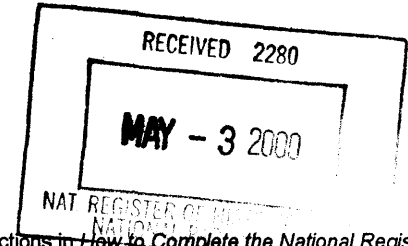


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to 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 Park Motel

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 803 4th Avenue South N/A not for publication

city or town Denison N/A vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Crawford code 047 zip code 51442

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).

Patricia Cherkins DSHPO 4-27-00
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA
State or 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): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall 6-2-00

Park Motel
Name of Property

Crawford County, Iowa
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

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>1</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
		sites
		structures
<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/motel

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/motel

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/
Spanish Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls STUCCO

roof TERRA COTTA
other _____

Narrative Description

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

Park Motel
Name of Property

Crawford County, Iowa
County and State

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.

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1940

Significant Dates

1940

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Chrestensen, Charles

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Park Motel
Name of Property

Crawford County, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 2 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	[1]5	[3]0[4]3[0]0	[4]6[5]3[6]3[0]	2	[1]5	[3]0[4]4[1]0	[4]6[5]3[6]3[0]
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
3	[1]5	[3]0[4]4[1]0	[4]6[5]3[5]8[0]	4	[1]5	[3]0[4]3[2]0	[4]6[5]3[5]8[0]
							<input type="checkbox"/> 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 Leah D. Rogers/Consultant
organization _____ date April 21, 2000
street & number 217 NW 5th Street telephone 319-895-8330
city or town Mt. Vernon state IA zip code 52314

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the complete 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 Jason Gesy
street & number 803 4th Avenue telephone 712-263-4144
city or town Denison state IA zip code 51442

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.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

**Park Motel
Crawford County, IA**

Narrative Description

The Park Motel, built in 1940 by Ted Port, is located on the south side of Highway 30 at the southeast corner of the intersection with Highways 59 and 141 on the west edge of the City of Denison in Crawford County, Iowa. The motel faces north and has two detached wings that flank the original core of the motel on either side. These wings were added in 1965 and are oriented at an angle to the original motel, which is on an east-west axis. The original motel is considered contributing to the property's significance, while the two wings are considered non-contributing because they were added after the period of significance. There are also two contributing objects, which are the extant brick cornerposts dating from the original motel construction, with two signposts, two lamp posts, and one fountain considered non-contributing objects because they were added to the property after 1940.

The original core of the motel is two stories in height and has a flat roof with a flat parapet that has a terra cotta tile coping. The plan is rectangular and has a strong horizontal emphasis. Projecting out from the facade are two gable-roofed vestibules that lead into individual motel rooms and side stairwells on either side of the building and a second-floor bay window that is centered over the entryway into the lobby and over the drive-through that leads to the rear of the motel. The projecting bay window imparts the look of a cantilevered balcony but is an enclosed structure. It has a shed roof that is covered with terra cotta roofing tiles. Fronting the bay are two long rows of casement windows and a scalloped crenellation-type detail around the base, although the scallops on the right-hand side were removed in more recent years. The first floor entryway into the lobby now has a projecting brick vestibule that was added in the 1960s-1970s but retains the original bow window with casement windows to the left of the doorway. The exterior walls of the motel are covered with stucco that was recently refurbished.

Other features of note include the round-arched doorways into the stairwells and individual motel rooms from the exterior; the terra cotta tile roofs on the projecting vestibules and porch hoods on both the front and rear of the building, the original exterior light fixtures on the projecting vestibules, the original wooden plank doors in the projecting vestibules, and the original paneled doors with six-lite windows on the rear and side doorways. Most of the windows are the original casement and 6/6 double-hungs, with only a few of the front and rear windows being modern inserts.

Interior features of note include the original lobby configuration complete with the original room-key cabinet, most of the original doors with Art Deco door hardware, wood-paneled wainscot lining the halls and stairwells, and much of the original room configurations on the second floor. The motel is currently being refurbished on the interior, with plans to retain as much as possible of the original material and configuration. In addition, at least one of the original kitchenette units is still upstairs and is a prefabricated, all-in-one metal unit with refrigerator, stove, sink, and cupboards. Two of the rooms were originally fitted with these kitchenette units. Many of the original light fixtures and the radio units and equipment for each room are still in the motel as well.

The first floor of the motel has a central lobby, with the motel clerk's quarters to the rear of the lobby including a living room, kitchen, and bedroom (originally all in one small room, now in two with a former motel room now the living quarters bedroom); the laundry and two motel rooms and three bathrooms in the connected unit to the east of the lobby; and the drive-through separating the lobby from the west unit, which has five motel rooms and three bathrooms (see attached floor plans, page 13). The second floor can be reached through the lobby stairwell or through the two stairwells in either side unit. The side units each have four motel rooms and four bathrooms, with the central unit having a large sitting room or lounge in the bay window and four larger motel rooms each having a bathroom. Two of the larger rooms were originally fitted with the kitchenette units. There is a full basement underneath the entire original motel building that is divided into several rooms. The original intent was to use one of the larger basement rooms as a recreation room and lounge; however, it is suspected that this room was never finished due to moisture and flooding problems that still persist in this low-lying property.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

**Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa**

The overall architectural style of the motel is Spanish Colonial Revival or Spanish Eclectic and is a type of architecture that was popular between 1915-1940. Related to the earlier Mission style of architecture, Spanish Colonial Revival was a simpler style distinguished by red tile roofs, stucco walls, heavy wooden doors in round-arched openings, and a low horizontal emphasis. The intent was to recreate the character of a Spanish hacienda; however, few examples fully achieved the U-shaped courtyard pattern of a true hacienda. The drive-through of the Park Motel imparts some of that effect, leading the visitor through the building and into the rear parking space of the motel but the building is rectangular and not U-shaped. The Spanish Colonial Revival style was most popular in the Southwest and Florida (Baker 1994:130; McAlester and McAlester 1998:417).

The design of the Park Motel was based on the design of the Pan-American Courts in San Antonio, Texas. The plans were drawn by local contractor, Charles Chrestensen, using an illustration from a promotional brochure brought back from San Antonio by Ted Port, a local entrepreneur (see attached illustration, page 15) (Amy Christianson, personal communication 2000). Chrestensen closely followed the design of the Pan-American Courts but made a few changes in the exterior details such as the design of the first-floor entryway and adding small windows over the second-floor stairwells. However, there were a few changes from Chrestensen's original drawings of the Park Motel and the finished building including the moving of the front lobby door from the side of the drive-through to the front facade of the lobby adjacent to the bow window and the deletion of two buttresses with arched doorways that extended off either side of the front facade (see attached original plans, page 14).

