

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

MAY 24 1988

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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 Lodgepole Opera House
other names/site number NeHBS # CN05-1 OHBIN #05-22-03

2. Location

street & number West side of Oberfelder at Front N/A not for publication
city, town Lodgepole N/A vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Cheyenne code 033 zip code 69149

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>1</u> | <u> </u> objects |
| | | | <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. Shannon May 16, 1988
Signature of certifying official 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. 7/7/88
 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

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: One-part commercial block
with false front

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation unknown

walls Concrete

roof Tin

other False front of pressed tin

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Lodgepole Opera House is located on the south side of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks; the elevator, stock yards, and lumber yard were all on the north side. Originally the opera house shared its block with the hotel and bank, but now the building stands isolated, surrounded by empty lots. Constructed in 1911 by Frank Isenberger as the upper floor of a garage, the cement block, two-story one-part commercial block structure measures 46'x70' and has a barn-style pitched tin roof and a false front scalloped with pressed tin shingles. "Lodgepole Opera House", painted in huge letters, remains visible on the false front above the windows. Access to the second-floor theatre is through a single door and narrow stair on the south end of the building front. A small ticket window is located immediately inside this door on the right; the ticket office was in the garage.

The auditorium is 45' wide and 58' long from the back windows to the edge of the stage. Low ceilings preclude a balcony, but a small, raised, enclosed wooden projection booth at the rear attests to the theatre's past use for motion pictures. Doors on either side of the stage give access to the backstage area, which is rather small. The ornate tin ceiling continues down the entire wall to the last angle of the pitched roof, ending about chest height. The simple wooden proscenium arch was painted blue, a color scheme continued on the woodwork of the doors to backstage and on the wainscoting below the 4' high stage, giving the impression that this opera house in its heyday was a cheerful, fun place to go.

The arch opening is 20' wide and 11' high; the stage itself is 18' deep. There is no apron, which helps attest to the building's use as much for community functions as for theatre. Wings on each side of the stage are about 12'6" wide. No dressing rooms exist.

Except for a lean-to attached to the first floor on the west (rear) at a later time, the structural and historical integrity of the building and theatre has been preserved.

