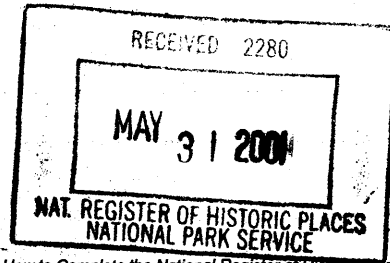


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

718



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 Rackett Grange Hall #318

Other names/site number Rackett Community Hall NeHBS #GD04-002

2. Location

Street & number 9250 Road 193

Not for publication

City or town Lewellen

Vicinity

State Nebraska

Code NE

County Garden

Code 069

Zip code 69147

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.)

Lawrence Sommer

5/24/01

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 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 H. Beall 7/5/01

Boyer

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Rackett Grange Hall #318

Name of Property

Garden 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	
3		Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
1	2	Objects
4	2	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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: meeting hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation CONCRETE

Walls WOOD

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.)

- X 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.
X 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1926

Significant Dates

1926

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Sam Mardis

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:

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

10. Geographical DataAcreage of property One acre.

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	13	732755	4616130	3.			
2.				4.			

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 Byname/title Greg Miller, Preservation Historianorganization Nebraska State Historical Societydate March, 2001street & number 1500 "R" Streettelephone (402) 474-4787city or town Lincolnstate NE zip code 68501**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 Rackett Community Club c/o Leasy Groves, Presidentstreet & number 10694 Road 209telephone N/Acity or town Ashbystate NE zip code 69333

Paperwork 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, (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 Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Rackett Grange Hall #318

Name of Property

Garden County, NE

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

Description

The Rackett Grange Hall #318 located at the former town site of Rackett, Garden County, Nebraska, is a one-story false front commercial building. Constructed in 1926, the wood frame rectangular shaped building has asphalt shingles on the front façade and wood shingles on the other three sides. Other contributing features on the site include a small wood frame shed, a wood frame outhouse, and a well and hand pump.

The Rackett Grange Hall #318 is about twenty miles northeast of Oshkosh at the former town site of Rackett. Its isolation is evident by the route to the site. To visit the hall one must take a graveled road, which is not always passable, then a narrow single lane oiled road that leads to the building. This remote location is distinguishable by the grove of trees that surround the site that is very distinctive in contrast to the grasses of the surrounding hills.

The false front first generation commercial one-story building is rectangular in shape measuring approximately 23 by 39 feet. Constructed of wood, the front façade is clad with asphalt siding while wood shingles cover remaining three sides. Although neither of these siding materials are original to the building they are at least fifty years old. The gabled roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The foundation consists of poured concrete with a stucco overlay. The main façade (which faces south) is symmetrical with a double door entrance flanked by a window on either side. Above the door is a sign with the inscription "Rackett Hall." On the west side are three symmetrically placed windows and three basement windows. The east façade also has three windows, but only one basement window. There is, however, a cellar door that leads into the basement. At the rear of the building is a chimney that is slightly off center.

The interior, which is intact, consists of one large open room with portable seating lining the walls. In the northwest corner is a partially enclosed stairwell leading to the basement. The basement is also an open space that served as a serving/refreshment area during Grange events.

Other buildings located on site include a small wood frame gable roofed shed to the east of the hall. Its construction date is unknown, but it was originally used to house a gasoline engine that provided power to the hall. After the introduction of electricity the gasoline was no longer required and the shed is now used for storage. The other building located north of the hall is a gabled, wood frame outhouse. A well and hand pump, a contributing object, is located east of the hall. Finally, there are two non-contributing objects, a propane tank located to the east of the outhouse and a fence that surrounds the property.

Although not historically associated with the Grange hall, the trees surrounding the site provide a unique setting amid the sandhills and sandhill valleys that dominate the region. Prior to the construction of the hall, Mr. J.E. Sherfrey, who donated the land for the Grange, planted a large number of trees. It was in the midst of which the hall was eventually built. Several rows of deciduous trees, primarily cottonwood, are located on the north and east sides of the Grange hall. On the west side of the building are rows cottonwood, fruit, and coniferous trees. This large stand of trees is in stark contrast to the generally treeless native of the sandhills.

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Continuation Sheet

Rackett Grange Hall #318

Name of Property

Garden County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

Significance

The Rackett Grange Hall #318 is located at the former town site of Rackett in Garden County, just east of Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge in the Sandhills region of Nebraska. The hall is eligible at the local level under Criterion A for its association with the Patrons of Husbandry movement. This organization, also known as "the Grange," was originally conceived as a fraternal organization designed to bring farmers and their families together to socialize and to learn new farming techniques. While the Grange did eventually provide a political voice for the farmers, its primary function was as a social organization. The Rackett Grange Hall #318 was no exception. Based on historical records it was the focal point of many social gatherings for the otherwise isolated community and surrounding area. The Rackett Grange #318 is also significant at the local level under Criterion C, as a good example of a first generation false front commercial building. These false front buildings were once ubiquitous throughout the state, but are now rarely extant. The period of significance is 1926, the year the hall was constructed. The nomination consists of three buildings—the Grange Hall, a power shack, and an outhouse; and one object—a well and hand pump.

Shortly after the Civil War farmers as a group, thought the country's economic policies and industry (particularly the railroads) were responsible for their perceived poor economic situation. But acting as individual farmers lacked the political clout to bring about the kind of changes they believed were necessary. This began to change when Oliver Hudson Kelley, a young government clerk, traveled across the South following the Civil War. Shocked at the plight of the poor farmers, he founded the Patrons of Husbandry in 1867. The goal of this organization was to improve the lives of farmers and broaden their horizons. Local chapters, called "granges" brought farmers and their families together to socialize and to learn new farming techniques. The Grangers sponsored fairs, picnics, dances, lectures—anything to break the bleakness of farm life. After a slow start the Grange movement grew quickly. By 1875 there were 800,000 members in 20,000 local chapters, located primarily in the Midwest, South, and Southwest.

At first the Grangers declined to enter the political fray. But in a pattern often repeated in companion oriented organizations, socializing led to economic and then to political action. By pooling their money to buy supplies and equipment to store and market their crops, Grangers could avoid the high charges of intermediaries. By the early 1870s they were also lobbying mid-western legislatures to adopt "Granger laws" regulating rates charged by railroads, grain elevator operators, and other intermediates. While moving into the world of politics they continued the fraternal and social aspects of the Grange.

It was not long after the founding of the Patrons of Husbandry that the first Grange chapter appeared in Nebraska. On January 1, 1872 the state's initial Grange was organized in Alma City, Harlan County. The Grange movement enjoyed some early success in opening new chapters throughout the state. However, by 1890 the Farmers Alliance (an association of newly created farm parties) began to supplant the Grange as the voice of the farmer. This led to a decline in the number of active Grange chapters, members, and consequently political clout.

By 1911, however, the Farmers Alliance began losing support primarily because their political positions were either implemented or absorbed by the two main parties, especially the Democrats. Conversely the Grange began a resurgence. The Grange still espoused the political views of farmers, but the renewed popularity stemmed from the fact they continued to offer the fraternal, social, and educational aspects that were so important to the farmer. These activities allowed the otherwise isolated families to interact with each other and exchange ideas on a number of subjects. Expanding on this concept, in 1912 home economics gained stronger emphasis within the Grange to the extent that "home economics stations" were established in the halls.

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Continuation Sheet

Rackett Grange Hall #318

Name of Property

Garden County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 2

For Garden County the establishment of Grange chapters began in 1923. Eventually, there were four Grange chapters in the county. One of the earliest new organizations was in Rackett. The inaugural meeting was held at District 12 School on October 25, 1924. While the Rackett Grange #318 continued to hold its meetings at District 12 School (no longer extant) the chapter moved quickly to establish its permanency. At the third meeting of Rackett Grange #318 a building committee was established to determine the feasibility of constructing their own hall. On February 3, 1925 the building committee reported that money could be obtained for the construction of such a structure. The Grange borrowed seven hundred dollars from the Bank of Bingham (SH02-001) to help build the new hall. At a meeting held on August 8, 1925 members decided the hall would be of frame construction and accepted one acre of land that Mr. J.E. Sherfrey offered to donate as a site for the building.

On June 25, 1926 the *Garden County News* reported "Many of the Grangers are hauling lumber for the new Grange hall this week." In the same edition the newspaper stated that Sam Mardis was given the contract to build the hall. Construction was completed on July 3, 1926 when the dedication occurred, followed by a celebration on July 4th.

The bi-weekly meetings continued on a consistent basis at the new facility after its completion. The *Garden County News* regularly reported dates of the upcoming meetings and what occurred at them. Some of these were business oriented, but most were social gatherings. Once again this demonstrates the traditional important function the Grange played as a fraternal organization for the farmers.

The Rackett Grange Hall #318 is also significant under Criterion C. It is a good example of a first generation false front commercial building that were once ubiquitous throughout the state, but today are rarely extant. These types of structures were generally built during the early Euroamerican settlement of Nebraska. As indicated by the newspaper article this type of building could be built in a short period of time (in this case one week). Also, they were cheap and easy to build. To distract from the simplicity the false front provided a more imposing image. Together these factors indicate the first generation false front commercial buildings were not meant to be permanent structures. Usually made of wood, and vulnerable to fire, they were gradually replaced by more substantial buildings constructed of more permanent materials.

According to the Nebraska Historic Building Survey there are only three other first generation false front commercial buildings in Garden County. Two are located in Lewellen and one in Lisco. While the integrity of these structures is not known the Rackett Grange Hall #318 retains good integrity.

The Rackett Grange #318 finally disbanded in the 1940s as a result of declining membership. However, the Rackett Community Club took possession of the building. This organization has preserved the building and continues to use it for social events. The Rackett Grange Hall #318 is significant at the local level under Criterion A for its association with the Patrons of Husbandry movement and is the only Grange meeting hall still extant in Garden County. Additionally, aside from not being an active Grange chapter it still performs one of its original main functions, that is, as a gathering place for social activities. The Rackett Grange Hall #318 is also significant at the local level under Criterion C as a property type rarely extant in Garden County. The imposing false front helped disguise the relatively cheap and easy construction of the building. Although this first generation commercial building type was not meant to be permanent, the Rackett Grange Hall #318 is still extant and retains a high degree of integrity.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Rackett Grange Hall #318

Name of Property

Garden County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 9 Page 1

Bibliography

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Historical Society of Garden County. Garden County History, 1886-1986. Dallas: Curtis Media Corporation, 1986.

Malone, Max E., ed. The Grange in Nebraska, 1872-1987. Lincoln, NE: Joe Christensen, Inc., 1989.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Rackett Grange Hall #318

Name of Property

Garden County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point 32 rods North of the center of Section 31, Township 20 North, Range 42 West, running thence West 20 degrees South, 8 rods, thence North 20 degrees West 16 rods, thence East 20 degrees North 10 rods, thence South 20 degrees East 16 rods, thence West 20 degrees South 2 rods to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary contains that parcel of land that has historically been associated with the property.