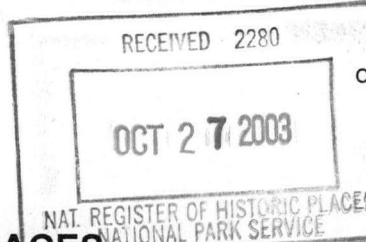


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



OMB No. 1024-0018

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 any 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 Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds

other names/site number Exhibition Hall, Agricultural Building, Round House (MOT-356-06)

2. Location

street & number Montgomery County Fairgrounds, 1043 South Main Street ☐ not for  
publication

city or town Dayton vicinity

state Ohio code OH county Montgomery code 113 zip code 45409

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Burlaw P. Owen Dept. Head October 22, 2003  
Planning, Inventory & Registration  
Signature of certifying official Date

Ohio Historic Preservation Office  
State or 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 commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I, hereby certify that this property is:
- ☒ entered in the National Register  
☐ See continuation sheet.
  - ☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register  
☐ See continuation sheet.
  - ☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register
  - ☐ removed from the National Register
  - ☐ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson A. Beall 12/10/03

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

**5. Classification****Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private  
☒ x public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- ☒ x building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	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**

0

**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

recreation and culture: fair

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

recreation and culture: fair

**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century: Octagon Mode

Late Victorian: Italianate

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation

stone

roof

asphalt

walls

wood

other

wood, metal, concrete

**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** x 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 a 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.

**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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

architecture

**Period of Significance**

1874

**Significant Dates**

1874

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a

**Architect/Builder**

Beaver, Leon

Kemp, Stephen

**Primary location of additional data**

- ☒ x State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Ohio Historic Preservation Office

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
Montgomery County, Ohio**

**Statement of Description**

The Exposition Hall at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds in Dayton, Ohio, is a two-story frame octagonal structure built in 1874, with low hipped roof and central clerestory. Sited on the highest point on the fairgrounds—a low rise near the entrance—the building enjoys great visual prominence (Photo 1). Surrounding the hall are other fair buildings of various styles and materials, which are excluded from the nomination.

The Montgomery County Fairgrounds is located on South Main Street in Dayton, approximately two miles south of the downtown business district. The surrounding area, appropriately known as the Fairgrounds neighborhood, is a working-class community developed for the most part in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is home to the University of Dayton and two major hospitals. The fairgrounds occupy a wedge of land bordered by West Apple Street to the north, South Patterson Boulevard to the west and West Stewart Street to the south. (See maps.)

The Exposition Hall is an imposing frame structure of octagonal form, covered by a low hip roof. The building stands two stories high with a diameter of approximately 150 feet. Each side is 64 feet in width and contains five regularly spaced bays. The first story is pierced by small square windows, the second by twelve-light windows. The main doorways have been altered with barn-style rolling doors on a metal track, and subsequently with overhead rolling doors. (Photos 2, 3, 4.) Simple wooden brackets accent the cornice line. Small gabled wall dormers, which contain square vents, break the eave line. Atop the roof is an eight-sided monitor that contains three narrow, 9/6 windows at each face (Photo 6).

The building rests on a limestone foundation that has been covered with concrete. The walls are covered with board-and-batten siding that is painted white, surrounded by a band of vertical siding with decorative notched edge. (Photo 5.) Asphalt shingles cover the roof.

The interior of the hall contains two levels: a first floor and a mezzanine. It contains 21,588 square feet: 18,760 on the first floor and 2,828 on the second. (See floor plan.)

The first level has a concrete floor and fluorescent lights. Along the outside walls, some wood shelving and synthetic paneling have been added, and some built-in storage areas installed. (Photo 7.) The windows are boarded over on the inside. Large steel beams, added in a 1950s renovation, support the mezzanine.

Twin staircases, rebuilt in 1953, lead to the second level. They feature wide steps with linoleum treads. Knotty-pine paneling covers the walls.



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**Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
Montgomery County, Ohio**

**Statement of Description**

The second-floor mezzanine is surrounded by an original balustrade of flat-sawn pickets, which incorporates a series of built-in benches. It features low wooden tables, pegboard partitions and several rows of bleachers. The floor is narrow tongue-and-groove maple. Additional square wood posts, two in each section, were installed around the perimeter of the mezzanine in 1953 (Photo 9).

The central atrium is open to the rafters, its framing exposed. In the center is a cast-iron fountain, three tiers high, set in a concrete pool. The base depicts ibis and cattails, while the tiers are bedecked with anthemias and stylized foliage (Photo 8). The manufacturer's nameplate reads, "J.W. Fisk, 4 Park Place."

The building features a sophisticated framing system, with vertical elements in compression and horizontal members in tension. Around the edges of the roof is a series of transverse beams, cut from a single piece of wood, secured to vertical supports. Steel cables with turnbuckles hold the beams in tension. This innovative structural system, called post-tensioning, increases the tensile strength of the roof structure and helps resist the forces pushing downward on the building and outward on the roof, allowing for the construction of a long clear span free of internal supports. Eight angled buttresses, each with three horizontal struts, support the dome. The buttresses in turn are bolted to vertical posts.

Portions of the roof framing exhibit charring from a fire in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (date unknown; post-1978). A 50- by 60-foot section of the roof at the south side of the building, comprising approximately 1/16th of the roof surface, was destroyed by a blizzard in 1978 and subsequently rebuilt, using framing that matched the original as closely as possible. Laminated horizontal beams were used for added strength. Sixteen vertical wood supports were added around the perimeter of the building, two in each section.

The Montgomery County Fairgrounds includes 37.08 acres, occupied by a diverse array of buildings and structures dating from 1900 to 1959. (See site plan.) Because they do not contribute to the significance of the Exposition Hall, they have been excluded from the nomination. Beside the entrance is the fairgrounds office (#1 on plan). Built in 1959, it is a one-story yellow-brick edifice built into a slope. Adjoining it on the north is the groundskeeper's residence (#2), a ranch house that matches the office in scale and materials. North of the groundskeeper's house is the Carousel Room (#3), a hipped-roof frame bungalow with several later additions.

Northeast of the Exposition Hall is the Coliseum (#5), a one-story yellow-brick exhibit hall of large scale built in 1920-1921. In the 1950s or 1960s blue metal panels were installed over the windows and aluminum-and-

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**Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
Montgomery County, Ohio**

**Statement of Description**

glass doors were installed at the front entrance. Directly north of the hall is the Fine Arts Building (#6), a one-story frame edifice built in 1900. To the west is a series of barns (#7-17) dating from the early through late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

South of the Exposition Hall, at the base of the hill, is an oval racetrack (#22). Facing it is a grandstand (#21), built in 1900: a steel structure partly enclosed with frame. West of the racetrack is "Shed Row" (#19), a line of interconnected one-story stables built in 1903, with later modifications. Firestops have been added between the stalls and the walls covered with asbestos siding.

An undated, vintage photograph of the Exposition Hall, likely taken c. 1900, depicts its original appearance. Encircling the frieze was a decorative band of notched siding, with small single brackets. The main entrance featured tall, double-leaf hinged doors with a large, semicircular, multipane fanlight. The walls were pierced by tall, double-hung sash windows: 6/6 windows at the first story, 12/12 at the second. The wall dormers contained large circular windows. Above the clerestory was an ornate octagonal lantern with bracketed cornice, crowned by a polygonal spire with gablets and oculi. The roof was covered with raised-seam metal. Vines clambered up the walls. (See photocopy.)

The 1918 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Dayton illustrates the appearance of the fairgrounds at the half-century mark. A series of small frame structures (all demolished) were grouped near the entrance. These included a one-and-a-half story residence (likely for the caretaker), an octagonal "shed" and a dining hall. The main drive looped around the Exposition Hall, with the building now known as the Fine Arts Building barely visible to the north. By 1962 the fairgrounds had achieved their present appearance, with the office building, caretaker's residence, "Carousel Room," barns, stables and grandstand clearly indicated. (See photocopies)

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**Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
Montgomery County, Ohio**

**Statement of Significance**

**Summary**

The Exposition Hall, constructed in 1874 as the centerpiece of the newly built Montgomery County Fairgrounds in Dayton, meets Criterion C in the area of architecture as an excellent example of the polygonal exhibit halls built on Ohio fairgrounds during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hailed as “magnificent” by the 1882 *History of Montgomery County*, it is the largest of five surviving eight-sided halls built in the state from c. 1871 to 1889. It is also the largest of 12 octagonal structures built in western Ohio from Defiance to Cincinnati. The hall is a significant illustration of the vogue for octagonal forms which swept the country in the two decades following the Civil War, notable for its sophisticated structural system. Its frame construction, two-story form, low hipped roof and central clerestory are highly characteristic of polygonal buildings in the Buckeye State. The building retains integrity of design and setting and is in good repair. It has been evaluated in the context of “Octagonal Buildings in Ohio, c. 1870-1910.” Its period of significance is 1874, its date of construction.

**Architectural Development**

**Octagonal buildings in Ohio, c. 1870-1910**

Polygonal buildings, most commonly eight-sided, are some of Ohio’s most distinctive structures. Never common in the state, they remain much-admired curiosities, survivors of an era of architectural inventiveness and vigorous experimentation.

**Octagonal houses.** During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, architect Frank Lloyd Wright proclaimed that “democracy deserved something better than the box.” Half a century earlier, however, Victorian polymath Orson Squire Fowler made a similar argument. His book *A Home for All*, first published in 1848, “was the first widely disseminated argument for the octagon form” (Keith A. Sculle and H. Wayne Price, “Barns of Nonorthogonal Plan,” in *Barns of the Midwest*, edited by Allen G. Noble and Hubert H.G. Wilhelm [Ohio University Press, 1995], p. 192). Fowler promoted the octagon as an alternative to rectangular forms because it enclosed more space than a building based on square corners. Yet it was easier for the “average” carpenter to build than a round building because it relied on straight-wall construction (ibid.).



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### Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds Montgomery County, Ohio

Following publication of Fowler's book, the octagon house enjoyed a brief period of popularity in Ohio, from c. 1850 to 1870. Several octagons, most of which exhibit characteristics of the Italianate style, survive to the present day. "The prototypical example has eight sides, a low-pitched roof, central chimney or cupola, decorative porches with chamfered posts, and wide eaves with heavy brackets" (Stephen C. Gordon, *How to Complete the Ohio Historic Inventory Form* [Ohio Historical Society, 1992], p. 134). A diverse group of five eight-sided houses is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Among them is the Lane-Hooven House (NR, 1973) in Hamilton, a Gothic Revival brick edifice built in 1863. The roof is punctuated by four tall gables with lacy bargeboard trim, and is crowned by a cupola. Directly across the street is the Lane Library (1867), whose historic core is a brick structure similar in plan and detailing to the Lane-Hooven House.

**Development of the octagonal barn.** The octagonal form also found favor with farmers for livestock and dairy barns. The innovative plan promised savings in labor and materials and made possible the central feeding of livestock, resulting in an efficient use of space. Centric (multi-sided) barns first appeared in the Northeast and South in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, as the showpieces of gentleman farms. An early promoter of the polygonal barn, and its "first theorist," was Eliot W. Stewart, a New York State livestock farmer and "timeless scientific agriculturalist" (Sculle and Price, p. 194). Like Fowler, Stewart rejected round barns in favor of polygonal structures because of their greater ease of construction. "When Stewart's multipurpose Octagonal Barn was described in the *Live-Stock Journal*, it created a wave of interest among northern farmers in the mid-1880s" (Gordon, p. 149).

Polygonal barns were built by specialized local or itinerant builders. Plans were available from do-it-yourself construction books such as *Radford's Practical Barn Plans*. Mail-order catalogs such as Sears & Roebuck and Gordon-Van Tine also offered prefabricated kits.

Octagonal barns are scattered across the northern and central United States and southern Canada (Allen G. Noble and Richard G. Cleek, *The Old Barn Book* [Rutgers University Press, 1995], pp. 120-121). They are most common in the Midwest, where they are concentrated in prime dairying or corn-growing areas (Sculle and Price, p. 188). The peak decade for nonorthogonal plans in the Midwest, including both round and centric structures, was the 1910s (*ibid.*, p. 193). Complaints about their supposed drawbacks, such as inconvenience and waste of materials, began to appear in the agricultural press in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. As the 20<sup>th</sup> century dawned, the "once-promising technology" of the nonorthogonal barn "was eventually overwhelmed by superior technology" (*ibid.*, p. 205), such as the tractor, and the unique structures lost favor in the depressed farm economy of the 1920s.

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**Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
Montgomery County, Ohio**

In addition to barns, the octagonal form was used for smaller outbuildings such as smokehouses or icehouses. One of the Midwest's most distinctive examples is the eight-sided public privy behind the Switzerland County Courthouse in Vevay, Indiana (c. 1864; HABS, 1971).

Octagonal barns in Ohio. Most octagonal barns in Ohio were built from c. 1875 to 1900. They are generally built of heavy timber, with pinned mortise and tenon framing, and feature radiating stall arrangements. Most are built to two stories, with a ramp to the upper level (Gordon, p. 149). Some are banked against side hills, with entrances at both levels.

Individual examples, however, exhibit considerable variety. While the eight-sided form was most common, six-, ten-, twelve, even sixteen-sided structures also were built. Octagonal barns also varied in size, from modest to very large. Roofs may be hipped, segmental or double-sloped, with moderate to steep pitch; they may be covered with slate, raised-seam metal or composition shingles. For optimal light and ventilation, the majority were built with cupolas or clerestories of various types, often topped by a round or polygonal lantern; some had only a central vent or chimney. Some also included gabled- or shed-roofed dormers. Some have few openings, while others have a multitude of windows or vents, sometimes arranged in two tiers. Most barns are of frame construction, covered in vertical or, less commonly, horizontal wood siding. Others were built of brick, stone or even clay tile.

Many polygonal barns are largely utilitarian in design. Others are enhanced with Italianate, Eastlake or Gothic Revival detailing. A Williams County barn, for example, features treble cornice brackets and lancet-arched windows. Decorative painted frames surround the entrances.

Some octagons incorporate gabled porticos, one or one-and-a-half-stories in height, at one or more entrances; many appear to have been added later. Some octagonal barns have received one or more additions or extensions. Some have been incorporated into interconnected complexes of agricultural buildings, including multiple barns, sheds, milkhouses or silos.

Many good examples of polygonal barns still survive in Ohio. An octagonal barn in New Plymouth, Vinton County, built c. 1880, features vertical siding, a small square cupola, and a hipped slate roof of moderate pitch. The polygonal Stewart Barn in Harrison County (c. 1921-1924) features vertical board siding, a segmented conical roof and arched windows and vents.



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**Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
Montgomery County, Ohio**

**Octagonal halls.** The octagonal form also was used for various types of public buildings in Ohio during the second through fourth quarters of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including town halls, schools and bandstands. Two of the earliest examples may be the eight-sided or “eight-square” schoolhouses (demolished) built in Morrow County in the 1840s. One of Ohio’s best examples of an eight-sided public building is a diminutive brick edifice (date unknown; HABS, 1937) in the village of Sinking Spring, Highland County. Built as a schoolhouse, it was later used as a town hall.

Because of its unobstructed interior space, the octagonal form also proved ideal for barn-like exhibition buildings such as the Dayton Exposition Hall. Five polygonal exhibit halls built on Ohio county fairgrounds in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century are known to have survived to the present day. These include two “floral halls” built for horticultural displays, both of which are listed in the National Register. Both are frame structures on the Greek-cross plan, with an eight-sided central tower or cupola. The Floral Hall (1871; NR, 1976) on the Morrow County Fairgrounds in Mount Gilead features weatherboarded walls and a gabled vestibule with double doors. The cupola is pierced by tall windows. Floral Hall or Needle Hall (c. 1884; NR, 1982), located in Bowling Green, Wood County, features an eight-sided hip roof with hexagonal shingles. Stick-style ornamentation adorns the doors and exterior walls. Similar in design, but with a square rather than octagonal tower, is the Domestic Arts Hall at the Geauga County Fairgrounds (1889-1890; NR, 1979).

