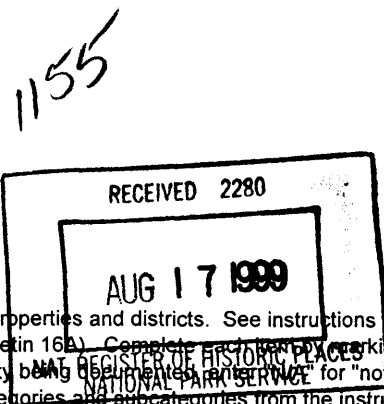


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being determined, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Birdsall, Mary, House
other names/site number Lauramoore Friends Home

2. Location

street & number 504 North West Fifth St. N/A not for publication
city or town Richmond N/A vicinity
state Indiana code IN county Wayne code 177 zip code 47374

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
[Signature] 7/26/99
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet. Patrick Andrews Signature of the Keeper 9/23/99 Date of Action
 determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other, (explain:)

Birdsall, Mary, House

Wayne IN

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

building

district

site

structure

object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Institutional Housing

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls BRICK

METAL: Aluminum

roof ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE _____
 SOCIAL HISTORY _____
 POLITICS/GOVERNMENT _____

Period of Significance

1859-1880 _____

Significant Dates

1860 _____

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Birdsall, Mary Thistlewaite _____

Cultural Affiliation

N/A _____

Architect/Builder

Unknown _____

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

Birdsall, Mary, House
Name of Property

Wayne IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.3

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	6	6	7	8	9	7	0	4	4	1	1	2	9	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

3

Zone		Easting						Northing						

2

Zone		Easting						Northing						

4

Zone		Easting						Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David B. Duvall
organization Lauramoore Friends Home date 7-21-97
street & number 7811 Kimlough Dr. telephone 317-257-5662
city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46240

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Lauramoore Friends Home, Inc.
street & number 504 North West Fifth St. telephone 317-962-2984
city or town Richmond state IN zip code 47374

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Mary Birdsall House
Wayne County, Indiana

Narrative Description

The Mary Birdsall house is located on a large lot at the northwest corner of West Fifth Street and Richmond Avenue in Richmond, Indiana. The two-story cruciform house is on high ground near the rear of the lot with an extremely large front yard to the east. The house is approached by a gravel driveway which rises from Richmond Avenue, passing behind the house, around the north side, and to the east front where there is a turning circle. Mature trees in the yard include wild black cherry, burr oak, butternut, ginkgo, Norway spruce, persimmon, sweetgum, tulip, white ash, white birch, eastern white pine, and sassafras. The style is generally described as Italianate with a low-sloped roof and dentilated and bracketed cornices, but it also features Gothic motifs in its wood details.

The walls of the cellar are constructed of stone, however, stone is typically visible only at grade. The bricks used for the walls of the original house were substantially from the Thistlewaite family's adjacent brick yard and are laid in American bond. The brick pattern is unarticulated except for a limestone string course at the water table at the first floor level, ashlar facing at the foundation level of the east (front) facade, and limestone sills and headers at doors and windows. At the kitchen addition, stone foundations extend above grade to the bearing of the framing. The foundation of the last addition is concrete block. The terraces which flank the projecting parlor at the front facade feature shallow wood arches with scalloped tracery. The terrace at the southeast corner of the house has been extended with a concrete porch with a wood railing. Hardware at this corner indicates the presence of a fabric awning at some time. Several chimneys, one for each arm of the cruciform, rise inconspicuously through the roof, usually at an interior ridge.

Most windows of the original house are wood casement type with casement storm windows which are exchanged seasonally for shutters. Some windows on the north wall and at the rear wing of the original house are double hung. It is clear that some windows along the north wall have been altered. Decorative wood cresting at the roofs of the window bays are articulated with quatrefoil tracery.

The Birdsall House is two stories over a slightly raised cellar with a cruciform ground plan. The plan of the original house consists of four large but not ostentatious rooms, one in each wing of the cruciform plan, surrounding a central space dedicated to a winding stair while providing a corridor between the other spaces. The house is oriented to the east with a small entry vestibule and covered terrace at each side of the projecting room. The east and west wings each feature a three-sided bay window extension at the first floor. An addition at the rear includes a new kitchen, and a later two-story addition contains sleeping rooms with bathrooms. The additions cross the west facade, wrapping to the north side, and returning to the west wall of the north wing. These additions are constructed of wood framing and are now covered with aluminum siding, which obscures any trim features which may exist. The roof of this addition is nearly flat with a very low slope toward the west and north walls.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7.8 Page 2Mary Birdsall House
Wayne County, Indiana

