

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 Eskridge City Park & Bandstand

Other names/site number KHRI #197-299; Eskridge Speaker Stand

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

2. Location

Street & number Eskridge City Park, bet. 4th & 5th, Main & Pine Streets

--

 not for publication

City or town Eskridge

--

 vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Wabaunsee Code 197 Zip code 66423

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this X nomination 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 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 Applicable National Register Criteria: X A B C D

See file.

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

Kansas State Historical Society
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official Date

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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Eskridge City Park & Bandstand
Name of Property

Wabaunsee County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

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

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
	1	buildings
1		sites
1	1	structures
		objects
2	2	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Landscape: Park

Recreation & Culture: Music Facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Landscape: Park

Recreation & Culture: Music Facility

Landscape: Object

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Public Park

Other: Octagon

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Wooden Piers

walls: Wood

roof: Composition shingle

other: _____

Eskridge City Park & Bandstand
Name of Property

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Narrative Description

Summary

Eskridge City Park (1903) occupies Block 32 in the city of Eskridge, Wabaunsee County, Kansas (2010 pop. 527). The park is located south of the central business district with a western boundary of Main Street, 4th Street to the north, 5th Street to the south, and Pine Street to the east (*Figures 1 & 2*). The bandstand (c. 1908) stands in the approximate center of the park and is a significant contributing structure. Noncontributing features in the park include a circular stone restroom (1978) and the Veterans Memorial (2009). Several other features are found in the park, including a tennis court with concrete pad and a depressed-level paved area (*Figure 3*). Play equipment, benches and picnic tables are scattered throughout the site. The park is landscaped with grass and shaded with several varieties of mature trees.

As is typical of landscapes, the plant materials and built features of the City Park have evolved over time. However, the park retains good integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association. Although the bandstand has been repaired with contemporary materials, it retains sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship to classify it as a contributing building in this nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The location and setting contribute to a strong sense of its historic use as a gathering place in the community of Eskridge.

Elaboration

Eskridge City Park was established in 1903, and the bandstand was constructed in 1908 or in early 1909. Both the park and bandstand were prominent facilities featured in the Eskridge Home Coming, a three-day celebration, August 25-27, 1909. A historic photograph from this celebration shows spectators facing east in a crowd around the bandstand (*Figure 4*). An earlier historic photograph (*Figure 5, c. 1908*) shows the bandstand standing in a landscape of bare young trees planted in regular rows.

Originally, the bandstand was about seven feet above the ground, but it was moved to the present location and lowered approximately three feet in 1913.¹ Presently, the park occupies a tract that is slightly depressed in the center and sloping to the southeast. An open, natural drainage runs diagonally through the park from northwest to southeast. The waterway has two wooden footbridges located near the bandstand. Although near the central business district, the park is located in a residential district. There are two residences on each block to the east and west with vacant lots to the north and south.

The bandstand is the most prominent historic structure of the park. The one-story octagonal wood frame structure is raised on square wooden posts. Each facet of the octagon is approximately ten feet long. It features an octagonal roof rising to a spire in the center. The entrance is oriented to the southwest with a flight of wooden stairs leading to the main floor level. The base of the bandstand is covered with vertical boards with a small spacing between boards for ventilation. A simple fascia board accentuates the main floor of the bandstand. The wooden floor is constructed of tongue and grooved boards approximately three inches wide. The bandstand railing is constructed of solid vertical sheathing. The oldest material consists of five-inch wide tongue and grooved boards; other material is 2-1/4 inches wide with beveled edge and other sections have been replaced with plywood.

The upper framing of the bandstand is the best preserved part of the historic bandstand. Heavy wooden posts supporting the bandstand roof are approximately five inches square with chamfered edges. The bandstand eave is ornamented with framed panels with 45 degree corners. These panels are sheathed with wide tongue and grooved horizontal boards ornamented with a center bead. There is a simple molding at the joint between the eave panels and ceiling. The ceiling is sheathed with three inch wide tongue and grooved beaded boards. The entire bandstand is painted white.

