

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE Iowa	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. XXII-Social and Humanitarian Movements
3. NAME(S) OF SITE Herbert Hoover Birthplace	4. APPROX. ACREAGE 28 acres
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) West Branch, Iowa	
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) Bernard L. Boutin, Administrator, Public Building Service, GSA, Washington, D. C.	
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)	

This two-room cottage in West Branch, Iowa, was the birthplace of Herbert Hoover, world-renowned engineer, humanitarian, and the 31st President of the United States. It was here that he spent the first seven years of his life. Born in humble surroundings on August 10, 1874, he was the second son of Jesse Clark Hoover and Huldah Minthorn Hoover. Herbert Hoover's parents, as well as his forbears for several generations, were Quakers.

The future President spent the first eleven years of his life in this small Iowa Quaker community. His father, of whom young Hoover had only a "dim" recollection, was the village blacksmith; later he established "a comfortable farm implement business." With greater resources, the family moved across the street from the two-room cottage where Herbert was born to a new and larger house, since destroyed, a block farther south and on the opposite side of the street. Herbert had a brother, born January 28, 1871, and a younger sister, May, born September 1, 1876.

However, tragedy soon struck the Hoover family. The father, Jesse Hoover, contracted a fever and died in December, 1880, at the age of 34. The mother carried on and endeavored to raise the children in her own home. However, she died in February, 1884, when Herbert was less than ten years of age. So, at an early age, young Hoover was guided by foster parents.

After his parents' deaths, he lived for a short time with his Iowa relatives. He spent some time at the country home of his Uncle Allan and Aunt Millie Hoover. During the winter of 1885, he went to live at Newburg, Oregon, with his uncle, Dr. H. John Minthorn, who had recently lost his only son.

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8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)		
Herbert Hoover, <u>The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Years of Adventure, 1874-1920</u> (New York: 1951)		
Eugene Lyons, <u>Our Unknown Ex-President: A Portrait of Herbert Hoover</u> (New York: 1948)		
Eugene Lyons, <u>The Herbert Hoover Story</u> (Washington: 1959)		
Dorothy H. McGee, <u>Herbert Hoover, Engineer, Humanitarian, Statesman</u> (New York: 1959)		
9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.) (cont. from above)		
William Hard, <u>Who's Hoover?</u> (New York: 1928)		
William Peterson, ed., "Hoover in Iowa," <u>The Palimpsest</u> (August, 1948)		
William Peterson, ed., "Hoover in Iowa," <u>The Palimpsest</u> (August, 1962)		
10. PHOTOGRAPHS*	11. CONDITION	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.)
ATTACHED: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent	Memorial Park and Shrine
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature)	15. TITLE	13. DATE OF VISIT
<i>Ray N. Matterson</i>	Visitor Services Coordinator (History)	June '59 & Aug. '60
		16. DATE
		November 10, 1964

* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)

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SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplement Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name, and the word (cont'd), as, 6. Description and Importance (cont'd) . . .

STATE Iowa	NAME(S) OF SITE Herbert Hoover Birthplace
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Following his move to Oregon, young Hoover attended Newburg Academy, a Quaker institution. When his uncle moved to Salem, he took young Herbert with him to serve as an office boy. In September, 1891, at the age of 17, Hoover entered Stanford University as a special student. He was graduated from that school in May, 1895, with a degree in engineering. After working at odd jobs in engineering, Hoover was employed as a chief engineer by the Chinese government. Later in 1901, he became a junior partner in the firm of Bewick, Moreing and Company. He traveled extensively and remained a partner with the firm for seven years. By 1908, he earned a world-wide reputation as an engineer and had become fairly wealthy. Later, he organized a group of consulting engineers.

Hoover first attracted recognition as a public figure in 1914 after he headed the American Relief Committee to aid penniless and stranded Americans in Europe. In this capacity, he assisted 120,000 Americans in coming home. Later, he headed the Commission for the Relief of Belgium. After the United States entered the World War, Hoover served as U. S. Food Administrator. Following the war, he established the American Relief Administration which fed millions of adults and children in countries ravaged by the war. He emerged from these experiences an internationally known public figure.

Following World War I, Hoover started on his political career which eventually brought him into the White House. In 1921, President Harding appointed him Secretary of Commerce and he served in that position for several years. In 1928, he received the Republican nomination for President and in the election that year he won an overwhelming victory.

Unfortunately, Hoover's administration was dominated by the economic depression which struck the country following the stock market crash in October, 1929. The end of his period of office in March, 1933, found some 12-14 million unemployed. Under his administration, Congress established the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to provide indirect relief through loans to insurance companies, banks, and state and local organizations. On the international scene, Hoover's greatest contribution was the London Naval Agreement of 1930 which placed limits on the number of small vessels, as well as battleships and cruisers, each nation might construct. In Latin American affairs, he inaugurated the non-intervention policies.

After leaving the office of President, Hoover retired for a number of years. Following World War II, at the request of President Truman, Hoover made several trips abroad to study food supplies and make recommendations to avert a postwar famine. In 1947, Truman appointed him Chairman of the Commission on the Organization of the Executive Branch of Government, commonly known as the Hoover Commission. In 1953, President Eisenhower created a second Hoover Commission with Hoover as Chairman. This commission issued several reports recommending ways of simplifying and creating economies in the

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STATE Iowa	NAME(S) OF SITE Herbert Hoover's Birthplace
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administrative structure of the government. Hoover retired from public life in June, 1955. He died October 20, 1964, at the age of 90 years and was buried at his birthplace at West Branch, Iowa. The remains of his wife have since been removed to the birthplace site.

