

SG-2165



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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Emerson City Park

Other names/site number DX04-003

Name of related multiple property listing N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & Number Square block between 4th and 5th Streets, Main and Logan Streets

City or town Emerson State Nebraska County Dixon

Not for publication Vicinity

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance: national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D


SHPO/Director

1/9/18
Date

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Nebraska State Historical Society

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting Official

Date

Title

State of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____


Signature of Keeper

3-5-2018
Date of Action

Emerson City Park
Name of Property

Dixon 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	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Buildings
		Sites
	<u>3</u>	Structures
<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	Objects
<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Outdoor recreation
LANDSCAPE/Park

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Outdoor recreation
LANDSCAPE/Park

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, stone, concrete, stucco

Emerson City Park

Dixon County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State

Description

Summary Paragraph (Briefly describe the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

The Emerson City Park encompasses an entire city block along Main Street and north of the city’s central business district. As seen in an aerial photograph, the park features two sidewalks which run diagonally from corner to corner. A large tiered fountain has been constructed at the point where the sidewalks meet. Each corner of the park has a differently styled gateway arch that were all constructed in 1928. A few have experienced slight changes but are largely intact. The park also features two modern, metal park shelters that are open sided and contain picnic table seating. One is located on the north side of the park, the other on the west. There is also a modern playground set in sand to entertain the children. Located along the sidewalk from the northeast corner toward the fountain, a small modern concrete bridge has been set over a dip in the lawn. It provides more of a scenic spot for photographs than a transportation device. Benches and other park furniture are located throughout the park, amongst mature trees which appear to have originally been set in allées along the sidewalks; some of the original plantings have been lost to attrition. The park retains its historic integrity, despite alterations and additions since the 1928 improvements. The overall park is considered a contributing site to the nomination; the four archways and center fountain are considered contributing objects.

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable.)

The Emerson City Park is located in southeast Dixon County. Although the city of Emerson is situated in three counties, the park is sited entirely within Dixon County. It was originally an unimproved green space that was set aside by surveyors platting the Warnock Addition. In the space of a year, the community added four gateways at the corners of the park, a large fountain at the center of the park, and sidewalks to connect them.

The first arch constructed is on the southeast corner, the most prominent corner as one drove or walked north from the business district. The arch has two heavy piers that are constructed of cement, but have the appearance of large stacked stones. At the top, there is a gabled pergola that is set upon two purlins set in the stone piers. A wood sign with the words “CITY PARK” is suspended between the piers, which are crowned by square wood capitals. All of the wood is stained red. Originally, the wooden pergola was slightly thinner in dimension, was painted white, and instead of a sign had thin wood boards that were placed vertically on the wooden framework of the pergola. Just inside the arch and to the right, there is a concrete pad with a drinking fountain.

The second arch constructed was built on the northeast corner of the park. It has substantially built square brick piers set on concrete bases. The bricks are primarily dark red with some decorative patterns of blond brick set on each side. A shallow arch of concrete is set on top of the piers, and is inscribed with the following:

Erected By
Dewey Lodge No. 233
I.O.O.F.
1928

This arch appears to have changed very little over the years.

Emerson City ParkDixon County, Nebraska**Name of Property****County and State**

By far, the most elaborate of the arched gateways is the one on the northwest corner of the park. This arch features battered piers of pink stone with rusticated masonry. Rising above the stone piers are squared concrete columns with the arch emerging out of the tops of the columns. A pedestal light and a globe glass is found on top of each column. A stone medallion is set in the middle of the arch, with the words "Dedicated to Mother 1928 by Community." A very old gooseneck light fixture would illuminate the medallion if connected to an active power source. The piers are flanked on either side by shorter, more diminutive battered piers that are topped with a square concrete capital and a concrete urn. Beyond these secondary piers, are arced wing walls of stone topped with brick that, along with the arch, create a half circle bench that surrounds a round flower bed filled with roses and a cement bird bath in the center. The flower bed is surrounded with matching brick, and a concrete walkway.

Finally, the southwest corner gateway arch is perhaps the most changed of all four. Originally, the arch was primarily brick, with hip high bases that supported cement columns upon which rested an impressive brick arch. Taller brick piers on the sides of the columns provided additional strength and stability. Photographs of the arch taken in 1986 as part of the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey show there is obvious deterioration to the columns. The wood posts in the center of the cement must have been the only thing holding the structure up, as half of the column on the left was lost in a vertical manner, while the right column only retained cement on the bottom third of the column. The structure has been retained; however, the columns had to be recreated and the entire arch has a skim coat of concrete or stucco. Although this is a severe change and affects the object's historic integrity, the elaborate form of the original arch, which is still very visible, precludes it from being considered a noncontributing feature.

The fountain in the center of the park is the most elaborate feature in the park and took longer than one summer to complete. The fountain itself is centered in a round basin made of pink rusticated stone, topped with a row of bricks. Inside, there is a conically shaped structure of brick with two concrete basins for catching water which rises from the center. The larger basin at the bottom is smooth and unembellished, but the smaller one on the top has some ridges or fluting that imply that it is intended to appear to be a lily pad or some other leaf. At the top, there is a round column with bas relief bison in profile, and above, a band of four bison heads with spouts for mouths, from which the water trickles. At the top, a pedestal light with a glass globe is placed. Around the fountain, the four sidewalks pass through a stone half-wall that encircles it, and four concrete steps allow a visitor to approach. Like the northwest archway, these arched walls incorporate bench seating into the walls and each of the four openings is embellished with a pair of cement Ionic columns that are also topped with a pedestal light with matching globes. Three more are located on the lowest basin of the fountain, making a total of twelve lights on or around this beautiful fountain. A marble tablet was set in the sidewalk entering the fountain circle, and says:

Park Restoration – 2002
In Celebration of the 60th Anniversary
Of Christiansen Construction Co., LLC,
Pender, Nebraska
Est. 1942

Another says:

Emerson Park Restoration 2002
Funded by Area Donations
and Community Participation

Additional minor features to the park include playground equipment, including swings and a merry-go-round that likely date from the 1960s or 1970s. Newspaper articles referred to see-saws and other playground equipment that was installed at the time, but they are no longer present. There are a number of benches that

Emerson City Park

Dixon County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State

have been placed on concrete pads, some appear historic, some appear newer, but none are significant enough to merit detailed description or counting toward contributing structures.

Other changes to the park include replacement sidewalks, which is not uncommon given the age of the park. At some point, the sidewalk along Main Street was installed and provides for a safe pedestrian path along the highway. The small concrete bridge that is located in a shallow part of the lawn replaces an eclectic bridge made of salvaged agricultural and mechanical parts that was built during the period of significance. In 2002, the bridge was put up for sale by the city. With its sharp edges, it was deemed a liability that the city could no longer afford. This concrete bridge was a relatively simple thing to put in its place to fill in as a popular site for wedding and senior photographs. This newer bridge is formed concrete with a pattern that imitates rusticated masonry impressed on the side.

The modern playground, picnic shelters, and small concrete bathroom building on the north side of the park, along with the concrete footbridge along the northeast sidewalk, were all added within the last fifteen to twenty years. Although they are not historic, they do represent the evolution of a city park and the amenities that the citizenry expect and do not detract from the historic nature of the park; all are included as non-contributing resources.

Emerson City Park
Name of Property

Dixon County, Nebraska
County and State

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.)

- 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.
- 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.
A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- E** A commemorative property.
- F** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1901 – 1968

Significant Dates

1901 – Park established by city

1928 – First arch completed

1929 – Fountain completed and park is dedicated

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

William Mines

Emerson City Park

Dixon County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Emerson City Park is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A for its association with entertainment and recreation in Emerson. The period of significance runs from 1901, the year the park land was purchased by the village, to 1968, fifty years prior to today. Since the park has continued to be a pleasurable recreation spot for the city with improvements made occasionally to provide additional uses or comforts for the public, there is no firm end date to its period of significance. The park predates 1928, but the land was left largely to remain a natural landscape. Perhaps some trees were planted, but the topography of the land was not altered, and there weren't many amenities to be found. In 1928, a community effort to improve the park started with the local men who worked for the railroad, who wanted to build a gateway arch to the park, and other groups were challenged to donate the labor and materials to do the same at the other three corners. Plans included a fountain for the center and sidewalks from the corners to the center ending at the fountain. The majority of the materials and labor was donated, a point the city advertised with pride, with just the sidewalks being provided by the city. Over the years, other features have been added or removed, but it is clear that the citizenry continued to come to play and picnic here.

Narrative Statement of Significance

History of Parks in the United States

The provision of open space, access to fresh air and nature, was espoused by city planners in the mid to late 19th century. Urban centers had become noted for congestion of people and buildings, foul air from coal fired factories and chimneys, and lack of access to nature and sunlight. The best known examples of cities establishing parks for the public benefit include large pleasure grounds such as Central Park in New York, Lincoln Park in Chicago, or Mission Bay Park in San Diego.

The history of urban parks in the U.S. is represented by four different types of parks that fall into different eras of development. The first is the "Pleasure Ground," which were created roughly between 1850 and 1900. These were largely large parks established on the fringe of a city which allowed citizens to access a landscaped area that emulated the countryside. A subset of this model was the "Small Park Movement," which attempted to translate the larger Pleasure Ground to smaller parks near tenements to be more available to the working class. The second model, the "Reform Park," was an attempt by city planners to reform the city socially. The theory was that by bringing everyone, including immigrants, together to learn a common language and develop relationships would help to reform the unrest of urban life. This era ran from 1900 to 1930. From 1930 to 1965, parks took on a new role as "Recreational Facilities." The emphasis changed from access to nature and time with others to one of activities, such as ball games, horse shoes, canoeing, and so on. And finally, from 1960 to present, the "Open Space System," which emphasized the multi-purpose value of open space.¹

Emerson City Park

It is difficult to put the development of a city block sized parcel of park land in Emerson, Nebraska, with a peak population of 883 in 1930, into the context of these larger park movements.² Regardless of what part of town they lived in, the citizens of Emerson were within a three or four block walk away from the edge of the city and

¹ Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1982).

² Elton A. Perkey, *Perkey's Nebraska Place Names* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Nebraska State Historical Society), 62.

Emerson City Park

Dixon County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State

access to nature. While 'nature' in Nebraska meant plenty of open space and access to fresh air and sunlight, it did not provide much in the way of varied landscape or trees.

In 1900, Emerson was a vibrant community that was a regional shipping point on the Omaha Railway Company line and a market center. The city boasted numerous clubs and community organizations, including a Commercial Club. They had aspirations of making improvements to their town and its amenities, which included an auditorium, a swimming pool, a ball field, and a park. The Emerson City Park exhibits elements of all of the park movements. It is a sculptured pleasure ground that took advantage of some topographical variation, enhanced with the planting of trees. For thirty years, it appears to have remained a largely green space. Much like a 'reform park,' it served as a place that people could gather to celebrate holidays or family reunions. It also was home to recreational opportunities. During summers, mothers would coordinate activities for their school children, which were held at the park. It was also home to foot races and children's games. The park has served many needs over the years.

Emerson is located in the extreme corner of Dixon, Dakota and Thurston Counties, occupying a small bit of each county. The town sits on 160 acres in Dixon County, and 80 acres each in Dakota and Thurston, which has led to no small amount of confusion over the years. The city park is entirely located in the Dixon portion of the city. In the spring of 1901, the *Emerson Enterprise*, began advertising that the village board was interested in purchasing some land for a city park.³ Two weeks later, the paper announced that "Emerson at last has grounds for a public park...the village board purchased of P. Kerwin the block north of the school house paying for the same \$1000. The ground lays well. It is high enough to be dry enough and low enough so trees will grow. It will make a good park, something the village long has needed..."⁴

Very quickly, the park began to figure in the city's social occasions. Independence Day and May Day celebrations usually included a parade that led citizens to the city park, at which speakers and musical performances would be heard.⁵ Foot races, potato sack races, and "Fat Man" races were held in the park.⁶ Picnics were often held in the park, both for gatherings of the entire city, or smaller clubs or family groups. In May 1911, Mr. Dohrman set up a tent in the park, and offered a free movie to children under the age of 14, all others paid 10 cents.⁷ The Fourth of July event in 1912 featured the following activities in the park: nail driving contest for girls, a pie eating contest for boys, an old fiddlers contest, and a water fight.⁸ Their events were marketed in the newspaper to other regional communities, and often drew visitors that were three times larger than the population of the town. Articles advertising their events reassured there was room for all: "We have a big park with plenty of shade and seats to accommodate all who come."⁹

The park featured prominently in the village's efforts to promote itself, a task that was shared by all of its citizens. The *Emerson Enterprise* encouraged its readers to encourage people to visit Emerson. "A town is worth just about what its citizens think it is worth; its possibilities are just about as great as the estimate put upon them by the citizens. When people ask about Emerson don't be afraid to mention its good points. Speak of its rail road facilities and its central location, tell of its schools, its churches, its municipal water and lighting plants and its public parks..."¹⁰

³ *Emerson Enterprise*, May 24, 1901. P. 4.

⁴ *Emerson Enterprise*, June 7, 1901. p. 5.

⁵ *Emerson Enterprise*, July 10, 1908. P. 5.

⁶ *Emerson Enterprise*, June 24, 1910. P. 5.

⁷ *Emerson Enterprise*, May 19, 1911. P. 1.

⁸ *Emerson Enterprise*, June 27, 1912. P. 1.

⁹ *Emerson Enterprise*, June 20, 1912. P. 1.

¹⁰ *Emerson Enterprise*, August 1, 1912. P. 1.

Emerson City Park
Name of Property

Dixon County, Nebraska
County and State

This was not Emerson's only park. The Railroad Park was located on the south part of town near the railroad depot, which is no longer extant. The park was maintained by the Omaha Railway Company and its employees, and particularly by a gentleman in town named William Mines. Mines was formerly employed by the railroad, and in his retirement enjoyed maintaining the flower garden at the Railroad Park. The *Emerson Tri-County Press* took note of his efforts, saying, "William Mines was instrumental in converting what otherwise would have been more or less of a weed patch into the beautiful little spot it is, and at present spends considerable time each year in keeping it in order. It is a good example of what can be done to beautify odd pieces of ground instead of letting them go to waste."¹¹

City parks and their conditions were on the minds of the citizenry of Emerson in general, and Mr. Mines in particular. Mr. Mines was routinely mentioned in newspaper articles that detail the improvements of the city park. In May 1928, a newspaper article outlined a dinner meeting of the Emerson Commercial Club. Mr. Mines reported on the accomplishments of his committee, the Park and Streets Committee, to the group, and indicated that the committee was recommending a plan to beautify the park, with the first step to construct sidewalks that would run from the corners to the center, where something like a flowerbed, or perhaps later a fountain, would be constructed. They recommended that lodges and other bodies in town be "given the privilege of erecting ornamental gates at the four corners."¹² He also presented a request from the railroad men of Emerson for the southeast corner, where they agreed to put up an entrance and were already planning a design and early start date. Their proposals were accepted.

Within four weeks, the Odd Fellows responded to their offer and requested to be able to build their archway on the northeast corner.¹³ Their response is perhaps no big surprise, since the president of the Commercial Club was also a prominent member of the I.O.O.F. Lodge, and was put in charge of their park improvement efforts. The same article outlined that the railroad men had already completed their arch, which was designed by William Mines. "Railroad men gave of their time and furnished material for the arch, and they are receiving the congratulations of citizens on the fine job and the thanks of those interested in making Emerson a more beautiful spot."¹⁴ After the Commercial Club wrote thank you notes to the officials of the Omaha Railroad to express their appreciation for the work of their employees in building such a fine entrance to their park, they received kind letters back from E. C. Blundell, Superintendent of the Omaha Railway, and P.R. Pechin, the General Manager of the railroad. Mr. Blundell responded, "I am indeed pleased to know the Community is appreciative of the help that was given them by the employees of our railroad. We are always desirous of working in harmony with the people of our towns, and are glad indeed to lend a helping hand at any time, if within our power, and we trust that the Community at large will appreciate the efforts that the employees are putting forth to serve the people and help make and maintain the little villages which we are proud of."¹⁵

Within another week, the town board had held another meeting and discussed the subject of the park. They decided that since they had a small amount of money in the park fund, they would carry forth a regular plan of improvements in coming years as the money was available. The subject of the sidewalks was broached, and they agreed that since plans called for a fountain to be installed in the middle of the park, it would be wise to install the sidewalks after the fountain was completed. Instead, they would begin with a concrete circle in the center of

¹¹ *Emerson Tri-County Press*, "Railroad Park One of Town's Beauty Spots," July 14, 1927.

¹² *Emerson Tri-County Press*, "Commercial Club Members Dine," May 10, 1928.

¹³ *Emerson Tri-County Press*, "Odd Fellows to Erect a Second Park Entrance," June 7, 1928.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Emerson Tri-County Press*, "R.R. Officials Praise Spirit of Community," July 26, 1928.

Emerson City Park

Dixon County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State

the park, in order to serve as a base or foundation for the fountain.¹⁶ They postulated that they might include some fish in the fountain, and that it might overflow into a pond with water plants. It does not appear that this came to pass, as a very traditional fountain was constructed and there is no sign of there ever having been a pond. The paper also challenged other groups to volunteer to build a park entrance, and stated the town board was willing to accept offers from groups or individuals.



Figure 1: Emerson City Park; view to the northwest (Nebraska State Historical Society collections, undated).

¹⁶ *Emerson Tri-County Press*, "The Town Board Makes Plans to Beautify Park," June 14, 1928.

Emerson City Park

Dixon County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State

By the next edition of the newspaper, all four corners of the park were spoken for by various organizations: the Commercial Club and the Ladies Auxiliary of the American Legion each claimed a corner.¹⁷ Upon going to press, the Auxiliary had no solid plans for the kind of arch they would erect, and were stressing the need to do some fundraising before they could act on their promise. In August, the *Tri-County Press* noted that the ladies of the American Legion Auxiliary were going to have an apron and bake sale to raise money for their arch.¹⁸ The Commercial Club circulated a petition to set aside money for getting funds from the club for creating their own arch, which would be a memorial to the mothers of the community. Already, they had committed member William Mines to be in charge of their construction project. The Odd Fellows were reported to already be at work excavating a foundation for their arch, and their design was known to involve brick and concrete.

Until the next May, there was no further mention of progress on their construction projects. In fact, the article in May indicates that there was a community clean and rake event in the park, orchestrated by William Mines.¹⁹ The men of Emerson toiled all day to clean up the lawns, and were fed a meal around 8pm by the Women's Club, consisting of wiener sandwiches, pickles, cake and coffee. The park no doubt needed some tidying from leaves and debris after a long winter.

The most detailed account of the condition of the park improvements was a description of the park taken from the *Sioux City Journal*, written by staff correspondent, H. L. Peterson.

The city park is a remarkable illustration of what civic pride and cooperation may do in a community. The park, having four memorial arches and a large central fountain, represents an outlay in material and labor of approximately \$5,000, yet not a cent of public money has been expended on it. All the money, equipment and labor have been donated.

The first arch, of cement blocks topped by a wooden arch, was built a year ago by Emerson's railroad employees, of whom there are about 50 in the town. The second arch, of brick, was donated by Dewey Lodge, No. 233, I.O.O.F. Emerson; the third and largest arch of cement and stone, was erected by the community and dedicated to "mother," while the fourth arch was erected by the Ryan McEntaffer post of the American legion, of brick and decorated by two eight-inch German shells from European battle fields.

The large central fountain was the gift of the Emerson Masonic lodge. This piece is not finished and will be surmounted by a statue and flower vases above a wide fish pond. Seats and flower vases along the walk have been given by the Emerson chapter of the Catholic Daughters. The park is well equipped with teeter totters, swings, slides, picnic tables and a tourist camp. It will be formally opened some time this summer with a celebration.

The prime mover in this project has been William Mines, veteran railroad man and president of Emerson Commercial club. It has been through his untiring efforts that the task has been carried through to completion. Mr. Mines is a master in molding artistic cement work and it was he who cast all the Doric columns and the flower vases and did much of the stone work.²⁰

Clearly word of the improvements to the Emerson City Park was making the newspapers throughout the region. In fact, as plans were being made for the celebration, it was pretty clear that crowds from many northeast

¹⁷ *Emerson Tri-County Press*, "All Four Corners of Park to Have Gateways," June 21, 1928.

¹⁸ *Emerson Tri-County Press*, "Local and General," August 16, 1928.

¹⁹ *Emerson Tri-County Press*, "Citizens Clean Up and Rake City Park," May 9, 1929.

²⁰ *Emerson Tri-County Press*, "Park is Well Improved," June 13, 1929. Reprinted from *Sioux City Journal* article written by H.L. Peterson; original article not dated.

