

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 in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, 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 Shirk-Edwards House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 50 North Hood Street N/A not for publication

city or town Peru N/A vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Miami code 103 zip code 46970

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 36 CFR 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.)

Patricia R. Riebt 8/1/95
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
 State of 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.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper Entered in the National Register Date of Action 9.14.95

Shirk-Edwards House
Name of Property

Miami County, Indiana
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(s)
- 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: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate
Neoclassical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: limestone
walls BRICK
WOOD: weatherboard
roof ASPHALT
other SYNTHETICS: vinyl
STONE: slate

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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

c.1862-1945

Significant Dates

c.1862

1921

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Edwards, Marie Stuart

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Harrison, Merritt

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: Miami County Historical Museum, Peru Library, Peru, Indiana

Shirk-Edwards House
Name of Property

Miami County, Indiana
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.5

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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Zone Easting Northing

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 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 Theresa L. Miller / Paul C. Diebold

organization _____ date March 8, 1995

street & number 50 North Hood Street telephone 317-473-8444

city or town Peru state IN zip code 46970

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 John R. and Theresa L. Miller

street & number 50 North Hood Street telephone _____

city or town Peru state IN zip code 46970

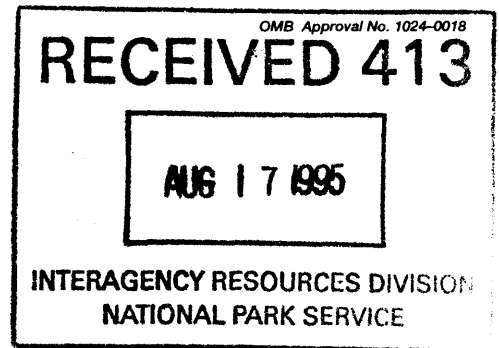
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain 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.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The Shirk-Edwards House is located at Hood and West Main Streets in Peru, Indiana. The site is 4 blocks from the courthouse square and the house is placed in a parklike setting in the center of a city block surrounded by an iron fence. Two other homes are located in this same city block (but are not included in the boundary). The Second Empire style house was built by Elbert Shirk's son while the Mission style house was built for Shirk's grandson.

Included resources are the house and the wood frame carriage house. The iron fence is not counted since only a small fragment of it is in the boundary. It could be counted as a single resource toward a historic district in the future.

The Shirk-Edwards House is a two story brick 8,000 square foot mansion, with uncoursed limestone rubble foundations, brick walls, and a complex hip roof. Exterior walls were coated with a very thin stucco to facilitate painting in 1921. Dates of construction are problematic. Several sources indicate that William H. Hood's c.1831 house, which was located here, was never demolished but was incorporated into the current dwelling in 1862, when Elbert Shirk built an Italianate mansion. Physical evidence is not conclusive, but items such as a difference in the first floor joists between those in the front rooms and those immediately behind seem to back this theory. In about 1880, a second story was added to the rear half. Richard E. Edwards and Marie Stuart Edwards, relations to the Shirk family through marriage, had the house remodeled by Indianapolis architect Merritt Harrison in 1921. Harrison converted the house into a Neo-Classical Revival style home while retaining many Italianate features inside and out. Whenever possible, features will be identified with the Italianate period or Neo-Classical period throughout the description.

Drawings do actually show this house in its Italianate form as early as 1868 in the "Birdseye View of Peru" map and in the Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Indiana, 1876, making the 1860's through 1920 its Italianate period. Blueprints drawn in 1921 by Indianapolis architect, Merritt Harrison, detail the major renovation at this time, making 1921 to the present its Neo-Classical period.

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**Shirk-Edwards House
Miami County, Indiana**

The southern elevation consists of a full-facade, two-story porch supported by four full and two engaged Roman composite columns (Photo 2). The second floor balcony has an iron balustrade. Two windows symmetrically surround the center door of the balcony. The rectangular windows have stone sills and lintels and wood entablature headers. Below, on the first level, French doors are located on either side of a center entry door. (The doorway, bricked over since the early 1950's to enlarge the living room, last year was covered with a nonworking door found in the attic to bring back the original symmetry). Four center steps lead up to a concrete floor, with both porch ceilings being constructed with tongue and groove wood siding. The low-pitched, hipped roof has a large eaves overhang and is boxed with dentil mouldings and large double brackets. The 1876 drawing shows an original one-story Italianate wrap around porch, with a center window rather than a door on the second level. Also, the earlier version of this house had a cupola on top, which was removed during the 1921 renovation.

