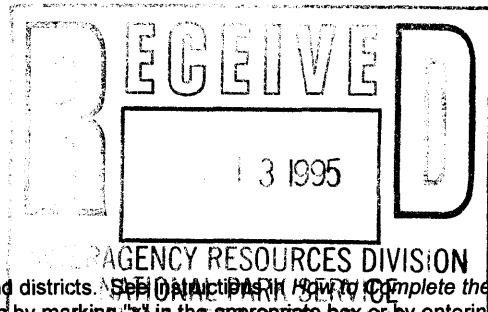


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



1475

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. Special instructions for completing 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 an 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 (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Sitting Bull Crystal Cavern Dance Pavilion

Other names/site number: N/A

2. Location

Street & number: US Highway 16  not for publication

City or town: Rockerville  vicinity

State: South Dakota Code: SD County: Pennington Code: 103 Zip code: 57701

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.)

J. Wilson, Acting SHPO 11/7/95  
Signature and title of certifying official Date

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 the Keeper Date of Action

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 H. Beall 12.14.95  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

National Register

Sitting Bull Crystal Cave Dance Pavilion

Pennington County, SD

Name of Property

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	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

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

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/storage

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Polygonal Dance Pavilion

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD: Weatherboard

roof WOOD: Asphalt

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

Sitting Bull Crystal Cave Dance Pavilion

Pennington County, SD

Name of Property

County and State

**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 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)

RELIGION

SOCIAL HISTORY

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

**Period of Significance**

1934-1945

**Significant Dates**

1934

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Black Elk, Nicholas

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

-

**Architect/Builder**

Duhamel, Alex, Bud and Peter

**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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Sitting Bull Crystal Cavern Dance Pavilion

Pennington County, SD

Name of Property

County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** less than 1

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1   3	6   3   5   3   7   0	4   8   7   0   0   0   0	2	-   -	-   -	-   -	-   -	-   -	-   -	-   -
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing				
3	-   -	-   -	-   -								
				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.)

**1. Form Prepared by**

Name/Title: Steph Ahrendt

Organization: SDSHPO Date: August 1995

Street & Number: PO Box 417 Telephone: 605 677-6822

City or Town: Vermillion State: South Dakota Zip code: 57069

**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 SHPO or FPO.)

Name: William Duhamel, c/o Monte Loos

Street & Number: Box 1760 Telephone: (605) 342-2000

City or Town: Rapid City State: SD Zip code: 57701

**Openwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine 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 (16 U.S.C. 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**

Section number   7   Page   1  

---

**Narrative Description:**

Located at the top of a steep hill nine miles south of Rapid City on the eastern side of US Highway 16 that leads to Mount Rushmore, the Sitting Bull Crystal Cavern Dance Pavilion is a one story, eight-sided, wood frame structure built in 1934 to house the Duhamel Sioux Indian Pageant created by Nicholas Black Elk. The Dance Pavilion is located along an elongated circular driveway at the beginning of the road that leads visitors down into Rockerville Gulch and the Sitting Bull Crystal Cavern. The pavilion has a poured concrete foundation, vertical board and batten weatherboard siding and asphalt shingles covering its octagonal conical roof.

Each of the eight sides has two double swinging doors positioned at the left and right edges. The northwestern two sides bear a painted sign stating "CAVE ENTRANCE TURN LEFT". Similarly, a sign stating "CAVE ENTRANCE TURN RIGHT" appears on the southwestern two sides. An eight-sided louvered wooden cupola with a wooden pole protruding from its peak tops the conical pavilion roof. The circular concrete foundation of the recently demolished wooden tipi building originally used as a ticket office for the Pageant and associated Crystal Cave is located across the road to the southeast of the Pavilion.

Inside, the Dance Pavilion is open except for a hexagonal open frame roof support in the very center of the poured concrete floor. Tie beams extend from the outer wall plates into this center roof support. The studs for the outer walls are ponderosa pine poles.

The outstanding interior feature of the Dance Pavilion is a series of five paintings of outstanding regional landscapes by Godfrey Broken Rope, a Sioux artist from Pine Ridge. These paintings are located on the outer walls between the two double swinging doors. The paintings start at the northeast wall and continue in a clockwise direction for four more panels. Starting at the northeast panel, the subjects are as follows: buffalo in a prairie setting, a faraway view of a sunset in a Badlands landscape, a close up view of a Badlands landscape with a river in the foreground, Sylvan Lake and a Black Hills landscape with a stream and pine trees. All of the scenes have a trompe l'oeil stone fence with a decorative railing painted along the bottom of the panel and a trompe l'oeil stone archway that surrounds the remaining three sides of each painting. The long view Badlands landscape also has a trompe l'oeil decorative grillwork painted to look as if it was installed in the stone arch. The decorative grillwork echoes the patterns in the decorative railings found at the

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   7   Page   2  

---

bottom of each painting. No paintings are found along the three western walls where the audience sat to watch the Pageant.

The only change to the building was the removal of the bleacher seating sometime after the Pageant stopped in 1957 and the building was used for storage. The Dance Pavilion retains a high degree of historic integrity.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

---

**Narrative Statement of Significance:**

The Sitting Bull Crystal Cavern Dance Pavilion is significant statewide under criterion B in the areas of religion and social history and significant regionally under criterion A in the area of entertainment/recreation as the permanent site of the Duhamel Sioux Indian Pageant from 1934-1957. Nicholas Black Elk, a noted Lakota medicine man and missionary, created the Pageant in an "attempt to preserve some of his traditional ways and, at the same time, to teach non-Indian tourists that the Lakota were not savages and that their culture was a thing of beauty which deserved respect." (Born 1994:24) The octagonal Dance Pavilion provided the Pageant performers with a theatre in the round that could be used in any type of weather. Its position along the route to Mount Rushmore made it an ideal tourist attraction. Under the South Dakota State Preservation Plan, the Dance Pavilion relates to the context V. Depression and Rebuilding, F. Recreation and Tourism.

The Pageant was a series of traditional Lakota dances and rituals performed by residents of the Pine Ridge reservation who camped just north of the Dance Pavilion during the summer months when the Pageant was offered. The Pageant, performed twice daily, began with a procession into the Dance Pavilion from the campground led by Alex Duhamel and his son Peter. Peter also served as the announcer for the pageant until his death in 1941. His brother, Bud Duhamel who still works at the Crystal Cavern in 1995, took over as master of ceremonies after Peter's death. Black Elk served as the medicine man in the Pageant, enacting pipe and healing ceremonies that were spaced between a wide variety of dances including the Ghost and Sun Dances. "Traditional mourning and burial rites" (Born 1994:27) were also included in the program. Black Elk was active in the Pageant until a few years before his death in 1950. Interest in the Pageant declined after Black Elk's death and it was discontinued in 1957.

The Duhamel Sioux Indian Pageant was a product of the long term friendship between Nicholas Black Elk and the Duhamel family of Rapid City, South Dakota. The Duhamels were a successful pioneer family that owned a variety of land and businesses including a large mercantile store in downtown Rapid City. The family, particularly Alex Duhamel and his sons Peter and Bud, came to know Nicholas Black Elk through trading with him and other residents of the Pine Ridge reservation to obtain Lakota crafts in return for supplies.

The Pageant, , was probably first developed in the late 1920s, at the same time the Duhamels began to promote the Sitting Bull Crystal Cavern as a tourist attraction.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  8  Page  4

---

The cavern, located on Duhamel family property near Rockerville approximately 9 miles outside Rapid City, was near land that had historically been a campground for Sitting Bull and his followers. Tourists travelling to see Mount Rushmore, started in 1925, had to pass right by the entrance to the crystal cavern. The Crystal Cavern soon became a popular stop for many Black Hills automobile tourists and continues to operate to this day. Current promotional literature for the Crystal Cavern states that it has "been voted by the United States Geological Society as the Number 1 Crystal Cave on the North American continent, the only Dog-Tooth Spar Cave on the North American Continent and one of only three in the world."

Bud Duhamel reported that Nicholas Black Elk first approached Alex Duhamel about starting the pageant possibly as early as 1927 (Born 1994:24). For several years prior to its move to the Crystal Cavern entrance in 1934, the Pageant was held starting at Baden Park in downtown Rapid City and ended up at the Duhamel's mercantile store. Tourists who had just viewed the Pageant could purchase authentic Indian crafts at the store.

Nicholas Black Elk was a Lakota medicine man and missionary known to many non-Indians as "one of the preeminent spokespersons for 'traditional' Lakota religion" (Born 1994:22) through author John Neihardt's 1932 work *Black Elk Speaks*. This work examines aspects of a childhood vision Black Elk had that directed him to "lead his people in the ways of their grandfathers". (Anderson 1995:157) Neihardt conducted his interviews with Black Elk during the early 1930s when the Pageant was only several years old.

Black Elk, the son of an Oglala medicine man, was already in demand as a medicine man himself when he came to Pine Ridge in 1882. After a stint in Buffalo Bill's Wild West show from 1886-89, Black Elk returned to Pine Ridge and became interested and active in the Catholic Church which he officially joined in 1904 after the death of his first wife. "For over thirty years, Black Elk served as a catechist, conducting Sunday services and working as a missionary on the Pine Ridge, Yankton and Sisseton reservations." (Anderson 1995:157) During this time, "His Lakota language letters and writings for church publications contain frequent references to his desire to learn more about the ways of the whites." (Born 1994:23)

In addition to taking advantage of the new Black Hills tourist industry, bridging the cultural and religious differences between Indians and non-Indians was one of Black Elk's main reasons for creating the Pageant in conjunction with the Duhamel family. Bud Duhamel told author David Born that "'Nick [Black Elk] really wanted people to understand his people, that's why he did the pageant.'" (Born 1994:24) He reports that



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   8   Page   5  

---

the dancers were "'very sincere in their beliefs and their ceremonies'" and the Pageant "'was no fake deal they did just for show.'" (Born 1994:29)

This unique site is significant as one of the earliest, continuously operating tourist attractions in the Black Hills and as the permanent home to the Pageant developed by the spiritual leader and teacher Nicholas Black Elk to promote appreciation for and understanding of traditional Lakota religious rituals and dances on a regular basis. The site retains its historic integrity.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number   9   Page   6  

---

**Bibliography:**

Anderson, Joan. "Dakota Images-Nicholas Black Elk." *South Dakota History*  
Volume 25, Number 2 (Summer 1995):157.

Born, David. "Black Elk and the Duhamel Sioux Indian Pageant." *North Dakota History*  
Volume 61, Number 1 (Winter 1994):22-29.

Duhamel, Bud. Interview with Steph Jacon. Rockerville, SD, 24 June 1995.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 5

---

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The boundaries encompass an irregular parcel of land that extends out 5 feet from the outer walls of the building.

**Boundary Justification:**

The boundary of the nominated property is set to include only the dance pavilion.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number photos

Page 1

---

All the following information is the same for all photos.

Sitting Bull Crystal Cavern Dance Pavilion  
Pennington County, South Dakota  
Photographer: Stephanie Ahrendt  
June 24, 1995  
Negatives on file at SD State Historical Preservation Center

Photo #	Description of view
1	Pavilion, camera facing south
2	Pavilion, camera facing north
3	Pavilion, camera facing west
4	Pavilion, camera facing east
5	Interior, camera facing south
6	Interior-faraway Badlands landscape (left) and close up Badlands landscape (right) are visible in the back, camera facing northeast
7	Interior-Sylvan Lake landscape-camera facing south
8	Interior-buffalo landscape, camera facing northeast