



Register of Historic Kansas Places Registration Form

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.

1. Name of Property

historic name Lahn Building
 other names/site number KHRI # 173-12561

2. Location

street & number 2206-2208-2210 E. Douglas Avenue not for publication
 city or town Wichita vicinity
 state Kansas code KS county Sedgwick code 173 zip code 67211

3-4. Certification

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

 Signature of certifying official Date

 Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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.)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	Total

Lahn Building
Name of Property

Sedgwick County, KS
County and State

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the State Register

NA

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store and
Restaurant

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY AMERICAN
MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Brick

roof: Synthetic

other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the current physical appearance of the property.)

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

The Lahn Building is a traditional two-story brick commercial building located in the 2200 block of East Douglas Avenue, two blocks east of Interstate 35 and across the street from Wichita East High School. The street facade is distinguished by a stepped parapet and a stone inscribed with the original owner's name "LAHN." Built as an investment property, the first floor has three small commercial storefronts and six apartments are located on the second floor. Former exterior alterations include replacement of one storefront, removal of upper windows and infilling transoms on the storefront. Despite these modifications, the building clearly reflects its original design and construction as a Commercial Style Two-Part Commercial Block, the most common style of historic commercial building found in cities and towns across the United States. The first-floor retail spaces retain original plaster walls and ornate tin ceilings. The second-floor is remarkably intact with the original plan configuration in place comprised of six apartments accessed by a central corridor. The corridor features interior windows on walls near a former skylight, the original wood stairway leading to the street-front apartment entrance, and original apartment doors featuring transoms and screen doors. Plaster walls and ceilings, wood floors and wood trim, as well as, some kitchen and bathroom fixtures are in place in most of the apartments.

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.)*

The Lahn Building is located at 2206-2210 East Douglas Avenue, twelve blocks east of the eastern edge of Wichita's commercial center. Douglas Avenue is the main east/west thoroughfare in Wichita's downtown area. Washington Avenue, at 1000 E. Douglas, is the eastern boarder of the core downtown district. The area spanning from Washington Avenue to Hydraulic Avenue (1000-2000 blocks) on East Douglas was developed in the period between 1910 and 1930 as Wichita's new "Auto Row," a collection of car dealerships, garages, and auto-related services. The portion of East Douglas Avenue, east of "Auto Row," remained primarily residential in early 1900s. The 1920 and 1930s brought development to this span of Douglas Avenue as Wichita experienced rapid expansion due in large part to the emergence of the automobile and the aircraft industry. To accommodate the burgeoning number of residents moving to new neighborhoods east of downtown, Wichita East High School and Roosevelt Intermediate School were built on the south side of the 2200-2300 blocks in 1924 and 1931 respectively. The existing one and two-story commercial buildings were constructed along the north side of the 2100, 2200, and 2300 blocks of East Douglas during this same period. Some businesses located in this three-block strip catered specifically to the student populations across the street including Orr's College Hill Bookstore at 2226 E. Douglas Avenue, Smith Baking Co. at 2300 E. Douglas, and the confectionary located in the Lahn Building at 2206 E. Douglas.

Douglas Avenue is a busy four-lane thoroughfare with on-street parallel parking on the north side of the 2200 block. Angled parking is located on N. Madison Street west of the building and additional parking is available behind the building on the rear of the lot. The Lahn Building occupies the front/south half of the lot and a small one-story addition is located off the northeast corner of the original building. The balance of the lot is an unpaved, gravel parking lot.

The Lahn Building is a two-story red brick commercial building located on the north side of the 2200 block of East Douglas Avenue. The setting is a traditional commercial block with adjoining street facades along the public sidewalk bordering Douglas Avenue. The Lahn Building is located between the Suhn Building, a two-story building on the west - located on the northeast corner of N. Madison Street and E. Douglas Avenue - and a c.1945 one-story brick building on the east..

Built shortly after the Suhn Building on the west, the Lahn Building abuts the front facade of the adjacent two-story building but was setback from the east facade of the Suhn Building on the upper level, creating a light well visible from the rear. Windows were located along the upper side facades of the Suhn and Lahn Buildings to allow natural lighting and ventilation into the upper-floor apartments.

A single-family residence was in place at 2212 E. Douglas at the time the Suhn and Lahn Buildings were constructed. The east facade of the Lahn Building was built at the east lot line and incorporated windows on the upper facade.¹ The existing one-story commercial building at 2212 E. Douglas was constructed in the mid-1940s.²

Exterior

The Lahn Building is a traditional "Two-Part Commercial Block" building, its front facade comprised of two distinct parts reflecting the public commercial uses on the lower level and private apartments on the upper level.³ The two-story building is rectangular in plan form and massing, distinguished by a stepped parapet with a flat or tapered roof. The upper facade is symmetrical with upper windows defining five bays on the front facade. Bays 1, 3, and 5 are comprised of a single window; bays 2 and 4 have paired windows. The windows have formerly been removed and wood infill installed. The openings are clearly visible and distinguished by their rectangular form with a simple concrete sill and single-tier stretcher course brick lintel with square concrete panels at the corners. The brick parapet is stepped and features subtle detailing and a simple concrete cap. Parapet detailing includes small diamond and square panels and a center rectangular panel inscribed "LAHN."

The lower level has three storefront bays, framed by brick piers with concrete bases. The configuration is asymmetrical due to a recessed doorway between the eastern two storefronts, providing access to the second-floor apartments. The street level is separated from the upper facade by a single-tier brick stretcher course with square concrete panels atop the piers, matching the detailing on the upper windows. All of the storefronts have experienced some former alteration but the traditional components and proportions have been maintained. The west storefront is a former replacement comprised of a wood bulkhead and transom with slightly smaller display windows. The eastern two storefronts retain simple concrete bulkheads and display windows topped by a simple cornice. A wood-framed, single-light door provides access at the

¹ The building may have been construed with windows on the lower level on the east facade as well, later infilled when the one-story commercial building was built on the east.

² A permit was issued to Ray Rogers and A.B. Hungerford 12-11-45 to building a new commercial building at 2212 E. Douglas Ave. at a cost of \$7,000 (City of Wichita Building Permit card file).

³ Richard Longstreth, The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1987), 24.

center of the east storefront. A single-light metal door is located on the west end of the center storefront and a slab metal door is located at the west end of the west storefront. At the center and east storefronts, glass has formerly been removed from the transoms and the areas have been infilled with wood panels and window air-conditioners installed. Security bars have been installed over display windows in the east and west storefront bays and the brick piers and concrete bulkheads at all storefronts, have been previously painted.

The street-front apartment entry appears to have originally been through a small recessed bay accessing a stairway to the second floor. A single door surrounded by wood siding has been added flush with the adjacent storefronts. The original recessed doorway with multi-light transom is in place, inside the exterior door.

Like on the front, upper windows have been removed and the openings infilled with wood on the sides and rear of the building. The rear/north facade is brick, formerly painted. A slab door is located in the center of the upper level of the rear facade, serving as a fire exit. An exterior steel fire escape is in place but does not extend to the ground. A one-story concrete block bay was in place by 1935 on the east half of the rear facade.⁴ The addition has a stepped parapet and tapered roof with a door on the west side. A single door provides rear access to the center and west commercial spaces; the east space is accessed through the rear addition.

First-Floor Commercial Spaces

Historically the ground floor was comprised of three individual storefronts, each with separate front and rear entrances. This configuration has been maintained except an oversized opening has been cut in the wall between the center and west spaces, most recently occupied by two related businesses. Each of the three commercial bays is a large open space with service area partitioned at the rear. The west bay was most recently occupied by a restaurant and includes a serving counter at the rear of the dining room and a kitchen and small bathroom partitioned on the north end. With the exception of the primary walls dividing the three spaces, the partition walls do not appear original in any of the three commercial spaces. All of the spaces originally had plaster walls and pressed metal ceilings. The ceilings remain in place and exposed in the center and east spaces. A suspended ceiling has formerly been installed in the west commercial space. The pressed-tin ceiling is visible in the rear kitchen but is in poor condition with extensive intrusions. The metal ceiling appears to have formerly been removed in the front area of the west commercial space, above the suspended ceiling. Floor coverings include VCT and carpet throughout.

Second-Floor Apartments

Six apartments are located on the second floor of the Lahn Building, accessed via a straight-run stairway at the front of the building on E. Douglas Avenue. The stairwell is an open well on the second floor with simple square wood newell posts, balusters, and wood top rail. Two apartments are located along the front of the building, accessed on each side of the stairway. The apartments are uniquely configured with two doorways. The main doors are a single-light over three-panel wood door with a three-light transom and wood-framed screen door, extant at each apartment entrance. The main entrance is located in the living room with a single bedroom on one side, a small galley-style kitchen and bathroom on the other side. A narrow secondary door provides direct access into the kitchen, from the central corridor.

A rectangular skylight was originally located about mid-point in the corridor. Two single-light pivoting windows are located on corridor walls below the skylight, to allow light into the corresponding apartments. The skylight opening is visible from the corridor but has been covered at the roof level.

The second floor of the Lahn Building is remarkably intact. A central corridor runs from the stairway on the south to a door in the center of the north facade, exiting on a fire escape. The hallway forms a U-shape around the stairway at the south end. The floor is comprised of six apartments, three on each side of the building. The apartments retain their original plan configuration. Historic features and finishes include original plaster walls and ceilings, wood floors, paneled wood doors, wood baseboards, and some kitchen and bath fixtures. The living and bedrooms are simple open rooms, each with a single closet. Original fixtures are extant in most bathrooms including a small round wall-mount sink, claw-foot tub, toilet, and built-in medicine cabinet with mirror. The kitchens are small narrow spaces with a built-in painted-wood table with bench seats located at the outer wall. Most kitchens retain a single, wood cupboard, a wall-hung sink, and old cooking stove, as well as, an exposed water heater.

Existing finishes include wall paper in some rooms and rolled linoleum in some kitchens and bathrooms. The wall paper is peeling in most locations and there are areas of significant plaster deterioration due to moisture infiltration from roof leaks. The living room in the west-central apartment has been compromised with HVAC equipment for the first-floor commercial space. The only major alteration affecting the apartments is the former removal of upper-floor windows.

⁴ 1935 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 204.

Conclusion

The Lahn Building retains a degree of historic interior integrity not found on many mixed-use commercial buildings. The two-story Commercial Style building is a Two-Part Commercial Block, the most common form of historic commercial buildings lining secondary streets and neighborhoods in major cities and downtown areas of towns across the country. The facade clearly reflects the contrasting interior functions with retail on the ground floor and apartments above. The red brick facade with stepped parapet, rectangular windows openings, and simple concrete detailing, reflect the primary characteristics of the Commercial Style. In near-original condition, the upper-floor apartments provide a rare glimpse of 1920s apartments, complete with many original features and finishes. The commercial spaces also clearly reflect their original design with the basic plan configuration of three retail spaces, two of which retain near-original storefronts and interior features including an ornate pressed-tin ceiling and plaster walls.

