NPS Form 10-900
Oct. 1990

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER
LISTED

JUL 0 3 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 Brown Hotel

Other name/site number 205-3930-00018; 205-3930-00010

2. Location

Street & number 519-523 Main Street ☐ not for publication

City or town Neodesha ☐ vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Wilson Code 205 Zip code 66757

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.)

Patricia Salmon DSHPO 5/16/08

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:)

Brown Hotel
Name of Property

Wilson County, 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	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2		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

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel
COMMERCE/restaurant
COMMERCE/specialty store

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Work in Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: CONCRETE/STONE: Sandstone
Walls: BRICK
Roof: ASPHALT
Other:

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

Brown Hotel
Name of Property

Wilson 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
- [x] **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 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)

ARCHITECTURE
COMMERCE
OTHER: Women

Period of Significance

1896-1957

Significant Dates

1896; 1904; 1922

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Carrie Louisa Burson Brown

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Dooley, Henry; builder

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:

Kansas State Historical Society

Brown Hotel
Name of Property

Wilson 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	262782	4145320
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 4/20/2007

Street & number 909 1/2 Kansas Ave, Suite 7 Telephone 785-213-1369

City or town Topeka State KS Zip code 66612

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 The Pendleton Company

Street & number 10007 Falcon Valley Drive Telephone 913-839-0249

City or town Lenexa State KS Zip code 66220

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

Introduction/Background
This nomination amends the National Register listing for the Brown Hotel in Neodesha (pop. 2848), Wilson County, Kansas, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on July 21, 1995. The original nomination focused on the Brown Hotel building, constructed in 1896 to replace the Occidental Hotel, and its 1922 addition. The property listed in 1995 is located at 523 Main Street (formerly 521-523 Main), Lots 1-2 in Block 47 of the Neodesha Original Town. Since the time of the original nomination, historical research has further clarified the property's history. In ca. 1904, the original owners constructed an adjacent building, on Lot 3. This later building had leaseable space on the first floor and additional hotel rooms on the second floor. The two buildings were connected with both an interior corridor and a porch/veranda that stretched across the front of the 1896 building, which set back from the sidewalk plane.

Setting/Overall
The Brown Hotel is located in the northwest corner of Block 47, on the southeast corner of Main and 6th Street, in the center of Neodesha's downtown. The property is located approximately 5 blocks east and 4 blocks north of the Frisco rail line, which runs southeast to northwest, clipping the southwest corner of town. The property is made up of three principal masses: the two-story 1896 brick building on the block's northwest corner that replaced an earlier frame building destroyed by fire, including a ca. 1904 veranda; the two-story southward-expanding 1922 brick addition to the 1896 building; the two-story brick ca. 1904 commercial building on Lot 3.

Exterior
Front (North) Elevation ca. 1904 Building – The ca. 1904 building is constructed of hard-fired smooth red brick. The building retains its historic 1/1 wood windows on the upper level. The front elevation of the ca. 1904 building is symmetrical. The first floor is painted green. A historic cast iron beam, with 5 equally spaced rosettes, spans the top of the storefront opening, delineating the first and second floors. The storefront, which wraps around to the exposed part of the west elevation, has been partially closed in. There is a door, leading to a stair that accesses the second floor, east of the storefront opening. The historic transom on the abbreviated west side of the storefront is intact. The second floor of the north elevation is painted yellow. In the center of the second floor is a projecting bay, which has a centered large 1/1 wood window flanked by narrow canted 1/1 wood windows. The bay is decorated with pressed metal. The pressed metal at the base has a swag pattern. The pressed metal surrounding the windows has corner blocks. A pressed-metal cornice tops the bay. Two narrow 1/1 windows flank the centered bay. These windows have stone sills and arched brick lintels. There is a door opening on the west elevation of the storefront that opens out onto the terrace on the front of the 1896 building. The parapet that tops the building and wraps around to the west elevation has decorative brick corbelling.

Front (North) Elevation 1896 Building – The principal character-defining feature of the front elevation of the 1896 building is a wood veranda/porch. The porch is supported by seven Tuscan columns, above which has a dentiled entablature. Above each column is a newel post that supports a simple balustrade. The ceiling of the veranda's first floor is finished with decorative pressed metal. The veranda occupies the space between the sidewalk plane and the front elevation of the 1896 building. On the first floor of the building, there are two arch-topped windows flanking an arch-topped centered door. The 1/1 windows have an upper sash that is smaller than the lower sash. The door opening had a centered door flanked by sidelights and a

transom window. There are four narrow 1/1 arch-top windows on second floor. Like the ca. 1904 building, the 1896 building is topped by decorative brick corbelling. The building's main entrance is in a canted corner. The door matches that on the north elevation – with the arched opening, sidelights and transom. Above the entrance, on the second floor, there is a narrow arch-top 1/1 wood window.

Side (West) Elevation 1896/1922 Building – The 1896 building lies on the north end of the west elevation. The 1922 addition, distinguishable by its smoother brick, recessed mortar joints, concrete details, and square windows - and separated from the 1896 building by an expansion joint, is on the south end. The west elevation of the 1896 has five arched openings on each level. There are three 1/1 wood windows and two doors on the first level. There are 5 1/1 wood windows on the second level. The window sills and water table are stone. The lintels are brick arches. The west elevation of the 1922 addition has seven openings – six windows and a door - on the first floor and six window openings on the second floor. The first-floor windows have decorative muntins on their upper sashes, which are smaller than the lower sashes. The second-floor windows are 1/1. The water table and window sills are concrete. The lintels are brick. There are also window wells that provide light to the basement. Before the sidewalk was placed, these were apparently open to a sub-grade sidewalk. Decorative brick corbelling accentuates the cornice line of the entire elevation – tying the 1896 building and 1922 addition together.

Rear (South) Elevation – The south elevation of the 1922 addition has four window openings and one door opening on the first floor, and three window openings and one door opening on the second floor. The first floor windows are 3/1 wood windows. The second-floor windows are 1/1. There is a chimney on the southeast corner of the 1922 addition. The chimney, topped with decorative brick corbelling, spans the two stories and extends beyond the roof line. The south elevation of the 1896 building has 1/1 arch-topped wood windows with stone sills and brick lintels. The first floor of the south elevation of the 1904 building has a partially closed-in window opening on the west end and a partially closed-in double-wide arched door opening on the east end. There is a 1/1 wood window and transomed door on the second floor. There is a solid brick chase on the east end of the south elevation of the 1904 building.

Courtyard - The space between the 1922 addition, the L of the 1896 building, and the west elevation of the 1904 building creates a courtyard. The west elevation of the 1904 building and south elevation of the 1896 building have 1/1 arch-topped wood windows with stone sills. The east elevation of the 1922 addition has pairs of double-hung windows on the first floor and single double-hung windows on the second floor. The courtyard was recently paved with brick, which is now deteriorating.

Interior

1904 Building – The first floor of the 1904 building is divided into two principal spaces, a retail space on the north end and an apartment on the south end. The two spaces are separated by an east-west wall at the south end of the store space. The west wall of the store space houses the storefront window and transom. The space on the east wall, under the stair leading to the second floor, has a small elevated restroom, which has a door to a storage area. The ceiling in the retail space has been lowered. The east and west walls are plastered. The south wall is a framed wall covered with gypsum board. The floor is covered with carpeting. A door opening on the south side of the retail space accesses the central hall of the rear apartment. The apartment has carpeted floors and suspended acoustical tile ceilings. Two rooms flank the center hall on the north end of the apartment space. A kitchen and restroom occupy the apartment's southeast corner. There is an exterior double door on the north end of the apartment space.

An exterior door on the east end of the front of the 1904 building opens to a stair leading to the second floor. The building's second floor is occupied by apartments, which are accessed by a single-sided corridor on the east end. The space is separated into two apartments. The northernmost apartment (Apartment A) is accessed by a south-facing door near the top of the stair. This apartment has a living room on its east end; a small dining area, kitchen, and laundry room in the northwest corner; and a bedrooms and bathroom on the south end of the apartment. The southernmost apartment (Apartment B) is accessed by an east-facing door toward the rear of the building. This apartment has a kitchen and bathroom on the south end, a living room in the center, and a bedroom on the north end. Character-defining features on the second floor include pressed-metal ceilings in the stairway, plaster perimeter walls, windows, doors, window trim, door trim, and baseboards.

1896/1922 Building – One may enter the 1896/1922 building through main doors on the north elevation, on the canted northwest entrance, through one of two doors on the west elevation of the 1896 building, or through a door on the west elevation of the 1922 addition. The entrance on the canted northwest corner opens to the main lobby. On the east end of the lobby is a grand staircase that rises to the second floor. The lobby features painted wainscoting. On the northeast corner of the lobby is a sliding door that accesses a second room on the north end of the building, which has been reconfigured in recent years. South of this room is a new restroom. A wall on the south end of the lobby divides the lobby from a dining room to its south. The dining room is in a state of abandoned rehabilitation. Behind the dining room is space historically occupied by the hotel's kitchen and workers' quarters. Character-defining features on the first floor include doors, transoms, window and door trim, and plaster walls.

