

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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JUN 18 1993

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Voltaire Twombly Building
other names/site number Old Post Office

2. Location

street & number 803 First Street not for publication
city or town Keosauqua vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Van Buren code 177 zip code 52565

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant personally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
[Signature] 6/10/93
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State Historical Society of Iowa
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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:)

Signature of the Keeper Patrick Andrews Date of Action 7/29/93

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
_____	_____	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/Department Store

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE/Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th Century:

Other

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

walls Limestone

roof Metal

other Iron storefront

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
[X] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

c.1875

Significant Dates

c.1875

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N.A.

Cultural Affiliation

N.A.

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
[X] Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

UTM grid 1: Zone 15, Easting 587720, Northing 4509210

UTM grid 3: Zone, Easting, Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Molly Myers Naumann, Consultant (515) 682-2743
organization Van Buren County Historical Society date January 1993
street & number C/O Hugh McCoy, 804 First Street telephone (319) 293-3752
city or town Keosauqua state IA zip code 52565

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Van Buren County Historical Society
street & number C/O Hugh McCoy, 804 First Street telephone (319) 293-3752
city or town Keosauqua state IA zip code 52565

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1

CFN-259-1116

Voltaire Twombly Building
Van Buren County, Iowa

Description:

The Voltaire Twombly Building (c.1875) is located on the north corner (nothing is laid out to cardinal points in the city) of Cass and First streets in the Keosauqua business district, one block from the Des Moines River. It is a two story rectangular gable roof building of limestone construction measuring 50'3" by 25'3". The entrance is located on the narrow gable end facing First Street. An enclosed exterior wooden staircase, 3'8" wide on the northeast elevation, leads to the second floor.

Resting on a stone watertable, the walls of the building are of quarried limestone blocks of varied sizes, all with a rusticated surface. The largest blocks (approximately 10" high by 18" wide by 8" deep) are used as quoins at all four corners. Stonework on the facade is comprised of medium size blocks, while those on the sides and rear vary greatly but are fairly small ranging from 2" to 5" high, and from 6" to 15" long. While limestone sills are used for all windows, the treatment at the top varies. The original windows located on the second floor of the facade and southwest elevation feature very simple segmental arches, while those which were added later have heavy timber lintels. Windows throughout have 4/4 double hung sash.

A photograph from 1912 shows the First Street facade with the cast iron storefront that exists today. The entrance is symmetrically placed and is recessed 3'5" from the sidewalk. It is flanked by large plate glass display windows measuring 8'3" wide by 7'6" high. 14" wooden panels are located below these windows, and a three light transom area is located above each. Simple iron columns (12'11") support the horizontal iron beam. There appears to have been minimal alteration to this facade.

The northeast elevation features one window on the first floor approximately in the middle of the wall, and on the second floor there is one window toward the front of the building, a door opening off the stairway, and a very small window near the rear of the building. The stonework around the front window and the use of a heavy timber lintel indicate that it may be a later addition. The rear of the building (the northwest elevation) contains no openings of any kind. The secondary facade along Cass Street, southwest elevation, features four windows at the second story level, and a window and door at street level. Three of the second floor windows are symmetrically arranged in the rear half, while the fourth is located near the front of the building. The stonework around it is similar to that around the front window on the opposite wall and it also has a timber lintel. The window at street level is located directly below one of the second floor windows and features the same type of timber lintel and stonework. The windows with the timber lintels are not shown in the 1912 photograph. It appears that all three of these windows were added sometime after that date. The door at street level is located near the rear of the building and features the same type of segmental arches found on the facade windows.

The historic photograph shows two brick chimneys, both of which have been removed, but the one on the southwest elevation has been replaced by a metal flue. The

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**Voltaire Twombly Building
Van Buren County, Iowa**

Description (continued):

original roofing material has not been determined, but the seamed metal roof has been in place for decades. While the 1912 photo shows the fire bell and tower, this was not shown in the 1883 Sanborn. The tower is not actually located on this lot and is not included in the nomination.

On the interior, the first floor features a 14' ceiling and was originally one large open space. There is no original woodwork of note, and little or no original plaster remaining. The major interior alteration has been the creation of a bathroom in the north corner and an enclosed office space just inside the side door. The walls creating this space can be considered temporary and removable. There is no interior access to the second floor. The second floor was remodeled in the 1940s by the Soil Conservation Service Office. It features two offices at the front of the building, and it may have been at this time that the new windows were added. A bathroom has also been added at the north corner of this floor. There is a full basement with dirt floor under the building.

The integrity of this commercial building, particularly on the exterior, has been maintained at a very high level.

