

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property Ransom Water Tower
historic name _____
other names/site number _____

2. Location
street & number Plumb Street between Cartier and Columbus not for publication
city, town Ransom vicinity
state Illinois code IL county La Salle code 099 zip code 60610

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official: [Signature] Date: 9-25-90
Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Waterworks

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Waterworks

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: "Barrel" type late 19th
century brick water tower
with wood tank

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Metal

other Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

On Plumb Street between Cartier and Columbus Streets on the berm is the site of the Ransom Water Tower. A forty (40) foot brick tower supports a twenty-eight (28) foot wooden tank. The tower is a round, "barrel" type structure and has a diameter of twenty-nine feet, four inches (29' x 4") at the bottom and tapers to approximately twenty-four (24) feet in diameter at the top.

Entry is from an arched wood door with a brick lintel on the south side of the structure, three feet by seven feet in size. (3x7) Also on the south side, twenty-eight (28) feet from the base, is a recessed wood door with brick lintel, seven feet by thirty inches (7' x 30") which allowed entry to the catwalk. The north side has two small arched windows with brick lintel, five feet by twenty-two inches (5' x 22") which are twelve (12) feet and thirty (30) feet, respectively, from the base. On the east side there is one window, three (3) feet from the ground which measures five feet by twenty-two inches (5' x 22") and on the west side there is one window twenty-two (22) feet from the ground which measures five feet by twenty-two inches (5' x 22") as well.

Inside the tower is the six inch (6") intake pipe that kept the tower filled with water pumped from three (3) wells. The walls are twenty-one (21") inches thick. Inside there is also a wooden stairway from the ground up to the catwalk door.

A redwood catwalk surrounded the base of the wood tank, but this was removed in 1960. Also in 1960, the metal hand rail on the catwalk was removed. The tower originally had a shingle roof which rotted in the early 1950's and was replaced with a cone-shaped metal roof.

 See continuation sheet

3. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance
1896-1940

Significant Dates
1896

Community Planning and
Development

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Ransom Water Tower meets Criterion A for its important role in the growth and development of the community. The period of significance is from 1896 to 1940. The Water Tower is located on the highest point in what was the center of the village in 1896, approximately one-eighth of a mile from Route 170. It has been the sole supply of water in Ransom (except for a few private wells that supplied drinking water) for all the commercial, business and residential buildings from its dedication in 1896 until July 19, 1990. The water tower attracted settlers, developed a business district and has continuously supplied water to Ransom for almost one hundred years.

In the early 1870's, speculators from Kankakee (Illinois) came to a small settlement in La Salle County (Illinois) with plans for a railroad and promises of wealth for those farmers willing to sell their land. The supervisor of this settlement, Nathaniel McIntyre, not only refused the Kankakee offer, but persuaded the Chicago, Pekin and Southwestern Railroad to build new tracks through Allen Township (the site of the settlement) by offering free access through school land. Enraged at losing their chance at becoming millionaires, the men of Allen Township formed a posse, armed themselves and forced Mr. McIntyre into hiding in the hatloft of his barn. Then word came through to the people that the speculators were con men and their railroad a hoax. Mr. McIntyre came down from his barn and the Chicago, Pekin, and Southwestern Railroad (which became the Santa Fe in 1888) came through. No record of the gratitude of Nathaniel McIntyre's neighbors has survived, but for one hundred years, until the advent of Amtrak, the Santa Fe trains would make an unscheduled stop for any passenger holding a ticket to what would be the only town in Allen Township, the village that would be called Ransom.

A community was planned parallel to the railroad. The first lots were sold at auction in 1876 for what was to be named "Allentown." Most of the early residents were German immigrants and veterans of the Civil War. These veterans gave the new town a new name--Ransom--in honor of the 28-year-old Brigadier General who led the 104th Infantry (La Salle County, Illinois) of the Union Army.

