

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 Wirkler-Krehbiel House
 Other names/site number KHRI # 079-4000-00806
 Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

2. Location

Street & number <u>2727 N. Main Street</u>		not for publication
City or town <u>North Newton</u>		vicinity
State <u>Kansas</u> Code <u>KS</u> County <u>Harvey</u> Code <u>079</u> Zip code <u>67117</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 x C D

SEE FILE

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.)

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

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late Victorian: Queen Anne

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone: Limestone
walls: Wood: Weatherboard, shingle
roof: Asphalt shingle
other:

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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 Wirkler-Krehbiel House is located at 2727 N. Main in North Newton. This structure is a two-story home of wood frame construction with exterior walls covered in wood clapboards. Dating from 1898, the structure exhibits the Queen Anne style, most notably in the fishscale patterns of roof gables, cresting on the roof ridgelines, and turned spindlework on the one-story front porch. It sits in the middle of a lot located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Main and 27th Street. The property retains a high degree of historic integrity on the exterior and inside, retains most of the original floor plan and many of the original decorative elements. The southwest corner of the lot contains a freestanding garage and upstairs apartment that in design and style mirrors the main house, but is of recent construction and therefore, is noncontributing.

Elaboration

The Wirkler-Krehbiel House faces the main thoroughfare of North Newton, Main Street, and is across the street from Bethel College. Its story is intertwined with that of the college and the community/city of North Newton. The land where the house sits is in the SW ¼ of Section 5, Township 23 S, Range 1 E, in the very northern most tier of sections of Newton Township. Main Street is the north-south half section line and the 1882 plat map shows this property, then belonging to a D.G. Koppes, just south of a small creek, the Kidron, which crosses that half section line near what is now 27th Street. The land's low elevation along this minor watercourse has made periodic flooding a problem.

Originally, some mile-and-a-half north of the City of Newton, this area underwent considerable transformation in the 1880s, an era of prosperity that resulted in a number of denominational colleges constructed across the state. One of these was Bethel College, which opened north of Newton in late 1893. The architect who finished the work on Bethel College was Wichita-based Elbert Dumont, who also designed the home of David Goerz, the college's first business manager, in 1893.¹

Peter Wedel, in his 1954 *History of Bethel College*, mentions "in 1898 G.A. Haury built his own home, now the W.H. Hohmann residence. The spacious C. Wirkler home, now the C.E. Krehbiel residence, was erected the same year."² Christian Wirkler had purchased the land at 2727 N. Main from Bethel College on April 13, 1898 for \$500.³ Construction seems to have taken place during the summer of 1898 as the September 30, 1898 *Newton Weekly Republican* announced that "Mr. Wirkler is now having the last nails driven in his home. After the painter has put on the finishing strokes it will add great beauty to Mount Hebron." Tax records show the home was completed by 1899.⁴

The architect for this structure is unknown. A marking on lath work discovered during one remodel uncovered the name "Voth," but no architect named Voth can be found in local directories of the period. By contrast, the home does bear a number of similarities, particularly in the use of fishscale siding in the gables and the treatment of windows, to the David Goerz residence, which is the work of Elbert Dumont. This home is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and serves as the home of the Bethel College president at 2512 N College. Down the street, at 2200 N. Main, the farmhouse of the Tangeman family dates from the early 1900s mirrors closely the overall layout of the Wirkler-Krehbiel House, as well as several exterior decorative elements. Should the architect of that structure be determined, that may provide an additional lead for the Wirkler-Krehbiel House's origins.

¹ Peter Wedel, *The Story of Bethel College, 1871-1951* (North Newton: Bethel College, 1954), 101-103.

² *Ibid.*, 103

³ Deed of the home. Harvey County Courthouse.

⁴ Wedel, *The Story of Bethel College*, 103.

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Over the years, the house underwent several changes. A fire on January 20, 1924 destroyed the roof and the contents of the attic. More changes took place after Christian (C.E.) Krehbiel's death in 1948. The dining room was divided into a bedroom and hallway. The north section of the front porch was closed off and made into a bathroom. Shortly after the 1956 death of Krehbiel wife, Mary, the family donated the house to Bethel College where it became a boarding house for professors, students, and visitors. It was at this point when an upstairs bedroom was divided into two rooms, one of which became a kitchenette for an upstairs apartment. By then, visitors to the home remembered sagging floors and downstairs woodwork hidden behind a light-colored patina, worn and chipped. In 1978, the upstairs kitchenette was remodeled into a bathroom. Bethel College sold the home in 1992 to a private family when another series of renovations took place. In 1994, the kitchen underwent a major remodel. A few years later, in 2001, the owners constructed a freestanding garage with an upstairs apartment in the far southwest corner of the lot, mirroring the architectural details of the original home.

Dating from the late 1890s, the home features elements of the Queen Anne style, especially in its overall form and details such as the fishscale shingle siding and turned spindles on the porch supports and balustrade. Unlike the ornate detail and asymmetry commonly associated with high-style Queen Anne of the 1880s, however, this home represents a more restrained interpretation with a simplicity more akin to folk Victorian structures. In some ways, the building illustrates well the transition that American home design was making at the turn of the century as Queen Anne Victorian was fading in popularity in favor of the simple, blocky lines of the American foursquare.

