

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

831



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions on the back of this form. Complete each item by entering the information requested. If an 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 Bedford Oil Company Service Station

other names/site number Conoco Station Building

2. Location

street & number 601 Madison N/A  not for publication

city or town Bedford N/A  vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Taylor code 173 zip code 50833

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Patricia Osherkin DSITPO 6-10-99  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA  
State of 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 certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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:)

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

7/15/99  
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property **Category of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

(Check only one box)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Specialty Store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Work in Progress

Other: Civic/Tourism

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals

Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Wood

roof Wood

other Stucco

Narrative Description

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

Refer to Continuation Sheets, pages 1-4.

**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.

**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 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1928-1949

**Significant Dates**

1928

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

R.F. Greenlee

**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:

Bedford Elem. Library

Bedford Oil Co. Service Station  
Name of Property

Taylor, Iowa  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** less than one

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	5	3	54	5	40	4	5	0	3	0	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing						

  
2 

Zone		Easting				Northing						

3 

Zone		Easting				Northing						

  
4 

Zone		Easting				Northing						

  
 See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

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

**Boundary Justification**

Continuation Sheet page 10.

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

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Patricia A. Wahlgren, Partner

organization Anderzhon+Carlson+Architects date May 24, 1999

street & number 1208 Dodge Street, Suite 220 telephone 402.341.8007

city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68102

**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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Taylor County Courthouse

street & number 405 Jefferson telephone 712.523.2280

city or town Bedford state IA zip code 50833

**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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Bedford Oil Co.  
Service Station  
Taylor, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 1

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Narrative Description of the Property

The Bedford Oil Company Service Station in Bedford, Iowa is a single story Mission Style gasoline station constructed from April 1928 to June 1928 by Roy Greenlee, a local contractor/builder. Located on a corner lot at the entrance of Bedford's downtown district, the building fronts Highway 148 at the intersection of Main Street and Highway 148 and is several blocks south of Highway 2 (see attached proximity location map). Bedford, Iowa is a community of approximately 1,500 residents in southwest Iowa.

Ownership of the property has been surprisingly consistent over the history of the property. The Bedford Oil Company Service Station was originally developed by Wyatt Blakemore and Ralph Thompson, two local developers. Blakemore sold his interest in the property to Thompson on November 17, 1950. The property was kept by Thompson's family until it was sold to John Warin, June 13, 1966, and ownership was later transferred to Warin Oil Company in October of 1974. Taylor County currently owns the property.

The building consists of three parts: the filling station at the south end, the service station garage at the north end, and a connecting building adjoining these two. An addition at the southeast corner of the filling station has a shed roof with asphalt shingles, and wood siding. This storage addition is in poor condition currently and was not part of the original structure. The connecting building between the filling station and the service station is suspected to be slab-on-grade with thickened edges for footings. The walls are wood frame with no interior sheathing, and no insulation. The floor is poured concrete that is in poor condition, possibly due to the lack of a proper foundation. The ceiling height is noticeably low in this area.

The filling station, which opened on June 30, 1928, is the portion of the building with the most architectural significance. On the west facade, which is essentially the "front" of the building, there are two arched windows and three arched doorways. Shades remain on the two arched windows. On the south facade of the filling station there are two more arched windows at "pedestrian" level, as well as a smaller arched window at "attic" level which is part of the parapet. The floor plan for this portion of the building contains a large lobby at the southwest corner, a mechanical room in the northwest corner, with two restrooms in the north-central part and an office/storage room in the northeast corner (see attached floor plan).

The service station garage was built in 1929 after an additional three feet of land to the east was purchased. In the service station garage, the garage doors are not original, although there is no indication of when the current doors were installed. The interior walls are painted brick, and the wood roof construction is exposed.

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Bedford Oil Co.  
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The exterior facade of the building is stucco and exhibits elements of the Mission Style of design including tall arched windows and curved roof lines. At the time of construction, the building had a porte-cochere which continued the mission style of the station. Two substantial pillars originally supporting the porte-cochere had been replaced with slender steel columns with brick masonry bases sometime between 1963 and 1969. The entire porte-cochere was removed in 1976, but the columns and masonry bases remain. The entire building, all three parts, has a low slope roof with decorative parapet elements at the filling station. Wood trim accentuates the architecturally significant elements of the exterior facade primarily located on the filling station portion of the building. Original colors for the building appear to have been white with red trim, however, at some point the building was painted and is now medium gray, with dark gray trim around the windows and doors.

