

# 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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name Miami County Mercantile Company  
 Other names/site number Miami County Publishing Company/Miami County Republic  
 Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

## 2. Location

|  |     |                     |
|--|-----|---------------------|
| Street & number <u>121 S Pearl Street</u>  | N/A | not for publication |
| City or town <u>Paola</u>  | N/A | vicinity            |
| State <u>Kansas</u> Code <u>KS</u> County <u>Miami</u> Code <u>121</u> Zip code <u>66071</u> |     |                     |

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
 I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide x local Applicable National Register Criteria: x A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO Date \_\_\_\_\_

Kansas State Historical Society  
 State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:  
 \_\_\_ entered in the National Register \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register  
 \_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_ removed from the National Register  
 \_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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**5. Classification**

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

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

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

|                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | private          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public – Local   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - State   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - Federal |

|                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | district    |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | site        |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | structure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | object      |

| <u>Contributing</u> | <u>Noncontributing</u> |              |
|---------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| 1                   | 0                      | buildings    |
| 0                   |                        |              |
|                     | 0                      | sites        |
| 0                   | 0                      | structures   |
| 0                   | 0                      | objects      |
| 1                   | 0                      | <b>Total</b> |

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/ department store

COMMERCE/ business

FUNERARY/ mortuary

HEALTH CARE/ medical business/office

INDUSTRY/communications facility

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/communications facility

COMMERCE/business

WORK IN PROGRESS

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE

walls: BRICK

roof: SYNTHETICS, TILE

other: STONE, METAL: Aluminum

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## Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources, if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

### Summary

The Miami County Mercantile Company at 121 South Pearl Street in Paola, Kansas is a three-story Commercial Style 40' by 98' brick building erected in 1904 and located across from the Miami County Courthouse just southeast of the town square. The entrance of the building faces west on Pearl Street. The north side of the building has an overhead door facing a paved alleyway. The building has wood/timber framing, masonry exterior, wood windows. The roof is flat with a brick parapet and tile coping. The Miami County Republic newspaper offices occupy the first floor. The property's basement houses a Stonemetz press once used to produce county newspapers in the 1900s, and the initial operational elevator installed in 1904. The wooden staircase on the first floor is original, and above the suspended ceiling tiles, an authentic tin ceiling remains. The second and third-floor office and business spaces are currently vacant. Originally built in 1904 by The Miami County Mercantile Company, the building reflects the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American style for commercial buildings. Although most of the exterior masonry and wood framing have remained intact, structural modifications were made in 1960 and again in 1997. Some of the original glass window panes have been replaced with boards due to aging and breakage. Overall, the building has good integrity for a large commercial building in the area.

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## Elaboration

### Setting & Site

The Miami County Mercantile Company is located in Paola at 121 S. Pearl Street in eastern Kansas. According to the 2010 census, with just over 5,600 residents, Paola, the Miami County seat, is the largest town located completely within the county boundaries. Paola's commercial core is a town square layout with a central park surrounded by dense commercial blocks. The area expands roughly between one-to-two blocks from the square on all sides. The Mercantile Company sits one-half block to the southeast of the square and across from the Miami County Courthouse. The downtown generally consists of one- and two-story brick storefronts. The Mercantile is one of two, three-story buildings in the commercial area and a prominent fixture. The surrounding area's density and overall commercial character have changed little from the Mercantile Company's early years. A portion of the historic facades have seen storefront alterations and some stucco or cladding, though most of the upper floors and openings remain intact. The area has not been surveyed or evaluated. Still, the Miami County Mercantile Company owner is interested in rehabilitation and preserving the building as a lynch-pin to encourage more preservation interest in the community. There are two buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places within the commercial area, the Miami County Courthouse and the Jackson Hotel at 139 W. Peoria St. (at the west end of the core).

The building fronts Pearl Street and faces west (northwest) toward the courthouse. To the north of the building is an alleyway between E. Wea St. and E. Mission Street. Directly behind the Mercantile Company is a surface parking lot accessible to the surrounding businesses. The south elevation is a party-wall with the adjacent business. The property occupies most of its lot, which has changed little. The property is one of the tallest buildings in Paola, with design aspects consistent with the era in which it was built. The land the building was erected on was purchased in March 1904 by William Schwartz to construct the new Miami County Mercantile Building.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "A New Brick Block," *The Western Spirit*, (Paola, Kansas), March 11, 1904.

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## Exterior

The Mercantile Company is a good example of the Commercial Style common in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It includes some character features like its three-story height, made of brick, tall and narrow windows on the upper stories, and distinctive brick designs and patterns at the cornice. It measures forty feet wide and ninety-eight feet deep. The Mercantile features a brick parapet and a sloped flat roof made of synthetics. The building has a symmetrical façade with six-windows across the second and third floors. Each window is an original wood double-hung one-over-one window with a stone accent for the hoods and lintels. The storefront system was replaced in the 1960s with an aluminum system. There is one entry at the northwest corner of the façade with four brick pilasters – two in the center and one at each end. The spaces between the pilasters are windows over tile bulkheads. The façade reads door, pilaster, two display windows, pilaster, one narrow display window, pilaster, three large display windows, and pilaster. Above the windows, covering where a transom and signboard would be, is a corrugated metal strip. The cornice is simple and features three-rows of projecting bricks at the bottom and imitated dentils across the top.

The north (alley) elevation features six segmental-arched windows with stone lentils on the upper floors. The arch above the windows is made of brick set in a double row lock. The windows appear to be the original two-over-two double-hung wood, but some are either painted or covered in plywood. The first-floor features a storefront window, two bricked-in windows, one segmental arch window, a loading/shipping overhead door, and another segmental arch window. There are no exterior details on this elevation. There is a metal straight-ladder fire escape from the roof to the upper floors.

The east (back) elevation seems to remain fully intact. There are six original segmental-arched wood windows with two-over-two lites and double-hung on the upper floors. There is a break in the middle separating the windows into sets of three, evenly spaced. The first floor features three windows on the left, all painted over. On the right is a tall narrow door opening, a space, and a window in the end. It doesn't appear that there was ever a window opening in the middle of the right side. However, the upper door is covered, and there is a standard door in the lower half. The door appears to be too small for the opening as it is surrounded by extra framing. There are two or three small openings at the basement level within the stone foundation wall.

