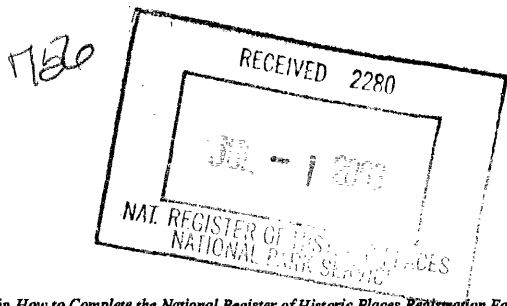


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 105 Main Street N/A not for publication
city or town Austin N/A vicinity
state Nevada code NV county Lander code 015 zip code 89310

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ronald W. Jones 3/4 PO 6-26-03
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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/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 8/14/03
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	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

2

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category

Subcategory

- SOCIAL
- SOCIAL
- COMMERCE

- meeting hall
- other: secondary structure

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category

Subcategory

SOCIAL

meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Stone
- walls Brick
- Concrete
- roof Asphalt
- other Wood
- Metal

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.)

- 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 fifty years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1867-1953

Significant Dates

1867-68

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Pearce, Richard (lodge furniture)

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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 of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property approximately 0.08 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing		Zone Easting Northing	
1 11	494020 4371250	3 11	
2 11		4 11	

___ See 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	<u>J. Daniel Pezzoni</u>	date	<u>June 1, 2003</u>
organization	<u>Landmark Preservation Associates</u>	telephone	<u>(540) 464-5315</u>
street & number	<u>6 Houston St.</u>	zip code	<u>24450</u>
city or town	<u>Lexington</u> state <u>VA</u>		

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	<u>Lander Lodge No. 8, F&AM (contact: Ray H. Williams III)</u>		
street & number	<u>PO Box 94</u>	telephone	<u>(775) 964-2531</u>
city or town	<u>Austin</u> state <u>NV</u>	zip code	<u>89310</u>

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.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 7 Description

Summary

The 1867-68 Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall is located at 105 Main Street in Austin, Lander County, Nevada. Austin is situated at an elevation of approximately 6,600 feet above sea level in Pony Canyon near the northern end of the Toiyabe Range and near the geographic center of the state. The town lies in the watershed of the Reese River, a tributary of the Humboldt River, and it is served by US Highway 50. The southwest-facing two-story building is constructed of brick and has an asphalt-roll front-gable roof with ventilators, a storefront with French doors under a permanent awning, and a rear shed wing. The ground-floor commercial space has a cloth ceiling. The second-floor lodge room, dressing room, and vestibule have grained woodwork. To the rear, attached to the second story of the main building by a bridge-like deck, is a two-level brick outbuilding that formerly contained a boiler and possibly a carbide plant. This building is built into a steep rocky bank that rises to Court Street.

Exterior

The front elevation has stretcher-bond brickwork whereas the side and rear elevations are American bond. The tall front parapet features corbelled brickwork including dentil-like corbels, two narrow recessed signage panels, and two ornamental cast-iron vents. The end corners of the parapet have been removed and the remaining brickwork crudely but decoratively shaped and parged (this alteration apparently occurred during the second quarter of the twentieth century). Sheet-metal open downspouts extend from the corners of the parapet to empty onto the roof of the awning. The second story has five window openings, all with segmental-arched heads, granite sills, and pintles for former louvered wood shutters. The center opening is a false window; its recessed brickwork was formerly concealed behind closed shutters. Presently a modern coach lamp-type light of aluminum and blue glass with the Masonic square and dividers motif projects from the opening. The four true windows have one-over-one sash with textured glass.

A shed awning with a corrugated metal roof projects over the first story. The awning was reworked in the late twentieth century and round metal poles inserted underneath for support, but it incorporates historic fabric such as slender iron struts and a sawn ledger attached to the facade by iron hooks with wood shims. Presumably the building originally featured an awning, although hard evidence does not exist for one until the early twentieth century (floods periodically damaged buildings on Main Street and may have carried off an earlier awning). The first story of the front

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 7 Description, continued

elevation consists of five entry bays divided by thick brick piers and spanned by jack arches. Set back in the recessed bays are two-leaf wood and glass panel doors. The left-hand door, which provides access to the second-floor meeting room, has eight lights in each leaf above a recessed and molded panel. The four doors to the right have four lights in each leaf above a recessed and molded panel. One of the top panes in each pair of door leaves is an operable awning pane. The bays have lintels formed from iron plates and bars, and there are iron pintles for former outer iron security doors. In between the arches are wrought-iron hooks that may once have supported signage. Other features include several iron pindle-like features of unknown function, porcelain doorknobs, and the frame for a former screen door in the center bay of which a screen transom painted with the letter L survives.

The northwest elevation is obscured by an adjoining building. The southeast and rear elevations have poured concrete at their bases to reinforce the foundations or to mitigate failing brickwork, and S-form tie rod plates. The southeast elevation has two sliding sheet metal hatches at the second-floor floor level that provide access to the springs and cables used to tighten the second floor's patented floor system (see Section 8). The southeast elevation also has charring associated with an 1881 fire that damaged the building.

The northeast or rear elevation has a stepped parapet and its second story has a four-panel door that opens onto the deck that connects to the outbuilding (described below), a six-over-one window, a bricked-up window, and a window made into a door with a textured glass panel. Rising next to the four-panel door is a wrought-iron ladder for access to the roof. The rear elevation first story has jack-arched entries with pintles for former doors and a shed-roofed brick addition. The addition has roofing fashioned from flattened oil or kerosene cans cut-nailed to the roof boards. Through an entry with a wood lintel are visible a cloth ceiling, traces of wallpaper on the walls, and a four-panel door to the main building with graffiti written in pencil.

Interior

The first-floor commercial space was not open for inspection but much of it could be observed through the front entries. The space has a wood floor, a vertical beaded board wainscot, plaster or papered walls above the wainscot, and a cloth ceiling. Running down the center of the space are metal pole supports. Every other pole supports heavy timber brackets with curving chamfered

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 3

Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 7 Description, continued

forms; presumably wooden supports formerly stood under these brackets. The left-hand entry opens into a narrow corridor with plaster walls and a paper-tile ceiling that leads back to a stair.

At the top of the stair is a bi-fold door leading into the hall vestibule. One door leaf is typically closed; the other leaf functions as a conventional door with decorative hardware, a doorbell, a spring hinge, and a peephole with sliding opening. The vestibule has a modern bathroom and another door with a peephole that leads into the lodge hall itself. The hall is a large room with plaster walls, a paper tile ceiling (over stucco or plaster), beaded nail/coat-hook rails, decorative iron grilles high on the walls, and blue carpeting (the blue color relates to the status of the lodge). A one-step dais extends along three sides of the room and there are higher daises near the midpoints of the southwest, northwest, and northeast sides.

The southwest dais, located between the two pairs of windows on the front of the building, has a red curtain hung from a semicircular curtain rod. A floor hatch opened into a compartment used to store a human skeleton known as "The Duke" that was used in Odd Fellows rituals (the skeleton is now located in the Virginia City Odd Fellows museum). To the left and right of the curtain are porcelain and bronzed metal knobs that may once have served as curtain holders. Associated with these are small medallions featuring the profiles of helmeted soldiers that may have served the same purpose. The windows have simple grained surrounds and molded valences.

On the southeast wall hangs a painted canvas or cheesecloth floor mat that was used in the ritual of the Order of the Eastern Star and was probably made in the late 1870s, perhaps by one of the female members of the Order's Austin lodge. The mat is in the form of a five-pointed star with the following colors and symbols painted in the points: white (crown), yellow (wheat sheaf), red (chalice), blue (sword), and green (broken column). On the northwest wall hangs a large lithograph depicting Masonic iconography published by John Sherer in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1857. Lecterns and a center altar are fashioned from mountain mahogany and have gold-painted plaster ornamentation. Near the front windows stands a Mason & Hamlin cabinet organ that was apparently purchased by the lodge in 1868. In a corner stand two second-degree columns topped by orbs that were made or assembled by lodge member Richard Pearce in 1868. The room also contains many pieces of original or early furniture, ceramic spittoons, and carbide light fixtures (taken down).

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 4

Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 7 Description, continued

The east corner of the second floor is occupied by a dressing room known to the lodge as the "inner room." This room is lined with closets with grained woodwork, four-panel doors, porcelain knobs, a frieze of recessed molded panels, and a molded cornice. Inside the closets are beaded board partitions, old coat hooks, and nineteenth-century carpeting with a decorative octagonal pattern. Some closets have been replaced with a base cabinet and sink. The room's plasterboard ceiling is lower than the original and there is a vinyl tile floor.

Outbuilding

The two-level outbuilding is constructed of crudely made bricks laid in American bond. The gable roof has roofing fashioned from flattened oil or kerosene cans cut-nailed to the roof boards. The granite foundation has a railroad rail built into it (this detail in combination with the cut nails and Sanborn maps suggest a date of construction in the early 1880s). An insulated pipe leads from the outbuilding to the main building, evidence that the building once contained a boiler for heating the main building. The outbuilding has a utilitarian exposed brick interior. A frame addition, probably dating to the early twentieth century, on the northeast gable end has standing-seam metal roofing, brick pattern metal siding, and wire nails used in its construction. On the southeast side are the ruins of a former two-seat privy of brick construction with railroad ties as floor joists. The privy was probably built at the same time as the rest of the outbuilding or shortly afterward.

Integrity Statement

The Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall possesses very good integrity from the period of significance. The main character-defining features have been preserved on the exterior as well as interesting secondary features or evidence for secondary features. Non-domestic outbuildings such as the one that survives behind the building are now rare in Austin. The principal interior space, the second-floor hall itself, has lost some original finishes, but it retains many historic secondary features and furnishings. Likewise, the second-floor dressing room and the first-floor commercial space are well preserved from the historic period, the former with its grained closets and the latter with its cloth ceiling. The block of Main Street on which the building stands has lost some historic resources (losses that began before the end of the period of significance), but it retains its essential nineteenth-century commercial character.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 5

Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance

Summary

The Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall, located in Austin, Nevada, was built in 1867-68 to provide meeting space for several fraternal organizations. The two-story brick building has notable original or early features such as a patented cable-supported dance floor, early lodge furniture, grained dressing room closets, a ground-floor store with a cloth ceiling, and evidence of a patented gas light ventilation system and iron storefront security doors. In addition to the important role the building played in Austin's social life, it also contained a dance hall and, in 1871, a roller-skating rink. The building remains in use by one of its original occupants, Lander Lodge No. 8 F&AM, and also by Nevada's oldest functioning chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star (Electa No. 2).

Applicable Criteria

The Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall meets Criterion A and is eligible in the social history area of significance for its central role in the social life of early Austin. The property also meets Criterion A and is eligible in the entertainment/recreation area of significance for its association with recreation in early Austin, including its use as a roller skating rink. The property also meets Criterion C and is eligible in the architecture area of significance for its many notable, innovative, or representative features and finishes, including a patented floor system. The period of significance extends from the 1867-68 date of construction until 1953. (The fifty-year National Register cut-off is chosen because the building is not of exceptional significance for the period after 1953.) The Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall is eligible at the local level of significance. The building is located in the Austin Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971. Information in support of eligibility appears throughout this section.

