

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

RECEIVED  
AUG 9 1992

1288

# 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 10-900-a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Harrington Bank Block and Opera House

other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number NW corner Third and Willis

not for publication

city, town Harrington

vicinity

state Washington code WA

county Lincoln

code 043

zip code 99134

### 3. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

#### Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

#### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	sites
<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	structures
<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N.A.

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.

Mary Sampson  
Signature of certifying official

8/10/92  
Date

Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
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.
  - 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

Gayle M. Rapsley entered in the National Register 10/2/92

for Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

---

## 6. Function or Use

---

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce: Financial Institution  
Recreation: Auditorium

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government: City Hall  
Vacant/Not in Use

---

## 7. Description

---

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation	stone
walls	brick
roof	
other	brick

---

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Harrington Bank Block and Opera House is a two-story brick structure that dominates the commercial center of the small town of Harrington in rural Lincoln County. Occupying a half-block at the northwest corner of Third and Willis streets, the building is constructed of the same distinctive orange-brown brick used in other buildings on the main street. But the Bank Block is further distinguished by a steeply pitched roof above the interior auditorium, and by triangular pediments, stone lintels, and an arched entry that hint vaguely at a Romanesque Revival vernacular.

The Bank Block is built on a rectangular plan and measures approximately 50 feet along the Third Street facade and 40 feet along the side elevations. The block is composed of two units: the taller opera house portion at the corner of Willis and Third, which rises to a steeply pitched hip roof; and a somewhat shorter two-story northern unit. The division is apparent on the rear elevation (where the uneven rooflines are exposed). But on the facade the building is visually unified into a single brick block, with a continuous cornice line and common fenestration.

Vertically, the facade is divided into several bays articulated on the upper level by shallow pavilions framed by brick piers. Horizontally, the building is divided by a raised brick stringcourse between the first and second stories. The building is crowned by a projecting molded brick cornice above a brick frieze with dentil course. Triangular pediments rise above the cornice of the opera house to denote the central entry bay and the auditorium itself. The pediments feature coping with finials and small arched openings. In the main pediment, raised stone letters spell "Bank Block."

The first floor of the building features a series of large storefront display windows with transoms (covered on the Third Street facade). Between the storefronts, large flat arched windows are surmounted by lintels composed of stone voussoirs. A recessed entry bay at the corner at Main and Willis is supported by a cast iron column and heavy stone lintels. A recessed entry on Willis Street is also supported by an iron post and is flanked by large plate glass storefront windows.

A portal with round stone arch in the center of the Third Avenue facade provides entry to the second floor. Second floor fenestration includes

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 7 Page 2

---

regularly disposed flat arched windows surmounted by stone voussoirs. The wood sash windows are now boarded to help prevent further deterioration. The south slope of the gable roof above the opera house includes three hipped dormers. Fenestration of the rear wall includes arched double hung windows (now boarded). The south wall, which once abutted a one-story brick structure (now demolished) has no openings.

The interior of the block features a series of commercial and office spaces on the first floor, and a large auditorium on the second floor. Although much of the first floor has been remodelled, some of the original plaster walls, millwork trim, and marble finish survives in the original banking room. A wooden staircase ascends to the auditorium, which is a large open space beneath a suspended cove ceiling. Although deteriorated, the auditorium retains most of its original character-defining features, including a raised stage framed by a proscenium arch. The arch is decorated with a plaster leaf-motif molding. Surviving millwork includes wainscoting and door and window surrounds. Paneled doors on either side of the stage lead to the backstage area and the two dressing rooms. The original stage drops are still in place, including one of an Alpine scene with advertisements for local businesses. The room is lighted by tall windows, now boarded with plywood.

## 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)

Architecture  
Entertainment

Period of Significance

1904-1942

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

N/A

J. R. Burrill

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

Dominating the business district of an agricultural trade town, the Harrington Bank Block and Opera House is an architecturally distinctive structure that served for four decades as an entertainment and business center for the region. The building was constructed in 1904 during the wheat boom of the era by the proprietors of a private bank; its scale and architectural character (complete with parapets, arched openings, and stone trim) made it an instant landmark and prominent business address. But the upstairs auditorium attracted the most excitement. From its gala opening in 1904 until World War II, the Opera House served as a venue for visiting and local entertainments. Today, first floor offices have been remodelled and the building has suffered some deterioration. But the Bank Block continues to maintain good exterior integrity and the Opera House itself retains its characteristic interior features, offering a glimpse into the community life of rural Washington in the early 20th century.

Historical Background: Located in the fertile wheat belt of Lincoln County, Harrington is a small agricultural trade center 50 miles southwest of Spokane. The town was named for W. P. Harrington of Calusa, California, who speculated in Eastern Washington farmland in the early 1880s, and whose vast holdings included the future townsite.

In 1882, Harrington, Jacob Furth, and Luke Robinson purchased 1,500 acres of bunch grass-covered land in one of the least settled sections of the Big Bend country. The same year, the Northern Pacific Railroad sent a survey crew through the area. Anticipating the arrival of the railroad, Mrs. Horace Cutter purchased a quarter-section from Harrington and surveyed a townsite, which she platted in May, 1883.

