

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

RECEIVED 2280

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.

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

1. Name of Property

Historic name: William Howard Taft National Historic Site (Additional Documentation and Boundary Increase)

Other names/site number: Alphonso Taft Home

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 2038 Auburn Avenue

City or town: Cincinnati State: Ohio County: Hamilton

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

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

| | |
|---|------|
| <u>Robert A. Motta Deputy FPO September 7, 2015</u> | |
| Signature of certifying official/Title: | Date |
| <u>National Park Service</u> | |
| State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government | |

| | |
|---|---|
| In my opinion, the property <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria. | |
| <u>Barbara Power</u> | <u>July 23, 2015</u> |
| Signature of commenting official: | Date |
| <u>DSTHPO for Inventory & Registration</u> | <u>Ohio History Connection</u> |
| Title : | State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government |
| | <u>State Historic Preservation Office</u> |

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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:) Accept Additional Documentation and Boundary Increase

Patricia Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

10/21/2015
Date of Action

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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 | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>1</u> | <u>4</u> | buildings |
| <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | sites |
| <u>9</u> | <u>5</u> | structures |
| <u>0</u> | <u>4</u> | objects |
| <u>11</u> | <u>14</u> | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling House

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum

LANDSCAPE: Park

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stone, brick, concrete

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Summary

William Howard Taft National Historic Site is situated at 2038 Auburn Avenue within the Mt. Auburn neighborhood of Cincinnati, Ohio. The property is a unit of the National Park System that honors and interprets the life and contributions of William Howard Taft (1857–1930) to American politics, government, and law. Taft, who served as 27th President of the United States (1909–1913) and Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court (1921–1930), is the only figure in American history ever to head two branches of government.

The nominated 3.64-acre property is consistent with the current authorized boundary of William Howard Taft National Historic Site. It includes 1.58 acres of the 1.82-acre property where William Howard Taft was born and spent his youth and early adulthood. The property also features the circa 1840 dwelling acquired by William Howard Taft's father, Alphonso Taft, in 1851, as well as several original and restored historic landscape features. The property also encompasses a 16-foot wide buffer strip (0.08 acres) to the south of the Taft Home parcel; a 0.28-acre parcel north of the Taft Home that features the Taft Education Center, developed by the National Park Service in 1999 to enhance the visitor experience; a 1.05-acre parcel used for visitor parking; and a 0.65-acre tract that accommodates non-park uses associated with a twentieth century apartment building as well as park staff parking. In addition to the Taft Home, resources that contribute to the significance of the property include one site—the historic Taft Home landscape—as well as nine structures—a wrought iron and stone fence, gravel carriageway, system of brick walks, well, two cisterns, and three stone walls.

Non-contributing features of the property include four buildings—the Taft Education Center, a contemporary storage building located northeast of the Taft Home, a twentieth century apartment building, and the Hamilton County Juvenile Court Youth Center—as well as one site, five structures, and four objects. These features support National Park Service administration of the national historic site, and use of the adjacent apartment building and youth center, both outside of federal ownership.

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Narrative Description

Setting

The Taft Home was built circa 1840 as part of the Mt. Auburn neighborhood, a suburb of the city of Cincinnati, Ohio, developed during the mid- to late nineteenth century atop the hills that frame the downtown to take advantage of healthful breezes and picturesque views of the city.¹ The neighborhood became an important locus for the civic, social, industrial, business, cultural, and religious leaders of Cincinnati. Scores of homes were built along a grid of streets established over the sloped terrain of Mount Auburn between 1830 and 1900. Auburn Avenue, which became known as the ‘Fifth Avenue’ of Cincinnati, was the most prominent among them.² Homes were designed in a variety of architectural styles, including Federal, Greek revival, Italianate, Romanesque revival, and Georgian revival.

The Italianate Taft Home occupied a long, narrow, rectangular lot, located at 60 Auburn Street, that measured 100 by 769 feet. The house was sited atop an elevated knoll and faced west toward Auburn Street, located 50 feet away. From the top of the knoll, the property fell away in all directions, most dramatically to the east.

Overview Description of the Property

William Howard Taft National Historic Site is located within a city block edged to the west by Auburn Avenue, to the north by Southern Avenue, to the east by Young Street, and to the south by Bodmann Avenue. The Hamilton County Juvenile Court Youth Center occupies a large portion of the block to the south of the property. As noted above, the 3.64-acre national historic site is comprised of six parcels—the 0.51-acre Taft Home parcel (Tract 01-101), an 0.08-acre buffer strip to its south (Tract 01-103), the 0.28-acre Taft Education Center parcel (Tract 01-

¹ Antoinette J. Lee, *William Howard Taft: An Administrative History* (Omaha, Nebraska: National Park Service, 1986), Chapter 1; Edwin C. Bearss, *Historic Structure Report – Historical Data – Home, William Howard Taft National Historic Site, Ohio* (Denver, Colorado: National Park Service, October 1972), 5.

² James Parton, *Atlantic Monthly* (August 1867); Gale Brooks, National Register nomination “Mt. Auburn Historic District” (Cincinnati, Ohio: Ohio Arts Council, 1972), 4; Scruggs and Hammond, Inc., *Cultural Landscape Report: William Howard Taft National Historic Site, Cincinnati, Ohio* (Omaha, Nebraska: National Park Service, 1993), 9–13. Auburn Avenue was initially referred to as Auburn Street.

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102), a 0.65-acre parcel at the corner of Auburn and Southern avenues (Tract 01-104), a 1.05-acre parcel south of Southern Avenue (Tract 01-112), and a 1.07-acre parcel east of the house that contains a portion of the youth center and associated parking (Tract 01-106).

The 0.51-acre portion of the Taft Home parcel that edges Auburn Avenue is part of the original family property. Set prominently within the parcel is the two-story Taft Home. A nineteenth-century fence, composed of limestone, sandstone, and wrought iron, delineates the edge of the property along Auburn Avenue, while paired sandstone piers and wrought iron gates mark the two entrances. The southern entrance, used by pedestrians, features a flight of stone steps that lead to a brick walk on axis with the front door of the house. Ornamental plantings edge the walk and the foundation of the house. The northern entrance is associated with a gravel carriageway that extends eastward into the property to the carriage shed, a contemporary structure built by the National Park Service to accommodate park storage needs. The carriageway is edged to the north by a stone wall and a wooden fence.

Additional brick walks extend north and south from the central walk. These lead to entrances into the house located to the north and south, and on the east end. The walk leading north includes brick stairs that traverse the descending topography. It connects to a side entrance at the basement level, which is used by park visitors to enter the house. Beyond the side entrance, the walk continues to the rear of the house where there are two additional entrances. One of these leads into the basement of the older part of the house, while the other accesses an addition built in 1851 by Alphonso Taft. Set within the brick walk near the entrance into the addition is a wooden cover that marks the location of a historic well. The walk approaching the second entrance is edged by a historic stone wall.

Behind the house to the southeast is a contemporary wooden screen fence that encloses HVAC units, a replica hitching post and horse hobble, and NPS boundary markers. Contemporary ornamental and chain link fencing edge the property to the south and east. Trees and shrubs growing along the fence help to limit views of the adjacent Hamilton County Juvenile Court Youth Center property.

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The parcel to the north of the Taft Home features the Taft Education Center—an interpretive facility that also includes National Park Service administrative offices. The parcel also includes a small parking area that accommodates six cars, a park identity sign, flagpole, bust of Robert Alphonso Taft, Ohio State Historical Marker, a marker recognizing Helen Herron Taft’s contribution of cherry tree plantings in Washington, D.C., and a wayside exhibit.

To the north of the Taft Education Center is a parking area used by park staff. The parking area, accessed from Southern Avenue, is also associated with the privately-owned apartment building located at the corner of Auburn and Southern avenues. Further east is the larger parking area developed by the National Park Service for park visitors, also accessed from Southern Avenue. The visitor parking area includes plantings, lighting, an identity sign, a walkway leading to the Taft Home parcel, and a retaining wall that supports the walk.

Integrity of the Property

The William Howard Taft National Historic Site possesses sufficient integrity to convey its historic associations with William Howard Taft, a significant figure in United States history. The William Howard Taft National Historic Site possesses integrity of location, association, feeling. Integrity of setting is diminished by the loss of the Burkhardt House to the south, and the addition of the Hamilton County Juvenile Court Youth Center and Taft Education Center to the southeast and north respectively. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are also diminished due to the changes that were made to the property following Taft ownership. Several of these changes have been reversed due to National Park Service restoration of the house and the cultural landscape based on research and archeological investigation.

Resource Descriptions

Contributing Buildings

- 1. William Howard Taft Home** (National Park Service List of Classified Structures (LCS ID) 001379; William Howard Taft National Historic Site Historic Structure (HS) number 01) (one contributing building.) The William Howard Taft Home was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1964, and listed in the National Register of Historic

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Places in 1976. The home purchased by Alphonso Taft in 1851 was built circa 1840 by G. and Mary Bowen as a two-story brick structure that measured approximately 39 feet by 21 feet in plan, and included a full walkout basement.³ After his purchase of the property in 1851, Alphonso Taft added a 40-by-22-foot wing to the east of the original structure. The addition contained two stories and a full basement.

Exterior

The Taft Home is of brick construction set atop a rubble limestone foundation. It features intersected hip roofs clad with copper. The walls in the lower two stories of the rear addition and the first story of the original structure are three wythes thick, while the upper story is two wythes thick.⁴ The bricks are laid in American bond using a lime mortar, with one course of headers following every seven courses of stretchers.

The house is characterized as Italianate in style. As such it is representative of many Mt. Auburn neighborhood residences built during the mid-nineteenth century. The main (west facing) facade is symmetrically divided with a centered main door and individual double hung windows to either side. Three window openings on the second floor mirror the location of the lower level openings. The door stoop stands atop two steps. The door is sheltered by a projecting square colonnaded door hood, supported by two square columns with chamfered corners. The hood has a flat roof and projecting scalloped vergeboard detailing above the cornice. The historic paneled front entry door remains in place.

The wall surface of the main facade is smooth brick with a slightly projecting center bay and corner detailing that conveys the appearance of pilasters on the corners. A stepped brick detail bridges the transition between the wall surface and overhanging roof eave. An unornamented parapet wall projects at the roof line. The roof, though not visible, is a cross configuration of a very shallow hipped roof. The hip crests in a north-south direction on the main body of the original house and is capped by the detailed iron railing of the widow's walk. The 1851 addition has a shallow hip that crests in an east-west

³ Lee, Chapter 1.

⁴ A wythe is a continuous vertical section of masonry one unit in thickness. A wythe may be independent of, or interlocked with, the adjoining wythe(s).

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direction. Decorative vergeboards surround the house from the eave and the projecting parapet wall. Each window has black shutters on either side of the opening. The house is currently painted a cream color, with the solid stretch of foundation banding painted a contrasting dark red color.

The north facade reveals the significant slope of the lot through the building's expression of a full three stories in height at the rear as exhibited in the exposed basement level of the 1851 addition. The current visitor entrance into the house is located here at the lower basement level, in what was once the kitchen. The entrance has a simple contemporary door set within a protective shelter surround enclosed by wooden lattice. The entry is through a central arch. The shelter is painted to match the house. A sloping metal cap to this entry meets the enclosure with vergeboards that match those on the cornice surrounding the entirety of the house.

The east (rear) elevation of the house is a narrow, full three-story height with an entry door into the kitchen area, and two simple double-hung windows on each level. The south elevation clearly shows the connection between the Taft 1851 addition and the original circa 1840 footprint of the house. The south facade retains what was once an open sunporch in the corner between the main body and the ell. This two story space is covered with wood slat mesh painted the same color as the house. Fenestration on this facade and throughout the house is double hung multi-light windows with black shutters. The sills and lintels of each window unit are painted a dark red color that helps to differentiate this detail from the main body of the house. The ell has star-shaped end points of the structural tie rods visible in the facade. These are painted the same color as the body of the house.

Interior

The interior of the house is currently used as museum display space. The first floor of the house is interpreted as the family residence during the period between William Howard Taft's birth in 1857 and his marriage in 1886, while the second floor exhibits interpretive

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panels detailing Taft's accomplishments as Governor-General of the Philippines, President of the United States, and Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Park visitors begin their tour by signing in at the Taft Education Center, subsequently traveling to the Taft Home with a guide. They follow the brick walk that leads to the visitor entrance door in the north elevation of the house. The interior is used as an orientation space. Before construction of the Taft Education Center, this room was also used as classroom space. This portion of the basement has been significantly altered. All of the finishes are contemporary, with carpeting and sheetrock walls to accommodate groups. It also features track lighting, a drinking fountain, and a restroom. One of the family cisterns is interpreted through a Plexiglas cover in the floor. The former kitchen is connected to the rest of the house by a stairway that was added as part of the Taft addition.

Beneath the original circa 1840 house is the furnace room and a work room. The foundation walls here are brick and stone with a concrete floor. This area exhibits evidence of work conducted during the 1980s by the National Park Service to restore the house. The space was traditionally used as quarters for a hired hand, and for a billiard room. When the 1851 addition was constructed, Alphonso Taft built the stepped stone wall to afford access to the basement of the circa 1840 section of the home.

From the former kitchen, the stairway leads to the main floor of the ell and the main entry hall, connected to the formal front door. The entry hall is a double loaded corridor with the original stair hugging the north wall, which is shared with the library. The floor is a painted oil cloth in an octagonal dark red, black, and cream pattern. The walls are covered with period-appropriate wallpaper. The stair to the second floor features a tapered round newel post with a two-tone wood pattern on the risers and treads. The side wall of the stair has a light and dark wood pattern. Two doors on the south wall of the hall lead into the formal parlor, while a single door on the north wall leads into the library. These openings are original and retain their wood trim. All of the trim on the

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main level is faux painted with wood graining in a style that was popular in the mid-nineteenth century.

The parlor located off the hallway to the south consists of one large room, but was historically two rooms before the dividing wall was removed. The room is decorated with wall-to-wall carpeting, gold-leaf window pelmets, and full length puddled draperies, and furnished with artifacts and decorative items owned by the Taft family, including family portraits of Alphonso and his wife, Louise, a piano, and furnishings. There are two matching Fry fireplace mantels in the room. One is original to the house. The other was purchased from a nearby property and installed to replace the original mantel during building restoration efforts conducted by the National Park Service. The original mantel was moved to an upstairs room in the house.

Across the hall is the family library. This room also contains an impressive Rogers fireplace mantel made of marble. Period wallpaper and flooring are present, along with several decorative items known to have belonged to the family, such as a desk and several books. A combination electric/gas three globe light fixture is centered in the room.

Adjacent to the library to the east is the dining room. It also features an interesting period fireplace mantel that includes figural tiles around the fire box. The original trim and doors, with faux painting, remain intact, while contemporary wall-to-wall carpeting covers the floor.

Beyond this room is a space that was historically used as a nursery and later an adult bedroom. It contains a fireplace and stove for heat. This room marks the transition between the original house and the 1851 addition through the change in the size and configuration of the hallway doors. The doors within the addition have the same faux-painted trim as the older section of the house, but feature a tripartite transom window above to improve circulation in the warm summer months.

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The stair accessing the upper floors of the addition is located at the back of the house.

This stair matches the general design and configuration of the original stair at the front of the house but the two stairs do not align in elevation. The connection between the addition and the original section of the house is separated by several steps. The hall corridor is wallpapered.

The upper floors historically housed the family and servant bedrooms. One of the rooms contains an elaborate wood-carved fireplace mantle with a tile surround. Most of the rooms contain exhibits about William Howard Taft's role in American politics, law, government, and judicial history. Stenciling on the walls and ceiling has been restored to reflect the Taft period of occupation of the house. Other areas of this second story space house utilities and storage.

Integrity of the Taft Home

Based on the careful restoration of the Taft Home by the National Park Service, the building retains integrity of location, feeling, and association. The only deviation from the historic footprint of the historic Taft Home is the two-story octagonal bay, approximately 6 feet by 22 feet in size, that is located along the south exterior wall of the rear wing. This feature replaced an earlier two-story piazza along the adjacent wall.

Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are retained by the extensive restoration of the building's exterior, while the interior has been rehabilitated for public use and has diminished integrity of design, materials, and workmanship due to the alteration of many of the rooms for museum display, interpretation and storage/office use. The integrity of the property's setting is somewhat diminished due to the loss of neighboring residential properties such as the Burkhardt House to the south, and the addition of the Hamilton County Juvenile Court Youth Center to the southeast and the Taft Education Center to the north.

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Chronology of Development

The house where William Howard Taft would be born was built circa 1840 in the Italianate style. Alphonso Taft (1810–1891) purchased the house from Mary Bowen and the estate of G. Bowen, in 1851.⁵ Taft, who had been born in Vermont, moved to Cincinnati in 1838 from New England. Like his father, Peter Rawson Taft, Alphonso Taft was a lawyer. Alphonso had left Vermont to attend Yale in 1833, the first member of the family to attend the University. Taft moved to Cincinnati circa 1839 following a visit that left him suitably impressed with the growing city and the opportunities available to him as a lawyer that he elected to relocate there. After securing a position with a local law firm, Taft also became involved in politics, supporting the election of the Harrison-Tyler ticket in 1840.⁶

In 1841, Taft traveled to Vermont to visit his family. While there, he met and married Fanny Phelps. The couple subsequently moved to a house at Fourth and Vine streets in Cincinnati that Alphonso had purchased. The couple had five children while living in the house, two of which survived infancy—Charles Phelps (1843) and Peter Rawson (1845).⁷

Taft's law practice thrived, and he and Fanny became involved in local cultural, social, and political activities. To accommodate their growing family and in consideration of Fanny Taft's health issues, Alphonso Taft purchased the home on Auburn Avenue on June 13, 1851. Taft hoped that moving the family away from the congestion and pollution of the city would help Fanny, who was in poor health.

The Tafts immediately set out to enlarge the home to accommodate their family, adding a large 40-by-22-foot wing behind the house to the east.⁸ Both the original house and the addition contained two stories and a full basement. The Tafts made many other improvements to the house during their first year of occupancy, including faux painting

⁵ Bearss, 5.

⁶ Henry F. Pringle, *The Life and Times of William Howard Taft: A Biography*, 2 volumes (New York, New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1939). I: 9-11.

⁷ Bearss, 3.

⁸ Bearss, 5–6.

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the woodwork trim, adding cabinets, carpeting, heating stoves, interior plumbing, and boilers for hot water, as well as a widow's walk. They also painted the house and the interior woodwork and added the cornice and shutters.

Landscape improvements instituted by Alphonso and Fanny Taft included construction of a stone retaining wall, cistern, and privy, and the addition of brick walkways that extended between the road and the dwelling and connected the building entrances.

Despite the move, Fanny Taft did not improve. In June 1852, Fanny Taft died, leaving Alphonso a widower and single father. Several months after Fanny's death, Alphonso traveled to New England to visit family and friends. While in New Haven, Connecticut, he met Louise Torrey of Millbury, Massachusetts, 18 years his junior, who was working as a schoolteacher.⁹ In December 1853, they were married. Following their marriage, the Tafts moved to the home on Auburn Street with Alphonso Taft's first two children. After losing their first child to whooping cough at fourteen months of age, Alphonso and Louise Taft welcomed a second child—William Howard Taft—on September 15, 1857. The Tafts would eventually add three more children to their family—Henry Waters in 1859, Horace Dutton in 1861, and Fanny Louise in 1865.¹⁰ In addition to the six children, they shared the house with Alphonso Taft's parents.

Alphonso and Louise Taft continued to improve the property, adding formal features in front of the house such as ornamental plantings, an ornamental urn, and a carriageway that led behind the house to a carriage house or stable northeast of the house. Behind the house, the steeply sloping land was terraced to accommodate service and agricultural uses. Further east, kitchen and vegetable gardens, an orchard, a honey bee yard, and a grape arbor were established to support household needs. The property is also thought to have included a barn or other outbuilding structure as well.¹¹ In 1863, following the widening of Auburn Street, the Tafts built a limestone, sandstone, and wrought iron fence

⁹ Bearss, 15.

¹⁰ Bearss, 13–15, 33, 39.

¹¹ Scruggs and Hammond, 13, 18–19, 22; Bearss, 5.

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along the west edge of the property.¹² The following year they added gas lighting. By 1869, the house was connected to the city water system.

In a letter penned in 1854, Louise Taft described life in the neighborhood as

Surrounded with fine residences, so shut out from the sight of the city that it seems like a village by itself. We can see the city and the river from the upper windows and from the top of the house. There are about fifty families living on the hill, many of them New England people, all acquainted with each other and very neighborly and social. There are none among them remarkably intellectual or highly cultivated though some of them are very wealthy and make quite a show. They are all friendly and pleasant neighbors.¹³

Alphonso Taft remained a successful lawyer during William Howard Taft's childhood years. Among his many accomplishments, Alphonso Taft served as a jurist, diplomat, and judge, and was appointed to the boards of trustees of the University of Cincinnati and Yale University. Later, Taft became involved in politics at the state and national levels. The family was an integral part of the social, intellectual, and political elite of Cincinnati. The Tafts hosted many important visitors—politicians, businessmen, and military leaders—some of whom became notable figures in American history.¹⁴

Alphonso and Louise Taft placed great expectations on their children, particularly in terms of academic success. The home served as the setting where the character and ambition of the Taft children were shaped. All of the male Taft children attended Yale, received degrees in law, and returned to Cincinnati to practice.¹⁵ William Howard Taft was a diligent student who always strove to meet the expectations of his parents. William Howard Taft's wife, Nellie Herron Taft, once remarked that Alphonso and Louise Taft: "created an atmosphere in which the children absorbed high ideals and strove to meet the family standard of intellectual and moral effort."¹⁶

¹² Scruggs and Hammond, 10.

¹³ Louise Taft to Mrs. Susan Torrey, Jan. 14, 1854, Library of Congress, William Howard Taft Papers, Series 1.

¹⁴ Lee, Chapter 1.

¹⁵ Scruggs and Hammond, 8.

¹⁶ Lee, Chapter 1.

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During the 1860s, Alphonso Taft became increasingly involved in politics. For his contributions to the Union cause during the Civil War, Taft was appointed to the Ohio State Supreme Court in 1865, a position he later retained when it became an elected post. While William Howard Taft was away at college, Alphonso ran for governor in 1875, but lost the Republican nomination to Rutherford B. Hayes. In 1876, the Tafts left Cincinnati for Washington, D.C., when Alphonso was appointed U.S. Secretary of War, and later Attorney General, under President Ulysses S. Grant.¹⁷

While they were away, the house at 60 Auburn Avenue was rented. In 1877, it was severely damaged in a fire. The Tafts returned to repair the house.¹⁸ As part of the work, Alphonso elected to increase the height of the upper story to 11 feet. He also oversaw the plastering of damaged walls, the addition of a new veranda, a new iron cornice around the building, new sills, and new flooring in the dining room. Taft chose to increase the size of the window in the parlor, which involved installation of a new sash and shutters. New wallpaper and decorative painting and other finishes were added to the interior of the addition. In 1878, Mrs. Taft added the Fry fireplace mantel in the parlor and the Rogers fireplace mantel in the library.¹⁹ William Howard Taft returned to Cincinnati in 1878 to live in the remodeled house while attending Cincinnati Law School. Thereafter, the house remained relatively unchanged until Louise Taft sold the property in 1899.

In 1882, President Chester A. Arthur named Alphonso to the position of U.S. Minister to Austria-Hungary, followed by an appointment to Russia in 1884. While the Tafts were abroad, they leased the house to tenants. In 1885, Alphonso and Louise returned to the house and Cincinnati, and were in residence there when William Howard Taft married Nellie Herron in 1886. In 1889, Alphonso Taft decided to retire and move to San Diego, California. Alphonso Taft died in California in 1891. His body was returned to Cincinnati, and Alphonso Taft was buried in Spring Grove Cemetery.

¹⁷ Lee, Chapter 1.

¹⁸ Scruggs and Hammond, 4-5.

¹⁹ Bearss, 91.

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After Alphonso's death, Louise Taft decided to return to live with family in Connecticut and lease the house. The first tenants, the Hunneville family, rented the property until 1899. The subsequent tenants, Judge and Mrs. Albert C. Thompson, rented the property for a short time before purchasing the house from Louise Taft in 1899. The Thompsons owned the house until 1912. During their tenure, the Thompsons removed the veranda and replaced it with a single-story front porch that extended the full width of the house. They also razed the two-story wooden piazza and replaced it with a single-story conservatory, and demolished the two-story stable and two other outbuildings.²⁰

After Judge Thompson's death in 1910, Mrs. Thompson offered it to the city for use as a playground. Unable to receive a commitment from the municipality, Mrs. Thompson sold the house to Colonel and Mrs. Ernest H. Ruffner in 1912. During their ownership, the Ruffners added interior bathrooms, an extension to the north elevation of the dwelling, a second story sleeping porch above the conservatory, a third cistern, and a grape arbor.²¹ Upon Colonel Ruffner's death in 1937, the house passed to Ruffner's daughter, Mrs. Violet R. DuBus. She was the first to begin discussions with local groups, including the newly-formed William Howard Taft Memorial Association, about protecting the house in order to memorialize and recognize William Howard Taft's birthplace and family home.

The William Howard Taft Memorial Association (the Association) was formed in 1934, and incorporated until July of 1937, with a stated purpose to "plan, promote, erect, and collect funds for a national memorial in honor of William Howard Taft." The organization's first priority was to acquire the Taft Home. Plans for acquisition unfortunately coincided with the efforts of William Howard's eldest son, Robert A. Taft, to secure the 1940 Republican nomination for president. Concerned that a campaign to secure funds for the acquisition and memorialization of the house would conflict with Taft's efforts to raise funds for the campaign, the Association did not immediately pursue acquiring the house.

²⁰ Scruggs and Hammond, 23, Bearss, 141.

²¹ Bearss, 147.

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Although Mrs. DuBus desired to sell the property, she gave the Association until April of 1940 to decide whether they would purchase it. Unable to raise enough money to pay \$12,500 asking price for the property, they declined to make an offer and the property was instead sold to Elbert E. Bellinger, who owned the neighboring Leopold Burkhardt house.²² Bellinger immediately told the Association that he would be happy to discuss selling the house to them whenever they were ready. At the same time, Bellinger proceeded to make several changes to the property. At the time of its acquisition, Bellinger described the house as in poor condition, indicating that termites had infested the kitchen and basement, and there were cracks in the brick walls on both sides of the 1851 addition. Bellinger's initial efforts focused on stabilizing the house. These were followed by its conversion into several apartments, including three units on each of the upper floors and one on the ground floor. The work entailed subdividing rooms, adding doors, removing and replacing flooring, removing and storing fireplace mantels, and adding kitchens and bathrooms.

Mt. Auburn's racial composition began to change around this time, including a large influx of African American residents. In poor health, Bellinger considered an offer from an African American undertaker to establish a funeral parlor in the house, before deciding to retain the property on the advice of his attorney. In 1950, Hamilton County announced plans to construct a new youth detention facility in the Mt. Auburn neighborhood. To reduce some of his maintenance and management responsibilities, Bellinger decided to sell the Burkhardt House to Hamilton County as a site for the planned facility and move into the first floor apartment of the Taft Home. Before the County demolished the Burkhardt House to make way for the facility, Bellinger salvaged fixtures and gate posts. Bellinger also constructed a wooden fence across the rear of the lot in 1951 after selling the eastern portion of the original Taft Home parcel to Hamilton County.²³

While the Bellingers lived in the Taft Home, its condition continued to deteriorate. Committed to their vision of establishing a house museum and memorial to honor

²² Lee, Chapter 2.

²³ Bearss, 153; Lee, Chapter 6.

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William Howard Taft in the home, the Association continued to raise funds, targeting the 100th anniversary of Taft's birth in 1957 as a goal for its purchase.²⁴

Senator Robert A. Taft died in 1953, a year after losing his third bid for the Republican nomination in 1952, this time to Dwight D. Eisenhower. By the late 1950s the Taft family had become more amenable to participating in the acquisition of the house. Robert's younger brother, Charles Phelps Taft (1897–1983), who was also a politician, active at the local level, began to take an interest in the history of fate of the house during this time and joined the Association. It was also at the time that the Bellingers began actively trying to sell the house. Their asking price was \$75,000, even though the property was only valued at \$35,000.

Charles Taft first approached Hamilton County about their interest in purchasing the property in support of the adjacent youth detention facility. He suggested that they consider establishing a memorial to President Taft on the ground floor, while using the second floor for offices. He believed the museum would serve as an inspiration to the residents of the detention center, and that the two buildings could be connected by an enclosed corridor. Taft even offered to have the family pay for any remodeling that would be necessary to accommodate these uses within the home. The County never pursued the idea, despite Charles' efforts.²⁵

When it became clear that the County did not plan to acquire the property, Charles Taft brokered a deal with Bellinger in 1961 that allowed him to remain in the house until his death, while the Association assumed responsibility for management and maintenance of the house. The complex arrangement resulted in a 100-year lease for the Association, and their securing first right of refusal to purchase the house from Bellinger's heirs for \$35,000 upon his death.

During the early 1960s, recognition of the historic importance of the Taft Home grew, resulting in a request by Ohio Congressman Gordon H. Scherer that National Park

²⁴ Lee, Chapter 1.

²⁵ Ibid.

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Service Historian and Chief, Branch of Park History Studies Roy E. Appleman include the property in a National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. Although Appleman scheduled the survey to be completed in 1961, it was not actually finished until August 20, 1963. The survey resulted in the property's designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1964. Informing his uncle Charles of the designation, Congressman Robert A. Taft, Jr., indicated that the William Howard Taft Home was included among forty-eight important properties because it "possesses exceptional value in commemorating and illustrating the history of the United States."²⁶

During the early 1960s, the Association began planning for the restoration of the house, engaging architects Frederick Kock and Paul Kiel and landscape architect Henry E. Kinney to guide the effort.²⁷ Their goal was to return the building to its condition prior to the 1877 fire, and open a house museum that would interpret and honor all members of the Taft family.²⁸ In order to restore the property to its pre-1877 appearance, they planned to use a circa 1868 photograph as a guide. Projects would include lowering the roof to its original height, reinstating a widow's walk, removing the south facade bay window, restoring the configuration of the upstairs windows in the southwest rooms that had been shortened when the roof was raised following the fire, removing the front porch and replacing it with a stoop and door hood, and removing the partitions added during the 1940s apartment conversion.²⁹

Soon after its designation as a National Historic Landmark, the federal government began to explore the possibility of including the presidential birthplace as a unit of the National Park System where they might honor the contributions of William Howard Taft and interpret the environment in which his character was shaped during his formative years.³⁰ In 1966, Charles Taft, inspired by designation of the Herbert Hoover birthplace cottage as a unit of the National Park System, became a supporter of this idea.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Bearss, 160.

²⁸ Ibid., 157.

²⁹ Ibid., 160.

³⁰ Lee, Chapter 3.

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In 1967, Elbert Bellinger died. Charles Taft quickly borrowed \$35,000 to purchase the property, loaned it to the Association, and helped execute the purchase agreement, in conformance with the stipulations in the lease agreement. In 1968, the Secretary of the Interior's Advisory Board recommended the Department of the Interior proceed with plans to seek national historic site status. Following their acquisition of the property, the Association donated it to the federal government in 1969.

On December 2, 1969, President Richard M. Nixon signed Public Law 91-132 establishing the William Howard Taft National Historic Site.³¹ The property encompassed a 0.51-acre portion of the original Taft lot. In 1972, an adjacent 0.28-acre parcel, referred to as the Cross property, was acquired by the William Howard Taft Memorial Association, and an extant apartment building demolished before the property was donated to the National Park Service for inclusion in the national historic site. For many years, the lot was used for visitor parking.

Following acquisition of the property in 1969, the National Park Service immediately began devising a plan to improve the condition of the house, while furthering the goal of restoration. A master plan prepared in 1970 suggested the National Park Service "restore the exterior of the William Howard Taft house, limiting interior restoration to that needed to support effective interpretation and suggest the nineteenth-century décor."³²

National Park Service historians, archeologists, and architects visited the property in 1971 to initiate work on various studies.³³ National Park Service architect Norman M. Souder and historian Edwin C. Bearss were assigned the responsibility to prepare components of a historic structure report for the property. Documentation of the property suggests that previous restoration efforts had removed material installed between the 1940s and the 1960s, leaving unfinished areas within the house. Surviving Taft-era building fabric was also identified.

³¹ Bearss, 163.

³² Lee, Chapter 5; see also National Park Service, *Master Plan for the William Howard Taft National Historic Site* 1970.

³³ Lee, Chapter 3.

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In 1974, stabilization work was completed by Fred L. Schille Co. of Cincinnati based on an interim plan prepared by Cincinnati architect William J. Miller. This work involved encasing the foundation walls of the original block in concrete, tuckpointing and painting the brick of the original block, and erecting a plywood protective structure around the rear wing.³⁴

On November 10, 1978, congressional legislation provided for an adjustment of the William Howard Taft National Historic Site boundary to include a 0.79-acre lot at the corner of Southern Avenue and Young Street. The parcel was to be used for bus parking. The parcel was acquired in 1973 by Hamilton County and transferred to the National Park Service in 1985 before being developed for parking. Three additional parcels were included in the boundary adjustment—a buffer strip south of the Taft Home, an access road, and an existing parking area.³⁵ The buffer strip, for which Hamilton County had granted a perpetual easement for screening purposes in December 1969, was transferred to the federal government in 1979.³⁶

In 1981, the National Park Service prepared a second master plan that outlined the additional work considered essential to the restoration of the property.³⁷ The 1981 master plan was followed by additional studies intended to guide the restoration work. In 1987, the carriageway and adjacent stone wall were restored. In 1988, the National Park Service prepared a historic structure report to document the history of walks on the property, particularly during Taft family ownership.³⁸ The present-day brick walks were restored in the 1990s based on the documentation provided in the report.

In 1993, the National Park Service prepared a cultural landscape report to guide restoration of the landscape.³⁹ Plantings were added to beds in front of the house based on

³⁴ Ibid., Chapter 7.

³⁵ Ibid., Chapter 4.

³⁶ Ibid., Chapter 4; National Park Service, Denver Service Center, "Boundary Adjustments/Land Acquisition William Howard Taft National Historic Site, Ohio," Drawing number 448/20012A, January 1977.

³⁷ See National Park Service, *Master Plan for the William Howard Taft National Historic Site*, 1981.

³⁸ Mark A. Chavez, "Brick Walks, Historic Structure Report, William Howard Taft National Historic Site" (Omaha, Nebraska: National Park Service, July 1988).

³⁹ See Scruggs and Hammond, Inc., *Cultural Landscape Report: William Howard Taft National Historic Site, Cincinnati, Ohio* (Omaha, Nebraska: National Park Service, 1993).

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the report, and a building was constructed at the end of the restored carriageway that recalled the historic Taft carriage house.

In 1995, Hamilton County replaced the circa 1950 youth detention facility with a larger facility. The new building was set back some distance from the road, with a portion of the building and associated parking facilities extending into the historic Taft Home.

In 1999, the National Park Service built the Taft Education Center on the parcel north of the Taft Home, and established walks, a small parking area, and other features to accommodate visitors.

In 2001, Congress passed H.R. 1000, which authorized additional adjustments to the boundary of William Howard Taft National Historic Site, including the exchange of the lot at the corner of Southern Avenue and Young Street with a 1-acre parcel of land closer to the Taft Home that involved the SABIS International School of Cincinnati, owner of one of the parcels. The boundary adjustment also included acquisition of the $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre parcel at the corner of Auburn and Southern avenues that contained a twentieth-century apartment building.

Construction of a new larger visitor parking area was completed in 2008 on the parcel acquired by the National Park Service through exchange. The parking area was connected to the Taft Home property by a concrete walk.

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Non-contributing Buildings

- 1. Taft Education Center.** The Taft Education Center is located north of the Taft Home parcel. It was constructed in 1999 by the National Park Service to accommodate visitor interpretive and park administrative needs. The building occupies the site of a circa 1885 dwelling, acquired by the Association and demolished before being donated to the federal government in 1972.

The Taft Education Center is a one- to two-story brick building that includes a walk-out basement on the east (rear) elevation, and a half-barrel dome roof, clad with standing seam metal painted green. A dormer with a pair of two-over two windows extends above the barrel roof and beneath a smaller eyebrow-shaped roof. The building envelope features constructive coloration, composed of red brick inset with yellow brick to form large “X” patterns.

The windows of the western and southern facades are two-over-two steel frame. Windows in the southern facade are grouped into a band of three, with a green painted steel lintel above. Windows in the eastern facade are one-over-one steel frame. The eastern rear facade includes eight bays. The fifth and sixth bays are grouped within a squared bay extension. There are no windows in the northern facade. The basement level is exposed at grade. It features two door entries set within a recessed porch created using a prominent lintel supported by paired columns in the center. There are no windows in the basement level.

The Taft Education Center is accessed from Auburn Avenue. A gated opening in the property’s perimeter fence leads to a parking area in front of the building. A free-standing brick wall, composed of yellow brick decorated with corbelling at the top as part of inset panels, a 3-foot high band of red brick at the base, and limestone sills and capstones, extends across the west (principal) elevation of the Taft Education Center. Visitors pass through an opening in the wall and turn right (south) to follow a corridor between the wall and the building that provides access to the entrance. An etched limestone block is

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set above the opening that reads “Taft Education Center.” Mounted on the yellow brick of the Taft Education Center wall are steel letters that read: “William Howard Taft 1857–1930 President Chief Justice Educator Statesman Diplomat.” A series of green-painted shallow metal arches, with a central circular steel panel, link the Taft Education Center and the free-standing wall.

At the Taft Education Center entrance, the brick-paved walkway expands into a plaza edged by brick walls. The plaza fronts the glass and galvanized steel pavilion that extends from the building’s southern facade. The glass pavilion provides access to a lobby, gift shop, and exhibit area. Administrative functions are housed above in the main block of the building. A stair extends from the plaza near the entrance to the basement level and an adjacent parking area used by park staff.

Based on its construction date, the Taft Education Center post-dates the period of significance and does not contribute to the significance of the property.

- 2. Carriage shed.** The William Howard Taft National Historic Site includes a contemporary building, referred to as the carriage shed, that is sited at the end of the gravel carriageway entering the property at Auburn Avenue. The carriage shed was constructed by the National Park Service in 1997 to accommodate park storage needs. It was designed to recall a carriage house present on the property during the Taft period of ownership.

The one-story structure measures 22 feet, 3 inches by 17 feet, 4 inches in plan. It features paired doors in the west (principal) elevation, edged by wall-mounted lights. A single door, offset of center, is in the south elevation. There are no other openings associated with the building. The exterior is clad with Hardie Plank clapboards painted grey to match a privacy fence located near the southeast corner of the parcel. The gable roof is clad with asphalt shingles. A vent is set into the peak of the roof on the southern gable end. The building is set on a concrete slab, and has a concrete landing at the door in the west elevation and a concrete stoop at the south entry.

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Based on its construction date, the carriage shed post-dates the period of significance and does not contribute to the significance of the property.

3. **Apartment building.** Located on the parcel at the corner of Auburn and Southern avenues is a twentieth century apartment building. The parcel is not currently in National Park Service ownership. The building post-dates the period of significance and does not contribute to the significance of the property.
4. **Hamilton County Juvenile Court Youth Center.** Located on the parcel south and east of the William Howard Taft National Historic Site is a large institutional structure built in 1995 to accommodate county youth detention, counseling, and court needs. A portion of the large building falls within the eastern extension of Taft Home parcel and the authorized boundary of national historic site. The parcel is not currently in National Park Service ownership. The building post-dates the period of significance and does not contribute to the significance of the property.

Contributing Sites

1. **Taft Home Historic Landscape.** The 0.51-acre Taft Home parcel includes original historic and restored landscape features that help to convey its associations with the Taft family during the period of significance. The Taft Home landscape constitutes a contributing site composed of the historic parcel, edged by the original limestone and sandstone fence and the north stone wall and north retaining wall, and containing the restored carriageway and brick walks, ornamental plantings, the covered well, and the retaining wall south of the Taft Home. The historic landscape conveys historic patterns of spatial organization and responses to natural resources through the placement and arrangement of its cultural features.

Non-Contributing Sites

1. **William Howard Taft Home site (33HA431).** Several archeological investigations have been conducted on the Taft Home property since the National Park Service acquired it in 1971. The house and its environs are identified as an archeological site in the state of

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Ohio record. Features associated with the site include mid- to late nineteenth century resources and material culture relating to the Taft family. The resources investigated archeologically have included the two cisterns; the 1851 addition, front porch, and building foundation; the evolution of construction evidence present within the basement; the walk system; and the carriageway.

The Taft Home site has not been subject to a comprehensive and systematic archeological survey. Previous surveys were targeted in nature and intended to address specific construction activity at the site. Current studies do not provide sufficient information to support the site as a contributing resource or National Register eligibility under Criterion D. However, it is possible that future investigations may identify sufficient material cultural and/or deeply buried features to provide significant information to the Taft period of occupation at the property during the mid- to late nineteenth century.⁴⁰

Contributing Structures

- 1. Taft Home limestone and sandstone fence and gates with stone steps and piers** (LCS ID 070152; HS-02). The Taft Home fence edges the original Taft Home property along Auburn Avenue. It was constructed during the period of Taft family ownership, apparently following the widening of Auburn Avenue in 1863. The National Park Service restored the wall and fence in 1974 when it was moved 6 inches to the west to conform to the property line.⁴¹

The wall portion of the fence is 3 feet high and composed of quarry-faced, ranged limestone ashlar surmounted by 4-inch thick rubbed finish sandstone caps. Inset into the capstone is a wrought iron fence. Five, 7-foot-high, square, dressed-sandstone gate posts with chamfered corners and cross-gabled tops mark the property's southwest corner,

⁴⁰ Information based on opinions of and consultation with Ann Bauermeister, Archeologist and Acting Park Archeology Program Manager, Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC), Lincoln, Nebraska, February 19, 2015. Ms. Bauermeister further consulted with archeological personnel at MWAC involved in investigations at the national historic site. Based on Ms. Bauermeister's opinion and consultation with other archeological personnel, the William Howard Taft site is neither a contributing resource nor individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. However, future study may reveal evidence of information potential that would suggest this assessment be revisited.

⁴¹ Lee, Chapter 7; National Park Service, List of Classified Structures, August 26, 2013.

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pedestrian entrance, and carriageway entrance. The pier that edges the carriageway to its south was moved to the property from the adjacent Burkhardt property by Elbert Bellinger in 1940.⁴² The historic street addresses of these two properties remain visible on the piers. The pedestrian and carriageway entrances are also marked by swing-arm iron gates. The pedestrian entrance leads to a flight of five tooled, and bull-nosed sandstone steps edged by limestone cheekwalls.

The Taft Home fence retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic associations, although integrity of design is diminished by the addition of the gate post from the Burkhardt property. The fence contributes to the significance of the William Howard Taft National Historic Site property.

- 2. Taft Home brick walks** (LCS ID 070153; HS-03). The sandstone steps that lead into the Taft Home property from Auburn Avenue are met by a 5 foot, 10 inch wide brick walk that continues to the formal entrance into the house. This walk, as well as additional walks that extend around the house to its north, south, and rear, are composed of red brick, dry laid in a herringbone pattern, with an edging course. The walks are anchored in place by steel edging. The walk that extends around the house to the north includes several steps to traverse the descending topography. Metal handrails edge the stepped section of the walk for the safety of visitors. The handrails are similar in detailing to the metal fence that edges the Taft Education Center parcel along Auburn Avenue.

The brick walks were restored by the National Park Service in the 1990s based on documentation afforded in a 1988 historic structure report. The walks were designed to match a historic brick walkway system laid in 1851 for Alphonso Taft by Hunt & Lull.⁴³ Information about the historic walk system was secured through research and archeological investigations conducted in the 1970s and 1980s. Based on the investigations, a front or main walk was likely in place when the property was purchased by Alphonso Taft. Taft replaced this and added a second walk that continued around the house to the north to

⁴² National Park Service, List of Classified Structures, August 26, 2013.

⁴³ See Mark A. Chavez, "Brick Walks: Historic Structures Report; William Howard Taft National Historic Site" (Omaha, Nebraska: National Park Service, July 1988).

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connect with the kitchen, as was typical of nineteenth century properties. The side walk would have been used to direct tradespersons to the service entrance. Taft also added a walk to provide access to the south entrance, and walks leading to the two rear entrances. The historic walks are thought to have been between 3 feet, 8 inches and 4 feet wide.

The restored walks retain sufficient integrity to convey their historic associations, although the integrity of design, workmanship, and materials is diminished by the wider profile and addition of handrails and steel edging. The restored brick walks contribute to the significance of the William Howard Taft National Historic Site property.

- 3. Taft Home carriageway** (LCS ID 070154; HS-04). The Taft Home carriageway is a gravel-surfaced road that extends east from Auburn Avenue toward the rear of the property. The entrance is marked by a pair of sandstone piers and wrought iron gates. The carriageway is approximately 10 feet, 6 inches wide and relatively level. It is edged to the north by a historic stone wall and a contemporary wooden fence.

The carriageway was restored by the National Park Service in 1987 in conjunction with repair and restoration of the stone walls to its north, and utility improvements that included installation of a manhole cover within the road corridor. The carriageway originally extended 150 feet to a carriage house. Today, the carriageway leads to the carriage shed constructed by the National Park Service to support park storage needs and designed to approximate the form of the historic carriage house for interpretive purposes.

The restored carriageway retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic associations, although integrity of design is diminished by the inclusion of the manhole cover within the road, and integrity of setting is diminished due to the presence of the contemporary wooden fence. The restored carriageway contributes to the significance of the William Howard Taft National Historic Site property.

- 4. Taft Home well** (LCS ID 070155; HS-05). The Taft Home well is a stone-lined structure approximately 3 feet in diameter located at the southeast corner of the east wing of the house. The well predates Taft family occupancy of the dwelling, and was likely built circa

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1840–1850 by G. and Mary Bowen. The well remained in use until circa 1900 when it was capped with a domed structure composed of brick and Portland cement. The well was stabilized by the National Park Service between 1982 and 1985 and covered with a wooden trap door for visitor safety.⁴⁴

The Taft Home well is an original feature of the property that has been preserved and protected by the National Park Service. Although the well has been covered with a wooden trap door, it retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic associations. The well contributes to the significance of the William Howard Taft National Historic Site property.

- 5. North stone wall.** Located along the northern edge of the carriageway is a mortared limestone rubble stone wall with deeply raked joints. The wall extends eastward from the limestone and wrought iron fence at Auburn Avenue. The wall has a level top course for the first half of its 46-foot length. At Auburn Avenue, the wall stands approximately 2 feet, 4 inches above grade, and is 1 foot, 10 inches wide. The grade of the carriageway descends as it travels eastward. Because the top of the wall remains at a consistent elevation, the height of the wall as measured from the ground increases as it moves eastward. At the midpoint, the wall stands 3-1/2-feet in height. Here, however, the wall begins to angle downward. At its eastern end, where it is met by a wooden gate, the wall measures 1-1/2 feet in height. Extending northward from the wall at the midpoint is an ell-shaped stone wall segment that screens a concrete pad and electrical box mounted to the wall. The wall extension includes an aboveground section that is approximately 1-1/2 feet in height, as well as a below ground retaining section.

The National Park Service rehabilitated the wall, which marked the north boundary of the Taft Home property by 1868, in 1987.⁴⁵ The rehabilitation involved masonry repair, but also included structural improvements, such as the installation of a concrete core, as well as the accommodation of fire suppression features and an electrical box. Although these contemporary changes diminish the wall's integrity of design, materials, and workmanship,

⁴⁴ National Park Service, List of Classified Structures, August 26, 2013.

⁴⁵ Wilson & Associates, Inc., drawings associated with the north retaining wall, drawing number 448/80015, October 1987.

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it retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic associations, and contributes to the significance of the William Howard Taft National Historic Site property.

- 6. North retaining wall** (LCS ID 070156; HS-06). Extending eastward along the edge of the carriageway is a stone retaining wall that follows the alignment of the north stone wall described above. It begins approximately in line with the northwest corner of the house and continues to the northeastern corner of the Taft Home property. This wall was built by Alphonso Taft in 1852 to contain the steeply sloping ground along the property's northeastern edge and prevent it from slumping at the margin of the carriageway, carriage house, and back lot. Although it historically stood approximately 5 feet above and 5 feet below the grade, only the below-grade section remains today. The wall is composed of rough-faced limestone laid with mortar. The National Park Service added a wooden fence on top of the wall for visitor safety. The wall has been stabilized several times since original construction, including work conducted by the National Park Service circa 1982–1985. Intact mid-nineteenth century sections have been identified using mortar analysis.⁴⁶

Although the wall has been stabilized and aboveground sections lost, the north retaining wall retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic associations. The north retaining wall contributes to the significance of the William Howard Taft National Historic Site property.

- 7. Retaining wall south of the Taft Home.** A mortared limestone rubble retaining wall parallels the southern facade of the 1851 Taft Home addition, allowing for access to the basement level of the original house. The wall, which is 2 feet, 4 inches wide, extends for 40 feet, the length of the eastern addition.

The wall steps down in four sections. The easternmost section is 3 feet, 1 inch in height. In the second section, the wall steps up to 6 feet, 3 inches in height. Each of the final two sections increases in height by approximately 1 foot. At its tallest, the wall reaches a height of 8 feet, 6 inches. The National Park Service has installed a metal railing into the top of the wall for visitor safety. This railing is approximately 2 feet, 9 inches in height, and steps down with the wall.

⁴⁶ National Park Service, List of Classified Structures, August 26, 2013.

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Despite the addition of the handrail, the wall retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic associations, and contributes to the significance of the William Howard Taft National Historic Site property.

- 8. Taft Home cisterns (2)** (LCS ID 070157; HS-07). There are two historic cisterns on the property that were present during Taft family ownership—the main cistern and the filtering cistern. The main cistern, which is thought to pre-date Alphonso Taft’s purchase of the home with a construction date of circa 1840–1850, is 12 feet, 2 inches deep by 15 feet, 2 inches in diameter. It is constructed of plaster lined and parged with cement. Today, this cistern is covered with a tarp and sand and not visible to visitors.

The filtering cistern is of similar construction. It was added by Alphonso Taft in 1851 to increase the water storage capacity for the household. It measures 13 feet deep by 12 feet, 9 inches in diameter, and has a 6 foot, 6 inch charcoal and sand deposit in the bottom. The cistern is capped with a brick and mortar dome with a 2-inch-diameter lead ring inlet.⁴⁷ Today, the filtering cistern is partially visible beneath a Plexiglas cover in the basement floor of the 1851 addition and presented as an exhibit for visitors.

The two cisterns were stabilized by the National Park Service in 1982–1985. Although integrity is diminished by the addition of the Plexiglas cover, tarp, and sand, the cisterns retain sufficient integrity to convey their historic associations and contribute to the significance of the William Howard Taft National Historic Site property.

Non-contributing Structures

- 1. Screen fencing around HVAC unit.** Near the southeastern corner of the property is an exterior HVAC unit that supports utility needs associated with the house. The equipment is screened from view by wooden privacy fencing on two sides. The fencing, which is painted a medium gray, is approximately 4 feet in height. It is composed of 4-by-4 posts set approximately 5 feet apart in concrete footers. Inset between the posts is a densely woven wooden lattice set within a wooden frame. Two-by-four boards notched into the

⁴⁷ Ibid.

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posts near the top finish the fence. The structure was installed with the HVAC equipment in 1984.

Based on its construction date, the screen fencing and HVAC unit post-date the period of significance and do not contribute to the significance of the national historic site property.

2. **Contemporary boundary fencing.** Contemporary boundary fencing associated with the property includes wooden fencing along the northern edge of the carriage drive, metal fencing along the west and south property boundaries, decorative metal fencing west and north of the Taft Education Center, and chain link fencing along the south and east boundaries.

The wooden fencing continues the line of the north stone wall to the eastern end of the 0.51-acre Taft Home property. The fence steps down the hill in segments with the grade. It is sited above the north retaining wall. The fence is composed of 4-by-4 posts set approximately 8 feet on center that support 1-by-4 inch boards at the top and bottom. Two-by-two pickets are set between the wood boards. A 1-by-4 board placed along the top finishes the fence. The posts have been cut to taper slightly at the top. The wood is unfinished and currently has a warm pine color but is weathering to gray. The fence was installed in 1999 as part of the Taft Education Center development.

The metal fencing along west and south property boundary is constructed of aluminum and painted black. The fencing encloses portions of the national historic site, including the western boundary along Auburn Avenue and part of the southern boundary. This fencing is composed of black posts set in concrete footers approximately 8 feet on center, which support heavy-gauge metal pickets collected at the top and near the bottom by metal rails. The fencing was installed in 1997.

Decorative black metal fencing also edges the Taft Education Center parcel to the west and north. This fencing is composed of 4-by-4 posts set in concrete that support 1-by-1 pickets. A pair of rails, set 4 inches apart, forms the top of the fence, while a lower rail frames the base. Decorative circular metal pieces are set between the pickets within the

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paired rails, and tied with metal straps to the pickets. A pair of wing-arm gates marks the entrance into the parking area from Auburn Avenue. The fencing was installed in 1999 as part of the Taft Education Center development.

The chain link fencing along the south and east property boundaries is coated in black vinyl to diminish its visual impact on the property. The fencing edges part of the southern boundary and the entire eastern boundary of the 0.51-acre Taft Home parcel and 0.08-acre buffer strip. The fence ranges in height from approximately 3 to 5 feet. It is set at the top of a steeply sloped embankment beside the entrance drive to the Hamilton County Juvenile Court Youth Center. A 4-foot-wide gate is set into the fence near the eastern end. The fence was likely installed in 1997.

The contemporary fencing present throughout the property post-dates the period of significance and does not contribute to the significance of the historic property.

3. **Brick wall at Taft Education Center walk and plaza.** A low brick wall topped with a concrete cap edges the visitor parking area associated with the Taft Education Center. The wall frames the walk that leads to the building entrance, and a small plaza nearby. The wall was built as part of the Taft Education Center in 1999. Steel medallions and stainless panels that interpret and honor Taft's contribution to American history were added to the wall in 2001. The wall post-dates the period of significance and does not contribute to the significance of the national historic site property.
4. **Staff and visitor parking.** Four parking areas are present within the William Howard Taft National Historic Site. These accommodate visitor and staff parking for the national historic site as well as the Hamilton County Juvenile Court Youth Center. The parking facilities include a small concrete-paved parking area to the west of the Taft Education Center, a staff parking area to the east of the building, a large visitor parking area along Southern Avenue to the east of the staff parking area, and a large parking area used by visitors to the Juvenile Court Youth Center located east and south of the Taft Home parcel.

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The smaller visitor parking area in front of the Taft Education Center accommodates six cars. It is accessed from Auburn Avenue through a pair of ornate metal gates set into the perimeter metal fence. The lot was built in 1999 as part of the Taft Education Center development.

Staff of the national historic site park to the east of the Taft Education Center. The parking area is accessed from Southern Avenue. It is also used by tenants of the adjacent apartment building. The parking area is asphalt-paved and accommodates approximately twenty-five cars. The parking area was developed during the twentieth century.

Park visitors are also invited to park in a large lot accessed from Southern Avenue. This asphalt-paved parking area is located northeast of the Taft Home parcel. Features of the twenty-four car parking area include a William Howard Taft National Historic Site identity sign, metal bollards that can be used to close the parking area, tree and shrub plantings, and lighting. The parking area is connected to the Taft Home parcel by a concrete walk. The lot was constructed in 2008.

The parking area associated with the Hamilton County Juvenile Court Youth Center is a large asphalt-paved facility. It was developed in 1995 in association with the Juvenile Court Youth Center.

