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NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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 Gowdy, John K., House

other names/site number Rush County Historical Society, 139-356-37061

2. Location

street & number 619 North Perkins Street N/A  not for publication

city or town Rushville N/A  vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Rush code 139 zip code 46173

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 36 CFR 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.)

*Patrick L. Rabb* 11/2/93  
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
 State of 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:)

Entered in the

for Signature of the Keeper	National Register	Date of Action
<u><i>Gregory M. Kapsley</i></u>		<u>12/10/93</u>

Gowdy House  
Name of Property

Rush Co., IN  
County and State

**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(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
3	4	objects
6	5	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)

RECREATION & CULTURE: museum

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: limestone

walls BRICK

WOOD

roof ASPHALT

other METAL: iron, copper, tin

STONE: limestone

**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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1888 - 1918

**Significant Dates**

1888

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Gowdy, John K.

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical 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:

DHPA

Gowdy House  
Name of Property

Rush Co., IN  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre.

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 1 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 0 |  
Zone Easting Northing  
2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing  
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 Hugh Smith, Information Center Assistant

organization Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana date December 10, 1992

street & number 340 West Michigan Street telephone 317-639-4534

city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46202

#### 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 Trustees, Rush County Historical Society

street & number 619 North Perkins Street telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Rushville state IN zip code 46173

**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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Gowdy House, Rush County, Indiana

Description

The John K. Gowdy House is a two story brick dwelling located in a residential neighborhood six blocks north from the central courthouse square of Rushville, Indiana. The home faces east fronting North Perkins Street on approximately a quarter acre. Operated as a museum since 1940, the property has remained largely unchanged since the turn of the century.

Built in 1888, the house is a well-preserved example of a Queen Anne style dwelling, with a complex hipped roof and projecting lower, assymmetrically placed gables. A cross-axiality is suggested by the main elevation's projecting gable and side-projecting bays (Photos 1, 2). The home rests on a three foot high rubble-faced, coursed limestone foundation. A wood one-story porch with leaded tin roof spans the front and extends along one side of the first floor to the primary entrance. A second story porch above the entrance is tucked beneath the hipped roof at the Southeast front corner. A side porch protects a second entrance behind the south elevation's bay window projection (Photo 3). All porches display similar turned and chamfered columns, incised balusters and turned spindle friezes, fan brackets, rosettes and drop finials.

Door and window lintels are segmented arches of glazed brick, placed on end in a radiating fashion. A central keystone of finished limestone in the front door lintel is partially hidden by the porch roof. Sills are of cut and finished limestone. Most windows are the original one-over-one double-hung sashes of a standard size. One exception is the fixed bevelled plate glass of the large front Parlor window. Another window type, found in the entrance hall and attic gables, is a fixed frame containing a central rectangular pane surrounded by a border of smaller panes. The Entrance Hall window features multiple colored glass panels surrounding an etched red pane.

Exposed eaves extend from a cornice of vertical-beaded siding. Narrow, panelled barge boards with a diamond shaped apex piece finish gable ends. Side gables facing north and south become cut away bay windows below the attic floor, demarcated by large, scalloped fan brackets with corner drop finials (Photos 3, 4).

Only one of originally five chimneys survives above the roof. It features a bell-shaped cap above brick panels. Accentuated panels, some with decorative brickwork, are also found on the two chimney shafts of the bay windows. Although the original slate roof has been replaced by asphalt shingles, copper troughing (as do some unique lightning rods) remain (Photos 3, 4).

Except for flat lintels, a gabled second story added to the Kitchen wing

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Gowdy House, Rush County, Indiana

displays materials and workmanship matching the historic house. At an unknown date, a rear porch located at the southwest corner was enclosed with clapboard siding and fixed windows (Photo 5).

The front entrance double doors and the single door of the side entrance of the south elevation contain an oblong glass pane over a shallow panel. The exterior faces are elaborately decorated with turned, fluted pilasters, rosettes and decorative pediments surrounding the glass openings.

The first floor plan suggests a loose cross-axiality. The Entrance Hall and Parlor front two Sitting Rooms which define the north and south bay windows. A Stairhall with a second exterior entry, and Dining room open to the rear of the Sitting Rooms; and an Office opens to the rear of the Stairhall. Doors opening between primary spaces further enhance an informal plan. Glass-panelled doors matching the exterior door design open to the south Sitting Room from both Entrance Hall and rear Stairhall. Pocket doors connect the two Sitting Rooms, and the Parlor and south Sitting Room (Photos 6, 7). Access to the rear service area, comprised of a Kitchen, Pantry, Lavatory and closets, is limited through the Dining Room (Photo 8). In the Kitchen, three built-in drawers with drop pulls are placed beneath a food pass-thru with top-weighted pocket drop door to the adjoining Dining Room (Photos 8, 9). A side pantry containing a weighted trap door hides steps to a full, unfinished basement. The sloped floor and brick walls of a southwest corner storage room evidences the original porch. Divided by a composition-board wall, a Lavatory and adjoining Office were originally one bathroom. A glass-paned rear door below a three-light transom leads to the back yard.

