

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Nebraska
COUNTY: Dodge
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE SEP 10 1974

1. NAME

COMMON: Love-Larson Opera House
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

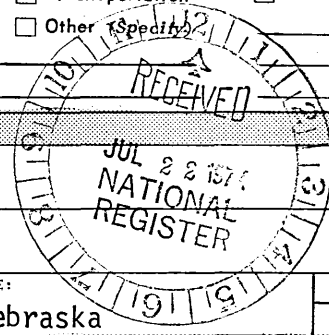
STREET AND NUMBER: 543 N. Broad Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Fremont		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: First	
STATE: Nebraska	CODE: 31	COUNTY: Dodge	CODE: 053

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: W. H. Pollock Grocery Co., L.T.D.	STATE: Nebraska
STREET AND NUMBER: 543 N. Broad Street	
CITY OR TOWN: Fremont	
STATE: Nebraska	



5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: County Assessor, Dodge County Courthouse	COUNTY: Dodge
STREET AND NUMBER:	
CITY OR TOWN: Fremont	
STATE: Nebraska	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic Preservation in Nebraska	STATE: Nebraska
DATE OF SURVEY: 1971 <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local	
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Nebraska State Historical Society	
STREET AND NUMBER: 1500 "R" Street	
CITY OR TOWN: Lincoln	
CODE: 31	

STATE: Nebraska
COUNTY: Dodge
ENTRY NUMBER: SEP 10 1974
DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Love-Larson Opera House is situated in the middle of a commercial block facing Broad Street. Broad Street (also U.S. Highway 77) is the main thoroughfare of the old business district in Fremont. All of the surrounding buildings are compatible in design and material, and they closely approximate the opera house in age. Of the surrounding structures, including the opera house, which presently houses a grocery store on its main floor, most have been covered with modern materials to modernize the storefront appearance. The additions have been limited to the ground floor facade and can be considered as having changed the basic integrity of the opera house or the surrounding buildings but little. The opera house and its surrounding buildings still remain today in basic harmony.

The theater was built by James Wheeler Love in 1888 at a probable cost of between forty and ninety thousand dollars. It was designed by Omaha architect Francis M. Ellis. Mr. Love superintended the construction.

The building is 65 feet wide and 126 feet deep and has five stories, including the basement. Red brick was the dominant building material used. The facade, trimmed with a sandstone facing, portrays solidity and massive grandeur. The side and rear elevations are devoid of ornamentation.

Over the years two galvanized-iron pinnacles, located on either side and extending above the building, have been removed. Most of the stained glass windows, limited to the upper stories, have been damaged. At the rear of the building, the large loading door on the stage level and a long, narrow slit used for loading full flats have been bricked in. The outlines of the original openings are still visible. Some additional brickwork, to decrease window and door openings, is evident on the side and rear elevations. However, considering the age of the building, remarkably few alterations have been made to the exterior.

The interior of the building served two functions: that of theater and commercial space. The first, or ground floor, was divided into two rooms. For many years these two rooms were occupied by a wholesale liquor store and an opera house restaurant/saloon. In the back of the ground level were located eight dressing rooms and a stairway that provided access to the stage.

Entrance to the theater was provided by two stairways (each with swinging doors) located on the front and either side of the building. The box office was at the head of the south-side stairs. Additional stairways led to the balcony and gallery levels and the parquet and dressing circle.

The interior of the theater was decorated in shades of brown with chocolate being the predominant shade. The frescoing that remains to-

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Nebraska	
COUNTY Dodge	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	SEP 10 1974

(Number all entries)

7. (cont.)

day is done in maroons and blues with some gold trim and scrollwork. They were executed by Lindman and McIvor of Minneapolis. A three-foot-wide fresco motif acted as the proscenium arch and was carried around the top of the other three walls. The frescoing in the ceiling represented typical theatrical designs. (Some portions of the frescoing are original.) A brown tapestry hung from the first-floor balcony railing. The main focal point of the interior was an impressive dome located in the center of the theater from which originally was suspended a sun burner. Additional illumination was provided by 250 gas fixtures.

