NPS Form 10-900
Oct. 1990

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER
LISTED

JUN 7 2006

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

Historic name Lincoln School

Other name/site number 005-0260-0903

2. Location

Street & number 801 Division St. ☐ not for publication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 4/21/06

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting official /Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I herby certify that the property is — Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

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

Lincoln School
Name of Property

Atchison Co., Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [x] private
- [ ] 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.)

Historic Public Schools of Kansas

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

Education: School

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Social: Meeting Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Gothic Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Brick
Walls: Brick

Roof: Asphalt

Other:

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

Lincoln School
Name of Property

Atchison Co., Kansas
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

- [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.
- [ ] **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 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 it 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

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Period of Significance

1921-1955

Significant Dates

1921

1937

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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:

Lincoln School
Name of Property

Atchison Co., Kansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.6

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	317600	4382150
2			
3			
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Angela Tyler; edited by Jim Sherow

Organization _____ Date April 14, 2004

Street & number 1211 M Street Telephone _____

City or town Atchison State Kansas 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 SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Name Boys & Girls Club of Atchison, Inc./Lincoln School Alumni Association c/o Robert Easley

Street & number 7032 Lakeshore Drive Telephone _____

City or town Kansas City State MO Zip code 64113

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

Description

Summary

Lincoln School (c. 1921, 1937) is located at 801 Division Street in Atchison, KS. The school was built in 1921 and a gymnasium/auditorium with a stage was added in 1937. The L-shaped, three-story brick building maintains a northern façade orientation. A flat roof covers the building, which stands on an above-grade basement with several sub-basement levels below it. The school is a simple brick design with most ornamentation provided by variations in the brickwork in the exterior walls. The school entrances had some ornamentation with the use of limestone in the surrounds as well as in the carved nameplate above the east side entrance reading "Lincoln School."

Elaboration

Classrooms were located on the second and third floors with bathrooms, kitchen and mechanical space in the first floor level. The original design of the school is said to have been four classrooms each on the second and third floors, with office, nurse and storage on the third floor and a large room on the second floor. The large room is thought to have been the original auditorium space, but in later years was used for a library and special education rooms. The 1921 auditorium space was inadequate for a school this size.

The 1937 gymnasium/auditorium had seating on one side of the gym with a balcony above. The gym was sized to accommodate a full-size basketball court and a stage with back-stage area. The 1937 building is attached to the west side of the 1921 building with access through the second floor large room, which would have been the auditorium prior to the addition. The 1937 addition was built with a new exterior entrance from the north side to allow patrons to enter next to a ticket booth and go directly to the built in seats.

The exterior of the 1937 addition emulated the design of the 1921 building with the addition of a tower built as half an octagon with castellations on the top of the entrance structure and a limestone surround built with the entry in a Gothic Revival-style arch, also of limestone. The remainder of the building is a rectangular brick design with the same, minimal, brick ornamentation as the 1921 building.

The 1921 portion of the school has three main entrances, one each on the north, east and south sides. The north entrance rises four steps to the exterior door, the east side three steps, and the south side five steps. Each of these entrances opens onto a stairway. There is also an entrance on the north side that leads to the basement level, this entrance was added in the 1970s.

The main classrooms, four each on the second and third floor remain in virtually the same condition as when the school was built, retaining the original oak woodwork and flooring (now covered by carpet). These classrooms on the corners of the original building have not been divided or altered in size or function. Some features such as the original slate blackboard have been covered by modern blackboards and the coat closets with doors that slide up into the wall above have been blocked to keep doors open, but appear to have all parts in place with some still in functional condition.

Through the years after 1937 the building received minor alterations, with some rooms being divided for different uses, the office space moving to a new location on the third floor, a library and computer room dividing up the original auditorium space and glass walls installed in the second floor entry to provide a weather break from the side entrances along the stairwells. Other changes include various fire safety and ADA alterations, replacement of the original tall windows with shorter windows, and infill of the top portions of the banks of windows.