## Interior

First floor: The first floor is subdivided into two section. The entrance opens directly into the front portion, which is about one-third of the first-floor. This space includes the lobby, a corner office opposite the entrance and along the north wall are two bathrooms. The back section of the building is about two-thirds of the first floor and remains mostly open and occupied by cubicles. The 1960 renovation installed carpeting, vinyl baseboard, and a grid drop-ceiling with standard fluorescent lighting. The structural posts within the space are evenly distributed to help support the structure. Above the drop-ceiling is the original undisturbed pressed metal. Some interior walls have been added along the room's edge to subdivide the space and feature large windows for light. These alterations used standard 1960s materials, trim, and finishes. Some of the equipment and shelving from the previous shop were installed at the Mercantile Company. The original stairs leading to the second floor are wooden with a decorative balustrade and a large ornate newel post. The remodeling seems to be mostly limited to the first floor.

Second & Third floor: The second and third floors have seen little alterations and mostly repair work. The original windows remain intact with surrounds and historic wood trim. The walls and ceiling are plaster and feature little damage in some areas. The trim around the openings, baseboards, and flooring feature the original wood. Some decorative flooring has been added in places, but it is peeling and coming off the original floors. The original doors, some with a transom above, are intact with their original fixtures. It appears that some metal triangular bracing has been added between the concrete columns on the second floor. Additional office space on the second and third floors was rented to local real estate agents, doctors, and other

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merchants.<sup>2</sup> Some of the third-floor is more industrial and feature exposed rafters, brick walls, and little to no trim around the windows.

**Basement:** The basement is very industrial, open, and used for storage. There are a large number of old newspapers and printing associated machines and equipment in this space. It remains a large, open space with structural brick posts evenly spaced throughout the floor. A couple of CMU walls were added for an additional support structure. The masonry and metal structure system are intact, as is the historic elevator shaft and mechanism. There are no finishes or decorative details in the basement.

### **Alterations**

Before more extensive renovations in 1960, Carrothers Construction Company in Paola, KS, was hired to pour concrete flooring in the property, then called the Buchman building. This concrete flooring was completed in the mid-1940s. The Miami County Publishing Company, owned by Drew McLaughlin, Jr., purchased and renovated the building in 1960. McLaughlin, Jr. hired Hubert Hamlin, of Kansas City, as the architect, and Cliff Lee Construction Company remodeled the building to accommodate the newspaper production and staff on the first floor. The building's entrance was moved from the center of the building to the north to its current location. An interior staircase located by the previous entrance was removed, creating the open lobby space. Sections of the 1940s poured concrete flooring was removed so that concrete and block foundations could be added for new presses and equipment on the first floor. The old storefront was removed, and basement windows were filled in. A back door was widened, and an overhead door was installed for loading trucks to deliver papers to the post office. A wall separated the front and backs of the first floor; the back half housed the newspaper's production and assembly while the front half housed the advertising and writing departments. Fluorescent lighting, heating systems, and air conditioning were installed on the entire first floor.

In 1997, The Miami County Publishing Company contracted Triangle Builders of Paola, KS, to renovate the first floor. Additional structural supports for the roof were installed and added structure to the roof trusses. The current first floor spaces (front & back sections) reflect the Triangle Plans and include staff cubicles, sectioned off office spaces, a reception counter, and opening up of the lobby area by removing the wall separating the front and back half of the first floor.

### **Integrity**

Although some changes have been made over time, most of them have been limited to the first floor. The Miami County Mercantile Company retains much of its integrity and many original features from when it was built in 1904. Also, the changes that have been made reflect its continued commercial use and function. It remains in its original location and footprint. The setting is largely unchanged from the commercial period, with the building hugging the sidewalk and alley and located in Paola's commercial core. Although the building's lower storefront has been altered, the building maintains its recognizable Commercial Style design throughout the structure. Most of the alterations were made in the 1960s and are typical alterations for commercial buildings. All of the original features and historic materials remain intact on three of the four levels. Some of the original features remain intact on the first floor, and some are non-permanently covered with a drop-ceiling or carpeting. The Mercantile Company maintains its historic function and association with commerce in Paola. The building is a good example of a large commercial building in Miami County and will encourage continued use of downtown buildings in small towns in Kansas.

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<sup>2</sup> *The Miami Republican* (Paola, Kansas), March 2, 1906.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

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

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

COMMERCE

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### Period of Significance

1904-1971

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### Significant Dates

1904

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1957

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### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

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### Cultural Affiliation

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### Architect/Builder

Schwartz, William

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### Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins with the year of construction in 1904. The Mercantile Company played a critical role in the early development and growth of the city and its industries. After the Mercantile closed, the local newspaper company, Miami County Publishing Co., Inc. purchased the building so that their two newspapers were housed under one roof. Their role within the community was to support and connect the surrounding areas of Miami County. Therefore, the period ends in 1971, as the building and businesses still played a vital role in the community until the 1980s, and there is no clear end-date before the general 50-year guidance for National Register listing.

### Criteria Considerations (justification)

N/A

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

### Summary

The building located at 121 S. Pearl Street in Paola, KS, was erected in the Summer of 1904<sup>3</sup> by The Miami County Mercantile Company. When it opened to the public in October 1904, the household furnishings store was described as equal to any in Topeka and surpassing town expectations.<sup>4</sup> The property meets the National Register of Historic Places Criterion A for commerce through its years of active commercial use in downtown Paola. Dr. P.S. Ayers also moved his medical practice to the building when the Mercantile opened. The building continued to house important and influential businesses throughout the mid-twentieth century. In 1956, Drew McLaughlin, Jr. purchased the property for the Miami County Publishing Company. The building was renovated at that point to the latest fashion and styles. The storefront and some finishes on the first floor were changed but still reflect the Commercial Style. Local newspapers were printed for County residents. Both William Schwartz<sup>5</sup> and Drew McLaughlin, Jr.,<sup>6</sup> were significant residents of Paola and Miami County. Their businesses were a staple for the growth, expansion, and continued documentation of the area seen through their success.

