

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
National Park Service

DEC 27 1988

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in **Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms** (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a Type all entries).

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

The Architectural Legacy of Proudfoot & Bird in Iowa, 1882-1940

B. Associated Historic Contexts

The Architectural Legacy of Proudfoot & Bird in Iowa, 1882-1940

C. Geographical Data

The boundaries of the State of Iowa

|__| See continuation sheet, section _____ page _____

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

David L...
Signature of certifying official

12/20/88
Date

Iowa Historical Society, Bureau of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Beth Boland
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

6/28/89
Date

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

Context.

Introduction. For well over forty-years, the Des Moines architectural firm of Proudfoot & Bird, et al.*1 played a significant role in designing Iowa's architectural heritage. During its heyday, the firm designed more than one hundred commercial buildings, including a number of tall office edifices; two hundred single family dwellings; at least thirty apartment buildings; several public libraries; more than fifty public school buildings; approximately 100 collegiate buildings; five county courthouses; and a scattering of other public and semipublic buildings like hotels, theatres, churches, hospitals, and fire stations.*2 To date, twenty of the firm's building have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The firm's statewide legacy is broad and deep. Of their approximately 658 Iowa Commissions between 1885 and 1940, about half (an estimated 338) were in Des Moines. The firm penetrated markets throughout the state, however, with commissions in at least 117 communities in 64 counties. Fifteen communities had more than five commissions. Especially well represented are Ames (18 commissions), Boone (9), Grinnell (27), Jefferson (7), Newton (13) and Oskaloosa (14). The firm did significant work outside Iowa, receiving 88 commissions in eleven states (Georgia, Kansas, Illinois, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, and Wyoming).

Thus, while the firm was not on the cutting edge of architectural experimentation, they provided a solid body of design within the self-imposed limitations of the demands of their clients and accepted architectural styles for the period. The architectural philosophy of the firm can be characterized as conservative, both in design and attention to cost. Their designs reflected those who commissioned them: the local boards of education, the State Board of Education (for collegiate buildings), the Des Moines public schools, county boards of supervisors, successful, old-line households, prosperous businesses. As John Woolson Brooks, who joined the firm in 1912 as a blue print boy and went on to become a partner, described it:

The main objective has been to produce Architecture in the unlimited sense of beauty, utility, and commodity; unlimited in that none of the three properties was allowed to predominate; none was neglected.*3

Proudfoot & Bird, et al. was considered the foremost architectural firm in the state, especially between 1910 and 1925. However, the firm's years of permanent Iowa residency date from 1896 and illustrate an unusual continuum (the organization of Proudfoot & Bird likely dates from 1882, but much of the intervening years were spent in other Midwestern states). Few firms can trace a similar record of uninterrupted practice, one that also placed them in the forefront of architectural practice in the state. The experience of the firm offers the opportunity to learn about architectural practice in Iowa from the late nineteenth century through the 1930's.

But it was the firm's successful and long-standing relationship with the State Board of Education that vaulted it to eminence beginning in 1898. That year, Proudfoot & Bird won the design competition for a new building on the University of Iowa campus. Their product met with sufficient approval that the firm became the permanent architect for all three of Iowa's state colleges, a position it retained for at least thirty years. Between 1898 and 1930, Proudfoot & Bird, et al. designed twenty-nine major buildings at the University of Iowa, a like number at Iowa State College (now University), and five at the Iowa State Teachers

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College (now University of Northern Iowa).

The composition of Proudfoot & Bird, et al. is the product of several firms and many architects. Of particular note are the contributions of Harry D. Rawson, William T. Proudfoot, and George W. Bird in forging the most prolific and dominant architectural firm in Iowa during the early decades of the twentieth century. Their work also reflects, literally, the construction boom that accompanied Iowa prosperity in the early decades of the twentieth century.

William Thomas Proudfoot. Proudfoot (who went by the names of William T., W.T., and Willis) was born May 2, 1860 near Indianola in Warren County, Iowa. By 1872 his father Elias was a carpenter living in Indianola, and the young Proudfoot likely became acquainted with building techniques through his father.*4

In 1878 Proudfoot graduated from high school in Indianola, and in October of 1880 he had a job with the important Des Moines architectural firm of Foster & Liebbe. Proudfoot remained there until April of the next year, then repeated that schedule with a stay from October 1881 to April 1882.*5 The only formal training he received was from courses at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, probably between the fall of 1884 and early 1885.*6

But even before receiving the MIT schooling, Proudfoot had struck out on his own,*7 marking the beginning of the firm's "barnstorming" for architectural commissions in the developing Plains states. In 1882 Proudfoot was in Huron, South Dakota, moving to Pierre the next year.*8 In both cities, Proudfoot & Bird received commissions.*9 The Boston study trip Proudfoot made was beneficial: the contrast in quality of design between the courthouse in Pierre, South Dakota and the later work in Wichita and elsewhere is evident.

Sometime after 1883,*10 and probably in 1885 after his MIT courses, Proudfoot transferred operations to Wichita, Kansas where he remained until 1891. Despite the Kansas residency, Proudfoot designed a Methodist church in his hometown of Indianola in 1885.*11 In 1891, the construction boom--and the numerous commissions--that Proudfoot & Bird had enjoyed in the Wichita area ended. Proudfoot moved on to Salt Lake City in 1891 where the firm gained a number of commissions. Proudfoot returned to Des Moines (via Philadelphia), for good, in 1896.*12

Proudfoot was a member of the Iowa Chapter of the American Institute of Architects from its organization in 1904. He died while still active in the firm on June 8, 1928 at the age of 68. Flags were flown at half staff at the University of Iowa in respect for the architect's contribution to the campus. "He was recognized as the outstanding architect of the state," according to a university engineering professor.*13 And the State Board of Education took special note of the passing of Proudfoot, noting that:

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as an architect, [he] has placed the imprint of his genius upon the physical aspect of the educational institutions [of Iowa], an imprint which will endure for generations, perhaps forever.*14

According to John Woolson Brooks of the firm, he was considered to be a:

quiet man of considerable depth...He appreciated Architecture, but was content to devote his energies to budget and practical considerations rather than beauty. He maintained a capable staff which he supervised carefully.*15

George Washington Bird. Bird was born in New Jersey on September 1, 1854.*16 Information about his background is somewhat sketchy. Some accounts state that he once worked in a woodworking mill in Philadelphia,*17--hence his ability to design detailed interior work. Also he may have received some type of architectural training in that city since it is claimed he belonged to the T-Square Club, a Philadelphia atelier. However, this information has not been substantiated.

