

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**



1154

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Clay County Hospital  
other names/site number 13001-295-050

**2. Location**

street & number 1200 East National Avenue N/A  not for publication  
city or town Brazil N/A  vicinity  
state Indiana code IN county Clay code 021 zip code 47834

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
[Signature] 7/26/99  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register  
 other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
Patrick Andrews 10/1/99

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
4	0	objects
6	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

HEALTH CARE: Hospital

DOMESTIC: Institutional Housing

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

HEALTH CARE: Hospital

HEALTH CARE: Clinic

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

19th & 20th c. REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof STONE: Slate

other STONE

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

HEALTH/MEDICINE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1928 - 1948

Significant Dates

1928

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Leonard, R.W.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 490340 4375380  
Zone Easting Northing

3 16 490330 4375030  
Zone Easting Northing

2 16 490530 4375370

4 16 490470 4375090

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Glory-June Greiff  
organization Preservation Association of Clay County date 8/31/98  
street & number 1753 South Talbott telephone 317-637-6163  
city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46225

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Clay County - Board of Trustees, Clay County Courthouse  
street & number 1206 East National Avenue telephone 812-448-2675  
city or town Brazil state IN zip code 47834

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Clay County Hospital

Clay County IN

## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Clay County Hospital sits back about a block (photo 1) from the north edge of US40/National Avenue on the east side of Brazil. The surrounding area is mostly residential, with some commercial buildings on the highway, especially toward the west. Off the highway beyond a red and tan brick entrance, whose gateposts are topped with light standards, is a curving drive that leads up to and through a linear parking lot with an esplanade planted with evergreens. Originally the parking lot was probably simply a broad loop in the drive. There are two other brick posts along National Avenue: on the corner at Sycamore Street, and east of the entrance drive about 115 feet. Southeast of the parking lot and outside the boundary of the historic property is a new building under construction that will house doctors' offices. The original hospital building (photo 2) retains most of its historic appearance despite the very large addition built in 1995 on the southwest, which itself adjoins an older addition (1959) off the west end of the original building. To the east of the hospital building stands the former nurses' residence (1947), now a family clinic (photo 3).

Built on a T plan of tan brick with a gabled roof to harmonize with the hospital, the former McRoy Nurses Home (which is inscribed on the entablature above the entrance) rises two stories over a raised basement. The building is modestly trimmed with limestone sills and entrance surround; there are fanlights flanking the entrance. The interior has been completely remodeled to accommodate the needs of the family practice.

The original hospital (photos 2,4), built in 1927-1928, is three-and-a-half stories, of tan brick liberally trimmed with limestone, topped with a slate hipped roof. The original wood frame windows, chiefly eight-over-one double-hung sashes, remain. Between the second and third stories are festooned rectangular cartouches of limestone. Above the third story is a dentilled cornice. The roofline is punctuated with gabled dormers symmetrically placed; five on the north, one each on the east and west, and three on the south. The dentils and the trim on the dormers are formed of metal. The center dormer on the south, above the main entrance, features a broken pediment. This entrance is sheltered by a balustraded portico, punctuated by a rounded pediment on which is inscribed "CLAY COUNTY/HOSPITAL/1927."

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Clay County Hospital

Clay County IN

The original part of the hospital is no longer used for patients and little historic fabric remains visible in the interior save for the terrazzo and clay tile floor in the octagonal lobby, and an unchanged elevator (photo 5) just off the lobby to the east. Presumably more survives, hidden by dropped ceilings and wall and floor coverings. The rooms themselves, of course, were always plain. The original spaces remain, for the most part, intact.

On the east end of the original building are a series of small utilitarian block-like additions (photo 6, left) constructed in 1959, from three stories down to two, then one story on the north with a garage easternmost. Around the rear, on the north of the original building is a flat-roofed one-story extension housing shop facilities and the boiler room to which is attached a tall brick smokestack (photos 6,7). Extending northwest off the original structure is a flat-roofed three-story addition (photos 6,7) dating to 1959 that contains primarily patient rooms. Extending southwest off the west end of the original building is a sprawling one-story addition (photos 1,2) built in 1995, which houses emergency facilities and the present main entrance of the hospital.

The property contains two contributing buildings (the original hospital and the former nurses' residence) and three contributing objects: the entrance and two brick corner posts. There is one non-contributing structure: the helipad.

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Clay County Hospital

Clay County IN

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

As the first such public facility in the county, Clay County Hospital, opened in 1928, represents a milestone in community health care for the region, and as such is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its significance in the area of health/medicine. The building is among the most important works of architect Rodney W. Leonard. While little of the original interior remains, the exterior of the hospital has survived remarkably intact, despite the addition of wings on either side and an entirely new building attached on the southwest. The Clay County Hospital is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of architecture.

Rodney W. Leonard (1886-1959), born in Paris, Illinois, came to Frankfort, Indiana, to set up his architecture practice in 1917. He designed numerous residences and several schools and churches primarily in the Frankfort area, as well as the Clinton County Hospital, completed in 1923. Although the massing of this and the Clay County Hospital of five years later is similar, the latter is more elaborate.

It was not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that health care practices began to improve dramatically from what they had been over hundreds of years. Hospitals were little more than houses of containment and death, but as the Progressive Era dawned, new ideas involving sterilization and disinfectants were becoming more common; heretofore untried operations were successfully completed. Medical education was growing more standardized and complex. Most of these new developments took place in larger cities, however, and many smaller towns had little or nothing in the way of hospital accommodations until after World War I.

