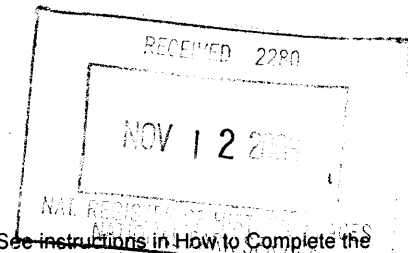


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 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 Steele, T.C., Boyhood Home

other names/site number T.C. Steele House

2. Location

street & number 110 South Cross Street N/A  not for publication

city or town Waveland N/A  vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Montgomery code 107 zip code 47989

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.)

J.C. Steele  
Signature of certifying official/Title  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources

11.8.03  
Date

State of Indiana  
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.

determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Patrick W. Andrews

Date of Action

12/24/2003

**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
- landscape

**Number of Resources within Property**  
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
 (Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19th c.: Greek Revival

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK  
 walls WOOD: Weatherboard  
 roof WOOD: Shingle  
 other CONCRETE

**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)

ART

Period of Significance

1852-1870

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Steele, T.C.

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:

Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

16	496200	4413750
Zone	Easting	Northing

3 

Zone	Easting	Northing

2 

--	--	--

4 

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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 Olen R. Gowens  
organization Historic Waveland, Inc. date 01-29-2002  
street & number Rt. 1; P.O. Box 84A telephone 765/ 942-2088  
city or town Ladoga state IN zip code 47954-9319

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 Historic Waveland, Inc.  
street & number 111 E. Main St. telephone 765/ 435-3090  
city or town Waveland state IN zip code 47989

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  
Boyhood Home

Steele, Theodore Clement,

Montgomery County, Indiana

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### Narrative Description

The boyhood home of Theodore Clement Steele, located at 110 S. Cross Street in Waveland, Indiana, is a modest representation of the Greek Revival style of architecture. The surrounding neighborhood is residential in nature, although the town's commercial district is just one block to the north. The property upon which the house is situated slopes gradually to the southern end of the lot. Several mature trees are located around the house, and a concrete sidewalk runs along the east side of the building.

The house can be identified by two distinct time periods. The original portion of the house, measuring thirty-two feet square, was constructed c.1850. Alterations occurred to the building sometime between July 1895 and April 1902, including two porches and a shed roofed extension to the west. The original structure is a one and half story wood frame building. There are four rooms downstairs and one room upstairs. The front elevation (photo #1) is divided into three bays, with the front door centrally located between two windows. The exterior walls are clad in yellow poplar clapboard, and rest on a brick foundation. Common fenestration in the original portion of the house consists of double-hung, 1-over-1 windows. The house has simple six-inch wide corner trim, a wide frieze board and roof overhang, all made of poplar. The house has a gabled roof of cedar shingles, installed as part of a 2002 restoration project. A brick chimney projects through the roof on the north side of the house.

The primary elevation of the house (photo #1) faces east, fronting on South Cross Street. The building's symmetrical gable-front façade is indicative of the Greek Revival style, including box returns at the gable ends. Another element of the style is a front entry including sidelights and transom, which are intact beneath a layer of clapboard siding. The front door itself is wood on the lower half with a glass window on the upper half. An eight-light storm door from a later era covers the front door.

It is believed that the windows in the T.C. Steele Boyhood Home were originally 6-over-6 double-hung windows, but were replaced approximately 100 years ago when the house underwent an extensive renovation. However, no photographic documentation exists for verification purposes. The window sash on the first floor appear to have original panes of glass dating to their installation. Two windows are located in the house's south elevation (photo #2), while just one is in the north elevation (photo #3).

At the time of the Steele family's occupancy, the dwelling consisted of four rooms on the ground floor; a parlor, dining room, bedroom, and kitchen. The upper half-story was one large room, most likely a bedroom. The front entrance opens directly into the parlor, which is eighteen-foot square. To the north, wooden double doors open into the twelve-foot by eighteen-foot dining room. Beyond the dining room, to the west, was the original kitchen, measuring twelve feet square. The kitchen could also be accessed through an exterior entrance to the north. This door has a glass panel in the upper half. A single door in the west wall of the parlor leads into the bedroom, which measures twelve by eighteen-feet. Many of the house's doors appear to be original four-panel doors. All of the ceilings of the first floor rooms are nine feet in height.

