

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

MAY 24 1988

# 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 Schneider's Opera House  
other names/site number NehBS #DD11-2; OHBIN #01-24-04

### 2. Location

street & number 104 Ash N/A not for publication  
city, town Snyder N/A vicinity  
state Nebraska code NE county Dodge code 053 zip code 68664

### 3. Classification

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

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 Unknown

walls Brick

roof Unknown

other Wooden exterior balcony

Pressed metal trim

Stone window decorations

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Schneider's Opera House is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of First and Ash Streets on land which originally belonged to Conrad Schneider, founder of the town of Snyder. Constructed in 1900, the brick Two-Part Commercial Block structure measures approximately 70 feet long by 50 feet wide. It has stone window sills and pressed metal window hoods, as well as a pressed metal cornice featuring a frieze of spoked wheels. A semicircular wooden balcony juts out, accessible from a door behind the stage on the second floor. Entrance to the second floor is through a single door at the street level rear of the building on the south side of the building. The auditorium is reached through double doors at the center of the theatre's back wall. Two rooms about three feet deep are on either side of the door inside the auditorium; one served as a ticket booth, while the others were probably used for storage, refreshments, etc.

The auditorium is 45 feet, 6 inches long from the back wall to the proscenium opening of the stage, and 47 feet wide between the window-filled walls. The pressed tin ceiling reflects some damage. Decorative squares on the ceiling mark the location of lights (see Photos #2 and #3). Wainscoting surrounds the entire auditorium to a height of about three feet. Access to the balcony is in the northeast corner of the building. The balcony contains some of the original bench seating and the small original railing. Two pillars near the center separate the balcony from the ceiling.

The unusual proscenium arch is wooden, decorated with small buttons. It measures 23 feet wide by 11 feet high. A two-foot apron extends into the auditorium from the stage. Access to the stage is through doors on either side of the proscenium opening. The stage is 11 feet from the proscenium opening to the rear wall, with ample 12-foot wings on either side.

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

 See continuation sheet

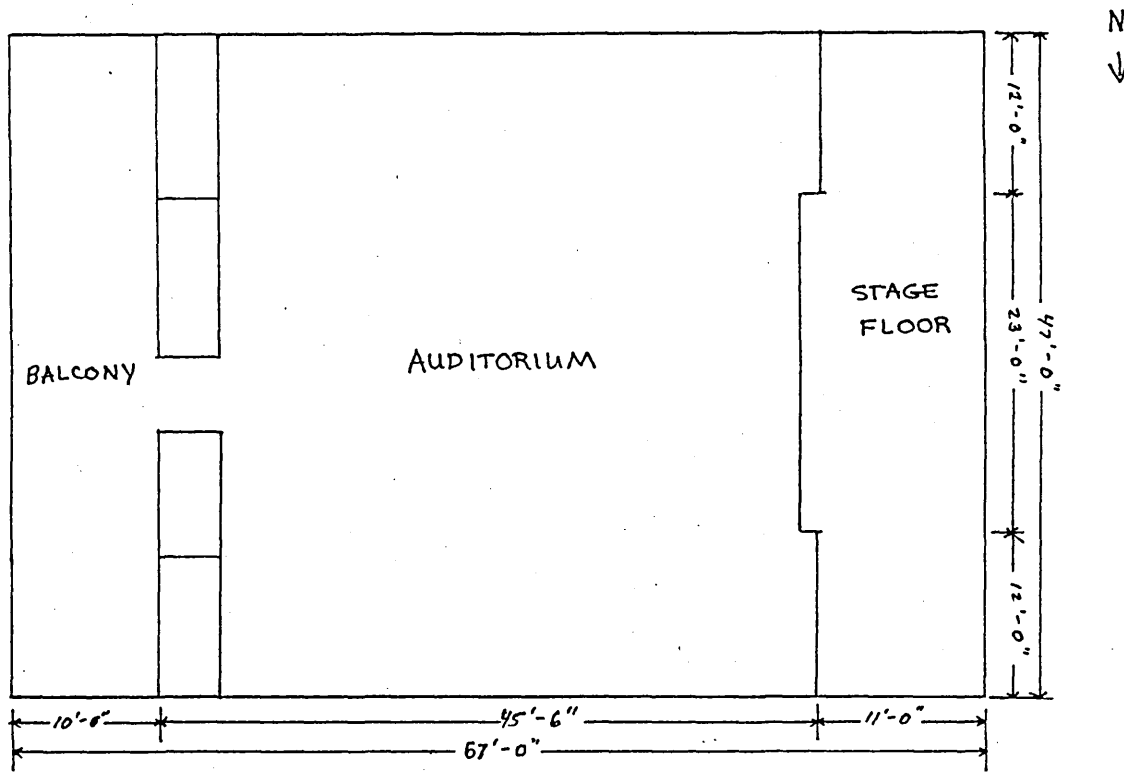
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Floor plan, Schneider's Opera House, Snyder



P. Leitner, Draftsman

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The two-story rectangular brick building displays an elaborate pressed metal cornice and pressed metal window hoods. Fenestration consists of tall, narrow double-hung window units of one over one pane arrangement. The storefront features a corner entry, and additional front (west) entry, both with continuing cast iron storefronts (columns, and wall cornice). Several windows have been boarded up. The building's exterior remains in near-original condition. The corner and front (west) entries lead to the street level retail space which originally housed a saloon and hardware store, and presently houses a hardware store. The second-level opera house space is 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

