

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register
Listed
January 11, 2017**

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 Arvon Township Hall
 Other names/site number KHRI #139-359
 Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

2. Location

Street & number <u>0000 W 9th St.</u>		not for publication
City or town <u>Lebo (Arvon Township)</u>	X	vicinity
State <u>Kansas</u> Code <u>KS</u> County <u>Osage</u>	Code <u>139</u>	Zip code <u>66856</u>

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

See file.
 Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO Date _____

Kansas 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:

<u> </u> entered in the National Register	<u> </u> determined eligible for the National Register
<u> </u> determined not eligible for the National Register	<u> </u> removed from the National Register
<u> </u> 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.)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

SOCIAL/Civic

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Vernacular Wood-framed Cross-Gabled

Township Hall

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Limestone; Concrete

walls: Wood

roof: Asphalt

other: Brick (chimney)

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Narrative Description

Summary

Arvonía Township Hall (1916) is located in the unincorporated village of Arvonía, Kansas, which is located approximately four miles north of Lebo, immediately southwest of Melvern Lake (completed 1975) in the southwest corner of Osage County. The west-facing building sits on the northeast corner of Arvonía Road and West 324th Street, an abandoned street. To the north is a stately home with farm-related outbuildings. To the east is a metal building owned by the Arvonía Township. Other nearby buildings include the Calvinistic Methodist Church and Arvonía School, both individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Arvonía Township Hall is a wood-framed, one-story, cross-gabled L-shaped building with a southwest-facing gabled entrance. The building's principal exterior material is wood clapboard. The foundation is rusticated limestone block and concrete. The roof is asphalt shingles. A small lean-to addition was added to the east elevation either at the time of the building's original construction or early in the building's history. In more recent decades, the ceiling in the main meeting room was lowered. Otherwise, the building has changed little since the time of its construction, retaining its historic floorplan and roofline, exterior clapboard, corner boards, original windows, hardwood floors, doors, trim, and furnishings. The building's appearance clearly interprets its long-held role in community and civic life in rural Osage County.

Elaboration

Exterior

Main Entrance (Southeast) – The main entrance of the building faces southwest, accessible by a concrete landing that stretches between the building's south and west-projecting gables. On each side of the landing is a cast-iron boot scraper. The entry bay has a gabled roof with simple wood verge board. A pendant sconce barn-type light fixture projects from the center gable to light the entry opening, which houses two six-panel wood doors topped by a three-light transom. Above the transom is a pediment-shaped board that divides the entrance-bay wall and gable. On the south wall of the west-projecting bay, just south of the entrance bay is a 1/1 double-hung window. The opposite wall, the west wall of the south-projecting bay, has no window.

South Gable End – The south elevation of the north/south gable features two pairs of 1/1 double-hung windows with simple trim, topped by a pediment-shaped board that divides the painted clapboard wall and gable. The gable is capped by a simple wood verge board. A smooth red hard-fired brick chimney pierces the peak of the gable just north of the south gable.

East Elevation – Along the east elevation the rafter tails are exposed. Here, the stark clapboard walls are interrupted by an east-projecting 8' X 10' lean-to addition with sloped standing seam metal roof and exposed rafter tails. In the center of the east elevation of the lean-to is a two-lite fixed-in-place wood window. The lean-to's south elevation has a five-panel door, accessible via two concrete steps. Although the lean-to sits on a reinforced concrete foundation rather than a limestone foundation, primary-document research and physical evidence suggests that the lean-to may have been part of the original construction. When the *Lebo Star* announced the winning bid for the building's construction, it stated that the design included a 5' X 7' cloak room. The lean-to's materials and appearance are consistent with the building's original construction period. Two pairs of 1/1 double-hung wood windows on the east wall of the main building flank the lean-to.

North Elevation – The north elevation is distinguished by two principal features, the north gable end of the north/south gable, and a lean-to bay that projects from the east-west gable end. The north gable end, on the east end of the north elevation, is similar to the south gable end, with on pair of 1/1 double-hung wood windows topped by a pediment shaped board that divides the clapboard wall and gable, which is topped by a simple verge board. Like the lean-to bay on the east elevation, the lean-to on the west end of the north elevation features exposed rafter tails. Unlike its counterpart, however, this lean-to's roof is integrated into the roofline of the east/west gable. There is a pair of 1/1 double-hung windows east of center on the north elevation of the lean-to. The west wall of the lean-to falls on the same plane as the west gable end.

