

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received DEC 27 1982
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Hotel Mealey

and/or common Hotel Iowan

2. Location

street & number 10 2 South Frederick Ave, not for publication

city, town Oelwein vicinity of

state Iowa code 19 county Fayette code 065

3. 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" 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:

4. Owner of Property

name Mealey Associate Partnership

street & number 340 East Wisconsin

city, town Lake Forest vicinity of state Illinois 60045

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Fayette County Courthouse

street & number

city, town West Union state Iowa 52175

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title n/a has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" 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 Hotel Mealey (1896-8) is a well designed and intact example of an elegant midwestern railroad center hotel building. The building combines hotel and commercial uses, and represents by its physical evolution a successful adaptation to changing hotel tastes and to a changing local economy. Described as "...a building of architectural beauty" just prior to its completion, the building filled a long felt and growing need to have "... more commodious hotel accomodations."

This four story brick building is square on plan (100' square) on the first floor and "U" on plan above that level, the Frederick (east or front side) wing being both slightly broader and longer than is the rear (west) wing. An open courtyard with southern exposure is three stories in height and separates the wings. Skylights in this inner courtyard lighted the hotel office, while courtyard windows provided natural light for each of the hotel's original seventy rooms. The structural system combines cast iron columns with interior and exterior load bearing walls. Exterior brickwork is of pressed brick, laid in running bond. Stone and galvanized iron are used to ornament the exterior. Yellow pine and antique oak were used for the interior woodwork.

The hotel's first floor provided commercial space for three storefronts. These flank the main South Frederick Street entrance and anchor the S.E. First Street side of the hotel. The storefront at the northeast corner featured a chamfered corner entrance with a cast iron column with capital for structural support. The main hotel entrance featured three stone segmental arches supported by cast iron columns, with corbelled brickwork that forms quoins on flanking pilasters. These same pilasters define the edges of a three story projecting pavilion which is highlighted by a second story palladian design and a pedimented parapet with nameplate above the top floor. An identical second floor palladian theme and pedimented parapet was centered on the north face without a projecting pavilion. A heavy projecting cornice originally separated the first and second floors, and a dentilated cornice traced the roofline base along the roofline parapet. Heavy stone lintels and thin stone sills define each window. Third floor fenestration is not consistently alligned with that of the second floor, but is alligned with the fourth floor fenestration.

The hotel employed electricity on a large scale, including over night display window lights, boasted an elevator as well as a private stairway for those ladies who wished to by-pass the hotel office in order to reach their accomodations. This latter feature was important in an age when the railroad hotel was primarily a "man's world", being frequented by salesmen and strangers in general.

Major alterations are limited to the addition of a fourth floor in 1916 and to the expected first floor modernization of storefronts. The replacement parapet wall has inlaid brick panel designs which match those on the new floor. A replacement pedimented parapet is incorporated into the parapet proper with a similar nameplate and a concrete coping. Recent restoration efforts have removed the modern marquee and brick veneer which had hidden the original entry way arches and a string course which separated the first and second floors. Two fires, in 1916 and 1933 caused damage on the fourth floor. When first built, the hotel was located in a residential area, in close proximity to the railroad yards, the Winders Opera House, and the original business area to the immediate north.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input 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 1898 **Builder/Architect** Marvel & DeMoney, Chicago (Architects)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Hotel Mealey is a well preserved and elegantly appointed late 19th Century architectural work. Its construction, design and scale were directly linked with the growth of Oelwein that resulted when the "largest railshops west of the Mississippi" were constructed beginning in 1894.

