

# Register of Historic Kansas Places Registration Form

**State Register  
Listed  
11/18/2017**



This form is for use in nominating individual properties and districts. The format is similar to the National Register of Historic Places form. 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. Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

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## 1. Name of Property

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Historic name Palmyra Post Office

Other names/site number Blood's Grocery; KHRI #045-0340-00004

Name of related Multiple Property Listing Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail

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## 2. Location

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street & number 511 5<sup>th</sup> Street  not for publication

city or town Baldwin City  vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Douglas code 045 zip code 66006

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## 3-4. Certification

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I hereby certify that this property is listed in the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

Applicable State Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

See file. \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

Kansas State Historical Society  
State agency

5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Total</b>

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

0

6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Government: Post Office

Commerce/Trade: Specialty Store

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture: Museum

7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Wood

roof: Shake

other:

Narrative Description

**Summary Paragraph** (Briefly describe the overall characteristics of the property and its location, setting, and size.)

The 1857 Palmyra Post Office is located at 511 5<sup>th</sup> Street in Baldwin City, Douglas County, Kansas, between Elm and Fremont streets (Figure 2). The small 1.5-story building has no particular architectural style, but its form is typical of early commercial buildings, with a full front porch and a gable roof with small parapet. It is made almost entirely of wood and has a shake-shingle roof and two dormer windows; today the building rests on a concrete foundation. The original double front doors, a chimney, and an additional (non-historic) room on the back of the building are no longer present. Aside from these details, the building retains much of its 1857 appearance and feel despite its relocation to Baker University's campus.

**Elaboration** (Provide a detailed description of the building's exterior, interior, and any associated buildings on the property. Note any historic features, materials, and changes to the building/property.)



**Figure 1:** Palmyra Post Office in 1960, prior to its relocation into Baldwin City.

The front of the building faces east (Photo 1). It is situated on land owned by Baker University (Figure 3). The Collins Sports and Convention Center is directly to the west, and the Old Castle Museum is to the north. A parking lot between the Collins Center and the post office sits at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Fremont. Several trees and an open field to the north of Old Castle are nearby.

The Post Office is a 1.5-story wooden building with a shake roof and a full-width, one-story front porch. Centered in the east elevation, double doors open to the porch (Photos 1 & 4); these doors are replicas and contain six-light-windows in the upper portion. There is a four-panel single door at the west end of the south elevation that leads to the attic stairs (Photos 1, 2, & 8). There are windows on all sides of the building. On the main level, there are four fixed six-light units on the east side, two on each side of the doors. The north and south elevations each have two replica four-over-four, double-sash wood windows (Photo 5). The west elevation has two square four-

light fixed units (Photos 2 & 3). At the attic level, the east and west elevations each have a single replica four-over-four, double-sash wood window centered in the gable ends. The north and south sides each have a centered dormer window; although, historically the building had two dormers on each side (Figure 1). The building is currently painted white, with yellow trim.

A second room on the back of the building can be seen in old photographs (Figure 1), but it was not original and apparently did not survive the moving process. A chimney and a dormer have also gone missing. The original front double doors were stolen while the building was stored in the Baldwin City lumber yard and have been replaced with compatible doors. The existing front porch is also a replacement and was done in the 1976 with seasoned barn wood to replicate the original as closely as possible. Once repaired, both floors can be used but with limitations. The second floor is only half a story and not handicap accessible, and the building is not climate-controlled.

The first floor of the building is mostly open and is currently used for storage. Aside from the disappearance of the back room mentioned above, the interior of the building is mostly intact and made primarily of wood; the ceilings and walls are made of wood strips. The original wrought iron letter cages and brass name plates used when the building was a post office are still present along the west wall (Photo 7). The supporting wooden roof structure and beams on the first floor also appear to be quite old (Photo 6); one description says the adz marks on the beams can still be seen. The attic is accessed from the stair in the building's southwest corner. It is unfinished and open, and the floor is wooden planks (Photo 9).

