

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0669431

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 22 1978
DATE ENTERED NOV 15 1978

**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

Oberlin College ~~Historic Resources~~ (partial inventory: history, architecture)

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

unreg. path along Professor, Main, & College Sts.

see continuation sheet

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Oberlin

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

13th Donald Pease

STATE

Ohio

VICINITY OF

CODE 39

COUNTY

Lorain

CODE

093

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

Multiple Resources

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Oberlin College Board of Trustees, First Church in Oberlin Trustees, Mr. and Mrs. Warren Taylor

STREET & NUMBER

Oberlin College, Main and Lorain, 227 South Professor Street

CITY, TOWN

Oberlin

VICINITY OF

STATE

Ohio

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, Oberlin College National Historic Landmark

DATE

1975-76, 1966

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Lorain County Regional Planning Commission

CITY, TOWN

Elyria,

STATE

Ohio

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Oberlin College campus covers a large area that centers around Tappan Square, the major open space in Oberlin. Located in the center of town and bounded by four major streets, Tappan Square is a park-like space of about ten acres that is laid out with brick walks that bisect each side of the square, which contains a number of large old trees. Two trees worthy of note are a large elm that stands beside the north-south center walk about one-fourth of the way north of West College Street and a large oak that stands near the center of the southeast quadrant. The only structure within the square is the Memorial Arch²⁵, built in 1903 from plans by J. L. Silsbee of Chicago.

The major part of the college campus lies west of Tappan Square, but prominent college buildings face all four sides of it. Beginning at the northwest corner and moving clockwise is Carnegie Library²⁸, a fine Richardsonian Romanesque building that features rusticated sandstone and a red tile roof on the exterior and contains a magnificent main reading room on its second floor. Next is Bosworth Hall²⁴ and Asia House, a quadrangle completed in 1931 from designs by Cass Gilbert. Until 1966 it was used as the Theological seminary. The buildings contains Fairchild Chapel, a beautiful Medieval-like Romanesque space, cloisters, two large lounges with beamed ceilings and enormous feudal-like fireplaces, and a rustic cafeteria. This complex has a very somber, theatrical religious character. Next is First Church²², a unique Greek Revival building with an interior space that resembles a theater-in-the-round, containing balconies on all four sides. When constructed in 1842, it was claimed that this building had the largest meeting space west of the Allegheny Mountains. This is a testimony to the abilities of its most prominent pastor, the Reverend Charles Grandison Finney, a nationally famous orator and revivalist minister. Next is the Allen Art Museum²⁶, built in 1917. This beautiful Renaissance structure is considered by many to be Cass Gilbert's Oberlin masterpiece. It is ornamented in red sandstone, limestone, terracotta, wood and statuary. Inside, the building features a three story high enclosed central court with a brick floor and with art galleries on either side. Behind the central portion, cloisters enclose a very picturesque open plaza with a fountain and rose garden which leads to classroom spaces behind. Immediately to the south, Robert Venturi's new addition (dedicated 1977) adjoins this building. While it is very contemporary and somewhat controversial in design, the new structure forms an interesting counterpoint to Gilbert's classic building. Commercial buildings and newer structures face the remainder of the eastern and all of the southern side of the square. On the west side of the square is the King-Rice complex¹¹, which is a modern precast concrete building that joins an older Queen Anne style masonry building that has been modernized by the removal of its towers and gable roof. The newer building vaguely recalls the once-popular "collegiate gothic" style in its sun screens, but does not harmonize with the older building or any of the

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other older college buildings. Next is Peters Hall,^{13.} a romantic, picturesque, asym-
metrically massed structure that is constructed from large blocks of rock-faced sand-
stone, with arched openings, a complex, steeply pitched gable roof that is punctured
by tall chimneys, skylights and two large towers. The front tower is on axis with the
main tower and is very picturesque in its asymmetry. It contains a spiral stone stair-
way in the southeast corner. Inside, classrooms face onto a large open light court
that has a beautiful main stairway and large massive fireplace. The room is trimmed in
light oak woodwork.

Next to Peters Hall is the Cox Administration Building.^{14.} It was designed in 1915 by
Cass Gilbert. This Romanesque structure features concentrated ornament around the
main entrance, which seems to be inspired by the work of Louis Sullivan. Above the main
entrance is a second floor blind arcade. The interior of this building is richly
ornamented with oak panelling and plaster ornament. Two murals by the noted artist
Kenyon Cox are in the entrance hall. Next is Finney Memorial Chapel,^{15.} built in 1908,
the first Oberlin College building designed by Cass Gilbert. This religious building
was inspired by the early Romanesque cathedrals of southern France, except that the
nave has been greatly widened to form a broad unified interior, while the side aisles
and transepts have been reduced in size. Exterior ornament was simplified and the top
stage of the bell tower was omitted because of budget limitations. The building is,
nevertheless, a grand structure that has a large interior space seating over 1500
people in the nave and on balconies on three sides. Massive exposed trusses support
the gable roof.

