

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A) Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Colby City Hall
Other name/site number 193-1060-0105

2. Location

Street & number 585 North Franklin Avenue not for publication
City or town Colby vicinity
State Kansas Code KS County Thomas Code 193 Zip code 67701

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard D. Lankford DSHPO 10-22-03
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of commenting official /Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

- entered in the National Register. _____
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register _____
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register _____
- removed from the National Register _____
- other, (explain:) _____

Colby City Hall
Name of property

Thomas County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
New Deal Resources of Kansas

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: city hall, correctional facility, fire station
SOCIAL: meeting hall
EDUCATION: library

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: city hall, fire station
SOCIAL: meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: limestone
walls STONE: limestone
Walls Brick with limestone trim
roof OTHER: latex
other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property Colby City Hall

County and State Thomas County, Kansas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register)

- Criteria A, B, C, and D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1936

Significant Dates

1936

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Suite and Blanchard

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): Primary location of additional data:

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, designated landmark, recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey, recorded by Historic American Engineering.

Record #

- Repository checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State agency, Federal agency, Local government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

Name of Property Colby City Hall County and State Thomas County, Kansas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .52 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	3	4	2
1	4	3	2
3	2	3	9
2	0	4	3
6	2	8	3
0	0		
Zone	Easting	Northing	

3	4	2	0
Zone	Easting	Northing	

2	3	4	0
Zone	Easting	Northing	

4	3	2	0
Zone	Easting	Northing	

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Melissa Fisher Isaacs, National Register Intern

Organization Kansas State Historical Society Date June 13, 2003

Street & number 6425 SW 6th Avenue Telephone 785-272-8681

City or town Topeka State Kansas Zip code 66615-1099

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name City of Colby

street & number 585 North Franklin Avenue telephone 785-462-4410

city or town Colby state Kansas zip code 67701

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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Colby City Hall
Colby, Kansas

Description

The Colby City Hall (c. 1936) is a one story building with a basement, designed with Art Deco influences. The structure is constructed with regular courses of rough-faced and rusticated native limestone. The deck roof, originally tile, is currently finished with white latex. The footprint of the original portion of the building measures 94 feet by 52 feet, with the 25.5 foot by 42.5 foot ell that originally accommodated the Colby Police Department jutting out of the southeast corner. The building is situated with its west-facing front facade running lengthwise, parallel to the street. The simplified design executed in limestone is typical of architecture produced by the Works Progress Administration.

The front facade is centered by a stepped chevron that projects vertically above the roofline to create a parapet. The face of this chevron is dominated by a large pointed arch window topped by a segmented stone arch with a keystone engraved "1936". Three smooth stones above and flanking the keystone are engraved "Colby City Hall". The double front entrance doors, accessed through a vestibule added in 1996, are directly beneath the window.

The center chevron is flanked by two wings which are each visually divided into two segments by the variance in setback. The facade of the centermost segment of these wings is set back slightly from the plane of the chevron; each of these segments features two three-light windows, topped by segmented stone lintels with keystones, on the first floor level and two windows, which have been bricked shut, on the basement level.

The second segment stands far forward of the center portion of the facade, and is pierced by a one-over-one window topped by a segmented stone lintel with keystone. A belt course of angled smooth-faced stone runs around this segment of the facade at the level of the lintel. Beneath this belt course, shallow pilasters create the impression of stout pillars shoring up the corners of the building.

The north facade of the original building features two pairs of one-over-one windows at the first floor level and two pairs of smaller one-over-one windows at the basement level. The south facade is punctuated by one pair of windows on the west end of the first level, one window near the east end of the first level, a pair of smaller windows on the west end of the basement level, and a single small window at the east end of the basement level. All of the windows on the first floor level are topped by segmented stone lintels with keystones.

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A water table of smooth-faced stone marks the division between the first floor and basement levels. Above this water table, the stonework is rusticated; below the water table, the stonework is rough-faced. An additional band of flat smooth stone immediately below the lintel level runs across the entire original facade, with the exception of the center chevron.

The Colby City Hall has been expanded over the years to meet the needs of the civic organizations it contains. This expansion has resulted in three non-contributing additions. The first addition, built in 1950, extends from the original building's northeast corner. This addition, which is faced with rusticated stone to match the original building, is divided into two bays and serves as shelter for the fire department's vehicles and equipment. Four large garage doors on the west elevation and three garage doors on the east elevation provide egress for vehicles. The east elevation also features a walk-through door.

In the 1960s, the original one-story ell which extends from the southeast corner of the building was modified. A second story was added, and the south elevation was altered to accommodate the addition of a door and a window. These changes were delineated from the original portions of the structure by the use of simulated stone in an irregular pattern.

