

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC **Captain Edward V. "Eddie" Rickenbacker Boyhood Home**

AND/OR COMMON

**Captain Edward V. "Eddie" Rickenbacker Boyhood Home**

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

**1334 East Livingston Avenue**

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

**Columbus**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**12**

STATE

**Ohio**

VICINITY OF

CODE

**39**

COUNTY

**Franklin**

CODE

**049**

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

**OWNERSHIP**

**STATUS**

**PRESENT USE**

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

**Eugene P. Goff**

STREET & NUMBER

**1081 Carousel Drive East**

CITY, TOWN

**Columbus**

VICINITY OF

STATE

**Ohio**

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

**Recorder's Office**

STREET & NUMBER

**410 South High Street**

CITY, TOWN

**Columbus**

STATE

**Ohio**

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

**Ohio Historic Inventory**

DATE

**1975**

— FEDERAL  STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

**Ohio Historical Center**

CITY, TOWN

**Columbus**

STATE

**Ohio**

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Around 1893-95 William Rickenbacker built the first part of this simple, 1½-story, L-shaped, gable-roofed dwelling. His son "Eddie," while growing up here, developed his interest in automobiles and airplanes, and this remained his only permanent home until well after World War I. In 1922 he rented an apartment for his bride, and subsequently they occupied various rented houses, apartments, and hotel suites. For a few years during his later life, Rickenbacker owned a ranch in Hunt, Tex., and a house in Coconut Grove, Fla., but none of these temporarily occupied residences represents his life and his World War I career as well as the boyhood home. It was "Eddie" who eventually paid off the mortgage on this house. Until about 1960, it remained in the Rickenbacker family as his sister Mary's residence.

According to Rickenbacker's autobiography, initially the house consisted of two downstairs rooms and two attic rooms. Probably around 1900 "Eddie" helped add a room and a half, apparently the north ell, and helped make a cellar. Comparison to a historical photograph in the autobiography shows that the greatest change since that time has been the addition of green shingle siding in alternate rows with staggered butts. Put on about 1960, presumably the shingles conceal the original board siding. The skeleton of the south section seems frame, and that of the ell brick. The low foundation is sandstone.

Unchanged house features include the main section's gable roof with north-south ridge and the ell's gable roof with east-west ridge. Roofing shingles in an imbricated pattern appear original. A shed dormer with two windows and a central red brick chimney with corbeled cap top the main roof, while another red brick chimney surmounts the ell. House trim includes wooden quoins, plain roof cornices, plain door and window surrounds on the main section, and corniced surrounds on the ell. All have been painted white but are otherwise unaltered. Windows are one-over-one sash.

The south side of the main block faces East Livingston Avenue and contains two windows. The north side of the house is two bays wide, the east side five bays long, and the west side windowless. Under each of three gable ends is a window. A three-bay-long, one-story wooden porch crosses the east side of the main block to the ell. Formerly ornamented by four turned posts and an open railing, now the porch has shingled posts, shingled arches, and an enclosed,

(continued)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) (sports)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1893-95-ca. 1925 BUILDER/ARCHITECT William Rickenbacher

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Eddie Rickenbacher was a special kind of military hero, argues historian Harvey A. DeWeerd, because he "represented a revolt against the industrialized depersonalization of war" which so characterized the 20th century.<sup>1</sup> During World War I he took part in the "first combat mission ever ordered by an American commander of an American squadron of American pilots."<sup>2</sup> His feat of shooting down 26 German aircraft in less than 6 months established him as "American Ace of Aces" and made him the idol of a whole generation of American youth. One of the Nation's leading race car drivers before the war, Rickenbacher after 1918 devoted his talents to the world of business, eventually purchasing Eastern Air Lines and making it the "first airline to operate without a subsidy from the Federal government."<sup>3</sup>

There are several extant structures associated with Rickenbacher, but this simple, 1½-story, L-shaped, gable-roofed, frame dwelling represents him best. Here he grew up, developed his interest in automobiles and airplanes, returned home from World War I, and resided "officially" until 1922, when he rented an apartment for himself and his bride. It was Eddie who paid off the mortgage on this house following his father's death. The house remained in the Rickenbacher family until about 1960.

<sup>1</sup> Harvey A. DeWeerd, President Wilson Fights His War: World War I and the American Intervention (New York, 1968), 151.

<sup>2</sup> Edward V. Rickenbacher, Rickenbacher: An Autobiography (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967), 102.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 213.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Coffman, Edward M., The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

*Shirley, Mary E., President Wilson Fights His War (continued) on 2*

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 1 acre.

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 7	3 3 2 3 6 0	4 4 2 3 7 9 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Cathy A. Alexander and Ralph Christian, Assistant Editors

ORGANIZATION

American Association for State and Local History

DATE

October 1975

STREET & NUMBER

1400 Eighth Avenue South

TELEPHONE

(615) 242-5583

CITY OR TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Tennessee 37203

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

125

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Rickenbacker

CONTINUATION SHEET

Home

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shingled railing. It has a pitched roof, beneath which lies one front door that faces east and another, in the ell, that faces south. Each door has a large glass panel with egg-and-dart detail around it. On the north side of the ell is a third doorway. Alterations here include a modern metal awning and a concrete patio. Next to the north door lies a bulkhead cellar door, which sits on a stone and concrete base, wherein the initials "E. V. R." are crudely traced.

