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ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORICAL SITES SURVEY

Mount Vernon, Iowa - the Hill City

1988

The historical research, fieldwork and documentation were prepared under the direction of Richard Thomas, project supervisor. The survey team consisted of 32 Mount Vernon residents. Seven residents worked on the computer data base. As principal investigator, Barbara Beving Long of Midwest Research evaluated the properties and prepared this report.

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MOUNT VERNON, IOWA - THE HILL CITY

Report of Findings

Introduction

An eminent historian has characterized Mount Vernon as a "community of charm."¹ The characterization is an apt one, for its homes and other buildings reflect "the intelligence, the conception of art, the beauty and comfort" of the Hill City.²

The objective of this survey of Mount Vernon was to identify the historic contexts that define Mount Vernon and the related significant buildings and districts that illustrate those contexts. The historic resources were assessed for their eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. They characterize the architectural and historical development of Mount Vernon. Considered as a unit, they comprise and define this attractive college town and help us to understand the forces that shaped it.

A Multiple Properties Documentation Form consisting of the contexts and property types for Mount Vernon is also part of the project. Properties can readily be nominated to the National Register under the umbrella of the Multiple Properties Documentation Form. This document is designed to make future National Register listings an easier task since the context supporting the significance of a given property is already prepared.

Note that the draft Multiple Properties Documentation Form differs somewhat from the findings in this report. The report contains additional information of interest or use to Mount

Vernon residents while the documentation form is organized to meet state and federal requirements. This report contains sections on works by local buildings (which lacked sufficient information for inclusion in the Multiple Properties Documentation Form), a list of significant properties, and suggestions for additional research and for preservation planning.

The information gathered in the course of the study has a continuing use for the community. Using survey data and the computerized data base, property owners can learn more about their homes and other buildings. The Historic Preservation Commission can apply the findings to make preservation planning decisions, including encouraging tourism and rehabilitation projects. Indirect benefits include a stronger sense of local pride and commitment to preserving the built environment.

Research findings are available through the Mount Vernon Historic Preservation Commission and the Iowa Bureau of Historic Preservation. Relevant documents include the survey sheets and photographs, computer data base, maps, copies of historic documents, and a draft Multiple Properties Documentation Form. In addition, local residents may find the Sanborn fire insurance maps for Mount Vernon of interest. Although the maps do not cover all of the city, they do trace development by showing specific buildings in certain areas of town for the years 1894, 1900, 1906, 1921, and 1941. The Preservation Commission has copies of these maps.

1. Description

"Mount Vernon is situated on a high and gracefully curving ridge, which runs northwest and southeast, near a beautiful grove. From the apex of this ridge one of the grandest views of the county can be had."³

The characterization is as accurate in 1988 as it was when it was penned in 1887. Technically known as a paha,⁴ the hill directed settlement patterns in the "Hill City." Cornell College, founded in 1853, occupies the top of the paha. Several of its substantial brick and stone buildings date from before the Civil War, and the entire campus is part of a National Register historic district. The spires of King Chapel, a stone church on campus dating from 1876, pierce the tree canopy and are visible for miles.

Laid in a grid pattern, the older streets of Mount Vernon are aligned with the hill. The main commercial street, First Street, runs precariously along the ridgeline and intersects with the old Military Road at the east end of the commercial district. Not until the 1890s were subdivisions laid out in accordance with the cardinal directions, forming a clear break of triangular lots and oddly intersecting streets along North 6th Street.

Other natural conditions besides the paha influenced settlement. At the easterly end of the hill, a creek with steep banks effectively halted growth in that direction while providing water to travelers resting from the rigors of the climb up the hill. Not until the late-twentieth century was housing built directly east of the creek, in the Crestview Addition. At this spot east

of town First Street and the Palisades Road converge at the cemetery and then continue to nearby Lisbon.

Wet low land north of the hill similarly inhibited settlement. The lowest spot in town, especially north of North 3rd Street, was not developed until the turn of the century. Low freestanding concrete walls mark the waterway's course through this residential area. Early settlement in Mount Vernon was concentrated along and on the south side of the paha as well as the north and south sides of the old Military Road (First Avenue).

The geology of the area--the clays of the paha--also influenced the early settlement of Mount Vernon by providing a plentiful supply of building materials. Clay was of suitable quality for brickmaking, and limestone was in abundance. Small creeks near town provided water power for milling lumber.

The brick and stone buildings of the college well reflect the impact of natural building materials on the appearance of present Mount Vernon, as do the substantial collection of brick houses. This major grouping dates from the early settlement period, before the Civil War, although notable brick houses were built into the 1880s.

Mount Vernon's brick houses come in a variety of shapes, including gable-side, gable-front, upright-and-wing, hipped, and crossed-gable. Most are two-story. Foundations are of locally quarried limestone (generally rubble or rough cut). Some lintels and sills are also stone. The Greek Revival Style and elements

harkening back to the Federal Style are the dominant stylistic influences. Brick is sometimes used decoratively to form cornices, cornice returns, and lintels. Use of brick with simple details and form results in a simplicity that contributes markedly to the charm of the community.⁵

In addition to illustrating the building materials, construction techniques, and stylistic influences of the mid-nineteenth century, the early housing aptly illustrates the importance of this period in Mount Vernon's historical development. The key influences of area settlement--the Military Road, Cornell College, and the railroad--were all in place by 1859, and the community prospered accordingly.

A large collection of late-nineteenth century housing and the main street commercial area illustrate Mount Vernon's railroad-related period of prosperity, from the 1870s through the 1910s. Most of the housing dates from the turn of the century. South along the paha it is generally interspersed among early settlement housing; north along and below the paha are almost exclusively late-nineteenth century areas. Most house shapes are present but hipped, gable-side, and crossed-gable examples are the dominant forms in Mount Vernon. The majority of these houses are or were sheathed in clapboard and have front porches. Despite their later construction date, many have limestone foundations.

The dominant stylistic influences are the Greek Revival, Colonial Revival, and Queen Anne, since a substantial amount of

residential construction occurred in Mount Vernon when these styles were popular. However, significant examples of the Italianate, Gothic Revival, and Stick styles are found, especially near the college. The Second Empire, Shingle, Craftsman, and Prairie styles are also represented in Mount Vernon. Most housing consists of simple shapes to which some stylistic details have been applied. For example, a gabled-ell farmhouse may have decorative wood shingle in the gable ends and bracketed turned porch columns, an example of "folk Victorian" or Queen Anne stylistic influence.⁶

Certain design motifs--some attributable to local builders--are in evidence on a number of turn-of-the-century houses. These motifs or "Mount Vernonisms" include use of varying widths of clapboard, prominent gabled front dormers, delicate Adamesque swag details, an uneven extended gable, and small polygonal towers on porches.

Many Mount Vernon houses are quite commodious, with additional rooms provided for rental to students. House lots in Mount Vernon are also ample, giving an air of prosperity and well being. At the rear of many lots are carriage houses and small barns, many in a fine state of repair.

Located sixteen miles east of the county seat of Cedar Rapids, Mount Vernon is now a satellite community for the considerably larger Cedar Rapids.

2. The Historic Resources of Mount Vernon, Iowa

Contexts

The Military Road Era. The foundation for Mount Vernon's evolution can be traced to Iowa's Territorial years, around 1840, when the Military Road was established. (Accounts vary and give 1838, 1839, and 1840 as the date of the Military Road.)⁷ Now known as Highway 1, the Military Road connected Dubuque and Iowa City, then continued south to the Missouri border. With the establishment of the Military Road, Pinhook (as Mount Vernon was first known) stood poised to compete with nearby Ivanhoe for eminence in Franklin Township in extreme southeast Linn County. Ivanhoe, a ferry site on the Cedar River, initially appeared to have the upper hand, for it was located on the Cedar River, a popular river and river road route.

In the late 1830s a handful of pioneers settled around the mighty mile-long hill that characterizes present Mount Vernon. By 1838 perhaps ten families farmed near the paha. A number built log cabins for dwellings and commercial use near the Military Road. The Military Road carried stage coaches, immigrants, homesteaders, dragoons. Beginning in 1846, state legislators bound for the capital of Iowa City also took the Military Road.

Mount Vernon residents established businesses to accommodate these travelers. By 1847 general stores and a blacksmith shop were in operation, most of them on present First Street. First Street intersects with the Military Road (First Avenue). Just

east of this intersection is a steep drop-off and a spring for travelers to quench their thirst. By 1851 travelers could tarry at Allison Willits' hotel, Mount Vernon House.⁸

Evidence of settlement in Mount Vernon mounts beginning in 1847. That year residents changed the community's name from the rather unpleasant-sounding Pinhook to the more respectable Mount Vernon. They also platted the Town of Mount Vernon, filing the six-block plat with the county the following year. The plat reflected the importance of the Military Road, for the blocks straddled the road. The steep topography dictated that Mount Vernon's main commercial street ran along the ridgeline, east-west, rather than along the Military Road.

Despite the steep topography--or perhaps because of its inherent beauty and natural benefits--Mount Vernon rapidly settled up after the designation of the Military Road. By 1848 not one but two sawmills provided locally cut lumber. The Torrance mill was two miles south⁹ of town, the other on Spring Creek south of Lisbon. Wood frame construction and milled lumber began to replace or cover log buildings.

