NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER
LISTED

APR 1 8 2007

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x' in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

005-0260-1415

1. Name of Property

historic name Atchison County Memorial Hall

other name/site number "Memorial Hall" & "Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall"

2. Location

street & town 819 Commercial Street — not for publication

city or town Atchison — vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Atchison code 005 zip code 66002

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Patrick Zollner DSHPO 3/2/07
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Kansas State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

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

Atchison County Memorial Hall
Name of Property

Atchison nty, KS
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
- X public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE/auditorium
SOCIAL/meeting hall

Current Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE/auditorium

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals: Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
walls brick
roof asphalt
other

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

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

Atchison County Memorial Hall
Name of Property

Atchison County, KS
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ B removed from its original location.

☐ C a birthplace or grave.

☐ D a cemetery.

☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ F a commemorative property.

☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation

Architecture

Period of Significance

1922 - 1956

Significant Dates

1922, 1940

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Meier, Rudolph - Architect

Johns, T. H. - Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

X State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other Name of repository:

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

Atchison County Memorial Hall
Name of Property

Atchison County, KS
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property **Less than one acre**

UTM References
(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/5 3/1/7/5/2/0 4/3/8/1/1/2/0
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property.)
Lots Nos. Thirteen to Twenty (13 to 20) inclusive, in Block Sixteen (16), of L.C. Challis Addition to the City of Atchison, Atchison County, Kansas.

Property Tax No.

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The nominated property includes the parcel historically associated with the Atchison County Memorial Hall.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth A. Lane – Professional Researcher and Genealogist
organization E. A. Lane Research Services date August 7, 2006
street & number 841 South Fourth Street telephone 913-367-0391
city or town Atchison state KS zip code 66002

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets
Maps A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs: Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.
Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner
name/title Atchison County Government
street & number Atchison County Courthouse telephone 913-367-8220
city or town Atchison state KS zip code 66002

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Architectural Description
Overview
Atchison County Memorial Hall (also known as "Memorial Hall" and "The Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Hall") constructed c. 1922 is a two-story yellow brick, simple rectangular shaped, Neo-classical style building located at 819 Commercial Street in Atchison, Atchison County, Kansas. The hall stands in the center of the eight hundred block of Commercial Street and is setback approximately 40 feet from the north curb at a slight incline on a simply landscaped lot. No known blueprints of the building exist.

The building's façade faces south and the main entrances can be accessed from Commercial Street via a cement walkway. The cement walkway is the full-width of the center section of the façade. The building sits at a very slight elevation and a set of five cement steps with a center metal handrail lead to the main walkway. These steps sit approximately 12 feet from the curb on the north side of Commercial Street. Flanking each side of the steps are platforms with cement bases. The bases are approximately 3 feet in diameter and have design elements which mimic other decorative features near the facade; however, they appear to be missing an urn or planter which should rest atop them. At the top of the steps, a flag pole mounted on a hexagon-shaped cement platform sits directly in the center of the walkway. A small brass plaque is mounted on the south side of the platform and reads, "In gratitude to the VFW Lt. Jared Fox Jackson Post No. 1175 whose help made this new entrance possible 1967." Two medium-sized apple trees which flanked the entrance sidewalk were recently removed. However, their stumps are ground level and visible from the walkway. Shrubbery and flower beds are located in an asymmetrical fashion along the façade. An Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad commemorative brass bell sits atop a cement square platform near the southeast corner of the façade. A brass marker on the south side of the platform reads, "This marker commemorates the founding of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway in Atchison, Kansas: September 17 – 1860." This is not the original location of the bell and plaque. A standard-sized sidewalk runs parallel to the façade and intersects the main entrance walkway in a T-fashion. Currently, the west side of this sidewalk is being reconfigured to offer handicap accessibility to the hall's main entrance. Two large cement urns with Art Deco design elements flank the front entrance. These urns are approximately 6 feet in height and 4 feet in diameter and are in their original location. On the east and west side of the property lines, yellow brick retaining walls flank the building. The east side retaining wall is L-shaped and attaches to the east wall of the structure. The west side retaining wall is an I-shaped free standing design; it does not attach to the building. Several bricks in the west side retaining wall are visibly marked with the following words, "Steel – Clay – Molding – Chicago." The area surrounding the hall is dominated by late 19th and early 20th century utilitarian, commercial buildings.