Exterior

The Wirkler-Krehbiel House is a wood frame house two stories in height and faces east toward Main Street. The exterior wood clapboards feature a 4-inch reveal and are painted "Downing Straw." Each gable has fishscale shingles painted the same color as the walls. Each wall is outlined by wood trim the same color as the wood window frames and cornice, "Rookwood Shutter Green." Some trim pieces, as well as exterior aluminum storm windows (age unknown) are "Rookwood Red." All windows, unless otherwise noted, are one-over-one sashes.

The main structure of the home consists of two stories, is of wood construction, has a hipped roof with four lower cross gables, and features 1,443 square feet. Each side wall has a two-story wing that projects outward 5 feet from the main body of the house, each topped with a lower cross gable, giving the house a cruciform layout. The roof originally had wood shingles, but is now covered by asphalt shingles (dating from 1996). The front and rear elevations each contain a large gabled dormer that extends nearly the width of the wall and is visually a continuation of the wall, making the home's overall appearance more akin to a gable-roofed structure rather than a hip-roofed one. Each ridge line features crenelated cresting which terminates in scrolls on the main ridge line and small finials on the gable ends.

The house rests on a full basement made of limestone blocks which encompasses the entire footprint of the home and extends 21 inches above ground level, approximately two courses in height. The enclosed porch on the north elevation rests on a foundation of cinder block. There are four basement-level windows, two under each wing. Each is vertically divided into two panes.

East/Front Elevation

The front elevation consists of a two-story wall topped by a large gable that extends nearly the width of the wall. The main entrance is off-center to the north and is a single door consisting of seven panels, one panel being a large single pane window. Unless otherwise described, all exterior doors fit this description. To the right of the door is a small stained glass window that illuminates the landing of the main staircase. This window, as are all the stained glass windows in the home, consists of a central clear pane of glass surrounded by small square panes, each pane being a different solid color. East of this window is a corner one-over-one window illuminating a filled in section of the porch. To the left of the main door is the main parlor window, a nearly square two-over-two window, the upper pane being approximately half the depth of the lower. The second story consists of three one-over-one windows equally spaced across the width of the wall. A thin strip of wood extends continuously over all three windows, serving as a type of lintel that visually separates the gable above from the main wall below but is just slightly lower than the actual eaves and cornices of the roofline. The gable, as are all gables on the structure, is clad in fishscale siding and features a single rectangular stained glass window in the same pattern as the first story staircase window.

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Front Porch

The first story features what was originally a "U" shaped porch that extended the entire width of the façade and then curved to extend down the two side walls to end at the projecting wings. The porch on the north wall has been filled in to the front façade, with two windows on the west and north walls meeting to form a single corner window. Structural elements of the porch include turned supports, decorative brackets on each support, a railing featuring similar turned posts, and spandrels above, also with turned spindles. The opening at the front door includes the upper spandrel but no railing and is topped by a pediment.

South Elevation

Continuing clockwise around the structure, the south elevation consists of three bays, the easternmost being longer than the other two. To the viewer's right (or east), the first bay is part of the main house structure: the first floor features a window identical to that on the front façade and a continuation of the front porch. The second story features a single window. The second bay is made up of the two-story, gabled projecting wing. Where the porch meets this wing is a door, as well as a secondary stair to the ground. Extending 3 ½ feet from the wing on the first story is a bay window with shed roof. The sides of the bay each contain a single, narrow, one-over-one window. The center of the bay has a ribbon window with one-over-one windows flanking a center one-over-one, the upper pane of the center being narrower than the lower. Above is a paired window, each one-over-one (unless otherwise noted, all paired windows follow this format). The same "lintel" that appeared on the front façade appears over this window as well, visually separating it from the gable with a center window. The third bay to the left of the wing features, on the first floor, a paired window and a one-over-one window on the second floor.

West/Rear Elevation

The rear of the home, facing west, has similar proportions to that of the front façade. The second story features a similar window with connecting lintel treatment as on the front, only with two equally spaced windows instead of three. The first story features an enclosed shed-roof porch. The center of this enclosed porch is a six-panel door. To the left are two nearly square one-over-one windows. To the right is a paired window, each unit a square and one-over-one. A similar paired window is on the south wall of this enclosed porch.

North Elevation

The north elevation, like the south, has a projecting two-story gabled wing and has similar massing, this time with the easternmost bay being longer than the center or west. The fenestration of the gable and the second story is similar to that of the south elevation. On the first story, the central wing does not have a projecting bay, and features a paired window unit identical to the one above it on the second story. To the left of the central bay, what had been the porch was filled in, save for a corner window at the far left edge. A narrow, one-over-one window is on the first story of the west facing wall of the wing. The door that would have opened onto the porch, as on the south wing, today opens into the bathroom that makes up the enclosed portion of the porch. The right bay features a one-over-one window offset nearly to the edge of the original wall. At the other end, at where the bay meets the wing, is a four-panel door that cuts through the water table to rest flush with the ground, this door provides access to the basement and back stairway.

Interior

To a large extent, the original interior floor plan remains with oak woodwork surviving throughout. Of particular note is the wheat patterned blocks that make up the corners of most door casements. High oak baseboards remain throughout. Flooring is pine. Original light fixtures exist in the ceilings of several rooms.