The second floor is accessed via the grand stair in the lobby. Doors that access the former hotel rooms open out into the landing. In the 1922 addition, a double-loaded corridor provides circulation for access to rooms via regularly spaced transomed doors. The second floor is in deteriorated condition – with some spaces in various states of rehabilitation. In 1975, it was remodeled to house four apartments. Despite deterioration and remodeling, the second floor has the following extant character-defining features: wood floors, baseboards, doors, transoms, windows and trims.

Statement of Significance

Introduction

The Brown Hotel is being nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the growth and development of Neodesha, Kansas and under Criterion C for architectural significance as a late nineteenth century commercial hotel. The building is also being nominated under Criterion B as a rare example of a commercial building commissioned by a nineteenth-century businesswoman, Carrie Burson Brown.

Carrie Brown's Neodesha

When Carrie Brown arrived in Neodesha to manage the Occidental Hotel in 1892, she witnessed a town on the verge of significant growth and change. The town had been settled, the railroad had arrived, and investors had begun tapping surrounding land for oil. It seems that the beginning of Neodesha's heyday coincided with the arrival of Mrs. Brown.

Much of Southeast Kansas was opened for white settlement in 1865, when the U. S. Government, under pressure from railroads, negotiated a treaty for the purchase of 8 million acres of Osage Indian reserve. The legal status of the ground, which stretched along the Kansas-Missouri border in the eastern third of the state, was not finalized until 1869. By then, however, nearly 2300 white settlers already inhabited the disputed Osage lands.[1]

Among the white settlers who arrived before the treaty was settled were Dr. Allen R. McCartney and Alexander K. Phelon, who opened an Osage Indian trading post in 1867. The trading post drew settlers who, by 1868 had erected 200 buildings nearby. In 1869 McCartney and Phelon joined with Robert S. Futhey and John B. Keys to plat the 240-acre town site. Because of its siting between the Fall and Verdigris Rivers, the founders named the town Neodesha after an Osage word believed to mean "the meeting of wooded waters."[2] In 1871, Neodesha became the first incorporated town in the Osage Diminished reserve, filing as a third-class city with a population of 1043. By 1880, the town's population had nearly doubled to 1972. The first railroad reached Neodesha in 1879. By the 1880s, the Frisco, Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe, and Missouri Pacific rail lines had reached the young city.[3]

By the time Carrie Brown arrived in Neodesha in 1892, Southeast Kansas was on its way to becoming the state's industrial center, with interests in mining, brick manufacturing, oil and gas. Although oral tradition had long held that Indians had used lit gas springs for council fires, the first white settlers knew little practical use for oil and gas outside of medicinal remedies. Oil was first discovered near Paola in nearby Miami County by legendary free-stater G. W. Brown in the 1860s.[4]

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[1] Paul Wallace Gates, *Fifty Million Acres: Conflicts Over Kansas Land Policy, 1854-1890* (New York: Atherton Press, 1966), 194, 213.
[2] Craig Miner, *Discovery! Cycles of Change in the Kansas Oil and Gas Industry, 1860-1987* (Wichita: Kioga, 1987), 29. Miner reports that "Neodesha" actually means "The Water is Smoky with Mud."
[3] "Neodesha," William Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1883).
[4] Craig Miner, *Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 62.

William Mills, also of Miami County, is credited with opening the first commercial oil well in the Mid-Continent Oil Field. With the financial backing of Pennsylvania oil investors, Morris drilled on land in the Neodesha vicinity owned by TJ Norman, striking oil in 1892. The rig, named Norman #1, produced a steady flow of oil until it was closed in 1917.[5] There were 68 producing wells by 1895, when forty laborers arrived from the East to work for Forest Oil.[6] The laborers' exploits drove Neodesha businessmen to organize the Oil Company of Kansas in 1897 with aims to refine oil from local wells. Soon thereafter Standard Oil constructed a $3.5 million refinery near Neodesha.[7]

The Brown Hotel's rise from the ashes of the Occidental Hotel in 1896 (see below) coincided with a population boom owing to the growth of the oil industry. Between 1900 and 1905, the peak years of oil production, Neodesha's population nearly doubled, from 2667 to 5147. The hotel played a key role in the newly industrialized city, providing lodging for speculators, prospective new residents, and salesmen who aimed to benefit from the growing market. Its natural resources allowed Neodesha to thrive at a time when the tumultuous 1890s recession plagued many of the state's other communities.

In the first few decades of the nineteenth century, Neodesha's population was in a constant state of flux. The city's fate first turned in 1905 when the Kansas Legislature, in a trust-busting move, passed a state refinery bill that provided for a state-run oil refinery operated by prison inmates.[8] In response to the groundbreaking legislation, Standard Oil pulled out of the Neodesha refinery. By 1910, the city's population had plunged to 4320. By 1920, however, the refinery was back in business and the population had exploded again to 6115. In 1930, the year Carrie Brown transferred the hotel deed to her son, the population was down to 5170, and the hotel's role in the town's social and economic future was uncertain.[9]

Carrie Brown and her extended family

The journey that led Carrie Louisa Burson Brown, owner and proprietor of the Brown Hotel, to Neodesha was a remarkable one. Carrie was born in Virginia on November 28, 1848, the daughter of Captain Joseph B. Burson and Mahala DeVesse Burson. After Captain Burson died (he was allegedly killed in John Brown's raid of Harper's Ferry, Virginia), Carrie's mother Mahala remarried John Harrison, who moved the family to Kansas in 1869.[10] In 1870, John and Mahala were living in Erie Township, Neosho County with Carrie's sister Arizona Burson (9) and her half sister Nevada Harrison (4, also known as "Vada").[11] Although Carrie, then in her early twenties, was not listed as living with the Harrisons in the 1870 Census, she was in Kansas by June 26, 1872 when she married Isaac B. Brown in Howard. The couple homesteaded near Sedan, Kansas, where their twin sons Joseph B. (named for Carrie's father) and Jesse D. were born May 6, 1873.

[5] Ibid, 212.
[6] Miner, *Discovery*, 59, 62.
[7] Miner, *Kansas*, 212-214.
[8] Ibid, 214.
[9] U. S. Census, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930.
[10] "Mrs. Carrie L. Brown Died Monday Morning," *Neodesha Register* 1935.
[11] U. S. Census, 1870.

Carrie's life took a new path when her husband died prematurely in 1875. With two young children to feed, Carrie moved the family to Coffeyville where she managed the Willard Hotel for six years. The family moved to Parsons after the Dalton Gang's infamous Coffeyville shootout, when, according to lore, the hotel was shot up. Other sources allude that she may have simply been "bought out."[12] Carrie managed the Tremont Hotel in Parsons until 1892. By the time she left Parsons and purchased Neodesha's Occidental Hotel in 1892, her sons Joseph and Jesse had reached adulthood.[13]

Having successfully raised her own children alone, Carrie went about helping other self-supporting women. Among them were her two sisters, Columbia Burson Hudspeth, 16 years her junior, and Arizona P. Burson Bonser, 21 years her junior and her half-sister Nevada (Vada) Harrison. Columbia and Vada assisted with the hotel from the time it opened. In 1905, the household included Carrie, her sons Joseph and Jessie, Columbia Hudspeth, Arizona Bonser, Arizona's son Dean Bonser and Nevada Harrison. By 1915, the household also included Arizona's daughter Vera.[14] Carrie had living quarters, including a sitting room, bedroom and bathroom, on the southcentral end of the hotel.[15] The ca. 1904 and 1922 additions may have been necessary to provide additional space to accommodate both hotel rooms and the growing household of employees and family.

Although Columbia and Arizona were much younger than Carrie, they both preceded her in death, Arizona in 1924 and Columbia in 1926. By the time Columbia died in 1926, Carrie was a "very large" and "very stern" 80-year-old woman. Still, she managed to keep the hotel by offering lodging and work to other self-supporting women. Among them was Cordelia Ickles, a divorced mother who worked as a waitress and lived in the hotel with her daughter.[16]

By the time of Carrie's death in 1935, she had become "one of Neodesha's interesting and beloved characters, and a good, true woman who had done her life's work well."[17] Carrie had deeded the hotel to her son Jesse and his wife Sarah (Sadie) Boswell Brown in 1930. When Carrie, faced with failing health, finally retired on April 21, 1932, Jesse and Sadie assumed management of the hotel. Sadie and Jesse were married in Meadville, Pennsylvania on January 3, 1906.[18] They bought a home and moved to Neodesha in 1913.[19] Their niece, Marrian Boswell, followed the couple from Pennsylvania to Neodesha, where she lived with the Browns. Sadie and Jesse managed the hotel until 1939, when they sold the building. Jesse worked for the City of Neodesha until his death on September 5, 1946.[20] Sadie died on October 24, 1946.

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[12] "Brown Hotel: Leading Hostelry of Neodesha---Headquarters for Commercial Men and other Transients," *Neodesha Register*, 8 May 1896.
[13] "Mrs. Carrie L. Brown Died Monday Morning," *Neodesha Register* 1935. Although it is believed that Joseph reached adulthood, he preceded his mother in death.
[14] Kansas Census, 1915.
[15] Oral History of Irene Hefley by Hilda J. Fawcett, December 12, 1994.
[16] Ibid.
[17] "Mrs. Carrie L. Brown Died Monday Morning," *Neodesha Register* 1935.
[18] "Mrs. J. D. Brown Died at Hospital Wednesday," *Neodesha Record*, 24 October 1946.
[19] Kansas Census, 1915.
[20] "Jessie Brown Died This Morning," *Neodesha Record*, 5 September 1946.

Women in Business

Carrie Brown entered the business world at a time when women's roles in American society were in flux. In the Colonial period and early Republic, women routinely partnered with their husbands and families in the management of businesses, which they generally operated from home. As the United States became more industrialized and work and home life were bifurcated, women were idealized as "keepers of morality" – and their economic role faded.[21]

Between 1830 and 1880, however, several dynamics opened doors for businesswomen. In the nineteenth century, women's rights advocates lobbied for more favorable property laws and equal access to credit. In the mid nineteenth century, all the states passed laws related to women's property rights. Like that of many Western states, the Constitution of Kansas included a women's property clause. By 1870, 15 percent of women over the age of 15 were gainfully employed. Over 10 percent of those employed in the Midwest operated their own businesses. Many of them became businesswomen out of necessity, continuing family trades or taking on new work after the untimely death of a husband or father.[22]

Because of restrictive social norms and women's related lack of experience in roles outside of the home, the businesses of most nineteenth-century businesswomen were domestic in nature. Running a boarding house or small hotel was similar to managing a nineteenth-century household. In 1900, women owned and operated 85 percent of the nation's boarding houses.[23]

Women hoteliers were less common. Still, there were other Kansas women who managed hotels in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. When Carrie Brown decided to leave Coffeyville, she sold the Willard Hotel to Mrs. Ellen J. Hines, an older widow who managed the hotel with her son Harry.[24] By 1920, Carrie was not the only woman hotel proprietor in Neodesha. By then, Mary A. Steffy, a widow 16 years Carrie's junior, managed the Commercial Hotel at 108 N. 4th.[25]

Still, Carrie Brown's ability to manage a thriving business while assisting other self-supporting women was extraordinary.

The Brown Hotel

Carrie Brown came to Neodesha and purchased the Occidental Hotel in 1892. The hotel was a two-story frame building constructed in 1881 by H. C. Schley, a European who came to Kansas via Wisconsin and his wife Eva Schley.[26] The term "Occidental" was used to denote "European." The name, also used by hoteliers in Wichita and elsewhere, implied sophistication and, in this case, accurately described the origins of the proprietor.

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[21] Angel Kwolek-Folland, *Incorporating Women: A History of Women and Business in the United States* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), 54.
[22] Ibid, 49-57, 97.
[23] Ibid, 75, 125.
[24] U. S. Census, 1900; "Brown Hotel: Leading Hostelry of Neodesha---Headquarters for Commercial Men and other Transients," *Neodesha Register*, 8 May 1896.
[25] U. S. Census, 1920; Neodesha City Directory 1922-23.
[26] Kansas Census, 1885; "Early Neodesha Hotels," *Neodesha Register*, 3 February 1946; "Neodesha's Pioneer Women, *Neodesha Register*, 13 May 1976.

In August, 1895, after Carrie had operated the hotel for three years, a devastating fire consumed the Occidental and other adjacent buildings. The unshakable Mrs. Brown, who portrayed no outward signs of defeat wasted no time planning a permanent replacement. Carrie hired contractors Hennessey and Martin to replace the wood-framed wreck with a fire-resistant two-story brick building. A month after the fire, on September 18, 1895, stone contractor Henry Dooley began excavating for the new building's foundation.[27] There is some evidence that Carrie operated a temporary location in a "handsome 9-room cottage in a most desirable part of the city near the hotel" after the fire.[28] Remarkably, the new brick hotel, renamed the Brown, opened to the public on February 6, 1896, just five short months after fire destroyed the Occidental.[29]

The newspaper proclaimed "The Brown Hotel – barring none – is the best hotel in Southern Kansas."[30] The new building was L-shaped, with offices, parlor, dining room and kitchen on the first floor and twenty guest rooms on the second floor. It boasted oak furnishings, natural gas lighting, a cheery dining room, large lobby, sample room (in a separate building at the back of the lot) and "courteous corps of servants."[31]

Before the new hotel opened, Carrie and her sisters were already planning to expand. An 1896 article about the new hotel announced that "a wing of twenty rooms" would soon be added. The subsequent improvements ranged from small one-story additions to the hotel and free-standing sample room, to the construction of an adjoining two-story commercial block. The lot immediately adjacent to the hotel had remained undeveloped since the 1895 fire destroyed a one-story dwelling there. Carrie's half-sister Vada Harrison purchased the vacant lot on October 31, 1904 and took out a $5000 mortgage on November 19, 1904 to finance the construction of a new two-story brick building.[32]

Improvements to the 1896 hotel building coincided with the construction of the adjoining structure. Carrie added a painted wood porch, which extended from the front plane of the 1896 building to the front plane of the adjacent new building. The porch tied the two buildings together and provided a terrace for the hotel's permanent residents. The new building provided leaseable space which presumably helped finance the mortgage payment. In 1905, a "Fair Store" occupied the first floor of the new building.[33] "Fair Store" was a general term for a discount store. It was also a specific term referring to the chain of discount department stores that later became known as K-Mart. It is unclear whether Vada operated the store or leased it to a shopkeeper. By 1912, the "Fair Store" had been replaced by a harness shop, possibly associated with the two-story hardware store building constructed in the middle of the block between 1905 and 1912.[34]

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[27] "For the New Occidental Hotel – A Two Story Brick," *Neodesha Record*, 20 September 1895.
[28] "Brown Hotel: Leading Hostelry of Neodesha---Headquarters for Commercial Men and other Transients," *Neodesha Register*, 8 May 1896.
[29] Ibid.
[30] "Brown Hotel: Leading Hostelry of Neodesha---Headquarters for Commercial Men and other Transients," *Neodesha Register*, 8 May 1896.
[31] Ibid; Sanborn Maps.
[32] Wilson County Register of Deeds, Deed Index, Lot 3, Block 47, Neodesha Original Town.
[33] 1905 Sanborn Map.
[34] 1912 Sanborn Map.

In 1913, Carrie's son Jesse returned to Neodesha with his wife Sarah (Sadie) to help manage the Brown Hotel. Jesse and Sadie were among many who came to Neodesha from Pennsylvania, most of them laborers who left the Pennsylvania oil fields to labor in the oil fields near Neodesha. In their first years in Neodesha, Jessie and Sadie owned a home. By the 1920s, however, they were living in the front rooms of the hotel's second floor, where they "had a veranda on the porch roof and they had a door you could go out there from the landing near the stairway."[35]

As Carrie's household and Neodesha grew, so did the Brown Hotel. In 1922, Carrie added a two-story brick addition to the rear of the 1896 building. The addition provided space for a new kitchen, as well as adjacent living quarters for employees. The family continued to live in the older parts of the building, reserving the new rooms for guests and workers. Unlike the hurried construction of the 1896 building, the construction of the 1922 addition afforded a more thoughtful design executed in higher quality construction materials. It also allowed for the future possibility of separating the hotel building from the adjoining 1904 commercial block.

In 1930, having fulfilled her plans for the site, Carrie, then 82, deeded the hotel to her son Jesse. Still, she did not officially "retire" until 1932, three years before her death. Soon after Carrie's death, the adjacent building fell out of the family's ownership. The property had passed to Arizona Bonser's daughter Vera Little in 1928. In 1932, it passed back to Vada (then Vada Harrison Geiser Messick) who sold it to CR White in 1935. It is likely that the second floor of the building was converted from hotel rooms to apartments after this time. By the 1930s, any necessary space needed for guests and permanent residents could be found in the expanded hotel building.

Jesse and his wife Sadie continued to operate the hotel until 1939, when they sold the building to Harold and Mary Ellen Kelley. Thereafter, it was known as the Kelley Hotel. Harold Kelley was born in Iola on October 13, 1899. He and his wife Mary Ellen married on September 21, 1929. After Harold Kelley's untimely death on July 24, 1945, the hotel was owned by a rapid succession of owners.[36] Harold's widow Mary Ellen sold the hotel to Lon Johnson in 1946. In 1947, Mr. Johnson sold the hotel to WF Stroud, who sold it to Loris and Alice Thrailkill in 1947. They sold it to HG and Marie Carley in 1949. WR and Florence Clopton bought the hotel in 1954, and sold it to Eugene (Gene) and Margaret Long in 1957.[37]

The Longs, who also farmed in the area, operated the building as a hotel and bus station from 1957 until 1970. Gene Long was born in Colorado on April 6, 1918. He and his wife Margaret married on April 20, 1940. In 1970, a devastating hail storm left the building in ruins and forced the hotel to close. Although the Longs filed a mortgage on the building, presumably with the intent of restoring it, their efforts were unsuccessful. The Longs moved to Coffeyville where they operated the Coffeyville Transfer and Storage until Mr. Long's retirement in 1982.[38] After the hailstorm, the Kelley Hotel was left vacant until 1974 when Frederick and Carolyn Seaton bought it and announced plans to preserve the Neodesha landmark. The Seatons sold the building to Richard Seaton in 1979.[39]

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[35] Oral History of Irene Hefley by Hilda J. Fawcett, December 12, 1994.
[36] Social Security Death Index.
[37] Wilson County Register of Deeds, Deed Index.
[38] "Eugene Long" (obituary), *Coffeyville Journal* 17 December 1998.
[39] Wilson County Register of Deeds, Deed Index.