Memorial Hall is a brick building with a concrete foundation and a simple flat asphalt roof with eaves. Designed in the Neo-classical style, it has a full-height porch supported by classical columns, and the façade shows symmetrically balanced windows and entrance doors. The yellow

brick building is detailed with simplistic Neo-classical and Art Deco inspired design elements. Today, Memorial Hall retains much of its architectural integrity.

Exterior

The Commercial Street façade faces south and is three units wide. The first story is dominated by four bays, three sets of entrance doors and two large white concrete block pedimented display areas. Two bays with simple keystones flank each side of the main entrance and the bays are modestly decorated with surrounds of white concrete block. The current windows are not original to the structure and were added in c. 1967. All the windows throughout the structure are encased in aluminum surrounds and employ an awning sash operation. Their configuration is commercial in nature. Three main entrance doors allow access to the building and are protected by a full-height entry porch which is both recessed into the body of the structure and extended outward. Two colossal, yet simple, Ionic columns of white concrete block support the porch and dominate the entrance. The entrance doors and transoms are not original to the building. Each set of double entrance doors are commercial glass doors with aluminum surrounds. A full glass rectangular transom window sits atop each of the access doors. Three original light fixtures are encased in white cement block and sit directly above each of the transom windows. Several of the original glass globes are missing. Two large symmetrical display areas dominate the east and west side of the façade. Each area is constructed of white concrete block and is distinguished by a triangular pediment. The west display area houses a brass plaque which lists the Atchison County World War I soldiers who were killed in action. The plaque is prefaced with the following message, "Let us hold in grateful memory the Atchison County men who gave all for God, Country and Humanity in the World War 1917-1919." The east side display area is blank; it bears no plaque, marker or commemorative inscription. The second story is nine-bays wide; each bay has a simple decorative sill of white concrete block. The window configuration is symmetrical. A frieze band bears the name of the building directly below a classical cornice. The words, "Soldiers – And – Sailors – Memorial," are cut into white concrete block and are centered directly above the main entrance. Two identical laurel reliefs flank each side of the wording and add a decorative element to the simple, yet bold, lettering. In the very center of building's facade near the roof's edge sits an eagle relief which serves as the base for a flag pole. The flag pole is not currently used. This is an original design element of the building.

The east one-fourth of the roof's surface is dominated by a rectangular structure with a simple flat roof commonly known as the flyspace for the stage. The east wall of the structure is flush with the east end of the building. This structure sits directly over the stage area and is visible from the façade. The structure was built to accommodate necessary components of the stage. The yellow brick is mimicked in this structure. This feature is common and necessary for theaters and is tastefully incorporated into the overall design of the hall itself. An additional small rectangular structure was built directly in the center of the stage structure's roof. It is a small rectangular structure with a corrugated metal gabled roof. This structure is not visible from the façade; although, it is located at the highest elevation of the hall itself. It was constructed to

house stage equipment. This structure has not been accessed for a number of years. It is unknown if the equipment is still operational.

The east, west and north (rear) exterior walls are largely devoid of decorative architectural elements and are utilitarian in nature. The east and west walls are clad in yellow brick whereas the north (rear) wall is comprised of traditional red brick. The east wall has three large and one small window at the south end and a window as well as a boarded-over freight entrance and a double metal door backstage entrance at the north end. The freight entrance cannot be accessed from the ground level and is in poor repair. There are steps leading to the double metal door entrance; however, they are in poor repair. The double metal doors are not original to the structure. A simple chimney is visible from the very northeast corner of the building. The elements are simplistic and asymmetrical. The west wall has six windows, three double glass entrance doors at the south end – one from the office area and two from the lounge area – and an olive green freight "garage-type" door at the north end of the wall. This door is in poor repair and is not original to the structure. The north (rear) wall has eight windows and two entrance doors. A set of double glass entrance doors in the mid-section of the rear wall leads into the rear foyer. A single metal door at the east end of the wall is surrounded by a window. This door allows access to the workshop area backstage. This entrance way does not appear original to the building. An additional window area on the north (rear) has been bricked in. East and north (rear) walls are flanked by commercial alleyways which can accommodate vehicles.