As many as twelve houses went up a year in the 1850s. Additional plats, such as Saxby's Addition of 1856, supplemented the original town plat as housing sites. A number of early settlement houses were built along Second Avenue Southeast, one block east of the Military Road. The Knott House at 417 A Avenue South, the next block east of Second Avenue, may date from the

1850s. More commercial buildings--a hotel and two stores--were built on First Street at the Military Road intersection.¹⁰

In 1850 the Franklin Post Office moved from a farmstead to Mount Vernon, confirmation of the community's growth. The following year the Methodists established a cemetery on the east end of town, more evidence of settlement.

Cornell College. Each year seemingly brought a new cause for further growth and development. One of the most far-reaching events occurred in 1853. Allison Willits, merchant, hotelier, and one of the town platters, conceived of the idea of a private school. Establishment of a school was among the typical booster occurrences in a new community. Local residents contributed money toward the new school. Willits enlisted the support and enthusiastic leadership of George G. Bowman, a Methodist minister in Mount Vernon. Bowman had consolidated area Methodism in Mount Vernon.

Bowman was also successful in enlisting the sponsorship of the Methodist church, and in 1853 the Iowa Conference Male and Female Seminary opened for classes. The Upper Iowa Conference of Methodists officially adopted or sponsored the then-named Iowa Conference Seminary. The college received its present name of Cornell College in 1857 when it hoped that New York businessman William W. Cornell would be a major benefactor.¹¹

Although he moved to California in 1858, Bowman left his imprint on the physical and intellectual development of Mount Vernon. It was Bowman and Willits who ensured that Cornell

College would be sited on the highest part of Mount Vernon's already lofty paha. Willits donated ten acres on the hill, "the most prominent portion of the ridge on a commanding eminence."¹² And Bowman convinced Isaac Julien to sell the school a ten-acre site at a good price. Julien, an area farmer, had bought the land for a home site, but Bowman was a persuasive man.

The school was an immediate success. For the first term held, in 1853, there were 161 students. By 1857 two college buildings, "Old Sem" and Old Main (both extant), were in use. In addition to enjoying strong local support, Cornell College benefited from the early arrival of railroad connections, from being co-educational at start, its early adoption by the Methodists, and a board of trustees not exclusively local who provided a broad base of support.¹³

To build campus buildings and Military Road era housing, Mount Vernonites exploited the plentiful natural resources that abounded in their own backyard beginning in the 1850s. Using bricks from a brickyard located at the foot of the hill, Elder Bowman built the village's first church building in 1850. By 1856 brickmaking was a considerable local industry. In her letters home Mrs. Benjamin Ford noted that her four boarders "are making brick and burning lime and they earn \$1.25 a day."¹⁴

In many cases, housebuilders erected crude kilns for brick-making right on the house site and brought their clay from a site just south of town. The area was blessed with clay of sufficient quality for making the distinctive dark red-orange Mount Vernon

bricks. Brick for the 1850s collegiate buildings on the Cornell campus was fabricated on the campus. It appears that the earliest brickmaking in Mount Vernon was a series of small-scale operations. Later (between at least 1888 and 1893) the Robinson brickyard was located by the creek on the east end of town south off First Street. The stone quarry was a little farther south, also along the steep dropoff of the creek, on both sides of the present Highway 30 route.¹⁵

William Platner operated a large stone quarry at nearby Ivanhoe by the early 1860s, reportedly shipping up to twelve cars of stone out a day. And "Billie" Conklin supplied local building needs for cut stone. Most local limestone was used for foundations, either rubble, roughly cut, or cut. Few buildings were constructed entirely of stone; high quality stone was apparently reserved for the most prominent ecclesiastical buildings in Mount Vernon--King Chapel (1876), First Presbyterian Church (1895), and First Methodist Church (1899). These buildings are the only extant nineteenth-century stone buildings in Mount Vernon.

In 1856 the pioneers who settled up Franklin Township (including Mount Vernon) came predominantly from the states of the Old Northwest: Pennsylvania (514), Ohio (446), Indiana (156), and New York (123). Residents from these four states accounted for over sixty percent of Franklin Township residents. Of the 2,032 residents counted in the township in 1856, 403 were born in Iowa (nearly twenty percent). Lesser numbers were born in Virginia (61), Kentucky (44), Illinois (45), and Maryland

(34), with the remainder from eleven more states. A small percentage of Franklin Township residents (5.7%) were foreign-born. Of the 115 foreign-born, twenty were from Bohemia, twenty-two from Germany, and forty-six from Ireland.

It is probable that these 1850s residents of Franklin Township and Mount Vernon employed the building skills and preferences they had learned in their home states and countries. The nativity of builders could well account for the differences, such as varying brick patterns, roof shapes, and details, in Mount Vernon's collection of brick housing as well as rural housing in the area.

With creation of Cornell College, the second major piece in the mosaic of Mount Vernon's historical development was in place. The year 1859, just a dozen years after Mount Vernon was platted, brought another major advancement.

The Railroad Era. The role of the Military Road as the dominant transportation mode and related purveyor of prosperity for Mount Vernon diminished even before the Civil War. In 1858 trackage of the precursor of the Chicago & North Western Railroad, the Chicago, Iowa & Nebraska Railroad, entered Linn County. Construction stopped for the winter in Lisbon, just east of Mount Vernon.

The following spring the railroad came to Mount Vernon. Mrs. Benjamin Ford, an 1854 arrival in the area, wrote home about friends having tea when the first train entered town: "...from an upper floor window at the Seminary they watched the first

train pull in."¹⁶ Such was the height of the campus (at 920 feet) that the tea drinkers could view the tracks located some six blocks north (at 850 feet).

The steep topography of First Street and the substantial dropoff from there (sixty feet in one block at some points) effectively eliminated the traditional preference for a depot site near the main commercial center of town. Contemporary writers recognized the limitations of the community's perch. "It is really the prettiest located village in the county, though from the narrowness of this ridge, its situation would not be so good for a large town."¹⁷

The tracks for the Chicago & North Western Railroad were located about seven blocks north of main street. In retrospect, the distant site was a fortunate one, for residents avoided the sparks, noise, and soot of steam railroads and the inconvenience of waiting for trains to pass on village streets. The northerly location of the railroad tracks stimulated platting and eventual settlement of the area north of the paha and main street. Portions of the area were very low and before actual settlement could occur had to be drained. A visual reminder of the low character of the area, especially beyond Third Street NW, are the low concrete walls marking culverts.

The arrival of rail connections affected virtually every aspect of Mount Vernon life. It was a boon to the college, for more students could reach the school from distant homes. By 1860 enrollment had reached 407, up from 294 in 1857.¹⁸ Merchants

could receive shipments of varied merchandise from the East. Farmers could ship produce to eastern markets. Transportation emphasis shifted from the north-south of the Military Road to the east-west route of the railroad, although the road remained an important local transportation route.

With the coming of the railroad, contractors had access to more varied and prefabricated building materials, such as window frames and turned porch columns. Indeed, the local lumber yard was eventually located by the tracks off of Highway 1. Mount Vernon residents no longer needed to rely solely on traditional local building techniques. Patternbook buildings replaced vernacular buildings. Local contractors such as Marsden Keyes, William Brackett, Charles Davis, and Guy Siggins availed themselves of the new design sources and materials available from railroad delivery. But stone mason Charles Heller continued to use local materials.

The presence of railroad connections with the East stimulated population increases, and Mount Vernon boasted of 760 residents in 1860 (excluding students). The Civil War affected every one of those residents. Men went off to war, leaving the women to add unfamiliar roles to their duties. But since Mount Vernon had the railroad, businessmen and area farmers could ship their goods to aid the war effort--and their own pocketbooks.

With the end of the Civil War in 1865, Mount Vernon returned to a peacetime footing and continued to prosper. In June 1869, 125 male residents voted to incorporate their community; eighteen

were opposed. The same year saw the establishment of a stable newspaper, the Hawkeye, after a series of unsuccessful publishing ventures. Mount Vernon had arrived.¹⁹

The commercial main street matured during the railroad era. A traveler or farmer entering town from the east in the 1870s encountered a school, church, grocery, doctor's office, Van Sant's bank, store, a bakery in Central House, a millinery shop, picture gallery, harness shop, and several dwellings. All these functions were located between the present school site and the Old Military Road. The principle part of main street on the other side of the Military Road contained no less than nineteen more buildings arrayed in a solid block on either side of First Street between First and Second Avenues.

Despite national financial depressions in 1873 and 1893, the population of Mount Vernon continued to increase in the last decades of the nineteenth century and peaked in 1905.

<u>1860</u>	<u>1870</u>	<u>1880</u>	<u>1885</u>	<u>1890</u>	<u>1900</u>	<u>1905</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>
760	779	859	899	1259	1629	1664	1532	1466

New construction reflected these steady increases in population through 1905. The 1890s, in particular, were notable for the amount of new housing. As many as thirty new houses were built a year. By 1895 nearly 150 new buildings lined the undulating streets of the Hill City.²⁰

In 1894-5 alone nine new commercial buildings went up along First Street. A relatively healthy local economy spurred construction, but the primary impetus was a series of three fires between December 1893 and July 1894--and the insurance payments

to burned-out merchants. Among the new business houses were four built by the Doctors John D. and Thomas L. Wolfe, including the Smith-Hogle Block (extant) at 109 First Street. Captain Charles W. Kepler built at 104 First Street (extant) and put his law office on the second story.²¹

The 1890s brought a nationwide financial depression, but Mount Vernon was less adversely affected than some communities. The presence of a thriving college probably helped during the uncertain times. Still, one bank established in 1891 was closed by 1895.²²

Local boosters sought to strengthen and diversify the economy through construction of the Mount Vernon Short Line Railway. They offered factory sites along the railway on the northeast side of town, long the nonresidential sector. The spur line ran along the creek bed and connected the Chicago & North Western depot²³ on the north end of town with the Mount Vernon Stone Company at the old quarry to the southeast. Backers had organized the company in 1894 to supply limestone, especially crushed limestone for roads and sidewalks. The owners boasted of having the "most complete steam crushing plant in the state."²⁴

The prosperity and growth of the 1890s in Mount Vernon made several new residential additions necessary to accommodate the demand for new housing. Boulevard Addition (tucked behind the campus), Rigby Addition, and Ash Park Addition (just south of the railroad tracks) were all platted during this period and rapidly built up with houses in the latest styles. These and other

sections of town well reflect Mount Vernon's 1890s prosperity. They illustrate the newspaper's contention in 1895 that visitors would conclude: "Here is an ideal village, here is an ideal home."