West Elevation – The west elevation is separated into two parts, the west elevation of the north-projecting lean-to on the north, and the west end of the east/west gable. Although the wall planes and clapboard of these two elements align, they are divided by a piece of vertical wood trim. There are no wall penetrations on the west elevation of the north-projecting lean-to. Three openings – a man door and two single 1/1 wood windows – pierce the west gable end. As elsewhere, the windows are topped by a pediment-shaped board that stretches across the width of the gable end. The gable is topped with a simple verge board.

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Other – Among the other exterior materials are a series of historic lightning rods that run along the ridgelines of the cross-gabled roof. The roof is finished with gray composite shingles.

Interior

Like the exterior, the hall's interior retains a high degree of architectural integrity. Interior finishes include shellacked wood trim, wood hanging racks, hardwood floors, plaster walls and plaster ceilings. With the exception of the addition of a suspended acoustical tile ceiling in the main meeting room, the interior remains relatively unchanged since the time of the building's construction.

The functions of the building's interior follow along the lines of the building's exterior masses. The shallow-gabled entrance bay evidences a foyer, which opens to a small meeting room and kitchen to the left and larger meeting hall on the right. The small meeting room, with vaulted plaster ceiling, is housed in the building's west-extending gable. A series of six hinged five-panel wood doors divides this space from the larger meeting room. The north-projecting lean-to, accessed via two doors and a pass-thru window on the north end of the small meeting room, houses the kitchen, which features a historic pantry, rustic plank storage cabinet, and simple shelving.

The larger meeting room, called the "dining room" in early records, occupies the bulk of the building's main mass, which runs north/south along the building's east end. Here, the original vaulted plaster ceiling is concealed by suspended acoustical ceiling tile. The north end of the room houses a historic platform or stage, accessible by stairs on its southeast and northwest corners. The stage raised floor of the stages matches the hardwood floors found throughout the building. The platform is faced with stained bead board.

A number of the furnishings in the larger meeting room are worth noting. First, metal frame and canvas voting booths illustrate the building's historic civic use. A piano in the northwest corner is likely original to the building. Although the building's dedication doubled as a fundraiser with receipts to "be used to buy furnishings for the Hall," there was a piano in the building for the building's dedication in October 1916. Other furnishings that appear to be original to the building include high-back chairs with armrests, tables, and folding chairs.

A five-panel door on the east end of the larger meeting room opens to the east lean-to. The space appears to have functioned as a storage closet and, therefore, may be original to the building, which was designed to include a cloak room. In this unconditioned space, the studs and rafters are exposed.

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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

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

ETHNIC HERITAGE / European

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1916-1940

Significant Dates

1916

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Beitz, Henry

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance for Arvonía Township Hall stretches from the time of its construction in 1916 until the last-recorded St. David's Day celebration at the township hall in 1940.

Criteria Considerations (justification)

N/A

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

The Arvonía Township Hall is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for local significance in the areas of Community Planning and Development, Ethnic Heritage, and Social History. In its first century, the building has served as a meeting hall and social center for the Welsh community of Arvonía, hosting countless community gatherings, from activities of the local Grange chapter to bridal showers to the community's annual celebration of Welsh heritage, known as St. David's Day. The building retains a high degree of architectural integrity from the time of its construction in 1916.

Elaboration

A Brief History of Arvonía

Arvonía, Kansas is an unincorporated village in the Marais des Cynes River Valley, on the traditional lands of the Kansa and Osage Indians. In the 1840s, 453,000 acres in parts of what became Osage and surrounding counties was designated as a Sac and Fox Indian Reservation. Euro-Americans began encroaching on the Sac and Fox's diminished reserve after Kansas Territory was opened for settlement in 1854. Although the tribe ceded the majority of its Kansas land and moved to Oklahoma in the late 1860s, promotional materials for Arvonía, noted that a few "friendly and civilized" Indians remained during the town's early development.

