



NEWS RELEASE

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REAL PEOPLE. REAL STORIES.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HISTORIC SITES BOARD OF REVIEW ANNOUNCES NOMINATIONS

Includes Nine National Register Nominations and One Kansas Register Addition

TOPEKA, KS— At its regular quarterly meeting held at the Kansas Historical Society in Topeka, the Historic Sites Board of Review voted to list one property in the Register of Historic Kansas Places and to forward nine nominations to the office of the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places in Washington, D.C., to be evaluated by their professional staff. If they concur with the board's findings, the properties will be included in the National Register. The board also approved the removal of one property from the National Register and two properties from the State Register.

The National Register of Historic Places is the country's official list of historically significant properties. Properties must be significant for one or more of the four criteria for evaluation. Properties can be eligible if they are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. They can be eligible if they are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. Distinctive construction can qualify properties for the National Register if they embody the characteristic of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. Lastly, properties may be eligible for the National Register if they have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history. The National Register recognizes properties of local, statewide, and national significance.

Below are summaries of the nominated properties:

NOMINATIONS - NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Fort Scott Downtown Historic District – Fort Scott, Bourbon County

Fort Scott was established in 1842 as a military post on the western frontier to prevent European American settlers from moving into the country west of the Missouri border that was reserved for American Indians. The U.S. Army abandoned Fort Scott in 1853 because the area was to be opened for settlement. A community established around the abandoned post and eventually became the Bourbon County seat of government. Construction of permanent stone and brick buildings in the downtown began in the early 1860s and picked up after the close of the Civil War in 1865. The first railroad line – the Missouri River Fort Scott, and Gulf – pushed through the area in December 1869 bringing more people and goods to Fort Scott. The town's fastest period of growth occurred from 1865

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to 1888, and by June 1887, Fort Scott had become the fourth largest town in Kansas, with a population of approximately 14,000 people. The downtown historic district includes nine-and-a-half blocks of the central commercial district that developed from 1863 until 1970 when urban renewal efforts demolished a number of commercial buildings to the north and east. The historic district boundaries are based on previous historic preservation survey and recommendations by the staff of the Kansas Historic Preservation Office. The district was nominated for its local commercial history, its association with the planning and development of Fort Scott, and for its representation of popular architectural styles.

Helmerts Manufacturing Company Building – 300 Santa Fe Street / 2500 S 2nd Street, Leavenworth, Leavenworth County

The Helmerts Manufacturing Company Building was built in 1909 to accommodate an expanding furniture manufacturing business. What began as a small manufacturer of barber chairs that operated out of two downtown storefronts in the late 1880s, expanded into a regional furniture company with larger facilities in Leavenworth and Kansas City. Like many industrial buildings of this vintage, the Helmerts building has a very plain, utilitarian design with load-bearing brick walls and heavy timber framing. Features that reflect evolving industrial building technology include steel lintels that provide the structural capacity for grouped windows and modern mechanical systems – most notably light, heat, and fire safety – that improved working conditions and building safety. The company operated out of this building until 1940. The property was nominated as a good example of an early 20th century manufacturing facility constructed at the juncture of traditional and modern building technologies.

Garfield Elementary School – 300 NW 7th, Abilene, Dickinson County

Designed by Kansas City-based architect Joseph W. Radotinsky, Abilene's Garfield Elementary School was built in 1942 with the assistance of the federal Work Projects Administration. Radotinsky's designs of the 1930s and 1940s were notable, breaking from the Progressive Era tenets that had defined educational architecture for the first three decades of the 20th century. A review of school board minutes and local media coverage of the school's planning and construction clearly portrays an emphasis on modern accoutrements, an attention to functional aspects of the school's use, consideration of maintenance and performance of materials, and planning for future expansion. With its blond brick and concrete construction, horizontal lines and bands of windows, stepped bays, and simple form, it is an excellent example of Modern and Art Moderne architecture. It was nominated as part of the *Historic Public Schools of Kansas* and the *New Deal-Era Resources of Kansas* multiple property nominations for its association with local educational history and its architecture.

Old Gray County Courthouse – 117 S Main Street, Cimarron, Gray County

This two-story brick commercial building in downtown Cimarron was at the center of a heated county seat dispute in 1889. When Gray County was established in 1887, Cimarron was designated the temporary county seat. Nearby Ingalls also sought permanent county seat status and in an election on October 31, 1887, both towns claimed victory. Accusations of buying votes and ballot-box stuffing were slung back and forth. The Kansas Supreme Court eventually declared Cimarron the winner. The building that would serve as Gray County's first courthouse was one of only a few permanent masonry buildings in Cimarron at the time. The county leased the building in January of 1888. One year later, a group of men from Ingalls raided the courthouse and stole the county records leaving three men dead in the bloody gunfight. Despite this setback, the county continued to operate in Cimarron. The present courthouse, which dates to 1927, is located two blocks south of this

building. The Old Gray County Courthouse was nominated for its association with the history of early Cimarron history and its role in the 1889 Gray County Seat War.

