

WT07-26, Continued

10. GEOGRAPHIC DATA

Acreage: Less than one acre  
UTM Coordinate: 14/E540850/N4437380

Verbal Boundary Description: Lots 1-3, Block 24, Original Town of Red Cloud, Webster County Nebraska.

WT07-27

32-4924

- 1. NAME: Miner Brothers Store
- 2. LOCATION: nw corner 3rd & Webster Streets
- 4. OWNER: Raymond and Dorothy Wescoat
- ADDRESS: Box 412, Red Cloud, Nebraska 68970

7. DESCRIPTION: The Miner Brothers store is a two story brick structure measuring 25 by 100 feet with a full cellar beneath. The structure was built in 1883 and was the first brick business block erected in the growing village of Red Cloud. As originally constructed the store featured a ground level cast-iron storefront, and a vintage cornice with a central pediment or gablet on the east front facade. The early cornice has been removed and re-built with brick as have portions of the front wall (photo #24).

Fenestration consisted of full-height lights on the second level, topped with a round-arched stone hood with keystone while the ground floor windows (south facade) were transom lights with stilted-segmented arches for hoods. The east front windows have been filled with brick while the ground floor windows are blocked with wood—these, however, do preserve some reveal from the outer surface of the wall which the second floor windows do not share.

8. SIGNIFICANCE: James and Hugh Miner were among the earliest business establishments in Red Cloud, opening their business in 1878 in a wooden building. In 1883 they opened this structure, built of local brick—the first brick structure completed on Red Cloud's main street. The store's business slogan was "live and let live." According to Mildred Bennett, "James Miner was the kind of business man who was willing to help those who he thought were worthy. When he put the business on a cash basis, he issued coupon books to carry his customers over until they could pay. The customers signed notes; the notes could be sold to the bank and bookkeeping was eliminated." (Bennett: 1961, p. 66).

The building is significant to the major theme of this nomination. When the Cathers moved to Red Cloud they rented a small house just one block west of the store (WT07-26). Mildred Bennett relates that

". . . friends remember the little girl dressed in a leopard-skin fabric coat and hat, sitting on the base shelf in Miner Brothers' General Store in the town of Red Cloud to have a pair of shoes fitted, and discoursing, with some prompting from her father, on Shakespeare, English history, and her life in Virginia." (Bennett: 1961, p.1).

**WILLA CATHER THEMATIC GROUP:**

**WT07-27, Continued**

Cather describes the store in her short story "Two Friends."

"He was the principal banker in our town, and proprietor of the large general store next the bank; he owned farms up in the grass country, and a fine ranch in the green timbered valley of the Caw." ("Two Friends", p. 195).

"Dillon's bank and general store stood at the corner of Main Street and a cross-street, and on this cross-street, two short blocks away, my family lived. On my way to and from school, and going on the countless errands that I was sent upon day and night, I always passed Dillon's store. Its long, red brick wall, with no windows except high overhead, ran possibly a hundred feet along the sidewalk of the cross-street. The front door and show windows were on Main Street, and the bank was next door. The board sidewalk along the red brick wall was wider than any other piece of walk in town, smoother, better laid, kept in perfect repair; very good to walk on in a community where most things were flimsy. I liked the store and the brick wall and the sidewalk because they were solid and well built, and possibly I admired Dillon and Trueman for much the same reason." ("Two Friends", p. 197).

"The bank, of course, was locked and dark before the sun went down, but the store was always open until ten o'clock; the clerks put in a long day. So did Dillon. He and his store were one. He never acted as salesman, and he kept a cashier in the wire-screened office at the back end of the store; but he was there to be called on." ("Two Friends", p. 198).

"Every evening in winter, when I went to the post-office after supper, I passed through Dillon's store instead of going round it,—for the warmth and cheerfulness, and to catch sight of Mr. Dillon and Mr. Trueman playing checkers in the office behind the wire screening; both seated on high accountant's stools, with the checker-board on the cashier's desk before them. I knew all Dillon's clerks, and if they were not busy, I often lingered about to talk to them; sat on one of the grocery counters and watched the checker-players from a distance." ("Two Friends" - Obscure Destinies, pp. 198-199).

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreeage: Less than one acre  
UTM Coordinate: 14/E540965/N4437420

Verbal Boundary Description: Lots 11-12, block 26, Original Town of Red Cloud, Webster County, Nebraska.

**WT07-31**

82-4925

- 1. NAME: Opera House
- 2. LOCATION: 413 N. Webster
- 4. OWNER: Frank E. & Henrietta Morhart
- ADDRESS: #3 Oak Hurst Place, Santa Rosa, CA 95405

2005