

REGISTER OF HISTORIC KANSAS PLACES---COVER SHEET

Name of Property Hiawatha Memorial Auditorium

Location 611 Utah Street  
(street and number)

Hiawatha  
(city, town, or vicinity location)

Lots 88 and 90 on Utah Street in the City of Hiawatha  
(legal description)

Brown  
(county)

Owner of Property Brown County Historical Society, Inc.

611 Utah Street  
(street and number)

Hiawatha, KS 66434  
(city, town, county)

National Register status:

date approved for nomination to the National Register by Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review February 23, 1985

date entered in National Register \_\_\_\_\_

**Description:** The Hiawatha Memorial Auditorium is a large, monumental Classical Revival building constructed of brick with stone trim. It consists of two principal stories over a half-raised full basement. The main facade is dominated by a shallow, full-height central portico of four unfluted Ionic columns. A full entablature extends across the entire street facade of the building. Above the entablature is a brick parapet, behind which the roof is flat. Three sets of double doors open from the portico into a vestibule, beyond which is a lobby corridor and the large, rather plain auditorium. Upstairs are several small meeting rooms and the auditorium balcony. The basement contains a large open assembly room and kitchen. The meeting rooms and the basement now house museum exhibits.

Significance The Hiawatha Memorial Auditorium is a good, very intact example of the  
Classical Revival public buildings erected in many Kansas towns in the 1910s and 20s.  
Built in 1920, it was designed by Thomas W. Williamson, a prominent Topeka architect  
who designed many public buildings during the early twentieth century.

The City of Hiawatha used the building as a public auditorium until 1977. After  
standing empty for several years, it was acquired by the Brown County Historical Society  
in 1980 for use as a museum and meeting hall.

Form prepared by Richard J. Cawthon date February 21, 1985

This property was approved for listing in the Register of Historic Kansas Places by the  
Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review on \_\_\_\_\_  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State Historic Preservation Officer

Feb. 23, 1985  
Date

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Hiawatha Memorial Auditorium

and or common Hiawatha Memorial Auditorium

2. Location

street & number 611 Utah Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Hiawatha

N/A vicinity of

state Kansas

code 20

county Brown

code 013

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Brown County Historical Society

street & number 611 Utah Street

city, town Hiawatha

N/A vicinity of

state Kansas 66434

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds

street & number Brown County Courthouse

city, town Hiawatha

state Kansas 66434

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title (none)

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A

N/A federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A

state N/A

## 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed (slightly in interior)		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Hiawatha Memorial Auditorium is a large, monumental, brick and stone building erected in 1920 in the business district of Hiawatha. It faces north directly across the street from the Brown County Courthouse.

The auditorium, designed by Topeka architect Thomas W. Williamson, is a finely executed Classical Revival building showing characteristics of both the Neoclassical Revival and the Georgian Revival.

The building consists of two principal stories over a half-raised full basement. The lower floor contains a vestibule, lobby offices, and the auditorium parquet and stage. The upper floor contains the auditorium balcony and three meeting rooms, the largest of which was used by the American Legion. The basement contains a kitchen and a large, open meeting room. The basement and second floor rooms now contain museum exhibits.

A shallow, full-height tetrastyle portico with unfluted Ionic columns extends across half the width of the front facade. Between the columns are three double doors, above which are the three windows with semicircular arches. The portico is flanked by four rectangular windows, one on either floor on each side. A finely-detailed Ionic entablature extends from the portico across the facade and for a short distance along the sides of the building.

Although the vestibule and lobby have relatively ornate decorative detailing, the auditorium chamber itself is very modestly trimmed. One especially notable interior feature is the painted frieze in the former American Legion room which consists of a colorful belt of patriotic emblems.

The only significant alterations to the building have been the installation of a projection booth at the back of the auditorium, and a shortening of the balcony wings, both of which were done in the mid-1920s.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below					
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

**Specific dates** 1920 **Builder/Architect** Architect: Thomas W. Williamson, Topeka, KS  
 Builder: ~~Sanneman Brothers, Green, KS~~

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Hiawatha Memorial Auditorium is locally significant primarily for its architectural prominence in the community. Additionally, it has secondary significance for its long use as a center for the performing arts and various community events, and as the meeting place for civic and veterans' groups.

The building was erected by the City of Hiawatha as a Memorial to the local residents who had served in the First World War.

Completed in 1920, the auditorium was designed by Thomas W. Williamson of Topeka. Having begun his private practice in 1912, he soon became one of Kansas' leading architects. He designed many prominent public buildings across the state including Topeka High School (1923-31) and the courthouses of Cheyenne County (1924-25), Jackson County (1919-21), Sheridan County (1917-18), and Smith County (1918-20).

The building was in use by the latter part of 1920, but was not formally dedicated until November 30, 1921. It served the city as a public auditorium and meeting hall for over fifty-six years. The auditorium chamber was used for a wide variety of events including musical and dramatic performances, pageants, movies, public meetings, and commencement exercises. Proms and banquets took place in the large basement meeting hall.

The city closed the auditorium in 1977. It stood vacant until 1980, when it was purchased by the Brown County Historical Society for use as a community historical museum.

THIS STATEMENT REFLECTS CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND IS SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Hiawatha, KS

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	5	2	8	3	0	3	5	4	4	1	4	2	5	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 88 and 90 on Utah Street, in the City of Hiawatha, Brown County, KS.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard J. Cawthon, Architectural Historian

organization Kansas State Historical Society

date July 19, 1985

street & number 120 West Tenth

telephone (913) 296-5264

city or town Topeka

state Kansas 66612

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



Executive Director

title Kansas State Historical Society

date July 23, 1985

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

Bibliographical References

Architectural drawings in the Thomas W. Williamson collection, Spencer Research  
Library, University of Kansas

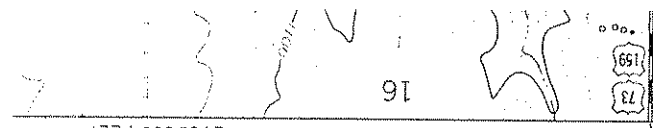
Archival materials in the Brown County Historical Society files

Hiawatha, KS, Daily World, November 30, 1921.

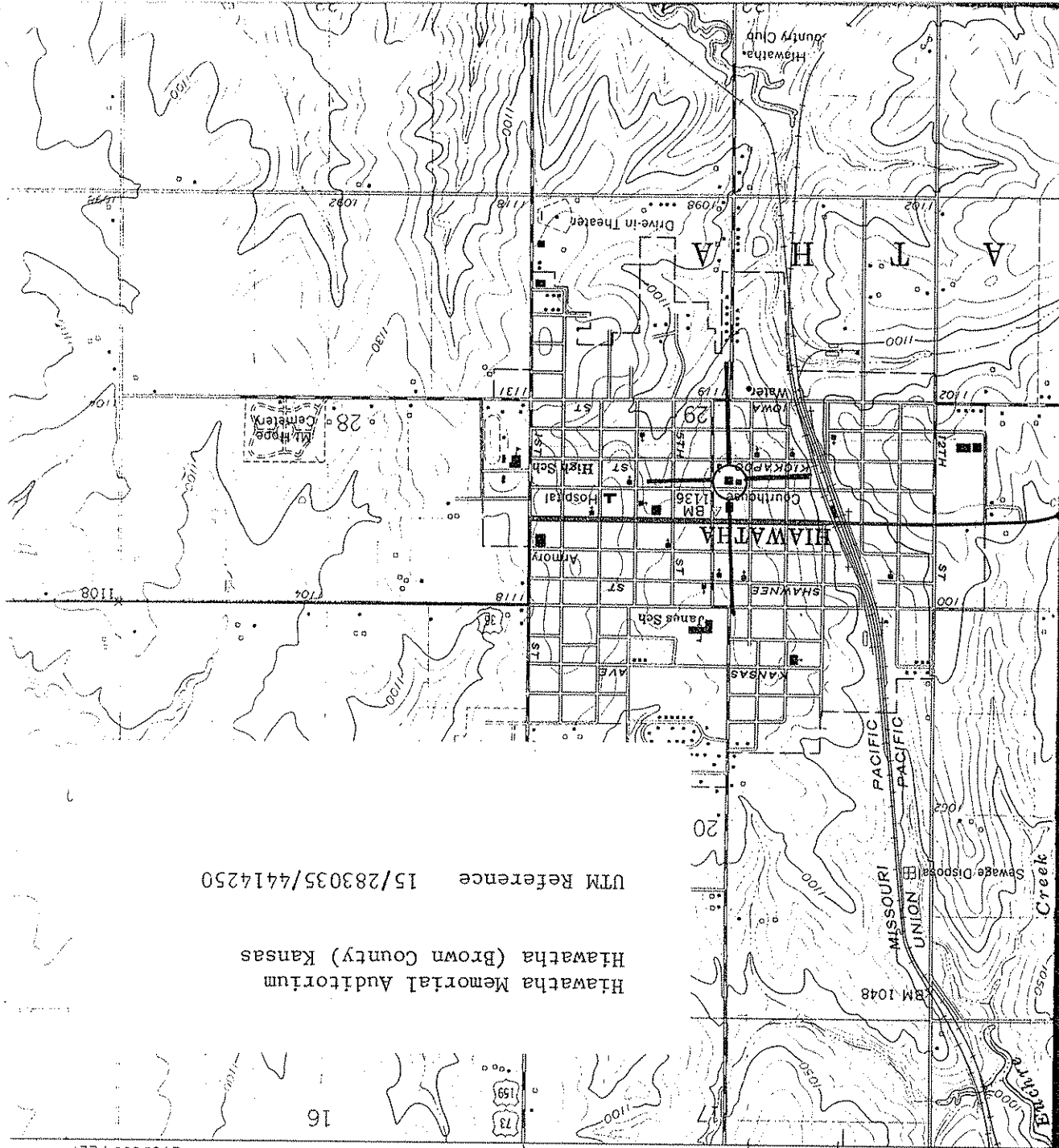
Kansas City Star, December 1, 1921.

This nomination was prepared from materials submitted by Helen Soark of the  
Brown County Historical Society, 611 Utah Street, Hiawatha, KS 66434.

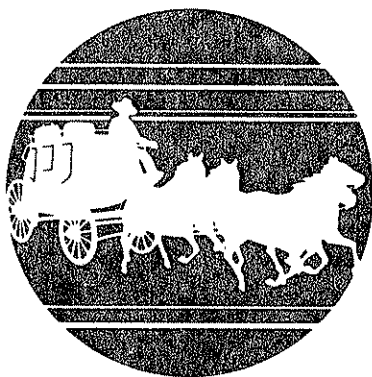
HIAWATHA QUADRANGLE  
 KANSAS-BROWN CO.  
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRA  
 FALLS CITY 17 MI.  
 RESERVE 9.2 MI.  
 2700 000 FEET



Hiawatha Memorial Auditorium  
 Hiawatha (Brown County) Kansas  
 UTM Reference 15/283035/4414250







# KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

120 West Tenth • Topeka, Kansas 66612 • 913/296-3251

September 26, 1985

Helen Soark  
Brown County Historical Society  
611 Utah Street  
Hiawatha, KS 66434

Dear Ms. Soark:

We are pleased to inform you that the Hiawatha Memorial Auditorium was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on September 5, 1985.

Enclosed is information explaining the National Register. If you have any questions concerning the registration of this property please contact us.

Sincerely,

Joseph W. Snell  
State Historic Preservation Officer

caf

Enclosures

pc: County Commission of Brown County  
Mayor Jerry Young