The eastern elevation is divided into three parts: the first square shape (from the edge of the first structure to the end of the brick part of the house); and the third, the vinyl-sided small two-story addition to the rear (Photo 3). The first part has four evenly spaced windows on the second story and three symmetrically spaced windows on the first. A flat roofed entry porch flanked by two Roman composite columns serves as the main entry way to the home. Double doors are constructed of wood with glass windows. A transom window sits above both doors. Before 1921, the entry area was a bay window and the doorway was located in the second section, between a one story bay window and the two story, semi-hexagonal fireplace bay extrusion. Also, an Italianate wrap porch extended from the front of the house, to past the first section. The second section was added in two parts. 1868 and 1876 drawings show the house with a one-story addition. In about 1880, a second story was added, following the exact lines as the lower floor. Section two consists of a semi-hexagonal bay with an interior chimney in the center and symmetrical windows located on either side of the fireplace on both stories. Two other tail chimneys

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can be seen on this side, while two more short chimneys are located on the very top part of the roof. Other windows on this section are asymmetrically located. All windows in this section have stone sills and lintels, with wooden entablature crowns, exactly matching the ones in the first section. As with the front facade, the roof has a wide eaves overhang, boxed with dentil mouldings and double brackets. The third vinyl-sided section is shorter and narrower than the back of the brick house, with a flat roof and plain, asymmetrical windows. The foundation of uncut field stone, laid in irregular courses, is fairly similar in sections one and two, although the floor joists differ considerably in lumber sized, nails used and construction methods.

The northern, rear elevation consists of a brick two-story gabled wall (Photo 5). The boxed, dentil mouldings wrap around a short way and end. A two-story, vinyl clad, flat roofed addition covers up a large portion of the brick wall. A rear entry door and unadorned, asymmetrical windows, along with the fairly new siding, make this addition look much newer than the rest of the house (probably 1920's). More asymmetrical windows cover the brick portion of the back walls. The 1921 blueprint shows that the window next to the vinyl part on the lower level used to be a maid's entrance.

The western elevation is for all practical purposes, the back of the house and especially in the summer, cannot be seen because of a wooded area in the sideyard (Photos 6 and 7). Therefore, this view is much less decorative than the eastern elevation. The western facade is very similar to the eastern, except that in section two, there is no bay area. The back (side) door is plain, with no portico and is parallel to where the Italianate front door had been on the east side. The roof features are the same as with the rest of the house, except for one hipped dormer on the roof. Three brick chimneys rise from the green asphalt roof. The windows have the same stone sills and lintels, but are lacking the decorative wooden crowns that can be seen on the eastern and southern facades. The windows are much more asymmetrical, as a result of several renovations. The brick looks slightly different

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where rebricking has been painted. An add-on side porch appears in pictures from 1925 through around the 1950's, although no evidence can be seen on the 1921 blueprints or today.

The interior of the house has two distinct looks. The first square part (four front rooms upstairs and down, with a former center entry hall and center curved staircase); and the second rear rectangular added on section. The eight rooms and hallways in section one have Italianate wide crown mouldings. Most of these rooms show evidence of plaster ceiling medallions that have been removed, while the hallway medallions are still intact. All walls throughout this section are one-foot thick brick. In section two, there is no plaster crown moulding, rather, simple wood trim. The ceilings in section one are twelve feet tall, while some in section two are thirteen feet tall.

Since the "front" door is actually a side door, a clockwise description of the interior begins in the parlor. The parlor is located in section one and has wide plaster crown moulding, a large double hung window and a black marble fireplace trimmed in wood (Photo 8). Italianate architrave window surrounds are still intact. The wood flooring continues into the next room.

The entryway to the living room was widened by Marie Stuart Edwards, probably in the early 1950's. At this time she also removed the front entry way and replaced it with a fireplace facade to create the look of one large (17x40'), rather than two small living rooms. Picture frame wall mouldings throughout the house were also probably installed at this time. The living room (in two sections with a hallway) has wide crown moulding, a center chandelier and wood and glass French doors on each side of the bookcases which surround the fireplace. Above each French door is a transom which rises almost all the way up to the crown moulding. All windows in this room have moulded surrounds. The French doors open to the columned front porch. In the 1921 plan, the west half of the front porch (on both stores) was screened. The west side of the back wall has two sets of built-in bookcases. The east wall has two large double hung windows, while the west side has

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Shirk-Edwards House
Miami County, Indiana

one.

