

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

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Historic Name: Isaac W. Byers House  
Common Name: same N. 8th  
Location: 5 ~~North Eighth~~ North Eighth Avenue, ~~City of~~ Iron River, MI  
Date of Construction: c. 1919

Architect: unknown

Builder: unknown

Classification:

Category: building

Ownership: private--John D. Hanley  
c/o Judy Hanley Summers  
35 Elder Drive  
Marquette, MI 49855

Public Acquisition: N/A

Status: occupied

Accessible: No

Present Use: private residence

Description:

Condition: excellent

Unaltered

Original site

The Byers House is a one-and-one-half-story, frame, rectangular structure, situated on a lot shaded by stately trees. In spite of its circa 1919 construction date, this building, with its steeply pitched cross-gable roof, reflects the Queen Anne style in form and massing. Gable returns and very narrow clapboard siding also indicate Queen Anne influence. The two-bay, full length front porch, supported by simple wooden piers, typifies the Byers House as an early twentieth-century residence, however. There is a one-story bay window on the south side of the house.

Significance:

Period: 1900-

Areas of Significance: commerce, community planning, law, politics/government

National Register Selection Criteria: B

The Byers House is significant as the home for sixteen years of Isaac W. Byers, who had it constructed as his residence circa 1919. Byers came to Iron River in 1895 and began practicing law. Along with four associates, he became the leading developer in the Iron River area, financing development of parts of Stambaugh, Iron River, and Caspian. Mr. Byers was also active in public service in Iron River, utilizing his legal skills for the improvement of the community.

I. W. Byers was born in 1866 in Pennsylvania. He was graduated from Princeton University in 1893 and, a year later, after being admitted to the bar, moved to Chicago to take up practice. Failing health troubled him and he came to Iron River in 1895 to seek strength in the north country. He opened his own law firm, recovered his health, and soon became financially independent. With a group of associates consisting of E. J. Van Ornum, F. A. Morrison, Nelson Fisher, and E. S. Coe, he took a leading position in the development of the Iron River area. This group, which became popularly known as the "Big Five," organized

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the Iron Savings and Loan Association in 1905, founded the Iron River Realty Company, which platted the Village of Caspian in 1907, formed the Citizen's Land Investment Company, and, in 1909, initiated the Iron Range Light and Power Company. This utility company was owned and operated successfully by the "Big Five" for seventeen years before it was sold in 1926.

In addition to his practicing of law and his business ventures with the "Big Five," Mr. Byers found time for governmental service: during his early years in Iron River he was circuit court commissioner, prosecuting attorney, judge of probate court, and county school examiner. He also served as president of the Upper Peninsula Grange Association, which worked to promote the development of agriculture in the county.

The Byers House, although fairly modest in proportions and ornamentation, is important as the residence for sixteen years of I. W. Byers, who played a key role in the development and expansion of Iron River during its greatest period of growth in the early twentieth century.

**Geographical Data:**

Acreage: Less than one acre

Quadrangle name: Iron River

Quadrangle scale: 1:24000

UTM Reference: 16 372640 5104890

Verbal boundary description and justification:

Lot 8, Block 10 of Young's Addition. This is the entire lot on which the house stands.

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Page 1 of 8

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Ref #3

Name Iron County Multiple Resource Area  
State MICHIGAN

Cover encl 12/22/83

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- 83003660 1. Amasa Historic Business District  
Entered in the National Register  
Keeper for Melvyn Byers 12/22/83  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 83003659 2. Alpha Public Buildings Historic Complex (Dist.)  
Entered in the National Register  
Keeper for Melvyn Byers 12/22/83  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 83003667 3. Byers, Isaac W., House  
Entered in the National Register  
Keeper for Melvyn Byers 12/22/83  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 83003662 4. Beechwood Store  
Entered in the National Register  
Keeper for Melvyn Byers 12/22/83  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 83003665 5. Bowers, Joseph, House  
Entered in the National Register  
Keeper for Melvyn Byers 12/22/83  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 83003664 6. Bethany Lutheran Church  
Substantive Review  
Keeper Boyl Groover - 12/22/83  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 50 7. Camp Gibbs Historic District  
Substantive Review  
Keeper Return R S  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 83003670 8. Central School  
Substantive Review  
Keeper Return R S  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 83003672 9. Caspian Mine Headframe  
Entered in the National Register  
Keeper for Melvyn Byers 12/22/83  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 83003671 10. Caspian Community Center  
Entered in the National Register  
Keeper for Melvyn Byers 12/22/83  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REIF #  
83003667

Byers, Isaac W., House (Iron County MRA)  
Iron County  
MIC HIG A N

NOV 15 1983

Working No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2-5-85  
Date Due: 12/15/83 — 12/30/83  
Action:  ACCEPT 12/22/83  
 RETURN \_\_\_\_\_  
**Entered in the National Register**  REJECT \_\_\_\_\_  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: \_\_\_\_\_ technical corrections cited below  
\_\_\_\_\_ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	
	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	
	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