As most of the site is concrete, due to the function of the property as a gas station, those portions that are landscaped are grass and have been mowed and maintained, although are somewhat overgrown. The concrete shows signs of age and is in need of some repair. There are three curb cuts serving as vehicular entrances to the property; one on the south side and two on the west.

The structural systems of the building are particularly indicative of the era in which the building was constructed. The unique structural floor system utilizes direct placement of the floor joists on a 2" concrete ledge integral with the foundation. Many of the walls are wood frame with 1x sheathing used for backing for the applied stucco. Horsehair plaster finishes the interior of the walls in the filling station portion of the building.

The building has some areas of significant deterioration on the interior due to the construction methods utilized when the building was constructed, lack of maintenance, termite damage, as well as the age of the facility. Areas of the applied stucco on the exterior have also suffered deterioration due to weather and the installation methods utilized at the time of construction. Little maintenance has been done to the property since the gas station closed in October of 1989. Rehabilitation work has begun as an effort to restore the building to its original condition. The majority of the floor in the lobby of the filling station has been removed as has one of the original restrooms. The underground tanks were removed in the summer of 1996.

Important decorative elements which remain are the exterior light fixtures, the metal windows, and several wood doors. Other elements remaining in the service station garage are the work bay and jack. Some of the electrical devices and fixtures currently installed in the facility no longer meet electrical codes, but are of significant historical value. Overall, the historic integrity of the property has remained intact and is one of the primary reasons for local interest in preserving the building.

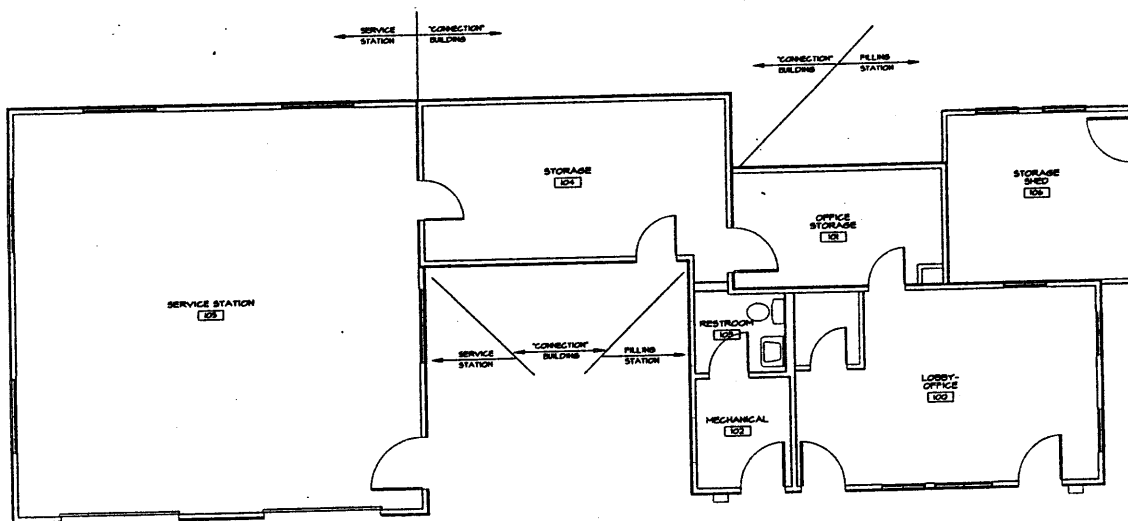
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Bedford Oil Co.  
Service Station  
Taylor, Iowa

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BEDFORD OIL COMPANY SERVICE STATION  
BEDFORD, IOWA



NOTE: DIMENSIONS HAVE NOT YET BEEN FIELD VERIFIED.



