

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

33

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Nansen Store

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 43713 228th St.

City or town: Howard State: South Dakota County: Miner

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B ___ C ___ D

<u>Jay D. Vogt</u>	<u>12-20-2013</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>SD SHPO</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Joe E. San H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

2-25-14
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/business

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

WORK IN PROGRESS

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: _____ WOOD/weatherboard _____
_____ ASPHALT _____
_____ CONCRETE _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Nansen Store includes a one-and-a-half story frame building attached to a two-and-a-half story frame building, historically used for retail commerce and as a residence. The vernacular country store sits on an open landscape surrounded by fenced crop and pasture land, set back south of 228th Street by about twenty feet, and within sight of the corner with 437th Street to the west. A store existed at the location by 1903, with an addition in place by 1910.¹ In a 1937 mortgage, the full description of the property includes the store in its present configuration.² The store has a stone and concrete foundation, lap siding with corner boards, wood window and door surrounds, and front-gable roofs with asphalt architectural shingles. The taller section of the store has a one-story full-width porch with square wood supports and a hip roof. The main entrance features a screen door leading to a recessed vestibule with a glass and wood pane door that opens into the store itself. On the interior, most first-floor rooms have bead-board ceiling.

¹ E. Frank Peterson, *Historical Atlas of South Dakota* (Vermillion, SD: E. Frank Peterson, 1904), 29; *The Howard Press* (South Dakota), February 4, 1910.

² Miner County Register of Deeds, Mortgage Book 93, page 529, filed July 1, 1937.

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The main store room features two shelving units and an island counter faced in bead-board and molded trim. Upstairs, the rooms feature intact doors, trim, and baseboards in molded woodwork. Recent efforts to repair historic siding and rebuild a damaged porch according to historic photographs have restored the Nansen Store to excellent integrity to represent the history of rural retail commerce in Miner County.

Narrative Description

The store sits on an open landscape east of the corner with 437th Street, across the road from a farmstead, and just west of a creek. The store is set back south of 228th Street by about twenty feet. There is the ruin of an outbuilding sitting on the back of the lot that once served as garage, storage space, and corn cob bin.³ Fenced crop and pasture land surround the store lot.

The Nansen Store includes a one-and-a-half story frame building (Part B) with an attached two-and-a-half story frame building (Part A). The store has a stone and concrete foundation, lap siding with corner boards, wood window and door surrounds, and gable roofs with asphalt architectural shingles. Part B has a square brick chimney topped with a tile pipe centered on the roof ridge as well as a vent pipe on the rear of the eastern slope. The chimney on Part A has been taken down to the roof level and closed over. Part A measures twenty-four feet wide, twenty feet tall (to eaves), and thirty-two feet long.⁴ Part B measures twenty feet wide, ten feet tall (to eaves), and matches Part A at thirty-two feet long.⁵ Historic photographs show that Part A originally had a false-front cornice that had been removed by the 1930s/40s.⁶ Part B was erected first; there is photographic and physical evidence of an original entrance centered on the façade of the smaller building.⁷ The dimensions can still be seen in the canted doorway framing, a change in ceiling material, and patched siding on the façade. The recessed entrance was removed and walled off sometime after the larger building was added. A historic newspaper recorded that the owner, Knut Skaar, had a “new store building” in February 1910.⁸

The gable-front façade of Part A has, on the first floor, two large, four-light, wood display windows flanking a central entrance with a tall two-light transom, two sets of paired one-over-one windows on the second floor, and a single small one-over-one window in the gable end. The main display windows were replaced in the 1940s; the earlier windows being larger single panes of glass.⁹ Three of the second-floor windows have extant wood screen windows. The entrance

³ Tom Wall, conversation with the author (October 15, 2013).

⁴ Miner County Register of Deeds, Mortgage Book 93, page 529.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Picture postcard with message, Mrs. Ditman Larsen to Miss Caroline Nilsen, December 21, 1916, in personal collection of Robert Kolbe.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *The Howard Advance* (South Dakota), September 15, 1905; *The Howard Press* (South Dakota), February 4, 1910.

⁹ Picture postcard with message, Mrs. Ditman Larsen to Miss Caroline Nilsen, December 21, 1916, in personal collection of Robert Kolbe; Tom Wall, conversation with the author (October 15, 2013).

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includes a single-leaf screen door with a divided section of screen over a single panel of wood, and there is a single-leaf door and single-light transom in a canted recession extending into the store floor, the door having a large glass pane over a beveled panel of wood. The open, full-width porch with asphalt hip roof, wood floor, wide fascia board, square supports, and concrete base was rebuilt in 2013 based on existing evidence and historic photographs from the 1940s because trees had severely damaged the foundation, roof, and supports. At the same time, early-1950s pressed board siding was also removed from the underlying wood siding. A photograph on a postcard written in 1916 shows that the form of the porch has remained the same, but the original four supports had simple capitals and bases, and the original porch sat on a stone base.¹⁰

The gable-front façade of Part B has two one-over-one windows on the first floor and one two-over-two window in the gable end, all three with wood screen windows. There is a lamp with metal shade and exposed bulb extending on a straight metal pole from the wall on the east side of the gable window. The extent of the original recessed entrance is notable only where the siding had been patched in below, between, and just above the first floor windows.

The east elevation of Part B has one grouping of paired one-over-one windows located off-center to the south. The south elevation of Part B includes a rear entrance with a single-leaf wood paneled door, three-light transom, and a screen door (matching that on the main entrance). There is a small single-light window with screen to the east of the rear door. In the gable end, there is a one-over-one window with screen window as well as the remnant pole and fixture from a wall lamp like that on the façade. In a 1967 photograph, there was formerly an extended mudroom off that rear entrance.¹¹ The rear, south elevation of Part A includes a two-light window to the west of a rear entrance on the first floor. The entrance has a single leaf door with two vertical glass panes over two wood panels. On the second floor, there are two single one-over-one wood windows, one of which has an extant screen window, and in the gable end, there is a single one-over-one window. The west elevation of Part A has two one-over-one wood windows with screen storm windows on the second floor.

On entering the building from the main entrance into Part A, the recessed vestibule is faced in wide board on either side of the screen door and the rest in bead-board. The ceiling of the store is also bead board, the walls are plaster, and the floor was laminate checkered with yellow rectangles painted on a brown base. A project in the fall 2013 found original hardwood floors beneath that, an older layer of laminate, and a layer of newspapers dating to 1944. Bead-board faces the counters and the chimney column in the center of the room. The stovepipe hole is covered with a tin plate. The west half of the room is partially closed off with a half wall of shelving that extends from the doorway to the chimney column. Behind that wall, there is little ornamentation except a board running along the top of the half-wall. In the main room, there are wood bead-board counters running along the back of the room topped with three-bay shelving units that have molded cornices. On the east side of the room, there is an island counter (with bead board like the wall counters) standing against another two-bay unit of counter and shelving. One bay includes a two-level glass cabinet that could be locked. There is a basic single-leaf door

¹⁰ Picture postcard with message, Mrs. Ditman Larsen to Miss Caroline Nilsen, December 21, 1916, in personal collection of Robert Kolbe.

¹¹ Photograph courtesy of Kari O'Dell, June 19, 1967.

