

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH 0674214

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RECEIVED MAY 7 1979
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DATE ENTERED

**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 *Multiple Resource Area*
Vermilion - Harbour Town ~~Historic Resources~~ (Partial Inventory: Historic and
AND/OR COMMON Architectural Properties)

2 LOCATION

OH 2 and U.S. 6
STREET & NUMBER see continuation sheet
CITY, TOWN Vermilion VICINITY OF 13
STATE Ohio CODE 039
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT Donald J. Pease
COUNTY Erie CODE 043

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multiple Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME multiple ownership
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN STATE
VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Erie County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN Sandusky STATE Ohio

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Ohio Historic Inventory, National Register of Historic Places
DATE 1976
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Lorain County Regional Planning Commission
CITY, TOWN Elyria 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Harbour Town 1837 Historic District is a locally designated area that consists of the original platted village of Vermilion. It includes the commercial center of Vermilion, which is located along Liberty Avenue and Main Street, and older residential sections of the city, which surround its commercial center. While the majority of the buildings within the historic area of Vermilion are commercial and residential, there also exists some public buildings and industrial structures.

Vermilion lies on a level plain at the mouth of the Vermilion River and along the shore of Lake Erie. The Vermilion River winds north and east of the historic district, isolating it from other sections of the city. Along the river, and in several inlets, are a series of boat docks for pleasure craft. The riverbanks are lined with a mixture of residential and commercial uses. Another major feature of the historic area of Vermilion is a major railroad line that passes from east to west through the center of the community. It serves as a boundary between the commercial area to the north along Liberty Avenue and residential neighborhoods to the south. Further to the south, beyond the residential area, is another railroad line. The shore of Lake Erie defines the northern boundary of the historic area. This shoreline has been eroding in the years since the community was first platted, causing the relocation of some older houses and necessitating breakwalls near those houses currently near the lake. Three small parks lie in the historic area. Victory Park is the largest. It is one block in size and is located in the center of town. The town hall and two churches, plus several residences, face onto this square. Hanover Park is a small triangular slice of land formed by a curve in Ferry Street. Exchange Park is also a small triangular park and lies at the northeast corner of Liberty and Main.

While Vermilion's period as a major lake port was from before the Civil War, few buildings from this era remain. The Captain Bradley House, the Steamboat Inn, the Pelton Hotel, the Harbour Store, and several houses are all that remain from this period and are Greek Revival in style. Instead, the majority of the historic buildings in the Harbour Town area date from the late nineteenth century and are Italianate in style. The older houses in Vermilion are generally Italianate buildings that feature elaborate cornices, brackets, hood moldings around the windows and doors, and ornate entranceways with small porches. Some houses in the historic district date from the end of the nineteenth century and are examples of the Queen Anne and Stick styles. Only a few houses in this area are from the early twentieth century. The most notable of these is the Great Lakes Museum, formerly the Wakefield House, which is a neoclassical building. More neoclassical structures exist in the commercial section, such as the Old Vermilion Bank, the Erie County Bank and the Fischer Block. One of Vermilion's major landmarks, its town hall, is an excellent example of Victorian Gothic architecture. It features a large opera hall on the second floor.

In recent years Vermilion has experienced a reawakening of interest in its past. The town has capitalized on its nautical heritage and small town charm and is a tourist attraction. It is known for its extensive boat docks for pleasure craft, several fine restaurants, vacation cottages, and numerous craft shops and gift shops. The commercial center was enhanced by storefront restorations that included attractive discreet

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Vermillion Harbour Town Historic Resources, Erie County, Ohio

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signs and by the planting of large street trees. Business in this summer resort is flourishing and major reinvestments have been made in several older commercial structures. The Sail Loft and the Cargo Warehouse are two older warehouse-type structures that have been imaginatively adapted for new commercial uses. The Firelands Community Bank recently acquired the old interurban station and remodeled it for use as a bank building. A local law firm has restored an exquisite little bank building for use as their offices. The Friends of Harbour Town, a community group, has acquired the McGraw House and is transforming it into an attractive collection of shops and offices. The impetus generated by the preservation of the downtown is spreading to the surrounding residential neighborhoods, where houses are being restored and rehabilitated. A few have attractive authentic color schemes. Others are having previous alterations removed and are being restored.

The Vermilion City Council enacted legislation establishing the Harbour Town 1837 Historic District in 1972. This ordinance set up a review board to monitor changes to buildings and new construction within the historic district. The buildings selected for nomination to the National Register are within or adjacent to this historic district. They include the major landmarks of Vermilion and buildings of special historical interest, such as the homes of early lake captains. Also included are important commercial structures, particularly those that have been restored or rehabilitated.