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### Elaboration

#### Brief History of Paola & Commerce

The land known as Paola, Kansas, was originally settled around 1832 by Indians who had traveled from Illinois. In 1854 the tribes of the Peoria, Wea, Piankishaw, and Kaskaskia Indians united to become The Confederated Peoria tribe, led by Baptiste Peoria. Baptiste Peoria was granted several hundred acres of land in what was called Wea Village. In 1855, the town of Paola was incorporated, and the Paola Town Company purchased roughly 400 acres of land. An area of land was given to Paola in 1858, by the town council, headed by Baptiste Peoria, with the provision that no building would ever be built on it; that land became the town square. During the first years of settlement, businesses, churches, and government buildings were constructed on the roads all around the square. As the town grew, businesses and additional buildings were built near the main square.<sup>7</sup>

Toward the end of the 1870s, *Western Spirit*, a local newspaper, produced information to bring people to Paola. An article from June 15, 1877, read, "Paola of to-day is one of the liveliest towns of the State, beautifully situated, surrounded on all sides with timber. Bull Creek borders it on the west and south, and Wea on the east. It has a population of over 1,600, with no objects of charity."<sup>8</sup> The brochure continued to describe how the town had developed and expanded at the time. Paola was well established by 1877, with a \$65,000 school building at three stories, a large courthouse, many church and fraternal organizations, and several manufacturers (wagon, carriage & buggy, pumps). Household and business items were not in short supply with several blacksmiths, harness shops, tailors & milliners, furniture stores, dry goods & grocery stores, and all other home supplies needed. The town continued further with two depots, several mills, agricultural equipment dealers, grain & flour stores, carpenters, masons and specialists, barbers, physicians, attorneys, and an auctioneer.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "Paola's Improvement." *The Western Spirit*, (Paola, Kansas), August 19, 1904.

<sup>4</sup> *The Western Spirit*, (Paola, Kansas), October 28, 1904.

<sup>5</sup> William Connelley, "William Schwartz," in *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans*, (Chicago: Lewis, 1918), 5v p228. Accessed Online at <http://www.ksgenweb.org/archives/1918ks/bios/schwarw.html>

<sup>6</sup> "Drew McLaughlin Sr.," Hall of Fame, Kansas Press Association. <http://kspress.com/mclaughlin-drew-sr>; "Dr. McLaughlin, J.," Hall of Fame, Kansas Press Association. <http://kspress.com/mclaughlin-drew-jr>

<sup>7</sup> "Paola Kansas," Miami County Kansas History, Miami County Historical Museum <http://www.thinkmiamicountyhistory.com/Paola.html>

<sup>8</sup> "City of Paola," *The Western Spirit*, (Paola, Kansas), June 15, 1877.

<sup>9</sup> "City of Paola," *The Western Spirit*, (Paola, Kansas), June 15, 1877.

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The population of Paola in 1883 was estimated at 3,000, which was almost double the size from 1877. In 1886 Paola was the only town west of Findlay, Ohio, lighted by natural gas.<sup>10</sup> The Miami Republican newspaper reported, "Paola is thoroughly awake to the great importance of the matter and will let no means escape to make its value known to the outside world."<sup>11</sup> Natural gas mines were attracting attention from capitalists and bringing people to the community. Paola experienced a tremendous economic boom when the Paola Gas Company found an extraordinary supply of natural gas with their 2<sup>nd</sup> well. On June 28, 1887, Paola hosted a gas celebration. The *Lawrence Weekly Journal* reported, "There were large crowds at the natural gas celebration in Paola, yesterday. It is reported that fifteen thousand people were present. The procession was over two miles long. This shows what natural gas is doing in Paola..."<sup>12</sup> The oil fields expanded and brought in around 400 new citizens.

At the turn of the century, telephone service was created that connected the surrounding smaller communities to Paola. The 1905 census determined the population of Paola had increased to 3,123 citizens. The city had begun forming around a prominent academy purchased by and for the Catholic Ursuline sisters.<sup>13</sup> Other businesses and entertainment activities like the automobiles club and a skating rink were formed and built in Paola.

In February 1906, a large fire occurred at the Mercantile Company, starting on the second floor in the undertaking department. The fire department suspects it started due to spontaneous combustion since there were no fire or lights in the area the fire started.<sup>14</sup> The fire department put out the fire before it spread to other businesses as previous fires in Paola history had done. The National Register of Historic Places nomination for Jackson Hotel in Paola discusses some early fires and damage within the commercial core.

The Commercial Hotel announced that in the last year, they had over 15,000 guests stay there. In 1906 the "Paola House" the oldest landmark in Paola and the first hotel erected in Eastern Kansas was destroyed by fire on South Silver that destroyed one half of the block. During the next 50 years many great buildings on the square in Paola were destroyed by fire. Some were rebuilt, but not on the same grand scale as before.<sup>15</sup>

Although the fire caused significant damage to the Mercantile Company's inventory and losses to other businesses in the building, the structure of the building remained intact. The Mercantile Company building continued to house an assortment of physicians, merchants, and other businesses in the following decades. The 1940 census showed a 5% population drop in Paola, but a post-war population growth of 13% and 20% gains in 1950 and 1960. Economic recessions and the growth of suburban areas northeast of Paola reflect minor population dips of 3% and 1% in the 1970s and 1980s, but by 2010, Paola's population was over 5600. The town square remains a hub of activity with various festivals and community events every year. The commerce surrounding the square continues to feature a wide variety of locally owned and operated goods, services, and eating establishments to local residents despite the addition of big box stores and chain restaurants on the eastern side of town in recent years.

### **Mr. Schwartz & The Mercantile Company**

William Schwartz emigrated from Nassau, Germany, to the United States in 1856 and made his way to Miami County in 1858. Schwartz worked to acquire property and businesses in Louisburg, KS, before expanding his endeavors to Paola. Although Schwartz was considered an authority in the cattle business for many years,

<sup>10</sup> "Paola Lighted by Gas," *The Miami Republican* (Paola, Kansas), March 5, 1886.

<sup>11</sup> "Paola Lighted by Gas," *The Miami Republican* (Paola, Kansas), March 5, 1886.

<sup>12</sup> "Paola Celebration," *The Lawrence Weekly Journal* (Lawrence, Kansas), June 30, 1887.

<sup>13</sup> National Register of Historic Places nomination, "Jackson Hotel" in Paola, Miami County, Kansas. Listed July 9, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> "Fire in Paola's Big Store," *The Miami Republican* (Paola, Kansas), February 2, 1906.

<sup>15</sup> National Register of Historic Places nomination, "Jackson Hotel" in Paola, Miami County, Kansas. Listed July 9, 2008.

