

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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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 Warren's Opera House
other names/site number NeHBS #SA04-34; OHBIN #02-21-07

2. Location

street & number 511 Second St. not for publication
city, town Friend vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Saline code 151 zip code 68359

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</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 A. 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: Restaurant

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 Concrete

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Stone trim

Pressed metal ledge above

street-level facade windows

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Warren's Opera House is located at 511 Second St., at the southeast corner of Second Street and Maine. It was erected in 1885-1886 by Joshua Warren at a cost of more than forty thousand dollars. The brick, Two-Part Commercial Block structure has a hip asphalt roof. An elaborate row of narrow windows, with stone window ledges and interconnected arches above the windows, decorates the north, or front facade; this motif continues around the west side, although there are fewer windows there. A row of decorative brickwork borders the upper third of the front facade. A large balcony is reached through a door in the southwest corner of the balcony. Access to the second-floor auditorium is through double doors in the center of the building. The opera house only occupies about two-thirds of this structure, the area under the hipped portion of the roof; the other third was originally rented by the local I.O.O.F. lodge. A box office remains at the top of the staircase. This opera house includes a commodious corridor along the north side of the auditorium. At the end of the corridor, one may enter the auditorium through double doors on the south side, or go up three steps directly into the dressing rooms on the stage right side.

The auditorium is 49 feet wide from the south, windowed wall to the wall of the corridor, and fifty feet, six inches from the proscenium opening to the back wall of the house. Four pillars support the balcony, which extends in a curve from the back of the auditorium, measuring 23 feet, 6 inches deep at the center and 32 feet, 6 inches deep at the sides. The back wall on both levels, and the other walls on the main level, include wainscoting to a level of about three feet. The space under the balcony on both sides of a double door, centered entrance is tiered on low risers. Some of the original chairs remain on both levels. Access to the balcony is through a double door in the northwest corner. The balcony edge is delineated by a low wooden wall. The ceiling shows evidence of extensive water damage. The wooden floor is in excellent condition. Rooms, originally professional office space, surround the theatre on three sides.

The proscenium arch measures 20 feet wide by 14 feet high. Ample wings of 14 feet, six inches grace both sides of the stage. Beyond the stage right wing, and outside of the auditorium space, are two dressing rooms, 11 feet wide by 20 feet, 6 inches deep. The stage measures 20 feet, 6 inches from the curtain line to the back wall. A 3 foot, 6 inch apron curves outward from the arch, including a footlight trough. One trap door exists upstage center. Two flats, the work of an unknown but probably itinerant artist, stand in place against the backstage wall. One represents a garden; the other indicates a street (see photo #4).

The structural and historical integrity of the building and theatre has been preserved.

See continuation sheet

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Function or Use : Historic Functions

Commerce/Trade: Specialty store

Commerce/Trade: Professional

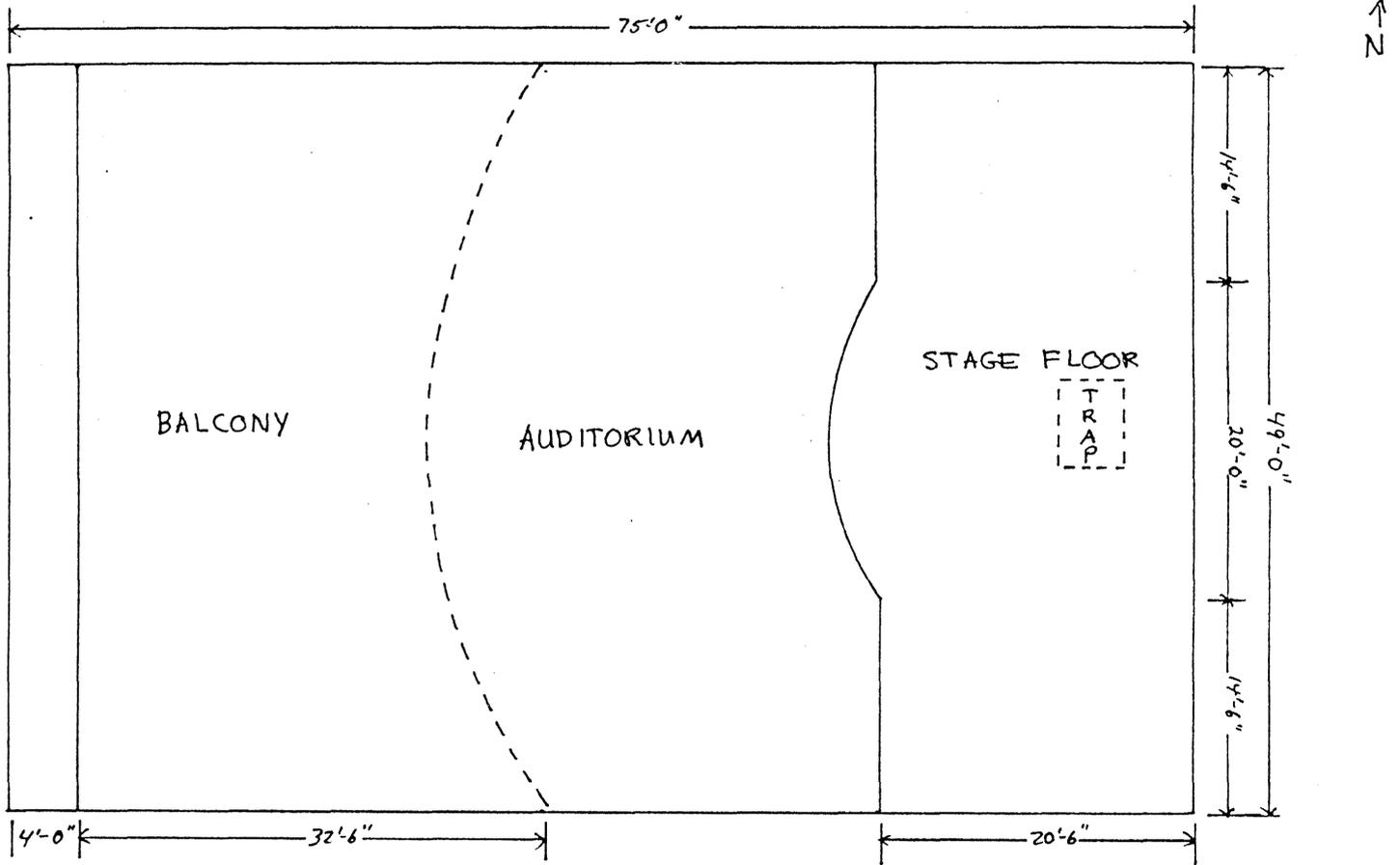
Health care: Medical business/office

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Floor plan, Warren's Opera House, Friend



Credit: P. Leitner, Draftsman

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The large two-story brick rectangular building has a central portion with a hipped roof and flanking flat roofs with stepped parapet walls on the side (east, west) facades (see photo #2). The front (north) facade exhibits a full-width pressed metal wall cornice visually supporting brick wall pilasters dividing the building into six bays, with each bay containing three window units of double hung sash. The second story windows show decorative window hoods connected by a continuous belt course which runs on the east, north and west facades. Brick corbelling further enhances the buildings design. Six storefronts run the width of the building and exhibit later remodellings incorporating plate glass windows, glass doors, and metal panels. Except for these storefront alterations, the building exhibits a high degree of historic integrity.

The building originally housed various retail businesses on the street level, including a grocery and glassware store, a clothing store, real estate and insurance agent's office, and a saloon. The second level originally housed professional office space, including a physician's office, a lodge hall, and the opera house. The first level space is currently used as a hardware store. The opera house, lodge hall, and office space on the second floor are vacant.

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)

Performing Arts

Entertainment/Recreation

Social History

Period of Significance

1885-1917

Significant Dates

1885

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Lanahan, John (builder)

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

Warren'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 Friend. As a facility for the performing arts, it offered productions such as touring stock companies; comic opera; comedy companies; musical concerts; dialect comedies; classics like *Hazel Kirke*, *Uncle Josh Spruceby*, and *East Lynne*; stars of the calibre of Miss Courtney Morgan, Miss Elsie de Tourney, and Sanford Dodge; minstrel shows; and home talent productions. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1886-1914.)

This opera house is significant in the area of entertainment/recreation, since it provided a place where the whole community could gather to attend dances and entertaining lectures. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1886-1914.)

This opera house is significant in the area of social history, because it gave Friend a neutral, nonaffiliated location for WCTU meetings, Memorial Day services, commencement exercises, political meetings, and basketball. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1886-1914.) 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

Barney, Harold. Letter to the author. Friend: 1986.
Friend Telegraph 7 Dec., 1883 - 9 Nov. 1917.
Knocke, Norma. Letters to the author. Friend: 1986.
Saline County Register of Deeds. Warren's Opera House public records. 5 Aug. 1987.
Warren's Opera House. Friend site visit. 21 Feb. 1987.
Warren's Opera House Block, 2 exteriors. Postcards. Andrea Paul Collection,
Lincoln, NE.
Yokel, Wayne. Telephone interview. Friend: 19 Feb. 1987.
---. Personal interview. Friend: 21 Feb. 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

Acreeage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

This property is described as Lots 227 and 228 in the Original Town of Friend, Saline 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, 1886, when it was built by Joshua Warren, an "energetic businessman" (*Friend Telegraph* 10 Apr. 1885). The period of significance 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 local opening of the first floor San Carlo Opera House around 1908 and the Elite (movie) Theatre about 1915 took considerable business away from Warren's Opera House; by 1909, most live entertainment had moved to the San Carlo. Limited choices in Warren's Opera House, plus its second story location, doomed it to a dwindling number of sporadic events.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2Warren's Opera House, Friend
Representative Entertainments, 1886-1914

DATE	EVENT AND PERFORMERS
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Social History

May 1886	WCTU meeting
	Memorial Day services, address by Gov. Dawes
Sep 1886	Political speech by Sen. VanWyck
May 1888	Decoration Day ceremonies
Jun 1889	Commencement exercises
Oct 1890	Speech by the Hon. John P. St. John
	Temperance lecture by C. A. Rankin
Oct 1896	Political speech by Sen. Thurston
Nov 1899	Musical and recital by Miss Clara Farrenburg
Nov 1899	Political speech by the Hon. R. W. Taylor of Lisbon, Ohio
Oct 1908	Political speech by Sen. Norris Brown
Oct 1908	Republican meeting
Oct 1910	Political speech by Sen. Norris Brown
Oct 1911	Basketball, Western H.S. vs. Friend H.S.
	Basketball, Crete H.S. vs. Friend H.S.
Nov 1911	Basketball, High school vs. town teams
Nov 1911	Basketball, boys and girls, Friend H.S. vs. Beaver Crossing H.S.
	Basketball, Friend H.S. vs. Exeter H.S.
Nov 1913	M.E. Ladies' Dinner

Entertainment/Recreation

Nov 1889	Weekly Friday Night Quadrille Parties
Dec 1889	Lecture by Captain Van Etten on 'The Home Against The Saloon'
Apr 1890	Miss Lowell Eldo entertainment
May 1892	Leap Year Ball
Mar 1893	Firemen's Masquerade Ball
Oct 1897	Lecture by Captain Eli, humorist
Nov 1902	Lecture by Ed Amherst Ott on 'Sour Grapes'
Oct 1906	Lecture by Dr. James Hedley

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Warren's Opera House, Friend
Representative Entertainments, 1886-1914

DATE EVENT AND PERFORMERS

Performing Arts

Mar 1886	Jay Simms Troup, <i>Over the Hills to the Poorhouse</i> Prof. Huckins' Concert The Stewart Concert Co.
May 1886	The Kansas City Museum Dramatic Co.
Sep 1886	Elite Comedy Co. with Mazie Molyneux in <i>Hazel Kirke, Driven From Home, and Lost in London</i> Andrews Opera co. in <i>The Mikado</i>
Oct 1886	Elite Comedy Co. with <i>A Diamond Necklace</i> McFadden's Boston Double Uncle Tom's Cabin
Nov 1886	<i>A Great Wrong Righted</i> , Home talent
Dec 1886	The Golden Bell Comedy Co.
May 1890	W. C. Coup Equiscriculum and Prof. Rucley's Educated Horses
Mar 1892	Sutton's Uncle Tom's Cabin co. The Lotus Glee Club
Aug 1892	The Jack Daily Co.
Feb 1893	The J. C. Lewis Comedy co. in <i>Si Plunkard</i>
Jul 1893	<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>
Sep 1893	Blind Boon co.
Nov 1894	<i>Inter-State Milk Maids Assn.</i>
Nov 1895	<i>Uncle Josh Spruceby</i>
Nov 1897	The Nashville Students The Shaker Medicine Co.
Dec 1897	Imperial Male Quartette and Concert Co.
Nov 1898	Reno Novelty Co. <i>The Woman's Wonderful Invention</i> , home talent entertainment
Nov 1899	<i>A White Elephant</i> First Nebraska Minstrels and Regimental Band
Oct 1900	Schubert Symphony Club and Lady Quartette
Nov 1900	The Johnson Comedy Co.
Oct 1901	Ed Redmond in <i>Prince Romiro</i> Concert by Miss Bertha Sonntag and Mr. Spencer Robinson
Nov 1901	Miss Elsie de Tourney in <i>Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots</i> <i>East Lynne</i> with Miss Courtney Morgan
Dec 1901	<i>The Drummer Boy of the Rappahannock</i> , entertainment by Major Hendershot

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Warren's Opera House, Friend
Representative Entertainments, 1886-1914

DATE EVENT AND PERFORMERS

Performing Arts, cont'd.

Oct 1902	Kemper & Arlington's Comedy co. with <i>The World, The Night Before Christmas</i> , and <i>East Lynne</i>
Nov 1902	<i>Si Perkins</i> Beggar Prince Opera Co.
Nov 1903	<i>A Runaway Match</i>
Oct 1904	Arlington's Comedians in <i>The Little Torment, My Little Pardner, In Old Kentucky</i> , and <i>The Forsaken</i>
Oct 1905	Arlington's Comedians with <i>M'Liss</i> and <i>Old Dan Tucker</i> Father Vaughn lecturing on <i>Love</i>
Nov 1905	The Salisbury Orchestra concert
Oct 1906	The Sanford Dodge co. in <i>Damon & Pythias</i> <i>A Gentleman Tramp</i> by Cartwright Large co.
Nov 1906	The Sanford Dodge Co. in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> with Louise Marshall
Oct 1907	<i>Sandy Bottom</i> <i>The Belle of Manila</i> <i>The Mountaineer</i>
Nov 1907	<i>Ole Olson in Spiritland</i> Emily Waterman Concert Co. Klulber Dramatic Co.
Dec 1907	The Kansas Sunflower Co.
Jan 1908	Colonial Saxophone Quartette
Oct 1908	W.C.T.U. home talent entertainment The Jubilee Singers
Nov 1908	<i>Three Years in Arkansaw</i>
By 1909	Most entertainments had moved to the San Carlo
Oct 1913	Unspecified attempt to reopen the theatre; not successful
Nov 1913	Frank W. Farmer concert, with Miss Flora Taub
Nov 1914	<i>Alma, Where Do You Live?</i> Home talent play, auspices of the Women's Club

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Photographs
Section number _____ Page 1

The following information is the same for all Friend photographs:

NAME OF PROPERTY: Warren's Opera House
CITY, COUNTY, STATE: Friend, Saline, Nebraska
NeHBS SITE No.: SA04-34
OHBIN SITE No.: 02-21-07

PHOTO NUMBER: Friend #1
NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Steve Pondelis
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 06-83 (8306/28:26)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Exterior view, looking southeast at the north (front) and west facades.

PHOTO NUMBER: Friend #2
NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Christian H. Ehlers
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 02-21-87 (8611/9:21)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Exterior view, looking northeast at the south (rear) and west facades.

PHOTO NUMBER: Friend #3
NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Christian H. Ehlers
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 02-21-87 (8611/9:33)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Interior view, looking northeast at the stage (from the balcony).

PHOTO NUMBER: Friend #4
NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Christian H. Ehlers
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 02-21-87 (8611/9:30)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Interior view, looking east at the flats on the stage.

PHOTO NUMBER: Friend #5
NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Christian H. Ehlers
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 02-21-87 (8611/9:26)
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Interior view, looking west at the auditorium.