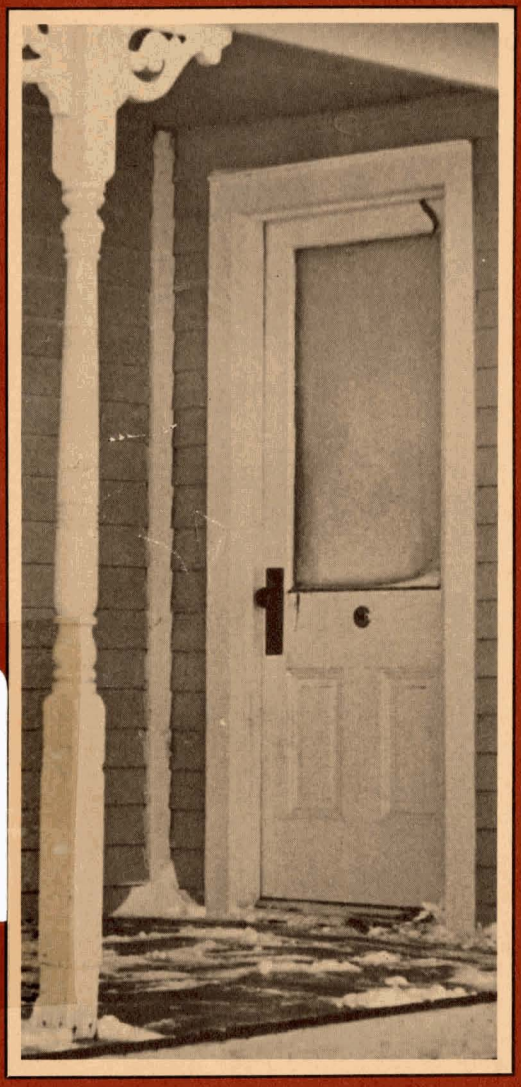

Hometown Architecture

Changes in Central Iowa Towns and Farms

central iowa regional association of local governments
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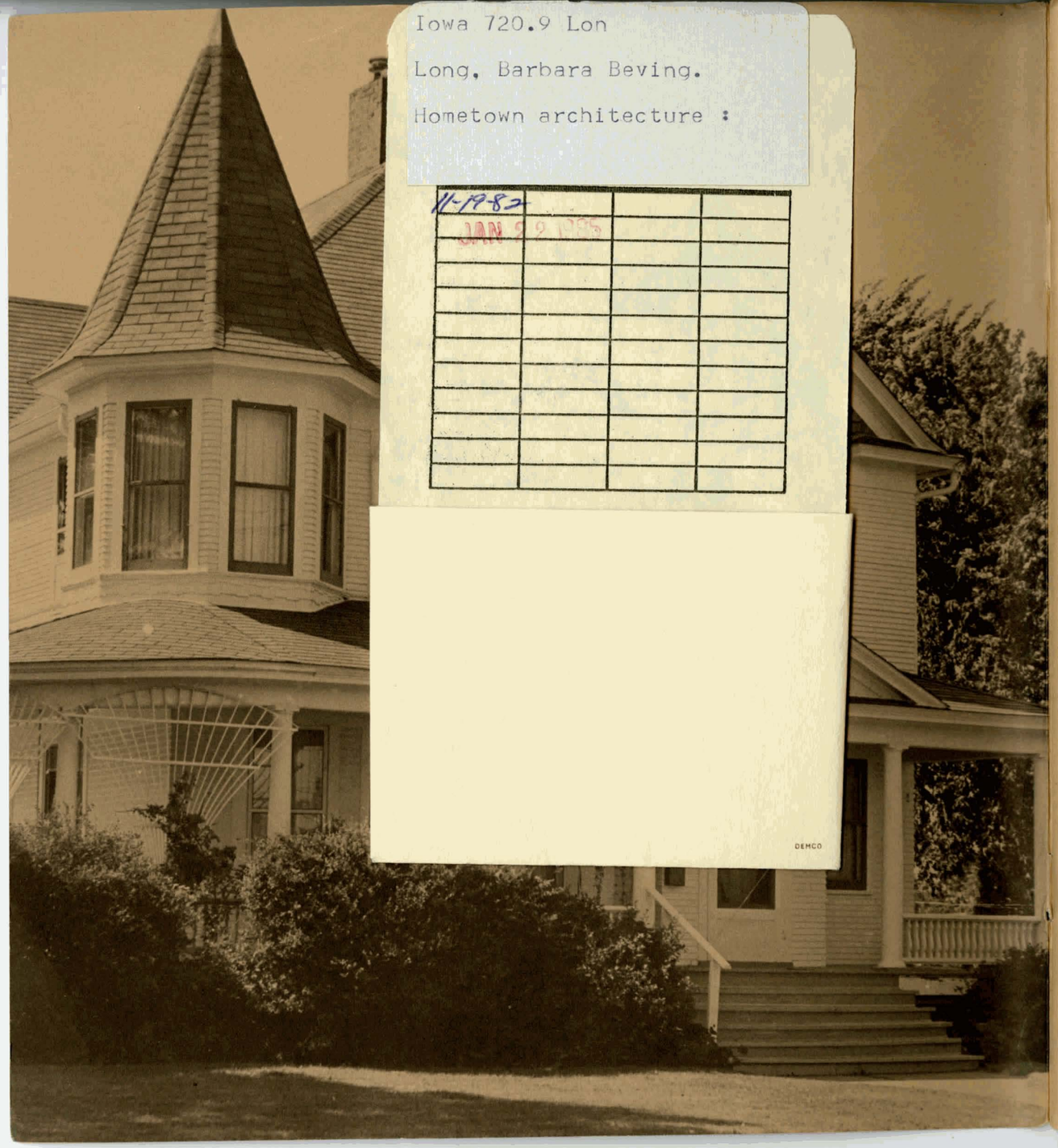
Division of Historic Preservation
Iowa State Historical Department



Hometown Architecture

Changes in Central Iowa Towns and Farms

Written by Barbara Beving Long, Historian, CIRALG
Designed by Sue Wells, Graphic Designer, CIRALG

Barbara Long

The Central Iowa Regional Association of Local Governments serves Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Madison, Marion, Polk, Story and Warren Counties.

Based on architectural and historical surveys of eight counties in Central Iowa, the surveys were a joint venture of CIRALG and the Division of Historic Preservation, Iowa State Historical Department.

This project has been funded with the assistance of a matching grant-in-aid from the Department of the Interior, Heritage Conservation & Recreation Service, under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Department of the Interior, Heritage Conservation & Recreation Service.

Foreword

One of the goals of Historic Preservation in Iowa is to promote greater involvement of individuals and local government in historic resource management. This study, reporting the distribution of important architectural and historic sites in the CIRALG area, should have that effect. It will be a planning tool for governmental administrators, certainly. More than that, calling attention to sites either on or eligible for listing on the *National Register of Historic Places* should stimulate the interest of citizens of the region in their historic patrimony. As these people become more aware of their cultural heritage they will become more involved in the decision-making process affecting historic site management and preservation. I am pleased that our office was able to work with CIRALG to produce this document, because I believe it will benefit the citizens of the region, helping them protect their cultural resources.

Adrian D. Anderson
State Historic Preservation Officer

It is a pleasure to present this study of central Iowa's heritage. The book is a product of a two year project, the extensive surveys CIRALG and the Division of Historic Preservation undertook to identify culturally significant structures in our area. These cultural inventories simplify the procedures for environmental impact statements by allowing us to know the location of buildings and sites before a federally funded project jeopardizes their existence.

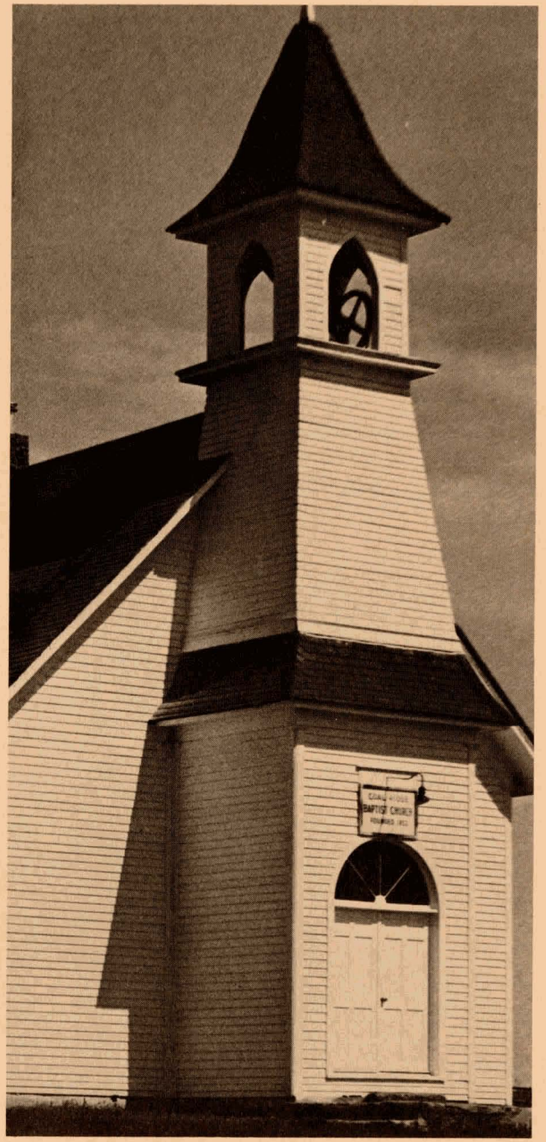
The inventories also show local residents and state officials the quality and diversity of our architecture. Many of the buildings included on the surveys have been determined to be eligible for listing on the *National Register of Historic Places*, the official list of the country's cultural resources worthy of preservation.

The examples of our diverse architectural heritage presented here allow only a glimpse of the valuable resources of central Iowa. Nonetheless, they provide a convincing case for the preservation and appreciation of our built environment. For more information on historic preservation, please feel free to call on me.

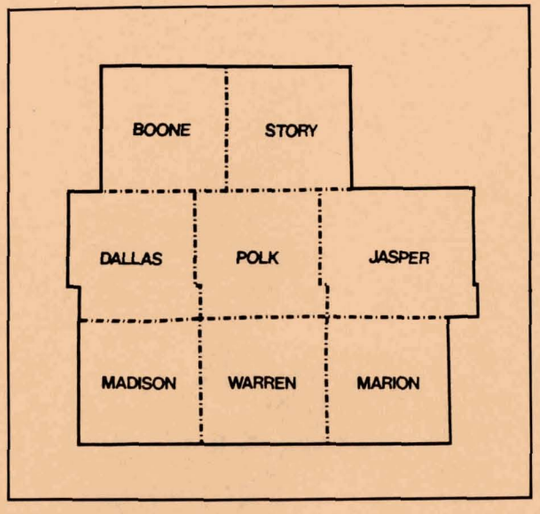
Gary Evans
Executive Director
Central Iowa Regional
Association of Local Governments

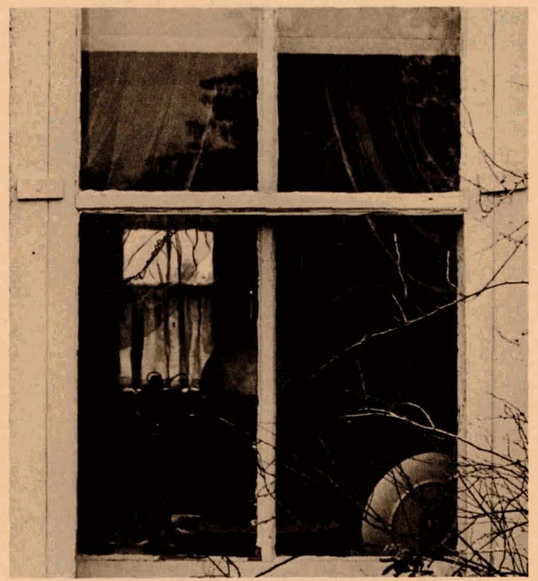
Central Iowa has a wealth of fine buildings in the towns and countryside. Many are imposing and elaborate. Others are modest and straightforward, but they all tell us something about our past. Hometown architecture discloses the aspirations, tastes, building abilities and needs of earlier Iowans. By their presence, these structural records of another time stand ready to reveal their story to future generations. By pausing to view the buildings, town plans and farms of central Iowa, we can better appreciate their value.

Barbara Beving Long



Coal Ridge Baptist Church. Marion County.





The Land

The land. It always comes back to the land. Part and parcel of the history of central Iowa is agriculture, the exploitation of a natural resource. The rise of towns, the railroads, even most business and industry in Iowa, relates to the ability of the soil to support crop and livestock production. As agriculture progressed from farming for subsistence to farming for international markets, Iowa residents needed towns to serve as farm market centers and railroads to provide a unified network for transport of goods.

In taming the land to make it productive, the settlers in central Iowa left their mark on the landscape in various ways. They created a patchwork of farms in 160-acre pieces, grids of new towns and lengths of railroad tracks across the rolling country side. In addition, the new Iowans built hospitable homes, commanding courthouses and becoming business houses. The patterns of development, the buildings and their architectural styles reflect central Iowa's history. The buildings and town plans are truly windows to the past, revealing the interests and aspirations of these energetic colonists on the prairie. By looking at the architectural styles in our own communities, we can see the requirements and preferences of our predecessors, the new Iowans, and how central Iowa towns and farms changed over time.

The eight counties (Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Madison, Marion, Polk, Story and Warren) roughly covering central Iowa contained a variety of natural resources and land types. Well drained tall grass prairie dominated the counties' terrain. The woodlands, of mixed hardwoods, clung to the stream valleys and along their sloping sides. A third land form, the wet prairie, occurred extensively in three of the eight counties. From one-fourth to one-half of the land in Boone, Dallas, Polk and Story Counties originally was marshy or poorly drained. Recalling the 1870s period,

John S. Holmes Stone Barn. St. Charles Area. Holmes left Indiana in 1855 to farm 140 acres and probably built the barn in 1875.

a resident in Story County described the terrain: ". . . a large part was low and swampy, and the assertion was often made that such land was valueless and would only be fit to raise ducks on or in . . ."

While settlers in the fertile but wet northern counties of central Iowa grappled with meandering roadways around ponds and sloughs, residents in the remainder of the eight-county area found predominantly well-drained prairie and streamside woodlands. Many settlers selected a mixed woodland and prairie farmsite. The trees provided a convenient source for building material, fencing and firewood, a protected and well-drained site and good soil. However, settlers did not unilaterally believe prairie soil to be less fertile, as is sometimes stated. One Story County pioneer commented on his arrival in 1854, "The prairie lay broad and fair, and the work of development was all to be done." Farmers from Illinois and other midcontinent states were familiar with prairie soils, although many European immigrants were not.

A further geographic variation for central Iowa occurred in Madison County, the southwesternmost county, where there are significant deposits of limestone. The outcrops were a haven for rattle snakes, leading to a successful hunt in 1848 when between three and four thousand rattlers were bagged. Early residents used the stone to construct homes, barns, stores and even the county courthouse. An example of this use of Madison County's limestone is John S. Holmes' stone barn that he built on his 140 acre stock farm.

From the limestone outcrops of Madison County to the fertile sloughs of northern counties to the hilly Des Moines River ledges of Boone County, the central Iowa landscape was an undulating sea of tall grass, punctuated by narrow strips of hardwoods along water courses. The land stood ready to host one of the most rapid and successful transformations the country has witnessed. It was a transformation from a wilderness to a populated and economically thriving territory. In but a decade, between 1849 and 1859, Iowa farmers rose from nineteenth to seventh place in corn production and from fifteenth to eighth place in wheat production. This level of production was a far cry from the pioneer practice of dropping corn kernels in slits in the tough prairie sod.

Log Cabin. Polk City area. The road originally passed directly by the cabin.

The First Settlements

From sparse colonies to local farm market centers.

As ever increasing numbers of Americans pushed westward into Iowa's interior by the early 1840s, they began to encroach upon land the Sac and Fox Indians occupied. As so often happened, a treaty forced the Indians to surrender much of central Iowa to make way for white settlement. Concluded in 1842, the treaty's terms dictated that white settlement could proceed to a point east of the socalled Red Rock Line during the spring of 1843. The Red Rock Line, which cut a north-south line through the state and bisected Jasper and Marion Counties in central Iowa, marked the division between the first wave of settlement to this area in 1843 and the second and far larger beginning in 1845. From 1843, the date of legal entry for settlement, through the Civil War period, central Iowans established certain patterns and silhouettes on the landscape.

A means of coping with American land transactions, the Land Ordinance of 1785, established a national system for land subdivision. Heedless of topography, the north-south east-west coordinate system imposed townships six miles square and containing thirty-six sections, each a mile square across the land. The sections could be further divided into quarter sections, and one quarter section (160 acres) was the basic farm unit. Thus a large landowner was often referred to as having seven farms, not 1,120 acres. The township and section lines separated farm holdings and provided a convenient road system to augment the much older Indian trails and early settlement routes. The gridiron system was predictable and rational, as anyone knows who has lost his way on rural roads. It facilitated the identification and sale of land, and especially in the flatter portions, divided the endless prairie grasses into manageable units. Thus the political act of establishing the gridiron system in 1785 imposed a patchwork pattern of fields, farms and towns on the central Iowa landscape.

Many of the intrepid settlers bought their 160-acre parcels from speculators fresh from land sales in eastern Iowa. These speculative landowners comprised nearly three-fourths of the initial land buyers in the area. The speculators, who were often settlers themselves, in turn sold or rented smaller tracts to new arrivals. Since much of the settlement preceeded the establishment of territorial land offices, county government or traditional law enforcement, settlers organized claim clubs to reduce strife over land claims. Through this organized effort they solved land title disputes in the brief period before the arrival of government land offices to handle land claim registration.

Pioneer Structures of Log, Stone, Wood and Brick

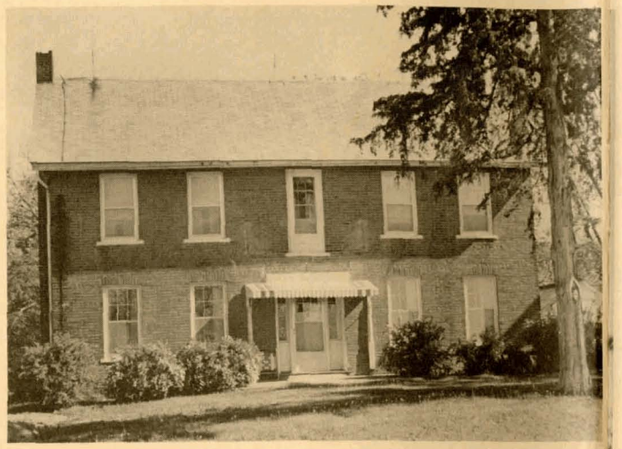
The new Iowans acquired land and carved farmsteads out of the wildnerness. They came to prefer wooded sites combined with prairies, for the wood had many uses and the prairie grass need not be completely cleared to use for grazing and limited crop growing. The timber provided a ready and inexpensive source of building material. All that was required was a sharp ax and a strong back to fashion a temporary log dwelling. Early log cabins such as the one near Polk City typically featured either round or squared logs that were notched at the corners and laid one atop the other. A chinking material—such as clay and small stones—filled the spaces between the logs. The most durable construction method, because water flowed off the logs, involved hewn square logs and dove-tail joints at the corners. Despite these precautions, the pioneer cabins could not have provided much comfort against the extremes of weather that swept the prairie. Heat, drought, hail, and tornadoes in summer and blizzards, freezing temperatures and snow in winter plagued the new Iowans.

Daily life was as simple and unadorned as the log cabins. Food was generally abundant, but only the occasional catch from the wild enlivened a monotonous diet based on corn and pork. Far from being an Eden in the wilderness, pioneer life required unceasing toil to produce crops for human and animal consumption. In 1855, using horse drawn implements, a man needed 33 hours to grow one acre of corn, compared to just four hours in 1940 with modern machinery.

Not only did the pioneers withstand long hours of labor, they also fell prey to isolation and loneliness. To qualify for the $1.25/acre purchase price, farmers who had staked out claims in advance of legal settlement had to maintain residency on their land. The land sale regulations produced the pattern so familiar to us of isolated farmsteads dotting the countryside.

At first these homesteads stood unfenced. Livestock roamed freely and had no special manmade shelter. Later, concern over livestock losses and crop damage and the resultant herd laws led to the use of fencing, another change in the landscape.

Besides farmsteads, the new Iowans made an imprint on the fertile landscape in other ways. Enterprising



Greenwood Farm. Berwick area. William Justice built the house in 1867, owned 1,000 acres of land and was postmaster, assessor, notary and justice of peace.

Seth Dayton Stagecoach Stop. Perry area. Dayton built his house that doubled as a stagecoach stop and tavern sometime after 1854 to serve passengers traveling between Des Moines and Fort Dodge.

individuals established inns and way stations for travelers along the often barely passable roads. Hard and dusty in the summer, the same dirt trails plus rain became a mucky morass that mired down wagons, stagecoaches and horses. The stagecoach stops sometimes formed the basis for a full-fledged town. Medora in Warren County eventually became a hamlet centered around the brick stagecoach stop on the road between Osceola and Indianola. Another all but forgotten place, Greenwood in Polk County, survived as a stop for travelers and as a rural post office from 1868 to 1883. At that time the railroad company bypassed the Justice family's stagecoach stop and created the rail stop, Berwick. William Justice made the bricks on his land for his large house and adjacent smokehouse or summer kitchen. The regular window

arrangement, simple lines and sidelights flanking the doorway show that the building is one of the very early ones in central Iowa.

Seth H. Dayton's stagecoach stop and tavern in Dallas County remained an isolated outpost on the Des Moines to Fort Dodge route. The tavern/stage stop illustrates early building techniques of rural Iowa. No architect helped plan the place. Instead, Dayton, the builder, brought brick-making knowledge and stylistic preferences with him from New York. Using materials locally available, he chose a design that seemed both practical and familiar to him. It is no surprise, either, that the roomy two-story edifice exhibits the simple lines of New York buildings of an earlier period, with an emphasis on simple practicality. Despite later alterations (porches enclosed or removed), the building's general appearance and site near Beaver Creek remain much as they were 112 years ago when thirsty travelers arrived to frequent the basement barroom at Seth Dayton's stagecoach stop.

While some new Iowans established stagecoach stops along well-traveled transportation routes, others harnessed water power by building saw and grist mills. Mills provided a fundamental improvement for the pioneers. The presence of a sawmill meant that milled boards and other pieces of lumber were locally available. The prospective builder need not rely on hewn logs, possess brick-making knowledge or travel great distances to purchase construction materials. A grist mill provided the pioneers with facilities vastly improved over their rudimentary home methods for grinding flour and corn meal. After the initial demand

Lynnville Mill and Dam. Lynnville. John Sparks built this, the first flour mill in the county, around 1848. It was converted to allow modern feed grinding in 1925 and produced electricity for local use for many years. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

for lumber fell, early saw mill owners often converted their operations to grist mills with the addition of heavy stone grinding burrs.

Since the presence of a suitable site dictated mill and dam locations, millsites often occurred at spots distant from the few other outposts of civilization. The miller in search of a site had to consider such stream characteristics as its width, depth, bank height and degree of fall. Behind the mill site, he would build a dam to supply water power to run the mill.

The mills along the major rivers in central Iowa were among the first sites pioneers established. Now, few original mills remain—casualities of swollen streams, disuse or time. John Parmalee became Warren County's first settler when he received army permission to construct a sawmill on Middle River in 1843. Parmalee's mill supplied lumber to fledgling Fort Des Moines. Three years later Benjamin Williams built a mill at Elk Rapids on the Des Moines River in Boone County. Other early mills and settlements occurred along the major watercourses in central Iowa: the Des Moines, Skunk, Raccoon, North, Middle and South Rivers. Hastily constructed mills, often at sites prey to flood waters, ranked among the earliest and most important early settlement structures to be found throughout central Iowa.

The continuing operation of the mill at Lynnville in Jasper County is the rare exception to the fate of most water powered mills. Contributing to the Lynnville Mill's continuing use and existence was the establishment of a small community in 1856 around the mill. Like most mills of the period, John Sparks' Lynnville Mill of 1846 is a large rectangle with a gabled roof. Its shape and the use of clapboard siding, probably among the sawmill's first products, lent a strongly domestic appearance to the streamside structure. No longer water-powered, the Lynnville Mill stands two and one-half stories high but many early mills were four, even seven, stories. The presence of a sawmill such as the one at Lynnville meant that settlers could build larger, more permanent structures of local materials and at a relatively low cost.

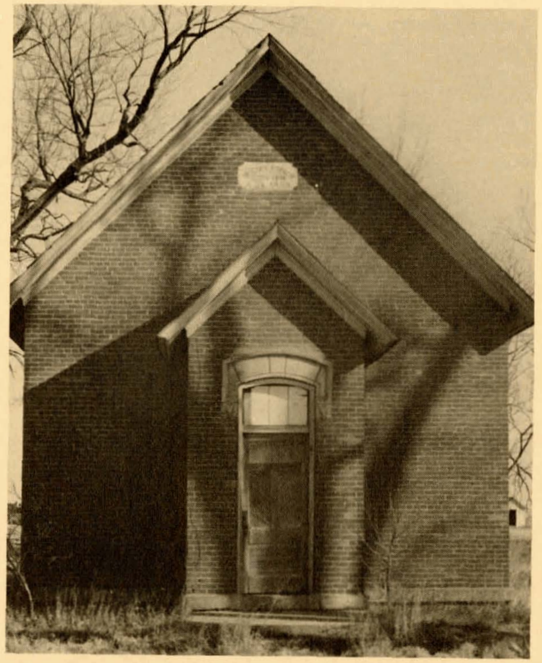
Foundations for Fellowship

The new Iowans immigrated to establish farms, inns, mills—economic ventures—but they also desired companionship and social interaction and needed buildings for these purposes. Religious preferences and educational ideals accompanied their plows and stewpots, their saws and spinning wheels. As a respite from the terrible isolation of farm life, early settlers organized church socials and spelling bees, Fourth of July celebrations and charivaris. They worked together on house-raising, husking bees and quilting bees, for work exceeded the number of hands available on the sparsely populated land.

Holding church services ranked among the first organizational efforts of the early settlers. By far the most prevalent church members were the Methodists, in part because of the circuit rider technique this denomination employed. Before even the smallest towns were common, Methodist preachers known as circuit riders traveled to the people and held services, using whatever building was available. The Methodists gained an early advantage that other denominations could not match. Despite the comfortable lead the Methodists enjoyed (15 per cent of the populace in the eight counties in 1895), a significant number of central Iowans (40 per cent in 1895) professed no church affiliation. Among the other large Christian faiths, the Baptists, Lutherans and Catholics were especially well represented. Other groups exercised local influence because they settled in large numbers in an area. The most well-known group was the Dutch Reformed Church whose members settled in Marion County in 1847 and founded Pella. Small groups of Brethren Church members were to be found in Dallas County.

A surprising number of the early central Iowa arrivals were Friends or Quakers. Society of Friends settlements, many of whose residents had arrived together in groups from other parts of America, grew up around meeting houses beginning in the 1850s. By 1857 Dallas and Madison County Quakers had built a meeting house near Bear Creek. Friends near Ackworth in Warren County organized by 1847 and later established an academy, while Jasper County Friends led by Elisha Hammer built a meeting house in 1866. Quakers in Dallas, Jasper, Madison and Warren Counties came to establish close-knit communities.

Before they had the time or money to build churches,



Friends Meeting House. Cumming area. The building has elaborate hood molds over the windows and door. Many meeting houses were simpler clapboard buildings.

settlers held religious meetings in homes, schools, and occasionally stores. Only later would they construct their church buildings. The need for a cemetery plot often established a rural church site when a bereaved family set aside part of its holdings for a burial place. In northwest Jasper County the Tramel family donated a church site that adjoined their family cemetery dating from 1856. When the settlers could not select one denomination they formed a nondenominational group and in 1878 built Union Chapel. Union Chapel, with its gable end entry, regular series of side windows having pedimented lintels, clapboard siding, and belltower of modest size, illustrates the simplicity of country churches and their adjoining cemeteries, which were familiar sites by the 1860s and 1870s. Again no architect designed the vernacular building; its shape (rectangular with a gabled roof, belltower entry and few details) reflected countless anonymous design decisions. Since these design decisions were based on local building abilities and materials, building styles sometimes changed slowly. The Sheldahl Lutheran Church was built in 1883, but its construction date could have as easily been twenty or thirty years earlier.

With the increasing numbers of settlers coming to central Iowa (68,468 in the eight counties by 1860), buildings with special uses began to occupy the prairie with increasing frequency. On the main roads, ten to fifteen mile intervals separated way stations and inns for changing stagecoach horses. Country churches also were sprinkled about the townships. Mills and dams crossed strategic stream sites. Another specialized building, the country school, also became commonplace during the initial period of colonization in central Iowa. Often placed at section corners, the country schoolhouses saw educational use only for the brief winter period between harvest and spring planting. Farm children were needed to work at home and in the fields.

The country school fulfilled the democratic ideal of providing a free education for all, but it did not guarantee the quality of learning. Poorly paid and often with only an eighth grade education, the country schoolteacher supervised the ungraded classes in one room and emphasized memorization over comprehension. The teacher performed all duties related to the school from cleaning the buildings to banking the fire. It is no wonder that in the early days the turnover rate among country schoolteachers was high, given the miserly salary and disagreeable working conditions.

Like other manmade structures on the prairie, the country schoolhouse occasionally formed the nucleus for a community. The hamlet Baxter in Jasper County sprang up around the Independence Center School. (Later, residents moved their farm market hamlet a mile east to the railroad, but the school remained behind.)

Union Chapel. Ira area. It was not until 1877 that there were sufficient numbers of families in Clear Creek Township to establish and build this nondenominational church.

Opposite. Sheldahl Lutheran Church. Sheldahl. Osmund Sheldahl, town founder, was both the spiritual and temperal leader of the Norwegian immigrants. A farmer and minister, Sheldahl conducted services in settlers' homes before building this church in 1883.

Opposite, far right. Independence Center School. Baxter area. The 1870 school was originally painted white outside and oakgrained inside.

Built in 1870, the clapboard-covered frame structure has details (pilasters at the corners, a plain frieze, details on the identifying plaque) and rectangular shape (broad gable, entrance at end) typical of buildings dating from that time. A plaque, decorated with molding and dentils and placed at the gable peak proudly announces the former school to have been in "Independence Center, District No. 5, 1870."

Country schools varied in size and quality of construction, but most were gabled, clapboard and painted white, not red. Less commonly a one-room schoolhouse was of brick or stone such as the North River Stone Schoolhouse. Stonemason David Harris used native limestone and placed stone quoins at the corners for simple classical decorations.

