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:** Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District
   - **Other names/site number:**
   - **Name of related Multiple Property Listing:** N/A

2. **Location**

   - **Street & number:** 29377 Mitchell Prairie Lane  
   - **City or town:** Wamego  
   - **State:** Kansas  
   - **Code:** KS  
   - **County:** Wabaunsee  
   - **Code:** 197  
   - **Zip code:** 66547

3. **State/Federal Agency Certification**

   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

   In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

   - national
   - statewide
   - local

   Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C

   **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:**

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:**
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District
Wabaunsee County, Kansas

5. Classification

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

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<th>Building(s)</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Object</th>
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Category of Property
(Check only one box.)

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<td>Noncontributing: buildings 4</td>
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<tr>
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Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE
LANDSCAPE/natural feature
RECREATION AND CULTURE/monument
FUNERARY: burial mound

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE
LANDSCAPE/natural feature
RECREATION AND CULTURE/monument
FUNERARY: burial mound

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MID-19TH CENTURY
OTHER: Vernacular

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE
walls: WOOD: weatherboard, log
         STONE
roof: SYNTHETIC, METAL
other:                                            
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 Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District (referred to as MM District) is a 166-acre area, composed of several property types. The MM District includes the five major components: (1) Heritage Prairie, a sizeable native prairie landscape, (2) the Mount Mitchell archaeological site, (3) Fort Riley Road – Mount Mitchell Trail Segment: trail swales, (4) memorial monuments, and (5) the Captain William Mitchell Farmstead. Contributing elements of the MM District include: six buildings, three sites, one structure, and two objects. The non-contributing elements include four buildings, and one structure – all of which are outlined in the inventory below.

The Heritage Prairie is the largest portion comprising approximately 163 acres and is bounded by property lines to the east and south and roads to the west and north. The Mount Mitchell archaeological site is located at the southeast corner of the MM District and is a prominent hilltop overlooking the scenic Kansas River valley to the north. There are two twentieth-century monuments on Mount Mitchell. On the east and north sides of the hilltop, the swale from the Fort Riley Road is visible in the landscape. Native American hunters, fur trappers, explorers and emigrants used the general route on the south side of the Kansas River. After Kansas Territory was opened to European-American settlement, this was an important overland transportation route during the Territorial and early settlement period of Kansas history.

The buildings of the Captain William Mitchell farmstead (2.9 acres addressed as 29213 and 29173 Mount Mitchell Road) are the most significant architectural elements included in the district. The farmstead is located to the north of the Heritage Prairie. It is the most visible built element in the view from Mount Mitchell toward the river valley. The farmstead has several contributing buildings including a vernacular-style house, stone wellhouse, and a stone gambrel-roof type barn. These buildings date from the period of significance (1856-1957). The upper part of the Heritage Prairie (65.90 acres) is covered with native vegetation and the lower part is a former agricultural tract that has been re-seeded with native grass and forbs (90.96 acres). The Heritage Prairie landscape, trail swales, and monuments have excellent integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. The monuments have excellent integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Despite some alterations, the contributing farmstead buildings have excellent integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. The buildings have relatively good integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Overall, the MM District has very good architectural integrity.

Elaboration

General character

The Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District (MM District) contains the heritage prairie – a native and regenerating landscape, a historic road swale, an archaeological site, one farmstead, and two commemorative monuments. All of these properties are included within a 166-acre area. The heritage prairie landscape is the largest element encompassing approximately 163 acres. The Mitchell Farmstead is located on the north central side of a county road which forms the north boundary of the heritage prairie tract. Built or manmade elements of the MM District include the Mitchell Farmstead, two commemorative monuments, and the remaining Fort Riley Road – Mount Mitchell Trail Segment swales. The landscape of the Heritage Prairie has been well preserved since early settlement after 1854. The physical relationship of the hilltop and lower prairie to the Fort Riley Road swales and the Mitchell farmstead remains relatively unchanged. Overall, the appearance of the district still represents the period when the district achieved significance. The nominated
Heritage Prairie, which includes the monuments, archaeological site, and trail swales, is approximately 163 acres primarily including the southeast quarter of Section 28, Township 10, Range 20E. Trail swales and the two monuments are located on the upper part of the prairie area.\(^1\)

The general character of the MM District has been primarily delineated by the grid system of land division, the cultivation of agricultural fields in the vicinity, and the construction of graveled section line roads and a paved highway to the west. Although the historic Mitchell farmstead has been sub-divided, the site plan and the character-defining buildings of the Mitchell farmstead remain with relatively good architectural integrity. Generally, the district is distinguished from the surroundings because the prairie is a large uncultivated tract in a landscape of cultivated fields and pastures. From the historic photographs that are available, it appears that there were fewer trees in the landscape during the nineteenth century. The Heritage Prairie is a natural open space that retains its character defining features, along with the monuments, archaeological site, and swales.

### Property Name | Construction or Alteration Dates | Type | Function | Eligibility
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Heritage Prairie | c. 1854 | Landscape/site | Landscape | Contributing
Mount Mitchell Archaeological site | Unknown | Site | Burial mound | Contributing
Fort Riley Road swales | c. 1854 | Site | Trail swales | Contributing
Mitchell Farmhouse | 1856, 1868, c. 1908 | Building | Single dwelling | Contributing
Wellhouse | c. 1880 | Structure | Outbuilding | Contributing
Outbuilding | c. 1868 | Building | Outbuilding | Contributing
Corncrib | c. 1920 | Structure | Corncrib | Contributing
Boxcar | c. 1920 | Building | Outbuilding | Contributing
Garage | Contemporary | Building | Garage | Non-contributing
Carport | Contemporary | Structure | Garage | Non-contributing
Tenant house | c. 1900 | Building | Single dwelling | Contributing
Barn | c. 1880 | Building | Barn | Contributing
Garage (northwest) | Contemporary | Building | Garage | Non-contributing
Garage (west) | Contemporary | Building | Garage | Non-contributing
Garage (east) | Contemporary | Building | Garage | Non-contributing
Fielding Memorial Monument | 1947 | Object | Monument | Contributing
Mitchell Memorial Monument | 1956 | Object | Monument | Contributing

**Heritage Prairie landscape**

The natural elements of the MM District are visibly represented in the Heritage Prairie area. The present entrance is located about one-half mile east of K-99 Highway and one-half mile south of the K-99 and K-18 Highway intersection. With a recent property addition of more acres of the former Mitchell farm to the Heritage Prairie area the park is now located at the junction of state highways 99 and 18. This section of Highway 99 is a portion of the Native Stone Scenic Byway. Mount Mitchell is 1220 feet above sea level and rises approximately 240 feet above the Kansas River valley to the north. This site marks the westernmost

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\(^1\) This nomination is based on extensive research and writing by Michael Stubbs, Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards, with additional information and maps provided by Bob Hoard, Tim Weston, and Rick Anderson, Kansas Historic Preservation Office. Their contributions are gratefully acknowledged.
appearance of glacial erratics south of the Kansas River valley. According to James and Susan Aber, this location represents a transition from the bedrock terrain of the Flint Hills to the south and west into the glaciated region of northeast Kansas. Bedrock crops out as stone lines on the hill side. The Cottonwood limestone caps the hill and the Neva Limestone appears about halfway up the hill. The Neva Limestone was quarried around the sides of the hill and used to construct buildings in the town of Wamego on the north side of the Kansas River. Local oral history accounts reported that stone for the Beecher Bible church in Wabaunsee to the east was quarried from this site. The abandoned quarry sites are small and likely date from the 1860s to the 1890s.2

The scattered glacial erratic boulders on Mount Mitchell were most likely deposited from icebergs drifting in glacial Lake Manhattan that filled what is now the Kansas River valley directly to the north. The actual limit of the ice sheet lay a short distance to the north and east, impounding a lake that filled with meltwater and glacial sediment. Massive influx of icebergs and periodic floods of meltwater carried glacial cobbles and boulders across the lake and deposited them on Mount Mitchell. Glacial erratics are resistant to weathering and have collected at the surface since glaciation took place more than half a million years ago.3 Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie itself consists of alternating layers of limestone and shale. These were deposited during the Carboniferous and Permian Periods, from approximately 330 to 240 million years ago. During this time Kansas was located closer to the equator, the climate was warmer, and a shallow sea advanced and retreated across eastern Kansas.4

Mount Mitchell Archaeological site
People have lived in the Great Plains for the last 13,500 years. For most of that time they were foragers, living off of wild resources and moving frequently to follow game and exploit plant foods. Approximately 1,800 years ago people in the region adopted horticulture and became more settled. Evidence of substantial houses and small villages appears. Small villages appear in the region and in much of temperate North America. Villages sometimes are evident by small trash mounds, or by artifacts exposed by erosion. Some are buried and found by intentional subsurface investigation methods such as shovel test pits and geophysical surveys. Also, at this time people began burying their dead in mounds constructed of soil or rock or both. These burial mounds are nearly always located on pronounced high landforms overlooking river valleys. Burial mounds may contain one or more individuals. Also, some mounds were used for multiple burials over a period of time. In these mounds there is evidence of a central burial pit created when the mound was built but also intrusive pits containing human remains that were excavated after the mound had been built and the original burial emplaced.5

A burial mound, archeological site number 14WB329, built during this time period is located at the summit of Mount Mitchell. When the Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards took over management of the property in 2006, they recognized the existence of this grave and took steps to protect and respect it. After consultation with the Kansas State Archeologist6 and members of the Potawatomi and Kanza tribes,7 the Prairie Guards removed and relocated a limestone monument to Captain Mitchell and the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony from its position on top of the mound. The burial mound on the Mount Mitchell site is evident on the surface. No known

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6 Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards files, Correspondence between Michael Stubbs and Robert Hoard 09/03/2009
7 Michael Stubbs site visit with Jon Boursaw and Lyman Boursaw, of the Citizens Band Potawatomi Nation, 05/10/2009
professional subsurface exploration has taken place, but the mound was looted in the 1920s. The projectile point found at the site was an inadvertent discovery during removal of the monument from the mound.

