

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic

and/or common OLD MORRISON MILL

2. Location

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town BURNT PRAIRIE \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of

state Illinois code 012 county White code 193

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name FAYE POLLARD

street & number ROUTE #1

city, town CARMI  vicinity of state ILLINOIS

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. WHITE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

street & number

city, town CARMI state ILLINOIS

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Illinois State Historical Society Markers Program has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1968  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Illinois State Historical Society, Old State Capitol

city, town Springfield state Illinois

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Old Morrison Mill is a large, square building located in Burnt Prairie, (originally Liberty), Illinois, just one block north of Liberty Road. The Mill has four stories, including the basement, with some of the many machines used in the milling process located on each level. The Mill was first built in Enfield, Illinois, in 1859, utilizing braced beam construction. The Mill was moved to its present location by Holmes and Young who had it dismantled and relocated to its present site. The timbers were handhewn, some 12" by 12", some 12" by 16", and several as long as 18 to 20 feet. Every large timber had cutouts with ample room for two notched end pieces to slip into the cutout sections, and holes for wooden pins to pass through to hold the timbers in place. The wooden frame is covered on the exterior by corrugated metal painted gray with red trim.

The inside of the Mill is a virtual antique factory. It is filled with a maze of wooden pipes which run from the basement to the attic and were used to transport the product from one area to another. There are workbenches, four-drawer cabinets, tools, a belt system, grain cleaners, scales, timbers and other machinery which is still in usable condition.

On the main floor are the wheat sinks where wheat was stored until time for the milling process. Between harvests, wheat was stored in the mill and at a nearby grainery. The wheat flows to the bottom of the wooden v-shaped sinks, and is then pulled along by a rotating screw mechanism to its first trip on the square box elevator system. After reaching the third floor in the small elevator scoops, the wheat is either dumped into bins or starts its path through the separator, a machine that separates straw from the wheat. This is followed by the cleaner and polisher, which polishes the wheat hull prior to the grinding process. Next, the wheat plummets to the first grinding machine where two sets of rollers in each machine gradually change the wheat into flour.

Between each machine the wheat is returned to the third floor to pass through a sifter before entering the next machine where it is carried to the sifter on the top floor, sifted, and then dropped into the storage bin on the first floor, ready for packaging.

In its earliest days, it was horse-powered, then powered by wood-fueled steam, coal-fueled steam, a diesel engine, and finally powered by electricity. A drive shaft runs from the central engine through the basement. Connected to it are moveable belts which transmitted energy to the machines located throughout the building.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

The boiler was installed in 1897 with wood as the first energy source. Water for steam was stored in a mill pond especially built for the new boiler. The men who fired the boiler arrived at work at 3:00 AM in order to get a full head of steam by the time the mill opened for business, usually 7:00 AM. As prices for wood and labor rose, coal became the energy source. The boiler was converted to coal burners, and all went well until the boiler developed too many leaks. Subsequently, a 2-cylinder, 60-cycle diesel engine was installed in 1931, and the old boiler was used as a radiator to operate the diesel. The diesel was installed on thick concrete and bolted down, and has never vibrated since installation. In fact, a coin can be placed edgewise on the diesel and will not fall. A 25-horsepower electric motor replaced the diesel in 1972. This electric motor can operate 4 days for less than the cost of operating the diesel for 1 day.

After passing through the four roller machines, the new flour was given its white color by a bleaching chemical. The flour was taken through another series of elevators and piped to a packing machine. Each bushel of wheat used to make flour took a total of 26 trips in the wooden elevator system.

The production of stone ground cornmeal flowed much the same process. The corn was placed in a corn sheller in the dirt-floored basement. The corn was shelled and cleaned and began its trip through one of the numerous small elevator systems. The corn tumbled down out of a storage bin on the upper floors and entered the millstones or buhrstones. The millstones are over one hundred years old. The bottom stone, 30 inches in diameter and 8 inches thick, rotates and grinds the corn against the stationary upper stone. The stones have grooves to control the cutting and movement of the grain from the stone to the piping system.

The front wall of the wooden frame building contains hundreds of penciled figures made as the millers tallied the prices for grain and meal. Trading with farmers was rarely on a cash basis, with most dealings being on a barter system, or occasionally the miller would exchange flour or meal for grain after making a "toll" charge (taking a percentage of the grain). Some farmers turned in their grain for storage at the mill and received a wheat or corn deposit card, against which he could withdraw grain to be used as the need arose.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1897

Builder/Architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Old Morrison Mill satisfies criteria A of the National Register because the Mill is a well-preserved example of the small scale grain processing plants which enabled the late nineteenth and early twentieth century small town to function as service centers for their immediate agricultural hinterland.

The subject of this nomination descended from a horse-drawn mill which Peter Morrison began operating at the site in 1820 in the town then called Liberty.

As a terminus on the Skillet Fork which drained into the Wabash-Ohio River corridor to New Orleans, Liberty received goods by flatboat from the world beyond and traded pork and produce, including ground grain from the Morrison Mill. Trade generated a bank, four groceries, a hardware store, three pork packing plants, a cigar factory, a furniture factory, and a hotel, at Liberty's economic height. Values rose to fifteen and twenty dollars per acre for prime land by the late nineteenth century. At that time the existing mill was replaced with the framework of the present mill owned by Homes and Young in nearby Enfield. Parkin and Martin owned the mill after its relocation to the trading center renamed Burnt Prairie. Probable descendants of Peter Morrison, the brothers R.S. and Cal Morrison, bought the mill at Burnt Prairie in February, 1897. The brothers changed operations from steam to electric power during their management which ended in 1931. During that time Morrison became synonymous with cornmeal in the town and its agricultural community. R. S. Morrison died in 1931 and Cal continued operations with the sons of R.S., Ray and Martin, until 1963. Today, Burnt Prairie has declined to 120 inhabitants, and the mill stands idle.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

History of White County, Illinois, Inter-State Publishing Co.,  
Chicago, 1883, pps 626 and 627  
Historic Morrison Mill, (Liberty), Burnt Prairie. Privately published  
pamphlet (1968)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Burnt Prairie

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	6	3	89	9	0	0	42	3	4	08	0
Zone		Easting				Northing					

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Beginning @ the intersection of 2nd St. & Mill St., the west boundary runs 385' north on 2nd St., the south boundary runs 340' east on Mill; the east boundary runs 385' north from the east end point of the south boundary line; the north boundary runs 340' from the north point of the

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries** west boundary line to the east boundary line

state code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Masterson with Keith A. Sculle

organization Illinois State Historic Preservation office date

street & number R.R. #1 telephone (618) 896-5620

city or town Burnt Prairie state Illinois

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director date 3/22/84

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

JUL 17 1984

IN REPLY REFER TO:

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places beginning July 8, 1984 and ending July 14, 1984. For further information call (202) 343-9552.

STATE, County, Vicinity, Property, Address, (Date Listed)

ARIZONA, Maricopa County, Phoenix, Rancho Joaquina House, 4630 E. Cheery Lynn Rd. (07/09/84)

HAWAII, Hawaii County, Kii Petroglyphs, (07/12/84)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Buena Park Historic District, Roughly bounded by Rapid Transit, Marine Dr., Irving Park Rd., and Montrose Ave. (07/13/84)

ILLINOIS, White County, Burnt Prairie, Old Morrison Mill, Off Liberty Rd. (07/11/84)

IOWA, Fayette County, Oelwein, Hanson, Alfred, House, 403 N. Frederick Ave. (07/12/84)

IOWA, Jasper County, Colfax, Hall, James Norman, House, 416 E. Howard St. (07/12/84)

IOWA, Johnson County, Iowa City, Close, M.T., and Company Flaxseed Warehouse, 521 S. Gilbert St. (07/12/84)

IOWA, Madison County, Winterset vicinity, Schoenenberger, Nicholas, House and Barn, Off IA 169 (07/12/84)

IOWA, Scott County, Bettendorf, Bettendorf-Washington School, 533 16th St. (07/12/84)

KENTUCKY, Fayette County, Lexington, Kinthead, Henry P., House, 403 Walnut St. (07/12/84)

KENTUCKY, Jefferson County, Louisville, Caperton Block, 564-574 4th Ave. (07/12/84)

KENTUCKY, Jefferson County, Louisville, First Street District (North Old Louisville MRA), Roughly bounded by E. Preckinridge, E. Kentucky, and I-65 (07/12/84)

KENTUCKY, Jefferson County, Louisville, Old Louisville Residential District (Boundary Increase), (07/12/84)

KENTUCKY, Jefferson County, Louisville, Tingley, George H., Elementary School, 1311-1317 S. Preston St. (07/12/84)

KENTUCKY, Nelson County, Bloomfield vicinity, Stone, John, House, U.S. 62 (07/12/84)

LOUISIANA, Lafayette Parish, Lafayette, Old Guaranty Bank Building, 500 Jefferson St. (07/12/84)

LOUISIANA, West Feliciana Parish, St. Francisville vicinity, Catalpa, U.S. 61 (07/12/84)

MISSISSIPPI, Amite County, Magnolia vicinity, Felder-Richmond House, Off I-55 (07/12/84)

MISSISSIPPI, Amite County, Magnolia vicinity, Lea, Hampton, House, Lea Rd. (07/12/84)

MISSISSIPPI, Warren County, Vicksburg, McDermott House, 1100 South St. (07/12/84)

MISSOURI, Harrison County, Bethany vicinity, Slatten House, MO 4 (07/09/84)

MISSOURI, Pike County, Clarksville, Clifford-Wyrick House, 105 S. Second St. (07/09/84)

NEW JERSEY, Hunterdon County, Oldwick vicinity, Kline Farmhouse (Cold Spring Cottage), NJ 517 (07/11/84)

NORTH CAROLINA, Burke County, Morganton, Avery, Alphonso Calhoun, House, 408 N. Green St. (07/12/84)