

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register Listed
October 6, 2011

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 William T. and Delora Crosby House
other names/site number 177-5400-00037

2. Location

street & number 1109 SW Topeka Boulevard (formerly Topeka Avenue) not for publication
city or town Topeka vicinity
state Kansas code KS county Shawnee code 177 zip code 66612

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

SEE FILE

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____

Title _____ 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 _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
2		Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single-family dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE: Organizational,
Professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS:

foundation: Brick

Italian Renaissance

walls: Brick
Terra Cotta

roof: Clay

other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The William T. Crosby House is located at 1109 SW Topeka Boulevard, a major north/south thoroughfare in the capital city of Topeka, Kansas (population 127,473). Just a block west of the Kansas Statehouse, the Crosby House was historically surrounded by other late nineteenth and early twentieth-century mansions. The surviving mansions include the home of U. S. Vice President Charles Curtis (ca. 1878, NRHP) to the north and the Dillon House (1913, NRHP) to the east. The Crosby House has cubed massing and hipped roof reminiscent of an early twentieth-century Foursquare. Stylistically, it is Italian Renaissance with Beaux Arts/Classical detailing. Significant features include blond field brick, ionic columns, stone and terra-cotta details, and a red clay-tile roof interrupted with hipped dormers. The nominated property includes an original garage, whose overall design and materials reflect that of the house. Because of its proximity to the central business district and state government offices, the area has evolved over time. By 1950, many of the larger single-family homes had been converted to boarding houses and offices. Eventually, office buildings, like the sprawling Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas headquarters on the adjacent property to the south, encroached on the neighborhood. Although the Crosby House's more-recent institutional use is reflected by its immediate surroundings, which include concrete sidewalks, driveways and parking lot, its form and architecture clearly interpret its historic use as a single-family residence.

Narrative Description

House Exterior

General

The exterior of the Crosby House retains a high degree of architectural integrity, with extant character-defining features including blond brick walls, clay tile roof, and classically detailed stone trim. The home retains its original wood windows, the vast majority of which are protected by enameled aluminum storm windows.

East (Front) Elevation

The Crosby House faces east toward Topeka Boulevard, formerly known as Topeka Avenue. Among the prominent features on the home's front is a one-story porch, which extends past the home's north and south elevations. The porch is supported by four brick piers, on the northeast, northwest, southeast and southwest corners. The brick piers have terra-cotta details, including medallions and corbels. Between these piers are ionic columns. There are two columns on each of the north and south sides of the porch. There are eight on the east end – a single column on the south, three pairs of columns in the middle, and a single column on the north. The columns are supported by a continuous brick railing with limestone capstones and arched openings with stone sills. Above each column, in the dentilled entablature of the porch's flat roof, is a terra-cotta corbel/bracket. The columns divide the porch into four bays. The porch is accessible via three stairs – the main one on the third bay with stone cheek walls and a centered wrought-iron railing, one off the west opening on the porch's north end, and a third off the west opening on the porch's south end. The porch floor is red tile. The porch ceiling is pressed metal.

Unlike the upper level of the façade, the lower level is asymmetrical. On the south end is a three-part Chicago-Style window. Like other windows, this window has decorative pilasters, a stone sill, brick lintel and surround, and terra-cotta keystone. The upper sashes, which are smaller than the lower sashes, have leaded glass. North of the Chicago-Style window is the home's elaborate main entrance. The entrance bay, which projects from the façade, is framed by stonework, including a dentilled pediment with corbels. The opening houses a centered entrance, flanked by sidelights. The door and sidelights have unpainted wood panels under leaded glazing. On the north end of the east elevation is a canted window bay. There are three window openings, each with a decorative stone sill, brick lintels and surrounds, and terra-cotta keystone. The upper sashes, which are smaller than the lower sashes, have leaded glass.

The upper façade is symmetrical. In the center is a terra-cotta medallion flanked on each side by a window opening. The windows have prominent dentilled hood moulds with corbels. Like many other of the home's windows, these have smaller upper sashes with leaded glass. Above the windows is corbelled brick, a dentilled cornice under wide eaves supported by

terra-cotta brackets. Above the eave, projecting from the hipped roof, is a hipped dormer with three-part window.

West (Rear) Elevation

The west side of the building is complex. The principal mass is L-shaped, with a two-story bay projecting from the north end of the cubed mass. From this bay projects a two-story porch addition. On the south end of the west elevation is a one-story vault mass that dates to the ca. 1950s. On the lower level of the porch bay houses two doors, a door on the north that opens to a basement stair and a second door that opens to the service area on the first floor. There is a single 1/1 window in the clapboard-clad upper level. There are no openings on the west elevation of the vault addition. A steel fire escape rises north to south from the rear parking area to the roof of the vault addition. On the second floor, a fire escape allows for exit from a door on the east end of the south wall of the clapboard porch; there is also a window on the west end of this wall. A second fire escape extends west from the third-floor dormer to the roof of the vault addition. This dormer was modified historically to provide an entrance/exit to third-floor living space. There are three window openings on the west elevation of the main mass and projecting bay. A downspout descends from the gutter on the roof of the vault addition.

