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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

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

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic Resources of Neosho, Newton County, MO

B. Associated Historic Contexts

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

Industrial and Wholesale Commercial Development in Neosho, 1858-1956.

C. Form Prepared by

name/title Debbie Sheals

organization Independent Contractor date November, 2012

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city or town Columbia state Missouri zip code 65203

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the standards and sets forth the 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.)

Mark A. Miles FEBRUARY 25, 2013
Signature of certifying official/Title: Mark A. Miles/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.

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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Introduction

This is an amendment of the 1993 Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) titled "Historic Resources of Neosho, Newton County, Missouri." That document was accompanied by a nomination for the "Neosho Commercial Historic District," which was listed in the National Register 8/12/93, and expanded 4/18/07. In 2002, the Neosho High School was also listed under that cover document. The only other Neosho property in the National Register is the Second Baptist Church, 430 Grant Ave, which was listed 1/4/1996.

Although the original MPDF touched upon the important role industry and wholesale companies played in the development of Neosho, no property type for that genre of architecture in Neosho has been established to date. This amendment adds context for historic industrial and wholesale commercial development to Section E as well as a "Warehouse/Industrial Buildings" property type in Section F. Description, significance and registration requirements are included for the new property type. An individual nomination for the Neosho Grocery Company Building, which was built ca. 1908 at 218 North Washington Street, accompanies this document. The period covered by the following context begins in 1858, when a tannery was established near the court square, and ends in 1956.

Historic utilitarian buildings are an endangered resource in Neosho. Although Sanborn maps show that there were generally 20 to 30 businesses such as factories, mills and wholesale companies in operation at any one time during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, few related resources have survived. The survey that laid the groundwork for the original MPDF in 1990 documented fewer than ten buildings with historic industrial or wholesale functions. Follow up research done for this context identified several additional buildings that fit that category, but also found that at least three of those surveyed in 1990 no longer exist. All told, just thirteen properties with ties to the industrial history of Neosho were identified for this study, although additional research may reveal more. (See Figure 1 and Appendix 1.) The added context and property type presented here will provide assistance for the evaluation and registration of those important links to Neosho's early development.

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Industrial Development in Neosho, 1858-1956

Manufacturing has been a part of life in Neosho for well over a century. Neosho was established in part because of access to good water supplies, which in turn supported industrial development. The town is, in fact, named for water. "Neosho" is an Indian term for "Clear-Cold-Water."¹ A description of Neosho which was printed in 1888 begins by briefly describing 14 different springs, and adding that nearby "Hickory Creek is formed of the waters of several small springs." The largest of those springs, aptly named Big Spring, is located approximately two blocks west of the courthouse square. The 1888 county history described Big Spring as "clear and cold, rushing from beneath a rocky cliff, and forming a swift creek or river, capable of running many mills."² The large number of springs are credited with bringing white settlers to the area in the 1830s. According to historian Sybil Jobe, "one of the reasons the pioneers settled in Newton County was the abundant supply of running water that could be harvested to run their water mills. Running water was also used to power mills to saw lumber."³

Although Hickory Creek, which is just east of the town, was the largest local body of water, it does not appear to have attracted early milling operations or other development. The state Gazetteer in 1860 noted that Hickory Creek contained "any number of good mill sites" but did not list a single mill, and the 1876-77 Gazetteer lamented that "Hickory Creek, a beautiful stream, affords excellent water power, which however is but little used."⁴ Historic maps and other sources show that early mills and factories instead located closer to the town center, along smaller spring-fed branches. The smaller streams may have been more attractive because they were less prone to seasonal flooding yet offered steady supplies of clean water. Also, by the 1870s most factories generated their own power, and therefore had no

¹ Robert Allen Campbell, Campbell's Gazetteer of Missouri, (St. Louis: R. A. Campbell, 1875) p. 401.

² Goodspeed Publishing Company, History of Newton, Lawrence, Barry, and McDonald Counties Missouri, (Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Co, 1888; Electronic reprint and Newton County excerpt by Hearthstone Publications, 2003) pp. 133-134.

³ Sybil Shipley Jobe, A History of Newton County Missouri as Portrayed in the Courthouse Mural, (Neosho, MO: Newton County Historical Society, 1998) p.38.

⁴ Missouri State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1876-77, (St. Louis: R. L. Polk & Co., 1877) p. 192, and Missouri State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1883-4, (St. Louis: R. L. Polk & Co. and A. C. Danser, 1884) p. 341.

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need for a stream strong enough to power a mill wheel.

The Big Spring branch, which runs north from the spring site to join Hickory Creek approximately eight blocks north of the courthouse square, was a favored site for early manufacturing operations. (See Figures 1 and 2.) One of the first industries in Neosho, a tannery established by German immigrant Benjamin Haas in 1858, was located close to its banks and several blocks along Mill Street and the creek gradually developed into a manufacturing center.⁵ The first known Sanborn map of the community, which was published in 1884, recorded seven different industrial complexes, six of which were located by that stream. The seventh, a woolen mill, was on a smaller branch a little farther north of the square. The map shows a brick mill, flour mill, foundry, plow factory, wagon factory and a lumberyard/sash and door factory clustered together along three blocks of Mill Street, which is now known as North College Street. That street was apparently platted as Wheeler Street, but soon became known as Mill Street.⁶ The name was officially changed to North College in 1924.⁷

Most of the factories shown on the 1884 map were established in the late 1860s or early 1870s.⁸ (See Figure 2.) According to the 1876 Gazetteer, Neosho was then home to 2 flour mills, 1 woolen mill, a planing mill, a foundry, a tobacco company and a distillery. A separate description of local industries written about the same time noted that there were also several machine shops, a lead furnace and 2 wagon factories.⁹ Smaller-scale manufacturing concerns included cabinet shops, harness makers and at least one cobbler.

The types of factories in operation in the late 1860s and early 1870s reflect local markets more than regional trends. Although the many local streams were good sources of water, they were not large enough to serve as a source of transportation. As a result, anything produced in Neosho had to be consumed locally, or shipped overland by wagon or mule. For example, in the 1840s, lead mined nearby was routinely shipped by wagon to Indian Territory, from where it was shipped to New Orleans via the Arkansas and Mississippi

⁵ Goodspeed, p. 145.

⁶ Sanborn Maps of the city labeled it as Mill Street, or "Mill or Wheeler," from 1884 until 1926, when it was labeled "N. College (Mill)."

⁷ Larry A. James, comp., Neosho: From Armistice Day to Thomas Hart Benton Day, (Neosho, MO: Newton County Historical Society, 2008) p. 115.

⁸ History of Newton, Lawrence, Barry, and McDonald Counties Missouri, pp. 142-145.

⁹ Campbell's Gazetteer of Missouri, p. 402.

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Rivers.¹⁰

Luckily for local producers, they had ready access to raw materials, and Neosho's steady growth provided a market for many of their products. Good fire clay for bricks was readily available, and timber was plentiful. A description of the area included in the 1876 Gazetteer entry for Neosho notes that the adjacent hills were "covered with a vigorous growth of oak, hickory and other timber."¹¹ The new homes and business buildings that were beginning to line the city streets were no doubt constructed largely from building materials obtained from the local companies. Other early factories processed agricultural materials such as wool and grains. A woolen mill was established in the north part of town in 1871, and the Neosho City Mills began processing flour on Mill Street around 1870.¹²

The advent of railroad service in 1870 had an immediate impact upon the size of the town as well as the local economy. Neosho had a population of around 500 when the Southern Branch of the Atlantic and Pacific (A&P) Railroad completed tracks north of town in 1870, and nearly four times that number just 6 years later.¹³ One local description noted that "the coming of the railroad was a welcome and important event, giving the town access to markets to the east. But there was some ill feeling in Neosho because the depot was located more than a mile north of Neosho proper."¹⁴ That northern location spawned the growth of Neosho City, also known as Martling, in the area around the new depot. That area failed to become a major commercial center however, and the two towns merged in 1880. Few to no local industries moved north in the 1870s, and Mill Street continued as the industrial core of the community into the 1880s, when a second railroad line was established in Neosho.

There is one historic property near Mill Street which retains ties to that early manufacturing center. The Robinson-Davis Lumberyard, at the corner of Brook and N. College (Mill) Streets, occupies a lot that was in continual use as a lumberyard close to 150 years. The site was the long time home of J. Robinson's Lumberyard and Sash and Door Factory, which was established in

¹⁰ Philip Thomason, "Historic Resources of Neosho, Missouri," National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, 1993, p. E.3.

¹¹ 1876-77 Gazetteer, p. 341.

¹² Goodspeed, p. 142.

¹³ MPDF form and 1876-77 Gazetteer.

¹⁴ Jobe, p. 103.

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1869.¹⁵ Later known as the Neosho Planing Mill, the plant was operated by Robinson into the 20th century. Between 1909 and 1916, the property became home to the Robinson-Davis Lumber Company, and operated under that name into the late 20th or early 21st century. Although most if not all of the 19th century buildings on the site appear to have been replaced, one early 20th century building has survived. A large office and lumber shed which faces W. Brook Street was built by the lumber company between 1912 and 1926. It replaced a comparably sized building that had occupied the same location when the planing mill was in operation in the 1800s.

In 1887, the Kansas City and Southern Railroad built a new rail line which ran along the east side of town, just a few blocks east of the square. A final addition to rail service came in 1908, when the Missouri and North Arkansas Railroad provided added linkage to southern rail service by tying into the existing lines.¹⁶ The industrial profile of the community changed and expanded with the added rail service. Manufacturers and processors began shipping their goods to broader markets, and the processing of raw materials from the surrounding countryside took on an even stronger role in area commerce. Wholesale companies also began to play a larger role in area commerce; some brought goods in by rail and distributed them locally, while others gathered local products to ship out of the community.

The Kansas City and Southern Railroad depot for Neosho was located on North Washington, just a few blocks northeast of the Courthouse Square. By the turn of the 20th century, a new industrial center had begun to develop south of the new depot, and other new mills and other utilitarian buildings were being built close to the railroad, on the east edge of the community. Most of those new plants included dedicated spurs to the main railroad line. (See Figures 1 and 3.)

Many of the new buildings south of the depot were located on North Washington Street which provided direct access to the Public Square. One of the most prominent early wholesale businesses in Neosho, the Haas Wholesale Grocery Company built a large building on Washington Street in 1898. The company was founded by Edward Haas in 1887. Haas was no stranger to Neosho; he was the son of Benjamin Haas, who established the tannery on Spring Branch in the 1850s. Edward Haas began working as a delivery driver at 14, started his own business at 17 and established his wholesale grocery

¹⁵ 1884 Sanborn Map and Goodspeed, p. 144.

¹⁶ MPDF E.4.

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business before he turned 21.

The wholesale business, which Edward Haas started in a commercial building on the west side of the square, was an immediate success. The company did more than \$87,000 worth of business in the first year, the equivalent of just over \$2 million in 2011 dollars.¹⁷ Edward's brother Charles Haas soon joined him in the enterprise, working as a salesman. One history of the company noted that Charles spent many years traveling "by horse and buggy over rough territory in Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma."¹⁸ Edward apparently handled purchasing, often traveling to St. Louis and Chicago to buy goods.

By the late 1890s the Haas Company had outgrown its quarters on the public square. In 1898 Edward Haas completed a five story brick building on North Washington Street, a block north of the square and one block east of the Kansas City and Southern railroad tracks. The large new building, which occupied a prominent corner lot, had a spur line to the railroad as well as wagon doors along its long side wall, which provided access for both wagons and rail cars.

The Haas Building is the largest and most elaborate historic building connected with wholesale business left in Neosho today. The highly intact building was the one of very few buildings indentified as individually eligible for inclusion in the National Register when it was surveyed in 1990. It is a contributing building in the Neosho Commercial Historic District.

Construction of the Haas Building helped establish North Washington Street as a wholesale and industrial center, and the area saw steady development into the mid-19th century. By 1926, businesses located within a block of the Haas Building included a stock pavilion, at least one produce company, poultry companies, an ice plant and a fruit warehouse. Edward Haas helped develop one of the largest factories to locate on N. Washington Street. In the late 1890s, he served as a manager for the local Anheuser-Busch Brewing Company, which had a small beer and ice warehouse nearby. In 1900, Haas partnered with the Busch Company to build the Neosho Ice Company ice plant less than a block north of his wholesale company building. That plant, which was referred to in the local paper as the Haas-Busch plant, was expanded several times in the early 20th century, and the Haas brothers

¹⁷ Calculation from "Measuring Worth"

<http://www.measuringworth.com/uscompare/relativevalue.php>, accessed Nov. 16, 2012.

¹⁸ Jobe, p. 146.

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later bought out Anheuser-Busch's interest.¹⁹ Many sections of that original ice plant are still in place. The Neosho Ice Plant produced ice for retail sale and to provide refrigeration for produce and beer shipments. The complex included a railroad spur which was bordered by a long open "icing platform."

Much of that ice was used to preserve local fruit. Fruit began taking a prominent role in area commerce in the late 1800s, with the establishment of an award winning vineyard, apple orchards, and strawberry fields. As noted in the MPDF, "Neosho's most important cash crop was strawberries, which residents began growing in 1899."²⁰ A description of the Neosho Ice Plant published in a 1921 city directory illustrates how important strawberries had become to the local economy: "When a normal fruit crop is grown in this locality they ice and re-ice approximately 1,000 cars of berries and fruit during a season."²¹

The local strawberry market spurred construction of another complex of buildings just northwest of the new ice plant in the 1910s. By 1916, the 300 block of N. Washington contained a fruit warehouse and a long row of "berry sheds," which were used to store berries awaiting shipment.²² (See Figure 4.) The berry sheds were used for close to eighty years, but have since been demolished.

Development along N. Washington continued with the construction of a wholesale grocery facility in the early 1900s. In 1908, the newly formed Neosho Wholesale Grocery Company purchased land across the street from the Ice Company, where they erected a two story brick building. The grocery company did well enough to expand their facility in the late 1910s or early 1920s, but fell upon hard times soon after. In 1923, they declared bankruptcy and sold their stock to the Haas Wholesale Grocery. The Neosho Grocery Company building, which later housed a transfer and storage company, is still in existence. An individual nomination for the Neosho Grocery Company building is being submitted with this cover document.

Grain mills continued to play an important role in area commerce in the early 20th century. Neosho was included in a list of the top 35 "flour, meal and feed producing centers" in the state in the 1910 Missouri Red Book.²³

¹⁹ Jobe, pp. 149-150.

²⁰ MPDF, E.4.

²¹ 1921 Directory, quoted in Jobe, p. 150.

²² Neosho: From Armistice Day to Thomas Hart Benton Day, pp. 46-49.

²³ J. C. A Hiller, Commissioner of Labor, Thirty-Second Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of Missouri: "1910 Red Book". (Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Printing

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Two large new grain milling complexes were established next to the Kansas City and Southern railroad line in the early 1900s. In 1901 the Neosho Milling Company built a new flour mill next to the Kansas City and Southern railroad tracks in the north part of town, at the corner of Baxter and High streets. The mill expanded steadily over the next two decades, and by the mid-1920s, was the largest manufacturing plant in Neosho. A small brick office which was built close to Baxter Street in 1919 was robbed by Clyde and Buck Barrow in 1933. The soon to be infamous Clyde Barrow made off with five diamonds and \$110 in cash.²⁴ (No explanation was given for the presence of diamonds in a mill office safe.) That small office building is still in place; it is all that remains of the original mill complex, which burned in 1964.

