

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Benjamin Harrison Home

AND/OR COMMON

Benjamin Harrison Home

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

1204 North Delaware Street

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Indianapolis

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

multiple

STATE

Indiana

CODE

18

COUNTY

Marion

CODE

097

**3 CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY**

\_\_\_ DISTRICT

 BUILDING(S)

\_\_\_ STRUCTURE

\_\_\_ SITE

\_\_\_ OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

\_\_\_ PUBLIC

 PRIVATE

\_\_\_ BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

\_\_\_ IN PROCESS

\_\_\_ BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS** OCCUPIED

\_\_\_ UNOCCUPIED

\_\_\_ WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

\_\_\_ YES: RESTRICTED

 YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_\_ NO

**PRESENT USE**

\_\_\_ AGRICULTURE

\_\_\_ COMMERCIAL

\_\_\_ EDUCATIONAL

\_\_\_ ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_\_ GOVERNMENT

\_\_\_ INDUSTRIAL

\_\_\_ MILITARY

 MUSEUM

\_\_\_ PARK

\_\_\_ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_\_ RELIGIOUS

\_\_\_ SCIENTIFIC

\_\_\_ TRANSPORTATION

\_\_\_ OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. Gerald M. Carrier, Executive Secretary

STREET &amp; NUMBER

The Arthur Jordan Foundation; 1204 N. Delaware Street

CITY, TOWN

Indianapolis

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Indiana

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

City-County Building

STREET &amp; NUMBER

East Washington &amp; Delaware Streets

CITY, TOWN

Indianapolis

STATE

Indiana

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic American Building Survey (5 ext. photos, 7 architectural data sheets)

DATE

2/74

 FEDERAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress/Annex (4 historic data sheets)

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION                                     |                                       | CHECK ONE                                   | CHECK ONE   |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD                 | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR                 | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED    |   |   |

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The President Benjamin Harrison Home is a two-and-one-half story brick building in the Italianate spirit. Built by the then prominent lawyer as a symbol of his newly found prosperous career, the house is an elegant, spacious structure containing 16 rooms and a full basement. The house has bay windows trimmed with stone. The most notable alteration in the appearance of the house is evidenced by the addition of the front porch (see accompanying photograph of the original east facade). The first porch was added by the President after his return from Washington. The porch was removed in the early 20th century and replaced with a brick porch. The present porch, with its influence of English-Regency styling, is a restoration to the original Harrison addition.

The Harrison Home has seen a number of functions since the President occupied it. From 1910 to 1936 the house was run as a rooming house. Then in 1936 it was acquired by the Arthur Jordon Foundation, which used the building as a femal domicile for the Jordon Music Conservatory. The house served this function until 1951 when the conservatory was acquired by the Butler University. In 1952, the President Benjamin Harrison Foundation, an offshoot of the Jordon Foundation, began to restore the second floor. Mrs. Harrison had left the house's furnishings intact and they were placed on display in 1952, the year the house was opened to the public.

No further alterations occurred for the next two decades. In 1973 the Jordon Foundation, with an additional grant from the Lilly Endowment, began a massive restoration of the first, second and third (attic) floors. There was a complete renovation of the basement. On this lower level the coal bin was removed and an entrance on the north side, adjacent a small garden, was installed. Likewise, the basement was transormed into a civic conference center. The offices of the Jordon Foundation and the curator of the museum are also on the level. A kitchen was added and steel beams installed for structural strength.

The formal entrance to the house faces Delaware Street. One enters the front hall in which is located an elegant cherrywood grandfather clock. The front parlor is located on the south of the entrance hall. Here gold-plated pier mirrors stand twelve feet high and a cut crystal chandelier hangs from center ceiling. The woodwork is butternut and the floors are of oak in parquet pattern covered with turkey red carpeting. Double doors lead to the back parlor. The room is furnished in red velvet-covered, inlaid walnut furniture. An exquisite rosewood piano, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, sits here giving the room its alternate name, the music room. It was in this room that Harrison accepted the Republican nomination for the presidency in 1888. Other rooms on the first floor include: the library, in which is located a handsome walnut bookcase in which are numerous volumes, some autographed by the President; a portrait of Abraham Lincoln, who commissioned Harrison a brigadier-general in the Civil War; and the dining room, in which there is a large portrait of President Harrison, by T.C. Steele, and a silver service with pitcher and goblets and a china closet with numerous dishes, the most outstanding being pieces from the Lincoln dinner service.

