



Ottumwa's Historic Treasures

**Compiled and Prepared by the City of
Ottumwa Historic Preservation
Commission**

Published September, 2013

Chief Wapello

Ottumwa: The early years

Chief Wapello

Wapello (1787-1842), for whom the county was named, was a chief of the Foxes, and second in command to Keokuk of the federated tribes of the Sacs and Foxes. He realized the changes that the white man could bring, and tried to lead his people in friendship and peace.

Born in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin in 1787, Wapello was one of many Native Americans who were moved farther, and farther west with the signing of each new treaty. He was at Rock Island, Illinois when Fort Armstrong was built shortly after the War of 1812. In 1829 he moved his village to the Muscatine slough on the west side of the Mississippi River. Following the signing of the treaty after the "Black Hawk War" in 1837, over a million acres of land in eastern Iowa was ceded to the U.S. At this time Wapello and his people traveled westward and settled along the banks of the Des Moines River just south of the present town of Ottumwa. Here he became a fast friend of the Indian Agent, General Joseph M. Street, who had followed a similar geographic pattern to reach Wapello County. The two men worked together to create a peaceful coexistence.

General Street suffered ill health from the time he arrived at the Iowa Agency, and died there in 1840. He was buried at the Agency, and land was given by the Indians to the wife of their dear friend, to sustain her and her family. Wapello expressed the desire to be buried near his friend when he too died. In 1842, Wapello died while on a trip along the Skunk River, and he was laid to rest at the side of his loyal white friend, General Joseph M. Street. Today their graves, and those of Mrs. Street, their children and Major John Beach (son-in-law of Street, and Street's successor as Indian Agent), have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Chief Wapello Memorial Park just east of Agency, Iowa.

Downtown Ottumwa

Historic Downtown Ottumwa

Ottumwa, Iowa is located in southeastern Iowa in the Des Moines River Valley. The city of Ottumwa developed in the 1840's near where several Fox and Sac Indian villages were located. The city itself climbs in and out of the river valley, providing scenic vistas and hill-hugging streets.

The business district of a typical Midwestern community is anchored around a town square with green space and a public building -- such as a courthouse or municipal building. In Ottumwa, however, business and commercial development followed the Des Moines River's diagonal path through the city. Over time, Central Park gradually evolved into the center of public buildings.

View from Court House Tower, Looking South (1907)



Second and Market Street



Downtown Ottumwa

Main Street



Main Street West from Market Street
(1908)



Market Street



Downtown Ottumwa

Market Street looking North



1891 Aerial view of Ottumwa north side residential
View from roof of Coal Palace looking northwest



Ottumwa Buggy Company



Downtown Ottumwa

Main Street



Myers C. Rice Clothier



Main Street



Downtown Ottumwa

Ketteridge and Merrill place of business



Union Block



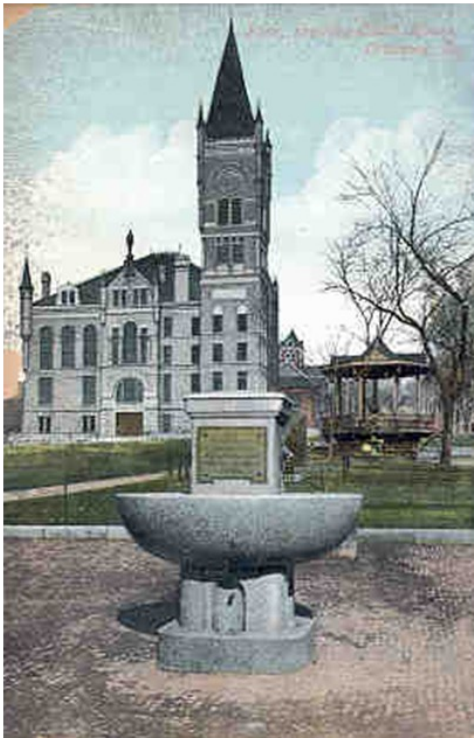
Wapello County Courthouse (1893)

The Wapello County Courthouse is located just north of Central Park on the northwest corner of Fourth and Court Streets. Built on the site of the original Wapello County courthouse, it was designed by architects Foster and Liebke in the Richardson Romanesque style - one of the more popular styles for courthouses of the time.



It features the large round arches of the medieval Romanesque style, with the massive form and rusticated stone surfaces made popular by American architect Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886). This style was used for commercial buildings and churches as well as public buildings such as courthouses. It remained popular through the 1890's.

In 1950, the clock tower and turrets (pictured below) that characterize this style were removed, for structural and safety concerns.



A statue of Wapello, the Fox chief for whom the county is named, looks out into the river valley from atop a front gable.

The Wapello County Courthouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Wapello County Courthouse (1893)

This view of the courthouse from the park shows the facade (front of the building) and illustrates several of the major characteristics of this style: rusticated stone walls, round arches, and strong horizontal emphasis with the belt courses around the building. Also shown is the statue of Chief Wapello on the front gable.

The highly textured surface of these stones is commonly referred to as rock-faced, or rusticated. This texture allows for an interesting play of light and shade on the surface. Not all of the stones used on the exterior are of the same size and shape. A stone water table (or belt course) of long narrow blocks divides the first and second floors, and



above this is found an area of patterned smaller blocks of different shapes (square as well as rectangle).

The massive round arched entry is echoed on the floor above by the triple window with arched opening in the center. Note the use of polished granite for the short clustered columns on each side of the entrance, and the use of smooth faced limestone for the columns between and flanking the second floor windows. This juxtaposition of smooth and rough is typical of the style.



Wapello County Courthouse (1893)



The short granite columns share a foliated (leaves and vines) capital in a manner reminiscent of Early Christian and Byzantine designs. In many Richardsonian buildings these capitals are of terra cotta, but in this case they appear to be of carved limestone. Note that these are engaged, not just free standing, columns.

just to the left of the entrance, on the second floor, are three tall individual round arched windows.



These windows indicate the location of the courtroom. At the corner is a vertical rounded form that extends from the belt course to above the roofline. This was the base of the turret that originally would have been topped by a conical roof. Such rounded forms are found throughout the building, all without the conical roof.



This view shows how each story of the building is separated from the others by a belt course, a horizontal row of stone blocks, that goes around the building. The one between the first and second floors is usually called a "water table" as it was originally designed to keep rain-water from running directly down the wall and into the basement. The next belt course, between the second and third floors is a little narrower, but it juts out as far as the water table. The belt course between the third and fourth floors is much narrower.

Wapello County Courthouse (1893)



Just below the roofline is another horizontal course known as the cornice. This features small square blocks of stone called dentils. The word dentil comes from the Latin word for tooth, and this looks like a row of teeth around the top of the building. (Dentils are also found on the other two public buildings around Central Park.) This view also shows the heavily textured stone lintels found above each of the windows.



A shallow gabled pavilion extends from the center of the east wall. This echoes the triple window with round arched center that is found on the facade. Here again are the smooth limestone columns dividing the windows. A shorter triple window is located in the gable itself. Originally there would have been three vertical turrets on that gable end.

At the top of the tower, between the two round arches and the cornice is a large panel, composed of four individual stones which identifies this as



the Wapello Co. Courthouse.



At the outside corner of the tower, immediately below the watertable, is the cornerstone which provides the date of construction (erected A.D. 1892), architects (Foster & Liebbe), builder (G. Stafford), local superintendent of construction (F.H.W. Young), and says that it was "Laid by the Grand Lodge of Iowa, A.F. & A.M. on Sept. 28th A.L. 5892." It was and remains, common for the local Masonic

Lodge to participate in the laying of cornerstones for public buildings. These cornerstones are invaluable for giving us information about many buildings around the state, and across the country.

Wapello County Courthouse (1893)



On the interior of the Wapello County Courthouse, it is more difficult to identify architectural elements that directly represent the Richardsonian Romanesque style other than the windows with the distinctive round arches. The interior illustrates late 19th century public interiors in general, rather than the specific style.

When you enter the courthouse today, almost immediately you come face to face with a large blank wall of the elevator shaft. Although this is necessary to provide accessibility, it detracts from the original design of the building and could have been placed in a less intrusive location. Originally the first impression upon entering the building would have been one of a large open central portion with a broad iron staircase rising to the second floor. Such staircases remain on both the first and second floors, but are located behind the elevator which extends to the third floor.



The use of iron for the staircase is very practical. Buildings such as this courthouse needed to be fireproof to protect the many records contained in their files. The functional aspect of the stairs is balanced by the ornate detailing on both the newel post and balustrades.

Note that the bottom of the newel post is a short, squat column with a foliated capital like that seen flanking the exterior entrance. The large square base and finial complete the design.

The ironwork is a combination of both linear and curvilinear forms, creating a pleasing design while serving a functional purpose.



Wapello County Courthouse (1893)



Structurally a building of this size needs not only weight bearing walls, but other support in the large open areas such as the foyer. The metal columns providing this support have been given a decorative capital to become part of the overall interior design.

Throughout the building most doorways are similar to the one on the right. The multipaneled doors are deeply recessed, and feature a transom above. The framing around the door consists of milled woodwork creating the effect of fluted pilasters, with decorative corner blocks and side blocks. The side blocks vary from door to door and are floral in design. The corner blocks are consistent throughout the building and contain a fleur-de-lis. The doorway is capped by a simple wooden cornice.



On the first floor, the wainscoting (also called the dado) around the central foyer is of colorful yellow and blue glazed tile. This was a popular building material in the 1890's, as new glazing and firing techniques were becoming available. The tile was a practical material for use in a heavily trafficked area, while also being attractive.

The wainscoting (or dado) throughout the rest of the building is of decorative wood panels. Note the continued use of the fluted pilasters, and square panels with flowers. This decorative element is found in hallways, staircases, and offices.



Wapello County Courthouse (1893)



Another decorative element found consistently above the first floor, is the use of colorful glazed floor tiles. The design and color of the tiles varies from area to area. The landing between the 2nd and 3rd floors, features a red center with decorative edging of cream and green. The 2nd floor halls have a combination of cream and blue tiles in the center, with a wider, more decorative edging of cream, green, blue, brick red, and white. The designs change at the entrances to each of the offices, with a slightly different pattern in the office proper.

The wood paneling used throughout the building for wainscoting and doorways, is continued in the courtroom. The judge's bench is treated in a highly decorative manner with a series of panels, slender engaged columns, and carved panels celebrating the judicial system.



Each of the major offices (auditor, treasurer, recorder, clerk of court) features not only the decorative wood wainscoting and tile floors, but also a fireplace with flanking columns with foliated capitals. They feature glazed tile and iron fireboxes.



Wapello County Courthouse (1893)



Immediately behind the judge's chair is an elaborate panel containing a classical urn with a foliated rinceau (flowing vines and leaves) pattern, and two banners containing the Latin words *Fiat Justitia*. This phrase means Let there be justice.

The front of the judge's bench features several classical motifs, such as dentils across the top, and a bead and reel design above the capitals. In the center a female figure is surrounded by foliage and two banners again proclaim *Fiat Justitia*.