Interior

The structure includes a partial basement below the backstage area, a main or ground floor and a second floor balcony area with two meeting rooms. The interior plan of Memorial Hall is dominated by a large central auditorium with stage at the east end. The auditorium is spacious and reaches the full height of the interior. The auditorium floor is laid with highly varnished, narrow matching boards. Sports boundary lines have been painted on the floor to accommodate athletic programs. The ceiling has been slightly lowered and is comprised of white rectangular synthetic tiles with metal supports in a pitched fashion. Retractable basketball goals are located at the east and west end of the arena. The lighting in the arena is utilitarian and not original to the building.

The stage area is the principle feature on the east end of the auditorium. The proscenium arch is very simple in design. A partial plywood wall has been constructed at the stage opening. An additional plywood wall has been constructed to enclose the front of the stage and the orchestra pit. These plywood walls compromise the integrity of the stage area; however, they are removable features. The area behind the stage is without decorative elements and is typical of all backstage areas.

Beneath the balcony on the south side, three main double entrance doors lead to the main foyer. The main foyer is without significant adornment. Two identical stairways sit on either side of the

main entrance doors and allow access to the second floor balcony seating area. A men's restroom is located at the southeast side of the main foyer. A hat and coat check area to the west side of the men's restroom is now used to store cleaning supplies. The original hat and coat check window has been removed and sheet-rocked over. A woman's restroom is located on the southwest side of the foyer. The fixtures in the restrooms are not original to the structure. In the southeast corner of the building, a modest sized square room exists which allows access to the stage and the partial basement. It is currently used for storage and a break room. In the southwest corner of the building, a modest sized square room exists which currently houses roller skates.

Beneath the balcony on the north side, six wooden slat "garage-type" doors lead into a rear foyer. The doors are painted white on the interior side; however, most retain their original varnished appearance on the foyer side. Much of the original hardware on the doors is also intact. A large outside entrance area near the northwest corner of the building allows access into the foyer and is wide enough to accommodate cars, trucks, and farm implements and equipment. This foyer has never been used for public admission but rather as a right of entry area for vendors, merchants, and dealers with large display items; therefore, the foyer is very simple and without significant architectural detailing. Today, this foyer houses some athletic equipment. A locker and dressing room is located near the east end of the foyer.

Beneath the balcony on the west side, six wooden slat "garage-type" doors lead into the lounge area. Again, the doors are painted white on the interior side; however, most retain their original varnished appearance on the foyer side. Much of the original hardware on the doors also remains intact. The lounge area is very institutional. Two sets of double glass doors lead to the west side of the building. An additional stairway in the northwest area of the lounge leads to the balcony. The Atchison Recreation Commission office is located to the south of the lounge and is accessed via a door near the southwest corner of the auditorium. The office space consists of a small reception area which accommodates two desks, an open closet space which houses office supplies and office equipment, and a room at the south end of the space which serves as the recreation director's office. The entire office space has generic lowered ceilings and is the only air-conditioned space in the building. This space does not retain any original character; remodeling occurred c. 1967.

A balcony rises in tiers with cement bench seating on the north, south and west sides of the auditorium. This balcony area constitutes the second floor of the structure. Painted wooden individual stadium seats sit atop the cement benches on the south side of the auditorium in much the same fashion as the original seats. It is unknown when the original seats were removed. Sets of concrete steps are symmetrical placed in the balcony area to allow access to the highest point. This area is not handicap accessible.

