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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>historic name</th>
<th>Whiting Service Station</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>other names/site number</td>
<td>KHRI # 085-144</td>
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2. Location

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<tr>
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<td>Whiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>state</td>
<td>Kansas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>county code</td>
<td>KS 085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zip code</td>
<td>66552</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3-4. Certification

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

SEE FILE
Signature of certifying official ___________________________ Date ___________________________
Title ___________________________ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

5. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership of Property</th>
<th>Category of Property</th>
<th>Number of Resources within Property</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Check as many boxes as apply)</td>
<td>(Check only one box)</td>
<td>(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)</td>
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<table>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>1</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: road-related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not In Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & Early 20th Century American

Movements: Craftsman/Bungalow

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Brick

roof:

other: Wood (eave brackets & windows)

Narrative Description
(Describe the current physical appearance of the property.)

Summary Paragraph (Briefly describe the overall characteristics of the property and its location, setting, and size.)

The Whiting Service Station was built in 1928 at the northeast corner of Whiting and 2nd streets at the south end of the community’s small commercial district. Today, this corner carries traffic along Highway 9, which enters Whiting (population 187) from the east on 2nd Street and turns north onto Whiting at this intersection. (Figure 1) Although the streets and parcels align north-south, the station is situated at an angle and faces southwest toward the intersection.
Elaboration  *(Provide a detailed description of the building's exterior, interior, and any associated buildings on the property. Note any historic features, materials, and changes to the building/property.)*

**Building Exterior**

The building is a one-story wood-frame building with a brick veneer exterior resting on a concrete base. (Figure 8) The base measures 15' by 15' square. A wood-frame hipped roof covers the structure and extends out over the front of the building to form a canopy. Galvanized tin rain gutters and ridge caps are mounted to the roof.

The canopy is supported by two steel I-beams and a single brick pillar. Wood eave brackets give added support. The brackets rest on brick buttresses that are located at two opposite sides of the pillar and at the corners of the building. The station was roofed with asphalt shingles. At the time of nomination, there appears to be two layers of shingles on the roof. (Figure 8)

The canopy has a tongue-and-groove board ceiling that covers the steel I-beams. A series of electrical lights are mounted to the ceiling beneath the edge of the canopy. The lights are spaced two feet apart. The primary entrance is a wood, 9-light door. Above the door is a 3-pane transom window that can be opened by a rod mechanism that is mounted to the inside wall. On each side of the door is a 9-over-1 double-hung wood window (Figure 8).

Restrooms were located within the southeast quarter of the building. A solid wood door in the south elevation of the building was the entry to the restrooms. A 2-pane transom window sits over the door. Adjacent to the door are two 12-over-1 double-hung wood windows each measuring 4 by 3 feet (Figures 6 and 9).

The east or rear elevation of the building features two 1-over-1 double-hung wood windows. These windows gave light and ventilation to the restrooms. The space between the windows places an interior partition that separated the restrooms (Figure 10).

The largest windows are two side-by-side, 15-over-1 double-hung wood windows that are centrally located on the north elevation of the building. These windows each measure 5 by 3 feet (Figure 9).

Historic photographs show that when the station was fully functional all the wood (doors, window lintels and trim, wood eave brackets, and the canopy ceiling) had been painted white (Figure 6).

The front elevation of the building, as it stands now, has a coat of white paint and all of the wood has been painted red. The canopy ceiling has been left with the original white coat. The main 9-light entry door has been painted white and the window muntins painted red. The other three elevations of the building have been left unpainted.

**Building Interior**

The interior is in poor condition due, primarily, to rainwater damage. The walls and the ceiling are/were lathe-and-plaster painted a light blue color. A plastered over brick chimney stands centered against the rear wall. Trash had been left in the building, most of which appears to be objects, such as automobile mufflers, from the last days that the station was operational (Figure 12).
8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Criteria
(Mark “x” in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for State Register listing)

- [x] 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.
- [x] 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)

- [ ] Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] Removed from its original location.
- [ ] A birthplace or grave.
- [ ] A cemetery.
- [ ] A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] A commemorative property.
- [ ] Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

- Commerce
- Architecture

Period of Significance
1928-1966

Significant Dates
1928, 1966

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

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

Period of Significance (justification)
The period of significance begins with the completion of the building in 1928 and ends in 1966 when the station closed.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)
N/A
Whiting Service Station
Name of Property
Jackson County, Kansas
County and State

Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary *(Provide a summary that notes under what criteria the property is nominated.)*

The Whiting Service Station is nominated to the Register of Historic Kansas Places under Criterion A for its local significance in the area of Commerce and Criterion C for its architecture. Completed in 1928, this station served the motoring public until it close in 1966. It is an example of a domestic-style gas station, a type of station popular in the 1920s that resembled a small house that conveyed a sense of domesticity meant to appeal to auto travelers. The Whiting station exhibits the Craftsman style and features a canopy that extends over the driveway.

