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NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Pospeshil Theatre
other names/site number NehBS #KX02-8; OHBIN #05-30-05

2. Location

street & number 123 Broadway not for publication
city, town Bloomfield vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Knox code 107 zip code 68718

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u> </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Opera House Buildings in Nebraska 1867-1917

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. 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. See continuation sheet.

James A. Hanson
Signature of certifying official May 16, 1988
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.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Beth Boland 9/28/88
 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:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & Culture: Theatre;
Music facility
Social: Meeting hall
Commerce/Trade: Restaurant

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

~~Commerce/Trade: Commercial storage~~
Commerce/Trade: Restaurant
Commerce/Trade: Warehouse
Domestic: Multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Two-part commercial block

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Unknown
walls Brick
roof Unknown
other Decorative brick window arches

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Pospeshil Theatre is located at the northwest corner of Broadway and Grant, at the edge of the business section. Constructed in 1906 by John Pospeshil, the Two-Part Commercial Block structure is described in the Feb. 15, 1906 *Bloomfield Monitor* as having a facade of "pressed brick." The building itself is approximately 114 feet long by 50 feet wide. It has red brick arches over all of the windows and red brick ridges along the top of the building. Otherwise, the building is utilitarian in appearance. The first-floor auditorium is raised about half a story above the street level. Entrance was through double doors at the center front of the building, into what was probably a spacious lobby some 28 feet deep. Unfortunately, this particular space was converted to living quarters at some time after the building no longer functioned as an opera house. Current entrance is through a garage-width door, up a ramp filling what was the stage left wing. Two ticket windows remain at the rear of the auditorium space, although one may have been used to serve refreshments at dances and sporting events.

The auditorium is 47 feet wide by 61 feet long from the proscenium opening to the back of the auditorium. Double doors with a transom above once provided entrance to this space from the lobby. The balcony is some 28 feet deep; it extends behind the auditorium space about 23 feet. The balcony curves inward, away from the stage; this is the reverse of most other Nebraska opera house balconies. Permanent pew-style benches remain in the tiered balcony (see photo #5), which has four large windows on the east end and two on the south. A knee-high rail with vertical posts set about six inches apart delineates the edge of the balcony. This balcony has "boxes" with permanent bench seats at the front on both the north and south sides (photo #6). It is reached by staircases on either side which come up along the outside of and behind the balcony boxes. Six attractive pillars support the ceiling of the balcony; the top third of these pillars is a large wainscoted triangle (see photo #3). Wainscoting is used extensively throughout the rest of the auditorium as well, including the entire area around the entrance under the balcony; at the tops of supportive arches placed at the edge of the balcony and at the midpoint of the auditorium; below the stage level; and circling the auditorium to a level of approximately three feet. The auditorium has a marvelous pressed tin ceiling in shades of rust and dark green. This ceiling, which along with the walls shows water damage, has a double border of pressed tin in two distinctive styles circling the auditorium (see photo #4). Condition of the floor is difficult to ascertain because of commercial storage.

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)

Performing Arts
 Entertainment/Recreation
 Social History

Period of Significance

1906-1917

Significant Dates

1906

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

The Pospeshil Theatre is significant for its association with and in reference to the historic context "Aesthetic Systems: Itinerant and Local Performing Arts in Nebraska" and the property type of "Opera House Buildings in Nebraska, 1867 to 1917." Under Criterion A, this opera house is significant in the areas of the performing arts; entertainment/recreation; and social history, on a state level, as a well preserved example of an opera house building in Nebraska. The building retains a high degree of historical integrity, possessing the physical and associative characteristics to make it an eligible member of its property type.

This opera house is significant in the area of performing arts for bringing a variety of entertainment to the community of Bloomfield. As a facility for the performing arts, it offered productions such as touring stock companies, musical concerts, dialect comedies, grand and comic opera, Shakespeare, minstrel shows, classics like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Monte Cristo*, or *Lena Rivers*, and home talent shows. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1906-1917.)

