>48</sup>Rev. T.H. Banks, “How One Poor Asylum Was Improved,” *Indiana Bulletin of Charities and Correction, Six Months Ending April 30, 1898* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, June, 1898), pp. 38-39.

<sup>49</sup>*The Indiana Bulletin*, No. 131 (December, 1922), published by the Board of State Charities of Indiana, p. 259.

<sup>50</sup>Hassett, p. 67.

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each of the 20 pens created. The pens were piped with water and equipped with sanitary troughs. They had also converted an unfinished barn into a dairy barn, installing a dairy floor, with water running in each trough

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and each trough self-flushing. Litter tracks were constructed along each side. Williams also stated that they had built an implement house and new corn silo.<sup>51</sup>

### Poor Asylum Farm Buildings--Significance

In cases in which the main residential building of the county infirmary or home survives, farm buildings or structures that are also extant contribute to the significance of the property as a whole, under Criterion A. They illustrate the type of farming practiced in a particular asylum/infirmary/home, are associated with types of farm work carried out by residents, and indicate changes in farming practices over time. In rare instances where the main residential building no longer exists and a collection of especially intact and substantial farm buildings or a main barn survive, the collection of farm buildings may have significance under Criterion A for what they illustrate of farm practices at an asylum/infirmary/home.

### Poor Asylum Farm Buildings—Registration Requirements

Farm buildings are most likely eligible as part of contiguous complex along with home-dormitory. In some cases, farm buildings may be across the road from the home-dormitory; when so, the boundary can cross rights-of-way to include the farm buildings. In rare cases, a discontinuous parcel may need to be nominated to include the resources. Unless totally removed or drastically altered, farm buildings should always be included with the main home.

In rare cases, a collection of especially intact and substantial farm buildings or a main barn may be eligible independently from the main house, if the main house no longer survives.

The site of a county home, along with its buildings, can be considered a contributing element of a nomination, if the area remains intact and the uses of the various sections can be documented (front yard for setting, barnyard, pasture, garden plots, etc.). Land beyond the immediate setting of the county home can be considered a contributing element to a complex that includes the main home, if the land was farmed by the home during the period of significance, and if the arrangement of fields, field divisions, and other aspects of use can be documented and have remained intact. Aerial photos both from the period of significance and current images, should be used to document the integrity of land uses for inclusion in nominations. The acreage in and of itself cannot convey the agricultural aspect of a county home without at least the agricultural buildings in place. Preferably the main home and at least a major agricultural building would be present to link the farmland with the county home's use of the land.

## **Section G—Geographic Data**

<sup>51</sup>W.H. Williams, Jr., "The County Farm as a Model Farm," *Indiana Bulletin of Charities and Correction*, No. 120 (March, 1920), p. 124.

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The boundaries of this multiple property study include all counties with extant poor asylums or county homes in the State of Indiana. Figure 4 shows the counties with extant buildings.

## Section H—Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

This document is intended to provide a framework for the assessment and nomination of historic county homes to the National Register of Historic Places. Each nomination will provide further insight into the history, design, and significance of specific county homes.

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Eight of the surviving county homes in Indiana have already been listed individually in the National Register, including those in Dearborn, Marshall, Pulaski, Scott, St. Joseph, Sullivan, and White Counties. The eligibility individually for pre-1945 county homes has thus been already established. Most of the existing nominations focused on the main building, housing the superintendent and the residents.

This multiple property documentation form is part of a contract with Indiana Landmarks to create a multiple property documentation context for additional nominations of county homes to the National Register. As part of the contract, the writer visited 10 county homes that were previously given a preliminary determination of eligibility by the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology: those in Bartholomew, Carroll, Clinton, Hendricks, Knox, Kosciusko, Owen, Parke, Randolph, and Steuben Counties. The current owners were interviewed and preliminary historical research was conducted on site. Subsequently, five National Register nominations were researched and prepared for the asylums or infirmaries in Carroll, Clinton, Hendricks, Knox, and Randolph Counties.

The writer also reviewed the determination of eligibility summaries prepared by Sam Burgess for Indiana Landmarks in 2015 and the 2013 Master of Science in Historic Preservation thesis prepared by Kayla Hassett at Ball State University: “The County Home in Indiana: A Forgotten Response to Poverty and Disability.”