The Lincoln Highway Era. The years up to the turn of the century were the pivotal ones for Mount Vernon's historical development. But the twentieth century was not without effect. Of special note was the return of the roadway in a major transportation role for Mount Vernon. Now known as U.S. Highway 30, the Lincoln Highway was the first transcontinental highway across the nation. The Lincoln Highway dated from 1913 when a group of businessmen in the automobile industry conceived of the idea. Communities across the country worked to fund a "seedling mile" of the Lincoln Highway. Special signs and concrete highway markers, such as the one moved to Mount Vernon's park, marked the route for automobilists.²⁵

The Lincoln Highway entered Mount Vernon from Cedar Rapids on the northwest edge of town. The route crossed the railroad tracks (over the former major transportation mode) using the present bridge, then turned east along First Street. The route continued out of town on First Street--after crossing the venerable Military Road--to Lisbon and points east. The intersection of the Lincoln Highway, designed for automobiles, and the Military Road, designed for horse carriage and ox cart, symbolized the arrival of a twentieth century technology.²⁶

Automobile enthusiasts traveled to and through Mount Vernon. The Hill City became, in effect, closer to Cedar Rapids, since travel time lessened. A tourist camp, small hotel, billboards, garages, and filling stations were built along or near the Lincoln Highway.

A second technological advance also affected Mount Vernon. Limited operation of an interurban line which ran down First Street began in December 1913. The electrically powered interurban line from Cedar Rapids was completed to Lisbon in 1915. It offered transportation that was quicker, cleaner, and cheaper than the old steam railroads. The interurban provided service for students and residents to the Palisades resort area six miles from Mount Vernon. Students could easily hop the interurban to attend sporting events against Coe College in Cedar Rapids. However, America's fascination with the automobile eventually supplanted interurban travel, and the final run was in 1928.

By 1923 Mount Vernon offered a variety of services for area farmers, students, and village residents. These included three coal yards, a grain elevator, two hardware stores, one motion picture house, two newspapers, and two banks. By the end of the decade, residents enjoyed an extended water system, more paved or graveled streets, and a fine new high school.²⁷

By the 1920s the continuing attributes of Mount Vernon were in place. Attracted to the charms of small town living, Cedar Rapids residents moved to Mount Vernon and commuted to work. Farmers retired and moved to town. Mount Vernon residents sought

work in the nearby county seat. Highway 30 became an ever busier route. The automobile hastened the demise of village isolation Mount Vernon had enjoyed. Still, the community continued to offer basic retail goods and services for residents, farm families, and students. But the emphasis on a farm-to-market economy lessened and the trappings of a suburb--albeit a highly attractive one with the added benefit of college life--took on more importance.

Property Types

The following property types are the categories of tangible resources that illustrate the historical development of Mount Vernon.

I. Military Road-era Buildings, c. 1840-1869

II. Description. Historic resources for this topic date from the time of early settlement in the Mount Vernon area, the 1830s, through the 1860s. The best examples are for the most part residential and brick, although barns, other outbuildings, and nonresidential buildings could be included. Vernacular building techniques are in evidence. Early settlement building techniques and materials, including log construction, post-and-beam construction, locally quarried limestone foundations, and use of locally produced brick, are additional features.

Most known resources for this topic are found along or near the old Military Road, especially south along the Hill, the dominant topographical determinant of Mount Vernon settlement. A

significant number of the best examples are built of locally manufactured brick. Since locally produced brick continued to be used as a building material beyond the Military Road era, it is considered as a separate property type. There is considerable overlap with the Military Road era, however.

III. Significance. These buildings call attention to the establishment of the Military Road around 1840 and illustrate the effect the route had on settlement in the Mount Vernon area. The Military Road appears to have been a key ingredient in fostering area settlement. Through their use of local building materials, these resources also show how early settlers took advantage of natural resources to provide shelter during the Military Road era.

IV. Registration Requirements.

1. Date from early settlement period, c. 1840-1869. End date allows for the time lag as settlers continue to use traditional building techniques.
2. Display traditional building techniques.
3. Display traditional building materials, such as locally produced brick, locally quarried stone, logs.
4. Some alteration is expected for such old buildings.
 - A. Main facade relatively unaltered.
 - B. Window frames appear original.
 - C. Roofline unaltered.
 - D. Unintrusive additions are acceptable.

I. Railroad-era Buildings, Districts, and Structures, 1859-1913.

II. Description. The Chicago & North Western Railroad arrived in Mount Vernon in 1859. Between 1859 and 1913 it was the sole source of rail transportation serving Mount Vernon. In 1913 the electrically operated interurban railway commenced service between Mount Vernon and Cedar Rapids. The interurban complemented steam railroad service and marked the end of the older transportation technology's exclusivity in the community.

During the railroad era, new types of construction replaced the vernacular forms of the Military Road era, such as balloon framing and brick veneering. While locally quarried limestone continued to be used for foundations, many architectural details were brought in by rail. These probably included windows frames, elaborate Italianate brackets, and turned porch columns.

Patternbooks and other architectural plan sources began to replace traditional building methods. Architects and local builders consciously designed the hundreds of new houses, business houses, campus buildings, and churches. Neither the original nor the 1902 replacement depot, buildings with the most direct association with this theme, still stand in Mount Vernon. Little warehousing was built along the tracks, and no significant examples remain.

A large collection of late-nineteenth century housing and the main street commercial area illustrate Mount Vernon's period of railroad-related prosperity, from the 1870s through the 1910s. Most of the housing dates from the turn of the century. South

along the paha it is generally interspersed among early settlement housing; north along the paha are exclusively late-nineteenth century areas. Most house shapes are present but hipped, gable-side, and crossed-gable examples are the dominant forms. The majority of these houses are or were sheathed in clapboard and have front porches. Despite their later construction date, many have limestone foundations. The Ash Park subdivision is one of the best examples of railroad-related prosperity in Mount Vernon, for houses are largely unaltered and date from the same period, the turn of the century.

Boundaries for the Ash Park district are those of the subdivision, from 5th to 7th Avenues North and between 6th and 8th Streets North. Commodious dwellings exhibit a cohesiveness of size, shape, siting, materials, and stylistic influences. Unlike other areas in town, there are relatively few intrusions. A remarkable number of the houses retain original details and clapboarding. An important stylistic influence is the Colonial Revival. "Mount Vernonisms" represented include varying widths of clapboard and prominent gabled front dormers.

The main commercial street developed into its present form during the railroad era. It is filled with brick-faced two-story storefronts and forms a distinct commercial district. The linear First Street commercial district spreads west from the crucial intersection of the old Military Road (First Avenue) and the road between Lisbon and Cedar Rapids (First Street). The approximately one-block sector contains twenty-one mostly two-story

brick-faced commercial buildings. There are few modern intrusions, although some storefronts have received inappropriate alterations. Still, some eight examples would contribute to the historic appearance of the district and six more buildings are especially noteworthy. Unifying features include many 1890s construction dates, pressed brick in unusual patterns, metal cornices, trim of local limestone, and similar size and shape.

II. Significance. These buildings call attention to the arrival of the steam railroad and illustrate the effect the new transportation technology had on the development and prosperity of the Mount Vernon area. Railroad connections were critical to any Iowa community for its continued survival and growth. The railroads offered direct connections with markets in the East. Local merchants could more cheaply receive a wider variety of goods, and farmers could ship their produce. In addition, in Mount Vernon the railroad was an efficient means for students to travel long distances from their homes to Cornell College. Railroad connections meant prosperity.

This railroad-related prosperity translated into commodious dwellings such as those of the Ash Park area and a thriving main street commercial district. The railroad brought new styles and materials to the Hill City.

First Street has always been the commercial center for Mount Vernon. Its buildings generally date from the 1890s and reflect the prosperity Mount Vernon enjoyed at the turn of the century. A number were constructed following a series of fires, which

accounts for some of the architectural cohesiveness of the facades. The commercial district well reflects the prosperity associated with Mount Vernon's position as a college town, one located on strategic road and railroad routes.

The Ash Park area reflects the growth, prosperity, and related residential construction boom Mount Vernon enjoyed beginning in the 1890s and extending into the 1910s. Ash Park Addition was a response to the growing demand for new housing sites, a reflection of local prosperity and the standing of Mount Vernon as a desirable place to live. A number of prosperous farmers retired and moved to town during this period, and other families moved there so their children could attend Cornell College. All needed housing. With its north boundary by the railroad tracks, the district graphically depicts the importance of the railroad in Mount Vernon development.

IV. Registration Requirements.

1. Date from 1859, when the railroad arrived, to 1913, when interurban service arrived in Mount Vernon. Most examples date from turn of the century.
2. Display such later building techniques as balloon framing, brick veneering.
3. Building materials such as clapboard, brick, pressed brick, stone, wood shingle, stucco.
4. Alterations to residential examples minimal.
 - A. Main facade relatively unaltered.
 - B. Roofline unaltered.

