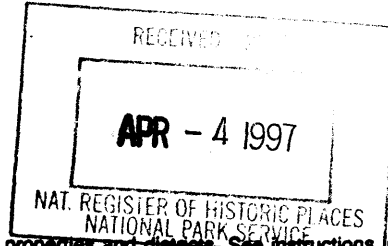


MAR 21 1997

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 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 Moyce/Steffens House
other names/site number French Creek House

2. Location

street & number 1615 Avenue H N/A not for publication
city or town Fort Madison N/A vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Lee code 111 zip code 52627

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 Oulkinson 3-31-97
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State of IOWA **HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA**

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 Patrick Andrus Date of Action 5/2/97

Moyce/Steffens House
Name of Property

MAR 21 1997

Lee County, Iowa
County and State

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	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

No style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/Limestone
walls WOOD/Weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

other BRICK

Narrative Description

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

Moyce/Steffens House
Name of Property

Lee County, Iowa
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)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

ca. 1844 (single-pen section built)
ca. 1857 (northeastern room built)
ca. 1892 (two room western addition built)

Significant Dates

ca. 1844 (as above)
ca. 1857 (as above)
ca. 1892 (as above)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Moyce, John
Steffens, Hermann

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Moyce/Staffens House
Name of Property

Lee County, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 115 16411480 44981840
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 Dr. John Hansman, F.S.A., Research Associate, Cambridge University,
England
organization French Creek House Preservation Corp. date October 1996
street & number 408 7th Street telephone (319) 372-4015
city or town Fort Madison, state Iowa zip code 52627

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 French Creek House Preservation Corporation
street & number 408 7th Street telephone (319) 372-4015
city or town Fort Madison, state Iowa zip code 52627

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
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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1

Moyce/Steffens House, Lee County, Iowa

DESCRIPTION

The Moyce/Steffens house sits on a 90 by 145 foot town lot of outlet 1081 in Fort Madison. Alternately known as the French Creek House, this sobriquet derives from the name of a stream that flows north to south along the eastern boundary of the property, known as "French Creek." The house measures 30 feet on the south (front) and north facades, and 26 feet on the east and west facings. There are four rooms representing three successive building phases. These comprise a single-pen structure completed in the mid-1840's, a one-room addition on the north of the original house, added during the 1850's, and a two-room western addition of the early 1890's. A galleried porch overextends the entire south face.

The Single-pen Section (kitchen on plan)

The small-scale, one-room plan of the single-pen original structure, measuring 15'5" by 12', is typical of an early settlement period house in Eastern Iowa, and of the method of construction and the material used. These features include oak studs, some with bark adhering to partly-sawn, partly-hewn outer tree facings used in framing the sill and rafter plates. The corner posts are supported by diagonal braces which tie the vertical posts to the rafter and sill plates. The studs and corner posts are mortised into the rafter and sill plates. In Eastern Iowa, brace framing was contemporary with log construction.

Kerf marks on the studs and corner posts appear to derive from the use of a two-man pit-saw, a device that may have been utilized on the western frontier of Eastern Iowa into the 1840's.

The cellar framing of the single-pen section consists of hewn oak timber floor joists mortised into the side wall sills which are also of hewn oak. Many joists have been replaced with sawn timbers.

The roof framing of the single-pen section has been altered from the original pitch on the north to overshoot the later addition to the house at that side. Original hewn rafters, some retaining bark, are in situ on the south side of this section of the roof, and others have been incorporated in the north side rebuilding.

The window framing of the single-pen section are smaller than those

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Moyce/Steffens House, Lee County, Iowa

from post-1850 era houses. The double-hung sash-weighted cases, each holding a single pane of glass, are replacements of probable six-over-six paned window lights which otherwise only survive in the two rooms on the building's north facade. Sash-weighted windows, as these, where only the bottom section moved, and with fixed top sashes, were common until the 1850's.

The ashlar-bonded cellar foundation walls beneath the single-pen house section, are laid with random and regular-coursed limestone blocks. The walls are exceptionally well-made for this modest house built on a low economic scale. Many wall stones display a finely smoothed surfacing.