Extensive additional research was then conducted using the issues of the *Indiana Bulletin of Charities and Corrections* published between 1890 and 1900 and between 1920 and 1922. The bulletin contained reports on periodic visits to all 92 poor asylums by the Secretary of the Indiana State Board of Charities and Correction and the transcripts of meetings of the State Conference on Charities and Correction. Discussions of the state of poor asylums were featured at many of those meetings.

For national context on poor asylums and almshouses, two books were consulted: Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* and David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic*. For perspective on the Massachusetts experience with almshouses and on the architecture of almshouses there from colonial times to 1940, Heli Meltsner’s 2012 book, *The Poorhouses of Massachusetts: A Cultural and Architectural History*, was helpful.

For historical perspective on both poor asylums and outdoor relief Indiana, Alice Shaffer’s 1936 review of “The Indiana Poor Law and its Administration” in *The Indiana Poor Law: Its Development and Administration with Special Reference to the Provision of State Care for the Sick Poor* was consulted. An earlier book by one of the secretaries of the State Board of Charities and Correction, Amos Butler, provided his perspective on the goals and accomplishments of the Board with respect to poor asylums: *Indiana: A Century of Progress: A Study of the Development of Public Charities and Correction, 1790-1915*. Finally, a 1911 book by the first

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secretary of the State Board, Alexander Johnson, offered details on his recommendations for the design and construction of poor asylums and almshouse in Indiana and elsewhere: *The Almshouse: Construction and Management*.

All of the primary source documents on poor asylums and the visits to ten county homes and the preparation of the five National Register nominations confirmed the essential characteristics of the design and use of county homes between 1832 and 1966 and the character-defining features that should be present to qualify for National Register listing. The primary and secondary sources confirmed that Indiana's poor asylums were part of a significant national movement to care for the indigent poor. They also suggest that Indiana became one of the

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leaders in the movement, especially during the period of reforms promoted by the Indiana State Board of Charities and Corrections. Thus, the surviving asylums and homes seem to be candidates for nomination with respect to Criterion A. The variety of architectural variations on a few standardized plans, some by notable Indiana architects, confirms that many of the surviving county homes could qualify for listing on the basis of Criterion C.