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in the southeast corner, which goes to a backroom now used as storage. An open doorway on the northern end of the east wall leads between Part A and B.

On the ground floor of Part B, the front room is largely devoid of shelving except two dark wood cabinets (one containing the electric fuse box) on the north wall between the two windows. The walls are plastered and the ceiling is bead-board. Going through a doorway on the south wall, the rear room has plaster walls and a ceiling that was covered partially in chip board tiles. A project in the fall 2013 uncovered the original beadboard ceiling. Kitchen appliances in the room date to the mid-twentieth century with a ceramic sink unit and streamlined metal cabinet handles. There is a bathroom in the southeast corner, behind the kitchen cabinet wall. To the west of the rear entrance, with its single-leaf wood-paneled door and rim lock door handle, is a door to the enclosed staircase. Halfway up the staircase there is a square door in the wall that leads to the attic of Part B. The attic features an unfinished ceiling, some remnant lathe-and-plaster walls, and a central chimney. The stairs open onto a small landing on the second floor of Part A. From the landing, doorways with wood surrounds, simple crown mold trim, and five-panel wood doors lead into four rooms with plaster walls and molded base boards. All the rooms are interconnected with no hallway. Another case of stairs continues into the attic, where the rafters are open, the floor is hardwood, but some of the sides and a center divider had quarter-inch composite paneling installed so that they could serve as rentable rooms in the 1950s-60s.¹² The chimney runs up at an angle to the center of the roof ridge.

¹² Tom Wall, conversation with author (October 15, 2013).

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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.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

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Period of Significance

c1903-1961

Significant Dates

c1903

1910

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

n/a

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Nansen Store is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at a local level under Criterion A for its significance to the history of Commerce. The store is comprised of two communicating frame structures with lap siding and gable roofs, one being one-and-a-half stories and the other being two-and-a-half stories with a one-story, full-width porch. The Nansen location was noted on a 1903 map and a new store building was noted in a 1910 news item; in a 1937 mortgage, the full description of the property describes the store in its present configuration.¹³ The period of significance runs from the store's approximate date of construction through 1961, which was the date that retail operations ceased as reported by a descendent of the owners at that time. The Nansen Store has excellent integrity to represent the

¹³ Peterson, *Historical Atlas of South Dakota*, 29; *The Howard Press* (South Dakota), February 4, 1910; Miner County Register of Deeds, Mortgage Book 93, page 529, filed July 1, 1937.

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historical importance of retail commerce in rural areas like northeastern Miner County, especially after the owner uncovered historic siding and reconstructed the badly damaged porch in 2013. Country stores are significant not only because they were a point of connection for rural residents to larger trade networks, they also provided the chance for informal gathering, discourse, and establishing social relationships at a neutral “third place” within the community landscape.¹⁴

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

THE NANSEN STORE

In 1889, Agnette Pederson received the homestead claim for the west half of the northwest quarter of Section 17 and the east half of the northeast quarter of Section 18, Township 107 North, Range 55 West.¹⁵ She was the first private owner of the land on which the Nansen Store now sits. Born Agnette Davidsdotter Stove (1854-1939), she had immigrated to the United States from Norway in 1877 and was married to Jens Pedersen who passed away in 1887. She re-married to Gabriel L. Fjellestad (1860-1941) in 1888.¹⁶ The earliest map record found for Nansen is a 1903 plat of the county that notes “Nansen” on the south side of the section line and a creamery on the north side in Section 8. Few businesses made up the extent of the Nansen locale. The Johnstad Creamery Co. was a cooperative that organized in 1896 and filed its charter in 1906; G.L. Fjellestad also served for a time as its president.¹⁷ In state gazetteers in 1914 and 1921, John Elshaug is listed as a blacksmith at Nansen.¹⁸ By April 1915, the creamery’s closure was indicated in a local news item that made reference to the “old Johnstad creamery building,” but the building was also used as a dance hall and moved behind the neighboring farmhouse.¹⁹ Nansen had a post office from April 1898 to August 1904, and the Nansen Telephone Company operated in the area from about 1900 to at least 1930 (having filed its charter in 1906).²⁰ In

¹⁴ Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community* (New York: Marlowe & Company, 1999 [1989]).

¹⁵ Miner County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 15, page 62, filed April 16, 1892.

¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*, Henden Township, Miner County, South Dakota, Enumeration District 245, Sheet No. 9.

¹⁷ *Report of the Secretary of State* (Pierre: State Publishing Company, 1907), 235; *Fifth Annual Report of the Food and Dairy Commissioner of the State of South Dakota* (Aberdeen, SD: News Printing Co., 1905), 56.

¹⁸ *South Dakota State Gazetteer and Business Directory 1921-22*, vol., 22 (St. Paul: R.L. Polk & Co., 1921), 200.

¹⁹ *The Howard Press* (SD), April 16, 1915.

²⁰ Alan H. Patera, *South Dakota Post Offices* (Lake Grove, OR: The Depot, 1990), unpaginated; *Report of the Secretary of State* (1907), 235; Doane Robinson, *South Dakota, Sui Generis*, Vol. 2 (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1930), 229; *Biennial Report of the Attorney General of the State of South Dakota, 1913-1914* (Mitchell, SD: Mitchell Publishing Company, 1914), 715-

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newspapers in 1904 and 1908, announcements were made that G.L. Fjellestad was hosting large Fourth of July celebrations in Nansen for the surrounding area, with fireworks, foot and horse races, picnic, baseball games, and dances.²¹ The Nansen Fourth of July celebration in 1910 was hosted by Ole Bergheim, who had multiple parcels of land in the area.²²

By 1904, Knut Skaar had the store up and running, and it was reported in 1905 that he wanted to build a small addition ten by twenty feet in size.²³ In November 1910, Gabriel and Agnette Fjellestad sold the subdivided lot on which the store stood to newlyweds Knut J. (1858-1943) and Caroline (Johnson) Skaar (1862-1937).²⁴ Knut and Caroline had emigrated from Norway to the United States in 1884 and 1893 respectively.²⁵ In February 1910, a news article referred to a “new” store building at Nansen, which was likely the two-and-a-half story addition—an indication that the store was growing with the local population.²⁶ In October 1910, the Skaars took out a \$1000 mortgage from Peoples State Bank in Howard.²⁷

In late June 1937, Knut Skaar mortgaged the store and assorted outbuildings to Dr. D.S. Baughman of the Madison County Hospital, six months after Caroline’s death the previous January. The mortgage document describes the property. It included two adjoining and communicating frame buildings used as store and dwelling, a garage with an addition for a brooder house, and a chicken house.²⁸ By 1940, their adopted daughter Olga had taken over the store operations, though Knut, at 82 years old, still lived there with Olga and her one-year-old son, Thomas.²⁹ The census in 1940 indicates that Olga had worked eighty-four hours the week prior, in comparison to the sixty to seventy hours worked by neighboring farmers.³⁰ On November 5, 1943, the Skaars mortgage with the Madison County Hospital was assigned to William Wall (1886-1954) of Howard who married Olga on November 21, 1943.³¹ Bill

717; *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Railroad Commissioners of the State of South Dakota* (Pierre: Hipple Printing Co., 1918), 365; *The Howard Press* (SD), December 10, 1909; February 4, 1910; and January 31, 1913.

²¹ *The Spirit of Dakota* (Howard, SD), July 1, 1904; June 26, 1908; and July 10, 1908.

²² *The Howard Press* (SD), July 8, 1910; *Atlas and Farm Directory, Miner County, South Dakota* (St. Paul, MN: Webb Publishing Co., 1917), 19.

²³ *The Howard Advance* (SD), September 15, 1905; Tom Wall, communication with author (October 15, 2013).

²⁴ Miner County Register of Deeds, Plat Book 3, page 49, filed November 11, 1910; and Deed Book 37, page 96, filed November 14, 1910.

²⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920*, Henden Township, Miner County, South Dakota, Enumeration District 161, Sheet No. 7A.

²⁶ *The Howard Press* (SD), February 4, 1910.

²⁷ Miner County Register of Deeds, Mortgage Book 64, page 225, filed November 14, 1910.

²⁸ Miner County Register of Deeds, Mortgage Book 93, page 529, filed July 1, 1937.

²⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940*, Henden Township, Miner County, South Dakota, Enumeration District 49-12, sheet no. 3A.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Miner County Register of Deeds, Mortgage Book 107, page 553, filed November 12, 1943; and Marriage Record for William Wall and Olga Skaar, November 21, 1943.

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continued on as a salesman for a short time after their marriage before he settled at Nansen to run the store with Olga.³² Knut passed away on December 30, 1943.³³ When the mortgage defaulted and was sent to public auction on January 17, 1944, Bill bought the property for the price of the mortgage principal and assorted fees.³⁴ Bill put on new green and white siding that used the green in the gable ends so that the building would not look as tall, had a contractor add concrete to the foundation, replaced the shingles, and replaced the storefront windows.³⁵ Before his death in 1954, he transferred ownership of the property to Olga.³⁶

By 1900, country stores had a common architectural vocabulary that included display windows, signs, and sign boards although no form type was universal. The Nansen Store has a gable roof and a one-story porch with a central double entrance and flanking four-part picture windows. For a time before the 1930s, it had larger display windows and a false-front at the roofline, which was a common way to indicate the commercial function of store buildings but likely did not survive the winds of the open, rural location. The store had a gasoline pump on the east side of the porch and later had a neon “Grain Belt” beer sign hanging over the porch roof.

Like many general stores, the Nansen Store offered a wide assortment of merchandise. Early records of the available merchandise are scarce. Most general stores provided processed foods like sugar and coffee, some eggs and produce, clothing items, other dry goods, hardware, and even agricultural implements. In 1909, in the sporadically-published newspaper column, the “Nansen Weekly,” the correspondent mentioned that the store had been doing good business in overshoes—perhaps as a comment on wet soil conditions that fall.³⁷ By the 1940 census, the store was no longer listed as a general store but as a grocery, a differentiation that was repeated in the 1947 Directory of Retail Establishments.³⁸ Into the twentieth century, larger trade centers like Howard or Madison supplanted many of the commercial roles of rural hamlets. Olga Skaar may have focused on grocery goods because consumers would still shop locally for perishable foods or convenience items. Olga’s son remembered that the store stocked cereal, coffee, canned goods, and other items similar to larger grocery stores but without the same variety of brands.³⁹ At the counter, they also had a tobacco case at the front and a candy case near the cash register (see Image 1).⁴⁰ Advertisements seen on the building in historic photographs include brands like

³² Tom Wall, communication with the author (October 15, 2013).

³³ South Dakota Department of Health. *Index to South Dakota Death Records, 1905-1955*. Pierre, SD, USA: South Dakota Department of Health. *South Dakota Death Index, 1905-1955* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2004.

³⁴ Miner County Register of Deeds, Mortgage Book 107, page 575, filed January 17, 1944.

³⁵ Tom Wall, communication with author (October 15, 2013).

³⁶ Miner County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 62, page 378, filed February 6, 1954, and Deed Book 63, page 467, filed June 28, 1954.

³⁷ *The Howard Press* (SD), November 26, 1909.

³⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. *Sixteenth Census, 1940*, Enumeration District 49-12, sheet no. 3A; *South Dakota Directory of Retail Establishments*. Bulletin No. 21 (Vermillion: Business Research Bureau, University of South Dakota, 1947).

³⁹ Tom Wall, communication with author (October 15, 2013).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

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Fenn's Ice Cream, Grain Belt Beer, and Sunbeam bread.⁴¹ As time went on, people continued to stop at the store for gas and staples like bread even as they were on their way to shop in town.⁴² Inventory first came by horse-drawn wagon trips that the Skaars made weekly to Howard.⁴³ In 1925, the Skaars bought a Dodge truck to make the trips; the truck had a bed enclosed with wire mesh and tie-up canvas walls (see Image 2).⁴⁴ Later, the occasional trip to Madison was necessary for items in high demand and for ice, but most of the merchandise came in weekly by truck from a Madison grocery and then monthly by semi-truck from the Nash-Finch wholesaler in Sioux Falls.

On the land to the east of the store, there was a garden and lawn that Bill tended with the help of his son, Tom, who had yard chores like picking potato bugs and mowing in warm weather. In the winter, he would bring in corn cobs from the bin for their cook stove and shovel the path to the two-seat outhouse.⁴⁵ Before the area received electricity and presumably about the time that they bought a truck in the 1920s, the Skaars added a gasoline pump that operated by crank; it was drained every night, and another of Tom's chores was to pump up the gas in the morning.⁴⁶ From a photograph, the pump looks like a type first used in 1918, having a visible glass cylinder at the top and a hose coming from that tank to the pump handle (see Image 3).⁴⁷ In the few years before he moved into Howard for high school, Tom also took jobs on neighboring farms.⁴⁸

Bill and Olga Wall were major influences in the coming of electricity to the area, so that the store could have both electric lights and refrigeration. For a time, they closed up the store each day from 4:00 to 5:00pm and traveled to neighboring farms to discuss registration for the Rural Electrification Administration and the erection of poles to carry the lines.⁴⁹ When electrification came in the late 1940s, the store got its refrigerators, converted an old coal room to an indoor bathroom, installed a modern kitchen on the ground floor, sought a license to sell 3.2 beer, and started stocking ice cream first from Madison's Arvilla company and then from Fenn Bros. Inc. in Sioux Falls.⁵⁰ The store first sold Farmer's Union gasoline and auto products, but during war-time rationing they denied Bill Wall's request for new tires. With one call to the Standard Oil

⁴¹ Photographs courtesy of Tom Wall and Kari O'Dell, copies filed at SD State Historic Preservation Office.

⁴² Tom Wall, communication with author (October 15, 2013).

⁴³ *Miner County Pioneer* (Howard, South Dakota), July 2, 1981.

⁴⁴ Tom Wall, communication with author (October 15, 2013); *Miner County Pioneer* (Howard, South Dakota), July 2, 1981.

⁴⁵ Bill Feller, communication with author (July 1, 2013).

⁴⁶ Tom Wall, communication with author (October 15, 2013).

⁴⁷ Photograph shared courtesy of Tom Wall, Bill Feller, communication with author (July 1, 2013); Jackie Tyson, Kristie Lockerman, and Mary Beth Reed. *Rural Commerce in Context: South Carolina's Country Stores, 1850-1950* (Stone Mountain, GA: New South Associates Technical Report 2159, 2013), 90.

⁴⁸ Tom Wall, communication with author (October 15, 2013).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Tom Wall, communication with author (October 15, 2013); Photograph of Eunice (mother) and Kari in front of store, December 1955, courtesy of Kari O'Dell.

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dealer in Howard, new tires were delivered and the store thereafter stocked Standard gasoline, oil, and their Atlas brand tires.⁵¹

The store was a community gathering place. Growing up, Tom Wall vividly remembered chairs placed around the stove in the center of the store where (usually) men would gather on weekday evenings to smoke pipes, cigarettes, and the occasional cigar while talking over the crops, weather, events at the school, Howard basketball, general gossip, and current events from newspapers and radio.⁵² From battery-operated and then electric radios, the Skaars, Walls, and their customers could listen to the news, music programs like the Bohemian Band on WNAX Yankton, contests like that for Pan-O-Gold bread on KSOO Sioux Falls, and boxing matches like that between Ezzard Charles and Joe Louis in 1950 (although Bill Wall actually listened to that fight from the car radio, which had better reception).⁵³ The store was a popular stop for ice cream and soda, or to play a game of cards or horseshoes. After getting electric refrigeration and a beer license, they set up a designated beer room off the main store room, and tables were set up there for card games like 8-player Smear or Pitch that men and women played for a quarter a game, quarter a set (also see Image 4).⁵⁴ In the early 1950s, the Walls purchased a television from the Firestone dealer in Howard that they set in that room on top of the juke box—major sporting events like the World Series were a must-watch.⁵⁵ Nansen also had its own nine-man baseball team and a women’s softball team.⁵⁶ Early news reports say that games were held various farms in the vicinity, but at some point a ball diamond was built on land south of the store. Local newspapers from 1904-1912 reported games that the Nansen nine-man team played with teams from Clearwater, Howard, Berton, Adams, and Belleview.⁵⁷ In 1910, the team that played two games during that year’s Fourth of July celebration included players Fjellestad, Dehne, Rygg, Bergheim, Hauge, Langland, Cross, Tystad, and Hetle.⁵⁸ In a 1936 photograph of the Nansen Ball Club at the Peterville Ball Park (see Image 5), players included Sandene, MacEntire, Langland, Olson, Eide, Rigg [Rygg], Soderberg, Fjellestad, and “Cherp” [Kjerpeseth]. The team enjoyed a particular rivalry with the Berton team to the north (in the occasional record, spelled “Burton”).⁵⁹ The store also provided a meeting place for matters of business, including the stockholders meeting of the Nansen Telephone Company in 1910 and

⁵¹ Tom Wall, communication with author (October 15, 2013).

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Tom Wall, communication with author (October 15, 2013 and October 29, 2013).

⁵⁵ Tom Wall, communication with author (October 15, 2013).

⁵⁶ Bill Feller, communication with author (July 1, 2013); Tom Wall, communication with author (October 15, 2013); *Miner County Pioneer* (Howard, South Dakota), July 2, 1981.

⁵⁷ *Howard Advance* (SD), June 24, 1904; *Spirit of Dakota* (Howard, SD), June 17, 1904; July 1, 1904; and June 12, 1908; *The Howard Press* (SD), August 6, 1909; July 8, 1910; and July 26, 1912.

⁵⁸ *The Howard Press* (SD), July 8, 1910.

⁵⁹ Bill Feller, communication with author (July 1, 2013).

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providing a location for residents of Belleview and Henden townships to sign up for the Agricultural Adjustment Administration's conservation program in February 1948.⁶⁰

Malvin J. (1898-1974) and Berna (Tystad) Hegdahl (1899-1984) bought the store from Olga Wall in June 1954, after Bill's death.⁶¹ Both the Hegdahl and Tystad families had been living in the area since early settlement. The Hegdahls ran the store until 1961 but their major source of income was renting upper rooms to hunters for the fall pheasant season.⁶² For a short time from March 1958 until November 1959, they let a contract for deed to Marie Maley and the agreement listed some of the assets of the store: \$300 worth of groceries, two scales, one cash register, one oil burner, three tables, twelve chairs, ten beds, mattresses, dressers, and nightstands, a kitchen range, one 12' Kelvinator, and one 15' Frigidaire.⁶³ After Malvin's death in 1974, Berna sold the store building to Bill Feller in August 1976.⁶⁴



Image 1: Family around the store counter, January 1956. Courtesy of Kari O'Dell.

⁶⁰ *The Howard Press* (SD), February 4, 1910; *Mitchell Daily Republic* (South Dakota), February 13, 1948.

⁶¹ Miner County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 62, page 467, filed June 28, 1954.

⁶² Bill Feller, communication with author (July 1, 2013); Tom Wall, communication with author (October 15, 2013).

⁶³ Miner County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 64, page 67, filed March 31, 1958.

⁶⁴ Miner County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 72, page 104, filed August 12, 1976.

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Image 2: Knut, Olga, and Caroline Skaar with their new Dodge truck. Courtesy of Tom Wall.



Image 3: Front of the Nansen Store, late 1940s or very early 1950s. Courtesy of Tom Wall.

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Image 4: Adults gathered in the store's back room, late 1950s. Courtesy of Kari O'Dell.

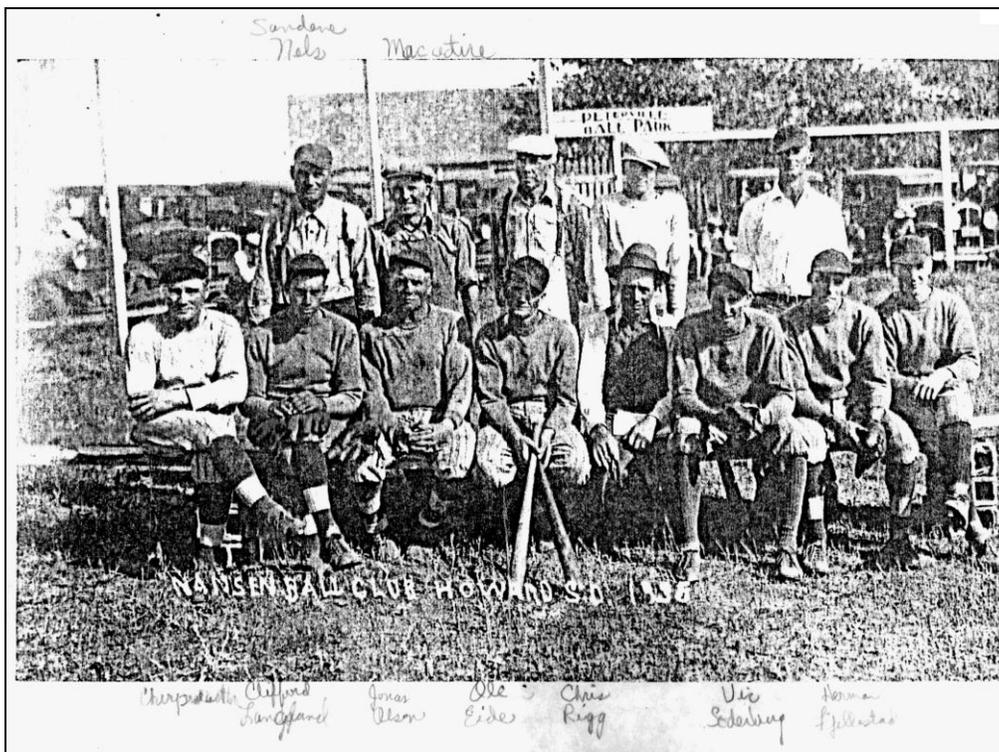


Image 5: Nansen Ball Club, Howard S.D. 1936, at Peterville Ball Park. Courtesy of Donna Meyer.