On the second floor are located a number of bedrooms. Two of these are worthy of mention. In the master bedroom is located the massive hand-carved bed in which the President died. There is also the crib in which the President slept as an infant in North Bend as well as his exerciser. The guest bedroom has a half-tester bed and a cradle used by the six children of John Scott Harrison. Located above the mantel is a portrait of President William Henry Harrison.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD                               | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW |   |   |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING     | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE         | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499   | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC     | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION           | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW                            | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599   | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS              | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE                     | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699   | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE            | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY            | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799   | <input type="checkbox"/> ART                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING            | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC                          | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899   | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE                | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY                     | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900-       | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS          | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)     |
|                                      |  | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION              |   |  |

## SPECIFIC DATES

## BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In this house, located at 1204 North Delaware Street, Benjamin Harrison accepted the nomination of the Republican Party for the presidency. It was likewise in this house that the candidate and his lieutenants planned the strategy that ultimately put him in the White House. Fame did not diminish his love for his home, and upon leaving the presidency he returned to his Indianapolis residence.

## BIOGRAPHY

Born near Cincinnati on August 20, 1833, Harrison subsequently moved to Indianapolis. By the time of his settling in Indiana in 1854, he has graduated from college and had married a college friend, Caroline Lavinia Scott. His new home town had less than 16,000 people in 1854. Still, Harrison foresaw opportunity in the law, and soon hung out his shingle. Over the years he built up a very respectable practice, grossing over \$12,000 in 1873.

Like numerous other lawyers, Harrison showed little hesitance in entering politics. Soon after establishing residence in Indianapolis, he joined the Republican Party. An increasingly important role in Indiana politics fell temporary victim to the Civil War. When Harrison emerged from that war, with a brigadier-general's rank, he resumed political activity. Supporting radical reconstruction, he attempted to gain his party's nomination for the governorship of Indiana in 1872, but the Republican convention rebuffed him. Four years later, however, he became the Republican candidate for the gubernatorial office. He waged a strenuous campaign, advocating sound money and reform in the State. A veteran himself, he did not forget to wave the "bloody shirt," reminding a veteran-filled audience in August 1876 that he,

"would rather march by your side on the dusty road under the dear flag of our Union, and wear the old army shirt stained with drops of blood, than to do service under the black banner of treason."<sup>1</sup>

Such appeals to old hatreds had lost some effectiveness, for Harrison lost the election by around 5,000 votes.

Perhaps a bit discouraged, Harrison still remained a hard-working, faithful Republican. He campaigned vigorously for the party's presidential banner in 1876 and 1880. Reward came in 1881, when the Indiana legislature elected him to the United States Senate. He served but a single term, during which he stoutly supported his party's position on all major questions. The one-time general also

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Dictionary of American Biography

Oberholtzer, Ellis Paxson, A History of the United States Since the Civil War (5 vols.; New York, 1917).

\_\_\_\_\_, Benjamin Harrison: Hoosier Statemans (New York, 1952)  
Sievers, Harry J., Benjamin Harrison: Hoosier Warrior, 1833-1865 (Chicago, 1959)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3 acres I

UTM REFERENCES

|   |      |         |          |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 16   | 572430  | 4403900  |
|   | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C |      |         |          |

|   |      |         |          |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| B |      |         |          |
|   | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| D |      |         |          |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Joseph Scott Mendinghall, Historian

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service - Historic Sites Survey

DATE

5/13/75

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street, N.W.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL \_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_

LOCAL \_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

9/8/83

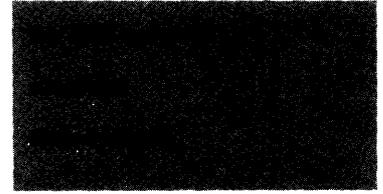
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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

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



Continuation sheet

1

Item number

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Page

2

The third floor of the Harrison Mansion was used as a ballroom. It presently houses exhibits of varying importance non apropos display on the interior of the house, e.g., campaign memorabilia, a buffalo horn chair and gowns.

There are two staircases in the house, the most elegant in the back hall adjacent the back parlor. This stairwell with handcarved butternut balustrade is continuous from first floor to Ballroom (attic). The second stairwell, in the rear of the house, is modest in design and is more aptly termed an accessway.

The Jordon Foundation has placed a small comfortable apartment in the rear section of the second floor. It has a living room, bedroom, small alcove, and modern kitchen.

