

Rural Reconnaissance Survey Adams County, Iowa

Summary and Recommendations

Summary

The Adams County Rural Reconnaissance Survey focused on the identification of rural churches, cemeteries, and schools throughout the county. It also included the inventory of selected architectural and archaeological sites identified during the survey, with a minimum of one architectural and one archaeological site recorded within each of the 12 townships. A total of 18 architectural properties and 13 archaeological sites were newly recorded as part of the current study, with an additional 25 architectural and eight archaeological sites that had been previously assigned inventory and site numbers but for which forms had either not been completed or needed updated information. This makes for a total of 43 architectural inventory forms and 21 archaeological site record forms completed for this survey. Recommendations for potential NRHP eligibility of each property was made, with some requiring additional research and/or Phase I Archaeological survey before a final recommendation of eligibility can be made. Some properties appear to have potential eligibility as historic districts encompassing associated rural cemeteries, schools, and churches. The research and survey were completed with the assistance of the Adams County HPC members as well as other interested volunteers who provided information and memories of the properties.

Prioritized Recommendations

Archaeological/Ground-Penetrating Radar Survey - The archaeological sites recorded during the current survey are all recommended for Phase I intensive archaeological investigation before a recommendation of potential eligibility can be made. All of the pioneer cemeteries and family burial grounds that were identified were recommended for ground-penetrating radar survey to confirm the cemetery boundaries and further assess site integrity. These all likely qualify for Pioneer Cemetery designation as a way to further recognize their significance. Some of these cemeteries need gravestone restoration but, with some exceptions, these cemeteries appeared to be in good condition and were being maintained. There are some reported burial sites that either have unconfirmed locations or are unconfirmed whether the burials were all removed. These locations are also recommended for survey, including ground-penetrating radar survey, to confirm their location and identify whether grave features are still present. These include the so-called Sprague, Homan, Kentucky Avenue, and the Old Brooks Pioneer cemeteries. Completion of these recommendations could be accomplished through a CLG or HRDP grant application. Most of these properties are privately-owned and will require owner permission to conduct the surveys. Therefore, before applying for such a study, the owners will need to be contacted and permission granted. The results of owner contacts may reduce the number of sites for survey if permission cannot be obtained.

Additional Survey and Historical Research – The NRHP evaluation of some of the architectural properties hinge on the interior integrity of the church and school properties. However, in some cases, additional research will be required to fully identify the historical associations of these properties with important events, such as immigrant settlements, before final evaluations can be made. These are activities that the Adams County HPC could undertake on their own. The questions for the interior inspections is how original or how modified are the church and school interiors. The churches that are still being used as such may have been modernized to the point that little remains intact of their historic interiors. If that is the case, then individual eligibility would be unlikely. The schoolhouses recommended

for interior inspection will also need to retain original elements that identify their historical function as a school in order to be individually eligible. Several of the cemeteries were also recommended for further research into their association with immigrant settlements in the county such as the New England Colony of Iowa (Rose Hill Cemetery), the Bohemian immigrants (Bohemian National Cemetery), and the Norwegian immigrants (Strand Cemetery and Rockdale Cemetery). This additional research could also be conducted as a local project. If some of the recommended interior inspections can be made before the end of the current study, the evaluations will be updated for those properties in the final report.

National Register of Historic Places Nominations – While there are properties that could be nominated right now for inclusion in the NRHP, it is recommended that this activity be conducted as a Multiple Property Submission (MPS) under a cover document that provides the historic contexts for the evaluation of Adams County’s rural schools, churches, and cemeteries. The basis for that cover document is presented in the current report as well as previous reports that have been completed by James Jacobsen (1997, 1999). The properties will still need to be individually eligible or contributing to an eligible historic district in order to be nominated as part of a MPS. Ideally, this task would wait until the Phase I investigations and the additional interior inspections and research tasks are completed because additional eligible sites and properties will be confirmed by that activity. However, there is no reason why an MPS should necessarily be delayed since once listed, a Multiple Property cover document is the tool under which additional properties can be listed in the years to come. Any Multiple Property Cover Document should be accompanied by individual nominations, often a half-dozen representative properties.

The prioritizing of the order of these recommendations is up to the Adams County HPC and owner interest. This consultant recommends that some priority be given to the completion of the Multiple Property Cover Document along with the NRHP nomination of a minimum of six individual properties, with two representative properties from each of the categories of rural schools, churches, and cemeteries. However, the recommended interior inspections and additional research should be conducted for those properties that the HPC is considering as one of the representative nominations prior to applying for grant funding.

The Phase I investigation and ground-penetrating radar surveys should be conducted as a separate project as these activities will require more time to complete. If it is decided to conduct these surveys after the completion of the Multiple Property Submission, the surveys will result in the next list of properties that can be nominated as well as properties in need of restoration and preservation.

Research Questions

- 1) How many churches and schools are extant as standing architectural properties and how many are at their original locations? A related question concerns their individual integrity at their current locations?

There are nine church buildings still standing and 23 sites of former churches no longer standing. Some of the nonextant church sites were marked with commemorative boulders in recent years but most are not marked in any way. The churches that remain standing are all still in use and being maintained except for one that is abandoned and deteriorating and one that is no longer used but appears to be at least minimally maintained.

There are 11 extant school buildings and 113 sites of former schoolhouses no longer standing. Five schoolhouses have been moved to other locations, with three converted into dwellings, one

converted into a farm building, and one now a historical exhibit. Three of the standing schools were moved outside of the county. One of the standing schools on its original site was converted into a hog house. Those schools that remain standing retain good to excellent historic integrity. Many of these remained standing because they became township meeting and polling places. Some have been maintained as historical exhibits on their original site but others are abandoned and deteriorating. Even those that were later used by the township are no longer used as such and are in danger of deteriorating, demolition, or being altered for other purposes.

Rural properties are a challenge to maintain on their original sites because of the decline in the rural population and the costs of maintaining a building that no longer serves a functional purpose. However, it should also be noted that many of the rural schools once in the county moved from one location to the other, often close to their original site, as rural needs changed.

There is no more tangible evidence of the changes in Iowa's rural populations through the years than the comparison of the large numbers of schools and churches that once stood in the county compared to the low percentage that remain standing and even lower numbers that remain in use for their original purpose. Both churches and schools had to consolidate through the years in order to survive, with many congregations uniting into a single larger congregation and schools consolidating in town settings where there were greater resources and higher population density. The advent of the automobile and buses and the paving of Iowa's rural roads facilitated traveling into town for school and church. While the greatest loss was in the identities of rural communities, the changes were necessary.

- 2) How many cemeteries are maintained and marked, and how many are known but not marked? Are the identified cemeteries all accessible in some way to the public?

There are 22 actively-used cemeteries in the county. In addition, are seven cemeteries that are no longer used for burials and likely qualify as Pioneer Cemeteries. In addition, are six burial sites that represent single or family burials that were never formally identified as cemeteries in the township or county records. The active and pioneer cemeteries are all marked. The single and family burials are not specifically marked but some retain gravestones. All of the townships contained at least one cemetery except for Mercer Township, which had none. The township with the most cemeteries/burial sites is Washington Township with two active cemeteries and four burial sites. Prescott Township was the second highest having one active cemetery, three pioneer cemeteries, and one family burial site. Nodaway Township has the third highest having three active cemeteries and one single burial.

The majority of the identified cemeteries in the county are being at least minimally maintained and the property owners are providing some type of public access to their locations. However, the burial sites are not recognized as formal cemeteries and therefore do not require public access, nor do they require maintenance. Some of these burial sites are being preserved, but their continued preservation into the future is in question. Those burials that are known but their locations are not confirmed are in the most danger of being destroyed or at the very least forgotten.

It should be noted that burials that are 150 years of age or older are protected under Iowa Code from knowing or intentional disturbance. Some of the older pioneer cemeteries and burials do qualify under that age requirement. The other cemeteries are generally protected under local and

state laws. For the most part, the cemeteries in Adams County do not appear to have suffered from serious vandalism and are being maintained and looked after.

- 3) How do the churches and cemeteries relate to one another, or not? How many cemeteries have no religious affiliation or associated church or church site and how many churches never had an associated cemetery?

The majority of rural churches and cemeteries in Adams County were unaffiliated with one another, but with some exceptions. These included the Strand Lutheran Church and Cemetery; the Lincoln Center Cemetery, School, and Church; a nonextant Baptist Church and the Forest Hill Cemetery; the Carl Methodist Church and Cemetery; the Mt. Zion Cemetery, two nonextant churches, and a nonextant school; the Summit Cemetery, nonextant school and a possible nonextant church; the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery and nonextant church; and the Stringtown Church and Cemetery. These were a mix of religious and immigrant affiliations in their groupings and groupings based on crossroads settlements that developed in many of the townships to serve the needs of the rural community. The crossroads developments were particularly important in those townships that had few or no formal towns. The denominations represented by the churches in the county include: Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, United Brethren, and other Protestant congregations. There is one cemetery south of Corning that has a Catholic affiliation but is also a joined Catholic-Protestant cemetery known as Oak Hill-Calvary Cemetery.