Foyer

Entering through the front door, visitors find to their right the main staircase, made of oak. The staircase starts with a single stair leading up to a landing. The remaining staircase extends to the left of the landing up what was an original exterior wall, nearly to the ceiling level, where it turns to the left over a closet to the second story hallway

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on the second floor. A single massive oak newel post anchors the initial stair, landing, and balustrade made up of turned spindles.

Looking west into the house from the front door, the stairway is to the right, and ahead is a door that leads to what was the original dining room. To the left there are large pocket doors leading to the parlor.

Parlor

The parlor takes up the entire southeast corner of the house. Each exterior wall contains a single large window. The other two walls contain double pocket doors, each door a six-panel unit. One pocket door opens to the foyer. The other opens onto the original sitting room, today, the dining room.

Living Room/Dining Room

Occupying the south wing of the home, the living room is longer than the parlor, one end of which includes the south wing and bay window. This end of the room also features a door that opens onto the south portion of the porch. At the other end of the room is a simple brick corner fireplace added when the pocket doors along that wall were closed off during the postwar remodeling of the original dining room. Opposite the double doors leading to the parlor is a single door leading to the kitchen.

Kitchen

Although this long narrow room has always been the kitchen, it underwent significant renovation in the 1990s. Cabinetry dates from that remodel; complete with a center kitchen island, but the woodwork, finishing, hardware are modern interpretations of early twentieth century designs, reflecting the popularity of "country" style kitchens in the late twentieth century. Opposite the door to the modern dining room, a door leads to the enclosed porch, today a mudroom. One end of the kitchen features a single window on the south wall. The other end includes an opening to a pantry with cupboards dating to the home's early years. Opposite these cupboards inside the pantry, a door provides access to a ground level exterior door on the north elevation and the basement. Also at this end of the kitchen there is an opening to the rear staircase that leads to the second story and attic. Tucked between these doorways is a built-in china cabinet or hutch that appears to exist from an earlier rendition of the kitchen. A third opening along the east wall is a doorway that leads to the original dining room.

Old Dining Room

The original dining room occupied the north wing of the house and mirrored the living room in the south wing. Sometime after the 1940s, the pocket doors that connected this to the adjoining living room were closed off and this room was divided lengthways. The larger half, adjacent to the kitchen, became a bedroom. The smaller half became a narrow hallway, one end of which opened onto the foyer and the other, onto a 1950s-era bathroom located in the enclosed portion of the porch. It retains this mid-century reconfiguration.

Upstairs

From the main staircase, visitors arrive at the second story in a long hallway that runs the length of the house. The first bedroom occupies the southeast corner of the house, roughly paralleling the location of the parlor below, with a small adjoining room along the front that served as an additional bedroom. The next two bedrooms occupy the north and south wings and open on to the main hallway.

At the west end of the hallway, in the rear of the house, are two bathrooms. The one in the southwest corner was, for a time, the space for a kitchen to an upstairs apartment before being divided and converted to a bathroom and laundry room. The other bathroom, in the northwest corner, was original to the home and still has an early toilet and tub, although the pink and black linoleum color pattern clearly dates from a later time and aesthetic. The rear of the house also contains access to a rear stairway and the attic.

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Attic

The attic burned in a fire in the 1920s and was rebuilt. Today, it is open with exposed trusses as it originally would have been. It has a wood floor and is used for storage. Each of the gable windows illuminate this space and are located near the floor level.

Basement

The basement is accessed through door on the east wall of the kitchen pantry or through an exterior door on the north facing elevation. It consists of several spaces. One is toward the rear of the house, with a concrete floor. The other spaces, divided from one another by stone walls, are dirt.

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8. Statement of Significance

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

Education

Architecture

Period of Significance

1898-1958

Significant Dates

1898 – construction; 1924 – attic fire;
c.1948-1958 - remodeling

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins with the construction of the house in 1898 and extends to 1958 when the property transferred out of Krehbiel family.

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 Wirkler-Krehbiel house is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C for its local significance in the areas of Education and Architecture. From its origins in 1898, this house has been associated with Bethel College and served as one of the first boarding halls for the institution. It was first home to Christian Wirkler, who served the college by housing student boarders. The house was later home to Wirkler's daughter Mary and her husband C.E. Krehbiel, an important local figure in early 20th century Mennonite circles and whose father played a key role in the Mennonite settlement in Harvey County and central Kansas. The house sits on the opposite side of Main Street from Bethel College. Twenty-Seventh Street is one of the main entrances to the institution. Kauffman Museum, the museum connected to Bethel College, is north of the property across 27th Street. This proximity to Bethel College and one of the key museums documenting the Mennonite community in Kansas highlights the significance of the home to the college and the Mennonite story in this region.

Elaboration

Mennonite Migration to Kansas and the Krehbiel Contribution

The Mennonites are an Anabaptist religious group of German, Swiss, and Dutch heritage noted for their pacifism. This refusal to engage in military service as a matter of conscience has remained a defining feature of the community, one that has sometimes resulted in their migration to places where such service was not required. Originating in Switzerland and Holland, a significant population of Mennonites in Europe was located in the Vistula River region of Poland in the late 1700s. This area eventually became part of the Russian Empire. By the late 1700s, at the invitation of Catherine the Great, several groups of Mennonites settled along the Volga River towards the Black Sea. During the early 1800s, these two populations of Mennonites, the Vistula and Volga River/Black Sea groups, lived in their own villages largely separate from nearby Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Jewish populations, as well as those of Catholic and Lutheran Germans. By the 1870s, Russian imperial policy under Alexander III changed regarding the Mennonites' exemption from military service. This, and general economic challenges in the Russian Empire, prompted Mennonites to look for new homes.

North America (Canada and the United States) was the most attractive place for migration. In addition to exemption from military service in both countries, there were lands available for settlement. In the United States, for example, railroads such as the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe had, thanks to the Pacific Railroad Acts, received millions of acres that could be sold. The Santa Fe's land agent, Carl Bernhard Schmidt, met with Mennonite leaders, especially a committee called the Mennonite Board of Guardians.⁵

Mennonite migration was highly organized with teams of individuals tasked with finding new places to settle. Those who came to Kansas were usually connected to the Vistula populations or, as with David Goerz and Bernhard Warkentin, of the Volga River/Black Sea areas. Reverend Christian Krehbiel, by contrast, was from southern Germany and came to the United States as a young man in 1851. By the 1860s, he had migrated to Summerfield, Illinois (near St. Louis), where he became an elder in the Mennonite Church and leader in the Mennonite Western District Conference.⁶

Decisions on where to settle fell to figures such as the Reverend Krehbiel, father to C.E. Krehbiel, who later owned the nominated home. H.B. Krehbiel's history of the Mennonite Western District Conference (a regional body representing Mennonite congregations in Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas) concluded that

This plan was first discussed among the churches of the Western District Conference; its originator and chief promoter being Chr(istian) Krehbiel, pastor of the Summerfield church, who, as we shall see, played

⁵ C. Henry Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites* (Berne, IN: Mennonite Book Concern, 1941), 383-477, 638-675.

⁶ H. B. Krehbiel, 428-434.

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a leading part in the whole migratory movement. In a private way this idea had been under consideration for some time, when in 1869 it was brought to public attention by placing "colonization" as a topic for consideration on the program of the Western Conference. At that session Chr. Krehbiel presented a plan for colonization. After some consideration of the scheme the Conference requested Krehbiel to associate with himself five other members of the Summerfield congregation and prepare the plan for publication in the *Friedensbote*. The scheme thus developed was published February, 1870. Viewed in the light of events which have since transpired, it must be conceded that the plan was very practical. The scheme as published met with approval, but not sufficient interest was awakened to lead to actual colonization. At the Conference one year later the matter received no mention. Chr. Krehbiel, backed by his church, finally stood alone as supporter of the idea, but he was not to be discouraged.⁷

The Summerfield Congregation had been experiencing land difficulties in Illinois. By the 1870s, new Mennonite settlers arrived daily making land scarce and expensive. In late 1871, Krehbiel and other leaders organized a body of eight men to scout lands from Canada and the Dakotas to as far south as Texas for possible settlement. In 1872, a body of men from Russia, including Bernhard Warkentin, Philip Wiebe, Peter Dyck and Jacob Beer arrived at Summerfield as part of a venture to seek out lands. While there, they "detected in Chr. Krehbiel a wise and far sighted adviser and leader, and in other respects found very agreeable conditions in that congregation, they remained at that place for a considerable time, and from it as a center made an inspection tour of the west, northwest, and southwest, accompanied by several members of the church."⁸ The following year, in 1873, another delegation arrived from Russia as well as a young teacher named David Goerz, and "Chr. Krehbiel accompanied these men on a land inspection tour to Kansas, with the result that all carried with them most favorable impressions of the advantages which Kansas offered."⁹ Again, according to the history written by Krehbiel's son, H.B.,

Upon pressure by Chr. Krehbiel his long cherished colonization scheme again rose into prominence. He succeeded in organizing a colonization company from members within his own church. This company sent a committee under leadership of Krehbiel to Kansas "to examine accurately land and conditions, and if suitable and possible, to arrange for a purchase, subject to ratification by the company." This expedition was joined by D. Goerz and several other Russian brethren. The result of the expedition was that the country about Halstead was selected as suitable for a colony, and arrangements were made which later led to a settlement under most favorable advantages.¹⁰

In response, Christian Krehbiel, Goerz, and other leaders formed the Board of Guardians to organize Mennonite migration. This body, formed in Summerfield, Illinois on December 2, 1873, was developed out of the merger of two earlier immigration organizations and included figures such as John Funk, editor of the Mennonite newspaper *Herald of Truth*, Christian Krehbiel, David Goerz, and Bernhard Warkentin, who is best known for promoting the introduction of Turkey Red Wheat, now a staple for Kansas culture. Krehbiel served as president. David Goerz was secretary. John Funk was treasurer. Bernhard Warkentin was the main agent.¹¹

Among the most promising lands for settlement were those the ATSF was selling in Kansas. Some leaders felt that lands in Canada were more promising and these Kansas lands were better for the poorer settlers. However, it was later deemed the land in Harvey and Marion counties was the best option for several reasons. The first was the main line of the Santa Fe railroad had recently been completed as far west as Hutchinson, KS. The second and perhaps most vital, was the climate and terrain of the area was similar to Russia and they believed their crops would be successful. Ultimately, however, the decision was made to acquire ATSF lands in Marion County, Harvey County, and Reno County. Carl Schmidt, Santa Fe's Land Agent, sold 100,000 acres in October 1874 alone. By the end of 1874, there were 4,000 new Mennonites in the area. Three years later, that number was 8,000. In all, 15,000 Mennonites came to Kansas.