South (Side) Elevation

The south elevation is divided into two principal masses, the main mass on the east and the one-story vault addition (ca. 1950s) to the west. Like that of the north elevation, the design of the south elevation is irregular. On the west end of the first floor is a projecting bay window with shed roof. The bay, which is supported with brackets, houses five leaded-glass windows with transoms – three in the center of the bay flanked on each side with a single window. Above the projecting bay window are two matching 1/1 windows. To the east, on the upper level, is a clerestory window. Farther east, there are windows on the upper and lower levels. An integrated chimney projects from the east half of the south elevation. The chimney is flanked by four-part leaded-glass windows on the lower level and 1/1 windows on the upper level. A hipped dormer with three-part window projects from the roof at the center of the main mass. Three downspouts descend from the gutter on this elevation.

North (Side) Elevation

The north elevation is divided into three main parts: the main mass on the east, the projecting bay in the center, and the two-story enclosed porch on the west. The first part has an irregular design. Above the porch is a horizontal multi-pane wide window with stone sill and terra-cotta keystone. In the next bay, there are two windows, one on each floor. The lower-level window is a leaded-glass casement with leaded-glass transom. The upper-story window has a smaller leaded-glass sash above a larger lower sash. West of this bay is a brick and stone buttress. To the west, on the lower level is a door and small window. Above is a leaded-glass casement window with leaded-glass transom. Centered in the main mass is a hipped dormer with three-part window. The projecting bay has two evenly spaced 1/1 windows on each level. To the west is the porch bay. It has a small window on the east end of its first level and a single centered 1/1 window in its wood-clapboard porch above. Six downspouts, including one on the east porch and one on the west porch, descend from the gutter on this elevation.

House Interior

General

The interior of the Crosby House retains a high degree of architectural integrity. Extant character-defining features include plaster walls, hard-wood floors, wood window and door trim (both painted and exposed), built-in cabinets and bookcases, fireplaces, leaded glass, radiators, chandeliers and sconces, and bathroom fixtures. In addition, the basement, which lacks finished space, retains the home's original boilers and wash sinks.

First Floor

The first floor is accessible via an entrance on each of the home's elevations. The main entrance, on the east elevation, opens to a small vestibule with a second entrance, with centered door flanked by sidelights, which matches the main entrance. The main entrance opens to the reception hall that measures 15' X 30'. There is a seating alcove nestled in the three-part canted window bay in the northeast corner of the reception hall. An open stair rises from east to west along the north end of the reception hall. The alcove is lit by two crystal sconces, which flank the window bay. From a landing, the stair rises east to west to the second floor along the north wall of the reception hall. A door on the west end of the reception hall opens to a rear hall. There are two openings on the south wall of the reception hall, one that opens to the living room and another that opens to the dining room. There is a radiator on the east side of the south wall of the reception hall. Under the stair is a small restroom. A door on the west end of the north wall, nestled under the stair, is an

exterior entrance. The finishes in the entrance hall, according to a historic description of the home, are “white enamel and mahogany.” A crystal chandelier hangs from the center of the reception hall. An original sconce hangs on the north end of the west wall, in the exterior entrance niche.

The living room, which occupies the southeast corner of the first floor, measures 17' X 26'. The living room is accessible via an entrance on the east end of the reception hall's south wall. The entrance is a wood door with leaded glass flanked on each side by two leaded-glass windows over wood panels. The south wall of the living room has a centered mantel and fireplace flanked by built-in wood bookcases, detailed with ionic fluted columns with faux entablatures, carvings in a wreaths and torch pattern flanking the mirror. The fireplace has a green ceramic tile surround and apron. Above the bookcases are leaded-glass casement windows. On the east wall is a three-part Chicago-Style window with leaded glass transoms. On the west wall is a “colonial archway” (elliptical arch). According to a historic description, the finishes in the living room, including casework, baseboards and crown molding, are mahogany. The floors are quarter-sawn oak with a Greek-key patterned parquet border. All but the border is covered with carpet. The room is lit with flush-mounted fluorescent fixtures.

The dining room, which occupies the original southwest corner of the first floor, measures 17' X 20'. The room is accessible via leaded-glass French doors with sidelights and fanlight on the west wall of the living room and east wall of dining room. The south wall of the dining room has a canted five-part window bay with wood sill. The west wall has an opening that houses a vault door. The dining room's north wall has three openings: a closet door and kitchen door on the west and a leaded-glass door to the reception hall on the east. Finishes, which include casework, baseboards and crown molding, are mahogany. The floors are quarter-sawn oak covered with carpet. The room is lit with flush-mounted fluorescent fixtures.

West of the dining room is a vault addition that was constructed by the Order of the Eastern Star in the 1950s. The vault is a rectangular room with linoleum floors and 1950s flush-mounted fluorescent light fixtures.

A door on the south end of the west wall of the reception hall opens to a rear service hall. A door to the north opens to the enclosed rear stair, which features exposed wood trim and turned rails. West of the service stair is a narrow corridor. On the west wall of the corridor, one on the north end and another on the south, are two doors that open to the kitchen.

A large kitchen occupies the house's northwest corner. The kitchen is divided into two spaces by an island of cabinets that juts eastward from the west wall. The south wall of the kitchen has two doors that open to the dining room. There is a wall of cabinets and drawers on the south end of the west wall. There are two doors on the north end of the west wall, an exterior door with transom and restroom door. There are also cabinets on the east wall, between the two kitchen doors and north of the northernmost door. The window on the north wall is surrounded by cabinets and drawers. The kitchen ceilings are suspended acoustical tile. The floors are hard maple covered with carpet.

Second Floor

The second floor is accessible via the grand open stair that rises east to west then north to south from the reception hall as well as via the service stair in the back hall. An original flush-mounted crystal light fixture lights the main stair from the second floor. A large open sitting room occupies the northeast corner of the second floor. The sitting room is subdivided from the stair hall by a large arched cased opening. This room is lit by an original crystal pendant light. There is a window bench on the north wall of the sitting room, a window on the east wall, and a mirrored closet door on the south wall. In the stair hall, just west of the arched opening, is a large built-in bookcase with leaded-glass doors. The second-floor corridor is lit with an original flush-mounted fixture.

A corridor south of the stair hall opens to two large “sleeping apartments” on the south side of the second floor: one on the southeast corner and another on the southwest corner. The larger east bedroom appears to have been the master bedroom. There is a single window on the east wall, two windows flanking a decorative fireplace on the south wall, two doors on the west wall, and two doors on the north wall. The doors on the west wall open to a bathroom and closet. The doors on the north open to the stair hall and a second closet. There are exposed hard-wood floors and original doors in this room. The fireplace on the south wall coordinates with that in the first-floor living room. It is mahogany with a yellow ceramic tile surround and apron, swag carving and mirror above. Other finishes, including colonial revival light fixtures and non-historic wall vinyl date to the period in which the building was occupied by the Order of the Eastern Star. The bathroom off the southwest corner of the bedroom has its original hexagonal tile floors, subway tile wainscoting and original tub, sink and toilet. This bathroom is also accessible via a small hall off the main second-floor corridor.

The west bedroom is smaller than the master bedroom. The north wall has a corridor door on the east and bathroom door on the west. The east wall has a closet door on the north. The south wall has two windows. The west wall has a single window. Like the master bathroom, the back bathroom has doors that open to both the hall and the adjacent bedroom,

although the bedroom door has been infilled on the bathroom side. It appears that a third doorway opened to the service stair. The bathroom has its original hexagonal tile floors, subway tile wainscoting, sink, and tub. The toilet is new. The ceiling is suspended acoustical tile.

A door on the north side of the hall, just east of the back bathroom, opens to the enclosed service stair. A door on the west wall of the service stair opens to a servant's quarters, which includes a small bedroom, bath and closet. The west end of this space is an enclosed sleeping porch. A door on the south side of the sleeping porch opens onto the roof of the vault addition.

Third Floor/Attic

The third floor, which is accessible via the rear stair, is divided by a fiberboard partition wall into two main spaces. The floors are exposed hardwood. On the west end are two small rooms, a kitchen on the south and bathroom on the north. Just inside the kitchen, on the south wall, is a door that leads to a closet. The galley kitchen has a door on its west wall that opens to the roof of the 1950s addition below and a fire escape. Mr. Crosby used the third-floor as a billiards room. The fixtures in the kitchen and bathroom are historic; however, it is unclear if they were original to the house or added during its period of significance.

Garage

The garage was built at the same time as the house, at a cost of \$1,000, more than the cost of many homes built at the time. Like the house, the garage has a blond brick exterior with shallow-hipped roof with dormers on each side. The cubed building has a historic south-projecting wood-framed addition clad with vinyl siding and topped with shallow hipped roof. There are two garage-door openings on the front/east side. The one in the wood-framed addition houses a pair of outward-swinging hinged doors. The other, which is centered on the front of the original brick building, houses a pair of wood-paneled sliding doors. The south elevation of the wood clapboard addition has a single double-hung window. The west elevation has two single double-hung windows with security bars. The north elevation has a three-part Chicago-Style window. All windows, including the multi-pane windows in the hipped dormers, are historic. The eaves and wood-framed addition have been covered with artificial siding. According to the *Topeka State Journal* account, the original garage roof was "metallic," likely pressed-metal scallops or pan tiles. Today, the garage has a red composition roof.

