

FINAL

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 Homecroft Historic District

other names/site number 097-392-88000

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet N/A  not for publication

city or town Homecroft N/A  vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Marion code 097 zip code 46277

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.)

*Daniel R. Roberts*

11-20-95

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:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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 |            |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 63           | 19              | buildings  |
| 0            | 0               | sites      |
| 0            | 0               | structures |
| 0            | 0               | objects    |
| 63           | 19              | 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)

Bungalow/Craftsman  
Colonial Revival  
Tudor Revival

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: limestone  
walls WOOD: weatherboard  
BRICK  
roof ASPHALT  
other

Narrative Description

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

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning & Development

**Period of Significance**

1923-1945

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Gates, Frank

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Homecroft Historic District  
Name of Property

Marion County, Indiana  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of Property 70 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 6 |
|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

  
Zone Easting Northing

3 

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 6 |
|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 7 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

  
Zone Easting Northing

2 

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 6 |
|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

4 

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 6 |
|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

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 Jane Nolan, Partner  
organization Weintraut & Nolan date September 23, 1995  
street & number 4118 North Pennsylvania Street telephone (317) 283-6453  
city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46205

**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 List available at DHPA.  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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.

2.

---

Roughly, Loretta and Maynard Avenues between Madison and Orinoco Avenues, including 6602-6730 Madison Avenue.

## 7. Description

---

### Materials

#### Walls

STONE: Limestone  
SYNTHETICS: Vinyl  
SYNTHETICS: Aluminum

The Homecroft Historic District is located in the incorporated town of Homecroft in Perry Township within the city of Indianapolis, the capitol of the state, in Marion County, in central Indiana. Marion County is set on a plain that is traversed by the White River. Geologically formed during the last Ice Age, glaciers scoured and flattened much of the land that is now known as the Tipton Till Plain.

The Homecroft Historic District is the core of the small incorporated 150-acre town of Homecroft and is made up entirely of single-family dwellings. The northern boundary of the district separates the historic district from newer homes built in the late 1940s and 1950s. Madison Avenue, a busy, four-lane street, forms the eastern boundary of the district and divides the strictly residential historic district from the eastern part of Homecroft which includes a few commercial enterprises on Madison Avenue. (See photo 10) The southern boundary, like the northern one, separates the district from homes constructed during a later phase of the development of Homecroft.

Contributing and non-contributing properties appear in the resource count and on the map; garages and sheds, most of them constructed more recently than the period of significance, have not been included in the count. With sixty-three contributing and nineteen non-contributing buildings, the ratio of contributing to non-contributing is more than three to one. There are no structures in the district.



National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet  
Homecroft Historic District, Marion County, Indiana  
Section 7, page 2.

---

The suburban town of Homecroft was platted by Frank E. Gates, a real estate developer, in 1923 on land that had been a poorly drained cornfield. The rectilinear street plan suggests a logical extension of the roadway network already in place because of the rectangular survey. Development of the town proceeded in stages with most of the construction in the historic district taking place in the 1920s through the early 1940s. Houses were typically constructed on the front third of the seventy by two hundred foot lots. Corner lots varied somewhat in size. In the 1930s, sidewalks were added and three maple trees, two in front and one in the back of each lot were planted. (See photo 2) The original storm sewers provided by Gates when the Homecroft was established was replaced by a modern sewer system in the late 1970s.

The architecture in Homecroft consists of a variety of period revival homes and bungalows that reflect the popularity of these styles at that time in the United States. The Bungalow originated in India. It first appeared in the West in the late nineteenth century in response to rising demands for affordable housing and the cultural dictates of the progressive movement with its emphasis on predominately vernacular homes with a rich cultural heritage. It stressed simplicity and functional integrity and was influenced by the prairie school.

The Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Revival homes in Homecroft are primarily one or one-and-a-half stories with square or rectangular floor plans. Clad in weatherboard or brick, a variety of facade treatments render the homes Colonial, Georgian or Neo-Classical without changing the interior plan. There are numerous English Cottages in weatherboard, brick, or stone that reflect the Tudor Revival style.

Tudor Revival architecture was a popular choice in Homecroft. Several elements of the style were combined to create the feeling of the English Cottage. Most are clad in brick. While several have steep roofs, some have moderately-pitched roofs with steep-roofed projecting front gables that contain the entrance. Tall multi-paned glazed windows, and massive chimneys with decorative chimney pots are common characteristics. A wide sampling of Tudor Revival in the form of the English Cottage ranges from a relatively elaborate brick-clad example at 1604 Loretta Avenue (See photo 5) to more modest adaptations.

The house at 1604 Loretta, the finest example of Tudor Revival in Homecroft, has a cross-gabled, steep-pitched roof with false-thatching that rolls around the eaves and rakes to suggest a thick layering of thatch. The brick wall cladding has occasional protruding bricks and ashlar accents for a decorative effect. A

gabled stucco dormer with paired multi-paned glazing is located in the southern roof slope of the side gable. There is also a similar stucco gable in the roof of the north elevation, although it does not contain windows. Beneath the gable in the facade are triple, tall, narrow windows with multi-paned glazing. The main entrance has a round arch with a stone keystone and decorative stone accents extending into the brick door surround. To the east, a short stone course continues to the enclosed porch in the gable facade, that has two arched openings with keystones and stone accents that match the entrance. A porch in the north elevation has similar arched openings. The chimney in the west elevation is massive with an irregular-cut stone base that extends ten feet upward from the foundation. The chimney has stone tabs in the brick, and three decorative chimney pots. Single rectangular windows with multi-paned glazing are on either side of the chimney.

The brick side-gabled one-and-a-half story house with its moderately-pitched roof at 1420 Loretta Avenue is more typical of Tudor Revival in Homecroft. A projecting front gable with a steep roof contains the round arched entrance with keystones and stone tabs in the door surround. Decorative stone accents in the projecting gable and multi-paned windows in the door give the feeling of the English Cottage. There is a gabled dormer with multi-paned glazing over the brick porch that has heavy square pillars. A massive chimney with two chimney pots is in the west elevation.

A brick side-gabled one-and-a-half story brick and weatherboard house at 1431 Loretta Avenue has a steep-pitched roof and a projecting front gable that contains a recessed arched entrance with a keystone and decorative stone tabs. A porch to the east is covered by a steep-pitched roof. Three tall, leaded, multi-paned windows in the facade, a hipped dormer with four small rectangular multi-paned windows, and a large chimney with stone accents and chimney pots represent a good example of the English Cottage in Homecroft.

A different version of the English Cottage in Homecroft can be found at 6724 Madison Avenue. The cross-gabled one-and-a-half story house is clad with brick on the first floor. The north and south gables and the large shed dormers on either side of the brick clad front gable are stucco with half-timber accents. The north dormer contain two six-over-six windows; the south dormer contains three.

Some adaptations of the English Cottage style have only a few characteristics to suggest the style. The simple one-and-a-half side-gabled cut-limestone home at 1402 Loretta Avenue is an example. (See photo 1) Only in the steep roof of the front gable that contains the arched entryway and the heavy stone chimney can the style be seen.

The home at 1437 Loretta (photo 4), possibly a Sears House or a close copy, has hints of the English Cottage style. The one-story side-gabled house is vinyl-clad. It has a moderately pitched roof and projecting front gable that contains three nine over nine windows. The brick chimney is relatively massive with two decorative chimney pots.

There are several more modest variations of the Tudor Revival on Maynard Avenue. The cross-gabled brick house at 1411 Maynard Avenue has a parquet pattern in the front gable. The round arched entrance in the front gable suggests the English Cottage. The brick cross-gabled home at 1436 Maynard Avenue with its steep roof, round arched entryway in the front and massive chimney represents another version. The false thatching of the moderately steep-roofed cross-gabled home at 1664 Maynard Avenue with its arched doorway and multi-paned windows represents another characteristic of the popular architectural style in Homecroft.

