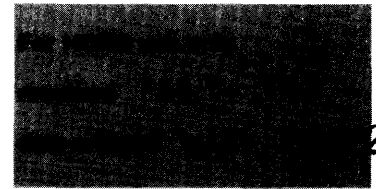


United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



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

1. Name

historic John K. Voorhees House

and/or common

2. Location

NW of Oskaloosa on IA 163

street & number 5 miles east of Pella on Hwy. 163 not for publication

city, town Oskaloosa vic. Pella vicinity of congressional district 4

state Iowa code 19 county Mahaska code 123

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Glenn and Lila Turnbull

street & number R.R. 3

city, town Pella vicinity of state Iowa

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office, Mahaska Courthouse

street & number

city, town Oskaloosa state Iowa

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Iowa Survey of Historic Resources has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1972 federal state county local

depository for survey records Division of Historic Preservation

city, town Iowa City state Iowa

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 John K. Voorhees House, situated in rural Mahaska County along Highway 163 between Pella and Oskaloosa, exhibits the combined influence of the Italianate and Second Empire modes on rural Iowa building styles in the late 19th century. Voorhees, a prosperous and influential farmer, designed and built this southwardly facing, red brick residence in 1871. Much of the building material, including the brick, was made on the Voorhees farm under his supervision, but most of the actual construction was subcontracted to masons, carpenters, and others. The house consists of a T-shaped, two-and-one-half story main block, and an attached, one-and one-half story dependency. Its brick walls rest on foundations of the same material over a partially raised basement that is set off by a continuous stone beltcourse.

The exterior ornamentation Voorhees applied to his home made it the most striking edifice in its neighborhood, and even today, well over a century later, this is still true. Voorhees utilized smooth dressed limestone for the continuous beltcourse at the base of the first story, and he used similar material for the corner quoins on the front portion of the house. At the rear sections of the house, however, corner quoins are constructed of brick. Except in attic areas where six paned wood sash windows are used, most windows are of the two-over-two wood sash variety. Windows and doors are for the most part set in arched brick surrounds that feature decorative molded archwork. Attic windows, however, are of the bullseye or circular variety, and those in the main block feature openings with pipes that once led to beehives that were kept in the attic. On the front portions of the house, Voorhees placed an encircling veranda with elaborately carved wooden posts and brackets, and on the east side of the dependency a somewhat less elaborate porch.

The edifice's most striking exterior features are its roof treatments. The wide eaves on both the main block and dependency feature pairs of large elaborately carved wooden brackets. The main block is capped with a slate covered mansard roof which features colored slate inset patterns. On the front (south) side, the date "1871" is delineated in colored slate, and on the rear (north) side are the letters "J V" which stand for the initials of the builder. The dependency, on the other hand, is capped with a hipped roof whose slate shingles have been replaced by modern asbestos ones. Both roofs are pierced by inside end brick chimneys with recessed panels.

Exterior alteration to the house has been confined largely to its porches. Several years ago, the east portion of the encircling veranda was removed, and many years before that the balustrades on top of it were taken down. Originally, the roof featured a balustrade as well, but this too was taken down some years ago. Luckily, most of the material was stored in the attic, and the present owners plan to put them back into place in the near future. The attic also has yielded

(Continued)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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DATE ENTERED	MAR 5 1982

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wood shutters that appear to be original as well as some of the slate that once covered the dependency roof. As far as practicable, most of this material will be utilized in the house's ongoing restoration.

Inside, a side hall floor plan is followed with a living room, two bedrooms, and kitchen on the first floor, and a parlor and five bedrooms on the second floor. Although the interior has been modified somewhat to accommodate electrification and modern plumbing, much of the original fabric, including staircases and woodwork, remains. The present owners plan to restore the interior as far as practicable and may attempt to redo the original graining of the wood which now remains in only one room.

The Voorhees House is located on a flat one and one-third acre lot adjacent to curving Highway 163 and is landscaped at front and side by several large walnut trees, flowers, and bushes. On its north side are several farm outbuildings and a garage, all of which appear to be relatively modern.

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 checked="" 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 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 1871-present

Builder/Architect

John K. Voorhees

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John K. Voorhees house is not only the most visually striking edifice along Highway 163 between Pella and Oskaloosa but an architecturally outstanding local landmark with a prominent place in local folklore. One story that has made the rounds for years is that the house was a way station on the Underground Railroad and helped ferry numerous black slaves to freedom. The fact that the not erected until 1871, six years after the end of the Civil War, should put this legend to rest permanently. Much more widespread are the stories linking the Voorhees house and the John H. Smith house, located 1.5 miles south, together as the "spite houses." According to purveyors of this story, Voorhees built his home in a grand manner in order to outdo his neighbor Smith who had erected a substantial residence a few years earlier. Members of both families, however, have always maintained that Smith and Voorhees were the best of friends and neighbors, and that the need for a large home not spite caused Voorhees to build the type of home he did. Despite these denials, the "spite house" stories have continued to circulate over the years and have become popular Sunday supplement material.

John K. Voorhees, the builder of this house which has fascinated people for over a century, was born in Warren County, Ohio in 1829. In 1853 he moved to Iowa and purchased the farm in Mahaska County where he would spend the rest of his life. The following year he married a neighbor's daughter and within a few years had become one of the county's leading farmers and owned four hundred acres. Voorhees devoted much of his attention to livestock raising and was well known for his fine horses and herds of Black Angus cattle. Although Voorhees' formal education said to have subscribed to more newspapers than any other farmer in the community. After suffering a stroke while working in the field in 1898, Voorhees died. Due to lack of interest in operating the farm among the children, Mrs. Voorhees sold it and the house in 1900 and moved to Pella. Over the years, the house had several owners and in later years served as a tenant house, before the present owners acquired it and began restoration.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet Item Number 9)

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property one and one-third acres

Quadrangle name Peoria Quad.

Quadrangle scale 7.5'

UMT References

A 15 514820 4581390
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification "Commencing at a point at the center of the County Road which runs east and west and which is located in the North 1/2 of the SE 1/4 of Section 16, Township 76 North, Range 17 West of the 5th P.M., where the North-South Quarter line of said Section 16, intersects said County Road."

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

state N.A. code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ralph Christian, Architectural Historian

organization Division of Historic Preservation date October 1980

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

city or town Iowa City state Iowa

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director

date January 15, 1982

For NCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register of Historic Places in the State of Iowa.

Edwin A. Anderson
Special Register Officer

[Signature]
Chief of Registration

date

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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