Several kinds of Spanish-brown paint were applied to the original trim and casings of the windows and doors of the single-pen room section. This earlier trim comprising a relative narrow Federal era style molding, was later overlaid by a thick Greek Revival or early-Victorian-era trim. The Spanish-brown paint appears to be milk-based, utilizing natural ochers in its preparation, a type commonly used until oil-based paints became available after the 1840's or early 1850's.

Hand-struck soft bricks used in the internal wall nogging of the single-pen section, exhibit large surfaces of unrefined tempering and varying degrees of oxidation resulting from uneven firing temperatures.

Filling the internal wall spaces with brick nogging was an early 19th century vernacular building practice adopted from Northern-European traditions in Britain, Germany, Northern France, and other countries.

The chimney stack for the single-pen section is cantilevered at (a) on the west wall. Such stacks were used with small iron stoves after 1830.

The plaster of the single-pen section is of good quality although unevenly applied in the common, 19th century three-step process. Microscopic analysis shows that red ox hair was used as a binder in the plaster. Ox hair served as a common binder regionally until the 1850's

The Northeastern Room (back room on plan)

The northeastern room addition to the house measures 15'4" by 9'7". The framing of the south wall utilizes the north wall of the

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Moyce/Steffens House, Lee County, Iowa

pre-existing section. Milled pine studs frame milled sill and rafter plates of the remaining walls. There is no diagonal brace framing.

Hand-struck soft bricks are used for the internal wall nogging of the addition. The bricks are notably more evenly fired than those utilized for the nogging in the single-pen house section.

The plaster of the northeastern room is unevenly applied and utilizes the 19th century three-step process. A vegetable matter, perhaps prairie hay, was used as a binder. Lath, cut in standard lengths, was used only on the ceiling. As in the single-pen section, plaster is applied directly onto the nogging of the northeast addition.

The one window with six-over-six paned lights, is slip-silled, double-hung, and utilizes sash-weighted cases, a feature, as noted earlier above, that remained common until the 1850's.

The fire-polished cylinder glass of the window, the glass thickness, color, and optical properties, are characteristic of a type not common after the mid-1850's.

The horizontal crown board that forms the trim over the northeastern room window, is drawn to a shallow point at the center. Gable window crowns are characteristic of both the Gothic Revival and Italianate architectural styles in the United States, and generally are to be dated between the 1840's and 1880's.

A stair at the southwest corner of the south wall in the northeastern room addition, leads to a gabled attic above. The steep risers, treads, and casing of the stair appear to be original. The three-board, batten-type door on the stair entrance point, is typical for the 1850's as are the cast iron hinges of the stair door.

The Western Addition (bedroom and living room on plan)

The two-room western addition to the house, extends north to south, the exact width of the two eastern rooms. The southern room of the western addition measures 13'9" by 10'7". The addition utilizes the balloon-frame system that eliminates hewn mortised joints, nogging and brace framing, for closely-spaced two-inch studs of varying width, joined only by wire nails. This system, which provided cheaper and more rapid construction, became increasingly popular by the Civil War, and

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Moyce/Steffens House, Lee County, Iowa

largely replaced mortised framing in more settled areas, by the 1870's.

The double-hung windows of the western additions have sashes with only one glazed unit each. In common with the windows of the two eastern sections of the house, the windows are sash weighted in which only the bottom section moves, a late use of this older casing style.

The plaster is evenly applied in a two-step process. Horsehair is utilized as a binder. The lath, cut in standard lengths, serves as a backing for both wall and ceiling plaster.

A detailed "birds eye" lithographic view of Fort Madison, published in 1889, which is accurate in all other known building representations, shows this house as only one-pen wide east to west. The earliest available Sanborn fire map for the relevant location, dated 1894, provides an outline plan of the house at its present dimensions. From this evidence and given the architectural styling and building characteristics of the western addition, we may reasonably deduce that this part of the structure was erected sometime between 1889 and 1894.

