Archaeological site information has been removed from this copy of the report.

The unedited text is available in the National Archaeological Data Base copy of the report.
PHASE I CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY
FOR THE PROPOSED FIFTH AVENUE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT WITHIN THE
CITY OF DECORAH
WINNESHEIK COUNTY, IOWA

Section 17, T98N, R8W

FHWA No. 003510
BRM-1876(601)--8N-96

BCA #1127

Prepared for
WHKS and Company
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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The purpose of this document is to present the findings of a Phase I cultural resources survey for the proposed Fifth Avenue bridge replacement (FHWA No. 003510; BRM-1876(601)--8N-96; Iowa Site Inventory No. 96-00235) project within the City of Decorah, Winneshiek County, Iowa. Bear Creek Archeology, Inc. (BCA), Cresco, Iowa conducted this survey for WHKS and Company, Mason City, Iowa for the purpose of determining if significant cultural resources will be impacted by the proposed bridge replacement. Fieldwork for this investigation was completed on October 20-23, 2003.

Located on the west side of Decorah, Iowa, the survey area is positioned over alluvial landforms of the Upper Iowa River Valley. Approximately 5.3 ha (13.1 ac.) of the SW¼, NE¼, and the NW ¼, SE¼, Section 17, T98N, R8W, Decorah Township, Winneshiek County, were surveyed during this investigation.

As a result of extensive archival research and intensive archeological survey, two known and one previously unknown culturally significant properties were investigated. The Fifth Avenue Bridge, because of its uncommon design type and well preserved condition, appears to meet the qualifications for listing with the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion C. Located southeast of the bridge, the remnants of the Taverner Mill were recorded as an archeological site in 1995. As portions of this late nineteenth century mill remain relatively intact, the site is considered to be potentially eligible for nomination to the NRHP under Criterion D.

Other than the bridge structure and aforementioned sites, no other cultural resources were identified during archival research or despite the efforts of the archeological survey. Based on these results, BCA recommends that no further archeological investigation is necessary for the remaining areas of the proposed Fifth Avenue bridge replacement project.
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INTRODUCTION
by
Eyan Bond

This report presents the findings of a Phase I archaeological investigation conducted by Bear Creek Archeology, Inc. (BCA), Cresco, Iowa of lands to be impacted by the proposed Fifth Avenue Bridge replacement (FHWA No. 003510; BRM-1876(601)--8N-96; Iowa Site Inventory No. 96-00235) project. This cultural resources survey was conducted in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act (Advisory Council of Historic Preservation [ACHP] 1984, 1999) and the Secretary of the Interior’s standards for the identification of historic properties (National Park Service [NPS] 1983). These standards require the gathering of adequate information concerning cultural resources, the integration of this information into the planning process, and the reporting of that information. This report details the information gathering process concerning cultural resource properties that may exist in or near the project area, provides descriptions of the cultural resources when encountered and their natural contexts, and contains recommendations concerning the potential impact of the proposed bridge replacement on existing cultural resource properties. The archeological investigation includes archival research and landform evaluations in addition to pedestrian reconnaissance survey and subsurface testing. This archeological investigation was conducted by BCA personnel for WHKS and Company, Mason City, Iowa. The fieldwork for this survey was performed on October 20-23, 2003.

PROJECT LOCATION

The project area is located in northeastern Iowa in the physiographic region known as the Paleozoic Plateau (Prior 1991; Figure 1). The survey area occupies portions of the SW¼, NE¼, and the NW¼, SE¼, Section 17, T98N, R8W, Decorah Township, Winneshiek County, Iowa. Based on information provided, the roughly T-shaped area of survey covers a 5.3 ha (13.1 ac.) tract of land on the west side of Decorah, Iowa (Figure 2).

Positioned over alluvial landforms of the Upper Iowa River valley, the project area is situated along Pulpit Rock Road and Fifth Avenue encompassing one bridge (Figure 3). From southbound Riverview Drive, the survey area extends approximately 457.2 m (1,500 ft.) along Fifth Avenue to the west were it terminates at Valley View Drive. From 45.7 m (150 ft.) north of the intersection of Fifth Avenue and Pulpit Rock Road, the survey area extends approximately 457.2 m (1,500 ft.) along Pulpit Rock Road to the south were it terminates at Will Baker Park (Figures 2 and 3). To accommodate the proposed construction operations, the area of survey extends between 22.9 m (75 ft.) and 45.7 m (150 ft.) beyond the Fifth Avenue and Pulpit Rock Road centerlines. Although the survey area east of the bridge encompasses residential homes and garages, no structures will be impacted as the project is currently proposed.
INVESTIGATION PREMISES

The purpose of this investigation is to document the cultural resources within the project area at the Phase I level of investigation. The goals of the Phase I survey are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for the Identification of Archeological Properties (NPS 1983:44716-44728). These standards are summarized and annotated within the archeological guidelines for Iowa (Kaufmann 1999). Phase I surveys are intended to provide basic data on the occurrence, location, and identification of cultural resources within a given area.

The survey strategy of this Phase I investigation was based on an analysis of the project area and the landforms that exist within it. Because geologic processes determine the geographic and pedologic character of a region, an understanding of an area’s geologic history is crucial to any evaluation of the archeological record. Landform and soil characteristics have a strong influence on the presence and distribution of the plant and animal communities utilized by human populations. Geological processes not only affect the patterns of human settlement, but they are also largely responsible for the preservation and destruction of the archeological record. Thus, the archeological record can be viewed as a product of both cultural and geological processes (Bettis and Green 1991).

Because archeological sites are incorporated into the environment by natural formation processes, they may be viewed not only as cultural remains but also as geologic deposits. This perspective on the location of sites allows the investigator to create predictive models of archeological site occurrence and patterned distribution within a given area, relative to the existing landforms within that area (Bettis and Benn 1984; Bettis and Thompson 1981). Such an approach also proves useful in investigator recognition of post-settlement alluvium (PSA), madeland, plowzones, and other disturbances that may have modified the area under investigation.

This type of landform modeling as a tool of cultural resource management is crucial to the development of survey strategies. More sensitive strategies allow the investigator to focus on those areas where the probabilities of site occurrence is highest, reducing or eliminating the costs of surveying those areas where sites would not logically occur (e.g., madeland, heavily disturbed areas, alluvial landforms consisting entirely of recent alluvium, etc.). Within those areas of focused investigation, informed strategies allow the determination of the depth and distribution of subsurface tests necessary for the location of buried cultural resource deposits. Additionally, the nature of the proposed impacts can be assessed in terms of the landforms present.
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Regional physiographic and geological models applicable to the project area are briefly outlined below.

Physiographic Region

The survey area is situated in the Upper Iowa River valley of northeast Iowa. At this location, the project area lies within the physiographic region known as the Paleozoic Plateau (Prior 1991; Figure 1). The Upper Iowa River, along with the Turkey River to the west and the Yellow River to the southeast, are the major drainage systems of Winneshiek County. These three rivers, which flow into the Mississippi River to the east, have had significant influence concerning the populating and human history of this region.

The Paleozoic Plateau is characterized by a rugged terrain marked by numerous rock outcrops, bluffs, varied slopes, springs, and streams; offering a diverse environment. This portion of Iowa has only thin, isolated patches of glacial drift, unlike the remainder of the state which has thick deposits, and subsequently the northeastern portion of Iowa is highly dissected from stream erosion and hillslope development. Along major upland divides the bedrock surface is buried by differing depths of thin, patchy pre-Illinoian glacial till overlain by variable depths of Wisconsinan loess. Inset below these features are younger surfaces where loess directly lies over the bedrock (Hallberg et al. 1984). Regional loess deposition in Iowa ceased approximately 12,000 years ago (Bettis 1984).