On the first floor, the dwelling consists of three rooms and a bath. Either two or 2½ rooms occupy the attic loft, and a room and crawl space complete the basement. The AASLH representative was not admitted to the interior of the house.

Just north of the house stands a one-story shed. Here young Rickenbacker may have undertaken his first mechanical experiments. The structure has green-painted clapboard siding, probably similar to that which covered the house originally, and it has wooden quoins. The gable roof seems reshingled, but the shed, which measures two bays by one bay, is in poor condition.

House and shed are in a deteriorating neighborhood consisting of both residential and commercial structures. North of the shed is a portion of the former Rickenbacker garden and beyond that a wire fence. Still farther north on the adjacent lot on Gault Street stands a modern concrete building housing Goff and Sons Roofing, Inc. Currently Goff rents the Rickenbacker Boyhood Home to an employee but intends to sell the property. Consequently the house may be in danger of demolition.

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Biography

Born October 8, 1890, in Columbus, Ohio, to recent Swiss immigrants, William and Elizabeth B. Rickenbacher, Edward V. "Eddie" Rickenbacher took an interest in things mechanical from an early age. By the time he was 7, he was proficient at shoe repair, and many of his spare moments were devoted to building mechanical gadgets. In 1904 his father died, causing "Eddie" to drop out of school, and he took the first of a number of low-paying factory jobs.

When "Eddie" was 15, he became interested in the automobile--an association which would eventually bring him his initial fame. After a short stint in a garage, he went to work as a laborer for the Frayer-Miller Automobile Plant in Columbus. In his spare time he studied mechanical engineering under the auspices of International Correspondence Schools. Lee Frayer eventually took Rickenbacher under his wing and employed him in the engineering department. In 1907 when Frayer left the company to join the Columbus Buggy Works, he persuaded "Eddie" to follow him as experimental engineer. By 1910 Rickenbacher, who was sales agent for the Firestone-Columbus car, had entered the field of racing. For the next 6 years, he devoted himself to this endeavor, becoming one of the Nation's top drivers and earning as much as \$80,000 yearly.

In 1916 while in Great Britain designing Sunbeam racing cars, Rickenbacher became an advocate of American intervention in the European war. Upon his return to the United States, he proposed the formation of a flying squadron composed of racing drivers and called "Aero Reserves," but the Army refused his request. When the United States declared war in April 1917, Rickenbacher joined the American Expeditionary Force as a sergeant and staff driver and sailed with John J. Pershing and his staff to France the next month. He still wanted to fly, however, and with the assistance of William "Billy" Mitchell, Rickenbacher finally received an assignment to flying school--despite the fact that he was overage and not a college graduate. After 17 days at the French aviation

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school at Tours, "Eddie" won his wings and a commission as first lieutenant, but he found himself assigned to the Advanced Flight School at Issoudun as engineering officer.

Eventually, Rickenbacker was able to get himself transferred to the 94th Aero Pursuit Squadron, which came to be known as the "Hat in the Ring" squadron because of its distinctive emblem. On April 14, 1918, he took part in the "first combat mission ever ordered by an American commander of an American squadron of American pilots."<sup>4</sup> On September 24, he became commander of the squadron, and on the next day, he singlehandedly took on seven German planes over the German lines and shot down two of them--a feat for which he was belatedly awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1930. By the end of the war, he had 26 "kills"--22 planes and 4 balloons--to his credit, giving him the title, "American Ace of Aces." Much of Rickenbacker's success can be attributed to the fact that he was older than most pilots, and as historian Edward M. Coffman points out "because of his experience in racing automobiles was already toughened in a field of dangerous competition."<sup>5</sup>

Released from the service as a major in 1919, Rickenbacker came home the idol of a grateful Nation. Everywhere he went he was greeted by large crowds, and soon he found himself deluged with offers to make movies or endorse certain products capitalizing on his war deeds. Although he refused these offers, he eventually wrote a war memoir, Fighting the Flying Circus. In 1922 he married Mrs. Adelaide F. Durant. Turning his attention to the world of business, he founded the Rickenbacker Motor Company which had some initial success before going bankrupt in 1927. Later that same year he purchased the Indianapolis Speedway, almost completely rebuilt it, and operated it until the end of World War II.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>5</sup> Edward M. Coffman, The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I (New York, 1968), 202.

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In 1928 he joined General Motors where he would hold a number of posts for the next several years in their automobile and aircraft divisions. In 1938 Rickenbacker purchased Eastern Air Lines from General Motors, and within a few years he made it the "first airline to operate without a subsidy from the Federal government, and for many years it was the only one to do so."<sup>6</sup>

During World War II, Rickenbacker served as a special civilian consultant for Secretary of War Henry Stimson, touring American bases both at home and abroad. In 1942 while on one of these tours to the South Pacific, his plane became lost, ran out of fuel, and had to land in the ocean. For 24 days he and the crew remained adrift on life rafts until they were finally found. Out of this experience, which drew national attention to him once more, came another book, Seven Came Through.

After the war, Rickenbacker continued with Eastern Air Lines as Chairman of the Board, a position he held until his retirement in 1963 at age 73. In October 1972, he suffered a stroke, and he died in Zurich, Switzerland, on July 24, 1973.

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DeWeerd, Harvey A., President Wilson Fights His War: World War I and the American Intervention (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968).

New York Times, July 24, 1973, 1.

Rickenbacker, Edward E., Rickenbacker: An Autobiography (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967).

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6 Rickenbacker, Rickenbacker, 213.