On the Shelby County Fairgrounds in Sidney is a large exhibit hall of low profile featuring blind walls with horizontal-board siding, low gabled wall dormers, and a segmental roof capped by a large octagonal cupola. The main entrance is contained in a gabled portico. The Cattle Barn at the Fairfield County Fairgrounds in Lancaster is a large frame structure with conical tin roof, topped by a circular monitor. The fairgrounds also boast an octagonal exhibit hall and judges’ stand. The vogue for eight-sided forms in Fairfield apparently also extended into the afterlife: the county features what may be the state’s only octagonal cemetery.

**Historical Development**

“County fairs were the climax of county agricultural societies throughout 19<sup>th</sup> century Ohio. They provided important opportunities for the entertainment and instruction of local farmers” (Carolyn M. Lineback, “Floral Hall” [National Register nomination, 1981]). Montgomery County’s first agricultural society was formed in 1845, and for the next three decades small fairs were held in various places in Dayton.



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Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
Montgomery County, Ohio

In 1855 the Agricultural Society purchased ten acres of the present grounds. The following year the county fair was held on the new site for the first time. "Owing to the purchase of additional grounds, bad weather and nonattendance of citizens, the association struggled with indebtedness for several decades" (Montgomery County Agricultural Society [MCAS], "History of the Fairgrounds and the Agricultural Society of Montgomery County," n.d.). The Ohio State Fair was held in Dayton four times during the 1860s, which also drew patrons away from the county exhibitions (ibid.).

By 1873 the focus of the county expositions changed to include mechanical and industrial displays.

[T]he growing city, the competition among the increasing numbers of agricultural implements, improvements in farming and in the quality of its grains and other products, the culture and wealth of the valley, all seemed to warrant a permanent exposition, commensurate in all its appointments, premiums and exhibitions, to the pretensions of the people of the city and surrounding country. (*History of Montgomery County* [W.H. Beers & Company, 1882], p. 504)

In 1874 a group of seven Dayton businessmen formed the Southern Ohio Fair Association: an "agricultural, mechanical and industrial association for the purpose of encouraging said branches of industry, improving agriculture, mechanism and all kinds of livestock" ("Minutes of the Southern Ohio Fair Association," May 16, 1874, p. 1). The original members were Gabriel B. Harman, Marcus Eells, John Shoupe, Nicholas Ohmer, John V. Naureth and Richard E. Anderson. A certificate of incorporation was filed on February 23, 1874. The organizers raised \$100,000 worth of capital by selling shares for \$50 each (ibid).

The newly organized Fair Association leased from the Montgomery County Commissioners 54 acres of land in south Dayton. On high ground overlooking the Great Miami River, the land commanded a "most extensive and varied view of Dayton, with all its residences, and towering spires and manufactories" (*Dayton Herald and Empire*, September 28, 1874). The grounds were situated "within easy walking distance of the [railroad] Depot, shaded with native forest trees, and supplied with Water from the City Water Works" (ibid.).

Once the land was secured, the Association drew up plans for new buildings and put the grounds in order. The centerpiece was to be a large exhibit hall, located prominently on a hill at the eastern edge of the grounds. On May 16<sup>th</sup> the Committee on Buildings and Grounds presented a design and plan for an octagonal exposition building designed by Leon Beaver, architect. Beaver was also partner in the contracting firm of Beaver & Butt, "builders and manufacturers of sash, doors and blinds" (L.H. Everts, *Combination Atlas Map of Montgomery*

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Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
Montgomery County, Ohio

*County, Ohio* [Hunter Press, 1875]). The secretary then requested bids to construct the hall as well as several other structures, including a gateway, fair office and stables (Minutes, pp. 17, 32). Three proposals were submitted for construction of the hall. Stephen Kemp submitted a bid of \$8,400 and secured the contract (*ibid.*, p. 22).

The fair buildings, including the hall, were constructed during the summer of 1874. A period lithograph depicts the newly completed fair buildings arrayed along the eastern edge of the property. Near the main entrance was a two-story octagonal bandstand, which housed a confectioner's stand on the lower level. Inside the gate was a fair office and ticket stand. To the west were the trotting track and grandstand. On the crest of a knoll north of the entrance was the Exposition Hall.

On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1874, the Association voted to hold its first annual exhibition that coming fall. The first event held at the fairgrounds was the Southern Ohio Fair, held September 29<sup>th</sup> to October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1874. Labeled "the boss fair of all Ohio," the Southern Ohio Fair featured exhibits of agriculture, livestock, machinery and fine arts, as well as horse races. It included over four thousand entries of all departments, including 300 horses. Equine celebrities were brought to the fair from the East, and running and trotting events were held daily. One of the chief attractions was the famed trotting mare "Goldsmith Maid," who ran the shortest time ever on a half-mile track: two minutes and 18 seconds (Everts, p. 22). In attendance was the "largest assemblage ever in attendance upon the fair grounds" (History, p. 505). In addition to horses, cattle, swine, sheep and poultry were on display, including 25 cattle driven overland from Xenia in Greene County. Fair attendance peaked on Friday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, with over sixty thousand people (*Herald and Empire*, October 4, 1874).

On display in the Exposition Hall were household appliances, including heating and cooking stoves and grates, furniture, pianos and organs, sewing machines and jewelry. Manufactures of residents of the Soldiers' Home, located in Dayton, were displayed, including hose, cigars and gentlemen's apparel (*Herald and Empire*, September 22, 1874, 3:1). The woodworking expertise of Beaver & Butt was on view in a display of mantelpieces, doors and shutters.

The Exposition Hall, admirably located on the crest of the hill north of the entrance gate is filled with one of the most varied collections of the manufactures of Dayton and other cities, chiefly Art, and carving, of fabrics of ornament and service, and other objects of utility, whose very conception and elaborations are beauty itself, while the end which they serve is convenience and practical wear and tear.



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**Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
Montgomery County, Ohio**

Halls without being “guided,” will feel that it is all one blaze of beauty, delicate arrangement, and an exposition, in short, of which Dayton may feel justly proud. The display of what is made right here in Dayton will surprise even the oldest resident, and it’s no wonder that this point has been steadily visited. (*Dayton Herald and Empire*, September 30, 1874)

In addition to the attractions of the Exposition Hall, the Power Hall (demolished) housed a large display of machinery, including turbine water wheels and steam engines of various types (ibid.).

The Southern Ohio Fair of 1874 was deemed a “huge success” with profits of \$23,600 (MCAS). Following the successful 1874 exposition, the Southern Ohio Fair Association continued to host yearly events, but struggled to make a profit through the 1880s (History, p. 505).

During the winter of 1913, Dayton endured one of the most devastating floods in its history. The Montgomery County Fairgrounds, centrally located on high ground, served as a staging area for flood relief activities. Supplies were shipped to the fairgrounds, then unloaded and distributed by work crews. An undated photo shows soldiers unloading huge blocks of ice from a wagon, with the Exposition Hall clearly visible in the background. (See photocopy.)

Many of the original (1874) fair buildings (grandstand, offices, caretaker’s residence, stables) were replaced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Fine Arts Building and the present grandstand were built in 1900, Shed Row in 1903, and the Coliseum in the early 1920s. Over time additional buildings were constructed; other buildings were destroyed by fire and replaced with new structures.

During the 1930s electric lights were installed around the racetrack, which was the first in Ohio to hold night harness racing. In the mid-1950s the Dayton Home Show was held on the fairgrounds. “[T]he manufacturer of Gold Medallion Homes built a new house thereon, which the fair board purchased for use as the fair office until the present office complex was built in 1959” (MCAS). The house was then converted to the groundskeeper’s residence (ibid.). When President Lyndon B. Johnson visited the fair in the 1960s, the event drew the largest crowd in its history, with over one hundred thousand in attendance (ibid.).