From the living room, one travels next through a hallway with a curved staircase, original rococo gas/electric chandelier and a built-in arched bookcase. The last room of the original section on the first floor (an office for both the Edwards families and the current owners) also has wide plaster crown mouldings, two large double hung windows and a decorative wood-trimmed, two-door closet (using the space under the staircase). An old door way has been made into shelves. A wall juts out for an old fireplace or stove (a double chimney sits on the roof at this location) but neither here nor upstairs have mantels.

Through the office, one may gain access to the back (side) door through a small room with a small half-bath. This room is in the newer section and has lower ceilings to accommodate a crawl space between the two floors. This room contains a small closet and plain book shelves. The lower half of the walls are covered in tongue and groove wainscoting.

Coming back through the small side room, through the office, through the center hallway, one ends up back in the parlor, completing the first circle in section one. From the parlor extends a hallway, leading to the dining room or to another back hallway, all now in section two, the newer addition. Traveling in a clockwise direction causes us to choose the hallway direction, where we pass a very decorative built-in curio cabinet with arched glass doors (Photo 10). In the corner is the elevator shaft. A 350 pound capacity wooden electric elevator, which still works perfectly, has patent numbers that date from 1936-1941. The hallway has thirteen foot ceilings, a very plain wood crown moulding and a brass and glass chandelier, probably from the 1920's. The hardwood floors continue down the hall. On the left is a half-bath, followed by a bedroom with a wood and brick fireplace. At this point, the wood floors end, and we enter the original servants quarters. A door to the right leads down to a very rough basement. Original crawl spaces were dug out to accommodate a boiler system. Many brick-floored chambers connect

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**Shirk-Edwards House
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the stone foundations walls to one another. The next door leads either to the kitchen or the former servant's area. The 1921 plans show two servants bedrooms, a living room and a bath next to the kitchen. The current arrangement is very similar, except that the bedrooms and living room are no longer subdivided, making one larger room. Also, the servant's entry door is now a window. The current entryway is through the vinyl addition room at the back of the house. This room contains the laundry and the back stairs leading to the apartment. The room is finished in tongue and groove wood siding. The kitchen is also extremely plain. Very little has ever been done to the kitchen, except for the installation of a row of 1970's lower cabinets on the east wall. Tongue and groove wainscoting covers the lower half of the walls. Old cabinets hang on the wall, one with glass doors. Through the kitchen, one enters the butler's pantry, a room lined with white wooden cabinets, many with glass doors. A two-light antique brass chandelier hangs above this area. The butler's pantry leads into the dining room. This room has thirteen foot ceilings and a large bay with a marble and wood fireplace, flanked by tall windows (Photo 11). Picture frame moulding trims all the walls. Through the dining room, one returns to the hall leading to the parlor, a complete circle of section two, and the end of the tour of the first floor.

The second floor route begins with a trip up the steep, curving staircase with a mahogany newel and banister (Photo 12). Above the stairs hangs a brass chandelier, with a plaster medallion shaped like oak leaves and acorns. The hallway has wide plaster mouldings, similar to all the section one rooms downstairs. The master suite at the front of the house is entered through glass-paned French doors, with a large paned window above the doors. The rococo fireplace is light gray marble (Photo 13). All the section one bedrooms have the wide plaster crown mouldings. There are two large windows on the east wall and two windows and a doorway overlooking the second floor balcony. French doors lead into a room to the west. Recently a 1970's bathroom was removed and a new shower and vintage claw-foot tub were added. This room has a chandelier identical to the one hanging in the master

