

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 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. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Rose Kirkwood Brothel
other names/site number Peoples City Mission/Mission Arts Building/LC13:C08-255

2. Location

street & number 124 South 9th Street
city or town Lincoln
state Nebraska code NE county Lancaster code 109 zip code 68508

<input type="checkbox"/>	not for publication
<input type="checkbox"/>	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

/s/ Michael J. Smith 07-03-12
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Director/SHPO, Nebraska State Historical Society
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

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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property (Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	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

none

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/Brothel

Domestic/Institutional Housing

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/Professional

Domestic/Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th & Early 20th Century American

Movements/Commercial Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: brick

walls: brick

roof: flat

other:

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Rose Kirkwood Brothel is a two-story brick structure, 40 feet wide by approximately 100 feet deep, located in downtown Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska. In 1903, the west (front) half of the existing brick building was constructed with a full basement. This building replaced an earlier wooden structure constructed in 1868. In July 1929, a brick addition was made on the east (rear) of the building, doubling its size. The principal, west façade is organized symmetrically into three bays with a center entrance. It displays, in truncated fashion, the base/shaft/cornice organization of a Commercial Style structure. The building occupies 40 feet of a 50-foot wide lot, providing a 10-foot access/passageway on the south side. The interior of the building retains little evidence of its original function as a brothel or its early conversion to and expansion as a "mission" or settlement house as walls have been moved and detailing lost. The exterior however, remains much as it appeared in early photographs, when it was in use as Peoples City Mission.

Narrative Description

The former Rose Kirkwood Brothel at 124 South 9th Street in downtown Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska was built in 1903 as a two-story, flat-roofed, brick brothel. The building replaced a two-story wooden house of prostitution, which had operated on the site since the 1870s. The building's west, principal façade stands at the property line, as do the adjacent buildings on the remainder of the block. To the north of the building is a 16-foot-wide alley, and on the south is a 10-foot-wide private passageway. Historically and currently, the passageway provides access to a side entrance, as well as allowing fenestration on the south façade.

While only a modest two stories in height, the three-bay façade is organized in the Commercial Style with a strong base, "shaft," and cornice. The visible portion of the basement/foundation is topped with a stringcourse and was faced with chipped face bricks; however, those bricks are now covered with stucco. Above the foundation, the west façade is pressed brick in a running bond pattern. The first story serves as the "base" of the composition, flanked with wide corner pilasters topped with corbelling. The central bay has a narrow center entrance set in a brickwork frame. Originally, the entrance was accessed by half-circular steps extending beyond the property line. During the Mission's tenure in the building, the entrance opening was lowered to sidewalk level and the stairs up to the first floor were relocated immediately inside the doorway.

Early photos show a semi-elliptical entrance, since modified to a rectangular enframement. The original first story sashes were lost in early remodeling; however, the original configuration was reinstated in the rehabilitation of the 1990s. Each side bay has Chicago Style windows on the first story consisting of wide center panes topped by transoms, which are flanked by narrow, double-hung side sash. The first floor windows are topped with a continuous band of shallow corbelling, emphasizing their width. The second story has a narrow center window with a non-historic wrought iron balcony; the side bays have paired double-hung windows, which are flanked with narrow piers. Corbelled brickwork expressed as dentils tops the second floor bays. The second floor is detailed as the visually lighter "shaft," characteristic of upper stories in Commercial Style buildings. Early photos show that the second story window configuration and a wooden balcony were key elements of the original design; these photos guided the 1990s rehabilitation effort. A bold, non-historic pressed metal cornice, installed in the 1990s rehabilitation, tops the main façade. The original cornice was more ornate but had a similar profile and scale.

The south façade is ten feet from the south property line, allowing for a private passageway to a side entrance. Formerly, the passageway had a wall and doorway at the sidewalk's edge; now, a wrought iron gateway provides a more transparent entrance, while establishing the private ownership of the passageway. Still visible on the south façade are the faint words "City Mission" painted across the top of the building. The north side of the mission is a secondary façade adjacent to a 16-foot-wide alley that allows for windows on both stories. The openings are topped with rowlock arches of three courses on the first story and two courses on the second. The south façade resembles the north in most characteristics—common brick, rowlock arched openings, and a clear demarcation between the west 1903 building and the east 1929 addition, which is created by differences in the brickwork and by a modestly higher roofline above the addition. The 1929 portion retains a south entrance near the junction of the two phases of construction, which remains the primary entrance to the building. The original portion had a similar entrance towards its east end, but it has since been partially in-filled with brick and replaced by a window. The older portion is constructed with a running bond, while the addition is of 7:1 common bond.