Alluvial Landform Model

The oldest alluvial landforms within the major streams of the Paleozoic Plateau (excluding the Mississippi River) are the rock-cored meanders that rise as high as 20-25 m (65.6-82 ft.) above the present-day floodplains. These deposits, consisting of sands and gravels but lacking a loess mantle, may be associated with the development of the Iowan Surface to the west (Figure 1). Such deposits are generally considered to be late to middle Wisconsinan in age, and entrenchment may have begun as early as 30,000 B.P. (Hallberg et al. 1984). Deposition ceased, and abandonment of the rock-cored meanders occurred after 12,000 B.P. (Bettis 1984; Hallberg et al. 1984).

Following the breakup of the Wisconsinan Laurentide ice sheet, rivers in northeastern Iowa began to downcut and migrate horizontally. Several minor cut-and-fill episodes during the Holocene period have produced a sequence of alluvial deposited terraces. In much of Iowa, a model has been developed that provides classifications for Holocene-age alluvial features, termed the DeForest Formation (Bettis 1990). The DeForest Formation contains seven members that are distinguished from one another based on composition, age, and degree of soil development (Bettis and Benn 1984; Bettis and Littke 1987; Bettis et al. 1996). Only those members that could potentially be identified within the project corridor are described below. Although developed primarily for the study of upland
landscapes, Ruhe’s (1969) analysis of hillslope evolution details the erosional and depositional sequences of the landform components potentially within the survey area (Figure 4).

Camp Creek Member. The youngest member of the DeForest Formation, the Camp Creek Member includes late Holocene and Historic (less than 500 B.P.) alluvial deposits. Usually typified by the lack of developed soils, brief periods of stability of member deposits can produce shallow and weakly developed A horizons representing a former or present surface. The Camp Creek Member tends to comprise T0 and T1 terraces, and most sediments still retain the characteristics of the alluvial sequences of deposition (Bettis 1990; Bettis and Benn 1987; Bettis and Littke 1987; Bettis et al. 1992).

Roberts Creek Member. The Roberts Creek Member consists of late Holocene (500-3000 B.P.) alluvial deposits that often contain weakly developed soils. The Roberts Creek Member usually contains A horizons underlain by weakly developed B horizons indicating that the period of stability was cut short, generally renewed deposition. Roberts Creek Member sediments tend to be dark in color. High Roberts Creek Member terraces will be positioned above Camp Creek Member terraces. Lower Roberts Creek Member terraces often have Camp Creek Member alluvium overlying the Roberts Creek alluvium (Bettis and Benn 1987; Bettis and Littke 1987).

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT AREA

Project Area Soils

The information provided below was taken from the Soil Survey of Winneshiek County, Iowa. The soils summarized in Table 1 are the types mapped by the Soil Conservation Service (Kittleson and Dideriksen 1968; Figure 5) as potentially occurring within or near the project area.
Table 1. Soil survey summary information (Kittleson and Dideriksen 1968:Sheet 57).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soil Name Designation</th>
<th>Slope (%)</th>
<th>Typical Pedon*</th>
<th>Native Vegetation</th>
<th>Landform Type(s):</th>
<th>Landform Component(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dorchester silt loam</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>C-Ab-Bw</td>
<td>vegetation has not influence development stratified silt loam</td>
<td>alluvial:</td>
<td>bottomlands and low terraces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayfield loam, deep</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>Ap-A-Bw-C</td>
<td>trees and prairie grasses loamy alluvium</td>
<td>alluvial:</td>
<td>stream benches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HuA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steep rock land</td>
<td>3-40</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
<td>limestone bedrock</td>
<td>upland:</td>
<td>steep slopes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terril loam</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>Ap-A-Bw-C</td>
<td>grasses loamy alluvium</td>
<td>alluvial:</td>
<td>bottomlands and stream benches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TeA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waukegan loam, deep</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>A-Bt-C</td>
<td>prairie grasses silt loam</td>
<td>alluvial:</td>
<td>stream benches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WdA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waukegan loam, deep</td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>A-Bt-C</td>
<td>prairie grasses silt loam</td>
<td>alluvial:</td>
<td>stream benches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WdB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*depending on the degree to which local surfaces have been affected by erosion and/or recent alluvial deposition

Steep rock land (Sr) is mapped on the valley walls near the western and southern extents of the survey area (Figure 5). These surfaces are described as irregular slopes as steep as 30% or more consisting of limestone outcrops and areas of shallow soil layers overlying bedrock (Kittleson and Dideriksen 1968:62)

Project Area Landscape Analysis

Crossing over and bounding the Upper Iowa River, the survey area is comprised entirely of alluvial landforms (Figures 2 and 3). At this location, the valley floor is quite broad and is surrounded by steep, rocky slopes (Figure 2). Alluvial landforms immediately adjacent the river, which are prone to frequent episodes of high water, appear to be comprised of primarily Camp Creek Member age (less than 500 years B.P.) deposits of the DeForest Formation. These surfaces are positioned at elevations approximately 3 m (9.8 ft.) or more below those of the surrounding stream benches. Camp Creek Member deposits post-date prehistoric habitation and rarely contain intact historic archeological material. Therefore, based on the landform model, Camp Creek Member deposits are considered to have a very low archeological potential. Camp Creek Member deposits sometimes overlie older Roberts Creek member deposits and, according to the typical pedon described in the soil survey, the alluvial soil (Dorchester silt loam, De) of the survey area has the potential to contain a buried soil (Ab horizon; Kittleson and Dideriksen 1968). The primary function of the soil survey is the examination of the upper portion of the solum and may not extend to depths at which Camp Creek Member deposits have potentially buried pre-settlement surfaces. Therefore, investigations included subsurface testing in the form of soil coring and deep bucket auger testing to determine project area stratigraphy. Elevated terraces at the eastern extent of the project area appear to be comprised of late Pleistocene-aged sediments whose surfaces have not been affected by recent alluvial deposition.
This section describes and evaluates the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility of the Fifth Avenue Bridge and provides historical information relating to the Taverner Mill site (13WH139).

FIFTH AVENUE BRIDGE DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

The purpose of this investigation was to determine the eligibility of the Fifth Avenue Bridge (state inventory number 96-00235) for listing in the NRHP. The project was assigned Historic Architecture Database (HADB) number 96-015 by the Community Programs Bureau of the State Historical Society of Iowa.

Description

The Fifth Avenue Bridge (a.k.a. the Taverner Bridge or the Green Bridge) carries Fifth Avenue over the Upper Iowa River in the western part of the city of Decorah. The bridge is located about .4 km (.25 mi.) south of the Luther College campus and .8 km (.5 mi.) north of Pulpit Rock Road, in the SW1/4, NE1/4 of Section 17, T98N, R8W (Figure 2). The historic structure is a rolled steel Parker through truss vehicular and pedestrian bridge with riveted joints and a wood plank deck, with a steel girder approach span and concrete abutments (Figures 6 and 7). There is no nameplate or other identification affixed to the structure, which was fabricated by the Federal Bridge Company of Des Moines, Iowa. The bridge was constructed under the authority of the Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors but is currently owned by the city of Decorah. There is visible deterioration in some of the web members, particularly on the west end of the upstream chord, otherwise, the bridge is fully intact and appears to be structurally sound.

The bridge consists of a 176 ft. long main span over the Upper Iowa River and a 30 ft. approach span from the west abutment. The height of the trusses ranges from 19 ft. at either end to 26 ft. at the center of the main span (Figures 8 and 9). The channels, cover plates, and bars are rolled steel and riveted together (Figure 10). The Parker Truss design is of a type commonly used for highway bridges during the early 1900s, and the Fifth Avenue Bridge trusses exhibit no unusual engineering or aesthetic features. The roadway is 16 ft. in width and consisted of a plank deck laid over steel stringers, and the original wood decking was replaced in 1981 with a new laminated timber deck (Figure 11). The piers and abutments are constructed of reinforced concrete, and the west abutment was reconstructed as part of the 1981 repair program (Figure 12). In the opinion of the city engineer, the historic structure cannot safely handle projected traffic volumes and loads;
because of its design, the bridge is also susceptible to damage from seasonal flooding. Therefore, the city has decided to replace the 1914 bridge with a modern structure (see the articles in the Decorah Journal, 8 June and 11 July 2000, 7 January and 6 February 2003).

The Fifth Avenue Bridge is distinguished by its setting on the Upper Iowa River, one of the most scenic rivers in Iowa, and its historical association with the Taverner Mill (see below). Over its length, the Upper Iowa falls at an average rate of 16 ft./mi., a characteristic that made it attractive for waterpower development during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Along its upper reaches, the river flows through a series of deep gorges, but within the Decorah city limits it swings through a broad valley and the narrow floodplain is prone to seasonal overflows. In its natural condition, the site of Decorah was covered by a mosaic of prairie and woodland, but the landscape has been largely transformed by more than 150 years of agricultural and urban development. East of the bridge, the urbanized area crowds up against the riverbank, though land use along the western approach to the Fifth Avenue crossing remains predominantly rural in character. Historically exploited for its water power, today this reach of the river is heavily used for recreational purposes, especially canoeing and tube floating.

Evaluation

Built in 1914, the Fifth Avenue Bridge is a rare, well preserved specimen of the Parker Truss bridge form. It was not included in the statewide survey of historic highway bridges conducted for the Iowa Department of Transportation (Fraser 1994; Randall Faber, personal communication 2003), and its significance had not been evaluated prior to the present investigation. While the structure is not historically distinguished for its association with important events in state or local history, the Parker Truss reflects a significant trend in bridge design and the type is relatively uncommon in northeastern Iowa (James C. Hippen, personal communication 2003), characteristics that qualify it for listing in the NRHP under Criterion C. The bridge is also noteworthy for its setting on the Upper Iowa River a short distance upstream from the site of the historic Taverner Mill (13WH139), though the historical association between the mill site and the bridge does not appear to meet the requirements of NRHP Criterion A.

Winnebago County was settled by Euro-Americans in 1848 and the town of Decorah, the county seat, was platted in 1853 (Alexander 1882). The initial development of Decorah occurred along the Upper Iowa River, which was bridged at several points within the city limits before the end of the nineteenth century. The development of West Decorah after the 1860s stimulated commercial activity and vehicular traffic in the area around the Taverner Mill and created the demand for constructing a bridge over the Iowa River at South Street (modern-day Fifth Avenue). The plans of Decorah printed in early atlases show the location of the bridge and its relationship to the Taverner Mill and other development (Anderson and Goodwin 1905:50; Andreas 1875:103; Warner and Foote 1886:16). The date of construction of the first bridge is not known, but the structure is
depicted in early photographs that show a Pratt Truss type bridge located slightly upstream from the Tavener Mill (Figure 13).

In response to a 1913 state law mandating the replacement of unsafe bridges and culverts (see Thompson 1989:83-112), the Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors moved to replace "the wood and steel combination structure known as Tavener [sic] bridge, located at the west end of Fifth Avenue" with a "new steel structure, designed to carry a wooden floor, and comply with the State Highway Commission's specifications for carrying capacity." Although it is nowhere stated in the supervisors' minutes, it is presumed that the bids were based on plans and specifications provided by the county engineer. After authorizing the sale of $65,870.40 worth of 5%, 20 year bonds for several county bridge projects, on 5 May 1913 the county supervisors instructed the auditor and engineer to seek bids for the new Fifth Avenue Bridge. When the bids received from "the several bridge companies" were opened on 18 August, the supervisors deemed the offers unsatisfactory and rejected all of them. A new bidding process was begun, based upon a $9,000 cost estimate, and on 22 September the supervisors accepted the low bid submitted by the Federal Bridge Company of Des Moines. The contract for construction called for a steel bridge with a wood floor, spanning 175 ft. with an approach span of 32 ft., and a roadway width of 16 ft. (Winneshiek County Auditor: Supervisors' Record G).

Work on the Fifth Avenue Bridge began in November 1913 and progressed rapidly, notwithstanding the need for additional concrete work and timber framing. The original plan called for the new bridge to be placed on the old bridge foundations, but this appears not to have been practical. No construction records or photographs exist, but the steel trusses would most likely have been erected while the river was frozen over. It is not known what became of the old bridge, or whether the approaches were graded as part of the new bridge construction. The work was supervised by county engineer Will M. Lee, and the names of the Federal Bridge Company engineers and contractors are not given in the county records. The minutes of the supervisors' meetings show that the board inspected the new bridge on the morning of 5 January 1914 and on 17 March the county paid the Federal Bridge Company $6,000.32 for the cost of construction (Winneshiek County Auditor: Supervisors' Record G). In a short news story printed on 11 March 1914, the Decorah Journal observed that construction was completed and the bridge was open. Noting the total cost of $8,159.80, the newspaper declared "[t]he bridge is built in a substantial manner and should last a life time."

Historically, truss bridges executed in wood, iron, or steel were the most common type of river crossing structure constructed in Iowa between the 1870s and the 1930s (Fraser 1994). Perfected by Charles H. Parker in the 1870s, the Parker Truss represented an important modification of the truss bridge prototype patented by Thomas and Caleb Pratt in 1844. By creating a truss bridge with a polygonal upper chord, Parker's "camelback" design provided additional support for the center of the span, where the stress was greatest, and thus saved material over a straight-chord Pratt truss of comparable size. Although they were somewhat more complicated to design and fabricate because of the different-length vertical and diagonal members in each panel, Parker Truss bridges were popular because they were stronger and cheaper than Pratt, Warren, or Howe truss.
designs. Approximately 50 Parker Truss bridges have been identified in Iowa but the property type has suffered significant attrition in recent years (Fraser 1994).

TAVERNER MILL HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Taverner Mill (13WH139), which began operating in 1871 or 1872, was built by John I. Taverner (sometimes spelled "Tavernier"), an early settler of Winneshiek County (Alexander 1882:286). The mill, as depicted in archival photographs, was a two-story building with native limestone basement walls, a gabled roof, and vertical board siding on the superstructure (Figures 13-16). Post and beam construction, using hewn oak timbers, is inferred, and the flooring was probably oak, while the siding may have been oak or pine. The mill and dam are shown on early plats, with the mill house located on the east bank just below the Fifth Avenue Bridge (Figures 17-19).

The mill used water power provided by a low timber and stone mill dam. This structure is not well defined in the old photographs, but probably produced 4-6 ft. of head. The dam diverted part of the river's flow into a stone-lined mill race that ran under the mill house and returned to the main channel through a short tail race. The energy released by the falling water drove a large overshot water wheel which, through a series of gears and belts, transmitted power to a pair of grinding stones. During its history, the Taverner Mill was a grist mill, used to grind wheat, corn, oats, buckwheat, and rye, which was stored on-site in wooden bins and later packed in wooden barrels. The mill's trade was primarily local (Andreas 1875:434) but the facility was used by farmers from miles around for their flour and feed supplies. Over the years a number of improvements were made at the property, including the addition of an ice house, and the old photographs show a complex of buildings along the riverbank next to the mill.

The Taverner family operated the mill commercially until ca. 1918. According to unpublished information on file at the Decorah Genealogy Association library, the mill buildings were razed in 1933. Today, the ruins of the of the mill house foundation is immediately visible on the east river bank and the flattened, graded area to the north which is interpreted as the filled-in mill race (Figure 20). The former location of the dam is visible as the stone and concrete remnants strewn across the channel and at the east and west banks of the Upper Iowa River (Figure 21).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fifth Avenue Bridge, built in 1914, is historically significant as a well preserved specimen of the Parker Truss highway bridge type. Contextually, it reflects an important trend in highway bridge engineering during the "Good Roads Movement" in Iowa and shows the influence of the Iowa State Highway Commission in the design of rural highway bridges in Winneshiek County. The Parker Truss bridge property type is rare in
northeastern Iowa and this particular bridge retains all of the important aspects of historic integrity, including design, materials, and location, required for listing under NRHP Criterion C.

The Fifth Avenue Bridge represents a significant part of Decorah's heritage and should be listed in the NRHP as part of the Highway Bridges of Iowa Multiple Property Study. The recommended treatment for the bridge is preservation in place, applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity, and material of the historic structure. While the bridge may be functionally obsolete for vehicle traffic, the city should consider adapting it for use as a pedestrian bridge: the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties allow for repairs and minor alterations that would make possible an efficient contemporary use of the structure. If the bridge cannot be preserved in place, every reasonable effort should be made to relocate the structure to a new site with compatible surroundings where it can be preserved and rehabilitated. If demolition must occur, the State Historical Society of Iowa has issued guidelines for marketing historic bridges for relocation, and for recording detailed historical and engineering data as part of an approved mitigation plan. Recordation would avoid total loss of the heritage resource by preserving a body of information (photographs, drawings, and written information) about the bridge for educational purposes.
Table 5. Summary of NRHP eligibility and recommendations.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site or Inventory Number</th>
<th>Site or Structure Type</th>
<th>NRHP Eligibility</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<td>96-00235</td>
<td>early twentieth century</td>
<td>potentially eligible</td>
<td>preservation in place, relocation, or further research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parker Truss type bridge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fifth Avenue Bridge:* Built in 1914, the Fifth Avenue Bridge is considered a rare, well preserved example of the Parker Truss type bridge. The structure is considered to represent a significant part of the local heritage. Given the exceptional characteristics of the Fifth Avenue Bridge, the structure may potentially qualify for nomination to the NRHP under Criterion C.

Based on archival research, the Fifth Avenue bridge is considered a historically significant property, and it is recommended that the bridge be preserved in place or relocated to compatible surroundings where it can be rehabilitated. If preservation in place or relocation of the bridge are not feasible, efforts should be made for recording detailed historical and engineering data as a part of an approved mitigation plan.
REFERENCES CITED

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Sampson, Gavin, A.


1977b Official site form for 13WH86. On file, Site Records, Office of the State Archaeologist, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

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Vogel, Robert C.

Warner, G. E., and C. M. Foote

Winneshiek County Auditor
1913 Supervisors’ Record G, Winneshiek County, Iowa. Winneshiek County Courthouse, Decorah, Iowa.

24
FIGURES
Figure 6. Fifth Avenue Bridge (FHWA No. 003510; BRM-1876(601)--8N-96) approach. View to the east.

Figure 7. Fifth Avenue Bridge (FHWA No. 003510; BRM-1876(601)--8N-96) profile. View to the northeast.

Field Dates: 10/20/03-10/23/03

BCA #1127
Figure 8. Drawing of the Fifth Avenue Bridge (FHWA No. 003510; BRM-1876(601)--8N-96)
main span.
Field Dates: 10/20/03-10/23/03

BCA #1127
Figure 9. Drawing of the Fifth Avenue Bridge (FHWA No. 003510; BRM-1876(601)--8N-96) approach span.
Field Dates: 10/20/03-10/23/03
BCA #1127
Figure 14. Archival view (undated) of the Taverner Mill and the old Pratt truss bridge (Decorah Genealogy Association). Field Dates: 10/20/03-10/23/03
Figure 15. Archival view (undated) of the Taverner Mill and the old Pratt truss bridge (Decorah Genealogy Association).
Field Dates: 10/20/03-10/23/03

BCA #1127
Figure 16. The Taverner Mill and the Fifth Avenue Bridge (ca. 1930) taken from Pulpit Rock (Decorah Genealogy Association).
Field Dates: 10/20/03-10/23/03
Figure 17. 1875 plat map of the project area (Andreas). Field Dates: 10/20/03-10/23/03
Figure 18. 1886 plat map of the project area (Warner and Foote).
Field Dates: 10/20/03-10/23/03

BCA #1127
Figure 19. 1905 plat map of the project area (Anderson and Goodwin Company).
Field Dates: 10/20/03-10/23/03

BCA #1127
Figure 20. Mill foundation remnants at View to the northeast.
Figure 21. Dam remnants at View to the west.
Field Dates: 10/20/03-10/23/03
Figure 22. Coverage of the project area. View to the east.
Figure 23. Coverage of the project area. View to the south.
Field Dates: 10/20/03-10/23/03

BCA #1127
APPENDIX A
Iowa Archaeological Site Forms
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<td>Item 3</td>
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**APPENDIX B**
Iowa Site Inventory Form
Site Inventory Form
State Historical Society of Iowa
(December 1, 1999)

State Inventory No. 96-00235 • New • Supplemental
Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.)
Relationship: • Contributing • Noncontributing
Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries
National Register Status: (any that apply) • Listed • De-listed • NHL • DOE
9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance Number
Non-Extant (enter year)

1. Name of Property

historic name: Fifth Avenue Bridge
other names/site number: Taverner Bridge; Green Bridge

2. Location

street & number: Fifth Avenue over the Upper Iowa River
city or town: Decorah
Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name
Township No. Range No. Section Quarter of
28N 8W 17 SW NE
(If Urban) Subdivision Block(s) Lot(s)

3. State/Federal Agency Certification [Skip this Section]

4. National Park Service Certification [Skip this Section]

5. Classification

Category of Property (Check only one box) Number of Resources within Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

If Non-Eligible Property
Enter number of:

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If Eligible Property, enter number of:

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<tr>
<td>0 Total</td>
<td>1 Total</td>
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Name of related project report or multiple property study (Enter "N/A" if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).

Title: Phase I Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Fifth Avenue Bridge Replacement Within The City of Decorah, Winneshiek County, Iowa
Historical Architectural Data Base Number: 96-015

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

14D04 TRANSPORTATION/bridge

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

09E BRIDGE (Parker Truss)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation
- walls
- roof

Narrative Description (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" representing your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria)

- Yes • No • More Research Recommended

A Property is associated with significant events.
B Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.
C Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.
D Property yields significant information in archaeology or history.
Criteria Considerations

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B Removed from its original location.
- C A birthplace or grave.
- D A cemetery
- E A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F A commemorative property.
- G Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

- 30 TRANSPORTATION

Significant Dates

- Construction date
  - 1914
  - Check if circa or estimated date

Significant Person

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

Architect/Builder

- Architect
- Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (See continuation sheets, which must be completed)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography  See continuation sheet for citations of the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form

10. Geographic Data

UTM References (optional)

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See continuation sheet for additional UTM references or comments

11. Form Prepared By

- name/title: Robert C. Vogel, Historical Consultant
- organization: Bear Creek Archeology, Inc.
- date: November 2003
- street & number: 24091 Yellow Avenue
- city or town: Cresco
- state: Iowa
- telephone: 563-547-4545
- zip code: 52136

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION (Submit the following items with the completed form)

FOR ALL PROPERTIES

1. Map: showing the property's location in a town/city or township.
2. Site plan: showing position of buildings and structures on the site in relation to public road(s).
3. Photographs: representative black and white photos. If the photos are taken as part of a survey for which the Society is to be curator of the negatives or color slides, a photo/catalog sheet needs to be included with the negatives/slides and the following needs to be provided below on this particular inventory site:
   - Roll/slide sheet #  Frame/slot #  Date Taken
   - Roll/slide sheet #  Frame/slot #  Date Taken
   - Roll/slide sheet #  Frame/slot #  Date Taken

   See continuation sheet or attached photo & slide catalog sheet for list of photo roll or slide entries.
   - Photos/illustrations without negatives are also in this site inventory file.

FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF PROPERTIES, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AS WELL

1. Farmstead & District: (List of structures and buildings, known or estimated year built, and contributing or non-contributing status)
2. Barn:
   a. A sketch of the frame/truss configuration in the form of drawing a typical middle bent of the barn.
   b. A photograph of the loft showing the frame configuration along one side.
   c. A sketch floor plan of the interior space arrangements along with the barn's exterior dimensions in feet.

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only Below This Line

Concur with above survey opinion on National Register eligibility: □ Yes □ No □ More Research Recommended

□ This is a locally designated property or part of a locally designated district.

Comments:

Evaluated by (name/title): ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
The Fifth Avenue Bridge, also known as the Taverner Bridge and the Green Bridge, carries Fifth Avenue over the Upper Iowa River in the western part of the city of Decorah. The bridge is located about .4 km (.25 mi.) south of the Luther College campus and .8 km (.5 mi.) north of Pulpit Rock Road. The historic structure is a rolled steel Parker through truss vehicular and pedestrian bridge with riveted joints and a wood plank deck, with a steel girder approach span and concrete abutments. There is no nameplate or other identification affixed to the structure, which was fabricated by the Federal Bridge Company of Des Moines, Iowa. The bridge was constructed under authority of the Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors but is currently owned by the city of Decorah. There is visible deterioration in some of the web members, particularly on the west end of the upstream chord, otherwise, the bridge is fully intact and appears to be structurally sound.

The bridge consists of a 176 ft. long main span over the Iowa River and a 30 ft. approach span from the west abutment. The height of the trusses ranges from 19 ft. at either end to 26 ft. at the center of the main span. The channels, cover plates, and bars are rolled steel and riveted together. The Parker Truss design is of a type commonly used for highway bridges during the early 1900s, and the Fifth Avenue Bridge trusses exhibit no unusual engineering or aesthetic features. The roadway is 16 ft. in width and consisted of a plank deck laid over steel stringers, and the original wood decking was replaced in 1981 with a new laminated timber deck. The piers and abutments are constructed of reinforced concrete and the west abutment was reconstructed as part of the 1981 repair program. In the opinion of the city engineer, the historic structure cannot safely handle projected traffic volumes and loads; because of its design, the bridge is also susceptible to damage from seasonal flooding. Therefore, the city has decided to replace the 1914 bridge with a modern structure (see the articles in the Decorah Journal, 8 June and 11 July 2000, 7 January and 6 February 2003).

The Fifth Avenue Bridge is distinguished by its setting on the Upper Iowa River, one of the most scenic rivers in Iowa, and its historical association with the Taverner Mill. Over its length, the Upper Iowa falls at an average rate of 16 ft./mi., a characteristic that made it attractive for waterpower development during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Along its upper reaches, the river flows through a series of deep gorges, but within the Decorah city limits it swings through a broad valley, and the narrow floodplain is prone to seasonal overflows. In its natural condition, the site of Decorah was covered by a mosaic of prairie and woodland, but the landscape has been largely transformed by more than 150 years of agricultural and urban development. East of the bridge, the urbanized area crowds up against the riverbank, though land use along the western approach to the Fifth Avenue crossing remains predominantly rural in character. Historically exploited for its water power, today this reach of the river is heavily used for recreational purposes, especially canoeing and tube floating.

Built in 1914, the Fifth Avenue Bridge is a rare, well preserved specimen of the Parker Truss bridge form. It was not included in the statewide survey of historic highway bridges conducted for the Iowa Department of Transportation, and its significance had not been evaluated prior to the present investigation. While the structure is not historically distinguished for its association with important events in state or local history, the Parker Truss reflects a significant trend in bridge design and the type is relatively uncommon in northeastern Iowa, characteristics that qualify it for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion C. The bridge is also noteworthy for its setting on the Upper Iowa River a short distance upstream from the site of the historic Taverner Mill, though the historical association between the mill site and the bridge does not appear to meet the requirements of NRHP Criterion A.

Winneshiek County was settled by Euro-Americans in 1848 and the town of Decorah, the county seat, was platted in 1853. The initial development of Decorah occurred along the Upper Iowa River, which was bridged at several points within the city limits before the end of the nineteenth century. The development of West Decorah after the 1860s stimulated commercial activity and vehicular traffic in the area around the Taverner Mill and created the demand for constructing a bridge over the Iowa River at South Street (modern-day Fifth Avenue). The plans of Decorah printed in the 1875, 1886, and 1905 atlases show the location of the original bridge and its relationship to the Taverner Mill and other development (Bond and Stanley 2003). The date of construction of the original bridge is not known, but the structure is depicted in early photographs that show a Pratt Truss type bridge located slightly upstream from the Taverner Mill (Bond and Stanley 2003).
In response to a 1913 state law mandating replacement of unsafe bridges and culverts, the Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors moved to replace "the wood and steel combination structure known as Tavener [sic] bridge, located at the west end of 5th Avenue" with a "new steel structure, designed to carry a wooden floor, and comply with the State Highway Commission's specifications for carrying capacity." Although it is nowhere stated in the supervisors' minutes, it is presumed that the bids were based on plans and specifications provided by the county engineer. After authorizing the sale of $65,870.40 worth of 5%, 20 year bonds for several county bridge projects, on 5 May 1913 the county supervisors instructed the auditor and engineer to seek bids for the new Fifth Avenue Bridge. When the bids received from "the several Bridge companies" were opened on 18 August, the supervisors deemed the offers unsatisfactory and rejected all of them. A new bidding process was begun, based upon a $9,000 cost estimate, and on 22 September the supervisors accepted the low bid submitted by the Federal Bridge Company of Des Moines. The contract for construction called for a steel bridge with a wood floor, spanning 175 ft. with an approach span of 32 ft., and a roadway width of 16 ft. (the above quotations are from the Winneshiek County Supervisors' minutes book).

Work on the Fifth Avenue Bridge began in November 1913 and progressed rapidly, notwithstanding the need for additional concrete work and timber framing. The original plan called for the new bridge to be placed on the old bridge foundations, but this appears not to have been practical. No construction records or photographs exist, but the steel trusses would most likely have been erected while the river was frozen over. It is not known what became of the old bridge, or whether the approaches were graded as part of the new bridge construction. The work was supervised by county engineer Will M. Lee, and the names of the Federal Bridge Company engineers and contractors are not given in the county records. The minutes of the supervisors' meetings show that the board inspected the new bridge on the morning of 5 January 1914 and on 17 March the county paid Federal Bridge Company $6,000.32 for the cost of construction. In a short news story printed on 11 March 1914, the Decorah Journal observed that construction was completed and the bridge was open. Noting the total cost of $8,159.80, the newspaper declared "[t]he bridge is built in a substantial manner and should last a lifetime."

Historically, truss bridges executed in wood, iron, or steel were the most common type of river crossing structure constructed in Iowa between the 1870s and the 1930s. Perfected by Charles H. Parker in the 1870s, the Parker Truss represented an important modification of the truss bridge prototype patented by Thomas and Caleb Pratt in 1844. By creating a truss bridge with a polygonal upper chord, Parker's design provided additional support for the center of the span, where the stress was greatest, and thus saved material over a straight-chord Pratt truss of comparable size. Although they were somewhat more complicated to design and fabricate because of the different-length vertical and diagonal members in each panel, Parker truss bridges were popular because they were stronger and cheaper than Pratt, Warren, or Howe truss designs. Approximately 50 Parker truss bridges have been identified in Iowa but the property type has suffered significant attrition in recent years.

REFERENCES CITED


Bond, Eyan, and David G. Stanley 2003 Phase I Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Fifth Avenue Bridge Replacement Within the City of Decorah, Winneshiek County, Iowa.
**Fifth Avenue Bridge**

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5th Avenue over Upper Iowa River</td>
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Address

Decorah Genealogy Association

Unpublished photographs and background information on area bridges.

Fraser, Clayton B.


Winneshiek County Auditor.

Supervisors’ Record G, Winneshiek County, Iowa. Winneshiek County Courthouse, Decorah.
Fifth Avenue Bridge
Name of Property
5th Avenue over Upper Iowa River
Address

Winnebago County
Decorah City

Topographic coverage of the Fifth Avenue bridge.
Fifth Avenue Bridge

Name of Property
5th Avenue over Upper Iowa River

Address

Scale map showing location of the Fifth Avenue Bridge.
Fifth Avenue Bridge approach. View to the east.

Fifth Avenue Bridge profile. View to the northeast.
<table>
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<th>City</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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Fifth Avenue Bridge

Winneshiek

Detail of web, lower chord on the downstream side. View to the southeast.

Detail of deck. View to the northeast.
<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>5th Avenue over Upper Iowa River</td>
<td>City</td>
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Fifth Avenue Bridge west abutment. View to the north.
Fifth Avenue Bridge
Name of Property
5th Avenue over Upper Iowa River
Address

Drawing of the Fifth Avenue Bridge main span.
Fifth Avenue Bridge

Name of Property: 5th Avenue over Upper Iowa River

County: Decorah
City: Decorah

Drawing of the Fifth Avenue Bridge approach span.
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The Taverner Mill and the Fifth Avenue Bridge (ca. 1930) taken from Pulpit Rock. (Decorah Genealogy Association)
APPENDIX C
Historic Architecture Database Form
Historical Architectural Data Base  
Data Entry Form for Studies and Reports  
Doc. No.: 96-015

**Source of Study:**  
☐ Certified Local Government Project  ☑ Section 106 Review & Compliance Project  
☐ Historical Resource Development Program Project  ☐ Other

**Project Reference #:** 1127

**Authors/Editor/Compiler/Originator:**  
Bond, Evan, and David G. Stanley

**Author Role:**  
☑ Consultant  ☐ Private Researcher/Writer  ☐ Teacher  ☐ Student  
☐ Project employee/volunteer  ☐ Site Administrator  ☐ Other:

**Title of Work:**  
Phase I Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Fifth Avenue Bridge Replacement  
Within The City of Decorah, Winneshiek County, Iowa

**Year Issued:**  
2003

**Type of Work Performed:**  
*(check one only)*

- ☑ Reconnaissance survey to make recommendations for intensive survey(s).
- ☐ Intensive survey
- ☐ Mixed intensive and reconnaissance survey

**Plan:**  
☑ Planning for Preservation/Survey  
☐ Community Preservation Plan

**Property Study:**  
☐ Iowa Historic Property Documentation Study  
☐ Historic American Building Survey (HABS)  
☐ Historic American Engineering Record (HAER)  
☐ Management or Master Plan  
☐ Historic Structure Report  
☐ Feasibility/Re-use Study  
☐ Architectural/Engineering Plans and Specs.

**National Register:**  
☐ Multiple Property Documentation Form

**Other (e.g., private research, school project, video):**
Kind of Work Produced:
(fill in one section only: Report or Monograph or Chapter, etc.)

Report: Published/produced by: Bear Creek Archeology, Inc.
Place issued: Cresco, Iowa 52136
Client: WHKS and Company

If applicable, include:
Series Title:
Volume #: Report #: 1127

Monograph: Publisher Name:
Place:

Chapter: In: ____ First pg. #: ____ Last pg. #: ____
Journal: Name: ____ Vol. ____ No. ____ Pages: ____ to

Thesis: Degree (check one): ☐ Ph.D. ☐ LL.D. ☐ M.A. ☐ M.S. ☐ B.A. ☐ B.S.
Name of College/University:

Paper: Meeting:
Place:

Other:

Geographic Scope of Study:
☐ City/town ☐ Township(s) ☐ County ☐ Region of Iowa ☐ Statewide ☐ Other:
State: IA
County: Winneshiek
Town: Decorah
Township: 98N
Range: 8W

Time Focus: (check any decades that receive particular attention)
☐ before 1830 ☐ 1830s ☐ 1840s ☐ 1850s ☐ 1860s ☐ 1870s ☐ 1880s ☐ 1890s
☐ 1900s ☐ 1910s ☐ 1920s ☐ 1930s ☐ 1940s ☐ 1950s ☐ 1960s ☐ 1970s ☐ 1980/later

Keyword: (Index of any subjects, topics, or people given prominent attention in the report)
Taverner Bridge and Mill
Parker Truss type
Upper Iowa River
Decorah, Iowa
Winneshiek County
APPENDIX D
National Archaeological Database Form
December 24, 2003

Doug Jones
Ralph Christian
Review and Compliance
Bureau of Historic Preservation
State Historical Society of Iowa
600 East Locust
Des Moines, IA 50319

Dear Doug and Ralph

RE: Fifth Avenue Bridge Replacement- City of Decorah, Iowa (FHWA: 003510)
Section 17, T98N-R8W

Enclosed for your review is the Phase I cultural resources survey for the above-mentioned federal-funded project. This project purposes the replacement of the Fifth Avenue Bridge, in the City of Decorah, Iowa. This survey also investigated a project corridor along Pulpit Rock Road, which may be used for a possible trail project.

The Fifth Avenue Bridge represents a 176 ft. x 16 ft. Parker Truss Bridge, built in 1914. This bridge, due to its construction type being a rarity in Northeastern Iowa and the bridge’s relationship to history of the City of Decorah, Iowa, was determined potentially eligible for the National Register under Criterion C. For this reason the Fifth Avenue Bridge is recommended for avoidance or mitigation. (FHWA:003510 / State Inventory 96-00235)

The area of potential impact encompasses two connecting project corridors, one being along Pulpit Rock Road and the second being along Fifth Avenue. Both corridors measure approximately 1500 ft. in length with project widths for that will require up to 150 ft. on either side of the existing centerlines. A total area of 13.1 acres was investigated.

The archaeological investigation was conducted using an extensive record / archival search, along with a pedestrian survey, hand-held soil probes and bucket auger testing. During this archaeological investigation, one previously recorded historic archaeological site, 13WH139, located south of the Fifth Avenue Bridge was re-visited and examined. In addition, a previously unrecorded prehistoric archaeological site, 13WH199, was identified within Pulpit Rock Road corridor.

Site 13WH139 was first recorded by BCA in 1995 and represents the remains of the historic Taverner Mill. This historic site was determined eligible for the National Register, under Criterion D during the 1995 investigation. Due to this, and the re-examination of the site, 13WH139 continues to be recommended for further Phase II investigations or avoidance.

Site 13WH199 represents a prehistoric open- habitation site, which appears to be intact and has integrity. Due to this, Site 13WH199 in considered potentially eligible for the National Register under Criterion D. This site is also recommended for further Phase II investigations or avoidance.
Design plans for this project are being finalized at the present time. Based on the primarily plans sent to us by the project's consultant, WHKS & Co., both sites 13PK139 and 13WK199 will be avoided. (A copy of this plans are enclosed for your review.)

