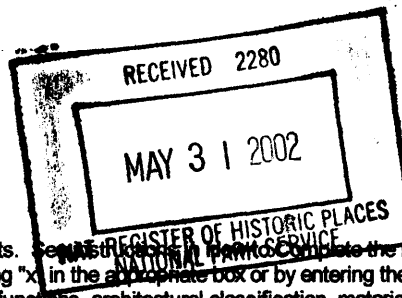


**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

1764



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

**1. Name of Property**

historic name GRENOLA MILL AND ELEVATOR  
other names/site number GRENOLA ELEVATOR MUSEUM

**2. Location**

street & number RAILROAD AVENUE not for publication   
city or town GRENOLA vicinity \_\_\_\_\_  
state KANSAS code KS county ELK code 049 zip code 67346

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this XX 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 XX meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide XX locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard D. Pankratz  
Signature of certifying official

May 24, 2002  
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 or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this 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): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]  
Signature of Keeper Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]

7/11/02

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>    </u> buildings
<u>    </u> public-local	<u>    </u> district	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> sites
<u>    </u> public-State	<u>    </u> site	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> structures
<u>    </u> public-Federal	<u>    </u> structure	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>    </u> 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)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE

STORAGE, GRAIN ELEVATOR,  
WAREHOUSES

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE

MUSEUM

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER; UTILITARIAN

GRAIN ELEVATOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof METAL; STEEL

walls WOOD; WEATHERBOARD

METAL; STEEL

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

See 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.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a 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.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCE

**Period of Significance**

1909 - 1944

**Significant Dates**

1909, 1944

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

P.H. PELKEY COMPANY - ARCHITECT  
R.M. VAN NESS COMPANY - BUILDER

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

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

**Name of repository:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** LESS THAN ONE ACRE

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 14 725930 4136370 3 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_

**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 DOROTHY KEPLINGER

organization GRENOLA HISTORICAL SOCIETY date DECEMBER 2001

street & number 2102 ROAD 2

telephone 316-358-3241

city or town GRENOLA

state KS zip code 67346

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name GRENOLA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

street & number BOX 111

telephone 620-358-3241

city or town GRENOLA

state KS zip code 67346

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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The Grenola Mill and Elevator (c. 1909) is located at Grenola on a siding of the South Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad Company (formerly the mainline of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad, Southern Kansas Division) in Elk County, standing one mile south of U.S. Highway 160 and east of Main Street, Grenola. The complex is comprised of a studded, balloon frame country grain elevator, a frame mixing room, a frame storage warehouse and scales. The complex once included a cob house which is non-extant. The siding remains intact although it has not been used for nearly 20 years. A frame one-room schoolhouse stands on the east edge of the property. The entire complex is now the Grenola Elevator Museum.

The integrity of the grain elevator is moderately high, although basic changes in technology have affected its appearance. Electricity replaced the original gasoline engine. The elevator was still in working order when it closed in 1985. The man lift is operable. The metal siding and roofs are original to the building. The scales are intact and can be used.

The Grenola elevator is an example of a studded balloon frame country elevator with a 15,000 bushel capacity. The elevator is a building with ten internal grain bins built on the principle of balloon frame construction. Wooden studs are employed as vertical members. The studs are planked over on the interior to form bins. The Grenola elevator is sheathed with metal sheets which provide some degree of protection against weather and the fire hazard of sparks from railroad steam engines.

At first, planks were used to tilt the wagon. When farmers started using trucks to bring grain to the elevator, a lift was installed to raise the front end of the truck to unload it. Large scales were installed when the loads became too heavy for the original 5 ton Fairbanks wagon scale. Grain was dumped into an 8' by 9' dump tank set in concrete below the driveway. The grain traveled up to the cupola by way of a vertical belt and bucket conveyor. The grain could then be spouted unto railroad cars or storage bins. The elevator is a rectangular structure with a southern façade orientation. The elevator measures 28' from east to west and 34' from north to south and it stands 34' tall. It is capped by a cupola that measures 22' from east to west by 12' from north to south and standing 22' high. An office projects from the elevator's southern elevation measuring 28' from east to west and 12' from north to south and standing 8' tall. An 8' by 8' addition to the west side of the office was built in the thirties to house the Mosler Safe

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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acquired from the bankrupt Grenola State Bank. The scales whose platform measures 9' by 18' stand in front of the office.

The mixing room is attached to the west wall of the elevator. It measures 47'6" by 21' and stands 10' high. There are two bins in the mixing room. The inside is laid in yellow pine 1x8 ship lap. The outside is sheeted with yellow pine ship lap and covered with 1½" corrugated galvanized iron. Along the south side of the mixing room is a 5' concrete loading platform.

A warehouse measuring 70' from east to west and 28' from north to south and standing 10' high is connected to the west wall of the mixing room. Both the mixing room and warehouse have gable roofs covered with galvanized metal roofing.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The Grenola Mill and Elevator (c. 1909) is being nominated to the National Register under criteria A and C for its historical association with the development of small family farms in southeastern Kansas and for its architectural significance as a complex that includes a studded, balloon-frame country grain elevator, mixing room and warehouse.

The complex is located at Grenola in Elk County about one mile south of US Highway 160. Grenola, established in 1879, is a small town in southeastern Kansas located between Winfield and Independence.

The country grain elevator, the mixing room, and warehouse are all connected and they stand as part of a complex that once included a cob house. The siding, which connects the grain elevator with the railroad, is intact. A frame, one-room rural schoolhouse has been relocated on the east edge of the property.

The integrity of the grain elevator is moderately high although basic changes in technology have affected its appearance. Conversion to electric power did away with the need for drive pulleys, line shafts, and belts, and eliminated the engine room. The man lift, still operable, is powered by hand. The metal siding is original to the building.

The first Grenola mill had burned in November of 1908. The farmers now had to go many miles to take their crops to market. The local newspaper (Grenola Leader, 14 January 1909) urged the people to form a stock company to put up a new mill and elevator for the farmers. It was pointed out that when farmers had to take crops to other towns, they also purchased supplies there, thus affecting the economy of Grenola.

A stock company was organized with a capital stock of \$7,500 for the purpose of building a mill and elevator in Grenola. The officers were J.R. Mann, President, F.E. Shrader, Vice-President, J.R. Demmitt, Secretary and Treasurer. Stockholders were J.R. Demmitt, E.A. Mann, C.E. Thompson, J.R. Mann, A. A. Denton, W. B., Denton, H.M. Thompson, D.E. Ware, E. Scyphers, Bowden Brothers, L.K. Clark, F.E. Shrader, and E.L. Downs. (Grenola Leader, 25 February 1909)

In March of 1909, the P.H. Pelkey Company, whose address was given as 157 N. Market, Turner Building, Rooms 18, 20 and 22, Wichita, KS, drew up the blue prints for the mill and elevator. Bids for the building of the elevator were advertised. (Grenola Leader, 11 March 1909)

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In June, it was reported that the contract had been awarded to the R.M. Van Ness Construction Company of Fairbury, Nebraska. (Grenola Leader, 10 June 1909)  
Van Ness agreed to build and complete and put into good working order the following buildings - one grain elevator, one warehouse, one cob house, one engine room, one office - for the consideration of \$5,800.

The R.M. VanNess Company specialized in elevator construction. It appears to be a family business operated by R.M. and his two sons, J.W. and R.H. Correspondence from R.M. VanNess indicates that at about the same time, the company was building elevators at Coldwater, Stockton, and Morrowville.

Construction began on the foundation on July 1, 1909. (Grenola Leader, 1 July 1909)  
The newspaper reported that there was a labor dispute. Some of the laborers who were working 10 hours and getting \$2 struck for 8 hours and \$1.75. The contractor did not see it their way. He hired all new workers except for one fellow who decided to stay on. The newspaper reported that it was not much trouble to get \$2 day hands. (Grenola Leader, 5 August 1909)

On December 2, 1909, the newspaper reported that the elevator had been running a few hours daily the past week to try out the machinery and to see that everything was in order. The first ad appears in the December 22, 1909, newspaper. It reads "The Grenola Mill and Elevator is completed and ready for business. We are in the market for all kinds of grain. We will be glad to have you call and see us. We solicit your business." J.R. Demmitt was the manager of the elevator.

Corn was a major crop grown in Kansas up through the middle 1920's and every elevator had a corn sheller. (Schoeff) Grenola had a corn sheller and a cob house. A spout on the outside of the east wall conveyed the cobs to the cob house. The north third of the cob house was partitioned off for a dust bin to receive the dust from the grain cleaner. Two spouts protruded from the east wall of the elevator, one conveyed the cobs and the other the dust. The cob spout has been removed but the dust spout is still intact. Disposal of the cobs was a problem. In Grenola, the cobs were given to the local citizens to burn in their wood stoves. By the fifties, less corn was grown and the cob house was no longer needed. For a short time, it was used to store fertilizer. It was finally torn down in the sixties.



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A McVickers gasoline engine provided the original power. The engine room was in the east part of the office. An employee related how each morning he would go through the office, walk down some steps and start the engine. A big belt ran from the pulley on the motor to power the conveyors, the roller mill and the hammer mill. The elevator was not changed to electric power until around 1954 although there were electric lights as early as 1916. An electric lift was put in to unload the trucks. Also in the 1950's concrete ramps replaced the planks and a concrete loading platform was built along the south side of the mixing room. Water was hooked up. Until this time, the elevator did not have running water or an indoor restroom. A well in the engine room had provided water. The office was remodeled and the part that was the engine room was converted into a restroom.

J.R. (Ralph) Demmitt managed the elevator from 1909 until 1944 with ownership remaining the same. In April of 1929, Demmitt caught his right hand between the belt and the pulley. His arm was pulled out of the socket at the shoulder, the elbow joint twisted and the muscles torn. (Grenola Leader, 2 May 1929). Years later, in March of 1944, he was under the floor of the mixing room cleaning out the grinder. An employee turned on the switch. Demmitt's right hand was caught in the machinery. The arm had to be amputated just below the elbow. This loss of his arm led to his decision to sell the elevator. The Durbin and Sheel Feed Store of Moline purchased the elevator in June of 1944. John Bacus became the new manager. Bacus later purchased the Durbin interest.

In July, 1972, Gary and Lowell Kinnaman purchased the elevator from Bacus and Sheel. In May of 1979, Lowell Kinnaman bought his brother Gary's interest. Merle Hey was employed to manage the business.

By the eighties, it was evident that the country grain elevator was no longer a profitable business. There were many reasons for this. The small family farm had practically vanished. In southeastern Kansas, many wheat fields were sown back to grass. Cattle ranches became the norm. The rural population began shifting to the city. Grenola's population dropped to around 300. The businesses that once lined Main Street were closed. Trucks competed with the railroads for the transportation of grain. Rail lines were shut down. It was now possible for the farmer to truck his grain to larger elevators. A large concrete facility could replace 15 old wooden elevators. Simply, what has rendered country elevators obsolete is their limited storage capacity, the development of new and safer building materials and changes in technology. (Selyem)

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Continuation Sheet**

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In 1981, The Grenola elevator was sold again. Ralph Lewis and R.W. Lenington became the new owners. Their brother-in-law, Kenneth Miller, purchased an interest in the business and was the manager from September, 1982 until June, 1984. The elevator closed in 1985. An auction was held and everything that could be moved out was sold. The building was auctioned for \$5,000. The new owner never reopened and he never paid any taxes. In 1989, the Grenola Historical Society purchased the building for \$200 at a sheriff's auction. The old country elevator became the Grenola Elevator Museum. The grand opening was held the first weekend in May of 1990. It has been in continuous operation since that date.

The useful life of a country elevator was estimated to be about 40 years. The Grenola elevator was in operation for 76 years. Local people banded together to raise the capital to build it. It became the focal point of the community. Farmers gathered there to drink coffee, to visit with friends and to exchange news. It stands as a monument to the simple, agricultural life of earlier years.

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Section number 9 Page 1

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### SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Co. Exhibit A from lease with the Grenola Mill and Elevator Co. 26 January 1909.

Grenola Gazette. 30 March 1944, 22 June 1944, 22 May 1952.

Grenola Leader. 26 November 1908, 14 January 1909, 25 February 1909, 11 March 1909, 10 June 1909, 5 Augusts 1909, 10 June 1909, 1 July 1909, 22 December 1909, 16 September 1916, 23 September 1915.

Hawkins, Charles. Interview with Dorothy Keplinger, 28 May 2001, (Elevator Employee, 1946-1961).

Kinnaman, Gary. Interview with Dorothy Keplinger, 8 July 2001. (Elevator Owner).

Lehrack, Otto J. Letter to J.W. VanNess, 31 August 1909.

P.H. Pelkey Construction Company. Specification for Studded Elevator to be built for Grenola Mill and Elevator Company, Plan No. 31209.

Sanborn Map Company. Map of Grenola, Elk County, KS. September, 1927.

Schoeff, Robert W., "The Grain Elevator," The Rise of the Wheat State: A History of Kansas Agriculture, 1861-1986, ed. George E. Ham and Robin Higham. (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 1987).

Selyem, Barbara Krupp. "The Legacy of Country Grain Elevators", Grain Journal, (July/August, 2000).

South Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad Company. Quit Claim Deed to Grenola Historical Society, 16 April 1996.

VanNess, J.W. Letter to Frank Warden, 2 September 1909.

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VanNess, R.M. Contract with Grenola Mill and Elevator Company, 5 June 1909.

VanNess, R.M. Letter to J.R. Demmitt, 17 July 1912.

Wolfe, David. Interview with Dorothy Keplinger, 10 July, 2001.  
(Elevator Employee, 1967-1979).

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property is located on a tract of land in the SW/4, Section 17, T-32-S, R-9-E. of Greenfield Township, Elk county, Kansas, standing one mile south of US Highway 160 and east of Grenola's Main Street.

The legal description is "beginning at a point 22'4" north of the NW corner of Block 14, then north to point 23' southerly and normally distant from the center line of the main track of the former AT & SF Railroad, then easterly parallel to said track to a point 23' southerly and normally distant from said track and parallel to the east side of block 14, then south to a point 22'4" north of the northeast corner of block 14, then west to point of beginning." The tract contains approximately .6 acres.

The original lease dated January 20, 1909, between the Grenola Mill and Elevator and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, Southern Kansas Division, Main Line, Second District, was for a tract of land 100' by 75'. More land was leased as the business expanded.

Legal description is from a quit claim deed dated May 30, 1996, when the tract of land was purchased from the South Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad Company by the Grenola Historical Society.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes a tract of land which contains the nominated grain elevator, mixing-grinding room, and storage warehouse. The grain elevator stands as part of a complex that included a cob house and scales. The cob house is non-extant. The scales are intact. The eastern part of the tract contains an early 1900 rural schoolhouse which is part of the museum complex.

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**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

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**Photographs**

Grenola Mill and Elevator  
Grenola, Elk County, KS  
Dorothy Keplinger  
February 2002  
Kansas State Historical Society

1/4 southwest view, north (track side) and east elevations  
2/4 northwest view, east and south elevations  
3/4 northeast view, south and west elevation  
4/4 interior view of pulley mechanism