On the north side of the house has been built a small garden. It has walkways bordered with shrubbery and small fountain/birdbath. (See accompanying photography)

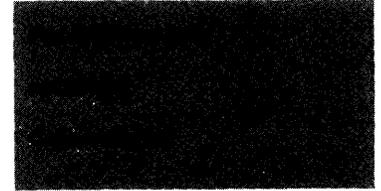
BOUNDARY INFORMATION AND JUSTIFICATION

The original Harrison property consisted of two lots on the west side of North Delaware Street. Subsequently, the Jordon Foundation acquired the property along with the entire block. Neighboring houses, were razed and the grounds landscaped. In the late 60's the southernmost lot (indicated on the accompanying plat map as lot 30) was sold and interstate 66 constructed (A photograph is enclosed which shows the view from the Harrison Mansion). In addition the Foundation has plans to sell some thirty feet of lots 28 and 29 for a proposed street. (This will, it is hoped, aid in the tourist trade as presently Delaware and 13th Streets are one way leading away from the I-66 entrance ramp just off Pennsylvania Street).

Commencing at the point of intersection of N. Delaware and 13th Streets proceed due south, along the west curb of N. Delaware Street to a point which intersects the right of way of Interstate 66; thence proceed in a northwesterly direction along the north side of this right of way to the point of intersection with an access alley (formerly Tolbott Street); thence proceed due north along the east side of the alley to the point of intersection with 13th Street; thence due east along the south curb of 13th Street to the point of origin. This boundary is indicated in red on the accompanying plat map titled "The President Benjamin Harrison Home Property Plat Map."

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

1

Item number

8

Page 2

remained a faithful friend of the veteran, in whose behalf he advocated a more liberal pension law. Much to his credit, Harrison, alarmed at the waste of our resources, introduced bills to create a public park out of the Grand Canyon in the Arizona territory. Needless to say, others lacked his farsightedness on this matter, and his bills got nowhere. With his term drawing to a close, Harrison sought re-election, but his State Legislature chose another.

With his retirement from the Senate in 1887, one could have thought that Harrison's political career had ended. But greater office still lay ahead. Harrison had displayed interest in the presidency in 1884, but his party had turned to James G. Blaine. For almost four years after leaving the Senate, Harrison apparently remained inactive. A speech on February 22, 1888, in Detroit showed, however, that the fire of ambition had not been extinguished, for he announced his willingness to run for the White House in the fall presidential campaign. His party responded favorable, nominating him at its convention that summer. On election night he and some friends waited for the returns in his library, until about 1:00 a.m., when Harrison went to bed. The final count showed that Harrison had not won the popular majority, but had topped his opponent, Grover Cleveland, in electoral votes.

Harrison carried an unexceptional political career and a cold personality into the White House. Apropos of the President's lack of cordiality, one Senator remarked after visiting the White House that talking to Harrison was "like talking to a hitching post."<sup>2</sup> Harrison's administration, like his conversation, lacked zest. The Sherman Silver Purchase Act, the McKinley Tariff and a Dependent Pension Bill were some of the important laws passed during his term. Perhaps the outstanding aspect of Harrison's presidency was his support of James G. Blaine's Pan-Americanism. Blaine, the Secretary of State, worked for closer relations between Latin America and this country with some beneficial results.

As the election of 1892 approached, Harrison hoped for renomination by his party. With less than enthusiasm, the Republicans did choose Harrison for another term. The people, showing less rapture for the President, voted for Cleveland; and for the second time since 1865 a Democrat won election to the White House.

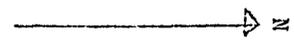
Harrison returned to his home in Indianapolis. He died there on March 13, 1901.

