

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received OCT 9 1986

date entered NOV 9 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The University of Illinois Buildings by Nathan Clifford Ricker Thematic Nomination

and/or common

2. Location

street & number University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign not for publication

city, town Urbana vicinity of

state Illinois code 012 county Champaign code 019

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> thematic group	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name University of Illinois Board of Trustees

street & number 364 Administration Building  
506 South Wright Street

city, town Urbana vicinity of Illinois state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of University Counsel

street & number 266 Administration Building, 506 South Wright Street

city, town Urbana state Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title see attached has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

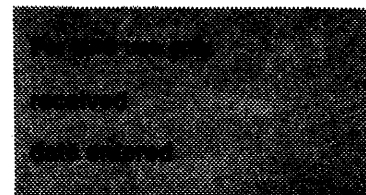
date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

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REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

1. Illinois Historic Structures Survey  
1975, April  
depository for survey records: Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
Old State Capitol  
Springfield, IL 62701  
  
All five buildings noted.
2. Illinois Historic Landmarks Survey  
April 1973  
depository for survey records: Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
Old State Capitol  
Springfield, IL 62701  
  
Altgeld Hall, Harker Hall listed.
3. Historic Resources of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
1986  
depository for survey records: Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
Old State Capitol  
Springfield, IL 62701
4. Library Hall (Altgeld Hall) is listed on the National Register of Historic Places

# 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

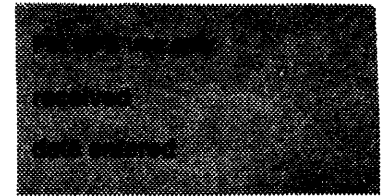
The University of Illinois Buildings by Nathan Clifford Ricker Thematic Nomination is comprised of campus buildings at the University of Illinois in Urbana, Illinois. Each of these buildings was designed by architect and educator Nathan Clifford Ricker between the years 1877-1897, at which time Ricker served both as Dean of Engineering and as Head of the Department of Architecture of the University of Illinois. An alumnus of the University, Ricker achieved the distinction of being the nation's first graduate in architecture, receiving his diploma in 1873. The discipline and determination which enabled him to be the first to earn this degree continued throughout his academic and professional career, distinguishing him as an educator and practitioner at the University of Illinois.

Five buildings comprise this nomination, three of which are located at the north end of today's campus quadrangle facing Green Street. The fourth is on Burrill Avenue between Springfield Avenue and Green Street, while the fifth is on Springfield Avenue, terminating Burrill Avenue (see Map 1). Each of these buildings portrays a distinctly different style of architecture. They represent, both in themselves and in their location, the early stages in the development of the University campus.

The early development of the campus was somewhat sporadic, with little evidence of campus planning visible until the early 1900's. The first known campus map (1872) indicates an area of only 623 acres (see Map 2). The original university building can be seen at the top of the map, near University Avenue. At the urging of then University Regent John M. Gregory, a ridge south of Green Street was chosen for future buildings. The logical development, then, was to line up the buildings along Green street. These buildings included University Hall (John Mills Van Osdel, 1873, demolished in 1938) and three buildings designed by Ricker: the Chemical Laboratory (1877, later renamed Harker Hall), the Natural History Building (1893), and the Library (1897, today called Altgeld Hall). Collectively, this cluster of buildings defined the main body of the campus (see map 1) until 1905 when McKim, Mead and White's Women's Dormitory (now the English Building) was erected on the site of today's quadrangle, giving a new orientation for future developments. With the addition of the Engineering Building (1894) and the President's House (1896) on the north side of Green Street, the campus no longer presented a linear street facade; the group of buildings now defined an enclosed space. It was this formation which foreshadowed the eventual development of the quadrangle immediately to the south. This quadrangle formalized the development of the campus as initiated by these buildings.

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The Metal Shop (1895, now known as the Aeronautical Lab B) was also designed by Ricker and was located on a north-south axis with University Hall. This axis, which linked the Metal Shop with the other buildings, terminated at the Drill Hall (1890, now the H. E. Kenney Gymnasium Annex). Ricker's Drill Hall was intended to serve as a focal point opposite University Hall (see fig. 1). This axis is still maintained, as the gambrel roof of the Drill Hall can be seen from the Student Union via Burrill Avenue.

