

John Eckert House
510 West Second Street
Madison
Jefferson County
Indiana

HABS No. IND-126

HABS
IND,
39-MAD,
18-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

JOHN ECKERT HOUSE

Location: 510 West Second Street, Madison, Jefferson County, Indiana.

USGS Madison East Quadrangle; Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 16.640340.4288525.

Present Owner and Occupant: James and Mildred Short.

Present Use: Residence.

Statement of Significance: This brick structure was built in 1872 for tin-smith John Eckert. The facade is clad in pressed sheet metal and styled in a local adaptation of Italian Renaissance Revival architecture. The plan is that of a typical shotgun house while the intricately detailed facade lends a unique character to the building.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1872. The earliest reference to the house appears in the Tax List of 1873, which includes among Eckert's real estate properties a "House and Lot on [the] North side of Second [Street] between Elm and Vine." This would indicate that the structure was erected in 1872. A later reference appears in the deed transfer of September 3, 1873, from Mary A. Taylor to Isaac N. Todd, which describes the property as "the brick dwelling house built by John Eckert."
2. Architect: No information available. The design of the molded sheet iron facade was probably the work of John Eckert, a Madison tinsmith and dealer in metal wares.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description of the property: Part of Lot #165, parcel 37, in the south section of the Second Addition West in the City of Madison. The following references to the chain of title of the property upon which the structure stands are in the Office of the Recorder, Jefferson County Court-house, Madison.

- 1871 Deed, November 4, 1871, recorded November 6, 1871 in Book 32, page 493. Henry H. and Mary Armstrong sold the property to John Eckert for \$300.
- 1874 Deed, April 22, 1874, recorded in Book 31, page 603. John and Eve Eckert sold the property to Mary A. Taylor for \$1800.
- 1878 Deed, September 3, 1878, recorded in Book 41, page 405. Mary A. Taylor sold the title of the Property "as to include the brick dwelling house built by John Eckert" to Isaac N. Todd for \$1800.
- 1887 Deed, December 13, 1887, recorded in Book 53, page 252. Isaac N. and Drusilla L. Todd sold the property to Mary Trow for \$1200.
- 1900 Commissioners Deed, June 28, 1900, recorded on June 29, 1900 in Book 70, page 71. William Powell, Commissioner of Jefferson County Court of Common Pleas, executor of the last will and testament of Mary Trow sold the property to Rebecca Isaacs for \$887.
- 1908 Deed, April 29, 1908, recorded on April 30, 1908 in Book 80, page 284. William Isaacs, widower of Rebecca Isaacs, sold the property to Dora L. Seigman for \$877.
- 1913 Deed, June 7, 1913, recorded in Book 85, page 62. Dora S. Isaacs sold the property to Elizabeth G. Farrell for \$1000.
- 1932 Deed, October 25, 1932, recorded on October 26, 1932 in Book 99, page 428. Elizabeth G. Farrell sold the property to Edward Schumacher.
- 1959 Deed, September 24, 1959, recorded in Book 129, page 79. Edward and Clara E. Schumacher sold the property to Mary A. Schumacher.
- 1959 Quit claim deed, September 24, 1959, recorded in Book 129, page 80. Mary A. Schumacher conveyed her interest in the property back to Edward E. and Clara E. Schumacher.
- 1966 Affidavit of Transfer, July 9, 1966. Clara E. Schumacher received title of the property from the estate of her husband, Edward E. Schumacher.
- 1968 Affidavit of Transfer, November 12, 1968, recorded in November 23, 1968, in Book 146, page 403-04. Mary A. Schumacher received title to the property

as sole heir of Clara E. Schumacher.

1977 Deed, August 11, 1977, recorded in Book 161, page 1145. Mary A. Schumacher sold the property to James and Mildred Short.