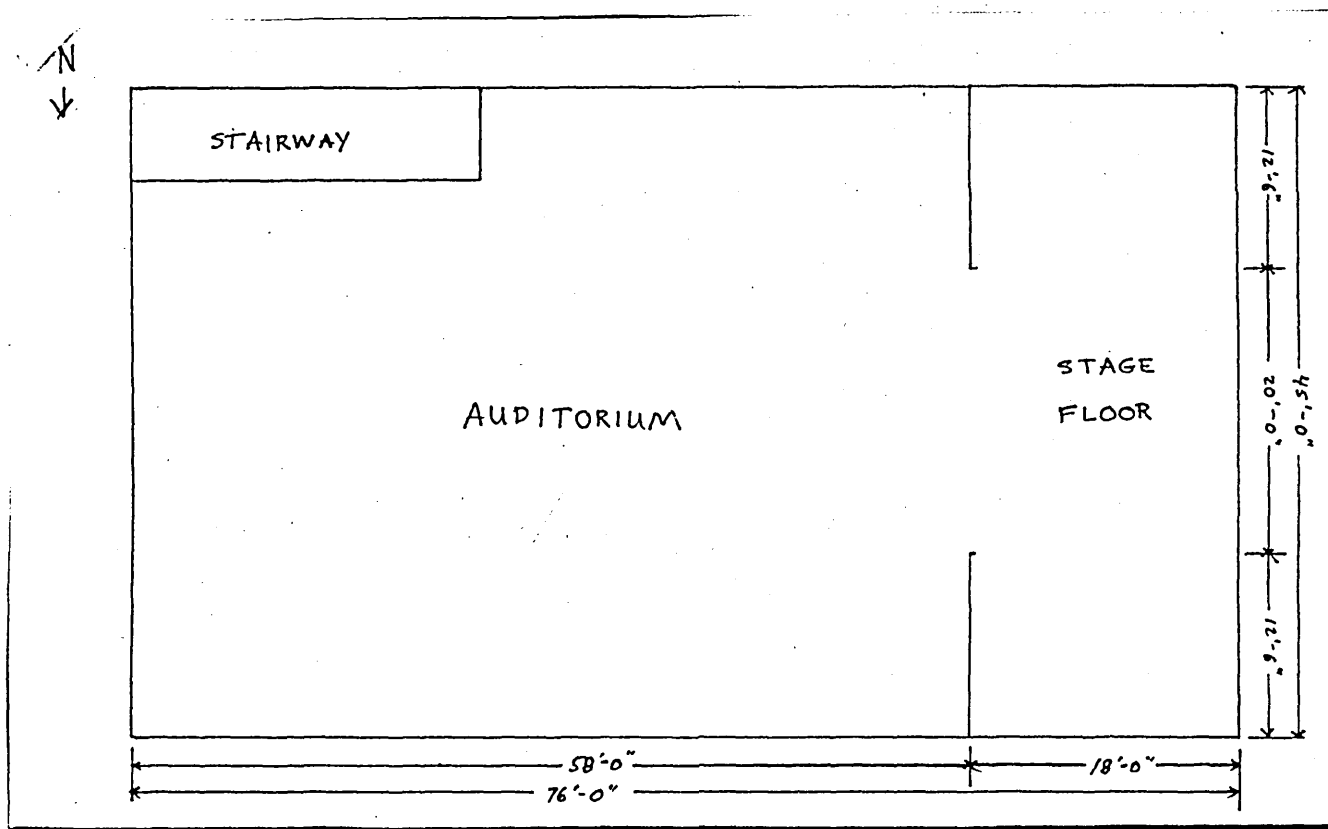
 See continuation sheet

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Floor plan, Lodge Pole Opera House, Lodge Pole



Credit: P. Leitner, Draftsman

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

1911-1917

Significant Dates

1911

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Isenberger, Frank (builder)

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

The Lodgepole Opera House 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 Lodgepole. As a facility for the performing arts, it offered productions such as home talent plays, musical concerts, impersonators, gospel singers, ventriloquists, touring stock companies, and classics like *Lena Rivers* and *Montana*. (See following table of Representative Entertainments, 1911-1917.)

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, basketball games, and lectures. (See following table of Representative Entertainments, 1911-1917.)

This opera house is significant in the area of social history because it gave Lodgepole a neutral, nonaffiliated location for Commercial Club meetings; Farmers Institutes; Ladies Aid Society; YMCA; basketball games; and high school commencement. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1911-1917.) 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

Bondegard, Bart. Personal interview. Lodge Pole: 22 May 1987.
Bondegard, Burton. Telephone interviews. Lodge Pole: 17 May 1987 and 10 Sep. 1987.
Campbell, Wayne. Telephone interview. Lodge Pole: 20 Oct. 1987.
Hafer, Don. Telephone interview. Lodge Pole: 17 May 1987.
Lodge Pole Express. 1 Jan. 1910 - 29 Dec. 1917.
Lodgepole Opera House. Lodgepole site visit. 22 May 1987.
Markel, Jean. Telephone interviews. Lodge Pole: 4 Oct., 20 Oct., and 24 Oct. 1987.
Peterson, Andy. Telephone interview. Lodge Pole: 4 Oct. 1987.
Quinn, Horace W. Letter to the author. Lodgepole: 1986.
Quinn, Hort. Telephone interview. Lodge Pole: 24 Oct. 1987.
Wise, Charlie. Telephone interview. Lodge Pole: 24 Oct. 1987.

See continuation sheet

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 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 [] [] acre

UTM References

A 13 6918170 4557640
Zone Easting Northing

B [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
Zone Easting Northing

C [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

D [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

This property is described as the south 46-2/3 feet of Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Block 1, Oberfelder's First Addition to Lodgepole, Cheyenne County, Nebraska.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire town lot(s) 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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The period of significance derives from the original construction date of the building, 1911. Although Lodge Pole had had Young's Opera House since 1892 and Fenske's since 1897, the new building was considered "an ornament to the city" (*Lodge Pole Express* 18 Mar 1911) and attracted most of the town's entertainment business after its opening that summer. The period of significance continues 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 use of the newer Withrow Hall for many social functions beginning about 1915; the new high school auditorium, built in 1916; and the proximity of the larger city of Sidney (19 miles) took most of the business away from the Lodge Pole Opera House, leaving only sporadic events dwindling in quantity year by year.

