

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places
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Hamburg Historic District: Description

Located northwest of the Davenport central business district, the Hamburg Historic District contains the most architecturally significant residences in the German settled area known as "Hamburg". Although the Hamburg area stretches as far north as Locust and as far west as Division, the district boundaries have been limited to the area between 5th and 9th and Ripley and Vine to reflect the best examples of architectural styles and the highest concentration of historic buildings.

Five blocks south of the Hamburg Historic District is the Mississippi River. The land slopes gradually northward until it reaches the alley north of 5th Street and then begins a much more dramatic slope. The bluff peaks around 7th Street and then sharply descends again north of 9th Street. This geographical location with a prominent view of the city and the river quickly became a prime building location for the middle and upper income Germans. A second boundary division became the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad tracks built along 5th Street in the 1850's, separating Hamburg from the lower income Germans south of the tracks adjacent to the industrial section. The geography of the area gave rise to the term "Gold Coast", to describe the bluffline portion of W. 6th Street extending from Ripley Street to Gaines Street.

There are a few churches and commercial enterprises scattered within the district, but the predominant building type is residential. Two examples of the variant are the German M. E. Church, 830 W. 5th, and a commercial structure at 932 W. 6th, both good examples of mid-19th century architecture, which help maintain the historic integrity of the neighborhood. The majority of houses were built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with a few more modern structures scattered within the area. Despite the occasional interruption of modern housing, these structures remain unobtrusive and maintain the sense of scale and building use of the historic district.

The earliest concentration of residential styles occurs along 5th Street, the southern boundary of the district. These residences are generally simpler in design and reflect the early growth period of Hamburg. The more elaborate residences begin as soon as the hills do. Located on steep, tree-covered lots, there is a large concentration of houses along 5th and 7th Streets, as well as the 600 and 700 blocks of Ripley, Western, Gaines, Brown, and Warren Streets. These are 2 to 3-story houses, richly ornamented and commanding an impressive view of the city and river. The individually significant structures begin to thin out along 8th and 9th Streets, but the simpler structures which surround them form the basic late 19th and early 20th century residential fabric which gives continuity and integrity to the historic district.

A variety of architectural styles are represented in the Hamburg Historic District. The dominant style of the early residences was the Greek Revival. One of the best preserved examples of small scale Greek Revival architecture in Davenport is the 1½-story, 3-bay front gable house at 916 W. 9th Street. Larger Greek Revival examples from this period are the 2-story symmetrical, side gable houses such as 732 W. 5th, 714 & 801 W. 6th which all have central doors and Greek Revival window ornament. The houses at 716 & 906 W. 5th and 911 W. 7th are good examples of the Greek Revival houses of the 1860's and 1870's, which retain the traditional symmetrical form, but have introduced some Victorian ornament.

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During the late 1860's and 1870's a house type that was popular in the community was the 2-story, 3-bay front gable house, a form derived from the earlier Greek Revival temple form. This Davenport prototype, commonly, though not exclusively, associated with the city's German population, displayed an off-center door, narrow segmental arched windows with 2/2 lights and often an oculus in the gable. Good examples of this form include 604 & 614 W. 5th St., 623 & 630 W. 6th St., 724 W. 8th and 530 Western. An attractive variation of this distinctive form are the houses at 917 W. 8th and 630 Warren, which contain the familiar 3-bay segmental arched 1st floor openings, but display two round arched windows in the gabled second story.

Beginning in the late 1870's, the economic successes of the first generation Germans became visible in the size and elaboration of their Hamburg homes. This post-Civil War era saw a proliferation of picturesque designs expressed in Victorian Gothic, Second Empire, Italianate, Queen Anne and a variety of vernacular interpretations of these styles.