In 1976, a one story addition was built which connects the northeast 1950 addition with the southeast ell.

The interior of the 1936 portion of the building is divided into offices. The front foyer leads to the stairs and the elevator, added in 1996, which provide access to the basement. At the top of the stairs, arched glass walls and glass doors to the right and left provide visitors with a clear view of the offices within those spaces. Men's and women's restrooms are located at the top of the stairs. The basement houses the American Legion's meeting room and a kitchen which retains many of its original fittings. A third restroom is located in the basement. The fire department offices are located in the rear of the building. The interior retains its original woodwork, many of its original doors, and much of its hardware is intact. The configurations of the rooms have been modified only slightly; the most significant of these modifications was the addition of the glass walls and doors that separate the office spaces from the foyer.

The Colby City Hall currently houses the city offices, the fire department equipment and offices, and local utility department offices.

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Statement of Significance

The Colby City Hall (c. 1936) is historically significant under Criterion A for its association with the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and its central role in the civic life of the Colby community. The city hall is also significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of the architecture of the WPA. The property is included in the New Deal Resources of Kansas Multiple Property Submission.

The economic depression of the 1930s, accompanied by the effects of the decade-long drought, resulted in significant unemployment in the Colby vicinity and statewide. Prior to the onset of the Depression, the town of Colby, which had received a railroad line and the county seat, had quickly grown and prospered as an agricultural and civic center in western Kansas. Colby was founded in 1885, when a town company chartered to lay out a new city in the Colby area struck an agreement with Civil War veteran J. R. Colby. Mr. Colby, who had settled three miles south of the Colby town site and had plans to plat his own town, agreed that in exchange for having the new town named after him, he would resign his own interest in town-building. By 1928, the city had a population of 2,600, and was home to two grain elevators, two lumber companies, three hotels, five oil companies, a movie theater, and the area's consolidated school, among other enterprises. The Depression, however, brought the dust storms and jack rabbit plagues that, paired with the economic troubles of the times, devastated the area's agriculture and the livelihood of many Thomas County residents.

Historical background and significance:

In 1933, the United States federal government began to reveal the relief programs that would make up the New Deal. The public works program promised thirty percent of the funding for a community building project plus a 3 ½ % interest rate on twenty-year bonds voted by the community, school district, or county undertaking the project. According to the Colby Free Press-Tribune, public opinion strongly advocated taking advantage of such an opportunity to receive federal funding. A committee appointed by Colby Chamber of Commerce president Roy Woodward determined that the most desirable building projects for the Colby community would be a high school building, a city hall, and a hospital.

In 1934, Colby mayor W. G. Shafer proposed the construction of a city hall that would consolidate in one building a variety of civic functions. He envisioned the building as the home of the city hall, the library, the fire department, the American Legion, and the city's voting booths. Initial planning for the city hall began later that year, but construction was delayed until July 1935, when architects Suite and Blanchard of Garden City, Kansas, finally received approval for their blueprints from the Kansas Emergency Relief Committee (KERC). The building had become a project of the KERC, a state agency which served much the same purpose as the more famous federal Works Progress Administration (WPA): to create relief employment through construction,

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road building, landscaping, and other public works projects. The KERC, like the WPA, provided a percentage of the funding necessary for a project, and loaned the rest at low interest rates. Among the other projects constructed or maintained in the Colby area by one or both of these agencies were the high school, the grandstand at the fairgrounds, Fike Park, and many miles of gravel roads. In autumn of 1935, the newly created WPA took over administration of the construction of the Colby City Hall; Cecil Shull served as the WPA's construction superintendent for the project. The American Legion also contributed \$3000 for materials for the building's basement, in exchange for a 99-year lease on the meetings room in the basement.

To minimize cost and maximize labor, native stone from a quarry on the Smoky Hill River south of nearby Monument, Kansas, was used in the construction of the Colby City Hall. Early mistakes in the building's stonework, which had to be redone, ate up vital funds and later led to delays in the completion of the building's interior. Work was temporarily stopped in May 1936 and again in September 1936 due to lack of money. Regardless of these delays, the city officers moved into the new city hall at the end of August 1936 and the library opened its doors to patrons on September 3, 1936. The completed building contained a City Administration room, council rooms, general offices, the library, banquet facilities, restrooms, fireproof vaults for city records, and basement meeting rooms for the American Legion and its Auxiliary. The fire and police departments occupied the rear portion of the building. The cost of the building was estimated at \$27,000. A total of around 65 men found relief employment in the construction of the Colby City Hall.

