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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JAN 05 1988

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Pennington, Governor John L., House  
other names/site number South Dakota Magazine Office

2. Location

street & number 410 E. Third Street N/A not for publication  
city, town Yankton N/A vicinity  
state South Dakota code SD county Yankton code SD 135 zip code 57078

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>0</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>0</u> objects
			<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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.

[Signature] 12/20/87  
Signature of certifying official Date

South Dakota SHRP  
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:)

[Signature] 2-8-88  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ Single Dwelling

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCIAL/ Office building

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)Italianate

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

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walls Brick

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roof Asphalt

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other Wood

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Gov. John L. Pennington House

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Situated at the corner of Third and Pearl Streets in one of Yankton's oldest residential neighborhoods, the Governor John L. Pennington House is a rectangular two-story simplified Italianate brick building rising from a brick foundation. It is capped by a hip roof with wide overhanging eaves supported by paired brackets. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. A small wood frame porch projects from the east facade.

Shortly after initial construction, two single-story wings to the west and to the north were added. Each is of the same material and stylistic influence of the main house. The additions are capped by flat roofs with tar and paper coverings.

The original house is built on a side passage floor plan. It is three rooms deep and only one room wide. Access to the upper story is provided by an original walnut stairway ascending from the entrance hall. All wood work, however, is modest in scale and detail. In the central bay, historic sliding doors open into the two-room west addition, which contains a small fire place. A second entry door pierces the front (south) facade of this addition. Window and door openings include brick jack arches.

Italianate features of the house include wide overhanging eaves with paired brackets, and arched fenestration.

Recently, the house was restored by South Dakota Magazine for use as its office and headquarters.

**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)

POLITICS-GOVERNMENT  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1875-1891  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1875  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

Pennington, John L.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

**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:  
South Dakota Historical Preservation Center

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A 

1	4
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6	3	1	8	8	10
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4	7	4	7	4	2	10
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 Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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 Zone Easting Northing

D 

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Quad: Gavins Point Dam, NE, SD. Scale: 1:24000.

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated property are contained within the legal description as recorded in the Yankton County Register of Deeds Office: East sixty feet of Lots 11 and 12, Block 46, Lower Yankton (City of Yankton, Yankton County, South Dakota).

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the parcel that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Bernie Hunhoff (w/ technical assistance by John Rau, SHPO staff)  
 organization South Dakota Magazine date October 30, 1987  
 street & number 410 E. Third Street telephone 605-665-6655/ Rau: 605-677-5314  
 city or town Yankton state South Dakota zip code 57078

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Gov. John L. Pennington House

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Under Criterion B of the National Register Criteria, the Governor John L. Pennington House is significant in the area of politics/government for its association with the life of the fifth governor of Dakota Territory. Constructed in 1875, it was the private residence of John L. Pennington during and after his tenure as governor. It is the only governors' private residence extant in the former territorial capital city of Yankton. Under the South Dakota Historical Preservation Plan, the property relates to the historic context labeled: IV. Permanent Rural and Urban Pioneer Settlement, E. Government Related Activities.

The Territory of Dakota was established by Congress in 1861 in the vast lands lying west of Minnesota and north of Nebraska Territory extending to the Continental Divide. Eventually, the land area was divided among new smaller territories, and Dakota was confined to the present-day boundaries of North and South Dakota. The earliest permanent settlement was in the southeastern corner of the territory stretching along the Missouri River. Sited upstream about 150 miles from Sioux City, Iowa, Yankton served as the capital from 1861 to 1883. During that time, its residents exercised a good deal of influence throughout the expanding territory. Its logistic, political, and social predominance permitted Yankton to become the largest city in the Dakotas, a distinction it held until the 1890's.

John L. Pennington, a native of North Carolina, came to Yankton in 1874 to assume his duties as governor. A newspaperman by trade, he had most recently served as a Carpet Bag legislator in Alabama during Reconstruction days. It was there that he developed a close political relationship with U. S. Senator George Spencer, who used his rapport with President Grant to secure the Dakota appointment for Pennington.

Shortly after Pennington took office, the celebrated Custer Expedition proclaimed that gold existed in the Black Hills in reliable, paying quantities, spurring the entry of thousands of persons seeking quick fortune in the mines and auxiliary services. After successfully ceding the Black Hills from the Sioux Indians in 1876, the U. S. Government authorized the organization of new counties in that region. Governor Pennington appointed most county officials from outside the Hills amid complaints of partisanship and factionalism. In fact, he supported the establishment of Sheridan City, a community in which he held considerable financial interest, as the seat of government for

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Gov. John L. Pennington House

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Pennington County, over the claim of rival Rapid City. Such political antics were common throughout western territories.

He played a partisan hand, too, in dealing with the grasshopper problem. Stemming from a rugged individualist view, he was opposed to direct aid to stricken farms and only grudgingly permitted the foundation of a territorial relief committee. Clearly, the destruction was localized, most of it affecting wheat and garden crops only, yet some action was necessary. Eventually, Congress and territorial officials realized this, but in the end it was the farmers' adaptation to the Dakota environment that alleviated the problem.

Despite his sectional interests, the governor made a few strides to improve conditions for all regions of the territory. He advocated laws that encouraged immigration, provided care for the deaf, dumb, and insane, as well as some tax reform. However, he suggested only a light taxation of railroads, whose operation he believed should not be inhibited to any great extent. Throughout his term, Governor Pennington professed a conservative philosophy typical of his times.

When his term expired in 1878, President Hayes replaced Pennington with William A. Howard, to whom the President owed a political debt. For the former governor he reserved the office of collector of internal revenue for Dakota Territory. It is fair to note that Pennington is one of only two Dakota governors to have completed a full four-year term. Except for Howard, who died in office in 1880, the others either resigned early or were removed at the discretion of the President. (1)

Unlike most Dakota Territorial governors, John Pennington continued to live and work in the territory after leaving public office. He operated a newspaper in Yankton until 1889, when he sold it L. D. F. Poore. Although mostly devoted to private business interests in those years, he did make some contribution to the statehood movement. Sectionalism ran rampant in the territory during the eighties, with many different proposals for division of Dakota. Yet, several prominent citizens from Yankton, including Pennington, rallied for a unified single state. Despite initial sectional sentiments, northern and southern elements compromised and cooled their fears of one another by the end of 1888. In 1889, statehood was granted to North and South Dakota, Washington, and Montana.

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Upon the death of his wife in 1891, Pennington retired to Alabama. He died there in 1900.

His career in Dakota had been filled with political partisanship, natural disasters, and strife, yet he also witnessed steady growth and development of the territory. In some ways, Pennington symbolizes the nature of western life during the late 19th Century. According to one biographer, his administration should be "... remembered for the growing pains which accompanied the opening up of the Black Hills for settlement..." and the affect that growth had on the entire territory. (2) The house he built in 1875 is the best extant reminder of territorial politics in South Dakota. (3)

The period of significance of the property extends from its construction in 1875 to 1891, when the governor ceased to live in the house.

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1.

The last territorial governor, Arthur Calvin Mellette, served from March 1889 to November 1889, when the Dakotas were admitted into the Union. He was then elected the first governor of the State of South Dakota. His 1883 house remains in Watertown, South Dakota, and is listed on the National Register.

2.

Pennington (1958), p. 6.

3.

The wood frame territorial capitol in Yankton and Germania Hall in Sioux Falls, the site of constitutional conventions, are no longer extant. Nor are there any other governors' houses left in Yankton.



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