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cattle were not his only interest or holdings. He was President of the Interstate Mercantile Company of Louisburg and President of the Bank of Louisburg, KS.

In 1891, Schwartz moved to Paola to manage another of his business holdings: The Paola Brick and Tile Company. In addition to the Miami County Mercantile in Paola, Schwartz erected additional buildings and houses in Louisburg and Kansas City, Missouri. Schwartz also contributed to the organization of Citizen States Bank of Paola in 1903 and participated in various other business activities in Paola until he died in 1914. Historical records state that "it is said that fifty families came to Kansas through his influence."<sup>16</sup> His descendants continued to be active members of Miami County, and on April 18, 2018, donated \$100,000.00 to the Miami County Historical Museum.<sup>17</sup> Mr. Williams Schwartz left a continuing legacy in Paola and Miami County. The building located at 121 S. Pearl Street is part of the legacy.

William Schwartz combined his expertise as a business owner<sup>18</sup> to allow local residents to purchase all the merchandise needed to furnish their homes without traveling outside of Miami County. The Miami County Mercantile offered stoves, carpets, kitchen furnishing, parlor suites, caskets, and more to its customers. Although the Mercantile had been in business for a few years before constructing the new building located at 121 S. Pearl Street, its showrooms and departments were located in separate buildings on the north and west sides of the town square.<sup>19</sup> By purchasing the land (lot six and seven in Block thirty in the City of Paola from S.D. Condon on June 30, 1904) and completing the new Mercantile building, Schwartz offered the convenience of one-stop shopping in the department store while keeping its location close to the central hub of the town square. Everything in the new building was reported to be modern: steam, heat, elevator, closets with sewer connection, gas, water, etc. The elevator was manufactured by the Kansas City Elevator Manufacturing Company and operated by a small gas engine; the elevator is still operational. The Miami County Mercantile had purchased the undertaking business of B. R. Keith in May of 1904<sup>20</sup> and offered undertaking services to local residents in the same building. The second and third-floor office spaces provided residents with access to other professionals, such as doctors' offices and real estate agents.

### **The Mercantile Company Building post-1950s**

Prior to 1956, Citizens in Paola and Miami County had two main newspapers to choose from: the Miami Republican, established in 1866, and the Western Spirit, established in 1871. The Miami County Republican's first owners, John McReynolds and Basil M. Simpson, were Radical Republicans in the days of Reconstruction following the Civil War. In 1871 the word "County" was dropped from the Newspapers name, and that was also the year that Captain Leslie J. Perry printed the first issue of The Kansas Spirit. Later Perry changed the name to The Western Sprit to avoid confusion with a similarly named newspaper in Lawrence.<sup>21</sup>

Drew McLaughlin, Jr. joined the Republican's staff after graduating from the University of Kansas in 1938. After serving in the Navy for several years, McLaughlin Jr. rejoined the Republican in 1952. In 1956, he helped arrange a merger between the Miami Republican and the Western Spirit, the current competition to the Miami Republican and owned by former banker L.M. Schwartz. Mr. McLaughlin, Jr. and Mr. Schwartz were determined to print a newspaper that fairly covered the community without dividing the community. In 1957, the Miami County Publishing Company was formed, and McLaughlin, Jr. became President, a position he held for

<sup>16</sup> William Connelley, "William Schwartz," in *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans*, (Chicago: Lewis, 1918), 5v p228. Accessed Online at <http://www.ksgenweb.org/archives/1918ks/bios/schwarw.html>

<sup>17</sup> McCauly, Brian, "Schwartz family makes big donation to museum," *The Miami County Republic*, April 18, 2018, [https://www.republic-online.com/business/schwartz-family-makes-big-donation-to-museum/article\\_e997ef48-e7ab-5af8-a9dc-4fe3f654d604.html](https://www.republic-online.com/business/schwartz-family-makes-big-donation-to-museum/article_e997ef48-e7ab-5af8-a9dc-4fe3f654d604.html).

<sup>18</sup> "The Miami Mercantile Company," *The Western Spirit* (Paola, Kansas), September 5, 1902.

<sup>19</sup> *The Western Spirit* (Paola, Kansas), December 19, 1902.

<sup>20</sup> *The Miami Republic* (Paola, Kansas), May 13, 1904.

<sup>21</sup> "About Us," *The Miami County Republic*. Accessed 2020 <https://www.republic-online.com/site/about.html>

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25 years.<sup>22</sup> The Western Spirit and the Miami Republican continued to be published under the two different names until 1991 when Phil McLaughlin, the third generation of his family to lead the newspaper, changed the name to the Miami County Republic.

In 1960 Drew McLaughlin, Jr. purchased the building located at 121 S. Pearl Street and contracted the renovations necessary to accommodate the printing of both newspapers. Before this, both papers were published at 16 E. Peoria Street, a location that was not sufficient space for customers and staff. The printing department was crowded, and because of this, the production time was lost.<sup>23</sup> The Miami County Publishing Company, Inc. held an open house on December 3, 1960, and invited the public to attend. According to an article to the *Miami County Republic* dated December 1, 1960, "The publishers made the move because they have confidence in Miami County now and look toward a continued growth in population and economy. Our faith is in Miami County. Anything the two Paola newspapers can do to promote greater progress, greater growth will be done. Harmony will be promoted and the result will be unity."

Original printing plates and historical newspapers are stored on the second floor of the building (as of 2020). Part of accommodating the heavy equipment for producing newspapers, the building needed additional structural supports. So, some steel members were added to the upper floors, additional steel posts were added to the first floor, and a couple of CMU walls were added in the basement. The storage required for the older mechanisms, historical records and printing tools, and papers was kept to the more industrial-like spaces in the building, such as the third floor and basement. As with most commercial buildings across the country, the trend to update and feature a new modern façade meant removing the historic storefront and replacing it with the era's style. The entrance and first floor spaces were updated to accommodate the modern trends and create a more eye-catching design. The 1960 aluminum storefront is a good example of this change. Additionally, the interior carpeting, vinyl, finishes, and drop-ceiling are common changes made to modernize businesses. The Miami County Republic, located at 121 S. Pearl Street, was and continues to be a place for Paola and Miami County citizens to trace their historical roots and become apprised of local events.<sup>24</sup>

### Closing

The Miami County Mercantile Company building is located at 121 S. Pearl Street in Paola, Kansas. Constructed in 1904, the building played an important role in aiding businesses and the community by supplying the various and much-needed supplies. The Mercantile Company was a required staple within the community, providing materials, furniture, fixtures, appliances, and more to Paola's expanding population and surrounding areas. Even after the Mercantile Company closed, the building's prominent location off the city square continued to house other local businesses. The local newspapers were consolidated into a single building with the purchase of the Mercantile Company building in 1956. The newspapers documented, shared, and kept good historical records for the surrounding communities. The Mercantile Company building is locally eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for commerce. The building retains good historic integrity and character-defining features and is a staple structure within the commercial core. The building is a good example of an early commercial enterprise in Paola.