The theater provided seating for 1,075 persons. There were 465 opera chairs in the parquet and dressing circle, 337 in the balcony, 253 in the gallery, and four balcony boxes of five chairs each. On each side of the stage, raised only two or three steps from the main house level and no more than ten feet from the stage, were shallow private boxes ornamented with carved wood, siding, tapestry, and rich carpet.

The stage, designed by S.L. Graham of Chicago, was 52 feet wide and 32 feet deep. It had foot and border lights, drops, a fly gallery, and a screen loft. The front curtain was 52 feet wide, 21 feet high, and cost approximately nine hundred dollars. One newspaper writer of the day noted, "Nothing was spared to make Fremont's opera house one of distinction."

In 1905 the opera house was purchased by L.P. Larson and renamed the L.P. Larson Opera House. To attract first class touring companies several changes were made. The stage was extended, the walls and ceiling were painted, and a new steam heating plant was installed. All of the private boxes were removed along with the three front rows of the parquet and other seats, lowering the seating capacity by approximately one hundred.

For the last fifty years the building has not been used as a theater, although it has been used in a variety of other ways. During the 1920's apartments were built on the second floor towards the front. The stage and auditorium were divided by a new floor ten feet above the stage floor for use by the National Guard for drills. More recently the Jehovah's Witness congregation and a furniture company have occupied this space. A grocery store has occupied the main floor since the 1930's.

The Love-Larson opera house is one of the oldest remaining theaters in the state. The building has not been damaged architecturally.



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

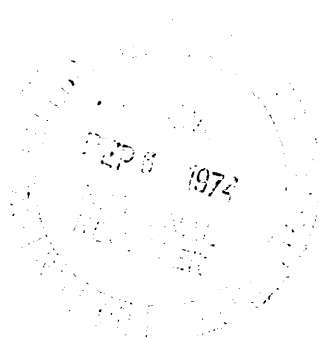
STATE Nebraska	
COUNTY Holt	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

7. Description (cont'd)
Love-Larson Opera House

page 2 of 2

The facade of the opera house has a definite vertical emphasis. The facade is trimmed with stone and galvanized iron cornices and ornaments. The four stone trimmed pilasters, one on either side and two in the center, were surmounted with galvanized iron pinnacles. Those on the sides are now missing. Running through the middle of the facade is a pattern of recessed stone and pressed brick checker work. Stained glass ornamented the windows of the upper stories. Two broad entrances are located on either side of the building. The two side pilasters are capped by small Romanesque arches, and located between the two center pilasters and half way up, is a large Romanesque arch. The facade is typical in both the use of material, brick with stone trim, and in design for its period in Nebraska.



8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The present opera house was built when Fremont's first opera house, built in 1874 by E.O. Crosby, burned on Christmas Eve in 1887. The need for a new structure was recognized by both commercial interests and citizens interested in civic improvement; they desired continued good entertainment and a building that everyone could look to with pride. A December 20, 1888, editorial in the Fremont Weekly Tribune reflects accurately these motives: "The new opera house serves as a perpetual and valuable advertisement of the city abroad . . . supplies another long felt want of the city as a convention city . . . (and) assures a better class of entertainment for the citizens of Fremont."

Instrumental in replacing the destroyed theater were Frank Fowler, Ray Nye, and John Thomsen. These three men persuaded James Wheeler Love to build the opera house. Mr. Love had moved to Fremont in 1880 after a career as a successful educator. In the eight years before he turned his attention to the building of an opera house he had become a wealthy landowner, successful businessman, and patron of the arts. The success of the canvass for funds to build a new opera house was in large part assured since there were no other competing auditoriums in the city.

For his architect, Love selected Francis M. Ellis of Omaha. Mr. Ellis was born in New York, where he also received his architectural training. After brief practice in New York he spent eleven years in Pennsylvania, five in Chicago, and nine in Marshalltown, Iowa, before locating in Omaha in 1885. He designed hundreds of buildings in the states where he practiced and was by then known as "an architect of established reputation". Included in the many buildings he designed are opera houses in Nebraska, Dakota, Iowa, and Illinois. Mr. Love superintended the work.

The new opera house saw its first performance on December 14, 1888. Minnie Maddern played to a full house. The next thirty years, and especially the first seven, were prosperous ones for the theatre management. This early success was in large part due to the variety and novelty of the performances offered. A broad range of productions, from minstrel shows to Shakespeare to local productions, was planned to appeal to every taste. Seats were available at all prices and almost anyone could afford at least a gallery seat. The theater's closeness to Omaha attracted companies that would normally not have played in such a small town.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Schanke, Robert A. "Fremont's Love Opera House". Febr. 10, 1974.
 (Unpublished manuscript).
 Files, Nebraska State Historical Society.

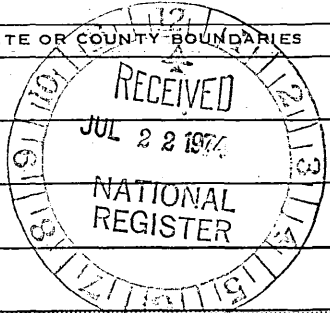
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	41	26	03
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	96	29	56
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: C. 1/4 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



LITM
 14/708980
 4589780
 CD

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Persijs Kolberg, Curator of Historic Sites

ORGANIZATION: Nebraska State Historical Society DATE: 7/10/74

STREET AND NUMBER: 1500 "R" Street

CITY OR TOWN: Lincoln STATE: Nebraska CODE: 31

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Marvin F. Kivett

Title Marvin F. Kivett, State Historic Preservation Officer

Date 7/10/74

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

[Signature]
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 9/10/74

ATTEST: [Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 9.6.74

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Nebraska	
COUNTY Dodge	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	SEP 1 1974

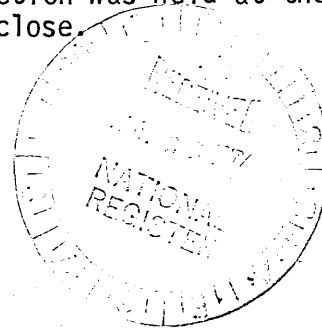
(Number all entries)

8. (cont.)

During the 1880's towns in Nebraska grew fast. Fremont's rapid growth, which was typical of most cities in Nebraska, was due mainly to the development of the railroad. Tracks first reached Fremont in 1866; by 1880 Fremont had become the largest railroad transfer station in Nebraska. The boom produced a phenomenal growth in population and established Fremont as an agricultural and business center.

From the earliest days the theater held an important place in early Nebraska town-building. It was a symbol of a town's new prosperity and confidence in the future. The opera house also exerted a positive social effect on the community. It encouraged theater interest in the community and used this interest to unify and integrate new arrivals to the town. It elevated the caliber of available entertainment and allowed for local participation. Among other cultural groups, a local opera house orchestra and the Fremont Dramatic Company were formed. Theater performances were a major social event, and all types and classes of people became highly involved, both as performers and spectators.

In 1908 financial difficulties began with the arrival of motion pictures. Already by 1908 the quality of available productions were limited. Those few that were available remained in Omaha. Between 1911 and 1915 the situation became aggravated with the addition of three movie theaters. Finally in 1916 the opera house was sold to Herman Duis, a Crowell businessman. Although an occasional theatrical production was held at the opera house, the era of good theater had come to a close.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

RECEIVED

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 Love-Larson Opera House
historic name Love's Opera House
other names/site number Larson's Opera House; NehBS #DD05:E-3; OHBIN #01-24-06

2. Location
street & number 543-545 Broad not for publication
city, town Fremont vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Dodge code 053 zip code 68025

3. Classification
Ownership of Property
 private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal
Category of Property
 building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object
Number of Resources within Property
Contributing Noncontributing
_____ buildings
_____ sites
_____ structures
_____ objects
_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Opera House Buildings in Nebraska 1867-1917
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

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. Harrison 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.
 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): additional information accepted Beth Boland 7/7/88
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

Work in Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Three-part commercial block

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Unknown

walls Brick

roof Unknown

other Pressed metal cornices,
ornaments, pinnacles

Stone decorations around windows

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Love's Opera House, later Larson's Opera House, is located at 545 Broad Street (U.S. Highway 77) in a heavily commercial section of Fremont. Constructed in 1888 by James Wheeler Love, it cost about \$40,000, although newspaper accounts of the day estimated as high as \$90,000. It was designed by Omaha architect Francis M. Ellis. The building is 65 feet wide and 126 feet deep; it consists of five stories, including the basement.