A good example of Victorian Gothic is the Francis Ochs House at 729 W. 6th (c. 1870), which features a steep roof, dominant front gable, cresting and a spacious gallery. This house expresses an early Gothic mode popularized by A. J. Downing, while the early 20th century house at 615 Ripley, with tower and crenelated parapet, derives more from medieval models. The Second Empire Style, characterized by a steep mansard roof, appeared briefly in the Henry Frahm House, 321 W. 6th St., (c. 1880).

The Italianate Style influenced a number of Hamburg residences. One of the earliest examples is the August Steffen, Sr. House at 420 W. 6th (c. 1856), a symmetrical stuccoed block with wide eaves, once bracketed, and a cupola rising from the low hipped roof. The Lambrite-Petersen House at 510 W. 6th, built several years later, is one of Davenport's few examples of the Italian Villa, characterized by a tall square corner tower with wide bracketed eaves and round arched windows. Other outstanding examples of the Victorian Italianate are the Henry Lischer House at 624 W. 6th (1871) designed by the local architect Fredrick George Clausen and the F. Max D. Peterson House at 629 Brown Street (1878). A late interpretation of the Italian Villa form is the Wm. J. Wiese House at 709 Brown (c. 1895), designed by Gustav A. Hanssen, which displays a 3-story, off-center, square tower, embellished by ogee arches and a terra cotta panel; and wide bracketed eaves.

By far the most common style is the Queen Anne and its various interpretations. Built almost entirely in the decade of the 1890's, the Hamburg houses influenced by this style generally display any combination of the following characteristics: irregular plan and massing, variety of texture and material, bay windows, steep multiple roof lines, round or polygonal turrets, and small classical detail. Two houses designed by B. F. Aufderhiede are excellent examples of the Queen Anne. His design for the J. C. Struck House at 703 Ripley is distinguished by a main facade flanked by a 2-story polygonal tower on one side and a 3-story rounded tower on the other, while the Herman Schmidt House at 525 W. 7th displays a 3-story polygonal corner tower and gabled bays, in combination with a spacious gallery and classical ornament. Good examples of textural variety include the Wm. Mueller House, 413 W. 6th, which features a clapboarded first floor and half-timbered and stuccoed upper story, and the J. O. Seiffert House, 532 W. 6th, which emphasizes the exposed timber framing and rich wood ornament in its polychrome finish. Some other notable examples whose irregular roofs and tall towers

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form focal points within the district are the houses at 726 W. 6th, 402 W. 7th, 510 W. 7th, 817 W. 7th and 604 Gaines.

The Hamburg district began to display influences of the more classical and symmetrical Georgian Colonial Revival around the turn of the century. The Dr. Heinrich Matthey House, 505 W. 6th, with its symmetrical front, but Queen Anne influenced towers along the side, reveals the transition during this period. The best example of a Georgian Colonial Revival House is the August Steffen, Jr. House, 412 W. 6th St. (1901) designed by Frederick George Clausen. The 3-story brick house with prominent rounded bays flanking the central double Ionic gallery is an extremely well detailed example of the style and an early 20th century landmark in the district.

Also represented in the early 20th century architecture of the district are a few good examples of the Craftsman style. The most outstanding example is the house that the architect Deidrich J. Harfst designed for himself at 424 W. 7th St., distinguished by the half-timbered upper story, wall dormer with leaded glass windows and decorative panels, and the brick porch piers with geometrical brackets.

Hamburg Historic District: Significance

The Hamburg Historic District contains the largest concentration of historically significant houses in Davenport and displays some of the most outstanding examples of 19th century architectural styles in the city. In addition, the district represents the geographical location of the middle and upper income German settlement of the late 19th and early 20th century. The large German population had a dominating influence on 19th century Davenport, and Hamburg was the home of many prominent German business and political leaders.

As one of the early extensions to the original city plat, this northwest area of town contains excellent examples of the first permanent dwellings of the German immigrants: small vernacular one-story cottages, symmetrical Greek Revival houses and the popular 2-story, 3-bay front gable form. Throughout the district are outstanding Victorian dwellings styled in the Gothic, Second Empire, Italianate and Queen Anne, as well as examples of early 20th century Georgian Revival and Craftsman Style houses. Supported by more common 19th and early 20th century house forms and by a handful of compatible modern dwellings, the district has maintained its architectural integrity throughout the 20th century.