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The building's current public entrance is accessed via the south passageway, which opens to a lobby space. Studio entrances are located on the east side of the lobby. The building contains ten studio spaces. The west side contains a staircase, a small kitchenette, and a central hallway leading to galleries and studios in the west half of the building. The hallway ends at the steps of the west (front) entrance. Parallel to this hallway, and rising from west to east, is a second staircase to the upper story. This staircase and the double-loaded central hall of the west half of the building appear to be the original plan of the west half of the building, which was built as the brothel.

The second story is configured much like the first, with a double-loaded central hall flanked by studios on the west half, and an upper "lobby" near the center (at the top of the second staircase) that opens onto the entrances of two apartments, which divide the east half of the building. These apartments are located in what was listed as a "men's dormitory" on the 1929 plans. A one-story addition on the east end of the building provides a garage and carport on the ground level, and a deck on the second level. Little historic finish remains on the interior, with the exception of the heavily patched, and now refinished, wooden flooring. The basement provides storage space and reveals rubble limestone foundations on the older west portion, and concrete foundations on the 1929 (east) addition. The east portion also includes tiled spaces, which are the remains of former shower rooms. Also retained in the basement is a 5'x5' decorative, pressed metal ceiling above a dropped ceiling in the east entry hall, which, based on its decorative motifs, likely dates to Rose Kirkwood's brothel.

Peoples City Mission occupied the building for eight decades, and during its tenure, the west façade was painted white, the cornice and balcony were removed, and the original fenestration was in-filled with one-over-one sash. The renovation by the current owner in the 1990s replaced the windows (informed by the design configuration of the early Mission occupation) and reinstalled, in simplified fashion, missing features such as the balcony, cornice, and passageway gate. Additionally, the white paint was chemically removed from the brick. While the building has seen dramatic changes in use over its years of service, and has lost integrity of interior spaces, the exterior retains its essential integrity of location, overall design, and key features. It still communicates its original bold, even flagrant, construction as a substantial brick brothel. Its location, just around the corner from Government Square, emphasizes the corruption involved with its illicit nature and its subsequent "reformation" as a Christian service facility for poor and immigrant residents.

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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.)

Property is:

- ☒ 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.)

Social History

Period of Significance

1903-1930

Significant Dates

1903, 1910, 1929

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Edwin H. Burr / 1929 Addition

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1903 with the construction of the building. From 1903 to 1909, the building operated as a brothel. The property was then purchased by the founder of Peoples City Mission, which opened its doors to the public in 1910. In 1929, Peoples City Mission expanded the building to the east for additional rooms. Although the Peoples City Mission operated in this location until 1987, the period of significance ends in 1930, with the major rear addition, recognizing the creation and elimination of the brothel, rather than the continued religious purpose of the Mission.

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Criteria Considerations

Criteria Consideration A acknowledges that Peoples City Mission had a strong Christian emphasis; however, the building derives its historic significance from its original function as a brothel and its transition to the Peoples City Mission. This transformation, which involved serving the poor and immigrant residents, played an important role in the elimination of the red-light district of Lincoln.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Rose Kirkwood Brothel is significant on the local level under Criterion A in the area of Social History. The existence of a red-light district of Lincoln is one that is often ignored, with only minimal physical remnants remaining, this building being the key physical remnant. When the Peoples City Mission opened in 1910, Lincoln's most flagrant brothel transformed into a place of charity, sealing the demise of Lincoln's red-light district. As a brothel, the building embodies the illicit political and social values of the early 1900's, while as the Peoples City Mission, it symbolizes Lincoln's effort to promote social welfare by serving the poor and immigrant community. As one building serving both ends of the moral spectrum—vice and charity—the Rose Kirkwood Brothel building represents a key transformation in Lincoln's social history.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Prostitution in late 19th and early 20th Century America

Around the turn of the twentieth century, nearly every American city had a red-light district. A few such as New Orleans's Storyville, San Francisco's Barbary Coast, and New York's Tenderloin were nationally known. Even much smaller communities, such as Hudson, New York¹ and Deadwood, South Dakota² had their former red-light districts, which today are highlighted in tourist promotions.

Cities differed in regulating vice; some sought to remove it from their city, while others accepted it as inevitable. The segregation of prostitution into specific districts occurred because of economic advantages, health concerns, and legal reasons. This physical segregation was referred to as vice districting. Even the nation's capital contained these vice districts. During the Civil War, there were 500 registered brothels and over 5,000 prostitutes in Washington, D.C.³ One of the most famous houses was run by Mary Ann Hall and was located on the Mall near the U.S. Capitol Building. Red light districts varied in size and building types, depending on the city. Some, like Omaha, consisted of "cribs," which were one-room shacks with filthy living conditions.⁴ Others had more extravagant brothels in elegantly furnished two-story homes. The cities with slum-like districts were often more eager to regulate, and to avoid the negative appearance, would often remove the residents. Other businesses usually associated and located within the vice districts were saloons, dance halls, gambling dens, and opium joints. Combined with brothels, these establishments constituted the "necessary evils" of the vice districts.

Early Prostitution in Lincoln: Pervasive and Permissive

Documenting the scope and location of an illicit activity such as prostitution in the City of Lincoln is challenging, as typical sources such as city directories and deed records are largely silent about illicit activity. Census and Sanborn maps were more explicit and by correlating multiple sources, it is apparent Lincoln had an extensive late 19th and early 20th century red-light district. Furthermore, it can be documented that the building at 124 S. 9th was not only built as a brothel, and so used for several years, but the frame building occupying the site before 1903 was also used as a brothel. 124 S. 9th is a rare vestige of Lincoln's red light district.

Early Lincoln newspapers contain frequent references to "soiled doves" or "disorderly houses," sometimes with specific names or addresses. Most of these locations clustered on the southwest edge of the downtown district, from approximately 12th Street on the east to 7th Street on the west, mostly south of O Street, or in the vicinity of the railroad depot (7th & P Streets). Several of these articles of the 1890s referred to it as "the burnt district." It is unclear if one of Lincoln's many early fires may have prompted this name.

¹ Harold Faber, "Hudson Casts New Light on Its Red-Light Past," *New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com> (accessed 03/14/2012).

² Tim Velder, "Local author releases book about Deadwood's battles with prostitution," *Rapid City Journal* <http://blackhillstravelblog.com/a-tour-through-deadwoods-brothels/> (accessed 3/14/2012).

³ "Madam on the Mall" <http://www.si.edu/oahp/madam/index.html> (accessed 03/12/2012).

⁴ Josie Washburn, *The Underworld Sewer: a Prostitute Reflects on Life in the Trade, 1871-1909* (Nebraska: First Bison Books Printing, 1997), 88.

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The 1880 U.S. Census of Lincoln identified the occupation of only a few women as “prostitutes,” with one notable exception—Lydia Stewart and five other women occupying 124 South 9th Street. The 1891 Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlas of Lincoln identifies two small frame buildings on S. 6th Street between M and N Streets as “ill fame.” The two residents at these addresses are identified in the 1890 directory and can be traced through the city directories from the early 1880s to the late 1890s at many different addresses, all south of O St., between 6th and 11th Street. Furthermore, the 1891 atlas labels several buildings in the emerging industrial district between L and N Streets, 7th to 9th Streets, as “F.B.” or “female boarding” houses. Since they are not identified as “ill fame,” one might argue they were as listed—boarding houses for women. However, those addresses correspond to several of the dozen addresses listed in an 1890 newspaper article about “disreputable joints” in Lincoln—including Lydia Stewart’s (by name).⁵ The 1903 edition of the Sanborn identifies 15 houses in the same vicinity as “F.B.” and several more of those correlate with the 1890 list. The 1891 atlas can be regarded as the fullest contemporary mapping of likely brothels in Lincoln. Four other residences identified on the 1903 Sanborn as “D[wellings]” are known to have been brothels, based on directory addresses of identified madams. This includes Rose Kirkwood’s place at 124 S. 9th Street.

Much insight into prostitution in Lincoln has been gained from the memoir of Josie Washburn, a former Lincoln madam who left the world of vice in 1907. Washburn sought to explain why women entered into prostitution during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, pointing out that during this time, the number of single women living and working in cities increased dramatically. They were working long hours for little pay and would oftentimes become prostitutes to supplement their modest earnings. Many reasons forced them into illegitimate employment such as husbands leaving them, the need to support ill parents, or a tarnished reputation from men who misled them.

Much of Washburn’s account focuses on the exploitation of prostitutes by public officials. She described that for a monthly “fine” of \$14.70 to \$29.70 for a madam and \$5.70 to \$9.70 for prostitutes, they were allowed to operate. Washburn suggested that these fines were intended to go to a school fund, but instead were often simply bribes. Anyone unable to pay was jailed until someone paid for her. If public officials sought to make an example of them, or to get more money, they would sometimes pile all the ladies into a wagon and parade them through the streets. When pressured to cease this extortion, officials could fine madams for the unlicensed sale of alcohol and levy even larger fines. In Washburn’s frustrated view, brothels were “one of the most valuable institutions of modern times to put money into circulation, from which commerce is everywhere benefited”⁶.

A highly publicized political and legal conflict in early Lincoln arose from such corruption. Ordinances outlawing prostitution were passing in 1885; however, police judge Alfred Parsons of Lincoln accepted fines to ignore the ordinances. On May 15, 1887, Lydia Stewart, Molly Hall, Rose Howard, thirteen of their girls, and four male patrons were arrested. To get back at the judge for not protecting them, they hired an accountant to prove his guilt in pocketing the money, which amounted to \$329. The charges were brought to the City Council in August, and while they found the charges to be true, Parsons claimed first that he misunderstood the law and then challenged the council’s authority to remove him from his position. Andrew J. Sawyer, mayor at the time of the incident, later wrote that “this wanton disregard of duty, this shameless violation of law, this private barter and sale of justice to the gamblers, pimps, and prostitutes of Lincoln were enough to arouse the righteous indignation of every citizen possessing the slightest regard for law, order or decency.”⁷ On August 15, 1887, the City Council passed an ordinance giving them authority to remove Parsons; however, Parsons appealed to the US Circuit Court in St. Louis. Despite the judge’s ruling in Parsons’ favor, the City Council proceeded to remove him. Through a lengthy court battle, and incarceration of Sawyer and the entire City Council (in an Omaha hotel), the courts found in favor of the City Council and Judge Parsons was officially removed. However, this did not end the corruption in government nor the illegal taking of fees.

The “Lydia Stewart”/Rose Kirkwood Brothel

Lydia Stewart was likely the most conspicuous operator of a house of prostitution in early Lincoln, as indicated by the 1880 census and her obituary of 1893. Deed records indicate one Mary E. Wallace acquired Lot 13 of Block 54 in 1873. The lot was originally occupied as a residence for L.A. Scoggin and was one of the first thirteen homes to be constructed in Lincoln. It appears on a map depicting Lincoln in 1868, created by members of the Old Settlers Association. Lydia Stewart, not Mary Wallace, was listed in city directories of the 1880s at 124 S. 9th, without an identified occupation. In the

⁴ *The McCook Tribune*, 10-31-1890, “Joints in Days of High License.” <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn94056415/1890-10-31/ed-1/seq-10.pdf>, (accessed 3/16/2012).

⁶ Josie Washburn, *The Underworld Sewer: a Prostitute Reflects on Life in the Trade, 1871-1909* (Nebraska: First Bison Books Printing, 1997), 330.

⁷ A. J. Sawyer, in Sawyer (ed.), *Lincoln the Capital City and Lancaster County: The Incarceration of the Lincoln City Council* (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co.: 1916), 274-293.

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Omaha Daily Bee, an article mentions W.E. Pfenning's attempt to shoot one of Lydia's ladies, Frankie Moore, at the house.⁸ The article goes on to say Pfenning was later arrested and jailed. At the time of her death in August 1893, newspaper articles clearly stated that the madam Lydia Stewart was Mary Wallace, with an estate estimated to be worth \$20,000 to \$30,000.⁹ Her obituary mentions Stewart/Wallace's adoption of Margaret Klotz who was orphaned as a small child. Lydia sent Margaret to live with neighbors and kept her own profession a secret. She later sent Margaret to a Catholic convent in the east to be educated. Reportedly, Margaret did not learn of her mother's livelihood until her marriage in June 1889. Lydia/Mary's estate originally was willed to her sister Annie G. Bailey, but her daughter Margaret contested the will and won.¹⁰ There is no evidence that Margaret operated the house as a brothel or lived in Lincoln during her few years of ownership in the 1890s.

The house was eventually sold to Rose Dillon in 1899, and the 1900 census lists "Rose Kirkwood," occupation "Lady," and seven other "Ladies" occupying the house. Another household listing in that census by the same enumerator referred even more explicitly to the head of the household as "Madam of Sport" and several residents as "Lady of Sport," strongly suggesting that the "Lady" occupants of 124 S. 9th Street were still operating it as one of several brothels in Lincoln.¹¹ In 1903, Rose Kirkwood replaced the old wooden house with the larger two-story brick structure, which is the original section of the extant building. Rose Kirkwood was likely Rose Dillon, as deeds show Dillon's ownership continued until 1909. The use as a brothel continued until at least 1908, as a *Valentine*, Nebraska newspaper reported that a state official was arrested at Rose Kirkwood's brothel in 1908.¹²