When originally built in 1940, the event was marked by a detailed description of the finished motel in the local newspaper (*Denison Review* 1940):

Nightly the huge neon sign burns brightly—lights shine from the windows—and in the daytime the flashy red tiles of the roof blaze above the creamy-white of the Spanish stucco walls!

All this, and more too, heralds the opening of Denison's newest haven for tourists—the Park Motel, constructed at the intersection of Highways 30, 59, and 141 by Ted Port.

Constructed in Spanish architecture, this building, 32 by 100 feet, contains 24 rooms—all air conditioned and steam heated, with an individual thermostatic control for each of the rooms.

Walls and roof of the Park Motel are of fireproof construction with mica pellet insulation and a 20-year bonded roof of pea gravel.

All rooms are equipped with either a bath or a shower, one or more beds, cedar-lined wardrobe, dresser lounging chair, straight chair, and smoking stand.

Furniture is of Hollywood style, the beds having an embossed leather head. Mattresses are either of the box spring or air spring type.

Two of the rooms have been made into small apartments with a kitchenette. In each of these is a built-in one piece combination unit, containing a refrigerator, stove, sink, oven, and cupboard. These rooms are equipped with studio couches and two or more lounging chairs.

Walls in the rooms are of plastic paint and durolite, and the color scheme of each room is different. All rooms are illuminated with fluorescent lighting fixtures, and are equipped with venetian blinds. All of the upstairs rooms and most of those on the first floor are fully carpeted.

There are beds to anyone's choosing—double beds, single beds, twin beds, and studio couches—and the Motel's standard sleeping capacity is 84. If more beds are needed, a supply of comfortable cots are on hand.

Most of the rooms can be reached from the outside without going through the office on the first floor. Several of the rooms can be opened into each other to make a family suite. Several rooms have double beds.

On the Second floor, above the office is located a lounge facing the highway. In the full basement workmen are now constructing a recreation room and large lounge.

Entrance to the Park Motel area is made through a gateway and wide paved drive, which runs through the building itself to the graveled courtyard in the rear where patrons may park their autos.

Landscaping of the 200 by 100 front yard has been completed with shrubbery and trees and automatic sprinkling system. The yard will be seeded to lawn grass (*Denison Review* 1940).

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

**Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa**

Modifications have been few to the Park Motel, which is most unusual given its use as a motel property since 1940. In 1965 the motel was expanded but in a rather unique way. Instead of attaching new wings to the old building and expanding the original core itself, two new wings were added as detached units set at angles to either side of, but apart from, the original core. As a result, the motel room space was more than doubled without impacting the original motel building. Other modifications have included the insertion of several modern windows on the front and rear facade, while retaining most of the original casement and 6/6 double-hung windows; the construction of an entry vestibule off the front door of the lobby; and the removal of the scallop design from the right-hand side of the projecting bay window over the drive-through. Shutters were also added to the front windows in more recent years.

Modifications to the landscaping of the front yard area of the motel have included the removal of the front fence and brick "gateposts" that lined the frontage of the property as seen in the 1940 photograph accompanying the above-noted newspaper article (see attached, page 16), although two of the brick cornerposts are still in place off the ends of the 1960s additions to the motel (see attached photographs). The original neon sign has also been replaced several times, although the location of the sign has changed only slightly as indicated by the two extant signposts, one older and one modern (see attached map, page 11). The front driveway was also expanded to serve as a front parking area. Also present in the front lawn area of the motel are two lamp posts added recently to the parking lot area and a terra cotta fountain on a three-lobed concrete and brick base, which is an older addition but does not appear to date from the 1940 construction of the Park Motel.

The current owner, Jason Gesy, is undertaking a major restoration of the Park Motel with the intent that it remain as authentic and true to the original design as possible. To that end, this nomination is being set forth to assist in the restoration efforts and to recognize the significance of this unique, early highway motel in Denison, Iowa.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa

Statement of Significance

The Park Motel is locally significant under Criterion A for its historical representation of an important development in transportation-related roadside services and under Criterion C for its representation of a well preserved example of Spanish Colonial Revival motel architecture in Denison and in Iowa. The Park Motel was built in 1940 along U.S. Highway 30, specifically at the intersection with two other highways, 59 and 141, through western Iowa. While not built along the original Lincoln Highway, it is situated alongside the right-of-way for the original Lincoln Highway route through Denison as well as along its later incarnation as Highway 30. The Park Motel was built by Ted Port, whose vision of roadside services in Denison included a cafe and a service station, both of which were located across the highway from the Park Motel. While the cafe and service station were under separate ownership by the time that Port built the Park Motel, it was built with the intent of a supportive service to these other offerings. In fact, the Park Motel and Cronk's Cafe were jointly advertised on postcards of the day. Therefore, while not a true "one-stop" operation under a single ownership, the operations were mutually supportive in the same manner as a one-stop. As such, the Park Motel represents the next step in the evolutionary process from the rustic tourist camps and motor courts along the Lincoln Highway, to the modern conveniences and luxury of the hotel for touring cars—the "motel." The Spanish Colonial Revival architecture used for the design of this motel reflects a popular style of the day, particularly in the southwestern United States. In fact, the inspiration for the Park Motel design was the Pan-American Courts in San Antonio, Texas, a place that Ted Port had visited. Local contractor, Charles Chrestensen, drew up plans for the Park Motel based on an illustration of the Pan-American Courts following the design of that motel quite closely. The Park Motel was intended to be both stylish and progressive and was specifically intended to catch-the-eye in the small western Iowa town of Denison. The period of significance and the significant date for this property is 1940, the year that the motel was built.

The motel was born out of the idea that automobile tourists, who were beginning to take advantage of the cross-country travel now open to them with the improvements of the roadways and the affordability and reliability of the car, would need support services tailored to their needs. These services included gasoline and repair services, food, and affordable shelter for the night. The cafe was tailor-made for roadside service as it provided the original "fast-food" and easy access from the highways.

It wasn't long before someone crossed a row of gas pumps with an eating place and bore the first truck stop. Like roadhouses, truck stops were often out in the hinterlands, or at least at the edge of town, where land was cheaper. To capitalize on every possible customer, they were usually built at the intersections of major highways...

As the great American roadside grew into an institution, entrepreneurs invented new places for travelers to rest from a long day on the road. Tourist camps became cabin camps, motor courts, then motels. They had begun as simple campgrounds in the days following World War I: shaded grassy areas, usually owned by the city or town, and usually free, where travelers in rough clothes pitched tents, cooked over fires, and keep lookout for road liars. When communities began charging for overnight stays, private operators got into the act, and soon competition had them all adding amenities like laundry buildings, picnic tables, hot showers, even electric hookups.

But as travelers turned away from riding in open cars, they also turned away from the notion of sleeping in open tents and roughing it in general. Operators soon began building tiny cabins so travelers could leave the tent at home....Day by day these 'cabin camps' added the comforts of home: bedding, electricity, heating, kitchenettes, and before long, camping was forgotten (Hokanson 1988:121-122).

