

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Himmelfarb, Samuel and Eleanor House and Studio

other names/site number N/A

Name of Multiple Property Listing N/A

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

### 2. Location

street & number 28W 120 Marion Road  not for publication

city or town Winfield  vicinity

state Illinois county DuPage zip code 60190

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this x nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:     national     statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:     A x B     C     D

Carol J. Devo Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer August 10, 2018 Date

Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

X entered in the National Register     determined eligible for the National Register

    determined not eligible for the National Register     removed from the National Register

    other (explain:)

Barkua Wepel Signature of the Keeper 10-4-18 Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	<b>Total</b>

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

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

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

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

COMMERCE AND TRADE/Professional Studio

**7. Description**

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

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT /

foundation: Concrete

Other: Contemporary

walls: Wood, glass, stone

roof: Asphalt

other: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

### **Summary Paragraph**

The Samuel Himmelfarb House and Studio is located at 28W 120 Marion Road in the Village of Winfield, DuPage County, Illinois, roughly thirty miles west of Chicago. Set within a large wooded lot, the building is located near only a few other residences along this rural stretch of Marion Road. The one-story, post-and-beam residence is set back from Marion Road and is the sole contributing structure on the property. Built in 1942 with an art studio addition, the structure is a roughly Y-shape plan, divided into working, sleeping, and family zones. Its common living areas and studio are on the main floor, with an unobtrusive basement level storage area. Designed by husband and wife artists Sam Himmelfarb (1904-1976) and Eleanor Himmelfarb (1910-2009) in accordance to their own domestic and professional requirements, the building exhibits broad qualities associated with the Modern Movement, including mass-produced construction materials, expansive window walls, and soaring flat roof planes. Its natural earth tones and low profile enable the house to easily blend into its picturesque surrounding environment. The entire property exhibits exceptional integrity both inside and out, and has been well preserved by the Himmelfarb family. The only significant changes from the original design include the 1972 enclosure of an exterior porch into a dining room, and a 1950s-era addition of a bedroom to the basement level. Interior alterations are minor, including replacement floorboards in the living room and updated bathroom fixtures.

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### **Narrative Description**

#### Location & Context

The Himmelfarb House and Studio is located at 28W 120 Marion Road in the Village of Winfield, DuPage County, Illinois, roughly thirty miles west of downtown Chicago. The building sits on the north side of Marion Road, on private conservation land near the West DuPage Woods Forest Preserve. (There are three other houses to the west). The property consists of a one-story, single-family residence and work studio set back from the road. The building stands on a wooded lot near the edge of the preserve.

Today, much of Winfield is populated with a mixture of historic and newly-constructed residences and commercial businesses. However, the stretch of Marion Road where the property sits remains rural, with dense forest surrounding the gently curving street on both sides. In addition to the Himmelfarb property, there are approximately ten other neighboring residential properties along Marion Road, all widely-spaced from each other, set back from the road, and at least partly obscured by mature trees and vegetation. Except for a heavily-renovated farmhouse at the end of Marion Road, all these residences were constructed after the completion of the Himmelfarb residence.

Sam and Eleanor Himmelfarb lived in Chicago when they purchased the property in the early 1940s. They chose this parcel specifically because of its rural location. As they designed their Modernist house, they oriented the building to the natural contours of the land, and utilized window walls bring the outdoor scenery of the forest into their domestic and working spaces. The building's light brown wood, rough flagstone, and plate glass construction, as well as its low horizontal profile, allow it to blend seamlessly into the surrounding landscape.

#### Exterior

The Himmelfarb House and Studio is a one-story frame house with a roughly Y-shape footprint. Each wing of the three wings is designated by its use: the southeast wing for bedrooms, the north wing for a work studio, and the southwest wing for common living and dining areas and a kitchen. For ease of description, the

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southeast wing is considered the bedroom wing, the north wing the studio wing, and the southwest wing is referred to as the family wing. The building has a concrete slab foundation. With a strong emphasis on horizontality, the building has exterior walls sheathed in light brown wood clapboards. It has a flat roof with eave overhangs along all exterior walls. A broad stone masonry chimney divides the family wing, and extends into a fireplace and hearth in the living room. Both the studio and family wings of the house are partially cantilevered over the ground, supported by stone masonry supports and steel beam framing.

The expressive eave overhangs along the rooflines of the house appear in a variety of configurations, classified here: Open eaves are instances where the eave rafters are fully exposed, with a fascia board mounted over their ends to form an open pergola. On solid eaves, plywood boards fully seal the spaces between the rafters. On some elevations, the eave appears in alternating open and closed sections, while on other elevations, multiple eaves appear in overlapping planes.

The building sits upon an undulating natural landscape. A downward slope in the middle of the property leads to the west branch of the DuPage River. The studio wing cantilevers over the slope, and is supported by a stone pier and steel I-beam structure. Similarly, the southwest end of the house cantilevers partially over a sunken carport.

Set well back from Marion Road, the building is approached via a paved concrete driveway. The drive is edged by a curb on the west and a low, stacked stone barrier wall on the east. The drive curves slightly as it approaches the residence before sloping down into a partially sheltered carport placed under the cantilevered portion of the family wing. The overhanging structure is supported by a steel I-beam structure and a stone masonry wall that defines the perimeter of the carport. The exposed steel beams and unfinished stone make it appear as if this end of the residence is floating above the ground.

A stone stairway leads from the carport past the family wing (which is essentially the long stem of the Y) towards a stoop. Composed of two flagstone steps and a landing, the stoop is set with a recessed front entry. A wood door is flanked by glazed sidelights.

The bedroom wing extends southeast from the front entryway. The southwest façade of the bedroom wing, composed almost entirely of glass, is approximately 25 feet long. The facade is made up of two glazed doors and three fixed windows, all of which extend from the floor to the open eave at the roofline.

The bedroom wing's southeast façade comprises a simple wall with no windows or doors under a solid eave. Long clapboards give the wall a strong horizontal emphasis. A narrow, poured concrete pathway extends along its full length, then wraps around the corner towards the northeast façade, where it widens unto a terrace.

The bedroom wing's northeast façade is roughly divided into two bays. The first bay is defined prominent horizontal clapboards surrounding a long ribbon window topped by a solid eave. The window, a mix of fixed and casements, overlooks the poured concrete terrace. A side entry with a plain wood door flanks the windows to the northwest. Unlike the first bay, the second bay is composed of two stories because the building is sited into a hillside. This bay is largely composed of horizontal clapboards, with a long, narrow fixed window at its upper northwest side. At this bay's lower level, a door with a glass panel provides access to the basement. A picture window and an operable casement flank the door to the southeast. Above the door and windows on the second bay, a row of transom windows punctures the wall below the roofline. An open eave overhangs the roofline transoms. In an expressive design touch, the open eave from the flanking studio wing extends slightly south to the bedroom wing facade, overlapping just below the transoms.

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The studio wing extends north from the corner of the bedroom and family wings. Built in 1951, the addition cantilevers over the sloping hillside site. A wide stacked stone pier, built in 1942 in advance of the studio's construction, supports the building. Two steel I-beams provide additional support underneath along the length of the wing. These supports suspend the wing above the forest floor, while also creating a utilitarian crawl space beneath the building.

The studio wing's east façade projects at a wide angle from the adjoining bedroom wing. Asymmetrically placed along the horizontal clapboard facade, a projecting box-like window extends above the eave. This "window box" has three vertical windows with operable casements at the bottom. The wood trim on the box and between the three windows is painted grey. The bottom portion of this box projects out from the façade wall, while the top slants back and upwards. As a result, the box breaks the roofline behind the horizontal rafter that extends across the entire facade. Towards the upper part of this facade, a pair of black painted wood panels flank the window box.

The north façade of the studio wing is approximately 17 feet long. The façade is lifted fully off the ground, resting on a stone pier set roughly six feet back from the end of the wing. This facade is almost entirely composed of three contiguous floor-to-ceiling windows with grey trim. The lower portion comprises operable casements. The plain wood wall surrounding the windows is painted white. A varied eave overhang is left open above the windows, and flanked on both sides by solid eaves.

The studio wing's west façade is almost entirely sheathed in long horizontal clapboards, topped by a solid eave. A single, narrow vertical window opening appears towards the south end. A short concrete stairway runs parallel to the studio wing at ground level, leading up to the northwest terrace on the main level.

The family wing's northwest facade is essentially divided into two bays. The northern bay extends the length of the living room, kitchen, and small dining room. The projecting southern bay extends the length of the main dining room, built in 1972 to enclose an existing porch. Both family wing bays are of similar massing and materials. Minor differences in the window frames and roofline differentiate the original 1942 section from the addition. An outdoor poured concrete terrace edges the family wing's northwest façade.

The southwest end of the family wing cantilevers the sloped hillside site. A long, stacked stone wall supports the building. Exposed steel I-beams provide additional support underneath along the length of the wing.

The northern bay on the family wing's northwest façade is a long window wall, divided into eight floor-to-ceiling panels. The second and fifth panels are glazed doors, providing access to the living room and small dining room, respectively. The remaining panels are fixed. The southern bay façade projects slightly forward. The bottom half of the bay is sheathed in horizontal clapboard, with a row of three wood-framed sliders along the top half. The window frames on the southern bay are painted white.

The eaves along the northwest façade appear in distinct two sections. At the northern bay, an open eave hangs over window panels 1 through 5, from north to south. The open eave terminates at bay 5, where it overlaps a slightly lower solid eave that hangs over the remainder of the northwest facade. A strip of aluminum flashing tops the solid eave.

A row of three wood-framed sliders with a closed eave overhang defines the southwest façade of the family wing. This end of the building cantilevers halfway over the sunken carport. The stacked stone wall and steel support beams extend slightly southwest past the building to define the boundary of the carport.

The southeast façade of the family wing extends north from the cantilevered southwest end of the building to the front entry, where the family wing connects with the bedroom wing at an L-shaped angle. Three window

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openings of various sizes and types run along the southeast façade. From south to north, these include a casement, followed by two sets of large picture windows. Each set of picture windows is flanked on both sides by casements. Between the second and third window sets, a massive stone masonry chimney divides the façade, extending roughly three feet above the roofline. The chimney also divides a varied eave, which is solid on the south side of the chimney and open on the north.

### Interior

A small foyer greets visitors upon passing the entry threshold. A grasscloth-clad wall wraps the corner towards the bedroom corridor. A second wall, wrapped in brightly colored wallpaper, divides the foyer from the living room. A pair of oak doors flank the foyer, concealing a coat closet and a small bathroom. Southeast of the foyer, a corridor leads towards two bedrooms—a master bedroom at the end of the hall and a second bedroom on the right. On the corridor ceiling, a long, hand-painted wood light fixture decorates recessed overheads. Both bedrooms feature built-in oak cabinetry and closets. Late 1960s-era carpeting replaces the original gray linoleum flooring.

The studio connects to the living room at its northeast corner, across from the foyer. A long, narrow row of transoms stretches across the roofline at the studio entryway. A built-in wood shelf with sliding chipboard panels creates a half-partition between the studio and the living room. The studio is entered via a short stone stair flanked by a planter. The room has cork tile floors and a sloped wood ceiling with exposed rafters. Three contiguous floor-to-ceiling windows define the far wall, flooding the room with desired north light. A similar set of windows on the northeast wall rises up towards the ceiling, projecting at an upward angle like a skylight. Several hanging fixtures provide additional light. A built-in desk and low bookshelf flank a descending basement stair, leading to a storage area and an additional bedroom. A half-bathroom is situated in the southeast corner.

The living room is flanked by the studio wing on the northeast, the foyer on the southeast, and the small dining room on the southwest. The northwest window wall frames a panoramic view of the forest beyond the outdoor terrace. A broad stone fireplace and hearth divides the southeast wall and extends from inside the living room to the exterior. A row of contiguous windows along the southeast wall frames the front landscape. Custom shelving from the early 1960s overhangs the southeast wall windows. A pendant lamp fixture suspends from the ceiling near the fireplace. Late 1960s-era gray stained floorboards replace the original linoleum.

The northwest-facing window wall continues from the living room into the small dining room. A radiant heat wall divides the small dining room from the kitchen to the south. A wood-framed mounted ceiling fixture provides illumination. The galley-style kitchen features original wood cabinetry, red ceramic tile floors, and a built-in breakfast nook on its northeast end. Mexican tiles, dating from the late 1940s, clad the kitchen counters and the walls around the stove. Southeast-facing picture windows run the length of the sink and countertop.

In 1972, the Himmelfarbs created the main dining room by enclosing an existing porch. The floor is finished in dark, hexagonal tiles. Vertical, unfinished wooden barn boards clad the northeast wall. Bands of glass sliders line the northwest and southwest walls. A door in the northeast corner leads outside to the terrace. A large custom sideboard sits along the southeast wall. A stamped metal, ceiling-mounted light fixture, designed by Spanish artist Julio de Diego (1900-1979), provides illumination.

### Integrity

Sam and Eleanor Himmelfarb occupied this property for over six decades. Since Eleanor's passing in 2009, the house has been occupied by Susan Himmelfarb, Sam and Eleanor's eldest daughter. Although Sam and Eleanor made some modifications to the house during their lifetimes, the interior and exterior designs remain

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largely intact and reflect the period of significance, 1942 through 1968 (the arbitrary fifty-year cut-off for listing on the National Register of Historic Places).

Sam and Eleanor's most significant alterations were limited to a 1950s-era basement addition and the 1972 enclosure of a porch to become a dining room. These minor alterations have little impact on the building's historic appearance. All other updates were made by the Himmelfarbs during the period of significance, including the late-1940s installation of artist-painted kitchen tiles, the early 1960s built-in shelving units in the living room, and replacement floors in the bedrooms and living room, both completed in the late 1960s. The exterior elevations and concrete terraces also reflect the period of significance. Exterior clapboards, windows, doors, and eaves are all intact and well-maintained. The carport and driveway are both in their original configuration.

The property retains an exceptionally high level of integrity. Its preservation, including the building's relationship to the land, has been and continues to be extremely important to the family. In fact, Eleanor established a conservation easement for the lot surrounding the house in 2002. Today, the building continues to strongly reflect its association with the Himmelfarbs.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Art  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1942-1966  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

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

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Himmelfarb, Sam  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation** (if applicable)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Himmelfarb, Sam (architect)  
\_\_\_\_\_

G. Holger Jernudd (builder)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The Himmelfarb House and Studio is locally significant for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The property meets with Criterion B for its association with acclaimed artist Sam Himmelfarb (1904-1976). The property is eligible for Art as its area of significance. Sam contributed to the Modern Art movement in mid-twentieth century Illinois, with many solo exhibitions, group shows, and awards to his credit. His paintings have been exhibited in dozens of prominent museums, galleries and private collections. Sam and his wife Eleanor (1910-2009) designed and built this remarkably intact residence in DuPage County in 1942. Even after Sam died, Eleanor, a much-lauded local art instructor, continued to live in and work from the building for another three decades. The house is significant as an incubator for Sam's creative work during much of his productive life. The period of significance spans from its construction date of 1942 until 1966, when Sam formally retired.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **Sam Himmelfarb: Early Life, 1904-1939**

Sam Himmelfarb was born in Latvia to Jewish parents in 1904. When Sam was six years old, he and his parents immigrated to the United States, briefly settling in New York City. While in New York, Sam's mother became pregnant with a second child. However, both mother and the baby died from complications incurred during childbirth. Soon after, Sam and his father moved west to Sheboygan, Wisconsin, where they lived in a series of rooming houses. They soon settled in Milwaukee, where Sam spent most of his childhood.<sup>1</sup>

Sam's father encouraged his son to explore his creative imagination from an early age. After Sam won a poster design contest at his elementary school, he began taking Saturday morning art classes at Milwaukee's respected Layton School of Art. In junior high, Sam attended an art summer camp, where participants were selected based on their exhibited artistic talent to study with master art teachers visiting from Germany. Around this time, Sam began a lifelong friendship with his classmate, Schomer Lichner (1905-2006). Schomer would become a prolific Wisconsin artist in his own right, beginning with his celebrated work as a WPA muralist during the 1930s.<sup>2</sup>

Sam partook in other extracurricular activities that would come to inform the style and subject matter of his art. His participation in the Boy Scouts helped instill a lifelong passion for nature, which many years later played a critical role in his house design. Sam also learned to play drums while in high school, performing in local vaudeville acts and dance music ensembles. By his early twenties, music performance developed into a semi-professional vocation, becoming a platform for his developing interest in observing and being around large crowds of people. In turn, Sam's experience as a musician provided him with inspiration and imagery for many of his paintings.<sup>3 4</sup>

After graduating high school, Sam studied at the University of Wisconsin, Madison where he attended art classes until 1924. As a college student, he began forging relationships with fellow young Midwestern artists who became his professional contemporaries. These included such canonized artists as Joseph Friebert (1908-2002) and Ben Shahn (1898-1969), the latter whose politically-oriented work in the 1930s exemplified the Social Realism movement. Sam also became close with lesser-known figures including Bertram Reibel (1901-1993) and Bernard P. Schardt (1904-1979), graphic artists who later became the heads of design at

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<sup>1</sup> Himmelfarb, Susan. Personal interview by Adam Rubin, Winfield, Illinois, August 24, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Himmelfarb, John. Personal interview by Adam Rubin, Chicago, Illinois, September 11, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Barilleaux, Rene Paul. *Three Painters: Samuel Himmelfarb, Eleanor Himmelfarb, John Himmelfarb*, Quincy Art Center, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> "Schomer Lichtner (1905 - 2006)," *Museum of Wisconsin Art*, wisconsinart.org/archives/artist/schomer-lichtner.

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Revlon, Inc. and J.C. Penny, respectively.<sup>5 6 7</sup> Like many American artists who got their start around the time of the Great Depression (1929 to roughly 1941), Sam's career would be defined by striking a pragmatic balance between holding a steady job with a reliable income and pursuing his creative imagination as a painter.

Though Sam did not graduate from the University of Wisconsin, he continued his formal art education at the Wisconsin School of Fine and Applied Arts, soon to become Milwaukee State Teachers College.<sup>8</sup> Here, Sam studied with Gustave Moeller (1881-1931), an influential German-born Wisconsin artist. Under Moeller's mentorship, Sam continued to refine his technique and develop his artistic vision.<sup>9</sup>

In 1926, Sam hitchhiked to New York City to study at the National Academy of Design and at the Art Students League of New York. At the latter, he took classes with Boardman Robinson (1876-1952), an acclaimed Canadian-American illustrator. Sam soon fell under the influence of a slightly older community of New York-based, socially-conscious artists known loosely as the *Ashcan School*. Art historian Barbara Weinberg summarizes the movement in a 2010 essay:

*Ashcan artists concentrated on portraying New York's vitality and recording its seamy side, keeping a keen eye on current events and their era's social and political rhetoric. Stylistically, they depended upon the dark palette and gestural brushwork of Diego Velázquez, Frans Hals, Francisco de Goya, Honoré Daumier, and recent Realists such as Wilhelm Leibl, Édouard Manet, and Edgar Degas. They preferred broad, calligraphic forms, which they could render "on the run" or from memory, thereby enlisting skills that most of them had cultivated as newspaper illustrators. Although the Ashcan artists advocated immersion in modern actualities, they were neither social critics nor reformers and they did not paint radical propaganda. While they identified with the vitality of the lower classes and resolved to register the dismal aspects of urban existence, they themselves led pleasant middle-class lives, enjoying New York's restaurants and bars, its theater and vaudeville, and its popular nearby resorts such as Coney Island... The Ashcan artists selectively documented an unsettling, transitional time in American culture that was marked by confidence and doubt, excitement and trepidation.<sup>10</sup>*

Sam's early work was highly informed by the Ashcan School, particularly in his dark paint tones and occupation with informal urban settings. His nascent depictions of everyday people, generally in a straightforward narrative context, developed from the influence of other progressive artists in his circle as well as from his affectionate observations of the denizens of New York City (Figure A). The human figure would become the primary and constant subject to occupy Sam throughout his artistic career, eventually developing from his straightforward, realist New York-based works into more expressionistic approaches, and eventually into abstraction, following his later move to Illinois.<sup>11 12</sup>

Sam worked two jobs to pay for his art classes—one as a drummer. In 1929, he played a 16-show run with the popular big band Horace Heidt and His Californians at New York's Palace Theatre, while also playing gigs with iconic singer and comedian Jimmy Durante (1893-1980). Other notable entertainers in Sam's New York social circle included lyricist Ira Gershwin (1896-1983) and dancers from Martha Graham's company. In addition to

<sup>5</sup> "Bernard P. Schardt Biography," *The Annex Galleries*, Artists, [www.annexgalleries.com/artists/biography/2113/Schardt/Bernard](http://www.annexgalleries.com/artists/biography/2113/Schardt/Bernard).

<sup>6</sup> *Soap, Cosmetics, Chemical Specialties*, v. 52, 1976, pg. 86.

<sup>7</sup> Himmelfarb, Susan interview

<sup>8</sup> "UW-Milwaukee's Predecessor Institutions: Milwaukee State Normal School (1885-1927)." *University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Libraries*, available at: [guides.library.uwm.edu/c.php?g=56484&p=363324](http://guides.library.uwm.edu/c.php?g=56484&p=363324).

<sup>9</sup> "Gustave Moeller." *Wisconsin Visual Arts Achievement Awards*, [wvaa.com/inductee/gustave-moeller-21](http://wvaa.com/inductee/gustave-moeller-21).

<sup>10</sup> Weinberg, H. Barbara. "The Ashcan School." *Metropolitan Museum of Art*, November 2010. Available at: [www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ashc/hd\\_ashc.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ashc/hd_ashc.htm).

<sup>11</sup> Barilleaux, *Three Painters*

<sup>12</sup> *Modernism in the New City, Chicago Artists 1920-1950*, [chicagomodern.org](http://chicagomodern.org).

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his music, Sam worked design jobs with various architectural firms. He assisted architects and engineers on several Long Island mansions, taking measurements and drafting building renderings. One of the highlights of Sam's early architectural experience was drawing the bathroom layouts for the under-construction Empire State Building (1931). Through these work experiences, Sam honed the skills he would use to design his own house ten years later.<sup>13</sup>

While in New York, Sam married Irene Donnelly, with whom he had a daughter, Nell. Needing to support his young family and feeling the increasing pressures of the Great Depression, Sam decided to return to the Midwest.<sup>14</sup> In the early-1930s, he moved with Irene and Nell back to Milwaukee, and soon after, he found work in Chicago. As economic stagnation beleaguered the country, Sam decided to focus on commercial three-dimensional design work, rather than trying to find employment as an architect. For some years, he was display designer for the Mandel Brothers Department Store in the downtown Loop. He also designed exhibits for the 1933-1934 *A Century of Progress Exposition* in Chicago. In 1937, Sam founded his own industrial exhibit company, Three Dimensions. Over the course of his professional career, Sam's firm served such national companies as Union Pacific, Parker Brothers, General Motors, Motorola, Overhead Door, and many others. All this work bore the mark of his architectural and fine arts background. The company also provided Sam a dependable income while he worked on his paintings part-time.<sup>15</sup>

### **Chicago Modernism, 1930-1945**

Sam situated himself in the Chicago arts milieu at a critical moment in the city's history. Chicago Modernism, as the movement would later be recognized by art historians, began to formulate in the late nineteenth century, with the Midwest debut of the Impressionist style in Chicago at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. By the 1930s, when Sam returned to the region, the status of Modernism among American intellectuals and artists was on the rise, partially the result of the repudiation of Modernist art by totalitarian regimes in Germany and the Soviet Union, and by the arrival of conservative-leaning formalist art criticism. The establishment of the Museum of Modern Art in New York also helped to advance a canon of "pure" Modernist art, which in turn encouraged the development of regional—or Localist—Modernist movements in non-east coast cities, including Chicago. These local movements strived to de-emphasize experimentation for its own sake while promoting regional character, tradition, and self-reliance, as these values were believed by critics to express "diverse systems of beliefs and individual modernity."<sup>16</sup>

In Chicago, Modernism highlighted an ironic contradiction between the technological innovations of the future, as represented through the vanguard buildings of the Chicago School, advances in factory machinery, retail marketing, and other areas, versus the traditionalist Beaux-Arts architecture and elite civic structures of the past, as exemplified by the design of the World's Columbian Exposition. Chicago artists in the Modernist camp, who along with Sam Himmelfarb included Mitchell Siporin (1910-1976), Julio de Diego (1900-1979), Macena Barton (1901-1986), among others, challenged provincials and cosmopolitan conservatives alike by presenting an emerging—and uniquely Midwestern—vision of humanism and social consciousness. This broad collective vision, which reached its zenith from 1915 through 1945, reflected the aims of artists—many of whom were immigrants or first-generation Americans—who used the formal vocabulary of modernism to address social ills and to advocate redress through ideals of community and democracy. Siporin, whose portrait Sam later painted, believed that such an art would aid "our 'little town' [Chicago]...in the process of completing her soul. This process can only continue in the free atmosphere of our world, our country, and our town."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Himmelfarb, John interview

<sup>14</sup> New York, New York *Marriage Certificate Index, 1866-1937*.

<sup>15</sup> Himmelfarb, Susan interview

<sup>16</sup> Kennedy, Elizabeth. *Chicago Modern 1893-1945: Pursuit of the New*, Chicago: Terra Foundation for the Arts, 2004. Pp. 7, 11, 14.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 14, 53.

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Sam's art began to evolve beyond his early New York-based work as he found his place within Chicago's artist community. His 1930s-era paintings carried over the Ashcan School's emphasis on the small-town pleasures of the urban experience while introducing to his canvases the bold vocabulary of the Chicago Modernist movement (Figure B). In Sam's own words:

"My paintings are exceedingly friendly. Like me, they speak easily for themselves. Look at them from a distance and then move in. You'll be amazed at how you become involved if you go along...I record the unprogrammed, the unglorified, the casual human scene. Essentially, I'm a narrator developing intriguing 'thing' patterns formed by overlapping ornamentation of people shapes, thing shapes, and color shapes. Together, they form an active, vibrating, coherent narrative. The depiction of [a] simple happening on a city street—in a beanery—on a bus ride—becomes a tune in praise of the unspectacular."<sup>18</sup>

With Sam's stature in the Modern Movement building momentum, his work began to be recognized and locally exhibited. His work was included in the *15th International Water Color Exhibition* at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1936, and he showed in the *Chicago and Vicinity Annuals* at the Art Institute in 1938 (he would participate in this show many more times through the 1940s and 1950s, eventually winning its Broadus James Clarke Memorial Prize). He also was a member of the Arts Club and Artists Equity, for whom he delivered many lectures. Later in the 1950s, he would deliver an Artists Equity-sponsored lecture to local civic and business groups cheekily titled "Don't Look Now, But Your Modern Art is Showing." Sam also had connections to the Abraham Lincoln Center Settlement House, which offered arts opportunities for underserved African-American and immigrant populations on the South Side. In the late 1930s, he delivered a lecture to a group of union members at the center about political poster design.<sup>19 20</sup>

As a socially-conscious artist, Sam was becoming increasingly alarmed over the rising threat of Nazism overseas, not least of which because of his own European Jewish heritage. He became active in Chicago's antifascist circles, and regularly attended meetings organized by the American League Against War and Fascism, an antiracist, pro-labor organization that later became the American League for Peace and Freedom. One evening in the late 1930s, Sam arrived early to 1517 E. 57th Street, a seven-room Hyde Park apartment that served as a meeting place for various leftist organizations. There, setting up chairs, he met Eleanor Gorecki, who lived in the apartment. Sam and Eleanor hit it off and soon began seeing each other on a regular basis.

Sam's marriage with Irene had grown strained over the years (he was 19 and Irene was 16 when they wed in 1926). As his relationship with Eleanor became more serious, Sam and Irene filed for divorce. On September 16, 1939, Sam and Eleanor married at her parents' house in St. Charles, Illinois. Their marriage would last for the next thirty-seven years, until Sam's death in 1976.

### **Designing the House and Studio, 1940-1942**

By 1940, Sam and Eleanor were searching for a permanent place to live and raise a family. Though they retained a lively social circle, and Sam's design business continued to grow, they both yearned to commune more directly with nature. Sam's boyhood experiences as a scout and summer retreats upstate while living in New York City, combined with Eleanor's memories of her childhood on the farm, helped the couple make the decision to leave Chicago for the rural suburbs.

Opportunity presented itself one afternoon, when Eleanor's parents were touring in their car around Winfield, a farming community roughly ten miles southeast of St. Charles. Driving up a rural stretch of road near the West

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>19</sup> Barilleaux, *Three Painters*

<sup>20</sup> Himmelfarb, Susan interview

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DuPage Woods Forest Preserve, they found an undeveloped property in a not-yet residential section of the nearby village. They quickly reported back to Sam and Eleanor, who soon purchased the property.

Since returning to the Midwest, Sam had occasionally taken on small architecture projects—mostly additions and remodels for friends, using a registered architect for the engineering requirements. The Winfield site provided Sam the opportunity to make his first design something truly personal and substantial. Over several months, he and Eleanor would regularly visit the undeveloped site, bringing a picnic lunch and sketching out the orientations for their desired rooms along the undulating terrain. As Sam drafted renderings, Eleanor contributed by envisioning the scale of the house's various spaces, which would include a large central living room, two bedrooms, and most significantly, an attached studio wing with two oversize windows to flood the room with soft, natural light.

Sam and Eleanor's design choices were bold and daring for the Winfield area, which in the early 1940s was still largely a rural farming village. Sam borrowed influences from early Modern Movement buildings that had only begun to infiltrate American architecture in the pre-WWII era. From his network of artists and designers, Sam was most certainly familiar with the work that came out of Germany's Bauhaus—likely from photographs and architecture publications—which promoted the use of exposed building materials, simple geometry, and a lack of ornament.

Sam's architectural references also included two innovative houses in Madison, Wisconsin: the Jacobs House (1937) and the Pew House (1938-40), both designed by master architect Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959). While visiting Madison, the Himmelfarbs witnessed firsthand the Jacobs House under construction, drawing inspiration from its relatively straight-forward design schematics and its floor-to-ceiling glazed walls, which created visual continuity between indoor and outdoor spaces. The Pew House, with its emphasis on horizontal lines and its placement on an undulating natural lot, surely helped Sam envision solutions for the siting of his own house.

Sam's renderings for his Winfield House took a similar L-shape footprint as seen on the Jacobs House and modified it into an irregular Y-shape, adding on a studio wing set at an oblique angle to the rest of the residence. The rolling terrain of the Winfield property required the one-story design to cantilever over the hillside on two ends, supported by stone piers and steel beams. Sam carefully arranged the window walls to create view sheds that would incorporate the forest landscape beyond the property line. Sam and Eleanor collaborated to create a practical flow between spaces, with a prominent fireplace at the center of the living room, a garden-like space created inside the elbow bend at the front of the house, outdoor terraces, and an open carport.

With finalized drawings, Sam and Eleanor began construction, filing a building permit with DuPage County on January 14, 1942. They hired G. Holger Jernudd (1906-1998), a Swedish-born carpenter, to serve as general contractor. At the time of construction, the estimated valuation of the property improvements was \$11,000. Aware that material shortages were imminent due to the escalation of WWII, Sam purchased the furnace days before a deadline made such items unavailable for the next several years. They also made a practical decision to delay completion of the studio wing for financial reasons, but built in-place a stone support pier where the wing would eventually rest. Nine months later, in November 1942, Sam and Eleanor moved into their nearly finished house. They completed the studio according to their original plans in 1951 (Figures C, D, E and F).

### **Work and Family Life, 1942-1966**

Sam and Eleanor made relatively few changes to the house design after 1942, as they focused on raising a family. They would have two children: a daughter, Susan (b. 1943) and a son, John (b. 1946) (Figures G, H and I). Sam's thriving exhibit firm allowed Eleanor to focus on parenting, though both were active and enthusiastic participants in family life. The Himmelfarbs spent summers at a three-room cabin on Madeline

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Island in Lake Superior, where Sam and Eleanor, and soon enough, John, painted. At the house, Sam and Eleanor regularly threw parties, organized nature conservation meetings, and hosted weekend stays from friends visiting from Chicago. In 1943, for one of their first large gatherings at the house, they hosted the touring cast of Thornton Wilder's original production of *The Skin of Our Teeth* when the company passed through Chicago. Other notable visitors to the house in these years included author-broadcaster Studs Terkel (1912-2008), film actor Lou Gilbert (1909-1978) and modernist sculptor Ruth Duckworth (1919-2009).

Sam continued to focus on painting while running his exhibit firm. He kept a rigid three-day-a-week schedule dedicated to artmaking, devoting the other four days to his business, which by the late 1940s had grown to employ a sales staff, in-house designers, and a silkscreen shop. Having steady work meant that Sam was freer to experiment and take risks with his art more than many of his contemporaries, as he was not reliant on selling paintings for his livelihood. In his 1950s work onward, Sam continued to "explore and discover the vitality and drama of the insignificant . . . the latent excitement in the unspectacular," as he declared in a 1958 interview for *Inland Architect*. His mature works of this period typically used "abstracted figures, subjects constructed with blocks of color to produce a patterned surface; paint applied in a cool, nearly mechanical technique and three-dimensional space flattened to create ambiguous spatial illusions" (Figure J).<sup>21</sup> He continued to exhibit in New York and Chicago, including solo shows at the Panoramas Gallery in New York (1956), the Frank Ryan Gallery in Chicago (1958), and others. In the 1950s, Sam served as president of the Artists Equity, of which he had been a long-time member.<sup>22</sup>

In the early 1950s, Sam and Eleanor added on a third bedroom to the basement space. Sam and Eleanor's interior changes were minimal, limited to the late-1940s installation of kitchen tiles brought back from Mexico, 1960s-era shelving units above the south-facing living room windows, and wood panels to replace linoleum floors. In 1972, after the period of significance, they enclosed an outdoor porch on the west wing of the house, turning it into a dining room. The addition incorporated the same exterior materials as the original house to create a seamless transition from the 1942 design.

Though the house was always Sam's most complete and best-realized architectural endeavor, he did occasionally take on other building projects. These included one other residence in Wheaton he built for friends Joseph and Betty Stephens (since demolished) and a small medical office in Warrenville, which survives. Sam also contributed design work to a house across Marion Road, owned by Herb and Helen Berkeley, a local piano teacher. However, none of these projects would equal the grandeur of his own family residence.

### **Beyond the Period of Significance, 1966-2009**

In 1966, Sam sold his business and retired. Desiring to be "in society" to make art and be among other artists, he found a studio in Chicago's Pilsen community through Ruth Duckworth, who worked in the neighborhood. Sam painted at the studio full-time and remained active in the community until his death in 1976.

### **Critical Evaluation of Sam Himmelfarb's Contributions to American Art**

Scholarly appreciation of Sam's contributions to American art are well-established.

Sam Himmelfarb exhibited in Wisconsin Painters and Sculptors annual shows at the Milwaukee Art Museum for many years, where several of his works are in the permanent collection. He showed also in the Chicago and Vicinity annuals at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1938, 1940, 1942, 1943, and 1951, where he won the Broadus James Clark Memorial Prize. His work was also included in the 15th International Water Color

<sup>21</sup> Barilleaux, *Three Painters*

<sup>22</sup> *Modernism in the New City*

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Exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1936. He participated in the members shows at The Arts Club of Chicago over a long period of years. His entry in the 60th Annual American Show, 1951, was selected for a circulating show through many museums in the U.S., and he was represented in a collection selected by Katharine Kuh which traveled to museums in Germany and France.

One-man shows took place at Milwaukee Art Museum, Allis Art Library, Milwaukee; Panoramas Gallery, New York; as well as the Ryan Gallery, Chicago. Three-person shows included Rosary College, River Forest, IL; Judson College, Elgin, IL; One Illinois Center, Chicago and Bradley Gallery, Milwaukee. In 1994, his work was shown at Quincy Art Center in a three-person show, along with the work of Eleanor and son John. In 2004, Sam's work was included in Chicago Modern, 1893-1945: Pursuit of the New at the Terra Museum of American Art in Chicago.

In 2007, the Himmelfarb House and Studio was featured in a Chicago Bauhaus and Beyond tour of Modernism in Chicago's Western Suburbs.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> "Western Suburbs Modernism Tour. Bauhaus and Beyond, November 18, 2007. Accessed November 19, 2017.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 4.2 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>41.865330</u> Latitude	<u>-88.168484</u> Longitude	3	_____ Latitude	_____ Longitude
2	_____ Latitude	_____ Longitude	4	_____ Latitude	_____ Longitude

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the Himmelfarb House and Studio property is shown as the solid line on the accompanying map entitled "Plat of Survey" (page 31).

The boundary illustrated on the map encompasses the entirety of Lot 85 in Winfield Farms, a subdivision in sections 12, 13, and 14, Township 39 North, Range 9 east of the third principal median, according to the plat thereof recorded April 3, 1908, as Document 93153, in DuPage County, Illinois.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This is the lot boundary that has historically been associated with the Himmelfarb House and Studio.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title	<u>Adam G. Rubin</u>	date	<u>1/12/2018</u>		
organization	_____	telephone	<u>(310) 428-8386</u>		
street & number	<u>1435 W. Hollywood Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor</u>	email	<u>adamgrubin@gmail.com</u>		
city or town	<u>Chicago</u>	state	<u>IL</u>	zip code	<u>60660</u>

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **GIS Location Map (Google Earth or BING)**
- **Local Location Map**
- **Site Plan**
- **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**
- **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).

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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

**Name of Property:** Himmelfarb, Samuel House and Studio  
**City or Vicinity:** Winfield  
**County:** DuPage County **State:** IL  
**Photographer:** Adam G. Rubin  
**Date Photographed:** October 31, 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

**Total Number of Photographs: 15**

- Photo #1: View from Marion Road towards house, camera facing north
- Photo #2: Front entry and stoop, camera facing northeast
- Photo #3: Bedroom wing, southwest façade, camera facing southeast
- Photo #4: Bedroom wing, northeast façade and terrace, camera facing west
- Photo #5: Bedroom wing, northeast façade with basement level entry, camera facing southwest
- Photo #6: Studio wing, east and north facades, camera facing south
- Photo #7: Family wing, northwest façade and terrace, camera facing southeast towards living room
- Photo #8: Family wing, northwest façade and terrace, camera facing southwest towards small dining room
- Photo #9: Family wing, northwest façade, camera facing southeast towards main dining room and stone support wall
- Photo #10: Family wing, southeast façade, camera facing northwest toward living room and front entry
- Photo #11: Foyer, camera facing southwest
- Photo #12: Studio, camera facing north
- Photo #13: Living room (foreground), with small dining room (background), camera facing southwest
- Photo #14: Kitchen, camera facing southwest
- Photo #15: Main dining room, camera facing north

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**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, D

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**List of Figures**

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all document should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.

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Figure B: "L", oil painting by Sam Himmelfarb (1941)

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Figure E: Carport, looking toward house from what will become the driveway. The original porch overhangs carport and rests on stone wall (1942)

Figure F: Sam painting in one of the bedrooms, temporarily fitted as a work room while awaiting completion of the studio wing (c. 1942)

Figure G: Eleanor Himmelfarb with daughter Susan, 10 weeks old, by fireplace (1943)

Figure H: Susan Himmelfarb reading in living room (April 1947)

Figure I: Sam Himmelfarb in kitchen (c. late 1960s-early 1970s)

Figure J: *Hilltop Town*, oil painting by Sam Himmelfarb (1958)



Figure A: Road House, Sam Himmelfarb, oil, 29" x 26" (1927)



Figure B: "L", Sam Himmelfarb, oil, 40" x 35" (1941)



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Figure C: Himmelfarb House nears completion (1942)



Figure D: House under construction, view north from corner of bedroom wing toward family wing (1942)

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Illinois, County: DuPage County

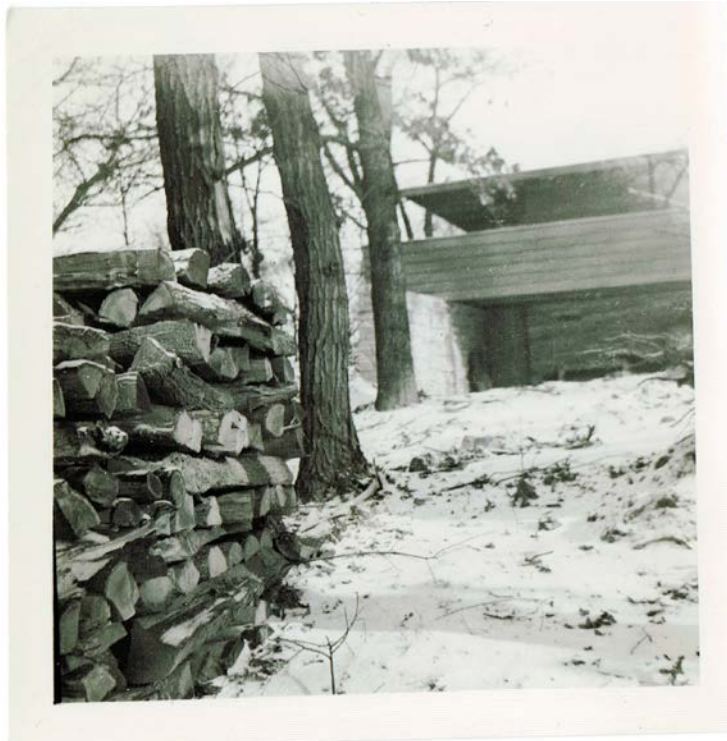


Figure E: Carport, looking toward house from what will become the driveway. The original porch (later enclosed to become dining room) overhangs carport and rests on stone wall (1942)



Figure F: Sam painting in one of the bedrooms, temporarily fitted as a work room while awaiting completion of the studio wing (c. 1940s)



Figure G: Eleanor Himmelfarb with daughter Susan, 10 weeks old, by fireplace (1943)



Figure H: Susan Himmelfarb reading in living room (April 1947)

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Figure I: Sam Himmelfarb in kitchen (c. late 1960s-early 1970s)



Figure J: Hilltop Town, Sam Himmelfarb, oil, 38" x 48" (1958) oil, 38" x 48"

**Property name: Samuel and Eleanor Himmelfarb House and Studio**  
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### **Additional background on Eleanor Himmelfarb**

Eleanor was born in 1910 in St. Charles, roughly 50 miles west of Chicago. She grew up in the Fox River Valley, the daughter of a Polish-born father and mother whose German family had lived in rural Illinois since the 1800s. As an only child, Eleanor found ways to entertain herself, often playing “teacher” in a schoolhouse of her own imagination—a role she would later assume as an adult. The family moved several times during Eleanor’s early childhood, living briefly in Chicago before relocating to a farm near the village of Wayne, northeast of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway. By the time Eleanor was six years old, the family had moved again to a farm between Barrington and Dundee.

Growing up in rural community, Eleanor did not have a highly-sophisticated exposure to the arts, but she did have some. Her parents highly valued books and music, and strived to provide their daughter with opportunities to broaden her education. When it came time for Eleanor to attend Dundee High School, she moved in with a family in town, assisting with house chores in exchange for room and board. In 1925, Eleanor’s parents sold their farm and moved the family to St. Charles, where she transferred to St. Charles High School beginning her sophomore year. Her parents soon moved into a house on Sixth Street, a block from the school. Eleanor returned frequently to the St. Charles house in the years after graduating high school and moving to Chicago.

The principal at St. Charles High School, H. Clark Brown, profoundly influenced Eleanor as an arts-oriented educator. In addition to his administrative role, Brown led a woodcrafter club (focused on nature and American Indian culture) and brought students on field trips to see plays and dance performances. He also invited diverse guest speakers to the school, including poets Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) and Countee Cullen (1903-1946), an African-American writer associated with the Harlem Renaissance.<sup>24</sup> Brown was instrumental in encouraging Eleanor to attend college, and may have connected her directly to the University of Chicago, of which he was an alumnus. Upon graduating high school in 1926, Eleanor moved to Hyde Park to attend the university, where she took courses in art history and design. Though Eleanor did not pursue studio arts at this time, her studies laid the groundwork for her lifelong passions for art and teaching.

For Eleanor’s first two years of university, she boarded with a family in the McKinley Park neighborhood on Chicago’s South Side. Every three-to-four weeks she returned to the country to collect goods from the farm to bring back to the city. Due to the financial constraints of college, Eleanor elected to take a year off before her junior year, during which time she taught fourth grade at Lincoln Elementary School in St. Charles. While teaching, Eleanor took Saturday classes and a correspondence course and made up a year of school. Eleanor returned to the University of Chicago for her senior year, renting a room in the Woodlawn neighborhood. To support herself, she worked at Baldwin Kingrey, a trend-setting interior decorating shop. Eleanor remained friends with owner Jody Kingrey for many years, later returning to the shop as a source for furnishing the house in Winfield.

After graduating in 1930, Eleanor looked for teaching positions, but was unsuccessful. She found a job in a print shop in St. Charles and worked there until the shop unionized, at which time she was forced to leave when the union was not accepting new members. She soon moved back to Chicago, where she secured a job at the RR Donnelley Printing Plant as a proofreader.

In addition to her work responsibilities, Eleanor had an adventurous spirit and a strong sense of curiosity about the world. In her early twenties, she drove with two other women from Chicago to Mexico to witness the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution (c. 1910-1920) firsthand. While there, she befriended Mexican artist Alfredo Zalce (1908-2003), who remained a lifelong friend. After Eleanor and Sam married some years later, the couple returned to Mexico multiple times to observe and absorb the lessons of revolutionary public murals painted by modernist artists including Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siquieros, and others.<sup>25 26</sup>

By the late 1930s, Eleanor was living as a single in the seven-room apartment on E. 57th Street, which she shared with several couples. Many of her housemates, Eleanor included, shared a common interest in progressive politics, and on occasion would organize events and discussion groups in the common living area. It is at one of these meetings that Eleanor first met Sam. After marrying in 1939, they rented an apartment at 4340 S. Oakenwald Avenue in North Kenwood. This was Sam and Eleanor’s last Chicago address before making the decision to leave for the country.

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<sup>24</sup> Wintz, Cary. *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance*, New York: Taylor & Francis Books, pg. 273.

<sup>25</sup> Kennedy, *Chicago Modern*, pg. 59.

<sup>26</sup> Himmelfarb, Susan interview

**Property name: Samuel and Eleanor Himmelfarb House and Studio**  
**Illinois, County: DuPage County**

As Eleanor observed her husband at work, her interest in art became more than philosophical and theoretical. Beginning in the late 1940s, she started pursuing her own art in a more serious way. Already an experienced photographer since her twenties, she began to take on other mediums, including weaving, soldering, tiles, and stained glass, taking classes whenever she could fit them into her family's schedule. With Sam's encouragement and mentorship, Eleanor eventually began to use the studio for her own paintings. Both artists were highly influenced by the view of the woods from the studio, which due to the window framing, appeared as a flat, horizon-less landscape. The illusion inspired Eleanor to organize her imagery—often abstractions of nature—on largely flat planes, a technique derived both from her husband and from many of the other Modernist painters she knew personally through their Chicago social circle.

Eleanor's curiosity and desire to further her arts education brought her to the nearby Morton Arboretum, about ten miles from the house in DuPage County. There, she studied natural history with renowned naturalist May Watts (1893-1975), who proved influential in Eleanor's life as an artist, educator, and close friend. At Watts' insistence, Eleanor took over instruction of painting classes at the Arboretum beginning in the 1950s. She continued to teach the class for several decades. As a nurturing and prolific arts educator, Eleanor provided a strong role model to local women starting their art careers later in life due to family obligations.<sup>27</sup>

After her husband's passing, Eleanor increased her involvement in the Chicago and DuPage County art worlds. She decided to continue her arts education and enrolled in the MFA program at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she studied under abstract painter Morris Barazani (1924-2015). She kept teaching, and for many years instructed courses in painting and design at Rosary College, Triton College, the DuPage Art League, and the College of DuPage.

Eleanor's painting output began to increase quickly after Sam's passing. Like her husband, her body of work largely investigated life's ordinary moments, focusing on the enigmatic aspects of natural landscapes with architectural references and the human form. Though Eleanor's emergence as an artist would largely occur after the Modernist era, her work exhibited a sophisticated understanding and continuation of the movement's themes, forms, and ideas. In her three decades of work after Sam's death, Eleanor's work appeared in many museum, corporate, and private collections, including The National Museum of Women in the Arts, the Mary and Leigh Block Museum at Northwestern University, the Illinois State University Art Museum, Neiman Marcus, and Kirkland and Ellis. She exhibited widely throughout the Chicago area and in the Midwest. Eleanor died in 2009.<sup>28</sup>

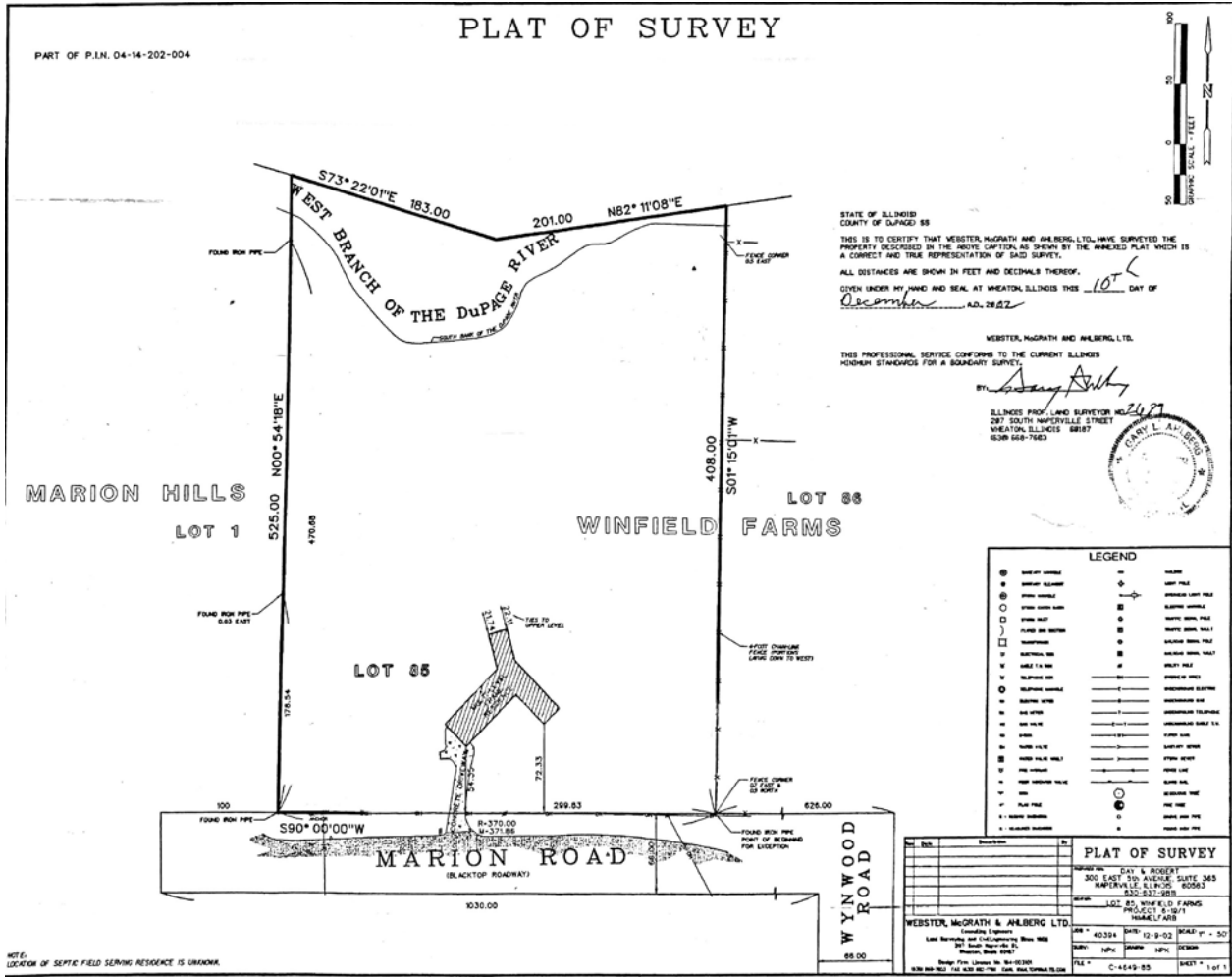
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<sup>27</sup> Himmelfarb, John interview

<sup>28</sup> Himmelfarb, Susan. Unpublished obituary of Eleanor Himmelfarb, July 14, 2009.

**Property name: Samuel and Eleanor Himmelfarb House and Studio**  
**Illinois, County: DuPage County**







































National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 9/14/2018      Date of Pending List:      Date of 16th Day:      Date of 45th Day: 10/29/2018      Date of Weekly List: 10/11/2018

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept       Return       Reject      10/4/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary  
Comments:

Recommendation/  
Criteria

Reviewer Barbara Wyatt      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2252      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



## Illinois Department of Natural Resources

One Natural Resources Way Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271  
www.dnr.illinois.gov

Bruce Rauner, Governor  
Wayne A. Rosenthal, Director

March 30, 2018

Ms. Barbara Wyatt  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, DC 20240



Dear Ms. Wyatt:

Enclosed are the disks that contain the true and correct copies of the National Register nomination recommended for nomination by the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council at its February 23, 2018 meeting and signed by the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer:

**Children's Village, Normal McLean County**  
**Samuel and Eleanor Himmelfarb House and Studio, Winfield, DuPage County**

**PLEASE NOTE: Corrections to the Corron Farm are also enclosed.**

Please contact me at 217/785-4324 if you need any additional information. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Andrew Heckenkamp, Coordinator  
Survey and National Register program  
Illinois State Historic Preservation Office  
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

enclosures

55-2417

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Himmelfarb, Samuel and Eleanor House and Studio

other names/site number N/A

Name of Multiple Property Listing N/A

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

## 2. Location

street & number 28W 120 Marion Road  not for publication

city or town Winfield  vicinity

state Illinois county DuPage zip code 60190

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  National  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

[Signature] Date 3/28/18  
Signature of certifying official Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation

Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources - SHPO  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Returned

Himmelfarb, Samuel and Eleanor House  
and Studio

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	<b>Total</b>

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

N/A

Returned

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

COMMERCE AND TRADE/Professional Studio

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT /

Other: Contemporary

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Wood, glass, stone

roof: Asphalt

other:

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### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

#### **Summary Paragraph**

The Samuel and Eleanor Himmelfarb House and Studio is located at 28W 120 Marion Road in the Village of Winfield, DuPage County, Illinois, roughly thirty miles west of Chicago. Set within a large wooded lot, the building is located near only a few other residences along this rural stretch of Marion Road. The one-story, post-and-beam residence is set back from Marion Road and is the sole contributing structure on the property. Built in 1942 with an art studio addition, the structure is a roughly Y-shape plan, divided into working, sleeping, and family zones. Its common living areas and studio are on the main floor, with an unobtrusive basement level storage area. Designed by husband and wife artists Sam Himmelfarb (1904-1976) and Eleanor Himmelfarb (1910-2009) in accordance to their own domestic and professional requirements, the building exhibits broad qualities associated with the Modern Movement, including mass-produced construction materials, expansive window walls, and soaring flat roof planes. Its natural earth tones and low profile enable the house to easily blend into its picturesque surrounding environment. The entire property exhibits exceptional integrity both inside and out, and has been well preserved by the Himmelfarb family. The only significant changes from the original design include the 1972 enclosure of an exterior porch into a dining room, and a 1950s-era addition of a bedroom to the basement level. Interior alterations are minor, including replacement floorboards in the living room and updated bathroom fixtures.

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### **Narrative Description**

#### Location & Context

The Himmelfarb House and Studio is located at 28W 120 Marion Road in the Village of Winfield, DuPage County, Illinois, roughly thirty miles west of downtown Chicago. The building sits on the north side of Marion Road, on private conservation land near the West DuPage Woods Forest Preserve. (There are three other houses to the west). The property consists of a one-story, single-family residence and work studio set back from the road. The building stands on a wooded lot near the edge of the preserve.

Today, much of Winfield is populated with a mixture of historic and newly-constructed residences and commercial businesses. However, the stretch of Marion Road where the property sits remains rural, with dense forest surrounding the gently curving street on both sides. In addition to the Himmelfarb property, there are approximately ten other neighboring residential properties along Marion Road, all widely-spaced from each other, set back from the road, and at least partly obscured by mature trees and vegetation. Except for a heavily-renovated farmhouse at the end of Marion Road, all these residences were constructed after the completion of the Himmelfarb residence.

Sam and Eleanor Himmelfarb lived in Chicago when they purchased the property in the early 1940s. They chose this parcel specifically because of its rural location. As they designed their Modernist house, they oriented the building to the natural contours of the land, and utilized window walls bring the outdoor scenery of the forest into their domestic and working spaces. The building's light brown wood, rough flagstone, and plate glass construction, as well as its low horizontal profile, allow it to blend seamlessly into the surrounding landscape.

#### Exterior

The Himmelfarb House and Studio is a one-story frame house with a roughly Y-shape footprint. Each wing of the three wings is designated by its use: the southeast wing for bedrooms, the north wing for a work studio,

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and the southwest wing for common living and dining areas and a kitchen. For ease of description, the southeast wing is considered the bedroom wing, the north wing the studio wing, and the southwest wing is referred to as the family wing. The building has a concrete slab foundation. With a strong emphasis on horizontality, the building has exterior walls sheathed in light brown wood clapboards. It has a flat roof with eave overhangs along all exterior walls. A broad stone masonry chimney divides the family wing, and extends into a fireplace and hearth in the living room. Both the studio and family wings of the house are partially cantilevered over the ground, supported by stone masonry supports and steel beam framing.