Arvonía was platted in 1868 or 1869 (sources vary) on land purchased for speculation by John Mather Jones, owner of a Welsh-language newspaper in Utica, New York and his associate James A. Whitaker of Chicago. To entice Welsh colonists to buy land in Kansas, Jones published a pamphlet entitled *Arvonía: That Is, The Welsh Settlement in Osage County* in which he claimed that Arvonía would "soon be one of the most flourishing Welsh settlements in the United States."¹

By 1870, Arvonía Township was home to 588 residents, 199 of which were natives of Wales.² The majority of homes were built on farms surrounding the fledgling village, but one contemporary account boasted that twelve to fifteen homes were under construction in town in 1870. While their homes were constructed, many of the town founders stayed in a large temporary hotel, later converted to a meeting house known as Walnut Hall. This burst of construction activity, which coincided with efforts to attract the Santa Fe Railroad, apparently represented the town's peak. Both Jones and Whitaker were likely discouraged by the Santa Fe Railroad's bypassing the town in favor of nearby Reading and Lang in 1870.³ Whitaker, who had moved to Arvonía in 1869 and started a furniture/general store, sold his business to Lewis Humphrey and left town. J. Mather Jones pulled out in 1871 after he was criticized in the *Osage Chronicle*, *Emporia News*, and *Topeka Commonwealth* for misrepresenting Arvonía to prospective colonists.

Although Arvonía did not meet the expectations of early speculators, many families remained in the unique Welsh community for generations. Some became successful ranchers and farmers. Others mined coal. Even after the Santa Fe bypassed the community, the town continued on a path of permanency, building a native stone school from plans by well-known Kansas architect John Haskell in 1872. The same year, J. M. Barrows, a Yale-educated minister, came to Arvonía with plans to establish a college. The scheme's progress halted after a cornerstone was laid and trees were planted.⁴

Lewis Humphrey, who bought out James Whitaker, had a meeting hall built above his business where the townspeople held religious services until churches could be built. His store also served as a post office, first established in 1873. In 1880, there were 756 people in Arvonía Township, including 173 Welsh natives and their children. In his 1883 history of Kansas, William Cutler referred to Arvonía as a "thriving little town with a population of about 150." The town of "intelligent and enterprising" citizens boasted "three stores, one hotel [Dooley Hotel], one blacksmith and wagon shop [W. D. Lewis], a

¹ John Mather Jones, *Arvonía: Sef y Sefydliad Cymraeg yn Swydd Osage (Arvonía: That Is, the Welsh Settlement in Osage County)*, (Utica, NY: *Y Drych (The Mirror)*, 1869).

² Ancestry.com. 1870 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009. Images reproduced by FamilySearch.

³ Marybelle Jones, "Arvonía: The Little Welsh Village in the Valley," 1962 unpublished, 4.

⁴ Phillips G. Davies, ed., "Welsh Settlements in Kansas" from *Kansas Historical Quarterly* vol. XLIII (Winter, 1977): 448-469. Translated from Rev. R. D. Thomas, *Hanes Cymry America (A History of the Welsh in America)* (Utica, NY: 1872).

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post office, two churches and a schoolhouse.”⁵ The two churches housed the services of the Welsh Congregationalists and Calvinistic Methodists. Like many other early buildings, both churches were built by carpenter Ellis (Al) Evans, who came to Arvonía from Utica, New York.

By the time the two churches were built, however, the town’s population was already in decline. Various efforts to secure rail service had failed; hopes were dashed in the 1870s when both the St. Louis Osage and Orient and Texas Railroads went defunct and again in 1883 when the Santa Fe built a line through Lebo, just four miles away.⁶ By 1910, the township’s population had plunged to 527, with only 28 Welsh natives remaining.⁷

Despite the declining population, the town continued to celebrate its Welsh heritage. Early on, church services were held in the Welsh language, which was also taught at Arvonía School. For many decades, the community celebrated St. David’s Day each March 1st in honor of the patron saint of Wales. The annual celebration held in the Arvonía School, alternating churches and the township hall, included a tea with Bara Brith (Welsh bread), performances by a Welsh chorus, debates and prizes. The event attracted visitors from throughout the region.⁸