It is presumed that the front (east) room and the two rooms immediately behind it, flanking the stairway, were parlors or chambers. The front room is decorated decidedly different and in an earlier style, suggesting that it may have originally been more formal, with the flanking rooms receiving more elegant finishes at a later date. The rear room of the original house was presumably the kitchen. It is the only room with its fireplace on an outside wall. The room has for many years served as a dining room since the addition of the present kitchen immediately behind it. The second story floor plan corresponds more or less to the first floor with simpler, but not spare, finishes. On each floor at the northwest corner there are a cluster of additional bedrooms inserted into the cruciform plan. There is also a second stair near the rear in the 1927 addition.

The interior openings and base of the front parlor are articulated with wide wood trim of varnished walnut. Other interior features fabricated from varnished oak are presumably from a late nineteenth century remodeling. These include fireplace surrounds and the winding stair located at the center of the house. Other interior wood trim, including built-in cabinetry in the service area at the rear of the original house and in the additions, is painted.

A small barn is located near the northwest corner of the site. The barn is a simple gabled structure with board and batten siding, double wood doors, and functionally located windows.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The property is significant in the areas of social history, politics, and government as the home of Mary Thistlewaite Birdsall, a premier suffragist and advocate of women's rights in Indiana during the mid-nineteenth century. This house has the greatest association with the life of Mary Thistlewaite Birdsall than any other residence during the peak of her political and social activism. The property is additionally significant for its architectural representation of progressive home design as it was advocated and understood in the period around the Civil War.

Mary Thistlewaite was born to the family of William Thistlewaite, an English Quaker, in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1828. William had immigrated from Leeds, arriving in Philadelphia in 1819 at the age of 27. He farmed at Wilmington, Delaware for eight years, marrying Elizabeth Wetherall and later fathering a son, Timothy, in 1821. In 1828, the family moved west to Cincinnati where William engaged in a butchering business. Later that same year, William and Elizabeth gave birth to their daughter Mary. The previous year, Mary's future

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3Mary Birdsall House
Wayne County, Indiana

husband, Thomas Birdsall, had been born in nearby Clinton, Ohio.

In 1829, the Thistlewaites moved to Richmond, Indiana, a town which had been laid out and incorporated only eleven years before. William purchased farm property and during the next twenty seven years amassed a considerable fortune as a pioneer businessman. He is reputed to have retired in 1855 at the age of 63, but he continued business dealings with his sons and Thomas Birdsall. Thomas was a business associate of Timothy Thistlewaite, having worked at one of the mills Timothy developed.

Thomas Birdsall married Mary B. Thistlewaite at Whitewater Monthly Meeting in 1848. Both Thomas and Mary were active in the vanguard social movements on the period, including emancipation, temperance, and suffrage. They attended an anti-slavery meeting at the Congregational Friends Church of Greensboro in 1851 and a subsequent meeting at the United Brethren Church in Dublin. At these meetings, the idea to hold the first Indiana Women's Rights Convention was generated and organized. The event was scheduled to convene on October 15, 1852 in Richmond, Indiana. Mary Birdsall was elected Secretary of the convention. For the next few years, women's rights issues became a theme for articles appearing in Indiana Farmer, for which Mary was the Women's Editor.

Volume III, number 3 of Indiana Farmer magazine announced that Mary Birdsall would become its Women's Editor in the following issue. In this issue, she introduced herself with the statement that "we shall endeavor to arouse her (woman) to a sense of propriety of taking more actively into her own hands the management of her interests horticulture, floriculture, and the merits of various species of utensils used by women, the formation and arrangement of dwelling houses in which no part of the human family has greater interest than she -- and various other subjects of great importance to women"

Mrs. Birdsall continued to serve as secretary for the second Indiana Woman's Rights Convention held in Richmond in 1853, and served as vice-president for the fourth National Women's Rights Convention held in Cleveland, Ohio the same year. In 1854, the Indiana Women's Rights Convention was moved to the capital city, Indianapolis, where it was held in a Masonic Hall. The event was highly ridiculed in the local press. Mary Birdsall was once again secretary. Annual sessions continued in Indianapolis, featuring national figures such as Lucretia Mott in 1855, to the dismay of the popular press.

