

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED NOV 15 1977
DATE ENTERED DEC 1 1977

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Ruth Suckow House
AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

So. Radcliffe and Fifth Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Earlville

VICINITY OF

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Iowa

Delaware

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

__DISTRICT

__PUBLIC

__OCCUPIED

__AGRICULTURE

__MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

__COMMERCIAL

__PARK

__STRUCTURE

__BOTH

__WORK IN PROGRESS

__EDUCATIONAL

__PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

__ENTERTAINMENT

__RELIGIOUS

__OBJECT

__IN PROCESS

__YES: RESTRICTED

__GOVERNMENT

__SCIENTIFIC

__BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

__INDUSTRIAL

__TRANSPORTATION

__NO

__MILITARY

__OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Earlville-Ruth Suckow Memorial Association

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Earlville

VICINITY OF

Iowa 52041

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Delaware County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Manchester

Iowa

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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

The Ruth Suckow House is a small (25' x 28') frame cottage, built early in the 20th century. The plan is l-shaped, one wing for a living room and bedroom, the other for kitchen and laundry room. The gable roof is shingled, and the exterior walls are rolled asphalt siding over the original clapboards. Windows are plain sash, with 6/6 lights (now boarded over). There are entrances into the living-room and kitchen. Interior walls are plaster, covered with paper. Floors are wood, and there is wainscoting in the kitchen. There are two brick chimneys, one on each section of the L.

The house sits on a small rise of ground on a semi-wooded lot, with an excellent view of hills and valleys to the south. It has been neglected for several years, due to lack of financial means for its preservation. In spring, 1977, the Earlville-Ruth Suckow Memorial Association tentatively agreed to allow the local fire department to burn the house. This action was taken reluctantly, and members of the Association notified the Iowa SHPO of their intent. National Register status is sought both by the SHPO and the Memorial Association, in the hope that such recognition will generate more local support toward the preservation of the house, which might be translated into matching funds for a federal grant-in-aid.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input 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 1925-26

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Suckow cottage at Earlville is the most significant structure in Iowa associated with the productive life of Iowa author Ruth Suckow (1892-1960). As the daughter of a Methodist minister, Suckow from childhood led a peripatetic existence which continued throughout her life. Of the many places Suckow lived, however, the cottage at Earlville appears to have been particularly important to her. Although she stayed here only two summers (1925 and 1926), those periods were significant for her literary career: while here, she wrote her second novel (*Odyssey of a Nice Girl*, 1925), and a number of short stories. Suckow's fondness for the cottage she described in her notebook:

My House

The brown clock ticks on its shelf in the little cream-colored dining room with wooden walls and ceiling. I keep pinks or roses in a glass finger bowl on the little...table. I love my two pink chairs.

The bedroom is always bare, clean, and cool, darkened a little. The twigs of the cherry tree brush one window.

From the west door there is a view, beyond the narrow road that goes past the Dickson's, of a rise of green meadow with small old-fashioned houses set upon it, and some wild crabs near the road. In the late afternoon, after a shower, a lovely green light falls through the door...There is an open, clean, garnished look about the room, but very friendly...¹

Although Ruth Suckow featured a variety of characters and locations in her fiction, she is best known for her vivid portrayals of Iowa farm and small-town life. In all of her writings she drew heavily upon her Iowa experiences, and many of her settings and characters are readily identifiable as real places and people. 1924-1934 were her most productive years, during which she published 8 novels and many short stories. The latter, which appeared in several magazines, particularly *American Mercury* and *The Midland*, are considered her best work. Unlike her contemporary, Hamlin Garland, she did not use her fiction as a vehicle for introspection — rather, she thought of her stories as a "running commentary on life", bits and pieces of time and place.²

Ruth Suckow's perception of her work falls well within the mainstream of "regionalism", a concept of visual and literary art which flourished, particularly in the midwest, during the 1920's and 1930's. Regionalism's most emphatic supporter was artist Grant Wood, but the idea also found expression in the work of Marvin Cone and Thomas Hart Benton, as well as in writers such as Suckow, Garland, and Herbert Quick. According to Wood:

Regionalism seeks to direct preponderating attention to the natural landscape, human geography, and cultural life of particular areas of the country, in the belief that writers who draw their materials from their own experience and the

See continuation sheet

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Andrews, Clarence A. A Literary History of Iowa. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1972.
- Nuhn, Ferner. "The Orchard Apiary". The Iowan, Summer, 1972, pp.21-24, 54.
- Meyer, Roy M. The Middle Western Farm Novel in the Twentieth Century. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1959.
- Kissane, Leedice M. Ruth Suckow: Interpreter of the Mind of Mid-America. Thesis, University of Minnesota, 1966

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	64,2510	4,70,45,0,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot Five (5), Block Sixteen (16), Earlville, formerly Nottingham, Iowa

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

M.H. Bowers, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Division of Historic Preservation, Iowa

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

26 East Market Street

TELEPHONE

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Adrian A. Anderson

TITLE

Director, Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

11.7.77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

W. Smith
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST: *Charles H. ...*
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 12/23/77
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 DATE 12.22.77

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Ruth Suckow Cottage, Earlville, Delaware County, Iowa

CONTINUATION SHEET

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life they know best are more likely to attain universal value² than those who do not....It has been a revolt against cultural nationalism -- that is, the tendency of artists to ignore or deny the fact that there are important differences, psychologically and otherwise, between the various regions of America.³

Ruth Suckow's intimate portraits of Iowa people and places do full justice to this statement. And although overshadowed in the popular view by better-known authors such as Hamlin Garland, Suckow "came nearer than any other writer has done to representing the whole of American life on farms and in small towns".⁴

¹Quoted in Nuhn, "The Orchard Apiary", p. 24.

²Andrews, p. 87.

³Grant Wood, "A Definition of Regionalism," Books at Iowa 3 (November 1965), p. 3. Quoted in Andrews, p. 252.

⁴Carl Van Doren, The American Novel 1789-1939 (New York: MacMillan Co., 1962), p. 361. Quoted in Andrews, p. 98.

BIBLIOGRAPHY, CONT.

Omrčanin, Margaret Stewart. A Critical Study of Ruth Suckow Fiction. Thesis, University of Illinois, Urbana, 1960.

Mohr, Martin Alfred. Ruth Suckow: Regionalism and Beyond. Thesis, University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1955.