By 1930, Arvonía Township was home to only 507 residents.⁹ Many of Arvonía’s young people left during World War I, despite continued efforts toward permanency, including the 1916 construction of a new township hall. St. David’s Day celebrations ended in 1940.¹⁰ Following a nationwide trend, many more left for urban areas during World War II and the postwar years. Soon, Arvonía’s shrinking population was unable to support its school. In 1949, Arvonía School consolidated with the Lebo school district. Although the *Wichita Eagle* declared Arvonía dead in 1958, the Calvinistic Methodist Church continued to hold services for another ten years. By then, however, many of the town’s landmarks were long gone. The Dooley Hotel was destroyed by fire in the mid-1880s. Walnut Hall burned to the ground in about 1898. The principal remaining landmarks are the Arvonía School, Calvinistic Methodist Church, and Township Hall.¹¹

Today, the town’s setting is dominated by Melvern Lake, a flood-control project authorized by Congress in 1954 and dedicated in 1975. In 1976, Arvonía was one of six American communities featured in a BBC film series on Welsh colonies.¹² The event sparked a new interest in the community’s Welsh heritage. Arvonía Township is now home to only 95 residents.¹³

Arvonía Township Hall

The Arvonía Township Hall, constructed in 1916, is significant for its role in community life in the rural community of Arvonía. For one hundred years, the building has housed significant community events, including social and political gatherings of local farmers, war-relief efforts, soil conservation meetings, and celebrations of the community’s Welsh heritage.

The principal advocates for the construction of the Arvonía Township Hall were members of the local chapter of the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, commonly known as “The Grange.” The Grange, a co-ed agricultural society designed to organize “rural people and worked to facilitate better social life for farm families, to share information, and to reduce the hostility of sectionalism after the Civil War,” was established in 1867 by Minnesota farmer

⁵ William G. Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago: Andreas Publishing Co., 1883). Accessed online at www.kanccoll.org.

⁶ Mrs. Henry D. Jones, “History of the Arvonía, Kansas, Welsh Settlement,” Osage County Historical Society Research Files.

⁷ Ancestry.com. 1910 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009. Images reproduced by FamilySearch.

⁸ “St. David’s Day in Arvonía Was Time of Song,” *Emporia Gazette*; “St. David’s Day in Arvonía,” “A paper presented 1 March 1929 by Fred P. Jones at a St. David’s Day celebration at Arvonía, Kansas;” “Paper on St. David Written in and about 1914 by F. P. Jones.” All in Kansas Files, “Arvonía Festivals,” Kansas Historical Society, K394.2 MSS no. 2 and Osage County Historical Society Research Files.

⁹ Ancestry.com. 1930 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009. Images reproduced by FamilySearch.

¹⁰ Some documentation says 1938. However, the author has found reference to a 1940 event held at the township hall. See Footnote 27.

¹¹ Phillip G. Davies, “The Welsh in Kansas: Settlement, Contributions and Assimilation.” In *The Welsh History Review* vol. XIV, no. 3 (1989), 387.

¹² “Arvonía Expecting Company Sunday,” *The Lebo Enterprise*, 20 May 1976; “British Film to Feature Arvonía and its People,” *The Lebo Enterprise*, 6 May 1976.

¹³ 2010 U.S. Census.

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Oliver H. Kelley.¹⁴ By 1873, the year of the first global economic depression, there were 409 Grange chapters in Kansas; by the organization's peak, the state boasted 1000 chapters.¹⁵ Early Grangers created the first credit unions, organized to negotiate bulk pricing for equipment, promoted the storage of grain at the nation's first grain elevators, and worked with farmers to curb over-production of costs.

Although some sources imply that the Grange faded after 1880, both the organization and its mission lived on. Mary Elizabeth Lease, a Kansas attorney who engaged in a nationwide speaking tour of Granges in the 1870s, gained notoriety as a populist in the 1890s who told farmers to "raise less corn and more hell." Still others became involved in the Socialist movement that took hold in the first two decades of the twentieth century. In 1916, the year Arvonía Township Hall was commissioned, both the Grange and the socialists claimed victory for the passage of the Federal Farm Loan Act, which increased credit for family farms.¹⁶