The expressive eave overhangs along the rooflines of the house appear in a variety of configurations, classified here: Open eaves are instances where the eave rafters are fully exposed, with a fascia board mounted over their ends to form an open pergola. On solid eaves, plywood boards fully seal the spaces between the rafters. On some elevations, the eave appears in alternating open and closed sections, while on other elevations, multiple eaves appear in overlapping planes.

The building sits upon an undulating natural landscape. A downward slope in the middle of the property leads to the west branch of the DuPage River. The studio wing cantilevers over the slope, and is supported by a stone pier and steel I-beam structure. Similarly, the southwest end of the house cantilevers partially over a sunken carport.

Set well back from Marion Road, the building is approached via a paved concrete driveway. The drive is edged by a curb on the west and a low, stacked stone barrier wall on the east. The drive curves slightly as it approaches the residence before sloping down into a partially sheltered carport placed under the cantilevered portion of the family wing. The overhanging structure is supported by a steel I-beam structure and a stone masonry wall that defines the perimeter of the carport. The exposed steel beams and unfinished stone make it appear as if this end of the residence is floating above the ground.

A stone stairway leads from the carport past the family wing (which is essentially the long stem of the Y) towards a stoop. Composed of two flagstone steps and a landing, the stoop is set with a recessed front entry. A wood door is flanked by glazed sidelights.

The bedroom wing extends southeast from the front entryway. The southwest façade of the bedroom wing, composed almost entirely of glass, is approximately 25 feet long. The facade is made up of two glazed doors and three fixed windows, all of which extend from the floor to the open eave at the roofline.

The bedroom wing's southeast façade comprises a simple wall with no windows or doors under a solid eave. Long clapboards give the wall a strong horizontal emphasis. A narrow, poured concrete pathway extends along its full length, then wraps around the corner towards the northeast façade, where it widens unto a terrace.

The bedroom wing's northeast façade is roughly divided into two bays. The first bay is defined prominent horizontal clapboards surrounding a long ribbon window topped by a solid eave. The window, a mix of fixed and casements, overlooks the poured concrete terrace. A side entry with a plain wood door flanks the windows to the northwest. Unlike the first bay, the second bay is composed of two stories because the building is sited into a hillside. This bay is largely composed of horizontal clapboards, with a long, narrow fixed window at its upper northwest side. At this bay's lower level, a door with a glass panel provides access to the basement. A picture window and an operable casement flank the door to the southeast. Above the door and windows on the second bay, a row of transom windows punctures the wall below the roofline. An open eave overhangs the roofline transoms. In an expressive design touch, the open eave from the flanking studio wing extends slightly south to the bedroom wing facade, overlapping just below the transoms.

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The studio wing extends north from the corner of the bedroom and family wings. Built in 1951, the addition cantilevers over the sloping hillside site. A wide stacked stone pier, built in 1942 in advance of the studio's construction, supports the building. Two steel I-beams provide additional support underneath along the length of the wing. These supports suspend the wing above the forest floor, while also creating a utilitarian crawl space beneath the building.

The studio wing's east façade projects at a wide angle from the adjoining bedroom wing. Asymmetrically placed along the horizontal clapboard facade, a projecting box-like window extends above the eave. This "window box" has three vertical windows with operable casements at the bottom. The wood trim on the box and between the three windows is painted grey. The bottom portion of this box projects out from the façade wall, while the top slants back and upwards. As a result, the box breaks the roofline behind the horizontal rafter that extends across the entire facade. Towards the upper part of this facade, a pair of black painted wood panels flank the window box.

The north façade of the studio wing is approximately 17 feet long. The façade is lifted fully off the ground, resting on a stone pier set roughly six feet back from the end of the wing. This facade is almost entirely composed of three contiguous floor-to-ceiling windows with grey trim. The lower portion comprises operable casements. The plain wood wall surrounding the windows is painted white. A varied eave overhang is left open above the windows, and flanked on both sides by solid eaves.

The studio wing's west façade is almost entirely sheathed in long horizontal clapboards, topped by a solid eave. A single, narrow vertical window opening appears towards the south end. A short concrete stairway runs parallel to the studio wing at ground level, leading up to the northwest terrace on the main level.

The family wing's northwest facade is essentially divided into two bays. The northern bay extends the length of the living room, kitchen, and small dining room. The projecting southern bay extends the length of the main dining room, built in 1972 to enclose an existing porch. Both family wing bays are of similar massing and materials. Minor differences in the window frames and roofline differentiate the original 1942 section from the addition. An outdoor poured concrete terrace edges the family wing's northwest façade.

The southwest end of the family wing cantilevers the sloped hillside site. A long, stacked stone wall supports the building. Exposed steel I-beams provide additional support underneath along the length of the wing.

The northern bay on the family wing's northwest façade is a long window wall, divided into eight floor-to-ceiling panels. The second and fifth panels are glazed doors, providing access to the living room and small dining room, respectively. The remaining panels are fixed. The southern bay façade projects slightly forward. The bottom half of the bay is sheathed in horizontal clapboard, with a row of three wood-framed sliders along the top half. The window frames on the southern bay are painted white.

The eaves along the northwest façade appear in distinct two sections. At the northern bay, an open eave hangs over window panels 1 through 5, from north to south. The open eave terminates at bay 5, where it overlaps a slightly lower solid eave that hangs over the remainder of the northwest facade. A strip of aluminum flashing tops the solid eave.

A row of three wood-framed sliders with a closed eave overhang defines the southwest façade of the family wing. This end of the building cantilevers halfway over the sunken carport. The stacked stone wall and steel support beams extend slightly southwest past the building to define the boundary of the carport.

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The southeast façade of the family wing extends north from the cantilevered southwest end of the building to the front entry, where the family wing connects with the bedroom wing at an L-shaped angle. Three window openings of various sizes and types run along the southeast façade. From south to north, these include a casement, followed by two sets of large picture windows. Each set of picture windows is flanked on both sides by casements. Between the second and third window sets, a massive stone masonry chimney divides the façade, extending roughly three feet above the roofline. The chimney also divides a varied eave, which is solid on the south side of the chimney and open on the north.

### Interior

A small foyer greets visitors upon passing the entry threshold. A grasscloth-clad wall wraps the corner towards the bedroom corridor. A second wall, wrapped in brightly colored wallpaper, divides the foyer from the living room. A pair of oak doors flank the foyer, concealing a coat closet and a small bathroom. Southeast of the foyer, a corridor leads towards two bedrooms—a master bedroom at the end of the hall and a second bedroom on the right. On the corridor ceiling, a long, hand-painted wood light fixture decorates recessed overheads. Both bedrooms feature built-in oak cabinetry and closets. Late 1960s-era carpeting replaces the original gray linoleum flooring.

The studio connects to the living room at its northeast corner, across from the foyer. A long, narrow row of transoms stretches across the roofline at the studio entryway. A built-in wood shelf with sliding chipboard panels creates a half-partition between the studio and the living room. The studio is entered via a short stone stair flanked by a planter. The room has cork tile floors and a sloped wood ceiling with exposed rafters. Three contiguous floor-to-ceiling windows define the far wall, flooding the room with desired north light. A similar set of windows on the northeast wall rises up towards the ceiling, projecting at an upward angle like a skylight. Several hanging fixtures provide additional light. A built-in desk and low bookshelf flank a descending basement stair, leading to a storage area and an additional bedroom. A half-bathroom is situated in the southeast corner.

The living room is flanked by the studio wing on the northeast, the foyer on the southeast, and the small dining room on the southwest. The northwest window wall frames a panoramic view of the forest beyond the outdoor terrace. A broad stone fireplace and hearth divides the southeast wall and extends from inside the living room to the exterior. A row of contiguous windows along the southeast wall frames the front landscape. Custom shelving from the early 1960s overhangs the southeast wall windows. A pendant lamp fixture suspends from the ceiling near the fireplace. Late 1960s-era gray stained floorboards replace the original linoleum.

The northwest-facing window wall continues from the living room into the small dining room. A radiant heat wall divides the small dining room from the kitchen to the south. A wood-framed mounted ceiling fixture provides illumination. The galley-style kitchen features original wood cabinetry, red ceramic tile floors, and a built-in breakfast nook on its northeast end. Mexican tiles, dating from the late 1940s, clad the kitchen counters and the walls around the stove. Southeast-facing picture windows run the length of the sink and countertop.

In 1972, the Himmelfarbs created the main dining room by enclosing an existing porch. The floor is finished in dark, hexagonal tiles. Vertical, unfinished wooden barn boards clad the northeast wall. Bands of glass sliders line the northwest and southwest walls. A door in the northeast corner leads outside to the terrace. A large custom sideboard sits along the southeast wall. A stamped metal, ceiling-mounted light fixture, designed by Spanish artist Julio de Diego (1900-1979), provides illumination.

### Integrity

Sam and Eleanor Himmelfarb occupied this property for over six decades. Since Eleanor's passing in 2009, the house has been occupied by Susan Himmelfarb, Sam and Eleanor's eldest daughter. Although Sam and



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Eleanor made some modifications to the house during their lifetimes, the interior and exterior designs remain largely intact and reflect the period of significance, 1942 through 1968 (the arbitrary fifty-year cut-off for listing on the National Register of Historic Places).

Sam and Eleanor's most significant alterations were limited to a 1950s-era basement addition and the 1972 enclosure of a porch to become a dining room. These minor alterations have little impact on the building's historic appearance. All other updates were made by the Himmelfarbs during the period of significance, including the late-1940s installation of artist-painted kitchen tiles, the early 1960s built-in shelving units in the living room, and replacement floors in the bedrooms and living room, both completed in the late 1960s. The exterior elevations and concrete terraces also reflect the period of significance. Exterior clapboards, windows, doors, and eaves are all intact and well-maintained. The carport and driveway are both in their original configuration.

The property retains an exceptionally high level of integrity. Its preservation, including the building's relationship to the land, has been and continues to be extremely important to the family. In fact, Eleanor established a conservation easement for the lot surrounding the house in 2002. Today, the building continues to strongly reflect its association with the Himmelfarbs.

Returned

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Art  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1942-1968  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1942  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Himmelfarb, Sam  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation** (if applicable)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Himmelfarb, Sam (architect)  
\_\_\_\_\_

G. Holger Jernudd (builder)  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The Himmelfarb House and Studio is locally significant for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The property meets with Criterion B for its association with acclaimed artist Sam Himmelfarb (1904-1976). The property is eligible for Art as its area of significance. Sam contributed to the Modern Art movement in mid-twentieth century Illinois, with many solo exhibitions, group shows, and awards to his credit. His paintings have been exhibited in dozens of prominent museums, galleries and private collections. Sam and his wife Eleanor (1910-2009) designed and built this remarkably intact residence in DuPage County in 1942. Even after Sam died, Eleanor, a much-lauded local art instructor, continued to live in and work from the building for another three decades. The house is significant as an incubator for Sam's creative work during much of his productive life. The period of significance spans from its construction date of 1942 to 1968, the arbitrary fifty-year cut-off for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

### Sam Himmelfarb: Early Life, 1904-1939

Sam Himmelfarb was born in Latvia to Jewish parents in 1904. When Sam was six years old, he and his parents immigrated to the United States, briefly settling in New York City. While in New York, Sam's mother became pregnant with a second child. However, both mother and the baby died from complications incurred during childbirth. Soon after, Sam and his father moved west to Sheboygan, Wisconsin, where they lived in a series of rooming houses. They soon settled in Milwaukee, where Sam spent most of his childhood.<sup>1</sup>

Sam's father encouraged his son to explore his creative imagination from an early age. After Sam won a poster design contest at his elementary school, he began taking Saturday morning art classes at Milwaukee's respected Layton School of Art. In junior high, Sam attended an art summer camp, where participants were selected based on their exhibited artistic talent to study with master art teachers visiting from Germany. Around this time, Sam began a lifelong friendship with his classmate, Schomer Lichner (1905-2006). Schomer would become a prolific Wisconsin artist in his own right, beginning with his celebrated work as a WPA muralist during the 1930s.<sup>2</sup>

Sam partook in other extracurricular activities that would come to inform the style and subject matter of his art. His participation in the Boy Scouts helped instill a lifelong passion for nature, which many years later played a critical role in his house design. Sam also learned to play drums while in high school, performing in local vaudeville acts and dance music ensembles. By his early twenties, music performance developed into a semi-professional vocation, becoming a platform for his developing interest in observing and being around large crowds of people. In turn, Sam's experience as a musician provided him with inspiration and imagery for many of his paintings.<sup>3 4</sup>

After graduating high school, Sam studied at the University of Wisconsin, Madison where he attended art classes until 1924. As a college student, he began forging relationships with fellow young Midwestern artists who became his professional contemporaries. These included such canonized artists as Joseph Friebert (1908-2002) and Ben Shahn (1898-1969), the latter whose politically-oriented work in the 1930s exemplified

<sup>1</sup> Himmelfarb, Susan. Personal interview by Adam Rubin, Winfield, Illinois, August 24, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Himmelfarb, John. Personal interview by Adam Rubin, Chicago, Illinois, September 11, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Barilleaux, Rene Paul. *Three Painters: Samuel Himmelfarb, Eleanor Himmelfarb, John Himmelfarb*, Quincy Art Center, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> "Schomer Lichtner (1905 - 2006)," *Museum of Wisconsin Art*, wisconsinart.org/archives/artist/schomer-lichtner.

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the Social Realism movement. Sam also became close with lesser-known figures including Bertram Reibel (1901-1993) and Bernard P. Schardt (1904-1979), graphic artists who later became the heads of design at Revlon, Inc. and J.C. Penny, respectively.<sup>5 6 7</sup> Like many American artists who got their start around the time of the Great Depression (1929 to roughly 1941), Sam's career would be defined by striking a pragmatic balance between holding a steady job with a reliable income and pursuing his creative imagination as a painter.

