

WASHINGTON
for NPS use only

received

date entered

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Nachusa House

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 215 S. Galena Avenue not for publication

city, town Dixon vicinity of congressional district

state Illinois code 012 county Lee code 133

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 checked="" 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Ronald G. and Kathryn D. Scanlon

street & number RFD 4

city, town Dixon vicinity of state Illinois

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lee County Courthouse, County Clerk and Recorder of Deeds

street & number

city, town Dixon state Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of Historic Structures in
title Lee County Interim Report has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1972, 1973, 1974 federal state county local

depository for survey records Illinois Historic Structures Survey

city, town Chicago state Illinois

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 type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Today, the physical appearance of the Nachusa House is evidence of its long history of continuous hotel service. Since its official opening in 1854, the hotel has undergone periods of expansion and remodeling, partial demolition and rebuilding. The Nachusa House is located on a prominent site in Dixon on Galena Avenue facing the Courthouse. The building may be divided into three basic components: 1) the main building, 2) the south annex, and 3) the west annex.

THE MAIN BUILDING

The main building is the core of the present-day Nachusa House and is the focus of this description because it comprises the one architecturally and historically significant portion of the hotel which is still largely intact. It is nearly square in plan (40 Feet x 48 Feet), and was built in 1853 and 1868 on foundations that were laid in 1838. The portion built in 1853 was a 4-story structure with 2-foot thick undressed limestone exterior walls and wood frame floor and roof construction. In 1868 the fifth floor, mansard roof and cupola were added and this change established the image that people have identified with the Nachusa House ever since.

Both the interior and exterior of the main building have been altered to some extent, but in both cases, a significant portion of the early form and detail has been retained. The basement, which is presently used as the hotel bar, has been substantially altered. It no longer resembles the basement "Nachusa House Billiard Hall and Bar" which was advertised in the 1878-1879 edition of Kolland's Dixon City Directory. The second floor, currently and originally the lobby level, possesses features which date from the original construction. These include the square wood columns, the crenelated cornice moulding, the chair rail, the well crafted and preserved winding stair, and the door and window moulding. The third, fourth, and fifth levels contain the rooms where notable, historic guests of the hotel have stayed. Almost all these rooms have undergone some modification to add private baths, and other general periodic remodeling. Although the corridor location and general room arrangement seem relatively unchanged, the addition of an elevator in 1914 has no doubt changed the plan on every level. The change is architecturally unobtrusive.

The outward appearance of the Nachusa House main building has changed in a number of ways from its look of 1868. The limestone block wall received a thin coat of stucco in the 1880's. New Orleans style wrought iron grillwork was added to the porches and balconies in the 1950's. The front steps, which led to the lobby porch, were removed because of the widening of Galena Avenue in 1965. The porch columns have been replaced although the porch balconies seem to be original as evidenced by shadow traces of brackets which match those seen in early photographs. Unfortunately, the cupola was removed sometime between 1926 and 1945. In spite of these changes, many original architectural details remain including the wood shingled mansard roof, the windows, and the bracketed cornice. Because of good photo documentation of the outside of the hotel in the 1870's and 1880's, it would be possible to restore much of the original detail including porch and balcony rails, porch columns, cupola etc.

Continued - See continuation sheet "description" page 1

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	miscellaneous
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" 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 1853 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

In a prominent position on a hilltop overlooking the Rock River Valley and across from the Lee County Courthouse stands one of Northern Illinois' most notable landmarks, the Nachusa House. This hotel was named for John Dixon, founder of the city of Dixon. "Na-Chu-Sa" is the name given Mr. Dixon by the Indians; it means head white hair.

The Nachusa House was built in 1853 as a simple 4 story structure with primitive wood sill and lintel window detailing and indigenous limestone masonry. In the early 1850's, the hotel was used primarily by stagecoach travelers enroute from Peoria and Chicago to Galena. In 1855, trains commenced running from Dixon to Chicago on the Air Line Road; the Nachusa House grew in popularity with both rail and coach travelers.

This building has commercial significance because it is one of the oldest continuously operated hotels in the state. The commercial success of the business is evidenced by the many changes which were made to improve the hotel's image and to better suit its burgeoning clientele. The mansard roof and fifth floor were both added in 1868 and were important in reinforcing the House's emergent image as a first class hotel.

The hotel has social significance because of its many notable guests. The following is a partial list of the people who registered at the Nachusa House:

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Abraham Lincoln | John A. Logan | James Doolittle |
| U.S. Grant | Cassius M. Clay | Jefferson Davis |
| Theodore Roosevelt | Horace Greeley | Gov. Richard Oglesby |
| Wm. Howard Taft | Helen Keller | J. Edgar Hoover |
| Gen. Leonard Wood | Billy Sunday | Oliver Wendell Holmes |
| Stephen Douglas | Marquis of Queensbury | |

The site, architecture, and successful operation combined to make the Nachusa House the pride of the community and an area landmark. The following excerpt from the Holland's Dixon City Directory for 1878-79 describes the hotel.