The second major new grain mill of the time period was built just a short distance from the Haas Wholesale Company, at the east end of Spring Street. In 1899 the Kansas and Missouri Milling Company built a new mill where the Kansas City and Southern railroad crossed East Spring Street. There may have been an older mill in operation at the time; one description of the company noted that the mill was established at the site of "Kiddoo Brothers & Co."²⁵ The new mill expanded steadily, and in spite of at least one major fire in the 1910s and several changes of ownership, remained in service for over a century. It became the Thurman-Davis Grain Company in 1915, burned and was rebuilt in 1917, and was purchased by its former competitor, the Neosho Milling Company, in 1931. Neosho Milling may have bought this property to expand their offerings beyond flour. The 1946 Sanborn map of the Spring Street complex labels it as a corn and feed mill.

In 1941 the Spring Street property was purchased by MFA, which still operates an exchange at that location. As with other early industrial complexes in Neosho, many of the original mill buildings there have been replaced, but at least one early section of this complex appears to have survived. A one story feed mill and a tall elevator close to Spring Street appear to have been in place since at least 1946. Those buildings were probably built in the late 1920s or early 1930s to replace buildings that were demolished in 1927.²⁶

The Thurman-Davis Mill may have encouraged the development of additional small scale industrial development along that end of Spring Street.

Company, 1911) p. 586.

²⁴ Neosho: From Armistice Day to Thomas Hart Benton Day, pp. 131-132.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 61.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 62.

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A small Four and Feed Exchange which opened at 211 East Spring in the late 1920s or early 1930s later became a hatchery, and a small stone building at 314 East Spring was built for the Farmer's Warehouse in early 1923. A matching stone building next to the Farmers Warehouse, at 316 East Spring, was built for the North family the same year. It housed storage and transfer companies owned by Dick North, including Dick North Storage and North Transfer & Storage.²⁷ The North Transfer and Storage Company had at least one other building in the early 20th century. The company purchased the former Neosho Grocery Company building in 1925 and occupied it into the early 1940s.

North was one of at least two Transfer and Storage companies in operation during that time period. The existence of Storage and Transfer companies was at least partly attributed to a greatly improved network of roads in the state and region. A statewide surge in road building and improvement in the 1920s dramatically changed the transportation industry in Neosho as well as other parts of the country. With better roads, businesses were less reliant on railroads, and formerly remote parts of the countryside were now accessible via truck and car travel. The highways changed the way existing companies had to operate, and spurred new types of business and industry, such as trucking or "transfer" firms.

A promotional booklet put out by the Advertising Club of Neosho in the 1930s shows the important role played by highways, proclaiming that the town was "in the center of a system of good hard surfaced highways."²⁸ Railroads were still vital links to supply and distribution networks however, and they continued in that role well into the 20th century. The 1930s publication observed that "Neosho offers the manufacturer and jobber an ideal location. Good surrounding trade territory and an easy outlet to northwest Arkansas, Northeastern Oklahoma, Eastern Kansas and all of Missouri south of the Missouri River. It is served by the Kansas City and Southern Railroad, the Frisco Lines and the Missouri and North Arkansas. The train service is good on all lines."²⁹

A list of "Neosho Industries" in that booklet named more than 30 local factories, many of which were 20th century ventures. Newer factories on that list included a broom factory (opened in a former mill in 1917), a garment

²⁷ Neosho: From Armistice Day to Thomas Hart Benton Day, p. 59

²⁸ Neosho, Missouri. Neosho, MO: The Advertising Club of Neosho, Missouri, ca. 1930s, n.p.

²⁹ Ibid.

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factory, a laundry and rug cleaning factory and a “Modern and Extensive Nursery.” There were also several businesses which processed local dairy products, including seven “cream stations,” a “Modern Creamery,” and an ice cream factory.

There were ample supplies of dairy products at the time. A local dairy association formed in the late 1910s did much to promote the dairy industry and encourage the creation of processing facilities. The Ozark Creamery, which opened in a former wagon factory in 1922, produced 20,000 pounds of butter for its first rail shipment.³⁰ The market for milk products supported many local farmers; a survey of dairy farms in the Ozarks which was conducted in the mid-1920s found that Newton County was second only to Greene County in the number of milk cows.

That healthy dairy industry led to the establishment of a Pet Milk plant in Neosho in 1927. The company opened in the former Ozark Creamery building and gradually developed into one of the largest employers in Neosho. That plant operated until 1985, after which the buildings were razed to make way for a new county jail.³¹ Other manufacturing of the 20th century included a Big Smith overall factory, and at least two small bottling plants. The Big Smith building no longer exists, but there are two buildings that were used as bottling works. The Coca Cola Bottling Company was built at 410 West Coler ca. 1925, and a second bottling works was built at 110 N. Jefferson between 1926 and 1947. Both are relatively modest buildings; the Coca Cola building is built of native rock, and the one on Jefferson appears to be built of poured concrete.

Neosho’s manufacturing base remained stable through the Great Depression, and by the mid 1940s, was at or above pre-depression levels. The 1947 Sanborn map documented 31 different manufacturing or wholesale businesses, up from 27 in 1926. Several of the businesses open in 1946 had been in operation for at least 20 years, and a few were well over fifty years old.

Neosho saw several changes in the 1950s, including the establishment of new manufacturing facilities and an annexation that more than doubled the size of the community. As noted in the original MPDF, industries added in the 1950s represent a diverse group, including La-Z-boy Furniture, an underground storage facility which was opened by a local lime company, and a rocket engine testing facility. The rocket engine plant was built by the

³⁰ That plant, which was located at Coler and Jefferson, is no longer extant.