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed the Exposition Hall continued to serve its original purpose, housing displays of domestic arts and farm and garden produce, as well as some commercial exhibits (MCAS). Attesting to the quality of its original construction, it required few repairs. The cupola was removed between 1913 and 1930;



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National Park Service

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**Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
Montgomery County, Ohio**

the exact date unknown. In 1953 the building was renovated at a cost of \$55,000: over five times its original cost. During this remodeling campaign the first floor was "cemented" and a maple floor laid upstairs. Steel beams were added to support the mezzanine, "noise proof" ceilings were installed and the stairways rebuilt. Windows were replaced and the original doors were replaced with barn-style rolling doors. The work was supervised by architect W. Ray Yount (Minutes of Grounds and Improvements Committee, Montgomery County Agricultural Society, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1953). On July 7 the building was rededicated and a commemorative plaque placed on an east-facing interior pillar (*Dayton Journal Herald*, July 7, 1953).

As noted previously, during the severe winter of 1978 part of the roof collapsed under a record snowfall. The damaged area was subsequently replaced by Fryman-Klinck General Contractors. The total cost was \$23,886, part of which was paid for by a grant from the Ohio Historic Preservation Office (Montgomery County Agricultural Society records).

**Integrity.** The primary significance of the Exposition Hall derives from its octagonal form and its unusual method of construction. The most significant alteration to the hall was the loss of the cupola; the clerestory below, however, remains intact. Minor changes, some of which are reversible, include the removal of the original doors and fanlight and their replacement by modern rolling doors. The first-story windows have been removed or covered over, the second-story windows replaced, and the circular windows removed from the wall dormers and replaced with vents. Cosmetic alterations to the interior include the rebuilding of the staircases and the installation of concrete floors and partitions.

The loss of the original doors and windows has not seriously compromised the building's integrity. These relatively minor decorative elements are not key features of the building's design, and the changes are theoretically reversible. The multi-light wood sash windows are unobtrusive in design and do not constitute an intrusive element. While the round windows have been removed from the wall dormers, the dormers themselves remain intact, and the windows could easily be reinstalled.

The building retains its character-defining features: its original eight-sided footprint, central clerestory and hipped roof. It also retains historically appropriate board-and-batten siding with decorative trim and cornice brackets. The interior plan remains unchanged apart from minor concessions to modern use such as the rebuilding of staircases and the replacement of floors. Other alterations to the interior are superficial and cosmetic in nature and readily reversed. Repairs to the building have been respectful and appropriate. Most

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National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number 8 Page 9

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**Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
Montgomery County, Ohio**

significantly, the building's remarkable structural system, based on tension and compression, remains intact. The roof framing is completely original apart from the section rebuilt in 1978, which comprises less than one-eighth of the structure. Moreover, the comparative rarity of octagonal halls—only five are known to exist in the state—justifies a somewhat lower level of integrity than might be expected from more common building types or those with a higher survival rate.

As when it was built, the hall is surrounded by buildings to which it is related by function and ownership, including several built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As the original builders intended, views of the hall from other parts of the grounds remain unobstructed by later development. Therefore the Exposition Hall possesses integrity of design, workmanship, materials, location, setting, feeling and association.

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National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number   9   Page   1  

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**Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
Montgomery County, Ohio**

**Major Bibliographic References**

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

## **NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number   9   Page   2  

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**Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
Montgomery County, Ohio**

### **Major Bibliographic References**

Noble, Allen G. and Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, editors. *Barns of the Midwest*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1995.

Ohio Historic Inventory files. Ohio Historic Preservation Office, Columbus.

Sanborn Map Company. "Dayton, Ohio." New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1918, 1962. Microfilm, Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, and online, Ohio Public Library Information Network (<http://www.oplin.lib.oh.us/access/>).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10\_\_\_\_ Page 1\_\_\_\_

Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
Dayton, Montgomery County, Ohio

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**10. Geographic Data**

Verbal boundary description

The Exposition Hall is located within the corporate limits of Dayton, Ohio. It lies approximately 100 meters west of the west line of South Main Street and 435 meters north of the north line of Fairground Avenue. The boundary for the hall is defined by the building footprint, which measures 64 feet on each side. (Please refer to 1962 Sanborn map and location map.)

Verbal boundary justification

This nomination includes the Exposition Hall while excluding areas of lesser integrity or different use. No additional land is included because the surrounding fairgrounds property represents later periods of development and does not contribute to the significance of the hall.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 12 Page 1

Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
Dayton, Montgomery County, Ohio

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**Section 12. Additional Information**

Photograph key

Name of property: Exposition Hall (same for all photographs)  
Location: Dayton, Montgomery County, Ohio (same for all photographs)  
Photographer: Margaret Warminski (same for all photographs)  
Date taken: February 2002 (same for all photographs)  
Location of negatives: 1043 South Main Street, Dayton (same for all photographs)  
View: Contextual view of Exposition Hall, looking north from main fairgrounds drive.  
Photo 1

View: East elevation, entrance, looking west.  
Photo 2

View: East and southeast elevations, looking northwest.  
Photo 3

View: East, southeast and south elevations, looking northwest.  
Photo 4

View: View of second story of hall, west elevation, showing gabled wall dormer, band of vertical siding with notched edge, cornice brackets, board-and-batten siding, and typical 12-pane wood window. Looking east.  
Photo 5

View: Second story, west elevation, showing eight-sided monitor or clerestory. Looking east.  
Photo 6

View: View of first floor of hall, looking south.  
Photo 7

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 12 Page 2

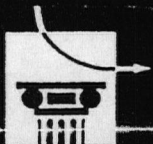
Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
Dayton, Montgomery County, Ohio

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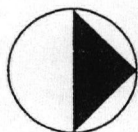
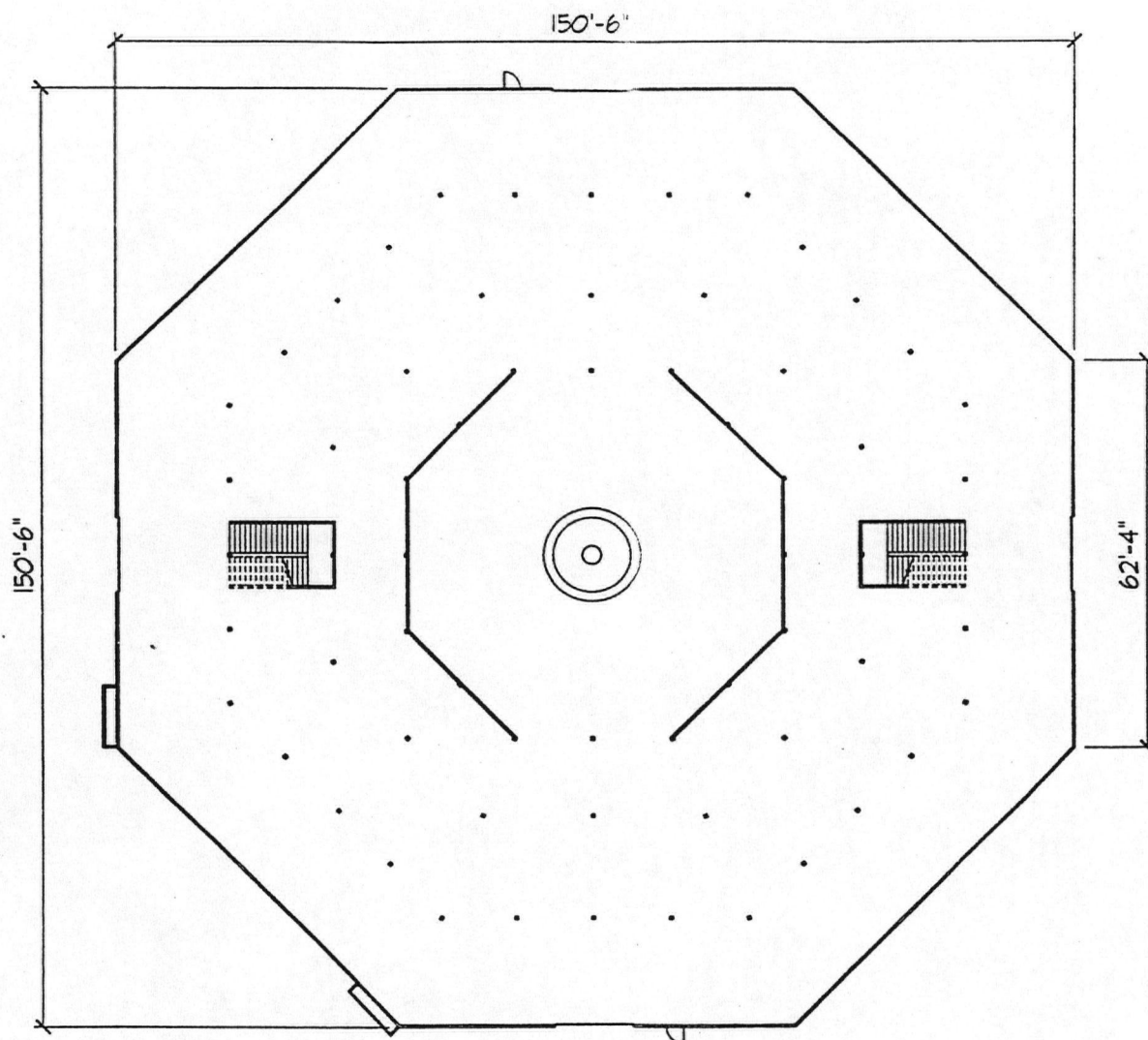
View: View of center court with iron fountain. Looking west.  
Photo 8