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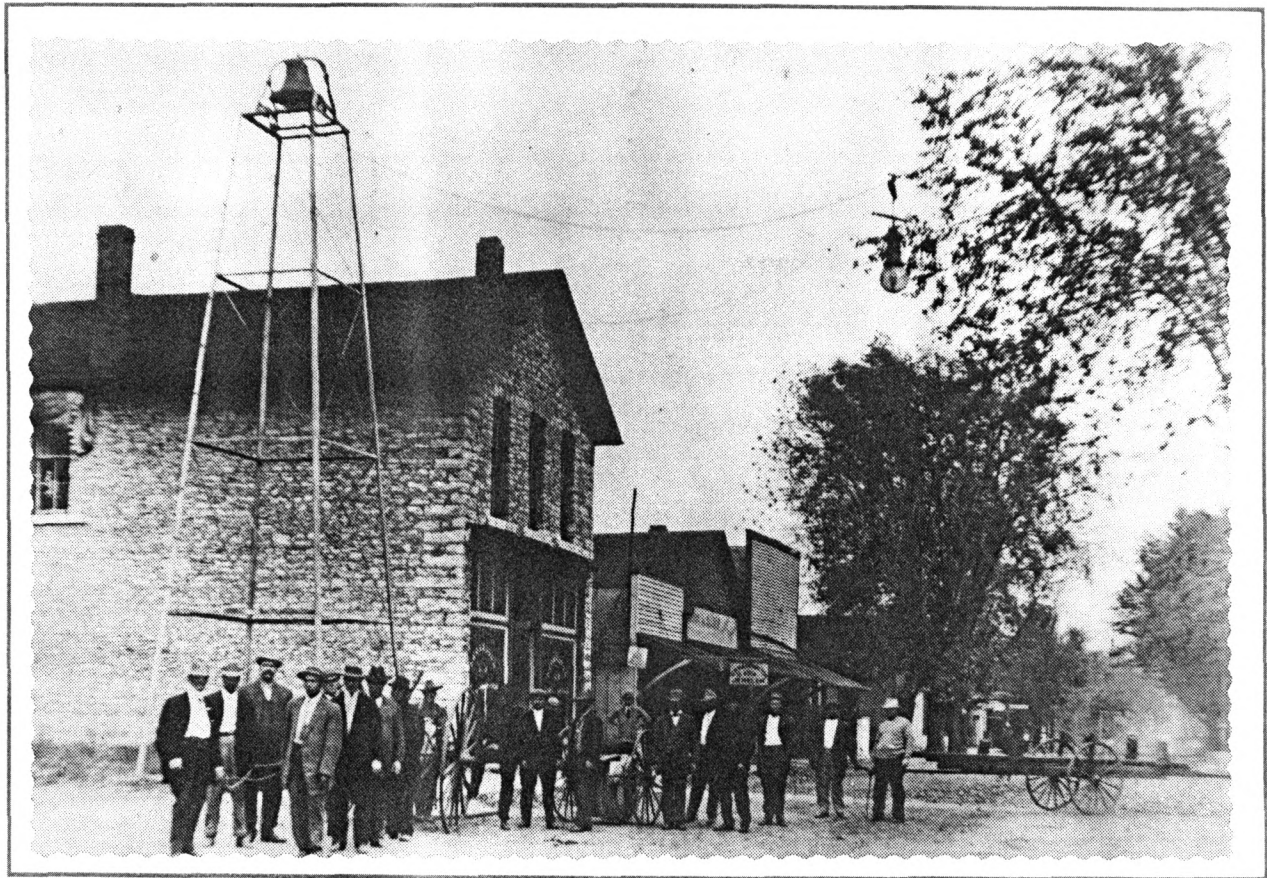
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Voltaire Twombly Building
Van Buren County, Iowa

Description (continued):



1912 photograph, Keosquaua Fire Department in front of Twombly Building.

