

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

1136

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form DEC 22 2013

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Chautauqua Park Historic District  
Other names/site number: Sac City Park, Tourists' Park, Sac City Campground,  
Riverside Campground

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

### 2. Location

106 Park Avenue,  
City or town: Sac City State: IA County: Sac  
Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  N/A

### 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A  B  C  D

<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-family: cursive;">Terry U. Bennett DSHPs</p> <hr/> <p>Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; text-decoration: underline;">STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA</p> <hr/> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-family: cursive;">12/12/2013</p> <hr/> <p>Date</p>
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In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

*Patrick Ardun*

Signature of the Keeper

*2/5/2014*

Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

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**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	objects
<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Landscape/Park
- Recreation & Culture/outdoor recreation
- Recreation & Culture/Auditorium

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Landscape/Park
- Recreation & Culture/outdoor recreation
- Recreation & Culture/Auditorium

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

other: Rustic

other: Chautauqua Pavilion

other: Log Cabin

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: concrete

Walls: Wood/Weatherboard

Wood/log

Stone

Roof: Asphalt/shingles

Wood /shingles

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

While driving across Iowa on Highway 20, travelers encounter plains, hills, and numerous small towns. Prior to 2012, motorists entering Sac County on Highway 20 drove through the heart of the county seat town of Sac City. After opening four-lane Highway 20, drivers can detour less than two miles south to visit the Northwest Iowa community of Sac City and its 2500 residents. Those entering from the east are soon greeted by the 1908 Chautauqua Pavilion sitting gracefully in the tree-filled Chautauqua Park Historic District. Sac City's Chautauqua Park, located in the south east quadrant of town and nestled along the east bank of the North Raccoon River, is a 10-acre property that gives visitors a glimpse into early 1900's rural culture. Driving through the park's winding path, visitors see the large Auditorium (designed to accommodate at least 2500 people), a small stone bridge, stone gates, a stone shelter house, a fish cleaning shelter, and a log cabin. Currently, all these resources are in place and have undergone few significant structural changes. The park also has a modern rest room/shower facility, camp grounds, and a home for the park attendant.

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**Narrative Description**

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Constructed</b>	<b>Contributing/Non-Contributing</b>	<b>Park Diagram</b>	<b>Images Photos</b>	<b>Classification</b>
Chautauqua Pavilion	1908	Contributing	1	Im. 1-9 Im. 24-32 Ph. 1-5, 21 Ph 24-25 Ph. 29-31	Building
Asa Platt Gates	ca. 1920	Contributing	4	Im. 12 Im. 32-33 Ph. 19-21	Structure
Metcalf Log Cabin	1854	Contributing	5	Im. 19-22 Im. 40-41 Ph. 6-9	Building
Stone Bridge	ca. 1920	Contributing	3	Im. 35, 49 Ph. 12-14,	Structure
Fish Cleaning Shelter	1939	Contributing	6	Im. 16-18 Ph. 15-18	Structure
Stone Shelter House	1939	Contributing	2	Ph. 10-11 Ph. 26	Building
Park attendant home	1970	Non-contributing	7	Im. 11-15 Im. 36-38 Ph. 15, 28	Building
Rest room	ca. 1995	Non-contributing	9	Ph. 17	Building
Play ground equipment	Various years	Non-contributing	8	Ph. 22-23	Object
Chautauqua Park	Established 1908	Contributing	N/A	Im. 23, 34, 43-48 Ph. 27	Site

Entering Chautauqua Park Historic District from Park Avenue, visitors travel south between the 1908 Chautauqua Pavilion (on the east) and the Asa Platt gates (on the west). Looking west toward the North Raccoon River, visitors see the 1854 Metcalf Log Cabin perched near the river bank. The winding gravel road runs parallel to the slight curve of the river and leads visitors by the small stone bridge, playground equipment, stone shelter house, fish cleaning shelter, and restroom facility (all on the east side) and park attendants' home (on the west.) After passing the park attendant home, the road veers to the east or continues south toward modern and primitive camp sites. The open grass-covered area has a Frisbee golf course and numerous picnic sites with built-in grills. The winding road ultimately takes park goers to the east side of the Chautauqua Pavilion and back to Park Avenue.

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The 1908 **Chautauqua Pavilion** is a modified octagonal structure with wood lap siding, asphalt roof, concrete floor, large screen-covered openings, and visible wood support beams. Each side of the octagon is a 49 foot span, enclosing 9,872 square feet of interior space. The building is painted white and surrounded by grass and trees. The interior of the building features open beam work supported by 20 interior wood pillars. The 33-foot-tall ceiling slopes from its peak toward the outside walls, creating the effect of a large tent. An elevated stage with a curved front provides performers an effective platform to share their talents with audience members. Long painted wooden picnic tables and benches provide seating inside the auditorium. Original transom windows in the upper walls and newer ceiling fans help provide comfort for guests in the hot and humid Iowa summer weather. On a cold or windy day, canvas murals with original paintings (done in 1996) depicting each town in Sac County can be lowered to help block inclement weather.

Two elevated dressing rooms flank either side of the stage. Entrance to both is through doors on the side walls of the stage which lead actors to short stairways to the dressing rooms. Below the east dressing room is a modern bathroom, added in what was once a storage area. Below the west dressing room is a kitchen facility that was added in the 1940's. The walls on either side of the stage proudly display historic photos that remind visitors of a by-gone era when the Chautauqua movement was a driving force in not only Sac City, but throughout the United States.

All of the interior beams are open to view; the octagonal structure produces architecturally interesting angles and designs. The center of the building is free from support pillars, allowing unobstructed visual access to the stage. (See embedded images 1-9, pages 30-34.)

Immediately to the west of the auditorium is a small **Stone Bridge**. The gently arching structure is made of stones 6-10 inches in diameter held together by concrete. The bottom portion of the bridge is concrete; the sides are stones embedded in concrete. The bridge is typical of early Twentieth-century landscape architecture. Although it once spanned a fish pond, there are no visible remnants of the pond today.

As one continues south along the gravel road running through the park, there is a large grassy area to the east with **playground equipment**. A large swing set, featuring seats attached to chains supported by a metal pipe structure, is reminiscent of playground equipment often found near early country schools. Four teeter-totters provide an opportunity for playful youth to jump off at an inopportune time, causing an unsuspecting person to crash to the ground. More modern play equipment serves as an invitation for children to get out of the car and enjoy the beauty of the park.

Looking west toward the river, one sees two stone pillars known as the **Asa Platt** gates. Each is three feet square and nine feet tall. A sidewalk between the two leads pedestrians into the park through the gates. Brass plaques on both pillars state simply, "Asa Platt Gate." The structures are made of stones similar to those in the Stone Bridge and held together with concrete. Both are in good condition, although openings in the top and remnants of electrical wiring would indicate that lights have been removed from the gates. (See image 10, page 34.)

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The **Metcalf Log Cabin** is located to the west, between the road and the river. The picturesque home sits atop a small knoll that does its best to protect the pioneer house from the river water that rises above the banks at least once each year. The log cabin's single door opens into a furnished room that reminds visitors of the primitive conditions early settlers endured to conquer the prairie. One small window beside the door and a rather curious wide and narrow window near the top of the east end of the cabin provide little light, even on the sunniest of days. The logs are held together with chinking; a fireplace on the west end is made of bricks that once lined the Main Street of Sac City. The roof is supported with beams open to the interior and covered with wood shingles. (See images 19-22, pages 39-40.)

Journeying further into the park, visitors find the 1939 **Stone Shelter House**. The stones in the walls are similar to those in the stone bridge, albeit larger. Wood beams and asphalt shingles enclose the L-shaped building. There are two areas available to visitors: one partly open shelter with a fire place and one completely enclosed area with a fireplace. A brass plaque above the interior fireplace says, "Works Progress Administration 1939." Large original paned windows allow picnickers a beautiful view of the Chautauqua Auditorium to the north and the tree-filled park to the south. Heavy original wooden doors compliment the rustic construction. Original metal light fixtures allow the building to be used at night. The interior is filled with heavy wooden tables and benches that appear to date from the same time as the Shelter House's construction. (See images 11-15, pages 35-37.)

Near the Stone Shelter House is an open **Fish Cleaning Shelter**. The wooden structure consists of a roof supported by six wooden pillars and a central brick chimney. Architecturally, the exposed beams and rafters of the Fish House, as well as the graceful roof that appears to float like an open tent, are influenced by the design of the Chautauqua Auditorium. Built-in tables with attached benches span both ends; an original cast iron sink abuts the brick chimney that once vented a wood-burning stove. The roof is covered with wood shingles; the ends of the canopy are faced with wood lap siding painted white. The original concrete floor appears to have been constructed with individual slabs. The structure is seldom used today except as a shelter from the sun or rain. (See images 16-18, pages 37-38.)

A 1970's ranch style home serves as the residence for the **Park Attendant**. The gray wood sided home nestles into the trees along the river bank. The building's slight L-shape mirrors the shape of the Stone Shelter House. Although the home is much newer than most of the park's resources, it certainly does not distract from the over-all beauty of the Chautauqua Park Historic District.

A rough concrete block building south and east of the Stone Shelter houses **restrooms** and shower facilities for campers and visitors. Constructed in the 1990's, the building has helped the park remain a viable destination for campers and provided needed facilities for all who use the area.

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**Chautauqua Park Historic District** is a relatively flat area, covered with grass and many beautiful trees. Graveled drives, flanked by short wood posts, allow motorists to drive through the park. A Frisbee golf area along the south edge of the park is a popular attraction. Numerous built-in grills and camping hook-ups accommodate those spending the night in either tents or campers. The North Raccoon River flows along the west edge of the park. Birds, rabbits, deer, and other wildlife frequently greet those using the park. In the spring, the river banks are lined with many native flowers. Open areas allow ample space for children and adults to engage in countless activities.

The layout of the district is aesthetically pleasing and functional. The distribution of the resources within the park allows each to appear important on its own, yet be united with the other resources to form a district that is rooted in the past, yet preparing for the future. Visitors have the opportunity to learn important details about life in the past century, experience natural beauty, and enjoy many recreational activities.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes 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.



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**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture \_\_\_\_\_

Entertainment/Recreation \_\_\_\_\_

Social History \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1908-1963 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1908 \_\_\_\_\_

1911 \_\_\_\_\_

1925 \_\_\_\_\_

1926 \_\_\_\_\_

1939 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Proudfoot & Bird \_\_\_\_\_

Gordon, W. J. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Chautauqua Park Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A and Criterion C. From its founding in 1908 until 1963, the area was a vital entertainment, recreational, social and cultural hub for Sac County and a large area of Northwest Iowa. As a promoter of the Chautauqua movement, the park embodied Teddy Roosevelt's description of the movement as "The most American thing in America." (Traveling Culture) It is one of the few extant areas founded for the purpose of and dedicated to the widespread Chautauqua movement that shaped several generations of Americans. (The only other extant pavilions in Iowa are found in Red Oak and Riverton.) Friends and neighbors gathered to camp, share stories, hear lectures, and experience music from across the land. The Metcalf Log Cabin is a reminder of pioneer days and early residents' struggles to conquer and settle Iowa in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century. Architecturally, Chautauqua Park is home to an auditorium designed by Proudfoot and Bird, a firm noted for significant contribution to Iowa and regional architecture. The Stone Shelter House is a classic example of WPA projects. The entire park is well maintained, yet remains true to historic roots. A visit to Chautauqua Park Historic District is a visible reminder of an era when beauty and function combined to heighten social awareness and promote cultural events.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Chautauqua Park Historical District has served as a gathering place, educational hub, and cultural center for the community and surrounding area since 1908. Members of the Sac City Chautauqua Association purchased the property along the North Raccoon River, next to the county fairgrounds in 1908, at which time the octagonal Chautauqua Auditorium was erected as designed by Proudfoot and Bird. As the years passed, the David Metcalf log cabin, Asa Platt gates, stone shelter house, stone walking bridge, and fish house provided additional attractions to Chautauqua Park.

From 1905 to 1907, Sac City Chautauqua Association partnered with Redpath Vawter Chautauqua circuit to present a fortnight of events filled with entertainment, lectures, and religious celebrations in tents erected on the Sac County Fairgrounds. Thousands of people traveled to Sac City to camp along the riverbank and attend the various events. The success of the first three Chautauqua seasons prompted local organizers to purchase approximately nine acres of land from D. H. Beimer in 1908. This land became the heart of what is now known as Chautauqua Park, fronted by Park Avenue on the north and connecting the Sac County Fairgrounds to the North Raccoon River.

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### **Chautauqua Movement and Chautauqua Park**

The Chautauqua movement began in 1874 in Chautauqua, New York, as the Chautauqua Lake Sunday School Assembly. The program was an educational experiment designed to reach Sunday School teachers and students during the summer months, when traditional schools were typically not in session. The program's almost immediate success and a desire to reach a wider audience prompted organizers to expand the scope of offerings. Academic classes, music and art instruction, and physical education opportunities became part of the burgeoning curriculum that spanned the entire year. Leaders began a correspondence study program. To better reach those who could not travel to New York, traveling Chautauquas began to spread throughout the United States. New York leaders did not universally approve of the itinerant programs, as their quality was somewhat uneven. Nevertheless, the movement spread with great success. Having a Chautauqua show was a source of great pride for many communities, and dates were highly sought. The Redpath agency (later Redpath-Vawter) in Cedar Rapids handled bookings for many on the Chautauqua Circuit.

Circuit Chautauqua is among the most significant and most often overlooked influences in early twentieth-century United States history. In the years before radio and television, hundreds of millions of people in thousands of rural communities learned about the great issues of their age and enjoyed entertainment from around the world without traveling further than their own towns' Main Street. (Traveling Culture: Circuit Chautauqua in the Twentieth Century)

To host a Chautauqua program, towns needed a sponsoring organization with financial backing, a good location, and railroad access. In 1904, community leaders in Sac City formed The Sac City Chautauqua Association to sponsor the first local Chautauqua in 1905. 120 shareholders made an initial investment to underwrite the cost of these events. Aside from acquisition of property, the initial investment was never needed to supplement the cost of local programs; ticket sales actually resulted in handsome profits nearly every year.

