

HAER
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MORRIS GRAIN COMPANY, ELEVATOR
I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor
Adjacent to Rock Island Railroad
Morris
Grundy County
Illinois

HAER No. IL-89

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
MORRIS GRAIN COMPANY, ELEVATOR
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HAER No. IL-89

Location: I & M Canal National Heritage Corridor
Along Rock Island Railroad
Morris, Grundy County, Illinois

UTM: 16 E.380880 N.4580050
Quad: Morris

Date of Construction: 1902

Builder: Unknown

Present Owner: Morris Elevator Company

Present Use: Storage

Significance: This large grain elevator was built in 1902 and accommodated a seed mill and warehouse in addition to the elevator.

Project Information: The Illinois and Michigan Canal was designated a National Heritage Corridor in 1984. The following year HABS/HAER embarked on an extensive inventory and documentation project of the 100 mile-long corridor. Field work for this project was concluded in 1988. Final editing of the documentation was completed in 1992.

Historian: David Kelliher and Timothy Whittaker, 1986.

This elevator was built in 1902, with a capacity of 75,000 bushels. To the west stood a steam dryer and to the east stood an engine room with dust collector, office and scales. All of these structures have been demolished. The seed mill and warehouse were added by 1927. The elevator originally belonged to the Morris Grain Company, which sold it to the Collins family. Sometime before the Second World War, the Quaker Oats Company, which had leased and then bought the adjacent oatmeal mill from the Morris Oatmeal Company around 1907, bought the elevator from the Collins family. Quaker Oats used the elevator complex to produce crushed cobs to make FerFerol for the U.S. government in the Second World War. After the war, the cob plant was removed. The building was sold to the Morris Elevator Company in 1964 and is now used for soy bean storage.

This site encompasses three structures, each having a concrete foundation, timber frame, and metal cladding. The grain elevator measures 60' x 36' and rises nearly 75' in height at the top of the cupola. Windows are four-light, double-hung sashes with wooden architraves. The north wall of the elevator has a sign proclaiming "Morris Grain Co., Seeds That Grow." On the south facade is painted a likeness of William Penn flanked by two signs reading "Quaker Oats" and "Grain Feed." The roof is corrugated metal with overhanging leaves. The grain elevator retains its cupola and is a visual landmark in Morris. Adjoining the grain elevator is the Seed Mill, a three-story wood-frame structure measuring 40' x 36'. The roof is covered in asphalt shingles with a monitor on top and six windows on the south side. Adjoining to the west is the wood-frame warehouse, measuring 55' x 30', with an enamel sign, "FULL-O-PEP FEEDS," on the western gable. Windows are twelve-light, double-hung sashes covered in louvered vents.

SOURCES:

Interview, Fred Aellig, (former plant manager, Morris Grain Co., 1957-1975), June 24, 1986.

Sanborn Map Co., Morris, Illinois (New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1907, 1916, 1927).

Morris Daily Herald, September 16, 1964.