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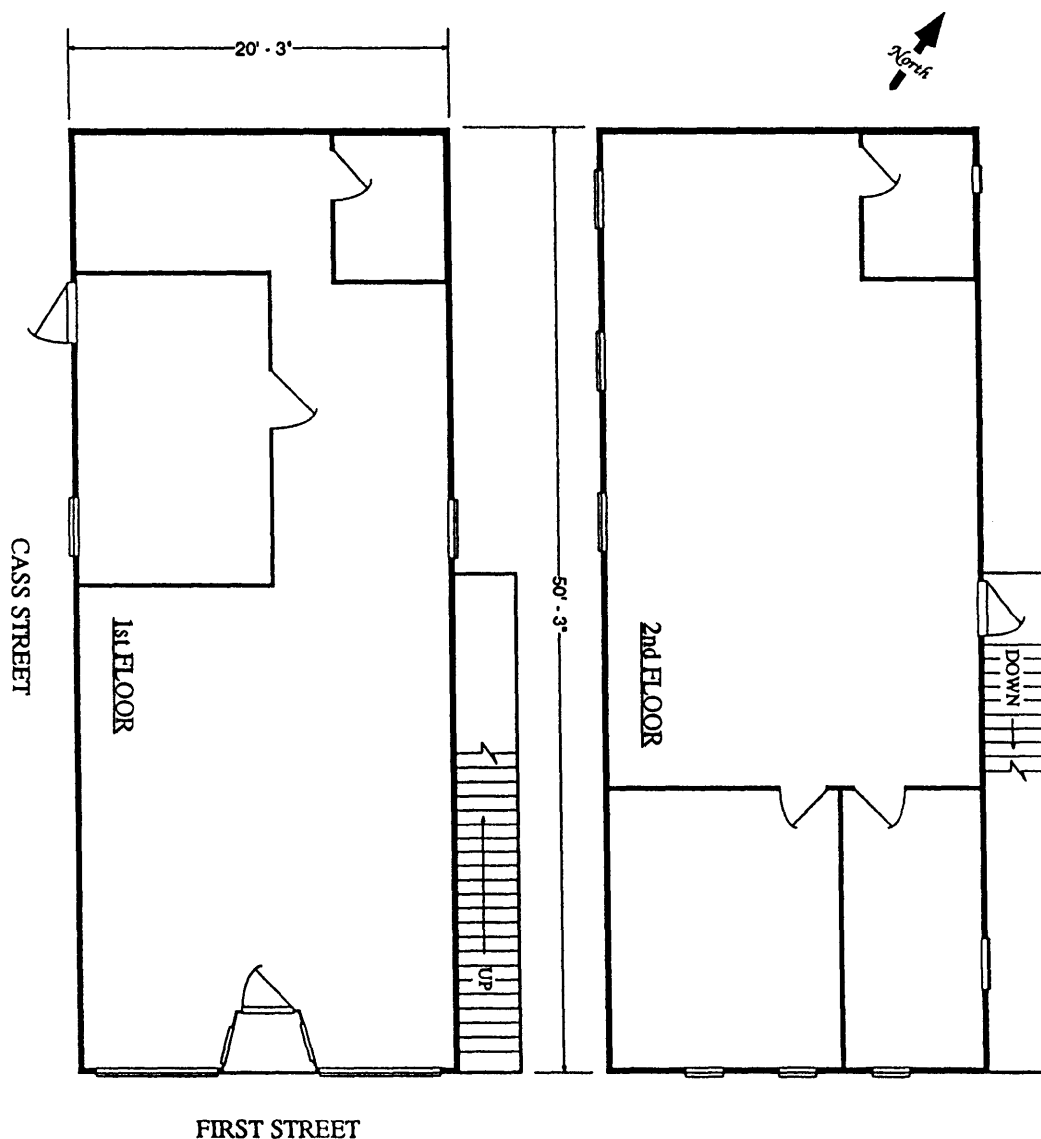
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Voltaire Twombly Building
Van Buren County, Iowa

Description (continued):



VOLTAIRE TWOMBLY BUILDING

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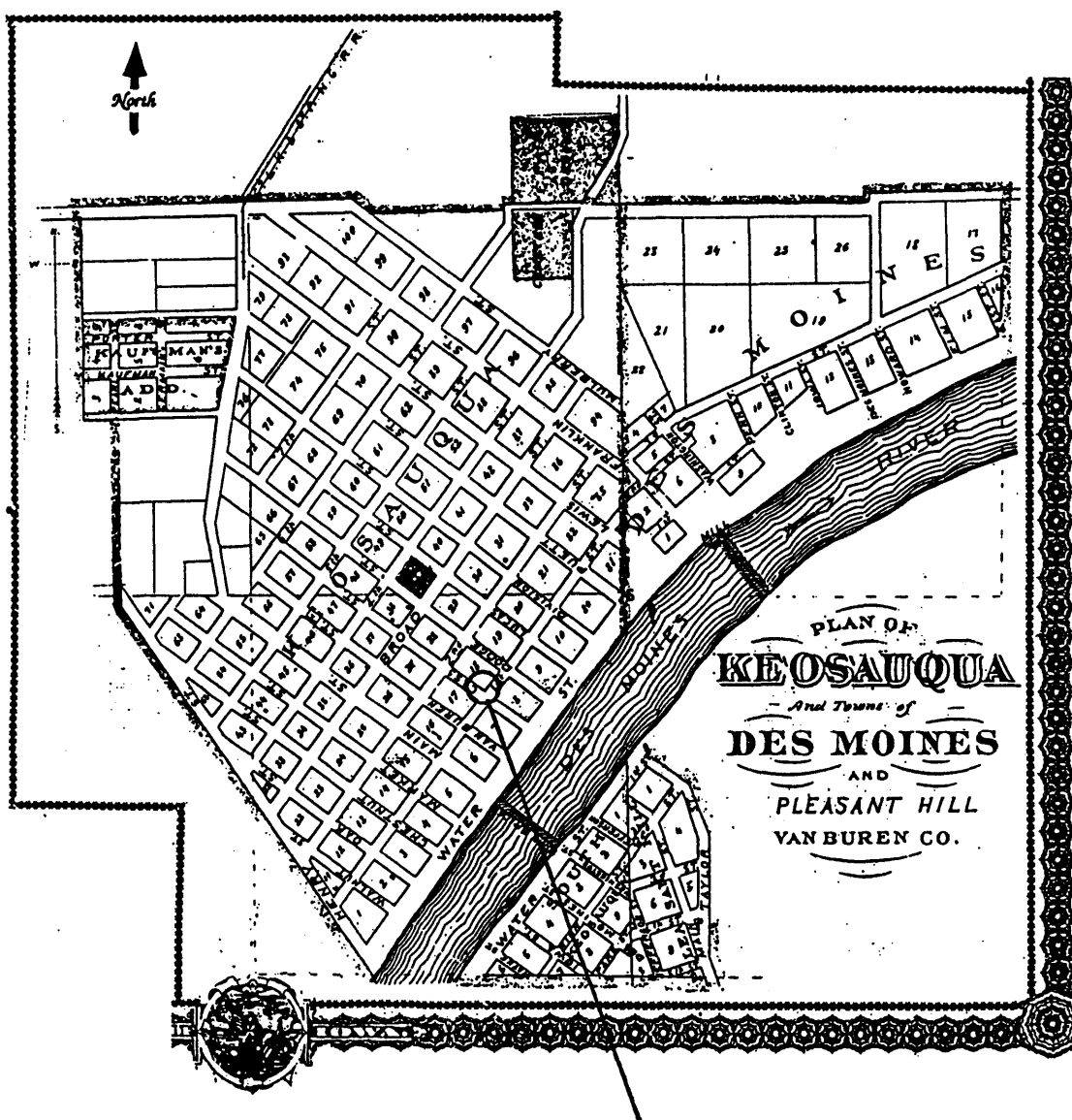
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Voltaire Twombly Building
Van Buren County, Iowa

