

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Alleman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 2701 NW 158th Ave. not for publication N/A
city or town Slater vicinity x
state Iowa code IA county Polk code 153 zip code 50244

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant X nationally _____ statewide _____ locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Steve King 12 MARCH 2015
Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____
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 for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. 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 of Keeper Patrick Andrews Date of Action 5/1/2015

Alleman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District
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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing Noncontributing

<u>9</u>	<u>3</u> buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>1</u>	<u>3</u> structures
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>12</u>	<u>6</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/ agricultural fields
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/ agricultural outbuildings
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/ animal facility
DOMESTIC/single dwellings

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural fields
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural outbuildings
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/ animal facility
DOMESTIC/single dwellings

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>CONCRETE</u>
	<u>STONE</u>
roof	<u>METAL</u>
	<u>ASPHALT</u>
	<u>WOOD</u>
walls	<u>WOOD</u>
	<u>BRICK</u>
other	<u></u>
	<u></u>

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: COLD WAR RESOURCES
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1955 – 1965

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Dates

1955

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 157.02 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	445345	4633085	3	15	446149 4633866
2	15	445342	4633882	4	15	446148 4633064

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jan Olive Full, Historian, w/ research assistance by Verda M. Alleman and Bruce A. Alleman

organization Tallgrass Historians LC date August 2014

street & number 2460 S. Riverside Drive telephone 319.354.6722

city or town Iowa City state IA zip code 52246

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name see Additional Documentation continuation sheet

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

=====
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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6. Function or Use

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure

7. Description¹

Summary Paragraph

A recognized century farm and held within the extended Alleman family since the 1880s, the Richard L. and Verda M. Alleman Farm Historic District is located in central Iowa, in northern Polk County, about half way between the Des Moines/Ankeny area to the south and Ames in Story County to the north. Urban growth from the south appears to be especially vigorous but it remains several miles from the historic district, which is surrounded by a solidly rural and agricultural landscape. Land in this central Iowa region – the state’s most recently glaciated Des Moines Lobe – is relatively flat and poorly drained. Drainage tile laid in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, “turned the Des Moines Lobe into highly productive farmland.” (Prior, 47). The small towns of Sheldahl and Slater are about three miles to the northwest of the Alleman farm. The town of Alleman, another small hamlet named after an early ancestor,² is about the same distance to the southeast along U.S. 69. That highway was once a main central Iowa route between the Minnesota and Missouri borders, and brought visibility and economic potential to the town of Alleman. With the opening of Interstate 35 in 1965, however, U.S. 69 has been relegated to a busy road carrying local traffic between Ankeny and Ames instead of its former long distance travelers. Richard and Verda Alleman’s farm is a 160-acre, quarter section farm occupying the southwest quarter of Section 4 in Polk County’s Lincoln township. It is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of the north/south NW 30th Street and the east/west NW 158th Avenue. The farm’s house, barn, and outbuildings – the farmstead – is a quarter mile east of this intersection along NW 158th Avenue. The farm has long been divided into four approximately 40-acre fields and the farmstead remains much the way it was in 1955 when, in a chaotic public event, the farm was visited by a large delegation of Russian agronomists and Soviet party officials. Today, the farmstead is occupied by Richard and Verda Alleman’s youngest son, Brian, and his family, while most of the fields are rented and planted by others.³ Richard LaVerne Alleman passed away in 1982; Verda Mae Alleman (Fig. 1) now resides in Ankeny.

Agricultural Fields – The farm (Fig. 2) is located in the southwest quarter of Section 4, Township 81 North, and Range 24 West. This is Lincoln Township within Polk County. The arable 160-acre quarter section has been reduced by about 1.55 acres, which are dedicated to county-owned roads on the west and south edges of the farm (although the farm is still commonly referred to as a 160-acre farm). The square-shaped farm is divided by fences and/or linear green space into its present four, 40-acre fields and has been since at least the 1930s and perhaps as far back as the 1880s when the farm came into the extended Alleman family.

¹ For software reasons, footnotes and figure numbers start over at 1 in both Section 7 and Section 8.

² Bruce Alleman to author, letter dated 4/11/2013.

³ Richard and Verda Alleman’s nephews now farm the land.

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Figure 1 Verda Alleman and her two children, Bruce (standing) and Sherry, soon after the Russian delegation's visit in July 1955. The slatted corn crib (left) and monitor-roof farrow house, both extant, are in the background. Alleman Family Scrapbook, published in *Harvester World*, August 1955.

The farmstead, with its collection of traditional agricultural buildings, occupies about 4 acres in the southeast corner of the southwest 40 acres, making the overall agricultural field in that corner of the farm somewhat smaller than the other three 40-acre fields. Reducing this southwest "40 acres" even more is a small natural stream that cuts across the extreme southwest corner of the field. This stream is currently known as "Four Mile Creek." The farmstead's location is roughly at the center point of the farm's half-mile-long southern border along NW 158th Ave. Field divisions and the farm's perimeter borders with neighbors on the north and east are determined by traditional wire fencing with wood and steel posts. White board fencing is also used to pen livestock within the interior of the farmstead itself. Modern field equipment's increased turning radii has resulted in some field fencing being removed, including the east/west field fence and roadside fencing on the west and most of the south perimeters. Despite some fencing removal, the four traditional fields are still clearly visible in current aerial photographs. These field divisions were never visible *in toto* from the ground from just one location because of the distances involved, but can be understood by traveling around the farm to observe fence lines or crop changes or, even better, by flying at low altitude over it (which was done by at least one plane during the 1955 Russian delegation visit).

In the 1950s, each of the four fields had a similar crop rotation schedule: corn would be grown for two years. The third year, oats and alfalfa were sown together. The oats matured and were harvested first, with the alfalfa then left to grow. The fourth year the field was used as pasture for livestock, and then the four-year rotation would start over. Hay was also present on the farm. Today, the fields continue to be used for livestock pasture in the southwest quarter and a crop rotation of corn and soybeans.

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Figure 2 The 160-acre Alleman Farm is centered in this aerial photograph from 2013 by the Polk County Assessor. The four farm fields are distinct despite the removal of the east/west interior field fence. A linear green drainage course from the center west to NW 30th Street maintains the distinction between the northwest and southwest 40-acre fields. Another green drainage course splits off and heads southeast. The Alleman farmstead at the bottom of the aerial is marked with the numbers “2701” along NW 158th Ave.

Farmstead

The farm buildings are arranged around a central graveled driveway that turns north off of NW 158th Ave. The drive terminates more or less in the center of the historic farmstead. Using a clock face as a directional device, the house would be at about 4 o'clock, with the barn at 10 o'clock. In between these two buildings, arranged around the open center of the clock face, are various outbuildings used for specific purposes. Most of these buildings were constructed between 1910 and 1940 and reflect the diversified nature of the farm during the early and mid twentieth century. Table 1 below lists the resources of the farm and notes information about their function, age, and materials. This information is based on family records, visual estimates, and the Polk County assessor. The farm house present in 1955 was later destroyed by fire and replaced with the present Ranch-style house in the late 1970s. Also in the 1970s, the western edge of the farmstead was expanded to accommodate a mobile home and garage near the highway, accessed by a separate drive. Farther north, closer to the farm fields, the expanded farmstead permitted the construction of three metal small-grain storage bins.

The south facing house is a rectangular one-story Ranch, with a two-car garage extension on its west end. Decorative brick veneer clads the façade and wood siding covers the rest. The low gabled roof is broken at the south center by a small gabled bump-out containing a bay window.

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Like the house, the large, gable entry, hay barn (Fig. 3) faces south also. Its ridge line runs north and south. At the south gable peak is a long narrow hay hood. Shed roofed lean-to livestock wings are attached on the west, north, and east sides, with large drive doors on south ends of the east and west lean-tos. The barn's walls are completely clad with vertical boards and battens painted the traditional red. Inside, the structural framework is of heavy, sawn timbers, with an open hay mow in the center at the ground-level dirt floor. While barn itself has a stone foundation, lean-to foundations are concrete.



Figure 3 The Alleman's nineteenth century hay and livestock barn is now home to a small band of horses, kept for pleasure rather than working. The board-fence pen now confines sheep. The camera is facing northwest. Bruce Alleman photo 2014.

The next largest building on the farmstead is the wooden drive-through slatted crib (Fig. 4), which sits prominently at about 7 o'clock on the clock face. This crib is slightly rectangular and a tall story-and-a-half in height. Sliding doors cover the central drive on the east and west gable ends. On either side of the drive the walls of the side cribs are slatted to encourage ventilation for drying the ear corn once stored inside. Above the drive, the walls have solid wood siding to permit small-grain storage (probably the oats) loaded by a conveyor or elevator through the roof cupola. The concrete foundation is not solid but perforated with wide openings for additional ventilation from under the building.

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Figure 4 Drive-through slatted corn crib, looking northwest from the central farmstead drive. Bruce Alleman photo, 2014.

Smaller buildings toward the west side of the farmstead include a monitor-roof farrow house (Fig. 5), used for sheltering sows with young piglets; a cattle loafing shed with an open south side; and two smaller sheds, one of which is at the base of the concrete silo. Toward the north rear of the farmstead is the chicken house and machine shed and shop. Sheep are now housed in pens outside the north barn lean-to and the chicken house. The building numbers in the aerial photograph (Fig. 6) below are keyed to Table 1.



Figure 5 Farrow house, facing west. Tallgrass Historians LC photo, 2014.

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Figure 6 Winter aerial photograph of the Alleman farm, 2009. Building numbers have been added.

Alleman Family Collection. No scale.

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Table 1. Contributing and Noncontributing Resources on the Alleman Farm

Numbers keyed to aerial	Resource Name or Function	Construction Year Family Records (Assessor's date)	Materials R=Roof W=Walls F= Foundation	Existed 1955-1965	Contributing Resource?
1	Cattle Shed	c. 1920 (1915)	R=wood shingle W= wood F=concrete	Yes	Yes
2	Farrow House	c. 1920 (1915)	R=metal W=wood F=concrete	Yes	Yes
3	Barn	c. 1887 (lean-to's: 1910-1920)	R=metal W=wood F=stone, concrete	Yes	Yes
4	Feed Shed	c. 1920 (1915)	R=metal W=wood F=concrete	Yes	Yes
5	Corn Crib	c. 1920 (1936)	R=metal W=wood F= concrete	Yes	Yes
6	Stave Silo	1958 (1910)	R=metal W=concrete F=concrete	Yes	Yes
7	Feed Shed at base of #6	(1920)	R=metal W=wood F=concrete	Yes	Yes
8	Chicken House	c. 1920 (1910)	R=metal W=wood F=concrete	Yes	Yes
9	House	(1978)	R=asphalt W=wood, brick F=concrete	No	No
10	Machine Shed	c. 1920 (1930)	R=metal W=wood F=concrete	Yes	Yes
11	Hog House (4-pen)	c. 1950 (1910)	R=metal W=wood F=concrete	Yes	Yes
12	Grain Bin	1997 (1979)	R&W=metal F=concrete	No	No
13	Grain Bin	1997 (1979)	R&W metal F=concrete	No	No
14	Grain Bin	1997 (1979)	R&W=metal F=concrete	No	No
15	Mobile Home	1978 (1978)	R=metal W=unk. F=n/a	No	No
16	Garage	1978 (1970)	R=asphalt W=composite F=unk.	No	No
17	Natural windbreak (evergreens and deciduous)	Various dates		Mixed material and ages	Yes – deciduous trees and windbreak location predate 1955
18	Fields and fencing			Yes	Yes

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Integrity

The Alleman Farm has very good historic integrity. The most significant alterations are the replacement of the original farm house in the late 1970s and the removal of several fence lines to accommodate larger modern equipment. The National Register *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes* Bulletin acknowledges that "No landscape will appear exactly as it did fifty or one hundred years ago. Vegetation grows, land use practices change, and structures deteriorate. The general character and feeling of the historic period, however, must be retained for eligibility" (21). In the case of the Alleman Farm, the 1955 agricultural landscape remains remarkably consistent. The "overall sense of past time and place is evident" in the traditional 160 acre farm perimeter and its associated historic farmstead buildings (*National Register Bulletin: How to Complete the National Register Form 4*).