Two balcony rooms (originally used as meeting rooms for the local "colored" and "white"

American Legion posts) sit in the upper northeast and southeast corners of the building and flank the stage. These rooms are accessed via a set of steps which run flush with the east wall of the building. Due to their location in the uppermost recesses of the east wall, they are often referred to as the "third-floor meeting rooms." The meeting rooms have not been used for a number of years and are in significant disrepair; regardless, they retain much of their original flooring, hardware, and woodwork. The southeast meeting room still contains a pressed red brick fireplace with a brass plaque which pays tribute to a local soldier who died in World War I. The northeast meeting room's fireplace was removed sometime ago.

A partial basement exists under the stage area and contains several rooms which are currently used for storage. Originally, this area was constructed to house the dressing rooms underneath the stage. A boiler room and coal room also exist in the basement area near the northeast corner of the building.

The building remains in a good state of preservation, and has undergone relatively few changes since its construction. No major additions have been made to the building since its construction. Exterior renovations include major landscaping changes to the main entrance, and removal of original doors and windows c. 1967 as well as the addition of a handicapped-accessible ramp c. August, 2006.

Interior alterations have been largely confined to the auditorium area. The main interior modifications include the false plywood walls in the orchestra pit and at the stage entrance, the lowered ceilings in the auditorium, renovations of the first floor restrooms, and the removal of original stadium seating. It is remarkable that the hall contains many of its original light fixtures especially in the foyer, corridor, and balcony. These recent changes have not severely altered the integrity of the building and most can be reversed.

Atchison History

Atchison is picturesquely located on hills and bluffs overlooking the Missouri River in the northeast corner of Kansas. The metropolitan areas of Kansas City, Topeka, and St. Joseph, Mo. are within an hour's drive.

Approximately 300 years ago, the area of present-day Atchison was home to the Kansa Indians. Their abandoned village was noted by Lewis and Clark when they explored the area on July 4, 1804. Fifty years after Lewis and Clark's visit, the Kansas Territory was opened and Atchison was one of its first settlements. On July 20, 1854, men from Platte City, Missouri, crossed the Missouri River and staked out a town site they named for David Rice Atchison, a noted Missouri senator. Atchison was incorporated on August 30, 1855, by a Special Act of the Territorial Legislature under Governor Wilson Shannon, and on February 12, 1858, the city of Atchison was incorporated under Governor Robert J. Walker. The town's early history includes a bitter rivalry between abolitionists and Missouri pro-slavery advocates. Atchison was made a city of first class on March 14, 1881, by a proclamation issued by Governor John P. St. John. Samuel C. Pomeroy was a prominent Free State settler and was the first mayor of Atchison.[1]

Atchison flourished as a leading commercial and transportation center because of it advantageous geographic location. The city had one of the best steamboat landings on the Missouri River and the wagon roads west were approximately 20 miles further inland than other Missouri river towns.

The boom years for Atchison occurred between 1870 and 1900, when major industries were established, large wholesale firms were developed and the commercial life of Atchison reached its peak. Atchison was one of the first banking centers in the state. Industries grew, along with the railroads, dealing in grains and milling, lumber and manufacturing.[2]

One of the oldest established towns in Kansas, Atchison has played host in pioneer days to such notables as Abraham Lincoln, Mark Twain, Horace Greeley and countless others. It was the birthplace of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad, and the starting places for some of America's greatest railroad leaders. Industrialists, agriculturalists, entrepreneurs, writers, journalists, musicians, churchmen and statesmen have resided in

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[1] *Atchison Centennial Souvenir*, p. 5-10.
[2] *Atchison Centennial Souvenir*, p. 5-10.

this historic community.[3]

Statement of Significance
Atchison County Memorial Hall (c. 1922) is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment and Recreation and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, as an example of a public building built in the Neo-classical architectural style. The period of significance is c. 1922-1956.

Entertainment/Recreation
The dedication of Atchison County Memorial Hall was held on Sunday, April 23, 1922. From opening day forward, the headliners drew large crowds. The first several events included a local American Legion minstrel show, a Sunday school convention lasting three days, and a health show with displays, booths, and live entertainment lasting five days.[4] On May 18, 1922, Madame Ernestine Schumann-Heink (1861-1936) became the first professional artist to appear at Atchison County Memorial Hall. During her best years, from 1898 to 1903, Schumann-Heink was hailed as "the world's greatest contralto." However, her claim to fame extended beyond this period. By singing at war rallies, bond drives, benefits for veterans, concerts for children and people who were destitute, she won the admiration of people who did not attend operas and concerts.[5] The standing room only crowd at her Atchison County Memorial Hall performance was estimated at approximately 2,500 people.[6]

A variety of traveling theater companies played at Atchison County Memorial Hall during the 1920s and 1930s. The management of Atchison County Memorial Hall contracted with the well-known New York based theatrical booking agencies of Klaw & Erlanger and the Shubert Brothers thereby securing a number of the best theatrical attractions on the road. Some of the most popular and important performers of the day appeared on the stage of Atchison County Memorial Hall.[7] On Thanksgiving Day in 1922, *Stetson's Uncle Tom's Cabin* played at Atchison County Memorial Hall for a matinee and evening

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[3] *Atchison Centennial Souvenir*, p. 5-10.
[4] Claude Warner, "Brief History of Memorial Hall," p. 4-5.
[5] Henry Earl Jones, "Schumann-Heink, Ernestine," A Concise Dictionary of Singers. (New York, 1962), p. 393.
[6] Warner, p. 5.
[5] Warner, p. 6.
[6] *Atchison Daily Globe*, November 24, 1922, p. 4.
[7] Wayne Ewley, "Tom Shows," Theatrical Stories. (Philadelphia, 1948), p. 465-499.
[8] Warner, p.6.

performance.[8] The Stetson Theatrical Group toured the United States from 1880 through 1929 doing "Tom Shows."[9] This rare treat for the Atchison community was a huge success, and a total of 2,713 individuals observed the play.[10]

Throughout the years, Memorial Hall has been used for numerous theatrical events, conventions, dances, basketball games, commencement exercises, etc. Charles Curtis, 31st Vice-President of the United States (1929-1933), and aviator Amelia Earhart (1897-1937) are among the noted Kansas celebrities who have appeared at the hall. Two Golden Glove boxing tournaments have been held at the hall. A number of famous musicians have also appeared at the hall including Harry James, Pee Wee Erwin, Ike and Tina Turner.

Meetings rooms for both the "white" and "colored" American Legion posts were once located in the building. The "white" and "colored" American Legion posts were separate entities and were housed in separate meeting rooms within the hall itself. Given the time period, it is still quite remarkable the post meeting rooms were within the confines of the same building. According to Margie Thibault of the Kansas American Legion, "Eighty years ago, the majority, if not all, of the 'Colored Posts' were in separate locations from the 'White Posts.' If they were located in the same building, it would have been very unusual."[11]

Today, the building serves as headquarters for the Atchison Recreation Commission offices. Sporting events, roller skating, and early morning walkers continue to use the building on a regular basis.

Atchison County Memorial Hall has served the citizens of Atchison County as a center of social activity and cultural heritage since its construction in c. 1922. The building is a visible and recognized feature of the Atchison County and continues to serve as a meeting place for recreational activities. Therefore, the building is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A.

Architecture

The Atchison County Memorial Hall is a fine modest example of the Neo-classical style architecture. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a return to classical design

[11] Margie Thibault, E Mail dated July 17, 2006.

Atchison County Memorial Hall validates the Neo-classical style and retains much of its integrity in design, materials, and workmanship. The hall is a tangible reflection of World War I's impact on America. Therefore, the building is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C.

Building History

During its regular 1919 legislative session, Kansas passed a law permitting the erection of memorial buildings. The law authorized and empowered the counties and cities of Kansas to vote bonds or incur indebtedness for the erection of memorials to commemorate the valorous achievements of soldiers, sailors, and Marines who entered the service of the United States. In late March of 1919, the movement to erect halls as memorials to soldiers and sailors of World War I was spreading rapidly throughout Kansas. Walter Burr, director of the Rural Service Department, Kansas State Agricultural College in Manhattan, Kansas was inundated with requests for building suggestions, plans, and specifications. Mr. Burr offered the following sentiments,

> The community house movement, where properly organized, is to be highly commended. These social service stations are certainly much better as memorials than marble shafts would be. It has been feared by some that there is danger in this movement in that it will proceed as a fad and result in the erection of poorly equipped, mismanaged buildings, which will be perpetual problems in the communities when the war enthusiasm has passed. Such a calamity can be avoided by following certain methods in financing erection, and maintaining of these buildings. In the average Kansas community the building should be financed on the taxation basis. This is the only democratic way to handle community enterprise. It is unfair to place the burden of financing such an institution upon the shoulder of a few enterprising citizens who might donate the money.[15]

Atchison Daily Globe, the city's local newspaper, began carrying articles in early April of 1919 promoting the need for a large hall. The general plan of the building itself was to construct an auditorium or convention hall to accommodate automobile shows, livestock exhibits, and farm products. The building was to house a large stage to accommodate any type of entertainment or community gathering. The *Atchison Daily Globe* articles were

[15] *Atchison Daily Globe*, April 4, 1919, p.7.

more than favorable, and at almost any juncture the newspaper attempted to convince the farmers in the county of the dire need for such a structure.

In mid-April of 1919, petitions were circulated among voters of Atchison County. These petitions were to secure a sufficient number of names as required by law to call for an election for the purpose of erecting a memorial to the soldiers and sailors of the county. The *Atchison Daily Globe* reported that public sentiment was overwhelmingly in favor of Memorial Hall.

The style of architecture and plans for general construction were to be decided upon by a large committee representing the city and county, appointed with approval by the Atchison County commissioners. Mr. Leo Nusbaum was appointed chairman of the Memorial Hall Committee. The 1919 estimated cost to build the hall was between $70,000 –$95,000. The proposed method of payment was a levy of one mil to be made the first year and an additional levy to be made the second year to defray the entire cost. In this manner, without becoming a burden or hardship to the taxpayers of Atchison County, the building would be paid for in a period of two years. Three local sites were favored.

The plan to erect a memorial hall was to be voted upon on June 10, 1919. However, the election was postponed by Atchison County Attorney Charles T. Gundy due to a clerical error in the Kansas Statutes books. Mr. Gundy was reported as saying the following, "The responsibility of the postponement of the election to a later date rests entirely with employes (sic) of the state house in Topeka, who permitted the wrong bill to be published in the official state paper instead of the real law, which will not become effective until in appears in the statute book. The statutes of the 1919 legislature probably will be off the press June 10, and the county commissioners today adjourned until June 11, in order to act promptly in calling another election."[16]

The *Atchison Daily Globe* of June 23, 1919 reported memorial hall petitions were again being circulated asking county commissioners to call an election to decide upon the building of memorial hall. The Memorial Hall committee was in receipt of several very strong letters from soldiers who had been overseas, praising the citizens of Atchison for their intentions to erect a Memorial Hall.

On July 19, 1919, the *Atchison Daily Globe* published the following letter from Rev.

[16] *Atchison Daily Globe*, June 5, 1919, p. 7.

Jesse M. Bader, a former Atchison Christian Church pastor who was currently serving as pastor of a large Christian Church in Kansas City.

> I have always been most anxious about having some kind of a community building for Atchison through which Atchison can more fully express her civic and community life. If there is one thing over another which Atchison needs, it is a memorial hall. This sort of a building will be a great stimulus for the growth of the community life of the county. It will furnish the opportunity for the citizens to know and understand one another better. The Memorial hall idea is a most splendid thing. The community should be anxious to do something that will do honor to these magnificent boys who answered the country's call. A Memorial hall such as you plan will not only be a memorial but also a practical way of expressing our feelings toward them.[17]

Several days prior to the July 29th election, the *Atchison Daily Globe* informed its readers that opponents of the hall were spreading erroneous reports of the cost to taxpayers. The Memorial Hall committee had been advised that "colored" voters were dubious about their support due to the taxation issues and added financial burden. Interestingly, Memorial Hall committee members were approached by influential "colored" citizens and were assured that the "colored" voters of the city and county would back the Memorial Hall proposition.

The July 30, 1919 edition of the *Atchison Daily Globe* headline boasted, "Memorial Hall Bonds Carried." An overwhelming vote in favor of the Memorial hall bonds in the city offset an almost solid vote against the proposition in the rural precincts. The large vote against Memorial Hall outside the city was not believed to be the result of antagonism to the tribute suggested to Atchison County soldier and sailors, but rather as the result of misunderstandings, opposition to increased taxes and propaganda by certain politicians.

According to figures made public on August 8, 1919 by the War Camp Community Service, plans to erect war memorials in the form of buildings to be used as social center had been decided in 236 cities, towns, and villages across the United States. The organization conducted a country-wide campaign for community memorials through its bureau of memorial buildings.[18]

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[17] *Atchison Daily Globe*, July 19, 1919, p. 5.

Atchison County Commissioners sold Memorial Hall bonds to the Brown-Crummer Company of Wichita, Kansas on August 8, 1919. The concern had handled Atchison city bonds for a number of years. The issue totaled $125,000 and bore 4 ¾%. They were bought at par by the Wichita company. The company bore the entire expense of legal services, printing registration fees and other items.

On September 9, 1919, the *Atchison Daily Globe* informed readers that Memorial Hall would be constructed on the north side of Commercial Street between Eight and Ninth Streets. It was to occupy lots that were currently vacant. The site is 190 feet wide and 125 feet deep. Plans for Memorial Hall propose the building to be 110 feet wide 160 feet deep. Eight lots were purchased for $16,000 on October 16, 1919.

Rudolph Meier of St. Joseph, Missouri, a former Atchison resident, was hired as the architect and T. H. Johns, an Atchison resident, as the builder. Mr. Johns was a prolific Atchison builder and had previously constructed several large structures in Atchison. Extant structures include the Atchison United Methodist Church building on Kansas Avenue and the vacant Ford Motor Company building on the south side of Commercial Street across from Atchison County Memorial Hall.

Work began on the building on April 20, 1920; however, building was ceased when a committee of farmers sought an injunction to enjoin the county commissioners from expending more than $125,000 on the construction of Memorial Hall. The temporary injunction was denied in late May and construction was resumed. On November 11, 1920, the cornerstone of the building was laid.

By June 15, 1921 an additional $75,000 was needed to complete the building. A campaign to secure signatures of 51% of the voters of city and county, authorizing the county commissioners to issue additional bonds for the completion of Memorial Hall was organized. The campaign was successful and Memorial was finally completed by April of 1922 at a total cost of $197,447. The dedication and opening day ceremony on April 23, 1922 was a grand affair.

Atchison County Memorial Hall is significant as a symbol of patriotism that predominated in communities throughout the United States after World War I. The building is a testimony to the lengths the citizens of Atchison County went to, to provided

[18] *Atchison Daily Globe*, July 19, 1919, p. 5.

comfort and entertainment as well as to preserve the original charge, emotion, and conviction that went into the work of remem-bering the war and its victims. The building has local cultural significance as a memorial to the soldiers who died in the Great War. The large robust structure is symbolic of World War I's impact on America.

