

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 in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Memorial Hall

other names/site number NeHBS # OT06:A-042

### 2. Location

street & number 908 1st Corso not for publication [n/a]

city or town Nebraska City vicinity [n/a]

state Nebraska code NE county Otoe code 131 zip code 68410

### 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.)

Lawrence Sommer  
Signature of certifying official

January 11, 1994  
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): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
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	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		<b>Total</b>

**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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Social/meeting hall  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Vacant/not in use  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Richardsonian Romanesque  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

foundation Brick  
walls Brick/stucco  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Asphalt  
other Metal  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Architecture

Period of Significance

1894-1932

Significant Dates

1894-1895

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Fisher, George Lee

Lawrie, Harry

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

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 Less than one acre.

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	15	258545	4506500	3.			
2.				4.			

[ ] 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 Greg Miller, Preservation Historian

organization Nebraska State Historical Society date November 1993

street & number 1500 R Street telephone (402) 471-4775

city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68501

**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 Ronald Kruger

street & number P.O. Box 63 telephone (402) 944-2577

city or town Ashland state NE zip code 68003

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

G.A.R. Memorial Hall

Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7, 8 Page 1

### Description

The Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall in Nebraska City, Otoe County, Nebraska, is a one-story, symmetrical brick building. Constructed in 1894-95, this rectangular shaped building was designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style by Omaha architects Fisher & Lawrie. Interior and exterior integrity is very good. The nomination consists of one contributing building.

The Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Memorial Hall is located at 908 1st Corso Street in Nebraska City, one block south of the main business street. Constructed in 1894-95, this building served as the meeting hall for the local post of the G.A.R. until 1932. The building was designed by the architecture firm of Fisher & Lawrie from Omaha, Nebraska. This firm was quite active in Nebraska City between 1894-95. In addition to the G.A.R. Hall, they designed a number of residences, several large buildings, and the First Baptist Church (OT06:A-029).

The Richardsonian Romanesque style, one-story building is rectangular in shape measuring 31 by 76 feet. Constructed of brick, stucco has been applied to all but the front facade. The windows on the sides and rear are segmentally arched. Additionally, there is an exit near the rear on each side. The gabled roof has a slight pitch and is covered with asphalt shingles. The foundation is brick with a backplaster overlay. The main facade is symmetrical and characterized by a central frontispiece capped with a sheet-metal cornice with an integral nameplate, a corbelled brick cornice and pronounced round-arch windows and door. The arches are emphasized with sheet-metal archivolt. Above each window appear metal shields; one showing the G.A.R. logo, the other the construction date, 1894. The raised entry has double doors that lead into the vestibule. A watertable is also visible.

The interior is virtually intact. On each side of the entry passage is an office. The main space is the assembly hall which measures 28 by 50 feet. There is a small platform at the far (north) end of the hall. The walls in this room round continuously into the ceiling. At the rear of the building is a narrow range of rooms housing the kitchen, pantry, and a restroom.

### Statement of Significance

The Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Memorial Hall in Nebraska City, Otoe County, Nebraska is significant at the state level under Criterion A for its association with G.A.R. organization (05.02.14). It is also eligible at the state level under Criterion C as a rare property type in Nebraska, namely a Hall building constructed specifically for use as a lodge hall for the G.A.R. organization. Stylistically, the building represents an excellent example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The G.A.R., formed in 1866, was a nationwide movement composed of Union veterans of the Civil War. Aside from the political influence it wielded, the association worked to increase patriotism, and provided an environment of fraternity and comradeship for its members. The period of significance is from 1894, when the building was constructed, to 1932 when a new Memorial Hall was built.

After the Civil War ended in 1865, the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) became the preeminent veterans' fraternal organization. Following its first meeting in Illinois in April 1866, the popularity of the

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

G.A.R. Memorial Hall

Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 2

## Statement of Significance (continued)

association spread rapidly. Composed of former members of the Union army, navy, and marines who were honorably discharged, the G.A.R.'s purpose was the cultivation of fraternity, comradeship, and patriotism. Initially, it also exercised a political role and was able to wield considerable influence in state and national politics.

The organization of the G.A.R. called for individual posts at the local or precinct level, county associations call districts, and state level posts known as departments. All post and district meetings and national encampments were designed to promote the growth of the order, to protect and assist disabled soldiers and their families, and to engender appreciation of service to the country through moral, social, and political activity.