- C. Unintrusive rear additions are acceptable.
 - D. Details such as porches, brackets, window shapes appear original.
 - E. Original wall covering used.
5. Alterations to commercial examples minimal.
- A. Second story of main facade relatively unaltered; store-fronts expected to have had some changes, which should be relatively unobtrusive.
 - B. Roofline unaltered.
 - C. Original wall covering used.

I. Lincoln Highway-era Buildings, Structures, and Objects

II. Description. Buildings and structures for this topic date from around the turn of the century when automobile travel began to be an important transportation mode and extend to the 1930s. Lincoln Highway-era historic resources are generally to be found on the route of the Lincoln Highway, present First Street. Relevant property types include a Lincoln Highway marker or sign, bridges and other transportation structures, gas stations, tourist camps, and hotels from the period. Relatively few eligible properties have been found thus far in Mount Vernon, despite the importance of the theme.

III. Significance. The Lincoln Highway symbolized the transcendence of the automobile in American life. In Mount Vernon, the connection of that community with Cedar Rapids by a transcontinental highway marked the beginning of Mount Vernon's position

as a satellite community of the county seat. In addition, the Lincoln Highway brought tourists and other travelers past the Cornell campus and through the heart of Mount Vernon (until the bypass was built in 1953).

The Lincoln Highway fittingly brought the transportation history of Mount Vernon full circle. From a site on the Military Road to a whistle stop on the Chicago & North Western Railroad to its position on the Lincoln Highway, Mount Vernon has enjoyed the fruits of its strategic location.

IV. Registration Requirements.

1. Date from the period of Lincoln Highway influence in Mount Vernon, early 1900s through 1930s.²⁸
2. Alterations minimal.
 - A. Structures and objects retain sufficient original materials to illustrate the theme.
 - B. Buildings retain sufficient original materials to illustrate the theme.
 - 1) Main facade relatively unaltered.
 - 2) Roofline unaltered.
 - 3) Unintrusive rear additions are acceptable.
 - 4) Details such as porches, brackets, window shapes and openings appear original.
 - 5) Original wall covering used.

I. Cornell College Campus, District, and Related Buildings,
1853-1930

II. Description. The present Cornell College/Mount Vernon Historic District consists of around 120 buildings and structures on the west end of town. Located on the highest part of the Mount Vernon paha, the approximately five-square-block campus forms the heart of the district. Other historic resources in the district include a bridge, houses, a former hotel, and stone churches. The Gothic Revival King Chapel, visible for several miles, is a dominant visual element. Campus buildings, which date from 1853 through the 1960s, are randomly placed about the hill.

Approximately seventy houses form a fringe around the campus on the west, southeast, and northeast sides. Construction dates range from the 1850s to the mid- to late-twentieth century. Stylistic influences are similarly diverse and include excellent examples of the Greek Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, Stick, Gothic Revival, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman styles.

Historic properties located outside the district but related to the theme could include important and longstanding boarding houses and homes of key professors and administrators.

The period of significance for the theme is 1853, when the school was established, through the 1930s. In 1930 Cornell built another dormitory to supplement living quarters dating from 1885,

and students ceased to board with area residents in their homes. The year 1930 marked a change in "town-and-gown" relations.

III. Significance. Various transportation modes affected Mount Vernon's commercial, industrial, and residential development. The establishment of Cornell College in 1853 affected and stimulated the community's intellectual climate. The college also affected residential development: professors and students alike needed housing.

IV. Registration Requirements.

1. Date from 1853-1930.
2. Collegiate use or one demonstrably and significantly related to Cornell College development.
3. Buildings retain sufficient original materials to illustrate the theme.
 - A. Main facade relatively unaltered.
 - B. Roofline unaltered.
 - C. Unintrusive rear additions are acceptable.
 - D. Details such as porches, brackets, window shapes appear original.
 - E. Original wall covering used.

I. Brick Houses in Mount Vernon, c. 1840-1890

II. Description. Mount Vernon is blessed with a distinctive collection of brick houses. A significant number date from before the Civil War through the 1860s, but there are important examples from the 1870s and 1880s as well. Since locally pro-

duced brick continued to be used as a building period beyond the Military Road era, it is considered as a separate property type. There is considerable overlap with the Military Road era, however.

The houses that illustrate this context are built of deep red-orange local brick. Rooflines vary and include gable-side (the dominant shape), gable-front, crossed-gable, upright-and-wing, mansard, and hipped. Later examples are more likely to be hipped and early examples tend to be gabled. Most are two-story. Foundations are of locally quarried limestone (generally rubble or rough cut). Some lintels and sills are also stone. Brick is sometimes used decoratively to form cornices, cornice returns, and lintels. With the earliest examples, the use of brick with simple details and form results in a simplicity that contributes markedly to the charm of the community. Good representative examples are: 113 and 201 2nd Ave N, 417 A Ave S, 224 1st St SW, 600 and 601? 1st Ave S.

Stylistic influences include Greek Revival (the dominant influence), Italianate, and Gothic Revival. The earliest examples often exhibit no strong stylistic influence but have a Federal Style simplicity and arrangement. Little has been determined about the designers and builders of most of Mount Vernon's brick houses, although a later example, the Boyd House at 405 3rd Street SW, was designed by architect Cass Chapman.

III. Significance. These houses call attention to the early settlement period of Mount Vernon. Their construction is associated

with the establishment of the Military Road around 1840 and they illustrate the effect the route had on settlement in the Mount Vernon area. Through their use of local building materials and building techniques brought with the settlers, these resources show how early settlers took advantage of natural resources to provide shelter during the Military Road era.

IV. Registration Requirements.

1. Wall covering is locally produced brick.
2. Stylistic influences include Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, and Gothic Revival.
3. Traditional buildings materials, locally produced brick, locally quarried stone, are important features.
4. Date from early settlement period or exhibit continued local preference for local brick.
5. Some alteration is expected.
 - A. Main facade relatively unaltered.
 - B. Window frames appear original.
 - C. Roofline unaltered.
 - D. Unintrusive additions are acceptable.
 - E. Considerable original details, especially porches, remain.

I. Works by Local Builders

Works by local builders are not now part of the Multiple Properties Documentation Form for Mount Vernon since more re-

search is necessary to establish the importance of the context and of individual properties that might illustrate the context.

II. Description. Local builders are known to have constructed a number of residences in Mount Vernon. Certain identifiable "Mount Vernonisms," motifs and designs repeatedly found on Mount Vernon buildings, may be traceable to the local builders. For example, at least five houses have an unusually large, prominent gabled front dormer, including one known to have been built by Guy Siggins. Siggins built at least seven houses and stone mason Charles Heller also worked on them.

Another distinctive set, one to which no builder has yet been assigned, feature an extended gable end. The effect is sometimes awkward and gives the appearance of a later addition, such an enclosed porch; however, these extended gables often have trim that matches the original on the house. Ten houses exhibit some version of the extended gable.

At least three houses have a distinctive porch treatment, a small polygonal corner tower. Charles Davis may be responsible for popularizing this Mount Vernonism. At least four houses are attributed to Davis.

Marsden Keyes is known to have built at least nine extant houses in the Mount Vernon area. A number are located in the present Cornell College/Mount Vernon Historic District. No specific design elements are now attributable to Keyes. At least two houses Keyes worked on were built from plans by an architect

and another was built with the help of local builder Charles Davis.

III. Significance. Mount Vernon was fortunate to have the services of a number of highly skilled local builders and contractors. Although the design sources for these builders has not been determined, their handiwork in some cases displays identifiable motifs. The local builders directly influenced the appearance of their community through their building designs and the enduring quality of their work.

As early as the 1850s and into the 1890s, Marsden Keyes built high quality homes in the Mount Vernon area. Charles Heller was a leading stone mason (later he worked in brick and also concrete) between 1896 and 1920 who worked on perhaps one-third of the buildings in Mount Vernon. Heller worked on at least 123 houses. His career calls attention to the use of local stone for Mount Vernon buildings. William Brackett, Charles Davis, and Guy Siggins were other important builders who deserve additional study.

3. Future Plans for Historic Preservation

Mount Vernon is fortunate to have such a wealth of relatively unaltered nineteenth century buildings. These buildings are worthy of preservation, and survey work is but the first step in fostering historic preservation in your community.

A. An important post-survey step is to nominate individual properties and districts to the National Register of Historic Places. Additional research will be necessary to prepare the

actual nominations. For some contexts in this survey, notably Works by Local Builders, considerable additional research would be necessary to nominate properties. CLG grant monies are available for preparation of National Register nominations.

The draft Multiple Property Documentation Form prepared as part of this survey project lays the groundwork for these nominations. It outlines the historic contexts that constitute the historical development of your community and also the related property types that illustrate these contexts. Section 2. of this report is essentially in multiple property format.

Listing in the National Register is an honor which has the added benefit of federal tax benefits to some property owners. Owners of income-producing properties (in other words, not the single-family home they live in) can qualify for Tax Act benefits for certified historic rehabilitations of the property. Interested property owners should contact the Bureau of Historic Preservation. The presence of National Register properties and districts are an important tourist draw as well.

B. Another area of action involves capitalizing on the publicity surrounding the survey project. Preservationists could sponsor workshops on such topics as how to preserve properly or how to bring tourists to Mount Vernon. Staff from the Bureau of Historic Preservation should be able to help, but the source of enthusiasm and action rests with your community.