The establishment of Arvonía's Grange chapter coincided with renewed populist fervor, as well as an apparent renewed interest in the Grange, during World War I.¹⁷ Although the Arvonía Grange was granted its charter from the state organization on July 19, 1915, there was no place for the group to meet.¹⁸ During the first year, Arvonians attended the meetings of other chapters. In December, 1915, Arvonians attended a meeting and oyster supper in Reading, Kansas, where the neighboring chapter's 140 members filled "the large Frye hall." The event left the Arvonians eager for a hall of their own. "It makes we [sic] Arvonians wish our hall were a reality instead of a dream."¹⁹

It would not take long for their dreams to become a reality. On March 4, 1916, the Burlington, Kansas *Daily Republican* reported that the Arvonía Township had awarded a contract for the erection of the Arvonía Township Hall to Lebo contractor Henry Beitz, who bid of \$1818. The building would "be something on the plan of the Lebo M. E. church." "The main building will be 30 X 40 feet, with dining room 20 X 16 feet, a kitchen 10 X 10 and a cloak room 5 X 7."²⁰

Although early sources indicate that the hall was the brainchild of the Arvonía Grange, it was funded by the township through a bond issue. On April 8, 1916, the Burlington, Kansas *Daily Republican* reported that newspaperman Dow Busenbark, who had recently moved to Lawrence, had purchased the bonds at "\$22 premium." "The contractor, Henry Bietz [sic]," the article continued, "will start the building as soon as the weather opens up and it will be pushed to completion."²¹ By July, the *Osage City Free Press* reported that "The foundation for the new Arvonía township hall is completed, and work on the frame has begun."²²

The Arvonía Township Hall was dedicated on October 6, 1916 with great fanfare. The program included music, a history of Arvonía, readings, an address by Reverend Williams, and a tableau (group of models portraying a historic scene). Despite the Grange's role in agitating for the building, presentations by the organization were notably absent in the dedication, which stressed the building's potential role in community life regardless of politics. The dedication was hailed as a great success, "one of the best, if not the very best programs ever rendered in years." Proceeds from the event, which totaled \$123.00, were used to buy furnishings for the new building.²³

Still, the building's principal role early on was that of a Grange hall. On December 12, 1916, the Prairie Queen Grange presented a play called "Mr. Bobs." On January 30, 1917, the Grange held a "Farmer's Institute," where all members of the community were encouraged to join in an "old fashioned dinner" and program with speakers from the Kansas State Agricultural College. In July 1917, the Pomona Grange held an event at the Arvonía Hall that attracted Granges from Carbondale, Overbrook, Melvern and Rartford [sic]. The Grange worked closely with the township board to assist in

¹⁴ Thomas Burnell Colbert, "Grange," in *The Encyclopedia of the Great Plains*, ed. David J. Wishart (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 712-713.

¹⁵ "The Grange in Kansas: 1872-1973" (Topeka, KS: Patrons of Husbandry, 1973), 6-7.

¹⁶ *Osage City Free Press*, 9 December 1915.

¹⁷ Ethel Whitehead, "Woman's Department," *Appeal to Reason* (Girard, Kansas), 25 March 1916. It is interesting to note that there was a meeting of socialists in Arvonía at the same time the local Grange chapter was also gearing up. Among the overlapping campaigns was the Federal Farm Credit Act of 1916.

¹⁸ The original charter is in the possession of the property owner.

¹⁹ *Osage City Free Press*, 9 December 1915.

²⁰ *Daily Republican* (Burlington, Kansas), 4 March 1916. This was a reprint of an article that originally appeared in the *Lebo Star*.

²¹ *Daily Republican* (Burlington, Kansas), 8 April 1916.

²² *Osage City Free Press*, 27 July 1916.

²³ *Osage City Free Press*, 5 October 1916; 12 October 1916.

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improvements; a committee was appointed in August 1917 to “co-operate with the township board in reference to purchasing a large American flag” for the hall.²⁴

The effort to display the American flag coincided with the patriotic fervor that swept the country during World War I – and marked the beginning of a shift in the building’s use to support the war effort. On December 13, 1917, the Arvonía Ladies Aid Society met at the hall to elect officers. “This society is working hard in the interest, of our soldier boys many of the members doing knitting along with their multitude of other duties.” In January 1918, Senator Jason Hilkey, “who came under the auspices of the local Red Cross chapter,” presented a recital. The ladies of Arvonía met at the hall on July 30, 1918 to conduct Belgium relief work. When the war finally came to an end, the community celebrated at the hall with a “receptions for the soldier boys” on Thanksgiving night in 1919.²⁵

With the “return to normalcy” in the 1920s, community celebrations resumed at the Arvonía Township Hall. In 1920, the community celebrated St. David’s Day with a program that closed with “a lively debate on the question. ‘Resolved, that woman is mentally man’s equal.’” The decision of the panel of judges, which included two men and one woman, was split along gender lines.²⁶

The building continued to serve the community’s rural farmers. In 1937, at the height of the dust bowl, it housed a soil conservation meeting. And its doors remained open to folks of all political persuasions, hosting both the Democratic and Republican caucuses in 1938. Despite hard times, the community banded to make improvements to the building. In November 1939, the Arvonía Presbyterian Aid Society worked all day to complete a quilt whose proceeds would “be used to buy a new stove for use in the Arvonía hall kitchen.”²⁷

Both the Great Depression and World War II changed the Arvonía community and, by extension, the township hall. Although Arvonía held its annual St. David’s celebration in 1940, the competition part of the event was omitted. No written documentation of the township hall can be found for the years 1940 to 1976. However, renewed interest in the hall came from renewed interest in the town during the Nation’s bicentennial, when 600 people descended on Arvonía to welcome a BBC film crew documenting the community’s Welsh heritage.²⁸

Henry Beitz

Arvonía Township Hall was constructed by local carpenter Henry Beitz. Born in O’Neill, Nebraska in 1886, Beitz moved to Lebo, Kansas as a young child.²⁹ By the time he built the Arvonía Township Hall in 1916, Beitz had established a region-wide reputation for his work. In 1911, Beitz built a 20’ X 40’ barn for local farmer John Henry.³⁰ In 1913, he won the contract to build a new schoolhouse for school district 66 west of Lebo.³¹ He built a large bungalow on the Mrs. John A. Jones farm and a fire engine house for the City of Lebo in 1915.³² Beitz also built a Colonial Revival home for Dr. W. B. Granger in Emporia’s tony Berkeley Hills subdivision in 1930.³³

Beitz apparently dedicated much of his young adulthood to his career, which included both construction work and a stint as a constable in Lebo. Despite much drubbing – a 1911 blurb in the Burlington *Daily Republican* pondered the meaning of his “providing more room to his residence in West Lebo” – Beitz remained single until the age of 32. In February 1919, after returning from World War I, Beitz “made a raid of Arvonía and carried off one of her finest young ladies, Miss Alice O’Neill ...” The two met in Arvonía, where Alice, an orphan known for her singing voice, was living with Mrs. L. Humphreys.³⁴

The Arvonía Township has continued to maintain the township hall as a meeting hall, polling place, and community center. The Township Board sold the building to private owners in July 2016.

²⁴ *Osage City Free Press*, 9 November 1916; 23 November 1916; 7 December 1916; 25 January 1917; 16 August 1917.

²⁵ *Osage City Free Press*, 30 August 1917; 29 November 1917; 24 January 1918; 25 July 1918; 20 November 1919.

²⁶ *Osage City Free Press*, 4 March 1920.

²⁷ *Emporia Gazette*, 29 September 1937; 22 June 1938; 15 November 1939; 13 March 1940.

²⁸ *Emporia Gazette*, 25 May 1976.

²⁹ Henry F. Beitz Obituary, *Lebo Enterprise*, 12 August 1948.

³⁰ *Daily Republican* (Burlington, Kansas), 20 November 1911.

³¹ *Daily Republican* (Burlington, Kansas), 6 November 1911.

³² *Daily Republican* (Burlington, Kansas), 10 June 1915.

³³ *Emporia Weekly Gazette* (Emporia, Kansas), 6 February 1930.

³⁴ *Osage City Free Press*, 27 February 1919.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Cutler, William G. *History of the State of Kansas*. Chicago: Andreas Publishing Co., 1883. Accessed online at: www.kancoll.org.

Daily Republican (Burlington, Kansas).

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Davies, Phillip G., ed. "Welsh Settlements in Kansas." In *Kansas Historical Quarterly* vol. XLII (Winter 1977): 448-469.

