Item 7—Agenda of July 15, 2010 **July 9, 2010**

Nomination of Agricultural Hall, State Fairgrounds, to the National Register

DISCUSSION:

The Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS) has submitted a nomination of Agricultural Hall, also known as Industrial Arts Building or IAB, to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Under Lincoln's responsibilities as a Certified Local Government (CLG), all National Register nominations within Lincoln are reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission. The CLG Procedures read in part:

E. Upon completion of the nomination form and all accompanying documentation, the applicant shall submit all documentation and supporting material to the CLG. When the CLG has determined that the nomination is complete, the nomination shall be scheduled for consideration at the first appropriate Commission meeting, together with notice to the chief elected official and the property owner.

F. The Commission, after reasonable opportunity for public comment, shall prepare a report as to whether or not a property, in its opinion, meets National Register criteria. The CLG shall transmit the report of the Commission and the recommendation of the chief elected official to the SHPO, and shall notify the applicant or owner as to the content of the report and the recommendation.

Attached are

- the survey form for Agricultural Hall prepared during the Antelope Valley Study
- a letter from Michael Smith, the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and CEO of the NSHS, to UNL
- the current nomination of Agricultural Hall to NRHP.

As indicated in "E" and "F" above, the questions for HPC are whether the nomination is "completed" and whether the property meets NRHP criteria. During the Antelope Valley Study, the IAB was deemed not to be NRHP-eligible based on its integrity of historic fabric. The survey form does not mention any interior inspection of the building and little research is reflected, as is typical in a reconnaissance survey. It is also germane to mention that the Antelope Valley projects did not propose any direct effect on IAB.

The submitted nomination is clearly much more intensive in description and research. It proposes that IAB is significant on the state level under NRHP Criteria A (association with a significant event, or broad pattern of events) and Criteria C (architectural or engineering significance), citing the specific areas of agriculture, industry, recreation, and architecture.

In my opinion, the nomination should be accepted as complete, providing sufficient documentation to re-evaluate the property's eligibility. The description (Section 7) and photographs provide a basis for understanding the building's integrity of materials and design. While obviously there have been losses of exterior ornament (especially the borders of the "shields") and elimination of the skylights, there appears to be sufficient surviving features to comprehend the overall design, character, and purpose of the historic property. Ironically, the main effect of the Antelope Valley project on this building—the

construction of the Antelope Valley Parkway south of it—affords the public longer views of the building than were previously readily available, better displaying the arcaded facades and overall form. Furthermore, the nomination stresses the interior structural system of the building as a critical element of its significance, which was not evaluated in the earlier survey.

The argument of statewide significance for IAB is strong, given its funding, purpose, and long-time function as a central part of the Nebraska State Fair.

The nomination cites Criteria A (association with events) and C (architecture/engineering). Criterion A is particularly well-supported in the areas of agriculture and entertainment, given the general purposes of the State Fair and of this building in particular. In industry, the building served industrial uses off-season in the early years and was repurposed as the Industrial Arts Building in its later decades, supporting those areas of significance. The strongest case for Criterion C (architecture) is probably the interior structural system, which is well-described in Section 7.

Recommended finding: The nomination of Agricultural Hall at the former Nebraska State Fairgrounds to the National Register of Historic Places is complete. The property appears to meet National Register Critieria A and C, and to have sufficient historic integrity for listing.

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Lincoln, Nebraska
Historic and Architectural Sites Survey

NEHSB # : D11-087 : Agency #52, D.A.S. # 0112,

Identification: Industrial Arts Building, State Fair Park

Address: Fairgrounds, Lincoln, NE

Historic Name: Agricultural and Horticultural Building

Common Name: Industrial Arts Building

Legal :

Public Access : Yes

Current Owner:

Name : State Fair Board

Address: State Fair Grounds, Lincoln, NE phone ( )

Type / Condition

Condition: Good

Altered since original condition Yes

major changes? Yes

Roof removed and modernized.