As the amenities grew, the cabin camps gave way to the more formal motor courts, which typically consisted of cabins arranged in an L or U shape around a central courtyard. It was from the motor courts that the motel was born.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 5

Sometime in the late 1940s, the term *motel* came into common use. By now the cabins had been connected, neon added wherever possible, and the motorist slept in a miniature, idealized version of home, complete with oil paintings on the wall, a Bible, and hangers in the closet. The dirty-fingernailed running-board campers of the past were long forgotten (Hokanson 1988:122).

The further evolution of this process was to tie together all the needed roadside services into one convenient enterprise, often termed the "one-stop." The typical one-stop would include a gas/service station, cafe, and tourist camp, motor court, or motel, all under one ownership and at one location along the highway. There were a number of one-stops along both the Lincoln Highway and U.S. 30 as it developed in Iowa, with notable extant properties including Niland's Corner at Colo, the King Tower Cafe in Tama, and the Youngville Cafe east of Cedar Rapids. Both the King Tower Cafe and the Youngville Cafe were originally associated with gas stations and tourist camps or cabins but are the primary extant buildings remaining from those one-stops. Niland's Corner, however, retains the cafe, gas station and tourist cabins from its days as one of the earliest one-stop locations along the Lincoln Highway (Colo Development Group n.d.; Henry 1997).

The construction of the Park Motel in 1940, and the use of the term "motel," appears to be an early example in Iowa and perhaps in the Midwest. It was noted at the time, that owner Ted Port pondered long and hard about what to name his new "motor hotel" and undertook research to settle on what he considered the perfect name. His research drew on his past experiences along the "west coast" where "he got many of the ideas for his new tourist home" (*Denison Review* 1940).

All along the coast, he explains the name 'port' is worked into the titles of inns, taverns, drive-in stands, etc. Many of these Ted says, were not of the highest caliber, and to people from the west the name 'port' might suggest something undesirable.

Throughout the United States, he learned upon investigation, there were about 16 tourist homes, similar to his that were named "Park Motel." All of them were desirable, first-rate establishments, with which one would not hesitate to associate the name of his own business.

To protect the name and keep out establishments not meeting certain desired specifications, there is now a movement under way to copyright the name, "Park Motel." Eventually the operators may form an association (*Denison Review* 1940).

Whether such an association was ever formed or not is unknown. The name certainly stuck to this particular enterprise as it has always been called the Park Motel from its beginning in 1940 to the present day. It is also interesting to note that the inspiration for the Park Motel design was a motel named the "Pan-American Courts," which was a two-story, multi-room motel like the Park Motel but had a courtyard to the rear surrounded by individual garages—another evolutionary development from the earlier tourist camp and motor court idea. That the Pan-American Courts was not yet called a "motel" even though it had been designed as a multi-room motel, is notable.

It is known that by 1935 there were in the United States an estimated 9,848 motor courts increasing to 13,521 by 1939 (Margolies 1995:35). However, even by that date, there were far more motor courts than true motels. By the early 1940s new motor courts and motels were being built at the rate of 800 per year, with 20,000 motels present by 1940 increasing to 30,000 by 1948 and 61,000 by 1960. By 1951, "motels had surpassed hotels as the leading suppliers of rooms" (ibid.:90). Of the motels and motor courts in operation by the early 1940s, 87% of the rooms had private baths, 89% had heat, 14% had air conditioning, 72% had innerspring mattresses, 60% had rugs or carpeting, and 16% had room phones (ibid.:39). Even fewer had a lounge, which was "a latecomer to roadside establishments as motels became motor hotels after World War II" (ibid.:53). Clearly, the many offerings of the Park Motel in 1940, including the lounge, were out of the ordinary in this relatively small Midwestern town but were also out of the ordinary for the country as a whole. It was certainly on the "cutting edge" of motel development in 1940.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 6

**Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa**

The Park Motel had its origin in Denison, Iowa, in a previous enterprise of Ted Port's. This was a service station and later a cafe that he built along what became Highway 30.

He opened his station on Highway 30 while it was still a mud road and started out to cater to the trucking business. Successful in this venture, he has held the trade of many trucking concerns for years....

Ted built the station, his house and the building now occupied by Cronk's Cafe—all of the same design. Visualizing the value of the property across the highway from his station [i.e., the motel site], he purchased it several years ago and has moved thousands of yards of dirt in to bring the lot up to the level of the highway (*Denison Review* 1940).

The gas station was built in 1926, with the cafe added in 1929. Based on the above description and existing photographs of the original cafe, the style of architecture of at least the cafe was the same Spanish Colonial Revival style as the later Park Motel (see attached photographs). There are no known photographs of the gas station. Unfortunately, the gas station and the original cafe building are non-extant, although Cronk's Cafe is still in business at the original location. Interestingly, there is still a gas station adjacent to the cafe and across the motel to the present day as well, although this is now a modern convenience store construction. Ted Port's house is still standing but was moved from its original location next to the café to its present location at 1324 4th Avenue North in Denison. The house is currently occupied by Sandy Mullenger, sister-in-law of the late actress, Donna Reed, who was born in Denison and often stayed at the Park Motel on return visits to Denison.

By the time the Park Motel was constructed, Ted Port no longer owned the cafe, which was by then occupied by Cronk's. However, as noted above, both enterprises cooperated in joint advertising, with postcards of the day showing both Cronk's and the Park Motel "on U.S. 30 and 59 and Iowa 4 and 141 at the Crossroads of Western Iowa" (Postcard in possession of Lyell Henry, Iowa City, Iowa). Ted Port also advertised his new motel at points along the highway on the outskirts of Denison. "Included in his plans are the placing of unique signs throughout the country in all directions—signs that not only advertise the Park Motel, but Denison as well" (*Denison Review* 1940). At least one of these signs still exists albeit in poor condition. It was found by the current owner's father in a ditch outside Denison. It is a hand-painted metal sign that shows the Park Motel as it appears in the postcard renditions of that era (see attached photographs). It now hangs in the lobby of the Park Motel.

The location that Ted Port selected for first his truck stop and then his cafe and motel enterprises filled the basic requirement for a successful roadside business: location, location, location. In this case, the location was at the intersection of several major roadways at the edge of the city. It was the last stop on the way out of town along U.S. Highway 30, and the first stop as you entered Denison from either U.S. Highway 59 or Iowa 141. The land on which he built the motel was also affordable, given that it was so low-lying it had been unsuitable for development until he was able to add sufficient fill to bring it up to grade.