The town of Oelwein was founded in the 1870's in conjunction with the coming of the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Minnesota Railroad. The Minnesota and Northwestern Railroad (later the Chicago, St. Paul & Kansas City Railroad in 1887, and the Chicago Great Northwestern Railroad after 1892) reached Oelwein in 1886 and had its main shops in South Park, Minnesota. Because of its rapid growth the company was increasingly in need of locating centralized shops to serve its far flung service area. The economic panic of 1893 along with a fear of organized labor's strength in the major issues forced the issue. In that same year the company rebuilt its Oelwein roundhouse and relocated several managerial offices to that town. An agreement was made in 1894 with the town of Oelwein that land and \$200,000 would be given to the company to defray the costs of the move and new construction. The community organized the Oelwein Land Company which purchased, platted and sold three subdivisions in order to raise the funds. The railroad facilitated the speculative nature of these local activities by beginning grading operations in June 1894. The actual dedication of the shops was to take place on September 28, 1899, fully five years after the original agreement was reached.

The shop location decision triggered a local building boom in Oelwein and the construction of the Hotel Mealey highlighted the busiest construction year (1897) yet experienced by the town. That year saw the completion of twenty five new homes and four commercial buildings along with a \$90,000 expenditure by the railroad. The hotel construction came about when Oelwein citizens approached Michael Mealey, a wealthy Irish-born St. Paul businessman, and father of James Mealey, an Oelwein merchant, and convinced the senior Mealey to build a hotel in Oelwein. A small locally generated bonus expedited the plan. The architects were Marvel and DeMoney of Chicago. Mr. Thomas Fitzpatrick, "a contractor of note" of St. Paul was given the contract for the \$35,000 building job. Work began in July 1896. O. A. Cummings, long time manager of the Union House (which was described as being "Oelwein's leading home for the traveling public."), considered "one of the most experienced landlords in the state" was the first manager of the Hotel Mealey (1898–1906). James Mealey first managed the corner dry goods firm at the hotel. As the hotel dedication neared, the local newspaper noted "There is not a vacant store building in the city, and the demand for residences far exceeds the supply notwithstanding the erection of many new ones the past season." The dedication on February 21, 1898 drew railroad officials, local community leaders and representatives from throughout Northeastern Iowa. The occasion was both a building dedication and an acknowledgement of the railroad's role in promoting city growth. President A. B. Stickley here first indicated publicly that in 1898 alone the railroad would build seven shop buildings adding four hundred new jobs and producing a total railroad yearly payroll of half a million dollars. Thirty years of sustained railroad expansion would follow. The expansion of the Hotel Mealey in 1916 would parallel this growth.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property ~~less than an acre~~

Quadrangle name Oelwein

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

UTM References

A

1	5	5	8	9	0	1	0	4	7	2	5	2	9	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B

Zone		Easting						Northing						

C

Zone		Easting						Northing						

D

Zone		Easting						Northing						

E

Zone		Easting						Northing						

F

Zone		Easting						Northing						

G

Zone		Easting						Northing						

H

Zone		Easting						Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 1,2 3 & 4, Block 3, Oelwein's Addition to Oelwein.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state Iowa code 19 county Fayette code 065

state _____ code _____ county _____ code _____

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator

organization Iowa SHPO date 14 December 1982

street & number Historical Building East 12th and Grand Ave. telephone 515-281-4137

city or town Des Moines state Iowa 50309

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 S. Anderson

title Executive Director Iowa State Historical Department date 24 November 1982

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
Entered in the
National Register

J. Melvyn Byers
Keeper of the National Register

date 1/27/83

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet Description

Item number 7

Page 2



Line Drawing of Renovation That Represents Current Appearance of Hotel Mealey

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet Significance

Item number 8

Page 2

The Hotel Mealey, enjoying the good times, would add a floor in 1916. Managers included C. B. Miller, G. W. Weaver (in 1907), and Ed Boss, the latter of whom operated a chain of fifteen midwestern hotels by 1920. The Boss chain operated the Mealey until 1969. The Hotel Mealey survived the demise of the small town hotel industry but finally yielded to the decline of railroad fortunes. In 1964 the Chicago Great Western and Northwestern Railroads merged and a gradual withdrawal of operations from Elwein resulted, culminating in the cancellation of an ongoing major hotel lease in 1980, which resulted in the closing of the hotel. Last known as the Hotel Iowan, plans were almost immediately formulated to remodel and restore the building for commercial and residential uses.

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Continuation sheet Bibliography

Item number 9

Page 1

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