

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

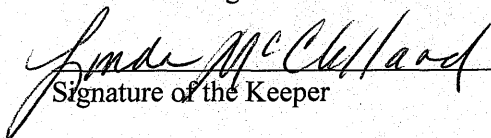
NRIS Reference Number: 05001514

Property Name: Abilene Historic District #1

County: Dickinson State: Kansas

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

January 11, 2006
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8: Significance

The closing date of the Period of Significance is hereby revised to read "1956" in keeping with the National Register fifty-year guideline.

The Kansas State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

RECEIVED

1519

NOV 28 2005

NATIONAL REGISTER, HISTORY
& EDUCATION
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, 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 Abilene Historic District #1
Other name/site number N/A

2. Location

Street & number 301, 303, 305, 307, 309 N. Buckeye not for publication
City or town Abilene vicinity
State Kansas Code KS County Dickinson Code 041 Zip code 67410

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] 11/21/05
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. [Signature] Signature of the Keeper 11/11/06 Date of Action
 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:)

Abilene Historic District #1
Name of property

Dickinson 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	
3		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
3		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)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC : single dwelling

DOMESTIC : single dwelling

COMMERCE / TRADE: department store; specialty store

COMMERCE / TRADE: specialty store; business

SOCIAL: meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN : Italianate

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE : limestone
walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other

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

Name of Property Abilene Historic District #1 County and State Dickinson 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)

- Criteria A, B, C, and D with checkboxes and descriptions regarding property significance.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions regarding property characteristics.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1885-present

Significant Dates

1885

1886

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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): Primary location of additional data:

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, designated landmark, recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey, recorded by Historic American Engineering.

Record #

- Repository checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State agency, Federal agency, Local government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 7 Page 1

Architectural Description

Abilene Historic District #1 is located 1.5 miles south of Interstate 70 in Abilene, Kansas, and includes 301, 303, 305, 307, and 309 North Buckeye Avenue. The district is bounded by Northeast 3rd Street on the south, North Buckeye Street on the west, by an adjoining building on the north, and Kirby Street on the east. The buildings face west and are situated on Lots 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 in Block 32. The three Italianate brick buildings were built in 1885 and 1886 and are situated at one of downtown Abilene's busiest intersections. With its original tin cornice and cast iron storefronts, the buildings maintain a high degree of architectural integrity.

1. Thomas Kirby Building – 301 and 303 N. Buckeye Avenue (C)

Exterior

Located in Block 32 on Lots 12 and 11, this two-story (with full basement) brick building was constructed in 1885 in the Italianate style. The front (west) façade of the Kirby building is nearly identical to that of the neighboring J.M. Brenizer building at 305 and 307 N. Buckeye Avenue except for the placement of the entrances. While the architect is unknown, one is led to believe that the same person designed both buildings. White stone quoins create a single vertical column defining each of the storefronts.

The exterior ground level of the Kirby Building remains intact with two recessed entrances – each situated south of the plate glass windows. The entrance to 301 N. Buckeye Avenue is a slight incline, while the entrance to 303 N. Buckeye is one shallow step up.

The transom window openings are intact, but the windows were replaced with wooden sign panels in the same scale in 1996-97 and now display the name of the business occupying the structure.

Above each storefront, there are two pairs of 1/1 double hung windows centered vertically and slightly raised horizontally. These windows were originally 2/2 double hung wood windows. The lug sill and the segmental arch lintel with keystone at the center are made of stone. Above the windows, the top four rows of bricks are projected creating an exaggerated saw tooth pattern. A somewhat decorative fascia board with simple raised horizontal rectangles centered over each pair of windows rests just below the bracketed tin cornice. Five large brackets define the cornice, which also features 16 smaller brackets and 20 stars (four brackets and five stars situated between each large bracket).

There is an open-air concrete staircase located on the north elevation between the Kirby Building and the Brenizer Building that leads from the sidewalk to a second story entrance to each building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 7 Page 2

In 2002, the current owners removed aluminum siding that had been added to the south elevation to repair the wall and restore the decorative brickwork to its original condition. The first level originally featured two single-door entrances, one at the front and one at the back of the building. A 2/2 double hung window has also been filled in on this elevation. The second level features five 2/2 double hung windows. The most eastern window was altered to create an entrance with a transom above the door, which remains intact. The entrance steps have been removed. The lug sill and the slightly arched lintel with keystone at the center are created of stone. Above the windows is brick, with the top four rows creating an exaggerated saw tooth pattern. There are 8 "teeth" centered between 7 wider "teeth", with two vertical brick extensions, believed to be chimneys rising slightly above the roof line. At each chimney the roofline lowers a depth of 2 bricks. Above each of the large "teeth" is a single raised square – 6 in all. Above each row of 8 smaller teeth is a horizontal raised rectangle – 5 in all.

A two-story brick building was added at the rear of the Kirby Building in the 1920s (c. 1923). This front (south) elevation of this addition features a modern steel door on the first level and two 1/1 double hung wood windows crowned by a raised horizontal rectangle accent on the second level. The east elevation of the addition features four evenly spaced non-decorative rectangular window-openings. These openings are currently boarded. A single story mid-20th century addition adjoins the east elevation of the earlier addition.

Interior

Interior double doorway openings on the first level allow access between 301, 303, 305, and 307 (both the Kirby and Brenizer Buildings). These openings allowed for the four spaces to be used as one to accommodate the expansion of Viola's RHV Hardware business.

The second level is a large open space that reflects its historic use as a social hall and meeting place. The space retains many original features including the decorative tin ceiling, wood flooring, and woodwork. The second level is currently vacant.

There is an opening in the southeast corner that leads into the basement of 303 N. Buckeye. The basement entrance to 301 N. Buckeye is from the outside of the structure along the south wall. This entrance is still accessible into the largest of the three rooms. There are two small rooms on the east portion of the basement.

2. J. M. Brenizer Building – 305 and 307 N. Buckeye Avenue (C)

Exterior

Located in Block 32 on Lots 10 and 9, this two-story (with full basement) brick building was built in September 1885 in the Italianate style. The front (west) façade of the Brenizer Building is nearly

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 7 Page 3

identical to that of the neighboring Kirby Building at 301 and 303 N. Buckeye Avenue except for the placement of the entrances. While the architect is unknown, one is led to believe that the same person designed both buildings. White stone quoins create a single vertical column defining each of the storefronts.

The exterior ground level of the Brenizer Building remains mostly intact. The recessed entrance to 305 N. Buckeye with two shallow entrance steps is intact and centered between two plate glass windows, which create the storefront. The exterior ground level of 307 N. Buckeye Avenue has been somewhat altered with the removal of the street front entrance. Three plate glass windows make up the current ground level façade.

The transom window openings are intact, but the windows were replaced with wooden sign panels in the same scale in 1996-97 and now display the name of the business occupying the structure.

Above each storefront, there are two pairs of 1/1 double hung windows centered vertically and slightly raised horizontally. These windows were originally 2/2 double hung wood windows. The lug sill and the segmental arch lintel with keystone at the center are made of stone. Above the windows, the top four rows of bricks are projected creating an exaggerated saw tooth pattern. A somewhat decorative fascia board with simple raised horizontal rectangles centered over each pair of windows rests just below the bracketed tin cornice. Five large brackets define the cornice, which also features 16 smaller brackets and 20 stars (four brackets and five stars situated between each large bracket).

A single story mid-20th century addition adjoins the (rear) east elevation original building.

Interior

Interior double doorway openings on the first level allow access between 301, 303, 305, and 307 (both the Brenizer and Kirby Buildings). These openings allowed for the four spaces to be used as one to accommodate the expansion of Viola's RHV Hardware business.

The vacant living quarters above 305 N. Buckeye is vacant and retains many original features including the plaster walls, wood flooring, and wood trim. The space above 307 Buckeye was recently renovated and now serves as the offices for ESA Design.

Like the Kirby Building, the Brenizer Building features a full basement, which originally housed separate businesses. The basement level is divided into two rooms with a trap door located in the southeast corner of the floor at 307 N. Buckeye. There is a set of stairs in the northeast corner of 305 that leads to the basement level.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 7 Page 4

3. Kleenall Cleaners Building – 309 N. Buckeye Avenue (C)

Exterior

Located in Block 32 on Lot 8, this two-story (with full basement) brick building was built in 1886 in the Italianate style. The front (west) façade of the Kleenall Cleaners Building has undergone more changes than the Kirby and Brenizer Buildings. It was covered with stucco in the 1930s or 1940s and was repaired by the current owners in 1989. The first level retains its original storefront configuration with a recessed central entrance flanked by two plate glass windows. The brick surrounding the plate glass windows and transom has been replaced with glazed clay tile. There is a single-door entrance defined by an awning that leads to an enclosed staircase immediately south of the storefront. This entrance is separated from the adjacent Brenizer Building by a single vertical column of white stone quoins.