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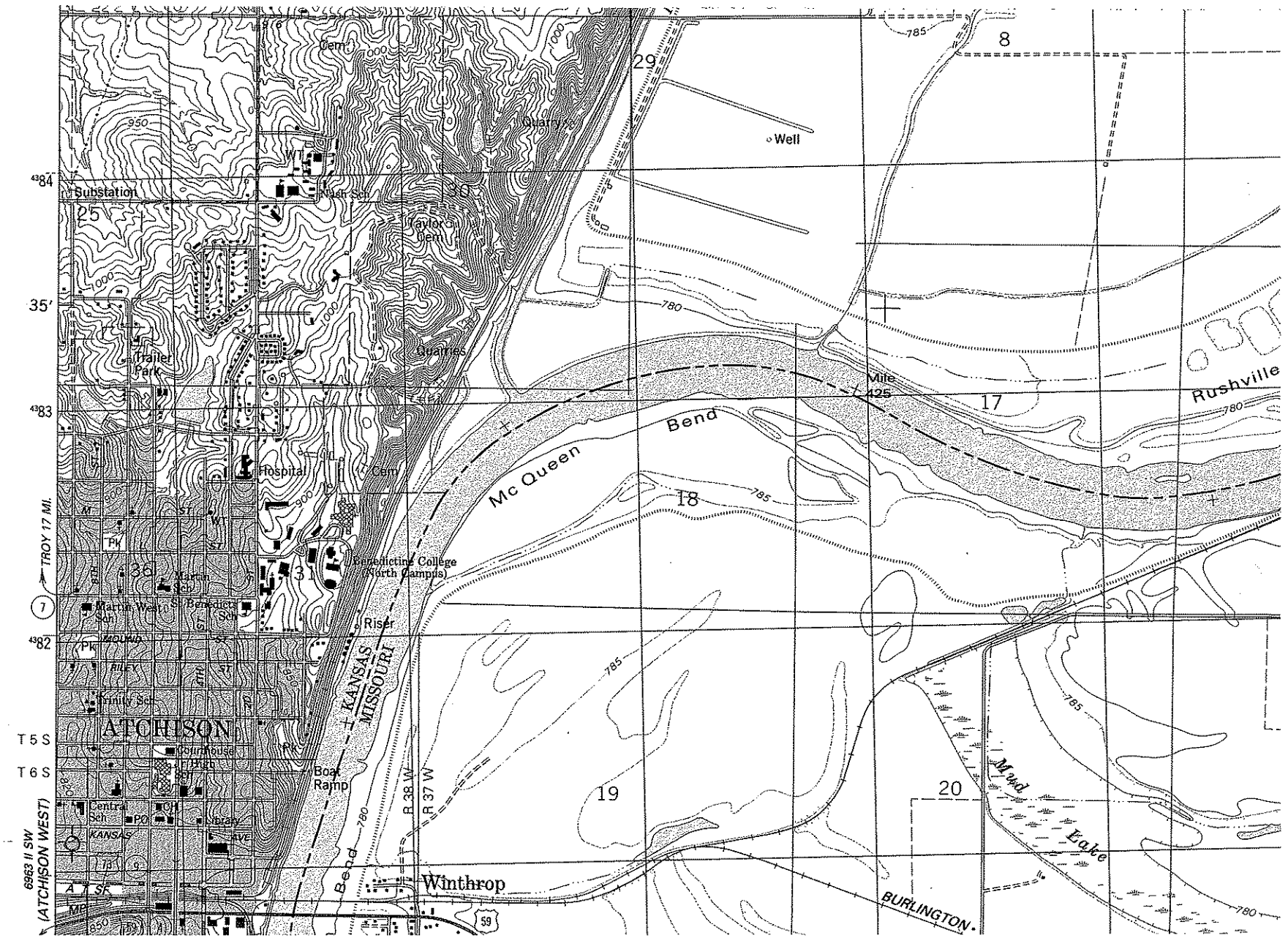
PHOTOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The following information is consistent for all photographs:

Property: Atchison County Memorial Hall
Location: Atchison, Atchison County, KS
Photographer: Sarah J. Martin
Date: 5 October 2006
Digital photographs on file at the Kansas State Historical Society

Photo #1:	South (front) elevation, view from the south
Photo #2:	Southeast corner, view from the southeast
Photo #3:	Northeast corner, view from the northeast
Photo #4:	Northwest corner, view from the northwest
Photo #5:	Main Lobby at South entrance, view from the southwest
Photo #6:	Auditorium facing east, view from the west
Photo #7:	Auditorium, facing east, view from the west balcony
Photo #8:	Auditorium balcony seating, view from the west
Photo #9:	Interior light fixture, Main Lobby
Photo #10:	Third floor American Legion Room, view from the east
Photo #11:	Auditorium door, view from the north
Photo #12:	South (front) elevation, memorial plaque, view from the south



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