

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Chief Justice Joseph M. Beck House
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 630 Avenue E N/A not for publication
city, town Fort Madison N/A vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Lee code IA 111 zip code 52627

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.
James S. Jand SHPO June 13, 1988
Signature of certifying official Date
Bureau of Historic Preservation, 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.
Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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:) _____
Michael Byrum 7-21-88
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Gothic

Italianate

Romanesque

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/Limestone

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See Continuation Sheet, Section number 7, Page 2

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Law
Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1859-1893

Significant Dates

1873
1883

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Beck, Joseph M.

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See Continuation Sheet, Section number 8, Page 2

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet, Section number 9, Page 2

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

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Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	5	6	4	3	0	0	0	4	4	9	9	1	5	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 609 and West One-half of Lot 608 in the City of Fort Madison, Lee County, Iowa.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lot that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lowell Soike, Historian (research/writing: David/Sheila Sallen & W. Page
organization State Historical Society of Iowa date February 29, 1988
street & number Capitol Complex telephone (515) 281-3306
city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50319

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The two-story house occupies a corner lot 75 feet wide by 145 feet in length in a residential section of Fort Madison. Situated on a level, neatly landscaped, lot approximately two blocks north of the downtown area and one-half block southwest of the Lee County Courthouse, the house rests amidst various Victorian era houses.

Architecturally, the house reflects local brickbuilding traditions with strong secondary stylistic influences. Distinguishing elements include the high pitch of the north facade gable, elaborate verge boards, cornice brackets and bay window. Together these stylistic aspects represent a mix of Gothic and Italianate influences reminiscent of what one might encounter in a A. J. Downing patternbook.

Joseph H. Beck had the house constructed for himself and his family and he lived there from about 1869 to his death in 1893. His law practice was located in a small building on the grounds of his house. This office is non-extant. In its place to the rear of the residence near the alley is a detached apartment/garage unit. This later built unit is considered to be "non-contributing." Sanborn fire insurance maps also indicate that for a number of years a greenhouse with glass roof was situated east of the house and a 1 1/2 story barn stood on the south property line abutting the alley. By 1894 the greenhouse was non-extant and the barn with its wood house and additions no longer existed by 1919.

Alterations to the exterior of the house have been minimal. Built of red brick on a stone foundation, the exterior has been painted in the same hue as its original surface. The interior of the house was modified somewhat in 1937 in accord with plans designed by T. W. Arnold. At that time the wood floors on each of the four outside porches were removed and replaced with concrete.

The interior, as revealed in the 1937 plans, shows changes to have been incidental. The hand-carved wooden stairway just off the reception room dominates the building's plan. Marble fireplaces in the first floor reception room, first floor dining room, and first floor living room remain as they were originally without alteration. Ceilings on the first floor are 12 feet high except for the kitchen in the rear which is 9 foot 9 inches high. The ceilings on the second floor are 9 foot 9 inches high except for the rear bedroom which has a ceiling height of 8 feet.

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Since its construction, the residence has always been used as a single family dwelling. From 1859 to 1937 the property remained in the Beck family. Ownership then passed to the Napier family of Fort Madison during the years from 1937 until 1981 at which time Mrs. Jane Young, the current owner, purchased the property.

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During the decades following the Civil War, two issues achieved special prominence in Iowa politics--black equality and liquor prohibition--each of which in its time became a leading test of Republicanism. In his twenty-four years as justice and five years as Chief Justice of the Iowa Supreme Court, Joseph M. Beck figured importantly in both of these series of events that shaped the direction of Iowa judicial and political history.

The question of equal access to social accommodations and voting rights for Black people loomed large in Iowa's postwar years political discussions. The election campaign of 1868, for instance, was dominated by the struggle over ratification of the Negro Suffrage Amendment. In adopting the amendment, Iowa stood in sharp contrast to the fourteen states in the north that rejected such a suffrage extension between 1865 and 1870. Justice Beck, elected one year earlier to the Iowa Supreme Court, had in earlier years been an ardent anti-slavery Whig before becoming a Republican. In five of the six cases relating to the civil rights of Negroes in Iowa before 1884 (when the "Civil Rights Act" was passed), Justice Beck supported the case for Black civil rights. The most noteworthy case, one in which Judge Beck wrote the unanimous majority opinion, was Coger v. The Northwest Union Packet Company (1873). The case arose when a teacher of colored children at Quincy, Illinois had refused to accept separate accommodations on a Mississippi packet steamboat operating between Keokuk and Quincy. After being forcibly removed from her place at a table in the ladies cabin upon her refusal to be served in the pantry, she brought suit against the boat company for assault and battery. When the Lee County District Court held the company liable, the company then appealed the decision to the supreme court. In the opinion rendered by Justice Beck, the court held that "Under the laws and constitutional amendments of the state and federal government a person of color is entitled to the same rights and privileges while traveling [on a common carrier], as a white person is, and can not be required by any rule or custom based on distinction of color or race, to accept other or different accommodations than those furnished to white persons." This decision, based in part on the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1866, has been subsequently described by one legal historian as "a leading case in Iowa involving the equality in civil rights."

Of equal significance was Justice Beck's association with turbulent events surrounding the prohibition issue. Prohibition and temperance sentiment came to be one, perhaps the leading,

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test of Republicanism during the late nineteenth century. Although this social movement became a continual embarrassment to many and weakened party strength, influential "progressive" Republican elements succeeded in keeping the issue alive and in the forefront of reform causes. Of the various leading events that brought the issue to the center of public attention, the most prominent struggle surrounded the proposed 1882 prohibition amendment to the Iowa Constitution. After its enactment by a referendum vote of the people, the State Supreme Court "stunned the people and the politicians of Iowa" in January of 1883 when it struck down the amendment on trivial grounds that its passage had not followed proper enactment procedure.

The lone dissenting vote was Justice Joseph M. Beck. In a lengthy dissenting opinion, he argued that "the ultimate and authoritative expression of the legislative will" had been complied with in the wording of the proposed amendment. His stance quickly brought him statewide fame, endearing him to the outraged prohibition forces while incensing their opponents. In the storms of protest that followed, Cyrenus Cole writes, "the four judges were denounced and execrated. None of them was reelected, while Judge Beck became a popular idol of the temperance people." The event reverberated through the succeeding election campaigns of 1883, 1884 and 1885 by making the central issue Republican promises to enact prohibitory legislation.

With respect to Joseph Beck's overall contributions to Iowa law, we quote from an assessment of the man by Edward Stiles in his Recollections and Sketches of Notable Lawyers and Public Men of Early Iowa, First and Second Generations (1916). Judge Beck

became known through the State for his legal learning and thoroughness. These qualities coupled with his high character and spotless integrity caused him to be pointed to and chosen as one of the Judges of that [Iowa Supreme] Court. In his professional labors at the Bar, he had given special attention to questions affecting the title of real estate, domestic relations and common carriers, and during his continuous service of twenty-four years on the bench, he became an authority on those questions. His term was longer than that of any other judge who has occupied a seat on that bench, and his decisions run through sixty-two volumes of Iowa Reports. The length of this service furnishes in itself convincing evidence of his ability as a jurist and the great

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confidence reposed in him by the people. His decisions cover perhaps the most important period of the State, and they will stand as perpetual memorials of his learning, ability and worth.

Justice Beck also achieved considerable stature in local affairs. He moved to Fort Madison in 1850 and soon became one of her more prominent citizens. Elected both Mayor and prosecuting attorney in 1852, Beck participated in the organization of the Republican party. He helped organize the first Baptist Church in Fort Madison and was for many years Superintendent of the Sabbath-school of his church. Judge Beck also organized the prison Sabbath-school of the Iowa Penitentiary at Fort Madison and served as its Superintendent for fourteen years. Financially, Justice Beck proved to be a shrewd businessman. He became one of the original incorporators of the First National Bank and also its Director, and was president of the Fort Madison branch of the State Bank as well. Joseph Beck also acively concerned himself with local railroad development, being the impetus for building the Fort Madison, Farmington and Western Railroad Company.

The extensive law library of abstracts and arguments of Judge Beck has been given by his children to the College of Law, State University of Iowa. The Beck donation forms an important part of that institution's collection, and the Beck books are in constant use by law students.

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PRIMARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS:

- Andreas, A. T. History and Atlas of Lee County, Iowa. Chicago, 1873. Hon. J. M. Beck biographical sketch on p. 39.
- Beck, Justice Joseph M. "Coger v. The North West Union Packet Co." Iowa Supreme Court decision; December Term, 1873; contained in: Reports of Cases in Law and Equity determined in the Supreme Court of the State of Iowa ("Iowa Reports"). Ottumwa, Ia.: Privately printed, 1875, pp. 145-160.
- Biographical Review of Lee County, Iowa. Chicago: Hobart Publishing Co., 1905. Typewritten MS attached by paste in State Historical Society Library (Des Moines) copy lists W. J. R. Beck as member of Iowa's First Judicial District.
- The History of Lee County, Iowa. Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1879, pp. 225, 542, 547, 555, 597, 606, 610, 726. Contains a lithographic portrait of Beck on p. 279.
- Koehler & Lange vs. Hill." Iowa Supreme Court decision; April Term 1883; contained in: Reports of Cases in Law and Equity determined in the Supreme Court of the State of Iowa ("Iowa Reports") Volume 60, pp. 543-704.
- Portrait and Biographical Album of Lee County, Iowa. Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1887. Hon. J. M. Beck biographical sketch on pp. 518, 521.
- Sloat, Ted. Fort Madison: A Pictorial History. St. Louis, Mo.: G. Bradley Publishing, Inc., 1987, p. 25.

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NEWSPAPERS:

"Called To The Highest Court/Sudden Death of Ex-Judge, of the Iowa Supreme Court . . . Short Sketch of His Career on the Iowa Bench and as a Leader in Western Affairs," Des Moines Iowa State Register, May 31, 1893, p. 1, c. 6. Front page coverage indicates Beck's prominence in the state.

"The Last of Earth," Keokuk Daily Gate City, Jun. 2, 1893, p. 5, c. 3. Contains resolution of Lee County Bar eulogizing Beck.

"Life's Candle Out," Keokuk Daily Gate City, May 31, 1893, p. 1, c. 1. Front page coverage indicates Beck's prominence in Lee County.

MAP SOURCES:

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, New York, Dated as follows:

1884 (Page 5) (first map): Shows dwelling as it is today at 609 - 4th Street (name later changed to Avenue E). 1-story office at 609 1/2 - 4th Street (southwest corner of property) with porch on west. Greenhouse 2-glass roof east of house. 1 1/2 - story barn on south property line abutting alley with 1-story wood house abutting barn on west. Shed east of barn.

1889 (Page 6): House same as in 1884. Office now has wrap-around porch on north and west and corner entry at northwest. Wood house now has small addition at north. Barn now has small, 1-story addition at southeast corner with porch abutting. Shed is non-extant. Greenhouse same as in 1884.

1894 (Page 6): House and Office same as in 1889. Barn's east porch non-extant. Greenhouse non-extant.

1900 (Page 6): House and office same as in 1894. Barn has small, 1-story addition west of addition at northeast corner.

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1907 (Page 16): House and office same as in 1900. Office listed as 314 Pine Street (later changed to 7th Street). Barn's small addition north of wood house non-extant. Small addition at southeast corner of barn non-extant. Small additions north of barn either replaced or absorbed by full length, 1-story addition.

1913 (Page 17): All buildings same as in 1907.

1919 (Page 10): House and office same as in 1913. Barn, wood house, and all additions to them non-extant. 1-story structure now stands on spot.

1926 (Page 4): House and 1-story structure same as in 1919. Office now styled "S"[tore] with small addition at north.

Andreas, A. T. History and Atlas of Lee County, Iowa (1873), Map of Madison Township.

OTHER:

Abstract of Title. Property Jane B. Young, Fort Madison, Iowa.

"Constitution and By-Laws of the Fort Madison Library Association with a Historical Sketch," Fort Madison: Privately printed, 1873. Hon. J. M. Beck listed as 1 of 6 on Board of Directors.

SECONDARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS:

Clark, Dan Elbert. "The History of Liquor Legislation in Iowa, 1878-1908," Iowa Journal of History and Politics, 6:4 (October 1908), 503-609.

Cole, Cyrenus. A History of the People of Iowa. Cedar Rapids: The Torch Press, 1921, pp. 421-423.

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- Dykstra, Robert R. "Iowa: 'Bright Radical Star'," in James C. Mohr, ed., Radical Republicans in the North: State Politics during Reconstruction. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, pp. 167-193.
- Faville, Frederick F., Moore, C. Edwin, and Faupel, Wayne A. Justices of the Supreme Court of Iowa (1838-1979). A thumbnail sketch of career of each Justice. Joseph M. Beck's (p. 16) cites Cogger vs. The North West. Packet Co. as "a leading case" in Iowa civil rights law.
- Jensen, Richard J. The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict, 1888-1896. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971, chap. 4.
- Parish, John C. "An Early Fugitive Slave Case West of the Mississippi River," Iowa Journal of History and Politics 6 (January 1908), pp. 88-95.
- Peterson, William J. The Story of Iowa. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1952, Vol. 2, pp. 830-844.
- Sage, Leland L. A History of Iowa Ames, Ia.: Iowa State University Press, 1974, pp. 66-70.
- Stiles, Edward H. Recollections and Sketches of Notable Lawyers and Public Men of Early Iowa, First and Second Generations. Des Moines: Des Moines Homestead Publishing Co., 1916, pp. 330-334.
- Story of Lee County, Iowa. Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1914, 2 vols: Vol. 1, "The Bench and Bar," pp. 296-303; Vol. 2 is biographical but without a sketch of Beck.
- Swisher, Jacob A. "The Case of Ralph," Palimpsest 7 (February 1926), 33-43.

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ORAL SOURCES:

Informant Interview. Mildred Virginia Coppage with W. C. Page, May 26, 1987. Ms. Coppage shared information about Beck's Siding (CB&Q railroad spur) and Beck's Farm in Jefferson Township, Lee County.

Informant Interview. John Hansman with W. C. Page, May 26, 1987. Dr. Hansman possesses several antique photographs of the Judge Beck house interior. Hansman has also collected information about the house and says it was constructed 1859/60 and occupied July 4, 1860.

Informant Interview. M. B. Werner with W. C. Page, May 26, 1987. Ms. Werner shared information about Harriet Connor Brown ("Grandmother Brown's Hundred Years 1827-1927") and Fort Madison society.