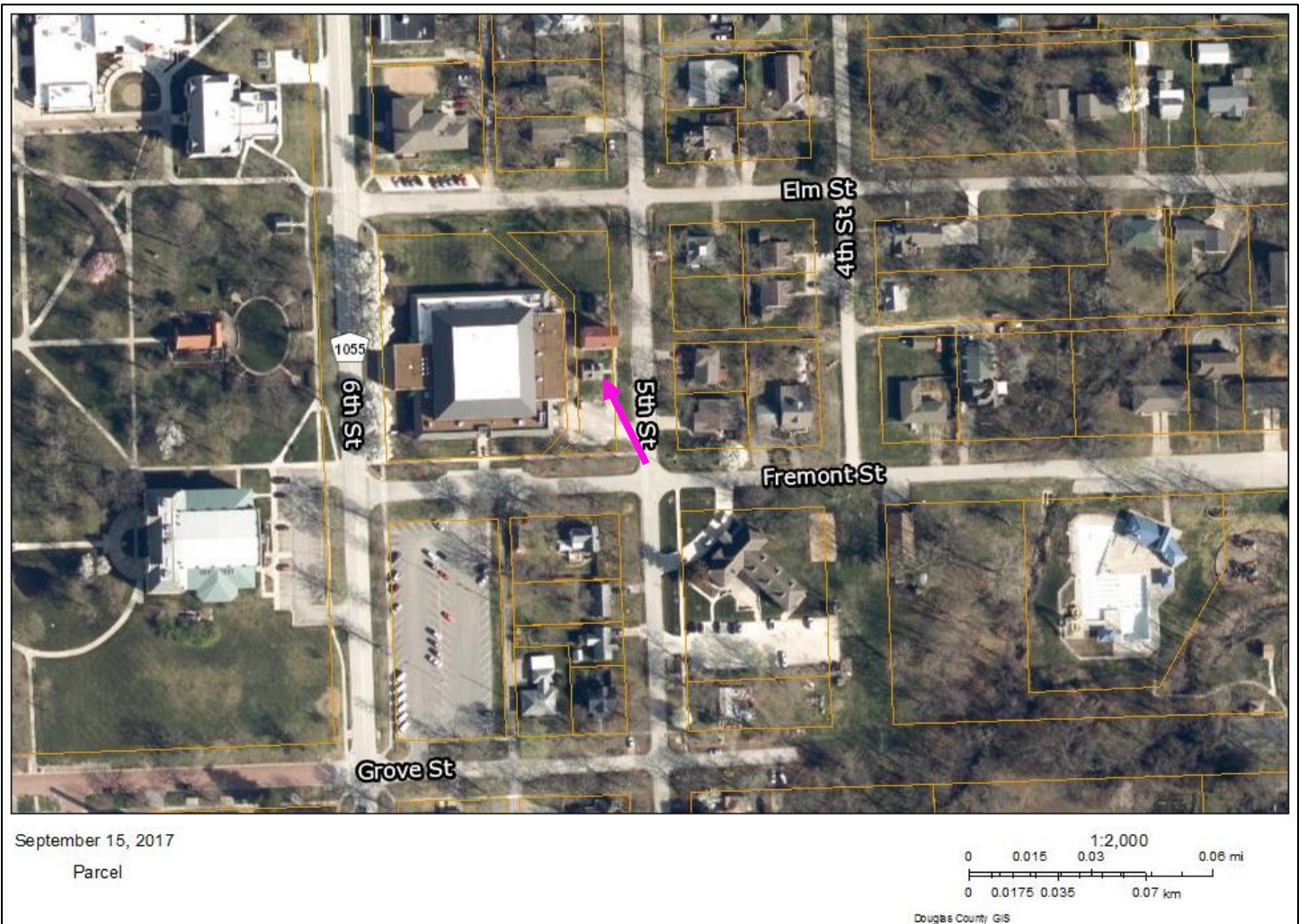


Figure 2: Contextual map of Palmyra Post Office. Arrow is pointing to building.