The survey which resulted in this nomination was conducted by the Lorain County Regional Planning Commission under contract with the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. It was part of a larger survey which covered all of Lorain County along with the City of Vermillion, and was oriented toward identifying all properties significant in the areas of history and architecture and which met the National Register criteria. The primary staffing for the survey was the preparer of this form.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Vermilion-Harbour Town Multiple Resource Area, Erie County, Ohio

CONTINUATION SHEET

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Vermilion has lost the "sense of time" common to historic districts as a consequence of several factors. There is apparently no standardized zoning policy or regulations in the community so that commercial and residential uses are mixed together throughout the town. Furthermore, the generally small-scale 1920s commercial buildings in the downtown have suffered from recent "colonialization" of storefronts. Finally, the downtown suffers from the presence of non-conforming structures positioned between significant properties. These reasons resulted in the selection of the MR format.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1837 - ca. 1920

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Vermilion has long been known as the home of lake captains. Its rich heritage is based on its link with the great lakes, as a major port early in the nineteenth century and later as a pleasant small town with a nautical character. Vermilion exists today as a summer resort community that is oriented toward tourists. The historic buildings in Vermilion are important as reminders of the town's colorful past, and serve to create the pleasant historic character for which the city has become known.

The strategic location of Vermilion at the mouth of the Vermilion River shaped its history as that of a port city linked economically to trade and commerce on the Great Lakes. Soon after it was settled, Vermilion became a shipbuilding port. It launched one of the first boats on the Great Lakes during the War of 1812. Vermilion was one of Ohio's first lake ports to be developed and served as a major transfer point for commerce flowing from inland areas to the Great Lakes. In 1836, the U.S. Government improved the Vermilion harbor, making it more accessible to the increasingly larger sailing ships that traveled on the lakes. The next year, Vermilion was incorporated as a village. In the period from the 1830's through the turn of the century, Vermilion was a town that was heavily oriented toward lake commerce. Fishing, sailing, and shipbuilding were the major industries and many structures were built along the banks of the Vermilion River for these industries. Some of them survive today, such as the Kishman Fish Company buildings, the Sail Loft and the Cargo Warehouse.

Because Vermilion was able to remain a pleasant small town in spite of its heavy lake commerce, it became a favorite place for lake captains to live. Many lake captains built fine houses where they lived between travels and after retirement. While the lake captains have become history, their houses remain and are known by the names of the captains who built them. Most of these older houses are fairly typical, but some have a certain nautical character in their rambling porches and cupolas that overlook the lake.

Several of Vermilion's landmark houses originally served as hotels for overland and lake travelers. The Steamboat Inn, the Basset House and the Lakeside Inn have since been converted to residences, but still retain much the same appearance as when they were small inns that catered to stagecoach and steamboat travelers.

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During the twentieth century, Vermilion's significance as a lake port diminished significantly. The shipbuilding industry died out, lake commerce was directed toward larger cities that had better port facilities, and the fishing industry declined with the pollution of Lake Erie. But because Vermilion was not heavily industrialized, it became a center for pleasure craft, and today has more small boats stationed here than virtually any other town on the Great lakes. Since the city has not undergone dramatic growth and development, except in its outlying areas, its historic landmarks remain largely intact in an historic environment. Vermilion's prime significance lies not so much in its individual historic landmarks, but in its largely intact setting as an early Great Lakes port. It is developing this asset into a new industry, tourism, through the preservation of its historic character.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- 1) Howe, Henry, Historical Collections of Ohio, Cincinnati, 1849.
- 2) Lorain County Regional Planning Commission, "Harbour Town - A Design Study for the Historical Area of Vermilion, Ohio", Elyria, Ohio, 1972.
- 3) Trinter, Betty, The Way It Was and How It Came To Be, Norwalk, Ohio, 1968.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY see Ohio Historic Inventory forms

UTM REFERENCES

A	_____	_____	_____	B	_____	_____	_____
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____	_____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property within this district includes only those buildings specifically listed on the attached continuation sheet, and their surrounding lots. In the case of commercial buildings, the nominated property includes only that land upon which the buildings stand, while in the case of residential areas, the nominated property will include the entire lot, plus the street frontage that coincides with the building's lot.

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

Steven McQuillin, planner

ORGANIZATION

Lorain County Regional Planning Commission

DATE

April 1978

STREET & NUMBER

21 Turner Block, Court Street

TELEPHONE

(216) 322-4725

CITY OR TOWN

Elyria

STATE

Ohio

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



4/23/79

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Carol O'Shull
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

11/14/79

ATTEST

William H. Brasman
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

11.8.79

VERMILLION

TRIP CO. CO.

H.B. STRANAHAN & CO.
CLEVELAND, O.

