

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0694614  
FOR NPS USE ONLY  
JAN 8 1979  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED MAR 2 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 "Jim" Brown House

AND/OR COMMON "Jim" Brown House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 3491 Akron Peninsula Road  
5 of Peninsula at

CITY, TOWN Northampton Twp. VICINITY OF Peninsula NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 14  
STATE Ohio CODE 035 COUNTY Summit CODE 153

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" 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	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input checked="" 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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Earva C. Bender ✓

STREET & NUMBER 3491 Akron Peninsula Road

CITY, TOWN Akron VICINITY OF STATE Ohio

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Summit County Building Annex

STREET & NUMBER 72 S. High Street

CITY, TOWN Akron STATE Ohio

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Ohio Historic Inventory

DATE 4/76  
—FEDERAL  STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Ohio Historic Preservation Office, Ohio Historical Center

CITY, TOWN Columbus STATE Ohio

# 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 "Jim" Brown House is a large two-story, wood frame house in the Greek Revival style. The L-shaped house features a five-bay facade with a central entrance. The two-story ell, which appears original, projects from the rear of the house on the southeast side. The house is of braced frame construction and rests on an ashlar stone foundation. There is a basement. The house features clapboard siding with corner-boards and a plain, continuous frieze. The gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The gable ends are treated as pediments and feature a molded raking cornice, flush siding, and Gothic-arch louvered ventilators. There are three inside end chimneys with corbeled caps.

The central entrance features a three-part entablature and pilasters. The doorway is recessed and is flanked by narrow sidelights divided by four mullions. There is a rectangular six-panel door covered by a modern storm door. The double-hung windows in the main block have the original 12/12 lights in the second story; the windows have been altered to 2/2 lights on the ground floor. Windows in the ell are smaller and are double-hung with 6/6 lights. All of the windows have plain trim. Those in the front and west elevations of the main block, have decorative wood shutters painted green. The house is painted white.

Two one-story rooms with screened porches have been added at the rear of the house. Otherwise it is little changed. Old photographs in the Peninsula (Ohio) Public Library show that the house at one time had a shed-roofed porch with a spindle rail and frieze, probably added c. 1880s, but this has since been removed. The original thirteen-room house was converted to double occupancy in 1950, and there are separate apartments on the top and ground floors. A second stairway was added at the rear of the ell. The fireplace in the first-floor room in the ell (now used as a living room, but probably once the kitchen) has been altered. The room in the southwest corner of the main block has been remodeled to serve as the kitchen. Except for these changes, the original woodwork and fireplace mantels are intact, on the ground floor at least; no inspection was made of the second-story apartment.

The Jim Brown Barn, constructed c. 1886, is situated about five hundred feet southeast of the house. It is a large, three-story bank barn with vertical siding. The gable roof is of slate. There are two cupola ventilators with pyramidal roofs, and there are stylized Palladian vents in the gables. The barn is painted red with white trim.

Also on the Brown property, between the house and the road, is a family grave marker. It is a stone obelisk about seven feet tall. It once marked the graves of "N. C. Brown," who died October 4, 1844, at the age of nine; and "D. M. Brown," who died January 21, 1851 at the age

# 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) <b>Folklore</b>
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      c. 1845      BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

"Northern Ohio was 'flooded' with counterfeit money," William T. Coggeshall writes in the preface to his tale about the operations of a counterfeit ring in "Cuyahoga village," an unspecified town on the Ohio Canal somewhere in the Cuyahoga Valley.<sup>1</sup> The story obviously takes its inspiration from the legendary exploits of the infamous "Jim" Brown, who, aided by his brother Dan and a host of others, directed a "Banking Institution" that left an enduring imprint on the folklore of the Cuyahoga Valley.

The Jim Brown House is significant for its association with this interesting chapter in the nineteenth-century history of the Cuyahoga River Valley. Built about 1845, it is a large two-story house in the Greek Revival style. Both the house, with its commanding view of the valley, and the Victorian-period bank barn nearby have a high degree of historical and architectural integrity.