The Porch

The overshot porch of the house on the south face, forms an unbroken continuation of the house roof along the entire facade. Alternatively identified as galleried porches, this roofed adjunct was apparently built or rebuilt on an extended plan when the two western rooms were added to the house during the late 19th century.

The present porch supports, slender Tuscan columns characteristic of the Colonial Revival style, are probably ca. 1910 replacements of the original square posts with chamfered edges, three of which were apparently reused in the house cellar where they serve as supports for a sagging foundation sill plate. They are painted the exact shade of brown as earlier layers on the house siding, and will be restored to the porch.

Present Condition

The house siding is of broad-width, milled clapboard. Most of the clapboard is presently overlaid with vinyl siding, but otherwise appears to be intact. Plaster lacking in several areas of two interior rooms can be replaced. All interior trim survives.

Previous architectural surveys with written reports on this structure were undertaken by Hansman (1991), Larson (1993), and Ingalls (1995). All reports are listed in the Bibliography.

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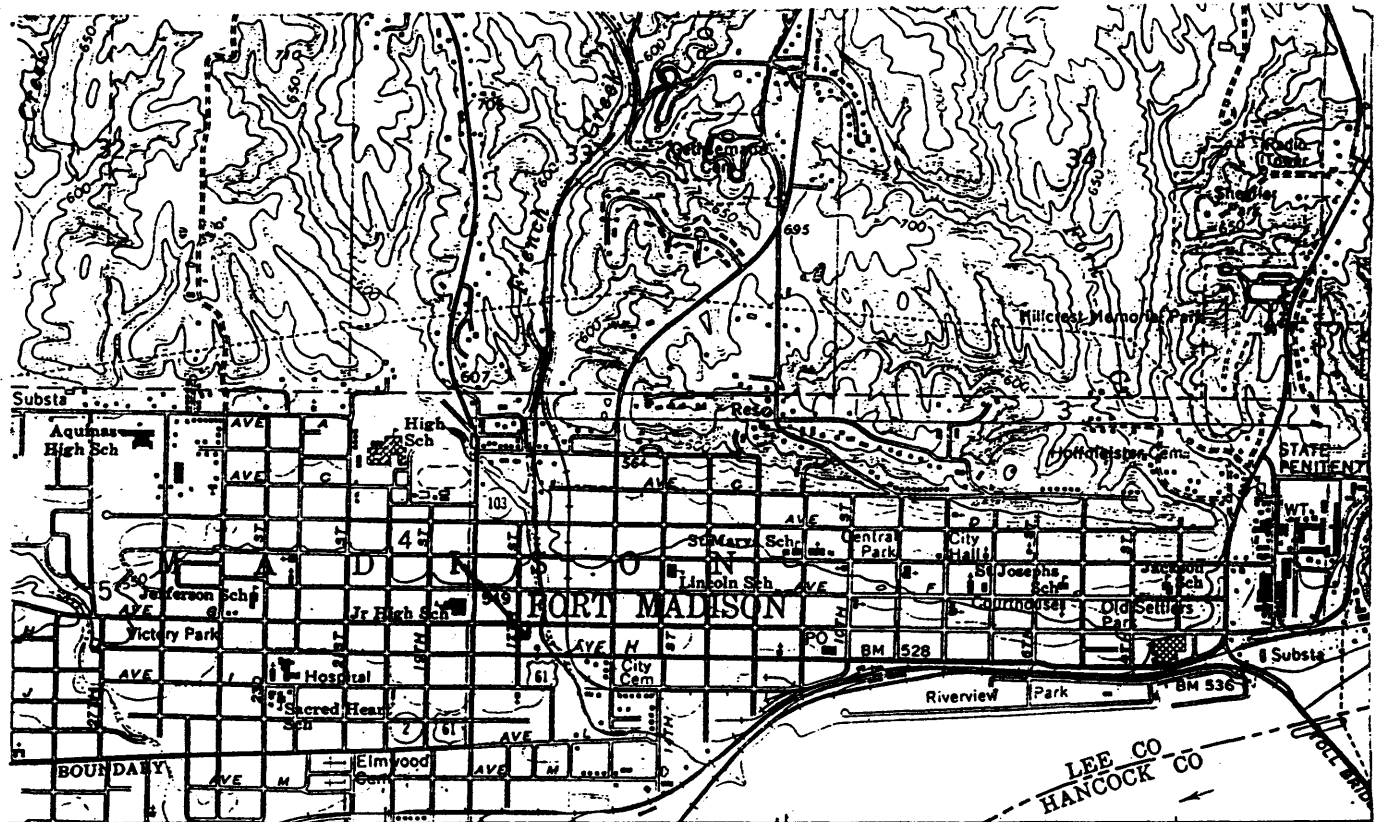
National Register of Historic Places
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Section number 7 Page 5

Moyce/Steffens House, Lee County, Iowa

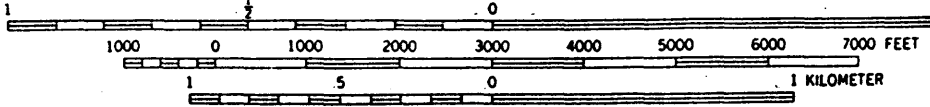
DESCRIPTION (Cont):

U.S.G.S. Map of Fort Madison
Moyce/Steffens House west of French Creek (noted by arrow)

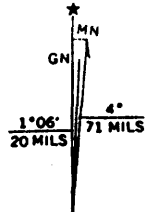


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SCALE 1:24 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929



UTM GRID AND 1975 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA
IOWA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, IOWA CITY, IOWA 52240,
AND STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, URBANA, ILLINOIS 61801
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

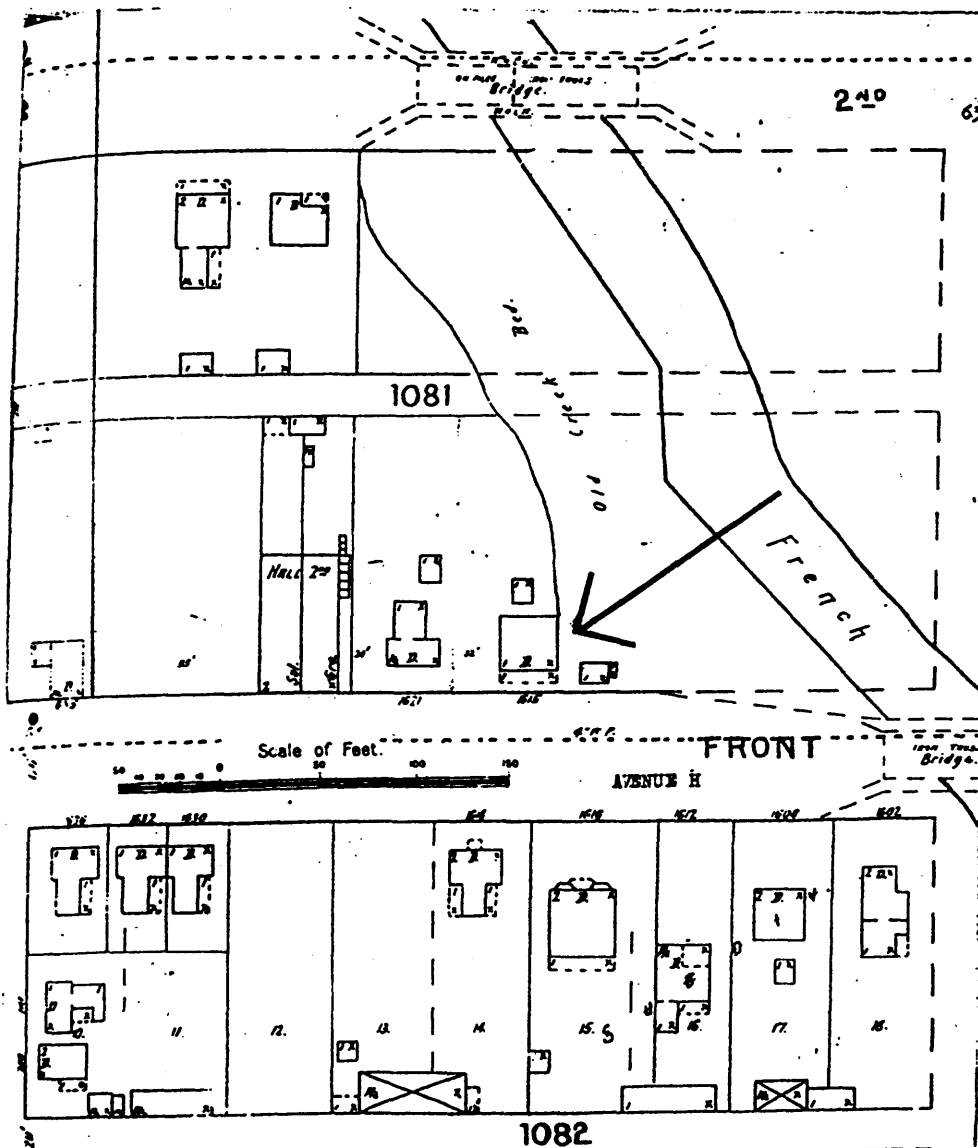
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Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

Moyce/Steffens House, Lee County, Iowa

DESCRIPTION (Cont):



1894 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map
indicating location of the Moyce/Steffens House
in relation to French Creek and Avenue H

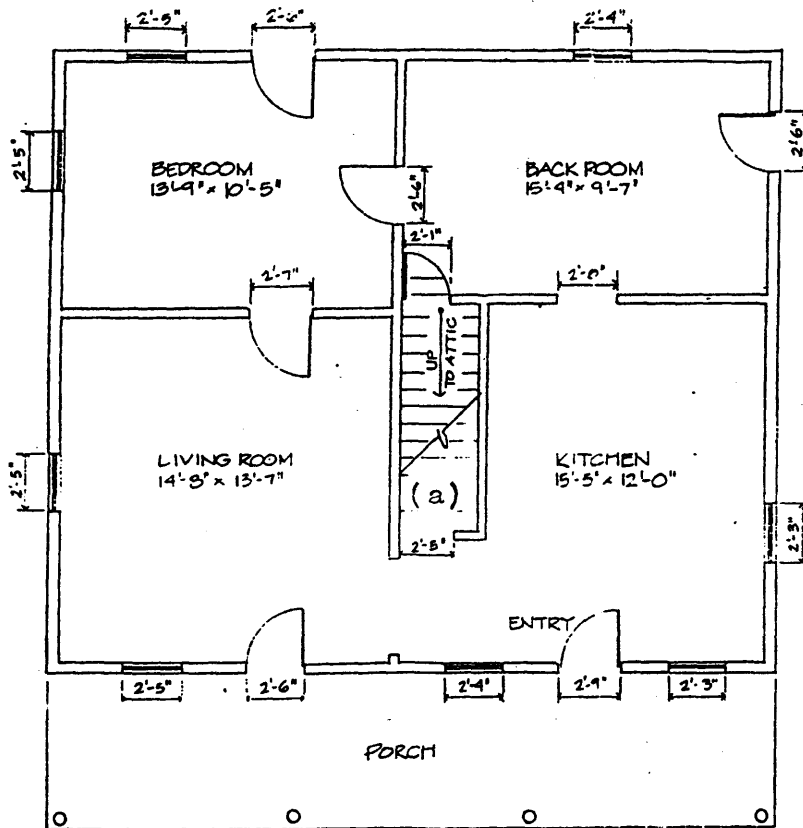
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Moyce/Steffens House, Lee County, Iowa

DESCRIPTION (Cont):



FRENCH CREEK HOUSE
FORT MADISON, IOWA
MEASURED BY THE GARDNER
MUSEUM OF ARCHITECTURE &
DESIGN
DRAWN BY MIRA D. METZINGER

FLOOR PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"

