

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received **JUN 9 1983**
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Torrance House

and/or common

2. Location

S of Lisbon

street & number Section 23, T-82-N, R-5-W, Linn County not for publication

city, town vicinity of Lisbon

state Iowa code 019 county Linn code 113

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>n.a.</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Lee and Kate Hawkins

street & number 514 Fairview Drive SE

city, town Cedar Rapids vicinity of Iowa 52403

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk's Office

street & number Linn County Courthouse

city, town Cedar Rapids vicinity of Iowa 52403

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title n.a. has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town vicinity of Iowa

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 Torrance House is a significant example of settlement era stone house construction in Iowa. It is vernacular in its plan and represents several unique design combinations and contradictions including flat stone arches and unusually long stretcher blocks of limestone, as well as a slate roof, rarely used for settlement era residences of this type.

The Torrance House (1866-67) is a two story side gabled residence, and is rectangular on plan (27' by 33'). The house offers a symmetrical two and a half bay wide facade on its north or public face. This facade indicates the presence of a central hall with stairway, and flanking hall and parlor. The house had four rooms on each floor, with central halls dividing the interior plan. The front door opened directly to the stairway.

Vernacular elements include the assymetry of the overall fenestration, the combinations of both coursed ashlar and random coursed ashlar stonework, and the placement of an inscription stone in the east gable peak. The southern facade has an off-center door and two windows which are vertically aligned with the four evenly spaced second floor windows (which number contrasts to the five windows opposite on the northern facade). The east side wall is symmetrical with two double hung 6/6 windows on each floor, and two small four light windows placed close to the eaves line in the gable ends. The west end wall, now largely obscured by the presence of a two door lean to roofed garage addition (1973) has a door and a single downstairs window, and matching fenestration with the east wall above that level. An in wall flue is centered in the east wall, while an interior brick chimney is on the west end. A 1960 photo indicates the presence of a small one room lean to roofed addition on the site of the garage.

Classical features include the use of carefully treated stone belt courses above the second floor and gable windows on the east end wall only, and above both window rows on the main facade. The first floor belt course is actually a continuous line of flat stone arches with keystone inserts. A thicker flat stone arch above the door is also incorporated into this line. All of these arches are partially cantilevered from the bearing wall itself. The second floor belt course incorporates the single lintels of each window on that level. A similar second floor belt course is found on the southern facade. Projecting stone cornice returns appear at each eaves corner.

The house was constructed of tan limestone blocks. Limestone slip sills and headings define all doors and windows on all faces other than the northern facade. A striking difference in stone coloration, bonding style, and stone size and treatment occurs between the two floors, indicating perhaps a change during construction of masons, stone, or perhaps a delay in completion. On the first floor, the stonework is done in random coursing, using irregular small and some very narrow stones. Corner work is sharply defined and skillfully executed, using larger well shaped blocks of stone. Second floor stonework is more regularly coursed, especially on the northern facade. Stones on this level are more uniform in width, and are longer and better shaped than those used below. The building's internal frame appears to have been assembled at one time. The original roof was slate, unique for an early residence. The original slate roof is

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Continuation sheet Physical Description

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documented by surviving slates from the original roof.

The house has a full basement with a transverse load bearing wall across the center. A cellar entryway is located at the northeast corner. The basement also includes two satwo small windows on the southern half of each end wall. Interior timbers are hand hewn.

The house is located at the eastern end of a six and a half acre tract. The house is prominently visible from a crossroads located just to the northwest of the site. A timbered area north of the house separates it from a creek which defines the northern boundary of the parcel.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1856 **Builder/Architect** Cunningham and Margaret Torrance

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Torrance House is a significant example of a settlement era residence which incorporates both vernacular and classical design features into its plan. Of special note are the flat stone and varied treatments of the limestone exterior in terms of bonding style and block size and treatment.

Cunningham Torrance (1789–1863) and his wife Margaret Cunningham Torrance (1798–1883) settled in Franklin Township, Linn County, in 1847, having come from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. A "homestone" set into the gable peak of the house gives the building date and the inscription "C. and M. Torrance." The Torrances were of Scotch-Irish extraction. Torrance at the time of his death, owned six hundred acres, farmed and raised stock. His widow continued to occupy the homestead until her death.

By 1895 the house was associated with a several hundred acre tract of land in Sections 23 and 26, and was owned by John McHugh (1825–92) and Anna McHugh. The latter person owned a smaller acreage by 1907. Henry Clark (1860–1928) and Rebecca Clark (1862–1924) owned the property by 1914, and the property continued in that ownership until the purchase by the present owners.

The 1865 Iowa State Gazetteer noted that "There are inexhaustible quarries of fine building stone everywhere accessible..." in Linn County, and that in the Mount Vernon area "Building material, such as stone, timber, lime, etc., are abundant." Despite this apparent abundance of building stone, its use in residential or any other form of construction is quite rare. Brick appears to have dominated this particular region. A stone quarry site was only one and a half miles north of this house according to the 1907 county plat map.

The current owner has sympathetically restored the house, including the replacement of the slate roof (which was destroyed by hail in the 1950's), and the restoration of the oak floors. It is intended eventually that the garage will be removed and replaced by a covered breezeway that will connect the house with a planned barn to the southwest.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Refer to Continuation Sheet 9-2

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Mt. Vernon Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

UTM References

A

1	5	6	3	3	0	0	0	4	6	3	9	2	1	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Refer to Continuation Sheet 10-2

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n.a. code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator

organization Iowa SHPO date May 25, 1983

Historical Building

street & number E. 12th & Grand Ave. telephone 515-281-4137

city or town Des Moines state Iowa 50319

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 Adrian A. Anderson

title Executive Director Iowa State Historical Department date May 25, 1983

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

for Melores Byers
Keeper of the National Register

date 7/7/83

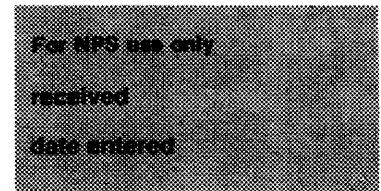
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation sheet Bibliography Item number 9 Page 2

The Biographical Record of Linn County Iowa, 1901. Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1901, pp. 441-2.

Unidentified Mount Vernon newspaper, 29 June 1883.

The Franklin Record, 12 December 1863.

Atlas of Linn County. Davenport: Iowa Publishing Company, 1907, p. 49.

Atlas of Linn County Iowa. Cedar Rapids: Parsons, Treat & Ward, 1895, pp. 28-9.

Atlas and Directory of Rural Taxpayers of Linn County, Iowa. Cedar Rapids: Wingert & Leefers Publishing Company, 1914, p. 15.

Farm Atlas of Linn County. Cedar Rapids: Republican and Times, 1921, p. 37.

New Atlas of Linn County, Iowa. Albia: Wood Atlas Company, 1938, p. 21.

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Continuation sheet Geographical Data

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Measuring at the northwest corner of the Northeast quarter of the Southwest quarter of Section 23, T-82-N, R-5-W of the 5th P.M., thence due east 905.11' to point of beginning, thence due east along the same line 100', thence south 5°-34'-30" 175.26', thence west 100', thence north along a line which is parallel to the eastern boundary line 175.26' to place of beginning. This parcel includes only the house and attached garage. The point which is 100' east of the point of beginning is also 324' west of the section centerpoint.