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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 Bujetin 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 desumented, 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 Russell Railroad Y.M.C.A.
other names/site numberGPR-328 on KY Historic Resource Inventory
2. Location
street & number 451 Verhon StreetN Anot for publication
city or town $\frac{\text{Russell}}{}$ \square vicinity N/A
stateKentucky codeKY county Greenup Co. code089 zip code
3. State/Federal Agency Certification
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 actionally statewide considered significant in the property does not meet the National comments.) Director and SHPO 3-13-2001
Signature of commenting official/Title Date
State or Federal agency and bureau
A substituting the substitution of the substit
4. National Park Service Certification
I hereby certify that the property is: Date of Action Percentify that the property is: Date of Action 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:)

Greenup Co., KY

County and State

5. Classification Ownership of Property	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Res	sources within Property	y e count)
(Check as many boxes as apply) Trivate public-local public-State public-Federal	(Check only one box) building(s) district site structure object	Contributing 1	Noncontributing 0	buildings
		ρ 0 1	0	structures objects Total
Name of related muitiple property listing (Enter "N/A" If property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A		Number of cor in the National	eviously listed	
6. Function or Use Historic Functions		Current Function		
(Enter categories from instructions)		(Enter categories from instructions)		
Domantia (Inglit	utional Housing	_Vacant/Not	in Use	
(.	utional Housing	Complete Annie Alle Annie and Complete Annie and Co		
Social/Civic		•	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
Recreation and	Culture/Sports Faci			
			· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
7. Description				
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)		Materiais (Enter categories from	instructions)	***************************************
Modern Movement Other: Modern Functionalism			foundation Poured Concrete walls Brick	
Modern Movement	/Moderne			
		roof_Built-u	o Tar Roofing	
		other_Alumin	um Hopper Windo	ws

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

See attached Continuation Sheets

Greenup	Co.,	ΚY

County and State

8. St	latement of Significance	
Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)		Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
		Transportation
\Box 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.	
	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	But I can up
	distinguishable entity whose components lack	Period of Significance
	individual distinction.	
\Box D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield,	
	information important in prehistory or history.	
Crite	ria Considerations	Significant Dates
(Mark	"x" in all the boxes that apply.)	•
Prope	erty is:	1948
· iopo	orty io.	
	owned by a religious institution or used for	
	religious purposes.	Claustin and Day of
□в	removed from its original location.	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
	The state of the s	N/A
□с	a birthplace or grave.	
Пр	a cemetery.	Cultural Affiliation
	a comotory.	N/A
	a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	
	a commemorative property.	·
L 1	a commemorative property.	
□ G	less than 50 years of age or achieved significance	Architect/Builder
	within the past 50 years.	Chesapeake and Ohio RailroAd,
		Chief Engineer's Office
Narra	ative Statement of Significance	
(Explai	in the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)	See attached Continuation Sheets
	ajor Bibliographical References	
	ography he books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one	or more continuation sheets.)
	ous documentation on file (NPS):	Primary location of additional data:
	preliminary determination of individual listing (36	State Historic Preservation Office
CFR 67) has been requested		☐ Other State agency
previously listed in the National Register		☐ Federal agency
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register		☐ Local government☐ University
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark		☐ Other
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey		Name of repository:
 1	#	
П	recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Russell Railroad YMCA
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Summary

The Russell Railroad Young Men's Christian Association Building (hereafter the Russell YMCA) is a three-story brick building executed in the modern style. Constructed in 1948, the building retains much of its original architectural features and is an example of modern institutional architecture in Kentucky. Located in the town of Russell Kentucky, the building is the sole surviving historic structure on the 1.32-acre site. Thus, it is the only contributing historic resource. The Russell YMCA was closed in 1984, due to a declining railroad constituency. The Russell Railroad YMCA building, noted on the Kentucky Historic Resource Inventory as GPR-328, is set to be renovated for use as senior citizen housing and a community center by Campbell and Associates of Versailles Kentucky.

Setting

The Russell YMCA is located at 451 Vernon Street in the heart of Russell Kentucky, population 4,014. The town is situated between Ashland Kentucky, former home of Ashland Oil, and Greenup Kentucky, the county seat of Greenup County. Additionally, Russell is located directly across the Ohio River from Ironton, Ohio and a short distance from Huntington, West Virginia. Although the Kentucky Atlas refers to it as being situated in the Eastern Coalfield Region, Russell might best be described as an Ohio River Railroad town. The town appears to have a greater affinity to Ohio River Railroad towns, like Covington and Newport Kentucky, in both architectural resources and feeling. Most of the architectural resources in Russell were built around the turn of the twentieth century or shortly thereafter, when the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad (hereafter C&O) was established. Prior to this time, Russell was a sleepy village of a few hundred inhabitants on the banks of the Ohio River. Russell does not resemble eastern Kentucky coalfield towns, like Hazard and Pikeville. These towns are major producers of coal, are not located on a major river, and are hemmed-in by the Appalachian Mountain Range. Russell, on the other hand, is not a producer of coal, nor is it surrounded by mountains.

The Russell YMCA is positioned facing the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad (now the CSX Railroad) tracks. The downtown Russell commercial district is located within two blocks from the YMCA building. The 1.32-acre lot on which the YMCA stands is surrounded by the CSX railroad yards, engine repair shops, and asphalted open space. A private individual purchased the 1.32-acre lot and the building from the National

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Young Men's Christian Association in 1989. The building and the land were deeded from the C&O Railroad to the Association, upon completion of the building in 1948.

Description

The Russell YMCA presents characteristics typical for institutional architecture in the mid-twentieth century. This three-story brick-veneered building is sheltered by a flat roof topped with built-up tar sheathing, and is distinguished by a commodious front porch and an open-air courtyard in the rear of the building. The building would resemble a U-shape, if viewed from the air. The building's weight is carried by a poured concrete foundation and a steel and concrete structural system. A rust-colored running-bond brick veneer is attached to this steel structural system with metal ties. A sand-colored, hard Portland Cement mortar is utilized between the bricks. In addition to the front porch and courtyard area, the flat roof serves as a semi-outdoor public space. A poured concrete shelter, visible on the roof of the front façade, was provided for those who do not wish to expose themselves to the elements. The building's roofline is stenciled with poured concrete coping. The flat roof, building materials, and concern for outdoor space are typical features for public intuitional architecture in the modern period.

The primary façade of the Russell YMCA, which faces south, is characterized by a bare modern functionalism and symmetry. The front façade is visually separated into three sections. The central portion, of which the porch is the defining feature, is flanked by two slightly projecting sections on each side. The main entrance to the building is accessed through a series of steel and glass doors from the front porch. The porch, which runs the entire length of the main section, has a flat roof with the weight being supported by eight evenly spaced poured concrete columns. These columns do not taper and are free of any architectural ornament, save for the low iron fencing, which connects the columns to one another. A set of eight poured concrete stairs leads to the porch from the railroad yards. On either side of the main entrance doors are two window openings, where four aluminum hopper windows were located. These windows were recently broken by vandals. On the second story of the main section of the front façade are seven aluminum hopper windows with poured concrete lintels and sills. As is the case with most of the windows on the building, these windows are topped with a continuous slightly projecting concrete window hood. On the third story of the main section are seven aluminum hopper windows with continuous poured concrete window hoods, and poured concrete lintels and sills. The two sections of the front façade that flank the main portion are a mirror image of one another. In both cases, the first stories

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are distinguished by five aluminum hopper windows topped with projecting poured concrete window hoods and poured concrete lintels and sills. A poured concrete belt course articulates the ceiling of the first story, and continues until it meets the roofline of the front porch. The second stories have five aluminum hopper windows on each section. Again, the windows are topped with poured concrete lintels and sills, and continuous bands of projecting poured concrete window hoods. This arrangement is repeated on the third story of the building on each section flanking the central portion of the front façade. The sole difference between the projecting sections on the main façade is a poured concrete plaque located on the section to the east side of the building at the foundation line toward the end of the brick wall. The plaque reads, "Jesus Christ Himself Being The Chief Cornerstone."

The east façade of the Russell YMCA is distinguished by two defined sections. The first section, which is the closest to the primary façade, projects slightly from the line of the building. This portion continues the bare symmetry observable on the front facade. The three stories are virtually identical with their use of four aluminum hopper windows separated by poured concrete mullions and topped with poured concrete window hoods. The lintels and sills on these windows are poured concrete as well. Entry into a partial basement storage space is located on this section. Four window openings, evenly spaced within the building's poured concrete foundation wall, echo the arrangement on the upper three stories. The central portion of the east façade is characterized by thin bands of aluminum louvered openings on the second and third floor of the building. These louvers allowed for air and light in the tiny sleeping rooms utilized by railroad laborers. On the first floor of the central portion of the east façade there are two side entrances to the building. Both of these brick entryways project approximately four feet from the building and each is reached through a set of four poured concrete steps. The projections take a rectangular shape and each utilizes poured concrete coping. Additionally, a low poured concrete wall shelters the main stairs and appears to have flowed directly from the building's high concrete foundation wall. Much like the window treatments on the building, each steel door is encased in poured concrete and topped with projecting poured concrete hoods. A fixed single-pane glazed window is situated directly above the doorways. The side entrances into the Russell YMCA are the only portions of the building that utilize a symmetrical version of the Art Moderne style. The lines on the entries are starkly geometrical, yet fluid in their movement. The squarish lighting fixtures on either side of the doorways are typical for the American Art Deco/Art Moderne period. The entrance closest to the front façade provides access to a hallway that leads to the front desk, offices, and a stair hall. The entry closest to the rear façade furnishes admittance into the YMCA gymnasium, as noted by a sign above the doorway. Between these side entrances is a set of six large aluminum hopper windows

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that provide light and air to the gymnasium. These windows are set directly into the brick and do not make use of poured concrete lintels or sills. The two sections of the east façade are unified by a poured concrete belt course, continued from the front of the structure. This belt course lets the reader know that the first story is more important and considerably taller than the upper two stories of the building. Lastly, the building's datestone is located on the east façade, close to the primary façade and the structure's foundation. The inscription "A.D. 1948" is found on the datestone.

The rear façade of the Russell YMCA, which faces north, is characterized by an openair courtyard situated between two brick wings. This arrangement ultimately forms a Ushaped ground floor plan. Both ends of the "U" have one-story projecting brick bays topped with poured concrete cornices. On the east wing of the "U," the end wall has four aluminum hopper windows on the first story and a pair of central doorways for deliveries by truck. The second and third stories utilize four aluminum hopper windows, placed in sets of two. The window placement on the upper two floors corresponds with the window placement on the first story. A thin poured concrete band defines the upper story of the building along the entire rear façade, and a poured concrete belt course delineates the courtyard area. The courtyard wall on the east wing of the "U" contains louvered aluminum bands on the second and third story that provided air and light to the sleeping rooms used by railroad workers. There is one aluminum hopper window located toward the main body of the building on both the second and third floors. The first floor of the east courtyard wing incorporates nine large aluminum hopper windows that are set directly into the brick veneer. These windows are topped with poured concrete window hoods. A doorway is situated on axis with the building's main stair hall, directly under the second and third floor windows. This door was intended to supply entrance into the courtyard area from the main body of the building. The north wall of the courtyard contains one window opening on the first floor. This aluminum hopper window is located toward the west wing of the building. The second and third stories have four aluminum hopper windows, located in the center of the north courtyard facade. Two small aluminum louvers are situated between the second and third story central windows. Directly above the first floor window, there is one aluminum hopper window on the second story and one aluminum hopper window on the third story. There is also a small aluminum hopper window on the left hand side of the north courtyard wall toward the roof-wall juncture. All of these windows make use of poured concrete lintels and sills. The basement on the north courtyard wall contains five centrally located aluminum hopper windows. Entrance and exit to the basement are provided on either end of the north courtyard wall. The end wall of the west wing of the "U' incorporates a band of five aluminum hopper windows encased in poured concrete lintels and sills. A lone aluminum hopper window is placed to the left side of the west

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end wall. A basement aluminum hopper window is situated immediately below the lone window on the first floor of the end wall. The building's mechanical systems occupy the space above the first story. There are no windows on the second floor of the west end wall, and there is one aluminum hopper window on the third story of the west end wall. On the west courtyard wall of the projecting section is a continuous band of nine aluminum hopper windows topped with poured concrete lintels and sills. There is also a continuous poured concrete window hood. There are two aluminum hopper windows in the basement. They utilize poured concrete sills. The first floor of the west courtyard wing contains nine aluminum hopper windows that are set directly into the brick veneer. These windows have poured concrete sills and a continuous poured concrete window hood. The second and third stories of the west courtyard wing incorporate louvered aluminum bands that supplied light and air to sleeping rooms formerly occupied by railroad workers. Additionally, there is an aluminum hopper window located at the juncture of the west courtyard wall with the north courtyard wall. The rear facade incorporates non-contributing elements. In the late 1980s, the Russell YMCA was altered in order to follow local and state fire code regulations. These strictures led to the addition of two small brick-veneered towers that contain stairwells. These stairwells are noticeable on the east courtyard wall and on the rear façade. The original stairwells were left in place.