Recent Alterations

The bandstand roof has contemporary beige composition roofing (new roofing in 1997). The contemporary steps are replacements. Wooden support posts for the bandstand floor and upper structure appear to be replacements and are set in concrete. A contemporary wood-frame ramp wraps around the south and southeast facets of the bandstand.² There are five simple interior wooden benches attached to the east railing that appear to be constructed of contemporary material.

¹ "Moving Park Band Stand," *Eskridge Tribune-Star* (27 February 1913): 1, col. 2.

² Benetta Foster, Information from Eskridge City Council minutes, e-mail communication 30 December 2015. The wood frame access ramp on the south and southeast was constructed in 2002 by Jack Foster and Bill Ridinger, employees of the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company which provided funds for the feature. The author wishes to acknowledge and thank Mrs. Foster, an Eskridge resident, history researcher and writer who provided important information and references. Her cooperation and generous contributions improved this nomination.

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There is a contemporary light fixture centered in the interior ceiling. The wood frame access ramp on the south and southeast was constructed in 2002 by Jack Foster and Bill Ridinger, employees of the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company which provided funds for the added feature.

One of the interesting features of the park is a flat sandstone slab carved with the name, "City Park," which is set in the northwest corner. This may be a historic feature, but no documentation has been found. Since the 1960s, other non-contributing features have been constructed in the park. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a depressed paved area southwest of the bandstand was built for a skating rink, but is now used as a basketball court. The rink area is oriented north-south with the west defined by a stone masonry retaining wall. South of the bandstand, the coursed rubble-stone restroom is circular with a metal-gated entrance to the southeast. It has a hexagonal standing seam metal roof. There is a small circular coursed stone fire pit between the bandstand and the restrooms. Directly east of the bandstand, the "All Veterans Memorial" was dedicated in 2009. The memorial consists of two low sections. There is a semicircular wall rising to a peak oriented north-south which faces a block with the top sloping to the east. Both elements of the memorial are constructed of rock-faced stone blocks laid in an ashlar pattern with inset brick panels bearing the veterans' names. Both of the elements are capped with red bricks and set on concrete piers in a gravel bed. There is a concrete sidewalk in fair condition on the west side of the park paralleling Main Street.

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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

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1903 – 1966

Significant Dates

1903, 1908-1909, 1913

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 is defined by the approximate date of construction and extends to 1966, the 50-year convention established by the National Register to provide sufficient passage of time to allow evaluation of the historic resource eligibility at the time of its listing.

Criteria Considerations (justification)

Although relocated, the bandstand was relocated within the same park, within its period of significance, and has gained significance from its current location.

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

Eskridge City Park (1903) and Bandstand (ca. 1908) are nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its local significance in the area of Entertainment/Recreation. Standing in the approximate center of the park, the Eskridge Bandstand is the park's focal structure. The park and bandstand are associated with the most vigorous period of economic growth and community development in the history of Eskridge. A community gathering place, the park continues to serve the local community; its period of significance ranges from the park's establishment in 1903 to 1966.

Elaboration

Eskridge City Park and Bandstand are associated with the economic development and population growth of the city during the early twentieth century. Although Eskridge was laid out as a town site on a large upland prairie tract in Wilmington Township in 1868, the town did not begin to grow until the Burlington, Alma, and Manhattan Railroad line was constructed through Wabaunsee County in 1880. During the late nineteenth century, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad acquired that company as a branch line. After that acquisition, Eskridge prospered as a shipping point for the Flint Hills cattle-feeding industry and in 1910 became the second largest town in the county next to Alma, the county seat.

By the turn of the century, the Eskridge Star boasted that Eskridge had "no peer among cities of her class, in thrift, energy, and business of her people, and she acknowledges no rival to trade, or material prosperity." As the newspaper described,

There are five dry goods and grocery stores, carrying stocks ranging from \$3,000 to \$20,000. Two hardware and implement stores, carrying stocks aggregating \$85,000. A graded school employing four teachers. There are two drug stores, one furniture store, one undertaking shop, two lumber yards, one hotel, two restaurants, two tailoring establishments, two millinery stores, two jewelry shops, two barbershops, three blacksmith and wagon shops, two livery stables and one shoe shop; one creamery, and one grain elevator. Seven churches, ministers and lawyers a plenty and all the doctors needed, together with some other paraphernalia we can't think of—usually found around a first-class Kansas town.³

The Star also asserted that the city needed more new homes because there was not a vacant house in town. John & George Waugh's Security Bank prepared to meet this community demand. By the turn of the century, the Waugh brothers' bank had survived the panic of 1893, and its resources had grown to over \$200,000. On February 16, 1900, they incorporated the Security State Bank under a state charter.⁴ John Waugh's business success supported his decision to contribute to community improvement in Eskridge. In 1899, he was elected mayor of the city and completed a large house directly west of where the city park was later established. The history of the city park and bandstand represent just one example of the civic leadership demonstrated by the local Waugh family and their significant contributions to the city of Eskridge.⁵

³ Bruce Waugh et al, "We Are Our Own Examiners: J. Y. Waugh, Eskridge, Kansas, and the Security State Bank," by the great-grandchildren of J. Y. Waugh, 51-52, in Greg Hoots, ed. Flint Hills Special (Alma, KS: Flint Hill Publishing, 2012). (2012), 56.

⁴ "We Are Our Own Examiners," (2012), 56.

⁵ John Young Waugh arrived in Eskridge from Iowa on New Year's Day, 1884, at the age of 24. After six months, Waugh concluded that he wasn't suited for farming and convinced his father to invest in a banking and cattle dealing enterprise located in Eskridge. John and his younger brother George opened the Security Bank in February, 1885. John married Sadie Collins in December, 1887 at her parents' home in Eskridge. Later, John Waugh helped each of his four brothers begin careers in Kansas. The Waugh family and the Security State Bank contributed to and benefitted from the growth of the grazing cattle industry. In 1892, the bank officers proudly proclaimed, "we are our own examiners." By March, 1899, partners John Waugh and John Peters shipped more cattle than anyone in the area. Early that year, John Waugh was elected mayor of Eskridge. John and Sadie also finished the construction of a five-bedroom house directly west of Block 32 where the city park was established four years later (See "We Are Our Own Examiners," 52, 54-57). By 1906 the Security State Bank had outgrown its second building. John and George Waugh commissioned a new two-story brick Romanesque style building to occupy a prominent corner lot in the center of the Eskridge business district. When completed, the building also housed the post office at its west end. The bank building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. John Waugh's untimely death was the front page news story in the Tribune-Star (May 6, 1915). 1500 people attended his funeral. Calling him "our foremost citizen," the eulogy continued, "for more than thirty years he has been prominently identified with every important movement for the advancement of the material, social, educational, and philanthropic interest of Eskridge." See "One of the State's Conspicuous Bankers Dead," Eskridge Tribune-Star (6 May 1915): 1, cols. 1-6.

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As an expression of their rising municipal aspirations, citizens of Eskridge voted in 1903 to establish a city park. The park was a project associated with the increasing prosperity and community development of the town. As the editor of the Eskridge Star urged on March 19, 1903,

*The plan to purchase a city park contains many merits that will recommend it to the voters at the coming city election. The location, size, and price is right. It is also customary for cities to invest in property of this kind. Our city is in good financial condition as compared to most other cities of like size.*⁶

In this commentary, the writer also advocated construction of a system of waterworks, paving the main street, and construction of an electric light plant. These improvements would provide fire protection, and add to the beauty, attractiveness, and convenience of the city. Later in the spring, the Eskridge Star reported on May 14 that "at the recent city election, the expressed sentiment of the people was for the purchase of a park. Since we have decided we need this park, let us make it a business proposition first and get it paid for, each contributing his share."⁷

A few days after the election, John and Sadie Waugh sold all of Block 32 across the street from their house to the city for a park. That transaction was approved by the Eskridge City Council on June 1, 1903.⁸ In an indenture dated May 18 1903, John Y. and Sadie D. Waugh sold the tract to the city for \$500 with the following conditions that the land be: "be used as a public park only and the buildings (except bandstand) auditorium and such buildings as are necessary to a park to be erected thereon, said park to be kept in condition that parks are usually kept. Any violation of above conditions reverts the above park back to the parties of the first part."⁹

Apparently, some of the town's boosters expected that the next improvement was the erection of a suitable bandstand within the park. In an open letter published in the Wabaunsee County Tribune on June 26, 1903, an anonymous writer, "Pro Bono Publico," proposed a grand program of civic improvements for Eskridge. These included a waterworks, an electric light plant, and,

*Last but not least, indeed it probably should of [sic] come first, judging by the expressed wish of our citizens at the polls, our city park requires attention, it ought to be sodded and neat driveways established. It ought to be supplied with a handsome band stand, a number of nicely painted rustic seats. There should be a windmill, well and tank, some neat fountains, and lovely flower beds so as to make it a delightful place in which our people can while-a-way their many leisure hours.*¹⁰

Even though Eskridge had a public park, the city band performed downtown for several years. During this period, the city band performed in fine form. Led by C. E. Edlin, the 18 boys in the band won a regional band tournament held in Alma on September 25, 1903.¹¹ Later, the Eskridge Star mentioned that the band had elected officers in a business meeting on September 9 and predicted that "the band's past successful record will undoubtedly be maintained under the present capable management."¹² The Eskridge band provided the musical entertainment for Memorial Day processions and services, Fourth of July parades and programs, and other community gatherings.

As the Eskridge Star reported on June 25, 1904, "the city band will make its first public appearance of the season, in a free concert, weather permitting, in front of the band hall on Friday evening June 26."¹³ That report boasted that the band provided the "best free advertising" available for local businesses. For the Fourth of July, 1904, the band prepared a program of patriotic airs, ragtime, and classical compositions.¹⁴ After this celebration, a reporter commented, "the band was very liberal with its music and added much to the enjoyment of the day. The boys certainly present a fine appearance and render good music."¹⁵

⁶ "City Park," Eskridge Star 19 March 1903, p. 4, col. 2.

⁷ "Tax Dodging," Eskridge Star 14 May 1903, p. 4, col. 2.

⁸ "Council Meeting," Eskridge Star 4 June 1903, p. 1, col. 4.

⁹ Indenture between John Y. Waugh, Sadie Waugh, and the city of Eskridge on May 18, 1903, recorded in Book 59, Page 261, Wabaunsee County records, Register of Deeds.

¹⁰ "Public Improvements," Wabaunsee County Tribune 26 June 1903, p. 1, col. 5.

¹¹ "Eskridge Band Wins," Eskridge Star 1 October 1903, p. 1, col. 3.

¹² Eskridge Star 12 November 1903, p. 8, col. 1.

¹³ Eskridge Star 25 June 1903, p. 1, col. 1.

¹⁴ "Glorious Fourth," Eskridge Star 16 June 1904, p. 1, col. 4.

¹⁵ "Fourth of July," Eskridge Star 7 July 1904, p. 8, col. 4.

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Development of the city park as a community gathering place and construction of a permanent bandstand, however, took several years. It appears that the Eskridge band often performed on a temporary platform constructed for special events throughout town. As a report in the Wabaunsee County Tribune on June 23, 1905 mentioned, "The Fourth of July committee on music have erected a band stand on main street [sic], from which the band will dispense sweet and patriotic strains on the Fourth."¹⁶ The band also performed indoors in the Modern Woodmen Association (M.W.A.) hall on Main Street.

In the history of Kansas communities, the local band was an important institution. City bands often traveled to play in exchange concerts, competitions, and fairs. These bands played a variety of music because of their presence in many civic and private events. Music ranged from patriotic and military marches to more social and formal concert music.¹⁷ Brass bands became "essential to the life of a community" and by 1900 "almost every town of any size had a band."¹⁸

The establishment of a park in Eskridge provided a recreational facility and symbolized the maturation and aspirations of this bustling Flint Hills town. Once again, the leadership of John Waugh was essential. Waugh was elected to his second term as mayor of Eskridge on June 1, 1907. As the Wabaunsee County Tribune reported, "he stands for progression and will give a safe administration. That he will make things move, and that Eskridge will expand, and reach toward the Metropolitan idea, everybody believes."¹⁹

One year later, the Wabaunsee County Tribune reported that, "the mayor and council decided to see about the probable cost of a band stand to be erected in the city park. They are to report Friday evening June 5th, and in all probability a band stand will be erected there. A recess was taken until Friday evening, June 5th."²⁰ Unfortunately, the report and the council's decision were not reported in the next week's Tribune.

