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## National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic events, persons, or places. See instructions in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 18B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

XX New Submission         Amended Submission

### A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historical and Architectural Resources of Henry County, IA

### B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

The Swedish Heritage of Wayne Township, Henry County, IA: 1864-c.1945

### C. Form Prepared by

name/title Molly Myers Naumann, Consultant  
organization Henry County Historic Preservation Commission date March 1999  
street & number 167 West Alta Vista telephone 515-682-2743  
city or town Ottumwa state IA zip code 52501-1437

### D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Patricia Chen Kim  
Signature and title of certifying official

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

State or Federal agency and bureau

6-10-99  
Date

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

7.15.99  
Date of Action

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historical & Architectural Resources  
Of Henry County, Iowa

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## HISTORIC CONTEXT:

### INTRODUCTION

The Henry County Historic Preservation Commission received a Certified Local Government Grant to conduct a Planning for Preservation project during 1995-96. That project identified five historic contexts which have been significant in the county's development. The primary recommendation from the planning project was to conduct an intensive level historical and architectural survey of the resources that relate to the context "The Swedish Heritage of Wayne Township." This survey was conducted during 1996-97 with the assistance of another Certified Local Government grant. This Multiple Property Documentation Form and the National Register nominations being submitted with it are the result of that intensive survey. Additional information about this project is included in Section H.

### THE SWEDISH HERITAGE OF WAYNE TOWNSHIP: 1864-c.1945

*(The complete history of Swedesburg in Henry County, and the New Sweden Settlement in Jefferson County, can be found in the library of the Swedish Heritage Museum in Swedesburg. The information contained in this document has been condensed and is not intended as a definitive history of the settlement.)*

Henry County is located in the second tier of counties north of the state of Missouri and is the second county west of the Mississippi River. It contains twelve townships encompassing 432 square miles (276,480 acres). This area was part of the Black Hawk Purchase and was opened for settlement on 1 June 1833. Although a number of communities were platted in the years immediately following the formal establishment of the county in 1836, other were founded later, in the 1850s, '60s, and '70s.

The surface of the county has been described as "high and undulating." The Skunk River, which runs from northwest to southeast through the county, is the major stream. The 1875 Andreas Atlas noted that the soil "is well adapted to the production of grain, grass, fruit and vegetables, and the county is known as one of the best agricultural and fruit-growing counties in the state."

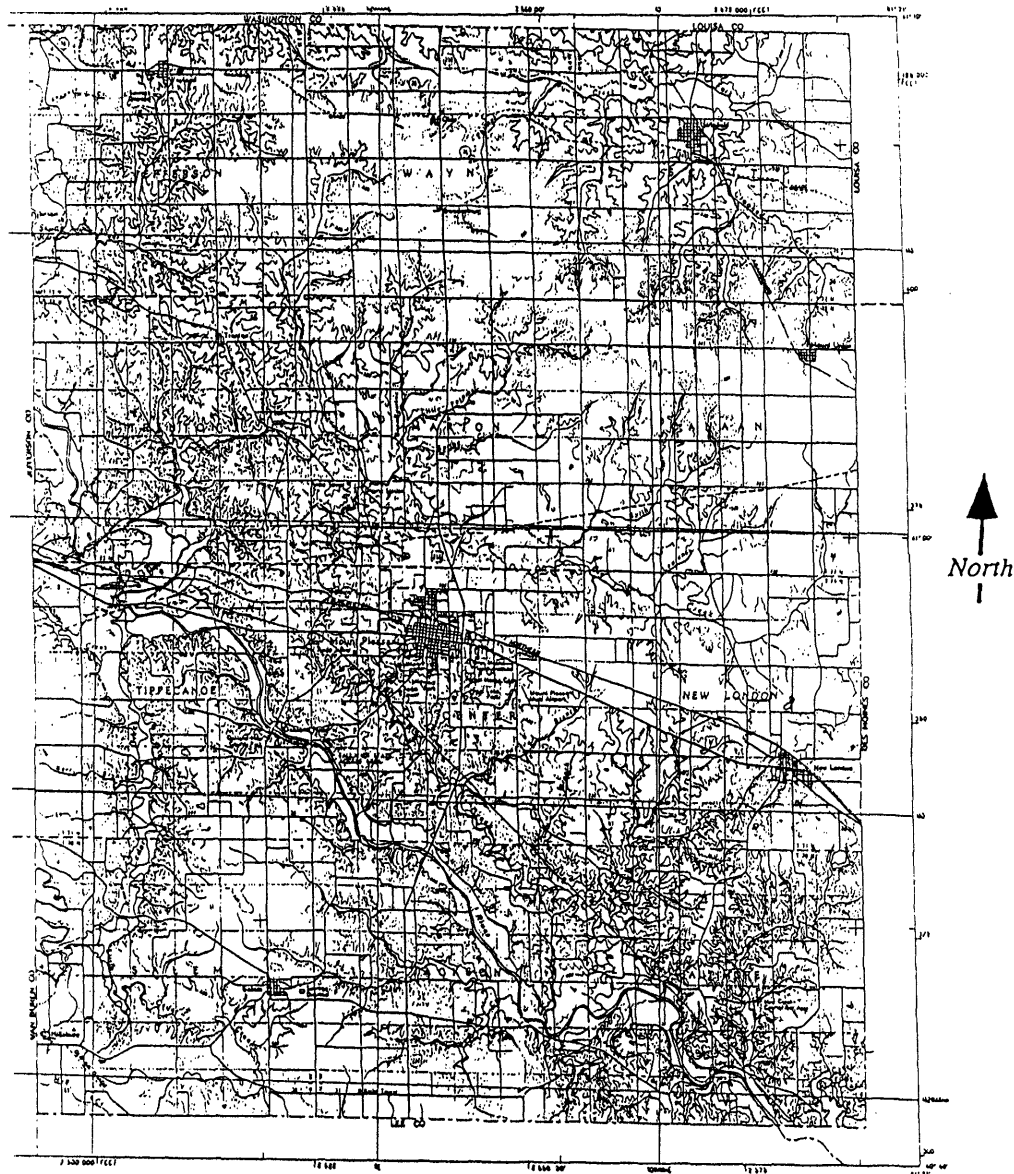
While the above description might be applicable to most of Henry County, Wayne Township in the north central part of the county (T73N R6W) was much different. Early surveyors described it as "swampy marsh land, in many places covered with shallow pools known as buffalo wallows. Some of these surveyors wrote notes on the side of their work sheets stating that this part of the county might never be settled because of its swampy condition."<sup>1</sup> Even the Military Road which was laid out between Dubuque and Keosauqua in 1839 had difficulty traversing this marshy area. It is said that there were a number of different "paths" which led through the region, some of which simply ended abruptly, causing early settlers to backtrack and try another. Despite the fact that much of the county was settled in the 1830s, land sales in Wayne Township did not start until 1850, and even then the new owners made no effort to improve the land. It took

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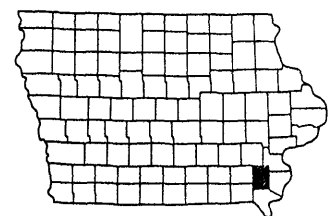
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Henry County, Iowa  
U.S.G.S. 1:100,000-scale topographic map  
(Reduced)