Comments on specific integrity aspects are as follows:

- (1) location: the farm and its farmstead are in their original location;
- (2) design: the farm's division into four equal 40-acre parcels and the location decision for the farmstead predates 1955. They were largely the result of conscious decisions of Alleman family ancestors and these design decisions have been maintained until recent years when the east/west field fence line was removed to accommodate larger machinery;
- (3) setting: the surrounding landscape of farm fields and grid-system county blacktops continues to be rural and agricultural and little changed since 1955;
- (4) materials: the type of crops grown on the Alleman Farm have slightly changed since 1955. While corn is still grown and there remains an area of pasture, the rotation schedule now includes soybean instead of alfalfa and oats. A low crop lacking the height of corn, soybeans are visually similar to alfalfa, therefore able to "generally convey integrity of setting" (*Rural Historic Landscapes* Bulletin, 23);
- (5) workmanship: the majority of farmstead buildings continues to reflect the workmanship of the original builders. Newer additions such as the farmhouse and metal silos do not reflect the historic integrity, but in light of the overall resource count and scale of the remainder of the historic farm district, do not detract significantly either;
- (6) feeling: the overall rural character of the rural landscape, the presence of seasonal crops (or windswept bare fields in the winter), and the Alleman family's farmstead neighbors result in excellent integrity of feeling;
- (7) association: there is a direct link between this farm and the Russian agricultural delegates' visits.

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8. Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The Richard L. and Verda M. Alleman Farm, in northern Polk County Iowa, is significant at the national level under Criterion A for its prominent role in hosting a Russian delegation¹ of agronomists and agricultural managers in July 1955, an event prompted by journalist Lauren K. Soth that promoted détente between the Soviet Union and the United States at the height of the Cold War and laid the groundwork for a similar visit to Iowa four years later by Nikita Khrushchev.² By early 1955, the power struggle that followed Joseph Stalin's death in 1953 between Nikita Khrushchev and Georgy Malenkov had been settled with Khrushchev emerging as supreme leader of the Soviet Union. During this same time, Russia and its satellites suffered from poor harvests and a shrinking rural population as young people moved to industrializing cities – the results of Stalin and Malenkov's emphasis on developing industry over agriculture. With a peasant's background himself and understanding the importance of agriculture to the Soviet Union, once in control Khrushchev quickly set ambitious goals for increasing agricultural production by focusing on corn and livestock, and by opening new lands for state farms in Central Asia and Siberia – his so-called Virgin Lands program. When Khrushchev publically complimented the United States on its agricultural success during a speech that also severely criticized Soviet agricultural management, the influential Des Moines Register lightheartedly invited him to send a delegation to learn how Iowa farmers managed to be so successful. Lauren K. Soth, editorial page editor and author of the invitation, also noted that “of course, the Russians wouldn't do it.”³ But Khrushchev immediately accepted the invitation, sending his crony, Vladimir Matskevich, and a host of Soviet agricultural officials to learn Iowa's “secrets” first-hand.⁴ On a sweltering day in the middle of July, 1955 then, 12 leading Soviet agricultural scientists and managers, plus a hundred or so reporters descended on the Alleman farm to learn about tall corn, fat hogs, and the amazing machinery that enabled one young farm family to do the work that took dozens of Russian laborers to complete. At least three other farms around the state were (officially⁵) visited that month, but the Alleman farm was the first stop for the delegation and the only traditional diversified farm on the agenda. It received the most attention from national and international journalists, some of whom blatantly emphasized the capitalism versus communism angle in their stories. The Alleman farm so impressed Matskevich that he returned to Iowa again in 1971 for a second visit to the Allemans and their farm, this time as the elevated Soviet Union Minister of Agriculture, the top man in Russian agriculture.⁶ The period of significance runs from 1955 until 1965, the National Register's 50-year sliding cutoff, in order to acknowledge the Alleman farm's continued historic integrity and significance as a focus of high-level Soviet agricultural interests during the period between 1955 and the return visit of Vladimir Matskevich.⁷

¹ Three in the delegation were from the Ukraine, one of the USSR's republics. *Des Moines Tribune*, undated, but July, 1955 clipping in the Alleman Family Scrapbook.

² Khrushchev visited the Roswell Garst farm in northwest of Des Moines in 1959. Garst was an enthusiastic promoter of hybrid seed corn and operated a 2,600 acre farm and livestock operation (Harold Lee, *Roswell Garst, A Biography* [Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1984], 182). In 2009, on the 50th anniversary of Khrushchev's visit, the Roswell and Elizabeth Garst Farmstead was listed with national significance in the National Register.

³ [Lauren Soth,] “If the Russians Want More Meat . . .”, editorial in *The Des Moines Register*, 2/10/1955. This is the editorial in which Soth invited the Russians to visit Iowa farms.

⁴ Some Americans worried that they Russians Khrushchev might send to Iowa would not actually be farmers. An unnamed Associated Press writer fretted, “For another thing, what assurances would there be that real farmers would show up in Iowa? What if the Russian representatives were more used to spying than farming?” “Chance of Soviet Visit to Iowa Seems Dim,” *Des Moines Register*, 3/3/1955.

⁵ The Roswell Garst farm at Coon Rapids became an unofficial stop.

⁶ John Strohm, “Russians Pay Us A Visit,” 1/1/1956. Reprinted in *The Freeman* (Foundation for Economic Education, online at http://www.fee.org/the_freeman/detail/russias-farmers-pay-us-a-visit, accessed on 7/14/2014).

⁷ Matskevich, as an important agricultural official, forms a neat bridge between two unlikely world leaders, Nikita Khrushchev and Richard Nixon, both of whom are credited with significant political and policy reforms. During his time in power, 1953 to 1964, Khrushchev sought to “de-Stalinize” Russia and improve the standard of living for Russian people, while Nixon later improved Russian-U.S. relations by eliminating specific trade barriers, thus enabling large Russian purchases of U.S. grain and livestock. The latter was a goal of Vladimir Matskevich's return trip to Iowa in 1971. See generally, William Taubman, *Khrushchev, The Man and His Era* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003); and on Nixon, see “Return Visit by Official From Russia,” *The Des Moines Register*, 12/14/1971. Taubman summarized Khrushchev's reform efforts as follows: “Khrushchev tried bravely to humanize

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The Global Context and the United States at Midcentury

Joseph Stalin and Joseph McCarthy – both prominent names in the news in 1940s and 50s, both known world wide, both politically ruthless. Stalin's rise through the ranks of the Communist Party in the 1920s, deftly outmaneuvering his rivals along the way, effectively made him despot of the Soviet Union by the end of the decade. During the 1930s Stalin collectivized peasant farms and pushed for rapid industrialization, but his cultural, political, and military purges left the Soviet Union unprepared for Hitler and World War II. The Soviet Union survived the war, but at a tremendous cost. Soon after, Stalin steered the U.S.S.R. into a postwar nuclear arms race with the United States. Accumulation of nuclear arms to a point of relative destructive equality was the standoff that epitomized the two super powers during the Cold War of the 1950s and 60s, a paradoxical situation that became known as "mutually assured destruction" or M.A.D.⁸ Enter Joseph McCarthy, junior United States Senator from Wisconsin in 1950. During an infamous speech in Wheeling, West Virginia that year – three years before Stalin's death – McCarthy claimed to have the names of more than 200 Communist spies working in the U.S. State Department. For the next four years McCarthy ruthlessly attacked politicians, journalists, Hollywood actors, and other prominent people during Senate hearings, creating a nationwide "Red Scare" that only subsided with his formal censure in December, 1954. The impact of these years was long lasting. Even today "McCarthyism" as a concept survives as the "political practice of publicizing accusations of disloyalty or subversion with insufficient regard to evidence" or "the use of methods of investigation and accusation regarded as unfair, in order to suppress opposition."⁹ The several years immediately preceding the 1955 Iowa visit were politically tense, difficult years, both in the Soviet Union and the United States. Clearly it was *not* an era conducive to peace overtures or handshakes – across the aisle or across the ocean.

Into this chilly environment of military and political intrigues stepped Midwestern journalist Lauren Soth with his invitation to Khrushchev in February 1955.¹⁰ Khrushchev had just become supreme Communist party chief, and on February 8, 1955 he was able to replace his main rival, Georgy Malenkov, as prime minister with his own man, Nikolay Bulganin.¹¹ Soth's unexpected invitation issued through the Des Moines Register's editorial page must have seemed like providence. Just the year before Khrushchev, then in charge of agriculture for the party, had formulated goals for quickly improving Soviet farm production: "first, by rapidly opening up millions of hectares of virgin and fallow land in the east and southeast [to be state-owned and run by volunteers]; and second, by promoting corn as a major grain and fodder crop."¹² He also wanted to reorganize Stalin's collectives by combining small and medium sized farms, and by creating central settlements at the center of each collective called "agrotowns."¹³ "Above all, it was necessary to increase the yield of certain specialized crops to raise production of feed for kolkhoz [collective] livestock..."¹⁴ According to Khrushchev's biographers, the "reason he

and modernize the Soviet System... Whereas Stalin was largely responsible for triggering the cold war, Khrushchev tried awkwardly to improve relations with the West. He also attempted to revitalize areas of Soviet life—agriculture, industry, and culture among others—that had languished under Stalinism" (XIX).

⁸ Information about Stalin was obtained online on July 14, 2014 at www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/stalin_joseph.shtml and http://www.pbs.org/redfiles/bios/all_bio_joseph_stalin.htm.

⁹ "McCarthyism/The "Red Scare," Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum website, accessed on 7/10/2014 at http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/online_documents/mccarthyism.html; additional biographical information obtained from the U.S. Senate website at https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Communists_In_Government_Service.htm on 7/24/2014.

¹⁰ The same editorial column published on February 10, 1955 contained another profound editorial in which Soth described the "age of atomic deadlock" achieved between the United States and the Soviet Union. Claiming the first two "phases of the atomic age had passed...the world is now in the third and most dangerous phase. The age of atomic deadlock. It is only wishful thinking from now on to talk about being 'ahead' in a race which both sides have now irrevocably lost." "The Atomic Deadline is Here," *The Des Moines Register*, 2/10/1955.

¹¹ Short biographies of Malenkov and Bulganin can be found at the *Britannica Online Encyclopedia*, online at <http://www.britannica.com>, accessed on 7/15/2014. Bulganin's friendship with Khrushchev is discussed at Roy A. Medvedev and Zhores A. Medvedev, *Khrushchev: The Years in Power* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 54.

¹² Medvedev and Medvedev, *Khrushchev: The Years in Power*, 57.

¹³ According to a Lauren Soth editorial published in the *Des Moines Register* on 2/13/1955, between 1950 and 1953, there was a merger of 250,000 collectives that reduced the total number to 94,000. The agrotowns were never built.

¹⁴ Medvedev and Medvedev, *Khrushchev: The Years in Power*, 36.

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concentrated so intensively on agriculture was that he knew that extricating the country from its cycle of chronic agricultural crises was essential” to the success of industry and the economy of the Soviet Union.¹⁵ The United States’ industrial growth and high agricultural production levels were obvious models for Khrushchev and his allies, but his public admiration was surprising considering world politics at the time.

As editorial page editor of the nationally respected Des Moines Register, Lauren Soth¹⁶ (Fig. 1) closely watched Russian politics. He had quick and ready access to the news coming out of Washington, D.C. since the Register was part of Cowles



Figure 1 Lauren K. Soth, c. 1956. This image of Soth was probably taken in connection with winning the “Pulitzer Prize in Journalism for Editorial Writing.” Lauren Soth Papers, Special Collections/Iowa State University Library

¹⁵ Medvedev and Medvedev, *Khrushchev: The Years in Power*, 38.

¹⁶ Born in Sibley, Iowa, Soth (1910-1998) was a graduate of Iowa State College in Ames and employed by ISC from 1934 until 1947, when he left to become an editorial writer for the Des Moines Register, a morning paper, and the evening Tribune. He served as the Register’s editorial page editor from 1954 until he retired in 1975. His extensive collection of papers and photographs are held at the ISC (now Iowa State University) library’s special collections department.

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Publications,¹⁷ a media holding company with a Washington based journalist named Fletcher Knebel.¹⁸ Knebel joined Cowles Communication in 1950. His employer, Iowan Mike Cowles, was a “liberal Republican and internationalist...for many years an influential voice in urging the United States to move away from isolationism and toward a more active role in world affairs.”¹⁹ It is easy to imagine that Fletcher Knebel and Lauren Soth spoke frequently regarding events in Washington and beyond. It is also easy to believe that Mike Cowles wholeheartedly approved of Soth’s 1955 editorials. Soth’s open invitation to Khrushchev perfectly blended Cowles’ international concerns with Soth’s knowledge of Iowa agriculture, at just the right Cold War moment when Khrushchev could immediately appreciate the benefits to be derived from a Russian visit to Iowa.

The Editorials

Soth headlined his February 10, 1955, *Des Moines Register* editorial – for which he won a Pulitzer Prize – with the headline “If the Russians Want More Meat. . .”²⁰ First noting that Khrushchev “seems to be the real boss of the Soviet Union now,” Soth wrote about Khrushchev’s speech that “lambast[ed] the performance of the Soviet economic managers,” especially *agricultural* managers, saying “Khrushchev advocated the development of feed-livestock agriculture as in the United States...He urged collective and state farms to plant hybrid corn to provide more feed for livestock.” Soth concluded Khrushchev was “talking sense” and even though “We have no diplomatic authority of any kind,...we hereby extend an invitation to any delegation Khrushchev wants to select to come to Iowa to get the lowdown on raising high quality cattle, hogs, sheep and chickens. We promise to hide none of our ‘secrets.’ We will take the visiting delegation to Iowa’s great agricultural experiment station in Ames, *to some of the leading farmers of Iowa*, to our livestock breeders, soil conservation experts and seed companies. Let the Russians see how we do it” (emphasis added). “We ask nothing in return,” Soth added. “[The visit] might even persuade them that there is a happier future in developing a high level of living than in this paralyzing race for more and more armament. Of course, the Russians wouldn’t do it. And we doubt that even our own government would dare to permit an adventure in human understanding of this sort, but it *would* make sense” (emphasis original).²¹

Soth later reflected on why he penned this editorial, a reflection probably prompted by his consideration for the Pulitzer Prize. “For some time,” he wrote, “I had been brooding on what seemed to me a paralysis in diplomacy between ourselves and the Communist bloc of countries. Officially, both sides seem incapable of making the sort of gestures which might lead

¹⁷ Cowles Publications was a “communications empire” of magazines, newspapers, book publishers, and radio and television stations created by Gardner “Mike” Cowles, Jr. The financial success of the original *Des Moines Register* and *Tribune* newspaper, created by Mike Cowles’ father, Gardner Cowles, made Cowles Publications possible. At its peak in the 1960s, Cowles Publications owned, among other things, *Look* and *Family Circle* magazines, a *Des Moines* television station, as well as other stations around the country and a cable TV system, plus a book publisher. Mike Cowles’ advancing age and the siphoning off of magazine advertisers by the national television networks brought about the eventual dissolution of Cowles Publications in 1978. Mike Cowles died in 1985, a week after the sale of the *Des Moines Register* and *Tribune* to the Gannett Company. “Gardner Cowles Jr. is Dead at 82; Helped Build Publishing Empire,” *New York Times*, 7/9/1985; William Fredricks, “Cowles, Gardner ‘Mike,’ Jr.,” In *The Biographical Dictionary of Iowa*, eds. David Hudson, Marvin Bergman, and Loren Horton, 105-107 (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2009).

¹⁸ Fletcher Knebel grew up in Oak Park, Illinois and worked at several papers, including the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* where he was the Washington correspondent in 1936. After serving in the navy during World War Two, he joined the Cowles organization. For many years he authored a daily column published on the front page of the morning *Register* called “Potomac Fever,” in which he satirized national politics and government. In 1962 he co-authored the Cold War novel “Seven Days in May,” a best seller that was later made in to a major motion picture. “Fletcher Knebel, Writer, 81, Dies; Co-Author of ‘Seven Days in May,’” *New York Times*, 2/28/1993.

¹⁹ “Gardner Cowles Jr. is Dead at 82...”

²⁰ The ellipsis in this headline is original. In 1956 Soth was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in journalism “for the editorial inviting a farm delegation from the Soviet Union to visit Iowa, which led directly to the Russian farm visit to the U.S.” The prize is awarded for “distinguished editorial writing, the test of excellence being clearness of style, moral purpose, sound reasoning, and power to influence public opinion in what the writer conceived to be the right direction, using available journalistic tool.” Pulitzer Prize winners in 1956 in other categories included Talbot Hamlin’s biography of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, *The Diary of Anne Frank* by Albert Hackett and Frances Goodrich, and *The Age of Reform* by Richard Hofstadter in the history category. Information available at www.pulitzer.org, accessed on 7/8/2014.

²¹ Soth actually suggested an exchange by sending a U.S. delegation to Russia at the same time.

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to an improvement in relations. The feeling of impending doom by A-war and H-war becomes overpowering at times. In this mood, I got to thinking about the speech by Nikita Khrushchev, Soviet Communist party secretary, in which he criticized the performance of Russian agriculture. Khrushchev had referred to American methods of feed grain and livestock production as worthy of emulation by Russian farmers. So I wrote a piece inviting the Russians to come to Iowa...I was not so optimistic as to expect the Russians to respond to this invitation—and was astonished when they did. The reaction [of the Russians and the American public]...suggest[s] that the time might be ripe for a softening of cold war antagonisms.” (undated signed typescript, Soth Collection, ISU Special collections).

Even with a quick acceptance by Khrushchev, official U.S. channels did not respond. Still sensitive because of Joseph McCarthy’s attacks, the State Department appeared to put up road blocks to the visit ranging from the lack of a formal written acceptance on the part of the Russians, to the demand that all the Russian representatives would have to be fingerprinted. “This was to be expected,” Soth wrote in a March 4, 1955 editorial. “The State Department has been so harassed by charges of Communist infiltration and ‘softness’ toward Communism, that no underling is going to take any chance of getting caught out on a limb.” Still, the State Department “underlings” faced an uphill battle after President Eisenhower himself approved of the idea in a White House news conference. The White House reporter who raised the subject at the press conference was none other than Fletcher Knebel of Cowles Publications.

The presidential news conference took place on March 2, 1955 and addressed a wide range of topics. The fifth question, toward the middle of the press conference, was raised by Knebel who asked: “Mr. President, what do you think of the suggestion advanced out in Iowa, and now seconded very heartily by an official Soviet publication called “Soviet Agriculture”²² that a group of Russians come out to Iowa and see how we grow the tall corn and the hogs?” (The transcription of this press conference notes laughter followed the question.) Within the president’s relatively short response was clear support for the idea. “I couldn’t imagine anything better than to have some of their agricultural people visit our agricultural people,” Eisenhower said. “I visited once both state farms and collective farms in Russia, and there was no place where I was queried so insistently and in such detail as I was on those farms... I really believe this would be an area in which some good could come... We would have some difficulty in clearing things under our present laws. There are a number of things to be studied and looked at; but just as a personal opinion as to what good might come out of it, these two peoples, these two representatives of agriculture getting together, I would say it would be good and good only.”²³

President Eisenhower’s stance surely was quickly conveyed to Lauren Soth at the Register offices in Des Moines. Two mornings later, on Friday, March 4th, Soth mentioned it in an editorial, and again on Monday, March 7th, and again in the March 13th *Sunday Register*. At the same time, Soth began alternately cajoling and shaming the State Department in his editorials. “Is it wise policy for the United States to reject an exchange of agricultural knowledge? Doesn’t this just play into the hands of Communist propagandists? Surely the great, powerful, free United States is not afraid to risk this small contact with the Soviet Union.”²⁴ And a few days later, “We are glad to learn that the State Department is not opposed to the idea of bringing some Russian farmers and farm experts to Iowa to study corn-hog agriculture. ‘High officials’ corrected the impression reporters had gained from some just plain ‘officials’ that the department was cool to an interchange of farm information with the Soviets....Thank goodness the State Department had the good sense to issue this statement promptly. It wouldn’t do at all for the United States to appear to be afraid of admitting a few Russians to study agriculture. It wouldn’t do at all for the United States to reject a chance for improving relations with the Russians – no matter how tiny the chance.”²⁵

²² The Des Moines Register published a translation of the “acceptance” in “Agriculture” the “daily paper of the Soviet Russian agriculture...” “How Soviets Answered Iowa Bid,” *Des Moines Register*, 3/31/1955.

²³ Dwight D. Eisenhower; “The President’s News Conference,” 3/2/1955. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed on 7/10/2014 at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=10424>. [Located with the assistance of Mr. Chris Abraham, Archivist, Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum, Abilene, Kansas.]

²⁴ *Des Moines Register*, 3/4/1955.

²⁵ *Des Moines Register*, 3/7/1955.

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When the process bogged down over the issue of fingerprinting (to which the Russians refused to submit), Soth wrote “[T]he big, strong United States government has handcuffed itself so tightly on rules and regulations for permitting foreign visitors, that it cannot unbend to permit this adventure in establishing some sort of human relationship with the Russians... It is a pity we cannot be flexible enough in our administration of the immigration law to make exceptions for a purpose which both the president and the secretary of state have said was in the interest of the foreign policy of the United States.”²⁶

Finally, the Soviet government suggested it might classify the agricultural delegation as “official” thereby qualifying for an exemption from the fingerprint requirement that had stalled things. Soth urged the State Department to “go along” with this suggestion, concluding that, if they came, the “Russians could not help but observe that what makes farming productive is the incentive system, the family farm and a free society. It would be a healthy thing for them to see this, no matter what they might say about it when they got back home.”²⁷ Then in a May 19th editorial, Soth announced that the exchange was approved, opining that “the Russian agriculture situation is so desperate that the Kremlin is willing to run the risk of sending 10 top agricultural officials to this country for a month, and exposing them to the wealth and freedom of America. This sets up a rare opportunity for the United States, and particularly for the state of Iowa where the Russian delegation will spend most of its time... We are proud that Iowa State College has been selected by the State Department to make general arrangement for the tour of the Soviet group in Iowa.”²⁸ Thus, through his *Des Moines Register* editorials published from February through May, 1955, Soth’s public pleading cajoling, shaming, and reasoning created a rare opportunity for détente during the chilly Cold War environment. But there was not much time to plan a successful Iowa tour.

The Soviet Delegation’s Tour

Soth continued to orchestrate the Iowa visit and participate in planning the delegation’s whirlwind tour in other states. A draft itinerary for the entire five week tour survives in Soth’s papers at the Iowa State University, as does correspondence suggesting his concern for maintaining the visit’s main goals in the face of special interest groups with their own agendas. Arrangements in each state were to be handled largely by educational institutions. Wheat farms in Nebraska and South Dakota would be handled by their respective state universities; grain elevators and warehousing in Minnesota would be arranged by the University of Minnesota. The Chicago stockyards and a meat-packing plant were on the itinerary, as was a visit to the Oliver Corporation, a farm implement manufacturer in South Bend, Indiana. A tour of the Ford Motor Company plant in Detroit was even contemplated. If there was any free time, the Russians were to be treated to a baseball game in the Twin Cities and tours of the museums along the lakeshore in Chicago. But the Iowa visit was first on the itinerary and, at nearly two weeks, the longest.²⁹

The “object” of the Iowa visit in particular was to be “focused on the economic production and marketing of corn and hogs. The specifics will be developed by Iowa [State College in Ames] with whatever guidance is needed from the USDA and the Department of State. At this time it is felt by USDA that the Iowa itinerary should include:

- a. Visits to outstanding family type corn-hog farms and to beef cattle farms.
- b. Study of significant research being conducted by the College.
- c. Visit to a hybrid corn company.
- d. Perhaps a brief visit to John Morrell Packing Co., Ottumwa, Iowa.

²⁶ *Des Moines Register*, 4/19/1955.

²⁷ *Des Moines Register*, 5/9/1955.

²⁸ *Des Moines Register*, 5/19/1955.

²⁹ “Proposed Program and Itinerary for ‘Russian Agricultural Delegation,’ Second Draft,” Soth Papers, Special Collections/Iowa State University Library. It is unknown how much of the itinerary came to fruition.

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e. Participation in various civic functions such as Farmer's Days, Political rallies, Chamber of Commerce meetings, Lions Club meeting, church services, etc."³⁰

It was this last tour objective that most concerned Soth (Fig. 2). Anticipating conflicting demands on the Russians' time, Soth organized a meeting as early as mid-March, 1955 to plan the tour in Iowa. On March 12th,³¹ Soth wrote to the presidents of Iowa State College, the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, and the Iowa Farmers Grain Dealers Association suggesting lunch in Des Moines to discuss the potential Russian visit. Kenneth McDonald,³² the Register's editor, and J.S. Russell, its farm editor, would also be sitting around the lunch table. Soth noted that already "politicians, Junior Chambers of Commerce, luncheon clubs and this and that are trying to 'get in on the act.'" He continued, "I think we want to be sure that the Russians

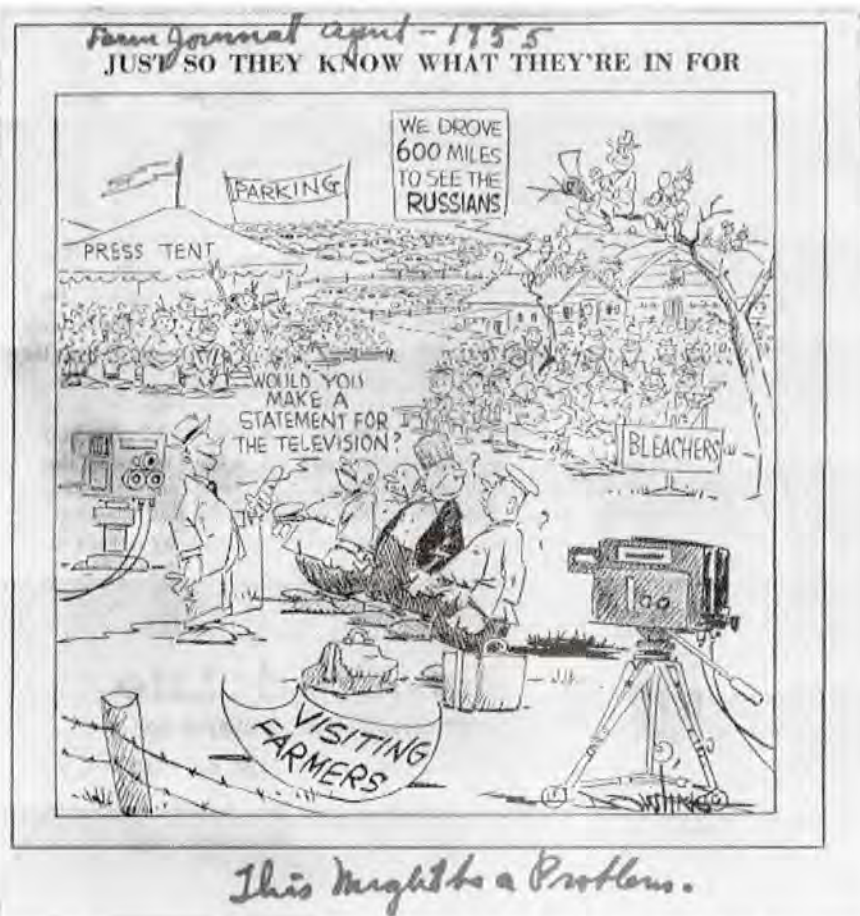


Figure 2 One of the many political cartoons published in advance of the actual visit. The handwriting appears to be Lauren Soth's. Published in the *Farm Journal* (April 1955), Lauren Soth Papers, Special Collections/Iowa State University Library.

³⁰ "Proposed Program and Itinerary...", 2.

³¹ This was the same day the *New York Times* reported that "informed sources" indicated the decision had been made at the "top administration" level to allow the Russian agricultural delegation visit, even though it would not be formally announced for weeks. Soth clearly knew this but kept up the heat with his editorials.

³² When Kenneth McDonald died ten years ago at age 98, the *Los Angeles Times*/Associated Press wires service obituary stated that he became Des Moines Register editor in 1953 and publisher in 1960. During his tenure, the paper's recognition and prestige grew "to the point it was considered one of the best papers in the U.S." *Los Angeles Times*, 8/28/2004, accessed on 7/31/2014 at <http://articles.latimes.com>.

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have a chance to see the Iowa farm economy and the Iowa society as it really is. We should not try to hide anything, *nor should we try to steer the visitors to our show places*. We also should do all we can to see that the visitors are not harassed by a lot of groups and people outside of agriculture who may be only curiosity seekers” (emphasis added).³³

When the Russian delegates finally did step off the United DC-6 at the Des Moines airport on July 17, 1955 they were eagerly greeted by a far wider audience than just Iowa farmers and agricultural professionals. The 12 men were met on the tarmac by a curious crowd estimated from 3,000 to 5,000, including high school girls flashing signs reading “welcome” in Russian (Figs. 3-5).³⁴ The next day the Russians boarded an air-conditioned Greyhound bus for the 22 mile trip north to the Alleman farm. On board was 45-year old Vladimir Matskevich, head of the delegation and a personal friend of Khrushchev.³⁵ Information about Matskevich and the other 11 delegates is found in Table 2 below. Missing from the melee that ensued at the bus’s first stop, however, was Lauren Soth who was in Russia as part of the exchange delegation of Americans visiting Soviet farms.

Table 2. Members of the Russian Agricultural Delegation			
(The delegation was also "accompanied by 3 Russian newsmen." <i>Cedar Rapids Gazette</i> , 7/18/1955)			
Name	Age in 1955	Official Capacity	Photos taken in Des Moines
Vladimir Matskevich, ³⁶ (Leader of the Delegation)	45	First deputy minister of agriculture in Russia. Born in a small village in southern Ukraine, of peasant farmers. (http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Vladimir+Matskevich , on 7/14/2014)	
Alexandr Tulupnikov	48	Director of Russian agricultural economics research institute; called the "All-Union Scientific Research Institute for Agriculture" and located in Moscow. (<i>New York Times</i> , 7/20/1955)	
Nikolai Gureev	47	Deputy chairman, Ukraine Council of Ministers; agronomist; member, Ukrainian Supreme Soviet (legislative body); "Deputy Prime Minister of the Ukraine" (<i>New York Times</i> , 7/20/1955)	

³³ Letter by Lauren K. Soth to James H. Hilton, Howard Hill, and Oscar Heline, 3/12/1955. Lauren K. Soth Papers, RS 16/3/54, Special Collections/Iowa State University Library.

³⁴ National Council on American-Soviet Friendship, *U.S.A. Welcomes Soviet Farmers: The Dramatic Record of a History-Making Tour* (New York, c. 1955), 7.

³⁵ Professional biographies of Matskevich and the other 11 delegations members were supplied by the Soviet embassy in Washington, D.C. and published in the *Des Moines Tribune* during the Iowa visit (Alleman Family Scrapbook, clipping, no date). Other sources are cited in the table.

³⁶ *Time* magazine had a few editorial opinions about the agricultural delegation, expressed on its August 1, 1955 "National Affairs" page: "The delegates turned out to be top-drawer officials, ranging from a big collective-farm chairman to the boss of all Soviet farming, Acting Minister of Agriculture Vladimir Matskevich, 45, a suave, shaven-headed Ukrainian henchman of Communist Part Chief Nikita Khrushchev." Competing for column space on this national affairs page was news about the "Big Four" conference taking place in Geneva, Switzerland at the same time, involving President Dwight Eisenhower; Soviet Union's premier (newly installed by Khrushchev) Nikolai Bulganin; Prime Minister of France, Edgar Faure; and the British Prime Minister, Anthony Eden.








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Table 2. Members of the Russian Agricultural Delegation (The delegation was also "accompanied by 3 Russian newsmen." <i>Cedar Rapids Gazette</i> , 7/18/1955)			
Name	Age in 1955	Official Capacity	Photos taken in Des Moines
Andrei Shevchenko	44	Conservation expert; advisor to the Russian minister of agriculture	
Petr Babmindra	48	Director of a 115,000-acre state-owned farm -- the "largest grain farm in the Soviet Union." Born in the Ukraine to a peasant family, he looked the least like an Iowa's conception of a Russian. (<i>Des Moines Register</i> , 7/19/1955)	
Petr Svechnikov	52	Chairman of a large collective farm; called the "Kuban Collective Farm, one of the biggest corn producing farms in Russia. (<i>New York Times</i> , 7/20/1955). KCF had 35,000 acres and 2,700 laborers (1 for every 13 acres) (<i>U.S.A. Welcomes Soviet Farmers</i> , 11)	
Boris Savelev	53	Deputy chairman of the Russian economic commission (planning group)	
Aleksandr Ezhevski	39	Assistant to Minister in charge of agricultural implement production; engineer	
Yuri Goubash	58	Assistant to the manager of Russian state-owned farms	
Anatoli Sirotn	48	Chief editor, <i>Selskoe Khozyaistvo</i> (translation <i>Farming</i>), a daily newspaper with circulation of 700,000	


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Table 2. Members of the Russian Agricultural Delegation (The delegation was also "accompanied by 3 Russian newsmen." <i>Cedar Rapids Gazette</i> , 7/18/1955)			
Name	Age in 1955	Official Capacity	Photos taken in Des Moines
Nikolai Bogach	46	Director of one of the 9,000 farm machine and tractor pools, stationed in the Ukraine	
Boris Sokolov	58	Head of a corn selection laboratory in the Ukraine	

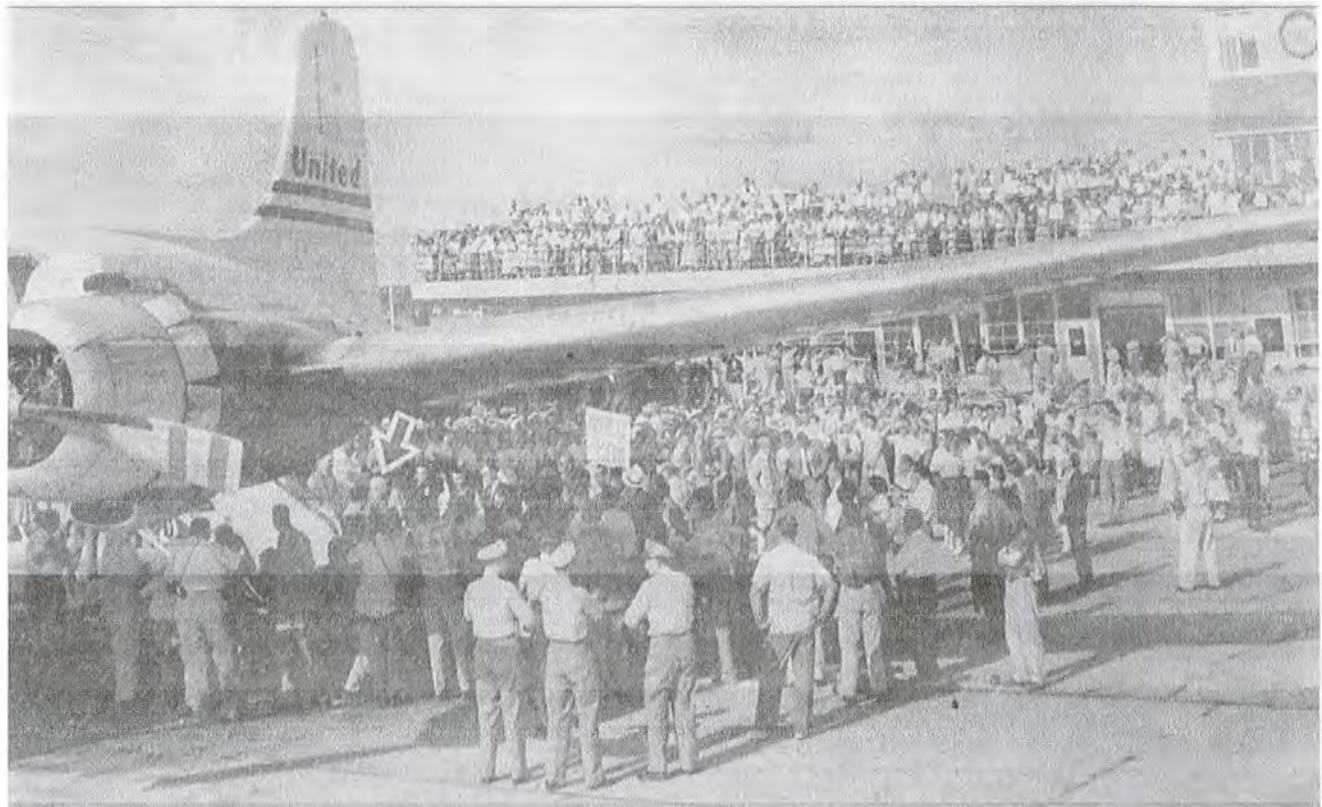


Figure 3 A large crowd greeted the Russians. The arrow points to Vladimir Matskevich, who is moving toward photographers positioned under the plane's engine. The image below looks like the resulting photo. Alleman Family Scrapbook clipping.

