

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

|                         |
|-------------------------|
| STATE:<br><b>Iowa</b>   |
| COUNTY:<br><b>Davis</b> |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY        |
| ENTRY DATE              |

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**James B. Weaver House**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**James B. Weaver House**

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Weaver Park Road (U.S. 63), c. 0.3 mile north of downtown**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Bloomfield**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
**4**

STATE: **Iowa** CODE: **19** COUNTY: **Davis** CODE: **051**

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Mr. and Mrs. David L. Augspurger**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Weaver Park Road**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Bloomfield**

STATE:  
**Iowa**

CODE:  
**19**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Office of the County Recorder**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Davis County Courthouse**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Bloomfield**

STATE:  
**Iowa**

CODE:  
**19**

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Iowa Survey of Historic Resources; National Register**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1972; 1974**  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: **State Historic Preservation Program; National Register of Historic Places**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**129 South Capitol Street; 1100 L Street, N.W.**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Iowa City; Washington**

STATE:  
**Iowa; D.C.**

CODE:  
**19/11**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

|           |   |  |                                |   |                                |                                    |
|-----------|---|--|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One)                                 |  |                                |   |                                |                                    |
|           | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair  | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated             | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
|           | (Check One)                                 |  |                                | (Check One)                                       |                                |                                    |
|           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered       | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site |                                |                                    |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

James Baird Weaver bought the land for his Bloomfield house about 1865, and he is believed to have erected the dwelling soon thereafter and resided in it until 1890, when he moved to Des Moines. The residence is an inverted L-shaped, two-story, red brick structure with a single-story rear ell. Both the main section and the ell are gable roofed, and the former has five interior, corbeled, brick chimneys. A sandstone foundation supports the house, and there is a partial basement.

The most distinctive features of the dwelling are the one-over-one, center-pointed, sash windows on the two-story portion. All are topped by denticulated, brick hoodmolds, and each first-story window is matched by an identical second-story opening. There are 10 such pairs. Original windows in the rear ell are one-over-one, rectangular-shaped sash and are set under segmental arches of brick. Formerly all these windows had louvered exterior shutters, and the present owners plan to restore them.

There are four entrances to the Weaver residence. The principal one, a single door with rectangular-shaped transom, is located on the south side of the east-west or main transverse and adjacent to the north-south transverse. Initially a two-tiered porch sheltered this opening, but that adornment was removed sometime in the 20th century. Presently a canvas awning shades this entrance. Other access openings are situated in the end and on the north side of the rear ell. Each is a single door with a rectangular-shaped transom under a segmental brick arch. The fourth access door is on the south side of the rear ell, where a sitting room has been added in recent years. This frame appendage stretches the entire length of the ell and is covered by an extension of the ell roof.

The main entrance to the house leads into a hallway that measures about 10 by 17 feet. To the left a bedroom fills the west end of the structure, and to the right a parlor extends some 30 feet through the full length of the north-south transverse. During Weaver's ownership this large area may have been partitioned into two smaller rooms. Perpendicular to and behind the parlor are a modern kitchen, a dining room, and the added sitting room. From the hall, a two-flight, open-string, balustraded stair with paneled newel leads to the second floor, where there are three bedrooms and a bath. Both stories have undergone some alteration, such as the removal of most fireplaces and the

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1865-1890 (1865-1912)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

During the last two decades of the 19th century, third parties exerted considerable influence upon American politics, and few men, if any, contributed more to those movements than James Baird Weaver. A champion of farmers and laborers, he served three terms in Congress, where he supported such farsighted reforms as a graduated income tax and Government regulation of monopolistic businesses. In addition he became a principal exponent of the free coinage of silver, participated significantly in the formation of the Populist Party, and ran for President on both the Greenback (1880) and Populist (1892) tickets. Appropriately, when writing about third party activity in the Midwest, historian Russell B. Nye described Weaver as "an acknowledged leader" whose platforms were "always concerned with social and industrial justice" and whose Presidential campaigns were "forerunners of those of Bryan and LaFollette."<sup>1</sup>

From about 1865 to 1890, Weaver lived in Bloomfield in an L-shaped, two-story, red brick house with a single-story rear ell.<sup>2</sup> The dwelling is gable roofed and has five interior, corbeled, brick chimneys. One-over-one, center-pointed, sash windows with denticulated, brick hoodmolds adorn the two-story section. The rear ell has received a south side addition, and a two-tiered front porch has been removed, but otherwise the structure is little altered externally. A private residence, it is closed to the public. This is the only extant Weaver structure known to the Iowa Historic Preservation Office.

(continued)

<sup>1</sup> Russell B. Nye, Midwestern Progressive Politics: A Historical Study of Its Origins and Development, 1870-1950 (East Lansing, 1951), 68.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Emory Haynes, James Baird Weaver (Iowa City, 1919), 359.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Haynes, Frederick Emory, James Baird Weaver (Iowa City, 1919).  
 Hicks, John D., The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party (Minneapolis, 1931).  
 Nye, Russell B., Midwestern Progressive Politics: A Historical Study of Its Origins and Development, 1870-1950 (East Lansing, 1951).  
 Unger, Irwin, The Greenback Era: A Social and Political History of American Finance, 1856-1879 (Princeton, 1964).

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY |                         |                         | O<br>R | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY<br>OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES |                         |  |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---|-------------------------|--|
| CORNER   | LATITUDE                | LONGITUDE               |        | LATITUDE  | LONGITUDE               |  |
|  | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds |        | Degrees Minutes Seconds   | Degrees Minutes Seconds |  |
| NW   | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |        | 40° 45' 18"   | 92° 24' 44"             |  |
| NE   | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |        |   |                         |  |
| SE   | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |        |   |                         |  |
| SW   | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |        |   |                         |  |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **circa 1 acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY  | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**George R. Adams, Managing Editor**

ORGANIZATION: **American Association for State and Local History**      DATE: **Dec. 1, 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1315 Eighth Avenue South**

CITY OR TOWN: **Nashville**      STATE: **Tennessee**      CODE: **47**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National       State       Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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James B. Weaver House

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

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7. Description (cont'd.)

redesigning of several doorways, but except for the parlor area, the original floor plan is virtually intact. Moreover 12-foot ceilings have been retained throughout the structure.

After Weaver left the house, it passed through several owners. Among them was the Davis County Chautauqua Association, which purchased the dwelling and dedicated it to public use in 1915. After the association declined, the house was turned once more into a private residence. It remains closed to the public.

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James B. Weaver House (Continuation Sheet)

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8. Significance (cont'd.)

Biography

James Baird Weaver was born in Dayton, Ohio, on June 12, 1833. The fifth of 13 children, he was the grandson of Henry Weaver, a War of 1812 veteran, and Susan Ross Crane, granddaughter of Betsy Ross. At the time of James' birth, his father Abram worked as a skilled mechanic and millwright, but in 1835 the family moved to a farm in Cass County, Mich. Seven years later the Weavers migrated to frontier Iowa Territory and settled eventually about 4 miles north of the future site of Bloomfield. There the family lived in a loghouse, and James and the other children attended a one-room school.

In 1847 Abram won election as clerk of the district court, so the Weavers moved into newly established Bloomfield. For a few months thereafter James enjoyed the prospect of continuing his education in a larger school. That same year, however, his father obtained a Government mail contract, and James had to give up his classes, carry the biweekly mail from Bloomfield to Fairfield, and study at home in the evenings.

Late in 1851 Abram relinquished the mail contract, and James returned to school for three terms. Afterward he read law briefly with a local attorney and fulfilled a longstanding dream by traveling to the California goldfields. Following an absence of about a year, young Weaver returned to Iowa and worked as a clerk in Bonaparte. He retained his interest in law, though, and in 1855 he borrowed \$100 and entered the Cincinnati Law School, graduating a year later.

