East Point Manor on Middle Bass Island in Lake Erie encompassed virtually all of the island's East Point Peninsula and included at least half a dozen buildings, including the manor house, riding stables and guest and worker residences such as the Erie/Lutes House, the North Shore House and the Black House. These residences were built during the mid-to-late 1800’s, pre-dating the 1925 establishment of the manor, and most have been substantially altered and remodelled. For the purposes of this nomination only the manor house and the riding stables, both of which were constructed after 1925, and their surrounding grounds will be considered. Additional structures located within the nominated area include the manor entry gate, a stone pump house, a concrete block storage building, a frame residence and a small cabin, the latter three of which do not contribute to the nomination.

Historically East Point Manor contained approximately 100 acres on East Point, a long narrow peninsula extending easterly from the northeast corner of the main body of Middle Bass Island. The country estate featured acres of open meadow, fields of alfalfa, a vegetable garden, orchards, vineyards and a nine-hole watered golf course (1&2). During the day guests at the estate could enjoy hunting, golfing, horseback riding, swimming, boating, sailing and fishing, while in the evening hours the manor’s invitees could retire to the manor house for a fine concert or dance from its rooftop pavilion.

During the late 1950’s and early 1960’s later owners broke up the great estate, subdividing the shoreline property and selling off the individual lots. Today East Point is a typical summer resort community with its own airfield and marina. All that remains of the East Point Manor are the various buildings, now scattered among the summer cottages which dot the lakeshore.

1. **Description: Stable Complex**

   The riding stables complex is located half way to two-thirds of the way out on the East Point Peninsula and consists of an old barn, an open courtyard and a tool shop now converted into a residence (4). The circa 1865 barn is 32' x 25' rectangular building of rubble stone construction set into a slight incline. Door and window openings are treated with either plain stone or wood lintels. A brace of double-hung 6/6 light second floor windows highlight the building’s south face while a loft opening is found on the west. An apparent second loft opening on the north has been infilled with stone. The old barn's roofline features exposed rafters above a narrow frieze board and its truncated hipped roof is topped by a rectangular louvered cupola. The barn is fronted by a low rubble stone retaining wall (5&6). It was originally part of the Lutes
farmstead and may have been used as a wine press house (3).

Opposite the old barn and on the north side of the courtyard is the former tool shop. The 32' x 22' building was constructed in 1936 with its gable roof terminating in a plain gable on the west and in a parapet gable on the east. The building's rubble stone wall treatment features large stone blocks of various dimensions and consists mostly of limestone with some multi-colored glacial stone interspersed. The large circa 1960 replacement windows have plain sills and include a large picture window on the east (7). The only apparent original window is a round-arched casement window under the parapet gable. Other notable features are a north side chimney and a semi-circular rubble stone wall which guards a north doorway. Both the north side chimney and the parapet chimney display paired round-arched openings.

The now open 56' x 54' courtyard originally housed a number of horse stalls along its east and west walls and also dates from 1936 (8). Similar to the tool shop, the courtyard's rubble stone walls contain stone of all shapes and sizes including various multi-colored glacial stones which contrast with the dull tan and gray of the predominant limestone. The north wall of the barn and the south wall of the tool shop are incorporated into the courtyard walls. The courtyard's main east wall features four coursed stone pillars of smaller dimension limestone topped by concrete spheres as well as the primary wood entrance gate which is topped by iron scrollwork and a lantern (9). A secondary gate breaks the west wall and an original sliding door protects a modern patio door which now provides entry into the tool shop. The courtyard's cobblestone floor contains a ring of stones arranged to spell; East Point Manor - H.F. Payer - Middle Bass Ohio - 1936.