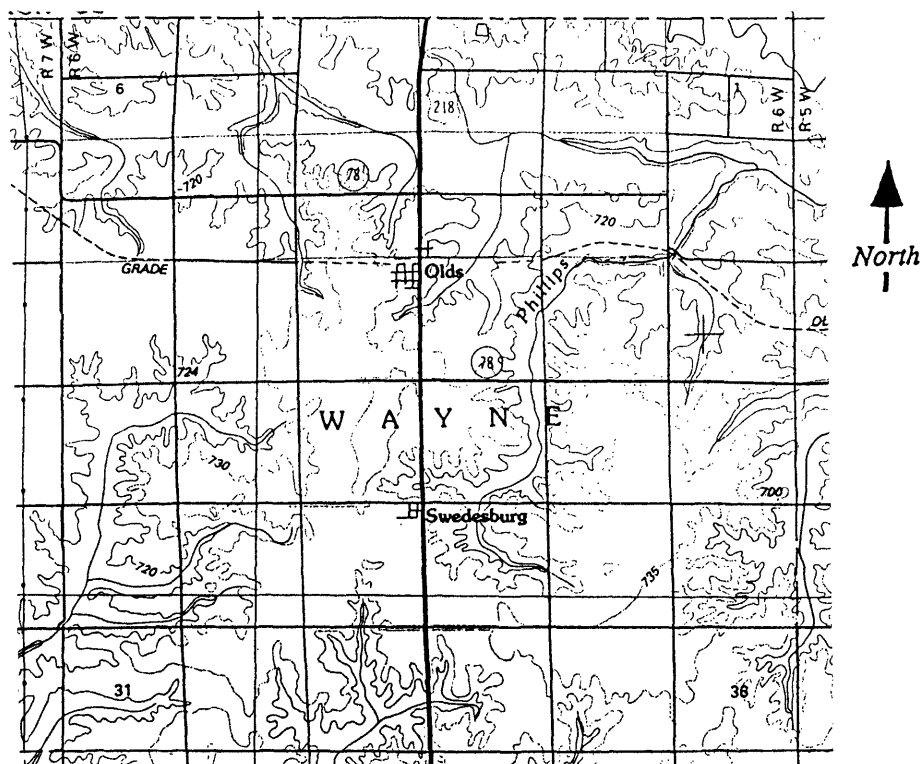
LOCATION DIAGRAM

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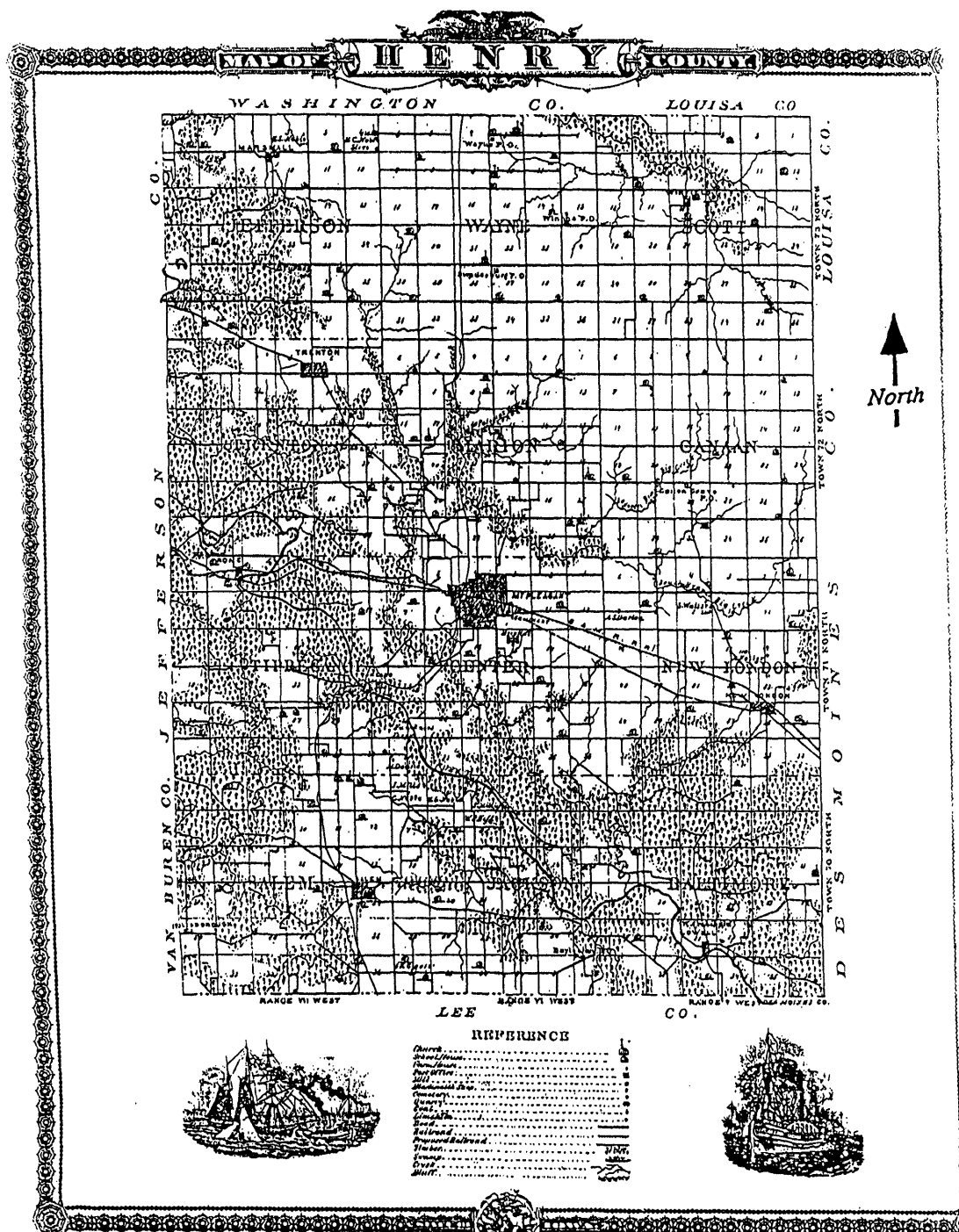
Henry County, Iowa: Detail of Wayne Twp.  
U.S.G.S. Map

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1875 Map of Henry County  
(From the A.T. Andreas Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa)

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another decade before the area came under cultivation. This happened due to a string of events set in motion by a Swedish emigrant named Peter Cassel.

In 1845 Peter Cassel led a group of 21 relatives and neighbors<sup>2</sup> to an area of Jefferson County, Iowa just northwest of the village of Lockridge and established a settlement there known as New Sweden. (New Sweden is located approximately 20 miles west and a little south of Swedesburg.) According to George T. Flom, this was the first large Swedish settlement in America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as being the first Scandinavian settlement in Iowa.<sup>3</sup> It is said that this area was selected because the land was rolling with plentiful water, and there were abundant trees for building purposes. Another source however described Cassel's Jefferson County land as ".....raw unbroken land that he found out on the windswept prairie but Swedish industry and Swedish thrift worked a marvelous transformation in the once barren landscape."<sup>4</sup> Whatever the land was really like, it appears that settlers came to the area quite rapidly, with some moving west from Illinois, while others came directly from Sweden. Cassel was personally responsible for many of the emigrants coming to southeastern Iowa. He sent many letters back to Sweden, addressed to "Friends and Countrymen," telling of the land and life in the Iowa Territory. These letters were printed in newspapers and published in book form. Since they came from an experienced farmer they aroused a great deal of interest.

As a religious people, one of the first tasks was the construction of a church. The white frame New Sweden Lutheran Church building was constructed in 1848. (Today it is recognized as the first church of the Augustana Synod, and has been dedicated as a shrine by the Synod. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.)

