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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

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This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

_X___ New Submission ____ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic Resources of Neosho, Newton County, Missouri

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Commercial Development of Neosho, ca. 1868 - ca. 1943
Civic and Governmental Buildings in Neosho, 1888 - 1943
Residential Development of Neosho, 1855 - 1943 (Not included in this submittal)
Religious Buildings in Neosho, 1895 - 1943 (Not included in this submittal)
Educational Buildings in Neosho, 1891 - 1943 (Not incuded in this submittal)

C. Form Prepared by

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Claire F. Blackwell — 24 June 1993

Signature and title of certifying official Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO — Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Patrick Andrus — 8/12/93

Signature of the Keeper — Date

INTRODUCTION AND ORGANIZATION

This multiple property group submittal for Neosho is organized with reference to two contexts; Commercial Development of Neosho, ca 1868 - ca. 1943; and Civic and Governmental Buildings in Neosho, 1888 - 1943. These contexts are preceded by a discussion of Neosho's geographical information and historic overview.

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Neosho, the county seat of Newton County, Missouri, is located in the southwest corner of the state along the western slope of the Ozark Mountains. The city is located 23 miles south of Joplin and 66 miles southwest of Springfield, at the intersection of Highways 60 and 71. The city is served by the Burlington Northern and Kansas City Southern Railroads. The 1990 census reported Neosho's population at 9,254.

The city is 1,041 feet above sea level and has a mild climate. Temperatures average 79 degrees during summer months and 37 degrees during winter. The area receives an average of 43 inches of rainfall each year with heaviest rainfall during spring and summer months. Neosho's topography is hilly and wooded with many sinkholes which provide natural drainage. Rocky topsoil covers deep limestone reserves, creating a natural reservoir. Hardwood trees such as ash, oak, walnut and maple dominate the area.

Neosho gets its name from its earliest known inhabitants, the Osage Indians, who called the area "Ne-u-zhu" which meant "many waters" or "the meeting of waters." Neosho, still often referred to as the "City of Springs" boasts more than ten natural springs which have been in constant use for centuries by Indians, early settlers, retailers and industries. The city's largest and best known spring is Big Spring, located two blocks west of the Courthouse Square, which empties into Hickory Creek. Big Spring was used by the Osage Indians for ceremonial purposes and early settlers used the spring for drinking water and to power grist mills. Other springs important to the development of Neosho include Hearrell, McMahn, and Walbridge Springs.

The Neosho Court Square and its environs contain all of the properties included in this nomination. The Court Square was laid out in 1839 when Newton County was formed and Neosho designated the county seat. The plan of the Court Square followed that of the Shelbyville Square Plan which has a central block of a grid for the courthouse and lots arranged to face it. In Missouri, 57 of the present 114 county seats were laid out in Shelbyville plans (Ohman, History of Missouri's Counties: 33). The Newton County Courthouse is bracketed by Wood Street on the west, Washington Street on the east, Spring Street on the north, and Main Street on the south. These streets are aligned in an east/west and north/south axis.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

During the 1830s, white settlers of English, Scotch, and Irish origin began moving into the area which became Neosho. Early settlers include Campbell Price who arrived in 1833 to find Levie Lee and James McCord, Neosho's earliest known white settlers, living near Walbridge Spring (Neosho, City of Springs: 7). In 1839, Newton County was organized and Neosho was chosen as the county seat by Hugh Shannon, John Reed and Jacob Testerman who were appointed by the state's governor as county judges. According to a survey performed in 1846, the town covered an area of about 40 acres and was laid off beginning at the "west edge of the large spring and...northeast of a large white oak," which included land originally belonging to John McCord (Ibid). Part of McCord's relinquished land was returned to him which he subdivided because of its proximity to Neosho. This area, later added to the city, is still called "McCord's Addition to Neosho." (England: 2).

At the time of the 1846 survey, Neosho was laid out at right angles with "seven degrees variation to the west" (Ibid: 1). The original town was comprised of Spring, Main, and Hickory Streets crossed by Jefferson, Wood, Washington, and Lafayette Streets running north to south. Plans for Neosho's first courthouse were laid out in 1840. The courthouse was constructed of oak logs with "one good chimney," a fireplace, one window and a door. This building was located off the square and was replaced by a new brick courthouse located in the center of the public square which was completed in 1850.

Religious services were important to Neosho's early settlers who were provided with a Methodist Circuit Rider during the 1830s. In 1843, Neosho appointed its own circuit member, Anthony Bewley, and its Methodist Church split into two organizations: the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. These churches remained separate congregations until 1939 when they again unified. The Cumberland Presbyterian faith organized a congregation of 18 members in 1837 but did not build a church until after the Civil War in 1870. Neosho's first church was built in 1859 by the First Baptist congregation which was organized in 1847 (Ibid: 3).

Schools were also an important part of early Neosho. "Subscription" schools at which students paid a dollar per course were established in the area as early as 1835 when three were set up along Shoal Creek. Neosho's first school, set up around 1840, was also a subscription school (Ibid: 2). The first public school of Neosho met at the old Masonic Hall located at the corner of Spring and Lafayette Streets. Around 1850, "Miss Savage's Academy" was organized which later became Central School. These organizations served Neosho until the Civil War (Neosho, City of Springs: 73).

By the early 1840s, several business establishments were already in full operation. The earliest merchant in Neosho was A.B. Anthony who owned a log store on Hickory Creek (Ibid: 113). In 1841, Anthony moved his business to the Court Square where there were also three log structures serving as tavern, dining hall and kitchen, owned by William Elam. Dr. Barlow owned a cabinet shop on Main Street and John and William Gibson had a blacksmith shop at the

corner of Wood and Main Streets. In 1856, Neosho's population was between 300 and 500 persons. During this period, the town had a hotel, saloon, and at least four stores including a general store and a grocery store.

During the 1840s, mining became a part of Neosho when lead was discovered and used for making bullets. Neosho's early commercial development was dominated by lead and zinc mining and Newton County spearheaded one of the state's earliest commercial operations. Northwest of the city, a lead mine was established. Lead was transported by wagon from Neosho to Indian Territory, then shipped down the Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans. In 1850, lead was produced on a large scale and approximately 8,000 people settled near the mines although Neosho's population remained right around 500 (England: 3).

Neosho's growth and development was halted with the coming of the Civil War. The residents of Neosho were divided in their loyalties but sided more with the Confederate cause than the Union. The Confederate Neosho Company was organized in October 1860 and mustered under Captain Henderson Jennings as part of the State Guards. The Company was active for six months, during which time it saw action at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, Lexington and Neosho. The Company disbanded after six months leaving its members to re-enlist elsewhere. Many inhabitants moved out of the city due to Union sympathies or merely because they did not want any involvement in the war. No major battles were fought in the Neosho area but skirmishes and guerilla activity took their toll on lives and property (Neosho, City of Springs: 14). The town's schools closed their doors and court was suspended for four years. A large part of the city was burned during 1863 and the courthouse was badly damaged.

Following the war, railroad construction into the area spurred population growth and renewed commercial activity, encouraged into the area by the railroad. The Southwest Branch of the Atlantic and Pacific (A & P) Railroad reached Neosho from Pierce City in 1870. The A & P eventually became the San Francisco and St. Louis (Frisco) Railroad. The Kansas City-Fort Smith and Southern Railroad, known locally as "The Splitlog", entered Neosho in 1887. The railroad was built by Mathias Splitlog and the first rail was laid opposite Neosho's fairgrounds. This line was intended to haul ore but more often carried hardwood timber. The Splitlog was sold to the Kansas City-Pittsburg and Gulf Railroad (now KCS) in 1893. The Kansas City Southern was built to ship coal, lead, zinc, petroleum and wood products out of Arkansas and Louisiana. A route was to extend from the Gulf of Mexico to Kansas City and Neosho was connected to the line in 1888 (Ibid: 189-195).

The Missouri and North Arkansas Railroad was the last of the major railroads to come through Neosho. It began in Eureka Springs, a resort town in Arkansas, and was extended to Neosho in 1908 tying into the Frisco and Kansas City Southern tracks. By 1908, the Missouri and North Arkansas provided 361 miles of track from Joplin, Missouri to Helena, Arkansas, on the Mississippi River.

With consistent rail service, Neosho boomed in the late 19th century shipping out vegetables and fruit from surrounding farms. This prosperity was reflected in the dozens of brick commercial buildings constructed on the Court Square between 1870 and 1900. This prosperity led to the development of Martling and New Neosho along the railroads to the north of Neosho. New Neosho, or "Newtown" as it was later called, was laid out in 1871 by A.W. Benham just north of the Neosho town limits. New Neosho's streets were called avenues so they wouldn't be confused with streets of the same name in Neosho. A railroad depot was built on Benham Avenue in New Neosho along with a roundhouse and cattle pens. In 1881, New Neosho was annexed by Neosho.

