

LUSTRON HOUSE
(Jacob-Klein House)
Beverly Shores Century of Progress
Architectural District
1 State Park Road
Beverly Shores
Porter County
Indiana

HABS NO. IN-260

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

LUSTRON HOUSE
(Jacob House)
- Klein

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Location: 1 State Park Road, east side, Beverly Shores, Indiana. Lots 3, 4, and 5 in Block 241 in Robert Bartlett's subdivision Unit N.

Significance: Lustron homes, first created to alleviate the post-World War II housing crises, were considered a viable test of prefabricated residential construction. The homes illustrate innovative material applications and new manufacturing techniques. An interest in prefabricated steel and porcelain enamel houses links the Lustron houses at Beverly Shores to their neighbor and predecessor, the 1933-34 Century of Progress Exposition Armco-Ferro House, a frameless structure built of load-bearing steel and enamel panels.

Description: The Jacob Lustron is a Surf Blue, two-bedroom Westchester Deluxe (Model 02) with white trim measuring 31'x 35'. The only addition to the house is a large screened in porch which was added at the time the house was constructed (Jacob, 20 June 1994). The porch was built from plans dated August 1, 1950, by Tonn & Blank, Inc., a Michigan City, Indiana building company and authorized Lustron dealer.

Ms. Jacob, her mother, Anna Jakob, and her friend, Annette Klein, bought the house in May, 1961 from its original owners and the Jacobs' friends, Henry and Dorothy Blum; the Blums had purchased the lots from Robert Bartlett on September 2, 1949. On February 25, 1971, the three sold the house and the property to the U.S. government for use in the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. They retained an Reservation of Use agreement that expires February 23, 1996.

The house is a single rectangular box on a concrete slab foundation with a gabled roof covered in grey enameled steel shingles. Porcelain enamel modular steel panels over a structural steel frame serve for both interior and exterior finishes. The main entrance leading to the living/dining space is on the shorter, gabled side next to a large, tri-partite window and is reached by steps on the western side lead up to the north entrance. A second entrance leading to the screened-in porch is on the long side of the house off of the utility room. The long side opposite of this entranceway has two large tri-partite windows with a central fixed light and three vertically stacked lights on either side. The southern facade has two smaller windows each containing four lights. The eastern facade has a screened-in porch covering about one half of the facade. One small casement window on the eastern facade indicates the bathroom and a large tri-partite window marks the bedroom. The only addition is to a screened in porch on the northern and eastern sides of the house. This appears to be the

same model as the Powell Lustron at 204 Lake Front Drive.

The plan of the house consists of a main entrance onto the living area. Off to the left but part of an open plan is a dining area leading into the kitchen. Off of the kitchen is a utility room and laundry area. Behind the living area is the sleeping quarters. A short hallway leads to the bathroom on the left and two bedrooms at the rear of the house to the left and right of the hallway. In plan, the living/kitchen areas are identical to the three-bedroom model. The arrangement of sleeping space is also similar. In the three-bedroom model, the rear of the house is extended, the corridor is lengthened and an additional room is added across from the bathroom.

History: The Lustron company was founded in 1946 by Carl Strandlund, vice president and general manager of Chicago Vitreous Enamel Products Company. Having been refused a steel allocation by the federal government to produce gas stations for the Standard Oil Company, Strandlund developed a steel house that was sponsored by the government in their effort to alleviate the post-World War II housing crisis. The Lustron Corporation, the largest of 280 prefabrication companies existing at the end of 1946, (Wolfe and Garfield 51) produced about 2500 all-steel homes between 1946 and 1950 when the company declared bankruptcy.

The original Lustron home was designed by architects Roy Burton Blass and Morris H. Beckman of Wilmette, Illinois (Mitchell 46). Aimed at a middle-class market, the house had many modern characteristics: stripped-down forms, 20th-century materials, and prefabricated building units. It continued to have traditional detailing, however, such as the gabled roof with enameled-steel "shingles." The basic five-room house had a 32'x36' open plan that used 20% of available space for built-in closets, dressers and closets (Wolfe and Garfield 58). Heat was supplied to the house through a radiant ceiling plenum system located under the gabled roof (Mitchell 48). The house was assembled on site by local craftsmen using an instruction manual provided with the unit.

Sources: Jandl, H. Ward. "Lustron, the All-Metal Dream House," Chap. in Yesterday's Houses of Tomorrow. Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1991.

Historical summary with special attention to the political and financial aspects of Lustron's creation, implementation, and later modification by Carl Koch. Illustrated with advertisements, pages from erection manuals, photographs during production and assembly, and photographs of completed homes.

Mitchell, Robert A. "What Ever Happened to Lustron Homes?" Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology (Volume ?) 1991, 44-53.

Concentrates on materials, conservation techniques and recording existing Lustron homes in North Dakota. Also includes brief history.

Snyder, Tim. "Lustron." Fine Homebuilding. (Volume 22) August/September 1984, 26-30.

Includes detailed discussion of construction techniques and evaluation of performance thirty-five years after erection. Includes axonometric drawings of heating and structural systems and construction details of wall panels.

Wolfe, Tom and Leonard Garfield. "'A New Standard for Living': The Lustron House, 1946-50." In Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, III, ed. Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman, 51-61. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989.

Provides detailed history and establishes context for prefabricated housing.

Interviews: Jacob, Elizabeth, owner of Lustron home. Interview by author, 20 June 1994.

Morrow, Jim, owner Lustron home in Chesterton, IN. Interview by author, 8 June 1994.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Documentation of the Beverly Shores Century of Progress Homes and Historic District was undertaken in the summers of 1993 and 1994 by the Washington Office of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the National Park Service, Robert J. Kapsch, HABS/HAER Division Chief, and Paul D. Dolinsky, Chief of HABS. The project was cosponsored by the Midwest Regional Office of the National Park Service, Andrew Ketterson, Chief of Cultural Resources and Craig Kenkel, Regional Historic Architect. Additional support was provided by Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Dale Engquest, Superintendent and William Supernaugh, Assistant Superintendent.

The project was directed by Frederick J. Lindstrom, HABS Supervisory Architect. The field documentation was completed by Project Supervisor, Judith E. Collins and Field Foremen: Joseph A. Bogniren and Laura J. Culberson, with Architecture Technicians: Bert V. Calhoun, II, Eric T. Helgoth, David M. Lefton, Michael J.

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Seibert, Lillian M. Smith and Lori A. Smith. The historical report and written building surveys were produced by Project Historian Maria F. Ali, under the direction of Catherine Lavoie, HABS Senior Historian and Sarah Allaback, HABS Historian. The large format photography was produced by HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in 1994. Recognition must also go to the individual residents of the houses and the staff of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore for their cooperation and assistance.