

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED NOV 14 1977
DATE ENTERED AUG 31 1978

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
John A. Green Estate
AND/OR COMMON
Green-Nissen Estate

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
~~Stone City~~ *vicinity of*
CITY, TOWN
Anamosa VICINITY OF
STATE Iowa CODE COUNTY Jones CODE

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<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:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
George P. Nissen
STREET & NUMBER
627 Cottage Grove SE
CITY, TOWN
Cedar Rapids VICINITY OF STATE Iowa 52403

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Jones County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN
Anamosa STATE Iowa

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
DATE
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN STATE
_FEDERAL _STATE _COUNTY _LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The John A. Green Estate at Stone City includes eight buildings and structures, all built of the limestone which came from Green's own Champion Quarries here. They consist of the ruins of the main house, several domestic and agricultural outbuildings, and the remains of several buildings associated with Green's quarry business. They are located on and around one of the hills (with the house at the top) which overlook Stone City -- once a town of 1500 people, but for many years nearly abandoned, except for some small-scale quarrying operations.

The mansion was built in 1882, and gutted by fire in 1963. In its intact form, it combined several stylistic features, and the striking use of both rock-faced ashlar and finely-dressed stone. The plan is reminiscent of the Italian palazzo, two stories with a center hall, and originally a high, hipped roof. Detail is high Victorian in the use of stone and (now gone) the front pavilion with high pointed roof which once contained a roof dormer of stone. The side bay is suggestive of Gothic, with its parapet gable. Of particular note are the fine stonework of the segmentally-arched keystone window hoods; the stone cornices; the Corinthian pilasters and columns, of indeterminate order, which rest on massive stone bases of medieval influence; and the use of the stringcourse as an integral part of the overall design.

Two nearby structures (carriage house and ice house) are constructed of stone laid so that pointed ends project sharply from the wall surface. The carriage house (1882) measures 12.9' x 20.6', with a slanted roof covered with rolled asphalt. There is a wide carriage entrance and a single window in the east wall, two windows at the south, one facing north. The ice house (1882) is somewhat larger (27.8' x 15.8'), with an asphalt-shingle gable roof into which a skylight was cut by artist Grant Wood in 1932. An interesting feature is the high eastern doorway, with quoining of very large, rock-faced stone. East and west elevations each have an oculus window in the gable end. North and south facades each have four small ventilating openings near ground level.

Also near the house is the stone base of a water tower (1899) which originally had a windmill on the top (the wooden tank is still extant). It is 28' high, of rock-faced random ashlar; very slightly oval in plan, and slightly flared at the top. The door and window openings have massive sills and lintels, and the latter have wide stone surrounds. A low stone annex at one side housed a gasoline engine, to power the pump.

The barn is a striking, three-story structure, erected on a bed of natural limestone, 50' wide, 120' long, with 30' walls. The hipped roof is 40' at the peak. It is suggestively medieval, with wide, round-arched entrances at each end, and five tapered buttresses on each side, the end buttresses being integral parts of the end walls. Each side bay contains a door flanked by narrow window openings. The east end has three floors of windows (some with glass, some louvered). The interior roof framing is wood, and the loft is supported by massive wood piers.

See continuation sheet

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John A. Green Estate, Stone City, Jones County, Iowa

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

The "Champion Quarrie's" (sic) depot and the remains of two other structures (office and blacksmith shop) associated with Green's quarrying business are located to the north and east of the barn. The depot is a small, one-story rectangular structure, with a slightly sloping flat roof, constructed of rock-faced random ashlar. The other two structures are also of stone, but only the walls remain.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1880's-1920; 1932, 1933 BUILDER/ARCHITECT John A. Green

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Green Estate at Stone City is significant in terms of architecture and art.

Both individually and together, the various buildings are very fine examples of high-quality stone masonry. In each are found features which, together, represent a broad spectrum of applications and uses. Rubble, rock-faced and dressed stone are found, as well as the unusual use of flat slabs with projecting points. Application runs from the strictly functional of foundations and walls, to well-shaped voussoirs and the fine detail of window ornament, cornice work, and columns on the main house.

