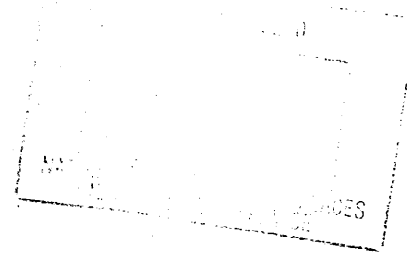


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Nehawka Public Library

Other names/site number NeHBS #CC12-015

2. Location

Street & number Southeast corner of Elm and Master Streets

Not for publication

City or town Nehawka

Vicinity

State Nebraska

Code NE

County Cass

Code 025

Zip code 68413

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William Sommer  
Signature of certifying official

10/21/02  
Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

see continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

see continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson A. Beall

12/5/02

[Signature]  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**Nehawka Public Library**

Name of Property

**Cass County, Nebraska**

County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
- Public-local
- Public-state
- Public-federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
1		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/Library

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: log cabin

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation Limestone

Walls Log

\_\_\_\_\_

Roof Asphalt

Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** Removed from its original location.
- C** A birthplace or a 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.)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

SOCIAL HISTORY

**Period of Significance**

1934

**Significant Dates**

1934

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Civil Works Administration

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 for additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	15	248011	4523865	3.			
2.				4.			

[ ] See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**name/title Jill M. Ebersorganization Nebraska State Historic Preservation Officedate June 17, 2002street & number 1500 R Streettelephone (402) 471-4773City or town Lincolnstate Nebraska zip code 68508**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Village of Nehawka

street &amp; number \_\_\_\_\_

telephone (402) 227-2235City or town Nehawkastate Nebraska zip code 68413

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, (15 USC 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**Nehawka Public Library**

Name of Property

**Cass County, Nebraska**

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

The Nehawka Public Library is located two blocks away from Nehawka's modest business district. The library was built on two bucolic lots near the village center that were available due to a house fire that occurred several years before the proposal of the library project. The entire village of Nehawka, with a population of 232 (2000 Census), lies within a charming pastoral setting of slightly rolling hills and plenty of green spaces between lovely older houses. The village lies thirty-seven miles south of Omaha, and thirty-eight miles east of Lincoln, and is located just a few miles from the banks of the Missouri River. The Nehawka Public Library is a fine New Deal era replica of the earlier Midland single-pen log cabin, with an exterior red cobblestone chimney on the north elevation, and overlapping saddle notches on the four corners.

The Nehawka Public Library log cabin is a one story, single-pen cabin with an asphalt-covered, side-gabled roof with exposed rafters and an external red stone chimney. The chimney is approximately eight feet wide at the base, and narrows about half way up its height. The log cabin has a limestone foundation, which was recycled from a building that formerly stood on the site, but was lost to fire several years before the construction of this building. The footprint of the cabin measures sixteen feet by thirty-two feet. Additional stones from the foundation are visible behind the library building.

The walls are made of logs, which were left in the round. The corners of the rectangular building were joined by cutting saddle notches on the top and bottom of each log, and fitting them together so that the logs fit tightly. This type of joining had the advantage of being both simple to construct, and resistant to catching and holding water, which would greatly diminish the potential lifespan of the cabin.<sup>1</sup>

The Nehawka Public Library cabin was chinked twice within a year of construction in order to weatherproof the cabin. It is unknown what kind of chinking was used when the building was first constructed, but since logs settle for as long as a year after being put in place, it was necessary to re-chink the logs.<sup>2</sup> After difficulty with the initial chinking, Mr. M. N. Tucker requested information from the Portland Cement Company, and a representative traveled to Nehawka to lend his expertise to the task.<sup>3</sup> The cabin has been chinked, both inside and out, in cement. Nails were driven in to the logs to provide extra anchorage for the mortar. Without it, it was difficult to keep the mortar sufficiently in place in order to dry as tightly as possible.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Editorial Staff of *Popular Science Monthly, How to Build Cabins, Lodges, and Bungalows; Complete Manual of Constructing, Decorating, and Furnishing Homes for Recreation or Profit* (New York: Popular Science Publishing Company, 1934) 46.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>3</sup> *Nehawka Enterprise*, 20 September 1934.

<sup>4</sup> Editorial Staff of *Popular Science Monthly, How to Build Cabins, Lodges, and Bungalows; Complete Manual of Constructing, Decorating, and Furnishing Homes for Recreation or Profit* (New York: Popular Science Publishing Company, 1934) 53.

