

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PHO 674 257

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 7 1979
DATE ENTERED AUG 13 1979

**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

Elyria Multiple Resource Area

Historic Resources of Elyria (Partial Inventory: Historic and Architectural)

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

The incorporation limits of Elyria

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Elyria

__ VICINITY OF

13

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Donald J. Pease

STATE

Ohio

CODE
039

COUNTY
Lorain

CODE
093

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

multiple ownership

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Lorain County Administration Building

STREET & NUMBER

226 Middle Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Elyria

STATE

Ohio

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Ohio Historic Inventory

DATE

1975-78

__ FEDERAL STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCAL

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 type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Elyria is situated on a level plateau, with its central portion located between two branches of the Black River. The branches converge directly north of the center of town and served to isolate and concentrate the commercial activity of the community. The plan of the city of Elyria has the major commercial street running from east to west at a point where the two branches are farthest apart. This street, called Broad Street, contains a number of historic commercial structures along it, ranging in period from pre Civil War Greek Revival to early Twentieth Century NeoClassical. The intersection of Broad Street and Middle Avenue, the major north-south street, forms the center of the city. On the southwest corner is Ely Park, a small public square enclosed by commercial buildings on three sides and the county courthouse, on its own small square, on the south. Development is quite dense around Ely Park and is largely commercial in nature, while the courthouse square, directly south, faces onto three churches and office structures.

North of Elyria's commercial center is an old residential area along Washington Avenue. This street once contained the finest residences in the city of Elyria, dating from the mid to late nineteenth century and representing a wide variety of architectural styles. Several of these houses still remain fairly intact, but many were demolished in recent years for institutional use and apartment units. South of the commercial center is an older residential section. Middle Avenue once contained many fine late nineteenth century houses, but many have disappeared as a result of strip commercial development. A prominent example of the houses that once lined this street is the E. J. Johnson House at Middle Avenue and Elyria Street.

It was during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that Elyria achieved significance as a prosperous small town of diversified industries, homes of wealthy businessmen and industrialists, with fine parks, spacious residences and a small but attractive downtown. During this period, nearly all the pre Civil War structures in the city were replaced. These include the old courthouse and several prominent Greek Revival mansions, plus the commercial buildings along Broad Street. The growth and development of Elyria in the nineteenth century led to a downtown composed largely of two and three story Italianate commercial blocks. These buildings are fairly uniform in height and have similar cornice lines. Ely Park is defined by continuous rows of three story Italianate commercial blocks on two sides. In essentially only two instances was this rhythm interrupted, when in the early twentieth century, two downtown bank buildings were constructed that are nine stories in height and neo classical in style. Several of Elyria's downtown commercial buildings have interior courts which feature skylights and balconies. Among them is the Century Block, an elaborately ornamented commercial structure that features shops and offices on its two upper floors grouped around a light court.

Elyria's population has more than doubled in size since the second world war and this dramatic increase has created changes in the downtown and older residential neighborhoods. The downtown has suffered a serious business decline due to competition from shopping centers. Many commercial buildings have been demolished for surface parking lots, particularly along West Broad Street. Many of the remaining structures are under utilized and in deteriorating condition. The older residential areas, such as those along Washington Avenue and Middle Avenue, have suffered from unsympathetic rezoning, which has allowed strip commercial and high density residential development to invade what were once upper class residential neighborhoods. The environment of many of the remaining historic buildings has been adversely

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 7 1979
DATE ENTERED	AUG 13 1979

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

Historic Resources of Elyria, Lorain County, Ohio

CONTINUATION SHEET DESCRIPTION ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

affected by this development. The percentage of residential use in these older neighborhoods is about fifty percent or less. The area along Broad Street is exclusively commercial, although about one quarter of the buildings are either vacant or demolished.

Several nominated properties are either at the outskirts of the areas that have been described or are located outside of the old city boundaries. The Patrick Carlin House was constructed as a rural farmhouse on land north of the city. It has since become a part of the city and new development is occurring around the old house, although it still retains its barns and outbuildings on a twelve acre lot. The old Elyria Waterworks Tower is located in an industrial area southwest of town. It is currently used by Republic Steel as a water storage tower.

The John Jay Shipherd House is an 1830 building moved to its present site among late nineteenth century houses from its original site in downtown Elyria.

Since the historic resources nomination lies in a largely urbanized area, no archeological sites were identified as part of the survey. Historical studies have indicated that the junction of the two branches of the Black River, which is directly north of the center of town, was a favored place for Indian campgrounds, particularly the caves under the two waterfalls. This area, which is contained within Cascade Park, has the potential to yield archeological data, since properties further downtown along the Black River have already been identified in archeological surveys. However, local histories have not identified downtown Elyria as ever having possessed any unusual earthenworks or other prehistoric structures.

This nomination is the result of an extensive survey of historic buildings in the city of Elyria which was carried out in the summers of 1975 and 1976 by summer interns of the Lorain County Regional Planning Commission. Nearly one hundred buildings and objects were identified for the Ohio Historic Inventory, the majority of which lie in or near downtown Elyria. The list of thirty structures selected for this nomination was arrived at after evaluating the initial group of inventoried structures to determine which were eligible for the National Register. This evaluation was done under consultations with the Regional Preservation Officer, city officials, businessmen and property owners. In addition to the normal criteria used for the National Register, several commercial buildings were listed because of planned rehabilitation projects that could utilize the 1976 Tax Reform Act. Thus, this nomination is viewed not only as a means of identifying those structures in Elyria that are eligible for the National Register but also as a means of encouraging the rehabilitation of selected commercial landmarks.

At present six properties in the City of Elyria are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. They include some very significant properties of obvious historic and architectural interest. These six buildings are the Lorain County Courthouse, Thomas W. Laundon House, Arthur L. Garford House, John C. Monteith House, First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Horace C. Starr House. They are identified along with those that are proposed for inclusion under this nomination on the site map.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES **1830-1920's**

BUILDER/ARCHITECT **various**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Elyria has an impressive assortment of historic buildings that date from its past as a prosperous small community that was home to energetic businessmen and industrialists. They range from such distinguished public buildings as E. E. Myers' Lorain County Courthouse to Elah Terrell's rugged Elyria High School, and the highly ornamental Ely Block, facing Ely Park. Some of these buildings are of special architectural significance and others have historical connections that are of more than local significance.

Elyria was settled by Heman Ely and a party of pioneers from Connecticut in 1817. Ely had acquired a large tract of land in the Western Reserve through his father, Justin Ely, who was a shareholder in the Connecticut Land Company. The new settlement developed rapidly and by 1822 the state legislature was requested to form a new county for this area. In 1824, Lorain County was created and Elyria was designated as the county seat, largely through the generous donations of land and money by Heman Ely toward construction of a courthouse. In 1833, Elyria was incorporated. Its name was chosen by Heman Ely as a unique combination of the Ely name and ancient Greek land of Illyria, which coincided with a period of American history in which Greek architecture and Greek names were emulated in new settlements. The arrival of a major railroad in the 1850's strengthened Elyria's position as a commercial center for the surrounding countryside. The resulting growth and development of the community, particularly after the Civil War, resulted in many new buildings being constructed, primarily in the Italianate style. Many of the buildings in downtown Elyria date from the late nineteenth century. The early twentieth century saw Elyria grow, but this growth was largely in the form of residential neighborhoods near the new factories on the east and west sides and for people working in the steel mills in Lorain. Little growth or change occurred in the downtown or older residential neighborhoods. In the years since the second world war, these older areas have suffered from economic decline and many buildings were demolished. However, historic buildings still tend to dominate the streetscape of downtown Elyria.

Several of the nominated commercial blocks bear the name of prominent merchants from Elyria's past. Mussey, Redington, Wooster and Ely are all names of people who made their living in the mercantile business in Elyria and erected elaborate commercial buildings that perpetuate their names. A few houses of prominent Elyrians are a part of this nomination, such as the A. R. Webber House, home of a prominent attorney, judge and local historian; the Frederick Reefy House, where the editor of the Elyria Democrat lived; and the John Lersch House, home of a prominent merchant.

The nominated properties possess significance in a variety of areas. The commercial buildings are significant not only for their distinctive architecture, as shown in the elaborate cornices and window moldings of some, but also as places of commerce, where much local business was carried out. The school buildings in this nomination, Elyria High School Washington Building and Hamilton School, have

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	AUG 13 1979
DATE ENTERED	AUG 13 1979

Historic Resources of Elyria, Lorain County, Ohio

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

histories that relate to education, particularly in the case of the Washington Building, which occupies the site of the town's first Union School and is the home of the first high school established west of the Allegheny Mountains. The Old City Hall has historical connections to town government, since it served as the center of Elyria government for nearly 110 years. The church buildings included in this nomination are primarily notable for their architecture, but have religious significance, such as St. Mary's, which is the home of the first Catholic parish in Lorain County. The Civil War monument is significant as an example of late nineteenth century sculpture.

Preservation has had a mixed impact on downtown Elyria. Many important historic buildings have been demolished within the past several years. These include the Capitol Theater, a Spanish Renaissance building dating from 1918; the Richardsonian Romanesque Greystone Hotel, Elyria's most elaborate hotel and social center; and the Old Beebe House, built in 1847. A few are in the process of restoration or are being considered for rehabilitation. Many fine older homes gave way to strip commercial development. Some are now being rehabilitated. However, because of the failure of past urban renewal programs to generate new construction in Elyria and because of potential tax benefits for rehabilitation, Elyria's older commercial structures are beginning to be recycled for commercial use once again.

The nomination of historic resources for Elyria was prepared as a list of individual, separate properties rather than a continuous district to avoid the intrusions, demolitions and alterations which have occurred in the downtown and older residential areas of the city. While certain areas of the town have historic character, there is not the continuous clustering of historic buildings that would justify establishing a district.

This survey was conducted by the Lorain County Regional Planning Commission under contract with the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. This was part of a larger survey of the entire county which was oriented toward identifying all properties in the county significant for reasons of history or architecture and which met the National Register criteria. The primary staffing for the survey was the preparer of this form.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Hall, Mrs. Mary Beebe. Reminiscences of Elyria, Ohio. Elyria, Ohio: The Lorain County Historical Society, 1900.
2. Lorain County Regional Planning Commission "Preserving Our Past". Elyria, Ohio: 1977.
3. Thomas, James B. Down Through the Years in Elyria. Oberlin, Ohio: The Oberlin Printing Co., 1967.
4. Webber, A.R. A History of Elyria and Her People. Elyria, Ohio: 1930

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY see individual O.H.I. forms

UTM REFERENCES

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

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated properties all lie within the corporate limits of the city of Elyria. The great majority of the properties lie within the central business district of the city, which is bounded by the east and west branches of the Black River, the Conrail line and Fourth Street. Three properties lie directly north of the downtown area along Washington Avenue, five are located south of the downtown, and a single structure, the Patrick Carlin House, is located in a semi-rural area north of town.

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

August 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

[Signature]

4/23/79

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Carol Shull
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 8-13-79
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST *William V. Brennan*
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 8-13-79