The facade of the opera house has a definite vertical emphasis, in keeping with its designation as a Three-Part Vertical Block architectural design. The facade is trimmed with stone and pressed metal cornices and ornaments. The four stone-trimmed pilasters, one on either side and two in the center, were once surmounted with pressed metal pediments, although those on the sides have been removed. Running through the middle of the facade is a pattern of recessed stone and pressed brick checkerwork. Most of the original stained glass windows, limited to the upper stories, have been replaced with facsimiles. Two broad entrances are located on either side of the building. The two side pilasters are capped by small Romanesque arches; located between the two center pilasters and halfway up, is a large Romanesque arch.

The ground floor space, accessed by double doors at the center of the building, originally contained two large rooms, one a restaurant/saloon and one a wholesale liquor store, operated by J. W. Love. The nonprofit corporation which bought the building in the 1970s and began renovations converted this space to an attractive foyer consistent with 1880s style, plus a functional hall behind that. Originally eight dressing rooms also occupied the rear of the ground floor with stairs leading up to the stage level, but these were removed, including the stairs, when the structure was converted to apartments during the 1920s, a conversion since removed. Public entrance to the second-story opera house was through wide stairways on either side of the building. At the head of the first flight of the south stairs was the box office.

The original inside decor was apparently very handsome, in various shades of brown. An extensive amount of frescoing was done by Lindman and McIvor of Minneapolis. The frescoing that remains was done in maroons and blues with some accents of gold trim and scroll, colors consistent with later changes. A three-foot wide fresco motif acted as the proscenium arch and was carried around the top of the other three walls of the house. "The designs of ornamental work in the frescoing are modest and neat. Two scrolls on each side represent various sorts of theatrical paraphernalia, while above the proscenium is a monogram of the

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MAY 24 1988

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

initials of the proprietor, 'J.W.L.' From the [frescoed] dome in the center of the auditorium is suspended a sun burner, while through the remaining portion of the house are tasty [sic] gas fixtures, there being two hundred and fifty jets in all to light the structure" (*Fremont Weekly Tribune* 20 Dec. 1888:2).

KD

The first balcony railing was topped with brass rods, from which hung a brown tapestry. On each side of the stage, raised only two or three steps from the main house level and no more than ten feet above the stage, was a shallow private box ornamented with carved wood, sliding tapestry, and rich carpets. The total seating capacity of the house was 1,075, with 465 opera chairs in the parquet and dress circle, 337 in the balcony, 253 in the gallery, and four balcony boxes of five chairs each. The top gallery, which held the most undesirable seats, consisted of permanent wooden benches.

The stage was reported as commodious, measuring 52 by 32 feet. It had both foot and border lights, with drops and bridges as well as a fly gallery and scenery loft. The theatre boasted eleven sets of scenery composed of 83 pieces. The elaborate front curtain, which cost approximately \$900, was described by Para Love, daughter of J.W. Love and later manager of Love's Opera House, as

Painted velvet with side curtains; fringed and draped back too realistically, showed a most foreign and formal balustraded garden, with meticulously placed and clipped trees standing in lined array about a fountain. The piece d'resistance of this was a statue 'Aphrodite' (without any nighty) taking her daily shower, and of which two unembarrassed, strolling lovers took no notice, their amours obviously occupying them (Schanke 227).

The first *Cahn Theatrical Guide*, in 1896, described the stage dimensions as 26 feet from the footlights to the back wall; 52 feet between the side walls; a proscenium opening 26 feet wide by 20 feet high; 12 feet of space under the stage; and one trap door, center stage.

L. P. Larson, who bought the theatre from Para Love in 1903, made several significant, if cosmetic, changes: the stage was extended, ceiling and walls were repainted, and a modern steam heating plant installed. The private boxes were torn out, as were the three front rows of the parquet and some of the balcony seats. This had the effect of lowering the seating capacity by about 100.

Of this immensely luxurious theatre space, only the top gallery with some of its benches; the dome; and some frescoing on and near the ceiling survive, the rest having been destroyed in the 1920s. However, the structural and historical integrity of the building and the theatre have been preserved. The cavern which was once the auditorium still exudes the feeling of a grand theatrical palace.

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

Period of Significance

1888-1917

Significant Dates

1888

1903

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Ellis, Francis M. (architect)

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

Love's 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 and entertainment/recreation, 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 Fremont. As a facility for the performing arts, it offered productions such as performers of the calibre of Minnie Maddern, John Dillon, Patti Rosa, and Ezra Kendall; classics like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Quo Vadis*, *The Octoroon*, *Chip O'the Old Block*, *Fast Mail*, *Si Perkins*, and *East Lynne*; minstrel shows; touring stock companies; musical concerts; dialect plays; and home talent dramas. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1888-1909.)

This opera house is significant in the area of entertainment/recreation, since it provided a place where the whole community could gather to attend lectures and moving pictures. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1888-1909.) 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.

The period of significance derives from the original construction date of the building, 1888, when it was erected by J. W. Love just a year after the fire which destroyed the earlier Shed's Opera House. Local newspaper reports of the time considered that it would "make [Fremont] the third best showtown in the state," reporting that Love's Opera House "is looked upon with pride by every citizen of Fremont" (*Fremont Weekly Tribune* 9 Aug. 1888). The period of significance

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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]	[7]	[0]	[9]	[0]	[0]	[0]
Zone		Easting				Northing	

B

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

C

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

D

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

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

This property is described as lots 1 and 2, Block 141, Original Town of Fremont, Dodge 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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MAY 24 1988

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

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 Empress and Wall Movie Theatres and the Fremont Auditorium took considerable entertainment business away from what was by then known as Larson's Opera House, leaving only sporadic events dwindling in quantity year by year.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MAY 24 1988

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Love-Larson Opera House
Representative Entertainments, 1888-1909

DATE EVENT AND PERFORMERS

Entertainment/Recreation

Nov 1895 Lecture by Col. Robert G. Ingersoll on *Liberty*
Oct 1899 Lecture by Colonel Copeland
Oct 1906 Vinton's Kinetoscope
Nov 1906 Vinton's Kinetoscope
Nov 1908 Hansons's moving pictures
 Swanson moving pictures

Performing Arts

Dec 1888 Minnie Maddern in *Caprice*; John Dillon in *Wanted the Earth and A Sky Scrapper*; Muggs' Landing; Sutton's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
Oct 1889 Charles A. Gardner; Thomas W. Keene in *Richard III*; He, She, Him, and Her; Jane Coombs in *Bleak House*; Dan McCarthy's Dear Irish Boy Co.; Barlow's Three Wives; *The Stowaway*
Nov 1889 T. E. Griswold's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; Muggs' Landing; Beach & Bowers' Minstrels; Matthews & Smyths Burglar Co.; W. T. Bryant & J. J. Quinlan in *Keep It Dark* with Lizzie Richmond; Jack Curry's *Irish Hearts of Old*
Dec 1889 Patti Rosa in *Margery*; *Chip O the Old Block*; *A Social Session*; Ole Oleson Co.
Oct 1890 Mattie Vickers; Major Scott Raymond's Black Diamonds
 Rusco & Swift's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
Nov 1890 Lew Johnson's Colored Minstrels
Dec 1890 *Lights & Shadows*; *Fairies Well*; Herne's *Hearts of Oak*
Oct 1891 Si Plunkard; Peck & Fursman's *Dan'l Boone*; Frank Daniels in *Little Puck*; London Gaiety Girls; Sawyer's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; Mattie Vickers; An American Boy; Gilmore's Band; *Skipped by the Light of the Moon*; Hyer Sisters Co.
Nov 1891 *The Ivy Leaf*; *Evangeline*
Dec 1891 *The Millionaire*
 Edwin Travers' *Private Secretary*; Cooley's Dramatic Co.; McCutcheon-Casley Theatre Co.; Charles Willard as Alvin Joslin; Irish Corporal

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MAY 24 1988

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Love-Larson Opera House
Representative Entertainments, 1888-1909

DATE EVENT AND PERFORMERS

Performing Arts, cont'd.