The bandstand was constructed, probably in the summer of 1908, but apparently this was not reported in either of the two newspapers of the day. Instead, a Wabaunsee County Tribune editorial boasted on July 2, 1908,

*Eskridge is going to do things down at the park. When they get through you'll find it the best resting place this side of the cemetery. ... You'll find too that those trees which you remember as mere shrubs are as tall as your house and furnish enough shade for a Fourth of July celebration. ... The powers that be have made a fine beginning and the rest of the folks are praying that the good work may go on.*²¹

By July 16, 1908, the Wabaunsee County Tribune commented, "Eskridge is the prettiest little city in the county. . . . But even Eskridge could be improved and she will in due time. Now that the park is being made a comfortable outing place, other things will surely be improved to correspond."²² More circumstantial evidence that the bandstand had been constructed in 1908 appeared in the Eskridge Tribune-Star early in the next year.²³ In an editorial published March 18, 1909, the reporter summarized the town's accomplishments,

The improvements during the past term have been greater than all other terms combined. Over five miles of cement and brick walks and crossings have been put in. The electric light system has been put in operation during the administration and our streets are better lighted than most towns that have a larger population. Our little park with its up-to-date speaker's stand is all paid for, and many other improvements such as tile, concrete,

¹⁶ News item, Wabaunsee County Tribune 23 June 1905, p. 1, col. 6.

¹⁷ Banner, Chris, "The Community Band in Kansas," Journal of the West 22 (July 1983), 36.

¹⁸ Marvin, Anne M. "Facing the Music: The Turn of the Century Hometown Band," Kansas Heritage 5 (Winter 1997), 5.

¹⁹ "The City Dads for 1907—8," Wabaunsee County Tribune 5 April 1907, p. 1, col. 1.

²⁰ "Council Proceedings," Wabaunsee County Tribune 4 June 1908, p. 1, col. 5. Neither the Tribune nor the Eskridge Star reported on the council's final decision, the cost of the bandstand, or the choice of contractor. According to Benetta Foster, a Eskridge resident and history writer, the Eskridge Booster Club may have paid for construction of the bandstand. The club certainly supported the park and its improvement. As the Eskridge Tribune-Star commented, "the Booster Club met last Wednesday evening at J.W. Busenbark's store to hear the reports of committees... The committee on the park dedication reported a favorable outlook and showed that they had been active and busy in the interests of the coming event." See "Booster Club," Eskridge Tribune-Star 15 July 1909, p. 4, col. 3.

²¹ "Who Said Park," Wabaunsee County Tribune 2 July 1908, p. 4, col. 3.

²² "Improvement Note," Wabaunsee County Tribune 16 July 1908, p. 4, col. 2-3.

²³ Early in 1909 the two competing newspapers published in Eskridge, the Eskridge Star and the Wabaunsee County Tribune, combined. The Eskridge Tribune-Star was published from February 11, 1909 until September 30, 1920.

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*and metal culverts have been put in. Our city "dads" are to be congratulated on the fine showing they have made.*²⁴

Ironically, by the time the bandstand was constructed, the city band organization had faltered. As a letter published on April 1, 1909 exhorted the community,

*Eskridge has a nice little park close in, a new band stand and plenty of talent within her borders, but no band. With little extra exertion on the part of a few public spirited people a very good organization could probably be formed here at little expense, which would be a great thing for the town. A few years ago, this town had a band that ranked well up among the good ones of the state and many of the members still reside here and are as good, if not better, than they were at that time.*²⁵

The role of the community band was further described in an editorial, "The Town Needs A Band."

