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national park services adds five nebraska locations to the national register of historic places

Two Sites, Three Districts Added To the National Register in 2017

Lincoln, NE, December 27, 2017– The Nebraska State Historical Society is pleased to announce that five Nebraska locations have been included in the National Register of Historic Places. The On Leong (lee-ONG) Tong House in Omaha, Chiodo (CHEE-oh-doh) Apartments in Omaha, along with the Grand Island Historic Downtown District, Kearney Historic Downtown District, and Neligh Historic Downtown District were considered and selected by the National Parks Service for listing.

Also known as the Truax Laundry, the On Leong Tong House is an early 20th-century commercial building that once housed a Chinese-American merchants’ association, similar to a Chamber of Commerce, for two decades. The organization supported newly-arrived immigrants, provided other assistance to members of Omaha’s Chinese community, and was a meeting center for the celebration of Chinese holidays. The tong house served as the commercial, cultural, and social center of Chinese-American life during the years of World War II and the early Cold War. The tong moved from this property to a smaller building in 1959.

The Chiodo Apartment complex was designed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style and was built in 1918. Since its construction, it has served as a multiple-unit residential complex, a role which it continues to this day. The building is a fine example of its architectural style, retaining much of its historical materials, layout, and finishes throughout years of use. The building’s foundation and first two stories are cut from stone that was salvaged from Omaha’s 1885 courthouse; the columns flanking each of the entrances previously had supported the courthouse’s dome. The Chiodo Apartments are one of four apartment buildings building by Vincenzo P. Chiodo during the 1910s. Of the four, only the Chiodo and the National Register-listed Florentine Apartment buildings still exist.

The Grand Island Historic Downtown District contains 64 contributing resources that demonstrate the commercial development of Grand Island from roughly 1870 to 1960. Since it was established, the district has remained a core of commercial activities in Grand Island. The district contains an intact collection of late-nineteenth- and early-to-mid-twentieth-century commercial and public buildings that reflect nine decades of commercial development in Grand Island.

The Kearney Historic Downtown District contains 99 contributing resources within the roughly five square blocks along Central Avenue that demonstrate the commercial development of Kearney from roughly 1875 to 1965. The District represents the core of commerce and historic transportation in the city from both the historic period and today. The downtown core has provided residents with goods and services since the founding of the community in 1872. The buildings and structures within the area reflect the development of the community and its commercial growth into central Nebraska’s regional hub.

Downtown Neligh Historic District contains 41 contributing resources that demonstrate the commercial development of Neligh from roughly 1887 to 1964. The historic district functioned as the central business area of Neligh since the opening of the Neligh Mill one block south of the District at the southwest corner of Main and West 2nd Street in 1874, largely in support of the local agricultural community. The commercial buildings within the District illustrate the evolution of Neligh from a mill site and railed depot to a thriving agricultural community and county seat. The resources within the District represent the evolving commercial needs of the citizens of Neligh.

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's inventory of properties deemed worthy of preservation. It is part of a national program to coordinate and support local and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect the nation's historic and archeological resources. The National Register was developed to recognize historic places and their role in contributing to our country's heritage. Properties listed in the National Register either individually or as contributing to a historic district are eligible for State and Federal tax incentives.

For more information on the National Register program in Nebraska, contact the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office at the Nebraska State Historical Society at (402) 471-4775 or visit history.nebraska.gov.

About The Nebraska State Historical Society
The Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS) collects, preserves, and opens to all the histories we share.  In addition to the Nebraska History Museum in Lincoln and historic sites around the state, NSHS administers the State Archives and Library; the State Historic Preservation Office; the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center, Omaha; the Office of the State Archeologist; publishes *Nebraska History* magazine and *Nebraska History News*; and is responsible for the administration of the Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission. More at History.nebraska.gov or follow us on Facebook.

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