

1-11-74

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Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| STATE: | Iowa |
| COUNTY: | Polk |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY DATE | DEC 10 1973 |

1. NAME

COMMON:
Jordan House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Iowa State Senator James C. Jordan Homestead

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
2251 Fuller Road

CITY OR TOWN:
West Des Moines

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

STATE: Iowa CODE: 14 COUNTY: Polk CODE: 153

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|--|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work <i>in progress</i> <u>Seasonal</u> | Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate) | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Summer camp dormitory</u> |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
West Des Moines Nazarene Church

STREET AND NUMBER:
2116 Grand Avenue (Church) 2106 Grand Avenue (pastor residence)

CITY OR TOWN:
West Des Moines

STATE: Iowa CODE: 14

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Regular Professor of Engineer #285 Frank L. Johnson

DATE OF SURVEY: November 1960 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Office of West Des Moines City Engineer, James Brown

STREET AND NUMBER:
1421 Maple

CITY OR TOWN:
West Des Moines

STATE: Iowa CODE: 14

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE:

COUNTY:

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

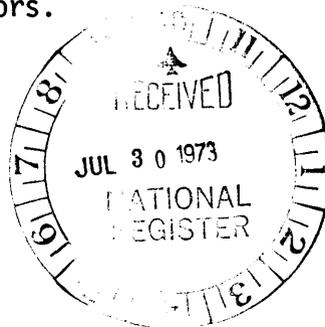
Altered Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Asymmetrical in plan, the two-story, white frame Jordan house was built in two parts. The first part on the east end, built in the late 1850's (no specific documentation), consists of a simple block with projecting vestibule area marking the central doorway. The second part on the west end, built in about 1872, consists of a larger block projecting from the west side of the 1850 structure. The central doorway and vestibule of this portion faces south and is enhanced by a second-story balcony, a semicircular transom, and by brackets supporting both the roof gable (in pairs) and the balcony. The porch to the left of this entryway has been enclosed. All windows are tall, multipaned, and crowned by projecting ornamented cornices. The interior of the original structure consists of a central stairway and four rooms of equal size, two on each floor. The later addition also has a central stairway, with four rooms of unequal size on the ground floor and six on the second, including a small stairway opening to the attic. All rooms have six inch pine flooring that has been covered by hardwood only in one room. Restoration plans include the elimination of a pantry and bathroom (not original), the unsealing of the original fireplace (in the west wing), the re-opening of the west porch, the restoring of the exterior balcony of the south side, repainting, replacing glass windows and refinishing the floors.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **Late 1850's**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The James Cunningham Jordan Home is the second home of one of Walnut Township's (now West Des Moines) earliest and most prominent settlers. This spacious white frame building with Italian, Gothic, and Classical decorative motifs welcomed such wealthy and prominent figures as Governor Samuel Kirkwood and harbored such famed fugitives as John Brown. Still standing as testimony to one man's outstanding business, political, and philanthropic endeavor, the Jordan Home has recently served as a dormitory for a religious summer youth camp.

James Cunningham Jordan, born in 1813 in Virginia, settled in what is now Polk County in 1846. Twice a state senator (1854 and 1856), Jordan promoted the building of railroads and introduced the bill responsible for removing the capitol from Iowa City to its present location in Des Moines.

Director of the local State Bank of Des Moines and successful investor in real estate and other business ventures, Jordan could well afford to build a large home. He provided the local community with its first school building (1849) and contributed liberally to the establishment of several educational and religious institutions throughout the state.



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(Number all entries) 8. Significance

"It would be impossible to write a complete history of Des Moines without mention of James Cunningham Jordan, for his name is interwoven with many events which have left their impress upon the city in its progress toward larger and broader interests. He also aided in shaping the legislation of the state and was a warm friend and adviser of Governor Kirkwood during the period of the Civil War. His birth occurred in Greenbrier County, West Virginia, on the 4th of March, 1813, his parents being John and Agnes (Cunningham) Jordan, who were also natives of that state as were his grandparents, the families being old ones in that section of the south.

Although his educational opportunities were only such as were afforded by the common schools, broad experience brought him wide knowledge and he became an active and practical man of affairs whose sound judgment was recognized by all. He early engaged in farming and live-stock dealing and subsequently turned his attention to the purchase and sale of real estate and the promotion of the earlier railways of his district. In fact he became identified with almost every business proposition which appealed to him as sound and creditable to handle. His success was steady and firm, furnishing him and his family with a most comfortable competence. As a director of the branch of the State Bank at Des Moines, his interests were often subjected to rigid inspection and it was with a pardonable pride that he would say: "The financial coast is clear - no tempest to catch me and destroy." He became one of the stockholders on the organization of the bank and was elected a member of its board of directors. While living a few miles out in the country, he was practically a resident of Des Moines and was identified with many of its enterprises along various lines. His support of any project seemed to many of his fellowmen an indication of its worth and brought to it further support.

A southerner by birth and an admirer alike of Clay, Harrison and Webster, Mr. Jordan passed easily to the support of Fremont, Fillmore, Harlan and Kirkwood. Years before, when a very young man, in Virginia, he became * convinced of the wrong being done to humanity by legalized negro slavery. At that time he was one of a party engaged in hunting up and returning to their owners a number of fugitive slaves who had escaped from the neighboring plantation. They were trying to elude pursuit by hiding in bushes and caves by day and stealing out at night, enduring untold hardships to make a few miles toward the great free west, of which they had but a vague idea, from hearsay only. These people, men, women and children, with hungry, pinched faces, sad, longing eyes, bleeding feet, and scanty, ragged clothing were quietly caught while most of them were trying to pray for deliverance, and, despite their pitiful pleadings and remonstrances, were marched back to their masters' home and to their lowly life of servitude to await the coming of the storm of anti-slavery heralded by Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, Henry Ward Beecher, John Brown and Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Jordan was a particularly warm friend of Governor

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Kirkwood, who offered him many military places of honor, which were declined on account of his conviction that he would represent the Union cause better by producing the money for the needs of the government by remaining in civil life rather than in military. In 1854 he was nominated and elected state senator, being the first whig to represent the district which then embraced more than twenty counties. His course received indorsement (sic) in his reelection in 1856. In 1879 he was elected representative from Polk County to the lower house of the eighteenth general assembly and several different times he was elected a member of the county board of supervisors. In 1854 he introduced a bill to remove the capitol to Des Moines and by most strenuous effort on the part of himself and his friends the bill was passed. He was among the first few who met Calvin Leighton in discussion of the question of raising funds for the building of the Des Moines Valley Railroad and he suggested the way to secure the extension of the road to the capitol city, saying, "I'll be one of two hundred who will give a thousand dollars each," and the money was raised.

Mr. Jordan belonged to the Early Settlers Society, the Tippecanoe, Pioneers, Octogenarian, and Pioneer Law Makers Societies, and his genuine worth and force of character commanded for him the stalwart friendship and unflinching regard of many. He was also an earnest Methodist, devoted his time and money when either the church or its schools needed his help and his humble cabin and afterward (when success was his) his spacious and comfortable home were well known as the haven and resting place for weary ministers and their families, a most cordial hospitality always being there dispensed. And not only to these, but to all in need of hospitality was his house a shelter. John Brown and his followers were his secret guests for several days when on their trip to Harper's Ferry. His home was very frequently the resting place of Hon. John A. Kasson, one of Iowa's most eminent statesmen and diplomats, and the warm friendship that existed between these two had an important bearing upon the political history of this state. From the foregoing it will be readily seen that James Cunningham Jordan has left his impress (sic) upon the progress and upbuilding of Des Moines and central Iowa and his history deserves a prominent place in this volume."

* James F. Jordan refers to the "underground railroad" slave activity occurring at his father's home, prior to the Civil War.