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1922-1963

Significant Dates

1922

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

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.

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

W.W. Stringer-builder

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Lahn Building is 1922 to 1963. This period begins with the building's date of construction and ends with the fifty-year cutoff for periods of significance where historic functions and characteristics continue to have importance and no specific date exists for ending the building's historic or architectural significance.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

The Lahn Building, built 1922 at 2206-2210 E. Douglas Avenue in Wichita, is nominated to the National Register under Criterion A in the area of Commerce. The building is significant as a commercial resource illustrating the development that occurred throughout the city in the 1920s following the expansion of the Wichita city limits in 1919.

Located on East Douglas Avenue, twelve blocks from the eastern boundary of downtown Wichita, the Lahn Building was built during a time when the city was experiencing explosive growth that led to neighborhood and commercial expansion outside the city's core. Development along this section of East Douglas, then the city's main east/west thoroughfare, followed the establishment of Wichita's "Auto-Row" on East Douglas immediately east of downtown and coincided with the selection of the site across the street from the Lahn Building, as home to Wichita East High School, built in the 1920s to serve the eastward-marching Wichita population.

This modest commercial building interprets the story of resourceful Latvian Jewish immigrants who came to Wichita in 1905 to escape Russian persecution and to pursue the American dream. Eli Lahn, in partnership with his son-in-law David Krashin, built the Lahn Building as an investment, a venture that would help support the Lahn family for seventy-seven years. The two-story building was designed to maximize income-producing potential, with three retail spaces on the ground floor and six apartments on the upper floor. The building has housed numerous small commercial businesses during its ninety-plus year history.

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

Early-Twentieth Century Wichita^v

Incorporated as a city in 1870, Wichita was well on its way to becoming a thriving center of trade two years later when it welcomed its first railroad. When Wichita was incorporated as a city of the second-class in 1872, it was positioned for rapid growth resulting from the cattle and grain industries. The railroads not only served the agricultural industry but brought new residents and building materials. Within ten years, the city was in the throes of the nationwide real estate boom. By 1886, when Wichita was incorporated as a city of the first class, it was well ensconced as the region's principal trade center. In 1889 Wichita's population growth reversed itself and the boom ended; many local investors lost everything. The city had a surplus of buildings, left vacant by a dwindling number of residents and businesses. The bust continued through the remainder of the nineteenth century.

The first two decades of the twentieth century were a period of recovery. With the revival of the grain business and development of new industries including broomcorn, oil and aviation, Wichita became an industrial center. The arrival of the first automobiles in the first decade of the twentieth century, the availability of cheap land on the city's outskirts and rapid population growth conspired to spur the city's expansion. Maps of local population growth illustrate the expansion in Wichita city limits for the period between 1910 and 1919, an area encompassing 14.22 square miles in a concentric circle from downtown.^{vi} By 1920, Wichita was the nation's ninety-sixth largest city and Sedgwick County had a population of 92,234. By 1930, the county's population had grown to 136,336. Wichita's population increased by 50,000 between 1920 and 1930 and brought record new construction. In 1921, construction permits totaled \$7.4 million, up from \$4.8 million in 1919.

^v As a commercial building, the Lahn Building is not eligible for listing on the National Register under the *Residential Resources of Wichita* MPS; however, the MPS provides a well-developed context regarding growth and development trends for the City of Wichita that is applicable to the Lahn Building: Morgan, Kathy and Barbara R Hammond. Multiple Property Documentation Form, *Residential Resources of Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas 1870-1957*, (Wichita: City of Wichita, Metropolitan Area Planning Department), 2008, 3-8.

^{vi} See population and city limit growth map on page 17, under "Additional Documentation."

New homes were required to accommodate the city's growing population. As neighborhoods were developed farther from downtown, secondary commercial development followed. Because land in these areas was less costly than in the downtown core, it appealed to small business owners and investors who built new commercial buildings – both free-standing buildings and clusters or whole blocks - to house their own business or as investment properties. The buildings in these secondary commercial areas included both one- and two-story buildings. Many of the two-story commercial buildings offered rental housing on their second floors to accommodate those who could not afford a private home or could not find a home to buy during this period of explosive growth.

The three-block area of East Douglas Avenue from I-35 to Grove Street fell within the 1919 expansion of Wichita's city limits. The development of this area of East Douglas relates to the context of the development of east Wichita's neighborhoods, including College Hill. College Hill, a one-square-mile neighborhood east of downtown, is bounded on the north by Central Avenue, on the south by Kellogg Avenue (U. S. 54), on the east by Oliver, and on the west by Hillside, four blocks east of the Lahn Building. By 1914, the College Hill area boasted 210 buildings, and adjacent blocks including those on which the Lahn Building would be built, were lined with modest one-story bungalows.^{vii}

The parcels along the north/south streets in the Park Place Addition, where the Lahn Building would be constructed, were wide to accommodate spacious suburban single-family-home-sized lots. The narrower lots along Douglas Avenue, the city's major east/west thoroughfare, were clearly designed for commercial development. The area's commercial development had begun by 1914, when a small store occupied the northwest corner of Douglas and Grove. But the blocks near the Douglas and Grove intersection would not be fully developed until nearly a decade later.^{viii}

East Douglas Avenue provided access from the city's hub to neighborhoods outside of downtown. Development along East Douglas was spurred in part by the emergence of Wichita's "Auto Row", a collection of auto dealerships and auto-related businesses immediately east of the downtown area. Farther east, Grove Street became a major north/south route tied to the aircraft industry and aviation-related businesses located near the intersection of East Douglas and Grove.

One major event that precipitated commercial development along this section of East Douglas was the construction of Wichita's East High School, completed in 1923.^{ix} Between 1900 and 1920, Wichita's population tripled from 24,671 to 72,217. The rapid growth placed enormous pressure on the city's institutions. On January 22, 1922, the *Wichita Beacon* announced that 1800 students were crowding into Wichita's high school, which was designed to house 1200 students.^x The following week, Wichita voters overwhelmingly passed a bond issue for the construction of a new high school, with 87 classrooms.^{xi} Roosevelt Intermediate School was built in 1931 adjacent to East High and the complex continues to serve USD 259 today. See *Figure 4* on Page 18 - a 1935 photograph illustrating the schools with commercial buildings across the street.

The construction of the schools on East Douglas, which would not only draw attention and people to the area, but also infrastructure, including bus and streetcar lines, logically attracted commercial development.^{xii} Just months after the bond issue passed, property owners like the Suhns and Lahns filed permits to construct commercial buildings in the 2200 Block of East Douglas. In March 1923, the *Wichita Beacon* announced that F. G. Orr had purchased a 25-foot lot in the block for the construction of a second, East Wichita location for

^{vii} Sheryll White and Marsha King, *Draft Context Statement for the College Hill Neighborhood U. S. 54 Highway Corridor Wichita Kansas* (Topeka, Kansas, 1994). On file at the Kansas Historical Society, Cultural Resources Division.

^{viii} 1914 Sanborn Map, Sheet 18.

^{ix} East High was originally known simply as Wichita High School. It became known as "Wichita East High School" following the completion of "Wichita North High School" in 1929. Nina Davis, "A History of Wichita Public School Buildings" (USD 259, 1997)

^x *Wichita Beacon*, 22 January 1922.

^{xi} *Wichita Beacon* 29 January 1929.

^{xii} *Wichita Beacon*, 9 September 1923; 6 October 1923.

Orr's Bookstore.^{xiii} The bookstore, located at 2226 E. Douglas Avenue and later expanded into adjacent buildings, would be a mainstay for decades.

By 1935, College Hill had been fully developed; there were 1300 completed construction projects between 1914 and 1935 alone. Although one single-family dwelling remained in the 2200 Block of East Douglas in 1935, five commercial buildings had been built there. A few of the new businesses in the 2100 through 2300 blocks of E. Douglas - Leber and Skrits Confectionary, Smith Bakery, and Orr's Bookstore - clearly targeted the student population. Most of the businesses provided basic goods and services to nearby residents of east Wichita neighborhoods. Among the 2200 block's commercial occupants were a drug store, tin shop, rug weaving and upholstery shop.^{xiv}

As Wichita continued to expand eastward, new commercial developments were built to serve the College Hill Neighborhood. Among these was Lincoln Heights Village, a suburban shopping center that opened on the southwest corner of Douglas and Oliver in 1949. With the construction of I-135 in the early 1970s, the 2200 Block of East Douglas was separated from downtown to the west and newer commercial developments to the east. The commercial area's proximity to the Interstate and lack of maintenance over time has greatly affected the integrity of these properties.

Today, Wichita is Kansas' largest city, with a population of 360,000. Significant revitalization has occurred throughout Wichita's core area spurred in part by major downtown development projects such as the new Intrust Arena. Private investment in historic commercial properties is broadening to neighborhood and commercial areas on the fringes of, or outside of, the downtown area reflecting new opportunities for historic commercial structures such as the Lahn Building.

Two individual commercial buildings in the adjacent 2300 block of East Douglas Avenue have been renovated in recent years but generally investment in this area has been sparse. At least one of those projects – Douglas Photographic Imaging- involved replacement windows and sandblasting that likely renders the building ineligible for listing on the National Register. The House Building at 2320 East Douglas is a two-story building with apartments on the upper floor and retail space on the ground floor; some of the retail space in this building remains vacant following rehabilitation. Many of the buildings in the 2100 to 2300 blocks are occupied by small destination businesses and services including a sign company, music businesses, medical supplies, drapery and paint shops, an insurance company and driving school. Few of the businesses have made physical improvements. Most lack historic integrity. For instance, many buildings have boarded transoms and storefronts, or retain decades-old facades that contribute to a rundown image of the neighborhood. A cursory analysis of existing resources in this three-block area suggests marginal prospects for any sort of historic district designation. Combined with the absence of any coordinated effort among business and property owners, individual listing of select buildings appears to be the best avenue for facilitating investment in those properties that retain a significant level of integrity.

Immigrant Businessmen and Investors

The story of the Lahn Building is that of resourceful immigrants pursuing the American dream. Elija [Eli] M. Lahn's journey, which culminated in the commissioning of this business building in 1922, began in Russia's Latvian province in 1865.^{xv} Little is known about the first half of Lahn's life. What is known is that Lahn, his wife Sarah, and their four children Irene, Anna, Sylvia and Nathan, were among thousands of Jews who fled after Latvia failed to secure independence from the Russian Empire in 1905. This wave of immigrants included both political leaders and revolutionaries who came to the United States not only to pursue financial opportunities, but also to avoid death at the hands of Russian authorities.^{xvi}

^{xiii} *Wichita Beacon*, 13 March 1923.

^{xiv} 1935 Sanborn Map, Sheet 204.

^{xv} Headstone, Wichita Hebrew Cemetery. A photo of this headstone was found in a public member family tree on Ancestry.com, <http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/28223255/person/12780312561/photo/4dde925c-55dd-463f-bf01-798d6b33dc83?src=search>.

^{xvi} According to one source, approximately 4000 Latvians fled to the United States following the 1905 Revolution. Maruta Karklis, Liga K. Streipa and Laimonis Streips, *The Latvians in America: 1640-1973* (Oceana Publications, 1974).

The first wave of Jewish migration began shortly after the Kansas Territory opened for settlement in 1854. That group included Jonas and Betty Wollman, freestaters who established the territory's first clothing store in Leavenworth. In the late nineteenth century, sizable Jewish communities were established in the fledgling state's cities, principally Leavenworth, Topeka and Wichita. German-American Jews were among Wichita's earliest settlers. In the 1860s, before the city's founding, the Hays Brothers made their mark as buffalo hide dealers. Sol Kohn, who served as Wichita's fifth mayor, was one of the signers of the town charter. By the mid-1870s, there were at least nine Jewish-owned businesses, many of them clothing stores operated by German-American Reform Jews. The city's first Jewish congregation was established in 1885; but by the late 1880s, the majority of the city's first wave of Jews had either assimilated or left town, a number of them moving to New York.^{xvii}

The Lahns were among the second wave of Jewish settlers, who came to Wichita in the early twentieth century. Unlike those of the Jews who chose Wichita for its economic opportunities in the period of westward expansion, the motivations of the second wave of Jewish settlers, including the Lahns, are less clear. Many immigrants chose cities where other family members had settled; but the Lahn surname was unique among Wichita's citizens.^{xviii} It is possible that they were among the Jews resettled by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) following various Eastern European uprisings. The HIAS brought Jewish refugees to the United States through Galveston, Texas, from whence they were distributed to other communities, including Wichita, where established Eastern European Jewish leaders like the Wolkows and Kameneskys organized to provide aid. This second wave of Jews, Eastern European Jews who tended to be more orthodox than their German-American predecessors, established a congregation in Wichita in 1906 and built a house of worship in 1913. (Rothman) Like the Lahns, many of the city's 300 Jews lived south of downtown, in the 800-1200 blocks of South Topeka and Lawrence (now Broadway).^{xix}

The Lahns joined an increasing number of Jewish merchants who provided goods to Wichita's growing population. In 1906, the year of their arrival, Eli Lahn was employed as a pawnbroker at 223 E. Douglas Avenue. He was identified as the proprietor of the Kansas Loan Company at 522 E. Douglas from 1909 to 1912. And by 1914, Eli Lahn had started a clothing business at the same location.^{xx} By 1920, Eli's ready-made womenswear shop employed the entire family. His wife Sarah, and daughters Irene (1894-1970) and Anita worked as saleswomen. Irene's husband, David Krashin (1884-1961), a Polish native who immigrated in 1890, managed the store.^{xxi} Eli Lahn's ready-made clothing remained at 522 E. Douglas until 1922.^{xxii}

By 1923, Eli Lahn was competing with a growing number of ready-made clothing merchants who staked claims on the town, which owing to record-high crop prices and an oil boom prospered in the years during and immediately following World War I. In response to the growing competition, Lahn initiated a two-decade-long period of repositioning. In 1923, he moved the store to 402 E. Douglas and changed the name to "The Smart Shop." In 1928, he moved the business to 215 E. Douglas, even closer to the heart of downtown. Between 1931 and 1934, Lahn turned the business over to his son-in-law David Krashin and the shop had moved again to 106 E. Douglas.^{xxiii}

Given Eli Lahn's persistent march toward the center of downtown, it is likely that he built the Lahn Building at 2206-2210 E. Douglas as an investment, not as a location for his clothing store, which never occupied the

^{xvii} Hal Rothman, "Building Community: The Jews of Wichita 1860-1900," *Kansas Quarterly*; 25, 2 (1993): 77.

^{xviii} Ancestry.com, *1910 United States Federal Census* [database on-line] (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010). Images reproduced by FamilySearch.

^{xix} Jay Price, "Jewish Community in Wichita, 1920-1970: Same Wagon, New Horses," *Great Plains Quarterly* (Paper 1320, 2008).

^{xx} Wichita City Directories, 1906, 1909-1912, 1914.

^{xxi} Ancestry.com, *1920 United States Federal Census* [database on-line] (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010). Images reproduced by FamilySearch. Ancestry.com, *U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918* [database on-line] (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2005).

^{xxii} Wichita City Directory, 1922.

^{xxiii} Wichita City Directories, 1923, 1928, 1931, 1934.

building. By 1922, the family had accumulated enough wealth to purchase the property on Wichita's major east-west thoroughfare from first-generation German-American dairyman William Suhm and his wife Antonia and commission a new business building.^{xxiv}

The Lahn Building on E. Douglas persevered long after the family clothing business. The Lahn Building changed hands twice during the 1930s. In 1932, at approximately the same time of Eli's retirement from the Smart Shop, David apparently sold his share back to Eli, who placed the property in the name of his wife Sarah in 1934, the year the Smart Shop moved to 106 E. Douglas.^{xxv} Unfortunately, even this prime location was not enough to ensure the business's long-term viability. Although other Jewish clothing businesses managed to survive the Great Depression, the Smart Shop closed in 1938.^{xxvi}

Unlike many of the Jewish merchants who came to Wichita in the nineteenth century, the Lahns, Krashins and their early twentieth century counterparts made the city their permanent home. By 1937, Wichita was home to over 1300 Jews.^{xxvii} Eli Lahn died in 1943. By that same year, Krashin had taken a job at Beechcraft, which hired record numbers of workers to produce aircraft during World War II.^{xxviii} Although the family no longer had its clothing business, it retained ownership of the Lahn Building at 2206-2210 E. Douglas. Following Sarah Lahn's death in 1949, the property passed to her children, who transferred their shares to David's wife Irene. David Krashin died in 1961. Following Irene's death in 1970, the property transferred to her heirs. The Lahn Building remained in the family until 1999.^{xxix} The property recently came under new ownership and a rehabilitation project is planned.

