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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MAY 24 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 Allen's Opera House
other names/site number NeHBS #DS02-19; OHBIN #04-11-04

2. Location

street & number 100 East 8th N/A not for publication
city, town Cozad N/A vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Dawson code 047 zip code 69130

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 L. Hanson 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. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Two-part commercial block

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Unknown

walls Concrete

roof Asphalt

other Stone window ledges above and
below window frames

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Allen's Opera House is located at the northeast corner of Meridian and 8th Street, the main business intersection of Cozad. Built for Charles E. Allen in 1906 by Charles Hart and Mr. Shanholt, the patent stone (concrete block) was manufactured by Charles Hart in Cozad (Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey Form, 26 Aug. 1985). The first floor originally held the Cozad State Bank, co-owned by Charles Allen, and the Allen General Store. The Two-Part Commercial Block structure measures approximately 95 feet by 50 feet. It has a vaulted asphalt roof covered with rolled tar. Consistent with most Nebraska opera houses built during the twentieth century, the facade lacks ornamentation, aside from stone ledges above and below the windows. Access to the second-floor auditorium was originally through a single door on the west side of the building. The outside steps no longer exist and the door is boarded over; access is now only through an attic opening reached by a vertical ladder attached to the wall in the rear of the first-floor retail space. A small ticket office opens onto the 10 feet by 14 feet foyer, which identifies the location of the original entrance. It has double doors which open into the auditorium.

This opera house is an exceptional example of the use of office space occupying the same floor as the auditorium. A hallway extends the width of the building outside the auditorium, separating the theatre space from several interconnected offices. The auditorium space itself measures 45 feet wide by 59 feet long from wall to wall. A makeshift wall of low-grade wood slats and butcher paper separates approximately the rear ten feet from the rest of the auditorium space. This space was used as an amateur boxing gym when the auditorium was still accessible from the outside. This theatre never contained a balcony, but does have a notable vaulted ceiling (see photo, Cozad #2). Some ceiling wainscot covering remains. Double doors, which open onto an exterior wooden platform, are located in the northwest corner of the auditorium; this entrance accessed directly to the former stage area.

Unfortunately, a fire destroyed the stage in this opera house. The apparent depth of the stage was approximately 15 feet. According to the 1909 *Cahn Theatrical Guide*, the house seated about 500, but no dimensions were provided by the theatre manager to this publication.

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The rectangular two-story concrete block building features a prominent corner entry which provides access to the first level retail space. An additional recessed entry is found on the south (front) facade. The building is utilitarian in appearance and displays a flat roof with a simple concrete cornice, and pressed metal wall cornice above the corner entry and storefront on the south (front) facade. Fenestration for the most part, consists of double hung windows. Windows on the west facade, second level, have been boarded up. Windows on the south (front) facade depict "advertisements" for both historic and present businesses housed in the building (see photo #1).

Unlike most other opera house buildings that have undergone changes on the exterior, especially on the street level facades, the Allen's Opera House possesses an exceptionally high degree of exterior integrity, and thus represents one of the best examples of a well-preserved opera house block in Nebraska. The second level interior houses interconnected office spaces (see floor plan) which originally housed an insurance company, and a physician's office. The first floor retail space originally housed the Allen's department store and the Cozad State Bank. The second level offices are now vacant, and the first level retail space houses a jewelry store. Although the integrity of the opera house interior has been compromised due to the removal of the stage, the opera house "space" in terms of feeling and association is still apparent. Due to the building's high exceptional exterior integrity and the well-preserved inter-connected office spaces on the second level, the Allen's Opera House has been evaluated as a significant representative example of an opera house building in this multiple property nomination.

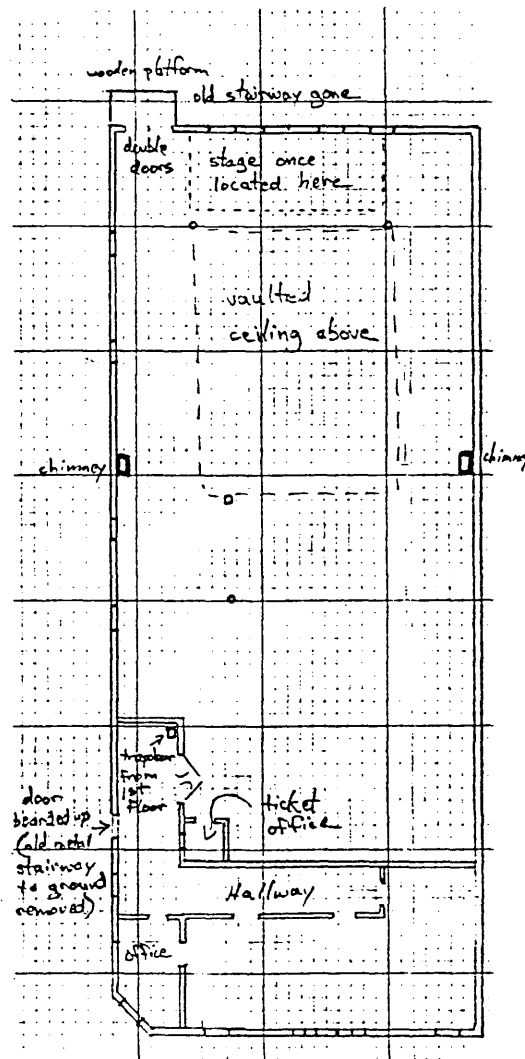
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Floor plan, Allen's Opera House, Cozad