September 15, 2017  
Parcel

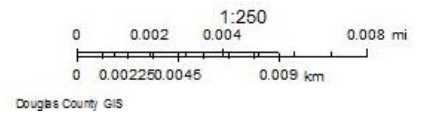


Figure 3 (Boundary Map).

8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Exploration/Settlement

Commerce

**Period of Significance**

1857-1862

**Significant Dates**

1857

1862

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The Palmyra Post Office was located in Blood's grocery store between 1857 and 1862. The post office moved to Baldwin City in 1862. The building may have continued to function as a store after this time, but we do not know for sure.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

The Palmyra Post Office was relocated to its present location after its period of significance, making it ineligible for listing in the National Register. However, this is the only extant resources associated with the Santa Fe Trail-era town of Palmyra, making it eligible for listing in the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

Narrative Statement of Significance

**Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that notes under what criteria the property is nominated.)

Built in 1857, the old Palmyra Post Office is the only extant resource associated with the short-lived town of Palmyra. From June 1857 to May 1862, this building functioned as a post office along the Santa Fe Trail. The building was relocated at least three times since the early 1900s, finally settling into its current location in the 1980s. Although its relocation precludes its listing in the National Register, this building is important to the early history of Douglas County as a remaining resource from Palmyra and the Santa Fe Trail.

**Elaboration** (Provide a brief history of the property and justify why this property is locally significant.)



**Figure 4:** Palmyra Post Office in 1965 (above) and 1969 (bottom) after being reconstructed on Baker University's Campus in 1964.

In 1854, the first free state settlers arrived in Kansas Territory and settled in what is now Douglas County.<sup>1</sup> The town of Palmyra, located twelve miles south of Lawrence, was first settled around this time on "one of the most beautiful and picturesque spots in Kansas," also by primarily Free State Movement adherents.<sup>2</sup> The Palmyra Association was formed in 1855 by Henry Barricklow, James B. Abbott, James G. Blood, Daniel F. Fry, and Dr. Andrew T. Still. Its purpose was to build a town on the Santa Fe Trail (*Figures 5 & 6*).<sup>3</sup> Still eventually founded the osteopathy movement, and James G. Blood became a delegate to the Wyandotte Constitutional Convention.

One of Palmyra's earliest residents, Lucius Kibbee, was the first man to be tried for murder in Kansas Territory for killing a Border Ruffian in self-defense. Kibbee's cabin was also where the first sermon to whites in Kansas took place.<sup>4</sup> A year later, after Kibbee had sold his cabin to Henry Barricklow, it was also the place where Baker University, the oldest four-year college in Kansas, was founded.

The 1860 US Census lists at least ten dwellings in Palmyra with multiple inhabitants.<sup>5</sup> The town was near the start of the section of the Santa Fe Trail known as the Narrows, and it was known to be a repair stop for wagons.<sup>6</sup> The town had several businesses made to accommodate the needs of Santa Fe Trail travelers, including blacksmiths, a wagon repair shop, general stores, hotels, and a post office.<sup>7</sup> Westport, Missouri, was approximately 50 miles to the northeast, and Council Grove, Kansas, was about 80 miles west.

James Blood ran a grocery store in Palmyra, which also housed the post office. Blood's store was constructed in 1857, and the post office was established at this location on June 29, 1857 with Newman Blood as postmaster. Individual accounts of the post office location vary, but three local historians state it was on 5<sup>th</sup> Street between Main and Fremont streets in Palmyra (*Figures 5 & 7*).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Daniel W. Wilder, *The Annals of Kansas* (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1875), 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, viii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vii.

<sup>4</sup> William H. Goode, *Outposts of Zion* (Cincinnati: Poe and Hitchcock, 1864), 254-5.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 1860 U.S. Census, National Archives Microfilm M653, Roll 349.

<sup>6</sup> Marc Simmons, *Following the Santa Fe Trail: a Guide for Modern Travelers* (Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1984), 72.

<sup>7</sup> Homer K. Ebright, *The History of Baker University* (Baldwin City, Baker University, 1951), 28.