The first floor of the main garage has a concrete floor, unpainted wood wainscoted ceiling, and exposed wood trim. Woodwork includes a work bench with drawers and cabinets on the north side. The wood addition is finished with unpainted boxcar siding on the walls and wainscoting on the ceiling. The second floor of the garage, accessible via an exposed wood stair that rises from the building's northeast corner, is finished in what appears to have been a small apartment. The floors are exposed hardwood. The woodwork and trim is unpainted. The walls and ceilings are plastered.

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)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1910-1952

Significant Dates

1910

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

William T. Crosby

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Frank C. Squires (architect)

David P. Scott (contractor)

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Crosby House stretches from the time of its construction in 1910 until William T. Crosby's death in 1922. This period was chosen because this was the span of time in which the home was associated with William T. Crosby, for which the home is being nominated under Criterion B.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

The William T. Crosby House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for local significance under Criterion B for its association with William T. Crosby, a pioneer Topeka merchant who co-founded Crosby Brothers Department Store, a Topeka institution from 1880 to 1975. In addition, it is being nominated under Criterion C as an example of the Italian Renaissance Style as employed in homes between 1890 and 1935. The home was designed by local architect Frank C. Squires, best-known for his governmental and institutional buildings.

Narrative Statement of Significance

A Brief History of Topeka

Topeka was founded in late 1854 by leaders of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, which chose the location where a branch of the Oregon Trail crossed the Kansas River. By the time the territorial legislature incorporated Topeka in 1857, the city boasted a population of 600, third to pro-slavery towns Atchison and Leavenworth. By 1858, however, free-staters outnumbered pro-slavery settlers; and the free-state Wyandotte Constitution designated Topeka as the temporary capital in 1859. When Kansas entered the Union as a free state in 1861, Topeka was named permanent state capital.

In the years following the Civil War, Topeka's population exploded. Between 1860 and 1870, the population grew 662% from 759 to 5790. It tripled to 15,528 by 1880; and doubled to 31,007 by 1890.¹ Among the city's new residents were thousands of African Americans, who fled the post-Reconstruction south in the Black Exodus.

Topeka's fate was tied closely to that of the railroad, particularly that of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe, which was chartered by Topeka town founder Cyrus K. Holliday in 1859. After the railroad began laying track in the late 1860s, it played a significant role in the state's settlement by marketing land to immigrant farmers. In 1878, the Santa Fe established its general offices and machine shops in Topeka. The expansion of the Santa Fe and arrival of other railroads contributed to an extraordinary real estate boom in the 1880s. In 1888 alone, 3000 new buildings were built.

The city benefitted from the railroad's success – and bore the brunt of the railroad's failures. Like most railroads, the Santa Fe over-expanded in the 1880s and went bankrupt in the 1890s. When the 1880s boom busted, 5000 people left the deflated city.²

It was not until the 1910s that the city's population finally recovered and the business elite began to build again. The city steadily grew in the first half of the twentieth century, doubling between 1900 and 1940, when the population reached 67,833.³ During the Progressive Era, Topeka was at the center of reform and religious activities. In 1919, the Menninger Clinic, which became a nationwide leader in moral psychiatric treatment, opened. Its founder Dr. Karl Menninger wrote the 1930 national bestseller *The Human Mind*, an early study of human behavior. Other reform movements included the Social Gospel movement, which applied Christian principals to social problems. In his bestseller *In His Steps*, Topeka minister Charles Sheldon asked Christian reformers to make decisions based upon "What Would Jesus Do?"⁴ Topeka is also known as the birthplace of Pentecostalism, a religious movement distinguished by the incidence of glossolalia.⁵

Topeka attracted national attention in the 1930s, when it was home to national figures in both the Democratic and Republican Parties. Georgia Neese Clark Gray, who served as the Democratic National Committee Chairwoman, would later become the first woman to hold the position of U. S. Treasurer.⁶ Better known was Kansas Governor Alf Landon, who famously challenged Franklin Roosevelt in the presidential race of 1936.

¹ U. S. Census, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890.

² Frank Blackmar, *Kansas: a cyclopedia of state history, embracing events, institutions, industries, counties, cities, towns, prominent persons, etc.* (Chicago: Standard Publishing Co., 1912), 811-815.

³ U. S. Census.

⁴ "The Rev. Charles Sheldon – In His Name," *Topeka Capital Journal* 24 November 2001; See Charles Sheldon, *In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?* (Chicago: Advance Publishing Co., 1898).

⁵ "Pentecostal movement has its roots in Topeka," *Topeka Capital-Journal* 17 August 1997.

⁶ "Kansans have had many White House ties," *Topeka Capital-Journal* 16 May 2004.

The Topeka Army Air Field, later known as Forbes Field, and other industries attracted new residents during World War II. Among the war-related industries was the Goodyear Tire Plant, which has remained a staple of the local economy for more than six decades.⁷ In the years following the war, Topeka made national news for its role in the landmark Supreme Court Case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. The historic desegregation case struck down the “separate but equal” doctrine and ushered in the broader Civil Rights Movement.

A series of natural disasters in the mid twentieth century greatly affected the community. The 1951 flood forced 17,000 Topekans from their homes and destroyed businesses, like the Morrell Meat Packing Plant, resulting in the loss of 1000 jobs.⁸ A devastating tornado in 1966 killed 13 people, destroyed neighborhoods, and caused \$100 million in damage to the city’s buildings, including the Kansas Statehouse.⁹

Despite these setbacks, the city’s population nearly doubled from 67,833 to 125,011 between 1940 and 1970.¹⁰ The population has remained steady since that time. Many of the city’s residents are among the 42,000 state employees.

William T. Crosby and the Crosby Brothers

William T. Crosby, the first child of William Crosby and Frances Hollingsworth, was born in Mansfield, Louisiana on December 20, 1852. In 1870, Crosby moved to Hartford, Connecticut where he lived with his uncle while attending high school.¹¹ After finishing his education, William worked as an apprentice for New Orleans’ Pete, Yale and Boling Dry Goods firm, “one of the largest wholesale merchandising firms in the South.”¹² For eight years, Crosby toiled as a traveling salesman through what was then “frontier country where banks, railroads and the like were unknown.”¹³ During this time William’s brother, Erastus H. Crosby, worked as a clerk at a dry goods firm in St. Louis.¹⁴

In 1880, with \$10,000 borrowed from their uncle, twenty-eight-year-old William Crosby and his twenty-four-year-old brother Erastus joined forces to establish what would become Kansas’s largest department store. After scouting in several Kansas towns, the brothers decided to buy out the stock of the Bartholomew Dry Goods in Topeka. They opened their new store, Crosby Brothers, in the 700 Block of Kansas Avenue on August 1, 1880.¹⁵ The two brothers settled in Topeka and married; Erastus married Helen Dieckriede of St. Louis on November 11, 1880 and William married Miss Delora Kleinhaus of Grantville on November 3, 1883.¹⁶

For years, the Crosbys out-worked the competition. They did not subscribe to regular business hours. “If we had a customer, it made no difference if it was 11 or 12 o’clock midnight,” said Erastus, “we’d keep the shop open.” After long days of selling goods, washing windows and sweeping sidewalks, the Crosbys often soothed their aching feet by walking home barefoot. Other nights, they would sleep on the store’s sales counters. During the economic crisis of the 1890s, when many businesses nationwide were folding, the Crosbys continued to expand. In 1893 or 1895 (sources vary), they bought the stock and building of the Stevenson and Peckman store at 717-719 Kansas Avenue and expanded their store to one hundred feet wide, “three floors and a basement” with a total floor space of about three and a half acres.¹⁷ When electricity reached downtown, the Crosbys were the first to install electric lights in their display windows.¹⁸ Despite his long hours, William Crosby found time to participate in civic and fraternal organizations, including the Old Topeka Club and Elks Club. Although William and his wife Delora had no children of their own, they contributed to the education of their nieces and nephews.

⁷ Topeka Chamber of Commerce.

⁸ “Flood of the Century: Reflections of the Flood” *Topeka Capital-Journal* 8 July 2001. Also Topeka Chamber of Commerce.

⁹ “1966 Tornado – Hard Times,” *Topeka Capital-Journal* 8 June 2006.

¹⁰ U. S. Census.

¹¹ Walter M. Markley, *Builders of Topeka* (Topeka: Capper Printing Co., 1934), 67. Crosby’s father was from Vermont.

¹² *ibid*

¹³ “Funeral is Today: William T. Crosby to be Buried from Grace Cathedral...,” *Topeka State Journal*, 24 April 1922.

¹⁴ 1880 US Census.

¹⁵ “50 Years Ago Crosby Boys Cast Lot with Topeka,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, 27 September 1930; George Mack, “Topeka’s Worthy Matron,” *Topeka Capital-Journal*, January 1978, Kansas Nurses Association clippings file.

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ William E. Connelley, *A Standard History of Kansas* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company. 1918); *Builders of Topeka*, 66.

¹⁸ “Erastus Hollingsworth Crosby,” *Topeka State Journal*, 8 March 1935.

Through the years, William and Erastus Crosby remained not only successful business partners, but also very close friends. Early on, the brothers and their families lived next door to each other at 901 and 905 Harrison, around the corner from editor and future Senator Arthur Capper.¹⁹ In 1910, in an act culminating thirty years of hard work, both brothers embarked on the construction of new homes. In about 1910, Erastus built a new home at the location of the brothers' homes on Harrison. William chose to build his grand home next door to his friend and contemporary Charles Curtis, who later served as the Vice President of the United States. The new homes would come to symbolize their economic status and serve as venues for hosting their illustrious guests.²⁰

William Crosby was president of the Crosby Brothers Store until his death on April 22, 1922.²¹ On the day of his funeral, "practically all stores on Kansas Avenue" were closed. From the time of his brother's death until his own death in 1935, Erastus managed the store. Crosby Brothers Department Store closed in 1975.

The Crosby Home

On February 12, 1910, the *Topeka State Journal* announced that building permit applications had been filed for ten homes. Nine of the new homes would be built at an average cost of \$2000. The tenth home merited a more detailed description than the others. William Crosby, who had made his fortune selling dry goods, would build a \$17,000 mansion, which the *Journal* predicted would be "one of the finest in Topeka." The garage alone would cost \$1000, more than many homes of the time. Below is the newspaper's description of the home:

New Crosby Residence

Aside from the items included in the list, application was made for a permit for W. T. Crosby's \$17,000 brick veneer residence which is being erected at 1107 [sic] Topeka avenue [sic]. The house was designed by F. C. Squires, the architect, and D. P. Scott has been awarded the contract for the superstructure. Aside from the house a permit has been written out for a \$1,000 garage which will be constructed of compressed brick and will be provided with a metallic roof.

The residence will be one of the finest in Topeka. It will be an 11 room home – brick veneer building with stone trimmings. An eleven-foot veranda, according to the plans, will extend across the entire front of the structure.

The reception hall will be 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ X 30 feet and the living room will be 17 $\frac{1}{3}$ X 26 feet. The dining room also will be spacious, measuring 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ X 20 feet.

According to the plans the reception hall will be particularly attractive, one of the features being an alcove. There will be colonial archways along the staircase.

The dining room and living room will be finished in mahogany and the hall in white enamel and mahogany, the floors in quarter sawed white oak with the exception of the kitchen, which will have a hard maple floor.

On the second floor each sleeping apartment will be supplied with a private bath, and all floor [sic] will be finished in hard maple. A large billiard room is planned for the third, finished in weathered oak.²²

Although the home was large, it was designed for a small household. The Crosbys had no children of their own. In April 1910, at their former home on Harrison Street, the Crosbys' household included themselves, as well as a 25-year-old servant, "barnman" John Bean. A man with a \$1000 garage would not have needed a "barnman." Still, it appears that the second-floor of the garage was likely finished for use by a male servant. By 1915, the Crosby household included two live-in servants, a 19-year-old woman named Esther Peterson who likely lived on the home's third floor, and a 25-year-old black man named William Bates. In the 1916 City Directory, Bates was listed as a chauffeur who worked at 1109 Topeka Boulevard. By then, he was no longer living with the Crosbys.²³ In 1920, the household included only William Crosby, his

¹⁹ Mack; 1910 US Census.

²⁰ Ibid,

²¹ "Funeral is Today..."; William's wife Delora died in 1930. Topeka Shawnee County Public Library Obituary Index.

²² "New Crosby Residence," *Topeka State Journal*, 12 February 1910.

²³ 1916 City Directory. Bates boarded at 1234 Lane.

wife Delora and their servant Mary Miller, a twenty-year-old German immigrant. William Crosby lived in his opulent home from the time of its construction in 1910 until his death in 1922. His wife, Delora Crosby died in 1930.²⁴

Delora Crosby had moved out of the home by 1927, when it was listed as the residence of Dr. J. A. Crabb.²⁵ Crabb was born in Brown County, Illinois on June 5, 1869. He farmed and taught until he entered the University of Kansas Medical School in about 1902. After completing his medical degree in 1906, Crabb taught anatomy at the university then opened an office in downtown Topeka. Crabb was last listed as living in the house in 1940. He practiced medicine until his retirement in 1954 at the age of 85. Dr. Crabb died on May 17, 1961. It is said that following his wife's death, his daughter Emma Crabb acted as hostess for parties in the house.²⁶

In 1942, 1109 Topeka was listed as the address for the Grover Tea Room, owned by David L. Grover. It is unclear how long the tea room was in business. There are no city directories for 1943, 1944 and 1945. By 1946, the home had been sold to the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which used it for its state offices. In 1952, the Seventh Day Adventist Church announced plans to move its state offices down the street to 1275 Topeka, raising speculation about the future of the Crosby House. By February, it was announced that the Order of the Eastern Star (OES), a fraternal organization open to both men and women, had purchased the building to house its state headquarters.²⁷ Among the changes made by the OES was the construction of a fireproof vault. In the words of OES Grand Secretary Gertrude Verna Gough, "It's not just a vault...it's a room you can walk into." OES used the vault to store its state records.²⁸ The OES owned the property when a corner of the house was damaged by the 1966 tornado.²⁹ The Kansas State Nurses Association, the current owners, purchased the house in 2006.

Italian Renaissance Architecture

The Crosby House is a vernacular interpretation of the Italian Renaissance Style, a style used in residential architecture between 1890 and 1935. The style was first employed in 1883 by Ecole des Beaux Arts-trained architects McKim, Mead and White for their Villard Houses in New York City. Simple interpretations were being built in the Topeka area by the 1910s, when Kansas City developer J. C. Nichols filling the region's first automobile suburbs with an eclectic mix of revival-style and classically inspired homes. Because the quality of materials and high level of architectural detail required a significant financial investment, residential examples of Italian Renaissance are very rare in Kansas. The Crosby House's quintessential Italian Renaissance features include its masonry construction, entablature, regularly spaced columns, quoining, decorative brackets, and prominent window surrounds.³⁰ The Crosby Home shares some similarities with the Dillon House, an Italian Renaissance mansion built to just a block to the east in 1913. Both homes feature blond brick, stone details and hipped clay-tile roofs with dormers. Higher-style examples can be found in Topeka's tony Westboro neighborhood, a 1920s-1930s automobile suburb modeled after J. C. Nichols' developments.

Frank Squires (Architect)

To design his stately home, William Crosby hired well-known Topeka architect Frank Squires. Squires was born in Columbus, Ohio in 1871 and moved to Topeka as a boy. At the age of 17, Squires began an apprenticeship with Topeka architect J. C. Holland. Thereafter, he attended Columbia University School of Architecture, one of the nation's first formal architecture programs. Some sources say that Squires worked at an architecture firm in Toledo, Ohio before returning to Topeka.

From 1895 to 1897, Squires served in the position of State Architect, overseeing the construction of the central wing of the statehouse. In 1898 or 1903 (sources vary), Squires partnered with his mentor J. C. Holland. Together, the pair designed a number of courthouses, including those in Harvey (razed), Marion (NRHP), Riley (NRHP) and Thomas (NRHP) Counties. The firm also designed the Junction City High School (NRHP). By 1910, Squires had his own firm. Among the

²⁴ Topeka Shawnee County Public Library Obituary Index.

²⁵ 1927-28 City Directory. In 1929, Delora Crosby was listed as living at the Jayhawk Hotel, a property developed by her brother-in-law Erastus Crosby.

²⁶ Mack; *Topeka Daily Capital*, 18 March 1961.

²⁷ Mack; "Eastern Star is Reported Buyer of Topeka Ave. Site," *Topeka State Journal*; 21 February 1952.

²⁸ "OES Moves into New Home," *Topeka Daily Capital*, 23 April 1953.

²⁹ Mack.

³⁰ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 378-385.

buildings he designed on his own were the Woman's Club Building (Topeka, NRHP), Rooks County Courthouse (NRHP), and St. John's Lutheran School (Topeka, NRHP). Squires died of a stroke in 1934.³¹

David P. Scott

David P. Scott, who was awarded the contract to construct the Crosby House, was born in Kentucky in about 1857. Among the other homes Scott built is the Morgan House (NRHP) at 1335 SW Harrison Street in Topeka.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Shortridge, James R. *Peopling the Plains: Who Settled Where in Frontier Kansas.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995.

Topeka Capital-Journal.

Topeka Daily Capital.

Topeka State Journal.

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: Kansas Historical Society

³¹ *Topeka Capital Journal* 5 November 2000; National Register Nomination, Burr Oak School; "F.C. Squires Dies," *Topeka State Journal* 10 March 1934.

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 177-5400-00037

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>267860</u>	<u>4325060</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The nominated property is Parcel #1093103019005000. The legal description for this parcel is as follows: ORIGINAL TOWN, Lot 367 + TOPEKA AVE LOTS 367-369-371 SECTION 31 TOWNSHIP 11 RANGE 16.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The above is the legal description for the property on which the William T. Crosby House sits.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christy Davis
organization Davis Preservation date 4/28/2011
street & number 909 1/2 Kansas Ave, Suite 7 telephone 785-234-5053
city or town Topeka state KS zip code 66612
e-mail cdavis@davispreservation.com

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.
- **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: William T. Crosby House
City or Vicinity: Topeka
County/State: Shawnee County, Kansas
Photographer: Christy Davis

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

All photos were taken by Christy Davis on April 8, 2011.