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Figure 4 In the photo above, Matskevich is at the bottom center with the curly-dark-haired Alexandr Tulupnikov over his right shoulder. The individual with the glasses over Matskevich's left shoulder may be John Strohm, an editor of agricultural magazines whom the State Department asked to be the official host and guide. He had accompanied the Russians from New York. Alleman Family Scrapbook.



Figure 5 Another view of the arrival of the Russians at the Des Moines airport, believed to be taken by Grover Hahn, Polk County extension agent. Color slide from the Alleman Family Collection.

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The Allemans' involvement with the Russian visit that hot July day had begun just ten days earlier when they received a call from Polk County Extension agent Grover Hahn asking them to host the visiting delegation. With the Allemans' agreement, and Iowa State College's approval, the Alleman farm was scheduled as the tour's first stop. Verda Alleman, 23 at the time, recalled that Hahn and ISU professor Herb Howell were "looking for a typical 'family farm' farmed by a veteran."³⁷ Her husband had served in Korea. With the decision made, the Allemans quickly returned to the painting that was already in progress on their farmstead, "even though it might look like we'd spruced up the place especially for their visit," Richard Alleman said.³⁸ One photographer even arrived early to catch them in the act of painting a board fence (Fig. 6).



Figure 6 Verda Alleman is seen here giving refreshments to a family crew painting the board fencing on the Alleman farmstead just prior to the Russian delegation visit. From left to right, the men are: Verda's husband, Richard; his brother, Robert Alleman; Verda's brother, Dean Floden; and Verda's father, Sanford Floden. While this particular scene was probably set up for the camera, the painting, which included the red barn, was already underway when the Russian visit was arranged. Alleman Family Collection; photographer unknown but thought to be an Iowa State College extension photographer.

³⁷ Verda Alleman, email to author, 7/10/2014.

³⁸ *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, clipping, no date, but 1955. Alleman Family Collection.

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The Event – A Chaotic Day on the Alleman Farm

Much as Lauren Soth anticipated, the first morning of the Iowa tour, July 18, developed into a carnival atmosphere rarely seen in Iowa *up to this point*.³⁹ The Greyhound bus leased for the tour was trailed by a caravan of 16 cars carrying dozens of reporters and photographers.⁴⁰ Newspaper reporters from the New York Times, Chicago Tribune, and Chicago Daily News, and the wire services joined Iowa print reporters from all over the state, including more than one from the Des Moines Register and Tribune. Based on his knowledge of the day's details, Frank Miller, the esteemed political cartoonist for the Register and a buddy of Lauren Soth appears to have been a part of the entourage as well (compare his cartoon in Fig. 7 with the same current view in Fig. 8).⁴¹ Magazine writers from LIFE, Time, and Newsweek were on hand, as



Figure 7 Cartoonist Frank Miller captured the essence of the melee at the Alleman farm with this image. The caption read “Ed, we should plan our family picnic sometime soon,” but the image needs no interpretation. *Des Moines Register*, 7/20/1955.

³⁹ The 1959 Khrushchev visit to Roswell Garst’s Coon Rapids farm prompted an even bigger media frenzy. Garst even threw silage at reporters to back them off a ways. See Harold Lee, *Roswell Garst: A Biography* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1984), black and white plates.

⁴⁰ *U.S.A. Welcomes Soviet Farmers*, 16.

⁴¹ Miller might have drawn his many cartoons of the Russian visit from photographs, but the detail in some of them suggests live impressions.

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Figure 8 This current view approximates the setting of the Frank Miller cartoon in Figure 7. The buildings are the same. From left to right: the corn crib, a shed behind the white tank, another shed, and the barn. The Farmall tractor in this photo is the one that towed the Russians' hay wagon around the farm fields as they inspected the corn and oats. Photograph by Bruce Alleman, July 2014.

were “newsreel” photographers, including one from Paramount News. One reporter came from as far away as Japan.⁴² A biplane buzzed over the Alleman farm, piloted for NBC or the Des Moines Register, and eventually landed in the field east of the farmstead.⁴³ This press group estimated at 60 to 100 was joined by neighbors, friends, and family of the Allemans, many of whom were standing along the farm driveway ready to announce the arrival of the bus as it pulled off the highway. “The neighbors,” the *New York Herald-Tribune* reported, “who had clustered around the driveway in a state of restrained excitement for nearly an hour, surged toward the road with the kids in the vanguard... Tippy, the dog, barked and ran in circles. Tippy seemed to know from the presence of swarms of strangers carrying camera and pencils that something unusual was about to happen on the sun-baked Alleman cattle-hog farm.”⁴⁴

Once off the bus, the Russians stayed in a group with their interpreter and guides. They were led by Richard Alleman, but surrounded by the swarming press. Vladimir Matskevich seemed especially annoyed at the disorder, chiding the group about the popping flashbulbs, the pushing and jockeying for position, and the general unruliness of the press. He quipped to Verda Alleman that if the photographers broke any fences they should stay behind and fix them – Russian humor that was repeated across the country the next day in newspaper articles and wire service stories about the event.⁴⁵

⁴² *Des Moines Register*, 7/14/1955.

⁴³ Verda Alleman, letter to author, received 8/14/2014.

⁴⁴ *New York Herald-Tribune*, 7/19/1955. This newspaper published reports of the visit to the Alleman farm in its Paris edition also.

⁴⁵ The cream of the crop, in terms of midcentury journalists, covered this event. Among those filing stories was Associated Press reporter Thomas P. Whitney whose article appears to be the most frequent wire service story published the next day in local and regional newspapers across the country. Whitney was fluent in Russian and had served as the attaché and chief of the economic section in the United States embassy in Moscow from 1944 until 1947 when he joined the AP as a correspondent and, later, as AP Moscow bureau chief. He was the translator for Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*, which was published in the United States in 1974 (“Thomas P. Whitney, Solzhenitsyn Translator, Dies at 90,” *New York Times* 12/12/2007).

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Eager to see Iowa's famous tall corn, the delegation quickly climbed atop a flat-bed hay wagon pulled by a Farmall tractor and headed off to inspect Richard Alleman's 75 acres of corn, followed by a second wagon loaded with photographers and reporters (Figs. 9-10). Once in the midst of corn higher than their heads, the Russians "dismounted the to inspect the crops... Each delegate carried a note pad and jotted down the answers Alleman and others gave to their numerous questions."⁴⁶ According to one reporter, "members of the group split up and wandered to different parts of the corn field. Tulupnikov, a



Figure 9 The press followed behind the Russians' hay-wagon in one of their own, also pulled by a tractor. Note the woman reporter and Frank Miller's rendition of her in his cartoon below (center right). The standing man at the far left, with the plaid shirt and gold-colored hat, is also represented in Miller's cartoon. Alleman Family Collection.

The Chicago Tribune sent Richard Orr, its seasoned rural affairs reporter. While employed by the Tribune during World War Two, the U.S. Army assigned him to serve as Glenn Miller's press secretary. He was president of Illinois and national press associations ("Richard Orr, 83, Longtime Tribune Farm Columnist," *Chicago Tribune*, 7/20/1998). Among the Des Moines George Shane was an artist, reporter, and columnist for the Des Moines Register from the 1940s through the 1960s. "Guide to the George Shane Papers," George Shane Papers, Special Collections/University of Iowa.
⁴⁶ Clipping, *Des Moines Tribune*, undated by ca. 7/19/1955, Alleman Family Scrapbook.

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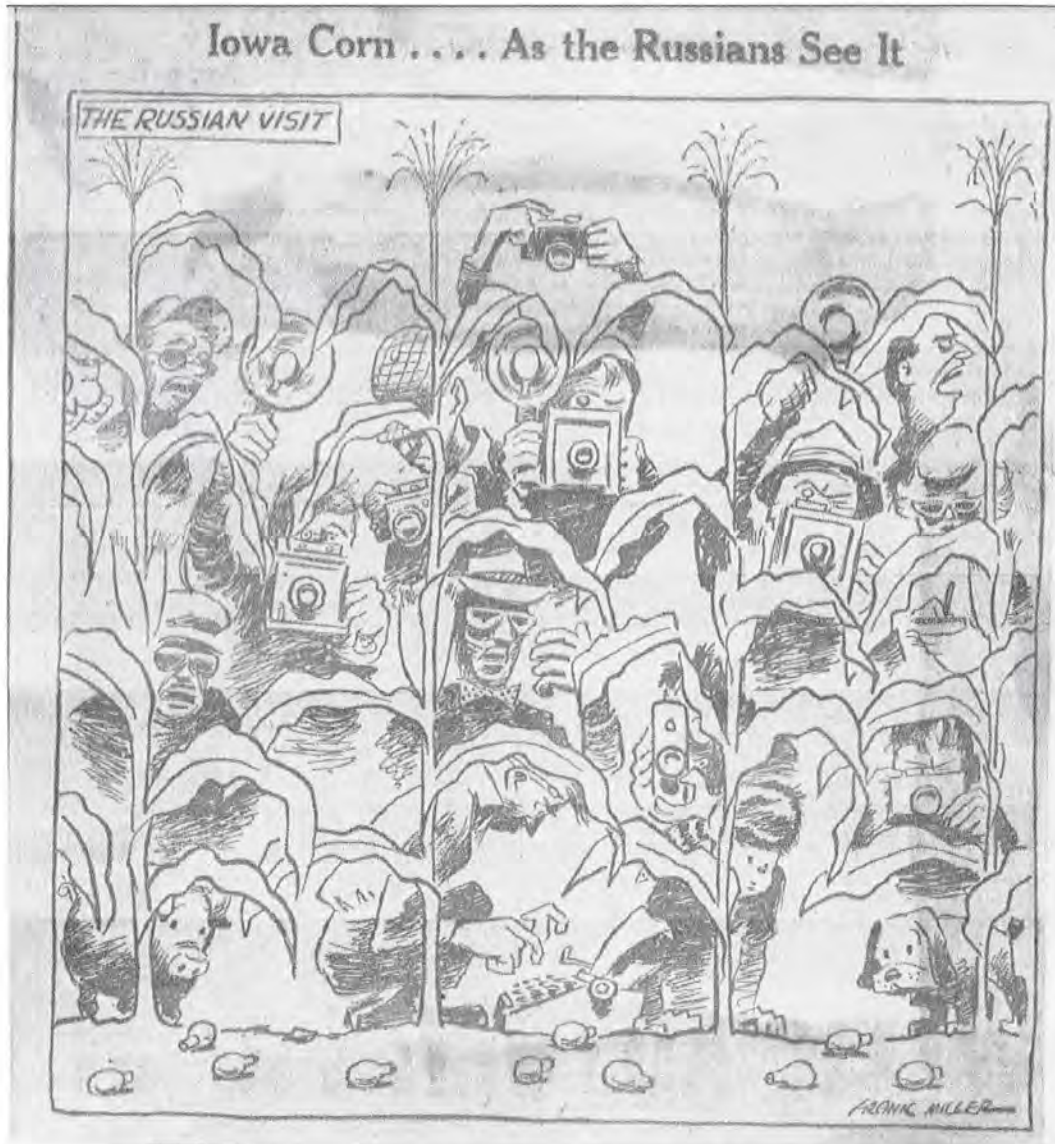


Figure 10 Register cartoonist Frank Miller's interpretation of the scene in the Alleman corn field – a few stalks of tall corn barely noticeable in front of a crushing phalanx of reporters and photographers. Spent flash bulbs litter the ground in front of the corn stalks. Two women reporters are seen, one just barely visible high on the left edge and a second woman is at center right. At the base of the corn stalks are a hog, a reporter at his typewriter already working to meet his deadline, a boy in a raccoon-skin cap (Davy Crocket was popular figure at midcentury), and the dog, Tippy. Miller has given eyes only to the boy, hog, and dog, who seem dazed by the scene, while the reporters and photographers hide behind sunglasses. The angry man in the upper right, looking off to the right, surely represents someone in particular but just who is not known – perhaps he is one of the guides assigned to the Russians or a State Department official unhappy with the press. *Des Moines Register*, 7/21/1955. Lauren Soth Papers, Special Collections/Iowa State University Library.