Oct 1892 Milton & Dollie Nobles in *For Revenge Only*; Crockett Comedy Co.
Patti Rosa as Dolly Varden

Nov 1892 Alba Heywood in *New Edgewood Folks*; *10 Nights in a Barroom*;
Gus Williams in *April Fool*; *The Stowaway*; *The Hoboe*

Dec 1892 *The Burglar*; D. M. Bristol's Equestrian Curriculum; *Bottom of the Sea*;
Midnight Alarm; Nora Machree with Clara Coleman; Katie Putnam in *An
Unclassified Express Package*; Rhea in *Josephine*

Oct 1893 John Dillon in *A Model Husband*; Flint the mesmerist; Woodward
Theatre Co.; *Fast Mail*; Oliver Byron and *The Dark Continent*;
Cleveland's Minstrels

Nov 1893 Hoss and Hoss; Si Perkins, Burton-Coleman Co.; Barlow's Minstrels;
Charles Loder in *Oh, What a Night!*; J. Edgar Owens' *Damon & Pythias*
w/ Mae North and F. J. Ellick, Jr.; Walker Whiteside in *Richelieu*;
The Silver King

Dec 1893 Rhea as Queen of Sheba; Corse Payton

Oct 1894 Tony Farrell in *Gary Owen*; Dewey Heywood Concert Co.

Nov 1894 *Friends*, Arthur C. Aiston, mgr.; *Jane*; Wilbur Entertainment Co.;
County Fair; *A Bunch of Keys*

Dec 1894 *A Summer Blizzard*; Ezra Kendall in *The Substitute*; *In Old Kentucky*
with Lulu Labor; Jane Coombs in *Romeo and Juliet*

Oct 1895 Sam T. Jack's Extravaganza in *The Bull Fighter*, *A Turkish Bath*; Van
Dyke and Eaton in repertory; *The Colonel's Wives* by the Sedley
Brown Co.

Nov 1895 Uncle Josh Spruceby; Cook Sisters' *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; Noble's
Dramatic Co.; Emily Bancker

Dec 1895 Joe Ott; *The Midnight Watch*; *My Wife's Friend*; *Maloney's Wedding*;
In Old Kentucky

Oct 1896 Katie Emmett in *Waifs of New York*; Nashville Students;
Bittler Theatre Co. in repertory

Nov 1896 Woodward theatre Co.

Dec 1896 Jack Fowler co. in *Father and Son*; Ottumwa Concert Co. of Chicago;
Alabama; *The Bells* by Omaha home talent; Fisk Jubilee Singers

Oct 1897 Woodward Theatre Co.; *Ole Olson*

MAY 24 1988

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4Love-Larson Opera House
Representative Entertainments, 1888-1909

DATE EVENT AND PERFORMERS

Performing Arts, cont'd.

Nov 1897 Dick C. Bowers' Minstrels; Della Pringle; Davis *Uncle Tom's Cabin; She; Hogan's Alley*

Dec 1897 *Hogan's Alley*, return engagement; Warner Comedy Co.; *The Broadway Girl*; Jule Waltes in *Side Tracked; Si Plunkard*

Oct 1898 *The Gay Matinee Girl*; Merrie Bell Opera co. with *Fra Diavolo; The Missouri Girl*; Louise Brehany Concert Co.; Gilhoolley's Reception

Nov 1898 *A Night at the Circus*; Herrmann the Great co.; Warner Comedy Co. with *Mercie's Marriage, Why Smith Left Home, After the Ball, Always on Time, The Hidden Hand*; Robert Downing with *Spartacus, Ingomar, The French Marriage*; James T. Kelly's *On the Midway*; Thurston's Musical Comedy Co. in *Muldoon's Picnic and A Booming Town*

Dec 1898 *What Happened to Jones*; Maximilian Dick Concert co.; *Flannagan's Flats*; Clementine De Vere Operatic Concert Co., with *Faust, Romeo and Juliet, Il Trovatore*; Ferris' Comedians with *On the Ohio, A Fool of Fortune, Peck's Bad Boy, In Cuba, Our German Friend; Uncle Josh Spruceby; Uncle Tom's Cabin; 1492*; Murray and Mack in *Finnegan's 400; Coon Hollow*

Oct 1899 *Town Topics*; Woodward Stock Co.; Walter's *Monte Cristo*; Scott's Minstrels; Herrmann the Great; *The Heart of Chicago; The Pay Train; The Wheel of Fortune; A Merry Chase; The Glad Hand; Under the Dome*

Nov 1899 Paul Kauvar; *The White Slave*

Dec 1899 *Erminie*, home talent; Walter Walker in *The Nominee; A Husband on Salary*

Oct 1900 *A Wise Woman; Little Trixie*; Redmond Dramatic Co.

Dec 1900 *My Friend From India*

Oct 1901 *Two Married Men* with specialties by Billy Colton, Charles Schilling, Jean Darrow, Mabel Colton; *Shore Acres; Get Together; Quo Vadis*; Chase-Lister Co. in *The Senator's Daughter, A Man of Mystery, Wicked London, Monte Cristo, East Lynne, The Octoroon, The Belle of Virginia*; Piano concert by Sherwood

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Love-Larson Opera House
Representative Entertainments, 1888-1909

DATE EVENT AND PERFORMERS

Performing Arts, cont'd.

Nov 1901	<i>At the Old Cross Roads; Uncle Josh Spruceby; A Common Sinner</i> with William de Vere; <i>A Barrel of Money; My Friend From Arkansas; A Barrel of Money</i> ; Mr. and Mrs. Clarence M. Brune in <i>Theodora; Sporting Life</i>
Dec 1901	<i>The Eleventh Hour</i> ; Rusco & Holland's Minstrels; Gideon's Minstrels; Tim Murphy in <i>A Capitol Comedy</i> ; <i>Jess of the Bar Z Ranch</i> with Alice Archer, James Manley, Duke Jaxone, Randolph Roberts, Albert Lang; <i>Rupert of Hentzau; Papa's Boy</i> with Harry Watson, the Nichols Sisters, the Gebest Sisters, and John Roland
Oct 1902	<i>The Tide of Life; A Modern Magdalen; A Runaway Match</i>
Nov 1902	Andrew Robson; Rose Melville; Mahara's Minstrels; Richard Carvel; Sis Hopkins; Stetson's <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin; Elmdale Farm; That Evil Eye</i> ; Eugene Cowles Concert Co.
Dec 1902	<i>Pudd'nhead Wilson; Gilhooley's Reception</i> ; Murray and Mack; <i>The Boy Tramp; The Christian</i> ; Adelaide Thurston
Oct 1903	<i>A Runaway Match</i> ; Irving French co.; <i>A Little Outcast</i> ; Ezra Kendall in <i>The Vinegar Buyer; When Johnny Comes Marching Home; Buried at Sea</i>
Nov 1903	Gus Swun's Minstrels; <i>The Head Waiters; The Governor's Son; Where Is Cobb?; A Thoroughbred Tramp</i>
Dec 1903	<i>A Girl from Sweden; The Midnight Express</i> ; Katherine Willard in <i>The Power Behind the Throne</i>
Oct 1904	Jack Hoeffler co. with <i>Michael Strogoff, Away Back East, A Divorce Cure, Camille, Fanchon, and Prince of Liars</i> ; Stetson's <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> ; Whitney's Show Girl
Nov 1904	Buster Brown; <i>Devil's Auction; Sign of the Four; To Die at Dawn; On the Bridge at Midnight; Fatal Scar; Her Only Sin; Nettie the Newsgirl</i>
Dec 1904	Porter J. White in <i>Faust</i> ; Marie Wainwright in <i>Twelfth Night</i>
Oct 1905	Buster Brown; <i>The Russian Spy; Hoity Toity; Two Merry Tramps; Under Southern Skies; Jolly American Tramp</i> ; Volunteer Organist
Nov 1905	Kilties' Band; Hickman-Bessey Repertoire co.; <i>McFadden's Flats; At Cripple Creek; Wyoming; Faust; The Girl From Kay's; Uncle Josh Perkins</i>
Dec 1905	<i>Florodora; The Telephone Girl</i> ; Liberty Belles; <i>A Human Slave</i>

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Love-Larson Opera House
Representative Entertainments, 1888-1909

DATE	EVENT AND PERFORMERS
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Performing Arts, cont'd.

