

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC UPPER ALTON HISTORIC DISTRICT

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

The former Shurtleff College and Western Military Academy campuses
and immediately adjacent residential areas

CITY, TOWN

Alton

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Illinois

VICINITY OF

CODE

COUNTY

Madison

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input 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 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 | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION | <input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input 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 Multiple - see accompanying list

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Madison County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Edwardsville

STATE

Illinois

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Illinois Historic Structures Survey, Madison County

DATE

October 1973

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Illinois Department of Conservation

CITY, TOWN

Springfield

STATE

Illinois

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT

DETERIORATED

GOOD

RUINS

FAIR

UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED

ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Upper Alton neighborhood of the City of Alton is located about two miles northeast of the latter's central business district on high land above the Mississippi River. Lying near the transition from river bluff to the south and high prairie to the north, the topography is still relatively varied, though not as marked by major features as is Lower Alton.

The Upper Alton Historic District lies near the eastern edge of the original town of Upper Alton and is confined to the former Shurtleff College and Western Military Academy campuses and immediately adjacent residential areas. Though individual structures and sites of historic interest are scattered throughout much of Upper Alton, only those areas dominated by the two educational institutions preserve an historic fabric, the rest having been subject to later residential filling in or considerable recent redevelopment. Visually, this change in character from the historic to the merely pleasant is sharp and clear on all sides.

Land use in the district is about equally divided between residential and educational, with the latter clearly prevalent in determining the district's character: the only purely residential street in the district is Evergreen Avenue, an interesting street of frame houses dating from ca. 1890-1910. In terms of structure utilization, a full third of those extant were originally and are presently used for educational purposes. Since these are generally of larger scale than the private residences, their role in establishing the district's character is patent.

With two large campuses, a number of larger homes set in spacious grounds, and a density of only 1.26 structures per acre, the general appearance of the district is decidedly park-like. Few streets run through the district -- of these few, only College has significant traffic volume -- and only two others, Leverett and Evergreen, have structures in close proximity to one another. In both cases, the relationships of scale, materials, and style are very strong and produce streetscapes of high quality.

Of 66 structures in the Upper Alton Historic District, excluding garages and other minor buildings, 31 have been evaluated as possessing special architectural and/or historical significance and an additional 8 were photographed by the Illinois Historic Structures Survey. The 24 background structures are of the same general period as those of significance and blend in well, despite the fact that most -- 14 -- are marred by inappropriate modern siding. There is but one intrusion in the district, a small semi-permanent classroom building near the northeast corner of Leverett and Annex.

The oldest structure in the district is Shurtleff College's Academic Hall (v.No.5 below) built in 1832 in a simplified Greek Revival vein. Late Greek Revival, with strong Italianate tendencies, is encountered (v.Nos.2, 6-7 below), as is mature Italianate (incl.No.4 below). Most residences in the district are Queen Anne and Classical Revival, or combine features of both, but there are also some respectable examples of early 20th century non-historicist styles and one very fine Georgian Revival (v.No.1 below). Most of the Shurtleff College buildings refer to a classical idiom, while those of the Western Military Academy are cast in crenelated Tudor Revival.

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

- PREHISTORIC
- 1400-1499
- 1500-1599
- 1600-1699
- 1700-1799
- 1800-1899
- 1900-

- ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
- ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC
- AGRICULTURE
- ARCHITECTURE
- ART
- COMMERCE
- COMMUNICATIONS

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

- COMMUNITY PLANNING
- CONSERVATION
- ECONOMICS
- EDUCATION
- ENGINEERING
- EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
- INDUSTRY
- INVENTION

- LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
- LAW
- LITERATURE
- MILITARY
- MUSIC
- PHILOSOPHY
- POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

- RELIGION
- SCIENCE
- SCULPTURE
- SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
- THEATER
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The primary significance of the Upper Alton Historic District lies in the former campus of Shurtleff College -- now a part of Southern Illinois University --, the direct successor of Illinois' first institution of higher learning, Rock Spring Seminary, founded in 1827 in St. Clair Co. Having moved to Upper Alton in 1831-2, the entire history of the institution since its relocation is extant in its buildings, beginning with the original Academic Hall down to the 1940 Administration Building by William B. Ittner. Beyond this important campus, the district also includes the homes of a number of men prominently associated with the school's development.

Though much of Upper Alton has lost its visual connection with the past, the immediate area of Shurtleff College -- and of the more recent Western Military Academy -- has been more fortunate. Architecturally, the number of truly outstanding individual structures may not be particularly great, but the total ensemble has undergone so few changes during the past several decades that it preserves the atmosphere of a late 19th Century college-town virtually inviolate. That this should exist within the context of a major metropolitan center -- that of St. Louis, Mo. -- is doubly remarkable.

HISTORY

Upper Alton's foundations are virtually contemporary with those of Lower Alton (Alton proper), the former having been laid out in 1816 or 1817 by Joseph Meacham and the latter in 1817 by Col. Rufus Easton. Despite later developments, early growth seems to have favored the higher location, about 34 families having located there within a very few years and that number having grown to about 70-80 families by 1821, the year of Upper Alton's incorporation as a village, while Lower Alton could claim only 32 in March of 1831. Conflicting title claims -- Meacham proved unable to fully pay for his land -- and general economic malaise, though, led to a precipitous decline and 1827 found only 7 families at the place.

But the 1830's put growth and prosperity on firmer footing for both Upper Alton and its rival on the river, the population of the former having recovered to ca. 200 by 1831. 1831 also marks the year of the signal event for Upper Alton's future: the decision to remove the Baptist Seminary then at Rock Spring in St. Clair Co. to the Alton area. On 4 June 1832, a land subscription agreement was entered into and a total of 362 acres "adjoining Alton" subsequently purchased. Further subscriptions were obtained from local citizens to erect a building -- the present Loomis Hall (No. 5 below, q.v. for additional history) -- and in December 1833 the Rock Spring Seminary re-opened as Alton Seminary and College. Following a \$10,000 gift from Dr. Benjamin Shurtleff in 1835, the name of the institution was again changed, this time to honor a generous benefactor.

Shurtleff College -- now the Alton Campus of Southern Illinois University -- has been a dominant feature of Upper Alton since its relocation there and has left an unmistakable mark on the historic district, most if not all of which is on land once owned by the college.

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CONTINUATION SHEET SIGNIFICANCE ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Though other developments undoubtedly occurred, for all practical purposes Shurtleff College was Upper Alton for most of the 19th Century. Beyond question, it was the favorable atmosphere created by the college as well as the housing needs of faculty that led to the development of the immediate area as one of fine and prominent residences.

One of the earliest of these great house's was the John Bostwick house (v.No.3 below), built in 1835 and later used for a variety of educational purposes. In 1879, Edward Wyman established the Wyman Institute for Boys in the house, an institution that by 1896 had developed into the Western Military Academy. Though destroyed by fire in 1903, the Academy was immediately rebuilt and remained a major factor in Upper Alton until it closed in 1971.

With no appreciable industrial base and a commercial district of only local importance, Upper Alton's development, apart from its educational institutions, was purely residential and generally uneventful. Its population was generously estimated at 1,500 in 1839 and was firmly set by the 1880 census at 1,535. Upper Alton was incorporated as a town in 1863 and was annexed to the City of Alton in 1911. Though much of Upper Alton bears the imprint of developments subsequent to annexation, the area of the historic district does not, remaining as a testimony to 80 years of independence.

SITES, STRUCTURES AND OBJECTS OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Numbers refer to the corresponding map. Where both historical and architectural significance attach, the greater is cited first.

1. N. ROGERS FARLEY, SR., HOUSE
3017 Leverett
Built in 1932; Leo Kleinschnittger, contractor

Mr. Farley was a merchant.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

2. ALVIN OLCOTT HOUSE
1800 Seminary
Built ca. 1859-63

Mr. Olcott, too, was a merchant.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

3. FENCE
East side of Seminary at Bostwick
Erected in 1835

The extant fence once enclosed the house and grounds of John Bostwick, modestly described in its day as the most magnificent residence west of the Alleghenies. Although the house burned in 1903, the fence stands as testimony to its excellence and to the skill of the iron-worker.

SIGNIFICANCE: URBAN FURNITURE

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CONTINUATION SHEET SIGNIFICANCE ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

4. ORLANDO L. CASTLE HOUSE
1831 Seminary
Built ca.1866

Orlando Castle joined the faculty of Shurtleff College in 1853 and remained associated with the school as Professor of Cratory, Rhetoric and Belles Lettres throughout a long and distinguished academic career.

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

5. SHURTLEFF COLLEGE: ACADEMIC HALL (NOW LOOKIS HALL, S.I.U. ALTON CAMPUS) - HABS ILL 25-21
South Side of College Avenue
Built in 1832

The Alton Campus of Southern Illinois University represents the direct descendant of the first institution of higher learning in the State of Illinois, Rock Spring Seminary, and as such holds a special place in the history of education in the state. In 1826, John M. Peck came west with the purpose of founding a school in Illinois, inspected a number of locations (including Upper Alton), and settled on Rock Spring in St. Clair Co. as his favored site. The school, "an institution for ministerial and general education in connection with the Baptist denomination," was opened November 1827 and continued in operation until May 1831. Forced to close at that time by the ill health of the principal, it was decided to remove to the more favorable location of Alton and, upon completion of Academic Hall, the institution re-opened in December 1833 as the Alton Seminary and College. Application for a state charter had been made and denied in 1828-9, but was eventually granted in 1831, not, however, without amendment to prohibit the teaching of theology. Because of this proviso, the first charter granted to a college in Illinois was neither acknowledged nor accepted and Alton College had to wait for official sanction until 1835, when it was chartered together with Illinois College in Jacksonville and McKendree College in Lebanon. A precarious undertaking throughout its early history, the school received a \$10,000 gift from Dr. Benjamin Shurtleff of Boston in 1835, prompting its rechristening as Shurtleff College. A prominent force in Illinois education for decades, Shurtleff closed in 1957 and is now, as has been indicated, a part of Southern Illinois University.

Other buildings of note on the campus include the Chapel (1883), Carnegie Library (1912), Women's Dormitory (before 1924), and Administration Building (1940; Wm.B. Ittner, architect).

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

6. WASHINGTON LEVERETT HOUSE
3006 Leverett
Built ca.1865

Washington Leverett joined the faculty of Shurtleff College in 1836 as Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. Serving also as president of the school in 1836-41 and 1847-9, he was extremely important in its early history.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

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CONTINUATION SHEET SIGNIFICANCE ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

7. JUSTUS BULKLEY HOUSE
3003 Leverett
Built ca. 1865

Justus Bulkley graduated from Shurtleff College in 1847 and was immediately elected principal of the school's preparatory department. Interrupting his association with Shurtleff on two occasions to assume pastorates in Jerseyville and Carrollton, he was successively Professor of Mathematics (1853-5), of Church History and Church Polity (1865 et seq.), and History (by 1889). Beside his distinguished service to the college, which included its presidency from 1870-2, Justus Bulkley was also prominent and influential in the affairs of the Baptist church.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

De Blois, Austen Kennedy, The Pioneer School, Chicago 1900.
 Voss, Viola W., Footprints and Echoes, Alton 1973.
History of Madison County, Illinois, W.R.Brink & Co., Edwardsville 1882.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 52

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |

| | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| B | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| D | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the intersection of College and Seminary, the boundary extends S on Seminary to the S line of the S.I.U. Alton Campus, E on this line to Annex, S on Annex to the S line of 1623 Annex, E on this line and the interior property lines S of Leverett to the E line of 3123 Leverett, N on this and the E line of 3122 Leverett to the interior property lines N of Leverett, W on these to Annex, N on Annex to College, E on College to the first property line E of Evergreen, N on this and the interior property lines E of Evergreen to the N line of 1845 Evergreen, W on this and the N line of 1852 Evergreen to the interior property lines

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Robert Wagner, National Register Assistant for Historic Districts

ORGANIZATION

Illinois Department of Conservation

DATE

July 19, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

9640 South Longwood Drive

TELEPHONE

312-779-2109

CITY OR TOWN

Chicago

STATE

Illinois

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

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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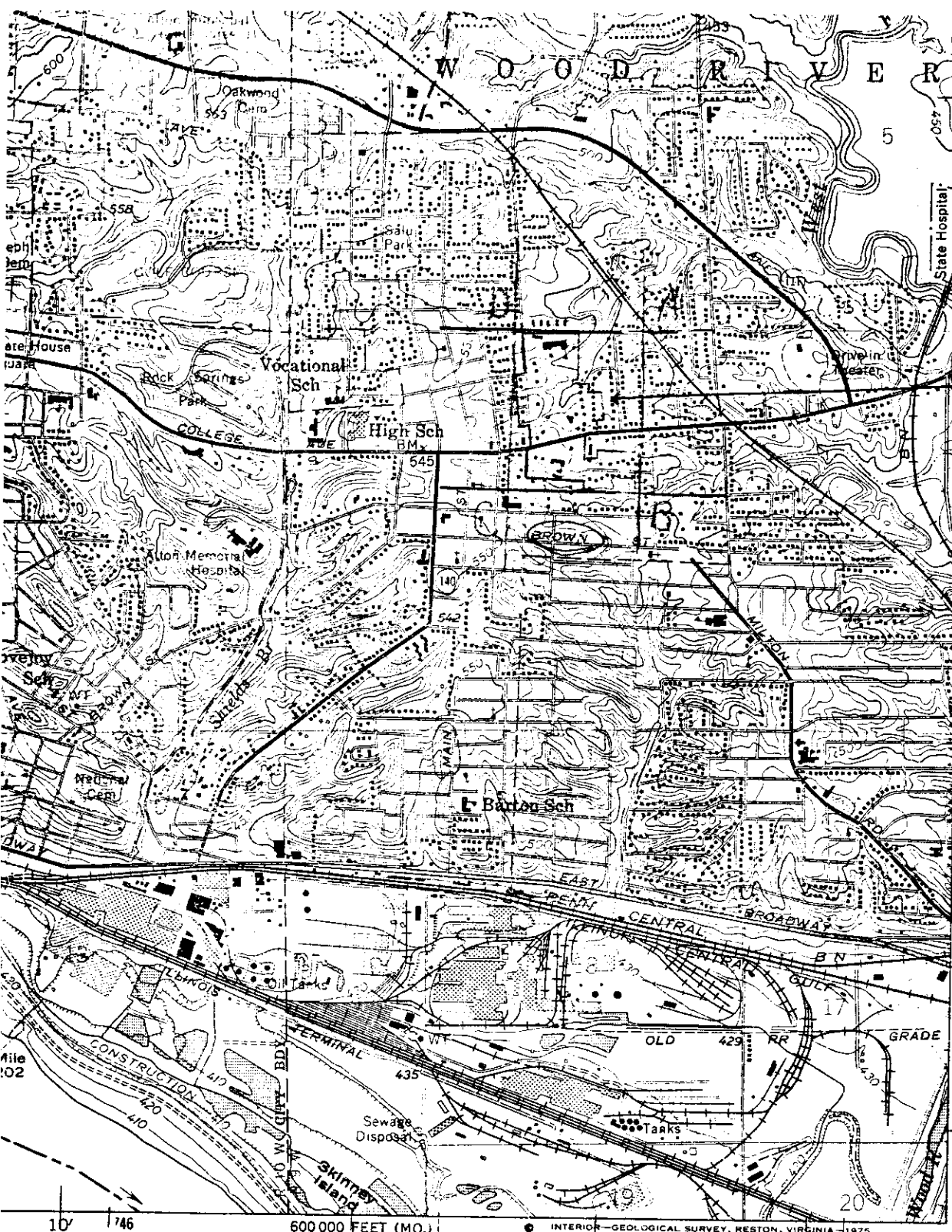
DATE ENTERED

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CONTINUATION SHEET GEOGRAPHICAL DATA ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

W of Evergreen, N on these and/or their extension to the line of Amelia, W on this to Seminary, S on Seminary to Judson, W on Judson to the interior property lines W of Seminary, S on these to the S line of 1732 Seminary, E on this to Seminary and then S on Seminary to the point of commencement.

N.B.: Unless otherwise specified, boundary segments along streets and alleys follow the midpoint of those streets and alleys.



UPPER ALTON HISTORIC DISTRICT

UTM REFERENCES:
 ZONE 15
 A: E - 748 030
 N - 4310 270
 B: E - 748 040
 N - 4309 550
 C: E - 747 500
 N - 4309 550
 D: E - 747 490
 N - 4310 200

140
 111
 BETHALTO, ILL. 146.13
 9 MI. TO INTERSTATE 270
 GRANITE CITY 14 MI.

10' 746 600 000 FEET (MO.) INTERIOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 1975 749 000m E 38°52'30" 90°07'30"

1 MILE



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from aerial photographs taken 1968 and 1974
 This information not field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Heavy-duty
- Medium-duty
- Light-duty
- Unimproved dirt
- U. S. Route
- State Route

ALTON, ILL. - MO.
 NW 1/4 ALTON 15' QUADRANGLE
 N 3852.5 - W 9007.5 / 7.5

1954
 PHOTOREVISED 1968 AND 1974
 AMS 2961 I NW - SERIES V863

(WOOD RIVER)
 2961 I SE

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE ILLINOIS

Date Entered MAY 2 1978

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Rockton Historic District | Rockton Winnebago County |
| Sycamore Historic District | Sycamore DeKalb County |
| Upper Alton Historic District | Alton Madison County |

Also Notified

Hon. Charles H. Percy
Hon. Adlai E. Stevenson
Hon. John B. Anderson
Hon. Tom J. Corcoran
Hon. Paul Findley

OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION