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Jones, Marybelle. "Arvonía: the Little Welsh Village in the Valley." Unpublished. Kansas: Reading, 1962.

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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: **Kansas Historical Society; Osage County Historical Society**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____ n/a

Arvonía Township Hall
Name of Property

Osage County, Kansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one

Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.

(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 38.480263 -95.869464 3 _____
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

2 _____ _____ 4 _____
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The nominated property includes the property occupied by the Arvonía Township Hall, whose legal description is ARVONIA, LOTS 13, 14, and 15 in Block 37 in the Township of Arvonía.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The above is the legal description for the parcel historically occupied by the Arvonía Township Hall.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christy Davis
organization Davis Preservation, LLC date August 11, 2016
street & number 715 First Street telephone 785-213-1369
city or town Cottonwood Falls state KS zip code 66845
e-mail christykdavis@gmail.com

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

name Susan E. Evans Atchison
street & number 8090 W. 323rd St. telephone _____
city or town Osage City state KS zip code 66523

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.

Arvonias Township Hall
Name of Property

Osage County, Kansas
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Photographs

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

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Arvonias Township Hall

City or Vicinity: Lebo vicinity

County: Osage State: Kansas

Photographer: Christy Davis

Date Photographed: July 19, 2016

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

- 1 of 12: Exterior, Overall of front elevation, looking northeast.
- 2 of 12: Exterior, Close-up of main entrance, looking northeast.
- 3 of 12: Exterior, East Elevation, looking northwest.
- 4 of 12: Exterior, East Elevation, looking southwest.
- 5 of 12: Exterior, West and front elevations, looking east.
- 6 of 12: Interior, Large meeting hall, looking north.
- 7 of 12: Interior, Close-up of ceiling in large meeting hall, showing plaster ceiling above acoustical tile.
- 8 of 12: Interior, Doors between large and small meeting rooms, looking west from large meeting room.
- 9 of 12: Interior, Interior of lean-to (closet) on east end of building.
- 10 of 12: Interior, Looking west from kitchen toward small meeting room.
- 11 of 12: Interior, Close-up of historic cabinet.
- 12 of 12: Interior, Close-up of historic cabinet.

Figures

Include GIS maps, figures, scanned images below.