Solving the Problem of Prostitution

Communities in late 19th century America took three common approaches to prostitution: extinguishment, acceptance, or containment. Laws and ordinances against the operation of disorderly houses (brothels, saloons, dance halls, etc.) have been around since the early nineteenth century, but with some frequency were challenged in state supreme courts. The basis of many arguments focused on the legitimacy of the police power and who is allowed to use it when convicting a person of vagrancy. States often granted power to the cities to pass ordinances that suppressed bawdy and assignation houses. Christopher G. Tiedeman, in his "Treatise on the Limitations of the Police Power," argued that the law could not make vice a crime unless it trespassed on the rights of the public. He did advocate that bawdy houses should be regulated by the police power, because it made a trade out of vice. Thomas M. Cooley in his "Constitutional Limitations" agreed, noting that "states could prohibit the keeping of gaming houses, the sale of immoral books, and the keeping of houses of prostitution and the resort thereto" and that because these places had a "tendency which is injurious and demoralizing"¹³ they had grounds to prosecute them.¹⁴ Most of the cases that challenged the use of the police power were decided in favor of the city. Prostitutes were not considered reliable witnesses, and any credible citizen would not admit to entering a house of ill-repute in fear of ruining their character.

Perhaps more often than enforcing such legal aspects, Lincoln officials used the laws to extort money from the women by allowing them to continue their trade. An 1885 ordinance outlawed prostitution in Lincoln; however, it was rarely enforced. This lack of enforcement by local police and prosecutors of state statutes harmed the reformers' goals of wiping out prostitution completely. Lincoln's Revised Statute Chapter 14-101 (1921) focusing on the concept of vagrants to clean the streets was created "to prohibit, restrain, and suppress tippling shops, houses of prostitution, opium joints, gambling houses..."

During Josie Washburn's time in Lincoln the number of "houses" ranged from six to twelve and varied by type. Washburn notes, "They were not of the extremely fashionable kind with costly furniture, nor of the lowest grade such as you will find in larger cities."¹⁵ Lydia's house lacked a servant, which was common among the brothels in Lincoln, and probably put

⁸ *Omaha Daily Bee*, 08-11-1893, p.5. "Lincoln in Brief." Omaha, NE.

⁹ The 1870 U.S. Census roster for Clay County, Illinois, includes a Mary Wallace, age 23, in the household of William Stewart, an attorney, and his family. This Mary Wallace is the same age as Mary Wallace, a.k.a. Lydia Stewart, of Lincoln, perhaps explain the source of the Lincoln madam's pseudonym.

¹⁰ *The Evening News*, 08-09-1893, "Lydia Stewart Dead." Lincoln, NE; *The Evening News*, 08-10-1893, "Lydia's Will." Lincoln, NE; *The Evening News*, 10-13-1893, "Broke the Will." Lincoln, NE.

¹¹ Both of these brothels included a female African American servant in the household, which suggested a level of prosperity beyond that of Lydia Stewart in 1880.

¹² *The Valentine Democrat*, 08-06-1908, "Sensation at Lincoln: State Auditor Searle is Arrested in a Red Light Resort." Valentine, Nebraska.

¹³ Thomas C. Mackey, *Red Lights Out: A Legal History of Prostitution, Disorderly Houses, and Vice Districts, 1870-1917* (Texas: Rice University Press, 1984), 46.

¹⁴ Thomas C. Mackey, *Red Lights Out: A Legal History of Prostitution, Disorderly Houses, and Vice Districts, 1870-1917* (Texas: Rice University Press, 1984), 146.

¹⁵ Josie Washburn, *The Underworld Sewer: a Prostitute Reflects on Life in the Trade, 1871-1909* (Nebraska: First Bison Books Printing, 1997), 28.

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her operation in the middle range. Not much is known about Lydia's successor Rose Dillon, as she was not found in the Census. According to Washburn, sometimes "a patron falls desperately in love with one of our girls and insists upon an immediate marriage."¹⁶ It is known that when Rose Dillon (or Rose Kirkwood) sold her property in 1909, she identified herself as Mrs. Grace M. Sterns, wife of Jacob M. Sterns. Whatever her changes of fortune, broader changes were occurring in Lincoln that would extinguish the notorious brothel at 124 S. 9th Street.

