

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 94000655


Date Listed: 7/8/94

Property Name: Table Rock Public Square Historic District

County: Pawnee State: Nebraska

none
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

July 8, 1994
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 1. Historic Name

"Table Rock Public Square Historic District" is hereby entered as the historic name.

U.S.G.S. Map

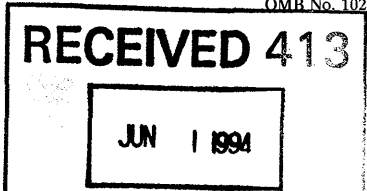
Label on map is hereby corrected to read "Table Rock Public Square Historic District."

Carol Ahlgren of the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment on July 7, 1994.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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 on the back of this form. Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name N/A

other names/site number Table Rock Public Square Historic District; PW08: multiple

2. Location

street & number see map of district boundary not for publication [n/a]

city or town Table Rock vicinity [n/a]

state Nebraska code NE county Pawnee code 133 zip code 68447

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.)

Marlene Sommer
Signature of certifying official

5/23/94
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): _____

Linda McClelland

7/8/94

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
28	13	buildings
1	0	sites
6	3	structures
0	0	objects
35	16	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling
Domestic: hotel
Religion: church
Commerce/Trade: business, professional, organizational, financial institution
Recreation & Culture: music facility, outdoor recreation
Landscape: park

Domestic: single dwelling
Domestic: restaurant
Religion: church
Commerce/Trade: business
Government: post office, fire house
Recreation & Culture: museum, outdoor recreation
Vacant/Not in Use
Landscape: park

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals

foundation Limestone, Brick
walls Brick, Frame, Asbestos, Asphalt, Aluminum
Tin, Vinyl
roof Asphalt
other _____

Narrative Description

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

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.
- 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.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning & Development

Period of Significance

1883-1921

Significant Dates

1883, 1920

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 13.75

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	747460	4451600	3.	14	747220	4451340
2.	14	747460	4451340	4.	14	747220	4451600

[] 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 Lonnie Dickson, Survey Assistant; Kathy Fimple, Historian; John Kay, Principle Investigator
organization Save America's Heritage date 8/27/1993
street & number 2714 Rathbone Road telephone (402) 483-0418
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68502

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 _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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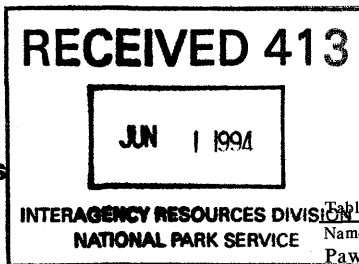


Table Rock Public Square Historic District
Name of Property
Pawnee County, Nebraska
County and State

Section 7 Page 1

DESCRIPTION

The Table Rock Public Square Historic District is located in Table Rock, a small Pawnee County town in southeastern Nebraska. The district is comprised of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century residential and commercial buildings that front on four sides of a large public square park. Wide streets surround the park and reinforce its central location in the district. The land falls sharply away from the district on three sides into the North Fork of the Big Nemaha River Valley. The scale of the park and its relationship to the buildings around it result in a unique public square environment. The district is comprised of 35 contributing resources: 28 buildings, 1 site, 6 structures as well as 16 non-contributing resources.

The Table Rock Public Square Historic District is centered around the public square park in Table Rock, a small southeastern Nebraska town (1990 population: 308). Rectangular in shape, the district is situated in the central part of the town. The four streets that surround the square are Luzerne (on the south), Houston (on the west), Pennsylvania (on the north) and Nebraska (on the east). The district is located between Nebraska State Highway #4 and spur #65. As one enters the square from narrow access roads, a sense of arrival is reinforced as the width of the streets increases drastically at the four intersections around the public square (see district boundary map). The intersection of Pennsylvania and Houston streets, the public square park, and the intersection of Nebraska and Luzerne streets buffer the residential and commercial areas. Of the ten residential properties constructed between c1885 and 1909, four are non-contributing, but all retain the scale and massing that are characteristic of late nineteenth-century houses. Three of the most notable are of brick construction: the Pattison-Burrow House (PW08-47); the Norris House (PW08-11); and the Holmes-Zolenka House (PW08-10) (see photo #'s 7, 9 & 10).

Table Rock was platted with larger than normal city blocks (332 x 396 feet). As the park is a full block, coupled with wide streets around its perimeter, the open space in the public square is unusually vast. Four pairs of concrete and cast iron light poles, located at the midpoint of each side of the park, create visual pathways between the residential and commercial components of the district. These pathways also link recreational and social areas within the park (i.e. picnic shelter/bandstand area to basketball and open grass areas). Views from within the park to the downtown businesses are framed by the State Bank of Table Rock (PW08-18), the Opera House (PW08-17), and I.O.O.F. Hall (PW08-19) on the west and the former Lincoln Hotel Block (PW08-61) and filling station (PW08-77) on the east (see photo #'s 4-6, 13 & 14).

Luzerne Street, on the south side of the public square park, throughout time has been the anchor of Table Rock's commercial district, as well as the major east-west corridor through town. In 1883, Rev. C.W. Giddings donated the block for the public square park and the formation of Table Rock's downtown public square was complete. Historic photographs indicate that Table Rock's commercial buildings developed through time in a manner that was similar to other southeastern Nebraska communities (see photo # 14). Frame commercial buildings were originally constructed and gradually replaced with brick. A fire in February of 1920, however, destroyed nearly all of the town's late nineteenth-century brick buildings on the south side of the square, with the exception of the Richardson-Kovanda Building (PW08-80) and the William Taylor Building (PW08-81) at the extreme western edge of the block (see photo #'s 2 & 3).

The buildings destroyed by the fire were constructed of brick; however, two frame commercial buildings were dynamited to prevent the fire from spreading east to the Lincoln Hotel Block (PW08-61, see photo #1). The aftermath of the fire had a decisive role in the commercial development of Table Rock. With the exception of four buildings that were reconstructed immediately after the fire, large gaps remained in the middle of the block until the late 1960's-70's when a one-story post office and a telephone building were constructed. Although the scale and massing as well as the construction dates of these buildings make them

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Name of Property

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DESCRIPTION (continued)

non-contributing, their location reinforces the public square district as the continued center of services and commerce in Table Rock.

Ironically, it was minimal growth and stagnation after the fire, combined with other factors, that has preserved the historic character of Table Rock's Public Square Historic District. The brick facades of the existing late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century buildings are intact. A good percentage of the houses on the north and east sides of the square contribute to the area's historic character. As a whole, the commercial and residential aspects of the district combine to make a distinctive example of a public square form of community development.

Inventory of Contributing Resources

PW08-83: Public Square Park, 1883 (see photo #'s 11-13). The Public Square Park is the center of the historic district and is surrounded by Pennsylvania, Nebraska, Luzerne, and Houston streets. The size of the park was established when Table Rock was platted with blocks that measured 396 by 332 feet. The buildings enclose the public square park and terminate views from within the park, creating a sense of place. Rev. C. W. Giddings acquired this block in 1866 during a sheriff's sale for \$2,006. In 1868, he sold the south half of the block for \$300 to John N. and Lydia A. Gere. This is the last entry in the deed records for this block. In 1883, according to a Table Rock business directory, Giddings donated the block to the city for use as a public park and Samuel Barnard donated landscape trees.

The park, itself a contributing site, contains two contributing buildings: a brick one-story hip roof bandstand with an attached raised concrete dance platform and a one-story brick former fountain building. The park also contains a non-contributing c1947 concrete block and frame picnic shelter/restroom building. Six contributing structures are associated with the park; in the center of each side of the park are four pairs of cement and cast iron light poles and two cast-iron street light poles are located on the north side. Three non-contributing structures are also located within the park: a cement basketball court, the steel water tower and the Korean War Memorial.

South Side of the Public Square: Luzerne Street between Nebraska and Houston streets

PW08-61: Lincoln Hotel Block, 1917 (see photo #1). Located on the southwest corner of Luzerne and Nebraska streets, this commercial block consists of four attached brick buildings: a three-story hotel, two-story theater, two-story commercial building and one-story maintenance/service building. Each of the four components of the complex is designed as a two-part commercial block that employs the same detailing to present a unified facade. Limestone headers and sills at the windows and a horizontal string course of limestone in the parapet are the only details on this simple, yet dignified facade.

Edward E. Hannel, a trustee of the hotel, purchased the ground for the complex in early 1917 for \$3,900 and acquired mortgages totaling \$38,000. A mechanic's lien filed in February of 1918 suggests that the complex was completed by the end of 1917. The hotel complex was the last prominent building constructed in Table Rock's downtown prior to the fire of 1920.

Alterations to the hotel are limited to the first level, which range from reducing the window heights by one third of the original to infilling some of the basement windows. Although the one-and-one-half story arched entrance has been enclosed with vertical siding, the theater retains its historical appearance. The commercial building has perhaps the most obtrusive alterations with the use of wooden shingles over the transoms of the doors and store front windows. On the secondary (west) facade, which also has a lower quality of brick, all of the windows are boarded up within the original openings. The maintenance shop building's only alteration is the replacement of the original frame garage doors with fiberglass roll up doors.

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DESCRIPTION (continued)

PW08-78: R.P. Jennings Building, 1920 (see photo #11). The R.P. Jennings Building is located on Luzerne Street between Nebraska and Houston streets on the south side of the public square park. Although abandoned, this one-story brick building is representative of the unadorned brick one-part commercial buildings that were constructed shortly after the fire of 1920. The most significant features of the building are the recessed storefront and transom window. One month after the fire, John Phillips sold the east 40 feet of Lot 3 for \$1,000 on 3/9/1920 to R.P. Jennings. The construction date in the parapet of the building is 1920. Jennings lost the property in February of 1927 when it was sold in a sheriff's deed for \$200 to James Broyles. On 5/3/1930, Broyles sold the land to Rudolph B. Karas. Through the next 25 years, Karas owned the property until it was sold to John Kolacny for \$1,500 in 1955. Although slightly deteriorated, the building retains its historic integrity.

PW08-79: J.C. Beck Building, 1920 (see photo #'s 2, 3 & 13). One of four adjacent buildings at the southwest corner of Luzerne and Houston streets, this building represents the only two-story, two-part brick commercial building that was constructed after the 1920 fire. An understated corbelling course differentiates the parapet from the rest of the facade, and the first level features a stained glass transom. In June of 1908, J.C. Beck and F.M. Colwell purchased the property for \$4,000. Beck sold the building to Ben Heir in December of 1924, and Heir owned the property until his death in 1937. Although the entry has been slightly modified, the building retains its historic integrity.

PW08-97: Frank Kovanda Building, 1920 (see photo #'s 2, 3 & 13). Located in a grouping of four buildings near the intersection of Luzerne and Houston streets, this one-part brick commercial building has a minimal amount of detailing. A brick corbelling course atop the parapet and a transom window differentiate the facade. Frank Kovanda, Sr., sold the original building to Frank Kovanda, Jr., in 1919. Frank Kovanda, Jr., obtained a \$3,000 mortgage in May of 1920 to rebuild after the fire. The Kovanda family continued to own the building until 1950, when it was sold to Edwin L. Beethe. Beethe sold the building to Mr. Wherry, whose "Wherry Mortuary" sign still appears on the parapet. Although glass block has replaced the original storefront windows, the building retains its original configuration.

PW08-80: Richardson-Kovanda Building, c1892 (see photo #'s 2, 3 & 13). The Richardson-Kovanda Building is one of two adjoining properties at the southwest corner of Luzerne and Houston streets that survived the fire (see also PW08-81). Constructed circa 1892, it is an example of a brick two-story, two-part commercial building that retains its historic integrity. A bracketed pressed-metal cornice atop the parapet and a wall cornice enhance the brick facade. The two arched window openings in the second level suggest that it was used as office space, which is characteristic of a two-part commercial facade. John N. Richardson purchased the property in 1883 and obtained mortgages during the early 1890's. Thus the building was constructed circa 1892. Anthony Kovanda and John Klima purchased the property 1899; and by August of 1900, Klima sold his share of the business to Kovanda. The Kovanda family owned the building from 1899 until 1947 under various partnerships and individual ownerships. The building retains its historical integrity in spite of minor alterations to the transom windows, which were covered with fiberglass panels.

PW08-81: William Taylor Building, c1895 (see photo #'s 2, 3 & 13). The Taylor Building is located at the southeast corner of Luzerne and Houston streets. Along with the adjacent Richardson-Kovanda Building (PW08-80), it survived the 1920 fire and is an example of a one-story, one-part brick commercial building. The building was the precursor to the restrained style of the 1920 structures that were built in the district soon after the fire. A simple corbelling course atop the parapet is the only ornamentation used throughout the facade. William Taylor purchased the property from David K. Miller, a trustee of the State Bank of Table Rock, in August 1892 for \$1,000. Taylor acquired mortgages totaling \$4,800 from the State Bank of Table Rock, half in 1895 and 1897. In July 1903, Taylor sold the building. Gerald E. Woods was the only other

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DESCRIPTION (continued)

substantial owner who owned the building from 1919-1932. Despite alterations to the recessed store front entry, the building retains its historic integrity.

Southwest Corner of the Public Square: Luzerne Street between Houston and Sixth streets

PW08-19: I.O.O.F. Building, c1901 (see photo #'s 4 & 13). The I.O.O.F. Building is located at the southwest corner of Luzerne and Houston streets. Cast-iron columns highlight the storefront of this two-story brick mixed-use commercial building. The east facade, although secondary, repeats the ornamentation of the primary or north facade. The brick two-story, two-part compositional north facade is crowned with a pressed-tin pedimented cornice that is adorned with the Odd Fellows shepherd staffs and interlocking ring symbols. The windows are set apart with arched brick and limestone window hoods and limestone sills. On the second level, the windows rest upon three courses of textured brick that creates a horizontal line that ties the two street facades together.

The Odd Fellows Building Association purchased the land from Linn & Cooper in 1883 for \$50.00 and constructed a building which burned in January of 1901. The property was sold by a building association trustee of the Table Rock Lodge #33, International Order of Odd Fellows on 4/3/1901. The local lodge then constructed the present two-story brick building and a grocery store continues to occupy the first level. The recessed entry store front was altered at an undetermined time; however, these alterations do not effect the original configuration. The building retains its historical character.

PW08-20: Milton H. Marble Building, 1904 (see photo #'s 4 & 13). Constructed in 1904, the M.H. Marble Building is located immediately west of the I.O.O.F. Building near the intersection of Luzerne and Houston streets. The detailing of the second level of the facade is nearly identical to the I.O.O.F. Building (PW08-019) with its arched brick and limestone window hoods and horizontal textured brick course. A bracketed pressed-tin cornice highlights the parapet, and a wall cornice separates the upper and lower levels. M.H. Marble originally purchased the land in 1891 and constructed the building in 1904. Marble then sold the property to Amy Marble in 1936 who continued to own the building through 1947. After 1947, the building changed ownership several times. The first-level storefront has been altered, but the cast-iron columns are intact and indicate the building's historical configuration.

PW08-21: Shop Building, c1885 (see photo #'s 4 & 13). Located on the south side of Luzerne Street in Block 38, this two-story building forms the southwest edge of the district. The only late nineteenth-century frame commercial building that remains in the district, it is also the oldest. Pressed-tin siding that replicates brick is used throughout the entire facade of the building. The pressed-tin cornice atop the parapet and a wall cornice that separates the first- and second-level facades are the only other decorative features. An estimated construction date of 1885 is derived from deed records. William White acquired a mortgage for \$240 in 1885, and two years later sold the property for \$800. The Village of Table Rock purchased the property in 1908 for \$350, which was the last deed entry through at least 1987. At an unknown date, the first-level facade had a garage door size opening cut into it and the building was converted into a maintenance shop/office building.

West Side of the Public Square: Houston Street between Luzerne and Pennsylvania streets

PW08-98: Professional Building, c1895 (see photo # 5). A two-story brick, two-part commercial block type professional building is located to the rear of the Table Rock State Bank (PW08-018) on Luzerne Street. Aside from a brick corbelling course atop the parapet and a horizontal band of textured brick between the first and second floors, the building has minimal ornamentation. The windows have arched openings which reflect the same stylistic influences of the attached bank building. Deed records for this property are

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DESCRIPTION (continued)

unclear, and thus the date of construction is based upon its architectural style and the fact that it appears to have been built soon after the adjacent bank. The professional building retains a high degree of integrity.

PW08-18: State Bank of Table Rock, 1892 (see photo #'s 5,6 & 14). The State Bank of Table Rock is prominently located at the northwest corner of Luzerne and Houston streets and is important to the district in several ways. Architecturally, the bank is the most significant building in the district and it visually anchors the most prominent corner. Throughout the history of the town, the bank has been the lender of the majority of mortgages to commercial buildings. The bank was founded by William Forbes and O.N. Weelock in 1883-84, and the present building was constructed in 1892.

Renaissance Revival style details distinguish the bank from the other buildings in the district. A cornice crowns the parapet and uses exaggerated dentils to set it apart from the rest of the facade. Series of rounded arch windows highlight the second level of the building. The main entrance is the focal point of the first level, with engaged classical columns that frame the door and support the entablature above the entryway. The building exhibits a high degree of interior and exterior historic integrity.