Emerson City Park

Dixon County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State

Nebraska towns would be coming to celebrate with them. The Commercial Club would not have been particularly wise if they had not sought to capitalize on their work and the influx of visitors who were likely to come. They offered some free entertainments, but made sure the businesses stayed open. They set the date for the event as July 30, 1929, and advertised far and wide.²¹

Plans called for a program that would begin promptly at 10:30 am with a band concert given by the Emerson Municipal Band, followed by a novelty parade with around thirty-five floats or cars (including one proud child on a decorated bicycle). At noon, all were encouraged to eat lunch in the park. You had to bring your own meal, but free coffee was provided.²² At 1:00 pm, a second band concert was given, followed by an invocation, and the presentation of the memorials to be formally given to the city. They planned for two addresses, one by J. J. McCarthy, an early pioneer of the area who would describe how different Emerson was from the town he helped found, and a talk by Congressman Edgar Howard of Columbus, Nebraska. The formal presentations would be followed by a baseball game at the ball park, and children's activities in the park itself, and an additional band concert at 7:00 pm. The evening entertainments would include a free demonstration of the Fox, in "acts of mystery" and a Bowery Dance at Weinandt's Hall. The mystery act was given its own article in the newspaper that day. The Fox was said to be a hypnotist, an escape artist thought to rival Houdini, and a mental telepathy artist. He would come to town and arrange to borrow a casket from the local undertaker. He would be locked in the casket, bound in a regulation straight jacket, and bound in three additional straps wrapped around the casket. Lastly, a cloth would be thrown over the casket, and within three minutes he would appear unassisted.²³

Since 1928, there have been additions to the amenities offered in the park. There are two park shelters that provide some cover for picnic tables. Playground equipment has changed over the years as equipment presumably became damaged or was deemed unsafe. There are some older swings and other features in the park, but the large modern playground located on the south side of the park nearest the school was added in 1995. Other repairs to the arches and fountain were made in 2002, as a service project to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of a business, Christensen Construction LLC, in Pender.

The Emerson City Park is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with recreation and entertainment in Emerson. Its period of significance runs from 1901 to 1968, the date the land was purchased for a park by the village for a park to a date fifty years before today. It is locally significant. While there have been changes to the park over the years, they are not so significant that they prevent the park from being eligible for listing in the National Register. They do, however, prevent us from putting it forth under an argument for Criterion C, as an example of landscape architecture. While it is difficult to compare the Emerson City Park to historical precedents in larger urban areas, the purpose of the park was the same as many of those larger, more elaborate examples: to provide its citizenry a place to gather enjoy each other and nature in whatever form that took, be it picnics or larger affairs.

²¹ *Emerson Tri-County Press*, "Commercial Club Sets Date Park Dedication," July 18, 1929.

²² *Emerson Tri-County Press*, "Plans Complete for Park Celebration on Tuesday," July 25, 1929.

²³ *Emerson Tri-County Press*, "'Mystery Man' Here for Park Dedication," July 25, 1929.

Emerson City Park
Name of Property

Dixon County, Nebraska
County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

Cranz, Galen. *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1982.

Emerson Enterprise. May 24, 1901 – August 15, 1912.

Emerson Nebraska Centennial: 1888-1988. Compiled by the Centennial Committee.

Emerson Tri-County News. July 14, 1927 – August 1, 1929.

Perkey Elton A. *Perkey's Nebraska Place Names*. Lincoln, Nebraska: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1982.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

Primary location of additional data:

- 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 #
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other (Name of repository)

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Approximately 2 USGS Quadrangle Emerson, NE

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

- | | | | | |
|----|----------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| 1. | Latitude | <u>42°16'54.99"N</u> | Longitude | <u>96°43'38.35"W</u> |
| 2. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |
| 3. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |
| 4. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

