United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Listed in Register of Historic Kansas Places 02/09/2013

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  Boot Hill Museum
other names/site number  057-1381

2. Location

street & number  500 West Wyatt Earp Blvd  not for publication
city or town  Dodge City
state  Kansas  code  KS  county  Ford  code  057  zip code  67801

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this _x_ nomination _x_ 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 _x_ 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

____________________________________  Date
Signature of certifying official
Title
_______________________________  State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property _x_ meets _x_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

____________________________________  Date
Signature of commenting official
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:)  

____________________________________  Date of Action
Signature of the Keeper
5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [ ] private
- X public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- [ ] building(s)
- X district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Noncontributing</th>
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Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Roadside Kansas

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- RECREATION/CULTURE: museum

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- RECREATION/CULTURE: museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

- LATE VICTORIAN: Gothic Revival
- LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Spanish Colonial Revival
- OTHER: Combination Depot

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation: CONCRETE
- walls: WOOD/TILE
- roof: WOOD; ASBESTOS
- other:  
The Boot Hill Museum is located at 500 West Wyatt Earp Boulevard/US Highway 50, which runs parallel to Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad line. This main east-west thoroughfare represents the southern boundary of the Boot Hill property and the historic commercial core of Dodge City. The nominated district generally encompasses one large city block and includes 21 resources. The Dodge City Downtown Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2009, is located immediately east of Boot Hill Museum.

Below is a list of resources included in the historic district. For moved features, dates of construction include both the original construction date and date the resource was moved to the Boot Hill site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Resource</th>
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<td>Locomotive</td>
<td>Built 1903 / Moved 1954</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Great Western Hotel</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Built 1929 / Moved 2003</td>
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<td>Shop 2</td>
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<td>Centennial Monument</td>
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Below are descriptions of the resources at Boot Hill Museum. A complete history of the museum is given in Section 8. There are 21 resources in all, ten of which were constructed at this location. The remaining resources were moved to the Boot Hill Museum beginning in 1953. Only two of these ten relocated resources (jail and locomotive) were moved to Boot Hill Museum during the period of significance, which is 1927-1964. After assessing the potential eligibility for all moved resources, two other resources (depot and Hardesty House) were determined to meet Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties even though they were moved to the site after the period of significance. The depot and the Hardesty House meet Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties because they do not derive significance from their association with Boot Hill Museum, but rather their architectural value. The integrity and eligibility of each resource is described below.
1. **ATSF Depot**  
**Status – Contributing building**

**Address:** W. Wyatt Earp Boulevard (Boot Hill)  
**Date of Construction:** built 1930; relocated to Boot Hill Museum 1977  
**Legal Description:** OT Dodge City; BLK: Pt. 23-24  
**Current Function:** RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum  
**Architectural Classification:** OTHER  
**Latitude / Longitude:** 37.75307 -100.02172

**Description:** The small frame depot was moved onto this site in 1977 and is located on the southern edge of the Boot Hill parking lot. The combination passenger/freight depot has a simple rectangular form with a gable roof. An office occupies the central portion of the building, with the freight area on the west and a waiting room on the east. The roof is asbestos tile with exposed rafter tails and eave brackets. Set on a concrete foundation, the depot has clapboard siding with a narrow reveal and six-over-nine double-hung wood windows. A bay window projects from the north facade. Openings include a paneled wood door at the east end of the north elevation for the passenger entrance and freight door west of the bay window, on the north elevation. The south elevation includes a paneled wood door leading into the freight area and two six-over-nine double-hung wood windows – one in the waiting area and one in the office.

**History:** This depot was constructed along the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad in Sitka, an unincorporated community in Clark County, Kansas, in 1930. Sitka is approximately 55 miles southeast of Dodge City. In the 1960s, the depot was moved to Ashland, Kansas. It was moved to Boot Hill Museum in 1977. Combination depots were the most common type of railroad depot in Kansas. They typically included three rooms – a waiting room, an office, and a baggage/freight area. Many combination depots were wood-frame with either clapboard or board-and-batten siding. Architectural detail was often minimal and limited to varied siding textures and eave brackets. The large bay window was the most distinctive feature found in combination depots such as this one. This building’s physical form clearly aligns with its historic function, and it is architecturally significant as a visual reminder of the ATSF railroad’s presence in small-town Kansas.

**Integrity:** The depot is one of several resources moved to the museum complex. Although it was moved to the complex after the period of significance, it is classified as a contributor to the historic district because it meets Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties since it derives its primary significance from its architecture. It retains integrity of design, workmanship, materials, and feeling.

2. **ATSF Steam Locomotive #1139**  
**Status – Contributing structure**

**Address:** W. Wyatt Earp Boulevard (Boot Hill)  
**Date of Construction:** Constructed 1903; Moved to Boot Hill 1954; Relocated to present site 2000  
**Legal Description:** OT Dodge City; BLK: Pt. 29, 20, 23, 24  
**Current Function:** RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum  
**Architectural Classification:** OTHER  
**Latitude / Longitude:** 37.75301 -100.02189

**Description:** An Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad locomotive is located immediately west of the depot in the Boot Hill parking lot. It is a 1903 Baldwin steam locomotive and is situated on a short segment of rail. Locomotive #1139 is a Prairie-type 2-6-2 engine built in 1903 by Baldwin Locomotive Works. The 2-6-2 designation refers to the engine's wheel arrangement – the first number notes the number of leading wheels, the second number notes the number of driver wheels, and the third number notes the number of trailing wheels. The Prairie types did not find favor with the Class I railroad lines, and only 1,500 2-6-2s were built, most destined for short lines.

**History:** This is one of only 28 remaining steam locomotives in Kansas. (See Table 1.) Four of the known locomotives are sunken in bodies of water; twenty-three are on display at museums, parks, and fairgrounds; and one is operational as part of a tourist excursion train in Abilene. Of the 28 remaining locomotives, eight are 2-6-2s. This locomotive was built in 1903 by the Baldwin Locomotive Works at a cost of $19,846.98. In its years on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe line, the locomotive logged approximately a million miles. The railroad’s main line passed through Dodge City creating the historic rail terminus responsible for the community’s legendary role as a trading and shipping center for buffalo hides and cattle. When the railroad donated the locomotive to the

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Boot Hill Museum in 1954, it was placed on the current site of the Great Western Hotel. In 1978, it was moved to the east side of the complex near the Front Street Replica. It was moved to its current location next to the depot in 2000.

**Integrity:** The locomotive is one of several resources moved to the museum complex. It has been associated with the Boot Hill Museum since 1954. It rests atop a segment of rail and maintains an appropriate setting very near the original ATSF rail line passing through Dodge City. This rolling stock is classified as a contributor to the historic district.

3. **Great Western Hotel/gift shop**
   **Status - Non-Contributing building**
   **Address:** W. Wyatt Earp Boulevard (Boot Hill)
   **Date of Construction:** 1982
   **Legal Description:** OT Dodge City; BLK: Pt. 23
   **Current Function:** RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum
   **Architectural Classification:** OTHER
   **Latitude / Longitude:** 37.75355 -100.02231

   **Description:** This two-story frame building was built in 1982 as a replica of the historic Great Western Hotel. The building serves as the entrance to Boot Hill and houses the gift shop. The building has clapboard siding and a false parapet on the front of a gabled roof. The shaped parapet has a bracketed cornice. The building features a full-width porch with a balcony on the second floor. The porch has square wood columns and the porch has a simple wood rail. The wood windows are tall two-over-two double-hung units. Multi-light wood doors are located in bays 2 and 4 with two windows in bays 1, 3, and 5 on the ground floor of the front facade. There are regularly spaced windows on the north and east facades. A shed porch is located over secondary entrances on the north and east facades. There is a visitor parking lot southeast of the building.

   **History:** This building is a 1982 reconstruction of Dodge City's legendary Great Western Hotel. Established in 1874 as the "South Side Hotel" by traders George Reighard and William States, the Great Western was located south of the tracks mid-block between 1st and 2nd - conveniently situated near the Santa Fe depot and the old Santa Fe Trail. The original hotel was a compact cubed two-story building, with hotel dining room in a one-story building to the east. In 1877 Reighard and States sold the hotel to Dr. Samuel Galland. Born in Prussia in 1822, Galland immigrated to the United States in 1849. After stints in New York, California, St. Louis, New Orleans, and Kansas City, Galland and his wife Bertha moved to Dodge City. Galland continued to practice medicine, serving as a doctor at Fort Dodge and later as county coroner during Dodge City's rowdy days. Under Galland's auspices, the Great Western earned a reputation for good food, good beds, good service and a strictly enforced curfew, despite reportedly catering to cattlemen. According to one source, Galland operated the hotel for about six years. In 1884, owners made plans to construct a new building on the southwest corner of 1st and Locust, but instead expanded on the existing site. The hotel remained in operation at its original location for many decades. Between 1905 and 1911 the Dodge City Milling and Elevator Company constructed a mill on the block to the north. By 1918, the hotel had been converted to a boarding house. When the original building was razed in 1942, it was the city's oldest business. This building was built in 1982 to serve as a visitor entrance to Boot Hill Museum.

   **Integrity:** The building is contemporary construction and is not associated with Boot Hill during the period of significance. It is a non-contributing member of the district.

4. **Church**
   **Status - Non-Contributing building**
   **Address:** W. Wyatt Earp Boulevard (Boot Hill)
   **Date of Construction:** 1929/2003
   **Legal Description:** OT Dodge City; BLK: Pt. 29, 20, 23, 24
   **Current Function:** RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum
   **Architectural Classification:** OTHER
   **Latitude / Longitude:** 37.75360 -100.02128

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3 *Dodge City Times*, 24 March 1877.
4 *Dodge City Globe*, 15 May 1942.
Description: This one-story frame church is one of several resources moved to the Boot Hill Museum. The simple rectangular building was placed on a concrete foundation (with recently installed stone veneer) at the east end of the museum lawn and faces west. The exterior walls are a novelty wood drop siding known as Double O. G. siding, which is a single siding board milled to present the shadow lines of two boards. The gable roof is wood shingles and has an open bell tower/cupola with a pyramidal roof. The roof overhang is minimal. The windows are nine-over-nine double-hung wood units with gabled window hoods. The entrance is in the center of the west elevation and has a fan-light window over the paneled wood door. There is a newer wood wheelchair ramp along the north side of the building.

History: This church building was built in 1929 as an oil well shack. It served as a church in Bucklin, Kansas from 1942 to 1991. Dale Birney donated the church to Boot Hill Museum in 2003. In a phased project, the museum modified the building to replicate the historic appearance of Dodge City’s Union Church. The building, which interprets Dodge City’s transition from wild and wooly cowtown to civilized Victorian city, was dedicated in 2009. The original Union Church (no longer extant) was built in 1876 to house non-denominational services. It also held the services of denominations, including the Catholic Church, until they could build their own buildings.

Integrity: The church is one of several resources moved to the museum complex. This building was relocated in 2003, after the period of significance. It does not meet Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties and, therefore it is classified as a non-contributor to the district.

5. Outhouse #1
   Status – Non-Contributing building
   Address: W. Wyatt Earp Boulevard (Boot Hill)
   Date of Construction: Unknown; Moved to Boot Hill Museum circa 1970
   Legal Description: OT Dodge City; BLK: Pt. 29, 20, 23, 24
   Current Function: RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum
   Architectural Classification: OTHER
   Latitude / Longitude: 37.75368 -100.02107

Description: A frame outhouse is located off the northeast corner of the church on the museum lawn. This building is one of several resources that have been moved to the Boot Hill Museum. The outhouse is a simple rectangular form with a gable roof and the west-facing door on the broad side of the building. The building has vertical board-and-batten wood siding and wood shingle roof. Inside, there are two toilet seats.

History: This outhouse was likely donated to the Boot Hill Museum in circa 1970, at the time the museum expanded to include the Hardesty House and school. Outhouses were abandoned in the surrounding rural areas in the late 1960s and early 1970s as farm families converted to indoor plumbing.

Integrity: The outhouse is one of several resources moved to the museum complex. This building was relocated after the period of significance. It does not meet Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties and, therefore it is classified as a non-contributor to the district.

6. Thresher’s Cook Shack
   Status – Non-Contributing structure
   Address: W. Wyatt Earp Boulevard (Boot Hill)
   Date of Construction: ca. 1890; Moved to Boot Hill Museum in 1984
   Legal Description: OT Dodge City; BLK: Pt. 29, 20, 23, 24
   Current Function: RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum
   Architectural Classification: OTHER
   Latitude / Longitude: 37.75375 -100.02080

Description: This resource is a portable cook shack taken into fields to prepare food for threshing crews during harvest. It is one of the many resources moved to the Boot Hill museum complex. The shack is a frame structure on steel wheels, made to be pulled by horse, oxen, or later farm machinery to the field. The small rectangular structure has wood drop siding and a shallow gable roof. There is a wood door on one of the short ends and an awning-type window on the broad side out of which food was served.

History: This cook shack dates to ca. 1890. Thresher’s cook shacks were used as rolling kitchens and dining rooms for traveling threshing crews. In 1984, the Augusta Peach estate donated this cook shack to the Boot Hill Museum.
Integrity: The cook shack is one of several resources moved to the museum complex. It rests atop its steel wheels, which allowed for its mobility. Despite its mobility, however, the cook shack only became a part of the Boot Hill Museum in 1984 – after the period of significance. It does not meet Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties, and is therefore a non-contributor.

7. **Blacksmith Shop**  
   **Status - Non-Contributing building**  
   **Address:** W. Wyatt Earp Boulevard (Boot Hill)  
   **Date of Construction:** ca. 1885; Moved to Boot Hill Museum in 1974  
   **Legal Description:** OT Dodge City; BLK: Pt. 29, 20, 23, 24  
   **Current Function:** RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum  
   **Architectural Classification:** OTHER  
   **Latitude / Longitude:** 37.75380 -100.02074  

   **Description:** This one-and-a-half-story frame building is one of several resources that have been moved to the Boot Hill Museum. It was placed on a concrete foundation located at the east end of the museum complex. The building has a gable roof with wood shingles. The broad side facing south is the front of the building and has a fixed shed canopy supported by wood posts. This covers a wood sliding door. The building has drop siding on the front and a narrow profile wood siding on the gable ends. A single paneled door accessed by an exterior wood staircase provides access to the upper level/loft on the west gable end.  

   **History:** The blacksmith shop originally functioned as a carriage house that stood in downtown Dodge City. It was moved to the Boot Hill Museum in 1974.  

   **Integrity:** This building is one of many resources moved to the museum complex. This building was relocated after the period of significance. It does not meet Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties and, therefore it is classified as a non-contributor to the district.

8. **Shop 1**  
   **Status - Non-Contributing building**  
   **Address:** W. Wyatt Earp Boulevard (Boot Hill)  
   **Date of Construction:** built circa 1980  
   **Legal Description:** OT Dodge City; BLK: Pt. 29, 20, 23, 24  
   **Current Function:** RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum  
   **Architectural Classification:** OTHER  
   **Latitude / Longitude:** 37.75386 -100.02075  

   **Description:** This one-story frame building was built new circa 1980. It is located behind (north of) the blacksmith shop at the east end of the museum complex and is used as a shop/garage and not open to the public at the time of nomination. The building has board-and-batten wood siding and a single wood-panel door that is flanked by two four-light fixed wood windows. The false front obscures the gable roof. A fixed shed canopy on the front of the building serves as a porch like many of the buildings in the Front Street replica.  

   **History:** This building was built new at the Boot Hill Museum ca. 1980.  

   **Integrity:** The building is contemporary construction and is not associated with Boot Hill Museum during the period of significance. It is a non-contributing member of the district.

9. **Shop 2**  
   **Status - Non-Contributing building**  
   **Address:** W. Wyatt Earp Boulevard (Boot Hill)  
   **Date of Construction:** built circa 1980  
   **Legal Description:** OT Dodge City; BLK: Pt. 29, 20, 23, 24  
   **Current Function:** RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum  
   **Architectural Classification:** OTHER  
   **Latitude / Longitude:** 37.75393 -100.02073  

   **Description:** This one-story frame building was built new circa 1980. It is located next to (north of) Shop 1 at the east end of the museum complex. It is used as a shop/garage and is not open to the public at the time of
nomination. The building has large-profile metal siding and a false front obscures the low-pitched gable roof. The rafter tails are exposed. A fixed shed canopy on the front of the building serves as a porch.

**History:** This building was built new at the Boot Hill Museum ca. 1980.

**Integrity:** The building is contemporary construction and is not associated with Boot Hill during the period of significance. It is a non-contributing member of the district.

10. **Hardesty House**

**Status – Contributing building**

**Address:** W. Wyatt Earp Boulevard (Boot Hill)

**Date of Construction:** 1879; Moved to Boot Hill Museum in 1969

**Legal Description:** OT Dodge City; BLK: Pt. 29, 20, 23, 24

**Current Function:** RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

**Architectural Classification:** LATE VICTORIAN: Gothic Revival

**Description:** The two-story frame house is one of several resources that have been moved to the Boot Hill Museum. It features a cross-gable configuration with a wood shingle roof. The gable ends have decorative barge boards and paired brackets at the eaves. A pair of pointed-arch windows is located in the south gable-end and it has a one-story projecting bay on the ground floor. The west gable-end features a two-story projecting bay. The exterior is wood clapboard and the foundation is concrete block. The house appears to be constructed from a standardized Gothic Revival plan, such as those distributed widely by 20th century architects Alexander Jackson Davis and Andrew Jackson Downing. It is an early and rare example of a Gothic Revival residence in Dodge City.

**History:** This home was built for Dodge City mayor A. B. Webster in 1879. In 1880, it was purchased by Colonel R. J. Hardesty. Hardesty had left Kentucky with his three brothers to mine in the Rocky Mountains. He made his fortune raising cattle. Hardesty married Margaret Mattus, a sister of Fred Harvey's wife. Hardesty died in 1910. The house was donated to the Boot Hill Museum in 1969 by the Skelly Oil Company, and thereafter relocated to the museum grounds from its original location on Chestnut Street.  

**Integrity:** The house is one of several resources moved to the museum complex. Although it was moved to the complex after the period of significance, it is classified as a contributor to the historic district because it meets Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties since it derives its primary significance from its architecture. It retains integrity of design, workmanship, materials, and feeling.

11. **Outhouse #2**

**Status – Non-Contributing building**

**Address:** W. Wyatt Earp Boulevard (Boot Hill)

**Date of Construction:** unknown; Moved to the Boot Hill Museum circa 1970

**Legal Description:** OT Dodge City; BLK: Pt. 29, 20, 23, 24

**Current Function:** RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

**Architectural Classification:** OTHER

**Latitude / Longitude:** 37.75388 -100.02098

**Description:** This outhouse was moved to the Boot Hill Museum circa 1970. It is located between the Hardesty House (to the east) and the schoolhouse (to the west). The outhouse has a square footprint, a shed roof with wood shingles, and board-and-batten siding. The board-and-batten door is on the south side of the outhouse.

**History:** This outhouse was likely donated to the Boot Hill Museum in ca. 1970, at the time the museum expanded to include the Hardesty House and school. Outhouses were abandoned in the surrounding rural areas in the late 1960s and early 1970s as farm families converted to indoor plumbing.

**Integrity:** The outhouse is one of several resources moved to the museum complex. This building was relocated after the period of significance. It does not meet Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties and, therefore it is classified as a non-contributor to the district.

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5 Don Richards, “Boot Hill: Dodge City, Kansas,” Kansas Heritage Center.
12. **School**

**Address:** W. Wyatt Earp Boulevard (Boot Hill)

**Date of Construction:** Built circa 1915 / Relocated to the Boot Hill Museum in 1977

**Legal Description:** OT Dodge City; BLK: Pt. 29, 20, 23, 24

**Current Function:** RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

**Architectural Classification:** OTHER

**Status - Non-Contributing building**

**Latitude / Longitude:** 37.75387 -100.02107

**Description:** This one-story frame school was moved to the Boot Hill Museum in 1977. It is located in the row of free-standing buildings immediately east of the Front Street replica. The school features a square plan with a pyramidal roof that has flat, wide eaves. The roof has wood shingles and the siding is narrow clapboard. The windows are one-over-one double-hung wood units with screens. A one-story porch with a shallow hipped roof spans the center portion of the south facade. The porch has square wood columns and a simple wood rail; a ramp has been added to the west end of the porch to make the building accessible. A paneled wood door with a single-light transom in the center of the south facade is the primary entrance into the building. The entry is flanked by two windows.

**History:** This one-room country school was constructed in Haviland, Kansas about 1915. It was later moved to Bucklin. It was moved to the Boot Hill Museum in 1977. For a brief period beginning in 1977, the building housed the Kansas Teachers’ Hall of Fame.6

**Integrity:** The school house is one of many resources moved to the museum complex. This building was relocated after the period of significance. It does not meet Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties and, therefore it is classified as a non-contributor to the district.

13. **Front Street Replica**

**Address:** W. Wyatt Earp Boulevard (Boot Hill)

**Date of Construction:** Built 1958 & 1964

**Legal Description:** OT Dodge City; BLK: Pt. 29, 20, 23, 24

**Current Function:** RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

**Architectural Classification:** OTHER

**Status – Contributing building**

**Latitude / Longitude:** 37.75388 -100.02151

**Description:** The Front Street replica is one of the six existing resources that were constructed in place at the Boot Hill Museum. It was designed to replicate the original Front Street some of which burned in the 19th century and the remainder of which was removed during urban renewal in the mid-20th century. The design replicated the original appearance and the actual businesses, primarily from historic photographs. The resource was built in two phases in 1958 and 1964 and includes fifteen “storefronts.” Most of the “buildings” are one-story and have false fronts that obscure a gable roof or flat roof. The steel and frame buildings were built on concrete foundations and have wood siding including clapboard, board-and-batten, and drop siding. The facades include simple parapet caps and ornate cornices. The upper facades are used for business signage. Each storefront has a fixed wood awning with wood shingles, supported by wood posts. The precise configuration of each storefront varies but generally includes a central door flanked by display windows.

**History:** This building is a 1958 replica of Dodge City’s Front Street, from Railroad Avenue (now Central) to Bridge Street (now 2nd Avenue), as it appeared in 1875. The City of Dodge City obtained the Boot Hill property with plans to construct a shrine for the "Cowboy Capital of the World." When it lost its bid for the museum to Oklahoma City, the city decided instead to construct a replica of Dodge City’s Front Street. Original plans would have created a generic representation or “movie set” version of Front Street. Plans for a more authentic replica were developed by Dodge City architect Gene Gurtner (1922-2008), who received his architecture degree from Kansas State University in 1949. (See Figure 11) At the time, none of the original wood-frame Front Street buildings remained. They had been replaced by more substantial masonry buildings by the early 20th century when Dodge City was determined to shake its rowdy image and portray the appearance of a Progressive city. So, Gurtner developed plans after study of historic photographs of Front Street. The 1958 replica opened July 1958.

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In 1964, the same year the museum acquired its Beesom collection and attendance hovered at 400,000, Boot Hill completed a $250,000 addition that included basement-level collections facilities.7

**Integrity:** The Front Street Replica was constructed during the museum’s period of significance and it retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It is a contributor to the historic district.

### 14. Jail

**Status – Contributing Building**

**Address:** W. Wyatt Earp Boulevard (Boot Hill)

**Date of Construction:** Built circa 1870-1890 / Moved to Boot Hill Museum in 1953

**Legal Description:** OT Dodge City; BLK: Pt. 29, 20, 23, 24

**Current Function:** RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

**Architectural Classification:** OTHER

**Latitude / Longitude:** 37.75413 -100.02232

**Description:** This one-story frame building was moved from nearby Fort Dodge/Soldiers’ Home to the Boot Hill Museum in 1953. Today it is interpreted as a small jail, but it is not believed to have historically functioned as such. The building has a rectangular plan and a hipped roof. The roof is wood shingles and the exterior siding is clapboard. It is a one-room building with a single door flanked by two small openings (open-air windows) – all on the east elevation. The building is situated on the hill north of the Great Western Hotel entrance/gift shop and is accessed by concrete steps. Beyond the jail to the north is the Plains Museum.

**History:** The building came from the Fort Dodge/Soldiers’ Home and was likely constructed in between 1870 and 1890. It was one of the first historic buildings moved to the Boot Hill Museum – on November 1, 1953. Dodge City men dressed as bandits and "stole" the building under the cloak of darkness.8

**Integrity:** The jail is one of several resources moved to the museum complex. This building was relocated during the period of significance, and it retains integrity from this period. It is classified as a contributor to the district.

### 15. Plains Museum

**Status – Contributing Building**

**Address:** W. Wyatt Earp Boulevard (Boot Hill)

**Date of Construction:** 1947

**Legal Description:** OT Dodge City; BLK: Pt. 20

**Current Function:** RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

**Architectural Classification:** OTHER

**Latitude / Longitude:** 37.75433 -100.02229

**Description:** This resource is the original Boot Hill Museum building and served as the original museum. It is located at the northwest corner of the museum complex on the hill above the jail overlooking the Great Western Hotel. It now houses the People of the Plains exhibit. The building is a one-story concrete and frame structure with newer vertical wood siding on the building’s south-facing elevation. The building features an L-shape plan and has a shallow shed roof. The roof extends to cover a porch on the south and west sides of the building. The west and north sides of the building have a stucco finish. A shed roof provides shelter at the rear (north side) of the building. The replica Boot Hill Cemetery is located directly behind (to the north) of the Plains Museum.

**History:** This building was the original museum. Local boosters broke ground for this building on March 26, 1947.9

**Integrity:** The building is located in its original location and its construction falls within the period of significance. It retains integrity from the period of significance, and is classified as a contributor to the historic district.

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8 Boot Hill Museum, Exhibit

9 Ibid.
16. **Cemetery/Hanging Tree**

**Status – Contributing Site**

- **Address**: W. Wyatt Earp Boulevard (Boot Hill)
- **Date of Construction**: 1872/1879/1947/1977
- **Legal Description**: OT Dodge City; BLK: Pt. 20
- **Current Function**: RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum
- **Architectural Classification**: OTHER
- **Latitude / Longitude**: 37.75446 -100.02229

**Description**: This resource is a focal point of the Boot Hill Museum. This replica cemetery is a small lot at the rear of the original museum at the northwest corner of the museum complex. The non-original headstones on the grass lot commemorate the notable individuals who died in Dodge City’s woolly days and were buried on Boot Hill from the time of Dodge City’s early settlement in 1872 until the establishment of Prairie Grove Cemetery in 1878. The site also includes a “hanging” tree. The cemetery is accessed by a stone path; it is enclosed by a wood fence on the north, and west sides, a concrete wall on the west, and bordered by the museum building on the south.

**History**: This was the location of Dodge City’s Boot Hill graveyard, established in 1872. In 1879, in preparation for the construction of the Third Ward School on this location, Coroner J. W. Straughn moved the human remains and headstones to Prairie Grove Cemetery. In the 1920s, after the school was abandoned, citizens rallied to protect Boot Hill from being leveled. Amidst this pressure, the city purchased the site for construction to protect its “historical value.” In 1928, local town boosters set up plaster headstones nearby to create a buzz among attendees to the state Republican convention. From that point forward, the site around the adjacent municipal building has been used to commemorate Boot Hill as a tourist site. Over time, the site evolved into Boot Hill Museum. In 1977, after the previous hanging tree was destroyed by lightning, the museum acquired this hanging tree from Horse Thief Canyon on north US 283 “where the previous tree was obtained.”

**Integrity**: The cemetery/hanging tree are part of the grounds of the museum and have been marketed to visitors since the museum opened in 1947. Its significance falls within the period of significance, and because no burials remain, it does not need to meet the requirements of Criteria Consideration D: Cemeteries. The replica cemetery likely acquired its current appearance when the adjacent museum building was completed in 1947.

17. **Municipal Building**

**Status – Contributing Building**

- **Address**: 501 W. Spruce
- **Date of Construction**: 1929-1930
- **Legal Description**: OT Dodge City; BLK: 20
- **Current Function**: VACANT/NOT IN USE
- **Architectural Classification**: LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Spanish Colonial Revival

**Description**: This 2-1/2-story Spanish Colonial Revival building is distinguished by its clay tile roof and complex roof-line. The building was constructed in 1929 and 1930 to serve as City Hall, including the police and fire departments. The plan configuration is generally a T-shape. It is a tan brick building with stone detailing and a red clay tile roof. The primary leg of the building is oriented east/west and is comprised of three parts: a wide center bay slightly taller than asymmetrical end bays. A cross-gable extends the building toward the south on the east end of the building. An ornate stone surround defines the City Hall entrance on the east end of the building. A metal balcony is located off the upper level in the center of the gable end. A tall chimney extends above the roof between the center and west bays. The west end of the building served the police and fire departments. The side-facing gable roof extended to enclose a one-story entry bay for the police and fire departments. The cross leg of the “T” has an intersecting gable roof on the west end of the building. This bay had two apparatus doors on the north facade, for the fire engines. A hose tower, located between the police/fire entrance and the garage bay, projects above the two-story building and features an arched window opening. The building features multi-light steel casement windows with rounded stone sills. Brick quoining defines the corners of the building and an ornate frieze terminates the brick facade. The building appears to have experienced foundation damage from moisture penetration and non-matching brick has been used for former repairs.

**History**: The Municipal Building was built in 1929 by Dodge City contractor J. N. Parham from plans by Mann and Company architects. The building replaced the city’s first permanent city hall, constructed in 1888. The

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10 Dodge City Commission, Resolution 153.
cornerstone was set in 1929, and the building was completed in 1930. It originally housed city offices, city courts, police department, jail and fire station. Although early plans for the municipal building included a museum addition, it was value-engineered out. In 1928, when Dodge City hosted the State Republican Convention, boosters set up fake grave markers on Boot Hill. The phony cemetery would come to dominate the front lawn of the new municipal building, becoming so popular that the Junior Chamber of Commerce left them there. In 1947, the city finally granted the Junior Chamber of Commerce permission to "construct and operate a historical structure and concession on boot hill." At that time, the attraction was separated from city hall. In 1960, just two years after the Front Street replica opened, plans for an expansion were begun. As the Boot Hill Museum expanded, the city offices were moved in 1965 out of the municipal building to a new location. The fire department and Chamber of Commerce continued to operate there. The City began planning a new fire station in the 1970s, but it was not built and dedicated until 1990. The municipal building housed the offices of the The Chamber of Commerce and The Development Corporation until January 2001. Since then, it has been used for storage and by the fire department for training purposes.

Integrity: The old Municipal Building is an outstanding resource in downtown Dodge City and maintains a good degree of historic integrity with original features including the clay tile roof and steel windows. Given its architectural significance and its integral role in the early development of Boot Hill as a tourist destination, the building is a contributing member of the historic district.

18. Cowboy Statue  Status – Contributing Object
Address: 501 W. Spruce
Date of Construction: 1927-1929
Legal Description: OT Dodge City; BLK: 20
Current Function: VACANT/NOT IN USE
Architectural Classification: N/A

Artist: Oscar H. Simpson, DDS; Al M. Bissing, DDS assisted in flaking model and pouring concrete
Model: Joseph Sughrue

Description: The Cowboy Statue is situated in the front lawn of the former Municipal Building - less than 100 feet from the building's northeast corner. The sculpture itself is made of concrete from mold of the likeness of Joseph Sughrue. It faces east and rests on a buff brick base. The sculpture’s measurements 84 inches in height, 25 inches wide, and 24 inches deep. The base is 10 inches in height, 25 inches wide, and 35 inches deep. The brick pedestal measures 52 inches in height, 39 inches wide, and 46 inches deep.13

There is a bronze plaque set within the east face of the brick base that reads: ON THE ASHES / OF MY CAMPFIRE / THIS CITY IS BUILT / MODELED BY O.H. SIMPSON, D.D.S. / PIONEER DENTIST / 1927

There is a small bronze plaque set within the concrete base directly beneath the feet of the statue that reads: THE MODEL FOR THIS STATUE WAS / JOE SUGHRUE / A COWBOY AND LATER DODGE CITY CHIEF OF POLICE / FROM 1933 TO 1936

Significance: The Cowboy Statue was dedicated on November 4, 1929 as the cornerstone was set for the construction of the municipal building. The statue is the earliest physical evidence on Boot Hill of commemorative efforts to recognize the area’s cowtown history.

Dr. Oscar H. Simpson, early resident and dentist, developed the technique of casting gold inlays and introducing it to the dentistry profession, and he used a version of this technique in developing his interest in concrete as a medium to express his artistic abilities and historical interests. In his retirement, he became known locally for his concrete art. For his work on the Cowboy Statue, he picked local police officer Joseph Sughrue as the model because he most reminded Simpson of a typical late nineteenth century cowboy. With assistance from fellow dentist Al M. Bissing and an unidentified postal employee, Simpson used plaster of paris to create a mold of Sughrue, who “was encased between two flasks (mold) halves. During the pouring and setting of the top (anterior portion of Sughrue’s body) flask half, rubber hoses to the model’s nose and vented to the outside enabled the

13 Measurements taken 18 May 1994 by B. Richard Dryden, DDS. [KSHS, Cultural Resources Division, Save Outdoor Sculpture file.]
human model to breathe for 45 minutes. Upon removing Sughrue from the completed mold, concrete was poured and reinforced in four sections: lower legs, upper legs, torso, and head and shoulders. The cowboy hat, revolver and spurs were melded to the concrete body last.  

**Integrity:** The Cowboy Statue is in fair condition and is in need of rehabilitation. It has stood on the lawn of the municipal building for over 80 years with little maintenance. At some point a slurry coating was applied to the statue as a means of protecting it, but this slurry is failing and needs to be removed to prevent further damage. The monument contributes to the significance of the district.

**19. Oxen-head Trail Monument**

**Status – Contributing Object**

**Address:** 501 W. Spruce  
**Date of Construction:** 1932  
**Legal Description:** OT Dodge City; BLK: 20  
**Current Function:** VACANT/NOT IN USE  
**Architectural Classification:** N/A

*Artist: Oscar H. Simpson, DDS*

**Description:** The Oxen Monument is situated in the front lawn of the former Municipal Building, just steps from the front (east) entrance on the south side of the sidewalk. The sculpture faces east and includes two oxen heads made of concrete mounted to a buff brick base that is topped by a concrete cap. The monument is 60 inches tall, 86 inches wide, and 63 inches deep.

The north face of the base includes a bronze plaque that reads: MY TRAILS / HAVE BECOME / YOUR HIGHWAYS / SEVEN MILLION HEAD / OF LONGHORNS / MARKETED FROM / DODGE CITY / 70’S – 80’S / LEST WE FORGET / MODELED BY / O.H. SIMPSON, D.D.S.

**Significance:** In 1932, three years after completing the Cowboy Statue, Simpson finished another concrete monument that was placed on the lawn of the Municipal Building – the Oxen-head Trail Monument. The marker commemorates the freighters and cattlemen of the nineteenth century who passed through this area on the overland trails.

**Integrity:** The Oxen-head Trail Monument is in good condition, and very much appears as it did when it was completed. The concrete oxen heads are painted and have retained their form and materials quite well. The monument contributes to the commemorative significance of the district.

**20. Bell Commemorative Marker**

**Status – Contributing Object**

**Address:** 501 W. Spruce  
**Date of Construction:** 1939  
**Legal Description:** OT Dodge City; BLK: 20  
**Current Function:** VACANT/NOT IN USE  
**Architectural Classification:** N/A

*Artist: National Youth Administration / Junior Chamber of Commerce*

**Description:** The bell marker is situated in the front lawn of the former municipal building, just steps from the front (east) entrance on the north side of the sidewalk (between the Oxen monument to the south and the Cowboy Statue to the north). The monument faces east and includes a two-tier buff brick base with the bell at the top. Each tier is topped by a concrete cap. The base tier includes a water spigot on the north face, below which is a small reservoir for catching water. The top of the base tier includes a non-functioning fountain. There is a step centered in front of the base indicating this may have been a drinking fountain. The monument is 96 inches tall, 49 inches wide, and 61 inches deep.

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14 B. Richard Dryden, DDS. “Save Outdoor Sculpture! SOS! Survey Questionnaire,” (Compiled 18 May 1994), 6. [KSHS, Cultural Resources Division, Save Outdoor Sculpture file.]
There is a bronze plaque set within the east face of the brick base tier that reads: H.B. (HAM) BELL / DEPUTY U.S. MARSHAL, / PIONEER SHERIFF / MAYOR OF DODGE CITY / AND GRAND OLD MAN / OF THE SOUTHWEST / SINCE 1874 / THIS FOUNTAIN ERECTED BY / THE JUNIOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE / 1939

There is a small bronze plaque set within the south face of the brick base that reads: A-D-1939 / NATIONAL YOUTH / ADMINISTRATION / WORK PROJECT

**Significance:** The monument was erected in 1939 in honor of “pioneer” sheriff and early mayor Hamilton B. Bell. This was the third commemorative marker erected during a ten-year span recognizing Dodge City’s early history. This monument has added significance in that it was part of a New Deal work project sponsored by the National Youth Administration.

**Integrity:** The Bell Commemorative Monument is in fair condition, and very much appears as it did when it was completed. It is equipped with a fountain mechanism, but this is not functioning. The monument contributes to the commemorative significance of the district.

21. **Centennial Monument**

   **Address:** 501 W. Spruce  
   **Date of Construction:** 1972  
   **Legal Description:** OT Dodge City; BLK: 20  
   **Current Function:** VACANT/NOT IN USE  
   **Architectural Classification:** N/A

   **Artist:** DeRos Hogue, architect\(^{15}\)

   This monument is located approximately 20 feet southeast of the Cowboy Statue. It consists of a square concrete pad (outlined with inlaid red bricks) with a monument in the middle surrounded by four free-standing buff brick and concrete pedestals at the corners. These corner pedestals each have an inlaid stone or metal plaque that faces toward the larger central monument, which is also made of buff. The larger monument has four buttressed corners and a tall central spire topped by a medallion that reads DODGE CITY, KANSAS / 1872 CENTENNIAL 1972.

   The monument is 15 feet tall and 17 feet wide. The central structure is 7 feet wide with a brick base measuring 80 inches in height. The four smaller pedestals each measure 48 inches in width and 32 inches in height.

   It is non-contributing because its date of construction does not fall within the period of significance.

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)

Entertainment/Recreation

Education

Architecture

Period of Significance
1927-1964

Significant Dates

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Gene Gurtner, Mann and Company (architects)

J. N. Parham (Builder)

Oscar H. Simpson (Cowboy Statue Artist)

Period of Significance (justification)

The district’s period of significance begins in 1927 when the City of Dodge City acquired the former Boot Hill Cemetery property to construct a new municipal building and plan for a museum to commemorate the city’s early history. The period ends in 1964 when the final historic addition was made to the Front Street replica.
Criteria Considerations (justification)

Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties
As noted in National Register Bulletin 15, “A property removed from its original or historically significant location can be eligible if it is significant primarily for architectural value or it is the surviving property most importantly associated with a historic person or event.” Boot Hill Museum is an artificially created grouping of buildings, structures, and objects made up of a mix of moved and replicated resources brought together for the primary purpose of tourism. An artificially created grouping is not eligible unless it has achieved significance since the time of its assemblage, and it cannot be considered a reflection of the time period when the individual buildings were constructed. Therefore, determining when resources were constructed at or relocated to the Boot Hill Museum is key in defining the contributing or non-contributing status of individual resources.

There are ten resources that were moved to the Boot Hill Museum beginning in 1953. Only two of these ten relocated resources (jail and locomotive) were moved to Boot Hill Museum during the period of significance, which is 1927-1964. After assessing the potential eligibility for all ten moved resources, two other resources (depot and Hardesty House) were determined to meet Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties even though they were moved to the site after the period of significance. The depot and the Hardesty House meet Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties because they do not derive significance from their associations with Boot Hill Museum, but rather their architectural value.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

For nearly a century, Dodge City’s livelihood has depended upon its ability to reinvent itself. It was born of the Santa Fe Trail, danced to the rhythm of the Santa Fe Railroad, and looked to the New Santa Fe Trail, Highway 50, for renewal. While Dodge City was remaking itself, the entertainment industry was capitalizing on its place in American popular culture – as the stereotypical Wild West town. While the protagonists of dime novels, movies and television series’ like Gunsmoke’s Matt Dillon were telling bad guys to “get the heck out of Dodge,” tourists flocked to the legendary town. By the mid-20th century, the city’s efforts to live down its rowdy past were overwhelmed by the potential for capitalizing on it. For much of the past fifty years, the community has supported dueling downtowns – a traditional commercial district interpretive of various periods of development and a replica of the city’s infamously raucous Front Street on the property known as Boot Hill Museum.

The Boot Hill Museum is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Roadside Kansas multiple property nomination as an example of the Roadside Attraction property type. It is nominated under Criterion A in the areas of Entertainment/Recreation and Education as a museum that interprets Dodge City’s history as a cowtown and for its association with Dodge City’s tourism industry. In addition, it is being nominated under Criterion C in the area of Architecture.

Elaboration

The Development of Outdoor Museums in the United States and Kansas

The modern preservation movement in the United States traces its roots back to the mid-19th century and to people like Ann Pamela Cunningham and the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association who purchased George Washington’s then-dilapidated residence in 1858 with the intention of saving it and turning it into a shrine to early American history. Other similar efforts to save nationally significant properties, including Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage and the Alamo in San Antonio, also occurred during the mid- and late-19th century. Early preservation success stories like these involved almost a religious attitude toward early American history and patriotism. To that end, many “saved” buildings were opened to the public as museums and national shrines.

House museums represent the earliest form of preservation in the United States; but at the same time, a new form of preservation was emerging in Europe. In the 1870s, Sweden’s Artur Hazelius began collecting buildings and “artifacts of
the common man" with the hope of instilling "a new sense of patriotism in his country."\textsuperscript{16} He collected buildings from throughout Sweden and opened his outdoor museum Skansen in Stockholm in 1891, hiring guides clothed in folk costumes to lend authenticity to the visitor experience. Others in Europe mimicked Hazélius’s idea and outdoor museums appeared in other Scandinavian countries such as Norway and Finland by 1910.

This outdoor museum phenomenon took root in the United States with the establishment of Colonial Williamsburg in 1926\textsuperscript{17} and Greenfield Village in 1928.\textsuperscript{18} John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who provided the financial support for the development of Colonial Williamsburg, worked with Reverend W. A. R. Goodwin to secure land and buildings all in an effort to celebrate the area’s colonial history. Many of the missing Colonial structures were reconstructed on their original sites in the 1930s, while others were restored. Not to be left out, Henry Ford established Greenfield Village in 1928 with a combination of relocated and recreated historic buildings. Like Skansen, both Greenfield and Williamsburg featured costumed docents and artisans intended to maximize visitor experience.

There are several terms used to describe outdoor museums including open-air museums, heritage parks, and even building zoos. The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines ‘outdoor museum’ as “…a restored, re-created or replica village site in which several or many structures have been restored, rebuilt, or moved and whose purpose is to interpret a historical or cultural setting, period, or activity.”\textsuperscript{19} The National Park Service calls these outdoor museums “artificially created groupings” and notes that because the various elements have been removed from their original contexts, they “cannot be considered as a reflection of the time period when the individual buildings were constructed.”\textsuperscript{20}

These outdoor museums take many forms and range from the well-known Colonial Williamsburg and Greenfield Village to smaller Kansas examples like Wichita’s Cowtown, Boot Hill in Dodge City, Old Abilene Town in Abilene, or any of the dozens found throughout small towns in Kansas. Author William J. Murtagh suggests outdoor museums are generally found in three forms. “They may consist of original buildings, on their original sites, preserved and operated as a museum for educational purposes. Or they may be buildings of historical or aesthetic interest moved to a new site for similar purposes. Or they may be composed of totally reconstructed buildings built with the same educational aim in mind.”\textsuperscript{21} Outdoor museums in Kansas often include examples combining all three forms – original buildings, moved buildings, and reconstructed/new buildings.

Kansas’s earliest outdoor museums date to the 1950s and 1960s and were undoubtedly influenced by Hollywood’s popular western-themed television shows. Until Hollywood introduced Americans to a remade version of Wild West, these communities had largely avoided their cowtown roots, instead focusing on their business and agrarian roots.\textsuperscript{22} Those communities without a colorful cowtown history generally embraced an idealized version of 19\textsuperscript{th} century life in small town Kansas. Tourism dollars were an obvious incentive to embrace these cowtown and agrarian roots, especially as local, state, and National centennial celebrations approached.

In many cases, outdoor museums represent a combination of both historic preservation and heritage tourism. An excellent and early example of this is Wichita’s Cowtown Museum. Wichitans concerned about the loss of some of the city’s oldest buildings began purchasing dilapidated structures in the 1940s and, in 1950, formed Historic Wichita, Inc., which eventually developed Cowtown Museum.\textsuperscript{23} Another example is Old Abilene Town in Abilene. This collection of historic buildings, all original to the Abilene vicinity, was assembled near the original town-site beginning with the Rock Island Depot in 1959 and throughout the 1960s in an effort to preserve and communicate the history of the town as the


\textsuperscript{19} As quoted in: Murtagh, Keeping Time, 213, 216.


\textsuperscript{21} Murtagh, Keeping Time, 90.


\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 308.
terminus of the Texas cattle trail. The park’s location along Kansas Highway 15 is across the street to the south of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Museum and Library complex, which was in development by the mid-1950s.24

Like Old Abilene Town, many outdoor museums in Kansas are found alongside state highways or other major thoroughfares, which illustrates an attempt to showcase local heritage through tourism. In addition to Boot Hill, which is located along Highway 50, examples include the following: the Barton County Historical Society’s museum and village along U.S. Highway 281, which began in 1964 and includes seven historic buildings and four modern buildings; a complex of five relocated historic buildings along U.S. Highway 24 in Clay Center, some of which have been on the site since at least 1973; the Hodgden House Museum Complex along Kansas Highway 14 in Ellsworth, which includes a combination of relocated historic buildings and others original to the site; and the Old Jefferson Town complex located along U.S. Highway 59 in Oskaloosa, which includes ten historic resources and two reconstructed buildings.

Although no comprehensive study of outdoor museums in Kansas has been completed, several have been documented. In 1995, historian Cathy Ambler published a study of seven Kansas outdoor museums that represent the various forms outlined by Murtagh.25 Interestingly, none of her examples included any of the aforementioned cowtowns in Wichita, Dodge City, or Abilene, which may imply that cowtowns should be studied as a separate type of outdoor museum. Instead, Ambler documented sites that reflect an idealized version of a late 19th century small town in Kansas. She suggests that the number of these small sites in Kansas grew after 1974, “aided [in part] by legislation allowing cities, not just counties, to raise money through the mill levy,”26 and that although “each site boasts some uniqueness” in their account of local history, the communities represented in her study have selected many of the same types of buildings and structures to convey a similar version of an idealized history. Many include a school, church, town buildings, a residence, windmill, barn, etc., usually intended to reflect the late 19th century. As the NPS recommends, she stresses the importance of observing these collections of preserved, moved, and recreated buildings as a “whole museum creation”, and that the “collection tends to become more important than the origins of its elements.”27

These various examples of outdoor museums, including cowtowns, illustrate common themes of preservation and tourism. Often in an effort to stave off generic commercialization and to save their heritage, historical societies, community groups, and individuals went to great lengths to preserve, and in some cases to recreate, pieces of their early history. The result was “Old Town” where modern visitors could experience life as it was perceived to have been in days gone by. This brand of heritage tourism captured a period in history that was particularly significant to the locality.

The Development of Boot Hill Museum

“Give most children the choice of visiting Valley Forge or Dodge City ....Dodge City wins. It is more glamorous in their imagination than Valley Forge.”28

In the late 1920s, rumors swirled that Dodge City’s notorious Boot Hill was slated for leveling. Although county coroner J. W. Straughn had moved the casualties of the city’s early shootouts to the Prairie Grove Cemetery in 1879, Boot Hill still captivated Dodge City Citizens. A number of dynamics – the deaths of many early pioneers, the re-introduction of cowboys like Will Rogers into American popular culture, and the new auto tourism business – converged to save and capitalize on Boot Hill.

The rumors were spurred when the Dodge City schools abandoned the Third Ward School, one of two schools that had occupied the site since 1880. If someone did not take action, a developer could level the historic burial place of the city’s rowdiest characters. In July 1925, the city council considered a resolution to purchase the property. The council passed Ordinance 614, which called for a special election to purchase Boot Hill. City fathers played a key role in saving the landmark, asserting the place’s significance as a potential tourist attraction. In a joint letter to the editor, fourteen boosters

24 For more information about the early development of Old Abilene Town, see Mary Jane Oard, “Rock Island Depot” National Register of Historic Places nomination (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 2010), 7-8.
urged voters’ support, noting that “Boot Hill … could be converted into one of the show places of the city … the historical value of the tract should be capitalized.” The measure carried in early April 1927 and the city issued $12,000 in bonds to buy the property.

As soon as the city bought Boot Hill, advocates from Dodge City and beyond began agitating for a museum there. A. B. McDonald, a feature writer for the *Kansas City Star* urged the city “to start a movement to establish some sort of museum into which all the relics of the early days might be brought and preserved.” In 1928, Dodge City hosted the State Republican Convention. On a lark, the hosts set up fake grave markers on Boot Hill. Although the phony cemetery would come to dominate the front lawn of the new municipal building, the headstones were so popular that the Junior Chamber of Commerce left them there. Although early plans for the municipal building (1930) included a museum addition, it was value-engineered out. For decades, pioneers Dr. O. H. Simpson and Heinie Schmidt settled for the headstones and plaster statues to commemorate the city’s cowtown days.

By the time the new municipal building was completed, the stock market had crashed – and, some feared, Boot Hill was destined for the same fate. The city fathers assuaged their actions by touting the project’s work-relief prospects. On January 31, 1931, a front-page headline read, “More than 100 Men Get Jobs on Boot Hill.” The small print noted that the men would use shovels to level Boot Hill “to the height of the retaining wall around it” for 30 cents per hour and 20 cents per load. When boosters were not convinced of the project’s merit, city commissioners hedged that it “believe[ed] the slope and terrace, when it [was] landscaped [would] be a sightly background for whatever historical setting is used on the hill…”

Meantime, ideas for proposed “historical settings” came pouring in. Among them was a plan to take the newly flattened landscape and create a three-dimensional replica “western landscape,” a “Historic Shrine” that would look more like a southwest plateau than anything found in Dodge City. The agitators were further emboldened when an estimated 200 gawkers and tourists visited the historic Boot Hill on one September Sunday in 1935. By this time, the visitors likely included not only auto tourists, but also some of the throngs of citizens fleeing the Plains for greener pastures in California. The hemorrhage was stemmed in part by New Deal programs, like the Museum Extension Service, which announced plans in 1937 to employ 60 area citizens. The museum service likely spurred efforts among area volunteers to start a Boot Hill museum. But perhaps the driving force was the 1939 World Premiere of the movie “Dodge City,” which firmly placed the town within the popular culture lexicon (see above). In November 1940, the Junior Chamber of Commerce was successful in convincing the city commission to issue bonds to construct a museum on Boot Hill.

Plans for a Boot Hill museum were delayed as the nation turned its resources and attention to the war effort. The nation’s fascination with the West continued during the war, when Hollywood cranked out nearly 200 westerns. As soon as the war ended, however, the effort to building a Boot Hill museum resumed. In April 1946, the mayor outlined his proposal for the leveled landscape: “The plan,” noted the *Globe*, “is to build a commercially profitable ‘movie set’ of Front Street in Dodge City.”

In 1947, the city finally granted the Junior Chamber of Commerce permission to “construct and operate a historical structure and concession on boot hill.” Merritt Beeson, son of pioneer and Cowboy Band leader Chalk Beeson, broke the sod for the new building, which was sited west of the 1930 Municipal Building. It had a simple glazed-tile design built to house the Beeson collection of artifacts. Over time, the building took on a more stereotypical outpost appearance with the addition of logs.

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29 *Dodge City Globe*, 2 April 1927.
30 Ibid., 13 November 1928.
31 Resolution 153.
32 *Dodge City Globe*, 31 January 1931.
33 Ibid., 3 March 1932.
34 Ibid. 10 November 1931.
36 Dodge City Commission Minutes, 29 November 1940.
38 Resolution 406, 26 March 1947.
It had taken more than 20 years, but the Boot Hill museum was finally off the ground. The museum’s growth was slow at first; 43,000 visited in 1949. But the Junior Chamber of Commerce remained committed to capitalizing on the city’s past. In 1953, Dodge City men dressed as bandits, “stole” the Fort Dodge jail under the cloak of darkness, and relocated it to Boot Hill. In 1955, Dodge City was in the running to house the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. Elaborate plans for a cowboy shrine were abandoned when Oklahoma City, home of the ill-fated cowboy humorist Will Rogers, was named. Though disappointed, Dodge Citians did not lose hope.

For years, the legend of Dodge City had provided fodder for Hollywood. Soon, Hollywood would return the favor. In 1955, CBS aired its first episode of Gunsmoke, a half-hour television program based upon a radio program of the same name. Each week, American families tuned into the show, held in suspense over whether the fictitious marshal Matt Dillon and saloon proprietor Miss Kitty would ever marry (they never did) or get caught up in a gun fight. Before Dodge Citians had heard of Gunsmoke, the shows devoted fans had heard of Dodge City. The show did not air in Dodge City for its first few years. By 1958, Gunsmoke was television’s #1 ranked show with an estimated 60 million viewers and the local post office was receiving mail addressed to Matt Dillon and Miss Kitty. Overnight Dodge City became a household name.

The town cashed in. In 1957, the city announced plans to construct a replica of Dodge City’s Front Street. City leaders had first proposed the idea of a “movie set” version of Front Street more than a decade earlier. Instead of a loose interpretation of Front Street, as originally proposed, the replica would be an accurate reproduction. The design was guided by local architect Gene Gurtner, who used historic documents and photographs to ensure the replica’s authenticity. Many of Dodge City’s original false-front business buildings had been lost in a series of devastating fires in the 1880s. By 1890, rows of two-story brick buildings lined Front Street. Because the original location was occupied by permanent Victorian-era buildings, the $80,000 Front Street replica would be located west of the heart of downtown, on the south side of the leveled Boot Hill. The replica opened with great fanfare in July 1958, just in time for the height of the tourist season. The city renamed Chestnut Street (Highway 50) Wyatt Earp Boulevard. Walnut Street was renamed Gunsmoke. It is the only street known to have been named after a television series.

In 1960, just two years after the replica opened, plans for an expansion were begun. In 1963, the Globe announced plans to triple the size of the replica. Oklahoma City might have been named home to the National Cowboy Hall of Fame – but Dodge City would not settle for less than “Cowboy Capital of the World.” After construction began in 1964, the Globe provided details:

The new addition will contain six storefronts with a total of 105 feet. It will complete the restoration of the first major block of the original Front Street. The construction is the first step in a proposed $250,000 expansion project that was initiated when the city exercised its option to purchase 48,250 square feet of land to be developed by Boot Hill, Inc., and Cowboy Capital of the World, Inc.

The addition would be built over a concrete basement, constructed to curate collections acquired from the Beeson Museum in 1964. These items represented the personal collections of pioneer bison-hunter, walking bank, peace officer, and Long Branch Saloon owner Chalk Beeson. As he collected his debts over the years, Beeson had acquired a great deal of artifacts associated with Dodge City’s wild-west days. The artifacts had been stored in the Chalk Beeson Theater and, later, in the original (1947) museum on Boot Hill. The addition was completed in time for the Longhorn Association of America to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the cattle drives by driving 150 Texas longhorns in front of the Front Street replica. Soon after the cattle drive, in 1969, the museum added the Hardesty House (1879) to the site.

As long as Gunsmoke remained on the air, the city saw a return on its investment. Visitation peaked at over 400,000. When CBS temporarily took the show off the air in 1967, the community panicked. Both the Dodge City Commission and

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41 Exhibit, Boot Hill Museum.
43 Boot Hill, Inc. Clippings, Kansas Heritage Center.
45 Ibid.
49 Richards, “Boot Hill: Dodge City, Kansas,” Kansas Heritage Center
the Kansas Legislature passed resolutions to urge CBS to put the show back on the air.  Although the impact of these actions is not clear, Hollywood legend has it that CBS Executive William Paley’s wife was outraged when Gunsmoke was cancelled. The network cancelled Gilligan’s Island to put Gunsmoke back on the air. The community, which admitted that Gunsmoke had “certainly made [tourism] a profitable enterprise,” had dodged a bullet.

But the longest-running series in television history could not remain on the air forever. In the words of the Globe, Gunsmoke “bit the dust” in 1975. The series had lasted twice as long as Dodge’s cowtown days. Perhaps the lightning strike that destroyed Boot Hill’s hanging tree in 1974 was an omen. Speculation about Dodge City’s future in tourism abounded. The Topeka Daily Capital wondered “With Gunsmoke off National TV Will the Ghost of Dodge Linger on Boot Hill?”

The museum tried to spend and promote its way out of the predicament. Early projects were reconstructions based upon historic documentation. Later projects followed the “building zoo” model which had swept the nation. In 1977, the museum moved in the Sitka Santa Fe Depot (1930) from Ashland and the Haviland School (1915) from Bucklin. Ironically, the wood-framed depot was more than thirty years younger than the extant historic Dodge City depot (1897), which by then stood derelict. It came to accompany a 1903 steam locomotive that was donated to the museum in 1954. Other projects included replacing the hanging tree with a new one from Horse Thief Canyon “where the previous tree was obtained.” In 1982, the museum reconstructed the Great Western Hotel, which was south of the tracks until it was razed in 1942.

Despite continued investment in the museum, annual visitation plunged 25%, from 400,000 to 300,000 in the years immediately following the cancellation of Gunsmoke. As visitation declined, the museum instituted an admission fee – charging $1 beginning in 1978. Visitations continued to decline during the 1980s and 1990s and today hovers at about 60,000. In 1996, the Convention and Visitors’ Bureau constructed a new visitors’ center on the southeast corner of the Boot Hill parcel. In 2000, an Applebee’s Restaurant was constructed north of the visitors’ center.