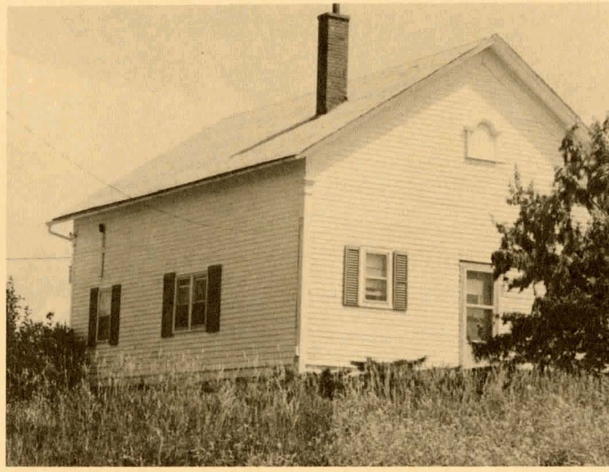
The New Iowans

Most of the newcomers to central Iowa were American-born; in fact, by 1895 they comprised 88 per cent of the residents. As of 1850, the majority, 60 per cent, of these American-born arrivals hailed from southern states rather than from the Yankee states of the east coast. A variety of European nationalities also enlivened the cultural patchwork of the eight counties from the onset. Four major European immigrant groups contributed to the area's heritage.

The Anna Dalander party launched a sizeable Swedish settlement with their 1846 arrival at the Elk Rapids mill site in Boone County. Swede Point, or Madrid as it finally became known, began based on an error: the founding group failed to locate New Sweden in Jefferson County. Therefore, they elected to establish a new site in the wilderness. Just as the Dalander group had wished to reach an existing settlement of their compatriots at New Sweden, other Swedes migrated to the Dalander Colony. Some established farms and populated other towns in Boone County, notably Boxholm, Pilot Mound and Ogden.

The combined Scandinavian-born presence in central Iowa was the largest non-American percentage (3.63 percent were Swedish- or Norwegian-born in 1895), but their number still lagged far behind the number of American-born residents. Since concentrated Scandinavian settlements developed, however, the Swedes in Boone County and the Norwegians in Story County exhibited a united influence far in excess of their regionwide numbers. Led by Osmund Sheldahl in 1854, Norwegians colonized both the north and southwest parts of Story County. The original arrivals from a Norwegian settlement in Illinois founded or settled near Story City, Roland, Cambridge, Palestine, Huxley, Slater and Sheldahl.

After Americans and Scandinavians, Germans



comprised the third largest nationality in the eight counties. The Germans influenced Midwest agriculture more than other immigrants both through their large numbers and high quality of their farming techniques.

Beginning in 1847, the Dutch settlement of Pella in Marion County spawned the largest and most visible ethnic community in the central Iowa region. Henry Scholte, a minister and businessman, acted as a community real estate agent for the immigrants, purchasing over 15,000 acres in their behalf. The Dutchman then sold this land to 800 settlers and set out to build a town, Pella. Though but seven per cent of Marion County was Dutchborn in 1895, 30 per cent of Pella's population was from Holland, an indication of that nation's dominance there.

Clapboard for Construction

The immigrants to central Iowa rapidly adapted to their new homeland in various ways. Local building materials were all that were available of course, and settlers used logs, milled lumber, and, less often, brick or stone for their buildings. Even those who retained the religion and social customs of the mother country rapidly shrugged off familiar building techniques and styles in favor of local materials and methods suited to Iowa's climate. For example, the Dutch in Pella discovered that shallow hearths designed for peat fuel provided insufficient warmth against the harsh Iowa cold and could not accommodate logs adequately.

Though much altered, Henry P. Scholte's house in Pella exhibits characteristics of some of the older structures in central Iowa. Built in 1848, the clapboard-sided house has the cornice return and plain frieze popular at that time.

Examples of adaptation to local building materials continue. Although the Irish in Madison and Warren Counties would undoubtedly have built their Catholic Church of stone in their native country, here in central Iowa the structure was wood. But the shape of their church, especially the heavy flared base of the belltower entry, recalls the substantial feeling of stone and is quite unlike other central Iowa rural churches.

American-born and foreign-born alike, the new Iowans built structures of local materials, generally milled lumber. One type of early farm house (after the log cabins) was one-story and rectangular, at times with the doors located on the long side of the gabled house.

Henry P. Scholte House. Pella. Scholte, founder of Pella, directed the immigration of hundreds of Hollanders in 1847. Several additions have enlarged and altered the 1848 house.

North River Stone Schoolhouse. Winterset area. In 1874, David Harris was the stonemason for the school, one of six in the township. Listed on the National Register.

Despite his Dutch heritage, Levi Conover built his Jasper County farmhouse of the mid 1850s with American style materials and Greek Revival detail popular in this country. With his farm just two and one-half miles from the Lynnville mill, Conover probably acquired his milled lumber there. The house, with two brick chimneys and two doors on one side, featured tiny cornice returns at the ends of the gables like Scholte's house in Pella. The classical cornice returns amounted to the sole ornament that marked the building as a very early one.

Another immigrant's house, that of Peter and Ulrika Dalander Cassel in Madrid, also displays classical details found on some of the oldest buildings in central Iowa: dentils along the frieze, corner pilasters with recessed panels, cornice returns and an entry with a pediment over it. Yet its builders were Swedish.

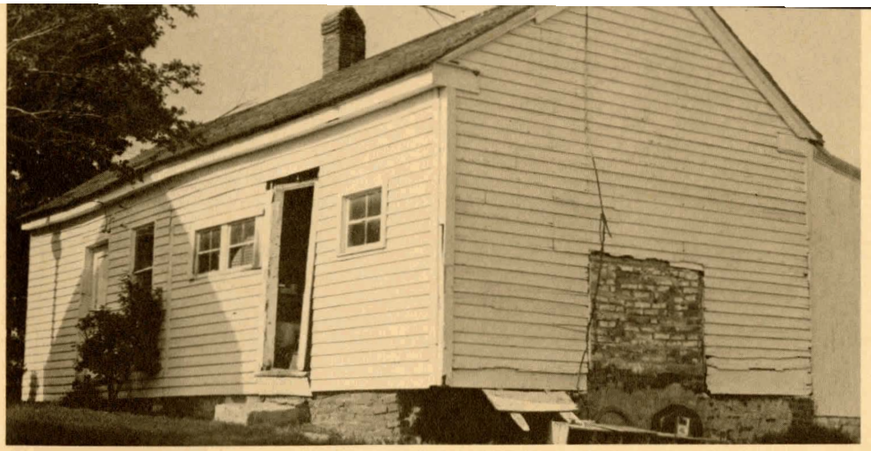
The Conover and Cassel houses represented one of the types of early settlement dwellings in central Iowa. Another farmhouse, the ell- or T-shaped farmhouse plan, was even more prevalent and probably dates from somewhat later. It was generally one and one-half or two story and the proportions and placement of the arms of the ell or T varied. Since the shape was functional and easy to build, it remained in favor for decades from mid-nineteenth century to the turn of the century. The farmhouse plan was adaptable. To it, the style-conscious homeowner could add whatever ornaments, window shapes or porches were in the latest fashion. The T-shaped farmhouse in Winterset shows the house shape in its simplest form.

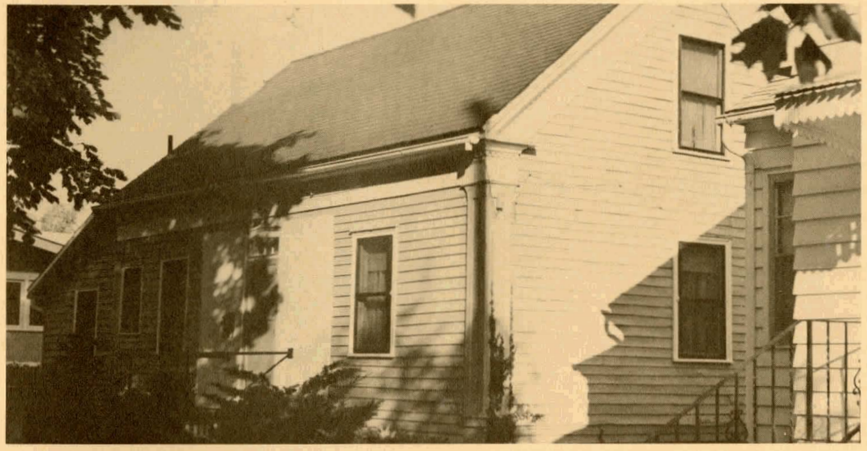
St. Patrick's Church. Bevington area. Irish immigrant farmers built the church in 1868. Listed on the National Register.

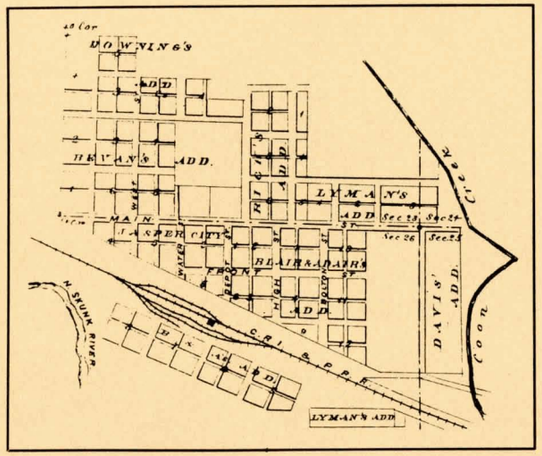
Above. Levi Conover House. Sully area. Conover used gold from California prospecting to buy 600 acres to farm. In 1875 he built a costly replacement home directly in front of this first one.

Middle. Carl and Ulrika Dalander Cassel House. Madrid. Cassel's father, Peter, led the first Swedish immigrants to Iowa in 1845 and founded New Sweden. Ulrika Cassel's mother, Anna Dalander, founded Madrid. Cassel ran saw and grist mills and farmed.

Below. Farmhouse Plan Dwelling. Winterset. Similar houses occur in virtually every central Iowa town and across the countryside.







1875 map of Kellogg shows plat bordered by Coon Creek and the railroad.

Opposite. Clarence B. Garden Store. Tracy. Garden opened his store in 1881 to sell hardware and implements, then switched to general merchandise.

Local Market Centers

The new Iowans built their farmhouse plan dwellings both on individual farmsteads and also near buildings with other uses. As settlement proceeded, they put clusters of houses around a church, along a mill stream or a stagecoach route. These origins may still be apparent today in the shape of the town and the presence of mid-nineteenth century buildings.

The platted towns invariably followed a gridiron pattern, a repetition of the township and range surveying pattern imposed upon the land. The grid was an efficient choice. Lots could be easily described in legal terms and transferred to new owners. Although most central Iowa town plats used a grid pattern, variations did occur occasionally. The presence of a fording point or mill stream might cause a jagged, irregular end to the town plat where it met the stream, as at Kellogg. Townplatters might orient the grid to follow the streamcourse or the road as they did in Polk City, Polk County, rather than follow the compass points, the traditional method. For other towns on a major road such as St. Charles, Madison County, the main street and state road were one and the same. The presence of a main road encouraged ribbon development along either side of the road. These and other farm market centers formed to allow the exchange of goods and services—commerce that agriculture supported.

The newly platted communities and their post offices naturally required names. Although the origin of some central Iowa town names is unclear, for others the sources emerge clearly. Sometimes settlers looked to their surroundings for a name and came up with descriptive town names such as Pleasantville and Prairie City. Other towns received their names after a person, especially the founder (Zearing, Mitchellville, Luther, Sandyville) or after a person of national fame (Monroe, Colfax, Huxley). When railroad construction prompted the platting of scores of new towns, many such as Perry, Beech, Bevington and Grimes were named for railroad officials or employees. A final basic method for town naming was based on nostalgia. Settlers named their new town in honor of their former home and came up with New Virginia, St. Charles (Missouri) and Peru (Indiana). Few central Iowa town names were of Indian derivation.

One of the first structures to arise in the farm market

center was the general store. At times the original was a crude log hut, but, like the schools and houses, this soon gave way to a more permanent wood frame structure. (Some communities skipped the log stage and originally built frame stores). The general store was the locus of many social and commercial activities; its presence transformed an isolated spot with perhaps a solitary church or mill into a village community serving more than one need. At the store the visiting farm family could post and receive mail, exchange pleasantries with friends, and buy an astonishingly wide variety of goods, ranging from potbellied stoves to millinery finery. In the days before the railroad, merchants brought wares by wagon from the nearest large town.

The stores and shop buildings of the farm market town typically featured a new addition to the familiar rectangular, gabled building shape: the false front. **Chief among its virtues was the ease with which it** could be constructed.

Merchants felt that the square false front applied to a long, rectangular building imparted a citified appearance to the clapboard stores of their instant cities. With the addition of the boomtown front, as they are sometimes called, a modest building of domestic shape assumed a mercantile shape. The style remained popular for decades. The square storefront, which made the building appear larger than it was, provided a readily recognizable building type: it meant that a town with commercial outlets was present.

Many commercial buildings and houses in small Iowa towns were built using a new technique that significantly altered construction practices. The light or balloon frame allowed buildings to be put up rapidly and cheaply by relatively inexperienced builders. Machine cut (milled) lumber, 2" x 4" studs, cheaper

wire-cut nails and a nailed together frame replaced the traditional hand-hewn timbers, wood pegs, square cut nails and the hefty mortise and tenon method for framing. The new balloon frame technique was so speedy that one experienced man could assemble a building frame in a single day. A book released in 1855 popularized the technique that had been devised twenty years earlier, and settlers readily adopted the method so suited to rapid growth and construction.

As communities prospered, storeowners often replaced the original wood structures with more substantial and, not incidentally, more fireproof stores of brick. Early wood stores were prey to fire, but a few examples of early commercial buildings still exist. C. B. Garden's store in Tracy, Marion County, dates from the beginnings of the town, the early 1880s. The large storefront windows allowed light to enter the store. Simple pilasters separate the windows and doors and appear to support a cornice that runs the length of the front. The recessed doorway was typical of the commercial building type.

Like Garden's store, many early commercial buildings were one-story, sometimes with living quarters to the rear. Others had two stories and housed several uses, perhaps a store on the lower level with living quarters, offices or a lodge hall above. The metal-covered store at Linden, Dallas County, exhibits other common features of the false front store. Again, a false front conceals a gabled building with a recessed entry and (formerly) large storefront windows. But the cast metal cornice, pilasters, second story lintels and the stamped metal siding are a further development in the boomtown style. The cast metal facade was an easily available substitute for the more costly stone and brick. The builder selected the combination of trim, cornices and so on from a catalog and received a shipment of pieces ready for application to the building front. The ornate cornice and especially the fancy turrets at the corners (sometimes irreverently known as toilet floats) were characteristic of the central Iowa marketplace as were the metal pilasters and cornice of the lower story. The window lintels, which have pediments, curved moldings and small headblocks adorn the upper story while also allowing light to enter the lodge hall. Fraternal groups numbered among the first social organizations in farm market centers and provided an essential meeting ground for residents.

The new Iowans left their imprint on the landscape as they prepared to exploit that valuable resource, the land. Individually, they staked out fields and farmsteads, built dwellings and barns. To serve new arrivals, enterprising men and women constructed mills and opened stagecoach stops, post offices and tiny crossroads stores. Collectively, they organized and built country churches and schools and platted gridirons of new towns. New Iowans organized and built structures for various reasons—for simple shelter, for social and religious communion, for commerce, and for government. In fact, the establishment of the county seats is another chapter in itself.

Store. Linden. Pressed metal covers the walls. Even the window and cornice trim is metal.