The new city hall provided a convenient central location, as well as a permanent home, for many important civic organizations. The Colby Public Library, prior to the construction of the city hall, had been a roving entity. Until 1926, the library was housed in private residences and various public buildings. In March 1926, a library board appointed by the city council decided that the library would be located in the Connelly building, and a city librarian was appointed. Between 1926 and 1936, the collection remained in the Connelly building but moved from floor to floor. As Colby was, until 1937, a taxless city, the library had no municipal funding. Plays were staged and magazine subscriptions were sold to raise money. The construction of the city hall did not immediately put an end to the library's financial struggles—library supporters continued to hold talent shows and box socials and solicit gifts from various clubs and organizations—but it did provide the library with its first permanent home.

The Colby Fire Department was organized in 1910 as a volunteer unit; in 1925 a city ordinance formally established and reorganized the volunteer fire department. It was not until 1951 that two men were hired to perform fire department-related functions. The fire department continues to make the Colby City Hall its home.

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Colby American Legion Post #363, chartered in 1922, and Auxiliary Post #363, chartered in 1923, made regular use of their basement meeting rooms, and often made them available to other local organizations. During World War II, the city hall served as a venue for functions such as selective service registration and local civilian defense council meetings.

The Colby City Hall, constructed in a minimalized Art Deco style, reflected the restrictions and goals of WPA architecture. Because WPA workers were often unskilled in the construction trades, plans had to be simple and relatively easy to carry out. The Art Deco style, with its hallmark geometric patterns and projections, could be simplified without losing all of its modern flair. Therefore, a restrained Art Deco design was often the choice of architects on WPA projects. In addition, the federal government hoped that creating solid, prominent structures would encourage the American people to have faith in the solidity and security of their government. The simple, modern design executed in native stone presented the citizens of Colby with an image that was both progressive and reliable.

The Colby City Hall continues to serve as the town's city hall. Although the library and the police department are now located in separate buildings, additions to the rear of the structure have allowed the civic organizations that remain there to keep pace with the times. In 1950, the Creson Construction Company was awarded the contract for a rear, two bay addition to house the fire department's equipment as well as the city's trucks. A second story was added to the police department's southeast ell in the 1960s. The final rear addition was completed in 1976 when the police department moved into the newly constructed Law Enforcement Building and the fire department expanded its quarters at the city hall. In 1995, the City of Colby received a federal grant to make the building compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This funding was used to introduce an elevator into the foyer; the work was completed in 1996. A vestibule was also added in 1996.

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Bibliography

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- "City Hall Nears Completion," *The Colby Free Press-Tribune*, 29 July 1936.
- "City Hall Work is to Continue," *The Colby Free Press-Tribune*, 20 May 1936.
- "Colby Defense Council Will Meet Thursday," *The Colby Free Press-Tribune*, 25 February 1942.
- Colby Sanborn Map, 1928.
- "County Club Women to Meet Next Tuesday," *The Colby Free Press-Tribune*, 15 April 1942.
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- "Library Opens Tomorrow," *The Colby Free Press-Tribune*, 2 September 1936.
- "Mayor Plans a City Hall at Fike Park," *The Colby Free Press-Tribune*, 13 June 1934.
- "Move City Office Last of Month," *The Colby Free Press-Tribune*, 26 August 1936.
- "Need More Good Jobs for Relief," *The Colby Free Press-Tribune*, 5 August 1936.
- "Public Works Program of Interest to Colby," *The Colby Free Press-Tribune*, 28 June 1933.
- Richards, Don, ed. "Colby," *Kansas!* 8 (May/June 1958), 14-17.
- "Set Times for the Third Registration," *The Colby Free Press-Tribune*, 11 February 1942.
- "Start Monday on City Hall," *The Colby Free Press-Tribune*, 3 July 1935.
- "Work Begins on City Hall," *The Colby Free Press-Tribune*, 10 July 1935.
- "Work Continues on the New Elevator at City Hall," *Colby Free Press*, 27 February 1996.

