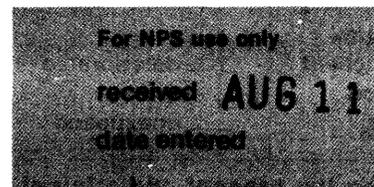


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



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

1. Name

historic Gruwell and Crew General Store

and/or common West Branch Heritage Museum

2. Location

street & number 109 West Main Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town West Branch \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 2

state Iowa code 19 county Cedar County code 031

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name West Branch Heritage Foundation

street & number Box 452

city, town West Branch \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Iowa

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds Office

street & number Cedar County Courthouse

city, town Tipton \_\_\_\_\_ state Iowa

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible?  N. yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

date N. A. \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records N. A.

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved    date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Currently a small museum, this former store is a well preserved example of a small-town commercial structure. Its small dimensions (18x 50') reflect the needs of the small quaker town of West Branch in the late nineteenth century. Title records and 1895 Sanborn fire map place the construction date at 1894. The store is one of four wood frame commercial structures in town, but only it has survived intact. Its setting is a quiet commercial street filled with nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings of similar size and proportion. Some, like the general store, are freestanding while others share walls.

The classical details displayed on the store are restrained and of appropriate scale. The raised parapet has a plain cornice and clapboard with a row of dentils between it and the large storefront windows and transomed double doors. That the extent of the front is glass, including sidelights set at an angle, allows considerable light to enter the building. A repeated motif is curved pieces added to corners of the door and window tops and also on the door panels. Small square panels painted in contrasting color march along beneath the windows. Simple pilasters running to the cornice frame the tidy composition.

The store is virtually unchanged and contains many original elements, including the wood ceiling, walls and floor, some glass display cases and a chimney hanging on a side wall for attachment to a stove. The front steps have been replaced. Upon conversion to a museum in 1964-65, several exhibit partitions were added as well as a large built-in fireplace at the rear. Bricks that form the fireplace are exposed at the building's back.

## 8. Significance

| Period  | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric          | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning     | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic    | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599            | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture            | <input type="checkbox"/> economics              | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699            | <input type="checkbox"/> architecture           | <input type="checkbox"/> education              | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> social/<br>humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> art                    | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> theater                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce    | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900–                | <input type="checkbox"/> communications         | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)         |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |   |  |

**Specific dates** 1894 **Builder/Architect** S.C. Gruwell and J.C. Crew

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The historical significance of the store lies in its representativeness as a building type in Iowa, the small-town store, rather than its association with a particular storekeeper or specific use.

S.C. Gruwell and J.C. Crew built and reportedly operated the store for several years, beginning in 1894. However, neither name appears in the Iowa State Gazetteer for 1895, 1897 or 1899; confirmation of their use of the store is lacking. Gruwell and Crew did own the building, which has served as a music store, harness shop, and shoe repair and clothing store before becoming a museum in the 1960s.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

\*Title records, Cedar county Recorder's Office, Tipton, Iowa.

\*Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1895 and 1912.

Maud Stratton, Herbert Hoover's Home Town (n.p.: 1948) (There is no mention of Gruwell and Crew running a general store in the lengthy descriptions of businesses.)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name West Branch Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

### UMT References

A 

|      |         |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---------|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 5       | 6 | 3        | 7 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Zone | Easting |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

|      |         |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|---------|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |         |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone | Easting |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |

C 

|      |         |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|---------|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |         |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone | Easting |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |

D 

|      |         |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |
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|      |         |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone | Easting |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |

E 

|      |         |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |
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| Zone | Easting |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |

F 

|      |         |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |
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| Zone | Easting |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |

G 

|      |         |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|---------|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |         |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone | Easting |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |

H 

|      |         |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|---------|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |         |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone | Easting |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 4, Parcel 64, Block 38 of Cameron's subdivision.

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

state N.A. code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara Beving Long and Ralph J. Christian, Architectural Historians

organization Division of Historic Preservation

date July 1982

street & number East 12th and Grand Avenue

telephone 515/281-5111

city or town Des Moines

state Iowa

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Adrian A. Anderson*

title Director

date July 21, 1982

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*Adrian A. Anderson*

Entered in the  
National Register

date

9/9/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration