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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Harlan House Hotel  
other names/site number Harlan House; Harlan Hotel

2. Location

street & number 122 North Jefferson Street  not for publication  
city, town Mount Pleasant  vicinity  
state Iowa code 019 county Henry code 087 zip code 52641

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	1	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.  
Signature of certifying official: *[Signature]* Date: October 8, 1987  
Chief, Bureau of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Iowa  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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]* Signature of the Keeper *11-16-87* Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Single dwelling  
Hotel  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Hotel and restaurant  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Italianate  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation \_\_\_\_\_  
walls brick  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof \_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

Since its final addition in 1892, the Harlan Hotel has been a visual landmark in the downtown commercial district. Because of its large size and unusual massing, the building is noticed by most who pass it. The building is entirely constructed of local rose brick which rests upon a limestone foundation. The unusual massing is a result of additions which were made to the front, rear, side, and roof of an 1857 residential structure.

The original 1857 section is located in the center of the structure and features a bracketed cornice, mansard roof (1892), corner and center pilasters. The windows are of the six-over-six variety. The two additions to the rear of the original structure are constructed as full three-story structures. These appear to have been built at the same time, that is, they appear as one. However, close examination proves that this was not the case. This section features asymetrically placed pilasters, six-over-six windows with square stone lintels, and a hip roof with a bracketed cornice. This cornice does not match the one on the original section of the building. On the south side of the building there is a wing like structure, three stories tall, with an unusual concave cornice and a hip roof. The windows in this section are again the six-over-six variety and capped by square limestone lintels. On the front an 1892 addition was constructed. It is a full three stories high and features a hip roof with a bracketed cornice which matches the cornice of the original portion of the building. The windows in this section are also of the six-over-six variety, and are capped by triangular head mouldings which also match those on the original section of the building.

The main entrance on Jefferson Street is covered by a large portico, supported by paired fluted columns, which extends over the sidewalk to the street. A similar appearing porch has been placed over the door on the south wing, in the center area of the lawn.

The interior features nine foot wide corridors on the front portions of the building. The ceilings in these areas are all twelve feet high. The hotel rooms on the second floor are the bedrooms of the original house. The rooms on the floor above, even though added, are of this same spacious size. The rear additions provide space for a large public dining room and kitchen on the first floor, eleven rooms on the second floor, and ten rooms on the third floor.

The overall dimensions of the building are 175 feet from front to back, and two feet wide at the widest point. The total area under roof is in excess of 21,000 square feet. Because of its large overall size, its incongruous multiple additions, and irregular massing, the building is a rare nineteenth century structure which has been the most prominent building located in the off of the square commercial area in Mount Pleasant.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G    N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1872-1899  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

Senator James Harlan

Architect/Builder

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.**

The Harlan House Hotel (1857, 1873, Ca. 1880, 1892) is significant because of its association with Senator James Harlan (1820-1899), who was the first Republican Senator for Iowa in 1855. Harlan served in the senate until 1865 when he was appointed Secretary of the Interior by President Lincoln. He again served in the senate from 1867 until 1872. The association of this building is primarily during his post senatorial years in which the hotel was his primary source of income, and secondarily, during his terms in the senate, when the original 1857 section of the hotel was constructed as Harlan's twelve room, two-story brick residence. Although the hotel building as it exists today is the result of a series of additions to the original section which more than tripled its size, these additions were made during the ownership, and under the direction of Harlan. This building retains a high degree of integrity with relatively few alterations since Harlan's death. Being a local landmark from the beginning, it is certainly the most visible, and probably the best representative structure of Harlan's post senatorial years. As a result of the hotel additions, many of the exterior walls of the original 1857 residence have been obscured. However, much of the interior spaces and features remain intact. This building is the only local representative structure of Harlan's senatorial years.

James Harlan was born in Clark County, Illinois on April 26, 1820. Harlan graduated from Indiana Asbury University (DePauw) on August 20, 1845. Harlan moved to Iowa to become president of the Iowa City College. In 1847 and 1848 he ran for the position of State Superintendent of Public Instruction. About this same time, he began studying the law and in 1850 was admitted to the bar. He opened his practice in Iowa City which he continued until 1853 when he moved to Mount Pleasant to become president to the Mount Pleasant Collegiate Institute, sponsored by the Iowa Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Immediately he began a fund raising drive to expand the small school. A second and much larger building was built, and he obtained a new charter as Iowa Wesleyan University. In 1855 he resigned his presidency to become Iowa's first Republican United States Senator. Harlan apparently felt the need for a large new home, one which would be an appropriate residence for a person of his stature. This new home, a two-story brick structure consisting of twelve rooms and 6,400 square feet was constructed during the spring and summer of 1857.<sup>1</sup> It was located in the business district, one block north of the town square, at the corner of Jefferson and Madison Streets.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

FOOTNOTES

1. Johnson Brigham, James Harlan, (Iowa City, Iowa: The State Historical Society of Iowa, 1913), p. 108.
2. Leland L. Sage, A History of Iowa, (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1974), p. 170.
3. Abstract of Title for Lot 1 and the North 20 Feet of Lot 2, Original Plat of Mt. Pleasant.
4. Sioux City Journal, March 8, 1942.
5. Letter from J. M. Beck, Centerville Iowa, 1956. (Beck was a resident at the hotel at the hotel in 1898 and 1899.)

PLEASE SEE SECTION 9, PAGE 2 FOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES.

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 

1	5
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6	2	1	6	6	10
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4	15	3	15	8	14	10
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Zone      Easting      Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone      Easting      Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 1 and North 20 feet of Lot 2 Block 7 Original Plat of City of Mt. Pleasant.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The lots historically associated with this resource are included in this nomination. Includes only hotel and associated courtyard area.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By** Research and nomination by Dave Cordes, Public Historian

name/title Christopher A. Wilde, Information Officer

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date 8 October 1987

street & number Capitol Complex telephone (515) 281-5111

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50319

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Sometime during the Lincoln administration, Robert Todd Lincoln and Senator Harlan's daughter Mary were introduced. They began courting, and "the senator found himself elevated into the Lincoln family circle, the constant companion of the family, the habitué of all White House gatherings, the companion on trips to the battlefields, Mrs. Lincoln's escort to the Second Inaugural, and, finally, a cabinet appointee."<sup>2</sup> Harlan was appointed Secretary of the Interior on March 9, 1865 by President Lincoln. He did not assume this office until shortly after Lincoln's assassination. Close ties were more firmly established between the Lincoln and Harlan families through the marriage of Harlan's daughter Mary to Robert Todd Lincoln on September 24, 1868. Harlan came into disagreement with President Lincoln's reconstruction policies and in 1866 was elected to the Senate for a third term. Resigning from the Interior Department, he took his seat in the senate on March 4, 1867. Legislation which Harlan was instrumental in include The Kansas-Nebraska Act, The Pacific Railroad Bill, The Homestead Bill, a bill granting land for Agricultural Colleges; and, of course, he is known for his strong abolitionist views and opposition to disunion of the States.

On January 17, 1872 Harlan was defeated for the Republican nomination by William B. Allison who was elected in the General Assembly one week later. Charges of dishonesty had surfaced against Harlan stating that he had grossly profited from his position in public office. His complete disclosure proved these charges to be false, but this effort was in vain. At this time Harlan returned to Mount Pleasant and entered into retirement from public office. He purchased a home at the corner of Broad and Main Streets (The Harlan-Lincoln Home NRHP), and made immediate plans to convert the downtown house into a hotel because it was much to large to support without his senatorial salary. As a hotel it would also provide him with a needed source of income.

The first advertisement for the Harlan House was run in the Mount Pleasant Journal, February 9, 1872. The ad stated that "this house is now fitted up and furnished as a First-Class Hotel, and is now ready for the reception of guests....Private entrance - Madison Street." Harlan's holdings at this time were his home in Washington, acquired when he was appointed Secretary of the Interior, and was put up for sale upon his defeat in 1872; \$1,500 of stock in the First National Bank of Mount Pleasant; an undetermined amount of stock in the Iowa National Bank in Ottumwa; \$2,500 worth of bonds on the State of Nebraska; and a total of about 200 acres of farm and unimproved land. It is obvious that he was using the hotel as a primary source of income. In the spring of 1873 an addition was made to the Harlan House. This three-story addition provided a large dining room on the first floor, and thirteen additional hotel rooms. Apparently his financial situation was somewhat poor, as two mechanics liens were filed against the hotel property. The first one was filed by the Mount Pleasant Gas Light Company in the amount of \$386.55, for lighting the Harlan House with gas. The installation date is not stated, but gas first became available in January of 1872. The second lien was in favor of George L. White "who contracted with James Harlan to erect a certain brick building as an addition to the building already on the said premises known as the Harlan House, for which the defendant was to pay the plaintiff the sum of \$2,500. Balance on the account is \$1,683.61, filed 17 February 1874."<sup>3</sup> The debts were satisfied within the following year. The second addition was made to the hotel ca. 1880. This

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addition extended the previous addition all the way to the alley and added a new large kitchen on the first floor and eight additional hotel rooms. The editor of the Mount Pleasant Journal commented that Mount Pleasant had two of the finest hotels in the state, the Brazelton House and the Harlan House.

James Harlan once again entered public office when he was appointed Chief Justice of the Second Court of Alabama Claims. He served from 1882-1886, and upon its conclusion again retired to Mount Pleasant.

In 1892 extensive additions were again made to the hotel. An imposing three-story addition was made to the front facade of the building. Much effort was made to make this section blend with the original house portion. The cornice and brackets were duplicated. Stone window headings were re-used and additional ones which were needed were duplicated with cast concrete. Window units and mouldings were relocated to the front facade and there is strong evidence that suggests that the present portico was originally over the front facade. The original entry door with side lights and transom window were left intact in their original position to serve as a division between the new outer vestibule and the lobby. This facade addition added two sample rooms on the first floor, and two rooms each on the second and third floors. Also, at this time, a south wing was added that enlarged the room labeled as the lounge on the first floor plan, enlarged room 206, and created room 306. The roof structure of the original house was also reconstructed as a mansard roof with dormers aligning with the windows below. This added a third complete floor to the 1857 portion of the building. The Harlan House Hotel in this final state measures 175 feet from front to back and 50 feet wide at the widest point. Space under the roof is in excess of 21,000 square feet. An advertisement in the 1897-98 Iowa State Gazetteer boasted "HARLAN HOUSE.....The only First-Class House in the town exclusively devoted to Hotel purposes. Heated with Steam. Located in the heart of the business district. Surrounded by lawn and shade trees. Almost absolutely free from danger by fire. Office, Parlor, Dining and Sample Room on First Floor. Reliable "Bus Line to and from all trains." H. B. Crawford, Proprietor. Rates, \$2.00 per Day." It should be noted that the Brazelton House, the only comparable hotel in town devoted all of its floor area to retail space. Even though it was ahead of its time at its 1857 construction, the quality and scale of the interior spaces fell short of the interior quality of the Harlan House. The rear wing of the Harlan could be found comparable to the Brazelton's small rooms and three foot wide corridors, but the character and feeling of the 1857 Harlan senatorial mansion with its nine foot wide central corridor, large spacious rooms, and twelve foot ceilings, carries forth to all corners of the building.

In spite of his advancing age, Harlan remained active in the Iowa Republican Party and was in great demand as a speaker. In 1893 he was chosen to preside over the state convention of the Republican Party as its temporary chairman, who always made the keynote speech. The central issue at this time was the state prohibition laws, and whether the Republican Party should continue to support them. Harlan had always been noted for his skill at debate and his captivating oratory, and this speech seemed to his great audience to surpass in effective forcefulness and logical beauty every prior effort in his whole life.

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"In front of the reading desk stood the temporary chairman, fully six feet tall, large but spare, snow white hair and beard--the very embodiment of a great patriarch. He had a voice like sweet music. But until toward the close of his speech, he used it very moderately, speaking only in conversational tone and with no gestures. He leaned slightly over the reading desk, as though talking intimately to a few friends. He pointed out that the Republican Party had never met defeat, so long as it adhered to the fundamental principles on which it was founded--....Then, in a quiet conversational tone, still leaning over the deak, he enumerated slowly the principles of the Republican Party. When he had concluded this recital, he said--measuring each word: 'These are the principles of the Republican Party, as your temporary chairman understands them.' Suddenly as it were, he sprung to life. He stood erect, his right arm shot up above his head, his fist clinched, and he thundered: 'And if I do not know what the principles of the Republican Party are--who does? I, who was present at its birth--who helped to rock its cradle--who have been with it in public office and in private station through all the swift vicissitudes of changeful time.' Perhaps no other man in Iowa could have done that and gotten away with it. It seemed boastful but in reality it wasn't. What he said was true, and everybody knew it was true.....He was the intimate personal friend of the greatest man the party had ever elected to the presidency. He fought its battles, and he had.....been a participant in everything that had gone on."<sup>4</sup>

In 1894 Harlan was the orator of the day at the laying of the corner stone of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument on the capitol grounds in Des Moines. In 1895 Harlan was considered from many quarters for the candidacy for governor, but his age probably was against him. The last public event in which Harlan took a prominent part was the laying of the corner stone of the Historical Building at Des Moines on May 17, 1899, on which occasion he was President of the Day. In the late 1890's Harlan moved from his residence to a room at the Harlan House. It was here that he died, with Mary Lincoln at his side, October 5, 1899.<sup>5</sup> On the day of the funeral, all businesses in the town were suspended, flags were flown at half mast, and the main streets of the town were draped in mourning. James Harlan left an estate valued at \$28,697.10, the hotel accounting for more than one-third of his total net worth. On April 8, 1901, Mary Lincoln and Robert T. Lincoln, her husband, sold the hotel and its furnishings to George E. Smith for \$10,000. This points to the fact that Harlan owned the furniture in the hotel, and thus was actively involved in the business of the hotel, even though he never acted as manager, nor tended to the day to day operations.

In 1907, the Thirty-Second General Assembly of Iowa passed an act declaring that James Harlan was worthy of being selected as one of the citizens of Iowa whose statue shall be placed in the said National Statuary Hall, empowering the Executive Council to provide a suitable statue. That statue was placed in the hall, now more commonly known as The National Statuary Hall of Fame.

Twentieth century alterations to the structure are minimal. Most of them appear to have been made in the 1920's. The carriage entrance was closed up and the porch removed. This side entrance hall was converted into toilet room space. The columns were apparently re-used in the construction of the porch on the south side. In 1916 forty-eight feet of the south lawn was sold off and a retail business was built there. The building now

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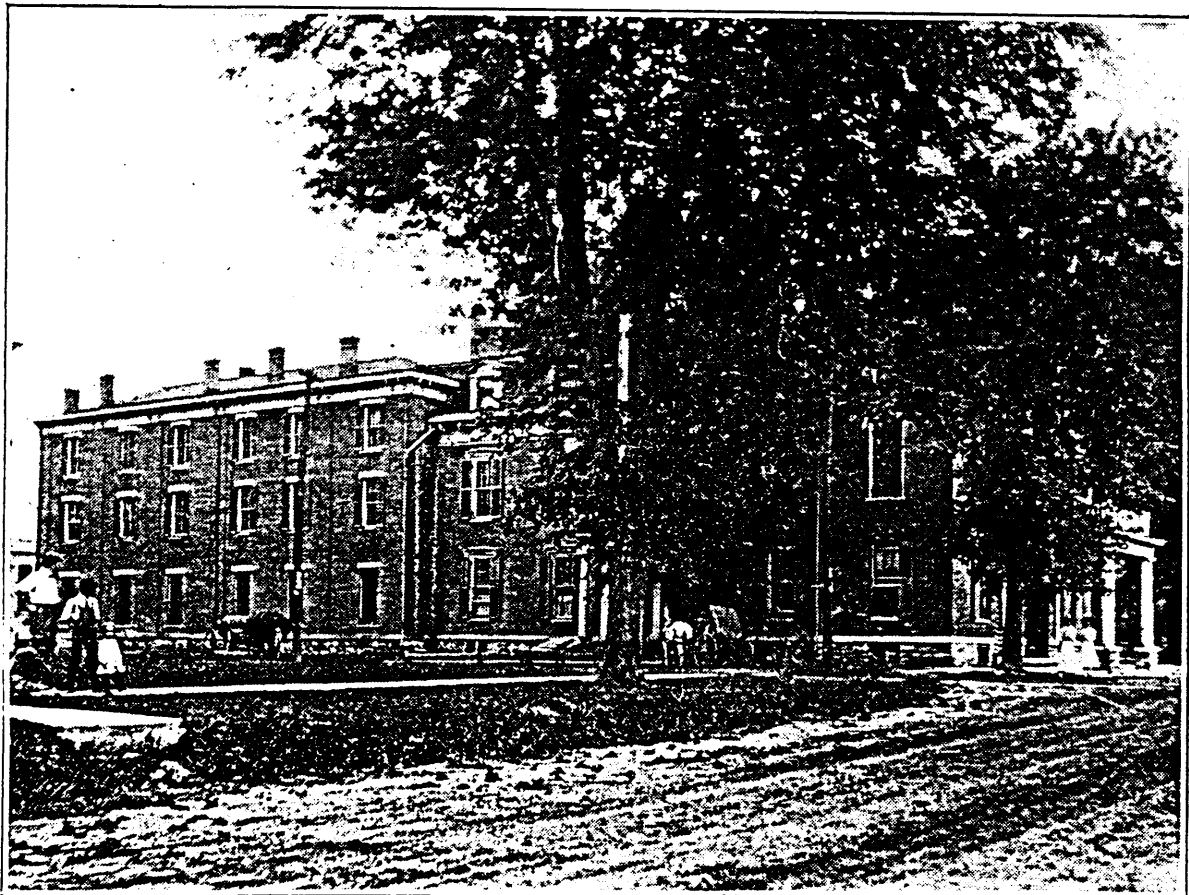
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covered with ivy does not diminish the tranquil quality of the lawn and garden area. A large window was placed between the two original parlor windows in an effort to add more light to the room which had been somewhat darkened by the 1892 facade addition. In the 1950's a very small brick addition was made to the southeast corner of the 1857 portion of the hotel. This was to provide more suitable restrooms. This addition is the only addition since Harlan's death. It is not visible from any street viewpoint.

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FOOTNOTES: Please see Section 9, Page 1.



THE HARLAN HOUSE

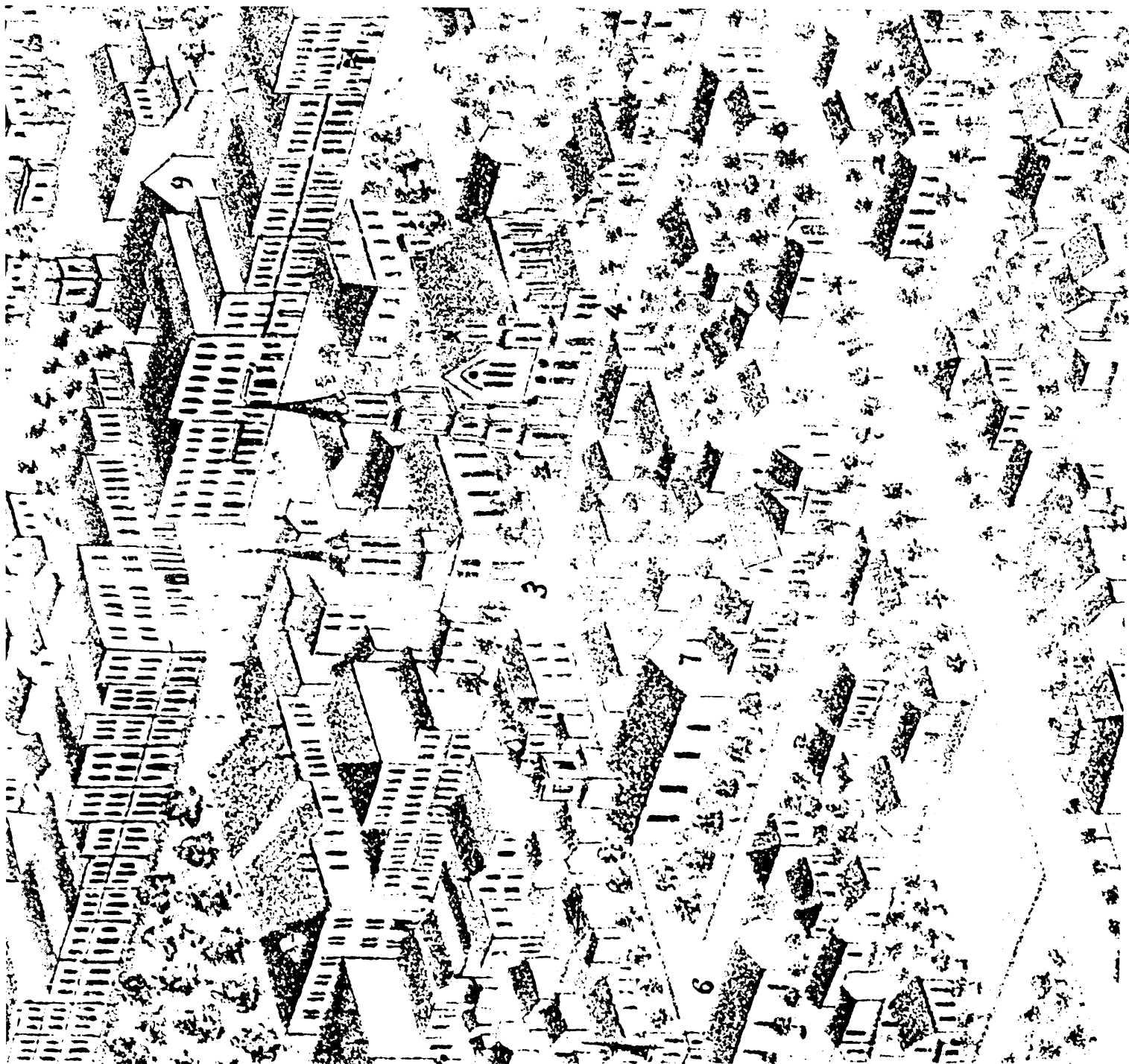


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Harlan House Hotel (highlighted in yellow):  
"1869 birdseye view, looking SW" (above the church labeled 4)



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