

798

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

JUL 25 2005  
RECEIVED 2280  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 Lane County Community High School  
Other name/site number Dighton High School

### 2. Location

Street & number 200 S. Wichita Avenue  not for publication  
City or town Dighton  vicinity  
State Kansas Code KS County Lane Code 101 Zip code 67839

### 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.)

[Signature] 7/21/05  
Signature of certifying official/Title Kansas State Historical Society Date

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 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:)

[Signature] 9/6/05  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
Wilson H. Beall

**Historic Public Schools of Kansas**  
**Lane County Community High School, Lane County, Kansas**

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
2	1	total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

Historic Public Schools of Kansas

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter Categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: ART DECO

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Concrete

Walls: Brick

Roof: Synthetic

Other: Stone detailing

**Narrative Description**

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

**Historic Public Schools of Kansas**  
**Lane County Community High School, Lane County, Kansas**

---

**8. Statement of Significance**

---

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
  
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
  
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
  
- D** Property has yielded, or likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
  
- B** removed from 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

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

---

ARCHITECTURE

---

---

---

---

**Period of Significance**

1927 - 1955

---

---

---

**Significant Dates**

1936 - 1938

---

---

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

---

**Cultural Affiliation**

---

---

**Architect/Builder**

Glen H. Thomas, Architect; M.C. Foy, Contractor - SCHOOL

---

A.N. Pomeroy, Designer - STADIUM

---

---

**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:

Lane County Historical Society Museum and Dighton High School



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section: 7 Page: 1

**Historic Public Schools of Kansas  
Lane County Community High School, Lane County, Kansas**

**Narrative Description**

Lane County Community High School in Dighton was constructed in 1936 through the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (PWA). The stadium at the rear of the school was constructed through the Works Projects Administration and completed in 1938. Both structures are excellent examples of New Deal Era resources in Kansas.

The school was designed by architect Glen H. Thomas of Wichita, best-known for his design of Wichita North High School. The Lane County school features similar detailing with stone bas relief panels depicting a Kansas icon, the bison. The school is a two-story blond brick building with a flat roof capped with stone. It is comprised of three distinct forms: the main building, the gymnasium on the south, and auditorium on the north. The plan form is a "U" shape; the gymnasium and auditorium are recessed and extend beyond the rear of the main building forming the "U" shaped plan. The main building is symmetrical with projecting end wings and a central entry defined by a short, square tower with a pyramidal roof. "Lane County Community High School" is inscribed in stone relief over the central entrance. There are separate entrances into the gymnasium and auditorium on the front facade, each inscribed in stone relief, like the main entrance.

Site

The school is located on South Wichita Avenue southeast of downtown Dighton. The building faces west, fronting Wichita Avenue. The school site is bordered on the south by E. Vine Street, and E. Pearl Street on the north. This tract of land was the original site of a two-story brick high school (located at the north end of the existing stadium) constructed in 1917. After the existing school was constructed, the old school was demolished by WPA labor and the bricks salvaged for construction of the Vo-Ag building behind the new school. Following completion of the Vo-Ag Building, WPA labor was used to build an earth mound stadium with native stone bleachers. The 1937 WPA Vo-Ag building was demolished to make room for a 1975 rear expansion that spans from the rear of the original school building to the WPA stadium located east of the school. At that time, a metal shop building was constructed across Pearl Street, north of the school, to serve as industrial arts and vocational agriculture classrooms.

Stadium

The 1937 WPA stadium included a football field, quarter-mile track, and bleachers on the west side of the field at the rear of the school. The stadium bleachers are an earth mound structure with limestone stepped bleachers and perimeter walls with corner piers. The perimeter walls and piers have a concrete cap. The original stadium design included croquet courts, a horseshoe pit and tennis courts between the school and the stadium. These features were removed for the 1975 expansion. A short stone wall has been extended around the perimeter of the track. The stadium is intact and retains its original character.

Exterior

Constructed of reinforced concrete and brick, the 1936 PWA school embodies characteristics of the Art Deco style. The rectangular form is articulated with projecting and recessed bays and a stepped roof line. Each of the three primary entrances on the front (west) facade is defined by projecting brick pilasters with stone bas relief panels at the top. Carved stone detailing further defines each entry bay. The stone detailing is primary geometric in form, with the exception of the bison panels. The diamond and chevron shapes are characteristic of the Art Deco Style. "Lane County Community High School, Gymnasium and Auditorium" are inscribed in bas relief over each respective entrance. The main central entrance is further distinguished by a short, square tower with a pyramidal roof. Ashlar stone horizontal bands at the sill of the ground floor windows and lintel of the upper windows extend around the entire building. Additionally, there are built-in scuppers at the roof line with copper downspouts around the building.

The front facade of the main building (comprised of five bays), is symmetrical. The projecting end bays are plain brick walls with no fenestration. The center bay is the tower with the main building entrance. Flanking the center bay are bays comprised of four tripartite windows on each floor. The windows and doors have been replaced. The original windows were multi-pane steel windows. The replacement windows retain the original masonry openings and proportions of the original windows but are single, fixed-pane with single-pane transoms. The doors are contemporary aluminum framed, glass doors but they do maintain a transom panel over the doors.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section: 7 Page: 2

**Historic Public Schools of Kansas  
Lane County Community High School, Lane County, Kansas**

The gymnasium is located on the south end of the building, deeply recessed from the facade of the main building. The gymnasium is asymmetrical with the entrance offset toward the north. Unlike the sets of three windows on the main building, the gymnasium has single windows. Ground floor windows are short, single-pane windows with no transom, upper windows are a single pane transom over single pane window like the main building.

The auditorium is located on the north end of the building. It is recessed like the gymnasium. The auditorium is also asymmetrical with the entry bay located toward the south. The west (front) facade of the auditorium is stepped, forming an L shaped plan. Ground level windows are short, single-pane windows like on the gymnasium; upper windows include both single pane and single pane with transom.

The north side of the original building is the auditorium. It is asymmetrical, primarily solid brick walls with subtle projecting brick pilasters. Pilasters frame the two central bays, originally with sets of three windows per floor. The windows have been covered but the original masonry openings are evident.

The gymnasium, on the south end of the original building, is also asymmetrical. Comprised of six bays, the south facade is defined by vertical projecting pilasters, with regularly spaced windows in each bay. The center four bays have three windows per floor; bays one and six have two openings per floor. A door provides ground level access at the rear of the gymnasium in the 6<sup>th</sup> bay.

A 1975 rear addition nearly doubled the size of the school. The addition is red brick with a flat roof and corrugated metal band at the top of the building. The addition includes a two-story gymnasium on the south end, behind the original gymnasium, and one-story cafeteria, classroom, and office space on the north half. The addition is simple and utilitarian and publicly visible only from the secondary facades.

Interior

Upon completion of the school in 1927, it was touted to be "modern" in design, with every amenity previously only found in large city schools. The new school reflected architectural and educational trends emerging from the Progressive Era. As was typical of schools of this period, the new high school had customized spaces designed for specific uses. A new trend was the provision of separate auditoriums and gymnasiums, and this was a distinguishing characteristic of the Lane County school. A description of the new school was published in the May 20<sup>th</sup>, *Dighton Herald*, 1937:

*Corridors were lined with marble (actually terrazzo floors with glazed block wainscoting), with built-in display cases. The Little Theater was perhaps the most useful and versatile room in the new school. It served as headquarters of the music department but was designed to be used for a variety of purposes including club meetings, banquets and dinners. Adjacent to the Little Theater was the PTA kitchen which also opened to the gymnasium for larger banquets.*

*The Home Economics department included a kitchen featuring individual workspaces with sinks and Westinghouse ranges, a dining room, a clothing room with sewing machines and an adjoining fitting room. The Science Department included discussion, experiment and supply rooms. Tables had stainless steel tops with running water and electrical outlets at each station.*

*The new high school auditorium was designed to seat 800, 600 on the main floor and 200 in the balcony. The auditorium stage was equipped with an advanced lighting system and the windows had drapes to control lighting for use during the day. On the opposite end of the building, the gymnasium had a capacity of 600. The new facilities boasted a good lighting system and electronic scoreboard. Shower and locker rooms were located beneath the bleachers. A cover was provided for the floor so that the gymnasium could be used for large banquets.*

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section: 7 Page: 3

**Historic Public Schools of Kansas  
Lane County Community High School, Lane County, Kansas**

The interior of the school retains much of its original character today. Terrazzo floors are extant in the corridors and bathrooms. The corridors retain the original glazed block wainscoting and plaster walls. The original doors – nine light over four panel wood doors with operable single-pane transoms, are also in place. The upper lights on the doors feature opaque panels around the perimeter with a clear center pane. Suspended ceilings have been installed in the main corridors to accommodate mechanical upgrades however, the original plaster ceilings and original light fixtures are in place at the foyer at the gymnasium entrance on the south end of the building. The corridors also feature a common feature of the period – clerestory windows. The original multi-paned steel clerestory windows are extant in some locations. The original built-in display cases are also in place.

Stairways, located at the north and south ends of the central corridor, are near original condition with terrazzo stairs and cast-iron railings with a wood cap. Most classrooms retain original features and finishes. There has been some alteration of classrooms to meet the changing needs of the school. Some classrooms have been reconfigured requiring new door openings, but the original doors are easily distinguished.

The school retains its basic plan configuration. The original configuration was fairly simple. The main building was a rectangular form with a central corridor and stairways on each end, anchored by the gymnasium on the south and auditorium on the north. Fire doors have been installed in the corridors to meet current building codes. The school has a basement that is used primary for mechanical space. The boiler room functioned as a Civil Defense Shelter for many years.

The school served the community well. It was almost forty years before any major alterations were undertaken. During this time, the school experienced steady growth. The community approved bonds to finance a million dollar expansion project in the mid-1970s. Completed in 1975, the addition was designed by architects Woods & Starr; Pierce-Schippers Construction Co. was the general contractor. The project included a new gymnasium on the south end, behind the original gym, a new common area that serves as the cafeteria, new bathrooms, a library, a new band and home economics classrooms, and district offices.

Originally, the cafeteria and Little Theater were located in the center of the main building, across from the main entrance. This area was most impacted by the new addition; it now serves as the connection to the rear addition, opening onto the commons area. The 1975 project also included remodeling of the original auditorium with new acoustic finishes, new seating, and covering of the window openings. The auditorium and original gymnasium remain in use today.

Since the 1970s expansion, the only major alteration of the original school was the replacement of the steel multi-pane windows in the early 1990s. The replacement windows are single pane, some with single pane transoms. They do however, maintain the original masonry openings, the size and proportions of the original windows. On the interior, the original glazed brick sills and plaster surrounds are intact.

Even with the rear expansion and window replacement, the school retains a high degree of integrity with significant original features and finishes. The interior clearly portrays the 1936 design.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section: 8 Page: 4

**Historic Public Schools of Kansas  
Lane County Community High School, Lane County, Kansas**

---

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

The Lane County Community High School and Stadium are significant on a state and local level under Criterion A as the public high school in Dighton, Kansas, an important component in the development of the town, and under Criterion C as excellent examples of New Deal Era Resources constructed through the Public Works Administration in 1936 and Works Progress Administration in 1937. The two-story blond brick school reflects the transition from the Progressive Era to the Modern Movement. The plan configuration represents the "modern school" with a separate auditorium and gymnasium as well as, classrooms designed for specific uses. Architecturally, the school embodies typical characteristics of the Art Deco style with its clean lines, stepped roof line, short entry tower and carved geometric stone detailing. Located east of the school, the stadium bleachers are an earth-mound structure constructed of native limestone. The stadium reflects the impact of New Deal Era works programs on educational facilities throughout the state. Built largely as a means to employ local men, the WPA stadium continues to serve the school and community. The school and stadium are representative of the Town High School and Education Related Structures property types and meet the registration requirements set forth in the multiple property documentation form, *Historic Public Schools of Kansas*.

The Town of Dighton

Lane County is centrally located in western Kansas. The county was created by the Legislature in 1873 and named for Senator James H. Lane, a freestate partisan from Kansas. The initial county census documented over 2700 inhabitants and Dighton was selected by a majority of voters for the temporary county seat.<sup>1</sup>

Dighton, the county seat of Lane County, is centrally located on the Great Bend & Scott division of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, lying 96 miles west of Great Bend and 25 miles east of Scott City. Four men started the town, purchasing quarter sections in 1878. One of the men sold his quarter to W.A. Watson. Watson platted his 40 acres into town lots in 1879; many of the town's streets are named after Watson's children: Annabelle, Lincoln, Pearle, George and James.<sup>2</sup> Watson erected a building to house a local newspaper, *The Dighton Herald*, and a two-story building housing the Kurtz and Wood Drug Store; he called his town, Watson.<sup>3</sup> A post office was established the same year and the first organized school was taught in 1879.

In the fall of 1885 a group of Wichita investors attempted to purchase land from Watson but he was asking too high a price for the town. The group bought property east of Watson, formed the Dighton Town Company and began building a new town. Richard Deighton, a surveyor out of LaCrosse, laid out the town site and the town was named after him.<sup>4</sup>

By the mid-1880s, all of Western Kansas was experiencing a building boom. Dighton and Watson were no different. Both had experienced significant growth and combined to form the town of Dighton. In 1886, Governor Martin declared Dighton the county seat of Lane County; due to an error in the report of the census to the Governor, the "e" was omitted in Deighton, and the town became Dighton. The first courthouse was built in 1886 (replaced in 1930). The town was incorporated in 1887 and the first graded public school was built.<sup>5</sup> The Santa Fe Railroad line reached Dighton in September of 1887 and the Denver, Memphis and Atlantic Rail line was completed in October of the same year (became the Missouri Pacific Railway in 1909).<sup>6</sup> The town boasted numerous commercial and service businesses, a local newspaper, banks and first class hotels, in addition to rail access.

Perhaps an indication of the economic challenges to come, the Dighton Town Company disbanded in 1888. A number of fires in 1889 destroyed much of the east side of Dighton, originally the town of Watson. The west end of the town survived and the town had a population of 400 in the year 1900.<sup>7</sup> The town and county continued to experience steady growth into the 1920s. When the new high school was built in 1937, the county population was 2,891 and Dighton had a population of 803.

Like most rural communities, Dighton endured the challenges of the Great Depression and World War II. Following WWII, Lane County's population declined while the population of the town of Dighton rose slightly. Today, Lane County retains its agricultural roots, with farming and livestock being the primary industry. The county population has dropped to approximately 2150 and Dighton's population is approximately 1200.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section: 8 Page: 5

**Historic Public Schools of Kansas  
Lane County Community High School, Lane County, Kansas**The Schools of Dighton

The first graded public school was built in Dighton in 1887. The County established a high school in Dighton in 1902. The high school was organized under a law allowing counties with a population of less than 2500 to have a county seat high school with the county commissioners serving as the school board.<sup>8</sup> The first high school class graduated in 1904 with five students. The high school originally met on the second floor of the grade school building. It was later moved to the upper floor of a commercial building in downtown Dighton (Smith-Holton Building) and, in 1910, was moved to the second-floor courtroom in the courthouse. At that time, there were 32 students enrolled in the high school.<sup>9</sup> In 1915, the local newspaper advocated the building of a new high school and in September of 1916, residents voted to spend \$20,000 on the construction of a public high school. The 2-story red brick school was occupied in March of 1917. The school was located at the north end of the existing football stadium. The school was a modern facility for its day housing a basement gymnasium, specialized classrooms for manual training and domestic arts, regular class rooms, and an auditorium.<sup>10</sup> Dighton built a new elementary school in 1927. Until the mid-1920s, there had been only one high school in the county. Healy, in northwest Lane County, opted to establish its own rural high school in 1926.<sup>11</sup> The Healy High School had a population of approximately 60 students by the mid-1930s. While there had been little change in the elementary school population in Dighton, there was rapid growth in high school enrollment. By 1935, the high school enrollment at Dighton was approaching 200 students and the existing school was over-crowded and outdated.<sup>12</sup>

Local citizens approved funding for construction of a new high school at a special election in 1935. In September of the same year, the Public Works Administration (PWA) granted 45% of the cost of the building, nearly \$90,000. General Obligation bonds were issued to finance \$110,000, the local portion of the cost of the new school. Ground was broken for the new school in January of 1936.<sup>13</sup> Glen H. Thomas, of Wichita, was the architect for the new school. M.C.Foy & Sons of Hutchinson was the general contractor with J.W. Elder serving as construction foreman. Thomas had an established reputation as a school architect, having designed numerous schools in Wichita, southeast and south central Kansas. He is best known for his design of Wichita North High School in 1929; he also designed the high schools in Coffeyville, Fort Scott, Pratt, Jetmore, Otis, and Mantor.

Lane County Community High School was completed and occupied on January 25, 1937, just one year after construction began. The school was dedicated in May of 1937 in conjunction with graduation ceremonies. The dedication was a five day event that spanned from Friday, May 21 – Tuesday, May 25<sup>th</sup>.<sup>14</sup> The High School performed Gilbert and Sullivan's H.M.S. Pinafore in the new high school auditorium on Friday and Saturday evenings. Baccalaureate was held on Sunday evening, the building dedication on Monday, and graduation exercises on Tuesday. Thirty-seven students comprised the first graduating class at the new high school. The building dedication featured brief comments by the R.E. Lawrence, the state director of PWA, and architect Glen Thomas; the contractor officially turned the school over to the County Superintendent. The ceremonies received state-wide attention, due in large part to the fact that Governor Walter Huxaman gave the dedication address. The school was featured in the Topeka and Kansas City papers, giving positive publicity to the PWA and the city of Dighton.

Lane County Community High School was built at a cost of \$200,000, through the PWA. By the 1920s, there was an increasing demand nationwide for the provision of modern educational facilities. Government programs including the Works Progress Administration and the Public Works Administration made school improvements a reality during the Depression years. Construction of school buildings topped all other types of PWA projects in both number and total cost. At the time the new school was built in Dighton, the PWA had financed over \$3 million on the construction of 84 schools since the program's inception in 1933.<sup>15</sup>

As was the case with most new schools of this era, modern schools were built to replace inadequate facilities in order to meet modern educational requirements. The design of the Lane County Community High School reflected the current educational standards and requirements of a modern high school. Its reinforced concrete and brick construction emphasized safety and health as well as efficiency of instruction. The school boasted a separate gymnasium and auditorium, a library, science and foods laboratories, a commercial department and Little Theater as well as regular classrooms. The school was touted to include all the modern educational facilities which had previously been found only in the larger population centers.<sup>16</sup>

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section: 8 Page: 6

**Historic Public Schools of Kansas  
Lane County Community High School, Lane County, Kansas**

Enrollment in Dighton High School peaked in the 1966-67 school year with 234 students; a \$1 million expansion and remodeling was completed in 1975.<sup>17</sup> The school population has continued to decline; Dighton high school was reclassified as a 1A school in 1999.<sup>18</sup> The high school had an enrollment of 121 in 2000 and in 2001, the high school became a combined junior high/high school serving grades 7-12. Dighton previously had two grade schools, Lincoln Primary School serving grades K-3 and Dighton Grade School serving 4-8. In 2001, the seventh and eighth grades were moved to the high school and Dighton Grade School now serves grades 1-6. Lincoln school is used for kindergarten and early childhood classes.

**Stadium**<sup>19</sup>

The 1936 high school was built southwest of the 1917 high school. Upon completion of the new school, county commissioners obtained approval from the Works Progress Administration for local labor to tear down the old two-story red brick high school and to salvage all possible materials. Lane County Commissioners were in charge of the project and WPA labor was used, employing local residents. High school instructor, Arthur N. Pomeroy was charged with the task of developing the plans and supervising construction. Most of the bricks from the old school were used to build a Vocational Agriculture building behind the new high school. The remaining salvaged materials were sold to pay for the new Vo-Ag building.

The New Deal Programs were essentially jobs programs, designed to create local employment. The Works Progress Administration was effectively used for a variety of local projects, literally as a means to create jobs for local residents. The Dighton school stadium is an excellent example of how the WPA resulted in school improvements through the goal of job creation. When the Vo-Ag building was completed, the county commissioners needed additional work for the WPA laborers. They again turned to Pomeroy for ideas of a project that could provide many labor hours with little material cost. Pomeroy initially suggested upgrading the athletic field. The existing field was located east of the new school but the site sloped from north to south and had significant drainage problems. Pomeroy calculated the earth work and estimated the man hours required. The commission felt like the project had to be expanded because the project was too small to carry the laborers through the fall and winter. Pomeroy came up with the idea of altering the grade on the football and baseball fields to create an earth mound stadium on the west side. The WPA required that the soil be enclosed within walls. This ruling led to the formulation of the design of the stadium. Locals remembered the remains of a deserted town on the way to Dodge City. Remnants of stone walls of several buildings lay in what was the former town of Ravanna in Finney County. The farmers who owned the land were happy to give the stones to anyone who would haul them away. These stones were hauled to Dighton and used to build the stadium.

The project was nearly brought to a halt when upon reviewing the preliminary plans for the stadium; WPA officials said they would require steel-reinforced concrete footings. There was no available funding for the concrete footings. Pomeroy researched native stone construction in Hays and received an opinion from the Hays Engineering Department that the footings were not required. He also had soil testing done at the University of Nebraska that supported his claim. Ultimately, the WPA approved the plans but stated that their engineers estimated a maximum life expectancy of five years.

That was in 1937; the stadium remains in place and in use today. The stadium was constructed through the WPA – Project No. D6 – 96-772.<sup>20</sup> In 1968, the field and stadium were designated Ringe Field in honor of Elmer Ringe, teacher and coach from 1925 – 1968. Community boosters raised funds in 1993 to construct a seven lane asphalt track around the field, the only major change in its sixty plus, year history.<sup>21</sup>

**Summary**

Lane County Community High School was constructed in 1937 as Dighton's second public high school building, built to serve a growing high school enrollment. The school reflected the transition from the Progressive Era to the Modern Movement in design. Although modern in exterior design and educational offerings, the plan configuration was influenced by the Standardization Movement that resulted in spaces designed for specialized uses and an emphasis on safety and sanitation. The school is a traditional example of the Town High School property type as the public high school serving

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section: 8 Page: 7

Historic Public Schools of Kansas  
Lane County Community High School, Lane County, Kansas

the residents of Dighton and most of Lane County. The Art Deco style structure reflected modern construction techniques and an emerging modern architectural style.

The school and stadium were constructed through PWA and WPA programs respectively. Both structures are excellent examples of New Deal Era resources and significant as a reflection of the impact of these programs on local educational facilities. The school was designed by Wichita architect, Glen H. Thomas, best known for his design of Wichita North High School in 1929. Lane County Community High School incorporates stone bas-relief panels depicting buffalos, a distinguishing feature of several of Thomas' schools.

The property maintains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and association. The school retains the general characteristics of the property type including: its original site and setting, the original building form as seen from the front, the original roof form with parapet, the exterior brick and pattern of window and door openings, original ornamentation in the stone detailing, and basic interior configuration.

The alterations to the schools are a reflection of the times and trends in school design. The 1975 addition included a second gymnasium, additional classroom space, a commons area used as a cafeteria, and district offices. The school expansion also involved some remodeling of the original school, specifically updating of the original auditorium and modification of the original cafeteria, kitchen, and rest rooms. The addition was built on the rear of the original school, clearly distinguished from the original building. The original windows and doors were replaced in the early 1990s. Although the replacement windows do not match the original style, they do maintain the original proportions and masonry openings. The modifications are within the parameters defined in the multiple property submission and do not sufficiently impact the integrity of the building as to make it ineligible for listing.

The Lane County Community High School is significant under Criterion A as the second public high school, built to serve the residents of Dighton and Lane County. It continues operation as a public school today. The school is also significant under Criterion C as a representative of an Art Deco educational structure, and the work of notable Kansas school architect, Glen H. Thomas. The school and stadium are traditional examples of New Deal Era Resources. The Lane County Community High School and stadium are nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple property documentation form, *Historic Public Schools of Kansas*; the school as a representative of the Town High School property type and the stadium, under Town Schools Education-Related Structures.

<sup>1</sup> Family Heritage Album of Lane County, Kansas (McPherson, Kansas: Family Heritage Society, 1975) 13.

<sup>2</sup> Lane County's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – An Historical Record of Lane County (Published 1961 in commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Lane County; 2<sup>nd</sup> Printing, February, 1976).

<sup>3</sup> Ellen May Stanley, Early Lane County Development (Newton, Kansas: Mennonite Press, Inc., 1999) 38.

<sup>4</sup> Stanley, 40.

<sup>5</sup> 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

<sup>6</sup> Family Heritage, 14.

<sup>7</sup> Stanley, 41-47.

<sup>8</sup> "A History of Dighton High," 1904 – 2004 Dighton High School Centennial Edition (Topeka: Jostens Publishing Co., 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Dighton Herald, May 20, 1937.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> "Lane County Community High School Dedication Program," May, 1917 (Lane County Historical Museum files).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Dighton Herald, May 20, 1937.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Centennial Edition.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Arthur N. Pomeroy, "High School Athletic Field and Earth Mound Stadium – W.P.A. Project, 1937 – Lane County Community High School," (unpublished report sent to Lane County Historical Museum), 1981.

<sup>20</sup> Arthur N. Pomeroy, "Lane County Community High School Construction of Stadium," November 8, 1937.

<sup>21</sup> Centennial Edition.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Historic Public Schools of Kansas

Sections: 9-10 & Additional Documentation Page: 8 Lane County Community High School, Lane County, Kansas

**Bibliography**

- All-School Reunion Committee. 1904 – 2004 Dighton High School Centennial Edition. Topeka: Jostens Publishing, 2004.
- Dighton Herald, 3 September, 1936; 20 & 27 May and 24 June, 1937.
- Historic Views of High School available on-line at [http://www.geocities.com/dightonhigh/photo\\_gallery.html](http://www.geocities.com/dightonhigh/photo_gallery.html).
- Hutchinson Herald, 26 May, 1937.
- Kansas City Times, 24 May, 1937.
- Lane County Community High School Dedication Program (provided by the Lane County Historical Society), Dighton Herald Print, May, 1937.
- Lane County's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – An Historical Record of Lane County, July 1961 (Second Printing February, 1976).
- "Lane County History," Family Heritage Album of Lane County, Kansas. McPherson, Kansas: Family Heritage Society, 1975.
- Leonrod, Mark Von. Person postcard collection including cards of High School and Stadium.
- Pomeroy, Arthur N. "High School Athletic Field and Earth Mound Stadium, WPA Project, 1937, Lane County Community High School," (unpublished report sent to Lane County Historical Museum), 1981.
- Pomeroy, Arthur N. "Lane County Community High School Construction of Stadium and Improvement of Athletic Field" Original design documents, W.P.A. D6-06-772, November 1937.
- School Records and Files, Lane County Historical Museum.
- Spencer, Brenda R. Historic Public Schools of Kansas, National Register Multiple Property Nomination, 2004.
- Spencer, Brenda R. Reconnaissance Survey of Lane County Community High School and Lane County Grade School, June, 2004.
- Stanley, Ellen May. Early Lane County Development. Newton, Kansas: Mennonite Press, Inc., 1999.
- Stanley, Ellen May. Golden Age, Great Depression, Dust Bowl. Newton, Kansas: Mennonite Press, Inc. 2001.
- The Dightonian. (High School year book available from the Lane County Historical Museum), Dighton, Kansas: Orange and Black Journalism Club, 1928 and 1937.
- Topeka Capital, 23 May, 1937.

**Geographical Data**

Verbal Boundary Description – Begin 80'E of NE Corner of Block 19, Then S330', W365', E330', S13', E300', N622', W300' to Point of Beginning, Original Town of Dighton.

The site is L shaped and includes the site of the sop located north of the school, and the stadium east of the school.

Boundary Justification – The site is comprised of the school buildings and stadium, clearly defined by geographic features.

**Additional Documentation**

Maps

USGS map attached

Figure 1 – Site Plan Sketch (Spencer, 2005)

Historic Views

Figures 2-3 – Historic Views of Dighton High School and Stadium

Original Construction Documents of WPA Stadium

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Historic Public Schools of Kansas**

Sections: 9-10 & Additional Documentation Page: 9 **Lane County Community High School, Lane County, Kansas**

---

Photographs

Lane County Community High School (aka Dighton High School)  
Lane County, Kansas

Photos were taken by Brenda Spencer November 10, 2004. KSHS holds the original negatives.

<u>#</u>	<u>Description of View [direction of camera]</u>
1	Front (west) facade [east]
2	Detail of Main Entry Tower on west facade [northwest]
3	Detail bas relief stone panel on auditorium [east]
4	Inscription over gymnasium entry on west facade [east]
5	West facade of gymnasium [east]
6	South facade [north]
7	WPA Stadium behind (east) of school [northwest]
8	Rear stadium and 1977 rear addition [south]
9	Detail of stadium steps [southeast]
10	North facade (auditorium) [south]
11	West (front) facade of auditorium [east]
12	West (front) facade [southeast]
13	Typical corridor w/ glazed block wainscoting and terrazzo floors [north]
14	Typical stairway and clerestory windows in corridors [west]
15	Typical original classroom door [northwest]
16	Typical replacement window with wood trim and glazed tile still [west]
17	Representative original built-in cabinet extant in corridor/foyer [south]
18	Auditorium (remodeled) [southwest]
19	Gymnasium [southeast]

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Historic Public Schools of Kansas**

Sections: 9-10 & Additional Documentation Page: 10 **Lane County Community High School, Lane County, Kansas**

---

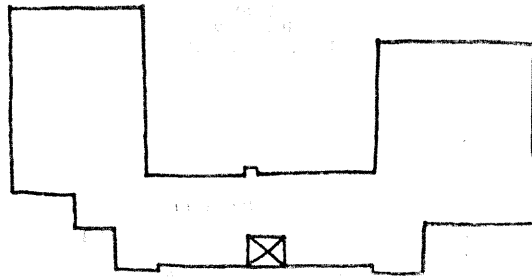


Figure 1 – Site Sketch Plan (Spencer, 2005)

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

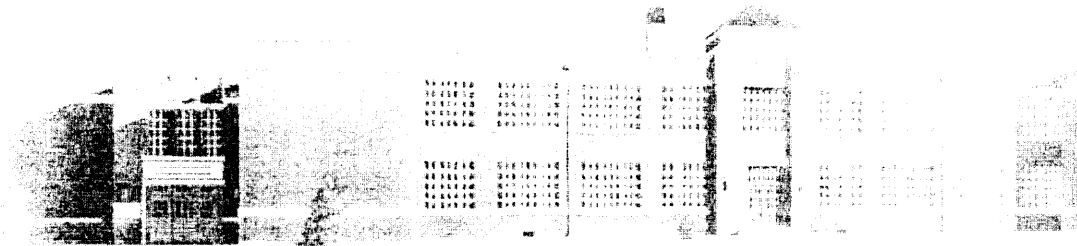
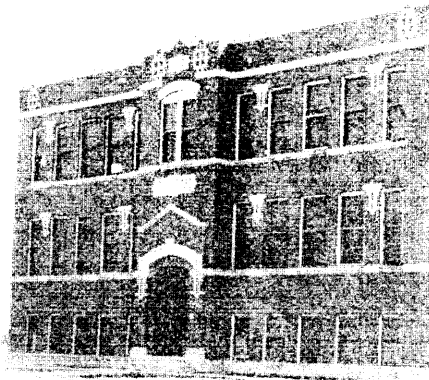
Sections: 9-10 & Additional Documentation Page: 11 **Historic Public Schools of Kansas  
Lane County Community High School, Lane County, Kansas**

---

*Figure 2 – Historic Views of Lane County Community  
High School and Stadium*

*Right – 1917 – Original High School  
Formerly located at north end of stadium  
Below – Front View of new High School, c. 1937*

*Source: The Dightonian, 1937 High School Year Book*



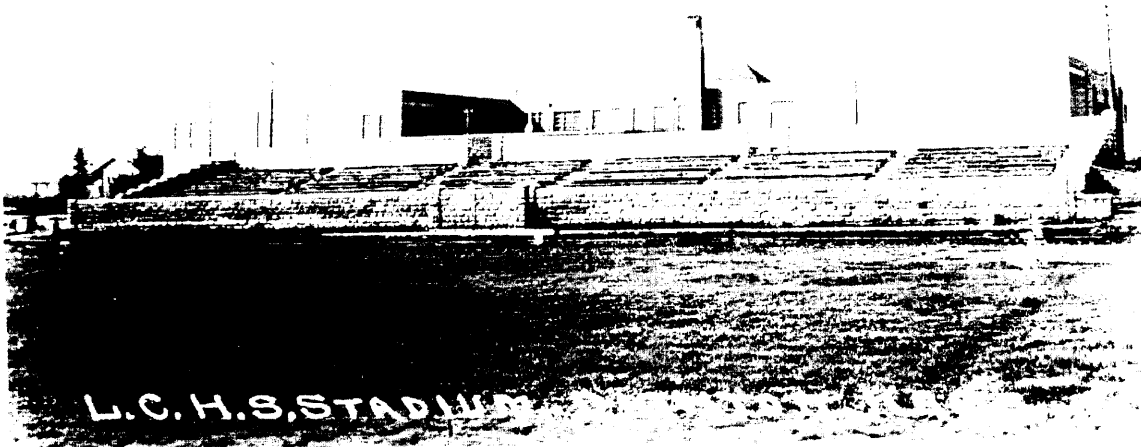
**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Historic Public Schools of Kansas**

Sections: 9-10 & Additional Documentation Page: 12 **Lane County Community High School, Lane County, Kansas**

---



*Figure 3 – Historic Views of Lane County Community High School and Stadium, c. late 1930s  
Source: Mark von Leonrod . First National Bank, Dighton – personal postcard collection*