On the second floor, three bedrooms radiate north, east and south from a central hall extending to the front of the home (Photos 11, 12). The Stairhall accesses a smaller rear Servant's Bedroom and former Bathroom. The frames of the two rear windows were extended to the floor and the Bathroom fixtures removed to provide entrance to a special exhibiton space added to the rear in 1961. "The Mary Sleeth Room" is finished in vertical composition panelling, pine moldings, and an interesting Cherry-wood floor. A steep dogleg stair with corner winders leads from the Servant's Bedroom to an unfinished, oak-framed attic.

Interior openings exhibit a standard machined branch-and-leave design decorating lintels and corner lintel blocks. Side casings have center cut recessed beading which connect with pedestal blocks at floor level. Openings display a uniform verticality, with window casings simulating french doors by extending below the sill. Doors which do not match window height are located beneath either swivel glass or blind plaster transoms which rise to meet window

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Gowdy House, Rush County, Indiana

height. Five-panel doors are utilized throughout the interior. Ogee trim tops base moldings and comprise picture railings, and the Parlor and Sitting Rooms have egg-and-dart pressed wood crown molding. The Kitchen, Lavatory, Office and Bathroom have vertical-panelled wainscoting beneath a chair-rail. Most rooms contain tongue-and-groove flooring. A variety of woods finish the interiors including Oak, Maple and Pine. The front doors, Parlor and north Sitting Room display quarter-sawn Oak in superb condition. Hinges, door knobs, and other hardware are bronze cast in intricate, Eastlake-inspired designs. Door knobs to service areas and closets are ceramic.

Each primary room of the house contains a unique cast-iron mantel with marbleized finishes and gilt trimming. The first floor mantels have solid slate shelves, while those of the second story are in iron cast with bevelled edges. Hearths with glazed square- or rectangular-shaped tiles are surrounded by a floral band with corner rosettes and narrow borders.

Many rooms contain brass ceiling combination gas and electric fixtures dating from the first decade of the twentieth century. A chandelier in the Entrance Hall resembles a Grecian urn. The Sitting Rooms fixtures are nearly identical with ruffled Holophane shades and inverted gas jets (Photo 7). The Dining Room contains a Craftsman-style lamp with flared amber glass electric lantern shades supplemented by two squared gas porcelain candles (Photo 8). Second story lights are simpler in design and many gas jets have been removed. Here, most electric fixtures feature delicately etched trumpet shades (Photos 11, 12).

A three-tiered, closed-string stair characterizes the Stairhall. Stop-chamfered post newels extend below each landing. Half-spheres surmount plates at newel tops. A larger newel at the foot of the stairs displays a triangular, scalloped sunburst pattern above incised scrolls on each face of the shaft, and a stylized flower carved into the base. Balusters enclose brackets inserted into the angles of the rise and are separated by a turned horizontal spindle to create a rhythm of rising solids and voids. The design is repeated more statically on the balustrade surrounding the second floor stair opening (Photo 10).

Behind the house is a two story Carriage House constructed after 1905 and before 1908. A hipped roof and two lower cross gables are covered with hexagonal slate shingles. Metal trim joins roof planes with tin bosses at roof ridges. Gutters are hidden in a pressed tin cornice. Double hung sash windows with a pentoid upper frame light the two attic gables. On the east elevation, exterior wood steps mounted on cast iron carriages rise to a second story balcony and entrance covered by a corrugated tin roof. The Carriage House was recently renovated and is in good condition (Photos 13, 14, 15).

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Gowdy House, Rush County, Indiana

A small, pyramid-roofed, frame structure next to the Carriage House at the northwest rear of the property was used as a Summer Kitchen. Built at the same time as the Carriage House, drop siding finishes the exterior walls. Because the wood sill is placed a few inches above ground on brick or stone corner supports, lack of proper ventilation beneath the building has caused extensive water damage. The walls are not vertically plumb and the sill is in advanced stages of rot. Used for storage, this building is endangered (Photo 15).

The grounds of the Gowdy House have been well maintained and feature several mature trees as well as new plantings. A rolled and cast iron fence encloses the property on the front and south sides, although contemporary fencing has been added by the museum to the rear. A well (covered by a planter), and cast-iron pump with concrete trough adjoins the walk between the House and Carriage House. The museum has moved and installed other structures and objects to the property including a playhouse, bell, marble monument, railroad sign and stone trough. Because the period of significance for the property ends with John Gowdy's death in 1918, the property is deemed to have three contributing buildings (House, Carriage House and Summer Kitchen); three contributing objects (pump, well and fence); one non-contributing structure and four non-contributing objects (playhouse, monument, bell, stone trough and railroad sign).