Each office also contains a steel vault for the preservation of legal documents. Again, these totally functional objects had decorative details to add elegance to this public building.



Wapello County Jail (1911)

The Wapello County Jail is connected to the courthouse with a stone walkway at the second floor level. Although the jail is of the same rusticated stone as the courthouse, the style more closely resembles the Four Square houses popular at the time. The jail originally served both as the sheriff's home and a correctional facility - a common arrangement at that time.

The urn and columns on the wide front porch add a touch of Neoclassicism.

Like many buildings in Ottumwa, the jail is built into the side of a hill. Additional stories are exposed in the rear.



Lester Jay Funeral Home (1929)

The Lester Jay Funeral Home, now Robertson-Jay Funeral Home, at the corner of North Court and Fifth Streets was one of the earliest and finest examples of funeral home construction in Iowa.

Designed by Archie Eaton of Ottumwa, this two-story brick Mediterranean Revival building features round, arched windows, a tile roof, and a broad brick porte cochere.

The Lester Jay Funeral Home is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



St. Mary's Catholic Church (1930)

St. Mary's Catholic Church, on the northeast corner of North Court and Fourth Streets, was designed by C.I. Krajewski of Dubuque, Iowa in the Gothic Revival style. St. Mary's is the newest of the monumental stone buildings around Central Park.

Constructed of Bedford Limestone (over brick), this building replaced a smaller stone church built on the same site in 1860-61. The use of stone, lavish carvings at the entrances, stone tracery at the windows, and buttresses along the walls give the church a strong sense of a medieval cathedral.



The style was based on that used in the Medieval period for churches across Europe. The most identifiable architectural detail of this style is the use of the pointed Gothic (or lancet) arch. In this country the Gothic Revival style was first popular in the 1840s-60s for residences as well as for churches. The style never really fell out of favor for ecclesiastical design, but it experienced a re-birth in the first decades of the 20th century when it became popular for collegiate architecture as well.

A 60' tall bell tower is located at the southwest corner. The tower features a copper-covered lantern and cross, and copper covered shutters.

St. Mary's Church and Rectory has been determined to be National Register eligible.

St. Mary's Catholic Church (1930)

St. Mary's is a fine example of the style featuring an asymmetrical facade with a corner tower. The main entrance is on Fourth Street, with side entries on Court. The exterior is of ashlar blocks of Bedford limestone. Another major element of Gothic design is the use of buttresses. These pillars of stone are attached to the building exterior to provide additional support as the walls extend higher and higher. Buttresses can be seen at the corners of the tower, and will be found on other corners of the church as well as along the side walls. The higher the buttress, the narrower the pillar becomes. Each segment has a slope at the top as it becomes narrower.



The bell tower is square in shape, with two Gothic arched openings on each side near the top, allowing the bell to be heard. Stone tracery is found in the top of these arches with louvers below. The top of the tower is crenellated, with finals on three of the corners, and a copper covered lantern and cross on the other. Copper was used throughout the building, but is most visible on the bell tower, and on the gutters.

age.

This photograph shows two different buttresses (one tall and one short) and a copper gutter. Copper takes on a green patina with



The main portal (entrance) facing Fourth Street is deeply recessed within the Gothic arched opening (visually a series of arches decreasing in size). Originally the double wooden entry doors would have matched the tympanum area above the inset panels, but these doors were replaced to meet fire code. Take note of the

carving, not just in the entry but above and on both sides as well. Each of the five panels bears a different symbol of Christianity.

St. Mary's Catholic Church (1930)



The vertical elements characteristic of Gothic design are seen in these carved forms. Note the foliage on the center portion of the shaft. At the bottom is a small carved fleur-de-lis.

The fleur-de-lis is a stylized representation of the lily, a symbol of purity. For this reason the fleur-de-lis is often used as a symbol of the Virgin Mary. It is appropriate that it be used on each side of the front doors of St. Mary's of the Visitation.



This cornerstone is located on the facade, just to the left of the entrance. It has a representation of the cross on a shield, and an inscription and date in Latin.



rather than a door.

Above the Court Street entrance is a carved panel bearing the name "Saint Marys" in flowing Gothic script. Again, the symbol of the Virgin is used with a foliated panel containing a fleur-de-lis on each side of the name.

Christian symbols are found in a number of places on the exterior. Here is a stone cross set within a window frame.

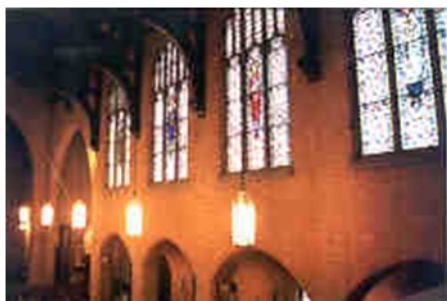


St. Mary's Catholic Church (1930)

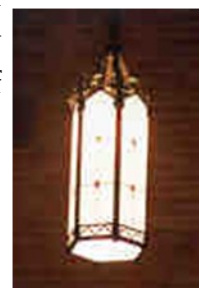


Although this window has protective covering, you can still see the stone tracery creating the smaller panels of the window. Note also, there is a stone buttress on each side of the window.

On the interior, elements of the Gothic Revival style are readily apparent. The floor plan of this church is one that has been used for Christian churches for centuries. It is long and narrow, with wings on each side near the altar area creating the shape of the cross. This plan has a narthex (entrance area just inside the front doors), a nave with side aisles (the area for the congregation), transept (the side wings), and altar area. This photograph is taken from just inside the narthex doors looking down the center aisle toward the altar. The interior walls are not of stone, but are of tannish-brown brick which is highlighted by inset carved stone panels. A large Gothic arch at the far end signals the beginning of the altar area, while the large arches on each side separate the nave from the transept wings. Smaller Gothic arches along the side walls separate the nave from the side aisles. Three tall slender Gothic arched stained glass windows are located in the wall above the altar. The flooring is terrazzo in the aisles and chancel (altar) area, with maple flooring in the pew areas. The altar of St. Mary's (like that in most Roman Catholic churches) was altered and simplified following Vatican II.



This photograph shows the arches defining the side aisles, and the large stained glass clerestory windows above. Clerestory windows are located high on a wall and allow daylight to shine down into the church (like light from Heaven). All of the stained glass windows are original to the church and were created by Emil Frei Incorporated of St. Louis. These windows along both sides of the nave represent different saints. Notice the hanging lights.



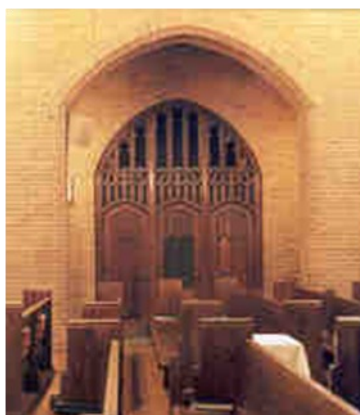
St. Mary's Catholic Church (1930)



This photograph shows the massive wooden ceiling trusses that cover the nave. Notice the ornate paint pattern on both the trusses and the ceiling panels.

The side aisles are separated from the nave by the Gothic arches. This photograph shows the different colors of brick used on the interior.

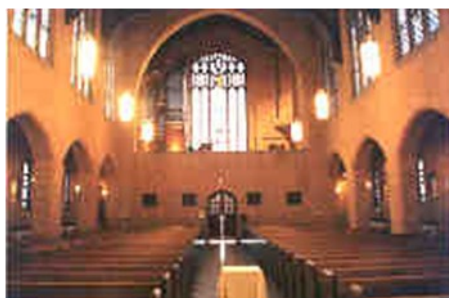
The side aisles are lighted by narrow stained glass windows. Stations of the Cross flank these windows.



A confessional is located on each side wall, near the altar area.

Note that these have elaborately carved wooden Gothic arched doors, with a Gothic arched screen above.

This shows the east side wing which forms the transept of the church. It contains two of the large stained glass windows featuring saints. Smaller Gothic arches form niches for statues, and lead into hallways.



This view from the altar area looking toward the front door shows the balcony above the narthex which houses the choir loft and pipe organ. Note the huge stained glass window. On the outside, this is the window you see above the front entrance. The pointed arches of the Gothic style are seen throughout the interior.

Federal Building (1912)

The Federal Building, now City Hall, located on the east side of Central Park, was designed by Treasury Department architects under the direction of James Knox Taylor to replace a small brick Post Office built on the same site in 1890. The Federal Building was completed in 1912 and used as a post office and court building until 1964. On June 17, 1966 the building became the Ottumwa City Hall.



The building is Renaissance Revival in style, executed in ashlar limestone. Buildings in this style are meant to resemble palaces built in Italy during the Renaissance period. Each floor is given a different decorative treatment. In addition, there are three "fronts" or facades on this building. The first story features a limestone facing tooled in horizontal striations. Arch tops accent the windows.

(Right) View of the Ottumwa City Hall from Third Street.

The interior first floor was altered in 1965 to accommodate city government. The second and third stories retain much of the original decor, including the court room and allied offices.

A white marble staircase with solid brass handrails leads to the second and third floors. Corridor floors in the upper stories are terrazzo with white marble borders. Plaster ceilings are shaped with vertical columns and horizontal beams.



The Federal Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Federal Building (1912)



This was designed as the main entrance to the Post Office portion of this building (the first floor). Note the large round arched opening, the metal pilasters on each side of the door, and the ornate iron grillwork in the lunette (arch above the door). The aluminum door is obviously a replacement, with wooden in-fill around it. This entrance is highlighted by three decorative elements.

Above it is a limestone cartouche (ornamental panel in the form of a scroll with curving edges) holding a shield with thirteen stars. This shield represents the original thirteen states of the United States.



On each side of the entrance is found a round stone panel with a flower design. In the center of each flower is an iron lantern to light the exterior.



In addition to each of these details, there are two more decorative stone panels on the Third Street facade, and repeated on the Central Park facade. These represent an early form of mail delivery . . . the Pony Express.

The Pony Express rider has been given a classical treatment by the rendering of a nude figure with voluminous cloak. Note the saddlebag or pouch across the rider's chest. The horse is shown in a full gallop. Just as the open book on the front of the library indicated the use of that building, this Pony Express rider indicates the use of this one.



Federal Building (1912)



As noted earlier, the Renaissance Revival style treats each story in a different manner. This view of the Third Street facade illustrates this treatment. The first floor features tooled limestone blocks (the edges have been gently rounded) and the doors and windows are all surrounded by large stone arches. A beltcourse separates the first and second floors. Above the first floor the corner features large stone blocks that form a pilaster (a flat attached column-like element) complete with a base and a capital. These pilasters are continued between each of the windows. The belt-course between the second and third floors is treated as a denticulated cornice. The third (or attic) story is much shorter than those below and is treated in a very simple manner with small square windows with a rectangular panel on each side, and a pilaster between each window unit. A full classical entablature caps the building. Originally the building had a green tile roof.

The second floor windows are rectangular in shape with a full triangular pediment above, and decorative stone sill below. The entire window is framed in a round arched panel which echoes the round arched openings on the first floor. Note the beltcourse below the window.



This beltcourse features a design of oval links alternating with square panels containing flower and leaf designs. It runs around all three main elevations of the building.

This shows the stone pilaster treatment at the corner of the second floor, with simple capital, and stone dentils forming the cornice. These dentils are similar to those found on the library.



Federal Building (1912)



This is the horizontal detail located immediately below the roof. It is a combination of stone dentils, and an elaborate egg and dart motif. The egg and dart pattern is found on many classical buildings, both Greek and Roman.

The stone staircase to the Fourth Street entry has a slight curve at the bottom, providing a softening effect to the building. This type of staircase is commonly found in residential designs of the Renaissance period. Behind the stairs you can see the continued design of the first floor with large round arches, the link patterned beltcourse, and the pedimented second floor windows.



The Fourth Street entrance features a rectangular doorway below a large round arch. The door is flanked by pilasters with decorative capitals, a full entablature with dentils, egg and dart motif, and a flat cornice. The arch is defined by two classical patterns, the egg and dart, and a bead and reel. Inset in the arch is an eagle in a round panel. This eagle represents the Federal government, showing that this is the entrance to the Federal court part of the building.

This decorative capital features a pattern of acanthus leaves with a sprinkling of small flowers. Note the bead and reel design on the left side.



Federal Building (1912)



This is the design used at the top of the pilasters separating the second floor windows on all three elevations of the building.

The same attention to classical design is found throughout the interior of the building. Just as the entrances on each facade are highlighted by architectural details, on the interior each of the three entrances feature a circular vestibule for a revolving door. The revolving doors were removed when the building was converted into City Hall in 1964. Note the classical treatment of this vestibule, with narrow pilasters between each of the windows.



This shows the simple capitals topping each pilaster, plus the denticulated cornice. The circular vestibule for the revolving doors juts into the lobby area. Notice the vaulted ceiling. This was accomplished through the use of steel arched forms which were then covered with ornamental plaster. The walls of the lobby were lined with metal post office boxes, and the area above the boxes was filled with small panes of glass to provide natural light in the work areas. A green marble wainscoting (dado) filled the area below the post office boxes to the floor. Flooring in the public area was of terrazzo with white marble borders.

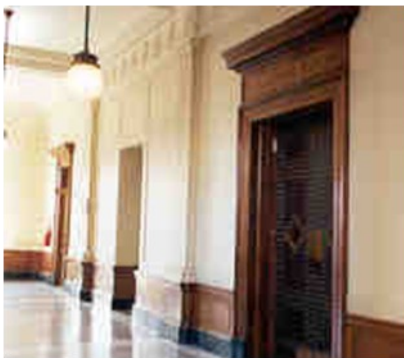
Just inside the Third Street entrance a white marble circular staircase with brass railing leads up to the second and third floors. The space in the center of the circular stairs is filled by a small passenger elevator.





This hallway extends all the way through the building from Third to Fourth Street. The double doors at the far (Fourth Street) end were placed in the revolving door opening temporarily. Notice the pilasters extending out from the walls between the window and door openings, the dentils along the cornice, and the recessed panels in the ceiling. The large window at the far end looks out over Third Street. Note the decorative plasterwork on the walls and ceiling. Rich oak woodwork surrounds the windows and doors. The hanging light fixtures with round globes are original to the building. Even the floor features a decorative pattern.

Office doors opening off the main hallway feature transoms, with classical cornice above. The oak woodwork is continued as a dado along each side, with a green marble baseboard.



The Federal Court Room is on this floor. Appropriately, the doors to this room are larger and more elaborate than the others along the hall. Note that it is wider and has double doors. The double doors opening into the court room are leather-covered with brass nails.

Also notice the plasterwork along the top of the wall. This is another classical detail. A row of dentils is found across the top. Below is a pattern of three bars, a plain square inset panel, three bars, etc. This is a classical Greek motif called triglyphs and metopes. The three bars are the triglyphs, and the panels are the metopes. This pattern is found on the Parthenon in Athens, and was very popular through the centuries.





This is the same entrance, but from the court room side. Notice that on this side there is a triangular wooden pediment above the door. The doorway is set in an arched area and flanked by fluted plasters complete with base and capital. These pilasters carry a simple classical entablature around the court room. An oak dado also surrounds the room. The two globe light fixtures are part of the original decor of this room.

This is a full view of the formal judicial end of the room. Symmetry continues to play an important role in the design. The judge's bench is raised on a dais and is centered in front of a door leading to the judge's chambers. Note that the door is pedimented and is set in an arched area, just as the entrance doors are. This door is flanked by free-standing fluted columns which support the entablature which circles the room. The judge's bench is of oak matching the woodwork. Originally the bench was only wide enough to extend from flag to flag. When this building became City Hall, this court room became the City Council Chambers. At that time two new sections were built, matching the original center portion. These two new sections allow the Mayor, Council, City Administrator, City Attorney, and City Clerk to all be seated behind the bench. Note the medallions on the wall behind the bench. These each contain an eagle, the symbol of the Federal Government. There is a large open area in front of the judge's bench that is now filled with tables for city staff participating in council meetings.



These each contain an eagle, the symbol of the Federal Government. There is a large open area in front of the judge's bench that is now filled with tables for city staff participating in council meetings.

This is a close-up of the eagle to the left of the judge's bench. Although it is a realistic representation of this American symbol, it has always been painted in a single color (ivory), not in natural colors. This photo shows the acanthus leaves that are part of the entablature above the columns/pilasters, the decorative plaster panels on each side of the eagle, and the decorative cornice above with acanthus leaves, dentils, and egg and dart. Note that these are highlighted by using different shades of off-white. This is a simple, but effective technique to highlight classical design elements.



Federal Building (1912) Construction

1910 - Prior to start of construction



1910 - Site Demolition



July 29, 1910



Federal Building (1912) Construction



August 30, 1910



September 17, 1910



October 29, 1910



December 31, 1910



January 31, 1911



February 28, 1911

Federal Building (1912) Construction



March 31, 1911



March 31, 1911



May 25, 1911



July 29, 1911



July 29, 1911

Ottumwa Public Library (1901)

The Ottumwa Public Library, on the west side of Central Park, is one of the 101 libraries in Iowa funded by Andrew Carnegie. Designed by Smith and Gutterson of Des Moines, Iowa, in the Neo Classical style. This style had become very popular following the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Many of the major exposition buildings were designed in this style, a new way of using classical elements. From 1900 - 1920 the Neo-Classical style was the preferred style for public buildings, and was used for many banks and churches as well. The library exhibits most of the major characteristics of the style, although some are in simplified form.



The Neo-classical limestone structure is a typical Carnegie building, with a high foundation and a formal staircase leading to a front entrance flanked by classical columns. The Ottumwa building, however, features a shallow dome over the rotunda.

A 1902 picture of the Ottumwa Library is shown on the right. Andrew Carnegie donated \$50,000 for the library. The cornerstone was laid on September 1, 1901. Mary E. Downey was the first Head Librarian.

The Ottumwa Public Library building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Ottumwa Public Library (1901)



This two-story building rests on a high foundation and is constructed of gray Bedford limestone. It features a symmetrical facade with a projecting portico and a shallow dome located over the center of the building. This dome reflects Roman rather than Greek traditions. Unlike the rusticated stone of the courthouse, this stone has been cut into smooth ashlar blocks. Note the larger blocks of stone (called *quoins*) that are found on the corners of the building. Quoins were originally used to add strength to the structure, but by 1900 were serving only a decorative purpose.

ative purpose.

The right front corner of the building contains a date stone (1901) just below the watertable. This watertable projects out several inches beyond the wall proper to ensure that water will not run down directly into the basement.



The entrance is located in the portico with monumental Ionic columns flanking the front doors. A broad set of stone steps lead up to the doors, perhaps a symbol of "climbing to achieve knowledge." A stone parapet surrounds the building, with a pair of volutes flanking a ball above the front entrance.

Ottumwa Public Library (1901)

A stone panel above the entrance is inscribed with the capital letters "PVBLIC LIBRARY." The "V" reflects the Roman use of the letter V in place of the letter U in inscriptions. Immediately below the identification panel is the entablature which divides the walls from the parapet. This entablature features a denticulated cornice (a row of dentils, "teeth," as also seen on the Courthouse and Federal Building).

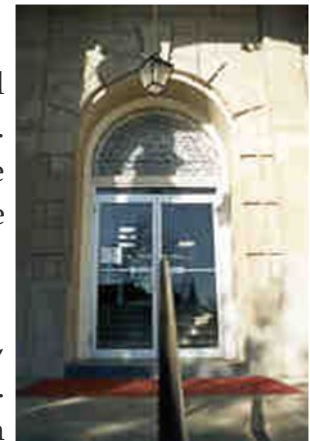


Often the use of symbols can help identify a building's function. In this case, on each side of the monumental columns we find a carved stone medallion containing an open book. A spray of laurel leaves cradles the medallion. Symbols have long been an important element in architectural design and another two of the other stone buildings around Central Park also have symbols on the exterior giving a clue about the building's use.

The original doors were replaced around 1950, but the original iron scrollwork pattern remains in the rounded transom area. Monumental pilasters with Ionic capitals flank the doors. Note the stonework pattern around the arched entrance.

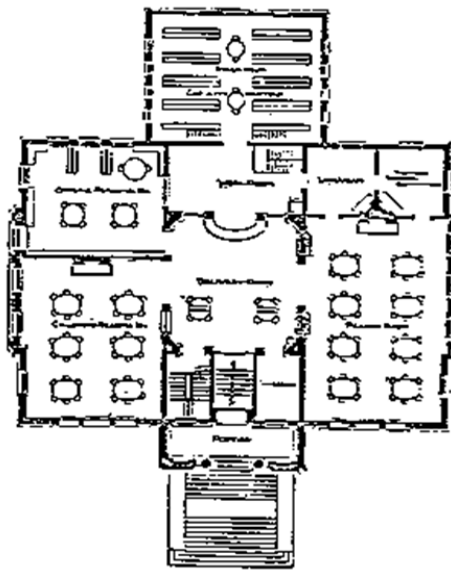


These windows are triple hung sash, with a "star" pattern in the top sash. This "star" was a very popular design element of this style, and is often found on bank buildings as well as public buildings. (Notice the windows of the First National Bank along the



Market Street side.) These triple windows have the same type of stonework pattern that is found around the doors. This is called a "Gibbs Surround" after the English architect James Gibbs. It is an alternating pattern of large and small stones around a window or door, drawing attention to it. Above each of the windows are stones laid vertically, some at a slight angle. These are representative of the "keystone" often found at the top of an arched opening. Note that this photo also shows the dentils of the cornice, and the watertable below the first floor.

Ottumwa Public Library (1901)



The interior of the library retains the original floor plan. It features a central rotunda, with reading rooms to each side, and the stacks area to the rear.

The focal point of the interior is the main level rotunda with its eight Doric columns on polished marble bases. This rotunda is located directly beneath the dome. This rotunda area is repeated on the lower level, with four columns providing support.

The use of monumental columns opens the space inside the building, with the rotunda flowing into the rooms to each side.



The columns around the rotunda support the lower part of the dome. Above the columns is an entablature, with a lunette on each wall (or opening), and a triangular area in each corner known as a spandrel. These have been highlighted by decorative plasterwork and have been painted different colors to show these architectural details. The dome itself rises from this support area. The dome is highlighted by a round stained glass window. The colors found in this window were in common usage in stained glass at the turn of the century. A few years after the library was built, Johannes Scheiwe, a German painter living in Ottumwa, offered to paint a mural in the dome, and allegorical figures in the panel under each spandrel. This dome mural was heavily damaged by roof leaks, and the dome was re-plastered and re-painted following World War II.



Ottumwa Public Library (1901)



Just as classical design is considered to be the appropriate style for public buildings, classical figures were considered to be appropriate decoration for public buildings. Allegorical figures representing Artes, Poesia, Historia, and Scientia, seemed to be the perfect theme for the library, a

place of learning. Each of the four figures is painted directly on the plaster and is more than life-sized. They are costumed in a mix of classical and Victorian dress. These have recently been restored to their original brightness. Scheiwe considered these paintings to be his contribution to the cultural climate of the community. The classical details found on the exterior were continued on the interior as well. This fireplace in the reference room is highlighted by a classical egg and dart motif directly below the mantle, and a cornice above the opening which features three rows of classical motifs: egg and dart, bead and reel, and acanthus leaves.

Although much of the library floor is now carpeted, the rotunda retains the original small hexagonal tile, a creamy white center area with a blue and gray border.



Hotel Ottumwa (1916)

The Hotel Ottumwa, now Parkview Plaza, is south of Central Park on Second Street. It was built by a group of Ottumwa businessmen who felt the community needed a fine, luxury-class hotel.

The six-story Renaissance Revival building is brick, with a wealth of classical details executed in terra cotta.

The architects, Proudfoot, Bird and Rawson of Des Moines, Iowa, returned to Ottumwa 25 years later to design the only other 6-story building in town, the Hofmann Building (now the Harvester Building) a few blocks east, at the intersection of Market and Second Streets.



YWCA (1924)

The YWCA, at the corner of Second and Washington Streets, looks much as it did in the 1920's. The brick exterior is a simplified Renaissance Revival design with round, arched openings on the ground floor and windows of diminishing size on the floors above. The interior features terrazzo floors and oak woodwork with a Craftsman influence.

The YWCA was built on the site of a YMCA building that burned in the early 1920's. A gymnasium survived and was given a new facade to match the new construction.



Granite Horse Trough (1906)

A granite horse watering trough with lion's head spigots currently sits in Ballingall Park at the intersection of Washington Street and River Drive. The Wapello County Historical Museum and Amtrak depot are located on the south side of the park.

The plaque on the watering trough reads:

1906
Presented By
The National
Humane Alliance
Hermon Lee Ensign
Founder



First National Bank (1915)

The First National Bank building is located at the corner of Market and Main Streets. This elegant structure was designed by H.H. Stoddard of Chicago, Illinois in a Neo-classical style.

In addition to the decorative details one would expect in this style, the entire building - not just the facade - was sheathed in cream terra cotta.

The First National Bank building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Lillburn Building (1876)

The Lillburn Building, now the Altfillisch Building, at 224 East Main Street retains intricate hood molds over the windows. The metal cornice was removed in the 1960's by order of the city fire marshal for safety reasons.



Benson Building (1930)

The Benson Building, located at 214 East Second Street, is a good example of the Tudor Revival style used for commercial design. However, it's unusual to find a commercial example of this style in the central business district.

Built of highly-textured, painted brick, the facade features the steeply-pitched gable roof and half-timbering of the style. This fanciful style was highly appropriate for the building's first use -- an indoor miniature golf course.



The Benson Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Ottumwa Courier Building (1921)

The Ottumwa Courier building, 213 East Second Street, is directly across the street from the Benson Building. It is an outstanding example of Egyptian Revival, a style rarely found in commercial buildings.

Designed by architects Clausen and Krause of Davenport, Iowa, the tan brick facade with stone trim is a perfect background for the colorful terra cotta details. The entrance is surrounded by a massive pylon capped by a spread-winged raven and a cornice with vulture and globe in the center.

The identification frieze is in the same typeface as the masthead that the newspaper used for many years. The interior design provided the most modern, efficient printing plant available at that time.



Benson Block (1924)

The Benson Block, 108 to 112 North Market Street, was originally built as a theater. Due to a lack of exits, the building was never used for that purpose.

The elegant, very elaborate Neo-classical terra cotta facade is in keeping with the great movie "palaces" of the period.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Historic Central Park

Variouly called Court Street Park, City Park, and Central Park (since 1930), it has been the civic center since the city was founded in the late 1840's. Central Park is located between Fourth Street on the north, Third Street on the south, Market Street on the east and Washington Street on the west. Civic buildings, a main highway, and public gatherings have all been centered around Central Park throughout the last 150 years.



The photo at left is the earliest known photograph of the Central Park area - c. 1860-70's. It is looking north along Court Street from one block south of Central Park. At this time in history, Court Street ran directly through the park. Note in the background that the towers are still on the 1855 Court House and the First Methodist Church on the left. The towers on both the church and the Court House were removed in the 1880's. The next picture shows the

towers removed.

The photograph on the right was probably taken in the mid 1880's. Central Park is in the foreground. The two buildings on the left are where the 1893 Court House would be built. The building on the left was originally the First Methodist Church. When this picture was taken it was being used as a National Guard Armory. The building in the middle was the old 1855 Court House. Court Street runs between the Court House and St. Mary's Catholic Church on the right.



Historic Central Park

Central Park has been the scene of speeches, band concerts, celebrations, dog shows, farmers' markets, relaxation and romance. A watering trough for horses was a delight to city kids when horses were no longer kept within the city limits. A wall once surrounded the park. Iron lampposts with round white globes light the park at night.

August 10, 1912 newspaper article lavished praise on the park.

"In the little spot in the center of the city, known as the City Park, the park commissioners have one of the finest resting places in the state. It is comparatively small, but its location is excellent. It is in the midst of the turmoil of traffic but yet is situated in such a location that it hears

but little of the hum of business. Many improvements have been made to it. A cement walk and coping costing \$1500 has greatly enhanced its attractiveness. The massive electroliers illuminate its beauties at night. Many flowers have been placed in the park and all the little things that add the finishing touches to attractiveness have been taken care of."



Historic Central Park

Ottumwa's Central Park looking toward Public Library.



Central Park view looking north up Court Street.



View looking west toward the Ottumwa Public Library. The Wapello County Court House is on the right in the background.



Historic Central Park

Central Park view to the south. The back of the Parkview Plaza, formerly Hotel Ottumwa, is visible in the background.



View looking north, up Court Street. St. Mary's Catholic Church is on the right in the background. The Wapello County Court House is on the left in the background.



Jefferson Street Viaduct



Ottumwa's history has revolved around the Des Moines River. The river drew early native people's and settlers. It provided a means of transportation before the railroads.

The Des Moines River also created a division in the community. It was a natural barrier inhibiting free access from one side of the banks to the other. Bridges were built to

unite Ottumwa. Ottumwa's nickname is "the City of Bridges."

Engineers from the Iowa State Highway Commission designed the bridge project. The Wisconsin Bridge and Iron Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin began excavation for the substructure in early 1935. Construction was completed in 1936. On May 28, 1936 the Jefferson Street Viaduct was dedicated in ceremonies presided over by Iowa Governor Clyde Herring and Ottumwa Mayor Edwin Manning. A crowd of about 15,000 people were on hand for the bridge's official opening.



The Jefferson Street Viaduct has five arched deck truss spans, riveted Warren deck truss, and supported above the Des Moines River on tapered concrete pedestals. It is



technologically noteworthy as an uncommon application of deck truss technology in Iowa.

The Jefferson Street Viaduct was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998.

The Historic Districts

Ottumwa, Iowa has three neighborhood districts and one cemetery listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

Court Hill Historic District

Fifth Street Bluff Historic District

Vogel Place Historic District

Ottumwa Cemetery Historic District

In addition, there are several individual buildings in Ottumwa with National Register listing. All houses listed on the National Register are private homes and not open to the public. Government buildings listed on the National Register are open to the public.

As you approach Ottumwa from the south or west, you are presented with a panoramic view of a tree-covered bluff rising from the Des Moines River valley with church spires and roof tops peaking through. Many of the spires and roof tops belong to houses and churches in the Fifth Street Bluff and Court Hill Historic Districts. Both of these residential districts developed as the city of Ottumwa grew up and away from the river during the second half of the 19th century. Court Street was a major street leading northeast from the river to Sixth Street, the original city limits.

The original settlement in the village of Ottumwa took place along the north bank of the Des Moines River. In May of 1843, the first settlers built log cabins near the river and the ferry crossing. By the early 1850's Ottumwans were starting to build more permanent residences, and these were located farther from the river, first along Second Street, and then moving up the hill to Fourth, and finally, construction began "on the Bluff" along Fifth Street.

The Vogel Place Historic District is an early 20th century residential neighborhood located in the northern part of Ottumwa between the Ottumwa Cemetery and the Ottumwa Country Club. Building lots were sold in the Vogel Place addition beginning in 1908.

The Court Hill and Fifth Street Bluff Historic Districts were officially dedicated in a ribbon cutting ceremony on May 16, 1998.

The Historic Districts

National Register of Historic Places

Ottumwa Mayor Uehling (pictured center) is cutting the ribbon officially dedicating the Court Hill and Fifth Street Bluff historic districts. Both districts were recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



The ribbon cutting ceremony was held in the middle of Court Street on Saturday, May 16, 1998. It was attended by Ottumwa dignitaries, local property owners, and members of the Ottumwa Historic Preservation Commission. The following properties are also listed on the national register:

Benson Block, 108 - 112 N. Market Street, Ottumwa, Iowa (listed 1-3-85)

Benson Building, 214 E. Second Street, Ottumwa, Iowa (listed 8-11-95)

First National Bank, 131 E. Main Street, Ottumwa, Iowa (listed 8-11-95)

Foster-Bell House, Fifth Street Bluff historic district, Ottumwa, Iowa (listed 9-29-83)

Jay Funeral Home, 220 N. Court Street, Ottumwa, Iowa (listed 8-11-95)

Ottumwa Public Library, 129 N. Court Street, Ottumwa, Iowa (listed 4-27-84)

U.S. Post Office (Federal Building and/or City Hall), Court and Fourth Streets, Ottumwa, Iowa (listed 8-13-76)

Wapello County Courthouse, Court Street, Ottumwa Iowa (listed 7-2-81)

The Historic Districts-Court Hill

The Court Hill Historic District contains 84 structures, 58 of which are key or contributing structures in the district. Court Hill represents a prestigious residential neighborhood with houses illustrating the most popular styles from c.1865 to c.1915. It is an area of large residences with a few smaller houses scattered throughout. The historical district begins at the intersection of 6th and Court Streets and extends north six blocks along Court Street to Woodland Avenue. Court Street was designed as a major street leading northeast from the Des Moines River to 6th Street, the original city limits, where it turned slightly and continued due north into the countryside. This appears to be the road that was authorized by the Iowa Legislature in February 1844 to extend from the southern line of Davis County to the northern line of Wapello County, touching both county seats. It was later part of U.S. Highway 63.