In regards to the impacts to the historic property, the Fifth Avenue Bridge replacement would be an **Adverse Effect**. If the bridge is replaced, the resolution of the adverse effect determination will require mitigation steps in accordance with Section CFR800.6(B) of the Federal Code. These steps will be in coordination with the Iowa SHPO office, WHKS & Co., the City of Decorah, and the Iowa DOT.

If you concur with the findings of this cultural resources investigation and the determination of **Adverse Effect** towards the Fifth Avenue Bridge Replacement, please sign these concurrence lines below, add your comments and return this letter. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Matthew J.F. Donovan
Office of Location and Environment
Matt.Donovan@dot.state.ia.us

Enclosure
cc: Kris Riesenberg- Location and Environment  
Jim Hemberger- District 2 Local Systems Engineer  
Stan Stallsmith- WHKS & Company / Project Manager  
Dave Stanley- Bear Creek Archaeology

Concur: Jeanine H. Date: 1/5/2004
SHPO Archaeologist

Concur:  
SHPO Historian
To: SHPO

Review and Compliance

Date: December 24, 2003

County: Winnieshiek

Funding: Fed X Local

Project No. BRF-024-2(6) -38-96

Possibly Fed State

Project Location/Description: Section 17, T98N-R8W

Feature Crossed: Upper Iowa River

  Proposed: Bridge Replacement: FHWA 003510

  Right-of-Way: up to 150 ft on either side of existing centerline

Project Length: 1500 ft. (Pulpit Rock Road) / 1500 ft. (Fifth Avenue)

  Grade Line: same

  Alignment: same

  Borrow Area: none

Location:

Channel Change:

  Displacements: 176 ft. x 16 ft. Parker-Truss bridge- FHWA 003510 / built 1914

  NR: Potentially

Subsurface Tests: 72 (12 hand-held soil probes / 60 bucket-auger tests)

Mapped Tests: Figure 3, Figure 24 and Figure 25

Quad Map: Decorah, Iowa (1981)

Acres Surveyed: 13.1 acres

NADB Form: Yes

National Register Properties in County: 22

  List those near project: Potential- Fifth Avenue Bridge

Targeted Approval Date: 30 Days

Other Information: See Summaries
### Historic Architectural Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property No.</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>NRHP</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Inventory 96-00235</td>
<td>Section 17, T98N-R8W</td>
<td>Parker-Truss Bridge</td>
<td>Potentially Avoidance or Mitigation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Archaeological Sites- Potentially Eligible

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Recommendation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site 13WH139</td>
<td>Section 17, T98N-R8W</td>
<td>Historic Mill</td>
<td>Potentially</td>
<td>Avoidance or Further Investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 13WH199</td>
<td>Section 17, T98N-R8W</td>
<td>Prehistoric Open Habitation</td>
<td>Potentially</td>
<td>Avoidance or Further Investigation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Historical Architectural Data Base
Data Entry Form for Studies and Reports

Doc. No.: 96-015

Source of Study: [□] Certified Local Government Project  [☑] Section 106 Review & Compliance Project
[□] Historical Resource Development Program Project  [□] Other

Project Reference #: 1127

Authors/Editor/Compiler/Originator:
Bond, Evan, and David G. Stanley

Author Role:  [☑] Consultant  [□] Private Researcher/Writer  [□] Teacher  [□] Student
[□] Project employee/volunteer  [□] Site Administrator  [□] Other:

Title of Work:
Phase I Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Fifth Avenue Bridge Replacement
Within The City of Decorah, Winneshiek County, Iowa

Year Issued: 2003

Type of Work Performed:
(check one only)
Survey:
[□] Windshield survey minimum level documentation
[☑] Reconnaissance survey to make recommendations for intensive survey(s).
[□] Intensive survey
[□] Mixed intensive and reconnaissance survey

Plan:
[☑] Planning for Preservation/Survey
[□] Community Preservation Plan

Property Study:
[□] Iowa Historic Property Documentation Study
[□] Historic American Building Survey (HABS)
[□] Historic American Engineering Record (HAER)
[□] Management or Master Plan
[□] Historic Structure Report
[□] Feasibility/Re-use Study

National Register:
[□] Multiple Property Documentation Form

Other (e.g., private research, school project, video):
Site Inventory Form

State Inventory No. 96-00235  □ New  □ Supplemental

district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.)
Relationship: □ Contributing  □ Noncontributing

Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries

National Register Status: (any that apply) □ Listed  □ De-listed  □ NHL  □ DOE

9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance Number
□ Non-Extant (enter year)

1. Name of Property

historic name: Fifth Avenue Bridge

other names/site number: Taverner Bridge; Green Bridge

2. Location

street & number: Fifth Avenue over the Upper Iowa River
city or town: Decorah

Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name: Winneshiek

(Township No. 98N  Range No. 8W  Section 17  Quarter of Quarter SW NE)

(If Urban) Subdivision __________________________

3. State/Federal Agency Certification [Skip this Section]

4. National Park Service Certification [Skip this Section]

5. Classification

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

If Non-Eligible Property

Enter number of:

- buildings
- sites
- structures
- objects
- Total

If Eligible Property, enter number of:

- contributing
- noncontributing

- buildings
- sites
- structures
- objects
- Total

Name of related project report or multiple property study

(Enter "N/A" if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).

Title: Phase I Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Fifth Avenue Bridge Replacement Within The City of Decorah, Winneshiek County, Iowa

Historical Architectural Data Base Number: 96-015

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

14D04 TRANSPORTATION/bridge

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

14D04 TRANSPORTATION/bridge

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

09E BRIDGE (Parker Truss)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls

roof

other 05F METAL/Steel

Narrative Description (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "X" representing your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria)

□ Yes □ No □ More Research Recommended A Property is associated with significant events.

□ Yes □ No □ More Research Recommended B Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.

□ Yes □ No □ More Research Recommended C Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.

□ Yes □ No □ More Research Recommended D Property yields significant information in archaeology or history.
**County:** Winneshiek  
**City:** Decorah  
**Address:** 5th Avenue over the Upper Iowa River  
**Site Number:** 96-00235  
**District Number:** __

### Criteria Considerations

- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B Removed from its original location.
- [ ] C A birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D A cemetery

- [ ] E A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F A commerative property.
- [ ] G Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>TRANSPORTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Significant Dates

- **Construction date:** 1914  
- [ ] check if circa or estimated date

#### Significant Person

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Architect/Builder</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Architect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Federal Bridge Company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

(See CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

9. **Major Bibliographical References**

   Bibliography: [See continuation sheet for citations of the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form]

10. **Geographic Data**

    **UTM References (OPTIONAL)**

    | Zone | Easting | Northing | Zone | Easting | Northing |
    |------|---------|----------|------|---------|----------|
    | 1    | 15      | 596,650  | 4 2  | 579,255  |         |
    | 3    | 4       |          |      |         |          |

   [ ] See continuation sheet for additional UTM references or comments

11. **Form Prepared By**

   - **name/title:** Robert C. Vogel, Historical Consultant  
   - **organization:** Bear Creek Archeology, Inc.  
   - **date:** November 2003  
   - **street & number:** 24091 Yellow Avenue  
   - **city or town:** Cresco  
   - **state:** Iowa  
   - **telephone:** 563-547-4545  
   - **zip code:** 52136

**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION** (Submit the following items with the completed form)

**FOR ALL PROPERTIES**

1. **Map:** showing the property's location in a town/city or township.
2. **Site plan:** showing position of buildings and structures on the site in relation to public road(s).
3. **Photographs:** representative black and white photos. If the photos are taken as part of a survey for which the Society is to be curator of the negatives or color slides, a photo/catalog sheet needs to be included with the negatives/slides and the following needs to be provided below on this particular inventory site:

   - Roll/slide sheet #: ______  
   - Frame/slot #: ______  
   - Date Taken: __________

   [ ] See continuation sheet or attached photo & slide catalog sheet for list of photo roll or slide entries. Photos/illustrations without negatives are also in this site inventory file.

**FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF PROPERTIES, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AS WELL**

1. **Farmstead & District:** (List of structures and buildings, known or estimated year built, and contributing or non-contributing status)
2. **Barn:**
   a. A sketch of the frame/truss configuration in the form of drawing a typical middle bent of the barn.
   b. A photograph of the loft showing the frame configuration along one side.
   c. A sketch floor plan of the interior space arrangements along with the barn's exterior dimensions in feet.

**State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only Below This Line**

**Concur with above survey opinion on National Register eligibility:** [ ] Yes [ ] No  
[ ] More Research Recommended  
[ ] This is a locally designated property or part of a locally designated district.

**Comments:**

**Evaluated by (name/title):**

[Signature]  
**Date:** 12/17/03
The Fifth Avenue Bridge, also known as the Taverner Bridge and the Green Bridge, carries Fifth Avenue over the Upper Iowa River in the western part of the city of Decorah. The bridge is located about 4 km (.25 mi.) south of the Luther College campus and .8 km (.5 mi.) north of Pulpit Rock Road. The historic structure is a rolled steel Parker through truss vehicular and pedestrian bridge with riveted joints and a wood plank deck, with a steel girder approach span and concrete abutments. There is no nameplate or other identification affixed to the structure, which was fabricated by the Federal Bridge Company of Des Moines, Iowa. The bridge was constructed under authority of the Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors but is currently owned by the city of Decorah. There is visible deterioration in some of the web members, particularly on the west end of the upstream chord, otherwise, the bridge is fully intact and appears to be structurally sound.

The Fifth Avenue Bridge is distinguished by its setting on the Upper Iowa River, one of the most scenic rivers in Iowa, and its historical association with the Taverner Mill. Over its length, the Upper Iowa falls at an average rate of 16 ft./mi., a characteristic that made it attractive for waterpower development during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Along its upper reaches, the river flows through a series of deep gorges, but within the Decorah city limits it swings through a broad valley, and the narrow floodplain is prone to seasonal overflows. In its natural condition, the site of Decorah was covered by a mosaic of prairie and woodland, but the landscape has been largely transformed by more than 150 years of agricultural and urban development. East of the bridge, the urbanized area crowds up against the riverbank, though land use along the western approach to the Fifth Avenue crossing remains predominantly rural in character. Historically exploited for its water power, today this reach of the river is heavily used for recreational purposes, especially canoeing and tube floating.

Built in 1914, the Fifth Avenue Bridge is a rare, well preserved specimen of the Parker Truss bridge form. It was not included in the statewide survey of historic highway bridges conducted for the Iowa Department of Transportation, and its significance had not been evaluated prior to the present investigation. While the structure is not historically distinguished for its association with important events in state or local history, the Parker Truss reflects a significant trend in bridge design and the type is relatively uncommon in northeastern Iowa, characteristics that qualify it for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion C. The bridge is also noteworthy for its setting on the Upper Iowa River a short distance upstream from the site of the historic Taverner Mill, though the historical association between the mill site and the bridge does not appear to meet the requirements of NRHP Criterion A.
In response to a 1913 state law mandating replacement of unsafe bridges and culverts, the Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors moved to replace "the wood and steel combination structure known as Tavener [sic] bridge, located at the west end of 5th Avenue" with a "new steel structure, designed to carry a wooden floor, and comply with the State Highway Commission's specifications for carrying capacity." Although it is nowhere stated in the supervisors' minutes, it is presumed that the bids were based on plans and specifications provided by the county engineer. After authorizing the sale of $65,870.40 worth of 5%, 20 year bonds for several county bridge projects, on 5 May 1913 the county supervisors instructed the auditor and engineer to seek bids for the new Fifth Avenue Bridge. When the bids received from "the several Bridge companies" were opened on 18 August, the supervisors deemed the offers unsatisfactory and rejected all of them. A new bidding process was begun, based upon a $9,000 cost estimate, and on 22 September the supervisors accepted the low bid submitted by the Federal Bridge Company of Des Moines. The contract for construction called for a steel bridge with a wood floor, spanning 175 ft. with an approach span of 32 ft., and a roadway width of 16 ft. (the above quotations are from the Winneshiek County Supervisors' minutes book).

Work on the Fifth Avenue Bridge began in November 1913 and progressed rapidly, notwithstanding the need for additional concrete work and timber framing. The original plan called for the new bridge to be placed on the old bridge foundations, but this appears not to have been practical. No construction records or photographs exist, but the steel trusses would most likely have been erected while the river was frozen over. It is not known what became of the old bridge, or whether the approaches were graded as part of the new bridge construction. The work was supervised by county engineer Will M. Lee, and the names of the Federal Bridge Company engineers and contractors are not given in the county records. The minutes of the supervisors' meetings show that the board inspected the new bridge on the morning of 5 January 1914 and on 17 March the county paid Federal Bridge Company $6,000.32 for the cost of construction. In a short news story printed on 11 March 1914, the Decorah Journal observed that construction was completed and the bridge was open. Noting the total cost of $8,159.80, the newspaper declared "[t]he bridge is built in a substantial manner and should last a life time."

Historically, truss bridges executed in wood, iron, or steel were the most common type of river crossing structure constructed in Iowa between the 1870s and the 1930s. Perfected by Charles H. Parker in the 1870s, the Parker Truss represented an important modification of the truss bridge prototype patented by Thomas and Caleb Pratt in 1844. By creating a truss bridge with a polygonal upper chord, Parker's design provided additional support for the center of the span, where the stress was greatest, and thus saved material over a straight-chord Pratt truss of comparable size. Although they were somewhat more complicated to design and fabricate because of the different-length vertical and diagonal members in each panel, Parker truss bridges were popular because they were stronger and cheaper than Pratt, Warren, or Howe truss designs. Approximately 50 Parker truss bridges have been identified in Iowa but the property type has suffered significant attrition in recent years.

REFERENCES CITED


Bond, Eyan, and David G. Stanley 2003  *Phase I Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Fifth Avenue Bridge Replacement Within the City of Decorah, Winneshiek County, Iowa.*
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Avenue Bridge</td>
<td>Winneshiek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Avenue over Upper Iowa River</td>
<td>Decorah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Decorah Genealogy Association
Unpublished photographs and background information on area bridges.

Fraser, Clayton B.

Winnesheik County Auditor.
Supervisors' Record G, Winnesheik County, Iowa. Winnesheik County Courthouse, Decorah.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</table>

Topographic coverage of the Fifth Avenue bridge.
Fifth Avenue Bridge
Name of Property
5th Avenue over Upper Iowa River
Address

Winnebago County
Decorah City

Scale map showing location of the Fifth Avenue Bridge.
Fifth Avenue Bridge approach. View to the east.

Fifth Avenue Bridge profile. View to the northeast.
<table>
<thead>
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</table>

Detail of web, lower chord on the downstream side. View to the southeast.

Detail of deck. View to the northeast.
<table>
<thead>
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</table>

Fifth Avenue Bridge west abutment. View to the north.
Fifth Avenue Bridge

Name of Property
5th Avenue over Upper Iowa River

Address

Winnesheik

County
Decorah
City

Drawing of the Fifth Avenue Bridge main span.
<table>
<thead>
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Drawing of the Fifth Avenue Bridge approach span.
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The Taverner Mill and the Fifth Avenue Bridge (ca. 1930) taken from Pulpit Rock.  
(Decorah Genealogy Association)