

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

11/28  
OCT 23 1990

# 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 City of Alliance Central Park Fountain  
other names/site number NEHBS # BX01-67

### 2. Location

street & number 10th and Niobrara n/a not for publication  
city, town Alliance n/a vicinity  
state Nebraska code NE county Box Butte code 013 zip code 69301

### 3. Classification

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

Name of related multiple property listing: na  
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 Signature of certifying official October 11, 1990 Date  
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. 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:) \_\_\_\_\_  
Helena Byrum Signature of the Keeper 11/28/90 Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/work of art

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/work of art

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

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walls Concrete

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roof N/A

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other Steel and Copper plumbing

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The City of Alliance Central Park Fountain was constructed on the corner of 10th Street and Niobrara Avenue in Alliance, Nebraska in 1935. The Fountain, an octagonal concrete structure which features tiers of water patterns and electrically controlled colored lights, was assembled with the combined efforts of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and crews from the City of Alliance. The Fountain occupies a prominent location in Alliance's Central Park along an original county and now city, thoroughfare. The nomination consists of one contributing object, the Fountain.

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The City of Alliance Central Park Fountain is located at the corner of 10th Street and Niobrara Avenue in Alliance (1980 population: 10,600) a county seat community in northwestern Nebraska. The Fountain is a General Electric Novalux 7-Projector Electric Fountain. An octagonal-shaped concrete structure with a diameter of 48 feet, the sides of the Fountain measure 21 feet, and the walls are one foot in height.

The basin contains an octagonal, concrete centerpiece which measures approximately 3 1/2 feet in height and 8 feet in diameter. The centerpiece originally served as a vault which housed the electrical controls to regulate the lights, spray, and water patterns. The rim of the centerpiece is surrounded by 65 nozzles 1/8 inch in diameter with an original spray height of 10 feet. The center nozzle, 12 1/2 mm, was capable of shooting water 35 feet. Three intermediate nozzles 7 1/2 mm in diameter, emitted water to 20 feet.

The Fountain was assembled and constructed by WPA workers and city parks department crews in 1935. It was completed for the Alliance "Stampede Days" celebration and attracted thousands of individuals. The local newspaper called the Fountain one of General Electric's "newest products" and described its capacity for a full spectrum of colors and varied patterns through the use of colored lights and timers.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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The Fountain was in continuous use during the summer months until the mid-1970's when it fell into disrepair. In 1977 limited renovation occurred with the replacement or repair of pump and motor, valves, and lights. In 1985, however, it was inoperative. Four years later in 1989, the community initiated restoration efforts. Landscaping around the Fountain was enhanced as part of this project, including the addition of benches, a sidewalk, and flower beds.

The Fountain's restoration did not change the historic appearance of the octagonal concrete structure. To improve the existing controls and ensure its continued operation, the original electrical system contained in the centerpiece was removed and placed in a separate cabinet located approximately 20 feet from the fountain. The original vault now contains only the water controls. Changes in color and spray, originally regulated by levers and timers, is now accomplished by computerized controls housed in the cabinet.

Original instructions or diagrams of the Fountain are not available, including records of the original lights and wattage. According to documents from the City Parks Department during the 1989 restoration, however, the Fountain had nine, 250 watt submersible lights with colored covers. Available newspaper accounts indicated that the original lights were 1,000 to 1,500 wattage; during the 1989 restoration, the lights were restored to 1,000 watt capacity. Available historic records also seemed to indicate that the Fountain's original lights were in the primary colors, red, blue, and yellow, with the capability of creating the full spectrum of colors. During the restoration, the primary colors were used, with clear lighting also provided. In the main centerpiece, eighteen 500 watt lights were also activated.

The spray height for the nozzles was increased during the restoration; the main nozzles spray height was increased to a capacity of 40 feet; the intermediate nozzles to 20 feet, and the small nozzles surrounding the centerpiece to 15 feet.

From the time of its first use in 1935 to the present, the Fountain has been a source of beauty and community pride for the residents of Alliance and the surrounding area.

**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)

Engineering

Period of Significance

1935

Significant Dates

1935

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

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

The Alliance Central Park Fountain is significant under Criterion C on a local level in the area of engineering as an excellent example of an electrically powered, colored-light fountain produced during the 1930's by a nationally recognized manufacturer, General Electric. The period of significance, 1935, is derived from the Fountain's date of construction.

The City of Alliance Central Park Fountain, located at the corner of 10th Street and Niobrara Avenue, was constructed in 1935 by Works Progress Administration (WPA) and city parks department crews.

The Fountain is a General Electric Novalux 7-Projector Electric Fountain, purchased as a kit by the city of Alliance in 1934. After it was purchased the Fountain was placed in storage until a suitable location could be determined. Although the courthouse grounds were seriously considered as a site, the corner of 10th Street and Niobrara Avenue was determined to be a more appropriate location.

During the spring and summer of 1935, the WPA and city parks department crews constructed the fountain; these crews had simultaneously provided many improvements to Central Park including the construction of stone entrance posts, stone walls, a large stone amphitheater, swimming pool, and bathhouse. An inspection of the park by NESHPO staff in April, 1990, following research, confirmed that most of Central Park's WPA-era design features--amphitheater, winding drives, shelterhouses, swimming pool, and bathhouse--have been greatly altered or removed. The Park as a whole, therefore, does not retain its historic integrity as a designed landscape.

See continuation sheet

**Major Bibliographical References**

Alliance Times and Herald, 1932-1935.

Cody, Evelyn. Interview, Alliance, NE, August, 1989.

Dubs, Jay. Engineer's Technician. Interview, August, 1989.

Garrett, Norman. Parks Superintendent. Interview, August, 1989.

Lincoln Sunday Star, February-May, 1935.

Shaughnessy, Lyle. Director of Parks and Recreation, City of Alliance. Correspondence, memorandum, November, 1988-January, 1989.

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:**

Knight Museum  
908 Yellowstone

Alliance, NE 69301

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property less than one acre

**UTM References**

A 

1	3
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6	7	6	2	2	0
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4	6	6	3	3	9	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The legal description of the Fountain is the west 150 feet of the south 150 feet of Block 1, Box Butte Addition to the City of Alliance, Box Butte County, Nebraska.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the parcel of land that has been historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Debra Lopheide, Director/Carol Ahlgren, Architectural Historian  
organization Knight Museum, Nebraska State Historical Soc. date June 28, 1990  
street & number 908 Yellowstone telephone (308) 762-2384  
city or town Alliance state Nebraska zip code 69301

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The Fountain, first activated during Alliance's "Stampede Days" celebration in June, 1935, was in continuous use during the summer months until the mid-1970's when it fell into disrepair; by 1985 it was inoperative. In 1988 Alliance residents initiated efforts to restore the Fountain. In August, 1988, over \$20,000 was raised for the restoration during an event called "Coins for the Fountain." Individuals placed quarters along Box Butte Avenue from the downtown area to the Fountain. The structure also became the focal point of a new community celebration, "Fountain Fest."