Oct 1906	<i>A Message from Mars; Human Hearts</i>
Nov 1906	Hickman-Bessey Repertoire co.; <i>Coming Thro' the Rye; Wonderland;</i> Buster Brown
Dec 1906	<i>My Wife's Family</i>
Oct 1907	Indian Band; Dockstader's Minstrels; <i>Arizona</i> ; Volunteer organist; Clark Concert Co.
Nov 1907	Edwin Strong Repertoire co. with <i>The Night Before Christmas;</i> <i>Toyland</i>
Dec 1907	Little Johnny Jones; <i>Mayor of Tokio</i> ; Minstrel show, home talent; <i>Moonshiner's Daughter</i> ; Rose Melville in <i>Sis Hopkins</i>
Nov 1908	<i>The Girl and the Stampede</i> ; Murray and Mack; Hickman-Bessey Repertoire co. No. 2
Dec 1908	Kathryn Osterman in <i>A Night at the Play; The Time, the Place, and</i> <i>the Girl; Devil's Auction; The Wolf</i> with Andrew Robson; <i>Uncle Tom's</i> <i>Cabin</i> ; Minstrel show, home talent; Davis Stock Co.; Cohan's Honeymooners
Oct 1909	<i>Montana; Man of the Hour</i>
Nov 1909	<i>Jack and Jill</i> with Ada Meade and Jack Henderson; <i>Man on the Box;</i> <i>Paid in Full</i> with Sara Perry and Ned Finley; <i>Sunny Side of</i> <i>Broadway</i> ; Chunn's <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> ; Nickerson Comedy co. in repertoire
Dec 1909	<i>Fifty Miles from Boston</i> ; W. B. Patton in <i>The Blockhead</i> ; Elwin Strong Players in repertoire

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MAY 24 1988

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

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- Fremont Leader*. 5 Jan. 1900 - 28 Dec. 1900.
- Fremont Weekly Tribune*. 5 Apr. 1888 - 27 Dec. 1888.
- Jorgensen, Loell R. Letters to the author. Fremont: 1986, 1987.
- . Telephone interview. Fremont: 22 Jan. 1987.
- . Personal interview. Fremont: 24 Jan. 1987.
- Love-Larson Opera House. Fremont site visit. 24 Jan. 1987.
- "Love's Opera House." *Fremont Weekly Tribune* 5 Apr. 1888, 21 Jun. 1888, and 8 Nov. 1888.
- "Opera House Opening." *Fremont Weekly Tribune* 6 Dec. 1888.
- Schanke, Robert A. "Fremont's Love Opera House." *Nebraska History* 55 (1974): 221-253.
- Thompson, Carroll, ed. *The Prairie Venture: Fremont, Nebraska Centennial History 1856-1956*. Fremont: Fremont Centennial Assn., Inc., 1956.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

APR 24 1988

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Photographs

Section number _____ Page 1

The following information is the same for all Fremont photographs:

NAME OF PROPERTY: Love's Opera House
CITY, COUNTY, STATE: Fremont, Dodge County, Nebraska
NeHBS SITE No.: DD05:E-3
OHBIN SITE No.: 01-24-06
NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Christian H. Ehlers

PHOTO NUMBER: Fremont #1
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 01-24-87 (8611/6:15)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Exterior view, looking southwest at the east (front) and north facades.

PHOTO NUMBER: Fremont #2
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 01-24-87 (8611/7:9)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Interior view, top level, looking southwest at the left side of the former stage line.

PHOTO NUMBER: Fremont #3
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 01-24-87 (8611/7:12)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Interior view, top level, looking east at the balcony area.

PHOTO NUMBER: Fremont #4
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 01-24-87 (8611/7:10)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Interior view, top level, from the balcony, looking northeast across the balcony at the old seats.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 74001107

Date Listed: 9/10/74

Love-Larson Opera House
Property Name

Dodge
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.

Beck Boland
Signature of the Keeper

7/7/88
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Add to Current Functions: "Social -- meeting hall

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)