<sup>8</sup> Palmyra Post Office folder, Old Castle Museum Complex Papers, Baker University Archives, Baker University.

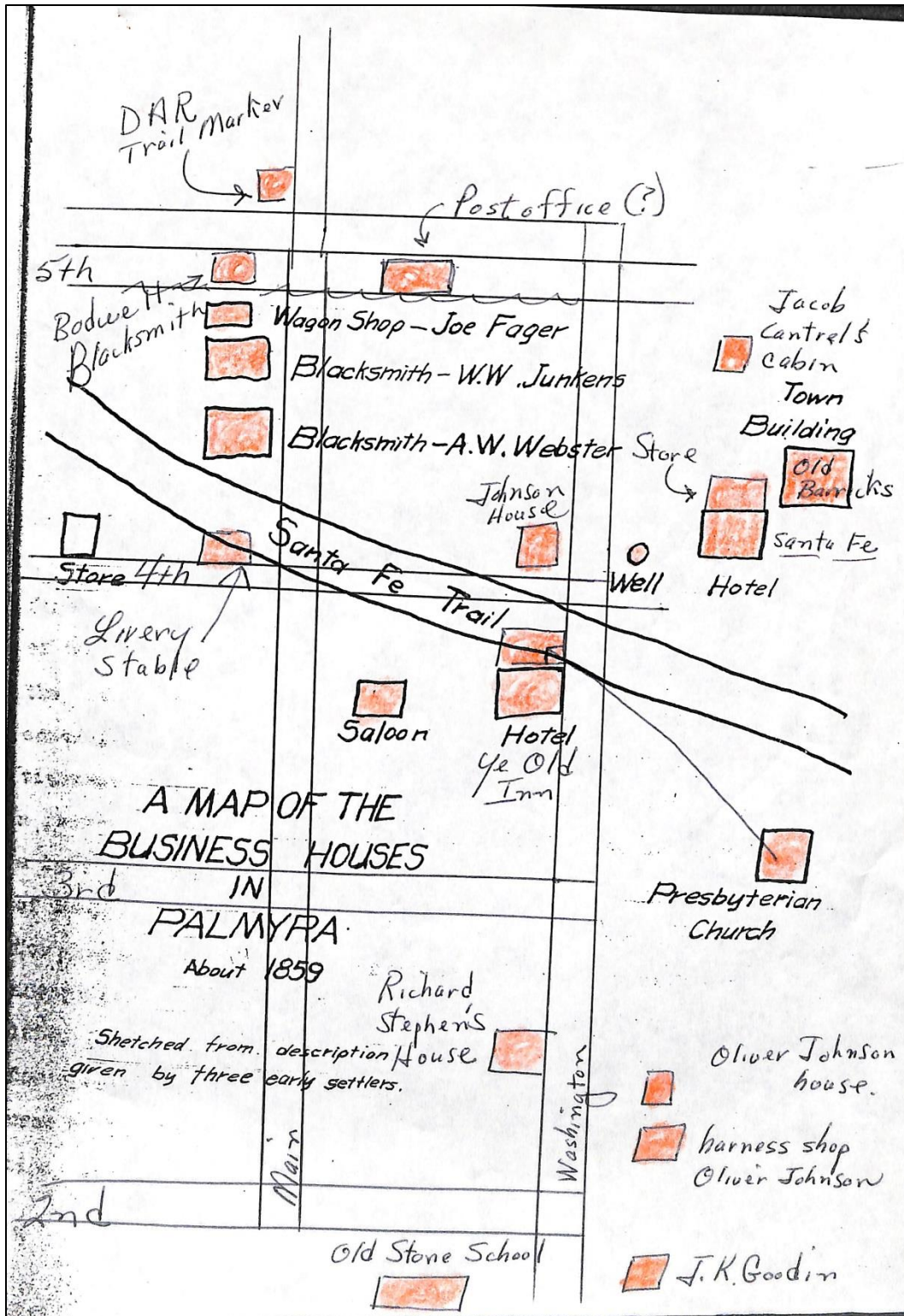


Figure 5: Sketch map of the town of Palmyra, as described by three early settlers

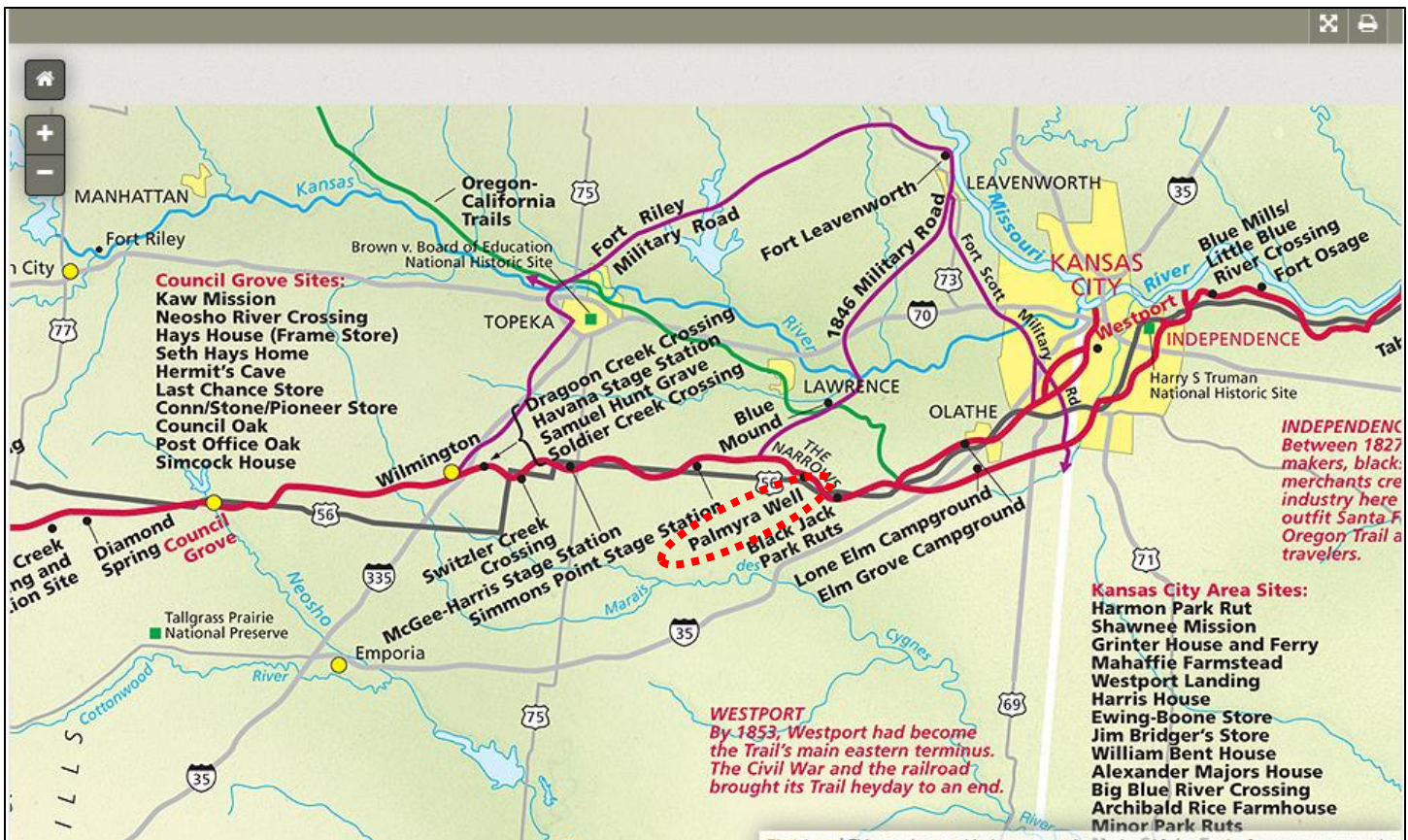


Figure 6: National Park Service map of the Santa Fe Trail, showing the location of Palmyra in relation to other known sites.

