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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" on the appropriate line or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name PIERSON-BETTS HOUSE
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 815 Penn Boulevard N/A not for publication
city or town Oskaloosa N/A vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Mahaska code 123 zip code 52577

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this (nomination
_ request for determination of eligibility) meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
(meets _ does not meet) the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant (_ nationally
_ statewide locally). (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Patticia Ohtenkung DEHP 2-21-96
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property (_ meets _ does not meet) the National Register criteria. (_ See continuation sheet for additional
comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is :
- entered in the National Register.
_ See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the
National Register
_ See continuation sheet
 - determined not eligible for the
National Register
 - removed from the National
Register.
 - Other, (Explain)

Edson H. Beall
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action
3/28/96

Entered in the
National Register

Pierson-Betts House
Name of Property

Mahaska County, Iowa
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many lines as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one line)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____ 1 _____	_____ 1 _____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
_____ 1 _____	_____ 1 _____	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

The Quaker Testimony in Oskaloosa, Iowa

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Neo-Colonial Revival

foundation Concrete
walls Brick

roof Asphalt
other Glass

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Pierson-Betts House
Name of Property

Mahaska County, Iowa
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" on one or more lines for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION
SOCIAL

Period of Significance

1933-1942

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Lewis B. Pierson and Robert Pierson, builders

Narrative Statement of Significance - (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliography References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- previous determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Record
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historical Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository

Pierson-Betts House
Name of Property

Mahaska County, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 15 | 529475 | 4572580 |

Zone Easting Northing

2 | | | |

Zone Easting Northing

3 | | | |

Zone Easting Northing

4 | | | |

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William C. Page, Public Historian; Joanne R. Walroth

organization Oskaloosa Historic Preservation Commission date June 3, 1995

street & number 520 East Sheridan Avenue telephone 515-243-5740; FAX 515-243-7285

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50313

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs - Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items - (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Marion B. Freeman, Trustee of the Albert H. Burrows Testamentary Trust

street & number c/o 428 South Broadway telephone 612-439-9568

city or town Stillwater state Minnesota zip code 55082

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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CFN-259-1116

Pierson-Betts House, Mahaska County, Iowa.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This is a 1-story, brick, single-family dwelling built over a period of several years in the late 1930s. It features a side-gable roof, a symmetrically ordered three bay facade, and clapboard siding in the gable ends. Windows feature 4/1 double-hung sash and brick lintels and sills.

Alterations include the installation of new, precast front steps and fixed, metal awnings over the front and side doors.

HOUSE

The Pierson-Betts House consists of a modest main block, measuring 30' x 24'. The house rests on a poured concrete foundation. Constructed of balloon frame, the house is veneered with brick on the exterior. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

On the interior, Floor 1 features softwood floors, currently covered with wall-to-wall carpeting. Interior finish of the walls is plaster. Floor 1 contains four rooms, two of which are bedrooms. There is a crawl space between the roof and Floor 1, but the house has no attic. The full basement contains one bedroom and has drywall finish. The basement floor is concrete. The condition of this house is fine.

Originally, there was a drive-in garage in the basement. Accessed by a driveway on the south side of the house, this drive curved to the north and east to enter the garage on the west elevation. The single-bay garage door has since been replaced and a detached garage constructed south of the house (Robert Pierson Interview).

SITE

A detached, frame garage stands at the rear of the house at its southwest. The garage is considered a noncontributing resource.

The Pierson-Betts House is situated on a portion of Lot 1 in Block 14 of the replatted Penn College Addition to the City of Oskaloosa. This parcel measures approximately 71' x 75' (width by depth) and is situated on the southwest corner of the intersection of Penn Boulevard and College Hill Avenue West. The house faces east and stands in the second block south of the William Penn College campus.

The topography in this area is gently rolling. Penn Boulevard begins, at the south, on College Avenue and runs to Trueblood Avenue on the north, undulating down across a wide swale on its course. The boulevard terminates at the Iowa Yearly Meeting House-College Avenue Friends Church on the south and the William Penn College campus on the north. The Pierson-Betts House stands along its northern rise. Penn College Addition contains mostly single-family dwellings constructed since the 1920s. The Pierson-Betts House is one of the older of these buildings.

