

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 Paul Gering House

Other names/site number CC14-097

2. Location

Street & number 423 North 6th Street

Not for publication

City or town Plattsmouth

Vicinity

State Nebraska

Code NE

County Cass

Code 025

Zip code 68048

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.)

Michael J. ...
Signature of certifying official

May 24, 2006
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 M. Beall

7-12-06

[Signature]
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Paul Gering House

Name of Property

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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.)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows: Buildings (1), Sites, Structures, Objects, Total (1).

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.)

Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)

Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation Concrete
Walls Wood frame
Roof Asphalt
Other

Narrative Description

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

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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.
X 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.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1896

Significant Dates

1896

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Harry Lawrie and W. E. Stockham

Chris Koehnke - carpenter

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:

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	15	257351	4544227	3.			
2.				4.			

[] 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 Jill Dolberg/Historic Buildings Survey Coordinator

organization Nebraska State Historical Society

date March 13, 2006

street & number 1420 P Street/Box 82554

telephone (402) 471-4773

city or town Lincoln

state Nebraska

zip code 68501-2554

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 Dennis and Beverly Hirz

street & number 423 North 6th Street

telephone (402) 296-2560

city or town Plattsmouth

state Nebraska

zip code 68048

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. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, (15 USC 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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Located in Plattsmouth, Nebraska, the Paul Gering House is a two and a half story Colonial Revival house constructed in 1896. The county seat of Cass County, Plattsmouth is situated in the northeast corner of the county approximately 60 miles northeast of Lincoln, the state capital of Nebraska. As the name suggests, Plattsmouth is located near the mouth of the Platte River at this river's confluence with the larger Missouri River. Considered part of the Omaha metropolitan area, the city of Plattsmouth is experiencing population growth, and the 2000 census indicated a population of 6,887.

This Colonial Revival residence is a rectangular shaped, two and a half story wood frame structure with an asphalt shingle hipped roof with three pedimented dormers on the main façade. The pediments of the dormers are slightly bellcast. The house has bracketed eaves over a cornice with a dentil molding. It has a concrete block foundation, and clapboard siding. The façade contains a central entrance under a partial width entrance porch supported by eight slender Doric columns. The cornice of the entrance porch also has dentil molding. The entrance porch has a flat roof that serves as a second story porch. The entrance itself is found on a curved wall, flanked by two windows.

The fenestration is the Gering House's most distinctive feature. The three bay house has windows arranged in groups of three on the outside bays. They are all double hung original windows, with aluminum storm windows on the outside. The first floor has two sets of three double hung windows under a dentilled cornice. On the second story, both outside bays have large Palladian windows, with diamond light panes in the upper sash and the arch of the Palladian window. Diamond light panes are also found in the windows of the dormers. A set of French doors provides access from the second story to the roof of the entrance porch.

Upon entering the Gering house, the entrant finds a vestibule entry created by the curved entrance and leaded beveled glass French doors. Through these decorative doors, a set of stairs with spindled balusters and wood paneling leads to the upper story. All of the floors in the house are quarter-sawn oak. Doors and pocket doors are all five-paneled doors with their original hardware. On the north side of the house, a formal parlor is entered through a unique pair of bi-fold leaded beveled glass French doors. An elegant birds eye maple fireplace, complete with mantle, elaborate columns, and a tile surround, graces the parlor. In the opposite direction, five-paneled pocket doors lead to the living room and dining room. A set of metal and glass doors from the living room leads to an enclosed porch that was enclosed in the 1920s. The walls of the enclosed porch are also glass set in metal. There is an attached garage that was added on to the house, with access from the glassed porch. Judging from its size, it appears to have been added on around the 1920s as well. The dining room has a fireplace that matches the one in the parlor, although this one has been painted. An additional pocket door leads back to the formal parlor. The dining room also has a pass-through to the kitchen, which lies behind the parlor on the northeast corner of the house. The kitchen was updated in the 1950s with a large range and sink, and cupboards. The kitchen has a maid's stair to the upstairs, and another stair to the basement.

At the top of the stairs from the main entry, French doors lead to the second story porch. The two front bedrooms are graced by the two sets of Palladian windows. Both rooms have two closets, and quarter sawn oak floors. Two additional bedrooms, a bathroom, and the back stairs to the attic story lie along the back side of the house. The upstairs provided living space for a maid, with a bedroom, living room and bathroom. These were redecorated in the 1960s, the last time a homeowner had live-in help.

The house exhibits a fine level of historic integrity. Changes have certainly taken place over the 110-year lifespan of the house, including a ca. 1920 garage and enclosed porch, and a 1950s kitchen. The only non-historic alteration that detracts slightly from the integrity of the house is the addition of a 1960s wrought iron railing around the second story porch, and some accent wrought iron between the columns of the entrance porch. If removed, house would look much as it always has, but its presence does not diminish the visual impact of this striking house.

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The Paul Gering House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion C for its architectural significance. Constructed in 1896, this house is a striking example of a Colonial Revival house in Plattsmouth, Nebraska.

Paul Gering was born in Germany. His family members were clothing manufacturers from Kempton, Germany, but he was a professor of mathematics. He came to the United States after the Civil War, fleeing Germany to avoid forced conscription into the military. Bringing his young family along on the three-week voyage across the Atlantic, Gering and his family eventually settled in Plattsmouth where he settled into an apparently lucrative career as a druggist. Gering & Co. advertised weekly in the Plattsmouth paper cures for various ailments, including vegetable liver pills and extract of sarsaparilla.

Although information on the Paul Gering family from the era in which the house was built is largely incidental, several mentions of the Gering family or the house in the *Plattsmouth Journal* are of interest. In March, 1896, the "old O'Rourke homestead place on North 6th Street, now occupied by Paul Gering and family, was today sold at administrator's sale for \$2000."¹ The O'Rourke House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 2 March 2006, and lies directly across the street from the site of the Gering House. A few months later, two mentions of the construction of the Gering house were found in the *Plattsmouth Weekly News-Herald*. "The cornerstone for the elegant Gering mansion to be built on North Sixth street was laid with property ceremonies yesterday."² The same issue also announced the hiring of a carpenter. "Chris Koehnke has the contract for the carpenter work on the new Gering residence, now building at Sixth and Elm streets. When complete the Gering family will be in possession of one the [sic] most satisfactory homes in the city. It will be a two-story, ten room structure, fitted with all modern conveniences, and its cost entire will border close on \$4500."³

The Colonial Revival style became prominent around the centennial of the United States (ca. 1880), but was popularized by the Chicago Worlds Fair of 1893.⁴ The term "colonial revival" refers to the entire rebirth of interest in the early English houses of the Atlantic seaboard. The Georgian and Adam styles serve as the baseline for the style, but details from any of the "colonial" precedents are used in many combinations to pay eclectic homage to the colonial era. The prominent features of the Gering house highlight the style's most noteworthy details, including a prominent entry under a small but elaborate entry porch, prominent windows on a symmetrical façade, and elaborate pedimented dormers. Cornices are another important identifying feature of the Colonial Revival. Cornices are typically a boxed roof-wall junction with little eave overhang, decorated with dentils or modillions.⁵ The Gering house has a broad cornice with a dentil molding, and a similar molding separates the windows on the first and second floor on each bay.

¹ *Plattsmouth Journal*, 12 March 1896.

² *Plattsmouth Weekly News-Herald*, 4 July 1896.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Clifford Edward Clark, Jr., *The American Family Home, 1800-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 132.

⁵ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 321.

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Several features of the house identify the house as an early example of the Colonial Revival style. On early versions of the style, the detailing tended to be highly exaggerated and proportionately awkward. Whimsical, pedimented dormers were popular. The pedimented dormers of the Gering house identify it as an early example through the exuberance of their bellcast sides. The pair of Palladian windows also identify the house as an early example of the style. While Palladian windows speak to the style's origins in the Adam and Georgian styles, the use of a pair of them is almost too extravagant for later Colonial Revivals that attempted to adhere more closely to historical precedents. In addition, while double hung, the single light sashes of the first floor and the diamond light panes of the upper story windows speak more to windows of the Victorian era than they do Colonial Revival.

This house is unique among the prominent homes of Plattsmouth for exhibiting this style. The most prominent residences in Plattsmouth, and there are many, were all either Queen Anne or Italianate examples. The Gering House alone broke from the local pattern. The Paul Gering house is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C for its architectural significance. It is eligible at the local level, and its period of significance is 1896. The house is a fine example of an early Colonial Revival style house that exhibits very good historic integrity, with the exception of the addition of a small amount of wrought iron railings around the roof between the columns of the porch.

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Paul Gering House

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Bibliography:

Clark, Clifford Edward, Jr. *The American Family Home, 1800-1960*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.

Olson, James C., and Ronald C. Naugle. *History of Nebraska, 3rd Edition*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.

Verbal Boundary Description:

Lots 5 and 6, Block 3, Plattsmouth, Cass County, Nebraska.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries encompass the lots historically associated with the Paul Gering House.