In his Letters from the Promised Land: Swedes in America, 1840-1914, H. Arnold Barton divides Swedish emigration into three phases. The settlers at New Sweden represent the first of these phases, The Pioneers: 1840-1864. It appears that there were a variety of reasons that people emigrated from Sweden to the United States. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century George T. Flom wrote a series of three articles dealing with the "Scandinavian factor" which appeared in the Iowa Journal of History of Politics. He examined the influences on both a national and a state level, and discussed each of the three Scandinavian countries separately. One of the things which appears to have interested him the most was what caused the mass migration from these northern European countries to the U.S. In 1905 he listed what he considered to be the eight chief influences, in order of importance:<sup>5</sup>

- 1) material betterment
- 2) letters from family/friends encouraging emigration
- 3) advertising of emigration agents encouraging emigration
- 4) religious persecution
- 5) church proselytism
- 6) political oppression
- 7) military service
- 8) desire for adventure

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Seventy years later Barton reached some of the same conclusions. He identified four major reasons behind Swedish emigration to this country:<sup>6</sup>

- 1) economic factors
- 2) religion
- 3) social distinctions
- 4) sheer adventure

To Barton the economic factors, more than anything else led to the Swedish emigration. Although farmers made up approximately 75% of the Swedish population, only 10% of the country was considered good arable land. It became increasingly difficult to make an adequate living under the circumstances. The early emigrants appear to have been farmers who were neither terribly rich nor terribly poor. It was fairly expensive to make the trip to America. In 1846 Peter Cassel advised that a family of four should not undertake the trip with less than 1,000 *riksdaler riksgalds* (approximately \$250.00 American dollars), a sum relatively few could afford.<sup>7</sup> Most commonly the emigrants were "moderately prosperous *bonder* who brought with them their entire families and sometimes a hired man or hired girl who contracted to work off the cost of the journey in America."<sup>8</sup> Such persons made up the group who accompanied Peter Cassel.

The immigrants were impressed by the sheer size of the country, and the abundance of its resources. As experienced farmers they appreciated the rich green grasses, stone-free soil, giant trees, and sparkling clean lakes. However, most were unprepared for the extremes in weather found in this country, from scorching summer heat to the icy blast of winter. Nothing prepared them for the tornadoes, snowstorms, floods, prairie fires, and droughts that are the American midwest. Despite the many unforeseen challenges, Iowa's Swedish immigrants stayed and prospered.

One of the New Sweden settlers was a man by the name of Oliver Stephenson. Around 1860 he married Mary Jonson, a young Swedish immigrant living in Henry County. Over the years both Oliver and Mary wrote many letters to friends and family back in Sweden, telling of their life in Iowa, and encouraging them to join them in this country. In an 1864 letter to her parents Mary shared her fear that the fighting of the Civil War might spread north into Iowa, and then described more of her life in New Sweden.<sup>9</sup>

Our new home has many advantages over the old one, and I like it much better. We have a good level road to church, and the distance is no greater. I sell butter and eggs to a man who calls every other week. I believe I have sold twenty dollars' worth of eggs, besides considerable butter. We have four cows. We sheared six sheep. I have twenty-four pounds of wool. I have begun to spin, and I intend to weave thirty yards of cloth warped with wool. A yard is equal to one and one-half *ain*. Cotton yarn is ten dollars per skein.....

The following year Mary told her family that she still hoped that some of them would come to Iowa, and then noted that

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Oliver speaks a great deal of moving to Sweden, but I don't favor it, as I have things as good as I could wish. The only thing that could induce me to go to Sweden is the pleasure of being with you.....We live better than the people in Sweden, and we are not wanting in spiritual food. When I compare conditions here with those in Sweden, we are fortunate. We have good bread and wheat flour and as much beef and pork as we desire for each meal. We have all the butter, eggs, and milk we need. Last summer I sold twenty dozen eggs every two weeks. Last fall we made a barrel and a half of good sugar syrup for cooking fruit. Last summer I cooked cherries in syrup.....We have an abundance of various kinds of apples. In fact, we have so many things that make for comfort and happiness that, when I compare Sweden with this country, I have no desire to return.....

I will write what we are doing. Oliver is plowing corn, and I am busy sewing dresses. I intend to spin soon. We have about thirty pounds of wool, half of which I am going to have spun by machine and the remainder I am going to spin by hand. I am going to weave clothes for Oliver, and I intend to sell some cloth. Last fall I sold cloth to my nearest neighbor for two dollars per yard.<sup>10</sup>

With such letters encouraging friends and family to emigrate, the area around New Sweden was rapidly filling up. In 1863 the pastor of the New Sweden Lutheran Church, Hakan Olson, and several other men from the settlement traveled to Henry County looking for a spot where a new Swedish settlement could be established. Despite the marshy quality of the land, they liked the broad flat areas of Wayne Township. Soon after this Olson traveled to Illinois and visited with Swedish immigrants around Biggsville and Okwauqua, telling of the potential in Henry County, Iowa. In the spring of 1864 people from New Sweden and the Illinois settlements began moving to the new settlement in Wayne Township. The first family to arrive was the S.P. Swenson family from Jefferson County, but a few days later the families of Mathias Anderson and John Tolander arrived from Biggsville, Illinois. The following year (1865) Oliver Stephenson (and wife Mary) purchased 160 acres in Section 18 and moved from New Sweden to Wayne Township, and Gust Fridolph of Biggsville moved to 80 acres in Section 34. Both Stephenson and Fridolph were to be exceedingly important in the Henry County settlement. Stephenson wrote many letters directly to friends and family in Sweden encouraging them to immigrate to Henry County. Fridolph took charge of land sales in the area. It is said that he was instrumental in locating desirable tracts for newcomers, land that could be bought at prices which they could afford, and which would also produce a living for them as they were getting settled in this new land.<sup>11</sup>

While the New Sweden Settlement represented what Barton refers to as phase I: "The Pioneers 1840-1864," the settlement around Swedesburg represents the next phase: "The Great Farmer - Land in the West 1865-1889." The end of the Civil War encouraged more European immigration, and crop failures in Sweden in the late 1860's added to this.



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Transportation had improved greatly since the 1840's, with railroads now reaching deep into the middle west, and ocean voyages taking days rather than weeks. The majority of the immigrants during this period were still farmers who settled in the farmlands of the midwest.<sup>12</sup>

By the spring of 1866 there were approximately 60 people (men, women, and children) living in the area. Just as the forming of a church had been important in the New Sweden settlement, so it was in Wayne Township. When the people gathered in April 1866 to organize a church, they named their small community "Freeport" to honor the man responsible for so many of them locating there, Gust Fridolph. (In 1870 the name of the village was changed to Swedesburgh because the post office already had a town called Freeport, and the "h" was dropped in 1893.) The congregation was offered one and one-half acres in the far southeast corner of Section 21 for their church, and in 1868 the church building was completed.

Pastor Hakan Olson of New Sweden purchased 40 acres in the northeast corner of Section 28 at a tax sale in 1867. It was located directly across the road from the church site, and became the location of the village of Swedesburg. The first lot sold by Olson (1868) was to house a store across the road south of the church. The sale came with the stipulation that no intoxicating liquor was ever to be sold on the premises.

In 1869 Hakan Olson was offered, and accepted, the position as pastor of the Swedesburg Lutheran Church. One of his first acts was to build a parsonage on his own land, across the road south of the church. The church's parsonage has remained on this site through the decades, though the present house is the fourth one.

Settlers were not just coming to the tiny village, but were settling on farms in Wayne Township. The largest concentration of Swedish settlers occurred in the southern two-thirds of the township. Among the first families to arrive were the Abrahamsons who settled in Section 34. Although there is still a farm associated with the Abrahamson family in Section 34 in 1998, it is located to the east of the original family farmstead.

It appears that the oldest farmstead remaining in family hands today is that of Charles E. Hult in Section 27, NW 1/4 (directly across U.S. Highway 218 from the village of Swedesburg proper, and diagonally across the road from the church). Born in Sweden in 1834, Charles Erick Hult (christened Karl Ericksson) came to this country in 1854. He worked on farms and railroads in Illinois for several years and became a citizen of the United States in 1861. In 1862 he enlisted in the Union Army, taking part in seventeen battles over the next three years. In 1867 he arrived in Swedesburg, Iowa and soon married a young Swedish woman named Charlotta Hultgren. While their house was being built they lived with Mons Anderson, one mile east of the Swedish settlement. When they moved into their new home in August 1867, it consisted of three rooms down and one room in the attic. At this time the country was mostly prairie with lots of marshy areas. The Hult house was the only one in the settlement for almost two years until the Johnson house was built on the south side of the Public Square. New arrivals had no place to stay, and many lived with the Hult family for days, weeks, and even months until their own houses could be built on their new farms. A young man (perhaps Nels Peterson) who traveled to Swedesburg with his parents in 1868 wrote in 1918 of their early days there.

