

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

SENT TO D.C.
12/22/95

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Edward L. Ryerson Area Historic District

other names/site number Edward L. Ryerson Conservation Area

2. Location

street & number 21950 North Riverwoods Road not for publication

city or town Deerfield vicinity

state Illinois code IL county Lake code 097 zip code 60015

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William L. Check / SHPO 12-20-95
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Edward L. Ryerson Area Historic District
Name of Property

Lake County, Illinois
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
10	9	buildings
0	0	sites
1	1	structures
3	0	objects
15	10	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/camp
AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding
AGRICULTURE/subsistence/agricultural field
AGRICULTURE/subsistence/storage
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/
outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/
Classical Revival
OTHER/log construction
OTHER/New England barn

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Brick
Wood
roof Tile
other Metal
Stone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Architecture

Period of Significance

1923-1945

Significant Dates

1928

1938

1942

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Cramer, Ambrose, Architect

Clark, Edwin, H., Architect

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Edward L. Ryerson Conservation Area

Edward L. Ryerson Area Historic District
Name of Property

Lake County, Illinois
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 471

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	424520	4670730
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	16	425000	4670730

3	16	425150	4670640
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	16	425120	4668890

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan S. Benjamin

organization _____ date November 1, 1994

street & number 711 Marion Avenue telephone 708-432-1865

city or town Highland Park, state IL zip code 60035

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Lake County Forest Preserve District

street & number 2000 North Milwaukee Avenue telephone 708-367-6640

city or town Libertyville, state IL zip code 60048

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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7. DESCRIPTION

THE LOCATION OF THE EDWARD L. RYERSON AREA HISTORIC DISTRICT

The 471-acre Edward L. Ryerson Area Historic District, at 21950 North Riverwoods Road, Deerfield, Illinois, includes the Edward L. Ryersons' 1942 Classical Revival country house surrounded by a designed landscape, a 1938 farm complex with adjacent pasture land and open fields, forest land and five log cabins: one built in 1928 by Edward L. Ryerson, and four others, built in subsequent years, by Hermon Dunlap Smith, Chauncey Borland, Ambrose Cramer, and Ivan Albright. The district is located entirely within the boundaries of the Edward L. Ryerson Conservation Area, which is owned by the Lake County Forest Preserve District. The historic district is situated in Vernon Township, in the southeast corner of Lake County in northeastern Illinois. Most of the district is in an unincorporated area of the county, although the south part is within the corporate limits of the village of Riverwoods and the post office address is Deerfield, Illinois. It is approximately 30 miles north of the Chicago business district and immediately west of the Deerfield Road exit of Interstate 294. The incorporated village of Deerfield lies 1-1/2 miles to the east.

The district is bordered on the east by Riverwoods Road and the east property line of land purchased by Edward L. Ryerson, Chauncey Borland, Frederick Preston, John Schweppe and John Garvin before 1945. This east boundary runs south to Deerfield Road, which forms the south boundary of the district between the east property line and the Des Plaines River. The north boundary of the district is located about a half mile north of Aptakisic Road, which runs west from Riverwoods Road, terminating about a half mile from the Des Plaines River. Aptakisic Road is the major access to the Ryerson country house, the farm complex, and the cabins that were once used by the Cramer and Borland families. The Des Plaines River, which meanders south, curves northeast and then back south, forms the west boundary for most of the district except for 50 acres in the southwest corner where the district lies on both sides of the river. The area in the district west of the river is in the shape of an "L" that follows the curve in the river. All of the land surrounding the district has been subdivided and developed except for land on the east side of the district that Ryerson purchased shortly after 1945 and land just east of this parcel, which was formerly owned by the Hess family and extends to Riverwoods Road. To the north there is housing development and a church. Where there are not homes there is commercial growth. The open land along Route 21 and Route 45 (Milwaukee Avenue), which is the major north-south thoroughfare across the river approximately 700' west of the district, is being rapidly filled with housing, office parks, hotels and other businesses.

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PRE SETTLEMENT PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

The main land features of the district are the Park Ridge Moraine and the Des Plaines River bottom land. The moraine is made up of gently undulating land shaped by the last glacier advances more than 13,000 years ago. The bottom land is flat and adjacent to the river. Water from the melting glaciers helped carve the river valley through which the Des Plaines River now flows. The river is generally about 100' across. The level of the land varies, from 672' mean sea level in the northeast corner of the district to a low of 635' mean sea level along the Des Plaines River in the southwest corner. Prior to the arrival of European settlers in the early 1830's, the area west of the river consisted of savanna and tall grass prairie kept free of trees by wildfires that swept from the west by the prevailing winds. These fires became extinguished just before they reached the west bank of the Des Plaines River so that a dense hardwood forest was able to grow east of the river. (1) Because of the wetness of the land, the area immediately next to the river on the south and west was also forested.

LAND USE BEFORE 1923

Prior to 1923, when Frederick Preston, Everett Millard, Cecil Barnes and Edward Larned Ryerson began to build log cabins on property they had purchased along the Des Plaines River, the land which comprises the Edward L. Ryerson Area Historic District had played a role in the history of Lake County.

Man's first known imprint in the district consisted of three Indian trails. Although their exact location is not known, a recent map of these trails in the collection of the Lake County Forest Preserve shows their approximate location. Shallow water areas allowed two of the major Indian trails to ford the river. One was the Deer Trail, which connected the Fox River with Lake Michigan. An extension of Deer Trail east of the Des Plaines River is Deer Path in Lake Forest. The second trail that crossed the river was the Mukwanago Trail, which led from Chicago to Wisconsin. The Great North Trail, which passed the historic district on the west side of the river,

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was an overland link in a trade route connecting the Ohio River and the copper deposits on Lake Superior. It generally followed the route of Milwaukee Avenue.

The earliest European settlement of the district dates from 1834. After the Black Hawk War of 1832, when the Potawatomi Indians ceded all their lands in Illinois to the United States government, vast areas opened up for pioneer settlement. Captain Daniel Wright, one of Lake County's first settlers, laid claim to approximately 1/4 of the land that makes up the historic district. That is today the central section of the district, just east of the Des Plaines River. With the help of Potawatomi chief Mettawa, Wright, in 1834, built what is reputed to be the area's first house, a log cabin on the prairie just west of the Des Plaines River and west of the north end of the district. (2)

In the fall of 1834, Hiram Kennicott and his father Jonathan laid claim to a part of the northern section of the district along the river and constructed what is reputed to be Lake County's oldest dam and saw mill. (3) A year later he added a grist mill and general store. These were located just north of the road known variously as Aptakisic (the Indian Chief for whom the town of Half Day is named), Old Mill, and East Mill Road. From the mill came supplies for the earliest frame buildings in the county and planking material for roads. The mill was abandoned in 1870. Today the structure and foundations are gone though there are some pilings where there was once a bridge across the river at the west end of the road. (4) The bridge was taken down in 1957 so the road would terminate before the river.

The forest east of the river was a source of timber for Wright and other newly-arrived settlers in the 1830's. Al Westerman who, until recently, served as Forestry Program Coordinator for the Lake County Forest Preserve District, noted that as timber supplies were being depleted in other parts of the county, farmers looked to the forest along the Des Plaines River to provide them with a constant source of much-needed firewood, fencing and building materials. As a result, during the 1850's and 1860's, many of the owners of large tracts of the historic district's forested land subdivided their forest into timber lots which generally ranged in size from five to twenty acres. Some of these lots were clear cut; some were cut selectively. The majority of the timber lots were also used in the summer as pasture land for cattle. (5)

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Starting in the 1890's, at a time when coal was beginning to replace wood as the dominant fuel source, farmers looked to sell off their timber lots. At this time, the Wisconsin Central Railroad (Soo Line) purchased several of the lots within the district just north of Deerfield Road, with the idea of creating a large park to increase weekend ridership. The railroad constructed a railroad spur (that is drawn on a 1907 plat) to the site and built Clybourn Park, but it was not a financial success, and the land was closed down prior to 1915 and sold. Today the only reminder of the park are remnants of a raised bicycle track, now overgrown with large trees, and portions of an abutment for a pedestrian bridge that was constructed across the Des Plaines River at the south end of the district.

The next major change on the property took place between 1923 and 1928, when Chicago area residents, Frederick Preston, Everett Millard, Cecil Barnes, and Edward Larned Ryerson began to purchase land, including some of the old five to twenty-acre timber lots, and built modest log cabins to use as vacation retreats along the forested east shore of the Des Plaines River. Roads were laid in at the same time to access the cabins. Of these early cabins only the Ryerson Cabin, built in 1928, remains, though in subsequent years several cabins, including those owned by Hermon Dunlap Smith, Chauncey Borland, Ambrose Cramer and Ivan Albright, were constructed both along the river and northeast of the river in areas surrounded by forest.

In 1938, Edward L. Ryerson acquired further acreage on the west side of the district. William Whigham put 250 acres of farmland south of Aptakistic Road and west of the access road to the cabins on the market, and it was immediately purchased by Ryerson, who had a barn, a farm equipment building, and a farmhouse constructed and had the land he purchased laid out to accommodate farm use.

The final change to the property occurred in 1940, when Ryerson decided to build a country house for use in the summer and on weekends. Two roads, extending south, were laid in off Aptakistic Road to the house. One was through an entrance gate, and one was built about 500' to the west of the first road, connecting the house to the farm and back to Aptakistic Road. The house, completed in 1942, was designed much as it appears today, with an oval driveway in the front and formal gardens in the rear landscaped by the architect for the house, Ambrose Cramer.

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LAND USE

In order to show that the property has sufficient integrity to reflect its use from 1923 to 1945, the period of significance, an assessment was made of available aerial photographs, historic plats, recollections and conclusions drawn from the vegetation. The earliest available aerial photo taken of a large area of the district before 1945 dates from 1939. Wes Sappington, who worked for the Ryersons for nine years, dating from 1963, and has continued to work for the Lake County Forest Preserve since 1972 when the property was transferred, has pointed out while walking through the property how it looked when he was employed by the Ryersons. Nan Buckardt, who is Environmental Education Manager for the Forest Preserve, has worked at the site ten years and has aided in the interpretation of the vegetation in relation to land use. Ms. Buckardt, with her accumulated knowledge and available evidence, has drawn (with the aid of Jack Nowak, Computer Engineering Technician for the Lake County Forest Preserve District) land use maps showing how the property was laid out in 1942 and in 1995.

The property included in the historic district was acquired by the families who built cabins over a number of years. Edward L. Ryerson bought up the largest number of acres, eventually owning 292 acres of the 471-acre district. The district reached its current ownership configuration by 1972, when all of the property owned by Ryerson and the other families was transferred to the Lake County Forest Preserve.

The district is today laced by a few roads and many hiking trails. Most of the roads tend to follow the path of the gravel roads laid out by the Ryersons and the other families who owned property and built cabins in the district. Aptakisic Road continues to be the major entrance to the district. It is paved, as are the two roads leading to the house--the east road that extends through a wooded area and the road to the west that extends along the east side of the farm buildings. The gravel roads that originally led to the cabins, from an entrance on Riverwoods Road just south of Aptakisic Road, today serve as footpaths, though there is still evidence of gravel, and some of the roads are wide enough to accommodate vehicular traffic. There are several dirt paths that serve as hiking trails; these tend to be located where there were formerly horse trails used by the Ryersons. The Forest Preserve has recently installed low wood bridges and catwalks over wet areas on the trails. The major change in the road system occurred in 1957, the year the bridge over the Des Plaines River at the west end of Aptakisic road was taken down. Today Aptakisic

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Road terminates on the east side of the farm buildings.

Although the nature of vegetation related to land use is that it changes over time, patterns of previous use can be seen in the current landscape. It can be recognized on Ryersons' property and on the parcels belonging to the other former landowners in the district.

The land owned by Ryerson in the district in 1945 consisted of the north half of the district starting at a line about 500' south of the house, 22 acres further south along the river where his cabin was located, and a six acre parcel at the south end of the district, north of Deerfield Road. The designed landscape immediately surrounding the county house is landscaped with lawn and formal beds and closely follows the plans laid out by architect Ambrose Cramer in 1940. The original use of the land area around the designed landscape can be understood today from current vegetation. The area to the west and southwest of the country house was used as pasture for grazing, and there was a vista to the Des Plaines River. It was open with scattered trees. This can be seen on aerial maps dating from 1939 and 1959. The area immediately west of the house and to the north of the house between the house and the farm buildings continues to be pasture where animals graze as they did when the Ryersons lived on the property. Here there is no underbrush or tall grasses; the pasture is dotted by tall hardwoods. From just west of the house to the boundary of the east-west section of Cabin Road, the name by which the road leading to the cabins was known, the pasture has been allowed, since 1971, to grow back naturally.

Although it looks densely wooded, its former use is known from Wes Sappington's recollections, from Forest Preserve records and from the growth patterns of vegetation. The change is obvious biologically because the large trees have spreading canopies, and all new growth has trunks with similar diameters. This indicates that the tall trees have, for several years, not received sufficient light for branches to continue to grow in the middle areas of the trees and that the understory was allowed to grow and fill in all at the same time.

There are two areas that today are open fields that once were used to grow crops. Both are seen as open land in the 1939 aerial map. One is located just west of the north half of the pasture and the farm buildings. There is a 1938 aerial photo of a small section of the farm that shows stacks of corn stalks in this area. Because there are no stumps or evidence of trees here it is likely that this area was logged. The second open field is southeast of the house. Wes Sappington recalls that this land contained crops until recently. There is also no evidence of trees here. In addition,

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Al Westerman has pre-settlement records which indicate that this land was bought to be logged. The clean line between the surrounding forested land and the field provide evidence that the land was probably clear cut. There is a road leading east from this field to a stand of spruce trees that were planted for Christmas trees by the Ryersons. This grouping of spruces, which today are mature trees, can be seen on the 1939 aerial.

The land surrounding the roads leading to the cabins and between the cabins continues to look much as it did in the 1920's when the earliest cabins, including the Ryersons', were built. At that time, most of the surrounding forested land was left intact, and it looks today much as it did then. Vegetation patterns indicate that the area has not been altered. The understory has trees with different diameter trunks, and the very tall trees have their major growth at the top of the trees where the trees have always been very close together.

The area immediately around the three cabins that remain in their original locations reflects how the land was used. The Ryerson Cabin continues to have open land surrounding it and a circular drive just to the north of the cabin. There is also a circular drive just north of the Smith Cabin. Both still have gravel, preventing substantial growth of vegetation. The land surrounding the Smith Cabin shows a different growth pattern; it was never cleared as evidenced by the many tall trees that have no low branches. The area around the Albright Cabin was once cleared, and vegetation patterns indicate that there was once open land with scattered trees. This can be seen by the number of surrounding trees that have low spreading branches and by the understory maples, which all have trunks of a similar diameter and which started to grow at the same time, when the area was no longer kept open and allowed to grow naturally.

It is clearly apparent where the Borland and Cramer cabins, which have been moved, were located. There is a gravel road leading south to the Borland site and, when it is reached, there is an open area and evidence of non-native plantings like spruce, white cedar and euonymus on the edge of it. There is also an open grassy area surrounded by ornamental plantings, such as daffodils, where the Cramer Cabin was located. The site north of the Cramer Cabin is open where it stood at the juncture of pasture land and woods and where Cabin Road joins the road to the Ryerson Cabin. The land remains wooded to the south of the Cramer Cabin, along the route to the Ryerson Cabin.

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Where cabins have been taken down, there is generally clear evidence of their existence. The former road to the Preston Cabin is today a path, cutting through the woods, without major wood growth because the road still has a gravel base and the large trees haven't established themselves yet. The cabin's concrete foundations still exist. It was approximately 15' x 20' and had two rooms. Where the Millard Cabin was located, there is still gravel showing clear evidence of the location of a circular drive. Surrounding an open area are some ornamental plantings including day lilies and daffodils. The understory surrounding the clearing is quite tall with hardwoods, such as maples, that have wide diameters. It is likely from this evidence that the Millards must have initially cleared the land and then early on let it grow. The Barnes Cabin, which was torn down in 1986, was located just east of the Ryerson Cabin. Today there is a pet cemetery with four headstones fifty yards west of the cabin. The house occupied a site that is today covered by a mass of 1' maple seedlings. Flat stones leading to the front door are still in place on the trail along the river.

Man's clearest design for the land and that which can be interpreted by comparing original drawings with the property as it looks today can be seen immediately surrounding the house. Cramer drew up a site plan that shows the oval drive in front of the house. This looks as it did when it was designed. Leading to the oval is a road that winds through a forest of tall trees with a dense understory. Because the understory growth has different diameter trunks, it is likely that the area has looked like this since it was laid out. As the road turns, there is an opening with a vista west to the house. This field, which is filled with wildflowers in the spring, also looks as it did in the years the Ryersons lived there. The west rear side of the house is formally landscaped with a terrace. It was designed with a lawn that has two intersecting brick paths, one oriented north and south and one oriented east and west with a hand pump for water in the center and three steps downward at its west end. The steps beyond lead to a brick path that runs north and south. At each end of the path are small circular areas surrounded by flower beds. This can be seen in the 1959 aerial photograph and is evident today. To the south of the house across from Mrs. Ryerson's bedroom is a sculpture known as "The Bird Girl" by Sylvia Shaw Judson. It was commissioned by the Ryersons in 1938 for the garden of the home they used as a summer residence in Marion, Massachusetts and was one of three executed. (The second was made for Theo and John Lord King, Sylvia Shaw Judson's sister and brother-in-law, and is currently owned by the Preston family; the third is located in Savannah, Georgia.) When the Ryerson country house was built in 1942, the sculpture was moved to its present site.

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The fifty acres on the west side of the river contains forest at the river's edge and open fields, where the 1939 aerial indicates the land was farmed. The areas to the north that were open fields in 1959 are open today. To the south were groves, with large trees and grasses, that contained a pond. Today this area has changed somewhat, having been filled in by shrubs. Immediately west of the river the land remains forested. Here the fires that historically burned the prairie, because of the wet land, were not so devastating.

Much of the area in the district that contains densely growing mature hardwoods, according to Nan Buckardt, has not changed much since pre-settlement days. Some trees are 150-200 years old. This is evidenced by the types and relative sizes of the trees as well as their growth patterns. The Edward L. Ryerson Conservation Area was surveyed and, in 1972, 278.9 acres of hardwood forest was officially designated an Illinois Nature Preserve. The area in the preserve that is in the historic district includes all of the land south of Cabin Road and east of the river and the area north of Cabin Road between Riverwoods Road and the entrance road to the country house. Those areas specifically omitted include the landscaped area around the house and the fields that were known to have been planted or used for grazing by the Ryersons. Land flanking the entrance road to the house was omitted because of future plans for educational use.

THE CABINS

The major development of the property that is historically significant began between 1923 and 1928 when Chicago area residents, Frederick Preston, Everett Millard, Cecil Barnes, and Edward Larned Ryerson, started to purchase land, including some of the old five-to twenty-acre timber lots, and build modest log cabins to use as vacation retreats. During that time roads were laid in from Riverwoods Road to access the cabins. Although there may have been more constructed, nine cabins existed on the property when Ryerson died in 1971. Today there are five. Three are located within about 1500' of each other, two on the river and one, to the east, in the woods. The fourth has been moved, and the fifth has been disassembled and reconstructed. These two are adjacent to one another on the north side of Aptakisic Road.

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THE EDWARD L. RYERSON CABIN

The oldest of the remaining cabins belonged to the Edward L. Ryersons, who purchased land there in 1927. Their daughter Nancy recalled in a talk she gave May 17, 1974,

They had "motored" out, as Mother writes in her journal, to call on the Cecil Barnes', who had a cabin here on the Des Plaines "for the day was too good to be wasted in the city." My parents loved this place from the moment they saw it and when they found a piece next to the Barnes' Cottage was for sale, they knew they must have it. By the following Wednesday, they had bought it from the Whigham family, who were direct descendants of Captain Daniel Wright, the first white settler in Lake County.(6)

Ryerson continued to acquire property along the Des Plaines River in the district until almost 1960.

Ryerson bought his first parcel of land from William H. Whigham, the great-grandson of Daniel Wright, near the site he believed to be at the intersection of the major Indian trails and started construction of a log cabin. He had the logs shipped in and hired three Norwegian cabin builders from Wisconsin. They camped there for the summer, carefully splitting and laying logs together without use of nails.(7) A nearby farmer oversaw construction.

The Ryerson Cabin is located at the west end of the long gravel road, known as Cabin Road, that was very likely built by the earliest cabin owners and served as the access road to most of the cabins that were originally built on the property. The entrance to this road was located approximately 400' south of the present entrance to the district. It extends south approximately 1200' and turns west approximately 3500'. The Ryersons' cabin, located about 800' south of this road, has a gable end facing south toward the Des Plaines River. The cabin is one story, resting on concrete foundations and irregular in shape. The main living areas are in a rectangular section, approximately 20' x 30', that is topped by the gable roof with broad overhanging eaves supported by exposed roof rafters. On the west side is a 10' x 10' porch with a shed roof and further north an 8' x 10' wing with a gable roof. There is also a gable-roofed wing, that is 10' x 10', at the north side of the building. The cabin walls are of log, notched at the corners with flat ends that project beyond the corners. There is a tall sloping chimney, made of large rounded 5-10"

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stones, at the ridge of the roof in the center of the cabin and a second lower chimney, built of limestone, on the exterior west wall of the porch. The windows are multi-pane casements with wrought iron latches.

The south elevation is symmetrical, with three wood double casement windows that each have ten lights. There are hinged operable wood exterior shutters that are kept closed. In the peak of the gable is a small square glass opening. Facing the river is a stone patio with a low limestone wall extending from the low west wall of the screened porch. There is a screen entrance door to the south, off the patio. On the west elevation is the exterior limestone chimney. It has sloping side walls, with the section that extends below the roofline set in the center of the screen wall of the porch. To the north of the porch is a utility room with a single boarded-up opening on the east wall. The north, rear elevation, has a screened door to the utility room, a double casement window that is shuttered closed in the main section of the house and, in the small gabled wing which contains a bathroom, a single boarded-up opening. There is also a window in the peak of the gable. The east elevation contains a screened front door flanked by two double casement windows that each have ten lights and hinged shutters that are presently closed. The south window opens into the cabin living room; the north opens into the bedroom. The doorway is topped by a shallow gabled canopy projecting two feet beyond the roof and slightly above the roofline. The bathroom wing contains a shuttered window facing east.

There are four rooms on the interior. Exposed rounded logs form the walls, and floors are of stone. The ceilings follow the peak of the roof and have exposed rafters and boards. A large room extending across the south side of the cabin which faces the river, served as living and dining room. It has a fireplace in the center of the north wall. To the east of the living-dining room is the small screen porch, with a large stone fireplace in the center of the screen wall on the west. Just to the north of the porch is the utility room. Two rooms open off the living room, to the north. On the west side of the house is the kitchen. On the east is a small bedroom with bunk beds built into the west wall. Beyond the bedroom, on the north side of the house, is the bathroom.

Over the years there seem to have been no alterations made to the Ryerson Cabin. Although the building floods periodically, there appears to be little damage to the walls and floors. In 1957, the Ryersons built a dam near their cabin to provide a low water crossing to the property they owned

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on the other side of the river.

THE HERMON DUNLAP SMITH CABIN

The second of the remaining cabins was built by the Ryersons' friends, the Hermon Dunlap "Dutch" Smiths. In 1935, the Smiths bought eight acres just east of the property owned by Cecil Barnes and built their log cabin.

The Smith Cabin is one story and rectangular with a gable roof that has exposed rafter ends. It measures approximately 15' x 20' and is smaller than the Ryerson Cabin. The cabin rests on a concrete foundation and is built of logs laid horizontally with vertical logs forming the corners. Entrance to the cabin is at the west end of the north side of the building, where there is a door made of vertical wood slats. Just east of the door is a pair of windows that are closed with vertical wood shutters. Each of the windows is an eight-pane casement. On the east side of the building are two pairs that are shuttered closed; on the west are three double windows that are also shuttered closed. There are four narrow rectangular skylights with metal reinforcing wire on each side of the gable. The south elevation of the cabin faces the Des Plaines River; it is set back approximately 100' from it. The south side of the cabin has a brick chimney, with sloping side walls that extend beyond the peak of the gable. At ground level is an exterior fireplace. Flanking the chimney are two pairs of windows.

The interior of the cabin is a single room with walls panelled in masonite. Flooring is of concrete. Rafters are exposed, and three long wood logs span the interior from one end of the gable roof to the other. At the south end of the room is the interior side of the brick chimney with sloping walls. The lower section has a large opening and is topped by a soldier course of bricks. The cabin is currently used for exhibits.

The Smith Cabin appears to be in excellent condition and to have, with the exception of skylight additions, undergone few changes over the years.

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THE CHAUNCEY BORLAND CABIN

The third of the remaining cabins was built by Chauncey Borland in the 1930's. It is a one-story rectangular log structure, approximately 15' x 20', with log ends that project beyond the walls. It rests on a concrete foundation. The cabin is topped by a side gable roof with exposed rafters. Attached to the rear of the rectangular cabin is an enclosed room, with large windows for viewing wildlife, that was formerly a screen porch. It measures approximately 10' x 20' and is topped by a shed roof. Set back on a path approximately seventy feet north of the entrance road, the cabin faces east. Most of the window openings contain pairs of casements, each having eight lights. The front, east elevation has three bays. The south bay contains the door, made of vertical wood boards, which opens onto an 8' x 10' porch surrounded by a slatted wood fence. The center bay has a pair of 8-pane casements, and the third bay is made up of three pairs of 8-pane casements. There is a row of projecting log ends separating the two north bays. The south elevation contains a large single-pane window that is part of the addition, three bays with two pairs of 8-pane casements and a smaller pair of 6-pane casements. There is a pair of 2-pane casement windows in the peak of the gable. The west, rear elevation is four bays wide with a fixed pane window facing west in the small addition, a doorway with a 3' x 6' porch and two pairs of 8-pane casements. The north gable end is made up of a band of four pairs of 8-pane casements with a pair of 4-pane windows in the peak of the gable.

The interior of the Borland Cabin has exposed beams and rafters. There is a central wood truss with the center vertical support connected to the crossbeam by a metal flange. Floors are of pine planks. Partial log walls are located at the east and west ends of the space indicating that there originally may have been two rooms. Some of the wood windows have been replaced by windows with metal sash.

The Borland Cabin was originally located on the Des Plaines River, approximately 1500' south of the east-west access road to the cabins. The Borland Family owned 16 acres on which the cabin was situated, and today there is an open grassy area where the cabin was built. It remained at this site until 1984, when the cabin was carefully disassembled, with parts numbered, and reconstructed at its present location. Today the cabin serves as an interpretive center. The large central space houses a natural history exhibit, and the rear addition, with its large windows, enables visitors to observe the surrounding wildlife.

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THE AMBROSE CRAMER CABIN

The fourth cabin in the district was designed and built in 1940 by Ambrose Cramer, the architect for the Ryerson family's country house. It is an "H"-shaped log building and measures approximately 40' x 20', with logs extending beyond the wall edges. The long section and the two symmetrical wings are both topped by gable roofs with exposed rafter ends. The front faces east. There is a shingled addition to the north, on the west side of the building. It has a shed roof. Foundations are of concrete. Four-pane wood casement windows are set in pairs throughout the cabin. All of the windows have operable wood shutters with wood bracing in a "Z" shape.

The front, east elevation is seven bays wide. There are two pairs of 4-pane casements in the projecting south wing, one pair of casements on each side of the door in the center and, on the north wing, a small pair of casements and a large garage opening with the door removed to accommodate washrooms. The central front door, which has three large wrought iron decorative hinges, is set behind a projecting front porch. The porch is topped by a gable roof with wood moldings beneath the shallow gable. Supporting the roof are sawn-cut flat boards in a decorative curved pattern. The south elevation is two bays wide. Two pairs of windows flank a large limestone chimney which has walls that slope to form a square shape above the roofline.

The west elevation, like the east, is made up of two wings flanking a center section. The north wing contains a band of six casements with the south three shuttered closed. The center section contains the shingled 10' x 20' addition topped by a shed roof and a band of 3-pane casements. The south wing has six four-pane casements. The north elevation contains one pair of 4-pane casements shuttered closed.

On the interior, there are four rooms. Entrance is into a small hallway. To the south is a large room with exposed rafters and two wood trusses. On the south wall is a large rectangular stone fireplace. Floors are of wood parquet. There is a small room to the west opening off the hall. To the north are two rooms. The room to the east is pine panelled. The room to the west, which was formerly an enclosed sleeping porch, is one step down. It, too, is pine panelled and is topped by a shed roof. There is a closet in the northwest corner.

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The Cramer Cabin remained in its original location on land leased from Ryerson near his own cabin until the 1970's. It was located at the fork of Cabin Road and the access road to the Ryerson Cabin, approximately 1800' south of Aptakistic Road and 700' east of the Des Plaines River. In the 1970's it was put on a flatbed and moved to its present site on the north side of Aptakistic Road.

THE IVAN ALBRIGHT CABIN

The fifth cabin was built in the 1950's by the Chicago artist, Ivan Albright. Although it is similar to the other cabins in size, shape and materials, because of its age, it is a non-contributing building in the district. It is rectangular and measures 25' x 30', with a gable roof and broad eaves. Albright designed and built it himself, sheathing the cabin in clapboards and placing it on a concrete foundation. It is situated in the woods south of the east-west access road to the cabins and just north of what was formerly the Borland property.

THE FARM

Although both Smith and Borland built cabins during the thirties, Ryerson undertook no further construction until 1938, when some of William Whigham's farmland was put on the market. Ryerson saw his retreat threatened when 250 acres of farm and woodland next to him was offered for sale with the very real possibility of subdivision, and he purchased this huge tract of land to ensure the isolation of his cabin. Almost immediately, he started construction on the farm buildings.

As soon as he bought the acreage Ryerson, wanting to make use of the land, built a small dairy farm. He abandoned the dairy farm in the 1940's in favor of raising Arabian horses, a small herd of beef cattle, and pigs. Original plans indicate he hired architects Edwin H. Clark and Herbert Banse, Inc., Chicago, to begin designs for a farm stock barn and a farm equipment building. Because they are stylistically similar in scale, massing, roof configuration and use of materials, it is possible that the farmhouse and two sheds located approximately 800' south and east of the farm buildings were also designed by the firm. Farm construction marked the beginning of

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"Brushwood Farm", the name by which the Ryerson property came to be known.

The original three farm buildings -- the stock barn, farm equipment building and farmhouse-- were built just south of Aptakisic Road about 2000' west of Riverwoods Road. When the country house was built, 1940-1942, the road leading south on Aptakisic Road to the house curved back north through the farm complex between the barn and farm equipment building and the house. The road pattern appears as it did in 1942 except that where the road turns west into the farm area it has also been extended to go directly north to Aptakisic Road. There is forested land on the east side of the road. The grass pasture land between the house and the farm buildings is grazed by sheep, goats and pigs. There is a fenced area to the north of the farm equipment building where Ryerson horses once grazed.

The stock barn is rectangular, 24' x 63', with four extensions and was designed to attach to a small grain room and two existing 21' tall concrete silos with steel roofs that are each 8' in diameter. The grain room was enlarged to the south and a dormer with a shed roof was added on the south side. This formed the barn's first extension. The barn walls, which rest on concrete foundations, have wood vertical board and batten siding. Topping the building is a gable metal standing seam roof. At the south end is a pointed overhang that is an extension of the gable. There are two metal vents in the ridge of the roof topped by wind vanes. At the end of the north gable is a metal roof ornament, in the shape of a horse, that may have been added in the 1940's when the Ryersons began to breed and show Arabian horses. The entire barn stands 1-1/2 stories with stalls for animals on the first floor and a haymow above. Its second and largest extension is at the south end of the barn. It is rectangular, measuring 20' x 56', stands one story and is topped by two standing seam metal roofs with wind vanes in the ridge of the roofs that have ornaments at the top in the shape of a cow. The third extension is located on the east elevation and is also topped by a standing seam metal roof with a wind vane in the ridge that has an ornament in the shape of a cow. The fourth extension is approximately 4' x 6' with a standing seam shed roof and is located on the west side of the barn where the barn meets the south extension.