First Floor

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Moyce/Steffens House, Lee County, Iowa

SIGNIFICANCE

The Moyce/Steffens House is of local and perhaps wider significance, under Criterion C because of its age, methods of construction, and utilization of building techniques associated with French, German, and Eastern American settlers in the Mississippi River valley. Constructed in the early mid-1840's, added to during the 1850's, and further enlarged in the early 1890's, this house illustrates to a remarkable degree the propensity of 19th century builders and designers to experiment and borrow freely from other cultures, in their search for solutions to design and construction problems relative to the climate, the availability of building materials, and to other concerns in the Middle West. This type of experimentation, a form of 19th century architectural multiculturalism, reflecting Iowa's diverse social and ethnic heritage, should be viewed as an important factor in the evolution of distinctive local, regional, and national building forms and styles. Largely intact and possessing a high degree of structural integrity, the Moyce/Steffens House stands as a virtual textbook of 19th century construction methods with its several sections featuring braced timber framing with mortised joints, brick fashwork or nogging; and balloon framing.

The State Historical Society of Iowa recognized the architectural importance of the Moyce/Steffens House in 1988 when Society officials authorized a special grant from its discretionary emergency fund, to provide half the purchase price for this building, thereby preventing its imminent demolition.

Significant constructional features of the original, single-pen section of the house include use of brace framing, unevenly-hewn and pit-sawn mortised timbers, and red ox-hair plaster binder. These indicators together with the use of a milk-based Spanish brown paint for the earliest interior trim of this part, collectively suggest a building date in the early or mid-1840's.

At that same period the property on which the house stands was owned by John Moyce, an immigrant stonemason from Scotland, who purchased this parcel of land in 1842.

In 1847 Moyce joined the only Iowa Company, mustered at Fort Madison, that participated in the Mexican War. Within months following his

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Moyce/Steffens House, Lee County, Iowa

discharge from the army in 1848, Moyce moved to Illinois.

If, as seems axiomatic, according to our dating criteria, the original single-pen section of the house, was constructed during the period of Moyce's ownership of this property, the extremely finely-hewn stone cellar walls could be understood as being laid by this master stonemason who took pride in applying his skill to the limestone cellar walls of his own house. More substantial brick houses of this period in Fort Madison, generally display less finished cellar walls largely constructed of roughly-hewn, flattish limestone which contrast markedly with the large-block coursings of highly finished limestone utilized for the cellar walls of present discussion. The suggestion has been advanced that Moyce may have been employed as a mason on the first cellhouse of Iowa State Prison in Fort Madison, construction of which commenced in 1839 and continued for some years thereafter. Under this postulation Moyce could have purchased and shaped the larger stone blocks used in the construction of his cellar walls, from prison building supplies. If this were so, at one period of his local residency at least, Moyce is also known to have accepted contract work.

The single-pen house section may be viewed as the only known survivor in Southeastern Iowa of a once fairly common frontier vernacular building. It is a diagnostic folk interpretation of a popular national trend of early 19th century building techniques collectively utilizing brace framing with pit-sawn and hewn oak timbers, mortised joints, and brick nogging. These and the developing constructional features of later additions, place the house in a special category as attesting, in one structure, the evolution of an important American building type.

In 1852, four years after John Moyce moved to Illinois, his Fort Madison property was sold to Hermann Steffens, a carpenter's laborer. In Section 7 of this report we have deduced, on the evidence of evolving constructional features, that the northeastern single-room addition to the original Moyce house, was most likely completed during the decade of the 1850's. These features included the use of milled studs in place of the pit-sawn and hewn studs of the earlier single-pen house, and an absence of brace framing of the original structure. Mortising and nogging, however, continued to be utilized. This and other evidence dates that addition to the early period of Hermann Steffens' residency.

Following Steffens' death in 1882, his widow Anna continued to live in the Moyce/Steffens house until her own demise in 1904. We have earlier

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Moyce/Steffens House, Lee County, Iowa

considered historical and architectural evidence suggesting that the final addition to the house was completed between 1889 and 1894 while Anna Steffens continued to reside there. The addition may have been built to house part of her family or as a rental unit, since both halves of the house are provided with separate front and rear doors.