³¹ Neosho: From Armistice Day to Thomas Hart Benton Day, pp. 124-125

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Rocketdyne Company in late 1956 at a cost of more than \$13 million. The plant, which manufactured and tested large liquid propellant rocket engines, soon became one of the town's most important manufacturing concerns. It was Neosho's largest employer for many years, eventually reaching a payroll of more than 1,200. The company played an important role in the national aerospace industry for decades. One description of the Neosho plant noted that "engines from Rocketdyne Neosho sent more satellites into space than any other facility in the world."³² The presence of Rocketdyne and other manufacturers undoubtedly played a role in the city's decision to annex 1,600 acres in 1957.³³ The period of significance for this context ends in 1956, with the establishment of the Rocketdyne facility. The rocket engine factory represented a shift in the types of manufacturing being done in Neosho, and helped usher in a new era of prosperity.

The mid-1950s also brought the launch of a civic beautification campaign which featured the installation of flower boxes throughout the city. More than 2,500 flower boxes were added in 1955, the first year of the program, and Neosho is still known as the "Flowerbox City." Flower boxes were even included on the city's first parking meters, which were installed around the square in 1956.³⁴ The flower box program and the annexation of 1957 have been cited as reasons the city received a national "All-American City" award in 1957. That award, which was a joint effort of the National Municipal League and "Look" magazine, recognized outstanding civic achievement for cities across the United States.

Manufacturers and wholesale businesses continue to be an important part of the local economy. At least one historic trend in the wholesale business has endured; one third of the town's wholesale businesses in 2002 dealt with groceries. Wholesale activities in general have become less common in recent decades. In 2002, for example, 2,644 people were employed in manufacturing in Neosho, while less than 250 worked in the wholesale business.³⁵

From the town's first tannery near the Spring Branch to 20th century wholesale companies on the east side of town, factories, warehouses and other working buildings have played a vital role in Neosho's economy. Very few

³² Jobe, p. 270.

³³ Thomason, p. E.6.

³⁴ Jobe, p. 350-351.

³⁵ <<http://www.city-data.com/business/econ-Neosho-Missouri1.html#manufacturing>>
Accessed 12-12-2012.

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historic utilitarian buildings have survived to bear testament to that influence. Those that have are worthy of additional study and recognition.

Appendix 1. Intact examples of the Warehouse/Industrial Building Property Type, by date of construction.

Note: This is not intended to be a complete inventory; it is hoped that future study will indentify heretofore overlooked resources.

201 N. Washington. Haas Wholesale Building, 1898. (Contributing Resource in the Neosho Commercial Historic District.)

107 S. Hamilton (at E. Spring). Missouri and Kansas Grain Company, ca. 1899.

217 N. Washington. Neosho Ice Company, 1900.

114 N. Wood. Neosho Heating, Plumbing and Cornice, 1905.

300 E. Main. Hurley Lumber Co. Lumberyard, 1906.

224 N. Washington. Neosho Wholesale Grocery Company, 1908-ca. 1922.

326 E. Baxter (at High). Neosho Milling Company Office, 1919.

211 E. Spring. Flour and Feed Exchange, ca. 1930.

314 E. Spring. Farmer's Warehouse, 1923.

316 E. Spring. Dick North Storage, 1923.

410 W. Coler. Coca Cola Bottling Company, Bottling Company, 1925.

20 W. Brook. Robinson-Davis Lumber Co, Lumberyard, 1925.

110 N. Jefferson. Bottling Works, Bottling Company, 1940s.

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Property Type: Warehouse/Industrial Buildings, 1858-1956.

Description

The Warehouse/Industrial Building property type describes the historic working buildings of Neosho. The property type includes factories, warehouses, and other utilitarian buildings used for industrial or commercial purposes prior to 1956. Early businesses associated with this property type include processing operations such as flour mills or bottling works, manufacturers, such as wagon makers or lumberyards, transfer and storage companies, and wholesale companies. The buildings themselves could have housed any activity associated with the above business types, including factories, mills, offices, warehouses. In general, these were functional buildings; buildings constructed or used for more public uses, such as retail, banking and lodging, would fall under the Commercial Buildings Property Type.

Examples of the Warehouse/Industrial Buildings property type are most commonly found in the early commercial and industrial centers of the community. The first area to be developed was located just northwest of the public square, close to the creek fed by Big Spring. That early manufacturing district featured several large manufacturing complexes, most of which were located on or near Mill Street (now North College). The first known industry in the area was a tannery begun by Benjamin Haas in 1858; it began to develop in earnest in the late 1860s and continued to be used into the early 20th century.

Late in the 19th century, access to rail service brought about new construction on the east side of town, where companies could take advantage of private spur lines to gain direct access to the Kansas City and Southern Railroad, which first came to Neosho in 1887. (Although the Atlantic and Pacific, later Frisco, Railroad first laid track to Neosho in 1870, it was apparently too far north to affect patterns of industrial development.) The Kansas City and Southern Railroad erected its first depot near the intersection of North Washington and East Coler in 1888, and by the end of the 19th century, the area south of the depot had developed into a warehousing and industrial center.

Another small cluster of working buildings is near the intersection of East Spring and South Hamilton Streets. A large grain mill was constructed there for the Kansas and Missouri Milling Company ca. 1899 and several smaller scale businesses were added along Spring Street in the early 20th

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century. Most of the historic utilitarian commercial buildings in the city today are located in one of those areas or scattered around the edges of the commercial district which encircles the public square.

Few industrial resources survive at all, and only one is listed in the National Register. The Haas Wholesale Company Building, at 201 N. Washington, was listed as part of the Neosho Commercial Historic District on 8/12/1993. That four story brick building, erected in 1898, is by far the largest and most intact example of the Warehouse/Industrial Building property type; it is one of the largest historic buildings of any kind in Neosho. The Neosho Grocery Company Building, at 224 N. Washington, is the single best example of an early 20th century warehouse in Neosho. It is being nominated with this amendment. One of the largest surviving buildings that was used for processing is a mill and elevator located on the original site of Kansas and Missouri Milling Company. That building was built in the late 1920s or early 1930s.

The utilitarian commercial buildings of Neosho share an emphasis on practicality and ease of maintenance. These were working buildings, and public appearance was often a secondary consideration for their builders. Architectural styling, when present, is restrained. As historian Alan Gowans aptly noted: "The art of architecture begins with a construction technology, and goes on from there. In utilitarian building, by contrast, the technology of structure and materials is all there is."³⁶

Most examples of this property type in Neosho are of masonry construction, with little to no architectural embellishment. The forms of the buildings vary according to their early function, but they tend to be simple, compact buildings. Masonry construction was favored for its strength, fire resistance, and low maintenance. In the 19th century, brick was the material of choice for exterior walls, and most foundations were of stone. Wall materials used in the 20th century include brick, cobblestones, poured concrete and frame; most foundations are concrete. Interior spaces were generally kept open through the use of wood post and beam systems, and interior finishes were minimal.

Building forms and patterns of fenestration usually reflect the original function of the building, which has a good deal of variation within this property type. Some buildings have rows of evenly spaced windows to

³⁶ Alan Gowans, The Styles and Types of North American Architecture, (New York: Harper Collins, 1992) p. 5.

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maximize daylight for the interior spaces, while others tend toward more solid exterior wall planes. Building shapes vary greatly depending upon function; warehouses and bottling works, for example, are generally simple and blocky, while mills and lumber yards tend to have distinctive complex rooflines. Some used common commercial building forms such as the one and two part commercial blocks.

Ground floor openings often include loading docks and drive doors, as well as typical commercial storefronts for offices and display areas. Many of the later buildings were constructed on railroad spurs, with dock doors that faced the tracks as well as truck doors that faced city streets.

Significance

Manufacturing, processing and other industrial activities have played a major role in Neosho's economy as long as the town has existed. The factories, warehouses and other buildings that were associated with these activities are important links to Neosho's commercial and industrial history. Examples of the Warehouse/Industrial Buildings property type may be significant under National Register Criterion A, in the areas of COMMERCE and/or INDUSTRY, for their role in the commercial and industrial history of the community. A few highly intact or technologically distinct examples may also be significant under National Register Criterion C, in the areas of ARCHITECTURE and/or ENGINEERING.

Newton County includes rich farmland and ample natural resources, and the processing of goods from the surrounding countryside dominated manufacturing and distributing in Neosho throughout the period of significance. The earliest factories processed raw materials for local consumption and provided the growing new town with a solid economic base. Grain mills were in operation by the late 1860s and continued to operate well into the 20th century. Neosho was one of the most prolific milling centers in the state, ranking among the top 35 in 1910.³⁷ Local mills such as the Neosho Milling Company, which opened in 1901, provided numerous jobs and produced tens of thousands of bushels of flour for export. The Neosho Milling Company alone could produce 250-hundred pound sacks of flour an hour.³⁸

Once railroad service was established, local products could be shipped to a larger market. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, manufacturers

³⁷ Hiller, p. 586.

³⁸ Neosho: From Armistice Day to Thomas Hart Benton Day, p. 132.

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and wholesalers relied heavily on railroad access. The railroad made it possible for manufacturers and processing companies to import otherwise hard to find raw materials, and provided transportation and a ready market for finished goods. Wholesalers could collect goods from the nearby countryside, then repackage and ship all over the country. By the early 1900s, there were multiple spur lines through the industrial areas on the east side of town, and many of the larger operations had trackside service.

Improvements to roads in the early 1900s also widened the sphere of influence by making it easier for farmers to get their products to market. With the introduction of automobile travel and the "good roads" movement, manufacturers and wholesalers began to rely upon truck transport as well as rail service. Commercial truck service made it easier to get raw materials from remote parts of the surrounding countryside, and offered manufacturers a more flexible shipping medium for their finished products. The boom in the local berry business of the early 20th century, for example, was supported by trucks as well as rail cars.

Commerce and industry have gone hand in hand in the development of Neosho. And as long as there have been manufacturing and processing businesses, there have been hard-working, practical buildings. Surviving warehouses, mills and other industrial buildings reflect their owners' need for functional buildings. Those rare survivors are significant examples of utilitarian commercial architecture in Neosho.