The Lahn Building

The Lahn Building at 2206 – 2210 E. Douglas Avenue is classified as a "Two-Part Commercial Block" building, the most common type of composition used for small and moderate-sized commercial buildings throughout the country.^{xxx} The building type is characterized by a horizontal division into two distinct zones which reflects the different interior uses. The first floor, at street level, indicates public spaces such as retail stores; the upper floor being more private spaces such as apartments. The origins of this building configuration can be traced to Roman antiquity when many urban buildings contained shops at street level and living quarters above. The eventual abandonment of the shop-house as the dominant form of commercial architecture is attributed to the growing demand for commercial space and the corresponding increase in land values.^{xxxi}

The Two-Part Commercial Block was prevalent among commercial buildings for a century, spanning from the 1850s to 1950s. These buildings embodied numerous architectural styles. By the turn of the twentieth century, a sense of order and unity prevailed in most designs. According to author Richard Longstreth, many examples of Two-Part Commercial Block buildings, have a classical sense of order but contain few, if any, references to past periods. Some such buildings are extremely plain, bearing certain affinities to their nineteenth century predecessors.^{xxxii}

Longstreth's reference to the "plain" appearance of Two-Part Commercial Block buildings is consistent with the characteristics of the Lahn Building's architectural style. Like so many commercial buildings built in Kansas from 1910 to 1930, the Lahn Building is a good example of Progressive-era Commercial Style architecture. Unlike their nineteenth-century predecessors, these buildings featured simple lines with subtle or no ornament.

^{xxiv} Abstract of Title and Wichita Building Permit Records.

^{xxv} Abstract of Title.

^{xxvi} Wichita City Directories, 1938, 1939.

^{xxvii} Price.

^{xxviii} Wichita City Directory, 1943.

^{xxix} David Krashin, Irene Krashin, Eli Lahn and Sarah Lahn are all buried at Wichita Hebrew Cemetery.

^{xxx} Longstreth, 24.

^{xxxi} Ibid.

^{xxxii} Ibid, 40, 42.

Typically constructed of brick, the style emphasized fire-proof construction and embodied standard features including stepped parapets with stone or concrete caps and rectangular upper-floor windows, typically double-hung, with simple brick or stone lintels and sills. Ornamentation was usually limited to subtle brick banding or corbelling and/or contrasting geometric panels. With its red brick facade and stepped parapet, rectangular window openings and simple concrete detailing, the Lahn Building is a good representative of a Two-Part Commercial Block, Commercial-Style building.

As noted above, the building was constructed by Eli Lahn and his son-in-law David Krashin in 1922 as an investment. Although Lahn and Krashin were partners in a women's shop during this time, the building was not built to house their own business. The building was built with three small retail storefronts, originally occupied by two restaurants and a confectionary shop.^{xxxiii} Over the years, the Lahn Building housed a variety of Wichita businesses, including the Leber and Skrits Confectionary, the Peerless Nut Store, and Ebersole Nut Company. John G. Leber came to the United States from Greece in 1907. Between 1923 and 1930, he had expanded his business from a confectionary to a café.^{xxxiv} The Ebersole Nut Company, which occupied the building in the 1940s and 1950s, was founded by Arthur Ebersole who began his business career as the proprietor of a popcorn stand.^{xxxv} A sampling of businesses located in the Lahn Building during its first forty years is provided below.

1923 City Directory

2206 – Mrs. Mollie Spencer, restaurant
2208 - W.E. Clark, restaurant
2210 – Leber & Skrits, confectionary
2208 ½ - Apartments: Harly Cross, R.L. Duncan, J.E. Egleston, Warren Hazelton, B.F. Holman, Neal Horan

1934 City Directory

2206 – Crist Rose P. Ladies wear
2208 – M.L. Moore – barber
2210 – Star Rug Cleaning Co.
2208 ½ - Roosevelt Apartments**: Liddy Martin, Ben Baxter, Robt. Bowland, Joe Atkinson, Nelson Lewis, 1-vacant

1941 City Directory

2206 – Peerless Nut Store & Ebersole Wholesale
2208 – Morrell Barber & Beauty (Carl Morrell)
2210 – Al-Don Furniture Service
2208 ½ – Roosevelt Apartments**

** NOTE – the listing for Roosevelt Apartments at 2208 ½ E. Douglas in the 1930s and 1940s is believed to be in error. Roosevelt Pharmacy was located at 2200 E. Douglas, in the adjacent Sunn Building and Roosevelt Apartments was likely the name of the apartments above 2200-2204 E. Douglas, not the name of the apartments above 2206-2208-2210 E. Douglas. The Lahn Building remained in the Lahn family until 1999; the name is reflected in the 1950s and 1960s City Directory listings.

1951 City Directory

2206 – Ebersole Nut Co., confectionary
2208 – Morrell Barber & Beauty
2210 – East Grill
2208 ½- Lahn Apartments

1963 City Directory

2206 – Vacant
2208 – Douglas Vacuum Cleaner Co.
2210 – Eilerts Invalid & Hospital Supply
2208 ½ - Lahn Apartments

^{xxxiii} 1923 Wichita City Directory.

^{xxxiv} Ancestry.com, *1930 United States Federal Census* [database on-line] (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010). Images reproduced by FamilySearch and Wichita City Directories.

^{xxxv} Ancestry.com, *1940 United States Federal Census* [database on-line] (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010). Images reproduced by FamilySearch and Wichita City Directories.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been Requested)

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>14</u>	<u>648963</u>	<u>4172357</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)
The South ninety (90) feet of Lots 42 and 44 on E. Douglas Avenue, Park Place Addition to Wichita, Kansas. The building includes three street-front commercial spaces addressed at 2206, 2208, and 2210 E. Douglas Avenue, and six upper-floor apartments addressed at 2208-1/2 E. Douglas Avenue.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)
The legal description above reflects the property on which the building is located and with which the building is historically associated.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Brenda Spencer and Christy Davis

organization Spencer Preservation date 13 March, 2013

street & number 10150 Onaga Road telephone 785-456-9857

city or town Wamego state KS zip code 66547

e-mail spencer@wamego.net

Property Owner:

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Sean Brennan, Breagan, LLC

street & number 1359 N. Emporia Avenue telephone 316-841-9209

city or town Wichita state KS zip 67214

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Please check with SHPO staff before completing photographs.

Name of Property: Lahn Building
City or Vicinity: 2206-2210 East Douglas Avenue, Wichita
County/State: Sedgwick County, KS
Photographers/ Date: Brenda R. Spencer, 24 January, 2013 (Lahn Building, photos 1-12)
Christy Davis, 8 March, 2013 (context photos #13-19)

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 Front/south facade
- 2 East storefront, south facade
- 3 Rear/north facade
- 4 Interior view of East Commercial Space, looking south toward storefront
- 5 Stairway, looking down from 2nd floor toward apartment entrance at storefront
- 6 Stairway, looking SE at north end of 2nd floor corridor
- 7 Central Corridor, looking north near the center of 2nd floor corridor
- 8 Interior windows located on corridor walls below former skylight, looking north near center of 2nd floor
- 9 "Typical" Apartment Living Room, looking W in west-central apartment, 2nd floor
- 10 "Typical" Apartment Kitchen, looking E in northeast apartment, 2nd floor
- 11 "Typical" Apartment Kitchen, looking E toward corridor at west-central apartment, 2nd floor
- 12 "Typical" Apartment Bathroom, looking N at southeast apartment, 2nd floor
- 13 West end of 2200 block E. Douglas, looking NE
- 14 2100 block of E. Douglas, looking NW
- 15 2200 and 2300 blocks of E. Douglas, looking NE
- 16 East end of 2200 block of E. Douglas, looking NW
- 17 2300 block of E. Douglas, looking NE
- 18 2300 block of E. Douglas, looking NW
- 19 Wichita East High School from 2300 block of E. Douglas, looking SW

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

MAPS

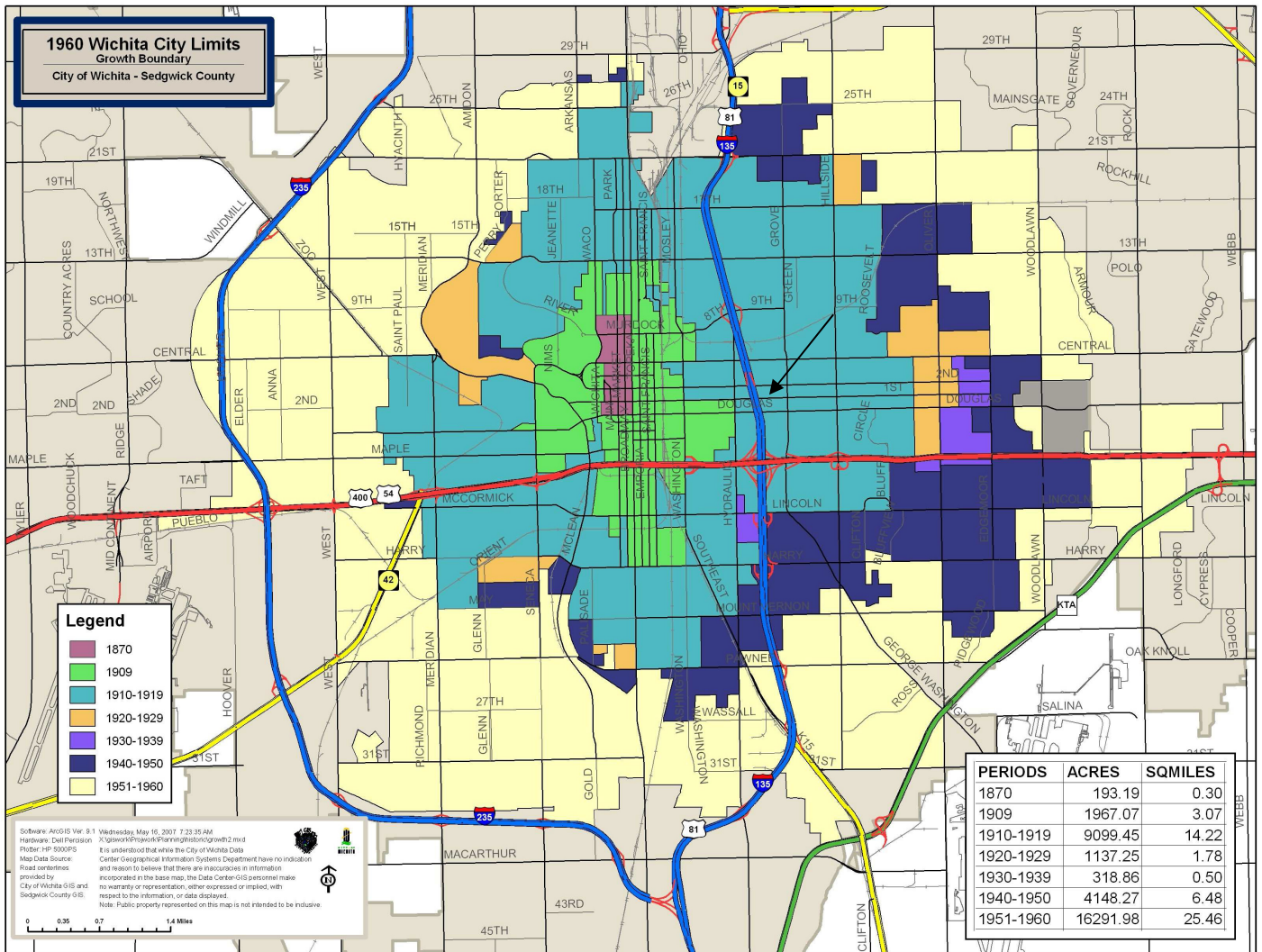


Figure 1 - Wichita City Limits and Growth Boundaries reprinted from *Residential Resources of Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas 1870-1957 Multiple Property Documentation Form* (Morgan and Hammond, 2008).

Site of Lahn Building on East Douglas Avenue is marked by black arrow near center of map.

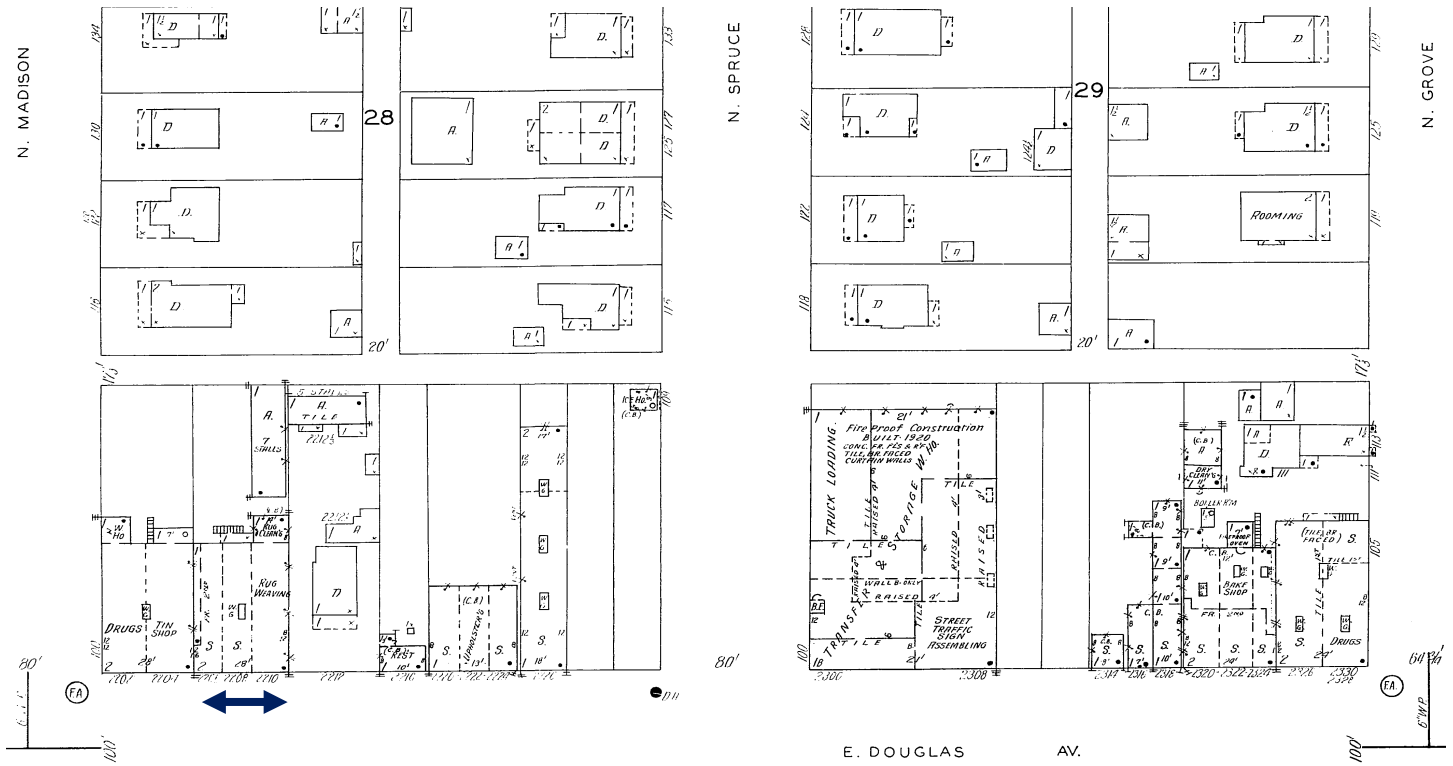


Figure 2 – Lahn Building extant at 2206-2208-2210 E. Douglas Avenue on 1935 Sanborn Map, Sheet 204.



Figure 3 – Lahn Building at 2206-2210 E. Douglas Avenue, shown above on 2013 aerial photo
Downloaded online at Google Maps, © 2013 Google

HISTORIC VIEWS



Figure 4 – Lahn Building at 2206-2210 E. Douglas Avenue, across the street from Roosevelt Intermediate School on right and East High School on left. Source: Wichita Public Library photo collection: http://www.wichitaphotos.org/graphics/wschm_A1-35.2.1.jpg.