Moved? No

Biographical

Orig. owner State Fair Board

Country of Birth _____ Date : _____

Place of Death _____ Date : _____

Occupation & Place of employ _____

Subsequent owners and dates

1. _____ Date _____
2. _____ Date _____
3. _____ Date _____

Architectural / Landscape Data

Bldg Name : Industrial Arts Building Construction Date 1913

Architect or Firm : Burd F. Miller

Contractor W.J. Assenmacher & Co. Engineer _____

Landscape architect _____

Do plans exist _____ Describe _____

Where _____

Original use of property Display area during State Fair (Agriculture and Horticulture)

Subsequent use(s) Display area during State Fair

Current use(s) Display area during State Fair (Commercial, Industrial Arts)

Descriptive Data

Architectural Style	
No. of Stories	1
Plan	Triangular
Roof Type	Mansard
Roof Materials	
Structural System	
Foundation	Concrete
Facade	Brick, stone, and wood
Trim	Brick, stone, and wood
Outbuildings	None

Describe other distinguishing exterior and interior features

Surrounding Land Uses Recreational, Industrial

Integrity of Property's Historic Setting Intact

Importance of Property to Historic Setting Integral

History and Significance

The Nebraska State Fair was located permanently in Lincoln in 1901. This structure was constructed in 1913 during an expansion period of the State Fair. This building was originally constructed as an agricultural and horticultural building, complete with a green space and a fountain.

Evaluation

While this structure meets minimum age requirements for consideration for nomination to the NRHP, the integrity of this property is marginal as it appears that the roof replacement removed a major portion of the original structure.

Bibliography

Lincoln State Journal, August 31, 1913

Stevens, Betty 1994 Bright Lights and Blue Ribbons 125 Years of the Nebraska State Fair. Journal Star Printing Co.

Nebraska
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

February 16, 2010

Mr. J. B. Milliken, President
The University of Nebraska
103 Varner Hall
Lincoln, Nebraska 68583

Re: The University of Nebraska Innovation Campus

Dear President Milliken:

The development of the Innovation Campus at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is clearly an exciting opportunity for your university and for the people of Nebraska. Congratulations on the progress made to date. As the State Historic Preservation Officer for Nebraska, I have been very pleased to see the University assisting local organizations that are dedicated to preserving the pioneering buildings grouped into what has been known as Heritage Village on the former State Fairgrounds. The University's announced plans to preserve and incorporate into the Innovation Campus the Arsenal building and the Agriculture or 4-H building are gratifying and very much appreciated by my office as well as many Nebraskans with commitments to history and historic preservation.

That said, I have concerns about the uncertainty of the future of the Industrial Arts Building (IAB), truly a signature structure of the Nebraska State Fair for a century. Following a careful review of the IAB, we have determined it is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (PL 89-665, 16USC470). Our determination re. eligibility of the IAB is based on its architecture and engineering design as well as its history. I am writing today, therefore, to encourage you and the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska to undertake a full and genuine review of all alternatives for the future of the IAB.

Given the University's announcements concerning anticipated federal funding and or partnerships in the future Innovation Campus, the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, in particular Sections 106 and 110(k) and implementing regulations of 36 CFR Part 800, are in play. The law and regulations place clear and unequivocal requirements on any and all federal agencies that may be involved in funding, licensing or permitting

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activities on the Innovation Campus as a whole, on particular aspects of that development, or in existing or new buildings on the campus. To explain, the Innovation Campus is a planned development; therefore, the University may not segment out aspects of the plan to "work around" National Register listed or eligible properties including the IAB. Any federal involvement of any type anywhere on the Innovation Campus places Section 106 review responsibilities on any and all federal agencies. Section 106 does not dictate final solutions, but rather implements a mandatory process to provide for a thorough and unbiased review of all alternatives in a manner that includes the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, an independent federal oversight agency, and the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office.

There is another aspect to which I want to draw your attention. Section 110(k) of that law addresses the issue of "anticipatory demolition" which can potentially require a federal agency to deny the project funding or licensing on which future development of the project may depend.

I have been quoted as saying that the IAB deserves a chance, that is consideration as to the possibilities of its future. The Section 106 process, when generously and fully entered into on the part of all parties including the federal agency and the property owner, provides that chance. While interested third parties are expected to be consulted and involved in the discussions, the owner cannot pass its responsibility in this process on to anyone else.