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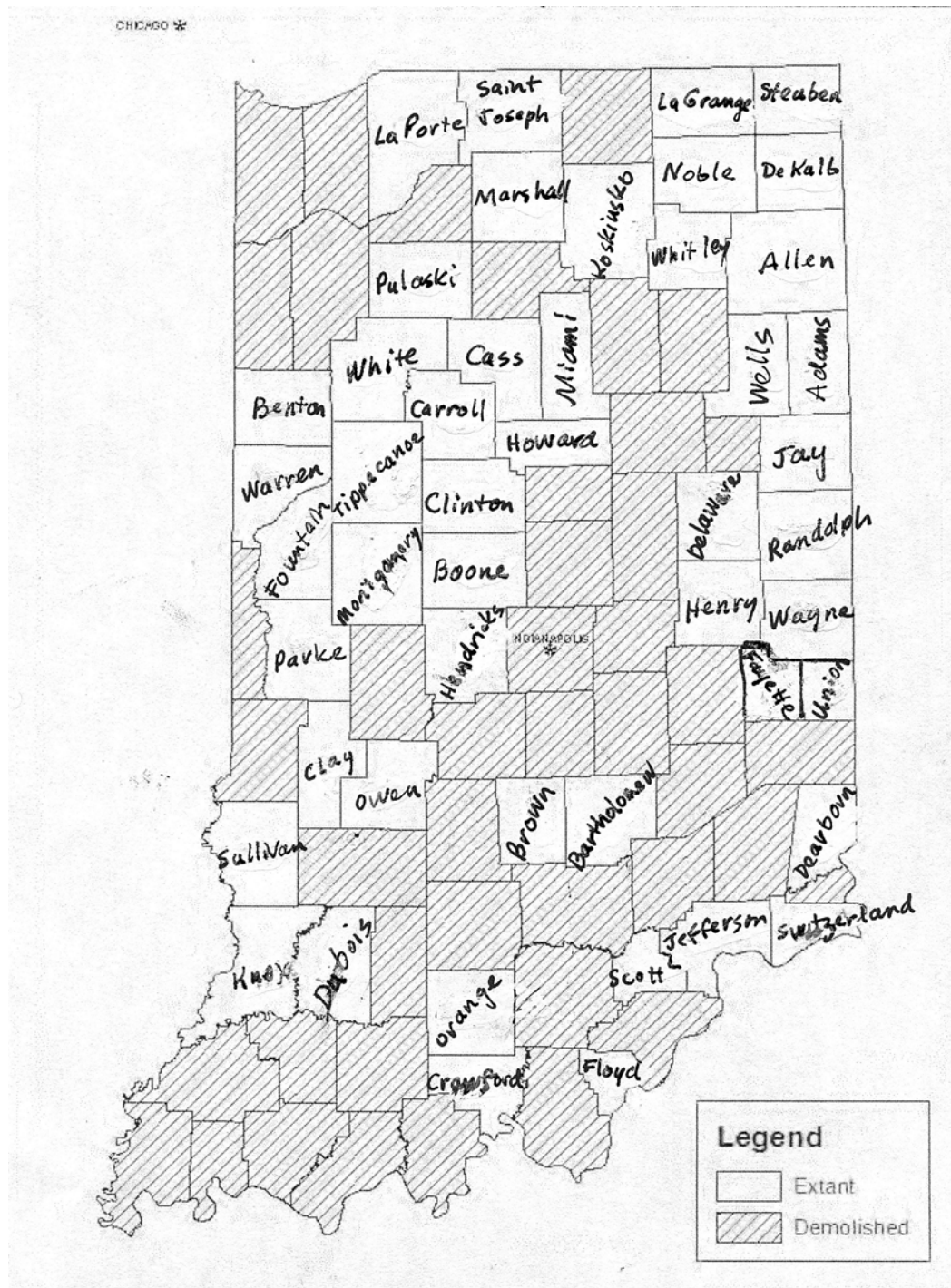


Figure 4. Extant County Home Buildings in Indiana, 2013

Source: Hassett, p. 143.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: COVER DOCUMENTATION

Multiple Name: County Homes of Indiana MPS

State & County: ,

Date Received: 10/22/2018      Date of 45th Day: 12/6/2018

Reference number: MC100003176

Reason For Review:

<input type="checkbox"/> Appeal	<input type="checkbox"/> PDIL	<input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue
<input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Photo
<input type="checkbox"/> Waiver	<input type="checkbox"/> National	<input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary
<input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> Period
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> TCP	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> CLG	

☒ Accept      ☐ Return      ☐ Reject      11/27/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary  
Comments:

Provides a good historic context for the evolution of Indiana's "poor houses". The form describes four basic types of county homes, plus ancillary resources related to farm activities. It does not, however, focus on the extent of acreage necessary to reflect the earlier "asylum" period, where agriculture is a key part of the facility. Nominations utilizing this cover should include sufficient acreage to reflect the activities of the property appropriate to the era of the buildings.

Recommendation/  
Criteria

Accept Cover

Reviewer Jim Gabbert

Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275

Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:      see attached comments: No      see attached SLR: No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



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October 18, 2018

Ms. Joy Beasley  
Keeper of the National Register  
National Register of Historic Places  
Mail Stop 7228  
1849 C St, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: County Homes of Indiana Multiple Property Documentation Form

Dear Ms. Beasley,

Enclosed is a Multiple Property Documentation Form titled County Homes of Indiana. All procedural requirements have been met in the processing of this application. I believe the application to be adequately documented, technically and professionally correct and sufficient.

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the County Homes of Indiana MPDF for the National Register of Historic Places.

In my opinion, this MPDF meets all applicable standards for evaluation. The Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board reviewed the application and voted to recommend its approval to the National Register of Historic Places.

Please address any questions you or your staff may have about this nomination to my National Register staff, Paul Diebold or Holly Tate.

Sincerely,

Cameron F. Clark  
State Historic Preservation Officer

CFC:PCD:pcd

enclosure: nomination package