- 1 of 12** Exterior, overall view of east elevation, looking northwest.
- 2 of 12** Exterior, overall view of north elevation, looking southeast.
- 3 of 12** Exterior, overall view of south and west elevations of house and garage, looking northeast.
- 4 of 12** Exterior, overall view of north and west elevations of garage, looking southeast.
- 5 of 12** Interior, first floor, looking northwest toward main stair.
- 6 of 12** Interior, first floor, looking east toward alcove in reception hall.
- 7 of 12** Interior, first floor, looking southeast toward fireplace and bookcases in living room.
- 8 of 12** Interior, second floor, close-up of fireplace in front bedroom.
- 9 of 12** Interior, second floor, back stairs, looking north.
- 10 of 12** Interior, second floor, back bathroom, looking west.
- 11 of 12** Interior, third floor/attic, overall view.
- 12 of 12** Garage, finished interior on second-floor.

Property Owner:

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

name Kansas State Nurses Association (Patricia J. Plank, President)
street & number 1109 SW Topeka Blvd telephone 785-233-8638
city or town Topeka state KS zip code 66612

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.

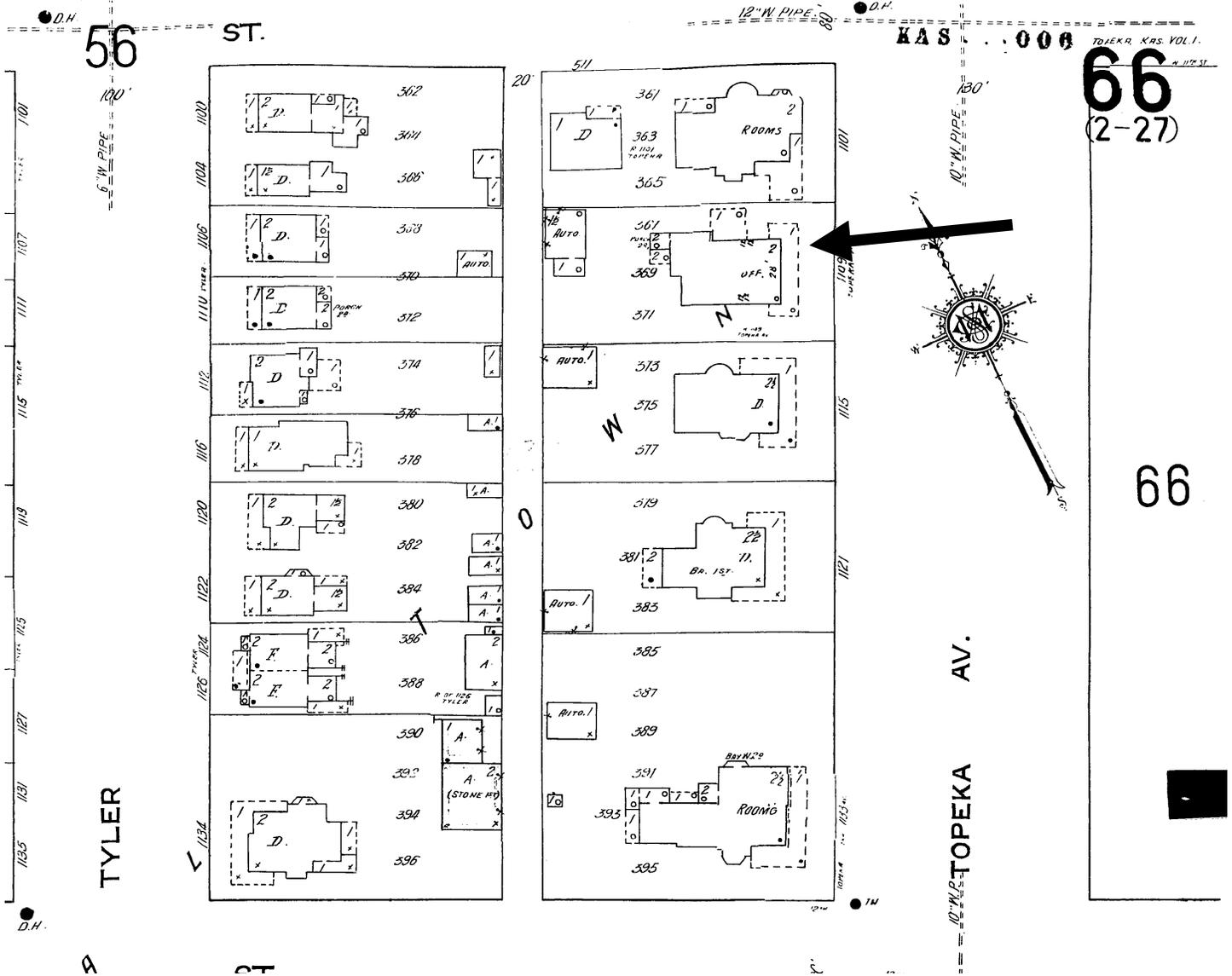


Figure 1: 1913 Sanborn Map (revised 1950), Sheet 66. Crosby House shown by arrow.