Survey Methodology

Nathan Clifford Ricker spent virtually all of his career at the University of Illinois, and existing evidence indicates that his practice was limited to work on the campus and some private residences in the Champaign-Urbana area. This thematic nomination includes all of the buildings on the university campus known to be designed by Ricker according to a survey of the campus conducted by the Preservation and Conservation Association in the summer of 1986.

The only other building in Champaign - Urbana which has been attributed to Ricker is his own residence at 612 West Green Street, east of the campus in Urbana. This structure has been excluded from this nomination for two reasons. First, it has been greatly altered and therefore has lost its design integrity. Secondly, because of Ricker's importance in the development of architectural education and his long association with the University, it was decided that his buildings on the University of Illinois campus are the most representative of his significance in education and architecture.

There are five contributing buildings in this thematic nomination. The description and significance of the individual buildings are described in continuation sheets following Section 8.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1876 - 1927

**Builder/Architect** Nathan Clifford Ricker

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The University of Illinois Buildings by Nathan Clifford Ricker are significant physical manifestations of the theories and teachings of the first university graduate of architectural studies in the United States. Ricker founded the third institution for architectural studies in the nation, the first in the Midwest. Throughout his career with the University, he was involved in the development of modern technology and materials, actively incorporating them into his teaching as well as his campus building designs. In addition, he drew heavily from his experiences in Europe, adapting both the innovative teaching methods and the eclectic use of historical styles he studied there to architecture at the University. Combining these educational and practical resources, he single-handedly established the program of architectural education at the University of Illinois. Under Ricker's direction, a practical emphasis was placed on structure, function, and sound building techniques. His influence on architectural education at Illinois as well as nationwide still prevails. The extant buildings which comprise this nomination span Nathan Clifford Ricker's career, exemplifying his philosophies as an architect and an educator.

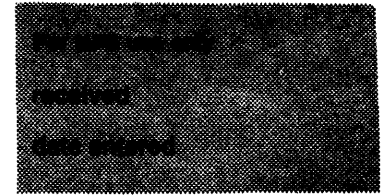
Nathan Clifford Ricker was born in Acton, Maine, on June 24, 1843. He moved to Springvale at the age of 13, where his father erected a mill. After school, Ricker studied surveying largely on his own, in addition to working at his father's mill. At 18 he replaced a country school teacher, using his earnings to purchase books for self-instruction in Latin, French, geology, and botany. It was then that he began translating scholarly works, a practice he continued throughout his career. He was concurrently developing his mechanical skill, as evidenced by his clever adaptation of a water wheel to the purpose of threshing grain.

After working for two and one half years in a factory making piano cases, Ricker grew restless and came to LaHarpe, Illinois, in 1866, ostensibly to visit his uncle for no more than a year. The lure of a half-interest in a wagon and blacksmith shop held him there for three years, but his desire to further his education was even stronger. He heard about the opportunities at the newly founded Illinois Industrial University and sold his interest in the business, using the \$750 profit to enroll in 1870.

Up to this time, architectural education depended primarily on the apprenticeship system, a gentlemanly arrangement by which young men gained the necessary experience by studying in the offices of the masters. Illinois Industrial University Regent John Milton Gregory had recommended to the Board of Trustees a more equally accessible program of formalized architectural education. Trustee John Mills Van Osdel, a leading Chicago architect, strongly supported the proposal, but it was Ricker who finally initiated the program by being the first to request it.

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Ricker's instructor was Swedish architect Harald M. Hansen, the first of a long line of European teachers in American architecture schools. He was strongly influenced by Hansen, who taught in the rigorous fashion of the Berlin Bauakademie. There, (in direct contrast with the Ecole des Beaux Arts) the teaching of all branches of engineering as well as architecture was, according to Ricker, "based on individual attainments and examinations...and not on pure competition of students with each other..."<sup>1</sup> Ricker was so proficient at his studies that in 1872, when illness prevented Hansen from teaching, Regent Gregory provided Ricker with the unique opportunity to direct his own studies as well as teach three fellow students. In March of 1873, the following year, Ricker became the first American graduate in architecture, just months before M.I.T. and Cornell (the only other architecture schools in the nation at the time) conferred degrees upon their first graduates.

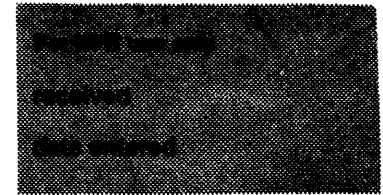
Gregory extended Ricker's teaching role to a permanent position in that same year, provided that Ricker spend the next six months traveling and studying in Europe. Ricker headed directly to the Bauakademie. From Berlin he traveled to Vienna, where he was particularly impressed by the new development of the Ringstrasse region under Gottfried Semper. It was in Vienna, at the 1873 Exposition, where Ricker also became familiar with the Russian system of instruction in mechanical engineering through carefully arranged shop practice. He was the first to introduce this system in the United States. Ricker's version consisted of a graded series of exercises in which the students learned the uses of the different tools in succession. His system focused entirely on the training of the student and was later adapted by all but one of the school shops in America. Most remarkably, Ricker adapted this system to architectural instruction many years before the Bauhaus, or even Walter Gropius, did so.

For 37 years, from September 1873 to September 1910, Nathan Clifford Ricker was the Head of the Department of Architecture at the University, serving one year as Instructor, one as Assistant Professor, and 35 as Professor. He was the sole instructor in the Department for twelve of those years, from 1873 to 1895.

The guiding principles of the Department of Architecture under Ricker were that the architect should first be a safe and economical builder, second a man of business capacity, and third an artistic designer. His educational methods have more than successfully withstood the test of time, barely differing from those employed today. Functional applications and sound construction technology were given priority. Students began by drawing and sketching, then commenced in a series of increasingly difficult building design problems. They culminated in the design of a large building,

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approached as if it were a real problem in professional practice requiring plans, details, and specifications.<sup>2</sup>

The pervasive influence of Ricker as an instructor and a designer is attested by the additions to his buildings, the last of which was made in 1927. All but one of the additions were done by Ricker's students in styles consistent with the original designs, maintaining the integrity of the existing buildings and complementing their styles. The first addition to the Natural History Building, by William Carbys Zimmerman, was the only addition not done by a Ricker student. However, even Zimmerman, who was State Architect at the time, repeated Ricker's design across his own facades, thus emulating Ricker's original building style even more exactly than Ricker's students had. The exterior facades of Nathan Clifford Ricker's campus buildings have not been altered in any way since 1927.

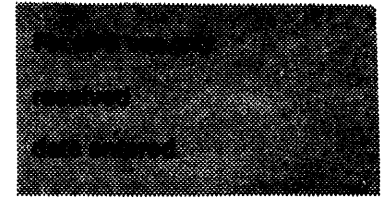
Nathan Clifford Ricker was an outstanding innovator in education, perpetually striving to ameliorate the inadequacies of the system. In response to the dearth of appropriate texts on architectural construction, history, and graphic statics he single-handedly initiated the production and compilation of over 2000 pages of notes, abstracts, and illustrations for his students. In addition, he translated over 40 volumes on architecture when English texts on particular subjects were not available for his students, including Viollet-le-Duc's Dictionnaire raisonnee de l'architecture francaise due XIe. au XVIe. siecle and the second edition (1899) of Otto Wagner's Moderne Arkitektur.<sup>3</sup>

Ricker's introduction of graphic statics and his lectures on the subject led to the publication of his Elementary Graphic Statics and Construction of Trussed Roofs (1885), the first book published by any faculty member while connected with the University. Later publications included Treatise on Design and Construction of Roofs (1912); Simplified Formulas and Tables for Floors, Joists and Beams; Roofs, Rafters and Purlins (1913) and three bulletins published by the Engineering Experiment Station.