Architects designing in Hamburg included Frederick George Clausen (414, 624 W. 6th & 817 W. 7th), Gustav A. Hanssen (709 Brown), Benjamin F. Aufderhiede (703 Ripley, 525 W. 7th), Deidrich J. Harfst (424 W. 7th), and Thomas McClelland (630 W. 5th, 530 Western).

Davenport Germans were a solid community geographically. Harrison Street formed the boundary between the Germans on the west and non-Germans on the east, while the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad tracks along 5th Street divided the middle and upper income Germans on the north from the lower income Germans in the "west end" south of the tracks. German immigration to Davenport began in 1848 and by 1858

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nearly 3,000 Germans had settled in Davenport. This figure represented about 20% of the city's population. German immigration continued strong in Davenport through the 1880's and by the 1890's the city acquired a reputation as a German town -- politically, socially and culturally. After World War I, however, in light of the xenophobic reaction of non-Germans, the German community as a single entity lost much of its dominating influence. In addition, Davenport's 2nd and 3rd generation descendants did not have the same language and cultural reinforcement of the immigrants and thus the homogeneity of "Hamburg" never returned.

Prominent German residents of the Hamburg Historic District include Henry Lischer (624 W. 6th), owner-publisher of the German language newspaper, Der Demokrat; August E. Steffen, Sr. (420 W. 6th), founder of the prominent Steffens Dry Goods Store and his son August Steffen, Jr. (412 W. 6th), his successor; Henry Frahm (321 W. 6th), owner of one of Davenport's most successful breweries; Hans Reimer Clausen (413 W. 6th (possibly an earlier structure at this address), a state senator in the 1870's and Davenport's most outspoken German-American leader; E. C. Mueller (413 & 429 W. 6th) and Wm. L. Mueller (413 W. 6th), owners of one of the major lumber milling companies; H. H. Andressen (726 W. 6th), the founder of the German Savings Bank; Henry Koehler (817 W. 7th), partner in the Koehler & Lange Arsenal Brewery; Carl Beiderbecke (532 W. 7th), the city's most important wholesale grocery jobbers; F. Max D. Peterson (629 Brown), a partner in the major dry goods department store, J. H. C. Petersen & Sons; and William H. Weise (709 Brown), a prominent manufacturer and financier in Davenport at the turn of the century. These neighbors shared common roots from the German states of Schleswig and Holstein. In addition, they shared numerous family relationships through the intermarriage of sons and daughters of the first generation settlers.

The only institutional buildings in the Hamburg District with historical significance were the German Methodist Episcopal Church (c. 1860) at 830 W. 6th Street, and the first Iowa College building (1848) at 517 W. 7th Street. The latter was modified in the late 19th century for residential use.

Together, the historical associations of these residential and institutional structures make the Hamburg District an unusually good collection of buildings significant in Davenport's 19th century German-American community.

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The district boundary follows 5th St. at the south from Vine to Ripley including residences on the north side of the street. On the east the boundary line extends from 5th to 9th St. along the back property lines of those residences on the east side of Ripley St. The northern boundary begins at the intersection of 9th St. and the alley behind Ripley, follows the tree line at the base of the hill behind 9th St. until it reaches Gaines, continues in a straight line to 9 1/2 St. and then follows 9 1/2 St. to Vine. The western boundary extends down Vine St. in a straight line from 9.1/2 St. to 5th St. including those properties only on the east side of the street.

UTM References (Zone 15)

	<u>EASTING</u>	<u>NORTHING</u>
A	702 050	4600 100
B	702 090	4599 640
C	701 320	4599 600
D	701 300	4600 060

Acreage: 106 acres.