The contemporary parking facilities present throughout the property post-date the period of significance and do not contribute to the significance of the historic property.

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5. **Concrete walk and retaining wall linking visitor parking and the Taft Home.** A concrete walk, approximately 6 feet in width, leads from the contemporary visitor parking area along Southern Avenue to the northeast corner of the Taft Home property. The walk, which begins near the southwestern corner of the parking area, follows the top of a 7-foot-tall, stacked concrete-block retaining wall edged by tubular metal handrails. The walk approaches the property behind the carriage shed, and continues around the building to the gravel carriageway. The walk and wall were built in 2008 in conjunction with the parking area, and thus post-dates the period of significance. The walk does not contribute to the significance of the national historic site property.

Non-Contributing Objects

1. **Bust of Robert Alphonso Taft** (LCS ID 618653; Park ref: Monument-3). Located north of the parking area associated with the Taft Education Center is a bust of Robert Taft sculpted by internationally known and influential Cubist sculptor Jacques Lipchitz (1891–1973) in 1961. The bust is a 4-foot-high bronze sculpture set atop a 4-foot-high limestone base. The bust was unveiled in 1961 at the Cincinnati Art Museum and presented to the city by the Thomas J. Emery Memorial Foundation. The bust was moved to the Taft Education Center property in 2000. A ceremony was held at the park to rededicate the bust. A bronze plaque was added to the stone base in 2001 that reads

Robert Alphonso Taft
“Mr. Republican”
Son of William Howard Taft
1889–1953
Ohio House of Representatives
1921–1926
Ohio Senate
1931–1933
United States Senator from Ohio
1939–1953

The bust was moved to the property after the period of significance. The bust does not contribute to the significance of the national historic site property.

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- 2. Ohio State Historical Marker** (LCS ID 618645; Park ref: Monument -1). An Ohio State Historical Marker (state number 43-31) faces Auburn Avenue in front of the Taft Education Center. The brown painted cast bronze marker was erected in 2003 by the Ohio State Historical Society and conveys the following information about Robert Alphonso Taft:

Robert Alphonso Taft. Robert A. Taft, son of William Howard Taft, was born in Cincinnati on September 8, 1889, and graduated from Yale University and Harvard Law School. After serving in a number of administrative posts, he served in the Ohio Legislature from 1921–1932. Elected as a United States Senator in 1938, he served until shortly before his death in 1953. He rose to the rank of Senate Majority Leader and, in three separate presidential election cycles in 1940, 1948, and 1952, was a chief competitor for the Republican Party nomination. Taft emerged as a leading figure in the party's conservative wing. He was the co-sponsor of the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, which sought equity between labor and business in collective bargaining. For his leadership, Senator Taft was given an honorary title of "Mr. Republican."

The Ohio Bicentennial Commission, The Ohio Historical Society, 2003.

The Ohio State Historical Marker post-dates the period of significance, and does not contribute to the significance of the national historic site property.

- 3. Park Site Features.** Several park site features are located within the national historic site that connote park identity and commemorate the life of William Howard Taft. These include the park identity sign, a flagpole, wayside exhibit, tree marker, and boundary markers. All of these features post-date the period of significance. Together they constitute one non-contributing object.

The park identity sign, which reads "National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior" and "William Howard Taft National Historic Site" and features the National Park Service arrowhead, is a painted wooden board set between two 8-by-8 metal uprights topped by pyramidal caps. The sign stands approximately 6 feet, 6 inches in height. The posts are set in a 8-foot-long brick wall with limestone cap similar to the wall that edges the pedestrian walkway near the Taft Education Center. Because the top of the wall remains at a constant height, it becomes taller as the ground drops away eastward.

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The shorter western end is approximately 1 foot, 8 inches in height, while the eastern end stands approximately 2 feet, 4 inches in height. The first identity sign associated with the Taft Education Center was installed in 2001 to replace an identity sign that stood in front of the Taft Home. The current sign was installed in 2012.

Set within the lawn panel in front of the Taft Education Center is an approximately 25-foot-high aluminum flagpole. The flagpole is used to fly the United States flag. It is set in a concrete footer within a lawn panel near the perimeter fence along Auburn Avenue. The top of the flagpole is capped with a ball finial. The flagpole was moved to its current location from the Taft Home parcel in 1999 as part of the Taft Education Center development.

A wayside exhibit is set into the lawn panel in front of the Taft Education Center for the benefit of visitors. The fiberglass wayside panel, which is set within a metal frame, interprets the history and arrangement of buildings along Auburn Avenue in the vicinity of the Taft Home between 1830 and 1900. The wayside stands approximately 3 feet, 6 inches in height, and is approximately 5 feet wide. It was designed in 1988 and moved to the Taft Education Center site in 1999.

A small bronze plaque (LCS ID 618649; Park ref: Monument-2) honoring Mrs. Helen Taft and her contribution to the cherry tree plantings around the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C. is located near the Taft Education Center. The plaque was installed in 2000 and dedicated as part of a ceremony held on site to rededicate the bust of Robert Alphonso Taft. The marker, located next to a tree planting, is associated with the efforts of Mrs. Taft, while First Lady, to ring the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C., with flowering cherry trees. The marker reads:

Yoshino Cherry, *Prunus serrulata*, In memory of Helen Herron Taft, wife of President William Howard Taft, (1909–1913). Mrs. Taft was instrumental in beautifying the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C. by planting the first Yoshino Cherry tree on March 29, 1909.

Three concrete cylinders, inset with etched bronze markers, are located on the grounds of the Taft Home parcel: near the southwestern corner of the property along Auburn

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Avenue; behind the carriage shed; and adjacent to the screen fencing associated with the HVAC units. These concrete cylinders, which denote National Park Service ownership, are 4 inches in diameter and extend approximately 4 inches above ground. The markers read "U.S. Dept. of the Interior; National Park Service; Unlawful to disturb. 10.0 S, 5.0 W." Although the date of origin of the markers is not currently known, they are thought to have been installed circa 1984.

4. **Hitching post and horse hobble.** An unpainted wooden 6-by-6 post with a tapered top is set into the ground near a large elm tree in the southeastern corner of the property. It is located in association with a small, round concrete object. These features are referred to as a hitching post and horse hobble in a 1991 photograph included in the 1993 cultural landscape report.⁴⁸ The hitching post and horse hobble post-date the period of significance. They do not contribute to the significance of the national historic site property.

⁴⁸ Scruggs and Hammond, 65.

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WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE PROPERTY DATA SHEET

| <i>RESOURCE NAME</i> | <i>LCS ID</i> | <i>ASMIS No.</i> | <i>DATE</i> | <i>PHOTO #</i> |
|---|---------------|------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS - 1 (PREVIOUSLY LISTED) | | | | |
| William Howard Taft Home (HS-01) | 001379 | | circa 1840s; 1851; restored 1964–1988 | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 |
| NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS - 4 | | | | |
| Taft Education Center | | | 1999 | 12 |
| Carriage shed | | | 1997 | 13 |
| Apartment building | | | Twentieth century | |
| Hamilton County Juvenile Court Youth Center | | | 1995 | |
| CONTRIBUTING SITES – 1 | | | | |
| William Howard Taft Home Historic Landscape | | | circa 1840– 1891 | |
| NON-CONTRIBUTING SITES - 1 | | | | |
| William Howard Taft Home | | 33HA431 | circa 1840– 1891 | |
| CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES - 9 | | | | |
| Taft Home limestone fence and gates with sandstone steps and piers (HS- 02) | 070152 | | circa 1862; 1877; relocated 1974 | 14, 15, 16 |
| Taft Home brick walks (HS-03) | 070153 | | circa 1851; restored 1988 | 17 |
| Taft Home carriageway (HS-04) | 070154 | | circa 1851; restored 1993–1999 | 18 |
| Taft Home well (HS-05) | 070155 | | circa 1840– 1850 | 19 |
| North stone wall | | | By 1868; restored circa 1987 | 20 |

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| | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--|--|------------|
| North retaining wall (HS-06) | 070156 | | circa 1852; restored circa 1987 | |
| Retaining wall south of Taft Home | | | circa 1851 | 21 |
| Taft Home cisterns (2) (HS-07) | 070157 | | circa 1840– 1850; 1851 | |
| NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES - 5 | | | | |
| Screen fencing around HVAC unit | | | 1984 | 22 |
| Contemporary boundary fencing | | | 1997–1999 | 21, 22, 23 |
| Staff and visitor parking | | | 1995–2008 | 23, 24 |
| Brick wall at Taft Education Center walk and plaza | | | 1999 | 23 |
| Concrete walk and retaining wall between visitor parking area and Taft Home | | | 2008 | |
| CONTRIBUTING OBJECTS | | | | |
| None | | | | |
| NON-CONTRIBUTING OBJECTS - 4 | | | | |
| Bust of Robert Taft | 618653 | | 1961; moved to site 2000; plaque added 2001 | 25 |
| Ohio State Historical Marker | 618645 | | 2003 | |
| Park site features | Tree marker- 618649 | | 1984–2012 | 23 |
| Hitching post and horse hobble | | | By 1991 | |

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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.)

- 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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Politics/Government

Law

Period of Significance

1857-1891

Significant Dates

1840s: 1851: 1857

1874

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

William Howard Taft

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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Summary Statement of Significance

William Howard Taft National Historic Site was created to protect and preserve the home where William Howard Taft, 27th President of the United States (1909–1913) and Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court (1921–1930), was born and spent his formative years. While living in the house, Taft gained an understanding of and appreciation for the law, diplomacy, and public service from his father, Alphonso Taft, who is also a notable figure in American law and politics, serving as Secretary of War and Attorney General under President Ulysses S. Grant. William Howard Taft's character and ambition were shaped to a large degree by the lessons and leadership afforded by his parents, as well as other family and community members. William Howard Taft National Historic Site is significant under Criterion B in the areas of Politics/Government and Law for its association with Taft. The Taft Home is the only property with integrity to survive that is directly associated with this nationally significant figure in American history. As such, it represents a significant landmark for understanding the contributions of William Howard Taft and his family, who were influential at the local, state, and national level in politics, government, and law. The period of significance for the property extends between 1857, the year of Taft's birth, until 1891, when his father, Alphonso Taft, died, his mother moved elsewhere, and Taft left Cincinnati for Washington, D.C. to assume the position of Solicitor General of the United States.

National Register Status of the Property

The William Howard Taft Home was first nominated for National Historic Landmark designation on August 20, 1963, by National Park Service Historian S. Sydney Bradford as part of a National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings.⁴⁹ The property was identified as significant under the theme of Political and Military Affairs (XXII), for the period 1865–1912. Based on the documentation provided as part of the survey, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall approved designation of the property as a National Historic Landmark on January 29, 1964. The designated property was referred to as the Alphonso Taft Home (William Howard Taft Home)

⁴⁹ Bradford S. Sydney, National Historic Landmark nomination "William Howard Taft Home" 1963.

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based on the request of Charles Taft, William Howard Taft's son, who was instrumental in preserving the historic home, and wished to honor his grandfather as well as his father.

In 1973, the Taft Home was identified as a contributing resource of the Mt. Auburn Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places for the collection of stately residences developed during the mid- to late nineteenth century by civic, social, industrial, business, cultural, and religious leaders of Cincinnati, including the Tafts. The homes, in terms of size, style, and ornamentation, continue to attest to the early grandeur of the area, and are important examples of the architectural styles popular during the period.⁵⁰

In 1976, the Midwest Regional Office of the National Park Service prepared National Register of Historic Places documentation for the William Howard Taft National Historic Site, established in 1969 to “preserve in public ownership historically significant properties associated with the life of William Howard Taft.”⁵¹ The documentation addressed the parcels associated with the property at that time—a 0.51-acre portion of the Taft Home parcel acquired for the national historic site in 1969, and the 0.28-acre Cross parcel to its north, acquired in 1972. The documentation was accepted by the Keeper of the National Register in 1976.

Since 1976, the William Howard Taft National Historic Site has undergone several restoration efforts, and has been expanded to include additional parcels. On November 10, 1978, Congress passed legislation providing for expansion of the William Howard Taft National Historic Site. This legislation resulted in the transfer of a 0.81-acre parcel at the corner of Young Street and Southern Avenue, acquired in 1973 by Hamilton County, to the National Park Service in 1980. The National Park Service developed and used the property for visitor bus and overflow automobile parking. In 1980, a 16-foot strip of land edging the Taft Home parcel to the south, for which Hamilton County had granted a perpetual easement for screening purposes on December 1969, was conveyed to the National Park Service to enhance the property's setting.⁵²

In 1999, the National Park Service built the William Howard Taft Education Center on the 0.28-

⁵⁰ Brooks, 4–5.

⁵¹ U.S. Congress, H.R. 7066. Public Law 91-132, December 2, 1969.

⁵² National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, Real Estate records, February 24, 2015; Lee, Chapter 4; National Park Service, “Boundary Adjustments/Land Acquisition William Howard Taft National Historic Site / Ohio,” Denver Service Center drawing 448/20012A, January 1977.

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acre parcel north of the Taft Home parcel. The building was connected to the Taft Home property by a pedestrian walk. Parking for six cars was established in front of the building.

To further address parking needs associated with the national historic site, Congress passed H.R. 1000 in 2001 authorizing boundary adjustments that included an exchange of land with the nearby SABIS International School of Cincinnati. As part of the exchange, the 0.81-acre parcel developed for parking at the intersection of Young Street and Southern Avenue, and an adjacent 0.15-acre parcel, were traded for a 1.05-acre tract south of Southern Avenue. The 1.05 acre parcel was located closer to the park and abutted the Taft Home. This allowed the National Park Service to develop a new visitor parking area that could be connected to the Taft Home parcel by a walk in 2008. The legislation also expanded the boundary to include the 0.65-acre parcel north of the Taft Education Center and a 1.07-acre parcel, part of the original Taft property, east of the Taft Home, owned by AW Partners LLC and Hamilton County respectively.

National Register Nomination Update

This National Register nomination update and boundary adjustment is being prepared to address the changes that have been made to the property since it was first listed in 1976 as described above. The property addressed by this updated nomination encompasses 3.64-acres, including all lands currently located within the authorized boundary of the William Howard Taft National Historic Site. The nomination expands on the period of significance listed in the 1976 nomination from an end date of 1874, the year that Taft left for college, to 1891, the year that Taft left Cincinnati for his first post in Washington, D.C. It also clarifies the significance criteria and areas of significance associated with the property. For example, architecture was indicated as an area of significance in the 1976 nomination, but was not supported. Architecture is not included as an area of significance in this nomination update. This nomination also assesses Criterion D significance based on the findings of archeological investigations conducted since 1976 in consultation with the Midwest Archeological Center of the National Park Service. Finally, this updated nomination documents resources that have been restored or added to the national historic site since 1976.

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Law

The William Howard Taft National Historic Site is significant in the area of Law for its association with William Howard Taft, an accomplished lawyer and constitutional law educator who served in numerous important positions throughout his career, including Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Taft was inspired by and received early training in the law while living at home on Auburn Street from his father, Alphonso Taft, himself an accomplished lawyer.

William Howard Taft enjoyed a long and distinguished career in law and public policy. After graduating from Yale in 1878, William Howard Taft received his Juris Doctor degree from Cincinnati Law School in 1880, and was admitted to the Ohio State Bar Association later that year. In October 1880, Taft was appointed assistant prosecutor of Hamilton County.⁵³ In 1882, William Howard Taft accepted an offer from President Chester A. Arthur to serve as Collector of Internal Revenue for the 1st District in Cincinnati. Taft left the position to open his own law practice in 1883. In 1887, Taft was appointed to serve on the Superior Court of Cincinnati. In 1890, Taft was appointed Solicitor General of the United States, the third highest position in the Department of Justice, before being appointed a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit in 1891. In 1892, Taft accepted an appointment as judge of the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals with jurisdiction over Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky, and Tennessee. While on the court, Taft also served, from 1896 to 1900, as a professor of law and dean of the Cincinnati Law School.

Taft's law career was interrupted by the first of several political appointments in 1900, when President William McKinley named Taft Governor-General of the Philippines. In 1908, William Howard Taft was elected President of the United States. Taft's presidency was marked by the initiation of eighty antitrust lawsuits, the direct election of Senators, and enactment of labor laws such as the limited work day. His political career extended until 1913 when he left the office of President of the United States, following the election of Woodrow Wilson in 1912.

⁵³ Bearss, 117.

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After leaving Washington, Taft returned to his true passion: the law. Taft is the only former president to go on to teach law full time after his presidential term.⁵⁴ He was hired to teach constitutional law at Yale University Law School, a position which he held from 1913 to 1921, when he was appointed Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court by President Warren G. Harding. Taft continued in the position for nine years until health considerations led him to resign from the court. During his tenure, Taft led the court in interpreting the Constitution in decisions on cases that would have profound effect on laws and legislation at both the state and federal levels.

Politics/Government

The William Howard Taft National Historic Site is also significant in the area of Politics/Government for its association with William Howard Taft, who served as 27th President of the United States (1909–1913), U.S. Secretary of War under President Theodore Roosevelt (1904–1908), and the first civil governor of the Philippine Islands (1901–1904). Taft was one of only six presidents whose first popularly-elected office was the presidency, and he has one of the broadest professional backgrounds in public service as a judge, U.S. Secretary of War, and civil governor of the Philippine Islands. Taft's presidency is one of the few that ratified more than one constitutional amendment and appointed six judges to the United States Supreme Court, the second most in a single term of any president. His strong opinions on the importance of clearly separating the branches of government, and limiting the power of the presidency are key components of his legacy in United States history.

As president, Taft emphasized antitrust, tariff, and worker rights legislation, but was also a strong proponent of private property rights. As noted above, he believed that the power vested in the president was limited to that articulated in the Constitution or granted through an act of Congress. As a result, he allowed Congress a much more powerful and influential role in developing legislation than many other presidents. Nonetheless, Taft is known for influencing several important bills and Congressional actions during his presidency, including the initiation of eighty antitrust lawsuits, Constitutional amendments for Federal income tax and direct

⁵⁴ Michael J. Gerhardt, *The Forgotten Presidents: Their Untold Constitutional Legacy* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

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election of Senators, and the setting of railroad rates by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Taft's inclination to avoid influencing legislative outcomes, did, however lead to the Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act controversy, and likely cost him the 1912 election. As president, Taft was slow to recognize the value of public opinion. He regularly refused engage journalism as a way to enhance his popularity or sway public opinion on topical issues of the day. In fact, he even refused to campaign for re-election in 1912, which contributed to his landslide loss.

Despite his disappointments while in office, Taft continued to apply his education and aptitude for government after leaving the White House. Following his presidency, Taft published several important books on government during and immediately following his tenure as professor of law at Yale.⁵⁵ These publications were often based on speeches presented to groups and organizations, which were then published as collections.

As Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Taft is known for several notable political achievements. Taft's combination of legal knowledge, judicial temperament, and political-administrative skill were instrumental in his success in leading the court. He was able to effect substantial change in the administrative operations of the courts due in part to his political prowess and connections. Although not as effective in this arena while president, Taft proved himself to be one of the most politically astute chief justices in history. His work on the Judiciary Act of 1925 marked the beginning of the modern Supreme Court era, allowing the court to play a more prominent role in the United States government system, and defined court authority and practices that remain in effect today.⁵⁶

Area History

⁵⁵ Publications penned by Taft include *Ethics in Service* (based on addresses delivered in the Page Lecture Series in 1914. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1915); *The President and His Powers* (based on a collection of 1915 speeches to Columbia University. New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1916); *Popular Government; Its Essence, Its Permanence and Its Perils* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1913); and *Liberty Under Law: An Interpretation of the Principles of Our Constitutional Government* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1922). These essays and speeches are also available in an eight volume series *The Collected Works of William Howard Taft*, with various editors, published between 2001 and 2004. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press.)

⁵⁶ Peter G. Renstrom, *The Taft Court: Justices, Rulings, and Legacy* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 184.

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William Howard Taft National Historic Site is located in the Cincinnati, Ohio, neighborhood of Mt. Auburn. The area was first settled in 1819, the same year that Cincinnati became a city, by James Key, and was first known as Key's Hill. Located along the Ohio River, Cincinnati was a bustling metropolis during the first half of the nineteenth century that could be hot, crowded, humid, and dirty. The bucolic and elevated terrain of Key's Hill began to attract others to build homes in the area during the 1820s and 1830s. The name was changed when the land was formally platted in 1837 to Mt. Auburn, in honor of the rural cemetery outside of Boston, Massachusetts. The Mt. Auburn neighborhood attracted wealthy businessmen and other community leaders, who built large estates along the ridge of the hilltop. Auburn Avenue, likely established circa 1808, was the main thoroughfare through the neighborhood; many community leaders built their homes along Auburn Avenue, often with towers to take advantage of the view. The most prevalent architectural style within the neighborhood was Italianate.⁵⁷ The city of Cincinnati annexed part of the Mt. Auburn neighborhood in 1849, a process that was completed in 1870.⁵⁸

William Howard Taft's Childhood and Early Adulthood

William Howard Taft was born on September 15, 1857, to Alphonso and Louise Taft in Cincinnati, Ohio. Taft grew up in an atmosphere rich with family, and encouraged from an early age to be successful in every pursuit. Taft attended Woodward High School, and was accepted to Yale College, his father's alma mater, in 1874. After completing his undergraduate studies in 1878, Taft attended Cincinnati Law School. While in law school, Taft lived at home with his parents.

Early Judicial and Political Career, 1880–1900

Taft was admitted to the Ohio State Bar Association in 1880, and appointed assistant prosecutor of Hamilton County later that year.⁵⁹ In 1882, William Howard Taft accepted an offer from President Chester A. Arthur to serve as Collector of Internal Revenue for the 1st District in Cincinnati. Taft left the position to open his own law practice in 1883.

⁵⁷ Brooks, 4; Scruggs and Hammond, 10.

⁵⁸ Scruggs and Hammond, 10–11.

⁵⁹ Bearss, 117.

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In 1886, Taft married Nellie Herron. The couple moved into their own home in the Walnut Hill area of Cincinnati, but continued to visit and check on the Taft Home on Auburn Avenue after Alphonso and Louise Taft moved to San Diego, leaving the house rented out to tenants.

By 1887, Taft had been appointed to serve on the Superior Court of Cincinnati. In 1890, Taft was appointed Solicitor General of the United States, the third highest position in the Department of Justice. At the age of 32, Taft was the youngest appointee ever to hold this position. In 1891, the Tafts moved to Washington for the position. There they would meet Theodore and Edith Roosevelt.

Two year later, Taft was appointed a judge for the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which had jurisdiction over Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky, and Tennessee. While on the court, Taft also served, from 1896 to 1900, as a professor of law and dean of the University of Cincinnati Law School. Throughout these appointments and positions Taft honed his legal abilities as well as his relatively conservative positions on law and politics.

Administrator and Governor-General of the Philippines, 1900–1904

In 1900, President William McKinley appointed Taft to serve as chairman of the Second Philippine Commission designed to organize a civilian government in the Philippines, following its transfer to the United States from Spain as part of the 1898 Treaty of Paris that ended the Spanish-American War. Although he accepted the administrative position with the encouragement of his wife, Helen Taft, it was also with the understanding that McKinley might later nominate him to serve as justice of the United States Supreme Court.

In 1899, the Second Battle of Manila broke out in the Philippines in response to United States acquisition of the islands as a result of the Spanish American War. The war marked the continuing struggle of the Philippine Islands for independence. Upon his appointment to the commission, Taft moved his family to the islands. In 1901, he was appointed to oversee a transition to civil government in the country as Governor-General. Vice President Theodore Roosevelt strongly supported the appointment, noting:

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A year ago a man of wide acquaintance both with American public life and American public men remarked that the first Governor of the Philippines ought to combine the qualities which would make a first-class president of the United States with the qualities which would make a first-class Chief Justice of the United States and that the only man he knew who possessed all these qualities was judge William H. Taft of Ohio.

As Governor-General, Taft faced the daunting task of establishing a stable government in the Philippines while slowly reducing the influence of United States military occupation of the islands. Taft was relatively successful in achieving these goals, although he believed that the United States would need to maintain a presence in the country for many years to come due to challenges associated with establishing a stable government. Taft was afforded executive as well as legislative powers as part of his position and issued hundreds of laws, established a judicial system to replace earlier Spanish ordinances, helped to create a system that allowed for popular election of a president and vice president and other administrative offices, and oversaw the development of new transportation and communications infrastructure.⁶⁰

While Taft was in the Philippines, President William McKinley was shot and killed in September 1901. After Theodore Roosevelt was sworn in as president, he soon began implementing progressive policies. Within the year, he offered Taft the first of two supreme court nominations. Taft would refuse both in order to finish his work in the Philippines.

⁶⁰ Miller Center, *American President: William Howard Taft (1857–1930)*, available online at www.millercenter.org/president/taft/essays/biography/1 (accessed September 21, 2014).

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United States Secretary of War, 1904–1908

Taft was unable to refuse, however, when President Roosevelt appointed him Secretary of War in 1904. In the year leading up to the appointment, President Roosevelt wrote to Taft in March of 1903 that, “The worst calamity that could happen to me...is impending because Root (Secretary of War Elihu Root who collaborated with Taft on many Philippine issues) tells me that he will have to leave me next fall. I wish to heaven that I did not feel as strongly as I do about two or three men in public life. But I do. I want to ask you whether if I can persuade Root to stay until a year hence, you cannot come back and take his place.”⁶¹

Taft and Root maintained a close and friendly relationship filled with mutual respect for each other’s abilities. Commenting on Taft’s qualifications for the position, Root assured that, “no man in the country had recently exhibited such unusual ability, both administrative and legislative.” The decision to accept the position of U.S. Secretary of War was difficult for Taft in many ways. He was exceedingly popular in the Philippines and enjoyed his work there. He was also concerned about the low compensation of a cabinet member and the cost of living in Washington, D.C. Roosevelt assured him that he and his wife had been able to make ends meet with small sacrifices, and anticipated that Taft would not have a problem supporting his family and needs on the wages earned. To alleviate these concerns, his brother Charles offered to supplement his \$8,000 annual income with another \$6,000 per year. This, coupled with health issues faced by Taft while living in the Philippines, helped to sway his decision. Taft announced in December 1903 that he would accept the position of U.S. Secretary of War to replace Root. Root provided his accolades with a letter stating, “I consider you one of the most valuable assets of the United States.”⁶² The friendship between Taft, Root and Roosevelt continued throughout Taft’s presidency up until the election of 1912. They often referred in correspondence to each other as the Three Musketeers, in reference to the book by Alexander Dumas.

During Taft’s three-year tenure (1904-1907) as U.S. Secretary of War, he was instrumental in negotiating the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905 that ended the Russo-Japanese War, and initiating

⁶¹ Pringle, I: 251-252.

⁶² Ibid, I: 255.

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the second occupation of Cuba when he established the Provisional Government of Cuba under the terms of the Cuban-American Treaty of Relations. One of Taft's main duties as U.S. Secretary of War was to supervise building the Panama Canal.

President of the United States, 1909–1913

Theodore Roosevelt declined to run for a third term in 1908. As the election loomed, Roosevelt recommended that voters consider Taft as his successor. With the larger than life personality and popularity of Roosevelt backing him, Taft easily won the nomination and the election and became the 27th president of the United States. He beat three-time candidate William Jennings Bryan, in part by promoting his commitment to continuing Roosevelt's progressive policies. In order to appease both wings of the party, Taft promoted Roosevelt's progressive agenda in the west while his brother Charles worked with Republicans in the more conservative east, which caused his opponent William Jennings Bryan to claim that he believed he was running against two people. The progressives were happy with the election stating that "Roosevelt has cut enough hay, Taft is the man to put it into the barn,"⁶³ while conservatives were happy to be rid of the "mad-Messiah" Roosevelt.⁶⁴

Taft's presidency was marked by antitrust work that resulted in control and dissolution of major corporations like the Standard Oil Company and the American Tobacco Company. Throughout his presidency, Theodore Roosevelt sought to curb the power of corporations by enforcing the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890 and preventing companies from creating large conglomerates that took advantage of citizens. He also supported organized labor and limiting work hours and number of days an employee could work in a week.

More conservative in his leanings, Taft, however, struggled to follow the Roosevelt administration's Progressive agenda. He also began his presidency with personal tragedy when his wife, Helen, suffered a stroke only a few weeks after the inauguration that left her unable to speak. She spent much of her husband's term in their summer vacation home in Beverly,

⁶³ Often cited quote of Progressives following Taft's election. For example see "William Howard Taft," in *The White House; History & Grounds; The Presidents*, available online at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/1600/presidents/williamhowardtaft> (accessed February 25, 2015).

⁶⁴ Ibid.

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Massachusetts, under the care of a nurse. She never fully recovered, although Taft spent many hours helping her to regain her ability to speak.⁶⁵ After his first year in office, Taft stated in a letter to Roosevelt that:

It is now a year and three months since I assumed office and I have had a hard time. I do not know that I have had harder luck than other presidents but I do know that thus far I have succeeded far less than have others. I have been conscientiously trying to carry out your policies, but my method for doing so has not worked smoothly...My year and two months have been heavier for me to bear because of Mrs. Taft's condition. A nervous collapse, with apparent symptoms of paralysis...made it necessary for me to be as careful as possible to prevent another attack. Mrs. Taft is not an easy patient and an attempt to control her only increased the nervous strain.⁶⁶

One of the major political issues during Taft's presidency was tariffs. Any attempt to adjust tariff laws was met with complaints from the various factions of the Republican Party as they sought to represent the interests of producers, merchants, or consumers. With his view of the limited role of the presidency in making legislative decisions, Taft attempted to maintain a centrist line. However, this often resulted in his attempt to support both sides, for example encouraging issue reformers to take on lower rates while negotiating deals with conservative leaders to keep rates high. Taft's approach resulted in one of the worst political failures of his presidency.

In 1909, Congress passed the Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act to address the issue of tariffs. Taft remained on the sidelines during the debate in Congress, despite his conservative leanings that suggested lowering existing tariffs, considered to be high and thus detrimental to trade for American businesses. The bill passed by the legislature, however, was a muddled middle ground that mostly raised tariff rates. The Act was received poorly by the public. In an attempt to sway public opinion, Taft chose to fully support the bill in public. In this, Taft managed to alienate all parties involved.⁶⁷ Taft's rhetoric about Payne-Aldrich, which he signed in to law on August 5, 1909, also resulted in a major split in the party. While Roosevelt personally shared in Taft's disappointment over the outcome, he also lamented the negative impact Taft's actions would have on the credibility of the Republican Party in the next election.

⁶⁵ James Chace, *1912: Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft & Debs-The Election that Changed the Country* (New York New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 31.

⁶⁶ Chace, 12.

⁶⁷ Pringle, I: 122.

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Although the relationship between Roosevelt and Taft became strained as a result, Roosevelt realized that his support of Taft would be critical for the Republican Party to succeed in the 1910 midterm elections. He, along with Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the U. S. Forest Service, supported Taft and rallied the party. Roosevelt wrote that Taft was, "... An excellent man under me, and close to me. For eighteen months after his election he was a rather pitiful failure, because he had no real strong man on whom to lean, and yielded to the advice of his wife, his brother Charley, the different corporation lawyers who had his ear, and various similar men." He stated that reelecting Taft would be, "on the whole the best thing for the country."⁶⁸

Roosevelt became the unofficial chairman of the state Republican convention in New York, but when the official party appointment was announced, he lost the position. Instead, the Party appointed Taft's Vice President James Sherman. This declaration of support of Taft's Vice President over Roosevelt effectively influenced Taft's strong loyalties to the conservative faction of the Republican Party, rather than the Progressives as represented by Roosevelt. Despite this snub, Roosevelt continued his efforts to unite the party by traveling across the country, and supporting progressive platform issues such as income and inheritance taxes, workers' compensation, and a downward revision of tariffs. Taft's support of the Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act marked one of the turning points of his relationship with Roosevelt. Taft's policies and support of Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act of 1909 led to the backing of the leadership among the conservative wing of the Republican Party, but also served to isolate and alienate liberal Republicans, who eventually left the party to form the Progressive Party, led by Theodore Roosevelt.

The Taft administration continued to follow Roosevelt's lead in breaking up large corporations. Most notable was Taft's attempt to break up Standard Oil, which was eventually dissolved in 1911. Another major schism between Taft and Roosevelt resulted from Taft's attack on the U.S. Steel Corporation. One focus of this suit included the company's acquisition of the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company, a transaction that had been approved and supported by President Roosevelt in 1907. The suit went so far as to identify Roosevelt as a co-respondent in the case,

⁶⁸ Chace, 38.

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even though no action could be taken against him, suggesting that he had exceeded his authority to support an illegal merger of the two companies, involving him in a “lawless act.”⁶⁹

Despite the progressive achievements that occurred during Taft’s presidency, such as the initiation of eighty antitrust lawsuits, more even than had occurred during the Roosevelt administration, pursuit of constitutional amendments for Federal income tax and direct election of Senators, and the setting of railroad rates by the Interstate Commerce Commission, the party became bitterly divided with the progressive wing increasingly unhappy with Taft.

The Election of 1912

The Presidential election of 1912 proved to be a pivotal event in American politics. The Republican Party was solidly divided between conservatives and progressives due to the political and personal rift between President Taft and former president Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt openly criticized Taft’s policies and expressed his disappointment in Taft’s selection of advisors. This resulted in a four party presidential ticket that included Democrat Woodrow Wilson, Socialist Eugene Debs, Republican William Howard Taft, and Progressive Theodore Roosevelt.

The progressives favored an eight hour work day for federal employees, promoted ecological conservation, were sympathetic to and supportive of labor unions, and recommended the popular election of federal and state judges. The conservatives supported increased tariffs on imported goods in the hopes of persuading consumers to buy American-made products, but did not support labor unions, or the popular election of judges. Taft’s firing of forester, conservationist, and Roosevelt’s friend, Gifford Pinchot, as the chief of the U.S. Forest Service in 1910 contributed to his unpopularity among progressives.

It was during the 1912 election that many of the delegates named to the national conventions were identified through primary elections for the first time. Progressives favored the popular election of delegates as a way to limit the power of political party bosses. Once elected, delegates could vote for their preferred candidate at their respective state conventions, after which the candidates would progress to the national convention, where one would win the support of the

⁶⁹ Doris Kearns Goodwin, *The Bully Pulpit* (New York, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013), 668.

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national party, and become the party representative on the ballot. Twelve states held primary elections in 1912. Robert La Follette won two of the first four primaries in North Dakota and Wisconsin, while Roosevelt won nine, including Illinois, Pennsylvania, Nebraska, Oregon, Maryland, California, Ohio, New Jersey and South Dakota. Taft won only Massachusetts. The loss of his home state of Ohio was likely the greatest blow of his campaign.⁷⁰

The Republicans held their convention at the end of June in Chicago. Elihu Root, a friend to both Taft and Roosevelt, was chosen by the delegates to chair the convention. Taft quickly received the support of the southern states and conservative delegates. When it became clear, as the delegates began to vote, that Roosevelt would not receive the nomination, he began to consider breaking away from the party, despite understanding that a division in the Republican Party could result in a Democratic victory. In a last-ditch effort to keep the party together during the convention, he attempted, but failed, to form an alliance with Robert La Follette to gain the nomination.

When Taft received the nomination, Roosevelt left the convention, followed by his supporters. He accused Taft of cheating by allowing illegitimate delegates to vote. Roosevelt's supporters reconvened in Chicago in August, and held a unique gathering. The delegates were generally of the working class, but included social workers, teachers, and businessmen; among them there were also more immigrants, Jews, and Catholics than had typically been represented at a Republican convention in the past.⁷¹ Also attending this convention were black delegates from several states, and the first women delegates to participate in the convention of a major political party. Jane Addams, the founder of Hull House in Chicago, a settlement house for immigrants, was one of the leaders of the convention, and part of Roosevelt's "female brain trust," along with Frances Kellor and Florence Kelley. Roosevelt was a strong supporter of women's right to vote. Roosevelt believed that the country would soon support women's suffrage. The convention was funded by Frank Munsey, a publisher, and George Perkins, a banker. Roosevelt and the Progressives were not immune from the influence of their staunch supporters and funders. Case in point was the revision of the platform as trust busters due to the strong beliefs of the funders.

⁷⁰ Lewis L. Gould, "1912 Republican Convention; Return of the Rough Rider" in *Smithsonian Magazine*, available online at <http://www.smithsonian.com/history/1912-republican-convention-855607/> (accessed October 1, 2014).

⁷¹ Chace, 161.

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Roosevelt's speech was epic and likened the election to the Battle of Armageddon. It resulted in extensive criticism of Roosevelt in the national press.