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COMPARISON WITH LIKE RESOURCES

The Nansen Store is one of the few general store structures remaining in Miner County. In 1914, three rural general stores were listed in the State Gazetteer and Business Directory under the heading for the town of Howard (more were listed within town limits). They were Knut Skaar's store at Nansen, a store in St. Mary's run by Harry Haxby, and a store in Berton run by Mrs. Bertha C.M. Tystad. The store in Berton was moved a short distance east into Belleview Township by 1940, but is either not extant or altered beyond recognition. In 1940, five businesses in rural Miner County were indicated on the census enumeration maps, including the Nansen store, the Berton Store in Belleview township, one in Vermillion township (called Clemetson's Corner), and two in the hamlet of Epiphany.⁶⁵ Comparing the 1940 map to current aerial maps and using field observation, the store in Vermillion township is also not extant or altered beyond recognition. One of the stores in Epiphany, Heine's Store, is still extant and retains good integrity. It is a one-story, gable-roofed wood-frame building with a false-front cornice, a one-story porch, and large display windows.

In other counties of southeastern South Dakota, two stores at Norway Center (29339 SD Highway 11, Lincoln County) and Nora (30705 475th Avenue, Union County) have been previously listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Both similarly served communities with a high percentage of Norwegian immigrants. The Norway Center store was built in 1926, operated until 1962, and was listed in the National Register in 2003. The long, one-story store has a brick tile foundation, wood clapboard and shingle siding, brackets and exposed rafter tails in the eaves, a central recessed entrance with flanking display windows, and a one-story gabled canopy with tapered square supports on a brick half-wall. In Union County, the Nora Store was built in 1907, was expanded in 1919 with a one-story addition and a three-bay carport, closed in the 1950s, and was listed in the National Register in 2007. The one-and-a-half-story, wood frame store has a stone foundation, a false-front parapet, central entrance with flanking display windows, and a narrow awning supported by square columns. Another surveyed store in Spink (Union County) was once very similar in composition to the Nansen Store. It had a two story main building with a false-front parapet, central entrance, multi-light display windows, a one-story porch with hip roof, and a one-story addition.⁶⁶ Its c.1910-1920s Craftsman canopy had exposed rafter tails and tapered columns on brick supports, and accommodated pull-through gas pumps. In 2012-2013, the addition's flat roof was replaced with a shed slope and enlarged, and the front canopy was removed and replaced with an extended metal gable-front roof, wood supports, and wood patio.⁶⁷

In the West River counties of South Dakota, one rural store was listed in the National Register in 1982 as the Keystone Trading Company (Halley's) Store in Pennington County. The one-story frame building had a false-front parapet and raised porch, and it served the mining community as

⁶⁵ U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 1940 Census Enumeration District Maps - South Dakota - Miner County; Record Group 29: Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1790 - 2007, #5839155; Bill Feller, communication with author, October 25, 2013.

⁶⁶ SD State Archives, AS-Historic Preservation Collection, 2011-07-18-335.

⁶⁷ Bernie Hunhoff, "What's Worth Saving in South Dakota?" *South Dakota Magazine* (May 28, 2013), accessed online.

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a general store, post office, and later bank office. Architectural surveys across the state have recorded country stores that are mostly one- or two-story wood frame buildings with gable or false-front roofs and porches or canopies; many also had one or more additions. At the time of survey in the 1980s and 1990s, most showed evidence of gasoline services, and surveyors noted many multi-use facilities for post offices or residences. In historical images or undated survey photographs in the digital collection of the South Dakota State Archives, rural stores were often wood frame buildings with display windows and a porch or awning. Several historical images note early stores in buildings that are indistinguishable from residential buildings. There were a few unique structures like the two-story, gambrel roof store and post office in Ashcreek, Ziebach County or the stucco-covered Sorum Store in Perkins County that had a rounded, stepped parapet. These examples show that rural stores were built in a wide variety of modest architectural forms that utilized some common features, and they were frequently multi-functional with later adaptations for servicing motorized vehicles.

HISTORY OF MINER COUNTY

Miner County was created in 1873 shortly after townships had been surveyed, but the county was not organized until 1880 and the present boundaries were established in 1883.⁶⁸ The census population of Miner County grew from 363 in 1880 to a high of 8,560 in 1920, which then fell to 3,739 by 1980. In one study that grouped Miner County in with the southern James River Valley region, the regional agricultural landscape was described as having a high percentage of cattle livestock farms, followed by cash crop farms for corn, and then general crop and livestock farms.⁶⁹ Most farms had resident operators and used family labor as opposed to hiring out.⁷⁰ By the 1950s, the region was increasingly mechanized: 86-96% of farms had automobiles, 73-93% had tractors, 74-88% were located with access to all-weather roads, and 56-75% had electricity.⁷¹

In 1880-1881, a community of Norwegian settlers grew up in the four northeastern townships of Miner County.⁷² Though some came directly from Norway and the Nordfjord region in particular, many had first settled in Wisconsin, Minnesota, or Iowa before moving on to land in Dakota Territory.⁷³ The winter they arrived, they faced an infamous 1880-1881 blizzard, and in the mid-1890s endured an economic recession. Norwegian immigration to the United States was concentrated in the period from the 1840s to the 1880s, and so Norwegians were among the first migrants to the newly opened Dakota Territory in 1858 and made up a large percentage of

⁶⁸ Leif E. Fjellestad, *Early History of Miner County* (Sioux Falls: Center for Western Studies, 1981), 1, 7, 49; Federal Writer's Project. *Prairie Tamers of Miner County* ([Mitchell]: SD Writer's League, 1939), 9.

⁶⁹ Lyle M. Bender, *The Rural Economy of South Dakota* (Brookings, SD: Agricultural Extension Service of South Dakota State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, 1956), 359.

⁷⁰ Bender, *The Rural Economy*, 359.

⁷¹ The author gave statistics by type of farm operation. Bender, *The Rural Economy*, 363.

⁷² Fjellestad, *Early History*, 10; Carlton C. Qualey, *Norwegian Settlement in the United States* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1938), 144.

⁷³ Fjellestad, *Early History*, 10.