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**Nehawka Public Library**

Name of Property

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**Section 7 Page 2**

The façade contains a central entrance located under a gabled door hood. The library retains its original wood paneled door and screen door, as well as each of its windows. On the primary façade, two small single-paned, fixed windows are located on either side of the door. On the south elevation of the cabin, there is a strip of three single-paned, fixed windows, and a storm cellar door to the basement, which is currently sealed shut. The north elevation has a small, two over two fixed window on either side of the large chimney, and the west elevation has two more evenly spaced small, fixed windows. Windows were necessary to illuminate the dark interior, since funds for electric lights were not initially available.

The interior of the library consists of one room and a basement. The basement is currently sealed off since the building is not regularly occupied. The main room has a large red cobblestone fireplace with a large mantle on the north end. The round logs were left exposed on the interior, and were chinked with cement on the inside. The walls are lined with bookshelves filled with a collection of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century books. Other furnishings include tables and chairs, a desk for the librarian, and some wicker furniture for comfortable reading by the fireplace.

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Nehawka Public Library

Name of Property

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donation of books that were housed in the lounge of the public auditorium. After starting with thirty donated books and seventy-five books from the Nebraska Traveling Library, the library eventually grew to house a collection of over one thousand titles.

In December of 1933, when the Nehawka Woman's Club learned of the availability of CWA grants, the club sponsored an application for funds to be used in erecting a permanent library building. The grant was approved and the club was appropriated \$515 to be used for labor. This was not a large sum of money, and it was clear that more money would be required to complete the project. The *Nehawka Enterprise* published a plea for assistance and cooperation in its 14 December 1933 issue.

"Considering the nature of the project, it is hoped that everyone in the community will co-operate [*sic*] in making it a success. There must be some work donated to complete it at once. If any farmer wishes to give the service of a team to haul material, or in any way help with the work, the favor will be greatly appreciated."<sup>9</sup>

In response, the Nehawka Woman's Club voted at their December 18 meeting to actively promote the project. The Library Committee of the Woman's Club volunteered to coordinate efforts of the volunteers who would donate labor and materials, as well as to raise money for the materials that would need to be purchased.

The plans for the library called for a log cabin to be situated in a small park, dedicated as a memorial to the pioneers of the community. The log cabin form was selected because it could be simply and inexpensively built, and, according to the *Nehawka Enterprise*, would remind citizens of the pre-railroad era settlement of Nehawka's pioneer past. Mrs. M. N. Tucker donated several lots of land for the library. Plans called for the library to be built on the foundation of the old Tucker house that had previously occupied the site, but had been lost to fire. By building on an existing foundation, they were able to take advantage of a pre-existing basement, which would be used for the storage of fuel for the furnace.<sup>10</sup>

The town, with a population of 298 (1930 Census), did in fact pull together to get the construction of the library started. By 21 December 1933, men from Nehawka had already gone to the Nutzman farm east of Murray to select and cut the logs for the building, all donated by Mr. Nutzman. Several teams of horses were donated for dragging the logs back to Nehawka, but the effort was found to be too difficult for horses. County Commissioner Chapman offered the use of a small caterpillar tractor for dragging the logs to the road for loading on trucks. The oil dealers and garage men of Nehawka furnished the gas for the trucks. Alvin McReynolds offered to obtain the red cobblestones for facing the fireplace and the chimney from Otoe County, and the Woman's Club brought lunches to the men while they worked. The *Nehawka Enterprise* took an opportunity to thank the volunteers for all their assistance, and added that

"If we attempted to mention each individual who has volunteered to assist with the work connected with the library, we would certainly have a roster that any community could be proud of. That's what we call community spirit."<sup>11</sup>

Construction on the library began in December 1933. Within a week of being allotted the grant money, workers had hauled the Nutzman logs onto the site. Mr. Obernalte acted as foreman during construction, and by 8 February 1934, the logs had all been arranged and the workers had completed chinking in between them for weatherproofing purposes.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Nehawka Enterprise*, 14 December 1933.

<sup>10</sup> *Nehawka Enterprise*, 21 December 1933.

<sup>11</sup> *Nehawka Enterprise*, 21 December 1933.

<sup>12</sup> *Nehawka Enterprise*, 8 February 1934.

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Nehawka Public Library

Name of Property

Cass County, Nebraska

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Section 8 Page 1

The Nehawka Public Library is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A. The library is significant under Criterion A for its association with work relief programs of the New Deal during the Great Depression and the philanthropy of a local social organization.