The main opening to the 1938 barn is on the north elevation. Here is found a double sliding barn door flanked by two, six-pane windows. Above it is a small inset door to the haymow. There is a double-hung 6/6 window in the peak of the gable. The east elevation has six, six-pane window bays with a wide door between the second and third bays to the south. In the center of the third

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and fourth bays is the small one-story gable roof extension that has a standing seam metal roof with a wind vane ornament in the shape of a cow. It has two double-hung windows on each side and a dutch door in the gable end. There is also a door on the north side with a nine-pane window in it. This extension is known as the milk room. (The milk room, where raw milk was cooled and stored prior to pick-up, was a common appendage on a dairy barn.) On the west elevation of the barn there are three, six-pane openings on the north side of the silos and two, six-pane windows and the small one-story extension with a shed roof on the south side of the silos. The grain room extension, connecting the barn and silos, has a door and a shed roof dormer facing south. On the south elevation of the barn there is a double sliding door flanked by two, six-pane windows. Above that entrance is an inset door. In the peak of the gable there are two doors that swing out, with six panes in each door, set under a projecting pointed peak.

The large extension with gable roofs is on the southwest corner of the barn. It has six bays on the east elevation. The wide opening on the south end served as a loafing area to shelter the animals from weather. The next bay is a six-pane window. There is then a dutch door, another six-pane window, a second dutch door and another six-pane window. The south gable end of this extension has two six-pane windows on the first floor and one 6/6 window in the peak of the gable. The west elevation of this extension has three six-pane windows to the north and a dutch door and a single six-pane window on the south end of the extension. There are two dormers with shed roofs extending out from the gable roofs. Set between the extension and the barn is the small extension with a gable roof. It has a Dutch door and a single six-pane window.

The farm equipment building is an L-shaped 1-1/2 story building with a one-story garage-like extension to the south that was added to replace a smaller extension after the building was constructed. Like the barn, the farm equipment building is sheathed in vertical board and batten siding and is topped by standing seam metal gable roofs. There is a square wood roof vent with a pointed sloping metal roof in the center of the south section of the L. The inside of the L faces east. The wing of the L extending south is 65' x 26' and has, on the east elevation, a full-height opening at the south end and a lower broad opening with sliding doors on the north end. On the west elevation is a pair of 9/9 double-hung windows with shutters and a large opening at the south end. On the north gable end there is a sliding garage door. On the south gable end there is a 6/6 window in the peak of the gable, and there is a door with nine lights. The garage extension has the wide garage opening facing east and a 6/6 window on the west. Just south of the window

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is an attached 3' x 5' shed covered with board and batten siding and topped by a standing seam metal shed roof. It has a small square window on the west and a door on the south, across from a corn-crib. There is a small shed roofed extension between this section and the corncrib that is located on the west side of this section of the building. The inside of this section, which is used for equipment storage, has a dirt floor. The wing of the L extending east is 50' x 21' and has two pairs of sliding double doors facing south with a door that has 9 lights between them. Above are three, 6/6 dormer windows with hipped roofs. The east gable end of the L has a door on the south end with nine lights, a 6/6 window on the north end and a 6/6 window in the gable. Both windows have shutters. The west gable end has two, 6/6 double-hung windows with a 6/6 window in the peak of the gable. The north elevation has two pairs of 6/6 double-hung windows with louvered shutters. There is a brick chimney in the ridge of the roof. On the first floor the interior contains three garages and a tool room. Upstairs is an apartment for the farm hand containing a bedroom, bath and closet.

A few feet south of the extension to the farm equipment building is the slatted one-story 8' x 19' corncrib, a contributing structure, with a standing seam metal gable roof. Wood slat fencing surrounds the land between the farm equipment building and Apatakisic Road and surrounds the large piece of land where animals graze between the country house and the farm buildings.

The third major building in the farm complex is the 1 1/2-story farmhouse. Like the barns, it is sheathed in vertical board and batten siding. It is approximately 20' x 30', rectangular and capped by a gable roof. On the south front of the house is an enclosed front porch, topped by a shed roof. Most of the windows are double-hung. They are 1/1 on the porch and 6/6 on the main house. There is an entrance facing south into the porch and a second doorway on the west with latticed side walls. It looks today much as it did in the 1938 aerial photograph, except the house is capped by an asphalt, not a standing seam metal roof.

The farm complex includes five non-contributing buildings. One is a rectangular pig barn, approximately 15' x 20', located just south of the stock barn building. Clark's 1938 drawings do not include this one-story wood building with a gable roof; construction is thought to have taken place in the 1960's. East of the barns and farm equipment building and across the road leading from the house to the farm complex is the second non-contributing building that houses animals, the chicken house. It is a metal building, approximately 20' x 30', capped by a shallow gable roof

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with two ventilators in the ridge gable. It is likely that this building was constructed in the 1950's when a steel riding arena and a steel swimming pool just south and east of the house were added. Immediately west of the farm equipment building is the third non-contributing building. It is a rectangular corrugated steel riding arena with a shallow gable roof. Measuring 60' x 90', it was built in the 1950's and used by the Ryersons for horse shows and riding in inclement weather. Today the building stands empty. It, too, is a non-contributing building in the district because of its age. Immediately to the rear of the silos is the fourth non-contributing building, a large semi-circular steel shed that resembles a quonset hut, measuring approximately 25' x 30', with a large door on the west side. It is used for storage. The fifth non-contributing building, a structure housing washrooms, with horizontal board and batten siding and topped by an asphalt tipped roof, was built in 1994.

The remaining wood farm buildings consist of two small one-story sheds, approximately 10' x 20'. Each has vertical board and batten siding and is capped by a shallow gable roof with simple ornamental bargeboard in the gable and extending around the eaves. Each has a pair of tall doors that swing open facing south. There are no windows. The sheds are located across the road that extends between the country house and the farm, south of the farm buildings, and on the north side of the drive in front of the garage connected to the house. These were likely built at the same time as the barn and farm equipment building and are contributing resources.

THE COUNTRY HOUSE

Early in 1939, an event occurred that encouraged the Ryersons to build a country house that was considerably more substantial than their log cabin. For years they had spent summers in a beach house at Aucoot Haven in Marion, Massachusetts. Then, in 1939, there was a devastating hurricane that virtually destroyed their property. Rather than repair their summer home, the Ryersons decided to build the "perfect small house", which they envisioned as an early Illinois farmhouse. (8) Construction on Nora and Edward L. Ryerson's country house took place 1940-42.

The architect for their country house on the Des Plaines River, Ambrose Cramer, was a family friend and half-brother of Ryerson's sister-in-law. Cramer, who was trained at Yale and studied at

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the Ecole des Beaux Arts, practiced with the firm of Dangler and Adler in Chicago from 1915 to 1917 and in association with David Adler from 1927-1929. He then opened his own office, designing several period revival residences, some of which were heavily influenced by classical architecture. The country house he designed for Ryerson reflects his Beaux Arts training and, in its formal symmetry and classical detailing, is a pristine example of classical revival architecture. Although it has a full portico of columns, not the more common temple front, its detailing gives the building a stylistic association with modest Greek Revival homes built in the 1840's and 1850's, many of which were farmhouses. In fact, the inspiration for the design of the house was a specific Greek Revival farmhouse, the Anson Rogers House, one of two similar houses (the other was the Orson Rogers house), built in the late 1840's in Marengo, Illinois, a small town in McHenry County, west of the district. Ryerson's wife, Nora, refers to it in her reminiscences on the origin of Brushwood Farm. (9)

A 1940 site plan shows that Cramer also designed the landscape and his stationery includes "Landscaping" as one of his services. The design at the rear of the house, which reflects Cramer's Beaux Arts training, is laid out symmetrically and is visually an extension of the house. The location chosen for the Ryersons' house, south and east of the farm buildings, was undoubtedly selected because of its slight elevation; the house was sited so it had a view across farm fields toward the Des Plaines River.

The approach to the house has not changed since 1942. Entrance is through a gate on the south side of Aptakisic Road, about a half mile west of Riverwoods Road. The gate consists of two square red brick piers that are about 5' high and topped with wood caps. On each side there are two similar piers that are about 3' high forming an "L". These piers are connected by three horizontal slats. A fence gate with three slats swings open onto a curving drive that heads south through a wooded landscape, then turns west towards the house. Just before the turn is a wide grassy opening in the trees, extending west toward the house. In the Spring it is a field of trillium from which the house can be viewed. To the east is a road leading to three non-contributing structures located at the turn in the road: a house that once was the gardener's cottage and was moved from across the river, and a recently-constructed garage and shed.

The road leading to the house is informal and curves through the woods until an oval drive is reached. At that point, the approach is formal and symmetrical, taking its cue from the classical

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symmetry of the house. The oval drive leads up to the entrance to the house. Just in front of the house, on the west side of the oval drive, is a low stone mounting block which originally would have been used to gracefully mount a horse or enter a carriage. To the south of the oval, is the large parking lot. At the point where the oval drive begins, the road continues back north to Aptakisic Road toward the farm buildings. A drive heading west, just north of the house, leads into the garage. Although they were never constructed, Cramer's site plan shows two buildings that were to be used as guest houses located directly across from one another on the north and south sides of the oval drive.

The massing of the Ryersons' country house is somewhat irregular, though it basically takes the form of a "U". It is long and narrow, approximately 180' x 30' with short legs of the "U" at the rear. The central section of the house, which is 1-1/2 stories, is capped by a dark red tile gable roof with a chimney on each end. Two short hyphens connect the central section to the two wings that extend slightly east at the front of the house and west at the rear, forming the "U". These wings are capped by red tile gable roofs. The overall square footage of the house, not including a 24' x 28' garage, is 5230 square feet. The house contains ten family living and service rooms on the first floor and three servants' bedrooms and a linen room on the second. The house is constructed of an orange-red brick taken from a building dating from the late 19th or early 20th century that was being demolished, the Hanover Woolen Mill in Hanover, (near Galena), Illinois. Six rows of stretchers alternate with a row of headers. Trim is of wood that has been painted white. The windows are double-hung, 6/6 with stone sills. Cramer remarked in a letter to Mrs. Ryerson that in addition to the "pink" brick he found 21 stone sills of the 28 he would be needing for the house. (10)

The east front facade of the house is divided into seven sections. Although the front is not absolutely symmetrical, the overall impression is one of symmetry because the projecting masonry sections are symmetrical. The center block is 44' wide. Its eight-foot-deep front porch, with the roof supported by six square posts with molded capitals, is reached by four shallow steps. It is five bays wide, with four double-hung 6/6 windows that have wood panelling at the base and stone lintels. There are louvered wood shutters extending from the bottom of the lintels to the wood porch floor on each of the windows. Centered between the two middle posts is the arched entrance. A panelled door flanked by two, three-pane sidelights with panels beneath them and topped by an elliptical fanlight is set back three feet behind the plane of the wall. In the center is a

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brass knocker that says "Brushwood". On the north wall of the panelled recess is a bell pull. Hanging from the ceiling in the center of the porch is a wrought-iron lantern. There are three, 6/6 dormer windows, topped by pediments, in the roof. At the north and south ends of the roof, set in the center of the ridge, are large square chimneys with molded brick caps.

Flanking the center block are the two, 10' long one-story hyphens, each with an arched multipane double-hung window with a stone sill plate. There is wood panelling between the window and the sill plate. The two, 21' side wings attached to the hyphens project three feet from the plane of the wall and are topped by front-facing gable roofs with molded wood pediments in the gable. On the east facade of each of these wings are two, 6/6 shuttered windows with flat stone lintels and black louvered shutters. A large rectangular chimney extends above the roof ridge at each end. Beyond the north wing and set back nine feet is the servants' hall, which is 14' wide and has a center door flanked by two double-hung windows. It is constructed of wood and sheathed in clapboards. Connected to the servants' hall at the north end of the house is the 22' x 25' foot garage. Set several feet into the ground, below the level of the front of the house, the garage has three small six-pane windows and is topped by a side gable roof. Beyond the south wing is an 8' wide wood frame section, with a single double-hung 6/6 window, that contains bathrooms. It is set back 12' and topped by a flat roof with wood scallops underneath the cornice. There is a ramp that was recently installed to provide a public entrance to the bathrooms.

The south elevation is in three sections. To the east is the endwall of the brick south wing. It contains a French door with nine panes and is flanked by black louvered shutters. On the projecting clapboard bathroom section, there are two doors facing south, reached by a ramp, with one double-hung 6/6 window facing east and one facing west. The one facing east has louvered shutters. Continuing west is the slightly lower wing that extends from the south wing of the main house and contains Mrs. Ryerson's bedroom. Projecting south, between the bathroom section and her bedroom is a cast iron ornamental porch, which was originally screened, resting on a two-foot limestone parapet wall. It served as her sleeping porch. Porches such as this were advertised in the 1930's in issues of Country Life in America and were readily available from catalogues. The south facade is composed of a central interior chimney flanked by two French doors, with eight lights on the top and panelling on the bottom, that open from the bedroom onto the sleeping porch.

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The west elevation of the house, with its two projecting wings, forms a "U". The west elevation of the south wing which is sheathed in clapboards, has a flat projecting tripartite bay window with a shallow projecting cornice and a flat roof. The north and south sides of the bay each have a double-hung 6/6 window with curving muntins that form a point at the top. The wide west end of the bay is configured into three sections with a wide center double-hung window that is 5/5 flanked by narrow double-hung windows that are 2/2 with pointed muntins at the top. There is panelling at the bottom of the bay. Above the bay is a triangular clapboard pediment with a semi-circular fanlight in the peak of the gable. The north side of the south wing has a double-hung 6/6 window and a French door with nine lights opening onto a porch. This porch, which has four turned posts, supports a slightly sloping shed roof.

The central block of the west elevation is seven bays wide on the first floor. In the center is a doorway that matches the front door. It is set back 3' behind the plane of the wall and consists of a panelled door with nine lights, two, three-pane sidelights with panels beneath and an elliptical fanlight. There are four double-hung 6/6 windows in the center block. Like on the front, the roof contains three dormers with double-hung 6/6 windows topped by pediments. On each side of the center block are French doors with nine lights and panelling below. Each door is topped by a pediment.

The north wing contains the parlor. The elevation facing south features a broad porch with four square posts supporting a low-pitched shed roof. The west facade has two French doors with twelve lights and topped by a pediment flanking a single double-hung 6/6 window with a flat stone lintel. At the west end of this wing is a projecting three-sided bay with two double-hung 6/6 windows flanking a double-hung 5/5 window. The west wall of the servants' hall, which has a decorative cast iron porch similar to Mrs. Ryerson's sleeping porch, and the west wall of the garage, which has three small six-pane windows, are set back 35' from the west wall of the parlor.

Three sections of the house can be seen from the north elevation. The western end, which is the north wall of the north wing, has three bays of double-hung 6/6 windows with flat stone lintels. The window to the east has no shutters. The two to the west, flanking a broad rectangular exterior brick chimney, have black louvered shutters. Also visible on this elevation, just south of the garage is the clapboard end wall of the servants' hall. The north section is the garage, which is built of stone and capped by a gable roof with a cupola in the center of the ridge. The garage has

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a modern panelled door with a clapboard gable above that has a pair of doors with diagonal bracing and a beam hoist in the center. The driveway, which is below the landscaped grade of the front and rear of the house, links up to the road to the farm.

The Interior

The overall impression of the interior is quite similar to that experienced on the exterior. The house is dominated by a sense of symmetry and a refinement of detailing that is derived from classical sources.

The plan for the first floor of the Ryersons' country house, where all of the family living rooms are located, is made up of rooms opening off of a single long spine. That spine is a hallway that is 7' wide and 75' long and that runs along the west side of the house. It is entered from a large 8' x 16' entrance hall, which has two openings on the north wall. The one on the west contains book shelves; the one on the east is a doorway to the sitting room/dining room. Between these two is a fireplace with oversized brick and a simple wood mantel. It has an old cast iron stove in front of it. Across, on the south wall, are two doors. The one on the west opens into a closet; the one on the east is a doorway to the ladies' room hall and guest room. There are wide crown moldings surrounding the room. At the west end is an elliptical arch to the long hallway. In the center of the long hallway, and directly opposite the front door, is a doorway that, except for having sidelights of etched glass with a fleur des lis pattern and a door with nine lights instead of panelling, is identical to the front doorway. This door opens on the rear gardens. Both doors are surrounded by wide moldings and topped by elliptical arches with a raised keystone. In the center of the entrance hall is a 19th century ornamental iron hanging fixture with etched glass globes.

The long hall opening off the entrance hall has flooring of wide pine boards. The walls have beaded vertical wood wainscoting, and the ceiling has wide crown moldings. The windows, all of which face west, have louvered shutters that fold into the wall and radiators beneath the windows.

Breaking the long space are five elliptical arches. Two define the space where the north and south walls of the entrance hall are located: one marks the opening to the passageway to an alcove east of the parlor; the fourth marks the opening to the passageway with doors to the guest room and

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Mrs. Ryerson's porch, and the fifth is an archway to the bedrooms that was created in the early 1970's just after the Ryersons died and the Lake County Forest Preserve took over the property.

The house was designed with three distinct areas. One was for family living, one for family bedrooms, and one for servants' bedrooms.

The family living rooms and the service rooms accommodating daily life are located on the north side of the house. Immediately north of the entrance hall is the room noted as the dining room on the plans, but it served as more than a dining room. The area that opens right off the entrance hall is a small sitting room-library, with book shelves and built-in cabinets on the west wall. On the south wall is a fireplace with a firebox that has bricks in a herringbone pattern and Italian glazed tiles with figures in a pastoral setting. Turned wood posts support the mantel. The walls and ceiling are sheathed in tongue and groove panelling. This cozy room was typically used for small family gatherings. A large rectangular opening separates the sitting area from the dining area, which has wainscoting that matches the wall treatment in the sitting room. The windows facing east both have window seats. There are two panelled doors symmetrically placed on the north wall. One is to a closet; one is a swinging door to the pantry. A panelled door on the west side of the dining area opens into the long hallway.

The other major family living space in the north side of the house was the parlor. It is reached through the long hallway which contains a small passageway that has a coffered ceiling and coffered walls and is topped by an elliptical arch with a raised keystone. Through the passageway, and through a small rectangular vestibule space with coffered ceiling and walls (that have flush panelled closet doors for firewood) is the door to the alcove leading to the parlor. The alcove, which was often used for family musicales, is a 9' x 18' space. Just west of the alcove and separated from the alcove by a broad elliptical arch with a raised keystone, the parlor has wood wainscoting, a fireplace with classical detailing, and a window seat in the bay at the west end of the room. On the east wall of the alcove are two symmetrical doors. The door to the north is a false door. The south door opens onto a passageway to the first floor service areas. These include the pantry, the kitchen, and servants' dining room. Both the pantry and the kitchen have their original white steel cabinets with glass doors and stainless steel countertops. There is red linoleum on the floors and acoustical tile on the ceiling. There is a short door to the garage attic off the servants' dining room, which has no decorative detailing.

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The family bedroom area is located to the south of the entrance hall. The guest room and the Ryerson's bedrooms are reached from the long hallway. There is also a door to the guest room off the entrance hall. The east door on the south wall of the entrance hall opens into the "ladies' room", a 6' x 7' space, with a powder room off it. The ladies' room opens into the guest room, which is 15' x 17'. It has a fireplace, with a simple wood mantel, against the east wall and is flanked by two recessed windows with window seats. To the east of the guest room, at the end of the west hallway, were Mr. and Mrs. Ryerson's bedrooms. These were originally reached through two doors opening from a passageway at the south end of the hallway. There is a doorway to the wood porch on the south end of the rear of the house off this passageway.

The first alteration to the plan of the house occurred in the long passageway right after the house was completed when the closets in Mr. Ryerson's bedroom were taken out, a small arched opening was constructed and a stairway to the second floor servants' bedrooms was installed on the east side of the hallway to Mr. Ryerson's bedroom. The second and last alteration was made in 1972, when the Lake County Forest Preserve took possession of the property, and it became known as the Ryerson Conservation Area. At this time the room configuration was altered under the supervision of New York architect Edward Larabee Barnes, whose father owned one of the cabins. The doorways to each of the Ryerson's bedrooms were sealed off, and an entrance was opened up at the end of the hallway. The Ryerson's bathrooms at the south end of the house were remodeled for public use. Like the adjacent guest room, Mr. Ryerson's bedroom, which is 11' x 16', has a fireplace against the east wall flanked by windows. Mrs. Ryerson's bedroom, which is on the west side of the house, has a fireplace against the south wall. It is flanked by a window and a door to the screened cast iron sleeping porch. On the east end of the north wall is a doorway to the north porch. To the west is the square bay which has a window seat.

The servants' bedroom area is located on the second floor, where there are three dormer-lit rooms and a hallway running north and south. The original stair to the servants' bedrooms is off the servants' hall, next to the alcove on the first floor.

Aside from the alterations to the bedroom wing, there were no other structural changes to the house when it was converted to offices and a visitors' center. Installation of can lights and large translucent light panels, the addition of bookshelves and institutional furnishings constitute cosmetic interior changes.

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There have been some alterations to the district since 1945 that fit the character of the district and a few that are more intrusive, but were made to accommodate the present public use as a conservation area. Although the Albright cabin was built in the 1950's and so cannot be considered a contributing structure, it is compatible in size and materials to the cabins. The steel buildings that were constructed by the Ryersons in the 1950's, including the chicken house, a steel quonset building for storage, a storage shed, and a steel horse arena have also been constructed too recently to be contributing buildings. Nevertheless, they do not detract from the significance of the district because of their function or scale. The wood gardener's cottage, its garage, and shed, and the wood pig barn are similar in scale to the 1938 farm buildings and also don't detract from the significance of the district. A steel pool, located about 50' south of the house was built in the 1950's and removed when the property was taken over by the Forest Preserve. There were also steel grain storage tanks that have been taken down. A caboose, which once served as a changing house for the pool, is no longer on the property. In later years, after the period of significance, the Forest Preserve added trails, a council ring and some small bridge-like crosswalks to the property. Two wooden outhouses west of the barn have recently been replaced by a single washroom facility. Although the Borland and the Cramer cabins have been moved, their original appearance has been largely preserved, and the clearings where they were located are still visible because of the open areas and surrounding ornamental plantings. The most intrusive changes are two parking lots, one located south and east of the house and one located west of the pasture, north of the farm buildings.

Although there are the inevitable changes over time in the Edward L. Ryerson Area Historic District, largely due to the conversion of the property from private use to public use upon Nora and Edward L. Ryersons' deaths in 1971, the impact of these changes has been minimal and respectful of their wish that the property serve as a conservation area run by the Lake County Forest Preserve District. What remains on the property is a substantial amount of evidence of a way of life. Within the historic district the Ryersons and other prominent Chicagoans built log cabins as private getaways and Nora and Edward L. Ryerson built their country house, a significant example of Classical Revival architecture.

List of Resources:

Contributing: (15)

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Buildings (10)

- Edward L. Ryerson Country House
- Stock barn/two silos
- Farm equipment building
- Farmhouse
- Two wood sheds
- Edward L. Ryerson Cabin
- Hermon Dunlap Smith Cabin
- Ambrose Cramer Cabin
- Chauncey Borland Cabin

Sites (1)

- Open space

Structures (1)

- Corn crib

Objects (3)

- Gate
- Sculpture: "The Bird Girl"
- Pump

Non-contributing: (10)

Buildings (9)

- Ivan Albright Cabin
- Pig barn
- Quonset hut
- Riding arena
- Chicken house
- Gardener's cottage
- Gardener's cottage garage
- Gardener's cottage shed

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Washroom

Structures (1)

1950s' dam

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

Locally significant, the Edward L. Ryerson Area Historic District meets Criterion A, under social history, and Criterion C, under architecture, for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Its period of significance dates from 1923, when Chicago area residents Frederick A. Preston and Everett L. Millard purchased land to build modest log cabins, until 1945. The district includes a log cabin constructed for Ryerson in 1928 as a weekend getaway and three others built by friends of the Ryersons between 1935 and 1940, farm buildings designed for the Ryersons by the architectural firm of Edwin H. Clark and Herbert Banse in 1938, the Ryersons' country house designed by architect Ambrose Cramer in 1942, and dirt paths and roads connecting the buildings--all in a wooded setting along the Des Plaines River. Taken as a whole, the cabins reflect a way of life of several prominent Chicago and North Shore families who led their economic and social lives in the city of Chicago but who had simple cabins in the country that served as weekend retreats. Although few Illinois examples of log cabins built for recreational visits during the 1920's-1940's have been documented, numerous books and articles on twentieth century log buildings indicate that log cabins were a building type regularly constructed in some states such as Minnesota and Wisconsin by people wishing to get away to the wilderness from life's normal routine. The Ryersons' country house, with its accompanying gentleman's farm, is significant as representative of numerous examples built by successful Chicagoans who, attracted by the tranquility of country life, built country houses on large pieces of property. Significant as an excellent example of Classical Revival architecture, the house was designed in a period style, the kind of architecture clients typically sought for country houses because of the comfort and respectability associated with historical revival houses. The Ryerson country house is particularly noteworthy for its detailing and exhibits a high level of artistic value and integrity. The architect-designed farm complex, although primarily utilitarian in its simplicity--like most farm buildings--displays design cohesiveness and excellent integrity.

Because of a devoted interest in the conservation of their property for public use, the Ryersons transferred it to the Lake County Forest Preserve District and convinced the other owners who

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used the area as a retreat to do the same. All of their property that is owned by the Forest Preserve is today known as the Ryerson Conservation Area. That part being nominated looks considerably different from the residential and commercially-developed surroundings, and, because of the relatively few changes to the property, retains considerable integrity to convey the significance of the historic district.

HISTORY

The history of the district as it looks today dates back to 1923, when log cabin retreats were first constructed on the Des Plaines River in this area. There were, according to property records and family reminiscences, three cabins (no longer in existence) ~~was~~ built between 1923 and 1928. These belonged to Frederick A. Preston, Everett L. Millard and Cecil Barnes. Preston, who lived in Highland Park, bought his land from John E. Barrett and Minnie B. Barrett, local farmers, in 1923 (12), and built a small log cabin on the river south of where, the main road to the cabins, Cabin Road, turns west. The second belonged to Everett Millard, who lived in a large log home designed by William W. Boyington on several acres of riparian property in Highland Park. He bought his land from William and Isabelle Whigham (13), direct descendants of Daniel Wright, one of Lake County's first settlers. His son, Everett, Jr., recalls that his father bought a farm east of Milwaukee Avenue on both sides of the river, sold the land west of the river to a farmer and kept the land to the east--continually adding to it while selling off pieces (14) and built a small log cabin on his property. One of the parcels Millard sold was to Cecil Barnes and his wife Margaret Ayer Barnes, who were friends of Millard's and who lived in Lake Forest. They bought twelve acres. Their son, architect Edward Larabee Barnes, fondly remembers the little cabin on the river, which their family visited practically every weekend. Located west on Cabin Road, it was shingled, not log, but very primitive in its conveniences. There were no toilets, and the family lit a fire to keep warm (15).

The Barnes introduced life on the Des Plaines River to their friends, the Ryersons, who were to build their own cabin there in 1928. Edward L. Ryerson's log weekend retreat was also not to be a great summer house, with all the luxuries of a city home, like many large summer places that were actually mansions, built in the outer suburbs of Chicago by architects such as Howard Van

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Doren Shaw or Benjamin Marshall. It was to be a simple place to escape. In an editorial written in 1929 in House and Garden the writer summed up the meaning of such a simple getaway, where rooms were filled with intimate memories. He wrote:

Life in the city is hedged about with various restrictions which we cannot alter. Our city homes are more or less governed by certain observances which we must carry out. Business demands and considerations for entertaining have always to be kept in mind. Time spent in country living, then, during the brief time which we can safely allot to relaxation, should, for best results, be given over to the pursuit of the simpler things of life.(11)

Edward L. Ryerson's getaway is the earliest remaining cabin built on the property. Edward's daughter, Nancy Ryerson Ranney, gave a talk in 1974 in which she reminisced about the origin of their small log cabin weekend retreat.

It was 46 years ago this month that my parents first saw this lovely part of the Illinois landscape. They had "motored" out, as mother writes in her journal, to call on the Cecil Barnes, who had a cabin here on the Des Plaines, "for the day was too good to be wasted in the city." My parents loved this place from the moment they saw it and when they found a piece next to the Barnes' cottage was for sale, they knew they must have it. By the following Wednesday they had bought it from the Whigham family (16).

Although none of the three cabins that preceded Ryerson's still exists, existing foundation walls indicate the location of the Preston cabin and vegetation patterns show the location of all of the cabins. Henry Preston sold their family's cabin and 15 acres of property to the Lake County Forest Preserve District in 1969. Everett Millard sold his cabin to the Stetson family, who in turn sold it to David Dangler sometime in the 1950's. At the time Dangler, who grew up in Lake Forest, lived in the city. He described the cabin as being built of logs, laid horizontally, with a slightly peaked roof. It had two rooms, no electricity and a pump for water. Heat came from a firewood stove, and the toilet facility was an outhouse. He remembers loving to hike in the woods at his private getaway.(17) Dangler sold his seven acres to the Forest Preserve in 1970.

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Located along the gently curving Des Plaines River or surrounded by forest, the environment of these cabins and those built subsequently is important to their significance. They were situated on several-acre parcels of land, accessed by roads and paths cut through the woods. It clearly was important to the owners that their surroundings, despite some ornamental plantings around the cabins, be unspoiled just as the facilities provided in the cabins were primitive. The extensive wooded acreage ensured privacy and a simple way of life considerably different from the more structured social life found in Chicago and its North Shore suburbs.

THE CONTEXT

The construction of log cabins by affluent Chicago and North Shore families as private summer vacation homes seems to be an unusual phenomenon in the Chicago area and, indeed, in all of Illinois. Yet it has been a common practice for almost a century in some parts of the country. In the Adirondacks, in the Pacific Northwest, and in midwestern states such as Minnesota and Wisconsin, where there are hundreds of scenic lakes, one finds a number of enclaves of vacation cabins built of log.

The most well known and publicized example of a concentration of log homes is located in the Adirondack Mountains in upstate New York. Over a hundred of these complexes, known as camps, were built from the 1870's until about 1930 by a group of New York industrialists and financiers as private getaways and were characterized by the use of log and stone construction with decorative rustic ornamentation--appropriate to the surrounding unspoiled setting. They were built as part of a quest for healthy recreation away from the demands of big business and high society. In this respect, the social history of the cabins is quite similar to the cabins built along the Des Plaines River. But here the similarity ends. The camps were built a considerable distance from New York and not so accessible for a Sunday hike or a quiet family picnic. In addition, the buildings were very large and grew into huge complexes on vast parcels of land. Actually, life at the camps was not simple. Private railroad cars brought baggage and servants--all the trappings of an active social life that revolved around visiting neighbors for tea and entertaining guests. Comfort and luxury coexisted with a romantic notion of roughing it. (18) The closest getaway, similar to the Adirondacks, for Chicagoans, was Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, where a number of Chicago industrialists and professionals who knew each other built summer places beginning in the 1870's. But these were huge, often architect-designed homes, and in the case of

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most, very little attempt was made to look rustic. In addition, life in them was considerably more sophisticated than what the families who built log cabins along the Des Plaines River were seeking. They were farther from Chicago and second homes rather than simple places to spend a day away.

The log camp buildings of the Adirondacks testified to the wealth of their owners and were large and impressive, yet log buildings were to reach even greater dimensions in the construction of great log hotels. This began in the west and were built by the railroads in the country's first national parks. Among the earliest was the Old Faithful Inn (1903-4), a building characterized by the extravagant use of logs, constructed by the Northern Pacific Railroad at Yellowstone National Park. During the mid 1920's, a Los Angeles architect, Gilbert Stanley Underwood, took the concepts of rustic architecture that had developed and created entire village developments at Bryce (1925), Zion, and on the north rim of the Grand Canyon (1927). (19) In the hotels that were constructed, the public could enjoy recreational experiences in the wilderness similar to those of wealthy New Yorkers.

Private resort hotels built of log construction also came to be built in the early years of the twentieth century, and numerous examples can be found throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin. Several have been listed on the National Register. Burntside Lodge Historic District, built in 1914 in Ely, Minnesota, is a 21-acre property containing a large log hotel and over 20 rustic cabins, many built of horizontal log construction with fieldstone fireplaces. Grand View Lodge, built on the shore of a large lake near Brainard, Minnesota, is a similar resort, built in the mid 1920's.

In addition to large resorts, groups of wealthy individuals were forming associations to build rustic getaways. Many of these have been listed on the National Register. In 1910, a group of fifteen men from Duluth bought an old logging camp that contained 1000 acres and formed Tettegouche camp. They built fifteen log and half log buildings on an isolated forested area on the shore of Lake Superior. Like the Ryersons' property it was privately owned. In 1977 subsequent owners turned over the property to the Nature Conservancy, and two years later the State of Minnesota purchased the property and established Tettegouche State Park. In 1922, a group of six wealthy Minneapolis families purchased 1575 acres near Two Harbors, Minnesota, on Lake Superior, formed the Encampment Forest Association, and built a private vacation spot

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with a log lodge and cabins. Although there was never an association formed and no lodge, Chicagoans building along the Des Plaines River were constructing similar log buildings and seeking a similar experience.

The construction of log getaway cabins was a phenomenon that was catching on and, as the number of publications indicate, reached a peak of popularity in the 1920's. Martin C. Perdue has compiled a bibliography of nine books and 93 articles published between 1908 and 1934 on "The Second Log Houses Revival, 1890-1950" (20). This bibliography includes a book by Chilson Aldrich, The Real Log Cabin, which was published in 1928 and reprinted twelve times through 1946 and gives detailed instructions on a cabin's construction. He wrote, ". . .with increasing frequency, therefore, one finds that the genuine American is going back to the good old ancestral custom, bootlegging his pioneer kick as it were--and building himself a log cabin away from the honks of man." (21) Articles appeared on a variety of topics including one on the renaissance in log architecture, several on building your own log cabin (as well as rustic furniture) and many on warm recollections of the lure and the experience of living in them. Raymond A. Ellis, writing in the March, 1932, issue of the Woman's Home Companion, wrote, "There is something romantic in all of us that at times seeks the primitive and simple life of the country..." (22) The publications printing articles on log cabins included The Craftsman, House & Garden, Country Life in America, Better Homes and Gardens, Sunset, Harpers Bazaar, and Popular Mechanics, indicating the subject was available to a wide range of readers.

Log Structures and other rustic buildings were built as part of the National Parks, resorts, private recreation associations, and, in the 1930's, by the Civilian Conservation Corps in state and national parks and forests all over the country. By 1935, 452 CCC camps had been established, and in Illinois the Corps had already begun work on several state park lodge and cabin complexes. One, Starved Rock State Park, featured a rustic unhewn log lodge building and twelve cabins dating from 1933-1939.

The construction of log cabins as wilderness retreats was part of a national trend that began in the Adirondacks and continued in popularity through the thirties. During times of prosperity and times of financial hardship the log cabin retained its appeal. The Ryersons' log getaway and the several others that were built along the Des Plaines River are atypical in Illinois, yet in other parts of the country numerous log buildings were constructed, and it was not unusual for families to

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seek a vacation getaway in a log building that presented a lifestyle totally divorced from their normal business activities and social lives.

THE EDWARD L. RYERSON CABIN

Edward L. Ryerson's cabin was, in all likelihood, built just after those constructed by Preston, Millard, and Barnes. Soon after their visit to the Barnes', Ryerson bought 28 acres just west of them. The Ryerson family, many of whom kept journals, reminisced about life at the cabin, a life that in its primitive qualities emulated the life of an early Illinois pioneer like Daniel Wright. Edward Ryerson, Nancy and her brother Ned all wrote about the cabin in a way that explained why this existence was so important to the lives of those who chose to build a cabin getaway on the Des Plaines River. It was an intense time of Ryerson's life. His father had died in 1928; he became president of the family business, Ryerson Steel Company, then almost immediately took a leave of absence in 1932-3 to serve as founding chairman of the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission. In 1935, he presided over the merger of the Ryerson Steel Company with the Inland Steel Company. Between 1927 and 1936 he served as president of the Chicago Council of Social Agencies. Ryerson wrote about those difficult early years of the Depression in his privately printed journal, "Ryerson Chronicle: 1886-1964":

These were years of sorrow and triumph, of anxiety and thankfulness, of hope and bitter disappointment, all which brought about great changes in the lives and attitudes of people throughout the entire world. None could avoid feeling some effect, but the ability to escape from an intimate contact with the problems of the big city and big business provided an opportunity to regain confidence and to appreciate the joys that come from a happy and courageous family.

For us, the little log cabin in the woods, beside the Des Plaines river proved to be one of the greatest assets we have ever possessed. Always having been a city dweller, the cabin, built in 1928, provided a healthy and simple outlet for recreation during those weekends in the fall,

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winter and spring when nature offers so much. Our cabin was truly a hideout, and it demanded much in the way of self reliance: no telephone, no electricity, no central heat, and no plumbing by modern standards. What a joy to be isolated in the woods with one's family and to return the activities of the city and the troubles of the world with renewed enthusiasm and faith.

I feel certain that our children will always remember those days and nights at the cabin as among the happiest we have had together, and they have continued through all the years from 1928.(23)

Ryerson was correct. His children's recollections reflect loving memories. Nancy wrote:

Our cabin was the setting for many happy times in my youth. We thought it a joy to leave Astor Street to come to a place with no heat and no electricity. We swam in the clean river, canoed, skated for miles on black ice - no pollution then to keep the water from freezing - and several times we were snow-bound and snowshoed to Milwaukee Avenue to hitch a ride to Wheeling where we caught a train to the city. (24)

Ned wrote a chapter in his journals titled "Our Childhood was a Cabin". "Our childhood was a weekend cabin where we could hear each other's voices drift like smoke from the cabin to the Des Plaines River and could hear the sound of the river drift back to us at night. It was a log cabin surrounded by trees at the end of a dirt road . . ." He described interior details such as "1928" carved into the fireplace by his father, the double bunks in the bedroom, the casement windows--all of which survive. He wrote that their lives were very different from their city world that was filled with servants and the proprieties of life. These were quiet times, where the children were protected from the cold and dark outside. It was a place of escape as well as family fun. And it was a place where the family shared the sorrow of Edward's brother's death. Life there was so important to him that Ned wrote 38 pages about his childhood years at the cabin.(25)

Although over the years, the Des Plaines River has frequently flooded the Ryerson Cabin, it today looks much as it did during the years of its importance to the family and continues to reflect the life experienced there.

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In the years following construction of farm buildings in 1938 and a more permanent country house in 1942, the cabin continued to be used. The grandchildren played, had birthday parties and spent nights there. Family friends spent weekends. In 1942, Arthur Holly Compton of the University of Chicago, who was at that time managing the Manhattan Project, used the cabin as a refuge.

The Ryerson Cabin has the best integrity of those still standing in the district, but the existence of the remaining cabins, reflecting the lives of the families who spent weekends along the Des Plaines River, are important to the significance of the District.

THE HERMON DUNLAP SMITH CABIN

The cabin east of Cecil Barnes' property was owned by Hermon Dunlap (Dutch) Smith and his wife, Ellen Thorne Smith. Initially they shared the property with their friends, the Arthur Dixon's. In 1935, they purchased eight acres and built on the river. At the time Smith was vice president of Marsh & McLennan, the insurance brokerage firm where he was to become president and chairman. He also was an overseer of Harvard University. In Chicago, he served as president of the Community Fund of Chicago, the Newberry Library, and the Chicago Historical Society, and as a trustee of the University of Chicago, the Illinois Childrens Home & Aid Society, the Field Foundation, Lying-In Hospital, and the Illinois Society for the Prevention of Blindness. In Lake Forest, where he lived, Smith served as president of the Lake Forest Public Library and of the Board of Education.(26) Ellen Thorne Smith founded the Womens' Board at the Field Museum and during World War II, served as head of their ornithology department. She also was chairman of the board for Hull House and wrote "Banderlog", the newsletter for the Brookfield Zoo. The Smiths had an active business and community life like the Ryersons, and their family treasured their primitive cabin getaway. Their son Farwell recalls how much fun they had going out there on Sundays. Friends would bike or ride horses from the Onwentsia Club stables in Lake Forest to visit. Their family was devoted to the woods. They would chop wood, roast hot dogs, go bird watching in the woods, swim in the river and once even canoed into Chicago. (27) The setting was so important to "Dutch" Smith that, in 1940, he published The Des Plaines River 1673-1940: A Brief Consideration of its Names and History. Like the Ryersons, the Smiths transferred their

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cabin to the Forest Preserve in 1970. Their legacy continues today. Between 1984 and 1986, to honor the memory of the Smiths, the Smith Nature Trail was established, the Friends of Ryerson took form, the Smith cabin became used for exhibitions and the Smith Symposium became an annual event.

THE CHAUNCEY BORLAND CABIN

Chicago real estate executive Chauncey Borland built his log cabin sometime before 1941 on 15 acres along the Des Plaines River just southeast of the Millard Cabin and north of the Preston Cabin. Like his friend Edward L. Ryerson, he was a Chicago resident active on numerous boards. He lived at 2450 Lakeview, and served on the board of Continental Illinois Bank & Trust Co., the John Crerar Library, St. Lukes Hospital and the Old People's Home of Chicago.(28) He donated his property and cabin to the Forest Preserve which, in 1985, disassembled the cabin, numbered its pieces, and reassembled it north of Aptakisic Road next to the Ambrose Cramer Cabin for use as an interpretive center, for exhibitions and for the observation of wildlife.

Although the Borland Cabin has been moved, its move does not diminish the significance of the District, and Criteria Consideration B relating to moved properties does not have to be met. It is generally of less significance than the unmoved buildings and is one of only two cabins that have been relocated. When the cabin was moved, it was carefully situated in an area that is similar in character to its former location and that recalled the basic qualities of its historic setting. It was placed in a cleared area directly adjacent to forested land. Because when it was moved its historic features were carefully preserved and it still has the majority of its original fabric, the cabin does not have to meet Criteria Consideration E relating to reconstructed properties.

THE AMBROSE CRAMER CABIN

The history of the cabin, built in 1940, that was designed by architect Ambrose Cramer for himself, is somewhat different from that of the other cabins since Cramer's connection to Ryerson was business as well as personal. The cabin was built on land owned by Ryerson and leased to Cramer as part of his architectural fee for designing Ryerson's country house. Cramer did not use the cabin long, for he retired to Maine in 1942, shortly after he completed his work for Ryerson.

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It remained on its site, just off Cabin Road north of Ryerson's cabin, until it was moved in its entirety on a flatbed trailer to its present location north of Aptakisic Road in the early 1970's.

Although this cabin has been moved, its relocation does not diminish the significance of the district, and Criteria Consideration B relating to moved properties does not have to be met. Like the Borland Cabin, it is generally of less significance than the buildings in the district that have not been moved. It was situated on a similar site, in a setting that was close to a major road and less forested than that where the Ryerson and Smith Cabins are located.

THE IVAN ALBRIGHT CABIN

A distinguished and nationally-recognized Chicago artist, Ivan Albright built his cabin for himself and his wife Josephine Medill Patterson Reeve, (whose family can trace its ancestry to the founders of the Chicago Tribune), away from the river, in the woods just south of the east-west section of Cabin Road east of the Smith property. Albright, who was also the designer, studied architecture at the University of Illinois and once worked for Dwight Heald Perkins. Edward Larabee Barnes recalled that several of the cabins were sided in clapboards and not log buildings. (29) This is the sole remaining example of the sided type. Albright sold his cabin to the Forest Preserve in 1968. Although this 25' x 30' cabin, built in the 1950's, is a non-contributing building in the District because of its age, it complements the significance of the others that were built earlier because of its design, size, and use.

OTHER PROPERTIES

There were a handful of other families who also had land and/or cabins on the Des Plaines River that were turned over to the Forest Preserve. Dr. and Mrs. John Schweppe and Walter Fisher both had property but it is believed that they had no cabins. Fisher, who lived in an avant garde house designed by his brother Howard Fisher in Winnetka, was, like the other property owners, a prominent Chicago citizen. An attorney, he once served as chairman of the Illinois Commerce Commission. Their property, plus a cabin built by Ainslie Sawyer north of the river, east of Albright's cabin, and sold ca. 1960 to Rosecrans Baldwin, and those originally owned by Frederick Preston, Everett Millard and Cecil Barnes were deeded over to the Forest Preserve, and

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the cabins were demolished. Those that remain are remnants of a time when these small humble buildings were a weekend refuge for many of Chicago's most prominent citizens. Here they found a rural retreat--in an enclave which was not conceived as a commune and where there was not a great deal of social interaction, yet where all the original owners knew each other and shared a common love of privacy, of simple recreation around the river, and of the woods.

THE FARM BUILDINGS

Edward L. Ryerson's use of his property on the Des Plaines River began to change in 1938, when Ryerson was 52 years old. It was then that the Ryersons' constructed farm buildings and shortly thereafter a larger, architecturally significant, country house that was to be used not only for weekend visits but as a summer residence. His acquisition of land for a farm began with concern over the future of his cabin retreat. To quote Ryerson, writing in his chronicles:

Suddenly, a situation developed that threatened the peaceful existence of our cabin. The owners of a large tract of farm and woodland adjacent to us decided to sell their property for the creation of a subdivision with, perhaps, one quarter acre lots for small home sites. To me, the cabin that had already meant so much, and the beautiful woodlands adjoining with trees that had stood there for more than two hundred years couldn't be sacrificed to meet the demands of population explosion. (30)

Ryerson solved his problem by acquiring the 250 acres that were put up for sale by Col. William Whigham, the grandson of Daniel Wright.

In order to make use of the land Ryerson had acquired in 1938, he immediately built a small farm. Although farm buildings, which are basically utilitarian, are seldom architect-designed, it was not unusual for the owners of large country estates to hire distinguished architects. For the design of his farm buildings, Ryerson selected the firm of Edwin Hill Clark, a Winnetka resident and a distinguished architect well known on the North Shore. In addition to many handsome Georgian Revival houses, Clark designed the Winnetka Village Hall (1925) and the Lake Forest Library (1931). He has received considerable recognition for the North Shore Country Day School in Winnetka, the Spanish Court and Teatro del Lago in Wilmette, Brookfield Zoo in Brookfield and the Lincoln Park Aquarium in Chicago. Existing plans indicate Clark's work for Ryerson included

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a dairy barn and a farm equipment building that provided a residence for the farm hand and was used to store tractors, farm machines, and the buggies for family sleigh rides. In their whitewashed simplicity, these buildings evidence the same quality Clark imbued in his more stylistically detailed public and residential work. Because of their similarity to the barn and farm equipment building, it is highly likely that Clark's firm designed the farmhouse and two sheds just north of the country house. All of these buildings, with their white-washed vertical board and batten siding, share a simplicity of design. Additions to the farm buildings are minimal and compatible in scale and materials with Clark's original designs. Both on the exterior and interior, the buildings have excellent integrity and reflect their intended farm use.

The Ryersons had Clark design a barn that, with its gable roof, three-bay configuration and broad central aisle is characteristic of a New England barn with a gable entry, as described by Thomas Hubka. (31) Ryerson started his farm with a dairy herd of Guernsey cows. Soon, however, he found the care of a milking herd presented a difficult labor problem and offered little satisfaction, so decided to liquidate the milk business. Though he continued to raise some beef cattle and Yorkshire pigs, Ryerson decided in the 1940's to try his hand at raising Arabian horses. This venture became a real source of interest and pleasure to both Edward and his wife, Nora. Their horses won many blue ribbons and they enjoyed exceedingly good sales of their offspring. But equally important, they loved both the exercise of riding and the chance "to see nature in all of its beautiful stages along our trails." (32) From the time the farm buildings were completed until Edward's death in 1971, the Ryersons especially enjoyed the pleasures that the Arabian horses brought their entire family.

It was not unusual for farm buildings to be a significant component of country house estates. Country Life in America, which was first published in 1901, focused, not just on country houses but on life in the country. The magazine contained ads for fine riding horses, stable and barn equipment and articles on horse breeding. Even though farms were often an important part of country living on large estates, unlike farms in English country places, they rarely, if ever, supported the house. Rather, it has been pointed out by Clive Aslet in The American Country House, farming provided an opportunity to enjoy active outdoor pursuits, to express solidity with the soil, to provide a wholesome environment for children and to suggest a link with the nation's agrarian past. It also perpetuated the memory of the estate's previous incarnation when the land was worked by small farmers. Aslet notes, "Such was the symbolic importance of the farm to the

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country house owners that many of them kept the word in the name of the house." (33) This is true of a number of Lake County farm estates. J. Ogden Armour's 1000-acre estate in Lake Forest was known as "Melody Farm". "Arcady Farm", Arthur Meeker's estate in Lake Forest, was a huge dairy farm. Ryerson's place was to be known, from the time the farm buildings were constructed as "Brushwood Farm". The Ryerson family loved "Brushwood Farm", and their children fondly remember the fun everyone had playing with the animals.

THE EDWARD L. RYERSON COUNTRY HOUSE

At the same time that Ryerson was acquiring more property on the Des Plaines River and building his farm, circumstances changed. For many years the Ryersons had been spending summers at "Aucoot Haven," their summer home in Marion, Massachusetts. In 1938, their property was almost totally devastated by a hurricane. With advancing years, children who were grown and the impending war in Europe presenting new and difficult problems for Ryerson, he decided to sell the Marion house and built a country house where they could spend summers nearer to home.

Numerous country houses had been built in the previous decades throughout nearby Lake Forest, with estates occupying increasingly large parcels of property in the area on the west side of the community and in villages west of Lake Forest. Landscape historian Norman T. Newton called this the era of the country house, reflecting the proliferation of major estates and gardens built between 1895 and 1930. (34) He probably used 1930 as the cut-off date because their construction generally slowed with the Depression and impending war. The typical country house was a small estate with varying amounts of acreage. Ten to fifteen was common. Sometimes they were built around a country club like Onwentsia in Lake Forest. Many were the primary residences of their owners. Others were used as summer retreats from the city, in which the out of doors played a dominant role in the owner's style of life. Although most prominent Chicago businessmen with large summer places tended to build them farther from Chicago in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, Northern Michigan or on the east coast in Maine or Massachusetts, several families including the William McCormick Blairs (who built in Lake Bluff), the Edward Bennetts (who built in Lake Forest) and the Edward L. Ryersons, who lived on the near north side of Chicago, had summer places within an easy commute.

Edward L. Ryerson, acknowledged as an important Chicagoan, was described in his obituary,

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August 3, 1971, as "a leader in the worlds of business, education, civic and church affairs and society." (35) Edward L. Ryerson was born in 1886 and grew up on the near north side of Chicago. In 1914 he married Nora Butler, who was called "one of the most attractive women in the Chicago Society circle". (36) They had three children: a daughter, Mrs. George (Nancy) Ranney, a son, Edward L. Ryerson (Ned), and a second son, Morton B. Ryerson (Bunny), who was killed in action in the Philippines in 1944. They had numerous grandchildren. Throughout their married life, Edward and Nora Ryerson lived at 1431 Astor Street -- spending weekends and summers at their country place. All the while, Ryerson remained very active in the city. He served as Chairman of the Board of Inland Steel from 1940 until his retirement at age 65 in 1953. Leaders of companies frequently serve on many boards, but Ryerson was particularly civic minded, and throughout his life, he immersed himself in numerous activities. President Dwight D. Eisenhower appointed him as a member of the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities. He also became the founding chairman and president of Chicago's educational television station, president of the John Crerar Library, president of the Chicago Orchestral Association, president of the Hospital Planning Council of Metropolitan Chicago, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Chicago Community Trust, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the University of Chicago and served as a director on the boards of many large companies including Northern Trust, Quaker Oats, Illinois Bell, and the Santa Fe Railroad. With a summer house close by, Ryerson could maintain an active professional life yet spend time with his family in an area he dearly loved.

A member of an old Chicago family, Edward was the grandson of Joseph T. Ryerson--founder of one of the country's largest steel companies. Starting with an iron goods store in 1842, Joseph and his son and grandsons developed the company, known as Joseph T. Ryerson & Son, into an international operation merging, in 1935, with Inland Steel Company. Ryerson entered the business in 1909, becoming president in 1929 and retained that title when the company merged with Inland Steel. Well recognized in the industry, he received a medal from the American Iron and Steel Institute "in recognition of his leadership in creating a better public understanding of the steel industry and its economic importance to our nation." (37)

Although extremely active in his business, Ryerson was deeply involved with the welfare agencies of Chicago. He found himself so immersed in the unemployment situation created by the Depression that he took a leave of absence from the company during the early 1930's in order to

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head up a plan to organize an emergency relief campaign. What followed immediately was a plan to pass state legislation to create an organization to deal with the problem through state funds. Out of this the first Illinois Public Aid Commission was created, and Ryerson was named by the Governor to be chairman.

Ryerson also distinguished himself in education. His degree came from Yale University, followed by graduate work at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In later years, he received honorary degrees from Yale, Kenyon College, Williams College, the University of Chicago and Ripon College. In civic affairs, because of his many volunteer activities, he received numerous awards including the Rosenberg Medal from the University of Chicago, Northwestern University's Centennial Award and the first Alexis de Tocqueville Service Award from the Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago. An active member of the Episcopal church, Ryerson served as a director of the Episcopal Church Foundation. Membership in the Attic, Chicago, Old Elm, Union league, and Cliff Dwellers Club, among others, contributed to an active social life. This list of his activities is only a representative sampling of Ryerson's business and community work. It is no wonder that his country house life offered a much desired respite. Nora Ryerson described their summer retreat as "A happy home where living is informal and easy." (38)

One reason they loved their country house with such fervor undoubtedly stems from the active role both Nora and Edward Ryerson played in its design and construction. Ryerson undoubtedly inherited from his father, also named Edward L. Ryerson, a special interest in his home. In 1916, the senior Ryerson hired Howard Van Doren Shaw to design Havenwood, an exquisite Italian villa, in Lake Forest (demolished). As an outgrowth of the senior Edward L. Ryerson's interest in architecture, he established a trust fund to offer fellowships to students in the field of landscape and architecture. His son displayed a similar interest in his own country house as is born out in numerous letters between the architect, Ambrose Cramer, and the Ryersons.

Architect Ambrose Cramer understood what the Ryersons wanted. They had just finished building a farm and now wanted to construct a farmhouse. It had to be in keeping with the land and perhaps its history. Their search for what they wanted began with that in mind. They also knew the period style they wanted to draw inspiration from--Greek Revival. Nora wrote,

In the 1840's the Classic Culture which had flourished in the Eastern and Southern States,

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reached the Middle West. In Illinois it came up from the South along the Mississippi River - from the East by the Ohio River - as far north as Galena, then the metropolis of the State. Greek Revival architecture flourished and many houses were built here in the Midwest, in that style - though smaller and simpler than those in the South and East.(39)

Indeed, they even found a "lovely little house," which could serve as a model for the summer house they wanted. Their inspiration was to be an 1840's Greek Revival farm house in Marengo, Illinois, in McHenry County. The house, which is still lived in, stands 1-1/2 stories with five bays set under a columned portico that extends across the front of the house. Nora Ryerson referred specifically to the Anson Rogers House, built as one of two almost identical homes for two brothers, Anson and Orson Rogers, who owned a dairy farm. Nora continued, "Informed and inspired, we started in earnest to build a truly early Illinois home." (40)

Ambrose Cramer was a logical choice for the Ryerson's architect. "Because his family had settled in Galena in its early years, he had the knowledge and the feeling for that particular style." (41) Close family ties also probably influenced their decision, since Cramer's half sister was married to Edward Ryerson's brother, Donald.

Although Ambrose Cramer designed relatively few buildings, he had excellent training and a distinguished career. The son of a banker, Cramer was born in 1891 in Lake Forest. He graduated from Yale in 1913 and in 1917 went to work for two years for the architectural firm of Dangler and Adler. He then served in World War I, as architect for the Great Lakes Naval Training Station in North Chicago, Illinois and in France, where he was decorated with the French Legion of Honor. Following his tour of duty, Cramer spent four years studying at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Upon his return from school, Cramer renewed his acquaintance with David Adler and worked for him from 1927 to 1929 when he established his own firm. (42)

Cramer's work is known today through his work for Adler and through published articles. His initials appear on Adler drawings for the Alfred Hamill House in Lake Forest and for "Castle Hill", the R.T. Crane House in Ipswich, Massachusetts. A townhouse he designed in 1915 at 2719 Lake View in Chicago (one of four brick Federal row style houses; the others were for Mrs. Arthur Ryerson, artist Abram Poole, and architect Henry Dangler) was published in 1930 in House and Garden and in 1935 in House Beautiful. (43) Another house that received attention

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was "Costantia", the home he designed in Montecito, California for his father-in-law, Arthur Meeker, in 1928. (44) Described as inspired by Dutch South African design, it was published in the 1976 September-October Architectural Digest. Cramer's wife Mary remembers that he designed several houses, which she worked on with him, but that he felt his "best" was the house in Riverwoods. (45) His non-residential work included the Century Club for the 1933 Century of Progress Exhibition and a very avant garde Art Moderne headquarters building for Nalco (National Aluminum Corporation) in 1937 in Chicago. The Nalco building, though totally different in style from the Classical Revival Ryerson country house, expresses a similar sensitivity to proportion, symmetry, and detailing.

Shortly after Cramer finished his work for the Ryersons, in 1942, he left Chicago for Washington, D.C., where he completed a term of service as deputy director of Lend Lease Aid to the British Empire for the State Department. From there he retired to Rockport, Maine. Upon his retirement, he purchased an 1854 Greek Revival cottage and adapted it into a comfortable summer residence while retaining the front Ionic portico. The similarities of his retirement home to the Ryerson house are striking. Although he abandoned the practice of architecture while in Maine, Cramer began a second distinguished career in historic preservation. He served as preservation officer for historic buildings in Maine for the American Institute of Architects and as a founder and president of the Maine League of Historical Societies and Museums. (46) In addition, he acted as a member of the Maine State Advisory Committee on Historic Sites and was such a strong supporter of the Historic American Buildings Survey recording projects in Maine that the HABS Maine Catalog is dedicated to Ambrose C. Cramer, "architect, scholar and constant friend of historic preservation." (47)

Construction activity on the house Cramer regarded as his "best" began in 1940. Cramer completed his plans for the Ryersons and went in search of historic material. He set out for Galena, where in nearby Hanover he located old pink bricks from a woolen mill that was being demolished. He wrote back to Ryerson, August 27, 1940, that he had closed the deal and found the brick to be exceptionally satisfactory. He paid \$200 for 50,000 face bricks and 21 old limestone sills that he figured he could reuse. He arranged for trucking and delivery and even furnished Ryerson with a photo of the old mill. (48) On April 11, 1941, a contract was signed between Ryerson and Thorvale Nielson Company, the general contractor, for an agreed-upon sum of \$86,298.30, and construction was soon underway. (49) During 1941, the Ryersons, in

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preparation for the move, were given gifts from family and friends of "long discarded early Victorian furniture and ornaments from attics and cellars" and themselves haunted antique shops and auctions. (50) In 1942, they moved into their handsome Classical Revival country house. Although it was larger than its prototype, the house is clearly reminiscent of the Greek Revival farmhouse the Ryersons' envisioned.

The discipline of classicism that Cramer learned at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and practiced throughout his career is evident in every aspect of his design for the Ryerson country house. The house is generally symmetrical both in its exterior massing and in its placement of interior openings. It has a central block flanked by wings that are identical in proportion and similar in detailing. On the interior, doors are placed so that they are balanced. For instance, in the front entrance hall there are two doors along the south wall leading to the guest room and a closet and the single door on the north wall is balanced by bookshelves in an opening across from and identical to the closet door. In the alcove next to the parlor there is a false door against the east wall balancing the door to the kitchen. In addition, detailing is clearly inspired by classical architecture. On the exterior, this is seen in the columned portico, in the pedimented wings and dormers, and in the panelled entrance doors topped by a fanlight and flanked by sidelights. On the interior, rich moldings, walls and ceilings with coffered panelling, and fireplace detailing reflect classical sources.

Classical architecture, in its various configurations, was frequently used as the inspiration for country house architecture, many of which (especially those built before the advent of the income tax in 1913) were very grand. Among the most monumental was the Frederick W. Vanderbilt House designed by McKim, Mead, and White in 1896 in Hyde Park, New York. The house in which Cramer grew up, "Rathmore", in Lake Forest, is a large three-story brick house dominated by a two-story new-classical portico with Corinthian columns. Although the Ryerson country house is far less pretentious than these examples, it is stylistically similar to the many Classical Revival country houses.

Typically, the clients for country houses, who often numbered among the wealthiest of the wealthy, selected period style designs. Many writers on country house architecture, including Russell Lynes and, more recently, Mark Alan Hewitt writing in The Architect and the American Country House, 1990, trace the very large homes that stood as great symbols of leisure and

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wealth to William Morris Hunt's 1889 design for George Washington Vanderbilt's 255 room estate, Biltmore, in Ashville, North Carolina. Hunt, according to Lynes, introduced the concept of "adaptation", that is the adaptation of an historical building type like the French chateaux (his inspiration for Biltmore) to the design of the American country house. (51) "Havenwood", Edward L. Ryerson's father's 1916 country house by Howard Van Doren Shaw, was designed in the manner of an Italian villa. English Tudor country houses, which to many were the quintessential physical manifestations of the aristocratic country life while bearing the closest association with America's ancestral roots in England, persisted in popularity as a model for the American country house.

While eclecticism dominated country house architecture, arguments arose in the architectural literature as to which style was appropriate for their design. A large body of opinion, including writers for the Architectural Record maintained that these luxurious houses, with their European affinities, were neither essentially American in character nor appropriate to a modern democracy. (52) What grew out of this argument was a strong interest in Colonial Revival architecture. Colonial homes, because of the "Americanness", were almost as popular as sources of inspiration as Tudor manor houses for the design of country homes, with the resulting Georgian or Federal Revival designs often built on as grand a scale as those modeled on French chateaux or Italian villas. This aristocratic taste for magnificence, however, was matched by a growth of interest in regional architecture by clients like Ryerson. Aslet notes that in the 1920's the style selected for a country house was not necessarily derived from the great works of architectural history, but from anonymous buildings of medium size. This, he points out, made Colonial architecture even more avidly admired. (53)

The Ryersons did not have to look as far as the east coast for inspiration. They found in nearby Marengo, not a great work of architecture, but a simple medium size building of the type that Aslet describes, the Anson Roger s House, a fine example of Greek Revival architecture. During the period from about 1830 to 1860, Greek Revival was the dominant style of American domestic architecture and so popular that it came to be called the "National Style". (54) Associated with the founding of democracy, Greek Revival architecture became as closely identified with America's roots as Georgian or Federal style buildings--especially in the Midwest where there were few earlier American prototypes.

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The Ryersons' country house was American in other ways than in its stylistic derivation. Aslet notes that the American country house excelled in the practical and convenient aspects of the plan as well as in comfort and efficiency of equipment. Their house had a very livable floor plan with separate living zones for sleeping, formal and informal living, and servants. There were numerous porches (considered by Aslet as "the most striking native feature") including a sleeping porch for Mrs. Ryerson, a porch off the parlor where the family could watch the children play and enjoy the animals grazing in the nearby pasture and a wide front living porch. A guest room and bath were conveniently located right off the front door. With an all- steel kitchen, it had the latest in equipment.

The house the Ryersons modeled their country house after was of the anonymous medium-size sort Aslet discussed. It was a modest American farmhouse, not grand like the prototype for his father's country house. Though considerably larger than the Rogers House, both in size and number of rooms, Ryerson's country house retains a human scale and reflects a comfortable, relatively informal life style. The home was designed with intimate spaces for people to gather including the library section of the dining room by the fireplace, and the front porch, which was fitted out with wicker chairs. The Ryersons shared with similar owners of country homes a respite from the busy life, a chance to enjoy relaxed social activities and family fun in an elegant home and a beautiful setting. But unlike many country homes, his house was not a status symbol; there was no consumptive display. Indeed, a stately house would have been quite inappropriate for the times and for Ryerson. The year construction began on the house was 1940, ten years after the advent of the country's worst depression, and the U.S. was at the brink of war. The era of building large country houses was pretty much over.

Like the Ryersons, Lake County owners of country houses frequently included farms as part of their estates. Because there has been no general survey of rural Lake County, it is difficult to know a great deal about the location of what has been referred as gentleman farms or hobby farms. A number of those that have been researched are located in Lake Forest or just west of Lake Forest.

J. Ogden Armour's "Melody Farm" at 1500 W. Kennedy Road, certainly was among the most grand. On acreage that was already farmland when he bought it in 1904, Armour built a 29,000 square foot house, two lakes, stables, orchards, and an orangery. Although it was intended to be

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a working farm, no permanent farm buildings had been erected or planned by 1916. Armour's neighbor, Arthur Meeker (Ambrose Cramer's father-in-law) claimed that the horses were not ridden and the lakes were not fished. (55) Built considerably earlier than the Ryerson country house, "Mellody Farm" was nothing like it in scale, image or use. Today it serves as a school.

"Arcady Farm", Meeker's 100 acre country place, was built in 1906 as a dairy farm and summer place and was located near Armour's at the northwest corner of Kennedy Road and Waukegan Road. It was a real working farm with barns for cows and horses and fields of cropland. Today all that is left are gateposts. The house, which was not known for its architectural distinction, was torn down in the late 1970's.

Louis Swift's farm "Westleigh", which was built ca. 1900 was a farm estate of over 1500 acres. It was originally located west of Green Bay Road and north of what is today known as Westleigh Road, though there are no longer any farm buildings on the property, which has been extensively subdivided.

"Walden" Cyrus H. McCormick's Farm on the east side of Lake Forest by Lake Michigan, was built in 1896. The stable and dairy barn still exist, but the house was demolished in the 1940's.

One farm built later was "Meadowood Farm". It was owned by Clifford Leonard at 550-75 Hathaway, west of Waukegan Road in Lake Forest. Although he set out, in 1923, to create a French dairy farm and chateau, the cost of running his 100 acre operation was prohibitive and the chateau was never built. A second was Samuel Insull's country estate, "Hawthorn Farms" at 1350 North Milwaukee Road in what is today Vernon Hills. Purchasing 5000 acres in 1906 that contained a farmhouse, barns, and a greenhouse, he segregated off 250 acres for himself and, in 1914, hired Benjamin Marshall to design an Italian Villa and Jens Jensen to landscape the property. He raised Stafford horses, a breed of horse used for hauling. The large and elegant home remains, but there is little evidence that it was part of a farm complex. (56) A third, "Red Top Estates" was another horse farm. It was built for the Mullady family ca. 1930 on Milwaukee Avenue, just north of Route 60, though nothing of this farm exists today.

Extensive study would likely turn up examples of other farm estates in Lake County. Though research is incomplete, it is certain that the Ryerson country house is part of a larger nationwide

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trend of building rural retreats that contained farm buildings and a trend prevalent in Lake Forest and rural Lake County.

The Ryersons very much enjoyed their country house and farm. In an article in the Chicago Daily News written in 1965, the reporter who interviewed Ryerson commented, "Summers are spent on Ryerson's Brushwood Farm, near Deerfield, where he raises Arabian horses, rides daily, tinkers with photography and spends as much time as he can with his eight grandchildren." (57) Family members remember sleigh rides and swimming in the (Ryerson) steel swimming pool. A friend, John Shedd Reed, who was president of the Santa Fe Railroad, brought out a caboose, which was outfitted with bunks and provided a place for grandchildren to sleep and change clothes. Edward and Nora's daughter Nancy wrote of "The wonderful days, summer and winter, my husband, children and I spent at Brushwood Farm." (58) In addition to family get-togethers, there were parties, where the Chicago Symphony, Walt Disney, delegations of Russian statesmen and numerous others were entertained. George Ranney, the husband of the Ryerson's daughter Nancy, has fond memories of the "simple but fastidious" lifestyle that gave the Ryersons' country place distinction. (59)

THE RYERSON CONSERVATION AREA

As they grew older, the Ryersons spent longer periods of time in Palm Desert, California, where they had a winter home. Nevertheless, they retained special interest in their property on the Des Plaines River and took steps to see that all of it, including the cabin and house, as well as the property belonging to the other cabin owners, would be preserved.

In the late 1950's, Ryerson served as an active member of the advisory committee established to enable Lake County to acquire and preserve wilderness area. Because of these efforts, a successful referendum, in 1958, resulted in the formation of the Lake County Forest Preserve in 1966. The Forest Preserve District was formed just as the family was thinking about how their property could be preserved in an undeveloped state. They logically thought of the Forest Preserve District as an appropriate steward and hired Charles "Cap" Sauers, who had been Superintendent of the Cook County Forest Preserve District since 1929, to develop guidelines for the use of the property as a preserve. In 1966, the Ryersons sold 85 acres north of Aptakisic road to the Forest Preserve District, and in following years they donated the remaining 257 acres.

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During this time Ryerson encouraged the other owners to convey their property and, from 1966 to 1977, all of the other land owners, some of whom owned cabins, deeded their land. Nora Ryerson, sharing her husband's enthusiasm, wrote on December 21, 1971, shortly before her death, "with a large part of the approximately 400 acres already deeded to the Lake County Forest Preserve and now under its care and protection, it will be held in trust always, we hope, for the use and enjoyment of future generations." (60) When the Forest Preserve assumed management in 1972, the total area of the Ryerson Conservation Area was 550 acres. Of this, 471 acres are included in the historic district. Only the land purchased by Ryerson after the period of significance and land purchased from the Hess family, whose property doesn't contribute to the significance of the district, has been omitted.

The Ryersons, in donating their property to the Forest Preserve District to conserve it for public use and in hiring Cap Sauers, participated in a long history of retaining natural and historic properties to be enjoyed by the public. The first of many national parks, Yellowstone National Park, was established in 1872. The Forest Preserve Act of 1891 gave Presidents power to set aside tracts of publicly-held land anywhere in the country, and millions of acres of forest were made national parks. In 1895, the first county park association was established, and in the first decade of the twentieth century, numerous states set up state park systems. Norman T. Newton, in his book, Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture, singles out Illinois for establishing the "renowned" Cook County Forest Preserve District, which he notes was created by popular vote in 1914 as an encircling belt of recreational area around Chicago. (61) Cap Sauers also received special mention by Newton for his design and management techniques that allowed for use by people in large numbers but retained the basic "forested sanctuary" character. (62)

Cap Sauers, in his 1966 report for the Forest Preserve, envisioned not just how the land would be used but also how the major buildings could function. He saw the use of the farmstead as a nature center, the retention of the Ryerson Cabin as an employee's residence or as a food concession and advocated preserving the house with its furnishings. (63) These buildings all continue to exist with excellent integrity.

Today the historic district continues to reflect its period of significance. Despite some demolition and relocation of cabins and changes to the landscape over time, the cabins that have been moved

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have been done so in a manner that retains a substantial amount of historic fabric. In addition, the landscape reflects, in the development of the vegetation, where the cabins and former roads were located. The forested appearance so attractive to the Ryersons remains. Where there are intrusions, such as parking lots or washrooms, necessary for public use, they have been integrated into the property with sensitivity. The Ryersons' wish that their property be preserved has largely been realized, and its use during the Ryerson years can be read in the buildings and surrounding landscape.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

That part of Sections 23, 26 and 35 in Township 43 North, Range 11, East of the Third Principal Meridian described as follows: Beginning at the southeast corner of Section 23; thence north along the east line of said section a distance of 1380.28 feet more or less to a point which is 1260.9 feet south of the northeast corner of the southeast quarter of Section 23; thence west parallel with the north line of the southeast quarter of Section 23 a distance of 544.6 feet; thence north parallel with the east line of the southeast quarter a distance of 400.0 feet to the south line of Lot 16 in Birchwood Lincolnshire Bluff 1st. Addition (being a subdivision of part of the southeast quarter of Section 23 aforesaid, according to the plat thereof recorded May 24, 1967 as Document 1337815, in Book 45 of Plats, page 6); thence west along the south line of the last named subdivision and along the south line of Birchwood Lincolnshire Bluff (a subdivision of part of the southeast quarter of said Section 23, according to the plat thereof recorded on June 21, 1966 as Document 1307739 in Book 43 of Plats, page 51), said line also being parallel with the north line of the southeast quarter of Section 23, a distance of 1403.48 feet; thence south 7 degrees 5 minutes east, 314.34 feet; thence south 43 degrees 14 minutes east, 54.0 feet; thence south 4 degrees 14 minutes east, 130.80 feet; thence south 48 degrees 30 minutes west, 483.7 feet; thence south 64 degrees 30 minutes west, 440.9 feet; thence north 71 degrees west, 210 feet, more or less, to the centerline of the Des Plaines River; thence southerly and easterly along the centerline of the river to a point of intersection with the northwest corner of the premises of land described as Parcel 5 in Document 1538791 and recorded December 28, 1971; thence south along the west line of said Parcel 5 a distance of 670 feet to the south line of Lot 4 in Tripp's Subdivision (a subdivision of part of Sections 26 and 27, Township 43 North, Range 11, East of the Third Principal Meridian, according to the plat thereof recorded in Book "C" of Plats, page 80, as Document 58422; thence east along the south line of said Lot 4 910 feet, more or less, to the west boundary of premises conveyed by deed from John E. Barrett and Minnie B. Barrett, his wife, to Frederick A. Preston and dated February 1, 1923 and recorded as Document 228057; thence east at an angle of 91 degrees 20 minutes (91 degrees 23 minutes deed) measured from north to east a distance of 465 feet, more or less, to the centerline of the Des Plaines River; thence southerly along the centerline of the river to a point that is 22.44 feet south of the north line of said Section 35 aforesaid; thence east parallel to the north line of said Section 35 and 22.44 feet south to a point that is 1114.34 feet west of the east line thereof; thence north 1023.70 feet, more or less, to a point on the north of premises conveyed to Caroline Daniels Moore by deed dated March 29, 1926 and recorded October 2, 1927 as Document 306521, (said point being 1118.5 feet west of a point on the east line of Section 26 and 900 feet south of the northeast corner of Lot 5 in Tripp's Subdivision of part of said Section 26, according to the plat thereof recorded April 21, 1894 as Document 58422, in Book "C" of Plats, page 80); thence east along the said north line of premises conveyed to Caroline Daniels Moore a distance of 1118.5 feet to a point on the east line of Section 26 which is 900 feet south of the northeast corner of said Lot 5 in Tripp's Subdivision; thence north along the east line of said Section 26 to the southeast corner of said Section 23 and the point of beginning, all in Lake County, Illinois.

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






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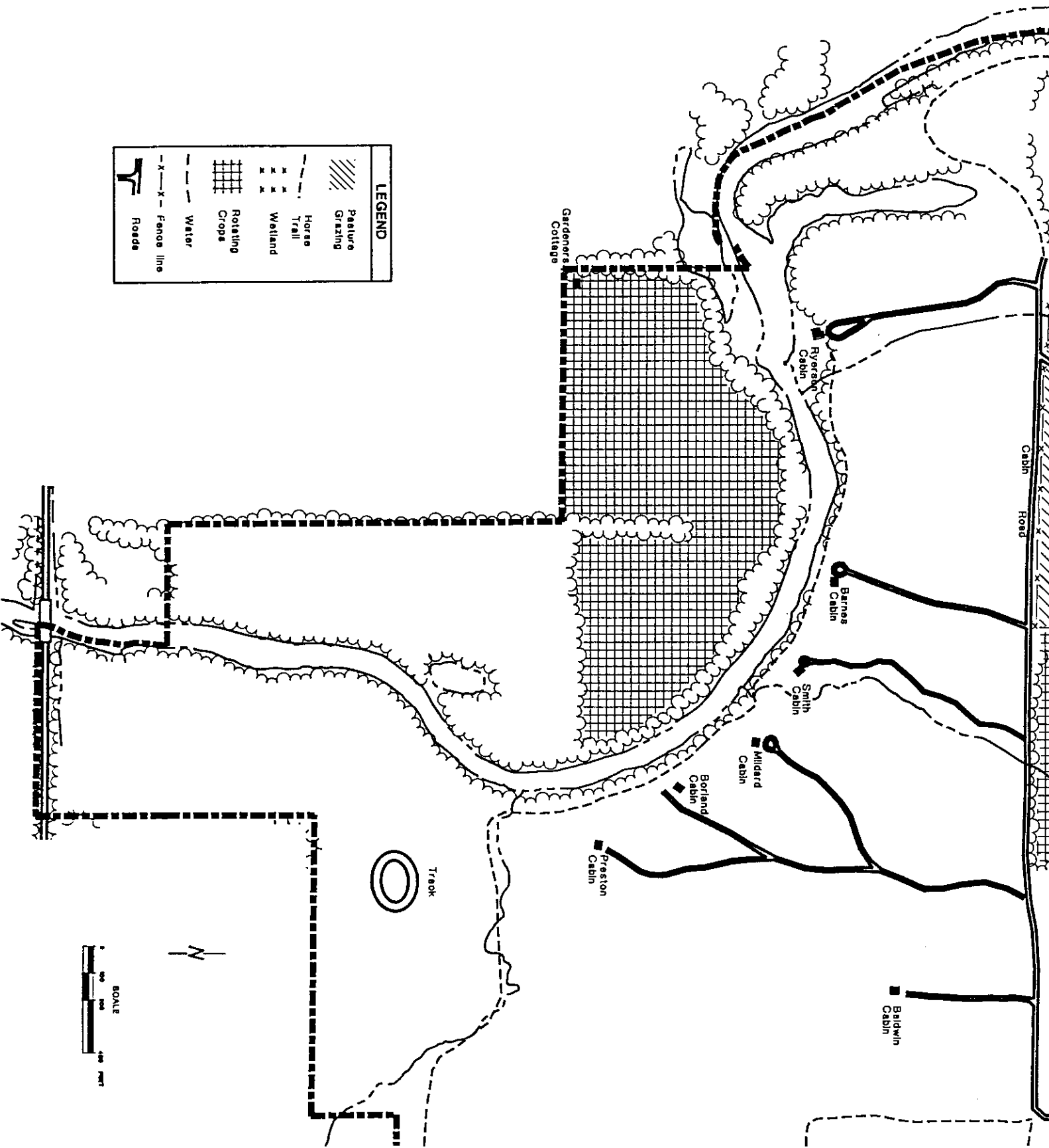
BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary line of the historic district includes the property owned by Edward L. Ryerson and his neighbors, Cecil Barnes, Hermon Dunlap Smith, Ivan Albright, Everett Millard (later David Dangler), Frederick Preston (later Henry Preston), Chauncey Borland, Ivan Albright, Ainslie Sawyer (later Rosecrans Baldwin), Dr. John Schweppe, Walter Fisher, and Dr. John Garvin during the period of significance.

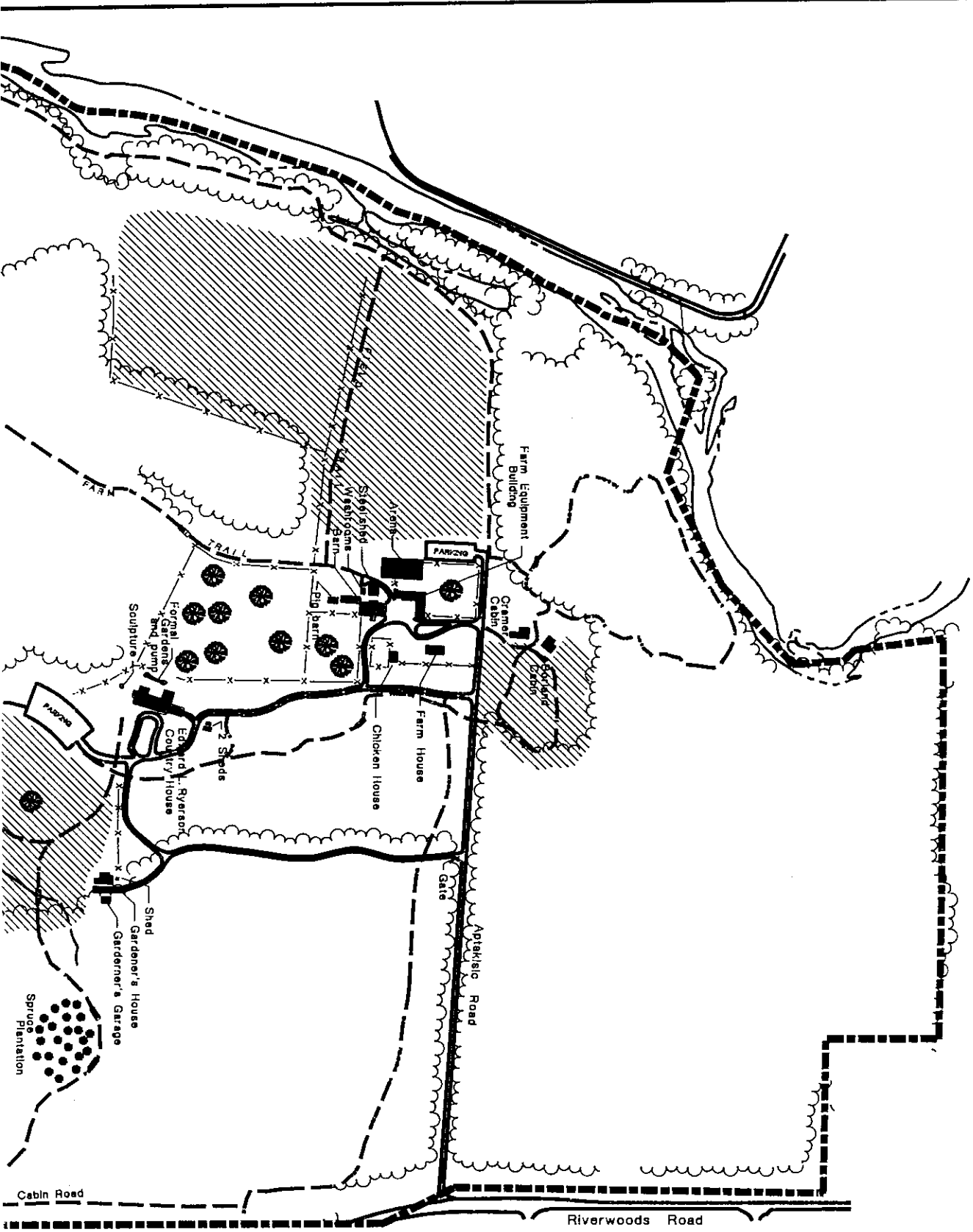
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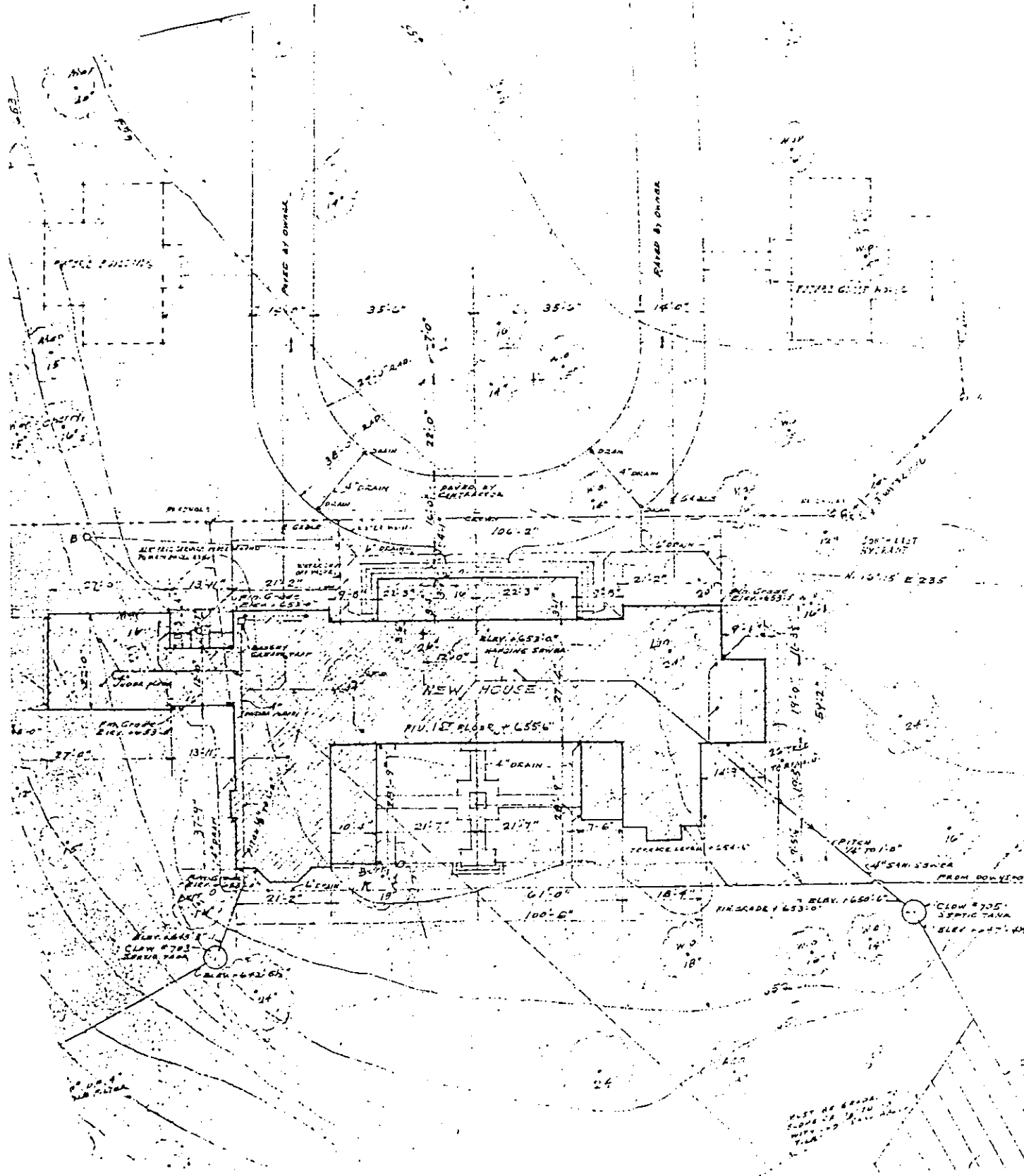
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- 6. 16 424540, 4668590
- 7. 16 424420, 4668810
- 8. 16 424160, 4669210
- 9. 16 424040, 4669320
- 10. 16 423180, 4670490

LEGEND	
	Pasture
	Grazing
	Horse Trail
	Wetland
	Rotating Crops
	Water
	Fence line
	Road



Edward L. Ryerson Area Historic District 1995





RYERSON COUNTRY HOUSE
 1940 Site Plan
 by Ambrose Cramer



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO:

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to announce actions on the following properties for the National Register of Historic Places.

For further information contact Edson Beall via voice
(202) 343-1572, fax (202) 343-1836 or E-mail: edson_beall@nps.gov

Visit our web site at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/nrhome.html>

MAR 29 1996

WEEKLY LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON PROPERTIES: 3/18/96 THROUGH 3/22/96

KEY: State, County, Property Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL, Action, Date, Multiple Name

- ARIZONA, YAVAPAI COUNTY, Camp Date Creek, N of US 89, Date Creek vicinity, 95001361, LISTED, 3/22/96
- FLORIDA, VOLUSIA COUNTY, Bethune--Cookman College Historic District, 620 Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Blvd., Daytona Beach, 96000298, LISTED, 3/21/96 (Daytona Beach MPS)
- GEORGIA, BIBB COUNTY, Lustron House at 3498 McKenzie Drive, 3498 McKenzie Dr., Macon, 96000216, LISTED, 3/18/96 (Lustron Houses in Georgia MPS)
- GEORGIA, DE KALB COUNTY, Farmer, Neville and Helen, Lustron House, 513 Drexel Ave., Decatur, 96000211, LISTED, 3/18/96 (Lustron Houses in Georgia MPS)
- GEORGIA, DE KALB COUNTY, Pines, Russell and Nelle, Lustron House, 2081 Sylvania Dr., Decatur, 96000207, LISTED, 3/18/96 (Lustron Houses in Georgia MPS)
- GEORGIA, DOUGHERTY COUNTY, Lustron House at 1200 Fifth Avenue, 1200 Fifth Ave., Albany, 96000214, LISTED, 3/18/96 (Lustron Houses in Georgia MPS)
- GEORGIA, DOUGHERTY COUNTY, Lustron House at 711 Ninth Avenue, 711 Ninth Ave., Albany, 96000213, LISTED, 3/18/96 (Lustron Houses in Georgia MPS)
- GEORGIA, FULTON COUNTY, Adams, Jack and Helen, Lustron House, 832 Burchill St., SW., Atlanta, 96000212, LISTED, 3/18/96 (Lustron Houses in Georgia MPS)
- GEORGIA, FULTON COUNTY, Epting, Thomas and Rae, Lustron House, 1692 Brewer Blvd., SW., Atlanta, 96000210, LISTED, 3/18/96 (Lustron Houses in Georgia MPS)
- GEORGIA, FULTON COUNTY, Knight, William and Ruth, Lustron House, 9166 Northside Dr., Atlanta, 96000208, LISTED, 3/18/96 (Lustron Houses in Georgia MPS)
- GEORGIA, SUMTER COUNTY, Lustron House at 547 Oak Avenue, 547 Oak Ave., Americus, 96000209, LISTED, 3/18/96 (Lustron Houses in Georgia MPS)
- ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, Dempster Street Station, 5001 Dempster St., Skokie, 95001005, LISTED, 3/01/96
- ILLINOIS, LAKE COUNTY, Ryerson, Edward L., Area Historic District, 21950 N. Riverwoods Rd., Deerfield, 96000086, LISTED, 2/29/96
- KENTUCKY, KENTON COUNTY, Bavarian Brewing Company, 522 W. 12th St., Covington, 96000281, LISTED, 3/21/96
- MAINE, ANDROSCOGGIN COUNTY, Bagley--Bliss House, 1290 Royalsborough Rd., South Durham vicinity, 96000242, LISTED, 3/22/96
- MARYLAND, WORCESTER COUNTY, Crockett House, 900 Market St., Pocomoke City, 96000299, LISTED, 3/21/96
- MARYLAND, WORCESTER COUNTY, Mar-Va Theater, 103 Market St., Pocomoke City, 96000301, LISTED, 3/21/96
- MASSACHUSETTS, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, Randall--Hale Homestead, 6 Sudbury Rd., Stow, 96000277, LISTED, 3/22/96
- NEW JERSEY, CUMBERLAND COUNTY, Bivalve Oyster Packing Houses and Docks, Shell Rd., Miller and Howard Sts., Commercial Township, Bivalve, 96000079, LISTED, 2/28/96 (Marine and Architectural Resources of the Maurice River Cove MPS)
- NEW YORK, ORANGE COUNTY, Brewster, Oliver, House, 66 Willow Ave., Cornwall, 96000149, LISTED, 3/08/96 (Cornwall MPS)
- NEW YORK, ORANGE COUNTY, Brooks, Samuel, House, Pleasant Hill Rd., Cornwall, 96000148, LISTED, 3/08/96 (Cornwall MPS)
- NEW YORK, ORANGE COUNTY, Carvey--Gatfield House, 375 Angola Rd., Cornwall, 96000152, LISTED, 3/08/96 (Cornwall MPS)
- NEW YORK, ORANGE COUNTY, Cocks, Isaac, House, Old Pleasant Hill Rd., Cornwall, 96000153, LISTED, 3/08/96 (Cornwall MPS)
- NEW YORK, ORANGE COUNTY, Hand, Walter, House, 520 Angola Rd., Cornwall, 96000154, LISTED, 3/08/96 (Cornwall MPS)
- NEW YORK, ORANGE COUNTY, Sands--Ring House, Main St., Cornwall, 96000150, LISTED, 3/08/96 (Cornwall MPS)
- NEW YORK, ORANGE COUNTY, Scribner House, 19 Roe Ave., Cornwall, 96000157, LISTED, 3/08/96 (Cornwall MPS)
- NEW YORK, ORANGE COUNTY, Sutherland, Daniel, House, 32 Angola Rd., Cornwall, 96000147, LISTED, 3/08/96 (Cornwall MPS)
- NEW YORK, ORANGE COUNTY, Sutherland, David, House, 70 Angola Rd., Cornwall, 96000146, LISTED, 3/08/96 (Cornwall MPS)
- NEW YORK, ORANGE COUNTY, Van Duzer--Sayer, Mary, House, Taylor Rd., Cornwall, 96000155, LISTED, 3/08/96 (Cornwall MPS)
- NEW YORK, ORANGE COUNTY, Woodruff House, NY 32, Cornwall-on-Hudson, 96000156, LISTED, 3/08/96 (Cornwall MPS)
- NEW YORK, ORANGE COUNTY, Wyant--Talbot House, 42 Clark Ave., Cornwall-on-Hudson, 96000151, LISTED, 3/08/96 (Cornwall MPS)
- OKLAHOMA, GARFIELD COUNTY, Enid Cemetery and Calvary Catholic Cemetery, 200 block of W. Willow Ave., Enid, 96000305, LISTED, 3/21/96
- TEXAS, HARRIS COUNTY, Stevenson, Joseph R. and Mary M., House, 804 Harold St., Houston, 96000275, LISTED, 3/21/96
- WISCONSIN, DOOR COUNTY, MERIDIAN (schooner) Shipwreck Site, Address Restricted, Sister Bay vicinity, 96000294, LISTED, 3/21/96 (Great Lakes Shipwrecks of Wisconsin MPS)
- WISCONSIN, LA CROSSE COUNTY, District School No. 1, US 14/61 E of Jct. with WI 35, Shelby, 96000303, LISTED, 3/21/96
- WYOMING, LARAMIE COUNTY, Pine Bluffs High School, Jct. of 7th and Elm Sts., Pine Bluffs, 96000228, LISTED, 3/21/96