The location of the Nachusa is the most advantageous that could be found for a hotel in the city. It is built on one of the highest eminences the city affords, opposite the Court House and overlooks the country for miles around. The structure itself is one of the handsomest and most substantial in Dixon, and from its commanding site it is among the first objects that catch the visitor's eye and the last upon leaving. (Page 66)

For these reasons we feel the Nachusa House should be placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet - Bibliography - Page 2

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.98 acre

Quadrangle name Dixon

Quadrangle scale 1: 62500

UMT References

A

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

See Continuation Sheet - Geographical Data - Page 3

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 Thomas C. Anderson, Apprentice Architect

organization McLane & McLane Architects

date October 7, 1982

street & number 212 S. Ottawa Avenue

telephone (815) 284-6056

city or town Dixon

state Illinois

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

date

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
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Nachusa House

Continuation sheet

Bibliography

Item number 9

Page 2

Bateman, ed., Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Lee County, Munsell Publishing Co., 1904.

Bennett, A. Milo, "The Building of a State, The Story of Illinois," Journal of State Historical Society, 13, Oct., 1920, p. 352.

Dixon Evening Telegraph Anniversary Issue, 1926.

Dixon Evening Telegraph, April 4, 1878 (p.1), Jan. 18, 1884, May 6, 1885, June 6, 1885, May 18, 1886, Sept. 3, 1887 (p.1), Feb. 13, 1914 (p.2), April 8, 1914 (p.2), June 13, 1914, June 14, 1914.

Dixon National Bank, 1871 - 1971, Century of Service, Dixon, Ill., (1971).

Holland's Dixon City Directory for 1878 - 79, Chicago, Ill., Western Publishing Co., 1879.

Holland's Dixon City Directory for 1869 - 70, Chicago, Ill., Western Publishing Co., (1870).

Inventory of Historic Structures in Lee County, Illinois Historic Structures Survey, October, 1972.

Lee County Historical Society, History of Dixon and Lee County, Dixon, Ill. 1980 (reprint of 1880 edition of Dixon Telegraph Print.)

Stevens, Frank, History of Lee County, Vol. I, S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1914, pp.338 - 339.

United States Department of the Interior
 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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Continuation sheet Nachusa House Item number 10 Page 3
Geographical Data

Parcel No. 1:

The Southerly 50 feet in width of Lot 1, and the Northerly 58 feet in width of Lot 4, in Block 29, in the Original Town (now City) of Dixon, more particularly bounded and described as follows: Beginning at a point on the East line of the said Block 29, 10 feet Southerly from at a point on the East line of said Block 29, 10 feet Southerly from the Northeast corner of said Block, and running thence Southerly along said East line, 108 feet to a point on said line, 2 feet Northerly from the Southeast corner of said Lot 4, in said Block; thence Westerly parallel with the South Line of said Lot 4, 140 feet to the alley; thence Northerly along the East line of the said alley, 108 feet to a point on said line, 10 feet Southerly from the Northwest corner of said Lot 1 in said Block; thence Easterly parallel with the North line of said Block, 140 feet to the point of beginning; EXCEPTING the following described tract: Beginning at the intersection of the Southerly w right of way line of Second Street with the Easterly line of said Lot 1, which point of intersection is 50 feet Northerly of the Southeast corner of said Lot 1, and running thence Southerly along the Easterly line of said Lot 1, a distance of 12 feet; thence Northwesterly to a point in said Southerly right of way line of Second Street 12 feet Westerly of the point of beginning; thence Easterly along said Southerly right of way line of Second Street, 12 feet to the point of beginning; AND FURTHER EXCEPTING THEREFROM the Southerly 50 feet in width of Lot 1, and the Northerly 53 feet in width of Lot 4, in Block 29, in the Original Town (now City) of Dixon, more particularly bounded and described as follows: Beginning at a point on the East line of siad Block 29, 10 feet Southerly from the Northeast corner of said Block, and running thence Southerly along said East line, 103 feet to a point on said line, 7 feet Northerly from the Southeast corner of said Lot 4, in said Block; thence Westerly parallel with the South line of said Lot 4, 140 feet to the alley; thence Northerly along the East line of siad alley, 103 feet to a point on said line, 10 feet Southerly from the Northwest corner of said Lot 1, in said Block; thence Easterly parallel with the North line of said Block, 140 feet to the point of Beginning;

Parcel No. 2:

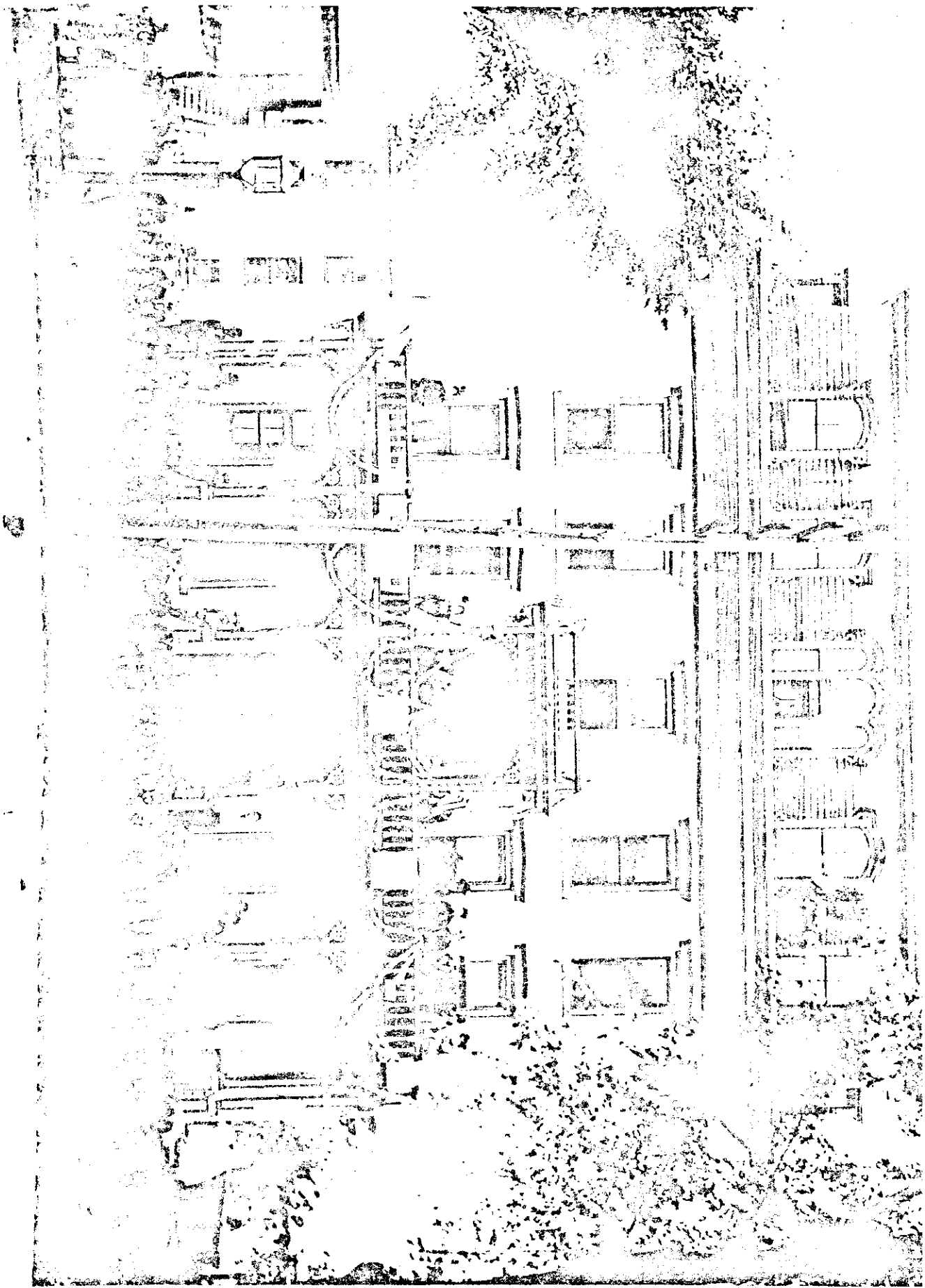
The Southerly 2 feet in width of Lot 4; all of Lots 5 and 8, and the Northerly 10 feet in width of Lot 9, all in Block 29, in the Original Town, now City of Dixon;

Parcel No. 3:

The Easterly 50 feet of Lots 7 and 10, and the Southerly 60 feet of the Westerly 90 feet of said Lot 10, all in Block 29, in the Town now City of Dixon;

Parcel No. 4:

The Westerly 90 feet of Lot 7 in Block 29, in the Town, now City of Dixon,
 all in LEE COUNTY, ILLINOIS.



1883



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

FEB 16 1983

IN REPLY REFER TO:

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places during the week beginning February 6, 1983 and ending February 12, 1983. For further information call (202) 272-3504.

STATE, County, Vicinity, Property, Address, (date listed)

ARIZONA, Maricopa County, Phoenix, U.S. Post Office, 522 N. Central Ave. (02/10/83)

ARIZONA, Pima County, Tucson, U.S. Post Office and Courthouse, 55 E. Broadway (02/10/83)

CALIFORNIA, Humboldt County, Eureka, U.S. Post Office and Courthouse, Fifth and H Sts. (02/10/83)

CALIFORNIA, Merced County, Merced, U.S. Post Office, 401 W. 18th St. (02/10/83)

CALIFORNIA, San Diego County, San Ysidro, U.S. Inspection Station/U.S. Custom House, Virginia and Tijuana Sts. (02/10/83)

CALIFORNIA, San Joaquin County, Stockton, U.S. Post Office, 401 N. San Joaquin St. (02/10/83)

CALIFORNIA, Stanislaus County, Modesto, U.S. Post Office, Twelfth and I Sts. (02/10/83)

ILLINOIS, Bureau County, Princeton, Skinner, Richard M., House, 627 E. Peru St. (02/10/83)

ILLINOIS, Cass County, Beardstown, Park House, 200 W. Second St. (02/10/83)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, King, Patrick J., House, 3234 W. Washington Blvd. (02/10/83)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Singer Building, 120 S. State St. (02/10/83)

ILLINOIS, Lee County, Dixon, Nachusa House, 215 S. Galena Ave. (02/10/83)

ILLINOIS, Logan County, Mt. Pulaski vicinity, Buckles, Robert, Barn (Round Barns in Illinois TR), SE of Mt. Pulaski (02/10/83)

ILLINOIS, McLean County, Chenoa, Scott, Matthew T., House, 227 1st Ave. (02/10/83)

ILLINOIS, Peoria County, Norwood Park vicinity, Christ Church of Lower Kickapoo, W of Norwood Park on Christ Church Rd. (02/10/83)

ILLINOIS, Pike County, Summer Hill, Scott, Lyman, House, U.S. 54 (02/10/83)

ILLINOIS, Sangamon County, Springfield, St. Nicholas Hotel, 400 E. Jefferson St. (02/10/83)

INDIANA, Monroe County, Bloomington, Blair-Dunning House, 608 W. 3rd St. (02/10/83)

KANSAS, Ford County, Dodge City, Sacred Heart Cathedral, 903 Central Ave. (02/10/83)

KANSAS, Gray County, Cimarron, Cimarron Hotel, 203 N. Main St. (02/10/83)

KENTUCKY, Christian County, Hopkinsville, Dalton, Monroe, House (Christian County MRA), 713 E. 7th St. (02/10/83)

KENTUCKY, Jefferson County, Harrods Creek, Nitta Yuma Historic District, 5028, 5040, 5044, and 5051 Nitta Yuma (02/10/83)

KENTUCKY, Taylor County, Campbellsville vicinity, Hiestand, Jacob, House, W of Campbellsville off KY 210 (02/10/83)

KENTUCKY, Taylor County, Campbellsville, Campbellsville Historic Commercial District, Roughly bounded by Columbia Ave., Broadway, 1st, Hotchkiss Sts., Central Ave. (both sides), and RR tracks (02/10/83)

MICHIGAN, Cheboygan County, Cheboygan, Newton-Allaire House, 337 Dresser St. (02/10/83)

MICHIGAN, Wayne County, Detroit, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church Complex, 1345 Gratiot Ave. (02/10/83)



7. Historical Themes: (check one or more of the following)

- Archeological Site (Pre-Columbian)
- Archeological Site (Post-Columbian to 1673)
- French Influence (1673-1780)
- Illinois Frontier (1780-1818)
- Illinois Early (1818-1850)
- Illinois Middle (1850-1900)
- Illinois Late (1900-present)
- Famous People (give names & dates)

8. Specific Date: 1837, with several additions made periodically, eg. mansard roof, Areas of significance (check one or more of the following) 1880.

- Aboriginal (historic)
- Aboriginal (pre-historic)
- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Art
- Commerce
- Communication
- Conservation
- Education
- Engineering
- Industry
- Invention
- Landscape Architecture
- Literature
- Military
- Music
- Political
- Religion/Philosophy
- Science
- Sculpture
- Social/Humanitarian
- Theater
- * Transportation
- Urban Planning
- Other (specify)

Brief statement of significance: (include all names and dates)
 Use additional sheets if necessary. **Probably oldest building in Dixon, th**

9. Form prepared by: **greatly altered over the years. Some of its guests were: Lincoln, Grant, T. Roosevelt, L onard Wood, E.V. Debs, S. Douglas, Billy Su**
J. Edgar Hoover, Marquis of Queensbury, Wm. J. Bryan, Et. a

Name and Title: TH Date _____

Organization: _____ Phone: _____

Street and number: _____

City or Town: _____ County: _____ Zip Code: _____

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for references for a particular site. When filling out the Survey form, please list according to the following example, published references to the site for which forms are being completed. If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly deduct from the Survey's task.

Bibliography

Robertson, Robert, Cf Whales and Men. New York, Alfred K. Knopf, Inc., 1954.