C. Interested preservationists should become conversant with preservation practices. One of the best means for learning about

historic preservation is membership in the National Trust for Historic Preservation (53 W. Jackson Blvd, Suite 1135, Chicago, IL 60604, 312/939-5547). This national organization is the best source for learning what other communities are doing with their historic resources. Its magazine, newsletter, workshops, and annual meeting are valuable sources of information.

D. The Preservation Commission should begin consideration of a Preservation Plan for Mount Vernon. CLG grant monies are available for planning.

The Preservation Commission should consider the following as part of a Preservation Plan:

- design review of changes in historic districts covered by the preservation ordinance
- programs to encourage proper rehabilitation of commercial buildings on 1st Street
- encourage tourism with specific projects such as a good restaurant and promotional materials
- use of some of the many large homes in town as bed-and-breakfast facilities
- provide a clearinghouse of information on proper preservation techniques, such as historic paint colors
- use preservation to foster neighborhood pride
- encourage adaptive reuse of old buildings
- recognize that local initiative is the best source for successful preservation programs
- encourage preservation of old outbuildings, especially carriage houses and barns

E. An expanded computer data base, one that draws on the data from this survey, would be useful to Mount Vernon residents. It would be especially helpful for new property owners who are interested in learning about their house's history.

F. The survey project raised a number of questions beyond the scope of the project, especially given the shortcomings of the volunteer effort that occurred. The research questions

remain and would form an interesting series of reports. Cornell students or other interested parties are encouraged to conduct research in the following topics:

- effect of Cornell College on housing, especially construction of large houses with rooms for boarders and role of Cornell mortgages to professors for housing in fostering good quality housing stock
- contribution of the various builders and contractors of Mount Vernon
- design sources of the old brick houses; perhaps they are traceable to a particular region in the East, especially the states that many township settlers came from; use County Auditor's records to determine early owners
- detailed information on the plans and construction techniques employed for brick and wood early settlement houses; requires seeing interiors for framing, etc.; map old houses for settlement patterns
- role of Military Road in settlement; use government survey notes, diaries of legislators who might have traveled the road
- role of the Mount Vernon Short Line Railway in encouraging new industry at the turn of the century
- quarrying industry from 1830s to when quarrying ceased
- systematic study, with copious notes, of newspapers to assemble list of building dates and other topics related to physical development of Mount Vernon; copy yearend booster editions if found
- evidence that presence of Lincoln Highway fostered change in the built environment or economy of Mount Vernon

G. Mount Vernon's fine collection of nineteenth century wood frame housing is, almost without exception, painted a bright white. Yet virtually no housing from that era was originally painted entirely white. Nothing would enhance the historic flavor of Mount Vernon's nineteenth century neighborhoods more than the use of appropriate historic colors. The Bureau of Historic Preservation has information on historic paint colors. Reference books are listed in the bibliography of this report.

4. Survey Methods

Because of the degree of local expertise available at the beginning of the project, the survey was designed to combine these substantial local talents for photographic, research, and clerical work with consultant expertise to be limited to evaluating significance of the properties, training volunteer surveyors, and preparing the final report. For a variety of reasons, including volunteers moving away and a state-imposed fall starting date, the mix was not as successful as it might have been.

The survey covered all areas within Mount Vernon's city limits, 2 square miles. Rural areas and formerly rural areas now within city boundaries were part of the survey. Virtually all old buildings within the city limits, including outbuildings, were photographed and evaluated. Portions of the existing Cornell College/Mount Vernon Historic District were not recorded since the Preservation Commission and the Bureau of Historic Preservation felt the area had already been studied. Volunteers, who had received a morning of training as well as study guides, visited the photographed sites and attempted to map, describe, and generally find out about the buildings.

The consultant categorized and analyzed all of the surveyed buildings and structures (over four hundred). Properties that contribute to the appearance of Mount Vernon but were not considered individually eligible for the National Register were marked as both contributing ("B") and not eligible ("C"). This

was an unusually high number, for Mount Vernon enjoys a major collection of relatively unaltered nineteenth century housing.

For properties that had been substantially altered and/or were of commonplace design and thus were not National Register-eligible, only the "C" box was marked. Individually eligible properties have the "A" box marked on Iowa Site Inventory Forms as key structures. Only "A" structures were mapped, along with possible historic districts and existing National Register listings. An inventory of "A" structures, buildings, and districts and also buildings and structures of special interest or requiring additional research was created and is listed in the appendix of this report.

In addition to categorizing and analyzing hundreds of buildings, four historic contexts and related property types were identified and a draft multiple property documentation form prepared. The multiple property document can pave the way for future National Register nominations.

Data was ample to allow characterization of the architectural and historical contexts for Mount Vernon. Two potential historic districts were identified as well as thirty individually eligible buildings and structures. A data base (the survey forms) was collected and forms the basis for a computerized data base, subsequent research, and local preservation planning. Insufficient information surfaced regarding the contribution of local builders, design sources for the brick houses, and the sources of and leaders in the community's turn-of-the-century prosperity.

5. Bibliography

Books

A Centennial History of Mount Vernon, Iowa. Centennial Committee: 1948. One of the better examples of this genre.

A Record of the Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the College.... Mount Vernon: Cornell College, 1904. Includes various historical accounts of Cornell College.

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---- and Winkler, Gail Caskey. Victorian Exterior Decoration: How to Paint Your Nineteenth Century American House Historically. New York: Henry Holt, 1987.

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Perrin, Richard W.E. Historic Wisconsin Buildings: A Survey of Pioneer Architecture 1835-1870. 2nd ed. Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1981. A highly personal but nonetheless useful discussion of vernacular building techniques.

Portrait and Biographical Album of Linn County, Iowa. Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1887. Especially useful since an early account.

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Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981. The standard guide to high styles.

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Keyes, Margaret N. "He Left a Legacy in Landmarks. Iowan (Fall 1971): 2-7, 31, 53. Interesting account of local builder Marsden Keyes.

Other Sources

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Clark, Jeff. "Mt. Vernon in the Early 1890's: an Era of Booming Prosperity." 1988. Term paper.

Lazell. Linn County. A Brief Review of its History From 1838 to 1923. n.p.: Linn County Board of Supervisors, 1923. Includes account of early settlement and arrival of railroads.

Mount Vernon Hawkeye, May 3, 1895. Valuable booster edition.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Mount Vernon for 1894, 1900, 1906, 1921, and 1941. The best source for showing outlines of houses, names of businesses in parts of town.

Second Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Iowa Conference Seminary, Mount Vernon, Iowa for the Year Ending July 12, 1855. Rock Island: Raymond's Printing House, 1855. Gives idea of coursework in 1855.

Schultis, G. Ann. "A Survey of the Brick Homes of Mount Vernon, Iowa Built Prior to 1900." 1973. Term paper. Good start.

Sherwood, Ada G. "'At Old Cornell--'." 1928. Interesting account.

Supplement to Mt. Vernon Hawkeye-Record and Lisbon Herald. December 3, 1925. A city directory.

Thomas, Richard H. "A Brief History of Mount Vernon, Iowa." 1973. Best analysis of Mount Vernon's historical development from 1830s to 1960s.

Topographical Map of Linn County, Iowa. Davenport: Iowa State Atlas Publ. Co., 1902. Shows railroad and Lincoln Highway route through town.

Collection of Richard H. Thomas, Cornell College professor,
including:

"Fires that Changed Main Street."

Lindsay, Carol and Ash, Rich. "A Look at the New Mt. Vernon
City Council: 1869-1876."

"Mt. Vernon History - Population Data."

Smith, Bryon. "Passenger Train Services to Mount Vernon.
1870-1960."

Wyatt, Barbara, ed. and comp. "Surveying and Evaluating Ver-
nacular Architecture by Midwest Vernacular Architecture
Committee." Draft report for National Park Service. c.
1987. A game but less than successful attempt at categoriz-
ing vernacular buildings in the Midwest. Some concepts were
incorporated into this project.

Notes

1. Richard H. Thomas, "A Brief History of Mount Vernon, Iowa." 1973, p. 25.
2. Mount Vernon Hawkeye, May 3, 1895.
3. Portrait and Biographical Album of Linn County, Iowa, Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1887, p. 956.
4. A ridge of silt and clay in the area of the Iowan glacial drift in northeast Iowa.
5. Good representative examples are: 113 and 201 2nd Ave N, 417 A Ave S, 224 1st St SW, 600 and 601? 1st Ave S.
6. Good examples include: 703 6th Ave NW, 124 2nd Ave NW, 117 3rd Ave NW (Queen Anne), 603 6th St NW, 610 5th Ave NW (Colonial Revival), and 219 5th Ave NW (Stick Style). See the McAlesters' A Field Guide to American Houses.
7. The Centennial history gives 1838 as the date as does the D.A.R. plaque in Mount Vernon. But the Centennial history also notes that Congress passed the legislation authorizing the road in 1840. The WPA Guide to Cedar Rapids and Northeast Iowa states that Lyman Dillon of Cascade plowed a furrow between Dubuque and Iowa City establishing the route in 1839.
8. Portrait and Biographical Album of Linn County, Iowa, Chicago: Chapman Bros., 1887, p. 957. The hotel burned in 1868.
9. The Centennial history gives both southeast (p. 22) and southwest (p. 61) of town as the Torrance sawmill location.
10. A Centennial History of Mount Vernon, Iowa, 1847-1947, Mount Vernon: Centennial Committee, 1948, p.23; survey form for 417 A Avenue South.
11. Chapman Brothers county history, p. 958; Ada Sherwood, "'At Old Cornell,'" pp. 5-7'; A Record of the Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the College.... Mount Vernon: Cornell College, 1904, p. 101.
12. Chapman Brothers county history, p. 958.
13. Centennial.
14. Centennial, p. 42, quoting.