⁷ H. B. Krehbiel, *History of the General Conference of the Mennonites of North America* (Published by Author, 1898), 201. Accessed <https://ia600406.us.archive.org/18/items/historyofgeneral01kreh/historyofgeneral01kreh.pdf>

⁸ Ibid., 203.

⁹ Ibid., 204.

¹⁰ Ibid., 204-5.

¹¹ H.B. Krehbiel, 200-209; Historical Notes compiled for the 125th Anniversary Celebration of the First Mennonite Church of Halstead; Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 640-2.

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Those who settled in the areas of Newton and, to an extent, around Hillsboro, tended to be Prussians from the Vistula area. Mennonites from the region of Volhynia (in modern Ukraine) settled near Moundridge. Those from the Black Sea/Volga regions settled in places such as Goessel, connected to the Alexanderwohl Community back in Russia, and Buhler in Reno County.¹²

Halstead was the initial area of choice for several of the leading figures among the "Council of Twelve," a body of Mennonite leaders tasked with finding locations for Mennonite settlement. On January 5, 1874 several key Mennonite families selected that area to settle. Together, they purchased 18,000 acres of land for \$50,000. Subsequently the first Mennonite service was given in Halstead while the men were here buying the land. They gathered at a local schoolhouse on January 11, 1874 and listened to the sermon given by the Reverend Christian Krehbiel encouraging the move to Kansas. At first, the main community settled in Halstead, Kansas. It was there Warkentin first developed his milling operations. In 1875, David Goerz led a group of Mennonites from the Summerfield community to Halstead. In 1879, Reverend Krehbiel also relocated to Halstead.¹³

Mennonite immigrants often embodied an appreciation for education. From their arrival they established primary schools and, within a few years, institutions of higher education.¹⁴ One such school was an Indian Industrial School located on Reverend Krehbiel's farm from 1887 through 1896.¹⁵ Eventually, the Halstead College Association was organized and faced with the task of erecting a building for a Mennonite school. The vote for location was five to four with favor winning out to Halstead. The Halstead Mennonite Seminary was dedicated on September 16, 1883 and opened three days later on September 19.¹⁶ Within the first year of opening though, there were evident shortfalls for the school; these included an inadequate building, limited curriculum, and an insufficient faculty to meet student demands.¹⁷ The seminary lasted just 10 years, ceasing operations and closing its doors on June 7, 1893 ahead of the opening of Bethel College north of Newton, which would assume and carry out the educational intentions of the Conference.¹⁸

The Move to Newton and Its Environs

In the 1880s, Mennonite leaders such as Bernhard Warkentin began to relocate from Halstead to join the existing Mennonite population living in Newton. By 1886, Mennonite leaders, including Warkentin and David Goerz, sought a new location for a Mennonite school in the area, and a new direction, resulting in the incorporation of Bethel College in May 1887. Construction began on a new campus, with the cornerstone laying of the main building taking place in 1888. The financial downturn of the late 1880s and early 1890s put construction on hold for several years. It was not until 1893 that work was completed on the main administration building with classes beginning the fall of that year.¹⁹

Before, at Halstead Seminary, the boarding of students was an issue. The solution was for boarding arrangements to be taken over by private families. The most noted of these was of Christian Wirkler. Originally from Switzerland, Wirkler came to the United States in 1866, living in various locations including Missouri, Iowa, and Illinois. In 1888 he and his family relocated to Halstead where he served as dining hall steward at the Halstead Seminary. In 1891, he and his family became private boarders of the Seminary's students. When the school closed, and was reconstituted at Bethel College, Wirkler and his family moved near the new college and once again supported a Mennonite college by serving as private boarders. According to Wirkler's granddaughter, Florence Krehbiel-Huffman, the home at 2727 N. Main was built in part as a boarding house for Bethel College in 1898 with Christian Wirkler as the private owner and operator.²⁰

¹² James R. Shortridge, *Peopling the Plains: Who Settled Where in Frontier Kansas* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 94-104.

¹³ Historical Notes compiled for the 125th Anniversary Celebration of the First Mennonite Church of Halstead.

¹⁴ Wedel and Kaufman, 25.

¹⁵ H.B. Krehbiel, 434.

¹⁶ Wedel and Kaufman, 28.

¹⁷ Wedel and Kaufman, 35.

¹⁸ Wedel and Kaufman, 43.

¹⁹ Wedel and Kaufman, 45-78; H.B. Krehbiel, 368-70.

²⁰ The need for lodging of both male and female students and the college was a pressing one in the late 1890s. During that decade, the school saw the construction of the Ladies Cottage in 1895 and the Minnesota House for men in 1899. The Ladies Cottage was later converted to Carnegie Hall, and self-demolished in 1962. The Minnesota Home was

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Christian Wirkler and the Home's Construction

The home's first occupants were Christian Wirkler, his wife Elizabeth, and their children Mary, Elizabeth (Lizzie), and John. The family was a charter member of the Bethel College Mennonite Church and both daughters later taught at Bethel College.²¹ Mary Wirkler succeeded Miss Clara Lemmon in 1899 and served an art instructor at Bethel College until her marriage in 1902.²² Her replacement was C. Paulus, who served in that role until 1905, when Lizzie Wirkler took on the position.²³ She remained employed there with the Fine Arts department for another nine years before she and her parents moved to California.

Mary Wirkler resigned from Bethel College in 1902 and married C.E. Krehbiel, son of Board of Guardian president Christian Krehbiel, on July 27, 1902 in a ceremony at the college in which the Rev. D. Goerz performed.²⁴ The reception was later held at the home of her parents. The parlor of the home was decorated for the wedding, a room where the doors were normally kept closed unless the Wirklers, and later the Krehbiels, were entertaining.²⁵ The next day's edition of *The Evening Kansas-Republican* paper reported the wedding "was of more than ordinary importance among the Mennonites of the county, the bride and the groom coming from families quite prominent in this sect."²⁶ The article also went on to say the couple would make the home at 2727 N. Main their home temporarily.

The 1900 census listed Wirkler as "keeping boarders," although none were listed. In 1917, Christian and Elizabeth Wirkler, along with two daughters, relocated to California. The Wirklers' daughter, Mary, her husband C. E. Krehbiel, and their children Olin and Florence occupied the home and continued the tradition of lodging students

C.E. and Mary Wirkler Krehbiel

C. E.²⁷ Krehbiel was born in Summerfield, Illinois and moved with his family to Halstead as a boy. He grew up in Halstead, attended the local Mennonite Preparatory School for three years, and then went to the Kansas State Normal School at Emporia, graduating in 1897. He returned to Halstead to teach before shifting his attention to the ministry. He was elected by the Mennonite church there for the ministry. He attended the Presbyterian Theological seminary at Bloomfield, New Jersey for one year, then spent five semesters in Berlin, Germany. By 1901, he had returned to Harvey County, Kansas and had become the secretary of Western Book & Publishing Company of Newton. The company would later be known as the Herald Book and Publishing Co. of Newton. He later served as a treasurer for the company as well. He held numerous business affiliations, including director of a hospital, three flour mills, and corporations during his life. In the 1930s, C.E. Krehbiel did extension work in Wichita, resulting in the formation of Lorainne Avenue Mennonite Church in 1931. For the next four years, C.E. and Mary Krehbiel drove south to Wichita to lead church activities. C.E. served as Secretary of the Mennonite Charities for 23 years, superintendent of the Leisy Orphan Aid Society from 1910-1948 and he received an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Bethel College in 1941.²⁸

Mary Wirkler Krehbiel and C. E. Krehbiel moved into the home in 1917 when her parents moved to California. This would be their only home until their passing. In daughter Florence's account of living in the home, it was noted that

moved and became the Music Hall. H.B. Krehbiel, 371-5; Wedel and Kaufman, 41, 100-1, 113; Florence Krehbiel-Huffman, personal pictures and commentary in *The Story of Krehbiel House*. Obituary for Christian Wirkler in *Christlicher Bundesbote*, October 11, 1932, https://mla.bethelks.edu/mediawiki/index.php?title=Wirkler,_Christian_%281840-1932%29&action=edit

²¹ Keith L. Sprunger, *Campus, Congregation, and Community: The Bethel College Mennonite Church 1897-1997*. (North Newton, Kan.: Bethel College Mennonite Church, 1997), 1.

²² Wedel and Kaufman, 121.

²³ Ibid, 122.

²⁴ Marriage License of C.E. Krehbiel and Mary Wirkler, 1902.

²⁵ Krehbiel-Huffman, *The Story of Krehbiel House*

²⁶ "Wirkler-Krehbiel," *The Evening Kansas-Republican* (Newton, KS), July 28th 1902.

²⁷ To avoid confusion, the elder Krehbiel will be referred to here as "Christian" and his son, "C.E."

²⁸ Obituary of Rev. Christian (C.E.) Krehbiel in *Mennonite Weekly Review*, July 24, 1948. Accessed at [https://mla.bethelks.edu/mediawiki/index.php/Krehbiel,_Christian_E._\(1869-1948\)](https://mla.bethelks.edu/mediawiki/index.php/Krehbiel,_Christian_E._(1869-1948)).

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on January 20, 1924 the house caught fire.²⁹ The roof and attic were burned including mementos their father C.E. had brought from Russia while distributing food during the famine. She went on to say Bethel students rushed to the family's aid and helped carry out belongings and furniture from the lower floors. The family was temporarily moved to the White House, which was the boy's dormitory across the Kidron while the home was repaired³⁰.

C.E. and Mary Wirkler Krehbiel had two children, a son, Olin, and a daughter, Florence. Olin later married Dorothy Kaufman and had two children of their own, son Ronald and a daughter Beverly. Olin, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, would go on to serve in the General Conference. In 1935, Olin became assistant and, later, successor to his father at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite in Wichita. Daughter Florence Krehbiel would later marry Harry Huffman, head purchasing agent for the Astrodome in Houston where they resided.