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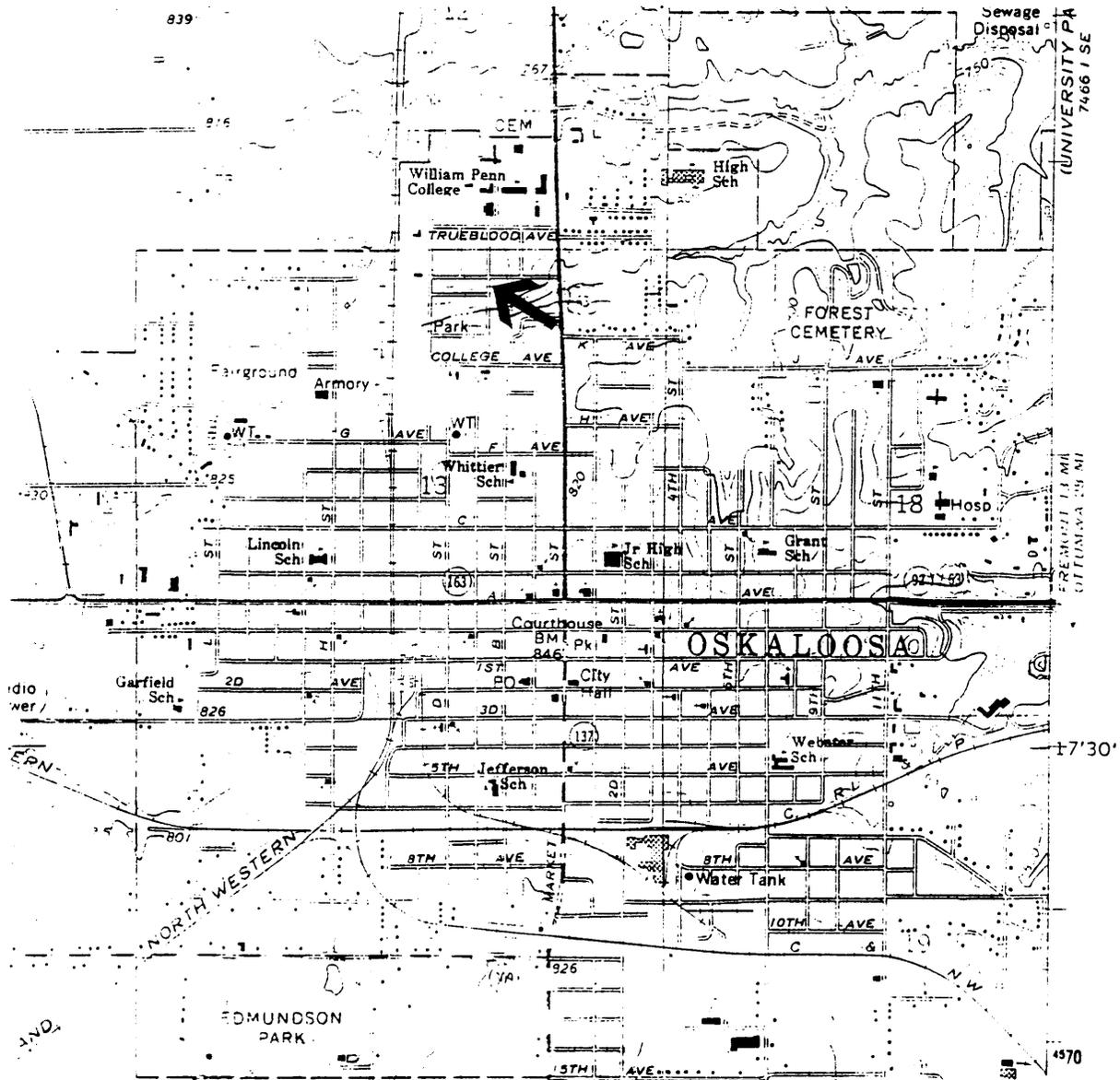
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Pierson-Betts House, Mahaska County, Iowa.

SITE MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



Source: U.S.G.S. Map (7.5 Minute Series), Oskaloosa Quadrangle, 1968.



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Pierson-Betts House, Mahaska County, Iowa.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built over the period of several years in the 1930s as a single-family dwelling, the Pierson-Betts House possesses a twofold historical significance, under National Register Criterion A, in calling attention to events and patterns associated with Penn College and the historic context "The Quaker Testimony in Oskaloosa, Iowa." As an early house within Penn College Addition, it illustrates the role of Lewis B. Pierson, an employee of Penn College, in the development of that area. Future comparative research may well show that the Pierson-Betts House also calls attention to residential housing as an emerging historic context of significance for women's history. Laura Betts, librarian at Penn College, was one of the few single women employees at that institution who achieved homeownership. Compared to other single women, Betts was exceptional both because she achieved the goal of homeownership and because this was accomplished after only a brief tenure at Penn College. It is known that her mother resided with her, and it is believed that the elder women provided some, if not most, of the financing for the purchase of the home (Interview with Robert Pierson). Betts' case, like that of Cassa M. Conover, shows the reliance of many professional women on other family members for continued support, despite occupying professional positions at the college.