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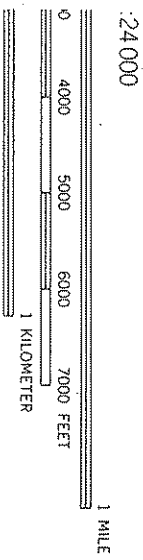
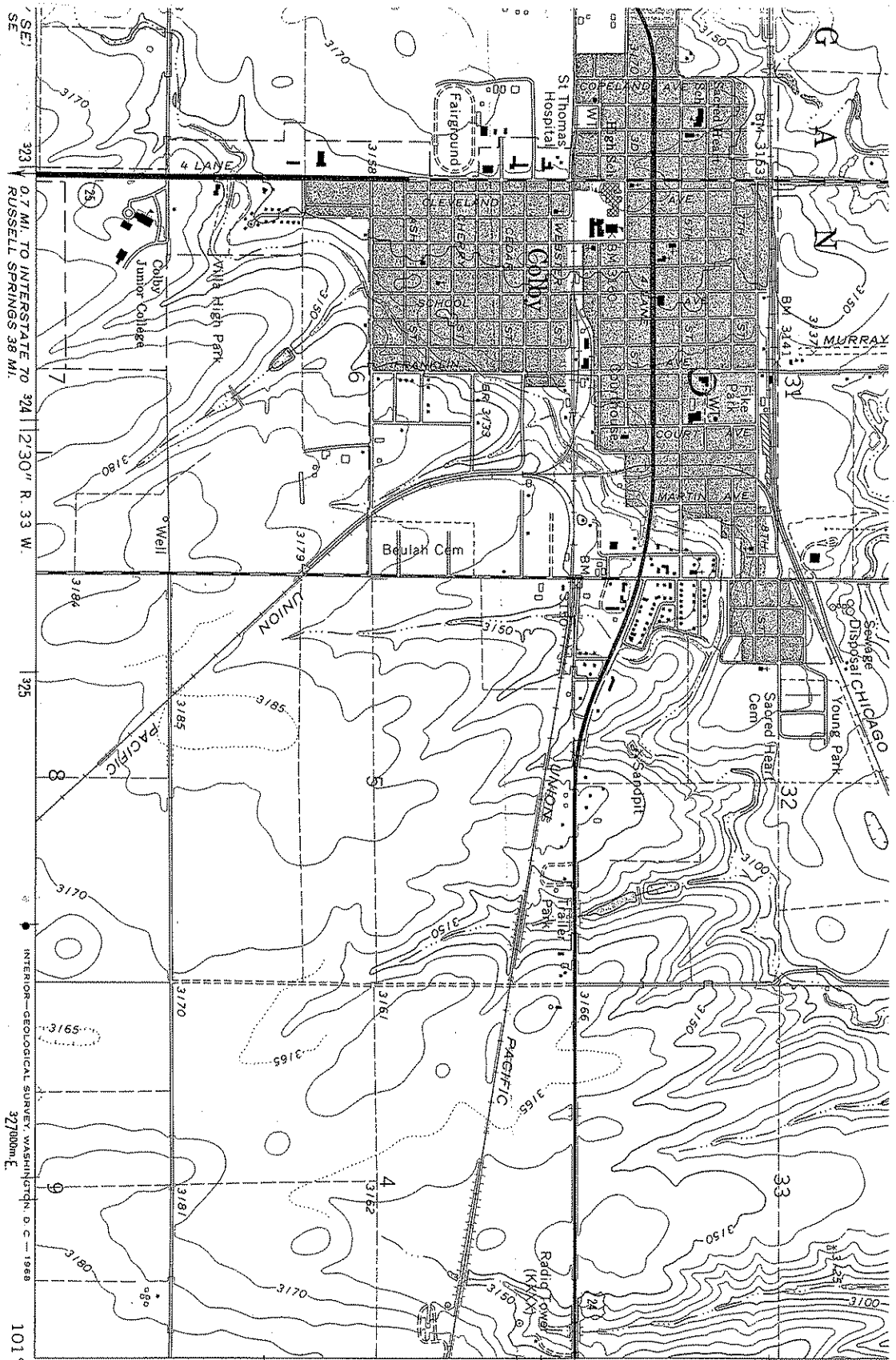
"Work is Halted on City Hall," *The Colby Free Press-Tribune*, 23 September 1936.

Verbal Boundary Description

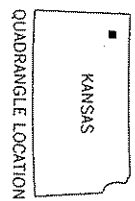
The nominated property is located on Block 10, Lots 2, 3 and 6 and the N1/2 of Lot 7 and adjacent vacated 6th Street and west 15 feet of south 15 feet of Block 3, Lot 10 in Colby, Thomas County, Kansas. The property is bounded on the north by Fike Park, on the south by an alley, on the west by North Franklin Avenue, and on the east by a parking lot and alley.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property contains all land historically associated with it.



VERTICAL SCALE
 1 INCH = 10 FEET
 HORIZONTAL SCALE
 1 INCH = 1 MILE
 MEASUREMENTS IN SEA LEVEL



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Heavy-duty
- Medium-duty
- Light-duty
- Unimproved dirt
- U. S. Route
- State Route

COLBY, KANS.

NE/4 COLBY 15' QUADRANGLE
 N3922.5—W10100.7.5

1967

AMS 5762 1 NE—SERIES V878

*COLBY CITY HALL
 COLBY, THOMAS COURT
 KANSAS
 UTM REFERENCES:
 14/323920/4362830*

39° 22' 30" T. 7 S.
 101° 00' 4361000m. N. T. 8 S.
 0.7 MI. TO INTERSTATE 70 324 12' 30" R. 33 W.
 RUSSELL SPRINGS 38 MI.