Upon returning to Bloomfield to launch his first practice, Weaver became involved in local politics. A Democrat, he converted to Free Soil principles after reading Uncle Tom's Cabin and New York Tribune editorials, and during the next few years, he campaigned for various Republican candidates. In 1860 he served as a delegate to Iowa's Republican State convention and attended the Republican National Convention as an observer. Despite these myriad political exertions, Weaver found time for courtship, too, and in July 1858 he married schoolteacher Clara Vinson, a native Ohioan.

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James B. Weaver House (Continuation Sheet)

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8. Significance (cont'd.)

The Civil War interrupted Weaver's political pursuits. In April 1861 he enlisted in the 2d Iowa Infantry and received a commission as first lieutenant. His regiment operated in Missouri for almost a year then took part in the Battles of Fort Donelson and Shiloh early in 1862. A few months later Weaver demonstrated particularly admirable leadership and coolness under fire at the Battle of Corinth, and within 12 days, he was promoted first to major and then to colonel. During the remainder of 1862 and throughout 1863, the 2d Iowa served in Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia. Weaver's enlistment expired in May 1864, and he was mustered out of the service. On March 13, 1865, the War Department brevetted him a brigadier general for gallant and meritorious service.

When Weaver returned to Iowa, he tried immediately to capitalize upon his previous political experience and gleaming war record. In 1865 he sought the Republican nomination for Lieutenant Governor and lost, but in 1866 he won election as district attorney of a six-county region. Although entitled to a 4-year term, Weaver resigned in 1867 and accepted appointment as a Federal assessor of internal revenue. This job lasted 6 years, and during that time, Weaver's pronounced enthusiasm for the temperance movement thrust him into disfavor with the antiprohibition wing of his party.

The prohibition issue notwithstanding, Weaver served as a Presidential elector in 1872 and narrowly missed winning the Republican congressional nomination from his district in 1874. Apparently encouraged by his strong showing in that race, he campaigned hard for his party's gubernatorial nod the following year, and prior to the Republican State convention, a majority of the delegates seemed committed to him. The antiprohibitionists proposed popular former Gov. Samuel J. Kirkwood, however, and he carried the convention easily. In 1875 Weaver tried unsuccessfully for the State senate, and in 1876 he failed in another bid for a congressional seat. Ultimately these defeats and Weaver's dissatisfaction with Republican monetary policy forced him out of the party.

During the Civil War the Government had issued \$400 million in paper money or greenbacks to help finance the war. After the fighting ceased this currency proved highly

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James B. Weaver House

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8. Significance (cont'd.)

inflationary, and furthermore only the national credit stood behind it. Consequently, in 1875 the Republican-dominated Congress passed the Specie Resumption Act directing the Treasury to resume the redemption of greenback and other legal tender notes in specie and at full face value by January 1, 1879. American farmers, especially those in the Midwest, opposed this contraction of currency for fear that it would increase the burden of their debts and depress the market price of their crops. Despite widespread Republican support for the resumption bill, Weaver joined the agrarians in opposing it. Moreover, a year after formation of the Greenback Party in 1876, he campaigned throughout Iowa for that group's candidates, and in 1878 he accepted the Greenback nomination for Congress and triumphed in the fall election.

In his first speech before the House of Representatives, Weaver attacked Republicans and Democrats for not responding to the needs of farmers and laborers. "There is a screw loose in Federal legislation," he asserted, "and the people have found where it is."<sup>3</sup> Weaver urged Congress to authorize unrestricted coinage of silver, substitution of greenbacks for national banknotes, release of idle Treasury funds, and immediate payment of the Government's bonded debt. This and subsequent House orations earned Weaver a reputation as an impressive speaker and marked him as a leading figure among greenback and free-silver advocates.

On June 9, 1880, the National Greenback Convention met in Chicago and nominated Weaver unanimously for the Presidency. In his acceptance letter, he reiterated his monetary policies and appealed for the support of farmers and laborers everywhere in the Nation. "Let us have a free ballot, a fair count, and equal rights for all classes," he pleaded.<sup>4</sup> During the next few months Weaver carried out a canvass so extensive that it was not surpassed until the Bryan campaign of 1896. He traveled almost 20,000 miles and addressed an estimated 500,000

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted in ibid., 113.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in ibid., 165.



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James B. Weaver House

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8. Significance (cont'd.)

people in 15 States. On election day Weaver failed to win a single electoral vote, but he received 308,578 popular votes, the most significant third party showing since the Civil War. Unfortunately for the Greenbackers, this represented their political pinnacle. Eventually the insurmountable strength of the Republicans, together with generally improved national economic conditions and majority acceptance of resumption, brought about the Greenback Party's demise.

The next 4 years were disappointing ones for Weaver. He campaigned widely for various Greenback candidates but incurred considerable opposition among party members because he advocated fusion with the Democrats. Still, he represented his party in Iowa's Sixth Congressional District election in 1882 and in the State's gubernatorial race of 1883. On both occasions he suffered defeat.

In 1884 Weaver succeeded in fusing Greenbackers with Democrats, and he gained a second term in Congress. Two years later he won a third. In Washington Weaver resumed his fight for free silver, lashed out at monopolistic business practices, called for a lower tariff and a graduated income tax, and argued for protection of mineral lands and water resources. Meanwhile the Greenback Party disintegrated completely, and in 1888 the Republicans thwarted Weaver in his bid for reelection.

Within 2 years the ex-Congressman became involved with another third party. The problems facing farmers and laborers remained unsolved, so the National Farmers' Alliance, the Knights of Labor, and other reform-minded groups began working together in search of a remedy. Even without a formal party structure or platform, they elected a number of Congressmen in 1890. Weaver welcomed the new movement, and in May 1891 he joined its leaders in an organizational conference in Cincinnati. There the delegates adopted the name "People's Party" and called for free silver and a graduated income tax. Other conferences followed, and Weaver played a significant role in nearly all of them. Finally, in July 1892 the Populists nominated him for President. In addition to the Cincinnati demands, the Populist platform included planks recommending Government ownership of railroads and telephone and telegraph services, establishment of postal savings banks, creation of an 8-hour workday, and direct election of Senators.

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8. Significance (cont'd.)

Accompanied by Kansas' Mary Ellen Lease and others, Weaver stumped the country as he had done in 1880. To raise funds and further publicize their cause, the party sold copies of A Call to Action, a book that Weaver published in 1891 to explain his political philosophy. Despite these efforts, the People's Party had little effect on the main contest between Democrat Grover Cleveland and Republican Benjamin Harrison. Easterners regarded the Midwest-oriented Populists generally as hayseeds, while southerners feared that voting for a third party candidate would merely weaken the Democrats. Accordingly Weaver received only 1,027,329 of the more than 12 million popular votes cast. He garnered 22 electoral votes, though, and the party elected 10 Congressmen, 5 Senators, 3 Governors, and about 1,500 State legislators. Despite their rather poor showing nationally, the Populists represented the first significant movement to insist that the Federal Government had some responsibility for social well-being. Moreover, eventually the two major parties adopted a large portion of the farsighted Populist platform, and Congress enacted much of it into law.

Sometime after the 1892 election, Weaver concluded that the Populists should follow the Greenbackers' example of 1884 and fuse with the Democrats. Therefore in 1896 he played a leading role in nominating William Jennings Bryan for President. This split the already dying People's Party, and ultimately many of its members, including Weaver, entered the Democratic fold.

Throughout his last years, Weaver remained politically active. He ran an unsuccessful race for Congress in 1898, served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1904, and campaigned vigorously for Bryan in the election of 1908. Following a brief illness, Weaver died in Des Moines in February 1912.