Because burial mounds often include significant and well-made artifacts, they are often excavated, looted and/or vandalized by treasure hunters. The mound on Mount Mitchell was excavated in the 1920s. Given that the property is mandated by the Kansas Legislature to be a public park, the Prairie Guards have long grappled with the question of how to acknowledge and respect the grave in such a high profile location. The standard approach to protect mounds from desecration is to keep information about the locations of burial mounds from the public. Since the mound itself is the highest elevation in the park visitors have been prone to stand on it with or without realizing it is a grave. After extensive consultation, the Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards, which administers the property, decided to initiate a program of education through the use of signage, tour guide explanation, and website educational presentations. By doing so, the board hoped that the public will learn about, appreciate, and respect the burials of indigenous people.

Fort Riley Road – Mount Mitchell Trail Segment: trail swales
A depressed grass-covered swale on the east and north sides of Mount Mitchell is a remnant of a trail used by French and American fur trappers and traders on their trips to and from the Rocky Mountains. Later, John C. Fremont and his party of U.S. Topographical Engineers were the first to document this route while on an expedition in 1843 to map the Oregon Trail. Before the general land survey of Kansas Territory and the construction of railroads, the trail from the newly established town of Topeka then west toward Fort Riley crossed the Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie. By 1855 the settlements of Topeka, Wabaunsee, and Manhattan had been established and this trail became known as the Fort Riley Road. Between 1857 and 1861, enslaved people escaping from Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas traveled to freedom in Canada on this portion of the road. The trail route entered what is now the southeast corner of Section 28, crossed the north half of Section 28, and turned west at the center of the west line of Section 28. The trail then paralleled the south side of the Kansas River to the west.

Presently, the trail is visible as a wide depressed swale that follows the curve of the original trail half-way down the slope of Mount Mitchell (See Figures 11-13, aerial photo map and LIDAR map). The Fort Riley Road trail swales found on this property, are a landscape feature that contributes to the significance of the larger cultural landscape of the Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie. Because the upper area of the Heritage Prairie is a relatively intact prairie landscape, the visible swales are a very good example of a Territorial period trail. Although the main Military Road from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley was constructed on the north side of the Kansas River, the trail from Topeka west toward Fort Riley is an example of a secondary route on the south side of the river to the military post. Most other trail swales have been obscured or destroyed by cultivation, road-building and other activities. To date, other segments of the military road or the secondary trail network that developed during settlement have not been nominated. These intact trail swales of the Fort Riley Road – Mount Mitchell Trail Segment remain in good condition and are an excellent example of these swales.

There is a Topeka-Fort Riley Road kiosk and bench on the site as well; coordinates are N 39.08.847’ W 096.17.809’.

8 Mount Mitchell Prairie Guard files, Michael Stubbs and Kathryn Mitchell Buster email correspondence of 06/16/2010, in reference to Sallie Mitchell letter saying, “Mount Mitchell supposed to have bones of Indian Chief – Smithsonian checked it – no bones, but lots of arrow heads & an Indian grinding bowl.” Sallie’s uncle by marriage was William Temple Hornaday, founder of the Smithsonian (National) Zoo.
10 Description and discussion of the pre-historic burial site is based on information provided by Michael Stubbs, Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards, and Bob Hoard, Kansas State Archaeologist (2020).
William Mitchell Farmstead

The Mitchell farmstead retains its original orientation and plan which is clearly visible from Mount Mitchell. The farmstead is oriented east-west along Mount Mitchell Road. Each of the subdivided tracts is slightly more than one acre including 2.9 acres of the original Mitchell farmstead located in the northeast quarter of Section 28, Township 10, Range 10E, Wabaunsee County, Kansas. The site plan and contributing buildings of the Mitchell farmstead are representative of the evolution of vernacular form and building types during the period of significance from 1856 to 1957. The wellhouse, outbuildings, and barn are well-preserved examples of those building types. Both the Mitchell house and tenant house have been altered and modernized. A few contemporary buildings that are non-contributing have been constructed on each of the present tracts. The farmstead has excellent integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. The house and tenant house have fair integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Overall, the farmstead has good architectural integrity.

Although parts of the interior have been rehabilitated, most of the floor plan from c. 1908 remains. The Mitchell house began as a simple log cabin with a loft. Sometime before Captain Mitchell married Mary Ann Chamberlain early in 1868, he improved his farm home “by building a two-story 4-room frame addition on west end of the log cabin, weather boarded up the logs outside and added a kitchen and small pantry on behind with porch in front so that he had a pretty respectable home all plastered inside to bring my mother to.”11 After 1880, as Kathryn Mitchell Buster concluded, “the house was once again expanded. A second-floor room was added over the dining room expanding what had once been the loft where runaway slaves were hidden. This room eventually became Auntie Maude’s studio. . . To balance the house, a west addition was constructed consisting of a parlor downstairs and a large bedroom upstairs. Another wide front porch was added, and, in back, a large screened-in porch . . . This house, with all its additions, is the one I knew from times spent there as a child in the 1940s and 1950s.”12

East of the Captain Mitchell house and outbuildings stand the former tenant house and the Mitchell barn. These structures were shown in a historic photograph (attributed to 1879). Although the general form of the present house appears to be consistent with the photograph, the existing structure may have been constructed later. According to William Izott Mitchell in his memoirs, sometime after 1896 when Captain Mitchell closed the Wabaunsee store, he “disposed of the fixtures and arranged with a carpenter in Wamego to take it down and build a tenant house on the farm with part of the lumber, the carpenter taking the remaining lumber for his work.”13 If Mitchell’s recollection is correct, the tenant house was constructed c. 1900.

Farmhouse

Because of the additions and alterations, the Captain William Mitchell house has fair architectural integrity. Sections of the Mitchell house were constructed in 1856, 1868, and the present form was completed with additions by 1908. The house is a two-story building oriented east-west with a side-gable roof. The earliest section of the house to the east is log construction on a rubble stone foundation. Other sections of the house to the west are wood-frame construction on a rubble stone and coursed rock-faced stone foundations. With the additions, the house has a cruciform planform with projecting central bays to the north and south.

South elevation

The main south elevation has a projecting central bay flanked by two low hipped-roof entrance porches. The east porch has been enclosed with six contemporary floor-to-ceiling fixed windows, a central sliding glass door, a concrete front step, and two double-hung windows set in a wood-frame and weatherboard wall to the east. A glazed wooden entrance door flanked by one 1/1 double-hung window is set in the exposed hewn-log wall of the east wing. The siding has been removed in this location to showcase the original logs. The west porch has

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a wooden floor supported on a rusticated block corner pier, three square posts, and concrete steps. There is a glazed wooden entrance door with a screen door flanked by a 1/1 double-hung window. The central bay has a single replacement window on the first floor surmounted by two 1/1 double-hung windows on the second floor. There is a 1/1 window in the first-floor bay to the west with a small 1/1 window in the second floor. Each of the flanking wings is surmounted by a gable wall dormer. In the east wing, there are three double-hung second-floor windows. In the west wing, there are two second-floor double-hung windows.

**East elevation**
The second story of the east elevation has two 2/2 wooden double-hung windows with aluminum storms. This east wall has a metal stove flue. Below the original east elevation, there is a contemporary one-story shed-roofed addition with a central entrance flanked by a single double-hung window to the south and a pair of double-hung windows to the east. The windows have aluminum storm windows. The addition has a contemporary synthetic entrance door with a nine-light glazed panel.

**North elevation**
The contemporary addition in the northeast corner of the north elevation has small paired double-hung windows to the east and a single window to the west. The projecting central wing has one 2/2 double-hung window on the first floor and the second floor to the north as well as a small second-floor 3/1 double-hung window in the west wall. Most of the one-story hipped-roof porch in the northwest corner of the north elevation has been enclosed. The enclosed section has a contemporary casement window. The screened section of the porch remaining open has a single square corner post and a screened entrance door to the west. The porch shelters a 1/1 double-hung window on the first floor. There are two small 3/1 double-hung windows on the second floor of the west wing of the north elevation.

**West elevation**
The west elevation has two 1/1 double-hung windows on the first floor surmounted by paired 6/6 contemporary windows on the second floor.

**Interior**
Significant interior features that remain from the c. 1908 construction and possibly earlier include wooden floors with 1X6 flooring, glazed paneled wooden entrance doors, paneled wooden partition doors, lath and plaster walls and ceilings. There are simple wooden moldings around doors and windows. There is wainscoting in the dining room which occupies the original log structure.

**Alterations**
Historic windows have been replaced in the first-floor east wing, central bay, and the second floor west wing of the main south elevation as well as the second-floor west facade. The roof is covered with composition shingle roofing and the walls are covered with wide synthetic siding. A brick end chimney in the east elevation of the original block has been replaced by a metal flue. The east end wall of the log cabin has been removed to provide access to the shed addition and create a larger dining room.

**Farmstead outbuildings**
There are four historic outbuildings on the Mitchell farmstead—a stone wellhouse, a wood-frame outbuilding, a wood-frame corncrib, and a wood-frame railroad car. These buildings have good architectural integrity. The outbuildings have integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association as well as integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Also, there is a storm cellar northeast of the house. The cellar has a concrete cap with a contemporary metal door.

**Wellhouse:** The wellhouse is northeast of the farmhouse with a well between it and the house. A nineteenth century photograph shows that well water was pumped by a windmill. The wellhouse (constructed c. 1880) is a small square building oriented east-west and constructed of coursed rock-faced limestone blocks. It has a hipped roof with composition shingle roofing. There is a four-panel wooden side entrance door and a four-
panel wooden screen door to the west and single 2/2 double-hung wooden windows in the north and south facades.

**Outbuilding:** North of the wellhouse is a rectangular outbuilding (aka the “red shed,” constructed c. 1868) that is oriented north-south with a side-gable roof and an addition attached to the north. The building is wood-frame construction with vertical board and batten sheathing and wooden shingle roofing on a rough rubble stone foundation. There is a central entrance to the east with a vertical board door and two 6/6 double-hung windows to the south. The gable-roofed addition has a wide rolling door to the east and another board entrance door in the southwest corner which extends past the main block. This addition has galvanized metal roofing. The main block of this structure was recently repaired by the Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards.

**Corncrib:** North of the “red shed” outbuilding are two structures: a wood-frame corncrib and a wood-frame railroad car. The corncrib (constructed c. 1920) is oriented north-south with a side-gable roof and four bays with entrances to the east. There is one vertical board door remaining. The corncrib had horizontal board sheathing spaced at regular intervals to allow air movement to dry the corn. The structure stands on three longitudinal concrete piers. The corncrib has galvanized metal roofing.