Conclusion

Dodge City’s livelihood has long depended upon its ability to reinvent itself. It was born of the Santa Fe Trail, developed with the coming of the Santa Fe Railroad, and looked to the New Santa Fe Trail - Highway 50 - for renewal. While Dodge City was remaking itself, the entertainment industry was capitalizing on its place in American popular culture - as the stereotypical Wild West town. While the protagonists of dime novels, movies, and television series like Gunsmoke’s Matt Dillon were telling bad guys to “get the heck out of Dodge,” tourists flocked to the legendary town. By the mid-20th century, the city’s efforts to live down its rowdy past were overwhelmed by the potential for capitalizing on it. Locals had been advocating for a Boot Hill museum as early as the 1920s, but it wasn’t until after the 1939 world premiere of the movie Dodge City, which firmly placed the town within the popular culture lexicon, that the city commission issued bonds to begin construction. The site developed in stages and was largely complete by 1964. Boot Hill Museum is nominated as part of the “Roadside Kansas” multiple property nomination for its significance in the areas of entertainment and education as a mid-20th century museum that interprets Dodge City’s history as a cowtown and for its association with the local tourism industry.

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50 Topeka Daily Capital, 1 April 1976.
51 Omaha World-Herald, 18 June 1972.
52 Dodge City Globe, 1 May 1975.
53 Ibid., 1 July 1977.
54 Topeka Daily Capital, 1 April 1976
55 Dodge City Globe, 1 July 1977.
56 Ibid., 15 May 1942.
57 Wichita Eagle, 26 May 1978.
9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography


Boot Hill Museum, Exhibit, Dodge City, Kansas.


City of Dodge City Files.


Dodge City Commission Minutes. 29 November 1940.

*Dodge City Globe.*

*Dodge City Journal.*

*Dodge City Times.*

Ford County Appraiser’s Records.


*Great Bend Tribune.*


*High Plains Journal.*

*Hutchinson News.*


*Kansas City Times.*

Kansas Heritage Center, Clippings.

Kansas State Census.
Boot Hill Museum
Name of Property
Ford County, Kansas
County and State

Lawrence Journal World.

Leavenworth Daily Commercial.


Omaha World-Herald.


Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.


Topeka Capital Journal.
Topeka Daily Capital.
Topeka Journal.

United States Census.


Wichita Eagle.

Wright, Robert M. Dodge City, the Cowboy Capital & the Great Southwest. Wichita, KS: Wichita Eagle, 1913. (K978.1/-F75/D66w).

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
donated 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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  Approximately 33
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References / Latitude & Longitude Coordinates (See Figure 1)
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

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<th>Zone</th>
<th>Easting</th>
<th>Northing</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundary of the nominated property begins at the junction of 5th Avenue and Spruce Street, east to 4th Avenue and Spruce Street, south to 4th Avenue to the property line, east to 3rd Avenue, south to the property line, west to the property line, south to the edge of the parking area, east to approximately 100 feet, south to property line at Wyatt Earp Boulevard, west to junction of Wyatt Earp Boulevard and 5th Avenue, and north to point of beginning. The boundaries are identified in Figure 1.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundaries include the historic boundary of the Boot Hill Museum and Municipal Building, the site from which Boot Hill Museum expanded.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title  Christy Davis & Sarah Martin (KSHS)
organization  Davis Preservation
street & number  909 ½ Kansas Ave, Suite 7
city or town  Topeka
state  KS
zip code  66612
e-mail  cdavis@davispreservation.com

date  8/22/2011
telephone  785-234-5053

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.
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: Boot Hill
City or Vicinity: Dodge City
County/State: Ford County, Kansas
Photographer: Brenda Spencer
Date of Photos: August 2008

Description of Photograph(s) and number:
1 of 13 Overall view of Front Street Replica, looking northeast.
2 of 13 Depot (contributing) and locomotive (contributing), looking southeast.
3 of 13 Great Western Hotel (non-contributing), looking north.
4 of 13 Church (non-contributing), looking east.
5 of 13 Threshers Cook Shack (non-contributing), looking southeast.
6 of 13 Blacksmith Shop and Shops 1 and 2 (non-contributing), looking northeast.
7 of 13 School (non-contributing) and Hardesty House (contributing), looking northeast.
8 of 13 West half of Front Street Replica (contributing), looking north toward Municipal Building (contributing).
9 of 13 East half of Front Street Replica (contributing), looking north.
10 of 13 Jail (contributing), looking southwest.
11 of 13 Original Boot Hill Museum (contributing), looking southwest.
12 of 13 Boot Hill Cemetery (contributing), looking northwest.
13 of 13 Municipal Building (contributing), looking southwest.

Property Owner:
(name) Boot Hill Museum, Inc.; City of Dodge City
(street & number) 500 W. Wyatt Earp Blvd
(city or town) Dodge City
(state) KS
(zip code) 67801

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.
Table 1: 28 Surviving Locomotives in Kansas
Source: www.steamlocomotive.com

<table>
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<td>Atchison, Atchison County:</td>
<td>ATSF 2-8-0 #811</td>
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<td>Chanute, Neosho County:</td>
<td>ATSF 2-8-0 #762</td>
<td>Display (Park)</td>
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<td>Display (Museum)</td>
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<td>Garden City Western 2-6-0 #25</td>
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<td>Sunk (Arkansas River, S of Larned)</td>
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<td>Lawrence, Douglas County:</td>
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Table 2: Sample of Outdoor Museums/Heritage Parks in Kansas

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<td>Abilene, Dickinson County:</td>
<td>Old Abilene Town</td>
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<td>Belleville, Republic County:</td>
<td>Republic County Historical Society Museum</td>
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<td>Clay Center, Clay County:</td>
<td>Historic building complex at junction of HWY 24 &amp; Crawford St.</td>
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<td>Colby, Thomas County:</td>
<td>Prairie Museum of Art &amp; History</td>
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<td>Dodge City, Ford County:</td>
<td>Boot Hill Museum</td>
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<td>Ellsworth, Ellsworth County:</td>
<td>Hodgden House Museum Complex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goessel, Marion County:</td>
<td>Mennonite Heritage &amp; Agricultural Museum</td>
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<td>Barton County Historical Society Museum &amp; Village</td>
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<td>Lindsborg, McPherson County:</td>
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<td>Onaga, Pottawatomie County:</td>
<td>Onaga Historical Society Complex</td>
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<td>Old Jefferson Town</td>
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<td>Sabetha, Nemaha County:</td>
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<td>Shawnee, Johnson County:</td>
<td>Shawnee Town</td>
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<td>Old Prairie Town at Ward Meade Park</td>
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<td>Wamego, Wabaunsee County:</td>
<td>Wamego Historical Society &amp; Museum</td>
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<td>Westmoreland, Pottawatomie Co:</td>
<td>Rock Creek Valley Historical Society Museum &amp; Complex</td>
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<td>Wichita, Sedgwick County:</td>
<td>Old Cowtown Museum</td>
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Figure 1: District Map

Dashed Line denotes district boundary. Numbers correspond with resource descriptions in section 7. Letters correspond with latitude/longitude coordinates noted below.

Datum = WGS84
A: N 37.75460 W 100.02241
B: N 37.75454 W 100.02140
C: N 37.75414 W 100.02141
D: N 37.75407 W 100.02059
E: N 37.75372 W 100.02064
F: N 37.75374 W 100.02101
G: N 37.75343 W 100.02101
H: N 37.75341 W 100.02078
I: N 37.75281 W 100.02086
J: N 37.75296 W 100.02255
Figure 2: Boot Hill, 1887 Sanborn Map showing Third Ward School, where the original Boot Hill Cemetery was located. The school was abandoned in the 1920s.

Figure 3: Boot Hill, 1892 Sanborn Map showing Third Ward School.
Figure 4: Boot Hill, 1932 Sanborn Map showing Municipal Hall, at the former location of the Boot Hill Cemetery and the Third Ward School.

Figure 5: Boot Hill, 1950 Sanborn Map showing Municipal Hall and Boot Hill Museum.
Figure 6: Boot Hill Cemetery on grounds of Municipal Hall, 1937. Kansas Heritage Center.

Figure 7: Construction of the Boot Hill Museum on top of Boot Hill in 1947.
Figure 8: Looking north at Boot Hill prior to the construction of the Front Street replica, circa 1957.

Figure 9: Looking northeast at Boot Hill prior to the construction of the Front Street replica, circa 1957.
Figure 10: Original Boot Hill Cemetery and Museum, ca. 1950. Kansas Heritage Center.

Figure 11: Architect's rendering for Front Street replica, 1958. Kansas Heritage Center.
Figure 9: Front Street replica, ca. 1958. Kansas Heritage Center.
Figure 10: Construction of first section of Front Street replica in 1958.

Figure 11: A crane steadies a façade as it is placed along the second section of the Front Street replica in 1964.

Figure 12: Photo shows ongoing construction of the second section of the Front Street replica in 1964.
Figure 13: Aerial View of Boot Hill Museum, ca. 1975. Kansas Heritage Center.

Figure 14: Current Aerial View of Boot Hill Museum. Ford County.