*Several times during the past year the Tribune-Star has advocated the reorganization and rejuvenation of the Eskridge band. The near approach of the big carnival and dedication of the park serves to emphasize the necessity of a home band to help enliven things at that time. Only a few years ago Eskridge had one of the very best bands in the state and many of the old players are here yet, to form a nucleus of a new band... Nothing adds more life to a town or advertises it better than a live band. A town of this size should have one and is fully able to support a good band in the right manner.*²⁶

The new band and speaker's stand was the centerpiece of the park in a historic photograph showing the crowd assembled when the bustling town of Eskridge celebrated its 40th anniversary in August, 1909. The town hosted a three-day long "Home Coming" celebration. Even though the scheduled park dedication was not described, the newspaper proclaimed that over 5,000 people attended the event including Governor W. R. Stubbs and U.S. Senator Charles Curtis. Music for the event was provided by the 7th Calvary Regimental Band. Mayor John Waugh welcomed the guests "in a hearty, enthusiastic, whole-souled talk... brief and to the point." As the reporter described, "the City Park, where the carnival and programs were held, is a delightful place. It was well-seated, shady and cool by day and well-lighted by night. It made an ideal picnic ground and many spread their lunches and ate in happy, picnic style."²⁷

Since 1909, the bandstand has been the most significant feature of Eskridge City Park. A photograph of the bandstand with close rows of leafy trees was published in the Eskridge Tribune-Star on August 25, 1910, as part of an issue boosting Eskridge for the second annual Home Coming celebration. Apparently, the community band had been reorganized because the article on festivities praised the "band boys," "under the leadership of Bandmaster Klein, these musicians have made a great hit with the Booster club as well as the great crowds that have heard them play. They are both able and willing to play the finest class of music, and so cheerful and obliging that it has been a pleasure to direct their operations. The band personnel includes 4 clarinets, 2 saxophones, 2 French horns, 2 slide trombones, 4 cornets, 1 bass and 2 drums, with the director, Mr. Klein."²⁸

For at least two decades, the Eskridge city band was a significant institution in community activities, but maintaining the organization always depended on local talent and leadership which fluctuated over the years. It appears that the community band languished after the mid 1920s. An article in the Eskridge Independent on June 7, 1922 summarized the problem,

It looks very much like the Eskridge band is about ka-flooey. Frank Easter, who has given his services for so long as director of the organization, is going away shortly. So are some of the members. Nobody seems to want to succeed Easter and try to hold the band together. . . The town doesn't care much for a band or an orchestra—or, at least, it never shows any appreciation—in a tangible or even an intangible form. The fact are that Easter has given and given his services and that of his bands and orchestras until what he has to give no longer has any

²⁴ "A Good Showing," Eskridge Tribune-Star 18 March 1909, p. 4, col. 1.

²⁵ "What About A Band," Eskridge Tribune-Star 1 April 1909, p. 1, col. 6.

²⁶ "The Town Needs a Band," Eskridge Tribune-Star 8 July 1909, p. 4, col. 1.

²⁷ "Big Carnival Week Closes in Eskridge," Eskridge Tribune-Star 2 September 1909, p. 1, col. 4-6. See also the historic photograph, August, 1909, Figure 4.

²⁸ "The Homecoming So Far Has Been Attended by Tremendous Crowds," Eskridge Tribune-Star 25 August 1910, p. 1, cols. 1-3. The bandstand photograph appeared on p. 3, cols. 1-2.

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value. Eskridge folks never think of offering to pay for the services of a band or orchestra. It costs money, time and a great deal of effort to keep a band or orchestra going. Who pays the bill? . . . The Independent believes the loss of the band and the orchestra, which have been so faithfully held together by Easter, is a great loss to the town—a loss that will be felt more and more as time goes on.²⁹

The wooden stand in the city park was more than a stage for band performances. It also served as a speaker's stand for orations and lectures in Chautauqua courses. Early in 1913, the structure was moved to its present location and lowered. As the Eskridge Tribune-Star reported,

The city has had a force of men busy this week moving the band stand to the center of the City park. This makes a nice improvement and seems to be just the place where the band stand belongs. While this stand was a fine one and looked real nice it has always been difficult for a speaker to make himself heard. It seemed to be very hard for an entertainer to make the audience hear as the position and height of the stand caused the sound of the human voice to be carried over the head of the hearers... For that reason the stand probably will be lowered by sawing off the posts and lettering the platform down. As it was the platform was about seven feet above the ground. It will likely be lowered to four or five feet. The position now occupied by the stand is the lowest point in the park and the lay of the land will form a natural grade for the sloping of the seats. It is to be hoped that the change will be beneficial.³⁰

Reportedly, the speaker's stand also was used for lectures.³¹ In Eskridge the Women's Study Club was organized in 1916 and in September the group discussed the possibility of enrolling in a course of study offered by the Chautauqua Assembly. Following that meeting, the Club women completed several courses on history, literature, and music over the next few years. In the early 1920s, however, the community lost interest in the Chautauqua assembly and courses.³²

In the decade when the park was established and the bandstand constructed, the population of Eskridge grew by 30% from 612 in 1900 to a historical peak of 797 in 1910. The town had two banks, a post office with four rural routes, electric lights, a weekly newspaper (the Tribune-Star), express and telegraph service, telephone connections, graded schools, hotels, five churches.³³ When John and Sadie Waugh sold Block 32 to the city in 1903 for a park and bandstand, they contributed to a community that many residents expected to continue to grow. As mayor, John Waugh could appreciate the city's achievements in the past decade. By that time, so many cattle were being shipped from Eskridge that the Santa Fe Railroad built a cattle lane to avoid driving cattle down Main Street to the depot.³⁴ By 1910, Waugh also was a respected community and regional leader. For example, the Drovers National Bank, Kansas City, MO, elected him as a director. In fact, the population of Eskridge stabilized in 1920 (759) and 1930 (726). By 1940 the population began to decline and in 2010 stood at 534.

The park is still maintained and the bandstand, although no longer the site of regular concerts, has a long history of use for other public and private social events. According to local writer Benetta Foster, "these have included Chautauquas, carnivals, city fairs, graduations, baccalaureates, and weddings."³⁵ Foster also pointed out that the bandstand has been used for Veterans' Day ceremonies for the past 17 years with speakers and musicians.³⁶

In 1964, the Eskridge Women's Study Club initiated an extensive improvement project for the City Park. They acquired a plan, organized volunteers, and raised funds to build a skating rink in the park (now located southwest of the bandstand). The club women also worked on landscaping the park.³⁷ By 1978 the Eskridge Independent commented that improvements made in the park in recent years included: an ice skating rink and rest rooms designed by architecture students from the University of Kansas, a landscaping plan designed by horticulture students from Kansas State University, playground equipment and a new concrete tennis court built with revenue-sharing funds with lights for the court

²⁹ "Dark Days for Band," Eskridge Independent 7 June 1922, p. 3, cols. 4-5.

³⁰ "Moving Park Band Stand," Eskridge Tribune-Star 27 February 1913, p. 1, col. 2.

³¹ Foster, Benetta, "Band Stand," Flint Hills Independent 14 October 1993, no page given.

³² Foster, Benetta, "Eskridge Study Club," Flint Hills Independent 1 October, 1992, p. 5, cols. 1-3.

³³ Blackmar, Frank M. ed. Kansas: A Cyclopedia of State History (Chicago, IL: Standard Publishing Company, 1912), 597-598.

In 1910 Alma, the Wabaunsee County seat, was the largest town in the county.

³⁴ "We Are Our Own Examiners," (2012), 59.

³⁵ Foster, "Band Stand," Eskridge Independent 14 October 1993.

³⁶ Benetta Foster to Dale Nimz, e-mail message 30 December 2015.

³⁷ Foster, Benetta, "Eskridge Study Club," 1 October 1992, p. 5, cols. 1-3.

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provided by the Eskridge Kiwanis Club.³⁸ Recently, the "All Veterans Memorial" was constructed and dedicated in 2009. Presently, the park and bandstand are important community amenities and significant historic resources representing the history and development of the town of Eskridge.

