

RECONSTRUCTED: Oct. 9, 1971

Form 10-300 (Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STATE:	Kansas
COUNTY:	Chase
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

3.17.72

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON: Nelson Ranch

AND/OR HISTORIC: S. N. Wood House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Cottonwood Falls vicinity

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: no. 5, Joe Skubitz

STATE: Kansas CODE: 66845

COUNTY: Chase CODE: 017

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Mrs. Ludvig (Selma) Nelson

STREET AND NUMBER: 824 North Ash

CITY OR TOWN: McPherson

STATE: Kansas CODE: 67460

COUNTY: Chase

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Register of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER: Chase County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Cottonwood Falls

STATE: Kansas CODE: 66845

COUNTY: Chase

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Survey of Historic Sites & Structures in Kansas

DATE OF SURVEY: 1957 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Kansas State Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER: 120 West Tenth Street

CITY OR TOWN: Topeka

STATE: Kansas CODE: 66612

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:	Kansas
COUNTY:	Chase
ENTRY NUMBER	
DATE	

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6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Samuel Newitt Wood, a peripatetic politician of 19th century Kansas, built a large stone house on his farm just east of Cottonwood Falls in Chase county in the 1860's. Born in Ohio in 1825, Wood came to Lawrence, Kansas, in 1854 to work for the free-state cause. He helped establish Chase county in 1858 and settled near Cottonwood Falls in 1859, where on May 30, 1859, he published the first issue of The Kansas Press, the first newspaper in the county. Dissatisfied with the slow growth of the town, he moved paper and family to nearby Council Grove in August, 1859, and lived there for three years.

Sam Wood was elected in 1859 as the representative for Chase, Morris, and Madison counties in the territorial legislature. He was a member of the first state senate in 1861-1862 and was in the state senate again in 1867. He also served in the state house of representatives in 1864, 1866, 1876, and 1877, acting as speaker of the house in 1877. Wood had a number of terms as Chase county attorney and campaigned, usually unsuccessfully, for a variety of other positions over the years.

In addition to his political activity Wood has wide-ranging business interests. At various times he was, among other things, a practicing attorney, real estate broker, cattle buyer, cattle raiser, publisher, insurance agent, town promoter, and freight line operator. He was also a militia officer during the Civil War.

After several years in Council Grove, Wood returned to Cottonwood Falls and built the west part of the large stone house. The exact date of the construction is not known. A letter to Wood written in January, 1864, by H. L. Scribner, apparently an employee of Wood who looked after the farm, mentioned a stable being completed, and in May Scribner wrote that he was ready for the builder "to push the house as fast as possible." A letter from a Cottonwood Falls resident, A. P. Gandy, in 1867 indicated that work on Wood's house was going well considering the weather. Whether the construction of the house was delayed until 1867 or the 1867 letter refers to an addition is not clear. Wood used Cottonwood Falls as his base of operations, but his extensive business interests frequently took him to all parts of Kansas and into neighboring states.

As early as 1864 Wood was advertising his Chase county farm for sale--\$10,000 for 1,080 acres. After the construction of the house and barn the price went up. On January 30, 1869, in the Chase County Banner Wood advertised as follows:

"Well watered with Cottonwood river and Buck Creek; containing 1,400 acres; 1,000 acres under fence, 150 acres timber, 300 acres broke land; over 1,000

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 1

STATE	
Kansas	
COUNTY	
Chase	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

S. N. WOOD HOUSE

8. cont.

acres of first class river bottom; no better land in the world. A Stone House and Stone Barn, costing over \$5,000. Will sell the whole 1,400 acres for \$28,000."

However, it was not until 1874 that Wood sold the large farm to Judge David K. Cartter of Cleveland, Ohio. Although the judge only visited the farm occasionally, a son, Dr. William H. Cartter, moved his family from Cleveland to the farm and lived there until his death in 1904. Although he apparently did not practice his profession to any great extent in Chase county, the east addition to the house carries the local name of "Dr. Cartter's Office" and was evidently built during the early part of the Cartter residency. The property later passed to Dr. Cartter's son-in-law, Charles Gregory, and his brother William. The Gregory family lost the ranch following a mortgage foreclosure in 1933, and it became the property of Ludvig Nelson, whose widow is the present owner.

Samuel N. Wood moved westward across Kansas with his promotions and schemes along with the line of settlement. He was murdered June 23, 1891, as a consequence of his role in the county seat war od Stevens county in extreme southwest Kansas. His body was returned to Cottonwood Falls for interment.

The large rambling ranch house is significant because of its connection with Sam Wood, one of Kansas' most flamboyant 19th century politicians. Regarded by many contemporaries as one of the founders of statehood, Wood was a key spokesman and prominent participant in territorial politics from 1854 to 1861 and in the formative years of statehood.

9. cont.

The Kansas Press (Cottonwood Falls), May 30, June 13, 1859.

The Kansas Press (Council Grove), October 17, 1859, October 12, 1863, November 30, 1863, August 20, 1864.

Letters to S. N. Wood from D. K. Cartter, July 28, August 4, and August 16, 1874 (S. N. Wood Collection, Kansas State Historical Society Manuscript Division).

Letters to S. N. Wood from A. P. Gandy, January 29, 1867 (S. N. Wood Collection, Kansas State Historical Society Manuscript Division).

Letters to S. N. Wood from H. L. Scribner, January 20, May 28, 1864 (S. N. Wood Collection, Kansas State Historical Society Manuscript Division).

McKenna, Sister M. Berard, Samuel N. Wood: Chronic Agitator, unpublished doctoral dissertation at St. Louis University, 1968.

McKinney, Florence, "Old Houses," Kansas Farmer (Topeka), April 20, 1946.

Mason, Henry F., "County Seat Controversies in Southwestern Kansas," Kansas Historical Quarterly, v. 2, no. 1 (February, 1933), pp. 55-61.

"Stone Houses," Chase County Historical Sketches, v. 3 (Chase County Historical Society, 1966), pp. 369-375.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 2

ST.	
COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

S. N. WOOD HOUSE

9. cont.

Supervisors and Commissioners Journal No. 1, Chase County, Kansas, March 15, 1859--August 20, 1861. (Copy in Kansas State Historical Society Manuscript Division).

Wood, Bessie M., "Col. Samuel N. Wood and Family," Chase County Historical Sketches, v. 1 (Chase County Historical Society, 1940), pp. 424-427.