

SURVEY REPORT
ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SURVEY
NEOSHO, MISSOURI

THOMASON AND ASSOCIATES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONSULTANTS
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PROJECT OVERVIEW

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. This was especially helpful in researching residential properties. Four possible historic districts were located, as well as eighteen properties that may be individually eligible for National Register listing.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Neosho's name is believed to be a corruption of the Indian word "Ne-u-zhu", meaning "meeting of the waters", or "cold clear waters" (City of Springs, 11). The town was blessed with an extraordinary number of springs, some hard and some soft, that have provided travelers' rests and watering places since the area was first explored.

Settlement of the area occurred in the early 1800s and in 1839 Neosho was designated as the seat for Newton County, which at the time extended south to the Arkansas border. The town was officially surveyed in 1846 on land belonging to J.W. McCord. The original town was comprised of Spring, Main, and Hickory Streets crossed by Jefferson, Wood, Washington, and Lafayette Streets running north to south. What is now the northern section of the city has been known as Neosho City, Martling, New Neosho, North Neosho, and finally Newtown before being incorporated by Neosho in 1881.

The Missouri Compromise allowed Missouri to enter the Union as a slave state. Neosho grew quickly and by the outbreak of the Civil War, the population had reached 700. The residents of Neosho were divided in their loyalties and focused more on the issue of states' rights than the issue of slavery. Neosho suffered during the war as thousands of troops from both Armies moved through the area. Missouri Governor Claiborne Jackson was pro-Confederate and ordered state militia to fight against the Federal Army. The 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 it saw action at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, Lexington and Neosho. The Company disbanded after six months leaving it's members to re-enlist elsewhere.

Governor Jackson, having been deposed in July 1861, retreated to Carthage, where he made his headquarters. Feeling that Carthage was dangerously close to federal forces, he held a special meeting of the Rebel Legislature in Neosho's Masonic Hall (demolished). The legislature, short of a quorum, met in Cassville three days later and voted to secede from the Union. After 1861, Southwest Missouri suffered during the Civil War. No major battles were fought in the Neosho area but much of the downtown area was burned in 1863.

The railroad was the most influential force behind the 19th century development of Neosho. The Southwest branch of the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad reached Neosho from Pierce City in 1870. The railroad sold thirty lots in "New Neosho", just north of Neosho, in preparation for the new line. The town was laid out in 1871 by A.W. Benham. The streets were called avenues so they

wouldn't be confused with streets of the same name in Neosho. The streets included in New Neosho were Broadway, Wall (College), Main, Commercial, Front, Oak and Hickory Avenues crossed by Baxter, Grant, Washington, Benham, Sherman, Madison, and Jefferson Avenues. A depot was built on Benham Avenue with a roundhouse and cattle pens between Jefferson and Madison Avenues. The railroad caused New Neosho to thrive, with the St. James Hotel built to accommodate passenger trade and many businesses located close to the tracks. A post office was established in 1873 and named Martling. Martling foundered, however, and was annexed by Neosho in 1881. The A & P eventually became the San Francisco and St. Louis (Frisco) Railroad. The railroad's emblem, a stretched raccoon's skin, is said to have been inspired when the vice-president of the Frisco line saw one hanging on the wall of the Neosho depot.

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. The railroad was intended to haul gold ore but more often carried hardwood timber. The line 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. The route was to extend from the Gulf of Mexico to Kansas City. Neosho was connected to the line in 1888.

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, in 1883. It tied into the Frisco and Kansas City Southern tracks and by 1908 provided 361 miles of track from Joplin, Missouri to Helena, Arkansas, on the Mississippi River. The line was created as a business venture, not as a freight train, but as a passenger train. In 1914 the line was the site of one of Neosho's worst accidents when a passenger car collided with a KCS freight car, exploded, and killed fifty-two people. Many of those killed are buried in Neosho's I.O.O.F. cemetery.

With the railroads came new churches, schools, and industrial growth that included light lead mining. Immigrants from Germany, France, and Switzerland came into the area and joined the large Scotch-Irish community. 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. The nation's oldest operating federal fish hatchery west of the Mississippi River was established at Neosho in 1888. Strawberries became the area's major staple crop from 1899 until the droughts in the 1930s. It was also because of the railroads that Neosho was able to have its first telephone service installed in 1879, just three years after Alexander Bell registered his patent. The line was run from the Frisco depot to the Alexander Hotel. The railroad

was also instrumental in the decision to locate the National Fish Hatchery in Neosho.

The abundance of natural springs also played a key role in the development of Neosho. The land is pitted with many sinkholes that form a natural drainage system through layers of limestone. The springs all produce different types of water, some hard, some soft, and some purported to have healing properties. Bartholic Spring served as the city's water supply from 1891 until World War II. The National Fish Hatchery has utilized the waters of Hearell, McMahan, and Bartholic Springs. Two springs, Big Spring and Walbridge Spring, were used by Pet Milk (1950s) and Carnation Company (1920s) to cool milk. Big Spring is perhaps the most noteworthy of the more than two dozen springs in Neosho. It is located at the west end of Spring Street in Big Spring Park. The limestone spring was used at one time to operate a mill. It is said that early settlers camped on the banks of the spring. The spring has been used to cool a blacksmith shop, a grocery store, printing presses, and milk. The location of so many springs in the area was certainly influential to Neosho's settlement and growth.

In 1888 the National Fish Hatchery was established in Neosho because of the city's proximity to the railroad and to an abundant supply of water in the form of the many springs. The land for the hatchery was purchased from Lemuel and Mary Hearell, Neosho pioneers. The government constructed buildings, ponds, and facilities on twelve acres of land in 1888. The hatchery has expanded several times through the years and now encompasses nearly three hundred acres and produces about one million fish annually. The hatchery is the oldest fish hatchery in operation west of the Mississippi River.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries brought tremendous progress to the town. By the 1890s, the city boasted a two-story brick courthouse and brick commercial buildings on the public square. Prosperous residential areas stretched to the west and south of the public square while an industrial area was located along the railroad tracks just north and east of the downtown area. Water mains were laid in 1891; telephones were connected throughout town in 1893; and electricity was introduced in 1897. In 1894, the Commercial Club purchased the land for Big Spring Park for \$4,000; the spring itself was purchased in 1926.

Neosho's prominence in canning and wholesale produce production was illustrated in 1898 with the construction of the four-story brick Haas building. The Haas Wholesale Company was one of the major businesses of the city and was a center for canning and shipping in southwest Missouri. The Haas family later built a another four-story building on the public square and both buildings remain as the tallest in the downtown area.

Another major industry was the Stark Brothers Nursery located on the northern edge of Neosho. The Stark Brothers nursery headquarters was established in 1912 in the building of the Mutual Wagon Factory and became a well known nursery of the state. In 1931, the nursery was reorganized as the Neosho Nurseries Company and had grown to serve 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 has long been the primary agricultural activity and Tyson Foods Incorporated presently operates a processing plant in town.

By 1920, there were 3,700 people living in Neosho and the community continued to grow during the following decade. Residential areas continued to expand and the Sale Memorial Hospital opened in 1927. The Depression had a significant effect on the local economy but a number of notable WPA 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.

During World War II, Camp Crowder was built to train men for the U.S. Army Signal Corps and at its peak housed more than 45,000 troops. The Army camp was located adjacent to the city's southern city limit. Neosho's economy boomed as the town tried to provide sufficient housing for the Army families. The Army built a neighborhood near the fish hatchery to house the officers and their families. Camp Crowder was reactivated in 1951, deactivated in 1958 and declared surplus in 1962.

The town has been known as the "Flower Box City" since 1955, when the Flower Box Program started and 3,000 flower boxes were planted with blooms. Neosho's economy remained stable after the war, when several industries located in Neosho, including AeroJet General, who opened a rocket-engine testing facility for its Rocketdyne Division. Other industries that have opened include La-Z-Boy Furniture, Teledyne, and others. The town's economy is now based upon a variety of manufacturers and is also a regional shopping center for the surrounding area.

ARCHITECTURAL OVERVIEW

Residential Architecture

Almost all of the historic residential buildings in Neosho were constructed between 1880 and 1930. It was during these years that the city enjoyed a period of rapid growth due to the coming of the railroads, which in itself encouraged the development of other industries. The town was burned in 1863 so ante-bellum structures are extremely rare. Over half of the 208 houses surveyed were constructed between 1880 and 1905, and dwellings with Queen Anne influences are most common. There are also examples of Italianate, Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival styles.

The earliest permanent residential structure standing in Neosho was constructed by Job Ratliff in 1855 to replace an earlier (1831) log cabin. The house is a two-story brick I-house with a rear ell. There is an original two-story L-shape porch on the rear facade with square wood columns and balusters. The most obvious alteration to the house is the addition of a ca. 1925 porch on the main facade. This partial-width porch has a stone rail and large square columns that rest on stone piers. The porch appears to have replaced an original porch that may have had a second story patio. An original door in the central bay of the second story has been converted to a sash window, but retains the original transom and sidelights. The house is an excellent example of mid-nineteenth century Greek Revival influenced rural architecture and retains sufficient architectural integrity to be eligible for individual listing on the National Register.

Neosho grew extensively after the coming of the railroads in 1870 and the architecture of the town reflects this growth. Most of the neighborhoods within two or three blocks of the city were developed by 1900 and include a number of houses with Italianate and Queen Anne influences. A significant collection of late 19th century residential architecture is located just west of the downtown area on Spring Hill overlooking Big Spring Park. This area appears to contain some of the most intact residences of the period and may meet National Register criteria.

Located atop Spring Hill, at 322 West McCord Street, is the Second Empire-style house that was built ca. 1870 by Thomas White, who kept a saloon in the early days of the city. The house is constructed of brick and stucco on a stone foundation and has a Mansard roof. The original one-over-one wood sash windows and dormers have round arches. At the roofline is an original cast iron balustrade. The only major alterations to the exterior of the house are a ca. 1920 wrought iron porch on the main facade and a ca. 1920 one-story wing that has been added to an original rear wing. This house is a fine high-style example of the Second

Empire style and is included in the proposed Big Spring Historic District.

The Daniel Longwell House at 101 South High is also included in the recommended Big Spring Historic District. The two-story Queen Anne house is of frame construction on a stone foundation. The original porch has milled columns and decorative corner braces. There are decorative brackets below the eaves and the frieze is decorated with applied wood rosettes. The rear of the house faces High Street, permitting a view of the city and Big Spring Park from the front. In the mid-twentieth century, the house was owned by Daniel Longwell, Chairman of the Board of Time-Life, Inc. Another early example of a high style house in the proposed district is the Robison House at 104 Spring Hill. This two-story Italianate residence was built ca. 1870 and one of Neosho's finest examples of this style.

Other notable 19th century residences include the J.E. Alexander house at 321 South Wood Street and the Heaton House at 335 South Wood Street. The Alexander House is two-story, frame, Italianate residence was built ca. 1870 on a stone foundation. Despite an exterior of asbestos siding, the house retains many of its Italianate details including double eave brackets and an original balustrade with milled panels above the porch. On the main facade is a three-quarters width porch with original milled columns, brackets, and modillions. The house also retains its original doors and windows. The house was built for J.E. Alexander, who owned Alexander and Son plow factory in Neosho. The factory is known to have been operating in 1872, with the family living at 321 South Wood Street. The family occupied the house through the 1930s. The house is one of the oldest in Neosho and one of the few that retains significant Italianate detailing.

The Heaton House is Neosho's finest example of a high style Queen Anne residence. The house was built in 1904 by Warren Heaton, the inventor of the auger post-hole digger. The house is of frame construction with weatherboard siding and rests on a stone foundation. The gable roof and cross gables have copper ridge cresting and the round corner tower has a decorative finial. The gable fields are decorated with milled panels in sunburst designs. Heaton designed the wrap-around porch on the main facade of the house himself. The Heaton House is an excellent example of the Queen Anne style and is individually eligible for listing on the National Register.

In addition to these residences the survey also located dozens of residences built in the 1880s and 1890s in Folk Victorian plans with Queen Anne influences. Common building forms are Gabled Ell plans, Composite Cottages, and Pyramid Square forms. These residences generally have one-over-one sash windows, weatherboard siding, single light glass and wood doors, milled porch columns, and decorative eave brackets and vergeboard. These

residences are scattered throughout the original residential areas of the city.

After 1900, residences were frequently built with Colonial Revival influences. The American Foursquare was an especially popular design and fine examples of this form were inventoried. These two-story residences are symmetrical in form with hipped roofs and Tuscan porch columns. Several Queen Anne and American Foursquare residences were built in the early 1900s along Hamilton Street and represent a small but significant collection of turn of the century residential architecture.

High style Colonial Revival and Neo-Classical residences were inventoried. The William Wills House (Clark Funeral Home) is one of Neosho's best examples of the Colonial Revival style. The house was built ca. 1905 and was originally used as a residence by William Wills, the Vice-President of the Bank of Neosho. On the main facade is a full width, one-story porch with Ionic columns resting on stone piers. The main entrance has an oval single-light glass and wood door with beveled glass sidelights and three-light transom. The windows have ashlar stone lintels and keystones. At the corners of the house are yellow glazed brick quoins. "Twin Oaks" at 515 West Spring Street is also a notable brick Colonial Revival influenced residence.

By 1910, the Bungalow or Craftsman style became the most popular residential building form in Neosho. The designs built in Neosho came from pattern books and a few are reputed to be mail order designs such as from Sears or the Alladin Company. The designs are typical of Bungalows built throughout Missouri from 1910 to 1930 and have horizontal massing with wide eaves, eave support brackets, and multi-light doors and windows.

Of particular note is the Craftsman-style Shambaugh House at 117 South Lafayette Street. Anna Shambaugh designed the house herself, room by room, in 1913, and its many windows soon earned it the nick-name, "The Glass House". An Army officer was once so impressed by the house that he had blueprints drawn up and an identical house built at his home in Illinois. The two-story house exhibits a high quality of workmanship of native materials. The house is of frame construction on a stone foundation with a limestone veneer applied to the first story and weatherboard cladding on the second story. A partial-width stone porch extends across the north facade of the house to form a porte-cochere. There are eight decorative lights in the upper and lower panels of the wood frame casement windows.

The Clark Armstrong House at 200 South Jefferson Street is a good example of a Craftsman style house with Colonial Revival details. The house was designed by architect Austin Allen of Joplin for the H. Clark Armstrong family and was built in 1912 by the construction company of J.E. Lewis. Clark's father, Bailey

Armstrong, operated a hotel on the square until it burned in 1881. The two-story house is constructed of hollow tile and stucco on concrete foundation, with a hipped roof of asphalt shingles. Distinguishing the house is a one-story, full width pergola supported by paired Tuscan columns on the main facade. The windows are six-over-six rectangular wood sash and at the roofline is a gable dormer with one-over-one paired sash windows.

The A.W. Fullerton House is a relatively unaltered Craftsman style home with a two-story Craftsman-style garage that also remains intact. The house was built ca. 1915 by Arthur Fullerton, the owner of the Neosho Mills. The Fullertons were a prominent family in Neosho in the early twentieth century. Located at 622 College Street, the house is a two-story frame, three-bay, rectangular plan residence built on a concrete and cobblestone foundation. The exterior is clad with weatherboard siding, with wood shingles on the second story exterior and a hipped dormer on the main facade. There is a partial width gable roof porch with concrete and cobblestone porch columns and railing on the main facade. The south facade also has a porte-cochere with cobblestone columns. To the rear of the house is a two-story garage with a cobblestone surface on the first floor and wood shingles on the second story. The garage has altered doors but retains its original windows, gable roof, and interior flue.

A particular noteworthy building material found in Neosho is the use of stone and stone and concrete veneers in building construction. This is especially prevalent for Bungalow and Craftsman style homes. Southwest Missouri has an abundance of sandstone and limestone deposits and many stones have red, tan, and other dark hues. Local builders utilized these stones in conjunction with poured concrete to create exterior building veneers. The veneers would be placed on frame buildings to give the appearance of a substantial cobblestone building. Other veneers are of flagstones and concrete in what has been termed "giraffe block" exteriors. Concrete and cobblestone construction was used for many garages and outbuildings in addition to dwellings. Little information is known about builders in Neosho who worked with these materials but their handiwork from this period is found throughout the city.

