

National Historic Landmarks

Historic General Dodge House

The [General Grenville M. Dodge House](#) is a historic house museum in Council Bluffs, Iowa. The large, Victorian mansion was built in 1869 and was the home of General Grenville M. Dodge (1831-1916). He was a Union Army general, politician and an influential figure in the development of the railroads across the American West. During his lifetime, he engaged in the mercantile business, organized a bank, surveyed the Missouri River Valley to the West for the Transcontinental Railroad, served a term in the U.S. Congress and served with distinction in the Civil War.

Dodge's house was designed by William Boyington, a Chicago architect. The mansion includes 14 rooms, is three-stories high and stands on a high terrace overlooking the Missouri Valley. The historic home displays such architectural features as parquet floors, cherry, walnut and butternut woodwork and a number of "modern" conveniences quite unusual for the period. Most windows are tall and narrow, with segmented-arch tops, some of which have decorative stone hoods. The interior features elaborate interior black walnut woodwork, and original fixtures including bronze hinges with silver butts. The house is decorated with items from the Dodge family. The property also includes an 1871 carriage barn, which houses a caretaker's residence. Dodge was deeply involved in the planning and building of his home, making several modifications such as central heating and hot and cold running water.

Dodge's house remained in the family until 1950, when it was converted into apartments. The house was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1961 for its association with Dodge. The city purchased the home in 1963 for conversion to a museum, reversing most of the alterations made prior to the period of Dodge's occupancy. It is now owned by the city of Council Bluffs and is open for tours.



National Historic Landmarks

The Reverend George B. Hitchcock House

The [Reverend George B. Hitchcock House](#) is a historic house in Cass County, Iowa, near the city of Lewis. The sandstone home was built in 1856 by the Reverend George B. Hitchcock. It is significant because it has features indicative of its use as a "station" on the Underground Railroad.

Rev. Hitchcock (1812-1872) was one of 11 children, and struggled with illness for much of his life. He married, and in 1841, he became the pastor of a church in Oskaloosa, Iowa. In 1847, Hitchcock worked as a stone mason and preached in Oskaloosa and Eddyville.



In the fall of 1853, the family moved to the Lewis area and lived in a log cabin west of town. Rev. Hitchcock bought 120 acres in 1854 and built the house in 1856 using sandstone quarried at Jester's quarry about a mile east of the Nishnabotna River. Ox teams hauled the rock to the river where it was floated across on a raft and then hauled up the steep hill to the high, level site of the house. Rev. Hitchcock also organized the Congregational Church in his cabin on April 11, 1855. There were 11 charter members, and Hitchcock became an abolitionist leader of the Congregational Church mission in western Iowa.

During his 12 years near Lewis, Iowa, Rev. Hitchcock became involved in the American abolitionist movement known as the Underground Railroad. At the time of his home's construction, it overlooked two major East-West trails, leading to ferry crossings on the river, and it was built with the care and protection of travelers in mind. It even included a secret room in the basement that is believed to have been used to hide freedom seekers (formerly-enslaved people). Rev. Hitchcock used his home to assist in the safe passage of freedom seekers through southwestern Iowa on their way East and North to freedom during the mid-19th century.

The Civil War ended in 1865 and the Hitchcock's moved to Kingston, Missouri, where he would have an opportunity to minister to Black parishioners, as well as white. He continued to organize churches, and he even traveled by horseback in 1872 through the frontier to find new locations. He would die that same year after falling ill upon his return.

This historic home was used as a farm until 1966, when it was sold to the state. It underwent a major restoration in the 1980s, and is now managed by the county as a historic house museum, interpreting the history of the Hitchcock family and the Underground Railroad. It was declared a National Historic Landmark in 2016.

