

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0270119

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED AUG 15 1975

DATE ENTERED OCT 10 1975

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 General William Worth Belknap House  
AND/OR COMMON Belknap House

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 511 North Third Street  
CITY, TOWN Keokuk VICINITY OF First  
STATE Iowa CODE 14 COUNTY Lee CODE 111

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 type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<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 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Irvin, Sr.  
STREET & NUMBER 511 North Third Street  
CITY, TOWN Keokuk VICINITY OF STATE Iowa

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Lee County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER Fifth and Concert Street  
CITY, TOWN Keokuk STATE Iowa

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
DATE  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
CITY, TOWN STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Belknap House is a two story brick building with a one-story wing. The original two story section of the building has a low-pitched gable roof with its ridge parallel to the street. All openings are tall and narrow with simple stone lintels and sills. Windows are regularly spaced except that which appears above the left-of-center doorway. One shows what appears to be original louvered shutters. Side lights and a transom link the doorway with the Greek Revival style. Cast iron star clamps and simpler disc-like clamps appear on the side and rear walls of the earlier part of the structure. Also, although many of them have been removed, there is evidence of wooden roof brackets under the eaves. Modern additions on the exterior of this early portion are the front porch with iron posts and a rear frame porch or storage area at the basement level. The stone foundation of the structure has been cemented over. The original roofing material has been obscured by asphalt shingles. The brick walls are laid in common bond with header rows appearing after every eight stretchers.

In the interior there is little evidence of the original wall, window, and flooring materials and ceiling materials--window frames have been removed and replaced, the ceilings have been lowered--but few major changes in the floor plan have been made. Most of the fireplaces have been removed and blocked up, however. Only one original fireplace and mantel remains.

The one story addition to the west of the main block was constructed shortly after 1854. Its roof is single-pitched, however, but the windows are nearly the same in appearance, if a bit smaller, and an interesting panelling motif in wood appears just below the roof line on the front. Below this one story addition is a double garage obviously added in the 1930's or 1940's.

The Belknap House is in good condition and rests in a picturesque setting on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. Its front yard is steeply sloping necessitating the use of a steep flight of stone steps to reach the front entrance. The rear portion of the building slopes even more steeply allowing for a more exposed view of the basement area.

# 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1854

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The historical importance of this property is clear: it was significant for being the principal residence of General William Worth Belknap during the most productive years of his remarkable military and political career. Belknap, a dashing and colorful figure of his day, derived his prominence from several sources:

- (1) Civil War military service, during which he quickly rose to the rank of Major General;
- (2) Appointment of cabinet rank as Secretary of War during the administration of President U. S. Grant;
- (3) Unsuccessful candidacy to the U. S. Senate in 1876, when the Iowa General Assembly elected Governor Kirkwood to the post;
- (4) Impeachment by the U. S. House of Representatives for improper conduct as Secretary of War.

This brick and wood house was built about 1854 by William W. Belknap as a residence for him and his mother, Anna C. Belknap, widow of Brigadier General William C. Belknap. William W. Belknap came to Keokuk in 1852 to practice law. As he was born and reared in the east and attended Princeton and Georgetown Universities, the rapidly growing community of Keokuk looked upon him with considerable respect and admiration. He enjoyed a prominent position among members of the Keokuk and Lee County Bar. He resided there until his appointment in 1869 to the cabinet of President Grant.

With the beginning of the Civil War Belknap helped organize a local militia known as the Keokuk City Rifles and rose to the position of Major in the unit. He volunteered his services to the Union, and soon became a staff officer with the Fifteenth Iowa Volunteers. He participated in a number of engagements, including the Battle of Atlanta where he was cited for bravery. By the end of the Civil War he had risen to the rank of Brevet Major General of Volunteers.

In 1869 President U. S. Grant selected General Belknap to be his Secretary of War. General Belknap served President Grant until 1876, when he was accused of improper conduct in office and impeached. Charged with selling army post traderships, his impeachment was not sustained by the U. S. Senate after a lengthy trial in spite of a majority opinion of guilt. Most of the senators who voted against impeachment declared they did so only because they believed there was a lack of jurisdiction inasmuch as General Belknap had resigned his office prior to the impeachment process. After impeachment General Belknap sold his property in Keokuk and achieved moderate success practicing law in Philadelphia and Washington.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Roger D. Bridges, "The Impeachment and Trial of William Worth Belknap, Secretary of War," M.A. Thesis, University of Northern Iowa, 1963.  
 Leland L. Sage, A History of Iowa. Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1974, pages 155, 197-198.  
 Philip D. Jordan, "The Domestic Finances of Secretary of War, W. W. Belknap," Iowa Journal of History and Politics, 52 (July, 1954): 193-202.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre  
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	6,3,7,8,4,0	4,4,7,2,9,1,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Mr. William L. Talbot and Miss Doris Foley, President

ORGANIZATION

Lee County Iowa Historical Society

DATE

9/26/74

STREET & NUMBER

313 Concert Street

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Keokuk

STATE

Iowa

## 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

*John D. Anderson*

TITLE

Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

8/11/75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

10/10/75

ATTEST:

*Ronald D. Greenberg*

DATE

10-9-75

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER