NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

(TYPE ALL ENTRIES · COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS)

1. NAME
COMMON:
Fort Harker Guardhouse

AND/ OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER:
northwest corner of Wyoming and Ohio streets
CITY OR TOWN:
Kanopolis
STATE:
Kansas

3. CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY (CHECK ONE)
□ District
□ Site
□ Structure
□ Object
□ Building

OWNERSHIP
□ Public
□ Private
□ Both
□ In Process
□ Being Considered
□ Public Acquisition:

STATUS
□ Occupied
□ Unoccupied
□ Preservation work in progress
□ Restricted
□ Unrestricted
□ No

ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
□ Yes:
□ No

PRESENT USE (CHECK ONE OR MORE AS APPROPRIATE)
□ Agricultural
□ Government
□ Park
□ Transportation
□ Commercial
□ Industrial
□ Private Residence
□ Other (Specify)
□ Educational
□ Military
□ Religious
□ Museum
□ Scientific

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
OWNER'S NAME:
Ellsworth County Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:
104 South Main St.
CITY OR TOWN:
Ellsworth
STATE:
Kansas

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Register of Deeds
CITY OR TOWN:
Ellsworth
STATE:
Kansas

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

STREET AND NUMBER:
Ellsworth County Courthouse
CITY OR TOWN:
Ellsworth
STATE:
Kansas

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE OF SURVEY:
Survey of Historic Sites and Structures in Kansas
DATE OF SURVEY:
1957
□ Federal
□ State
□ County
□ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Kansas State Historical Society
STREET AND NUMBER:
120 West 10th St.
CITY OR TOWN:
Topska
STATE:
Kansas

FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE:
The Fort Harker guardhouse, a substantial two-story native brown sandstone building, is situated at what was the west end of the parade ground. The stones, which measure as much as 36 inches long, 12 inches high, and 12 inches thick, are laid in regular horizontal coursing. The building has a hipped roof extending over a two-story porch on the east side. The upper floor was originally divided into two large rooms and six small cells. This floor, which can be reached only by an outside stairway, has six windows, three in front and three in the rear. There are no windows on either the north or the south side of the guardhouse. The lower floor was divided into three rooms: a guardroom, 26 by 15 feet; a non-commissioned officers' room, half that size; and a small tool room. The guardroom has three windows.

Today it looks much as it did originally—the cells are gone from upstairs and one partition downstairs has been removed. Bars on the upstairs windows are said to be original.

The building is now operated as a museum by the Ellsworth County Historical Society.
### Statement of Significance

Fort Harker was one of three forts (Harker, Hays, and Wallace) established along the Smoky Hill valley to guard the route to Denver, which passed through the part of Kansas most susceptible to Indian raids.

Fort Harker was originally established in the summer of 1864 as Fort Ellsworth. In November, 1866, the name was changed to Harker, and in January, 1867, it was relocated about three-fourths mile east.

For a time Harker was the headquarters of the district of the Upper Arkansas and the supply depot for all military forts west, including Colorado, New Mexico, and portions of Arizona.

It was at Harker in the fall of 1868 that Gen. Phil Sheridan planned his winter campaign of 1868-1869 which finally subdued the southern Indians.

In 1873 the military abandoned the fort; the railroad had put an end to its usefulness. The military reservation was opened to settlement and the buildings were sold.

The present town of Kanopolis is situated on the old fort site, and the guardhouse was for a time the Kanopolis city hall. It is the only surviving original building which has not been greatly altered. (Some officers' quarters stand two blocks east of the old guardhouse, but they have been altered into residential buildings.)
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ellsworth Messenger, August 10, 1950.
"Kanopolis, the City of Great Expectations," Kansas City Star, April 30, 1911.
Salina Herald, August 13, 1881.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Richard D. Pankratz, Director, Historic Sites Survey

ORGANIZATION: Kansas State Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER: 120 West 10th St.

CITY OR TOWN: Topeka

STATE: Kansas

14. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National [X] State [X] Local [ ]

Name: Myle H. Miller
Title: 

Date Sent to NR: 9/1/71

15. NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date: 

\* U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1973-729-147/1442 3-1
FORT HARKER GUARDHOUSE

6. cont.

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration
1939 Federal

Records destroyed. A guide book, Kansas, was published in 1939.