A central enclosed stairway leads from a door in the northwest corner of the parlor to a single, fourteen by thirty foot room. Single windows in the east and west exterior walls are the only source of daylight. The ceilings measure seven feet in the upper level.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Steele, Theodore Clement, Boyhood Home  
Montgomery County, Indiana

### Narrative Description – Continued

The original hardwood floors throughout the house were yellow poplar. White oak was used for the window and door facings as well as baseboards. The parlor and dining rooms feature decorative moldings while plain facings are used in the rest of the rooms. The risers, sideboards, and railing of the stairs were grained to resemble oak.

The house remained unchanged from these original conditions until sometime between July 1895 and April 1902, when an addition was added to the rear of the house and renovations executed to the original portion. According to Sanborn Insurance Company maps, the original outlines of the structure were still in place in July of 1895. A later Sanborn map, dated April of 1902, identifies the addition as part of the house.

The addition (photo #4) is a fourteen foot extension at the rear, or west side, and runs north forty-two feet, ten feet beyond the north side of the original exterior walls. It rests upon a brick foundation. Poplar clapboard matching the original building was used for the exterior cladding. The wood windows are 2-over-2 double hung. The ceilings are eight feet in height.

Three new rooms were added in the addition, including a utility room, kitchen, and storage/pantry room. The south room of the addition has an entrance and window in the south facade, and one in the west. Directly to the north of this room, is a room which appears to have served as the kitchen, consisting of an exit door in the west wall and three narrow half windows over the sink. The original kitchen may have been converted into a second downstairs bedroom. The room in the northwest corner of the addition is a ten-foot by fourteen-foot room with an outside entrance on the east side. There were single windows in the west and north walls. This was either for storage or a pantry.

At this same time, two Eastlake-style porches were added to the east and north facades of the original house (photos #1,3). The flat roofed porch on the east facade features four decorative turned columns, ornamental scroll-cut brackets and spindlework just below the porch's roofline. Three steps lead up to the central bay, supported by a concrete porch floor. On the west end of the north facade is the smaller of the two porches. Three decorative turned columns support the shed roof. This porch also features the scroll-cut brackets and spindlework. It is also believed that the modified Palladian window was installed in the upper gable of the front façade during the same period as the two porches and rear addition.

The interior underwent several alterations during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, all of the original plaster was removed and replaced with plywood paneling. Most ceilings were covered with plasterboard and stippled. Several windows in the rear addition were either downsized or changed to reflect the changing use of the rooms. Finally, insulation was blown in between the exterior walls. The exterior walls were untouched. The home's last occupants discontinued its use in June 1999.

In 2000, a group of concerned citizens, art lovers and historic preservationists, formed the Historic Waveland, Incorporation, with the goal of saving and preserving the property. The uncertain fate of the home warranted its inclusion on Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana's "2001 10 Most Endangered Places of Indiana" list. That same year, Historic Waveland, Inc., secured the necessary funds to purchase the property to avoid the demolition of the house. This group continues its preservation efforts with a vision of making the T.C. Steele Boyhood Home a community center for art shows and exhibits of local and other Hoosier artists, as well as visiting artists.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Steele, Theodore Clement, Boyhood Home  
Montgomery County, Indiana

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### Statement of Significance

The boyhood home of Theodore Clement Steele is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its associations with the early life and training of one of Indiana's most significant artists. While the house displays features of architectural significance, its eligibility for the National Register is primarily based upon the historical stature and enduring fame of the man himself. Steele, who is perhaps best known for his bucolic landscape paintings, mastered portrait painting at an early age while residing at the home. During his 18 years of residence in the property (1852-1870), he completed some forty portraits of family members, friends, and prominent citizens in the area.

Theodore Clement Steele was born near Gosport, Indiana on September 11, 1847, the eldest child of Samuel and Harriett Steele. When he was five, his parents relocated the family to Waveland, located in southwestern Montgomery County. By the time of the Steeles' arrival, Waveland was already a thriving town. Its location had been determined by the presence of springs where travelers between Lafayette and Terre Haute would stop for water. A small settlement including a trading post and post office opened nearby in 1830.