Revival styles from the early 20th century are limited and no high style example of a Spanish Mission, Italianate, or other revival forms were inventoried. The Tudor Revival style is represented throughout the city in small stone veneer cottages and bungalows. The Barnett House at 725 Baxter Street is an excellent example of a high style Tudor Revival home. The house is a two-story frame and stucco residence built in 1928. It has a concrete foundation, gable roof of asphalt shingles, and a textured stucco exterior. The entrances have original multi-light glass and wood doors and windows are six-over-one rectangular wood sash. In the gable fields is half-timbering.

Neosho enjoyed a second renaissance during World War II, when Camp Crowder was constructed for the Army Signal Corps. The local economy benefitted directly from the construction of the Army installation, but the residential areas of Neosho also grew as a result of this development. The area built by the military in the southeast section of Neosho is worth noting. Many of the buildings share similar house plans and materials and were built to house officers and their families. Although these buildings are not yet fifty years old, the more representative house types were inventoried because of their significance to the development of the community during the 1940s. Over 350 buildings were originally constructed at Camp Crowder but less than a dozen remain. Representative examples of these buildings were inventoried during the survey.

Since the 1940s, residential construction has expanded west and south of the original city limits and Ranch and Split-level dwellings are found throughout these areas. Many lots within the city have also had the original residence razed and new dwellings erected on their site. Alterations to 19th and early 20th century residences has been common through the addition of artificial sidings and modern porch and window materials.

Due to the new construction and alterations only small areas of residential architecture appear to meet National Register criteria. The dwellings adjacent to Big Spring Park are particularly significant and represent a fine collection of late 19th century architecture. Five dwellings along Hamilton Street were built in the early 1900s and represent a small but significant collection of early 20th century architecture. No other area in Neosho appeared to retain sufficient integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to qualify as National Register Historic Districts.

Commercial Architecture

The buildings on Neosho's public square include one-part and two-part commercial structures with pressed metal and tapestry brick fronts and many with Italianate, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival details. The square was first laid out in 1846 and has undergone many changes since then. The earliest buildings were one-story frame structures that were soon replaced by more substantial brick buildings as the city grew and prospered. The buildings that are now located on the square were constructed primarily between 1880 and 1920. The square has survived several disastrous fires and has been reconstructed several times.

The north, east, and south sides of the public square retain much of their early 20th century character and appear to meet National Register criteria as an historic district. This district has been identified as the Neosho Commercial Historic District. The west side of the square is composed of turn of the century buildings but several large buildings have been covered with metal facades. Buildings on the square originally contained Neosho's most significant businesses, banks, and restaurants. The 1936 Art Deco courthouse dominates the center of the square.

The most significant row of relatively intact commercial buildings is on the north side of the public square, along Spring Street. This row extends approximately one-half block from both sides of the square and includes the Haas Building, Berger's Block, and the Heaton Building. The Haas Building at 130 East Spring Street (not to be confused with Haas Wholesale Grocery, which will be discussed later) is a four-story brick, two-part commercial building constructed in 1906. The southeast corner of the storefront is chamfered and has an original marble column. The upper facade is composed of two bays with each bay divided by brick pilasters with Doric capitals above the fourth floor level. Below the roofline is a concrete cornice with large modillion blocks and brackets. The building was constructed by the Haas family to house the offices of the Missouri and Northern Arkansas Railroad but the firm went bankrupt before ever occupying the building. The building was home to the Neosho Savings Bank and several city offices in the early part of this century. There are jail cells in the basement of the building and the Neosho Hospital leased the top two floors in the 1920s.

The Heaton Building at 112 West Spring Street is a two-story brick, two-part commercial building constructed in 1895. On the upper facade are three window bays with each bay containing an original one-over-one rectangular wood sash window. The windows have brick relief arching with rock-faced stone shoulders and keystones and the windows share a continuous stone sill. At the roofline is a sheet metal cornice with rectangular panels having rosette and floral designs. The Heaton Building has served a variety of purposes, housing a grocery, a baker, and a pool hall.

Berger's Block, adjacent to the Heaton Building, is a two-story brick, two-part commercial building constructed in 1886. The upper facade is composed of seven window bays. The west three bays have one-over-one rounded arch sash windows with brick relief arching and stone sills. The east four window bays have rectangular twelve-over-twelve sash windows with single-light arched transoms. These windows also have brick relief arching and connecting the windows are corbelled brick belt courses. Dividing the window bays are brick wall buttresses. At the roofline is a sheet metal cornice with brackets and rosettes. At the corners of the building are pyramidal design metal finials. Berger's Block has housed a variety of commercial ventures including restaurants, butchers, a barber shop, and the a hotel on the second floor. The second floor has been the Globe Hotel, the Central Hotel, and Comfort Lodge (during WWII).

Although the commercial area was originally contained within the square, the district has grown one or more blocks in almost all directions. The areas north and east of the square, between Spring and Washington Streets has always been used by the railroad and its dependent structures. Thus, there are several warehouses and storage buildings in this area, a few constructed by the North Transfer and Storage Company that are still standing. Much of the old railroad area at the north end of Washington Street is now occupied by Tyson Foods, Inc.