Small frame bungalows were among the earliest homes built in Homecroft. They were predominately vernacular, functional homes without frills. A group of small bungalows clad in weatherboard were built along Loretta Avenue in the 1920s.

The one-story front-gabled weatherboard bungalow at 1653 Loretta Avenue features a low-pitched clipped-gable roof with a partial-width front porch. The separate, extended porch roof matches that of the house. There are attached shutters on either side of the one-over-one windows in the three-ranked facade. The door has three elongated rectangular panes.

Just across the street at 1654 Loretta Avenue is another one-story weatherboard bungalow of the same vintage. It is side-gabled with a low-pitched clipped-gable roof with a wide-eave overhang. The three-ranked facade has a central door opening sheltered by a small entrance porch with a clipped-gable roof. One-over-one windows with attached shutters flank the entrance.

There is a brick version of the Bungalow style at 1637 Maynard Avenue. A one-story front-gabled house with a low-pitched, clipped-gable roof, it was among the homes built in the mid-



1920s. Two windows with three narrow rectangular panes in each are located in the front gable. The three-ranked facade has a central door opening and is flanked by paired three-over-one windows. A brick front porch with a low-sloping roof and flat-arched wood trim extends across the entire facade. The roof is supported by heavy square brick pillars.

There is a larger version of the bungalow at 6670 Madison Avenue. (See photo 9) The one-and-a-half story home, clad with vinyl siding and brick, is side-gabled and has a moderately pitched roof with a wide eave overhang. The roof covers the porch that extends across the front of the house. The porch, with painted brick and heavy piers, may have been open at one time. Now there are six one-over-one rectangular windows on each side of the central porch support. A centered hipped-roof dormer with two three-over-three windows interrupts the slope of the roof. An entry door is located in the south side of the porch. There are paired six-over six windows with attached shutters in the south gable just above a projecting addition.

The Colonial Revival style, particularly in one and one-and-a-half story Cape Cod cottages, can be found in Homecroft clad in brick, weatherboard, and stone. The revival adaptations of the Cape Cod Cottage have a lower roof pitch and somewhat different proportions. However, they were very popular during the time Gates developed his suburb. Other examples of Colonial Revival homes in Homecroft often have similar floor plans. Small changes in the details of facades can make the difference in stylistic classification.

Neo-Classical details determine the style of the one-story brick home at 1426 Maynard Avenue. (See photo 6) The four-ranked side-gabled building has a moderately-pitched roof and the door surround for the entrance is a wooden arched pediment with dentils that rests upon supporting pilasters. A small metal railing sets off the area in front of the door. The entrance is flanked by one eight-over eight window on the west and two smaller windows on the east. The windows have attached shutters. There is a decorative brick course of upright stretchers above the windows. There is a similar house at 1484 Maynard Avenue, although it is three ranked and has flattened brick arches over the window openings.

An example of the Cape Cod Cottage can be found at 1487 Maynard Avenue. (See photo 7) Although the one-and-a-half story, moderately-pitched, side-gabled house has been covered with vinyl siding, the basic integrity of the house has been maintained. Three gabled dormers with narrow rectangular windows are in the  
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

roof slope as well as a large central brick chimney. Two sets of paired one-over-one windows with attached shutters flank the central door opening with its simple surround and sidelights. There is an attached glassed-in porch on the north side and an attached garage on the south.

The home at 1425 Loretta Avenue is another example of the Cape Cod Cottage. The one-and-a-half story side-gabled house has aluminum siding. It has three gabled dormers in the sloping roof that covers the screened porch. Although the facade is four ranked, it is not symmetrical. The central entry is flanked by paired six-over-six windows to the west and two six-over-six windows to the east.