15. G. Ann Schultis, "A Survey of the Brick Homes of Mount Vernon, Iowa Built Prior to 1900," 1973, p. 1; interview with Richard Thomas, Cornell professor, May 19, 1988.
16. Centennial, p. 49.
17. Chapman Brothers county history, p. 956.
18. A Record of the Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the College..., Mount Vernon: Cornell College, 1904, pp. 95, 101.
19. Centennial, pp. 62-3; and Chapman Brothers county history, p. 957.
20. Mount Vernon Hawkeye, May 6, 1892, May 3, 1895; Centennial, p. 90. The June 13, 1890 issue of the Hawkeye noted that improvements for the year were the best yet.
21. Ibid.; "Fires that Changed Main Street."
22. Hawkeye, May 3, 1895.
23. A second depot, not extant, replaced the original in 1902.
24. Ibid.
25. Drake Hokanson, "Transcontinental Travel. Iowa's Lincoln Highway, Iowa Architect 35 (November/December 1986): 38-39.
26. In 1953 the present route of Highway 30 was built to bypass Mount Vernon.
27. Centennial, pp. 187-8, quoting Cedar Rapids Gazette; Thomas, p. 12.
28. Date of Lincoln Highway influence not yet determined.

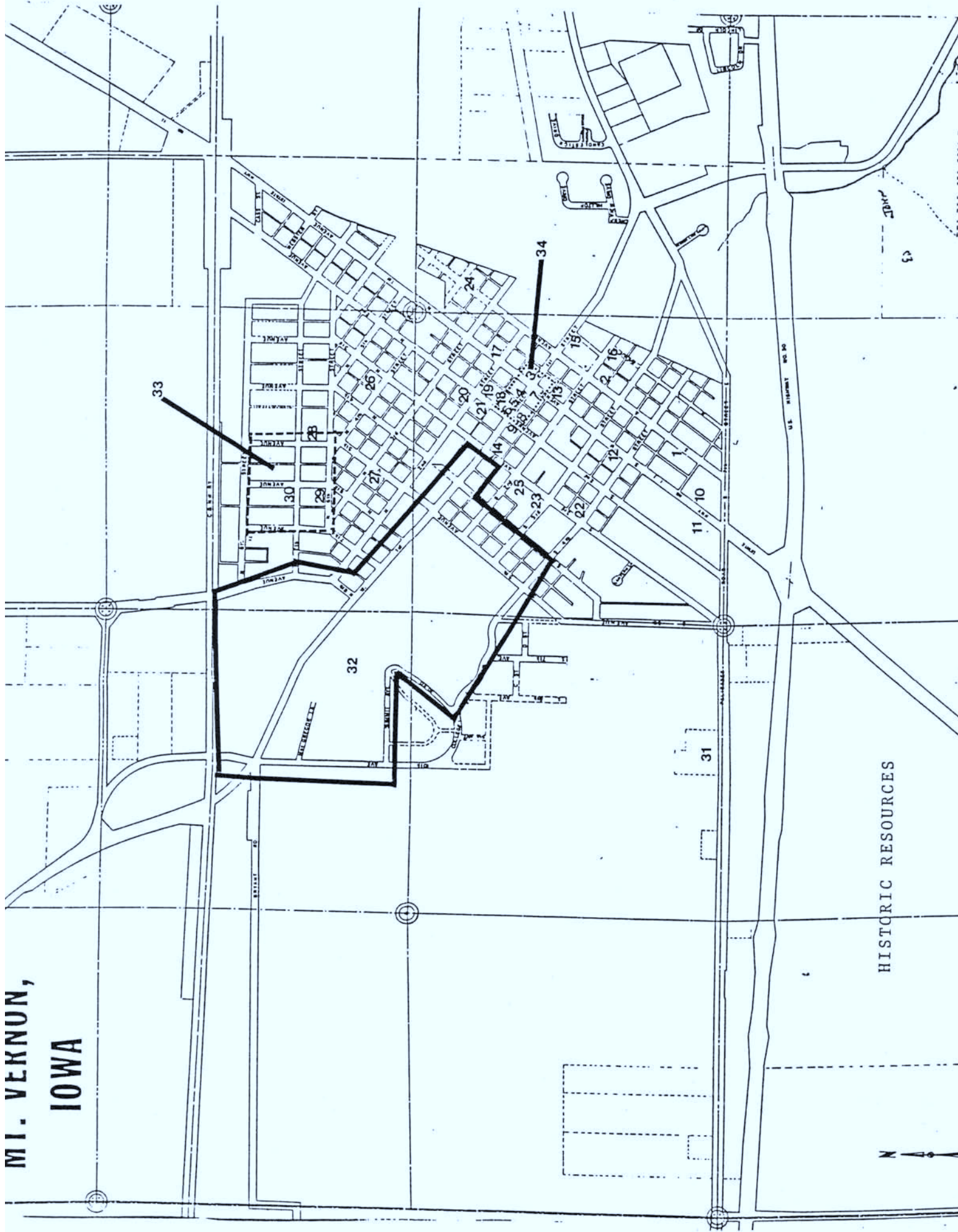
APPENDIX A

Historic Resources Eligible for National Register Listing

Numbers are map numbers. Comments in parentheses refer to historic contexts the properties illustrate.

1. Knott Brick House, 417 A Ave (brick) (road)
2. House, 208 A Ave S (rail) (builder)
3. Wolfe-Ellison Block, 101 1st St E (rail)
4. 109 1st St
5. 113 1st St
6. 117 1st St
7. Store, 100 1st St SW (rail)
8. Store and Odd Fellows Building, 124 1st St SW (rail)
9. Drs. Wolfe Building, 202 1st St SW (rail)
10. Brick House, 600 1st Ave S (brick) (road)
11. Augustus Bauman Brick House, 601? 1st Ave S (brick) (road)
12. Brick House, 309 1st Ave S (brick)
13. Brick House, 111 1st Ave S (road) (brick)
14. Henry Albright/Dr. F.F. Ebersole Brick House, 224 1st St SW (brick), (road), (college?)
15. Mt. Vernon Hotel, 210 1st St SE (hy)
16. Brick House, 214 2nd St SE (brick)
17. Brick House, 103 2nd St NE (brick) (road)
18. Brick House, 112 2nd Ave N (brick)
19. House, 124 2nd Ave N (rail)
20. Brick House, 201 2nd Ave N (brick)
21. Brick House, 113 2nd Ave N (brick)
22. Brick House, 316 3rd Ave S (brick)
23. Dr. J. Doran Brick House, 303 3rd St SW (brick)
24. Brick House, 323 3rd St NE (brick)
25. House, 117 3rd Ave NW (rail)
26. House, 409 4th St NW (rail)
27. House, 219 5th Ave NW (rail)
28. Professor Harry Kelly House, 610 5th Ave NW (rail)
29. Professor Freer House, 603 6th St NW (rail) (builder?)
30. House, 703 6th Ave N (rail)
31. Wesley West Brick House, 521 Palisades Rd. (individually listed in National Register)
32. Cornell College/Mount Vernon Historic District. (listed in National Register)
33. Ash Park Historic District (rail) (builder)
34. First Street Commercial District (rail)

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APPENDIX B

Inventory of Historic Properties by Address

In parentheses is the historic context(s) to which the property relates. Numbers in brackets are map numbers.

Road = Military Road era
Brick = Brick House
Rail = Railroad era
Builders = Works by local builders
Hy = Lincoln Highway era
College = Cornell College

* = individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
+ = merit further study before determining National Register eligibility
^ = potentially important example that has been too altered to merit National Register listing now

NR = individually listed in the National Register
In district = part of present National Register district

+House, 203 A Ave S (builder) [1]
*House, 208 A Ave S (rail) (builder) [2]
*Knott Brick House, 417 A Ave (brick) (road) [3]
+House A, Lisbon Rd (builder) [4]
+House B, Lisbon Rd (builder) [5]

*Wesley West Brick House, 521 Palisades Rd (brick) (NR) [6]
+House, Palisades Rd (road) [7]
+House, 730 Summit Ave (builder) (in district) [8]
^Brick House, 407 1st Ave S (brick) (road) [9]
*Brick House, 111 1st Ave S (road) [10]

+Lincoln Highway Marker, 1st St NW (hy) (in district) [11]
*Mt. Vernon Hotel, 210 1st St SE (hy) [12]
+House, 213 1st Ave S (builder) [13]
*Brick House, 600 1st Ave S (brick) (road) [14]
*Augustus Bauman Brick House, 601? 1st Ave S (brick) (road) [15]

*Henry Albright/Dr. F.F. Ebersole Brick House, 224 1st St SW (brick), (road), (college?) [16]
*Brick House, 309 1st Ave S (brick) [17]
+Mount Vernon High School, 1st St NE (hy) [18]
*Lyttle Brick House, 801 1st St NW (brick) (in district) [19]

*Guild Hall, 1st St SW (brick) (in district) [20]
 *Wolfe-Ellison Block, 101 1st St E (rail) [21]
 ^Store, 103 1st St NW (rail) [22]
 ^Store, 105 1st St NW (rail) [23]
 ^Bank Building, 107 1st St NW (rail) [24]

 *Store, 100 1st St SW (rail) [25]
 ^Capt. Charles Kepler Building, 104 1st St SW (rail) [26]
 *Store and Odd Fellows Building, 124 1st St SW (rail) [27]
 *Drs. Wolfe Building, 202 1st St SW (rail) [28]
 *House, 124 2nd Ave N (rail) [29]

