

Jacob Shuh House  
718 West Main Street  
Madison  
Jefferson County  
Indiana

HABS No. IND-92

HABS  
IND,  
39-MAD,  
17-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. IND-92

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IND.  
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## JACOB SHUH HOUSE

Location: 718 West Main Street, Madison, Jefferson County,  
Indiana.  
USGS Madison East Quadrangle; Universal Transverse  
Mercator Coordinates: 16.640065.4288740.

Present Owner: George A. Leininger, Jr.

Present Occupant: Vacant.

Present Use: Residence, now in the process of being restored and  
adapted for re-use as a commercial building.

Statement of  
Significance:

The Jacob Shuh house is a notable example of Madison's earliest Greek Revival homes. Built 1837-38 for the nineteenth-century industrialist Jacob Shuh, the conservative yet impressive design of the brick residence served to express Shuh's newly acquired status within the early Madison community. Several prominent families have been connected with the home, including drygoods merchant C.L. Holstein, and doctors R.W. Cochran and S.A. Whitsitt.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1837-38. Jacob Shuh sold the West Main Street property to William Disharoon in 1834 for consideration of \$550. Through a series of trials in 1842, 1846, and 1848, Shuh repossessed the property by order of the Jefferson County Probate Court. In 1834 Disharoon intended to move from Louisiana to Madison, establishing his permanent residence in Madison. However, he reconsidered his purchase and informed Shuh in January 1837 that Shuh should re-acquire the property. Expecting that Disharoon would give him legal title to the property, Shuh began "erecting thereon a good substantial dwelling & outhouses & enclosing said grounds and making other permanent & lasting improvements to the value in all of more than one thousand dollars & has ever since been in peaceable occupation of said premises . . ." [Shuh vs. Graves and Graves, Probate Order Book, October 16, 1847, pp 614-18.]

Before Disharoon gave over to Shuh the title to the property, he died in Louisiana, July 10, 1839. Meanwhile, Shuh had erected a house upon the land, beginning in 1837. The legal title to the property was therefore in dispute between Disharoon's heirs, Ezekiel and Sarah Graves, and Jacob Shuh. The final court order conveying to Shuh the legal title to the property was rendered in 1848.

2. Architect: The architect is unknown. However, the sophisticated design and construction of the house indicate that an architect was employed. In 1837, Shuh owned a successful steam mill complex; he was therefore of the economic means to afford the services of a local architect. One tradition states that Francis J. Costigan (1810-1865), the architect of the J.F.D. Lanier Home (1843-44, HABS No. IND-23), designed the Shuh house. The adapted classical moldings of the Shuh residence are very similar to those which ornament the facade of the Lanier house, and the Shrewsbury house (1846-49, HABS No. IND-8), another Costigan design. The semi-circular wall in the Shuh's second floor interior plan are found in almost all of Costigan's known domestic Madison works. The balustraded roof cupola - a roof vent and skylight - on the Shuh house is quite similar in design to that which topped the Shrewsbury house, now removed. The Lanier house also has a roof cupola which functions as a vent, but it is larger and of a much more ornate design. The earliest reference to Costigan's presence in Madison is in the Baptistery Records of St. Michael's Church for 1838. Since the Shuh house is believed to have been constructed in 1837, Costigan's probable 1838 arrival in Madison may disprove the notion that he designed this residence. On the strict lines of stylistic details, the house may have been Costigan's first commission in this city.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The legal description of the property is Parcel 63 in the Third Addition West to the City of Madison. The following deed references are in the Office of the Recorder, Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison.
  - 1834 Deed, June 23, 1834, recorded July 9, 1834 in Book 1, page 324. Jacob and Mary Ann Shuh sold the property to William Disharoon for \$550.
  - 1848 Deed, December 16, 1848, recorded December 25, 1848, Deed Book 4, page 139-40. Joseph Chapman, Commissioner of Jefferson County Probate Court issued a deed for the property pursuant to an order of the Court.

