

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

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

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

1. Name

historic The Mountz House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 507 East Houston Street not for publication

city, town Garrett vicinity of congressional district Fourth

state Indiana code 018 county DeKalb code 033

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Peter Carson Mountz and Mary Pifer Mountz

street & number 507 East Houston Street

city, town Garrett vicinity of state Indiana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. DeKalb County Court House

street & number Auburn Square

city, town Auburn state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Mountz House stands on a tree-lined residential street in Garrett, Indiana. The site is a corner lot slightly higher than the street, and sloping toward the rear.

The house is a broad two-story rectangle four bays wide and five bays long, with a pitched slate roof. Midway back the length of the house on either side are short projecting wings two bays wide and a half bay deep, whose gables are more steeply pitched than those of the main roof. The angle formed by the wing on the rear (southwest) corner of the house is filled by the one-story hipped mass of the kitchen and back porch. A similar porch fills the angle on the northeast corner of the house, and originally extended across the front (north) elevation. The only outbuilding is a twenty-four by forty-foot barn at the rear of the property. Its loft still contains woodwork left over from the construction of the house.

The house is of frame construction on a fieldstone foundation. The narrow clapboard siding is trimmed with wide boards at the corners and as a horizontal banding across the heads of the windows on both floors. The eaves have a sloped soffit with a plain frieze. Windows are two-over-two double-hung sash, and are original.

The front of the house is decorated with diamond-shaped checkerboard panels set between the second floor windows and on either side of the attic window. The attic window consists of a large central opening with an eight-over-one double-hung sash flanked by smaller casements of eight lights which have transoms of floral tracery. These elements are enframed by wide boards with battered sides, a broad sill supported by modillions, and a plain entablature surmounted by a large tracery panel which fills the apex of the gable.

The other prominent feature of the exterior was the front porch, which was removed during the brief 3 year interval in which the Mountz family did not own the property. The porch consisted of turned posts with decorative brackets, and a heavy rail supported by turned spindles. The posts of the back porch and the side bay of the front porch were retained and covered with plain boxing; the remainder of the front porch was stacked in the carriage house; the Mountzes hope to eventually restore the porches.

The double doors of the main entrance are set off-center on the right side of the main (north) elevation; the doors are single glazed leaves of golden oak, with a rectangular transom of bevelled glass. The vestibule is decorated with the original Italian Marble floor and blue-green leather with a pattern of embossed gold medallions; this same covering once graced the stair hall which lies beyond the vestibule doors. The hall has an open stair with a seating alcove opposite its base. The east half of the first floor consists of front and central parlors, with a dining room beyond; behind the stair hall are the study, rear stair, pantry and kitchen. The second floor consists of bed chambers on either side of a central hallway. A stair at the front of the second floor leads to the attic, which houses a play area and a large tank which collected rainwater from the pole gutters. The water was gravity-fed throughout the house for washing and other use. The full basement was also a service area, which includes a former coal bin, shelves for food preserves, and a triple sink constructed of slate and brass. The basement also held the collector for a central vacuum cleaning system which was installed in 1913.

The Mountz House is outstanding for the excellent condition of its original fittings. Most rooms of the first floor have classical enframements of polished golden oak; the built-in china closet in the dining room and the woodwork and wainscote of the kitchen are of yellow pine. The oak woodwork, as well as the central parlor's mantel, the stairway, and the built-in cabinets in the second floor hall were made by the Pullman Company in Chicago. The second floor woodwork is of yellow pine. All the woodwork has its original oiled and waxed finish, and is in excellent condition. With the exception of one bedroom, all frieze and picture molds have their original finish. All but three rooms are lighted with their

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(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED AUG 13 1979

DATE ENTERED SEP 11 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET DESCRIPTION

ITEM NUMBER 7

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original brass fixtures, which have retained their etched glass shades and globes; the house has always been electrically lighted. Portieres are hung throughout the first floor; the brass portiere knobs date from 1896.

The furnishings are the accumulated property of four generations of the Mountz family; perhaps a dozen pieces date from the last two decades. Particulary notable are a loveseat which has always occupied the same spot in the front parlor, and a four-poster bed which dates from 1850 and was brought from the original Mountz farmstead in Steuben County; today the bed stands in the front chamber.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Mountz House is significant largely for its architecture. The Town of Garrett developed in the late 1800's as a railroad town; most of the houses were and are lower and middle class houses of the Neo-Jacobean and Bungalow modes. The Mountz House is one of the larger houses in the town. Although the front porch has been removed, the remainder of the structure, including the interior, is largely intact. The interior woodwork has its original finish and all hardware and light fixtures are original. The house is significant as one of the best examples of the Queen Anne style of architecture in the Town of Garrett.

The structure is also notable for several local historical associations. The house was originally built from 1893 to 1896 for Herman N. Coffinberry, who was president of the Garrett Banking Company. Coffinberry, who was County Auditor from 1890 to 1894, was involved in a ring of county officials stealing from the DeKalb County Treasury, and the house was constructed with embezzled funds. In April, 1906, the Sheriff came to 507 Houston to arrest Coffinberry, who fled to the master bath and shot himself in the head.

Henry Wesley Mountz was acting as the attorney for the bank, and when Coffinberry's widow filed bankruptcy, Mountz bought the property. Mountz was born in 1871 in Steuben County and was graduated from DePauw University in 1894. A son, George Edward Mountz, was born in 1908, and followed his father into the legal profession. He graduated from DePauw in 1930 and from Harvard Law School in 1933. After the start of World War II, Mountz volunteered and as a naval intelligence officer served on the Japanese War Crimes Commission at the end of the war. In 1949 he returned to Garrett to practice with his father; a well-known lawyer, he served as DeKalb County Prosecutor and Garrett City Attorney before his sudden death in 1951.

The property has remained in the Mountz family for all but a three-year period since 1906.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Deed and Court Records
History of DeKalb County, Indiana. Indianapolis: B. F. Bowen & Co., 1914.
History of Northeast Indiana. 2 Vols.; Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1920.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Garrett

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	6	5	6	4	2	0	4	5	7	8	8	8	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H:

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification The boundary for the property is defined by the property line of the east half of lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 in Block 67 in Keyser's Addition to Garrett.

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary Pifer Mountz

organization _____ date November, 1977

street & number 507 East Houston Street telephone 219/357-4220

city or town Garrett state Indiana

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Joseph D. ...*

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 8-7-79

For HCRS use only

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

John ... date 9-11-79

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *William H. ...* date 8-23-79

Chief of Registration