**Railroad car:** The railroad car is deteriorated. It has a low-pitched gable roof with metal roofing and a metal frame sheathed with vertical boards. The building stands on concrete block piers. There are central entrances to the east and west.

**Carport (contemporary):**
There is a contemporary carport east of the house and south of the wellhouse. It is constructed of with six wooden timber posts, three on each side over a concrete slab. The garage is double car width with a wood framed low-pitched gable roof clad in metal. This is non-contributing due to the date of construction and its lack of association with the significance of the property.

**Garage (contemporary):** A small rectangular shed-roofed metal garage sits north of the wellhouse. This garage is sided with standing seam-metal and has a synthetic overhead garage door to the east with no other openings or details.

**Mitchell farmstead tenant house:**
Generally, the tenant house (now a separate residence) has fair architectural integrity. Although it retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association, the design, materials, and workmanship have been altered. The tenant house (constructed c. 1900) is a rectangular building oriented north-south with two shed additions to the north. There is a main shed-gable roof covered with standing seam metal roofing. The building is wood-frame construction with a rough rubble limestone foundation. The building has contemporary plywood sheathing.

In the main west elevation, there is a side front entrance to the south with a contemporary synthetic door and a metal storm door. This entrance is sheltered by a shed-roofed full-length porch. This contemporary porch has a concrete floor with small square wooden posts and a railing with square spindles and a lattice panel in the southwest corner. The first floor of the main block of the west elevation has an entrance flanked by a window to the north. There are two small second-floor windows in the west elevation. These are 6/6 double-hung metal replacements. The second floor windows have ornamental wooden shutters. There are two shed-roof additions attached to the main block. The larger shed addition has a stone foundation, plywood sheathing, and a pair of small 4-light metal replacement windows.

In the east elevation of the main block, there are two 6/6 metal replacement windows on the first and second floor. There is a single 6/6 metal replacement window in the east elevation of the large addition. In the south elevation, there are two 6/6 metal replacement windows on the first floor surmounted by a single central 6/6 metal window.
Garages (non-historic): There are three non-historic garage buildings on the property—one northeast of the house and two northwest. All are oriented north-south.

Northeast: The northeast garage is a rectangular building with a gable roof. It is wood-frame construction on a concrete foundation with plywood sheathing and a metal roof. It has a synthetic overhead door to the south, a synthetic entrance door to the southwest, and a small 2-light window in the west façade.

West: Of the paired garages, the west building is wood-frame construction with plywood sheathing and metal roofing on a concrete slab. There is an overhead door flanked by an entrance door in the south façade, one 2/2 window in the west façade, and two 2/2 windows in the north façade.

East: The east building is contemporary metal-frame construction on a concrete slab with horizontal metal siding and metal roofing. There is a synthetic overhead door and entrance door in the south façade and two 2/2 metal windows in the east façade.

Mitchell barn
The Mitchell barn (constructed c. 1880) appears to have been a horse barn with a center aisle and hayloft. It is an early example of the gable-roof barn type which first appeared in Kansas before 1887 when a number of these barns were illustrated in the Official State Atlas of Kansas. The Mitchell barn has excellent architectural integrity. In addition to its location, setting, feeling, and association, the barn has integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. It is a rectangular three-bay building oriented east-west with a pent gambrel roof surmounted by a central wood-frame hipped-roof ventilator. In the main south façade, the central entrance is flanked by two windows and two side entrances. There is a rear shed-roofed addition to the north and a long unequal gable-roofed addition with two sections to the northeast. The barn is constructed of coursed shaped limestone masonry. The main south façade has flat smooth-cut stone lintels, smooth-cut stone sill, quoins, and an arch ornamented the central entrance, and smooth-cut stone corner quoins. In the main block, there is a slightly projecting water table in the west, north, and east facades. There are non-historic but appropriate paired wooden doors in the central entrance, a historic board and batten door to the west, a historic board and batten Dutch door to the east, and two historic board and batten doors in the north side entrances. There are two 6/6 wooden double-hung windows in the first floor of the south and west facades and a single first-floor window in the east façade. There is a single loft window in the west and east façades. The roof is covered with contemporary metal roofing.

The interior of the main barn is divided into three bays. It was divided by timber frames supporting the loft floor. The east frame has been infilled with insulation on the first floor. The west frame and loft floor have been removed, but joist pockets in the masonry wall remain. Stalls have been removed, but there is a small room (possibly historic) partitioned in the northeast corner.

The stone masonry addition to the north is very deteriorated. It has two void areas where the wall has collapsed. The addition has an entrance in the west façade and metal roofing. Reportedly, the one-story addition to the east was used for sheep and, possibly, hogs. There are two sections. The west section has a stone masonry rear wall and a concrete front wall with seven openings; the east section is wood-frame construction with metal sheathing. Both additions have corrugated metal roofing.

Fielding Memorial Monument
Both of the monuments are contributing features of the Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie historic district. The Fielding Monument consists of a rectangular red granite stone with an inscribed bronze tablet set on a square concrete footing. The monument is located on the northeast brow of Mount Mitchell and faces north toward the Kansas River valley. Both front and rear faces of the stone have been finished, but the sides and top are

irregular. Probably, the stone was shaped from a glacial erratic similar to some of the smaller stones found on Mount Mitchell and the area north of the Kansas River. The bronze plaque states: “Captain George T. Fielding III. 192nd F.A. Bn, 43rd Div., U.S.A. Killed in Action Near Manila. P.I. April 30, 1945. Aged 28 years. “In memory of Dodge—Doer of Good Deeds.” The Fielding Memorial Monument is located at N 39.08.719' W 096.17.927'.

Mitchell Memorial Monument
This monument consists of a tall rectangular smooth-cut Onaga limestone block with an inscribed bronze plaque set on a square concrete footing. It is located on the west brow of Mount Mitchell and faces west. The Mitchell Monument is several yards southeast of the Fielding Memorial. The plaque states: “In commemoration of the Connecticut Kansas Colony known also as the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony, which settled in Wabaunsee in 1856, and in memory of Capt. William Mitchell, a member of the colony, this monument is erected on Mount Mitchell through the generosity of his son, William I. Mitchell, by the Kansas State Historical Society, 1956.” The Mitchell Memorial Monument is located at N 39.08.712' W 096.17.892'.
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
EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance
1856-1957

Significant Dates
1856, c. 1868, 1908, 1956

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Captain William Mitchell
Period of Significance (justification)
The beginning of the period of significance is defined by the construction date of the Captain William Mitchell cabin in 1856 and his pre-emption claim on a quarter section in the southeast quarter of Section 28, Township 10, Range 10 East. The end of the period of significance in 1957 is defined by the death of Maude J. Mitchell, Captain Mitchell’s daughter, on the Mitchell farmstead.

Criteria Considerations (justification)
The two commemorative monuments at the MM Historic District are eligible for their history and association with the larger and complex Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District and are not recommended for listing due to their commemorative nature. Since they are part of the larger MM Historic District, they meet the exception for Consideration F.

8. 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 Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A for its associations with the exploration and settlement of Kansas as well as the development of agriculture in the state. The area of native prairie and the archaeological site included in the district is associated with the pre-history of the central Great Plains. The Fort Riley-Mount Mitchell Trail Segment and the Captain William Mitchell Farmstead are associated with the exploration and settlement of Kansas. The trail and Mitchell log house are associated with the Underground Railroad and free-state colonization of Kansas, which opposed pro-slavery settlers. Other buildings standing on the Mitchell farmstead are primarily associated with five of the nine historic contexts outlined in “Historic Agriculture-related Resources of Kansas” from the 1870s through 1941. The Mitchell and Fielding monuments are associated with commemorations that were popular in the period after World War II. The period of significance for the historic district is from 1856 to 1957.

Mount Mitchell Historic District Context
1) Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie
2) Pre-historic archeological site
3) Fort Riley Road - Mount Mitchell Trail Segment: trail swales
4) Captain William Mitchell House and Outbuildings
5) Captain William Mitchell Barn and Tenant House
6) Mitchell and Fielding Monuments

Elaboration

Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie
The Heritage Prairie tract is eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion A for its significant historical and cultural associations with the settlement and community development of Wabaunsee County, Kansas. The prairie-clad brow of Mount Mitchell was a prominent landmark associated with exploration and settlement during the nineteenth century. The remaining native grassland area on the upper slopes is a remnant eco-system that serves as a seed source and dispersal site for expansion of the eco-system throughout the Heritage Prairie tract. National Register listing will support land management of the Heritage Prairie historic district that recognizes the enduring value of the native tallgrass prairie eco-system.

In addition to its significance as a prominent geological and historical landmark, the Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie is significant as an example of the history of land use in eastern Kansas from settlement to the recent past. Historically, much of the acreage now included in the Heritage Prairie was utilized as cropland, hay meadow, and pasture. Current land management is designed to extend the area and diversity of native plant species down the hill. The goal is to restore the whole area to a more complex and resilient tallgrass prairie landscape. The effort to preserve this prairie remnant is significant because so much of the tallgrass prairie in northeastern Kansas (outside of the Flint Hills) has been lost to agriculture and development. Because so much of the prairie in Kansas has been lost, this Heritage Prairie is significant as a landscape that can be restored and preserved for public appreciation.

As ecologists Fred Samson and Fritz Knopf insisted in 1994, “native prairie should be among the priorities in conservation of biological diversity.” Before this pronouncement, native prairie had been neglected in the discussion of biological diversity. Native prairie is the largest vegetative province in North America and grasses as an integral component of prairies inhabit the continent in greater abundance than any comparable group of plants. Since European settlement, declines in areas of native prairie range as high as 99.9%. Exploitation by overgrazing and recreation adds to the stress on remnant prairie. Once the prairie is destroyed, ecological restoration requires several centuries. Prairie grasslands are superior carbon sinks in comparison to forests with similar environmental characteristics. Large amounts of stored carbon in grassland soils reflect fundamental differences between grasses and trees. The Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie is a remnant of the tallgrass prairie extending from Canada and Minnesota south to Texas.

According to the National Park Service, “tallgrass prairies are an extremely complicated web of life.” Eighty percent of the foliage is made up of grasses, from forty to sixty different species. The other twenty percent of the primary vegetation consists of species of forbs or flowers. Prairie landscapes vary in soil types and depth, moisture, and slope. The Mount Mitchell prairie has several different niches for specific plant communities. Species that require more moisture and deep soils thrive in the lower areas with different species on the dry, shallow wind-swept hilltop.