Elaboration *(Provide a brief history of the property and justify why this property is locally significant.)*

The Founding of Whiting

The Township of Whiting was founded in Jackson County, Kansas in 1867. The community is the namesake of Martha Whiting, the second wife of U.S. Senator Samuel C. Pomeroy. The Pomeroy's resided in Atchison. The senator was instrumental in the development of the Central Branch of the Union Pacific Railroad. Whiting was the first station stop of this railroad branch. The railroad donated land to settlers that was once part of the Kickapoo Indian Reserve. The settlement at the station stop slowly expanded to a population of 391 residents and it was legally designated a third class city on April 27, 1888. The first election for city officials was held the following month on May 15. W.M. Hedge was elected the first mayor. The first meeting of the city council was held eight days later on May 23.¹

The White Way Garage

Steam powered farm machinery and the automobile followed the railroad into the 20th century. Fred Thonen, a local mechanic and an owner of a steam powered threshing machine, knew that these machines needed maintenance.² (Figure 3)

Thonen opened a mechanics shop in Whiting known as the White Way Garage. The earliest known photograph of an automobile in Whiting was taken in front of the garage in 1915. The automobile was photographed parked next to a horse hitched to a wagon which certainly illustrates the transition in transportation that was occurring.³ (Figure 4)

The days of the livery stable and horsepower in rural communities had its drawbacks. Horses, cows, mules, chickens, and other livestock often roamed freely about town. Flies and obnoxious odors became intolerable, and even more troubling was that cows would gather to forage the grain and hay that was loaded on wagons waiting to be transported to markets. Local ordinances were passed to reign in straying animals with fencing and pens.⁴ Dirt streets were continually rutted by wagon traffic and rains caused wagon and pedestrian traffic to be mired in mud.

The first automobile owners were as free-wheeling as the straying livestock. Automobiles caused considerable congestion in front of the White Way Garage. Drivers gathered at the garage to buy the

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⁴ Ewert 1931: 164.
gasoline that Thonen started to sell as well as relying on his mechanical skills. The automobiles were raced up and down the streets emitting noise that frightened horses and soon annoyed residents. Thonen, most probably, had begun tinkering with some of the vehicles trying to increase speed, but most certainly increasing noise.

The congestion problem was confronted by the city council in passing Ordinance No. 93, the Auto Livery Ordinance, on July 28, 1916. Under this ordinance, automobiles were to be parked only in the center of the street at an angle of forty-five degrees with the center line. The center line was midway between the outer edges of the sidewalks along the streets. Violators could be fined not less the five dollars nor more the twenty-five dollars.

A petition was delivered to the mayor and the city council in 1919 containing the signatures of 29 citizens who were beyond the point of endurance by being annoyed by thoughtless drivers racing through the streets with wide open mufflers on their automobiles.

Automobile owners had their concerns too. They wanted the dirt streets of Whiting to be maintained. Thonen took it upon himself to grade the streets. The city council decided Thonen was not to be reimbursed for his contribution to improve the city streets in that the council never proposed or appropriated money for such a project.

Safety issues also emerged that concerned automobile drivers. Doctor J.E. Love was an early automobile owner, the first or second in Whiting, who had replaced his horse and buggy with the automobile in making house calls within Whiting and out in the surrounding countryside. The doctor’s wife, ironically, was the most prominent citizen who signed the 1919 petition to control auto-related noise.

A 1922 news article reported that the Loves had been in an automobile accident. The Loves were driving to Topeka in a Ford Coupe. Miss Hazel Cuddy, a school teacher in Whiting, was a passenger. Miss Cuddy had to have been sitting in the rumble seat of the coupe. Dr. Love overturned the coupe negotiating a curve just outside of the Hoyt community. Mrs. Love was injured but her injuries were not serious. The trip to Topeka and the return trip to Whiting was completed by train. The news report cautioned drivers to be careful in that accidents could happen to the most experienced drivers.

Railroad authorities too, cautioned drivers to be aware that when crossing railroad tracks the train always had the right of way. Drivers were being reminded, more and more, to be responsible for themselves and to others.

One way to be a responsible driver was to have an eye examination by a doctor. An optometrist in Horton, Kansas began advertising in the Whiting Visitor newspaper that driving automobiles caused eye strain and that drivers should have their eyes examined. These cautionary measures are now a part of the body of laws that came into effect as automobile owners and drivers rapidly increased in numbers.

Fred Thonen expanded his auto-related business by opening an automobile dealership, which also supplied and maintained mechanized farm machinery, and offered mechanic services and gasoline for automobiles. With this expansion the White Way Garage became the Whiting Motor Company. This new company was a General Motors dealership that offered the 40 horse power Oldsmobile Six Sedan with a four-door body by Fisher advertised to sell for $1100. Thonen had already initiated plans to build a new full-service filling station at a new location and, as his plans came to fruition, his farm machinery facet of the business became a John Deere dealership.

5 Whiting Journal, 10 February 1922.
6 Whiting Journal, 30 May, 1924.
7 Whiting Visitor, 29 April 1927.
8 Holton Signal, 20 October 1927.
The Whiting Service Station

The new Whiting Service Station was constructed at the corner of Whiting and 2nd streets which is now the southeast corner of the intersection of Highway 9 and 2nd street. The building faces in a west, southwesterly direction. A canopy covered gravel drive-through connected the two streets and gave access to two gasoline pumps. A third pump was installed outside of the canopy sometime later. The pumps were brought to Whiting from Ottawa, Kansas. The present owners of the property have one of these pumps in storage (Figure 3).

The style of the station may be classed as a "house with a canopy."9 A single pillar supported the canopy that covered the two gasoline pumps.10 (Figure 6)

The station featured an airlift.11 (Figure 7) The airlift was once covered by an additional canopy. With the airlift, an automobile could be lifted off the ground by the power of compressed air thus giving a mechanic easy access to the underside of the vehicle. All that remains of the airlift today is a concrete pad and the airline that runs underground from the center of the pad to the station.

A grand opening was celebrated on May 5th, 1928. To promote the event, customers who purchased five quarts of Whiting Service High Grade Oil were given five free gallons of Red Hat Motor Oil gasoline. A mechanic was also on hand to give customers advice on lubricating an automobile.12

The Whiting Service Station was in business until 1966. The building has been unused from 1966 to the present. Bernard Ohlson (personal communication with author), a Whiting resident, remembers that when he was about eight years old, an oak tree was planted adjacent to the building. Ohlson, who never operated the station, became the owner of the property that is now shaded by this tree. Some of the overhanging limbs have been pruned to protect the roof of the building. Ohlson's sons, Eric and Dean, now own the property.

Recent History

Volunteers have done some work on the station and the empty lot on which the building now stands. They were trying to arrest further deterioration of the building. Door and window openings were covered with sheets of particleboard to prevent further rainwater damage. Most of the trash that was left stored in the building has been cleaned out (Figure 12).

Work has been devoted to the lot itself to control the overgrowth of brush and weeds. And, too, as has been already been described above, now two oak trees growing adjacent to the building have been pruned to prevent low, overhanging limbs from further damaging the roof of the building (Figures 7 and 8).

The effort of the volunteers does demonstrate that there is a local interest in saving the Whiting Service Station but their objective to stay the building from further deterioration has to be disappointing. The building is still in a state of deterioration. A conclusive statement about the present condition of the building must be based upon an analysis by one who has expertise in such restoration projects.

Summary and Conclusions

12 Whiting Visitor, 4 May 1928.
The Whiting Service Station is a reflection of a rural Kansas community that first flourished as an original stop on the Central Branch of the Union Pacific Railroad line and was later impacted by mechanized farming and the automobile. The Whiting Service Station is reflective of the history of Whiting, Kansas and its early automobile era. The owners of the service station capitalized the distribution of motor oil and gasoline and provided essential automotive services for the Whiting community for the 38 years from 1928 to 1966. The building itself is a simplistic canopy-style designed structure, exhibiting a personal touch of the original builder, and one of various standardized designs of automobile service stations that rapidly spread nationally as a new architectural feature.
9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form)


Ewert, Henry. *An Early History of Jackson County, 1855-1880*. A Master Thesis submitted to the Department of History and the Faculty Graduate School of the University of Kansas, 1931.

Holton (KS) Signal, October 20, 1927.


Whiting (KS) Visitor, April 29, 1927.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  Less than one acre  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_______
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Longitude</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)
Whiting (Original Town), Lots 8, 9, and 10 in block 21, Section 27, Township 05, Range 16E.
Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)
The nominated property includes the lots historically associated with the Whiting Service Station.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title  Jessica Lynne Ditmore & Eric Dean Marshall
organization  
street & number  
state  
e-mail  

Property Owner:
(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name  Dean S. Ohlsen & Eric D. Ohlsen
street & number  30957 T Road  
state  KS  
ze-mail  

e-mail  

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.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items**: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:
Please check with SHPO staff before completing photographs.

See below, figures 8-13.
Figure 1: Contextual Aerial Image, Google 2014.
Figure 2: Close-in Aerial Image, Google 2014.
**Figure 3:** Fred Thonen with his steam powered thresher, 1915.

![Fred Thonen with his steam powered thresher, 1915.](image1)

**Figure 4:** The White Way Garage, 1915.

![The White Way Garage, 1915.](image2)
Figure 5: Gas Pump

Figure 6: The Whiting Service Station when the station was fully functional.
**Figure 7:** The compressed air powered automobile lift at the Whiting Service Station.

**Figure 8:** A frontal view of the Whiting Service Station showing the supporting pillar for the canopy, buttresses at the pillar and the corners of the building, the wooden brackets, and the arrangement of electrical lights beneath the canopy.
Figure 9: View of the south elevation of the station.

Figure 10: View of the east or the rear elevation of the station.
Figure 11 (9): View of the north elevation of the station.

Figure 12: View of the interior of the station
Figure 13: A work in progress view of the station when the windows and doors were being covered.