Acknowledgments

A number of organizations and individuals assisted in the preparation of this report. The nomination was sponsored by Lander County and the Austin Historical Society with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from the Nevada Commission of Economic Development, and it is one of ten nominations prepared for prominent historic landmarks in Austin in 2003. Special assistance was provided by the owner, Lander Lodge No. 8, and one of its members, Ray H. "Ramey" Williams III of Austin. Others who provided assistance included Allen D. Gibson, Deputy District Attorney, Lander County; Christy Caronongan, Administrative

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 6

Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

Assistant, Lander County Executive Director's Office; Ray H. Williams Jr., Ray and Irene Salisbury, Phillip "Poncho" and Joan Williams, and Joy Brandt with the Austin Historical Society; Dee Helming and Herbert Wallace "Wally" Trapnell, The Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce; and Mella Rothwell Harmon, Architectural Historian/National Register Coordinator, Nevada State Historic Preservation Office.

Historic Context

Silver was discovered in Pony Canyon in May 1862 and within a year the population of the nascent community of Austin and its immediate vicinity stood at nearly 1,000. The Comstock Lode boomtown of Virginia City provided a staging area for the settlement of Austin and in many respects served as a template for Austin's economic, demographic, and architectural development. Austin was made the seat of Lander County on September 2, 1863, and in November 1864 the town's population was reliably estimated at approximately 6,000, briefly making Austin the state's second largest community. Austin rapidly passed through the three incipient developmental stages identified by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office as characteristic of the state's mining towns: the settlement stage (provisional architecture and haphazard organization), the camp phase (more permanent frame buildings and town platting), and the town phase (masonry construction, public buildings, established infrastructure, and stylistic sophistication).¹

By the end of 1866 Austin boasted two substantial brick churches (Austin Methodist and St. Augustine's Catholic), several banking houses, the *Daily Reese River Reveille* newspaper, the International Hotel (moved from Virginia City), and hundreds of brick, stone, wood, and adobe mining structures, commercial buildings, and dwellings. American-born whites constituted the majority of the population; Chinese, English/Welsh, Irish, and "civilized Indians" were important groups as well. Austin also experienced, to a degree, a fourth phase of Nevada mining town development: partial abandonment, as the silver played out and the town's economy and population contracted at the end of the nineteenth century. Austin's status as a trade center for central Nevada

¹ Neu, "Austin Historic District;" Abbe, *Austin*, 56; Hulse, *Silver State*, 79; and Harmon, "How to Prepare Nominations," 8-9. One authority claims a peak Austin population of 10,000 in the summer of 1863 (Nevada State Historical Society, *Nevada*, 259). Another suggests a peak population of approximately 8,000 (Smith, "Austin, Nevada," 7).

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 7

Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

prevented it from becoming a ghost town, but the town's population declined to 702 by 1900 and stands at about 300 today.²

Benevolent, fraternal, political, and ethnic organizations played an important part in early Austin's social life. In November 1863, before the town was a year old, a Hebrew Benevolent Society was formed, followed in 1864 by Masonic and Odd Fellows lodges, the Independent Order of Good Templars, and the Society of Reese River Pioneers, and in 1865 by the Austin Circle of the Fenian Brotherhood and the Merry Bachelors of Austin. These organizations promoted political and social causes, organized and hosted balls, concerts, holiday observances, and lectures.³

The International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) convened Austin Lodge No. 9 in January 1864, and in 1867 a second, short-lived Odd Fellows chapter, Alpha Lodge No. 11, was organized. Austin's Odd Fellows met informally as early as July 1863 and by September they had formed the Austin Association of Odd Fellows. Newspaper dealer and paint supplier Frank V. Drake served as the Association's secretary in 1863 and he made his shop available for its meetings. The Free and Accepted Masons formed Lander Lodge No. 8 in March 1864, and on April 1 of the following year a second Masonic lodge was organized, Austin Lodge No. 10. Austin's Masons discussed the formation of a lodge as early as August 1863, and at a meeting in the county courthouse on March 3, 1864 petitioned the California Grand Lodge to create Lander Lodge No. 172. The Nevada Grand Lodge was formed on January 18, 1865, and the Austin lodge was redesignated Lander Lodge No. 8. The various Odd Fellows and Masonic lodges and associations initially met at several locations, but by June 1864 Lander Lodge No. 8 was paying rent to Isaac Braderick (or Bradrick) for use of the second story of his brick building on Main Street, known as Massauer's Dry Goods Store. A September 1864 lease for this space referred to it as "the Odd Fellows' and Mason's Lodge room." According to Masonic historian Wayne Perkins, Braderick may have added the second story to his building to accommodate the lodges.⁴

² Neu, "Austin Historic District;" Abbe, *Austin*, 58-59; and Harmon, "How to Prepare Nominations," 9.

³ Abbe, *Austin*, 75-76.

⁴ *Ibid.*; *Reese River Reveille*, July 25 and September 12, 1863 and December 2, 1864; Perkins, "Lander Lodge #8;" Harrington and Angel, *Harrington's Directory of the City of Austin*, 42; and

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8

Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

The duplication of Masonic and Odd Fellows lodges in Austin was a result of Civil War antagonisms. As Evalin Curran, a historian of the Order of the Eastern Star (the women Masons) in Nevada, has written: "Masonic history shows the North and South so strongly divided here that one lodge for each was formed with the only common cause, a semblance of law and order. Later the southern one was gradually to disintegrate as the North showed its strength to the world." The duplication may explain press notices that suggest separate Masonic and Odd Fellows meeting places even after the Braderick building was secured, and may also explain the reported completion of an "Odd Fellow's Hall" in early 1865.⁵

As Austin developed into a stable community and Masonic and Odd Fellows membership grew, the lodges began to plan for the construction of a jointly owned meeting place. Also, the end of the Civil War brought reconciliation between the North and South-leaning lodges, allowing them to pool resources for a building. In September 1867 a Masonic and Odd Fellows' Hall Association was formed to sell stock for the construction of the hall, which would have store space for rent on the ground level and a meeting hall above. A site was purchased "in the center of the most valuable part of the chief avenue of the city" and ground broken on October 15. According to Masonic historian Ray H. Williams III, a photograph exists that shows Chinese workmen tamping the ground for the building foundation, which was begun October 22. On November 2 the "interesting and imposing ceremonies" of the cornerstone laying were enacted. The *Reese River Reveille* reported the participation of "the Grand Architect intrusted with the superintendence of the building" but neglected to identify him (the unnamed architect's title suggests he was a Mason). The building was roofed over on January 1, 1868, and the finish work completed save for the plastering of the second-floor hall, which was delayed by cold weather.⁶

Lander Lodge No. 172 records (loose papers).

⁵ Curran, *History of the Order of the Eastern Star*, 10; Perkins, "Lander Lodge #8; and Lewis, *The Town that Died Laughing*, 174.

⁶ *Reese River Reveille*, November 1 and 4, 1867 and January 24, 1868; Ray H. Williams III personal communication. A cursory examination of Lander Lodge No. 8 records for 1867 and 1868 did not discover the name of the architect.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 9

Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

The January 24, 1868 issue of the *Reveille* carried an extensive description of the recently completed Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall:

The building is 75 feet long by 36 feet wide; it embraces two stories, and its hight [*sic*] is 37 feet. The first story contains two stores, each 75 feet long, 15 feet wide, and 13 feet high; and the main entrance to the hall. The hall is a spacious room of the proportions of 60 feet long by 34 feet wide, and is 16 feet from floor to ceiling. The junction of walls and ceiling has an elliptical finish. Back of the hall there are three small rooms. Besides the principal entrance to the hall from Main Street there is another in the rear from Court Street over a short bridge. The hall is furnished with patent ventilators, and is well lighted by four large windows in front. Excepting the foundation, which is composed of masses of tough granite, the building is of well-made brick, and is covered with a tin roof laid upon a thick stratum of earth. The front of the building is surmounted by a plain, deep cornice, below which there are indented spaces for two tables for inscriptions, which, when they are inserted, will relieve the present appearance of heaviness.