<sup>22</sup> "Drew McLaughlin Sr.," Hall of Fame, Kansas Press Association. <http://kspress.com/mclaughlin-drew-sr>; "Dr. McLaughlin, J.," Hall of Fame, Kansas Press Association. <http://kspress.com/mclaughlin-drew-jr>

<sup>23</sup> *The Miami County Republic* (Paola, Kansas), December 1, 1960, Volume 96.

<sup>24</sup> "About Us," The Miami County Republic. Accessed 2020 <https://www.republic-online.com/site/about.html>

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

Newspapers:

- "A New Brick Block," *The Western Spirit*, (Paola, Kansas), March 11, 1904.
- "City of Paola," *The Western Spirit*, (Paola, Kansas), June 15, 1877.
- "Fire in Paola's Big Store," *The Miami Republican* (Paola, Kansas), February 2, 1906.
- McCauly, Brian, "Schwartz family makes big donation to museum," *The Miami County Republic*, April 18, 2018.  
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- "Paola Celebration," *The Lawrence Weekly Journal* (Lawrence, Kansas), June 30, 1887.
- "Paola's Improvement." *The Western Spirit*, (Paola, Kansas), August 19, 1904.
- "Paola Lighted by Gas," *The Miami Republican* (Paola, Kansas), March 5, 1886.
- The Miami County Republic* (Paola, Kansas), December 1, 1960, Volume 96.
- The Miami Republic* (Paola, Kansas), May 13, 1904.
- The Miami Republican* (Paola, Kansas), March 2, 1906.
- "The Miami Mercantile Company," *The Western Spirit* (Paola, Kansas), September 5, 1902.
- The Western Spirit* (Paola, Kansas), December 19, 1902.
- The Western Spirit*, (Paola, Kansas), October 28, 1904.

Other Sources:

- Kansas Press Association. "Drew McLaughlin Sr." Hall of Fame. Accessed 2020 <http://kspress.com/mclaughlin-drew-sr>.
- Kansas Press Association. "Dr. McLaughlin, J." Hall of Fame. Accessed 2020 <http://kspress.com/mclaughlin-drew-jr>.
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- National Register of Historic Places nomination, "Jackson Hotel" in Paola, Miami County, Kansas. Listed July 9, 2008.
- The Miami County Republic. "About Us." Accessed 2020 <https://www.republic-online.com/site/about.html>.
- William Connelley. "William Schwartz." In *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans*, 5v p228. Chicago: Lewis, 1918.  
Accessed Online at <http://www.ksgenweb.org/archives/1918ks/bios/schwarw.html>

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

Miami County Mercantile Company  
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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage 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>38.571169</u> | <u>-94.877936</u> | 3 | _____     | _____      |
|   | Latitude:        | Longitude:        |   | Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2 | _____            | _____             | 4 | _____     | _____      |
|   | Latitude:        | Longitude:        |   | Latitude: | Longitude: |

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

The Miami County Assessor describes the parcel as PAOLA RE-SURVEY, Lots six (6) - seven (7) of Block thirty (30) in Paola, Miami County, Kansas – Section 16 Township 17 Range 23. The common address is: 121 S. Pearl Street, Paola, KS 66071. The Property ID is # 1351602046004000.

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

The nominated property boundary includes the entire parcel at 121 S. Pearl Street in Paola, Kansas that is historically associated with the Miami County Mercantile Building. Easements, restrictions, setback lines or servitudes, if any, reflected on the plat of said land filed as Plat B, page 11 or otherwise appearing the public records. Document entitled "Agreement between S.D. Condon and Hattie. A. Condon, his wife and D.O. Sellers and Clara N. Sellars, his wife" filed June 2, 1905 as Book 93, page 95.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Chris Butler

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 5-18-20

street & number 303 South Castle Street telephone 913-594-9159

city or town Paola state KS zip code 66071

e-mail bsechris@yahoo.com

**Property Owner:** (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Legacy Properties & Development, Rob George, Owner

street & number 907 N.Pearl Street Suite 4 telephone 913-731-2394 ( cell)

city or town Paola state KS zip code 66071

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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### **Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### **Figures**

Include GIS maps, figures, scanned images below.

- Figure 1: The Western Spirit (Paola, Kansas), May 2, 1887
- Figure 2: The Miami Republican (Paola, Kansas), March 5, 1886
- Figure 3: The Miami Republican (Paola, Kansas), June 24, 1887
- Figure 4: The Western Spirit (Paola, Kansas), September 5, 1902
- Figure 5: The Western Spirit (Paola, Kansas), March 11, 1904
- Figure 6: The Western Spirit (Paola, Kansas), August 19, 1904
- Figure 7: The Western Spirit (Paola, Kansas), October 28, 1904
- Figure 8: The Miami Republican (Paola, Kansas), February 2, 1906

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Figure 1: The Western Spirit (Paola, Kansas). May 2, 1887

A year ago in our big edition of THE SPIRIT we outlined the resources of Paola and Miami county, natural advantages, wealth and certain development, noting the value of our natural gas, the low price of the best land the sun ever shone upon, and the inevitable rise in values. We told the people then of the streets of Paola lighted by gas, her mills run by gas, and stores and dwellings heated and lighted by gas, of street railway, advance in rents and rise of prices. What many looked upon then as visionary and mere newspaper blowing is a reality to-day. When the Dunn farm adjoining the city sold in a few months afterward at \$100 per acre, some said it was not a real transfer, and so on. But last week when a syndicate of capitalists dropped in and paid \$300 per acre in cash for the same land and purchased over 250 acres adjoining it at figures ranging from \$150 to \$275 per acre, taking all the territory between Paola city and Wea to the gas wells, these same fellows began to open their eyes. Then dealing in ground begun, and besides the \$90,000 paid by Mr. Boicourt of the A. T. & S. F. Ry. management, and others, it is safe to say that men of this place and other towns have paid for city lots and suburban lands over \$100,000. Watchful capitalists from Kansas City, Ft. Smith, St. Louis and other points, have, without any parade or lofty talk, quietly got deeds for \$75,000 worth of land that the public is not apprised of, and the deeds cautiously sliding into the Recorder's office, one to three at a time.