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Lodge Pole Opera House, Lodge Pole
Representative Entertainments, 1911-1917

| DATE | EVENT AND PERFORMERS |
|------|----------------------|
|------|----------------------|

Social History

| | |
|----------|--|
| Nov 1911 | Farmer's Institute Commercial Club meeting |
| Oct 1912 | Old Settlers' Reunion |
| Nov 1912 | Commercial Club sponsoring Hon. J. L. McIntosh |
| Dec 1913 | Annual banquet, Lodge Pole Commerce Club |
| Dec 1914 | M.E. Sunday School & Lodge Pole H.S. Christmas entertainment |
| Oct 1915 | Ladies Aid Society Meeting |
| Oct 1916 | Senator Hitchcock, speaking |
| Nov 1917 | Patriotic meeting YMCA Meeting |

Entertainment/Recreation

| | |
|----------|---|
| Jul 1911 | 4th of July dance Dance |
| Sep 1911 | W.O.W. "Hard Times" Dance |
| Nov 1911 | Thanksgiving Day Dance |
| Dec 1911 | Christmas Night Dance |
| Nov 1912 | Social dance, Sidney's Stokes Orchestra |
| Dec 1912 | Newton Wesley Gaines, speaker |
| Nov 1913 | Social Dance Thanksgiving Eve Dance |
| Dec 1914 | Masquerade ball |
| Oct 1915 | Halloween masquerade party |
| Oct 1916 | Public dance |

Performing Arts

| | |
|----------|--|
| Oct 1911 | <i>A Musical Mix-up</i> , home talent |
| Dec 1911 | <i>Her Gloves</i> , home talent |
| Oct 1912 | The Original Strollers Quartette |
| Nov 1912 | Protean Concert Co. |
| Dec 1912 | <i>The Girl and the Outlaw</i> w/ Roy LaMarr |
| Jan 1913 | S. Platt Jones, entertainer and impersonator |
| Mar 1913 | The Original Carolina Jubilee Singers |

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Lodge Pole Opera House, Lodge Pole
Representative Entertainments, 1911-1917

DATE EVENT AND PERFORMERS

Performing Arts, cont'd.

| | |
|----------|--|
| Oct 1913 | The Sidney Dixie Minstrels (Sidney, Nebraska home talent) |
| Dec 1913 | <i>Lena Rivers</i> , Carl M. Dalton, mgr. |
| Jan 1914 | <i>Ole Oleson in Spiritland</i> , Carl M. Dalton Company |
| Jan 1915 | Woods Big Show |
| Feb 1915 | <i>The Girl of the Sunny South</i> by the National Stock Co. The Great Entertainment, high school home talent |
| Nov 1915 | Eska Wilson, ventriloquist |
| Oct 1917 | Bankson & Morris' <i>Montana</i> |
| Nov 1917 | <i>Lena Rivers</i> |

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Photographs

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The following information is the same for all Lodgepole photographs:

NAME OF PROPERTY: Lodgepole Opera House
CITY, COUNTY, STATE: Lodgepole, Cheyenne County, Nebraska
NeHBS SITE No.: CN05-1
OHBIN SITE No.: 05-22-03
NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Christian H. Ehlers

PHOTO NUMBER: Lodgepole #1
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 05-22-87 (8705/4:15)
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: Lodgepole #2
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 05-22-87 (8705/4:11)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Interior view, looking west
at the stage.

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 88000947

Date Listed: 7/7/88

Lodgepole Opera House
Property Name

Cheyenne
County

NE
State

Opera House Buildings in Nebraska 1867-1917
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Boland
Signature of the Keeper

7/7/88
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Add to Historic Functions "Commerce/Trade -- business"

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)