

KANSAS

Kansas State Historical Society
Cultural Resources Division

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS, GOVERNOR


CERTIFICATION OF STATE REGISTER LISTING

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

Property Name: Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery
Address: 11560 US Hwy 400, Fort Dodge, KS 67843
County: Ford
Owner(s): State of Kansas – Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs
Address: 700 SW Jackson, Ste 701, Topeka, KS 66603

This nomination was approved by the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review for the Register of Historic Kansas Places on December 1, 2007.

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



Patrick Zollner

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

12/4/07
Date

Register of Historic Kansas Places

Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating individual properties and districts. The format is similar to the National Register of Historic Places form. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets. Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery
Other name/site number _____

2. Location

Street & number 11560 US Hwy 400 not for publication
City or town Fort Dodge vicinity
State Kansas Code KS County Ford Code 057 Zip code 67843

3.,4. Certification

I hereby certify that this property is listed in the Register of Historic Kansas Places.
Patrick Zollner 12/4/07
Patrick Zollner, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
<u>1</u>	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

FUNERARY/Cemetery

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY/Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation:

Walls:

Roof:

Other: Metal/Iron; Stone/Marble, Granite, Sandstone, Limestone, Slate

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the State Register)

- 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 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

MILITARY

Period of Significance

1890-1957

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Fort Dodge Library; Dodge City Heritage Center

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	4	4	1	8	0	4	0	4	1	7	6	2	4	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

2

Zone		Easting						Northing						

3

Zone		Easting						Northing						

4

Zone		Easting						Northing						

 See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Gwen Ceymour, Cemetery Manager

Organization Kansas Veterans' Cemetery – Fort Dodge Date 3-16-2007

Street & number 11560 US HWY 400 Telephone (620) 338-8772

City or town Fort Dodge State Kansas Zip code 67843

Property Owner

Name State of Kansas – Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs

Street & number 700 SW Jackson, Ste 701 Telephone (785) 296-3976

City or town Topeka State KS Zip code 66603

Register of Historic Kansas Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 1

Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery
Fort Dodge, Ford County, KS

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery (1890) is located along KS HWY 400 ¼ mile east of Fort Dodge in Ford County, Kansas. The three-acre spot occupies a hillside overlooking the highway and Fort Dodge to the west. HWY 400 provides access to the cemetery.

The Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery is the final resting place of veterans, spouses, and civilians from the Civil War, Indian Wars, Mexican War, Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War eras. The cemetery occupies 3 acres of land and is divided into three sections: Civil War, Spanish American War, and World War sections. The land includes headstones, two outbuildings, two monuments, two park benches, a flagpole (1919), wrought iron gate and fencing along the highway, and a sandstone wall surrounding the remainder of the cemetery. The headstones, which are arranged in east-west rows, include both government issued and handmade markers. The wrought iron fencing and stone wall were built in 1934. The two outbuildings include a tool shed and outhouse, believed to have been constructed in the early 1930s. One monument, the Chas Memorial Monument, dated 1937, was donated to the cemetery by the Diemart family. The second monument is a memorial, thought to have been constructed in the 1940s, from the Soldiers' Home in memory of the unknown soldiers buried there.

An unpaved driveway circles the cemetery and also divides the three sections. A new entrance to the cemetery was recently constructed. (See the attached site map.) It also provides access to the cemetery office building east of the cemetery, a parking lot, and newly added burial sections, which are all outside the boundaries of the historic cemetery. They are not included in the nomination.

Veterans and dependents by era interred in the Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery:

Civil War	655
Indian Wars	4
Mexican War	3
Spanish American War	104
World War I	141
World War II	143
Korean War	13
Vietnam	5

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery (1890) at Fort Dodge is being nominated to the Register of Historic Kansas Places under Criterion A for its associations with military veterans history and the former Fort Dodge. The Kansas Soldiers' Home established the cemetery shortly after it acquired the Fort Dodge property from the federal government.

Context

The history of the Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery actually begins with the establishment of the Fort Dodge Military Reservation in 1865. The Military Reservation consisted of approximately 68 square miles (around 44,000 acres) along the Santa Fe Trail in southwest Kansas. A company of "Galvanized Yankees", confederate prisoners of war recruited from the Union prison at Rock Island Arsenal, Rock Island, Illinois, and a company of the 11th Kansas Cavalry were the first to occupy the fort. Fort Dodge was established on the Santa Fe Trail offering protection to wagon trains, the US mail service, and serving as a supply base for troops engaged in the Indian Wars.

In its day, Fort Dodge an important military establishment on the western frontier. It was located on the north bank of the Arkansas River, a short distance southeast of the present Dodge City, on the site of the "Caches", which had been a favorite camping ground for freighters and hunters from the time of the opening of the Santa Fe Trail. The origin of Fort Dodge goes back to 1847 when Fort Mann was established at the Cimarron Crossing on the Santa Fe Trail a few miles west of the present community of Fort Dodge. The loss of personnel resulting from field engagements with the Indians and terminal illness necessitated the establishment of a post cemetery.¹ On April 5, 1882 the United States Army abandoned Fort Dodge. The last of the troops marched southward to Camp Supply when the flag was lowered on October 2, 1882. Fort Dodge, guardian of the commercial frontier, the cattleman and homesteaders, had fulfilled its purpose. In 1886, military interments in the original post cemetery were exhumed and reburied at Fort Leavenworth.

After Fort Dodge was decommissioned, most of the land was opened for homesteading. Dodge City residents claimed the first seventy-five homesteads. In 1889 the rest of the area was opened, creating a land rush. For the next eight years the land and Fort were managed by a Department of Interior custodian. Dodge City entrepreneur Robert Wright, custodian, managed to exploit the facilities by housing drovers who awaited the sale of their cattle, and by purchasing land surrounding the Fort.

¹ It is important to note that the post cemetery at Fort Dodge is different than the Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery. The cemetery at Fort Dodge was located on a ridge just beyond what is now the Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery and is not included within the nomination boundaries. For the most part, the old post cemetery was a temporary burial place as many of those buried there in the mid-1800s were exhumed at a later date and moved to Dodge City, Fort Leavenworth, and other places. The old post cemetery, which has been studied in recent years by archeologists, is visible by a few remaining headstones and fences.

Register of Historic Kansas Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 3

Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery
Fort Dodge, Ford County, KS

On March 2, 1889, President Grover Cleveland approved an act of Congress authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to sell and convey to the State of Kansas Lots numbered 3, 5, 6, and 7, of section 3, township 27 south, range 24 west, on condition that the state pay, within 12 months, the rate of \$1.25 per acre, and establish a Soldiers' Home for veterans.

Cemetery History

In January 1890, Fort Dodge was deeded to the State of Kansas for use as a Soldiers' Home. The first three veterans were admitted to the Soldiers' Home on February 7, 1890. Most of them were Civil War veterans, others were veterans of the Mexican and Indian Wars, many of whom had served with great honor in the Army. Eventually, dependents and relatives of veterans were admitted, along with Confederate and African American veterans. Due to the passing of the residents at the Soldiers' Home, along with their dependents, a need for a cemetery arose. The older soldiers from the Soldiers' Home who passed away while in residence had often made previous arrangements to be interred at the Soldiers' Home Cemetery. The government purchased modest headstones for the graves of all pensioned soldiers, however, relatives were expected to mark the graves of others. A number of veterans' dependents also found a final resting place at the cemetery.

The first burial in the newly established cemetery was Mrs. W.B. Adams in May 1890. The first veteran interment in the developed Soldiers' Home Cemetery was in 1892. Mr. William Bruner, a Mexican War Veteran and soldier in the 2nd Pennsylvania Infantry, along with his wife, is buried in the Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery.

