

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Renwick Generating Plant

other names/site number Municipal Steam Light Plant

2. Location

street & number 103 N. Field St.

N/A not for publication

city or town Renwick

N/A vicinity

state Iowa

code IA

county Humboldt

code 091

zip code 50577

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

David C...
Signature of certifying official/Title

12/22/94
Date

State Historical Society of Iowa
State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

for
Signature of the Keeper

Edson H. Beall

Entered in the National Register

Date of Action

2-17-95

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
6	0	structures
0	0	objects
7	1	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/Public Works

GOVERNMENT/Public Works
GOVERNMENT
GOVERNMENT/Fire

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

foundation concrete
walls concrete

roof asphalt
other _____

Narrative Description

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

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.

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

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance
1936-1944

Significant Dates
1936

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Long, G.L.

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Renwick Generating Plant
Name of Property

Humboldt County, IA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 11S 142.010.45 4714.210.20
Zone Easting Northing

2
Zone Easting Northing

3
Zone Easting Northing

4
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stanley McCurry, representative of BVBA

organization Boone Valley Betterment Association date April 1994

street & number 1695 Xenia Ave. telephone 515-824-3504

city or town Renwick state Iowa zip code 50577

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

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

Property Owner

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

name City of Renwick

street & number City Hall, 103 N. Field telephone 515-824-3511

city or town Renwick state Iowa zip code 50577

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

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

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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICEUnited States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1**Narrative Description**

The Renwick Generating Plant (contributing building) is one story building, constructed of concrete block, manufactured in Renwick. It has a shape that is primarily rectangular and a simple, very functional design. The concrete block has been painted tan on the exterior walls of the engine room, shop, salt bin, and softener room. The exterior walls of the garage and city hall have not been painted, but are tan and brown. The electrical plant is significant under Criterion A at the state level because it was the original supplier of energy to the first rural electric cooperative line funded in Iowa through the Rural Electrification Act (REA) of 1936 according to Harold Stevenson in his book Corn Belt: Enthusiasm Made the Difference (page 83). The building is located one block off of Main Street in Renwick, Iowa, and it faces west onto a paved street. The lot is 100 foot by 140 foot in area. The building is very sound; however, the wearing of the interior has prompted minor maintenance activities. The generating equipment contained in the building is in excellent condition and supplies power to the community during power failures of the Rural Electric Cooperative system currently used by the City. An addition was built onto the north side of the plant for the fire department in 1942. The portions of the building most important to the nomination are the engine room and the shop as indicated on the floor plan.

An engineer, G. L. Long, was initially hired September 11, 1914 to design the steam powered electrical light plant. The building's walls and foundation were constructed of concrete block, manufactured in Renwick, with an addition built in 1942 composed of clay block. The original construction consisted of the items listed on the floor plan as the "shop" (19' X 44') and "engine room" (31' X 44'). The "softener room" and "salt bin" (22' X 12') were added just a few years later. The rooms of the second addition are designated on the floor plan as "garage" (34' X 36') and "city hall" (16' X 36'). Energy was first distributed by the plant on March 14, 1915 at 6 P.M. The steam generators were replaced seven years later by a 75 horsepower, two-cylinder, semi-diesel engine and generating equipment made by Fairbanks-Morse and Company. A 40 horsepower Fairbanks-Morse diesel was added three years later. Each of these engines were replaced in turn by larger diesel engines. A 125 horsepower diesel made by Worthington Pump and Machinery Corporation was added in 1936 and began supplying power to the newly formed rural electric cooperative, funded by the Rural Electrification Act of 1936.

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(Narrative Description Continued)

Continued growth necessitated still more electrical power. Three years later (1939) another Faribanks-Morse diesel was installed -a 300 horsepower, four-cylinder model. The 75 horsepower and 40 horsepower engines were replaced in June 1942 by a second 300 horsepower diesel. Plant equipment is now comprised of the three diesel engines and generating equipment with a total horsepower of 725 and a rated kilowatt capacity of 483. The engines now present in the plant include the engines purchased in 1936 (125 horsepower, 5 cylinder diesel), 1939 (300 horsepower, 4 cylinder diesel), and 1942 (300 horsepower, 4 cylinder diesel). Since these three remaining engines supplied power as part of the rural electric cooperative over 50 years ago, they have been determined to be contributing.

In preparation for allowing visitors to the plant, maintenance activities are being planned and implemented through local funding sources, but they will not influence the power generating capabilities of the plant. Walls, ceiling, floor, and motors were recently painted. The live electrical area has been gated off to prevent personal injuries. An entrance door has been constructed in the wall facing Field Street. The restrooms were modified to allow for handicap accessibility.