During the summers of 1932 and 1933, John Green's estate (then as now owned by the Nissen family of Cedar Rapids) was the site of an art colony, established by artist Grant Wood. Wood and several colleagues leased 10 acres (which included the mansion and most of the outbuildings) for a 6-week summer course (with credit through Coe College in Cedar Rapids) which included drawing painting, lithography, and sculpture. Students and faculty (among the latter were Wood, Marvin Cone, Adrian Dornbush, Arnold Pyle, and Florence Sprague) lived in the mansion, or camped out in ice wagons brought to Stone City and gaily painted by the artists. Wood himself remodelled the old ice house as a studio, and Dornbush created a small apartment in the water tower loft. Among the many visitors who came for the Sunday "openhouses" was John Steuart Curry, who, like Grant Wood, included farms among his art subjects. No particular school of art was promulgated at the Stone City Art Colony--but it was founded on Grant Wood's philosophy that "art that loses contact with the people is lost." As a principal spokesman for "regionalism", which included both artists and writers during the 1920's and 1930's, Wood was concerned with the trend toward "cultural Nationalism", which in economics and politics, as well as in art and literature, denied the value and vitality of America's geographical, social, and cultural pluralism. His colony at Stone City, though short-lived, was an attempt to establish, within a special setting and among like-minded people, the psychological climate which would bring appreciation to both artists and visitors of the value of working with "the things they knew best": in this case, the land and people of the midwest.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Brown, Hazel E. Grant Wood and Marvin Cone. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1972.
- Garwood, Darrell. Artist in Iowa. New York: W.W. Norton, 1944.
- Hermann, Patricia B. Stone Architecture of Stone City and Waubeck, Iowa. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Iowa, 1966.
- Green, John A. "The Development of Stone City", letter to Dr. S.G. Matson, SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 35.88 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	15	6300	3200	B			
	636350	4663500					
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of SW $\frac{1}{4}$, except 4 acres in the NE corner, Section 6, Township 84 North, Range 4 West, Jones County, Iowa

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

M.H. Bowers, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Division of Historic Preservation, Iowa

STREET & NUMBER

26 East Market Street

CITY OR TOWN

Iowa City

DATE

TELEPHONE

STATE

Iowa 52240

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 D. Anderson

TITLE

Director, Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

11.7.77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

W. Matz

DATE

8/21/78

ATTEST:

Charles A. Jones

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

5.3.78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Due to financial difficulties, and to Grant Wood's increasing pre-occupation with his teaching position at the University of Iowa and his work with the Public Works of Art Project, the Stone City art colony did not open after the first two, highly successful, summers. Green's mansion, however, sheltered the arts in subsequent years, as a summer home for Paul Engle, novelist, poet, teacher, and founder of the International Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa. In 1963, sparks from one of the mansion's seven fireplaces set a fire which gutted the house. Until 1976, the Green Mansion was one of Iowa's most picturesque ruins. During the past year, work has begun on restoration and rebuilding of the mansion and outbuildings, with the intent of creating both living space and a setting for education, the arts and culture.

John A. Green (1844-1920) was one of three men whose massive quarrying operations along the Wapsipinicon River created Stone City and supplied much of the midwest with building stone for more than thirty years. Green, born in Ireland, came to the US in 1852. From 1860-70, he worked in Boston, Joliet, Ill., and Wyoming as a stonemason and letterer for monument works, the Rock Island arsenal, and the Union Pacific Railroad. Green came to Stone City in 1868, and worked in the Dearborn quarries before opening his own quarry (Champion #1) in 1869.

The extension of the Chicago, Northwestern & Pacific Railroad to Stone City in the late 1870's allowed extensive expansion of the quarries. Two quarries had been established by 1855, 4, including Green's first during the following decade. In the 1880's, five more were opened, and one more in 1894. Green's own holdings included two "Champion Quarries", one of the Buffalo River, an old state-run quarry on the Wapsipinicon, and quarries in Minnesota and Missouri.

Green appears to have been an innovative as well as a large-scale operator. In 1876 he installed a "rubber" to produce, on-site, polished blocks of stone. He is also believed to have been an early user of hydraulic power for stripping quarries, and of black powder for blasting.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Green's estate, with its monumental structures, was both the typical display of the Gilded Age self-made man, and an excellent advertisement for his business. However, he was to enjoy prosperity, and his fine house, for only about 20 years. About 1900, the growing national preference of builders for concrete and cement eclipsed the limestone industry at Stone City: the quarries, including Green's closed, and he was forced to sell his estate and extensive agricultural lands.

BIBLIOGRAPHY (cont.)

- 13 January, 1896, reprinted in Annals of Iowa (3 Ser.) Vol 20, #4 (April, 1936), pp. 304-308.
History of Jones County, Iowa. Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1879, pp. 457-8.
Corbit, R.M. (ed.) History of Jones County, Iowa. (2 Vols). Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1910. Vol.I, pp. 369-373, Vol.II, pp. 458-462.
Buck, Bob, "Stone City: A Living Ghost Town," The Iowan, 16:2 (Winter, 1967-8), pp. 33-7.
Zook, Nancy Gibbons, "Ghosts along the Wapsipinicon," The Iowan, 3:1 (October-November, 1954), pp. 24-9, 38, 47.
John A. Green obituary, Annals of Iowa (3 Ser.) Vol. 12, #7 (January 1921), pp. 552-3.
Condit, Carl W. American Building. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, pp. 158-160.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

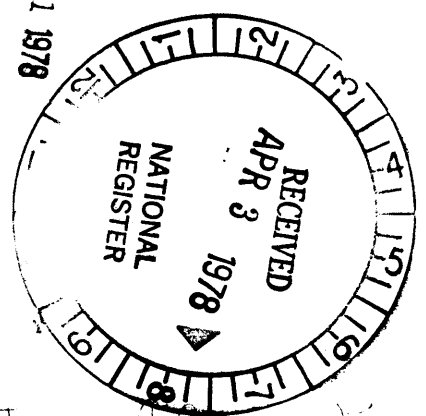
ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

Verbal Boundary Description (supercedes description on 10-300):

NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ except commencing at a point 140' south and 30' west of the center of Section 6; thence south 70'; thence west 135'; thence north 70'; thence east 135' to point of beginning; the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$; that part of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ lying south and east of the railroad right-of-way across said 40 acre tract; that part of Lot 5 lying south and east of the railroad right-of-way across said lot, excepting from the above Lots 1 and 2 of Power Place as shown by plat of survey of record in Irregular Plat Book One, p. 82, described as follows: Commencing 38' north of the center of Section 6; thence west 400'; thence south 150'; thence west 250'; thence north 333'; thence east 650'; thence south 183' to point of beginning; except SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ and that part of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ lying south and east of the right-of-way of the railroad; all of said premisses being in Section 6, T84N R4W of the 5th P.M. subject to public highway.