John Milligan, a Crawfordsville resident and land speculator, purchased acreage near Waveland's post office. By 1835, Milligan platted the town and began to sell lots. Rapid growth followed and by 1850, the town had three general stores, two wagon shops, a blacksmith shop, two inns and three churches. Waveland was incorporated in 1866. County records indicate Milligan owned the lot upon which the Steele house is located, and also that Samuel Steele rented his saddle shop from Milligan. This recorded link between T.C. Steele's father and Milligan establishes the likelihood that it was indeed the house at 110 S. Cross Street that became the family's home upon their arrival in 1852. Steele family records also substantiate the provenance of the house.

One of the reasons the Steele family may have come to the village of Waveland was its excellent school. The Presbyterian Church required the construction of institutions of higher learning throughout the state, and the session in Waveland agreed to do so in 1848. The Waveland Academy was completed the following year, including a substantial brick building for the cost of \$1,200.

Soon after the family had relocated in Waveland, an uncle presented Theodore with a small paint set. It may have been this simple gift that released the creative mind and spirit of Steele and foreshadowed his life of artistic expression. Theodore taught himself to draw and even began assisting other children of his age in how to draw and create on paper. At the age of twelve he enrolled for classes at the Waveland Collegiate Institute, which had been reorganized from the Academy in 1859. His studies included Object Lessons in Form, Colors and Drawing, his first formal instruction in art. His unique talent was immediately recognized and in the following term he was himself teaching other students.

The 1865 catalog of the Institute lists the eighteen-year-old as an instructor in Drawing and Painting in the school's preparatory department. Additionally, he had begun painting in oil without formal instruction and was creating portraits of such quality that he was sought out by interested parties from Lafayette to Greencastle, and as far away as Peru, Indiana. Clearly, Steele became intent on a career in the arts during his years of development in Waveland. These early studies and teaching were essential to the development of the skills that were necessary for Steele to establish his career. Perhaps of equal importance was the fact that Steele was encouraged to pursue an artistic career and was given the opportunity to do so in the small community of Waveland.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Steele, Theodore Clement, Boyhood Home  
Montgomery County, Indiana

### Statement of Significance - Continued

Following his graduation from the Waveland Collegiate Institute in 1868, Steele spent time in both Chicago and Cincinnati, coming under the tutelage of significant portrait painters. One of the early portraits painted by Steele in this time frame was of a fellow student, Mary Elizabeth Lakin of Rushville, Indiana. The two soon found their common interests and were married on February 14, 1870. By this time he was earning a good living in portraiture. His reputation spread and in response to orders they moved to Battle Creek, Michigan, just weeks after the wedding. To augment his income, he offered classes and between sessions he painted studies of nature, still-life and landscapes, his greatest interest centering on the latter.

Except for occasional sojourns back to Waveland, Steele's departure for Michigan in 1870 was his last connection to his boyhood home. The same year, his widowed mother Harriett Steele relocated with her four other sons to Kansas, leaving behind the family residence of 18 years. It is important to emphasize, however, that the experience Steele developed for portraiture during the Waveland years would later lead to some of his most significant works. Renditions of significant personalities such as President Benjamin Harrison and Vice President Charles Fairbanks, among others, linked Steele to some of the most important Americans of his time.

Steele returned to Indiana in 1873 and opened a studio in the central business district of Indianapolis. Steele believed the city offered greater opportunities for artistic growth than many other Midwestern cities. Unfortunately at the time of this return, a major economic depression reigned throughout the country. To help make ends meet, Steele joined with a rising young poet named James Whitcomb Riley in creating commercial signs for businesses. Working together from the art studio in the Fletcher & Sharpe's Block, Riley employed himself with the lettering of the signs while Steele aptly applied the ornamentation. Quite naturally, Steele painted a portrait of the talented poet.

The following year, an Indiana Exposition was held in conjunction with the State Fair, in which Steele offered his artwork in a judged show. It was his most important and imposing exhibition entered up to that time. Two of Steele's original portraits in oil won him the Gold Medal, establishing him as an accomplished regional artist. This event had a great impact on the broadening of artistic interests in the city, which reverberated statewide.

In 1880, Steele traveled to Europe with his family and fellow artists J. Ottis Adams with whom Steele would maintain a lifelong association. Steele studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, Germany where he further cultivated his skills at portraiture and took an increased interest in landscape painting. While in Munich Steele met fellow American painter J. Frank Currier, an artist who would have a great impact on Steele's painting. Currier exposed Steele to the practice of painting finished works "en plein air," or out-of-doors directly in front of nature, rather than completing the painting in the studio. It would be several years before Steele adopted this technique wholeheartedly. In the summer of 1884, Steele made the decision to return to Indianapolis and apply the knowledge he had acquired in Munich.