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.....we, at last, tired from the long and tedious trip, most gladly arrived at our destination which was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hult.....I firmly believe that outside of regular hotels or boarding houses, there are few, if any, places in the state where more people, both local and transient, have, without cost or price, received both shelter and nourishment, and where the same was accompanied by gentle friendliness, encouragement and counsel, such as only sincerely sympathetic and unselfish, kind-hearted people like Mr. and Mrs. Hult could bestow. ....I have not sufficient command of language to do justice to these two splendid people with whom we, in their rather small, four room house, stayed until near the following Christmas.<sup>13</sup>

While the church was under construction it is said that the builders lived across the road with the Hults. One long-time resident noted that when her father's leg was broken by a horse falling on him, he was carried to the Hult home where he stayed until he could walk. Although the Hults were not charter members of the Lutheran congregation, they (and their family) have been active long-time members. In c.1882-84 the Hult house was enlarged to its present full two story size, complete with inset corner porch with turned millwork. Today much of the farmstead (barns, sheds, etc.) has been lost or altered, but the house, summer kitchen, and wood shed are representative of this family which was so important in the development of the Swedesburg area. The house and two attendant buildings are considered to be National Register eligible.

In 1870 S.P. Morgan and O.L. Lindeen arrived in the Swedesburg area. The young emigrants were good friends as well as cousins, and had married women who were also cousins in a double ceremony. For several years the two families lived in one small house on the O.L. Lindeen farm just east of Swedesburg in Section 27, and the men farmed in partnership. In 1874 Morgan purchased land across the road in Section 22 where

he erected a good residence, in fact his home is one of the most commodious and beautiful in the township, forming a very attractive feature in the landscape. He has also built various barns and sheds having everything necessary for the care of crops and stock and he uses the latest improved machinery to facilitate the work in the fields.....He is one of the prominent stockmen of the county and known as a breeder of polled Angus cattle. He also breeds Duroc Jersey hogs and raises some sheep.<sup>14</sup>

Only three of S.P. Morgan's buildings (house, barn, and shed) were standing in early 1997 when the Wayne Township survey was undertaken. Although not complete with outbuildings, this farmstead was evaluated as National Register eligible due to the high level of original design and the integrity of the extant resources, and the importance of Morgan in the development of this area. The house displayed fine architectural detailing in the gable ornamentation and front porch, while the large barn features twin cupolas with lightning rods. The house was demolished in the spring of 1997 making this ineligible as a farmstead.

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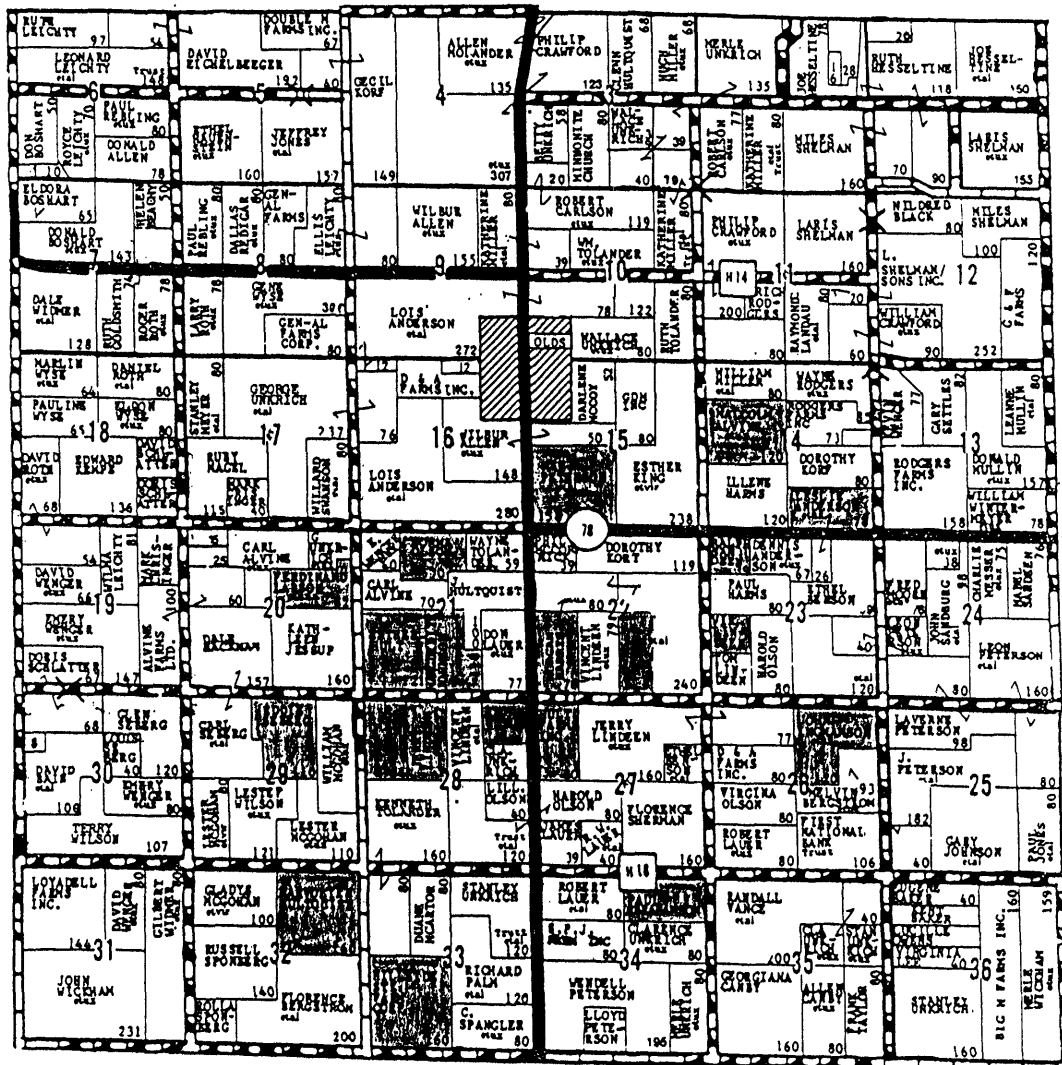
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**T-73-N**

**WAYNE PLAT**

**R-6-W**



Shaded areas indicate inventoried farms with strong Swedish connections.  
(1995 Plat Map)

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John Holt arrived from Sweden with his parents in 1853, and they settled in Jefferson County, Iowa. Holt purchased his farm in Wayne Township before he was married in 1873, and had a fine new Italianate style house built c.1875-80. His farmstead is located near the southwest corner of Section 21, a mile west of the church. Although the original barn and outbuildings have been replaced, the house remains a fine example of its type and period and illustrates how quickly large residences were built by some Swedish settlers.

After moving to the Swedesburg area in 1865, Mary Stephenson continued to send letters to her family back in Sweden. During the summer of 1868 she sent a letter in which she spoke directly to her sister and brother-in-law, Carl and Johanna,

.....you ask how you can put you money to the best advantage. You cannot buy a farm, because land is too high priced, but you can get a start by renting a farm. Renters get ahead much faster here than in Sweden. Those who want to own land go farther west, where the land is free. If you settle in this community, however, you can soon get started by buying colts and calves and harvesting fodder. Livestock develops rapidly, and it will not be long before you can realize on them. Oliver says he will help you all he can. You will not regret coming here if you do not encounter misfortunes - and misfortunes are met with in every country.

Day laborers are able to save money here - an impossibility in Sweden. I know of many who own farms who didn't even have gruel in Sweden.....a few weeks ago seventeen emigrants from Nydala parish arrived and made their headquarters with us. We housed and fed them, as they had not relatives or acquaintances. One family is still with us. The husband has been engaged to work two months for an American for twenty dollars per month.....People are arriving from Sweden and from other countries and sections in large numbers; but do not worry over the danger of overpopulation, as Iowa is as large as Sweden and only half settled.<sup>15</sup>

That letter must have had a profound effect, because the following May (1869), Carl (now known as Charles) and Johanna Larson arrived in Swedesburg, accompanied by her parents. Oliver Stephenson purchased land in Section 20 in 1870 which he evidently rented to his brother-in-law, ultimately selling it to him in 1875. The first house on this land was a small gable roof two room cottage with a loft. This was replaced between 1880 and 1890 by the present two story hip roof house which was built in stages. The original house then became the summer kitchen. The "new" house features bay windows and turned millwork on the porches, a truly elegant residence of its day. Today the large house has had the original siding covered on three sides, impairing the integrity, but it remains in the Larson family and stands as an important illustration of the Swedish settlement in the area.

These early farmers were plagued by the wet marshy conditions of some of their fields. Around 1880 a solution to the problem was found. A tile factory opened near Mount Pleasant which produced tile that could be laid in such a way to drain the excess

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water from the land. Soon tile factories sprang up throughout the area, trying to meet the demand. The installation of drainage tile in Wayne Township made the difference between soggy marshland, and fields that have been called "veritable gardens"

Another Swedish emigrant, August Anderson, settled in Section 33 in 1881, and with his son Edwin established a large operation known as the Hillside Stock Farm. The Andersons were well known as people who would hire young Swedish men and/or help them find jobs with others, so they could earn enough money to buy their own land and bring their families here. Although the Anderson farm has been altered over the years and does not have the Integrity necessary for the National Register, it tells an important story about the Swedish settlers.

In 1894 S.P. Morgan bought another 78 acres, these being just north of the village. On this he had built, in 1908-09 a large house for his wife, daughter and himself. (His son was getting married and would live on the "home place.") This new house featured the hip with gable roof, and broad wrap-around porch common to the period. Decorative brackets were found on the corners. The barn and one other building appear to date from the same period. It is said that the pastures on both the north and south sides of the farmstead remain virgin prairie grass.....never tilled. At this point this farmstead does not appear to have the significance necessary for the National Register but is representative of the Swedish heritage in the area.

As late as 1903 Swedish families were still moving to farms in this township. Charles Seberg was born near New Sweden to Swedish parents. He moved to the Swedesburg area following his marriage to Lydia Boshart, and in 1903 they purchased a farm in Section 29 (it was listed in Lydia's name only). It is not known what buildings were in place when they made the purchase, but in 1911 they built the house, barn, and perhaps some additional structures. According to an inscription on an interior wall, the house was constructed by Mae Roth in May 1911. It is a substantial house which displays the major decorative elements of the period: hip roof with gables, bracketed corners, decorative gable ends, and wrap-around porch with classical columns. The barn is also impressive, with board and batten exterior, gambrel roof, and hip roof ventilator. Additional information would be necessary to prove National Register eligibility, but the buildings illustrate a somewhat later period of Swedish growth.

While all of these farmsteads were being established, the village of Swedesburg was developing as well. By 1870 the settlement had grown to a population of 333, an increase of 274 people in just four years. Although Hakan Olson had purchased the land, and had even sold lots in 1868, the town was not actually surveyed and platted by the county engineer until 1875. The original plat contains twelve blocks with 50' wide streets running north/south and east/west. The Public Square (block 7) was a gift to the town from Olson with the stipulation that it be used for a women's seminary or other school purposes. Although this has not been followed precisely, it has always housed the parish hall which is used for many (most) community activities. The east edge of the village was defined by the former Military Road (now U.S. Highway 218), and the church was located immediately north of the town plat.

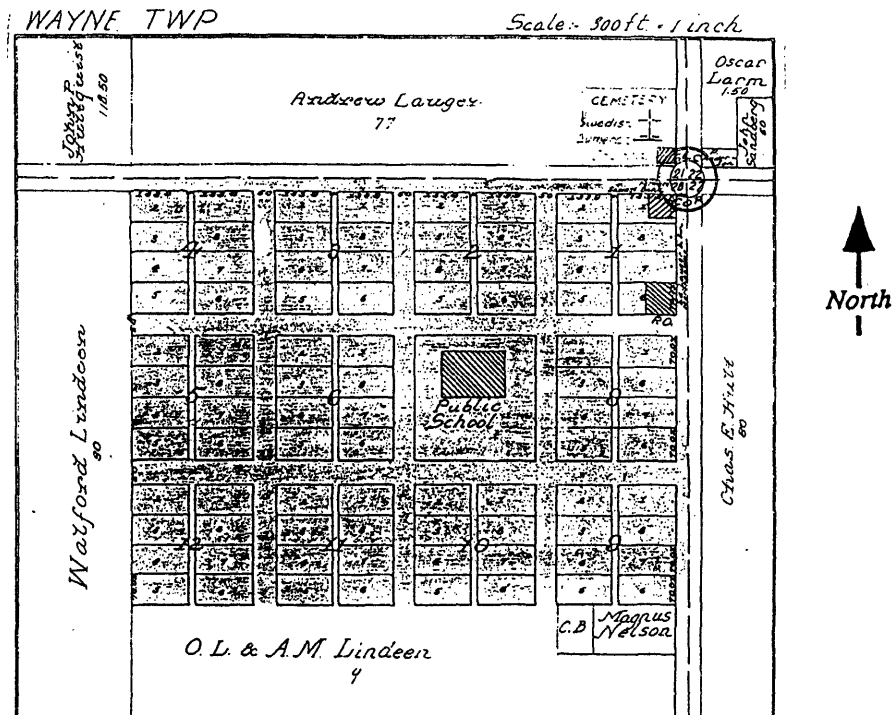
Although the church was the major focus of the young community, commercial development was necessary as well. The first store was built directly south of the church in 1868-69, with more buildings soon constructed south along the old Military Road and

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Plat Map of Swedesburg  
(From 1917 Standard Atlas of Henry County)

around the corner on Park. Two buildings from these early years remain today. In 1875 Charles Bergh had a building constructed for his tin shop, with living quarters above. His business expanded, becoming a hardware and general store. In 1881 Samuel White had a building built to house his general store, and used Bergh's building as well. These are both small frame buildings with gable roofs.

Other 19<sup>th</sup> century businesses in Swedesburg included: two shoe repair shops, a wood carver who made wooden shoes, a blacksmith shop, restaurant and barber shop (with I.O.O.F. Hall above), a carpenter shop and undertaking parlor, two physicians, a rug weaver, a dress making shop, and a bank.<sup>16</sup> The I.O.O.F. Building was located on the north side of the Public Square at the east end. When it burned in 1902, it was not re-built on the same lot, but on a lot one block to the east, facing the present highway. Both the Bergh and White store buildings were moved a few feet when the new I.O.O.F. Hall/general store (also known as the Anderson & Nelson Store) was built.

Farmers and business people alike were interested in learning their new language, so during the winter months English classes were held for the Swedish men. Across the county Swedish emigrants were forming clubs and lodges of every description. Some

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were for purely social purposes, while others were formed to promote temperance, and to provide mutual self-help through sickness and burial insurance. In December 1875 the SVEA Mutual Insurance Association was founded in Swedesburg. Originally the SVEA benefits were available only to Swedes, but it was opened to others in the 1940s. The SVEA Mutual Insurance Association is the oldest active business in Swedesburg today and is operated from a private residence.

In 1883 the small Swedesburg church was destroyed by fire. The congregation immediately began construction of a new church on the site. The new building was completed that same year. It was much larger, seating between 400-500 people, and it featured a 110' spire which could be seen for miles. The frame building was painted white and became known as "The Big White Church in the Little White Town."<sup>17</sup> The fire, and subsequent rebuilding of the church, marked an important point in Swedesburg's history. Without the church as the focal point of the community, the small village probably would have disappeared. With the new church, people had a reason to come to Swedesburg, and it retained its commercial enterprises.

The role of the Lutheran Church in the life of Swedesburg cannot be overstated. The history of the church is contained in the many records found in the Swedish Heritage Museum and will not be covered in detail here. Suffice it to say, the church provided the support which held the early emigrants together. It gave them a place to speak their native language and to celebrate their common customs. Here the traditions were handed down from one generation to another.

To put the Swedish settlement in Wayne Township in perspective, it is necessary to know what was happening in other areas. The 1885 Census of Iowa provides a picture of Swedish settlement in the state. It appears that Swedes were scattered throughout the state with a concentration in urban areas such as Sioux City (Woodbury County), Des Moines (Polk County), and Burlington (Des Moines County). However, an examination of the census report by township shows that there were three main areas of the state with concentrated Swedish rural settlement. The area of Jefferson and Henry counties containing New Sweden and Swedesburg is one area; settlements in Montgomery and Page counties are the second; and, parts of Webster, Hamilton, and Boone counties make up the third.<sup>18</sup> This shows that the Jefferson/Henry county settlement was not only the earliest in the state, but it remained an important component of Swedish settlement.

Barton calls the period between 1890-1914 "Farm, Forest, and Factory." He notes the great reduction in numbers of emigrants, and the fact that many were settling in urban industrial areas, rather than coming to the rural areas of the midwest. Barton closes his discussion of Swedish emigration with the outbreak of World War I. The war effectively shut down emigration for nearly five years. In the 1920s it increased again and then slowed to a trickle. To Barton, the major influx was over.

In Henry County, however, the impact of Swedish immigration appears to have extended to the beginning of World War II. From 1900 to 1940 Swedesburg entered a new phase of its development. It appears that most of the emigration from Sweden to Swedesburg had taken place by 1900, with few new arrivals after that date. Despite the lack of new arrivals, Swedesburg (and the area around it) remained a strong Swedish settlement. With the church continuing to play an important role in the life of the village, it became a "crossroads community," a place which provided services not only to its

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residents, but to neighboring farmers as well. The old Military Road running along the east edge of town became known as the Red Ball Route in 1913. As automobiles became more popular, more and more people were coming through the community. A new bank was built on the corner south of the church in 1914. This simple rectangular brick building illustrated the continued importance of the small town. After the bank closed this building was used for a variety of purposes (barber shop, residence, and finally, the Post Office). Although the façade has been altered by the addition of a covered entry, the building remains a good example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century design.

A number of new residences were constructed in Swedesburg in the first decades of this century. The original Swedish settlers were ready to retire, with a new generation taking over the day to day farming operations and moving into the big family farmhouses. The retirees "moved to town," building new houses for their later years. In many cases, the "retirement houses" built in Swedesburg were not small cottages, but large residences. They illustrated the popular styles of the day with some lingering elements of Queen Anne detailing on hip roof designs. The house at 305 Highway 218 is an example, having been built c.1918 as a retirement home for Magnus and Anna Nelson. A classic Four Square design was completed in 1918 for John Hultquist at 105 Park. Others built sprawling bungalows, such as the one at 203 Park which was built for Charles Hultquist in 1929, and, at a much later date (post-WW II), ranch houses became popular. The move from the farm to town, even a town as small as Swedesburg, was a major one for people who had spent their entire lives in a rural environment, with the "next door" neighbors at least a quarter mile distant. In town they experienced a feeling of crowding and a loss of privacy.<sup>19</sup> The construction of a large "retirement house" may have helped to off-set the changes.

Despite the construction of a number of new houses, Swedesburg did not expand much beyond the original plat. The Magnus Nelson house was built immediately south of the village limits, and the two Hult residences were directly across the highway to the east. (Charles Hult had a large house built south of the original family home for his son in 1904.) Although these houses were not actually in town, they were definitely part of it.

In 1927 tragedy again struck the Swedesburg church. A bolt of lightning during a thunderstorm destroyed the "Big White Church" before the fire departments from neighboring towns could get to Swedesburg over the unpaved roads. With improved transportation, and the relative ease of getting to churches in other towns, it would have been easy not to replace the Swedish church. However, the congregation unanimously agreed to rebuild. Burlington architect W.F. Weibley was selected to design the new structure. The Gothic Revival style church of tan brick with Bedford stone trim was completed in 1928. It features a full basement and has a seating capacity of 500. Construction costs, without furnishings, came to \$30,000.

Just as the decision to rebuild the church in 1883 was an important point in Swedesburg's history, so was the decision made in 1927. With the popularity of the automobile and the advent of hard surface roads, there was little to keep people to villages such as Swedesburg. However, with the construction of a new brick church building, Swedesburg was assured of people coming to town on a regular basis, and local inhabitants had no reason to leave. The new Swedesburg Lutheran Church guaranteed the continued life of the community.



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When the building occupied by the Anderson and Nelson General Store was moved two miles north to the town of Olds in 1928, local citizens recognized the continued need for a general store in Swedesburg. A new building was promptly constructed on the lot next door. Known as the Farmers' Union Exchange, this store operated until 1976. The 1881 White Store was physically attached to the rear of the new building, and the Bergh building was located immediately to the west and was used for storage purposes. These buildings have been purchased by the Swedish Heritage Society and serve as the Swedish Heritage Museum. The Farmers' Union Exchange is a good example of a simple frame commercial building in a small community, being rectangular in shape with a gable roof, and a "boomtown" front. In the 1960s the façade was altered by the application of steel siding and brick veneer, but the other three elevations and the interior retain a high degree of integrity.

The other extant commercial building in the village is the Red Ball Garage located on the highway across from the church. Obviously named for the Red Ball Route, this auto garage was built in 1929, one year after the new church and store, and just a year before the highway was paved. The construction of this building illustrates the growing importance of the automobile, and also the continued importance of the town of Swedesburg. Having the highway run through the community brought people and products in, and helped transport agricultural products out.

By the time Dave Johanson, the last Swedish emigrant to arrive in Swedesburg, came in 1929, few, if any church services were being conducted in Swedish. The transition had been a gradual one, beginning with the children's Sunday School classes, and spreading throughout the programs of the church. The last to change from Swedish to English was the men's Swedish Sunday School class.<sup>20</sup> On some occasions two services were conducted, one in Swedish and one in English. Fewer and fewer of the congregation spoke the language of their ancestors.

The years from 1930-45 appear to be ones of quiet continuity for the Swedish community. Highway 218 (the new name for the Red Ball Route) funneled cars, trucks, and people through Swedesburg on their way to Mount Pleasant or Iowa City, or points in between. The general store and auto garage were both busy, and several small businesses came and went in the village. Like the rest of the country, Swedesburg struggled, but survived the Great Depression. There had been no new emigrants in a decade, and there appeared little chance of new ones.

Following the war, new construction and new attitudes were in place. Swedesburg was a community with a strong Swedish heritage, but it was a community of Americans. More and more Swedesburg became a retirement community. Farmers and their wives moved into town, and had smaller houses built, many reflecting the popular post-war ranch style. Social activities continued to revolve around the church. Carl Anderson noted that the Swedesburg Lutheran Church has always been the focal point of the community. To be the focal point, it must have provided services to its members. Through the decades the church has provided fellowship for people of all ages, not only through Sunday services, but through special groups: the Women's Missionary Society, church circles, sewing societies, quilting bees, Luther League, choirs, a cornet band, a Swedesburg orchestra, father/son dinners, Family Night, Thanksgiving Dinner, and the

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annual Smorgasbord in December. The Swedish traditions observed through the church remain a vital part of the community and preserve the heritage.

The past twenty years have seen changes in Swedesburg. A few new families (with no ties to the area's Swedish heritage) have come to town and built new houses along the western edge. U.S. Highway 218 is being expanded from two to four lanes, and the new roadway is located 500 yards east of Swedesburg. It is part of the so-called "Avenue of the Saints" which will soon provide four lane travel from Saint Louis, Missouri to Saint Paul, Minnesota. Swedesburg is ideally located for those who work in nearby towns such as Mount Pleasant and Iowa City, but desire a quiet rural setting. One resident predicts that Swedesburg's future will be as a bedroom community for the larger towns.<sup>21</sup>

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Carl A. Anderson, "The Saga of Swedesburg," Annals of Iowa, (Vol XXXV, No 3, Winter 1960), p 191.

<sup>2</sup> H. Arnold Barton (Ed.), Letters from the Promised Land: Swedes in America, 1840-1914, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press for the Swedish Pioneer Historical Society, 1975), p 28.

<sup>3</sup> George T. Flom, "The Scandinavian Factor in the American Population," Iowa Journal of History and Politics, Vol III, No 1, Jan1905), p 71.

<sup>4</sup> Charles J. Fulton, History of Jefferson County, Iowa, (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1914), Vol II, p 202.

<sup>5</sup> Flom, p 73.

<sup>6</sup> Barton, pp 11-14.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p 11.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p 15.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p 100.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p 120.

<sup>11</sup> Anderson, pp 190-2.

<sup>12</sup> Barton, p 111.

<sup>13</sup> Inez Hult, Unpublished Manuscript, p 6.

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<sup>14</sup> Biographical Review of Henry County, Iowa, Containing Biographical and Genealogical Sketches of Many of the Prominent Citizens of Today and Also the Past, (Hobart Publishing Co., 1906), p 344.

<sup>15</sup> Barton, p 136.

<sup>16</sup> Anderson, pp 200-1.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p 203.

<sup>18</sup> Lowell J. Solke, historian with the State Historical Society of Iowa (SHSI) provided the information from the 1885 Census of Iowa on Swedish settlement patterns, and developed maps illustrating the patterns.

<sup>19</sup> Jon Spayde discusses this farm/town concept in his article "The Edge of Town," in Robert F. Sayre's Take This Exit, (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1989), p 176.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Inez Hult, conducted by Herbert Hult, 1 March 1997.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Gary Anderson, conducted by Bloom & Wickham, 28 February 1997.

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ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES:

THE SWEDISH HERITAGE OF WAYNE TOWNSHIP: 1864-c.1945

- I. NAME: The buildings, structures, objects, and districts representing "The Swedish Heritage of Wayne Township: 1864-c.1945.

II. DESCRIPTION:

The resources (a collective term for the above named categories) in this property type are varied in terms of use, size, and location. The unifying factor is that each is associated with the Swedish Heritage of Wayne Township, Henry County, Iowa.

Residences are the largest property type, being found on the farmsteads as well as in the village of Swedesburg. These vary in period (from 1867-1990s), style, size, and building materials used. The majority are of wood construction and are painted white, but there are exceptions to this.

Church-related resources are another property type. This includes the 1928 church building and the adjacent cemetery, the parsonage (the fourth one on this site), and the parish hall. The church is of brick construction, while the others are of wood.

Commercial buildings make up a small percentage of the total resources. All five are located along U.S. Highway 218. Two are of 19<sup>th</sup> century construction while the others date from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Building materials used include wood, brick, and glazed hollow tile.

Farmsteads comprise a large number (19) of the resources and all are located within a three mile radius of Swedesburg. While some of the buildings on these farmsteads are the original ones, many represent second and third generations of construction. The farmsteads will be composed of multiple buildings: residence, barn, usually a corn crib, hog house, machine shed, and garage. Other resources on the farm site may include: chicken houses, silos, and windmills. With few exceptions the primary building material will be wood.

The physical condition of the resources in this historic context will vary, from deteriorated, to greatly altered, to almost original condition. Many houses will have had additions made over the years, and have lost (or gained) porches. New siding has been applied to some houses, and a few farm outbuildings as well. The integrity of the church has been maintained at a high level.

III. SIGNIFICANCE:

- IV. The buildings, structures, objects, and districts that make up this property type illustrate the Swedish settlement that took place in Wayne Township beginning in 1864 and extending until c.1945 with the end of World War II. It is believed that the last Swedish emigrant arrived in this area in 1929. This Wayne Township settlement was a direct result of the New Sweden settlement in Jefferson County, Iowa, and it holds a place of importance in terms of ethnic influences in local development. One of the strengths of

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this settlement is the fact that the Swedesburg Lutheran Church remains active today. Many resources remain in the hands of direct descendants of the early Swedish settlers.

## V. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS:

1. Significance (use or form) relates to the Swedish Heritage of Wayne Township, 1864-c.1945.

Criterion A: properties that represent significant events and activities in the Swedish settlement of Wayne Township.

Criterion B: properties that are directly associated with Swedish settlers and remain in the same family today.

Criterion C: properties that illustrate the building techniques, types and/or styles, that were used by Swedish settlers and their direct descendants, or which form an unusual group of buildings or structures that illustrate the Swedish settlement during this period.

Criterion D: properties that have the potential to yield additional information about the Swedish settlement of Wayne Township.

2. Qualifying building use will include: religious, educational, residential agricultural, and commercial.

Qualifying building materials will include: wood, brick, stone, stucco, metal, and concrete.

3. If a building has been moved, the move should have taken place within the period of significance and the integrity should not have been impaired to a great extent. Specifically, there should be limited loss of architectural elements, limited alterations due to the move, and the new site must be sympathetic.

4. Integrity Considerations:

In all cases, the most important integrity consideration is that the building retain sufficient elements of the original design, materials, and setting, that the owner during the period of significance would recognize it.

Residences. The basic shape and proportion of the house should be intact. Windows and doors should not have been moved or substantially changed. Porches should be sympathetic if not original. Alterations made during the period of significance may be acceptable if they are of a scale and material sympathetic to the original design. Application of modern non-wood siding will generally not be acceptable.

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Church-Related Resources. The basic shape and proportion of the building should be intact, with doors and windows not substantially altered. Some minor changes and/or additions may be acceptable if they do not obscure the primary façade, and are of sympathetic design, proportion, and construction material.

Commercial Buildings. Such resources should retain their historic shape and proportion while reflecting their original function. It is expected that street levels may have been altered, and these alterations should not preclude a property from eligibility if changes are reversible and the upper level retains much of its historic character. Additions should be of sympathetic design, proportion, and construction material.

Farmsteads. These should contain a complete set of agricultural buildings (house, barn, outbuildings) in a relatively unaltered state. Farmsteads that are not complete should be viewed in terms of separate buildings.

Barns. The basic shape and proportion of the building should be intact. Windows and doors should not have been moved or substantially changed. Alterations made during the period of significance may be accepted if made to secondary elevations, and of a scale and material sympathetic to the original design. Roof replacement is expected, and the replacement of wood shingles by asphalt or metal is acceptable.

Districts. These areas must possess a sense of time and place, must relate to the building types, styles, and materials of the period of significance, have relatively few intrusions, and not have been altered to a high degree. Key structures will have few if any alterations, while contributing structures may have a somewhat lesser level of integrity. Modern siding, new windows, and porch alterations should be carefully reviewed in terms of contributing structures. Intact farmsteads with a high level of integrity will be considered districts.

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5. Eligible Examples from the Intensive Survey (All located in T73N R6W)  
(\*\* Denotes resource being nominated with this submission.)

**	Charles E. Hult House, Summer Kitchen, and Wood Shed	Sec 27 NW1/4 NW1/4
**	Swedesburg Evangelical Lutheran Church	1897 140 <sup>th</sup> Street Swedesburg
**	Red Ball Garage	1901 140 <sup>th</sup> Street
**	Swedesburg Historic Commercial District Bergh Store White Store Farmers' Union Exchange	107 Highway 218
**	John Hultquist House & Barn	105 Park Swedesburg
	Charles Hultquist House & Garage	203 Park Swedesburg

Resources that are Potentially Eligible with Additional Research

Charles Larson Farmstead	Sec 20 S1/2 NE1/4
John Holt Farmstead	Sec 21 SW1/4 SW1/4
S.P. Morgan Farmstead	Sec 22 W1/2 SW1/4
S.P. Morgan Barn	Sec 22 SW1/4 SE1/4
Lydia Seberg Farmstead	Sec 29 NW1/4 NE1/4

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## **GEOGRAPHIC DATA:**

The geographic area covered in this project includes all 24,960 acres in Wayne Township, Henry County, IA (T73N R6W).

## **SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS:**

This Henry County preservation project is part of a long range program to identify, evaluate, register, and protect, the cultural resources of the State of Iowa. The Henry County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) received a Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant to conduct a Planning for Preservation Project during 1995-96. That project identified five historic contexts which have been significant in the development of Henry County:

- 1) Transportation: 1833-c.1946
- 2) Mills: 1833-c.1900
- 3) Farms and Farmsteads: 1833-c.1946
- 4) The Swedish Heritage of Wayne Township: 1864-c.1945
- 5) The Society of Friends in Salem: 1837-c.1946

These five contexts were then prioritized, with the recommendation that the first survey project should be of the Swedish Heritage of Wayne Township.

The HPC applied for, and received, another CLG grant to conduct this intensive survey during 1996-97. The objectives of this survey were to develop the context and to define the significant property types associated with it. The next step was to identify and record the farmsteads in Wayne Township (and individual properties in Swedesburg) which illustrate both the context and property types. All sections of Wayne Township (24,960 acres) were included in the project area.

The Historic Preservation Commission contracted with a consultant, Molly Myers Naumann of Ottumwa, to serve as the principal investigator, to organize and coordinate the survey activities, to refine the historic context, identify the property types, evaluate the properties, and prepare the final report. Naumann had previously served as the consultant on the Planning for Preservation project and was familiar with the area. Meetings to recruit volunteers were held at the Swedish Heritage Museum in Swedesburg for two reasons: it is centrally located within Wayne Township, and, it is the repository of much of the research material needed for this project. Orientation workshops for the volunteers were conducted by the consultant. The volunteers were responsible for the fieldwork, photography and mapping, archival and legal research, conducting the oral history interviews, and the typing and collating of the final products.

The consultant developed the following criteria to determine which farmsteads would be recorded during this survey:

- 1) The property must have a history of Swedish ownership, with the majority of the buildings on the site constructed during that ownership.



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- 2) There must be sufficient information about previous owners to establish how and why the property is important to the Swedish heritage of the area.
- 3) The architectural integrity must be such that the owner during the period of significance would recognize it.

It was decided that all properties (including garages and barns) in the village of Swedesburg would be recorded to provide a complete and accurate picture of the community at this time. An Iowa Site Inventory form was completed for each major resource.

The principal investigator and members of the historic preservation commission devoted one day to driving roads within the township, looking for farmsteads which appear to retain a high level of integrity and which were believed to have Swedish ties. Research was then undertaken using land records to establish that a Swedish connection actually exists, and then the farmsteads which met the criteria were photographed, with all necessary information recorded on the photo log sheet. A farmstead form was completed for each, with Iowa Site Inventory forms for the residence and barn(s) on the property. One team of photographers was responsible for all of this fieldwork. Maps for each farmstead were drawn by the photographer.

Archival research was conducted at the Swedish Heritage Museum, the Ottumwa Public Library, and the State Historical Society libraries in both Iowa City and Des Moines. Resources included state and federal census records, county and local histories, plat books and atlases, historic photographs, unpublished reminiscences, and letters. Between 25 and 30 oral history interviews were conducted with long-time residents. Legal research was conducted in the Henry County Assessor's Office, with additional information provided by the property owners through Abstract of Title research.

The information gathered through both research and fieldwork was examined and interpreted by the principal investigator. The sites were then evaluated within the historic context and were determined to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, not eligible for the National Register, or, to be considered as part of a potential historic district. A total of 19 farmsteads and 48 properties in Swedesburg were recorded. There were multiple buildings on many of the sites, resulting in between 150 and 200 total resources.

The recommendation from the principal investigator at the end of the intensive survey was that a Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) be prepared for "The Swedish Heritage of Wayne Township, Henry County, Iowa: 1864-c.1945". In addition to the MPDF, individual National Register nominations should be prepared for: the Swedesburg Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Red Ball Garage, C.E. Hult residence, summer kitchen, and wood shed, the John Hultquist residence and garage, the Charles Hultquist residence and garage, and a commercial historic district nomination for the Farmers Union Exchange, White Store, and Bergh Store (Huckster Barn).

In 1998-99 the Historic Preservation Commission received another CLG grant to assist with the preparation of the Multiple Property Documentation Form and individual National Register nominations. Naumann was again hired as the consultant for the project. Working with local volunteers additional photography was accomplished and

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information gathered. All of the resources nominated with this Multiple Property submittal illustrate the important role the Swedish community has played in the settlement and development of Wayne Township.

From the beginning this preservation project has dealt only with architectural and historical resources. No attempt has been made to identify potential archeological sites.

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Unpublished material in the Swedish Heritage Museum, Swedesburg, IA

Church Minutes (Secretary's notes from 1866-1920, originally in Swedish).  
Church Year Books (2 are in Swedish, 3 dating after 1941 are in English).  
Histories of individual families are filed in 3-ring binders.  
Letters of Oliver Stephenson.  
Writings of Carl Anderson (in 3-ring binders).  
Oral History Interviews (tape) with: John Alvine, and Dave Johanson.

## Oral History Interviews

The following interviews were all conducted by Herbert Hult.

Virgil & MaryJane Lindeen, 22 Feb 1997.  
Betty Larson, 22 Feb 1997.  
Marguerite Johnson, 22 Feb 1997.  
Inez Hult, 22 Feb 1997.  
Phillip Ingmanson, 22 Feb 1997.  
Opal Hult, 22 Feb 1997.  
Marilyn Boal, 22 Feb 1997.  
Sarona Sears, 24 Feb 1997.  
Malcolm Alvine, 24 Feb 1997.  
Nancy Sandeen (mother of Ralph Sandeen), 24 Feb 1997.  
Gary Anderson (son of Lenore Anderson), 24 Feb 1997.  
Richard Peterson, 24 Feb 1997.  
Randy Morgan, 24 Feb 1997.  
Esther Hult, 24 Feb 1997.  
Inez Hult, 1 Mar 1997.

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The following interviews were conducted by Bonnie Bloom and Jane Wickham of the Swedish Heritage Museum.

Bonnie Bloom, 27 Feb 1997.  
Dave Johanson, 27 Feb 1997.  
Marie and Mildred Bergstrom, 27 Feb 1997.  
Harriet and Lavern Hult, 28 Feb 1997.  
Nona Olson, 28 Feb 1997.  
Rosie Alvine, 28 Feb 1997.  
Vincent Lindeen, 28 Feb 1997.  
Gary Anderson, 28 Feb 1997.  
Marilyn Boal, 28 Feb 1997.  
Virginia Lindeen, 1 Mar 1997.  
Marguerite Hultquist Johnson, 4 Mar 1997.  
Bonnie Bloom, 4 Mar 1997.  
Edith Molander, 7 March 1997.