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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: George Hodges House

Address: 425 S. Harrison, Olathe, KS 66061

County: Johnson

Owner: Forrest and Louise Miles

Address: 631 W. Park
Olathe, KS 66061

National Register eligible _____

State Register eligible X

This property was approved by the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review for the Register of Historic Kansas Places on June 23, 1990.

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

Ramon Parson
State Historic Preservation Officer

July 2, 1990
Date

The George H. Hodges House (c. 1892, 1921) is located at 425 S. Harrison in Olathe, Johnson County, Kansas (pop. 37,258). It is being nominated to the State Register for its association with George H. Hodges (1866-1947), who served as a Kansas State Senator from 1904 to 1912 and as governor of Kansas from 1913 to 1915.

Hodges constructed the 425 S. Harrison residence in 1892 and lived there until his death. The two-story, frame and shingle house was built in the Eastern Stick style. In 1921 the house was renovated into an English Cottage and stuccoed. In 1951 the house was renovated into a duplex. The family retained ownership of the property until 1989 when it was returned to a single family residence. Overall, the property maintains a moderately high degree of integrity from the 1921 renovation.

The house has an eastern facade orientation and measures forty-nine feet from north to south and forty-four feet from east to west. A photograph of the house that appears in the 1907 Souvenir Book of Olathe and Johnson County indicates that when the house was constructed in 1892 it faced north, the 1921 remodelling included a forty-five degree change in the orientation of the house. A one and a half story stuccoed garage sits to the northwest of the house. The garage has a southern facade orientation and measures thirty-two feet from east to west and nineteen feet from north to south.

George Hodges was an early advocate of hard surface roads. During his years in the Kansas Senate, he was the author of the Hodges rock road law and chairman of the committee that wrote the public utility law. He was instrumental in the passage of the two-cent railroad fare law, the anti-pass law, the primary election law, suffrage for women, railroad safety regulations and reduction of freight rates for grain and grain products. He introduced the first bill for state printing and distribution of texts for public schools.

Early in his public career he advocated the commission form of city government and the right of referendum and recall. He became a national authority on unicameral state legislatures.

During the two years he served as governor of Kansas, with a Democratic majority in the Kansas legislature, thirteen of the fourteen pledges of the Democratic platform were voted into law. He brought to the office business methods and progressive attitudes.

After women won the right of suffrage in 1912, he appointed twenty-three women to important state posts. He took the state educational institutions out of politics by placing them under a non-political administrative board. The bonded debt of the state was paid off. State institutions were built and repaired.

During World War I when Belgium was the victim of German oppression, he appealed to every Kansan to give either two bushels of wheat or a barrel of flour for Belgian relief. In ninety days, 50,000 barrels of Kansas flour were on their way. For this service the late King Albert decorated him in 1925 with the Golden Cross, Officer of the Crown.

Although he was not re-elected to a second term as governor, he spoke widely over the nation on public issues and was recognized as a prohibition leader. After the United States entered World War I, he served as a major in the American Red

Cross and as a civilian on the staff of Major General Leonard Wood.

In 1920 as delegate to the Democratic National Convention at San Francisco, he was one of nine men who wrote the platform. Upon his return home, he suffered a serious illness which ended his active political career. Although his name appeared on the ballot as Democratic candidate for United States Senator, he was unable to campaign.

He was born at Orion, Wisconsin on February 6, 1866. He came to Olathe as a small boy in a covered wagon in 1869 with his parents, his older brother, Frank, and a sister. The two boys early began their close business association, first herding the town cows, then lathing houses. For three years George worked yardman and bookkeeper in an Olathe lumber yard before starting his own lumber business on borrowed capital in 1889. In 1891, his brother Frank joined him. The firm was known as Hodges Brothers Lumber Company. The firm prospered and by 1933 the original lumberyard had expanded to include fourteen lumber businesses in surrounding towns in Johnson County and adjoining counties.

As young men both George and Frank Hodges developed an interest in civic and political affairs. George was elected to the Olathe City Council in 1887 at the age of twenty-one, serving on that body for two years. During this time the city obtained its first electric lights. Olathe had no city water or sewage system at that time, the Hodges brothers decided after a local epidemic of typhoid and meningitis in 1899, that the city urgently needed to get these systems installed to prevent further outbreaks of typhoid. In 1899 Frank Hodges ran for mayor of Olathe on the Democratic ticket on the dual health platform and during his two terms as mayor saw Olathe build a sewage system, a waterworks plant, and hard-surfaced streets.

In the years after World War I, Hodges kept himself busy with his business interests. In 1921 the Hodges brothers founded a newspaper in Olathe, the Johnson County Democrat, which evolved into the Olathe Daily News. During his business career Hodges was associated with the following businesses: director and owner of the controlling interest in the First National Bank in Olathe, president of Olathe Building and Loan Company, director of the City National Bank and Trust Company in Kansas City, director of the State Bank in Stanley, director of the Overland Park Savings and Loan Association, president of the Olathe Register Company, and owner of several farms in Johnson County.