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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED FEB 4 1977
DATE ENTERED JUL 15 1977

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 AND/OR COMMON
** Severson, Nels, Barn
"Fort" Severson

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER T99N R18W *N of Carpenter*
CITY, TOWN Carpenter VICINITY OF Third
STATE Iowa COUNTY Mitchell CODE 131

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: historic site

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mitchell County Bicentennial Commission, c/o W.H. Biedermann
STREET & NUMBER R.R. 4
CITY, TOWN Osage, VICINITY OF Iowa 50461

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Mitchell County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN Osage 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 _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Severson Barn is a two-story structure of irregularly-cut limestone (locally obtained) measuring 30' x 32'. Walls are 18 inches thick, the stones held in place by a lime mortar. The gable roof was once covered with wood shingles, recently replaced with cedar "shakes". Rafter ends project beneath the eaves.

There is a variety of window and door openings. On the west side are a double-door entrance (wide to accommodate animals), and an opening to the hay loft above. The long sides feature small, almost square openings framed in wood, for ventilation purposes. On the east side are a door and two very small openings, on the south another opening to the loft and several of the small, square openings. Rectangular pieces of metal, set at irregular heights below the eaves, indicate tie rods. All the door and larger window openings have lintels of hewn timber. The loft is supported by similar heavy timbers, a number of which are still in place. The ground level has a dirt floor, the loft flooring was originally of planks.

The barn is set near the Deer Creek, in a grassy area surrounded by woodland. There are a number of frame buildings in the area, but they are later and are not included in the nomination.

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 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1867

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Nels Severson

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This stone barn is a remnant from one of the earliest settlements in Mitchell County. Newburg Township, in which the barn is located, was first settled in 1854, largely by Norwegians, possibly members of the Norwegian immigration movement led by the Reverend C.L. Clausen, whose colonizing efforts in Wisconsin, Minnesota and northern Iowa are an important part of the region's history. Among these Norwegians were brothers Ole and Nels Severson. Ole is said to have built a log house on Deer Creek, probably near the site of this barn, which was built by his brother Nels in 1867. Ole died in 1854, shortly after his arrival, but Nels lived on to have a large family, serve in the Civil War with the 13th Iowa Infantry, and hold "several local offices".

Severson's barn was one of the few (and possibly the only) stone structures in the area of this Deer Creek settlement. For this reason, and because of its relatively large size, the early white inhabitants may have considered it an ideal shelter, or defensive structure, in the event of Indian attack. Although such danger never materialized (indeed, the periods of greatest Indian unrest in the area, the Spirit Lake massacre and the New Ulm uprising, had occurred years before, in 1857 and 1862), local tradition invested the structure with the name "fort", by which it is known today. Such a military designation for a structure built essentially for wholly different purposes was not uncommon on the American frontier -- objects as disparate as a church, a farmhouse, or a hastily-erected arrangement of sod walls also bore -- and bear -- the designation "fort".

Because it was situated along the road from Northwood (Minnesota) to St. Ansgar (Iowa), it has been suggested that the barn may have served as a stage-coach stop and shelter for wagon teams. Local tradition also says that travellers were accommodated in the barn, but its construction (no chimney or fireplace, in particular) does not effectively corroborate this. Possibly a nearby frame structure, long gone, was the actual inn.

These traditions, although lacking contemporary corroboration, contribute much to the local affection for Nels Severson's barn. With or without them, the barn is a lovingly crafted instance of frontier building, using local materials in a simple, enduring way.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Story of Mitchell County. Mason City: Klipto Printing Co., 1973 (for Mitchell County Historical Society)

Osage Press-News, 28 December 1972.

History of Mitchell and Worth Counties. Springfield, Ill.: Union Publishing Co., 1884.

Kirkpatrick, Inez E. Stagecoach Trails in Iowa. Crete (Neb.): J-B Publishing Co., 1975

Personal Recollections of Lela Stewart McGill, Myrtle Lee Anderson, and George N. Severson. mss. on file, Division of Historic Preservation, Iowa City, Iowa

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A

15	499110	4807520
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

C

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

D

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

W.H. Biedermann

ORGANIZATION

Mitchell County Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

R.R. #4

CITY OR TOWN

Osage

DATE

TELEPHONE

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 A. Anderson

TITLE

Director, Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

1/19/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. Muntz
 DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND ARCHITECTURAL RESTORATION
 ATTEST: *Charles Herring*
 KEEPERS OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE *2/14/77*
 MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 DATE *6-13-77*