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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 Lawrence Opera House
other names/site number NeHBS #NU05-1 OHBIN # 04-26-05

2. Location

street & number Second & Calvert Sts. N/A not for publication
city, town Lawrence N/A vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Nuckolls code 129 zip code 68957

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 W. Johnson 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. 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: Department store

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in Use
Commerce/Trade: Specialty store

7. DescriptionArchitectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)OTHER: Two-part commercial block

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Unknown
 walls Brick
 roof Tar
 other Decorative brick trim

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Lawrence Opera House is located at the southwest corner of Second and Calvert Streets, on the edge of the town's business district. Built by Henry Hoeveke in 1901, the Two Part Commercial Block structure measures approximately 27 feet wide by 77 feet long. It has a flat, tar-coated roof with a metallic silver protective paint layer above the tar. A border of decorative brickwork surrounds the top of the facade; originally the front facade was decorated with iron, but this has been removed. Windows are attractively boarded over, not from vandalism but from wind damage. The original exterior stairs to the second-floor door of the auditorium, on the northwest corner of the building, have been removed; access is now through a rear window reached by crossing the roof of a small one-story addition about the size of a garage, which has been added to the rear of the building. A lobby 8 feet wide by 14 feet long is immediately outside the auditorium.

The auditorium is 25 feet wide by 67 feet long, with a commodious closet located in the southwest corner, probably used originally by the M.W.A. Lodge which shared the opera house space. No balcony exists in this small opera house. Windows fill the north and east walls of the auditorium. The tin ceiling is in excellent condition, as is the wooden floor. Original wooden curved-back chairs are scattered about the space. The stage in this opera house has been removed, but was located in the east end of the the auditorium. A wooden border about three feet high, which surrounds the auditorium, ends where the stage once began, about ten feet from the back wall.

The structural and historical integrity of the building and theatre, except for the removal of the stage and the one-story addition at the rear, has been preserved.

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The two-story brick building has a flat roof with a decorative brick corbelled wall cornice. Window units are crowned with arched brick window hoods. The original cast-iron storefront (street level) has been remodeled and today shows a "stucco and half-timber like" treatment with a recessed entry. The first level originally housed a general merchandise store and now serves as a hardware store. The second level originally served as a combination opera house and lodge hall, and today the space is vacant. The opera house and the one-story building adjacent to it currently house the same retail space. Modern-day access was created by "punching" a hole through the party wall between both buildings. There is interior access on the first level only. Because the two buildings are not historically and functionally related, and the buildings are not defined by continuous interior function, this nomination only includes the Lawrence Opera House property.

Occupying a corner lot, the building has two primary facades. Because the alterations have, for the most part, been confined to the storefront on the east (main) facade, and the building interior is in near-original condition, the building retains sufficient historical and structural integrity to convey its significance as an opera house in this multiple property nomination.

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

1901-1917

Significant Dates

1901

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Butzirus, first name unknown (builder)

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

The Lawrence 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 Lawrence. As a facility for the performing arts, it offered productions such as musical concerts, hypnotists, touring stock companies, classics like *Ten Nights in a Barroom* and *Rip van Winkle*, and home talent. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1901-1917.)

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, lectures, and moving pictures. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1901-1917.)

This opera house is significant in the area of social history, because it gave Lawrence a neutral, nonaffiliated location for lodge meetings, suppers, and school entertainments. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1901-1917.) 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

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

1	4	5	6	2	9	1	0	4	4	6	0	2	0	5
Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

Zone	Easting				Northing									

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

This property is described as Lot 1, Block 11, in the Original Town of Lawrence, Nuckolls 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 OHBN 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, 1901. It 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 proximity of Nelson (16 miles), Red Cloud (28 miles) and Hastings (31 miles), which had moving picture theatres and first floor community auditoriums by 1917, meant that as more Lawrence residents bought cars, activities in those nearby cities became a more viable option. Limited choices in the Lawrence Opera House doomed it to a dwindling number of sporadic events, primarily significant under the category of entertainment/recreation.

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Lawrence Opera House, Lawrence
Representative Entertainments, 1901-1917

DATE EVENT AND PERFORMERS

Social History

Oct 1901 Lodge oyster supper, address by R. D. Sutherland of Nelson
Nov 1905 School entertainment

Entertainment/Recreation

Oct 1901 Grand ball, music by Kerr Opera House Orchestra of Kearney
Nov 1901 Dance
Thanksgiving Grand Masquerade ball
Nov 1902 Lawrence social Dancing Club ball
Thanksgiving Grand Masquerade ball
Oct 1903 Lawrence Social Dancing Club, first dance of the season
Nov 1903 Masquerade ball
Sep 1904 Bonheur Bros. Golden Mascot (moving picture) shows
Nov 1904 Lecture by Ernest J. Sias
Lawrence Dance Club dance
Nov 1905 Thanksgiving masquerade ball
Oct 1907 Dance
Nov 1907 Masquerade Ball
Club Dance
Dec 1908 Lecture by Mrs. Mae Guthrie Tongier
Charles F. Stalker, Cartoonist
Nov 1909 Thanksgiving Masquerade ball
Dec 1909 Lecture on "Nicaragua" by Editor Harrison of Lincoln
Nov 1910 Ball, music by York Orchestra
Nov 1911 Dance, music by Breitfelder's Orchestra
Dance, music by Superior Orchestra
Nov 1914 Masquerade ball
Oct 1915 Dance
Nov 1915 Thanksgiving ball
Dec 1917 Moving pictures, Fridays and Saturdays

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Representative Entertainments, 1901-1917

DATE EVENT AND PERFORMERS

Performing Arts

Nov 1903 Concert
Prof. A. L. Joy and Prof. G. J. Moffett, hypnotists

Jan 1904 *Ten Nights in a Barroom*

Nov 1904 Ladies' Quartette

Oct 1905 The Sherrys, Comedians and Musicians

Dec 1905 *Ten Nights in a Barroom*

Mar 1907 *A Runaway Tramp*

Oct 1907 Blind Boone Piano Concert

Dec 1907 Johnson & Aülger's *Rip van Winkle*

Nov 1908 *Down in Maine*

Dec 1908 Dr. Buck's Medicine Show
Robley Male Quartette and Bayard T. Robley, impersonator
Szikosky Entertainment Co.
Down in Maine, home talent

Dec 1909 Band Boys home talent concert

Oct 1910 *In Golden Valley* by Pearl Alberta Burton

Nov 1910 *My Dixie Girl*

Nov 1912 *Rebecca's Triumph*, home talent by the Ladies Sociality

Oct 1914 *The Girl and the Tramp*

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- Friend, G.S. Letters to the author. Lawrence: 1986, 1987.
- Hlavac, Jack. Telephone interviews. Lawrence: 24 Mar. 1987 and 23 Apr. 1987.
- . Personal interview. Lawrence: 26 Apr. 1987.
- Keifer, Oswin, chmn. *From 'Hoppers to 'Copters: Stories of Nuckolls County for 100 Years.* N.p.: n.p., n.d.
- Lawrence Locomotive.* 20 Oct. 1900 - 7 Dec. 1917.
- Lawrence Locomotive*, ed. *Lawrence Diamond Jubilee, 1890-1965.* Lawrence, NE: Lawrence Locomotive, 1965.
- Lawrence Opera House. Lawrence site visit. 26 Apr. 1987.
- Nuckolls County Centennial, Inc. *The Wonderful Years: A History of Nuckolls County, Nebraska 1871-1971.* Superior, NE: The Superior Express, 1971.
- Nuckolls County Register of Deeds. Lawrence Opera House public records. 11 Sep. 1987.
- Ostdiek. Letter to the author. Lawrence: 1987.
- Wilcox, V.R. "A History of Nuckolls County, Nebraska." M. Thesis. Colorado State C of Ed, Greeley, 1935.

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Photographs

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The following information is the same for all Lawrence Photographs:

NAME OF PROPERTY: Lawrence Opera House
CITY, COUNTY, STATE: Lawrence, Nuckolls, Nebraska
NehBS SITE No.: NU05-1
OHBIN SITE No.: 04-26-05
NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Christian H. Ehlers

PHOTO NUMBER: Lawrence #1
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 04-28-87 (8704/1:31)
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: Lawrence #2
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 04-28-87 (8704/1:33)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Interior view, looking east at the auditorium area.