The platform of the Bull Moose Party included the support of labor unions, limiting campaign spending, conservation ethics, women's suffrage, an eight-hour work day, safer workplaces, and unemployment, retirement and health insurance. One shortfall of the Roosevelt campaign was a lack of support for equal rights for African Americans. Because he needed to capture the full support of the Deep South to win the election, he knew that supporting this issue would lose him votes in the south. He allowed "lily white" political parties to operate in the former Confederate states, and acquiesced to the demands of John M. Parker, a progressive supporter from New Orleans who warned Roosevelt that southerners, "cannot and will not under any circumstances tolerate the negro."⁷² Roosevelt was for voting rights for African Americans and was against lynching. He also gave African Americans more government jobs in the north than previous administrations. However, he believed his quest for the presidency was worth the sacrifice of these beliefs in order for the chance to obtain the support of the south, and thus the Office of the President. Despite these changes in his platform, Roosevelt was still seen as the president who invited Booker T. Washington to the White House in 1901, and who dined with two African Americans in Providence, Rhode Island. This strategy failed, and went against the core tenants of the Progressive or Bull Moose Party's social justice platform.⁷³

During Roosevelt's acceptance speech he stated that the Progressives should make a "contract with the people: for a modern industrial society" which included federal reforms to support industry such as the minimum wage, end of child labor, insurance for "hazards of sickness, accident, invalidism, involuntary unemployment, and old age..." Rather than trust busting big corporations Roosevelt proposed regulating business rather than breaking it apart. Roosevelt chose Hiram Johnson, the governor of California as his running mate.

Roosevelt and Wilson were the clear front runners in the election. Roosevelt's dynamic personality and Wilson's lead in the south eclipsed both Taft and Debs. Taft, who never relished his role as president, and always detested campaigning, chose not to campaign at all. His

⁷² Ibid., 163.

⁷³ Ibid., 165.

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disappointment in Roosevelt and the loss of their friendship most likely contributed to his deference of politicking. Taft thought Wilson an opportunist who changed his opinion so often it was unclear what he actually believed. Taft lamented the advice he consistently received from his advisors to campaign and get his name in the headlines. He believed he needed to preserve his presidential dignity and was quoted as stating, "I have been told that I ought to do this, ought to do that...that I do not keep myself in the headlines. I know it, but I can't do it. I couldn't if I would, and I wouldn't if I could."⁷⁴ Meanwhile Roosevelt was attracting thousands of people to his campaign speeches. Taft believed his biggest accomplishment was besting Roosevelt during the Chicago convention. With Taft's refusal to campaign, he was labeled a "dead cock in the pit" by Roosevelt. He gave only two major speeches between the end of the convention and the election in November. He remained committed to running as a traditional conservative. Taft spent most of the month of September in Beverly, Massachusetts, relaxing and playing golf, out of the public light.

In October 1912, Roosevelt was campaigning in Milwaukee when he was shot while driving to his speech. A bullet penetrated his chest, passing through his coat and the copy of his fifty page speech. Even though his chest was bleeding, he continued on to the auditorium and spoke for more than an hour to a rousing crowd. He was immediately transported to a hospital in Chicago where tests revealed the bullet lodged one inch from his heart near a broken rib. Doctors chose not to remove the bullet. Many believed that this dramatic event would seal Roosevelt's successful election.⁷⁵ When he traveled to New York's Madison Square Garden for one of his final major speeches prior to the election, he was greeted by a crowd of 16,000 people who cheered for nearly 45 minutes before Roosevelt could begin his speech. Not to be overshadowed by the Progressives, Woodrow Wilson later gave a pivotal speech at the same location; the crowd that had gathered to see Wilson cheered him for more than an hour before he could speak.

Adding to Taft's difficulties was the death of his vice president, James Sherman, on October 30, 1912, which left Taft without a running mate just one week prior to the election. He quickly identified Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University, as his new running mate.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 200.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 233.

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The election results were as expected. Even with the popularity of Roosevelt, the division of the Republican Party resulted in a split vote that the Democratic candidate, Woodrow Wilson, was easily able to best. Taft carried only two states, while Roosevelt won six. Wilson would claim forty states in terms of the Electoral College. Taft did not achieve a majority of the popular vote in any state. Eugene Debs received the largest share of the popular vote ever won by a Socialist candidate for president.⁷⁶ Given the vote totals—Wilson received 6,293,454, Roosevelt 4,119,538, and Taft 3,484,980—it is likely that if the Republicans had not split into two factions, they might have retained the office of the President. Instead, Wilson became only the second Democrat to be elected president following the Civil War.

Constitutional Law Professor, 1913–1921

Following his devastating loss in 1912, Taft returned to Yale to teach constitutional law, where he was able to reconnect with his true passion—the law.

Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, 1921–1930

William Howard Taft was appointed 10th Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court on June 30, 1921, by President Warren G. Harding. Taft replaced Chief Justice Edward White, who had become ill.⁷⁷ Throughout his career, Taft’s greatest aspiration was a position on the Supreme Court, which he described as a “sacred shrine.”⁷⁸ As he assumed his new post, Taft’s enthusiasm for the new position led him to note “I don’t recall ever being president.” William Howard Taft served as Chief Justice between 1921 and 1930, stepping down due to health considerations only a month before his death.

Taft’s record as Chief Justice is considered important on several fronts, principally in the area of administrative reform. Taft’s Court administrative achievements were substantial and have

⁷⁶ Ibid., 238.

⁷⁷ Richard G. Frederick, *William H. Taft (A Volume in the First Men, America’s Presidents Series)* (New York, New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2010), 170–171.

⁷⁸ As quoted in Pringle, II: 951.

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proven long-reaching. In the opinion of one Court historian, “As judicial architect, Taft ranks second only to Oliver Ellsworth, who originally devised the judicial system.”⁷⁹

Two of Taft’s accomplishments involved passage of legislation, which Taft introduced and promoted to congressional representatives, designed to streamline court administration. The most notable were the Judicial Conference and Transfer Act of 1922 and the Judiciary Act of 1925. These bills resulted from Taft’s efforts to expand his influence beyond the routine deliberation of court cases; they were also a direct result of interests that Taft had developed throughout his career, but was not in a position to address until his appointment as Chief Justice. Earlier in his career, Taft had called for a reform of the federal judiciary to include not only structural changes but procedural reforms that he hoped would render the Court more efficient in its day-to-day operations. Taft worked tirelessly through several avenues—the press, the American Bar Association, and members of Congress—to convey the importance of his proposed reforms. Congressional support was particularly important, as legislation would be required to mandate several of the changes that Taft recommended. As noted by historian Richard Frederick, Taft “displayed astute politicking, something he had not always accomplished as President, in dealing with Congress.”⁸⁰ Several Senators would back Taft in his reform efforts during the 1920s, including Albert B. Cummins of Iowa.⁸¹

The Judicial Conference and Transfer Act of 1922 created a new body—the Judicial Conference—which was to be chaired by the Chief Justice, and include judges from each circuit court and the chief judges from the courts of appeal. The members of the Judicial Conference were to be grouped into several committees that reported directly to the Chief Justice. They were concerned with matters such as court procedures, better defining the rules of evidence, and the transfer of judges. Taft is known to have occasionally added items to the agenda not specified in the original law, such as determining uniform punishments for Prohibition violators. In addition to his use of the Conference to maintain acceptable and proper caseloads, Taft also used it to streamline court administration. As an added benefit, the Conference served to increase the

⁷⁹ Alpheus Thomas Mason, “William Howard Taft, 1857–1930,” in Leonard M. Friedman and Fred L. Israel, eds., *Justices of the United States Supreme Court, 1789–1995: Their Lives and Major Opinions* (New York, New York: Chelsea House, 1995), 2109.

⁸⁰ Frederick, 172.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

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autonomy of the judicial branch. Through this gesture, Taft is considered the first chief justice to lead the federal judiciary as a whole in a meaningful way.⁸²

The second bill, also largely passed due to Taft's promotional efforts, was the Judiciary Act of 1925, often referred to as the "Judges' Bill." The bill effectively shifted the Supreme Court's appellate jurisdiction to a discretionary responsibility, allowing the justices to give preference to cases they believed to be of national importance. The bill was meant to lessen the ever-increasing load of cases heard before the Supreme Court. During the early 1920s, the principal issues faced by the court included the government's introduction of an income tax in 1913, post-World War I readjustment, and Prohibition. After passage of the Act, the justices were able to select their cases by reviewing petitions for *writs of certiorari*—the submission of lower courts' decisions for review—and made rulings on the petitions. With at least four justices voting in the affirmative on a petition, the case would be heard by the Court. Otherwise, the justices could reject the petition without any ruling on the merits of the case. This procedure, still followed today, helped the Supreme Court operate more efficiently, potentially lessened the case load, and allowed the Court to dedicate its time to the cases that were most important from the standpoint of precedents and the Constitution.⁸³

Besides giving the Supreme Court more control over its docket, supporting new legislation, and organizing the Judicial Conference, Taft was able to secure general supervisory power over the scattered and disorganized federal courts for the Supreme Court and the Chief Justice. A final reform suggested by Taft—the overhaul of the judicial codes relating to rules of procedure—however, would not come to pass.⁸⁴

In 1929, Taft effectively argued in favor of the construction of a new Supreme Court building that would help to distance the court from Congress as a separate branch of the United States government. Until a new building was completed in 1935, the court met in the Old Senate Chamber of the Capitol building, where the Justices had no private chambers; in fact, Taft's

⁸² Ibid., 172–173.

⁸³ Ibid., 173.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 177.

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Conferences had been required to convene in a room in the Capitol's basement. The 1935 home of the Supreme Court remains the building in use today.

In addition to these accomplishments, Taft has also been lauded for his leadership among the justices and Court dynamics. At the time of his appointment, the other eight justices included Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., generally considered one of the greatest Supreme Court justices of all time; Louis D. Brandeis, an important framer of Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom program, who was one of the liberal voices on the court; Willis Van Devanter; Mahlon Pitney; Joseph McKenna; James C. McReynolds; and John H. Clarke.⁸⁵ Taft himself had appointed Pitney and Van Devanter, and was instrumental in guiding Harding's choices of three new associate justices in 1922 and 1923. With Harding's additions, the Court acquired a conservative core that remained in place for much of the decade and was consistent with the politics of the dominant Republican Party. When Clarke resigned after Taft's first year, he was replaced by Utah Senator, George Sutherland. Pierce Butler was chosen to replace Justice Day in 1922, while Edward Sanford replaced Justice Pitney in 1923.⁸⁶

For Taft, the qualities he sought in an associate justice included the ability to shoulder an appropriate share of the workload and a conservative outlook on Constitutional matters, particularly the guarantees of the 5th and 14th Amendments. His philosophy of constitutional interpretation was essentially historical contextualism. In contrast, he believed academics such as Felix Frankfurter of Harvard had influenced Wilson's choices of Brandeis and Clarke, who he believed were determined to undermine the importance of the Constitution.⁸⁷

Taft was masterful in his ability to get along with the other Justices and to mold them in a way that resulted in a general agreement on cases, despite wide differences amongst principles and, sometimes personalities. Taft focused much of his attention on "massing" the Court to achieve unanimous opinions. Aside from Justices Brandeis and Holmes, dissenting opinions were relatively few during Taft's term, with nearly 90 percent of all rulings during the period of 1921 to 1930 resulting in a unanimous decision.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 170–171.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 171–172.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 173.

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Taft was also one of the most diligent workers within his own Court. When appointed, he explained to a friend that the “Task I undertake is one of incessant labor and of critical responsibility.”⁸⁸ Taft assigned himself the writing of more opinions than other justices. While Chief Justice, Taft wrote the opinion for a total of 256 cases. During the 1922 term, alone, he wrote approximately twice the number of the other eight.⁸⁹

Taft’s conservative leanings generally stemmed from his belief in the primacy of private property within the American democratic system. In a lecture delivered at the University of Rochester in 1922, Taft noted that the Constitution “rests on personal liberty and the right of property, and that the former includes the right of property as it includes the right of contract and the right of labor.” He defined the right of property as including the essential right to act in an independent manner as regards employment, and claimed that such a right motivated the individual and caused progress, noting “Destroy it and material progress ceases.” While he acknowledged that materialism, selfishness, and plutocracy potentially result from the pursuit of wealth, he suggested that “these evils must not blind us, as they do blind many well-intentioned, dreamy reformers, to the fact that personal liberty and the right of property are indispensable to any possible useful progress of society.”⁹⁰

Constitutional scholar Paul Murphy has suggested that Taft’s approach to protecting property interests involved the use of both broad and narrow precedents. He assumed the broad approach, involving the expansion of federal authority, allowed for the regulation of “activities detrimental to or of no consequence to legitimate business.” Interpreting federal power over commerce broadly allowed the Court to strike down state regulatory attempts with the argument that such actions were reserved to the federal government. While the Court considered a broad approach in many cases, the Taft bloc of conservative justices also used narrow precedents to inhibit actions by federal lawmakers, citing the 10th Amendment, which reserved powers to the states. Using this approach, however, “necessitated a steady exercise in legal line-drawing by the justices, and injection of concepts of judicial reasonableness.” While Taft found this to his liking—it

⁸⁸ Ibid., 178, from William Howard Taft to Walter L. Fisher, August 3, 1921. Fisher Papers, Box 5.

⁸⁹ Frederick, 178, from Renstrom, 264.

⁹⁰ Frederick, 174, from William Howard Taft. *The Collected Works of William Howard Taft*. Volume 8: “Liberty under Law’ and Selected Supreme Court Opinions.” Francis Graham Lee, editor. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2004), VIII: 3–18.

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enhanced the Court's powers—the process was unsatisfactory to others for its subjective application.⁹¹

Along with his opinions on the importance of private property rights, Taft delivered related opinions on organized labor. Beginning with the earliest cases for which he wrote the majority opinion, Taft indicated his opposition to the interests of labor. In both *American Steel Foundries v. Tri-City Central Trades Council* and *Truax v. Corrigan*, the Court overturned lower-court rulings favorable to labor groups, limiting the right to picket, and striking down an anti-injunction law. In both cases, the ruling also established some limitations on Section 20 of the Clayton Antitrust Act, meant to establish labor rights.⁹² However, it is also interesting that his record on this topic was mixed. In Taft's most interesting opinion, on a labor case involving a minimum wage for women in the District of Columbia known as *Adkins v. Children's Hospital* delivered in 1923, Taft wrote a dissenting opinion to the majority opinion that struck down the law. While he wrote of his skepticism regarding a more general application of the idea of a minimum wage to address practices of long hours and poor pay associated with sweatshops, he felt that, in this instance, applied to women, the law was sustained by legal precedents. In his opinion he stated "it is not the function of this Court to hold congressional acts invalid simply because they are passed to carry out economic views which the Court believes to be unwise or unsound." Of interest in this statement, as noted by historian Frederick, is the fact that "it appeared to most observers that, in fact, the Taft Court was marked by judicial activism, largely demonstrated by ruling against economic views contrary to the prevailing conservative views of the Court's majority, which included the Chief Justice."⁹³

Taft returned to a more conservative viewpoint a few months later in his opinion summarizing the unanimous Court decision in *Wolff v. Court of Industrial Relations*. The Court of Industrial Relations had been established in Kansas as a progressive measure intended to help lessen labor strife in the state. Among the powers assumed by the court was the right to compel owners and workers in "essential" industries to continue working during resolution of labor disputes. Using

⁹¹ Frederick, 176, from Paul L. Murphy, *The Constitution in Crisis Times, 1918–1969* (New York, New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 58–60.

⁹² Frederick, 174–175.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 175.

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his particular focus on the 5th and 14th Amendments as they pertained to contracts and rights, Taft wrote that “Freedom is the general rule and restraint the exception,” dismissing the notion that the producers of food and clothing were operating in the “public interest,” as the Kansas court contended. Instead, Taft and the Court ruled that the Industrial Court had overstepped its regulatory bounds. The argument effectively ended any other significant attempts at business regulation in the states during the 1920s.⁹⁴

In 1926, in *Myers v. United States*, Taft wrote what he considered to be one of his most important decisions. Taft noted that senatorial agreement was not necessary for the dismissal of Frank S. Myers, an appointed postmaster of Portland, Oregon, in his majority opinion in a 6 to 3 split over the President’s right to remove the appointee from his position. He combined historical research with his own Executive administrative experience, producing a 70-page argument that has been called his “greatest state paper.”⁹⁵ In the opinion, Taft argued that in order for the executive branch to function effectively, the President must be able to retain confidence in his subordinates, noting “The moment that he loses confidence in the intelligence, ability, judgment or loyalty of any one of them, he must have the power to remove him without delay.”⁹⁶ In his opinion, Taft appears to be drawing from personal experience during his presidency and the Ballinger-Pinchot controversy.⁹⁷ The decision was reversed by the Supreme Court of 1935.⁹⁸

Other cases that were to hold future ramifications included the 1928 decision in *Olmstead v. United States*, in which the Court ruled on the use of telephone wiretaps by the Justice Department in a Prohibition case. Taft was barely able to form a 5 to 4 majority in his attempt to uphold a lower court’s ruling that evidence obtained in such a manner was admissible. While the 4th Amendment had been used to argue that letters in the mail are protected from search, Taft deliberated that the same principle did not apply to “telephone wires reaching to the whole world from the defendant’s house or office,” suggesting that such wires “are not part of his house or

⁹⁴ Ibid., 176.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 176, from David H. Burton, *Taft, Holmes, and the 1920s Court: An Appraisal* (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1998), 141.

⁹⁶ Frederick, 176, from Taft, *Collected Works*, VIII: 257–258.

⁹⁷ Frederick, 176.

⁹⁸ Gilbert J. Black, ed., *William Howard Taft, 1857–1930; Chronology Documents–Bibliographical Aids* (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1970), 29.

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office any more than are the highways along which they are stretched.”⁹⁹ The opinion held until 1967, when it was reversed by the Warren Court in *Katz v. United States*.¹⁰⁰

Many of the opinions of the Taft Court did not hold up through the 1930s as the Great Depression and the New Deal led to changing ideas about private property and government regulation. Recent historical evaluation of the Court finds other aspects of its legacy to be mixed. Historian Peter Renstrom suggests that “The Taft Court was not reactionary, but it was not particularly insightful either.”¹⁰¹ Others consider that many of its opinions invalidated actions that could have helped avoid the Great Depression, and in fact, the four pro-business Justices that remained on the Court after Taft resigned—McReynolds, Sutherland, Van Devanter, and Butler—would strongly oppose many of the regulatory efforts of the New Deal. Nonetheless, as Renstrom notes, the Taft Court “blurred the public-private distinction found at the center of classical legal thought, and its interstate commerce decisions seemed to suggest that most aspects of such commerce were within federal regulatory reach.”¹⁰² Another Court historian, Alpheus Manson suggests that Taft’s reputation as a “very good” Chief Justice rests, not on his judicial philosophy, but on his ability as an administrator of the Court and his lobbying activities on behalf of the Court.¹⁰³

Taft died in March of 1930, one month after leaving his post as Supreme Court Justice. William Howard Taft was interred in Arlington National Cemetery. First Lady Helen “Nellie” Herron Taft died May 22, 1943, in Washington, D.C., and was laid to rest beside her husband.

⁹⁹ Frederick, 176–177, from Taft, *Collected Works*, VIII: 335.

¹⁰⁰ Frederick, 176–177.

¹⁰¹ Frederick, 178, from Renstrom, *The Court*, 213.

¹⁰² Frederick, 177–178.

¹⁰³ Frederick, 178, from Alpheus Thomas Manson, *William Howard Taft: Chief Justice* (New York, New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1965), 299–305.

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Summary

William Howard Taft National Historic Site is nationally significant under Criterion B of the National Register of Historic Places. As 27th President of the United States and the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, William Howard Taft is the only person in American history to lead both the executive and legislative branches of government. Taft was born in the house at 2038 Auburn Avenue in Cincinnati, Ohio on September 15, 1857. He was raised there and lived in the house with his family until attending Yale in 1874. He returned to live in the house in 1878 while attending law school in Cincinnati. His parents and siblings occupied the house until it was rented after his parent's departure for retirement in California, and eventually sold, Taft remained a frequent visitor to the house until his father's death in 1891.

The William Howard Taft National Historic Site preserves the birthplace and family home of the 27th President. The house on Auburn Avenue is significant as the only remaining property associated with Taft's childhood and early adulthood in his home town of Cincinnati. It represents the place where he matured and developed the character and work ethic that led him to become President of the United States and Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Taft was a respected lawyer with an intelligent and dedicated legal mind, who succeeded in several positions involving law, politics, and government. Over the course of his career, Taft served as Solicitor General of the United States, Federal Circuit Court judge, and Governor-General of the Philippines. Taft was popular and successful in this role, and remained in Manila until 1903 when he returned to the United States to accept the position of U.S. Secretary of War under his good friend and political ally, President Theodore Roosevelt. Taft was an efficient and accomplished Secretary of War. He, along with the President, is credited with expediting progress and construction on the Panama Canal and establishing temporary administration in Cuba.

Roosevelt refused to run for another term as President in 1908, and Taft became his selection for the Republican Party nominee. With Roosevelt's support, Taft handily won the election and

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became the 27th President of the United States. However, several controversial actions during Taft's presidency including signing the Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act, and removal of U.S. Forest Service's Gifford Pinchot resulted in the demise of Taft's friendship with Roosevelt. The falling out and political division between the two men and splitting of the Republican Party to include the Progressive or Bull Moose party in 1912 resulted in Democratic candidate Woodrow Wilson gaining the White House.

Taft quietly left the office to return to his passion: the law. He taught constitutional law at his alma mater, Yale University, wrote several books, and was appointed Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court in 1921, his highest aspiration.

The William Howard Taft National Historic Site protects and preserves the home where Taft was born and spent his formative years, and affords visitors the best opportunity to learn about the work and achievements of our 27th President, who also served as Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

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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: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 33HA431 (Ohio Archeological Inventory, State Historic Preservation Office archeological site number)

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.64 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

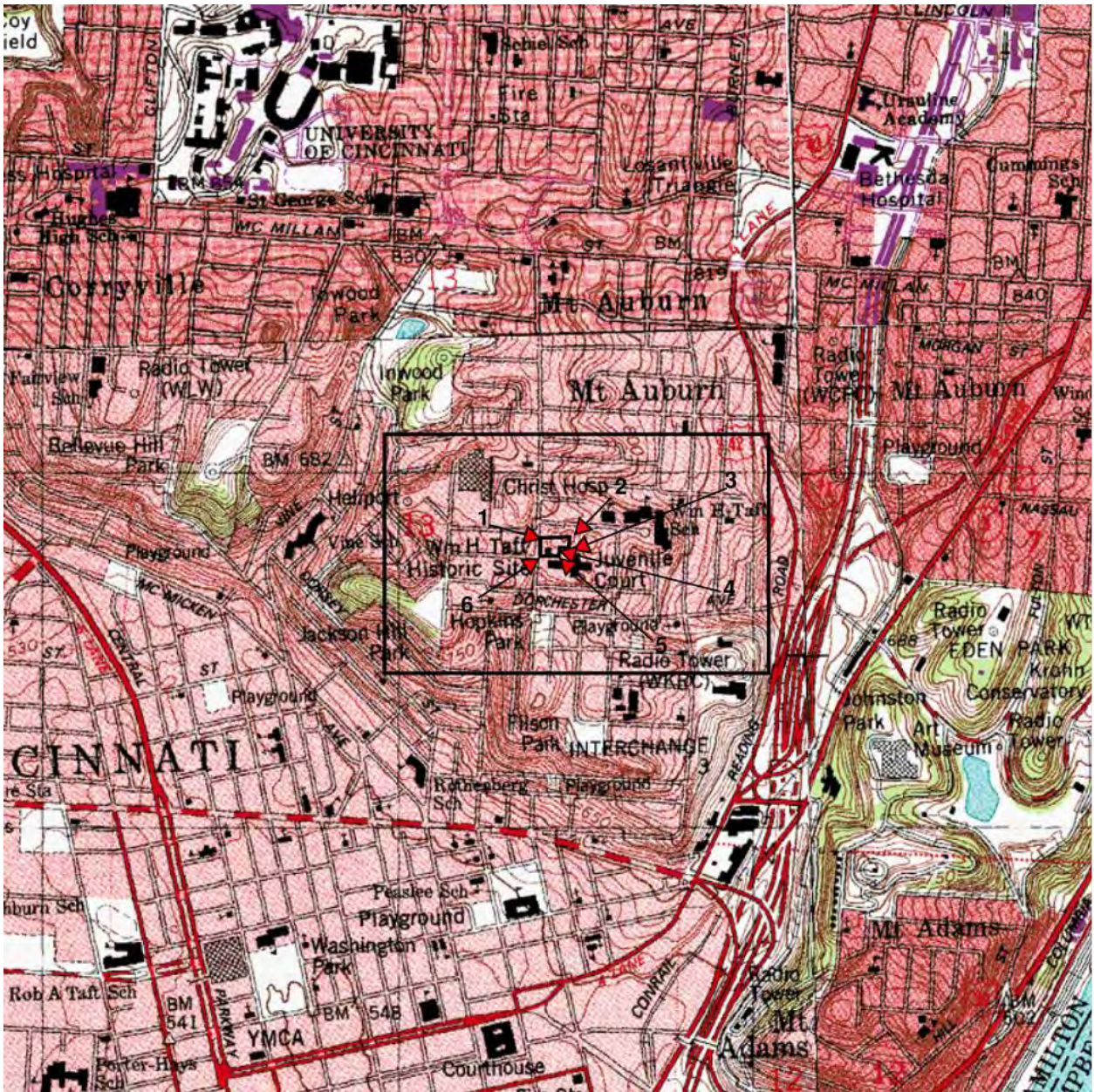
Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

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| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
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| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

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United States Geographical Survey (USGS) Covington, Kentucky 1:24 map coverage. William Howard Taft National Historic Site is located at the center point of the map within the outlined box. Numbers and arrows 1-6 correspond with UTM coordinates identified below.

William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

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Or
UTM References

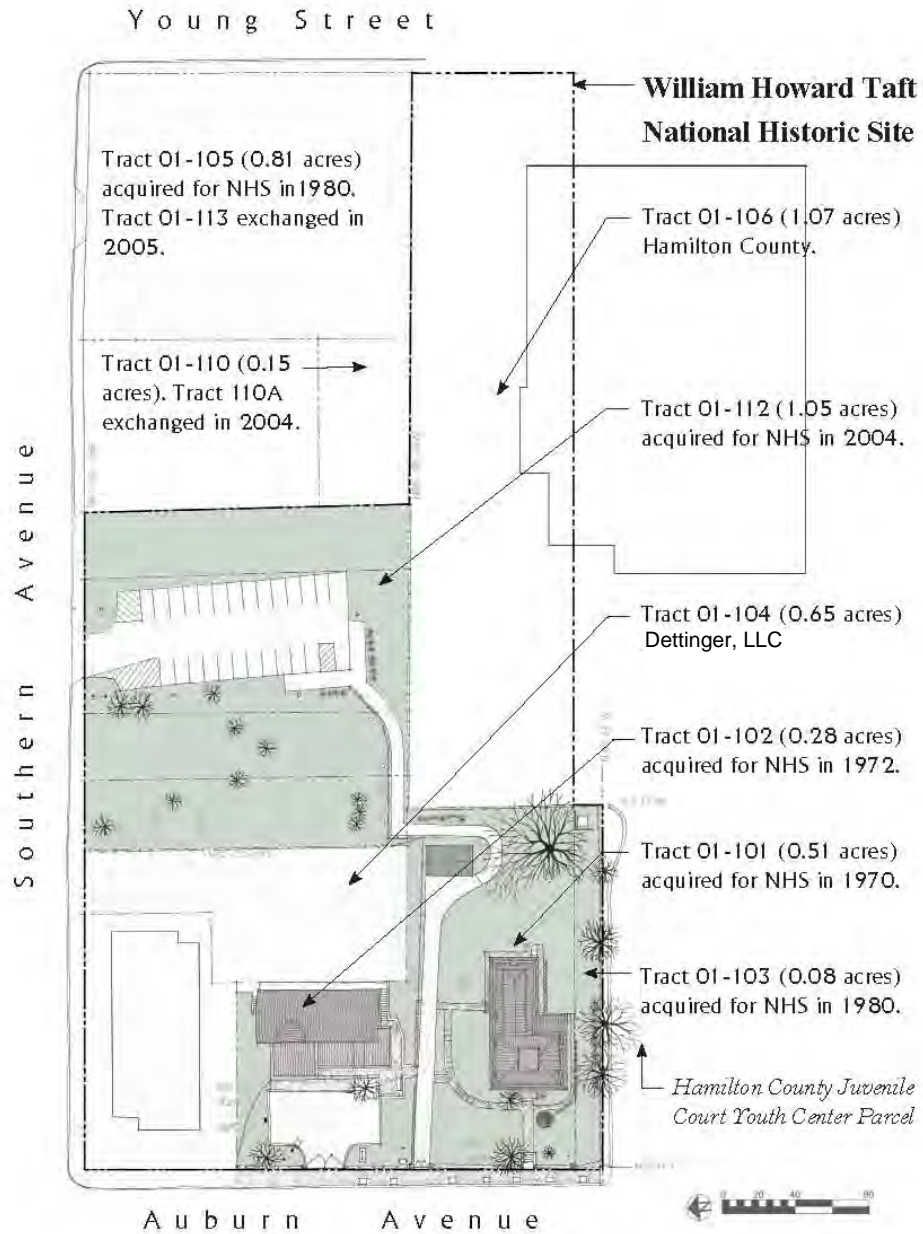
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------|
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| 2. Zone: 16 | Easting: 715482 | Northing: 4332812 |
| 3. Zone: 16 | Easting: 715474 | Northing: 4332793 |
| 4. Zone: 16 | Easting : 715450 | Northing: 4332793 |
| 5. Zone: 16 | Easting: 715450 | Northing: 4332765 |
| 6. Zone: 16 | Easting: 715388 | Northing: 4332771 |

William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

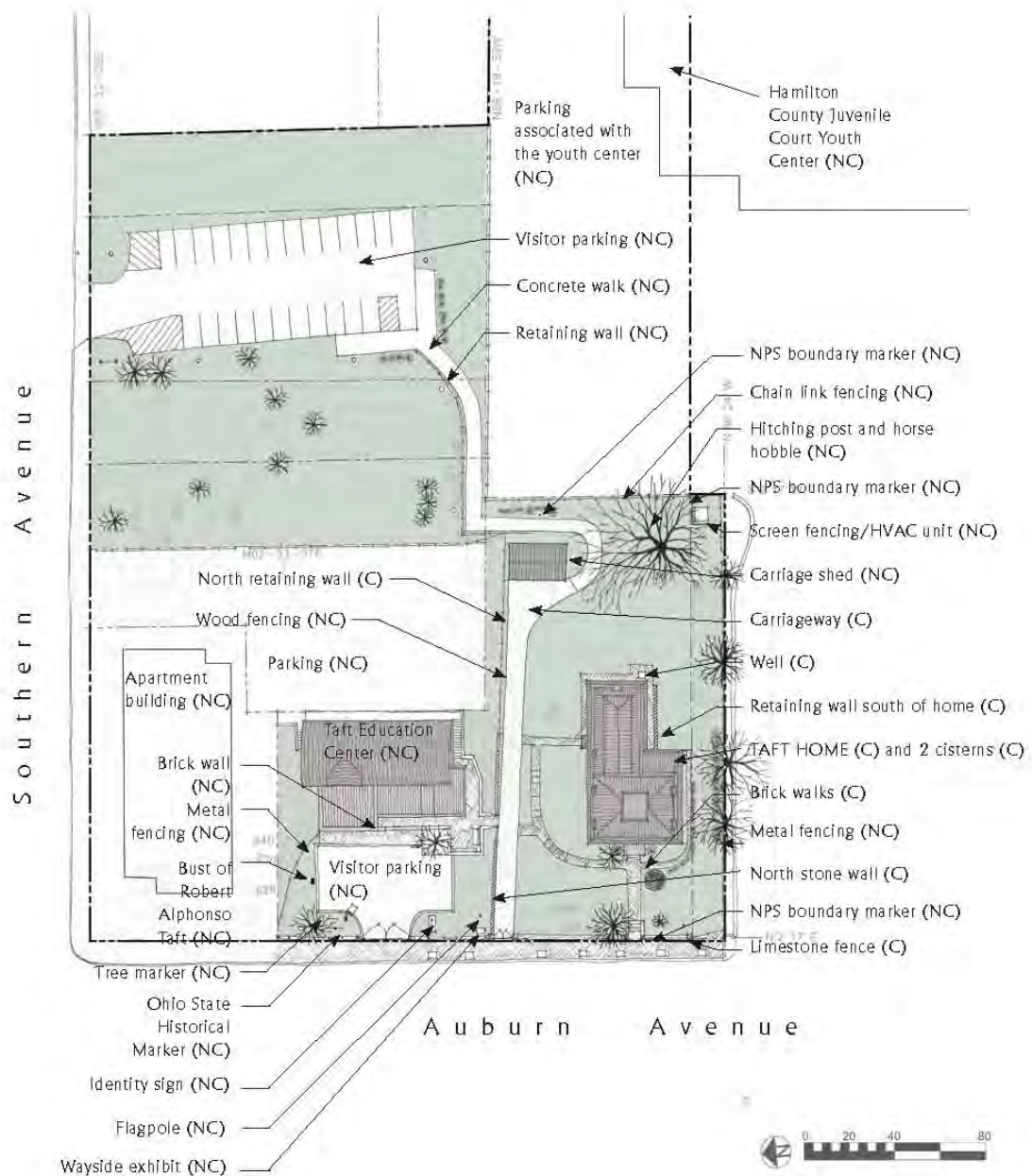
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William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Tracts and Ownership History

William Howard Taft National Historic Site
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William Howard Taft National Historic Site
 Sketch Plan

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

The William Howard Taft National Historic Site is located in the Mt. Auburn neighborhood of Cincinnati, Ohio. The property encompasses 3.64 acres of land within portions of a block bordered by Southern Avenue to the north, Young Avenue to the east, Bodmann Avenue to the south, and Auburn Avenue to the west. Of the 3.64 acres, the National Park Service owns 1.92 acres, Hamilton County owns 1.07 acres, and 0.65 acres are in private ownership. The parcel map indicated above illustrates the property boundary.

The property contains the birthplace and family home of President William Howard Taft, as well as the Taft Education Center located on the adjacent property to the north. The two buildings are connected by a walkway. The house is located at 2038 Auburn Avenue within a 0.51-acre parcel, 100 feet by 220 feet in size that falls 203 feet south of Southern Avenue. An 0.08-acre buffer parcel edges the home site to the south. Immediately adjacent to the home site to the north is the Taft Education Center, located on a 0.28-acre irregular parcel, referred to as lot D in the Osmond Cogswells addition. The parcel measures approximately 101.5 feet by 120 feet. A 1.05-acre parcel that has been developed to accommodate visitor parking is located northeast of the home site. The parcel is accessible from Southern Avenue, but is connected to the home site by a pedestrian path.

Also falling within the congressionally authorized boundaries of the national historic site, in private ownership, is a 0.65-acre parcel at the southeast corner of Southern Avenue and Auburn Avenue that features an apartment building. A rectangular tract of 1.07 acres that lies in an east-west direction in the middle of the block extends from the home site eastward to Young Avenue. This parcel is owned by Hamilton County, and is used as a parking area associated with the Juvenile Court Youth Center.

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary for this property coincides with the congressionally authorized boundary of William Howard Taft National Historic Site, a unit of the National Park System.

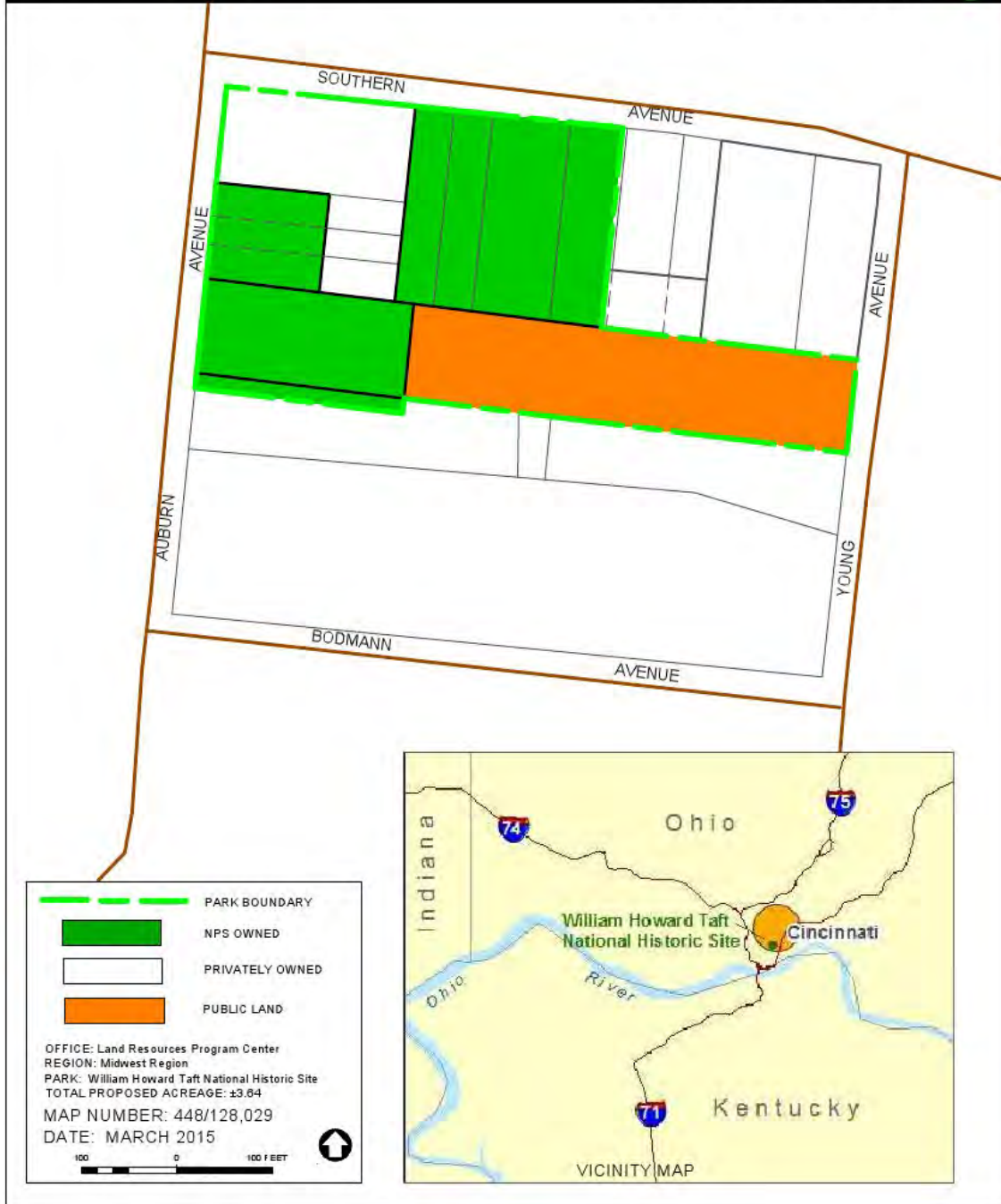
William Howard Taft National Historic Site
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William Howard Taft National Historic Site

National Register Nomination

National Park Service
 U.S. Department of the Interior



William Howard Taft National Historic Site park boundary map showing the congressionally authorized boundaries and the whether the parcels are owned by the NPS, other public lands, or in private ownership. Map courtesy of the National Park Service Midwest Regional Office Land Resources Program Center.