The earliest remaining houses in the Court Hill District date from the period 1865-75 and represent various aspects of the Italianate architecture style. The neo-classical design house pictured at the left was built between 1865 and 1870 for Major Charles and Tabitha Fulton.



The first electric streetcar was put into service on Court Street in 1889. The street was bricked during the summers of 1890 and 1891. The streetcar and the brick streets spurred a boom in housing construction between 1890 and 1915. Houses built in this period favored the Queen Anne and Neo-classical design styles. For many years (as late as 1942) steam heat was available in Ottumwa through a central system. The main steam pipes ran up the middle of Court Street hill, thus ensuring that the street was never snow-covered or slick in the winter. Court was the only street in town that you could always get up in the winter.

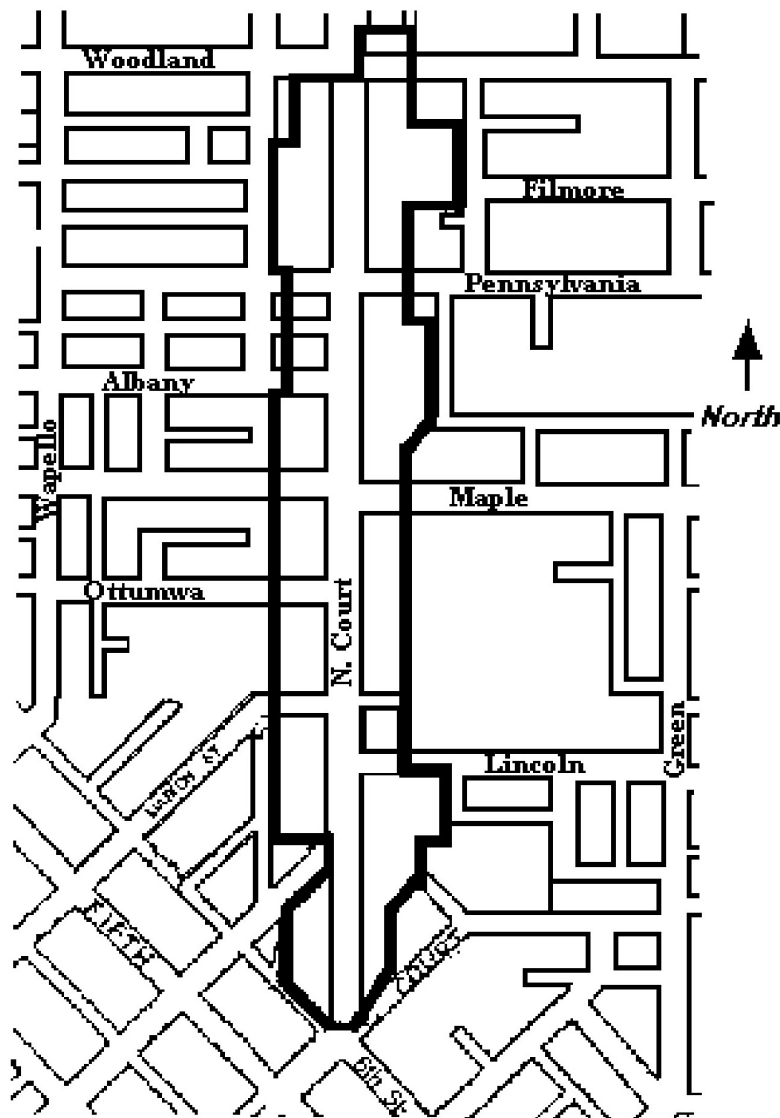
A fine example of a brick residence is shown at the right. The Italianate style house was built in the early 1880's for W.R. Daum (of the Electric Street Railway). It features a tower, bracketed cornice, and a two-story bay to one side. The windows have simple segmental arches of cream colored brick, with the same brick used for quoining at the corners, and a decorative pattern between the cornice brackets.



The Historic Districts-Court Hill

Court Hill District Map

The Court Hill Historic District is approached from the intersection of 4th and Court Streets, where Central Park is ringed by four large limestone buildings: Wapello County Courthouse, Ottumwa Public Library, City Hall/Federal Building, and St. Mary of the Visitation Church. In this area Court Street is 82 feet wide and provides a sweeping path up the hill. Two blocks north, at the intersection of Court and 6th streets, the Court Hill Historic District begins. It extends north six blocks to Woodland Avenue, and includes all resources facing Court Street. The Court Hill Historic District is outlined by the bold lines on the map below.



The Historic Districts-Court Hill

A number of houses in the Court Hill District retain a high level of integrity, while others have been altered over the years. There has been little demolition of historic houses, and almost no new construction. The conversion of many multi-family housing during World War II had a major impact on the integrity. Recent years have seen a return to single family status for several of the houses, with a growing awareness of Ottumwa's heritage. Pictured at the left is the W.T. Harper house built in the 1880's in the High Victorian Italianate style. Although it is now painted white, originally it was of deep red brick with cast hoodmolds, limestone trim, and a bracketed cornice. The mansard roof is pierced by dormers, as is the tower roof.



The J.C. Jordan house is pictured on the right. It was built in 1889 and has retained an extraordinary level of integrity. It is an excellent example of Queen Anne design with its irregular roof shapes, multiple porches, and highly decorative surface.



1891 was an important year in the history of the Court Hill neighborhood. It was the year that Court Street was paved from 6th Street to Woodland Avenue. A number of houses were constructed in the 1890's, most of which had some elements of Queen Anne style.



A good example of Queen Anne design is the W.H. Cooper residence built in 1892. While no architect has been determined, it could well have been the work of one of Ottumwa's local architects, or built from mail order plans. It is a classic example of the style with an irregular roof line, multiple porches, and a rounded corner tower. Around 1915 the wrap-around porch was replaced by the two current porches which feature the popular diagonal star pattern often used in the windows of public buildings and banks. The house at the right is thought to have been constructed c.1900 and illustrates how effectively classical details can be applied to a simple hip roof box. The pilastered corners, and porches with ionic columns are strong design elements. The dormers feature baroque pediments.



The Historic Districts-Court Hill



This two and one-half story house was constructed c.1910 as a tri-plex. It was built for Tabitha Fulton who lived next door in the large 1860's brick house. She wanted to leave the big house for her children and family, but wanted a fine place to live nearby. This was basically a luxury apartment building when it was built. It features a full two story portico on the side gable, with full pediment above the Doric columns. A second floor porch, with balustrade, is set inside the columns.

An example of Queen Anne design from the 1890's is the residence of grocer Otto Brenhorst, pictured at right.



At the far northern end of the Court Hill Historic District, newspaper publisher A.H. Hamilton



had a rather subdued Queen Anne residence built c.1891. It uses the classic details associated with Free Classic Queen Anne in its porches, as well as the Palladian window in the front dormer.

The early decades of the 20th century saw the popularity of simple two story houses with entries on the gable end. These houses usually had a broad porch across the facade. Some had classical elements, like the house pictured at the right.



The Historic Districts-Fifth Street

The bluffs along the north side of the Des Moines River in Ottumwa, Iowa are a major landscape feature, having played an important role in the town's development since it was established in 1843. As Ottumwa grew and prospered, local business owners could afford more comfortable housing, and many began building "on the bluff," not only to be away from the swampy river bottom, but for the view.



While construction on the bluff began in the late 1850's, there were three major periods of construction in the neighborhood: the 1860's, the 1890's, and the 1920's. The decade of the 1890's was an especially busy period. The list of property owners include: George Morrell (John Morrell & Co.), F.W. Simmons (American Mining Tools Co.), G.C. Janney (Janney Mfg.), J.W. Edgerly (wholesale druggist), J.H. Merrill (wholesale grocery), H.B. Hendershott (judge), etc. The Fifth Street Bluff Historic District represents a prestigious residential neighborhood with representative houses from all decades between c.1860 and c.1930. The most popular architectural styles in the district include Italianate, Queen Anne, and Tutor Revival. Brick streets with limestone curbs were laid in 1895 and make a strong visual statement.

The Fifth Street Bluff area includes 64 houses/buildings and three structures (brick streets, stone retaining walls, and an iron fence). Of these 67 resources, 43 are considered to be key or contributing structures. The location of the Fifth Street Bluff area has shielded it from commercial development and preserved important historic and architectural features. Architecturally, the Fifth Street Bluff area is important because it contains some of the best examples of specific styles in the city, and because it has the largest concentration of architect designed houses and buildings. Nine different architects or architectural firms designed the houses and buildings in the district from 1883 to 1929.

The Queen Anne style was a very popular architectural style at one time in the district. Most houses received a rather subdued Queen Anne treatment, lacking the most flamboyant elements common elsewhere.

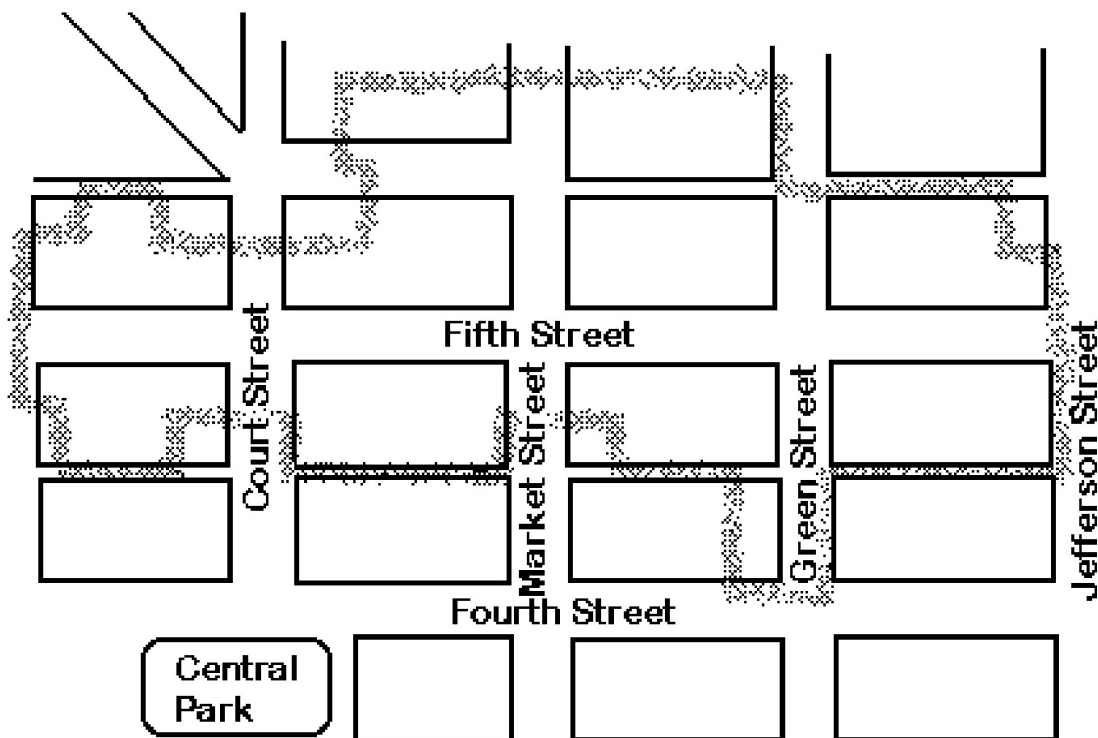
The Historic Districts-Fifth Street

The most visually prominent architectural style in the district is Tudor Revival. It is interesting that all of these houses were architect designed and that all but one were owned by members of the Foster and Morrell families of the John Morrell & Company meat packing plant. Pictured at the right is the Foster-Bell House. The house was originally built in 1893. In 1923 the exterior was redesigned into its present Tudor Revival configuration.