4. Builders, suppliers: The molded sheet metal facade and the cast iron fireplace mantels and surrounds were probably provided by Eckert. In his business, Eckert dealt in sheet metal cornices and details, cast iron fireplaces, and other metal goods.
5. Original plan and construction: As originally constructed this one-story brick structure measured eighteen feet (three-bay south front) by approximately fifty feet. Designed on a "shotgun" plan, the house is characterized by an off-center front entrance and an interior room arrangement which is without a main hallway. Each room is as wide as the principal mass, and the rooms adjoin one another, opening into the next at the room's back wall near the east side.

On the exterior, the deeply recessed round-arched openings and sharply articulated bracketed cornice throw into bold relief the fine intricacies of the molded sheet metal facade. Some of the molds are believed to have been purchased from contemporary trade catalogues; others, of a more simple design, may have been styled and made by John Eckert in his metal shop. Viewed from the street, much of the house's original character as it appeared in 1872 is intact.

6. Alterations and additions: The kitchen area, covered with a shed roof, was added at the rear ca.1920. Plumbing, electricity and central gas heating were probably installed at this time.

B. Historic Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

John Eckert was born in 1841. By 1867, he had established his career as a merchant and craftsman, when he was listed in the Madison Directory as a partner in the firm of Braun and Eckert, tanners and gas-fitters, 47 West Main Cross Street. Eckert bought Braun's interest in the business upon Braun's retirement in 1871, and advertised as dealing in "stoves and tinware." It was at this time that he bought the land upon which the John Eckert house stands. Because he did not personally live in the Second Street house, it is probable that Eckert built the structure as a speculative venture and advertisement of his commercial trade. By 1875, he had joined with Maurice F. Herbst, expanding the business to include "stoves, grates, tin, copper and sheet ironware."

Their inventory, in 1879, included "galvanized iron cornice, slate and tin roofing." By 1887 Eckert and Herbst had separated and Eckert had moved to 210 East Main Street, specializing in "stoves and tinware." He managed the shop until his death on April 16, 1904, leaving his business, its stock and the building at 208-210 East Main Street to his sons, Frederick and Edward. They continued the business as "John Eckert's Sons," and later under the firm name of "Edward Eckert and Sons." After eighty-eight years and three generations, the family business closed in April 1954.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Jefferson County Deed Records, Office of the Recorder,
Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison.

Jefferson County Tax Records, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873,
1874; in City Hall, Madison

Minutes of Fire Meetings, Washington Fire Company #2,
104 West Third Street, Madison. John Eckert's death
was memorialized on April 18, 1904; the closing of the
Eckert family business was noted on April 6, 1954.

2. Secondary and published sources:

City of Madison Directory, 1867, 1871-72, 1872-73, 1875,
1879, 1887-88, 1909.

Prepared by John L. Hopkins
Team Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
Summer 1978

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Eckert house was built in 1872. Its facade is clad in pressed sheet metal and styled in a local adaptation of Italian Renaissance Revival architecture. The interior plan is that of a typical shotgun house, characterized by an off-center front entrance and no main hallway, with each room adjoining another.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The rectangular one-story residence measures approximately 18' (three-bay south front) x 69'.
2. Foundation: Rubble stone with a cut stone skirting across the front laid upon a cut stone sill. There are foundation vents around the house.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The original main section is constructed of brick laid in common bond and painted white. Embossed metal detailing on the front facade is molded to form quoins at each corner and a deeply recessed round-arched opening which define each bay. A string molding extends across the front at the spring impost line of the arches. Between the window openings are long, slender raised panels outlined in an embossed molding, and trimmed with a rope motif. A deeply recessed panel, trapezoidal in shape, with an embossed leaf design is between the rounded arches. The rear addition has clapboard siding, painted white.
4. Structural system, framing: Load bearing brick walls with wooden framing.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: Two stone steps front the main entrance door. On the east facade is a recessed porch with wooden flooring, skirting and a plastered ceiling. A concrete step fronts the north door. A small opening to the cellar is on the east side near the rear, and is covered with a wooden box.
6. Chimneys: A brick chimney, towards the rear, has been lowered and capped with metal. A brick chimney with a projecting brick cap and covered with metal that has a projecting metal flue sits upon the central ridge. A small exterior end chimney is built against the center of the rear wall.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The off-center front doorway is framed by wooden surrounds, stone sill, and a wooden threshold, and is fitted with a frame glass paneled door and moveable transom. Two doors on the east (side) porch open into bedrooms. These doors are identical and have wooden surrounds, sill and threshold, and a wooden frame screen door. The interior doors have double-raised panels with a glass panel on the upper half, and are framed by a one-light transom.