Birdsall also continued her journalistic career with Indiana Farmer for at least eleven issues, authoring articles on subjects as varied as domestic economy, a scientific discussion of the superiority of dry firewood, decor of the family home for the holiday season, and proper remuneration for women's labor. In volume VII, number 11, published on February 1, 1853, she edited an article comprised largely of material excerpted from the "Treatise on Domestic Economy" by Catherine Beecher, which presented a discussion in the popular science mode of the era of the proper design of dwelling houses. The article commented on the number and size of rooms stating, "the arrangement of rooms and the proper supply of conveniences are

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Mary Birdsall House
Wayne County, Indiana

other parts in which the economy of labor and comfort is often disregarded.” Further scientific presentations were made regarding the location of wells and carrying water. The theme of comfort and economy once again emerged with the comment “. . . the farther a house is removed from this shape (perfect square) the more the expense is increased. Wings and kitchens built out beyond a house increase expense both in building and in heating them.” Disparaging comments were also made against piazzas and porticoes, instead making an argument for vestibules. These statements were made on the premise that the introduction of outside air immediately into sitting rooms is unhealthy. Birdsall’s presentation of Beecher’s ideas on house design predated the publication of Beecher’s book, American Woman’s Home, by seventeen years. The publication included a house plan peculiarly similar to the Mary Birdsall House.

It is not clear why Mary Birdsall ceased editing for Indiana Farmer. Consistent with the focus on domestic design, volume VII, number 14 contained published plans from the house design which won had won an award at the Indiana State Fair by J.T. Smith of Rush County. It also included a foretelling article making a favorable recommendation for the controversial “bloomer” pants for ladies. After number 15, no editorial credit was given to Mary Birdsall. After volume VII, number 18, the ladies’ department disappeared from the publication for some time, though it is noteworthy that this issue contained letters to the editor in support of Mary Birdsall’s views. The Indiana Farmer was eventually sold and relocated to Indianapolis, where it continued to print agricultural commentaries by figures such as Henry Ward Beecher, brother of Catherine and Harriet.

Despite the withdrawal of her views in popular media, or perhaps because of it, Mary Birdsall purchased the periodical magazine the Lily in 1855 from Amelia Bloomer, promoter of “bloomer” pants, after Bloomer was forced to give up the publication following her husband’s unemployment. This nationally distributed magazine maintained an editorial focus on temperance, dress reform, suffrage, women’s rights, and the repeal of unjust marriage and inheritance laws. Mary continued its publication from Richmond for at least the next five years. The editing and publication of the Lily was undertaken in partnership with Dr. Mary F. Thomas, who would also share in Mary’s next political undertaking.

The seventh Indiana Women’s Rights Convention returned again to Richmond in 1858, at which a petition was composed to the Indiana State Legislature requesting that the same rights of property and suffrage be afforded to women as were granted to men. Thus, on January 19, 1859, Dr. Mary Thomas, Agnes Cook, and Mary Birdsall became the first three women to address the state legislature of Indiana. The House and Senate were convened together in a rare joint session to receive the rights petition. The event took on a sensational, carnival-like atmosphere described in the State Sentinel as jollification. The Civil War soon overtook the suffragist and women’s rights movement, and another rights and suffrage convention was not held in Indiana until 1869.

Scrutiny of Richmond vicinity directories, periodicals, and property records has yielded no residential or

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5Mary Birdsall House
Wayne County, Indiana

business address for Thomas and/or Mary Birdsall previous to the construction of this house, although the Thistlewaite family had extensive holdings. The Birdsall house was reported to have been under construction in a Richmond newspaper in 1859, and the house had presumably been occupied by the notice of its having been burglarized (one knife stolen) in 1861. The house was constructed of brick from Timothy Thistlewaite's brick kiln which lay on adjacent land to the north. The Thistlewaite and Birdsall properties lay just beyond the westerly city limits at that time.

The house is Italianate in style. It is characteristic of domestic design which was promoted during this era as technologically progressive, healthy, and emancipating. The house is cruciform in shape, much like the ideal plan published nearly a decade later by Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe in their American Woman's Home. Though the Birdsall home is much larger, it shared a general layout with the published plan and included several details such as the diminutive corner verandahs, the entry vestibule(s), central stair location, and large conservatory bay windows. This formulation was prompted as domestic science and had been the focus of such publications as the women's section of the above mentioned Indiana Farmer for which Mary was an editor. It is obvious that the design of the house was congruent with the development of the domestic science concepts promoted by the Beechers. Given the social circles among whom these women were associated, it is probable that they all had met, or at least corresponded, and that the Beechers' plans and ideas not only affected Mary Birdsall but that Mary may have also affected them. Certainly the Mary Birdsall House demonstrates exemplary domestic architecture as it was being advocated by progressive women during the mid-nineteenth century.