As a result of the benefits offered to Union veterans under the Homestead Act of 1862, moving west became a popular concept among the former soldiers. In Nebraska, this migration was important because veterans became one of the groups of emigrants that helped to settle and develop the state. G.A.R. posts, once important social institutions to the veterans and their families are, therefore, important reminders of the contributions of these people in Nebraska.

The first post in Nebraska was chartered in April, 1866, in Omaha. Nebraska was constituted a provisional department on July 10, 1867; but when no report was received at the national headquarters, the state was dropped from the rolls. In 1874, a provisional department commander was appointed. At the first annual encampment of the Department of Nebraska held at Omaha, June 12, 1877, the department became a permanent part of the G.A.R. organization; at the time, there were twelve local posts in Nebraska. A total of 356 posts were organized in Nebraska between 1866 and 1908. The dwindling number of surviving Union veterans helped bring about the demise of the G.A.R. By 1940, only a few posts remained; and in 1944, the last regular encampment of the Department of Nebraska was held in Lincoln with only one member present. The last Civil War veteran in Nebraska died on December 24, 1948. The national G.A.R. association came to an end when its last member died in 1956.

Nebraska City's G.A.R. charter is dated April 3, 1890. Following the national organization's tradition, the post was named after a deceased veteran. The Nebraska City post chose Col. William Baumer of the Nebraska Regular U.S. Volunteers. The post remained active until 1934.

Records do not indicate where the post's meetings were held during the first four years of its existence. In 1894, however, the Trustees of the William Baumer Post and the Trustees of the William Baumer Relief Corps (the women's auxiliary of the G.A.R.) purchased a parcel of land; and in the same year, they built the G.A.R. Memorial Hall. At the time the building was constructed, the William Baumer Post was the fourteenth largest (out of 268) in Nebraska. The G.A.R. used this building as its meeting place until 1932 when a new Memorial Hall was built. Since the post became inactive after 1934, the G.A.R. Memorial Hall is the best representation of the organization in the community.

The G.A.R. Memorial Hall is also eligible at the state level under Criterion C. This Hall building (05.1.1) is a rare property type in Nebraska. While other halls are still extant in the state, most are on the second floor of a multi-use commercial building (05.1.2). The nominated building, however, is one of three extant free-standing halls that were built exclusively by, or for, the G.A.R. in Nebraska. The other two are one-story frame buildings located in Elmwood, Cass County and Falls City, Richardson County (RH03-113). The condition of the hall in Elmwood is unknown, and the integrity of the building in Falls City has been

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

G.A.R. Memorial Hall

Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8,9,10 Page 3

### Statement of Significance (continued)

compromised. Conversely, the hall in Nebraska City has a high degree of integrity both internally and externally. Additionally, it is more substantial and better defined due to its masonry construction and architectural design.

The building was designed by the Omaha architecture firm of Fisher & Lawrie in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, which was popular in Nebraska during that time. The firm was quite active in Nebraska City between 1894-1895. Along with the nominated property, they designed a number of residences, several large buildings, and the First Baptist Church (OT06:A-029).

The association was a valuable asset to the veterans in Nebraska City. Although the political power of the G.A.R. had decreased significantly by the time the William Baumer Post was formed, it continued to provide a social and fraternal environment that was important to its members; and to promote patriotism and the commemoration of Memorial Day (McConnell, 1992, p.xiii). For these reasons, the G.A.R. Memorial Hall in Nebraska City is significant at the state level under Criterion A for its association with the local organization. It is also significant under Criterion C as a rare property type in Nebraska.

### Bibliography

Blumenson, John J.-G. Identifying American Architecture. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1977.

Dearing, Mary R. Veterans in Politics. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952.

McConnell, Stuart. Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992.

Nebraska City Daily News, 1894.

### Verbal Boundary Description

A tract of land beginning at the SW corner of lot 10, block 75, thence N 90 feet, thence E 44 feet, thence S 90 feet, thence W 44 feet, to the place of beginning, being a part of lot 10, block 75, original town, Nebraska City, Nebraska.

### Boundary Justification

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



View looking north at main façade. Photo by D. Murphy, 1974, NSHS (7412/4:5)