By 1882 Bird had made his way to Des Moines where he worked as an architect for William Foster.*18 It is probable that Proudfoot and Bird met over the drawing boards of Foster's (or Foster & Liebbe's) architectural firm. Bird soon followed Proudfoot to Wichita and is listed in city directories beginning in 1886.*19 Around 1891 he too was in Salt Lake City.*20

Bird was a member of the Iowa Chapter of the American Institute of Architects from its inception in 1904. He retired from Proudfoot & Bird around 1912 (he would have been fifty-eight years old) and moved to California. Bird was reportedly "burned out" from the rigors of design, especially the elaborate Polk County Courthouse in Des Moines (1902-1906), and also intrigued by the new medium, the motion picture. No information has surfaced about Bird's career in California, but his death certificate listed his occupation as architect and business as building. California proved salutary to his health, however, since he lived for another forty years, passing away on September 7, 1953 in Los Angeles at the age of ninety-nine. *21

Harry Dustan Rawson. Rawson was born in Des Moines on September 1, (same date as Bird), 1872. Born of a prominent pioneer family, *22 he attended Grinnell College for two years and received a B.A. degree in architecture from MIT in 1896. Following graduation, Rawson went on a European tour on bicycle where he presumably viewed European architecture. After brief (1896-97) employment in the Chicago architectural firm of J. L. Silsbee, Rawson returned to Des Moines. Architect George E. Hallett employed him between 1897 and 1898 when Rawson became a partner in the firm to form Hallett & Rawson. The firm prospered until dissolving in 1910. Hallett reportedly moved to California and Rawson joined with Proudfoot & Bird to form Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson.*23

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Rawson used his Republican political ties--his brother Charles was a U. S. Senator--and his prominent family's considerable contacts to keep the commissions rolling in to Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson. He was active in the Iowa Chapter of the AIA and served as its president. Rawson also served as the first president of the Iowa Board of Architectural Examiners, which was established in 1927, and thus was also the first architect to be registered (by exemption) under that group. He died February 14, 1934 at the age of sixty-one.*24

According to John Woolson Brooks, Rawson "was accepted by the 'best' people, and having a brother who practically was the Republican party of his time and place, did not hamper him professionally." Also, "He made no pretense at being a designer, but he would labor exhaustively to perfect a plan."*25

Proudfoot & Bird (1882-1910). The highly successful partnership of Proudfoot & Bird dates from the 1880's. The two young men must have known one another as early as 1882 when both were employed by the same architectural firm. It appears that the two formed a partnership in that year and proceeded to seek commissions. Based on city directory research, the first known commissions were in Huron, and then Pierre, South Dakota, followed by Wichita, Kansas.*26 Proudfoot sometimes acted as the "advance man" who met potential clients and secured the commissions. Bird arrived after there was something to design and proceeded to do so. This division of labor was the norm for subsequent Iowa work as well.*27

The largest and most significant body of Proudfoot & Bird work outside Iowa is in Kansas. In the five or six years of their Kansas connection, the pair received commissions for at least fifteen business houses, the Wichita City Hall, and the YMCA. They also designed five churches, twenty-nine houses (including one for each of the architects), and nine public and private elementary schools in Wichita. Other Kansas commissions included a bank in Pratt, a Catholic church, and a number of public schools.*28

But the Kansas commissions which laid the groundwork for breaking into the Iowa architectural market were collegiate. In Wichita Proudfoot & Bird designed Garfield University and Judson University (not built) and in North Newton Bethel College (1888-93) and also Congregational College at Eureka.*29

The volume of Proudfoot & Bird commissions in Kansas (more than sixty just in Wichita) initially seems extraordinarily high for such a brief five-year period. But the tremendous growth as new settlers arrived is ample explanation for the construction boom. In 1880 the population of Wichita stood at just 5,482, but by 1888 it had soared to an estimated 40,000--all in need of lodging and business places. The 1887 booster edition of the local newspaper boasted of more than 3,000 new buildings just for that year, including over a mile of new commercial frontage in brick and stone. Even allowing for booster exaggeration, the volume of construction was substantial.*30 With the end to the construction boom in Kansas, Proudfoot & Bird moved on to Utah. In alliance with Salt Lake City architect Henry Monheim they won the competition to design the City and County Building in that city in 1891.*31 Between 1892 and 1893, Monheim, Proudfoot & Bird designed seven houses, a small factory, and an apartment building. Following Monheim's death, Proudfoot & Bird designed two houses in 1894 and a brick and iron powerhouse in 1895.*32

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The circumstances behind the decision of Proudfoot & Bird to move from Salt Lake City to Des Moines have not been determined. Before returning to Iowa, it appears that Proudfoot took a stab at Kansas City while Bird checked the architectural waters of Philadelphia, both in 1896.*33 The nationwide financial depression of the early 1890's may have been a contributing factor in their moves and final stop in Des Moines--better to weather the storm in relatively familiar home territory.

Proudfoot & Bird Come Home to Roost. Proudfoot & Bird first appear in the Des Moines city directory in 1896. It is possible that the firm received an important commission in Polk County (Des Moines is the county seat of Polk County) which made the decision to move all the easier. A source dated September of 1897 shows a drawing of the Polk County Insane Asylum. Proudfoot & Bird were the architects.*34

In 1898 the firm gained their crucial commission in Iowa, for it sealed their relationship with the State Board of Education (now known as the State Board of Regents). In that year, Proudfoot & Bird won the competition for a new collegiate building (Schaeffer Hall) on the then State University of Iowa campus in Iowa City.*35 As recounted in his obituary:

It was W.T. Proudfoot who made the negotiations, satisfied himself that the board meant a \$150,000 building [and costing no more!], consulted the professors on how they preferred to arrange their rooms, and won the competition. *36

The reputation of the firm as reliable and suitable was sealed with this commission. And at the turn of the century, Proudfoot & Bird gained work on other important public buildings. Of special note are the Dallas County Courthouse in Adel (1901-02), with its chateausque corner towers and red tile roof, and the Polk County Courthouse in Des Moines (1902-06), an imposing Beaux-Arts display of rustication, medallions with floral swags, and keystones carved with grotesque faces. The collegiate work continued as well for over thirty years, with major building designs every few years on all three Iowa campuses (now known as University of Iowa, Iowa State University, and University of Northern Iowa). *37

The firm's early work was not confined to the larger public buildings. Known Proudfoot & Bird commissions include houses, apartment buildings; warehouses, small stores, several laundries, small factories, churches, and perhaps elementary schools. Although they received commissions elsewhere in the state, the bulk of their work was in Des Moines, the largest city in the state. Proudfoot & Bird also designed notable public and semipublic buildings for Drake University and Des Moines University in Des Moines, Simpson College in Indianola, and for Central Holiness University (present Venard College) in Oskaloosa.

In addition, Proudfoot & Bird were selected to represent Iowa outside the state. They were chosen in 1902 to design the temporary Iowa Building for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis.*38 They also were responsible for the Iowa Andersonville Prison Monument erected in Andersonville, Georgia.

Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson (1910-1925). In 1910, Proudfoot was fifty years old and Bird was fifty-six. Reportedly wearied of the rigors of the drafting board, Bird was increasingly disinterested in design work, and in 1912 retired from the firm.

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To remain viable, Proudfoot & Bird needed a competent draftsman at this point in its history. Herbert B. Rich was hired in 1911 to carry on Bird's draftsman duties. Canadian-born Rich received his architectural education at the Spring Garden Institute, the University of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and, like Bird, had been a member of the atelier, the T-Square Club. By 1920 Rich had risen to the position of chief designer, but he left the next year to become a partner in the Des Moines firm of Keffer and Jones. *39

With Harry Rawson's arrival as a partner in 1910, the firm stood poised to participate in, indeed dominate, architectural practice in Iowa. The early decades of the twentieth century were a time of unprecedented prosperity in the state. The twin goals of high crop prices and high demand for them affected urban and rural economies alike. Growth on virtually all fronts--in urban population, business starts, and number of school-age children--meant ever more commissions for architectural firms. And Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson reaped the reward in vastly increased numbers of commissions of the related construction boom. Strengthened by the political and social connections of Rawson, the newly formed Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson emerged as the foremost architectural firm in the state.

Although there was no obvious change in design philosophy or style, a notable increase in the number of commissions did occur during the Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson years. Well over half of the tracings on file at the successor firm of Proudfoot & Bird, et al. are Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson designs. (About twelve percent are by Proudfoot & Bird.) Even allowing for the rather lax record keeping by these earlier firms, the dominance of the 1910-25 version of Proudfoot & Bird, et al. is apparent.

The varied nature of commissions also continued. The number of extant examples just in Des Moines reveal the range of work:

Houses - 25
Apartments - 5
Commercial - 11
Office Buildings - 6
Industrial - 4
Lodge Halls - 2
Public Schools - 13
Churches - 4
Public Buildings - 2

The firm also continued its fortunate relationship with the State Board of Education, and they designed over fifty schools outside Des Moines. The firm was responsible for approximately twenty banks, most in small towns. Thus, the firm capitalized on the rural prosperity that prompted bankers to establish and build new banks. Even the burg of Cumberland, Iowa (population 351 in 1980) sported a fine stone-faced bank on its developing main street in 1912.

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The firm added new building types to their repertoire. They designed a number of commercial garages or automobile showrooms, also filling stations. Also from this period are three city halls (four if one counts the collaborative effort on the Des Moines Municipal Building), "Liberty Theatre" at the World War I cantonment of Camp Dodge in Polk County, and four libraries. The firm also designed thirteen Des Moines schools, including three notable high schools.*40

Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson maintained a close relationship with the Hubbell family, a prominent and wealthy pioneer family who owned (and owned) considerable real estate in Des Moines. In addition to designing the ten-story Hubbell Building (9th and Walnut, Des Moines) in 1912, where the successor firm still has its offices, they provided at least seven other designs for speculative buildings the Hubbells built. Such was the relationship that Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson even designed Grover Hubbell's dark room for his house and also the Hubbell Mausoleum in Woodland Cemetery.

Proudfoot, Rawson & Souers (1925-29). The 1920's in Iowa was a period of growing financial depression. The dramatic drop in worldwide demand for agricultural products and the related drop in land values forged a depression of considerable proportions. The building trades suffered accordingly.

Although the firm continued to receive important commissions, Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson suffered in the mid-1920's along with other Iowans. To bring in some needed capital, the remaining partners (Proudfoot and Rawson) brought in a new partner, Clark Souers. Souers had been able to pay the \$50,000 they required of him since he had married into a wealthy family.*41

The pattern of varied types of commissions continued, but at a substantially lower volume. Still, there were three fine houses, including the Neoclassical Louis C. Kurtz house in Des Moines, and also L.B. Maytag's pool. Other important commissions included a newspaper office in Marshalltown, the State Fish and Game Pavilion at the Iowa State Fairgrounds, and the Memorial Union at Iowa State University. A project in Elgin Illinois for the Yeoman fraternal group must have been a welcome one in 1928-30, for it encompassed six buildings.

Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers & Thomas (1930-33). In 1930 another partner, Oren Thomas, was added to Proudfoot & Bird, et al. before this change, two architectural firms, Thomas & McClellan and Keffer & Jones, had received numerous commissions for new schools throughout the state. By bringing Thomas on board, Proudfoot, Rawson & Souers hoped to get more school commissions, especially for the consolidated schools. And during this brief three-year period they did design five schools in Iowa, a grade and high school in Blair Nebraska, and a junior and senior high school in Concordia, Kansas.*42

Although the number of commissions was minimal (about twenty-four), several are notable. The First Church of Christ Scientist in Des Moines is a medieval monastery interpreted in 1930's fashion. The Des Moines Building is the best example of an Art Deco office building in Des Moines. And the former Iowa-Des Moines National Bank Building, also in Des Moines, is an Art Deco tour de force.

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Thomas' stay was brief, only three years. The nationwide financial depression and related absence of construction were factors. And Thomas' "habit of living beyond his means was unfortunate and that probably contributed to his retirement" from the firm.*43

Proudfoot, Rawson, Brooks & Borg (c. 1933-1945). The depression continued, and commissions dwindled to a trickle. Proudfoot died in 1928, Rawson in 1934, J. Woolson Brooks and Elmer H. Borg, who had joined the firm in 1912 and 1913, respectively, bought into the firm and became partners. In contrast to the glory years--just eight years ago--they each paid only \$2,000 for the honor of becoming partners. Brooks and Borg borrowed on their life insurance policies to make their payment.*44

During the depression years, the firm barely eked out an existence, with Elmer Borg losing his house to creditors. With the onset of World War II, construction activity was extremely limited. Most of the staff went into the armed forces although Brooks initially remained behind.*45 After the war, however, the firm was reactivated, and the names of the deceased partners Proudfoot and Rawson dropped. The firm was renamed Brooks-Borg, Architects-Engineers. With a coterie of young architects like John Rice, who became a partner in 1959, Brooks-Borg became a major actor in Des Moines and Iowa's postwar building boom. In 1966 Rice left the firm and Paul Skiles became a senior partner, and the present (1989) name, Brooks, Borg, and Skiles was adopted.

Iowa Architectural Legacy. The legacy of Proudfoot & Bird*1 is broad and deep. Approximately 658 Iowa commissions (includes new buildings, large additions) are known from 1885-1940. Examples of their work are found throughout the state as well as in Georgia, Kansas, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, and Wyoming. About half (an estimated 374) are in Des Moines (commissions outside Iowa--at least eighty-eight--are not considered in this report).*46

Categorizing the firm's commissions by property types reveals a balanced practice. About one-third of the known commissions were residential, another one-third were commercial or industrial, and a final one-third consisted of public and semipublic commissions.

The analysis which follows is based primarily on examples identified in Des Moines and is written with the underlying assumption that because of the large numbers of properties examined the typology and property characteristics discussions which follow (with the exception of small town banks and collegiate architecture) can be applied to Proudfoot and Bird, et al. buildings elsewhere.

Residential Work. Most extant examples date from the early twentieth century. Both single- and multiple-family housing designs are competently and conservatively done--and some are exceptionally fine works. Notable examples include the Tudor Revival Frank Mattes house (1305 37th, Des Moines) by Proudfoot & Bird, the Shingle and Colonial Style Harry D. Rawson house (2908 Forest Drive, Des Moines) presumably by the architect/owner, and the English

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cottage-influenced Charles Martin house (3939 Grand Avenue) by Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson. The majority of ninety-three known commissions (and forty-nine extant examples) are found on Des Moines' more prosperous west side, with a notable concentration in the most prestigious area, south of Grand Avenue.

Houses. Certain recurring motifs and plans became increasingly familiar in the course of the survey, although no unique motifs immediately identifying a house as a Proudfoot & Bird, et al. design were apparent. Indeed, some of these features appear on the work of other architectural firms. These recurring elements include:

- two-story side porches
- gable-side or gable-side with additional front gables
- additional front gables with a shed-roofed entry between
- wide shed-roofed dormers
- small sidelights placed high and close to the front door
- diamond patterns, especially in stonework (also an identifying feature of many Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson commercial designs).

The Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson years, 1910-1925, were the most productive for the firm, based on the number of commissions. Extant residential commissions in Des Moines totaled twenty-five. Total known residential commissions attributed to Proudfoot, Bird, & Rawson came to 118, fifty of them in Des Moines.

The typical Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson house is Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival or of no obvious style. It is either gable-side or gable-side with additional front-facing gables. The latter is typically found on the Tudor Revival examples. And it is likely to be stucco, brick and stucco, or brick. A common feature is the presence of side porches (either enclosed, open or screened) extending two stories (sometimes one story). These gabled porches are frequently offset from the main gabled portion of the house, but sometimes are flush with it; they add considerably to the bulk or mass the house displays to the street.

Of the twenty-five known extant Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson examples in Des Moines, seven are Tudor Revival Style and eight are Colonial Revival. Notable examples include two large Colonial Revival examples, the Henry C. Wallace House (37th and John Lynde Road) and the Dr. Oliver Fay House (10 35th). The William Smith House (668 42nd) displays a number of Tudor Revival and other design elements associated with Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson (especially massing and materials).

In addition, two other Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson houses are highly distinctive, their designs reminiscent of English cottages. The stucco Charles H. Martin House (3939 Grand) features an undulating roof line that rises over the front windows, a prominent beam or course between the two stories, and a fine curved recessed entry. The Arthur H. Neumann House (4324 Woodland) uses typical elements (gable-side with additional front gables, wide shed dormer) to create a charming cottage effect. Fine materials--brown brick, red roof tile, stone trim--enhance the effect.

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Two notable houses from the post-1925 period are Tudor Revival. The Jay E. Tone House (28 S.W. 35th) is quite large and enjoys a suitably expansive wooded lot. The Isaac J. Wallerstein House (104 Foster Dr) is an attractive and late example of the Tudor Revival, revealing a deft use of features of that style. The other example, the Louis C. Kurtz House (220 37th) is a rarity among residential designs of this firm--exhibiting the Neoclassical Style.

Two interesting examples diverge dramatically from the firm's usual designs, the Frank Zeller House (1900 44th) and the GE New American Home for Weitz Investment Company House (3420 St. Johns Rd.). Both are executed in the International Style, a rarity in Des Moines, having flat roofs, smooth stucco walls, one- and two-story sections, and distinctive window and entry treatment. Presumably the GE-Weitz House contains a variety of electric machines suitable for a house conceived as a "machine for living."

The use of durable materials like stone, brick and stucco contributed to the relative lack of alteration. The generally large size of the homes rendered additions unnecessary and the quality of design may have blunted the home improvement urge--more factors in the relative lack of alteration.

Apartments. The dozen apartment buildings by Proudfoot & Bird, et al. share certain similarities with the firm's 1910-25 school designs. Most are rectangular, from three- or four-stories, brick-faced, use groups of windows, sometimes have a high basement, and have decoration concentrated at the entrance. A fine typical example, the Reily Apartments (1534 Woodland Avenue) has a delicate Gothic Revival entrance. Another interesting example, the Motzer Flats (1353 9th Street), features classical detail applied in a restrained manner, unusual brick patterns along the cornice, and smooth pilasters with moulded capitals at the entry.

The most interesting and elaborately decorated example is the Norman Apartments (3103 University Avenue). Built for speculative purposes by Drake University, the Proudfoot & Bird*1 design has two shades of tan brick and a wealth of Gothic Revival stone trim. The surface is made lively through stone quoins and courses, diapering at the cornice, and three-part bays.

Commercial and Industrial Buildings. Twenty-seven extant examples of commercial buildings by Proudfoot & Bird, et al. including seven office buildings, still stand in Des Moines. The range of extant examples and known commissions show significant concentrations of specialized commercial buildings. Important subtypes (not all have good unaltered examples) are: office buildings, retail stores (including small department stores), hotels, warehouses, factory/warehouse complexes, office/factory units, banks, *47 publishing and printing houses, and automobile-related buildings.

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Commissions by the firm pepper downtown Des Moines and include some of the city's most prominent landmarks. The most notable example in the city and in the state is the nineteen-story Equitable Life Insurance Company of Iowa office building (604 Locust Street). Built in 1923, the building displays features found on the firm's commercial buildings, especially office buildings and hotels. The form is the base-shaft-capital configuration; lighter trim (here terra cotta and stone) contrasts with brick; and architectural details are an arresting display of the Gothic Revival. A wealth of detail includes gargoyles, quatrefoil patterns, tracery motifs, a deeply recessed pointed arch entry, and Gothic arches. Other commercial buildings by the firm also exhibit Gothic Revival details, and there are also good examples of various combinations of Classical Revival by the firm (Northwestern Hotel, Hotel Fort Des Moines), and Art Deco (Des Moines Building, Iowa-Des Moines National Bank Building).

The firm's one- and two-story commercial buildings, especially automobile-related ones, are typically brick, have fairly simple geometric detail (including the diamond shape), and contrasting stone or concrete trim. However, a number of these smaller buildings are (or were) faced with smooth stone and are executed in the Art Moderne or International Styles (1021 Locust, Des Moines).

Distinctive Characteristics. Several interesting characteristics of commercial design by Proudfoot & Bird*1 deserve mention. These topics are based on such disparate characteristics as a particular design treatment, a type of building, or a style. All do not appear in sufficient numbers (among the extant examples studied) to merit designation as a subtype of a property type, but they are notable characteristics of Proudfoot & Bird*1 commercial and industrial design, and additional examples may well surface in later studies.

Airy Cornice Treatment. A group of base-shaft-capital tall buildings exhibit similar and interesting design: the Register & Leader office building (713-717 Locust), the Hotel Fort Des Moines (10th and Walnut), First National Bank building (Boone), and the Leavitt & Johnson National Bank building (Waterloo). Distinguishing characteristics include a fairly heavy but light-colored base (usually stone) using classical motifs, a darker brick shaft, and especially tight and airy cornice ornamentation. Terra Cotta is typically used, an effective material for achieving the light feeling for the cornice. For example, the Hotel Fort Des Moines (apparently the only relatively unaltered example of the three) has a melange of urns, festoons and scrolls, topped with dentils, ovulo and modillions. All date from the 1910's--just after Rawson joined Proudfoot & Bird--and represent a notable sub-catagory of the office building subtype of commercial buildings.

Publishing Houses. In addition to the Register & Leader office building mentioned above, the firm designed at least four other printing and publishing houses, including newspaper offices in Grinnell and Marshalltown. The firm gained the commissions for two of the state's most important agricultural publishing houses: the Meredith Publishing Building (1716 Locust Street) and the Wallace-Homestead Building (1912 Grand Avenue). The ornate design of these Des Moines buildings go far beyond the industrial needs of a printing house and both display the prosperity of the businesses. The elaborate, and even showy, designs of these examples served to emphasize the competition between the two giants in farm journals.

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Decorative Diamonds. Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson often added decorative diamonds to their commercial facades. The motif is more common on smaller commercial buildings, especially automobile-related ventures. The diamonds are executed in contrasting trim (stone or concrete) and are often used in conjunction with brick patterns, another inexpensive early 20th century technique for enlivening the surface of a design. Most examples have been altered, but something of the motif remains on the one-story commercial building at 1201 Walnut Street in Des Moines.

Art Deco Buildings. Buildings by the firm after 1925 include some of the most noteworthy examples of the Art Deco Style in Des Moines. The designs may reflect the influence of new partners in the firm, Clark Souers and Oren Thomas. The former Iowa-Des Moines National Bank Building (520 Walnut Street) and the Des Moines Building (405 6th Avenue) are excellent examples of the style.

Industrial Examples. The firm received relatively few industrial commissions compared to their commercial experience, and fewer still remain unaltered. Among the oldest examples in Des Moines (a Proudfoot & Bird commission) is the former Schmitt & Henry mattress and furniture factory and warehouse. Notable are the Romanesque round arches of the loading docks, one of the few nineteenth century motifs that harken back to Proudfoot & Bird's transient years in Kansas. The firm also designed a number of powerhouses, including the Iowa Power & Light Company powerhouse in Pleasant Hill (just outside Des Moines).

Other industrial examples are of interest in that they combine "nice" offices and/or showrooms with the factory trailing to the rear. The former Standard Chemical Company Building (1013 High) and the former Des Moines Marble and Mantel Company Building (1120 Walnut) are altered examples of this property subtype in Des Moines.

Automobile-Related Buildings. The firm also received commissions for a significant number (at least seventeen) of automobile-related buildings in Des Moines and across the state, such as the two-story stone-faced Art Moderne garage for D.S. Chamberlain and W.F. Mitchell (1021 Locust, Des Moines). Automobile-related commissions crossed state boundaries in at least one instance. In 1919 Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson designed a commercial garage for R.G. Fisher in Dixon, Wyoming. (Most of the known examples in Des Moines have been altered.)

Hotels. Proudfoot & Bird, et al. designed nine hotels in Iowa. The Northwestern Hotel and Hotel Fort Des Moines are both already on the National Register. Additional research may show a typology for Proudfoot & Bird hotels. Seven of the nine examples are believed to be extant.

Banks. Proudfoot & Bird, et al. received twenty-nine commissions in Iowa cities. Twenty-three of these commissions occurred between c. 1900 and 1920 for sites outside of Des Moines. A number are, or were, noteworthy, including Hallett & Rawson's Capital City State Bank Building of 1902 (not extant), Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers & Thomas' Iowa-Des Moines National Bank Building (520 Walnut Street, Des Moines), and Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson's Cumberland Savings Bank in tiny Cumberland. Additional research should reveal additional small-town examples of significance.

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Public and Semi-Public Buildings and Structures. The category encompasses a wide range of buildings. For convenience, they are organized under the following rubric:

- Governmental facilities: courthouse, city hall, fire department, armory
- Institutional facilities: hospital, rest home, settlement house, YMCA, reformatory
- Cemetery facilities: burial vault, mausoleum, cemetery plan
- Libraries: public and college campus examples
- Lodges: lodge halls may have commercial use as well
- Educational facilities: public school, college (private and public university)
- Churches

Because of the wide range of building types built over a forty-year period, not all subtypes are easily categorized. In addition, this study has not included examples of all known commissions, making conclusions difficult at best. However, some categories, especially public schools, have been studied in sufficient detail to allow certain conclusions.

Governmental Facilities.

Courthouses. Proudfoot & Bird, et al. designed five courthouses in Iowa, and all are architecturally significant.*49. The courthouses for Polk County (1902-06) in Des Moines and Dallas County (1901-02) in Adel are unique and exciting examples of the work of George W. Bird. The latter, with its round corner towers and conical red tile roofs, is reminiscent of a French castle. It is said that Bird was inspired by the Azay-le-Rideau chateau at Indret-Loire, France. The Polk County Courthouse is an imposing example executed in the Beaux-Arts Style. An enormous three-stage clock tower rises from the center of the highly decorated building.

A common feature for all five examples is a high rusticated basement. The Greene and Jasper County Courthouses even have the rustication continue throughout the wall surface. The somewhat later courthouses for Jasper County (1909-11), Greene County (1917), and Pocahontas County (1920-23) are more Neoclassical in style and share notable characteristics with the Municipal Building (1910) in Des Moines.*50 These three examples are taut, well-designed examples of this property type.

Educational Facilities.

Public Schools. Consolidation in 1907 of the large east and west side school districts in Des Moines as well as a number of smaller outlying districts combined with a population boom to bring about a large number of school commissions for the firm. Between 1910 and 1931 they designed fourteen schools in Des Moines, including five junior high schools and three, perhaps four, senior high schools.

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Grade Schools. Their elementary schools in Des Moines are typically two stories with a high basement; the latter often has set a stone water table above it. The entry is centered with flanking symmetric sets of windows. These windows are generally grouped together and outlined with contrasting brick or, more frequently in the Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson examples, stone. A frequent motif are quoins, often rather widely spaced, around these window groupings (Phillips School). Brick quoins are also found, especially at corners (McKinley and Greenwood Schools). Cornice or parapet treatment is rather simple and typically includes a projecting stone course, then unadorned brick, and simple coping. All but three of the examples studied (including large additions) featured this parapet treatment.

Hanawalt School is a good example of typical Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson school design. Notable features--and ones seen on other examples by the firm--include brick pattern (headers) between the first and second story windows, high water table that also forms a continuous sill for the windows, rectangular shape, ornamentation at entry, and rather simple cornice treatment.

