

D.C.
12/18

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Williams, James Robert, House

and or common The Castle

2. Location

street & number 310 East Main Street

not for publication

city, town Carmi, vicinity of

state Illinois code 012 county White code 193

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: empty

4. Owner of Property

name City of Carmi

street & number 225 East Main Street

city, town Carmi, vicinity of state Illinois

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. White County Courthouse

street & number 305 East Main Street

city, town Carmi, vicinity of state Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Illinois Historic Structures Sur. has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date October, 1972 federal state county local

depository for survey records Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

city, town Springfield, state Illinois

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH:

The nominated property is a well known landmark in Carmi, Illinois. The three story home an excellent example of the eclectic architectural styles of the 1890's, combining Romanesque, Revival, Queen Anne and exotic details. The structure looks rather like a red brick castle, with three, three story towers and four balconies. Galvanized and fabricated iron, terra cotta, brass, limestone, wrought iron, and wood shingling are all used to carry out the themes of the structure.

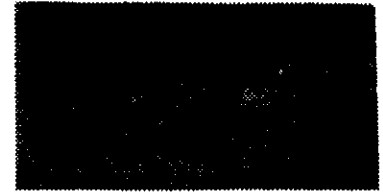
DESCRIPTION DETAIL:

The nominated property was constructed in 1896 as a three story single family residence, and includes a full basement. The lot in which is it situated is approximately 200 by 91 feet, and is located at the corner of Main Street--Highways 1 and 14--and Main Cross in Carmi, Illinois. The house sits on the eastern half of the property, while the western half has been maintained as an open lawn, containing Golden Raintrees, Gingko, oak, maple, and dogwood trees, and is set off from the house by a concrete drive. The park was originally part of the public square of White County, and was purchased by Judge Williams in 1882, during his term as County Judge. The nominated property is quite flat, but the terrain begins to slope toward the Little Wabash River within a block on the east and south sides of the house. The Ready and Shannon families owned three adjacent lots, but all of the outbuildings standing at the time of the home's prominence have been torn down and/or replaced.

Directional terms used in this essay are used in relation to the City of Carmi, which was platted in the direction of the Little Wabash River, and is tilted at a 57-degree angle to true north. North and west areas of Carmi are laid out "square to the world." The house is approximately two blocks from the river, and across the street from the oldest house in Carmi, built in 1814. The house is at the eastern edge of the business district.

Many materials were used in the construction of the Williams home, most notably red brick with gray limestone arches and lintels. The brick was hauled to Carmi along with the materials for the Hail Storms building, a commercial building located in the next block. (This structure, now housing an abstract office, was covered with stucco many years ago.) The exterior trim is all painted white, except for touches of green shingles in the back, painted to match the slate. The interior is largely oak, and was supplied by the contractor. The roof is of green slate, with some patching done in charcoal slate. The home cost approximately \$18,000 to build.

To best describe the eclectic structure, one needs to divide it into several sections. The front has a central section containing the entrance porch on the first floor, a balconied second floor, and an arcaded porch extending from the roof on the third floor. Flanking the central bay are three, three-

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet 1

Item number 7

Page 2

story towers, two with crenelated flat roofs, and the third with a double bell octagonal roof. The west side has a secondary entrance and two, two story sections. The back has two gabled sections of two stories each, and each of these sections has a single story wing projecting to the alley.

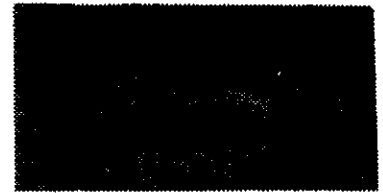
The front porch of the home consists of three arches supported by Ionic columns. It shelters double front doors, with glass panels in the top sections, and a wooden bay window. The bay window contains three windows, each of two panes of glass. One double window is also located to the right the front door, providing balance. Five wide stone steps lead to the porch, matching the limestone sill which ribbons the brick foundation.

