

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

Graham - Ginestra House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

1115 S. Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Rockford

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

16th

STATE

Illinois

VICINITY OF

CODE

012

COUNTY

Winnebago

CODE

201

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<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 checked="" 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

Leonard (deceased) and Mary Ginestra - Therese R. Schmeltzer, Trustee

STREET & NUMBER

1115 S. Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Rockford

VICINITY OF

STATE

Illinois

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Winnebago County Courthouse - Recorder's Office

STREET & NUMBER

State and Church Streets

CITY, TOWN

Rockford

STATE

Illinois

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

The Illinois Historic Structures Survey: Interim Report

DATE

October 1974

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Illinois Department of Conservation

CITY, TOWN

Springfield

STATE

Illinois

# 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		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Graham-Ginestra House is a rectangular, two-story limestone structure (facing east) on S. Main Street in Rockford, near the Morgan Street intersection. The house has a slate gable roof (restored); its walls are constructed of one-foot Galena dolomite limestone blocks originally hewn and shaped on the site from six-foot slabs. From S. Main Street a circular drive leads to the house and three frame outbuildings - a shed, stable, and carriage house - which stand at the western edge of the property; a five-foot limestone wall connects these buildings with a smoke house, also composed of limestone, in the northwest corner.

The house is a transitional structure between the Greek Revival and Italianate Styles. Except for the bracketed eaves and the bracketed scrollwork of the two entrance canopies (south and east sides), the exterior is relatively free of ornament. On the south side of the house, between the first and second stories, a six-foot stained glass window has been cut into the wall; the window was added to the house by the Graham family after the original date of construction. (A small frame summer kitchen at the rear of the house has been replaced by a cement-block garage and utility room; but this change does not affect the integrity of the limestone structure.)

The massiveness of the exterior serves as a foil to the delicacy of detail on the interior of the house. The living room, which one enters through the front doorway, emphasizes this difference. There is a free-standing stairway with finely-turned balusters and rail of mahogany and black walnut that winds to the second floor landing. The stair treads are maple; along the base of the stairway, on the side of each step, a small jigsaw scroll in pine repeats the design of the bracketed entrance canopies. The stairway begins at the left of the front double doors (oak and bevelled glass, with a frosted glass transom) and curves gradually overhead. The entrance hall is further defined by four fluted Ionic columns that cross the room at the right of the double doors.

The living room has a marble fireplace and a hand-painted ceiling. The fireplace is constructed of pink (Tennessee) and black (Italian) cut marble, with cattails in gold-leaf etched into the surround; the fireplace itself is surmounted by a cherry and mahogany mirror-stand of bevelled glass that belonged to the Grahams. On the ceiling an elaborate wrought-iron railing border has been painted against a row of pink roses and a background color of bronze. A similar treatment of a geometrical half-star design has been carried out on the ceiling of the entrance hallway. (Another painting on the second floor stairway ceiling was destroyed, except for a leaf border, by leaking water.) Paired doorways, separated in the west wall of the living room by the row of Ionic columns, lead into the dining room.

The dining room has a parquet floor of oak, walnut, maple, and pine; a plaster-work rosette on the ceiling; and a gray cut marble fireplace containing a hearth of terra cotta and three ornamental brass rods suspended from the surround\*. In the north wall of the room, two sliding doors of Circassian burl walnut veneer lead into the library (converted to a kitchen). Another door in the west wall connects

\* Three fireplaces - one in the library, and two in upstairs bedrooms - were walled in at the time that a furnace was installed.

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CONTINUATION SHEET    DESCRIPTION    ITEM NUMBER    7    PAGE    3

the dining room with a rear kitchen and butler's pantry. This room, which the Ginestras used as a bedroom, has a parquet floor of alternating black cherry and maple bands. It should be noted that all four walls in the dining room have doorways, the south wall entrance leading to the outside.

The second floor of the house contains three bedrooms, two of which are accessible from the front stairway, and a third from a doorway in the middle bedroom. A staircase connecting the rear bedroom with the kitchen and butler's pantry has been walled in on the second floor, and adapted as a storage closet on the first floor; and the rear bedroom area itself has been altered to provide a small upstairs bathroom and kitchen. (These changes were undertaken by the Ginestras in order to make the upstairs of the house more suitable to tenants; but the alterations would be reversible.)

Much of the charm of the Graham-Ginestra House resides in the original fittings and furnishings: the brass doorknobs, latches, and hinges; the Graham bedroom set of burlled walnut veneer; the stacked casks of the wine cellar. There is a full basement, with a brick floor, beneath the house.

In the garden, opposite the side entranceway, a red porphyry slab has the initial "G" (Graham) carved below a masonic lodge emblem. The peonies, pink and red roses, gas plant (fraxinella), flowering quince, and Boston ivy all survive from the time of the Grahams. The three outbuildings are substantially unaltered, though some clapboarding has been replaced due to rot and the columned archways of the carriage house have been boarded up.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1857

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Graham-Ginestra House was constructed in 1857. The original owner, Freeman Graham, Sr., was a prominent local businessman who built the first sour mash distillery in the State of Illinois, and achieved a national reputation for his whiskies. Graham was also part owner of the Rockford Cotton Mills, and his home at 1115 S. Main Street was located approximately midway between the Mills (202 S. Main) and the Graham Distillery (1602-08 S. Main).

The Grahams were one of the most influential Rockford families to settle on the city's southwest side. Freeman Graham originally came to Rockford to manage Emerson, Talcott, & Company, a manufacturer of farm implements located in the city's "Water Power" District a few blocks from the (later) Graham residence. He had been apprenticed for seven years in the East as a maker of cotton and woolen machines, and had served as both a justice of the peace and a member of the Connecticut Legislature before migrating to the Midwest. In Rockford he was elected as the Fifth Ward Alderman.

On the death of Freeman Graham in 1896, the family business was divided among three sons, and the house itself bequeathed to a daughter, Julia, and her husband, Henry S. Warner, the secretary-treasurer of the Graham Match Company. The Warners lived in the house until 1927, when they sold it to a Sicilian immigrant named Leo Ginestra.

South Rockford in the 1920's was the center of a rapidly-expanding Italian immigrant community (eventually to become the city's second largest ethnic group), and the Ginestra home on S. Main Street was situated along its main commercial thoroughfare, directly across the street from the Rialto and Capitol Theatres.

Leo Ginestra lived in the house until his death in May 1978. He was a real estate assessor, machinist, and maintenance mechanic, who owned a mobile home park on S. Main Street beyond the city limits. He enjoyed a reputation in the Italian community as both an amateur musician and a wine-maker. Though the complexion of South Rockford changed in later years as many of the original immigrant families moved to other parts of the city, and S. Main Street itself suffered increasingly from commercial blight, the Ginestras continued to maintain the house and grounds. Today the house is easily the most habitable structure on S. Main Street within the city limits.

The Graham-Ginestra House mirrors the history of South Rockford over more than 120 years, from the third decade of the city onwards. It is remarkable that, during a century of rapid commercial and industrial expansion on the southwest side, only two families have ever lived in the house. The structure is one of the best-preserved and (on the interior) most ornate residences in the city constructed before the Civil War.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one

QUADRANGLE NAME North Rockford

QUADRANGLE SCALE \_\_\_\_\_

UTM REFERENCES

A	_____	_____	_____
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	_____	_____	_____
E	_____	_____	_____
G	_____	_____	_____

B	_____	_____	_____
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D	_____	_____	_____
F	_____	_____	_____
H	_____	_____	_____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The north one-half of Lot 7 (except the north six feet of the east 46 feet), all of Lot 8, Block 22, Church and Robertson Addition, a Subdivision of part of the NE Quarter of Section 27-44-1, Winnebago County, Illinois.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Jon Lundin

ORGANIZATION

DATE

October 10, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

1120 Brookfield Road

TELEPHONE

226-8043

CITY OR TOWN

Rockford

STATE

Illinois

## 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

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

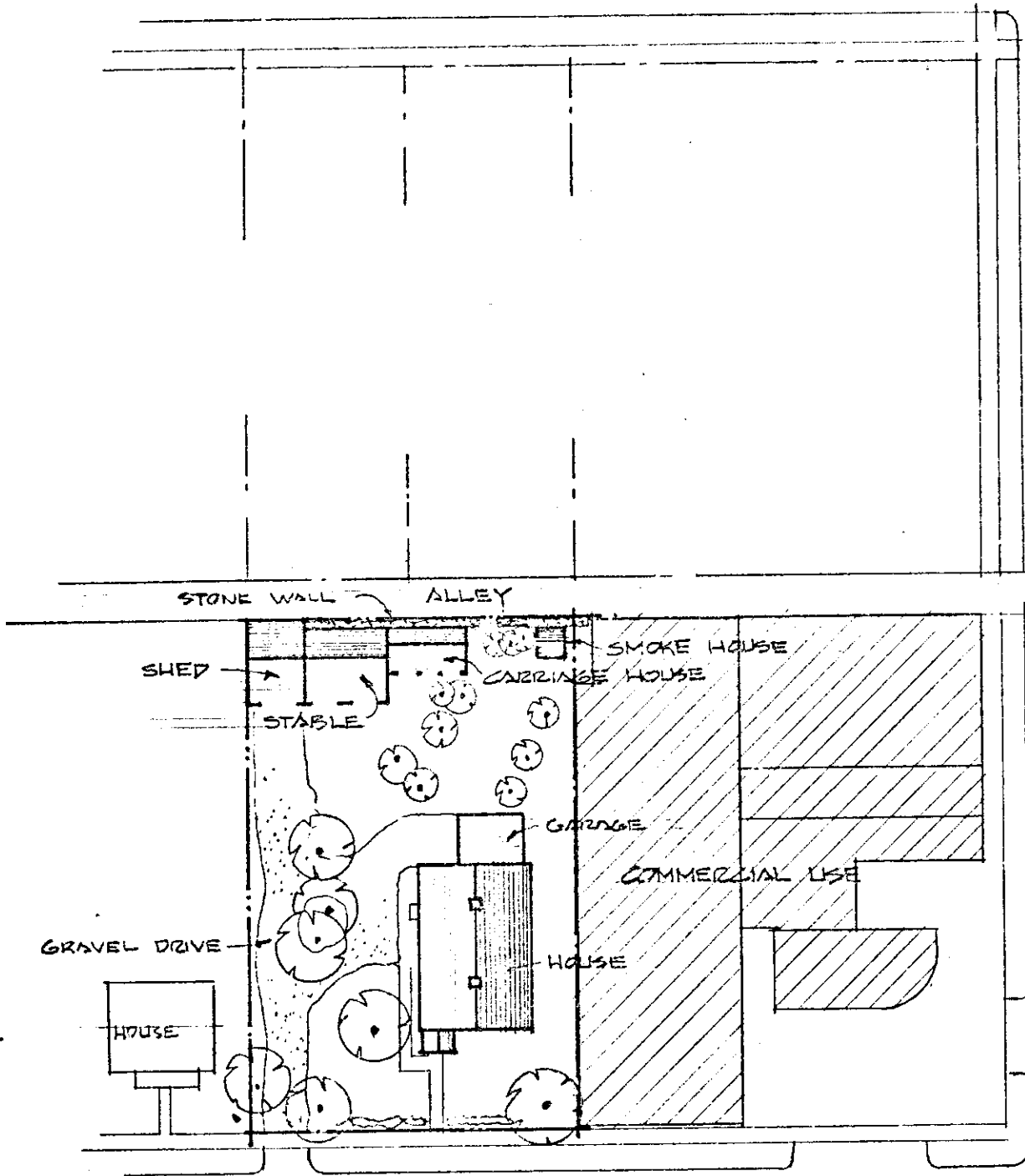
DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION



STONE WALL

ALLEY

SHED

STABLE

GRAVEL DRIVE

HOUSE

CARRIAGE HOUSE

SMOKE HOUSE

GARAGE

HOUSE

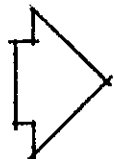
COMMERCIAL USE

MORGAN STREET

SOUTH MAIN STREET

SITE PLAN

1" = 50'



REFERENCES  
 Portrait and Biographical Sketch of Winnebago and Joove Counties, Illinois.  
 Chicago: Chicago Biographical Publishing Company, 1892.  
 History of Winnebago County, Illinois. Chicago: H. F. Kett and Company, 1877.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one

QUADRANGLE NAME North Rockford

UTM REFERENCES  
 A 16 3126700 4680740  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 C  
 E  
 G

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

B  
 D  
 F  
 H  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE  
Jon Lundin

ORGANIZATION

STREET & NUMBER  
1120 Brookfield Road

CITY OR TOWN  
Rockford

DATE  
October 10, 1978

TELEPHONE  
226-8043

STATE  
Illinois

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

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NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

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STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Dave Perry

TITLE Director, Ill. Dept. of Conservation

DATE 3/27/79

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

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

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE

ATTEST: CHIEF OF REGISTRATION DATE



ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ILLINOIS

STATE

Date Entered JUN 11 1979

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Graham-Ginestra House	Rockford Winnebago County

Also Notified

Honorable Charles H. Percy  
Honorable Adlai E. Stevenson  
Honorable John B. Anderson

**COPY OF CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION**

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.





7. Historical Themes : (check one or more of the following)

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archeological Site         | (Pre-Columbian)          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archeological Site         | (Post-Columbian to 1673) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French Influence           | (1673-1780)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Frontier          | (1780-1818)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Early             | (1818-1850)              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illinois Middle | (1850-1900)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Late              | (1900-present)           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Famous People              | (give names & dates)     |

8. Specific Date: 1856

Areas of significance (check one or more of the following)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (historic)     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (pre-historic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Military            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture               | <input type="checkbox"/> Music               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication             | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation              | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry       | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invention                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture    |  |

Brief statement of significance: (include all names and dates) Use additional sheets if necessary. Freeman Graham founded Graham Distilleries

9. Form prepared by:

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street and number: \_\_\_\_\_  
City or Town: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for references for a particular site. When filling out the Survey form, please list according to the following example, published references to the site for which forms are being completed. If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly deduct from the Survey's task.

Bibliography

Robertson, Robert, Of Whales and Men. New York, Alfred K. Knopf, Inc., 1954.