Three other structures are located on the stables property. Just west of and adjoining the complex is a non-contributing two-story frame residence (22), while to the south and along the lakeshore are a small non-contributing circa 1960 concrete block storage building and the East Point Manor entry gate. The 1936 gate is constructed of wrought iron and is flanked by coursed stone pillars with spherical and vase-like ornaments. Behind these pillars buttressing rubble stone walls slope quickly to the ground, while before the pillars the walls decline gently, terminating in two short pillars topped by concrete urns (10).
2. Description: Manor House

Situated near the far eastern end of the long narrow East Point peninsula, the East Point Manor House reflects its geographic setting in its long narrow 184' x 25' rectangular floor plan. The basically one story manor house was built between 1925-1926 and consists of a central pavilion with flanking wings (14&15). The wing sections are constructed of native limestone laid in a rubble stone pattern with steeply-pitched gable roofs of verigated copper sheet terminating in scallops. A rubble stone chimney protrudes above the gable near the central pavilion on the west while a second stone chimney abuts the east wall (16). Both display rectangular openings infilled with copper sheet. The roofline further features exposed rafters beneath the wide overhanging eaves and a frieze-like solid wood board above the window line and behind the shielding scallops. Multi-paned casement windows in bands of two, three or four are the rule, with window openings typically recessed with heavy slanting rubble stone sills. Entries include a back kitchen door, twin garage doors and full-length multi-paned glass double doors in the breezeway connecting the garage with the remainder of the home. Screened-in hallways extend across the front, broken by two-tiered coursed stone pillars which pierce the roofline and produce a buttressed effect. Similarly a triad of stone pillars support the copper-infilled west end gable, with the central pillar also dividing the two car garage (17).

The central pavilion is the single most dominant element of the manor house and contrasts sharply with the wing sections. Whereas the wings are rectangular in shape and emphasize the horizontal, the pavilion is octagonally shaped with a vertical emphasis, and bulging from the center of the building, interrupts the rectilinear flow initiated by the wings. The pavilion is topped by an open gazebo with a low-pitched gable roof supported by metal columns. With the exception of the northernmost face, the exterior faces of the pavilion consist of four long narrow divisions of multi-paned glass windows and doors separated by high two-tiered rubble stone pillars topped by concrete vases. Awning-like verigated copper roof sections with scallops project out over each face. The pavilion's north face, a solid stone chimney/bell tower, is constructed of rubble stone with small rectangular openings as in the other chimneys and with a round-arched opening with hanging bell (18).

Inside, the high-ceilinged pavilion serves as a central core area with hallways connecting the main room with two guest bedrooms, bath and master bedroom on the east and with the kitchen, utility/caretakers' rooms, breezeway and garage on the west (19). The rustic flavor of the home's exterior prevades the interior as well, as both the hallways and the central room have solid stone slab floors and interior walls finished with
field stone. Other notable features include the fireplace, solid oak door and window framing, round-arched gazebo stairway entry and box-like hand-crafted wood chandeliers all found in the central room (20).

An expansive front lawn populated with hardwoods and cedars extends southward to the lake, while an equally large back yard contains hardwoods, evergreens and a sizeable private garden. A slowly-deteriorating rubble stone pump house built in 1926 and topped by a flat concrete slab roof/platform with iron canopy frame sits below the bank along the lakeshore (21). A small non-contributing frame cabin which dates from the 1960's is found thirty to forty yards northeast from the manor house (24).
8. Significance

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Specific dates 1925, 1936  
Builder/Architect Alfred Schnurr/J. Milton Dyer

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

East Point Manor is significant as the summer estate of Harry Franklin Payer, an assistant Secretary of State of the United States and an early member of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Brain Trust." Prominent structures associated with the estate include the riding stables and the manor house. These buildings are not only significant for their association with Harry Payer, but are also of importance in their own right. The manor house is an unusual example of the work of its designer, the noted Cleveland architect J. Milton Dyer, while the stables complex is an architecturally interesting group of structures notable for its use of locally available building materials.

Even before he accepted the position of Assistant Secretary of State, Harry Payer had compiled a list of achievements that would have ensured him a prominent place in the legal and political history of the State of Ohio. Shortly after obtaining his law degree from Baldwin-Wallace University, Payer managed nationally-known Progressive Mayor Tom L. Johnson's first mayoral campaign in 1900. Subsequently Payer served from 1901-1907 as an assistant Cleveland city solicitor under Newton D. Baker, President Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of War during World War I. Payer found his real fame and fortune, however, in private practice, where he was touted as "Cleveland's greatest trial lawyer," and as a proponent of judicial reform, serving as one of three gubernatorial appointees to the Judicial Council of the State of Ohio from 1925 to 1932. Harry Payer also was one of the founders of the Cuyahoga Council Bar Association, serving as its president for three terms between 1929 and 1932, and was a well-known public speaker on legal and psychological topics.