Fifth Street Bluff Historic District Map

The Fifth Street Bluff Historic District is outlined by the shaded lines on the map below. Geographically the Fifth Street Bluff Historic District includes all the properties facing Fifth Street between Washington and Jefferson Streets, plus the houses on North Green from Fourth to Sixth Streets, and the houses on North Market from Fifth Street to just beyond Sixth Street.



The Historic Districts-Fifth Street



The Italianate style is well represented in the district. Several houses feature round arched windows and brackets with pendants. The house at the left was built in the mid-1870's for a local lumber dealer. It exhibits a number of highly decorative Italianate details in the brackets, Gothic window in the front gable, sawn-wood cornice board, and covered entry porch.

The Fifth Street Bluff Historic District is an area that should be viewed on foot. The brick streets with stone curbs, stone retaining walls, mature trees, and historic residences give it a strong sense of time and place.



Pictured at left is the J.H. Merrill house. The house was built in 1913 and replaced an 1860 frame house that burned. This house was designed by Ottumwa architect George M. Kerns and is an eclectic blending of several styles including both Tudor and Craftsman.

The original portion of the house on the right was built between 1856 and 1858. It was a two story brick house, probably with a hip roof in a simplified Italianate style. In 1895 the property was totally remodeled. A dining room was added to the west, and a massive staircase and library on the east. The roof was raised to create more



attic space. The new roof was steeply pitched with Shingle style gable ends and dormer windows. The front wrap-around porch was given Neo-classical paired columns and balustrade, with an embossed pediment over the entry steps.

The east end of the Fifth Street Bluff Historic District is anchored by the F.W. Simmons house. This was designed by New York architect F.R. Cornstock and was built in 1899 in the Colonial Revival style. It features Neo-classical columns on both of the small single story porches, large round arched windows on the first floor, cameo windows flanking a central second floor window, pedimented dormers, and a Palladian window in the center gable.

The Historic Districts-Fifth Street

Pictured right is a two and one-half story Shingle style house that was designed by Omaha architects Fisher & Lowrie. This fine example of the somewhat rare style was built between 1892-1897. It retains an unusually high level of integrity, with all original detailing in place. The rounded shingled corners of the second and third floors are especially nice elements. This remains in the family of the original owner.



The Trinity Episcopal Church at the corner of 5th and Market Streets was completed in 1895 from plans drawn by Davenport, Iowa architect Edward Hammett. It is of rusticated limestone in the Gothic Revival style. Gothic arched windows and doors are used throughout, with stone buttresses located between the windows along the sides of the sanctuary. An apsidal end is located on the east, with a three story bell tower at the opposite end, rising above the corner entrance. Like many houses in the Fifth Street Bluff district, the church is built into the hillside, so the lower level actually opens at ground level in the rear. This is an excellent, basically unaltered, example of late 19th century Gothic Revival ecclesiastical design.

The Historic Districts-Vogel Place

The Vogel Place Historic District is an early 20th century residential neighborhood located in the northern part of Ottumwa, between the Ottumwa cemetery on the south and the Ottumwa Country Club golf course on the north. The district is bounded on the east by the former St. Joseph Hospital (pictured at right) and on the west by Court Street. The major resources in the district are 91 houses, one hospital, one church, a brick paved street, and four distinctive driveways. Two-thirds of the houses were built in the 1920's and 30's.



Vogel Place was platted on land owned by E.B. and Elizabeth Vogel and given to their daughters following E.B.'s death. The original plat map of Vogel Place was certified by the county surveyor in September 1907 and filed with the county recorder in March 1908. The daughters retained the services of an attorney and began selling lots in 1908.

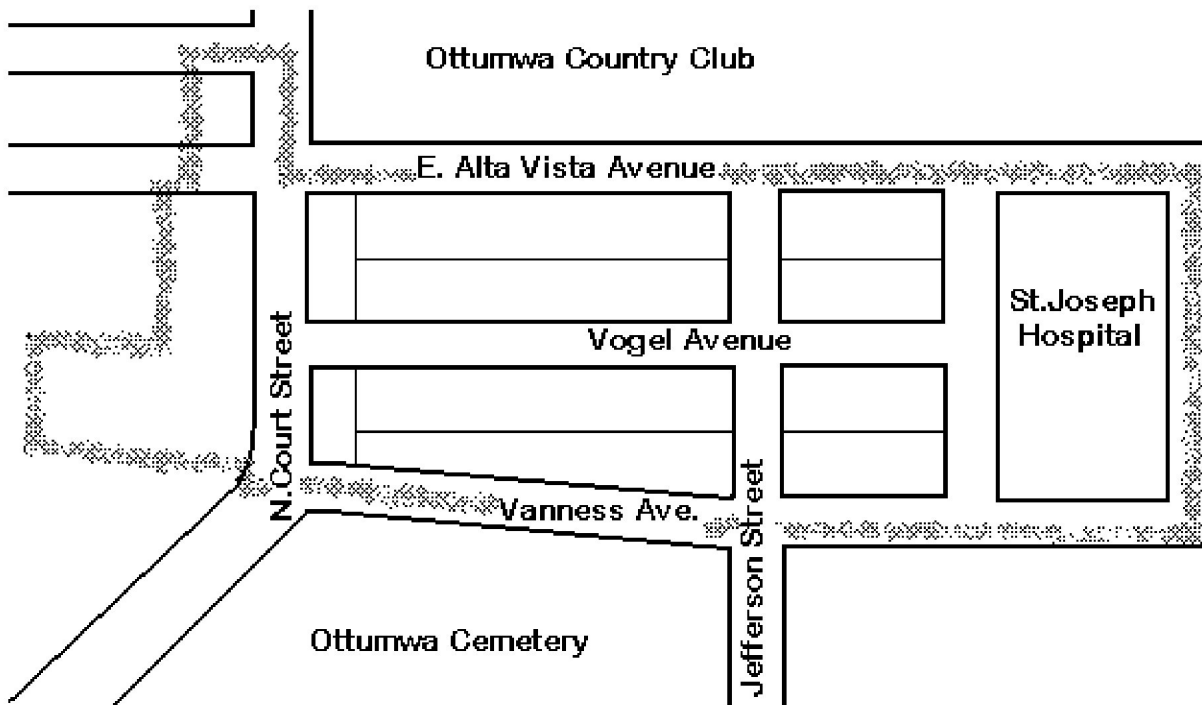
The Ottumwa Electric Railroad line ran past Vogel Place on Court Street. The street-car line and the district's location next to the Country Club made it an attractive place to live. The houses are typical middle class residences being one and one-half or two stories in height. Wood is the most common building material, but there are a number of brick veneer residences, and two unique "concrete" (cement block) houses. Vogel Place is one of the first neighborhoods where garages were considered to be an important part of the development. Small garages dotted the rear of almost every lot in the district.

The Historic Districts-Vogel Place

Map of the Vogel Place Historic District

The map below shows the boundaries of the Vogel Place Historic District. The district is somewhat rectangular in shape and encompasses 31.6 acres. The core of the district is the Vogel Place Addition which includes 101 lots.

There are three east-west streets in the district: East Alta Vista, Vogel Avenue, and Vanness Avenue. Jefferson Street runs through the area north and south. In addition to the 101 lots in Vogel Place proper, the district includes the former St. Joseph Hospital on the east, and eight residences along the west side of Court Street between Vanness and Hawthorne Drive. These nine additional buildings provide strong visual boundaries for the district.



The Historic Districts-Vogel Place



Architectural Styles

Bungalow and Craftsman

There are five major architectural styles in the Vogel Place Historic District. The most popular was the Bungalow or Craftsman house. Twenty four percent of the housing stock is of this type. The bungalows range from small one story designs to large, architect designed houses. These houses feature a gable roof and broad front porches. Most have exposed rafter ends and diagonal eave braces. Bungalows remained a popular style for decades, and the ones in Vogel Place reflect this as their period of construction spans the years between 1912 and 1930. The house pictured above is a small bungalow style house that retains its original tiny garage and driveway.

The houses below are other examples of the Bungalow style architecture. The house on



the left is a good example of a Bungalow style house executed in brick. The middle picture is an architect designed house. The house on the right is a two story Craftsman house with the entrance on the gable end.

Tudor Revival

Tudor Revival is a popular architectural style in Vogel Place district. Two types of Tudor Revival are common in the district: half-timbered and English Cottage. The half-timbered houses illustrate the use of brick for the first floor with a combination of stucco and "half-timbering" in the gable ends. The English Cottage type of Tudor Revival features a steeply pitched gable roof with a projecting gable entry. The doors are usually arched and have a stone surround. The house pictured to the right is a very good example of this popular smaller English Cottage style of Tudor Revival.



The Historic Districts-Vogel Place

Colonial Revival

During the 1920's many houses were built in the Colonial Revival style. Most of these houses are two stories with a gable roof, the entrance usually entered on the long, or eave side. Wood was the most common building material. Porches have classical columns and/or pilasters.



Romantic Revival

Some of the largest houses in the Vogel Place district are in various Romantic Revival styles. Most of these houses face or side onto Court Street. A fine example of Neo-classical design is shown on the right. This two story brick residence features symmetrical facade with two story portico with monumental classical columns. The entrance is pedimented with sidelights and windows feature jack-arched tops. A two story solarium balances the single car garage on the other end. This house from 1915 is one of the earliest in the neighborhood.



The house on the left is a "cement" house built for Lester Fuller in 1908-12. Built of rusticated concrete blocks, smooth finished concrete, and concrete blocks with other decorative details, it is two stories with a broad porch across the front. The major stylistic element is the Baroque parapet on the front dormer, with smaller versions at each end of the porch roof. This type of parapet is characteristic of the Mission Revival style.

American Four Square

Five of the houses in the district are American Four Square. They are all locate on Vogel Avenue. These are typical examples of style being two stories with hip roof, dormer, and (originally) a broad porch with fairly heavy, or paired, posts across the front. All were built of wood. The house pictured here is a good example of American Four Square architecture.



Ottumwa Cemetery



Ottumwa Cemetery's original 10 acre plot and the four key structures that create its dramatic entrance are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The receiving vault, wrought iron fence, Edgerly Gateway, and office/chapel are set in a magnificent arboretum housing trees and shrubs planted throughout the city's

history.