- 4) It is known that the Icarian Schoolhouse is extant but moved several times. Currently it is not considered eligible for the NRHP; however, one question about its eligibility is how it compares as far as integrity, age, and architecture with other extant schoolhouses in the rural areas?

The current study determined that the extant Icarian Schoolhouse is one of the oldest still standing in the county and among the better-preserved. It retains a higher degree of architectural integrity than the extant Woodside School No. 2 in Lincoln Township, which has lost its vestibule and was used as a hog house in the modern era, or Prescott No. 2 that was even more modified for its later use as a hog house and was built after the Icarian Schoolhouse. It is also older than the Cramer or Miller schoolhouses in Carl Township, the Mercer Center School No. 5 in Mercer Township, or the Grant Center No. 5 schoolhouse in Grant Township, all of which were built in the early 20th century. The Hogan Schoolhouse in Mercer Township is the close in potential age to the Icarian Schoolhouse and retains its front vestibule but it too has been moved onto a farmstead and is now used as a storage shed. The Hogan Schoolhouse is also in a deteriorated condition with no plans for restoration. It can be stated that none of these rural schoolhouses had the same historical significance as the Icarian school, which for most of its history as a schoolhouse was part of the Icaria Colony and even played a symbolic role in the Colony's 1878 split when it was moved half-way between the two new colonies as part of the legal settlement. Therefore, despite the many moves of the Icarian Schoolhouse, it is recommended eligible for inclusion in the NRHP for its significance as one of the oldest surviving schools in the county and for its significant association with the Icaria Colony including being a symbol, along with the New Icaria Dining Hall, of the 1878 dissolution of the original colony and its split into Young Icaria and New Icaria. Unlike the extant dining hall, the school is the last standing building from the Icaria Colony before the split. The only other visible vestige is the Icarian Cemetery.

Table 1 is a summary of the properties and sites identified and recording during the current survey along with the recommendations made for each.

Table 1. Summary and Recommendations

Township Name	Inventory or Site Number	Property Name/Type	NRHP The Evaluation/Recommendation
Lincoln	02-00593	Strand Lutheran Church	Not individually NRHP-eligible but is contributing to a potential district including the church, parsonage, and cemetery. Further historical research and interior examination of church is recommended.
Lincoln	02-00570	Strand Cemetery	Not individually NRHP-eligible but is contributing to the above-noted potential historic district
Lincoln	02-00571	Lincoln Center Cemetery	Not eligible
Lincoln	02-00592	Woodside Schoolhouse No. 2	Potentially eligible, requires further research into historical significance
Lincoln	13AA120	Black Jack School No. 3 site	Recommended for Phase I investigation
Lincoln	13AA56	Fairview School Site	Recommended for Phase I investigation
Washington	02-00567	Mt. Etna Brethren Cemetery	Not eligible
Washington	02-00568	Forest Hill Cemetery	Not eligible; however, the site of the former First Baptist Church next to the cemetery is recommended for Phase I investigation. If significant archaeological remains of this church are found, then the cemetery should be re-evaluated as part of a potential historic district including the church site and cemetery.
Washington	02-00594	Mt. Etna Schoolhouse	Not eligible
Washington	02-00595	Mt. Etna Evangelical Church	Not eligible
Washington	13AA111	Hinton School Site	Recommended for Phase I investigation
Washington	13AA58	Slide Off Cemetery	Recommended for ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey, along with the Sprague and Homan cemeteries, which have not yet been identified sufficient for archaeological site designation.
Carl	02-00561	Mt. Zion Cemetery	Not individually eligible but contributing to potential district including cemetery, church sites, and school site
Carl	13AA117	Mt. Zion School Site	Recommended for Phase I investigation; could be contributing to a potential historic district including cemetery and church sites (see above)
Carl	02-00572	Carl Cemetery	Not eligible
Carl	02-00596	Cramer Schoolhouse	Potentially eligible; recommended for further historical research and Phase I investigation of schoolyard area.
Carl	02-00597	Miller Schoolhouse	NRHP eligible
Colony	02-00562	Bohemian National Cemetery	Recommended for further research into its representation of the Bohemian immigrant settlement of this township.
Colony	02-00598	Nevinville Church	Needs interior examination and further research into its history and location before NRHP eligibility can be fully evaluated.

