

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	IOWA
COUNTY:	DES MOINES
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	SEP 6 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:
Snake Alley

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
North Sixth Street, between Washington and Columbia Streets

CITY OR TOWN:
Burlington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
First

STATE: Iowa CODE: 14 COUNTY: Des Moines CODE: 057

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
Comments: _____ _____ _____			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
City of Burlington

STREET AND NUMBER:
North Sixth Street between Washington and Columbia Streets

CITY OR TOWN:
Burlington

STATE: Iowa CODE: 14

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Des Moines County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
North Main Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Burlington

STATE: Iowa CODE: 14

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
N/A

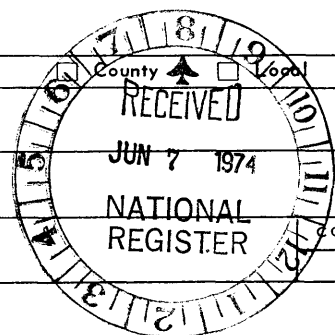
DATE OF SURVEY:
 Federal State

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Burlington

STATE: Iowa



STATE: IOWA

COUNTY: DES MOINES

ENTRY NUMBER: _____

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Both Burlington's Snake Alley and Lombard Street in San Francisco have been called the "crookedest street in the world." Snake Alley was built in the summer of 1894. It consists of five half curves and two quarter curves over a distance of 275 feet and a rise of 58 feet. Stretched straight the alley would run about 440 feet in length.

The bricks of the alley were laid horizontally with their uphill edges projecting slightly at an angle so horses could get better footing. The stone curbs were cut to fit the curves and grade.

In recent years the restoration and beautification of Snake Alley has included repair and resetting of bricks and stone curbs, the installation of gaslights reminiscent of the 1890's era, new steps with wrought iron railings and the planting of many flowering trees, shrubs, and evergreens.

Structures facing Snake Alley range in dates of construction from the 1850's to the 1940's and in architectural styles from Greek Revival to Italianate to twentieth century commercial.



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2. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1894**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Snake Alley was once featured as the "crookedest street in the world," in Ripley's "Believe It or Not." Its only rival seems to be Lombard Street in San Francisco.

Snake Alley was constructed in the summer of 1894 when the City Council decided there was a need for a short cut from the residential section at the top of North Hill to the business district at the bottom. The drop was steep and dangerous and it was feared that water would wash an ordinary road away. The Council also realized that horses and buggies would go rushing down pell-mell once they started. Consequently curves were designed to permit the horses to descend at a more normal speed. In addition, the bricks for the alley were tapered to allow traction for the horses. Curbs of stone were tailored to fit the curves and changing grade--a tedious piece of craftsmanship.

William Steyh, City Engineer at the time, appears to have been the engineering genius behind the project. The contractor was George Kriechbaum who submitted the low bid of 60 cents per curb lineal foot and \$1.53 per square yard of paving.

Over the years Snake Alley has inspired many artists both local and from afar resulting in many interesting sketches and paintings. Snake Alley along with the Mississippi River and selected historic homes has become a catalyst for fostering a sense of community identity for both residents and visitors alike.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Hawk Eye, January 31, 1965

The Hawk Eye, November 1, 1970, "Crookedest Street Was - And - Is Fun."

Iowa Motor News, March-April 1971, "Burlington Restores Snake Alley."

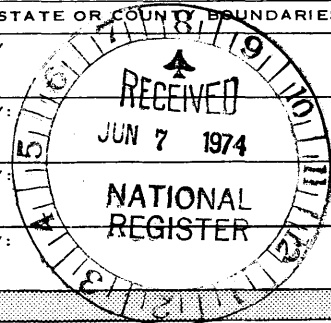
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		40° 48' 42"	91° 06' 21"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/4 acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: C. W. Dowse, Assistant Director

ORGANIZATION: Department of Planning & Development DATE: 10/1/73

STREET AND NUMBER: City Hall

CITY OR TOWN: Burlington STATE: Iowa CODE: 14

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Adrian A. Anderson

Title State Historic Preservation Officer

Date June 3, 1974

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

Al R. ...
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 9/6/74

ATTEST:

Charles ...
Keeper of The National Register

Date 5-8-74