PW08-17: Table Rock Opera House, 1893 (see photo #'s 5,6 & 14). The opera house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988 as part of a state-wide multiple property nomination, Opera House Buildings in Nebraska. Located on the west side of the public square immediately north of the bank (PW08-18), this opera house was constructed in 1893 by G.R. "Rice" Martin. Once owned by the Bohemian Lodge # 84, the opera house is now owned by the Table Rock Historical Society and used as a museum. The opera house features a first-floor commercial space with a double storefront on either side of a central entry into the second-level opera house. The upper levels are of brick construction topped with a stepped parapet. Ornamentation in the building's facade is limited to limestone pointed window hoods and sills.

PW08-82: G.R. Martin Building, c1893 (see photo #'s 5,6 & 14). The Martin Building, which is on the west side of the square, is a brick two-part commercial building whose only remaining ornamentation is the limestone window hoods and sills that match those of the adjacent opera house. G.R. Martin purchased the land in 1892 and sold the building for \$7,000 to George H. Paul in 1907. The estimated date of construction, 1893, is based upon the relationship to the opera house sharing the party wall and the physical similarity of the two buildings. The integrity of the first-level storefronts has been compromised with infilled windows.

PW08-16: Table Rock Museum Buildings, c1914-1925 (see photo # 6). Located on the west side of the square near the intersection of Luzerne and Pennsylvania streets, the Table Rock Museum Buildings are three connected buildings that house the collections of the museum.

Building "A", c1914: Building "A" is a one-story false front brick commercial building with large arched door and window openings highlighted with brick corbelling. The building was constructed by C. McCourtney in 1914 after he acquired a mortgage for \$3,400. The street facade retains its historic integrity; however, the south facade has been altered with vertical siding.

Building "B", c1925: Frank H. Taylor constructed this one-story brick commercial building in approximately 1925 to replace a frame commercial building. He originally purchased the property in 1910 and apparently decided it was necessary to upgrade the property to a fire-proof brick building. Taylor owned the Table Rock Argus newspaper from 1887 until 1934, and it is probable that this building housed the newspaper office and printing facility. The building retains its historic integrity.

Building "C": A non-contributing concrete block building that is adjacent to building "B".

North Side of the Public Square: Pennsylvania Street between Houston and Nebraska streets

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DESCRIPTION (continued)

PW08-47: Pattison-Burrow House, 1909 (see photo # 7). A one-story brick vernacular house located one lot west of the northwest corner of Pennsylvania and Houston streets. Notable features of the brick house include a classically styled porch and truncated hip roof. John Pattison purchased the land in 1908 and built the house. The following year Pattison sold the home to Louisa Brown who continued to own the property until 1945. Despite minor alterations, such as the in-filled rear porch, the house retains a high degree of historic integrity.

PW08-99: G.R. Martin House, 1893 (see photo # 7). A one-and-one-half story vernacular frame house located at the northwest corner of Pennsylvania and Nebraska streets. It was constructed in 1893 for G.R. Martin who owned a meat market and the Table Rock Opera House (PW08-17). Martin owned the house until 1900 when it was sold to H. M. Bates. Although asphalt siding has been installed over the original clapboard, the house retains its historic character. The Martin House and the adjacent Pattison-Burrow House (PW08-47), provide visual enclosure representing the northwest boundary of the district.

PW08-14: Methodist Episcopal Church, c1882 (see photo # 8). The Methodist Episcopal Church is located at the northeast corner of Houston and Pennsylvania streets. Notable for its corner bell-tower entry, this one-story frame church visually dominates views from the park to the northwest. Although the exterior has been compromised with aluminum siding, the church functions as a focal point of religious and social activities for the historic district and plays a vital role in the community. The land was purchased by the church in 1882, and a mortgage was obtained for the construction of the building shortly afterward.

PW08-71: Conklin-Butler House, 1893 (see photo # 8). Located on Luzerne Street between Houston and Nebraska, the Conklin-Butler House is a one-story frame Queen Anne style dwelling. The house retains its historic integrity and is notable for its Eastlake porch and truncated hip roof. The house was constructed for William A. Conklin in 1893 who owned it through 1910. Alida C. Butler then acquired the house and her family owned it until 1936. None of the subsequent owners owned the house for a significant period of time.

PW08-11: Norris House, c1885 (see photo # 9). This large two-story brick house is located at the northwest corner of Pennsylvania and Nebraska streets. Its notable features are the front porch with classical columns and Eastlake detailing and the limestone headers and sills of the windows. Charles and Fannie Norris purchased the land in 1868 from C.W. Giddings and owned the property until 1945. Throughout time, the Norris House has been the largest of the houses located around the public square. Although a door and two windows have been altered, the house retains its historic character. Views through the park to the northeast terminate at this property.