- 1848 Deed, October 28, 1848, recorded December 21, 1848 in Book 4, page 142. Jacob Shuh sold the title to the property to Charles Louis Holstein for \$1000.
- 1899 Deed, November 1, 1899, recorded November 8, 1899 in Book 69, page 208. Charles L. Holstein to Alois Holstein.
- 1901 Deed, May 1, 1901, recorded May 5, 1901 in Book 71, page 138. Alois Holstein sold the property to Robert W. Cochran for \$2200.
- 1925 Deed, July 27, 1925, recorded July 29, 1925, Book 95, page 223. Dr. Robert W. Cochran and Velma Cochran, his wife, sold the property to Margaret Whitsitt.
- 1941 Conveyance Decree by Court, April 25, 1941, recorded in Probate Order Book 46, page 612. By action of Jefferson County Probate Court, the estate of Margaret C. Whitsitt conveyed the property to Dr. Schuyler Whitsitt, husband.
- 1967 Conveyance Decree by Court, August 19, 1967, recorded August 23, 1967 in Book 143, page 333. Jessie G. Whitsitt, second wife of Dr. S.A. Whitsitt, was decreed the property in settlement of her husband's estate.
- 1973 Deed, July 14, 1973, recorded September 14, 1973 in Book 157, page 1129. Jessie Whitsitt sold the property to Bernard and Kathy Koehler for \$35,000.
- 1975 Deed, December 26, 1975, recorded December 29, 1975 in Book 159, page 2512. Bernard and Kathy Koehler sold the property to Larry Fowler.
- 1978 Deed, January 16, 1978, recorded January 18, 1978, Book 162, page 64. Larry Fowler sold the property to George A. Leininger, Jr.
4. Original plan and construction: The structure's plan as it exists today is virtually unchanged from the original. There is some question however as to whether the service wing to the rear is a part of the original fabric. A cellar extends under the full area of the wing with no apparent break in the foundation's fabric. The exterior brick wall above ground also seems to be continuous and of the same construction date as the main section. Interior framing, between the wing and the main structure on both first and second floors is not continuous - there

is a difference of one step between the main block and the service wing. Throughout, the finish of interior surfaces is uniform. Unless further, more substantial evidence becomes available to prove otherwise, it would seem that the service wing should be considered a part of the original plan.

5. Alterations and additions: Few major changes have been made to the outside of the building. The outside vestibule doors of the entrance porch have been removed, but traces of the hinge mortises remain. Louvred shutters have been recently replaced on the exterior. Old photographs show a balustraded cupola at the peak of the hip roof, now removed. The cupola appears to have been used originally as a covered vent duct. Since pieces of the cupola do exist, it may be rebuilt and replaced during the current restoration.

The interior flooring of cherry and maple strip boards was probably installed ca. 1901. Electrical wiring, also possibly installed at this time, is presently being replaced by a new electrical conduit and outlets, wired into the brick wall's fabric. The house's interior was altered considerably during 1926-27 when the Whitsitt family divided the home into two apartments. A partition wall in the first-floor double parlor was installed. The wall was removed in 1978, restoring the room to its original scale and dimensions. A forced-air heating duct was installed in the wall separating the living and dining rooms.

Porches on the two-storied service wing were enclosed for bathroom space, probably in 1901. On the second floor, a kitchen was added to the former servants' quarters during the 1925-26 work.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Jacob Shuh, the original owner, was one of Madison's early industrialists. Born in Germany in 1902, he came to America at an early age, and was located in Madison by 1825. In 1835, Shuh entered into a \$5000 bond agreement with three other men, forfeitable to the State of Indiana. It is not known what duties Shuh was performing, but these bonds were required of all public employees who handled public funds. During the mid-1830s he began building his linseed grist mill complex, which was combined with a wood-carding operation and driven by the same steam engine. Shuh's future as an industrialist was short-lived. In September 1846, heavy rains flooded the valley of Crooked Creek in Madison, causing the creek to back up behind the railroad embankment at the western end of town. The embankment finally gave way on September 3, 1846. The

"Courier" reported, "Shuh's Oil Mill Building had the gable end carried away, and his carding machines destroyed." Eleven days later, on September 14, Shuh signed the first of three deeds for his home, conveying the property to Charles L. Holstein. Conceivably, he completed this transaction to recover some lost capital as well as end the seven year dispute with William Disharoon's heirs. After the final settlement of this dispute in 1848, Shuh lived out the rest of his life quietly. He served as City Assessor for part of the town during 1856-58, and worked primarily as a carpenter until his death on January 29, 1860.