According to one modern source, the building cost \$17,600 to construct, although in 1881 its value was given as \$3,375. (Property values and construction costs were inflated in Austin during the 1860s and depressed in the 1870s and later.)⁷

Although the architect for the building has not been identified, others involved in its construction and outfitting are known. In June 1868 carpenter and undertaker Richard Pearce was paid for making second-degree columns for the lodge, and the following month J. D. Thompson was paid for "Tyling and washing" (references to laying drain tile and whitewashing?). The Austin mercantile house of Horton & Sawtelle supplied furniture for the lodge including sofas and "day chairs."⁸

The original commercial occupant or occupants of the ground level are not known, but in May 1871 John Parady & Co. announced the opening of a roller skating rink in the space. For 25 cents

⁷ *Reese River Reveille*, January 24, 1868; "Welcome to Austin;" and Angel, *History of Nevada*, 240.

⁸ Lander Lodge No. 8 Record of Minutes, pp. 253, 258, 283, and 288.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 10

Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

admission and 25 cents skate rental patrons could skate in the afternoons and evenings, and Saturday mornings from 10 a.m. to noon the skating was children only. Special "skating soirees" were also offered. The roller-skating Austinites of 1871 were at the forefront of a nationwide craze that began in the 1860s and peaked in the 1870s and 1880s (before being resurrected in the early twentieth century). James L. Plimpton of New York perfected the prototype modern roller skate in 1863 and in 1869 the New York Skating Association was formed by enthusiasts. What is even more surprising about Austin is that the Pardy roller rink was not the only one in town--Barovich's Hall had one too. The Pardy and Barovich roller skating rinks failed to advertise in 1872, suggesting the fad was short-lived. The saloon of Triplett & Clark occupied the ground floor in 1881, and the 1886 Sanborn map notes a saloon and billiards parlor as occupants. In 1890 the space was used as a hall and in 1907 it was occupied by a meat market.⁹

Recreational use was an aspect of the building from the very beginning; in fact, the hall was introduced to the public with a ball on January 15, 1868. To enhance the suitability of the hall for dancing the Masons and Odd Fellows installed a system of cables to give the floor more bounce. As reported by the *Reveille* on May 22, 1877:

The laying of Clark's patent elastic safety floor is completed in Masonic and Odd Fellows' Hall . . . In order to give the public an opportunity of testing the merits of the floor, the Trustees have concluded to give a grand ball in the hall, on the night of the 30th instant. Dancing on this floor will be a luxury and a new sensation.

The patented dance floor is still in place, having survived a fire that damaged the hall and destroyed a string of buildings on the north side of Main Street in 1881. The *Reveille* reported that "the Masonic Hall roof was burned off entirely, and the second floor badly damaged." The present gable roof may have been installed after the 1881 fire. The gas light flues on the side parapets were another survivor of the fire, and they remained in place well into the first half of the twentieth century before being removed.¹⁰

⁹ *Reese River Reveille*, May 27 and 31 and July 26, 1871 and September 15, 1881; Hickok, *Encyclopedia of North American Sports History*, 388; Levinson and Christensen, *Encyclopedia of World Sport*, vol. 3, 907; and Sanborn maps.

¹⁰ *Reese River Reveille*, May 22, 1877 and September 15, 1881; "Welcome to Austin;" Lewis, *The Town that Died Laughing*, 215; Torrence, *History of Masonry in Nevada* (excerpt at

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Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

Female lodges associated with the Masons and Odd Fellows also used the hall. Electa Chapter No. 2, Order of the Eastern Star, a Masonic affiliate, was organized on June 6, 1877. According to a 1978 guide to Austin, Electa No. 2 is the oldest functioning Eastern Star chapter in Nevada. The Austin Rebekahs (I.O.O.F.) organized on May 13, 1880 as the Esther Degree Lodge No. 4, and the same year they joined Electa No. 2 in the purchase of dishes "for the purpose of giving entertainments." In 1897 the Rebekahs reorganized as Lodge No. 13 of the Rebekah Assembly, I.O.O.F., and in 1909 the lodge boasted fifty-four members of whom thirty-five were "sisters" and nineteen were "brothers." Today, Electa No. 2 and Lander Lodge No. 8 continue to meet in the building. The first floor is presently used for storage.¹¹

Architectural Analysis

The Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall is one of the Nevada's oldest halls specifically constructed for and by a fraternal organization to survive to the present day. The building is representative of fraternal halls built across America during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These buildings typically combined meeting hall and commercial functions; commercial rents helped defray building and maintenance costs and generated income for the fraternal organization. The Austin hall's description in the January 24, 1868 issue of the *Reveille* provides a number of insights into its original character. The original roof, consisting of "a tin roof laid upon a thick stratum of earth," points to Hispanic influence. Other flat earthen roofs existed (and may still exist) over Austin's early commercial buildings, and adobe was a common building material in the early years. The "patent ventilators" were served by diminutive brick flues ranged along the side parapets. (The flues were removed in the mid-twentieth century, but remnants of the ventilation system may survive in the walls.) Not much is revealed about interior details, except for the mention of the "elliptical finish" at the juncture of the walls and ceiling in the lodge room. This seems to reference a cove cornice, but whether of wood, plaster, or pressed metal is unknown, for the cornice was apparently destroyed in the 1881 fire. The

www.nvmasons.org); and Curran, *History of the Order of the Eastern Star*, 11, 12.

¹¹ Curran, *History of the Order of the Eastern Star*, 10-11; *Proceedings of the Rebekah Assembly I.O.O.F. of Nevada*; "Visitors' Guide to Greater Austin;" and Ray H. Williams III personal communication.

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Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

partition that divided the first floor into two narrow store spaces was presumably removed prior to the opening of the roller skating rink in 1871.¹²

A number of architectural features are not explicitly mentioned in the 1868 article but are worthy of note. The false window created the appearance of a continuous row of windows on the exterior while allowing for the placement of the dais at the center of the lodge hall's southwest wall. False windows were occasionally used in brick construction in the East and Midwest during the nineteenth century for similar reasons. Another design feature of the Austin hall is virtually unknown outside of the West; the building's storefront consists of a row of entryways rather than a center entry flanked by display windows, the standard arrangement east of the Mississippi. (John Reps' collections of lithographic views of American towns and cities demonstrate the prevalence of the Western storefront form in the West.) Whether there was a corresponding functional difference in the way retail merchandising was carried out has not been studied.¹³

The iron doors that once secured the storefront entries protected the merchandise inside from theft and, in Austin, may have served the additional function of safeguarding the fragile wood and glass doors behind them and the interior as well from the damaging freshets that periodically roared down Main Street. The cloth ceiling inside the store space may be one of the best-preserved ceilings of its kind in Austin, and although not original it perpetuates a ceiling treatment that was in use from the earliest years in Nevada. Finally, the Austin hall is notable for its two patented features: the original ventilation system--assumed to have vented carbide lights, but perhaps for general ventilation--and the "Clark's patent elastic safety floor" added in 1877. America's historic Masonic lodges are noted for their architectural stylishness, refinement, novelty, and even eccentricity. With its patented features the Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall illustrates this defining aspect of Masonic architecture.

¹² *Reese River Reveille*, January 24, 1868.

¹³ Reps, *Bird's Eye Views*, 82, 83.

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Section 10 Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area corresponds to Lander County tax parcel 01-078-05.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the nominated area correspond to the present boundaries of the parcel on which the Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall stands.

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Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. 1. Subject: Austin Masonic and Odd Fellows Hall (same for all photos)
 2. Location: Lander Co., Nv. (same for all photos)
 3. Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni (same for all photos)
 4. Photo date: March 2003 (same for all photos)
 5. Original negative archived at the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office,
 Carson City, Nv. (same for all photos)
 6. Description of view: Southwest (front) and southeast elevations.
 View looking north.
 7. Photograph number appears at beginning of entry (same for all photos)
2. 6. Southeast and northeast elevations. View looking west.
3. 6. Rear wing, bridge/deck, and outbuilding. View looking northwest.
4. 6. Lodge hall, southeast and southwest walls.
5. 6. Dressing room closets.