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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 MORRILL HALL, CORNELL UNIVERSITY

AND/OR COMMON
 Morrill Hall

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
 Cornell University

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION
 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN
 Ithaca

— VICINITY OF 27

STATE
 New York

CODE
 36

COUNTY
 Tompkins

CODE
 109

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<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 Cornell University, James Yarnell, Chief of Planning

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
 Ithaca

— VICINITY OF

STATE
 New York

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
 REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Tompkins County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
 Ithaca

STATE
 New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
 None

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
 SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Morrill Hall stands at the southwest corner of the original campus quadrangle and was first known as Building No. 1, or South University Building. The University named it after Justin S. Morrill, the author of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, in 1883.

The building is a solid structure that looks as if it will endure for all time. Begun in 1866 and completed in 1868, Morrill Hall is a four-story building that is made of bluestone that was quarried on the campus. It was designed by Henry W. Wilcox, of Buffalo, and cost \$70,111.24. The central section of the building is slightly recessed, which breaks what would have been a very monotonous front. The main doorway has a companion in the middle of either wing. The first three floors have a large number of tall, arched windows, each with a keystone at the top. A mansard covers the top of the building, and dormer windows project from the roof. Two massive stone chimneys rise from either side of the central section. Just beneath the roof line is a bold and heavy cornice.

The interior of the building, unlike the exterior, has been changed since 1868, but its basic structure has not been altered. Originally, the structure served as a combination dormitory, classroom, and administration building. Today, Morrill Hall is used by the Department of Modern Languages and the Department of Psychology.

Despite an early Cornell professor's statement that the building, plus some other early structures, could only be improved by dynamiting them, Morrill Hall exemplifies that thought that Cornell and White created an institution that was to be as enduring as that solid stone edifice.

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 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 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 1866-68

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Henry Wilcox

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The opening of Cornell University in 1868 marked a revolution in American higher education. The "Cornell Idea," aimed at preparing students for useful careers in the complex post-Civil War society, offered training in the various fields of knowledge on the basis of equality among the disciplines. Andrew D. White, the first president of Cornell, operated on the principles that subjects requiring the same amount of study and effort should be recognized as peers; that in the liberal arts such courses as history, political science, and modern literature should rank with Latin, Greek, and Mathematics; and that undergraduates should be able to elect courses.

Morrill Hall, the original university building, was begun in 1866 and completed in 1868. It is a four-story building of bluestone (quarried on the campus), with a mansard roof and dormer windows. The central section of the building is slightly recessed, preventing what would otherwise have been a monotonous facade. Two massive stone chimneys rise from each side of the central section. Inside, the building has been completely altered since 1868. Originally serving as a combination dormitory, classroom, and administration building, it now houses the departments of Modern Languages and Psychology.

HISTORY

Cornell University owes its existence to the intellectual and financial generosity of Ezra Cornell. A self-made and wealthy man by 1862, Cornell knew how difficult it was for poor boys to obtain a good education. In particular, he realized that training even in agriculture and the trades was largely beyond the reach of poorer youths. When the Morrill Act of 1862 was passed, Cornell instantly comprehended that the purpose of the land-grant act coincided with his own thoughts. Moreover, the act inspired him to contemplate practical means of bettering educational opportunity.

About two years later, Cornell met and became a friend of Andrew D. White. Both men held seats in the New York Senate, White being the chairman of the committee on education, Cornell the chairman of the committee on agriculture. White was a scholar and deeply interested in education. When he learned of Cornell's plan to give \$500,000 towards founding a university if the State would grant the institution New York's share of Federal lands stemming from the Morrill Act of 1862, he vigorously supported the scheme. After much debate, the legislature adopted Cornell's largess, chartered Cornell University in 1865, and conferred on it the State's land grant.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Bishop, Morris. A History of Cornell. Ithaca: New York, 1962.
 Brubacher, John S. and Willis Rudy. Higher Education in Transition. New York, 1958.
 Dorf, Philip. The Builder, A Biography of Ezra Cornell. New York, 1952.
 Nevins, Allan. The State University and Democracy. Urbana, Illinois, 1962.
 Rogers, Walter P. Andrew D. White and the Modern University. Ithaca, New York, 1942.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre.

UTM REFERENCES

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

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The National Historic Landmark boundaries are coterminus with the physical boundaries of Morrill Hall, which measures approximately 180' from north to south and 70' from east to west.

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

S. Sydney Bradford, Staff Historian; Boundary information added by Richard Greenwood

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

1/22/76

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington, D.C.

STATE

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

9/28/83

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC
LANDMARKS)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Cornell University

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Because of his close association with Cornell, White became president of the new university and largely devised its academic point-of-view. White's educational philosophy rested on the idea that democracy depended upon educated citizens. Although more learned than Cornell, both he and the founder basically agreed that education should benefit as many citizens as possible, and thus the Nation in the greatest possible degree. Cornell had originally conceived of a school to train tradesman, but White gradually converted him to the idea of a university to offer as broad an education as possible for the "captains in the army of industry."

The essence of White's hopes for Cornell University still invigorates the plan of organization that he presented to the Board of Trustees on October 21, 1866. He asserted in the report that subjects requiring the same amount of study and effort should be recognized as peers; that in the liberal arts such courses as history, political science, and modern literature should rank with Latin, Greek, and mathematics; and that undergraduates should be able to elect courses. These principles foreshadowed a new day in college education, stressing as they did an equality in courses and personal development.

From the day White delivered his inaugural address in 1868, he devoted himself to the advancement of the University. A record initial group of 412 students began the first academic year, White having rejected 50 applicants. There were 17 resident professors and 16 non-resident scholars to instruct the students. Three years later, in 1871, a freshman class of over 250 began at Cornell, the largest freshman class in the history of American education. Furthermore, the University's total enrollment surpassed that of any other three colleges in New York.

In administering Cornell, White adhered to his basic concepts. He sought the best teachers. Many stimulating professors thus taught at Cornell, such as the linguistic genius, Daniel Willard Fiske, who authored Chess In Iceland and An Egyptian Alphabet for the Egyptian People; and Isaac Roberts, who was appointed to the Department of Agriculture in 1874 and has been called the "Father of Agricultural Science in America." An advocate of non-sectarianism, White opposed any religious orientation of the University. That position aroused the enmity of some outside the institution, and his popularity was not bolstered when some students formed the Cornell Young Men's Heathen Association. A believer in female education, White supported the introduction of co-education at Cornell. In 1886, the University granted the world's first doctorate in electrical engineering.

Besides offering its students a broad spectrum of courses, Cornell attempted to cooperate with the public schools. Outstanding in this respect was its work in promoting nature study. Through teachers lecturing in schools and the distribution of helpful leaflets, the university created an effective

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Cornell University,
CONTINUATION SHEET Morrill Hall ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

relationship between itself and the farming population. Liberty Hyde Bailey's essay, The Nature Study Idea (1903), exemplified this aspect of the University's work.

Both White and Cornell have long since died. Nevertheless, the institution they created played a major role in the democratization of American college education. And the impact of that accomplishment remains with us today.