

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

William Peters Hepburn House

AND/OR COMMON

William Peters Hepburn House; Dorothy Schwimmer House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 321 West Lincoln Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Clarinda

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 5

STATE Iowa

VICINITY OF CODE 19

COUNTY Page CODE 145

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 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 Dorothy Schwimmer

STREET & NUMBER 321 West Lincoln Street

CITY, TOWN Clarinda

VICINITY OF

STATE Iowa

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. County Recorder

STREET & NUMBER Page County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN Clarinda

STATE Iowa

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE National Register; Discovering Historic Iowa

DATE 1972; 1972

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS National Register; Iowa Department of Public Instruction

CITY, TOWN Washington; Des Moines

STATE D.C.; Iowa

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR  
 DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

From about 1867 until about the time of his death in 1916, William Peters Hepburn owned and resided in this framehouse, and since he occupied it almost half a century, it represents the totality of his career. The dwelling has changed hands only a few times, and the present owner-occupant, Dorothy Schwimmer, has lived in it since 1937. She and a previous owner, Walter Anderson, made some alterations--none major--in the building, but the structure remains in good condition. Hepburn also owned and maintained a Washington home from 1894 until about 1915, shortly before his death. It is less representative of him and only in fair condition. There are no other known extant Hepburn residences.

Hepburn's two-story Iowa home stands atop a small hill in western Clarinda, and it seems likely that, at one time, Hepburn owned at least the block now bounded by North 19th, State, North 18th, and West Lincoln Streets. At that time the dwelling could overlook the town without the obstruction of houses and trees, but today, other houses and lots divide the east portion of this block. The front door of the Hepburn House faces eastward, but its front walk runs southward out to West Lincoln Street. The present owner, Schwimmer, planted the trees and shrubs, except for the lilacs, that surround the residence on all four sides. The neighborhood is middle class and residential.

The Hepburn House sits on a sand-brick and lime-mortar foundation. Today it has dark-green-painted bevel siding and white-painted trim and corner boards, but originally, all wooden siding and trim were painted white. The roof includes a gable on the south end of the dwelling with east-west ridge and a gable on the west side of the dwelling with a north-south ridge. A one-story, flat-roofed veranda extends the length of the east facade with a mansard-roofed tower at about its midpoint, near the intersection of gable roofs. Schwimmer screened in the north portion of the veranda, beginning with the fourth bay, the one that holds the front door and the tower. Extending the length of the west side is a combined one-story, flat-roofed screened porch and small, one-story northwest wing. All roofs have boxed cornices with a plain frieze, and the tower mansard cornice is also bracketed.

Basically, four-over-four sash windows serve the west, south, and east sides of the house, while the tower and north openings are case-ments. Most windows have entablature heads, and a few have modern louvered shutters. Original round, projecting surrounds frame the four round windows--one in each side--of the tower's entablature-topped mansard. An original light-colored brick interior end chimney pierces the west gable end, but prior to 1937 Anderson removed the original kitchen and dining room from this side of the house. A second chimney, put in by the present owner, serves the second-floor fireplace that she installed in the tower. Probably there were no fireplaces originally.

# 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1867- ca. 1916 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1906 Congressman William P. Hepburn introduced and secured passage of a measure to give the Interstate Commerce Commission the **power** to set aside and prescribe railroad rates. This bill was, according to distinguished historian George E. Mowry, "a landmark in the evolution of federal control of private industry."<sup>1</sup> In pushing what became known as the Hepburn Act into law, Hepburn, says historian John Morton Blum, "provided the precedent, accepted by the courts and enlarged by later Congresses, by which federal regulatory agencies have promoted the national welfare."<sup>2</sup>

As chairman of the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, Hepburn was also responsible for a number of other significant pieces of legislation. In 1904 he played the leading role in House authorization of construction of the Panama Canal, and 2 years later coauthored the Pure Food and Drug Act, which set a precedent for **Federal legislation** in this area. For many years highly critical of what he considered the excessive powers of the Speaker of the House, Hepburn in 1909 became one of the leaders in an effort to curb the power of Speaker Joseph G. Cannon. Hepburn's speech criticizing Cannon, according to historian Kenneth W. Hechler, "coming as it did from a man who had established a high reputation within the party, carried great weight with the other members of the House."<sup>3</sup>

Between about 1867 and about the time of his death in 1916, Hepburn owned and resided in this two-story, gable-roofed framehouse with a mansard-roofed tower. Beginning in 1894, he owned and occupied a three-story rowhouse in Washington also. Though somewhat altered, the Iowa dwelling, which he occupied for almost half a century, is in better condition and more representative of Hepburn than his Washington home. The pair are the only known extant Hepburn residences.