Whatever the reason for the second enlargement of this residence, the western addition features further advancements in 19th century wood-frame construction. These include the use of balloon framing in which the studs and corner posts are secured with wire nails, rather than mortised to the rafter and foundation sill plates as is characteristic of the earlier two units of the house, and where the brick nogging of the earlier parts, has been eliminated.

The Moyce/Steffens House thus documents, in one extended building, popular construction advances of much of the 19th century in South-eastern Iowa. Not only is the Moyce/Steffens house a rare, if perhaps unique regional example of a significant pioneer style of folk architecture, it preserves the only surviving overshoot, 19th century galleried porch presently recorded within the state.

The galleried porch was adopted by 18th and early 19th century ethnic French settlers in much of the Southern and Middle Mississippi Valley, from a general architectural building style that evolved on various Caribbean islands. Later German, English, Eastern American, and other immigrants to the Mississippi Valley, adopted the galleried porch from the French who preceeded them in those parts. Thus, whatever the date or dates of construction of the galleried porch at the Moyce/Steffens House, the ultimate source of this building style, in the Mississippi Valley at least, would have been the relevant pioneer French settlers of that wider region.

Subsequent to its extended occupation by the Steffens family, the house has passed through numerous owners and tenants. The French Creek House Preservation Corporation is currently viewing several options as to how this structure may be best utilized, following its restoration, to preserve the entire building for future generations. The Corporation has been granted a not-for-profit status by the Iowa Secretary of State, and is tax exempt under both federal and state designation.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 & 10 Page 11

Moyce/Steffens House, Lee County, Iowa

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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Hansman, John F., "An Enquiry into the Architectural History of the French Creek House," 1991 (unpublished report).

Ingalls, Marlin, "Architectural Analysis of the French Creek House," 1995 (unpublished report).

Larson, Paul, "Provisional Report on the French Creek House," 1993 (unpublished report).

McAlester, Virginia and Lee, A Field Guide to American Houses, New York, 1986.

Noble, Allen G., Wood, Brick, and Stone, North American Settlement Landscape, W.I., University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1984.

Peterson, Fred W., Homes in the Heartland, University of Kansas Press, Lawrence, Kansas, 1992.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Fort Madison, 1894 and 1926.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

A part of outlot 1081 in the City of Fort Madison commencing at a point on the north line of Avenue H 213 feet east of the southwest corner of said outlot 1081, thence north 145 feet; thence east 90 feet; thence south 145 feet to the north line of Avenue H; thence west 90 feet to the place of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The original Moyce property comprised the entire outlot 1081. Lots were gradually sold off leaving the present boundaries described above as the only remaining part of outlot 1081 historically associated with the house.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number Photo- Page 12
graphs

Moyce/Steffens House, Lee County, Iowa

PHOTOGRAPHS: Moyce/Steffens House
1615 Avenue H
Fort Madison, Lee County, Iowa

All photographs of the Moyce/Steffens House were taken in April 1996 by Richard Bohnenkemp. All negatives are held by the French Creek House Preservation Corporation, 408 7th Street, Fort Madison, Ia 52627.

- #1 Exterior: Facade, looking northeast showing overshot porch.
- #2 Facade, looking southwest, showing six-over-six windows.
- #3 Interior: Southeast corner of 1840's single-pen section showing hewn oak corner post, hewn, angled bracing, and nogging. Bracing only partly exposed behind plaster.
- #4 Northeast corner of 1850's addition showing milled pine studs and brick nogging. No corner bracing.
- #5 A detail in attic of stud mortised into a rafter plate. Note parallel kerf marks on stud created by pit-sawing.
- #6 East facade of cellar wall showing large limestone block coursings with smoothed surfaces. At left and right are squared posts with chamfered edges, originally utilized as porch supports, but cut down when removed to serve as bracing for foundation plates in cellar.