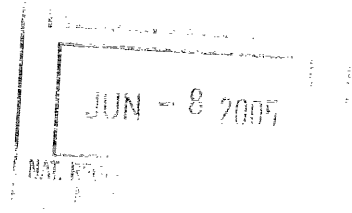


724

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 Columbia Hall
Other names/site number NEHBS #HW04-056

2. Location

Street & number Intersection Nebraska Highway 58 & W. Roger Welsch Avenue Not for publication
City or town Dannebrog Vicinity
State Nebraska Code NE County Howard Code 093 Zip code 68831

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.)

Wendell Summer Date 6/3/05
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 for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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): _____

Edson H. Beall 7/22/05

for _____
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Columbia Hall

Name of Property

Howard County, Nebraska

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

X Private

Public-local

Public-state

Public-federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

X Building(s)

District

Site

Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

Buildings

Sites

Structures

Objects

1

Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: meeting hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commercial Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation BRICK

Walls BRICK

Roof ASPHALT

Other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more 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.)

- X 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.
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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ETHNIC HERITAGE: European

Period of Significance

1908-1930

Significant Dates

1908

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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 for additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local Government
University
Other
Name of repository:

Columbia Hall

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre.

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

Table with 7 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, Zone, Easting, Northing. Rows 1-4 with data and a reference to a continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Greg Miller, Preservation Historian
organization Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office
date March, 2005
street & number 1500 "R" Street
telephone (402) 471-4787
city or town Lincoln
state NE zip code 68501

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.)

Property Owner

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

name/title Dannebrog Area Booster Club
street & number P.O. Box 216
telephone (308) 226-2237
city or town Dannebrog
state NE zip code 68831

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings.

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.

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Columbia Hall

Name of Property

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Section 7 Page 1

Dannebrog is a small community (pop. 324, 2000) in Howard County in eastern central Nebraska. Columbia Hall is located on two corner lots at the eastern end of the town's commercial district. Nebraska State Highway 58 runs along the west façade of the building enhancing the site's prominent location in the community.

Columbia Hall is an irregular-shaped two-story brick building measuring approximately 66 by 48 feet. The exterior of the first floor of the main (south) façade is highlighted by a cast iron storefront with a central recessed entry. The recessed entry is flanked on either side by a single bay. The glass transoms across the storefront have been replaced with an opaque composite material. Above the storefront are a pair of arched one-over-one double hung, double windows. Above each window is the Danish Brotherhood in America emblem. A metal sign inscribed with the date "1908" sits atop the metal cornice that spans the building's entire roofline.

The east façade initially runs perpendicular to the front of the building, but then, after about thirty-two feet angles off northwest for the remaining thirty-four feet. There are three separate wooden doors and one round window on the ground floor of this façade. The door nearest the front of the building is arched. On the second floor are five, single-pane, double-hung arched windows.

The rear of the building is relatively plain, with the exception of the three, single-pane, double-hung arched windows on the second floor.

The first floor of the west façade also has a cast iron entryway. The door is flanked on either side by windows. As on the front the original glass transoms have been replaced with an opaque composite material. A modern cement ramp has been added to make the side door handicapped accessible. Two round arched windows are also present on the first floor of this façade. The second floor has four, single-pane, double-hung arched windows. Surrounding the entire building are three belts of molded concrete brick. One at the base of the first floor, one between the first and second floors, and one above the second story windows.

The main entrance leads into a large community room. Four columns, original to the building, remain in this space. Immediately to the west a small, approximately 10 by 10 foot, room used to store reference material has been added. The rest of the first floor has also seen extensive renovation. New interior walls surround the main hall area creating useable space between the hall and the exterior of the building. The space on the east side contains the original stairs going down to the basement and leading up to the second floor, along with a new mechanical room. At the north end of the building going from east to west the new space contains a kitchen, the women's and men's restrooms, and a storage area. The new space on the west side houses the original flight of stairs leading to the second floor.

The basement remains in its original unfinished condition. A brick wall separates the room into two, approximately equal sized spaces.

The second floor, once maintained as a meeting hall, is currently unused and in disrepair. Interior walls in the east and west have been removed leaving just the framing studs. At the north end is a stage. Although it also lacks some of its original walls and framing, the platform is still intact making it a recognizable and distinguishing feature.

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Columbia Hall

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Section 8 Page 1

Columbia Hall in Dannebrog, Howard County, Nebraska is significant at the local level under Criterion A for its association with the Danish Brotherhood in America and the Danish ethnic culture. The Danish Brotherhood in America was an organization designed to help immigrants and promote cultural traditions. The period of significance for Columbia Hall is 1908 when the building was constructed to 1930 when the organization sold the building. The nomination consists of one contributing building.

The Founding of Dannebrog

After arriving in the United States a significant number of Danes immigrated to eastern Wisconsin. By the 1840s they had founded several rural and urban settlements. These colonies drew additional Danish settlers resulting in this ethnic group being well established in Wisconsin by the 1860s.

As the federal government opened land further west for settlement various members of the Wisconsin Danish enclaves decided to take advantage of this opportunity. One of these movements resulted in the establishment of a Danish colony in Howard County (established March 1871). Led by Lars Hannibal, Soren Nielsen, John Christensen and others, the Danes quickly began making land claims in 1871. Many of these people settled around the future site of Dannebrog.

As the number of settlers grew there developed an increased awareness this new rural colony needed a town center. Lars Hannibal, one of the original settlers in the area, took it upon himself to ensure this would occur. In May 1871 he bought land where he hoped the new town would be located. To solidify this proposition Mr. Hannibal sent a letter to the Postmaster General in March 1872 requesting the establishment of a post office for the proposed town site. This request was recognized one month later. The final step occurred in January 1874 when, according to the Howard County deed ledgers, the plat map of the town of Dannebrog was approved. (After considering several suggestions for the name of the new town Lars Hannibal selected Dannebrog, the term applied to the Danish national flag). Throughout the rest of the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century the Danish population of Howard County, and Dannebrog in particular, continued to increase.

The Danish Brotherhood in America

The Danish Brotherhood in America had its beginnings in the 1870s when thousands of people emigrated from Denmark to the United States. While hoping for greater opportunities in their new home the immigrants also cherished the traditions and culture of their native homeland. Reconciling these two objectives was not an easy task. Success in the United States required assimilation into a new culture that consequently resulted in compromising or forfeiting traditional customs. To prevent the complete disassociation from their heritage these settlers turned to their Danish neighbors, who shared their common interests, to help maintain their cultural identity.

That was the kind of companionship Mark Hansen was seeking when, in 1880, he formed the Danske Vaabenbrodre (Danish Brothers in Arms) in Omaha. Since Hansen was a veteran of the Danish Army and had fought in the United States Civil War, his organization emphasized the military service members had in common. Membership in this organization grew quickly. Additionally, similar groups that lacked military orientation, began forming around the country.

Realizing their common interests a number of these separate bodies proposed joining together to create a national organization. Eventually, five groups agreed to unite and held their first convention 1882. Members of the convention established a new organization named the Danish Brotherhood in America. To be more inclusive membership was not limited to veterans, but was open to all men "born of Danish parents or who were of Danish extraction." Goals established for the Danish Brotherhood in America included providing members with social activities, to nurture their common background through the use of the Danish language and songs, and to provide financial help to members with a survivor's insurance, and sickness and death benefits.

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Columbia Hall

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Section 8 Page 2

The Danish Brotherhood in America grew rapidly. The first year there were six lodges and two hundred members. Within ten years membership had grown to nearly two thousand people and forty-one lodges. As the Brotherhood's membership grew so did its reputation. From the beginning the group provided insurance that members may not have been able to find elsewhere. Investing the premiums from the insurance program made it possible for the Brotherhood to expand their benefits to members.

The Brotherhood also played an active role in perpetuating Danish tradition and culture. The national organization established a publication that dispersed relevant information and encouraged communication between members. Additionally, it sponsored cruises to Denmark and raised money to help bring Danish athletes to the United States for the 1932 Olympics. At the local level, lodges offered lectures, educational programs, and workshops designed to enhance and encourage the continuance of the Danish heritage.

To ensure the Danish Brotherhood in America continued to be a viable organization the membership base was expanded over time. In 1939, men who were married to women of Danish extraction were allowed to become members. The first juvenile members were accepted in 1952. Finally, in 1961 membership was opened to women, making the Brotherhood a true family organization.

Columbia Hall

As the number of ethnic Danes living in Dannebrog and the surrounding area increased the idea of establishing a Danish Brotherhood in America lodge gained popularity. This concept reached new heights in January 1892 when P.S. Petersen began traveling around the Dannebrog area getting prospective members to sign a petition for the creation of a lodge. By February 1892, Mr. Petersen had twenty-six signatures. These signatures along with other necessary papers were presented to the Supreme Secretary in Chicago, Illinois. As a result the lodge in Dannebrog was officially installed into the Danish Brotherhood on February 20, 1892.

Records do not indicate where the lodge members held their meetings during these early years. But it is reasonable to assume that various stores and offices would have been the most likely venues. By 1899, however, it became evident the lodge members wanted a permanent meeting hall. In that year the lodge filed Articles of Incorporation for the expressed purpose of purchasing land on which to construct a "building to be used for a Hall" (Articles of Incorporation. Danish Brotherhood Hall Association, September 23, 1899).

Still, even with these good intentions and the paperwork in place, the actual fruition of the project did not take place for some time. On January 13, 1908 the Danish Brotherhood Society Hall Association (D.B.S. Hall Association) bought the Woodman Building from John G. Schlytern for \$1,400 (*The Dannebrog News*, January 17, 1908). The newspaper article continued by stating the Association intended to remodel the building and use it as their hall.

These plans soon changed, however. At an April 18 meeting the D.B.S. Hall Association voted to tear down the old building and construct a new one (*The Dannebrog News*, April 24, 1908). Thereafter bids were received and a contractor retained. On June 26, 1908 *The Dannebrog News* reported the foundation was laid and the new Danish Brotherhood Society (D.B.S.) building would be called Columbia Hall. Later it was reported the Dannebrog Mercantile and Supply Company would rent the first floor with the second floor reserved for D.B.S. meetings. As work progressed on the building the newspaper reported Columbia Hall "is an ornament to the town and a monument to the progressiveness of the D.B.S." (*The Dannebrog News*, September 3, 1908). Finally, on October 9, 1908 a ceremony was held to dedicate the opening of Columbia Hall (*The Dannebrog News*, September 24, 1908). For at least the next twenty-two years the Dannebrog Lodge of the Danish Brotherhood in America met in Columbia Hall.

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Columbia Hall

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A declining membership forced the Dannebrog lodge of the Danish Brotherhood to sell the building in 1930. This was followed in 1934 by the dissolution of the D.B.S. chapter. While different retail businesses continued to occupy the first floor, the second floor was still used for meetings of such groups as the Independent Order of Odd Fellow, the Rebekahs, the Royal Neighbors of America, and the American Legion.

The Danish Brotherhood in America is an important organization originally designed to help immigrants adjust to life in the United States. After immigration slowed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the organization changed its main mission to promote the Danish heritage through a variety of programs. Columbia Hall in Dannebrog is an excellent example of a building used by this organization. It is an especially important organization and building in Dannebrog because of the community's strong Danish culture and heritage. To help ensure the continuance of this ethnic tradition the Dannebrog Booster Club purchased Columbia Hall in 1992. Through ongoing renovation Columbia Hall is once again playing a prominent role in the community and helping to maintain the strong Danish heritage and is still an ornament in the community. The property is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of ethnic culture for the role it played in the promotion and preservation of Danish culture in Nebraska.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Columbia Hall

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Section 9 Page 1

Bibliography

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The Dannebrog News

Howard County, Register of Deeds Office.

Jeppesen, Torben G. Dannebrog on the American Prairie. Translated by James D. Iverson. Odense, Denmark: Odense City Museums, 2000.

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Continuation Sheet**

Columbia Hall

Name of Property

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Verbal Boundary Description

Described as lots 8 and 9, block 17, Original Town, Dannebrog, Howard County, Nebraska.

Boundary Justification

Boundary includes all historically associated real estate.