This opera house is significant in the area of entertainment/recreation, since it provided a place where the whole community could gather to attend dances, and edifying or humorous lectures. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1906-1917.)

This opera house is significant in the area of social history because it gave Bloomfield a neutral, nonaffiliated location for school entertainments, basketball and other athletic events, and church socials and bazaars. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1906-1917.) In the days before radio, television, and sound movies, activities at the opera house were anticipated for days or weeks ahead of time. It provided a place for people to get together to have a good time and forget their troubles over crops, weather, taxes, the railroads, and the generally hard life of settling the Great Plains.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bloomfield Diamond Jubilee 1890-1965. Wahoo: Ludi Printing Co., 1965.
 Bloomfield Monitor. 28 Dec. 1905 - 29 Nov. 1917.
 Mormann, Viva. Telephone interview. Bloomfield: 28 May 1987.
 Pospisil, Emil. Telephone interview. Bloomfield: 27 May 1987.
 Pospisil Opera House, exterior. Postcard. Andrea Paul Collection, Lincoln, NE.
 Pospisil Theatre. Bloomfield site visit. 30 May 1987.
 Skrivan, William A. Letter to the author. Bloomfield: 5 Jun. 1986.

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

D. Layne Ehlers (see below)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one [1] acre

UTM References

A

1	4
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6	1	1	1	1	0
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4	7	1	6	8	5	5
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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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 Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

This property is described as Lots 4 and 5, Block 6, in the Original Town of Bloomfield, Knox County, Nebraska.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire town lots that have been historically associated with this property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title D. Layne Ehlers, Principal Investigator
 organization OHBIN Study date April, 1988
 street & number 2302 South 11th telephone [402] 435-6946
 city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68502

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Function or Use

Commerce/Trade: Specialty store

Commerce/Trade: Professional

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The proscenium arch measures 24 feet wide by about 16 feet high, with wings of 11 feet, 6 inches. The stage left wing no longer exists; it was replaced by a cement ramp. Current access to the stage area is by a narrow door on the extreme stage right side; it can safely be assumed that another such door once existed on the stage left side. Due to the style of the auditorium and the fact that it is located about half a story above ground level, it can be assumed that dressing rooms once existed under the stage, although this area is no longer accessible. The stage is 22 feet deep from the proscenium opening to the back wall; it is approximately 5 feet above the auditorium floor level. A two-foot apron extends beyond the proscenium arch. Some scenery remnants, apparently elaborate draperies, remains suspended on the stage. The original advertising curtain featured "a street scene in Bloomfield with paintings of five of Bloomfield's big brick buildings," and advertising spaces "went like hotcakes; there didn't seem to be enough to go around" (*Bloomfield Monitor* 23 Aug. 1906).

The structural and historical integrity of the building and theatre, except for the removal of the stage left wing area, has been preserved.

The large rectangular brick two-story building with raised basement, has a center raised entry on the main (east) facade and a flat roof with parapet wall. The building is divided into bays by full-height brick pilasters visually supporting a corbelled wall cornice. Fenestration consists of segmentally arched window openings capped with brick window hoods. The main (east) entry displays double doors, transom, fanlight and round-arched brick window hood visually supported by wall pilasters with corbelled wall cornices. The building has seen few alterations on the exterior. Some windows on the south facade are now boarded up and other lower level openings have glass block infill.

The building originally housed the opera house and various retail businesses, including a restaurant on the lower level (converted to a garage in the 1920s), tailor shop, and professional office space. The building is currently used as a bar and apartment units, and the opera house space is used for commercial storage.