Management of the Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie meets one of the important goals outlined in the call for prairie conservation—the protection of viable representatives of each native prairie type in each ecoregion. Preservation of the Mount Mitchell landscape represents one of the essential principles of prairie conservation-to protect and enhance wild prairie wherever it exists whether as large, connected landscapes or as one-of-a-kind remnants. Thoughtful management is essential to the continued health and survival of prairie communities. Public education interpreting the environmental value of this ecosystem is a foundation for the several historical themes represented in the Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District. European-American settlers under-valued the prairie because, “these magnificent grasslands were neither desert or garden but something completely new to European and Euro-American experience. So new that there wasn’t a name for them in either English or French. Pressed to come up with something, the early French fur traders had extended their term for a woodland meadow-une prairie-as a kind of metaphor for this big, wide sparsely wooded windswept world.”

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21 Chris Helzer, The Ecology and Management of Prairies in the Central United States (Iowa City: Published by the Nature Conservancy by the University of Iowa Press,2010), xi.
22 The expansive prairies found in the region were new to Euro-American settlers.; Savage, Prairie: A Natural History. 2.
The Heritage Prairie is the largest tract in the historic district. It was the south part of the Captain William Mitchell farmstead. The farmstead buildings are located on the 160-acre tract that Mitchell claimed or preempted in 1856 (NE ¼ Section 28, Township 10, Range 10E). Mary and William Mitchell acquired the southeast quarter of Section 28 where Mount Mitchell and the Heritage Prairie is now located in 1869 from fellow Connecticut colonist J. J. Walter. This tract is located on the south side of the road and section line opposite the William Mitchell farmstead. Although an exact date is unknown sometime after the purchase, about ninety acres of this quarter section was converted from native prairie to crop land. This is the lowermost level area of Mount Mitchell Heritage Park. From family photographs and artwork created by Maude J. Mitchell, it appears that wheat and alfalfa were grown here as least by 1879. The remaining acreage (the steeper area of Mount Mitchell, approximately 42%) remained native tallgrass prairie. Where the slope allowed, the Mitchell’s harvested an annual prairie hay crop. The remainder of the prairie was grazed by the Mitchell family’s sheep.

Haying on the thirty-acre tract deeded to the Kansas State Historical Society in 1953 ceased in 2006 when the property became a public park. In 1966, a waterway along the east boundary was constructed and terraces were added in 1968. Crops grown over the past fifty years include soybeans, sorghum, corn, and wheat. Cropland in the southeast quarter of Section 28 (91 acres) was enrolled in the Federal Conservation Reserve Program on October 1, 2010. This contract is eligible for renewal in 2025.23

**Fort Riley Road**
The Fort Riley road swales on Mount Mitchell are a landscape feature significant under Criterion A for its association with the early settlement and exploration of Kansas and Wabaunsee County. As seen on Mount Mitchell, remnants of these pioneer trails still exist. The swales are significant because they are visible evidence of the exploration and early settlement of Kansas Territory. These well-worn swales have been documented to be well traveled and preserved in this specific location. Due to the use and protection of the property over time, the swales are relatively undisturbed and intact. The route has a high potential for the discovery of archaeological evidence. Potential discoveries could answer questions about the early settlers and their travels over the pre-settlement prairie landscape. As a landscape feature, these swales retain good historic integrity and significant features, such as depth, location, setting, and feeling.

**Chronology**
Native American hunters, fur trappers, explorers and emigrants used the general route on the south side of the Kansas River that became known as the Fort Riley Road after 1854 when Kansas Territory was opened to European-American settlement. Traffic on this road was most active during the Territorial early statehood period from 1854 to 1865. As land claims, cabins, and farms proliferated in the landscape, the road helped define the settlement pattern. However, the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad on the north side of the Kansas River to Manhattan in 186624 meant that overland travel rapidly shifted to the railroad and away from the Fort Riley Road. Other railroads were constructed on the south side of the Kansas River valley in the 1870s and early 1880s.

On his second exploring expedition to the West in 1843, John C. Fremont, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, followed a route from Westport in Missouri up the south bank of the Kansas River to its head where his expedition crossed the Smoky Hill just above its junction with the Republican River.25 Fort Riley was later established at this location on the north side of the river. Fremont and his party of U.S. Army Topographical Engineers were the first to record this route while mapping the Oregon Trail. Since this is a convenient route on the south side of the Kansas River, Fremont and his men may have followed earlier trails used pre-

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24 The first train on the Kansas Pacific Railroad crossed the Blue River and reached Manhattan on August 20, 1866.
25 Louise Barr, *The Beginning of the West*. According to Barry, Fremont’s second expedition traveled along the south side of the Kansas River camping at Deep Creek on June 4, 1843, 482. Fremont’s routes were shown in a map, 604.
historically by Tribal nations, then used historically by French and American fur trappers, traders, and mountain men on their way to the Rocky Mountains from St. Louis in the early nineteenth century.

Late in the fall of 1852, the U. S. Army sent Major E. A. Ogden, escorted by Major R. H. Chilton and Troop B, First Dragoons, to locate a new military post in the vicinity of the forks of the Kansas River—the confluence of the Smoky Hill and the Republican. “The site selected was afterwards named Fort Riley, now one of the finest military posts in America. Some buildings were erected in 1853—54, most of them temporary, and the post was garrisoned by infantry.” In 1855, Congress appropriated funds for establishing a calvary post at Fort Riley. Major E. A. Ogden directed the construction. The woodwork, windows, and doors were made in Cincinnati, Ohio. These were shipped by boat to Fort Leavenworth and then, by wagon, over the military trail, to Fort Riley. This was the beginning of the “Fort to Fort” trail.26 This trail ran on the north side of the Kansas River Valley.

The trail that became known as the Fort Riley Road followed a route on the south side of the Kansas River. This was a central route between the northern track of the Oregon-California Trail north of the river and the southwesterly route of the Santa Fe Trail across Kansas. Upon completion of the General Land Office (GLO) land surveys in Kansas, the territorial legislature passed laws providing for public highways on section lines. Previously, the legislature had designated several existing emigrant and military roads to keep the main travel routes open. The law establishing territorial roads also allowed property owners to fence off old roads and redirect traffic to the section perimeter. Thus, the remnant trail swales on Mount Mitchell are a landscape feature offering a visible impression of the early settlement and exploration of Kansas. As seen on Mount Mitchell, remnants of these pioneer trails still exist. Trails researcher Morris Werner has commented, “eroded rut swales on prairie hillsides, often marked with wild plum thickets or buckbrush are silent witness to long forgotten activities of emigrants, freighters, stagecoaches and military expeditions.” Werner cited Willa Cather’s description of an abandoned road in Nebraska to express the emotional appeal of historic trails, “which used to run like a wild thing across the open prairie, clinging to high places and circling and doubling like a rabbit before the hounds.”27

Even before the territory was formally opened to Euro-American settlement in 1854, landmarks along the south side of the river included the Potawatomi Baptist Mission, the Kanza Indian villages of American Chief, Hard Chief, and Yellow Banks, the Kansas Methodist Mission, Frederick Choteau’s store (where Seth Hays worked), Uniontown, Boursaw’s Mills, Buffalo Mound, Waterman’s crossing, and Fort Riley.28 By 1855 the settlements of Topeka, Wabaunsee, Deep Creek, Pillsbury Crossing, and Manhattan had appeared and the trail became known as the Fort Riley Road.29

The Topeka and Manhattan stage line followed this trail. It was described in an early advertisement in the April 25, 1857 Kansas Tribune.30

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28 Text on trail marker, Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie.

29 “Map of the Kanzas T., enlarged from Map of the Corps of Topog... eng. And published in 1850.”

As a striking image using LIDAR shows, the trail route skirted Mount Mitchell from the southeast and ran northwest across what is now the Heritage Prairie to cross Antelope Creek and turn toward Wabaunsee.31 On the site below the crest of Mount Mitchell, the trail ruts, now parallel depressions in the landscape, remain visible. The hill that became known as Mount Mitchell has been a significant vantage point for travelers in the Kansas River valley for centuries. One of the first European-American settlers, A. A. Cottrell, a member of the exploration committee for the Connecticut colony, recalled that, on first coming to Wabaunsee in 1856 he stood on the top of a hill on the farm that later was to become the property of Captain Mitchell, and exclaimed, “Gentlemen, I’m going to settle in this valley.”32

Although detailed descriptions are uncommon, three contemporary references outline different aspects of travel on the Fort Riley Road during the Territorial and Civil War periods. In a description of what happened to a claim jumper in 1856, Stephen Fairfield wrote, “he was marched to Mitchell Hill by two of the boys with Sharps rifles and told to leave.”33 This indicates that the intruder was taken to the military road on the east side of Mount Mitchell and sent back toward Topeka to the east. In October 1858, a delegation from the Congregational churches along the Missouri River, Lawrence, and Topeka traveled westward across the Pottawatomie reservation to a church convention in Manhattan. Following the Fort Riley Road, they stopped at [Mr. Berkaw’s] house on Mill Creek and, “in the morning we drove out into the solitude again and for twenty miles more we pursued our lonely way. About noon we came to Wabaunsee which was known everywhere as

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31 LiDAR image. 2006 Lidar River Corridor Project, Kansas Data Access and Support Center (DASC), Lawrence, KS. Developed for the USGS by Sanborn Mapping, July 5, 2006. Image provided by courtesy of Cultural Resources Division, Kansas State Historical Society.


33 Stephen Fairfield, “Getting Married and the Ague,” paper read at the Old Settlers Meeting, Harveyville, Wabaunsee County (1904), in Kansas State Historical Society Collections Volume 11, 611.
the home of the New Haven colony or the Beecher Rifle Company.” The delegation returned to the east along the same route. In a letter describing a childhood experience during the Civil War, Katie Cotton Browne wrote, "I remember the soldiers coming down over the hill east of our house [Mount Mitchell] and coming between our well and the house. We had a well 60 feet deep of crystal clear cold water and mother sent me down with a pail, pitcher, and all the tin cups so the soldiers could fill their canteens... the officer in command told father he would have to take his grain which was in the shock in the field. I saw him counting and writing in a book and they went on west, I suppose to Ft. Riley. I think father was paid for the grain at the close of the war.”

**Captain William Mitchell farmstead**

The Mitchell farmstead is significant under Criterion A for its association with the settlement and agricultural history of Wabaunsee County. Captain Mitchell was a respected leader of the Connecticut colony of free-state settlers in the northern part of the county near the Kansas River and the hamlet of Wabaunsee. As a territorial settler Mitchell provided his home as a refuge along the Underground Railroad which transported freedom-seekers through Kansas on the way to Canada. After Kansas became a state, Captain Mitchell continued to lead the development of Wabaunsee County. He served as a Wabaunsee County commissioner and state legislator. Mitchell promoted the construction of a railroad line that ran near his land and served the settlement of Wabaunsee. Once his farm was established, he purchased a general store in Wabaunsee and operated a significant business that served the community for more than ten years. Captain Mitchell’s wife, Mary, was an active partner in Captain Mitchell’s economic and social contributions to Wabaunsee County. Before coming to Kansas, she trained as a teacher and practical nurse. After her marriage, she served the rural community in the vicinity of the Mitchell farmstead as a nurse and also taught young women in the Wabaunsee church. Throughout the late nineteenth century, William and Mary Mitchell were respected and beloved leaders who aided and influenced many settlers in the Wabaunsee community. Their farmstead is significant because of its association with their lives.

In 1856 Captain William Mitchell claimed 160 acres of prairie land in Kansas Territory (presumably by pre-emption which was prevalent before the Homestead Act was enacted in 1862 during the Civil War). The original house was a one-room hewn-log cabin constructed of cottonwood, walnut, and hackberry logs cut from the timber in the Kansas River valley to the north. According to Captain Mitchell’s son, Alex, "my father took a 160 acre homestead located 3 [sic] miles east of Wabaunsee village and some years later he bought another 160 acres adjoining on the south and 17 acres adjoining on the north making a total of 337 acres. [He] started improvements on his homestead as soon as possible after arrival, building a good log cabin, digging a well and making a shelter for his oxen." Before his marriage on March 31, 1868, Captain Mitchell "had improved the home by building a two-story 4-room [sic] frame addition on the west end of the log cabin, weather boarded up the logs outside and added a kitchen and a small pantry on behind, with porch in front, so that he had a pretty respectable home all plastered inside to bring my mother to." As William Izott Mitchell recalled, when he was about five years old, "one year father decided to put a cellar under the whole house, we then had a cellar under [only] part of it. This necessitated the entire house being raised about two feet, while the excavation was being made and the cellar walls were built. I doubt if I was...

35 Katie Cotton Browne, letter in "Old Settlers Reunion in Wabaunsee," (Memorial Day, 1940).
36 Stubbs, “Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Application,” (July 15, 2002), 7. In a statement, “Mitchell Barn,” by Kathryn Mitchell Buster, great-granddaughter of Captain and Mary Mitchell, wrote that “the trees for Mitchell’s cabin were cut from a grove of cottonwood trees on an island in the Kaw River near Wabaunsee, and then dragged to the building site.” Statement in Michael Stubbs files.
five years old at the time [c. 1878] but father took me to Wamego with him when he went to borrow a set of large railroad jacks from, or through, Mr. Palmer, then agent for the Union Pacific Railroad there. These were used to lift the house and put it up on blocks or stilts. It must have remained in this state for a month or more... eventually father had a fine fruit cellar, for apples from his expanding orchard.”

This is the house depicted in a painting painted by 1947 by Maude Mitchell based on an 1879 photograph.

According to Captain Mitchell’s great granddaughter, Kathryn Buster, the Mitchell house was again expanded sometime after 1880. The original cabin loft was enlarged to provide a second-floor room over the dining room. This room eventually became Maude Mitchell’s painting studio. Another addition consisting of a parlor downstairs and a large bedroom upstairs was constructed to the west. A second front porch was added to the front and in the rear, a large screened-in porch. William I. Mitchell mentioned the parlor in 1896 so the additions were constructed between 1880 and 1896. Maude Mitchell (d. 1957) and her cousin Mabel (d. 1974) made no major changes to the farmhouse. In her later years, Mabel moved to Wamego and rented the Mitchell house to various tenants. In 1975 the Mitchell farm site was subdivided. A tract with the Mitchell stone barn and tenant house (built before 1879) was sold to a different owner. The present owners of the Mitchell house have owned a 3.5-acre tract since 1975. In the summer of 1991, the owners removed the east wall of the original log cabin and combined the former pantry with the living room. They also remodeled and expanded the kitchen.

Underground Railroad in Wabaunsee County
The William Mitchell farmstead also is significant under Criterion A for its historical associations with the Underground Railroad in Kansas Territory. Because documented and well-preserved sites associated with the Underground Railroad in Kansas are rare, the Mitchell farmstead is a significant example. The Mitchell farmhouse is a vernacular residence that began as an early log cabin constructed in 1856. Captain Mitchell built the cabin with the help of other newly arrived members of the Connecticut-Kansas Colony, also known as the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony or Company. Inspired by Horace Greeley, Eli Thayer, and other prominent anti-slavery proponents, this emigrant colony have been organized in New Haven, Connecticut by Charles Lines. The colony was intended to ensure the entry of Kansas into the Union as a non-slave or free state.

The Underground Railroad (UGR) was a clandestine informal network of people who worked together to hide and transport freedom seekers on their journey north. Activity on the Kansas Underground Railroad was significant between 1857 and 1860. Runaways to Kansas primarily escaped from Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas. Stations in the Manhattan, Kansas, area were located at Wabaunsee, Deep Creek, Louisville, Manhattan, Juniata, and near Centralia. From near Centralia, the fugitives usually connected with the Lane Trail at Seneca, traveling on through Nebraska, Iowa, and Illinois to Canada.

Not long after the colonists erected their own shelters, settlers began sheltering and assisting freedom seekers escaping from Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas. Captain Mitchell was one of the URR participants in the colony, acting as both stationmaster and conductor. In 1857, his father, William Mitchell, Sr. and his maiden sister, Agnes, joined him from Connecticut and it was Agnes who no doubt cooked and provided for their guests.

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The Captain Mitchell house has been continuously occupied since 1856. Over the years, the house has been enlarged with several additions and the original log cabin is now the living room of the present farmhouse.42

By June of 1860, the westernmost route of the Underground Railroad in Kansas Territory ran from the claim of Reverend John Stewart, south of Lawrence on the Wakarusa River, then west up the Wakarusa River valley to safe houses in Bloomington and Auburn, and on to the Harvey Settlement on Dragoon Creek (later known as Harveyville). From there the freedom-seekers were taken either northwest to the Mission Creek community of free-state settlers from Wisconsin or directly to the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony at Wabaunsee on Antelope Creek near the Kansas River.43

According to Charles Leonhardt, an active UGR conductor and author of an 1870 manuscript, “The Last Train that Passed Over the Underground Railroad from Kansas Territory, “this route was used in cases of extreme caution” and “to this out of the way place only Express Trains ran, when danger demanded it.”44 Probably, less than one hundred freedom-seekers were transported on this out-of-the-way branch of the Lane Trail while it operated between 1857 and 1860.45

In comparison with previous efforts in eastern states, the Underground Railroad in Kansas Territory was different. Almost all of the Kansas UGR participants knew each other from the many Free-State political meetings and constitutional conventions they attended. Second, it was not uncommon for “passengers” to stay at a particular depot for weeks or even months before moving on.46

Evidence for the Mitchell farmhouse as a station on the Underground Railroad comes from corroborating written sources and oral tradition. From the Charles Leonhardt list for the Hartford Settlement Station, “among the active workers were Capt. Wm. Mitchell, Enoch Platt and their near neighbors on the Antelope Creek. In the town of Wabaunsee were Samuel R. Weed and the house of C.B. Lines, the most conspicuous conductors.”47 In the 1856 letters of Charles B. Lines, he stated, “An underground railroad route was established through the settlement. The attic of the William Mitchell house, east of Wabaunsee, served as a hiding place for slaves. Mitchell took the slaves to Joshua Smith who escorted them north to the state line. Enoch Platt was also active in this movement.”48

Two of Captain’s Mitchell’s four children also left written accounts of their father’s participation in the URR. Maude Mitchell left her family scrapbook to the Kansas State Historical Society. The scrapbook includes clippings of her interviews regarding her father’s and the community’s participation in the URR. In 1947 she painted a depiction of her home as it appeared in 1879. A description of the painting pasted on its back stated, “the one story part of the house is a log cabin built by Captain Mitchell upon his arrival in Kansas from Connecticut with the Beecher Bible and Rifle Company in 1856. Later the cabin was clapboarded and incorporated into a larger farmhouse. In early Kansas history, this cabin was a station on the “Underground

47 Stubbs, “Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Application,” (July 15, 2002), 4. Leonhardt (1827-1884) was a conductor on the URR who wrote extensively on the activities and participants of the URR in eastern Kansas during the Territorial period. His handwritten papers (1870) are held by the Manuscript Collection, Kansas State Historical Society.
Railroad.” During the day freedom-seekers were hidden in the loft and in the darkness of night helped to escape to the North by certain sympathetic anti-slavery men of the community.49

Maude’s brother, William Izott Mitchell, began writing his memoirs in 1951, but the manuscript was unfinished when he died in 1953. As he recalled, his aunt Agnes “often told of happenings in the very early days before Kansas became a state . . . As soon as his one room log cabin was ready, he sent for his aged father and a maiden sister [Agnes] . . . to live with him. Aunt Agnes sometimes told us children stories of happenings in those early days. She told of their concealing eight negro run-away slaves in the attic of their cabin for a number of days, until they could be safely moved by father and a neighbor, Enoch Platt, to the next underground station of their escape route north.”50

Joshua Smith and his son, John, were neighbors to the east of the Mitchell farm who preceded the arrival of the members of the Connecticut-Kansas Colony. According to another son, H.E. Smith, “the conductors of the underground system were Captain Mitchell, Enoch Platt, and John Smith. The operations were carried out at night under cover of darkness. H.E. Smith remembered that frequently "his father would hear a knock at the door about 9:00 o’clock in the evening and be informed that Captain Mitchell wanted to see him. His father would say nothing, put on his coat, and leave the house to be off into the night. There is no way of knowing how many runaway slaves passed through Wabaunsee or the number of occasions that the railroad was used.”51

In his list of Underground Railroad stations, Charles Leonhardt described the community network that supported Captain Mitchell’s activity. “Among the active workers were Capt. Wm. Mitchell, Enoch Platt and their near neighbors on the Antelope Creek. In the town of Wabaunsee were Samuel R. Weed and the house of C.B. Lines the most conspicuous conductors. West of this station were many dangerous places to pass before reaching the stations on the Blue and the Kaw. Along the Kaw bottom and north of Deep Creek the early settlers were most all from southern states and very pro-slavery.”52

Captain William Mitchell family
William E. Mitchell was born in or near Kilmarnock, Scotland on June 24, 1825, the son of William E. and Mary Izott Mitchell. In 1826 his family emigrated to Middletown, Connecticut, where his father was weaver in charge of the Russell & Company Weaving Mill in Middletown. William Mitchell, Sr. was active in the Middletown Anti-Slavery Society. As a boy, young William Mitchell attended D.H. Chase’s private school in Middletown. He then served as a corporal in the Connecticut State Militia in 1846.53

When William Mitchell was 24 years old, he sailed around Cape Horn to join the California gold rush. Then in 1852 he and a friend sailed to Australia where he worked in the gold fields there for three years. After six years, Mitchell returned to Middletown, stopping on the trip home to visit relatives in Scotland.54

53 Buster Captain Mitchell Bio Final Edit (5/22/2020), 1
William Mitchell returned to the United States in 1855 and he found the nation wracked by controversy over the extension of slavery into new territories. The recently enacted Kansas-Nebraska Act emphasized the principle of "popular sovereignty" which gave settlers in the new territories the responsibility of deciding for themselves whether the territories would join the Union as free or slave states. At that time, the Connecticut-Kansas Colony was being organized in New Haven. Organizers were recruiting men to settle in Kansas Territory to ensure its future as a free state. With his anti-slavery background and adventurous experience, William Mitchell joined the group.55

The Connecticut-Kansas Colony was also referred to as the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony or Company. On March 20, 1856, at a meeting held in the North Church on the New Haven Green, Charles B. Lines, president of the company, made an appeal for funds to arm the colonists. Henry Ward Beecher, the famous anti-slavery preacher and brother of Uncle Tom’s Cabin author Harriet Beecher Stowe, then gave a rousing sermon about the importance of the colonists’ mission to Kansas. At its conclusion, Professor Silliman of Yale College rose and said that he wanted to be the first on the list to pledge twenty-five dollars for the purchase of a Sharps rifle to arm the members of the colony emigrating to Kansas. The Sharps carbine was the most advanced weapon of its time, superior to weapons available to pro-slavery advocates. Others in the audience followed with pledges. Reverend Beecher stood and said if they could raise funds for twenty-five rifles on the spot, he would pledge twenty-five from his congregation at Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, New York. Encouraged by Beecher, members of the audience responded with pledges, including the Junior and Senior classes at Yale, and soon surpassed the goal. In a letter dated March 28, Beecher sent a check to Charles Lines for $625 and accompanied it with twenty-five Bibles inscribed on the cover with the Corinthians verse, “be ye steadfast, immovable.” The letter to Lines was reprinted in papers across the nation, often with the headline, “Bibles and Rifles for Kansas.”56 After that, newspapers began to describe the company as the Beecher Bible and Rifle Company and the Sharps rifles were nicknamed “Beecher’s Bibles.”

William Mitchell emigrated to Kansas Territory in 1856 as a member of the Connecticut-Kansas Company. He was a prominent leader of that free-state colony, a conductor on the westernmost route of the Underground Railroad, and the conflict between free-state and pro-slavery factions in Kansas. When the Prairie Guards Militia Company was organized, Mitchell was elected captain and led his men to the defense of Lawrence. Captain Mitchell was a lieutenant, captain, and paymaster general of the Kansas State militia.57 He was one of the first commissioners of Wabaunsee County upon its organization and won election four times. In 1868, he was elected to the state legislature.

After the cabin was finished, Captain Mitchell’s elderly father and his unmarried sister, Agnes, from Connecticut joined him in Kansas in 1857. Agnes managed the household from territorial days until after the Civil War when Captain Mitchell married.58 On March 31, 1868, Mitchell married Mary A. Chamberlain (1837-1915), a teacher also from Middletown, Connecticut, at Cleveland, Ohio.59

After their marriage, the Mitchells lived on a farm that included 337 contiguous acres by 1885. Captain Mitchell planted a twenty-acre orchard. He built outbuildings for storage and machines, chicken houses, an

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57 “Old Pioneer Gone,” (March 1903).
58 “History of Pioneer Family at Wabaunsee,” Wabaunsee County Truth (June, 1936), in Maude Mitchell Scrapbook (1890-1950), Kansas State Historical Society.
outbuilding with a cider press and space to make sorghum molasses. William Izott Mitchell remembered that while he was a young boy, his father “decided to put a cellar under the whole house.” About 1878, the whole house was raised and a larger cellar was created to provide “a fine fruit cellar for apples from his expanding orchard.” Most likely this is the farm house shown in an 1879 photograph. In his Memoirs, William Izott referred to a family photograph and concluded, “I think that the happiest years of father’s life were around the period when the family and house photo was taken.”

As late as 1878, there was no railroad in Wabaunsee County. Residents hauled supplies for the county seat town, Alma, from the Union Pacific Railroad at Wamego, thirteen miles to the north. This route ran past the Captain Mitchell farm. As county commissioner, Captain Mitchell actively promoted the issuing of county bonds for construction of the Manhattan, Alma, and Burlingame Railroad which was completed in 1879 and celebrated with a community celebration on July 5, 1880. After the new railroad built a station in Wabaunsee, west of the Mitchell farmstead, Captain Mitchell was hired as the station agent. He also was engaged to manage the E.B. Purcell general store in Wabaunsee and grain buying business. In 1881 Captain Mitchell rented the farm to a Mr. Hepner and the Mitchells moved their family of four children to the nearby hamlet of Wabaunsee.

Captain Mitchell bought a small house on Elm Street in Wabaunsee. This entire block (3 acres) had a shed barn for horses. At the time, Wabaunsee had a population of about 175 residents. As described in 1883, Wabaunsee “cannot be called a town, nor can it, properly, be named a village . . . it has a very fine church edifice, and a good schoolhouse, both built of stone. It also has a post-office and one store . . . There are not over ten or a dozen houses in the whole place and these are scattered and far apart.” Although Captain Mitchell had supported and attended the First Church of Christ in Wabaunsee, in the early 1880s, one of the church leaders defrauded him of an interest in a 160-acre tract of pasture. Mitchell sued, eventually taking the case to the Kansas Supreme Court where he lost. He never returned to the church.

A few years after the move to Wabaunsee, Captain Mitchell purchased the general store in 1884 and began to teach his sons “the rudiments of business and railroad station work.” Each of his three sons left Kansas and established careers; Maude also left Kansas, but returned in the early twentieth century. After the children left home in 1895, Captain Mitchell and his wife Mary along with his brother from California, “Uncle Jimmie” Mitchell moved back to the farm. Jimmie Mitchell had been associated with his brother in the operation of the general store for many years. After 1865, a two-room frame schoolhouse (District 2) was constructed on the northwest corner of the Mitchell farm about half a mile from the farmhouse. The teacher boarded with the

62 William Izott Mitchell, *Memoirs* (Part 1, 1951), 24. W.I. Mitchell estimated that the photo was taken about a year after the Garfield assassination in 1882. However, the Mitchell family had moved to a house in Wabaunsee early in 1881.
64 “History of Pioneer Family at Wabaunsee,” Wabaunsee County Truth (June, 1936), in Maude Mitchell Scrapbook (1890-1950), Kansas State Historical Society.
68 “History of Pioneer Family at Wabaunsee,” Maude Mitchell Scrapbook, KSHS.
69 “History of Pioneer Family at Wabaunsee,” Maude Mitchell Scrapbook, KSHS.
Mitchells. In addition, while Captain Mitchell lived, the family usually had one or more relatives or friends staying in their home.\textsuperscript{70}

When Captain Mitchell died on March 23, 1903, several prominent settlers expressed their respect in an appreciative obituary. Reverend F. D. Jackson outlined “an index to his character—that of his love of right, of honor, of courage and of generous courteous manhood.” A.A. Cottrell described him as “a leader of men who bound them to himself by his absolute unsellishness and his honest uprightness.” S.H. Fairfield remembered, “Captain Mitchell was a man of sterling worth, with excellent judgment, and a safe advisor. I knew him as a true friend” and a “helper to the poor slave.”\textsuperscript{71}

Mary Mitchell was an active partner in Captain Mitchell’s economic and social contributions to the Wabaunsee community. Before her marriage and coming to Kansas, she organized and led several private schools. Mary Mitchell was active in the Wabaunsee church and for years “a large class of young ladies felt a great influence from her that stayed with them through life.”\textsuperscript{72} Shortly before her marriage, Mary Chamberlain took a special course of training as a nurse, at the Battle Creek Sanatorium, where her mother was Woman’s Physician. “This was done in order to cope with situations that bound to arise in a newly settled country. In the years that followed, she served neighbors in and about Wabaunsee as a practical nurse days and nights without number in sickness and death, with never a thought of remuneration.”\textsuperscript{73} Mary A. Chamberlain Mitchell was born on January 28, 1837 in Middleton, Connecticut and died April 29, 1915.\textsuperscript{74}

Mary Chamberlain’s sister, Josephine Chamberlain, married Dr. William Hornaday, a famous naturalist. Hornaday was the founder of the National Zoo and the first director of the New York Zoological Park, now called the Bronx Zoo. He was a pioneer in the wildlife conservation movement in the United States and a founder of the American Bison Society, which is credited with saving the bison from extinction.\textsuperscript{75} The Mitchell children had notable careers. Alex C. Mitchell retired after working 47 years for the Santa Fe Railroad. H. Raymond and William I. Mitchell served for many years as the manager and treasurer of the Bronx Zoological Park. Maude J. Mitchell was an artist, poet, and composer who lived on the Wabaunsee County farm.\textsuperscript{76}

Alex Mitchell, the eldest son, learned telegraphy and attended college at Kansas State Agricultural College, Manhattan. He worked for the station service of the Rock Island Railroad. Alex worked as a relief agent for several years at several various towns in northern Kansas and Nebraska. After the Rock Island experienced an operators’ strike in 1892, Alex Mitchell moved to the Santa Fe Railroad and was employed as cashier, chief clerk, and agent. In 1936, he was station agent at Arkansas City, Kansas and retired in the 1940s.\textsuperscript{77}