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bedroom. Retracing our steps back out to the center hall, we find a section one bedroom to the right and another to the left. These rooms each have brass chandeliers. The room to the right also has arts and crafts style wall sconces to match its chandelier. The room to the left is connected to a bathroom by stepping up and walking through a small closet. The room to the right is connected to a bathroom with a little stairway leading to a small hall with a closet. It also connects to another bedroom. Back to the center hall once more, we now continue on, taking two steps up (to accommodate the higher ceiling in the newer addition). Much woodwork is of simple boards and bull's eye blocks throughout the rear second floor. To the left we see a door which opens to reveal the elevator on the second floor. The next door is a linen closet, with many doors, drawers and storage space. The woodwork looks pre-1921, and so may have saved or moved from elsewhere. The next door to the left is a bedroom (now part of an apartment). The next door to the right is a bedroom that has the exact floor plan and picture frame moulding as the dining room downstairs. A wood and marble fireplace, surrounded by two large windows, dominates the architecture of the room. The crown mouldings are very simple, narrow pieces of wood. A closet door is across the room from the door leading to the bathroom. The closet is made from what used to be the hall leading to the butler's pantry. This bedroom, according to the 1921 blueprint, was the upstairs dining room (Photo 14). A very similar butler's pantry and kitchen sit directly above their counterparts on the lower level (Portions of this rear area of the house were made into an apartment with separate dining and sleeping quarter for the elder family members in 1921). Minor changes have been made since the 1920's but this area retains its original character.

Back to the center hallway, we enter the servant's quarters area. There are no more hardwood floors and the woodwork has never been painted. The first door on the left is a large closet and the second door leads to the attic staircase. A hallway leads to the apartment's living room, formerly divided into two maid's bedrooms. An entire wall of wood cabinets lines one wall. These also appear to be pre-1921. A section of cabinet has been removed

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to allow the use of another bedroom by the apartment dwellers. A small bathroom is in this area. The maid's living room is still as it was in 1921. The back exit leads to a sun porch area. The 1921 plan shows a hand elevator in the rear addition, near the back staircase, but no evidence of this exists today.

The attic has an all-common rafter system, with notched rafters in section one. Section two has a large water tank once used to heat water for summer showers. A ladder leads to an opening on the top of the roof, concluding our tour with the best possible view of Peru.

Behind the house, across the circle drive, stands a wood shiplap sided carriage house with an unknown construction date (within the 19th century). The gabled part of the building is possibly shown in the 1868 bird's eye view. The main section has a gabled slate roof, with a shed added to one side and an addition with a hipped roof on the other (Photo 15). The heavy wooden garage doors are of the old-fashioned sliding style. The car bay has a poured concrete floor. An old bathroom is in the corner, with an old sink. The stable area is in the next room, with dirt floors, horse windows and plank floors. A stairway leads up to a loft filled with old doors and architectural pieces, including the old cupola windows. The beams supporting the roof are hand hewn and wood pegged. An Italianate style circular vent decorates the peak of the roof. Downstairs, a door leads to the add-on room, a former garage, remodeled in the 1970's into a recreation room. All three sections of the carriage house are shown to be in existence on the 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

The one and one half acre yard combined with the neighboring grounds, combine to make a lovely, landscaped block, referred to in old pictures as "Shirk Park".

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Section 8-Statement of Significance

The Shirk-Edwards House has historic and architectural value. As a historic place, the house is important under Criterion B for its association to Marie Stuart Edwards, a state leader in the suffrage movement and other social concerns. Edwards organized and headed the Indiana Women's Franchise League and became an important leader in the National League of Women Voters. The house is significant under Criterion C as an example of a rehabilitation of an 1860s Italianate house into a grand Neo-Classical mansion. Noted Indianapolis architect Merritt Harrison provided plans for the 1921 rehabilitation of the house. The period of significance (c.1862-1945) includes the time that Marie Edwards lived here (1914-1970) and the period of architectural significance (c.1862-1921) and carries these two items to the fifty year cut off point.

History of the Shirk-Edwards Property

The history of the Shirk-Edwards House, 50 North Hood Street, can be summarized by a synopsis of its owners. William Hood first owned the house, then the estate was bought by Elbert Hamilton Shirk. Elbert Shirk then passed the house to his son in law Richard A. Edwards and daughter Alice (Shirk) Edwards. Richard A. Edwards then passed the house to his son Richard Elbert Edwards and his wife, Marie Stuart Edwards. The elder members of the family continued to reside in the house after passing ownership to the next generation in most cases.

Following an October 23, 1826 treaty between the Miami and U.S. government, the site of 50 North Hood Street was opened for sale, and Joseph Holman bought the land from the U.S. government for \$500 in 1828. The boom in Peru real estate had already begun; Holman sold 210 acres of his 640 acres to William Hood for \$500 in 1829. Holman and Hood entered into a rivalry over the site of the county seat, with Holman proposing the site of Miamisport, a village he had founded nearby. Hood proposed his land as the site and offered inducements to sway the commissioners, including a free public square site and brick courthouse, lots for churches, and \$125 for a library. Hood also lured businessmen away from Miamisport by charging a nominal fee for lots or donating them. Hood's tactics were very successful, with the county seat being

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awarded to Peru. In 1834, Hood sold two-thirds of his 210 acres to two influential men, Richard L. Britton and Jesse L. Williams (a civil engineer on the canal) for \$6,000 and together, the three platted Peru. By the mid 1830s, Peru was a bustling canal town.

