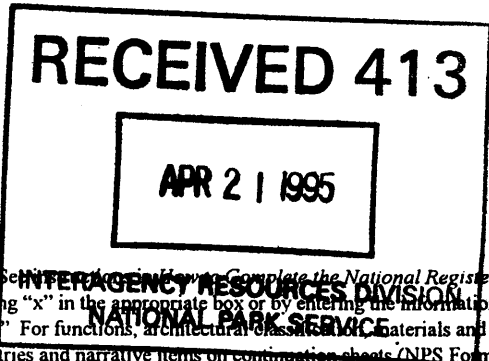


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions on 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 Big 4 Fair Art Hall

other names/site number Hollenbeck Hall

2. Location

street & number Water Street-River Road [NA]not for publication

city or town Eldon [NA ] vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Wapello code 179 zip code 52554

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.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Patricia Quinn  
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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall

Entered in the National Register 5-18-95

Name of Property

County and State

**5. Classification**

<b>Ownership of Property</b>		<b>Category of Property</b>	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
(Check as many boxes as apply)		(Check only one box)	(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site			
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure			_____ sites
	<input type="checkbox"/> object			_____ structures
				_____ objects
			<u>1</u>	<u>0</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

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE/FAIR

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION CULTURE/FAIR

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/exhibition building

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

Name of Property \_\_\_\_\_

County and State \_\_\_\_\_

**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.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT/recreation

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1911-1917

**Significant Dates**

1911

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

UNKNOWN

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** 120 M-L less than one acre.

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	[1]5	[5]6	[1]4	[0]	[4]5	[2]8	[7]0	[0]	2	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	Zone	Easting		Northing	Zone	Easting		Northing		Zone		Easting		Northing			
3	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	4	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

[ ] See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

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

Quit Claim Deed - 2/11/1891  
Sec. 35 Township 71N  
Range 12W SW Corner Lot 3

**Boundary Justification**

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

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Shirley Acton-Supt. Art Hall/Paul Acton-Treas.  
 organization Wapello County Regional Fair Association date November 28, 1994  
 street & number 59 Friendly Lane telephone 515 682 9589  
 city or town Ottumwa state Iowa zip code 52501

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the complete 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 Wapello County Regional Fair Association  
 street & number Water Street telephone 515 652 7521  
 city or town Eldon state Iowa zip code 52554

**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.).

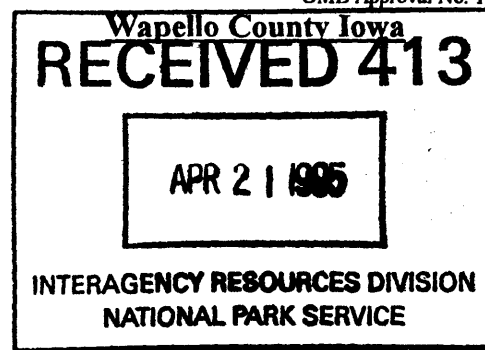
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this 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.

(8-86)

**Big 4 Fair Art Hall**

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

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The Big 4 Fair Culinary and Art Hall (now called Hollenbeck Hall) is a one story brick building situated on the Wapello County Regional Fair Grounds, Eldon, Iowa. It is approximately 400 yards N. E. of the Des Moines River, at the East end of Water Street, near the South entrance of the Fairgrounds. The brick building sits on a concrete foundation and is capped with an asphalt shingle covered roof. A fire destroyed an early building on the site. This one was completed in August 1911 for the fair held that year in September. The building consists of a center with four wings, each with exterior doors, each wing representing a surrounding county. North County-Wapello; East County-Jefferson; West County-Davis; South County-Van Buren. It is believed to be the earliest brick building on a county fair grounds in Iowa. A wooden louvered cupola (18' 3" from the ground to the top) is on top of center of the building's roof. Each wing is 11' 2" high. No major changes have been made in the Art Hall since it was built. Originally the building had eight ( 8) shuttered windows (3'3"), 2 on each wing. They were later closed because of vandalism. The roadway through the fairgrounds is 3' from the West entrance of the building.