Next is the Severance Laboratory,^{16.} designed in 1900 by Howard Van Doren Shaw of Chicago.
The main portion of this sandstone building is positioned at a forty five degree angle
to two wings which are at right angles to one another. The main portion faces Tappan
Square and is capped by a broad low tower. The interior of the building has been
modernized. North of Severance is the Orville and Wilbur Wright Laboratory of Physics.^{17.}
It was built as the first phase of what was to have been a very impressive scientific
quadrangle. The red brick finish at the southern and extreme western ends of this
building show where other sections would have connected. This building is the final
example (1943) of the Romanesque Revival that was begun in Oberlin by Patton and Miller
with the old Warner Gymnasium (1900).^{18.}

Other buildings of note within the district include Wilder Hall,^{19.} built in 1909 and
designed by J.L. Silsbee for use as a men's dormitory. Next to Wilder is Bailey House,^{20.}
a small brick cottage owned by the college and used for apartments. Talcott Hall^{21.} and
Baldwin Cottage^{22.} are two picturesque dormitories that lie south of Tappan Square. They

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were designed by Weary and Kramer of Akron in 1886. Both have towers, porches, fireplaces and grand stairways. The Monroe-Bosworth House² is a Greek Revival building of fine proportions and in very good restoration that is located on South Professor Street. The President's House^{2,4} on Forest Street, was built in 1917 from designs by Professor Clarence Ward, then chairman of the Art Department. It is an interesting and unusual conglomeration of Georgian and Greek Revival forms.

About the intersection of South Professor and Morgan Streets are several older buildings. Allencroft House², Shurtleff Cottage⁵ and Thurston House⁶ are now college dormitories, but were once residences that were built in the late nineteenth century. Johnson House² is a magnificent Queen Anne building that was built as a residence by a wealthy banker. Dascomb Cottage³, a beautiful Gothic Revival house, was moved across the street to provide a hilltop site for Johnson House. Old Barrows⁴ was a former residence that is now a dormitory. It features an impressive front portico with four large Ionic columns.

Along East College Street are three structures of significance to Oberlin College. Mallory House^{2,8} is now a dormitory and has been much altered since its construction over one hundred forty years ago. Hall House⁷ was once a very impressive Italianate house that has had its ornament stripped away and an incongruous front porch added. Tank Hall¹⁰ was built as a dormitory in 1897 and is an excellent example of Queen Anne architecture.

With two exceptions these buildings are owned by Oberlin College and are used as academic buildings, dormitories or faculty residences. First Church is privately owned, but has had an intimate connection with the college from its inception. During its early years, this building served as a meeting hall for college events. Later, its pulpit continued to be largely filled by college professors and heavily attended by students of the college. First Church serves as a center for certain college-related events, as well as a church that serves the community and the town of Oberlin. The James Dascomb House is privately owned. Its connection with the college lies in its early use as the home of one of the College's early professors. James Dascomb, who taught sciences, built this house in 1853. The Dascomb House is now part of an historic grouping of college-related residences.

Oberlin College was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1965. After the passage of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, boundaries were established for this district, which make it consist of only Tappan Square, an open park-like space in the center of the campus, bounded by four city streets. In 1974, the First Church in Oberlin was placed in the National Register of Historic Places. This nomination includes these two listings, plus the major college buildings that are historic and college-owned residences that are of historical and architectural interest.

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The nomination is the result of a contract between the Lorain County Regional Planning Commission and the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. It was designed to identify the historic and architectural resources of the county and nominate those most significant to the National Register. The work is being completed by a historic preservation planner hired by the planning commission for that purpose. A complete historic inventory was done for the City of Oberlin locating all historically and architecturally significant properties. The historic resources of Oberlin College were chosen from this body of information. The spatial distribution tends to break up the visual cohesiveness of the resources preventing the use of a district nomination.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" 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 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 **1842-1943** BUILDER/ARCHITECT **various**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Oberlin College campus possesses an abundance of valuable historic resources, ranging from the architecture of its buildings to the archeological remains of several early buildings, which lie in Tappan Square. As one of this country's foremost schools for many years, Oberlin College has been the scene of important historical events. Since Oberlin College was in Ohio for many years during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it possesses historic buildings on a scale and magnitude that is difficult to find elsewhere. And since Oberlin has not grown dramatically in recent years, its historic buildings remain in a context that is largely undisturbed.

