

**SELGEM**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Garden of Eden

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Southeast Corner, 2nd Street & Kansas Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Lucas

STATE

Kansas

VICINITY OF  
CODE

20

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
No. 1, Keith Sebelius

COUNTY

Russell

CODE

167

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED:	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Naegele

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Lucas

VICINITY OF

STATE

Kansas

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Russell County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Russell

STATE

Kansas

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration

DATE

1939

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Records destroyed. Kansas, A Guide to the Sunflower State was published in 1939.

CITY, TOWN

STATE

167-3340-003

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Cabin Home, which is the nucleus of the Garden of Eden was built out of large stone logs and concrete in an irregular L-shaped plan. It is situated on a large corner lot on the east edge of Lucas. The house is one and one half stories with a basement and has eleven rooms, a bath and its own electric plant. The interior is finished in California redwood, pine and oak.

The main facade which faces north has a centrally placed raised porch with a low pediment. This porch has been placed on the west side of a slightly projecting wing. An open porch with a balustrade continues around to the east where the roof over it resumes at the center of the facade. This porch is accessible from both floors and has two bays, one of which is rounded. There is a balustrade above the cornice. The rounded bay appears to have been flat in one early photograph, but a later photograph (before 1917) of this facade shows it to be similar to its present appearance. The two story porch continues half the way across the south facade where it is met by a projecting wing. The major feature of the west facade is a two story bay window. There is a ground level entrance to the basement in the central panel of the bay. The roof has been resurfaced with light colored asphalt shingles.

After the completion of the Cabin Home, Dinsmoor began to work on his mausoleum which is located in the northeast corner of the property. This building is constructed of stone logs and has three diminishing tiers, the first measuring 14 feet square, the second 9 feet square, and the third 4 feet square. At each corner there is a cement post faced with native stone measuring from 18 to 21 feet long. The mausoleum has been crowned with a concrete American flag giving it an overall height of 40 feet. It contains a 7 by 10 foot room where Dinsmoor and his first wife have been buried. His concrete coffin bears Masonic symbols.

The Garden of Eden was started shortly after the completion of the mausoleum. Dinsmoor began by molding twenty-nine artificial trees, some as high as forty feet, out of wet concrete and then began building the concrete figures among them. His first themes were Biblical, many coming from Genesis or Moses. There is a sign between two trees on the west side of the lot bearing the caption, "Garden of Eden." Below the sign are over-lifesize statues of Adam and Eve, their hands clasped and arms curved to form the beginning of a grape arbor. There are Masonic symbols on Adam's cloth. A statue of the devil with a pitchfork rises up behind the sign near the tree on the right. The tree on the left has a grouping of four figures representing the offerings of Cain and Abel; below them are two girls, one on a swing while the other is catching a bird. The next tree to the north shows the discovery of Abel's body by his wife, dog and an angel. Above the grouping is an oversized eye with a hand that points toward Cain and his wife on the next tree which is in the northwest corner of the lot.

The sculptural group across the north side of the lot represents, according to Dinsmoor, "present day civilization." It shows a chain of events that stretches across several trees. He comments on the evils of trusts, bonds, interest, and chartered rights and how they are protected by the flag. These evils reach out to grab a girl who is after a soldier, who is shooting at an Indian on the next tree, who in turn is shooting an arrow at a dog which is chasing a fox that is in pursuit of a bird that is eating a worm on a leaf.

The Goddess of Liberty stands atop the next sculptural group to the east. She has one foot on the trust and is spearing its head. Below her a man and woman are using a saw marked "ballot" to cut off the limb labeled "chartered rights" upon which the trust stands. Under this tree is a ziggurat-shaped concrete strawberry bed.

# **B** SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Samuel P. Dinsmoor

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Samuel P. Dinsmoor, the creator and builder of the Garden of Eden at Lucas, Kan., was born in Ohio in 1843. Prior to his enlistment in the Union army in 1862, he had been a farmer. After the war he moved to Illinois where he taught school five terms and farmed. He married Frances Barclay in 1870. In 1888 he moved to Russell county, Kan., settling on a farm near Lucas. He moved to Nebraska in 1890 but returned to Russell county in 1891. In 1905 he retired from farming and moved to Lucas, where he purchased one-fourth of a block on which to build a home.

In 1906 he began building a stone log cabin. Huge stones were cut at a quarry near Lucas and hauled to his building site. One of the stone cutters was Nicholas A. Broska. Although Dinsmoor did much of the work himself, he did employ some local stonemasons including a man named Steve Truitt. The large stones were fitted together like logs and Dinsmoor used large amounts of concrete for the porches and for ornamentation. By September, 1907, the finishing touches were being applied. Then in January, 1909, Dinsmoor had the words "Cabin Home" put on the rock log across the front of the porch.

When the house was completed, he began construction of the forty-foot high mausoleum. After that he began working on the Garden itself. Surrounding the Cabin Home he placed sculptured concrete figures of Man, animal life, trees and effigies. He molded 29 trees out of wet concrete, some as high as 40 feet, and built concrete figures among them. To support the statuary there was a network of concrete limbs which also helped to link one grouping to another. Dinsmoor experimented with various concrete mixes and developed a mixture pliable enough to be hand worked but adhesive enough to hold firm. He continued to work on the Garden until 1929 when failing health and eyesight forced him to stop. A pamphlet he wrote in 1927 reported that as of July 1, 1927, he had used 2,273 sacks of cement, more than 113 tons, on his project.

Dinsmoor himself gave the place its name "Garden of Eden." Adam and Eve are there with the serpent and one part of the Garden is devoted to the theme of the downfall of Man as told in the Bible. His first themes were Biblical, but as the project grew he began to add statuary commenting on contemporary philosophies and practices. The increasing complexities of life were depicted.

Dinsmoor's first wife died in 1917 and according to the newspaper accounts was buried in the local cemetery. However, within a few years the literature on the Garden stated that she had been buried in a concrete coffin in the mausoleum just below a second coffin which Dinsmoor had reserved for himself. In 1924 the 81-year old Dinsmoor married his 20-year old housekeeper, creating a considerable stir in the small community. Subsequently they had two children. Dinsmoor died in 1932, and as he had instructed, his body was placed in the mausoleum in a concrete coffin that had a glass top so visitors could view him.

From 1908 to 1933 the Garden was a popular tourist attraction, but after Dinsmoor's death it was forgotten and ignored. The statuary became overgrown with shrubbery and vines and the Cabin Home was used as an apartment house. In 1967 the property was

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Garden of Eden

CONTINUATION SHEET

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PAGE 1

7 DESCRIPTION

Above the coal house and ash pit on the east edge of the property rises a grouping showing Labor crucified by a lawyer, doctor, preacher and banker.

Other structures on the grounds include a visitors' dining hall, which is 21 feet square and has a concrete floor, roof and tables. Dinsmoor also constructed a small zoo with cages for a badger, owl, and coyote, 28 pigeon roosts, two bird houses and an eagle roost. There is a concrete wash house and smaller strawberry bed just to the south of the Cabin Home. The Garden is lit by 48 electric lights, and Dinsmoor would often light it at night because of the specially eerie effect.

The Cabin Home and the Garden of Eden are today much as they were when Dinsmoor was alive. The paint has faded from some of the sculpture, some of the smaller figures have been damaged by vandals, the stone cabin has a new roof, and one of the two concrete American flags has had to be taken down, but little else has been changed.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

acquired by the present owners who have carefully cleaned and restored it. All of Dinsmoor's major creations are still standing and the Garden is once again a tourist attraction.

To an average visitor Dinsmoor's work may appear crude and bizarre, out of proportion and reflecting an amateurish attempt at realism. But the work does fit into a stylistic trend usually referred to as naive or primitive art. Typical of this style is an overattention to details and an exaggeration of differences and features for emphasis. It is today known as an excellent example of naive art and unusual in its scale.