b. Windows: The windows on the front facade are four-over-four light double-hung sash and extend to the floor. On the side facades, windows are six-over-six light double-hung sash with a stone lintel overhead. All openings in the original section are framed by wooden surrounds and a stone sill. The kitchen addition has four-over-four light double-hung sash windows with wooden surrounds and sills. A fixed four-light window is in the attic at the north end gable.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The original brick section has a gable roof with a hip on the front which extends to the parapet, created by the cornice. The frame addition has a shed roof. Both are covered with asphalt shingles.

b. Cornice, eaves: An embossed metal cornice with console brackets frames the front facade and returns at the sides. Between each bracket is a molded panel, trimmed with an arrow motif on the face of the panel. A molding extends across the front, at the base of the brackets, with square molded blocks at its base, apparently forming an extension of the bracket. A raking fascia trims the rear gable end.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. Cellar: A small cellar extends under the rear part of the original brick section. It is used for storage and hot water heating equipment, and reached by wooden steps through a hinged wooden opening in the kitchen floor.

b. First floor: Shotgun plan with an off-center front entrance and an interior arrangement without a main hallway. The entrance opens into the living room. Each room is as wide as the principal mass and the rooms adjoin one another, opening into the next at the room's back wall near the east end.

2. Flooring: Concrete flooring is in the cellar. Medium wide wooden boards covered with linoleum are in all rooms except the rear bedroom. The rear bedroom is covered with very narrow wooden boards, finished and exposed.

3. Walls and ceiling finish: All walls and ceilings in the original brick section are plastered with wall paper covering. Kitchen walls are brick, painted on the south wall and wooden paneling on all other surfaces. The ceiling is fibreboard.

4. Doorways and doors: Doorways in the three rooms of the original section have wide wooden surrounds. The doors have double-raised panels. Doors in the remainder of the house have double-raised panels and are framed by wooden surrounds and raking trim above.
5. Special decorative features: The living room fireplace is trimmed with cast-iron mantels and round-arched surrounds, painted black, and has been closed up. The bedroom fireplace is similarly detailed.
6. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: Gas heaters.
 - b. Lighting: Electrical fixtures.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house is on the north side of a residential street, facing south. A concrete sidewalk extends along the front and east sides; a gravel driveway leading to a garage at the rear of the property is also to the east of the house. A small yard encompassed by a wire fence is at the rear.
2. Outbuildings: A double garage, in good condition, has vertical wooden siding and a hip roof covered with asphalt shingles.

Prepared by John White
Project Supervisor
Historic American
Buildings Survey
Summer 1978

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with Historic Madison, Inc. and the Indiana Historical Society. The recording project was completed during the summer of 1978 under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS; Kenneth L. Anderson, Jr., Principal Architect; and John P. White, of Texas Tech University, Project Supervisor; with student assistant architects Richard Berliner (Rhode Island School of Design), Jon Lourie (University of Maryland), Eric Swanson (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute), and Peter Whitehead (State University of New York at Buffalo); and project historian John L. Hopkins (Skidmore College), at the HABS Field Office in Madison, Indiana. The drawings were edited in the HABS Washington office in February 1979 by architect Rudy Massengill. The written data was edited and expanded in February 1979 by Jan E. Cigliano, a historian of the HABS staff.

Addendum to
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PHOTOGRAPH

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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