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Name of Property

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Melissa Dirr Gengler and Liz Sargent
organization: Historic Resources Group, Inc.
street & number: 442 South 28th Street
city or town: Lincoln state: NE zip code: 68510
e-mail: melissa@hrg-nebraska.com
telephone: 402-770-5877
date: June 15, 2015

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, 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.

Documentation Photographs



Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View east of the principal facade, William Howard Taft Home.

1 of 25.

William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

Hamilton, OH
County and State



Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton

State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View southeast of the principal and northern side facades, William Howard Taft Home.

2 of 25.

William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

Hamilton, OH
County and State



Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View southwest of the northern and rear facades, William Howard Taft Home.

3 of 25.

William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

Hamilton, OH
County and State



Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View west of the rear facade, William Howard Taft Home.

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William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

Hamilton, OH
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Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton

State: Ohio

Photographer: Melissa Dirr Gengler

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Interior view of central corridor inside the main entrance into the house.

5 of 25.

William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

Hamilton, OH
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Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton State: Ohio

Photographer: Melissa Dirr Gengler

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Interior view of front parlor looking northeast.

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William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

Hamilton, OH
County and State



Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton State: Ohio

Photographer: Melissa Dirr Gengler

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Interior view of first floor library looking southwest.

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William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

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Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton

State: Ohio

Photographer: Melissa Durr Gengler

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Interior view of stairs in the original core of the house and the addition.

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William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

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Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton State: Ohio

Photographer: Melissa Dirr Gengler

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Interior second floor view of meeting/conference room looking southeast.

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William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

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Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton State: Ohio

Photographer: Melissa Dirr Gengler

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Interior second floor view of museum displays looking east.

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Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton

State: Ohio

Photographer: Melissa Dirr Gengler

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Interior basement stair.

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William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

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Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View northeast of the Taft Education Center.

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William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

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Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View east of the carriage shed.

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William Howard Taft National Historic Site
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Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton

State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View southeast of the stone wall and wrought iron fence that edges the property along Auburn Avenue.

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William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

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Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton

State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View south of the gate in the boundary wall along Auburn Avenue.

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William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

Hamilton, OH
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Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View west of the gate at the carriageway.

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William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

Hamilton, OH
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Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton

State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View west of the brick walk between Auburn Avenue and the front porch of the William Howard Taft Home.

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William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

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Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton

State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View east along the carriageway.

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William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

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Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton

State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View northwest of the wood cover over the Taft Home well.

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Name of Property

Hamilton, OH
County and State



Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton

State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View west of the stone wall and wood fence that edges the carriageway to the north.

20 of 25.

William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

Hamilton, OH
County and State



Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton

State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View southwest of the retaining wall that edges the Taft Home to its south.

21 of 25.

William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

Hamilton, OH
County and State



Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton

State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View southeast of the screen fencing and property boundary fencing along the southeastern edge of the property. The Hamilton County Youth Detention Center property is visible beyond.

22 of 25.

William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

Hamilton, OH
County and State



Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton

State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View southeast of the entrance into the Taft Education Center, park identity sign, and flagpole. The Taft Home is visible beyond.

23 of 25.

William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

Hamilton, OH
County and State



Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View southeast of the visitor parking area along Southern Avenue.

24 of 25.

William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

Hamilton, OH
County and State



Name of Property: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton State: Ohio

Photographer: Liz Sargent

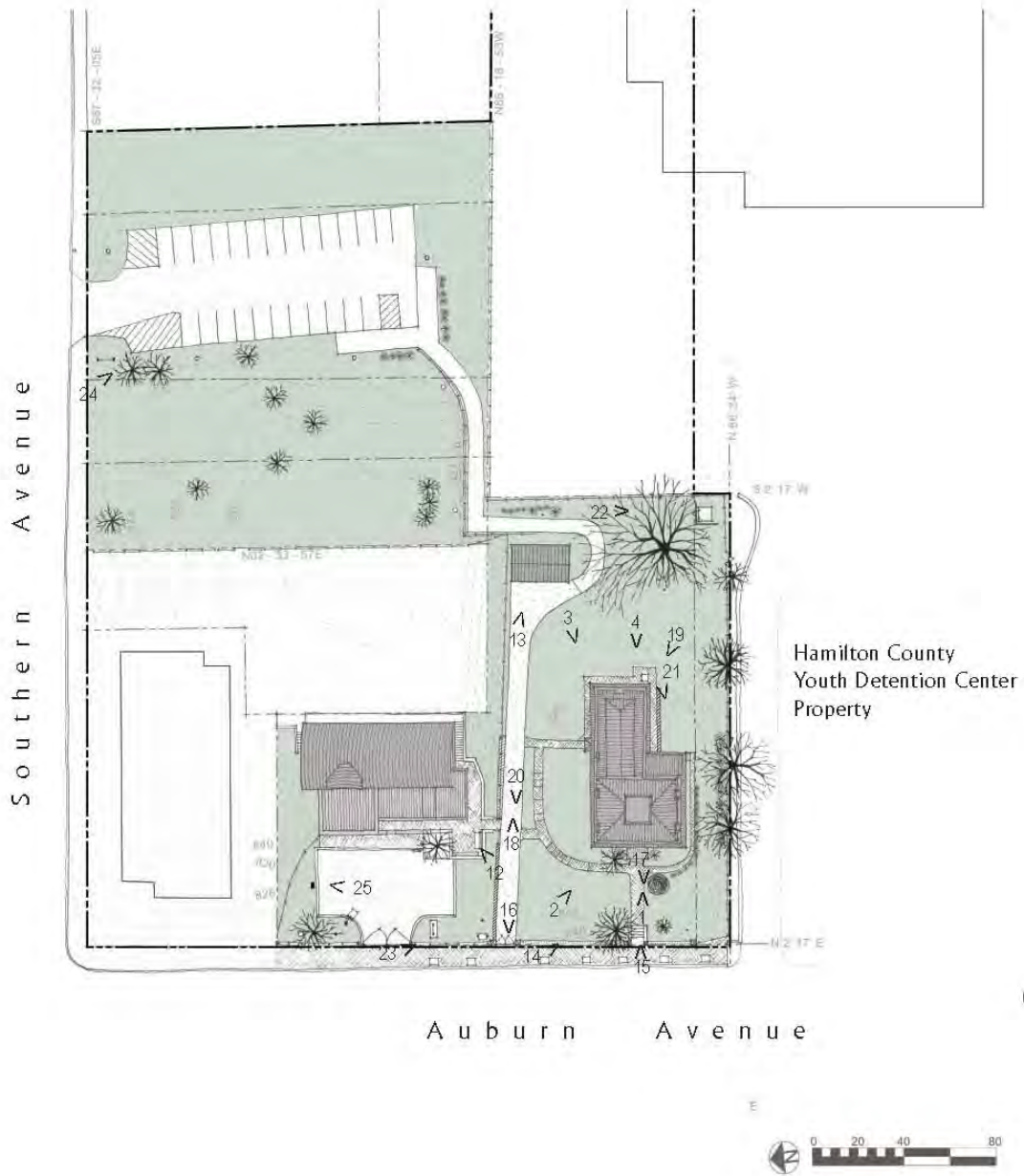
Date Photographed: March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View north of the bust of Robert Alphonso Taft.

25 of 25.

William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

Hamilton, OH
County and State



William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Photo Station Points Map

William Howard Taft National Historic Site
Name of Property

Hamilton, OH
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, DC.



























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Specialized Instruction
for the
Deaf and
Hard of Hearing







2038









William Howard Taft
National Historic Site







National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

William Howard Taft
National Historic Site

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT
National Historic Site
PARKING



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
**William Howard Taft
National Historic Site**





ROBERT ALPHONSO TAIT
"Mr. Republican"
Son of William Howard Taft
1889-1953
Ohio House of Representatives
1921-1926
Ohio Senator
1921-1923
United States Senator from Ohio
1929-1953
Gift of the Honorable J. Mervyn Dymally, President

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: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: William Howard Taft National Historic Site (Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation)

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OHIO, Hamilton

DATE RECEIVED: 9/09/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/06/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/21/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/25/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000753

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 10/21/2015 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

- Additional Documentation - expanded Description and Statement of Significance
- Boundary Increase to the National Historic Site's Authorized Boundary

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept

REVIEWER Patrick Ardus DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE _____ DATE 10/21/2015

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



HISTORIC RESOURCES GROUP, INC.

August 3, 2015

National Park Service
Federal Preservation Officer
Robert Sutton, Ph.D.
Chief Historian, Park History Program
1201 I (Eye) Street, NW # 2261
Washington, D.C. 20005

RE: William Howard Taft National Register nomination

Dear Dr. Sutton:

Enclosed you will find two disks containing the National Register nomination documentation and photographs for the William Howard Taft National Historic Site in Cincinnati, Ohio. The nomination has been accepted by the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office. Also enclosed is the National Register nomination cover sheet signed by Barb Powers, Deputy Ohio State Historic Preservation Officer.

HRG prepared this nomination under contract with the Midwest Regional Office of the National Park Service. Ron Cockrell, the contract officer's technical representative, has also reviewed and accepted this nomination. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Melissa Dirr Gengler".

Melissa Dirr Gengler
President/Architectural Historian
Historic Resources Group, Inc.
Melissa@hrg-nebraska.com
402-770-5877

Enc.

Cc: Ron Cockrell, NPS MWRO
Nicholas Murray, NPS MWRO
Liz Sargent, HLA

August 14, 2015

Kyle Woodland
Dettinger, LLC
2938 Vernon Place
Cincinnati, OH 45219

RE: William Howard Taft National Register nomination, 2038 Auburn Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Mr. Woodland:

We are pleased to inform you that the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the William Howard Taft Home at 2038 Auburn Avenue in Cincinnati, Ohio has been signed by the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office and forwarded to the Washington Area Service Office of the National Park Service. The Taft property qualifies for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places of the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. Based on the documentation presented to the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office, Barbara Powers, Department Head of Planning, Inventory and Registration Department has signed the nomination recommending its listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The William Howard Taft National Historic Site located at 2038 Auburn Avenue was listed in the National Register Historic Places in 1973 as a contributing resource in the Mount Auburn Historic District and individually listed in the National Register in 1976. This effort includes additional document and boundary expansion to the existing nominations. The twentieth century apartment building you own at 2058 Auburn Avenue is located within the congressionally authorized boundary of the William Howard Taft National Historic Site. As such it was documented and included in the additional documentation as a non-contributing resource.

This letter documents your notification of the action at the subject property. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the information below, or Megan Rupnik at the Ohio State Historic Preservation office at 614-297-2300 (mrupnik@ohiohistory.org).

Sincerely,

Melissa Dirr Gengler
President/Architectural Historian
Historic Resources Group, Inc.
Melissa@hrg-nebraska.com
402-770-5877

Cc: Ron Cockrell, National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, Omaha, NE



HISTORIC RESOURCES GROUP, INC.

August 28, 2015

Kelly Spradley-Kurowski, PhD
Historian and Manager, National Maritime Heritage Program
National Park Service
1201 I (Eye) Street NW, #2261
8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005


RE: William Howard Taft National Register nomination

Dear Dr. Spradley-Kurowski:

Enclosed you will find the updated disk containing the National Register nomination documentation for the William Howard Taft National Historic Site in Cincinnati, Ohio. This draft documents the updated private property owner of the parcel held within the boundaries of the nomination.

Thank you for your consideration, and please let me know if you have any further questions.

Respectfully Submitted,


Melissa Durr Gengler
President/Architectural Historian
Historic Resources Group, Inc.

Melissa@hrg-nebraska.com
402-770-5877

Enc.

Cc: Ron Cockrell, NPS MWRO
Nicholas Murray, NPS MWRO
Liz Sargent, HLA



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

RECEIVED 2280

SEP - 4 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

September 4, 2015

Memorandum

To: Acting Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places

From: Deputy Federal Preservation Officer, National Park Service *Robert A. Matta*

Subject: Additional Documentation and Boundary Increase for William Howard Taft National Historic Site

I am forwarding a boundary increase and additional documentation for the National Register nomination for the William Howard Taft National Historic Site. The site received National Historic Landmark designation in 1964, and was administratively listed in the National Register of Historic Places with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966. NRHP documentation was prepared in 1976. This document updates the resource counts and areas of significance, and documents boundary adjustments that have occurred since 1976. The Park History Program has reviewed the form and found the property eligible at the national level of significance under Criterion B with areas of significance of Politics/Government and Law. The period of significance is defined as 1857-1891.

To: <kellie.wise@hamilton-co.org>, <greg.hartmann@hamilton-co.org>

Cc: "Cockrell, Ronald" <ron_cockrell@nps.gov>, Nicholas Murray <nicholas_m_murray@nps.gov>, Liz Sargent <lizsargentla@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, 2 Mar 2015 13:41:52 -0500

Subject: William Howard Taft National Historic Site

Dear Commissioner Hartmann,

Historic Resources Group, Inc. has been retained by the Midwest Regional Office of the National Park Service to provide updated documentation on the National Register of Historic Places listing for the William Howard Taft Home National Historic Site in Cincinnati. We have just submitted our 95% complete draft to the National Park Service for review. Section 60.9 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires that the chief elected official of the county and municipality be given an opportunity to comment on the nomination. An excerpt of that law can be found below. We are also forwarding a copy of the nomination to Mayor John Cranley for review and comment.

I am attaching the 95% draft here for your review and comment. The law further states that if no comment is received within a 45 day period upon receipt the nomination may continue through the established federal process.

I am happy to answer any questions or comments you may have and have enjoyed working in Cincinnati!

Thank you,

Melissa Dirr Gengler

Architectural Historian

Historic Resources Group, Inc.

402-770-5877

Melissa@hrg-nebraska.com

www.hrg-nebraska.com

Sec. 60.9 Nominations by Federal agencies.

(c) Completed nominations are submitted to the appropriate State Historic Preservation Officer for review and comment regarding the adequacy of the nomination, the significance of the property and its eligibility for the National Register. The chief elected local officials of the county (or equivalent governmental unit) and municipal political jurisdiction in which the property is located are notified and given 45 days in which to comment. The State Historic Preservation Officer signs block 12 of the nomination form with his/her recommendation.

Thanks, and enjoy your weekend.

Melissa Dirr Gengler

Architectural Historian

Historic Resources Group, Inc.

402-770-5877

Melissa@hrg-nebraska.com

www.hrg-nebraska.com

From: Spradley-Kurowski, Kelly [mailto:kelly_spradley-kurowski@nps.gov]

Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2015 9:31 AM

To: Melissa

Cc: Ronald Cockrell; Liz Sargent

Subject: Re: Wm Howard Taft National Register Nomination

[Quoted text hidden]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Melissa Dirr <mdirr@neb.rr.com>

To: <mayor.cranley@cincinnati-oh.gov>

Cc:

Date: Mon, 2 Mar 2015 13:45:03 -0500

Subject: William Howard Taft Home National Historic Site

Dear Mayor Cranley,

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documentation on the National Register of Historic Places listing for the William Howard Taft Home National Historic Site in Cincinnati. We have just submitted our 95% complete draft to the National Park Service for review. Section 60.9 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires that the chief elected official of the county and municipality be given an opportunity to comment on the nomination. An excerpt of that law can be found below. We are also forwarding a copy of the nomination to President of the County Commission Greg Hartmann for review and comment.

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Melissa Dirr Gengler

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www.hrg-nebraska.com

—— Forwarded message ——

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To: <kellie.wise@hamilton-co.org>, <greg.hartmann@hamilton-co.org>

Cc: "Cockrell, Ronald" <ron_cockrell@nps.gov>, Nicholas Murray <nicholas_m_murray@nps.gov>, Liz Sargent <lizsargentla@gmail.com>

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Melissa Dirr Gengler

Architectural Historian

Historic Resources Group, Inc.

402-770-5877

Melissa@hrg-nebraska.com

www.hrg-nebraska.com

—— Forwarded message ——

From: Melissa <melissa@hrg-nebraska.com>

Historian and Manager, National Maritime Heritage Program
National Park Service
1201 I (Eye) Street NW, #2261
8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
kelly_spradley-kurowski@nps.gov
phone: 202-354-2266
fax: 202-371-2229

Like us on Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/NationalParkServiceHistory>

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

—— Forwarded message ——

From: Melissa Dirr <mdirr@neb.rr.com>

To: <mayor.cranley@cincinnati-oh.gov>

Cc:

Date: Mon, 2 Mar 2015 13:45:03 -0500

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5 attachments



dettinger notification letter.docx

41K



WIHO_NRN_95%_03_02_2015.pdf

6764K



noname.eml

9272K



WIHO_NRN_95%_03_02_2015.pdf

6764K



noname.eml

9267K

Spradley-Kurowski, Kelly <kelly_spradley-kurowski@nps.gov>
To: Melissa <melissa@hrg-nebraska.com>
Cc: Ronald Cockrell <ron_cockrell@nps.gov>, Liz Sargent <lizsargenthla@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 31, 2015 at 9:20 AM

Thanks, Melissa!

Kelly Spradley-Kurowski, PhD