In 1926 when Ted Port built his service station, U.S. 30 had just come into existence. Prior to that time, the Lincoln Highway was the main east-west highway route through Denison having been established in 1913 as the nation's first transcontinental route specifically intended for automobile traffic. By 1925, the system of named highways had become too unorganized and too confusing, particularly in areas where several named highways shared the same route. To alleviate the situation, the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) started planning a federal highway system that would use a numbering rather than a naming system. "The Lincoln Highway Association was all for a numbered highway system, as long as one number corresponded to the Lincoln Highway and the names stayed with the road" (Lin 1998). Unfortunately, the Association did not get its wish.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

**Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa**

Major east-west routes would be numbered in multiples of ten, from U.S. 20 across the north to U.S. 90 across the south. Major north-south routes would end in 1 or 5, from U.S. 1 between Maine and Florida to U.S. 101 between Washington and California. The Lincoln Highway was broken up into U.S. 1, U.S. 30 (including U.S. 30N and U.S. 30S), U.S. 530, U.S. 40, and U.S. 50. Nearly two-thirds of the Lincoln's length was designated U.S. 30, which began in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and ended in Astoria, Oregon. The AASHO also adopted a standard set of road signs and markers, and to avoid confusion, all markers of all named roads would have to be taken down (Lin 1998).

As a result, interest in the Lincoln Highway waned, and the Association became inactive by the end of 1927. As one of its last acts, the Lincoln Highway Association marked "the highway not as a route from one destination to another, but as a memorial to Abraham Lincoln" with concrete markers placed along the highway approximately every mile by the Boy Scouts in 1928. These markers have a small bronze medallion of Lincoln's bust and the inscription "This highway dedicated to Abraham Lincoln" (Lin 1998).

In Denison, the original route of the Lincoln Highway entered town from the east and extended along 4th Avenue South up to the intersection with Main Street. At Main, the Lincoln Highway turned south one block to 5th Avenue South where it then continued to the west before angling to the northwest near the Boyer River crossing. It then crossed the river bridge and angled back to the southwest but still north of the present route of U.S. 30 (see attached map, page 19). As such, this route was located one block south of the Park Motel, with the angled portion being along the west edge of the later Park Motel property. The location of this old highway route is still discernible along the edge of the Park Motel lot but no pavement remains from the roadway.

In Denison, there were at least two other motor court enterprises along parts of the old Lincoln Highway and the later route of Highway 30; however, the extant examples are of the motor court and cabin variety and include the Ho Hum and The Trees, both situated along U.S. Highway 30 (4th Avenue South). The Park Motel stands out as a well preserved example of early motel architecture in the city of Denison and as a well preserved example of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, a style that was not common in Denison during this period, particularly with the subsequent loss of Ted Port's early service station and cafe of the same design. As such, the Park Motel stands as a good representative of a progressive, innovative, transportation-related support service enterprise along U.S. Highway 30 in the early formative days of this important highway route. It also is a good reflection of the origin of the motel idea and early motel architecture in the southwestern United States as it was transplanted by Ted Port to western Iowa. The Park Motel was also extremely unusual for the time in its design as a two-story structure—most of the early motels were one-story buildings that reflected the evolution from detached cabins of the tourist camp and court patterns to the connected rooms of the motel (Margolies 1995:95).

That the Park Motel was a success is attested to by its continued existence and use as a motel. It has also been a fashionable place to stay for celebrities visiting the town including, Denison-native actress Donna Reed and political notables, Elizabeth Dole, Ethel Kennedy, and former Iowa governor Terry Branstad, to name a few.

In 1945, Ted Port sold the property to Stanley Hood, who retained possession into the 1950s. Leo Asman may have been an owner for a short period in 1954; however, by the late 1950s, Virgil Nelson, was the owner of record. Nelson retained possession into the 1960s when it was transferred first to Marilyn Rosman and then to Harry Shives, whose Shives Motel, Inc., operated the business until 1974 when Carter and Gail Cose purchased the property on contract. A warranty deed was finally issued in 1985 when the property was sold to Ronald Ohm, who in turn sold the property to Tom Anderson and John Jensen in 1988. In 1995, the contract for the property was assigned to J B Trust. The current owner, Jason Gesy, purchased the property in 1998. It was during Marilyn Rosman's ownership in 1965 that the motel operation was expanded by the construction of the two detached wings. It was fortunate that Rosman preserved this historic motel while expanding the practical side of the motel operations.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 8

**Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa**

Other individuals involved in the actual construction of the original Park Motel building included Charles Chrestensen, who served as the general contractor for the project; Charles Jacobsen, who did the plumbing; Vernon Berg, electrical; L.T. Petersen, tinning and heating; Ted Gottchalk, interior decorating; and R.W. Brandt, cement and floor work (*Denison Review* 1940). The lumber and other building materials were purchased from the Mullin Lumber Company of Kenwood, with the original neon sign manufactured by the Electrical Products Consolidated in Omaha, Nebraska, and the heating and air conditioning units from Chrysler Airtemp (*ibid.*).

Charles Chrestensen drew up the plans for the Park Motel based on a brochure from the Pan-American Courts that Ted Port had brought back from San Antonio, Texas (see attached illustration, page 15). Chrestensen and Port made a few changes to the design, so the Park Motel was not an exact copy, but the design is a close approximation of the Pan-American Courts. Even after the plans had been drawn up, the final design of the building as constructed involved a few changes including the placement of the front lobby door. The interior floor plan was also slightly altered from its original design, although some interior changes may have been executed in later years (see attached floor plans, pages 13-14).

The Park Motel was certainly innovative and ahead of its time, particularly in the small western Iowa community of Denison. That it has survived so long with so few changes is perhaps most remarkable of all.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 9

**Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa**

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Property Abstract for Park Motel, in possession of, and researched by, owner Jason Gesy, Denison, Iowa.

Original plans and elevation drawing of the Park Motel by Charles Chrestensen in possession of Amy Christianson, Denison, Iowa.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 **Page** 10

**Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa**

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Park Motel property is shown as the dashed line on the accompanying map entitled "Sketch Map Showing Boundaries of Nominated Property." The north boundary is the curbing along current U.S. Highway 30 (4th Avenue South), while the east boundary is the current property line between the Park Motel and the adjacent fast-food restaurant; the south boundary is a property boundary demarcated by a line of utility poles; and the west boundary is the west property boundary marked by a lilac hedge.

Boundary Justification

This property has historically been associated with the construction and operation of the Park Motel since 1940. It encompasses the original motel building, the two 1965 additions to the motel operation, and the surrounding lawn and parking areas associated with the motel business.