The Garden of Eden represents the personal vision of its creator. It is part of the tradition of large, painted sculpture and naive American art. The distortions and exaggeration of details and proportions give the work a special interest. It has a quality of significance in American culture as it possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and is worthy of National Register listing.

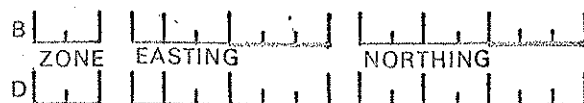
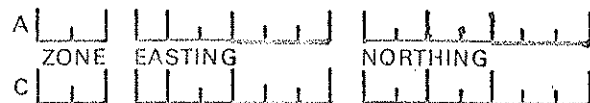
**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

- "An Art Waiting for a Movement," Topeka Sunday Capital-Journal, Midway Magazine, June 15, 1975.
- "Concrete 'Garden of Eden' at Lucas Almost Forgotten," Topeka Capital, June 4, 1950.
- "Concrete 'Garden of Eden' Is Monument to Kansas 'Heretic,'" Topeka Capital, Mar. 28, 1974.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY One  
 UTM REFERENCES

Lat. 39° 03' 33"  
 Long. 98° 32' 04"



VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE Richard Pankratz, Director, Historic Sites Survey  
Cornelia Wyma, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Kansas State Historical Society DATE June 24, 1976  
 STREET & NUMBER 120 West 10th Street TELEPHONE 913-296-3251  
 CITY OR TOWN Topeka STATE Kansas 66612

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X STATE        LOCAL       

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Nyle H. Miller  
 TITLE Executive Director, Kansas State Historical Society DATE August 2, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
 I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
 \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Garden of Eden

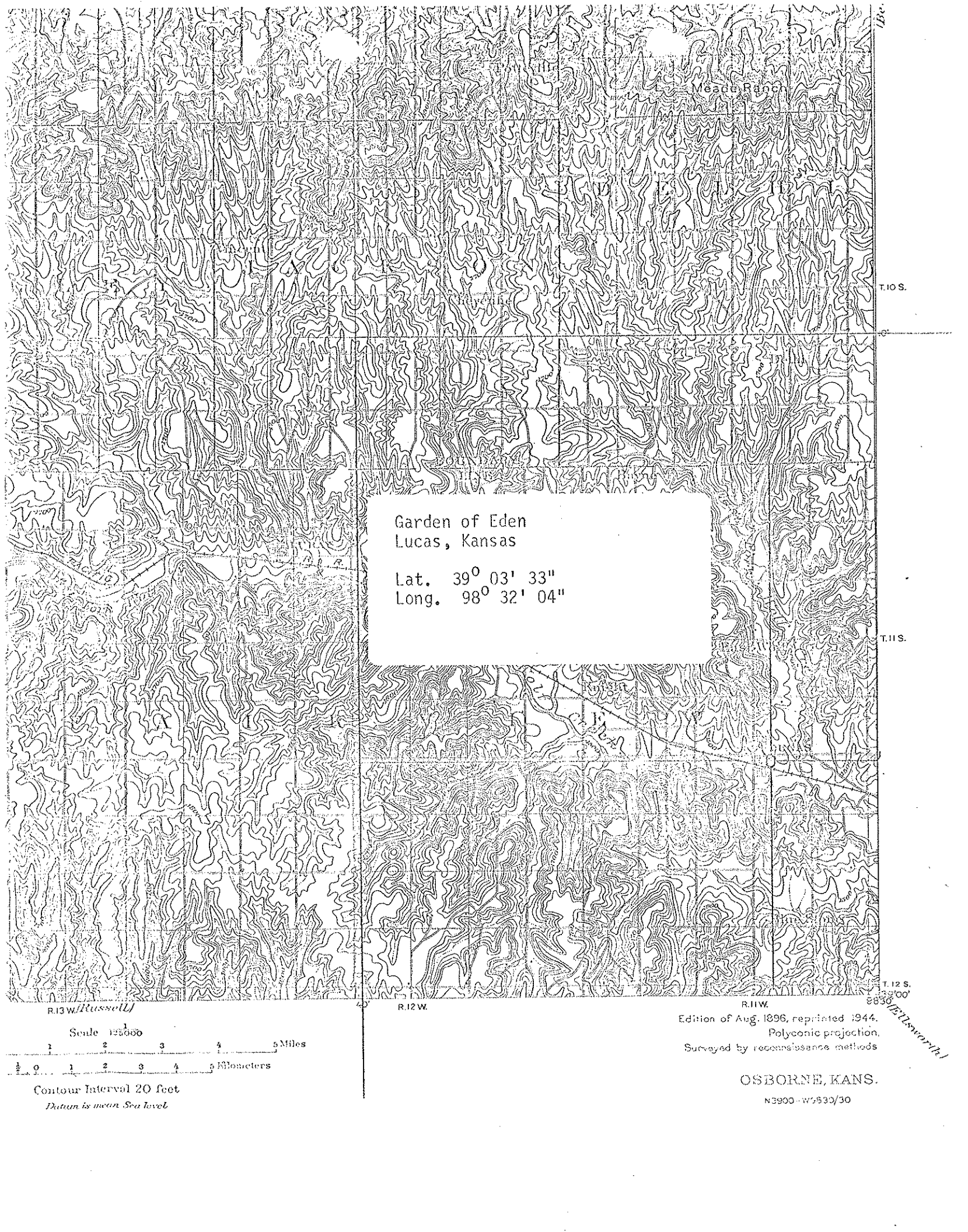
CONTINUATION SHEET

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PAGE 2

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Dinsmoor, S. P., Pictorial History of the Cabin Home in Garden of Eden (n.p., 1927) modern reprint.
- "Eve Takes Another Adam into Her 'Garden of Eden,'" Chicago Weekly American, 1933 (clipping filed in Kansas State Historical Society library, exact date not given).
- "Fearfully and Wonderfully Made Images of Concrete ...," Topeka Capital, February 19, 1922.
- Hoopes, Owen Dean, This Is My Sign--"Garden of Eden" (Lucas, Kan., Lucas Publishing Co., 1972).
- Lucas Independent, Jan. 28, 1909; Mar. 13, 29, 1913; Apr. 26, May 3, Sept. 27, 1917; Apr. 30, 1924; Mar. 16, 1927.
- Lucas Sentinel, Feb. 22, Mar. 22, Sept. 20, 1907.
- "Lucas Man Buried in Garden of Eden," Russell Record, Dec. 12, 1974.
- "Man Who Built Kansas 'Garden of Eden' Dies," Topeka Capital, July 23, 1932.
- "S. P. Dinsmoor Dead," Lucas Independent, July 27, 1932.
- "A Strange Concrete 'Eden' in Kansas," Kansas City Times, July 11, 1958.
- Watson, John, "Man-made Cement 'Garden of Eden' Startles Imagination...," Wichita Eagle, Jan. 22, 1953.



Meade Ranch

T.12 S.

T.10 S.

T.11 S.

T.12 S.  
88°00'

2830  
E.12 S. 12 W. 12 E.

Garden of Eden  
Lucas, Kansas

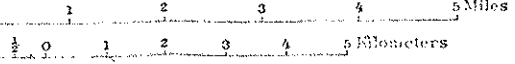
Lat. 39° 03' 33"  
Long. 98° 32' 04"

R.13 W. (Russell)

R.12 W.

R.11 W.

Scale 1:25000



Contour Interval 20 feet  
Datum is mean Sea level

Edition of Aug. 1896, reprinted 1944.  
Polyconic projection.  
Surveyed by reconnaissance methods

OSBORNE, KANS.  
N3903-W7530/30