Lastly, the west façade of the Russell YMCA building continues the modernist design idiom of simplicity and functionality. As was the case with the east façade, the west façade can be divided into two main sections. The section closest to the front façade projects slightly from the main line of the building. This portion contains sets of four aluminum hopper windows divided by poured concrete mullions on all three stories. These windows are capped with poured concrete window hoods, and use poured concrete lintels and sills. Additionally, there are four aluminum hopper windows in the basement that echo this configuration. They are set directly into the building's poured concrete foundation. The first story of the main portion of the west façade is characterized by six aluminum hopper windows with poured concrete lintels, sills, and mullions on either side of a side entranceway. This entry appears to resemble the side entrance on the east façade; however, this cannot be determined due to an enormous amount of kudzu and poison ivy obscuring the doorway. The second and third stories utilize aluminum louver vents that furnished air and light to the railroad workers' sleeping rooms. The basement has three aluminum hopper windows that are set directly into the high poured concrete foundation. Also noticeable on the west façade is the brick stair tower constructed in the late 1980s. The tower has three small windows situated above an entrance. The west façade is unified through use of a poured concrete belt course, which connects it to the primary façade.

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The interior of the building follows a traditional hotel/railroad YMCA floor plan. The main public spaces in the building are located on the first floor, while the private sleeping and domestic spaces are located on the upper floors. This arrangement of space is common in hotels and railroad YMCAs (Lupkin 1997, 45). The front entrance to the Russell YMCA leads directly to a public lobby and a large marble reception desk. A hallway bisects this area and leads to a reading room, smoking room, library, cafeteria, and other public meeting spaces on the left hand side. If taken to the right, the hallway leads to office spaces and a gymnasium/auditorium. The upper stories are accessed from two stair halls situated on either side of the main reception area. On the second floor, a U-shaped corridor leads to dorm rooms that were utilized by railroad workers. On the left hand side of the building are fifteen large sleeping rooms, a shower room, toilets, a washroom, a linen room, and a supply closet. Across the front and courtyard side of the building are thirteen large sleeping rooms, a linen room, and an "airconditioning room." On the right side of the structure are forty-three small dorm rooms, linen rooms, a washroom, toilets, an "air-conditioning room," and a supply closet. The larger sleeping rooms were reserved for the "aristocracy" of railroad laborers, which included engineers, conductors, firemen, and brakemen, while the smaller sleeping rooms were retained for general laborers. This floor plan is repeated on the third story. The basement can be accessed through the exterior courtyard stairs, or through the main stair halls. The basement accommodates a mixture of public and private spaces. In general, public spaces are located on the right side of the building directly under the auditorium/gymnasium, and the private spaces are situated under the kitchen/cafeteria area. The right side of the building contained a bowling alley, game rooms, and a barber shop. Locker rooms, storage spaces, and a machinery room are located along the front and the left side of the building.

The Russell YMCA incorporates functional painted concrete block walls, however; all of the stair halls in the building use a fancier glazed buff-colored brick wall surface. Most of the ceilings in the building are dropped-height ceilings covered with acoustic tiles. The building's floor is poured concrete sheathed with black and white composition tiles.

The interior of the Russell YMCA retains much of its historic architectural fabric. The dropped height ceilings, floor and ceiling tiles, and wall surfaces have generally not been altered. The only spaces in the building that have been dramatically changed are the kitchen/cafeteria area, the bowling alley, and the auditorium/gymnasium area. The kitchen/cafeteria space was updated in the 1980s. At that time, most of the wall surfaces were covered with plywood, and a linoleum tile was laid over the original composition tile. Additionally, the kitchen fixtures were updated in the 1980s to comply with more modern food service needs. The bowling alley, which was located in the

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basement, has been removed. Apparently, it was replaced with game rooms in the 1970s. There is no observable historic finish associated with the bowling alley's tenure. Finally, the auditorium/gymnasium space has been slightly altered. The historic oak flooring, wall surfaces, and large windows are still in place. However, the stage area has been encased in plywood and a replacement dropped tile ceiling was added in the 1970s.

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Statement of Significance

The Russell Railroad Young Men's Christian Association (hereafter the Russell YMCA) meets the terms of the National Register of Historic Places Criterion A. The Russell YMCA is an excellent example of an institution created for railroad workers upon the establishment of large corporate railroad enterprises in the state of Kentucky. In particular, there were two important railroad lines that altered Kentucky's landscape in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. These lines were the Louisville, Kentucky based Louisville and Nashville Railroad (hereafter the L&N Railroad) and the Richmond, Virginia based Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad (hereafter the C&O Railroad). Both of these lines were not content to serve their respective home states, but sought to expand and develop railroad lines across the rapidly industrializing nation. In order to understand the significance of the Russell YMCA, two contexts will be developed: the development of the C&O Railroad in Kentucky and the development of the Railroad YMCA in Kentucky. These contexts should not be considered separately, but as interwoven historical narratives that help explain the importance of the Russell Railroad YMCA.

Development of the C&O Corporate Railroad Line in Kentucky 1880 - 1950

Prior to the Civil War, Kentucky had many small, regionally operated railroad lines (Turner 1956, 80). In fact, the state was known for its "graveyard of short lines" (Turner 1956, 80). Many of these short lines had the intention of connecting the city of Lexington with major river ports in Cincinnati and Louisville. The Lexington and Ohio Railway was, for instance, established in the 1830s, and completed just below Frankfort in 1834 (Herr 1964, 69-70). However, the line did not reach Frankfort proper until 1848, upon the construction of a tunnel through the hills of the capital city. The beleaguered Lexington and Ohio Railway never truly entered the city of Louisville. In 1847, a company known as the Louisville and Frankfort Railway purchased rights-of-way along the L&O line and completed the rail line from Frankfort to Louisville in 1851. Meanwhile, the L&O was sold to the state of Kentucky and back to private investors, who reorganized it twice and added a line to Cincinnati, before being purchased by the L&N railroad in 1878 (Herr 1964, 72). This dizzying array of ownership and half-completed lines was typical of early railroads in Kentucky. To make matters worse, rail gauges were not standardized. This lack of uniformity meant that rail lines could not be connected with great ease, as the tracks were of differing sizes and strengths. This disorganization, combined with a rather provincial mindset, spelled meager financial success for many of Kentucky's early railroad lines (Sulzer 1998).

The founders of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway had something different in mind for their rail line. Begun as the Virginia Central Railway in 1850, the company intended to

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expand the line across the Commonwealth of Virginia through the Blue Ridge Mountains, and eventually connect with the Ohio River in western Virginia (which became the state of West Virginia in 1863). Virginia Central President Edmond Fontaine envisioned, "Ours will be an important link in a chain of railroads reaching from the Atlantic to the Pacific not passing over a foot of abolitionist territory" (Turner 1956, 39). Between the 1850s and the time of the Civil War, the Virginia Central Railroad expanded into Clifton Forge in western Virginia and had made an agreement with the Orange and Alexandria Railroad that allowed access to Northern Virginia.