The 1870s and 1880s were busy decades in Neosho. On the Court Square a variety of new commercial buildings was constructed for occupants such as Washer & Clark, carriage manufacturers on the south side of Spring Street. The east side of the square included Uhlman & Maas, druggists and Crowdus & Noble general store. Small industries set up shop such as J.E. Alexander & Co.'s mill which produced sashes, doors and blinds, and lumber for builders. A cabinet shop run by H. Stallbaum took over an old storehouse on the south side of the square. Bakeries, confectionaries, physicians offices, stone masons, blacksmiths, a brewery and tannery were all part of Neosho's post-Civil War Court Square area. This business development was mirrored with the expansion of the town's residential areas to the east, west, and south of the Court Square. In 1879 alone, 32 homes were built along with sidewalks of brick and stone. (Goodspeed: 272-273)

From 1870 to 1900, Neosho grew from approximately 500 citizens to 2,725 (Kohler, "Neosho, Missouri": 21). With the increased population came new churches, schools, and industrial growth including lead mining. The Neosho Smelting Furnace began operation in 1871 and shipped 150 pigs of iron within the first month that it had opened (Goodspeed: 279). Immigrants from Germany, France, and Switzerland came into the area and joined the large Scotch-Irish community. Among these new immigrants were Herman and John Jaeger from Switzerland. Herman Jaeger planted a vineyard just outside of Neosho and in 1889 won the Medal of the French Legion for supplying grapes to France which had lost many of its grapes to blight and drought. An apple orchard was also planted outside of Neosho during this period of time, helping to establish fruit as a commercial enterprise in Neosho. Neosho's most important cash crop was strawberries which residents began growing in 1899. These early strawberry farms provided work for people traveling west who stopped during harvest season to earn money to continue their journey. The berries were transported by railroad and kept cool by "icing railroad cars" at the Neosho Ice Company (England: 6).

In the 1870s, mills and factories were built to can produce, process wool, tobacco, ice, and flour, and manufacture metal and machinery, pianos, and lumber. Wagon production was another industry spawned by the railroad. During the late 1800s, it was estimated that Neosho produced approximately 2,500 wagons each year. Neosho's most successful wagon company was started in 1872 by D.H. Kirk who operated a factory on the east side of the Court Square.

Neosho's success in canning and wholesale produce became evident in 1898 with the construction of the four-story brick Haas building on North Washington Street. The Haas Wholesale Grocery Company, one of the major businesses of the city, was a center for canning and shipping in southwest Missouri. The Haas family later built a another four-story building on the north side of the Court Square. In 1907, a canning factory was opened to capitalize on abundant tomato and strawberry supplies.

Neosho also became well known in the late 19th century due to its spring water and hotels. The Big Spring was purchased by Ed Clark in 1882 and he used the spring to power his wagon factory. David Mendell also owned part of the spring property and opened a hotel in 1890 known as the Mendell House. In 1894, Neosho tried to trade city lots for Big Spring property but the City Council refused to make a decision. In 1903, the Commercial Club managed to obtain property for a park which cost about $4,000 and did not include the spring. By 1926, the spring was at last a part of the property. The Mendell House was moved across the street from its original location and later became known as the Big Spring Inn.

In 1886, the Neosho High School was built which held its first commencement in May, 1889. Black students in the city were educated at a schoolhouse on Grant Street. One of the school's students was George Washington Carver, who lived in Neosho for about three years. Carver, the son of a former slave, moved to Neosho around 1870 to live with Andy and "Aunt" Maria Watkins, who were among the town's most prominent black citizens. Aunt Maria served as a midwife to many of Neosho's women (England: 5). During the early 1890s, the one-story Lincoln School was built which had 158 students enrolled by 1901. Concern about the building's safety resulted in its demolition in 1930.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South founded the Neosho Collegiate Institute in 1878. This was Neosho's first school to offer higher education. In 1884, a new building on North Wood Street was constructed of brick and stone. Because of debts, the institute closed in 1887. In 1888, the organization reopened and changed its name to Scarritt College, after Dr. Scarritt of Kansas City who donated $5,000 to the school. The college operated well into the early 20th century. Among Scarritt's alumni was Will Rogers, America's famous columnist and comedian.

The increase in manufacturing and shipping in the early 1900s resulted in continued population growth. From 1900 to 1910 the city grew by almost 1,000 residents to 3,661. Many of the original one-story brick and frame commercial buildings on the square were replaced with new two-story buildings. A new brick courthouse was constructed in 1878 which was two stories high and had a basement and symmetrical towers (Ibid: 1-2). Neosho expanded its telephone and electrical service during this decade and the city's wooden water pipes were replaced by iron pipes in 1906 to prevent leakage and increase water pressure (Ibid: 4-5).

A major industry of these years was the William P. Stark Nursery located at the northern edge of Neosho. This nursery was established in 1912 in the building of the Mutual Wagon Factory. In 1931, the nursery was reorganized as the Neosho Nurseries Company and served a four-state region. Dairy and poultry businesses were also important in the early 20th century with the Pet and Carnation Companies each establishing creameries in town. Poultry farming gradually replaced vegetables and fruits as the dominant agricultural activity in the surrounding area during the early 20th century.

Over the next two decades Neosho's population grew slowly but steadily reaching 4,485 by 1930. Residential areas continued to expand and the Sale Hospital opened in 1927. The Depression had a significant effect on the local economy but a number of notable Public Works Administration projects took place during the 1930s. These included the paving of sidewalks, improvements to Big Spring Park, construction of a new courthouse in 1936, and construction of a new auditorium and city hall building in 1938. The 1936 courthouse was funded by the Public Works Administration, and its cornerstone was laid by Missouri Senator Harry Truman.

In 1941, the United States War Department authorized construction of a army training center southeast of Neosho known as Camp Crowder. By November 1941, more than 13,000 people obtained jobs on the site constructing dozens of frame barracks and other buildings. Used as a signal corps training center, Camp Crowder was the home of more than 45,000 troops during World War II. The impact of Camp Crowder on Neosho was enormous. There was a great demand for housing to serve the many laborers and civilians employed at the Camp and commercial activity increased. The influx of so many new people strained relations with local citizens and this impact was examined by a University of Missouri study in 1944 (Kohler, "Neosho, Missouri":1). At the end of World War II, the site was disengaged as an active area until 1951 when it was used as a reception area during the Korean War. The camp was deactivated again in 1958 and declared as surplus in 1962 (Neosho, City of Springs: 27).

Neosho has been called the "Flower Box City" since 1955, when the Flower Box Program started and 3,000 flower boxes around the city were filled with blooms. In 1967, the city installed a flower clock from Switzerland which appropriately reflects its nickname. Neosho's economy continued to grow after World War II, with several new industries moving into the area, including AeroJet General, which opened a rocket-engine testing facility for its Rocketdyne Division, La-Z-Boy Furniture and Teledyne. In 1956, Southwest Lime Company opened an underground warehouse using a cave which provides year-round storage and is located on a rail siding. The city received the "All America City" Award in 1958 for outstanding civic efforts after annexing 1,600 acres in 1957 which more than doubled the size of Neosho. Visitors today can still see a ceramic tile mural commissioned in 1964 by a local artist which shows the city's history. The town's economy is now based upon a variety of manufacturers and there is also a regional shopping center for the surrounding area.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF NEOSHO, CA. 1868 - 1943

Neosho's Court Square has been an economic, social, and governmental center of the community for over one hundred years. The square has been Neosho's primary commercial area and it contains many of the community's oldest businesses. The Court Square area is significant under Criteria A and C for its role in local commerce and pre-1940 commercial architecture.

Neosho was the trading center of Newton County in the years before the Civil War. The war resulted in the destruction of much of the town's commercial buildings and it was several years before construction of substantial commercial buildings occurred. The Court Square was the center of the town's business activities and in 1869 the square was composed of two dozen businesses. Just off the square were small manufacturing companies such as the Washer and Clark carriage company and Stallbaum's cabinet shop (Goodspeed: 272).

Before the Civil War, a few dwellings were located on the square but these were razed the following decade to make way for commercial buildings. The oldest remaining building on the square appears to be the Alexander Stewart building at 100-102 W. Spring Street constructed in 1868 (Ibid). This two-story brick building has Italianate detailing and retains much of its original design. From 1879 to 1883 a number of brick buildings were constructed including the McElhany and Price Opera House on the north side of the square. Bricks were available from several brickyards in Neosho including the Elliot Carnes brickyard established in 1869 and the Budd Kelley brickyard opened in 1884 (Ibid: 274).

The 1884 Sanborn Insurance Map shows at least a dozen two-story brick buildings located on the four sides of the square. A number of these on the north and west sides of the square exist to the present and are some of the oldest commercial buildings remaining in Neosho. These buildings housed dry goods stores, clothing stores, hardware companies, furniture stores, and saloons. There were also several boarding houses, meeting halls, and at the northeast corner of the square was a school (Sanborn Map, 1884). Also in 1884 the original Masonic building was constructed at the northeast corner of the square (Goodspeed: 275). Several other brick buildings including the Berger's Block on W. Spring Street were built in the late 1880s.

The commercial activity of Neosho was enhanced by the establishment of a number of manufacturing companies in the 1880s. Although the B.H. Kirk Wagon Factory was located on the square, the majority of these businesses were located on streets just off the square. These businesses included the Neosho Planing Mills and Alexander and Sons Plow Factory. This increased commercial activity resulted in the organization of the Bank of Neosho in 1884 and the Neosho Savings Bank in 1885 (Ibid: 281).

Commercial businesses expanded during the 1890s and early 1900s and many new brick buildings were constructed. One of the most prominent of these was the Golden Eagle building constructed in 1895 at the southwest corner of the

square. The Golden Eagle building housed a well known dry goods store and was one of the largest businesses of the period in Neosho. The two-story Rice building was constructed on the north side of the square in 1898 along with several other brick buildings.

The tallest building of the 19th century was constructed by Edward Haas on North Washington Street in 1898. The Haas Building was the home of the Haas Wholesale Grocery Company, one of the leading produce companies of southwest Missouri at the turn of the century. The company built its building adjacent to the Kansas City Southern Railroad and shipped produce throughout the region. The company's business prospered and in 1906 Edward Haas constructed a four-story brick building at the northeast corner of the square. This building was constructed to house a bank and offices and was the largest building constructed on the Court Square.

The Briggs Hardware store was another important business of the early 1900s. This business was established in 1896 in a building on the south side of the square. A fire destroyed this building in 1906 and the present building was completed the same year. This company continued to operate in this building until the mid-20th century (Neosho, City of Springs: 170). The building adjacent to the Briggs Hardware Store at the corner of E. Main and S. Washington also burned in 1906 and was rebuilt with a glazed brick front. This building housed businesses on the first floor and the second floor served as an annex for the Spring City Hotel across the street.

By World War I, the Neosho Court Square appeared much as is does today. All four sides of the square were composed of one- to two-story commercial buildings except for the four-story Haas Building. The Masonic Hall on the east side of the square was remodeled with its present front in 1913 ("Neosho-Past, Present, and Future"). The original opera house on the north side of the square burned in 1916 and was replaced by the present building at 116 E. Spring Street.

During the 1920s most businesses on the Court Square and adjacent streets flourished and a 1926 Neosho Daily Democrat article described the business houses as a "subject of pride to citizens' (Neosho, City of Springs: 116). Businesses on the square included McGinty's Department Store, Matter's Jewelry, the Price Brothers Drug Store, the Newton County Hardware Store, and Briggs Hardware Store. Four banks were in operation on the square including the First National Bank in their remodeled building on the E. Main Street.

Since 1940 the Court Square has continued to be a major commercial area of Neosho. Despite the development of suburban areas and strip shopping centers the Court Square is an active shopping area containing restaurants, clothing stores, department stores, and offices. Almost all of the storefronts are occupied and upper floor space is used for storage or offices. Traditional businesses remaining on the square include McGinty's Department Store, Matter's Jewelry, and the Bank of Neosho. Unlike many other Missouri communities, Neosho's historic downtown area continues to be an important center for business and commerce.

CIVIC AND GOVERNMENTAL BUILDINGS IN NEOSHO, 1886-1943

The Court Square is significant under Criteria A and C for its significance in local Politics/Government and for the architectural styles of its civic and governmental buildings. Newton County and Neosho governmental offices have been traditionally located in or near the Court Square area. Newton County was created in 1839 and the following year funds were provided for the construction of a courthouse. The first Newton County courthouse was a small log building measuring 18' by 20' with a stone chimney (Ibid: 28). This building was used until 1847 when a one-story brick courthouse building was erected in the center of the square. This building was badly damaged during the Civil War and was razed in 1866. The county court then met in several locations until a two-story brick courthouse was constructed in 1878. This building was designed in the Second Empire style and featured a slate mansard roof and two symmetrical towers (Ibid: 30-31). The county offices remained in this building until the present building was constructed in 1936.

In 1888, the Newton County Jail was constructed on N. Washington Street one block from the Court Square. The building was designed in the Second Empire style and housed the sheriff's residence and office. At the rear of the building was a one-story wing containing the jail cells. The building was designed and constructed by the Pauly Jail Building and Manufacturing Company of St. Louis at a cost of $6000. This building was used as the county jail until 1936 when the jail was moved to the third floor of the courthouse. In recent decades the building has housed the Newton County Historical Society's offices and Museum.

The most dominant building in Neosho's Court Square is the Newton County Courthouse whose cornerstone was laid on July 30, 1936. The building was designed by St. Louis architect Neal C. Davis, a native of Newton County, and financed by the Public Works Administration and a local bond issue. This two-story Carthage stone building was constructed with Art Deco influences in a cross plan with one-story wings extending on all sides. The building continues to house the county government and the interior retains its original wood doors, marble wainscoting, fluted marble pilasters, and metal staircases. Neosho was incorporated in 1866 and a mayor-aldermanic form of government was adopted in 1877 (Ibid: 51). City offices met in a variety of locations during the late 19th century. City offices were established in the 1906 Haas Building on the Court Square and this building housed the city government until the construction of the City Hall building in 1938.

Neosho's Auditorium and City Hall is located one-half block west of the square on Main Street. The two-story building was also designed in the Art Deco style by architect Neal C. Davis and constructed in 1938 with financial assistance from the Public Works Administration. The building originally housed the city hall, public library, and meeting areas. The auditorium has a stage at one end, hardwood floors, and original wood seats in the gallery, which is lighted by original multi-light casement windows.

In 1944 the city changed its government to a council-manager form. In recent years city offices have moved out of the City Hall to other locations and the building is presently used for offices and meeting space.