The transom window openings are intact, but the windows were replaced with wooden sign panels in the same scale in 1989 and now display the name of the business occupying the building.

Above the storefront, the second level originally resembled the second level of the Kirby and Brenizer Buildings with tall, paired 1/1 wood windows. At some point (believed to be the 1930s or 1940s), the window openings were partially filled in and square casement windows were installed. Sometime after 1994, the openings were restored to resemble those of the Kirby and Brenizer Buildings and the current 1/1 wood windows were installed. The architect is unknown, yet one is lead to believe that it was the same person who designed both the J. M. Brenizer Building and the Thomas Kirby Building because of the original design and the timeframe during which the buildings were constructed.

A somewhat decorative fascia board with three simple raised horizontal rectangles rests just below the bracketed tin cornice. Four large brackets define the cornice, which also features nine smaller brackets and 12 stars.

The building retains its original footprint. There is a one-story (19' x 16') brick garage with a flat roof at the east edge of the lot. It is not attached to the Kleenall Cleaners Building, but it does adjoin the north side of the modern addition of 307 N. Buckeye. This garage serves the residents who live on the second level of Kleenall Cleaners Building. The rear elevation features a centrally located first floor entrance flanked by two 1/1 double-hung windows. An exterior staircase leads to the second level rear entrance to the apartment.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 7 **Page** 5

Interior

The first level maintains the original spaces and ceiling height. Some original woodwork is intact, especially around the entrance and storefront windows. The second level serves as living quarters – as it did originally. Historically, the basement level housed a separate business, but it is currently vacant.

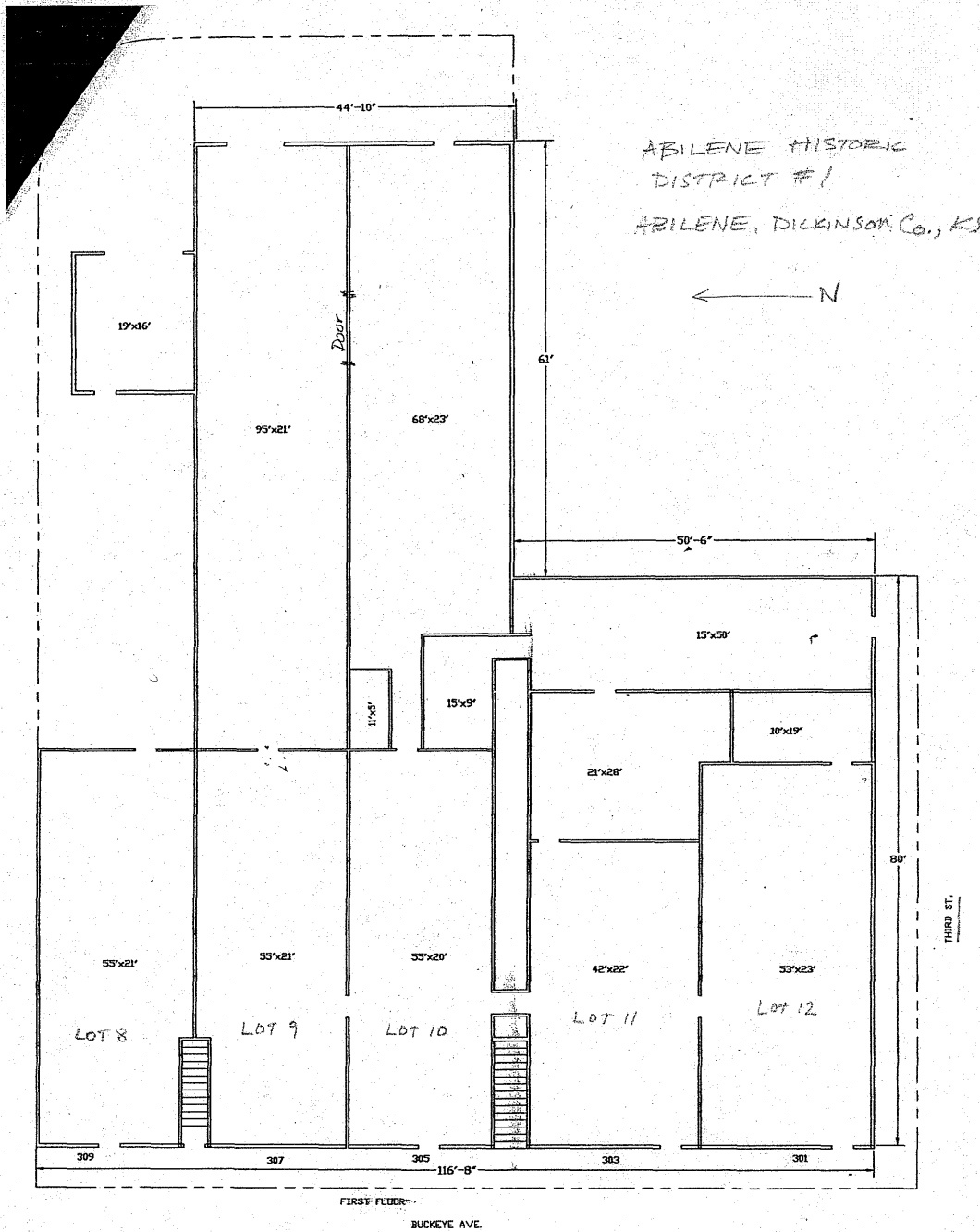
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 7 Page 6

Figure 1: First Floor Configuration



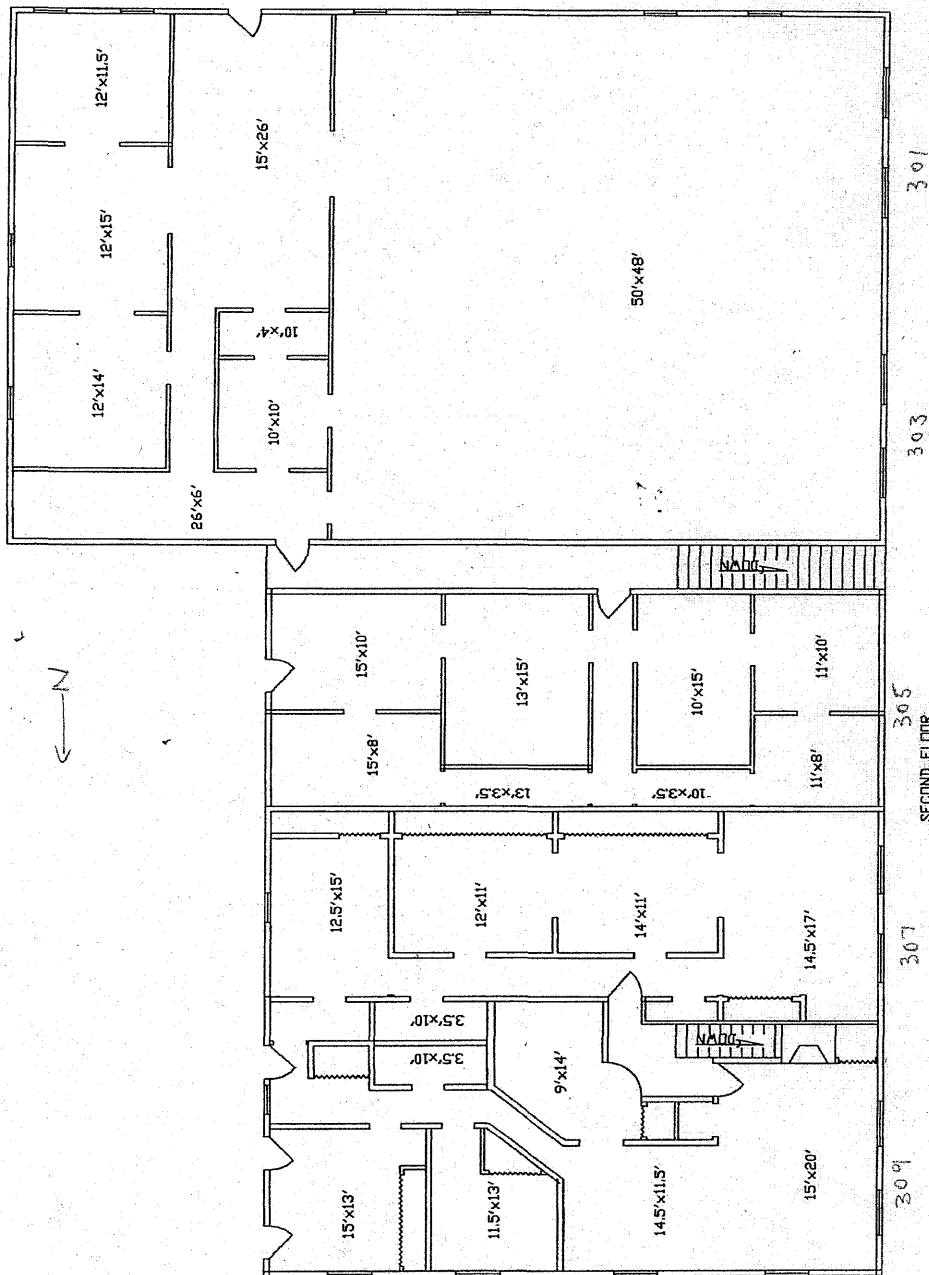
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 7 Page 7

Figure 2: Second Floor Configuration



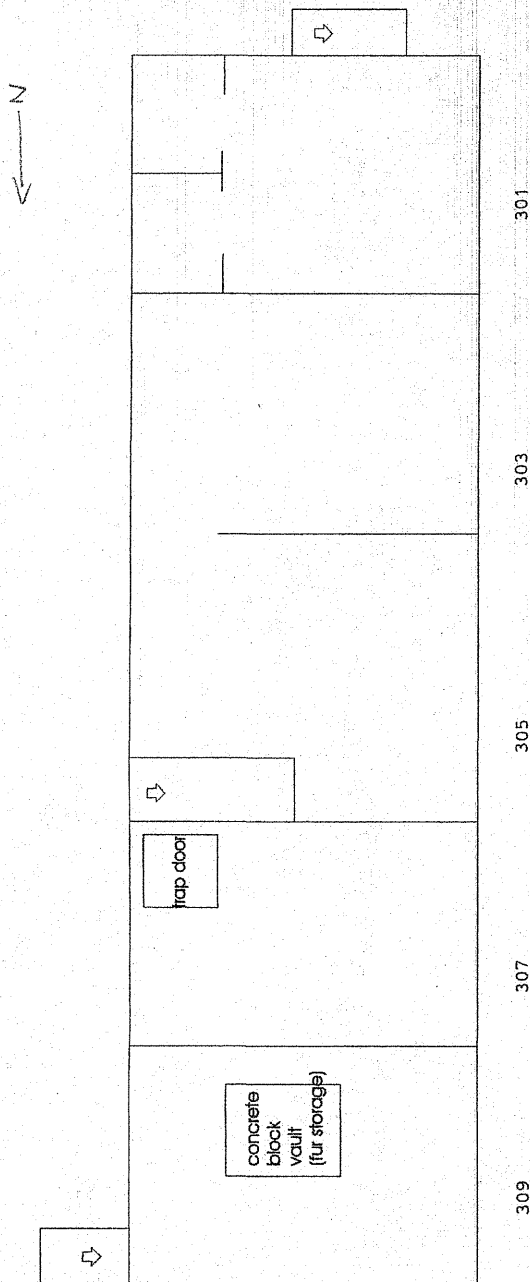
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 7 Page 8

Figure 3: Basement Configuration



Basement diagram of the buildings located at 309 - 301 N. Buckeye, Abilene, Kansas

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 8 Page 9

Statement of Significance

The Abilene Historic District #1 (c. 1885-86) is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its historical significance as a contributor to the development of commerce in Abilene and for its associations with entrepreneurs Thomas Kirby, John Milton Brenizer, and R.H. Viola; and Criterion C for its architectural significance as a good local example of Italianate commercial design. Located on a prominent downtown corner, these buildings represent a period of local and regional economic growth. Still used for retail and residences, these buildings retain much of their original design, layout, and materials. The Thomas Kirby Building, the J. M. Brenizer Building, and The Kleenall Cleaners Building have remained pillars in Abilene's downtown business district.

Historical Overview

The Italianate style was exceedingly common in the Midwest. With its beginnings in England as part of the Picturesque movement, a reaction to the formal classical ideals in art and architecture that had been fashionable for about two hundred years, the style is characterized by tall, narrow windows, usually two over two lights, commonly arched or curved. They frequently are topped by crowns or hoods, or surrounded by decorative frames. Elaborate cornices along the top of the buildings, ornamented with single or paired brackets, are also common. These decorative elements can be constructed in masonry, wood or metal. Cornices are often paired with quoins along the edges of the building.

In Kansas, Italianate-influenced architecture was built from 1865 until the mid-1880s. During this twenty-year period Abilene, and much of Kansas, experienced significant growth in its population, economy, and government structure. Census records indicate a significant growth in population in Dickinson County from 15,251 residents in 1880 to 22,273 in 1890.¹ The original town was laid out in 1860 and the railroad brought growth related to the cattle industry in the late 1860s. In the late 1870s and 1880s, two-story brick and stone commercial buildings began to replace smaller, frame buildings in the downtown.

Original owners of the three nominated buildings included Thomas Kirby (301 and 303 N. Buckeye Avenue), John Milton Brenizer (305 and 307 N. Buckeye Avenue), and Sarah Mills King and her daughter Elizabeth K. Shaler (309 N. Buckeye Avenue). Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps trace the activities and businesses occupying the

¹"Historical Census Browser," University of Virginia Library. Accessible online at <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/>.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 8 Page 10

buildings. The maps show various types of businesses cycling through these buildings during the first few decades. The list below illustrates this cycle of businesses and tenants.²

	301 N. Buckeye	303 N. Buckeye	305 N. Buckeye	307 N. Buckeye	309 N. Buckeye
1887	Grocery	Carriage Repository	Dry Goods & Grocery	Confectionary	Millinery
1892	Bottling Works	Printing	Vacant	Meats	Dry Goods & Grocery
1905	Bottling Works	Vacant	Grocery	Vacant	Dress Maker - 2 nd Level
1912	Cleaning & Dyeing Lodge - 2 nd	Meats Lodge - 2 nd	Grocery Rooming - 2 nd	Vacant Rooming - 2 nd	Vacant General Repair Shop Rooming - 2 nd

The maps suggest that the second level of the Kirby Building was used as a lodge beginning around 1912. Although the organization is not indicated on the map, other sources note that the I.O.O.F. met at the Kirby building from at least 1923 until the late 1940s. The maps also indicate that the second level of the Brenizer and Kleenall Cleaners Buildings were used as living quarters as early as 1912.

From its construction in 1886 to 1916, the Kleenall Cleaners Building housed retail, repair, and dry goods shops. Tufts Undertaking Company operated out of the building from 1916 to 1925. The building served as the home for Kleenall Cleaners business from 1926 to 1988.

The R.H. Viola family purchased the Kirby and Brenizer Buildings over the course of several decades from 1916 to 1942, and they became Viola's RHV Hardware Store. The business remained under the ownership and management of the Viola family for over half a century and was one of the largest employers of the community for many years. Although the ownership of the business and appearance of the buildings have evolved, a hardware store of some kind has continued to operate from this location since its inception.

Thomas Kirby

Thomas Kirby's life history is intertwined with that of Abilene, the town in which he made his home since 1872. His long and active business career, his interest in the affairs of the county and his prominence in business and political matters made him a leading figure in Abilene for nearly a third of a century.

² Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1887, 1892, 1905, and 1912.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 8 Page 11

Kirby was born in Ireland and moved to Johnstown, Pennsylvania, with his parents at the age of 4. In 1872, he moved to Abilene, and he married Annie Benbow in October 1874.

Kirby served as the cashier of the Lebold-Fisher Bank for six years until he began his own bank in 1878. The Thomas Kirby Bank was located on Broadway Street. Later he erected a bank building at 306 N. W. Second where he was in business until 1898. He lived a somewhat retired life from that date until his death in 1905.

Kirby purchased Lots 11 and 12 of Block 32 in 1885 and financed the construction of the Kirby Building. Historical records suggest that Kirby owned the property, but did not operate a business at this location. That same year, Kirby built a beautiful Second Empire-style home on North East Third Street in 1885, one of the handsomest residences in Abilene. This house remains extant across the street to the east from the nominated district and currently serves as the Kirby House Restaurant. Kirby also owned additional real estate, both within Abilene and in the county. He was elected county treasurer on the Democratic ticket in 1882 and was re-elected in 1884. Kirby was an unsuccessful candidate in 1888 for the office of state treasurer.

Kirby was also instrumental in the building of Mount St. Joseph's Academy north of Abilene in Kirby's Addition. His financial assistance and business advice made it possible to erect the school in 1885, which filled a prominent place in its time. The Wichita Sisters of St. Joseph managed the academy. In 1912, the Concordia Diocese (now Salina) purchased the institution, which was converted to St. Joseph's Home and School in 1915.³ Kirby also improved and beautified land on Second Street that became known as Kirby Park. This was located on land owned by a railroad company near the site of the present day Union Pacific Depot.

Kirby suffered several financial losses during the depression of the late 1880s and early 1890s, but his standing in the community wasn't diminished. Many regarded him as a prominent citizen of great integrity.⁴

John Milton Brenizer

Much of what is known about John Milton Brenizer comes from local news articles. Milt, as he was known, began construction of his building in early 1885. The progress of the construction and opening of Brenizer's business was well documented in local newspapers. A news article dated

³ *Abilene Reflector-Chronicle*, 31 January 2005. Available online at www.abilene-rc.com/NF/omf/abilene/ssiname=WebOSTTN/news/news_story.html?rkey=0005837+sid=20050131145215.CB698+cat=news

⁴ *Abilene Reflector-Chronicle*, December 1991.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 8 Page 12

March 27, 1885 reported, "work has been commenced by Milt Brenizer's new store building, on Buckeye avenue."⁵ Another report dated April 10, 1885 indicated, "The cellar wall of J. M. Brenizer's new brick block is being pushed rapidly forward. J. M. will have one of the neatest store rooms in the state."⁶ By September 25, 1885, Brenizer had "moved into his elegant new store on Buckeye, just north of Third Street. He has a very fine room, and it is filled to overflowing with a fine assortment of general merchandise. His new stock is very large and complete, and should be seen. Give him a liberal patronage. He will treat you fairly and do well by you."⁷ The October 2, 1885, Friday Morning edition of *The Gazette* further described the new building:

Our well-known dry goods and grocery man, M. Brenizer, has recently removed from his old location on Buckeye opposite Second street, to his new brick block just above Third, on Buckeye. The store has been fitted up in elegant style, and is indeed a model one of the kind. Mr. Brenizer has lately returned from the east, where he has purchased a new and elegant stock of dry goods for the fall and winter trade. With a new store, new stock and reasonable prices, he can make it an object for all to call. In the grocery line, his stock is as usual, complete, and includes everything in fine family groceries. For anything in dry goods or groceries, give Brenizer a call. He can please all in quality and price."⁸

By February 19, 1886, "J. M. Brenizer [had] disposed of his grocery department to his brother, A. S. Brenizer." Milt retained the dry goods department.⁹

Brenizer, a well-established dry goods merchant, was respected in the community that he served. He continued in the retail business until he sold the building in 1906 to Benjamin F. Nelson, another reputable dry goods businessman having established himself in 1875.

The two buildings changed hands several times before R. H. Viola purchased 307 Buckeye in 1935 and 305 Buckeye in 1948.

⁵ *The Gazette*, 27 March 1885.

⁶ *The Gazette*, 10 April 1885.

⁷ *The Chronicle*, 25 September 1885.

⁸ *The Gazette*, 2 October 1885.

⁹ *The Chronicle*, 19 February 1886.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 8 Page 13

R. H. Viola

R. H. Viola was born in 1874 in Avilena, Italy, about 20 miles from Rome and lived there nine years attending school through 4th grade. He came with his parents to the United States in 1883 settling in Kansas City where relatives lived. Working various jobs, one of which was a fruit "butcher" on the Union Pacific passenger train running between Kansas City and Denver. It is from the rail car that he got his first glimpse of Abilene, a thriving western town whose name reminded him of his birthplace. He and his wife owned a "hole in the wall" grocery store in Kansas City, but it was not meeting the success they had hoped for. Using a train pass, the decision was made that he would come to Abilene and look for work. He arrived on Valentine's Day with 28 cents in his pocket, and lots of determination. He had learned the cobbler's trade and went to work in a shoe store and repair shop upon arriving in Abilene. A few months later he borrowed \$300 to buy the business.¹⁰

Times were tough and a few years later the business "went under". Viola went to work at the old Blue Front Store, located at 208 N. Cedar.¹¹ In 1911, Viola started up again in another shoe repair shop in a small shack where Cozy Café was located.

With each few dollars that he could manage to save from the shoe repair business he would buy one or two pairs of shoes from some wholesale house and have them sent COD. He saved the profits until in 1916 he had saved \$250, which he used as a down payment to purchase 303 N. Buckeye. With the larger room he quickly realized he had to go into other markets to make ends meet. He purchased a small stock of canned goods, stacked them in the window at "cut prices" selling out almost overnight. With borrowed money he purchased more groceries. Viola had purchased one storefront but couldn't rent the building so he ordered a carload of feed and a carload of potatoes. They were stored and sold at this location. From there he built up one of the largest and most successful home-owned retail organizations in Kansas. Viola purchased Lot 10 (305 N. Buckeye) in 1925, Lot 9 (307 N. Buckeye) in 1935, and Lots 11 and 12 in 1942. Gradually, hardware and appliances were added until it became one of the largest phases of the operation in 1954. There were five stores under the RHV heading (feed and produce on the rear frontage) and were managed by Viola's son Vic.

The financial structure of the business was a composed of about a dozen major departments all in one set up under two principal headings: The RHV stores on Buckeye Avenue and Cross Street (known today as Kirby Street) and the three adjoining stores on Third Street.

¹⁰ *Reflector-Chronicle*, Abilene, KS, Tuesday, February 9, 1954.

¹¹ 1910-1911 Abilene City Directory

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 8 Page 14

R. H. died in 1946 and the business carried on and expanded under the direction and leadership of his five surviving sons – Vern, Willis, Ted, Vic, and Albert. Another son, who died in World War I, and three daughters were not involved in the business. The brothers worked as a team and shared equally, functioning as a board of directors but without officers. Ted was regarded more or less as the general manager, being more visible at community activities. In 1954, RHV had grown to consist of nine stores, which included grocery, hardware, shoe, and bakery services grossing approximately three-quarters of a million dollars a year.¹²

Hardware store employees Bob Schenck and O.B. Bradley purchased the Viola family's hardware business in 1974. Ted Viola and Mrs. Vic (Nadine) Viola retained ownership of the Kirby and Brenizer Buildings.¹³

Today, the RHV True Value Hardware store operates out of the Kirby and Brenizer Buildings, and Ed and Lynda Scheele now own the buildings. The Kleenall Cleaners Building is now gift store.

Summary

These nominated buildings are significant to the development of commerce and business in Abilene. The stories of these buildings are best told through the owners and tenants that occupied the buildings – most notably Kirby, Brenizer, and Viola. Located at one of Abilene's prominent downtown intersections, these buildings continue to serve as a commercial and architectural anchor within the local business district.

¹² *Reflector-Chronicle*, Abilene, KS, Tuesday, February 9, 1954

¹³ *Kansas City Star*, 17 February 1974.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 9 **Page** 15

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 10 **Page** 16

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property stands on Lots Eight (8), Nine (9), Ten (10), Eleven (11), and Twelve (12) of Block 32, Kuney and Hodge's Addition to Abilene, Kansas.

Abilene Historic District #1 is bounded by Northeast 3rd Street on the south, North Buckeye Street on the west, by the adjoining building on the north, and Kirby Street on the east.

Abilene is the county seat for Dickinson County. Of the 105 counties in the state of Kansas, Dickinson County is ranked 28th in population and 43rd largest (550,668 acres) in acreage. It is bounded by Geary County to the east, Riley County to the north, Saline County to the west and Marion County to the south.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire parcel that is historically associated with the nominated property.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Abilene Historic District #1
Dickinson County, KS

Section number 11 **Page** 17

Photographic Information

The following information is consistent for all photographs

1. Abilene Historic District #1
2. Dickinson County, KS
3. Photograph by Sarah J. Martin
4. October 27, 2005
5. Digital photographs on file at the Kansas State Historical Society

The following information is applicable to specific photographs

- Photo #1: From the left – 303 & 301 N. Buckeye, west elevation, view from west
- Photo #2: From the left – 307, 305, 303, 301 N. Buckeye, west elevation, view from west
- Photo #3: From the left – 309, 307, 305 N. Buckeye, west elevation, view from west
- Photo #4: 309 N. Buckeye, west elevation, view from west
- Photo #5: 303 N. Buckeye, storefront, view from southwest
- Photo #6: 301 N. Buckeye, south elevation, view from southeast
- Photo #7: Exterior staircase, between 305 (r) and 303 (l) N. Buckeye, view from west
- Photo #8: 301 and 303 N. Buckeye, interior, second story, view from northeast
- Photo #9: 305 N. Buckeye, interior, second story, view from east
- Photo #10: 305 N. Buckeye, interior, first story, storefront, view from east
- Photo #11: 301 N. Buckeye, interior, first story, looking into 303 and 305 N. Buckeye, view from south
- Photo#12: 309 N. Buckeye, interior, second story, apartment, view from southeast
- Photo#13: 309 N. Buckeye, interior, second story, interior stairwell looking into 307 N. Buckeye, view from north
- Photo#14: 309 N. Buckeye, interior, first story, storefront