James H. Kelley, first elected Mayor of Dodge City, came to Fort Dodge as an employee in charge of General George Custer's horses and greyhound dogs. Kelley was an avid hunter who served under General Custer. In appreciation for his service, Custer had given Kelley a fine horse and about a dozen of his hunting dogs. He was given the nickname "Dog" as a result of his assignment to care for General Custer's hunting dogs during an earlier period when he had served with the US 7th Cavalry. Kelley gained considerable fame as mayor, restaurateur, and saloonkeeper in Dodge City. He was buried in the Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery in 1912.

Early day records were not always complete. The grave of a ten-year-old girl, marked "The Little Stranger" Besie Ingeram, is a unique marker that can be found at the cemetery. Legend says the girl was found wandering the plains. Although attempts were made to find her parents, efforts were unsuccessful. She was taken in by fort residents and died shortly thereafter, without uttering a word. A custodian at the Soldiers' Home hospital placed flowers on the girl's grave each Memorial Day until his death. Ingeram's birth date and death date are unknown.

One dependent interred was Sophia Spratt (1931), who was perhaps as much a veteran of military life as any man buried there. She had been married to three soldiers during her lifetime. Sophia's headstone bares the inscription: "Sophia, wife of Gearhart, Spencer & Spratt. She was faithful to all three soldier boy husbands and is waiting the reward for faithful service".

In 1933, plans were underway to employ 150 men from the Civil Works Administration. One of the projects outlined for completion was the repair and painting of the Soldiers' Home Cemetery

Register of Historic Kansas Places
Continuation Sheet

Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery
Fort Dodge, Ford County, KS

Section Number 8 Page 4

fence. In addition to the new cemetery fence, attractive gates and stones were placed. A "face-lifting project" began on the Soldiers' Home Cemetery when the Soldiers' Home fell under the Kansas Veterans' Commission in July 1953. The reason for renovation was the disarray of concrete curbing surrounding family plots. Many were broken, irregular, and unsightly, preventing work with mowers. Curbing was removed, the ground leveled, and markers were replaced and realigned in 1954. In order to give the cemetery a neat appearance, stones were realigned and repaired.

It has been an annual event for Patriotic Memorial services to be held at the cemetery in remembrance of soldiers buried there, since its establishment. Today memorial flags are placed on each gravesite for Memorial Day in honor and memory of each veteran.

The cemetery represents those who helped preserve the union, explored the west, and made settlement of the west a reality. The Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery has served as burial grounds for its veterans, who, in time of war and peace, have given so much in defense of their homes, their state, and their country for many years - past, present, and future.

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Continuation Sheet

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Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery
Fort Dodge, Ford County, KS

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Continuation Sheet**

Section Number 10 & Photos Page 6

**Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery
Fort Dodge, Ford County, KS**

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A tract of land in Government Lot 2 in the Northeast Quarter of Section 3; Township-27-South; Range-24-West of the 6th PM in Ford County, Kansas, being more fully described on the Certificate of Survey.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery is surrounded by wrought iron fencing and gates on the south side (facing hwy 400). A sandstone wall surrounds the north, east, and west sides of the property. This includes the property historically associated with the Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery.

