Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

PH0502111

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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FOR NPS USE ONLY

AUG 8 1977 RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NCT 2 1 1977** 

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

# **1** NAME

HISTORIC

Cedar Falls Ice House

AND/OR COMMON

## **LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN       CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT         Cedar Falls	STREET & NUMBER					
Cedar Falls	Franklin Avenue and First Street					
STATE     CODE     COUNTY     CODE       Black Hawk     CLASSIFICATION     CLASSIFICATION     CATEGORY     OWNERSHIP     STATUS     PRESENT USE      DISTRICT     Xpublic    OCCUPIED    AGRICULTURE    MUSEUM      STAUCTURE    BOTH    OCCUPIED    COMMERCIAL    PARK      STRUCTURE    BOTH    OCCUPIED    COMMERCIAL    PARK      STRUCTURE    BOTH    WORK IN PROGRESS    EDUCATIONAL    PRIVATE RESID      STRUCTURE    BEING CONSIDERED    YES UNRESTRICTED    INDUSTRIAL    TRAUSPORTATI      DECINSTORY FOR    YES UNRESTRICTED    INDUSTRIAL    TRAUSPORTATI      NO    WILLTARY    OTHER    OTHER      STRET & NUMBER    COLART FAILS						
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# 7<sup>-</sup> DESCRIPTION

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Cedar Falls Ice House is a round building, 97'4" in diameter and 28' high to the eaves. It was constructed 1921-22 on a concrete foundation, of 8" hollow clay tiles. The trussed, double-pitched room (which peaks 24' above the eave line) is covered with composition shingles. Small ventilation openings are located at intervals about 6' above the ground; an additional metal ventilator is situated in the center of the roof. The original access to the interior of the ice house, which extended from ground to cornice line and accommodated a conveyor belt, has been filled in, and two short, wide doorways for small boats have been cut into the walls.

The icehouse is located on its original site, in the original town plat, on the south bank of the Cedar River at the Franklin Avenue bridge. No machinery remains from the structure's function as an ice house.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cedar Falls Ice House is an artifact from a now-defunct industry. Although ice is sold commercially today, it is the result of manufacture; no longer is ice laboriously cut out of rivers for wholesale or retail markets, as was the case when this structure was erected. The shape of the building, too, is noteworthy: although many icehouses were rectangular, the circular form used here was far more efficient, in that it allowed only one wall to touch the stacked blocks of ice, rather than two (in corners), thus retarding the inevitable melting.

The icehouse was built by the Cedar Falls Construction Co. for Hugh Smith in 1921-2, to replace a wooden icehouse which burned earlier in 1921. Smith acquired the Cedar Falls Ice and Fuel Co. in 1917, selling both ice and coal. During the 1920's the firm was the only supplier of ice in the city, but by 1934 it was one of four. That year, Smith apparently went bankrupt, and the property was taken over by a local bank.

The 25 years following World War I saw gradual improvements in refrigeration, which virtually guaranteed that operations like High Smith's would become obsolete. The centuries-old tradition of harvesting ice from frozen ponds, lakes and rivers was in the U.S. after the Civil War augmented by the development of equipment by which ice could be manufactured, regardless of season. During the 1920's, the sale of natural ice (such as that provided by Smith) declined significantly in competition with the manufactured substance. The perfection of mechanical refrigeration (cheaper, more reliable, cooler, more sanitary and convenient) during this period completed the demise of natural ice as a commercial venture. The inevitable result was to render businesses like Hugh Smith's effectively extinct.

Following Smith's bankruptcy, the ice house was used as a sales barn, skating rink, and boat storage facility. It will become a centerpiece of a proposed riverfront park, and will be outfitted as a local museum.

### 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cedar Falls City Directory, 1934

Cedar Falls Daily Record, 1 November 1921, 24 January 1922

Anderson, Oscar E. Refrigeration in America. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953.

Interview by Nancy Redfern with Hugh Eugene Smith (son of Hugh Smith), February, 1977

### **10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1, 2, 7, and 8, Block 18, Original Town Plat, Cedar Falls, Iowa

LIST ALL STATES A	ND COUNTIES FOR PROPER	TIES OVERLAPPI	NG STATE OR COUNTY BOU	NDARIES
STATE	CODE	COUNTY		CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY		CODE
<b>11</b> FORM PREPARE	ED BY			
NAME / TITLE Nancy Redi	fern, President			
ORGANIZATION			DATE	
Cedar Falls Hi	storical Society			
STREET & NUMBER			TELEPHONE	
303 Clay St	reet		······································	
CITY OR TOWN			STATE	
Cedar Falls			Iowa 50613	
12 STATE HISTOR	<b>C PRESERVATIC</b>			N
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