The Civil War wreaked havoc on the Virginia Central Railroad. Much of the line's infrastructure was destroyed, including bridges and iron rails, which were removed at strategic points. Additionally, the line was in poor financial condition, due to the enormous amount of worthless confederate money in its coffers. In spite of these difficulties, the railroad continued to expand in the post-War reconstruction period. In 1867, the rail line changed its name to conform with its mission of connecting the east coast to the Ohio River. The Virginia Central was renamed the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. In 1873, the line was extended 419.3 miles from Richmond to the Ohio River at Huntington, West Virginia (Turner 1956, 72). The new line made use of standard gauge steel rails, which were stronger than the iron rails used previously on the line. During this time, the C&O railroad was proclaimed by bolsterers to be, "fast becoming one of the four east-west trunk lines furnishing an outlet from the Mississippi Valley to the Atlantic, as well as tapping the iron, coal, and other resources of Virginia and West Virginia" (Turner 1956, 68). Indeed, C&O officials saw the benefits of transporting agricultural goods and raw materials of the Virginias to the West and North.

The C&O Railroad initiated its expansion into Kentucky in the late 1870s and 1880s. The company purchased the Elizabethtown, Lexington, and Big Sandy Railroad in the late 1870s (Turner 1956, 93). This line connected Huntington to Lexington and Louisville via an agreement with the L&N Railroad. Shortly thereafter, the C&O bought a controlling interest in the Kentucky Central Railroad, which provided access to Cincinnati, and completed a line from Louisville to Memphis, Tennessee (Turner 1956, 110). In 1882, the C&O again gained control over small Kentucky-based lines with the purchase of the Maysville and Big Sandy Railroad and the Kentucky and Great Eastern Railroad, which had attempted to join Catlettsburg, Kentucky with Maysville, Kentucky (Turner 1956, 111). The purchase and completion of the Kentucky rail lines and subsequent agreements with the L&N Railroad meant that the C&O had forged a major trunk line from the coast at Newport News, Virginia to Kentucky terminating in the south at Memphis.

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As noted previously, Kentucky's rail lines were small affairs. Because of a lack of capital and a desire to expand beyond the regional confines (with the exception of the L&N line), Kentucky's railroads were inefficient regional enterprises that focused on larger towns, such as Lexington and Louisville (Turner 1956; Herr 1963; Stover 1997, 139).

The C&O continued to acquire small rail lines in Virginia and Kentucky through the turn of the century, in order to compete for rail traffic with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (Turner 1956, 149). As C&O historian Charles Turner puts it, "The resulting 438 miles of track, made up of the Lexington and Big Sandy, the Maysville and Big Sandy, the Covington Short Route Transfer, and the Kinniconnick and Freestone, formed the division of the C&O Railway in Kentucky. The whole area was officially designated the Big Sandy Division in August, 1914" (Turner 1956, 149). After the C&O was firmly established in Kentucky, the line was extended further north and west. By 1950, the C&O had established lines to Columbus, Detroit, Grand Rapids (Michigan), Chicago, Milwaukee, Buffalo (New York), and Washington, D.C., with connections further west. The C&O rail line extended 4,301 miles and largely served as a carrier of coal by midcentury, although passenger service was being improved after the Second World War.

With the expansion of the C&O Railroad came the establishment of railroad-related institutions at towns along its lines. In Kentucky, small towns blossomed when rail transportation connected them and their products with larger urban areas. Most of Kentucky's towns had been established by the time of more efficient rail transport, but many of them remained small villages with few inhabitants and even fewer public amenities (Herr 1963; Turner 1956). Thus, the large corporate railroad attracted inhabitants to "railroad towns," and spurred on the creation of local institutions, like hospitals, hotels, city halls, housing, etc. The railroad itself was also responsible for the development of railroad-oriented public and private places. The C&O constructed numerous railroad passenger depots, engine roundhouses, freight warehouses, bridges, repair shops, and railroad YMCAs.

The Railroad YMCA in Kentucky

Whereas there were no railroad YMCAs in Kentucky prior to the 1880s, by 1900 five associations were created and had constructed Railroad "Y" buildings to serve this constituency. The Railroad YMCA has its origin in Cleveland, Ohio in 1872 (Hopkins 1951, 229). Begun as a prayer group, the railroad workers lobbied the company to allow for a prayer and reading room with YMCA support in the Cleveland depot building. Soon, the railroad president and workers were united in their effort to construct a

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separate railroad YMCA building for the exclusive use of railroad employees. By 1878, the Cleveland railroad workers had a new building and a Secretary devoted solely to the rail workers' spiritual, physical, and moral development. From this missionary seed, the railroad YMCA was adopted by railroad companies and workers across the nation. In fact, the YMCA International Committee, which was the governing body of YMCAs in the United States, created a Railroad Division for the sole purpose of expanding the work in 1877 (Hopkins 1951, 230).

The goal of the work entrusted to the railroad YMCAs was to improve the lives of railroad workers and make them better men through promulgation of values, such as manliness, industry, sobriety, duty, and responsibility (Winter 1997, 68). Railroad companies especially approved of this effort, as they benefited from a stable, quiescent workforce. Indeed, railroad company officials began to see the Railroad YMCAs as the safeguard against worker unrest (Winter 1997, 69). Theodore Vorhees, Vice-President to the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, stated, "that it is very much the business of the company to make sober, moral men of their employees, and that any money successfully expended for that end is well invested" (Winter 1997, 69). Some workers shared this vision of railroad YMCA work. Engineers, conductors, firemen, and brakemen were especially interested in promoting these values, as they made the most money and accepted the most prestige and responsibility with relation to their employment (Winter 1997, 68). Railroad historian Thomas Winter explains their interests as follows, "Engineers and conductors, among the highest-paid railroad employees, regarded the YMCA as a means for initiating their fellow workers into their male craft culture. As skilled workers, they believed that a man established and earned the respect of his fellow workers, superiors, and the community through industry, sobriety, duty..." (Winter 1997, 68). Semi-skilled workers, like firemen and brakemen, saw the Railroad "Y" as a ladder to success through which they could attain betterpaying, higher-status employment. "By joining the YMCA, workers signaled to their superiors that they subscribed to the values which both the company management and the skilled aristocracy of the railroad workforce embraced" (Winter 1997, 68). Most workers, regardless of class, appreciated the tidy accommodations that the Railroad YMCAs offered.