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short man overshadowed by six foot corn stalks, started a series of questions, some in English and some in Russian. He expressed curiosity about fertilizer, disposition of the stalks after the crop had been harvested and the generation of hybrid corn in the field...Tulupnikov also showed great surprise when he learned that only one extra man was hired during the combining season. He threw up his hands and shouted to fellow delegate Matskevich, 'only one.' He spoke in English due to his surprise and then caught himself and translated his remark into Russian...Peter [Petr] Nikolaevich Svechnikov and Alexkandr [Aleksandr] Aleksandrovich Ezheviski both displayed interest in the corn planting program and had a long talk with 25-year-old Alleman in the corn field"(Fig. 11).⁴⁷



Figure 11 Richard Alleman answers questions from the Russian delegation. Alleman Family Collection.

⁴⁷ *The Mt. Pleasant News*, 7/18/1955.

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The wagons then rumbled off to the oat fields (Fig. 12) before returning to the farmstead to look at Alleman's fat hogs and Hereford cattle, made nervous because of the crowd (Fig. 13-15). An out-of-state reporter wrote that "bouncing across Alleman's 160-acre farm with his companions, [Matskevich] said the crop layout was 'very impressive.'"⁴⁸



Figure 12 The seemingly ever-gregarious Alexandr Tulupnikov, director of a research institute, took center stage in many of the press photos taken on the Alleman farm. Here he is inspecting an oat field. The man in the center holding a microphone is Grover Hahn, Polk County Extension agent. At left, staring down at the cameraman, are Petr Babmindra (with the short tie) and Nikolai Bogach (in the white jacket). Babmindra headed the largest state-owned grain farm in the Soviet Union (115,000 acres), while Bogach was the director of a Ukrainian farm machinery and tractor pool or "station." Established under Stalin, the machine-tractor stations were supposed to serve the collectives by providing them with more sophisticated and advanced equipment than the hand tools, crude plows, and animals they already had. "Over the years the importance of the stations grew and by 1953 they were doing most of the basic work that needed doing on a kolkhoz: plowing, sowing, cultivation, applying fertilizers, some harvesting with combines, hay-making, etc. Practically all the chores requiring modern equipment—tractors, combines, threshers, reapers, binders—were done by workers and drivers from the machine-tractor stations since the kolkhozes had no technical facilities, repair shops, or people trained to use the equipment." From six in 1932, the number of machine-tractor stations rose to 7,069 in 1940, and to over 9,000 following the World War Two. Medvedev and Medvedev, *Khrushchev: The Years in Power*, 25. Iowa State College photograph, Lauren Soth Papers, Special Collections/Iowa State University.

⁴⁸ *Chicago Daily Drovers Journal*, 7/19/1955.

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Figure 9 Back from their hay wagon tour of the Alleman farm fields, the Russians and Americans discussed farming methods. From left to right, identifiable people in this view include: Grover Hahn (Polk County Extension agent), Alexandr Tulupnikov, Petr Babmindra (partially hidden), Richard Alleman holding microphone, delegation leader Vladimir Matskevich, and the pointing interpreter (name unknown). The man on the right looking intently toward the interpreter and Alleman is Russian but cannot be positively identified. The others are too obscured to identify. Noticeable behind the group are the tall plants of the Alleman corn field. This photograph is thought to have been taken by an Iowa State College photographer. If so, it would have been Percy Dean, who was the ISC Information Service photographer from 1951 through at least 1958. *Ames Daily Tribune*, 12/11/1958.



Figure 14 Richard Alleman discussing his hogs. Iowa State College Extension photo, Special Collections/Iowa State University.

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Figure 15 Members of the Russian delegation and the official party entered the cattle pen to get a closer look at Alleman's animals. Reporters and photographers apparently were kept back a ways. This photograph is thought to have been taken by the Iowa State College Extension photographer. Alleman Family Collection.

Following the tour, the entire crowd was served a cool drink on the shady lawn and the Russians and officials went into the Alleman farmhouse for a long question and answer session about the farm's operation and income, and the family's personal life on the farm. In a gesture that presaged a return visit years later in 1971, Vladimir Matskevich was formally presented with an ear of corn by three-year-old Bruce Alleman, Richard and Verda Allemans' son – a good will photo opportunity snapped by multiple photographers and reprinted in newspapers across the country (Fig. 16).



Figure 16 Bruce Alleman, with his mother Verda, presents Vladimir Matskevich with an ear of corn. Sixteen years later, in 1971, Matskevich returned to the Alleman farm and presented a wristwatch to the boy, then 19. Behind them are Alexandr Tulupnikov on the left and Richard Alleman in the center. Iowa State Extension photograph, Special Collections/Iowa State University Library.

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At the end of the visit, the Greyhound bus loaded up the Russians and returned to Des Moines where they heard lectures by Iowa State agriculture professors, participated in another press conference, and feasted on a banquet provided by the Greater Des Moines Chamber of Commerce. Among the banquet speakers were the Iowa governor, Leo A. Hoegh, and Iowa Farm Bureau Federation president Howard Hill, the latter of whom spoke about the potential for increased trade.⁴⁹ In the days following, the Greyhound bus took the Russians to a hog farm operated by George Hora, the first Iowa State College-designated "master swine grower," in Washington County. Hora's farm produced 800 head annually.⁵⁰ The Alleman farm, by contrast, had 12 sows with 121 "spring pigs," 48 head of cattle, and 200 chickens.⁵¹ References in contemporary newspapers also mentioned, without much detail, stops at the Leonard Hoffman farm in the north-central Iowa vicinity of Iowa Falls, and the Guy Stover, Jr. dairy farm in the vicinity of Reinbeck, in the historic northeast dairy region of the state. Current Washington County assessor records list an extended family of Horas, many of whom appear connected with hog confinements (today called "confined animal feeding operations" or "CAFOs") suggesting that George Hora's operation in 1955 had successfully expanded in the following decades into modern factory farms.

A Little Side Trip

Echoing Lauren Soth's earlier goals for the Russian tour, Farm Bureau Federation Howard Hill had declared during the evening banquet following the Alleman visit that the "Russians would be seeing small family farms, noting categorically that they would not see 'our largest or our fanciest farms.'"⁵² Clearly, this was mostly propagandistic and intended to emphasize the small family farm as a keystone of American democracy. On the other hand, with 100,000-plus-acre state farms and large collectives in the Soviet Union, and an enormous effort underway to modernize and improve their agricultural production, the Russians were quite willing if not eager to see those larger farms. As it happened, on one overnight stopover in western Iowa, Alexandr Tulupnikov (who spoke English) and Boris Savelev (the economic planner) had dinner with Stephen and Mary Garst, son and daughter-in-law of Roswell Garst. Roswell had a large farming and cattle operation near Coon Rapids, not far away. The next morning, Tulupnikov was given a quick tour of the Garst farming operation. According to Roswell Garst's biographer, "Tulupnikov, a short, busy-browed, humorous man, was excited by what he saw and said he would describe Coon Rapids farming to the head of the delegation, Vladimir Matskevich, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture. ('I discovered Roswell Garst,' Tulupnikov liked to say afterwards)."⁵³ The same day, Roswell attended a party for the Russians in Ames where Iowa State College was located, and met Matskevich.

The next day, "the delegation departed for the north, even though Matskevich had asked to go to the Garst farm [a request refused by the College]. True to his word, he had his car stopped, got out, and refused to go anywhere except to Coon Rapids. It was arranged that the rest of the delegation would continue, but Matskevich and two others would be driven by Don Murphy of *Wallaces' Farmer* to Coon Rapids. Matskevich spent most of the day with Roswell, learning about feeding cellulose and protein, inspecting the hybrid seen corn plant, and learning about drought-resistant hybrids and grain sorghums...[T]he 2,600-acre farming and managerial operation was something that at least approached the scale of farming in the USSR, and the feeding techniques were like nothing Matskevich had ever seen."⁵⁴ This meeting of Roswell Garst and Vladimir Matskevich, who was quickly elevated to Minister of Agriculture after his Iowa visit, eventually led to Garst's trip to the Soviet Union and then Nikita Khrushchev's trip to Coon Rapids in 1959 (Fig. 17). That famous, albeit brief, thawing of

⁴⁹ *U.S.A. Welcomes Soviet Farmers*, 14.

⁵⁰ "Russian Delegation to Visit Washington Farm Tuesday," *The Mt. Pleasant News*, 7/18/1955. By comparison, in 2014 CAFOs holding 2,000 or more hogs at any one time are common.

⁵¹ "Russian Farm Experts Tour Southeast Iowa," *Ames Daily Tribune*, 7/19/1955.

⁵² Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 181.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 4, 181-122.

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Cold War relations between the two superpowers is well documented and the nationally significant Garst farmstead was listed in the National Register in 2009, the 50th anniversary of Khrushchev's Iowa visit.

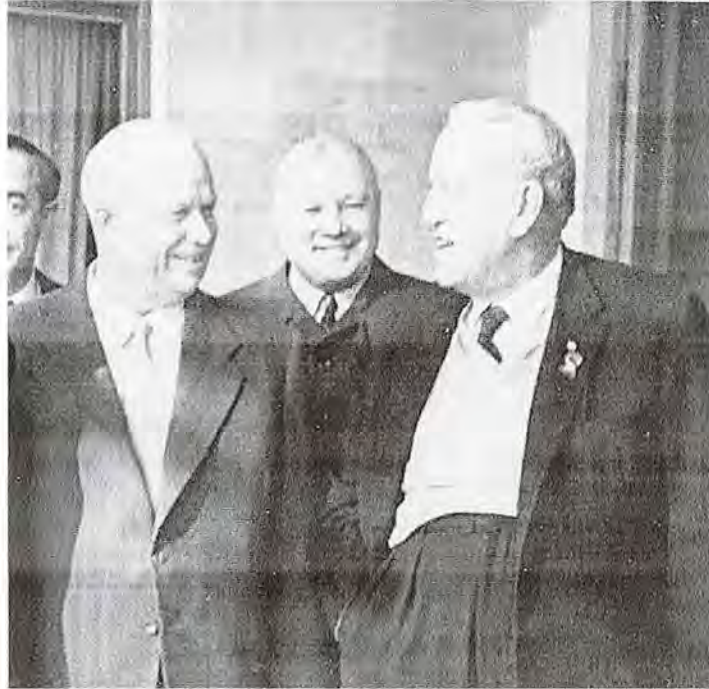


Figure 10 A beaming Vladimir Matskevich stands behind Nikita Khrushchev (left) and Roswell Garst in this photograph taken in 1959 in Sochi, Russia. Lee, *Roswell Garst*, plate following 244. There is no photo credit for this image. It may have been a Garst family photograph.

Aftermath

In the end, the extensive print coverage of the Russians' visit to the Alleman farm was published in more than 30 of the 48 states and several foreign countries. But not all opinions or the publicity generated by the Russians' 1955 trip to Iowa were positive, despite President Eisenhower's press conference prediction that only good could come from the visit. Some worried the trip would be more of a spying than a learning opportunity for the Russians.⁵⁵ The State Department reacted with "vast caution" about the trip and the conservative Republican senator from Indiana, Homer Capehart, "suggested that a Russian study of Iowa agriculture might even 'aid and abet' Communist power."⁵⁶ Reflecting afterward, John Stohm, an agricultural authority and the man chosen by the State Department to accompany the delegates, cast the visit in terms that suggested American superiority: "I believe both countries gained from this Russian farm visit," Stohm wrote. The Russians got technical information and "they must realize now that Americans do not want war. And they must know that we'd be tough to lick, if they started one." Stohm further wondered if the Russians would "tell the truth" about agriculture in the United States in light of "Soviet publications...about downtrodden American farmers."⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *Des Moines Tribune*, 3/3/1955.

⁵⁶ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 7/28/1955.

⁵⁷ "Russia's Farmers Pay Us a Visit," 1/1/1956, reprinted in *The Freeman* (online journal published by the Foundation for Economic Education). Accessed at http://www.fee.org/the_freeman/detail/russias_farmers-pay-us-a-visit on 7/14/2014.

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Soon after their return, the head of the delegation, Vladimir Matskevich, wrote an article for Pravda, the Communist party newspaper, which was translated and carried in United States papers along with a picture from the Alleman farm visit. The article moves deftly between positive observations of American agriculture and veiled and not-so-veiled criticisms of it, many of which were grounded in the perceived superiority of the Soviet political system. Calling Iowa the "corn center" of the United States, Matskevich cautioned his Russian readers not to forget that American agriculture was "capitalistic, with its peculiar contradiction," and that "our kind hosts naturally aimed to show us only that which represented their agriculture in its best light." Matskevich "liked the organization of hay-making in the USA" and felt that "the use of machinery is not badly organized in the USA," tepid praise at best. He observed "labor saving" devices including milking machines for dairy cows and self-feeders for hogs, but he also thought these methods (which of course eliminated worker labor) "often results in breaking the most elementary rules of animal hygiene. In visiting farms and even agricultural fairs, we often saw very dirty farms and even not clean cattle." And though he acknowledged the benefits of the tractors by then being mass produced in the United States by companies like Iowa-based John Deere Tractor Company, "we could not help but notice that the tractors as well as other machines on these farms of the U.S.A. are utilized with little productivity. Production per tractor in the U.S.S.R.," he claimed, "is far greater than in the U.S.A. or Canada." Clearly remembering which audience he was writing for, Matskevich concluded:

This is explained by the superiority of our socialistic system of farming. The huge sizes of our farms present wide opportunity for more rational utilization of techniques. Both in the United States and Canada we often met with revelations of striking contradictions which are inherent in a capitalist system of economy. Yes, the American bourgeois press itself as well as statistics admit that monopolies and large capitalist enterprises suppress, bankrupt and destroy small farmers... The American press recognizes that these [small] farms are doomed to extinction. In the agriculture of the U.S.A. there is an unswerving process of concentration of production and of squeezing out the small farmer by the large.⁵⁸

In the long run, Matskevich may not have been so wrong in his prediction of doom for the American small farm, even if the Soviet system certainly has failed. Today, farms in the Midwest are much larger but operated by vastly fewer farmers who use ever-bigger tractors, planters and combines. Animals are no longer kept in small wooden sheds, hog houses, chicken coops, and wood-slat pens on diversified farms of 160 or 240 or 320 acres, but are raised in confinement buildings on specialized corporate-owned farms that annually send to slaughter hundreds of thousands of chickens, turkeys, and hogs. Similarly, millions of eggs are produced by hens in confinement and thousands of head of cattle are kept in large feeder lots and fattened on corn. The sheer number of animals kept together in such close quarters has led to wide-spread use of antibiotics to combat the spread of disease. The trajectory of American agriculture envisioned by Matskevich, perhaps as much for overt political reasons as anything, has been rendered much more accurate than he probably could have imagined in 1955.

Americans appear to have interpreted the Russians' visit with more optimism than Matskevich, and they were equally confident that it was actually the United States' capitalist system that worked the best. Cartoonist Frank Miller neatly captured this belief in a *Register* cartoon that showed two farmers, one sitting on a tractor, waving good-bye to a bus headed away past a corn field. Lauren Soth had promised the Iowa farmers would show them all the secrets to high agricultural production. Miller's cartoon reveals these secrets to be "hard work, mechanization and scientific methods, and family farms" (Fig. 18).

⁵⁸ "Soviet Visitor's Report on American Farming," Lauren Soth Papers, Special Collections/Iowa State University; Alleman Family Scrapbook; also published in *U.S. News & World Report*; and the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 7/27/1955.

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Figure 18 Frank Miller's political cartoon reflects the American values that were believed to be responsible for the success of United States agriculture at midcentury. Clearly, supporters of the farm exchange with Russia hopped to convey an better understanding of these beliefs to the delegation. Lauren Soth Papers, Special Collections/State University of Iowa.

Thus, in 1955 the groundwork was laid for potential improvement in the Cold War relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union by exposing representatives of each nation to the average citizens of the other. The opportunity was created by the powerful behind-the-scenes work of publisher Mike Cowles, the editorial voice of Lauren Soth, and a reform-minded Khrushchev who was trying to improve the Soviet system so that millions of workers could be fed. The scene was most prominently played out on a 160-acre, central Iowa farm on one hot day in mid-July. The visit of the Russian delegation to the Alleman farm prompted a better understanding of the ordinary American and served as the opening act in a bigger drama to occur four years later when Premier Khrushchev himself visited the larger-than-life Roswell Garst. The Alleman farm best represents the important 1955 Russian agricultural visit because it was the first and most publicized farm and because it best represents the small family farm held up by journalists and political cartoonists as the American ideal.

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Future Plans

The Alleman farm is still in the family and the younger son, Brian Alleman, and his wife, Brenda, plan to continue living on the farm. Cattle are no longer found on the farm, but the younger Alleman couple raise sheep. Farm fields are planted and harvested by distant family members now.

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Alleman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Alleman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District
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United States Department of the Interior
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Alleman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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United States Department of the Interior
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Alleman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District
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-
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United States Department of the Interior
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Section 10 Page 39

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nomination includes the southwest quarter section of Section 4, Township 81, Range 24, aka Lincoln Township, Polk County; bounded on the south by NW 158th Avenue and on the west by NW 30th Street, Slater, Iowa and on the north and east sides by fence lines. The boundaries do not include the county-owned roads or grass shoulders and drainage ditches adjacent thereto.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the parcel historically associated with the Richard L. and Verda M. Alleman Farm during the period of significance.



Source: Polk County Assessor, 2014

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Alleman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District
name of property

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Polk County, Iowa
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Section Additional Documentation Page 40

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Verda M. Alleman

street & number 120 NW Georgetown Blvd. Unit 1 telephone 515-229-8040

city or town Ankeny state IA zip code 50023

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Verda M. Alleman (Trustee)

street & number 2701 NW 158th Ave. telephone 515-229-8040

city or town Slater state IA zip code 50244

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Robert C. Alleman (Trust)

street & number 2701 NW 158th Ave. telephone 515-229-8040

city or town Slater state IA zip code 50244

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Richard L. Alleman (Trust)

street & number 2701 NW 158th Ave. telephone 515-229-8040

city or town Slater state IA zip code 50244

This information is taken directly from the Polk County Assessor's website record for this farm.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Alleman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District
name of property

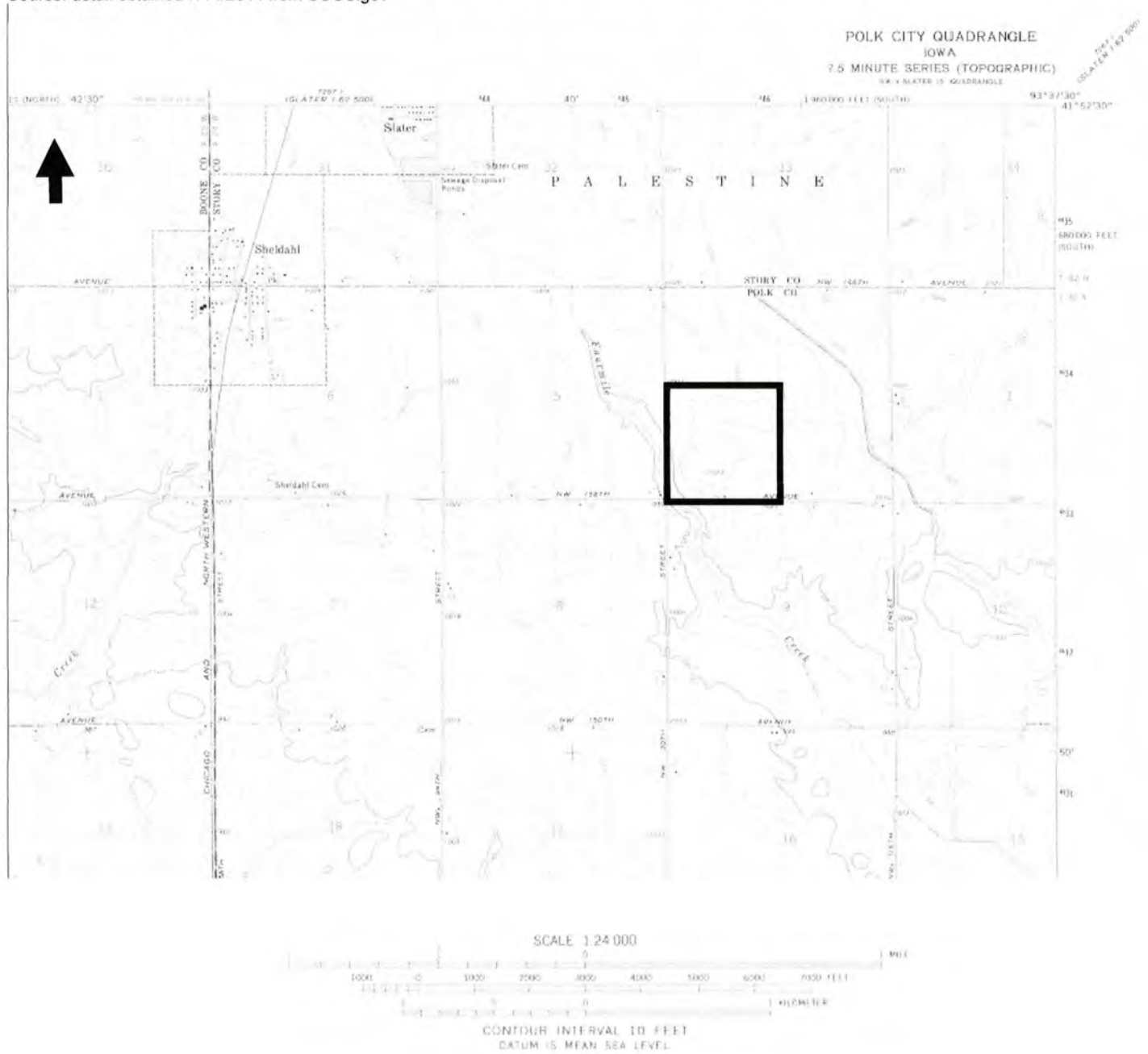
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section Additional Documentation Page 41

Detail of Polk County, Iowa, with boundaries of the nominated property outlined.

Source: detail obtained 7/14/2014 from USGS.gov



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Alleman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District
name of property

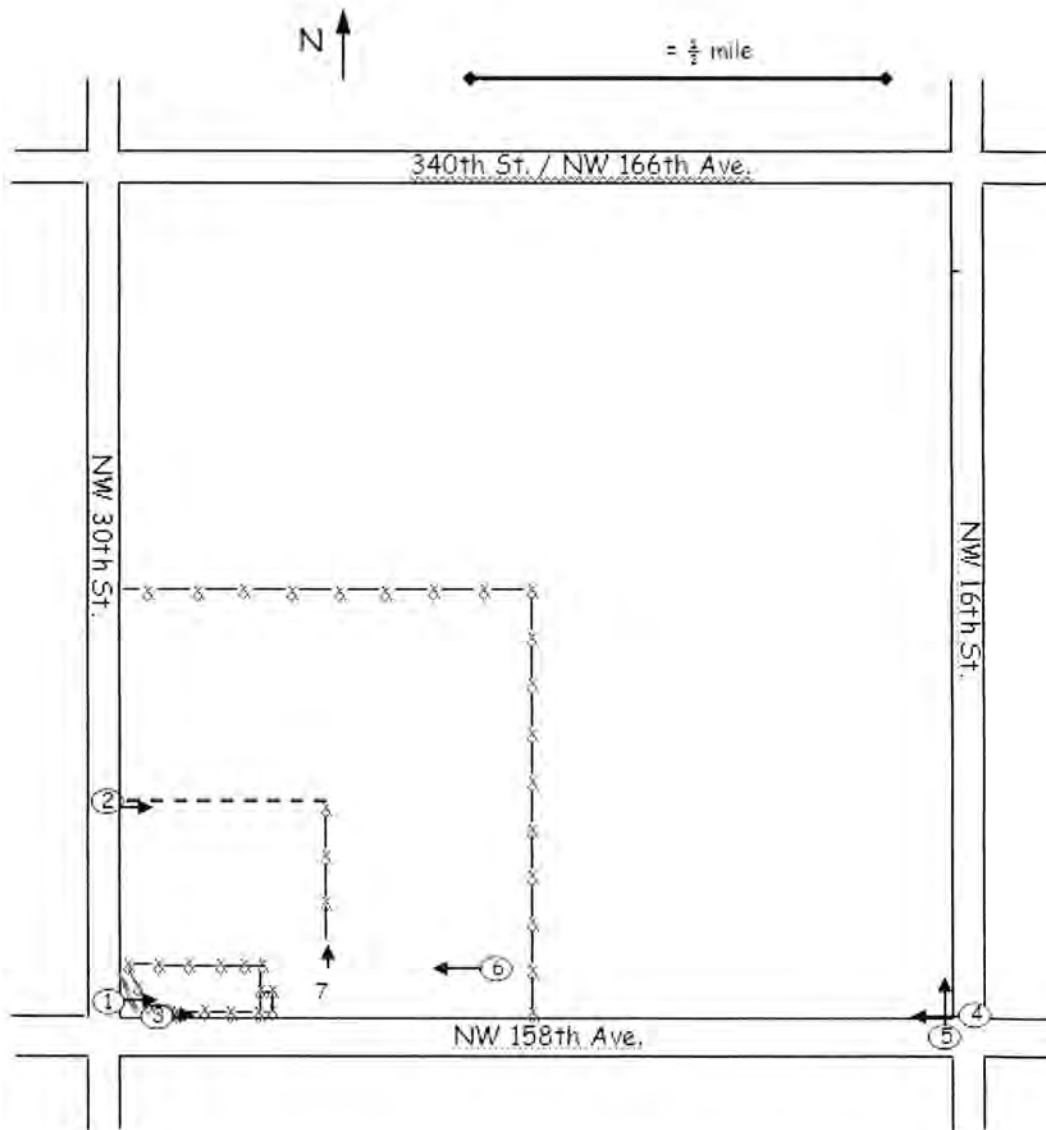
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section Additional Documentation Page 42

Site Plan and Photo Key of Historic District
(also see separate photo key for the farmstead, below)

Source: Tallgrass Historians LC, 2014



Notes: #7 photo location is also the location of the farmstead. See below for the farmstead photo key.
Dashed line denotes grassy greenway without fencing; x-x-x denotes fence lines.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Alleman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District
name of property

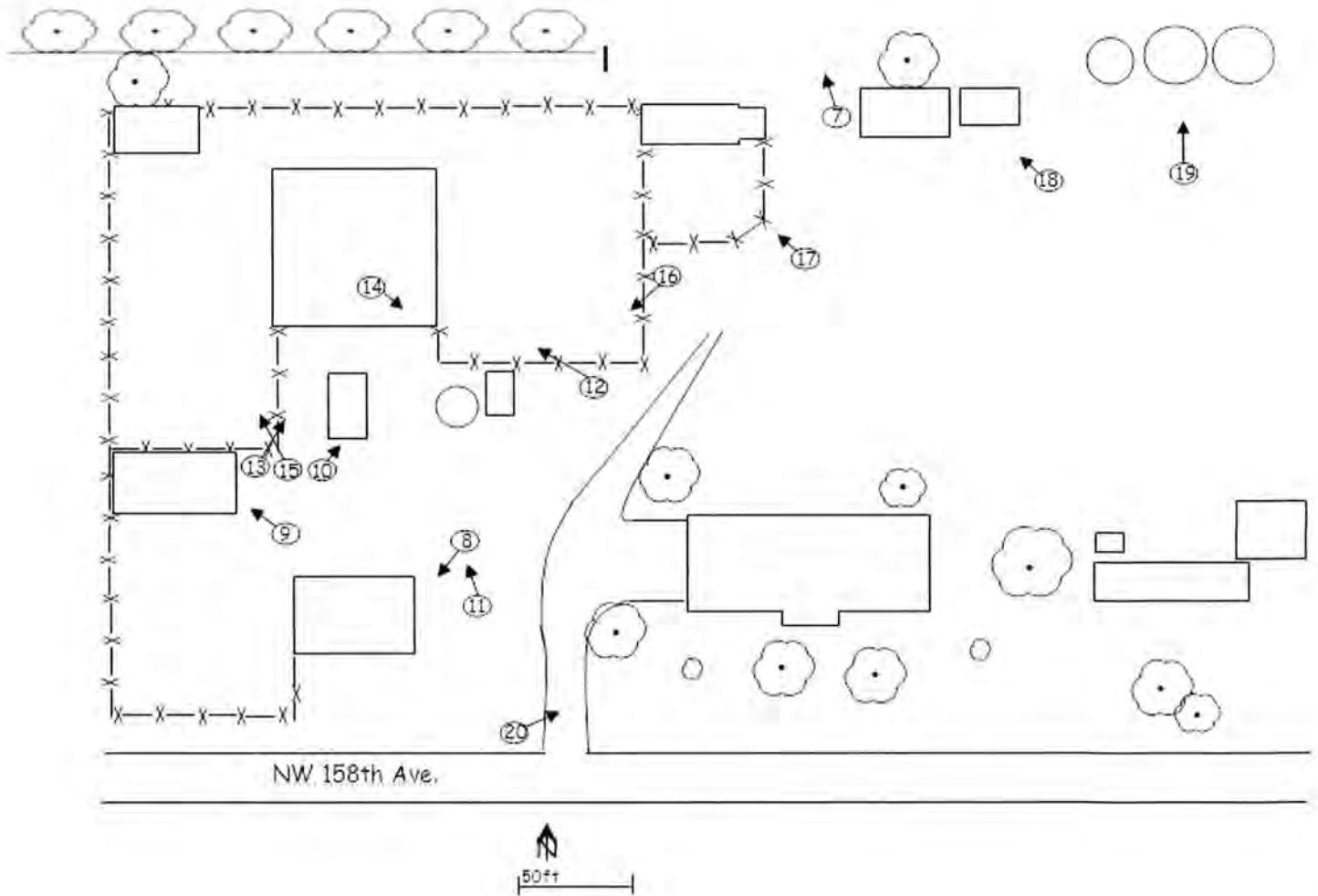
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Polk County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 43

Site Plan and Photo Key of Farmstead
(also see separate photo key for the entire historic district, above)

Source: Tallgrass Historians LC, 2014



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Alleman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District
name of property

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Photograph Label Information

1, 2, 3, & 5 share the same information as follows:

1. Alleman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District
2. Slater, Polk County, IA
3. Tallgrass Historians L.C.
4. April 2014 & 2009
5. N/A (digital photographs)
- 6.- 7. Photo # and direction camera is facing

1. Landscape, farmstead from NW 30th St., looking E
2. Landscape, agriculture fields, looking E
3. Landscape, farmstead, looking E
4. Landscape, looking W
5. Landscape, looking N
6. Landscape, looking W
7. Landscape, looking NW
8. Corn crib, looking SW
9. Farrow house, looking SE
10. Feed shed, looking NE
11. Barn, silo and feed sheds, looking NNW
12. Barn, looking WNW
13. Barn, looking NE
14. Interior, barn, looking SE
15. Cattle shed, looking NW
16. Silo and feed shed, looking SW
17. Chicken coop and feed storage, looking NW
18. Machine shed and hog house (on right), looking NW
19. Grain bins, looking N
20. House, looking NE
21. Aerial of farm, looking NE (from Alleman Family Collection)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Alleman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section Additional Documentation Page 45

Duplicate of aerial image printed in Section 6 & 7, page 6
(Numbers on buildings are keyed to Table 1 on page 7,
not the photo numbers listed above)



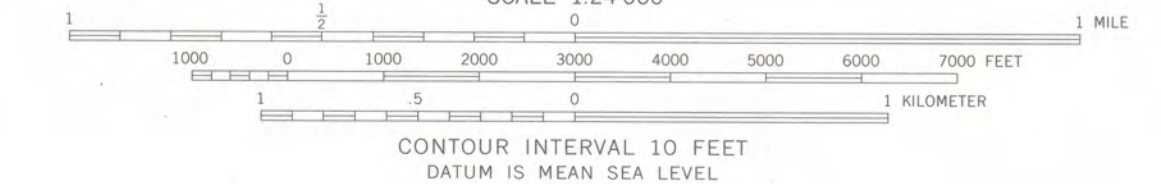
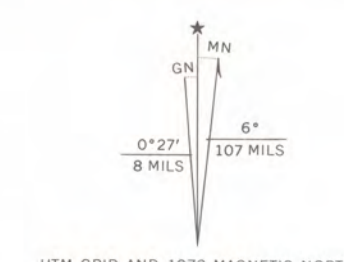
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

POLK CITY QUADRANGLE
IOWA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Allen, Richard L. &
Verda M., Farm
Historic District
vic. Slater, Polk Co.
IA
UTM Reference
1- 1514453451463085
2- 1514453421463382
3- 15144614914633866
4- 15144614814633064

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1971. Field checked 1972
Projection: Iowa coordinate system, south zone
(Lambert conformal conic)
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Iowa coordinate
system, south and north zones
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 15, shown in blue. 1927 North American datum
Areas covered by dashed light-blue pattern
are subject to controlled inundation
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND BY THE IOWA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, IOWA CITY, IOWA 52240
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

POLK CITY, IOWA
SW/4 SLATER 15' QUADRANGLE
N4145-W9337.5/7.5
1972
AMS 7267 I SW-SERIES V876









NO
PASSING
ZONE





































Allen
Es

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Alleyman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: IOWA, Polk

DATE RECEIVED: 3/20/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/14/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/29/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/05/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000192

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 5/1/2015 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A
REVIEWER Patrick Anderson DISCIPLINE Historian
TELEPHONE _____ DATE 5/1/2015

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

RECEIVED

FEB 03 2015

by SHPO

NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW WAIVER

The owner agrees with the State of Iowa to expedite its participation in the National Register of Historic Places nomination process, including shortening the 30-day commenting period, for the following property:

Alleman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District, 2701 NW 158th Avenue,
Slater vicinity, Polk County

Verda M. Alleman 1/31/2015
Owner Signature Date

RETURN TO: State Historical Society of Iowa, ATTN: Beth Foster Hill, National Register Coordinator, 600 E. Locust, Des Moines, IA 50319

NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW WAIVER

The owner agrees with the State of Iowa to expedite its participation in the National Register of Historic Places nomination process, including shortening the 30-day commenting period, for the following property:

Alleman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District, 2701 NW 158th Avenue,
Slater vicinity, Polk County

Robert C. Alleman, Trustee

Owner Signature

on behalf of Robert C. Alleman

Verda Alleman, Trustee

2/3/15

Date

RETURN TO: State Historical Society of Iowa, ATTN: Beth Foster Hill, National Register Coordinator, 600 E. Locust, Des Moines, IA 50319

NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW WAIVER

The owner agrees with the State of Iowa to expedite its participation in the National Register of Historic Places nomination process, including shortening the 30-day commenting period, for the following property:

Alleman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District, 2701 NW 158th Avenue, Slater vicinity, Polk County

Richard L. Alleman (Trust) 2/3/15
Owner Signature Date
on behalf of Richard L. Alleman (~~Trust~~)
by Verda Alleman, Trustee

RETURN TO: State Historical Society of Iowa, ATTN: Beth Foster Hill, National Register Coordinator, 600 E. Locust, Des Moines, IA 50319

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

MARY COWNIE, DIRECTOR
CHRIS KRAMER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR



IOWA
ARTS
COUNCIL

PRODUCE
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SITES

STATE HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
OFFICE OF IOWA

IOWA
HISTORICAL
FOUNDATION

March 12, 2015

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmarks
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

The following National Register nomination(s) are enclosed for your review and listing if acceptable.

- Oakdale Cemetery Historic District, Davenport, Scott County, Iowa
- Allerman, Richard L. and Verda M., Farm Historic District, Slater vicinity, Polk County, Iowa

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Foster Hill".

Elizabeth Foster Hill
National Register