The County Seats

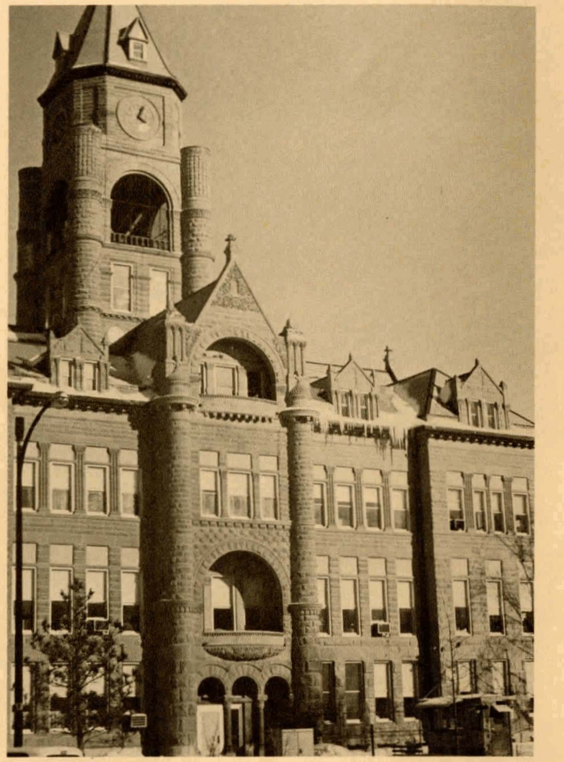
Towns sprang up where they did for various reasons, generally related to some commercial undertaking. But the central Iowa county seat developed where it did for another reason—solely because its site lay near the newly formed county's center. In every case but one in the eight counties of central Iowa, the legislature (territorial or state) appointed a three-man commission to visit the new county and select a suitable county seat site. These commissions chose a place at or very near the county's center. The county seats of Knoxville, Newton, Adel, Indianola, Winterset, Boone and Nevada became instant centers of government in the late 1840s by this method.

The exception to this method of county seat selection, an exception in more ways than one, is Des Moines, whose beginnings were distinctly military. The United States Army wished to establish strategic forts on the frontier to protect Indians from encroaching white settlement and to keep peace among the Indian tribes. Beginning in 1834 American troops explored the Des Moines River as far north as the Raccoon River fork (in present Polk County) and established Fort Des Moines there in 1842-43.

Fort Des Moines, the military garrison and western-most outpost in the region, received a boost in 1846. Through clever manipulation of the territorial legislature, its residents defeated bids from four other Polk County villages to become the county seat. Fort Des Moines politicians convinced the legislature to take the northernmost tier of townships from Warren County and assign them to Polk County. With these townships as part of Polk County, Des Moines appeared in a more central and therefore more desirable geographic position. Warren County leaders eventually regained their purloined townships in 1853. Four years later, Des Moines politicos again proved their expertise at convincing others of the benefit of their city's centrality by wresting the state capital designation from Iowa City.

With its standing as state and county governmental headquarters, Des Moines emerged as the most prominent city in the state. The city assumed the leading commercial and manufacturing role in central Iowa as well, sometimes arresting further development in nearby towns. Des Moines proved an irresistible attraction for growth and development in nearly every area affecting central Iowa, from agricultural implements to the arts. But it is Des Moines' very size and influence, overwhelming in contrast to other county seats, that sets the capital city apart. Des Moines' history, though sharing threads common to

Tower and turrets of Dallas County Courthouse. Adel. Listed on the National Register.



other central Iowa towns, stands separate from the discussion of the typical developing central Iowa town.

Whether Des Moines or other central Iowa seats of government, the county seat served as the center for its county both economically and spatially. The physical reflection of this centrality was the courthouse. The courthouse square in the center of the city blocks which, in turn, lay amid the square fields and pasture of the county formed a pattern of superimposed squares, a geometric manifestation of the interrelated nature of the land, the towns and the people.

On the courthouse square the courthouse typically provided a strong vertical presence, a landmark visible for miles. However, the original courthouse rarely exhibited the expensive materials and imposing grandeur of later more permanent replacements. Like the first homes, stores and schools, the original courthouse was often of logs, then perhaps a larger frame structure, and finally a building of stone or brick designed for permanence. Clearly central Iowa residents desired a courthouse of suitable size and quality to reflect local pride and prosperity.

When county residents decided to build a new courthouse, they selected from the latest styles. Winterset's Madison County Courthouse, the area's oldest, was rebuilt in 1876-77 on the classical Greek Cross plan foundations of the second courthouse that was but eight years old when it burned. Prior to building the fire-stricken courthouse of 1868, the county had first used a double-sized log cabin. Andrew H. Piquenard, designer of the State Capitol in Des Moines, planned Madison County's third and present courthouse to have classical details. The building's massiveness, central clock tower, multiple entrances and location on a square ringed by commercial structures were typical of county governmental architecture. Similarly, the Dallas County Courthouse in Adel, which derives its stylistic inspiration from the French Chateau style, retains the common attributes of county courthouses. The regular series of conicalroofed bays, dormers and irregular silhouette provide the principal French points of reference.

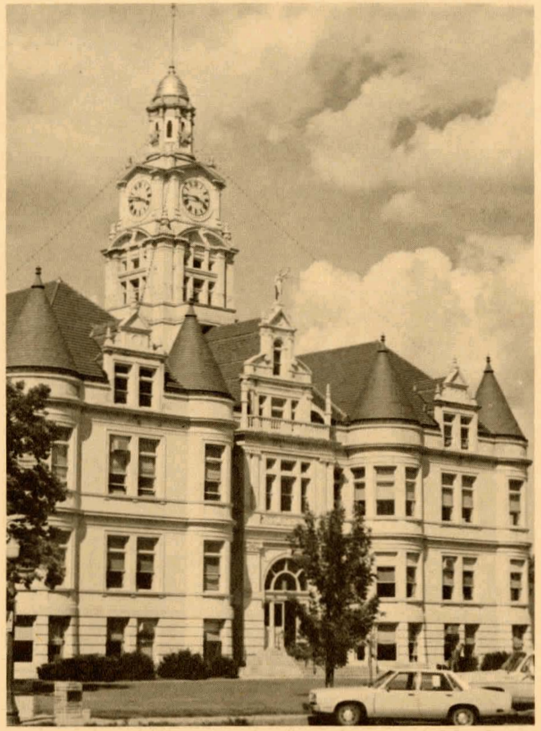
The other central Iowa counties have or have had imposing courthouses located on town squares. The Richardsonian Romanesque Courthouse at Knoxville, Marion County, is a superb example of that style, and the rockfaced stone, arcades of round arches and heavy feeling of the building are characteristic. The county seats of Boone County, Jasper County and Polk County also have exceptionally fine courthouses dating from before 1920, while those in Warren County (a WPA project) and Story County are more recent.

County Seat Prosperity

The courthouse and the courthouse square fostered the establishment of allied businesses around them and provided a natural, efficient town plan that was workable before automobile and truck traffic. In common with the state capital, the county seat exerted a magnetic influence that aided its growth even before the arrival of railroad connections. For five of the eight counties the county seat town has consistently hosted the largest population. Generally, the largest of most everything occurred in the county seat, as well as some specialized activities.

Lawyers and owners of abstracting and land sales businesses established offices to be near the county records and courts. For example, by 1860 in Winterset fourteen lawyers had hung out their shingles to practice law and handle land transactions for a Winterset population of less than two thousand. Banking was another area that thrived in the prosperous atmosphere of the county seat. The lawyers, land speculators and bankers formed an inter-related network that contributed greatly to a county's economic vitality and served the whole county.

Even the Civil War drain on Iowa manpower did not



Dallas County Courthouse. Adel. Built in 1902, the design source was a 16th century French chateau.

Opposite, far left. Madison County Courthouse. Winterset. All the limestone was locally quarried and prepared except the columns. Listed on the National Register.

Opposite. Marion County Courthouse. Knoxville. Knoxville has long competed with the county's other large town, Pella, but the county seat designation made Knoxville a banking and political center.

stop the growth of agriculture and the county seat economy. In fact, after the unsettled conditions following the 1850s depression and transportation problems were solved, Iowa farmers did quite well during the Civil War. They gained through a combination of several factors. There was a high demand for wheat, wool and pork, both abroad and for the troops; railroads had improved greatly and competition between the rail companies had lowered transportation costs. Although women and children had to work in the fields to replace those who went to war, farm production increased with improved machinery. Iowans were proud of being a free state and about 76,000 men and boys enlisted in the Union cause.

Following the crippling financial panic of 1873 and plummeting agricultural prices, the late nineteenth century and up to 1920 was a time of growth in central Iowa. High crop and livestock yields and the arrival of railroad connections linking central Iowa to hungry outstate markets allowed new businesses to be opened, pretentious homes to be built.

Elaborate Emporiums and Stately Homes

The prosperity the county seat economy wrought was readily apparent in the commercial blocks around the courthouse square. Businessmen erected larger, more permanent and elaborate stores, offices, and banks during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Like the earlier wood frame false front stores, these commercial structures were long and narrow with good-sized storefront windows to light the interior. They exhibited increasingly elaborate ornament, however, and used a variety of materials including brick, stone, cast iron and concrete.

The painted brick Adel Bank Building was the sort of building that could be found around the courthouse square and in the prosperous town. The second story windows are round-arched, then topped with an airy lintel. The metal lintel has a stylized keystone at the center and an embossed twining pattern. The twining pattern on the lintels or window hoods and also on the rectangular panels above them are painted a contrasting color, an extremely popular and now all-but-forgotten Victorian custom. Painted contrast and the richness of pattern and texture evident on the upper story of the former Adel Bank reflect the prevailing taste of the

Adel State Bank. Adel. Built in 1881, the bank survived a locally famous robbery in 1895. A future Iowa governor, George W. Clarke, narrowly missed death when the robber's gun misfired.

Opposite. First National Bank. Winterset. C.D. Bevington, realtor, businessman and railroad builder, organized the bank in 1865 and served as its president.

period. The projecting metal cornice, with its finial-topped corner turrets, lacy iron cresting (partly missing) and center starburst motif carry on designs from below.

The builder of the Adel Bank could well have selected the pre-cast metal cornice and windows from a catalog. With access to catalogs a builder could easily construct the most fashionable building in even the most remote town. Furthermore, a builder could readily build or design a larger business block just by increasing the number of architectural elements he selected from the catalog or pattern book. The First National Bank Building in Winterset accommodated several businesses. Its appearance reflects this modular approach. Stone pilasters separate the various mercantile concerns and also frame the doorway to the second story. The builders chose fire resistant brick and stone; the presence of construction grade limestone and skilled stonemasons in Madison County accounts for the use of stone for lintels, pilasters and trim, rather than cast iron or concrete. But the building still exhibits Italianate motifs popular in the nineteenth century, especially the ornate metal cornice, triple sets of brackets, corbels and fanciful panels. A second, simpler cornice also separates first and second floors, another common device.

Commercial emporiums and businesses such as the banks in Winterset and Adel sprang up in central Iowa towns at the end of the nineteenth century and most especially with the arrival of railroad connections to a town. Some buildings were more elaborate than these examples and many were less ornamental. Residences from the period between the Civil War and about 1880 reflected midwestern variations on styles popular since the 1850s such as the Italianate and the Gothic revival

styles. The Italianate style became especially popular. The distinctive brackets, alone or in groups, on cornices, doorways, windows, bays and porches and the elaborate window tops are distinguishing features. The Albert Dabney house, also in Winterset, illustrates both the affluence this county seat lawyer attained and the stylistic kinship between some commercial and residential buildings of the era.

Like the Winterset's First National Bank, the Dabney house is brick with stone and also wood trim. The heavy stone lintels have incised decoration and accent the long, narrow and round-arched windows. The house represents the irregular Italianate form, having broad eaves, large gabled projections and a rather flat roof. The pairs of jigsawn brackets running along the cornice coupled with the wealth of fanciful wood detail at the eaves, along the porch grill and on the window canopy provide visual delight that is so characteristic of the style.

The irregular Italianate form also appeared in clapboard. In shape a variant of the T-shaped American farmhouse, the John Perrigo house in Boone features a noteworthy roofline having a bellcast gabled outline and pairs of elaborate brackets beneath the broad eaves. As in other examples, the narrow windows are round-arched, but here are curiously capped with straight molded lintels. The shutters are probably the originals, but the architectural ornament (lintels, brackets, cornice) would most likely have originally been painted a lighter color for contrast with the grey, fawn or sage green color of the body. Placed in the corner of the "T", the small porch is of characteristic size and shape, but the clusters of slender columns are a Gothic Revival element reminiscent of Gothic cathedral columns.

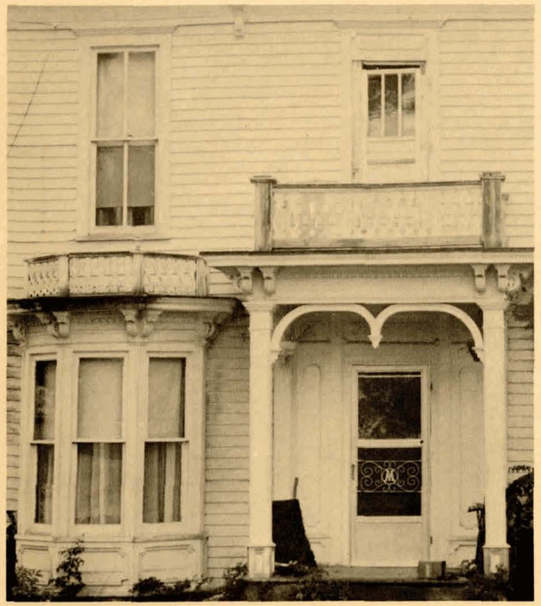
Though not in a county seat, the Joseph Mack house (Macksburg, Madison County) excellently illustrates the regular or cubelike Italianate building. Two story with a truncated hipped roof, the house has smaller additions trailing to the rear, since the box of the main house could not accommodate all the household's needs—a common occurrence. Again, the characteristic Italianate details are present: jigsaw brackets, broad overhang, long narrow windows with molded lintels, bays and a porch. The bracketed bays flank a delicate front porch, and all are topped with more decorative woodwork. The effect is one of symmetry and stability modified by airy decorations. The small entrance porch

Above. Albert Dabney House. Winterset. Dabney practiced law and served in the legislature.

Below. John Perrigo House. Boone. Perrigo was a farmer who also ran a passenger train from 1859 to 1877. He probably built the house in 1869-70.

Opposite, above. Joseph H. Mack House. Macksburg. A farmer and doctor, Mack platted his town and built this home in 1873 in the vain hope of acquiring railroad connections.

Opposite, below. Henry C. Wallace House. Winterset. Wallace lived here from 1882 to 1891 and began his interest in agricultural journalism that culminated with the Des Moines publishing empire including Wallace's Farmer.



with the central pendant drawing attention to the doorway invites one to enter.

The Henry C. Wallace house in Winterset, another box-shaped example, also displays Italianate items. The delicate iron cresting that graces the porch, bay and roof tops is a prevalent element. At the rooftop the iron cresting stands in place of a cupola, another typical element although not present in these examples. The slender porch columns and grill, whose surface has been pierced to form a cutout pattern, are unusual in design and in having survived without alteration. A somewhat discordant factor and an indication of the vernacular aspect of the design is the uneven window and door placement.

Italy was not the only distant country to influence building fashions. The French Second Empire Style was extremely popular in some parts of the country, both for residences and public institutions. The distinguishing feature was the mansard roof, generally with a series of dormers. A central entry tower, such as that of Terrace Hill in Des Moines, currently the Governor's residence, presents one of the state's grandest examples of the Second Empire Style with Italianate details. With its commanding hilltop location, the mansion was a showplace when millionaire businessman B. F. Allen built it in 1867-69. Allen's choice of the style reveals a sophisticated awareness of the latest fashions. Relatively few Second Empire buildings exist in central Iowa. Perhaps the financial doldrums of the 1870s, the time it would have been most popular here, discouraged construction. By the time central Iowa had recovered economically, other styles had superceded the French mode.

By the 1870s homebuilders could choose from several basic styles and from numerous stylistic motifs within these styles. Often the central Iowa homeowner simply added his favorite ornament, lintels and porch detail to the basic farmhouse plan which was either ell- or T-shaped. By selecting the distinctive dripmold label that extends down the window sides and a porch with slender details, one Winterset homeowner had himself a farmhouse plan residence of Gothic Revival inspiration. Slender porch columns with small capitals and curvilinear Tudor arch shapes between the columns provide the few Gothic Revival elements. It is possible that the house once carried more ornament, which would have been painted a contrasting color.

The delicate, lacy gingerbread of the Gothic Revival

Terrace Hill. Des Moines. The imposing mansion was designed by Chicago architect W.W. Boyington. Listed on the National Register.

house often succombs to the ravages of time and shifting fashion but the Jacob Shelders house in the county seat town of Boone has withstood these assaults since 1871. Although its shape is the basic farmhouse plan with a steeper pitch, the irregular outline (highly desirable for the picturesque quality it imparts) is achieved through the addition of both gabled and shed dormers, finials and pendants at gable peaks and ends, and the filigreed bargeboard along the gables. Variety characterized Gothic Revival cottages, and Jacob Shelders achieved this effect through Gothic-inspired ornament and also through the more Italianate lintels of the front windows. The flat-roofed entry porch is a later addition.

The county seat fittingly lay in the center of its county, for it was the focus of political and economic growth. Important social activities, the largest churches, opera houses and libraries, also centered on the county seat. Generally the county seat had more residents than other towns in the county, and its buildings provided a catalog of popular building styles. The county seat economy, which relied upon land sales and farming, provided the basis for growth. The coming of the railroad augmented the county seats' prosperity and also created new marketplaces along the line. Beginning in the late 1860s, central Iowa joined in this new transportation network. Availability of rail transport and of improved farm machinery prompted the transition from subsistence farming to commercial farming in Iowa.

Gothic Farmhouse. Winterset.

Jacob M. Shelders House. Boone. The dining room floor of this 1871 house had alternating strips of walnut and maple.

The Railroad Towns

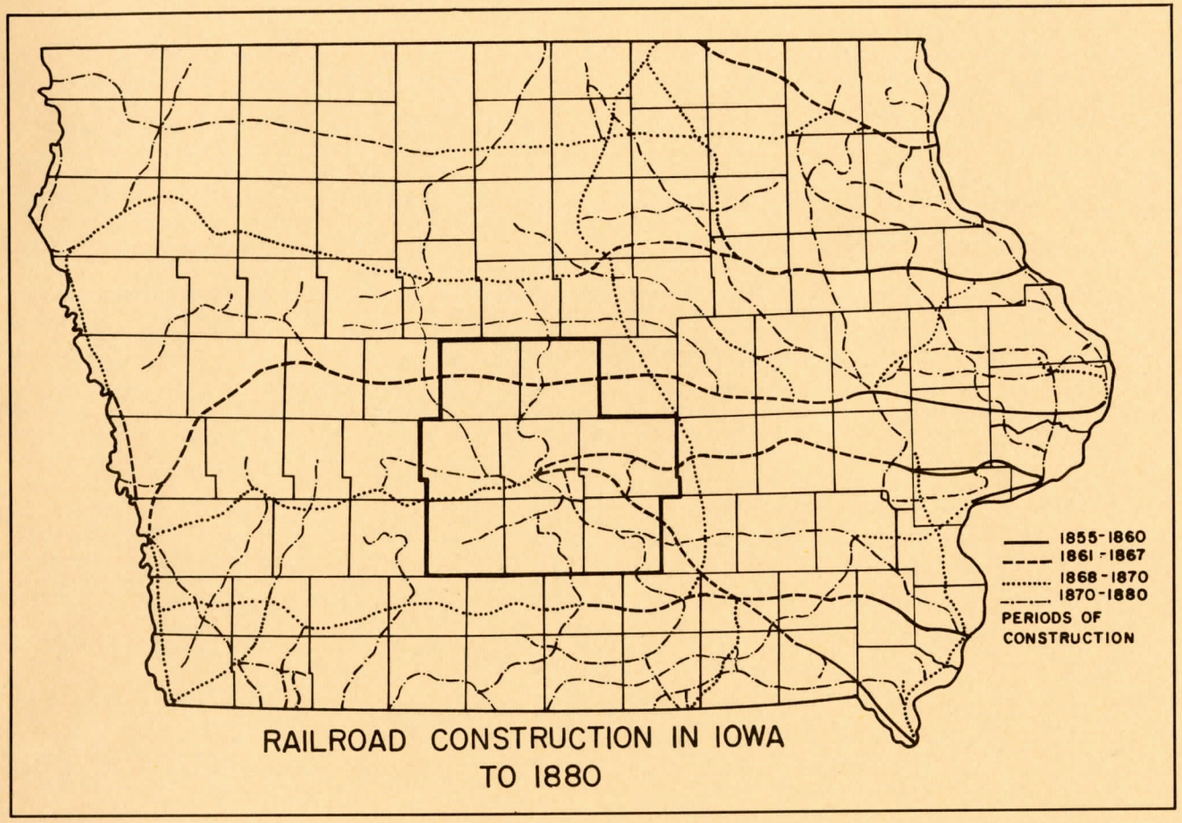
From Local to National Market Places.

The arrival of railroad connections unquestionably altered the landscape of central Iowa and the lives of central Iowans. More than any other single factor, railroads enabled the Midwest (of which the counties of central Iowa were a part) to become the provider of agricultural products for the world. With the railroad links to areas beyond the midsection of the country, the local farm market eventually expanded to one of global dimensions. The railroads and the new commercial and company towns they spawned ended some of the rural isolation early settlers endured. They brought prosperity and unparalleled economic and population growth. In short, the railroads, the towns they served and the surrounding resources (both agricultural and mineral) combined to form an integral economic system, one inextricably allied with the land.

There was an early recognition of the utility of rail transport. In 1856 Congress established trans-continental rail routes that provided for four routes across Iowa and set aside four million acres of federal lands for state use. The state, in turn, handed out these railroad land grants (11.7 per cent of Iowa's acreage) as an inducement for rail construction. One of these national routes crossed the north part of central Iowa in a successful bid to be Iowa's first trans-state line. In its wake, John Blair's Cedar Rapids and Missouri Railroad left a string of new towns, rapidly constructed buildings and a clutch of suddenly prosperous land speculators.

Towns lived or died because of the railroad. Along the route, existing towns grew, new towns blossomed. Those towns lacking rail connections shrank into the backwaters or literally picked up and moved to a site by the tracks. The development along the Cedar Rapids and Missouri Railroad illustrates these occurrences in central Iowa. In his westward quest, rail

The period between 1860 and 1880 was the time of greatest railroad construction for central Iowa.



RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION IN IOWA TO 1880

executive John I. Blair traced a route through the north central counties of the state. In Story County he platted Colo, site of the winter halting point for track building in 1863-1864. The town's birth was not without controversy, however, and legal battles marked its birth. Attorney John L. Dana filed a counterclaim to the land of the Colo plat and eventually won the suit.

No such legal problems hampered Nevada's acquisition of the coveted railroad. County seat residents voted in 1863 to offer 6000 acres of swamp-land grants to the railroad to assure its presence in the county. The site selection of Ames, too, depended on financial inducements. A savvy settler, Mrs. Cynthia Duff, secured the depot near her land east of the fledging Iowa Agricultural College campus by offering land to Blair at a cheaper price than a competing landowner had offered.

As Blair's railroad route proceeded into Boone County, the pattern of financial gain and legal hassles also continued. The rail route caused the demise of Boonesboro, then the county seat, and started the town of Montana, eventually named Boone. Blair selected a depot site east of Boonesboro because he believed, incorrectly, that county seat residents had failed to raise enough subsidy funds for his company. A further inducement tipped the scales in favor of a new site—landowner A. B. Holcomb offered Blair two-thirds of the lots Holcomb was to plat. Boonesboro citizens initially labored fiercely to upgrade their town in an attempt to curb population loss. But it was a vain effort, for the railroad was an irresistible magnet to settlement. By 1887 Boone's ascendancy was complete when it annexed its former rival.

Located west of the Des Moines River, Ogden too was a product of this railroad. But legal battles dating from early Iowa transportation history clouded the new town's beginning. In the 1850s the Des Moines Navigation Company received every other section of land within five miles of the river. In return the company was to make the Des Moines River navigable for steamboat travel, thus providing ready access to eastern markets. Though defunct as a river master, the company still claimed this land, especially when in 1860 Blair selected a site for Ogden that lay on a disputed section. The courts upheld the Navigation Company's claim, and in 1870 the company replatted the town.

John Blair's laying of the railroad route through Story and Boone Counties provoked a flurry of activities. Citizens strove to have the train stop at their town. They donated cash, thousands of acres of farmland, town lots and depot sites. Prospects for speculative return were such that the new Iowans engaged in lengthy court battles for the honor of platting towns. The depot, with its uniquely functional style, symbolized central Iowans' hopes for prosperous commerce. Later depots were sometimes of brick as in the Jasper County cities of Baxter and Newton, but most depots had wood siding. It could be shiplap, clapboard or, as with the Carlisle depot in Warren County, board and batten. The depot stretched along the tracks and passengers bought tickets at the trackside bay. The sweeping roof overhang sheltered passengers on the platform, and the curved purlins accentuated the functional roofline. Depots provided a unique and recognizable building shape in the rail towns.

Similar stories of maneuvering for the depot unfolded along other early rail routes of central Iowa. The rate of rail construction was astonishing. By 1880 major national lines, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, Chicago and Northwestern, Chicago and Rock Island, Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul and local spur lines brought service to all eight central Iowa counties and virtually every county in the state as well. The lines prompted the establishment of 57 towns, 58 per cent of the present incorporated cities in the region. The railroad lines moved towns and possible town sites like so many chess pieces on the rural checkerboard. In later years national railroad company officials sometimes preferred, when establishing a route, to retain ownership of an entire new town, selling lots themselves. Also, local businessmen, such as C. D. Bevington of Winterset, organized rail construction to connect their community with existing rail service.

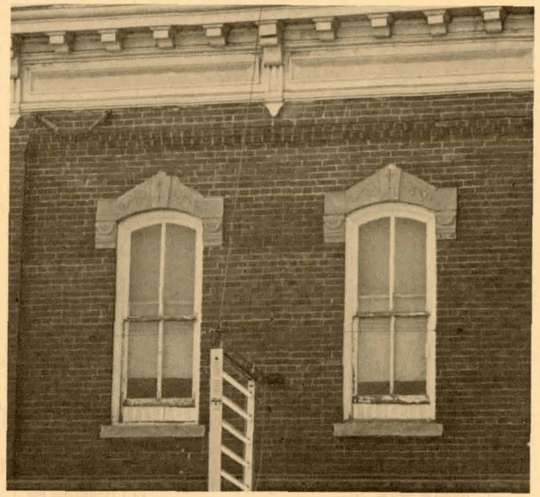
Rock Island Depot. Carlisle. The railroad came to Carlisle in 1872, and the depot probably dates from that time.

National Market Places

The presence of a railroad influenced town appearance. Where before towns had grown up around a church or school or along a stage route or millstream, new rail towns grew outward from the tracks. Restrictions imposed by topographic factors and the use the shortest, often diagonal, route dictated the path of the roadbed, while town plats tended to follow compass directions. Thus new towns platted along the railroad, such as Earlham in Madison County, frequently had uneven lots where the tracks crossed town. Occasionally one street, Railroad Street, paralleled the tracks while the remainder conformed to the tyranny of the grid system. Smaller sized commercial lots along or near the tracks reflected the economic basis behind rail town settlement. Residents of existing towns that acquired railroad connections also found the tracks superimposed upon blocks. Plats of pre-railroad communities such as Monroe and Pella often centered on a town square with businesses around them. Busy rail towns, in contrast, wasted no costly commercial space on such amenities. If the original town plat included a park at all, the site more likely stood at the edge of town as it did in Bussey, Marion County and Dallas Center, Dallas County.

The pace and atmosphere of a rail town differed too from those without the iron horse. With numerous daily trains bearing salesmen, shoppers and merchandise, the rail town bustled with sights, sounds and smells. The hiss and grit of trains, the squeals and stench of railbound livestock, the hammer and saw of new construction, the alternate dust and mud of streets, all combined to provide a robust but also pungent and grimy street scene. Stockyards located near the depot and the downtown as occurred in Bussey and Dexter provided loading access but also a heady aroma.

New buildings with specialized uses, often related to agriculture, sprang up hastily in the burgeoning rail towns. Besides the depot, the typical rail town acquired stockyards, a creamery, and grain storage buildings or elevators. Merchants established specialized businesses to replace the ubiquitous general store. For example, in 1879, just ten years after the coming of the railroad, Perry in Dallas County had two implement stores, seven groceries (some combined with restaurants, bakeries or drugstores), three hotels, five millineries and a dressmaker's shop, five general stores,



Ogden House. Ogden. Buit in 1887 after a fire, the hotel served travelers until 1909 when it became a bank. The bankers altered the first story facade.

four hardware stores and tinshops, four wagon, plow and blacksmith shops, three law firms, four doctors, two hotels, eight loan and real estate agents, a bank, four grain dealers, and an elevator and mill, two harness makers, a poultry and butter house, two lumberyards, and nineteen other shops and businesses. All these stores and shops existed to serve but one thousand people.

Rail connections provided an outlet for agricultural products but they also brought buyers and sellers to town. Traveling salesmen, or drummers as they were called, stayed at hotels. Many hotels or boarding houses such as the Bondurant House in Bondurant, Polk County, resembled overgrown houses, but the brick Ogden House presented a commercial appearance. Like other business buildings, this hotel in Ogden, Boone County, had elaborate lintels on the second story windows and a metal cornice. Inside, the hotel provided a sample room for drummers to display their wares in an effort to drum up business.

Railroad connections also meant that an increased volume and variety of merchandise could reach formerly remote places. The number and type of

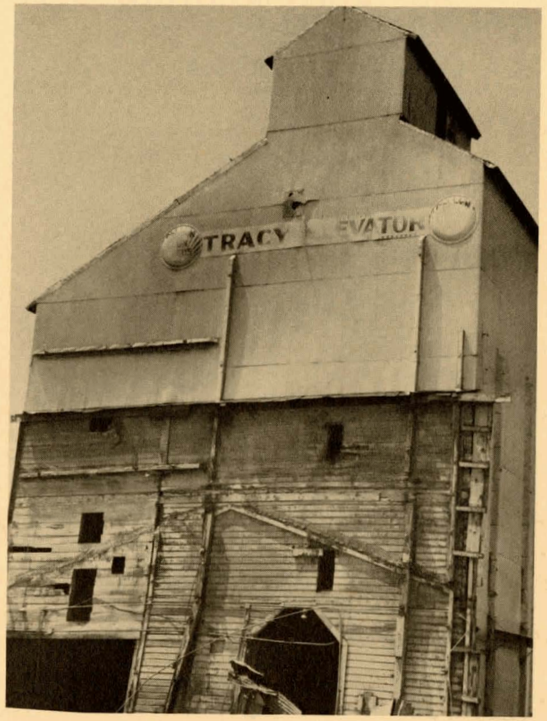
Commercial Buildings. Dallas Center.

