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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

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RELIGION/religious structure

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RELIGION/religious structure

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

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Mid-19th century

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Other: Luxembourgian

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foundation Limestonewalls Limestoneroof Composition shinglesother Wood

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

This small limestone chapel, measuring 8'1"x 7'2", is located on the north side of the Spruce Creek Road, at the intersection of a farm lane. The chapel occupies a triangular plot of land, with four tall spruce trees along the west side, and a white picket fence enclosing the lawn in front of the chapel. The chapel consists of three stone walls, with an open facade on the south elevation. A set of iron gates featuring a cross pattern is located on this open facade.

The interior is plastered, and furnished with a stone altar with a hand carved crucifix. The gabled roof is covered with composition shingles.

The stonework on this small chapel is of cut stones, most about 6"x 10", laid in courses. It appears that some repointing has been done within the past few years.

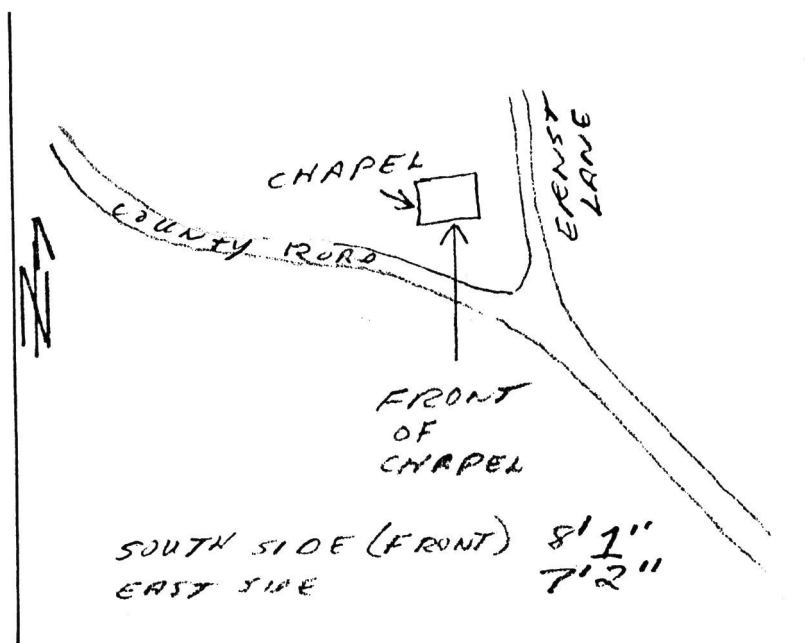
The site of this small structure, at the side of the road in this valley, is quite beautiful. Approaching from the east, you round a corner, and there is the chapel with its neat fence and trees, totally isolated, the only other man-made structure in sight being a bridge a half mile down the road.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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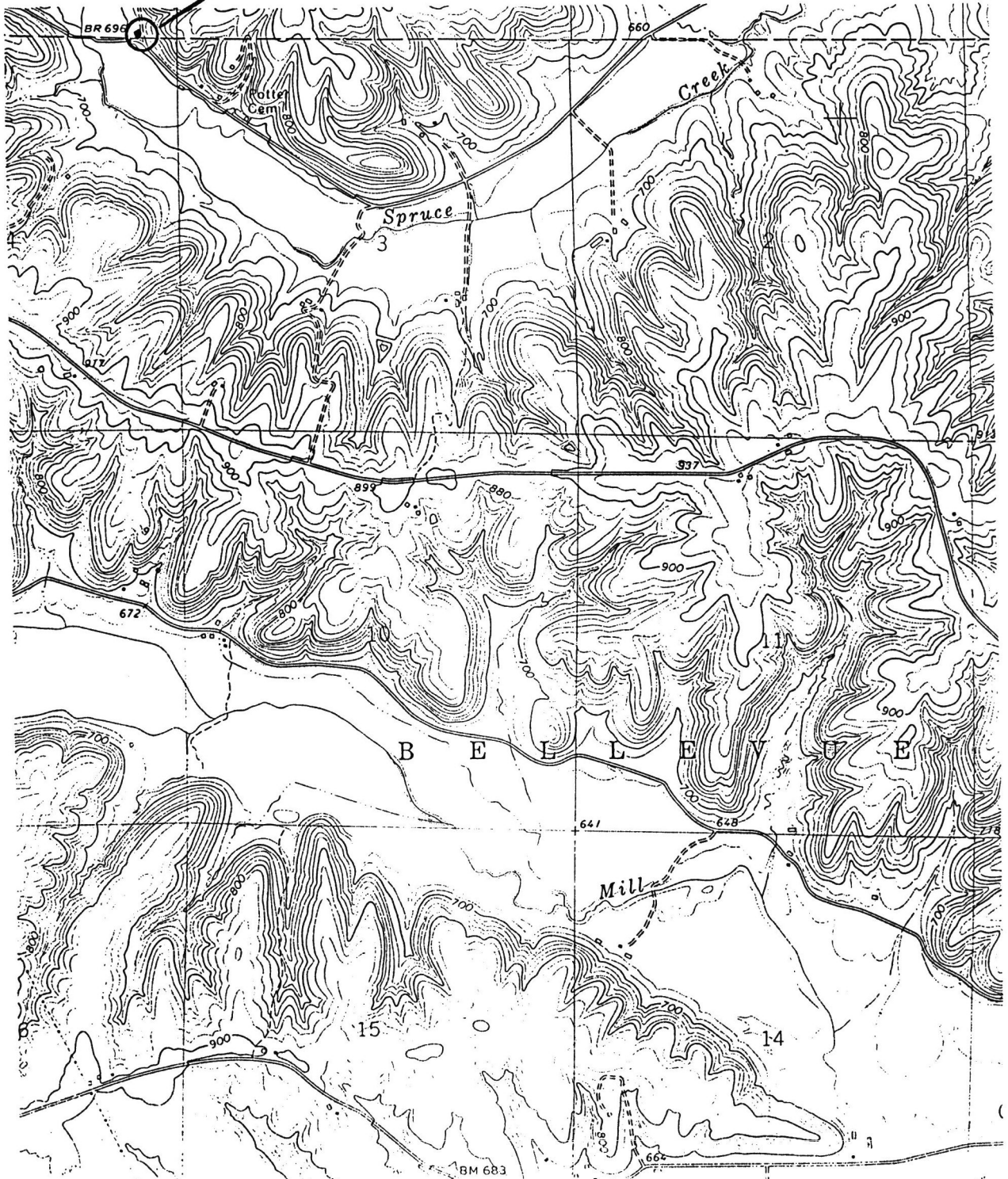
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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## Fritz Chapel