The first settlers arrived and a general store was started in the spring of 1883; in the fall, a post office was established. In 1884, a hotel, blacksmith shop, and newspaper opened for business, and the nascent community even vied to become seat of Lincoln County. But the hopes of early settlers were quickly dashed when the Northern Pacific bypassed Harrington, and Mrs. Cutter was unable to sell her lots.

The town's fortunes changed dramatically in 1892, however, when the Great Northern Railway brought its Crab Creek line through town. W. P.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number  8  Page  2

---

Harrington bought the site back from Mrs. Cutter that year, and his Harrington Townsite Company sold most of the lots in town. Several additions were laid out as well, and it was reported that 40 carpenters were at work on new buildings. Much of the initial boom ended after construction crews completed their work and businesses left with them. But the town continued to grow that decade as large wheat harvests brought settlers and businesses to the region.

In 1892, the California Land and Stock Company (another Harrington-Furth-Robinson venture) purchased 3,000 acres to developed farmland near Harrington, and appointed John F. Green to be the local manager and promoter. The timing was propitious. Bumper crops in the 1890s led to rapid growth in the region, and by the turn of the century Harrington was the trade center for a prosperous wheat district. The town boasted hotels, two banks, a milling company, and grain warehouses that stored over one million bushels of wheat.

In 1902, Harrington was incorporated. By 1905, an agricultural machinery manufactory was in business; the town's population had grown to 850 (by contrast, there are about 500 residents today); and 23 firms conducted business in a series of substantial brick commercial structures that lined the downtown streets. Indeed, the architecture of downtown Harrington symbolized the community's growth. In 1903, the Harrington Citizen reported that the town "is justly proud of the business blocks [and] no building now standing would look out of place in a town of many thousand inhabitants." Three years later, the newspaper claimed that Harrington had "more brick blocks than any town its size in the state."

Perhaps the most imposing of these new commercial structures was the Bank Block built in 1904 at the corner of Third and Willis in the town center. The two-story brick structure was built by the owners of the private Bank of Harrington, and housed not only the bank but several other businesses (which soon included a barber shop, saloon, newspaper, harness shop, bowling alley, and lodging rooms) as well as the new Harrington Opera House in the well-equipped upstairs auditorium.

John F. Green, the California Land Company manager, Marion F. Adams and Albert G. Mitchum established the Bank of Harrington in 1898 as a private financial institution serving the region's farmers and businesses. The company also was involved in commercial real estate--in addition to the Bank Block, the firm built the Adams-Mitchum Block across the street in 1898 (now razed)--and in 1904, the bank received permission to erect and maintain the city's sewer system.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 8 Page 3

---

The firm's new Bank Block was designed and built by J. R. Burrill and Company, self-described "building contractors and architects," who designed many of the town's commercial structures; millwork was provided by L. V. Sisum. Construction was completed in the fall of 1904 at the cost of \$25,000, and on December 16th the Opera House was opened to a capacity crowd of 375, described as the "largest attendance in the history of Harrington." The new auditorium featured a large hall with raised stage, proscenium arch with ornate plaster moldings, dressing rooms, and several backdrops that advertised the services of local businessmen. On January 1, 1905, the Bank of Harrington begin operations in the downstairs banking rooms, a facility outfitted with marble and oak finishes. "No bank in the state in a town the size of Harrington can equal it," claimed the newspaper that week.

For the next four decades, the Opera House was the center of entertainment in the community. Initially managed by Adams, the hall was a venue for the local lyceum, Chautauquas, masquerade balls, wrestling and boxing exhibitions, traveling vaudeville performances, and popular "home talent entertainments." The opera house remained in business until the 1940s, when it was condemned as unsafe for crowds.

Despite changing tenants and vacancy, the building continues to be an architectural landmark. The roofline parapets, arched openings, and stone trim reflect a vaguely Romanesque Revival influence that distinguishes the Bank Block from other downtown brick structures. And the interior auditorium still boasts the stage, proscenium arch, backdrops, and dramatic open space that first impressed Harrington crowds in 1904.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Maribel Cronrath, Harrington, 100 Years: 1880-1980 (Harrington, 1980).

Donald Walter, ed, Lincoln County: A Lasting Legacy (Davenport, 1988).

An Illustrated History of the Big Bend Country (Spokane, 1904)

"New Opera House Opens," Harrington Citizen, Dec. 16, 1904, p. 1.

Special Issue, Harrington Citizen, December 1, 1905.

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: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property less than one

UTM References

A 1 1 4 0 5 5 5 0 5 2 5 9 0 7 0

Zone Easting Northing

C

Zone Easting Northing

B

Zone Easting Northing

D

Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description The nominated property is described thusly: beginning at the northwest corner of Third and Willis, proceed westerly along the north curb of Willis approximately 45 feet; turn north and proceed northerly along the rear property line approximately 55 feet; turn east and proceed easterly along the north wall of the nominated building approximately 45 feet to the west curb of Third; turn south and proceed along the west curb line of Third to the point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire structure originally built as the Bank Block and Opera House.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/title Leonard Garfield, from information submitted by Douglas Rudkoff

organization Harrington Opera House Committee

street & number Box 133

city or town Harrington

date May 1, 1992

telephone (509)253-4282

state WA

zip code 99134