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settlers during the Second Dakota Boom during 1878-1887.⁷⁴ By 1900, Norwegian immigrants made up 12.8 percent of the population of South Dakota.⁷⁵ Norwegians settled primarily east of the James River (the easternmost quarter of the state), in part because the railroad network was more developed in the east at the time.⁷⁶

The Norwegians of northeastern Miner County never started their own town, but they created rural businesses and social institutions. The Belleview Lutheran and Berton Baptist churches served that community.⁷⁷ Residents built up 437th Avenue, which runs north-south towards Howard, as an all-weather oil road that was colloquially referred to as the Norwegian Gravel.⁷⁸ Two areas of commercial services emerged that were named Berton and Nansen. Both had a general store and a baseball team, and Nansen also had a creamery, blacksmith, and telephone company for a time. Nansen held its own Fourth of July celebrations for many years in the early twentieth century, and the program of events reflected standard American traditions of the era.⁷⁹ The Nansen community was, along with many other places of Norwegian influence, named for Fridtjof Nansen. Fridtjof Nansen was a zoologist and oceanographer who had led the first crossing of the interior of Greenland in 1888 and a record-setting expedition of the North Pole in 1893-96 that made him world-famous.⁸⁰ He was a treaty negotiator for Norwegian independence from Sweden in the period from 1905 to 1908. He was also ambassador to Great Britain in the two years following independence, helped negotiate and coordinate the repatriation of prisoners of war from the U.S.S.R. in 1920, and won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1922 for his work as the High Commissioner for Refugees for the League of Nations.⁸¹ After his death in 1930, the Nansen International Office for Refugees was established to carry on the work into the interwar period.⁸²

HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE OF COUNTRY STORES

Most country stores were vernacular structures of varied forms, but well before Euro-Americans settled in Dakota, a “pattern language” of common features came to signify that a building held a store.⁸³ Stores typically had large windows on the façade but not on the other walls of the main room so that merchandise could be seen from the street and stacked along the walls. They had prominent central entrances, often with double doors and porches that served as a gathering

⁷⁴ Harry Thompson, *A New South Dakota History* (Sioux Falls, SD: Center for Western Studies, 2005), 125-126.

⁷⁵ Qualey, *Norwegian Settlement*, 134.

⁷⁶ Thompson, *A New South Dakota History*, 126.

⁷⁷ Federal Writer’s Project, *Prairie Tamers*, 10.

⁷⁸ Fjellestad, *Early History*, introduction.

⁷⁹ See for example, *The Howard Press* (SD), July 8, 1910.

⁸⁰ James Arthur Bain, *Life of Fridtjof Nansen: Scientist and Explorer* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., Ltd., 1897).

⁸¹ James E. Hassell, *Russian Refugees in France and the United States between the World Wars* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1991), 16-18.

⁸² Hassell, *Russian Refugees*, 20.

⁸³ Kingston William Heath, “False-Front Architecture on Montana's Urban Frontier,” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 3 (1989), 203-204.

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place.⁸⁴ False-front facades on the gable-roofed buildings were inspired by urban commercial buildings, they provided practical space for eye-catching signage, and they were used to convey commercial legitimacy and aspiration.⁸⁵ Counters were used to display goods and delineate the space of the customers from that of the storekeepers or clerks.⁸⁶ Posted advertisements were common and numerous on the exterior clapboard or interior beadboard walls.⁸⁷ Counting rooms or offices and the storekeeper's residence were often housed in adjacent or second-floor spaces in the building, separated from the retail space.⁸⁸ Owners often chose to live at or near the store to provide added security for the property and merchandise within, and also allow them to do other work on the property in-between customers.⁸⁹ The shop-house combination was a tradition extending back to the colonial era.⁹⁰ Often located nearby were small processing operations that helped transition goods from the farms to the store and on to larger markets—operations like the Johnstad Creamery near the Nansen Store, or cotton gins near stores in the American South.⁹¹ Though some stores were often frame buildings similar to residences in form, houses were often set back from the road and had ornamental plantings used to create a domestic aesthetic, while stores were often set nearer the road and plantings were minimal so that the building, signage, and advertisements would be visible to customers.⁹² In order to survive the automobile age, rural stores often began to offer gasoline and auto service with the accompanying auto parts and convenience goods.⁹³ Adding automobile services required that stores add underground storage tanks, a space for motorists to pull off and access the pump, and even additions for garage workshops.⁹⁴

General stores were economically important to communities because they provided an avenue for distributing local agricultural and craft products, and they provided rural residents access to goods produced elsewhere.⁹⁵ They were often the first commercial operations in a newly-settled area, especially in places where farmers immediately started commercial production and needed

⁸⁴ Tyson et al., *Rural Commerce in Context*, 65; Heath, "False-Front Architecture," 203.

⁸⁵ Tyson et al., *Rural Commerce in Context*, 16; Heath, "False-Front Architecture," 200-201, 207; Richard W. Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* (Washington, DC: Preservation Press, 1987), 55.

⁸⁶ Tyson et al., *Rural Commerce in Context*, 16, 92.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 28, 92.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 65, 92.

⁸⁹ Heather Fearnbach, *Historic Store Context: Burke, Caldwell, Cleveland, McDowell, and Rutherford Counties* (Winston-Salem, NC: Fearnbach History Services, Inc., 2012), 6.

⁹⁰ Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street*, 24.

⁹¹ Tyson et al., *Rural Commerce in Context*, 20, 50-52.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 68.

⁹³ Michael L. Berger, *The Devil Wagon in God's Country: The Automobile and Social Change in Rural America, 1893-1929* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1979), 114; Tyson et al., *Rural Commerce in Context*, 58-59.

⁹⁴ Tyson et al., *Rural Commerce in Context*, 88.

⁹⁵ Robert A. Mittelstaedt, "The General Store Era: Memoirs of Arthur and Harold Mittelstaedt," *South Dakota History* 9(1)(Winter 1978), 36, Richard W. Stoffle, "Whither the Country Store?" *Ethnohistory* 19(1) (Winter 1972), 65.

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a greater amount of imported goods.⁹⁶ Rural or country general stores were spaced to serve populations dispersed across the grid landscape of homesteading. The merchandise could vary widely depending on local demand. They commonly had dry goods, hardware, and general merchandise for sale but also groceries such as root and tuber vegetables, tree fruits, and processed foods like coffee, flour, and sugar.⁹⁷ During his fieldwork on Wisconsin hamlets in the 1940s, geographer Glenn T. Trewartha described how “from [the stores] come odors fearfully compounded from oil cloth, kerosene, coffee, rope, fruit and scores of other aromatic substances.”⁹⁸ Gardens and orchards maintained by storekeepers could supply a portion of the store’s produce. Stores often took in local “barnyard commodities” like butter and eggs or garden produce for resale.⁹⁹ Options for trade and credit constituted an important commerce system in agricultural areas where cash income only came periodically to neighboring farmers.¹⁰⁰

For areas with high populations of immigrants, language was a major factor in social and economic ties. Even Yankee-owned town businesses often employed clerks who could speak languages of the area’s immigrant residents.¹⁰¹ Geographical concentrations of residents of a single ethnicity often set up their own churches, stores, newspapers, and other services.¹⁰² For the Norwegian settlers concentrated in the four northeastern Miner County townships, having businesses operated by Norwegian-speakers would have been very important, particularly in the first generation of the community.