The 1898 Haas Wholesale Grocery building at 210 North Washington Street, dominates the northeastern part of the commercial district. Although located one block north of the square, this four-story building stands out as it is impressive in its size and design. The building was constructed with an electric elevator and an automatic sprinkler system. This company was begun by Edward Haas and was one of the leading produce companies of southwest Missouri in the early 20th century, shipping fruits and vegetables throughout the region. Built in 1898 with Italianate influences, the building has a substantial brick and limestone facade. The entrance is set within a large arched opening with radiating voussoirs. The arches spring from bases which have four marble columns and floral capitals. Above the storefront is a stone frieze with incised chevron molding. Windows on the fourth floor are arched and have stone keystones. At the roofline is a large sheet-metal cornice with dentils and brackets. The interior retains an original pressed metal ceiling, columns with pressed metal panels and Corinthian capitals, and a cast iron safe.

Growth west of the square has been naturally restricted by the steep cliff created by Big Spring. Nevertheless, there has been some development in the form of an early (1917) automobile dealership and a hospital constructed in 1926 by Dr. O.A. Sale. The commercial area extends barely one block to the south to

include the U.S. Post Office, built in 1934, and the Victorian Gothic style United Methodist Church, built in 1897. To the east of the square are modest commercial buildings constructed adjacent to the railroad.

Neosho once had several movies theaters, especially during World War II, when Camp Crowder drew thousands of military families to the area. The only theater building left in town is the Orpheum, one-half block south of the square on Wood Street. The two-story brick theater was constructed as the New Dreamland in 1917, which opened with talking pictures. The upper facade is original and has three bays of windows. The central bay of the building has three windows in a Palladian motif. The upper facade has a stuccoed surface and at the roofline is a stepped parapet with concrete coping. The theater continued to show movies until the late 1980s, but is not in use at the present time.

There was a small commercial area in Martling, which was also known as North Neosho, or Newtown, and was annexed by Neosho in 1881. Commercial Avenue was laid out as the main street and paved around 1880. The streets were laid out in reference to the railroad tracks and were called avenues, so as not to confuse them with streets in Neosho. This area was dominated by the railroad and included a depot, a roundhouse, the St. James Hotel, and a small commercial district. The town of Martling foundered, however, as Neosho grew and prospered, until 1881, when it was annexed by Neosho. Only a few early commercial structures were found in the original section of Martling none of which possess particular significance.

Scattered throughout Neosho are a number of buildings which housed neighborhood grocery stores and other businesses. Most of these are of frame construction although several are also of cobblestone and concrete construction. The inventory also surveyed the Hopi Court, a tourist court of the 1930s. This court is located just off US Highway 60 and is the only remaining example of a pre-1940 automobile tourist court in Neosho. The office and several modest cottages remain from this period.

Public Buildings

Neosho contains several significant public buildings that include government buildings, schools, meeting halls and lodges, and churches. Most of these buildings were constructed in the early part of the twentieth century, and several were constructed with the aid of the Work Projects Administration (WPA) in the 1930s.

The Newton County Historical Society Museum presently occupies the original Newton County Jail building. The building was constructed in the Second Empire style in 1888 with a

limestone foundation and an exterior of five-course common bond brick. The main facade was covered with stucco ca. 1920 when a two-story porch was added to the main facade. The building was built as the sheriff's house and county jail until the new jail was built on top of the new courthouse in 1936. The building was designed and constructed by the Pauly Jail Building and Manufacturing Company of St. Louis at a cost of \$6000. Six jail cells were originally located in a two-story rear ell constructed of brick. This ell is no longer standing. The building is located in the proposed Neosho Commercial Historic District.

The Masonic Hall, at 101 South Washington Street, is a two-story brick, two-part commercial building originally constructed in 1883 and enlarged and remodeled to its present appearance in 1913. The building has three bays with the central bay containing an entrance opening onto stairs leading to the second story. Above both storefronts is a belt course of yellow glazed soldier and sailor brick courses. The upper facade is composed of two bays with extensive use of yellow glazed brick. The Masonic Lodge has its hall on the second floor, and there have been a variety of stores on the first floor at different times that included a harness shop, clothing store, and a hardware store.

The most dominant building in Neosho's public square is the Newton County Courthouse. The Courthouse was built on the site of four previous courthouses. The cornerstone was laid on July 30, 1936, with Senator Harry S Truman making the address. The building was designed by St. Louis architect Neal C. Davis, a native of Newton County, and was funded by the Work Projects Administration. This two-story Carthage stone and metal building was constructed with Art Deco influences in a cross plan with one-story wings extending on all sides. The exterior of the building is of smooth Carthage stone and rests on a raised basement. Art Deco details include fluted pilasters, chevron molding, and concrete fret bands at the roofline. The interior retains original wood doors, marble wainscoting, fluted marble pilasters, and metal staircases.

Neosho's Auditorium and City Hall is located one-half block west of the square on Main Street. The two-story building was designed in the Art Deco style by Neal C. Davis and constructed in 1938 with the help of the W.P.A. On the main facade are five sets of double doors of single-light glass and wood design. Above the doors are large single-light rectangular transoms with opaque lights. Also above the doors are chevron panels and vertical fluted panels. Windows are four-light hopper design. In the second story central bay the window openings have structural glass blocks. At the roofline is concrete zig-zag molding. 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. The building is located in the proposed Neosho Commercial Historic District.

The U.S. Post Office is a good example of a Colonial Revival post office building constructed by the W.P.A. in the 1930s. The one-story brick, five-bay, rectangular plan post office was built in 1934, but did not open until 1935. The building has a concrete and brick foundation, exterior laid up in five-course common bond brick, and flat roof of rolled roofing. The main entrance has an original wood surround with a broken pediment, fluted Doric pilasters, and eave dentils. Incorporated into the pediment is a brass or copper eagle. The building was designed by Louis Simon, one of the primary architects of government postal buildings in the 1930s.

Perhaps one of the more unusual contributions to the city's architectural and cultural resources is the National Fish Hatchery. The U.S. Fish Hatchery in Neosho is the oldest continually operating federal hatchery west of the Mississippi River. The original hatchery was built in 1888 on land purchased by the U.S. government for one dollar. This complex included a Queen Anne influenced main building but this and other original buildings have been razed. The only historic building that remains standing is the 1926 glazed brick garage and feed building. The hatchery consists of the original earthen sluiceways and holding ponds that were inlaid with concrete and rocks in the late 1930s by the WPA, under the direction of Robert North, a local contractor. Much of the construction of the hatchery was done by the WPA in 1938/39. Other buildings and structures on the site were built in recent decades. The hatchery has historic significance but no buildings and structures remain from its original construction.

Neosho's Chamber of Commerce is a one-story stone, four-bay, rectangular plan public building built ca. 1930. The building has a stone and concrete foundation, gable roof, and an exterior of coursed rubble stone and concrete. The main entrance has an original multi-light glass and wood door. Flanking the door are large wood thirty-light picture windows. The interior has been remodeled but retains an original rubble stone mantel. This building was constructed ca. 1930 as part of the Big Spring Park and Hotel complex. Its original use is unknown but the building is known to have been used as a home for the owners of the Inn, although it is not known who built it.

Most of the schools in Neosho were constructed in the early twentieth century and were constructed in place of older, obsolete schools. The two Lincoln schools in the north part of town are significant and form a small historic district. The schools are significant in the areas of black history and education. The original Lincoln School is a one-story brick, three-bay rectangular plan school building built in 1891 and now

used as a residence. The Lincoln School replaced the old "colored school" that was located on Grant Avenue (now demolished). The school served as the school for black students in Neosho until 1940 when the adjacent school was constructed. The Lincoln School of 1940 is a one-story, rectangular plan stone veneer school built adjacent to the original school. The school served the black students of Neosho beginning in 1940 until the system was integrated in the 1960s.

Neosho Intermediate School was constructed as the high school in 1916. The school was designed by St. Louis architect Neal C. Davis, a native of Newton County who also designed the courthouse and auditorium. This two-story brick school has a raised basement, concrete foundation, exterior of Flemish bond brick, and flat roof. The building has fifteen window bays with ca. 1970 metal windows added in the window openings. The main entrance is recessed within a Tudor-arched, one-story brick wing. At the corners of the one-story wing and window bays are concrete quoins. Below the roofline is a concrete cornice and at the roofline is a stepped parapet and soldier course banding.

Central School replaced an earlier school building that was deemed unsafe and razed in 1930. The new Central School opened in August of 1930 to serve grades one through six. It is a two-story brick, rectangular plan, six-bay school located on Hickory Street above Big Spring Park. The building has a concrete foundation, flat roof, and an exterior of stretcher-bond brick. On the main facade is a two-story projecting bay containing the main entrance. This entrance has paired ca. 1970 metal and glass doors. The door surround is of concrete and has a voluted cornice and fascia panel with garland and swag and urn decoration. Above is a window opening with architrave molding and a concrete sill.

The M.E. Benton School is a one-story stone and concrete, nine-bay, irregular plan school building constructed in 1937 by the W.P.A. The school was a graded elementary school that replaced an 1898 school on the same site. The building has a concrete foundation, hipped roof of asphalt shingles and stone exterior surface. The building's main facade has two primary entrances with ca. 1970 metal and glass doors. Above the doors are inset stone panels and at the roofline is a stepped parapet. At the rear are two one-story additions. A concrete block addition was constructed in 1954, and another in 1960.

With the exception of the two Lincoln Schools, Neosho's early 20th century school buildings have been altered with modern doors and windows and additions. Despite these changes and alterations these buildings are significant in local education and should be evaluated for National Register significance.

Another significant collection of public buildings are those associated with the Big Spring Park. The Big Spring Park was

purchased by the city and extensive construction of park buildings commenced in the 1920s. Buildings and structures in the park include the Pavilion and Wading Pool and the Grecian Theater. The park consists of large landscaped areas and has traditionally been an important social and civic center of Neosho. The park is included in the proposed Big Spring Historic District.

Church buildings

Most of the church buildings that remain standing in Neosho date from the very late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Six churches were inventoried, and all are good or excellent examples of late nineteenth century styles that includes vernacular gable-front styles, Victorian Gothic, and Richardsonian Romanesque.

St. John's Episcopal Church is a one-story frame, three-bay, gable-front rectangular plan church built in 1895. The church has a stone foundation, a gable roof, and an exterior of asbestos shingles. On the main facade is a gable-roofed vestibule with exposed rafters. This contains the main entrance which has double doors of raised panels in cross designs. Flanking the entrance are stained glass lancet windows. On both the east and west facades are ca. 1920 wings which rest on stone and concrete foundations. These wings have gable roofs, asbestos shingles, exposed rafters, and paired one-over-one sash windows. This church was built in 1895 to serve Neosho's Episcopal congregation. The building is located in the proposed Big Spring Historic District.