Brick (of various colors) generally had contrasting lighter stone trim as the typical wall covering. Brick was sometimes used creatively. Both McKinley and Greenwood Schools, probably by Proudfoot & Bird, feature two shades of brick used prominently and distinctively. At McKinley, taupe--colored brick is used along the cornice, high basement, pilasters, and quoins with golden tan brick at the windows. Phillips School featured a brick pattern of light tan stretchers alternating with dark brown headers. The result is a subdued checkerboard effect.

Ornamentation is generally concentrated at the entries. Stylistic influences are often rather indirect and are generally limited to Classical Revival and Gothic Revival. There may be some stylistic relationship between Proudfoot & Bird's collegiate architectural work and the Des Moines elementary school designs.

Junior and Senior High Schools. Like the grade schools, extant examples are brick (often red) with contrasting stone trim. An identifying feature is the plan: a prominent raised centered entry with long wings extending out (sometimes curving) on either side. Such is the configuration for Roosevelt and Lincoln High Schools (indeed, their massing is nearly identical) and for Callanan, Hiatt, and Wilson Junior High Schools.

Hiatt and Wilson are exact duplications of one another, a cost-saving measure for the school system. The junior highs are distinguished from the senior highs in that they are smaller and less costly and elaborate versions of the high schools. It is as though they prepared junior high student gradually for entering a familiar, but larger and more ornate senior high.

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The junior and senior high schools in Des Moines date from the 1920's with the exception of East High School. They exhibit such Proudfoot & Bird*1 features as windows grouped with stone surrounds with quoins, elaborate entry detail, imaginative decorative detail, and the plan mentioned above. Ornamental detail, notably on Roosevelt and Lincoln High Schools, is a highly distinctive amalgam of Moorish, Gothic, and Classical Revival details. Lincoln High School is the best example of these schools; the main facade is unaltered and additions trail inobtrusively to the rear.

ENDNOTES

1. "Proudfoot & Bird, et al." refers to the combination of architectural firms that were responsible for the firm's work: Proudfoot & Bird, Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, Proudfoot, Rawson & Souers, Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers & Thomas, and Proudfoot, Rawson, Brooks & Borg.
2. Information about commissions based on extensive records (including tracings) at offices of the successor firm, Brooks, Borg & Skiles, in Des Moines.
3. John Woolson Brooks, "Personal Recollections of John Woolson Brooks, Over 64 Years, from Blue Print Boy to an Antique. May 1976," p. 3. Typed report.
4. Warren County, plat book, 1872; the 1870 Census lists Elias, carpenter, and Martha, age 34 and his wife and the following children: James, William, Kate Elizabeth, Earnest, and Charles. The 1880 Census lists a younger wife, Mary, stepsons Franklin and John Kiplinger, and a mother-in-law Mariah Barnett [perhaps Elias' first mother-in-law], based on conversation with Ed Carlson, Wichita architect, September 14, 1987. The Annals obituary for Proudfoot lists Martha Barnett as his mother.
5. William T. Proudfoot, Application, Iowa Board of Architectural Examiners (BAE), 1927.
6. "William T. Proudfoot," obituary, Annals of Iowa 16 (1927-29): 474. An item in the Indianola Weekly Herald from April 1, 1885 states that Proudfoot was in town after being in Boston "for the past six months...studying architecture.") MIT has a record of a William Proudfoot from Indianapolis, Indiana (rather than Indianola) attending as a Special Student in the school year 1884-85. However, in his application to the Iowa Board of Architectural Examiners in 1927 Proudfoot gave 1883-84 for the MIT study, probably an error of Proudfoot's memory.
7. In his application to the Iowa Board of Architectural Examiners when it was established in 1927, Proudfoot gave 1882 as the year in which he began practice as a principal in a firm.
8. Proudfoot, Application, BAE.

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9. The known commissions are the Methodist Episcopal Church in Huron (extant and built 1883-85) and the Hughes County Courthouse in Pierre (built 1884-85). Letter from Carolyn Torma, Historical Survey Coordinator, South Dakota Historical Society, June 17, 1987 (no further research into South Dakota commissions of Proudfoot & Bird has been done).
 10. Although Proudfoot listed himself as a resident of Wichita in 1884 on his BAE application of 1927, his first advertisement (sans Bird) and city directory listing do not appear there until 1885.
 11. Indianola Advocate Tribune, October 15, 1885.
 12. "William T. Proudfoot," Annals of Iowa 16 (1927-29), p. 474; Raymond E. Higgins, "The Architectural History of the Salt Lake City and County Building," M.A. thesis, University of Utah, passim.
 13. Office of Historic Preservation, Architects in Iowa form, William T. Proudfoot; Des Moines Register, June 8, 1928, quoting Prof. Burton P. Fleming, head of mechanical engineering department of college of engineering, University of Iowa.
 14. State Board of Education, "Resolution of Respect and Appreciation. Mr. W.T. Proudfoot," July 6, 1928, reprinted in Steve Gray, "Proudfoot and Bird." term paper, Iowa State University, 1975, p. 24.
 15. John Woolson Brooks, "Personal Recollections of Various Architects," c. 1978, p. 5. Typed report.
 16. George W. Bird, death certificate.
 17. "George Bird Buildings Reflect Renaissance in Italian and French Styles," Iowa Architect (January-February 1958), p. 20.
 18. Des Moines City Directory, 1882.
 19. Notes and research from Kansas State Historical Society. The 1886 Wichita city directory noted that G.W. Bird was from Philadelphia.
 20. Higgins, passim.
 21. Membership rosters, Iowa Chapter, AIA; death certificate, George W. Bird.
 22. His father, A. Y. Rawson, founded Iowa Pipe & Tile Company and also operated coal mines.
 23. Harry D. Rawson, Application, Iowa BAE, 1927.

