

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received DEC 27 1982  
date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic George A. Wells House

and/or common Wells-Booker-Taylor House

**2. Location**

street & number 304 ~~South~~ Main St \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Fairfield \_\_\_ vicinity of

state Iowa code 19 county Jefferson code 101

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mr. and Ben J. Taylor

street & number 304 South Main

city, town Fairfield \_\_\_ vicinity of state Iowa

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jefferson County Courthouse

street & number 51 E. Briggs Avenue

city, town Fairfield state Iowa 52556

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Area 15 Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1981 \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state  county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Iowa SHPO

city, town Des Moines state Iowa

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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved

date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The George A. Wells House is a very well preserved example of a modest combination brick and frame 19th Century home which retains vernacularized Greek Revival style elements despite its late date of construction.

The house is located in a residential area, just a few blocks from the town square to the north. The two story front gabled structure is veneered with brick laid in running bond. The plan is essentially that of a rectangle, with a very slight side wing projecting from the rear of the northern face. The main facade is a vernacular interpretation of the Greek Revival, with a double off-center entrance, and basic vertical symmetry. The cornice is plain, and lower front windows are floor length with 2/2 sash.

Of special interest are the ornately treated stone headings and sills, and the two story chamfered bay with its recessed second story on the south side. An internal flue has stone coping. A basement window on the north face is surmounted by a brick relieving arch. The front porch features square cast iron posts with decorated capitals, and a very unique cast iron railing.

A two story gabled rear wing apparently is part of the original house, yet its windows contain 6/6 sash. This wing retains a side cellar entrance and an arbor-covered side porch. The rear gable end includes an ornate framed vent. A two bay garage (1964) was added to the rear of the house, replacing a porch and rear chimney, and a side porch on the north side of the house was enclosed (1965).

The stone headings are quite unique in their surface treatment. They are ornamented with a centered maltese cross and their ends feature three vertical flutes which surmount recessed stone carved brackets. The mullions also feature similar carved brackets which support the headings. The house was apparently started with basement excavation and construction but apparently because of economic circumstances, the house remained uncompleted long enough for at least one small tree to grow. The delayed completion date perhaps accounts for the late date of construction for this style. The brick and frame portions of the house are united by a single foundation, however a full basement is found only beneath the brick portion. There is no indication that the brick veneer is not original, the foundation being so constructed as to accommodate the additional width of the brickwork.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1883 **Builder/Architect** George Wells

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The George A. Wells house is historically significant due to its association with two locally notable Fairfield residents, Goerge A. Wells (1831–1895), builder of the house, and Samuel F. Booker (1823–1899), the second owner of the house. In addition, the house is architecturally significant in terms of its style as well as its local importance as a representative early example of 19th Century Fairfield.

Goerge A. Wells settled in Fairfield in 1856, and opened a drug store there. In 1862 Wells opened a private bank, joining in partnership with Garret A. Garretson in 1877. The firm dissolved in 1893. Private banks were locally important for community growth in an age when state laws prohibited other banking institution forms. Wells was a notable promoter of the business life and community development of Fairfield, serving as a Parson's College board of trustees member, several terms as Third Ward Alderman in the middle 1880's, and two years as town mayor just prior to his death. Wells was a lifelong Republican, having served as a member of the local "Wide Awakes" during the presidential campaign of 1860. Despite his local prominence and involvement in community affairs, Wells declined political involvement outside of Fairfield.

Wells began construction of this house, probably after acquiring the property in early 1879, but due to financial difficulties, the basement alone was finished. Finally in 1883 the house was finished and Wells occupied the building until his death in 1895.

Samuel F. Booker, noted community promoter and farmer, spent his final years in this house, dying there in 1899. Booker resided in the county from 1865 through 1878, relocated to Hannibal Missouri until 1889, and lived in Fairfield thereafter. His widow, Narcissa occupied the house until 1906. Booker served as city assessor for Fairfield.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Fairfield North Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	5	5	8	7	1	3	0	4	5	3	9	5	3	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

### Verbal boundary description and justification

North 74' of Lots 7 & 8, Block 17, New Plat Addition, Fairfield.

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

state Iowa code 19 county Jefferson code 101

state \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator

organization Iowa SHPO date 14 December 1982

Historical Building

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

city or town Des Moines state Iowa 50319

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Adrian A. Anderson

title Executive Director Iowa State Historical Department date 24 November 1982

### For NPS use only

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

**Entered in the  
National Register**

John Melous Byers  
Keeper of the National Register

date 1/27/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 3

Fairfield Ledger, 3 April 1895

Fairfield Ledger, 31 December 1932.

Fairfield Ledger, 18 October 1899, p. 3.

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Iowa State Census, 1885, Jefferson County, Fairfield, Iowa, Third Ward, p. 289.

Iowa State Census, 1895, Jefferson County, Fairfield, Iowa, Third Ward, p. 30.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1885.

Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Maps. New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Company,  
1892, 1899, 1907, 1913.

Jefferson County Records; Deed Book 22, pp. 39, 41, Book 7, p. 378, Book 47, p. 81.

Abstract of Title.

Interview with Ben and Lucille Taylor, November 9, 1979.

Interview with Mrs. Stella Gaines, by Ben and Lucille Taylor, no date.

Welty, Susan Fulton. A Fair Field, Detroit: Harol Press, 1975, p. 398.