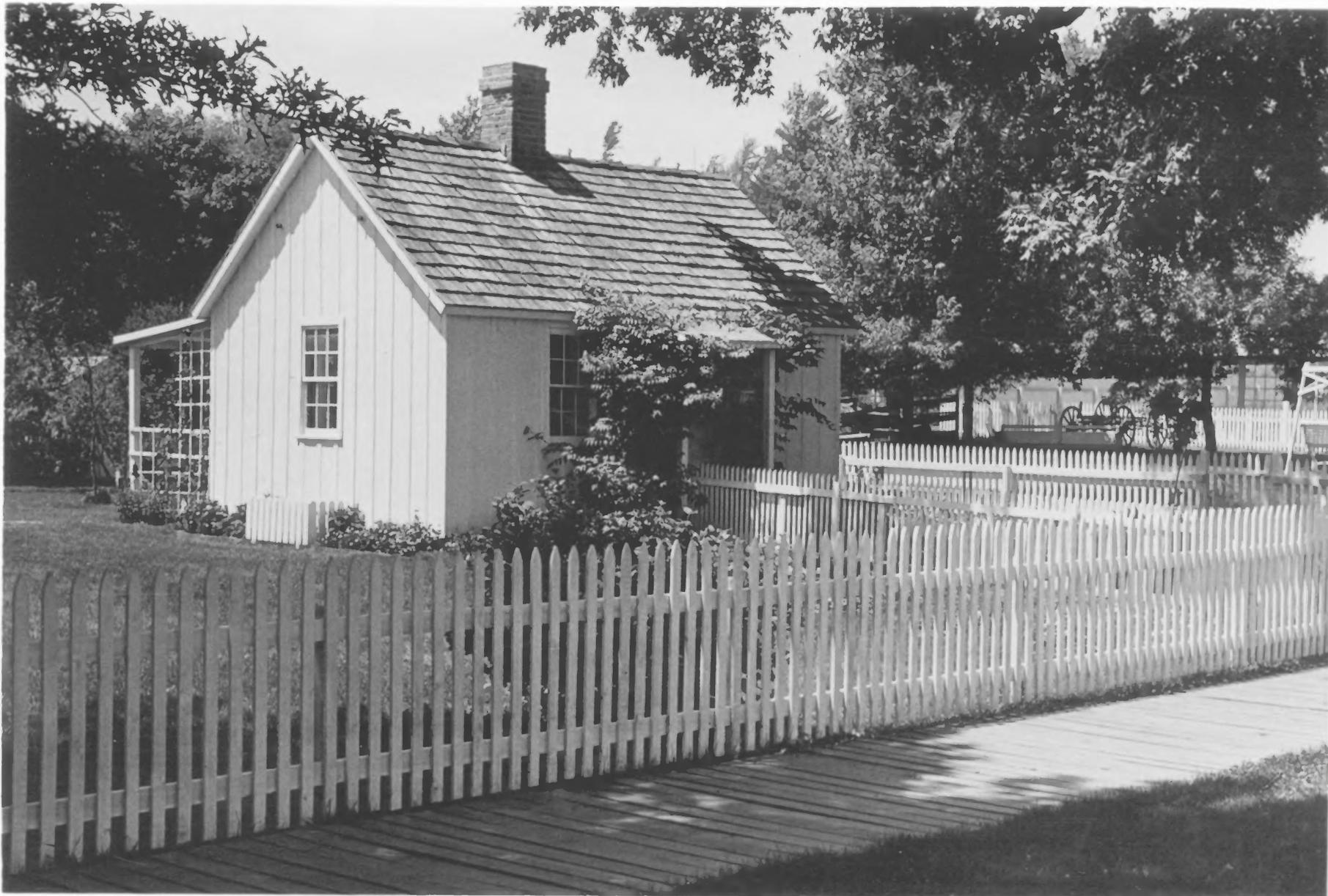
Remains: The Herbert Hoover Birthplace is a part of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Park, which comprises some 28 acres of land. The cottage where Herbert Hoover was born is simple in every detail and contains two rooms. One of these served as a parlor, kitchen, and dining room combined; the other as a bedroom. It is now administered by the Public Buildings Service, General Services Administration.

In 1935, the Hoovers obtained the property which had passed into other hands. The original cottage was placed in its original position and restored to its former status. The building was then equipped with some of its original furnishings. A replica of the Jesse Hoover blacksmith shop has been built near the birthplace site.

In 1939, prominent citizens of Iowa incorporated the Hoover Birthplace Society which, in the late 1950's, merged with the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation. Since that time, the area has been landscaped and developed. The new Herbert Hoover Library-Museum which houses all the personal papers and memorabilia from Hoover's Presidency was dedicated in 1962. The Library is administered by the National Archives and Records Service.

Bibliography: (continued from first page)

John Drury, Historic Midwest Houses (Minneapolis: 1947)
Roy Sweigert, Jr., Herbert Hoover of West Branch



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
NPS Photo by Charles C. Keely, Jr.

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Today some 400,000 visitors annually pass through the humble two-room cottage where the 31st President of the United States was born. This is one of several buildings in the Downey Street neighborhood which have been carefully restored by the National Park Service. The cottage is furnished with many of the original pieces which belonged to Hoover's parents, Jesse and Hulda, who built the home about 1870.

Herbert Hoover

National Historic Site
West Branch, Iowa