While teaching, he continued his own studies and received his Master of Architecture (the second such degree to be conferred in the United States) in 1878, the same year he was elected Dean of the College of Engineering while continuing on as the head of the Architecture Department. He continued both administrative positions as the responsibilities grew. In addition, he served concurrently as University Architect, primarily responsible for several major university buildings as well as many smaller construction jobs. His contribution to the physical environment of the university, that is, the five buildings which comprise this nomination, remain with us today as a tribute to this great educator. They survive as a tangible reminder of the man responsible for the beginnings of architectural education as we know it today.

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Ricker was actively involved in campus administration and planning up until his retirement in 1916. His concern for the planning of the campus is evident from his letter to Supervising Architect James M. White in 1910 offering his own suggestions for White's plan.<sup>4</sup>

Ricker's efforts to improve the architecture profession extended beyond the classroom. It was through his efforts, combined with those of Dankmar Adler of Chicago, that the Illinois Architectural Act was passed in June of 1897. This legislative act, which requires the licensing of architects as well as provides for their registration, was the first of its type in the United States. He served as member and chairman of the Board of Examiners for nearly 20 years and served in 1911-1917 as Chairman of the Commission to codify the building laws of Illinois. His commendable participation in civic and university events spanned 50 years of service to the University.

Collectively, Nathan Clifford Ricker's five campus buildings and their additions span his career, reflecting his development and influence as an architect and educator. Using his buildings as actual teaching tools, Ricker employed his students as draftsmen and shop workers in their construction. While his students studied his theories on design and construction, his buildings were actually designed and constructed around them. These buildings exemplified Ricker's philosophies; they were practical combinations of eclectic historicism and modern technology. They are the physical embodiment of Ricker's own teaching and design philosophy, symbols of the history and heritage of the University.

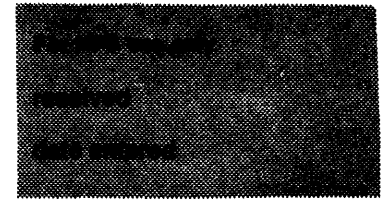
Significance Endnotes

1. Charney, Wayne M., and Stamper, John W. Nathan Clifford Ricker and the Beginning of Architectural Education in Illinois, unpublished manuscript, p. 4.
2. Kimball, Sidney F. The Department of Architecture: Development, Conditions, Ideals, Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1913, p. 7.
3. Charney, Wayne M., and Stamper, John W. Nathan Clifford Ricker, p. 5.
4. Tilton, L. D., and O' Donnell, T. E. History of the Growth & Development of the Campus of the University of Illinois, Urbana, 1930, pp. 192-193.



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A D D E N D U M

CONTINUED SIGNIFICANCE OF THE  
UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS BY NATHAN CLIFFORD RICKER

In the early years of the twentieth century the University of Illinois experienced visible changes in the numbers of its faculty and student body. The late 1800's had seen a dramatic increase in enrollment as higher education became more vital to individual and social welfare. At the same time greater numbers of permanent faculty brought recognition and acceptance to more and more of the individual colleges. As the branches of higher education within the university grew they required larger, more sophisticated structures. This is where the Ricker additions clearly show their importance to the education received by University of Illinois students. Aside from their association with Ricker, they reflect the growth and maturity of the individual colleges housed within their walls.

Each of Ricker's campus buildings reflect the changing status of the university. The Natural History Building addition of 1909 provided much-needed lecture and classroom space to a new influx of students, this in response to a much greater variety of courses offered pertaining to the individual student's comprehensive training in the natural sciences. The funding of the large museum space in 1910 attests to continuing interest in the subject, as does the fact that more additional space was needed only thirteen years later in 1923.

The Drill Hall and Men's Gymnasium reflect the inflated status of physical education after 1902. Physical education had become a required subject in the university curriculum by 1898, making necessary the addition of the Men's Gymnasium in 1902. By 1914 Freshmen were required to invest in two full semesters of physical training. This is the same year the Drill Hall came into use as the Men's Gymnasium Annex, aptly fulfilling the need for additional training space. Just previous to this, in 1912, the Department of Physical Training for Men was established as an independent division of the university. It's clear that athletics had become a vital part of university life.

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This emphasis on physical exercise continued and in 1924 all students were required to take four years of physical training. The men's Gymnasium and Annex continue to support the university in this same capacity today.

The growth of law studies at the University of Illinois was reflected both in the Chemical Laboratory (Harker Hall) and in the Library (Altgeld). In its early years the law school was thought to be an uncultured, alien element in the academic body, not having been immediately authorized by the state legislature. It was not until 1903, through the efforts of Dean Harker, that money was secured for the first time for the purchase of law books. This earned the respect of the campus as well as the world of legal education. In this same year the college took possession of Ricker's newly remodelled Chemical Laboratory, affording them a large and sophisticated building of their own rather than a wing of University Hall. The structure contributed in lending a certain aura of maturity to the college of law.

At the same time the university library, with its numerous volumes, had reached a bursting point so that by 1927, despite its four additions, it was forced to vacate its premises for a larger building. Perhaps the most distinctive building on the campus, Ricker's Library was turned over to the College of Law, bringing even more recognition to that college. By 1929 enrollment there had reached over 400 students, and it was decided that only graduate students could be admitted from this point on. The college had grown in size and stature with the respective Ricker buildings in which it was housed, as it now officially took its position in the family of law schools in the United States.

Along with the growth of these branches of higher education came the additions to the buildings by architect Nathan Clifford Ricker. The continued significance of the buildings is evident not only in Ricker's initial design, but in their subsequent usage and their importance to the education received by University of Illinois students.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE ATTACHED SHEETS

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property see individual inventory sheets

Quadrangle name Urbana, IL

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u>	<u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u>	<u>0</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

B	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u>	<u>0</u> <u>6</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

C	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u>	<u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u>	<u>0</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>
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D	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u>	<u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u>	<u>0</u> <u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u>
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E	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u>	<u>0</u> <u>3</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>
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F	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
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G	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
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H	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
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### Verbal boundary description and justification

see attached individual inventory sheets

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Amy L. Cassens, Bret F. Johnson, David J. Garner, and Janice A. Stein  
Graduate Students in Architecture  
organization University of Illinois date August, 1986  
110 Architecture Building  
street & number 608 East Lorado Taft Drive telephone (217) 333-1330  
city or town Champaign state Illinois

# 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 [Signature]  
title Director date 9-22-86

### For NPS use only

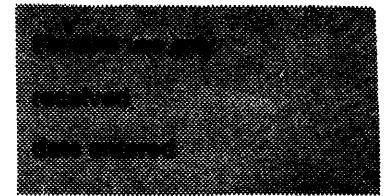
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Beth Crosvener date 11/19/86  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: See Continuation sheet for Testimony date  
Chief of Registration

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"Architectural Education in the United States - II. The University of Illinois." The American Architect and Building News, September 1, 1888, pp. 95-97.

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Bannister, Turpin C. "Pioneering in Architectural Education - Recalling the First Collegiate Graduate in Architecture in the U.S.A. - Nathan Clifford Ricker, Parts I & II." Journal of the American Institute of Architects, July 1953, pp. 3-8.

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Kimball, Sidney F. The Department of Architecture: Development, Conditions, Ideals. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1913.