View: View of second floor of hall, showing wood balustrade and support columns. Looking west.  
Photo 9

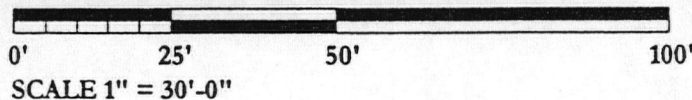




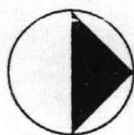
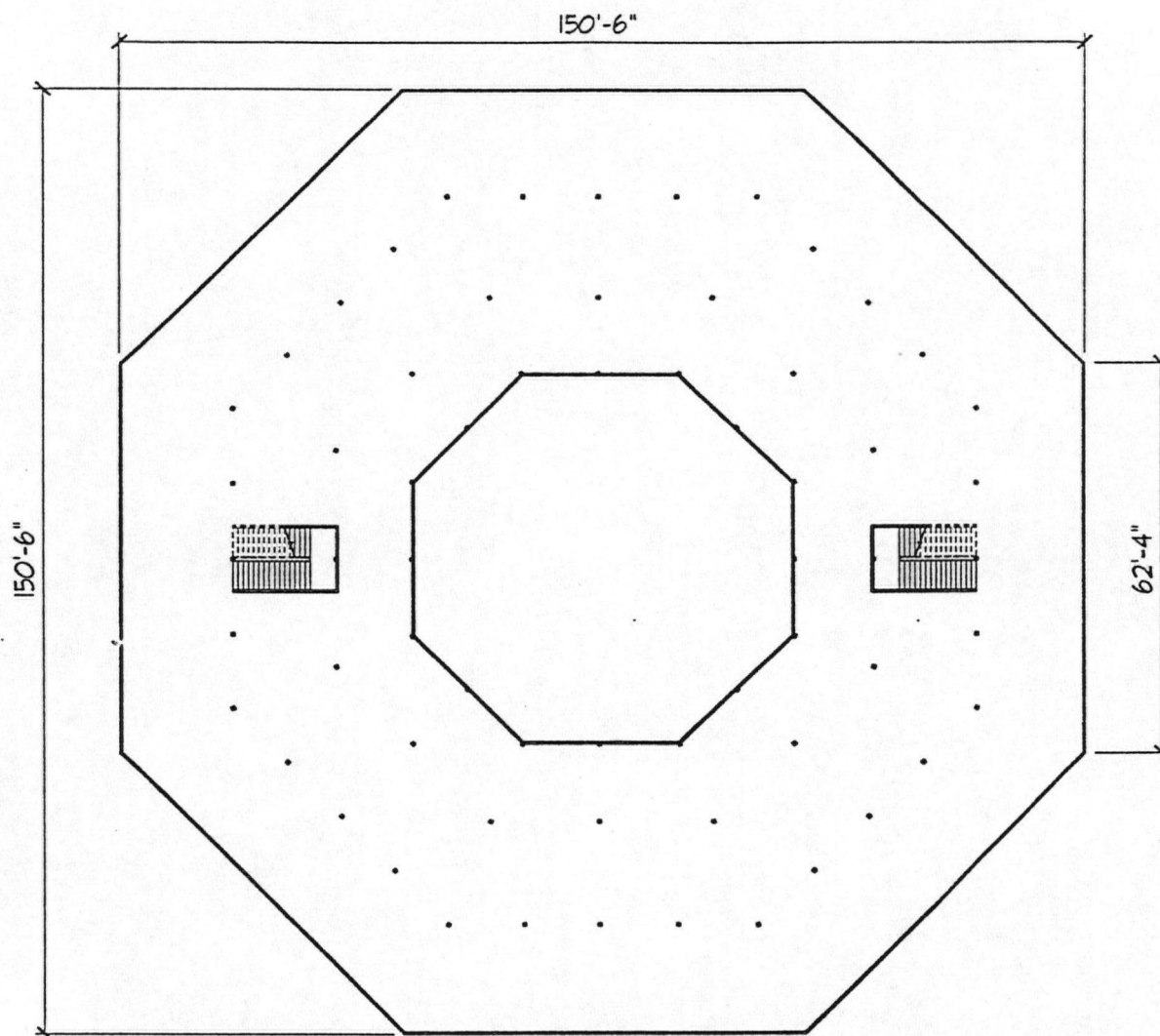
LORENZ + WILLIAMS  
ASSOCIATES



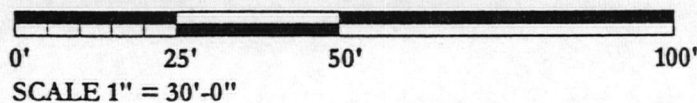
**BUILDING #9 - GROUND FLOOR**



Exposition Hall, Dayton,  
Montgomery County, Ohio  
Floor plan: first floor  
Scale 1" = 30'-0"