Peoples City Mission

During the early 20th century, in the area south of O Street and west of 9th Street, where so many of the "female boarding houses" were identified in 1903, increased investment and major construction was occurring. Establishments such as the Beatrice Creamery Company, which bought much of the block bounded by L, M, 7th and 8th Streets in 1909 and began major industrial construction, changed the economics and character of the former "burnt district."¹⁷ None of the former brothel locations in that area are documented as operating beyond 1910.

There was also another influence moving into the red-light area at this time: The Peoples City Mission. Reverend W.B. Howard, and other pastors and lay members of various churches, sought to bring the church to the fallen women, knowing that they were not going to seek the church. Josie Washburn solidifies this view as she mentions, "women have absolutely no friends outside of their own world," and are faced with too much criticism to leave their profession to seek reform.¹⁸ "These righteous souls [church members] set their sights on what was considered one of the most notorious of the houses of prostitution, Lydia's."¹⁹ By 1907, the group had raised enough money to purchase the building, and officially obtained the lots by March 1910. The building was "renovated and dedicated to the service of the Lord."²⁰ At the time of opening, the staff, consisting mainly of volunteers, was put to work providing temporary shelter and food to men, as well as providing religious services. Later, space would be allotted as shelter for women and children. At the time they opened their doors, the mission saw an influx of German-Russian immigrants. Many of the children attended the Mission Sunday School where they were taught to read and speak English. Classes were taught in both German and English with about 40 pupils in attendance each week.²¹ "What had been a beer garden at Lydia's became a playground for children."²²

As Lincoln opened its mission in the red-light district, some cities were having a more difficult time opening similar operations. The 1910 case of the City of San Antonio et al v. Salvation Army involved a city ordinance passed to prevent the Salvation Army from building next to a popular city park. The home would be a "rescue for fallen women;" however, the city felt they should not provide a gathering place for vagrants. The Texas Court of Civil Appeals found that if the vagrants were seeking help and reformation, they were no longer able to be considered as such, and "to prevent the building of such a refuge was preposterous, distasteful, and an unnecessary limitation." The ordinance was struck down and the Salvation Army built its structure.²³ The Peoples City Mission may have had a stronger welcome from the City of Lincoln because its location was on the edge of the business district and away from areas of residence.

The period from 1890 to the outbreak of World War II is commonly considered the Progressive Era, with the advent of the Purity Crusades to end vice districts and restore moral principles. The Temperance Movement was also strong among Lincoln residents, and in 1909, the Temperance forces won the election by a majority and saloons were abolished. This election coincided with the movement of the anti-prostitution crusade onto a national stage. Settlement workers realized that economic concerns were the main factor pushing women into the trade. Therefore, they fought to secure better working conditions and minimum wages to entice the women out of their illegitimate businesses. The settlement workers were also launching a much larger attack on the other businesses that catered to the clients of these brothels, such as saloons and dance halls. Many cities were beginning to adopt Red Light Abatement acts in the early twentieth century, which gave "to the individual citizens in any community the right to prevent by injunction the continued operation of houses of lewdness, assignation, and prostitution as nuisances without having to prove such individual citizens suffered

¹⁶ Josie Washburn, *The Underworld Sewer: a Prostitute Reflects on Life in the Trade, 1871-1909* (Nebraska: First Bison Books Printing, 1997), 208.

¹⁷ "The Meadow Gold Block" National Register Nomination, 2011, Lincoln Planning Dept., Ed Zimmer.

¹⁸ Josie Washburn, *The Underworld Sewer: a Prostitute Reflects on Life in the Trade, 1871-1909* (Nebraska: First Bison Books Printing, 1997), 261.

¹⁹ Arthur Lindsay, *It Takes a Home: Commemorating 90 Years of Service by Peoples Mission* (Nebraska: Cross Training Publishing: 1997), 63.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Arthur Lindsay, *It Takes a Home: Commemorating 90 Years of Service by Peoples Mission* (Nebraska: Cross Training Publishing: 1997), 64.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Thomas C. Mackey, *Red Lights Out: A Legal History of Prostitution, Disorderly Houses, and Vice Districts, 1870-1917* (Texas :Rice University Press, 1984).