Though Sam did not graduate from the University of Wisconsin, he continued his formal art education at the Wisconsin School of Fine and Applied Arts, soon to become Milwaukee State Teachers College.<sup>8</sup> Here, Sam studied with Gustave Moeller (1881-1931), an influential German-born Wisconsin artist. Under Moeller's mentorship, Sam continued to refine his technique and develop his artistic vision.<sup>9</sup>

In 1926, Sam hitchhiked to New York City to study at the National Academy of Design and at the Art Students League of New York. At the latter, he took classes with Boardman Robinson (1876-1952), an acclaimed Canadian-American illustrator. Sam soon fell under the influence of a slightly older community of New York-based, socially-conscious artists known loosely as the *Ashcan School*. Art historian Barbara Weinberg summarizes the movement in a 2010 essay:

*Ashcan artists concentrated on portraying New York's vitality and recording its seamy side, keeping a keen eye on current events and their era's social and political rhetoric. Stylistically, they depended upon the dark palette and gestural brushwork of Diego Velázquez, Frans Hals, Francisco de Goya, Honoré Daumier, and recent Realists such as Wilhelm Leibl, Édouard Manet, and Edgar Degas. They preferred broad, calligraphic forms, which they could render "on the run" or from memory, thereby enlisting skills that most of them had cultivated as newspaper illustrators. Although the Ashcan artists advocated immersion in modern actualities, they were neither social critics nor reformers and they did not paint radical propaganda. While they identified with the vitality of the lower classes and resolved to register the dismal aspects of urban existence, they themselves led pleasant middle-class lives, enjoying New York's restaurants and bars, its theater and vaudeville, and its popular nearby resorts such as Coney Island... The Ashcan artists selectively documented an unsettling, transitional time in American culture that was marked by confidence and doubt, excitement and trepidation.<sup>10</sup>*

Sam's early work was highly informed by the Ashcan School, particularly in his dark paint tones and occupation with informal urban settings. His nascent depictions of everyday people, generally in a straightforward narrative context, developed from the influence of other progressive artists in his circle as well as from his affectionate observations of the denizens of New York City (Figure A). The human figure would become the primary and constant subject to occupy Sam throughout his artistic career, eventually developing from his straightforward, realist New York-based works into more expressionistic approaches, and eventually into abstraction, following his later move to Illinois.<sup>11 12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> "Bernard P. Schardt Biography," *The Annex Galleries*, Artists, [www.annexgalleries.com/artists/biography/2113/Schardt/Bernard](http://www.annexgalleries.com/artists/biography/2113/Schardt/Bernard).

<sup>6</sup> *Soap, Cosmetics, Chemical Specialties*, v. 52, 1976, pg. 86.

<sup>7</sup> Himmelfarb, Susan interview

<sup>8</sup> "UW-Milwaukee's Predecessor Institutions: Milwaukee State Normal School (1885-1927)." *University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Libraries*, available at: [guides.library.uwm.edu/c.php?g=56484&p=363324](http://guides.library.uwm.edu/c.php?g=56484&p=363324).

<sup>9</sup> "Gustave Moeller." *Wisconsin Visual Arts Achievement Awards*, [wvaaa.com/inductee/gustave-moeller-21](http://wvaaa.com/inductee/gustave-moeller-21).

<sup>10</sup> Weinberg, H. Barbara. "The Ashcan School." *Metropolitan Museum of Art*, November 2010. Available at: [www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ashc/hd\\_ashc.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ashc/hd_ashc.htm).

<sup>11</sup> Barilleaux, *Three Painters*

<sup>12</sup> *Modernism in the New City, Chicago Artists 1920-1950*, [chicagomodern.org](http://chicagomodern.org).

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Sam worked two jobs to pay for his art classes—one as a drummer. In 1929, he played a 16-show run with the popular big band Horace Heidt and His Californians at New York's Palace Theatre, while also playing gigs with iconic singer and comedian Jimmy Durante (1893-1980). Other notable entertainers in Sam's New York social circle included lyricist Ira Gershwin (1896-1983) and dancers from Martha Graham's company. In addition to his music, Sam worked design jobs with various architectural firms. He assisted architects and engineers on several Long Island mansions, taking measurements and drafting building renderings. One of the highlights of Sam's early architectural experience was drawing the bathroom layouts for the under-construction Empire State Building (1931). Through these work experiences, Sam honed the skills he would use to design his own house ten years later.<sup>13</sup>

While in New York, Sam married Irene Donnelly, with whom he had a daughter, Nell. Needing to support his young family and feeling the increasing pressures of the Great Depression, Sam decided to return to the Midwest.<sup>14</sup> In the early-1930s, he moved with Irene and Nell back to Milwaukee, and soon after, he found work in Chicago. As economic stagnation beleaguered the country, Sam decided to focus on commercial three-dimensional design work, rather than trying to find employment as an architect. For some years, he was display designer for the Mandel Brothers Department Store in the downtown Loop. He also designed exhibits for the 1933-1934 *A Century of Progress Exposition* in Chicago. In 1937, Sam founded his own industrial exhibit company, Three Dimensions. Over the course of his professional career, Sam's firm served such national companies as Union Pacific, Parker Brothers, General Motors, Motorola, Overhead Door, and many others. All this work bore the mark of his architectural and fine arts background. The company also provided Sam a dependable income while he worked on his paintings part-time.<sup>15</sup>

### Chicago Modernism, 1930-1945

Sam situated himself in the Chicago arts milieu at a critical moment in the city's history. Chicago Modernism, as the movement would later be recognized by art historians, began to formulate in the late nineteenth century, with the Midwest debut of the Impressionist style in Chicago at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. By the 1930s, when Sam returned to the region, the status of Modernism among American intellectuals and artists was on the rise, partially the result of the repudiation of Modernist art by totalitarian regimes in Germany and the Soviet Union, and by the arrival of conservative-leaning formalist art criticism. The establishment of the Museum of Modern Art in New York also helped to advance a canon of "pure" Modernist art, which in turn encouraged the development of regional—or Localist—Modernist movements in non-east coast cities, including Chicago. These local movements strived to de-emphasize experimentation for its own sake while promoting regional character, tradition, and self-reliance, as these values were believed by critics to express "diverse systems of beliefs and individual modernity."<sup>16</sup>

In Chicago, Modernism highlighted an ironic contradiction between the technological innovations of the future, as represented through the vanguard buildings of the Chicago School, advances in factory machinery, retail marketing, and other areas, versus the traditionalist Beaux-Arts architecture and elite civic structures of the past, as exemplified by the design of the World's Columbian Exposition. Chicago artists in the Modernist camp, who along with Sam Himmelfarb included Mitchell Siporin (1910-1976), Julio de Diego (1900-1979), Macena Barton (1901-1986), among others, challenged provincials and cosmopolitan conservatives alike by presenting an emerging—and uniquely Midwestern—vision of humanism and social consciousness. This broad collective vision, which reached its zenith from 1915 through 1945, reflected the aims of artists—many of whom were immigrants or first-generation Americans—who used the formal vocabulary of modernism to

<sup>13</sup> Himmelfarb, John interview

<sup>14</sup> New York, New York *Marriage Certificate Index, 1866-1937*.

<sup>15</sup> Himmelfarb, Susan interview

<sup>16</sup> Kennedy, Elizabeth. *Chicago Modern 1893-1945: Pursuit of the New*, Chicago: Terra Foundation for the Arts, 2004. Pp. 7, 11, 14.

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address social ills and to advocate redress through ideals of community and democracy. Siporin, whose portrait Sam later painted, believed that such an art would aid “our ‘little town’ [Chicago]...in the process of completing her soul. This process can only continue in the free atmosphere of our world, our country, and our town.”<sup>17</sup>

Sam’s art began to evolve beyond his early New York-based work as he found his place within Chicago’s artist community. His 1930s-era paintings carried over the Ashcan School’s emphasis on the small-town pleasures of the urban experience while introducing to his canvases the bold vocabulary of the Chicago Modernist movement (Figure B). In Sam’s own words:

“My paintings are exceedingly friendly. Like me, they speak easily for themselves. Look at them from a distance and then move in. You’ll be amazed at how you become involved if you go along...I record the unprogrammed, the unglorified, the casual human scene. Essentially, I’m a narrator developing intriguing ‘thing’ patterns formed by overlapping ornamentation of people shapes, thing shapes, and color shapes. Together, they form an active, vibrating, coherent narrative. The depiction of [a] simple happening on a city street—in a beanery—on a bus ride—becomes a tune in praise of the unspectacular.”<sup>18</sup>

With Sam’s stature in the Modern Movement building momentum, his work began to be recognized and locally exhibited. His work was included in the *15th International Water Color Exhibition* at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1936, and he showed in the *Chicago and Vicinity Annuals* at the Art Institute in 1938 (he would participate in this show many more times through the 1940s and 1950s, eventually winning its Broadus James Clarke Memorial Prize). He also was a member of the Arts Club and Artists Equity, for whom he delivered many lectures. Later in the 1950s, he would deliver an Artists Equity-sponsored lecture to local civic and business groups cheekily titled “Don’t Look Now, But Your Modern Art Is Showing.” Sam also had connections to the Abraham Lincoln Center Settlement House, which offered arts opportunities for underserved African-American and immigrant populations on the South Side. In the late 1930s, he delivered a lecture to a group of union members at the center about political poster design.<sup>19 20</sup>

As a socially-conscious artist, Sam was becoming increasingly alarmed over the rising threat of Nazism overseas, not least of which because of his own European Jewish heritage. He became active in Chicago’s antifascist circles, and regularly attended meetings organized by the American League Against War and Fascism, an antiracist, pro-labor organization that later became the American League for Peace and Freedom. One evening in the late 1930s, Sam arrived early to 1517 E. 57th Street, a seven-room Hyde Park apartment that served as a meeting place for various leftist organizations. There, setting up chairs, he met Eleanor Gorecki, who lived in the apartment. Sam and Eleanor hit it off and soon began seeing each other on a regular basis.

Sam’s marriage with Irene had grown strained over the years (he was 19 and Irene was 16 when they wed in 1926). As his relationship with Eleanor became more serious, Sam and Irene filed for divorce. On September 16, 1939, Sam and Eleanor married at her parents’ house in St. Charles, Illinois. Their marriage would last for the next thirty-seven years, until Sam’s death in 1976.

### Eleanor Himmelfarb: Early Life, 1910-1939

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 14, 53.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>19</sup> Barilleaux, *Three Painters*

<sup>20</sup> Himmelfarb, Susan interview

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Eleanor was born in 1910 in St. Charles, roughly 50 miles west of Chicago. She grew up in the Fox River Valley, the daughter of a Polish-born father and mother whose German family had lived in rural Illinois since the 1800s. As an only child, Eleanor found ways to entertain herself, often playing “teacher” in a schoolhouse of her own imagination—a role she would later assume as an adult. The family moved several times during Eleanor’s early childhood, living briefly in Chicago before relocating to a farm near the village of Wayne, northeast of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway. By the time Eleanor was six years old, the family had moved again to a farm between Barrington and Dundee.

Growing up in rural community, Eleanor did not have a highly-sophisticated exposure to the arts, but she did have some. Her parents highly valued books and music, and strived to provide their daughter with opportunities to broaden her education. When it came time for Eleanor to attend Dundee High School, she moved in with a family in town, assisting with house chores in exchange for room and board. In 1925, Eleanor’s parents sold their farm and moved the family to St. Charles, where she transferred to St. Charles High School beginning her sophomore year. Her parents soon moved into a house on Sixth Street, a block from the school. Eleanor returned frequently to the St. Charles house in the years after graduating high school and moving to Chicago.

The principal at St. Charles High School, H. Clark Brown, profoundly influenced Eleanor as an arts-oriented educator. In addition to his administrative role, Brown led a woodcrafter club (focused on nature and American Indian culture) and brought students on field trips to see plays and dance performances. He also invited diverse guest speakers to the school, including poets Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) and Countee Cullen (1903-1946), an African-American writer associated with the Harlem Renaissance.<sup>21</sup> Brown was instrumental in encouraging Eleanor to attend college, and may have connected her directly to the University of Chicago, of which he was an alumnus. Upon graduating high school in 1926, Eleanor moved to Hyde Park to attend the university, where she took courses in art history and design. Though Eleanor did not pursue studio arts at this time, her studies laid the groundwork for her lifelong passions for art and teaching.

For Eleanor’s first two years of university, she boarded with a family in the McKinley Park neighborhood on Chicago’s South Side. Every three-to-four weeks she returned to the country to collect goods from the farm to bring back to the city. Due to the financial constraints of college, Eleanor elected to take a year off before her junior year, during which time she taught fourth grade at Lincoln Elementary School in St. Charles. While teaching, Eleanor took Saturday classes and a correspondence course and made up a year of school. Eleanor returned to the University of Chicago for her senior year, renting a room in the Woodlawn neighborhood. To support herself, she worked at Baldwin Kingrey, a trend-setting interior decorating shop. Eleanor remained friends with owner Jody Kingrey for many years, later returning to the shop as a source for furnishing the house in Winfield.

After graduating in 1930, Eleanor looked for teaching positions, but was unsuccessful. She found a job in a print shop in St. Charles and worked there until the shop unionized, at which time she was forced to leave when the union was not accepting new members. She soon moved back to Chicago, where she secured a job at the RR Donnelley Printing Plant as a proofreader.

In addition to her work responsibilities, Eleanor had an adventurous spirit and a strong sense of curiosity about the world. In her early twenties, she drove with two other women from Chicago to Mexico to witness the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution (c. 1910-1920) firsthand. While there, she befriended Mexican artist Alfredo Zalce (1908-2003), who remained a lifelong friend. After Eleanor and Sam married some years later, the couple returned to Mexico multiple times to observe and absorb the lessons of revolutionary public murals

<sup>21</sup> Wintz, Cary. *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance*, New York: Taylor & Francis Books, pg. 273.

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painted by modernist artists including Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siquieros, and others.<sup>22 23</sup>

By the late 1930s, Eleanor was living as a single in the seven-room apartment on E. 57th Street, which she shared with several couples. Many of her housemates, Eleanor included, shared a common interest in progressive politics, and on occasion would organize events and discussion groups in the common living area. It is at one of these meetings that Eleanor first met Sam. After marrying in 1939, they rented an apartment at 4340 S. Oakenwald Avenue in North Kenwood. This was Sam and Eleanor's last Chicago address before making the decision to leave for the country.

### Designing the House and Studio, 1940-1942

By 1940, Sam and Eleanor were searching for a permanent place to live and raise a family. Though they retained a lively social circle, and Sam's design business continued to grow, they both yearned to commune more directly with nature. Sam's boyhood experiences as a scout and summer retreats upstate while living in New York City, combined with Eleanor's memories of her childhood on the farm, helped the couple make the decision to leave Chicago for the rural suburbs.

Opportunity presented itself one afternoon, when Eleanor's parents were touring in their car around Winfield, a farming community roughly ten miles southeast of St. Charles. Driving up a rural stretch of road near the West DuPage Woods Forest Preserve, they found an undeveloped property in a not-yet residential section of the nearby village. They quickly reported back to Sam and Eleanor, who soon purchased the property.

Since returning to the Midwest, Sam had occasionally taken on small architecture projects—mostly additions and remodels for friends, using a registered architect for the engineering requirements. The Winfield site provided Sam the opportunity to make his first design something truly personal and substantial. Over several months, he and Eleanor would regularly visit the undeveloped site, bringing a picnic lunch and sketching out the orientations for their desired rooms along the undulating terrain. As Sam drafted renderings, Eleanor contributed by envisioning the scale of the house's various spaces, which would include a large central living room, two bedrooms, and most significantly, an attached studio wing with two oversize windows to flood the room with soft, natural light.