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**8. Significance**

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

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Verbal boundary description and justification

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_\_ state      \_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

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**13. Other**

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

PHOTO: ISSAC W. BYERS HOUSE

55

83003067



Issac W. Byers House  
5 North Eighth Avenue  
Iron River, Iron County, Michigan  
Photo: Steven Karpick  
Date: October 1979  
Neg: Michigan History Division  
View: Camera facing NW  
Photo: ~~#36 of 124~~ 55 of 158

Please refer to the map in the  
Multiple Property Cover Sheet  
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000326

Shannon - log in / send card  
RUC - file

sent card  
5/27/83

May 25, 1983

MAY 26 1983

MICHIGAN HISTORY DIVISION

Dr. Martha M. Bigelow, Director  
Michigan History Division &  
State Historic Preservation Office  
Michigan Department of State  
208 N. Capital  
Lansing, MI 48918

RE: Isaac W. Byers House  
5 North Eighth Avenue  
Iron River, MI

ATTENTION: Kathryn B. Eckert

Dear Dr. Bigelow & Ms. Eckert

We were very pleased and very excited to hear from you, that our family home has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. My father, John D. Hanley, has asked me to express our pleasure to you, and try to give you some information about the house that you may find helpful and/or supportive.

We apologize that our response to your letter of April 29 is somewhat tardy, but we hope that this reaches you within your time lines. Further, since it has been many, many years since I perused the property deed, the only supportive information that I can furnish is that which deals with the interior of the house and its condition. I truly love the home and I know that my brothers and sisters, my mother and father, truly enjoyed residing there.

I believe the house is virtually intact in that the woodwork is in very good condition throughout the house and has not been replaced, but has instead been waxed and polished. The woodwork (extensive) and the stairs are the most remarkable in that refinishing was not necessary as long as proper care was exercised. Downstairs, the woodwork seems to be of a red mahogany, while upstairs it seems to be more honey colored.

One enters the house at the front via a wide, open "sitting" porch, which spans the width of the house. The porch was ideal in sultry summer weather and for watching thunder storms. The front door has a heavy, large, oval beveled glass insert, measuring some 4 to 5 feet (est.) from the top of the oval to the bottom of the oval. (Please bear in mind that all measurements are estimated and that they are relative to my 5'4" height.) The oval begins about 12 inches from the floor.

One enters into a foyer. Straight-on is an open stairway to the second floor with wide landings after two steps, after 7 (or 8) steps, another after one step before it proceeds to the second floor. It seems that the bannister rail and supports may be original, but in any case, are finished in a red mahogany that darkens near the very top steps.

To the left of the foyer one enters to the living room through a pillared arch. The pillars themselves are approximately five feet high. They sit on top of wood bases that begins at the floor and are about two feet high. The pillars meet the top frame of the arch. All this woodwork is of a red mahogany.

One must walk through the living room to the dining room, but the two rooms are separated by a large, built-in china with four (2 by 4 foot) leaded glass doors. One walks through the center, with a china on either side of the entry, and extend some five feet from the floor to the top of the cabinets. Three-foot pillars, one on each side, reach from the top of the chinas to the underside of the woodwork at the top of the arch. Again, red mahogany.

The dining room is of quite generous proportions as are all the rooms of the house. Walking into the dining room from the living room, a bay with a large 'picture window' centered between two smaller windows angled at either side, carries the room dimensions out some two to four feet beyond the square or straight, and much woodwork (red) frames these windows. On the inside wall (right) two doors are at either end. The far door leads into a 'den' or 'study', and the near door gives access to the basement. The sideboard always fit nicely between the two doors. Straight on, but nearer the bay, a doorway of larger dimensions opens into the kitchen, where the chimney for the kitchen range is still in existence, but no longer used. (We believed that it was never used.) We suspect the chimney was added after the house was built because of the support system, a problem we dealt with on a continuing basis, until my father discovered the iron support jacks now used in new construction. A small pantry and food preparation area is located at the right wall of the kitchen, accessible through a smaller door (not centered) near the sink.

At one time, the entrance to the kitchen from the dining room had a two-way, swinging door. Because of the size of our family, closing the door was hazardous and thus it was usually open. When wall-to-wall carpeting was installed, the door was removed and stored. A large door on the back wall of the kitchen (off-center) opens into a 'shed' and thus outside.

I suspect the light fixtures throughout the house, except the dining room, are the original fixtures. From what I recall, the fixtures are large and heavy. Light colors are etched into glass covering the light bulbs in some rooms. In the bedrooms upstairs, candle-like fixtures are near each window. To describe the locations, in the large, front bedroom the candle-like fixtures are on either side of a large, double window (complete with woodwork). In the two smaller bedrooms, only one fixture is at one side of the windows.

There is but one bathroom in the house, on the second floor, complete with claw-foot bathtub and large built-in medicine chest near the sink. It seems the walls and ceiling in the bathroom were covered with a kind of oil-cloth, then painted over. Wainscoting at about 4½ feet from the floor is on each wall and provides a very secure seat for towel racks, etc.

Wainscoting also runs at the same height on each wall in the kitchen.

The largest bedroom (front) boasts of an alcove where we always placed the bed. The ceiling followed the roofline and even though one can stand upright with room to spare at its lowest point, it greatly aided furniture placement by putting the bed there.

Each bedroom, as well as the den, has a huge walk-in closet. Another large storage area is located under the stairs and is accessible through the foyer.

The den, or study, was always a delightful room in which to do homework, or read. While in this room, one was not aware of any sounds from outside or from other parts of the house.

Laundry chutes were accessed from the bathroom and the den.

Throughout the house are high and elegantly worked wood mouldings where the walls meet the floors (mopboards?) A single trim board runs through each room and is placed where the ceilings meet the walls.

All walls are of the type where a kind of wire fencing material was used as a foundation for the plaster. The plaster was then placed and worked to the desired thickness. Where repairs had to be made, my father imitated this technique and was very proficient at it.

During the time my family occupied the home (since 1957), we did not modernize or remodel the dwelling. The only change that was made was that on the exterior...specifically at the sides of the steps up to the front porch, where a low, wide bench-type affair flanked the stairs instead of a railing....these were great for sitting in the sun. My father could not longer obtain the narrow lap siding to make necessary repairs, so he found it necessary to remove the "flouncing" only, and installed a black, wrought iron railing...still in keeping with the appearance of the house.

The attic is accessible through a "push-up" trap door in the ceiling of the upstairs hallway. Former residents may have used the area as a playroom for children. The floor is made up of smooth 6 by 2 inch planking...very solid. Unfortunately, the attic space is no longer accessible on a casual basis because of the need to insulate with "blown-in" insulation.

The roof of the home is relatively new and in very good condition...a new roof was installed during the last ten years. In order to install the new roof, all other roofs were removed down to the trusses of the house. I believe there were some four roofs under the then-existing roof.

The windows of the home are fascinating to me in that ropes and pulleys were a part of the window frame and were visible in the track of the window, and were attached to the frames of the panes in such a way that the windows could be lifted to any level and (I think) weights inside the frames would balance the weight of the window at the desired position, where it would stay without any use of propping. As one opened the window, one could hear and feel the mechanism working. By holding the window at the desired position momentarily, the weights would adjust and balance, but if one closed the window quickly, one could hear the weights and pulleys clatter.

When the attic was cleaned in preparation for insulating, all the old mementoes of past owners had to be taken out of storage. We felt those plush albums of turn-of-the-century pictures of people and places would be better off in the Iron County Historical Museum. I found an additional prize that day...a glazed, clay jug, complete with cork, pushed securely down and behind the insulation of the eaves. Of course it was empty.

The house occupies a corner lot in the city. I believe the landscaping and plantings are those of the original owner. Mock orange, lilac, lily of the valley, peonies, poppies, fire-bush, are all strategically placed. A tall thick lilac hedge separates the property from next door. Maple trees and a large willow tree, on Division Street (which runs at the side of the property) were planted perhaps forty years ago...the willow perhaps before that. Until last year, three giant elm trees shaded the front of the house (estimated height is fifty feet). However, they were lost to disease and had to be removed, as were a large, white birch and a mountain ash in the back yard.

I hope the preceding is somewhat helpful to you in the nomination of our family home. I believe the house is structurally VERY sound. In addition to its current age, I believe it will stand for yet many decades with minimum expense. Certainly, it will probably shelter successive families with children and provide them with hours of hide and seek in its many closets and graceful rooms. The character and charm of the home should be preserved for those families to enjoy as we did. Perhaps its designation as a historical site will prevent those families from disposing of the glorious woodwork, the elegant light fixtures, those never-to-be-replaced china cabinet dividers -- the "doric" (I believe) columns -- to mention only a few outstanding and obvious features.

I rereading this letter, I find that on beginning the description of each room, I tended to mention first the outstanding feature of each room. I must apologize for its apparent disorganized appearance...but I found that one's memory is stimulated by one's thoughts of remembered activities.

Please feel free to contact me at home (906-228-9668) or at my office (906-227-2045) if you need further information or details. In any case, please let me know the outcome of your June 2 meeting. My address appears below...I will then inform the family of your decision.

My father is now residing in a nursing home and would not be available at the family home. My mother may not be available at the home, since she tends to like to visit with those of my brothers and sisters in the area.

Sincerely,



Judy Hanley Summers (for John D. Hanley)  
35 Elder Drive  
Marquette, MI 49855

s