Oberlin College was founded in 1833 through the efforts of the Reverend John Jay Shipherd and Philo P. Stewart, who secured the donation and sale of a large tract of wilderness in Lorain County from owners in the East. The school opened on December 3, 1833 with only thirty students and two instructors. Oberlin was able to attract a number of abolitionist students and a faculty member from the Lane Seminary in Cincinnati two years later by adoption by the trustees of a set of resolutions that gave the college a radically abolitionist posture and allowed the admission of blacks along with whites into the college curriculum. Oberlin College was the first school of higher education in the nation to publicly adopt a policy regarding the admission of blacks. These radical policies enabled Oberlin College to attract Asa Mahan and Charles G. Finney in 1835. These two nationally known educators and ministers helped to mold Oberlin's radical image that it developed nationally in the period before the Civil War. In 1858, Oberlin was the scene of national attention as people from Oberlin forcibly freed an escaped slave from his captors in the Oberlin-Wellington Slave Rescue. A number of Oberlin's most prominent citizens were sentenced to jail under the terms of the detested Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. Later that year, John Brown recruited two Oberlin blacks for his raid on Harper's Ferry, Virginia. The hanging of John Brown in December 1859 was declared a day of mourning in Oberlin, where he had many friends and supporters.

The Union Cause was vigorously supported in Oberlin and a company of volunteers was formed under Giles W. Shurtleff. During the nineteenth century, Oberlin prospered. Large, comfortable modern buildings such as Peters Hall took the place of the early, more primitive structures, as the campus was almost entirely rebuilt. Oberlin College grew in size to become the largest institution of higher education in Ohio. The College library, under the direction of Azariah Smith Root, grew from a mediocre collection to one of the finest in the state. The Conservatory of Music was founded in 1865. And in 1884-92, one of the largest buildings in the world devoted to the instruction of music was erected. Oberlin Missionaries

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went all over the world. In 1900, a group of thirteen missionaries and five children were massacred in an uprising of Chinese peasants known as the Boxer Rebellion. Three years later the Memorial Arch in Tappan Square was built by a missionary board to memorialize the dead missionaries, all but four of whom were from Oberlin College.

Through the beneficence of Charles M. Hall, the millionaire who discovered an inexpensive way of manufacturing aluminum while studying at Oberlin, and under the progressive leader of President Henry Churchill King, Oberlin College continued to progress early in the twentieth century. Cass Gilbert, a nationally prominent architect, was hired as the campus planner. Although his overall plan for Oberlin College was not implemented, Gilbert designed five major college buildings. Under the terms of Hall's will, the college cleared Tappan Square of all buildings and is forbidden to use this space for any buildings. One of the first college or university connected art museums was built in 1917, it remains today as one of the three finest college or university art museums in the United States.

As at other schools, the 1950's and 60's was a period which saw some of the college's fine older buildings being replaced by newer structures. The Conservatory was demolished in 1964 to make way for the King-Rice complex. Many old houses made way for large new dormitories. Protest from the college community in 1971 saved Peters Hall and Warner Center from demolition to provide a plaza for the new college library. The 1970's has been a period of financial retrenchment for the college and no new buildings are planned. An appreciation for Oberlin's rich resource of historic buildings has developed and the official policy has changed from demolition and replacement of older buildings to maintenance and rehabilitation, where funds permit, of college buildings.

This nomination is an outgrowth of a complete historic inventory of the City of Oberlin completed by the Lorain County Regional Planning Commission. Those significant properties which are utilized by Oberlin College for academic or residential purposes, and those significant properties historically tied to the College were selected for nomination to the National Register as best exemplifying the heritage of this important 19th and 20th century educational institution. Currently the Tappan Square only is listed as a National Historic Landmark.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Fairchild, James H., Oberlin: The Colony and the College, Oberlin, Ohio, 1883.
 Fletcher, Robert S., A History of Oberlin College From its Founding Through the Civil War, Oberlin, O. 1943
 Williams Brothers, History of Lorain County, Ohio, Philadelphia, 1879.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 160

UTM REFERENCES for Tappan Square - See map for UTM

A	1,7	3,9,7	8,4,0	4,5	7,1	9,0,0	B	1,7	3,9,8	0,6,0	4,5	7,1	9,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			
C	1,7	3,9,7	8,4,0	4,5	7,1	6,4,0	D	1,7	3,9,8	0,6,0	4,5	7,1	6,4,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

This district is to include only those properties mentioned and that have State inventory forms attached to this nomination. The general boundaries of the district are outlined on the attached map. In addition to buildings, Tappan Square in its entirety, is part of this district.

District is wrong word => resource

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

October 1977

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]

TITLE

SHPO

DATE

5/11/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Signature]
William LeBeach

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4/15/78

DATE

Nov 7, 1978