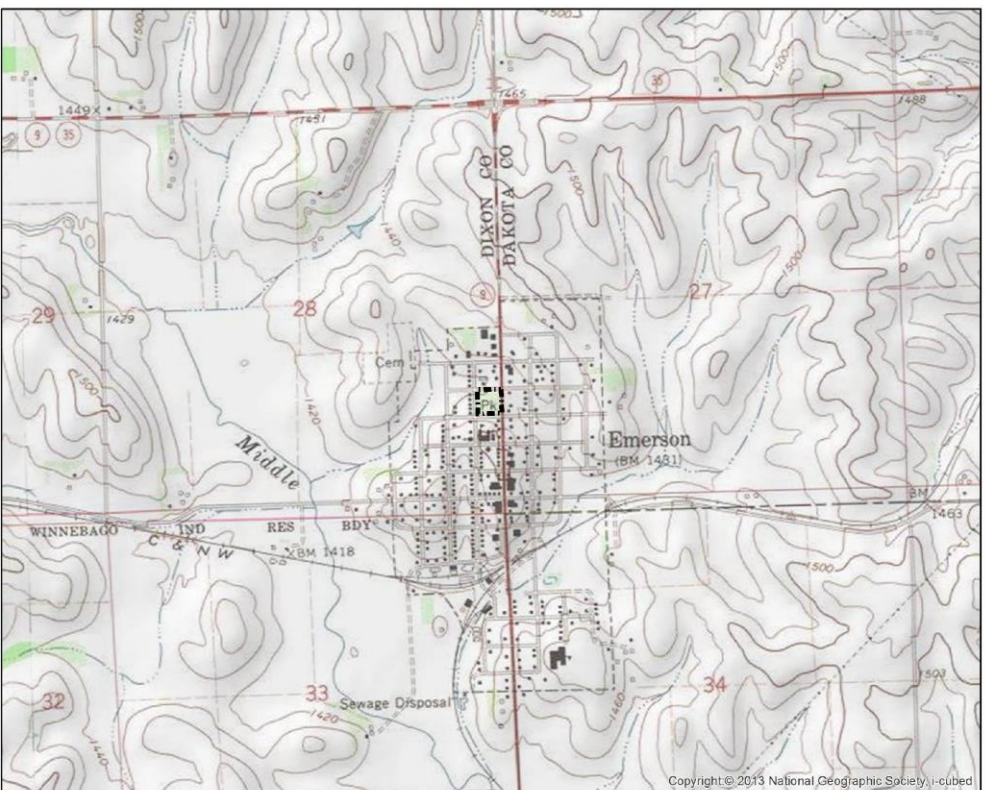
All of Block 6, including adjacent alley, Warnock's Addition, Emerson, Dixon County, Nebraska.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

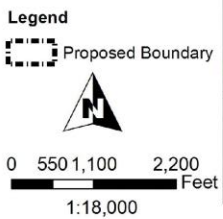
The boundary of the Emerson City Park encompasses all of the city block that has historically been associated with the park.

Emerson City Park
Name of Property

Dixon County, Nebraska
County and State



Emerson City Park
Emerson, Dixon Co.,
Nebraska

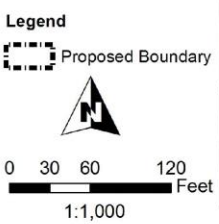


Emerson City Park
Name of Property

Dixon County, Nebraska
County and State



Emerson City Park
Emerson, Dixon Co.,
Nebraska



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 (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



CITY PARK



ERPOWER, BY
REWEY LODGE NO. 233
M.O.F.
1928


















A brown picnic shelter with a gabled roof and metal support posts. Inside the shelter, there are several metal picnic tables and benches. A sign is mounted on the front edge of the roof. The shelter is situated on a grassy area with a concrete path leading to it. In the background, there are bare trees and a playground structure.

REMOVING PICNIC TABLES
FROM PARK PROHIBITED
VIOLATORS WILL BE
PROSECUTED



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 1/18/2018 Date of Pending List: 2/21/2018 Date of 16th Day: 3/8/2018 Date of 45th Day: 3/5/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 3/5/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



January 8, 2018

Jim Gabbert
NPS-National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW
Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Emerson City Park, Emerson, Dixon County, NE

Dear Mr. Gabbert,

Enclosed is the complete nomination packet for the Emerson City Park, located in Emerson, Dixon County, Nebraska. The enclosed contents are as follows:

- The signed first page of the Emerson City Park nomination;
- One archival disk with the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Emerson City Park to the National Register of Historic Places in PDF format; and
- One (1) disc with the photographs for the Emerson City Park nomination.

If you have any questions regarding the submitted materials, feel free to contact me at the phone number or email address below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David L. Calease".

David L. Calease
National Register and Historic Marker Coordinator
Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office

Phone: 402-471-4775
Fax: 402-471-3100
david.calease@nebraska.gov

Enclosures (2): 1 disk with Nomination
1 disk with National Register Photographs

1500 R Street
PO Box 82554
Lincoln, NE 68501-2554
p: (800) 833-6747
(402) 471-3270
f: (402) 471-3100
www.nebraskahistory.org