Criterion A: New Deal Relief Programs and Social Organizations

While the stock market crash in October of 1929 created a crisis in America's business and industry, agricultural areas throughout the United States had been in a depression for most of the decade of the 1920s. Farm prices that spiked during and after World War I fell as drastically as they had risen. As prices fell in mid-1920, farmers were faced with debts they were unable to pay. Farmers' incomes did not keep pace with inflation, and a devaluation in land prices contributed to their financial problems. Suffering in the agricultural economy caused economic problems for the rest of Nebraska at large. Black Tuesday was simply another devastating blow to an already depressed economy.

By December of 1932, farm prices were the lowest in Nebraska history. In addition, Nebraska, and the rest of the Midwest, was suffering from a severe drought that caused valuable topsoil to erode, damaged crops and reduced agricultural production. Nation-wide, there were more than 12 million people unemployed and in need of assistance. Twenty-five percent of the American labor force was jobless.<sup>5</sup> State governments were incapable of supporting the vast numbers of destitute citizens who required help. The Federal government was forced to intercede, and with the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932, the New Deal was instituted. Roosevelt's New Deal policies came in many manifestations, from the Social Security Act that provided monthly pensions to the elderly to direct relief payments from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, and perhaps most importantly public work relief projects that provided jobs to America's able-bodied unemployed. Some of these projects took the form of road construction, sewer repair, ditch digging, reforestation projects, and the construction of public buildings, among many other projects.<sup>6</sup> Throughout much of the Roosevelt administration, from 1933 to 1940 when public assistance was most required, billions of dollars were spent on projects intended to provide the working man with an opportunity to work.

On November 9, 1933, President Roosevelt signed an Executive Order creating the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and providing \$400 million from the Public Works Administration funds for the new organization.<sup>7</sup> The goal of the Executive Order was to put four million of America's unemployed to work by January 15, 1934. By November 16, 1933, all relief work beneficiaries and projects were transferred to the CWA. Within another month, well over two million people were already employed on CWA projects, and the CWA had advertised that funds were available for building projects. The Nehawka Public Library was no doubt one of the more modest projects funded in part through a CWA grant, though the building's completion was made possible through the efforts of the Nehawka Woman's Club.

The Nehawka Woman's Club was founded on October 18, 1927, with a total membership of twelve. The mission of the club was "to promote intellectual ideas, to be of mutual helpfulness, and to promote community spirit."<sup>8</sup> Within a year, the club's membership grew to forty-eight. At the April meeting in 1928, the club began to discuss the founding of a library. A committee was established to pursue the possibility, and the Nehawka library was created by July 1929 through the

<sup>5</sup> Phoebe Cutler, *The Public Landscape of the New Deal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 5.

<sup>6</sup> Page Smith, *Redeeming the Time: A People's History of the 1920s and the New Deal* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1987), 598.

<sup>7</sup> Henry G. Alsberg, *America Fights the Depression: A Photographic Record of the Civil Works Administration* (New York: Coward-McCann Publishers, 1934), 8.

<sup>8</sup> "Nehawka Woman's Club – After Six Years." *Nebraska Club Woman*, March-April 1934.



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Nehawka Public Library

Name of Property

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Unfortunately, the building effort was already beginning to run out of funds by that date as well. County Commissioner E. B. Chapman accompanied a group of Nehawkans to Lincoln to appear before the Nebraska CWA Board to apply for additional funds. The board allotted fifty dollars for materials and an additional \$240 for labor, which would pay for another week of work for the men that were presently employed on the site.<sup>13</sup> The project was still in its beginning stages; more money would be required to complete the project.

The Nehawka Woman's Club responded to the need by planning fundraising activities. The women planned a dance and card party to be held in the Nehawka Auditorium.<sup>14</sup> The price of admission was twenty-five cents for gentlemen and ten cents for ladies. Refreshments were offered at "reasonable prices." Many attended the Woman's Club's first fundraising function for the library, and the club netted \$25.52 for use for construction costs. Again, the *Nehawka Enterprise* was effusive in its praise.

"The earnest work of the women of Nehawka in their endeavor to get funds to complete the building free from all incumbrances [*sic*] when the time comes, is a most laudable ambition and with their well known determination bids fair to succeed. Just leave it to the women folks, and they will find a way to raise the money. But of course that doesn't mean the men can't help, for the aid of everyone is needed."<sup>15</sup>

Additional concerts and dances were held monthly to raise funds for construction. A March 8 concert netted the club the sum of \$27.87.<sup>16</sup> In addition to these special events, the Nehawka Woman's Club sponsored a movie each week at the auditorium. By July, the library was almost completely funded, although fundraising activities would continue in order to purchase new holdings for the library.

Work on the log cabin was suspended during the summer, due to extreme heat.<sup>17</sup> By September, the heat had broken and the committee was eager to complete construction on the library. M. N. Tucker wrote to the Portland Cement Company to request information regarding the proper material and method for chinking logs. The logs had been chinked early in the construction, but the material they used initially did not hold. A representative of the Portland Cement Company traveled to Nehawka to advise the workers on the best method of chinking with cement. Nails were driven into the logs in order to provide the cement something on which to adhere. They had had difficulty getting the cement to chink the smooth edges of the logs. The chinking was soon accomplished, and within a few weeks, members of the Woman's Club were ready to tidy up the log cabin and move their collection of library books into the new library building.

In preparation for the formal dedication of the library, the Nehawka Woman's Club asked pioneer Nehawka families to write their family histories for a book to be placed in the new library. Several ads were placed in the *Nehawka Enterprise* requesting their stories. The club used these histories in order to write a pageant and a historical review of Nehawka and the surrounding area for the dedication ceremony on 30 September 1934. Although the dedication had scarcely been advertised, more than 500 people attended the celebration.<sup>18</sup>

The Nehawka Woman's Club continued to support the library after the construction phase was completed. The club held monthly fundraisers to obtain funds for addition book purchases. A committee was formed to travel to Lincoln

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Nehawka Enterprise*, 1 February 1934.

<sup>15</sup> *Nehawka Enterprise*, 8 February 1934.

<sup>16</sup> *Nehawka Enterprise*, 15 March 1934.

<sup>17</sup> *Nehawka Enterprise*, 20 September 1934.

<sup>18</sup> *Nehawka Enterprise*, 4 October 1934.

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**Nehawka Public Library**

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occasionally to purchase new books. The newspaper then printed a list of the new titles that were available to their readers.<sup>19</sup> Donated funds also were used for new improvements to the library, including electric lights, which were installed in December 1934.

The library continued to operate for more than forty-five years, finally closing ca. 1980.<sup>20</sup> The building continues to house a lovely collection of books and local history, but is no longer regularly used. Meetings are occasionally held there, but the building remains largely vacant, save the collection held within.

The Nehawka Library is a New Deal-era replica of a pre-railroad era single-pen log cabin. Like many other building projects of the New Deal programs, such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the builders chose to use rough materials that were inexpensive and easy to acquire, and built in a form that required little expertise to execute. Although the ladies of the Woman's Club often stated that the library was built in a log cabin form in order to remind Nehawka of its pre-railroad era past, it is likely that given the small amount of funds allocated to the project by the granting agency, the log cabin was chosen because it was a form that they could afford to build. After all, the purpose of public works building programs was to give skilled and unskilled workers of the local area employment on public building projects that they could accomplish, and given the small population of the Nehawka area during the 1930s, there was no doubt a lack of skilled laborers available for hire. It was necessary that the design be simple to construct, and be of materials easy and inexpensive to acquire in order to fulfill the projects' labor-providing goals.

The Nehawka Public Library is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for its association with New Deal public building and relief programs. The library was constructed using a small grant from the federal government, and the great efforts of the Nehawka Woman's Club in fundraising and project coordination. The entire community contributed to the project, either through labor, donation of supplies, delivering lunches to the workers, or by playing pinochle at a fundraiser. This building, possibly more than any other building in Nehawka, represents a *Public* building in every sense of the word: it was conceived, funded, built and used by the community at large, and everyone could feel that they owned a part of it. The form was used because the materials were common, local, inexpensive and easy to obtain, and the form required no special knowledge in order to build. It is a lovely example of a New Deal public works project that mobilized the community, provided wages for at least a portion of the laborers, and gave Nehawka a source of pride for many years to come.

<sup>19</sup> *Nehawka Enterprise*, 25 October 1934.

<sup>20</sup> *Plattsmouth Journal*, 24 November 1994.

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Name of Property

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**Nehawka Public Library**

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**Section 10 Page 1**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Lots 1 and 2, Block 15, Original Plat of the Village of Nehawka.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes all of the land historically associated with the Nehawka Public Library.

NEHAWKA PUBLIC LIBRARY  
(NEHBS #CC12-015)  
NEHAWKA, CASS  
COUNTY, NEBRASKA  
SITE PLAN - NO SCALE

KEY  
1. LIBRARY  
2. LIMESTONE FOUNDATION