Description (continued):



Indicates location of Twombly Building.

Map of Keosauqua from the 1875 Andreas Atlas p. 142.

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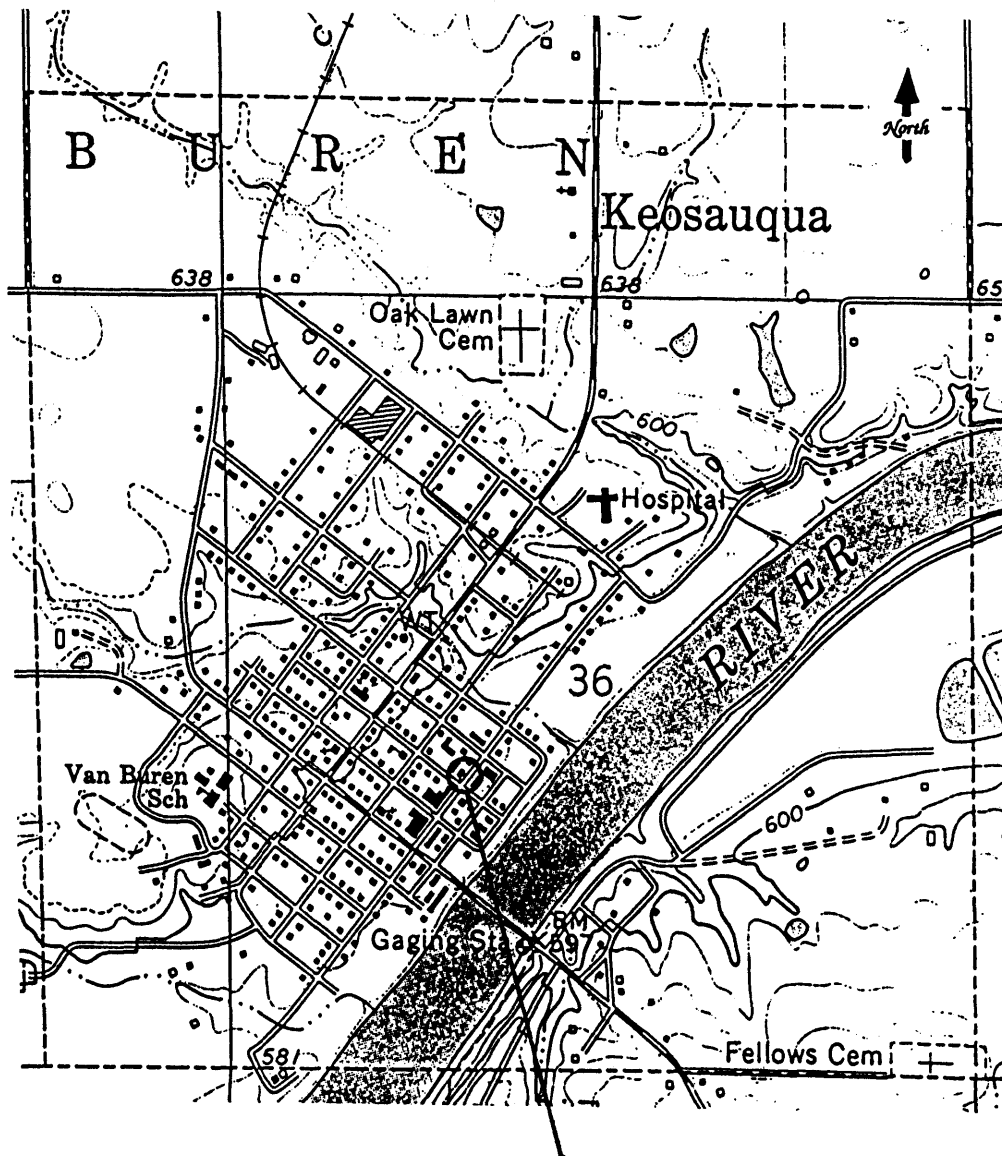
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Voltaire Twombly Building
Van Buren County, Iowa

Description (continued):



Indicates location of Twombly Building.

U.S.G.S. Map of Keosauqua (enlarged).

