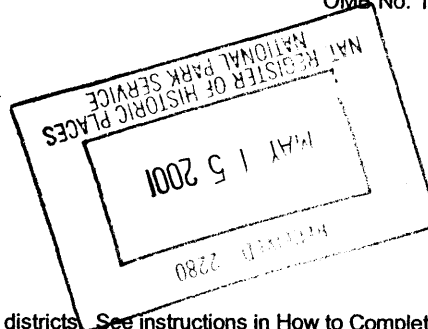


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Grace Coolidge Memorial Log Building  
other names/site number Custer Community Center

2. Location

street & number 644 Crook Street not for publication N/A  
city or town Custer Vicinity N/A  
state South Dakota Code SD county Custer code 033 zip code 57730

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jay D. Voigt  
Signature of certifying official

05-07-2001  
Date

SD SHPO  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**4. National Park Service Certification**

- I hereby certify that the 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 of the Keeper: Edson H. Beal  
 Date of Action: 6/21/01

**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**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0  
 Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

---

## 6. Function or Use

---

### Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Social Sub: Clubhouse  
Recreation and Culture Auditorium  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Recreation and Culture Sub: Auditorium  
Sports Facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

## 7. Description

---

### Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

No Style  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Concrete  
Roof Asphalt  
Walls Log  
Other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

---

## 8. Statement of Significance

---

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- 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.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Social History

Entertainment/Recreation

**Period of Significance**

1926-1950

Significant Dates 1926

Significant Person N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Berge Bergeland

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

See Continuation Sheets

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- \_\_\_ Preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
\_\_\_ previously listed in the National Register
\_\_\_ previously determined eligible by the National Register
\_\_\_ Designated a National Historic Landmark
\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary Location of Additional Data

- X State Historic Preservation Office
\_\_\_ Other State agency
\_\_\_ Federal agency
\_\_\_ Local government
\_\_\_ University
\_\_\_ Other

Name of repository:

---

## 10. Geographical Data

---

**Acreage of Property** Less than one

### UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>13</u>	<u>612865</u>	<u>4846818</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) See Continuation Sheet

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.) See Continuation Sheet

---

## 11. Form Prepared By

---

name/title Stephen Rogers, Historic Preservation Specialist  
organization SD SHPO date 20 November 2000  
street & number 900 Governors Drive telephone (605) 773-3103  
city or town Pierre state SD zip code 57501

---

## Additional Documentation

---

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

**A USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

**A sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Grace Coolidge Memorial Log Building  
Name of Property

Custer County, South Dakota  
County and State

---

## Property Owner

---

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Custer  
street & number 622 Crook St telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Custer state SD zip code 57730

---

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page # 1

---

## Physical Description:

The Grace Coolidge Memorial Log Building is a large, single story, rectangular structure constructed in 1926. It sits on a corner lot in Custer, South Dakota and has served as a community and social center since its construction.

Constructed of log from the Black Hills National Forest, the building features a concrete foundation. The asphalt covered, gambrel roof is not ordinary, as the upper gable pitch is very low. From the exterior the building appears to be two stories but features a large single room on the interior. At the front, north, end of the building a small mezzanine level has been added for office space and two small spaces have also been enclosed on the ground level for offices.

The façade of the building features a central entry with a pair of non-historic metal doors. The doors are accessed by a set of stairs with a small landing. A ramp has been added to the left side of the stairway for accessibility. The horizontal logs of the façade are divided into three sections by vertical logs that end under the roofline with diagonal braces. To either side of the entry is a pair of eight-over-one double hung windows. Directly above the entry is a fixed arch window, eight lights wide by four lights high. To either side of this window is a pair of nine-light, fixed windows. In 1986 a series of buttress logs were put in place to support the aging structure. The logs are set in concrete and placed diagonally against the building. There are four of these supports on the façade of the building, one on either side of the doors and one at each corner.

The east elevation also features the division of horizontal members with vertical logs, forming five sections. Starting at the north end, the first section historically featured a pair of eight-over-one windows at the ground level with a pair of fixed six-light windows above. The six-light window is intact, but a small 9X12 gable roof addition with a pair of double doors has replaced the lower level window. The center three bays on this elevation have paired eight-over-one windows on the ground level with paired six-light windows above. The eight-over-one windows have been covered over to reduce vandalism. The southern most section features a pair of eight-over-one windows at the second story level and an infilled doorway at the ground level. Each bay has a four-light window at the basement level. All of these windows, except the one in the second bay, have been covered as well. This elevation has support logs at each corner and at each of the four vertical divisions.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page # 2

---

### Physical Description continued:

The west elevation has the same five bay divisions as the east elevation. The first four sections beginning at the north end have the same window configuration as the east elevation. All of the windows, except the upper level windows in the third and fourth sections, have been covered. Between the third and fourth sections is an exterior, stone chimney. The last section on this elevation features a covered window at the upper level and a door with a new wooden stairway and small landing. The door has been replaced with a new steel door. Support buttresses and covered basement windows on this elevation match those on the east elevation. The east and west elevations feature exposed rafter ends.

The south elevation is divided into three sections with vertical logs and has diagonal braces under the roof like the north facade. The central section has no openings. The sections to either side feature a pair of covered, eight-over-one windows and covered basement windows.

