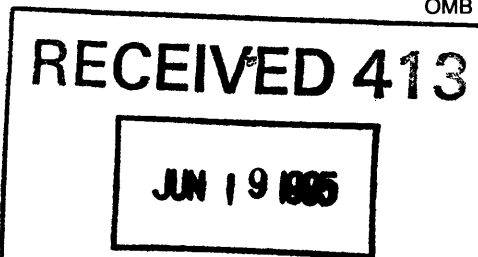


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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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, mark "N/A" where applicable. For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Brown Hotel

other names/site number 205-3930-0018

2. Location

street & number 523 Main Street  not for publication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.)

Richard D. Parkent D-SHPO June 14, 1995  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Kansas State Historical Society

State of 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- 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:)

Edson A. Beall Signature of the Keeper Entered in the National Register Date of Action 7/21/95

Brown Hotel

Name of Property

Wilson 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		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic; Hotel

Commerce; Restaurant

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Work in Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century

American movements;

Commercial style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: sandstone

walls Brick

roof Asphalt shingles

other

Narrative Description

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

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

- 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 is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

**Period of Significance**

1886-1930

**Significant Dates**

1886

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Dooley, Henry; builder

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**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:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

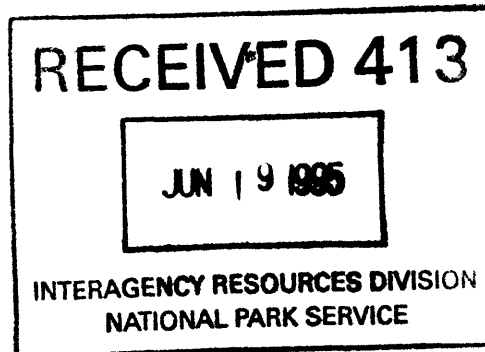
Kansas State Historical Society



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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The Brown Hotel (c. 1896) is located at 523 Main Street in Neodesha, Wilson County, Kansas (pop. 2,837). The two-story, ell-shaped brick hotel sits on a sandstone foundation and is surmounted by an asphalt shingled flat roof. The building has a northern facade orientation facing Main Street with a secondary elevation to the west facing Sixth Street. The main entrance is located at a 45 degree angle at the northwest corner of the building. A one-story, wooden, Classically inspired porch was added to the north facade in 1905. In 1922, a substantial brick addition was added to the south elevation, doubling the size of the hotel.

The Brown Hotel maintains a moderate degree of architectural integrity as an example of a two-part commercial block hotel. The building stands at the corner of Main and Sixth Streets and is part of a block of one and two story brick buildings along Main Street. The brick hotel contains restrained elements of both the Italianate and Classical styles. Italianate influences are found in the large rectangular windows with brick arches. The presence of the Classical style is found in the porch with its Tuscan columns and entablature.

The Brown Hotel was constructed in two phases, 1896 and 1922. The 1896 structure was an ell-shaped building with overall measurements of fifty feet north to south and seventy-five feet east to west. The Neodesha Register noted in the May 8, 1896 edition that the "building as it stands is not yet complete according to plans, there being a wing of twenty rooms to be added in the near future." It was not until 1922 that a forty feet by seventy feet brick addition with a basement was constructed on the south elevation.

The exterior of the hotel is constructed of brick. Brick arches surmount the windows and doors on the original 1896 hotel. Flat brick arches surmount the windows on the west and south elevations of the 1922 addition. Sandstone thresholds underscore all windows, except the ones located on the east elevation of the 1922 addition. An entablature with a corbelled brick triangular motif is located on the north and west facades of the building. A large chimney rises from the southeast corner. A c. 1922 photograph, before the addition, indicates that three chimneys rise from the roof of the west elevation, date removed unknown.

The first story of the north facade of the building is pierced by two doors and a cottage window. A cottage window refers to a window in which the meeting rails are placed above the horizontal midline of the opening, creating a top and bottom of different heights. A c. 1922 photograph indicates that the far east door was once a cottage window. The photograph also shows that a double door once pierced the north facade instead of the present single door flanked by two narrow windows. The second story is pierced by (going east to west) two 1/1 double hung sash windows, a small 1/1 double hung sash window surmounted by a square window, and a 1/1 double hung sash window. A c. 1922 photograph indicates that the small 1/1 double hung sash window surmounted by a square window replaces a door surmounted by a transom. An even earlier photograph, c. 1896, shows that this door was present before the porch was constructed in 1904. All openings are surmounted by brick arches.