 *Brick House, 201 2nd Ave N (brick) [30]
 *Brick House, 112 2nd Ave N (brick) [31]
 *Brick House, 113 2nd Ave N (brick) [32]
 +House, 514 2nd Ave N (road) [33]
 *Brick House, 103 2nd St NE (brick) (road) [34]

 +House, 313 2nd St NW (builder) [35]
 *Brick House, 214 2nd St SE (brick) [36]
 +^House, 201 3rd St NE (road) [37]
 +House, 203 3rd St SW (builder) [38]
 *Brick House, 323 3rd St NE (brick) [39]

 +House, 313 3rd Ave S (builder) [40]
 *Brick House, 316 3rd Ave S (brick) [41]
 *House, 117 3rd Ave NW (rail) [42]
 +House, 616 3rd Ave N (builder) [43]
 +House, 707 3rd Ave N (builder) [44]

 *Stephen Fellows Brick House, 402 3rd St SW (brick) (in district) [45]
 *Prof. Hugh Boyd Brick House, 405 3rd St SW (brick) (in district) [46]
 ^Brick House, 413 3rd St SW (brick) (in district) [47]
 *Dr. J. Doran Brick House, 303 3rd St SW (brick) [48]
 +Van Etten House, 408 3rd St SW (college) (in district) [49]

 +House, 310 4th Ave S (builder) [50]
 *House, 409 4th St NW (rail) [51]
 *Brick House, 303 5th Ave S (brick) (in district) [52]
 *Brick House, 309 5th Ave S (brick) (in district) [53]
 +House, 212 5th Ave N (builder) [54]

 +House, 603 5th Ave N (builder) [55]
 *House, 219 5th Ave NW (rail) [56]
 *Professor Harry Kelly House, 610 5th Ave NW (rail) [57]
 *Professor Freer House, 603 6th St NW (rail) (builder?) [58]
 +House, 625 6th St NW (builder) [59]

 *House, 703 6th Ave N (rail) [60]
 +House, 615 6th Ave N (builder) [61]

+House, 617 7th St NW (builder) [62]
*Reuban Ash Brick House, 702 8th Ave N (brick) (in district) [63]
*Old Highway Railroad Bridge, 10th Ave N (Hy) (in district) [64]

APPENDIX C

Significant Historic Properties in Mount Vernon

The following are examples of important buildings and structures in Mount Vernon by the historic context to which they relate. Under the terms of the contract for this project, those properties studied in some detail are to be listed by context. Properties significant under more than one theme are listed under each theme. Properties in the present historic district are not listed unless significance is in addition to their importance in the district. For example, the bridge over the railroad on 10th Avenue calls attention to the importance of the Lincoln Highway in Mount Vernon.

- * = individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- + = merit further study before determining National Register eligibility
- ^ = potentially important example that has been too altered to merit National Register listing now

NR = individually listed in the National Register

In district = part of present National Register district

Military Road-era Buildings

+House, Palisades Rd

^Brick House, 407 1st Ave S (brick)

*Brick House, 111 1st Ave S

*Brick House, 600 1st Ave S (brick)

*Augustus Bauman Brick House, 601? 1st Ave S (brick)

*Henry Albright/Dr. F.F. Ebersole Brick House, 224 1st St SW (brick), (college?)

*Brick House, 201 2nd Ave N (brick)

*Brick House, 112 2nd Ave N (brick)

*Brick House, 113 2nd Ave N (brick)

+House, 514 2nd Ave N

+^House, 201 3rd St NE

Railroad-era Buildings

*Wolfe-Ellison Block, 101 1st St E

^Store, 103 1st St NW

^Store, 105 1st St NW

^Bank Building, 107 1st St NW

*Store, 100 1st St SW

- ^Capt. Charles Kepler Building, 104 1st St SW
- *Store and Odd Fellows Building, 124 1st St SW
- *Drs. Wolfe Building, 202 1st St SW
- *House, 124 2nd Ave N
- *House, 703 6th Ave N
-
- *House, 117 3rd Ave NW
- *House, 219 5th Ave NW
- *Professor Harry Kelly House, 610 5th Ave NW
- *Professor Freer House, 603 6th St NW (builder?)

Lincoln Highway-era Buildings and Structures

- +Lincoln Highway Marker, 1st St NW (in district)
- *Mt. Vernon Hotel, 210 1st St SE
- +Mount Vernon High School, 1st St NE
- *Old Highway Railroad Bridge, 10th Ave N (in district)

Cornell College Buildings and District

- *Guild Hall, 324 1st St SW (brick) (in district)
- +Van Etten House, 408 3rd St SW (in district)
- *Henry Albright/Dr. F.F. Ebersole Brick House, 224 1st St SW (college?)
- +Charles Kepler House, 205 2nd Ave N

Brick Houses

- *Knott Brick House, 417 A Ave (road)
- *Wesley West Brick House, 521 Palisades Rd (NR)
- ^Brick House, 407 1st Ave S (road)
- *Brick House, 600 1st Ave S (road)
- *Augustus Bauman Brick House, 601? 1st Ave S (road)
-
- *Henry Albright/Dr. F.F. Ebersole Brick House, 224 1st St SW (road), (college?)
- *Brick House, 309 1st Ave S
- *Lyttle Brick House, 801 1st St NW (in district)
- *Brick House, 111 1st Ave S (road)
- *Guild Hall, 324 1st St SW (college) (in district)
-
- *Brick House, 103 2nd St NE (road)
- *Brick House, 214 2nd St SE
- *Brick House, 323 3rd St NE
- *Brick House, 316 3rd Ave S
- *Stephen Fellows Brick House, 402 3rd St SW (in district)
-
- *Prof. Hugh Boyd Brick House, 405 3rd St SW (in district)
- ^Brick House, 413 3rd St SW (in district)
- *Dr. J. Doran Brick House, 303 3rd St SW
- +Brick House, 303 5th Ave S (in district)

+Brick House, 309 5th Ave S (in district)

*Reuban Ash Brick House, 702 8th Ave N (in district)

Works by Local Builders

+House, 203 A Ave S

*House, 208 A Ave S (rail)

+House A, Lisbon Rd

+House B, Lisbon Rd

+House, 730 Summit Ave (in district)

+House, 213 1st Ave S

+House, 313 2nd St NW

+House, 203 3rd St SW

+House, 313 3rd Ave S

+House, 616 3rd Ave N

+House, 707 3rd Ave N

+House, 310 4th Ave S

+House, 212 5th Ave N

+House, 603 5th Ave N

+House, 625 6th St NW

+House, 615 6th Ave N

+House, 617 7th St NW

*Professor Freer House, 603 6th St NW (rail) (builder?)

APPENDIX D

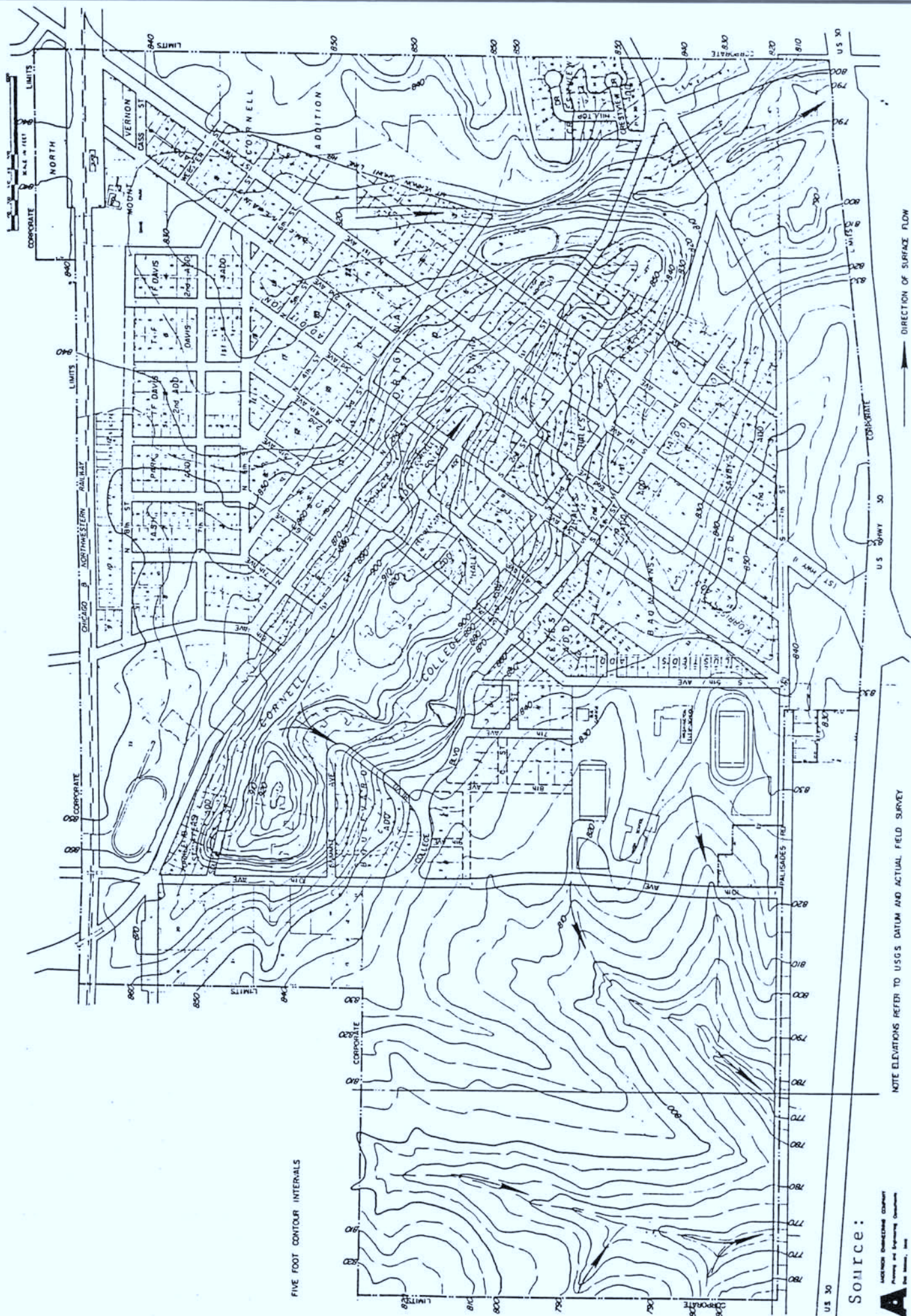
Historic Resources Already Listed on the National Register

Wesley West Brick House, 521 Palisades Rd.