Statement of Significance

Summary

The Lincoln School is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as part of the *Historic Public Schools of Kansas* MPS under Criterion A for its historical association with events that have made a significant contribution to the history school desegregation during the 1950s. The Lincoln School is the last extant public building in Atchison, Kansas, that was built for and served the African American community. This property is significant for two primary reasons. The first is because of its role in the education of the African American community for 34 years. The second is for its role as the central hub of the drive to integrate the city school system during the same time period the *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* Supreme Court case mandated the end of segregation in the nation. In fact, the people in Atchison were well on they way to integrate their schools before Topeka, and the people associated with the integration movements in both cities knew each other and their efforts. Located on the corner of Eighth and Division Streets in Atchison, Kansas, Lincoln School was the hub of the African American community from 1921 to 1955 and to this day it stands as a touchstone for the thousands of students who grew up, received their education, and still return to visit the former school building.

History

As the hub of the African American community in Atchison, Lincoln School was surrounded by churches, minority owned businesses, and homes of much of the community served by the school. The importance of the school is noted by many of the graduates who to this day credit the education received as a source of self-worth and skills that enabled them to lead successful lives. Reunions of the Lincoln School Alumni have drawn hundreds of former students back to the community since the group's initial reunion in 1992.

Lincoln School was also the focus of the move to integrate the school system in Atchison, and as such, was thoroughly a part of the broader national effort to end segregation in the United States. In the early 1950s, behind the scenes collaborative work of white and black clergy in the city laid a base for school integration. Concurrently, the Atchison school board paid close attention to the cases arguing for the end of segregation in nearby Topeka and across the country. The Atchison Board of Education began action to accomplish integration before the Supreme Court announced its decision in the case of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*, having already integrated grades 9-12 (high school grades were integrated from the beginning of public education in Atchison, Kansas; however activities were segregated) and moving to integrate the 8th grade in 1952-1953 school year and the 7th grade in the 1953-1954 school year.

The integration moves in Atchison helped lead the way in Kansas and nine days after the Topeka Board of Education formally voted to end segregation in the schools the Atchison Board of Education followed suit. By May 1954 when the Supreme Court handed down its ruling on *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*, Atchison was well on the road to full integration. The city of Atchison was among the first, if not the first community in Kansas, to accomplish full integration of its city school system, completing integration at all grade levels with the start of classes September 1955.

The drive toward integration gained momentum with the building of Lincoln School in 1921. It was the first and only modern educational facility built especially for the education of African American students in Atchison. Reflective of segregationist policies in the United States, prior to the construction of Lincoln School, African American students were relegated to outdated buildings, either converted for their use or buildings that had been replaced by new, modern buildings, for the white students in the Atchison school district. The Lincoln School name had been used previously for an African American school building, that structure was a simple 6-room wood frame building with outdoor toilets and no running water.

Amazingly in 1919, when the the Klu Klux Klan began exerting a powerful political force in the nation and Kansas, the Atchison Board of Education called for a bond issue election to build a new school, citing the problems with the existing school. Mr. Mize, board member, proposed a resolution for the bond election that described the needs of the African American community, "Whereas: The present colored school located at 8th and Atchison streets, known as the Lincoln School, is unsafe, unsanitary, old, inadequate and unfit to be used longer for school purposes, and the erection of a new building for the colored pupils of Atchison is an absolute necessity..." The proposal detailed other needs of the school district to be included in the bond election including the cost for the building of Lincoln School of $60,000.

In 1921 the new Lincoln School would begin to draw the African American community together. Even before students moved into the new school its effect was being seen as parents formed the first PTA in March of 1921.

> *The Atchison Daily Globe in March 1921*
> *"A Negro Parent-Teacher Association was organized with Mrs. Jerry Shackelford president and Prof. W. E. Gray vice president."*

This organization would play a large role in the school and would eventually be the organization to give voice to the African American community's desires to end segregation in the school system.

When Lincoln School opened, W. E. Gray was the principal and 8th grade teacher. Some other teachers from newspaper reports of the time include: Miss Carrie Kerford- first and second grades, Miss

Marguerite Brandon – third grade. In the first year the new school saw an enrollment of 93 boys and 93 girls. The 186 African American students made up 17% of the 1,101 total grade school age students in Atchison's schools.

The move to the new school also meant transportation would be supplied to students from south Atchison to Lincoln School. *The Atchison Daily Globe* reported the following on Sept. 8, 1921.