The second story bay is dominated by a semi-circular stone-arched doorway which opens onto the balcony, flanked by two arched windows. The balcony door is made of a single piece of glass, and is surrounded by wooden spokes containing six beveled-glass windows, all framed by the central stone arch. The flanking openings contain two lights each. A stone ribbon connects the three arches, and is decorated with scroll carvings. Four large Italianate brackets and eight small ones are found above the windows, helping to support the overhanging third floor loggia. The second floor porch originally had a railing of turned balusters.

Protruding from the sharply sloped main roof, an arcaded porch fronts the third floor ballroom. The four arches are supported with square posts, and the capitals and cornice are of galvanized iron. Entry to the porch is gained through a screened door, and a foursome of small windows let light into the attic. The porch is protected with a wrought iron railing. The slate roof of the overhand is pyramided and topped with an iron finial.

The most distinctive feature of the Williams home is the three towers at the north, west and south corners of the building. The northeast and southwest towers are round and have flat turret style roofs with terra cotta gunwales, lending the name "Castle" to the building. The northwest tower is octagonal with a double bell roof and tiny windows in the third floor openings and a large iron finial. The round towers have vertical brick lintels on the third floor windows. Many of the vertically-mortared bricks have been lost, and the gaps have been filled with plastic and newspapers. Rough stone lintels, in excellent shape, decorate all second and first floor tower windows, five per tower for the round towers per floor, and four for the octagonal tower, and are another Romanesque element of the building. Beneath the tower roofs are wide ornamental friezes, executed in galvanized iron with a vine pattern. The octagonal tower has a false balcony below the second floor windows, level with the front balcony, supporting a two foot wide wrought iron railing. The same decoration is found around both turrets below the third floor windows, at the same height as the corbeling beneath of the main roof.

The terra cotta trim found on the turrets extends around the top edge of

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Continuation sheet

2

Item number

7

Page 3

the hipped main roof, and the back gable roofs. Two winged brass dragons ornament the ends of the highest section of the roof. There is a single massive brick chimney.

At the west side of the building is a small archway, supported by a graceful stone column forming a covering for the side entrance, the top of which features the same crenellation and flat roof as found in the corner towers. High above this entrance is a small arched roof dormer, flanked with two tiny round towers of its own. It is richly ornamented with a starburst pattern in the brickwork and a scrolled modillion. The side entrance is part of two sections of two stories each which provide more width to the house, and allows all three towers to be visible from the front of the structure. Two large windows on the first floor and two small ones on the second story provide interest. A separate pyramidal roof extends from the corner of the first wing, and the wrought iron balcony wraps around the top of the corbeling on the second. Small brackets are found underneath the corbeling, which extends around all non-tower portions of the house.

At the south side of the building, partially hidden by the southwest tower, is a one story frame addition to the building, built in the 1920's and used as a rear entrance to the upstairs kitchen. It is half-covered with peeling paint, with a large hole in the sagging latticework under the entrance, and no railing to the curved stairs. Large nine-paned windows cover the top half of the addition to provide light and charm. The addition has a shed-type metal roof.

The rest of the south side of the house features a mixture of architectural treatments. The dining wing extends almost back to the alley, and is lit by a grouping of five narrow windows, joined by slim columnettes supporting a wide wooden lintel. On top of the gently sloping roof of the dining area is a vertical section of green wood shingles, beneath an inset porch supported by three columnettes. The porch is topped by a gabled roof with terra cotta trim. The gable is finished in green shingles, decorated by a Palladian window topped by a white shingled half-moon surrounding a tiny semicircular light and two small rectangular two lighted windows beneath.

A matching Palladian window is found on the southeastern wing of the house, above two large rectangular windows on the second floor. The first floor projects from the basic line of the house, and consists of two bay windows, each of three glass sections, the center large and the sides very narrow, all separated by columns. Connecting the southeast portion and the east tower of the house is a windowless brick wall, its roof line broken by a Queen Anne window dormer, its ornamentation in green wooden shingle and gable.