The International Committee of the YMCA long understood the effects of constructing the most modern YMCA buildings possible (Lupkin 1997, 44). Upon establishment of a local YMCA Association, the Committee strongly recommended the erection or renovation of a building to serve members. YMCA officials viewed the Association building as a powerful advertisement for the Association and, in effect, "the cause." The buildings were to attract a maximum number of young men through their progressive

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architecture to the Christian betterment programs offered therein. The Railroad Associations concurred with this view of the YMCA building and constructed them in great numbers. Construction of a railroad YMCA building usually involved financial backing from the particular railroad company (Hopkins 1951, 234). Most railroad YMCAs were funded through grants from large corporate railroads, and were deeded to the National YMCA, upon termination of the debt service. Financial assistance was also provided for a YMCA Secretary to conduct the Association's business. General operating funds were supplied by railroad workers' subscriptions and through local donations (Hopkins 1951, 234).

In Kentucky, a total of seven railroad YMCAs had been founded by 1924 (Young Men's Christian Association 1924, 228). The C&O Railroad had provided for YMCA buildings in Ashland (1900), Covington (1909), Lexington (1917), and Russell (1896) (Young Men's Christian Association 1924, 228). The L&N Railroad, the other large corporate rail line in Kentucky, furnished the other three Railroad "Y" Associations. These structures were founded at Corbin (1917), Hazard (1923), and Louisville (1912) (Young Men's Christian Association 1924, 228). All of these railroad YMCAs were located within walking distance to the rail lines and shops. The Railroad YMCAs began the century with 2,512 members in six Associations (Young Men's Christian Association 1907, 158). In 1927, the last year for which national statistics could be uncovered, railroad employees in Kentucky totaled 628,000 men, while there were 6,831 railroad YMCA members (Young Men's Christian Association 1927, 220). The Russell YMCA had the largest number of worker memberships, with 2,025 men involved with the organization: Ashland was second with 1,254 members, and Corbin was third with 1,212 members. The YMCA Yearbooks examined, which range from 1906 to 1927, indicate with meticulous care the type of activities that were commonplace in Railroad "Y" buildings. There were, for example, 120 dorm beds, 166,000 meals served, 3,500 baths taken. and 2,100 attendees at Bible Classes in the Russell YMCA building.

The Railroad YMCAs associated with the C&O Railroad were established with the expansion of the rail line through the state. The Ashland Association was founded in 1897, the Covington Association was established in 1890, the Russell Association in 1896, and the Lexington association in 1897 (Young Men's Christian Association 1924, 230). As noted previously, all C&O-associated YMCAs were furnished with buildings by the railroad company. The YMCA facilities were described by the company as, "equipped with reading rooms provided with wholesome literature, also with bath and rest rooms...At Handley and Russell lunch rooms are provided where employees obtain food at cost...The railroad company pays the secretaries and other attendants at each building and the employee desiring benefits pay other expenses" (Turner 1956, 134).

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As Turner notes, "one minister writing in the *Western Christian Advocate* claimed that the [C&O] railroad was doing much for the moral improvement of its employees (Turner 1956, 134).

The Russell Railroad YMCA

The Russell YMCA developed within the context of corporate railroad expansion in Kentucky. In 1880, the town of Russell was a small village of 175 inhabitants (Biggs and Mackoy 1951, 110). Most of the town's residents were employed in the iron industry across the Ohio River at Ironton, Ohio. However, with the coming of the C&O Railroad in 1889, Russell grew appreciably. The C&O Railroad made Russell an important junction on the expanding rail line, thus attracting throngs of workers and their families to the town. In fact, the rail line intended the Russell terminus to be the "largest [rail] yard in the country to be operated by a single railroad" (Turner 1956, 135). In 1889, the C&O established an engine roundhouse (engine shop) and other repair shops at Russell. By 1900, the town had "good streets, large business houses, nice homes and churches" and a population of 743 persons (Biggs and Mackoy 1951, 110).

The Russell YMCA was founded during this period of explosive growth. In 1896, a small two-story frame building was constructed by the C&O Railroad to provide YMCA services (The Russell Times, 15 September, 1974, B-19). The Russell YMCA was owned by the National Young Men's Christian Association and administered by a local YMCA Board. By the turn of the century, the building was renovated to serve the ever-increasing railroad population. The renovated Russell YMCA was a three-story Victorian frame structure with a commodious entry-porch (The Russell Times, 15 September, 1974, B-19). This building was located in proximity to the railroad tracks, near the site of the present YMCA building. The 1920 and 1929 Sanborn Maps indicate that there might have been an Annex Railroad YMCA building on site (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Russell, KY, 1920 and 1929). This Annex building could have been constructed to supplement the overcrowded accommodations at the main YMCA structure.

Whatever the case, membership in the Russell YMCA expanded, along with the growth in population and employment opportunities. The Russell "Y" had 384 members in 1906 with an average daily attendance of 440 railroad workers (Young Men's Christian Association 1907, 158). Additionally, 4,854 workers attended Bible classes that year, and 25 workers were involved in regular training courses (Young Men's Christian Association 1907, 159). The Russell building was listed with a value of \$10,000 in the same year (Young Men's Christian Association 1907, 175). By 1919, the Russell "Y" had 577 regular members making it the third largest railroad YMCA in the state, behind

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Corbin and Louisville (Young Men's Christian Association 1919, 261). The town of Russell boasted 1,758 residents by 1920 (<u>The Russell Times</u>, 15 September, 1974, B-9).

The C&O Railroad again expanded the employment base at Russell in the 1920s, with the construction of "a third track between Ashland and Russell...a 100-foot turntable, a water softening plant, a conveyor for handling coal from bad order cars [cars that needed repair]..." (Turner 1956, 185). Additionally, yard improvements were executed, including "an improved engine terminal for Russell, a \$1,250,000 undergrade crossing at Terry Street, and additional radial tracks" (Turner 1956, 185). These improvements had the net effect of increasing the worker population, and, in turn, membership in the Russell YMCA. By 1924, the Russell YMCA had 966 members and a constituency of 20,000 railroad workers (Young Men's Christian Association 1924, 229). These numbers were only surpassed by the operation in Louisville.

The Russell "Y" building was valued at \$320,000 in the 1924 assessment. The programs offered by the "Y" increased in this period, as well. In addition to the Bible study classes, lunch room, training classes, and library, the Russell YMCA expanded its programs to involve the entire community of Russell. Community playgrounds were established by Secretary Arch Morgan (1924-1944) and included tennis courts, a croquet court, a small swimming pool, swings, slides, and a baseball field (The Russell Times, 15 September, 1974, B-19). As noted before, the Russell YMCA had 2,025 worker members in 1927, making it the largest Railroad YMCA in the state. The town of Russell reached a peak with 2,084 inhabitants in 1930 (The Russell Times, 15 September, 1974, B-9).

