



KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Certification of State Register Listing

The Register of Historic Kansas Places includes all Kansas properties nominated to the National Register as well as lower threshold properties which are listed on the state register only.

Property Name: The Dick Building

Address: 2-4 North Main, Ellinwood, KS

County: Barton

Owner: Addrianna Dierolf

Address: 108 E. 3rd Street, Ellinwood, KS 67526

National Register eligible _____

State Register eligible

This property was approved by the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review for the Register of Historic Kansas Places on February 24, 1990.

I hereby certify that this property is listed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

Ramon Powers
State Historic Preservation Officer

March 7, 1990
Date

The Dick Building is located at 2-4 North Main Street in Ellinwood, Kansas. It was constructed in 1887 and is the second oldest building in Ellinwood. It was originally occupied by Julius Meyers and Sons Hardware Store and a grocery store. Subsequently it housed the first bank in Ellinwood, the Ellinwood Post Office, and the first telephone office in Ellinwood. It currently houses a doctor's office and a thrift shop on the first floor, the second floor is vacant.

Ellinwood was platted in 1872. By 1880 it was a prosperous community of 400 people, mostly German immigrants. The growth of the community depended largely upon agricultural activities until the late 1920s, when the development of oil and gas leases began.

Ellinwood had the reputation of the last town in Kansas "to go dry." It was said that saloons operated in Ellinwood after they were closed everywhere else. For many years Ellinwood was the distributing point for one of the largest breweries in the country.

Mathias (Matt) Dick (1851-) came to Ellinwood in 1876 from Wisconsin as the station agent for the Santa Fe Railroad. In 1882 he entered into a general farm implement business and bought his partner out in 1885. In 1900 Dick bought the building at 2-4 North Main and carried a large stock of hardware and farm implements.

The Ellinwood Telephone Exchange was owned and operated by Matt Dick and Ed Bockemohle and was located in the Dick Building. The exchange began business in 1899 with forty phones. By the next year eighty-five phones were in operation. The system was known as the automatic and was put in by the National Automatic Telephone Company of Chicago. No central office or "hello" girl was required, as patrons connected with each other by an automatic device.

The Dick Building is located on the corner of Main Street and Highway 56, it is a two story brick structure with a tower. The building has been altered on the exterior. Its first floor storefront has been modified and the tower has lost its polychromatic slate roofing. Additionally the building has been sandblasted and painted. Partition walls have been erected in the doctor's office on the first floor. The second story consists of fourteen rooms. All ceilings in the second floor are elaborately decorated with fleur-de-lis central motif in six different patterns on a lead-tin alloy cast in large sheets and nailed into place. The walls have cypress wood wainscotting. There is one arched doorway and one curved wall. Street entrance to the second floor is gained by the original front and back stairways. The building was electrified in 1908 and still has the original tube and knob wiring.

Originally the basement under the entire building housed businesses. At one time there was a harness shop, a blacksmith shop, and a barber shop which is also decorated with the cypress wainscotting. Entrance to the shops was by an underground tunnel that was accessible by a stairway from the sidewalk on the street level. The tunnel in front of the shops connected with other tunnels and other shops under the business district on Main Street. Adrianna and Dan Dierolf began restoring the tunnels under the Dick Building in 1982. Adrianna's grandfather, Matt Dick, built

the underground rooms now being restored.

The Ellinwood tunnels were built in the late 1880s. Most of the street level shops had underground stores as well. Most of the tunnel system remained open and in use through the 1930s, but since then separation walls have been built to block access from one building to another. In Summer 1982 most of the remaining tunnels were filled with sand when new sidewalks were constructed. Only about 50 feet of the elaborate network of tunnels that connected the basements in the town's eight block business district have been reopened. Now only the tunnels under the Dick Building and the Wolfe Hotel are open.