As the name implies, this building used both as a grocery store and a post office. Henry Barricklow applied to the United States Post Office Department in January 1857 for a post office to open in Palmyra.<sup>9</sup> According to the application, the post office was to be located on the route “From Westport to Council Grove on which mail is now carried two times a week.” Hall is listed as the mail contractor.<sup>10</sup> Newman Blood, the first postmaster and store owner and another Wyandotte Constitution delegate, moved to Lawrence in 1861.<sup>11</sup> Darius Shook was appointed postmaster at this time. While over 130 post offices existed from Jan 1861 through June 1857, only a handful were located along the Santa Fe Trail.<sup>12</sup> In May 1862, the post office function relocated south to Baldwin City.<sup>13</sup> It is believed that a grocery continued to operate out of this building for several years after but exactly how long is unknown.

Baldwin City expanded throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but Palmyra eventually ceased to exist. Homer Ebright wrote that “Palmyra died in self-sacrifice as it encouraged the residents to move into the new land owned by Baker University just south of the old village, where town-lots could be purchased cheaply, and the proceeds would support the infant college.”<sup>14</sup> The advent of the railroad and the depot constructed in Baldwin City in 1867, combined with the Santa Fe Trail’s demise, probably contributed to Palmyra’s death as well. The old post office building was likely abandoned during this transition.

After its abandonment, the Palmyra Post Office was relocated several times (*Figure 7*). The first move was to the southeast corner of Highway 56 (Ames St.) and 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Baldwin City sometime after 1900; although, the exact date of this first relocation is unknown. Between 1920 and 1930, a man named Arthur Bridwell bought the post office building and

<sup>9</sup> Post Office Application on file with Baker University.

<sup>10</sup> See *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail* (2012): E-55 for discussion about the Hall-Hockaday mail routes.

<sup>11</sup> “Death of Mr. N.C. Blood,” *Lawrence Daily Journal* (Sunday, October 22, 1876): 4.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Williamson Baughman, *Kansas Post Offices, May 29, 1828August 3, 1961* (Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, 1961), 143-155.

<sup>13</sup> Baughman, *Kansas Post Offices*, 98.

<sup>14</sup> Ebright, *History of Baker University*, 29.



moved his extensive collection of antiques and artifacts into the building.<sup>15</sup> Bridwell lived there until 1953, when he sold the land on Ames Street to real estate developers and moved into a retirement home.<sup>16</sup> Baldwin City citizens worried about the fate of the building, so they dismantled it and moved it to a local lumber yard to save it from destruction. It remained there until 1964, when it was reassembled on Baker University's property just northwest of the Old Castle Museum.<sup>17</sup> Finally it was moved to its current location directly south of Old Castle in the early 1980s to make room for the Collins Sports Complex, and it is now the only original building from Palmyra that is still standing.

**Figure 7:** Current aerial image of Baldwin City with plat of Palmyra in white shaded area. The numbers represent the approximate locations of the post office over the years: 1) Original; 2) First relocation; 3) Not pictured, a local lumberyard; 4) 1964 relocation; 5) 1980s relocation and current site of building.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 1930 U.S. Census, National Archives Microfilm T626, Roll 700; Palmyra Post Office folder, Old Castle Museum Complex Papers, Baker University Archives, Baker University.

<sup>16</sup> Kansas, Affidavit 8252, Book 249 (1967), Hale Steele and Carl Butell, Douglas County Court Records, Lawrence.

<sup>17</sup> "The post office needs funds; the old one, that is!," *Baldwin Ledger* (Thursday, April 2, 1964): n.p.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form)

1860 United States Census (Free Schedule), Palmyra Township, Douglas County, Kansas Territory; p. 101; July 20, 1860; National Archives Microfilm M653, Roll 349.

1930 United States Census, Baldwin City, Douglas County, Kansas; p. 1A, family 11, dwelling 11, line 43; April 2, 1930; National Archives Microfilm T626, Roll 700.