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A one-story porch was added to the north elevation in 1904. Five Tuscan columns placed on the cement porch support a flat roof. The frieze is decorated with dentils. A tin ceiling surmounts the porch. A c. 1922 photograph indicates that there were originally seven columns and a railing for the second story porch. The railing was defined with turned spindles and a banister placed over each of the seven columns.

The first floor of the original 1896 west facade is pierced by three cottage windows and two doors. The far north window and far south door are boarded up. The second story is pierced by five 1/1 double hung sash windows. These openings are surmounted by brick arches. The first floor of the 1922 addition is pierced by two boarded up windows, a door, and four cottage windows. The upper sashes of the cottage windows are defined with diamond lights. The second story is pierced by six 1/1 double hung sash windows. Flat arches surmount all openings.

The entrance is at a 45 degree angle at the northwest corner of the building. A single door flanked by two narrow windows pierces the corner. A c. 1922 photograph indicates that this door replaces a double door. A 1/1 double hung sash window pierces the second story of the entrance corner. The door and window are surmounted by brick arches.

The first floor of the south elevation is composed of (going west to east) a board up window, a door, a boarded up window, and two 3/1 double hung sash windows. The second story is pierced by two 1/1 double hung sash windows, a door, and a 1/1 double hung sash window. All opening are surmounted with brick flat arches.

The east and south elevations face another building and an alley. The elevations are pierced with 1/1 double hung sash windows and three doors. Brick arches and sandstone thresholds surmount and underscore each window respectively in the 1896 building.

Fenestration is comprised mostly of 1/1 double hung sash windows in singular groupings. Cottage windows are located on the first floor on the north and west facades. The basement is pierced by twelve small windows: five on the west elevation, two on the south elevation, and five on the east elevation.

A non-extant crane was located at the rear of the annex. This crane was used to hoist the salesman's heavy sample cases from a wagon to the basement entryway. The cases were called Drummer's cases.

The interiors of the first and second floor retain their original floorplan and detailing reflecting the internal arrangement of a turn of the century hotel. The original 1896 first floor was comprised of the hotel lobby, sample room for salesman's trunk and wares, a dining room that served hotel guest and local citizens, a kitchen, and living space for the owner/manager.

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The hotel is entered at a 45 degree angle on the northeast corner. A single door flanked by two narrow windows pierces the corner. A c. 1922 photograph indicates that this door replaces a double door. The door and window surrounds throughout the entire hotel are defined with flat profiles. Wainscotting covers the lobby walls.

A pine, dog-legged staircase on the east wall of the lobby rises to the twenty hotel rooms on the second floor. The pine staircase is defined with a squared newel post and a solid railing. Both the railing and newel post are accented with panel inserts.

The 1922 addition added twelve guest rooms on the second floor. All doors on the second floor are surmounted with transoms. The first floor of the addition contains the banquet facilities. When the hotel was enlarge, the kitchen was relocated to the east wall of the banquet room. To the south of the kitchen is a bath and two sleeping rooms for the help. To the south of the banquet hall is a foyer and two rooms and a bath that served as manager's quarters.

The annex has a full basement with four rooms: a furnace room and three sample rooms. Three staircases give access to the basement. One staircase is located on the south elevation of the building. This entrance is where the salesmen lowered their trunks that needed to be placed in the basement sample rooms. Another entrance is located on the east elevation. This entrance leads either to the kitchen or the basement. The basement is also accessed from an internal staircase in the center of the building.

The hotel was remodelled in 1975. At this time the electrical system was rewired and the plumbing was replaced. The first story was also converted into four offices, the second story converted into four apartments, and the front porch was restored. In 1994, the Brown Hotel was purchased by a non-profit organization called "Friends of the Brown Hotel" for the purpose of restoring it as a fine dining facility and Bed and Breakfast. The Brown Hotel maintains a moderate degree of architectural integrity as an example of a two-part commercial block hotel.

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The Brown Hotel (c. 1896) is being nominated to the National Register under criterion A for its historical association with the growth and development of Neodesha, Kansas and under criterion C for its architectural significance as a late nineteenth century commercial hotel.

The Brown Hotel maintains a moderate degree of architectural integrity as an example of a two-part commercial block hotel. The building stands at the corner of Main and Sixth Streets and is part of a block of one and two story brick buildings along Main Street. The brick hotel contains restrained elements of both the Italianate and Classical styles. Italianate influences are found in the large rectangular windows with brick arches. The presence of the Classical style is found in the porch with its Tuscan columns and entablature.

"Town building preoccupied a large portion of the westward-moving populace. Many Americans shared the dream that their own communities would one day emerge as great urban centers. The size and extent of a community's commercial buildings served as an index to its achievements and its potential. Even in the frontier town, many of the earliest and finest permanent buildings were erected to house those commercial enterprises. Businesses were intentionally clustered in more or less central districts....The individuality of the emporiums, offices, banks, hotels and theaters that made up these areas was important to their collective image." (Longstreth, p.13)

The Brown Hotel, situated along the once busy Main Street, integrated itself into the community by catering to the commercial trade. As traveling salesmen worked their way west, the Brown Hotel became a logical stop because of the sample rooms, created specifically for salesmen to lay out their wares. A crane was even located south of the addition to hoist the salesmen's heavy sample cases out of the baggage wagon, sent to the train station by the hotel, into the basement entry way.

In 1869, Neodesha Townsite was founded by John B. Keys, Robert S. Futhey, Alexander K. Phelon and Dr. Allen R. McCartney. These four founders shared equally in the cost of the land. Dr. McCartney named the town Neodesha, an Indian word of Osage dialect meaning "the meeting of wooded waters." The 240 acre townsite, a flattish knoll between the Fall and Verdigris Rivers, was first surveyed in July 1869 by A. H. Perry. It was the first townsite in the Osage Diminished Reserve to be entered at the U.S. Land office in Humbolt, Kansas in July of 1871.

In February of 1870, the Ohio House was the first hotel built in Neodesha and served as a stage coach stop. Between 1871 and 1881, four additional hotels were built: The Neodesha House (later known as Commercial House and then the Commercial Hotel), Tannerhill's Boarding and Rooming House (later known as Tannerhill's Inn), the Houston Hotel and the Hotel Occidental. These hotels are non-extant. Neodesha was incorporated as a third class city in 1871 with a population of 1,043.

In 1879-1880, the coming of the railroad, the St. Louis W & W Railroad (Frisco), the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe, and the St. Louis and San Francisco Company (Missouri and Pacific) brought new businesses and prosperity to Neodesha. On November 28, 1892, the historic oil well, Norman



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#1, was drilled. It was the first commercial oil well drilled west of the Mississippi and opened the Mid-Continent Field.

Discovery of oil brought about the construction of a refinery. The boom in the city created a need for added hotels. Neodesha began to experience benefits of the new oil industry as gas lines were laid supplying gas to the city for lights and fuel. The gas was so plentiful that the gas street lights and gas hotel lights were left burning day and night. The saying was "the only thing you used a match for was to light your cigar!" Neodesha's oil was displayed at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893.

Carrie Brown, a widow, began construction of the Brown Hotel in 1895 after the Occidental Hotel burned to the ground in an August 1895 fire. Before coming to Neodesha, Mrs. Brown ran the Tremont House in Parsons, Kansas and a hotel in Coffeyville. After her hotel in Coffeyville was damaged during Dalton's Raid, she sold out to Mrs. H. J. Hines and moved to Neodesha. Mrs. Brown purchased the Occidental Hotel in 1892. The Occidental burned with an estimated loss of \$7,000.

The September 20, 1895 edition of the Neodesha Register noted that "Wednesday morning Henry Dooley, stone contractor under Hennessey & Martin, contractors and builders, began excavating for the foundation of a brick hotel on the site of the old Occidental. The contract was given (to) Hennessey & Martin by Mrs. Carrie L. Brown, who is thus showing characteristic Kansas pluck and energy by causing a better building to rise from the ashes of the old. When completed the value of the property will be about \$6000 and will be a first class property." The Brown Hotel was completed with a final cost of \$10,000.

The Brown Hotel was open to the public on February 6, 1896. The May 8, 1896 edition of the Neodesha Register stated "The Brown Hotel -barring none- is the best hotel in Southern Kansas.... It was recently completed; it is of brick, two stories in height and contains twenty rooms, newly furnished in handsome oak."

"A courteous corps of servants attend to the wants of patrons. The menu served is the equal of many of the so-called swell restaurants of the larger cities where fancy prices are charged. The rates of this hotel -\$2 per day- are exceedingly low for the attention shown and the living received. The hotel is the mecca of the commercial public. This house enjoys a large portion of the commercial trade, and is always crowded with this class of guests." (Neodesha Register, May 8, 1896)

"With the help of her two sisters, Mrs. Brown operated an outstanding facility with fine room accommodations, a large dining room where excellent meals were served-thus making it one of the most popular in southeast Kansas." (Neodesha Register, May 13, 1896)

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By 1904, in addition to the oil refinery, industry in the community included a glass plant, a smelter and a cement plant. Thirteen new businesses were under construction. The Brown Hotel served the community in many ways: lodging for prospective industrial leaders, a meeting place for social events, a dining room for the community and a place for civic clubs to meet.

A ten by fifty foot veranda was added to the hotel in 1904. "The Brown Hotel is having a fine porch built along the north side. It has a cement floor and unusually large posts. The top will be floored above and a tin roof for the veranda." (Clipping file, Joe Allen)

In 1922, a substantial rear addition was added. "The city commission Monday night granted permission for the erection of a two story addition to the Brown Hotel....The new structure will be 40x70 feet, two stories high, entirely of brick. There will be three sample rooms on the lower floor, a private dining room with a seating capacity of near 100, and the help's quarters which will be provided with both tub and shower baths. The second floor will be entirely utilized with twelve guest rooms, each with private bath and modern in every detail." (Neodesha Register, September 21, 1922)

Carrie Brown operated the Brown Hotel from 1896 to 1930. She deeded the hotel to her son, Jess at her death in 1930. While Jess Brown managed the hotel, its most famous guest was Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys. "Wills and his western wing band stayed at the hotel in 1941 after performing a concert during a rodeo in Neodesha. Reportedly, Wills got drunk and tore up his room." (Dodge City Daily Globe, February 17, 1995) Irene Hefley remembers when her mother, a maid at the hotel, took her up to see the room. The "mattress was slashed to pieces from his spurs. The carpet, wall paper and plaster was even damaged. Bottles had been opened and they squirted up to the ceiling." Ms. Hefley also noted that Bob Wills never made it to the concert.

Since the 1940s, it has had a number of owners and various businesses. In 1994, the Brown Hotel was purchased by a non-profit organization called "Friends of the Brown Hotel" for the purpose of restoring it as a fine dining facility and Bed and Breakfast.

The Brown Hotel maintains a moderate degree of architectural integrity as an example as a two-part commercial block hotel. The building stands at the corner of Main and Sixth Streets and is part of a block of one and two story brick buildings along Main Street.

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Clipping file, Joe Allen, historian. Rankin Memorial Library, Neodesha, Kansas.

Hefley, Irene. Interview by Hilda Fawcett December 12, 1994.

Longstreth, Richard. The Buildings of Main Street. Washington D. C.: The Preservation Press, 1987.

Neodesha Register, September 20, 1895; May 8, 1896; September 21, 1922; May 13, 1976

Porter, Billie. "Brown Hotel." National Register nomination drafts, 1994.

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated property stands on Lots 1 and 2 in Block 47, less a strip 6 1/2" east and west and 30' north, out of the northeast corner of said Lot 2. The property is bounded to the north by Main Street, to the west by Sixth Street, to the south by an alley and to the east by adjacent property lines.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary contains all property historically associated with the nominated building.