Charles L. Holstein was a dry goods merchant in Madison between 1844 and 1883. Born in Gratz, near Leipsig, Germany, on December 25, 1811, Holstein travelled throughout Europe before immigrating to the United States in the early 1830s. Holstein's presence in Madison is known as early as 1839 when he purchased the first of many later pieces of property on Walnut Street. In 1842, he married Emily Bachman, the daughter of a wealthy landowner and tavern-hotel keeper. They had two children before her death in 1873. He joined many organizations, notably the Knights Templar organization, and served as the Treasurer with the Masonic Lodge #2 for a number of years. Holstein retired from the Dry Goods business in 1883, residing at his West Main Street home until his death in March 1893.

Dr. Robert W. Cochran and his family lived in the Shuh house during 1901-25, at which time Cochran established his medical practice as an eye-ear-nose-and-throat specialist. He was one of the first medical specialists in Madison, and served for several years as Jefferson County Coroner.

Schuyler A. Whitsitt was born on January 11, 1869, the son of a Scott County, Indiana farmer. He became one of Madison's most prosperous and respected physicians, his practice spanning well over forty years of public service. During his time, Whitsitt also served as the Secretary of Madison's Board of Health. He remained active in his medical practice until his death on March 3, 1961, leaving his wife Jessie an estate of more than one-half million dollars.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

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Office of the Probate Clerk, Jefferson County Courthouse,  
Madison.

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

Jefferson County Mortgages Records, 1812-1845, Office  
of the Recorder, Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison.

Probate Order Books, 1812-1978, Office of the Probate  
Clerk, Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison.

Tax Lists for the City of Madison, 1837-1900; 1900-1978,  
Madison City Hall, Madison.

2. Secondary and published sources:

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Cemetery Records of Jefferson County, Indiana. John Paul  
Chapter, D.A.R., compiler, privately published, 1941.

Items from Early Newspapers of Jefferson County, Indiana,  
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Sulzer, Marcus R. Catalogue of the City Officers and  
Ordinances of the City of Madison, Indiana. Madison:  
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Prepared by John L. Hopkins  
Team Historian  
Historic American  
Buildings Survey  
Summer 1978

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Jacob Shuh house is a notable  
example of Madison's earliest Greek Revival homes. Built

1837-38, the five-bay brick structure is symmetrical about a wide central doorway. It is conservatively styled in the classical mode, and characterized by corner pilasters, four corner chimneys, and a main entry framed by engaged Tuscan columns supporting an entablature and denticulated cornice, which is repeated at the principal roof line. The interior is arranged on a central hall plan with the formal rooms to either side of the stair hall.

2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The two-story structure with a partially exposed basement is L-shaped, and measures approximately 43' (five-bay front) x 52'.
2. Foundation: Stone.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Brick laid in common bond with pilasters at each of the four corners. A stone watertable is at the first level. Painted clapboarding covers the enclosed porch at the northeast corner.
4. Structural system, framing: Load bearing brick walls with wooden framing. The mortise-and-tenon roof system is constructed with heavy wooden timbers.
5. Porches, stoops: The front (south) central entrance is framed by a recessed porch. The porch surround consists of engaged wooden Tuscan columns which support an entablature of a plain, smooth architrave and frieze and a denticulated cornice. The paneled sides of the recessed entry are trimmed with ornamental molding. Stone steps leading to the porch are protected on either side by a thin iron railing. A stone bulkhead with wooden steps and metal-covered wooden doors leads to the cellar. On the north elevation a closed-string wooden stairway leads to the second floor.
6. Chimneys: Four brick corner chimneys rise tall above the roof surface. A brick chimney on the rear ell has been leveled with the roof.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The south six-paneled south door is trimmed with a porcelain door knob, iron keyhole cover and a bell in the center stile. A deeply recessed five-light side light is on each side of the door with a pilaster at each jamb. The east door into the dining room has two vertical glass panels on the upper half with two small raised wooden panels below. A heavy wooden surround with brick crossettes is topped by a three-light transom with a two-light storm sash and a protective

hood overhead. Both doors have a stone sill and oak threshold.

The rear doors on the first and second floors have a glass panel on the upper half, three panels below and wooden surrounds.