Harry F. Payer came to national prominence with his appointment by President Roosevelt in June of 1933 as one of six assistant secretaries under Secretary of State Cordell Hull. As an Assistant Secretary of State, Payer served as chief legal advisor to the State Department. His duties included dealing with international political questions which involve important legal problems such as arbitrations, treaty matters, narcotics, aviation and free entry. More specifically, Payer was deeply involved in the resumption of normal relations with Soviet Russia, particularly trade regulations. He was a leading proponent within the Roosevelt Administration for an early recognition of the Soviet Union and was credited with performing much of the background work behind the United States November 17, 1933 recognition of the U.S.S.R., one of the major accomplishments of Franklin Roosevelt's first term.

In November 1933, due apparently to differences with Secretary Hull, Payer moved from the State Department to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (R.F.C.) where he served as special counsel on foreign and export matters. He was appointed by the President in January of the following year to the Executive Committee on Commercial Policy, whose task it was to coordinate government commercial policy and to supervise all government actions affecting
import and export trade. Payer remained at the R.F.C., where he worked on
development of national export policy, creation of Import-Export banks and
resumption of trade relations with the Soviet Union, until May 1, 1934 when
he resigned to return to his legal practice.

In addition to his official position as assistant Secretary of State, Harry
Payer unofficially was a member of "Roosevelt's Brain Trust," and as one
leading newspaper of the day noted, "unofficial titles are more important, in
some instances, in this administration than are the official ones. The "Brain
Trust" was a key group of presidential advisors gleaned primarily from the
academic ranks which has been credited with formulating many of the policies
adopted under Roosevelt's "New Deal." Leading members of this group included
Harry L. Hopkins, Rexford G. Tugwell and Raymond Moley, Payer's close friend
and mentor. According to newspapers of the time, Payer was considered
something of a unifying spirit whose influence helped mold the group into a
cooperating unit.

Harry F. Payer began construction of his Middle Bass Island estate in 1925,
having already acquired a widespread reputation as a successful trial lawyer.
In fact, the very impetus behind the building of the East Point Manor may well
have stemmed from his success in the courtroom, particularly from his success
in those cases involving the then new fields of personal injury and workers
compensation. In frequently representing workers against management, and
winning, Payer earned the enmity of many prominent business leaders and was
excluded from the leading social and country clubs of his day. East Point
Manor became Harry Payer's personal country club and served as his summer and
weekend retreat during the latter half of the 1920's and into the 1930's, the
height of his legal and political career. During this period many prominent
individuals from Cleveland and Washington D.C. were entertained at Payer's
island retreat, including the members of the Cuyahoga County Bar Association
who on occasion held their annual summer picnics there. Although he
frequented his summer estate less and less often in his later years, Payer
remained the lord of East Point Manor until his death in 1951.

Other buildings associated with Harry F. Payer are still extant. Most
prominent among these is his permanent residence in Cleveland Heights, which
is considered among the finest residences in the Cleveland metropolitan area
(not on the National Register).
1. Statement of Significance: Manor House

The East Point manor house is significant for its association with the prominent Ohio attorney and political figure Harry F. Payer and as an excellent example of the work of its architect, J. Milton Dyer. The manor house was the focal point of Payer's Middle Bass Island estate, a favorite getaway where Payer entertained his friends and associates from the worlds of business and government. The manor house was built between 1925 and 1926 by Alfred Schnurr of Sandusky, Ohio under the direction of J. Milton Dyer, a prominent Ohio architect of the early 1900's whose works bridged the gap between the traditional architecture of the late 19th century and the more functional Frank Lloyd Wright inspired forms of the early 20th century.

J. Milton Dyer received his education in architecture at Case University in Cleveland and at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He opened his Cleveland office in 1900. Although he designed buildings into the 1940's, Dyer was most productive during the early 1900's when he established himself as one of the most versatile and original architects in Cleveland. Examples of Dyer's work include the Brown Holst Building and the Tavern Club in Cleveland, the J. Pickands House in Bratenahl, the Lake County Court House in Painesville, the Cleveland City Hall, the Cleveland Athletic Club and the Cleveland Coast Guard Station. All but the first of these have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Dyer was considered a transitional architect and exemplary of the work of architects of his day, his designs were frequently characterized by an assimilation of the older classical tenets with the newer functional and Wrightian idioms. The East Point manor house, although designed later in Dyer's career, illustrates this eclectic architectural approach. Among the more functional and/or Wrightian influences found in the manor house are an emphasis on horizontal and vertical elements in the home's basic low rectilinear profile broken by the high central pavilion and roof-piercing pillars; a blending of interior and exterior spaces in its screened-in hallways; a use of native materials in its rubble limestone wall construction; and the incorporation of both a geometric design and central core or living area in its octagonally-shaped central pavilion. Yet, and notwithstanding these newer influences, with its steeply pitched gable roofs, groups of multi-paned windows and almost overpowering use of wood and stone, the manor house still exudes the heavy masculine Old World Flavor of an English or Teutonic hunting club.

The East Point Manor and manor house are something of an incongruity in the Lake Erie Islands region. The manor was one of only a few large private estates known to have existed in the region while the manor house
itself is by far the earliest Frank Lloyd Wright inspired structure to have been built in the area. The East Point manor house has changed but slightly over the years with no major additions or alterations.

2. Statement of Significance: Stables Complex

The riding stables complex is significant for its association as a supporting structure within the Middle Bass Island estate of Harry F. Payer. The stable complex is also an architecturally interesting group of structures typical of the stone architecture found in the Lake Erie islands area and significant for its attention to design and excellence of detail.

Although the manor house was the most prominent of the East Point Manor buildings, the stables complex also played in integral role in the life of the estate as the center of one of the estate's major recreational activities. Horseback riding was one of Harry Payer's favorite avocations and his island stable reportedly included a number of Irish jumping horses. Along with golfing, horseback riding was one of the primary diversions enjoyed by guests at Payer's island retreat. Moreover while Payer's private golf course was abandoned long ago, leaving behind only the outline of a few of its fairways, the stables complex remains a structural reminder of the recreational, country club atmosphere of his island retreat.

With the difficulty and expense of importing building materials to the Lake Erie Islands, island builders have long relied on locally available materials such as timber, limestone, grout, lime and the glacial or hardhead stone peculiar to the region. New construction frequently made use of old material scavenged from razed structures and in many cases existing structures were simply renovated for some new use. Although largely constructed in 1936, the stables complex is illustrative of these two tenets of island building. The complex is constructed of glacial stone and limestone, the latter reportedly quarried on nearby Kelleys Island, and further incorporates a pre-existing stone barn into the overall layout.
As with the East Point Manor and manor house, the Payer riding stables is rather unique in the islands area. Large private estates were rare within the Lake Erie islands region and a private riding stables rarer still. Payer's stables complex also shows an attention to design and a preference for artistic embellishment not commonly seen in area outbuildings. Although the complex is no longer used as a riding stables and has been altered to include two residences, it still retains much of its original character and is one of the more unusual structural groups in the island area.
CONTINUATION OF ITEM #9

4. Payer, Harry F. "Scrapbooks", manuscript collection, Center for Archival Collections Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio

CONTINUATION OF ITEM #10

Parcel 1 (Stable Complex) description: Situated in the Township of Put-In-Bay, County of Ottawa and being a part of sublots 7 and 4, East Point, Middle Bass Island and all of lots 205 and 205 in East Point Subdivision No. 4, bounded on the west by the west line of lot 204 East Point Subdivision No. 4 and said line produced northerly; on the south by Lake Erie; on the east by the east line of lot 205 East Point Subdivision No. 4 and said line produced northerly; and on the north by a line drawn parallel to and 216.5 feet northerly from the north right of way line of South Shore Drive.

Parcel 2 (Manor House) description: Situated in the Township of Put-In-Bay, County of Ottawa and being part of sublots 2 and 3, East Point, Middle Bass Island, bounded on the west by the east lines of lot 180 East Point Subdivision No. 8 and lot 181 East Point Subdivision No. 9; on the south by Lake Erie; on the east by the west line of property conveyed to T.L. Swartz and Margaret Swartz by deed recorded in Volume 242, page 13, Ottawa County Deed records; on the north by the south right of way line on North Shore Drive.