The Ottumwa Cemetery was established in 1857 after outgrowing the town's original cemetery which was located nearer to downtown. The cemetery's current boundaries are North Court Street on the west side, Vanness Avenue on the north, Jefferson Street on the east, and Park Avenue on the south. Ottumwa Cemetery's original 10 acres was laid out in grids of lots on the hillsides with meandering roads.



In 1887, an ornate receiving vault was constructed. The vault is built of deep red brick and terra cotta panels in a High Victorian Gothic design. Shortly after the vault was completed, a romantic design wrought iron fence was built along Court Street.



The keystone to the cemetery's entrance is Edgerly Gateway. The Bedford limestone arch was constructed at the southwest corner of the cemetery in 1904. It is in the classical form of a Roman triumphal arch.



The Gothic-style office/chapel pictured below has arched windows and a crenelated roofline. It was completed in 1906 and dedicated to the Union soldiers and sailors of the Civil War. The picture of the Cemetery staff below was taken in 1929.



Ottumwa Cemetery



This life-size statue of a greyhound dog, visible from North Court Street, was placed on the lot of Thomas J. Nash at about the turn of the century. Legend has it that the dog belonged to Nash's four-year old grandson, George Jr. When George died in 1904, so the story goes, the grief stricken pet visited his young master's grave every day. Then one day he was found dead of a broken heart on the burial spot. The boy's grandfather had the statue cast as a monument to the devoted dog.

Architectural Styles

Ottumwa's historic buildings represent many different architectural styles. The characteristics of some of the more common architectural styles are listed below.

Italianate (1840-1885)

- Balanced, symmetrical facade
- Decorative details: crowned doors
- One-story entrance porch
- Arch emphasis over tall, narrow windows
- 2 or 3-stories
- Low pitched roof
- Wide overhanging eaves with decorative brackets
- May have square cupola or tower



Queen Anne (1880-1910)

- Distinguishing feature - decorative wall surfaces (wood shingle pattern common)
- Ornamental details - spindlework ("gingerbread" ornamentation)
- Steeply pitched roof; irregular shape
- Asymmetrical facade
- One story porch along one or both sides
- Cutaway bay window



Tudor style architecture Tudor (1890-1940)

- Prominent gable
- Decorative half-timbering
- Massive chimney
- Steeply pitched roof
- Side-gabled
- Tall, narrow windows
- Dominate surface on first story walls



Architectural Styles

Neoclassical style architecture Neoclassical (1895-1940)

- Typically 2-story with prominent full height porch
- Porch columns elaborate - usually Corinthian
- Facade symmetrically balanced (centered door)
- Doors have decorative surroundings
- Eaves are boxed with a moderate overhang



Craftsman style architecture Craftsman (1905-1930)

- Low-pitched roof
- Wide, open eave overhang with rafters exposed
- Porches with roof supports that are tapered square columns extending to ground level (with no breaks at porch floor)



Ottumwa Architects

Foster and Liebbe - Architects

William Foster (1842-1909) and Henry F. Liebbe (1851-1927) formed a partnership in 1883 in Des Moines, Iowa and continued to work together until 1898. They specialized in the design of public buildings, including ten county courthouses in Iowa, a number of college and university buildings for the State of Iowa, and the Hospital for the Insane in Clarinda, Iowa. They also designed a number of churches, schools, and large residences. Foster became interested in the design of opera houses, and began to build and manage these. When he left the architectural partnership in 1898, he devoted himself entirely to the operation of opera houses.

Among the buildings designed by Foster and Liebbe are:

- Ames, English Office Building for Iowa State College
- Chariton, Lucas County Courthouse
- Clarinda, Hospital for the Insane
- Clarinda, Page County Courthouse
- Des Moines, Central Christian Church
- Des Moines, First Methodist Church
- Marengo, Iowa County Courthouse
- Ottumwa, Wapello County Courthouse
- Washington, Washington County Courthouse

For more information about William Foster, Henry F. Liebbe, and/or their partnership, see: Shank, Wesley L., *Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999. Henry Hobson Richardson - Architect

Few architects have made such important contributions to the field that a style has been named for them. Henry Hobson Richardson is such a man. His interpretation of the Romanesque style with its heavy massing and highly textured materials, has become known as Richardsonian Romanesque.

Richardson (1836-1888) was born in Louisiana. Following his graduation from Harvard, he studied architecture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, becoming only the second American to be formally trained in architecture. Returning to the U.S. he set up practice in New York with Charles Dexter Gambrill. In 1872 a massive fire destroyed much of Boston's down-

Ottumwa Architects

town. One of the buildings lost was Trinity Church. Richardson won the competition to design and build the new church. Started in 1873, the massive stone building with its round arches, polished columns, and towers, was completed in 1877. Trinity Church firmly established Richardson as an architect of note. In the following ten years he designed approximately 50 buildings, most in this same style. Though the style remained the same, he designed a variety of different types of buildings, including libraries, train stations, residences, and commercial buildings. In each you can see the rich texture of the material (stone), and the rhythmical pattern of the openings (round arches). It is these characteristics which have been borrowed by architects across the country and used to create such buildings as the Wapello County Courthouse in the Richardsonian Romanesque style.

Building designed by Richardson include:

- Albany, New York - City Hall
- Boston, MA - Boston and Albany Railroad Station
- Boston, MA - Trinity Church
- Cambridge, MA - Stoughton House
- Chicago, IL - Glessner House
- Chicago, IL - Marshall Field Warehouse
- Woburn, MA - Woburn Public Library

Ottumwa Architects

Smith and Gutterson - Architects

Oliver O. Smith (1868-1916) and Frank A. Gutterson (1872-1901) formed a brief partnership from 1898-1901 with offices in Des Moines, Iowa. Before and after that period Smith was in partnership with a number of other well known Iowa architects. Like Foster and Liebbe, Smith and Gutterson apparently specialized in public buildings.

Buildings designed by Smith and Gutterson include:

Des Moines, Iowa Public Library

Des Moines, Iowa Historical Memorial and Arts Building (Old State Historical Building)

Ottumwa, Iowa Public Library

Owatonna, Minnesota Public Library

For more information on Oliver O. Smith and/or Frank A. Gutterson, see: Shank, Wesley I., *Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999.

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Casimir I. Krajewski - Architect

Casimir Ignatius Krajewski (1893-1949 or later) was born in Poland. He opened an office in Dubuque, Iowa in 1927 and worked there until about 1940 when he moved to Chicago. Not many buildings have been identified as his work. The only one listed in Shank's book is St. Mary's of the Visitation in Ottumwa.

For more information about Casimir Krajewski see: Shank, Wesley I., *Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999.

History of Wapello County

A Brief History of Wapello County, Iowa

by Tom Quinn, Past President of the Wapello County Historical Society

Introduction

At the roar of cannon fire, hundreds of people rushed forward shouting and waving their torches lighting up the night. They ran on foot, galloped on horse-back and bounced along in wagons. Every so often someone would stop and drive a stake into the ground.

It was midnight on May 1, 1843. The event was the settling of Wapello County by land rush. Land was being carved up into sections for homesteading. Over 1,000 settlers staked claims that first day.

Before May 1 of 1843, Wapello County was Indian land. By treaty, no white man was allowed to settle in the county. Soldiers stationed at the Indian Agency drove off trespassing white settlers. By the end of May, there were 5,000 people living in Wapello County. They were cutting down trees to build cabins, clearing land to plant crops, and making good use of the abundant grass prairies with their livestock.

Early Indian History

The first known residents to the area were the Mound Builders, a name archaeologists and historians have given to an early peoples that may have migrated here across a land bridge from Asia. Precisely who they were, where they really came from or why they left will probably never be known. But what we do know is that they were in Wapello County and left six earthen mounds as record. Known as Caldwell Mounds, Sugar Creek Mounds, Trowell Mounds, Stiles Mounds and Village Creek Mounds, they sat on high ground overlooking broad valleys. The Mounds are regular in shape and contain ash, charcoal, stone tools, and bits of unglazed pottery. Occasionally human remains have been uncovered in the mounds.

It is pure speculation what the mounds may have been used for. Some people say they were cremation grounds, others believe the mounds were merely observation posts, while some experts think they were used in religious ceremonies.



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What we do know about early Wapello County is that it contained plentiful game, rich prairie soils, tall hardwood forests, good water, and vast coal deposits. There were herds of buffalo grazing on the prairies and countless herds of deer and elk ranging between Ottumwa and Eddyville. In the forest there were great numbers of wild turkeys and prairie chickens. Occasionally a black bear would waddle down to the river and then go back to its den in the woods. It is no wonder that early pioneers and Indians alike wanted to live in such a land.

Iowa was never a permanent home to any Indian tribe after the Mound Builders. But the state's plentiful game did attract migrating Indian hunting parties that wandered across its borders. The Iowa Indians were a nomadic tribe that had small villages in Iowa, but wandered from Lake Michigan to the Missouri River. Other tribes that occasionally roamed Iowa were the Illinois, Missouri, Otoes, Omahaws, and Pawnee.

It is the Fox and Sac Indians that gave Wapello County most of its Indian heritage. The Fox and Sac Indians were originally from around the Great Lakes. In their many skirmishes with the French, they were pushed westward eventually crossing the Mississippi River into Iowa where they set up hunting camps along the Des Moines River valley. At one time there were three Indian villages in Ottumwa and a Hardfish village near Eddyville.

Most of the Indian activity in Wapello County occurred between 1800 and 1843 when a peace treaty was signed that forced the Fox and Sac to reservations in Nebraska.

In 1838 two important events happened that forever shaped the history of Wapello County. Chief Wapello moved his village from Muscatine to the Des Moines River just south of Ottumwa, and an agency for dealing with the Indians was being built near what was to become known as Agency City.

A Council House, a place to hold talks with the Indians, was the first building completed at the Indian Agency. Soon to follow was a house for the first agent, General Joseph Street, who arrived with his family in April of 1839. A "Pattern Farm" to teach farming skills to the Indians was begun and several other buildings were constructed.

History of Wapello County

The county is named for a chief of the Sac tribe, Chief Wapello. A statue of him sits high atop the Wapello County Courthouse. He was a powerful ruler among his people and a good friend of the white man. Wapello was born about 1787 at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. He died March 15, 1842 near the forks of the Skunk River while on a hunting trip. He so admired the first Indian agent in the county, General Joseph Street, that Wapello asked to be buried beside him upon his death. Both are buried near Agency, Iowa in Chief Wapello Memorial Park.

Early Settlements

Agency

The beginnings of the town of Agency, separate and apart from the Indian Agency, was begun in 1843 when Shaphat Dwire opened a general store and was named the first postmaster. Soon after that a church was built and houses sprung up. The first settlers were those employed at the Indian Agency. The town grew slowly until the railroad came in 1859. Agency was incorporated on January 6, 1859.

Eldon

Southeast of Agency along the Des Moines River, the community of Eldon was getting its start. John Groover, a German immigrant, had cleared some land, planted some crops and built a cabin. Since this was before the May 1, 1843 legal date for settlement, government troops burned down his cabin, set fire to his fields and drove him off. Mr. Groover returned after the 1843 land rush and reclaimed his land.