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special damages different from those suffered by them in common with the public.”²⁴ These Red Light Abatement Acts, along with “organized pressure group lobbying state legislatures and influencing public opinion, and the war all led to the close of the vice districts and removal of clusters of bawdy houses from the urban American Scene.”²⁵ The turn of the century idea of separating the red-light districts was replaced with the need to dismantle all vice in the city. “According to some accounts of Lincoln history, all of Lincoln’s prostitution houses were closed in May 1907 when County Attorney Frank Tyrell finally enforced the city’s law against these businesses.”²⁶

The Peoples City Mission was closely tied to the Settlement Movement, as they sought to locate among the poor, become their neighbors, and share in their concerns. It was the idea of settlement house workers to have daily contact with their neighbors and work cooperatively with the poor to bring about social change. The settlement workers were creating a new kind of “social welfare based on specially trained professionals with the skills and knowledge to offer effective social services in a technocratic society.”²⁷ The Charity Organization Society (COS) was created to help women adjust to a life outside of prostitution. They “believed that people were moving from a known to an unknown culture and needed assistance adjusting to their new environment.”²⁸ This type of help was outlined in Josie Washburn’s book as necessary for the girls seeking reformation but lacking from the women in high society.

During the 1890s, settlement workers were forging links between religion and social reform that were similar to the goals of the Mission. The economic depression of 1893 hit Chicago hard and allowed for the widespread tolerance of vice. The Civic Federation of Chicago, established in 1894, concentrated its efforts on conducting a campaign for good government. This included an investigation on prostitution and saloons in the city. Approximately a decade later in New York, Belle Linder Moskowitz, a social reformer and political activist, formed the Committee on Amusement and Vacation Resources of Working Girls, which investigated East Side dance halls. Her study revealed the encouragement of gambling, drinking, and prostitution, which resulted in a 1911 law requiring state licensing of all dance halls. She also investigated the conditions in tenement housing when she served on the New York City Tenement House Commission, organized December 1900, which showed growing problems of prostitution in crowded residential neighborhoods. During prohibition, settlement residents were involved in a variety of moral crusades, “believing that the saloon and its associated vices such as drunkenness, prostitution, and political corruption, destroyed family life....” The Committee of Fourteen, existing from 1905 to 1930, was a highly influential anti-vice association that supported vice districting from the start. They also reached the conclusion that “laws are an inadequate instrument for social control.”²⁹ Contrasting the vice districting view, the Chicago Vice Commission deemed vice districts to be negative and the annihilation of the vice to be the solution. The districts were geographically containing; however, culturally they were unable to halt the traffic in and out of the district that kept it running. While these committees were being created and served to correct vice in the cities, the “anti-prostitution crusade moved on to the national stage in 1909,” which was about the time the Peoples City Mission formed and moved into Lincoln’s red-light district to fight social issues.

With the strong connection between saloons and brothels, Lincoln’s temperance movement, most likely backed by the Peoples City Mission, played a significant role in the demise of the houses of ill repute. The saloon, like the brothel, was viewed as an evil institution that undermined traditional family values. Lincoln was divided on the issue of prohibition, and in 1902, the supporters were able to get Lincoln city officials to pass a progressive excise tax for Lincoln saloons. The excise tax implemented a license fee that was gradually increased to \$1500 per saloon. This high license fee was designed to reduce the number of saloons. They also limited the hours of operation from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and restricted the location of saloons.³⁰ With brothels relying heavily on their sale of alcohol, this new tax would severely hurt their operation. To further the problem, in 1909, the same year the brothel was sold, the citizens of Lincoln voted for a resolution of prohibition by a narrow margin of 51 percent, as mentioned earlier. It was not until 1911 that the city voted to end prohibition; however, strict licensing was again enforced. By this time, however, brothels had been phased out of existence in Lincoln.

²⁴ Thomas C. Mackey, *Red Lights Out: A Legal History of Prostitution, Disorderly Houses, and Vice Districts, 1870-1917* (Texas: Rice University Press, 1984), 88.

²⁵ Thomas C. Mackey, *Red Lights Out: A Legal History of Prostitution, Disorderly Houses, and Vice Districts, 1870-1917* (Texas: Rice University Press, 1984), 91-92.

²⁶ Mark A. Griep, *124 South 9th Street Through the Decades: Sporting, Savings Souls, and Making Culture* (Nebraska: 1998), 8.

²⁷ Mina Carson, *Settlement Folk* (Illinois: University of Chicago Press: 1990), 8.

²⁸ Domenica M. Barbuto, *American Settlement Houses and Progressive Social Reform* (Arizona: The Oryx Press: 1999), vii.

²⁹ Mara L. Keire, *For Business and Pleasure: Red-Light Districts and the Regulation of Vice in the United States, 1890-1933* (Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press: 2010), 17.

³⁰ Nebraska Studies, “*Nebraska Prohibits Alcohol*”

http://www.nebraskastudies.org/0700/frameset_reset.html?http://www.nebraskastudies.org/0700/stories/0701_0122.html (accessed 03/15/2014).