The most elegant Colonial Revival house in Homecroft is located at 1422 Loretta Drive. (See photo 3) It is considerably larger than its neighbors. The two-story, three-ranked, painted brick, side-gabled home has a moderately-pitched roof with a narrow eave overhang and a centered gable. There are three eight-over-eight double-hung windows with shutters in the second floor. The central door has sidelights and is flanked by eight-over-eight double-hung windows with shutters. The corners are decorated with quoins. Two shuttered six-over-six windows are in the second floor of the east gable, and two six-over-six window flank a side door beneath. The north window is not shuttered. All window openings have stone sills. In the rear elevation, the garage has been converted to a room.

Most of the non-contributing resources in Homecroft were built later than the period of significance. The home at 1414 Maynard Avenue is an example. (See Photo 12) The one-story side-gabled home has a projecting front gable with an entry way adjacent to the gable. The facade is faced with limestone and a limestone chimney is located in the west gable. Two homes on Loretta Avenue, 1434 and 1438 are quite similar in style but are clad in brick.

The Homecroft Historic District is an entity that is representative of a distinct period of community development and planning that began in the 1920s and continued throughout the period of significance. This middle-class neighborhood reflects the move away from the cities into planned suburbs in the countryside that took place all over the United States. Few have maintained their integrity as Homecroft has. Despite the fact that the city of Indianapolis has grown all around it, the little suburb still retains its identity as a small planned community.

## 8. Significance Statement

The Homecroft Historic District is a residential district established in 1923, a time that coincides with the decentralization of the urban population of the United States after World War I. The district represents a trend toward suburban development in Indianapolis and the entire nation. Enabled by the ease of interurban commuting and the growing popularity of the automobile, hundreds of thousands of Americans retreated from the smog, crime, and diversity of the city to pursue a sylvan existence in homogeneous suburbs. The Homecroft Historic District qualifies for Criterion A: Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The district has significance in the area of community planning and development; it is a classic example of the rise of commuter suburbs during the 1920s. The modest, vernacular, period revival homes and bungalows found in Homecroft reflect the choices of architecture found in many middle class suburbs in the United States in the 1920s.

In 1923, Frank E. Gates, a subdivision and real estate specialist, and his son, Oliver, bought 80 acres of swampy farm land in Perry Township 4 1/2 miles south of the city center and 1 1/2 miles south of the city limits of Indianapolis. The land was located on an interurban line that insured a short commute to Indianapolis where most of the future residents of Homecroft would work.

A well-known developer of several subdivisions, Frank Gates founded Frank E. Gates Real Estate Company in Indianapolis in 1913 and advertised that he had a "Special Department for High Class Suburbs" in his office in the Fletcher Trust Building. Forest Manor, just south of Broad Ripple, is his best-known subdivision in Indianapolis, although he developed others in Anderson, Indiana, Columbus and Dayton, Ohio, and Cadillac, Michigan. Homecroft differs from Forest Manor in that it was not a subdivision that extended from Indianapolis. Its location was farther removed from the city. Gates decided to call his new suburb Homecroft, because he felt it was a name that suggested a desire to own a home.

The historic district lies within the original 80 acres. Gates later purchased 40 additional acres to the west and 30 acres along Tulip Drive in 1940 bringing the total acreage of the small town to 150. When it was established, Homecroft was a suburb in the countryside that seemed quite distant from the city. It was

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet  
Homecroft Historic District, Marion County, Indiana  
Section 8, page 2.

---

separated from Indianapolis by cultivated fields and very little development. Now, Homecroft is surrounded by the larger city that extends to the county line a little over a mile to the south. Suburban sprawl continues even farther southward into Johnson County.

Frank and Oliver Gates envisioned the potential of the suburb and prepared the land for residential development. They remedied the surplus water condition by installing a storm sewer that fed into Buck Creek. Then, they platted the lots; the standard size was seventy by two hundred feet, although corner lots varied somewhat in size. They laid out cinder streets and driveways and brought in utilities.