<sup>1</sup> George E. Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt and the Birth of Modern America, 1900-1912 (New York, 1958), 205.

<sup>2</sup> John Morton Blum, The Republican Roosevelt (New York, 1966), 105.

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth W. Hechler, Insurgency: Personalities and Politics of the Taft Era (New York, 1940), 46.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Blum, John Morton, The Republican Roosevelt (New York: Atheneum, 1966).

Briggs, John Ely, William Peters Hepburn (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1919).

(continued)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre.

UTM REFERENCES

A	15	327600	4511800	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the designated property coincides with the boundary of the legal lot known as 321 West Lincoln Street, Clarinda, Iowa.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Cathy A. Alexander and Ralph Christian, Assistant Editors; and George R. Adams, Managing Editor

ORGANIZATION

DATE

American Association for State and Local History March 1976

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1400 Eighth Avenue South

615-242-5583

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Nashville

Tennessee

## 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET Hepburn House ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

The east veranda has a wooden floor and posts that resemble the original posts without roof brackets. The east, or main, door has a transom topped by an entablature and retains its "doorbell," whose handle produces a grinding sound when turned. The door opens into a vestibule with a west door leading to the present dining room and an open south side arch entering the main hall. South of the main hall, along the length of the south side, stands the current living room. At one time, Hepburn's study shared the south side with the living room, but Anderson removed the partition. North of the main hallway, a bedroom was where the dining room is now; a music room, a dining room, and a kitchen completed the first floor. Anderson removed the original kitchen and dining room, and today's kitchen stands west of the current dining room, and in the small northwest wing stands the present utility room. The utility room contains the original bulkhead cellar door and basement stairs, though. In some rooms, original 2-inch oak floor boards remain, but the walls and ceilings have undergone replastering. Today Schwimmer maintains a museum, which she opens by appointment. In the living room, she displays the portraits of the first 27 U.S. Presidents, executed by Polish artist I. Machlanski in 1917-18, and photographs of Hepburn, his wife, and this house in their day. The dining room holds Schwimmer's extensive collection of seashells and marine life specimens. In the east end of the main hall, the original, open, one-flight staircase mounts to the second story, the plan of which is apparently unchanged.

On the north lawn of the house, a great maple tree once stood, and beneath it in 1903 Hepburn and President Theodore Roosevelt discussed acquisition of the Canal Zone. Today, since the tree became diseased and was cut down, only its huge stump remains. Distant from the house, at the extreme west edge of the property, a one-story garage, which Anderson built, faces 19th Street; near the garage, northwest of the house, stands a small, vault-roofed shed that Schwimmer added.

In Washington, between 1894 and 1915, Hepburn owned and occupied a three-story rowhouse at 1124 East Capitol Street, NE. Similar rowhouses flank this former Hepburn residence, and all are in fair condition. Measuring three bays across its front facade, the Washington Hepburn dwelling has a rectangular front door in its west bay and a flat-roofed rectangular projecting bay in its center and east first- and second-story bays. The structure has what appears to be a cross gable roof with the front-facing gable end topped with a stone finial. Ivy-covered rock-faced ashlar faces the first story, and red brick covers the second and third floor. First-floor stone and second-floor brick colonettes divide the center and east windows from each other,

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CONTINUATION SHEET Hepburn House ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE two

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and one continuous rock-faced stone lintel tops the second-story windows. Another rock-faced stone lintel surmounts the second-floor window above the door. On the third floor, two windows topped by a rock-faced stone course flank a larger center window topped by a semi-circularly arched fanlight and radiating brick voussoirs. A red brick east interior end chimney with corbeled cap surmounts the dwelling.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Hepburn House ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE one

Biography

William Peters Hepburn was born November 4, 1833, in Wellsville, Ohio, the son of James S. and Ann C. Hepburn. James died shortly before William's birth, and his mother soon married George S. Hampton, a prosperous Wellsville commission merchant. Young Hepburn's stepfather was ruined financially by the Panic of 1837, and the family moved to Iowa to make a fresh start. By 1844 they had settled in Iowa City, where William's stepfather became clerk of the State Supreme Court and his mother a teacher. After attending several private schools, William in 1850 became a printer in the office of the Iowa Republican. He worked at this trade for 3 years.

By 1853, however, Hepburn had decided to study law, and he began to read law in the office of William P. Clarke, one of the best know attorneys in Iowa. The following year, Hepburn moved to Illinois, won admission to the bar, and settled in Chicago where he supported himself by working as a bookkeeper for a leading law firm. In 1855 he returned to Iowa, passed that State's bar examination, and settled in Marshalltown. Soon he developed a flourishing law practice partly due to his contacts in Chicago who recommended him highly to businesses in the city in need of legal services in Iowa.