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Voltaire Twombly Building
Van Buren County, Iowa

Statement of Significance:

The two story Voltaire Twombly Building (c.1875) is significant under Criterion C as a good example of vernacular commercial design executed in limestone. It is located on the corner of a major intersection in the business district, one block from the Des Moines River and is the largest remaining example of stone construction in Keosauqua, the Van Buren county seat.

Van Buren County is one of the oldest in Iowa, having being organized in 1836. The 1875 Andreas Atlas noted "The grandest of Iowa rivers -the Des Moines- runs diagonally from northwest to southeast, having a length of some forty-five miles in this county....." Literally thousands of early settlers followed this river through Van Buren County to the interior of the state. A number of villages grew up along the river, including Keosauqua, which was designated as the county seat in 1839. The community prospered during the riverboat era, but when the major railroad was laid out to the north, any major growth became unlikely. The town has maintained a stable population around 1,000.

Although constructed in the 1870s, the Twombly Building is reminiscent of many commercial buildings in Van Buren County from the 1840s and '50s: A two story gable roof rectangle, with the entrance located on the narrow gable end. Only the storefronts with large display windows distinguished these early buildings from large houses or schools. Following the Civil War most commercial buildings assumed the flat roof and decorative cornice design that was to become the norm in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Constructed of quarried stone blocks of varying sizes, the Twombly Building utilizes large stones for the quoins and watertable. Medium blocks are found on the facade, and the side and rear elevations are composed of small stones of irregular shape and size. The 4/4 windows feature stone sills, with segmental stone arches above the original windows, and heavy timber lintels topping the three others. The cast iron storefront retains a remarkable level of integrity, with wooden panels below the plate glass windows, and square panes above forming the transom area. No markings were found at the base of the columns identifying the iron works or foundry.

While most of the commercial buildings in Keosauqua are of brick, there were several stone buildings in the 19th century. A large stone flouring mill (c.1850, non-extant) was located near the government lock and dam, and smaller stone buildings were found throughout the community. Although never as widely used in Van Buren County as it was in others such as Lee, Jackson, and Dubuque, limestone was a popular building material in the Des Moines River towns. "Building stone is abundant, and easily accessible at all points in the county. The concretionary limestone is found outcropping along nearly every creek.....The limestone has been chiefly used for building purposes." (Andreas, p. 493) Locally it is said that the Mormons were responsible for much of the limestone construction. Only three limestone houses have been identified in the Keosauqua area, all

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Voltaire Twombly Building
Van Buren County, Iowa

Statement of Significance (continued):

of them on farmsteads in Henry Twp. All of these are two stories with a gable roof and were built of large stone blocks (approximately 14"x20"), not the irregular stone blocks found on the Twombly Building. One house in Sec. 14 is said to have been built by the Mormons in 1846, and this statement is strengthened by the presence of a Mormon cemetery on the farm. No date has been established for the house in Sec. 8, but the house in Sec. 11 has a date stone above the door which reads "1878". This would put the house within the same period as the Twombly Building. Just as the source of the stone has not been determined, neither has the builder. The most famous 19th century brick/stonemason in Keosauqua was Benjamin F. Pearson, but he undertook only one contract after the Civil War and it was not for this building. Five stonemasons in the county were listed in the 1878 History of Van Buren County, Iowa none of whom lived in Keosauqua.

The construction date of this building has been estimated based on the abstract of title. This shows that A.F. Davis purchased Lot 1, Block 18 on May 30, 1873 for \$100.00. Three years later, June 1, 1876, Davis sold the W 1/2 (not the whole lot) Lot 1, Block 18 to V.P. Twombly for \$1,000.00. This twenty-fold increase in purchase price seems to indicate construction of the building during this period. Unfortunately, the Keosauqua newspapers for the years 1873-76 are non-extant. It is often said that Twombly was the one who had the building constructed, but this does not appear to be correct. However, he was probably the first occupant. Newspapers from 1877 contain advertising for his dry goods and grocery business in this stone building. The Keosauqua Republican moved its offices to the second floor of this building the year that Twombly purchased it. J.M. Overman, long-time Keosauqua resident, noted in the 1935 80th Anniversary Edition of the Republican that when he arrived in Keosauqua in 1878 "most of the business buildings were located on the river bank, there were but two or three buildings on what is known as the present main street (First Street)...The post office building was standing at this time and Capt. V.P. Twombly ran a grocery store downstairs and upstairs was where the Keosauqua Republican was printed." Twombly sold this building in 1892. The 1893 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the use as "Clothing" with "Printing" on the second floor. By 1912 it housed the post office on the first floor and the Union Telephone Co. on the second. The post office was located here for decades. In 1966 Keosauqua attorney Jo S. Stong donated the building to the Van Buren County Historical Society. It is presently in use as a museum.

Voltaire P. Twombly is one of only three native born Iowans to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. He was born in Farmington (Van Buren County) in 1842, and spent his childhood in Keosauqua. He enlisted at age 19 "under the first call for troops" and was mustered into service at Keokuk on May 27, 1861 as a Private in Co. F, 2nd Iowa Infantry. On February 15, 1862 during the Battle at Fort Donelson (TN) three color bearers were shot down. Cpl. Twombly picked up the flag and was instantly

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**Voltaire Twombly Building
Van Buren County, Iowa**

Statement of Significance (continued):

knocked down and wounded, but immediately arose and bore the colors to the end of the engagement. Forty Iowans were killed and 160 wounded during this charge. The victory at Fort Donelson marked a turning point in the war. Twombly also participated in the battles of Shiloh and Corinth, and made the march with Sherman to the sea. It was for his bravery at Fort Donelson that Twombly was awarded the Medal of Honor. Following his discharge with the rank of captain in 1865, he married the girl he had left behind and engaged in the milling business, first at Ottumwa, and then in Pittsburg (Van Buren County) with his father-in-law. In 1876 he opened his dry goods and grocery business in the stone building in Keosauqua. He served as the Van Buren County Treasurer for four years and as mayor of Keosauqua for nine months (he was elected on a "No Saloon" slogan). From 1885-91 he served three terms as Treasurer of the State of Iowa. He helped organize the Home Savings Bank in Des Moines and served as its president from 1891 to 1901. He spent his last years in Des Moines. He died in 1918 and is buried in the Pittsburg Cemetery. His heroic act is depicted on the Soldiers and Sailors Monument on the Iowa State Capitol grounds.

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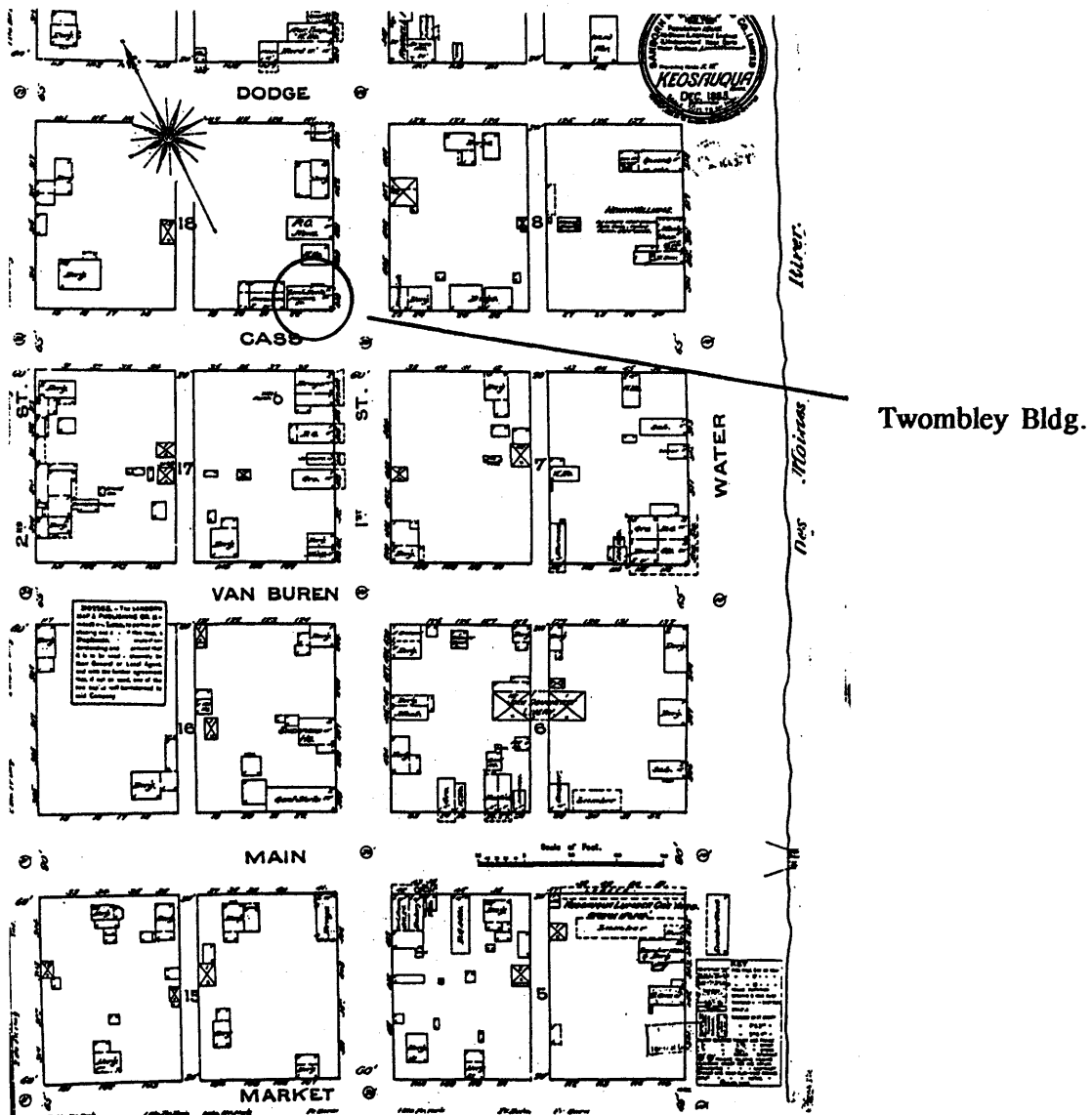
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Voltaire Twombly Building
Van Buren County, Iowa

Statement of Significance (continued):



1883 Sanborn Map

Notice few other commercial buildings along First Street.