EXISTING FLOOR PLAN

NO SCALE



Anderson + Carlson + Architects  
1208 Dodge Street Suite 220  
Omaha, Nebraska 68102  
402.341.8007 FAX 402.345.4926

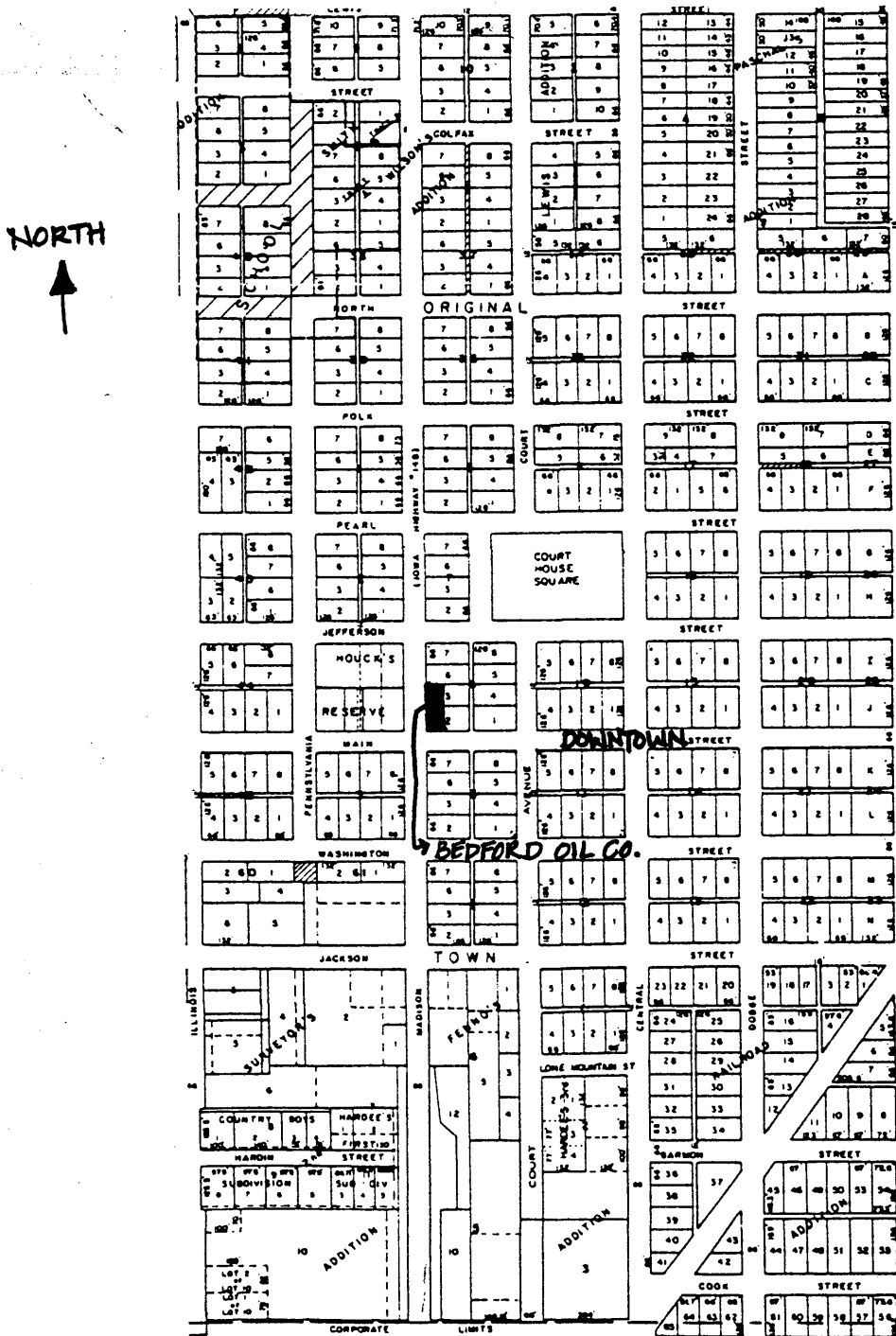
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Bedford Oil Co.  
Service Station  
Taylor, Iowa

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Partial map of Bedford, Iowa, indicating the location of Bedford Oil Company Service Station, and also showing the proximity to downtown Bedford.



Map prepared by: Leak Location Consultants, Inc. Omaha, NE.  
Date: June 1986.  
Provided for use in this form by: Bedford Area Economic Development.



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Bedford Oil Co.  
Service Station  
Taylor, Iowa

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Narrative Statement of Significance

The Bedford Oil Company Service Station is historically significant under Criterion A as a reminder of early Iowa automotive transportation, both within the city of Bedford, and Taylor County in particular. This building is symbolic of a change in the transportation industry: the widespread use of the automobile and the introduction of the corner gas station. Secondly the Bedford Oil Company Service Station is significant under Criterion C as an example of Mission Style architecture which for Bedford represents an architectural style that is unique and therefore draws attention to a building that would otherwise be overlooked in this small rural community.

The Bedford Conoco Station Building was originally Bedford Oil Company, built in spring of 1928 by Wyatt Blakemore and Ralph Thompson. Although not spectacular in design, this building was a functioning gas station for the community of Bedford, Iowa until October of 1989, indicative of a timeless design. Minor modifications were made to the facility during its sixty years of use, but the main features and overall layout of the building remain unchanged. These modifications are described in the narrative description of the property.

A primary area of historical significance is the construction methods used on the building. The original low slope wood roof construction has been maintained. The unique structural floor system utilizes direct placement of the floor joists on a 2" concrete ledge integral with the foundation. Horsehair plaster is the interior finish on many of the walls. While these construction methods and materials are historically significant for the period in which the building was constructed, they have also added to the deterioration of the building over the years.

The Bedford Oil Company Service Station is historically significant to the community of Bedford in particular. It is considered a landmark in Bedford and for this reason, there is substantial interest in restoring the property to its original appearance and condition. Plans for restoration include the development of the interior to a visitor's bureau with information about Bedford, the surrounding area, and the State of Iowa. A grant has already been awarded to proceed with the plans for restoration.

With its location on State Highway 148 and Main Street, and approximately two blocks from "Public Square," the station is a cornerstone at the entrance of Bedford's downtown business district. The construction of the highway was somewhat integral with the development of the Bedford Oil Company Service Station as they occurred during the same year. Highway 148 provides a north-south link from Missouri to Interstate 80 through southwest Iowa creating a prime location for a service/filling station.

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Although it has been owned and managed by various families and residents of the community, the original developers of the property are historically significant to the community of Bedford. Wyatt Blakemore lived all but the first three years of his life in Bedford and was primarily a farmer in the area. His partner, Ralph Thompson was referred to in 1953 as "Bedford's oldest native son." Ralph was the son of J.M. Thompson, the founder of Thompson Mercantile Store which operated in Bedford for over 100 years, and the building still remains. Thompson followed in his father's footsteps in helping to develop the community of Bedford throughout his lifetime. He initially ran a men's clothing store until becoming partners with Blakemore, and later helped develop the Bedford Golf and Country Club, while his wife helped develop the Bedford Public Library.

During their partnership, Thompson and Blakemore first developed the Ford Garage, an automobile dealership. They went on to build three service stations, the last of which is the Bedford Oil Company Service Station, which was intended to be "the finest station in town." They purchased the land from the president of the Bedford National Bank, William E. Crum, in April of 1925, but waited three years to develop the property. Attempting to establish a new standard for service stations was obviously a goal of theirs in 1928 when there were already three other oil stations in this town of just over 2,000 residents. To this day there remains only one service station and two filling stations.

A new standard was established and consequently the Bedford Oil Company Service Station was the oldest operating service station in the city when it closed in 1989. This new standard is evident in numerous small details throughout the building including the light fixtures, electrical devices, metal windows and wood doors which today all possess historical significance. Through the years since its construction, these items remain unchanged. Individually these items would not make the building historically significant, but when combined, the building is historically significant to the period in which it was constructed, and is historically significant to the community of Bedford.

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This photograph is illustrative of the original design of the building, and the goal of the restoration efforts. Specific details include the signage and the porte-cochere.



