1. Name of Property
   historic name  Edwards House
   other names/site number  Oswego College for Young Ladies; Kansas Military Academy; Just-Laid Egg Farm; KHRI # 099-4250-00007

2. Location
   street & number  910 Ohio Street
   city or town  Oswego
   state Kansas code KS county Labette code 099 zip code 67356

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
   Ownership of Property
   (Check as many boxes as apply)
   x private
   public - Local
   public - State
   public - Federal

   Category of Property
   (Check only one box)
   x building(s)
   building
district

   Number of Resources within Property
   (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)
   Contributing  Noncontributing
   building
   district
   site
   structure
   object
   2
   2
   4
   0
   Total
The Edwards House is located at 910 Ohio Street on the southern edge of Oswego in Labette County, Kansas. Constructed of red brick, the two-story classic structure features a large, full-height front porch with four brick columns. The home was originally built circa 1874 reflective of the Italianate style, but it has undergone two renovations that have altered its appearance.

Setting

The Edwards residence is located on the southern edge of Oswego, approximately one-third mile south of Highway 59. (Figures 1 and 2) Ohio Street passes the west (front) side of the house and Barker Drive passes to the south of the house, through the original property, and leads to the community hospital. A long narrow
Concrete walk leads to the front of the home from a sidewalk that parallels Ohio Street. The home is reached by car via a long gravel driveway that runs to the immediate south of the home and circles at the back of the house towards the south before rejoining the main drive. Two stone gate posts mark the entrance to this drive. A sidewalk leads from the driveway to the front door of the home. There is also an entrance leading from this drive at the back of the home on the south side. An old barn behind (east and slightly south) the house has been converted through the years for parking and storage. A sprawling lawn surrounds the home, with the majority of the lawn on the west, or front, of the house. The original 10-acre setting is now 1.8 acres, which is L-shaped.

Inventory of Resources

1. Residence (built 1870-1874; porch modified circa 1935 and 2013; contributing building)

Exterior

The two-story building was built as an Italianate-style single-family residence sometime between 1870 and 1874. It is a red-brick, eight-room structure with an irregular footprint roughly measuring 32’ x 39’. The hipped roof has asphalt shingles. The roof originally featured a widow’s walk, but that was removed at an unknown date. There are three interior chimneys. At some point early in the building’s history (before 1892), a two-story, four-room brick addition measuring 26’ x 20’ was added to the northeast corner of the house, as is evidenced by masonry that appears to be slightly different than the main block. This addition appears in pictures of the home taken around 1887 when it was the site of The Oswego College for Young Ladies. The building’s windows have been replaced with vinyl sashes.

The dominant feature of the house is a two-story porch which is reached via a long sidewalk from the front (west) of the home, or a shorter walk which runs from the driveway on the building’s right to the five concrete steps in the center of the home. The 37’ x 10’ wide porch situated atop a stone foundation covers nearly all of the front elevation. The porch is supported by four red brick columns. Until recently (2013), this porch featured a second-story floor and sitting area that had long-ago functioned as an enclosed sleeping porch. This porch dates to the mid-1930s, and replaced a one-story, Italianate-style porch that wrapped around the west and north elevations.

The building’s double-door entrance is located on the center of the west elevation. The doors feature glass windows in each door and a segmental arch transom above with two clear glass windows. The west elevation has a symmetrical appearance with identical 7-foot tall arched windows to the right and left of the front doors and two matching 6-foot tall arched windows directly above at the second-story. There is a double-door centered on the second-story above the main entrance. This door provided access to the sleeping porch, which is no longer extant.

The south side of the building features four arched windows, two on the first story and two directly above on the second story. The north side of the building is similar, though two smaller windows were added to the original section of the house near where the addition joins the original.

The addition at the northeast corner is constructed of red brick. The addition spans the north two-thirds of the east (rear) wall of the original block. The north side of this addition features four windows. The rear, or east side, of the house has a back entrance that is accessed via a short flight of steps. The single back door has an arched transom above and there is a window to the north of it. A single second-story window is directly above this door.

There is a third entrance into the rear addition of the house that leads from the driveway passing along the south side of the house. Adjacent to the door on the east is a window; matching windows are on the second story directly over the door and first-story window. This section of the house sits back from the facade of the original home.
Interior

The interior of the Edwards house retains much of its original integrity in the lower level of the original section of the home. The original room configuration is maintained. Entering through the front door, a long open entry hall is dominated by a narrow, straight-run staircase on the north wall leading up to the second floor. The walnut railing leads upwards towards the rear (east end) of the hall, then turns, runs the length of the second-floor hall towards the front (west), turns again, and runs up to a 3-4 foot high landing where the former widow’s walk can be accessed via a trap door in the roof. Two flights of stairs are present along the east wall of the addition, one leading to the upper level and one descending into the basement.

The wood flooring in the first floor is hardwood, installed between the mid-1930s to the late 1940s. The foyer is flanked by entrances to front parlors on the right (south) and left (north). One room adjacent to the north parlor can be accessed from the back of the hallway and both rooms adjacent to the parlors can be accessed via the parlors. To the right (south) of the front entrance, a door leads to a formal living room that measures 13 1/2' wide by 18' long. A fireplace dominates the south wall of the room. Double pocket doors with a glass transom above open to another room to the east. This southeast room measures 13 1/2' wide by 13’ long.

As the usage of this house, while it was a women’s college, was home for the college administrator and administration offices, it appears from photos that the administration office was the southeast room of the front section. It is possible that the southwest parlor was the school’s music room.

To the left (north) of the main entrance another door leads to a parlor that measures 16’ wide by 15’ long and features a fireplace against its north wall. Beyond this room, is a 16’ x 9 1/2’ room. Bathroom and laundry areas were added east of this room. This section of the home maintains its original millwork around the doors.

The addition at the northeast corner of the building, which based on early photos and Sanborn maps appears to have been added before 1892, features a back entrance and work room measuring 12'6” by 16’. This room connects into the back of the main entry hall, as well as into the southwest room of the original part of the house. To the north of this room is a kitchen that measures 11’4” by 12’. A back staircase leads from this kitchen to the upstairs.

The second floor of the home was similar to the lower level in the original section of the house, featuring four rooms, one in each corner of the house, each accessed from the central hallway. The home is currently undergoing renovation to provide additional bathrooms and closet spaces. To this end, one of the bedrooms (in the northeast corner) has been removed and that space turned into two bathrooms. The second-floor plaster walls were completely removed and replaced with sheetrock.

The original plank flooring still exists in the upstairs hallway and the two front (west) bedrooms. Some millwork was lost when walls were removed.

The back, or newer, section of the house features two bedrooms upstairs with a full bathroom and claw foot tub.

2. Barn (Circa 1860-1875, contributing building)

A small limestone barn sits southeast of the house. The age and history of the original part of the barn is unknown, but the owners have always been told it was there before the home was built and predated the Kansas statehood. The original structure is a long narrow two-story building made of stone and measuring 30’ X 24’. It features a small window in the lower-level of the south side and a larger window or door in the upper level of the north side. The east-facing facade features a door and small window.

In later years (date unknown) a one-story tile addition measuring 30’ by 20’ was added to the west side of the barn; half for parking for two cars and the other half was at one time an apartment with an entrance on the
Edwards House Labette County, Kansas
Name of Property County and State

south side. The old barn and newer section are joined by a long pitched roof which is covered with asphalt shingles.

3. Gate Posts (Constructed 1922 or before, 2 contributing objects)

Two stone gateposts rest on either side of the driveway that leads to the property from Ohio Street on the west. Measuring 2’ x 2’, and roughly 6 1/2’ in height, the objects leant an elegant air to entry onto the grounds of the schools once housed there, as evidenced from an historic photograph taken of the property as the military academy opened in 1922. (Figure 6) It is unclear when they were constructed, but they date to at least 1922. The gateposts are made of Carthage Stone set on concrete bases with concrete tops. Many years ago, a young girl living on the property surprised her family by painting them white, thus the stones are painted.
### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable Criteria

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.</td>
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#### Criteria Considerations

(Enter categories from instructions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social History</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Period of Significance c. 1874-1936</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significant Dates c. 1874 – Built as private residence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1886 – Oswego College opened on site</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1922 – Kansas Military Academy opened on site</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1925 – Property becomes Just-Laid Egg Farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1936 – Lewis Edwards purchases property</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 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 construction of the house circa 1874 and extends to 1936 when Lewis Edwards purchased the property for use as a single-family residence.

#### Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A
Summary (Provide a summary paragraph that notes under what criteria the property is nominated.)