The interior of the building is mostly one large room with exposed log walls and an exposed roof truss system. As stated earlier the main alterations to the structure have occurred at the north end of the interior. In the 1980s, this part of the building was enclosed for office space. New lighting and basketball goals were also added.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page # 3

---

### Statement of Significance:

The Grace Coolidge Memorial Log Building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its role as an important social and recreational center in the history of Custer, South Dakota. It is also eligible under Criterion C as a distinctive type of construction, as it is one of the largest surviving log structures in the State of South Dakota. The log building was conceived by a group of ladies who had a Tea Club during the late 20's and early 30's. In 1926, a group of Custer women, realizing the need for a building in which to hold community events, formed the non-profit Custer Women's Civic Club and began to enlist help in the project. Their vision was a universal building to host their teas, provide a center for recreation, and provide space for performing arts activities.

Through the generosity of M. J. Bailey, they acquired a corner lot on Seventh and Crook Streets. Captain H. J. Stone followed Mr. Bailey's example and gave another lot to the women's club. The women, themselves, bought a third lot for \$5,100.00

Next the women began acquiring the logs for the structure. The city gave what suitable logs they had in the southern part of town. Through the Denver office of the U.S. Forest Service, the women were able to procure the rest of the logs for \$70.00.

Berge Bergland, an expert in log construction, was then hired to prepare the logs for construction for a fee of \$1,500.00. Charles Harbach dug the hole for the foundation and basement for the 50-foot by 100-foot building. He was paid \$251.00. Cement from the South Dakota Cement Plant at Rapid City was purchased at \$257.40 a carload plus \$62.70 freight. M. E. Nystrom furnished rock, bent irons and labor for \$1,020.00 to construct the basement.

Timber joists were laid and the first rough floor put down just in time to be covered with four feet of snow from a big storm. A man with a team of horses was hired to remove the snow; unfortunately, the horses' hooves went through knotholes so their use was discontinued. A group of men and boys used scoop shovels to remove the snow and were "well paid" by the women to do so.

Bergland then commenced selecting the logs for the sides and roof of the building, selecting the largest and best logs for the construction. A 1926 news clipping refers to him "as an artist in this kind

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page # 4

---

### Statement of Significance continued:

of work, it is safe to predict now that the hall will be a great credit to the entire community." The day the curved log was being put in place over the front door, the women had a "first birthday" meeting.

Jacob Larson was hired to lay the floor. While he was doing so, graders were landscaping the lawn and pushing the dirt up around the foundation.

To complete the building so they could get some returns from its use, the women borrowed \$7,000.00 at 7 percent interest. It was used for the roof, common floor, windows, doors and hardwood floors, chinking, oakum, lumber, balconies, bolts for the logs and plaster between them and oil and varnish to preserve them, plus water and sewage and wiring for electric lights. Sidewalks were built. Grading and seeding the lawn cost \$300.00; a chimney, \$380.00; two furnaces, \$813.00. The women also took out insurance on the building.

The building sported a dance floor, reading rooms, stage, and meeting place. The basement was fitted up with a kitchen and showers. The Community Building eventually cost \$14,000.00 to build.

While the women were raising funds selling logs, putting on dinners, rummage sales and other activities, they were also preparing costumes for the 1927 Gold Discovery Days Pageant and the visit of President and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge to the celebration. Mrs. Coolidge also graciously accepted an invitation to tea when the members of the Custer Women's Civic Club formally dedicated the Community Building.

The Community Building was the center for such activities as dances, teas, sales, and a center for Civilian Conservation corps activities. At one time the Custer County Library was housed in the basement. The building was the embodiment of the history, patriotism, energy and accomplishments of the City of Custer and the Custer Women's Club.

By the 1950s, membership in the Custer Women's Civic Club was dwindling to the point where the women felt they could no longer manage the building. It was at this time that they gave it to the city.

It was subsequently used for a western museum, a wood toy manufacturing business, Black Hills Playhouse performances, a computer chip assembly plant, flower shows, county extension meetings, indoor auctions during inclement weather, troop and district meeting places for Boy Scouts and Girl

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page # 5

## Statement of Significance continued:

Scouts, for some years as an eighth-grade fundraising. The City considered the demolition of the building in the early 80's for a parking lot.

In the mid-1980s, a group formed the Grace Coolidge Memorial Log Building Foundation (GCMLBF) and leased the building from the city. This group started to run some recreational and fitness programs along with a day-care. Though there was no City Recreational Program, their intent was mainly to salvage the building. In the spring of 1986, a group of recreation minded individuals joined forces with the GCMLBF and formed the Custer Y's Men's Club. This co-ed organization started youth recreational programs (Baseball, softball, t-ball, aerobics, pre-school, and basketball leagues).

That summer also saw the donation of new buttress logs by a local log contractor, Jorgensen's Log Homes and over-all building staining with all of the labor and materials being donated the Custer Y's Men. Other projects have been: replacing exterior doors with steel framed doors, addition of gym lights, addition of ADA ramp and stairs at the entry, and replacing the crumbling front walk with new concrete.

The Grace Coolidge Memorial Log Building is significant for its continuing role as a social and recreational center in Custer. It is also significant at the state level as one of, if not the largest, log building in South Dakota.

## Bibliography:

Custer County Centennial Committee. A Brief History Of Custer County, South Dakota. [Custer, S.D.] The Committee, 1961

Custer County Chronicle, July, 1926.

Sundstrom, Jessie, editor. Custer County History to 1976. [Custer, S. D.] : The Society, 1977.

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The entire lot upon which the building sits

**Boundary Justification:** The boundary includes the parcel historically associated with the building