Registration Requirements

Individual Buildings

Representative examples of the above property type may be eligible for the National Register if they are the site of an important business, exemplify a particular building type or use, or are associated with an important event or occurrence. They may be significant under National Register Criteria A and C, in the areas of COMMERCE, INDUSTRY, ARCHITECTURE, and ENGINEERING. They will be eligible in the areas of Commerce or Industry for their role in the commercial and industrial history of the community. Buildings with a higher level of architectural styling or technical sophistication may also be eligible in the areas of Architecture or Engineering. Their period of significance will correspond to the time in which they had the historic commercial or industrial function. Eligible buildings will be reasonably intact, and readily recognizable to their period of significance. The best local example

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is the Haas Wholesale Grocery Company Building, at 201 N. Washington, which was listed as part of the Neosho Commercial Historic District. The Neosho Grocery Company Building, at 224 N. Washington, which is being nominated with this cover document, also falls into this category.

Properties which are eligible under Criterion A will retain their basic original form, with no major alterations to principal exterior dimensions or rooflines. Original or early materials should predominate, especially on wall surfaces. Any early ornamental features, such as corbelled cornices or other architectural embellishments, should also be largely intact. Window openings, especially on the facade, should also be intact. Replacement windows may be acceptable, if the original openings are intact and the new sashes are close to the originals in individual dimensions.

Although the buildings must be reasonably intact to qualify for listing, alterations and minor changes are inevitable, and it is important to gauge the overall effect of any changes when evaluating eligibility. Rear additions and alterations to secondary elevations are acceptable, as long as they are not overly noticeable from the street. Other additions and alterations which were done during the period of significance may have acquired historic value of their own and should be carefully evaluated.

Changes to ground floor openings, such as office storefronts, loading docks, and vehicular openings, are especially common, and representative of the utilitarian function of this property type. Original materials within such openings are therefore not requisite for listing under Criterion A, as long as the original patterns of fenestration are evident, and the overall masonry openings remain largely intact. By the same token, surviving original storefronts, garage doors, and other distinctive architectural features represent especially significant historic resources, and their existence can outweigh other integrity issues, as long as the building continues to clearly evoke its period of significance.

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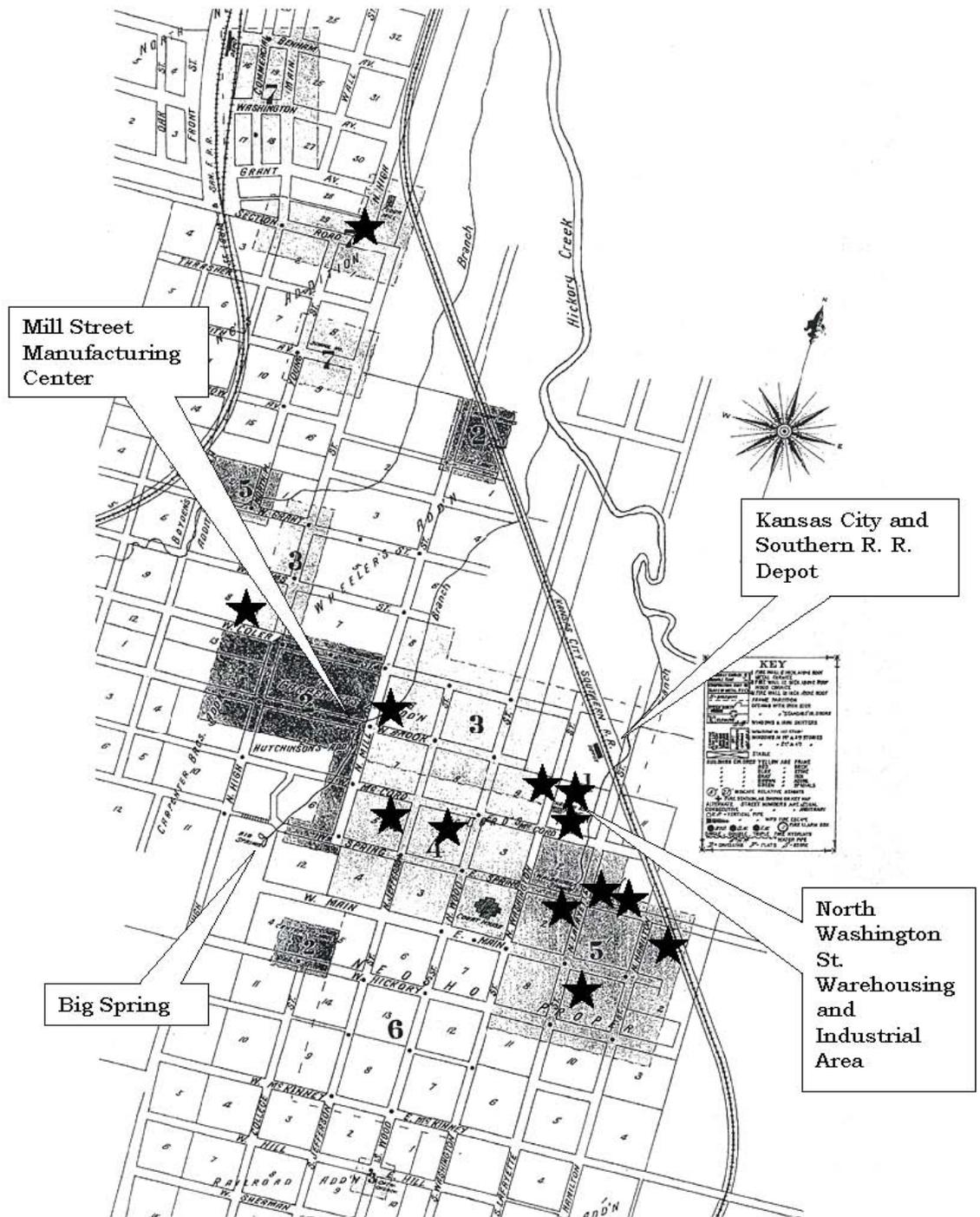
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Figure 1. Locations for Historic Industrial Centers and Surviving Resources.