Clay County was no exception. By the 1890s there were several physicians practicing in the county who performed surgery. Many kept up with the latest techniques through conferences and papers presented to the Indiana State Medical Association. For a time Dr. J.F. Smith, one of the most successful surgeons in Clay County, operated a small clinic. Before the turn of the century people in Brazil had the services of the Sourwine Hospital, a modest facility above the Sourwine Opera House, and then Dr. Rawley's Hospital, which opened in 1909 and lasted into the 1920s and was known for its use of the newly discovered substance radium. (Neither of these buildings survives.)

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Clay County Hospital

Clay County IN

In 1925 the Civic Club of Brazil, a group of businessmen seeking to lure more industry to Clay County, as well as several physicians, presented a petition to the County Board of Commissioners urging them to establish and maintain a public hospital in Brazil. The local privately run hospital--a modest facility located in a former house on National Avenue--was closing; once again Clay County residents who were seriously ill or injured would be forced to journey to Terre Haute or Indianapolis for their care. There was another reason the county boosters wanted a public hospital. For several decades coal had been a mainstay of the county's economy; now the mines were playing out. The boosters were seeking to lure new industries to Clay County and they believed the presence of a modern hospital to serve the area would help in their endeavor. The following year the Commissioners received another similar petition, this one signed by about two hundred resident freeholders in the county.

In 1926 the results of a countywide referendum showed that Clay County citizens did indeed want a public hospital, albeit by a narrow margin. It is probable that the naysayers were not so unhappy with the idea of a hospital as with the fact that funding it would come from a tax assessment on their property. The Commissioners wasted no time and almost immediately ordered a tax levy of one mil on the dollar "of the assessed valuation of the taxable property" in Clay County and appointed a four-man board of trustees for the yet to-be-built hospital in December 1926. Six months later, bonds were issued so construction could begin; architect Rodney W. Leonard signed a contract with the hospital trustees in July 1927. Construction began that fall, and the building was ready inside and out a little over a year later.

People were very excited about the new hospital, touted as "the finest county hospital in this part of the country." Certainly it was an extremely attractive building, with its slate roof and lavishly applied limestone trim. It must have presented a reassuring appearance to the community, which had had nothing like this in the past. Previous so-called hospitals were located in houses or above commercial businesses. This huge structure stood well off the highway (newly designated US40) on a large campus, some blocks east of the hubbub of town. Fully equipped with operating rooms, laboratories, X-ray facilities, maternity and infant wards, several kitchens, even a detention ward and an autopsy room, the hospital opened with a capacity of fifty beds.



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Clay County Hospital

Clay County IN

The basement contained, among other things, a huge laundry room with "power washers and ironers" and there were several boilers throughout the hospital to assure a constant supply of hot water and steam to sterilize instruments.

Wondrous as this hospital must have seemed, the droves of people who piled in during the the building's two-day open house in early December 1928 apparently caught the staff by surprise. The plan had been for doctors, nurses, and administrators to take groups of visitors to view all parts of the hospital top to bottom--a never-to-be-repeated opportunity. So many thousands came that control was virtually impossible, and hundreds of curious visitors simply wandered willy-nilly on their own throughout the hospital.

The first patients, several "afflicted persons" that had been making the best of it in their homes, entered the hospital immediately after the open house, followed the next day by about a dozen people from the private hospital. But one person had preceded them; an emergency operation to remove gallstones was performed on a man from Jackson Township the second day of the open house.

In the early years of the hospital nurses were required to be single and lived on the first floor of the building under the strict eye of their resident supervisor. Later, married nurses were allowed, who, of course, could live at home. When the capacity of the hospital needed to be expanded after World War II, a separate nurses' residence, the McRoy Nurses Home, was constructed just southeast of the main building in 1947. (Today it houses a family clinic.) A large wing of patients' rooms was added onto the northwest of the hospital in 1959; at the same time a small utilitarian addition was constructed on the east. Technology was advancing rapidly, along with greater administrative needs, and the hospital was having difficulty keeping up with needed changes. But finally in 1995 what was essentially a completely new building with emergency facilities and an adjacent helipad was added on the southwest.

Despite modern additions, the Clay County Hospital still retains its historic integrity; the original building is clearly visible and appears much the same as it did when it was opened in 1928. The hospital's leading role in the history of health care practices in Clay County can hardly be denied.

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Clay County Hospital

Clay County IN

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brazil Times, Reflections of Clay County, Indiana. Brazil 1993.

Clay County Commissioners' Records, 1925-1928.

Finley, Crystal. Letters to John F. Hoffman concerning Clay County Hospital and the role of her father, Dr. G.W. Finley, in the county's medical history. 12 April, 23 April, 7 May 1977.

Hoffman, John F. "Early Medical History of Clay County." Unpublished paper presented in 1977 to [?].

"New Hospital to Be Opened to Public Sunday." Brazil Times 8 December 1928.

Thornton, Felix G. A Centennial Medical History of Clay County, Indiana. Brazil 1916.

"Thousands View New Hospital at the Opening." Brazil Times 10 December 1928.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

Starting at the northeast corner of Sycamore Street and National Avenue (US40), proceed east along the north edge of US40 past the hospital entrance to a driveway going north (marked by a square brick pillar). Proceed due north along the drive and beyond, along its northward extension, to the eastward curve of the hospital entrance drive, south of the former nurses' residence. Proceed east on this drive to Pine Street, then north along the west edge of the street to the rear entrance drive (providing access to the north parking lot). Proceed westerly along this drive (which essentially parallels Lenox Street to the north) to Sycamore Street, then south along the east edge of Sycamore Street to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification

Encompasses all the historic resources of the property, using existing demarcations.