Northeast Corner of the Public Square: Northeast corner of Pennsylvania and Nebraska streets

PW08-55: House, c1893. A small one-story frame house is located on the north side of Pennsylvania Street between Nebraska and Fifth streets. Pointed window frames and Eastlake style porch posts highlight this simple yet dignified facade. The date of construction is based upon its architectural style and the fact that it is very similar in design to the Conklin-Butler House (PW08-71, built 1893). Although the front porch has had minor alterations, the house retains its historic integrity.

East Side of the Public Square: Nebraska Street between Luzerne and Pennsylvania streets

PW08-10: Holmes-Zelenka House, c1895 (see photo # 10). The Holmes-Zelenka House is located at the southeast corner of Pennsylvania and Nebraska streets. The notable features of the one-story brick vernacular house are Eastlake detailing, segmentally arched windows and an unusual corner entry. This T-shaped house is one of only two remaining buildings on the east side of the public square. The house was constructed for Lydia A. Holmes after she acquired a mortgage in 1895. Ms. Holmes sold the property in 1899, and the house

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DESCRIPTION (continued)

did not have a long-term owner until Albert Zelenka purchased the property in 1916 and owned it until 1941. Although the rear porch has been enclosed and the Eastlake front porch has been removed, the house retains its historic character.

Southeast Corner of the Public Square: Southeast corner of Luzerne and Nebraska streets

PW08-77: Filling Station, c1920 (see photo #11). Located at the southeast corner of Luzerne and Nebraska streets, this one-story brick filling station represents the southeast boundary of the district. The building features a large porte cochere and a wooden shingled roof. The circa 1920 construction date is based upon the scale and massing of similar filling stations built in the state during the early 1920's. Although abandoned, the building retains its historic integrity.

Non-contributing properties

PW08-15: Two relocated buildings, a frame school and a log cabin part of the Table Rock Museum.

PW08-16: The northern most building of the Table Rock Museum complex (see photo # 6).

PW08-83: Non-contributing features located in the public square park: a picnic shelter/restroom building, a steel water tower, cement basketball court, and a Korean War Memorial.

PW08-100: House with c1960's wide siding (see photo #8).

PW08-101: House with c1970's wide siding (see photo #8).

PW08-102: House with asbestos siding (see photo #8).

PW08-103: House with asbestos siding.

PW08-104: Mobile home, c.1980.

PW08-105: Ruins of a commercial/professional building (see photo #'s 3 & 11).

PW08-106: Metal building c. 1970 (see photo # 6).

PW08-107: One-story brick post office c.1970 (see photo #'s 3 & 11).

PW08-108: One-story concrete block telephone building c.1965 (see photo # 3).

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Table Rock Public Square Historic District is significant on the local level under Criterion A in the area of community planning and development. The development of Table Rock during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is typical of communities in southeast Nebraska. During the nineteenth century, Table Rock suffered through floods, failed to win the county seat, was bolstered by the arrival of the railroad, flourished during the prosperity of the eighties, and suffered again during the depression of the nineties. The town boomed again during the early twentieth century, then experienced a disastrous fire and declined as the century progressed. In the planning of its public square, however, Table Rock is atypical. The large expanse of green space framed by unusually wide streets and surrounded by a mix of commercial and residential buildings is unique for a town its size in southeastern Nebraska. The period of significance, 1883 to 1921, begins with the establishment of the public square which solidified the form of the town, through the rebuilding efforts that immediately followed the fire.

Table Rock is located in the rolling hills overlooking the North Fork of the Big Nemaha River in northeast Pawnee County. Pawnee County is located in southeast Nebraska and was originally part of Richardson County when the first Nebraska counties were established in 1854. The first settlers began arriving in the spring of 1854, following the South Fork of the Big Nemaha River into the county. One year later, the present-day boundaries of Pawnee County were officially approved by the Territorial Legislature

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

and the county was divided into townships. The townsite of Table Rock was selected and partially laid out in 1855 by the Table Rock Town Company which was formed by three southeast Nebraska businessmen including Robert Furnas of Brownville, a prominent agricultural spokesman and Governor of Nebraska from 1872 to 1874.

