United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Registration Form**

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  **HALL APARTMENTS**

   other names/site number__________

   name of related multiple property listing _________ N/A

2. **Location**

   street & number  550-552 Third Street

   city or town  Niagara Falls

   state  New York code NY county Niagara Falls code 063 zip code 14301

3. **State/Federal Agency Certification**

   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. ( [ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

   Signature of certifying official/Title  Date

   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 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

   (see continuation sheet)
5. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership of Property</th>
<th>Category of Property</th>
<th>Number of Resources within Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Building(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Function or Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic Functions</th>
<th>Current Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOMESTIC Multiple Dwelling</td>
<td>HEALTH CARE Medical Business/Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTH CARE Medical Business/Office</td>
<td>VACANT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural Classification</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/ Neoclassical</td>
<td>Foundation: STONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walls: BRICK, TERRA COTTA, CONCRETE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roof: ASPHALT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Narrative Description

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

Name of Property

**Niagara County, New York**

County and State

---

### 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.)

- [X] A Property 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.
- [X] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that 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 boxes that apply.)

- [ ] 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

---

### 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):**

- [X] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. **NPS #42327**
- [ ] previously listed in the National Register
- [ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
- [ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
- [ ] recorded by historic American Building 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 repository: ___________________________
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.15 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Easting</th>
<th>Northing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>657914</td>
<td>4772865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Katy Stuck and Kelsie Hoke, Associate Architectural Historians [Edited by Jennifer Walkowski, NYSHPO]

organization Preservation Studios date 4/18/2022

street & number 170 Florida Street telephone (716) 725-6410

city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14208

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 SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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

name ____________________________

street & number ____________________________ telephone ______________

city or town ____________________________ state ______ zip code ______

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, D.C. 20503
Narrative Description of Property

The Hall Apartments is a three-story mixed-use apartment building located at 550-552 Third Street on the west side of the road between Main Street and Walnut Avenue in the City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York. It sits at the north end of the city’s small historic downtown, half a mile northeast of the Rainbow Bridge to Canada and City Hall and a third of a mile east of the Niagara River. To the south, along Third Street, the downtown is primarily composed of two-story, early twentieth-century mixed-use and commercial buildings in a variety of styles, as well as a few mid-twentieth century buildings of similar scale. To the north and east, the area is largely residential, with homes dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and some commercial buildings from the middle part of the last century. The building itself sits at the oblique intersection of Main and Third streets, facing east. Two- and three-story buildings are present across the intersection. An empty lot is present to the north, with residences beyond. The Sagamore Apartments, a building that is of similar type, size, massing, and age (built 1926), abuts the nominated building to the south, with elevations on Third and South Main Streets. [The Sagamore has been determined individually eligible and has also been nominated to the National Register.] An alley runs behind the building and provides access to the rear and to garages located behind the building.

The property consists of two contributing resources: the 1928 dumbbell-shaped steel and masonry Hall Apartments and a 1927 three-car rear garage of brick and architectural tile.\(^1\) Both the apartments and garage were built for Dr. Frank Hall, a prominent physician in Niagara Falls. The Hall Apartments was designed and constructed in the Neoclassical style by the Walter S. Johnson Building Company.\(^2\) Historically, the building featured two apartment units and two commercial spaces at the first floor, one of which housed Hall’s medical practice, and five apartment units at each of the two upper floors. Another apartment was located at the basement level. Presently, the building consists of two healthcare offices and a commercial space on the first floor, five apartments on the second floor, four apartments on the third floor, and an apartment unit in the basement.

The alterations to the first-floor plan occurred in the 1960s or 1970s. The two original commercial spaces remained, but the medical office was expanded into one of the apartment units and the other ground-floor apartment was converted into a second medical office. These changes were sensitively executed, and the first story retains a great deal of integrity in regard to both original floorplan and finishes.

---


A less sympathetic one-story frame addition with a concrete block foundation was constructed onto the rear southwest corner of the building, also in the 1970s. There is a connection between this addition and two enclosed bays of an eight-bay 1926 frame garage located on the neighboring parcel to the south that is historically associated with the adjacent Sagamore Apartment building. The nomination boundaries have been drawn to include this interconnected portion of the Sagamore Apartment garage even though the interconnection is non-historic. Per National Register guidance, the remaining unenclosed components of the Sagamore garage are counted as a single building within the Sagamore Apartment complex because it was constructed as a single building and remained one building during the period of significance. The garage constructed for the Hall Apartments is not attached or connected to the latter and is counted as a contributing building to the Hall Apartments.

The second and third floors of the Hall Apartment have been largely untouched since their original construction and also retain a high degree of integrity in layout, finishes, and features, with hardwood floors, wood case work, and plaster walls throughout. Two of the apartments on the third floor were combined at an unknown date, resulting in only four apartments on the third floor. Currently, one of the first-floor medical offices is in use by a dentist, but the rest of the building has been maintained, unoccupied, for many years.

**Exterior**

The Hall Apartments is dumbbell-shaped in plan and measures three-and-a-half bays wide by ten bays deep. It has a steel-frame structure with masonry infill and rises three full stories in height over a short basement, with a tall parapet concealing a flat roof at the top. The facade is faced in yellow brick with limestone accents. The side and rear elevations are primarily architectural tile with some yellow brick. There are regular one-over-one rectangular windows throughout, grouped into Chicago-style widows at the front, and all are non-historic black aluminum units. At the rear of the building, there is a small one-story non-historic ell attached at the southern end of the west elevation, and an abutting but detached brick and architectural-tile garage just beyond to the west. Along the south elevation, a long eight-car garage bay is located within the adjacent parcel (Figure 1). In the 1970s, some of the garage stalls were modified into a one-and-a-half story office/studio and attached to the main building through the non-historic real addition.

**Facade**

The east-facing facade consists of a main three-bay portion with a narrow, slightly recessed, one-bay portion to the south. The main portion is symmetrically composed and has stacked Chicago-style windows in the outer bays and a large, articulated original entry at the center bay with single windows above. At the center bay, the

---

main entry is accessed by a single step up and consists of a large, round-arched opening containing a single door flanked by sidelights with an arched transom across the top. The door is an original painted wood door with a

**Figure 1:** The Hall Apartments showing the main building (blue; 1928) and three-car garage (green; 1927). The non-historic 1970s addition (yellow) included new construction between the apartment building and three-car garage, as well as the conversion of two bays of a 1926 eight-car garage historically associated with the

full glazed panel at the center. The sidelights have been fitted with new glazing but retain their original casings and short recessed panels at the base, and the transom is the original leaded glass with a scrolled pattern. Framing the entry is a large classical surround with a single quarter-engaged Doric column to either side supporting a full Doric entablature with articulated triglyphs and a short curb at the top. A spandrel panel and central keystone are present in the field between the top of the arched entry and the frieze. To either side, the base of the building is wrapped in a short limestone base capped by a water table beneath a wide rectangular opening containing a Chicago-style window. Centered above the entry, there is a single window opening at the second story, flanked on either side by the same Chicago-style windows. The first-floor windows are taller than those at the second floor, but each opening has a cast-stone sill and a lintel of soldier-coursed brick. At the third story, the windows match those of the second floor and sit on a sill course of limestone. Above, the elevation is capped by a heavy frieze and cornice of limestone with a patera centered over each window at the frieze and a tall parapet of yellow brick with a limestone coping.

To the south, the narrow half bay is wrapped by the same limestone base, sill course, frieze and parapet as the main portion. A wide rectangular entrance is centered at the first floor and contains a non-historic brushed aluminum door with narrow sidelights, a spandrel panel with the words "Christian Science Reading Room," and a multi-light steel transom. Single one-over-one windows are present at both upper floors.

**North (side) Elevation**

The north elevation of the building is ten bays wide and, owing to the dumbbell-shaped plan of the building, has a slightly recessed center portion with shorter projecting wings at either end. The wings are each two bays wide, executed in terra-cotta clay tile (aka speed tile), and are without openings. The six-bay center portion is yellow brick to match the front at the first and second stories, and clay tile at the third story. Within this center portion, there are six single-window openings at each floor with three grouped to either side and a larger solid space at the center. The three window openings at the western half of the first floor have been filled in, as the space beyond is used for an exam room. Two smaller windows are also present at the basement, each roughly centered beneath the group of three windows above. All of the window openings at the basement, first, and second stories have a cast-stone sill and a heavy limestone lintel with canted corners, while those at the third floor have cast-stone sills and steel lintels.

**South (side) Elevation**

The south elevation is similar to the north elevation with some differences to accommodate the adjacent building and an interior stair. As on the north elevation, the western projecting wing is blank; the eastern projecting wing abuts the neighboring building. At the recessed center portion, the two lower floors are yellow
brick with canted limestone lintels above the openings, while the floor above is clay tile with flat steel lintels instead. The western recessed portion contains two basement windows just west of center, two windows at the first floor, and three windows at both the second and third stories. Immediately to the east of these three bays, in the center of the recessed portion, a single side entry with original wood sash door and flanking leaded-glass window are located at grade. A pair of windows is present above at the intermediate landings of an interior stair below the second and third floors. The lower paired stair window has been reduced in height with a metal spandrel panel. The three eastern bays feature two off-center basement windows, two windows that match the three stories of the western bays, and a smaller window at each story in the easternmost bay. Small windows are also located on each story at the wall juncture of the projecting end-wings and the recessed portion, facing inward.

Rear (west) Elevation

The rear elevation of the building is executed fully in terra-cotta clay tile. A narrow bay at the center contains a single rear entry door at grade, and small, single windows light two intermediate stair landings above. The door appears to be original and has two horizontal panels in the lower half and an upper half with a blank infill panel obscuring or replacing the original upper glazed panel. To the north, there are two large, original multi-light steel basement windows within window wells. Above the steel windows, there two windows at the first floor, and a pair of windows at both the second and third floor. South of center, a circa-1970 wood-frame ell is present at the first floor. Above it, there are two windows at the second story and, at the third story, a pair of windows with a smaller single window towards the southern edge. With the exception of the basement, the windows match those found elsewhere on the building.

In the 1970s, a small addition to the building was constructed at the southwest corner of the rear elevation using the west wall of the apartment and the east wall of the garage, which was located twelve feet to the west. The addition was of wood frame constructed, with vinyl siding. Although the addition was internally connected to the apartment building, it was not connected to the garage, which remained an independent building, despite sharing a party wall.

Garages

At the rear of the building, there is a three-bay, single-story, brick and clay tile garage. When originally built in 1927, the garage was freestanding and sat approximately twelve feet west of the Hall Apartments; however, it now shares a party wall with a non-historic addition to the Hall Apartment built in the 1970s. The garage faces north and has a single wide opening across its north face flanked by a yellow brick pier at either end. The remaining visible sides of the garage are each hollow clay tile without any openings. The east wall of the
garage, which now forms one wall of the ell, has two large original windows openings that have been filled in with concrete block. The apartment building and the garage are not connected on the interior.

To the south of the three-car garage, a long eight-car garage is located within the adjacent parcel, facing south. The eastern half of this garage abuts the Hall Apartments, and the other half extends to the west. The garage has end walls, a rear wall, and some dividing walls of hollow clay tile. The south-facing elevation originally largely consisted of wood posts between the stalls and a soffit and projecting eave running the length of the bay. In the early 1970s, two of the middle bays were converted into a one-and-a-half-story addition to the non-historic addition to the Hall Apartments by raising the walls and adding a shallow gabled roof. This volume was then sheathed in vertical wood siding, as were the three remaining bays to the east. This enclosed volume is now included in the nomination for the Hall Apartments. This portion of the garage is not accessible internally to the garage bays to the east and west, which remain associated with the Sagamore building to the south.

**Interior**

On the interior of the building, the original floorplan is largely intact throughout, as are most of the original finishes. Each floor has a wide, central corridor running east-west, with a main circulation stair centered on the south wall and a rear stair at the center of the west wall. At the first floor, there are two offices, a commercial space, and one apartment. The second floor has five apartment units, and the third floor has four units. A full basement level is also present and, apart from utilitarian space, contains one small apartment centered on the south wall, accessed by the main stair. The utilitarian space features a concrete floor with walls of painted masonry or painted wood structure and exposed structure at the ceiling, while the apartment has finishes dating to the 1970s or 1980s, consisting of terrazzo and vinyl tile at the floors, and gypsum at the walls and ceilings.

**First Floor**

The main entry to the first floor is through the primary door on the east-facing Third Street facade. As this door is only a single step above grade, there is a small vestibule inside with a short flight of steps up to the main floor level and central corridor. A single large dentist’s office currently occupies all of the space on the north side of the corridor. Historically this space contained two offices, but they were combined in the 1960s or 1970s to provide additional exam rooms. On the south side of the corridor, there is a one-bedroom apartment at the east end, and a second dentist’s office at the west end which incorporates both the rear ell and one-and-a-half story addition within a former garage. The vestibule at the front of the building has glazed tile walls at the lower half with textured plaster above, a matching barrel-vaulted ceiling, and simple tile floor. Cast-stone steps lead to a tall round-arched opening into the corridor. The corridor has matching textured plaster walls, a flat plaster ceiling, and hardwood floors with stained wood baseboards, chair rail, crown, and heavy casings at the
openings. Opposite the stair, there is a tall floor-mounted pier mirror with elaborate carving which appears to be original to the building.

North of the corridor, the large dentist's office has three generous rooms at the front (east end) and a long hallway with several smaller exam and prep rooms at the rear. Throughout, the original flooring is covered over with either carpet or vinyl tile. The front room has been partially divided down the middle with modern partitions to form two small dental exam rooms, but the perimeter walls are plaster and there is original stained-wood casing at the Chicago window on the east wall and painted wood baseboard wrapping the room. The original ceiling is obscured by a dropped, acoustic tile ceiling. To the west is a reception and administration room, and beyond that, the waiting room. The reception and administration room retains some plaster at the north and south walls but is otherwise finished in modern drywall with a dropped, acoustic tile ceiling. The adjacent space used as the waiting room is highly finished and very intact. A heavy stained-oak cornice wraps the room and is intersected by beams supported on small corbels which divide the ceiling into three horizontal panels. At the west end of the room there is a deep fireplace faced in iron-spotted brown brick and framed by carved oak Ionic capitals in the round supporting a full oak entablature at chest height. The entablature wraps around to the north, capping a built-in bookcase with leaded-glass doors. The base of the room is wrapped by stained baseboard and the windows have matching casings. The remainder of the dentist's office is taken up by a narrow hallway along the south wall providing access to additional exam rooms to the north and at the western end. Each of these spaces has gypsum walls with painted original trim still remaining at the perimeter and original ceilings obscured by dropped, acoustic tile ceilings.

The small apartment on the south side of the main corridor appears to be largely original in floorplan with some modifications made at the kitchen and bathroom. It consists of a bedroom against the east wall with a kitchen at the center and a large living room adjacent to the west. The perimeter walls are each plaster with original painted casings and trim intact. In the bedroom, the ceiling is flat plaster wrapped by a tall painted crown and the remainder of the ceilings are dropped, acoustic tile. The flooring is a mix of carpet and vinyl tile over the original hardwood.

The second medical office incorporates both the rear ell and the one-and-a-half story addition and so has a rambling plan. It is entered via a door adjacent to main stair and opens into a highly finished waiting room with a hallway extending west and accessing exam and prep rooms. The hallway terminates at the ell, which is divided into two exam rooms and a closet and provides access through the exam rooms to a large studio office located in the addition. The waiting room space has plaster walls and plaster ceiling with cased openings and is wrapped by a tall, stained baseboard and deep matching crown. A deep plate rail runs around the room, supported on small brackets, and slim wood members divide the area beneath into tall panels. Above, boxed wood beams divide the ceiling into panels. The rest of the office has largely contemporary finishes with gypsum at the walls, a mix of gypsum and adhered acoustic tile at the ceilings, and carpeted floors. In the hallway, some
original painted trim and stained two-panel doors remain. The studio office in the addition is similarly finished with gypsum throughout and shag carpeting at the floor. It has a low-ceilinged ground story level below the studio space with matching finishes.

Second Floor

At the second floor, the corridor is similar to the first floor and has a hardwood floor with textured plaster walls and painted wood baseboard, chair rail, and crown. The main stair centered on the south wall is a simple but handsome stained-wood stair with slender square spindles, a molded handrail, and square newel posts with trimmed caps. The plaster walls of the stairwell are textured like the corridor. At the west end of the building, the rear stair is similar but narrower and executed in painted wood.

The five fairly generous apartment units are arranged around the central corridor. There are two one-bedroom units, two two-bedroom units, and one studio unit, all of which have intact floorplans with no changes made to the original plans. Layout is highly variable from unit to unit. Three of the units open directly into the living room, while two have entry halls or vestibules. The number of bedrooms or size of the apartment is not a determining factor in whether the unit has an entry vestibule. All of the apartments have a single combined living and dining room, and only three have separate kitchens, the other two featuring a wide inset opening in one of the walls of the large living space for the kitchen instead. Four of the five apartments also have bedrooms that open directly into the living area instead of through a hallway. The bathroom of one unit is accessed through the bedroom, but the rest are off of the main living space or accessed from a hallway.

Throughout, each of the apartment units has hardwood floors, plaster walls and ceilings, and heavy wood casings at each of the openings with tall wood baseboards. The living rooms and bedrooms of each unit have a different pattern of textured plaster at the walls. Of the apartments that do not have a separate dedicated room for the kitchen, but instead have a wide inset opening in the living room wall, the opening is cased to match the other openings and was fitted with a counter, cupboards, sink, and small refrigerator. The cased openings remain at all of the apartment units but no longer retain the appliances or cupboards. In many apartments, the original single panel doors and even some historic light fixtures remain in place.

Third Floor

The layout and finishes of the third floor are identical to the second floor with one exception. At the southeast corner, an original one-bedroom unit and adjacent studio unit to the west were sensitively combined at an unknown date to form the existing two-bedroom apartment. The merger of these rooms resulted in the third floor featuring three two-bedroom units and one one-bedroom unit. Like the second floor, all of the units retain
a significant amount of historic fabric, including original wood flooring, textured plaster walls and ceilings, wood doors, trim, and cabinets, and many of the light and bathroom fixtures.
Statement of Significance:

The Hall Apartments, located at 550-552 Third Street, is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a representative and intact example of an early twentieth century mixed-used commercial/apartment building. The four-story yellow brick building with steel frame, tripartite windows, and monumental Neoclassical entrance enframement shows the influence of period trends in commercial building design and exemplifies the buildings once typical of early twentieth century apartment development in the City of Niagara Falls. The property is also significant under Criterion A in the area of Social History for its association with growth and development trends in Niagara Falls during the early twentieth century when the city emerged as an industrial center, for its association with changes in healthcare in this period, and for its illustration of middle-class apartment house living in Niagara Falls.

Dr. Frank Hall, a prominent physician in Niagara Falls, commissioned the three-story building in 1928 as both an office for his practice and a residence for his family. The building was laid out with two medical offices and a commercial space on the ground floor and apartment units on all three stories and in the basement. Constructed by the W.S. Johnson Building Company, the Hall Apartments features modest, but sophisticated, Neoclassical detailing on the facade, particularly the overscaled entrance surround, which helped construct a formal public image for both the building and the Hall business on a prominent street corner in the city. Although less finely finished on the interior than high-end apartments, the apartment units are remarkably intact, with floorplans and fabric dating to the original 1920s design. The rooms are spacious, with handsome detailing, including arched entryways, a variety of textured plaster walls and ceilings, and even original bathroom and light fixtures. The medical offices, despite some sensitive expansions and alterations to the layout, retain a significant amount of original fabric and demonstrate changes in the physical space of practicing medicine that occurred during the early twentieth century, when the site of healthcare transitioned from the patient’s home to the doctor’s office.

The Hall Apartments was one of at least seven other small apartment buildings erected in Niagara Falls during the mid-1920s that served a largely middle-class professional clientele, a population that increased dramatically in the early twentieth century as the city of Niagara Falls emerged as an industrial center. While targeting tenants of modest income level, the Hall Apartments still displays the “timeless respectability” that investors created to appeal to potential tenants.⁴ The restrained Neoclassical ornamentation of the facade and a formal name, “The Hall Apartments,” projected a proper and reputable identity to the public.

The period of significance begins with the initial construction of the rear garage in 1927 and ends in 1948, when the building was sold out of Hall family ownership. While healthcare providers have continued to operate in the

building, the Hall family’s ownership represents the building’s most significant association with the significant themes. Together, the commercial spaces and apartments provide a connection to the early twentieth century development in Niagara Falls, when mixed-use buildings like the Hall Apartments served a growing population with diverse needs.

**History of Niagara Falls and the Development of Third Street**

Although the falls have been a destination for Euro-American adventurers and tourists for centuries, it was not until the years leading up to the War of 1812, when brothers Augustus and Peter Porter led an effort to settle the Village of Manchester on the American side of Niagara Falls, that the area saw any significant settlement. The development of a transportation route and a tavern, and, later, the completion of the Erie Canal in nearby Buffalo, ensured a steady flow of settlers and tourists to the region thereafter.

While the falls signified American sublimity for many onlookers, the untapped potential of the Niagara River evoked industrial potential in others. The roots of industry in the area stretch back to the 1758, when French settlers under the direction of Daniel-Marie Chabert de Joncaire de Clausonne constructed a sawmill that drew power from the Horseshoe rapids. When Augustus Porter settled in the area, he directed the construction of a number of small industries that drew hydropower from the Niagara.

Progress in Manchester underwhelmed visitors during the first few decades of settlement, but the pace of industrial development accelerated throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century with local advances in the generation of hydroelectric power led by the Schoellkopf and Adams power plants. The promise of the power generated by these two plants (which became the Niagara Falls Power Company) ensured the preeminence of Niagara Falls as a location for industry.

In addition to industrial development, the early tourism economy spurred a variety of commercial enterprises around the intersection of Main and Falls streets prior to 1875. North of the Hydraulic Canal, residential

---


8 Stan Horab, Patricia Rice, and Tom Yots, “City of Niagara Falls,” in *Niagara County Bicentennial*, edited by Craig Bacon, Melissa Dunlap, Douglas Farley, Shirley Frombgen, Kellie Schiavone, and Patricia Tracy (Niagara County: Niagara County Historical Society, 2008), 118.


buildings lined Third, Fourth, and the west side of Fifth Street. Few buildings existed east of Sixth Street and all that did were located south of Niagara Street at Falls Street. A decade later, the same patterns persisted. In 1888, the north end of Third Street remained on the outer limits of the settled part of the village. To the west, a significant amount of industry associated with both the Hydraulic Canal and the New York Central and Hudson Railroad tracks was located off of Second Street. Two blocks to the south, the intersection of Third Street and the Hydraulic Canal showed the beginnings of a civic and commercial node. The land around Main and Third streets was moderately developed with dwellings; however, the only businesses within a few blocks were E.A. Butler Florists, partially on the lot where the Hall Apartments was eventually built, and a small grocer across Main Street.

In the two decades straddling the turn of the twentieth century, Niagara Falls experienced immense growth as manufacturing topped tourism as the leading economic generator for the city. Job opportunities and the promise of state-of-the-art technology attracted tens of thousands of immigrants to the city, which expanded through a series of municipal mergers. The villages of Manchester and Suspension Bridge, a settlement north of the falls, merged in 1890 to form the City of Niagara Falls, resulting in a combined population of 9,000. Two years later, with the installation of the first streetcar line in the city on Main Street, nearly all of the lots along Third Street were developed for residential use and a second grocer, a butcher shop, and a pharmacy joined the Butler Florists on Main Street.

By 1900, about 19,500 people lived in Niagara Falls, and the commercial character of Third Street south of the Hydraulic Canal solidified as new building activity pushed out of the historic downtown and more retail enterprises opened around the intersection of Niagara Street. The small commercial intersection at Main and Third grew as well. Butler’s Florists expanded its buildings, and a furnace shop and hardware store opened nearby on Main Street. Around the turn of the century, a two-story house was constructed at 552 Third Street.

In 1909, the valuation of the city was over twenty-four million dollars, eight times its value in 1892, and the population had nearly quadrupled to 35,000. City Industrial Agent E. T. Williams described the way this influx of people redefined the demographic character of the city in a 1915 article for the Niagara Falls Gazette, declaring that the population was “cosmopolitan, so far as race is concerned, and the strictly American portion

11 Sanborn Map Company, Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York, 1888, Sheet 8.
12 Sanborn Map Company, Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York, 1888, Sheet 4.
13 Sanborn Map Company, Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York, 1888, Sheet 8.
16 Horab et al., “City of Niagara Falls,” 129.
17 Sanborn Map Company, Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York, 1897, Sheet 26; Sanborn Map Company, Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York, 1914, Sheet 1.
hailed originally from many different states of the Union.” Developers and entrepreneurs, large and small, met the significant demand for commercial and residential amenities to accommodate the swelling workforce. Between 1911 and 1914, prices paid for building permits in the city totaled over four million dollars. Factory construction accounted for a significant portion of this total, but the acceleration of residential development contributed as well. In 1911 alone, estimates placed the number of new homes constructed in Niagara Falls at around 500 buildings. Authorities also invested substantial resources to rapidly provide adequate infrastructure. By 1915, the city had laid eighty-three miles of sewer lines, compared to roughly thirteen miles total in 1893. These amenities accompanied a major street-paving campaign and the installation of electric streetlights and an electric streetcar system.

By 1920, the population had increased by another 20,000 people. This growth, paired with infrastructure improvements, buoyed investor optimism and spurred speculative neighborhood development. A 1920 survey of city buildings by the city assessor identified 8,860 houses, 5,957 apartment buildings, and 35 hotels in the city. Nationally prominent companies, including Du Pont, the Carborundum Company, the Shredded Wheat Company (later Nabisco), and Niagara Falls Power Company, employed tens of thousands of people, including residents of 552 Third Street, and facilitated several decades of strong economic growth and general prosperity. By the onset of World War II, Niagara Falls was home to just under 80,000 people.

Dr. Frank Hall (1867-1944) and Early Twentieth Century Healthcare in Niagara Falls

Frank Hall was born in Ontario, Canada, in 1867 to English parents. He began practicing medicine in 1886 at the age of 19 and emigrated across the border to Niagara Falls, New York, in 1892, where he continued his trade. Hall was one of only nine physicians in the city at the time and operated his practice first out of Edwin J. Cole’s pharmacy at 91 Ontario Street (now 539 Main Street) at the northeast corner of Third and Main Streets.

---

19 E. T. Williams, “What Was Once a Mere Summer Resort Town is Now Thriving Industrial and Commercial Center of 36,000 People,” Niagara Falls Gazette, May 1, 1915.
20 Williams, “What Was Once a Mere Summer Resort Town is Now Thriving.”
21 Williams, “What Was Once a Mere Summer Resort Town is Now Thriving.”
22 Williams, “What Was Once a Mere Summer Resort Town is Now Thriving.”
23 “Phenomenal Growth of Niagara Falls,” Buffalo Courier, 1910, Niagara Falls History -1939, Special Collections, Niagara Falls Public Library, Niagara Falls.
25 Horab et al., “City of Niagara Falls,” 129.
26 1900 U.S. Census, Niagara County, New York, population schedule, City of Niagara Falls, First District of Second Ward, Enumeration District 72, Sheet 10, dwelling 552, family 173, Frank Hall.
27 Hall’s source of medical training is unknown and took place in Canada. 1920 U.S. Census, Niagara County, New York, population schedule, City of Niagara Falls, Second Ward, Enumeration District 116, Sheet 1, dwelling 552, family 10, Frank Hall; “Gertrude Gordon v. City of Niagara Falls,” State of New York Supreme Court Appellate Division-Fourth Department, 1891, 163.
(extant) and then out of the adjacent three-story brick building at 545 Main Street, where he lived (also extant).  

It is not coincidental that the opening of Cole’s pharmacy coincided with Hall’s arrival in 1892. In the late nineteenth century, doctors and druggists had a close, symbiotic relationship, and it was common practice for physicians to occupy a public space at the rear of a pharmacy. The presence of a doctor in the building supplied a steady stream of customers to the drug store, while the pharmacist provided the physician with easy access to wholesale drugs and medical supplies and acted as a receptionist, taking messages for the doctor while he was away, which were often left on a hanging slate tablet.

When Hall began practicing medicine, very little healthcare was done in a doctor’s office, if the doctor had one at all. The traditional site of medical care and healing was the patient’s home, and, as a result, doctors were expected to attend patients in their place of residence or at the place of injury. Doctors would arrive at the patient’s location by bike, by horse, by streetcar, or on foot, having been fetched by a relative or called on the phone at their home or the pharmacy. Specialists existed, but far more doctors were general practitioners, catering to all the needs of the community, from assisting births to treating communicable disease and aiding victims of workplace accidents. As the practice of medicine became more technical during the early twentieth century, and laboratory techniques such as x-rays and electrocardiograms were invented and became accessible for neighborhood physicians, patients began coming to the doctor instead of the other way around, and a doctor’s office, while still commonly within or adjacent to the physician’s home, required more specialized and separated spaces.

In 1894, Frank Hall married Elizabeth Mayle. Mayle came from a prominent and wealthy local family. Her father, Louis F. Mayle, was a German immigrant and speculative investor involved in a variety of pursuits, including real estate, tourism, and industry. Frank and Elizabeth had a son in 1896 and named him Louis F.

---

30 McLennan County Medical Society, “Doctors’ Offices in the Late 1800s.”
after his grandfather. That year, the young family moved across Main Street to a house at 552 Third Street. Frank continued to operate his practice out of their new home and, possibly, the local pharmacy. He made house calls, attended workplace and transportation injuries, retrieved the bodies of the deceased, and evaluated patients for various ailments, including venereal disease, at his home office. It appears the Halls leased the property from Eugene and Jane Butler, local florists, for four years before Elizabeth Hall purchased it in 1900.

The family was doing well enough at this point to own the house outright and afford two domestic servants. Influenced and supported by Elizabeth’s father, Frank Hall was elected secretary of Mayle’s Cataract Brewing Company in 1903 and joined the board of directors in 1908 with Elizabeth’s brothers and uncles.

In 1927, the Halls launched a renovation of their property at 552 Third Street, possibly to reorganize the space to address the increased role of the doctor’s office in patient care. While temporarily living at 583 Third Street, which was also undergoing construction, they added a three-car garage at the back of 552 Third, presumably to accommodate patient visits, and began remodeling the house. Unfortunately, a fire erupted at the home one evening from a pile of rags workers had left behind. [The garage survived and is part of the nominated property.] Although the value of the damage was listed at only $200, the Halls demolished the house in order to construct an apartment building on the lot.

The Hall Apartments

The success of Frank’s medical practice and other enterprises allowed the Halls to branch out into real estate development. In 1928, after the fire at their home, Frank commissioned the Hall Apartments on the site to include an office for his practice and commercial space for an oil burner company that Louis Hall was invested

35 1900 U.S. Census, Niagara County, New York, population schedule, City of Niagara Falls, First District of Second Ward, Enumeration District 72, Sheet 10, dwelling 552, family 173, Frank Hall.
36 The house depicted on mapping at 552 Third Street in 1897 is located adjacent to the north of the house labeled as 552 Third Street on subsequent mapping. It is possible that the house was mis-numbered, and the Halls moved into a new build at 552 Third in 1896 that was not depicted on the 1897 mapping. L.P. Waite & Co., Waite’s Directory of the City of Niagara Falls for 1896 (Niagara Falls: L.P. Waite & Co., 1896), 139.
39 1900 U.S. Census, Niagara County, New York, population schedule, City of Niagara Falls, First District of Second Ward, Enumeration District 72, Sheet 10, dwelling 552, family 173, Frank Hall.
42 “Fire Due to Hot Day,” Niagara Falls Gazette, August 17, 1928, 12.
in on the ground floor. The apartments reflect the Hall family’s growing prosperity and diversification of income. The investment in the building pushed the Halls’ enterprises beyond healthcare and into real estate and commerce and mirrored a broader trend of investment property and apartment development on Third Street in the 1920s. By the time the city directory was published in 1928, seven of twelve of the apartments were already occupied, including one by the Halls’ son, Louis. Frank and Elizabeth moved on to a house they purchased on Orchard Parkway in 1930, but Dr. Hall maintained his practice in the office on the first floor of the Hall Apartments until his retirement in 1937.

### Apartment Living in Niagara Falls

The concept of the apartment building was common in Europe long before it became socially acceptable in the United States. As apartment living gained popularity in the United States in the early twentieth century, apartments developed into a specialty design field. Prior to the late nineteenth century, multi-family residential buildings were generally associated with crowded tenement houses in cities like New York, and books like *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) exposed unthinkable conditions. However, as regulations curbed the most atrocious aspects of tenement houses, multi-family units appealed to the economic sense and shifting social norms of American society. As industrial cities like Niagara Falls fostered growing working and middle-class populations, apartment buildings in primarily residential neighborhoods offered an alternative to living in congested downtown districts.

Construct in 1906, the Lochiel Apartments at Buffalo Avenue and Third Street were among the earliest apartments in Niagara Falls that catered to wealthier residents. An advertisement boasted its aesthetic inspiration as being “modeled after the big and fashionable apartment houses in other cities.” The novelty of the building type at the turn of the century is evident in the fact that the Niagara Falls city directory did not include a section for “apartments” or “flats” in 1911, despite the fact that multi-unit residential buildings catered to a working-class and middle-class clientele as far from downtown as Seventh Street. By 1916, however, the city directory listed twenty-seven buildings under the “Apartment Houses” headings, including the D & S Apartments at 404 Seventh Street and the Jeanette Apartments at 614 Niagara Street. While these apartments were located in mixed-used buildings, their names differentiated the residential use, a useful marketing tool.

---

47 National Register of Historic Places, The Wayne and Waldorf Apartments, Buffalo, Erie County, New York, National Register #14NR06575, Sec.8, Pg. 1.
The city directory reported thirty-six apartment buildings in 1920.\(^{49}\) That figure rose to fifty-seven in 1927, and many of them were on Third Street.\(^{50}\) Although there were luxury apartments in the city, such as the 1925 Jefferson (NR 2004) at Third and Jefferson, other apartment buildings serving the rapidly growing middle class emerged. In 1918, several “medium priced flat dwellings” went on the market, and more followed in the 1920s: The Yates (460 Third Street), the Knack (466 Third Street), the Sagamore (adjacent to the nominated building as Third and Main Street), and the Murphy (215 Fourth Street), each of which was named, a practice that became fashionable and “assigned distinction” to the buildings and their residents.\(^{51}\) These buildings were all modest apartments catering to middle class residents.\(^{52}\)

While the Park Place Apartments and the Sagamore Apartments contained close to twenty units, the Tearney Apartments (463 Third Street), the Moore Building (451 Third Street), and the Yates (460 Third Street) each contained eight apartments, and the Richard (531 Third Street) contained ten.\(^{53}\) The Hall Apartments, originally advertising twelve units, was similar in scale with these smaller buildings nearby.

**Residents of the Hall Apartments**

City directories and the federal census of 1930 provide significant information about the occupants of the apartments.\(^{54}\) Directories from fourteen years between 1928 and 1949 were consulted, during which time more than ninety different individuals lived in the building. The residents were largely young, well-to-do professionals with white-collar jobs. Half of the tenants were single or widowed and two-thirds were women, living with spouses, other women, or alone. Five pairs of women were documented living together, frequently a widow and a single woman. Sometimes they were related, a niece or daughter for example, and sometimes their relationship was less clear. Although there were tenants listed as boarders within the apartments of the primary leaseholders, no servants were observed.

Few single men lived in the building and those that did often married quickly and moved out. Only two minors were documented in the apartments over the course of twenty years; however, there were likely more children based on the number of young widows and couples that called the Hall Apartments home. More than half of the twelve widowed women did not work, indicating enough independent wealth to be self-supporting. In 1930, all of the residents were white, and the average age was thirty. Sixty percent of the tenants were not born in New York.

---

\(^{49}\) Roberts Brothers Company, *Niagara Falls City Directory for 1920* (Roberts Brothers Company: Niagara Falls, 1920), 473.

\(^{50}\) Roberts Brothers Company, *Niagara Falls City Directory for 1927* (Roberts Brothers Company: Niagara Falls, 1927), 624-5.


\(^{54}\) Census pages for this building from the 1940 federal census were not available.
York, hailing from four different countries (Canada, England, Ireland, and Norway) and four states (Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kansas, and Missouri). Rent in the building ranged from $40 to $85 a month.\(^{55}\)

The apartments hosted a variety of religious adherents. Elizabeth Hall belonged to the Women’s Parish Society of St. Peter’s Episcopal Church at 140 Rainbow Boulevard (extant).\(^{56}\) Minnie Parkhill, a resident in 1937 and 1938, was the widow of Robert Parkhill, reverend of the Third Presbyterian Church in North Tonawanda (extant).\(^{57}\) Marion R. Beaupre, tenant from 1942 to 1956, was a member of the Altar and Rosary Society of St. Mary of the Cataract Catholic Church (extant) and Court Niagara Grand Regent of the Catholic Daughters of America.\(^{58}\) Morris Goldstein, the rabbi of the nearby Temple Beth Israel at 404 Cedar Avenue and Temple Beth El at 720 Ashland Avenue (both extant), was one of the first tenants in 1928 and one of a number of residents with Jewish surnames.\(^{59}\)

Apartment vacancies and turnover were initially problematic. In the first four years, when the units were primarily rented by young, single people, the turnover rate was between 60 and 80 percent annually. Vacancies averaged around 15 percent throughout the 1930s, with as many as four of the apartments empty at a time. As more long-term tenants became established into the 1940s, however, turnover dipped to 25 percent on average. There were regularly no vacancies and sometimes only a single unit changed hands year-to-year. The longest-standing tenants during the first half of the twentieth century were Thomas DiVita, an auto salesmen and assistant manager, and his wife, Rose, who lived in the building from 1940 to at least 1960. Other residents of nearly two decades included Marguerite Boytz, a cafeteria manager, Margaret Kendall, a windowed club secretary, and Hazel Keysauer, an office secretary. Despite increased tenant stability, 42 percent of residents observed between 1928 and 1949 stayed in the building for a year or less.

The city directories also reveal a variety of occupations held by tenants of the Hall Apartments. A review of fifty-nine residents that were employed, both men and women, found that 22 percent worked in office environments and another 18 percent were managers and supervisors of various businesses. Five tenants owned local businesses, including two women. Highly skilled, high-level specialists in the building included a metallurgist, a research chemist, and an electrical engineer. Traditionally lower-wage jobs such as cashiers, security guards, and restaurant workers were present but uncommon.

---

\(^{55}\) 1930 U.S. Census, Niagara County, New York, population schedule, City of Niagara Falls, Seventh Ward, Enumeration District 32-57, Sheets 7A and 7B.

\(^{56}\) “Entertainments,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, March 26, 1927, 8.


\(^{58}\) “Aides Named for Breakfast,” *Buffalo Courier-Express*, October 2, 1943, 9; “Mrs. Bley Attends State Convention,” *Erie County Independent*, May 1, 1941, 8.

Notable Tenants

With women making up the majority of the population in the apartments, many of the documented professions conform to contemporary gender norms for female work and include teachers, clerks, secretaries, stenographers, bank tellers, nurses, and club organizers. In spite of gendered occupational expectations, some of the women who occupied this building were educated and ambitious. Ruth M. Hancock, the wife of a teacher, opened the Hancock School of Business in 1933, the same year she moved into the Hall Apartments. She was a psychologist for the Niagara Falls Department of Education, the Vocational Education and Guidance Division of the Department of Education in Niagara Falls, the New York State Commission for Mental Defectives, and the Child Guidance Division of the New York State Department for Mental Hygiene. She testified as an expert witness in court cases and traveled to schools across Niagara County to give talks at parent-teacher meetings on topics like mental hygiene for children.

Betty Ferguson, tenant from 1933 to 1940, was one of five business owners that lived in the building. Ferguson opened The Betty Shop in 1925 at 205 First Street in the Hotel Niagara (extant) at the age of 25. The boutique carried high-end women’s fashion including silk dresses, hats, furs, and lingerie. After closing for a few years in the mid-1930s, the Betty Shop reopened at 212-214 Falls Street in 1938 and remained in operation into the 1970s. Another entrepreneur, Marion Beaupre, was a founding director of the Niagara Quality Store, an apparel business, with Joseph Kramer and Albert E. Moss in 1934, and the Purity Yeast Company with Philip L. Blumenthal and Marvin I. King in 1935. Beaupre also owned a considerable amount of property in Niagara County.

The well-employed and upwardly mobile tenants, especially the women, hosted and participated in events for clubs and church organizations in the apartments and began to appear in the “Society News” section of the Niagara Falls Gazette soon after the building’s completion. In 1929, Mrs. Pearl Ross, the wife of hotel

61 “P.T.A. Will Hear Address on Mental Hygiene Wed.,” Evening News (Tonawanda and North Tonawanda), March 17, 1937, 2.
63 Roberts Brothers Company, Niagara Falls City Directory for 1925-1926 (Lockport: Roberts Brothers Company 1925), 358.
64 “Duplicate Key Thieves Take $3,000 Worth,” Buffalo Courier-Express, July 17, 1927, 2.
Of the men in the building, Emil Korb (resident from 1940 to 1952) was the most active in social and professional clubs. Korb began working for the New York Central Railroad in 1919 and, through a series of promotions, became the Niagara Falls Division Passenger Agent in 1950 and the Passenger Sales Manager at Buffalo’s Central Terminal in 1959. He and his wife, Catherine, were regularly pictured in the newspapers, attending parties at the Statler Hotel in Buffalo or on vacation in the Caribbean. Korb was the chief clerk, committee chair, and eventual vice president of Buffalo Passenger Association. In addition to the Lions Club,

68 “Entertainments,” Niagara Falls Gazette, November 19, 1929, 10.
71 “Zontians Play Tournament Golf,” Buffalo Courier-Express, July 15, 1948, 8C.
73 “Banner for Victorious Lions,” Buffalo Courier-Express, July 6, 1941, 3.
74 1920 U.S. Census, Niagara County, New York, population schedule, City of Niagara Falls, Second Ward, Enumeration District 116, Sheet 1, dwelling 552, Margaret I. Kendall.
75 “Shifts Made by Central in Personnel,” Buffalo Courier-Express, December 23, 1950, 1; “Passenger Staff of NYC To Be Revised in March,” Buffalo Courier-Express, February 3, 1959, 17.
he was a member of the Erie Downs Golf and Country Club, the Kiwanis Club, the Buffalo Athletic Club, the Greater Buffalo Advertising Club, and the Central Railway Club.78

Other notable tenants include Sidney W. Edlund, Max and Adella Teller, and Lewis L. Yaseen. These residents showcase the wide variety of middle-class professions held by people in the building. Sidney Edlund, a sales manager, was one of the first tenants of the building in 1928. Around 1929, Edlund married, and he and his wife, Mary, went on to found a successful self-help organization called the Man Marketing Clinic (later the Sales Executives Club of New York) in 1935, an early job-hunting group which helped both men and women land rewarding jobs. The couple traveled the country to host workshops, set up local chapters, and market their book Pick Your Job and Land it! (1938). Their program was accessed by over 500,000 people nationwide in its first twenty years.79

During the mid-1930s, Max and Adella Teller, two professional musicians, lived at the Hall Apartments. Max, a violinist, trained at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw in the Netherlands, and his wife, Adella, sang with the Chicago Symphony.80 To support them both, Max taught music lessons in cello, violin, and piano in their apartment.81 Their son, Max, who lived in the building as a child, played French Horn in the local Carborundum Band, the Niagara Falls Concert Band, the Niagara Falls Philharmonic Orchestra, the Boston Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony, and the National Symphony.82

Lewis Yaseen, the son of Russian immigrants, opened Yaseen’s: The Reliable Store in 1927 at 425-427 Erie Avenue, offering credit and jewelry.83 After temporarily moving the business to 368 Third Street in 1929, Yaseen’s Reliable Credit and Jewelry Store reopened at 204-206 Falls Street in 1930 or 1931, where it remained into the 1960s.84 Yaseen was a representative of the Jewish Army and Navy War Service Committee of Niagara Falls, a member of the Niagara Masonic 32nd Degree Club, and a founding member of the Good Fellows Committee.85 Yaseen and his wife were wealthy and connected enough to be on a waiting list for the first flight

81 Roberts Brothers Company, Niagara Falls City Directory for 1937, 505.
83 “Certificates Filed,” Lockport Union-Sun & Journal, October 13, 1927.
84 Roberts Brothers Company, Niagara Falls City Directory for 1928-1929; Roberts Brothers Company, Niagara Falls City Directory for 1929-1930.
to Paris after World War II civilian travel restrictions were lifted. Like Yaseen and Emil Korb, residents of the Hall Apartments were able to afford extended vacations, such as Mrs. Max Wolff’s ten-day jaunt to New York City, Mr. and Mrs. Robert LeVan’s two-week tour of the Adirondacks, and Marion Beaupre’s month-long excursion through the Western United States. Louis Hall, Frank and Elizabeth’s grown son, occupied his own apartment in the building in 1928, but moved out with his wife to a house at 352 Third Street in 1929. He is not recorded at the building again until 1946, after the death of his father, when he was presumably managing the property.

Commercial Tenants at 550 Third Street:

No. 550 Third Street, the first-floor commercial space at the south end of the building with its own entrance, was occupied by a number of businesses during the period of significance. The Simon Oil Burner Corporation, dealing in oil burners, was formed in 1929 by Louis F. Hall and two brothers, Simon and David Dimet. It appears the company may have failed after a series of lawsuits against them in 1933 were successful, and 550 Third Street remained vacant for three years. In 1937, another oil interest, the Great Lakes Oil Company, occupied the storefront. Little history could be gleaned about the origins of this company, which only stayed in the building for a year; however, Frank Hall served as the president and his investment in the company accounted for more than half of his significant financial worth upon his death in 1944.

After the Great Lakes Oil Company vacated the space, Anna Kahn, the daughter of Russian immigrants, opened Kahn’s Interior Decorating at 550 Third Street in 1938 with the help of her husband, Philip. The business was no longer in the building by 1940. A year later, proprietors Margaret Meyers, a relative of Lewis Yaseen (likely a daughter-in-law or niece), and Margaret Miller opened Margo’s Beauty Shop in the space. The business continued at 550 Third Street through at least 1962.
Architecture of the Hall Apartments: The American Commercial Style

The Hall Apartments is an excellent and intact example of a modest, but handsome, mixed-use commercial and residential building designed in the American Commercial style. The style originated in the architectural and structural advances made in steel building technology in eastern port cities such as New York and Philadelphia during the 1880s. This foundational steel-framed masonry form was exported to Chicago, where the style was further developed through the erection of hundreds of tall, simply adorned commercial buildings. Early skyscrapers are included in this style, as well as smaller, much more modest multi-story structures. Although this building form is sometimes referred to as Chicago Style, these buildings owe their early manifestation to groundwork in coastal cities, and the style has been exported and repeated all over the county, where it was modified and adapted to local settings through the 1930s. Hallmarks of the American Commercial Style include steel frames with masonry cladding and flat roofs, three-part windows, projecting bay windows, decorative parapets, ground-floor commercial space (often with large windows), and simple classical detailing throughout.  

The building at 550-552 Third Street is a restrained three-story yellow brick building representative of American Commercial style architecture. The three-part Chicago-style windows, limestone cornice, neoclassical details, and flat roof are all consistent with common commercial design trends of the 1920s. In keeping with the prevailing design advice of the time, many apartment buildings in Niagara Falls employed nods to different classic revival styles. The American Apartment Houses of Today, published in 1926, implored designers to create a dignified facade but not to “adhere too rigidly to any one style or period.” In contrast to single-family homes, where the owner had full control over the aesthetic, apartment buildings needed to bolster broad appeal to a wide tenant base. Historical references conveyed a respectable identity to the building but did not overdo any particular style. The facade of the Hall Apartments, with vaguely neoclassical elements such as the main door surround with partially engaged Doric columns flanked by contemporary three-part windows, adhered to this principal and demonstrated a quality of design and workmanship intended to foster confidence and pride in current and potential residents and patients.

Pairing commercial and residential functions on major thoroughfares provided a variety of income sources to the building owner, and mixed-use commercial and residential buildings were well-suited to neighborhood retail locations like Main and Third Streets where they were highly visible and easily accessible via streetcar. The mixed-use building displays some divisions of function the exterior. The commercial unit at 550 Third Street, with its narrow, slightly recessed full-height bay and at-grade entrance, is clearly delineated from the residential and medical portions of the building. The medical office, however, was not differentiated from the residential

---


units at the facade, perhaps to maintain the homely atmosphere patients expected as healthcare transitioned from the household to the more formal doctor’s office.

Inside, the layout of the Hall Apartments follows best practices for apartment design. Although the main east-facing entrance to the building provided access for both tenants and patients, southern and western entrances allowed residents to bypass the doctor’s door, while allowing both the office and the residents a formal and distinguished front entrance and hall. The ground-floor commercial space at 550 Third Street is completely isolated from the rest of the building and cannot be accessed from the interior.

With the exception of the units on the first floor that were thoughtfully converted into medical offices and two units on the third floor that were sensitively joined through a shared wall, nearly all of the apartments retain their original layouts. Within the individual units, public rooms like the living, dining, and kitchen are generally separated from the more private bedrooms and bathrooms; however, the apartments range in size from single-room lofts to two-bedroom units and the layouts are variable. Some apartments feature separated kitchens, while others have a single room for living, dining, and cooking, with an inset kitchen area on one wall of a large main room. The variability of the layout explains why some tenants were observed upgrading or downsizing to different units in the building over the years to meet their needs and tastes.

Overall, the units retain a significant amount of original fabric, although some apartments were designed with finer detailing, such as the fireplace and heavy oak cornice on the first floor and built-in cabinetry between the kitchen and living room in a unit on the second floor. One of the most interesting aspects of the interior is the wide variety of original textured plaster walls and ceilings that are still intact throughout the building. Apartments have as many as four different plaster textures in a single unit, including swirls, circles, and stippling. In addition to the decorative plasterwork, the building features original hardwood floors, arched openings between rooms, wood doors with glass knobs, bathrooms with white subway tile walls, gray and white checkered square or white hexagonal tile floors, and built-in porcelain tubs. Many of the original lighting and bathroom fixtures are still in place.

Although there is some water damage throughout the building, and the kitchens have been removed from the units, the most significant intrusion is a poorly designed non-historic 1970s addition at the rear of the building. The frame addition is not sympathetic to the original design, was constructed after the period of significance, and does not contribute to the historical significance of the building. Additionally, part of a garage historically associated with the Sagamore Apartments in the neighboring parcel to the south was converted into livable space at the same time and made accessible from the 1970s addition via an interior walkway. This former garage space also does not contribute to the historical significance of the Hall Apartments and was never historically associated with this building. Despite these changes, on the whole, both the interior and exterior are
in great condition and provide a largely complete depiction of middle-class apartment living as the building was originally designed and finished.

**Builder: Walter S. Johnson Building Company – “We Give Service.”**

The Walter S. Johnson Building Company is a local contracting firm in Niagara Falls founded in 1923 by Niagara County native Walter S. Johnson. The son of a farmer, Johnson was born in Olcott, New York in 1890 and spent his younger years as a farmhand before getting into the building trades. By the time he was thirty, Johnson was operating as an independent contractor, and three years later, in 1923, he opened the Walter S. Johnson Building Company at 2532 Hyde Park Boulevard in Niagara Falls (not extant). The firm was immediately successful and expanded rapidly as the population of Niagara Falls boomed in the 1920s. Johnson was elected vice president of the Buffalo chapter of Associated General Contractors in 1927, and he was a director of both the Niagara Home Builders Association and the National Association of Home Builders.

The Hall Apartments was one of the many buildings erected by the firm in the 1920s. The company was also responsible for building the New Imperial Hotel, the surgical building of the Memorial Hospital, and Lewiston Heights homes for Warren Curtis Jr. and Norton Kirkpatrick. In the 1930s, Johnson began to take on slightly different projects, such as highway construction and sixty homes for a planned utopian community east of Hyde Park Boulevard and Buffalo Avenue in Niagara Falls. Other large projects include numerous campus buildings for SUNY Brockport and SUNY Fredonia, portions of the American Rapids Bridge to Goat Island, a six-classroom addition to the Wurlitzer School, and a remodeling of the Niagara Falls State Armory. The company was capable of building at a variety of scales and in a variety of styles, from classical revivals to more Modern forms. Walter S. Johnson died in 1980, but his contracting firm has carried on. The company remained at its location on Hyde Park Boulevard at least through the 1970s; however, the firm is now located at 6688 Mooradian Drive.

---

102 Roberts Brothers Company, *Niagara Falls City Directory for 1923* (Lockport: Roberts Brothers Company 1923).
Subsequent History: Post-1948 Uses of the Building

Dr. Frank Hall died in 1944, leaving a substantial estate that included a number of properties and business holdings in the care of his son, Louis. The younger Hall sold the building to Dr. Frank A. Pallone Jr. in 1948, ending two decades of family ownership of the building that bears its name.108

In 1956, after decades of prosperity, the spectacular collapse of the southern two-thirds of the Schoellkopf power station caused $20 million in damages and precipitated a major disaster in Niagara Falls. The loss of their main power source crippled Niagara Falls’ industrial plants and the incident initiated a series of factory closures that devastated the local economy. Between 1958 and 1963, the city lost one-third of its factory jobs.109 As people lost jobs without the prospect of new local employment opportunities, they moved away, and the city saw population numbers decrease from a peak of over 102,000 people in 1960 to 85,000 in 1970.

While limited data on occupancy is available after 1960, that year, only one unit was listed as vacant, and two others did not respond to the annual directory.110 Many of the tenants in the 1950s were long-term residents of the building. This stability would decrease, however, as the economic woes of the city spread out amongst even the wealthier and more educated citizens and demolitions began taking place along the once prosperous and well-to-do Third Street. Dr. Pallone practiced dentistry out of the office in the building for nearly seventy years until his death in 2018. During the 1970s, Pallone added a one-story addition to the rear of the building in order to expand the office space. At an unknown date, the apartments were closed, although the two commercial spaces continued to operate. Today, 550 Third Street hosts a Christian Science reading room, and 552 Third Street is still an active dentist’s office.

Summary

The Hall Apartments was built by the Walter S. Johnson Building Company in 1928, joining a 1927 three-car masonry garage already on the property. The period of significance begins with the construction of the garage at the rear of the parcel in 1927 and ends in 1948 when the Hall Apartments was sold by the family that commissioned its construction and for which it was named. The building is significant as an excellent and intact example of a mid-sized, middle-class apartment constructed in Niagara Falls the 1920s. Like many urban places across the United States, Niagara Falls experienced both an increase in population and a growing cultural


acceptance for apartment living in the early twentieth century. While higher-end apartment buildings, like the Jefferson Apartments (NR 2004), served wealthier residents, more modest building forms, like the Hall Apartments, catered to middle-class residents and featured storefronts and offices at ground level, creating mixed-use buildings that contributed to commercial streets in urban neighborhoods. The Hall Apartments is in excellent condition, and while there have been alterations to the ground-story floorplan, the layout of the units remains largely intact, with a significant retention of historic fabric throughout. The building contributes to an understanding of the physical design of Niagara Fall’s middle-class apartments and continues to play an important role in the existing historic streetscape of downtown Niagara Falls.
Bibliography:


*Buffalo Courier*. “Two Linemen Seriously Hurt.” April 21, 1896.

*Buffalo Courier-Express*. “Aides Named for Breakfast.” October 2, 1943.

*Buffalo Courier-Express*. “Banner for Victorious Lions.” July 6, 1941.

*Buffalo Courier-Express*. “Buffalo Residents Travel to Southern Clime.” March 25, 1938.


*Buffalo Courier-Express*. “Duplicate Key Thieves Take $3,000 Worth.” July 17, 1927.


*Buffalo Courier-Express*. “First Flight Abroad Has Waiting List.” November 19, 1944.

**Hall Apartments**

**Name of Property**

**Niagara County, New York**

**County and State**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Buffalo Courier-Express. “Golden Gloves Ticket Sales Move to Aud on Wednesday.” December 4, 1944.
- Buffalo Courier-Express. “Judgements.” April 26, 1933.
- Buffalo Courier-Express. “Passenger Staff of NYC To Be Revised in March.” February 3, 1959.
- Buffalo Courier-Express. “Sixteen Firms in This Area Incorporated.” April 8, 1929.
- Buffalo Enquirer. “Niagara Falls.” August 28, 1894.


*Daily Cataract Journal.* “Elegant New Apartments to Open This Week.” January 18, 1906.


*Erie County Independent*. “Mrs. Bley Attends State Convention.” May 1, 1941.


“Gertrude Gordon v. City of Niagara Falls.” State of New York Supreme Court Appellate Division-Fourth Department, 1891, 163.


*Lockport Union-Sun and Journal*. “Certificates Filed.” October 13, 1927.

*Lockport Union-Sun and Journal*. “Falls Companies to Build Dorms.” April 7, 1966.


*Lockport Union-Sun and Journal*. “Judgements.” November 11, 1933.

*Lockport Union-Sun and Journal*. “Lis Pendens.” September 2, 1933.


National Register of Historic Places. The Wayne and Waldorf Apartments, Buffalo, Erie County, New York, National Register #14NR06575, Sec.8, Pg. 1.


Niagara Falls Gazette. “41 Building Permits in Week; Construction Value $121,388.” August 30, 1927.


Niagara Falls Gazette. “Building Operations in the City of Niagara Falls Reach Record Total of $2,081,186.” December 31, 1918.


Niagara Falls Gazette. “Fire Due to Hot Day.” August 17, 1928.


Niagara Frontier Planning Board. “Mayle Acres.” Niagara County 1938 (map).


*Rome Daily Sentinel.* “Summer School at State School Closes Big Year.” August 13, 1925.


The Saratogian. “Award $1,163,000 in Highway Jobs.” September 13, 1933.


U.S. Census Bureau. 1900 U.S. Census, Niagara County, New York, population schedule, City of Niagara Falls, First District of Second Ward, Enumeration District 72, Sheet 10, dwelling 552, family 173, Frank Hall.

U.S. Census Bureau. 1920 U.S. Census, Niagara County, New York, population schedule, City of Niagara Falls, Second Ward, Enumeration District 116, Sheet 1, dwelling 552, family 10, Frank Hall.


U.S. Census Bureau. 1930 U.S. Census, Niagara County, New York, population schedule, City of Niagara Falls, Seventh Ward, Enumeration District 32-57, Sheets 7A and 7B.


Williams, E.T. “What Was Once a Mere Summer Resort Town is Now Thriving Industrial and Commercial Center of 36,000 People.” Niagara Falls Gazette. May 1, 1915.
Hall Apartments
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated with a heavy line on the attached maps with scale.

Boundary Justification

This boundary contains all property historically and currently associated with the Hall Apartments. The property includes the entire parcel, with the apartment building and associated three-car garage, at 550-552 Third Street (parcel # 159.29-1-2), as well as the interconnected non-historic portion of the apartment to the south at 530 Main Street (parcel # 159.29-1-3) in the city of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York. The boundaries have been drawn to include the non-historic interconnected bay of a 1920s garage building to the south, which was interconnected to the Hall Apartments in the 1970s. The Hall Apartments, the 1970s addition, and the central bay of what had been a garage associated with the Sagamore Apartments, are all interconnected.
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Hall Apartments
City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York
550–552 Third Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14301
Hall Apartments  
City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York  
550-552 Third Street  
Niagara Falls, NY 14301  

Note: The Niagara County GIS tax parcel boundary appears to be inaccurate.  
Parcel 159.29-1-2 has been offset 1.48 m S 4° 13’ 05” E to approximate the correct parcel boundary.

Area: 0.15 ac
Hall Apartments
City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York

550–552 Third Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14301

Area: 0.15 ac

E 657914 N 4772865

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Coordinate Units: Meter
Orthoimagery Year: 2021
Hall Apartments
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State

Additional Information

Photo Log:
Figure 2: Google Maps image showing the Hall Apartments in relation to the Niagara River, the Niagara Falls State Park, Oakwood Cemetery, US Route 62 (Ferry Avenue), and State Route 104 (Main Street).
**Figure 3:** 552 Third Street in 1914 prior to the construction of the Hall Apartments. A square two-story house and one-car garage were located on the lot at the time (source: Sanborn Map Company. *Niagara Falls, New York*. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1914, sheet 1).
Figure 5: Current First Floor Plan, Hall Apartments (not to scale).
Figure 6: Detail, Current First Floor Plan, Hall Apartments.

Detail view showing interconnection of non-historic addition into the adjacent 1920s garage building to the south.
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11  Page 7

Hall Apartments
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

Hall Apartments

Niagara County, New York

County and State
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Hall Apartments
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State

Section 11 Page 9
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Name of Property: Hall Apartments
County and State: Niagara County, New York
Hall Apartments
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Property</th>
<th>Hall Apartments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County and State</td>
<td>Niagara County, New York</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 11  Page 12
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11  Page 13

Name of Property
Hall Apartments
Niagara County, New York
County and State
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Hall Apartments
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State

Section 11  Page 14
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11  Page 15

Hall Apartments
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section __11__ Page __16__

Hall Apartments
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State
Sample medical office area photos
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11  Page 18

Hall Apartments
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Hall Apartments
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State

Section 11 Page 19
Sample apartment photos
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11  Page 21

Hall Apartments
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Hall Apartments
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State

Section ___ Page ___
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11  Page 23

Hall Apartments
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State