Acreage: approx. 35.88 acres

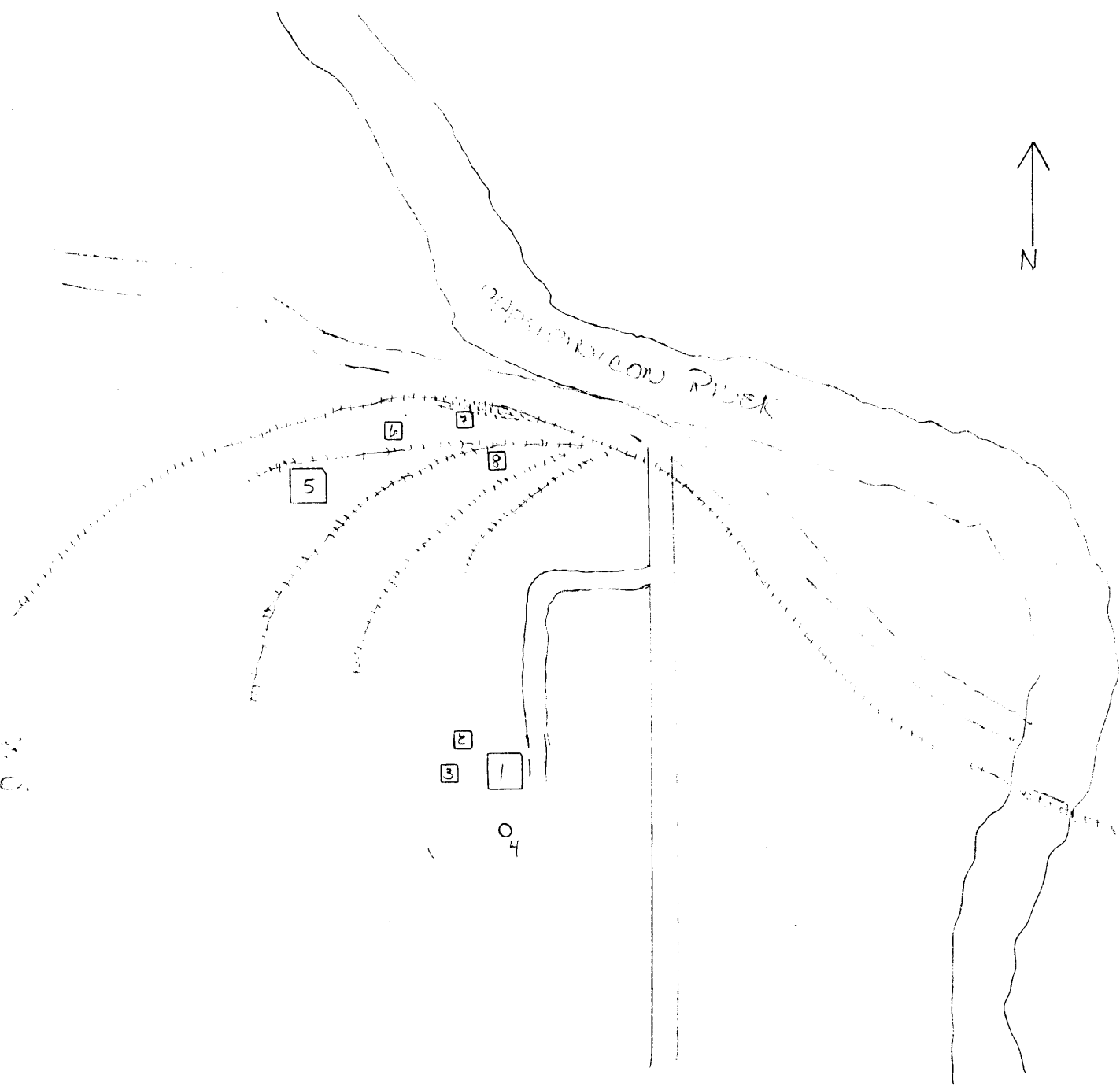
AUG 31 1978



JOHN A. SWEET'S ESTATE
 STONE CITY, JONES CO.
 IOWA

- 1 - MANSION
- 2 - ICE HOUSE
- 3 - CARRIAGE HOUSE
- 4 - WATER TOWER
- 5 - BARN
- 6 - BLACKSMITH
- 7 - DEPOT
- 8 - QUARRY OFFICE

NOT TO SCALE



Barn

Blacksmith Shop (not visible)

Depot

Quarry Office

John A. Green Estate
Stone City, Jones County, Iowa



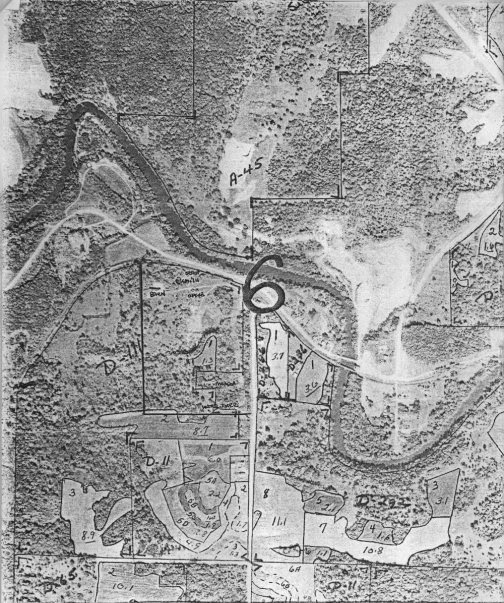
Ice House

Mansion

Carriage House

Water Tower

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6

Jones Crop Year

A-8
Green Estate