The Second Baptist Church is a good example of a Victorian Gothic church of the nineteenth century. The one-story brick church was built in 1896 in a rectangular plan with a projecting two-story brick bell-tower on the main facade. The church has a stone foundation, gable roof, and an exterior of six-course common bond brick. The main entrance is located on the projecting central bay and has ca. 1980 metal and glass doors. Above the doors is an original Gothic arched transom with stained glass lights and three-courses of brick relief arching. Windows are two-over-two wood sash with stained glass lights set within a Gothic arched opening. The bell tower has a mansard roof which supports an open belfry with a copper finial.

The In-Time Revival House is located in the north section of Neosho and was constructed as the Wesley Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church in 1896. It is a one-story frame, two-bay rectangular plan church with a stone foundation, gable roof, and weatherboard siding. On the main facade is a projecting bay which contains the main entrance. This entrance has ca. 1930 double doors of two-paneled design. Above the doors is an ogee arch and

transom. On the main facade is a large stained-glass window with three one-over-one sash windows. The church is the last standing historic church that has historically been associated with the black community.

The United Methodist Church, at the corner of Wood and Hickory Streets, is a two-story brick, irregular plan church with Victorian Gothic influences designed by John M. Propst and built in 1897. The church has a stone foundation, exterior of stretcher-bond brick, and a gable roof. The main facade has three bays and the primary entrance is located on the first floor of the building's bell tower. On the east facade facing South Wood Street is a large keyhole design stained glass window. Other windows in the building are one-over-one rectangular wood sash with stained glass lights and rock faced stone lintels and sills. At the southeast corner of the building is a two-story bell tower with stone quoins, corbelled brickwork, and a castellated parapet. The church is located in the proposed Neosho Commercial Historic District.

At the corner of Brook and High Streets, the First Presbyterian Church stands as a fine example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, the only example of this style in Neosho. The present building was completed in 1898 after the original building burned in 1897. The new church was designed by architects McCullom and Ely (who was a cousin of one of the pastors) of Washington, Pennsylvania. The one-story church is constructed of uncoursed limestone and has a gable roof with a rectangular bell tower at the northwest corner. The bell tower has a pyramidal roof with a finial. The main entrance into the church is in the first floor of the bell tower and is set within a stone arch. Window openings have rounded Romanesque arches with stained glass windows. At the corners of the church and on the bell tower are stone wall buttresses.

The First Congregational Church is located one block north of the public square on Wood Street. This two-story church was built in 1907 and is a good example of the Victorian Romanesque style. The church has a stone foundation, stretcher bond brick exterior and a gable roof. On the main facade is a one-story incised loggia with Romanesque stone columns, stone arches and a castellated parapet. The main entrance has ca. 1920 solid wood doors. Windows are arched one-over-one wood sash with stained glass lights. At the northwest corner is a square bell tower with stone belt courses and arched openings with stone shoulders and keystones. The First Congregational Church was organized in 1866, the second church to organize in Neosho. This church was built in 1907 and continues to be used by the First Congregational Church congregation. The building is located in the proposed Neosho Commercial Historic District.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIONAL REGISTER LISTING

Proposed Historic Districts

1. **Neosho Commercial Historic District:** Neosho's commercial district extends approximately one-half block in all directions from the courthouse square. The district includes commercial, public, and government buildings and two churches. Most buildings are two-part commercial structures with Italianate details constructed between 1870 and 1910. Although there has been some alterations to many of the buildings on the square, the north, east, and south sides retain much of their original character and appear to meet National Register district criteria.

Other blocks to the north and east of the square also have significant buildings and should be included in any proposed district. Of particular note is the four-story Edward Haas Building on North Washington Street built in 1898. This building was occupied by a locally well-known wholesale grocery and produce company and exhibits excellent craftsmanship. The district also contains a number of public buildings and meeting halls. Two of the most significant of these are the Newton County Courthouse and Neosho Auditorium and City Hall, both built in the late 1930s with WPA assistance. The buildings are constructed of Carthage stone and have Art Deco details. There are fifty-one buildings in the proposed district boundaries, thirty-eight of which would be considered contributing.

Contributing:

1. Newton County Courthouse
2. 105-109 East Main Street
3. 111 East Main Street
4. 113 East Main Street
5. 121-127 East Main Street
6. 129 East Main Street
7. 107 West Main Street

9. Neosho Auditorium
10. 100 East Spring Street, Rice Building
11. 106-108 East Spring Street
12. 110 East Spring Street
13. 112 East Spring Street
14. 114 East Spring Street
15. 122 East Spring Street
16. 124 East Spring Street
17. 126 East Spring Street
18. 130 East Spring Street, Haas Building
19. 202 East Spring Street
20. 204 East Spring Street
21. 206 East Spring Street
22. 100-102 West Spring Street

23. 111-115 West Spring Street
24. 112 West Spring Street, Heaton Building
25. 114-118 West Spring Street, Berger's Block
26. 121 North Washington Street, Newton County Historical Museum
27. 201 North Washington Street, Edward Haas Wholesale Grocery
28. 101-103 South Washington Street, Masonic Lodge
29. 119-123 South Washington Street
30. 125 South Washington Street
31. 110 North Wood Street
32. 114 North Wood Street
33. 115 North Wood Street, First Congregational Church
34. 116 North Wood Street
35. 204 South Wood Street
36. 210-216 South Wood Street
37. 218-220 South Wood Street
38. Wood and Hickory Streets, United Methodist Church

Non-contributing:

1. 101-103 East Main Street
2. 115 East Main Street
3. 117 East Main Street

5. 102-104 East Spring Street
6. 200 East Spring Street
7. 104 West Spring Street
8. 109 West Spring Street
9. 105-107 South Washington Street
10. 109 South Washington Street
11. 112 North Wood Street
12. Wood and Main Street
13. 206-208 South Wood Street

2. Big Spring Historic District: This residential district includes fourteen buildings, structures, and sites in, and surrounding Big Spring Park. The houses in this district were constructed between 1870 and 1890 and represent some of the best high style architecture of the period. Of particular note are the Italianate Daniel Longwell House at 101 South High Street, and an excellent example of the Second Empire style at 322 West McCord Street. The district also includes the park, several elements of which were constructed in 1926.

Contributing:

1. 101 South High Street--the Daniel Longwell House
2. 100 Spring Hill
3. 104 Spring Hill
4. 120 Spring Hill--Matters House
5. 305 West Spring Street--Neosho Chamber of Commerce

6. 308 West Spring Street--St. John's Episcopal Church
7. West Spring Street--concrete steps
8. 322 West McCord Street
9. Big Spring Park--Cave
10. Big Spring Park--Pavilion and wading pool
11. Big Spring Park--Restrooms
12. Big Spring Park--Grecian Theater
13. Big Spring Park--Bridge
14. Big Spring Park--Terraced landscaped area

Non-contributing:

1. 116 Spring Hill
2. Big Spring Park--clock
3. Big Spring Park--Fish Pond

3. Hamilton Terrace Historic District: This is a small residential district representing the turn-of-the-century Hamilton Terrace development. Four of the five houses in this district were constructed ca. 1905 and all but one represent the work of a single builder. Of particular note is the Mixer house at 344 Hamilton Street, the oldest house in the district, built ca. 1890. The houses were constructed for some of Neosho's most prominent families including the McGintys, the Cravens and the Millers.

Contributing

1. 344 Hamilton Street--Mixer House
2. 404 Hamilton Street--Craven House
3. 408 Hamilton Street
4. 412 Hamilton Street--Miller House
5. 416 Hamilton Street--A.C. McGinty House

Non-Contributing - None

4. Lincoln Schools Historic District: This small district includes the two Lincoln schools and their grounds on Hickory Avenue in north Neosho. The original Lincoln School was built in 1891 while the second school was built in 1940. These schools served as the primary educational facilities for black students in Neosho for over fifty years. Both schools have been converted to single family dwellings but retain sufficient architectural integrity to warrant listing on the National Register.

1. 1205 Hickory Avenue (1940)
2. 1227 Hickory Avenue (1891)

Proposed Individual National Register Listings

1. Wesley Chapel M.E. Church (In-Time Revival House), 429 Baxter Road, black history.

2. 725 Baxter Street, architectural significance, Tudor Revival architecture.
3. First Presbyterian Church, Brook and High Streets, architectural significance, Richardsonian Romanesque architecture.
4. A.W. Fullerton House, 622 North College Street, architectural significance, Craftsman architecture.
5. Ruark House, 407 Freeman Road, architectural significance.
6. U.S. Post Office, 101 East Hickory Street, Governmental significance.
7. 106 South Jefferson Street, architectural significance.
8. Clark Armstrong House, 200 South Jefferson Street, architectural significance.
9. Prettyman House, 412 South Jefferson Street, architectural significance.
10. Shambaugh House, 217 South Lafayette Street, architectural significance.
11. M.E. Benton House, 216 East McKinney Street, architectural and historical significance.
12. U.S. Fish Hatchery, Park Street, Governmental significance.
13. 515 West Spring Street, Twin Oaks, architectural significance.
14. 200 block, North Wood Street, Neosho Intermediate School, architectural significance.
15. William Wills house, 312 South Wood Street, architectural significance.
16. Alexander House, 321 South Wood Street, architectural significance.
17. Heaton House, 335 South Wood Street, architectural and historical significance.
18. Job Ratliff House, Route 8, architectural significance.

SUMMARY

Neosho retains a significant collection of residential and commercial architecture from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The majority of its historic architecture is located around the public square and in the residential areas to the west and south of the square. Preservation activities in past years has included the conversion of the jail building into an excellent local museum, the rehabilitation of several buildings on the square, and the formation of the Neosho Historic Preservation Commission. The Commission sponsored the recent survey and provided valuable historical information during the inventory. The Commission has no immediate plans to designate local districts and instead is focusing on downtown revitalization.

Future preservation actions recommended for Neosho include:

1. Preparation of a Multiple Property Nomination for the city. This nomination should include all eligible historic districts and individual properties in Neosho. If funding for this type of nomination proves difficult to obtain, at a minimum the Commercial Historic District nomination should be prepared as soon as possible.
2. Become part of the Missouri Main Street Program: The downtown area contains an excellent collection of historic architecture and remains a viable commercial center of Neosho. The hiring of a Main Street manager and participation in the state program would help to continue revitalization efforts in the city.
3. Promote the historic buildings of Neosho through brochures and walking tours. Many fine buildings are located in and within a few blocks of the public square. Neosho could promote its heritage tourism through walking tours of the public square, Big Spring Park and other historic buildings and sites.
4. Integrate the surveyed sites into future planning efforts. Neosho should consider placing preservation into any future land use or zoning plans for the city. Preservation should be a component in areas such as tourism, revitalization, low income housing rehabilitation, and community promotion.

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