

Kan. Cong. Dist. No. 4
Garner Shriver
Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Kansas	
COUNTY: McPherson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME	
COMMON: McPherson Opera House	
AND/OR HISTORIC:	

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 221 South Main			
CITY OR TOWN: McPherson			
STATE Kansas	CODE 67460	COUNTY: McPherson	CODE 113

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Apartments <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME: Floyd Moore			
STREET AND NUMBER: 221 South Main or 109 East Sutherland			
CITY OR TOWN: McPherson	STATE: Kansas	CODE 67460	CODE 20

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Register of Deeds			
STREET AND NUMBER: McPherson County Courthouse			
CITY OR TOWN: McPherson	STATE: Kansas	CODE 67460	CODE 20

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY: NONE			
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Kansas	COUNTY: McPherson	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
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FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The McPherson Opera House located at the northeast corner of Main and Sutherland streets is a rectangular three-story building with a basement. This large Eclectic style structure measures approximately 130 feet long, 50 feet wide, and 40 feet high. The roof is steeply pitched in a mansard effect for several feet and then becomes a flat tar roof.

A main entrance to the opera house is on the south side within a massive two-story stone arch. Above the arch is a carved stone balustrade. At the third floor level is another stone and brick arch, which in turn is capped by a large decorated stone gable. The double doors at the first floor are flanked by granite columns within the archway. The entrance way with its decorative stone work is one of the most impressive features of the building.

The exterior walls are of red brick and limestone and are topped by a stone cornice. A horizontal band of cut stone separates the first and second floors and a protruding band of brick on the south and stone on the west separates the second and third floors. Brick pilasters vertically divide the west facade into three symmetrical sections and the south facade into eight sections, some of them of unequal size. Each brick pilaster terminates above the roof line with a unique brick and stone pinnacle.

All windows are rectangular, although there may originally have been some with curved sides in the entrance arch. Doors are likewise rectangular and both doors and windows had wood frames. However, many of the present window frames are of metal. All first floor windows on the south facade have arched stone lintels as well as stone jambs. Second floor windows on the south have horizontal stone lintels. Those on the west have a horizontal brick lintel with a stone keystone. All third floor windows have an arched lintel of a stone and brick combination. Stone sills are common to all windows. Many of the window openings on the south side have been bricked shut.

On the west front a flat-roofed porch overhangs the sidewalk at the first floor level and shelters the entrances. An arched stone design centered on the west facade encloses windows on the second and third floors. A stone gable similar to the one on the south is located over the arched design at the roof line. At the very bottom of the gable raised stone letters spell out "OPERA HOUSE."

Visible alterations appear to be confined to the building's windows with many on the south side bricked shut and the semicircular arches of the third floor windows filled in with metal siding.

The interior has been modified; however, a theater or hall still remains in the building although it has not been used for some time. Part of the structure has been converted into apartments.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian ☐ 16th Century ☐ 18th Century ☐ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century ☐ 17th Century ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1889

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Aboriginal ☐ Education ☐ Political ☐ Urban Planning
☐ Prehistoric ☐ Engineering ☐ Religion/Philosophy ☐ Other (Specify)
☒ Historic ☐ Industry ☐ Science
☐ Agriculture ☐ Invention ☐ Sculpture
☒ Architecture ☐ Landscape ☐ Social/Humanitarian
☐ Art ☐ Architecture
☐ Commerce ☐ Literature ☐ Theater
☐ Communications ☐ Military ☐ Transportation
☐ Conservation ☐ Music

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The McPherson Opera House built in 1889 was for many years an important community center in McPherson. The first opera house in town had been located on the second floor of the Bank of McPherson building from 1880 to 1889, but as McPherson grew and prospered the Opera House Company, with E. G. Clark as president, decided on March 25, 1888, to construct a new opera house. Work commenced the following week with contracts being let to Ellison and Linn for the stone basement and to W. G. Reynolds for the building. By June the stone work was almost finished and the entire building was completed by mid-January, 1889, at an approximate cost of \$40,000. At the grand opening on January 28, the Modoc Club of Topeka presented an opera entitled "Chimes of Normandy." The building's 900 seats were filled and box office receipts that evening amounted to \$900.

From April, 1889, until December 6, 1894, the McPherson county commissioners rented the building, except for the main hall, at an annual fee of \$1,400 for use as county offices until the new county courthouse was completed. The opera house was used for public meetings, political rallies and stage shows until late in 1925 when it closed its doors. Several reasons were suggested for its closure: the competition of movies was forcing the road shows to go to the larger cities; some people were concerned about what they believed to be the poor condition of the opera house building and its lack of adequate fire escapes; and it simply was no longer profitable to run an opera house.

An announcement was made in May, 1929, that the building would re-open as a modern motion picture theater, the "Empire." The initial response was overwhelming and 200 people had to be turned away on opening night; May 8; however, the competition of a rival theater proved to be too great, and the venture was closed in July, 1929. It did not re-open as a theater again until the late 1930's when it became the "Mac" theater. Later the opera house was completely remodeled into apartments and business establishments. In 1971 the building housed an antique shop and a jewelry store.

The McPherson Opera House had an important role in the development of the McPherson community. It was, in effect, the county courthouse for five years while the present courthouse was under construction. For better than 30 years it hosted many of McPherson's cultural

Geo. W. Shaffer, McP Rep, 1-11-1889

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Flory, Raymond L., editor, McPherson At Fifty (McPherson, Kan., McPherson College, 1970), pp. 73-76.
 McPherson Democrat, March 30, April 6, 20, 27, June 22, July 13, 20, September 14, 21, 1888; January 4, 11, 25, February 1, 1889.
 McPherson Daily Freeman, September 13, 1887.
 McPherson, Kansas, Souvenir (McPherson, Freeman Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 5.
 McPherson Daily Republican, May 10, 1947.
 Weillepp, Ed, "Opera House Opened in '89," McPherson Daily Republican, May 10, 1947.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes Seconds
NW	0 0 0	0 0 0		38 22 02	97	39 58
NE	0 0 0	0 0 0				
SE	0 0 0	0 0 0				
SW	0 0 0	0 0 0				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Charles Hall, Architectural Consultant
 Richard Pankratz, Planner

ORGANIZATION: Kansas State Historical Society DATE: November 30, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: 120 West Tenth street

CITY OR TOWN: Topeka STATE: Kansas CODE: 66612

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☒

Name

Nyle N. Miller

Title

Executive Secretary, Kansas State Historical Society

Date

December 14, 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

SEE INSTRUCTIONS