

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



279

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 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 Carpenter, James Sansom House

other names/site number Oakwood Estate

2. Location

street & number 3320 Kinsey Avenue N/A  not for publication

city or town Des Moines N/A  vicinity

state Iowa code Ia county Polk code 153 zip code 50317

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 Oulkins DSHPO 2-26-98  
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 4.23.98  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	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)

Domestic / Single Dwelling

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic / Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Century  
Revivals / Colonial Revival

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick  
walls Wood

roof Asphalt

other

Narrative Description

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

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)

Engineering

Social History

Period of Significance

1906-1939

Significant Dates

1927

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

James Sansom Carpenter

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:

\_\_\_\_\_

Carpenter, James Sansom House  
Name of Property

Polk - Iowa  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property Less than one

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	15	454150	4606100
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4			

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 Marlon Mormann

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date November 24, 1997

street & number 3320 Kinsey Avenue telephone 515-281-3964

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50317-2712

**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 Marlon Mormann

street & number 3320 Kinsey Avenue telephone 515-281-3964

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50317-2712

**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.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

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Carpenter, James Sansom House  
Polk County, Iowa

## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The James Sansom Carpenter house, a two and 1/2 story Colonial Revival constructed in the 1890s is at its original location on an east Des Moines hilltop. The house is surrounded by a canopy of mature oaks in a quiet residential neighborhood.

The house is an irregular rectangular floor plan 76 feet eastwest, by 48 feet northsouth at its widest points.

Repairs were made by J.S. Carpenter after a 1927 fire. The house remains in substantially good condition after these repairs.

The Carpenter house sits on a panhandle shaped lot 230 feet eastwest by 130 feet northsouth with a 20 foot wide paved drive extending south off the southeast corner and 124 feet down the hill to Kinsey Avenue. A drive of concrete on the north and brick on the south circles the house.

The house is wood frame construction with clapboard siding. The foundation is red brick. The first floor has seven glass paneled entry doors. The doors on the west, south and east are also adorned with side lights typical of the Colonial Revival style.

All windows are wood, double hung, double light with wood louvered shutters with the exception of the south living room single light bay window that is 6 feet high by 8 feet wide.

The east, south, and north entries are supported by smooth shaft wood Doric columns, another element of the home's Colonial Revival period.

The west facade main entry is enclosed by a flat tarred roof with wrap around porch to the south side.

The south facade entry features a Doric, smooth columned pergola with brick steps, all in fair but original condition.

The east entry is a rectangular porch with smooth Doric columns enclosed by six sets of ten pane palladian windows.

On the first floor, north, is the fireproof art room constructed by Carpenter after the 1927 fire. The room is brick exterior and flat tarred roof.

The house has a steep multi-gabled roof with asphalt shingles. Four equal size gables point to the north, south, east and west. Small gables pointing north and east cover the second story maid's quarter and first story attached garage respectively.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Carpenter, James Sansom House  
Polk County, Iowa

### NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (continued)

The outside roof has modillion blocked cornice supports surrounding the house at the third story level. Projecting eaves with copper gutters lay beneath the roof edge.

A non-contributing two-stall garage 20 by 20 feet, sits at the far northeast corner of the lot.

The south facade is covered by vinyl siding. Double hung windows on the second story are covered by aluminum storms and artificial shutters, both alterations from the Carpenter era.

The interior description begins at the basement with red brick wall covered by concrete veneer. The floor plan is predominantly open with a 7 by 11 foot walk-in bank vault in the northwest corner. The vault lies beneath the fireproof art room with entry by a steel combination locked door followed by two steel keyed doors.

The first floor main entry on the west has oak floors and staircase. The oak woodwork on the staircase, as throughout the house, repeats the Colonial Revival theme. Square spoked balustrades support the railing on the four-level turning staircase. The walls supporting the staircase are rectilinear paneled oak. All walls are of plaster and lath construction on all three levels.

The den or library is at the southwest corner of the house. The floors are oak with three feet rectilinear paneled base boards. Dentille oak cornice molding fourteen inches high surround the ceiling. Oak, built-in, open front bookcases line the south wall. The Colonial Revival influence is again repeated as demonstrated by vertical fluted pilasters separating each of the bookcases.

In the center of the house is a 16 foot by 33 foot living room with oak floors, 8 inch oak baseboards, and an oak fireplace with rectilinear panels. The living room was reconfigured from two smaller rooms after the 1927 fire. The living room ceiling is elaborately decorated with composite Italian ceiling tiles. Double oak pocket-panel doors separate the living room from the library on the west and on the east is a double wide entrance into the formal dining room.

The fireproof art room lies on the north side of the living room. The 11 foot walls are concrete as are the floor and ceiling. The entry is by double steel doors. Two wood, double hung four pane windows adorn the north wall.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Carpenter, James Sansom House  
Polk County, Iowa

## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (continued)

The formal dining room has 3 foot high, rectilinear African teak wood paneling from the floor up. Teak wood cove molding 14 inches high surrounds the ceiling.

The kitchen has changed from the Carpenter era: it now has metal cabinets, vinyl floor covering and Formica counter tops. On the southeast corner is the kitchen entry enclosed by 10 pane palladian windows which are interchangeable with screens for summer use.

An attached one car garage sits at the northeast corner. The garage has its own toilet, sink, and shower on the south. A fire hose and sprinkler system from the Carpenter era are still present.

A second small staircase leads to the second story off the northeast corner of the kitchen.

At the northeast corner of the second story, two stair steps below the second floor, is a maid's quarter with 8 foot ceilings, pine baseboards and floor, and a 2 inch cove picture rail.

A second story has five bedrooms with 10 foot ceilings, oak floors, and painted pine woodwork. The second story has two full baths.

A staircase off the second story center hall leads to the third story. A finished room lies on the west side of the house with a 12 foot peaked, vaulted ceiling. On the east side of the third floor is an unfinished attic space with wood floor.

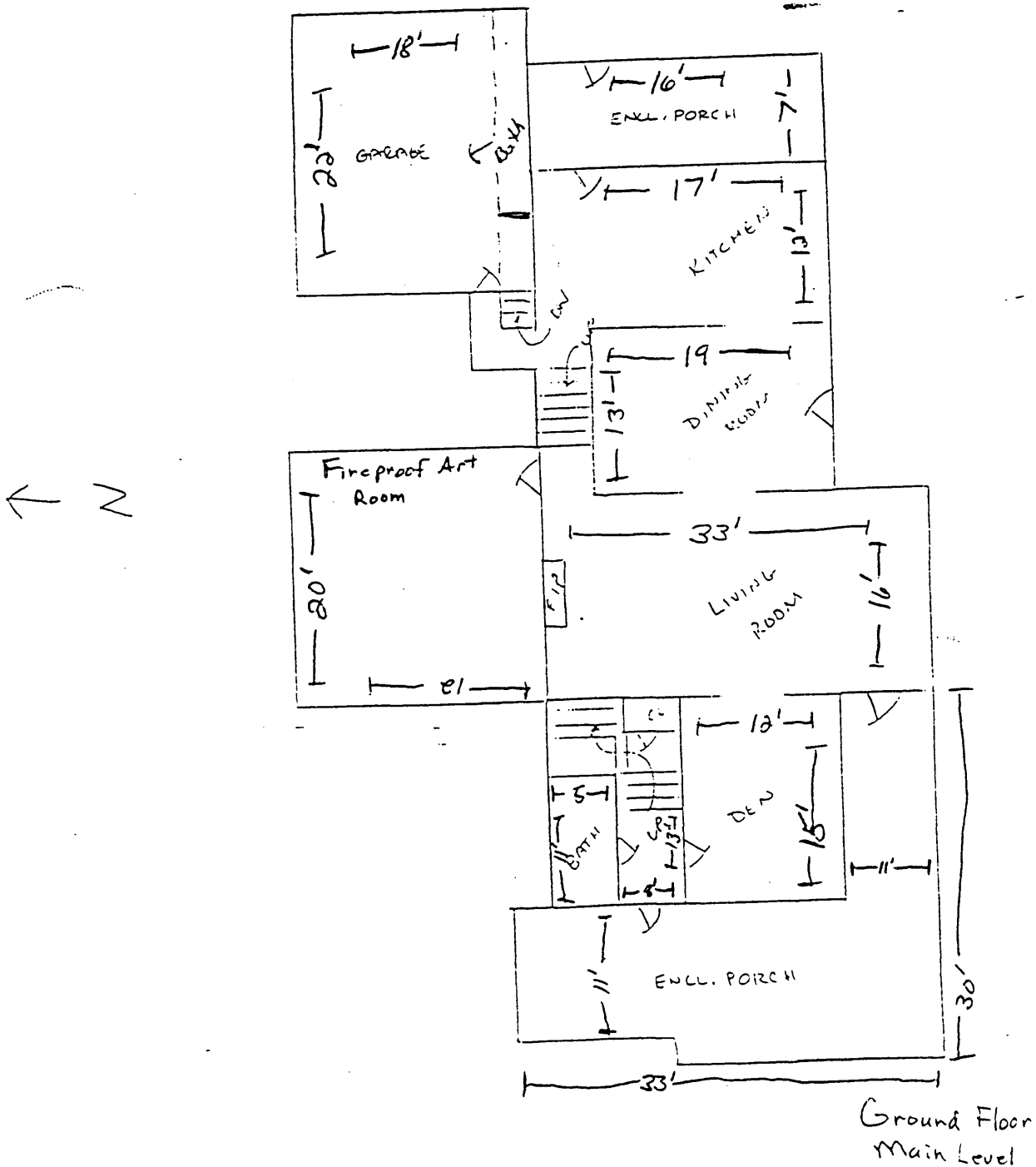
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Carpenter, James Sansom House  
Polk County, Iowa

FLOOR PLAN





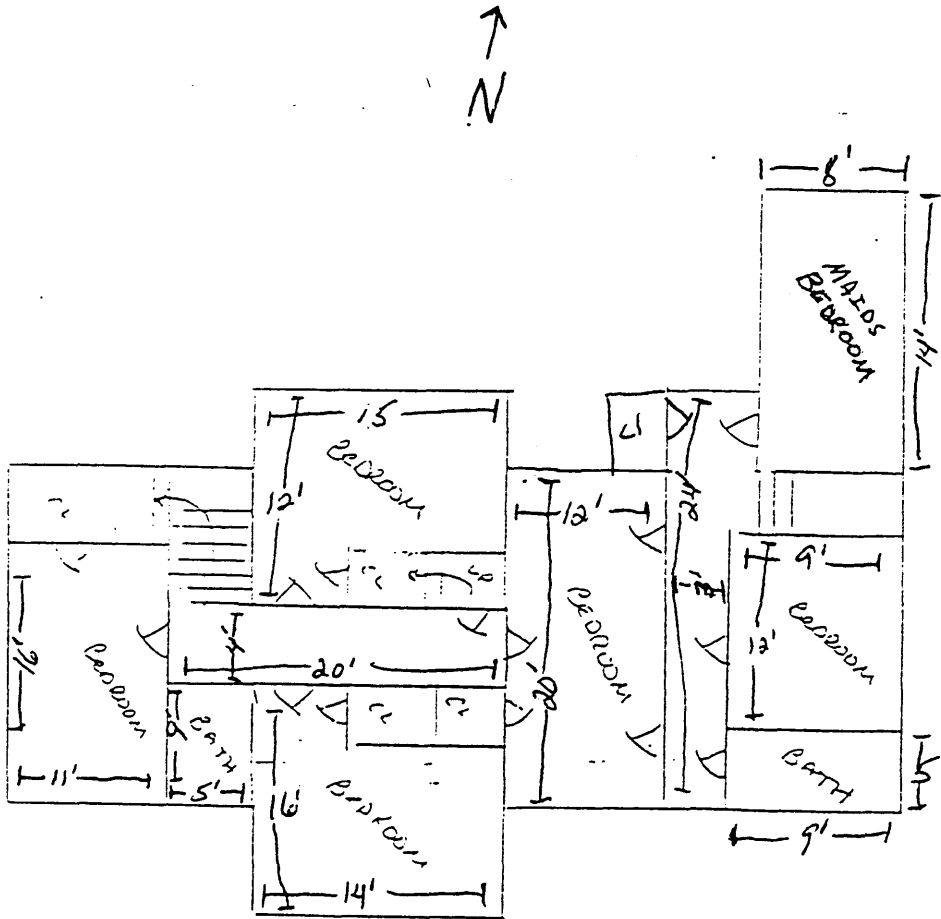
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Carpenter, James Sansom House  
Polk County, Iowa

FLOOR PLAN



Second Level

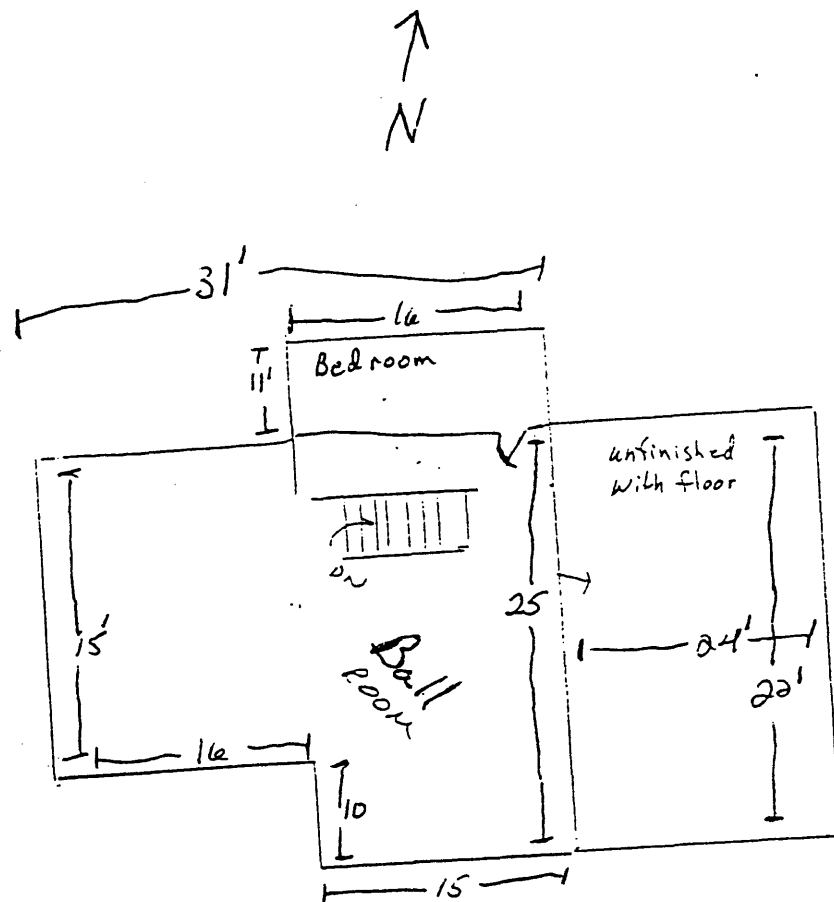
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Carpenter, James Sansom House  
Polk County, Iowa

## FLOOR PLAN



Third Level

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Carpenter, James Sansom House  
Polk County, Iowa

### NARRATIVE-STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The property is eligible for the National Register under the criterion "B" for its association with the life of James Sansom Carpenter. He organized one of the state's most notable bridge construction companies, the Iowa Bridge Company, which for three decades built many steel and concrete bridges in the Midwest. Moreover, he served as the first and only president of the Des Moines Association of Fine Arts from 1915 to 1939. He was, in the words of one observer, "that rare combination of artist, art connoisseur, collector, and successful businessman."

James Sansom Carpenter resided at the Oakwood Estate Mansion, now known as 3320 Kinsey Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa, from 1906 until his death in 1939. Carpenter, prominent engineer and bridge contractor, held his collection of 350 etchings and lithographs, and 125 oil paintings in the twenty room two and 1/2 story 1890s mansion. The art collection, included some 25 etchings by Rembrandt.

Carpenter was a pioneer in Des Moines art appreciation. James Carpenter assisted in the formation of the Des Moines Association of Fine Arts in 1916 and held office as the president until his death in 1939. Carpenter, an artist himself who had studied in Europe, brought together forty Des Moines art patrons who donated \$100 per year to the Art Association for the yearly purchase of an outstanding work of art. The Association of Fine Arts led to the formation of the Des Moines Art Center in about 1945 through donations to the Edmundson Art Foundation.

James Carpenter collected the finest works of art and entertained world renowned artists at Oakwood Estate. Personal friends and visitors to Oakwood include such famous artists as Leon Gaspard, W. Elmer Schofield, Frank Brangwyn, Ben Foster, and George Gardner Symons, a winter scenes artist. A superb canvas of Des Moines' own Four Mile Creek was painted by Symons when visiting Oakwood. James Carpenter's most notable painting is "Aunt Fanny" by George Bellows. This painting was designated a national prize by the April 8, 1939 Des Moines Register, and is currently displayed at the Des Moines Art Center.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Carpenter, James Sansom House  
Polk County, Iowa

## NARRATIVE-STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Oakwood Estate Mansion housed one of the largest art collections in America by the famous Swedish artist Anders Zorn. Prince William Bernadotte, second son of the King of Sweden., visited Oakwood on March 15, 1927. The prince took great pleasure in the Zorn painting "Kari", which was considered the best known Zorn portrait in America. The prince was an acquaintance of Kari, the young woman in the portrait. "Kari" is currently held by Joslyn Museum of Art, Omaha, Nebraska. Carpenter also owned fine examples of art from such famous artists as Robert Henri, George Bellows, Leon Kroll, Eugen Speicher, Richard E. Miller, and Felice Carena, just to name a few.

The twenty room 1890s mansion occupied by James S. Carpenter for over thirty three years still stands on the Oakwood Estate at 3320 Kinsey Avenue. Carpenter made interior renovations in 1927 after a fire nearly claimed one of the best art collections in America. The Oakwood Mansion stands today much as it did after the 1927 repairs which added a fireproof art room constructed of concrete floors, walls and ceiling, and reconfigured the living room from two small rooms into the current sixteen foot by thirty-three foot great room. Carpenter kept his most valuable art work in this fireproof room. Also added were sprinkler systems in the garage and a fire hose, which in 1927 was state of the art in fire protection.

The Carpenter house was declared a local landmark on October 18, 1995 by the Des Moines Iowa Historic District Commission, Des Moines City Ordinance 2-205.06.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
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Carpenter, James Sansom House  
Polk County, Iowa

**Bibliography**

"J.S. Carpenter was visited by King of Sweden to see art" Des Moines Register, 12-28-1994

"J.S. Carpenter's Art Delighted a Prince" Des Moines Register April 7, 1939, page 13, C.1-2

"Donated Heirloom, Too Big to Net Big Bucks" Des Moines Register, May 23, 1992.

"Art Center Traces Roots to 1916" Des Moines Register, October 6, 1993.

"Carpenter, 68, Bridge Firm Head, is Dead" Des Moines Tribune, April 6, 1939.

"City is Given Art Collection of Carpenter" Des Moines Register, January 31, 1941.

Weaver, James B. "James Sansom Carpenter" Des Moines Register, April 8, 1939. page 6, c.6-7

Banger, Linda. "Meet Me on the Corner: East 32nd Street & Kinsey Avenue" Des Moines Register, Wednesday, October 1, 1997 11AT-WSN.

Abstract of title, lot 11 Cedar Hill, City of Des Moines, Polk County, Iowa.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Carpenter, James Sansom House  
Polk County, Iowa

### Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 11, Cedar Hill, City of Des Moines, Polk County, Iowa

### Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the mansion occupied by J.S. Carpenter from 1906 to 1939 which maintains its historic integrity and original location.