The floorplan of the house was designed for the needs of a politician. The first floor was for the public, and has a large den/office coming off the west side entrance, library space in the towers, a huge parlor on the east side, and

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet 3

Item number 7

Page 4

a dining room and kitchen/pantry in back. The original kitchen was in the basement, and a dumbwaiter brought food to the pantry. The second floor was for the family, consisting of bedrooms and baths. The third floor had a ballroom and storage area.

The first floor interior is finished in golden oak, rendering it surprisingly bright and airy. A great stairway comes off the front hall and features a massive newel post with carved vines and garlands, while all of the balusters are carved in the form of an Ionic scroll. The stairway is very solid. Underneath the stairway is curved and molded wood paneling, which is repeated throughout the house. Tall casement doors beckon the guest into the impressive parlor, approximately 40' by 18'. At the south end of the parlor is a fireplace flanked by curly maple Ionic columns. In front of the fireplace are four matching floor to ceiling columns, partially fluted, supporting a half timbers with beaded edges and a carved garland design. Two bay windows and large wall mirrors complete the area. Portions of the fireplace and columns have been dismantled, but are still in the room. The Williams family maintains that this room was inspired by the old French Embassy building in Washington, which they visited several times. At the hall end of the library is a marvelously preserved Syrian arch hanging from the ceiling, its maple beading forming a gentle ripple. The wall area in the large den/office is devoted to bookcases, and oak paneling covers a large area in the tower library. A tall fireplace with side columns and a wooden mantle sets in the middle of the bookcases. There is still evidence of the Grecian nautical murals which had been painted and papered in the downstairs rooms, most of which are done in shades of blue. Grasscloth covers the dining room area, which uses the oak paneling as wainscoting. The first floor kitchen and service pantry was remodeled in approximately 1940, and has grey tiling trimmed in stainless steel. Ceilings in the first two floors run thirteen feet.

The second floor has four large bedrooms and a small sitting room which looks onto the balcony and its arched door and window. The northwest bedroom contains a white cast-iron fireplace. The master suite, at the south side of the house, has two adjoining bathrooms, finished in grey and black tile and chrome. A bad leak has developed in the corner of this room, where a flat-roofed tower butts against the main hipped roof.

The third floor originally contained a piano and the was used as a ballroom, according to the Williams family. It has a low ceiling and more oak paneling. In later years it was fitted with shelves for books and newspapers. All three of the tower attics were used for storage, and were not finished. Many of the acoustic tiles on the ceiling of the ballroom have been removed, but the roof appears to be in good shape.

The brick basement and stone foundation appear to be in good condition. The plumbing and wiring were redone in 1940, and the home has steam heating and a huge boiler. The home has always had electricity. Several items stored on

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



**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Continuation sheet 4

Item number 7

Page 5

the concrete floor of the old kitchen attest to the dryness of the area. There is a back entrance into the basement, and the remains of a large cistern, which was used by the Shannon family. Several of the original doors from other parts of the house are found in the basement. Iron grills cover the basement windows.

The home is without furniture, and contains a few nondescript light fixtures. Some of the door hardware and other fixtures were sold by the previous owner. Slate green carpet remains on the stairs, and some linoleum and tile have been left on the floors. Venetian blinds cover most windows, except for the many that have been boarded, and the front door, which retains a lace curtain.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1896-1905 **Builder/Architect** George F. Barber, Knoxville, Tenn.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH:

There are two reasons why the nominated property belongs on the National Register of Historic Places. First of all, it is significant as a piece of architecture. It is a unique design by the noted architect George Franklin Barber, who displayed great talent in combining details from many periods. Secondly, James Robert Williams, the original owner, was important as an attorney and judge in White County, and, while a U.S. Congressman, as a leader in the Free Silver movement. He was a campaigner and friend of William Jennings Bryan. Williams' wife was a member of two of Carmi's most prominent families.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The Williams home was designed by George F. Barber and Company of Knoxville, Tennessee, and was built in 1896 by David Getaz, Contractors, of the same city. George Franklin Barber was a very prolific and successful late nineteenth and early twentieth century architect, specializing in residential works, and this home is one of his more impressive works. Getaz was involved in many important building projects.