Like the adjacent Bethel College, the home was outside of the Newton city limits. From the late 1890s to the early 1900s, a community grew up around Bethel College, consisting mainly of individuals connected with the institution. In the early twentieth century, the Wirkler home was one of a line of residences along Main Street opposite Bethel College, an area where some local boosters attempted to name Mount Hebron. Eventually, a line of the Arkansas Valley Interurban extended up to Bethel College along Main Street. With this growth a public water system was installed by 1912, but no sanitary sewage system existed and sewage issues plagued the area. Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal funding was available to incorporated cities, but Newton declined to annex the area into city limits. In 1938, residents around Bethel successfully incorporated their community as North Newton and applied for the funding to construct sewer lines between the two communities. Up until that time, many of the city directories researched listed the address of 2727 N. Main as a rural route of Newton. In November 1955, the home became part of the newly-platted Hupps Addition, an area surrounding the college and home to students, faculty, staff and their families.

A Bethel Institution

Following the deaths of C.E. in 1948 and Mary Wirkler Krehbiel in 1956, their children Olin and Florence felt it was only fitting that the home should always be a part of Bethel College. In 1958, the children gave the home to Bethel College where it remained a boarding house for students, professors, and visitors to the campus. Florence made the following statement regarding the home which pertained to the turnover to Bethel, "many happy and some sad memories abound in this home and much love. We sincerely hope each person visiting here or spending time here will be touched by its warmth and feel some of the love that will always remain here."³¹

By the 1970s, the home was a noted, if worn fixture, on the Bethel College campus. Among its residents were faculty such as Duane Friesen, professor of theology at Bethel College and founder of the Peace Studies program.³² Bethel College continued to expand and develop during this period. For example, the land north of the house across 27th Street, including land that Lizzie Wirkler once owned, became the site of the Kauffman Museum, a facility affiliated with Bethel College and dedicated to telling the history of the Mennonites in Kansas. By the 1980s, the home was showing its age and the college sold it to Ted and Alisa Krehbiel (no relation to original Krehbiels) in the fall of 1992. Since then, the home has served as a private residence.

Queen Anne Architecture

The Queen Anne style was popular in the United States and Kansas from 1880 to 1910. It is especially common in Kansas as the state experienced considerable growth in population and residential building during this period. The style, which was popularized in the United States at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, allowed for a broad interpretation, and included small cottages and grand mansions – both urban and rural. The style reached

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ According to a map from 1936, the White House was where the present day Shultz Student Center is located. Wedel and Kaufman, 387.

³¹ Ibid.

³² A Unifying Thread: Duane Friesen looks back at 35 years of teaching and scholarship, Monday, August 29th, 2005 accessed at <http://www.bethelks.edu/news-events/news/post/3502/>

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its peak in Kansas at the height of railroad development through the state, allowing for the quick delivery of mass-produced materials and ornament.³³

The Wirkler-Krehbiel House was built toward the end of the period during which the Queen Anne style was popular. The building's Queen Anne features include the irregular form and massing, its asymmetry, and its decorative elements such as the fishscale siding and turned spindles on the porch supports and balustrade. However, the applied and decorative elements are more restrained than what might be found on an earlier Eastlake-inspired residence, reflecting the transition in American residential architecture away from Victorian styles toward the Craftsman and Colonial Revival styles that gained favor early in the 20th century.

³³ Martha Hagedorn-Krass, "The Queen Anne: The Queen of Late-nineteenth Century Style," In *Kansas Preservation* vol. 26, no. 5 (September/October 2004): 13. Virginia and Lee McAlister, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 263-268.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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A unifying thread: Duane Friesen looks back at 35 years of teaching and scholarship, Monday, August 29, 2005 accessed at <http://www.bethelks.edu/news-events/news/post/3502/>.

Digitized Harvey County Atlases from 1882, 1902, 1918, and 1926, accessed at www.kansasmemory.org.

U.S. Census 1900
U.S. Census 1910
U.S. Census 1920
U.S. Census 1940

Conversations with several individuals also informed the writing of this nomination form. These included Rosie Epp Reimer, Ray Reimer, Keith Sprunger, John Thiesen, and Dudley Dodgion Toevs

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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 # _____
- 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): _N/A_

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 0.61 acres

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>38.074451</u> | <u>-97.345670</u> | 3 | _____ | _____ |
| | Latitude: | Longitude: | | Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2 | _____ | _____ | 4 | _____ | _____ |
| | Latitude: | Longitude: | | Latitude: | Longitude: |

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The Wirkler-Krehbiel House sits on a corner lot facing east and is bounded to the east by Main Street and to the north by 27th Street. Private property lines define the lot on the south and west. The property's legal description is: Hupps Addition to North Newton, Block 1, Lots 5, 6 (Section 5, Twp, 23, Range 1E).

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The nominated property includes the lots historically and currently associated with the Wirkler-Krehbiel House.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Billi Wilson – City of Newton; Sadonia Corns – WSU Student; Dr. Jay M. Price - WSU

organization City of Newton date _____

street & number 201 E 6th Street telephone 316-284-3641

city or town Newton state KS zip code 67114

e-mail bwilson@newtonkansas.com

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

name Timothy & Mary Hodge

street & number 2727 N Main Street telephone _____

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city or town North Newton state KS zip code 67117

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.

