

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**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 Decker House Hotel

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
128 North Main Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Maquoketa

VICINITY OF

Second

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Iowa

Jackson

97

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

Edward Lamson

STREET & NUMBER

128 N. Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Maquoketa

VICINITY OF

STATE

Iowa 52060

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Jackson County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Maquoketa

STATE

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 type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Decker House is a hotel completed in 1878. It is located on the northern edge of the central business district of this county seat town. The hotel is situated on a corner lot, with 46' frontage on Main Street and 146' along James Street. The building is 3 stories high, with a flat roof slightly slanted down toward the south. The foundation is local limestone, the exterior walls of dark red brick and two feet thick. Decoration is confined to the north and east (front) facades. The rear and south elevations are extremely plain, with openings rather irregularly placed. The roof ends in a stepped parapet at the rear.

The main facade is 5 bays wide, with segmentally-arched windows beneath bracketted hoods. The entrance (with modern plate-glass and metal doors) is a wide round arch of brick, in the intrados of which are square wooden posts with capitals supporting a wooden arch. The entrance was originally sheltered by a small porch featuring iron columns and a bracketted cornice with crowning cast-iron railing. Later, a canvas canopy to the sidewalk was used, subsequently replaced by the present somewhat unfortunate two-story wooden "portico". The James Street facade is 11 bays long, divided into three panels of 3, 4, and 4 bays respectively, and framed by brick wall buttresses. Windows have flat tops, and cornices without brackets. On both north and east facades, the windows become progressively shorter from first to third floors, which increases the illusion of height. A broad iron cornice is found on these facades, with modillions, paired brackets, and decorative frieze. Originally, the front facade featured a shaped pediment above the cornice which displayed the inscription "Decker House, 1876", but this, like the small entry porch, has long since disappeared.

The main staircase of the hotel extends up the south wall, with office and former baggage room to the right. A front parlor has been divided to accommodate a bar. A long hallway leads to diningroom and kitchen toward the rear. The hotel rooms and apartments have been modernized.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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 1876-78

BUILDER/ARCHITECT W.W. Tucker, Watertown, NY, Arch.
Thomas Shere, Maquoketa, Builder

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Decker House is a fine example of mid-19th-century commercial architecture in the Italianate style. Its pretensions to luxurious living were typical of the period, and quite appropriate in a community which had become the county seat only a few years before the hotel's construction. The Decker House is now among the community's largest and most prominent relics of the immediate post-Civil War period, although the loss of several features (the entrance porch, original front doors and pediment over the cornice) is unfortunate. Most regrettable is the loss of the front porch: it lent an appropriate air of domesticity to a building otherwise wholly commercial in character.

James Decker (1808-1881) was an entrepreneur in New York state who counted the hotel in Maquoketa among a variety of real estate holdings in Iowa. As a young man, Decker ran a wholesale operation in Watertown (NY) with partners in New York City. Subsequently, he sold out to his brother and moved to Denmark, NY, to take up real estate and finance. In the early 1850's, Decker appeared in Iowa, and bought up a variety of agricultural and town properties in and around Maquoketa before returning to New York and retirement in Watertown. The first Decker House, "a moderate-sized frame building" (History, 1879, p. 508) was erected in 1856 and opened the following year under the management of Goddrich Brainard.

With the removal of the Jackson County seat from Andrew to Maquoketa in 1873, the latter town experienced a rapid rise in population and prosperity. Probably to capitalize on the increase of travellers bound to come to Maquoketa on county or commercial business, Decker erected a big brick hotel, designed by W.W. Tucker of Watertown. It opened with appropriate fanfare in May, 1878. At the time of its construction, it was probably the most "elegant and substantial" hotel in the community: its known competitors of 1879 were the Kimball House ("neat and comfortable") and the Midland House "about 15 sleeping rooms" (History, 1879, p. 508).

Following James Decker's death in 1881, his son Leonard took over his holdings in New York and Iowa. In 1885 Leonard moved to Maquoketa, and lived at the Decker House until he died in 1900.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Ellis, James W. History of Jackson County, Iowa. Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1910, Vol. II, pp. 172-73.
 History of Jackson County, Iowa. Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1879, p. 508.
 Portrait and Biographical Album of Jackson County, Iowa. Chicago: Chapman Bros., 1889, pp. 291-292.
 Jackson Sentinel, 23 May 1878 (account of opening of hotel)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

QUADRANGLE NAME Dubuque, Iowa; Wisconsin; Illinois

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:250,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 692950 4460000

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot is 46' wide and 146' deep, located on the southwest corner of Main and James Streets, Maquoketa, 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/National Register Coordinator

ORGANIZATION

Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

November 1978

STREET & NUMBER

26 East Market Street

TELEPHONE

319/353-6949

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 X

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

John D. Anderson

TITLE Director, Division of Historic Preservation

DATE 11/13/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. Muntz

DATE 12/29/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

William N. Brasham 12-29-78