### History

Daniel M. (1788-1832) and James R. Brown (1800-1865) were natives of New York State. While still children, their family emigrated to Ohio, moving first to a farm near Youngstown, and finally settling on "640 acres of wild land" on the west side of the Cuyahoga River, just below the village of Boston. Upon his marriage to Laura Wood, of Hudson, "Dan" Brown moved to Lawrenceburg, Indiana, although he continued to make frequent visits to his old home in Boston. "Jim" Brown married Lucy Mather in 1819, and built a house on a portion of his father's farm. He embarked in trade with William G. Taylor of Cleveland, keeping a store and tavern in a two-story frame building he erected at Boston about 1825-26. Some years later the store was moved to the east side of the river and refitted as a hotel; Jim Brown presided as landlord.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"The Counterfeiters of the Cuyahoga--A Buckeye Romance," in Frontier Life and Character in the South and West (Columbus, O.: Follett, Foster and Company, 1860), p. 229.

<sup>2</sup>Samuel A. Lane, Fifty Years and Over of Akron and Summit County (Akron, O.: Beacon Job Department, 1892), pp. 876-877. It is believed that the two-story store still standing adjacent to the Ohio Canal in Boston is that built by Jim Brown. This has not been documented, however.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bierce, Gen. L. V. Historical Reminiscences of Summit County. Akron, O.: T. & H. G. Canfield, 1854.

Lane, Samuel A. Fifty Years and Over of Akron and Summit County. Akron, O.: Beacon Job Department, 1892.

Northampton Township Tax Maps (1846, 1852, 1880, 1890, 1900).

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3 1/2

QUADRANGLE NAME Peninsula

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES  
A 17 451 500 455,8880

B                          
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C                        

D                        

E                        

F                        

G                        

H                        

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property consists of an irregular lot described as follows: Beginning at a point on Akron Peninsula Road 80 meters north of the intersection of Ira and Akron Peninsula Roads, proceed due east for a

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 Carol Poh Miller, Historic Preservation Consultant

ORGANIZATION under contract with the Ohio Historic Preservation Office, Ohio Historical Society DATE 30 May 1978

STREET & NUMBER 1260 Granger Avenue TELEPHONE 216/226-8236

CITY OR TOWN Cleveland STATE Ohio

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL    STATE    LOCAL X

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 [Signature]

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE 12/8/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

[Signature]  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 3.2.79

ATTEST: [Signature]  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 3.2.79

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of thirty. The bodies were removed to Akron more than seventy years ago, according to the present owner.<sup>1</sup>

The Jim Brown House and Barn are situated on a hilltop and are reached by a steep, winding drive. They are surrounded by the ninety-four-acre Bender farm and enjoy a panoramic view of the Cuyahoga River Valley.

<sup>1</sup>Interview with Earva C. Bender, Northampton Township, Ohio, 10 April 1978.

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distance of 120 meters; then proceed due south for a distance of 140 meters; then proceed due west to Akron Peninsula Road; then proceed north along the eastern edge of Akron Peninsula Road to the point of origin.

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In his history of Summit County, Samuel A. Lane writes that, "coincident with the opening of the Ohio canal in 1827, there was in existence an extensive organization for the manufacture of, and dealing in, counterfeit money along the entire length [of the canal], with its headquarters in the Cuyahoga Valley, with the two Browns, as its leaders." The other principal characters in the counterfeit ring included William G. Taylor, Jim Brown's business partner; Abraham S. Holmes and Col. William Ashley, of Boston; William Latta, of Bath; Jonathan DeCoursey and Thomas Johnson, of Norton; and Joshua King and Joel Keeler, of Portage.<sup>3</sup> The currency is said to have been manufactured in the deep ravines of the Cuyahoga Valley, and in isolated barns. A wooded area near the point where Bath, Boston, and Northampton townships meet is still known as "Money Shop," because Jim Brown supposedly manufactured counterfeit money there.<sup>4</sup>

The Brown's most infamous scheme involved a trip to the Far East, to "market" their printed money in the ports of India and China. Dan and Jim Brown went to New Orleans in the winter of 1831-32, where they purchased and equipped a large vessel for the expedition. Jim Brown and William Taylor went on shore the night before departure to "paint the town" prior to the long sea voyage. The pair spent their money so liberally, however, that it aroused the suspicions of police, who followed them back to their vessel and seized the contraband. Dan Brown died in a New Orleans jail cell. Accounts of the trial of his accomplices are sketchy, but apparently Jim Brown and Taylor were acquitted. Taylor was never heard from again; Jim Brown returned to Boston, where he was "heartily congratulated by his old neighbors, and a good deal lionized wherever he was known." In 1834, he was elected Justice of the Peace for Boston township, and is said to have administered the office with "marked fidelity" during his three-year term.<sup>5</sup>

Numerous legends surround Jim Brown's extraordinary escapes from the law. In one instance, Brown is said to have negotiated a forged draft with a New England bank. Then, by riding day and night on a pre-arranged relay of fresh horses, he is said to have returned to Ohio

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 878.

