

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JUN 20 1979  
DATE ENTERED JUN 26 1979

**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 John W. Smith House

AND/OR COMMON  
Roberta Nicholson House

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
730 Pontiac Street

CITY, TOWN  
Rochester

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Fifth

STATE  
Indiana

--- VICINITY OF  
CODE  
18

COUNTY  
Fulton

CODE  
049

**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"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Mrs. Roberta Nicholson

STREET & NUMBER  
730 Pontiac Street

CITY, TOWN  
Rochester

--- VICINITY OF

STATE  
Indiana

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Fulton County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN  
Rochester

STATE  
Indiana

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
Indiana Historic Sites & Structures Inventory

DATE  
1972

--- FEDERAL  STATE --- COUNTY --- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources

CITY, TOWN  
Indianapolis

STATE  
Indiana

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Smith-Nicholson House is a large 1892 Neo-Jacobean house, located on a corner lot in a residential area of Rochester, Indiana

The structure has a basement, two full stories, and a large attic. The frame structure rests on a limestone block foundation. Various projections give an impression of an irregular plan to the rectangular mass. There are two chimneys toward the north side. The northeast corner has a three-sided projecting bay with a round dormer window in a three-sided tent roof with slate shingles. One side of the bay features a diamond-shaped and square-shaped design in the siding.

An "L" shaped porch dominates most of the front (east) elevation and half of the side (south) elevation. There is lattice work beneath the porch floor and bulastrades above. Plain Doric columns support the porch roof which has asbestos shingles. Access to the porch is by way of stairs on the east elevation and at the southeast corner. There is a gable roof above each stair. Above the gable roof over the doubled-door main entrance is a recessed porch beneath a round arch. A small enclosed back porch with a slate roof squares off the northwest side. The back (west) also has an outside cellar entrance.

A dominant feature of the exterior is a round tower projecting from the second floor at the southeast corner. The tower is capped by a conical tower with a finial. Other notable features include a variety of five yellow poplar wood siding shingles (arrows, half-cone, hexagonal, round, and octagonal shapes). The siding flairs out at the base of the first and second stories.

There are 75 windows of various sizes. Most are double hung sashes with one over one light and a stained glass window above the plate glass windows; the 25 stained glass windows are allegedly Tiffany productions. A number of windows have a large single pane. There are small, double, round-arched windows in the south elevation; and a semi-circular sunburst in the attic on the east elevation.

Each of the four sides has a gable projecting from a high gable slate roof. The gables on the north, west, and south sides have windows beneath swept curvilinear hoods. There is a low cresting along the ridges of the slate roof with finials located on the projecting gables and the end points of the high center ridge.

The interior retains the original woodwork and original sliding double doors on the first floor. Pine, oak, cherry, maple and walnut woods were used to finish the interior. The main floor has three different patterns of wood parquet floors. The original brass and bronze hardware is intact.

There have been few alterations to the house. Originally, the front porch was much smaller with a gable roof projecting from the double door entrance. The existing porch was constructed sometime in the 20th century before 1914. Other changes include the addition of gutters in 1972 to replace the original built-in guttering and the installation of aluminum windows in 1974.

A detached frame garage is also located on the property.

# 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1892

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Smith-Nicholson House is important as a well preserved example of Neo-Jacobean architecture which was one of the styles popular at the turn of the century. It is one of the best examples of this style in Rochester. The projecting gables, bays and tower suggest the irregular mood expressed by the Neo-Jacobean structures. The different siding shingles convey the suggestion of a variety of building materials. In his book on Indiana Houses of the Nineteenth Century, Wilbur Peat identifies the Smith-Nicholson House as a good example of the more restrained treatment used on Neo-Jacobean houses late in the 19th century. Peat preferred to use Neo-Jacobean in place of the Queen Anne or Eastlake designations used elsewhere.

The Smith-Nicholson House was built for John W. Smith about 1892. Smith had acquired the lot from Isaiah Conner on December 21, 1891. Smith was born near Shelbyville and moved to Fulton County in 1857. After graduating from the University of Michigan in 1870 with a law degree, he returned to Rochester to become a prominent community leader and successful businessman, working with abstracts and loaning money. In 1895 his newly completed house reflected his high standing in local society. The house served the Smith family, which included two daughters and a son, until the property was sold to Omar B. Smith (a cousin) in 1907. John Smith died in 1925.

Omar B. Smith was born in 1868 in Fulton County. He gained recognition throughout the county as a successful banker, serving as President and Chairman of the Board of the Rochester First National Bank. He was also a director of the Rochester News-Sentinel, an officer in the Indiana Road Paving Company, and treasurer of the Rochester Bridge Company. He was also a noted civic-social leader, being active in the Methodist Church, Rochester Country Club, Kiwanis, K of P Lodge, IOOF Lodge, and Masonic Lodge. He served as Rochester's first mayor from 1909 to 1913. Although Omar Smith died on November 27, 1930, the property remained in the family until it was sold by Omar's widow in 1945. The house passed through a number of hands until it was acquired by Mr. and Mrs. Howard W. Nicholson in 1968.

The significance of the Smith family in Rochester's financial, political, social and civic life complements the architectural merit of the house.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES Deed Records.