> *To Haul Colored Pupils*
> *W. H. Henderson, colored, who has been awarded the contract by the board of education for hauling pupils of the first three grades of the Lincoln school, who live in South Atchison, to and from the school, has established the following schedule:*
> *Mr. Henderson will make two trips each morning to take the pupils to school. The first trip will start at the Christie store, Sixth and U Streets at 8:20 each morning. From there, Mr. Henderson will drive north on Sixth street to the grocery store at Sixth and Utah avenue, where he will pick up several pupils who live in that vicinity. From there he will drive north to the new Lincoln building, without stopping.*
> *The second trip will commence at Sixth and U streets at 8:40, and follow the same route as the first trip.*
>
> *All pupils who will be transported by Mr. Henderson must meet at one of these two points. Mrs. Kerford, a teacher in the Lincoln school, will have charge of the pupils, and will assign those who are to go on the first or second trips. Pupils should see or call her before Monday, for these assignments.*
> *H. P. Study, Superintendent of Schools*
>
> *The Lincoln School project was to "effect alterations in the present Lincoln School building. The gymnasium and auditorium, which have been inadequate in the past, will be enlarged and remodeled at Lincoln School."*

In 1937 the only major modification of the school was made when the gymnasium, seating and stage were added to the west side of the school. As in so many other cities throughout the United States, African Americans found themselves the beneficiaries of New Deal programs, which was crucially important in aligning African American voters with the Democratic Party. The gymnasium seating and stage project was funded jointly by the local school district and the PWA (Public Works Administration). The Aug. 25, 1937 *Atchison Daily Globe* noted the total for the two projects (Central School and Lincoln School alterations) was $79,000 from the school district and $65,000 from the PWA.

Lincoln School is still much as it was when the main construction projects of 1921 and 1937 built the structure. The building itself is much the same but the time period that this building embodies has now past and has left its indelible mark on Atchison as well as communities across the nation. Lincoln School is one of the many segregated schools that tell the story of segregation in the United States and the struggle for equal educational opportunity. Thousands of students attended, learned, and grew to adulthood in Lincoln School. Also, thousands of parents became involved in their community and in the struggle for equal opportunity because of the activities that centered in Lincoln School.

Atchison's public schools were segregated only up through the 8th grade however high school students, while allowed to attend the same school as their white counterparts, were not allowed to take part in activities and only allowed to participate in certain athletic teams.

Lincoln School not only served as the center for the education and community of grade-school students, but also as the center for high school age athletics and activities, such as the prom and other school events.

An example of the philosophy that was pervasive in the school came from 1947 Principal Evelyn Weaver (Harper) in an administrative bulletin dated Sept. 2, 1947.

"We must seek the well-balanced, rich personality development of the whole child – the growth of the whole child, physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual – not in isolation, but as closely related avenues of growth toward enriched life for individuals and for society."

The philosophy of the school as a part of the greater community and as an instrument of change was also echoed in the first *Lincoln Star* dated August 27, 1947.

> *Education Responsibility*
> *The educational responsibility of the child, or youth, lies with the total community. Learning takes place not only in the classroom, but in the home, church, the neighborhood, and every nook and cranny where the child comes in contact with his environment. Education is, therefore, not only a product of books and of precepts stemming from teachers, but is a product of the newspapers, the radio, the movies, the sermon, the gang, the neighborhood, the streets, and every other contact.*
>
> *Recognizing the importance of this great responsibility, parents, ministers, teachers, and every member of the community should mobilize to make articulate public support for a better way of life – a better school; - a better community, - providing every opportunity for a well-balanced development of the various phases of child growth simultaneously and*

progressively toward a complete human being worthy of a place in the onward march of human progress.

Starting in 1947 through the end of segregation Principal Evelyn Harper promoted many programs that would facilitate the later integration of the schools. The continuing Lincoln School PTA met monthly, students formed a student council, and the *Lincoln Star* was started with classroom reporters making regular reports. Along with these changes the mandated involvement of all teachers with various activities helped promote the school as the center of the community.

Lincoln School was the site of piano recitals, dance programs, and an operetta. The students took part in a school banking program that promoted "thrift" with deposits held in the Exchange National Bank and allowed children to save and only withdraw their savings just before Christmas. Clubs and activities were formed, including camera club, majorettes, youth football and radio clubs according to the 1951 *Lincoln Star* yearbook.

The Lincoln Kittens were formed around 1927, the school basketball team included programs for Lincoln School age students but also for high school students, who were not allowed to play on the Atchison High School team, in spite of the high school being integrated from 9th through 12th grades.

Photographs of the time show the Kittens teams as Kansas state high school champions in 1936 and 1945. Photographs reproduced in the Lincoln School reunion book in 1992 show the teams in the Lincoln school gym and posing with trophies in front of the school entrance. In addition to Lincoln School giving high school students the opportunity to participate in basketball the school also gave African American students the chance to attend a prom, something they were not allowed to attend at Atchison High School prior to 1955.

According to Elizabeth Thompson, Atchison resident, as quoted in the Atchison Daily Globe on Feb. 22, 2003, "black students did not get to go to prom. They had their own at Lincoln School for ninth through 11th grade students."

Lincoln School is significant because it tells the story of generations of African American students in Atchison, Kansas, and how they lived in the days of segregated schools, but it is also significant because of the central role the school held during the move to integrate and give equal educational opportunities to all students in Atchison. In this respect, this school is one important symbol of the broader national trend to integrate public schools, and more than this, it represents a successful effort of African Americans and Euro Americans to unite on this issue.

The 1952-1953 school year saw 8th grade students from Lincoln School integrated into the Atchison High School and the following year, 1953-1954, the 7th grade followed suit. With these actions the

junior high and high school levels were now integrated leaving only the grade school ages in segregated schools.

Atchison was moving ahead before the *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* decision was handed down. The Sept. 13, 1953 *Atchison Daily Globe* stated

> *Atchison's plan to end segregation has attracted considerable attention over the state. Recently Topeka voted to end segregation 'as soon as practicable.' Leavenworth presently is discussing the situation there and reportedly is 'making studies.'"*

The Atchison Board of Education had been preparing for this action for two years and in a special Saturday morning meeting, Sept. 12, 1953, they passed a resolution to end segregation in the city school system. Citing the agenda of the U. S. Supreme Court and the improvement of attitudes about integration, the board passed a resolution and began the final steps to end the long era of segregation.

The resolution and statement read:

> *"That the plan of abolition of segregation in the public schools of Atchison heretofore established by the board, which has been effected in grades seven through 12, be intensified so as to complete the plan throughout grades one to six as soon as practicable."*

Moreover, it took a lead from President Truman's policies to desegregate the armed forces.

> *"Tensions regarding segregation have gradually lessened. Sacrifices made by Negro youth in the armed forces during World War II and in Korea have earned the respect and grateful thinks of all Americans. The banning of segregation practices in the armed forces had led the way to the abandonment of similar practices in other fields of American life."*

Coming just a week after the formal announcement of a resolution by the Topeka Board of Education, Atchison's school board was watching actions in the area and was preparing itself to quickly move as they felt the time was right to accomplish integration with the least amount of problems.

Issues related to integration had been in the works for some time. The Lincoln School PTA had been addressing the issues they saw coming. Already in May of 1953 Rev. S. J. Holly, representing the African American community, had requested the cooperation of the school board in addressing the issue of the Lincoln School teachers when integration occurred.

In the Sept. 16, 1953 *Atchison Daily Globe*, Al Bennett in his "Here in Atchison" column answered an inquiry on the Lincoln teachers.

> *"If and when segregation is ended in the public grade school, there is no intention of the part of the school board to fire or dismiss the colored teachers at Lincoln School. Lincoln schoolteachers will be worked into the public school system wherever their services will be of maximum benefit. This hope is straight from the school board."*

This was important in winning support within the African American community, and Atchison stood out in not dismissing African American teachers once integration began. This was not the case in school districts such as Wichita. This was the first step in ending segregation at Lincoln School and was a relatively easy decision to make, according to the report "Segregation and Integration – Atchison Public Schools" there were three factors strongly influencing this decision: 1) all the African American teachers had been employed at Lincoln School six years or longer 2) all the Lincoln School teachers had bachelors degrees and three held masters degrees 3) conferences with the Atchison City Teachers Association indicated the teachers citywide would strongly protest any dismissal of the Lincoln staff based on race.

By May 17, 1954 when the U. S. Supreme Court decision on *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* was handed down, in which Chief Justice Warren said, "segregation has no place in education," Atchison public schools were already considering their options to accomplish integration in the city grade schools.

Less than a month later, the Atchison Board of Education set the date for the end of segregation, in the June 9, 1954 minutes of the Atchison Board of Education the following motion was made:

> *Motion was made by Mr. Thorning that segregation of Negro pupils be discontinued as of this date in all Atchison City School districts with the exception of the Martin-Lincoln district; thereby eliminating the necessity for operation of the school bus transporting pupils to Lincoln School; also, that beginning with the school term of September 1955, all segregation be ended in the Martin-Lincoln district under such a plan as will promote the best interests of the students in our school system. Motion seconded by Mr. Mize. The following vote was taken: Mr. Harold Martin – Aye, Mr. Rex Thorning – Aye, Mr. Chester Mize – Aye, Dr. Ira Morrison – Aye, Mr. Karl Root – Aye, Mr. Wm. Stanton, Jr. – Aye.*

The motion immediately following empowered Superintendent of Schools Charles W. Lafferty to transfer one or more of the teachers from Lincoln School to positions in schools throughout the school system. A few days later Mr. Printice Gary became the first Lincoln School teacher assigned to an integrated school. Gary was assigned to duty as a sixth grade instructor at Franklin and Washington Schools, serving as the principal's relief in each school (at the time each principal served as a classroom teacher for a half day and performed administrative duties the other half, requiring a relief teacher at each school).

After this meeting only the details of redistricting or re-aligning the grades served in the elementary schools remained to fully accomplish integration.

According to the *Atchison Daily Globe* of June 10, 1954, the actions taken June 9, 1954, may have even gone further if not for the fact that teaching contracts were already in place for the upcoming year making the final move to integrate the Lincoln-Martin School District more difficult because of the need to reassign teachers to even out school populations. The actions taken however did integrate Central Elementary School, Franklin Elementary School and Washington Elementary School with the anticipation of between 10-15 African American students enrolled in each school for the start of the 1954-1955 school year. This left the final year of Lincoln School with only 133 students. The 1954-1955 school year actually saw African American students in Franklin and Washington Schools but none enrolled at Central School.

Work to come up with a final plan for the integration of the Lincoln-Martin School District began immediately with the school board, the Lincoln PTA, and various community interests weighing in. Among the suggestions, petitions and plans submitted included, redistricting all five elementary school districts, dividing the Lincoln/Martin district and allow students to apply for admittance outside of the district, make Lincoln School grades four through six and Martin School kindergarten through third, make Lincoln School sixth grade only and redistrict the other four elementary schools, or use Lincoln as a junior high.

By November 30, 1954 the Board of Education was moving toward a final plan to end segregation. At that meeting Mr. Chester Mize moved that the Board of Education

> *"...go on record and that the public be notified that segregation be ended in the present Martin-Lincoln school district commencing September 1955; that the present Martin school building be renamed Martin East and the present Lincoln School building be named Martin West and that the Martin East Building be used for the lower grades and Martin West for the upper grades, the same to be determined by the class attendances and the facilities of the two buildings; that this action be not final but tentative only subject to final determination at the regular January meeting of the Board."*

The motion carried unanimously, but only after a two-hour discussion.

In January 1955 petitions were presented by the Martin School patrons and continuing discussion on how best to integrate the Lincoln School students fully into the school district resulted in the postponement of the final decision until the Feb. 1955 Board of Education meeting.

The Lincoln PTA hosted a "discussion meeting" on the issued Jan. 24, 1955 at Lincoln School. Roland Tyler, President of the Lincoln School PTA urged all interested parties to attend.

> *"The Martin School patrons and Globe representatives will be present. It is urgent that every Negro citizen attend this meeting," said Tyler in the letter to the community. "Integration is not limited to public schools only, but in every way of life. It is very vital to every citizen who believes in the Christian way of life with equal opportunities.*
>
> *"Please plan to attend the meeting Monday evening, whether you have children or not, so that you can be counted as desirous of integration. We need you! The grade having the largest number of parents and patrons attending the meeting will receive a prize. Thank you!"*

The January 25, 1955 *Atchison Daily Globe* reported over 200 citizens attended and unanimously voted to support the Board of Education proposal to combine Lincoln School and Martin School into one district with K-3 grades at Martin and 4-6 grades at Lincoln.

> *"More than 200 persons attended the meeting at Lincoln School, including 30 white people from the Martin School district...After Mrs. Florine Clayton had read the school board's summary on integration, representative of various groups were called on to express their views. All favored the school board proposal. The Rev. Wiley Scruggs, pastor of the Church of God, gave the minister's view, George Ed Kerford expressed the businessman's view, Mrs. Mary Kelly spoke as a mother and Dave Carey, Sr., as a father.*
> *"Carey told about how integration is working in the schools. He said he had three sons enrolled at Franklin Schools. He stated they were being treated well and that his wife came home from a Franklin PTA meeting 'singing the praises of the people.'...concluding his remarks, Carey stated: 'My opinion is, put them (the children) together, leave them alone, and they will work it out.'"*
> *...Mrs. Lloyd Kerford, Jr., moved that the meeting go on record endorsing the school board's action. The resolution was seconded by the Rev. Scruggs. A standing vote on the resolution was called for and the resolution passed.*

On Feb. 11, 1955, the Board of Education met with several petitions to consider and two primary options for integration still on the table. Petitions included those from the Lincoln School PTA meeting, and petitions disputing claims by members of the Martin School group that Central School overcrowding was an issue in the decision on how to complete the last step in integration.

While outwardly no one spoke against integration, the plan from the Martin School district parents was a thinly veiled attempt to minimize the actual integration of African American students into the student

body as a whole. Their presentation called for redistricting and making all five schools K-6 creating a split between a new Lincoln School district and the existing Martin School district. They opposed the plan to make Martin School K-3 and Lincoln 4-6 as under using the facilities at Lincoln, noting that a proper Kindergarten would have to be built at Lincoln.

George Ed Kerford spoke on behalf of the Lincoln School patrons saying that speaking personally it was immaterial to him which plan was adopted as long as it was done "fairly and squarely" and as long as there was no hint of delay or compromise, and would also include the fullest possible integration of Lincoln School teachers.

The Board of Education set aside a final decision until Feb. 18, 1955. Throughout the whole process the Board moved deliberately and gave everyone multiple chances to voice their opinions. At this final meeting on the issue another hour of discussion preceded a final vote, and even before a final vote was taken the Board held a "straw poll" to see how close they were to a final decision.

The straw poll was 5-1 in favor of the Board's original plan. The vote came out 6-0 in favor and with the following resolution, integration was complete.

> *"The Board of Education goes on record and that the public be notified that segregation be ended in that present Martin-Lincoln School District commencing in September, 1955; that the present Martin School building be renamed Martin East and the present Lincoln School building be renamed Martin West and that the Martin East building be used for lower grades and Martin West be used for upper grades, the same to be determined by the class attendances and the facilities of the two buildings; that this action be for at least one year, subject to constant study and review."*

The Board never formally reviewed the integration decision and let stand their action until all the elementary schools were combined into a single elementary school facility in 1997. In this manner, the citizens of Atchison became national trend setters in integrating their public schools.

The story of Lincoln School is one that goes to the heart of the Atchison community as a whole and tells the important story of how the African American community built itself from its own foundation. Lincoln School can be viewed as the first time the African American community was given a school on par with the rest of the school district. Lincoln School can be viewed as the catalyst for producing two or three generations who had the opportunity to learn and then make the best of their lives. And Lincoln School can be viewed as the place and the impetus that brought a section of our community together, both African American and White to prod, then push and then demand that integration be accomplished for the good of everyone.

Lincoln School is significant to Atchison because of the generations of students who have learned lessons in math, English, history and in life while inside the brick walls of the school itself. Lincoln School is significant to those beyond Atchison and to those who never attended the school, because it is one of the many places that tell the story of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* and the people who fought and believed that every citizen deserved the right to have a good education regardless of the color of their skin, their creed or religion. Lincoln School is more than bricks and mortar; it serves as a national symbol for those who believed that their children deserved something better.

Lincoln School began as a school to segregate the community in the 1920s. In the 1930s and 1940s it became a place that brought the African American community together through sports, and carnivals and recitals. In the 1950s it brought the community together through the basic belief that every child deserves the best the community can give them. When Atchison citizen George Kerford called for an integration plan to be adopted that was "fair and square" and "with no hint of delay or compromise," it was a brave act for a businessman to make such a demand, but he knew he was calling for the community to do the right thing.

And the right thing is what also makes Lincoln School significant, the children who attended school in the building both during the period of significance during segregation and for the over 40 years later when students attended with no thought to race. Dave Carey, Sr., an Atchison father summed up what Lincoln School really means in a few short words back in 1955, "...Put them (the children) together, leave them alone, and they will work it out."

The Lincoln School is an Atchison landmark that still today retains a high degree of architectural integrity of the original building as constructed in 1921 and 1937 with changes in the windows, doors and the addition of ramps. The school is simple design with minimal ornamentation that was built to serve the educational needs of the community and fulfilled that purpose for 76 years. Lincoln School now has its original name sign restored with the removal of the Martin West sign added in 1955. The school building still retains its connection with the community who used it as well. It is a drawing card for former students and its planned restored use as a community center for Boys and Girls Club, a museum room, possible 4-H use and as an ongoing home to the Lincoln Alumni Association will not only continue to tell the story of segregation, integration and education, but serve future generations in a building that truly has played a significant role in the history of Atchison, the State of Kansas, and the nation.

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Atchison Daily Globe

March 1921 – Form Lincoln PTA
Sept. 4, 1921 – High School Tuition Free
Sept. 5, 1921 – Old Lincoln School to be Sold Tomorrow
Sept. 7, 1921 – School Board – story
Sept. 7, 1921 –Changes to Lincoln School faculty
Sept. 8, 1921 – To Haul Colored Pupils
Sept. 18, 1921 – Gain in School Enrollment
August 21, 1937 – Back to School
August 25, 1937 – Atchison School Grant Approved
Sept. 13, 1937 – Public School Show Increase
Sept. 4, 1953 – Abolish Segregation in Topeka Schools
Sept. 13, 1953 – In Step to End School Segregation
Sept. 16, 1953 – Here in Atchison by Al Bennett
May 17, 1954 – Rules Against Segregation
June 10, 1954 – Segregation to Early End Here
Nov. 30, 1954 – Plan Final Integration Action Here
Jan. 3, 1955 – To Present a Petition

Jan. 15, 1955 – Back Martin School Plan
Feb. 7, 1955 – School Meeting is Postponed
Feb. 13, 1955 – Martin School Plan Proposed
Feb. 20, `1955 – School Board Plan Adopted
Feb. 22, 2003 – Atchison rich in black history

Miscellaneous Sources:

Lincoln School PTA – Letter from Roland Tyler PTA President dated Jan. 21, 1955

U.S.D. 409 Board of Education minutes

March 17, 1919
May 4, 1953
Sept. 12, 1953
June 9, 1954
Nov. 20, 1954
Jan. 3, 1955
Feb. 11, 1955
Feb. 18, 1955

The Lincoln Star – monthly newspaper of Lincoln School

Vol. 1, No. 1 – August 27, 1947
Vol. 1, No. 2 – Sept. 1947
Undated – first year – thought to be Vol. 1, No. 3
Vol. 1 Number 8 – May 1948

The Lincoln Star – yearbook 1951

Lincoln School Administrative Bulletin – Sept. 2, 1947

Lincoln School Memory Book – Special publication for 1992 Lincoln School Reunion published by the Lincoln School Reunion Officers.

"Segregation and Desegregation – Atchison Public Schools: report on activities leading up to integration in Atchison." Unknown author. Source Elaine Tittsworth – Lincoln School Alumni Association.

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 1 & 2, Block F, Old Atchison

Boundary Justification

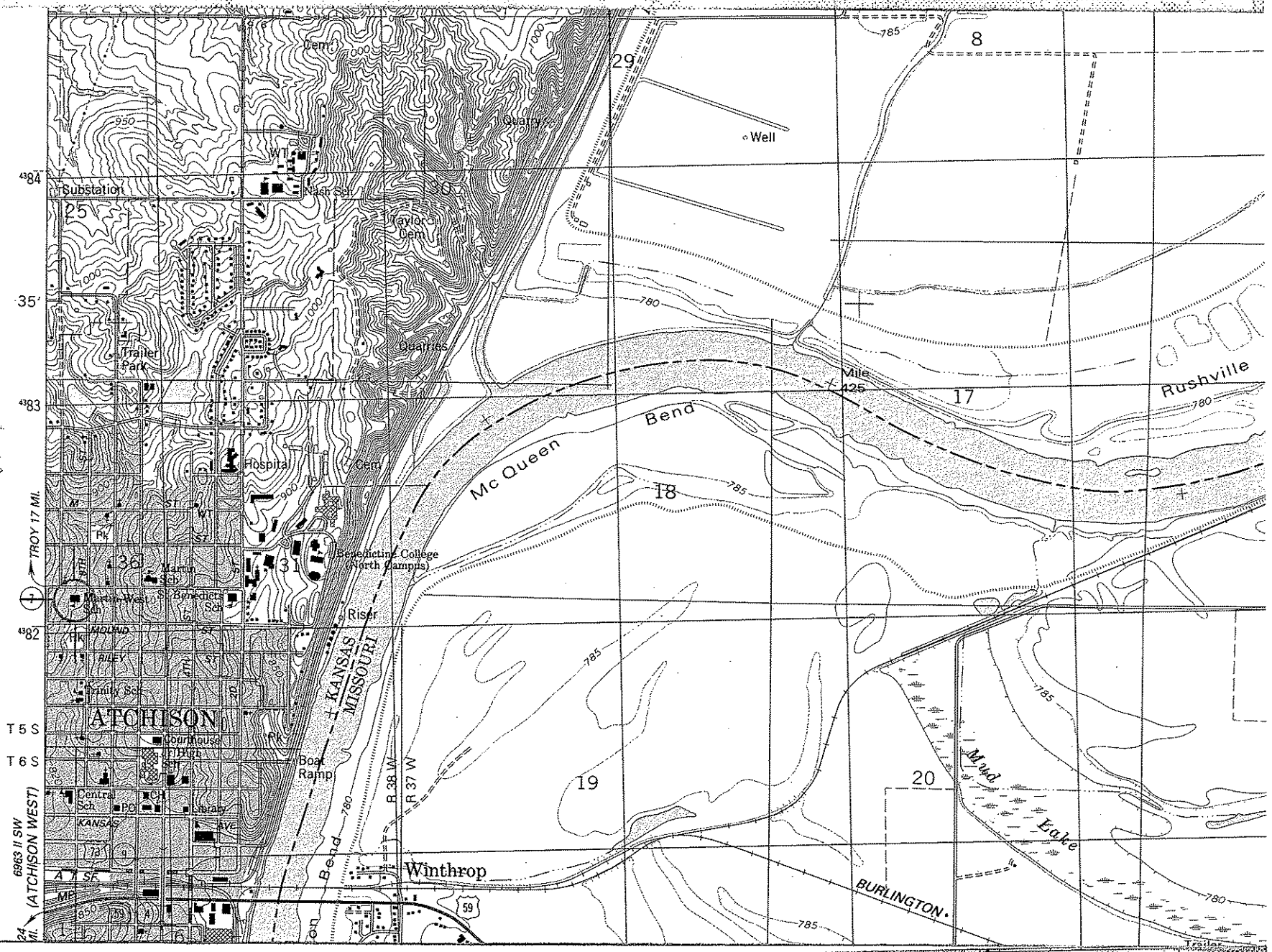
This boundary includes all of the property historically associated with this resource that retains its integrity.

Photographic Information

The following information is consistent for all photographs:

1. Lincoln School
2. Atchison Co., Kansas
3. Photograph by Martha Hagedorn-Krass
4. July 2004
5. Negative on file at KSHS

The following information is specific to each photograph:

Photo #	Description of View
1.	View from the east
2.	View from the northeast
3.	View from the northwest
4.	View from the west
5.	View from the south
6.	View of keystone and sign block above entrance on east elevation from the west
7.	View of glass block surround in entrance foyer
8.	View of interior hallway
9.	View of classroom and coat closets
10.	View of gymnasium from balcony from the southeast
11.	View of gymnasium from ground floor from the southeast

Lincoln School
Atchison Co., Kansas
UTM Coordinates:
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