My office has significant experience in working with the Section 106 process. We will insist that any federal agency that is or may become involved in the development o f the Innovation Campus fulfill its responsibilities. To that end we have written to the U.S. Department of Agriculture; a copy my letter is attached. At the same time, we stand ready to assist the University of Nebraska in addressing the requirements that come with using federal funds or involvement in creating your exciting new project. I am ready to meet with your or your representatives in regard to this matter and pledge my commitment to providing assistance in the federal review process.

I can be reached at my office, 402-471-4745 or by e-mail at michael.smith@nebraska.gov.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Smith
State Historic Preservation Officer

Cc. Edward T. Reilly, USDA
Harvey Perlman, UN-L

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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 Agriculture Hall

Other names/site number Industrial Arts Building , LC13:D11-087

2. Location

Street & number N/A Not for publication [ ]

City or town Lincoln Vicinity [ ]

State Nebraska Code NE County Lancaster Code 109 Zip code

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [X] statewide [] locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official 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

Agriculture Hall
Name of Property

Lancaster County, Nebraska
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ___ Private
- ___ Public-local
- X Public-state
- ___ Public-federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- X Building(s)
- ___ District
- ___ Site
- ___ Structure
- ___ Object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/fair

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation Concrete
Walls Brick
Roof Asphalt shingle
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.)

X **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.

X **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.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE
AGRICULTURE
INDUSTRY
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance
1913-1960

Significant Dates
1913

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Burd F. Miller, Architect
W. J. Assenmacher, Contractor

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 for additional data:

X State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
X Local Government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.55 acres

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	694586	4522399	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 Jill Dolberg and David Murphy with the NSHS and Laurie Richards of Heritage Nebraska
organization Nebraska State Historical Society date May 20, 2010
street & number 1500 R Street/P.O. Box 82554 telephone (402) 471-4787
city or town Lincoln state Nebraska zip code 68501-2554

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/title Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska
street & number 1901 Y Street telephone (402) 472-7211
city or town Lincoln state Nebraska zip code 68588

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined 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, (15 USC 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.

SUMMARY

Agriculture Hall, now the Industrial Arts Building in Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska, is a distinctively shaped, trapezoidal building on the south edge of Lincoln's State Fairgrounds. The fairgrounds are located along the railroad tracks north and east of downtown and the University of Nebraska – Lincoln's city campus. The Nebraska State Fair is a summer institution that drew visitors from throughout the state to Lincoln for the eleven day event. In the early first decade of the 21st century, attendance fell from a high of 350,000 in 2000 to a low of 238,000 in 2003.[1] Although numbers rallied slightly in the next few years, in 2008 the Nebraska State Legislature decided to move the State Fair to Grand Island, Nebraska in 2010. The fairgrounds were transferred to the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. Agriculture Hall is a trapezoidal, red brick arcaded building that originally was used to display innovations in agriculture, and later industrial marvels, to the visitors of the Nebraska State Fair.

Exterior Systems

Agriculture Hall's trapezoidal dimensions are 300 feet on the north, 300 feet on the west, 366 feet on the south, and 90 feet on the east. The long, angled south façade parallels the adjacent railroad tracks which form the south boundary of the fairgrounds. The exterior wall system is composed of brick masonry exterior bearing walls that are punctuated with semi-circular brick masonry arches. The brick used for the exterior is a pressed modular dark red brick. The brick arches are regularly spaced along the entire façade forming an impressive arcade assembly. Each arch contains a decorative architectural concrete keystone in the shape of a swagged volute. The arch spring line consists of horizontal concrete beams (a simulated flat arch) with slightly tapered bottom intrados resting on architectural concrete consoles or brackets. The wall areas above the beams are either in-filled with brick masonry in a solid panel or contain large wood window sashes. Areas below the concrete beams either form entrances into the building interior and are in-filled with small doors and windows or have been bricked up or enclosed with masonry.

Each arch is flanked by large engaged brick piers. At the top of each pier are remnants of a decorative shield or medallion constructed out of architectural concrete. The remaining substrate has been grouted and painted. Originally the shields were edged with a swagged border. The ornament has spalled or been chiseled away.