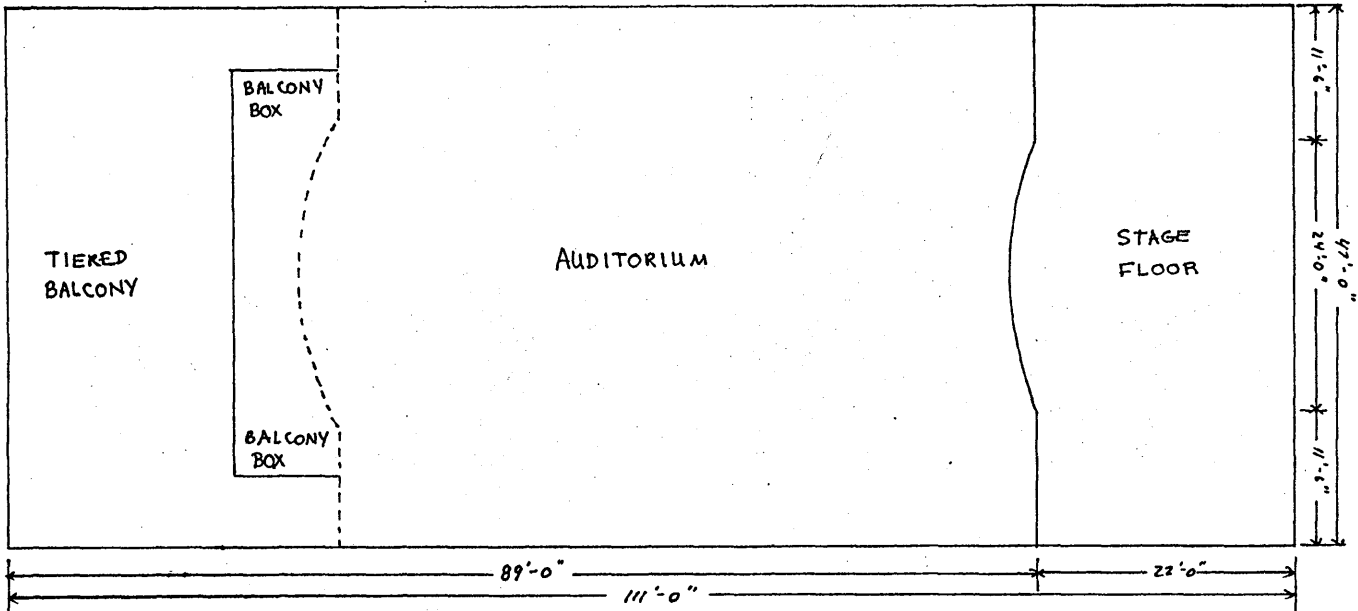
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Section number 7 Page 2

Floor plan, Pospeshil Theatre, Bloomfield

N →



P. Leitner, Draftsman

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Section number 8 Page 1

The period of significance is derived from the original construction date of the building, 1906, when it replaced the earlier Bloomfield Opera House. The press celebrated it as "one that would be a credit to any city of 25,000 inhabitants and is a magnificent monument to the enterprise and faith of one of our foremost citizens" (*Bloomfield Monitor* 6 Sep. 1906). The period of significance continued through 1917, the year considered to signal the end of the opera house era in Nebraska, based on declining numbers of touring companies nationally and rising numbers of movie houses and automobiles. The Orpheum (Movie) Theatre and the Star (Movie) Theatre took most of the business away from the Pospeshil Theatre, leaving only sporadic events dwindling in quantity from year to year.

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Pospeshil Theatre, Bloomfield
Representative Entertainments, 1906-1917

DATE EVENT AND PERFORMERS

Social History

Dec 1906 Musical recital by Mr. Freefield's class
Nov 1907 Basketball
Oct 1908 Political speech by Gov. George L. Sheldon
Oct 1909 Wrestling match, Jake Jakopsen of Iowa vs. Hans Olsen of Bloomfield
Oct 1912 Columbian Entertainment by St. Andrew's School pupils
Dec 1913 Christmas Entertainment by the pupils of St. Andrew's School
Nov 1916 Bazaar and chicken pie social by the Ladies of St. Andrew's Guild