MAY 7 1979

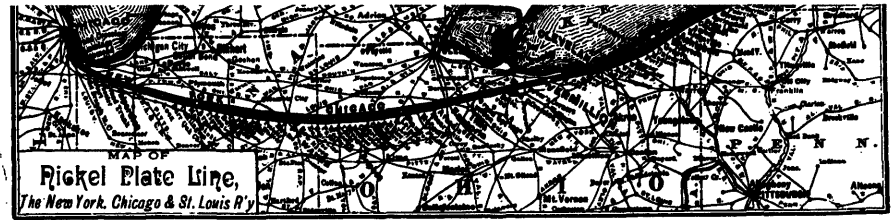
SCALE - 300 FEET TO ONE INCH

LINWOOD PARK, VERMILLION, O.

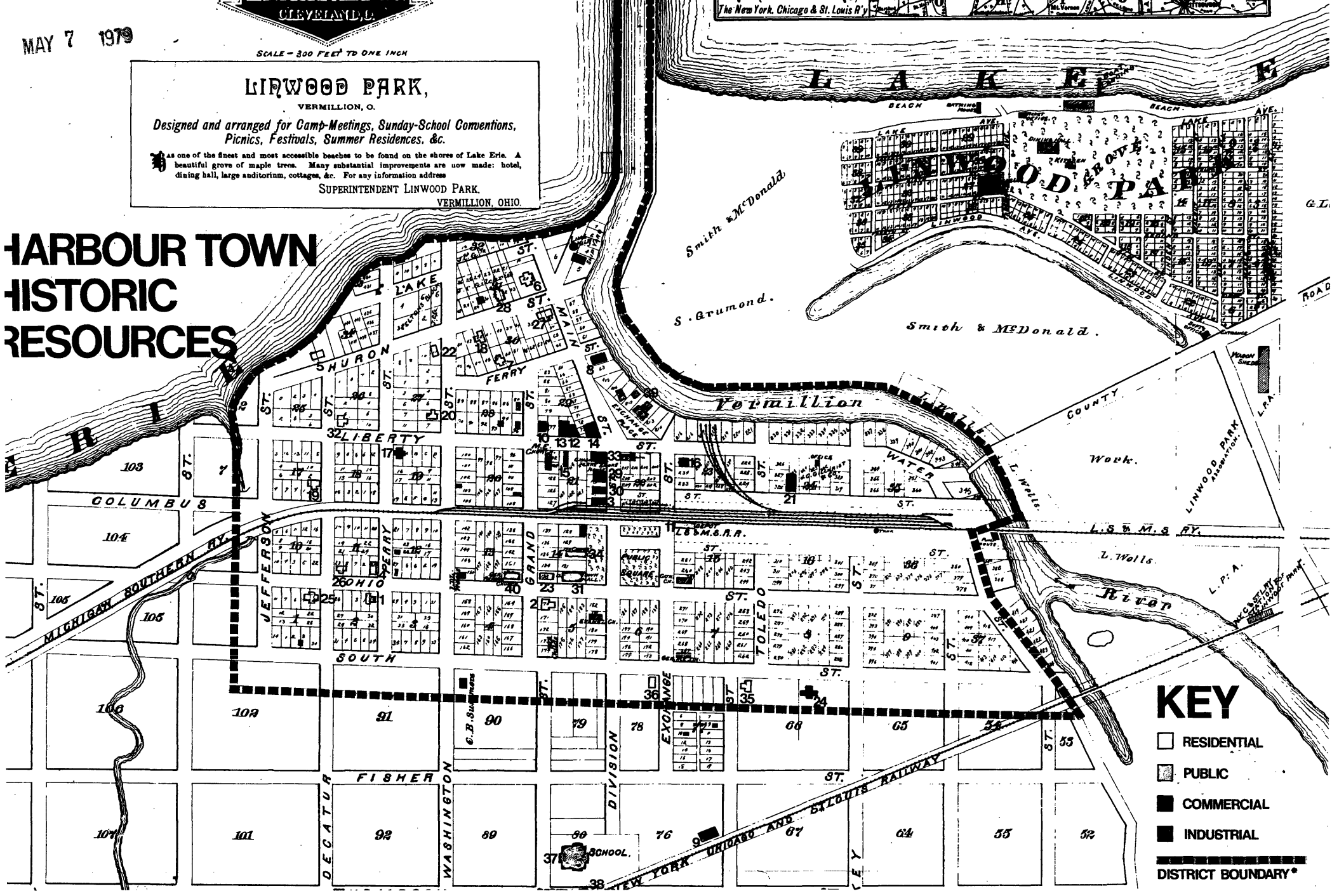
Designed and arranged for Camp Meetings, Sunday-School Conventions,
Picnics, Festivals, Summer Residences, &c.

As one of the finest and most accessible beaches to be found on the shores of Lake Erie. A beautiful grove of maple trees. Many substantial improvements are now made: hotel, dining hall, large auditorium, cottages, &c. For any information address

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VERMILLION, OHIO.



HARBOUR TOWN HISTORIC RESOURCES



KEY

- RESIDENTIAL
- PUBLIC
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY*