

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED OCT 29 1980

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Grainfield Opera House

AND/OR COMMON

Grainfield Opera House

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Main and Third Street S.

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Grainfield

___ VICINITY OF

No. 1

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Keith G. Sebelius

STATE

Kansas 67737

CODE

20

COUNTY

Gove

CODE

063

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

___ DISTRICT

___ PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

___ AGRICULTURE

___ MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

___ UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

___ PARK

___ STRUCTURE

___ BOTH

___ WORK IN PROGRESS

___ EDUCATIONAL

___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___ SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

___ ENTERTAINMENT

___ RELIGIOUS

___ OBJECT

___ IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

___ GOVERNMENT

___ SCIENTIFIC

___ BEING CONSIDERED

___ YES: UNRESTRICTED

___ INDUSTRIAL

___ TRANSPORTATION

___ NO

___ MILITARY

___ OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Opera House Company, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

Grainfield, Kansas

CITY, TOWN

Grainfield

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Kansas

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Gove County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Gove

STATE

Kansas 67736

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1970

___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Kansas State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

STATE
Kansas

66612

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The old Grainfield Opera House is a two story brick structure with an ornate cast iron front. It is located on the southwest corner of Main and Third Streets, facing east. The building is 50 feet wide and 100 feet long. Stone foundation^{walls} are two feet thick and are capped by a dressed water table. Behind the parapet of the ornamental front, the metal-sheathed roof is nearly flat in the center with pitched sections on three sides.

Stone in the Opera House foundation has the streaked cream and brown color of the post rock strata found east of Grainfield. Brick in the walls is relatively soft; at the building corners weathering of individual bricks has exposed a coarse aggregate.

A complete metal facade was provided for the Opera House. At ground level there is a double store front. This floor is divided in half by an interior brick fire wall. Each store front has double entrance doors with display windows on either side. Columns, sills, and lintels are cast iron with the maker's name (Mesker Bros., St. Louis) on the columns. Above the first floor the five bay front is made of galvanized iron with an ornamental fleur-de-lis motif. At the first floor level the facade is anchored into the masonry wall. The upper part of the facade appears to be attached to a frame substructure.

An enclosed wooden stair on the south exterior wall of the building leads from the street to the second floor auditorium. On this side the upper windows are small; they have stone lintels and sills. A single double-hung window at ground level has what was probably the original 4-over-1 sash. There are two chimneys in this wall.

In the rear of the building there are entrances to the cellar and to the ground floor. An open wooden stairway leads to a second floor door. There is a wood beam extending from the wall above the door for lifting material to the second floor. Windows in this wall have brick arches over the openings and stone sills. Built-in roof gutters empty into drainpipes attached to the rear wall. There is a wooden privy behind the building next to the alley.

On the north both door and window openings have dressed stone lintels with keystone accent and stone sills. The upper windows are full size; both windows and the door at ground level on this side are paired. There are three chimneys in the north wall.

Much of the interior of the opera house is intact. There are original wooden floors, lath and plaster partition walls and wooden ceilings.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(see attached sheet)

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED
UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1

QUADRANGLE NAME Grainfield

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24

UTM REFERENCES

A 14 31713 31010 41310 11615
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See attached sheet)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Julie A. Wortman, Architectural Historian
Dale Nimz, Historic Preservation Department

ORGANIZATION Kansas State Historical Society

DATE 10-1-80

STREET & NUMBER 120 West 10th

TELEPHONE 913 296-3251

CITY OR TOWN Topeka

STATE Kansas CODE 66612

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Joseph W. Snell

TITLE Executive Director, Ks. State Historical Society

DATE 10-14-80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Signature]
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 11/29/80

ATTEST:
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

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Alterations:

This building presents substantially the same appearance as it did when completed in 1887. In the south half of the store front, windows have been boarded up. A stained glass panel in the center of the second floor facade has been removed. Missing details from the northermost bay of the second story facade include medallions, a column cap, and part of the column base.

The roof has been coated with tar or asphalt. At the southwest corner of the building, a concrete wall approximately 8' tall and 10' long has been poured to buttress the brick walls. Rear doors to the cellar and first floor have been enlarged. A window opening in the north wall has also been widened and the opening beside it filled with brick.

Inside, only the upstairs meeting room has been renovated. The floor has been carpeted, walls paneled, and an acoustical tile ceiling installed.

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late in February, 1888. A harness shop was housed behind the printing office on the ground floor. Upstairs were offices and meeting rooms. The auditorium was used for performances, dances, and church programs. A private school was once held upstairs and the first high school classes in town were held downstairs on the north side.

Early in the twentieth century, a grocery store operated in the building. Enlargement of the north and west entrances probably occurred during the 1920's when the Shaw Motor Company used the whole ground floor. At the present time the north half of the Opera House is vacant. The south half is used as shop and storage for Walt's Home and Auto. The Masonic Lodge occupies one of the second floor rooms on the east.

For most of its existence, the Grainfield Opera House has been a community center. It was designed to accomodate a variety of commercial and social uses. The building is associated with the early optimism and subsequent fortunes of Grainfield and the surrounding agricultural territory.

Architecturally, the combination of local materials with a factory-made ornamental front is a design solution reflecting historic circumstances and the ambitions of the town company partners. The iron front was cheap and quickly installed--creating the appearance of sophistication in a frontier town.

Mesker Brothers was one of the leading producers of galvanized iron fronts in America. Ben and Frank Mesker opened their foundry in St. Louis in 1881. Throughout their career, they used a distinctive fleur-de-lis motif in their ornamental designs in contrast to another brother, George, of Evansville, Indiana who used a morning glory motif. The Grainfield Opera House front was probably ordered from a catalog, shipped in sections on the railroad, and then assembled and attached to the masonry block by local workmen.

THIS STATEMENT REFLECTS CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO FUTURE AMENDMENT.

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H.H. Sutcliffe, Marcella Zerr, Beverly Summers, Denice Hartman.
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The nominated property occupies Grainfield City Lots 1, 2, and the south four feet of Lot 3, Block 25. The property is approximately 50 feet by 100 feet in size.