In the social life of rural communities, general stores were also places of gathering and rest, socialization and recreation, sharing news and gossip, debating politics or farm methods, negotiating social values, and building collective identity. Depending on the community or the time of day, a country store was sometimes a male-dominated environment, but elsewhere it actually served as an important space where women and children could interact socially with the general community.¹⁰³ Other rural institutions like schoolhouses, town halls, and churches were also community gathering points, but socialization at the stores tended to be more frequent and less structured.¹⁰⁴ Stores might have had telephones, radios, or televisions available for public

⁹⁶ Stoffle, “Whither the Country Store?” 64.

⁹⁷ Mittelstaedt, “The General Store Era,” 37.

⁹⁸ Glenn T. Trewartha, “The Unincorporated Hamlet: One Element of the American Settlement Fabric,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 33(1) (March 1943), 61.

⁹⁹ Mittelstaedt, “The General Store Era,” 37, Stoffle, “Whither the Country Store?” 65.

¹⁰⁰ Thompson, *A New South Dakota History*, 178; Stoffle, “Whither the Country Store?” 65; Tyson et al., *Rural Commerce in Context*, 17.

¹⁰¹ Thompson, *A New South Dakota History*, 127; Odd S. Lovoll, *Norwegians on the Prairie: Ethnicity and the Development of the Country Town* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2006), 101.

¹⁰² Aidan McQuillan, “European Americans,” in David J. Wishart, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Great Plains* (Lincoln, NE: Center for Great Plains Studies, 2004), 225.

¹⁰³ Heath, “False-Front Architecture,” 210; Jeanne Kay Guelke, “Gendered Space,” in Wishart, *Encyclopedia*, 330.

¹⁰⁴ Stoffle, “Whither the Country Store?” 66; Berger, *The Devil Wagon*, 110.

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use before they became common in individual homes.¹⁰⁵ Radio became an influential source of news and market reports as well as entertainment.¹⁰⁶ The social importance of stores abated somewhat but did not disappear altogether after the automobile extended the range of leisure and retail options for rural residents.¹⁰⁷ Informal gathering places that are local and inclusive continue to be important because they serve as places where residents can learn more about each other, newcomers can find introduction and integration, people can form extra-familial associations between genders and generations, “public characters” or gatekeepers can observe and monitor social dynamics, business can be transacted on neutral ground, the community can work towards and celebrate collective accomplishments, mutual support can be mobilized in times of need or crisis, conversation about politics and intellectual subjects can be held in a level forum, and the mood is generally playful and entertaining.¹⁰⁸

In 1929, there were 1,030 general stores in South Dakota.¹⁰⁹ Between 1911 and 1956, approximately 230 small towns disbanded as population and commerce shifted to urban areas; the rural population decreased from 84% of the total population in 1920 to 66.8% in 1950.¹¹⁰ The increasing use of automobiles catalyzed much of the changes in rural commerce in the twentieth century. By the 1930s, the good roads movement, affordable and available automobiles, and Rural Free Delivery meant that consumers could travel into villages or larger towns for competitive prices and a wider selection or, in addition, meant that goods they ordered through the mail could more easily be delivered to their doorstep.¹¹¹ From the early 1900s through the 1920s, there had been several grassroots efforts, including a national “buy at home” movement, which unsuccessfully attempted to counteract the mail-order trend.¹¹² Eventually however, generations shifted and cumulative factors drew even the hold-outs into larger towns.¹¹³ Saturdays in town became a social staple of the 1930s-40s.¹¹⁴ Rural electrification movements also meant that the frequency of store visits was reduced because some quantity of

¹⁰⁵ Tyson et al, *Rural Commerce in Context*, 31; Morse Salisbury, “Radio and the Farmer,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 177 (January 1935), 142.

¹⁰⁶ Salisbury, “Radio and the Farmer,” 142-143; Steve Craig, “‘The More They Listen, the More They Buy’ Radio and the Modernizing of Rural America, 1930-1939,” *Agricultural History* 80(1) (Winter 2006), 8-9.

¹⁰⁷ Berger, *The Devil Wagon*, 111-112.

¹⁰⁸ Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place*, xvii-xxvi, 20-85.

¹⁰⁹ Mittelstaedt, “The General Store Era,” 37.

¹¹⁰ Thompson, *A New South Dakota History*, 179; Bender, *The Devil Wagon*, 9.

¹¹¹ Thompson, *A New South Dakota History*, 178-179; Mittelstaedt, “The General Store Era,” 38; Trewartha, “The Unincorporated Hamlet,” 43; Stoffle, “Whither the Country Store?” 63, 67; Berger, *The Devil Wagon*, 79; Orlando J. Goering and Violet Miller Goering, “Keeping the Faith: Bertha Martinsky in West River South Dakota,” *South Dakota History* 25(1) (Spring 1995), 44; Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience* (New York: Random House, 1973), chapter 13.

¹¹² Boorstin, *The Americans*, chapter 14; Thompson, *A New South Dakota History*, 191; Berger, *The Devil Wagon*, 111.

¹¹³ Berger, *The Devil Wagon*, 113.

¹¹⁴ Stoffle, “Whither the Country Store?” 67.

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perishable items could be stored in refrigerators or freezers at home, although electrification and large appliances were not common in rural residences until the mid-century.¹¹⁵ Even into the 1950s, only 56-75% of farms in Miner and neighboring counties had electricity.¹¹⁶

In the early 1940s, many academics were already projecting the continuing decline of small towns, but the trend was not inevitable or comprehensive. Glenn T. Trewartha's study in Wisconsin found that a number of the stores in crossroad hamlets actually survived because they could operate at a lower overhead, were still located conveniently to rural residents, and supported a sense of community.¹¹⁷ In 1972, another researcher, Richard W. Stoffle, noted the continued survival of churches and country stores in rural Fescue County, Kentucky despite centralization trends, and concluded that the stores were "an adaptive economic institution, one which continues to exist because of credit, convenience, sociability and economic viability."¹¹⁸ He even observed a period of renewal for country stores during wartime rationing and as television at home replaced trips to Main Street as a source of entertainment.¹¹⁹ Stoffle found that surviving stores tended to be "social stores" dependent on the personal relationships of the storekeeper with the customers, or "economic stores" which attempted to offer services equal to or greater than stores in town.¹²⁰ Social stores restricted their inventory to nonperishable snacking items and open floor space for gathering chairs and tables, and he projected that most were not likely to survive their owners.¹²¹ Economic stores offered comparable or better goods at lower prices because overhead for the small, long-owned store building was lower than for new suburban retail structures, and they could also accommodate custom ordering and extensions of credit.¹²² In the last decades of the twentieth century, the remaining country stores were further impacted by rural depopulation as farm sizes continued to increase, by the rerouting of major transportation networks within the interstate system, by the growing use of credit cards, and by the construction of large suburban retail centers.¹²³

CONCLUSION

The history of the Nansen Store demonstrates how country stores served as an economic connection to wider markets, as a community gathering place for socialization as well as more

¹¹⁵ Fearnbach, *Historic Store Context*, 9; Ronald R. Kline, *Consumers in the Country: Technology and Social Change in Rural America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 140, 200-201.

¹¹⁶ The author cited percentages based on the type of farm operation. Bender, *The Rural Economy*, 363.

¹¹⁷ Trewartha, "The Unincorporated Hamlet," 44, 49-50, 61, 66.

¹¹⁸ Stoffle, "Whither the Country Store?" 63.

¹¹⁹ In South Dakota, numbers of new car and truck registrations dropped dramatically in the period from 1942 to 1945, and rose only slightly in the two years following. *Handbook of Business Information*, 15; Stoffle, "Whither the Country Store?" 68.

¹²⁰ Stoffle, "Whither the Country Store?" 69.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 70.

¹²³ Gilbert C. Fite, "The Transformation of South Dakota Agriculture: The Effects of Mechanization, 1939-1964," *South Dakota History* 19(3) (Fall 1989), 301.

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formal meetings, and as a host of recreational activities like baseball and card-playing. Its history also shows how twentieth-century technologies like electricity and motorized vehicles affected rural commerce. The Nansen Store is a vernacular country store, with the characteristic type features of large display windows, prominent entrance, and combined residential space. The Nansen Store retains excellent integrity to its period of significance, and tells the story of how the Skaar and Wall families ran a business that played an essential commercial and social role in the rural Norwegian-settled area of northeastern Miner County.

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: SDSHS State Archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): MN00000101

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

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UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Zone: 14 | Easting: 622689.760301 | Northing: 4881966.833474 |
| 2. Zone: 14 | Easting: 622715.160352 | Northing: 4881966.833474 |
| 3. Zone: 14 | Easting: 622715.160352 | Northing: 4881940.904255 |
| 4. Zone: 14 | Easting: 622689.760301 | Northing: 4881940.904255 |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The National Register boundary consists of the building (bounded by the UTM points #1-#4) and its immediate surroundings that are within Lot 1, Section 17, Township 107 North, Range 55 West.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries were selected to correspond with the Nansen Store building and its immediate surroundings.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Liz Almlie
organization: SD State Historic Preservation Office
street & number: 900 Governors Drive
city or town: Pierre state: South Dakota zip code: 57501
e-mail: liz.almlie@state.sd.us
telephone: 605-773-6056
date: 6 December 2013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

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- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Nansen Store

City or Vicinity: Howard vicinity

County: Miner

State: South Dakota

Photographer: Liz Almlie

Date Photographed: July 1, 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

SD_Minor County_Nansen Store_0001

View of façade, camera facing south.

SD_Minor County_Nansen Store_0002

Oblique view of façade and west elevation, camera facing southeast.

SD_Minor County_Nansen Store_0003

View of east elevation, camera facing west.

SD_Minor County_Nansen Store_0004

Oblique view of south and east elevations, camera facing northwest.

SD_Minor County_Nansen Store_0005

View of façade and road landscape, camera facing northwest.

SD_Minor County_Nansen Store_0006

Interior view of entrance, ground floor of Part A, camera facing northwest.

SD_Minor County_Nansen Store_0007

Interior view of shelves and chimney column, ground floor of Part A, camera facing southwest.

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SD_Minor County_Nansen Store_0008

Interior view of shelves and counter, ground floor of Part A, camera facing northeast.

SD_Minor County_Nansen Store_0009

Interior view of rear kitchen, ground floor of Part B, camera facing southwest.

SD_Minor County_Nansen Store_0010

Interior view of rooms, upper floor of Part A, camera facing southeast.

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

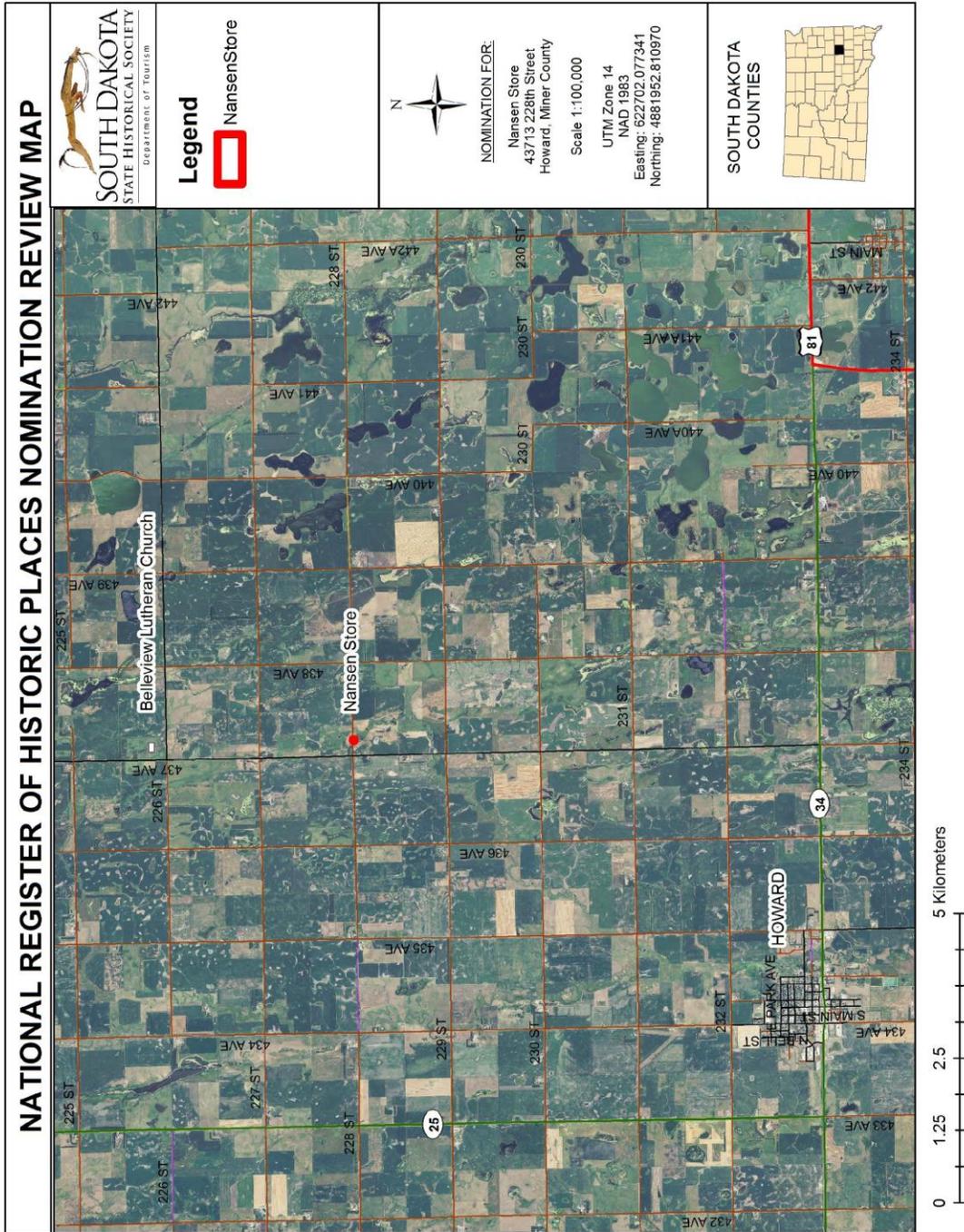


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