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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED	APR 19 1976
DATE ENTERED	OCT 8 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC *nk*
nk Elkader Opera House
AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 207 No. Main __NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Elkader CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 2nd

STATE Iowa VICINITY OF Clayton

CODE _____ COUNTY _____ CODE _____

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME City of Elkader

STREET & NUMBER 207 No. Main

CITY, TOWN Elkader STATE Iowa

VICINITY OF _____

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. City Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER 207 No. Main

CITY, TOWN Elkader STATE Iowa

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE _____

DATE _____ __FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS _____

CITY, TOWN _____ STATE _____

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This 3-story red-brick structure (50' x 102') has a symmetrical "false front" facade of pressed brick. The center bay (of 3) has on the third floor three semicircular-arched windows. Ornamental brick design (some in relief, some in brick of a different color) and two pilasters decorate the front facade. The metal-covered gable roof bears two galbed domers, one on each side. Windows on the sides have semi-elliptical arches and stone lintels (upper two floors only).

The inclined auditorium contains 302 seats and 2 boxes. The stage is 24' x 48'. The proscenium opening is 17' x 28', the stage loft 40' high. The basement originally contained dressing rooms, storerooms, etc., and a 32' x 62' dance floor.

In 1949 the stairs were relocated from the center to the left side, and a double entrance for fire trucks was installed in the center and to the right on the first floor. One set of stairs to the balcony was removed and a library added where offices had been. The fire trucks and library have since been removed to other buildings.

In 1960, the basement was remodeled. The raised portion around the side was eliminated along with the posts bordering it. The kitchen was modernized and enlarged, and a small stage and balcony removed. Three 40' steel beams on steel reinforcement posts were installed in the fire station floor. The basement was finished with tile walls and floor, and a modern lighting system installed.

In 1963 local civic and study organizations began to restore the auditorium to its original condition. The original opera chairs were retained. Some of the seats were removed to make the stage larger. Old plaster was replaced and painted near the original colors. Iron work was gilded. Red velvet carpet and curtains were installed. Urns originally used to decorate the exterior front were placed on pedestals at the sides of the stage.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1903

~~BUILDER~~/ARCHITECT Shick & Roth, LaCrosse, Wisc.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The importance of a theater in the community life of Elkader was aptly demonstrated by the speed with which citizens moved to replace their opera house following a fire in 1903. They were aided by the owner of the previous opera house, who donated the land for the proposed new structure, as well as by \$10,000 contributed in the form of stock purchase in the new theater. The Elkader Opera House opened 27 November, 1903, barely 10 months after the destruction of the earlier building.

The Opera House was a focus of action, not only within Elkader, but for people from outlying communities. In its first years, it hosted numerous plays in the Chicago-Minneapolis circuit, and Ed Wynn was featured on at least one playbill. More recently, several local theater groups and a barbershop chorus, as well as educational, recreational, farm, government and town groups have found the Opera House a congenial environment in which to perform or meet. The Opera House thus continues to fulfill its historic role as a center of community life in Elkader.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

History of Clayton County, 1916
 Clayton County Register, 125th Anniversary edition (5-8 August, 1971)
 Records of the County Clerk's Office, Clayton Co.
 Records in the possession of Mary Carnes, Elkader

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	630 6,2,9	2,6,0	4,7	4,5	7,7,0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING						
C							D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Approximately the center of the block bounded by Main St. on NE, alley SW, Spruce St. NW, Cedar St. SE.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marjorie C. Costigan, Board Member

28 May 1974

ORGANIZATION

Elkader Historical Society

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

104 McKinley

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Elkader

STATE

Iowa

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Adrian P. Anderson

TITLE

Director, Div. of Historic Preservation

DATE

April 24, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Signature]

DATE

10/8/96

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

10/7/76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

Elkader Opera House, Elkader, Clayton County, Iowa

Used as theater: 1903-1947; 1964-present
Used as fire house: 1947-1964