William N. Hood was born in Ohio in 1791 or 92. In 1819 he moved to Fort Wayne, where, for a number of years he was a successful merchant who dealt extensively with Native Americans. He moved to Peru in 1831, building a brick house at present day 50 North Hood. This house is believed to be part of the nominated property. Hood engaged in land speculation in Peru and became wealthy. Other accomplishments of Hood include the organization of the first Presbyterian Church in his home at 50 North Hood in 1835, and the founding of the Peru Collegiate Seminary, and he served on the first town school board. He was elected to the State Legislature in 1836 and again in 1838, but died before entering his second term. The family continued to own 50 North Hood until 1862.

In that year, Elbert Hamilton Shirk purchased a portion of the Hood farm including "one of the first brick houses in Peru" at 50 North Hood (History of Miami County, p. 368). Shirk laid out one of the earliest additions to Peru using part of the old Hood estate. Others by him followed in 1868 and 1871. Sources indicate that Shirk added onto the Hood House to create the Italianate mansion pictured in an 1868 Bird's Eye View of Peru.

Elbert H. Shirk was born in Franklin County, Indiana in 1818. He studied at Miami University, Ohio for two years and taught at the County Seminary there before emigrating to Peru in the summer of 1844 to form a mercantile business partnership. In 1845 he married Mary Wright of Franklin County and his partnership was dissolved. Shirk continued on his own and also became involved in real estate transactions. From 1850 to 1855 he invested great amounts of money in Mexican War land warrants in southwestern Indiana and Evansville. Other investments in Kansas, Michigan, and Chicago came in the 1860s and 1870s. Using his wealth, Shirk established a private bank in 1857 which soon became the First National Bank of Peru. Shirk was president of the bank until his death. In 1867,

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Shirk formed a partnership with Kilgore and established a four story department store in Peru. Elbert Shirk donated half the cost of building a new Baptist Church, of which he was one of eleven original members.

When Shirk died in 1886 at age 68, he was very wealthy, holding real estate in Indiana, Illinois, and other states as well as majority shares of stock in banks in Monticello, Delphi, and Tipton. The Shirks had four sons. The eldest, Milton, built a house next to 50 North Hood in the 1880s and succeeded his father as bank president. Another son, Elbert W., became vice-president of the same bank. The Shirk's daughter Alice became a cashier of the bank and lived her life, raising a family, in the home of her parents at 50 North Hood.

Alice had married Richard A. Edwards in 1880. Richard A. Edwards was born in Bridgewater, Massachusetts in 1851. His Welsh father had been the president of Illinois State University and was elected State Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois. Richard A. attended Princeton and Dartmouth Colleges, graduating from the latter in 1876. After graduation he accepted the position of instructor of Latin and Greek in the Rock River Seminary, Morris, Illinois. Two years later, he taught at Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois. After three years at Knox College, the Edwards moved to Peru in 1881. He married Alice Shirk in 1880 and was a cashier at her father's bank by that time.

Richard A. and Alice Edwards had four children. Richard A. continued to live at 50 North Hood until his death in 1947. Richard Elbert Edwards, son of Richard A., was the next owner of the house. Born when his parents lived in Galesburg in October of 1880, he moved with them to Peru in 1881. Richard E. Edwards graduated second in his class from Worcester Academy, Massachusetts. In 1902, he graduated from Harvard. For the next two years he worked at his family's bank. In 1904, Richard E. and Marie Stuart were married. From 1904 to 1909 he worked for the Wolverine Cedar and Lumber Company, living part time in Menominee, Michigan and Chicago. From 1909 until 1914 he was general manager

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of the company. In 1914, after the cutting of the company's standing timber was completed, he and Marie returned to Peru and moved into 50 North Hood Street.

