

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



FEB 19 1982

**1. Name**

historic Joseph "Diamond Jo" Reynolds Office Building & <sup>House</sup> Residence  
and/or common

**2. Location**

A and Main Sts.  
street & number Northwest corner of A Street near it's intersection with Main Street (U.S. Hwy 18) — not for publication  
city, town McGregor — vicinity of congressional district 2  
state Iowa code county Clayton code

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name J. Douglas Dawson, William Conklin<sup>9</sup>, and Patrick Tranter  
street & number P.O. Box 97  
city, town McGregor — vicinity of state Iowa

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office, Clayton Courthouse  
street & number  
city, town Clinton state Iowa

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title None has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date  federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records  
city, town state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Surrounded by heavily wooded cliffs and situated in the heart of McGregor's nineteenth century commercial area, the Joseph "Diamond Jo" Reynolds Office Building and Residence is a striking visual reminder not only of McGregor's heyday as a major commercial and agricultural center but of one of the state's and nation's leading steamboat operators. This attractively-sited, two-story, northwestwardly-facing edifice, whose Romanesque styling is unique for this area, was erected in the early 1880's during the heyday of the famed "Diamond Jo" line. Constructed of red brick, the building rests on foundations of locally quarried limestone over a partially raised full basement. The structure is capped with a flat roof pierced by a single skylight and surrounded on three sides by a brick parapet.

Exterior ornamentation is provided chiefly by window and door treatments and the skillful use of contrasting types of brick and terra cotta. Particularly noteworthy are the large rounded arches on the front (northwest) facade which not only enclose the windows and doorways there but give the building something of an arcaded effect. The main entrance is highlighted by a large triangular pediment featuring a molded terra cotta cornice and highly decorative tiles and chimney pot of the same material. The somewhat ornate projecting bay window at the base of the second story here is not original and dates from around the turn of the century. Additional decoration is provided by utilizing contrasting shades of brick to trim arches around the second story on the front facade and first and second stories on the southwest side; molded bricks and terra cotta panels featuring geometric, flower, business and numerous other motifs; decorated brick chimneys with corbelled caps; and a highly decorative brick cornice and corbelling along the roofline. For the most part, alteration to the building's exterior have been minimal and it looks much as it did when Reynolds lived and worked here.

Although the interior has been altered somewhat, particularly on the first floor, it still retains a number of original features like woodwork, doors, and fireplaces. The second floor features an ornate pressed tin ceiling, carved wooden doors, and flooring utilized when the Reynolds family resided here.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1880-1895 **Builder/Architect** Joseph Reynolds

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Joseph Reynolds Office Building and Residence is the only known extant edifice in McGregor closely associated with Reynolds' career as owner of the famed "Diamond Jo" steamboat line and as one of Iowa's most outstanding nineteenth century entrepreneurs. In many ways Reynolds typified that breed of nineteenth century businessman who constantly moved westward to improve his prospects and fortune and in the process contributed mightily to state, regional, and national development. Born in New York, he became a flour miller in that state in the 1840's. By the 1850's, as the grain belt shifted further westward, Reynolds relocated to Chicago where he became a major grain buyer as well as a flour manufacturer. Around 1860 he moved to McGregor which was then the largest primary wheat market west of Chicago. Reynolds soon became McGregor's and one of the northwest's biggest grain buyers. By 1865, largely due to the markets created by Reynolds and others, it became commonplace to see over 1,000 wagon loads of wheat on the streets of McGregor during the buying season and to have sellers arriving from as far as 200 miles west.

During his first years in McGregor, Reynolds utilized the available steamboat lines to ship grain down the Mississippi, but continued efforts in the mid-1860's to deny him access to river transportation caused him to establish his own line around 1866. By the early 1870's, the "Diamond Jo" line had become a major factor in river transportation. In 1874 Reynolds shifted the headquarters of the line and his other enterprises from Fulton, Illinois to Dubuque so that he would not have to travel so far to supervise his operations. In the late 1870's, as railroads displaced steamboats in the shipping of grain, Reynolds turned to the passenger trade. He built some of the most ornate and luxurious steamboats on the river, and from that date until 1911 when the line was sold, "Diamond Jo" boats were considered the ultimate in luxury travel. In fact, W.C. Handy mentioned the line in a verse of his famous "St. Louis Blues."

Reynolds did not confine his activities to steamboating. From his home and office in McGregor he supervised a financial empire which included a trade in fur and hides, a railroad in the South, and mines in the West. On a trip to visit one of his mining properties, he died suddenly in 1891. His widow continued to reside in the office and residence building until shortly before her death in 1895. In latter years, this structure was used for a variety of purposes including grain trader offices, a billiard parlor, and a post office. Presently, it houses a winery, shops, and several apartments.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

UTM NOT VERIFIED

(See Continuation Sheet Item Number 9)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Prairie Du Chien

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

## Verbal boundary description and justification

The West 61 Feet of lots 9 & 10 in block 4 of the Original Town of Mc Gregor, Clayton, Co.

## List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ralph J. Christian, Architectural Historian

organization Division of Historic Preservation date October 1980

street & number 26 East Market Street telephone 319-353-6949 or 353-4186

city or town Iowa City state Iowa 52240

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Alvin A. Anderson

title Director, Division of Historic Preservation date January 6, 1982

For HCERS use only

hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

William H. Brauman date 2.19.82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 18 1982

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Myers, Lena D., Alexander MacGregor and His Town (McGregor: McGregor Public Library, 1971).

Price, Realto D. (ed.), History of Clayton County, Iowa, Vol. I (Chicago: Robert O. Law Company, 1916).

"The Diamond Jo Line," Special Issue, The Palimpsest, LI (April 1970).

Winther, Oscar O., The Transportation Frontier: Trans-Mississippi West, 1865-1890 (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1964).

Writers' Program of Work Projects Administration, A Guide to McGregor (McGregor: J.G. Widman & Sons Co., 1940).