<sup>4</sup>Karl H. Grismer, Akron and Summit County (Akron, O.: Summit County Historical Society, [1952/]), p. 110.

<sup>5</sup>Lane, Fifty Years and Over, pp. 879-881; and Gen. L. V. Bierce, Historical Reminiscences of Summit County (Akron, O.: T. & H. G. Canfield, 1854), p. 45.

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so quickly that, when taken to trial for the crime, the court found that (in Lane's words), "with the fastest mode of travel then known, no living man could have performed the journey in the time intervening between the perpetration of the crime there, and his thoroughly proved presence in Ohio." Brown is said to have committed a similar crime near Pittsburgh, then to have ridden in a single night to his home in the Cuyahoga Valley; neighbors saw him chopping firewood at his own door in the morning, and the alibi was thus successfully established.<sup>6</sup>

In the winter of 1837-38, Brown disposed of his hotel property at Boston and moved his family to Akron. According to Lane, in the early 1840s they moved to a three-hundred-acre farm in Northampton township, the title to the property then being in the name of Daniel M. Brown, Jim's eldest son.<sup>7</sup> According to the deeds, Daniel M. Brown acquired 208.83 acres in Lot #83 (on which the house stands) in 1845 from John Wells, and in 1846 purchased 96 additional acres in the same lot from the State of Connecticut. Title to the property was transferred to James R. Brown in 1850.<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately, the exact date that the house was built is not known, nor is it certain whether the house was built by Jim and Dan Brown, or whether it was on the property at the time of purchase. The tax map of Northampton township for 1846 (the earliest map available) shows the presence of a "Frame House" as well as a barn, so it can be established that the house was constructed by this year at least.<sup>9</sup> According to the 1850 Ohio census, Jim and Lucy Brown shared the house with their son, James Jr., and his family. Jim Brown's occupation is listed as that of "farmer."<sup>10</sup>

Although Jim Brown was frequently arrested for his crimes, he just as frequently managed to escape indictment. In the summer of 1846,

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<sup>6</sup>Fifty Years and Over, p. 881.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 882.

<sup>8</sup>Summit County, Ohio, Deeds, Vol. 14, p. 485; Vol. 10, p. 287; and Vol. 18, p. 315.

<sup>9</sup>Northampton Township Tax Map (1846), located in the Summit County Building Annex, 72 S. High Street, Akron, Ohio.

<sup>10</sup>Federal Population Census of Ohio, 1850, Summit County, Northampton, p. 603.

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however, Brown was arrested for counterfeiting, tried and found guilty. He was sentenced to ten years in the Ohio Penitentiary. While there, Brown was a model prisoner and was given special charge of the prison hospital. His devotion and heroism during an outbreak of cholera, and the intercession of his daughter, Laura, won him a pardon from President Zachary Taylor. Brown was set free in July 1849, having served less than three years of his term.

According to Lane, "The free pardon from President Taylor, and the restoration of Brown to liberty and citizenship, was not followed by that reform of his associations and habits that his family and friends had anticipated." Lucy Mather Brown filed for a decree of divorce, which was granted in December 1851. Thereafter, Brown had no contact with his family for the rest of his life. In 1860, Brown was convicted for passing a counterfeit bill in Michigan, and he served a three-year sentence there. On December 9, 1865, Brown was returning from Cleveland to his boarding house near Yellow Creek (Botzum), when he fell in a canal boat and fractured his skull. He died the next day.<sup>11</sup>

Brown's eldest son, Daniel M., died in Northampton on January 21, 1851. Lucy Mather Brown died at Akron, August 21, 1884. The Browns' daughter, Laura, married twice, eventually moving to New York. Their younger son, James R. Brown, Jr., continued to live on the Northampton farm until his death in 1889.<sup>12</sup> The Brown farm passed to Miner H. Howe, then to Hattie and Fred Ozier. Andrew J. Bender purchased the property in 1907,<sup>13</sup> and it has been in the Bender family ever since. Earva C. Bender, Andrew's son, farms the land today.

<sup>11</sup>Lane, Fifty Years and Over, pp. 888-889, 890.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 890-891.

<sup>13</sup>Northampton Township Tax Map (1900); and Summit County, Ohio, Deeds, Vol. 350, p. 66.