Arvonia Township Hall
Name of Property

Osage County, Kansas
County and State

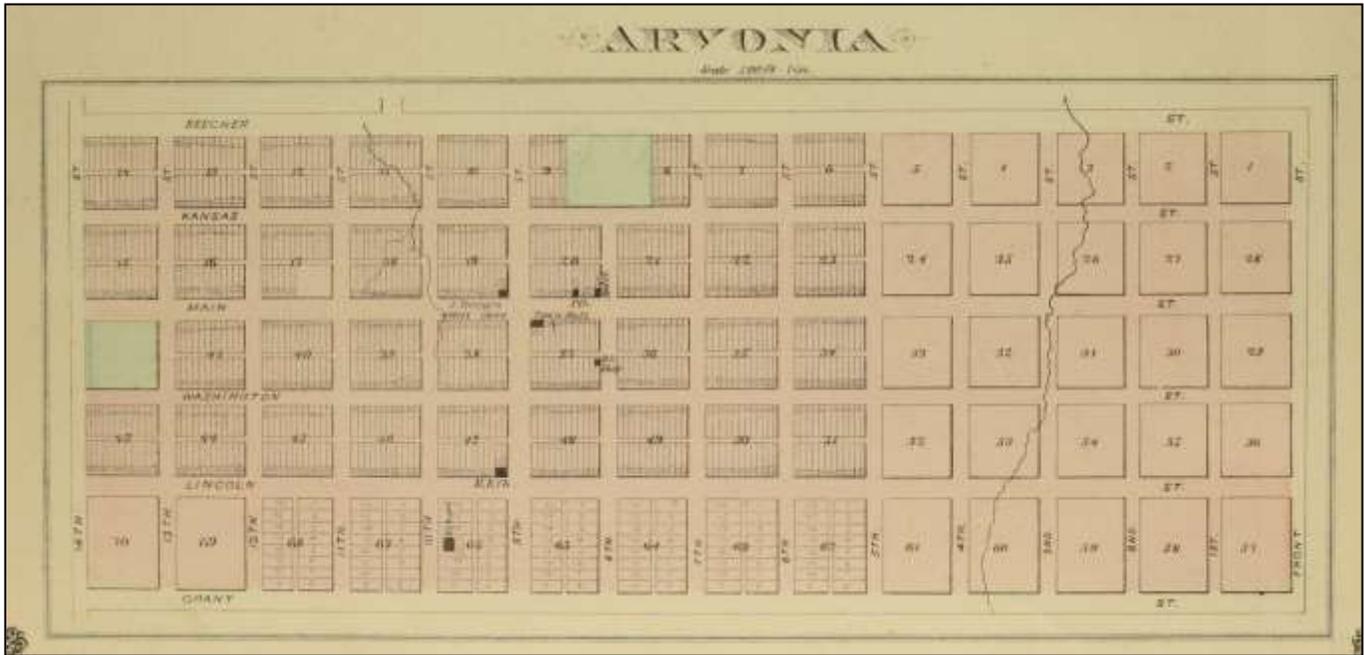


Figure 1: An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Osage County, Kansas. Page 56. Created by Edwards Brothers of Missouri. Date: 1879. Photo Credit: Kansas Historical Society. Accessed online at www.kansasmemory.org.

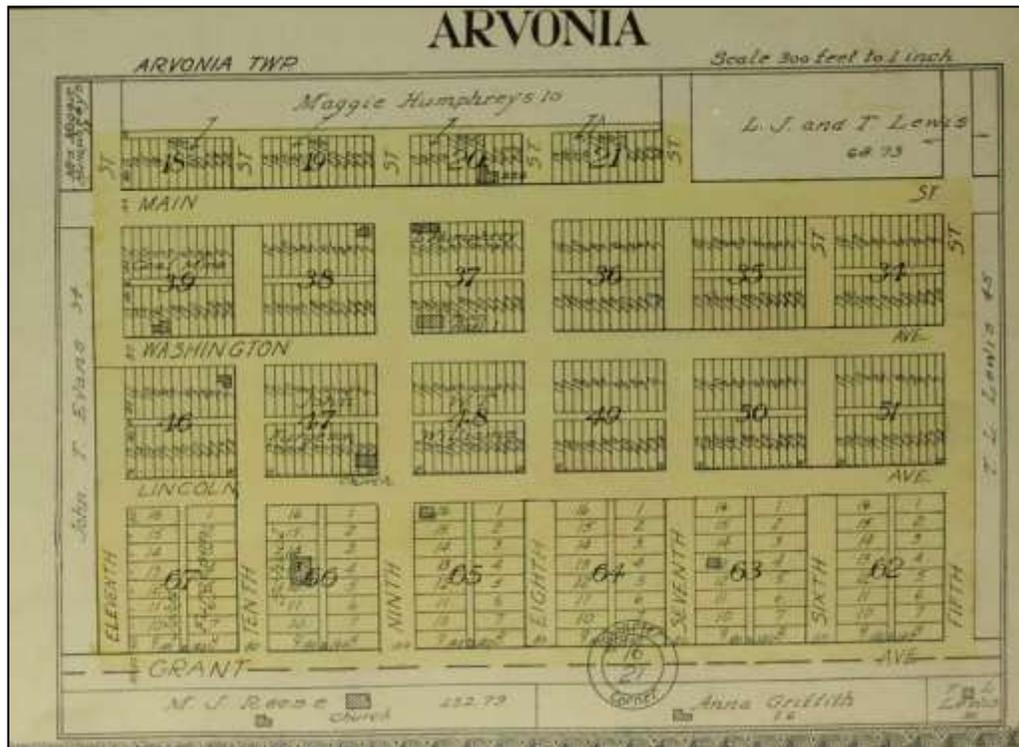


Figure 2: Standard Atlas of Osage County, Kansas. George A. Ogle & Co., 1918. Photo Credit: Kansas Historical Society. Accessed online at www.kansasmemory.org.

Arvonias Township Hall
Name of Property

Osage County, Kansas
County and State



Contextual Map, showing proximity of hall to the other two National Register-listed properties in Arvonias.

Arvon Township Hall
Name of Property

Osage County, Kansas
County and State



Boundary Map. Google 2016 aerial.