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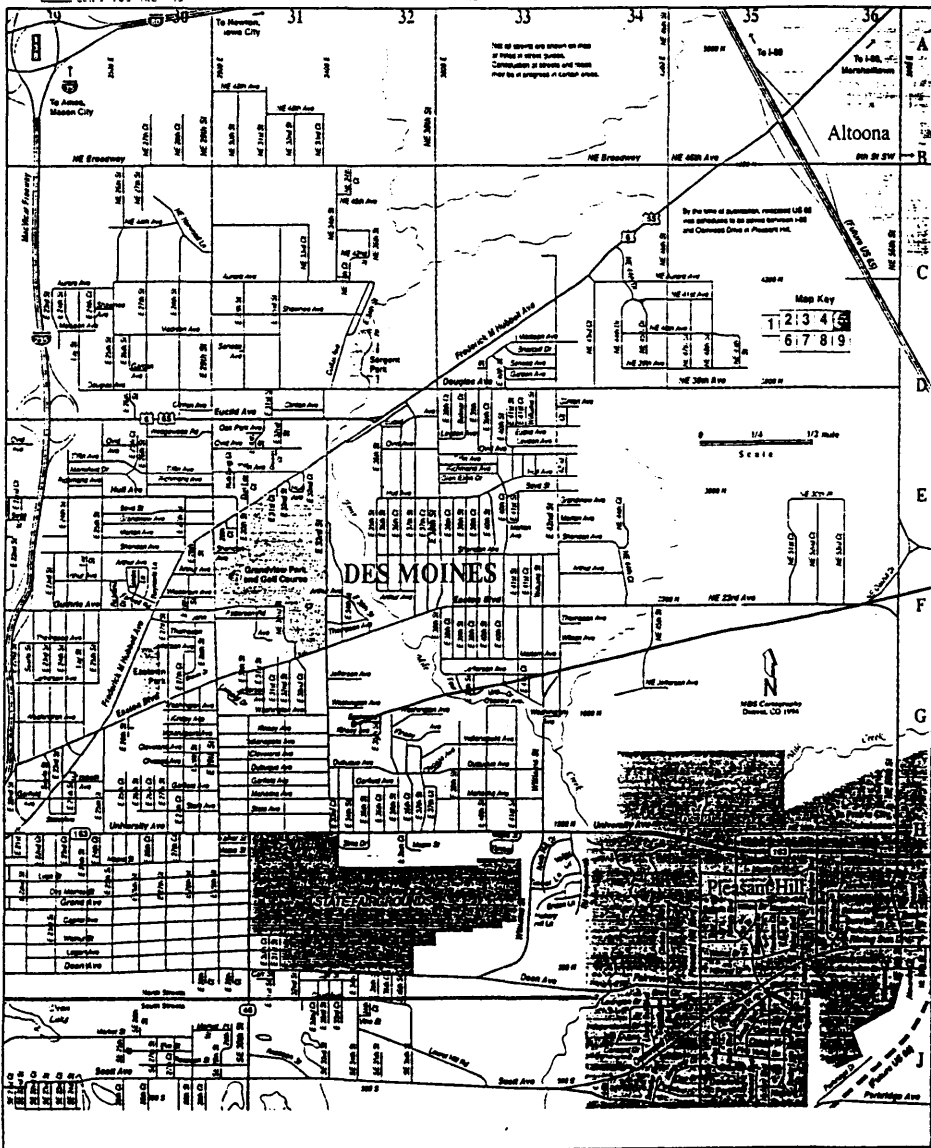
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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Carpenter, James Sansom House  
Polk County, Iowa

MAP: J. S. Carpenter House location on map of Des Moines, Iowa's  
east side streets.

MAP SOURCE: US WEST telephone book, DesMoines Iowa, 1996.



J.S. Carpenter House

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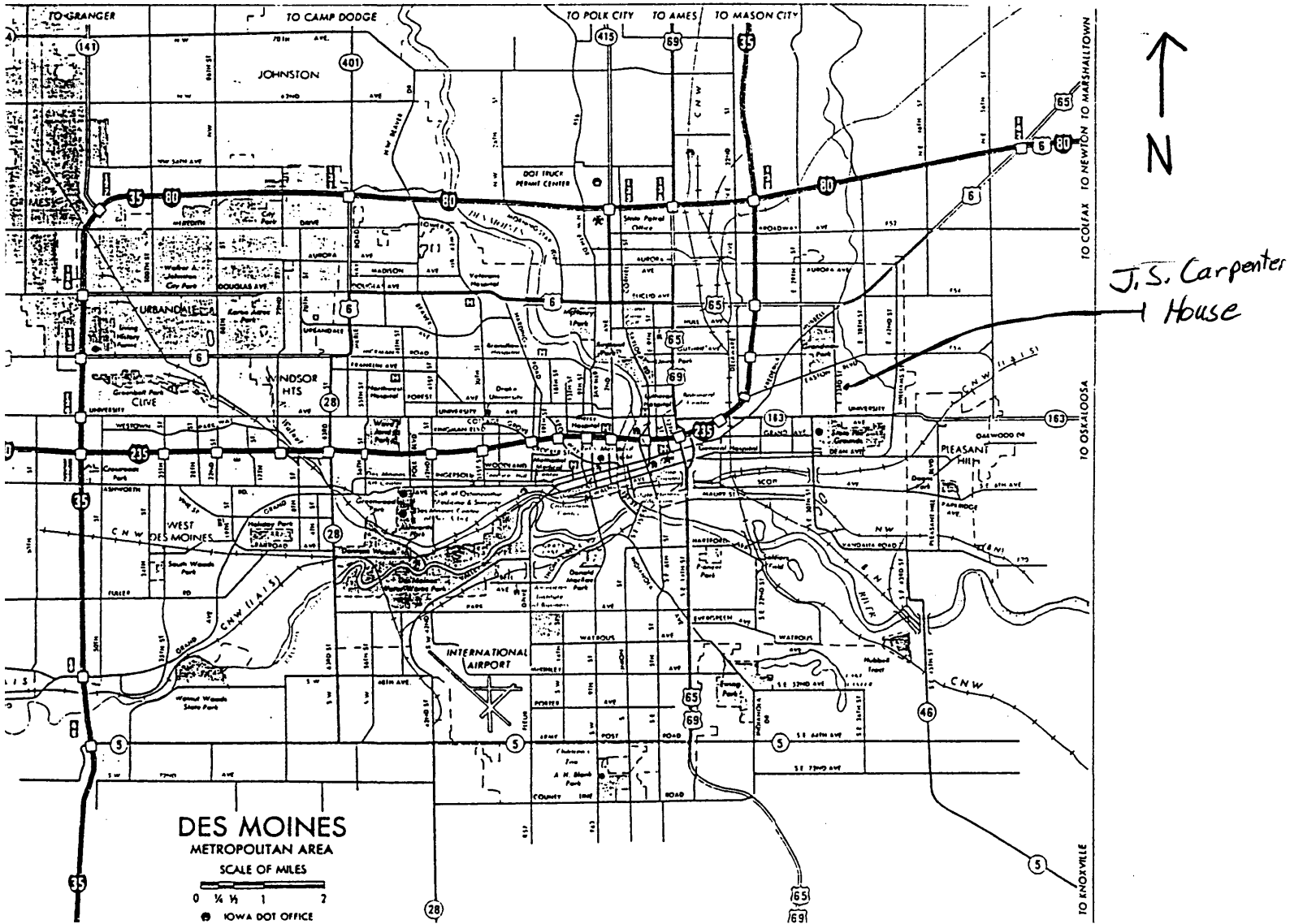
National Register of Historic Places  
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Carpenter, James Sansom House  
Polk County, Iowa

MAP : J. S. Carpenter House location on map of Des Moines, Iowa.

MAP SOURCE: Iowa Department of Transportation 1996.





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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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Carpenter, James Sansom House  
Polk County, Iowa

MAP: J. S. Carpenter House shown at lot 11 Cedar Hill Plat.

MAP SOURCE: Abstract of title, lot 11, Cedar Hill, City  
of Des Moines, Iowa.

CEDAR HILL

LOT 2 STOWE HEIGHTS AN  
OFFICAL PLAT IN THE CITY  
OF DES MOINES, IOWA

↑  
NORTH  
SCALE 1"=100'

NOTE - 1/4" FINISH AT ALL CORNERS  
EXCEPT AS NOTED