The building addition, constructed in 1942 on the north side of the electrical plant, provided a place for housing the fire department and city hall. The fire department space consists of a garage (34 foot by 36 foot) for the fire engine with two overhead doors on the building front to accommodate fire fighting apparatus. The 16 foot by 36 foot room was constructed at the same time on the north side of the garage for use as a city hall. This addition has minimal impact upon integrity.

Outlying objects/structures/buildings include: a transformer substation bank, a cooling tower, a water tower, and a utility shed. The transformer substation bank was determined to be a "contributing structure" because it distributes the electricity produced by the plant to the City. The cooling tower was determined to be a "contributing structure" because water that is used to cool the engines is cooled by passing through

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(Narrative Description Continued)

the cooling tower and recirculated through the engines. The water tower has been determined to be a "contributing structure" because it supplies water for the cooling process of the engines. The utility shed was determined to be a "noncontributing building" because it is used for general storage, built much later than the main plant, and not related to the functions of the generating plant. The shed is less than 50 years old. See the sketch of the grounds including outlying buildings/structures/objects.

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Narrative Statement of Significance

The Renwick Electric Plant is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. Specifically, the facility was the first REA financed system in Iowa to energize its lines. Farmers in the Renwick area had been trying to convince decision-makers that electrification of farm homes was a good idea since 1928, and the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, signed into law by President Franklin Roosevelt, created the financial vehicle to make it happen. The act created a loan program for electrification of rural areas. The commercial power companies serving urban areas were not interested in the program because they did not feel the market for rural electricity was large enough to justify borrowing the money or building the lines. Because the program was not being utilized by the power companies, the officials of REA opted to allow rural electric cooperatives to participate. Subsequently, the farmers of rural Renwick began setting up a cooperative with the assistance of Frank J. Lund, an attorney from Webster City. The Boone Valley Electric Cooperative was incorporated by:

Renwick

W. H. Helmke
E.A. Nelson
Albert Nelson
C. M. Gillespie
Alfred Martin
A. H. Streeter
Moine Yanney

Goldfield

John F. Schipull
O. A. Overbaugh
A. E. Bjornson

Clarion

John and Wiert Johnson
August Naefke

Hjalmar Jansen

Pete Enge
Alfred Pehl
Oscar D. Larson
F. J. Knight

Kanawha

E. J. Maland

The board approved the loan contract with REA on May 29, 1936. Just six days later the cooperative reached an agreement with the City of Renwick to purchase electric power from them on a wholesale basis.

On June 12, 1936 an engineering firm, Young & Stanley, was hired for the distribution lines. On June 30, 1936 a franchise was granted by the state of Iowa to build the lines in Wright, Humboldt, and Hancock counties. Miller-Baxter Construction Company of

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(Narrative Statement of Significance Continued)

Indianapolis was hired as the contractor for the lines, and the entire 43 mile stretch was completed within six months. The lines were actually energized on December 2, 1936, the first lines energized by a cooperative through the REA program in Iowa.

In 1949, the Renwick Electrical Plant, which was previously thought to have a capacity far beyond the potential electricity needed, was being overloaded even though the more advanced diesel engines were being utilized. The Boone Valley Cooperative, therefore, negotiated a contract with the Corn Belt Power Cooperative in Humboldt. Currently, the Corn Belt Power Cooperative supplies electricity to the City of Renwick which is somewhat ironic since Renwick had been the original supplier of power to the Boone Valley Cooperative.

The electrification of the rural lines by the Renwick Electrical Plant through the REA program is especially significant because of the cultural changes prompted by electricity. The cultural changes experienced by the residents were primarily the result of convenience and improved quality of electrically powered items. For example, the light bulb allowed people a more convenient and sufficient light source prompting them to increase their level of activity during evening hours. Other electrical appliances quickly followed including the electric stove, radio, refrigerator, and hot water heater. The electrical plant is still in good working condition and is used by the City when it is cut off from Corn Belt Power during power outages.

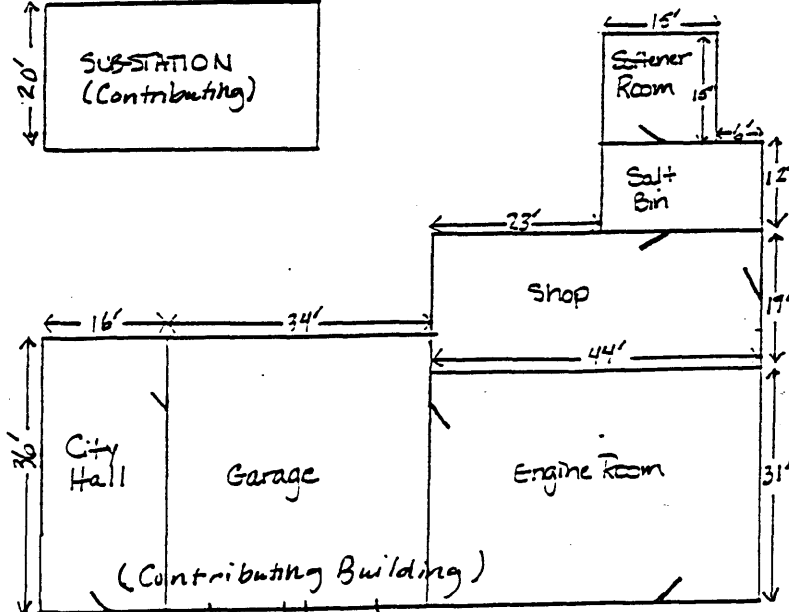
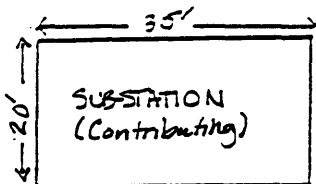
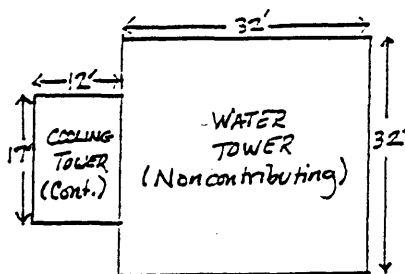
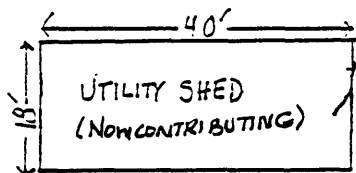
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Grounds Map

← N
GROUNDS

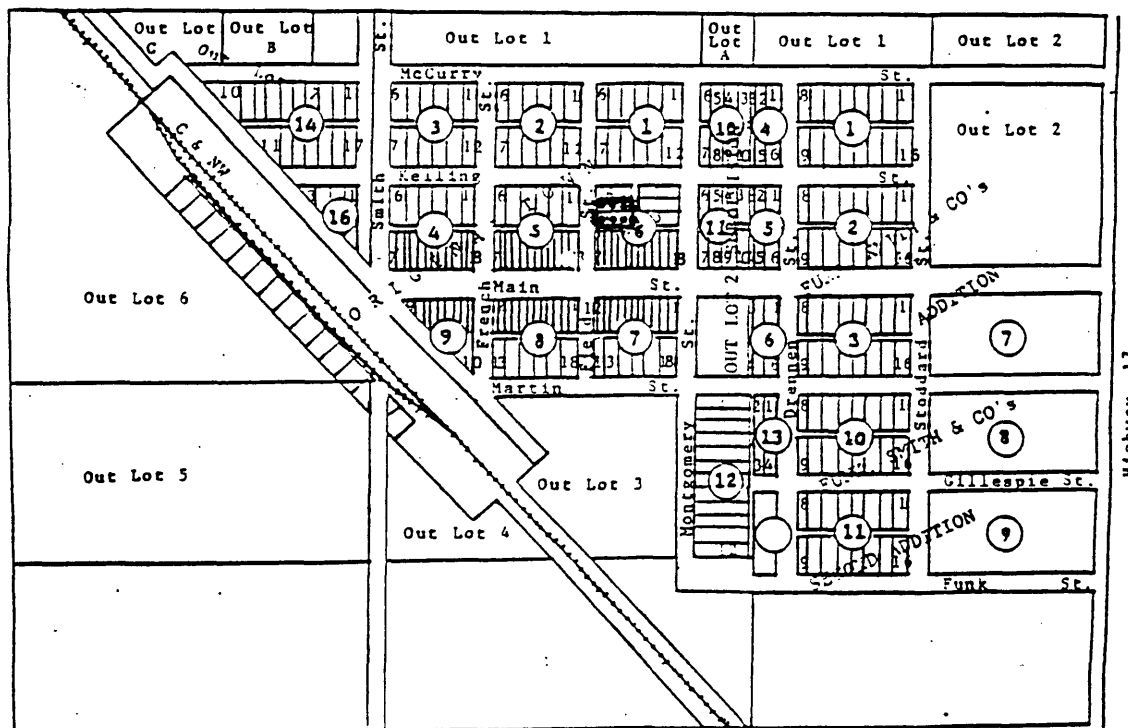


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City Plat Map



RENWICK

••• Renwick Generating Plant Location

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Bibliography

Severson, Harold. Corn Belt: Enthusiasm Made the Difference. Humboldt, IA: Corn Belt Power Cooperative, 1972. Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. 72-8153.

State Historic Preservation Office.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary chosen includes the entire lot: Block number 6, Lots 4 and 5 of the original town of Renwick.

Boundary Justification

The boundary was chosen as the entire lot because outlying structures are contributing to the historical significance of the property. Also, the lot was an easily defined and identifiable area.