From the time of the family's first settling in Indianapolis they had rented several houses but never remained at any one address for an extended period of time. They first took a house in 1873 on Linden Street; exact address unknown but referred to being north of Pleasant Run. The next year they moved to 47 Dougherty Street (now Woodlawn) and in 1875 moved once again, this time to 54 Apann Avenue. These dwellings are no longer extant. In 1876, they moved into rooms on the third floor of the Bradshaw Block, 73 West Washington. Steele also moved his studio to the same location. The Steeles had lived here until their departure to Europe.



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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Steele, Theodore Clement, Boyhood Home  
Montgomery County, Indiana

### Statement of Significance - Continued

While returning from Europe, a disastrous fire destroyed the storage building that contained the Steele family's personal possessions, household furniture and several paintings that had been shipped back from Europe. To soften their sorrow and distress, Major William J. Richards, a cousin of Steele's, rented and completely furnished a house directly across the street from his own residence on Seventh Street (now Sixteenth Street) known as the Tinker or Talbot Place. In 1886 Steele added a studio to the property.

Steele probably did not see his first real French Impressionist painting until he visited the World's Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893. He had two works accepted by the jury for inclusion in the American section of the Art Palace and, much to his surprise, they were hung in the "Impressionist" room. By this time Steele's paintings, with their bright palette and their attention to atmospheric effects of light, were closely allied to the ideals of impressionism. They were considered in the vanguard of their day and regarded as modern. Steele himself referred to his application of this modern art form as "western impressionism."

Although Steele was active in the expanding art world in Indianapolis during the winter months, he habitually sought out the rural settings during the summer months for his landscape settings. Therefore he often returned to familiar places such as Waveland, Yountsville and Crawfordsville in Montgomery County; Lafayette in Tippecanoe County and Greencastle in Putnam County. Another place he had grown fond of was Rushville in Rush County, the homeplace his dear Libbie's family. It was here that he jointly purchased a house with J. Ottis Adams in 1897. The artists spent so much time at the house that Libbie began to refer to it as the "Hermitage," a name which stuck and by which the property is still known. Years later, when Steele built his own home-studio in Brown County, he sold his half of the "Hermitage" to Adams, who lived and raised his family there. Still extant and relatively unaltered, the house is located at 650 East 8<sup>th</sup> Street in the Brookville Historic District and bears the name of the Hermitage Bed and Breakfast.

In the fall of 1899, Libbie Steele died following a period of failing health. In contrast to this sorrowful time, Steele reached a high point in his career the next year when Wabash College at Crawfordsville bestowed upon him an Honorary Degree of Master of Arts. It was noted that he was one of Montgomery County's most outstanding citizens. This was the first academic award bestowed upon him.

The artist, needless to say, had always spent much of his time in introspection. After his wife's departure there naturally were hours of remembrance and recollections of the past and its influence on his life. In one of these moments he found his mind taking him back to his youthful days in Waveland. He jotted down in his journal: "It is with pleasure and thankfulness I recall this little town, a village of five or six hundred inhabitants, where my childhood and youth were spent. It had the usual village stores and blacksmith's and wagon and carriage shops typical of the period, but it was a community of more than ordinary intelligence and situated in a charming and pleasant country of prosperous farms."

After returning to Indianapolis, Steele discovered an air of excitement stirring within the Indianapolis Art Association, which he had been instrumental in organizing. The Association was searching for suitable location in which to establish an art museum and art school, a venture afforded them through a significant bequest from the estate of John Herron, which stipulated the establishment of the museum and school. After months of search and very thoughtful planning, the Art Association settled upon the old Tinker-Talbot Place, taking possession on April 9, 1901. However, it was to be a temporary museum and plans were immediately begun for an outstanding structure. The old mansion

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Steele, Theodore Clement, Boyhood Home  
Montgomery County, Indiana

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### Statement of Significance - Continued

was completely renovated to accommodate and properly serve its function as a museum. For the first time electricity was installed. One year later the Steele Art Studio on the grounds was converted into an Art School, fulfilling another objective of the Association. Mr. J. Ottis Adams, a Mr. Lyons and the eldest son of T.C. Steele, Brandt, were the first instructors of art at the new school.