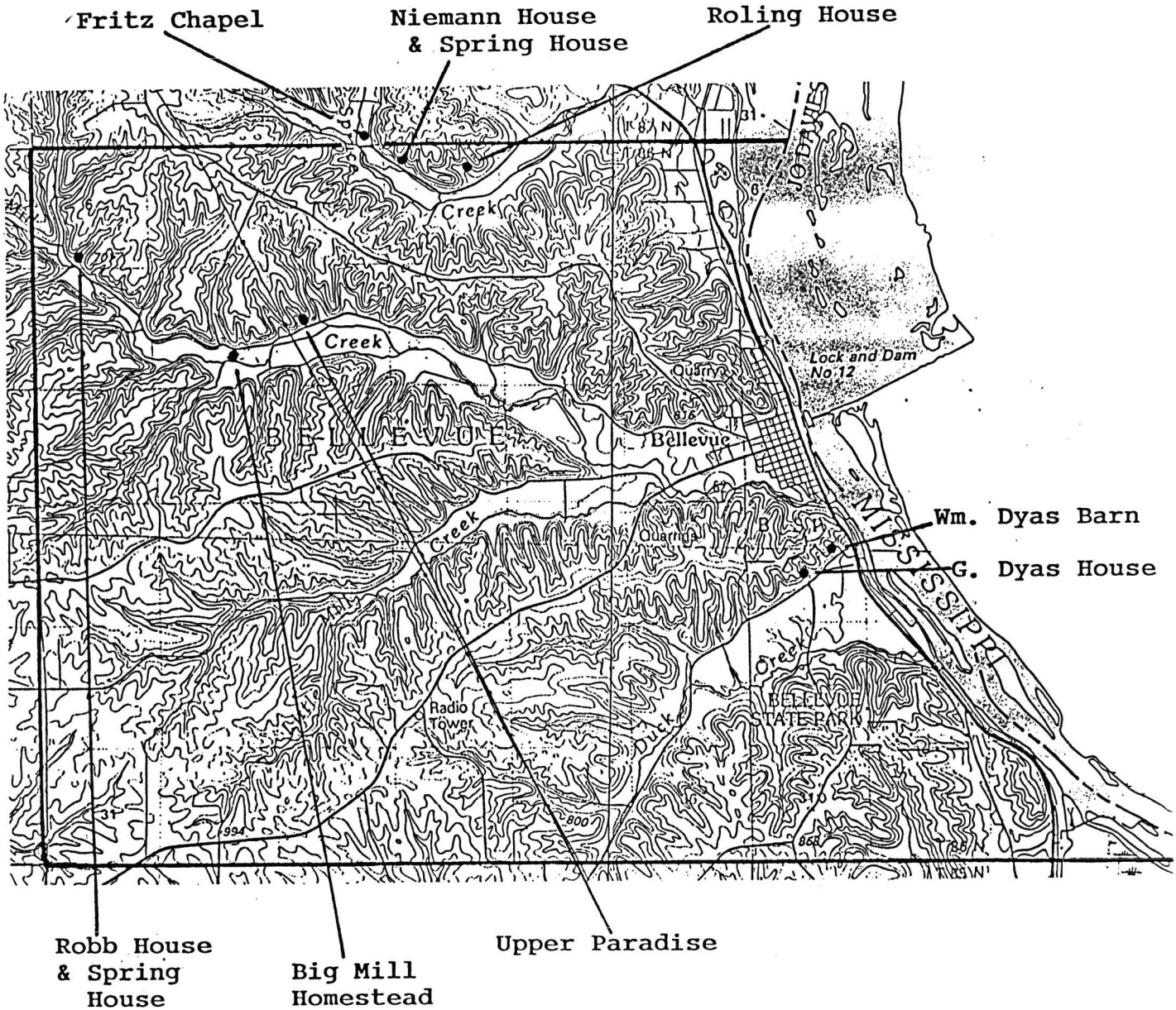


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Rural limestone resources being nominated  
with this submission.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance  
1852  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates  
1852  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation  
Luxembourgian  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person  
N.A.

Architect/Builder  
Mathias Fritz

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

This small limestone chapel is significant under Criterion C as an example of vernacular limestone design from the mid-19th century.

In 1852 Matthias Fritz and his family emigrated to this country from Luxembourg. They ultimately settled here in Jackson County, in the valley of Spruce Creek. It is said that Fritz erected this chapel in thanksgiving for a safe voyage. Tradition has it that Fritz was a stone mason by profession, but he is not listed in any of the census records as such. No other buildings have been attributed to Fritz. A long-time resident remembers hearing stories about a number of stone masons who lived on small farms (40 acres) in the area, but traveled distances to work, often for a week at a time. Fritz may have been such a mason.

The Fritz family was one of many from Luxembourg to settle in Jackson County. Tete des Morts Twp., immediately north of Bellevue, had a large number of Luxembourgian families. Many were clustered in the area around St. Donatus, while others located on farms in the area, spreading into Bellevue and Prairie Springs townships as well. Fritz Chapel is located on the Bellevue/Tete des Morts township line. The Fritz family apparently was not a part of the Luxembourgian St. Donatus parish, as they are buried in St. Joseph's cemetery in Bellevue. It is very possible that they worshipped at the small "neighborhood" church of St. Nikolaus a mile east of the chapel that had been established by German Catholics (the Niemanns and Rolings).

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National Park Service

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### BRONZE PLAQUE ON ALTAR

Erected by Matthias Fritz  
1819-1889

About 1852 in thanks to  
God for a safe voyage for  
his family from Luxembourg  
to America.

### WOOD PLAQUE TO RIGHT OF CHAPEL

#### FRITZ CHAPEL

In the mid 1800s Mathias Fritz and his wife Maria Forrett and their six children left Luxembourg for the United States. The ship completed the arduous passage in 42 days. It was a dangerous adventure during which Mr. Fritz vowed to God that if he gave them a safe passage to America he would erect a chapel. They left New Orleans by boat up the Mississippi River ending their journey in Bellevue.

They bought 34 acres of land near here where they lived for the remainder of their lives.

Matthias, utilizing his skills as a stone mason and carver, built the chapel on land that was donated by a friend. He carved the walnut arches from a single piece of wood, and also carved the Christ figurine.

Mrs. Fritz was killed in 1884 by a runaway team of horses. Mr. Fritz made her tombstone, which is located in St. Joseph's cemetery in Bellevue. Matthias Fritz died in 1889.

Their children cared for the chapel until the last Fritz child, Johanna Fritz Meier, died in 1945. The responsibility was then taken over by her children.

The first Mass heard at the chapel was on June 24, 1952, on the 100th anniversary of the chapel's completion.

The first annual Fritz reunion at the chapel was held July 27, 1980.

Today an organization called the Matthias Fritz Chapel Fund, Inc. has the responsibility of its preservation and upkeep of the chapel and grounds.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Atlas & Plat Book of Jackson County, Iowa. 1893; 1913.  
History of Jackson County, Iowa. 1879; 1897.  
Unidentified, undated newspaper articles about the chapel.  
Interview with Ed Ernst conducted by Bel Tubbs, 28 January 1991.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than one acre.

UTM References:

A 

1	5
---	---

7	0	6	5	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	6	8	5	3	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone      Easting                      Northing

B 

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Zone      Easting                      Northing

C 

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D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

A parcel of land located on the north side of Spruce Creek Road where it intersects with the Ernst private lane in T87N R4E Sec 33 SE $\frac{1}{4}$  SE $\frac{1}{4}$ . This parcel is irregular in shape, bounded by the lane on the east, the road on the south, and is enclosed by a fence. It measures approx. 40'x80' following the fence, and extending ten feet to the north beyond the chapel rear wall.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This nomination includes the chapel and fence, the area historically associated with this resource.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

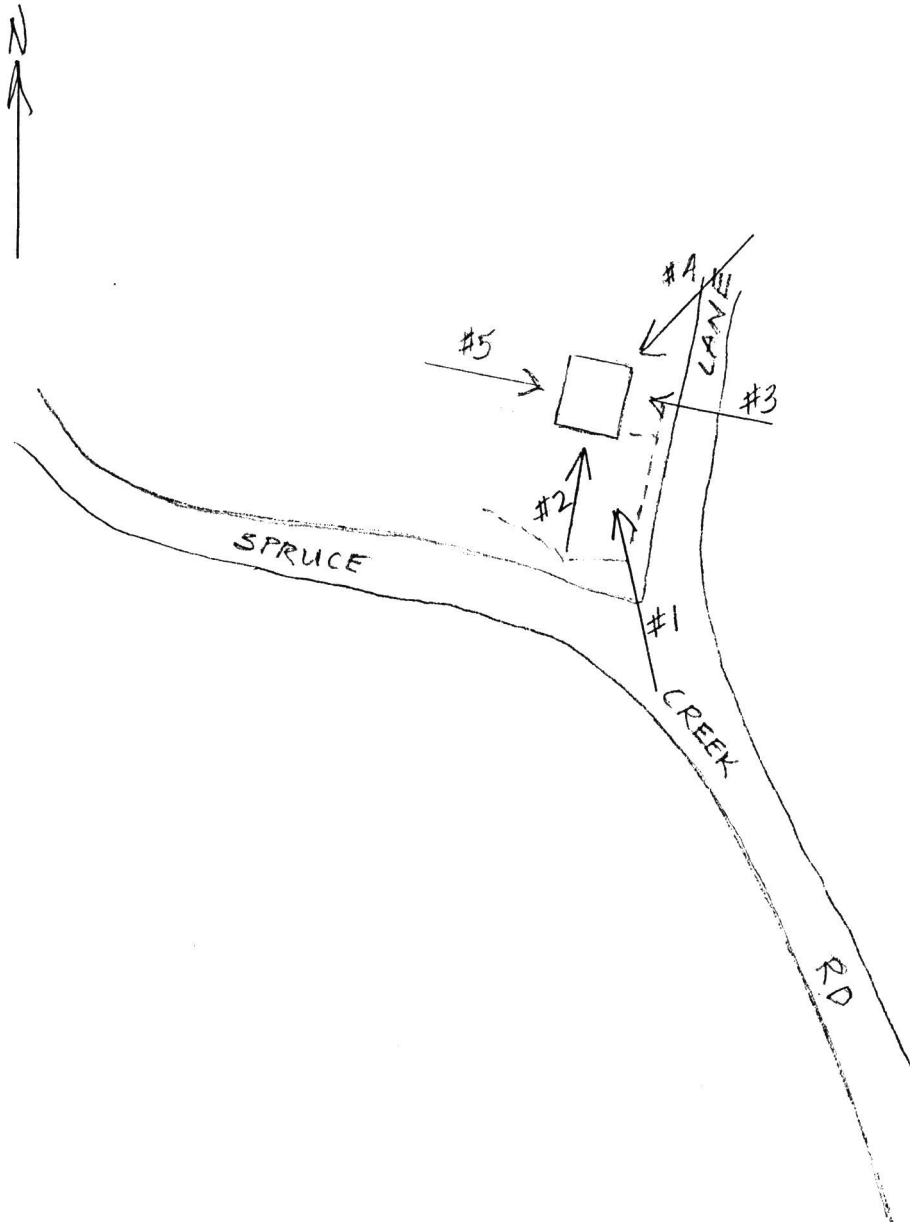
name/title Molly Myers Naumann, Consultant (515) 682-2743  
 organization Jackson County H.P.C. date May 1991  
 street & number J.C. Courthouse, 201 W. Platt telephone (319) 652-3181  
 city or town Maquoketa state IA zip code 52060

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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7/16/91

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

Limestone Architecture of Jackson County, MPS IOWA

		Date Listed
COVER	<del>Substantive Review</del>	<u>8/30/91</u>
1. Bellevue Herald Building	Substantive Review	<u>8/30/91</u>
2. Big Mill Homestead	Entered in the National Register	<u>8/30/91</u>
3. Building at 101 North Riverview Street	Entered in the National Register	<u>8/30/91</u>
4. Building at 126 South Riverview Street	Entered in the National Register	<u>8/30/91</u>
5. Building at 130-132 North Riverview Street	Entered in the National Register	<u>8/30/91</u>
6. Building at 306 South Second Street	Entered in the National Register Substantive Review	<u>8/30/91</u>
7. Building at 307 South Second Street	OWNER OBJECTION	<u>8/30/91</u> Determined Eligible
8. <del>Building</del> HOUSE at 505 Court Street		<u>8/30/91</u>
9. Dyas, George, House	Entered in the National Register	<u>8/30/91</u>
10. Dyas, William, Barn	Entered in the National Register	<u>8/30/91</u>
11. Kucheman Building	Entered in the National Register	<u>8/30/91</u>
12. Niemann, Theodore, House and Spring House	Entered in the National Register	<u>8/30/91</u>
13. Robb House and Spring House	Entered in the National Register	<u>8/30/91</u>
14. Roling, Henry, House	Entered in the National Register	<u>8/30/91</u>
15. Upper Paradise	Entered in the National Register	<u>8/30/91</u>
16. Fritz Chapel	Substantive Review	<u>8/30/91</u>

new

new

new

CDJ

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Fritz Chapel

MULTIPLE NAME: Limestone Architecture of Jackson County MPS

STATE & COUNTY: IOWA, Jackson

DATE RECEIVED: 7/16/91      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/07/91  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/23/91      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/30/91  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 91001067