The area around Eldon had many advantages for settlers. It was well wooded, well watered, and had rich mineral deposits. In 1859 the Keokuk and Des Moines Railroad located the Ashland Crossing flag station on the present town site. In 1861 William Riordan and a few others settled in the area and the town began. A short time later, a second railroad, the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad laid tracks to Eldon. A railroad boom town had begun. The town was incorporated in 1872 and by 1878 there were three general stores, two drug stores, a shoe shop, two blacksmith shops, a barber shop, three hotels, a saw and grist mill, a lawyer, and three physicians. An article writ-

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ten at the time touted Eldon as "a growing, prosperous town with a good future where any young man would want to live."

Eddyville

In 1841, J.P. Eddy came from Warren County, Ohio to establish a farm and Indian trading post in what is now called Eddyville. Nearly 1,000 Indians from the Hard Fish band were living in the area at the time. Mr. Eddy's trading post sold skinning knives, blankets and other items that the Indians were eager to purchase. Although J.P. Eddy only lived there three years, he made his mark felt. He built the first store, the first schoolhouse, and he was the first postmaster.

By May 1, 1843, there were ten families living in Eddyville. In 1847, twenty families were there along with a saw and grist mill, Martin Tucker's Hotel, Dr. Ross (a physician), and a blacksmith. The town incorporated in 1857. By 1868, Eddyville was on its way with the Thurbaugh and Phillips Plow Factory, an ox-powered wooden mill operated by James Brady, a pork packing house, and a brewery.

Blakesburg

The earliest settlers arrived in Blakesburg in 1843, building their cabins near an Indian village. Located on a high rolling prairie, Blakesburg was near a heavy body of timber and near extensive coal fields. In 1852 Theophilus Blake laid out the town. Four years later there were nearly 500 residents and numerous stores and businesses including a grist and saw mill, four dry goods stores, three blacksmith shops, one wagon shop, one gunsmith shop, one tailor, and a saddle and harness maker. At one time Blakesburg boasted as a "show town" with one of the finest opera houses in the state and a constant parade of traveling vaudeville troupes and medicine shows.

Chillicothe

Chillicothe was laid out in 1849 by A.J. Wicker. The first house was built for the Reverend A.J. Pierce, a Methodist minister. The first post office opened in 1849 with A.J.

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Wicker as the postmaster. At one time Chillicothe had three general stores, two wagon shops, three saloons, a creamery, four doctors, and two hotels.

Kirkville

Kirkville was laid out by John Kirkpatrick and grew to be quite a trading point. During its heyday around 1890, it had a population of over 700 people and prospered due to the coal mining operations that were located there. The principle business was the Kirkville Supply Company. After the coal mines were abandoned, the population and traffic in town decreased.

O t h e r t o w n s i n W a p e l l o C o u n t y
There were many other towns in Wapello County during the mid-1800s including Farson, Dahlonga, Keb, Wigglesville, and Ashland. Most of these flourished for a while and then died out.

The Making of Ottumwa

Seeing an opportunity to make some money on land, several investors formed the Appanoose Rapids Company and in May of 1843 staked claim to 467 acres of land that was to become Ottumwa. The Appanoose Rapids Company had determined the center of the new county of Wapello and proceeded to make their land holdings the county seat. It was naturally suited for a town site with good river access and plentiful game.

The land they staked claim to was near three Indian villages. The hill on which Ottumwa High School now sits was the site of Chief Wapello's village. Chief Keokuk's village was on the Des Moines River bank opposite the mouth of Sugar Creek. Chief Appanoose located his village a mile upstream.

The new town was briefly called "Louisville" before it became officially known as Ottumwa. There are several possible meanings of the Sac Indian word "Ottumwa." Two commonly accepted meanings are "place of perseverance or self will" and "land of rippling waters."

Ottumwa was first settled in the summer of 1843 and grew slowly at first. In 1844, one

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year after it was started, Ottumwa was chosen to be the county seat of Wapello County. At that time there were only ten buildings in town, most of which were occupied by government officials. The following year still found Ottumwa a primitive town with no streets or sidewalks.

In 1845 Ottumwa supported three stores, a tin shop, a blacksmith shop, a tailor shop, two hotels, a whiskey shop, and about 15 log houses. The only public building was a little temporary jail. There were no churches or schools in 1845.

1848 was the turning point in Ottumwa's history. The town began to grow rapidly. Trade flourished and many improvements were made to make life more pleasurable.

By 1853 there were eight dry goods stores, two drug stores, one clothing store, one stove store and tin shop, one harness shop, two hotels, two churches, a tannery, two steam saw and grist mills, a carding machine, one wagon shop, three cabinet shops, one chair shop, one gun shop, one wheelwright, three blacksmith shops, four shoe shops, three tailor shops, one bakery and confectionery shop, seven lawyers, and six physicians.

The first railroad came to Ottumwa on September 1, 1859. Ottumwa was soon to become a center for the railroads as well as a manufacturing and wholesale center. In 1860 Ottumwa has a population of 1,632 that grew to over 5,000 people by 1870.

Early Commerce

It was the good rich land that brought the settlers to Wapello County in the first place, but it was the commerce that kept them here and attracted still more people to settle here. From three small trading posts, licensed to deal with the Indians before Wapello County was open for settlement, the business activities of the county have grown tremendously. Today there are over 1,200 stores plus dozens of industries and other forms of business. But it was farming that dominated life in early days. Most of the settlers were farmers in search of productive land on which to stake their futures. The prairie soils were rich for growing crops of wheat, rye, buckwheat, alfalfa, and oats. The new settlers needed saw mills to build their homes and grist mills to grind their grains. The city of Agency became known as the city of mill with lumber, grist, and

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weaving mills aplenty.

Livestock also played an important role to the early pioneers. The prairie made excellent grazing land for cattle. Beef and pork processing plants sprung up in all parts of the county. The village of Dahlongega had two of the first pork packing houses in the county. One such packing house was located just north of Dahlongega in a log building. The meat was packed and transported by wagon to trading points on the Mississippi River.

Other food manufacturers also found success in Wapello County. Anton Lowenberg opened his first "bake shop" in Ottumwa in 1875. The Walter T. Hall Candy Factory began making confections on Third Street in Ottumwa in January 1880. B. Walter started a brewery in Eddyville in 1868.

Large deposits of coal were discovered in the northeast part of Wapello County. The first coal mine in the county opened in Richland Township in 1857 by Joshua Marsh. In the mid to late 1880s, the Carver Mine was the largest coal mine in the state employing 500 people. There were mines near Kirkville, Chillicothe, Happy Hollow, Bear Creek, and Rutledge.

In 1848 there were no railroads and no well traveled highways to follow in the county. Travel was either by foot, horseback, or river. The railroads played a major part in opening Wapello County to other parts of the country and shipping local products out to world markets. Many of the county's first railroads were built around the time of the Civil War. By 1888 there were 105,012 miles of track in Wapello County. At one time, there were 57 passenger trains on seven lines crossing Wapello County every day. In its heyday, the Burlington Railroad alone handled 40,360 freight cars each month through its Ottumwa terminal.

Because of almost pure clay deposits found in parts of the county, several communities developed a reputation for fine pottery. Blakesburg, Dahlongega, and Ottumwa all had pottery manufacturers early in their histories. After the pottery was made, it was packed in wagons filled with straw and hauled to waiting customers.

Wapello County has had some very unique and successful manufacturing concerns in

History of Wapello County

its history. The Johnston Ruffler Company of Ottumwa began manufacturing sewing machine rufflers in 1872. The Janney Manufacturing Company, established in 1899, made corn huskers and other agricultural implements. The Dain Factory began manufacturing haying equipment, fee grinders, and agricultural implements in January of 1900. Joe Dain sold his business to John Deere of Moline, Illinois in 1911.

Mining tools of superior quality were made by the Hardsocg Manufacturing Company beginning in 1891. Their most famous product was the Little Wonder Drill. This drill was used all over the world. It worked the copper mines in Peru, the diamond mines in South Africa, and even helped build the New York City subway system.

The Ottumwa Box Car Loader Company made a machine for loading railroad box cars with coal. The machine was invented and manufactured in Ottumwa by Phillips and Henry.

In the 1880s Ottumwa had over 40 cigar manufacturers employing 500 people. Some of the leading cigar manufacturers located in Ottumwa in those days were George Potter, John Pallister, Graver Cigar Factory, McKee and Marks, and La Flor De Mayo brand cigars. Julius Fecht was another famous Ottumwa cigar manufacturer. He owned a tobacco plantation in Cuba where he would load the tobacco onto ships headed for Florida. From Florida the valuable cargo would be hauled to Ottumwa by wagon train escorted by armed guards.

Other products made around the turn of the century in Wapello County include building brick and tile, wooden tool handles, granite grave stones, cigar boxes, mattresses, and perfume. A company in Agency was famous for its oak-split feed baskets. The American Mining Company manufactured coal mining equipment in Ottumwa.

Have you heard of a Collingwood? It's not an automobile or a painting, but it is just as artistic. Joseph Collingwood made over 450 concert violins while he lived in Ottumwa just after the turn of the century. His violins were in great demand by orchestra musicians on the east coast.

Ottumwa had large wholesale hardware companies dating back to 1856 and a wholesale drug house founded in 1851. Wholesale grocers and wholesale fruit companies

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also contributed to Ottumwa's reputation as a wholesale center for Iowa.

The commerce in Wapello County was diverse and prosperous in its early years. The area attracted inventors and investors willing to take a chance on a new idea and a new settlement.

Frequently Asked Questions

FAQs

Questions and Answers About Historic Property Designation

Q: What is the National Register of Historic Places?

A: The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. The National Register is part of a national program administered by the National Park Service to identify and protect our historic and archeological resources. Properties listed in the National Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. These resources contribute to an understanding of the historical and cultural foundations of the nation.

Q: What are the restrictions of listing?

A: Owners of private property listed in the National Register are free to maintain, manage, or dispose of their property as they choose provided no Federal monies are involved. There are no restrictions on what a listed property owner can do to their property. They can paint it, build an addition to it, or tear it down without asking anyone's permission.

Q: What are the benefits of listing?

A: Besides the pride of owning a nationally recognized historic property, owners may qualify for Federal grants for historic preservation when available. Properties listed in the National Register may be eligible for a 20% investment tax credit for the certified rehabilitation of income-producing certified historic structures such as commercial, industrial, or rental residential units.

Q: How do properties get listed in the National Register of Historic Places?

A: National Register properties are distinguished by having been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards.

Properties must be nominated to the National Register by the State Historic Preservation Office. State nomination forms are typically prepared by private individuals or local historic preservation commissions. A State review board makes a recommendation and, if approved, the nomination is forwarded to the National Park Service to be considered for listing. Generally, properties eligible for listing in the National Register must be at least 50 years old and represent the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. Structures that have significant exterior alterations are ordinarily not eligible for listing.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is a historic district?

A: A historic district has been surveyed and the properties documented according to their historical, cultural, and architectural significance. It consists of contiguous properties that contribute to the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.