Soon, the Gates company began to do a brisk business selling lots and building houses. Frank Gates did most of the real estate development and offered several models to his customers enabling them to build architect-designed homes without the expense of one-of-a-kind construction. The most prevalent architectural styles in Homecroft Historic District are the Bungalow, Tudor Revival as represented in the English cottage, and Colonial Revival as seen in the Cape Cod cottage. William A. Radford, who wrote a weekly article in the *Marion County Mail* about architecture, described the most popular styles of the day, particularly the English cottage and the bungalow. "These styles suggest substantial, picturesque living, beauty which is real, because they are based on sound good taste."

Oliver Gates, by then a partner in his father's business, lived in Homecroft from the beginning, and he oversaw the building and general maintenance of the Homecroft that was provided by the Gates Realty Company. For many years this service extended to turning on the street lights manually by means of a switch on a lamp post on Madison Avenue.

The significance of community planning and development in the town of Homecroft in the early 1920s reflects a period of intense suburban development that began all over the United States after the end of World War I. Several factors influenced this development including population distribution, the reconfiguration of households and families, increased mobility, and the idealization of life in the countryside.

For the first time, the majority of the people in the United States lived in urban areas. The 1920 census revealed that the balance of the population of the United States had shifted; more people lived and worked in the cities than on farms. Cities became more crowded and their residents more diverse as farm dwellers left their rural homes and immigrants came from eastern



Europe. Immigrants were less numerous in Indianapolis than in many other American cities.

Another factor that influenced suburban growth was the gradual change in the size and structure of families. Between 1890 and 1920, the large extended families of the Victorian Era declined and began to be replaced by smaller, nuclear ones that had a less complex hierarchy. These families preferred to live in smaller, detached, single-family dwellings, and they could afford to do it because of the availability of mortgages. The number of homes that were secured by mortgage debt between 1890 and 1920 rose from twenty-seven to forty percent nationwide, and that percentage continued to grow throughout the period of significance.

Spurred by the invention of the automobile and improved infrastructure, millions of families needed little encouragement to follow their dreams of a bungalow, a garage, and a well-manicured lawn in the clean air of the countryside. Vast tracts of rural areas succumbed to the bulldozer in the 1920s as Americans moved out from the center of the city. Frank Gates realized that Homecroft would appeal to people who wanted to live in the country but who worked in the city. From Homecroft, residents could simply walk across Madison Avenue to Roel's Drug Store to catch the interurban, or they could drive their own automobiles to their jobs in Indianapolis.

The rise of the middle-class suburb followed in the wake of the progressive era's revolt against Victorian excesses. Idealization of life in the countryside became a theme of suburban development. Life away from the city was perceived as healthy alternative to the dingy and decadent city. In the suburb, families could raise their children far from what they perceived as the moral vice and depravity of the industrialized city. By the 1930s, row after row of suburban homes testified to the dispersion of America's urban population.

The idealized joys of suburbia, however, were sometimes balanced by its shortcomings. The rise of the suburbs represented a retreat of the white middle class from the city; this furthered social and economic segregation in metropolitan America. Because many suburbs provided water, sewers, police, and other amenities, residents felt little responsibility for the city. Many, including Homecroft, had restrictive covenants that forbade the sale or rental of homes to people who might destroy the homogeneity of the suburban enclave. Businesses were not allowed and renters were discouraged in Homecroft.



Indianapolis had its streetcar suburbs in the late 1800s such as Irvington, but the automobile prompted the development of later planned suburbs. Among the early ones were Golden Hill in 1907, Brendonwood in 1917, and Crows Nest in the 1920s. However, Golden Hill and Crows Nest catered to the wealthy, and Brendonwood's developer, Charles Lewis, imported noted landscape architect, George Kessler to design a residential park for upper-middle-class homeowners. Homecroft's appeal was to the solid middle class who aspired to own their own homes.