Formation of a community under the guidance of the Table Rock Town Company never materialized. Instead, the holdings of the company were purchased in 1857 by the Nebraska Settlement Company, which consisted of a number of business leaders from the coal regions of Pennsylvania. The settlement company encouraged approximately 200 families to emigrate from Pennsylvania and New York. The first of these arrived near Table Rock in 1857. In June of 1858, a large town site was officially surveyed in the south-half of Section 32 that includes the present-day boundaries of Table Rock.

The first crude dwellings were constructed in the lowlands immediately east of the current town site. Disease and financial distress placed serious hardships on the emigrants, and their buildings were subjected to frequent flooding. Today, there is no evidence of this initial settlement. By the end of 1858, only fifteen of the 200 families remained. These people relocated to the higher ground of the surveyed community and soon constructed a frame church, general store, and several dwellings.

The community developed gradually during the 1860s. Important strides were made in developing the infrastructure of a community. A stone school, brick kiln, cheese factory, and wagon shop were added to the community during this time. In addition, a frame bridge was built over Taylor's Branch of the North Fork of the Big Nemaha River.

In 1871-72, the Atchison and Nebraska Railroad Company built a rail line approximately three-fourths of a mile east of town in the river valley. The arrival of the railroad gave Table Rock the distinction of being the only Pawnee County town with a railroad--an advantage it held for ten years. An addition of residential and commercial blocks (Railroad Addition) was surveyed and added to the original town plat. The railroad constructed a hotel and depot in the "lower town" site, and a competition soon developed between the "upper" and "lower" portions of Table Rock.

The presence of the railroad and depot encouraged a more rapid construction of businesses and dwellings in the lower town and threatened the continued existence of the upper town. The lowland, however, was subject to flooding; and in 1880, the citizens of the lower town agreed that the upper town was a more suitable site for the development of the community and signed a petition agreeing to relocate. The lower town businesses gradually joined the established businesses on what would become the south side of the public square. The depot, however, remained adjacent to the rail line in the lower town.

The consolidated central business district was focused on an expansive public square, platted in 1883, which also served as the primary public park in the community. Land for the square was donated by Rev. C.W. Giddings, owner of much of the upper town site and a nearby cheese factory. Trees were donated and planted and the public square became the focal point of the Table Rock central business district. To enhance its prominence, four exceptionally wide streets were platted surrounding the square. Luzerne Street on the south side of the square also served as the main route connecting the upper town to the depot in its lower town location. With this connection to the railroad, Luzerne Street and Houston Street, on the west side of the square, developed as the main commercial streets in the district. The State Bank of Table Rock (PW08-018) and the Table Rock Opera House (PW08-017), built in 1892 and 1893 respectively, became landmarks on the west side of the square. A variety of commercial buildings, such as the Kovanda-Richardson Building (PW08-080), were built on Luzerne Street during the 1880s and 1890s. The Methodist Episcopal Church was built on the northwest corner of the square in 1882. Residences filled in most of the remaining lots on the north and east sides of the square, although a hotel (non-extant) was constructed on the east side of the square.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

The public square became the center of social and community activity in the growing town. The relationship of the residential and commercial enclaves linked by the expanse of the park created a picturesque nineteenth-century town. Table Rock flourished during the 1880s and early 1890s and recorded its peak population in 1900 (pop: 852). While population declined somewhat over the next two decades, significant construction took place in 1917 when the Lincoln Hotel Block (PW08-061) was built on the southeast corner of the public square.

In February of 1920 a fire began in the basement of one of the buildings on the south side of the square. It soon spread and could not be contained because the community's fire fighting equipment was frozen. Eight buildings were lost in the fire: six two-story brick buildings that were directly consumed by the flames and two single-story frame buildings that were dynamited to prevent the fire's spread. Left intact was the new brick hotel (PW08-61) on the east end of the block and two adjoining brick buildings (PW08-80, & 81) on the west end. Three buildings (PW08-78, 79, and 97) were immediately rebuilt in the center of the block, but large gaps remained.

The depressed economy of agricultural communities in the 1920s followed by the depression of the 1930s contributed to the decline in Table Rock's population and development. The gaps on the south side of the square that resulted from the fire remained vacant for over half a century until the 1970's when two one-story brick buildings (post office and telephone exchange) were constructed. The only other additions to the district in the 60 years after the fire were a picnic shelter, basketball court, water tower, and war memorial in the park. By 1990, the town's population was 308. Today, the wide streets and large park surrounded by residential and commercial buildings convey a strong visual and historic sense of a distinctive public square district.