W. F. deCordova, Manager of the Great Western Glass Factory is here now arranging the details of the franchise preparatory to commencing the erection of buildings.

The street car road charter has been sold to the syndicate and work of grading begins this week, the first move being to straighten the jog in east Peoria street near B. J. Sheridan's residence.

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Figure 2: The Miami Republican (Paola, Kansas). March 5, 1886



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Figure 3: The Miami Republican (Paola, Kansas),  
June 24, 1887

Figure 4: The Western Spirit (Paola, Kansas),  
September 5, 1902

**NATURAL GAS JUBILEE!**

**GRAND PREPARATIONS BEING MADE TO CELEBRATE ON TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 1887.**

**Excursions From Kansas City and Various Other Points on That Day.**

The first natural gas celebration ever held in the west will take place in Paola next Tuesday. Last Monday evening a number of Paola citizens and several Kansas City capitalists met in the Paola Opera House and made all the necessary arrangements to have one of the grandest meetings of this nature now on record. S. G. Bigelow was chosen chairman and A. D. States secretary. Speeches were made by H. A. Miller, Geo. A. Clark, A. E. Standen, J. H. Phillips, D. M. Ferguson, A. D. States and others on the general prospects of Paola and her wonderful natural advantages. The Kansas City gentlemen will conduct the excursion and the citizens are to entertain the people in the way of a free dinner, free transportation around the city and to the natural gas wells. Natural gas arches will be built across the four corners of the square, which will be illuminated with natural gas; besides this there will be pipes laid to various parts of the city which will have the necessary fixtures for illumination.

The excursionists are expected at 9:30 a. m., and upon their arrival the committee on transportation will meet the people at the depots and form in one grand procession bound for the gas wells in the Boon field. After noticing the beauties of gas there they will return to town and adjourn for dinner, which will be arranged in the beautiful grove on the Z. Hayes farm, where stoves will be put up and the food cooked with natural gas.

A committee on ways and means consisting of Z. Hayes, T. M. Hobson, H. A. Miller, D. M. Ferguson and C. H. Mallory was chosen, also a committee on transportation and reception, consisting of J. T. Highley, James Rodman, L. D. White, H. T. Bates, J. P. Hiner and Don Campbell. These committees are to have a meeting tonight in Paola Opera House, to which all are invited. A committee on procuring dinner was appointed by the chair, consisting of J. E. Maxwell, W. G. Phillips, Joe Nicely, S. D. Condon and D. M. Ferguson. Geo. Quimby and E. W. Robinson were chosen to make a water works display and E. M. Wickersham as committeeman on music. H. A. Miller was chosen marshal of the day, with five assistants. Two good bands have been procured for the occasion. Every farmer in this and adjoining counties is requested to be present and help make it one of the grandest events ever occurring in eastern Kansas.

**The Miami Mercantile Company.**

The Louisburg Mercantile and Manufacturing Company established a branch store in Paola in the early part of 1901 as an experiment in the furniture and stove business. It has proved a success beyond all expectations. In fact, custom came so steadily and rapidly that it was decided to make the concern a Paola institution, and the Miami County Mercantile Company was formed by Wm. Schwartz, J. W. Hand, J. F. Powell and others who are property owners, residents and heavy tax-payers of this city.

True, others interested with them own and operate a similar store in Louisburg and one in Osawatomie, but the house, or rather two houses now, here must be ranked with the exclusive Paola business enterprises. Such men as Schwartz, Hand and Powell brought to Paola with them not less than \$50,000 capital to add to our material wealth. Their substantial homes, their personal and real estate holdings, Mr. Schwartz's brick and tile plant, all combine to make the Miami County Mercantile Company worthy of the large patronage it is enjoying.

With so large a business in this county they say to customers in many ways—one of which is, about everything sold comes by car load lots. The business has grown and is growing because they sell the best goods cheap and warrant them to all buyers. As evidence of the growth and progress of the Miami County Mercantile Company, the taking of a long lease of the north room, west side of Park, Paola, of the Old Opera House, is convincing. Of course, the main rooms are in the Oyster Block, on the north side. See their announcement in this issue.

Mrs. Jennie Hungerford and daughter

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**A New Brick Block.**

Mr. Wm. Schwartz has purchased the Moffett hotel ground and building, across the alley south of the post-office, and will immediately start the work of erecting a three-story brick building, 40 feet wide by 98 feet deep. The frame building now on the lot will be moved next week. It was bought of Alpheus Lane. The Miami County Mercantile Company takes a fourth interest in the ground and new building.

Everything in the new structure is to be modern—steam heat, elevator, closets with sewer connection, gas, water, etc. The elevator will be operated by a small engine run by gas. The whole building, from basement to garret, is to be occupied by the Miami County Mercantile Company which is now on the north side of the Park. Work will be begun at once and pushed to completion for occupancy about August 1st. The total cost, including ground, will be \$15,000.

**Paola's Improvement.**

More building of a substantial character has been done in Paola within the last three months than ever before in the same period. Oyster Brothers erected a \$4,000 addition to their business block; W. F. Edwards a \$1,500 livery stable extension. The Miami County Mercantile Company has nearly completed a \$15,000 brick, Ursuline Sisters have put up a \$40,000 main building of Ursuline Academy and W. H. Gatlin has finished a \$4,000 brick store room. O. F. McLaughlin has finished two \$1,600 residences; E. W. Bryant's \$1,800 house is done and so is Ben Long's \$2,000 residence; R. Mundell has made a \$3,000 boarding house of the Presbyterian church, and J. W. Wren has completed a \$2,500 home. Major Lane's new residence is nearly ready for occupancy and W. J. Curts' splendid dwelling is done at a cost of \$2,000; E. C. Canfield's new cottage, Frank M. Sheridan's \$1,200 addition to his home, W. J. Nicholson's \$2,000 dwelling, Dr. Buxton's cottage and half a dozen others, all new, are finished or nearly so. Besides this, work has started on a \$14,000 Presbyterian church and C. F. Emery's new \$2,500 home. Altogether about \$100,000 has been expended in building and repairing in Paola since the 1st day of last May.