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24. Des Moines Tribune, February 14, 1934; Edgar Harlan, A Narrative History of the People of Iowa, 5 vols. (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1931), 4: 250-251.
25. John Woolson Brooks, "Personal Recollections...", p. 5.
26. See detailed records from Kansas State Historical Society.
27. However, it appears that Bird was the first to move to Salt Lake City with Proudfoot following. Since the latter supervised construction, it is possible that he stayed behind in Kansas for that purpose. Several Proudfoot & Bird buildings remained under construction in 1891 when Bird moved to Utah.
28. Building list appended to letter, Ed Carlson, AIA, Wichita, to Joe Snell, Kansas State Historical Society, April 13, 1987. Proudfoot & Bird buildings listed on the National Register in Kansas include the former Garfield University building, Wichita City Hall, McCormick school, former YMCA, (all in Wichita), and Bethel College Administration Building (in North Newton). See Elizabeth H. Macauley, "The Works of Proudfoot and Bird and the Riverside Cottage," term paper, 1981, pp. 6, 9, 11, 12, 14.
29. Macauley, *passim*.
30. Elizabeth H. Macauley, "The Works of Proudfoot and Bird and the Riverside Cottage." Term paper, May 7, 1981, p. 1.
31. See Raymond E. Higgins, "The Architectural History of the Salt Lake City and County Buildings" (M.A. thesis, University of Utah, 1978), *passim*. Higgins believes (p. 108) that Monheim would not have been capable of carrying out the design and construction of the building on his own. The three-man partnership brought Proudfoot & Bird an immediate local presence in Monheim, while Monheim was able to secure a commission he would not otherwise have won.
32. "Works of Bird and Proudfoot--extracted from Salt Lake City Building Permit Records." List appended to typed report, "City & County Building," 1941?; Higgins, *passim*.
33. Macauley, p. 24, citing letter from Allen D. Roberts, architectural historian for State of Utah, to Sondra Van Meter, in files of Kansas State Historical Society.
34. Alan M. Schroeder, "Directory of 19th Century Iowa Architects", State Historical Society of Iowa, 1982. However, some sources report that Proudfoot went to Kansas City and Bird went to Philadelphia before coming to Des Moines. See "Official Souvenir Program. Semi-Om-Sed Carnival. Des Moines, Iowa. Sept. [sic] 13-18, 1897" at Iowa Historical Library for drawing of asylum.
35. Inland Architect, vol. 31, no. 5 (June 1898), p. 49.

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36. Des Moines Tribune, June 9, 1928.
37. Information about commissions generally comes from records at Brooks, Borg & Skiles, the successor firm to Proudfoot & Bird; also see Iowa City Inventory forms on specific buildings and structures.
38. Des Moines Register & Leader, December 20, 1902.
39. Herbert Rich, application, Board of Architectural Examiners; "Personal Recollections of John Woolson Brooks over 64 Years, from Blue Print Boy to an Antique. May 1976;" Brooks, "Personal Recollections of Various Architects," c. 1979, p. 5. Brooks also believed that Rich "had no scruples about 'cribbing' generously from the past or even occasionally, from contemporaries" (p. 5).
40. Brooks, Borg & Skiles records.
41. "Personal Recollections of John Woolson Brooks...", p. 2.
42. "Brooks: Personal Recollections," p. 2; Brooks, Borg & Skiles records
43. "Personal Recollections of John Woolson Brooks...", p. 2.
44. "Personal Recollections of John Woolson Brooks...", p. 2; "History of Brooks-Borg," undated typed report from Brooks, Borg & Skiles.
45. Ibid.
46. Numbers are approximate and based on the number of pages of specific building types listed in the data base. The data base consists of records at Brooks, Borg & Skiles which list their collections of tracings for their commissions and additional research sources added to these totals (a more accurate count should be done).
47. More work remains to be done in defining the characteristics of the small-town bank designs of Proudfoot & Bird*1.
48. American Contractor, vol. 28 (August 10, 1907), p. 42.
49. Four of the five were not visited for this study, and their significance is based on photographs.
50. The design for the Municipal Building was the product of a group of Des Moines architectural firms, including Proudfoot & Bird and Hallett & Rawson. The later similarities with Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson courthouses suggests that one or both of these firms had a significant hand in the Municipal Building's design or they were strongly influenced by the design.

F. Associated Property Types

- I. Name of Property Type Works by Proudfoot & Bird et. al. in Iowa, 1882-1960
- II. Description See continuation sheet, section F-II page 1
- III. Significance See continuation sheet, section F-III page 1
- IV. Registration Requirements See continuation sheet, section F-IV page 1

See continuation sheet for additional property types

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

See continuation sheet, section G page 1

H. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet, section H page 1

Primary location of additional documentation:

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Historic preservation office | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other State agency | <input type="checkbox"/> University |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Federal agency | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Specify repository: SHPO

I. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara Beving Long, Architectural Historian

preparer Ralph J. Christian, Architectural Historian

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date November 23, 1988

street & number Historical Building, Capital Complex telephone (515) 281-8697

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50319

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Property Type: Works by Proudfoot & Bird*1 in Iowa, 1882-1940

II. Description. Works by the various components of Proudfoot & Bird et al. consist of residences (single- and multiple-family), commercial buildings, industrial buildings, and public and semipublic buildings. Known extant and unaltered examples date from 1898 to 1940. For further discussion and definition of property types and subtypes see Architectural Legacy section of Context.

Commissions encompass a variety of subtypes but the important subtypes are the following:

- Commercial: hotels, banks, office buildings, theatres, automobile-related buildings
- Industrial: powerhouses and factories
- Public and Semipublic libraries, courthouses and city halls, public schools, private college and public university buildings, lodge halls, churches, institutional facilities
- Residential: architect's own home

Subtypes are based on number of commissions, i.e., the body of Proudfoot & Bird. et al. work rather than just known examples. Significant commissions are known for the larger property type, such as commercial buildings, in addition to the subtypes.

The property type encompasses works by the various firms that constitute Proudfoot & Bird, et al.: Proudfoot & Bird (1882-1910); Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson (1910-25); Proudfoot, Rawson & Souers (1925-29); Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers & Thomas (1930-1933); and Proudfoot, Rawson, Brooks & Borg (c. 1933-1945).

Many of the works in the property type display design characteristics that identify them as Proudfoot & Bird, et al. A number of the firm's office buildings have a base-shaft-capital composition. Residential examples typically are gable-side in type and Tudor or Colonial Revival in style. However, the volume and variety of commissions the firm enjoyed for over forty years make simple characterization difficult.

The architectural philosophy of the firm may be characterized as conservative both in design and attention to cost. Their designs reflected those who commissioned them--the State Board of Education (for collegiate buildings), public schools systems, County Boards of Supervisors, successful, old-line households, and prosperous businesses. While the firm was not on the cutting edge of architectural experimentation, they provided a solid body of design within the self-imposed limitations of the demands of their clients and accepted architectural styles for the period.

As might be expected, representative examples of this property type occur in greatest concentrations in Des Moines, the largest city in Iowa and headquarters for the firm. The

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architects did seek and accept commissions beyond the corporate limits, however. The Iowa map is dotted with locations where the firm designed at least one building. Many, especially in the small towns, were banks or schools. The firm received commissions in at least 115 Iowa communities. Significant concentration of works by the firm (more than five commissions) occur outside Des Moines in fifteen cities.

Because of the generally higher quality of design, construction costs, and prominence, works by Proudfoot & Bird, et al. can be expected to enjoy a higher degree of preservation than, say, popular housing styles or buildings of commonplace design. For example, prestigious housing is less likely to have received extensive alteration and massive office buildings are less prey to demolition or addition.