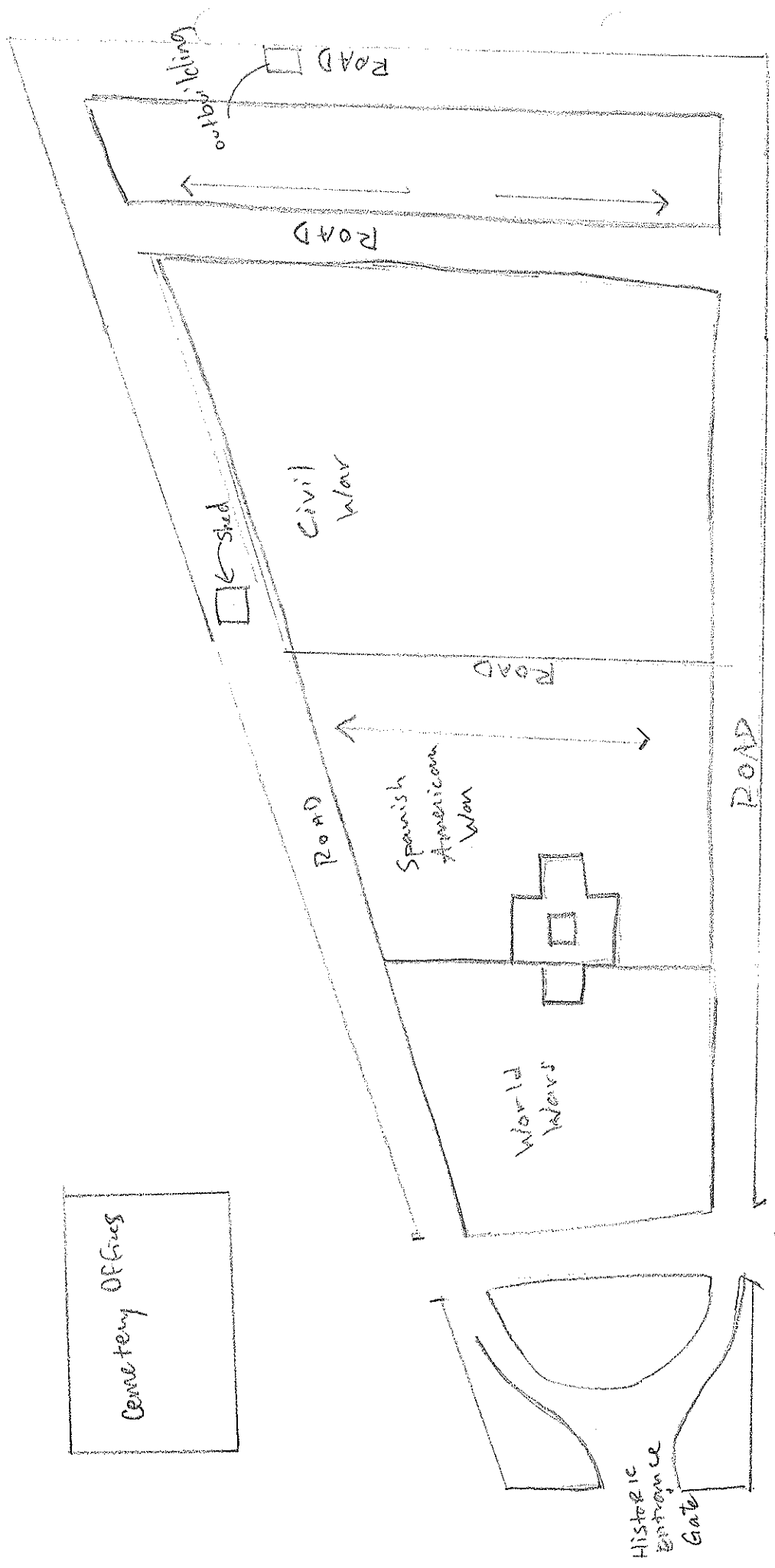
PHOTOGRAPIC INFORMATION

Property Name: Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery
Location: Fort Dodge, Kansas
Photographer: Sarah J. Martin
Date: 11 April 2007

- Photo 1: Historic entrance, facing S
- Photo 2: Modern entrance, facing N
- Photo 3: Road leading into cemetery, facing S
- Photo 4: "Little Stranger" grave marker
- Photo 5: James Kelley grave marker
- Photo 6: Lucinda Kirk grave marker
- Photo 7: MacDonald Vinius grave marker – handmade
- Photo 8: Mrs. Bruner grave marker – handmade
- Photo 9: Overview of the rows of markers – facing NE
- Photo 10: Overview of the rows of markers – facing E
- Photo 11: Obelisk Monument – facing NW
- Photo 12: Outbuilding – facing NE

N ←

Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery Fort Dodge, KS



↑ New entrance

HWY 400

Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery
Fort Dodge, Ford Co., KS
14: 418040
4176240

FORT DODGE QUADRANGLE
KANSAS - FORD CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

1899 N. 30 E.
15 P. 27 W. 11 E.