Penley House – 3400 Penley Drive, Wichita, Sedgwick County

The Penley House was built in 1917 on a 20-acre tract at the east edge of Wichita. Its long driveway was lined with trees and stretched west toward Hillside Street. The Classical Revival-style house is dominated by a two-story Greek temple portico supported by four colossal Ionic columns that extend over the galleried porch on the front elevation. The property was subdivided in 1941 for residential development in response to the city's World War II-era housing shortage. Today, the house sits on just one-half acre and small mid-century Minimal Traditional-style residences now flank what was the long driveway. It was nominated as part of the *Residential Resources of Wichita – 1870-1957* multiple property nomination for its Classical Revival architecture.

Wichita High School – 324 N Emporia, Wichita, Sedgwick County

Wichita High School was designed by architect William B. Ittner and erected in 1910-1911 in the Collegiate Gothic style. Based in St. Louis, Ittner designed public school buildings throughout the Midwest, including Liberty Memorial High School and Woodlawn Elementary School in Lawrence. The Wichita High School building is three stories and features a brick exterior with stone quoins at the building's corners. Two slightly projecting crenellated towers flank the central entrance. Above the entrance on the corbels beneath the second-story windows are sculpted figures representing educational themes. The building no longer functions as a school, and current plans call for it to be rehabilitated into apartments. It was nominated as part of the Historic Public Schools of Kansas multiple property listing for its architectural significance.

Wathena Fruit Growers' Association Building – 104 3rd Street, Wathena, Doniphan County

The Wathena Fruit Growers' Association Building was built in 1909 in downtown Wathena. The building is located near the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific and the St. Joseph and Grand Island railroad lines that allowed farmers to ship their produce to markets west, northwest, and southwest of Wathena. The two-story Commercial-style building served as a central meeting place for the fruit growers who worked for a consistent and fair market in which to sell their produce. The association owned the building until 1945 when it was sold to the Farmers' State Bank. The building was nominated for its association with local commerce, the fruit industry in Doniphan County, and as a good local example of early 20th century Commercial-style architecture.

Cuba Blacksmith Shop – one-half block west of Baird Street on Lynn Street, Cuba, Republic County

Built in 1884, the Cuba Blacksmith Shop is a small, one-story limestone building that sits a half block west of the downtown. Blacksmith shops like the one in Cuba provided important services to developing farming communities that included constructing, repairing, and maintaining general farm machinery, as well as making special tools and machines for farmers and residents. Blacksmiths also provided such valuable services as shoeing horses and repairing household utensils, sharpening knives, fixing pots and pans, and sewing machines. This building functioned as a blacksmith shop into the 1970s and then fell into disrepair in the late 20th century. In recent years, the roof and rear wall had collapsed and the stone walls were beginning to fail. A group of community volunteers came together in 2006 to save the building. In December 2008, the building reopened as a functioning blacksmith shop. Today, the building is owned by the City of Cuba and is planned to be open for demonstrations about four times a year.

G. W. Norris House – 301 E 12th Avenue, Hutchinson, Reno County

The Norris House was built in 1912 and is a well-preserved example of the classic foursquare house with Craftsman characteristics. The foursquare, which was popularized through mail order catalogs during the early 20th century, features two stories set on a raised basement with the main entrance approached by raised steps and topped by a low pitch pyramidal or gable roof. The Norris House is located just south of the Kansas State Fairgrounds, and was one of the first single-family homes built in this neighborhood, which largely developed between 1906 and 1928. The property is named for its longtime owner G. W. Norris, whose son Fred has been locally memorialized for his military service and death during World War I. The Norris House was nominated as a good local example of a foursquare house with Craftsman details.

NOMINATIONS - REGISTER OF HISTORIC KANSAS PLACES

St. Joseph's Catholic Church & Cemetery – 13497 Lower McDowell Creek Road, Geary County

St. Joseph's Catholic Church and Cemetery are located in the McDowell Creek Valley in Geary County. The picturesque valley, which was first settled by Euro-Americans in the mid-1850s, includes several mid- and late-19th century farmsteads. Area Catholic parishes, including the former St. Joseph parish, trace their roots to Father Louis Dumortier, who served what is now northeast Kansas from 1859 to 1867. A church was built and a cemetery established on this property in 1870. The existing limestone Gothic Revival-style church was built in 1910 to replace the earlier building. The church closed in 1989 and was sold to the Geary County Historical Society in 2008. The property was nominated for its Gothic Revival architecture.

APPROVED FOR REMOVAL – NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Shedd & Marshall Store – 243 Whiting, Whiting, Jackson County

The Shedd and Marshall Store was listed in the National Register in 1977 for its architectural significance and for its association with locally significant businessmen Charles Shedd and William Marshall. Despite efforts to seek alternatives to demolition, the building was deconstructed in late 2008 and early 2009. An architectural salvage firm retained most of the building material.

APPROVED FOR REMOVAL - REGISTER OF HISTORIC KANSAS PLACES

Nelson Building – 106-108 E Wall Street, Fort Scott, Bourbon County

Miller Block – 1-5 S Main Street, Fort Scott, Bourbon County

The Nelson Building and Miller Block were listed in the Register of Historic Kansas Places May 21, 2005, for their association with local commercial history. The buildings sustained heavy fire damage in March 2005 and were quickly listed in the state register in an attempt to secure historic rehabilitation funding. The buildings, however, could not be saved and were torn down.

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