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Photographs

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

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Wirkler-Krehbiel House
City or Vicinity: North Newton
County: Harvey State: Kansas
Photographer: Dr. Jay Price & Billi Wilson
Date Photographed: 31 July 2014

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

- 1 of 13 East (front) façade, camera facing W (Photographer: Billi Wilson)
- 2 of 13 Southeast corner of building, camera facing NW (Photographer: Billi Wilson)
- 3 of 13 Southwest corner of building, camera facing NE (Photographer: Jay Price)
- 4 of 13 West (rear) façade, camera facing E (Photographer: Billi Wilson)
- 5 of 13 Northwest corner of building, camera facing SE (Photographer: Jay Price)
- 6 of 13 Non-contributing Garage, east side, camera facing W (Photographer: Billi Wilson)
- 7 of 13 Interior, staircase at main entrance to house (Photographer: Billi Wilson)
- 8 of 13 Interior, living room looking into dining room at right (Photographer: Jay Price)
- 9 of 13 Interior, corner fireplace in dining room (Photographer: Billi Wilson)
- 10 of 13 Interior, woodwork detail (Photographer: Billi Wilson)
- 11 of 13 Interior, second-floor hallway (Photographer: Billi Wilson)
- 12 of 13 Interior, second-floor bedroom (Photographer: Jay Price)
- 13 of 13 Interior, basement (Photographer: Billi Wilson)

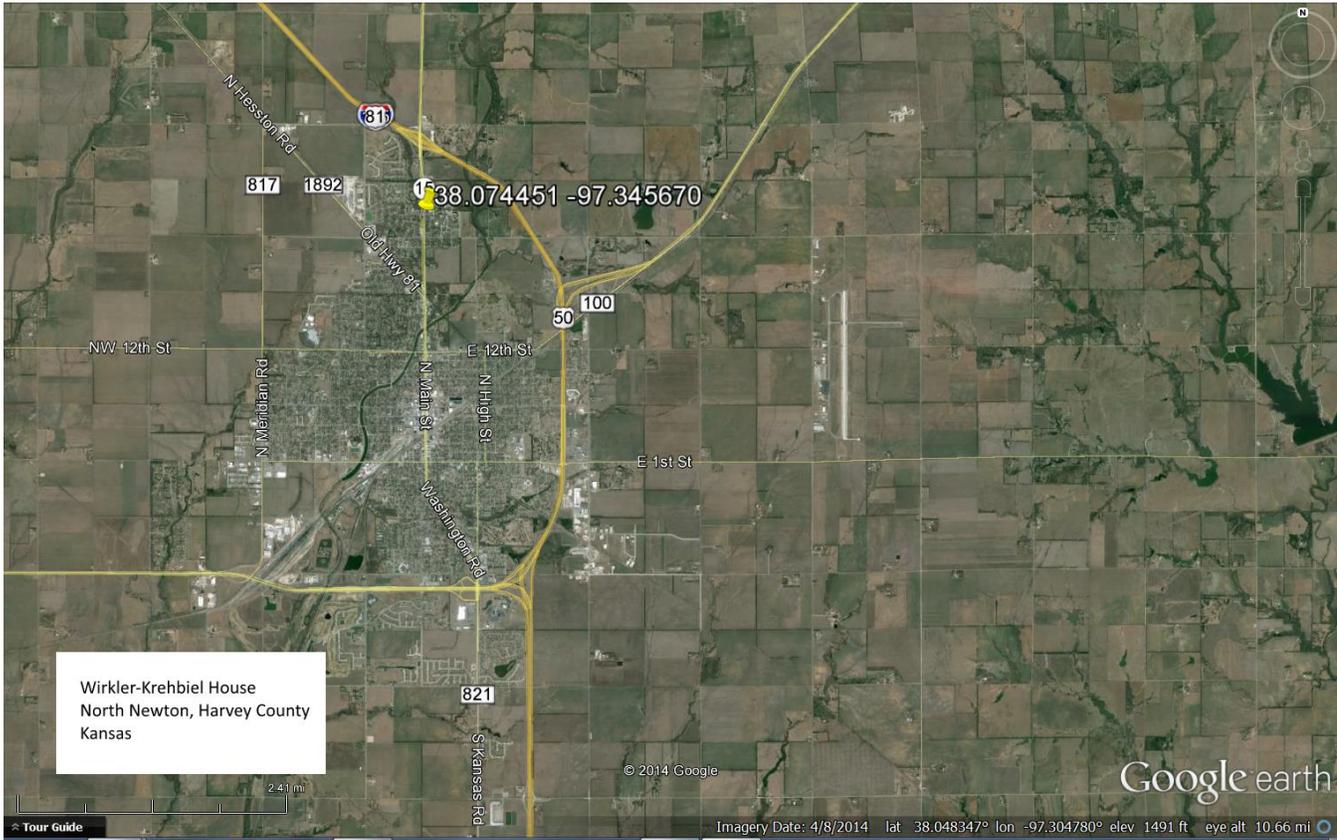
Figures

Include GIS maps, figures, scanned images below.

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Figure 1: Contextual Aerial Image, Google Earth 2014.



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Figure 2: Close-in Aerial Image, Google Earth 2014.