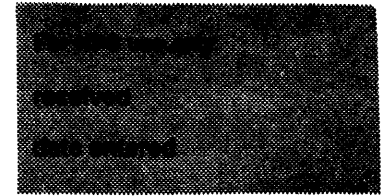
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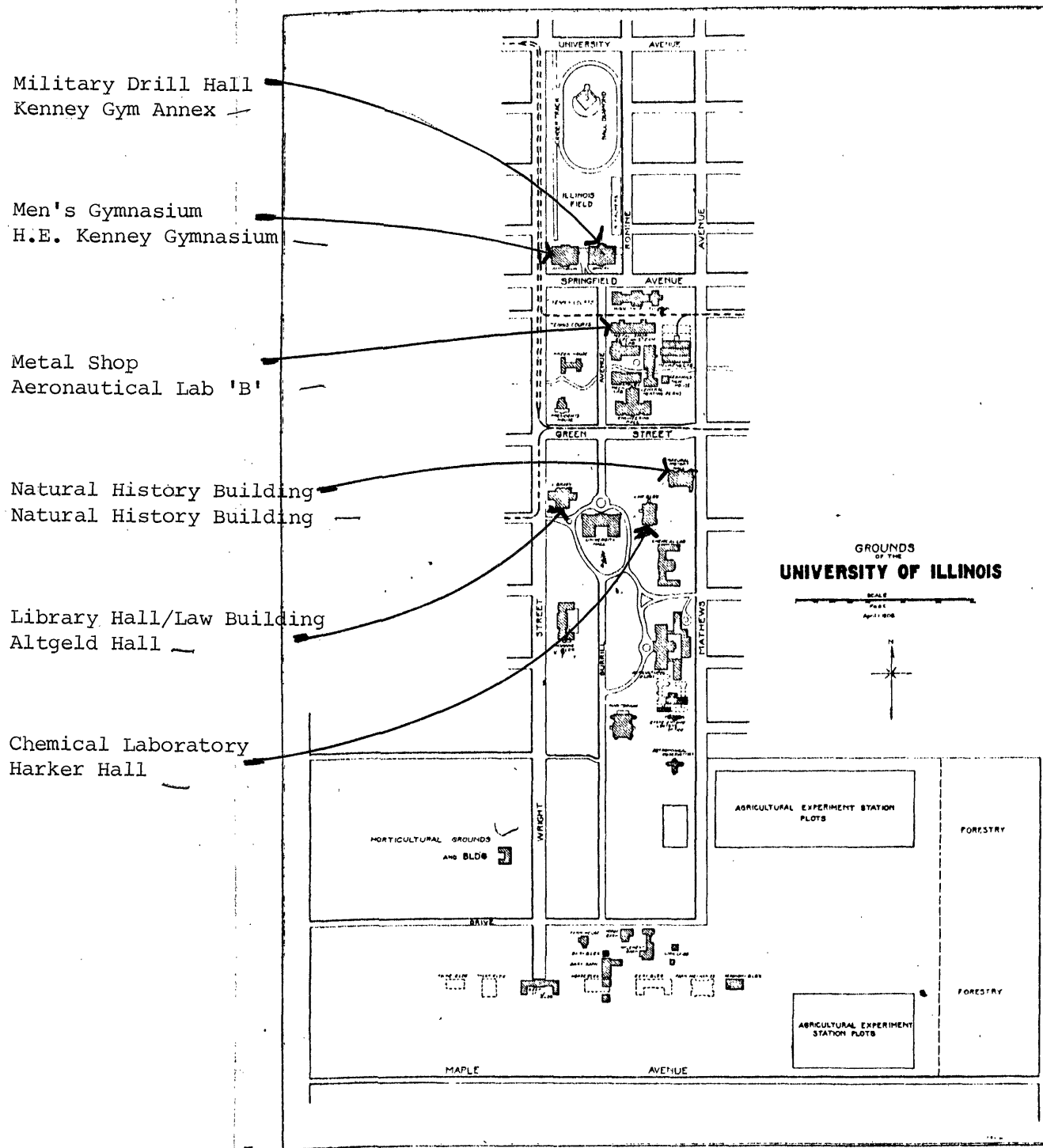
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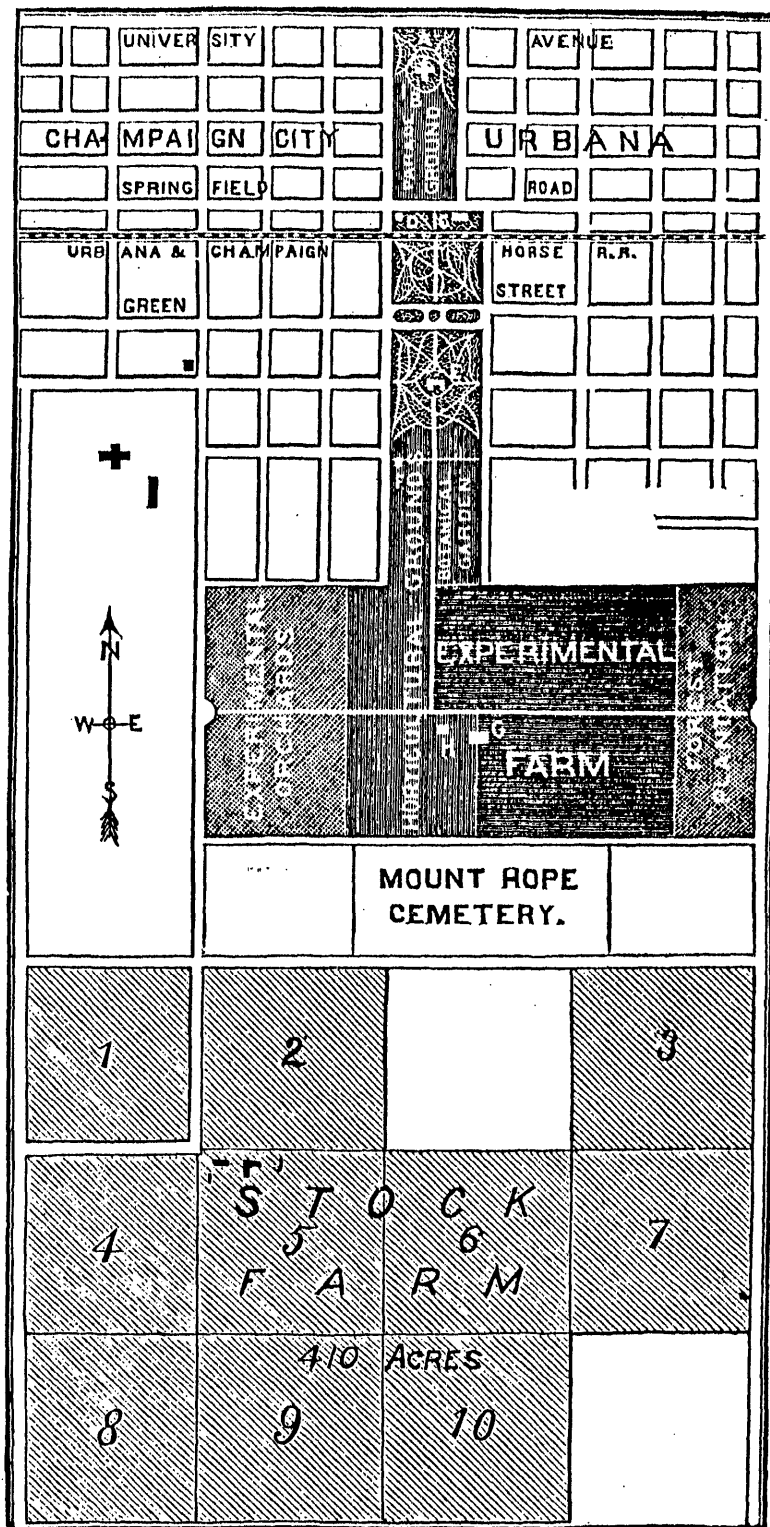


Map dated 1906

Tilton, L. D. and T. E. O'Donnell

History of the Growth and Development of the Campus  
of the University of Illinois

Urbana, 1930



Map of Farms, Buildings, Grounds, Etc.

Map dated 1872

Tilton, L. D. and T. E. O'Donnell

History of the Growth and Development of the Campus  
of the University of Illinois

Urbana, 1930

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name University of Illinois Buildings by Nathan Clifford Ricker TR  
State Champaign County, ILLINOIS

Conn 11/19/86

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. Chemical Laboratory

*for Keeper*

*for* Keeper Melana Byers 11/19/86

Attest

2. Military Drill Hall and Men's Gymnasium  
Substantive Review

Keeper Beth Grosvenor 11/19/86

Attest

3. Natural History Building

*for* Keeper Melana Byers 11/19/86

Attest

4. Metal Shop

Keeper Beth Grosvenor 11/19/86

Attest

5.

Keeper

Attest

6.

Keeper

Attest

7.

Keeper

Attest

8.

Keeper

Attest

9.

Keeper

Attest

10.

Keeper

Attest