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Function or Use : Historic Functions

Commerce/Trade: Professional

Commerce/Trade: Financial institution

Health Care: Medical business/office

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)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
<u>Performing Arts</u>	<u>1906-1917</u>	<u>1906</u>
<u>Entertainment/Recreation</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Social History</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>		
<u> </u>		
<u> </u>		
<u> </u>		

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Hart, Charles (builder)
Shanholt, first name unknown (builder)

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

Allen's Opera House is significant for its association with and in reference to the historic context "Aesthetic Systems: Itinerant and Local Performing Arts in Nebraska" and the property type of "Opera House Buildings in Nebraska, 1867 to 1917." Under Criterion A, this opera house is significant in the areas of the performing arts; 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 Cozad. As a facility for the performing arts, it offered productions such as musical concerts, home talent and high school productions, actor Eugene Moore, touring stock companies, dialect plays, minstrel shows, and classics such as *The Climax*, *St. Elmo*, *Weary Willie Walker*, *The Wolf*, and *Lena Rivers*. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1907-1918.)

This opera house is significant in the area of entertainment/recreation, since it provided a place where the whole community could gather to attend edifying lectures and sporting events (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1907-1918.)

This opera house is significant in the area of social history because it gave Cozad a neutral, nonaffiliated location for school declamatory contests, Commercial Club and political meetings. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1907-1918.) 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

Allen, Charles E. *Early and Modern History of Cozad and Surrounding Community.*
Cozad?: Tri-City Printers, Inc., 1959.
Allen's Opera House. Cozad site visit. 11 Apr. 1987.
Cozad Local. 7 Oct. 1910 - 4 Jan. 1918.
Cozad Republic. 28 Aug. 1908 - 18 Dec. 1909.
Cozad Tribune. 2 Mar. 1906 - 29 Nov. 1907 and 14 Sep. 1909 - 21 Sep. 1909.
Czaplewski, Russell A. Letter to the author. Lexington: 31 May 1986.
Frazier, James. Letter to the author. Cozad: 1986.
---. Telephone interview. Cozad: 8 Apr. 1987.
---. Personal interview. Cozad: 11 Apr. 1987.
Hart, Lane. Letter to the author. Cozad: 1987.
---. Personal interview. Cozad: 11 Apr. 1987.
Rupe, Genice R. Letter to the author. Lexington: 7 Feb. 1987.
Rupe-Jordening, Genice R. Letter to the author. Lexington: 21 Aug. 1987.

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

Zone Easting Northing

C

B

D

Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

This property is described as Lots 13 and 14, Block 6, Russell's Addition to the Original Town of Cozad, Dawson County, Nebraska

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire town lots that have been historically associated with this property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title D. Layne Ehlers, Principal Investigator

organization OHBIN Study date April, 1988

street & number 2302 South 11th telephone [402] 435-6946

city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68502

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The period of significance is derived from the original construction date of the building, 1906, by Charles Allen. 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 Palm Theatre, which opened circa 1911, took considerable business away from Allen's Opera House, leaving only sporadic events dwindling in quantity year by year.

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Allen's Opera House, Cozad
Representative Entertainments, 1907-1918

DATE	EVENT AND PERFORMERS
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Social History

Jan 1907 School declamatory contest and entertainment
Sep 1908 Commercial Club meeting
Nov 1908 School program
Oct 1910 Political speeches by W. J. Taylor and Congressman Hitchcock

Entertainment/Recreation

Jan 1911 Lecture by Frank L. Loveland of Lincoln
Oct 1912 "Christian Socialism" lecture by Rev. Joseph Perkin
"Socialism" lecture by Fred J. Warren
Oct 1913 Lecture by Shungapovi
Dec 1916 Dr. Whitfield Ray, the South American Traveller [sic]
Jan 1918 Wrestling match between William Busteed and Joe Stokes

Performing Arts:

Feb 1907 Fred Raymond's *Old Arkansaw* with Grace Hayes, Victor Lambert
Apr 1907 Nashville Students
A Poor Relation
Sep 1907 *Sis in New York*
Tillie Olson
Oakes & Gilson's *A Bachelor's Honeymoon* with Herbert de Guerre
Nov 1907 *My Boy Jack* starring Eugene Moore
Sep 1908 Pelton and Smutzer Co. in *The Lieutenant and the Cowboy* with
Theodore Lorch
Miss Nae [sic] St. Clair in *Bunco in Arizona*
Oct 1908 Slayton's Jubilee Singers
Nov 1908 Mr. Raymond's *Missouri Girl*
Eugene Moore in *My Boy Jack*
A Bachelor's Honeymoon with James Greene and Belle Rosa
The Missouri Girl
A Modern Woodman, home talent

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Allen's Opera House, Cozad
Representative Entertainments, 1907-1918

DATE EVENT AND PERFORMERS

Performing Arts, cont'd.

Dec 1908	<i>The Farmer's Daughter</i> <i>The Professor's Love Story</i> , home talent directed by Miss Allen The Lewis Stock Co. in <i>The Diamond</i> , <i>Necklace Robbery</i> , <i>The Parish Priest</i> , <i>Nebraska</i> , and <i>The Devil</i>
Oct 1909	<i>A Prince of Sweden</i> with Carl Olson
Dec 1909	<i>It's All in the Pay Streak</i> Cozad Theatrical Club, home talent
Oct 1910	<i>St. Elmo</i> the Trier Sisters Quintette
Nov 1910	<i>The Climax</i> , mgr. H. E. Bonnell <i>Weary Willie Walker</i> with Vic Crane <i>The Widow Perkins</i> Mr. and Mrs. Peter Carter, cartoonist and singer
Dec 1910	<i>The Village Belle</i> , high school play Gilbert A. Carter, impersonator Carl M. Dalton's Co. in <i>Tilly Olson</i> Lewis Stock Co. in <i>Nebraska</i> the Ringler Donovan Concert Co. with Bret H. Ringler
Oct 1911	Hallowell Concert Co. Rounds' Ladies Orchestra <i>Under the Harvest Moon</i>
Nov 1911	<i>Daniel Boone in Old Kentuck</i> The Morrison Entertainers International Concert Co. <i>The Little Rebel</i> , high school play
Nov 1912	Protean Concert Co. Giddings Concert Co.
Jan 1913	New York Male Quartet <i>Our Minister</i> , Clifton Mallory Co.
Feb 1913	Sanford Dodge & Co. in <i>The Right of Way</i> <i>The Miller's Daughter</i>
Feb 1913	The Perrys in <i>Kidnapped for a Million</i> Edwin R. Weeks Co.
Sep 1913	<i>The Wolf</i>

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Allen's Opera House, Cozad
Representative Entertainments, 1907-1918

DATE EVENT AND PERFORMERS

Performing Arts, cont'd.

- Oct 1913 Leon Washburn Stetson's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
The Dubinsky Bros. Production of *The Price She Paid*, starring
Rachel May Clark, cousin of the Barrymores
- Nov 1913 *The Girl and the Tramp*
- Oct 1914 *In the Shadow of Old Baldy*, home talent
- Oct 1916 Robert Sherman presents *The Girl Without a Chance*
The Other Man's Wife, Gaskill & MacVitty Co.
- Nov 1916 Mysterious Smith Co., spiritualists
The Gordon Co.
- Dec 1916 Florence Elliston in *The Shadow of the Cross*
- Jan 1917 The Cordova Concert Co.
- Feb 1917 Sidney Landon, the impersonator and humorist
- Mar 1917 Mrs. Turittit Iay in "The Fifth Floor Back"
- Sep 1917 George H. Bubb's *Ikey and Abey*
- Oct 1917 *Montana* by Al G. Story's Shows
The Giersdorf Co.
Lena Rivers
Kulola's Hawaiians in *The Princess of Paradise*
- Nov 1917 The Shaler Players (changed name to the Kincaid Players during this
run) in *Betty's Love Affair*, starring Evelyn Kincaid, William A.
Cornish, mgr.
- Dec 1917 Rose Dean in *The End of a Perfect Day*
- Jan 1918 *The Katzenjammers' Picnic*, high school
Stolen Jewels, or George Greaf [sic] Triumph
Northern Amusement Co. with *Let Ole Do It*
The Other Man's Wife
The Million Dollar Dolls

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Photographs
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The following information is the same for all Cozad photographs:

NAME OF PROPERTY: Allen's Opera House
CITY, COUNTY, STATE: Cozad, Dawson County, Nebraska
NeHBS SITE No.: DS02-19
OHBIN SITE No.: 04-11-04
NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Christian H. Ehlers

PHOTO NUMBER: Cozad #1
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 04-11-87 (8704/1:4)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Exterior view, looking northeast at the south (front) and west facades.

PHOTO NUMBER: Cozad #2
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 04-11-87 (8703/12:35)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Interior view, looking south at the auditorium.