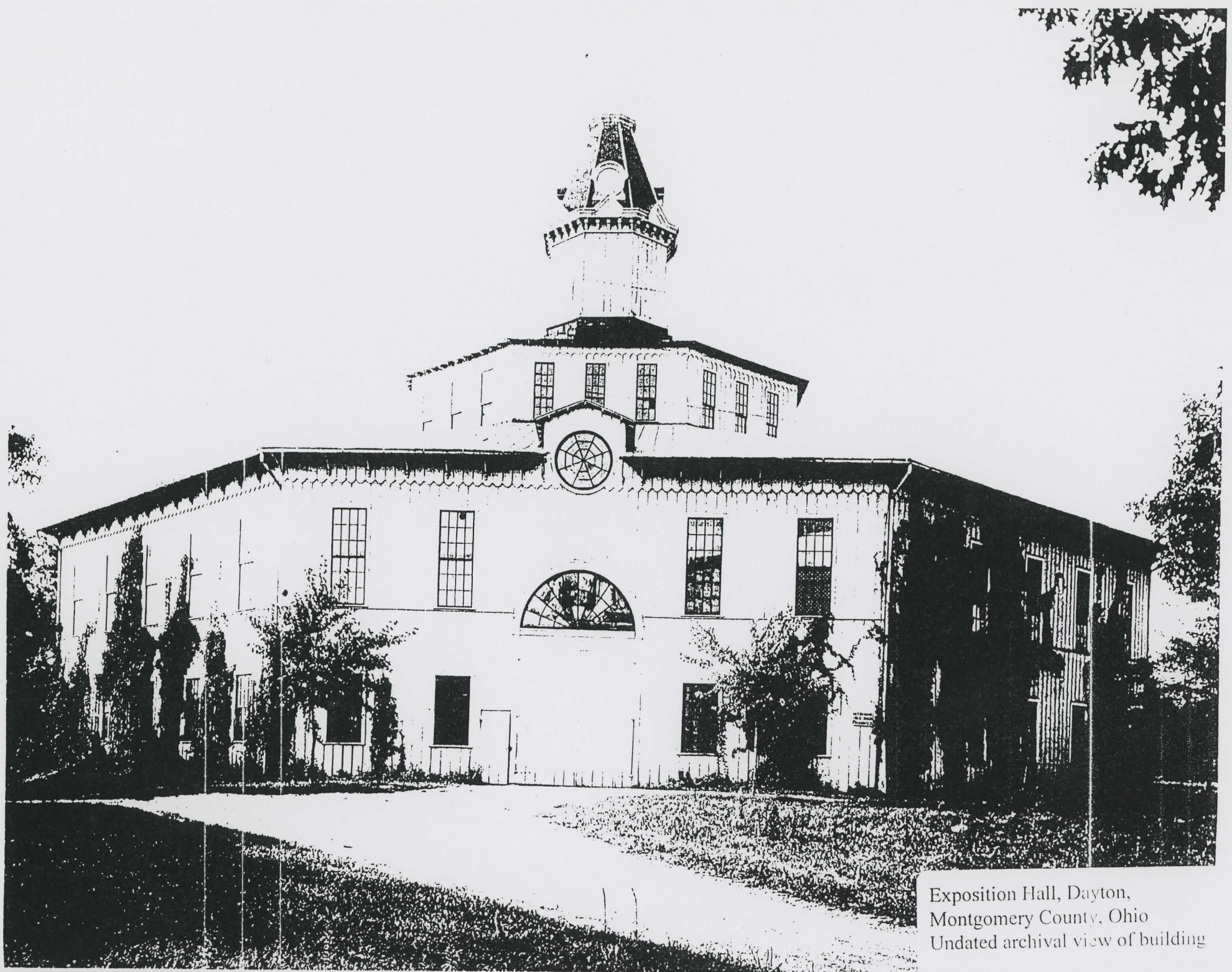


**BUILDING #9 - SECOND FLOOR**



Exposition Hall, Dayton,  
Montgomery County, Ohio  
Floor plan: second floor  
Scale 1" = 30'-0"

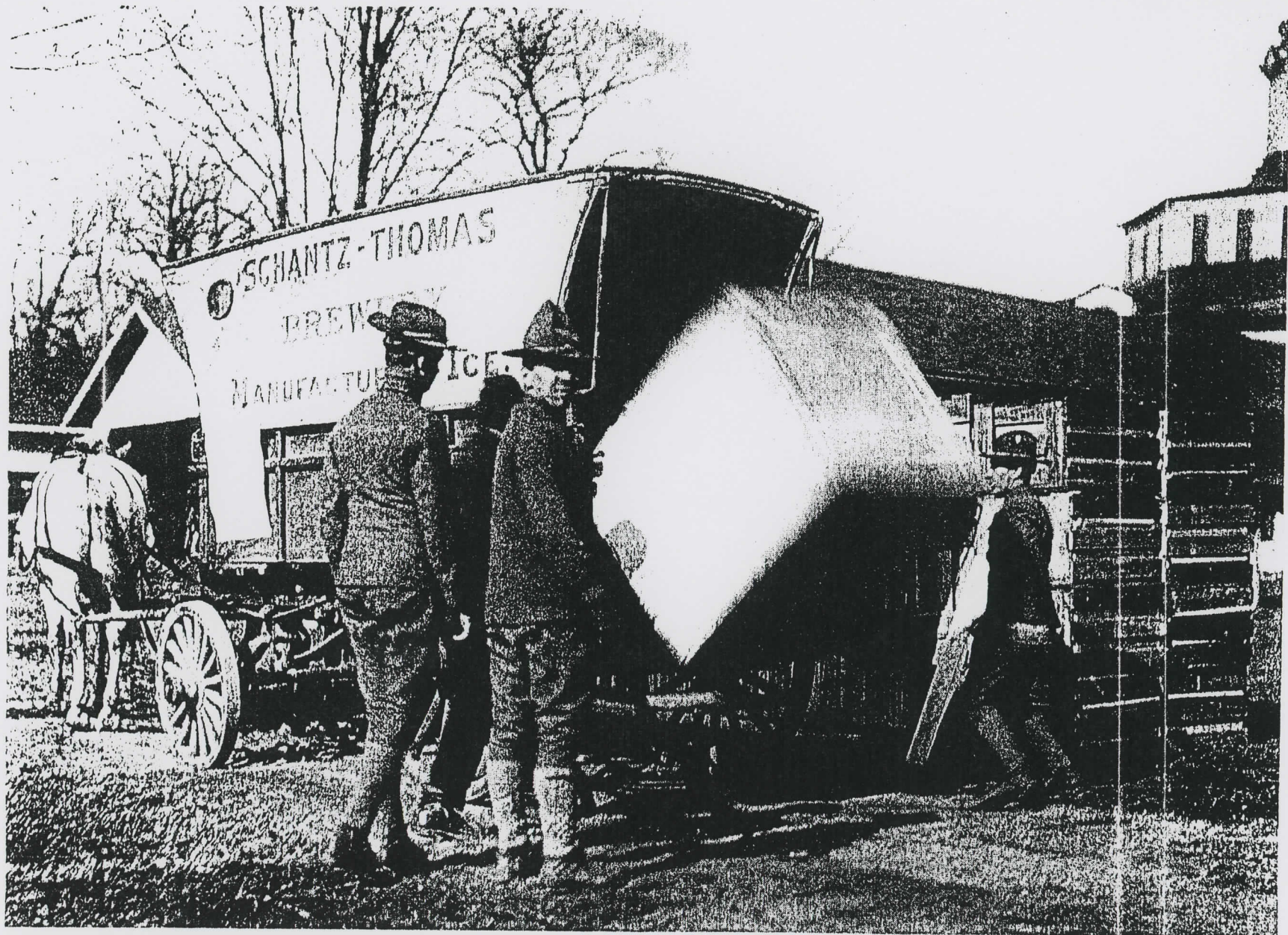




Exposition Hall, Dayton,  
Montgomery County, Ohio  
Undated archival view of building

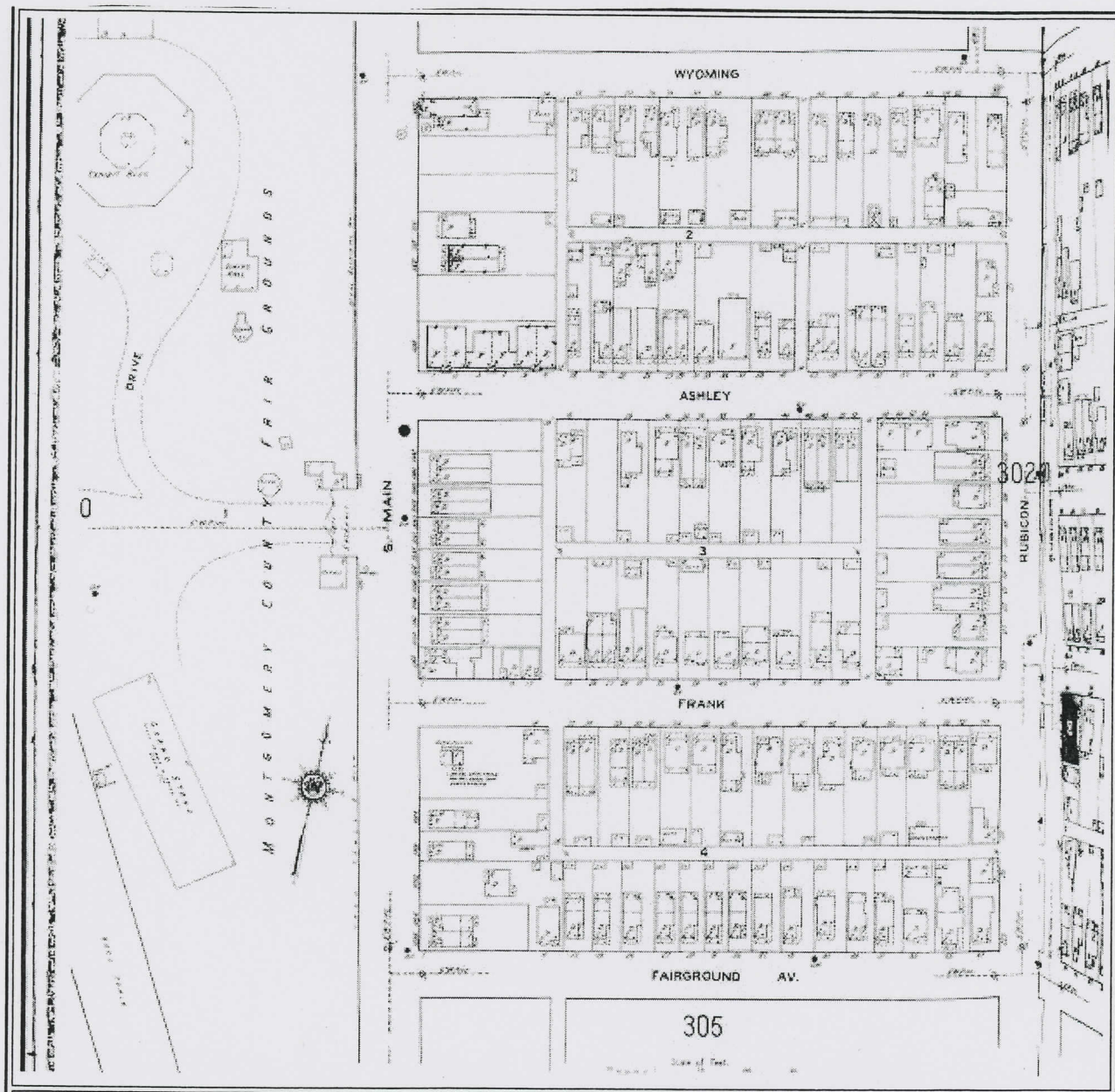


Exposition Hall, Dayton,  
Montgomery County, Ohio  
View of fairgrounds during 1913  
flood; Hall visible in background



*Soldiers unload supplies for flood victims at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds. The Roundhouse building can be seen in the background.*

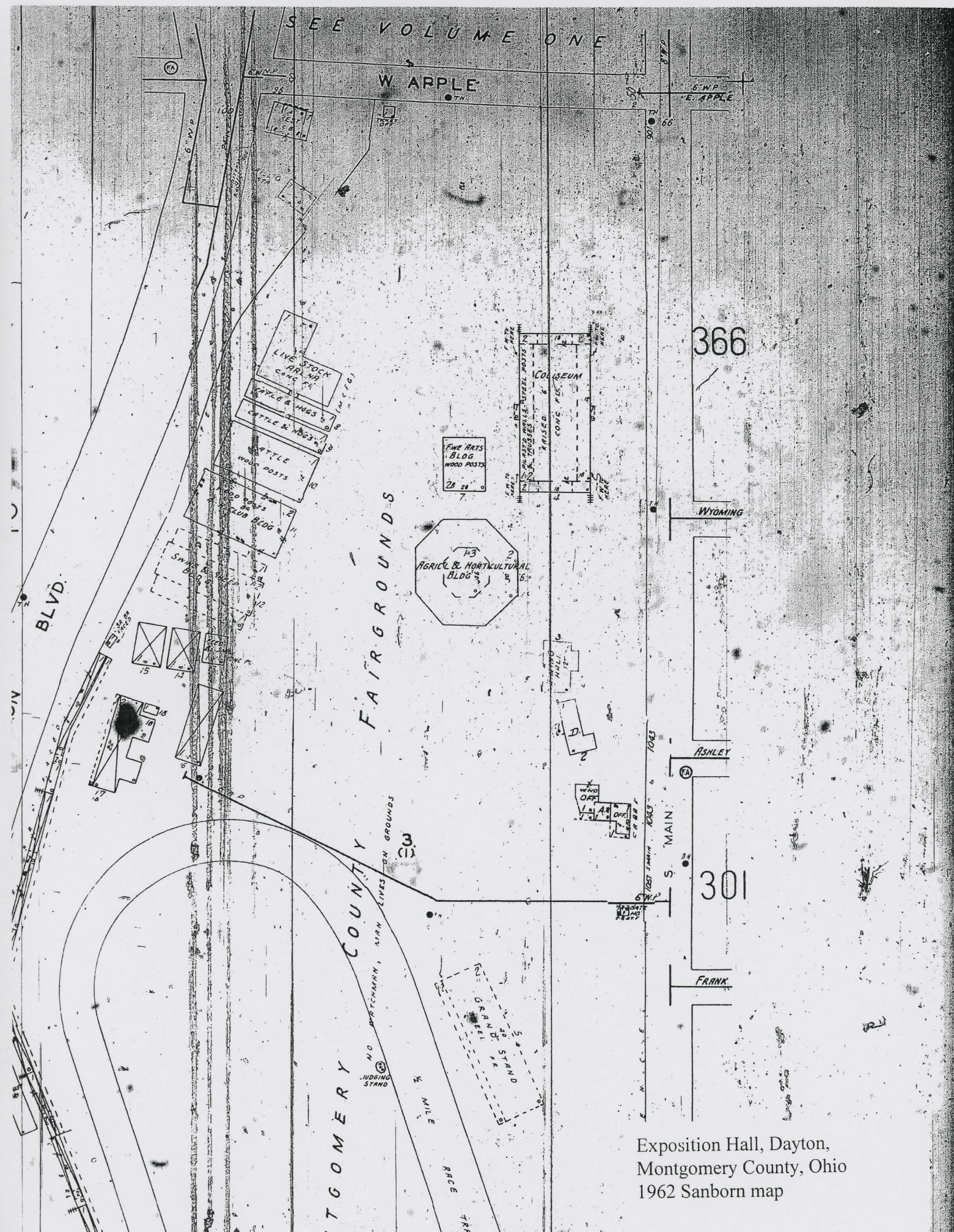




Dayton, Ohio (1918-1932 vol. 3, 1918)

Exposition Hall, Dayton,  
Montgomery County, Ohio  
1918 Sanborn map





Exposition Hall, Dayton,  
Montgomery County, Ohio  
1962 Sanborn map





# LORENZ + WILLIAMS

## ASSOCIATES

1. MAIN FAIRGROUNDS OFFICE AND FAIRTIME OFFICE
2. GROUNDSKEEPER RESIDENCE
3. TERRACE ROOM RESTAURANT (CAROUSEL ROOM)
4. MONTGOMERY COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE
5. COLISEUM BUILDING AND EXHIBITION HALL
6. FINE ARTS BUILDING (HILLTOP ROOM)
7. JUNIOR LIVESTOCK BARN
8. MILKING PARLOR
9. AGRICULTURAL BUILDING (ROUND HOUSE)
10. LIVESTOCK PAVILION
11. LIVESTOCK SHOW BARN
12. SWINE BARN
13. SHEEP BARN AND MAINTENANCE ANNEX
14. HORSE BARN
15. HORSE BARN
16. HORSE BARN
17. HORSE BARN
18. DAYTON HORSE SHOW BARN
19. SHED ROW HORSE BARN
20. SOUTH MAIN TICKET OFFICE
21. GRANDSTAND
22. ANNOUNCERS BOOTH
24. FAIRGROUNDS MAINTENANCE BUILDING
27. APPLE STREET TICKET OFFICE



SITE PLAN - 37.08 ACRES

NO SCALE

Exposition Hall, Dayton,  
Montgomery County, Ohio  
Site plan

### MONTGOMERY COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS STUDY



"The Round House" - Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
*Vicinity Map*



Exposition Hall, Dayton,  
Montgomery County, Ohio  
Location map with building circled



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OHIO, Montgomery

DATE RECEIVED: 10/27/03 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/19/03  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/05/03 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/11/03  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 03001287

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 12/01/03 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

Exposition Hall, Montgomery Co. Fairgrounds



Dayton, Montgomery Co., OH

Exposition Hall, Montgomery Co. Fairgrounds



Dayton, Montgomery Co., OH



Exposition Hall, Montgomery Co. Fairgrounds



Dayton, Montgomery Co., OH

Exposition Hall, Montgomery Co, Fairgrounds



Dayton, Montgomery Co., OH

Exposition Hall, Montgomery Co., Fairgrounds



Dayton, Montgomery Co., OH

5



Exposition Hall, Montgomery Co. Fairgrounds



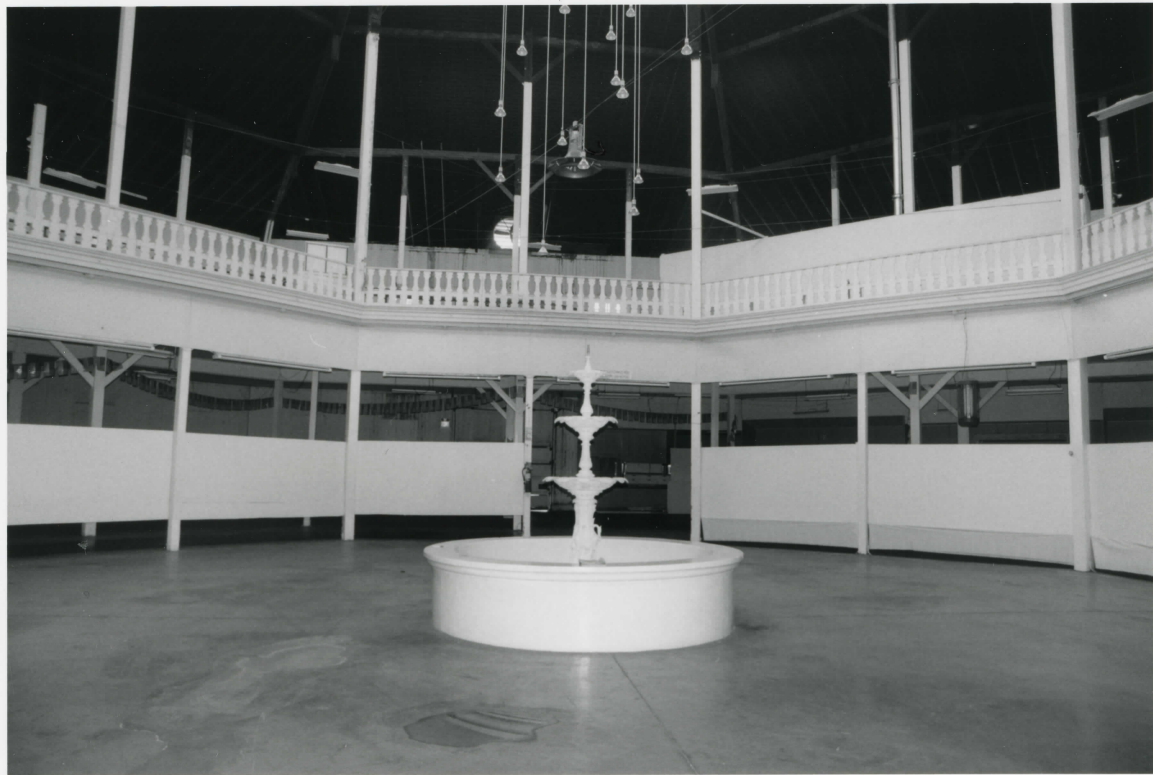
Dayton, Montgomery Co., OH

Exposition Hall, Montgomery Co. Fairgrounds



Dayton, Montgomery Co., OH

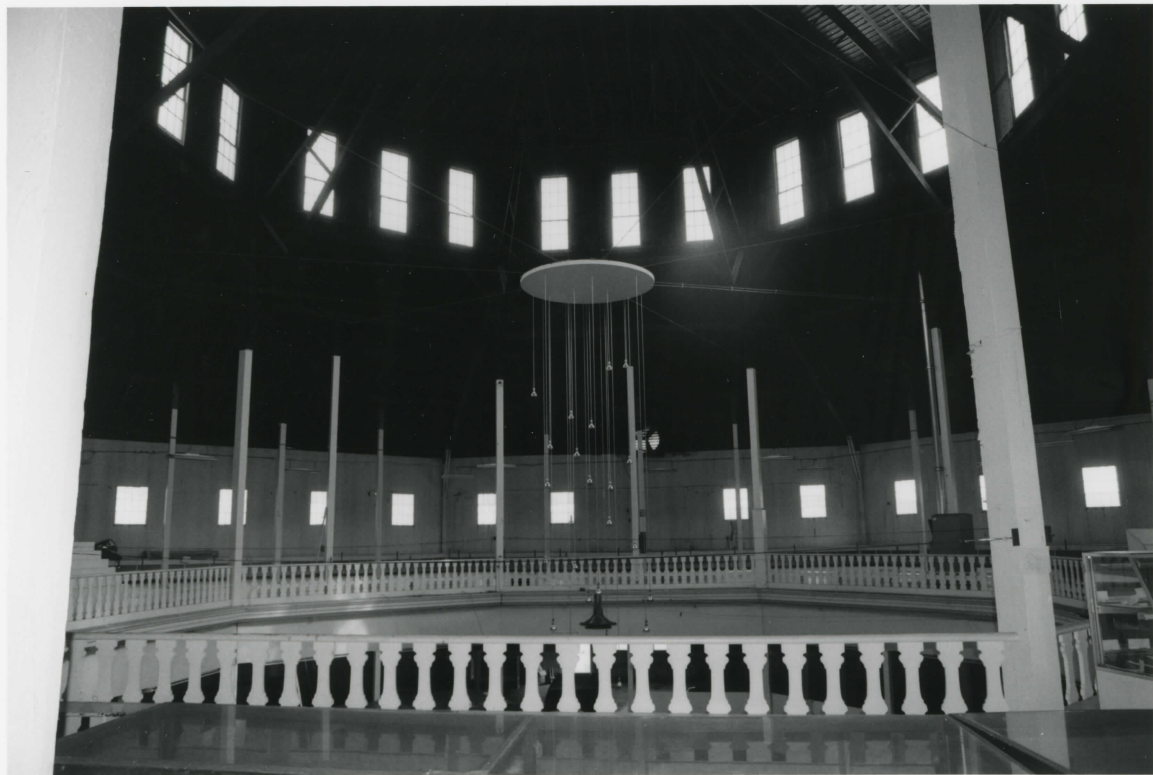
Exposition Hall, Montgomery Co. Fairgrounds



Dayton, Montgomery Co, OH

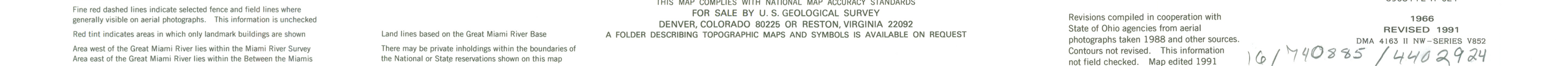


Exposition Hall, Montgomery Co. Fairgrounds



Dayton, Montgomery Co., OH



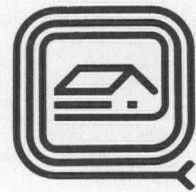




## Ohio Historic Preservation Office

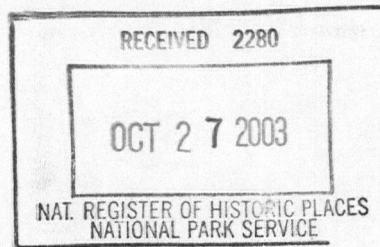
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614/ 298-2000 Fax: 614/ 298-2037

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OHIO  
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SOCIETY  
SINCE 1885

October 22, 2003



Ms. Carol Shull, Chief of Registration  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye Street, NW 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington DC 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find two (2) new National Register nominations. All appropriate notification procedures have been followed for these new submissions. If you have questions or comments about these documents, please contact this office.

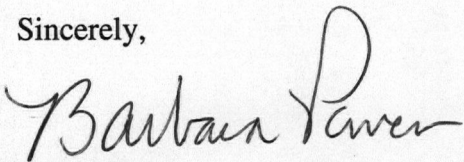
### NEW SUBMISSION

Glencoe-Auburn Hotel and Glencoe-Auburn  
Place Row Houses  
Exposition Hall, Montgomery County Fairgrounds

### COUNTY

Hamilton  
Montgomery

Sincerely,

*for*   
Rachel Tooker  
State Historic Preservation Officer

enclosures