Baughman, Robert Williamson. *Kansas Post Offices, May 29, 1828-August 3, 1961*. Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, 1961.

"Death of Mr. N.C. Blood." *Lawrence Daily Journal* (Lawrence, Kansas), October 22, 1876.

Ebright, Homer K. *The History of Baker University*. Baldwin City, Kansas: Baker University, 1951.

Goode, William H. *Outposts of Zion, with Linnings of Mission Life*. Cincinnati: Poe and Hitchcock, 1864.

*Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail*. National Register of Historic Places multiple property documentation form. 2012.

Kansas. Douglas County. Affidavits. Douglas County Court Records, Lawrence.

Old Castle Museum Complex Papers, Baker University Archives, Baker University.

"The Post Office Needs Funds; the Old One, That Is!" *Baldwin Ledger* (Baldwin City, Kansas), April 2, 1964.

Simmons, Marc. *Following the Santa Fe Trail: a Guide for the Modern Traveler*. Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1984.

Wilder, Daniel W. *The Annals of Kansas*. Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1875.

10. Geographical Data

**Acree of Property** Less than one acre

**Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.**

(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>38.777381</u>	<u>-95.185016</u>	3	_____	_____
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

The nominated area only includes the building and the land it is sitting on. Beginning at a point that is 94 feet north of Fremont Street and 37.1 feet west of 5<sup>th</sup> Street, proceed 21.5 feet north parallel to 5<sup>th</sup> Street from the southeast to the northeast corner of the building. Then proceed 27.6 feet west along the north side of the building to its northwest corner. From there, proceed 22.1 feet south to the southwest corner of the building, then proceed east 28 feet along the south side of the building to the southeast corner.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The building has been moved from its original location. Only the building is historically significant.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sara DeCaro, Museum Director

organization Baker University date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number P.O. Box 65 telephone 785-594-8380

city or town Baldwin City state KS zip code 66006

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Property Owner:

name Baker University

street & number P.O. Box 65 telephone 785-594-8347

city or town Baldwin City state KS zip code 66006

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each digital image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to a sketch map or aerial map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photograph Log**

Name of Property: Palmyra Post Office  
City or Vicinity: Baldwin City  
County: Douglas State: Kansas  
Photographer: Richard Anderson (KSHS) & Sara DeCaro (BU)  
Date Photographed: November 2016 (KSHS) & March 2016 (BU)

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 01 of 09:** South and east elevations, looking NW (KSHS)
- 02 of 09:** South elevation, looking NE (KSHS)
- 03 of 09:** North and west elevations, looking SE (KSHS)
- 04 of 09:** Detail of east elevation (BU)
- 05 of 09:** Typical window (KSHS)
- 06 of 09:** Main level ceiling and south wall, looking SE (BU)
- 07 of 09:** Main level original counters along the west wall (BU)
- 08 of 09:** Stairwell in southwest corner of building, looking south (BU)
- 09 of 09:** Attic level, looking west (BU)

**Figures**

Include GIS maps, figures, scanned images below.

- Figure 1:** Palmyra Post Office in 1960, prior to its relocation into Baldwin City. From Baker University Archives.
- Figure 2:** Contextual map of Palmyra Post Office. Arrow is pointing to building. 2017. Douglas County GIS.
- Figure 3:** Boundary map. 2017. Douglas County GIS.
- Figure 4a:** Palmyra Post Office in 1965 after being reconstructed on Baker University's Campus in 1964. Baker University Archives.
- Figure 4b:** Palmyra Post Office in 1969 after being reconstructed on Baker University's Campus in 1964. Kansas Historic Resources Inventory.
- Figure 5:** Sketch map of the town of Palmyra, as described by three early settlers. Baker University Archives.
- Figure 6:** National Park Service map of the Santa Fe Trail, showing the location of Palmyra in relation to other known sites. National Historic Trails Office, National Park Service.
- Figure 7:** Current aerial image of Baldwin City with plat of Palmyra in white shaded area. 2017. Douglas County GIS.