- b. Windows: Windows on the south facade are one-over-one double-hung sash. The windows on the north facade are six-over-six double-hung sash. Wooden louvred shutters flank the windows on the south and east facades. All first-floor windows have heavy surrounds of a recessed panel under the sill, plinth blocks at the base, cross-ettes, and topped by a raking cornice.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The main block has a hip roof with a widow's walk at the peak, and covered with standing seam metal sheathing. The rear kitchen section has a gable roof and is covered with asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: A plain, smooth wooden fascia board and denticulated cornice with a delicate bead and reel molding extends around the front and side facades, returning on the north (rear) facade. Articulating the roof line at the rear section is a plain wooden fascia with a raking cornice on the gable end and metal gutters on the sides.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: The partially exposed basement extends under the full area of the main block and is partitioned into five rooms. Masonry supports receive the weight of each of the four fireplaces. The heating unit and hot water heater are located in the cellar.
- b. First floor: Central hall plan with a double parlor to the left and the dining and living rooms to the right. Access to the kitchen section at the rear is through a door in the dining room's north wall. A door at the end of the hallway leads into a bathroom.
- c. Second floor: Central hall plan; partitions correspond to the lay-out of the first floor. A utility room is housed on the second floor above the enclosed porch.
- d. Attic: Unfinished space with access to the roof hatch.

2. Stairways: The central hall stairway is divided into two runs with a landing between the two. The wooden cherry handrail, supported by two balusters to each tread, extends from a turned newel post at the base, curving at the landing, up to the second floor. Under the stairway on the first floor, wooden paneling conceals a closet. The enclosed back stairway extends from the cellar, to the first floor, to a hallway between the northeast bedroom and second-floor kitchen. In the second-floor central hall, a steeply pitched open-string stairway with narrow treads leads to the attic. The stairway's handrail is supported by two balusters to each tread, extending from a newel post at the second floor, through an opening in the ceiling up to the attic.
3. Flooring: Narrow oak board flooring covers the principal first-floor rooms. Linoleum is in the kitchen and bath. Wide wooden board flooring, painted, is on the second floor. The second-floor kitchen, bath and utility rooms have linoleum covering.
4. Walls and ceiling finish: Walls and ceilings are plastered. In the first-floor parlor and center stair hall an enriched talon cornice molding extends around the room, joining with a molded plaster frieze. Two plaster floral motifs ornament the parlor and center hall ceilings at center. There is evidence of a similar ceiling motif in the living and dining rooms. A simple wooden frieze extends around the ceiling of the living and dining rooms. Beaded wooden wainscoting trims the first-floor kitchen walls and pressed metal is on the ceiling.
5. Doorways and doors: First floor doors have four double-raised panels with heavy wooden surrounds of crossettes, plinth blocks and a raking molding at the head. Doors on the second floor are the same, but have no crossette in the surround.
6. Special decorative features and trim: Each parlor fireplace has a marble hearth and a projecting wooden mantlepiece, framed by simple pilasters with capital and base. The living room mantlepiece has been removed, but there is a brick hearth. The dining room mantlepiece is simply appointed with wooden pilasters to each side. The coal firebox is trimmed with a round-arched metal surround and a green tile hearth. Simple wooden mantlepieces with pilasters are in all bedrooms.
7. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Heating: A recent oil-fired furnace heats the house

through hot-air ducts. Cast-iron floor grilles are in the second floor, allowing heat to rise from the first floor.

- b. Lighting: There are some recent lighting fixtures, but most have been removed. Some of the pipes for gaslight fixtures still exist.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house stands on the north side of West Main Street, facing south. A concrete sidewalk extends across the front of the property with a sidewalk leading up to the main entrance. An iron railing fronts the property. A driveway is on the east side of the house. There is a medical clinic on the west side, and a school on the east. Across the street to the south is commercial and residential property.
2. Landscape design: A large deciduous tree is on each side of the sidewalk at the curb, and one in the front to the right. A large coniferous tree is in the front to the left. There are several trees and some low shrubbery in the back yard.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This 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, Project Supervisor (Associate Professor, Texas Tech University); with student assistant architects Richard Berliner (Rhode Island School of Design), Jon Lourie (University of Maryland), Eric Swanson (Rensseler 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 staff historian in the HABS office.

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
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