Apparently the Civil War period was profitable for Thomas Birdsall. During that time he built an outfitting company along with his brother, Samuel, and brother-in-law, Timothy. Other Birdsall-owned businesses were a grocery, candle works, and various mill operations. He remained active in socially progressive movements, serving as president of the temperance society in 1867. In 1869, Birdsall and Thistlewaite built a commercial building together. There is a record of Mary having provided a load of firewood to the Children's Home in 1870. Thomas and Mary's son, William, entered Earlham College in 1873 and went on to become president of Swarthmore College from 1898 to 1902. Thomas' brother and business partner committed suicide in 1871. This author has not pursued the details of ensuing business arrangements, but by 1880 a Richmond newspaper observed the visit of Thomas Birdsall "of Philadelphia for several years", indicating that his business activities had him gravitating to that location. However, as late as 1884 the company of Birdsall and Dennis was still in the outfitting business in Richmond.

Exactly when the family moved to Philadelphia is unclear to this author. Thomas and William were both accepted to Race Street Monthly Meeting on certificate in 1886 but Mary did not move her meeting affiliation from Richmond. Sometime during this period the house was rented out. When Mary died suddenly in Philadelphia on February 1, 1894 her body was rushed back to Richmond. Her funeral, which was originally scheduled to be held in her old home, was relocated at the last moment to her brother

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 6

Mary Birdsall House
Wayne County, Indiana

Timothy's home. She was buried in the Earlham Cemetery. Thomas Birdsall died in Richmond in 1901.

The house had been sold in 1899 to Charles and Laura Moore. In 1927, the house was acquired by Whitewater Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends for use as a retirement home for the elderly and as a temporary meeting place for worship. They are believed to have planned the eventual construction of a meetinghouse in the east yard of the property which never came to fruition. For many years, Whitewater Monthly Meeting worshiped in the parlor. In the same year that it was acquired, an addition was made to the northwest corner, thus increasing the number of bedrooms and adding a modern kitchen and backstairs. The Lauramoore Friend's Home became incorporated privately in 1951 and continues to operate the facility as a retirement home.

The Lauramoore Home Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation for the purpose of providing retirement housing. The occupancy of the Lauramoore Home is non-sectarian. The religious associations of the property arise from its period of ownership from 1923 until 1951 by the Whitewater Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. This association remains in a requirement that appointment of board members of the owning corporation be approved by the annual meeting of the Ohio Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. Membership for such an appointment is, however, broadly applied, and as such, is not restricted to any established conference, convention, etc. of this faith. Though the establishment of a not-for-profit retirement home by such a religious body may be of some historical interest, this period and use are not fundamental to the historical associations from which this nomination derives.

Though the religious associations and beliefs of the Birdsalls were integral to their political activities as suffragists, emancipationists, and advocates of temperance, these activities were fundamentally of a political nature and not of principally religious importance in the context of historical significance.

The Mary Birdsall House offers an opportunity to see the exhibition of progressive residential architecture in the home of a mid-nineteenth century crusader for women's rights and conditions, designed and constructed at the climax of her period of political activity. As such, it is of greater association with the ideas, actions, and historical trends to which Mary Birdsall contributed than any other dwelling which she may have occupied during her period of significant political and social activism.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 7

Mary Birdsall House
Wayne County, Indiana

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9.10 Page 8

Mary Birdsall House
Wayne County, Indiana

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Verbal Boundary Description

Starting at the northwest corner of West Richmond Avenue and Northwest Fifth Street; proceeding west by southwest along the north line of West Richmond Avenue for approximately 110 feet, thence west 200 feet along the same north line of West Richmond Avenue, thence north 218 feet, thence east 150 feet, thence south 45 feet, thence east 150 feet, thence south approximately 130 feet to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary described above corresponds to lot 33 of C.H. Moore Addition to the City of Richmond excepting 44 feet off the west end and 150 feet by 45 feet at the northeast corner which have been further subdivided as lots and a rough triangle approximately 100 feet by 44 feet by 110 feet which has been added to the right of way of West Richmond Avenue at the southeast corner of the lot. This lot represents the boundaries of the property as it was transferred to the present owner in 1927 and represents the original house site of the Birdsall-Thistlewaite property which was considerably more extensive at the time of their occupancy.