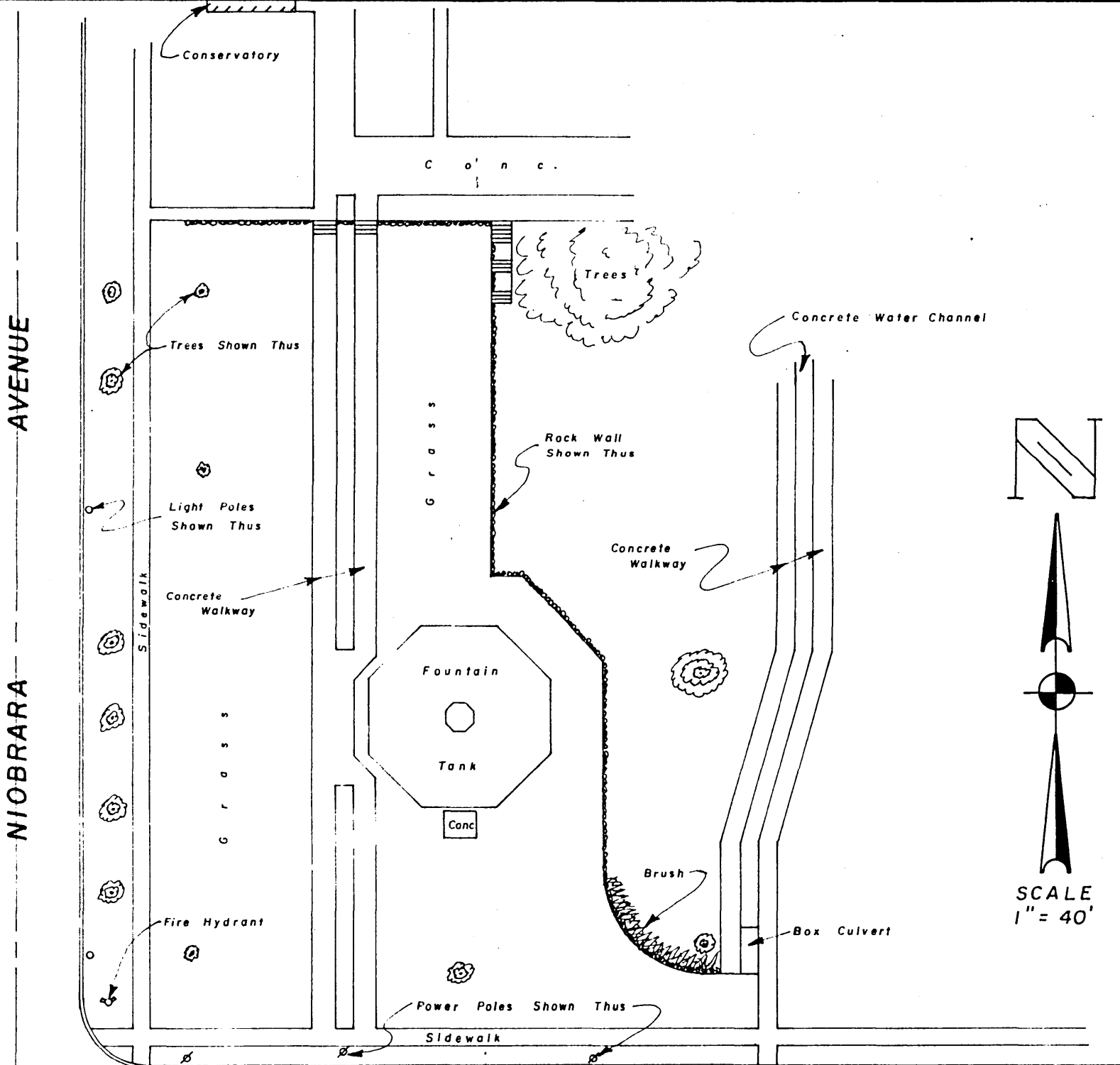
Significant in the area of engineering, the Fountain exhibits good integrity. When it was first activated in 1935, the local newspaper described it as one of General Electric's "newest products." Through the use of timers and colored lights, a spectrum of colors and sequences was possible. During the 1988-89 restoration, the electrical system was removed from the centerpiece and placed in a separate control box. The controls are now computerized but no significant changes were made to the Fountain's historic appearance.

The continued importance of the Fountain to residents of Alliance and the surrounding area is apparent by the overwhelming support provided for its restoration. In addition to donating thousands of dollars to ensure its continued operation, local residents initiated efforts to have the Fountain listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

City of Alliance Central Park  
Fountain (NEHBS # BX01-067)

Site Plan

Drawn by Jay L. Dubs, Dept. of  
Public Works, City of Alliance,  
11/22/88.



10th

STREET

**EXISTING SITE PLAN**