Hepburn soon became deeply involved in politics as well. Largely as a result of the influence of William P. Clarke, he played an active role in the creation of the Republican Party in Iowa and served as a delegate to the party's first State convention in 1856. That same year Hepburn won election as prosecuting attorney of Marshall County. In 1858 he became the chief clerk of the Iowa House of Representatives and later in the year was elected district attorney for the 11th Judicial District. He was an Iowa delegate to the 1860 Republican National Convention and attended Lincoln's first inauguration.

Shortly after the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter, Hepburn resigned as district attorney and entered the Army. He raised and became captain of a troop in the 2nd Iowa Cavalry, eventually attaining the rank of lieutenant-colonel and serving with Sheridan and Rosecrans. After being mustered out of the Army in 1864, Hepburn settled in Memphis, Tenn., and established a highly lucrative law practice. Three years later, however, because of bitter postwar hatreds he returned to Iowa. Settling in the town of Clarinda, he formed a law partnership with his brother-in-law and bought one-half interest in the Page County Herald. He again became active in Republican Party affairs, devoting much of

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CONTINUATION SHEET Hepburn House ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE TWO

his attention to winning the soldier vote. Although he bolted the party in 1872 to support Horace Greeley because of the corruption of the Grant administration, Hepburn was back in the Republican fold in 1876 and served as a Presidential elector.

In 1880 Hepburn won election to the U.S. House, where, according to biographer Lester B. Shippee, he "distinguished himself as a vigorous opponent of 'pork barrel' legislation and an earnest champion of military and pension legislation."<sup>4</sup> He lost his seat in 1886 largely because of his vote for Shelby M. Cullom's bill creating the Interstate Commerce Commission. Hepburn's constituents perceived this measure and his opposition to legislation proposed by John H. Reagan as prorailroad. Hepburn returned to his law practice but continued to be politically active. He was a delegate to the 1888 Republican National Convention, and in 1889 President Benjamin Harrison appointed him Solicitor of the Treasury.

In 1892, Hepburn ran again for his old House seat and won the first of eight consecutive terms. During his tenure he earned a reputation as one of the most influential Republicans in the House and eventually took over the chairmanship of the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce. In 1904 he played the leading role in House passage of legislation authorizing the construction of the Panama Canal, and 2 years later he coauthored the Pure Food and Drug Act, which set a precedent for Federal regulation in this area.

In 1906, at the behest of President Theodore Roosevelt, Hepburn pushed through the House what became known as the Hepburn Act. This measure, says Hepburn biographer John Ely Briggs, "constituted his principal achievement and earned for him enduring fame."<sup>5</sup> The law, described by historian George E. Mowry as "a landmark in the evolution of federal control of private industry," gave the Interstate Commerce Commission power to set aside railroad rate schedules on complaint of shippers, prescribe new rates subject to judicial review, and have access to railroad books.<sup>6</sup> According to historian John Morton Blum,

<sup>4</sup>

Lester B. Shippee, "William Peters Hepburn," Dictionary of American Biography, IV, (New York, 1931), 568.

<sup>5</sup>

John Ely Briggs, William Peters Hepburn (Iowa City, 1919), 243.

<sup>6</sup>

Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 205.



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CONTINUATION SHEET Hepburn House ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE three

Hepburn "challenged the most cherished prerogative of private management, the most hoary tenet of free private enterprise--the ability freely to make prices."<sup>7</sup>

In 1908 Hepburn won renomination despite strong opposition from the supporters of Albert B. Cummins but narrowly lost the general election because of Republican factionalism, the opposition of organized labor, and old political enmities. For many years Hepburn had been highly critical of what he considered the excessive powers of the Speaker of the House, and as a lame duck in 1908-9, he played a leading role in an effort to curb the power of Speaker Joseph G. Cannon. Hepburn's speech criticizing Cannon, says historian Kenneth W. Hechler, "coming as it did from a man who had established a high reputation within the party, carried great weight with the other members of the House."<sup>8</sup>

After leaving office in 1909, Hepburn opened a law office in Washington, D.C., and practiced there for a number of years. Eventually he returned to Clarinda, Iowa, where he died on February 7, 1916, at the age of 82.

7

Blum, The Republican Roosevelt, 91.

8

Hechler, Insurgency, 46.

CONTINUATION SHEET Hepburn House ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE one

Hechler, Kenneth W., Insurgency: Personalities and Politics of the Taft Era (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940).

Mowry, George E., The Era of Theodore Roosevelt and the Birth of Modern America, 1900-1910 (New York: Harper & Row, 1958).

Sage, Leland L., A History of Iowa (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1974).

Shippee, Lester B., "William Peters Hepburn," Dictionary of American Biography, IV, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), 568-69.

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