Two federal buildings were constructed in Neosho, the U.S. Post Office and the National Fish Hatchery. The U.S. Post Office was constructed in 1934 on Hickory Street and is an example of a Colonial Revival post office building constructed by the Work Projects Administration. The post office has been determined by the U.S. Postal Service to be ineligible for the National Register. The National Fish Hatchery was established in 1888 and largely rebuilt in the 1930s. The main building of the complex was constructed in recent decades and the property has been determined ineligible for the National Register.

The Newton County Courthouse, Newton County Jail, and Auditorium and City Hall are located in and around the Court Square and are included within the Neosho Commercial Historic District.

NAME OF PROPERTY TYPE - COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Description:

The buildings on Neosho's Court Square were constructed primarily between ca. 1868 and ca. 1915. The buildings follow forms of the One-Part and Two-Part Commercial Blocks typical of commercial buildings constructed throughout the country during this period (Longstreth, Main Street: 24, 54) One-Part Commercial Blocks were constructed with storefronts and ornamental framing, while Two-Part Commercial Blocks have separate storefronts and upper facades. Although narrow with 20' to 25' storefronts, most buildings extended back 100' or more to rear alleys.

The north, east, and south sides of the public square retain much of their architectural character and this area has been identified as meeting National Register Criteria. These sides of the square and adjacent blocks comprise the Neosho Commercial Historic District. The west side of the square is composed of turn of the century buildings but the majority of buildings have been covered with metal facades and this side of the square no longer retains integrity.

The square was first laid out in 1846 and the earliest buildings were one-story frame structures that were soon replaced by more substantial brick buildings as the city grew and prospered. After the Civil War, two-story brick buildings were constructed on all four sides of the Court Square facing the courthouse. Over two dozen brick buildings were erected on the square by the end of the century.

The majority of the buildings constructed during this period are of brick construction with a few embellished with upper facades of stamped metal. The building at 110 N. Wood Street is a good example of a stamped metal facade and displays decorative pilasters dividing the window bays. Stone is used for decoration such as window sills, lintels, belt courses and piers. Excellent stonework can be seen at the 1898 Haas Building entrance surround. Glazed brick was sparingly used with the white glazed facade at 129 E. Main Street displaying the most significant use of this material.

A number of buildings retain original storefront elements such as frame or brick bulkheads, plate glass display windows, transoms, and recessed entrances. The storefront at 124 E. Spring Street displays an especially ornate entrance with a leaded glass door and sidelight. Cast iron was used on storefronts for structural and decorative columns and examples of cast iron are visible at 100 and 110 E. Spring Street. During the early 20th century polished granite was used for decorative columns at the Haas Building and 129 E. Main Street. A few buildings retain storefronts of tinted glass known as Carrara glass applied during the 1930s and 1940s.

Upper facades of the Court Square buildings retain much of their original character and include rectangular and arched windows, corbelled brick decoration, and blind arcades. Sheet or stamped metal was widely used for cornices and can be found on many buildings. The Berger's Block at 114-118 W. Spring Street and the Golden Eagle Building have fine examples of stamped metal cornices. Stamped metal and cast iron were also used for window cornice decoration at buildings such as 100-102 W. Spring Street and 126 E. Spring Street.

The interiors of the most Court Square buildings consisted of open floor space on both floors. Decorative elements in these buildings were largely confined to stamped metal ceilings, ornate staircases, and fluted door surrounds. A few buildings such as the 1908 Haas Building were constructed with separate offices and meeting rooms on the upper floors. The Haas Building is the most notable of these and retains its original four-story staircase. In recent years the majority of the Court Square building's first floors have been remodeled or altered.

Stylistic influences of the downtown commercial buildings range from the Italianate style to the Colonial Revival style. The Italianate style is present through the use of decorative cornices, arched windows, or windows with embellished hoods. The building at 102-104 W. Spring Street is an example of this Italianate influence. The 1898 Haas Building displays detailing representative of the Victorian Romanesque style through its use of stone and brick on the main facade, rounded arched entrance, and decorative granite columns framing the entrance.

After 1900 many of the Court Square buildings were constructed with Colonial Revival detailing such as the Neosho Savings Bank at 125 S. Washington Street, and the Newton County Bank at 200 S. Wood Street. Both buildings were constructed with stone or cast concrete cornices with modillion blocks, and corner quoins. The Neo-classical style was used for the remodeling of the Temple Front, First National Bank at 111 E. Main Street. This building is distinguished by its full-height Corinthian columns. Little new construction occurred on the square after 1920 and there are no existing examples of Art Moderne or Art Deco commercial buildings.

In recent years many of the original storefronts have been remodeled or altered with modern metal or wood panels. Upper facade remodeling or concealment has also taken place but the majority of buildings within the proposed Neosho Commercial Historic District display their original upper facade detailing.

Significance:

The commercial buildings in and around the Court Square area of Neosho are significant under Criteria A and C for their architectural character and role in the community's period of growth and development during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. After the Civil War, Neosho became a thriving county seat and regional trading center. The town was served by a number of railroads and was a center for small manufacturing companies and the shipping of agricultural products. Between 1890 and 1920 Neosho more than doubled in size and the present Court Square is indicative of this growth and prosperity.

At the turn of the century the Court Square was the center of Neosho business and commerce. Its brick buildings contained a wide variety of stores, banks, offices, and recreational businesses such as theaters and saloons. The businesses on the square provided employment for Neosho residents as well as essential goods and services.

One of the best known businesses on the square in the late 19th century was the Golden Eagle Department Store. This store was begun in 1883 and in 1895 the company constructed the two-story building at 101-109 E. Main Street. The Golden Eagle had such innovations as the Barr system of cash carriers and baskets which served to connect the different departments with the cashier's office via overhead lines (Neosho, City of Springs: 132). Another early department store was McGinty's which was founded in 1904 and moved into the Golden Eagle building in 1918. This store became one of the best known in the four-state area and remains in operation at the southwest corner of the square (Ibid). The interior of this building burned in 1949 and this section of the Golden Eagle building no longer retains its historic character.

Matters Jewelry was founded in 1892 and was originally located in the 300 block of Spring Street. The business has occupied its present site in the Golden Eagle building since 1956. Also in 1956, Matters was recognized by the National Jeweler as one of the 300 oldest jewelers in the country, and the third oldest in Missouri. Several drug stores have operated on the square such as the Evans Drug store and the Price Brothers Drug Store. The Evans Drug store was originally located in the building at 129 E. Main Street before moving to the west side of the square. The building was later sold to the Guthries Drug Company which operated at this location for several decades (Ibid: 140).

The Court Square has been the traditional financial and banking center of the community since the late 19th century. The Bank of Neosho was organized in 1884 and is the oldest bank operating in Newton County (Ibid: 142). Other early banks include the Neosho Savings Bank, incorporated in 1885 and the First National Bank of Neosho, organized in 1902. The First National Bank originally leased a building on the south side of the square until it purchased two buildings in 1922 and remodeled them into the Temple Front building at 111 E. Main Street. The Newton County Bank was organized in 1913 and constructed the two-story brick building at 200 S. Wood Street. This bank

remained in operation until the Depression when its assets were assumed by the Bank of Neosho (Ibid: 146).

The Court Square was also the home of several hotels during the late 19th and early 20th century. Perhaps the most famous was the Spring City Hotel, later known as the England Hotel. This building was constructed ca. 1884 at the southeast corner of the square and stood until the mid-20th century when it was razed. At least two existing buildings were used as hotels during the early 20th century. In addition to housing various businesses on the first floor the Berger's Block's upper floor was operated as a hotel for many decades. The second floor was known as the Globe Hotel, the Central Hotel, and during World War II it was the Comfort Lodge housing dozens of Camp Crowder workers. The four-story Haas building has had several uses during this century. For several decades it was home of the Neosho Savings Bank and city offices. The Neosho Hospital leased the top two floors in the 1920s and the upper floors were used as the Newton Hotel.

The Court Square continues to function as Neosho's center of commerce and finance. In recent years "strip" commercial activity has taken place to the west of the downtown area, primarily along Neosho Boulevard. Despite this shift in shopping patterns the downtown area remains an important business center and few buildings are vacant. New construction has been limited and the Court Square displays much of its historic appearance and vitality.

Registration Requirements:

Commercial properties in Neosho are significant primarily through their architecture and through their associations with the commercial history of the community. To be architecturally significant a building must be a fine example of a particular style or possess unusual design elements and detailing. The building must also possess integrity of setting and location, design, workmanship, and materials. This includes all original upper facade decoration, the majority of original storefront elements, evidence of the original interior floor plan, and most interior features. Under these registration requirements the 1898 Haas Building on N. Washington Street is the only individually eligible commercial building in Neosho. This building is included as contributing in the Neosho Commercial Historic District.

To be historically significant a building must be the site of a business of particular importance to the community, must be associated with an individual of particular importance, or be associated with an important event or occurrence. The 1898 Haas Building is the only commercial building which appears to meet individual registration requirements for historical significance due to its prominence in regional produce shipping and commerce.

Commercial buildings may also meet registration requirements if they form a significant grouping which retains integrity of setting and location. To be eligible these buildings must be contiguous at their original locations and a significant concentration must retain integrity of design, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association. Buildings which retain integrity are

those which have original upper facade detailing and materials and have feeling and association of a particular era. The retention of original storefront elements is not necessary if the majority of upper facade detailing remains intact. A grouping of buildings may also be considered significant if they collectively have particular historical significance in the commercial growth and development of the community.