Grain Elevator. Linden. Linden got its start around 1879 as a station on the Des Moines, Adel and Western Railroad.

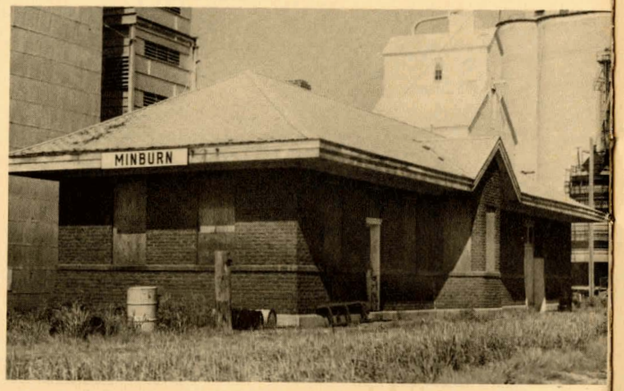
buildings along the main streets of rail towns increased with rapid population growth. New commercial structures were both one- and two-story. More permanent materials, cast iron fronts and brick, rapidly replaced the highly flammable false front wood frame stores. In Dallas County, Dallas Center's main street, the product of a railroad-related growth, exhibits some late nineteenth century storefronts. The one-story stores are miniature versions of larger, more ornate business houses. Their metal cornices, which feature dentils, small corner turrets and decorated pilasters between window and door openings, could have been ordered from a catalog and arrived by rail ready to be applied to these brick structures. Cast iron or metal fronts were available in the East by 1850 and popular in the Midwest into the 1890s. Metal fronts that have not been modified are exceedingly rare today.

The two-story brick structure on Dallas Center's main street has a plaque proclaiming it to be the McFair Building. Buildings of this type and time often displayed the original owner's name and the date of construction on a plaque at the top. Bricks laid soldier style, as if they were standing at attention, form the very pleasing semi-circular arches of the second story. Stone or stonelike concrete ridges outline the arches, while patterns of brickwork cross the facade. Like the falsefront stores, the McFair building has decorative projections at the cornice corners. Also, the side of the long narrow building provided a convenient spot for a sign. These painted advertisements were common in the nineteenth century town. The Dallas Center buildings have features that are characteristic of commercial buildings of the post-Civil War period in central Iowa, a time when the promise of railroad-related prosperity struggled against falling agricultural prices.

A post-war financial panic that began in 1873 hurt the entire national economy. The ranks of the unemployed swelled in the cities. Life was no better in the country, for farmers suffered from the double injury of low agricultural prices while railroad shipping costs remained high. The railroad companies, once considered the saviors of the farm economy, were now cast by some as villains. While the railroads, profit-



Grain Elevator. Tracy. Dismantling reveals the structure of the elevator.



Above, right. Depot. Minburn. The imposing concrete elevators provide a dramatic focus in the landscape.

making ventures after all, did unite to force the highest rates they could muster, they also opened central Iowa to new markets and eventually to new affluence.

Following the disastrous postwar period, central Iowa communities recovered. New commercial buildings sprang up in the rail towns, especially during the 1880s and 1890s. Also new to the townscape were structures with specialized functions. By far the most common of these new specialized structures, in fact as ubiquitous and as vital as the depot to economic life, was the grain elevator. The shift from handling grain in bags to handling grain in bulk and storing it vertically improved the speed and efficiency of grain transport dramatically. The familiar shape of the grain elevator, such as the one at Linden in Dallas County, with its slanted roofs flanking the higher center portion, provided one of the taller sights in rail towns, rivaling church spires and county courthouses. Wood siding covered the first elevators, but more fire resistant metal sheathing and numerous additions have often been added over the years. The design of the grain elevator was extremely functional: the taller center portion housed the mechanism that raised grain into a series of walled bins for bulk storage. The elevator was located along the tracks so railroad cars could receive the grain from openings in the storage bins. Some central Iowa elevators date from the 1870s, but many more have been replaced by much larger groups of cylindrical concrete elevators first used in 1900. The silo-shaped elevators and the depot in Minburn reflect the importance of the railroad in agricultural regions and

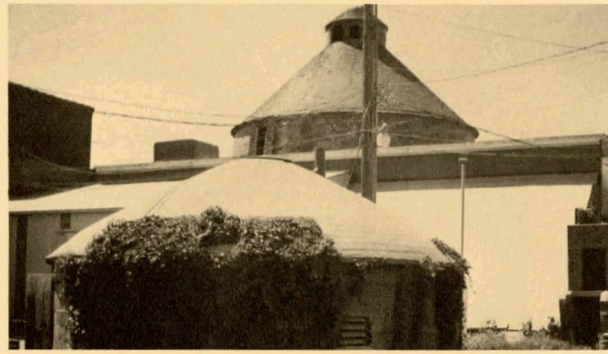
are a common site in Iowa market centers.

The railroad allowed the development of other specialized agricultural ventures, such as creameries and egg and poultry supply houses, for the presence of an efficient and widespread transportation network allowed the collection and distribution of produce. In short, they spurred experiments in mass marketing. The Boardman Brothers in Nevada, Story County, used the railroad to collect egg and dairy products. In 1882 they built a large (and now much altered) creamery. The lower level contained the cold storage area cooled by running air over ice to chill eggs and dairy products. The Boardmans had extensive operations in at least ten other towns where they churned butter, pickled eggs and stored these and related products bound for distant markets.

With the availability of transportation for farm products, central Iowa farmers sought ways of increasing production. Some practiced "book farming" and experimented with new strains of crops, new breeds of livestock and new farming methods. In the 1880s residents of hilly, less fertile Warren and Madison Counties turned increasingly to cattle raising. The development of a new fencing material, barbed wire, allowed farmers to enclose herds cheaply and brought another addition to the landscape, the fence row. Proponents of cattle raising extolled the benefits of blue grass for grazing and established the Blue Grass League.

A more widespread rural organization aimed at studying new farm techniques was the Patrons of Husbandry. Men and women belonged to Granges where they met to exchange information and pleasantries. A Jasper County resident, Andrew Failor, formed the second Grange in the country at Newton in 1868 and was instrumental in organizing others in the state.

Another method for increasing agricultural production was to enlarge the amount of land in use. Beginning in the late 1880s farmers began to reclaim the sloughs and soggy prairie by laying drainage tile beneath the soil. With the large scale use of tile, previously undesirable lowland became valuable, highly fertile cropland. The extent of artificial drainage through tiling (more than $1,000,000 worth of tile was manufactured in Iowa for local use in 1902 alone) is little known and appreciated, since its visual effect on the landscape is subtle and the drainage tile lies buried in the ground.



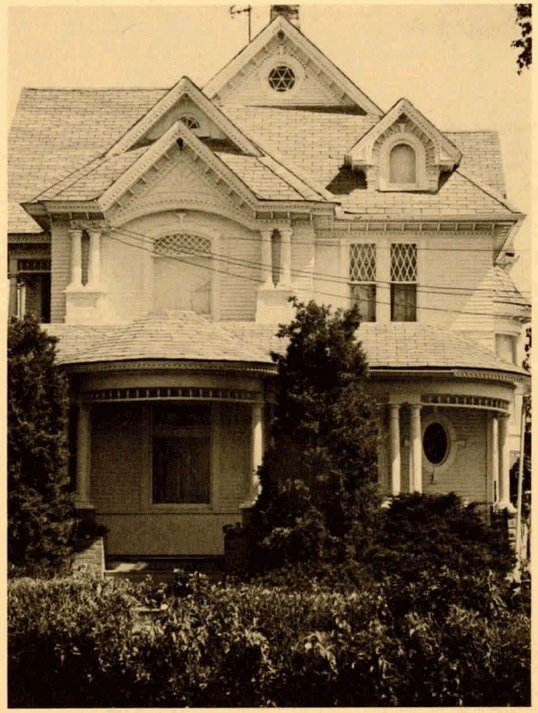
Dallas County Brick and Tile. Adel. The plant started operating around 1900 and was one of the largest tile factories in the county.

Large scale drainage of the wet prairies, especially in Story, Polk, Boone and Dallas Counties in central Iowa, began in earnest with the 1904 legislation establishing drainage system districts. Brickmakers such as Samuel McHose in Nevada, his relative J. B. McHose in Boone and Halvar Straight in Adel expanded their factories to produce clay drainage tile. The beehive shaped kilns lent a distinctive appearance to the factory.

Fanciful Homes

The railroad brought prosperity to many. The large, often elaborate homes of the successful still stand as evidence of the prosperity of the 1880s and 1890s in small town Iowa. The arrival of the railroad to central Iowa and the resultant prosperity coincided with a change in architectural styles. Late Victorian house shapes became increasingly complex with bays, large porches, towers and complex rooflines. They featured a variety of textures using patterns of wood shingles and clapboard, different combinations of roof lines (such as hipped, gabled and jerkin-headed), and up to five colors of paint.

Houses of the late nineteenth century were an exuberant array of ornament and texture. The ornament ws sometimes fanciful, sometimes an adaption of classical detail, more often a combination of both. The late Victorian styles offered a seemingly infinite number



Abram Dykstra House. Otley. The four Dykstra brothers vied with one another to have the most conspicuous farmhouse, but Abram's was by far the most elaborate.

of variations for hometown architecture. Builders chose ornament and other stylistic details from catalogs or pattern books. It was a laissez faire method of choosing designs, for any builder could select the patterns that would make the house special and unique. The newly rich were proud of their success and freely spent and displayed their wealth. Even the smallest rail town might host a stately home. Otley, a railstop dating from 1867, never rose above three hundred people, yet one of its residents, Abram Dykstra, was able to afford a very special dwelling. A visual confection of architectural ornament, the house exhibits some characteristic Victorian detail: irregular outline; a circular porch that undulates around two front corners; multiple gables of different sizes, some piled one atop the other; bays and a balcony on one side, an oriel on the other. These elements contribute to the asymmetric, complex shape. The dominant theme is one of variety—the house cannot be seen or comprehended in a single glance. Even the windows vary in shape—round, oval, round-arched, rectangular and Tudorlike, in size, and in type of window pane, having diamond-shaped panes and etched glass patterns. The variety continues with a band of patterned wood shingle separating the two stories. The presence of dentils throughout provides the primary unifying factor. Many houses from this period have classical detail such as the dentils, pediments and columns seen in other earlier styles. But none used them more freely and imaginatively than on the Dykstra house.

When Levi Springer built his house in Prairie City, he wished to display more than just his financial success. Springer owned a lumber company, and his house, located on a corner just off the town square, showed types of decoration popular—and available—through his lumber yard. Though similar to the Dykstra House in irregular outline and variety of elements and texture, the Springer house has yet other features common to the period such as the jerkin-headed or sliced off gable peak with small brackets below it. (Note how much smaller they are than the brackets on the John Perrigo House in Boone.) At the top of the porch is a sunburst design in wood, another common feature, as are the chamfered or sliced off corners on the house front. As on this house, chamfered corners were often accompanied by a decorative pendant or bracket above it to highlight the angle. Chamfered corners were one of the most common late nineteenth century forms,

Levi Springer House. Prairie City. Springer advertised as a dealer in "all kinds of Pine Lumber, Paint, Rock Lime, Coal, Stucco, Cement, and Hair" in 1887.

almost as common as the use of wood shingle in different patterns (used here in the gable ends).

The Springer house acted as a giant advertisement for the owner's lumber business. The broad curves of the porch detail, now screened in on both levels, are an elaborate and extraordinary example of the architectural ornament made available by technological developments. The bandsaw and lathe made spindles of myriad shapes and sizes, shingles in diamond, scallop and other patterns, and other complex pieces of ornament, and they made them at an affordable price. Lumber yards such as Springer's provided these materials to potential homebuilders. They could choose from a bewildering variety of house types and ornament using pattern books and trade catalogs. The ornament and house parts arrived by rail.

Not only did late Victorian houses exhibit a medley of ornament, they also displayed a combination of colors. Using several colors on the house "showed off" the ornament very effectively. The current preference of white for late nineteenth century homes is perhaps the greatest departure from their original appearance, aside from using aluminum siding. Unless it was part of the classic revival (in which case the house would have white trim and a light green or grey-blue body), an up-to-date Queen Anne house in the late nineteenth century rarely exhibited less than three colors; various shades of the same color, often tones of warm red-brown, light or dark green, umber, or ochre, were used on the body, trim and window frames of the house. The dark body and darker trim of the house on 7th Street, Newton, Jasper County, reflects a modern version of these painting preferences. It is also a good example of a simplified, hometown instance of Victorian design. There is less variety than on other houses, but the features (chamfered corners, scalloped shingles, pendants and spindle porch columns, and the pent roof that frames the triangular gable end) are typical of the period.

Another house in Newton, on 1st Avenue East, shows the imaginative variations used on late nineteenth century homes. Here a corner of the house bisects the tower which is only one story. The house has classical details, and the delicate relief on the triangular part of the porch pediment also has a classical basis. The fanciful design was very likely constructed of an inexpensive material such as sawdust and glue, then cast in a mold and applied to the smooth wood surface. This method would have been less costly than hand carving. Without the darker paint, this delightful detail would go unnoticed.

Certain stylistic elements such as the chamfered corners were especially popular in central Iowa. A common house shape of the period was two and one-half story with a hipped roof on the body and several additional gabled roof parts. The gable ends offered an excellent spot for decoration, and the shape made for a roomy, inviting house. Sometimes a number of homeowners in an area chose the same style. In Jasper

House. Newton. A favorite color scheme of the time would have been a dark gold body, with both dark and medium olive trim.

Above. House. Newton. The house combines classical details with Victorian exuberance.

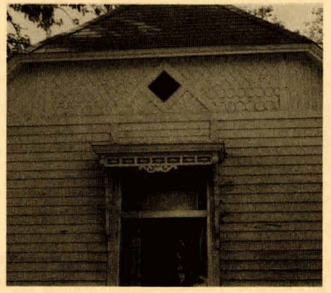
Glenn R. Baker House. Mingo. The Baker Family platted Mingo in 1884 to be near the new railroad route.

County are a number of houses like the Glenn R. Baker house just outside of Mingo. These houses have a large wraparound porch, a hipped roof with additional gables, two diamond shaped windows probably highlighting the staircase and a small second story corner porch with wood decoration. Wood shingles and a sunburst pattern are other elements in the nearly identical Colfax and Mingo houses.

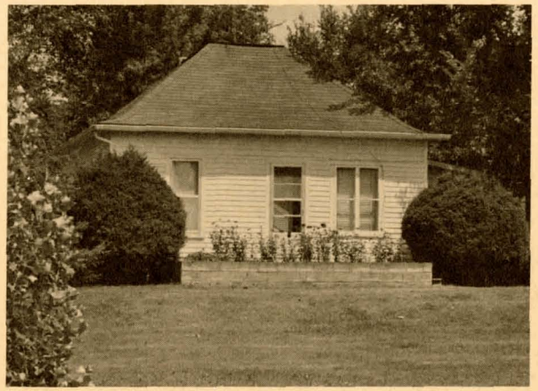
Much of the ornament on late nineteenth century houses was derived from classical or medieval styles. In some cases architects used past design (such as medieval buildings) as a starting point upon which to launch a new style, while others experimented with less derivative, more original designs. These architectural experiments were American developments based on a "truthful" expression of a building's construction, that is, the exterior of a building was to reflect the interior construction method and floor plan. Neither the Stick, Shingle or Eastlake Styles, as they are sometimes called, were prevalent in central Iowa, although examples of them can be found. Builders occasionally chose Stick Style details to add to their houses. The modest one story house on Market Street in St. Charles, Madison County, has sticks or strips applied to the surface above the windows and outlining other ornament. The sticks were supposed to reveal the interior framing of the house. The narrowly reeded panels that flank two patterns of wood shingle in the gable end appear to be a further adaptation of Shingle Style ornament. The window panes are a particularly popular late nineteenth century phenomenon, both in the use of a smaller pane on top and especially the border of smaller, colored panes.