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In 1922, the Lincoln Community Chest (predecessor to the United Way) was organized adding Peoples City Mission as a charter member. Eight percent of the mission's budget came from the United Way. In 1928, as a result of the Great Depression, services were expanded at the Peoples City Mission. There were few government programs in place to deal with the crisis; therefore, many people sought food and shelter from the Mission. The Mission soon became the primary provider for emergency assistance to the city and helped thousands of individuals through the Depression. In response to this influx of residents in need, and under the guidance of the new Reverend T.J. Hinkin, the Mission expanded its building in 1929. The \$14,400 two-story addition was located on the back of the lot and doubled the size of the building. The Mission continued to serve the Lincoln community from 124 S. 9th until a move in 1987 relocated them to 110 Q Street.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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Mackey, Thomas C. *Red Lights Out: A Legal History of Prostitution, Disorderly Houses, and Vice Districts, 1870-1917*. Rice University, 1984.

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Carson, Mina. *Settlement Folk*. The University of Chicago Press: 1990.

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Archives

City of Lincoln Building Permits, 1904-, Lincoln Building and Safety Department

Lancaster County Register of Deeds

Periodicals and Newspapers

The McCook Tribune, 10-31-1890, "Joins in Days of High License." Image 10 provided by University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries, Lincoln, NE.

Omaha Daily Bee, 08-11-1893, p.5. "Lincoln in Brief." Omaha, NE.

The Evening News, 08-09-1893, "Lydia Stewart Dead." Lincoln, NE.

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The Evening News, 08-10-1893, "Lydia's Will." Lincoln, NE.

The Evening News, 10-13-1893, "Broke the Will." Lincoln, NE.

Sunday State Journal, 01-01-1911, "The City Mission." Lincoln, NE.

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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): LC13:C08-255

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .15 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	14	693295	4520521	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

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

All of Lots 13 and 14, Block 54, Original Plat, Lincoln, Lancaster County, NE.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries include all of the property historically associated with 124 South 9th Street, Lincoln, NE.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stephanie Brady, Intern; Ed Zimmer (Editor), Historic Preservation Planner

organization Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Dept. date 03/15/2012

street & number 555 South 10th Street telephone 402-441-6360

city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68508

e-mail stephaniebrady@gmail.com; ezimmer@lincoln.ne.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.

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- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Rose Kirkwood Brothel
City or Vicinity: Lincoln
County: Lancaster State: Nebraska
Photographer: Stephanie Brady
Date Photographed: February and March, 2012
Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo #1 of 7 (NE_LancasterCounty_RoseKirkwoodBrothel_01)
Axonometric looking southeast

Photo #2 of 7 (NE_LancasterCounty_RoseKirkwoodBrothel_02)
West Façade

Photo #3 of 7 (NE_LancasterCounty_RoseKirkwoodBrothel_03)
Detail of South Façade with "City Mission" sign remnant

Photo #4 of 7 (NE_LancasterCounty_RoseKirkwoodBrothel_04)
South passageway

Photo #5 of 7 (NE_LancasterCounty_RoseKirkwoodBrothel_05)
Detail of recovered ceiling tin from entryway, 124 S. 9th St., Lincoln

Photo #6 of 7 (NE_LancasterCounty_RoseKirkwoodBrothel_06)
second floor, looking west

Photo #7 of 7 (NE_LancasterCounty_RoseKirkwoodBrothel_07)
First floor corridor, looking west

Property Owner: (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Judith Andre
street & number 124 South 9th Street telephone 402-477-2822
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68508

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 18 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.

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Photo 1 of 7
Axonometric looking southeast



Rose Kirkwood Brothel
Name of Property

Lancaster County, NE
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Photo 2 of 7
West Façade



Rose Kirkwood Brothel
Name of Property

Lancaster County, NE
County and State

Photo 3 of 7
Detail of South Façade with "City Mission" sign remnant



Rose Kirkwood Brothel
Name of Property

Lancaster County, NE
County and State



Photo 4 of 7
South passageway

Rose Kirkwood Brothel

Name of Property

Lancaster County, NE

County and State

Photo 5 of 7

Detail of recovered ceiling tin from entryway, 124 S. 9th St., Lincoln



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Photo 6 of 7, second floor, looking west



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Photo 7 of 7
First floor corridor, looking west

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Name of Property

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Supplemental Image 1: Peoples City Mission 1916, Townsend Studio

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Supplemental image 2: Peoples City Mission clients, 1915, Townsend Studio.