**NAME**

**HISTORIC**

AND/OR COMMON

Cornelius O'Connor House

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Homer

VICINITY OF

X__ Vicinity First

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Nebraska

CODE

31

COUNTY

Dakota

CODE

043

**CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>PRESENT USE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISTRICT</td>
<td>PUBLIC</td>
<td>OCCUPIED</td>
<td>AGRICULTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUILDING(S)</td>
<td>PRIVATE</td>
<td>UNOCCUPIED</td>
<td>COMMERCIAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRUCTURE</td>
<td>BOTH</td>
<td>WORK IN PROGRESS</td>
<td>EDUCATIONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SITE</td>
<td>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</td>
<td>IN PROCESS</td>
<td>ENTERTAINMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECT</td>
<td>IN PROCESS</td>
<td>MUSEUM</td>
<td>GOVERNMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BEING CONSIDERED</td>
<td>ACCESSIBLE</td>
<td>INDUSTRIAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>YES: RESTRICTED</td>
<td>MILITARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>YES: UNRESTRICTED</td>
<td>OTHER:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Dakota County Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Dakota City

VICINITY OF

STATE

Nebraska

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Dakota County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Dakota City

STATE

Nebraska

**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

_FEDERAL_ _STATE_ _COUNTY_ _LOCAL_

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE
DESCRIPTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITION</th>
<th>CHECK ONE</th>
<th>CHECK ONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X EXCELLENT</td>
<td>X UNALTERED</td>
<td>X ORIGINAL SITE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>GOOD</em></td>
<td><em>RUINS</em></td>
<td><em>MOVED</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>FAIR</em></td>
<td><em>ALTERED</em></td>
<td><em>DATE</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Situated against the bluff near the Missouri River, the Cornelius O'Connor house is a local interpretation of the Italianate style of architecture. Designed and built ca. 1875 by O'Connor himself, this two-story brick house has decorative features including bracketing along the cornice, brick window hoods with keystones and brick quoins at the corners. Two matching frame scroll saw work porches shelter the north (front) doors of the house.

Typical of much Italianate architecture, the main body of the house is ell-shaped in plan. There is a rectangular brick addition on the rear of the structure which may have been built at the same time as the main house. The plan of the first floor is that of a central hall with front and back parlors on the east side and dining room on the west. The kitchen and 2 other small rooms are housed in the rear addition.

The interior of the structure features walnut woodwork handcarved by Captain O'Connor. This first floor boasts of panelled wainscoting in the entry hall and dining room. The doors and wainscott panels have a marbleized grain. A special dining room feature is the built-in sideboard on the east wall. A small pantry located between the kitchen and dining rooms has a window to allow for efficient food serving. Other first floor rooms include front and back parlors, the former containing a black marble fireplace purportedly imported from Italy. A picture rail also lines this room and a bay window adds interest to the back parlor. These two rooms are separated by a wide semi-elliptical archway with sliding doors.

The carved staircase lined with wainscoting, rises to second floor to the south from the entry hall. The newel post contains a hidden panel which gives way to a secret compartment. Near the top of the staircase is a recessed niche where the O'Connor family kept a religious statue. At this point the stairway carves east as does the wall.

There are eight bedrooms on second floor. Two of these being at the rear of the house in the addition housed servants, who had easy access to the kitchen by way of a back stairway.

The house, now being restored by the Dakota County Historical Society, is in excellent condition. The most serious problem they encountered was the rebuilding of the ornate porches to replace the originals, which had nearly rotted away. This reconstruction was accomplished through the use of old photographs and the talent of a local carpenter. There is a minor modern intrusion on the interior. The society has installed a baseboard heating system which is visible in places, but color-wise blends with the rooms. Outside the house a tall chainlink fence has been installed to discourage vandals.
SIGNIFICANCE

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

---PERIOD---
-PREHISTORIC-ARCHAEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC-
-1400-1499-ARCHAEOLOGY-HISTORIC-
-1500-1599-AGRICULTURE-
-1600-1699-ARCHITECTURE-
-1700-1799-ART-
-1800-1899-COMMERCE-
-1900-COMMUNICATIONS---

---COMMUNITY PLANNING---

---LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE---

---RELIGION---

---Sculpture---

---SCIENCE---

---LITERATURE---

---MILITARY---

---SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN---

---THEATER---

---Transportation---

---Other (Specify)---

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1875

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Cornelius O'Connor, an Irish immigrant, came to America with his parents in 1829 at the age of eight years. The family lived in Boston for twenty years, after which Cornelius went to New York where he married Catharine Duggan in 1852. In 1857 he and his wife moved west settling in a year old Catholic colony in St. John's Precinct, Dakota County, Nebraska.

O'Connor had been a carpenter while living in the east, but followed agricultural pursuits after his settlement in Nebraska. By 1882, he owned 1,300 acres of land with about 240 acres in cultivation, and wintered 200 head of cattle, 100 hogs and 20 horses.

O'Connor was also politically and militarily active, representing Dakota County in both the 8th and 11th sessions of the Territorial Legislature. He was instrumental in establishing the first school in Dakota County, the O'Connor School, and served as its director for over twenty years. In 1857, Governor Richardson commissioned O'Connor as Captain of a company formed to suppress Indian troubles. During the Indian war of 1864, he led Company I of the Second Nebraska Cavalry through the fighting in Northern Dakota Territory.

Architecturally, the house is quite distinct. Since it was a product of Captain O'Connor's talents, it has a special character particularly noticeable in the interior. A curvilinear aspect dominates the interior details, while the dark walnut woodwork adds a special, almost heavy quality to the atmosphere. This is very different from the character of the exterior which is generally light and rectilinear. The O'Connor house is an exceptional example of rural Italianate architecture designed and constructed by a talented immigrant carpenter.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UTM Zone</th>
<th>Easting</th>
<th>Northing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>71,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>46,8</td>
<td>71,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE: Janet Jeffries, Curator of Historic Sites

ORGANIZATION: Nebraska State Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER: 1500 R Street

CITY OR TOWN: Lincoln, Nebraska

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

- National [ ]
- State [√]
- Local [ ]

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE: [Signature]

DATE: 4/21/77

TITLE: Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

CFO 892-453
Andreas, A. T., History of Nebraska, Chicago, Western Historical Company, 1882.

Dakota County Historical Society, informants, 1977.

United States Census Records, Dakota County, Nebraska, Omadi Township, 1860, 1870, 1880.


Photo 1
Overall view of N façade of house & site, looking S toward the bluffs
Photo by D. Murphy, NSHS, March 1977
(NSHS 7703/2:29)

Photo 2
General view showing N & W facades, looking SE
Photo by D. Murphy, NSHS, March 1977
(NSHS 7703/2:23)
Photo 3
General view showing N & E facades, looking SW
Photo by D. Murphy, NSHS, March 1977
(NSHS 7703/2:26)

Photo 4
General view showing S & E facades, looking NNW
Photo by D. Murphy, NSHS, March 1977
(NSHS 7703/2:27)
Photo 4
Main central stair hall just inside front (N) doors, looking S
Photo by D. Murphy, NSHS, March 1977
(NSHS 7703/3:32)

Photo 6
Dining hall showing built-in sideboard & pass-through from pantry, looking S
Photo by D. Murphy, NSHS, March 1977
(NSHS 7703/3:29)
Photo 7
Detail view of door panel (upstairs servant's room) showing marbleized panels & outer edge of frame, looking S
Photo by D. Murphy, NSHS, March 1977
(NSHS 7703/3:36)