

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PHO 688 274

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 20 1978
DATE ENTERED	DEC 23 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

Washington Township Center High School

AND/OR COMMON

Washington Township Community Center

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

NE of Road

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Katona Road, vic. X VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Iowa

CODE

COUNTY

Johnson

CODE

103

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

__DISTRICT

X PUBLIC

__OCCUPIED

__AGRICULTURE

__MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

__PRIVATE

__UNOCCUPIED

__COMMERCIAL

__PARK

__STRUCTURE

__BOTH

X WORK IN PROGRESS

__EDUCATIONAL

__PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

__ENTERTAINMENT

__RELIGIOUS

__OBJECT

__IN PROCESS

__YES: RESTRICTED

__GOVERNMENT

__SCIENTIFIC

__BEING CONSIDERED

X YES: UNRESTRICTED

__INDUSTRIAL

__TRANSPORTATION

__NO

__MILITARY

X OTHER: community center

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Washington Township Community Center, Inc. c/o Raymond Troyer

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Parnell

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Iowa 52325

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Johnson County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Clinton and Court Streets

CITY, TOWN

Iowa City

STATE

Iowa

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input 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

Washington Township Center High School is located in a rural area of Johnson County. The environment is gently-rolling, cultivated land, with an occasional farmstead. The school is situated at the crossing of two gravel county roads; across the road to the west, within a windbreak of pines, is a building once used as the local elementary school

The former high school building, erected in 1926, is a boxy frame structure, 51' x 36', one story, on a high, poured concrete foundation. It has a high, hipped roof with broad eaves. Sash windows are set in plain surrounds, beneath transom panels of 3 vertical lights. The windows are grouped in three banks of three on the north side, and are individually-placed on the other facades.

The entrance is set within a slightly-protruding, hipped-roof pavilion. The door is framed by sidelights and has a multi-light transom with vertical panes. Between the entrance and the bank of three small sash windows set close beneath the eaves is a faded wooden sign with the name of the school and date of construction.

The basement of the school is rather unfinished, but is partitioned into two large rooms. These once housed classes in home economics, physics, chemistry and wood-working. Evidence of the latter is a wooden panel with silhouettes where tools were to be properly hung. The main floor contains classrooms on the northwest, southwest and southeast corners. The bulk of the floor space is taken up by a large study hall/auditorium, 36' long and 24' wide. A portable stage once used here is now gone, but the curtain, on which is painted a mountain scene and advertisements from local businesses of the period, remains.

Although the school closed in 1945, the building has seen continuous use as a community center for rural area residents. It is now undergoing rehabilitation by the local chapter of Optimists International.

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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" 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 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

1926

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Washington Township Center High School represents an unusual facet in the history of rural public education in Iowa. Erected and maintained solely through donations and tuition paid by township residents, it was in that sense a throwback to the early days of public education in the state. On the other hand, the school represented the growing awareness among rural people of the importance of schooling beyond the traditional eighth-grade level. The school was a response to a combination of needs and concerns involving educational opportunity for farm children, inadequate roads and methods of transportation, and the rural inhabitant's common misgivings about the life and atmosphere of "the city".

The earliest public high schools in Iowa were generally located in towns and cities, with the majority of their students drawn from these communities. Participation of students from rural, farming areas was often limited, due to the distance they were required to travel over bad roads, and/or to a feeling among rural people that education beyond the eighth grade was an unnecessary luxury for young men and women destined to follow their parents' footsteps as farmers and farm wives and mothers. The innate suspicion of the country man for the city dweller also biased some rural parents against sending their children alone to school in town.

The inhabitants of Washington Township in the 1920's were generally in agreement with their farming counterparts in other areas of Iowa on the problems of distance and urban life, particularly with respect to the education of their children. However, they recognized the need for education beyond the traditional elementary-school level, as life in the 20th century became more complex and educational standards rose. Their response was the establishment of Washington Township Center High School, which opened in 1926. In establishing the school, these people reverted to a tradition common in 19th century Iowa, in which "public" schools, generally of the one-room sort, were built, funded, and supervised by the local inhabitants, deriving from subscriptions, contributions and a nominal tuition fee the means to maintain the building and pay the teachers. Appropriately, the new high school was located across the road from the township's elementary school, in the extreme southwest corner of Section 15, which was almost the exact center of the township. The high school served the community for 19 years, offering a varied curriculum which included "basics" such as English, mathematics, and history, as well as home economics, woodworking and the sciences. The building also was a community center, where an annual "fall festival" combined "open house" at school with a local fair featuring baked and canned goods, piecwork, and agricultural products. This use of the building as a community center continued after the school closed in 1945: it was used for several years thereafter as a polling place, and in 1952 as a meeting house for the local 4-H chapter. About 1960, a corporation was formed of township residents to maintain the building as a place for public functions. On maps today, the crossroads

see continuation sheet

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Peterson, William J. The Story of Iowa. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1952, Vol. II, pp. 848, 860, 865.
 "History of Center High School". MS compiled from volumes of the "Centerika", the Washington Township Center High School annual yearbook, by Clifford Hess, a member of the school's first graduating class (1928) and life-long resident of the area. Copy on file at Division of Historic Preservation, Iowa City, Iowa.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY one acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Amish, Iowa

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 602580 4600940

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Commencing at the SW corner of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 15, T78 R8, thence north 16 rods, thence east 10 rods, thence south 16 rods, thence west 10 rods to place of beginning.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

M.H. Bowers, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

November 1978

STREET & NUMBER

26 East Market Street

TELEPHONE

319/353-6949

CITY OR TOWN

Iowa City

STATE

Iowa 52240

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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

11/13/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

William H. Brauman

DATE

12/29/78

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

William H. Brauman
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

12-29-78

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Washington Township Center High School, Johnson County, Iowa

CONTINUATION SHEET

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where the school is located is called "Townhall", and the building continues to function as such for its rural constituency today.