Once in Peru, Richard Elbert Edwards was involved in many enterprises, including Peru Chair Works (vice-president and manager), First National Bank (vice-president), Miami Manufacturing Company, and the Peru Heating Company. He also was director of a furniture company in Rochester, NY. Later in life, Edwards became distinguished in the field of agriculture. He had earned a Master of Agricultural Economics from Purdue University, and in the late 1930s to the 1950s he was involved in many agricultural boards and groups. Most notably, from 1947 to 1959, R.E. Edwards served on the State Livestock Sanitary Board. As a result of his efforts, a Department of Veterinary Science was established at Purdue, a model program for livestock sanitation was set up and used in other states, and every county was required to have stock examined and accredited before sale. For these and other efforts, he was elected to the Agricultural Hall of Fame at Purdue.

Marie Stuart Edwards and the Shirk-Edwards House

But it is Marie Stuart Edwards' contributions which make the Shirk-Edwards House historically significant. Born in 1880 in Lafayette, Indiana, Marie was descended from prominent persons, including Henry Ellsworth, Ambassador to Sweden and owner of a major portion of Lafayette in the 1830s and Elias Derby, America's first millionaire.

Marie's life was filled with "firsts". She was the first girl in Lafayette to ride a bicycle and the first to go to a women's college (Smith). She was the first woman member of the school board in Peru, the first to serve on the State Board of Education and the first woman to serve on the State Welfare Board. She was an organizer and first treasurer of the National League of Women Voters.

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Marie Edwards began her crusading in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, when frustration over finding safe milk for her son caused her to mount a campaign to curtail infant mortality by abolishing unsanitary dairies and bad milk. Upon returning to Peru with R.E. Edwards, she became an organizer and state president of the Indiana Women's Franchise League. She was to play a significant role in the forming of the National League of Women Voters.

The National American Women Suffrage Association had been formed in 1890 to unite women's efforts to secure the right to vote on a national basis. With individual states granting some voting rights in the 1880s and 90s, suffrage had gained momentum, and in a broader sense was becoming part of the Progressive era reforms which characterized American politics in the early 1900s. Leaders such as Carrie Chapman Catt realized the need for an organization which would inform soon to be enfranchised women on the importance of voting and being involved in politics. Such an organization would also promote social reforms affecting women and society. This became the impetus for the formation of the National League of Women Voters: to insure passage of an amendment to enfranchise women, to educate voters on democratic responsibilities, and to push for social reform.

In March 1919, Marie established a national reputation with a well received speech at the National American Woman Suffrage Association meeting (NAWSA was the forerunner of the League). A mid-June 1919 meeting brought suffrage leaders together in New York City, with the not yet named group forming strategies. Marie Stuart Edwards was likely involved, for in February 1920 at Chicago's La Salle Hotel, she was nominated as one of four officers of the National League of Women Voters. Recommendations were not made as to who would be president, vice-president, treasurer, or secretary, but the four leaders-Maud Park, Edna Gellhorn, Pattie Jacobs and Marie Edwards-agreed that Maud Park would be president. Marie Stuart Edwards became the first treasurer and later vice president of the organization. Marie handled the business of the League from 50 North Hood. After two years, Marie relocated her League offices to the second floor of a

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building across the street (still standing).

In 1920, Marie helped organize the highly successful Social Justice Day in Marion, Ohio and 13,000 women from all over the country came to discuss women's rights with Senator Warren Harding, a presidential candidate. Keeping the issue of women's voting rights before the public finally paid off with ratification of the 19th Amendment on August 18, 1920. The work of the League continued, however. From her headquarters on the second floor of a building across the street from 50 North Hood, Marie directed 2,000,000 women in planning the first Pan American Conference of Women in 1921.

Marie Edwards continued to remain active in social causes and women's rights into the 1930s and 40s. In 1929 she had served on the Indiana State Commission for Mental Defectives. That year she was chairman of the 10th Anniversary and Memorial Fund of the League of Women Voters. Marie made a 1930 nationwide tour on behalf of the League to increase fund raising; this committee reached the goal of \$250,000 despite the onset of the Depression. She was chairman of the Department of Government of the Indiana League of Women Voters in 1934. In 1937, she was vice president of the newly created Indiana Board of Public Welfare and chairman of the drafting committee for the Civil Service Bill in Indiana. She was also very involved in trying to improve the state's penal system, serving on the state Board of Corrections and writing the laws for this board.

Mrs. Edwards was active on the county board of Associated Charities and headed the local Works Project Administration board, part of FDR's New Deal program, during the Depression years. Due to her leadership, shacks along the Wabash River, known as "Tin Town", were razed and the families who lived there were provided decent places to live. She was appointed to Peru's first Civic Center board, supervising the initial project of converting the building into a community center.