Raymond Mitchell attended business college in Topeka and then worked as a clerk in the Topeka post office. A few days after the opening of the Cherokee Strip, he began working for the Santa Fe Railroad as a cashier at Ponca City, Oklahoma. Later he was promoted to cashier at Oklahoma City, and then chief clerk at Arkansas

\textsuperscript{70} William Izott Mitchell, Memoirs (1951), 15.
\textsuperscript{71} “Old Pioneer Gone: (March 1903).
\textsuperscript{72} “A Splendid Woman Gone,” Mary Mitchell obituary 7 May 1915. Maude Mitchell Scrapbook, Kansas State Historical Society.
\textsuperscript{73} “History of Pioneer Family at Wabaunsee,” Maude Mitchell Scrapbook, Kansas State Historical Society.
\textsuperscript{74} “A Splendid Woman Gone,” Mary Mitchell obituary 7 May 1915.
\textsuperscript{77} “History of Pioneer Family at Wabaunsee,” Maude Mitchell Scrapbook, KSHS.
City. In 1898 he resigned to take a position as chief clerk of the Zoological Park, then being established in New York City. Eventually, he became manager of the park and continued through 1936.78

William Izott Mitchell succeeded his father as station agent for the Manhattan, Alma, and Burlington Railroad in Wabaunsee. After five years, he resigned and attended college at Manhattan for a year or so, and then worked for the Santa Fe Railroad as warehouse foreman at Arkansas City. He later became cashier of the Frisco Railroad in the same town and then moved to Sherman, Texas. After ten years working for the Frisco, he went to work as cashier of the New York Zoological Park with his brother Raymond.79

Maude J. Mitchell (1875-1957) attended the New York State Normal College at Buffalo. After graduation, she returned to Kansas to teach district school in the Manhattan area before entering the Columbia University School of Art in New York. In 1900 she graduated from Columbia and continued her studies at the Art Students League in New York City.80 She was hired as supervisor of drawing for the public schools of Dubuque, Iowa. About 1902, she became art instructor at the Wisconsin State Normal College, Platteville. Maude taught there for thirteen years and then resigned to return to Kansas after her mother died in 1915. She supervised the Mitchell farm operation and painted.81 Maude Mitchell became known for her views of farms in Wabaunsee and Pottawatomie counties in oils and watercolor, displaying, as one critic described, “a familiarity with Kansas scenes and a comprehension of the difficulties of catching the ever-changing, ever-varying moods of a hill and sky country.”82 According to the curators, although Mitchell was influenced by American Impressionism (1890-1910), she brought an landowner’s eye to her imagery. Her artistic work documents crop production, cattle grazing, flooding, and vernacular architecture.83 In later years, she designed the gateway for the Wabaunsee Township Cemetery.

Maude Mitchell also had an interest in public affairs. She wrote progressive editorials for the Wabaunsee Truth newspaper in addition to publishing poetry and political cartoons. Mitchell served as an interpreter of the county’s history, especially its abolitionist and later integrated Beecher Bible and Rifle Church. In later years, she designed the stone gateway for the integrated Wabaunsee Township Cemetery, where she is buried.84

It appears that Captain William Mitchell pre-empted the Northeast quarter of Section 28 where the farmstead was located. His land patent on the quarter was recorded on December 11, 1866. Captain William Mitchell acquired title to a second quarter in the southeast quarter of Section 28 on March 16, 1869 and recorded a mortgage on the property May 17, 1869. In 1885, William Mitchell was recorded as the owner of 320 acres including the Northeast quarter and Southeast quarter of Section 28, Township 10, Range 10 in northern Wabaunsee County.85 Mitchell also owned a strip in the Southeast Section 21 along the section line adjacent to his farm. The same property was documented in the 1902 Standard Atlas of Wabaunsee County.86 Title to the property passed to his widow, Mary, and then to the Mitchell children. After Captain Mitchell’s death in

78 "History of Pioneer Family at Wabaunsee," Maude Mitchell Scrapbook, KSHS.
79 "History of Pioneer Family at Wabaunsee," Maude Mitchell Scrapbook, KHS.
85 Atlas of Wabaunsee County (Chicago, IL: Gillen & Davy, 1885), 7.
1903, the parcel of 320 acres and 17 additional acres was recorded in the 1919 Standard Atlas of Wabaunsee County with the Mary A. Mitchell estate as owner. Mary Chamberlain Mitchell passed away in 1915.

Mary A. Mitchell and others were the owners on March 6, 1905 when a $5,000 mortgage was recorded. The property was still titled to the Mitchell estate in 1931 when a highway deed for .75 acre was recorded. On October 12, 1936, siblings William I. Mitchell and A.C. Mitchell signed quit claim deeds to their sister, Maude J. Mitchell for part of the northeast quarter. Probably, this transaction gave Maude title to the farmstead building site. On February 21, 1955, A.C. Mitchell and his wife granted a 70-acre tract to Mable Jean Mitchell and others. After this subdivision, family members inherited partial interests. On May 18, 1954 Palmyre C. Mitchell, executor of William Izott Mitchell, deeded 30 acres of the quarter to the Kansas State Historical Society. On September 2, 2016, the Kansas State Historical Society recorded a quit claim deed for the 30-acre tract to Audubon of Kansas, Inc. Audubon of Kansas holds the deed to the 30-acre parcel and a 15.35-acre tract acquired in 2007. The Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards, Inc. bought a 124.7-acre tract in the southeast quarter on June 3, 2019. In 2020, the Kansas Department of Transportation claimed by eminent domain 6.29-acres, reducing the tract to 118.41 acres.

On April 25, 1972, Denny Burgess and his wife bought a small tract (3.137 acres) with the farmstead buildings. They sold to the present owner, Morris Crisler and his wife, on October 31, 1975. The present owner of the adjacent tract which includes the historic Mitchell barn, George R. Kelsey and his wife, acquired their tract on November 14, 1983.

Monuments on Mount Mitchell
Recognizing the traditional significance of Mount Mitchell as a cultural landmark, the crest of this distinctive hill became the site of two commemorative monuments. On Memorial Day, 1947, members of American Legion Post #32, Alma, Kansas, went to the Mitchell farm to dedicate the Fielding monument. The Fielding monument and a later monument to honor Captain William and Mary Mitchell were erected in the northwest quadrant of the top of Mount Mitchell. This location provides a scenic vista overlooking the Kansas River valley to the north and west. The Fielding and Mitchell monuments are contributing features in the Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie historic district. The monuments are significant under Criterion A for their commemorative associations. The monuments have excellent integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The Fielding Monument consists of a stone with a bronze tablet erected to honor the memory of Captain George T. “Dodge” Fielding III, who was killed in action at Luzon near the end of World War II, and all service men who lost their lives in the war. As a young boy in the 1920s, “Dodge” Fielding enjoyed summers at the “Big Four Ranch” or Mitchell farm. Captain Fielding graduated from Princeton University with highest honors in 1939. He volunteered for the National Guard in 1940 and fought in the Pacific theater after 1941. He served as a forward observer, survey officer, and reconnaissance officer—the riskiest assignments in Field Artillery. Fielding was awarded the Bronze Star and later recommended for the Legion of Merit. The surviving members of his family chose the hilltop of Mount Mitchell as a site for a living memorial. The bronze tablet mounted on a stone slab states: “Captain George T. Mitchell III. 192nd F.A. Bn., 43rd Div., U.S.A. Killed in Action Near Manila. P.I. April 30, 1945. Aged 28 years. “In memory of Dodge—Doer of Good Deeds.”

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88 Deed Index-S.E. ¼ Section 28-Township 10-Range 10, Wabaunsee County Register of Deeds. The Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards is a 501 c 3 nonprofit corporation with a volunteer board of director that manages the conservation of the property. Membership is informal with anyone donating or volunteering considered a member. The organization’s name is derived from the local 1856 free-state militia, the Wabaunsee Prairie Guards.
89 “Memorial to Captain Fielding,” Alma Signal-Enterprise 5 June, 1947.
Upon his death, William Izott Mitchell bequeathed a thirty-acre tract including the crest of Mount Mitchell to the Kansas State Historical Society. As the executive committee reported October 16, 1953, the will stated, “To the Kansas State Historical Society of Topeka, Kans., I give and bequeath a thirty (30) acre tract of hill pasture located in the S.E. corner of the S.E. quarter of Section 28, Range 10, Township 10 in Wabaunsee county, Kansas, to be held by it or the state of Kansas as a public park. This property comprises an outstanding hill now known, and always to be known, as Mount Mitchell, in memory of my father, Captain William Mitchell, who was a pioneer settler. The purpose of this gift is to provide a suitable and permanent location for a historical marker to be placed upon the summit of said hill in memory of the Connecticut Colony, better known as the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony, that settled in this locality in April, 1856.” The board voted to accept the bequest.

Two years later during the centennial of the Connecticut colony’s arrival in 1956, the Mitchell monument was erected. As reported, “the Society is pleased to have had a part in commemorating the constructive efforts of this group of pioneers.” The Mitchell monument is embellished with a bronze plaque which states: “In commemoration of the Connecticut Kansas Colony known also as the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony, which settled at Wabaunsee in 1856, and in memory of Capt. William Mitchell, a member of the colony, this monument is erected on Mount Mitchell through the generosity of his son, William I. Mitchell, by the Kansas State Historical Society, 1956.” The plaque is mounted on a tall smooth-cut Onaga limestone block resting on a concrete foundation. The Mitchell monument was re-located fifty feet to the southwest in 2010.

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93 See photograph, Maude J. Mitchell standing beside the monument in 1956.
9. Major Bibliographical References

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

This nomination is based on extensive research and writing by Michael Stubbs, Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards, with additional information and maps provided by Bob Hoard, Tim Weston, and Rick Anderson, Kansas Historic Preservation Office. Robert J. Herman, Prairie Guards volunteer, also assisted with maps. Their contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

Articles and Books
Aber, James S. and Susan E.W., “Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie, Kansas,” Accessed 7/10/2020 at:
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Mary Mitchell obituary.
“Old Pioneer Gone,” (March, 1903).
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Wabaunsee County, Kansas

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https://hornadayscrapbooks.com/about_hornaday.
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Maps
Atlas of Wabaunsee County. (Chicago, IL: Gillen & Davy, 1885).
Hunnius, Ado. “State of Kansas” map (March, 1870). Accessed 7/06/2020 at Kansas Memory:
LIDAR map, Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie, courtesy Cultural Resources, Kansas State Historical Society.
“Map of the Kanzas T., enlarged from Map of the Corps of Topog. . . eng. And published in 1850).