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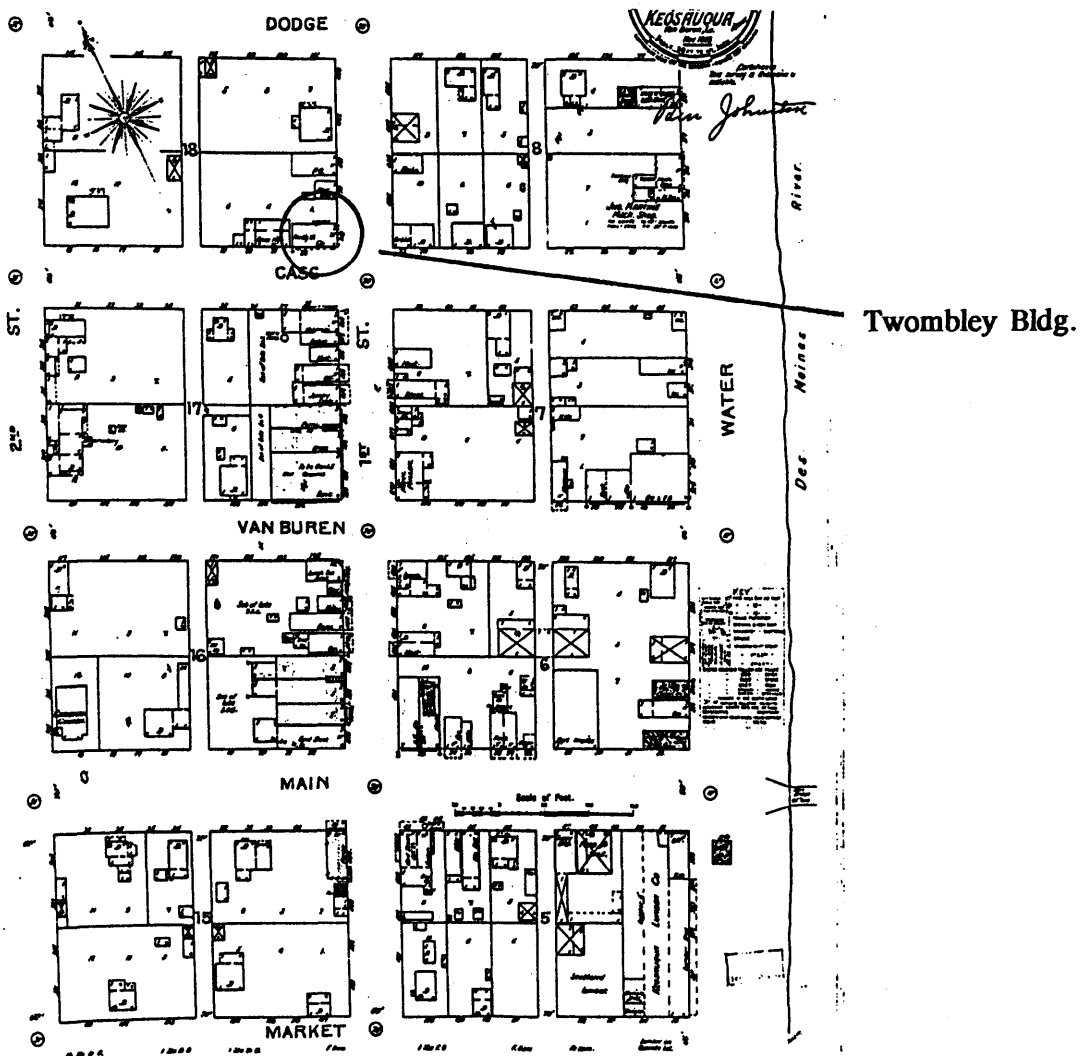
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Voltaire Twombly Building
Van Buren County, Iowa

Statement of Significance (continued):



1893 Sanborn Map

Shows commercial development along west side of First Street.