The Edwards house is nominated to the Register of Historic Kansas Places under Criterion A in the area of Social History. The residence is a reflection of early growth and development in Oswego and the community’s interest in establishing an educational institution for women. The house and surrounding property are the last remaining vestiges of the Oswego College for Young Ladies, which held classes from 1885 to 1920. The house was constructed circa 1874 as a private residence. In 1885, the property was deeded to the Oswego College for Young Ladies, which was operated by the Neosho Presbytery. Plagued by enrollment problems, the College closed in 1920 and sold its property to the Kansas Military Academy in 1922. The property functioned as the military academy’s campus just two years, before it suffered a devastating fire that destroyed the adjacent classroom and dormitory building. The property again became a private residence, owned by N.R. Bickford, who established a large poultry farm there before selling ten years later to Lewis Edwards. At the time of nomination, the property is owned by a descendant of Edwards.

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

Euro-American settlers began arriving in Oswego after the Civil War in 1865; two years later they formed the Oswego Town Company and named the settlement after many settlers’ hometown of Oswego, New York. Lots were given away to every person who would erect a building, and the town grew steadily. By 1870, the town had over 1,000 residents and was a city of third class. It had established a post office, several stores, a blacksmith shop, two hotels, a bank, and a sawmill. The first school opened in 1867. It appears Oswego’s residents were interested in education from the beginning, as is illustrated by a group of citizens who organized in 1870 “for the purpose of securing lectures and aiding in literary enterprises,” and became known as the Oswego Library and Lecture Association. A few years later in 1877, many of the same people formed the Oswego Library Association for the purpose of establishing a reading room. The passage of $340,000 in bonds assured that the town would be serviced by railroads, and the first train arrived on July 6, 1870, giving Oswego an outlet for its agricultural production.

With the early success of the community, wealthy businessmen began building stately homes in the 1870s and 1880s. The original owner and builder of the nominated residence is not known for certain, though it was likely constructed by George and Margaret Brockway, who owned the property from 1873 to 1877. There is a strong likelihood the Brockways built the house as the property does not show up on the 1870 tax rolls, but is listed on the 1874 rolls. Moreover, George Brockway opened a bank in partnership with H.C. Draper on March 2, 1874, and it closed on September 1, 1877. The Brockways are not listed as living in Oswego in subsequent state and federal censuses. These dates Brockway was associated with the bank closely align with their ownership of the property.

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1 Nelson Case, History of Labette County, Kansas from the First Settlement to the Close of 1892 (Topeka, KS: Crane and Company Publishers, 1893), 161.
4 Case, History of Labette County, Kansas, 166.
5 County property records note that Margaret Brockway purchased the property from Susan Williams, who owned the land on which the house is situated from 1869 to 1873. Susan’s husband, Richard Williams, died in 1873, which likely prompted her to sell the property. It is possible the home was built by the Williams’ before the sale. Williams had purchased the property from A. L. Austin on September 11, 1869, who had purchased the entire NE quarter of Section 21 (former Osage lands) from the US Government on June 20, 1870, according to the land patent record.
The Brockways sold the property to Charles O. Perkins on August 31, 1877, who then transferred it to the Oswego College for Young Ladies on November 27, 1885. Frank Blackmar recalled in his 1912 history of Kansas, “The citizens of Oswego donated a sum of money for the purchase of the Brockway place, which consisted of 10 acres of land and a beautiful home, for use as a school.”

In October 1882, the Neosho Presbytery had adopted a resolution to establish a college within its bounds. The proposal was then approved by Presbyterian Synod, and in May 1883 the Neosho Presbytery held a special meeting in Oswego and voted to establish the school in Oswego. In fall of 1885 the citizens of Oswego purchased the land at NW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of Section 21, n 33, Range 21, and transferred it to the college. Early resident and local historian Nelson Case noted in his History of Labette County, Kansas, “This property was at the time valued at $17,000. It had a large brick residence, which was considered one of the finest in the county. In December 1885, Miss Louise Paull was elected principal of the school, and authorized to select other members of the faculty; and with the faculty thus chosen the school was opened in the brick residence above referred to, January 14, 1886.” A new wood-frame building was erected on the property – immediately south of the former Brockway house – at a cost of about $12,000 in the summer of 1887. The new building was used for classroom and dormitory space, and the former Brockway residence became an administrative building.

The Handbook of Oswego, Kansas, published in 1888, described the newly established college in the up-and-coming city as follows:

The Oswego College for Young Ladies, an academic school of high grade, organized under the auspice of the Presbyterian Synod of Kansas in 1883. The college buildings and campus, of which a view is given, have been provided by the public spirited citizens of Oswego, at a cost of nearly $30,000. The grounds embrace ten acres of the southerly part of the city, and are among the most beautiful and attractive in the suburbs of a city noted for its charming environments...The faculty is composed entirely of ladies, whose experiences, culture and high character eminently fit them for the work in hand. The curriculum is comprehensive, rational and practical. The government of the school is like that of an ideal home, and the mental training of the student as thorough as it is practical. Miss Susan H. Johnson, the principal, is named to me as a lady of rare managerial gifts and literary merit, and a born teacher of fine experience and record...

