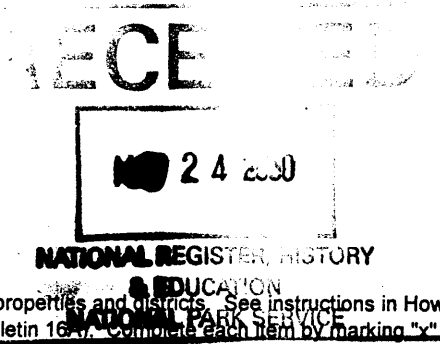


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



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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 Wenger, Martin, Farmhouse

other names/site number 141-598-42025

2. Location

street & number 701 E. Pennsylvania N/A  not for publication

city or town South Bend N/A  vicinity

state Indiana code IN county St. Joseph code 141 zip code 46601

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]  
Signature of certifying official/Title

11-5-97  
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

[Signature] 6/22/00

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	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	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)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls WOOD: Weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

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.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE \_\_\_\_\_  
 EXPLORATION / SETTLEMENT \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

c.1851-1902 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Wenger, Martin (builder) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**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:

Historic Preservation commission of South Bend  
 & St. Joseph County

Wenger, Martin, Farmhouse  
Name of Property

St. Joseph IN  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property <1

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	563200	4612260	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

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, Consulting Historian

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 3-20-97

street & number 1753 S. 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 Doris Wigfall

street & number 829 Huey Street telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town South Bend state IN zip code 46628

**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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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 1

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Martin Wenger Farmhouse

St. Joseph County IN

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

Sitting in relative isolation on the northeast corner of two tree-lined residential streets that were platted decades after the house was built, the Martin Wenger farmhouse nevertheless appears much as it did when it was built (probably in the early 1850s) but for the removal of its front porch. Houses fifty to sixty years newer that once surrounded the dwelling are now mostly gone, with only traces of steps and sidewalks to suggest they ever existed. To the south the early twentieth century neighborhood is more intact, and some scattered remnants survive to the west. Starting about a block to the east is an industrial area with some buildings dating to the late nineteenth century. Wenger sold off this eastern parcel of his farm to manufacturers not long after he retired from agriculture in 1872. By that time the city had begun to close around his farm. Over the next few decades he sold sizable chunks off the edges of his property as residential lots. After his death, his heirs subdivided what remained as the Wenger Homestead Addition, and the house was divided into apartments.

A classic Italianate frame dwelling (photo 1), the farmhouse, which rests on a fieldstone foundation, is tall and square with a shallow-pitched hipped roof. The wide entablature features ornate paired brackets and dentilled trim (photo 2). The round-arched wood frame four-over-four double-hung sashes (photo 2) are original, as is the clapboard siding. A nineteenth century photograph shows an ornately trimmed porch across the south facade, which has not survived. At the east side of the south facade (see photo 1) is the round-arched main entrance, today reached by a plain concrete stoop with sagging railings. All first-floor openings are presently boarded. In the rear (north) is a two-story addition (see photo 3) with gabled roof and returns, and paired one-over-one double-hung wooden sashes, probably dating to the early twentieth century. Along its north elevation is an open flat-roofed porch with turned posts. It, too, has a fieldstone foundation, which may indicate there had been an earlier addition in the rear. Another possibility is that the rear addition's foundation was constructed from stone salvaged from another farmstead building that was demolished. A bank barn that once stood to the east of the house survived until about 1910, when it was taken down.

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Martin Wenger Farmhouse

St. Joseph County IN

The interior of the house was divided into several apartments some ninety years ago, keeping the interior walls but resulting in the enclosure of what had surely been an open staircase. Only its substantial oak newel post and a short length of the bannister and balustrades remain. However, all the original massive interior window and door surrounds are present (see photo 4), as are the baseboards. While first floor ceilings have been dropped, the originals are most likely intact. The ceilings of the second floor retain their full twelve-foot height. At present most of the rooms are filled with all manner of trash and building materials, making access and viewing extremely difficult.

At the rear of the property in the northeast corner of the lot (see photo 5) is a small frame garage with tongue-in-groove siding and a pyramidal roof with exposed rafter ends beneath wide eaves, dating perhaps to the late 1920s. Its hinged double doors face the alley to the north.

