NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

1. NAME
   COMMON:
   Bank of Florence
   AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION
   STREET AND NUMBER:
   8502 North 30th Street
   CITY OR TOWN:
   Omaha
   STATE:
   Nebraska
   CODE:
   26
   COUNTY:
   Douglas
   CODE:
   055

3. CLASSIFICATION
   CATEGORY (Check One)
   District ☐ Building ☑
   Site ☐ Structure ☐
   Object ☐
   OWNERSHIP
   Public ☐ Private ☑
   Public Acquisition:
   In Process ☐
   Both ☐
   Being Considered ☐
   STATUS
   Occupied ☑ Unoccupied ☐
   Preservation work in progress ☐
   ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
   Yes: ☑ Restricted ☑
   Unrestricted ☐

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)
   Agricultural ☐ Government ☐
   Commercial ☐ Industrial ☐
   Educational ☐ Military ☐
   Entertainment ☐ Museum ☑
   Religious ☐ Scientific ☐

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
   OWNERS NAME:
   Florence Historical Foundation
   STREET AND NUMBER:
   8502 North 30th Street
   CITY OR TOWN:
   Omaha
   STATE:
   Nebraska
   CODE:
   26

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
   COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
   County Clerk, Douglas County Court House
   STREET AND NUMBER:
   1700 Farnum Street
   CITY OR TOWN:
   Omaha
   STATE:
   Nebraska
   CODE:
   26

   APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:
   4 acre

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
   TITLE OF SURVEY:
   DATE OF SURVEY:
   DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
   STREET AND NUMBER:
   CITY OR TOWN:
   STATE:
   CODE:
The building is located on lot 8, block 33, in the former town of Florence, now part of Omaha. It was erected in 1856 as a modest two story brick building with a low pitched hip roof. The heavy cornices and the treatment of the wall openings place the structure within the tradition of Greek Revival commercial architecture, even through the building is almost devoid of ornamentation. Many years ago, the original double doors of the principal facade (east) entrance were replaced by a single door, and the numerous lights and glazing bars of each window were replaced by large panes of glass. Otherwise, very few exterior alterations have been made over the years. Although the interior appears to have been remodeled extensively around the turn of the century, the original bank vault remains intact. Shipped by steamboat from western Pennsylvania in 1856, this vault consists of interwoven strips of quarter-inch sheet steel. The vault is ventilated by concealed air shafts and enclosed within three foot thick masonry walls.

Within the past five years, the building has been acquired and partially restored by the Florence Historical Foundation under the leadership of J. M. Hart, Jr., President of Omaha's North Side Bank. The Foundation has removed the many layers of exterior paint through sandblasting, repointed and waterproofed the walls, and repaired and repainted the wood trim. The large "Bank of Florence" sign across the facade has also been restored recently and is said to be original to the structure. The building is now occasionally opened to the public as a museum. Late nineteenth century bank furnishings, including teller's cages, were recently removed from an old bank near David City, Nebraska, and installed inside the Florence bank, recreating the appearance of a small Nebraska bank at the turn of the century. The bank's history is summarized on an official Nebraska Historical Marker located just south of the building.
Now a section of northeastern Omaha, the former town of Florence figures prominently in the early history of Nebraska, created as a territory in 1854. Florence was platted in 1854 on the site of Winter Quarters, which had been established by the Mormons in 1846 as their principal encampment between Nauvoo and Salt Lake City during their epic westward migration. Briefly, during the 1850's, Florence stood as one of Nebraska's leading Missouri River steamboat ports. The Bank of Florence is the most important and least altered of the few extant early buildings in Florence. It is also one of the oldest commercial buildings in Nebraska and is perhaps the oldest building in Omaha, Nebraska's largest city.

The Bank of Florence was chartered by Nebraska's territorial legislature on January 18, 1856, and the building was erected the following summer at a cost of $4500 by builder Levi Harsh for the financial firm of Cock, Sargent & Parker of Davenport, Iowa. The bank soon played an important role in the development of the Florence area. Frontier banking practices were lax, and along with other Nebraska banks of the 1850's the Bank of Florence issued quantities of unsecured "wild cat" currency and financed land speculation. Much of this money still exists in museums and private collections. Weakened by the Panic of 1857, the bank failed in 1859. (Only one Nebraska bank survived the Panic.) Various businesses continued to use the bank building prior to the organization of the second Bank of Florence, which occupied the structure from 1904 to 1939. Omaha's present North Side Bank, located south of the Florence area, traces its origin to both the first Bank of Florence and the second Bank of Florence.
## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Archives, Nebraska State Historical Society

## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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<th>OR</th>
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**LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY**

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**LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE**

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

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## 11. FORM PREPARED BY

**NAME AND TITLE:**

John Q. Magie, Curator of History

**ORGANIZATION:**

Nebraska State Historical Society

**DATE:**

August 22, 1969

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

1500 R Street

**CITY OR TOWN:**

Lincoln

**STATE:**

Nebraska

**CODE:**

68508

## 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:**

__________________________

**Title:**

__________________________

**Date:**

__________________________

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

__________________________

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

**ATTEST:**

__________________________

Keeper of The National Register

**Date:**

__________________________
Exterior from the east. Nebraska State Historical Society, 1970 (H673.5-1884)