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT:     NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    8/30/91 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

This small structure is significant as an unusual type of stone construction in Jackson County, where stone was abundant & frequently used for all sorts of building between 1840 & 1880. This small chapel was reportedly constructed in thanksgiving for a safe voyage from Luxembourg to the U.S. Its builder was one of a large group of emigrants from Luxembourg who settled in this part of the county. The structure meets the registration requirements established by the MPS.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept/C  
REVIEWER Harper  
DISCIPLINE Historian  
DATE 8/30/91

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

---

CLASSIFICATION

count       resource type

---

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

---

FUNCTION

historic       current

---

DESCRIPTION

architectural classification  
 materials  
 descriptive text

---

SIGNIFICANCE

Period              Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates                      Builder/Architect  
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

summary paragraph  
 completeness  
 clarity  
 applicable criteria  
 justification of areas checked  
 relating significance to the resource  
 context  
 relationship of integrity to significance  
 justification of exception  
 other

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

acreage               verbal boundary description  
 UTM's               boundary justification

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ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

sketch maps       USGS maps       photographs       presentation

---

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# CLG NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW

CLG Name Jackson county Historic Preservation Date of Public Meeting 4-16 & 4-24-91

Property Name Fritz Chapel Address R. R. 2, Bellevue, IA

1. For Historic Preservation Commission:

- Recommendation of National Register eligibility
- Recommendation of National Register ineligibility

Signature *E. Lane Edwards* Date 4-26-91

Reason(s) for recommendation:

The Jackson County Historic Preservation Commission recommends the Fritz Chapel for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places because of its uniqueness in the State of Iowa as well as the known history. The reason for the chapel being built adds to the character of this site and makes it one of kind.

2. For Chief Elected Local Official:

- Recommendation of National Register eligibility
- Recommendation of National Register ineligibility

Signature *J. C. Engel* Date 4-16

Reason(s) for recommendation:

The Jackson County Board of Supervisors agree with the Jackson County Historic Preservation Commission's assessment of this building and their recommendation of National Register eligibility.

3. Professional Evaluation Name Lowell J. Soike, Ph.D.

- Recommendation of National Register eligibility
- Recommendation of National Register ineligibility

Signature *Lowell J. Soike* Date 5-1-91

Reason(s) for recommendation:

*Concur with consultant's evaluation.*

RETURN TO:  
BUREAU OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
CAPITOL COMPLEX  
DES MOINES, IA 50319



Fritz Chapel Jackson

Rt 3 (Spruce Creek Rd)

T87N R4E Sec 33

Bellevue IA

Dan Eggars

1990

SHPO

general view of chapel & grounds looking NW

#1



ERECTED BY  
**MATTHIAS FRITZ**  
1812 - 1884  
AN OLD FIELD IN THOMAS CO.  
MO. BEING SAFE YOUNG  
FOR THE FAMILY FROM  
LUTHERIA MO TO AMERICA

MATHIAS  
FRITZ

Fritz Chapel Jackson

Rt 3 (Spruce Creek Rd)

T87N R4E Sec 33

Bellevue IA

Bob Sheets

Jan '91

SHPO

Facade looking North

#2



Fritz Chapel      Jackson

Rt 3 (Spruce Creek Rd)

T87N R4E Sec 33

Bellevue IA

Bob Sheets

Jan '91

SHPD

East elevation looking West

#3



Fritz Chapel Jackson

Rt 3 (Spruce Creek Rd)

T87N R4E Sec 33

Bellevue IA

Bob Sheets

Jan '91

SHPO

3/4 view of rear (north) elevation looking SW  
#4



Fritz Chapel

Jackson

Rt 3 (Spruce Creek Rd)

T87N R4E Sec 33

Bellevue 1A

Bob Sheets

Jan '91

SHPO

West elevation looking east

#5

Please refer to the map in the  
Multiple Property Cover Sheet  
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64500167