Entertainment/Recreation

Nov 1906 Thanksgiving dance, music by Pospeshil & Mitchell Orchestra
Nov 1909 Thanksgiving dance, music by First Regiment Band Orchestra
Dec 1909 Lecture by the Rev. John Daly
Oct 1911 Lecture by Robert L. Kemple, *The American Boy*
Oct 1912 Dance, music by First Regimental Orchestra
Halloween Dance, music by First Regimental Orchestra
Nov 1912 Freiheit Lodge dance, music by McCoy's Celebrated Orchestra
Thanksgiving masquerade dance, music by the Bloomfield Orchestra
Oct 1913 Halloween dance, music by the Bloomfield Orchestra
Nov 1913 Hill's dance
Masquerade dance
Oct 1914 Dance, music by the Bloomfield Concert Orchestra
Dance, music by Collins Bros. Orchestra of Marcus, Iowa
Dance, music by DeLucas Orchestra
Nov 1914 Dance, music by DaLucas Orchestra
Oct 1915 Lecture by Hon. Granville Jones, humorist
Nov 1915 Thanksgiving dance
Dance, music by Bloomfield Orchestra
Oct 1917 Dance, music by Jorgia Jazz Band
Dance, music by Clemens' Orchestra of Sheldon, Iowa
Married Folks Dance, music by Ogden's 5-piece orchestra
Clayton H. Staples, landscape artist
Paul Barnaby, Entertainer and Reader of Plays
Nov 1917 Red Cross dance, music by Clemens' Orchestra of Sheldon, Iowa
Thanksgiving dance, music by Clemmens' Orchestra of Sheldon, Iowa

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Pospeshil Theatre, Bloomfield
Representative Entertainments, 1906-1917

DATE EVENT AND PERFORMERS

Performing Arts

Sep 1906 Wallack's Theatre Co. in *The Slave Girl*, *The Quaker Tragedy*, and
The Mansion of Aching Hearts
A Life's Mistake

Oct 1906 *A Day of Judgment* by the Kearney Stock Co.
Monte Cristo with Eugene Moore
On the Bridge at Midnight

Nov 1906 Ward & Grenell's *Hooligan's Troubles*
The Hidden Hand with Coral Armin and Van Murrel
Blind Boon Concert Co.
Cincinnati Cremona Orchestra concert

Dec 1906 King Perkins Co. in *A Homespun Heart*

Nov 1907 Bloomfield Juvenile Band Concert
Dubinsky Brothers' *Pickings from Puck*
Chicago Lyceum Ladies Quartette

Dec 1907 Father MacCorry of New York, lecturing on *The Kingship of Man*

Oct 1908 Brownlee & Reed's Dramatic Co. in *The Texas Cattle King*
A Bachelor's Honeymoon with James F. Green

Nov 1908 The Trousdale Brothers in *The Love Trail*
A Gay Old Girl with Reginald Poole
Walter Savidge co. in *Pardners, Thorns & Orange Blossoms*, and
The Devil
Hans Hanson company

Dec 1908 *Under the Harvest Moon*

Oct 1909 *Lena Rivers*
Ward Waters Entertainment co.

Nov 1909 *The Farmer's Daughter*
Uncle Tom's Cabin
Eugene Moore's *Monte Cristo*
Monte Cristo by Fred G. Conrad's co.

Oct 1910 *The Old Clothes Man*
Phyllis Barrington Stock Co. in *The Morning After*, *The Girl of the*
Sunny South, and *The Merry Widower*

Nov 1910 *Pinkey, the Pinkerton Girl*

Dec 1910 *The Man on the Box*

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Pospeshil Theatre, Bloomfield
Representative Entertainments, 1906-1917

DATE EVENT AND PERFORMERS

Performing Arts, cont'd.

Oct 1911 *Il Trovatore*
Water Savidge Co. in *A Story of the South*
Wagner-Shank Opera Co. with *Faust*

Nov 1911 *The Revelation* by the Elwin Strong Co.
The Yankee Doodle Boy with Bud Hicks
Emperian Concert Co.
Under the Harvest Moon

Dec 1911 Christian Hansen violin concert

Oct 1912 Blind Boone Concert Co.
Hamlet--A Tragedy by Hilliard Wight & Co.

Nov 1912 *Kidnapped for a Million* by the Perrys
Tilly Tilson, the funny Swede comedian
Joe, the Newsboy Detective

Dec 1912 The E. G. Douglas Vaudeville Show

Dec 1913 *What Became of Parker*, high school home talent

Oct 1914 Joe Weber's *Alma, Where Do You Live?*
Christian Hansen, the celebrated Scandinavian violinist, assisted
by Miss Ethel Belle Haynes, pianist, reader, impersonator
C. L. Burgderfer, the Original Funny Man

Nov 1914 Concert by Dr. O. A. King and Miss Grace Wattles

Dec 1914 *What Happened to Ole*

Sep 1915 Harvey Holmes and his company of entertainers
Don't Lie to Your Wife

Oct 1915 *The Frame Up*
Hilliard & Amber Wight in *The Night Before Christmas*
Edna Earl Crum Concert Party

Nov 1915 Gordon Vos Binder-Hewitt Company in *The Stronger Love*

Dec 1915 Meistersingers Male Quartette
Jerry and Col. Lee
Walter Savidge Players in *Why Lindy Ran Away*

Sep 1916 *Don't Lie to Your Wife*

Oct 1916 *The House of a Thousand Candles*
The Divorce Question
On the Bridge at Midnight
In a Woman's Power

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Pospeshil Theatre, Bloomfield
Representative Entertainments, 1906-1917

DATE	EVENT AND PERFORMERS
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Performing Arts, cont'd.

Nov 1916	Melver Juvenile Opera Co. with <i>My Morocco Maid</i>
Dec 1916	D. W. Griffith's <i>The Birth of a Nation</i>
Oct 1917	Busby's Minstrels <i>Let Ole Do It</i> <i>The New Wizard of Wiseland Abroad</i>
Nov 1917	Condon Comedy Co. in <i>The Quaker Outcast</i> and <i>Home Wrecker</i> Varallo Gross Orchestra Co. concert W. B. Patton's <i>A Wise Boob</i> Amy Ellerman Concert Contralto The Condon Comedy Co. in <i>The Minister's Sweetheart</i>
Dec 1917	McCabe's Georgia Troubadour Minstrels <i>A Good For Nothing Husband</i>

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Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Section number _____ Page 1

The following information is the same for all Bloomfield photographs:

NAME OF PROPERTY: Pospeshil Theatre
CITY, COUNTY, STATE: Bloomfield, Knox, Nebraska
NehBS SITE No.: KX02-8
OHBIN SITE No.: 05-30-05
NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Christian H. Ehlers

PHOTO NUMBER: Bloomfield #1
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 05-30-87 (8705/7:25)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Exterior view, looking northwest at the east (front) and south facades.

PHOTO NUMBER: Bloomfield #2
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 05-30-87 (8705/7:12)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Interior view, looking west at the stage from the balcony.

PHOTO NUMBER: Bloomfield #3
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 05-30-87 (8705/7:21)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Interior view, looking east at the balcony area.

PHOTO NUMBER: Bloomfield #4
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 05-30-87 (8705/7:4)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Interior view, looking northwest (from the balcony) at a side wall support.

PHOTO NUMBER: Bloomfield #5
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 05-30-87 (8705/7:9)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Interior view, looking southeast (from the balcony) at some of the balcony seats.

PHOTO NUMBER: Bloomfield #6
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 05-30-87 (8705/7:3)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Interior view, looking southwest (from the balcony) at the balcony box seats.