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie: 163 acres; Captain Mitchell Farmstead: 2.9 acres
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District  Wabaunsee County, Kansas

**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)

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

This district consists of two different tracts on the north and south side of Mount Mitchell Road, Wabaunsee County, Kansas. The nominated property includes the distinctive hill known as Mount Mitchell and a surrounding tract as well as the two present-day properties that comprised the Captain William Mitchell farmstead.

North of Mount Mitchell Road, the boundary of the farmstead includes the farmhouse and outbuildings that have been historically associated with the Mitchell family and that maintain historic architectural integrity. The original farmstead has been subdivided into two parcels with different owners. Surounding agricultural fields associated with the farmstead on the north side of the road have been excluded. The boundary of the north tract is defined as follows: beginning at the northwest corner (39.153050; -96.300226), proceeding east to the northeast corner (39.153061; -96.298816), then south to a point at the southeast corner (39.15109; -96.298798), then west along the road to a point (39.152157; -96.300445), then north northeast to the point of beginning.

The larger tract in the district is located on the south side of Mount Mitchell Road. The boundary of the south tract is defined as follows: beginning at the northwest corner (39.151827°; -96.304858°), proceeding along the road east to the northeast corner (39.152062; -96.295931), then south on the property line to the southeast corner (39.143539; -96.296082), then west on the irregular property line to a point (39.145860°; -96.304843°), and then north northwest to the west property line and then north to the point of beginning.

**Individual features included in the larger tract:**
Topeka-Fort Riley Road bench and kiosk: 39.14745, -96.296817
Mitchell Monument: 39.1452, -96.2982
Fielding Monument: 39.145317, -96.298783

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)
The boundary encompasses the properties historically associated with Mount Mitchell and the Mitchell family: the Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie site and the Captain William Mitchell farmstead (buildings and structures).
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District

Wabaunsee County, Kansas

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Dale E. Nimz, Consultant, Research by Michael Stubbs
organization: 

date: August 31, 2020
street & number: 4703 Bluebird Lane

telephone: 785-979-8398
city or town: McLouth
state: KS
zip code: 66054
e-mail: dale.nimz@gmail.com

Property Owner 1: (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name: Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards, Inc, Morris & Michele Crisler, Robert & S.L. Kelsey
street & number: P. O. Box 136

telephone: 785-221-4061
city or town: Wamego
state: KS
zip code: 66547

Property Owner 2: (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name: Audubon of Kansas
street & number: 210 Southwind Place

telephone: 
city or town: Manhattan
state: KS
zip code: 66503

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:

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District

City or Vicinity: Wamego vicinity

County: Wabaunsee State: Kansas

Photographer: Dale Nimz

Date Photographed: August 6, 2020

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

1 of # 44 Mount Mitchell, view from N
2 of # 44 Mount Mitchell, view from NE
3 of # 44 Fort Riley Road trail swale, view from WNW
4 of # 44 Fort Riley Road trail swale, view from NW
5 of # 44 Fort Riley Road trail swale, view from S
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District        Wabaunsee County, Kansas
Name of Property                                         County and State

6 of #:44  Mitchell farmstead, view from S
7 of # 44  Mitchell farmstead, view from SE
8 of # 44  Mitchell house, view from SW
9 of # 44  Mitchell house, view from WSW
10 of # 44 Mitchell house, view from NW
11 of # 44 Mitchell house, view from ENE
12 of # 44 Mitchell house, view from E
13 of # 44 Mitchell house, view from SE
14 of # 44 Mitchell house wall, view from SW
15 of # 44 Mitchell house, floor joists, view from S
16 of # 44 Mitchell wellhouse, view from SW
17 of # 44 Mitchell wellhouse, view from W
18 of # 44 Mitchell wellhouse, view from S
19 of # 44 Mitchell wellhouse, view from SE
20 of # 44 Mitchell cellar, view from S
21 of # 44 Mitchell outbuilding, view from SE
22 of # 44 Mitchell outbuilding, view from SW
23 of # 44 Mitchell outbuilding, view from NE
24 of # 44 Mitchell corncrib, view from E
25 of # 44 Mitchell corncrib, view from SE
26 of # 44 Tenant house, view from SE
27 of # 44 Tenant house, view from SW
28 of # 44 Tenant house, view from E
29 of # 44 Tenant house, view from W
30 of # 44 Tenant house, view from S
31 of # 44 Garage, view from WSW
32 of # 44 Garages, view from SE
33 of # 44 Barn, view from E
34 of # 44 Barn, view from SE
35 of # 44 Barn, view from SW
36 of # 44 Barn, view from WSW
37 of # 44 Barn, view from W
38 of # 44 Barn, view from N
39 of # 44 Barn interior, view from NW
40 of # 44 Barn interior, view from W
41 of # 44 Mitchell monument, view from W
42 of # 44 Mitchell monument, view from SE
43 of # 44 Dodge monument, view from W
44 of # 44 Dodge monument, view from S

Figures and Maps:
Figure 1: Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District (MM Historic District) boundary
Figure 2: MM Historic District – site context, overview
Figure 3: MM Historic District coordinates, latitude/longitude
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Figure 5: Fort Riley Road – Mount Mitchell Trail Segment: swales
Figure 6: Fort Riley Road Section 28-T10-R10E General Land Survey (1856)
Figure 7: Fort Riley Road “Map of Kansas” (1870)
Figure 8: 2006 LiDAR River Corridor Project, Kansas Data Access and Support Center (DASC), Lawrence, KS. Developed for the USGS by Sanborn Mapping, July 5, 2006.
Figure 9: Mitchell land claim, Wabaunsee Map, William Hartley (1856)
Figure 10: William Mitchell property, Atlas of Wabaunsee County (1885)
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Figure 12: Mitchell House (c. 1879, Maud Mitchell scrapbook), view from southwest
Figure 13: Mitchell House painting (Maude Mitchell scrapbook), view from south
Figure 14: Mitchell House (c. 1908, Maude Mitchell scrapbook), view from south-southwest
Figure 15: Mitchell House (1956, Maud Mitchell scrapbook), view from south-southwest
Figure 16: Mitchell House (c. 1972), view from south
Figure 17: Mitchell outbuilding and barn (c. 1905, Maude Mitchell scrapbook), view from southwest
Figure 18: Mitchell barn (c. 1905), view from south-southwest
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District
Name of Property

Wabaunsee County, Kansas
County and State

Photo 1

Photo 2
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District

Name of Property

Wabaunsee County, Kansas

County and State

Photo 3

Photo 4
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District
Name of Property

Wabaunsee County, Kansas
County and State
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District
Wabaunsee County, Kansas

Name of Property

Photo 7

Photo 8
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District
Name of Property

Wabaunsee County, Kansas
County and State

Photo 9

Photo 10
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District
Wabaunsee County, Kansas

Name of Property

Photo 11

Photo 12

Photo 13
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District
Name of Property

Wabaunsee County, Kansas
County and State

Photo 16

Photo 17
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District
Name of Property

Wabaunsee County, Kansas
County and State
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District

Wabaunsee County, Kansas

Name of Property

County and State

Photo 20

Photo 21
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District

Wabaunsee County, Kansas

Name of Property

County and State
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Name of Property

Wabaunsee County, Kansas
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Wabaunsee County, Kansas
County and State

Photo 28

Photo 29
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District
Name of Property

Wabaunsee County, Kansas
County and State
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District
Name of Property

Wabaunsee County, Kansas
County and State
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District
Name of Property: Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District
County and State: Wabaunsee County, Kansas

Photo 36

Photo 37

Photo 38
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District
Name of Property

Wabaunsee County, Kansas
County and State

Photo 43

Photo 44
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District
Wabaunsee County, Kansas

Figure 1: Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie
Historic District
Wabaunsee County, Kansas
Boundary and Features

Heritage Prairie 166 acres
Includes: Prairie,
Mount Mitchell archaeological site,
Mitchell Memorial Monument,
Fielding Memorial Monument

Mount Mitchell Archaeological Site

Captain William Mitchell Farmstead
29213-29173 Mount Mitchell Road
Wamego, Wabaunsee County, Kansas
*details of farmstead on farmstead map
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District  Wabaunsee County, Kansas

Name of Property

County and State

Figure 2
Site Context Map

Wabaunsee Cemetery
Beecher Bible and Rifle Church

Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District

Wabaunsee County, Kansas

Google Earth
Figure 4: Captain William Mitchell Farmstead
Figure 5: Fort Riley Road—Mount Mitchell Trail Segment swales
*note that the Lidar lines do not exactly match the ruts, this is expected and GPS points for the ruts have been included
Figure 6: Fort Riley Road Section 28-T10-R10E General Land Survey (1856)
Figure 7: Fort Riley Road “Map of Kansas” (1870)
Figure 8: 2006 LiDAR River Corridor Project, Kansas Data Access and Support Center (DASC), Lawrence, KS. Developed for the USGS by Sanborn Mapping, July 5, 2006
Figure 9: Mitchell land claim, Wabaunsee Map, William Hartley (1856)
**Figure 10:** William Mitchell property, Atlas of Wabaunsee County (1885)
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District

Wabaunsee County, Kansas

Name of Property

Figure 11 – Mitchell Farmstead (attributed to 1879, Maud Mitchell scrapbook), view from south

Figure 12 – Mitchell House (c. 1879, Maud Mitchell scrapbook), view from southwest
Figure 13 – Mitchell House painting (Maude Mitchell scrapbook), view from south
Figure 14 – Mitchell House (c. 1908, Maude Mitchell scrapbook), view from south-southwest

Figure 15 – Mitchell House (1956, Maud Mitchell scrapbook), view from south-southwest
Figure 16 – Mitchell House (c. 1972), view from south

Figure 17 – Mitchell outbuilding and barn (c. 1905, Maude Mitchell scrapbook), view from southwest
Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District

Wabaunsee County, Kansas

Figure 18 – Mitchell barn (c. 1905), view from south-southwest