The Table Rock Public Square Historic District is significant in the area of community planning and development. While the town's history is typical of small agricultural communities in southeast Nebraska, its significance is primarily derived from the distinctive environment created by the large public square in a central business and residential district. Many towns have public squares, but they often are, or were, platted as courthouse squares.

In a six and one-half county area in southeast Nebraska (Pawnee, Richardson, Johnson, Nemaha, Gage, Otoe, and southern Lancaster counties), only 4 out of 63 extant towns including Table Rock were platted with commercial public squares not intended for a courthouse. None of these three towns, Firth (Lancaster County), Nemaha (Nemaha County), and Humboldt (Richardson County), compare with Table Rock in size of population or historic development. Two of the towns, Firth and Nemaha, were much smaller with peak populations of less than 500. Humboldt was significantly larger, with a peak population of 1,433 in 1930.

The Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NeHBS) has not been completed for Lancaster and Nemaha counties. Therefore, the extent of public square development in Firth and Nemaha is unknown. The historic buildings survey for Richardson County was completed in 1992. Humboldt, historically much larger than Table Rock, features a public square district surrounded on all sides with commercial buildings. The Table Rock Public Square District, therefore, with its mix of commercial and residential buildings located on exceptionally wide streets surrounding a large park, represents a unique example of town planning in southeastern Nebraska.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (see district map)

The boundaries of the Table Rock Public Square Historic District are limited to the properties that surround the public square park and retain their historic integrity. The boundary on the north is the rear property line of the residential lots including Lots 11 and 12 of Block 16; Lots 7-12 of Block 17; Lots 7-9 of Block 18.

The boundary line east of the public square extends to the rear of the residential lots including Lots 4-9 of Block 27. At the southeast corner of the district, the boundary runs west along the center of Luzerne Street to the east facade of PW08-77, a filling station located on Lot 6, Block 40 and proceeds to the rear of the property line.

The district boundary then continues west along the rear property line of Lots 1-6 of Block 39 and Lot 1 and the eastern one-third of Lot 2 of Block 38. From here the boundary turns north and runs along the west facade of PW08-21, located on parts of Lots 1 and 2 in Block 38, and continues north past Luzerne Street.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (continued)

The district boundary then runs north along the rear facades of the commercial buildings on the west side of the public square including Lots 8-12 and Lot 1 of Block 29. The boundary line then turns west at the center of Pennsylvania Street and continues until it reaches the western edge of Lot 11 in Block 16 and connects to the rear property line at the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (see district map)

The boundaries of the Table Rock Public Square Historic District were selected to include the park, the four streets and intersections around the park and the buildings that front on the four sides of the square. Comprised of eight partial blocks surrounding the public square, the district is bounded on the north and east by the rear property line of the residential lots, on the south by the rear property line of the commercial lots and on the west by a line that runs roughly along the rear of the commercial buildings.

The four corners and the west boundary line of the district were the only areas that were flexible when deciding upon the location of district boundaries. It was determined that the district should include all properties that enclosed views from within the public square; thus at the four corners (Blocks 16, 18, 40, and 38), the first three lots were potentially within the district.

In Block 16, only the houses in Lots 11 & 12 were considered to be contributing and the northwest corner of the district was established at Lot 11. The north boundary is the rear property line of residential lots on the south half of Blocks 16, 17 and 18. In Block 18, Lots 8 & 9 are vacant, and thus the boundary line turns south at the east side of Lot 9 to connect with the rear property line of residential lots along the east side of the public square (Lots 4-9) of Block 27.

Once the property line intersects the center line of Luzerne Street, a decision was made to turn west following the center line to exclude non-contributing properties east of PW08-77, a filling station. The eastern boundary then continues south along the side of the filling station to the rear of Lot 6. The southern boundary is the rear property line of commercial lots on the north half of Blocks 40, 39 and 38.

At the southwest corner of the square in Block 38, only the first three buildings within Lots 1 and part of 2 retain their historic integrity and were constructed within the period of significance (1888-1921). Thus the district boundary turns north along the west facade of PW08-21, a shop building, and continues north in a straight line at the rear of commercial buildings at the west side of the public square. This line turns east to avoid a non-contributing storage building and returns north at the rear facades of PW08-16 A & B and continues to the center line of Pennsylvania Street. The district boundary then continues west until it includes all of Lot 11, Block 16 and turns north along the west property line to connect with the north boundary line.



Contributing Buildings =
 Non-contributing Buildings =

Drawn by: Lonnie Dickson 8/27/1993

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Table Rock Public Square Historic District
 Table Rock, Pawnee County, Nebraska