On November 25, 1905, the cornerstone laying ceremony for a new museum building of Neo-Classical design was celebrated with Steele giving the dedicatory address. Work on the new structure progressed so well that the dedicatory observations were held November 20, 1906. Today the Herron School of Art is part of the Indianapolis University-Purdue University-Indianapolis Campus.

In 1906, Steele had begun to search for a place outside of the city where he could paint and enjoy nature intimately. Late that year he decided to invest in a sizable area for the building of a home-studio. The construction of his new home was undertaken in the spring of 1907. It was at this same time that Steele had begun a relationship with Selma Neubacher, an assistant supervisor of art for the Indianapolis school system. The two were married on August 9, 1907, and moved immediately into the hilltop home and studio that Steele had named "House of the Singing Winds," in keeping with his lifelong perception of the music of nature.

It is generally agreed that Steele's construction of "House of the Singing Winds" was the beginning of the prolific Brown County Art Colony. The following year, according to fellow artist Adolph Schulz, "...the art colony became the largest in the Central States and it has remained so ever since 1908...." Artists from Chicago and around Indiana began to spend at least part of the year in Brown County. Steele was prolific in painting the new idyllic setting. All his attention therefore was occupied with landscape works.

Following the establishment of the art colony of Brown County, Steele generally came to be known as the "dean of Indiana artists". He was greatly pleased to be elected as an Associate of the National Academy of Design in 1913. Indiana University honored him with a Doctor of Laws degree in 1916, and his association with the University was further strengthened with their appointment of Steele as Honorary Professor of Painting in 1922.

In June 1926, Steele became very ill and required hospitalization in Terre Haute. Although he was released in a few weeks, his condition did not improve. He was then taken to the University of Indiana Medical Center where his problem was diagnosed as incurable. He was returned to his most hallowed home-studio where he quietly bade farewell July 24, 1926.

The legacy of T.C. Steele lives on through his countless creations of art scattered throughout museums and private collections here and abroad. Towering above all Hoosier artists, Theodore C. Steele stands preeminent. Both artists and connoisseurs of art in America and Europe readily acknowledge his stature and fame. It is of the utmost appropriateness that just as his final home-studio has been preserved and maintained, so also the dwelling of his artistic beginning should be respectfully restored and preserved in perpetuity.

The astounding professional artistic development attained by Steele during his years in Waveland places him among the inexplicable young prodigies of the art world. His development came with only meager instruction or exposure to the art of painting, yet he was able to create masterful canvases derived from an innate instinct or proclivity. Steele executed forty plus portraits, as well as still-life and landscapes in the short time span between the age of sixteen and

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Steele, Theodore Clement, Boyhood Home  
Montgomery County, Indiana

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### Statement of Significance - Continued

twenty-three while dwelling in the house on South Cross Street. According to Laurette McCarthy, an independent scholar and curator who has specialized in Hoosier artists, "Steele had a prominent career as one of Indiana's leading portraitist long before he painted his first impressionist work. He began his life as a painter, received his first training in art, and embarked upon his professional career in Waveland, Indiana."

Of the early paintings completed by Steele, the existence of ten paintings has been documented (see list of "Early Paintings of T.C. Steele," Page 11: Additional Documentation). This list of paintings illustrates diversity in Steele's early work, however, his emphasis on portraits is quite evident. Eight of the paintings are portraits and these likely number among the forty that he was known to have completed. Five of these portraits were painted from life while the other three were copies of masters. Steele's practice of copying the works of masters such as Stuart or Healy allowed him to hone his artistic skills. He continued this practice in his career. While studying at the Royal Academy, Steele frequented the Old Pinokothek, Munich's outstanding art museum, where he worked for hours copying the old masters in order to understand and apply their peculiar mechanical techniques in art creation.

It is worth noting that of the ten early paintings by Steele known to exist, the Indiana State Museum is the repository for four. Three of these paintings were completed during his Waveland years. The ownership of these paintings by the State of Indiana speaks to their recognition as significant within the body of Steele's work. In correspondence, Rachel Perry, Fine Arts Curator for the Indiana State Museum, confirmed this by stating, "These works are significant for their revelation of Steele's early natural talent and quality as an artist."

