Kansas State Historical Society

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 Cross & Morgan General Store
Other names/site number KHRI #105-131
Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

2. Location

street & number 406 S. New York Ave. not for publication
city or town Sylvan Grove vicinity
state Kansas code KS county Lincoln code 105 zip code 67481

3-4. Certification

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

Applicable State Register Criteria: x A __ B __ C __ D

Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO Date

Kansas State Historical Society
State agency

Listed in the state register 08/13/2016
5. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership of Property</th>
<th>Category of Property</th>
<th>Number of Resources within Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X private</td>
<td>X building(s)</td>
<td>Contributing 1 Noncontributing 1 buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public - Local</td>
<td>district</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public - State</td>
<td>site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public - Federal</td>
<td>structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>object</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 1 Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the State Register

0

6. Function or Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic Functions</th>
<th>Current Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Enter categories from instructions)</td>
<td>(Enter categories from instructions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMERCE/TRADE: Department Store</td>
<td>AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE: Storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL: Meeting Hall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE: Storage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECREATION &amp; CULTURE: Auditorium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE: Animal Facility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural Classification</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Enter categories from instructions)</td>
<td>(Enter categories from instructions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernacular</td>
<td>foundation: STONE: Limestone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>walls: STONE: Limestone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WOOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>roof: METAL: Corrugated tin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other: WOOD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Cross & Morgan General Store (circa 1877) is located within the 1876 town site of Sylvan Grove about 1/4 mile southwest of the 1886 (and current) town of Sylvan Grove, Lincoln County, Kansas (Figure 1). Situated in a small draw about 50 yards north of the Saline River (Figure 2), the two-story gable-front building faces east and has a walk-out basement on the west; a one-story lean-to is attached to the northwest corner, but it is not considered a contributing resource to the building, having been constructed after the period of significance. The building, which measures 34'-0" (E-W) x 20'-8" (N-S), has native limestone walls on the south, west, and north; the east façade is wooden and dates to the mid-20th century.

Setting
The Cross & Morgan General Store is located on a 19-acre rural parcel just outside the corporate limits of Sylvan Grove. A modern house sits approximately 175' to the east of the nominated building. To the north are two small farmsteads, and to the west and south are agricultural fields. The tree-lined Saline River runs to the immediate south of the building.

An old chicken house sits to the south, separated from the general store by a concrete exterior stair. Two other agricultural outbuildings are located to the immediate southeast of the building. None of these three outbuildings are within the nominated boundaries.

Exterior
The building is constructed of native limestone quarried in the area. The blocks were laid in a coursed ashlar pattern; they measure from 6" to 20" long x 7" high. The southeast and northeast corners have alternating quoins that protrude slightly from the wall plane. Each quoin is finished with horizontal tooling; the protruding quoins have a margin. The remaining stones were quarried using a feather and wedge. Lintels and sills are larger stone blocks. The original mortar, indicated by the large rock and pebbles contained in it, is still in place between most of the limestone; although, cementitious mortar has been applied in a few locations. The original wall reinforcement rods remain. It is believed that a staircase was once attached to the outside south wall of the building (Figure 3); however, it is not known how the upper doors on the west side were accessed. The gable roof is currently covered with corrugated metal. Many of the upper windows and doors are covered with plywood or other lumber.

The east elevation has been altered over the years and no longer retains its historic materials or design (except for the stone quoins at the corners). What was first a recessed center storefront entryway is now a wooden wall with an entry door on the right-hand side, a large window on the left, and a sliding door in the middle. The upper portion of this wall historically contained a centered door with four-over-four windows on both sides. While a centered square opening currently exists, there is no evidence on the exterior or interior of other openings in this wall. Inspection of the interior connection between the north and east walls shows the location of the previous wall (Figure 4). The historic stepped gable parapet was replaced with a smooth overhanging gable that is approximately 24'-6" above grade.

The east elevation’s original materials are unknown at this time, but it is speculated to have been wooden. The only two known historic images are not clear (Figures 5 & 6); however, Figure 5 shows the upper façade material clearly differs from the north elevation in color, texture, and width. The location of nails used to attach horizontal boards as vertical lines, especially prominent above the centered upper story opening. Further, upon visual inspection of the interior northeast corner, no evidence of former mortar or stone tooling exists to indicate where a stone wall would have been installed.

The south elevation exhibits the drastic change in elevation from the east to the west, as the basement becomes exposed toward the west. The basement walls are thicker than the main and upper levels, creating a water table between the basement and main levels. A rectangular masonry opening is located in the western third of the basement wall. The window unit has been removed and the opening partially infilled with plywood. At the western end of the upper elevation is a masonry opening with historic wooden door.

The west elevation contains the most number of openings. At the basement level is a centered enlarged masonry opening with no doors. The upper stories each contain two masonry openings for doors, some of which are extant. The non-contributing wooden lean-to attaches to the north half of the basement level on this elevation.
The north elevation is blank, containing only a single masonry opening into the basement level. The topography on this side is more level than the south.

**Interior**
Hand-hewn timbers are seen throughout the building in beams and floor joists. Flooring in the main and upper levels is wood. The main level is completely open with the exception of a small room (7'-6" x 14'-0") in the northwest corner and a grain bin in the southwest corner. The original staircase was removed, and a wooden ladder is in its place leading to the upper floor. This area is also open area with a clear view of the roof rafters and trusses. Evidence of lath and plaster work is visible on the bottoms of the trusses. The north, west, and south walls of both the main and upper levels have evidence of plasterwork; the east walls do not contain any plaster or evidence of lath. The basement has been modified over the years with a central walkway at grade with the exterior topography. On either side of this walkway, the floor has been lowered for use as hog pens.

**Integrity**
The majority of this property retains sufficient integrity of materials, workmanship, location, and setting to communicate its early associations with Sylvan Grove. The loss of the main façade (as well as the ambiguity of its original materials) and the interior modifications make this building ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
8. Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

Period of Significance
ca. 1877-1887

Significant Dates
N/A

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

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

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.

Period of Significance (justification)
The period of significance covers the year of construction (ca. 1877) to the year the town was relocated (1887).

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)
N/A
The Cross & Morgan General Store represents the period in which the first pioneers settled western Lincoln County, Kansas, beginning in the late 1860s. Kansas became the 34th state in 1861, but it was not until the Homestead Act of 1862 and the end of the Civil War in 1864 that measurable growth occurred in Kansas. In 1866, settlers began their migration into the territory that was to become Lincoln County, but only after 1870, when the county was organized, did the population increase.

To be considered a county, a pre-determined population had to be established. In June 1870, the first census was taken that included Lincoln County, population 516. The Kansas Legislature considered the petition to form Lincoln County, and on October 4, 1870, Governor James Harvey appointed three county commissioners and a clerk. The City of Lincoln Center was the county seat.1 Pleasant Township, in which Sylvan Grove is located, was organized in 1873.2

Before 1887 the settlement of Sylvan Grove grew up on the north bank of the Saline River in Section 14, Township 12 South, Range 10 West, approximately one quarter mile southwest of the town's present-day location. Although Sylvan Grove was platted in 1877, the first settlers had been in this location since circa 1867.3 These settlers, Louis Farley and his son, Hutchinson, called their farm Twin Groves.4 Other families trickled in over the next few years, causing the US Government to establish a post office in December 1872.5 According to local historian Elizabeth Barr, “Charles” M. Heaton was postmaster, and the office was at his home two miles south of the present Sylvan Grove until about the year 1877, when it was moved to the home of H. S. Merriman near where the town now stands.”6 When the post office relocated, it was established within a small store erected by E. B. [sic] Cross and W. F. Morgan (possibly the one-story structure in Figure 5).7

Heaton recalled that the post office “was removed to a store near Meriman’s [sic] Mill, a short distance southwest of the city of Sylvan Grove.”8 Mr. & Mrs. Harvey S. Merriman and Alford J. Masterson acquired title to land along the north bank of the Saline River in December 1875.9 On this property in the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 14, Merriman & Masterson constructed a large grist mill around which the first iteration of Sylvan Grove grew (Figure 3). Writing in 1883 Kansas historian William Cutler emphasized the mill’s impact on the town:

> The most important industry here is the flouring mill of Merriman & Masterson. This place is located fourteen miles west of the center and county capital, and the above mentioned mill is a nucleus about which gathers quite a

---

1 Dorothea Tarrence Homan, Lincoln — That County in Kansas (Lindsburg, Kans.: Babos’ Printing, 1979), 57.
6 Barr, A Souvenir, 80. Bureau of Land Management records indicate Charles M. Heaton received the land patent to the south half of the north half of Section 26, Township 12 South, Range 10 West in 1879 as part of the Homestead Act. This means Heaton had to have lived on the property since at least 1874; this location in Section 26 is about two miles due south of present-day Sylvan Grove (http://www.glorecords.blm.gov). Writing in the Lincoln Sentinel in June 1914, Heaton confirms he settled in the north half of Section 26 in 1871; he also states the post office was officially opened in February 1873.
7 Barr, A Souvenir, 80.
9 Property abstract provided by property owner, Tommie Berger, 1. The first record of the nominated property is July 22, 1874, when land title was transferred from the United States Government to a Robert Dunwiddie. It quickly passed through several owners until December 1875.
large business. The mill contains, and operates both night and day, three run of stones. The reputation their flour has obtained makes it one of the better flouring mills of the West.\textsuperscript{12}

Merriman, who was one of the town platters, erected a stone building north of the mill in 1877 into which Cross & Morgan moved their business and post office.\textsuperscript{11} While not much is known about Cross and Morgan – including Morgan’s first name – Kansas state census records from 1885 and 1895 indicate that W. F. Morgan was a merchant and Allen B. Cross was a farmer. The 1887 \textit{Official State Atlas of Kansas} gives the most detailed information about these gentlemen, however, listing the following, “W. F. Morgan & Co., Dealer in General Merchandise and Postmaster. Estab. 1877. P.O., Sylvan Grove.” Cross is described as being of this firm. Both men are also individually listed as “Leading Citizens” who are dealers in general merchandise and raisers of Short-horn cattle.\textsuperscript{12}

The Cross & Morgan General Store is the first known building in the town constructed of native limestone. Stone masons in this part of Kansas were typically of European descent, as were most of the local citizenry; although, the actual builders of the Cross & Morgan General Store are not known. Based on the construction information available for other similar buildings, the stone was quarried by hand, hauled several miles to the building site, cut to size, and hoisted in place with the help of a horse or a mule. This building exhibits masterful detail work in the stone etching, the design of the end stones, and the hand-hewn beams. The walls remain straight and the majority of the stones are in excellent condition today. Quite possibly it was the only stone building in the original town, as no other remnants of any other buildings can be found in the area. The locally-quarried stone used in Cross & Morgan’s store eventually became a popular construction material in the area now known as Post Rock Country.\textsuperscript{14} Use limestone was only natural because the area was lacking in trees, and the stone provided a sturdy, long-lasting material to build homes and businesses.

Merriman & Masterson’s mill and Cross & Morgan’s store became the nucleus around which the small town revolved. Barr noted, “This was the only store before the coming of the railroads [in 1887], and people came thirty miles to do their shopping and get their grain ground at the mill...”\textsuperscript{14} The store provided food and supplies to the farming community and housed a place upstairs to hold many social, religious and educational activities, such as church services, dances, meetings and spelling bees.\textsuperscript{15} Between 1877 and 1887 the town boasted a population of around 25 with a post office, general store, mill, two schools, and several residences.\textsuperscript{16}

A major Saline River flood in July 1886 destroyed Merriman & Masterson’s mill, along with numerous other structures in the town. With the coming of the Union Pacific line to the area, town leaders decided to replat Sylvan Grove to higher ground to the northeast of the river.\textsuperscript{17} Cross & Morgan sold their business to Schemerhorn & Co. soon after the railroad arrived,\textsuperscript{18} and the building was sold to G. A. A. Deane in May 1887.\textsuperscript{19} Mr. Morgan moved to Tacoma, Washington, in 1890 where he worked as a bookkeeper for a construction company. He returned to Sylvan Grove to sell his farm and planned to have his family join him. He went back to Washington alone and died there before his family arrived. They remained in Sylvan Grove. Mr. Cross and his family also remained in Sylvan Grove where he continued to be engaged in farming. He died in 1896 at the age of 60.\textsuperscript{20} Now at least 140 years old, the building is a the only tangible reminder of the earliest days of Sylvan Grove, standing as monument to the early pioneers and stone masons whose craftsmanship, hard work, and spirit have stood the test of time.

\textsuperscript{10} Cutler, \textit{History of the State of Kansas}, n.p.
\textsuperscript{11} Barr, \textit{A Souvenir}, 80.
\textsuperscript{13} Kansas Sampler Foundation, One of the Eight Wonders of Kansas Customs (www.kansassampler.org). This is an area about 200 miles long and 100 miles wide through the middle of Kansas that is rich in limestone deposits.
\textsuperscript{14} Barr, \textit{A Souvenir}, 80.
\textsuperscript{16} Sigley, “History of Sylvan Grove, Kansas,” 2; U.C. Census data indicates the population of Sylvan Grove in 1880 was 25.
\textsuperscript{17} Lawson, \textit{Honoring our Heritage}, 7.
\textsuperscript{18} Barr, \textit{A Souvenir}, 80.
\textsuperscript{19} Abstract, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{20} Lawson, \textit{Honoring our Heritage}, 90.
9. Major Bibliographical References

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


Kansas Sampler Foundation, One of the Eight Wonders of Kansas Customs (www.kansassampler.org).


Property abstract provided by property owner, Tommie Berger.


10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  Less than one

Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84:  

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 39.006698  -98.399772  
Latitude:  Longitude:

2  
Latitude:  Longitude:

3  
Latitude:  Longitude:

4  
Latitude:  Longitude:

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)
The nominated property is less than one acre of a larger 19.7-acre parcel described as follows: PT OF SE4 BEG AT SW COR MILL AVE TH E1240'(S) S345'(S) W270 SELY338'(S) E150' ELY338'(S) E 150' S130'(S) TO RVR TH NWLY SECTION 14 TOWNSHIP 12 RANGE 10.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)
The nominated boundary includes only the building and the immediate land on which it sits.
Cross & Morgan General Store

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Terry Lilak with Amanda K. Loughlin (KSHS)
organization: 
date: Spring 2016

street & number: 211 N. Kentucky Ave.
city or town: Sylvan Grove
state: Kansas
zip code: 67481
e-mail: terrylilak@gmail.com

Property Owner:

name: Tommie & Theresa Berger
street & number: 406 S. New York Ave.
city or town: Sylvan Grove
state: Kansas
zip code: 67481

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Photographs
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each digital image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to a sketch map or aerial map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn’t need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Cross & Morgan General Store
City or Vicinity: Sylvan Grove vicinity
County: Lincoln State: Kansas
Photographer: Amanda K. Loughlin (KSHS)
Date Photographed: December 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 8: Looking W at building in context, showing south and east elevations.
2 of 8: East elevation.
3 of 8: West elevation, looking NE.
4 of 8: Looking SE at north and west elevations.
5 of 8: Southeast corner, upper level.
6 of 8: First floor, looking south.
7 of 8: Second floor, looking east (no evidence of former window openings or plaster on east wall).
8 of 8: Basement, looking east.

Figures
Include GIS maps, figures, scanned images below.
Figure 1. 2014 Aerial image, showing Cross & Morgan Store in context of Sylvan Grove. Pin denotes location of building. Source: Google earth.
Figure 2. & Boundary Map. 2014 Aerial image, showing Cross & Morgan Store in immediate context.
Source: Google earth.
Figure 3. Undated historic image from the Sylvan Grove Historical Society, looking north. The old mill is in the foreground; the Cross & Morgan General Store is in the background. A stair is visible at the upper level of the store.
Figure 4. Northeast corner of upper level. Plaster on north wall (at left) stops before the edge of the stone. The previous wall likely would have been installed flush with the north wall. Current wood wall is visible to the right and shows that the building is open to the outside. Wood may have been reused. (Photo 12/2015).
Figure 5. Undated historic image from the Sylvan Grove Historical Society.
Figure 6. Undated historic image from the 1908 book *History of Lincoln County* (page 80).