### **Sac City Chautauqua Auditorium**

The combination of railroad access, a beautiful tree-filled community, and ample space for camping made the county seat town of Sac City, Iowa, an ideal location for traveling Chautauqua shows. Local organizers began consideration of hosting as early as 1902. Organizational efforts came to fruition when 120 people formed the Sac City Chautauqua Association in December, 1904. July 8-16, 1905 marked the first series of Chautauqua programs in Sac City. The traveling organization set up a large tent on the Sac County Fairgrounds, and people came from miles around to share in the entertainment and educational opportunities the series provided. (See images 24 and 25, page 42). \$2 adult tickets and \$1 children's passes allowed attendees access to the 25 different events. Many rented tents for \$1; some splurged and spent \$2.50 for a tent that was already set up. The successes in 1905, 1906, and 1907 prompted the Sac City Association to purchase land adjacent to the Sac County Fair Grounds in 1908. The purchase price was \$1275. The transaction was recorded April 15, 1908, in the Sac County Recorder's office.

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The Association engaged Proudfoot and Bird architects of Des Moines to design a suitable auditorium and hired contractor W. J. Gordon of Sac City to erect the structure. The 98 by 120 feet structure had an octagonal front to make it resemble the familiar Chautauqua tents and to enhance its acoustical properties. The ceiling was 33 feet tall. Pillars and open rafters reminded attendees of sitting in a large tent. The building took 80,000 board feet of lumber, 120 squares of roofing materials, and literally a ton of nails. Some of the material was shipped from Fischer, Louisiana. The walls were finished with tiered wooden weatherboard and the roof was covered with wooden shingles. (Hart, p. 283) Glass windows on the upper tier opened to provide ventilation. The floor was originally dirt and the side walls were open, but covered in canvass to keep "gate crashers" from gaining access to the entertainment. Total cost of the building was \$3,475. Money was raised by selling \$10 certificates which guaranteed the purchasers season tickets to the 1908-1912 Chautauqua programs. Construction progressed rapidly, in spite of significant flooding in the nearby North Raccoon River. The June 18, 1908 issue of *The Sac Sun* stated,

The auditorium of the Sac City Chautauqua Association almost one and one-half blocks east of the courthouse is nearing completion. It is sufficiently advanced that tests may be made of its acoustic advantages, which will be found superb. Get your season ticket this week or next and encourage this great enterprise. (*Sac Sun*, 18 June 1908, p. 1)

The following week, the local newspaper reported:

On June 18, 1908, W. T. Proudfoot, of the firm of Proudfoot and Bird Architects, came from Des Moines and inspected the new auditorium on the Chautauqua grounds. He pronounced the acoustics perfect and was delighted with the success of his plan in this respect. He also approved the workmanship of the contractor, though making a few minor suggestions, which will be speedily carried out...The late high waters of the Coon river (*sic*) will in no way interfere with the Sac City Chautauqua Assembly which begins Friday, June 26, at 2 p.m. Everything will be in prime trim for the rendering of one of the very finest and best balanced programs to be given in Iowa this year. There is an abundance of camping ground, beautiful in all its appointments, that has at all times been far removed from the flood. The auditorium has at no time been reached by the waters, which are now rapidly receding and entirely out of the way. (*Sac Sun*, 25 June 1908, p. 3)

In spite of the organizers' assurance that everyone would be completely removed from the flood, early photos show campers surrounded by, and in one case standing in water. (See Image 29, page 44.) Weather conditions did not make the 1908 season as financially successful as the preceding seasons; nevertheless, the permanent auditorium and park dedicated to the Chautauqua activities created an important landmark that would contribute to the community into the twenty-first century.

#### **Auditorium Changes**

Originally, portions of each wall on the north half of the building were open and filled with bleachers to seat those attending shows. By the late 1930's, after the city became owners of the building, the Pavilion had fallen into disrepair. The Great Depression had diminished the city's ability to meet essential expenses; parks and

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recreational facilities certainly suffered from neglect. If the auditorium were to be saved, local leaders realized the need to cover the walls with screens to keep birds from nesting inside and also help protect the structure from harsh winter conditions. Improvements included pouring a concrete floor in the building and building partial wooden walls between the posts that supported the tent-like structure. A plaque in the auditorium recounts the first significant changes.

The structure stood for many years and was in general use. In 1939, the dirt floor was very bad, the roof needed repair, and paint was peeling off. There was considerable talk of tearing it down for it had little to offer the public. One day Charles Hacke and A. O. Anderson drove down to the Chautauqua auditorium to look over the structure. Mr. Hacke was editor of the *Sac Sun* and Mr. Anderson was president of the Sac City State Bank. They stood under the roof and surveyed the auditorium. "This is too good a building to tear down," said Mr. Anderson. "If we could just lay a cement floor and enclose the outside with screens," said Mr. Hacke. That was it. Fred Salasek, with help from W. P. A. labor was building the Shelter house and he had a lot of cement left over. Mr. Anderson and Mr. Hacke decided to talk it up, to write articles for publication in the *Sac Sun* and soon the floor was laid and screens enclosed the auditorium. New paint was applied and the roof was resingled. (quoted from plaque inside Chautauqua Auditorium.)

Mr. Hacke and Mr. Anderson accomplished their goal in stages. In his weekly column for *The Sac Sun*, Mr. Hacke noted:

Now that the work has actually started on laying the cement floor in the old Chautauqua Auditorium it is surprising to find out how many are actually interested in it and who think it is just the right thing to do. Some months ago there was considerable talk of tearing down the building...There was opposition to this step, mostly on the part of older residents who recall with pleasure, many interesting programs and plays presented under that roof.

Others were likewise interested in saving a building that was far too good to be discarded and could be converted into practical use. The result will be a fine shelter house or auditorium where picnics, family gatherings, programs and even church services may be held in comfort and convenience. (*Sac Sun* 20 July 1939)

Several weeks later, Mr. Hacke used his editorship to push for more improvements.

There has been a lot of approval for the new cement floor recently placed in the old chautauqua (*sic*) building in the city park. The members of the Sac County American Legion and Auxiliary made good use of it last Sunday when they held the county picnic in the city park. The rain which fell earlier in the day made the ground damp and wet. The picnickers moved to the old chautauqua (*sic*) building where said picnic was held and they enjoyed it immensely. No dust or dirt to contend with, no mud or damp grass. A fine cement floor gave under foot and the roof furnished protection from the elements.

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There is a growing desire among those who are interested in this landmark that the entire building be enclosed with screens. It has already been whitewashed inside and is in fine shape, but birds are already making nests on the interior and their traces are being left on the seats and tables placed there. An enclosed building would keep out all undesirables and would make picnicking more pleasant and sanitary. (*Sac Sun* 10 August 1939)

Citizens responded to Mr. Hacke's pleas and the entire building was enclosed by the summer of 1940. Kitchen facilities were added in the room west of the stage in the 1940's. In the 105 years since the original construction, there have been numerous coats of paint; new roofs; some electrical upgrades, including new lighting and ceiling fans; improvements in the dressing rooms; and the addition of one restroom in a storage area. In 1995, local residents contributed more than \$25,000 and untold volunteer hours to help return the building to its original glory. In 1996, a county-wide program resulted in a set of nine painted canvas murals, representing each incorporated town in the county, to cover the screened areas. The entire structure was rededicated in 1976 as a part of the country's bicentennial. Nevertheless, there have been no significant structural changes in Mr. Proudfoot's original design. The Auditorium is one of the few extant structures of its kind in Iowa and a living testament to the Chautauqua era that changed not only Sac City but the entire country.

### **Proudfoot and Bird**

For well over forty-years, the Des Moines architectural firm of Proudfoot & Bird, et al. played a significant role in designing Iowa's architectural heritage. During its heyday, the firm designed more than one hundred commercial buildings, including a number of tall office edifices; two hundred single family dwellings; at least thirty apartment buildings; several public libraries; more than fifty public school buildings; approximately 100 collegiate buildings; five county courthouses; and a scattering of other public and semipublic buildings like hotels, theatres, churches, hospitals, and fire stations...

The firm's statewide legacy is broad and deep. Of their approximately 658 Iowa Commissions between 1885 and 1940, about half (an estimated 338) were in Des Moines. The firm penetrated markets throughout the state, however, with commissions in at least 117 communities in 64 counties. Fifteen communities had more than five commissions. Especially well represented are Ames (18 commissions), Boone (9), Grinnell (27), Jefferson (7), Newton (13) and Oskaloosa (14). The firm did significant work outside Iowa, receiving 88 commissions in eleven states (Georgia, Kansas, Illinois, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, and Wyoming).

Thus, while the firm was not on the cutting edge of architectural experimentation, they provided a solid body of design within the self-imposed limitations of the demands of their clients and accepted architectural styles for the period. The architectural philosophy of the firm can be characterized as conservative, both in design and attention to cost. Their designs reflected those who commissioned them: the local boards of education, the State Board of Education (for collegiate buildings), the Des Moines public schools, county

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boards of supervisors, successful, old-line households, prosperous businesses. As John Woolson Brooks, who joined the firm in 1912 as a blue print boy and went on to become a partner, described it:

The main objective has been to produce Architecture in the unlimited sense of beauty, utility, and commodity; unlimited in that none of the three properties was allowed to predominate; none was neglected.

Proudfoot & Bird, et al. was considered the foremost architectural firm in the state, especially between 1910 and 1925. However, the firm's years of permanent Iowa residency date from 1896 and illustrate an unusual continuum (the organization of Proudfoot & Bird likely dates from 1882, but much of the intervening years were spent in other Midwestern states). Few firms can trace a similar record of uninterrupted practice, one that also placed them in the forefront of architectural practice in the state. The experience of the firm offers the opportunity to learn about architectural practice in Iowa from the late nineteenth century through the 1930's. (Long, Barbara, p. 2)

Local newspaper references indicate the Mr. Proudfoot was involved with plans for the Chautauqua Auditorium in Sac City. The firm's selection was somewhat predictable, as W. J. Dixon, president of the Sac City Chautauqua Association, lived in Seven Oaks, a home designed by Proudfoot & Bird. (Seven Oaks is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.) (Becker) The structure typifies the company's combination of beauty, utility and commodity. Research has found no other outdoor auditoriums designed by the firm.

#### **Asa Platt Gates**

Two stone pillars serve as gate posts for the entrance to Chautauqua Park. There originally were three-foot tall electric lights on top of the pillars, and may have been attached gates that kept horse-drawn and motorized vehicles out of the park. When the path of Highway 20 moved north and further from Chautauqua Park, the entrance changed, leaving the two stone pillars as a monument to Mr. Platt who worked diligently for the community and the Chautauqua organization. Platt, the grandson of a Revolutionary War veteran, built the first frame home in Sac City, enlisted to serve in the Civil War, and was active in both farming and mercantile endeavors while serving as president of the Sac County State Bank. His philanthropic efforts were numerous; the Asa Platt Boys' Home for the Sac City Institute, Platt Street, and the Asa Platt Gates were a testament to the pioneer's contributions to the community. *The Sac Sun* of March 26, 1908, credits Mr. Platt's mediation between the Fair Board and Chautauqua Association as a primary reason Chautauqua Park came into being.

Much of the credit for pointing out the way to harmony and bringing the several parties together belongs to Asa Platt, whose interest in all that looks in the welfare of the city so frequently is manifested. (*Sac Sun*, 26 March, 1908, p. 2)

Although the exact date of the gates' construction has been lost to history, photographic evidence indicates they were built prior to 1931. (See Images 32-33, page 46.)

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### **Stone Bridge and Fish Pond**

A fish pond spanned by a small stone walking bridge was a popular attraction on the west side of the Chautauqua Auditorium. It was certainly constructed after the Asa Platt gates, based on photographic evidence. (See Images 34, page 47.) Although many have speculated the bridge and fishpond were part of a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project, photographic evidence indicates the bridge and fish pond were in place by 1935, the first year WPA projects began. The absence of a metal plaque on the bridge and the early construction date would suggest the structure was built by other means. Large gold fish inhabited the fish pond which was aerated by small fountains. All that remains is the bridge, as city insurance required first the fencing in of the pond, and ultimately its removal in the 1970's. The bridge currently seems an enigma for those who don't know its history. (See Image 35, page 47 and Image 49, page 57.)

### **Stone Shelter House**

The advent of radio and movie theaters, improved transportation, and economic conditions caused Chautauqua programs to wane in popularity after the first decades of the 20th century. By the time of the Great Depression, Chautauqua Park was used as a place for gatherings and recreation, but no longer hosting Chautauqua programs. The park's popularity as a picnic site, coupled with availability of WPA funds and workers, made the construction of a stone shelter house an ideal addition to the area in 1939. The architect of the building is unknown, but Mr. I. Lasensky, area engineer for the WPA, may have been instrumental in the building's design. The style complements the natural wooded setting overlooking the North Raccoon River. The building's unique design, featuring an open shelter fireplace and a separate enclosed area with a fireplace, allowed two large groups to use the facility at the same time. More than 20 WPA workers, under the supervision of sponsor superintendent Fred Salasek, foremen Jack Myers and Leslie Geary, and timekeeper George French had begun work on the stone shelter by mid-April, 1939. After completing a renovation project at the Community Building overlooking the square in Sac City, the men focused their efforts on the Stone Shelter House.

The WPA project brought needed employment into the community and helped provide much-needed economic stimulus. The building was also an early example of eco-friendly construction. At his speech during the July 1, 1939, dedication ceremony for the Community Building and Stone Shelter House, Sac City Mayor J. B. Tourgee extolled the project's virtues. He began his dedication speech with a quote from President Franklin Roosevelt. "When men dedicate a new edifice for a common enterprise, they are at once celebrating an achievement and announcing a purpose." Tourgee continued to extol the virtues of the shelter house using his own words.

The achievement is apparent to all of us. Out of the surplus materials of our good earth, we have gathered together the elements of which the buildings we dedicate are constructed. From the waste materials of the earth we have gathered the rock and the sand, from the forests the lumber, and from the scrap pile the metals and with the ingenuity, skill and perseverance of a few good workmen we have brought forth a thing of beauty and a joy to this community.



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The purpose of all this is to add to the pleasure, health and education of our citizens. It is to make life better and more worth while (*sic*), our homes more desirable and our love for them and for our country more vital and enduring. Most important of all is the fact that our community taste, our love for recreation and right living has been and will be raised and stimulated by these fine achievements. Our community life has been made richer and better and more enduring. (*Sac Sun*, 6 July 1939)

It would appear that many of the materials were acquired locally. Mr. Tourgee's remark about scrap metal leads one to wonder if the fixtures were crafted by the workmen. The Stone Shelter house has been home to countless family gatherings, birthday parties, and even dances. (See Images 36-39, pages 48-51.)

### **Fish House**

Fishing was a popular attraction for Chautauqua Park. The construction of an open facility for anglers to clean and cook their catch is symbolic of the community's desire to accommodate those using the park. The canopy-like wood structure featured a sink with running water, counter area to clean fish, and a wood-burning stove. Conversations with descendants of early park custodians indicate that the building was erected about the same time as the Stone Shelter House to keep the mess of cleaning fish out of the fancier stone building.

### **Metcalf Log Cabin**

Chautauqua Park contains the first log cabin built in the Sac County area. In 1854, one year before Sac City was founded, Mr. David Metcalf built the structure about a mile north of the present town of Sac City. The exact location was on the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter of section 14-88-36. (Freese, p. 320) At that time, the area was part of Woodbury County and there were only six or eight families in the region that eventually became Sac County. Hundreds of travelers spent the night in the cabin as they traveled to more westerly points. The cabin was built of logs hewn from trees felled in the area, had a dirt floor, wood rafters, and a primitive wooden roof.

In 1925, area residents united to move this historic example of pioneer architecture from the S. L. Watt farm to Chautauqua Park. Reports indicate the cabin was moved as a complete structure, making the home a contributing resource moved into the park under Criterion Consideration B. At that time, volunteers renovated and repaired the cabin, which served as a visible reminder of times gone by to all who drove by on Highway 20. The scenic location by the North Raccoon River had its drawbacks, as the river frequently escaped its banks and endangered the cabin. The local Federated Women's Club organized a second restoration in 1957. The entire cabin was raised above flood level; chimney footings and a concrete floor were run; masons made a new chimney from bricks that had once paved the Main Street hill in Sac City; and the logs were preserved and sealed. At that time, the women began collecting items for the home that would have been typical for pioneer dwellings.

The home became a significant building in Chautauqua Park, reminding visitors of the relatively primitive conditions pioneer settlers endured to eke out a living from the prairie in the midst of Native American settlement. (See image 40, page 52.)

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### Non-contributing Resources

There are several additional resources in the nominated district. Through the years, the type of playground equipment has changed; there are no longer "monkey bars" or a merry-go-round. At one time, there was an open wading pool between the auditorium and Stone Shelter House. The pool was removed *circa* 1960.

Natural plantings have always been an important feature of Chautauqua Park. It is interesting to note that several trees were planted in memory of Mr. and Mrs. H. R. Elrod in 1973. Mrs. Elrod was the granddaughter of Asa Platt. Another tree commemorates Iowa's sesquicentennial celebration of 1996. Flowerbeds along the north side of the park have long been a source of community pride and serve as a reminder of the park's history of welcoming guests and promoting educational and cultural activities.

### Chautauqua Park

The location of Chautauqua Park was the result of several compromises. The 1905-1907 assemblies took place in a large tent set on the Sac County Fair Grounds. When leaders of the Sac City Chautauqua Association began to consider building a permanent pavilion, the preferred location was on the Fair Grounds. Negotiations among the Chautauqua Association, Fair Board, and land owner D. H. Beimer appeared to have stalled. In desperation, leaders of the Chautauqua Association obtained an option to purchase land east of the Fair Grounds to build a new auditorium. Local business leaders did not like the proposed locale, as they feared the greater distance from downtown would have a negative impact on business during the Chautauqua assemblies. According to *The Sac Sun*, March 26, 1908,

After weeks of delay, in which it seemed that there was little prospect of an agreement that would enable the Chautauqua Association to obtain a suitable site in time to erect an auditorium this year, a deal was concluded the first of this week that adjusts in a very satisfactory manner the relations of the fair and the Chautauqua assembly and gives assurance of permanent sites for both. The arrangement required mutual concessions on the part of the two associations and D. H. Beimer, owner of the land on which the fair ground is located. Much of the credit for pointing out the way of harmony and bringing the several parties together belongs to Asa Platt...

In brief, Mr. Beimer has contracted to sell 37 1/2 acres of land to the fair association for \$125 per acre. The Chautauqua Association takes nine acres on the west side and pays for it \$1,275. A recent survey made it clear that an auditorium can be built near the first entrance to the fairground practically as safe from high water as on the site where the tent has stood. (*Sac Sun*, 26 March, 1908, p. 5)

The Park itself has undergone some boundary, management, and ownership changes in the past century. After the original purchase from Mr. Beimer, the Sac City Chautauqua Association owned the property. On February 21, 1911, the Sac City Chautauqua Association deeded the property to the Sac County Chautauqua Association. The change of name was an attempt to involve leadership and receive

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backing from the entire county.

The Articles of Incorporation (Recorder's Office Book 1, p. 69) for the Sac County Chautauqua Association, Sac City, Iowa, were filed on December 5, 1910. "The purpose and object of this corporation shall be to acquire and own the auditorium and grounds of the Sac County Chautauqua Association and such other real personal property as may hereafter be deemed necessary; to hold and manage annual Chautauqua assemblies in Sac City, Iowa, and to employ talent to entertain and instruct the public in science, philosophy, literature, music, art and religion: and in order to employ talent and effect the objects of this organization, it may charge an admission fee to its entertainments." The Capital Stock was \$10,000.00 with shares at \$2,000.00 each. The corporation was to continue for fifty years unless previously dissolved. (Freese, p. 319)

The Sac City Park Board asked for, and was granted, permission to establish a Tourists' Park on the southern part of Chautauqua Park in 1922. At that time, the city park commissioner began to oversee the park activities. Thus began the city's involvement with the area. In 1926, the board of directors for Sac County Chautauqua Association determined it was no longer feasible to host large-scale events. Whether it was finances, leadership burnout, or simply changing times that made the week-long festival impractical to continue is uncertain; the ultimate cause was most certainly a combination of all three. It was only natural for the Sac County Chautauqua Association to seek help from the city to preserve the park. On January 13, 1927, the Park Board of Sac City assumed ownership of Chautauqua Park.

The Sac City Chautauqua Grounds have been formally deeded to the city of Sac City for park purposes. The deed to the city was signed by officers of the Sac County Chautauqua Association on Tuesday evening of this week, pursuant to authority from the stockholders of the association.

The city covenants to maintain the Chautauqua park and also the land recently acquired from the Rowe estate perpetually as a public park and the rights to the Chautauqua ground and buildings for assembly purposes are reserved to the association.

If there should be any violation of that contract on the part of the city, the Chautauqua property would revert to the original stockholders. It is not presumed that there is any likelihood of the city's failing to keep this agreement. The acquirement of this ground gives Sac City a public park that can not be excelled in northwest Iowa. No more beautiful trees can be found in the state than those which are growing in Chautauqua park and on the Rowe estate ground. Fear frequently was expressed that the Rowe property might go into other hands and the trees be cut down before there was a chance to preserve them. (*Sac Sun*, 13 Jan. 1927, p. 1)

The additional property from the Rowe estate enlarged the park and is currently the area used as a campground on the south side of the park. This additional area is not included as part of the application for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The only other change to the boundaries of the park happened in 1938, when the park acquired the land up to the river and extended north to the road. In addition to the previously-cited legal description, the following was added:

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Block "B" and lots five(5), six (6) in block "C" and all that part of lots one (1), two (2) three (3) and four (4) in block "D" lying south of the highway or street running through said block "C" in the original town of Sac City, Iowa. (Public record)

(See Map 1, page 57, for the original area and map 2, page 58, for the additions acquired in 1938.)

The additional property acquired in 1938 is part of the application for inclusion on the National Registry of Historic Places, as the Metcalf log cabin had been placed on this property thirteen years before it was actually part of Chautauqua Park. It would appear that the land west to the North Raccoon River and north to the road were used as part of Chautauqua Park long before either the Chautauqua Association or the City had legal ownership. (see Images 40-41, pages 8-24—8-25) The current legal description of the property on file at the Sac County Court House simply states, "1.53 Acres Outlot A-1 and Outlot A-2 except .77 acres in SW corner. (10.924 acres)."

Since the city acquired the property, it has been known as "Chautauqua Park," "Tourist Park," "Sac City Park," and "Sac City Campground." "Chautauqua Park" is used for the purposes of this application. The Stone Shelter House, Fish House, park custodian house, restrooms, playground equipment, and modern camping accommodations have been added to the property. Since the last Chautauqua in 1926, the park has not had too many weeks with more than 1000 visitors in residence. Nevertheless, it has been used extensively. Family reunions, dances, county-wide country school graduation ceremonies, home shows, cook-out contests, rubber duck races, launching a new fast-food product, city-wide freecycles, countless fundraisers, church services, political rallies, filming a movie, concert series, and annual Chautauqua Days celebrations all utilize the park. P. Buckley Moss created a print featuring the park; senators and presidential candidates have graced the area; busloads of tourists stop to visit. Through it all, Chautauqua Park has remained a center for education, culture, and recreation—a living reminder of a bygone era that continues to use its beauty and nobility to inspire each successive generation.

The nominated district, Chautauqua Park, has served a vital role as a cultural and recreational center for Sac City, Iowa, and the surrounding communities for more than 100 years. As a cultural center, it has hosted politicians and orators (most notably William Jennings Bryan), the famous Sousa Band, Madame Schuman-Heink, and a host of others. Performances by the "Jubilee Singers" were undoubtedly many people's first exposure to African-American music. Lectures were instrumental in encouraging people of all ages to value education, understand the political process, and expand horizons. Chautauqua's influence shaped history in Sac City and the surrounding area. Chautauqua Park proved to be a catalyst for people working together for the common good of the community, which is a characteristic of Sac City that remains today.

As a recreational area, its scenic location and rich amenities have attracted untold thousands of visitors for not only cultural and education events, but family gatherings, dances, reunions, and religious celebrations. The North Raccoon River provided a welcome area for fishing, boating, and swimming. The campgrounds were and are noted for their beauty, accessibility, and spacious accommodations.

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Chautauqua Park Historic District is home to the historically significant Proudfoot and Bird designed auditorium, Asa Platt gates that honor a community founder, Metcalf cabin that is a testament to the early pioneers that settled Northwest Iowa, a fish house that is at best a historical curiosity, small stone bridge that is a fine example of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century landscape architecture, and shelter house that serves as an example of WPA projects. The auditorium, with its soaring rafters and fine acoustics, was considered one of the finest examples of a cultural pavilion in the area and is the few extant Chautauqua auditoriums in Iowa. The combination of resources in Chautauqua Park represents a wonderful collection of rustic architecture that embodies the union of function, beauty, and harmony within a beautiful natural setting.

Archeological investigation was not a part of this nomination. Additional research may identify archeological sites that could contribute to the overall historical significance of the property, particularly given the proximity of the park to the North Raccoon River.

Although there have been some changes to the district over the past century, the major resources remain with few structural modifications. Original materials are evident in each structure. Chautauqua Park is significant not only for its historical buildings, but as a symbol of a community working together to better itself by involving groups of citizens to effect positive change on their surroundings. An early report in *The Sac County Bulletin* (December 15, 1909) may best summarize the effect of Chautauqua Park on the community and all who have visited it.

The movement has been the recipient of most cordial public favor, because of its great value to the moral and educational interests of the community, and the self sacrificing and unselfish open manner in which the business has been conducted. This is distinctively an organization of the people and for the people which is destined to endure so long as the people continue to give it the same cordial and substantial support that it has thus far so happily received. (*Sac County Bulletin*, 15 December, 1909, page 1)

Chautauqua Park, an area "of the people and for the people," is a historically significant area, notable for its architecture; recreational facilities; and significant contributions to the community through education, culture, performing arts, and the preservation of early Iowa pioneer history.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):**     N/A    

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property**     10.924    

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: -94.985664 | Longitude: 42.421692 |
| 2. Latitude: -94.983629 | Longitude: 42.421158 |
| 3. Latitude: -94.984671 | Longitude: 42.418229 |
| 4. Latitude: -94.985512 | Longitude: 42.417886 |



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Or

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Chautauqua Park Historic District, in Sac City, Iowa, is the area bordered on the north by Main Street (old highway 20) and Park Avenue, west by the North Raccoon River, east by Park Drive, and south by the curve of Park Drive. Legal description: 1.53 Acres Outlot A-1 and Outlot A-2 except .77 acres in SW corner. (10.924 acres)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The selected boundaries include all of the original Chautauqua Park and the additional land toward the river that was acquired in 1938 at the time the city of Sac City assumed ownership of the property. The 1938 additions were included because they were used as a part of the park from earliest days even though not legally included in the property description.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Bruce Perry  
organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number: 212 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
city or town: Sac City state: IA zip code: 50583  
e-mail BruceLPerry@gmail.com  
telephone: 515-979-5620  
date: May 28, 2013

**Property owned by**

Chautauqua Park Historic District  
Name of Property

Sac County, IA  
County and State

name/title: City of Sac City  
contact: Charles Adam Ledford, city administrator  
street & number: 302 East Main Street  
city or town: Sac City state: IA zip code: 50583  
e-mail saccityal@prairieinet.net  
telephone: 712-662-7593

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Chautauqua Park Historic District

City or Vicinity: Sac City

County: Sac

State: IA

Photographer: Bruce Perry (all photos)

Date Photographed: 21 September 2012 (photos 1-18, 20-27, 29); 2 February 2013 (Photo 28); 8 February 2013 (photo 19); 6 May 2013 (30-31)

All photography digital; digital imagery stored at 212 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Sac City, IA

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Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

(Sketch Map number keys the photo to the numbered reference on the Sketch Map on page 60)

1 of 31 (Sketch Map #1)

North side of Chautauqua Auditorium, Sign on building added in 2008 for the building's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Stone marker in front identifies plantings in memory of Mr. and Mrs. H. R. Elrod. (camera looking south)

2 of 31 (Sketch Map #1, #4)

Chautauqua Auditorium from the Asa Platt Gates. (camera looking south east)

3 of 31 (Sketch Map #1)

Southeast corner of Chautauqua Auditorium. Solid wall is side of the stage. Window is stage right dressing room and door once opened into a storage area. Restroom facilities are now below the dressing room. Screens and lower walls between pillars were added in 1930's. (camera looking west)

4 of 31 (Sketch Map #1)

Detail of wood siding on upper portion of Chautauqua Auditorium. (camera facing south)

5 of 31 (Sketch Map #1)

Detail of support for pillars. All support elements are original. (camera facing south)

6 of 31 (Sketch Map #5)

Front of Metcalf Log Cabin. (camera facing south east)

7 of 31 (Sketch Map #5)

Back of Metcalf Log Cabin (camera facing north)

8 of 31 (Sketch Map #5)

Detail of east end of Metcalf Log Cabin. Logs are original; chinking is concrete. Roof was replaced in 1970's. (camera facing west)

9 of 31 (Sketch Map #5)

Detail of west end of Metcalf Log Cabin. Stone chimney was replaced with brick chimney using bricks from Sac City Main Street 1957. (camera looking south east)

10 of 31 (Sketch Map #2)

Back side of Stone Shelter House. Stone appears to be of local origin. Windows are original. Block shower/restroom facility to left of building. (camera looking south)

11 of 31 (Sketch Map #2)

Southeast corner of Stone Shelter, Fish house and block shower/restroom facility. (camera looking south)

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12 of 31 (Sketch Map #3, #2, #1)

Stone bridge in Chautauqua Park. Chautauqua Auditorium to left, Stone Shelter to right. (camera looking south east)

13 of 31 (Sketch Map #3, #2, #8)

Stone bridge in Chautauqua Park. Stone shelter in background as well as playground equipment. (camera looking south)

14 of 31 (Sketch Map #3, #5)

Stone bridge looking west. Metcalf Log Cabin in the background. (camera facing west)

15 of 31 (Sketch Map #6, #7)

Fish cleaning shelter. Built-in tables are original. Park custodian house in the background. (camera looking north west)

16 of 31 (Sketch Map #6, #1, #2)

Detail of built-in tables with Chautauqua Auditorium, Stone Shelter House, and shower facility in background. (camera looking north)

17 of 31 (Sketch Map #6, #1, #2)

End view of Fish Cleaning Shelter. Auditorium, Stone Shelter House, and shower facility in background. (camera looking north)

18 of 31 (Sketch Map #6)

Detail of interior of Fish Cleaning Shelter. Chimney designed to vent a wood-burning range. Open rafters are reminiscent of structure of the Chautauqua Auditorium. (camera facing northeast)

19 of 31 (Sketch Map #4)

Interior view of North end of Stone Shelter House showing original windows. Log cabin visible in the distance. (camera looking south)

20 of 31 (Sketch Map #4)

Asa Platt Gates looking north toward Park Avenue and Main Street. (camera facing north)

21 of 31 (Sketch Map #4, #1)

Edge of Asa Platt gate looking toward Chautauqua Auditorium. (camera facing southeast)

Chautauqua Park Historic District

Sac County, IA

Name of Property

County and State

22 of 31 (Sketch Map#8, #7)

Teeter-totter set with Park Attendant house in the background. (camera facing west)

23 of 31 (Sketch Map #8, #1)

Playground equipment and picnic table between Chautauqua Auditorium and Stone Shelter House. Exhibit building for fair grounds in back ground. camera facing east)

24 of 31 (Sketch Map #1)

South side of Chautauqua Auditorium. Center area is the stage with dressing rooms on the upper part of each side. A kitchen area is in enclosed area lower left of center and storage area is in enclosed area on lower right. (camera facing north)

25 of 31 (Sketch Map #1)

Southwest corner of Chautauqua Auditorium. (camera facing west)

26 of 31 (Sketch Map #2)

Stone Shelter House has a large semi-enclosed area on the front with a fireplace. The interior and exterior fireplaces share a common chimney. (camera facing southwest)

27 of 31

North Raccoon River beside the Metcalf Log Cabin and Main Street bridge. The river has been a great source of recreation as well as a problem for Chautauqua Park. Heavy seasonal rains often lead to flooding of the park; nevertheless, the buildings' locations have kept them free from all but minimal water damage. (camera facing north)

28 of 31 (Sketch Map #7)

Park Attendant House (camera facing west)

29 of 31 (Sketch Map #1)

West entrance to Chautauqua Auditorium. (camera facing north)

30 of 31 (Sketch Map #1)

Interior of Chautauqua Auditorium with canvas murals lowered. Each mural depicts a different town in Sac County. (camera facing west)

31 of 31 (Sketch Map #1)

Interior of Chautauqua Auditorium with canvas murals lowered. Each mural depicts a different town in Sac County. (camera facing east)

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

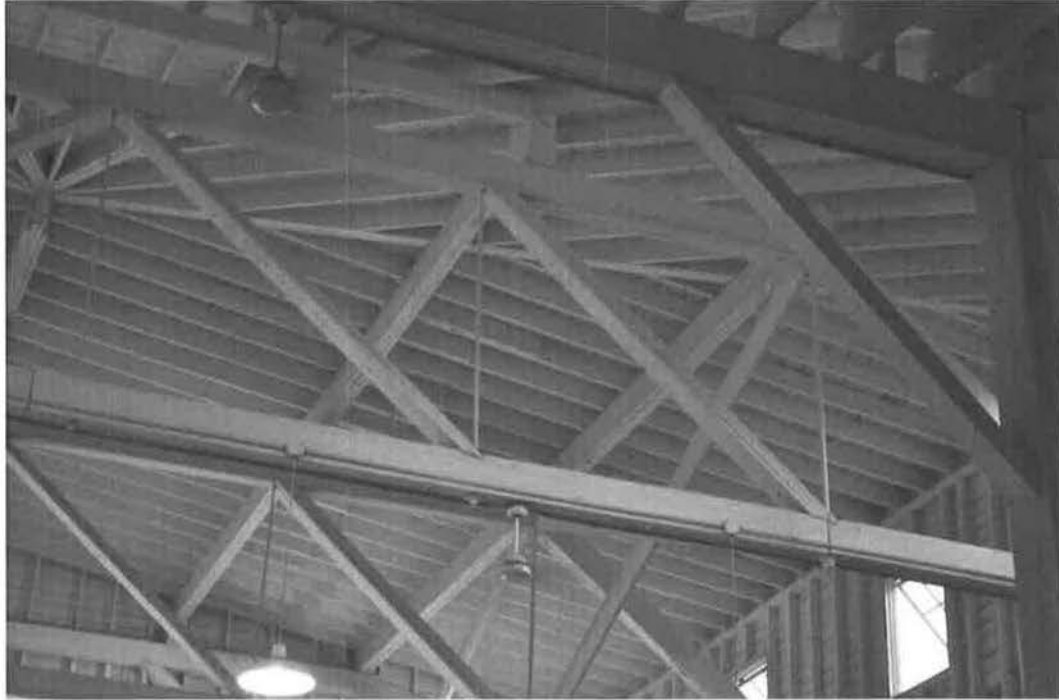
Chautauqua Park Historic District  
Name of Property

Sac County, IA  
County and State

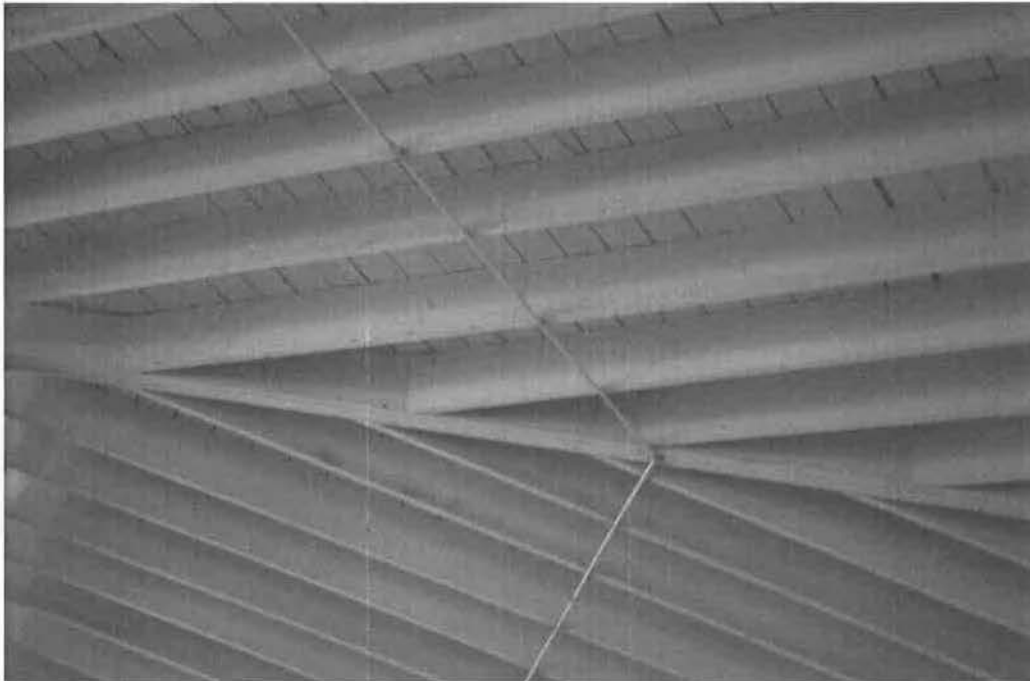
**Embedded images**

**Section 7--Current Images of Architectural Details**

(All images from Bruce Perry Photo Collection unless other credit given)



(Image 1) Detail of open rafter configuration to accommodate modified octagonal shape. The tall ceiling with open rafters reminded audiences of sitting under a big-top tent.



(Image 2) Proudfoot's interior design featured visible support beams and numerous angles.

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(Image 3) Wood support beams on concrete footings support the Auditorium's structure.



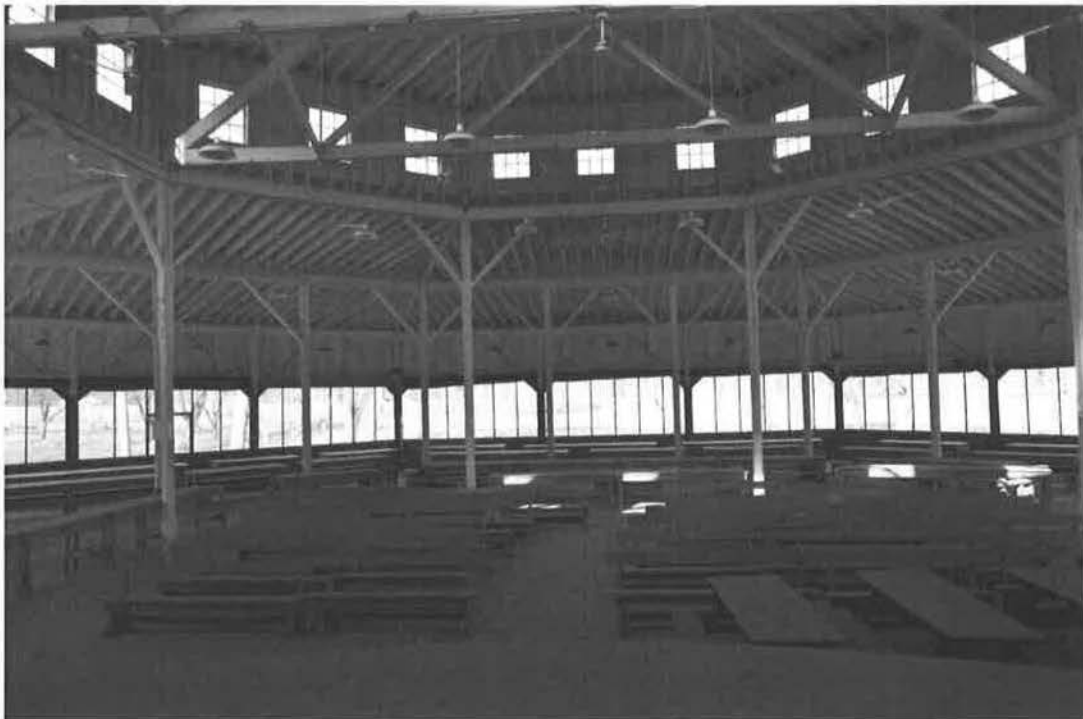
(Image 4) Wood siding on the upper portion of side walls is placed diagonally, forming striking angles and coming to diamond points that are characteristic of many Proudfoot and Bird designs.

Chautauqua Park Historic District  
Name of Property

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(Image 5) Another view of exposed beams in the Chautauqua Auditorium.



(Image 6) Performers' views in Chautauqua Auditorium looking at audience and the 21 interior support columns.



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(Image 7) Performers' view looking at ceiling and upper ventilation windows.



(Image 8) 1908 Auditorium in Chautauqua Park.

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(Image 9) Each year the Chautauqua Story continues as Sac City celebrates Chautauqua Days. Interior of the Chautauqua Auditorium as it appears today. July 4, 2012.



(Image 10) Close up of Asa Platt Gate.

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(Image 11) Stone Shelter House today. Note some water damage on the wood pillars. Stone work is in good condition.



(Image 12) Plaque above interior fireplace says, "Works Progress Administration 1939."

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(Image 13) Outdoor fireplace at Stone Shelter House.



(Image 14) Open beam ceiling and original light fixture in open area of Stone Shelter House.

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(Image 15) Interior of Stone Shelter House showing original light fixture, open beamed ceiling, original windows and stone interior.



(Image 16) Fish cleaning shelter. Structure is intact; city has plans to replace roof.

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(Image 17) Close-up of original sink and counter next to brick chimney in fish cleaning shelter. The wood-burning stove that once was in shelter is gone.



(Image 18) View of Stone Shelter from the Fish House. Built in tables, as well as cleaning and cooking facilities, allowed people to enjoy fish caught in the North Raccoon River. The open structure is reminiscent of the Chautauqua Auditorium, although the arches between posts are a clear contrast with the angular design of Proudfoot's plan.

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(Image 19)  
Plaque on north side of Metcalf Cabin.  
*This pioneer log cabin  
Erected in 1854 by  
David Metcalf  
Near  
Winnebago Indian Village  
One mile north  
Of present site of  
Sac City  
Presented and donated  
To the people of Sac City  
By  
Samuel L. Watt, Jr.  
Removed to this site in  
1925.*

(Image 20) The stone chimney was replaced with a brick chimney. Bricks are those originally used in paving Main Street, Sac City. Roof is wood shingles. Concrete Foundation supports the chimney and the entire structure sits on a concrete pad.



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(Image 21) Metcalf Cabin from the river bank.  
Stone Shelter House is visible to the left of the cabin.



(Image 22) Interior of Metcalf Cabin showing photos of early residents, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander,  
as well as some early furnishings.



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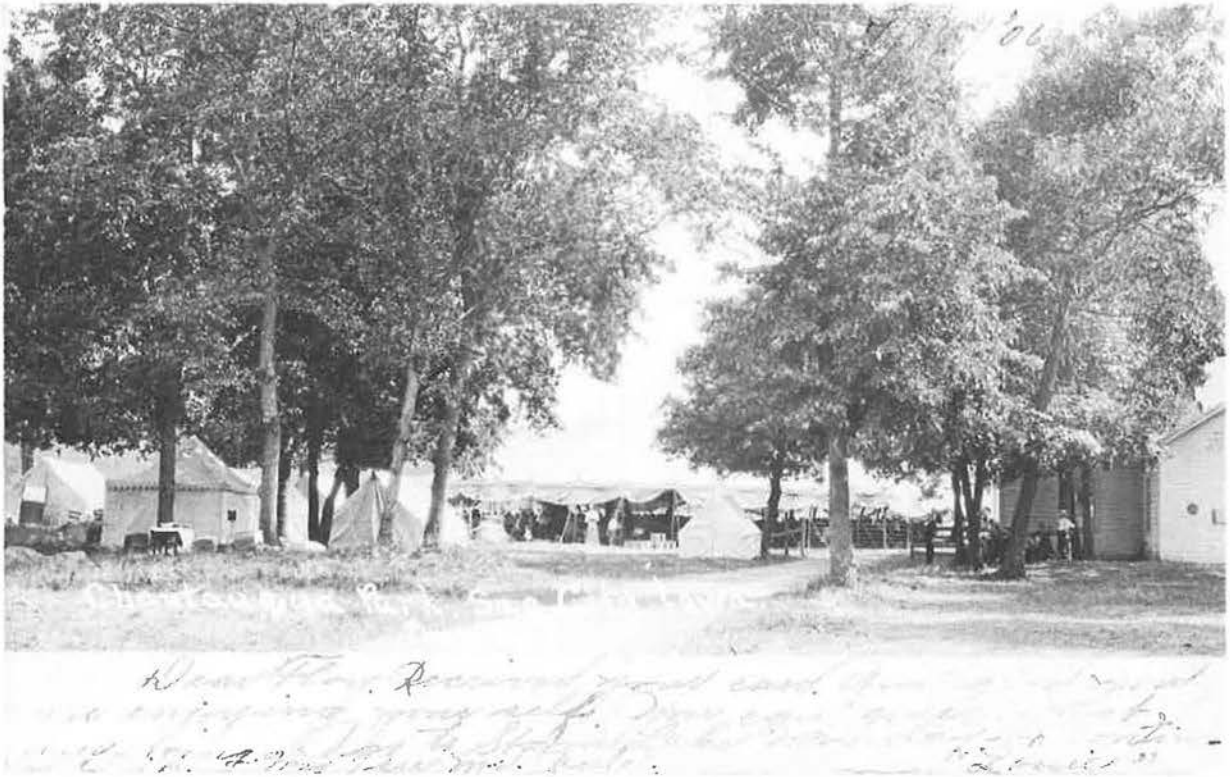


(Image 23) Flower beds and entrance as they are today.

Chautauqua Park Historic District  
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**Section 8— Embedded Historic Images**



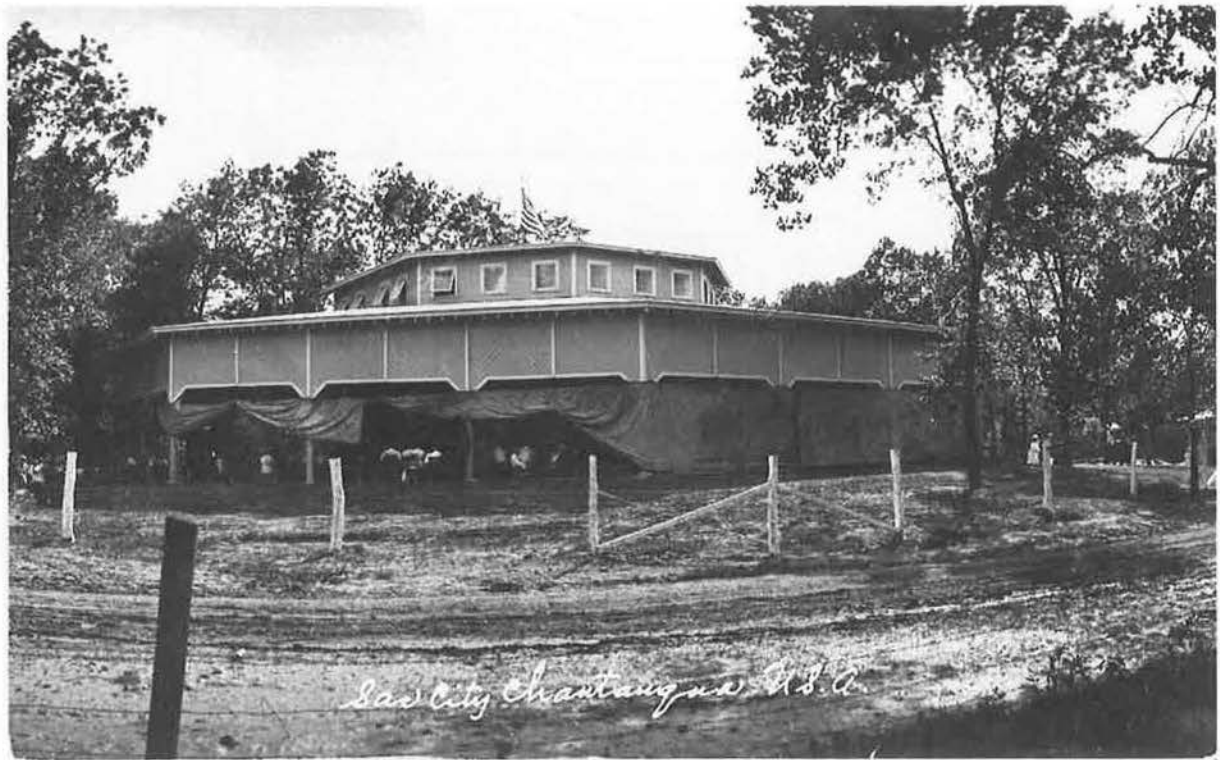
(Image 24) 1906 Chautauqua set up in tent at Sac County Fair Grounds.



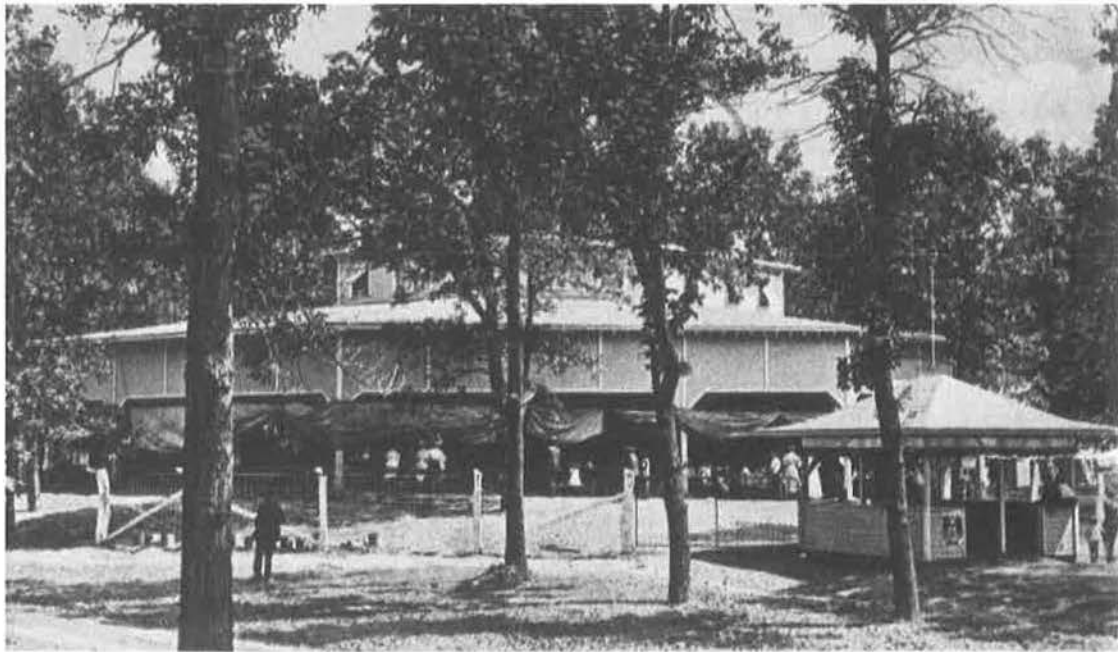
(Image 25) 1907 Chautauqua with William Jennings Bryan was a huge financial success.

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(Image 26) Postcard postmarked July, 1908. One of the oldest photos of the Auditorium.



(Image 27) 1909 commercial postcard was a fun and popular souvenir for the many in attendance.

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(Image 28) 1912 Photograph shows the majestic structure and open sides.



(Image 29) Even though local newspapers assured Chautauqua potential audiences water was not near the Auditorium, photos certainly belie that assurance.

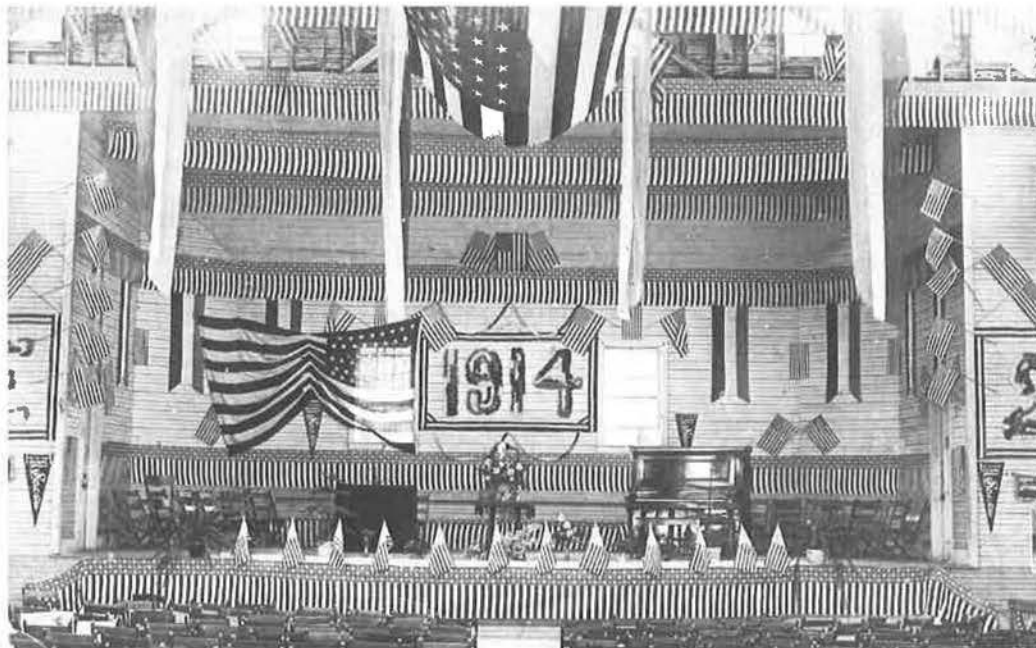
Chautauqua Park Historic District  
Name of Property

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Chautauqua Auditorium, Sac City, Ia.

(Image 30) 1913 photo postcard shows north face of the Auditorium surrounded by people.



(Image 31) Auditorium bedecked in flags and ready for the 1914 series of programs. As the United States prepared for WWI, the Chautauqua movement became very patriotic.

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(Image 32) Asa Platt Gate, postcard dated October 2, 1931.  
Small building was once used as a ticket booth.



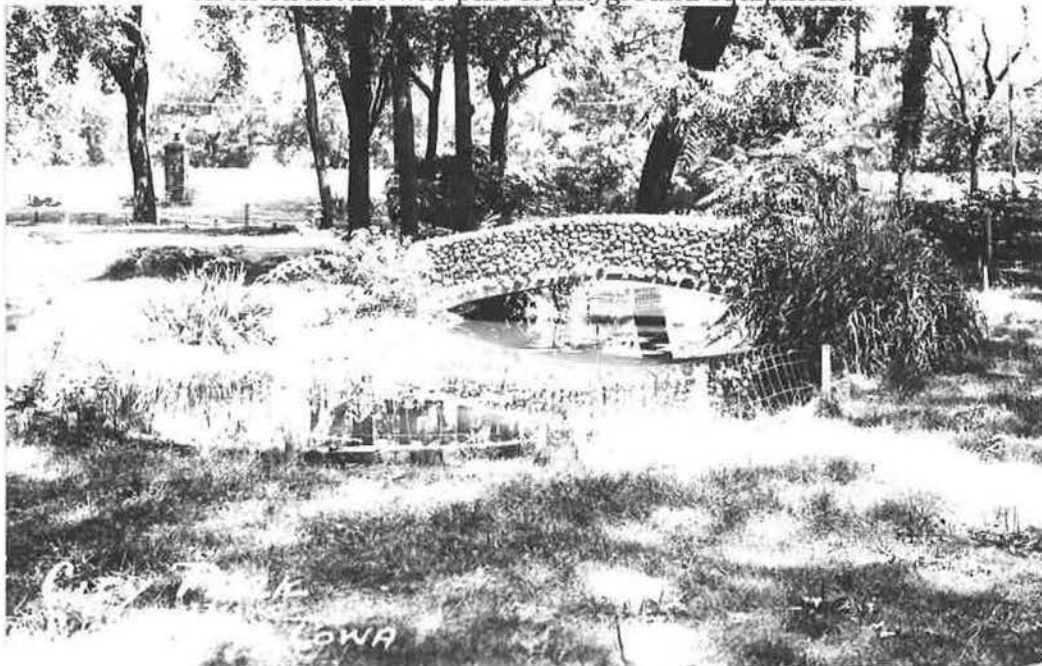
(Image 33) Dense foliage and young woman invite visitors to enter park through Asa Platt Gates.

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(Image 34) 1935 litho postcard showing fish pond and bridge, as well as open auditorium. Arch structure was part of playground equipment.



(Image 35) Fish pond, bridge, and Asa Platt gates in background. Postcard circa 1940. Auditorium would be to right of photo. Bridge is the same today, but the pond has been filled in.

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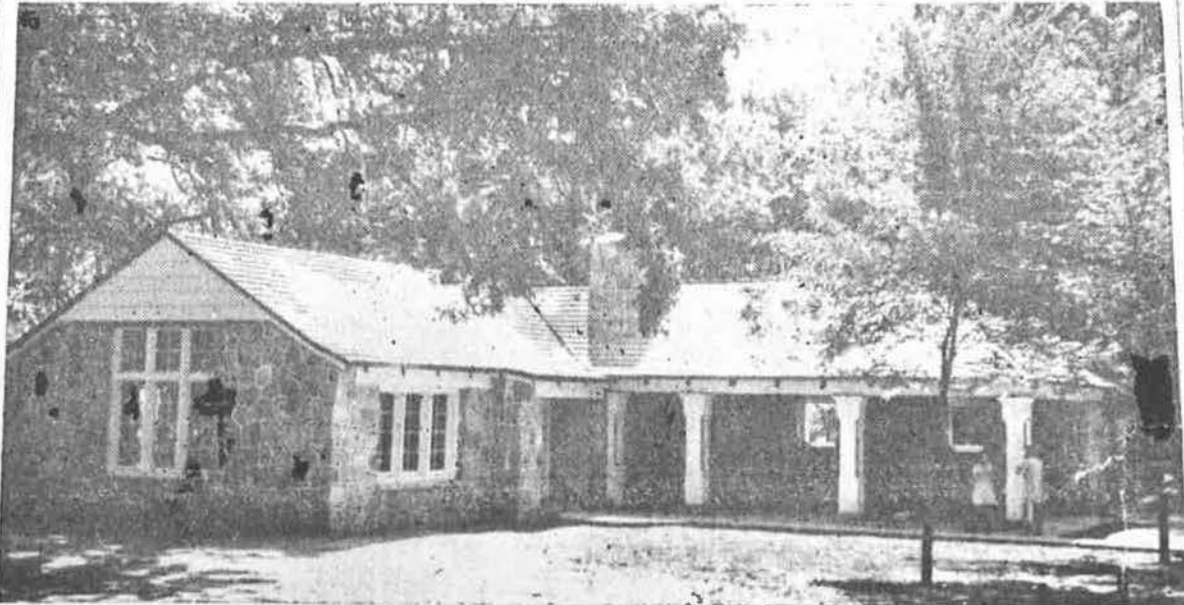
(Image 36) Rocks everywhere to be put in place in the forms erected for the shelter house in Sac City park. Pictured here are Fred Salasek, George Zimmerman, and one of the workers.  
(Photo *Sac Sun*, 27 April 1939)



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## Sac City Shelter House Ready For Use



Pictured above is the Sac City shelterhouse, now completed and ready for use. It was dedicated and formally presented to the city on Saturday of last week. Elsewhere in the Sun will be found a story describing the service and the acceptance speech given by Mayor J. B. Tourgee.

—Photo by Johnson

(Image 37) Picture from the front page of 6 July 1939 *Sac Sun*.

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(Image 38) Stone Shelter House, circa 1940. Auditorium in background

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**—DEDICATION PROGRAM—**

**Sac City Park Shelterhouse**

**SATURDAY, JULY 1, 1939**

**10:30 A. M.**

Chairman: Malcolm Currie

Band Selections ..... Roy Holtz, Directing

Invocation ..... Rev. Corwin Taylor

Introductions:

Members of the City Council

Project Foremen: Jack Myers, Leslie Geary

Project Timekeeper: George French

Sponsor Superintendent: M. F. Salasek

"An Appreciation to Project Employees"

"History of the Project" ..... I. Lasensky  
Area Engineer

"Presentation of the Shelterhouse to the  
Community ..... C. R. Smith  
State Field Engineer

"Acceptance of the Shelterhouse for the  
Community ..... Mr. J. B. Tourgee  
Mayor of Sac City

Benediction ..... Rev. Corwin Taylor

(Image 39) Program from Stone Shelter House dedication. (Sac Sun, 6 July 1939)

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(Image 40) Metcalf cabin before it was moved to Chautauqua Park Historic District. Mr. and Mrs. Alexander and four-legged friend. Fireplace was added at a later date.

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(Image 41) Metcalf cabin, circa 1940. Note the stone chimney. Entire cabin has been raised by building up land to avoid potential flood damage.



(Image 42) Flower beds at the entrance to Chautauqua Park, often called City Park, circa 1950.

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(Image 43) Entrance to Chautauqua Park circa 1960.



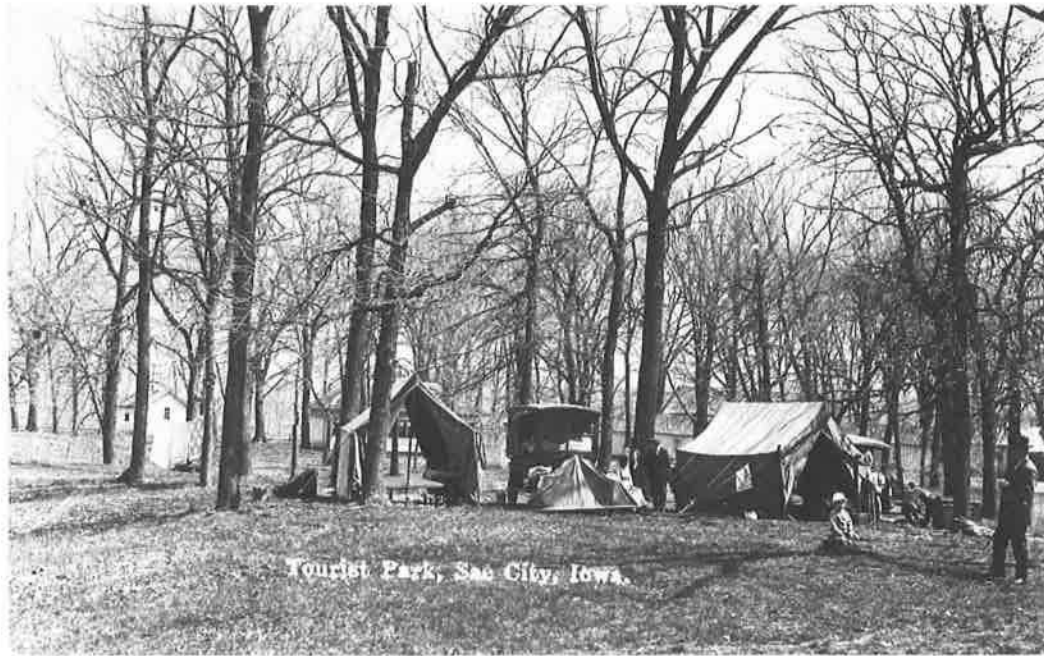
(Image 44) Camping along banks of North Raccoon River at Sac City Chautauqua, in 1908 or 1909. Riverbank was used as part of Chautauqua Park before it was legally owned by the Chautauqua organizations or the city.

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(Image 45) Chautauqua camping in 1906. Wool clothing and neckties were the norm for casual outings.



(Image 46) The advent of cars and Chautauqua Park's location next to Highway 20 created a wonderful opportunity to use the area as a tourist park for passing motorists to spend a night.

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(Image 47) Travelers camping behind the Chautauqua Auditorium



(Image 48) A wooden walkway kept visitors out of the mud; auditorium in the background.  
Circa 1940.



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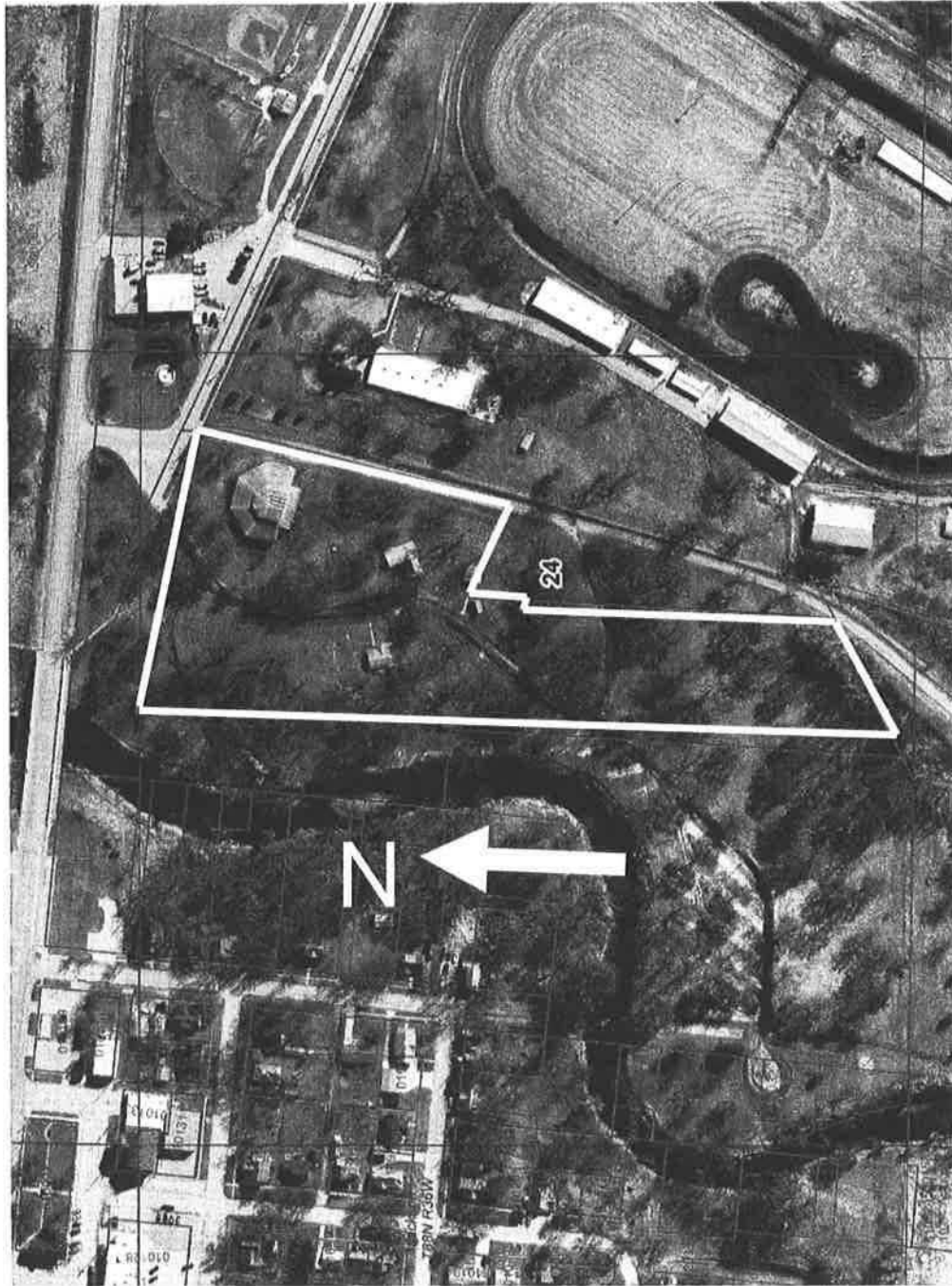


(Image 49) Stone bridge over fish pond was a popular place for photographs as well as an attraction for children of all ages to enjoy watching the fish. *Circa 1940.*

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Name of Property

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County and State

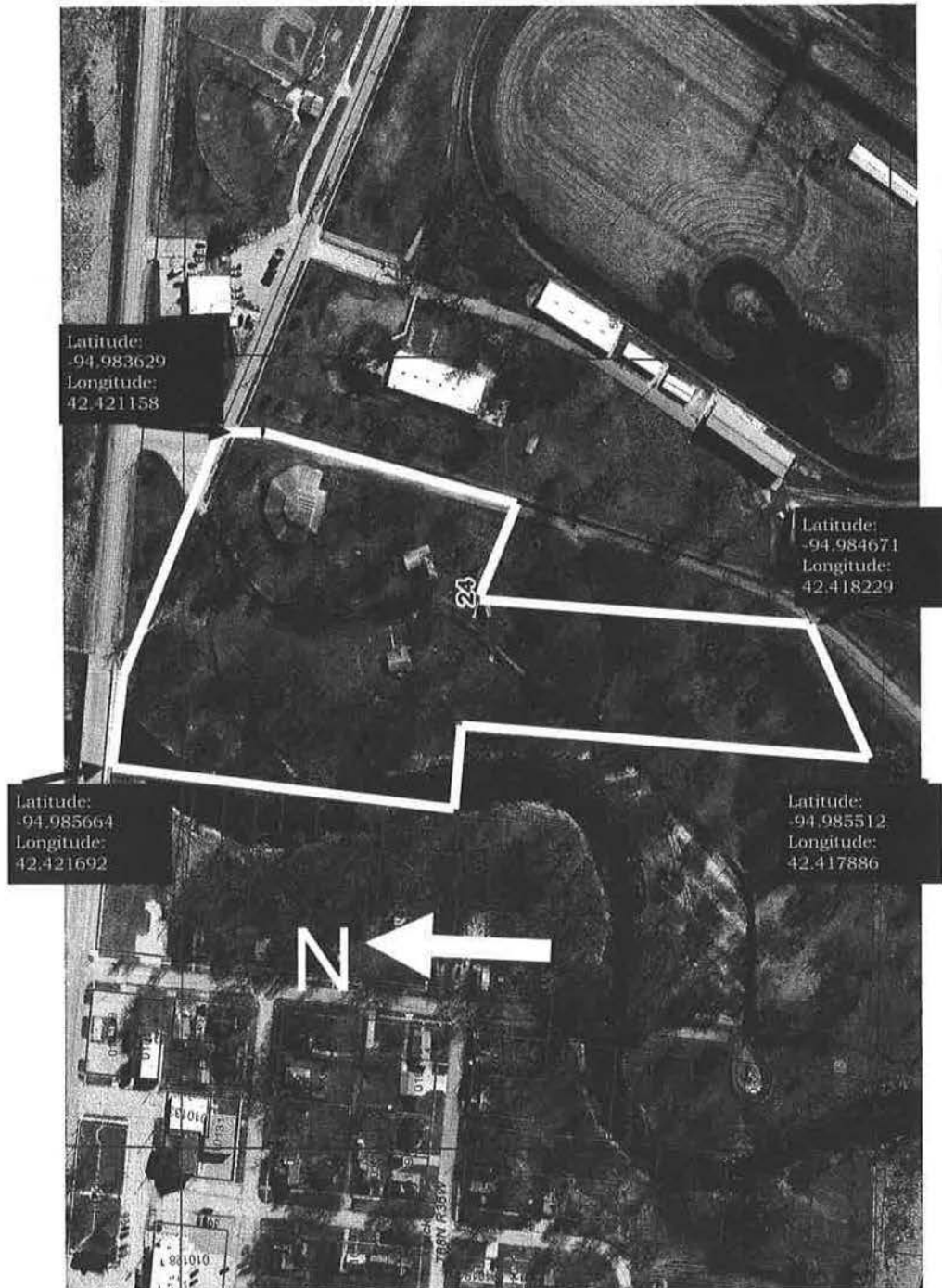
**Maps, Sketches, and Floor Plans**



Map 1: Boundaries of Chautauqua Park as originally purchased in 1908.

Chautauqua Park Historic District  
Name of Property

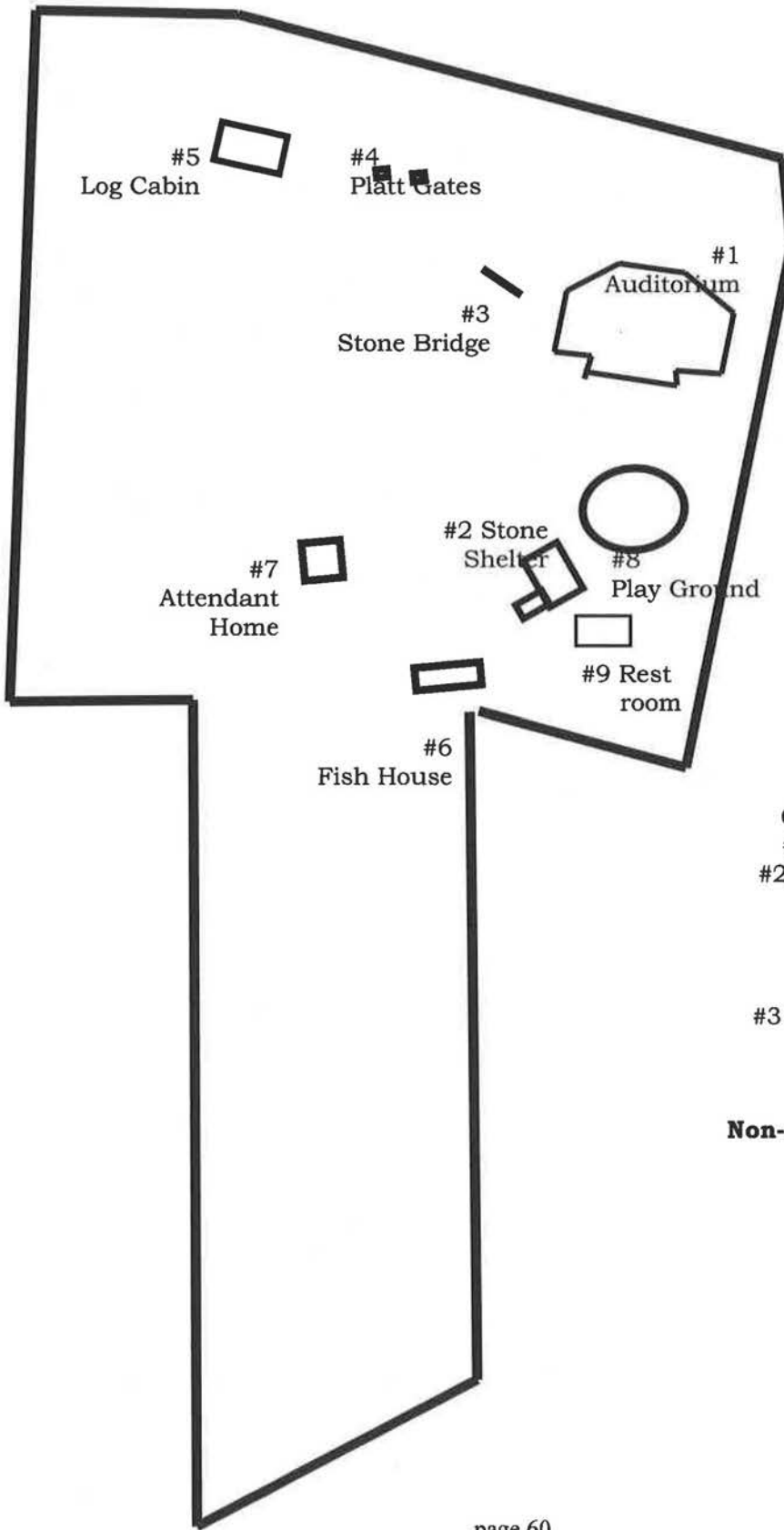
Sac County, IA  
County and State



Map 2: Boundaries of Chautauqua Park as after additions in 1938. These are the boundaries of the district nominated in this application.

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Name of Property

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Sketch of property  
as included for  
application.  
Numbers correspond to  
Location numbers on  
Submitted photos.

**Contributing Resources**

- #1 Auditorium—Building
- #2 Stone Shelter—Building
- #5—Log Cabin

Entire Park—Site

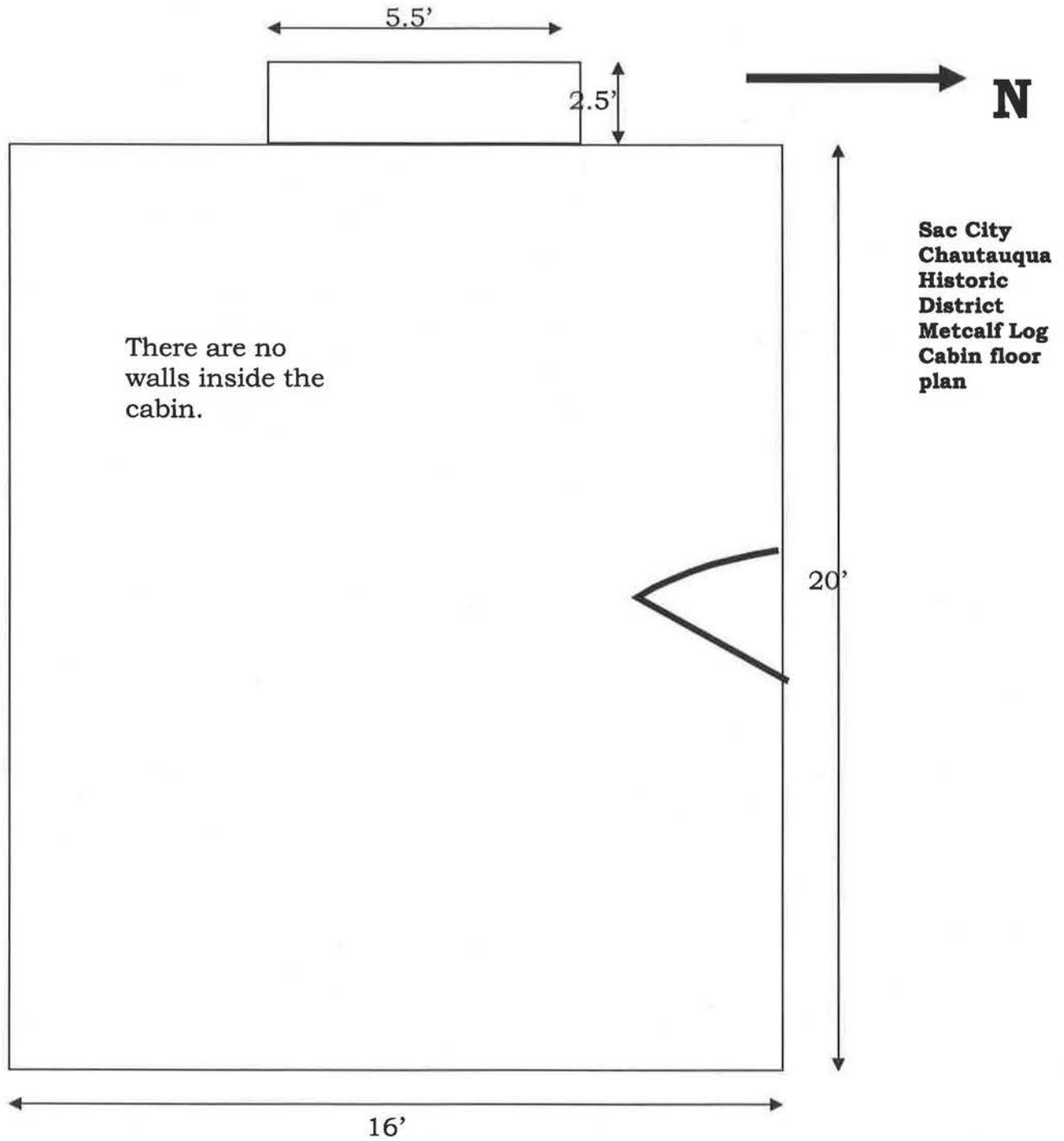
- #3 Stone Bridge—Structure
- #4—Asa Platt Gates
- #6—Fish House

**Non-contributing Resources**

- #7—Attendant House
- #8—Play Ground
- #9—Rest Room

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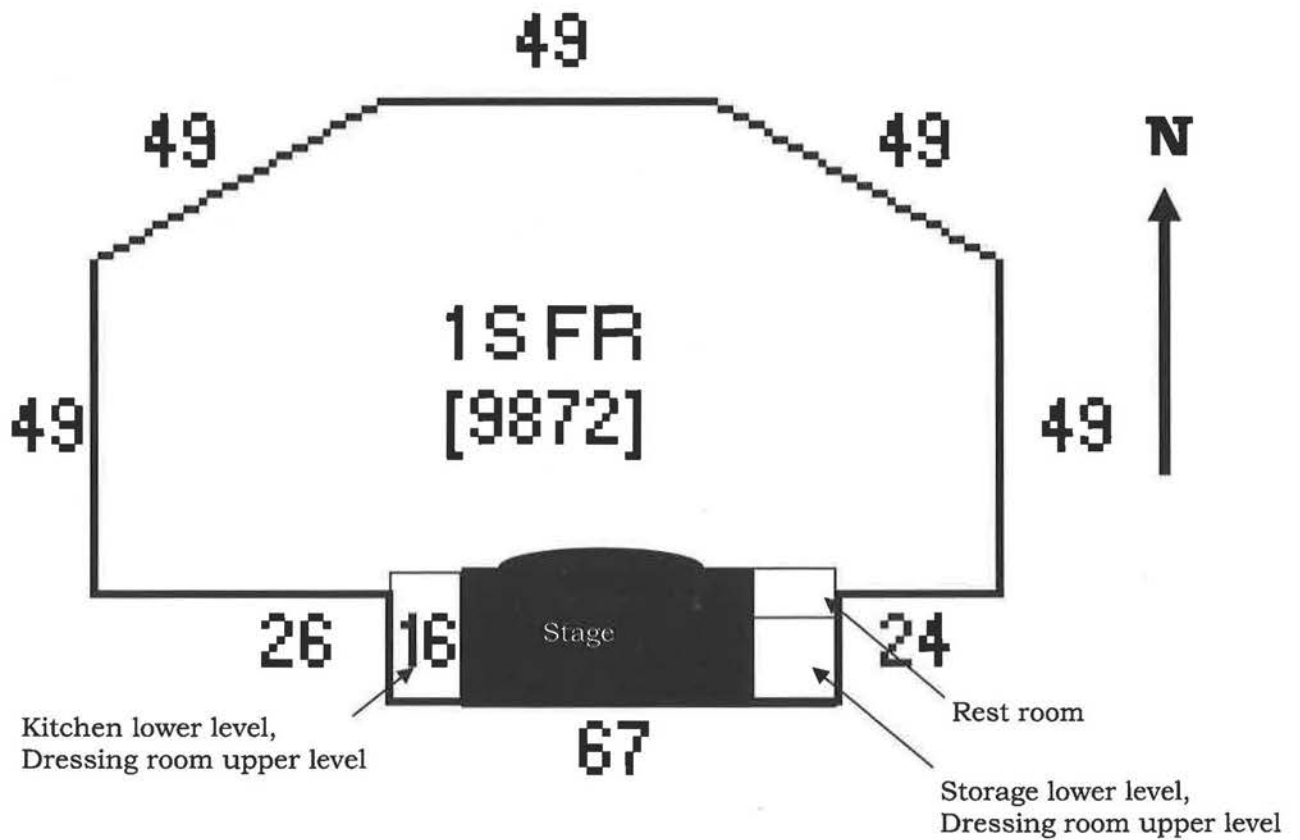


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Name of Property

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**Sac City Chautauqua Historic District  
Chautauqua Auditorium floor plan**

**Sac County, IA**

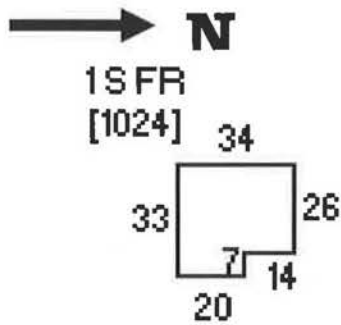


Chautauqua Park Historic District  
Name of Property

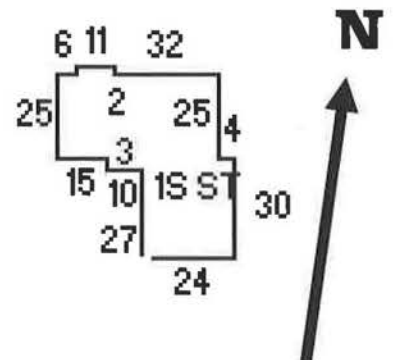
Sac County, IA  
County and State

**Sac City Chautauqua Historic District**  
**Attendant home and Stone Shelter floor plans**

**Sac County, IA**



Park Attendant home



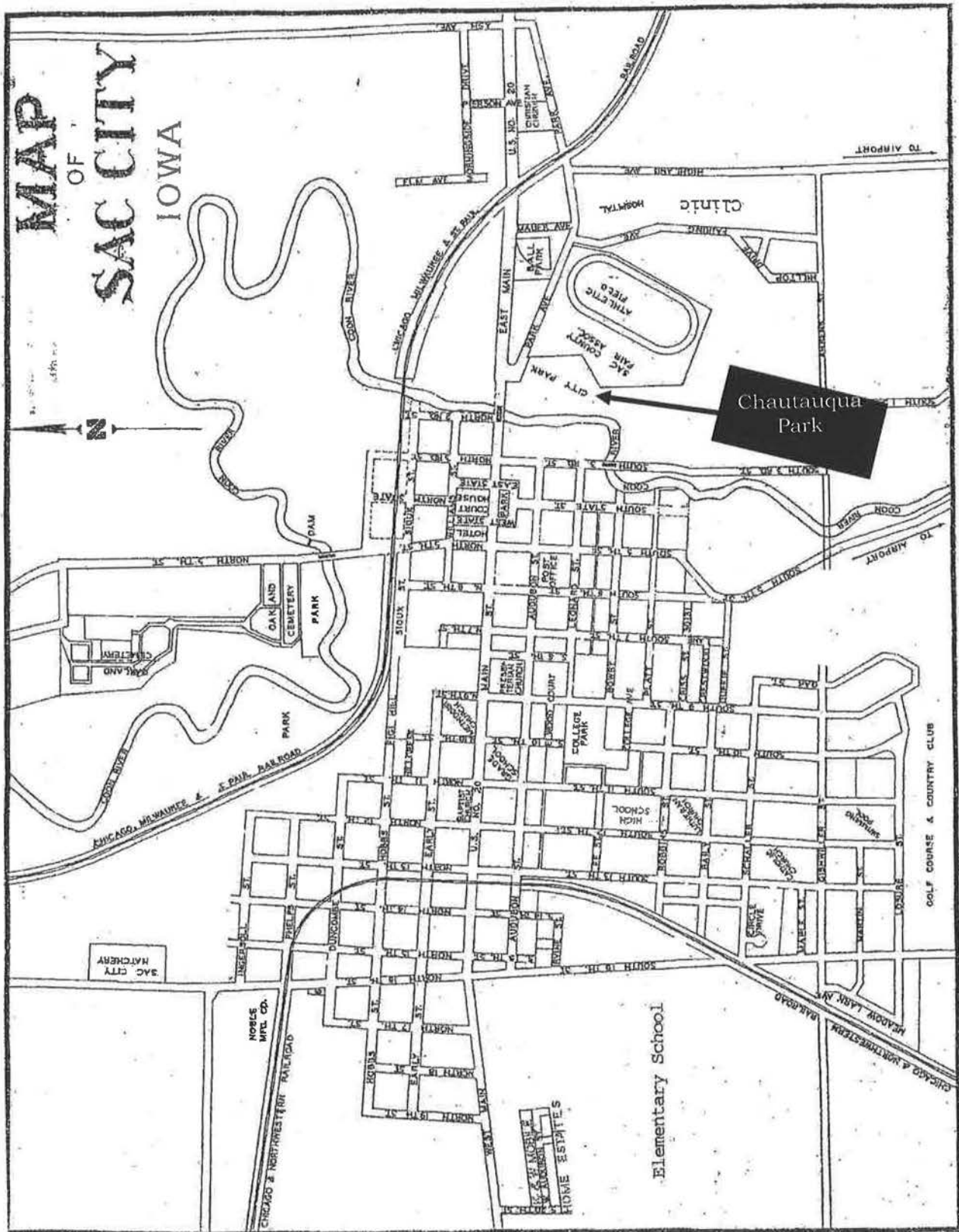
Stone Shelter House

Sketch by [www.camavision.com](http://www.camavision.com)

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**Present-day map of Sac City, original available at Sac City Offices**



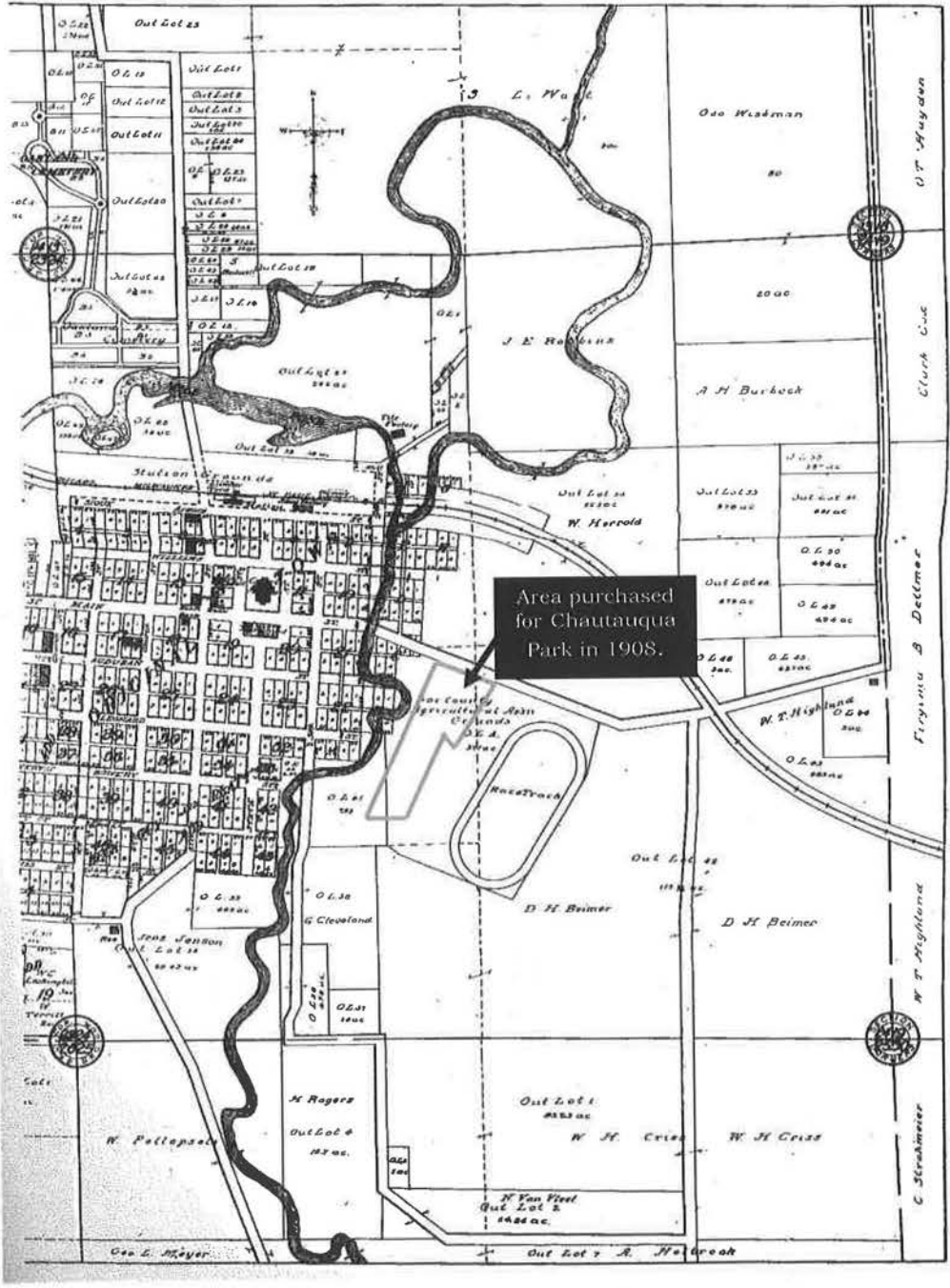


Chautauqua Park Historic District  
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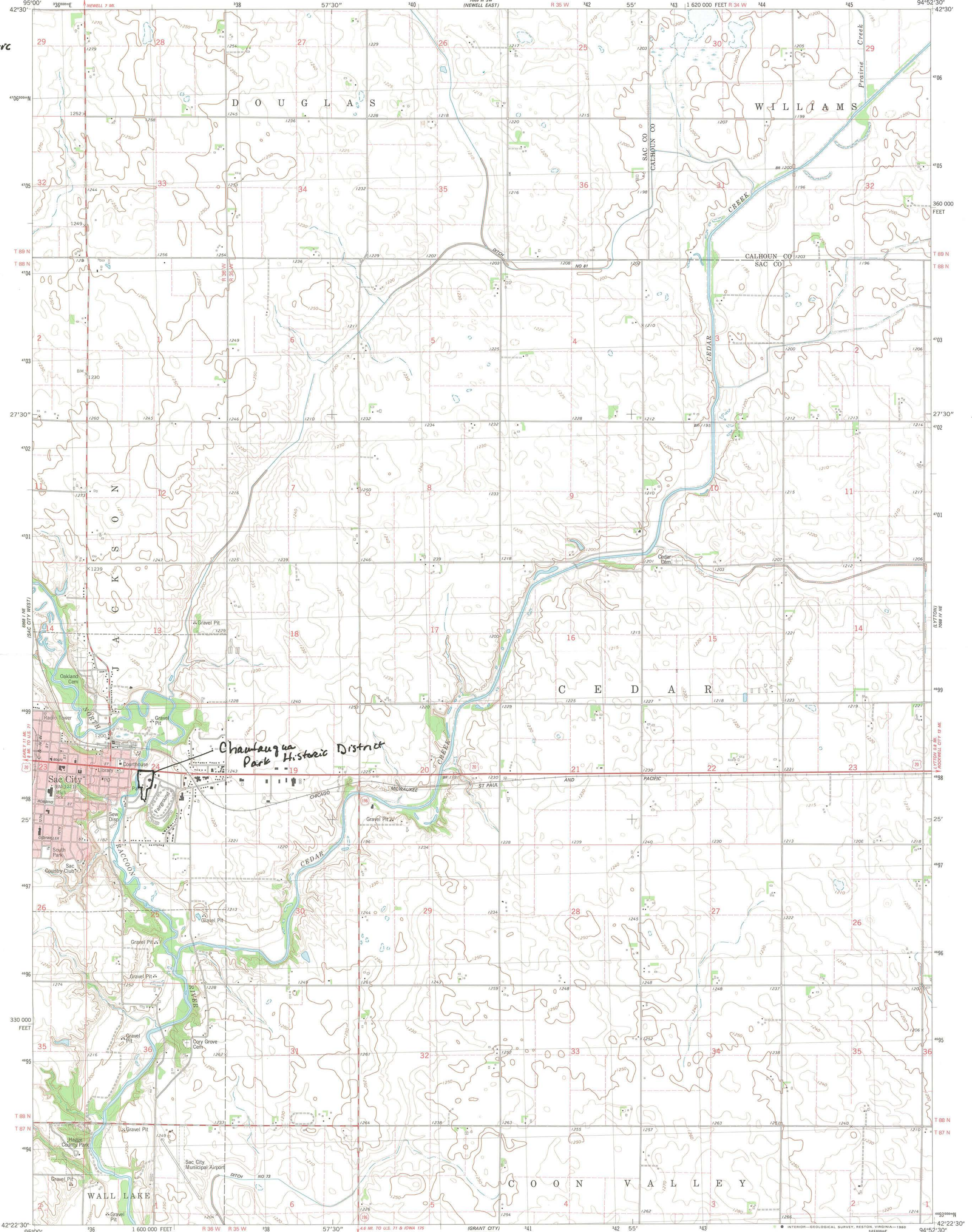
Sac County, IA  
County and State

**EAST PART OF  
SAC CITY**  
COUNTY SEAT OF SAC CO.  
JACKSON TWP.  
IOWA  
Scale 300 ft. to 1 in.

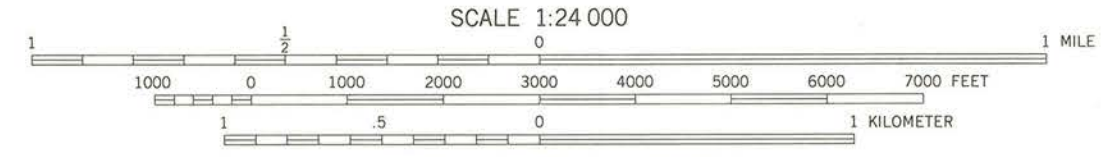
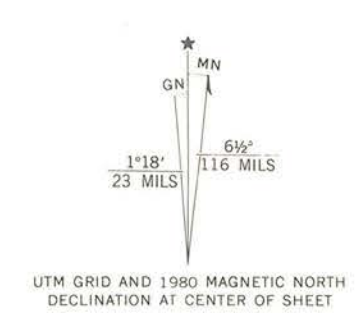
1908 Map of  
Sac City, before  
the purchase of  
Chautauqua  
Park.



Chautauque  
Park Historic  
District  
  
Sac County  
IA



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1974. Field checked 1975. Map edited 1980  
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Iowa coordinate  
system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15  
1927 North American Datum  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983  
move the projection lines 5 meters north and  
21 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks  
Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
AND BY THE IOWA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, IOWA CITY, IOWA 52240  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route

SAC CITY EAST, IOWA  
N4222.5-W9452.5/7.5  
1980

DMA 7088 IV NW-SERIES V876



1908 Charter Oak Bldg. 2005































































Office  
CAMPGROUND  
PARK HOST  
Chickadee Rd.  
and  
Picnic Shelter  
Reservations









UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Chautauqua Park Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: IOWA, Sac

DATE RECEIVED: 12/20/13      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/21/14  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/05/14      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/05/14  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13001138

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: Y    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    2/5/2014 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A&C  
REVIEWER Patrick Anderson      DISCIPLINE Historian  
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_      DATE 2/5/2014

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

# CULTURAL AFFAIRS

MARY COWNIE, DIRECTOR  
CHRIS KRAMER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR  
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR



SUSAN KLOEWER  
ADMINISTRATOR



MATTHEW HARRIS  
ADMINISTRATOR

December 16, 2013

Carol Shull, Chief  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye Street, N.W.-- 8th Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

The following National Register nomination(s) are enclosed for your review and listed if acceptable.

- Wilson Buildings, 211-219 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue S, Clinton, Clinton County
- Iowa Beta Chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon, 228 Gray Avenue, Ames, Story County
- Chautauqua Park Historic District, 106 Park Avenue, Sac City, Sac County

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Foster Hill, Manager  
National Register and Tax Incentive Programs

STATE HISTORICAL BUILDING  
600 EAST LOCUST  
DES MOINES, IOWA 50319

T. (515) 281-5111  
F. (515) 242-6498

WWW.CULTURALAFFAIRS.ORG

**Sac City Historical Preservation Committee Meeting**  
August 15, 2013, Noon, Sac Co. Cattle Company

Shirley Phillips called the meeting to order with the following persons present: Brandy Ripley, Lynda Cavanagh, Barbara Bloes, Laura Zimmerman, and Jackie Stone.

**Chautauqua Park Historic District:** The application to place the Chautauqua Park Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places was reviewed by the committee and it was noted that Bruce Perry did a thorough job with the application. Laura Zimmerman made the motion to approve the application. Brandy Ripley seconded the motion. Ayes all.

**The mayor, Barbara Bloes, signed the review and added the following comments:** *"Our Chautauqua Park including the Chautauqua Building, Stone Shelter, Fish House, and the Log Cabin, is one of the few historical treasures of its kind in the US. It needs to be preserved for posterity. Placing it on the registry will offer grant opportunities to help with maintaining its historic integrity. It will also bring attention to this site as a National Registered historic site."*

**Members of the committee commented:** *This has been long arduous project and has been attempted many times in the past. It's far overdue to be certified as an historic site. We need to continue to recognize and maintain our historic Chautauqua Building. The research into this project was very complete. This area of our community is more than eligible for nomination and acceptance onto the National Register. We highly recommend this application for approval.*

**Other Business:**

It was reported that the City was in possession of the contract for the Downtown Façade Grant that Sac City has received to preserve and restore the historic downtown. The architects have been here to give the bids and the grant committee needs to meet to make the decision on the firm to use so the project progresses.

Lynda Cavanagh made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Jackie Stone seconded the motion. Ayes all.

Respectfully Submitted by Lynda Cavanagh,  
Secretary 