Rochester Sentinel, Sept. 19, 1895, April 11, 1973

Rochester News-Sentinel, Dec. 26, 1925, Nov. 28, 1930

Interviews with Jane Miller and Irene Poltz, granddaughters, Omar & John Smith, respectively.  
"Fulton County Architecture, 1836-1900", Fulton County Historical Society Quarterly, No. 15 (July, 1973)

Peat, Wilbur D., Indiana Houses of the Nineteenth Century. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1962.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	6
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5	6	5	6	2	0
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4	5	4	6	1	9	0
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590

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B 

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Commencing on the west line of Pontiac Street where the same is crossed by the north line of Eighth Street, thence west on the north line of Eighth Street, 162 feet to the alley; thence north on the east line of the alley, 90 feet; thence east parallel with the north line of Eighth Street 162 feet to the west line of Pontiac Street; thence south thereon 90 feet to the place of beginning.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mrs. Roberta Nicholson

ORGANIZATION

DATE

March, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

730 Pontiac Street

TELEPHONE

219/223-5727

CITY OR TOWN

Rochester

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

June 14, 1979

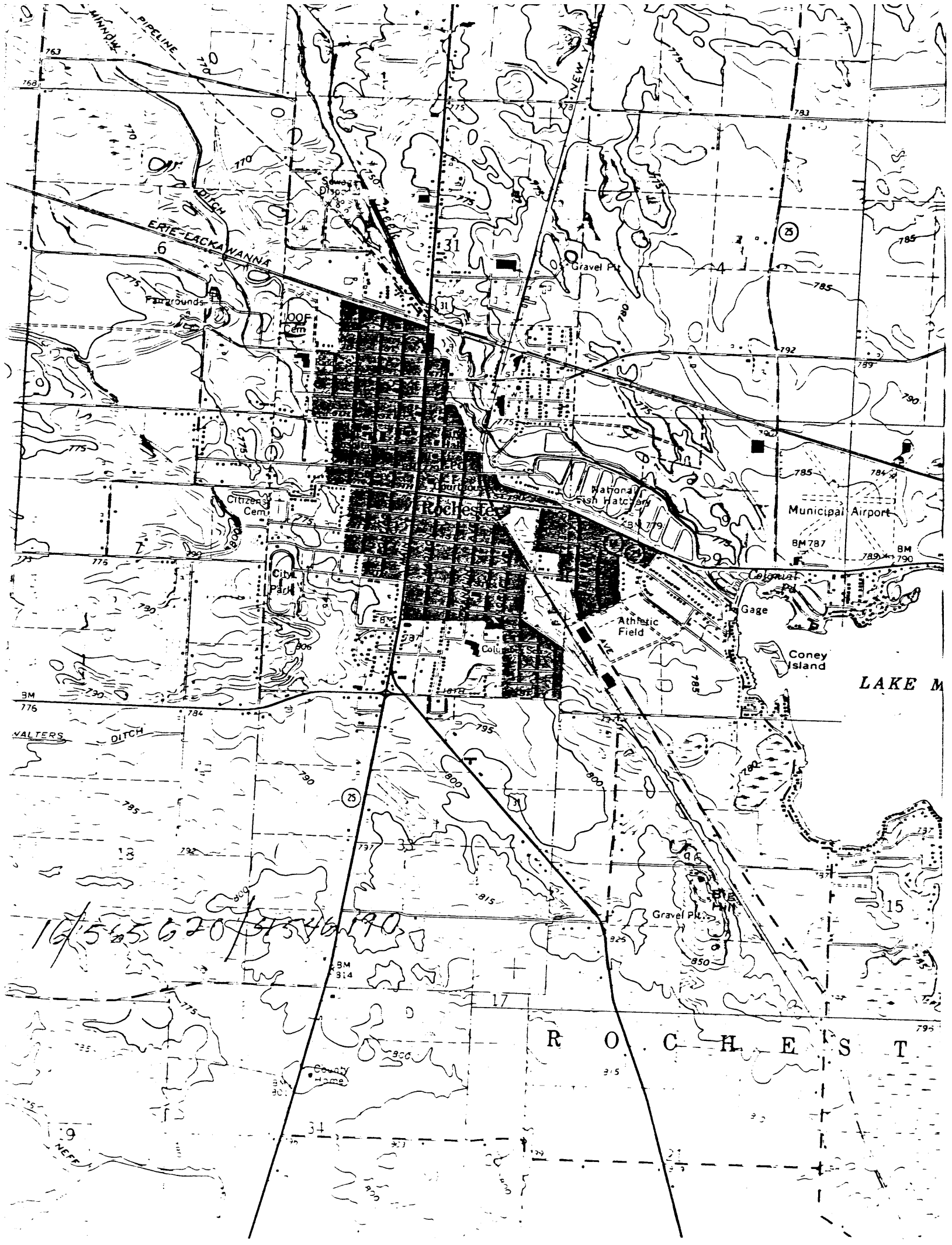
FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Charles A. Huns*  
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 7-26-79  
 RECORDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *William H. Graham*  
 7-25-79  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



ERIE-LACKAWANNA  
6

Rochester

Municipal Airport

Athletic Field

Coney Island

LAKE M

10/5/56 20/34546/70

R O C H E S T E R