The period of significance, under Criterion A, for the Pierson-Betts House is 1933-1942, the period of time in which Lewis B. Pierson and Robert Pierson constructed the building and Laura Betts occupied it.

The property contains one contributing resource for this nomination, the house, and one noncontributing resource, the garage.

EVENTS AND PATTERNS

The Pierson-Betts House calls attention to the importance of Penn College personnel in the development of Penn College Addition in Oskaloosa. The role of the pioneers of this addition--the Stranahans, the Berrys, the Kloses, and the Piersons--is significant because they set the tone of Quaker settlement, which continues today in the area. Penn College Addition was first platted in 1914 but few lots were sold. Following the disastrous fire at Main Building on the Penn campus, this addition was replatted in 1917. The sale of town lots increased and, after Professor Edgar H. Stranahan began construction of his home at 1001 Gurney Street, about 1923, others followed suit. Dr. William E. Berry at 116 Rosenberger Avenue and Dr. William H. Klose at 1002 Penn Boulevard provide two good examples. The Pierson-Betts House was one of the few new homes constructed in the plat during the 1930s.

Pierson was one of the twenty faculty and administrators who served Penn the longest time. His son, Robert Pierson, was Penn's Director of Maintenance from 1960 until his retirement in 1981. Together father and son served Penn for 77 years, so the house also calls attention to families in which members of two generations have worked for the college.

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Pierson-Betts House, Mahaska County, Iowa.

After completion of the Pierson-Betts House, Lewis and Lilly decided not to move in and sold the building. The purchaser and first occupant of the home was Laura Betts, Penn's librarian from 1937 to 1942. By buying a house, even one of such a modest scale as this, Betts proved to be exceptional. Most women faculty and staff members at Penn remained renters for the duration of their careers at the institution. Betts' short tenure at Penn College suggests the desire for upward mobility, an ambition reinforced by her documented homeownership of this property.

After Betts left Penn, the house has been occupied by other Penn faculty, including Dr. Wendell and Florence Faye Farr and Dr. Albert Burrows. This continued chain of title by individuals associated with Penn College calls attention to Penn College Addition as a preferred residential area for that institution's employees.

WOMEN'S HISTORY

Residential housing is emerging as a significant context for the study of women's history in Iowa. Often denied or restricted from positions within the workplace, single women found the quest for suitable housing difficult. Although not well documented to date, lack of financial capability and discrimination by lending institutions can be cited as possible causes for this problem.

In the unusual instances when single women did possess financial capability, recent studies have shown that they invested in residential housing. In 1994, a study of the Letitia Ambruzzese Building in Des Moines, Iowa, described how a single woman in the 1930s planned, had constructed, and managed a commercial and multi-family building (Page:1994a). Another study has analyzed the Laura T. and Albert L. West House and that woman's real estate activities during the 1880s and 1890s (Page:1994b). A third recent study has documented this phenomenon within higher education in Iowa. In the early 1920s, women faculty members at Iowa State College in Ames, Iowa, responded to unsuitable housing then available to them. Joining together to organize the Faculty Women's Housing Company, these women charted a course of action, determined to build a multi-family dwelling to alleviate some of these difficulties, obtained financial backing, consulted an architect, and erected a multi-story commercial/apartment building. Completed in 1922, the Cranford Apartment Building on Lincoln Way in Ames was an immediate success, evidenced by the fact that most rental units were bespoken prior to the building's completion (Page:1992). Although these pioneering studies have raised the issue of residential housing as an important context for women's history in Iowa, it is impossible to determine at the present time its extent as a phenomenon. Denied participation in the broader business world, women turned to residential housing as an alternative source of income. Homeownership also gave them a means to self-fulfillment.

The nomination of the Pierson-Betts House in Oskaloosa reinforces these previous findings. Single women were presented with problems in finding housing in Oskaloosa, especially in the immediate environs of Penn College. Even after Penn College Addition was laid out, the lots were sold for single-family dwellings, which few single women could afford. A lack of suitable apartment accommodations meant most women faculty ended up living in the dormitories as house mothers, as

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Pierson-Betts House, Mahaska County, Iowa.

Rosa Lewis did, or renting rooms in the homes of other Penn personnel, as Cassa M. Conover did following the death of her father.

Single women employees at Penn College rarely owned homes of their own. The Pierson-Betts House is significant for women's history in Oskaloosa because it is the exception that proves the rule. While librarian at Penn College, Laura Betts lived in this house with her mother. Although all Penn employees received modest salaries, evidence of homeownership such as this strongly suggests a pay differential between male and female faculty members at the institution. While such a differential might not have been unusual among other small, liberal arts colleges in the Midwest during this period, it is significant for Penn College. The Society of Friends is well known for its early support of the equality of women, and Penn College espoused this tenet from its establishment. In money matters, however, the college failed to implement those beliefs.

HOUSE CONSTRUCTION

Lewis B. Pierson was the long-time Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds for Penn College. He and Lilly Kellogg Pierson, his wife, lived in an apartment on the second level of the Central Heating Plant on the Penn College campus from 1917 until Lewis retired. They had purchased a lot in Penn College Addition with the intention of building a home at 815 Penn Boulevard for their retirement there. Lewis carried through with his plan. In its construction, Lewis used timber from the dismantled 1865 Iowa Yearly Meeting House for the support beams. Lewis also used bricks and other supplies purchased for architect A. T. Simmons' planned gymnasium in 1917, which was never built. This careful recycling and employment of building materials call attention to thrift, another character trait prized by Quakers.

In terms of styling, the Pierson-Betts House illustrates a very restrained, small-scale example of a house influenced by Neo-Colonial Revival architecture. The symmetrical design of the facade, the side-gable configuration of its roof, and the central location of its chimney point to this influence. Architectural detailing is reduced to its minimum. This may call attention to Quaker preferences for plain and simple design. In its employment brick, the building also seems to illustrate Quaker preferences for quality building materials.

This building was designed by Robert Pierson, son of Lewis and Lilly, in an industrial arts class at Oskaloosa High School. The Smiths of Oskaloosa, local masons, laid the brick veneer. Lewis and Robert Pierson framed the building. An electrician from Grinnell wired the house in exchange for a \$500 note Lewis held against him (Robert Pierson Interview).

REPRESENTATION IN OTHER CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEYS

The Pierson-Betts House was surveyed in 1981 as part of the Area XV Regional Planning Commission's then comprehensive cultural resources surveys of Mahaska County. At that time, the Historical Survey did not identify or evaluate the Pierson-Betts House within the context of education

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Pierson-Betts House, Mahaska County, Iowa.

in Oskaloosa. The Architectural Survey evaluated the building as not eligible for nomination, under National Register Criterion C. In the intervening years, more information has come to light regarding this building and its place within the historic context "The Quaker Testimony in Oskaloosa, Iowa."

POTENTIAL FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Although the site's potential for archaeological research is, as yet, unevaluated, there appears to be little if any in this regard.

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Pierson-Betts House, Mahaska County, Iowa.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

SECONDARY

Housing list prepared by Oskaloosa Monthly Meeting volunteers, 1992.

Naumann, Molly Myers; *Architectural Survey of Oskaloosa, Iowa*; Report prepared by the Area XV Regional Planning Commission and on file at the State Historical Society of Iowa; 1981.

Page, William C.; *Historical Survey of Mahaska County, Iowa*; Report prepared by the Area XV Regional Planning Commission and on file at the State Historical Society of Iowa; 1981.

Page, William C.; "Cranford Apartment Buiding, Site Number 7D-52." *Historical and Architectural Resources of Ames, Iowa: Reconnaissance and Intensive Surveys*. Report prepared for the Department of Planning and Housing, City of Ames, Iowa; 1992. 2 volumes.

Page, William C.; *State of Iowa Historical Recordation of the Letitia Ambruzzese Building*. Report prepared for the Des Moines Metropolitan Transit Authority and on file at the State Historical Society of Iowa; 1994a.

Page, William C.; *State of Iowa Historical Recordation of the Laura T. and Albert L. West House*. Report prepared for the Des Moines Metropolitan Transit Authority and on file at the State Historical Society of Iowa; 1994b.

Page, William C., and Joanne R. Walroth; *Intensive Cultural Resources Survey of the Quaker Testimony in Oskaloosa, also including the Chicago, Rock Island, & Pacific Railroad Area*; Report prepared for and on file at the Oskaloosa Historic Preservation Commission and State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines; 1992.

Watson, *William Penn College*, pp. 254, 299.

ORAL INFORMANTS

Pierson, Robert, interview with Joanne R. Walroth, June 11, 1992.

Pierson, Robert, interview with William C. Page, May 22, 1995.

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Pierson-Betts House, Mahaska County, Iowa.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The north 75 feet of Lot 1 of Block 14 of Penn College Addition to the City of Oskaloosa, Iowa.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The National Register boundary contains all land associated historically with this resource.

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CFN-259-1116

Pierson-Betts House, Mahaska County, Iowa.

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