NPS Form 10-900
Oct. 1990

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER
LISTED

NOV 2 0 2008

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 Ranson Hotel

Other name/site number Kansas Inventory Number: 155-0000-0061

2. Location

Street & number 4918 E. Main ☐ not for publication

City or town Medora ☐ vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Reno Code 155 Zip code 67502

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 10/09/08

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:)

Ranson Hotel
Name of Property

Reno County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	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 Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: hotel
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store (grocery store and service station)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Early Twentieth-Century Falsefront-type railroad hotel

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: CONCRETE/STONE: Concrete Slab (later addn)
Walls: WOOD
ASPHALT
Roof: ASPHALT
Other:

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

Ranson Hotel
Name of Property

Reno County, 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)

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1905-1957

Significant Dates

1905

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

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:

Ranson Hotel
Name of Property

Reno County, Kansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	14	601080	4222726
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 Christy Davis

Organization Davis Preservation Date 3/1/2007

Street & number 2416 SW Sunset Ct Telephone 785-213-1369

City or town Topeka State KS Zip code 66604

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 Steven Becker

Street & number 11309 E. 69th St. Telephone (620) 543-2297

City or town Buhler State KS Zip code 67522

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

Narrative Description

The Ranson Hotel is located at 4918 E. Main in Medora Junction, an unincorporated village ten miles northeast of Hutchinson in Medora Township (pop. 1594), Reno County, Kansas. The building is being nominated under Criterion A for its association with the growth and development of Medora Junction, Kansas.

Setting
The Ranson Hotel sits in Block 3 in the easternmost point of Medora Junction, at the intersection of the old Rock Island and Frisco Railroads. It also faces Kansas Highway 61, a highway that connects Hutchinson to McPherson, and runs southwest to northeast along the southeast corner of Medora. The building's front elevation faces south toward Main Street. The property includes a non-historic three-car garage at its rear to the north. A smattering of buildings is located to the west. On the north, south and east lay open farmland.

Overall
The hotel is a two-story wood frame building with three principal masses: a two-story center section, a one-story lean-to addition to the west, and a canted addition with second-story walkout on the east. The first floor of the center section was adapted in the 1930s to accommodate a service station drive-thru. The storefront was modified to correspond with the angle of Highway 61.

The building's modest design and materials illustrate the hurried nature of its construction, elaborated in the Statement of Significance. The wood frame is covered with a wood underlayment and clapboard. The clapboard is covered with two layers of rolled asphaltic siding embossed to create the appearance of brick. The first of these layers, in place by the end of the 1930s, likely dates to the building's conversion to a service station. In his study of asphaltic siding, architect Mike Jackson reports that "Red and tan brick," like the tan brick pattern on the building's first layer of asphaltic siding, "were the dominant patterns in the 1930s and 1940s." The second layer of asphaltic siding dates between the 1930s, when the first layer was installed, and the 1970s, when manufacturers discontinued production of the material.[1] It is difficult to determine whether or not both layers of siding were in place at the time of a 1960 photo since this second layer of asphaltic siding was painted.[2]

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[1] Mike Jackson, "Asphalt Siding: An Artificial Reality," Preserving the Recent Past, Vol. I (Historic Preservation Education Foundation, Washington DC, 1995).

[2] Al Dumler, "Reno County Village Fights for Life," *Hutchinson News*, 24 January 1960. A fuzzy photograph from this 1960 newspaper article, shows differentiation between the color of the "brick" and that of the "mortar." The paint created a uniform appearance.

The roof is front-gabled with a false-front type parapet that wraps around the west, south and east elevations. Two chimneys pierce the gable's peak. With the exception of those in the ca. 1930s canted storefront, the building's window frames, sashes and trim are original. The shutters are a non-historic addition. A simple metal cornice stretches along the building's front elevation. Interior materials date both to the building's original construction and to its 1930s modification. A photo in a 1960 newspaper article demonstrates that the building's exterior has changed little since then.

Front (South) Elevation

The front elevation is divided into two masses – the one-story westward-extending bay, and the principal two-story mass on the east. The one-story west bay is punctuated by a three-part fixed-pane ribbon window, flanked by black shutters. There is no parapet or cornice on the one-story bay. The first floor of the main bay is canted to delineate the service station drive-thru. It features three equally sized pairs of windows divided by two entry doors. The second story has two evenly spaced pairs of 1/1 double-hung windows flanked by shutters. A simple, but prominent cornice caps the top of the building. The cornice has four evenly-spaced eave brackets and a half-circle feature in the center. Shutters have been added in recent decades.

East (Side) Elevation

The principal feature on the east elevation is an east-projecting two-story covered walkway. Narrow wood posts support the walkway, which provides access to the second-story apartment from a stair, which rises from north to south. The walkway covers a one-story canted east-projecting bay, which has a door and window. On the second level, there are two 1/1 double-hung windows, one on the north end and one of the south end. In the center, sheltered by the covered walkway, is a sliding door. The first-story window and the second-story window on the south end are flanked by shutters.

West (Side) Elevation

From the west, the west elevation of the one-story west-projecting bay and the second story of the principal mass are visible. The only openings on the west elevation of this bay are a window air conditioning unit and two boarded up windows. There are four 1/1 double-hung windows on the second story of the principal mass. The two southernmost windows are flanked by shutters. A stovepipe extends past the roof of the one-story lean-to between the third and fourth windows.

Rear (North) Elevation

From the north elevation of the two-story mass, the building's shallow gabled roof is visible. There is a double window on the east end of the first floor, a centered door, and 1/1 single window on the west end of the first floor. Two evenly spaced pairs of 1/1 windows grace the second story of the two-story mass. The north elevation of the west-projecting lean-to bay falls on the same plane as the north elevation of the principal mass.

Interior – First Floor

The public enters the building from the easternmost doorway on the canted entrance on the south elevation. There are four main spaces on the building's first floor, separated by north-south and east-west walls. The main doorway accesses the southeastern space. The southwestern space, larger than the southeastern room, is accessed from the southeast room via an opening in the north-south wall. The southwest room occupies the one-story lean-to addition on the building's west end. There is unfinished storage space on the north end of the lean-to addition. The northwest room is a kitchen space that likely served as a prep kitchen for the grocery store. There is a door and small window on the north wall of this space. The northeast room houses a small enclosed restroom, work area and stair to the second floor.

Interior – Second Floor

One can access the second floor via an interior stair in the northeast corner of the first floor – and via a sliding door that opens onto the covered exterior stair on the east elevation. At the top of the stair is a large open sitting room onto which a number of doors open. On the east wall at the top of the stairs is the double sliding glass door. On the south wall of the sitting room are two transomed doors – a double French door on the east end and a single angled multi-pane door on the southwest corner. Both of these doors access a large open room on the building's south side. A transomed multi-pane door is on the south end of the west wall of the sitting room. North of the first door is an arched opening that opens to a kitchen, with historic cabinets and doors, in the northwest corner of the building. A second set of transomed French doors lies on the north end of the sitting room, west of the enclosed stair. West of the double doors is a closed-in transomed door that formerly provided access to the space that was converted to the kitchen. Each of these historic doors likely opened to hotel rooms.

Statement of Significance

The Two Medoras

Medora, platted by the Medora Town Company in 1887, was originally located at the junction of the Little Arkansas River and the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway (Rock Island), a mile and a half northeast of the current village site. The Rock Island Railway linked the upper Midwest with New Mexico, a key trading center throughout the nineteenth century. By 1900, its lines stretched across Kansas – linking Belleville, Phillipsburg and Colby on the north and Herington and Wichita to Oklahoma on the south. Between the boom years of 1886 and 1888, the company's track mileage burgeoned from 40 to 1000, making it the state's fourth-largest railway.[3]

Medora's vicinity to the rail line positioned it as a center of activity for the surrounding rural community. By 1895, Medora Township was home to over 60 families, the vast majority of which lived on farms outside the city limits. In 1893, the local school district moved a frame schoolhouse from its original rural location into town.[4]

In the late nineteenth century, the St. Louis San Francisco Railway (Frisco), a line that provided regional service to the Ozarks and Southern Plains, made plans to construct a new rail line through the area. The line would run southeast to northwest, perpendicular to the Rock Island line. Because passing through Medora, which then lay northeast of the Little Arkansas River, would have required multiple river crossings, the railroad chose to bypass the community, instead crossing the Rock Island line on property owned by JH Ranson (also spelled "Ransome").

When the Frisco was built, the Rock Island Railway announced plans to relocate its depot to the junction of the two rail lines, southwest of Medora. The Rock Island Company moved the depot before dawn on a Sunday morning – when protestors could not file an injunction to prevent it. In October 1905, William H. and Mary E. Ranson, then owners of the land surrounding the new rail intersection, filed a plat for Medora Junction, a new town to be located west of the junction of the two rail lines, across the Rock Island tracks from the moved depot.[5]

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[3] Deon Wolfenbarger, *Historic Railroad Resources of Kansas Multiple Property Nomination*, 2000-2001.

[4] County Superintendent and Teachers, *The Old Trail and the New 1865-1918: The History of Reno County, Kansas* (Reno County: Reno County Superintendent and Teachers, 1918), 257.

[5] Karen Burgess, "Medora and Medora Junction." *Reno County GenealogicalSociety Newsletter*, May-August 1989.

Both William and Mary Ranson were born in Illinois to English-born parents – William in 1840 and Mary in 1844. In 1900, the Ransons lived on a farm near Kechi, Kansas (near Wichita) with their three daughters and son. The couple, who were still living near Kechi in 1910, apparently never moved to the town they platted.[6] Still, they actively developed the new town, building its first hotel and grocery store.

With a monopoly on early business, the Ransons donated building sites to residents, who quickly began relocating to the new town site. Other businesses soon followed. The Junction House Hotel (later called "Bob Calvert Hotel), Rickenbrode Mercantile and Arbuckle Coffee Co moved their buildings to the new site. The transition was complete by 1907 when the school district moved its frame building for a second time to the new town. By 1912, the town had a grain elevator, express office and post office – and boasted a population of 75.[7]

The Ranson Hotel – Railroads and Highways

The Ranson Hotel was among the first buildings built by the Ransons after platting the new town in 1905. At the time, railroad hotels were essential to community development. They provided both lodging and showroom space for traveling salesmen who supplied goods to local businesses. In addition, they offered temporary housing for speculators and potential residents. The Ransons placed their new hotel at the prime junction of Main Street and the Rock Island Rail Line, across the street from the Rock Island depot.

Railroads were important to all communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Still, they played a unique role in the agriculture-based economies of rural communities like Medora Junction, providing the means by which farmers shipped their goods to market. But by the time of the Ranson Hotel's completion, the automobile was poised to forever change the railroad's role. With record-high grain prices during World War I, coupled with the cost-cutting mass-production of automobiles, many farm families were able to purchase cars and trucks for the first time.

In the budding auto age, a town's survival depended not just on its vicinity to a rail line – but on its place along a paved highway – a good road to town. The first paved road that linked Hutchinson and Medora was completed by the county in 1919. In 1920, the road became Kansas Highway 17 (K-

[6] US Census, 1910-1930.

[7] Frank Blackmar, "Medora," *Kansas: a cyclopedia of state history, embracing events, institutions, industries, cities, towns, prominent persons, etc.* (Chicago: Standard Publishing Co., 1912).

17), under the auspices of the newly formed Kansas Highway Commission. In 1937, the road was expanded and re-dubbed K-61.[8] The expansion of K-61 was a mixed blessing for Medora Junction. Although it provided important highway access, it required the demolition of an entire block of Medora. This left the Ranson Hotel as the only of the original Medora Junction buildings to remain.[9]

The highway's influence on the development of Medora Junction eclipsed that of the railroad. By the late 1930s, the Ranson Hotel, constructed as a railroad hotel, had been converted into a service station and garage. New owners adapted the hotel building to accommodate the use, chamfering the building's corner to provide for a drive thru. This approach was commonly applied to roadside service stations in the 1920s and 1930s to ensure pumping would not disrupt the flow of traffic on busy streets like their curbside pump predecessors. Before oil and gas companies instituted the practice of constructing free-standing buildings designed specifically for auto garages and stations, suppliers modified existing buildings like the Ranson Hotel.[10]

The Ranson Hotel housed the service station from the 1930s until ca. 1950, when it was converted to a grocery store. It was used as a grocery store and private residence through the 1990s. In 1960, the *Hutchinson News* reported that the village was fighting to "keep Medora's name from being pushed off the map." By then, many of the town's landmarks, including the wood-frame depot and grain elevator, had been demolished.11 Since then, many more have followed suit, leaving the only the Ranson Hotel to interpret the town's early history.

The Ranson Hotel is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for its role in the growth and development of Medora, Kansas. The building housed the first business in Medora Junction, platted in 1905 and housed subsequent businesses, including a service station and grocery store, that illustrate Medora's evolution from a railroad town to a highway town.

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[8] Sherry Lamb Schirmer and Theodore A. Wilson, *Milestones: A History of the Kansas Highway Commission and the Department of Transporation* (Topeka, Kansas: Kansas Department of Transportation, 1986) and Kansas Department of Transportation records provided by Marsha King.

[9] Paula Adams, "Activity III Report, Medora Hotel" (Topeka, Kansas: Kansas Department of Transportation, 2002).

[10] Chester Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 96.

[11] Dumler, "Reno County Village."

Bibliography

Adams, Paula. "Activity III Report, Medora Hotel." Topeka, Kansas: Kansas Department of Transportation, 2002.

Blackmar, Frank W. "Medora," *Kansas: a cyclopedia of state history, embracing events, institutions, industries, counties, cities, towns, prominent persons, etc.* Chicago: Standard Publishing Co., 1912.

Burgess, Karen Poulton. "Medora and Medora Junction." *Reno County Historical Society Newsletter*, May-August 1989.

County Superintendent and Teachers. *The Old Trail and the New 1865-1918: The History of Reno County, Kansas*. Reno County: Reno County Superintendent and Teachers.

Hutchinson News.

Jackson, Mike. "Asphalt Siding: An Artificial Reality." Preserving the Recent Past, Vol. I. Historic Preservation Education Foundation, Washington DC, 1995.

Liebs, Chester. *Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. (This includes information about both service stations and grocery stores.)

Raitz, Karl B., and John Paul Jones III. "The City Hotel as Landscape Artifact and Community Symbol." *Journal of Cultural Geography* 9 (1988): 17–36.

Riskin, Marci L. *The Train Stops Here: New Mexico's Railway Legacy*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005. (This includes a section on railroad hotels.)

Schirmer, Sherry and Theodore A. Wilson. *Milestones: A History of the Kansas Highway Commission and the Department of Transporation*. Topeka, Kansas: Kansas Department of Transportation, 1986.

U. S. Census Records. 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930. (Medora and Kechi)

Wolfenbarger, Deon. *Historic Railroad Resources of Kansas Multiple Property Nomination*. Topeka, Kansas: Kansas State Historical Society, 2000-2001.

Verbal Boundary Description

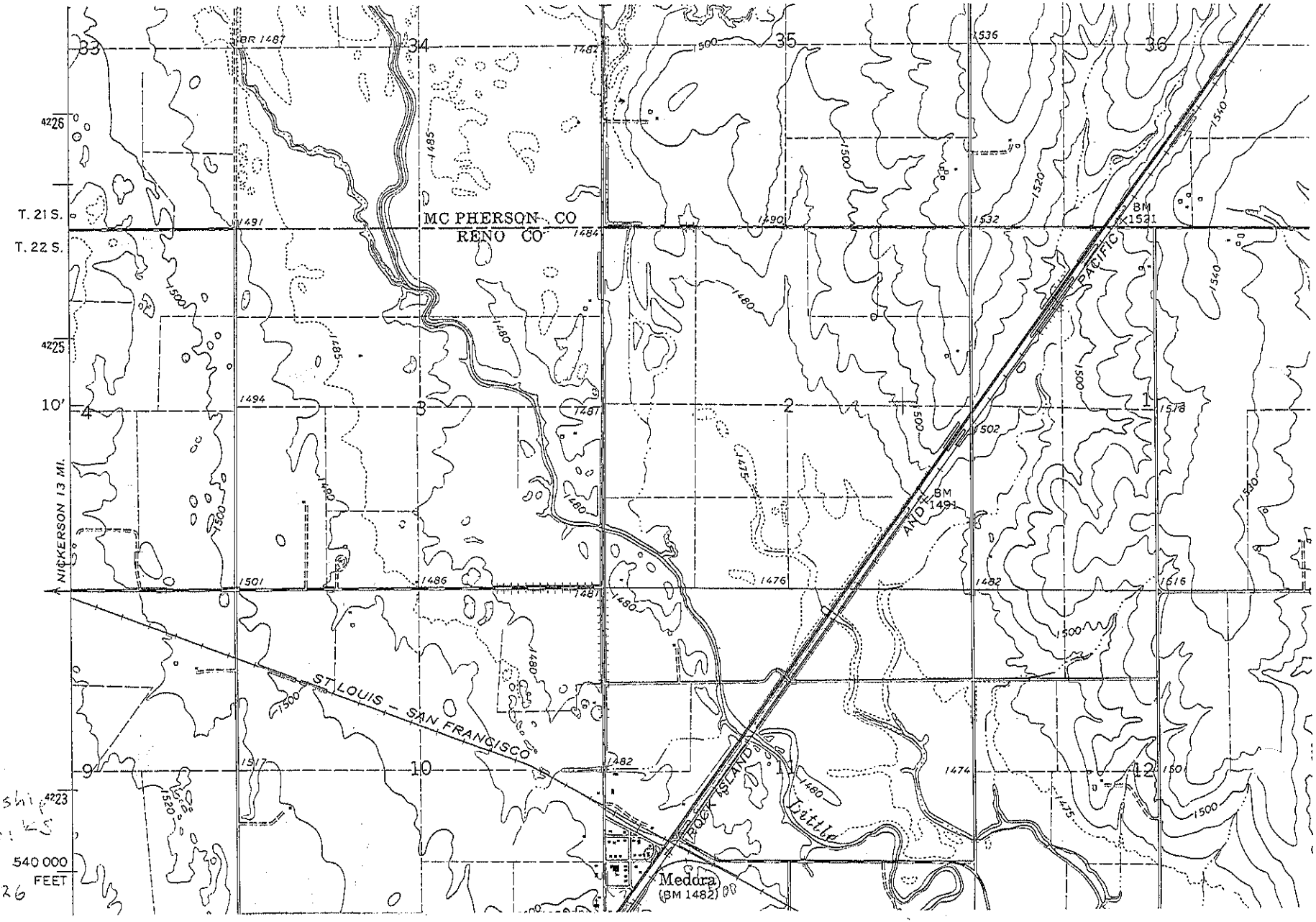
The nominated property consists of Lot 19, except the west 5' and all of Lots 20-24, except for the highway right-of-way in Block 3, Medora Junction, Kansas.

Boundary Justification

The above is the legal description for the parcel on which the Ranson Hotel at 4918 E. Main in Medora Junction sits.

Photo Log

1. Exterior, South (Front) Elevation, Looking North.
2. Exterior, East (Side) Elevation, Looking West.
3. Exterior, East and North Elevations, including view of garage.
4. Exterior, North (Rear) Elevation, Looking Southwest.
5. Exterior, West (Side) Elevation, Looking Northeast.
6. Exterior, Storefront.
7. Interior, First Floor, Looking toward Storefront.
8. Interior, First Floor, Looking West.
9. Interior, First Floor, Looking North.
10. Interior, First Floor, Looking North in Kitchen.
11. Interior, First Floor, Close-up of typical Wood Trim.
12. Interior, Second Floor, Open Hall, Looking Southwest.
13. Interior, Second Floor, Open Hall, Looking Northwest.
14. Interior, Second Floor, South Room, Looking Northeast.
15. Interior, Second Floor, Kitchen, Looking Southeast.
16. Interior, Second Floor, Open Hall, Looking Northwest.
17. Interior, Second Floor, Open Hall, Looking South.



Ranson Hotel
Medora Township
Reno County KS
14 6vi080
4222726