The T.C. Steele Boyhood Home is one of the oldest extant buildings in Waveland and the sole representative of the Greek Revival architectural style. Despite its turn-of-the-twentieth-century alterations, such as the modified Palladian window in the front gable and the two decorative porches, the house still retains the defining features of the Greek Revival cottage that Steele called home for eighteen years. The mid-nineteenth century origin of house is unmistakable and the property would no doubt be identifiable to Steele were he to see it today.

Still situated on its original lot "...down the hill, south of Main Street," as described in *House of the Singing Winds*, the structure's location and its proximity to the small downtown commercial district have not changed since Steele resided here. The house has retained exterior features, which Steele would have recognized, including the original clapboard siding and corner boards, the wide frieze board, and the box returns of the front gable. The fenestration of the house remains much the same as during Steele's time, as well. Though obscured for decades, the front door surround with sidelights and transom still remains and is to be restored. The Greek Revival cottage has also retained its original room configuration, as well as original interior elements including wood baseboards, window and door trim, and several wood-paneled doors.

In correspondence with the Steele family, Thomas Creveling, great-great grandson of T.C. Steele, has stated, "Of the resources associated with the life and career of T.C. Steele, the Steele family considers two to be the most significant - his home and studio in Brown County and this small cottage in Waveland." Conclusively, the boyhood home of T.C. Steele is of unquestionable significance and qualifies for placement in the National Register of Historic Places. This modest abode was not the physical birthplace of T.C. Steele but rather the place where his all-consuming passion for a life of art was conceived. It was from here that Steele went forth from this humble beginning an established, successful artist.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Steele, Theodore Clement, Boyhood Home  
Montgomery County, Indiana

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### Bibliography

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Journal and Personal Papers of T.C. Steele – 1870-1926, Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis, Indiana

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### Verbal Boundary Description

Part of Lots numbered ninety-six (96) and ninety-seven (97) as the same are known and designated on the recorded plat of Milligan and Noel's Addition to the Town of Waveland.

### Boundary Justification

This is the legal description of the property on which the T.C. Steele Boyhood Home is located.

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Additional Documentation

Photographs

Photo #1

(Items 1, 2, and 5 are the same on photos #1 through #14)  
(Items 3 and 4 are the same on photos #1 through #9)

1. Steele, Theodore Clement, Boyhood Home
2. Montgomery County, Indiana
3. Theodore Miller
4. January 4, 2002
5. Olen Gowens
6. View of east facade

Photo #2

6. View of south facade

Photo #3

6. View of north facade

Photo #4

6. View of west facade

Photo #5

6. Typical trim detail

Photo #6

6. View of stairs looking west

Photo #7

6. Railing at top of stairs

Photo #8

6. Interior door detail

Photo #9

6. View of upper level palladian window looking east

Photo #10

(Items 3 and 4 are the same on photos #10 through #14)

3. Fred Kelly
4. July 10, 2002
6. View of parlor looking south from dining room

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Additional Documentation (Cont.)

Photo #11

6. View of dining room and front door looking east

Photo #12

6. View of addition looking southwest from original kitchen

Photo #13

6. View in addition looking south

Photo #14

6. View of upper level looking east

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Additional Documentation

Early Paintings by T.C. Steele – 1863-1870

Portrait of Cervantes Ca. 1863	Private Collection, Direct Descendent	Believed to be one of first oils
Portrait of Altice Steele 8 yr. old brother, Ca. 1863	Private Collection, Direct Descendent	Possibly first from life
Landscape – Waveland Ca.1865	Private Collection	Scene at Waveland
Portrait of Harriett Evans Ca.1865	Private Collection, Direct Descendent	Mother – from life
Portrait of Samuel Steele Ca. 1865	Private Collection, Lateral Descendent	Father – likely from photographic image
Still Life with Watermelon Ca.1868	Indiana State Museum	
Portrait of Revolutionary Belle Ca. 1868	Indiana State Museum	Copy of original by Gilbert Stuart
Portrait of Sir Thomas Lawrence, Ca. 1869	Indiana State Museum	Copy of Original by Healy
Portrait of Libbie Lakin Before marriage, Ca. 1870	Private Collection, Direct Descendent	From life while a fellow student
Portrait of James Stephen Upton, Ca. 1871	Indiana State Museum	Immediately following departure from Waveland but reflects his growth as an artist