Figure 5: The Western Spirit (Paola, Kansas), March 11, 1904

Figure 6: The Western Spirit (Paola, Kansas), August 19, 1904

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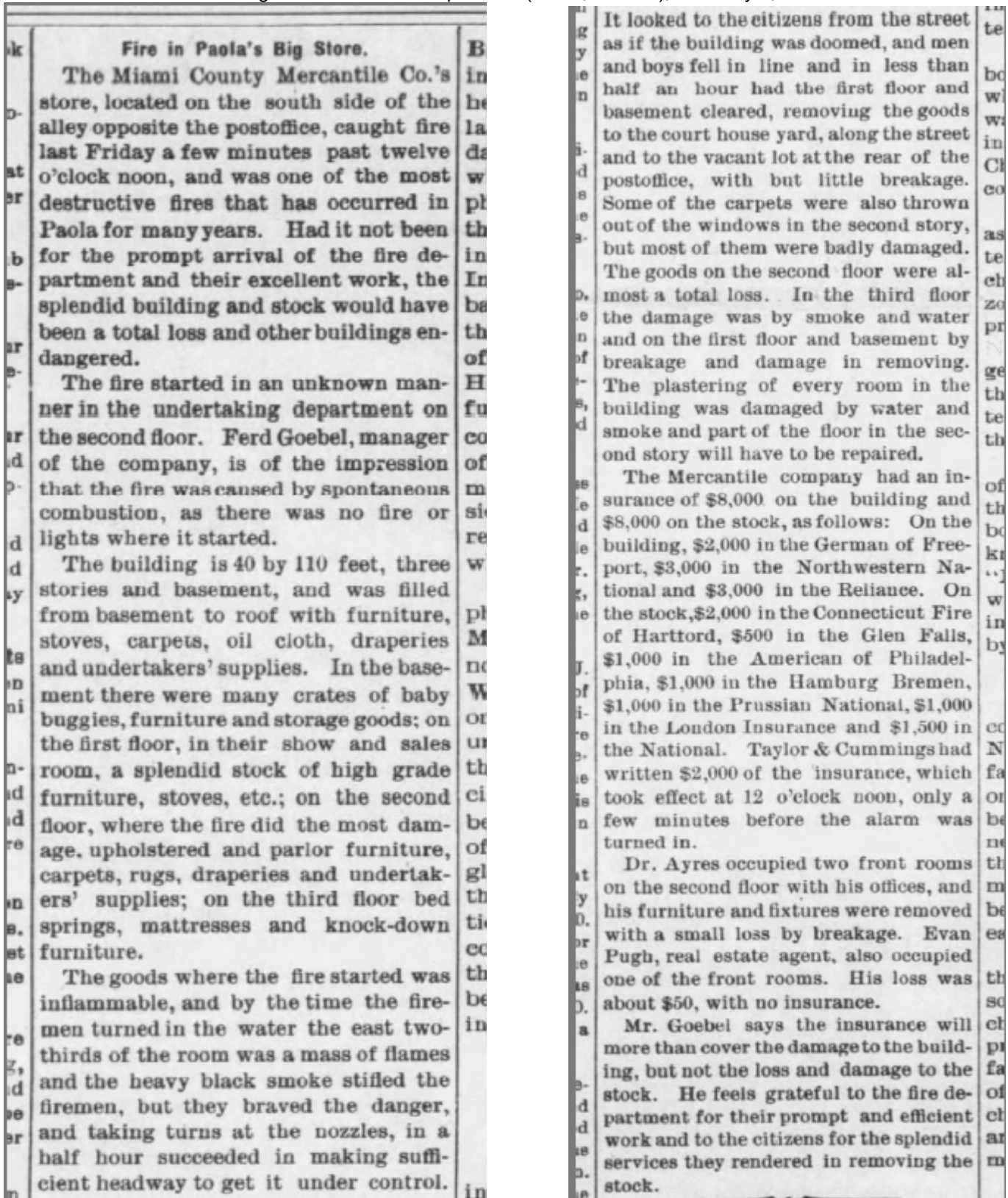
Figure 7: The Western Spirit (Paola, Kansas), October 28, 1904

There never was a more successful opening in Paola than that of the Miami County Mercantile Company on the 15th inst. And no wonder. Such a store surpasses the expectations of the oldest settler. None of us ever dreamed that this town would have a house-furnishing establishment equal to any in Topeka—a three-story building, 40x110 feet, three stories and basement all filled with merchandise for furnishing the home—stoves, carpets, kitchen furnishing, parlor suites, caskets, etc., etc., with a \$10,000 stock of carpets and rugs.

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Figure 8: The Miami Republican (Paola, Kansas), February 2, 1906