The building changed hands many times throughout the 1980s and 1990s, when owners included the Kansas State University Foundation and Charles Lowry. In 1994, the Lowrys sold the building to the Brown Hotel, Inc., an organization formed to preserve the building. The group received funding from the Heritage Trust Fund to help with preservation. Today, the buildings are being redeveloped as a hotel and conference center by The Pendleton Company, a Lenexa-based Real Estate Development Company owned by Neodesha natives.

19th and Early 20th Century Hotels

The history of the Brown Hotel falls into the broader context of the rise and fall of city hotels nationwide. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, hotels, particularly those in the west, were economic and social centers. In their study of the subject, Raitz and Jones argue that hotels were better indicators of a city's "personality and progress" than government buildings and churches.[40]

In the years before railroads, hotels, like Neodesha's Ohio House (opened 1870) were also stage coach stops.[41] After the arrival of the railroad, they provided a place for traveling salesmen to exhibit their wares. The Brown Hotel, with its spacious sample room, was called "the mecca of the commercial public."[42] Before apartment buildings, hotels served as temporary housing for prospective residents and bachelor entrepreneurs, such as Fred Badger, a 30-year-old newspaper editor who lived at the Brown Hotel in 1900.[43] Hotels also often housed a town's only commercial dining establishments. According to the Neodesha Register, Mrs. Brown was "one of the best caterers in the state," serving a menu that was "the equal of many of the so-called swell restaurants of the larger cities where fancy prices are charged."[44]

Because of the essential role they played in community life, their uninterrupted operation was imperative to the livelihood of a town. As in the case of Neodesha's Occidental, the loss of a hotel, through fire or natural disaster, was not uncommonly met with strong calls for reconstruction, often subsidized by business leaders and volunteer laborers.[45] In light of the labor necessary to construct a two-story brick and stone building in the nineteenth century, the efforts to complete the Brown Hotel in six months were extraordinary. In the early twentieth century, many modern fireproof hotels, such as the Hotel Ripley in Newton, Kansas, were financed through the sale of stock to community leaders. Investment was promoted as a civic duty by local newspapers who printed the names of stockholders on the front page.

By the 1930s, the luster of community hotels had begun to fade – due to a number of dynamics. Restaurants that were independent of hotels fed the town's residents. Apartment buildings, which became common after World War I, housed temporary residents and unmarried folk. Movie theaters entertained broad audiences. And roadside motels, situated along highways, which had begun to take precedence over the railroads, catered to travelers. As a result, many small-town hotels like the Brown lost their appeal.

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[40] Karl B. Raitz and John Paul Jones, III, "The City Hotel as Landscape Artifact and Community Symbol," *Journal of Cultural Geography*. V. 9, 1988, 28.
[41] Ibid.
[42] "Brown Hotel: Leading Hostelry of Neodesha---Headquarters for Commercial Men and other Transients," *Neodesha Register*, 8 May 1896.
[43] U. S. Census, 1900.
[44] Brown Hotel: Leading Hostelry of Neodesha---Headquarters for Commercial Men and other Transients," *Neodesha Register*, 8 May 1896.
[45] Raitz and Jones, 22.

Summary
The history of the Brown Hotel is interpretive of the commercial and social cycles of Neodesha. The building is significant for its association with the growth and development of Neodesha and as an example of an extant nineteenth-century hotel commissioned by an extraordinary businesswoman and her family.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property lies on Lots 1, 2 and 3, Block 47, less a parcel 6 ½" east and west and 30' north, out of the northeast corner of Lot 2. The nominated property includes both the 1896/1922 Brown Hotel building on Lots 1 and 2 and the ca. 1904 commercial building on Lot 3 constructed for commercial use on the main floor and additional hotel rooms on the second floor. The property is bounded by Main Street on the North, Sixth Street on the West, and an alley on the South.

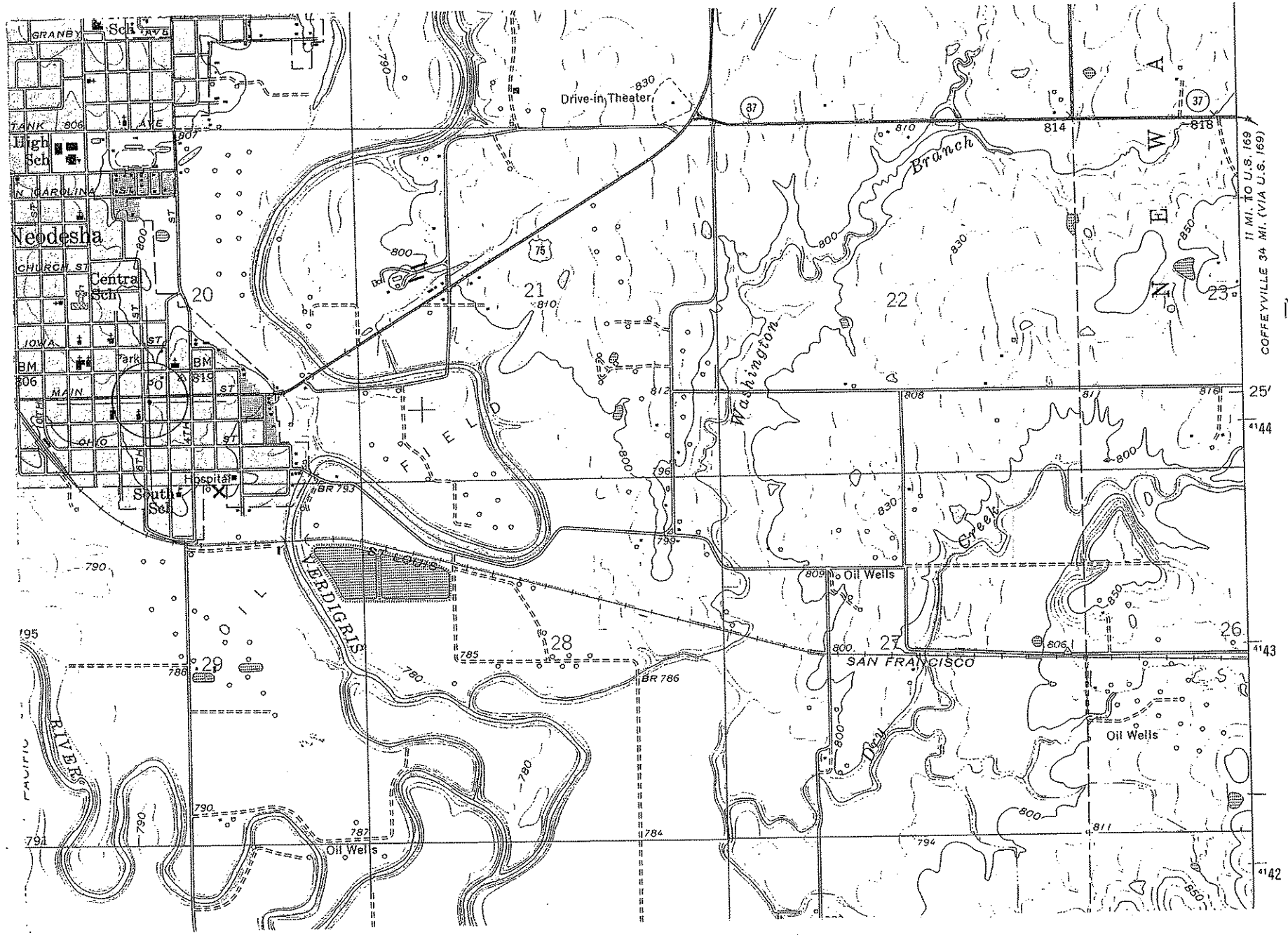
Boundary Justification

The property contains the two buildings associated with the Brown Hotel during the properties' ownership by Carrie Brown and her sisters Nevada Harrison and Columbia Hudspeth. Historically, the hotel spanned both buildings.

Photographic Information

Photographer: Christy Davis
Date: April 2007
Address: 519-523 Main Street
Digital negatives on file at the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka

1. Front elevations, ca. 1904 building (left), 1896 building (right)
2. Side elevation 1896 building and rear 1922 addition
3. Rear elevation, 1922 addition
4. Courtyard, 1922 addition
5. Exposed side elevation, ca. 1904 building
6. Courtyard
7. Rear elevation, ca. 1904 building
8. Close-up of pressed metal ceiling, veranda, 1896 building
9. Main stair, first floor, 1896 building
10. Pocket doors, first floor, 1896 building
11. Windows in 1922 addition
12. Stair rail, 2nd floor, 1896 building
13. 1st floor commercial space, ca. 1904 building
14. 2nd floor hallway, ca. 1904 building
15. 2nd floor bay, ca. 1904 building
16. Interior doors in apartment, 2nd floor, ca. 1904 building



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