Fanciful houses occurred everywhere in central Iowa—in the country as well as in the rail towns and county seats. The William Haley House in Warren County near Cumming and Orilla has decoration that is both small in scale and relatively restrained. Much of it is geometric and original in that it is not derived from classical motifs or other styles. The decoration along the gable ends and window frames appears carved or incised, and the contrasting paint highlights this delicate decoration. Like the house in St. Charles, the Haley house has reeded or textured bands of wood running across the base and between stories of the house. In common with other houses of the period are the irregular outlines and the amount of textural variation on the house surface.

William Haley House. Cumming area. Haley settled in Warren County in 1870 to farm.



Market Street House. St. Charles. Even a one story cottage could have a considerable array of decoration.



Miner's Cottage. Oswalt. Cottages once dotted the hillsides along the road to the mine.

Worker's Cottage. Bussey. Despite its modest size, the house has spindle porch ornament.

Shuler Company House. Waukee area. The exposed structural members were a popular feature in the early part of the twentieth century.

Mining Towns

The railroad gave new life to many central Iowa places, caused the decline of others lacking depots, and prompted the creation of shipping points for farm products. The presence of railroad shipping facilities also allowed industrialists to exploit another Iowa natural resource—coal. Beginning in the late 1860s and expanding in the 1870s, central Iowans opened coal mines of sufficient output for sale beyond the immediate area. The railroads, of course, became the principal buyers as well as transporters of the fuel.

Coal mining ranked as a major industry in four of the eight central Iowa counties (Boone, Jasper, Marion and Polk Counties) and was important to the economy of two more (Dallas and Warren Counties). Limestone-rich Madison County and fertile but marshy Story County saw negligible mining activity.

The rise of coal mining produced some changes on the Iowa landscape. For efficient transport the coal companies needed spur rail lines to the mine site and tipples for loading the coal. Both slope and shaft methods of mining occurred depending on the location and quality of the coal. The companies needed men to work in the mines and therefore built whole towns near the mines. Often these company towns were temporary, in use only ten or twenty years until the coal supply dwindled. Then the company moved operations on to a new site and the town and its residents followed.

Oswalt, near Colfax, is an example of such a company town. Platted by Barnett P. Oswalt in the late 1880s, the town once had two to three hundred homes, several stores and a social hall for the miners who numbered eighteen hundred at Oswalt's peak. Many came from Ireland, Sweden and Wales. A strike in 1896 brought in another ethnic group, for the company imported Negroes as strike breakers. Many remained to work in the mines following the strike settlement. Most of the buildings of Oswalt are long gone but several hipped roof cottages remain.

The hipped roof cottage, or worker's cottage, was typically clapboard, rarely brick. Variations in roofline, ornament, porches and gables were frequent, but the basic square house shape with a hipped roof (sometimes truncated), front porch and center door was a familiar house type. Not solely for miners, the worker's cottage occurs in abundance in central Iowa

towns. Though popular in the prairie states, the worker's cottage is rarely found in the East.

The mining company town had its beginnings in the late nineteenth century in association with the railroad, but companies continued to open new mines and accompanying towns. New immigrant groups, from Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, and Croatia, settled in mining camps during the early years of this century. Negroes also formed a significant percentage of coal miners. In fact, early in the twentieth century, mining was the chief occupation of Polk County's black population. They worked side by side with European immigrants in such Polk County mines as the Saylor, Enterprise, Marquisville, Oralabor, Carbondale and Norwoodville Mines.

One of the last large mines in central Iowa belonged to the Shuler Company near Waukee in Dallas County. The Shuler Mine opened in 1921 and yielded over seven million tons of coal during its twenty-eight year existence. Many Italian-born miners lived in the rows of small uniform company houses, some of which are still standing. Unlike the earlier square worker's cottage, many of the Shuler Company houses were rectangular with a gabled roof. The entry at the gable end had a small off center porch. The dwellings, modest and utilitarian, featured exposed structural pieces, a common feature of early twentieth century houses. On the Shuler Company house the rafter ends and the beams of the porch are visible.

Central Iowa mining production increased steadily through the nineteenth century and peaked around 1920 with the end of World War I. In 1917 Iowa ranked tenth in the nation in coal production, while for fifty years Polk County was the second largest coal producer within the state.

The end of World War I marked the end of large scale demand for the soft Iowa coal. But coal mining provided an important source of income to many new Iowans during the prosperous period around the turn of the century.

Consolidated School. Shipley. Now abandoned, the school has a one story side addition and new window panels.

The Automobile Towns

Into the Twentieth Century

The years between about 1890 and 1920 were a time of high prosperity and profound change for central Iowans. Farmers enjoyed the dream combination of high crop yields and high prices, and their financial success directly affected town economy. Technological change and social change also permanently altered life in the country and towns.

The availability of new energy sources contributed to several changes in central Iowa and the nation. Mass produced automobiles freed the farm family from its relative isolation. Trips that took thirty to forty-five minutes by horse and wagon diminished to a ten minute ride by automobile. Iowans quickly recognized the value of auto travel and in 1914 led the nation in per capita auto ownership, having one car for every sixteen people. The presence of so many cars prompted a change in the landscape, for car owners demanded better quality roads. Progressive leaders conducted a statewide campaign to replace dirt roads with gravel roads.

New Schools

The gasoline-powered vehicle also allowed for improvements in secondary education. Farm children could now ride buses to consolidated schools in larger, newly formed school districts. Because they combined the costs and receipts from a larger area, the consolidated school district could provide a more varied range of subjects and a better quality of education. With declining rural population, the numerous one-room country schools lacked enough pupils for classes through the 8th grade. For the first time, all farm children could consider going to high school in the nearest towns. New schools were built in many communities during this period to accommodate increased enrollments. Schools such as the one at Shipley were the product of the consolidated school movement after the turn of the century. The site selected sometimes lay in a spot central to the newly formed consolidated district but distant from major towns. Generally having three stories, the consolidated school provided a highly visible local landmark. The Shipley consolidated school has design elements common to many of the institutional and commercial structures being built during this prosperous time. Unlike the elaborate windows and cornices of buildings of previous styles, this school exhibits simple, flat

ornament. White brick outlines the originally large windows and the vertical piers between them. This ornament is geometric and stylized; it does not relate to or copy an earlier style such as the Gothic or classical. The Shipley school was part of a revolution in American architecture, one that shares more with designs of today than with the past. It looked to the future.

Education was changing at other levels besides the secondary. The land grant institution in Ames, Story County—Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts (as it was renamed in 1896)—became a leader in continuing education, especially in agriculturally-related fields. The state established one of the nation's first agriculture extension services at the college in 1906 to provide the latest information on farming methods to the public. Besides Iowa State College, private colleges such as Central College in Pella, Simpson College in Indianola and Drake University and Grandview College in Des Moines provided the opportunity for higher education.

During this period, would-be scholars and residents alike traveled aboard a variety of vehicles. Iowa State College students rode the "Dinky" railroad between Ames and the campus beginning in 1893. Other students commuted to schools on the new electric Inter-Urban Railway that began in 1905. Electric interurban lines were constructed in Polk, Dallas, Jasper and Boone Counties in central Iowa. Thus, new technology, the harnessing of electricity, brought county residents to such places as the Perry Normal College, to employment, to shopping. Some farmers, such as those around Gardiner (an interurban stop), even used the line to haul milk into town.

New Technology

Besides the electric railways, other types of technology changed farming. With a gasoline powered tractor, a farmer could cover far more acreage than before. Machine power began to replace horse and man power. Using trucks, a farmer could more quickly haul more produce to market. The transition to gasoline-powered machinery marked the final phase in the journey in central Iowa from subsistence farming to cash crop farming for a global market.

Advances in corn hybrids, in particular, assured that the farmer would have higher yields and ever more crops to haul to the depot. Beginning in the 1910s, Henry A. Wallace, Jay Newlin, Simon Casady and others began to experiment with improving strains of corn. With the establishment of Pioneer Hi-Bred International in Johnston, Polk County, to produce and market hybrid seed corn on a large scale, these agricultural experimenters revolutionized American agriculture. Before Wallace and his group pioneered the field, large scale marketing of seed corn did not exist. Farmers simply saved the corn from their own fields. (Wallace later rose to national political prominence, serving in Cabinet posts and as Vice-President during Franklin Roosevelt's Presidency).

Improved agricultural practices, high yields and high returns brought prosperity to the countryside. Yet rural residents deserted the farms for towns and cities in increasing numbers. Despite agrarian prosperity, farmlife lacked many of the amenities that were becoming more and more common in town. Such differences in life style, where previously there had existed relatively little difference, surely contributed to a town and country friction and to dissatisfaction with life "down on the farm".

Ogden (population 1100 in 1905) opened an electric light plant in 1904. But rural residents, unless they bought their own generators, had to wait thirty years for the federal Rural Electric Administration to provide an electric system for the country. A housewife in town could use labor saving electrical appliances such as toasters, vacuums and irons, while for her rural counterpart household tasks remained virtually unchanged. Town residents, such as druggist John S. Pitman in Ogden, acquired limited telephone service in 1882 but rural residents waited until 1901 for phone service.

Maytag Company Plant. Newton. The factory was built in 1900 to house Maytag's Parsons Band Cutter and Self Feeder Company.

Dinky Railroad Depot. Ames. The train hauled building materials and students to campus between 1893 and 1907.

John H. Riekenberg House. Boone. Riekenberg, a German immigrant, opened a general store in 1884 and was involved in local banking.

Brick House. Pella. The style conveys an impression of prosperity, comfort and traditional American ideals.

The presence of electric power plants in rising numbers of communities prompted the establishment of new industries. Inventors devised new agricultural implements and entrepreneurs manufactured electrically powered appliances for the home. Fred Maytag of Newton owed much of his spectacular financial success to inventions of both agricultural and domestic appliances. In 1893 he and three other businessmen organized the Parsons Band Cutter and Self Feeder Company. They marketed a threshing machine attachment but soon decided to diversify and joined the local enthusiasm for making washing machines. In 1907 Maytag and his associates built a hand powered machine and almost immediately decided to concentrate exclusively on washing machine manufacturing and sales. Through Howard Snyder's inventive refinements and Maytag's business acumen, the Maytag Company successfully marketed a machine with a reversible wringer in 1910, electric and gasoline powered washers in 1911 and 1914, washers with lighter aluminum tubs, and washers with dramatically improved cleaning abilities in 1922. The latter innovation, the Gyrofoam washing principle, assured Maytag Company's success. By 1927 its combined sales exceeded those of the four leading national competitors, and the company has continued to supply the nation with quality washers.

New Buildings

Fred Maytag's washing machine factory ranked among central Iowa's larger business ventures outside of Des Moines. However, smaller factories and businesses blossomed throughout central Iowa during the early part of the century. Their financial success combined with agricultural and mining receipts to produce a building boom of goodly proportions. The prosperity and technological change that so separated nineteenth and twentieth century ways of life was evident in the appearance of residential, commercial and industrial buildings. From the 1890s into the 1930s, a number of styles enjoyed popularity in central Iowa. Oftentimes designers or architects came up with a new style in reaction to existing styles. Such was the case with the revived interest in classical elements, an interest prompted in large part by the classically styled buildings of the Columbian Exposition held at Chicago in 1893. This revival, which proved quite popular in central Iowa around the turn of the century, used

traditional classical motifs but combined them in new, complex, decidedly untraditional ways. Architects used familiar Georgian, American Colonial, Greek and Roman ornament but chose room arrangements based on the needs of the occupants and sometimes the Victorian preference for irregularity of outline.

Some homes dating from the 1890s featured a plainer, less exuberant but still irregular shape, and above all used classical details (dentils, Palladian windows, Corinthian columns). The John H. Riekinberg House in Boone combines classical ornament with the irregular shape found during the late nineteenth century. The Palladian window shape in the gable ends is a classical characteristic, while the corner tower is a trademark of Queen Anne houses of this period. The various elements are combined especially well in this house. Many central Iowa houses combined these seemingly irreconcilable elements to produce a comfortable room arrangement and a straightforward appearance.

Others, such as the house in Pella, recalled America's colonial heritage. This large brick dwelling has features found on eighteenth or early nineteenth century American houses of the East Coast—evenly arranged gabled dormers and windows, parapet gables and a doorway with an elliptical fanlight and sidelights. However, other elements show the house as belonging to the turn of the twentieth century, including the two-story side porch without a balancing porch on the other side, the proportions of the front door and the groups of windows having small collections of panes rising to the tops of them. The house differs from its colonial antecedents in its unorthodox display of various traditional elements. But how much simpler it is, comprehensible at one glance, than the gingerbread

First National Bank. Newton. The influential Bergman family built this bank in 1920 to replace an 1886 bank.

Right. Sully State Bank. Sully. The stone faced bank is a fine example of commercial architecture.

Opposite, far right. Grand Auditorium and Hotel. Story City. Listed on the National Register, the structure hosted many local events.

confections popular in previous years.

The reaction to complex Victorian styles was not limited to residential architecture. Classical designs, especially those of the Greek temple, adapted well to commercial and institutional buildings. With the newfound prosperity in central Iowa, businessmen and bankers erected new monuments to their success. Many chose variations on the Greek temple form, particularly for banks. Built in 1920, the monumental First Newton National Bank building in Newton is a superb example of a twentieth century adaptation of the classic Greek temple. The colossal columns, done in the Doric Order, support a full entablature with a pediment above it. The sculptural frieze in the pediment and the projecting decoration along the roofline enliven the building's composition.

The Greek temple and other classical shapes seemed an apt choice for bank architecture, for their styles called to mind images of democracy, honor and strength, all desirable associations for a financial institution. Bank buildings of all sizes displayed these classical designs and their positive associations to good effect. The Sully State Bank building in Sully, Jasper County, resembles a small shrine rather than a temple. But classical simplicity and elements such as the pediment and engaged columns of the entry are clearly present. The pairs of engaged columns have a highly unusual design at the top that is of Egyptian origin.

Whether for banks or businesses, houses or hotels, many central Iowa buildings built after 1890 exhibited classical designs and ornament. In contrast to these derivative styles, other builders chose plans based on original architectural compositions and ornament. Across the country, architects of this period began experimenting with new philosophies of architecture, with new lay-outs and new ornament. Their efforts produced various designs with diverse and intriguing labels: Prairie Style, Chicago School, Craftsman and Bungalow Styles, the Art Deco and Arte Moderne. Despite differences in appearance and philosophy, these styles shared in being a reaction to previous styles.

Central Iowans used these styles frequently, especially for buildings that housed new types of technology. Towns that prospered during this golden age of agriculture added new buildings with new functions: gas stations, movie theatres, automobile showrooms, factories and consolidated schools. And the new styles lent themselves well to these new uses. Like the Shipley consolidated school, the Grand Auditorium and Hotel in Story City exhibits flat geometric ornament and a simplified appearance. The uneven, or stepped, top of the building front, the series of slender windows and the vertical bars dividing the window panes are typical design elements for buildings of the 1910s and 1920s. The Grand Auditorium was built in 1913 to host new twentieth century forms of entertainment—the movies and vaudeville acts. Life styles were changing as moving pictures brought visions of outside worlds far different from life in central Iowa, and the automobile provided the means for escape from the farm or small town.