George Franklin Barber was born in July, 1854, in De Kalb, Illinois, and was raised near Fort Scott, Kansas. His training in architecture came through the study of then popular architectural manuals and handbooks and his work as a carpenter, rather than from formal schooling. Barber returned to Illinois in 1884 to assist his older brother, Manley DeWitt Barber, a respected house carpenter in De Kalb. It is not certain when Barber made the transition from carpenter to designer, although by late 1885 he was acting as an architect for the firm of Barber and Boardman, Contractors and Builders, De Kalb. The largest known building of his early career is the Gothic styled stone-faced De Kalb Congregational Church, begun in 1885 and completed in 1888, which still stands.

Unfortunately for Illinois, Barber's health forced him to leave Illinois in 1888 for the more salubrious mountain climate of East Tennessee. Desirous of expanding his practice, Barber placed an emphasis on the use of "pattern books" or "mail-order house plans" to solicit business. Barber had published two collections of engravings while living in De Kalb, and in Knoxville he published a total of nine large mail-order catalogs as well as a series of samplers. He developed a questionnaire and "Handy Sketch Sheet" allowing clients to receive detailed house plans based on their individual needs and budgets. The catalogs, and Barber's monthly magazine, American Homes, published from 1895 to 1904, also included advertising from manufacturers of architectural woodwork, hardware, and related items, all personally approved by Barber, that could be shipped to the prospective building location.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Continuation sheet 5

Item number 8

Page 2

"Barber homes" were greatly desired by members of the rising middle class, interested in showing their good taste and good fortune, and were soon found throughout America and the world, especially in locations where no architects were available, or near railroads where building components could be shipped by Barber advertisers. Many of Barber's designs were executed in wood, and while they contained the variety of styles popular in the period in which he practiced--1888 to 1915--his early pattern-book work centered on Queen Anne architecture including an abundance of gingerbread fancywork, towers, verandas, and asymmetrical shapes. Much of his energy was focused on translating the Richardsonian Romanesque style, popular in public buildings, into designs suitable for frame homes. Later Barber designs incorporated Colonial Revival features in which the residence often stood on a podium or base.

By 1908 Barber was sufficiently occupied with local construction to suspend his mail-order business. Approximately 20,000 sets of plans had been issued by Barber's firm, but less than 200 Barber homes are known today. Barber's son Charles joined his father's firm in 1910, after completing architectural studies at the University of Pennsylvania, bringing an increased emphasis on architecture as a profession, and a dislike of his father's former method of practice. Barber passed away in 1915.

The Williams home is important as a demonstration of Barber's interest in the Romanesque Revival style, inspired by its location across from the White County Courthouse and the egos of its owners. This was one of Barber's customized projects, according to Barber historian Michael Tomlan of Cornell University. No other examples of its design can be found in any Barber literature. (John Mecum, an 88-year-old Carmi carpenter, remembers tales about an architect from Knoxville coming to personally supervise construction, an uncommon occurrence for Barber's firm.) The Queen Anne tower can be traced to Designs 145 and 147 in Barber's Cottage Souvenir #2, printed in 1892, but the turrets and central arches are unique to this design. Other than the overall composition of the house, it provides considerable contrast from the only other known Barber homes in Southern Illinois: The Allen Gray home in Grayville, 15 miles from Carmi, and the Mt. Vernon home of W.C. Arthurs, some 50 miles distant. Both of these homes are excellent frame examples of the Queen Anne style. All three exhibit a gift for balance and proportion, stylized.