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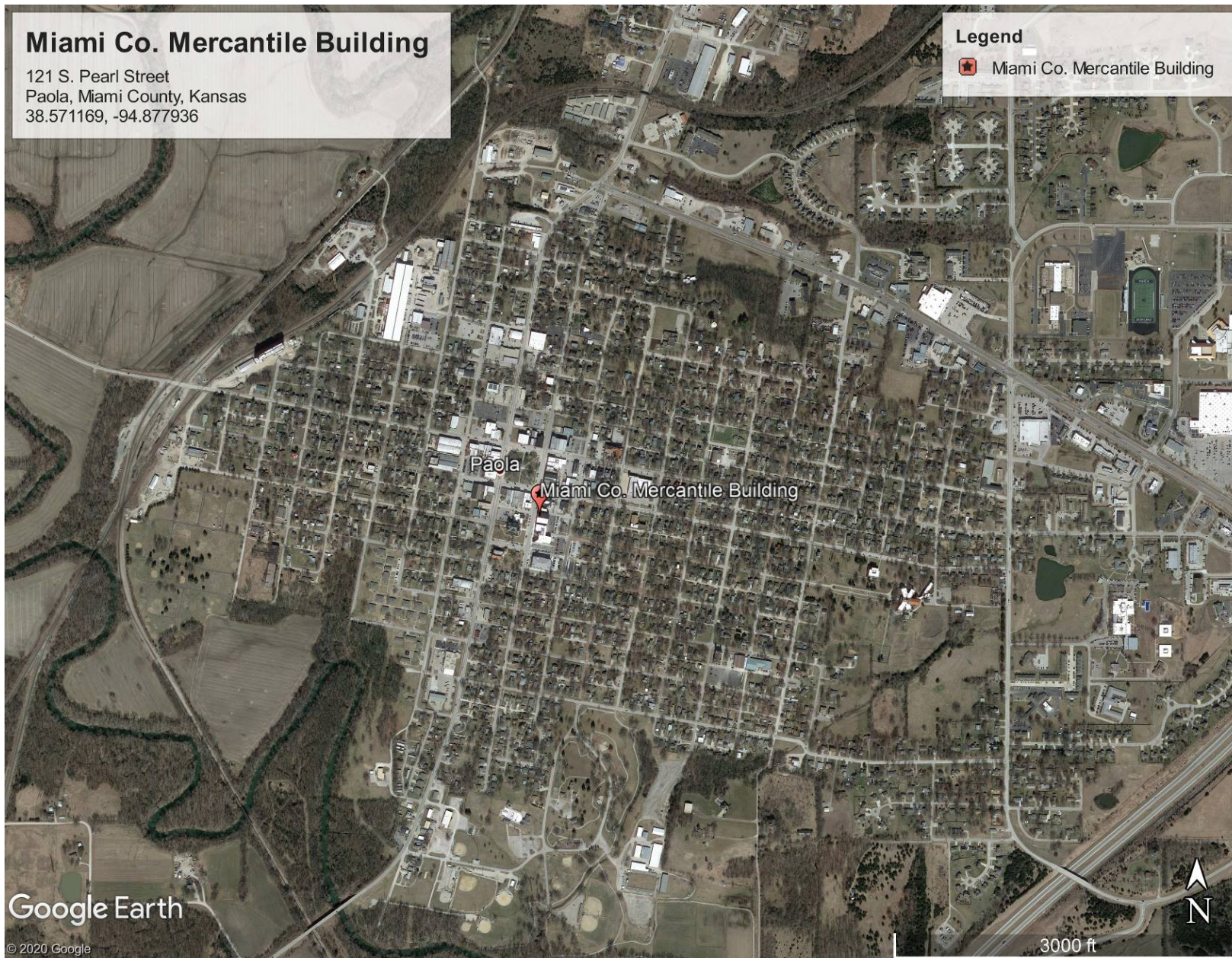


Miami County Mercantile Company

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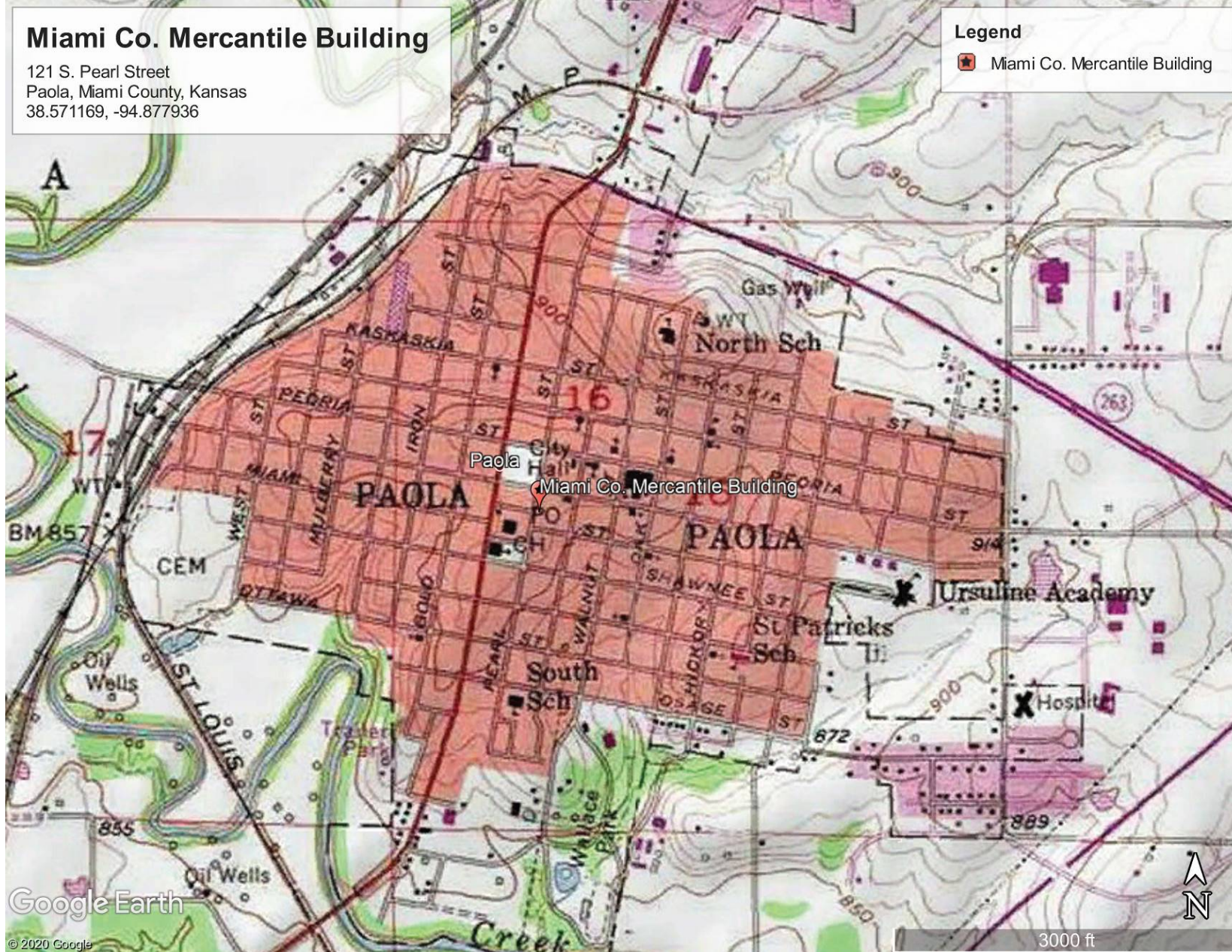


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Google Earth

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3000 ft