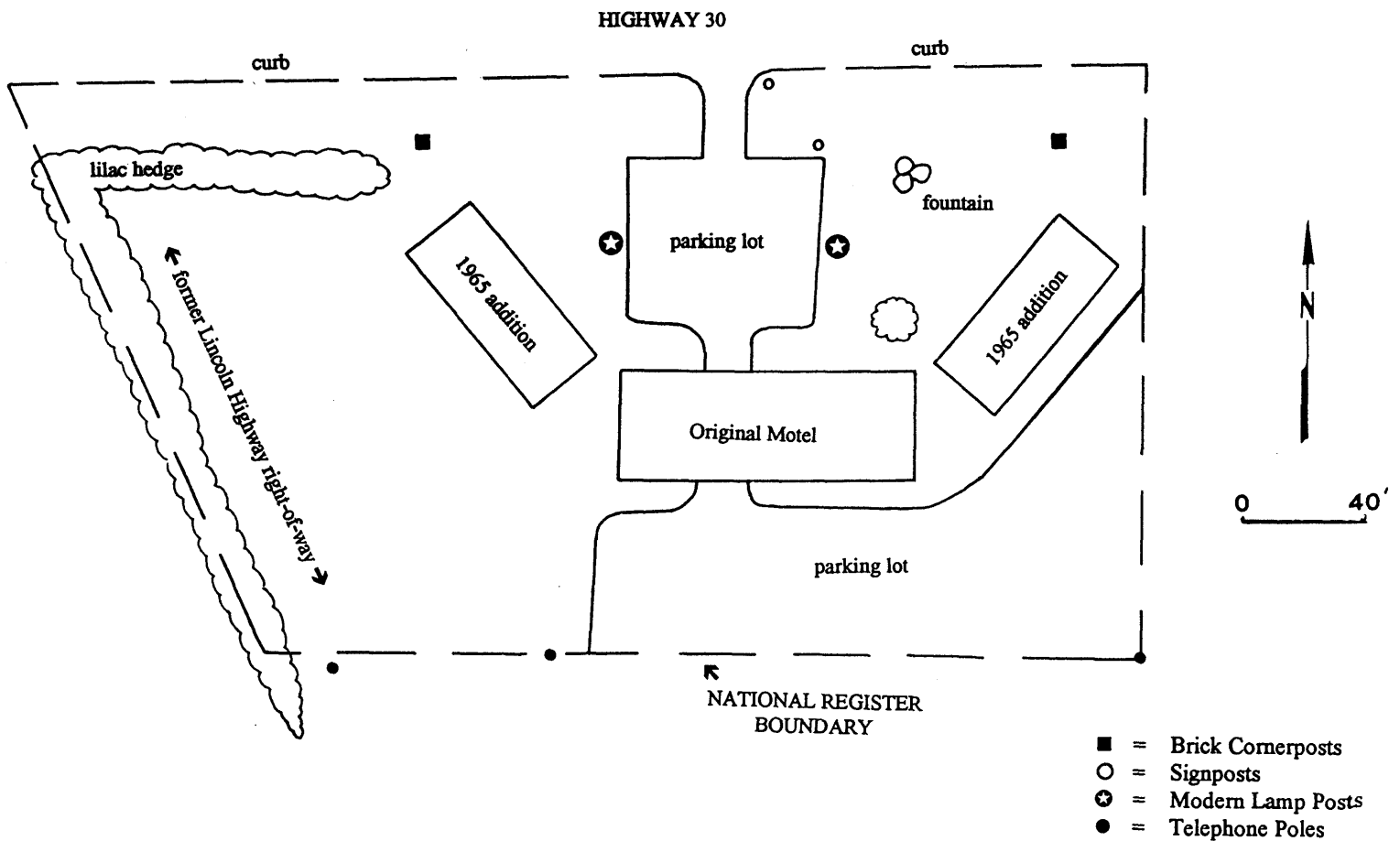
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 11

Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa

Sketch Map Showing Boundaries of Nominated Property



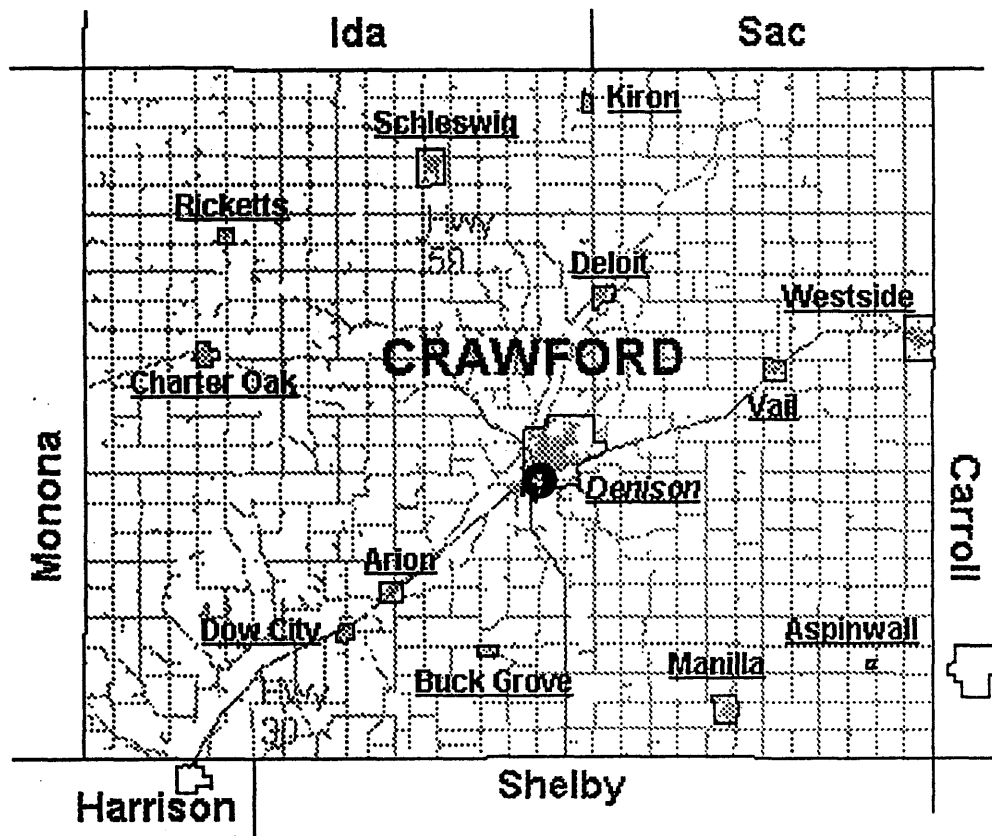
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 12

Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa

Locational Map of Nominated Property



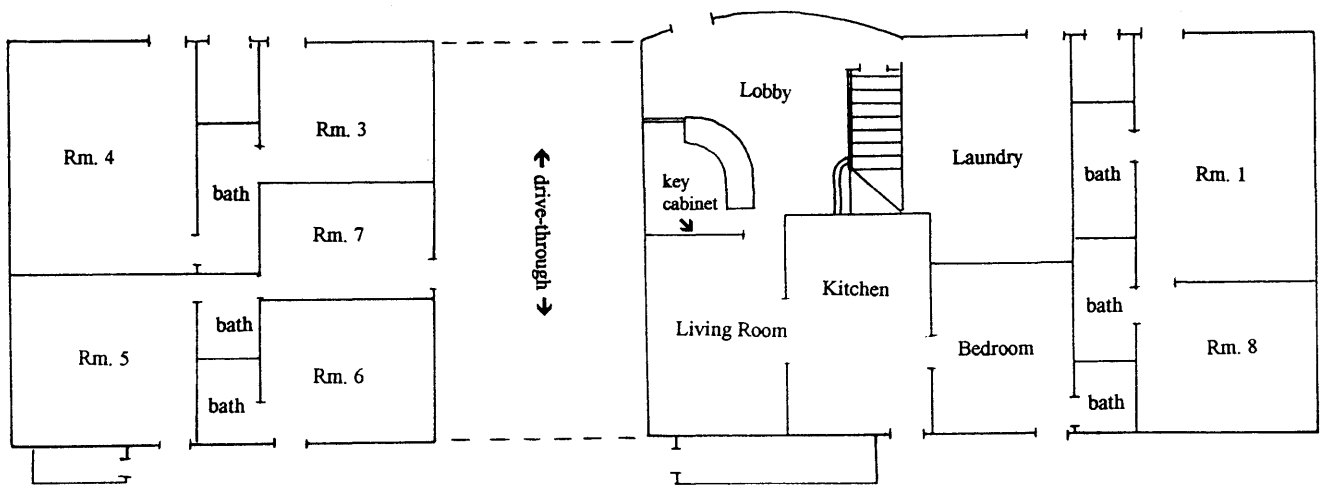
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 13

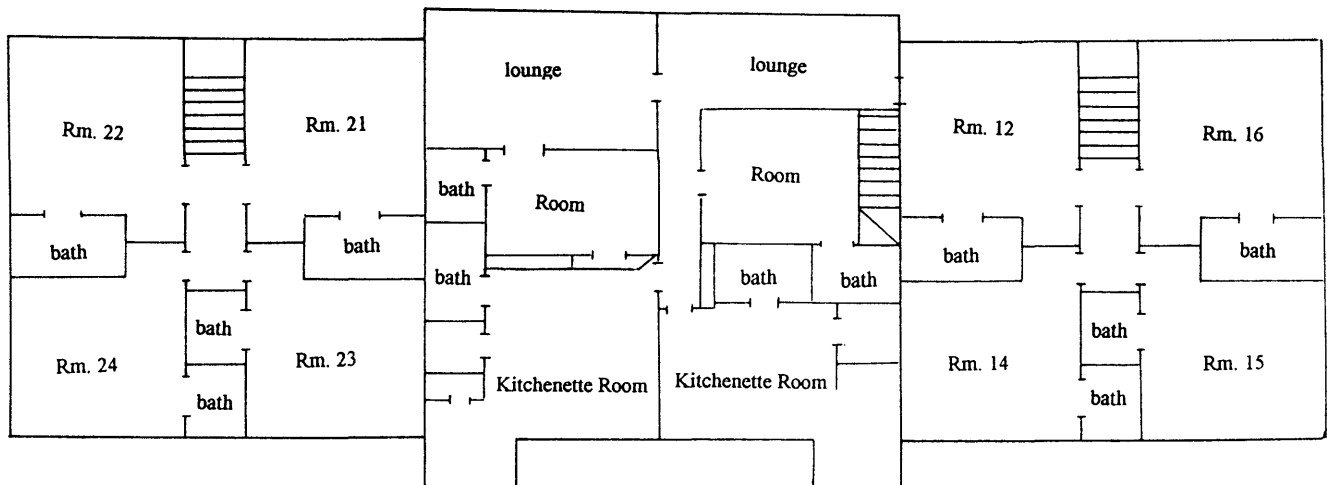
Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa

Current Floor Plans of Park Motel



FIRST FLOOR

0 15ft



SECOND FLOOR

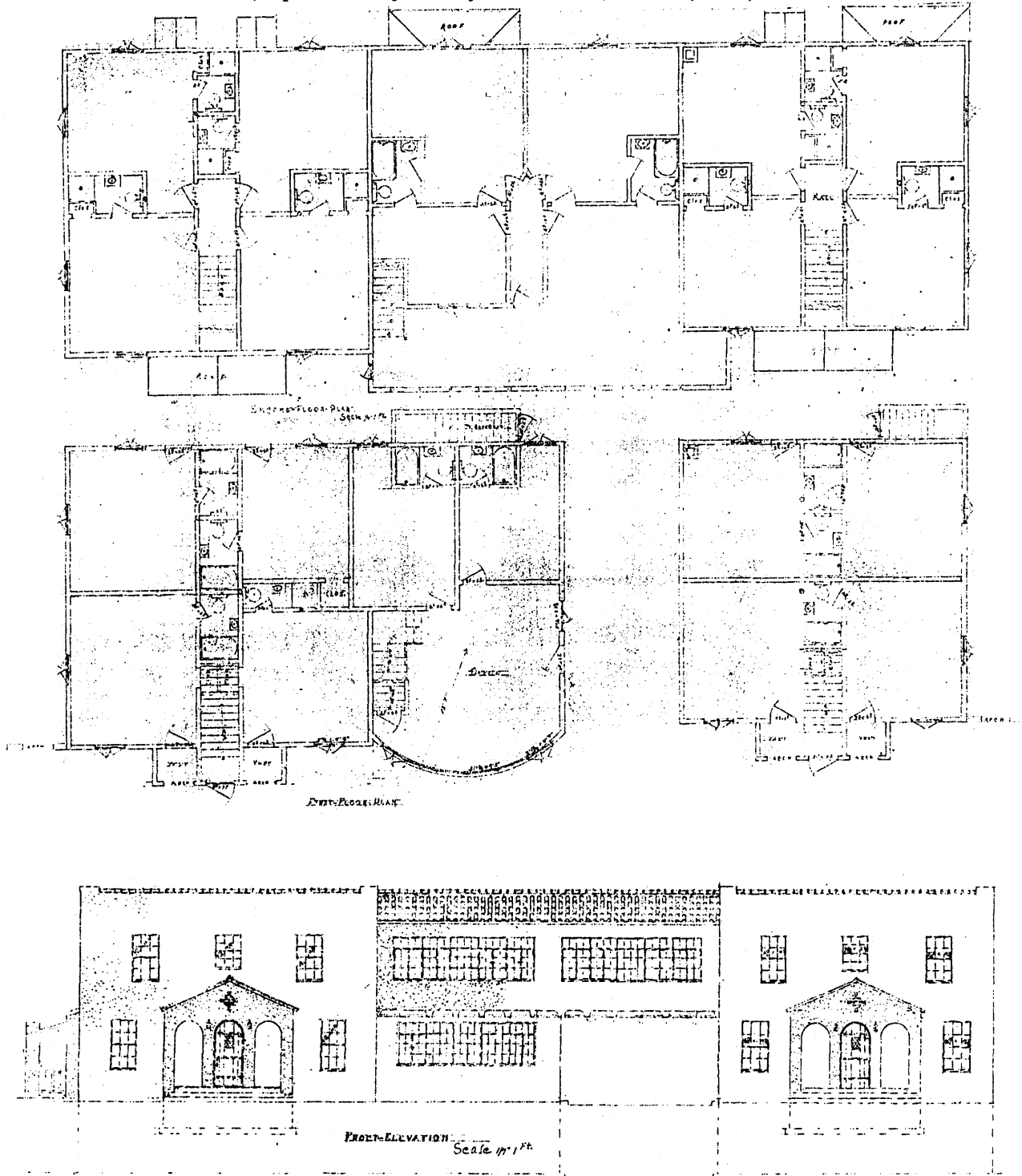
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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 14

Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa

Original Floor Plans and Elevation Drawing of Park Motel
(Copies courtesy of Amy Christianson, Denison, Iowa)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 15

Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa

Illustration of Pan-American Courts, San Antonio, Texas,
from brochure brought back by Ted Port and used by Charles Chrestensen to design the Park Motel
(original in possession of Amy Christianson, Denison, Iowa).



Pan-American Tourist Courts — *Air Cooled Throughout*
5433 Broadway —o— San Antonio, Texas

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Additional

Section number Documentation Page 16

**Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa**

Photographs of Park Motel (top) and Cronk's Cafe (bottom) in 1940
(Source: *Denison Review* 1940)



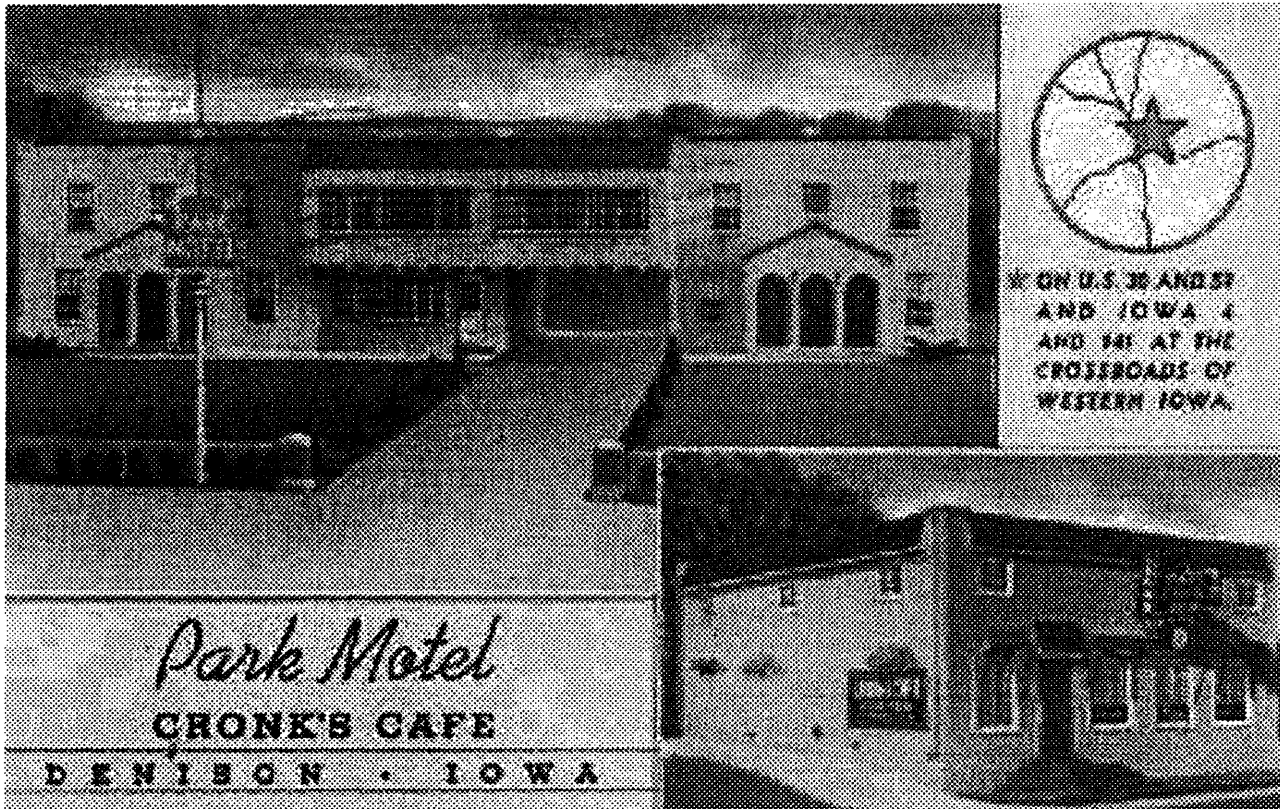
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 17

Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa

c.1940 Postcard Showing Park Motel and Cronk's Cafe
(Source: Collection of Lyell Henry, Iowa City, Iowa)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