Any work done to the building was handled by local carpenters and volunteer fair board members. Edgar Hollenbeck, Newt Breckenridge, Walter Franklin, and Ira Hart, all of the Eldon area helped keep the building in good repair. The original floor was dirt with sawdust added each year during the fair activities. In the 1950's a cement floor was added to the building under the direction of director and stockholder, Edgar Hollenbeck, (deceased) and husband of Mable Hollenbeck, who was Art Hall Superintendent for over 40 years. The hall was named for Mrs. Hollenbeck in 1984. She remained Superintendent of the Hall until her death in the Spring of 1994, at the age of 88 years.

Age and floods have caused the original one story building to suffer cracks in all sides. Wooden exterior doors on the end of each wing have rotted and are to be replaced. Current roof is asphalt over wood shingles, (roof leaks in the SW corner). The louvered cupola rests on top of a gabled roof. Interior walls are partially plastered (now cracked), some walls have peg board covering them. Brick pilasters and wooden 2X8 ties were used in wooden construction and are still in the building. Rod ties were added later.

Beginning in the 1950's the Fair Board sponsored and promoted stock car races during the summer, during which time the Art Hall was used as a concession stand. Electricity and a water line were then added to the building.

The K. D. (Keokuk-Des Moines) Railroad bordered the North edge of the Fairgrounds and during a Big 4 Fair noted ex-president Theodore Roosevelt made a stop at the grounds on his way from Keokuk to Des Moines. This famous statesman had a stop of sufficient length the forenoon of September 4, 1912 for all to afford an opportunity to see and hear him.

Quoted from The Eldon Forum September 5, 1912:

*At 11:00 the train bearing the party came in sight a couple of miles down the river, and immediately a cry went up. Two extra coaches for himself and party being attached to the regular train. The train stopped at the railroad entrance and 'Teddy', accompanied by a few of his party were taken in autos to the front of the Grandstand, piloted by officials of the Big 4 Fair Association and the Eldon Mayor Enyart. He was introduced by the Fair President D. A. Jay. The train proceeded to the train station and an auto party, car driven by Ned Lutz, took Roosevelt back to rejoin his train in Eldon.*

**United States Department of the Interior**

National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7Page 2

*The Colonel was dressed in a plain dark gray suit, wore a soft black hat, which he held in his hand while speaking, and waved continually to the assembled thousands as he was whirled away up the river road to the train.*

*The exhibits in all departments that year were good, fine specimens of live stock plentiful, poultry fine, and in the art hall there are many specimens of farm and garden products as good as can be found anywhere. One of the exhibits that attracted much attention in the art hall is that of Jacob Roberts. Here were exhibited numerous specimens of revolvers, keys, brass knuckles, powder and shot flasks, knives, pistols and other things of like nature that have come to be so scarce that some were considered curiosities. Above the cases displaying the items was a picture of Lincoln and Washington in a handmade frame of very novel construction. This led to a very successful year for the Big 4 Fair. 20,000 people attending was a conservative estimate of the total attendance, in spite of raising the price of admission to .35 cents. Because of inclement weather in former years and the burning of the art hall that had been rebuilt, the association was somewhat involved, but it is thought that the good receipts of the fair just closed will practically clean up the slate and that they can now plan for a still bigger and better exhibition for 1913.*

Walnut trees that surrounded the building originally were cut and used during WWI for gun stocks. Only two walnut trees now remain close to the art hall. A small Pin Oak tree was planted near the North entrance to the Art Hall in the 1960's by Henry McGregor, stockholder and director, in memory of his mother, Blanche McGregor and Aunt Edith Aubrey, long time workers in the hall. The tree now stands stately towering above the building. The first year the rebuilt Art Hall was used it included a soldiers reunion, thought to be Spanish/American and Civil War Veterans, including the 54th Regiment Band. During WWI, soldiers were camped and trained on the Fair Grounds. The Art Hall was used in conjunction with military training.

Historically recorded, Ioway and Fox & Sac Indian Tribes used these grounds for many activities. Indian battles were fought East of the property. It was written that the Ioway Indian nation held friendly pony races here, near the Art Hall. Documented in History of Wapello County by Ruth Sterling; page 353, (Indian Races).

The late Morris Hogue, a former Fair Board member, recalled that the Art Hall at one time was used as a dwelling by a family that was training standard bred horses on the half mile track that lies approximately 60 yards from the building; probably in early 1930's.

Historically, the first Big 4 Fair was started in 1891 and ceased to be in the year 1917. A debt of a few thousand dollars made the sale necessary. It was reorganized in 1918 as the Wapello County Agricultural Fair and is now called the Wapello County Regional Fair. The Fair has been held continuously each Fall, in August, excepting during WWII, when it was cancelled because of war concerns. In the late 1940's it also was cancelled because of a polio epidemic.

The Art Hall is in need of repair and a Flood Grant (1994) has enabled plans for this repair to begin.

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

## **National Register of Historic Places**

### **Continuation Sheet**

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#### Statement of Significance

This property, Big 4 Fair Art Hall is significant under the National Register Criterion A as a contribution to Wapello County's early 1900 Fair Exhibitions. This event is significant to the pattern of history of that area. The property is also significant under Criteria C representing a distinctive type of architecture or work. It was constructed of brick, completed August 19, 1911, and used first during the Big 4 Fair in September 1911. The original building had been destroyed by fire.

The building related to Iowa's Historic themes of Agriculture, Culinary Arts, and Crafts. The Big 4 Fair Art Hall has a central area from which four wings extend. Each wing represented a surrounding county. Wapello County-North, Davis County-West, Jefferson County-East, Van Buren County-South. This building was built, to give each county an area to display their agricultural produce, grain, arts, and crafts including hand work, and canning endeavors. People from surrounding areas used the building as a place of entertainment and a meeting area. Many came as family units in horse and buggy. They camped on the grounds while displaying their goods in the Art hall and also attending the fair.

The Big 4 Fair Art Hall is located on the Wapello County Regional Fair Grounds, Eldon, Iowa. The town of Eldon was incorporated in the year 1873. It was a thriving railroad center, a division point for the Chicago/Rock Island/Pacific Railways, North and South route. Also the Keokuk/DesMoines track, East to West, bordered the Wapello County Fairgrounds and was used by many in Wapello County as means of getting to the fair. It brought people from Ottumwa, the county seat, to Eldon. The train running from Ottumwa to Eldon at that time was called the "Hog 'n Human" because it hauled both to area communities and to Eldon during fair time. At one time Eldon had a population of over 3000. The town has been subject to many changes, in particular the closing of the railroad in 1978, which led a decline in Eldon's population. It now has a population of approximately 1200. Eldon is proud of having the fairgrounds on it's town map. A small lake area is situated on the West fairgrounds property, draining into the Des Moines River. The lake area was built by C. C. C. workers during the Depression in about 1934. The Big 4 Fair Art Hall lays East of the lake area and a parking area used during the Fair is along the Water Street entrance. The fairgrounds are maintained year round and much of the area is used by local people as a picnic area.

The Big 4 Fair Art Hall was renamed Hollenbeck Hall in 1984, honoring Mabel Hollenbeck who served as Superintendent. for 40 years. She was a stockholder and director on the Fair Board for 50 years. Mrs. Hollenbeck and her husband, Edgar, residents of the Eldon and Ottumwa area all their lives spent many hours of dedicated work at the Art Hall, during the Fair and preparation work before it. Her father-in-law, Sherm, was a stockholder on the original Wapello County Agriculture Fair Association. Mrs. Hollenbeck remained active on the board until her death in early 1994 at the age of 88 years.

Transpiring years saw changes to the Wapello County Fairgrounds, but the Big 4 Fair Art Hall remained the same. Several times over the years flood water from the Des Moines River entered the structure and left debris, and layers of mud on it's foundation and floor. The interior of the building remains much the same as when built. It originally had a wooden shingled, hipped roof, now covered by asphalt shingles. The dirt floor, covered with sawdust during the fairs, is now concrete. It is said to be the only original brick structure, dating back to the early 1900's on an Iowa Fairgrounds. It has been used for many social and cultural events during it's history.

**The Big 4 Fair Art Hall**  
**Wapello County Iowa**

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

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**Continuation Sheet**

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The general characteristics of the Big 4 Fair Art Hall building have remained throughout the years. Due to cracking of the northeast and West wall, some brick areas have been replaced, as well as some reinforcement of the concrete foundation in these areas. This was done in the 1960's. The structure is unheated.

The bricks used in the Big 4 Fair Art Hall were probably from the Trott Kiln located in West Eldon at that time. There are a few of these bricks around and they are considered collectors items.

The special wing design of the Big 4 Fair Art Hall with it's brick construction, hipped roof and louvered cupola on top center, exemplify the architectural work of that period in our history.



(8-86)

**Big 4 Fair Art Hall****Wapello County Iowa**

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

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Bibliography**

Wapello County Court House: Ottumwa, Iowa  
County Recorder Office

Maps: Wapello County Court House  
Plat Book S  
Auditor's Office

Ottumwa Public Library:  
Micro Film of Ottumwa Courier  
dated: August 19, 1911

Eldon Forum microfilm 1912  
Jo Eddy, Eldon, Iowa

Eldon Forum: August 16, 1917 microfilm  
Jo Eddy, Eldon, Iowa

History of Wapello County  
by Ruth Sterling  
(page 353, Indian Races)  
Section 7, page 2

**United States Department of the Interior**

**National Park Service**

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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**Verbal Boundary**

Quit Claim Deed 2/11/1891

Sec. 35 Township 71 N

Range 12 W SW Corner Lot 3

**Boundary Justification**

A circle 56 ft. in diameter based on the center point of the bldg., discribing thereby an octagon that includes this bldg. only.

United States Department of the Interior

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos

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### Photo information

Hollenbeck Hall  
Big 4 Fair  
Wapello County  
Water Street, Eldon, Iowa

### Photographer:

Paul Acton, Fair Board Treasurer  
July 1994

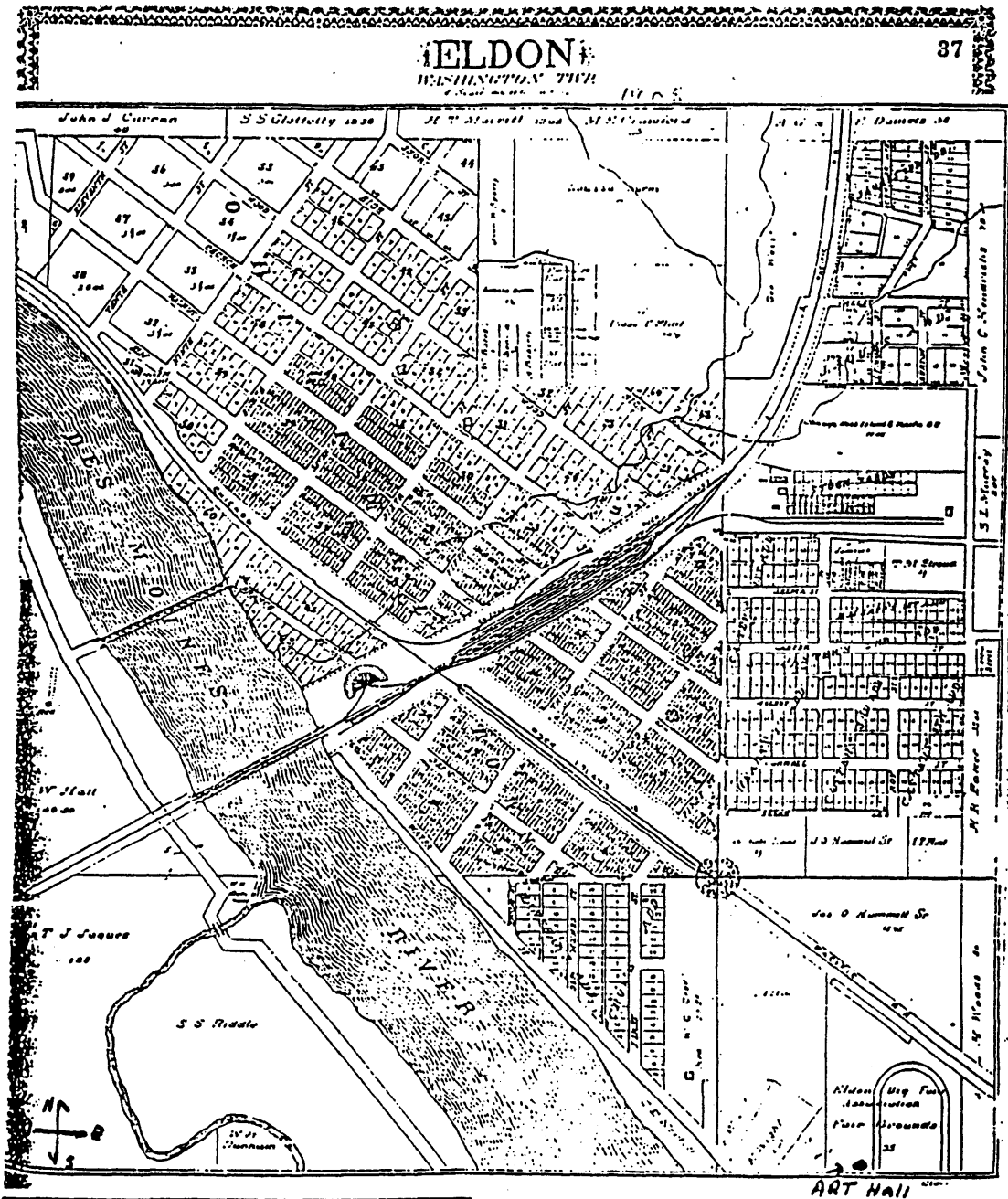
Photos-3 each of: North view looking South  
South view looking North  
East view looking West  
West view looking East

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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1930-1931: Washington Township Country School  
 teachers: Alpine, Helen Holmes; Ashland, Ella Harlan;  
 Dahlgren, Naomi Pence; Liberty, Lucille Daub; Union,  
 Madelyn Hodson; Fairview, Velta I. Dell; Bentonon, Alma  
 Parker; Pleasant Ridge, Mildred Stum

March 31, 1916: The Bay View club met today at the  
 home of Mrs. Cinda Davks on West Elm Street.

September 24, 1881: Eldon still blooms on—new build-  
 ings going up all the time. . . . Saturday Evening Press.

United States Department of the Interior

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Interior of Big 4 Fair Art Hall. Building interior has display cases along all walls. Also beams on which quilts are displayed during Wapello County Regional Fair.

The Big 4 Fair Art Hall

Wapello County Iowa

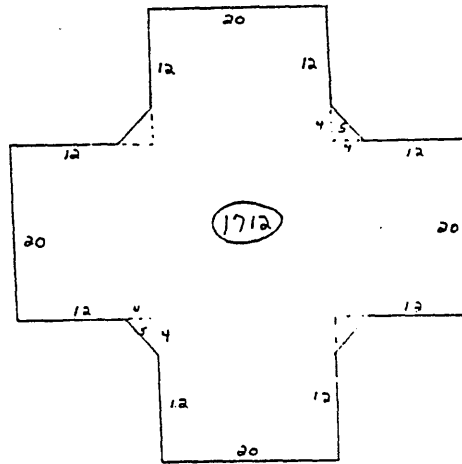
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Form with multiple sections: 1. OCCUPANCY, 2. FOUNDATION, 3. BASEMENT AREA, 4. EXTERIOR WALLS, 5. ROOF, 6. FLOORS, 7. INTERIOR FINISH, 8. PARTITIONS, 9. HEATING, 10. PLUMBING, 11. TILING, 12. WIRING, 13. STRUCTURAL, 14. MECHANICAL, 15. MISCELLANEOUS, 16. OBSOLESCENCE. Includes columns for construction, size, class, year built, and value.

United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
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View at Big Four Fair Grounds, Eldon, Iowa.