The Williams home was carefully executed by the construction firm of David Getaz, Contractors and Builders. Getaz, a native of Switzerland, was a principal in the well known Knoxville construction firm of Stephenson and Getaz, which built the Knox County Courthouse, completed in 1886. Getaz advertised in Barber publications, and won the Williams contract. After 90 years, the home is still square and level, with only slight deterioration in the slate roof and vertical brick lintels on the third floor. Much of the exterior trim, including the capitals on the ballroom balcony and the ornamental friezes around the

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet 6

Item number 8

Page 3

turret towers, are galvanized or fabricated iron, and need only a coat of paint to restore. Inside, the carved oak and maple paneling is breathtaking. The paneling runs throughout the first floor, and connects all the windows in the first and second story towers. Unifying the interior design is the use of a garland motif and classical detailing, found on the hall door, newel post, half-beams, columns, and on wallpaper and wall murals. Each baluster on the stairs was individually carved, with a scrolled design outlining the finished product. Such examples of the woodworker's art are not found today, and are seldom discovered in such pristine condition. Unfortunately, the City of Carmi, current owners of the home, had started to dismantle woodwork around the parlor fireplace for an historic display in their new library, but the damage can be repaired.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT SIGNIFICANCE:

The Williams home was built for James Robert Williams, one of the important personages in the history of Carmi and White County. It is the culmination of three generations of work to acquire wealth and influence. To understand the motivations of J.R. and Minnie Williams, one must examine their family tree. Mrs. Williams' family first came to Carmi in 1820: Dr. Thomas Shannon and his wife, Eliza Dupuy Shannon, who moved to Carmi from Mt. Carmel during a cholera epidemic and became prosperous as a physician and merchant. Their son, Albert R. Shannon, merchant and attorney, married Miss Sarah Jane Ready in 1845. Her parents, Samuel and Lucinda Ready, had come into White County in 1831, and purchased a two story brick building near the County Square which was used as a bank, office, and living quarters. In 1846 A.R. purchased lot 53 of the original plat of Carmi, site of the future Castle. Samuel Ready acquired many acres of White County farmland during his tenure as Drainage Commissioner of White County, from 1852 to 1860, and was also an attorney. A.R. Shannon was interested in education, serving as a member of the first Illinois State Board of Education, and spending twelve years on the Carmi School Board. A replica of the old Shannon-Ready building still stands east of the Castle, replacing the original in 1940. Only one of A.R. and Sara Jane's five children, Mary Dupuy, born in 1857, lived to adulthood.

James Robert Williams was born in Burnt Prairie Township, White County, in 1851 to Thomas and Susan Rawls Williams. Thomas was a preacher and a farmer, and later lived in Carmi. J.Robert received his A.B. at Indiana University in 1875, and an L.L.B. in 1876 from the Union College of Law in Chicago. In 1877 he was admitted to the bar and opened an office in Carmi. He quickly gained prominence for his oratory ability in and out of the courtroom. Williams became active in the temperance movement, Democratic Party politics, and was an incorporator of the Southern Illinois Normal School and Commercial College, which built a two story building at the corner of Main and Plum, then on the outskirts of Carmi. A.R. Shannon was one of the first directors of this institution.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Continuation sheet 7

Item number 8

Page 4

In 1880 Williams was appointed Master of Chancery for White County, a position where he could hear minor cases and preside over preliminary hearings in major disputes. Williams was elected County Judge without opposition in 1882. The same December, 1882, issue of the Carmi Courier announced the receipt of Williams' judicial commission and defended his purchase of a portion of the original White County Square along with Professor Thomas of the Normal School. Williams continued to practice law in Carmi and Grayville during his tenure as County Judge, and defended Allen Gray of the founding family of Grayville against negligence charges stemming from the family's operation of the Grayville Water Works.

In 1884 Judge Williams married Mary Dupuy "Minnie" Shannon. The marriage took place at 11 p.m., and afterwards the couple caught the midnight train for St. Louis, where they honeymooned before traveling to the World Exposition in New Orleans. Marrying Mary Shannon gave him financial resources to equal his political power, and he built his holdings into a large fortune, including an entire section of land in Carmi Township. Conveyances between Williams' grandson and daughter-in-law in the 1950's indicate that the judge owned over 2,500 acres of land in White and Gallatin Counties. Williams was known around town as "Dollar Bob".

When Williams became judge the future of the White County Courthouse was in doubt. The old building, built in 1828 for \$3,000, was too small. The county government did not want the new Courthouse to be built in the center of the square, to impede the flow of traffic from the business district to the river. The Normal School building was seriously considered as a possible site. With property at both ends of town Williams won either way, but he was pleased when the old site was retained. When the new Gothic and Italianate Courthouse was finally completed in 1883 with a massive square tower over the entrance the judge had the perfect backdrop for the home he would someday construct.

Having conquered White County, Judge Williams received the chance to become nationally prominent in 1889, when he was elected to the 51st Congress to serve an unexpired term. He was reelected in 1890 and 1892, but was defeated in 1894, when Republican influence was at its zenith. Williams attained prominence during the silver controversy in the 51th Congress. For his dedication to the silver cause, Williams was rewarded by a visit to Carmi from Williams Jennings Bryan, during the 1896 Presidential campaign. Williams introduced Bryan during his stop at the railroad station, and addressed the assembly himself later in the day. Williams also toured Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, and Minnesota stumping for the Democratic ticket, sometimes traveling with the candidate himself.

Williams did not run for office in 1896. Other things were on his mind. Having acquired a taste for national politics, Williams wished to build an residence worthy of his aspirations. The house was constructed more as a monument to his ambition than as a home for his wife and children. Planning on

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet 8

Item number 8

Page 5

the house, which included moving the old Shannon store, began in 1895. Brick was hauled to the site in February, 1896, and the contract for the home was let in June of that year. It was estimated that the house would take five months to finish, with materials shipped to Carmi by the Knoxville contractor. The first known event to take place in the new home was on December 27, 1896, when a birthday party for Judge Williams took place in the basement. By May, 1897, the house had been wired for electricity, and a granite front walk was completed the next month.

Williams defeated Theodore G. Risley in 1898 to return to Congress, and served three terms. Receptions and meetings were frequently held in the new Carmi mansion. In 1900 he was Chairman of the Illinois delegation to the Democratic National Convention, and there was local talk of his running for governor. In 1902 Williams overcame a Republican attempt at gerrymandering his district. Representative Williams was an unsuccessful candidate for the U.S. Senate in 1903, when he was described by the White County Democrat, on the basis of articles in Baltimore and Chicago newspapers, as a man "of quiet demeanor, about 53 years old, delicate in build, and unlike Williams of Mississippi in his general appearance, and like him, a man of quick mind, alert in debate, and quite famed as a campaign orator."

Representative Williams went into the Democratic convention in 1904 as a favorite son candidate from Illinois. Carter Harrison, Mayor of Chicago, was an important supporter. Judge Alton B. Parker won the nomination, but Williams was nominated and received several votes for Vice President. During the Republican landslide of 1904, Congressman Williams could not even hold onto his seat from the 20th District of Illinois--only one Democrat was elected from the state.

After his defeats, Judge Williams spent most of the rest of his life in California. Williams only returned to Carmi to make campaign speeches for his fellow Democrats and oversee his property. His body was returned from Loma Linda to Carmi for burial in 1923. Of Williams' children, Thomas Shannon never married. Robert Ready grew up in California, marrying Claire Arndt in 1928, and had one son, James Robert Williams, in 1933. The family spent more time in Illinois after the Southern Illinois Oil Boom doubled Carmi's population in the 1930's, remodeling the bathrooms and kitchen and repairing the window blinds throughout the house. Robert Ready Williams died in California in 1948, and the old home place served for his funeral.

In her later years, Claire Williams spent more time in Carmi, opening the home for a tour in 1960. In 1968, Mrs. Williams was badly scared when an earthquake shook the mansion, and moved out soon after. Several people tried to buy the home in the 1970's and 1980's, but were dissuaded by the asking price of \$150,000 or more, and its alleged poor condition. In 1985 Claire Williams offered the site to the City of Carmi for a new library, and the City agreed to her asking price, planning to raze the structure.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet James Williams House

Item number 9

Page 1

Bibliography

- Barber, G.F., The Cottage Souvenir, Revised and Enlarged, 1892, Knoxville, Tennessee
- Carmi Courier; Vol. 39, No. 7, 9/10/1896; No. 10, 10/1/1896; No. 11, 10/8/1896;
No. 12, 10/15/1896; No. 15, 11/5/1896; No. 23, 12/31/1896; No. 28, 2/4/1897;
No. 31, 2/27/1897; No. 42, 5/13/1897; No. 45, 6/3/1897, 6/4/1897, and 6/25/1897.
- Carmi Dollar Courier, Vol. 14, No. 12, 11/2/1882; No. 16, 11/30/1882; No. 17, 12/7/1882;
No. 35, 4/12/1883; and No. 42, 5/31/1883.
- Carmi Times, Vol. 7, No. 1, July 16, 1878.
- Carmi Weekly Times, Vol. 7, No. 2, July 23, 1878.
- Lee, Vicki, "Fate of Landmark Hangs in Balance," The Carmi Times, Vol. 20, March 20, 1970.
- Marquis, A.N., and Co., History of White County, Illinois. 1883, Chicago, Inter-state
Publishing Company
- _____, Who's Who in America, Vol. XI, 1920-21, Chicago, A.N. Marquis
and Co., 1922.
- _____, Who Was Who in America, Vol. 1, 1897-1942, Chicago, A.N.
Marquis and Co., 1944.
- Massey, James C. and Shirley Maxwell, "Reading the Old House, The Romanesque Revival --
A.K.A. Richardsonian Romanesque," The Old House Journal, Vol. 14, No.1, Jan-
Feb. 1986.
- _____, "Pattern Book Architecture -- Is Yours a Mail-
Order House?" The Old House Journal, Vol. 8, No. 12, December 1980.
- Smith, J. Robert, "Five Men From Carmi Have Served from Carmi," The Carmi Times,
Vol. 15, No. 245, December 9, 1965.
- Tingley, Donald F., The Sesquicentennial History of Illinois, Volume 5: The Structures
of a State: The History of Illinois, 1899 to 1928. Illinois State Historical
Society, Springfield, 1965.
- Tomlan, Michael A., Introduction to George F. Barber's Cottage Souvenir Number Two,
1982, Watkins Glen, NY, American Life Foundation and Study Institute.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet James Williams House

Item number 9

Page 2

Bibliography cont.

Trustees of the Illinois State Historical Society, Transactions of the Illinois State State Historical Society for the Year 1930, Springfield, State Printers, 1930.

Turpin, Joe, ed. with others, "History of Williams House Told At Meeting", White County Historian, 1960.

_____, Selected Examples of Architecture in the Tri-state Area of Indiana, Kentucky, and Illinois, The Indiana Junior Historical Society, 1972.

Whetstone, John L., "Commission Form of Government from 1812-1872," The Carmi Times, Vol. 15, No. 245, December 9, 1965.

_____, "Early White County Life as Writer Saw It in 1911," The Carmi Times, Vol. 15, No. 245, December 9, 1965.

White County Democrat, Vol. 1, No. 51, October 27, 1898; Vol. 1, No. 52, November 3, 1898; Vol. 41, No. 22, December 29, 1898; Vol. 41, No. 23, January 5, 1899; and Vol. 45, No. 18, November, 26, 1903.

Williams, Claire A., 1986, Documentation by Claire Williams, Carmi, Rister Offset Printing, 1986.