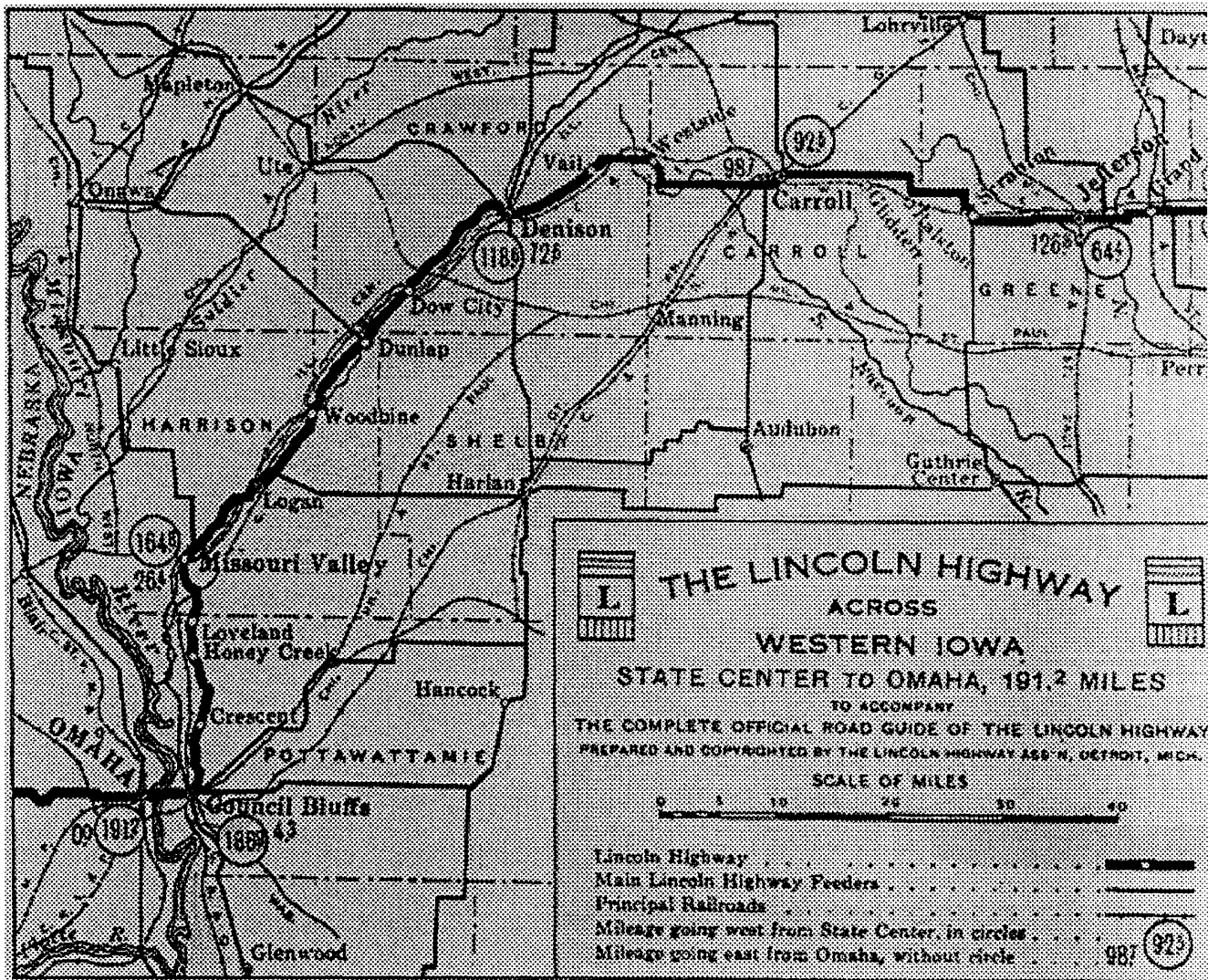
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional

Section number Documentation Page 18

Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa

Map Showing Route of Lincoln Highway in Western Iowa



**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

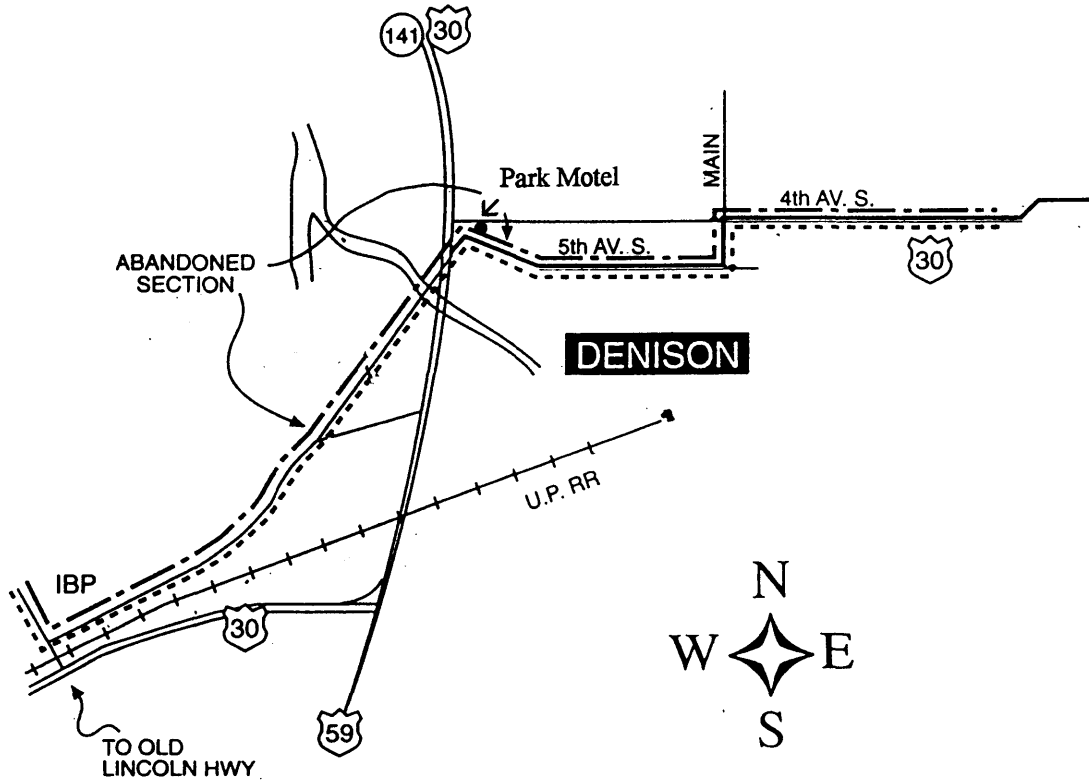
**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Additional

Section number Documentation Page 19

**Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa**

Map Showing Route of Lincoln Highway Through City of Denison
(Source: The Lincoln Highway Iowa Map Pack)



**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Additional Documentation **Page** 20

**Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa**

Photographs

Name of Property: Park Motel
County and State: Crawford County, Iowa
Name of Photographer: Leah D. Rogers
Date of Photographs: June 26, 1999
Location of Negatives: Park Motel, Denison, Iowa

- #1 View: Front of Motel, view to the SSE from U.S. 30
- #2 View: Front of Motel, view to the SE from U.S. 30
- #3 View: Front of Motel, view to the WSW from U.S. 30
- #4 View: Close-up of West Unit of Motel, view to the South
- #5 View: Close-up of East Unit of Motel, view to the South
- #6 View: Close-up of Entry Vestibule to East Unit of Motel, view to the South
- #7 View: Rear of Motel, view to the NNW
- #8 View: Close-up of Rear Room Entryways of Motel, view to the WNW
- #9 View: Close-up of Door and Window in drive-through portion of Motel, view to the WSW
- #10 View: Room key cabinet on interior of Motel Lobby, view to the WSW
- #11 View: Detail of door hardware and wainscot paneling in hallway of East Unit of Motel, view to the NW
- #12 View: Detail of interior window of second-floor apartment of Central Unit of Motel, view to the East
- #13 View: Detail of built-in kitchenette unit once in second-floor apartment of Central Unit of Motel
- #14 View: Metal advertising sign for Park Motel now located in Motel Lobby

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 21

Park Motel
Crawford County, Iowa

Sketch Map Showing Direction of Photographs

