

RECORDED  
MAY 22 1990

**NATIONAL REGISTER**

NPS FORM 10-900 (Rev. 8-86) OMB No. 1024-0018 [SD-SHPO # ECA-OH-597-1/89]  
[use paper with at least 25% cotton rag content, use NLQ or LQ printer]

**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 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 "NA" 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: Towner, Francis Averill (F. A.) and Janet Leach, House  
other name/ site number: CU-CU-CU-2

**2. Location**

street & number: 218 Crook Street /NA/ not for publication  
city, town: Custer /NA/ vicinity  
state: SOUTH DAKOTA code: SD county: Custer code: SD 033 zip code: 57730

**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property:	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property:		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
/XX/ private	/XX/ building(s)	___1___	___1___	buildings
/ / pubic-local	/ / district	_____	_____	sites
/ / public-state	/ / site	_____	_____	structures
/ / public-federal	/ / structure	_____	_____	objects
	/ / object	___1___	___1___	Total

Name of related multiple property listing: NA \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: \_\_\_0\_\_\_

**11. Form Prepared by**

name/title: Evelyn Robb, owner; with technical assistance by John Rau, SHPO staff  
organization: \_\_\_\_\_ date: January 9, 1990  
street & number: 218 Crook Street telephone: 605-673-3028  
city or town: Custer state: SOUTH DAKOTA zip code: 57730

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property name

, Custer  
county

, SOUTH DAKOTA  
state

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.

[Signature] Signature of certifying official      5/12/91 Date

S. J. O. S. H. B. O. State or Federal agency or 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 or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Entered in the  
National Register

entered in the National Register

[Signature]      6/21/90

\_\_\_\_ 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] Signature of the Keeper      Date

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property name county state

6. Function or Use (enter categories from instructions)  
Historic functions: Current Functions:  
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling  
HEALTH CARE/Clinic

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7. Description  
Architectural Classification: Materials:  
(enter categories from instructions) (enter categories from instructions)  
Stick Style foundation Stone  
walls Wood  
roof Asphalt  
other Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance: /XX/ see continuation sheet

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8. Significance  
Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in  
relation to other properties: / / / / /XX/  
nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria / / A / /B /XX/C / /D

Criteria Considerations / /A / /B / /C / /D / /E / /F / /G

Areas of Significance (enter from instructions)  
Architecture

Period of Significance Significant Dates  
circa 1890 circa 1890

Significant Person Cultural Affiliation  
NA NA  
Architect/Builder  
Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations,  
and periods of significance noted above /XX/ see continuation sheet

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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Situated on a narrow, sloping lot in the heart of the City of Custer, the Francis Averill and Janet Leach Towner House is a two-and-one-half story Stick Style dwelling with Queen Anne massing. Rising from a stone foundation, the large, rectangular, wood frame building is clad with drop siding. It is capped by a broad gable roof that intersects with a wide gabled wall dormer on the northeast (front) corner and a large gabled bay on south (rear) facade. Roof surfaces are covered with asphalt shingles. Two historic brick chimneys with corbelled brick caps rise from the roof line. A small open porch with a steep shed roof shades the main entry door on the northwest corner of the front facade. Located on the east facade is an open porch with a hipped roof supported by square columns. In 1980, the original rear porch on the south alley facade was replaced by an enclosed sun room.

Fenestration is generally asymmetrical, consisting mostly of elongated rectangular double-hung windows. A picture window with a multiple-pane overlight and a small hood with decorative brackets pierces the center of the northeast wall dormer. Small multiple-light windows with colored glass panes light both stairways at the northeast (front) and southwest (rear) corners of the building. Characteristic of the Stick Style, all facades feature vertical and horizontal trim boards suggestive of the frame of the building. Gables are trimmed with standard and diamond-shaped shingles as well as with decorative bargeboard bearing Eastlake details.

The interior displays a plethora of fine period-authentic appointments including hardwood floors and wall trim, pocket doors, a built-in hutch, transoms, and light fixtures.

Located a few yards south of the house is a wood frame garage (noncontributing) covered with tar paper and drop siding. It is situated on the site of the original carriage house.

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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
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Under Criterion C of the National Register Criteria, the Francis Averill and Janet Leach Towner House is significant in the area of architecture, because it is a good local example of Stick Style domestic building. It is one of the very few 19th Century dwellings in the City of Custer to survive in a nearly unaltered state. Built in circa 1890 for one of the community's early leading citizens, the house exhibits a variety of period-authentic features on both the exterior and interior. Under the South Dakota Historical Preservation Plan the property relates to the historic context labeled: IV. Permanent Rural and Urban Pioneer Settlement, D. 2. Urban Development/Residential Living.

Deeply rooted in mid-to-late-Victorian traditions, the Stick Style is an American domestic housing form that is distinguished by very tall proportions, steep roofs, projecting eaves, and the particularly characteristic ornamental stickwork suggestive of the actual frame of the building. This ornament was flat, two-dimensional, and purely nonfunctional. Like the later Queen Anne style, Stick designs usually featured a variety of siding materials. Facades were generally asymmetrical. The earliest Stick Style houses were designed by such accomplished architects as Richard Upjohn and Richard Morris Hunt. However, by the 1870s and 1880s, plans and ornamental fixtures for the style were widely available in mail order catalogues and pattern books. Although the actual design source is unknown, the Towner House is no doubt a product of one or more of these standardized patterns. It typifies the Stick Style with its vertical emphasis, two-dimensional ornamental stickwork, and other decorative treatments.

For decades rumors of gold in the Black Hills aroused the interest of fortune seekers. In 1874, the U. S. Government dispatched a large, flamboyant force under the command of Lt. Col. George A. Custer to explore the region and to find ways to expel White intruders. Prospectors working for the expedition discovered gold on French Creek near present-day Custer, and news of the find spurred a revival of illicit entry. Soon, thousands of would-be miners and their followers settled in the southern part of the Black Hills. In the summer of 1875, the City of Custer was founded. By 1876, through negotiations by two successive controversial commissions, the government ceded the Black Hills region and opened it for settlement. The following year, the Dakota Territorial government organized the three Black Hills counties of Custer, Pennington, and Lawrence.

Francis Averill (F. A.) Towner came to Custer in 1877 and was soon involved in a number of regional mining interests, including the Grand Junction Mining Company and the Black Hills and Duluth Copper Mining Company. By 1890, he was vice president of the First National Bank of Custer. He and his family were always active in local social organizations and events. The house the Towners

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built in circa 1890 is a symbol of their prestige within the community.

Over the years, the house has been owned and occupied by a number of different parties. In the 1930s, Dr. F. E. Manning, a prominent local physician, used it as both his residence and his clinic.

Currently the house is owned by Evelyn Robb, who keeps it in a good state of repair.

The period of significance of the nominated property does not extend beyond the date of construction in circa 1890.

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property name

, Custer  
county

, SOUTH DAKOTA  
state

9. Major Bibliographical References

/XX/ see continuation sheet

Previous documentation by 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:

- /XX/ State historic preservation office
- / / Other State agency
- / / Federal agency
- / / Local government
- / / University
- / / Other

Specify repository:

South Dakota Historical Preservation Center

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property: Less than one acre

UTM References:

A = /13/	/612-340/	/4847-610/	B = / /	/ /	/ /
C = / /	/ /	/ /	D = / /	/ /	/ /
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

Quad: Custer

Scale: 1:24000

/ / see continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is bounded by the legal description as recorded in the Custer County Register of Deeds Office: Lot 10, Block 34, Original Plat of Custer City, Custer County, South Dakota.

/ / see continuation sheet

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries of the nominated property are contained within the legally recorded lot lines of the parcel historically associated with the property.

/ / see continuation sheet

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Baldwin, George P., ed. The Black Hills Illustrated. Deadwood, SD: The Black Hills Mining Men's Association, 1904.

Custer County Chronicle. Custer, South Dakota. August 11, 1900.

Deed Records. Custer County Register of Deeds Office.

Historic Photograph. Circa 1904. In Possession of Evelyn Robb.

Sundstrom, Jessie Y., ed. Custer County History to 1976. Custer, SD: Custer County Historical Society, 1977. Passim.

Tallent, Annie Donna Fraser. The Black Hills: or The Last Hunting Grounds of the Dakotahs. St. Louis: Nixon-Jones Printing Co., 1899. pp. 295, 304.



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1.

Francis Averill and Janet Leach Towner House  
Custer, Custer County, South Dakota  
by Rolene Jungemann  
August 1989  
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center  
North (front) and west facades, camera facing south-southeast  
Photo No. 1

2.

Francis Averill and Janet Leach Towner House  
Custer, Custer County, South Dakota  
by Rolene Jungemann  
August 1989  
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center  
East facade, camera facing west  
Photo No. 2

3.

Francis Averill and Janet Leach Towner House  
Custer, Custer County, South Dakota  
by Rolene Jungemann  
August 1989  
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center  
East facade, camera facing west, detail of gable  
Photo No. 3

4.

Francis Averill and Janet Leach Towner House  
Custer, Custer County, South Dakota  
by Rolene Jungemann  
August 1989  
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center  
Interior, east entry door with transom  
Photo No. 4

5.

Francis Averill and Janet Leach Towner House  
Custer, Custer County, South Dakota  
by Rolene Jungemann  
August 1989  
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center  
Interior, built-in hutch  
Photo No. 5