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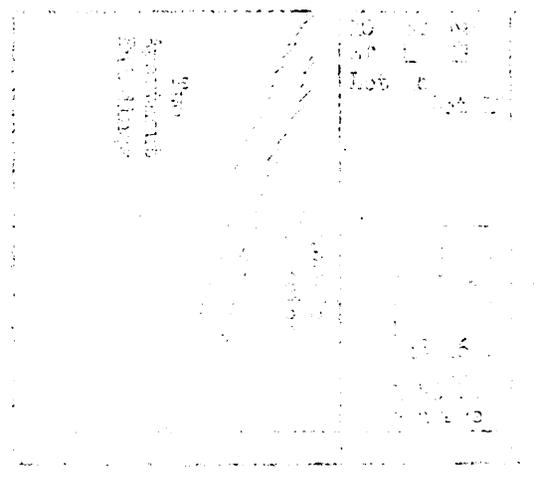
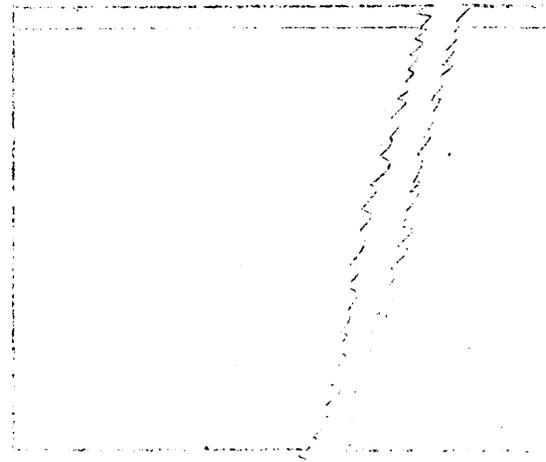
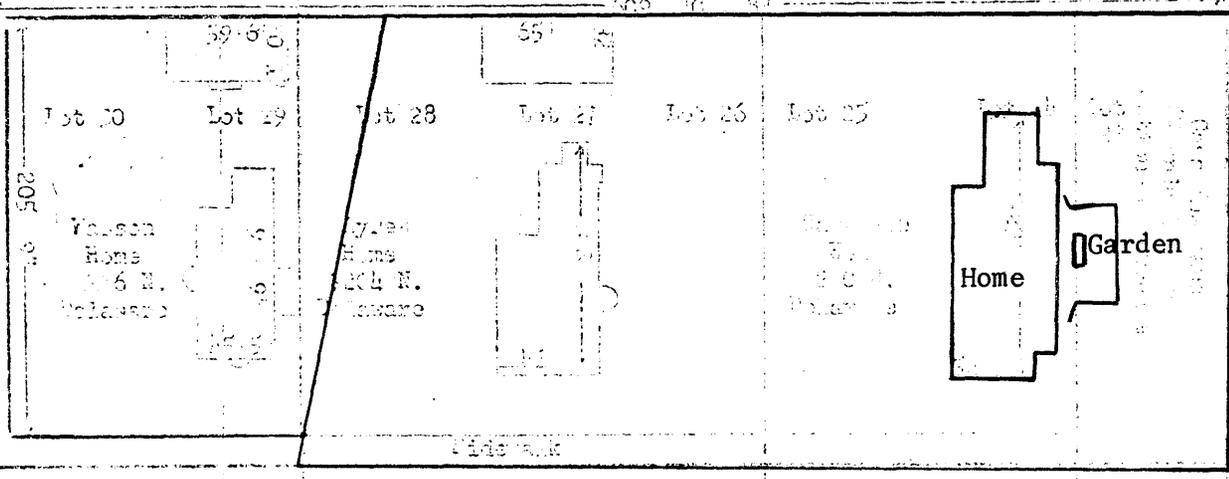
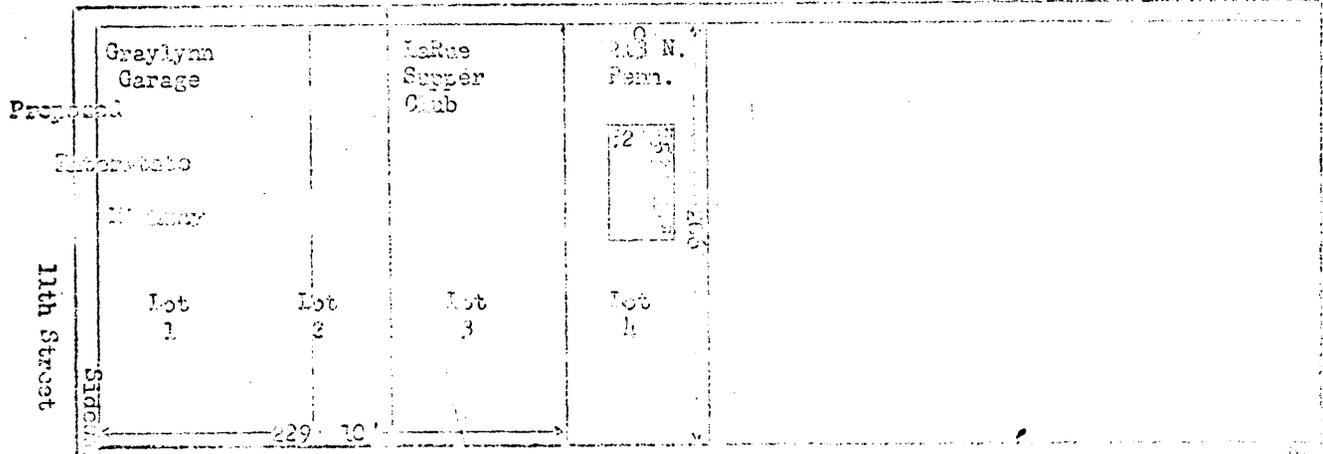
<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Harry J. Sievers, Benjamin Harrison: Hoosier Statesman (New York, 1959), 117.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Ellis P. Overholtzer, A History of the United States Since the Civil War (5 vols.; New York, 1917), V, 176.

11 200' wide  
11 150' wide



Pennsylvania Forest



The President Benjamin Harrison Home  
Property Plat Map