From a speech given by Ethel Shackleton McCann, Allen Township historian and daughter of Ransom's first merchant, at the dedication of Ransom Grade School, 1952.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2 Ransom Water Tower

Ransom was indeed a planned community. Ads were placed in the old Streator (Illinois) Monitor for storekeepers, tradesmen and craftsmen as early as January, 1876. The village was incorporated unanimously in 1885. Wooden planks made sidewalks and a small, wood water tower was built at the end of a fledgling business district. The first businesses were a hotel, a saloon, a doctor, a carpenter, a pharmacist, a grocery store, a blacksmith, a grain office and a cash exchange. In 1892 a fire wiped out the east side of the business district. Some businesses rebuilt, others left. This had a disastrous affect on the town's growth and plans for the future, so plans were made for a public water works system and central water tower. The first meetings were held in the winter of 1893-94 and there was much controversy about the size of the proposed tower. Many felt that for a town of 200 inhabitants, a 15,000-20,000 gallon capacity tank would be sufficient, but Mayor Gus Richards and Councilman McMichael (owner of Ransom Brick and Tile Company) prevailed. They had big plans for Ransom and their tower. They dug three wells and built a tower in 1896 to hold 45,000-50,000 gallons of water. They also built a hand-laid brick sidewalk from the downtown business district to the base of the tower on the hill so all Ransom residents could walk to admire their proudest achievement.

A lantern was hung from the tower's catwalk and the village constable lit it every night, making it a beacon in the midst of the miles and miles of cornfields. Since Ransom's trees were young when the tower was built, it was the highest and most visible sight for miles around.

Ransom flourished after the tower was built. The first phone system began on September 7, 1903. AT and T opened a telegraph office on May 17, 1905 and an extensive sidewalk system was built between 1905 and 1910 by then-Mayor Conard, who also supplied flower planters in front of every house in town and made it possible for Ransom residents to walk to any place in town and a half-mile outside of town to the public cemetery on a cement sidewalk. A dozen street lamps from the Illinois Valley Gas and Electric Company lit Ransom for the first time on May 7, 1910 and gradually went into every home.

Thanks to the abundant water supply, Ransom continued to prosper and grow. Another small metal water tank was built for the railroad and a depot was erected. A post office was built, a grain elevator, large cattle pens, a railway express office, a coal and lumber yard, four churches, an undertaker, a bakery and candy store, a drug store, an appliance store, a paint and wallpaper shop, a department/hardware store, a bank, a newspaper, a town hall, two saloons, a restaurant, a bowling alley, three grocery stores, a boot and harness repair shop, two car dealerships, two gas stations as well as a veterinarian, two physicians and a dentist. There was also a community hall for dances, plays and meetings and a two-story grade and high school.

Ransom continued to grow, peaking at the population of almost 600 in the years before World War II. The years after the war, with the deaths of these early settlers and no one willing to take their places and the advent of good highways and cars "in every garage" started Ransom's slow decline.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Essington, Thurlow G., A Charter and Revised Ordinance of The Village of Ransom. 1916.
Streator Times-Press. Streator, Illinois. July 30, 1975.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property less than one

UTM References

A

1	6
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3	6	1	6	3	0
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4	5	5	7	2	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The south side of Plumb Street between Cartier and Columbus Streets. The tower sits on the village right-of-way between lots 1 and 8. The boundary line follows a line ten (10) feet away from the exterior wall of the tower.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the square footage that has historically been associated with the water tower.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marianne Cahill

organization _____ date August 1, 1990

street & number 1216 North Dearborn Parkway telephone 312 649-0991

city or town Chicago state Illinois zip code 60610

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places. For further information call 202/743-9542.