Surviving associated resources that have been identified to date are indicated by stars.

Base Map from the 1902 Sanborn Map of Neosho.

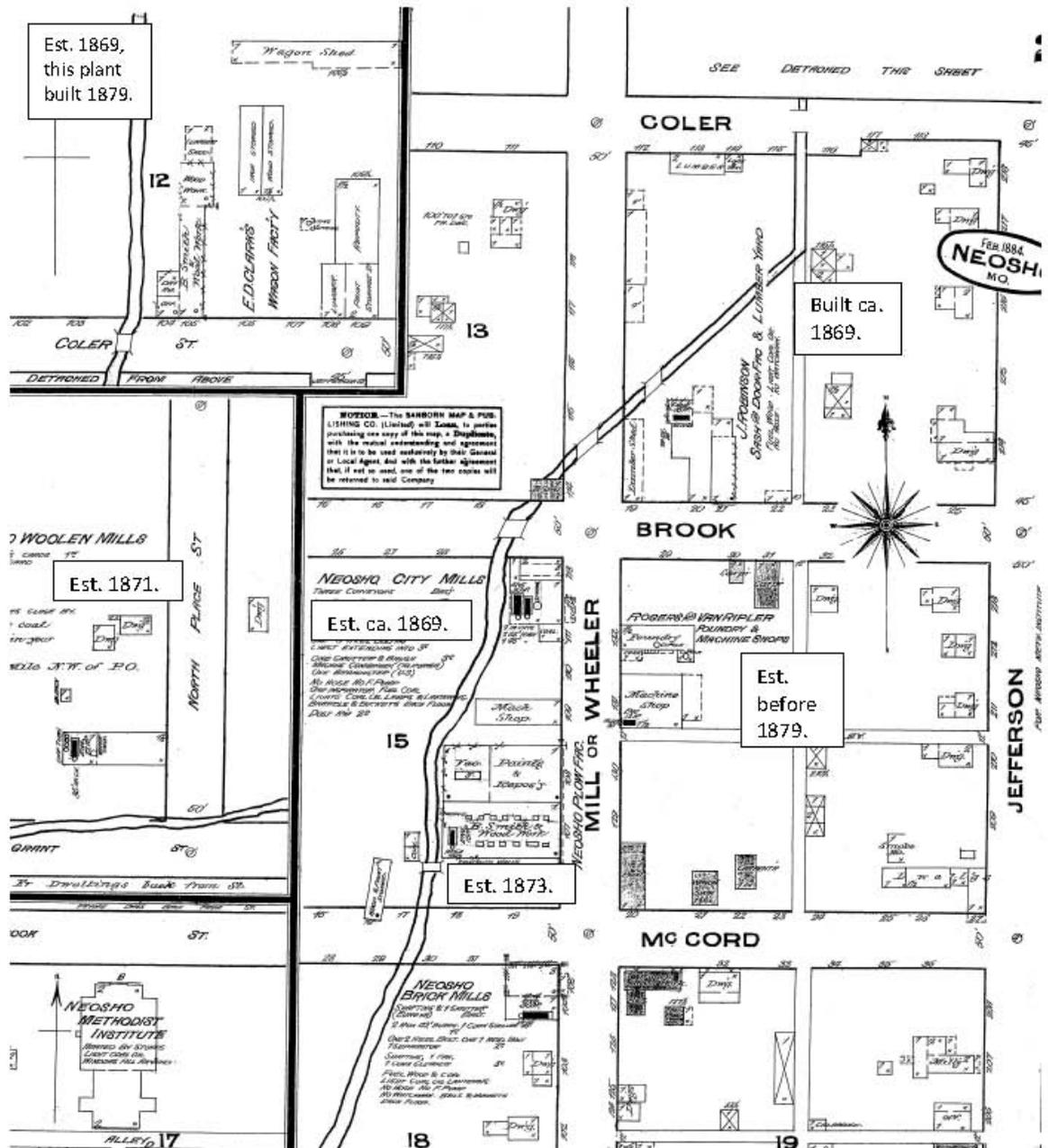


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Figure 2. All of the industries in Neosho that were mapped by the Sanborn Map Company in 1884 (with dates they were established, if known). Established dates are from History of Newton, Lawrence, Barry, and McDonald Counties Missouri. Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Co, 1888.



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Figure 3. North Washington Street in 1902.

Platbook of Newton County, Missouri: Compiled From County Records and Actual Surveys.
Missouri Publishing Co., 1902.



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Figure 4. Photo of North Washington Street, looking north, probably from the Haas Wholesale Grocery Building. The Ice Plant is on the right, and the Neosho Grocery Company and berry sheds are on the left. Photo from Larry James, comp. Neosho: From Armistice Day to Thomas Hart Benton Day. Neosho, MO: Newton County Historical Society, 2008, p. 49.