New buildings such as the brick one in Zearing, Story County, often featured garage doors to accommodate autos and trucks. The Zearing building illustrates other common features of the period including brick piers separating the structure into bays and rising above the rooftop and simple decorative brick patterns. Other commercial buildings exhibited still different stylized or geometric ornament. Though the commercial building in Ames, Story County, displays a more detailed front, this remains but an elaboration of the vertical piers separating the building into bays and relatively flat, geometric brick ornament. The Executive Office Building, also in Ames, shows yet another stylized design, one that is rarely found here. Popular in the 1920s and 1930s, the Art Deco characteristics are the angular composition; emphasis on the main entrance, especially with rounded partial columns and flat sculptured panels; and a streamlined effect accomplished with lines and bands of ornament such as those uniting the window tops.

The gas station of course stands as a major symbol of the auto era. Although some gas stations could be found bedecked with colonial or Tudor trappings, most exhibited the new, clear, geometric shapes that belong to the twentieth century. Many, like the one in Story City, had hipped roofs that conveniently extended forward to rest on columns. The drive-through provided a sheltered spot for filling cars at the gasoline pumps. These tiny transportation depots were built of brick, stucco and clapboard. Their appearance was

Above. Brick Commercial Building. Zearing. The provision for garage doors reflects the ascendancy of the automobile.

Below. Commercial Structure. Ames. The design for the second story is unusual.

straightforward and functional—intended to accomplish a retail task, to sell fuel—but their simplified, geometric design was also a part of the new architecture that was sweeping the nation.

New Attitudes

The twentieth century brought change in architecture, in transportation, and in society and politics as well. Under the banner of the Progressive political movement, civic leaders fought for efficiency in government, fairness in labor and industrial relations, and protection for consumers. Des Moines led the nation with its reorganization of municipal government in 1907. The Des Moines Plan provided for five commissioners who monitored various departments to deter corruption and inefficiency. Federal legislation covered a wide range of reforms such as pure food regulations, limiting corporate donations to political candidates, and allowing primary elections for selection of United States Senators.

At the state level, the Iowa legislature initiated many projects to benefit the public. They allocated funds for a public park system, road construction and modern facilities for the disabled. In 1915 the State Board of Control selected a Boone County site on Woodward's northern outskirts for the Iowa Hospital for Epileptics. Plans for the institution followed the latest progressive ideas and featured an attractive campus-like setting. The basis for the village or cottage plan was self-sufficiency, and the Woodward facility raised its own crops, dairy herds, fruits and vegetables. Later expanded to house retarded residents, Woodward State Hospital-School, as it was renamed in 1949, has retained its pleasant setting. Many of the original buildings, including the Meadows, exhibited classical characteristics and thus were part of the classical reaction to Victorian styles. The village plan relied on a series of small buildings having different functions. For the Meadows, enclosed passageways connected these separate cottages.

Through the 1910s, Iowans enjoyed security and success. Like the rest of the nation, they shared a disinterest toward the war engulfing Europe and even financially benefited from the demand for arms and agricultural exports. But the United States entry into World War I beginning in 1917 changed that comfortable neutrality. With the creation of a draft to

Executive Office Building. Ames.

Gas Station. Story City. An excellent combination of function and design.

The Meadows. Woodward State Hospital and School. Opened in 1917, the original facility had resident and observation cottages for men and women, hospitals and a dining room.

Swede Valley Lutheran Church. Ogden area. Swedish immigrants, many of whom worked in the coal mines and farmed, built this church in 1882 to replace an earlier one.

provide an armed force, the federal government established or activated army bases, including Camp Dodge and Fort Des Moines in central Iowa. Fort Des Moines offered the sole training camp for black officers in the then segregated army.

On the homefront patriotic activities flourished, ranging from buying war bonds to planting victory gardens. Politicians, teachers and other spokesmen emphasized loyalty and good citizenship. This enthusiasm for all things American occasionally turned ugly when excessive wartime zeal became directed against the many residents of German birth or heritage. Even a hint of German sympathy might bring charges of treason. In Iowa this anti-German sentiment culminated in the Governor's order that only English could be spoken in schools and other public places, including churches and telephone conversations. Churches in central Iowa such as the Swede Valley Lutheran Church and the Zoar Reformed Church had routinely held services in the mother language and now were forced to consider abandoning the practice. However, the Swede Valley church members continued to hold services in Swedish until 1924, while the Zoar Church members used German until 1935. Overall, the Governor's order did much to dilute the ethnic strength among immigrants in Iowa.

Much more than peace accompanied the armistice. The war made residents more aware of the world beyond the middle borders. Movies and radio brought the outside events home even as the automobile allowed easy escape from the familiar. Because of these technological improvements, life in America became more standardized. The same Ford was available everywhere.

Indeed, leaving the farm became more than a personal choice for many Iowans; it was an economic essential. Agricultural production had increased dramatically to meet wartime demands. Farmers bought more machinery and land in order to profit from the high prices, and they received loans from local banks. After the war, high production continued as long as the government maintained wartime price supports. But the government ended these price supports, and prices for farm products plummeted. For most farmers in Iowa, there were no roaring twenties. Not only farmers suffered from the agricultural depression. Bankers who had lent money to aid farmers over a seemingly temporary slump found their

Zoar Reformed Church. Baxter area. Listed on the National Register, the church features a noteworthy spire.

banks to be in jeopardy. About 400 Iowa banks failed in six years after World War I ended.

New Blocks of Housing

Despite this grim rural predicament, not all central Iowans suffered financial reverses during the 1920s. The nation, returned to a peacetime economy, required new housing for veterans and to make up for that delayed by wartime priorities. The blocks of new housing built following World War I are the result. Developers planned and built streets and blocks of similar dwellings—many of one story. Although numerous variations occurred, postwar bungalows shared certain characteristics. The front porch, an important American preference, was found almost without exception on early twentieth century homes. Decoration was sparse and reflected the building's inner structure: exposed rafter ends, purlins at the eaves and simple geometric shapes. Stucco, brick, wood shingle and narrow wood clapboard were all used, even for the same house shape. The wood shingle and clapboard bungalow in Van Meter, Dallas County, exhibits typical features, such as the porch columns, purlins, gable end decoration and overall scale and design. The prominent porch is especially well integrated into the body of the house.

One way to distinguish among various house types of this period is by the shape of the roof. Where the Van Meter bungalow had gabled roofs and an entrance on the long end of the house, the roof of the house in New Virginia, Warren County, extends forward to cover the porch. The gabled dormer, which provides a roomier second story, displays exposed rafter ends and a curious row of cresting along its ridgeline.

In contrast, the larger house in Perry, Dallas County, has its porch and front door on the gable end. The attic windows that follow the shape of the gable peak are a typical feature. Less common is the use of brick.

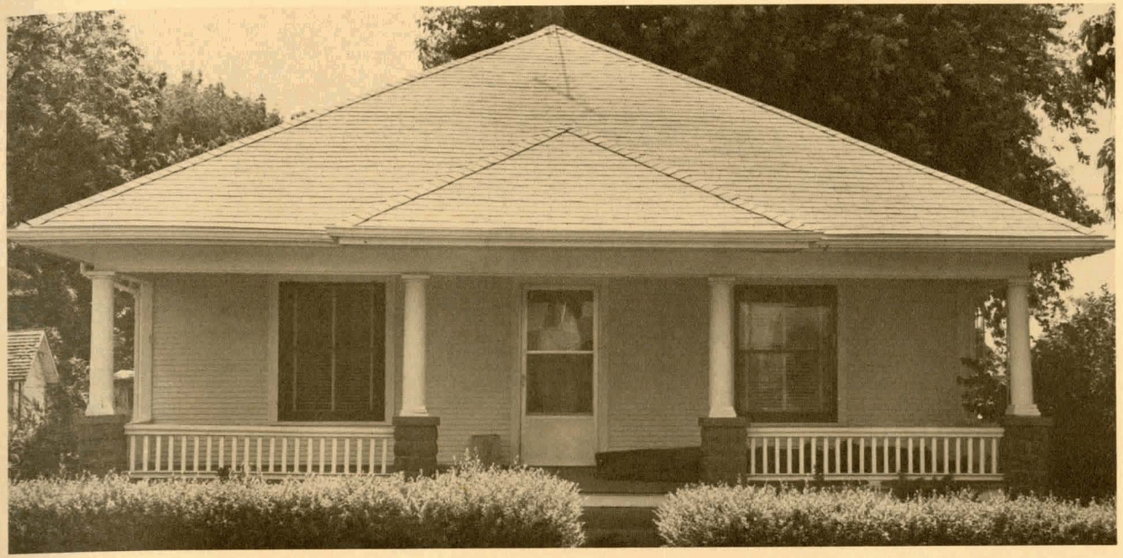
The stucco house in Knoxville exhibits yet another popular and familiar variation. The front door also appears at the gable end, but the pitch of the porch roof is broader than that of the house. In recognition of the rise in automobile ownership, the house plan includes an attached garage tucked under one side. The house in Pleasantville, with its hipped roof, provides a further house shape, one related to the automobile era. This hipped roof is broader in pitch than older hipped

Above. House. New Virginia. The roofline that slopes to include the porch provides a casual, inviting appearance.

Brick House. Perry. The proportions and size reveal a Craftsman Style influence.

Opposite. Bungalow. Van Meter. The porch columns reflect the influence of California architects.

Bungalow. Knoxville. Stucco was commonly used.



roof cottages, and it continues forward to form a porch in a form remarkably similar to the gas station in Story City.

Houses of the early twentieth century had gabled, hipped and sometimes gambrel roofs. They differed from their predecessors in shape, proportion and type of ornament. The stucco house in Madrid contains hints of the Prairie Style, another experiment in defining an original American architecture. The Prairie Style elements include very broadly pitched rooflines that exist on different planes, bands of windows and a distinctly horizontal feeling to the mass. The strips applied to the walls emphasize that horizontality. Elements of the Prairie Style may appear as parts of a house not wholly of that style. For example, the stucco house in Knoxville has groups of windows in a manner reminiscent of the Prairie Style but the overall design is more akin to the Craftsman or Bungalow Styles.

Houses of the early twentieth century occur in abundance across central Iowa. New technology and the application of mass production principles brought increasing standardization to the lives of central Iowans. For the first time many manufactured items were available nationwide. The savings from mass

Prairie Style Bungalow. Madrid. The Prairie Style influenced much of residential architecture in the Midwest.

House. Pleasantville. The kinship between the house and gas stations of the period is apparent.

production superceded transportation and marketing costs. Ford marketed autos across the country, and Maytag sold his washers to a national market. Even standardized houses were marketed nationally. Sears, Roebuck and Company, Montgomery Wards & Co., and other catalog businesses offered mail order houses in the early twentieth century. In many cases the prospective homeowner selected the house he needed from a catalog of styles. The company delivered precut, notched and numbered timber to the house site. All the materials for the house from windows and shingles to paint were included in the package. Around 1915, Wards offered a variety of styles and costs ranging from $294.00 for a hipped roof bungalow to $1,395.00 for a two and one-half story box with porches and bays. The average price was $884.00. The popularity of the mail order house has not been determined but there are many houses in central Iowa that resemble those available through mail order catalogs. Mail order houses came in many sizes, but one of the larger designs in a 1915 Wards Catalog closely resembled the hipped roof house in Ames. Straightforward and commodious, these house types are found with frequence in central Iowa.

For central Iowans the years into the twentieth century encompassed both change and standardization. New forms of technology forever altered lifestyles and the landscape. Nationwide marketing of everything from appliances to houses and automobiles allowed the relatively isolated Iowa farmer to purchase the same merchandise that was available across the nation.

Lifestyles, too, became more standarized, as American culture prevailed over imported cultures. The rising sentiment against all things foreign so noticeable during World War I provoked this tendancy toward similarity.

New building styles accompanied the prosperity of this golden time. Some styles revived earlier styles reinterpreted in a different way, while others experimented with all new designs.

Mail Order House. Ames. Large dormers, the bays, and the comfortable front porch provided additional space.

Barn. Knoxville. On the lower level, the German style barn has a sheltered entry for the livestock and on the opposite side a ramp for entering the upper level.

House. Pella. The porch of three circular bays and the second story curves at the window provide a picturesque quality.

Summary

Iowa's richness resides in its people, farmlands, towns, and buildings. The historical and design decisions the residents followed are what determined Iowa's appearance. The land and its ability to support life are the underpinnings of the state's successful agricultural enterprise.

The buildings and other manmade innovations that past Iowans constructed are the tangible reminders of this rich heritage. Through them can be traced changes in prosperity, fashion, construction techniques and uses. How different the modest general store of early settlement years appears from the gaudy Victorian emporium of the railroad years, and how different both stores are from the flat geometric brick store of this century.

In tracing the broad outlines of Iowa's history, many fascinating stories have been omitted, because of their peripheral importance, their short-lived effect, or the limitations of this work. The stories of Prairie City's potato industry, Colfax's mineral water spas, Warren County's underground railroad network for fugitive slaves, and many more must await another telling.

The presentation of Iowa's hometown architecture and the changes it has undergone is a celebration of the state's distinguished heritage. The productive achievements have been emphasized at the expense of tales of individual toil, pettiness or mediocrity. Iowa's towns, buildings and farms, the physical reflections of the past, are like the prairie flowers that once covered the state in rich profusion. Their beauty and diversity is subtle; they cannot be fully appreciated until they are seen and experienced firsthand.

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Glossary

Arcade—series of connected arches

Bargeboard—a board, often ornately carved, placed against the projecting edges of a gable and hiding the ends of the horizontal roof timbers

Bellcast Gable—a gable having flared ends

Boomtown Front—see false front

Bracket—a support element under the eaves or other overhang; often more decorative than functional

Chamfered Corner—normally right-angled corners of a house that have been beveled or cut at an angle to produce a picturesque outline

Clapboard—overlapping horizontal boards covering a wood frame building

Classical—using principles of Greek or Roman art and architecture

Corbel—a projecting block or brick that supports, or appears to support, what is above it

Corbelling—decorative bands of brickwork where each band or group is built out beyond the one below; a series of corbels

Cornice—any projecting ornamental molding along the top of a building that finishes or crowns it. In classical architecture, the top projecting section of an entablature

Cresting, Iron—a band of ornament, generally lacy or decorative, along the top of a roof or wall

Dentil—one of a series of small projecting toothlike rectangular blocks, especially under a cornice

Doric Order—the oldest and simplest of classical Greek orders, having heavy columns, plain capitals and a bold simple cornice

Engaged Column—see pilaster

Entablature—the part between the column capital and the roof or pediment

Facade—front of a building

False Front—a squared front of a building, usually wood, that rises above and covers a gabled roofline at the gable end

Fanlight—a semicircular or fan-shaped window set over a door or window

Finial—an ornament at the top of a spire or gable

Frieze—middle part of the entablature; may be decorated or plain; also a continuous band along the roofline or wall

Gable—the triangular upper portion of a wall at the end of a double pitched roof

Gambrel Roof—a roof that has two slopes on two sides

Greek Cross—a cross with four equal arms

Grill—decorative elements separating columns on a porch; often pierced or cut out to produce airy, fanciful effect

Headblock—squared block at corners of a window or door lintel

Hipped Roof—a roof with four uniformly pitched sides

Jerkin-Headed Roof—gabled roof which has a third roof plane at the gable peak; appears sliced off