During World War II she was responsible for organizing and

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conducting the Red Cross Blood Donor Unit, which was one of the most successful in Indiana. Marie Stuart Edwards died at 50 North Hood in 1970. Richard Elbert Edwards died in 1969. The Shirk-Edwards House is the most fitting tribute to Marie's contributions to social reform in Indiana.

Architecture

The architectural significance of the Shirk-Edwards House lies in the quality of the rehabilitation carried out under the direction of Merritt Harrison in 1921. The rehabilitation is significant because of its sensitivity to the Italianate fabric of the house (within a 1920s frame of reference) and for the quality of work shown in Harrison's additions to the house. Harrison specified preservation of some interior and exterior Italianate features which were clearly "dated" by 1921, such as the heavy paired brackets and entablature window lintels of the exterior. On the interior, he specified reuse of old woodwork and left many Italianate moldings in place. He did, however, transform the house by adding the grand portico to the front.

It is assumed that Marie Stuart Edwards was personally involved with selecting ideas for the rehabilitation, but whether R.E., Marie, or Harrison provided most of the guidance remains unknown. The project came at a seminal time for the preservation movement in Indiana. Architects were expressing an interest in historic architecture. Indianapolis architect Lee Burns wrote several books about historic architecture in Indiana during the teens and was designing Federal revival homes in Indianapolis. Burns remodeled the former Johnson farmhouse at 4500 North Park Avenue (1862) in 1919, for example. Indiana's first state historic site, the J.F.D. Lanier Mansion (1844) was officially donated to the State of Indiana and opened to the public in 1925. Perhaps not coincidentally, the Lanier Mansion features a full height portico on its riverside facade.

Merritt Harrison (1887-1973) was a prominent architect in Indianapolis. He formed several partnerships during his long

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career. Harrison was born in Richmond, Indiana and moved to Irvington (in Indianapolis) with his family in 1900. After his education at Manual High School and Cornell's architecture program, he returned to Indianapolis and became a draftsman under H.L. Bass. In 1916, Harrison started private practice, receiving commissions for large homes on the northside throughout the 1920s. In 1922, a partnership with Llewellyn Turnock was formed which lasted until 1934.

Under this partnership, the firm designed many notable Indianapolis buildings, including Crispus Attucks High School, Indiana School for the Blind, and the Irvington Presbyterian Church. The commission to rehabilitate the Shirk-Edwards House in Peru is a departure which illustrates a fuller body of work for Harrison. No other known early rehabilitations of this type exist in Peru.

Harrison continued his architectural practice until 1971, designing buildings with William Russ from 1934 to 1950, including Lockefield Gardens in 1935 and the State Fairground Coliseum in 1939.

Current owners of the Shirk-Edwards House, the Millers, are undertaking an ongoing rehabilitation of the house. They hope to preserve both the Italianate features of the house and its 1921 additions and alterations.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