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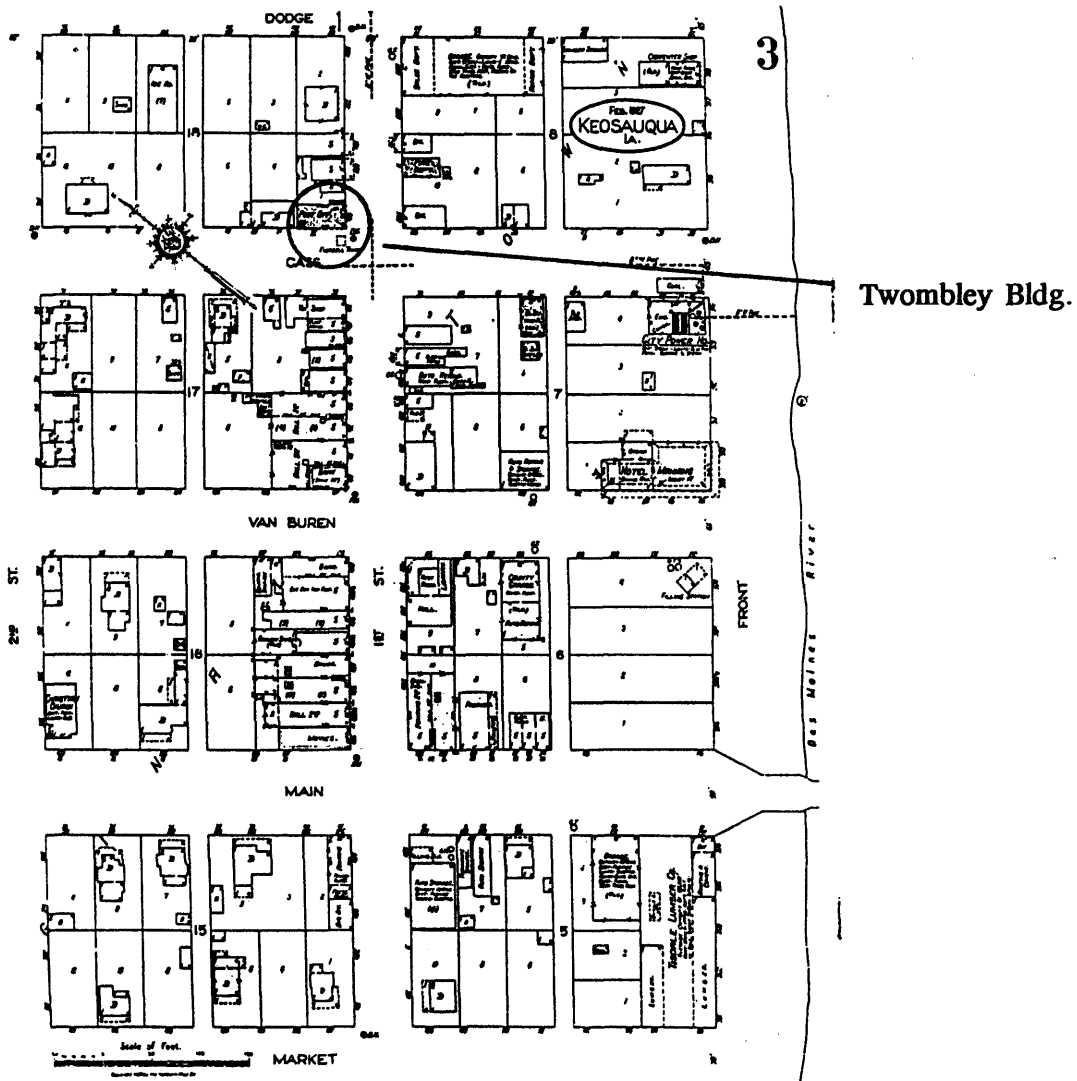
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Voltaire Twombly Building
Van Buren County, Iowa

Statement of Significance (continued):



1927 Sanborn Map

Shows full commercial development along First Street.

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Continuation Sheet

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CFN-259-1116

Voltaire Twombly Building
Van Buren County, Iowa

Bibliography:

- Abstract of Title, Original Plat, Block 18, W 1/2 Lot 1.
- Andreas, A.T. Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa. Chicago: Andreas Atlas Co., 1875.
- Historic photographs provided by the Van Buren County Historical Society.
- History of Van Buren County, Iowa. Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1878, p. 530, pp. 543-598.
- The Keosauqua Experience: The First 150 Years 1839-1989. A Sesquicentennial Project of the Van Buren County Historical Society. Douds, IA: Data Design, 1989.
- The Keosauqua Republican, 1877, and the 80th Anniversary Special Edition, August 15, 1935.
- Lamberto, Nick. "Iowan's Civil War Medal to Battle Site," Des Moines Sunday Register, no date, 1968.
- Naumann, Molly Myers. Limestone Architecture of Jackson County, Iowa. (MPD) Maquoketa, IA: Jackson County Historic Preservation Commission, 1991.
- Picturesque Keosauqua and Vicinity. Compiled and published by the Women's Improvement Association. Keosauqua, IA: Sherman Bros., Printers, 1912.
- Plat Book of Van Buren County, Iowa. Philadelphia, PA: Northwestern Publishing Co., 1897.
- Portrait and Biographical Album of Van Buren County, Iowa. Chicago: Chapman Bros., 1887.
- Research notes and photographs provided by the Van Buren County Historic Preservation Commission.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Keosauqua, 1883, 1893, 1927.
- A Service of Dedication of the Medal of Honor Grave Marker of Voltaire P. Twombly, Pittsburg Cemetery, July 2, 1989. A program from the service that was part of the Keosauqua Sesquicentennial Celebration. A transcription of the actual service was attached.
- "A Sketch of the Life of Captain V.P. Twombly," Keosauqua Republican, March 7, 1918, p. 1, c. 3.
- "Voltaire P. Twombly," Annals of Iowa, Vol. 12, #6 3rd Series (October 1920) p. 474. Obituary.

Verbal Boundary Description

City of Keosauqua, Original Plat, Block 18, W 1/2 Lot 1.

Boundary Justification

This is the area historically associated with this resource.