Sam and Eleanor's design choices were bold and daring for the Winfield area, which in the early 1940s was still largely a rural farming village. Sam borrowed influences from early Modern Movement buildings that had only begun to infiltrate American architecture in the pre-WWII era. From his network of artists and designers, Sam was most certainly familiar with the work that came out of Germany's Bauhaus—likely from photographs and architecture publications—which promoted the use of exposed building materials, simple geometry, and a lack of ornament.

Sam's architectural references also included two innovative houses in Madison, Wisconsin: the Jacobs House (1937) and the Pew House (1938-40), both designed by master architect Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959). While visiting Madison, the Himmelfarbs witnessed firsthand the Jacobs House under construction, drawing inspiration from its relatively straight-forward design schematics and its floor-to-ceiling glazed walls, which created visual continuity between indoor and outdoor spaces. The Pew House, with its emphasis on horizontal lines and its placement on an undulating natural lot, surely helped Sam envision solutions for the siting of his own house.

<sup>22</sup> Kennedy, *Chicago Modern*, pg. 59.

<sup>23</sup> Himmelfarb, Susan interview



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Sam's renderings for his Winfield House took a similar L-shape footprint as seen on the Jacobs House and modified it into an irregular Y-shape, adding on a studio wing set at an oblique angle to the rest of the residence. The rolling terrain of the Winfield property required the one-story design to cantilever over the hillside on two ends, supported by stone piers and steel beams. Sam carefully arranged the window walls to create view sheds that would incorporate the forest landscape beyond the property line. Sam and Eleanor collaborated to create a practical flow between spaces, with a prominent fireplace at the center of the living room, a garden-like space created inside the elbow bend at the front of the house, outdoor terraces, and an open carport.

With finalized drawings, Sam and Eleanor began construction, filing a building permit with DuPage County on January 14, 1942. They hired G. Holger Jernudd (1906-1998), a Swedish-born carpenter, to serve as general contractor. At the time of construction, the estimated valuation of the property improvements was \$11,000. Aware that material shortages were imminent due to the escalation of WWII, Sam purchased the furnace days before a deadline made such items unavailable for the next several years. They also made a practical decision to delay completion of the studio wing for financial reasons, but built in-place a stone support pier where the wing would eventually rest. Nine months later, in November 1942, Sam and Eleanor moved into their nearly finished house. They completed the studio according to their original plans in 1951 (Figures C, D, E and F).

### Work and Family Life, 1942-1968

Sam and Eleanor made relatively few changes to the house design after 1942, as they focused on raising a family. They would have two children: a daughter, Susan (b. 1943) and a son, John (b. 1946) (Figures G, H and I). Sam's thriving exhibit firm allowed Eleanor to focus on parenting, though both were active and enthusiastic participants in family life. The Himmelfarbs spent summers at a three-room cabin on Madeline Island in Lake Superior, where Sam and Eleanor, and soon enough, John, painted. At the house, Sam and Eleanor regularly threw parties, organized nature conservation meetings, and hosted weekend stays from friends visiting from Chicago. In 1943, for one of their first large gatherings at the house, they hosted the touring cast of Thornton Wilder's original production of *The Skin of Our Teeth* when the company passed through Chicago. Other notable visitors to the house in these years included author-broadcaster Studs Terkel (1912-2008), film actor Lou Gilbert (1909-1978) and modernist sculptor Ruth Duckworth (1919-2009).

Sam continued to focus on painting while running his exhibit firm. He kept a rigid three-day-a-week schedule dedicated to artmaking, devoting the other four days to his business, which by the late 1940s had grown to employ a sales staff, in-house designers, and a silkscreen shop. Having steady work meant that Sam was freer to experiment and take risks with his art more than many of his contemporaries, as he was not reliant on selling paintings for his livelihood. In his 1950s work onward, Sam continued to "explore and discover the vitality and drama of the insignificant . . . the latent excitement in the unspectacular," as he declared in a 1958 interview for *Inland Architect*. His mature works of this period typically used "abstracted figures, subjects constructed with blocks of color to produce a patterned surface; paint applied in a cool, nearly mechanical technique and three-dimensional space flattened to create ambiguous spatial illusions" (Figure J).<sup>24</sup> He continued to exhibit in New York and Chicago, including solo shows at the Panoramas Gallery in New York (1956), the Frank Ryan Gallery in Chicago (1958), and others. In the 1950s, Sam served as president of the Artists Equity, of which he had been a long-time member.<sup>25</sup>

As Eleanor observed her husband at work, her interest in art became more than philosophical and theoretical. Beginning in the late 1940s, she started pursuing her own art in a more serious way. Already an experienced photographer since her twenties, she began to take on other mediums, including weaving, soldering, tiles, and

<sup>24</sup> Barilleaux, *Three Painters*

<sup>25</sup> *Modernism in the New City*

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stained glass, taking classes whenever she could fit them into her family's schedule. With Sam's encouragement and mentorship, Eleanor eventually began to use the studio for her own paintings. Both artists were highly influenced by the view of the woods from the studio, which due to the window framing, appeared as a flat, horizon-less landscape. The illusion inspired Eleanor to organize her imagery—often abstractions of nature—on largely flat planes, a technique derived both from her husband and from many of the other Modernist painters she knew personally through their Chicago social circle.

Eleanor's curiosity and desire to further her arts education brought her to the nearby Morton Arboretum, about ten miles from the house in DuPage County. There, she studied natural history with renown naturalist May Watts (1893-1975), who proved influential in Eleanor's life as an artist, educator, and close friend. At Watts' insistence, Eleanor took over instruction of painting classes at the Arboretum beginning in the 1950s. She continued to teach the class for several decades. As a nurturing and prolific arts educator, Eleanor provided a strong role model to local women starting their art careers later in life due to family obligations.<sup>26</sup>

In the early 1950s, Sam and Eleanor added on a third bedroom to the basement space. Sam and Eleanor's interior changes were minimal, limited to the late-1940s installation of kitchen tiles brought back from Mexico, 1960s-era shelving units above the south-facing living room windows, and wood panels to replace linoleum floors. In 1972, after the period of significance, they enclosed an outdoor porch on the west wing of the house, turning it into a dining room. The addition incorporated the same exterior materials as the original house to create a seamless transition from the 1942 design.

Though the house was always Sam's most complete and best-realized architectural endeavor, he did occasionally take on other building projects. These included one other residence in Wheaton he built for friends Joseph and Betty Stephens (since demolished) and a small medical office in Warrenville, which survives. Sam also contributed design work to a house across Marion Road, owned by Herb and Helen Berkeley, a local piano teacher. However, none of these projects would equal the grandeur of his own family residence.

### **Beyond the Period of Significance, 1968-2009**

In 1966, Sam sold his business and retired. Desiring to be "in society" to make art and be among other artists, he found a studio in Chicago's Pilsen community through Ruth Duckworth, who worked in the neighborhood. Sam painted at the studio full-time and remained active in the community until his death in 1976.

After her husband's passing, Eleanor increased her involvement in the Chicago and DuPage County art worlds. She decided to continue her arts education and enrolled in the MFA program at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she studied under abstract painter Morris Barazani (1924-2015). She kept teaching, and for many years instructed courses in painting and design at Rosary College, Triton College, the DuPage Art League, and the College of DuPage.

Eleanor's painting output began to increase quickly after Sam's passing. Like her husband, her body of work largely investigated life's ordinary moments, focusing on the enigmatic aspects of natural landscapes with architectural references and the human form. Her carefully composed abstract images illuminated her conceptual approach to humanity's place in nature. In a synopsis from "Three Painters"—a 1994 Quincy Art Center retrospective of Sam, Eleanor, and John Himmelfarb's work—curator Rene Paul Barilleaux writes: "By juxtaposing natural subjects with the human figure, [Eleanor] suggests the interaction between them.

Saturated

colors, gestural brushwork and free-floating imagery animate the paintings and enable them to transcend the

<sup>26</sup> Himmelfarb, John interview

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sense of tranquil isolation often associated with traditional landscape painting.<sup>27</sup> Though Eleanor's emergence as an artist would largely occur after the Modernist era, her work exhibited a sophisticated understanding and continuation of the movement's themes, forms, and ideas (Figures K and L).

In her three decades of work after Sam's death, Eleanor's work appeared in many museum, corporate, and private collections, including The National Museum of Women in the Arts, the Mary and Leigh Block Museum at Northwestern University, the Illinois State University Art Museum, Neiman Marcus, and Kirkland and Ellis. She exhibited widely throughout the Chicago area and in the Midwest. Eleanor died in 2009.<sup>28</sup>

### Critical Evaluation of Sam Himmelfarb's Contributions to American Art

Scholarly appreciation of both Sam and Eleanor's contributions to American art are well-established.

Sam Himmelfarb exhibited in Wisconsin Painters and Sculptors annual shows at the Milwaukee Art Museum for many years, where several of his works are in the permanent collection. He showed also in the Chicago and Vicinity annuals at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1938, 1940, 1942, 1943, and 1951, where he won the Broadus James Clark Memorial Prize. His work was also included in the 15th International Water Color Exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1939. He participated in the members shows at The Arts Club of Chicago over a long period of years. His entry in the 60th Annual American Show, 1951, was selected for a circulating show through many museums in the U.S., and he was represented in a collection selected by Katharine Kuh which traveled to museums in Germany and France.

One-man shows took place at Milwaukee Art Museum, Allis Art Library, Milwaukee; Panorax Gallery, New York; as well as the Ryan Gallery, Chicago. Three-person shows included Rosary College, River Forest, IL; Judson College, Elgin, IL; One Illinois Center, Chicago and Bradley Gallery, Milwaukee. In 1994, his work was shown at Quincy Art Center in a three-person show, along with the work of Eleanor and son John. In 2004, Sam's work was included in Chicago Modern, 1893-1945: Pursuit of the New at the Terra Museum of American Art in Chicago.

Eleanor Himmelfarb's work is included in many corporate and private collections, including the American National Bank, the Harris Bank, Kirkland & Ellis, and Deloitte & Touche, Continental Illinois Bank and Ideal Industries. Her gallery exhibitions included one-woman shows at the Evanston Art Center; Jan Cicero Gallery, Chicago; Gallery '72 in Omaha, and Chicago Street Gallery in Lincoln, IL; Sven Parson Gallery, Northern Illinois University; University Club, Chicago; North Central College, and Riverwalk Gallery, Naperville, IL; College of Dupage, Glen Ellyn, IL, and IIT, Chicago. Two- and three- person shows featuring her work have been held at Johnson County Art Council Gallery, Iowa City; Rosary College, River Forest; One Illinois Center, Chicago; Bradley Gallery, Milwaukee; Judson College, Elgin, IL, and Barrington Center Arts Council, Barrington, IL. Her work has been included in many group shows including The Chicago and Vicinity Show at the Chicago Art Institute, 1985; The Chicago and Vicinity Show presented at the Chicago Cultural Center by the Art Institute and The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1990; the 32nd Illinois State Invitational Springfield, 1980, and in group shows at the Renaissance Society, University of Chicago, The Peltz Gallery, Milwaukee; Volid Gallery, Chicago; Evanston Art Center, International ArtExpo, Navy Pier; Beverly Art Center, Chicago; the Norris Gallery in St. Charles, IL, and the Decatur Art Museum, Decatur, IL. In 1993, Eleanor served as artist-in-residence at Illinois State University, Normal.

In 2007, the Himmelfarb House and Studio was featured in a Chicago Bauhaus and Beyond tour of Modernism in Chicago's Western Suburbs.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Barilleaux, *Three Painters*

<sup>28</sup> Himmelfarb, Susan. Unpublished obituary of Eleanor Himmelfarb, July 14, 2009.

Himmelfarb, Samuel and Eleanor House  
and Studio

Name of Property

DuPage County, Illinois

County and State

## Summary

The Himmelfarb House and Studio reflects the lives and contributions of two important artists who both contributed to the Modern Art movement in mid-twentieth century Illinois. Only the Himmelfarb family has ever lived in the building, and many of Sam, Eleanor, and John's paintings and furnishings still decorate the house. The house is highly significant both for its associations with the Himmelfarbs and for its progressive design.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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"Several Towns Named After Founders and Heroes". *The Daily Herald*. December 28, 1999, pg. 220.

*Soap, Cosmetics, Chemical Specialties*, v. 52, 1976, pg. 86.

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Himmelfarb, John. Interview by Adam Rubin. Personal interview. Chicago, Illinois. September 11, 2017.

Himmelfarb, Susan. Interview by Adam Rubin. Personal interview. Winfield, Illinois. August 24, 2017.

---

<sup>29</sup> "Western Suburbs Modernism Tour. Bauhaus and Beyond, November 18, 2007. Accessed November 19, 2017.

Himmelfarb, Samuel and Eleanor House  
and Studio

Name of Property

DuPage County, Illinois

County and State

## GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

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## ONLINE IMAGES OF HIMMELFARB FAMILY PAINTINGS

Samhimmelfarb.com  
Eleanorhimmelfarb.com

## ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

"Biographical Notes," *Samuel Himmelfarb: People Paintings and Drawings*, Milwaukee: Charles Allis Art Library, 1969.

Himmelfarb, Samuel and Eleanor House  
and Studio

DuPage County, Illinois

Name of Property

County and State

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———. *Harvest of Freedom: Jewish Artists in America, 1930–1980s*, Edited by Michael Weinberg. Chicago: American References, 1989.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

Himmelfarb, Samuel and Eleanor House  
and Studio  
Name of Property

DuPage County, Illinois  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 4.2 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>41.865330</u>	<u>-88.168484</u>	3	_____	_____
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the Himmelfarb House and Studio property is shown as the solid line on the accompanying map entitled "Plat of Survey" (page 31).

The boundary illustrated on the map encompasses the entirety of Lot 85 in Winfield Farms, a subdivision in sections 12, 13, and 14, Township 39 North, Range 9 east of the third principal median, according to the plat thereof recorded April 3, 1908, as Document 93153, in DuPage County, Illinois.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This is the lot boundary that has historically been associated with the Himmelfarb House and Studio.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Adam G. Rubin date 1/12/2018  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ telephone (310) 428-8386  
street & number 1435 W. Hollywood Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor email adamgrubin@gmail.com  
city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60660

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **GIS Location Map (Google Earth or BING)**
- **Local Location Map**
- **Site Plan**
- **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**

Himmelfarb, Samuel and Eleanor House  
and Studio

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property

DuPage County, Illinois

\_\_\_\_\_  
County and State

- **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).

Returned



Himmelfarb, Samuel and Eleanor House  
and Studio

DuPage County, Illinois

Name of Property

County and State

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

**Name of Property:** Himmelfarb, Samuel House and Studio  
**City or Vicinity:** Winfield  
**County:** DuPage County **State:** IL  
**Photographer:** Adam G. Rubin  
**Date Photographed:** October 31, 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

**Total Number of Photographs: 15**

Photo #1: View from Marion Road towards house, camera facing north

Photo #2: Front entry and stoop, camera facing north

Photo #3: Bedroom wing, southwest façade, camera facing southeast

Photo #4: Bedroom wing, northeast façade and terrace, camera facing west

Photo #5: Bedroom wing, northeast façade with basement level entry, camera facing southwest

Photo #6: Studio wing, east and north facades, camera facing south

Photo #7: Family wing, northwest façade and terrace, camera facing southeast towards living room

Photo #8: Family wing, northwest façade and terrace, camera facing southwest towards small dining room

Photo #9: Family wing, northwest façade, camera facing southeast towards main dining room and stone support wall

Photo #10: Family wing, southeast façade, camera facing northwest toward living room and front entry

Photo #11: Foyer, camera facing southwest

Photo #12: Studio, camera facing north

Photo #13: Living room (foreground), with small dining room (background), camera facing southwest

Photo #14: Kitchen, camera facing southwest

Photo #15: Main dining room, camera facing north

Returned

Himmelfarb, Samuel and Eleanor House  
and Studio

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property

DuPage County, Illinois

\_\_\_\_\_  
County and State

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, D

Returned

**Property name: Samuel and Eleanor Himmelfarb House and Studio**  
**Illinois, County: DuPage County**

**List of Figures**

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all document should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.

Index of Figures

Figure A: *Road House*, oil painting by Sam Himmelfarb (1927)

Figure B: "L", oil painting by Sam Himmelfarb (1941)

Figure C: Himmelfarb House nears completion (1942)

Figure D: House under construction, view north from corner of bedroom wing toward family wing (1942)

Figure E: Carport, looking toward house from what will become the driveway. The original porch overhangs carport and rests on stone wall (1942)

Figure F: Sam painting in one of the bedrooms, temporarily fitted as a work room while awaiting completion of the studio wing (c. 1942)

Figure G: Eleanor Himmelfarb with daughter Susan, 10 weeks old, by fireplace (1943)

Figure H: Susan Himmelfarb reading in living room (April 1947)

Figure I: Sam Himmelfarb in kitchen (c. late 1960s-early 1970s)

Figure J: *Hilltop Town*, oil painting by Sam Himmelfarb (1958)

Figure K: Gate to Cherche Midi, oil painting by Eleanor Himmelfarb (1999)

Figure L: Mid-day Mid-night, oil painting by Eleanor Himmelfarb (2007)



Figure A: Road House, Sam Himmelfarb, oil, 29" x 26" (1927)



Figure B: "L", Sam Himmelfarb, oil, 40" x 35" (1941)

Property name: Samuel and Eleanor Himmelfarb House and Studio  
Illinois, County: DuPage County



Figure C: Himmelfarb House nears completion (1942)

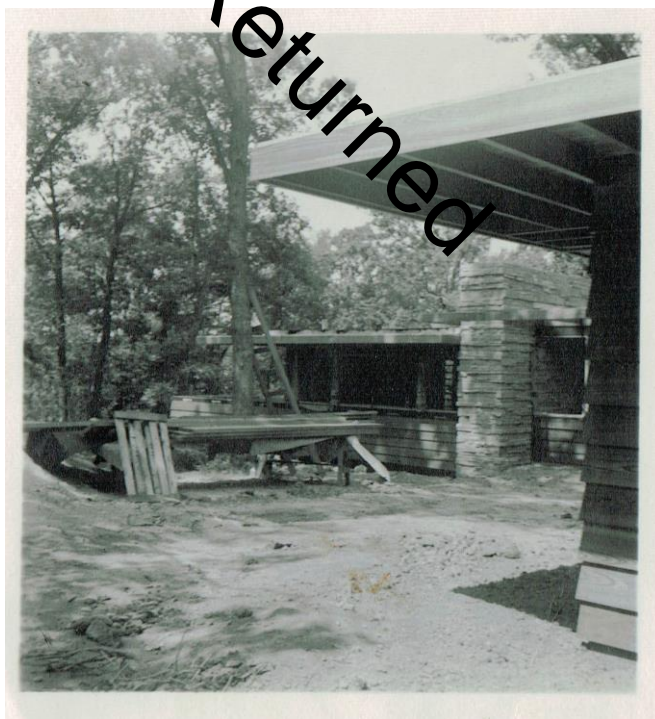


Figure D: House under construction, view north from corner of bedroom wing toward family wing (1942)

Property name: Samuel and Eleanor Himmelfarb House and Studio  
Illinois, County: DuPage County

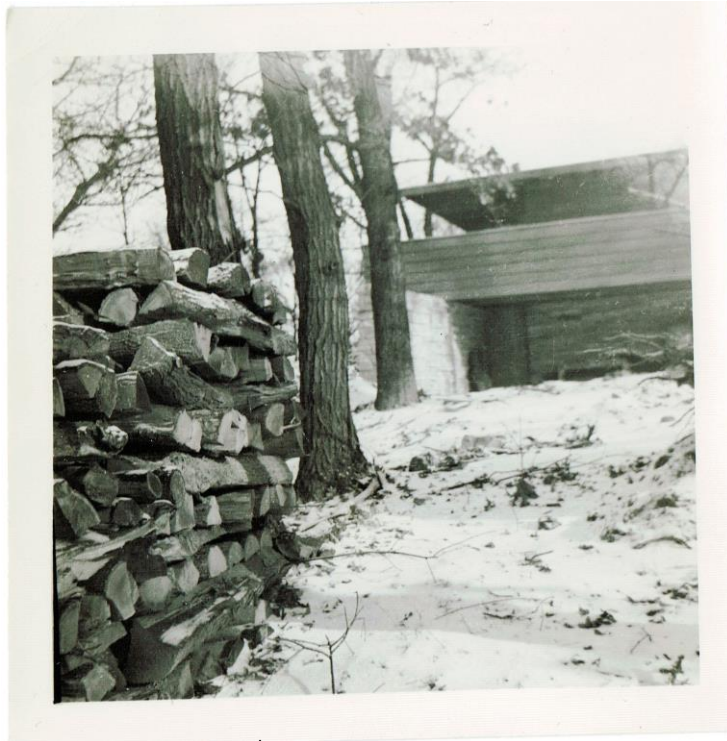


Figure E: Carport, looking toward house from what will become the driveway. The original porch (later enclosed to become dining room) overhangs carport and rests on stone wall (1942)



Figure F: Sam painting in one of the bedrooms, temporarily fitted as a work room while awaiting completion of the studio wing (c. 1940s)



Figure G: Eleanor Himmelfarb with daughter Susan, 10 weeks old, by fireplace (1943)



Figure H: Susan Himmelfarb reading in living room (April 1947)



Figure I: Sam Himmelfarb in kitchen (c. late 1960s-early 1970s)



Figure J: Hilltop Town, Sam Himmelfarb, oil, 38" x 48" (1958) oil, 38" x 48"





Figure K: Gate to Cherche Midi, Eleanor Himmelfarb, 1999, acrylic, 38" x 48"

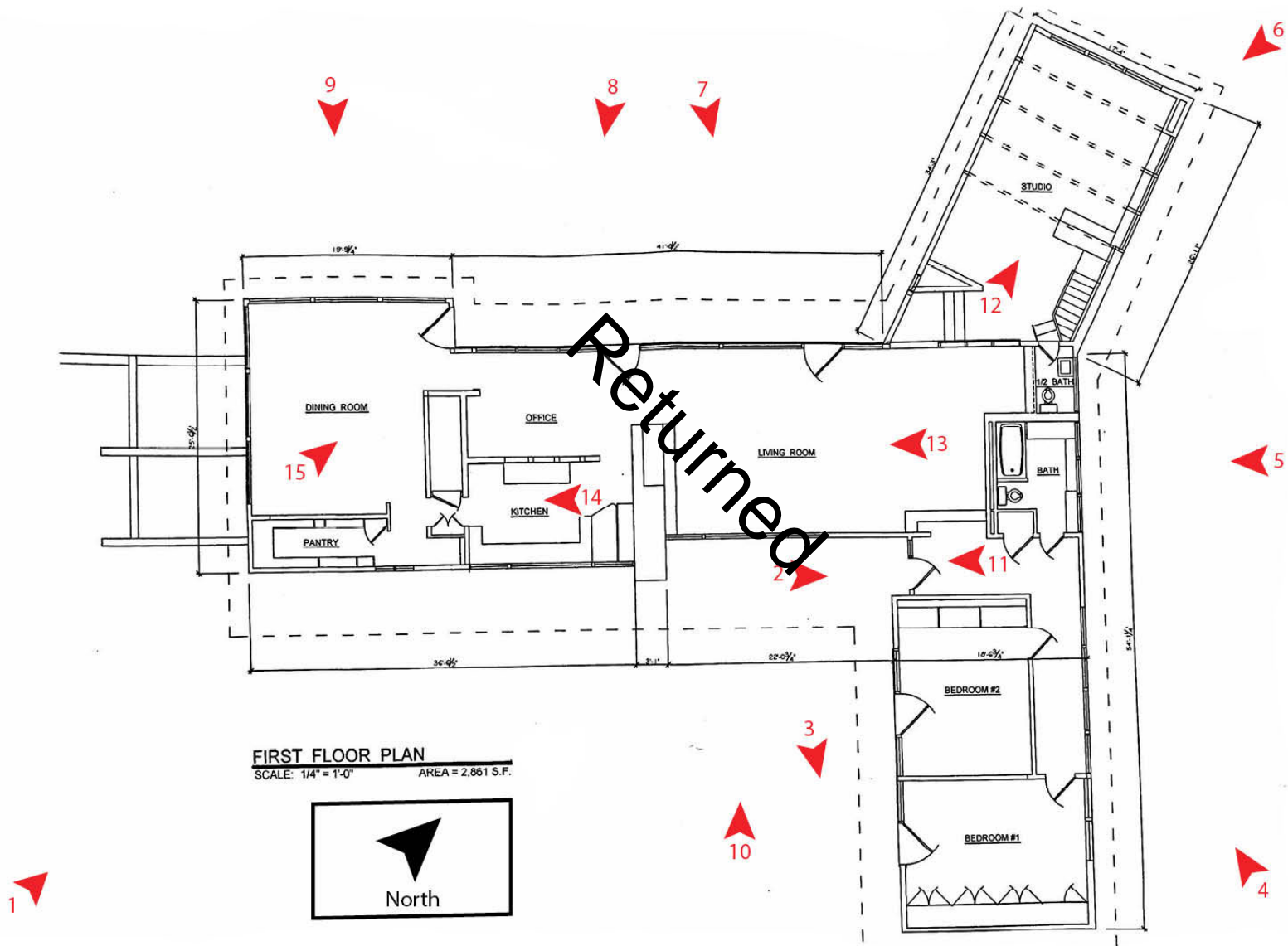


Figure L: Mid-day Mid-night, Eleanor Himmelfarb, 2007, acrylic, 36" x 48"

Property name: Samuel and Eleanor Himmelfarb House and Studio  
Illinois, County: DuPage County







Samuel and Eleanor Himmelfarb House and Studio  
 28W 120 Marion Road  
 Winfield, DuPage Co., Illinois

National Park Service  
 NR Photo Key

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 4/4/2018      Date of Pending List: 4/26/2018      Date of 16th Day: 5/11/2018      Date of 45th Day: 5/21/2018      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept       Return       Reject      5/21/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Barbara Wyatt      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2252      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places**

**Comments  
Evaluation/Return Sheet**

**Property Name:** Himmelfarb House  
**Property Location:** DuPage County, Illinois  
**Reference Number:** 100002417  
**Date of Return:** May 30, 2018

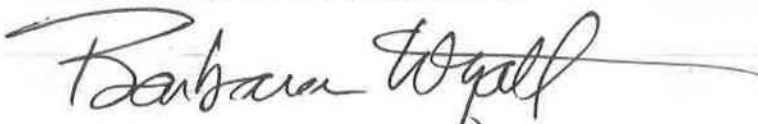
**Reason for Return**

The Samuel and Eleanor Himmelfarb House and Studio nomination is being returned because of confusion about its significance and period of significance. Because the nomination includes a great deal of text about Eleanor Himmelfarb, it appears that she is also considered significant under Criterion B. The period of significance does not conform to National Register guidance. The following points should be considered:

1. The house is nominated for association with Sam Himmelfarb, but Eleanor Himmelfarb's life and success as an artist is also described, particularly on page 13 and near the end of Section 8 and elsewhere. Please consider abbreviating these sections and explaining that the house is not also nominated for association with Eleanor Himmelfarb, due to her relatively recent death (2009) and a lack of critical evaluation of her work and an inability to classify her contributions as exceptional (required for Criterion Consideration G)--or whatever the case may be.
2. In at least two places, ~~the~~ period of significance is described as being "1942 to 1968, the arbitrary fifty-year cut-off for listing on the National Register" (pages 7 and 9). No period of significance should be arbitrary, and when Criterion B is applied the period of significance is defined by the years the significant person was associated with the house during his or her productive period. If Sam Himmelfarb died in 1976 and was creating art until his death, this would be a reasonable end date for the period of significance. If Sam Himmelfarb retired from his career as an artist in 1968, this is a reasonable year to end the period of significance. Depending on the end date, Criteria Consideration G may need to be applied.

Please call me at 202-354-2252 or send an email to [barbara\\_wyatt@nps.gov](mailto:barbara_wyatt@nps.gov) if you have any questions.

Barbara Wyatt  
National Register of Historic Places

  
5-31-18



# Illinois Department of Natural Resources

One Natural Resources Way Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271  
www.dnr.illinois.gov

Bruce Rauner, Governor  
Wayne A. Rosenthal, Director

September 10, 2018

Ms. Barbara Wyatt  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, DC 20240



Dear Ms. Wyatt:

Enclosed are the disks that contain the amended copies of the National Register nominations returned by the National Register of Historic Places:

**Reference Number: 100002826, St. Thomas Catholic School For Boys, Rockford, Illinois.**  
**Reference Number: 100002417, Himmelfarb House, Winfield, Illinois.**

Please contact me at 217/785-4324 if you need any additional information. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Andrew Heckenkamp, Coordinator,  
Survey and National Register program  
Illinois State Historic Preservation Office  
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

enclosures