<p>Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)</p> <p><u>Performing Arts</u></p> <p><u>Entertainment/Recreation</u></p> <p><u>Social History</u></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Period of Significance</p> <p><u>1900-1917</u></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Cultural Affiliation</p> <p><u>N/A</u></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Significant Dates</p> <p><u>1900</u></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Significant Person</p> <p><u>N/A</u></p>	<p>Architect/Builder</p> <p><u>Unknown</u></p>	

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

Schneider'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 Snyder. As a facility for the performing arts, it offered productions such as gospel singers, touring stock companies, magicians and hypnotists, musical concerts, and home talent events. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1908-1917.)

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 lectures. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1908-1917.)

This opera house is significant in the area of social history because it gave Snyder a neutral, nonaffiliated location for political meetings, church bazaars, community parties, high school graduation, and box socials. (See following table of Representative Entertainments 1908-1917.) 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**

Durkschneider, Glen. Personal interview. Snyder: 24 Jan. 1987.  
Kollmorgen, Arthur, ed. *Diamond Jubilee: Snyder Frontier Days*. Fremont, NE: Nebraska Printing and Litho, 1965.  
"Opera Houses Part of Glamours Past." *Scribner Rustler* 5 Mar. 1975.  
Schneider's Opera House. Snyder site visit. 24 Jan. 1987.  
*Scribner Rustler*. 21 Jun. 1900 - 26 Nov. 1903 and 20 Jul. 1911 - 27 Nov. 1913.  
*Snyder Banner*. 2 Oct. 1908 - 21 Oct. 1910 and 2 Oct. 1914 - 30 Nov. 1917.

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 15, 16, and 17, Block 4, of the Original Town of Snyder, Dodge 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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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The period of significance is derived from the original construction date of the building, 1900, by Conrad Schneider, founder of the town in 1882 and owner of the local mill. It 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. Although Snyder did not have a separate moving picture theatre by 1917, the proximity of Fremont (32 miles) and Scribner (7 miles), both of which had moving picture theatres--not to mention Fremont's auditorium--meant that as more Snyder residents bought cars, activities in those nearby cities became a viable option. Limited choices in Schneider's Opera House doomed it to a dwindling number of sporadic events, primarily significant under the categories of social history and entertainment/recreation, not in the area of the performing arts.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Schneider's Opera House, Snyder  
Representative Entertainments, 1908-1917

DATE            EVENT AND PERFORMERS

### Social History

Oct 1908    Democratic Party speeches  
Oct 1910    Emanuel Lutheran Bazaar  
Oct 1914    Surprise party for Amanda Jug  
Oct 1915    Reception for M/M Leo Feichtinger  
May 1916    High school graduation exercises  
Dec 1916    School program and box social  
Nov 1917    Bazaar by St. Frances de Sales Guild

### Entertainment/Recreation

Oct 1908    Royal Neighbors of America 6th annual ball  
Oct 1908    Prof. J.P.D. Meyn, stereoptican entertainment  
Nov 1908    Thanksgiving dance  
Oct 1909    Halloween ball  
Nov 1909    Thanksgiving ball  
Oct 1910    Benefit ball  
            Dance, music by Remlins Orchestra from Humphrey  
Oct 1915    Married Folks Dance  
Nov 1915    Dance, music by Collins Brothers.  
Nov 1915    Orchestra dance  
Nov 1916    Married Folks Dance

### Performing Arts

Oct 1908    Lucas-Garrett Co.  
Nov 1909    Ferguson's Dixie Jubilee Singers  
Dec 1909    *The Royal Slave* with Roger Hubbell  
Jan 1910    *Tony the Convict*, home talent  
Oct 1910    *My Dixie Girl*  
Oct 1914    Robert Robinson co. in *St. Elmo* with Catherine Hadley  
Oct 1915    *Panhandle Pete*  
            *The Frame-Up* with Fred Byers  
Dec 1915    Doyle Stock Co.  
Jun 1916    The Lucas Show  
Nov 1916    Mysterious Smith Co.  
Nov 1917    The Varallo-Gross Orchestra Co.  
            Kathryn Dale Co.



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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Photographs

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 1

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The following information is the same for all Snyder photographs:

NAME OF PROPERTY: Schneider's Opera House  
CITY, COUNTY, STATE: Snyder, Dodge, Nebraska  
NeHBS SITE No.: DD11-2  
OHBIN SITE No.: 01-24-04  
NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Christian H. Ehlers

PHOTO NUMBER: Snyder #1  
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 1-24-87 (8611/6:24)  
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society  
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Exterior view, looking northeast at the west (front) and the south facades. (The Opera House entrance is on the south side at the rear of the building.)

PHOTO NUMBER: Snyder #2  
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 1-24-87 (8611/6:29)  
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society  
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Interior view, looking west at the stage.

PHOTO NUMBER: Snyder #3  
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH (and NEGATIVE NUMBER): 1-24-87 (8611/6:30)  
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Nebraska State Historical Society  
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW INDICATING DIRECTION OF CAMERA: Interior view, looking east at the auditorium area.