By the 1940s, the Russell YMCA had outgrown its former accommodation in the three-story Victorian-style building. A 1942 <u>Russell Times</u> article made an eloquent plea for a new YMCA building stating that the association had grown so dramatically that three makeshift buildings could not house all of the Y-sponsored activities (<u>The Sun</u>, 6 October, 2000). This article also suggested that the entire community used the building for meetings, physical activities, and dining at the "Y" Restaurant. It is unclear how long the entire community had access to the Railroad "Y" building, however, the Russell YMCA was certainly a focal point for Russell by the 1940s (<u>The Sun</u>, 6 October, 2000).

In 1948, the C&O Railroad constructed a new Railroad YMCA building for the city of Russell on the site of the 1896 structure. The new "Y" was built at a total cost of over \$1 million (<u>The Russell Times</u>, 15 September, 1974, G-14). The building incorporated program spaces that had hitherto been contained in separate structures, or did not exist

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at all. The new YMCA included a bowling alley, a gymnasium/auditorium, a barber shop, a restaurant, meeting rooms, sleeping rooms, and a library. Program interests were also expanded to include softball, archery, wrestling, football, basketball, chess clubs, and bridge (The Russell Times, 15 September, 1974, G-14). Railroad workers continued to be served by the YMCA through 142 sleeping rooms, laundry accommodations, a library, and training courses. The earlier religious focus appears to have been de-emphasized by this time, as there was no mention of it in newspaper accounts. Unfortunately, there are no Association Yearbooks available for this period in the Russell YMCA's history. Thus, no statistics can be forwarded regarding membership. Interestingly, most of Kentucky's Railroad YMCAs had declined by this time, with the majority closing in the 1960s. The Russell "Y" was the only railroad YMCA to be constructed post-World War II. It could be surmised that the uninterrupted vitality of both the town of Russell and the YMCA was due to a policy of continued investment by the C&O railroad in the community.

The Russell Railroad YMCA was alive and strong as of the 1974 Russell Centennial Celebration, documented in the Russell Times newspaper (15 September, 1974). The paper described the railroad yard as the "largest railroad yard in the country operated by one railroad" (The Russell Times, 15 September, 1974, B-5). According to this account, "the Russell Terminal is an important part of the 12-state Chessie [C&O] System. From Russell, 24 trains a day arrive and depart on regularly scheduled runs, and four 'turns' serve area freight customers as over 1,000 car movements a day keep the three major yards there moving freight and coal out over five busy routes" (The Russell Times, 15 September, 1974, B-5). It further asserts "While modern superhighways and air travel have cut heavily into passenger traffic of byegone [sic] days, Russell has maintained its reputation as an important railroad town" (The Russell Times, 15 September, 1974, B-9). It appears that railroad workers were still enjoying the "Y" facilities, as well, "The [YMCA] Association at Russell has for many years held the distinction of being one of the largest railway units in the world. It has had the further distinction of serving railroad men working on, into and out of the world's largest individually-owned and privatelyoperated railroad terminal, that of the C&O Railway Company. Locally, throughout those 78 years, it has held the distinction of being an institution without which the Russell area would have struggled to survive and grow" (The Russell Times, 15 September, 1974, B-19).

By 1984, the C&O Railroad had been consolidated with the L&N Railroad into a multinational corporation known as CSX Railroad. The CSX interests withdrew financial support for the Russell YMCA, due to a declining railroad constituency (<u>The Sun</u>, 25 August, 2000). The railroad needed fewer workers because they had mechanized

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many jobs formerly performed by skilled human labor. The Russell YMCA could not continue to operate without CSX support. The building closed in the 1980s and has been vacant since that time.

Establishment of the Russell YMCA building coincided with the expansion and development of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad in the state of Kentucky. As noted before, there were no Railroad YMCAs prior to the construction of large corporate railroads in Kentucky. The C&O Railroad, however, had the available capital and interest in the development of such institutions. Not only was the YMCA building constructed to provide accommodations close to the place of employment, but it was also designed to affect the worker's behavior and attitude on the job. In sum, the Railroad YMCAs attempted to produce "loyal servants of the corporations" (Winter 1997, 78). Thus, it is within the contexts of the development of the C&O Corporate Railroad line from 1880 to 1950 and the development of Railroad YMCAs in Kentucky from 1880 to 1950 that the Russell YMCA attains its significance. The building is a late, yet still worthy representative of this type of corporate railroad investment in small town Kentucky. It is also among the only Railroad YMCAs extant in the state. It has been determined, thusfar, that the Lexington, Louisville, and Ashland Association buildings are no longer standing. The Hazard Association building is standing, but has been used as office space for a number of years. If it can be ascertained that the Covington Association building is no longer extant, then the Russell YMCA may be the sole remaining Railroad YMCA with association to the C&O Railroad.

Integrity Considerations

As noted in the Narrative Description, the Russell YMCA maintains a majority if its historic architectural fabric from its period of significance, 1948-1950. Thus, the YMCA building is an excellent physical example of an historic resource associated with the expansion of corporate railroads in the state. A brief assessment of the building's integrity factors will address these issues. These integrity considerations are forwarded with the knowledge that the building is being nominated under Criterion A. In order for the building to successfully convey the feeling of an historic resource associated with the C&O Railroad in Kentucky, the Russell YMCA must meet integrity of location, design, feeling, and association.

Integrity of **location** has been preserved. The Russell YMCA building has never been moved from its site adjacent to the railroad tracks. The building's **setting** has been changed. The Russell YMCA is no longer situated in a busy railroad yard surrounded

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by throngs of workers. Much of the CSX railroad's operations are carried on by machines. The yards surrounding the building are virtually empty. Additionally, the community no longer uses the playgrounds and ball fields to the north of the structure. These fields are overgrown with weeds and kudzu. There is little trace of the activities that were performed in this outdoor space. Thus, the **setting** of the Russell YMCA does not clearly portray mid-twentieth century activities. Integrity of setting is not clearly conveyed.

The building's integrity of **design** has been preserved. The 1980s addition of two stair towers in the rear of the structure has not impaired the readability of the building. These towers were constructed with the same color of brick and do not overpower the look of the rear façade. The floor plan of the building remains as it did in 1948, with the exception of the removal of two walls on the first floor. The wall between the library and the smoking room was removed to allow for a larger space. The same situation is repeated in the first floor office space. The wall between the Secretary's office and the support staff space was removed to create a larger space. Neither of these minor alterations destroys the building's overall integrity of design. The floor plan on the upper stories has not been changed. The form, massing, and style of the building are readable and, thus, reflect the time/place of the mid-twentieth century. There have been no additions to the structure that have engulfed it, nor have there been any character-defining subtraction from its mass. The stark Modern style is evident to the observer. The functional brick façade, steel framing system, the aluminum hopper windows, and the bare poured concrete ornamentation all combine to give credence to the building's mid-twentieth century construction date.

Integrity of workmanship and materials is apparent to the observer as well. The YMCA retains historic woodwork, dropped-tile ceilings, flooring, original brick veneer, and its historic aluminum hopper windows. The main disruption of the building's integrity has occurred on the first and basement floors. In the basement, the bowling alley was removed to provide space for games and meeting rooms in the 1970s. On the first floor, the auditorium/gymnasium was covered in an inexpensive variety of plywood paneling. The oak flooring, however, has remained intact. The kitchen/dining room area has been largely dismantled. While the floor plan has not been altered, much of this space's historic fabric has been removed. The walls have been covered with plywood paneling and the floors have been encased in linoleum tiles. Most of these changes occurred in the 1980s. The majority of these changes are reversible, as the original wall and floor surfaces exist under the 1980s sheathing. With the exception of these spaces, the building retains its historic materials.

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Finally, integrity of **feeling and association** remain with the building. The structure is known by Russell residents as the "Old Y" building. Most of the inhabitants spoken with had a story to tell of the "Y" building and the Chessie Railroad system. Russell residents appear to be proud of their involvement with the expansion of the C&O System and recognize the association of the building with this endeavor. Integrity of feeling is evident as well. The Russell YMCA's form, massing, style, materials, and association combine to evoke the feeling of expansion and investment made by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad in the state of Kentucky.

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Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The Russell YMCA property is described as follows in the Greenup County Deed Book 415, page 423:

Beginning at a point in the easterly line of Vernon Street 273 feet measured N 25-00 E, along the produced easterly line of Vernon Street and said street line from its intersection with the center line of westbound main track of the Russell Subdivision of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway at station 5108-46.0; thence N 25-00 E, on said street line of 250 feet to a point; thence S 65-00 E, 230 feet; thence S 25-00 W, 250 feet; thence N 65-00 W, 230 feet to the point beginning and containing 1.32 acres; more or less; being more particularly indicated in yellow on the map marked for identification, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company, Chief Engineer's Office, Drawing No. X-13173, dated September 2, 1955.

A map of the property is included in the attachments to the Russell Railroad YMCA nomination to the National Register.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundary of the nominated property encompasses 1.32 acres historically associated with the YMCA building. The Russell YMCA is situated in the middle of what might be conceived of as a National Register District with historic association to the C&O Railroad. However, the C&O Railroad does not own the 1.32 acres on which the Russell YMCA sits; this property has been in private ownership since 1989. Furthermore, the C&O Railroad does not wish their property to be nominated to the National Register. Thus, the Russell "Y" is being nominated based upon current property boundaries under the ownership of Ms. Kay Reynolds of Portsmouth, Ohio. These boundaries are appropriate because they include the Russell YMCA building and the land directly contiguous, all of which has been evaluated within historic contexts focused upon the YMCA identity of the property.

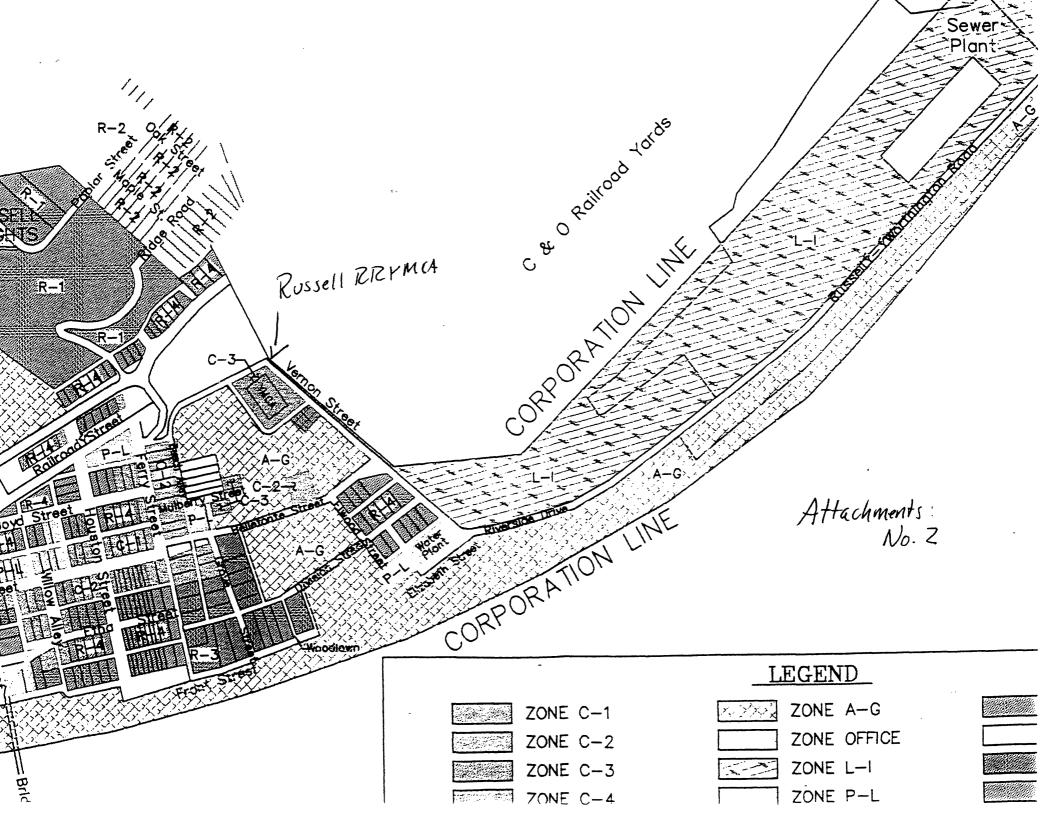
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Additional Documentation Russell Railroad YMCA Section Page Greenup County, KY

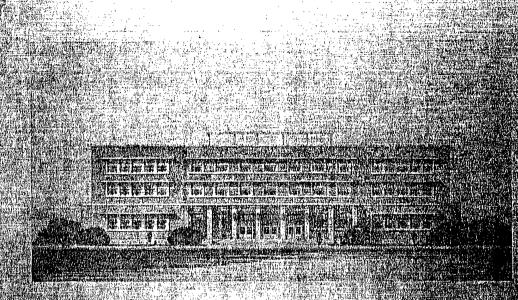
Attachments

- 1. USGS Map, Ironton Quadrangle.
- Location Map, City of Russell Zoning Map.
- 3. Location Map, C&O Railroad Site Plan (1955).
- 4. Architectural Drawings from C&O Engineering Department.
- Program from 1948 Groundbreaking Ceremony. Photocopied by the C&O Railroad Historical Society in Clifton Forge, Virginia for the author.
- 6. Historic photo of original building. Photocopied from <u>The Russell Times</u>, 15 October 1974.
- 7. (a) Historic drawing of the Russell RR YMCA Complex. (b) Historic photo of RR YMCA complex. Photocopied from <u>The Russell Times</u>, 15 October 1974.
- 8. Historic photo of Russell RR YMCA Bible Study Class circa 1931. Photocopied from The Russell Times, 15 October 1974.
- (a) 1920 Sanborn Map for the City of Russell showing the RR YMCA.(b) 1929 Sanborn Map for the City of Russell showing the RR YMCA Annex
- 10. Historic photo of the current Russell YMCA building circa 1950. Photocopied from <u>The Russell Times</u>, 15 October 1974.



Attachments: No. 3

554 Beginning THE CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO RAILWAY COMPAN PROPERTY TO BE CONVEYED TO WESTERN POCAHONTAS CORPORATION RUSSELL GREENUP COUNTY ASHLAND RUSSELL DIVISION-RUSSELL SUBDIVISION SCALE: 1" 100" DRAWING NO. DATE: 8-2-55 DRAWN BY:H.J.C., UR X-13173-1 TRACED BY:H.J.C.JR CHECKED BY: C.L.T.



Program

Cornerstone Laying Ceremony, Russell, Ky., Railroad M. M. O. A

OCTOBER 15, 1948, 12:00 NOON

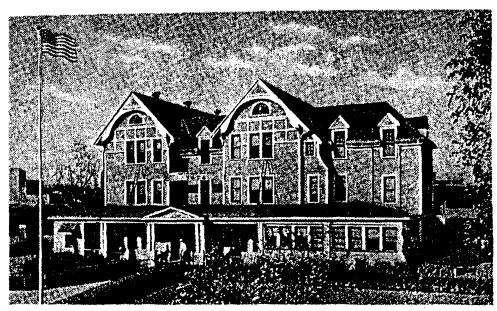
F.W. Myers: Chairman

REGERTION OF GUESTS

Chairmen of Labor Organizations and Committee of Management ALLONAL ANTHEM:
Claire Brock Leaden

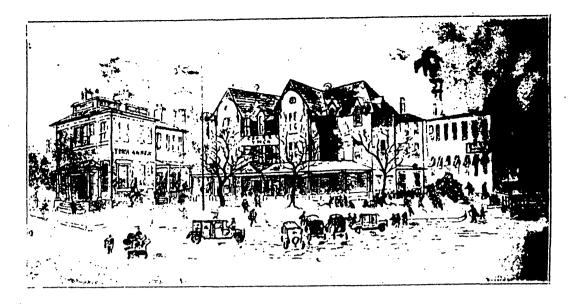
Claire Brock Lead

Adam Same Randall "v



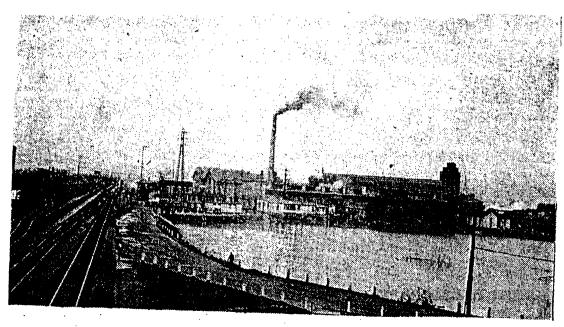
The YMCA as it looked in 1891

Attachments: No.6 Attachments: No 7a



Here Is A Drawing of The Russell Y.M.C.A. of Many Years Ago.

Attachments: No. 76



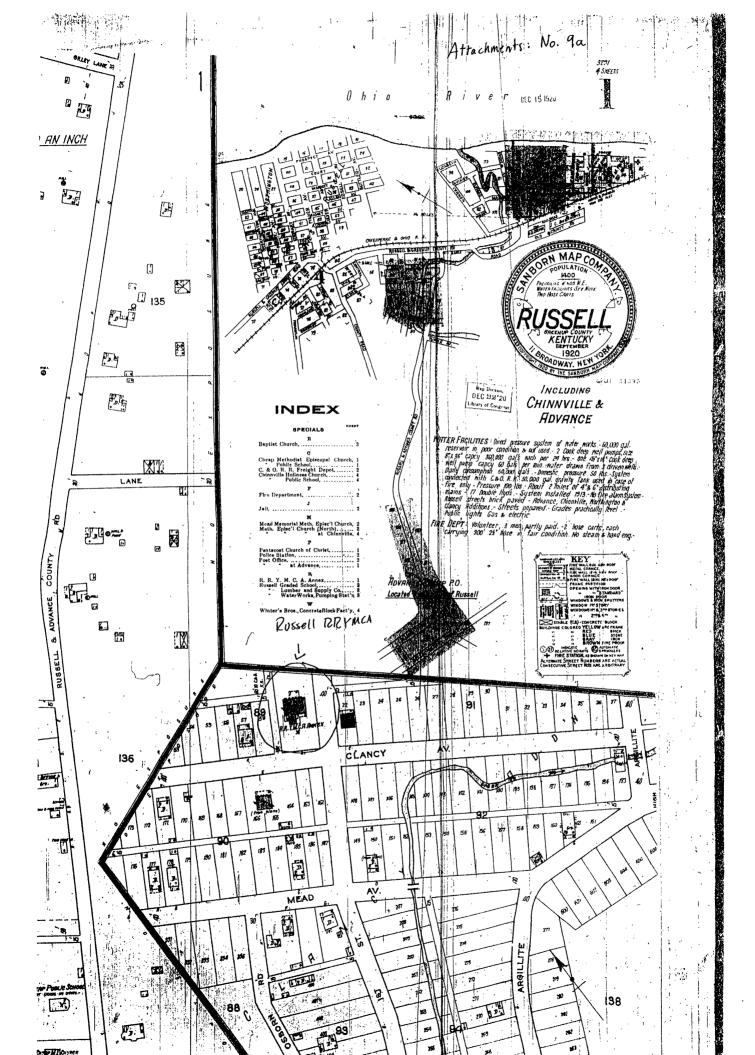
This picture shows the old YMCA in the background and part of Beech Street.

Attachments: No 8



YMCA BIBLE STUDY CLASS AROUND 1931

Row 1: Austin Leake, Buster Arthur, Bill Bratton, Unidentified, Unidentified, Robert Clark. Row 2: Unidentified, Grayson Cox, Ralph Franz, Roy Craft, Unidentified, Unidentified. Row 3: Unidentified, Joe Gilley, Edgar Fleck, Ralph Clark, Thad Sanford. Row 4: Billy Fleck, Dr. Henry Sutton, Unidentified, Rolfe Hughes, Eugene Rice, Lee Cook, Eugene Harris, Unidentified.





Railroad and Community Y.M.C.A. P.O. Box Drawer AC ESTABLISMED IN 1896 Russell, Kentücky

Attachments: #10