

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



1983

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

**1. Name**

historic Ferguson, Benjamin, House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 673 High Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Charlestown

N/A vicinity of

~~congressional district~~

state Indiana

code 018

county Clark

code 019

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name W. Robert & Bonny Wise

street & number 673 High Street

city, town Charlestown

N/A vicinity of

state Indiana 47111

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clark County Courthouse, County Recorder's Office

street & number Court Avenue

city, town Jeffersonville

state Indiana 47130

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

Indiana Historic Sites  
title and Structures Inventory

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date August, 1979

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology

city, town Indianapolis

state Indiana

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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moveddate N/A

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

The Ferguson House is a simple Federal style structure with a pitched roof. The original two-story house is made of brick laid in common bond, and was built with an outside kitchen. Soon after construction, a single story brick wing was added to the northeast end. New owners in the 1860's added two frame additions to the rear.

The windows contain most of the original panes and are either six over six, or nine over six. The main, southeast facade has three bays on the original house, with the eastern-most being an entrance; all have flat radiating arches. The one-story addition has two bays. The front door is not original, but the four-pane transom is original and is of pegged construction, as are the door shutters.

The interior has ten-foot ceilings and deep baseboards. Three rooms contain the original Federal style fireplace mantels. The two-run staircase has poplar posts and balustrade, while the treads are blue ash, all pegged.

The second story retains its original wide board poplar floors, while the first story floors have been overlaid with oak parquet. Some of the original, two-piece chair rail remains in the upper and lower hallway.

Built-in cupboard space is plentiful: the bedroom has a wardrobe, the living room a window seat, the stairhall a large closet, the dining room a floor-to-ceiling pantry, and the parlor has deep cupboards on either side of the fireplace.

According to a 1911 Sanborn insurance map, there were a total of seven structures on the lot; now there are two. Immediately behind the house is a story-and-a-half shed that has a fruit cellar with a plaster floor. In one part of the shed is a large fireplace that was meant to receive large cauldrons used to wash clothing.

The original well is still on the lot and has a hand-hewn limestone cover. There is also a large brick patio in a herringbone pattern, as well as a walkway that goes most of the length of the lot.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1816 **Bullder/Architect** Benjamin Ferguson, Builder

**Statement of Significance** (~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~)

The Benjamin Ferguson House is significant as one of the community's best remaining structures from its earliest period, and because it was built by someone who became a prominent leader in the community.

Ferguson came to Charlestown from Virginia and immediately purchased land in Clark County. He purchased lot number 27 from James McCampbell in 1815 for \$100. The house was probably finished by the time he married Sarah Hay in April of 1816. Ferguson was elected to the first Indiana House of Representatives in 1816, the year Indiana was admitted to the Union, and continued to serve almost every year until 1833. His range of activities eventually included the Board of Directors for the Clark County Seminary; the second Postmaster of Charlestown; a lawyer and associate Circuit Court judge; and Master of the Blazing Star Masonic Lodge.

Ferguson and his wife stayed in this house only a short time, however, selling the house and lot in 1818 to Joseph Barbaroux for \$2500. Barbaroux, in turn, sold it in 1819, and the deed stated "...lot #27 containing 80 feet in front and 200 in back on which lot of ground a brick house and kitchen are erected thereon. The said was conveyed to me by Benjamin Ferguson and Sarah, his wife." The house changed owners frequently until 1860, when a young German immigrant named John George Spreisterbach purchased it. Spreisterbach and his son, Louis, were blacksmiths, the son later becoming a lawyer and judge and, in 1904, Charlestown's first mayor.

The house was a rental property for 20 years, before being purchased by its present owners in 1980.

According to Dana's Geographical Sketches on the Western Country, 1819, Charlestown had about 160 houses, chiefly of brick. Today, there are but a handful from this early period, of which the Ferguson house is one of the best preserved.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

1. History of the Ohio Falls & Their Counties, L.A. Williams & Co. 1882 Vol. II [5. County
2. A Biographical Directory of the Indiana General Assembly, Vol. 1, 1816-1899 Courthouse
3. Baird's History of Clark Co., Indiana, 1909 [6. Early
4. Biographical & Historical Souvenir for the Counties of Clark, etc., 1899 Newspapers

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name Charlestown

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	6	6	1	6	7	2	0	4	2	5	5	3	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 whole of lot #27 as known and designated on the map or plan of the town of Charlestown, Clark County, Indiana, and fronting 80' on High Street, and running back the same width 200' to an alley

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bonny Ellen Wise

organization

date January 4, 1983

street & number 673 High Street

telephone 812/256-6651

city or town Charlestown

state Indiana 47111

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*James M. Redmon*

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

date April 21, 1983

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date 6/16/83

*James M. Redmon*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration