



Local Landmark Designation Nomination Form

1. Name

Historic Prairie Tillers Mural

and/or common _____

2. Location

street & number 119 Center Street

city, town Whitewater congressional district 5

state Wisconsin zip code 53190 county Walworth

3. Classification

Category

- district
 building(s)
 structure
 site
 object

Ownership

- public
 private
 both

Public Acquisition

- in process
 being considered

Status

- occupied
 unoccupied
 work in progress

Accessible

- yes: restricted
 yes: unrestricted
 no

Present Use

- agriculture
 commercial
 educational
 entertainment
 government
 industrial
 military

- museum
 park
 private residence
 religious
 scientific
 transportation
 other:

4. Owner of Property

Name Stonegate Management, LLC (Greg Aprahamian, owner of the building on which the mural is painted)

street & number S107 W30511 Sandy Beach Road

city, town Mukwonago vicinity of _____ state Wisconsin zip 53149

5. Location of Legal Description (In County Courthouse)

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Walworth County Register of Deeds

street & number 100 Walworth Street, Room 102

city, town Elkhorn state Wisconsin

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Title No survey exists for the mural

Date _____ federal state county local

depository for survey records _____

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

Condition

- excellent
- good

- deteriorated
- ruins

Check One

- unaltered
- altered

Check one

- original site
- moved (if so, date moved _____)

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance See Attached

8. Significance

(Continue on separate sheets if necessary)

Period

- prehistoric
- 1400-1499
- 1500-1599
- 1600-1699
- 1700-1799
- 1800-1899
- 1900-

Areas of Significance-Check and justify below

- archeology-prehistoric
- archeology-historic
- agriculture
- architecture
- art
- commerce
- communications

- community planning
- conservation
- economics
- education
- engineering
- exploration/settlement
- industry
- invention

- landscape architecture
- law
- literature
- military
- music
- philosophy
- politics/government

- religion
- science
- sculpture
- social/
- humanitarian
- theater
- transportation
- other (specify)

Specific dates 1980/2004 **Builder/Architect** Caryl Yasko/ Muralist and Artist

Statement of Significance (Give specific sources for all statements of fact.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Attached

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1500 Square Feet

Quadrangle name Whitewater

Quadrangle scale _____

UMT References (Optional)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	NW	42.8334036 degrees	_____
C	NE	42.8333904 degrees	_____
E	_____	_____	_____
G	_____	_____	_____

	Zone	Easting	Northing
B	SW	42.8332689 degrees	_____
D	SE	42.6332829 degrees	_____
F	_____	_____	_____
H	_____	_____	_____

Verbal boundary description and justification The mural is located on the east side of the building wall at 119 Center Street.

The building is located at Lot 4, Block 13 or the Original Town of Whitewater.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patricia Blackmer, Chairman
organization City of Whitewater Landmarks Commission **date** September 25, 2020
street & number 445 W. Center Street **telephone** 262-458-2178
city or town Whitewater **state** Wisconsin

12. Municipal Data

Zoning District: Business Aldermanic District: 3
Parcel Number: 70T 00139
Commission Actions
Hearing Approved: _____ Hearing Date Set: _____
Landmark Designated (Date): _____ Number: _____
Certified By: _____
Commission Chairman
Date: _____

Describe the present and original physical appearance

The Prairie Tillers Mural (2004 restoration) was replicated to match the original which was created and painted by Caryl Yasko in 1980 and dedicated on September 26th of that year. Sadly, the original mural was lost by 1989. It was originally painted on the exterior wall of the Furnace Building at 119 Center Street. That brick wall had been an interior wall of the former Whitewater City Hall. When the City Hall was razed in 1972, the interior wall became the exterior wall of the Furnace Building. Because the brick was extremely porous, the instability allowed for the mural to be lost. In 2004 the Prairie Tillers Mural Repainting Project was initiated. The wall was cleaned, wire mesh was put in place to stabilize it and three coats of concrete/stucco were added to resurface the wall prior to repainting the mural. A re-dedication ceremony was held on September 26, 2004. To date it remains in good condition. The Whitewater Art Alliance has a fund of \$5000 and is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the Prairie Tillers Mural.

Statement of Significance

The Prairie Tillers Mural was originally created by Caryl Yasko in 1980 on the east exterior wall at 119 Center Street. Yasko, a 1963 graduate of Dominican College with a degree in art is a nationally and internationally known muralist. She is a resident of Whitewater. Her Prairie Tillers Mural celebrated the spirit of Whitewater by creating a tribute to the Kettle Moraine. The mural was well regarded throughout the world and artists, photographers and writers came to Whitewater to chronicle the story of the mural. The mural tells the Whitewater story celebrating the courage and perseverance of our city founders while depicting the unique Kettle Moraine geography with its rolling hills and prairies.

“The figures on the right side of the mural depict three time periods in history: the tribal era, the early settlers and the people of the present (us working hard to make history by turning the water wheel to extract the power to build a dream). The figures on the left represent the future generations who will take and use what we have to continue the dream. These figures are unformed and undefined to remind us that the future can be shaped by us, by the decisions and choices we made today.

The large circle in the center of the composition represents a millwheel. Early Whitewater settlers depended on water power to mill lumber, paper and grain. The first such mill built by Dr. James Trippe in 1839 was in continual use until 1963 and eventually razed in 1972. The wheel is painted with decorative symbols of Whitewater’s accomplishments in agriculture, education, tourism, retail business, manufacturing and milling. The Territorial Oak which still

stands at the intersection of Franklin and Main Street forms the center of the waterwheel. That great Burr Oak is the tree from which Whitewater was originally surveyed.

Other elements symbolize the land on which this town was built, the waving prairie from delicate spring to flaming autumn. Prairie violet, shooting stars, pasque flowers, blue lupine, prairie smoke, yellow coneflowers and prairie dock are some of the flowers depicted. The blazing colors of autumn merge into flames of the annual prairie burnings and the historic fires of Whitewater.” (Portions of the above content created by the Whitewater Arts Alliance and Caryl Yasko)

Below the mural is a retaining wall which is unique to this mural. The combination of the painted mural by Caryl Yasko together with the sculptural retaining wall below it by Niki Glen and Yasko includes hand-molded concrete. The concrete is embedded with pottery shards, farm implements and locally found objects as well as Native American designs.

Major Biographical References

Barnett, Alan. Community Murals: The Peoples Art. Art Alliance Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1984.

Glen, Niki. [Glenstudios.com/projects/prairie tillers](http://Glenstudios.com/projects/prairie_tillers).

Jefferson Daily Union Newspaper. Restored “Prairie Tillers” Mural. Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, September 8, 2014.

McDarison, Kim. Yasko Scheduled to Restore “Prairie Tillers” Mural. Whitewater Register, Whitewater, Wisconsin, August 5, 2004.

Royal Purple Newspaper. Whitewater Main Street Festival Supports One Final Cause. University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Team Lightning Bugs. Prairie Tillers Mural, Whitewater, Wisconsin. Murals on Waymarking.com, September 28, 2008.

Whitewater Arts Alliance. Dedication Ceremony and Celebration Brochure. September 26, 2004.

Wisconsin Historical Markers: The Prairie Tillers Mural. www.wisconsinhistoricalmarkers.com,

Yasko, Caryl. “Fresco in Whitewater”. National Murals Network News, 1980.