³⁸ Bandstand, historic photograph caption, Eskridge Independent 7 September 1978, p. 2.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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- "Fourth of July." Eskridge Star (7 July 1904) : n.p.
- "Improvement Note." Wabaunsee County Tribune (16 July 1908) : n.p.
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- "Moving Park Band Stand." Eskridge Tribune-Star (27 February 1913) : n.p.
- "One of the State's Conspicuous Bankers Dead." Eskridge Tribune-Star (6 May 1915): 1, cols. 1-6.
- "Public Improvements." Wabaunsee County Tribune (26 June 1903) : n.p.
- "Tax-Dodging." Eskridge Star (14 May 1903): 4, col. 2.
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"The Town Needs A Band," Eskridge Tribune-Star (8 July 1909) : n.p.

"Wabaunsee County's Prosperity: Eskridge one of the Greatest Shipping Points in the West." Eskridge Star (18 January 1900): 1, col. 4.

Wabaunsee County Tribune (23 June 1905) : n.p.

"What About A Band." Eskridge Tribune-Star (1 April 1909) : n.p.

"Who Said Park." Wabaunsee County Tribune (2 July 1908) : n.p.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

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

Acree of Property 2

Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.

(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>38.857201</u>	<u>-96.109540</u>	3	_____	_____
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:

2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The nominated property includes the Eskridge City Park. This park occupies two one-acre parcels described as follows: EAST ESKRIDGE, BLK 32, LTS 1 through 12 (PID: 099-243-05-0-30-38-002.00-0) & LTS 13 through 18 (PID: 099-243-05-0-30-38-001.00-0), SECTION 05, TOWNSHIP 14S, RANGE 12E

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundaries include the area established as a city park in 1903.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dale E. Nimz
Organization For Bruce Waugh & City of Eskridge date August 11, 2016
street & number P. O. Box 1046 telephone 785-979-8398
city or town Lawrence state KS zip code 66044
e-mail dnimz@sunflower.com

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

Name City of Eskridge
street & number 110 S. Main Street telephone 785-449-2621
city or town Eskridge state KS zip code 66423

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 100 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.

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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: Eskridge City Park & Bandstand

City or Vicinity: Eskridge

County: Wabaunsee State: Kansas

Photographer: Dale Nimz

Date

Photographed: 29 October 2015 & 10 August 2016

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

29 October 2015

- 1 of 18 Bandstand, view from southwest
- 2 of 18 Bandstand, view from south
- 3 of 18 Bandstand, view from east southeast
- 4 of 18 Bandstand, view from east northeast
- 5 of 18 Bandstand, view from west southwest
- 6 of 18 Bandstand, view from north
- 7 of 18 Bandstand, view from south
- 8 of 18 Bandstand, view from east
- 9 of 18 Floor and railing, view from west
- 10 of 18 Railing and posts, view from southeast
- 11 of 18 Ceiling, view from east
- 12 of 18 Stone marker, view from west
- 13 of 18 Restrooms, view from southeast
- 14 of 18 Park, view from northeast

10 August 2016

- 15 of 18 Park, view from southeast corner
- 16 of 18 Park, view from east southeast
- 17 of 18 Park, view from southwest
- 18 of 18 Park, view from northwest

Figures

- Figure 1. Aerial image of the town of Eskridge, Kansas (Source: Google, 2015).
- Figure 2. 1919 Standard Atlas of Wabaunsee County, Kansas, Eskridge, p. 16.
- Figure 3. Site Plan of park (Source: Google, 2015).
- Figure 4. Bandstand and crowd, Eskridge City Park, c. 1910.
- Figure 5. City Park Bandstand, Eskridge, Kansas, c.1908.
- Figure 6. Two men sitting on bandstand railing, Eskridge, c. 1910

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Figure 1. Aerial image of the town of Eskridge, Kansas (Source: Google, 2015). The city park is denoted by shaded box.



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Figure 2. 1919 Plat of Eskridge, showing location of City Park.



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Figure 3. Site Plan of park (Source: Google, 2015).



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Figure 4. City Park Bandstand, Eskridge, Kansas, 1909.



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Figure 5. City Park Bandstand, Eskridge, Kansas, c.1908.



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Figure 6. City Park Bandstand, Eskridge, Kansas, ca. 1910.



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Boundary Map. Dashed line represents boundary of park. Source: Google.