1963

Source of photograph: Dale Sanders

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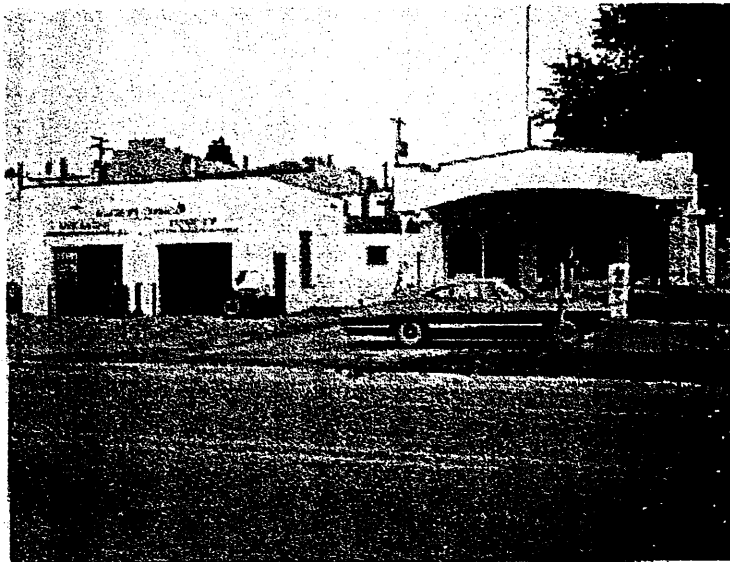
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This photograph illustrates the modification to the original porte-cochere. The masonry bases for the columns (shown here) still remain.



1969

Source of photograph: Dale Sanders

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Bibliography

1. Bedford City Hall files.
2. Bedford Times- Republican newspapers. Bedford, Iowa: Feb. 28, 1928 front page; April 28, 1928 front page; June 28, 1928 classified ad.
3. Blakemore, Wyatt (son of co-owner/builder) letter dated 9.20.97. Phone and personal interviews by Barbara Hannon, 11.97, 9.98, and 2.14.99.
4. Cummings, Carl (elderly citizen) interviewed by Barbara Hannon 2.14.99.
5. Hanshaw, Clifford (elderly citizen) interviewed by Barbara Hannon 2.14.99.
6. Crosson, Frank E., History of Taylor County; From the Earliest Times to 1910: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1910, p. 71.
7. Huebinger's Pocket Automobile Guide for Iowa. Des Moines: Iowa Publishing Co., 1913; Davenport: Iowa Publishing Co., 1917; Peoria, IL: Huebinger Publishing Co., 1924. Housed in Iowa Department of Transportation Library, 800 Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50010.
8. Iowa Department of Transportation Library, 800 Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50010.
9. Norman, Mark, Clarinda Business and Industry Association, phone interview by Barbara Hannon, 2.11.99.
10. Platteville, Iowa 1855-1990. Knoxville, IA: Kwik Service Printing. 1990, p. 40.
11. Sanders, Dale (station operator/lessee 1946-1978) interviewed by Barbara Hannon in Fall 1996, 9.25.97, 2.7.99.
12. Taylor County Assessor's Office, Bedford, Iowa.
13. Taylor County Recorder's Office, Bedford, Iowa, Village Deed record, Book 6, p. 580; Book 13, p. 120; Book 17, p. 165; Book 20, p. 367; Book 29, p. 751.
14. Taylor County Auditor's Office, Bedford, Iowa, Plat Book 3, p. 1.
15. Taylor County History. Taylor County Historical Society, Dallas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1981: p. 54, p. 105.
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17. Zalet, Hank, Iowa Department of Transportation Librarian. Phone interview by Barbara Hannon, 2.3.99.
18. Centennial History of Bedford, Iowa 1853-1953. Published at Bedford, Iowa, 1953.

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Bedford Oil Co.  
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Verbal Boundary Description

West 1/2 of Lot 2 Blk 6 less tract SW cor., Orig Bedford and  
West 63'S46' Lot 3 Blk 6, Orig. Bedford, Taylor County, Iowa.

Boundary Justification

No areas outside this boundary are historically associated  
with the Bedford Oil Company Service Station, nor are they currently  
associated with it.