The school is popular alike with pupils, patrons and the general public; has no semblance of denominational influence, but is liberal and progressive in tone, method and work; has a warm place in the heart of this public and in the judgment of the writer, is one of the most desirable schools for the thorough social, intellectual and musical training of young ladies, at moderate cost, and under the best possible social and Christian influences, to be found in the Western country.

The school was established as a boarding school, but it struggled to sustain a consistently high enrollment to remain open. Perhaps the college leaders had seen the fact that Oswego was at a crossing point of two railroads – the Katy and Frisco – and its proximity to Indian Territory as reasons to hope that enrollment would remain high. A 1974 research paper written by Margaret Varvel Smith, the daughter of Oswego resident and college teacher Marrie Edythe Squier, noted that the shortage of students plagued the institution throughout its history. In 1905 an Auxiliary Board of Trustees appealed for a higher enrollment, and in 1909, the college was

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7 Nelson Case, History of Labette County, Kansas from the First Settlement to the Close of 1892 (Topeka, KS: Crane and Company Publishers, 1893), 219. Citation covers entire paragraph.
said to have reached its zenith enrollment. Yet, the class of 1913 had a total of only three women and by 1920, the college had closed its doors.\(^9\)

In the meantime, the Kelley Military Academy of Burlington, Kansas, was experiencing steady growth, rendering their quarters inadequate. With the availability of the Oswego College for Young Ladies campus, the academy moved to Oswego in 1922 and changed its name to the Kansas Military Academy. In a publication about the school, Oswego was described as "ideal,"

\[\ldots\text{with "every modern convenience and one of the best water plants in the country. While the town is large enough to furnish these conveniences, it is small enough to be free from those distractions and temptations that make the city dangerous to the growing boy in his school days…}\]

Most people who visit the Kansas Military Academy remark about its home-like atmosphere. Intentionally the institutional idea is avoided in every phase. The cadet is given the most zealous care that is possible apart from his own home. He has constant association with virile leaders as K. M. A. has one faculty officer for every ten boys. The definite regulation that only boys free from vicious habits shall be admitted to the school makes possible the sort of selection in the boy’s association that his own home would maintain.\(^10\)

With the relocation of the Kansas Military Academy to the grounds and buildings of the former Oswego College for Young Ladies, the Academy enrollment jumped to a record high of about 50 cadets in the winter of 1924. At 10 AM on Monday, March 3, 1924, neighbors reported fire on the roof of the classroom and dormitory building, adjacent to the brick residence. Members of the Oswego fire department and officers and cadets of the academy battled the blaze, but the three-story wood structure was engulfed in flames and even threatened the brick structure where the administrative offices were housed. The *Oswego Independent* later reported,

\[\text{Realizing that it was futile to attempt to save this building and with the south wind carrying the flames directly across north to the brick administration building, less than 150 feet away, the firemen soon directed their attention toward saving it. It took heroic work and beneath the metal roof the building was on fire many times, and the east wing of the building was badly damaged and the whole structure suffered much from the flood of water, but it was saved and can be repaired to be as good as before.}^{11}\]

Following the fire, which destroyed the building that housed the academy’s classrooms and dormitory, the community housed those students without a place to live until other arrangements could be made. The school never reopened in Oswego, and the property was sold December 19, 1925 to N. R. Bickford.\(^12\) The 1930 US Federal Census recorded Bickford as a 32-year-old poultry farmer, who owned the property valued at $10,000. He was married to Naomi Bickford and they had three young children.\(^13\)

Bickford established a poultry business on the property that came to be known as the “Just-Laid Egg Farm,” and it developed into one of the largest poultry farms in the state during the late 1920s and early 1930s.\(^14\) According to an article published in the Diversified Farming Edition of *The Oswego Democrat* in 1929, the


\(^12\) An unconfirmed Internet source suggests the military academy relocated to the vacant campus of William and Vashti College in Aledo, Illinois, in March 1924 and became the Illinois Military Academy. It was reorganized after bankruptcy in the 1930s as Roosevelt Military School.


Bickfords “constantly maintain a flock of from 3,000 to 8,000 birds on this ten acre tract,” and the farm hatches more than 200,000 baby chicks a season, which are shipped to every state in the union. “Fine pedigreed birds are shipped to all parts of the country and eggs from the high production birds are sold, many bringing more than $5.00 each.”  

The Bickford family lived in the brick residence and developed their many farm outbuildings south of the residence. None of these poultry farm buildings remain today. It is believed that the front porch of the brick residence was changed during the Bickfords’ ownership to more closely reflect its current appearance, though the 1920s and 1930s Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps suggest otherwise. The one-story, wrap-around, Italianate-style porch was removed and replaced by a two-story porch, with an upper-level sleeping porch, on the west (front) elevation. Bickford also added onto the stone outbuilding.

The Just-Laid Egg Farm appears to have fallen victim to the Great Depression, and the property was sold to Lewis S. Edwards, a nephew of the late U.S. Senator Preston B. Plumb, in 1936. The 1940 US Federal Census recorded 60-year-old Edwards as a farmer married to 55-year-old Cora. The house has remained in the Edwards family and is currently owned by Lewis and Cora Edwards’ granddaughter Katherine Barker.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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


Oswego Independent, 7 March 1924.

The Oswego Democrat, 29 November 1929.


10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.8 acres (Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

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

1 37.160047 -95.111849 2 ____________________________

Latitude: ____________________________  Longitude: ____________________________
**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

The property is “L” shaped and is bound by Ohio Street on the west, Barker Drive on the south, residential property to the north and hospital property on the east. The section at the back of the property runs north, creating the L-shape and is flanked by residential property on its west side.

The 1.5-acre tract is described as follows: S21, T33, R21: BEG 30’E & 188’S NW/C NW1/4 SW1/4 NE1/4 W170’ N188’ E184’ S340.25’ W167.5’ NWLY 72’ W120’ N TO POB & EXC BEG 200’.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundaries reflect the entire parcel still owned by Katherine Barker which includes the gate posts, the house and barn.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Karyn L. Carpenter; KSHS staff edits
organization: ___________________________ date: October 2013
street & number: 425 6th Street telephone: 206-780-2214
city or town: Oswego state: KS zip code: 67356
e-mail: Newfhugger_wander@mac.com

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**Property Owner:**

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

name: Katherine Barker
street & number: 910 Ohio Street telephone: 620-795-2002
city or town: Oswego state: KS zip code: 67356

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**Photographs:**

Please check with SHPO staff before completing photographs.

Name of Property: Edwards House
City or Vicinity: Oswego
County: Labette State: Kansas
Photographer: Karyn Carpenter (Photos 1-2; 4-8); Heather Brown (Photos 3; 9 thru 12)
Date Photographed: February 10, 2013 (Photos 1-2; 4-8); December 18, 2013 (Photos 3; 9 thru 12)

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 12: Entrance posts flanking driveway leading to residence, camera facing E
2 of 12: Residence with outbuilding behind, camera facing E
3 of 12: Residence (with new porch balustrade), camera facing E
4 of 12: North (side) elevation of residence, camera facing SE
5 of 12: North (side) and east (rear) elevations of residence, camera facing SW
6 of 12: Outbuilding, north (side) elevation and west elevation (with garage bays), camera facing SE
7 of 12: South and east elevations of outbuilding, camera facing NW
8 of 12: Outbuilding, north (side) elevation, camera facing S
9 of 12: Interior of residence, primary entrance on west side of building, camera facing W
10 of 12: Interior of residence, staircase in center hall leading to 2nd floor, camera facing E
11 of 12: Interior of residence, 2nd floor hall showing window on west wall, camera facing W
12 of 12: Interior of residence, 2nd floor room, camera facing NW
Edwards House  Labette County, Kansas

Name of Property                   County and State

Additional Documentation

Figure 1: Contextual Aerial Map, Google, 2013
Figure 2: Close-in Aerial Map. Google, 2013.
Figure 3: Koch, Augustus. *Bird’s Eye View of Oswego, Kansas*. 1877. Accessed online: http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/226095
Figure 4: Oswego College for Young Ladies – President’s Residence (date unknown). Shows residence before porch modification.
Figure 6: **Kansas Military Academy** – Kansas Military Academy Handbook. On file, Oswego Kansas Historical Museum. Circa 1922.
Figure 7: Kansas Military Academy – Dormitory Fire (March 3, 1924). Adjacent building destroyed.
Figure 8: Part of the Bickford Farm (Just-Laid Egg Farm) – *The Oswego Democrat*, November 29, 1929.

Figure 9: Bickford Farm, between 1925 and 1936.
Figure 9: Bickford House, between 1925 and 1936. Photo shows altered porch and second-floor sleeping porch.