_____, The Silent Park, The Old Cemetery of Carmi, Illinois, 1817-1966, Privately Printed, 1985.

9. Major Bibliographical References

White County Newspapers, 1878-1986, White County History, 1882, White County Sesquicentennial Publications, 1966, Illinois State Historical Society Transactions, 1930, Barber Publications, etc. A complete listing of our sources is attached.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Carmi, Illinois

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	3	9	8	4	4	0	4	2	1	6	3	1	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification Lot 53, the northeasterly half of lot 54, and an unnumbered lot approximately 101' on the east & west and 91' on the north & south, directly adjacent to the west side of lot 53, all in the original plat for the City of Carmi. The unnumbered lot is a portion of the original county square.

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 Lucinda Birk Conley, Ly Buttry, Terry Wylie, Kay James, Frances Lee, Teresa York, Janet Harlan, / National Register Committee

organization Save the Castle, Inc.

date October 9, 1986

street & number 1500 West Main Street

telephone (618) 382-2048

city or town Carmi

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 Director

date 12-16-86

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

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. BOX 37127

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO:

FEB 6 1987

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 beginning January 25, 1987 and ending January 31, 1987. For further information call (202) 343-9552.

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

- ALABAMA, Dallas County, Plantersville, Antique Store (Plantersville MRA), Off AL 22 (01/29/87)
ALABAMA, Dallas County, Plantersville, Christian Church and Parsonage (Plantersville MRA), Off AL 22 (01/29/87)
ALABAMA, Dallas County, Plantersville, Doctor's Office (Plantersville MRA), Jct. of First Ave. N of Oak St. and First Ave. (01/29/87)
ALABAMA, Dallas County, Plantersville, Driskell--Martin House (Plantersville MRA), NW jct. of Cherry St. and First Ave. (01/29/87)
ALABAMA, Dallas County, Plantersville, Todd House (Plantersville MRA), S side of Oak St. W of First Ave. (01/29/87)
- CALIFORNIA, Butte County, Chico, Southern Pacific Depot; 430 Orange St. (01/29/87)
CALIFORNIA, Contra Costa County, Antioch, Shannon--Williamson Ranch, RR 1, Lone Tree Way (01/29/87)
CALIFORNIA, Santa Barbara County, Montecito, Steedman Estate, 1387 E. Valley Rd. (01/29/87)
CALIFORNIA, Sonoma County, Sea Ranch, Knipp and Stengel Ranch Barn, CA 1 (01/29/87)
- GEORGIA, Rabun County, Hoojah Branch Site (9RA34) (01/27/87)
- ILLINOIS, Kendall County, Plano, Sears, Albert H., House, 603 E. North St. (01/29/87)
ILLINOIS, White County, Carmi, Williams, James Robert, House, 310 E. Main St. (01/29/87)
- KENTUCKY, Campbell County, Newport, Posey Flats, 101--103 E. Third St. (01/29/87)
KENTUCKY, Pendleton County, Peach Grove vicinity, Immaculate Conception Catholic Church and Cemetery, Stepstone Rd. (01/29/87)
- LOUISIANA, Iberia Parish, Jeanerette vicinity, Bayside, LA 87 (01/29/87)
- MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex County, Cambridge, Cambridge Common Historic District (Boundary Increase and Decrease) (Cambridge MRA), Roughly NW of Waterhouse St. on Concord Ave. between Garden and Follen Sts. (01/26/87)
MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex County, Cambridge, Harvard Union (Cambridge MRA), Quincy and Harvard Sts. (01/26/87)
- MONTANA, Beaverhead County, Dillon, Barrett, Martin, House, 733 South Pacific (01/28/87)
MONTANA, Stillwater County, Columbus, Jacobs, Michael, House, 4 W. First Avenue, N. (01/28/87)
- NEW HAMPSHIRE, Hillsborough County, Manchester, Harrington--Smith Block, 18--52 Hanover St. (01/26/87)
- NEW YORK, Ontario County, Geneva vicinity, Belhurst Castle, Lochland Rd. (01/29/87)