

Iowa Site Inventory

Office of Historic Preservation
Iowa State Historical Department
East 12th & Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Site Number 77N 28W - 17
District Name Legacy In Stone TR
Map Reference # 49

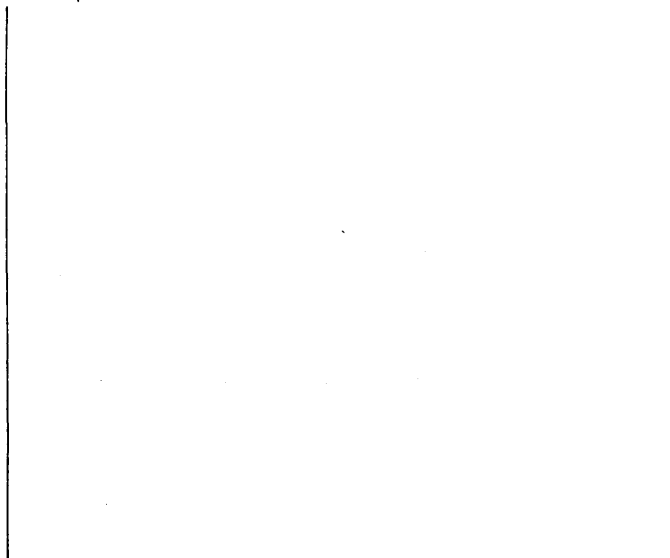
Identification

1. Site Name Seth and Elizabeth Wilson House
2. Village/Town/City Vic. Earlham Township Madison County Madison
3. Street Address on G14 1.3/4 miles east of P57
4. Legal Location 77N 28W 17 S1/2 NE1/4 *
Urban: subdivision block parcel subparcel
Rural: township range section % section of 1/4 section
- (Map 6)
5. UTM Location: zone 15 easting 408,640 northing 4,591,240; Acreage less than one acre
6. Owner(s) Name Wayne and Ardith Thrailkill
7. Owner(s) Address Rt. 2 Box 118 Earlham IA 50072
(Street address) (City) (State) (Zip)
8. Use: Present Residence Original Residence

Description

9. Date of Construction 1862 Architect/Builder Seth Wilson
10. Building Type:
 single-family dwelling industrial other institutional religious
 multiple-family dwelling educational public agricultural
 commercial
11. Exterior Walls: clapboard stone brick board and batten shingles stucco
 other Native limestone
12. Structural System: wood frame with interlocking joints wood frame with light members (balloon frame)
 masonry load-bearing walls iron frame steel frame with curtain walls reinforced concrete
 other _____
13. Condition: excellent good fair deteriorated
14. Integrity: original site moved—if so, when? _____
Notes on alterations, additions (with dates and architect, if known) and any other notable features of building and site:
Dormers and exterior chimney added
15. Related Outbuildings and Property: barn other farm structures carriage house garage privy
 other _____
16. Is the building endangered? no yes—if so, why? _____
17. Surroundings of the building: open land woodland scattered outbuildings densely built-up commercial
 industrial residential other farmstead

18. Map



19. Photo

Roll _____ Frame _____ View _____

*Nomination boundary:

A circle, 150' diameter, with center point located at center point of house. Excludes outbuildings.

SIGNIFICANCE

20. Architectural Significance

—a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register

—b. Contributing structure _____

Theme(s) Vernacular Architecture

Subtheme(s): Identified master designer/builder: Wilson; Function: Residential.

The Seth W. and Elizabeth Wilson House is an early example of a vernacular farm residence built of limestone. It is one of few symmetrical massed rectangle stone houses ever built in the county and is the only extant one and one half story building. It is an extant work of Seth Wilson who was contractor for several of the early stone residences in the Earham area. Notable features include recessing the main facade to form an entrance alcove, the floor plan, and a dated keystone above the main entrance.

The 28' x 36' one and one half story gabled house is constructed of locally quarried ashlar and roughly squared rubble limestone. The south public facade has a door centered under the eaves with two flanking windows on each side. The east and west gable facades each have two windows at the main level with two smaller windows at the attic level. The north facade has a centered door with two windows to the left and a shed to the right which also covers the door.

The main south facade is constructed of dimension ashlar textured with draft lines. Stonework is coursed with regular bond and close joints. The other facades are roughly squared stone laid in courses. Joints have been repointed. Quoins and lintels are ashlar with draft lines. Protruding sills have draft lines, too. There is a recessed stone alcove at the main entrance. Above the door there are two dimension stones textured with draft lines and joined by a keystone dated 1861. Windows are splayed. The reveals are paneled with undecorated walnut planks. There is a recessed door set into the stonework of the recessed alcove. The door reveal is paneled with undecorated walnut plank. There is a transom. The overhanging eaves and verges are closed. There is a cornice and cornice return and mitred soffits. There are flues within both gable walls and fireplaces in the west end of the basement and first floor.

The interior has a central hall with two rooms on each side of both the top and attic floors. The east side of the hall has a stone wall from the basement through the first floor level. The interior is finished with plaster, undecorated woodwork and tongue and groove flooring. The basement has a walkout to the west which appears to have been used as a main family entrance. The basement walls are white washed quarry faced coursed limestone. The basement fireplace has a lintel design very similar to that above the main entrance. There are two pieces of slightly arched dimension stone with draft lines which are joined by a keystone. There is a hand hewn summer beam in the basement. There is single roof construction with collar beams and ashlaring. Dormers have been added.

The house evidences characteristics similar to those of other houses for which Seth Wilson was contractor. These include almost square symmetrical massed rectangular buildings with two rooms on either side of a central hall, use of ashlar for the main facade, recessed facade around the door, and a stone with the date of construction carved in it.

21. **Historical Significance**

—a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register

—b. Contributing Structure _____

Theme(s): Early Settlement

In 1854, Seth Wilson came to the northwestern part of the county with several relatives to settle and speculate on land. He obtained patent deed to over 600 acres. Wilson and his relatives purchased over 3000 acres, reportedly paying for the land with \$20 gold pieces which they had brought with them to Iowa. Wilson was a Quaker who encouraged other Quakers to come to the area and settle. He sold the land for and was one of the incorporators of Earlham. He built the town's first hotel and entertainment center. In 1859, Wilson bought the 200 acre farm on which this house is built. He probably began construction soon after and completed it in 1862.

Atlas of Madison Co., Iowa Philadelphia: Harrison & Warner, 1875.

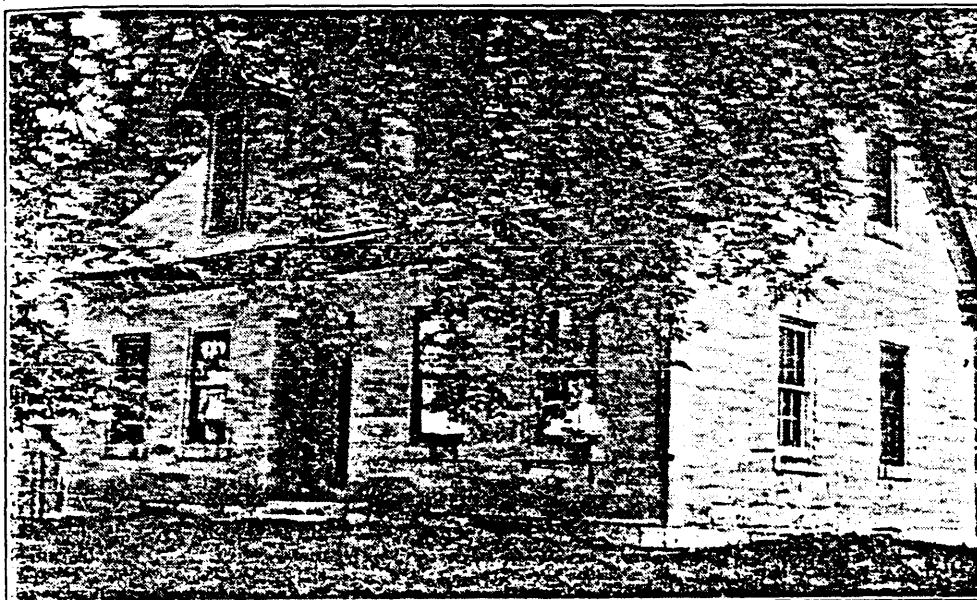
Courthouse Records. Winterset, Iowa: Madison County Recorders' Office.

Mueller, Herman. History of Madison County, Iowa, 2 vols. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915.

Nunamacher, Sarah. Earlham Pioneer History. The Echo Press, 1928.

22. **Sources**

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Built by Seth Wilson. 1862 carved in lintel over door. Landing Taylor is present owner .

S. Nunamacher, Earlham Pioneer History. The Echo Press, 1928, p. 9.