Cornell College/Mount Vernon Historic District.

PHYSICAL FEATURES AND TOPOGRAPHY MAP

MOUNT VERNON, IOWA



FIVE FOOT CONTOUR INTERVALS

Source:

AMERICAN ENGINEERING COMPANY
Planning and Engineering Consultants
Des Moines, Iowa

NOTE ELEVATIONS REFER TO USGS DATUM AND ACTUAL FIELD SURVEY

DIRECTION OF SURFACE FLOW

Mount Vernon Site Inventory
September, 1988

Street Address	Date of Co	Site name	Map	Po
417 A Ave. South	1850	Knott House	1	A
208 A Ave. South	1900-1906		2	A
101 + 103 1st Street East	1894	Wolfe - Ellison Block	3	A
109 1st Street West	1893	Commercial Building	4	A
113 1st St. West	1891		5	A
117 First Street North	1894-1900	Lora's Fashions	6	A
100 1st Street West	1894	Hardware & Tin Shop	7	A
124 1st Street West	1904	IOOF Hall	8	A
202 1st Street SW	1912	Dr. Wolfe Offices	9	A
600 1st Ave. South	1870's		10	A
601 1st Ave. South	1853	Augustus Bowman House	11	A
315 1st Avenue South	1875		12	A
118 1st Ave South	1850		13	A
224 S. 1st Street West	1853	Henry Albright/Dr. F.	14	A
210 South 1st Street East		Floyd Mersh Mt. Verno	15	A
214 Soth 2nd Street East	1860's		16	A
103 North 2nd Street East	1860's		17	A
112 2nd Ave. North	1855	Ida Sherwood House	18	A
124 2nd Avenue North	1890	Dr. Gormley	19	A
201 2nd Ave. North	1870's		20	A
113 2nd Ave. North	1850's		21	A
316 3rd Ave. South	1860's		22	A
303 South 3rd Street West	1850-1860	Dr. J. Doron House	23	A
323 North 3rd Street East		Elija Waln House	24	A
117 3rd Ave. North	1903	George Soper House	25	A
409 North Fourth St. West	1880		26	A
219 5th Ave. N.	1890's		27	A
610 5th Ave. North	1900	Professor Harry Kelly	28	A
603 North 6th Street West	1891	Professor Freer House	29	A
703 6th Ave. North	1896	Professor Van Valkenb	30	A
521 Palisades Rd.	1877		31	A
Tenth Ave. North over tra	1900-1910	Chicago Northwestern		B
730 Summit Avenue	1900			B
212 5th Avenue North Mt.	1906			B
707 3rd Avenue North	1901			B
213 1st Avenue South	1900			B
616 3rd Avenue North	1902			B
203 A Avenue South	1894			B
603 5th Avenue North	1900			B
615 6th Avenue North	1900			B
617 North 7th Street West	1900			B
313 3rd Avenue South	1910			B
625 North 6th Street West	1900			B
809 Lisbon Road	1900			B
313 North 2nd Street West	1910			B
819 Lisbon Road A	1900			B
310 4th Avenue South	1906			B
203 South 3rd Street West	1906			B
107 1st Street West	1991			B
105 1st Street West	1888			B
104 1st Street West	1895			B
103 1st Street West	1880			B

Street Address	Date of Co	Site name	Map	Po
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10th Avenue West & Northw	1900	Old Overhead Bridge		B
324 1st Street West	1868	Guild Hall		B
408 South 3rd Street West	1938	Van Etten House		B
205 2nd Avenue North	1892	Charles Kepler House		B
413 South 3rd Street West	1859			B
303 5th Avenue South	1860			B
309 5th Avenue South	1865			B
702 8th Avenue North	1854	Rueben Ash Farmstead		B
801 1st Street West	1884	George Lyttle House		B
402 South 3rd Street West	1862	Stephen Fellows House		B
405 South 3rd Street West	1876	Professor Hugh & Mary		B
514 2nd Avenue North	1884			B
201 North 3rd Street East	1860			B
2001 Palisades Road	1860			B
123 South 2nd Avenue West	1840			B
407 1st Avenue South	1859			B
200 1st Street East	1927	Mt. Vernon High Schoo		B

Mount Vernon Site Inventory, September 1988
Houses built during 1890's

Street Address	Owners Name	Date of C
101 + 103 1st Street East	Mrs. Diana Price	1894
109 1st Street West	Alan Shepley	1893
113 1st St. West	George Richards	1891
117 First Street North	Connie Kahl	1894-1900
100 1st Street West	Lynn Traver	1894
124 2nd Avenue North	James Engelbrecht	1890
219 5th Ave. N.	Marshall G. Hardesty, Jr.	1890's
610 5th Ave. North	Paul K. Scott	1900
603 North 6th Street West	Charles R. and Felicitas Connell	1891
703 6th Ave. North	Donald and Judy Stine	1896
730 Summit Avenue	Cornell College	1900
213 1st Avenue South	Shawn & Jackie Weirather	1900
203 A Avenue South	Roger Hoffman	1894
603 5th Avenue North	Douglas & Connie Randall	1900
615 6th Avenue North	Bill Wallace	1900
617 North 7th Street West	Roger Rife	1900
625 North 6th Street West	Terry Knake	1900
809 Lisbon Road	Robert C. Ohlfest	1900
819 Lisbon Road A	Donald Siggins	1900
104 1st Street West	Mrs. Iva Roberts	1895
10th Avenue West & Northwe	Chicago & Northwestern R.R. (Lea	1900
205 2nd Avenue North	James Freeman & Abbi Swanson (h/	1892

Mount Vernon Site Inventory, September 1988
Houses built before 1880

Street Add	Subdivisio	Owners Nam	Date of Co	Architectu	Condition
417 A Ave.	Saxby's Ad	Geraldine	1850	Greek Revi	good
600 1st Av	Saxby's 2n	Gerald Edl	1870's		excellent
601 1st Av	Bauman's A	Norma Morr	1853		excellent
315 1st Av	Hall's 1st	M. G. Mitc	1875		excellent
118 1st Av	Original T	James Moor	1850		good
224 S. 1st	Original T	Roy Bowman	1853		excellent
210 South	Saxby's Ad	Viola Mers			good
214 Soth 2	Saxby's Ad	Joe Gianni	1860's	Greek Revi	good
103 North	Original T	Patricia B	1860's	Greek Revi	good
112 2nd Av	Original T	Arnold Bra	1855	Greek Revi	fair
201 2nd Av	Original T	Michael &	1870's	Greek Revi	excellent
113 2nd Av	Original T	Don Koppen	1850's	Greek Revi	good
316 3rd Av	Hall's 1st	Mrs. Orvil	1860's		good
303 South	Hall's 1st	Mike and L	1850-1860		good
323 North	Cornell Ad	John and B			excellent
521 Palisa		Randall M.	1877		excellent
324 1st St		Mary Seidl	1868	Greek Revi	fair
413 South		Mrs. John	1859	Greek Revi	excellent
303 5th Av		Cornell Co	1860	Gable-Side	good
309 5th Av		Cornell Co	1865	Greek Revi	excellent
702 8th Av		W. Claud &	1854	Greek Revi	excellent
402 South		Lloyd & Vi	1862	Greek Revi	good
405 South		Denver & C	1876	Gothic Rev	Excellent
201 North		Russ Charb	1860	Gable-Side	good
2001 Palis		George Pis	1860	Gable-side	good
123 South		Patricia B	1840	Crossed-ga	good
407 1st Av		Mary Mulhe	1859	Greek Revi	excellent

Local Hist	Site name	Map Refe	Potential	Exterior W
Brick/Mili	Knott Hous	1	A	brick
brick/Mili		10	A	brick
Brick/Mili	Augustus B	11	A	brick
brick		12	A	brick
Military R		13	A	brick
Brick/Mili	Henry Albr	14	A	brick
Lincoln Hi	Floyd Mers	15	A	shingles
Brick		16	A	brick
Brick		17	A	stretcher
brick	Ida Sherwo	18	A	brick
Brick		20	A	brick
Brick		21	A	brick
brick		22	A	brick
Brick	Dr. J. Dor	23	A	brick
Brick	Elija Waln	24	A	brick
national r		31	A	brick
Cornell Co	Guild Hall		B	brick
brick			B	brick
brick			B	brick
brick			B	brick
brick	Rueben Ash		B	brick
brick	Stephen Fe		B	brick
brick	Professor		B	brick
road			B	clapboard
military r			B	shingles
military r			B	brick
military r			B	stone & br