Colony	02-00599	Rose Hill Cemetery	Recommended for further research; may have historical significance for association with the New England Colony of Iowa
Colony	13AA116	Colony No. 7 School Site	Recommended for Phase I investigation
Union	02-00558	Summit Cemetery	Not eligible, but if significant archaeological remains are identified at the Summit School Site (see below), and if the former church site can be

			confirmed, then the cemetery and the two sites would be contributing to a potentially-eligible historic district.
Union	13AA114	Summit School Site	Recommended for Phase I investigation
Prescott	02-00521	Prescott Consolidated School	NRHP eligible as a historic district including high school, gymnasium, elementary school, and gateway arch
Prescott	02-00556	Evergreen Cemetery	Not eligible; also previously recorded as 13AA105
Prescott	02-00566	Mt. Pleasant Cemetery	Recommended for GPR survey of cemetery and Phase I investigation of possible church site; likely qualifies as a Pioneer Cemetery
Prescott	02-00557	Castle/Old Evergreen Cemetery	Recommended for further research and GPR survey; likely qualifies as a Pioneer Cemetery
Prescott	02-00600	Prescott Methodist Church	Recommended for interior examination and further research.
Prescott	02-00601	Prescott Presbyterian Church/ Masonic Hall	Recommended for interior examination and further research.
Prescott	02-00602	Prescott Twp. School No. 2	Likely not NRHP-eligible but surrounding site recommended for Phase I investigation before final determination can be made.
Prescott	13AA66	Beck School Site	Recommended for additional Phase I investigation
Prescott	02-00022	Icarian Schoolhouse	NRHP eligible
Prescott	13AA71	Icarian School Site	Not eligible
Prescott	13AA73	Icarian Cemetery	Recommended for GPR survey and re-evaluation of site significance for its historical association with the Icaria Colony
Prescott	13AA62	Family burial site	Recommended for GPR survey
Quincy	02-00547	Walnut Grove Cemetery	Recommended for further historical research
Quincy	02-00564	Oakland-Quincy Cemetery	Not eligible
Quincy	02-00565	Old Quincy Cemetery	Recommended for GPR survey
Quincy	13AA67	Queen City Cemetery	Recommended for GPR survey
Quincy	13AA121	Pleasant Valley School Site	Recommended for Phase I investigation
Douglas	02-00587	Carbon Methodist Episcopal Church	NRHP eligible
Douglas	02-00569	Rockdale Cemetery	NRHP eligible; recommended for GPR survey
Douglas	13AA118	Houck School Site	Recommended for Phase I investigation
Nodaway	02-00552	Baldwin Cemetery	Not eligible
Nodaway	02-00553	Nodaway Cemetery	Not eligible
Nodaway	02-00554	Methodist Grove Cemetery	Not eligible
Nodaway	02-00603	Nodaway Consolidated School	Recommended for interior survey but potential eligibility appears to be low
Nodaway	13AA108	Mauderly Burial Site	Preserve and protect
Nodaway	13AA109	Northrup School Site	Recommended for Phase I investigation

Nodaway	13AA110	Mt. Zion Church Site	Recommended for Phase I investigation
Jasper	02-00549	Oak Hill-Calvary Cemetery	Not eligible
Jasper	02-00551	Brooks Cemetery	Potentially eligible; recommended for further historical research for final determination
Jasper	02-00555	Prairie Rose Cemetery	Not eligible
Jasper	02-00604	Brooks Methodist Church	Potentially eligible but recommended for interior survey for final determination
Jasper	13AA113	Somerset School Site	Recommended for Phase I investigation
Mercer	02-00605	Mercer Center Schoolhouse	Not individually eligible but is contributing to potential historic district also including the Mercer Center Methodist Church
Mercer	02-00606	Mercer Center Methodist Church	Not individually eligible but is contributing to potential historic district also including the Mercer Center Schoolhouse
Mercer	13AA119	Cedar Valley School Site	Recommended for Phase I investigation
Grant	02-00559	Stringtown Cemetery	Not individually eligible but could be contributing to a historic district that includes the Stringtown Community Church.
Grant	02-00607	Stringtown Community Church	Recommended for interior examination and consideration as contributing to a historic district that includes the Stringtown Cemetery.
Grant	02-00560	Salem Cemetery	Not eligible unless contributing to a historic district including the Salem UB Church Site
Grant	13AA112	Salem United Brethren Church Site	Recommended for Phase I investigation
Grant	02-00608	Grant Center Schoolhouse	Potentially eligible but recommended for interior survey for final determination
Grant	13AA97	Sunny Hill School (Grant No. 7)	Archaeology site recorded for road project; not evaluated; recommended for Phase I investigation