Works by the firm could date from as early as 1882 when Proudfoot & Bird apparently was established. Proudfoot is known to have received a commission in 1885 for a church in his hometown of Indianola, the likely location for any pre-1896 commissions in Iowa. A more useful starting date, however, is 1896, the year they returned permanently to Iowa. Extant examples are known to date from the late 1890's. Significant related properties no longer stand. However, sufficient numbers of Proudfoot & Bird, et al. buildings--and a substantial number of significant designs--remain to allow comparison and study of the firm's architectural legacy in Iowa.

III. Significance. The property type directly calls attention to the meaningful role the Des Moines architectural firm of Proudfoot & Bird, et al. played in designing Iowa's architectural heritage. Over a forty-year period, the firm was responsible for major office buildings, over two hundred residences, more than one hundred commercial buildings, and some fifty public schools across the state. Approximately thirty apartment buildings and a like number of banks are also represented in the firm's records. In addition, they designed a number of Carnegie libraries, hotels, theatres, lodge halls, churches, hospitals, and other public and semipublic buildings such as courthouses in five counties, the Iowa Fish and Game Pavilion at the Iowa State Fairgrounds, and the Central Fire Department firehouse in Des Moines.

But it was the firm's successful and longstanding relationship with the State Board of Education that vaulted it to eminence beginning in 1898. That year Proudfoot & Bird won the design competition for a new building on the University of Iowa campus. Their product met with sufficient approval that the firm became the permanent architect for all three of Iowa's state universities, a position it retained for over thirty years.

Proudfoot & Bird, et al. was considered the foremost architectural firm in the state, especially between 1910 and 1925. However, the firm's Iowa years date from 1896 (and possibly as early as 1882) and illustrate an unusual continuum. Few firms can trace a similar record of uninterrupted practice, one that places it in the forefront of architectural practice in the state. The experience of the firm offers opportunity to learn about architectural practice in Iowa from the late nineteenth century through the 1930's.

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The composition of Proudfoot & Bird, et al. is a product of several firms. Of particular note are the contributions of Harry D. Rawson, William T. Proudfoot, and George W. Bird in forging the most prolific and dominant architectural firm in Iowa during the early decades of the twentieth century. Their work also reflects, quite literally, the construction boom that accompanied Iowa prosperity in the early decades of the twentieth century.

IV. Registration Requirements.

1. Area of Significance.

- a. Criterion C: properties that represent the work of a master architectural firm.
- b. Date from presence in Iowa, 1882-1940.

2. Characteristics and Qualities.

- a. Association with Proudfoot & Bird*1 is attributable.
- b. Of sufficient design quality to embody distinctive and successful characteristics of the firm's design work.
- c. Illustrate architectural heritage of Iowa, 1882-1940.

Important Subtypes

- d. Commercial, including hotels, banks, office buildings, theatres, automobile-related buildings.
- e. Industrial, including powerhouses.
- f. Public and Semipublic, including libraries, courthouses, public schools, city halls, private college and public university buildings, lodge halls, churches, institutional facilities.
- g. Residential, including architect's own house.

3. Generally Excluded Properties.

- a. Funerary monuments the firm designed may qualify if of sufficient architectural merit.

4. Integrity. Alterations should not impair appreciation of quality of design.

- a. Residences: minor exterior alterations acceptable (this would generally not include the application of metal siding); retain most original details, wall coverings, porches.
- b. Commercial buildings: some ground floor alterations may be acceptable, especially for prominent buildings.
- c. Schools: most original elements should be intact; no intrusive additions; changes to windows (a common problem with schools) do not detract from the design.

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- d. Industrial buildings: some additions and alterations are expected and, if not intrusive, acceptable.
- e. Public and semipublic buildings: most original elements intact; no intrusive additions well-designed additions acceptable, to serve public better.

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IV. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods.

The project began with the assumption that Proudfoot & Bird, et al. was an important architectural firm in Iowa. Previous survey work and the Architects in Iowa project had unearthed sufficient information about the firm to suggest that it should be evaluated further. In addition, a number of buildings by them are already listed on the National Register (at last count twenty), implying that their worth was well recognized throughout the state. How important, indeed whether the firm actually was significant, remained to be determined.

As much as possible, the firm was studied with regard to their total contribution, not just the extant properties or the extant unaltered examples. This approach provided a wider context for evaluation.

The depth of analysis of the more than forty years' worth (fifty-eight years if pre-1896 examples in Iowa are found and considered) and some 600 commissions of buildings in 117 Iowa communities available for consideration in the project would not have been possible without access to the tracings collection of the successor firm, Brooks, Borg & Skiles. Basic data (drawer number, building type and client name, date, architectural firm, place) was entered into a computer. This data base could then be searched quite easily and lists generated by the various versions of the firm, by building type, etc. The information was used to create a typology generally based on function and association with Proudfoot & Bird, et al.

The data base was also used to generate lists of buildings by place. The lists were sent to knowledgeable local sources in each of the approximately fifty-six counties where Proudfoot & Bird, et al. had commissions. Lack of time and money prevented a statewide field inspection. The responses to the mailing provided information on the present condition of the buildings and fodder for additional research.

City directories provided addresses for the various Des Moines commissions listed in the data base. As a test against the sometimes contrary information about a given commission the architectural historian for the project checked the tracings at Brooks, Borg & Skiles for questionable sites. In several cases, this eliminated already suspect sites from the survey and was a valuable resource.

Bureau of Historic Preservation files yielded considerable useful information. National Register files gave detailed information on specific buildings. Notes gleaned from such journals as the American Contractor gave information about the firm's projects. Since not all of the firm's commissions remain at Brooks, Borg & Skiles, these notes (and other sources were added to the master list of commissions.

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The Architects in Iowa project (files at Bureau of Historic Preservation office) compiled biographical and other information on that topic. Especially useful were city directory items and Board of Architectural Examiner application information for architects and firms.

Although this project was limited to Iowa works, the architectural historian also wrote to appropriate repositories in Kansas and South Dakota. The response was excellent and useful in providing an earlier and heretofore uncompiled context for the work of Proudfoot & Bird. Copies of theses and other relevant documents were received. (Proudfoot & Bird is especially esteemed in Wichita, and a festival honoring them was held in September 1987.)

Because of the high number of commissions in Des Moines, survey work was concentrated there. This allowed the maximum number of extant properties and the widest range of property types (with some exceptions) to be studied. The exceptions are small-town banks and the state collegiate architecture. It should also be noted that the survey focused on exterior facades and features and did not include interiors because of limitations imposed by time and funding. Many Proudfoot and Bird*1 buildings have significant interior features, and as properties are nominated and further survey work is done, data should be collected to develop interior typologies for the firm. It can be said with confidence, however, that sufficient information on the other property types has been amassed to allow proper study and evaluation. Standards of acceptable alterations were based on National Register standards for assessing integrity.

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Unless stated otherwise, unpublished sources are located in Iowa Office of Historic Preservation files.

Brooks, Borg & Skiles records. (Located at their offices.)

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National Park Service

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