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Gowdy House, Rush County, Indiana

## Significance

The John K. Gowdy House and grounds is significant under Criterion B of the National Register for its association with John K. Gowdy, a leading late nineteenth century State politician. Built in 1888, the property is also eligible for inclusion under Criterion C for its exemplary Queen Anne style architecture.

The house was constructed for John K. Gowdy, who resided with his family in the house until his death in 1918. Alterations made by the Gowdys between 1905 and 1908 include the construction of the Carriage House and Summer Kitchen. Interior changes probably completed during the same time include the addition of combination gas/electric light fixtures, narrow pressed-wood crown moldings in primary first floor rooms, and a bevelled plate glass front Parlor window. Few changes were made after Gowdy's death in 1918, and the property remained in his family until October 1940, when relatives of Gowdy's wife donated the property to the Rush County Historical Society. Since then, the house has been operated as a museum. Changes made by the organization include a 1961 gabled second story rear addition. A bust in relief of Rushville native and early State governor Samuel Bigger has been inserted into a front wall. Other changes include enclosing a rear porch, and the division of a first floor bathroom into two rooms. The museum has also replaced upper closet door panels with glass for display purposes, added linoleum flooring in several rooms, and replaced some light fixtures. Although four chimneys and original slate roof have been removed, the Rush County Historical Society has attempted to carefully maintain and sympathetically update the property, and the Gowdy House retains much of its original character.

The property's importance for its association to John Gowdy relates to the context of local and state politics. John Kennedy Gowdy (1843-1918) was a Rush County native who pursued political office after service in the Union Army's Fifth Indiana Calvary (participating in the pursuit and capture of Captain John Morgan and Sherman's March to the Sea). He rose quickly through local political office, first as twice-elected Rush County Sheriff from 1870 to 1874. Between 1882 and 1890, he served two terms as county Auditor, and was continuously appointed Rush County Republican Chairman from 1879 to 1889. In 1890, Gowdy was chosen to succeed the resigning State Republican Party Chair. He was reelected to this post in 1892, 1894 and 1896.

As described in a turn of the century history of the Republican Party, Gowdy was noted for his "executive ability" and "splendid judgement". His "fairness and firmness, great tact and shrewd manipulation" coalesced state Republicans despite internal dissension and factionalism, and spotlighted Indiana as an

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Gowdy House, Rush County, Indiana

important state during the 1896 presidential campaign. For his service, newly-elected President McKinley appointed Gowdy as Consul-General to Paris in March, 1897, where he remained until resigning in October, 1905. Gowdy's consular appointment represents the culmination of his political importance.

Gowdy's eight-year residency in Paris included the Spanish-American War and the 1900 Exhibition. As Consul, he certified the signatures of those transferring the lands of the French-controlled Panama Canal to the United States, and presented a statue of George Washington as a gift from the American people to the French. He was responsible for locating and returning to America the remains of Revolutionary war hero John Paul Jones. Gowdy received numerous awards, including being the first American to be decorated as an officer of the French Legion of Honor. Upon his return to Rushville, Gowdy was greeted by a cheering crowd of three thousand, and the Mayor proclaimed the day "Gowdy Day." Thereafter, Gowdy retired from politics, preferring to concentrate on horse breeding and managing his 747-acre farm.

Gowdy's political involvement mirrors a twenty-year period when Republicans dominated state and national politics. Between 1890 and 1910, Indiana contributed such nationally influential Republicans including Senator Albert J. Beveridge, originator of the Child Labor bill; and Senator Charles Fairbanks, subsequently Theodore Roosevelt's Vice-President. Many of these men were Gowdy's personal friends.

The Gowdy House is also important as a well-preserved example of the Queen Anne style. Assymmetrical massing, second story corner porch, and complex gable and hipped roof are representative characteristics of this late nineteenth century style. Turned and chamfered porch posts, spindle friezes, fan brackets and other decorative wood elements illustrate exemplary craftsmanship, as do the brick segmented arched window lintels and panelled chimney shafts. Similar decorative brick and wood work found on contemporary Rushville residences point to the work of an unknown local builder. However, the Gowdy House details are among the most elaborate, and clearly the best preserved. Retention of such details as elaborate lightning rods, frame screen doors, interior woodwork, hardware, mantels, plumbing and light fixtures add to the home's historic character.

Except for the years 1897 to 1905 when he lived in Paris, Gowdy resided at his North Perkins Street address continuously from 1888 until his death in 1918. The property has changed little since then. Therefore, the property is significant for its retained integrity and for its association with John Gowdy.

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Gowdy House, Rush County, Indiana

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Gowdy House, Rush County, Indiana

Verbal Boundary Description

Two lots with an aggregate dimension of seventy feet by one-hundred sixty-five feet, being legally described as seventy feet off of the south side of Lot 13 in George C. Clark's First Addition to the City of Rushville, Rush County, Indiana.

Boundary Justification

This is the historic property boundary.