Homecroft typifies the suburb of the 1920s where inexpensive farm land provided an area to build affordable houses that attracted middle-class families who wanted to follow the American dream and become homeowners. The predominant architectural styles in Homecroft represented the popular ones of the day. Frank Gates featured traditional period styles that symbolized respectability and economic security. Most prevalent in Homecroft are the Bungalow and Late Nineteenth Century and Early Twentieth Century Revivals. A group of small bungalows in the 1600 block of Loretta Avenue are among the earliest homes constructed in the suburb. There are several Colonial Revival homes, mostly in a modified Cape Cod style. Tudor Revival homes in the form of the English Cottage are the most numerous and can be found on every street.

The building of homes in the historic district continued throughout the period of significance, and improvements were made. Sidewalks installed during the 1930s with Works Progress Administration (WPA) help caused quite a controversy, because of the use of government labor on private property. After the addition of sidewalks, Gates began to beautify the suburb by planting maple trees: two in the front and one in the back of each lot. By 1945, homes had been built on three/fourths of the lots in the historic district.

Although there were additions to the suburb in 1940, and the town has been gradually surrounded by Indianapolis on all sides, there is still a cohesiveness about Homecroft. Perhaps that is due to the fact that it successfully resisted annexation to Indianapolis and became an incorporated town in 1951. Because Homecroft does not have a town hall, the town board trustees hold their meetings in a locksmith shop that is not in the district. The little town banded together again in the mid-1970s to install a new sewer system when the Environmental Protection Agency found that the original storm sewers were polluting Buck Creek. Townspeople raised the money in advance to keep expenses down.

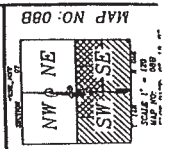
When Indianapolis and Marion County consolidated under Unigov

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet  
Homecroft Historic District, Marion County, Indiana  
Section 8, page 5.

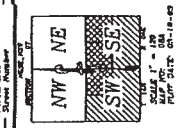
---

legislation in the late 1960s, Homecroft and other suburbs were granted the special status as an "included town." Included towns were permitted to maintain local governments, adopt and enforce local ordinances, provide local services, and impose local property taxes. Local ordinances must be consistent with ordinances of the city of Indianapolis and Marion County. The Indianapolis City-County Council must approve the issuance of any general obligation bonds by the included towns.

Regardless of various alterations in its status as a suburb, the Homecroft Historic District has maintained its integrity throughout the years and has changed very little since it was established in 1923. It is still a small middle-class suburb of well-kept single family dwellings. One can look down Loretta Avenue or Maynard Avenue and see rows of mature maples that were planted sixty or seventy years ago when the houses were built. Homes have been maintained and upgraded, but little has been done that would challenge their integrity. As soon as one turns into the little suburban town of Homecroft, the noise of the city diminishes, and the peacefulness of the quiet neighborhood is apparent. The significance of community planning and development is still as evident as it was when the small suburb was established in 1923.



HOME-CROFT ADDITION  
 (MIDDLE THIRD)  
 PERRY TOWNSHIP  
 MARION CO. INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA



HOME-CROFT ADDITION  
 (WEST THIRD)  
 PERRY TOWNSHIP  
 MARION CO. INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

CALLER PARKER, D. J. & SONS  
 501739  
 1000 S. W. 10th St.  
 Marion, Ind. 47304  
 PHONE: (317) 964-4000  
 FAX: (317) 964-4000  
 2008/2009

HOME-CROFT  
 HISTORIC  
 DISTRICT  
 MARION CO., IN



CONTRIBUTING TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION

MAP NO. 088





INTERCHANGE 54 (INT. 65) 0.9 MI.

T. 15 N.  
T. 14 N.

(BEECH GROVE)  
3763 II NE

Homecroft H.D.  
MARION Co. IN

ZONE 16

- ① E 574200  
N 4391480
- ② E 574670  
N 4391470
- ③ E 574770  
N 4391120
- ④ E 574190  
N 4391120

GREENWOOD 2.5 MI.

4389