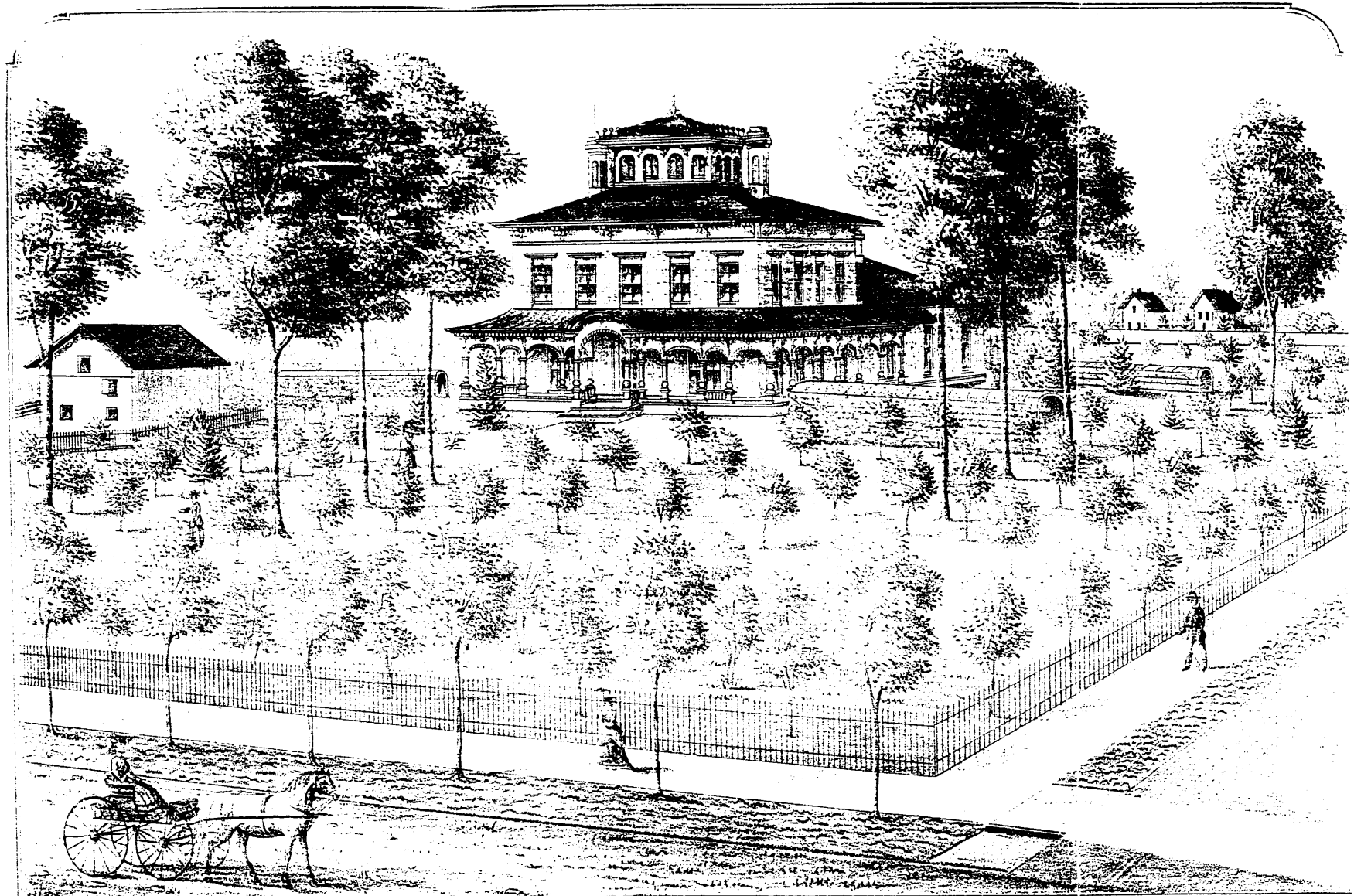
Tract #1 - A part of Outlot No. 1 in Shirk's Addition to the City of Peru, Miami County, Indiana, described as follows: Beginning at a point in the East line of said Outlot, being the west line of Hood Street, 132 feet North 30 degrees West of the Southeast corner thereof and running thence South 60 degrees West and parallel with the North line of Main Street 212 feet to the point of beginning of the following described real estate, to-wit: Thence North 30 degrees West and parallel with Hood Street and with the East line of said Outlot 68 feet 5 inches to a point; thence North 60 degrees East 70 feet 8 inches to a point; thence south 30 degrees East and parallel with the East line of said Outlot 68 feet 5 inches to a point; thence North 80 degrees West and parallel with the North line of Main Street 70 feet 8 inches to the place of beginning.

Tract #2 -Beginning at a point in the North line of Main Street 106 feet eastwardly from the Southwest corner of said Outlot and running thence eastwardly along the North line of Main Street 106 feet to a point; thence northwardly and parallel with Fremont Street 139 feet 6 inches to a point; thence westwardly and parallel with Main Street 106 feet to a point; thence southwardly and parallel with Fremont Street 139 feet 6 inches to the place of beginning.

Tract #3 -Beginning at a point in the North line of Grantor's land which is 132 feet northwardly at right angles from Main Street and 197 feet westwardly along Grantor's North line 15 feet to the Northwest corner of Grantor's land; thence southwardly along Grantor's West line 15 feet to a point; thence northeastwardly 21.2132 feet to the place of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

These boundaries were chosen because this is the way the land was divided between the Shirk and Edwards families at the time of Marie Stuart Edwards' death, which is also the land we own.



RESIDENCE OF E.H. SHIRK, Pres^t of THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK, PERU, MIAMI CO., INDIANA.