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
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Martin Wenger Farmhouse

St. Joseph County IN

## NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Martin Wenger farmhouse is a rare surviving remnant of early agricultural settlement in St. Joseph County around the growing town of South Bend. Typical of such a building constructed in the mid-nineteenth century, it is a very fine example of the Italianate style rendered in frame construction. Over a hundred years after being overtaken by the city, the Wenger farmhouse appears to be one of the very few intact frame Italianate dwellings in South Bend, and likely the only one that had been a farmhouse. Indeed, although a number of brick Italianate houses survive in rural St. Joseph County, extant frame houses in this style are rare. The Martin Wenger farmhouse is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the area of settlement and Criterion C in the area of architecture.

Born in Pennsylvania in 1820, Martin Wenger left home when he reached his majority and headed west. His older brother Christian had already settled in the vicinity of South Bend, so Martin stopped there in 1841. After knocking about the midwest for a year or so as a harvest hand, he returned to South Bend and became an agent for a threshing machine manufacturer. In 1845, Wenger, having acquired some eighty acres along Turkey Creek Road (present Miami Street), married Christina [a.k.a. Christena] Studebaker, the younger sister of his brother Christian's wife. The father of the sisters, Samuel Studebaker (no relation to the famous wagon manufacturers), had died some years previously. The girls' mother died shortly after Martin and Christena's marriage. The Wenger brothers purchased the 156-acre Studebaker estate at auction, and Martin bought out Christian's share in 1848. Martin Wenger and his wife then moved onto the new farm, still mostly forested, from the tiny frame cabin on Turkey Creek Road in which they had begun their married life. For at least three years they lived in the old Studebaker pioneer dwelling, while Martin continued his successful threshing and began the task of clearing the land. The Wengers' hard work paid off; the harvested hardwoods and other timber fetched good prices, and within three years they had ten acres planted in wheat. Evidence suggests the present farmhouse dates to 1851. No compelling documentation appears to support the conclusion by some that it was built in the 1860s.

The Wengers continued actively farming until 1872. The following year Martin began to sell parcels of his property and essentially became a real estate developer. Some he sold for industrial use, adjacent to the railroad, to the South Bend Toy Manufacturing Company and to the Miller-Knoblock Wagon Company. Later he sold another parcel to the Wells and Krieghbaum Manufacturing Company. The rest, in successive additions starting with his first plat to the north of his homestead, he sold as residential lots. No doubt the income from his real estate ventures afforded Martin and Christina the ability to travel frequently around the country, which they did for the next twenty-odd years, visiting distant relatives and sightseeing. Some sources say Martin had a new house built in 1889, but Christina refused to move from the homestead; if so, this is not mentioned in the Wenger memoir. However, that year his son Christian and his wife moved to a new house on Miami Street; perhaps that suggests the origin of the story. Christina died in 1898; still in the old farmhouse, Martin lived four more years until 1902. After his death, his son and daughter platted the remaining land into the Wenger Homestead Addition. The farmhouse was sold and divided into apartments.

The exterior of the Martin Wenger farmhouse is remarkably intact, given its age and especially its location. While the original floor plan was altered ninety years ago, the interior retains considerable original detail, including all the original window and

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

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

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door surrounds on the outer walls, along with some of the interior doorways and a portion of the staircase. A number of Italianate houses are still to be found in the rural areas of St. Joseph County, but these are mostly brick. Far fewer Italianates of any material have survived within the boundaries of the city, and evidence suggests this is the oldest and likely the only that is a surviving farmhouse. The Wenger house's fieldstone foundation and relatively lavish ornamentation add to the building's significance.



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Continuation Sheet**

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Martin Wenger Farmhouse                      St. Joseph County IN

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

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Ogle, George A. and Company, comp. Standard Atlas of St. Joseph County, Indiana. Chicago 1895.

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Pictorial and Biographical Memories of Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties, Indiana. Chicago 1893.

Sanborn Insurance Maps of South Bend, Indiana. New York 1885, 1891, 1893, 1899, 1917, 1934/45.

Wenger, C. M. Wenger Memoirs and Autobiography of Martin Light Wenger and His Wife Christina Studebaker. South Bend 1898.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries are those of Lot 226, Wenger Homestead Addition.

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

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the house and its outbuilding, and it is the boundary of the lot created for the house in the Wenger Homestead Addition, platted by the heirs after the death of the original owner, Martin Wenger.