Under these registration requirements the majority of the buildings on the north, east, and south sides of the Court Square and several side streets would be considered contributing to the Neosho Commercial Historic District. The 1990 inventory of Neosho did not inventory any other commercial buildings meeting individual or district National Register criteria outside the boundary of the Neosho Commercial Historic District.

NAME OF PROPERTY TYPE - CIVIC AND GOVERNMENTAL BUILDINGS

Description:

Neosho retains four civic and governmental buildings constructed prior to 1940 in the downtown area. The oldest of these is the Newton County jail constructed in 1888 on N. Washington Street. This building was designed in the Second Empire style and served as the sheriff's house and office. At the rear of the building was a brick wing containing jail cells but this wing has been removed. The building served as the Newton County jail from 1888 to 1936. In recent years the building has housed the Newton County Historical Society and Museum.

Neosho was the site of two major Public Works Administration projects during the 1930s: the construction of the Newton County Jail in 1936; and the construction of the Auditorium and City Hall in 1938. Both buildings were designed in the Art Deco style by architect Neal Davis. The exteriors of both buildings are of Carthage stone and feature detailing such as chevrons, fluted pilasters, and stylized panels and friezes. The buildings are the only examples of the Art Deco style in the downtown area of Neosho.

Another Depression-era public building is the U.S. Post Office completed in 1934 on Hickory Street. The Post Office is a one-story brick building designed in the Colonial Revival style by government architect Louis Simon. The building has not been extensively altered and retains its original design and detailing.

Significance:

Civic and Governmental buildings are eligible under Criteria A and C if they are notable examples of an architectural style or were of particular importance in a governmental role or function. The Newton County Courthouse has served as the county's courthouse for over fifty years and it retains its original Art Deco design and detailing. The Newton County Jail served as the county's primary correctional facility from 1888 to 1936 and retains the

majority of its original design. Both buildings are reflective of the county government's historic growth and development.

The Auditorium and City Hall is the only notable city building constructed prior to 1940. The building was designed to consolidate municipal offices and serve as the city's public auditorium and library. The building served in this capacity for several decades before the offices and the library moved to other locations. The building continues to be used as a city auditorium and meeting hall.

The U.S. Post Office and the National Fish Hatchery are the only federal properties constructed in Neosho prior to 1940.

Registration Requirements:

Civic and Governmental buildings met registration requirements if they played an important role in local government operation; were a particularly noteworthy architectural design; if they retained integrity of design, materials, craftsmanship, feeling and association; and if they retained integrity of location and setting. Under these requirements the Newton County Courthouse and Auditorium and City Hall were determined to meet eligibility criteria. The Newton County Jail has been altered through the removal of a rear wing and addition of a second-story porch and stucco exterior on the main facade. This porch and stucco exterior were added prior to 1940 and are considered historic alterations. Sufficient integrity of the original design and pre-1940 additions are considered present for the building to meet eligibility criteria. All three buildings are included as contributing buildings in the Neosho Commercial Historic District.

The U.S. Post Office has been evaluated by the Postal Service and determined not to meet National Register criteria. Due to alterations and post-1940 additions, the National Fish Hatchery has been determined not to meet National Register criteria.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The Historic Resources of Neosho, Newton County, Missouri are located within the corporate limits of the city of Neosho, Missouri.

SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

In 1990, the City of Neosho received a grant from the Historic Preservation Program of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to conduct an architectural and historical inventory of properties within the city limits of Neosho, Missouri. The purpose of this inventory was to identify, photograph, and conduct research on approximately 200 properties associated with the historical growth and development of the community. In order to complete the inventory the City of Neosho solicited proposals from qualified consultants and selected Thomason and Associates, Historic Preservation Consultants from Nashville, Tennessee, to complete the project.

To complete the survey, the consultant drove every street within the city limits of Neosho and identified properties which met survey criteria. For properties which were inventoried, a Missouri survey form was completed, black and white photographs were taken, and data was gathered concerning the property's architectural style and detailing. At the majority of properties questionnaire forms were distributed to gather additional historical data.

At the conclusion of the survey, 208 Historic Inventory Forms and photographs were completed and submitted to the Department of Natural Resources and to the City of Neosho. Historical background for many of the properties was collected using questionnaires that were completed by property-owners.

The consultant identified several areas and a number of individual buildings which appeared to meet National Register criteria. These recommendations were reviewed by the staff of the Historic Preservation Program and they agreed that the Neosho Commercial Historic District met National Register criteria (Letter from Lee Gilleard to Jim Taylor, March 14 1991). In 1992 the City of Neosho received a grant from the Department of Natural Resources and selected Thomason and Associates to prepare the nomination.

In January 1993 the consultant re-examined the proposed district area and recorded changes which occurred since the completion of the survey in 1991. This examination included taking new photographs, completing additional historical research, and gathering present day maps.

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