WEEKLY LIST OF LISTED PROPERTIES
10/29/90 THROUGH 11/02/90

NOV 09 1990

KEY: Property Name, Multiple Name, Address/Boundary, City,
Vicinity, Certification Date, Reference Number, NHL status

ALASKA

Bethel Borough-Census Area
First Mission House
231 Third Ave.
Bethel 10/30/90 90001551

ILLINOIS

Cook County
Oak Lawn School
8526 S. Cook Ave.
Oak Lawn 11/02/90 90001725

Kendall County
Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
304 S. Center Ave.
Piano 11/02/90 90001724

La Salle County
Ransom Water Tower
Plumb St. between Cantler & Columbus
Panson 11/02/90 90001723

Lee County
Whitney, Col. Nathan, House
1620 Whitney Rd.
Franklin Grove vicinity 11/02/90 90001726

Warren County
Parson Block Building
88 & 90 Public Square
Monmouth 11/02/90 90001727

LOUISIANA

Lincoln Parish
Ruston State Bank
107 N. Trenton St.
Ruston 11/02/90 90001730

TENNESSEE

Davidson County
Dozier Farm
8451 River Rd. Pike
Nashville vicinity 11/01/90 90001580

TEXAS

Lubbock County
Tubbs--Carlisle House
602 Fulton Ave.
Lubbock 11/02/90 90001719

WASHINGTON

Yakima County
Buckeye Ranch House
10881 WR 410
Naches vicinity 11/02/90 90001735

Multiple Resource Areas are identified by MRA
Multiple Property Submissions are identified by MPS
Thematic Resources are identified by TR
NHL designates a National Historic Landmark

The following actions have been taken on the following properties:

KEY: Property Name, Multiple Name, Address/Boundary, City,
Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL status, Requested Action, Decision Date

KENTUCKY

Jefferson County
Kennedy--Hunsinger Farm
Jefferson County NRR
4354 Taylorsville Rd.
Jefferson town vicinity 83002685
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION 11/01/90

LOUISIANA

Richland Parish
Rhymes, Monnie Roark, Memorial Library
206 S. Louisa St.
Rayville 11/02/90 90001736

MARYLAND

Sonerset County
Rock Creek Methodist Episcopal Church
Deal Island Rd. NE of Scotts Cove
Chance 11/02/90 90001718
St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church and Joshua Thomas Chap
el
Deal Island Rd. N of Jct. with Tangler Rd.
Deal Island 11/01/90 90001650
St. Peter's Methodist Episcopal Church
Jct. of Old Crisfield--Marion Rd. & Heart's Ease Rd.
Hopewell vicinity 11/02/90 90001721

MASSACHUSETTS

Worcester County
First Methodist Church
75 Walnut St.
Clinton 11/02/90 90001720

MICHIGAN

Ingham County
St. Mary Cathedral
229 Seymour St.
Lansing 11/02/90 90001716

NEW JERSEY

Burlington County
Wills, Jacob, House
Evesham Township MPS
Brick Rd., W of Evans Rd.
Marlton 11/01/90 89002296

OREGON

Hood River County
Shaw--Dumble House
318 Ninth St.
Hood River 10/30/90 90001601

The following properties were also entered in the National Register but were excluded from a previous notice:

KEY: Property Name, Multiple Name, Address/Boundary, City,
Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL status

MINNESOTA

Cass County
Battle Point (21CR12)
6 mi. W of Co. Hwy. 8 on Leech Lake, Chippewa NF
Cass Lake vicinity 8/17/90 90001144

MISSOURI

Shannon County
Merns Ferry Archeological District
Address Restricted
Rector vicinity 10/25/90 90001541

NEW MEXICO

Lincoln County
Mesa Ranger Station Site
Lincoln Phase Sites in the Sierra Blanca Region NPS
Address Restricted
Nogal vicinity 10/22/90 90001533
Nogal Mesa Kiva Site
Lincoln Phase Sites in the Sierra Blanca Region NPS
Address Restricted
Nogal vicinity 10/22/90 90001532
Nogal Mesa Site
Lincoln Phase Sites in the Sierra Blanca Region NPS
Address Restricted
Nogal vicinity 10/22/90 90001531

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston County
Lighthouse Point Shell Ring (28CH12)
Late Archaic--Early Woodland Period Shell Rings of South Carolina NPS
Address Restricted
Charleston vicinity 10/14/90 90001505