The base of the building is coated with a cement plaster or concrete parging approximately four feet in height. At the top of the exterior masonry wall and at the edge of the roof are remnants of sheet metal cornice work. The original cornice has been removed and the remaining top portion of the wall was enclosed with a Mapes-type panel. At the roof edge is a continuous rectangular gutter. Drainage from the gutters is provided via round corrugated downspouts spaced at approximately every other bay. The downspouts lead to underground drain pipes leading away from the building.

The building's hipped roof system is composed of three-tab asphalt shingles and rolled asphalt roofing. The roof covering has failed in three areas and the wood decking substrate has rotted allowing water to enter the building. These areas are mainly at the west and north roof slopes of the roof. The roof features small gabled dormers evenly spaced along each side.

The east façade of the building contains three large overhead doors. The central door has a large concrete ramp and flanking retaining walls which leads to the lower building level while the southern-most door has a concrete loading dock which serves the main level.

[1] *Lincoln Journal Star,* 31 August 2009.

Interior Systems

The interior of the Agriculture Hall is essentially one large volume measuring approximately forty feet to the underside of the roof deck and surrounded at the perimeter by a mezzanine with smaller rooms/spaces directly under the mezzanine. The principal structural system is a web of trusses designed to cover the large open area of the interior exhibition space. The nature of the exhibitions was such that the space did not need to be clear-span, as was most common in the predecessor buildings of this type. Such a requirement would have been very difficult to accomplish in this case given the unusual shape of the building site, which the fair board had apparently requested be used in its entirety.

The system is composed of common steel sections, assembled, as had been typical since the mid-nineteenth century, into composite structural members as required to carry the various load demands. Truss chords and webs, for example, are designed using steel angles, with all members connected by riveted plates; posts are spaced steel channels set back-to-back and connected with a lattice-work of riveted strap-iron.

The key to the whole structure is the post-and-truss system of the interior open space. This space has the same shape as the trapezoidal footprint of the building. The trapezoid is the result of the truncation of the lesser angle of a scalene right triangular shape, very near to what would have been the most acute point. The truncation wall is only 90 feet in length, compared to the 300 and 366-foot lengths of the remaining three walls of the building. The resulting interior space is essentially triangular.

The interior structure responds to this truncated triangle by roughly dividing the three angles in half by ridge lines, the three ridges meeting near the areal center of the open space, where a column is positioned. Additional widely-spaced, full-height, free-standing columns then radiate from this central post along the ridge lines. These posts support principal or ridge trusses, into which the interior ends of the main roof trusses are connected. The main trusses are aligned normal to the exterior walls, and meet the ridge trusses at angles.

Closely-spaced lattice columns at the edge of the mezzanine create an arcade around the perimeter of the open space. These are supported at mid-height by the steel and concrete mezzanine floors. A composite bolster at the top of the columns acts as a capital. The capitals support the outside vertical webs of the main trusses; these webs then perform as extensions of the columns up to the top chords, at the roof deck. The webs are cross-braced between columns, above the capitals. The capitals also support the interior end of the bottom, horizontal chord of the smaller trusses that span the mezzanine portion of the interior, between the open space and the exterior walls. The outside ends of these trusses are supported on pilasters integral to the exterior brick bearing walls.

The main trusses are essentially simple Pratt type trusses, while the mezzanine trusses feature integrated, single inverted (Howe) trusses into their profiles. The main roof trusses support a very low-pitched, nearly flat roof. A band of skylights that reflected the triangular shape of the interior space was formerly supported by the outside three panels of these trusses. The roof pitch steepens at the line of perimeter columns, above the mezzanine trusses.

The rather pragmatic structural response to covering the triangular space was elaborated in a very sophisticated way via the integration of the mezzanine into the exhibition structure. Here the architect and engineer introduced a pronounced curve into the bottom chord of the main trusses, giving the exhibition space the prominent character of a lacey, vaulted volume. The space appears sheltered with an arched-truss at the narrow end, expanding into a flattened arched-truss at the wide end of the space. There, the change in direction of the trusses to meet the other two ridge lines produce a vaulted end to the space. The overall character then provides a structurally and aesthetically festive interior space, and one that recalls the tradition of such spaces as it had developed from mid-nineteenth century England.

The mezzanine floor is composed of concrete slabs resting on beams or bearing walls below. The main floor of the arena is also composed of a grade-supported concrete slab except at the northern portion of the space which is located over a partial basement/lower level. Concrete ramps located at the ends of the mezzanines provide access to upper levels. Wood-framed stairs also provide access from the main level to the mezzanine level at various locations around the perimeter of the area.

The mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems in the Industrial Arts Building are limited to minimal electrical power and lighting, plumbing for restrooms and domestic water, and some mechanical ventilation systems. The building has no heat and was originally designed to be ventilated and lighted naturally. Two significant changes have occurred to the building – the skylights have been removed or covered with asphalt roofing material and electric ventilators have been installed in some of the roof dormers.

Historic Integrity

In general, the building retains its historic integrity. The decorative metal cornice that once ringed the building has been replaced with a modern flat metal cornice and the decorative borders of the shields atop the exterior piers have been removed. Other detriments to the condition of the structure or its historic integrity are the result of deferred maintenance.

SUMMARY

Agriculture Hall meets is significant on the state level under Criteria A and C in the areas of agriculture, industry, entertainment/recreation, and architecture/engineering. The building represents facility growth during the State Fair's expansion period. It has significance of the engineering of its structural system and for its association with the Nebraska State Fair, an event that brought entertainment opportunities, educational enrichment and the latest in agricultural technology to the lives of thousands of Nebraskans on an annual basis.

Before Nebraska was officially a state, there was a fair. A state fair is a competitive and recreational gathering of a state's population. It is a larger version of a county fair, often including only exhibits or competitors that have won in their categories at the local county fairs. Originally a state fair included a competitive exhibition of livestock in various competitions, the display of farm products which were not necessarily for sale, and competition among various fair participants in such categories as handicrafts, baked goods, jams and jellies, but has since been expanded to include carnival amusement rides and games, music, races, and tests of strength and skill. From the days of the first Nebraska Territorial Fair along the banks of the Missouri River at Nebraska City to the present 11-day show, the Fair has always been a joyful occasion.

The Nebraska State Fair has had a wide and varied influence in the State of Nebraska. During Nebraska's settlement period, the State Fair was used as an advertising tool for encouraging settlement within the state. The State Board of Agriculture, under the leadership of Robert W. Furnas, developed the Fair into an effective annual agricultural exposition. The Board of Agriculture and the State Horticultural Society cooperated to send exhibits of Nebraska fruit and grains to expositions throughout the East. Later, instead of drawing people from out of state, it concentrated it on drawing people from all over Nebraska to show their prize livestock, display their most impressive quilts and cake recipes, explore expanding agricultural technology and perhaps view impressive statues made of butter and other industry displays. For many, the State Fair was their only vacation of the year, making it their annual chance to meet old friends now distant, learn techniques from other regions of the state, and enjoy recreation and entertainment that was otherwise unavailable at home.

Agriculture Hall: History & Contribution to Nebraska Agriculture and Industry

After moving among Nebraska City, Brownville, Lincoln and Omaha, in 1901 the Nebraska Legislature selected the Lancaster County Fairgrounds as the permanent site for the annual Nebraska State Fair. During an early period of fair expansion and due to the great need for agricultural exhibits including horticulture and floriculture, a new Agricultural Hall (later renamed the Industrial Arts Building in 1948) was constructed in 1913 at a cost of $100,000 complete with a green space and fountain at the interior. The building was designed to exhibit and display agricultural products from the state of Nebraska. After World War II, the building was used to exhibit agricultural and industrial technology produced in the state.

On January 16, 1913, a bill for $108,000 was introduced to the Legislature by Michael Lee of Omaha and George Jackson of Nelson for the construction of an agricultural building at the State Fair Grounds. This bill passed on April 16, 1913 and was signed by Governor John H. Morehead. Of the $108,000, $100,000 was earmarked for the erection of Agriculture Hall on the State Fair Grounds and $8,000 for the purchase of land. Architect Burd Miller of Omaha was hired to design the building, and contractor W. J. Assenmacher of Lincoln received the contract for the construction of the building.

According to the Secretary's Report contained in the *1914 Annual Report of the Nebraska State Board of Agriculture* "... we (Nebraskans) now have erected one of the best agriculture-horticulture buildings to be found on any state fairgrounds in the United States." The Secretary's Report in the *1915 Annual Report* stated that "this building caused wonderment and delight from not only the citizens of Nebraska but from those of other states as well. The unique display furnished... was something new in State Fair showing nationwide." Exhibits contained not only agricultural products from a wide range of climatic conditions around the state, but also displays instructive and educational in nature providing "information of such a varied character as would take a month of travel to gather from local growing sources."

Besides exhibits of Nebraska agriculture, Ag Hall also contained foreign displays and exhibits for homemakers, including the latest Singer sewing machine, innovations in food storage, cleaning equipment, and childcare. One interesting example was a popular wellness program called "Better Babies." The *1916 Annual Report* noted that the "...babies' health department has grown to be one of the standard departments of the Fair...and interest manifested by the mothers in the welfare of their children gives great pleasure to the members of the Board." The report also noted that "during the last two years we have conducted a children's nursery under the north balcony...where children were cared for under the direction of competent nurses during the days of the fair. It is a source of great convenience and help to mothers attending the Fair."

Agricultural Hall is significant for representing the breadth of change that occurred in agriculture during the first half of the 20th century. Although there is much debate regarding the circumstances of the invention of the first tractor, it is clear that tractors were not prevalent in the United States until the decade of the 1910s when the technology became more compact, reliable and affordable. Prior to this, plowing, planting and reaping were done through the use of horses and manpower. Farm families benefitted from having a large brood of children that would eventually be able to help with chores. Alternatively, they might hire men to work on the farm with them, providing rural employment for many.

The affordable internal combustion engine and affordable tractors made a huge difference in the way agricultural production was accomplished nationwide and in Nebraska. Socially speaking, fewer people and animals were required to do the work, which over time removed work horses from barns across the plains and moved hired men into the cities. Once tractors became the norm and not the exception, innovative farmers would make improvements to their designs, their accessories and additional machinery that would make agriculture easier. The decade of 1940 was pivotal in terms of nationwide changes in the mechanization of agriculture, and therefore the agricultural population, of the United States. At the beginning of the decade, 6.8 million families lived on farms, translating into 30 million people in these farming families. At the same time, there were 1.2 million tractors in the U.S. By 1950, the U.S. had 4 million tractors, and the population of Americans on farms had fallen to 23 million. At the same time, these farms were more productive than ever. It was true that, as tractor advertisements claimed, one man could do the work of many.

After World War II and with the construction of a new agriculture building, Ag Hall was converted for exhibiting industrial and technological products developed in the state and was renamed the Industrial Arts Building. One reference from the *1948 Annual Report* stated that "...prior to opening of the fair all available space for industrial space was sold out." That year, the Burlington Railroad exhibited the newest and most advanced refrigerated railroad car equipment. "This exhibit was highly educational...in how perishable products are transported." In addition, the fair visitor could see displays of new power steering motors for tractors purportedly easily installed by the average farmer, innovations in corn drying, grain storage, irrigation systems and on and on.

Ag Hall also played a role in the early years of aircraft manufacturing in Nebraska and the United States. In 1919 during the off season, the Lincoln Standard Aircraft Company (originally the Nebraska Aircraft Corporation) bought the entire stock of World War I surplus Standard airplanes as well as surplus 150 hp Hispano-Suiza engines. The company

proceeded to replace the Standard Hall-Scott engine, which was underpowered and prone to catch fire when the engine backfired, with the Hispano-Suiza engine in order to make a more powerful and reliable airplane. Nearly 200 planes were assembled in Lincoln, the first of which were assembled at the State Fairgrounds in Agriculture Hall. During his years in Lincoln, Charles Lindbergh learned to pilot one of these Lincoln Standard Planes. I.O. Biffle, who was Lindberg's flight instructor, assisted in the assembly of the Lincoln Standard Aircraft in Agricultural Hall as well. Biffle and Lindbergh were two of the first pilots to transport airmail across the country. Barnstorming became the rage with the Lincoln Standard Aircraft because they were highly maneuverable and relatively inexpensive. Many pilots purchased these planes in Lincoln and some of them gave rides to visitors at the Nebraska State Fair. Later in its history, Agriculture Hall would continue to play a key role in industrial history with the assembly of the famous Cushman Scooter in the building.

Architecture

Agriculture Hall was designed by a noted Nebraska architect whose work has achieved some recognition in that many of his buildings are included in historic districts within Omaha and Lincoln. Burd F. Miller, a prominent architect from Omaha, Nebraska, contracted with the Nebraska State Board of Agriculture and prepared the design of the 1913 Agriculture Hall. Mr. Miller was also responsible for the design of the Arsenal Building (NRHP 9/17/1981), now a military museum on the former State Fair Park, and many other historically significant structures in Omaha and Lincoln. His work includes houses located in Omaha's Gold Cost Historic District (NRHP – 3/14/1997), Field Club Historic District (NRHP – 11/15/2000), Dundee-Happy Hollow Historic District (NRHP – 7/22/2005), and Lincoln's Boulevards Historic District (NRHP – 12/19/2008).

This 93,000 SF trapezoidal building rises to an open height of nearly forty feet at the interior and contains a thirty-six foot wide mezzanine around the perimeter of the interior. Perhaps of most significance is the interior spatial character of the building and its trapezoidal shape, which led to a unique structural system. It is reminiscent of exhibition halls that had a tradition of exhibition halls that used large, open, glazed spaces sheltered by iron, and later steel, truss systems. This tradition began with the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park (Joseph Paxton, 1851), followed by the Exposition universelle de 1855 in Paris (Palace of Industry, Max Berthelin), then the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia (Main Exhibition Hall, Henry Pettit and Joseph Wilson; Machinery Hall, Pettit and Wilson; Horticulture Hall, H.J. Schwarzmann; and Agriculture Hall, James Windrim), and finally to the Paris International Exposition of 1889 (Galerie des machines, Victor Contamin and Ferdinand Dutert; and the Eiffel Tower). When constructed in the early 1900s, exhibition buildings of this type of construction were built in several fairgrounds throughout the United States. The light steel trusses, laced columns and masonry exterior walls set them apart from later fair buildings.

Ag Hall's unique plan and immense skylit space imparted a sense of grandeur to visitors at the State Fair and reinforced the importance of agriculture to the State of Nebraska. Visitors to the fair could see a garden growing inside a building. It also gave exhibitors a special space to promote first the best agricultural products and later the technological breakthroughs of the time.

Since its formative years, the Nebraska State Fair has grown and continues to showcase the talent, products and people of Nebraska. To many, the Nebraska State Fair was the main social event of the year. It was a place to meet and learn from others, to enjoy entertainment and to celebrate. The Agricultural Hall/Industrial Arts Building played a major role in making the State Fair worth the long trip from outstate by providing a central place for all of these innovations to be viewed and potentially purchased for their own farms.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The Industrial Arts Building is located in the NE ¼ of the SE ¼ of the SW ¼ of Section 13, Township 10 North, Range 6 East. The nominated property consists of the building's footprint.

Boundary Justification:

The Nebraska State Fairgrounds is in the process of being converted to the Nebraska Innovation Campus of the University of Nebraska. Agriculture Hall does not have a current legal description or conventional address as it is part of a large, state-owned campus. The building's trapezoidal footprint encompasses the entire historic resource.

Photo 1of 6 – southwest corner with cornerstone, west and south elevations
Aspect: NE
Photo by Jill Dolberg, NSHS, 06/09/2010

Photo 2 of 6 – south end of west elevation
Aspect: E
Photo by Jill Dolberg, NSHS, 06/09/2010

Photo 3 of 6 – west and north elevations at northwest corner
Aspect: SE
Photo by Jill Dolberg, NSHS, 06/09/2010

Photo 4 of 6 – Detail of Keystone
Photo by Jill Dolberg, NSHS, 06/09/2010

Photo 5 of 6 – Interior toward southwest corner
Aspect: SW
Photo by Dan Worth, BVH Architecture, 09/15/2009

Photo 6 of 6 – detail of truss and post system
Photo by Dan Worth, BVH Architecture, 09/15/2009