

Kan. Cong. Dist. No. 1

Keith Sebelius

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Kansas	
COUNTY:	Ellis	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	

1. NAME

COMMON: Walter P. Chrysler Home

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 104 West Tenth street

CITY OR TOWN: Ellis

STATE: Kansas 67637 CODE: 20 COUNTY: Ellis CODE: 051

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: City of Ellis

STREET AND NUMBER: City Hall

CITY OR TOWN: Ellis STATE: Kansas 67637 CODE: 20

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

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

STREET AND NUMBER: Ellis County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Hays STATE: Kansas 67601 CODE: 20

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Survey of Historic Sites and 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 66612 CODE: 20

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Walter P. Chrysler boyhood home located on West 10th street in Ellis is a two-story, six-room white frame house with horizontal lap siding. The house is accented by a white picket fence which encloses the entire property and by its intersecting gable roofs. Rectangular frame doors and double hung windows provide the first floor fenestration for the building. Second story windows are double hung and occur either in the gable ends or in small gable-roofed dormers. Two wood columns provide support for the shingled front porch. A cornice of small vertical wood bars about one foot in length and spaced six inches apart encloses the front and west side of the porch. Colored glass windows flank the main entrance door.

The only protrusions above the horizontal roof line are two brick chimneys. The house was originally built in the shape of a "T" with the stem running east-west. The porch fills in the space at the northwest corner. Two small one-story frame additions have been added on the south. At the southwest corner a lean-to was added to shelter the outside cellar entrance. And the second addition extended the "T" to the south to provide space for indoor toilet facilities.

In 1954 the house was refinished as it might have been during the occupancy of the Chrysler family. However it was damaged by a flood in 1957, and restoration work had to be repeated on the floors, walls and furnishings.

The house was purchased by the Chrysler Corporation, donated to the City of Ellis in 1955, and is now operated as a museum. A few original Chrysler family possessions are in the house, and it is otherwise furnished as a family of their means might have had it.

A barn and a small shed still stand at the south end of the property.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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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) 1889-1897

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input 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 checked="" 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

Walter Percy Chrysler (1875-1940) was born in Wamego, Kansas. When he was three, the family moved to Ellis, where his father was a locomotive engineer for the Union Pacific railroad. It was about 1889 that his father built the two-story house which is now known as the Walter P. Chrysler Home.

Chrysler went to work at the Union Pacific roundhouse in Ellis at age 15 as a sweeper and engine wiper and a few years later began a four-year stint as a shop apprentice. He left Ellis in 1897 and in the next eight years moved from one western railroad to another, gaining experience and building a reputation as a brilliant mechanic. He demonstrated his administrative talent by rising to the position of superintendent of motive power for the Chicago Great Western railroad by the age of 33.

In 1912 he became works manager of Buick Motor Company, then the most important unit of General Motors. He introduced new processes and efficiencies into an operation which was still following the practices of carriage makers. After a disagreement with William C. Durant, the head of General Motors, he resigned in 1920.

After successfully reorganizing a faltering Willys-Overland Co., he was persuaded to take over the Maxwell Motor Co., which was in desperate financial circumstances. Chrysler reconstituted the company, and in 1925 it became the Chrysler Corporation. The 1928 purchase of Dodge Brothers was the last major development needed to put the Chrysler Corporation in a position to challenge the automobile manufacturing leadership of Ford and General Motors.

The house is significant only because it was the home of young Chrysler from 1889 to 1897. From a five-cent-an-hour sweeper in the Union Pacific roundhouse at Ellis, he became one of the leaders of American industry. Few if any Kansans have surpassed his accomplishments in the industrial world. Although Chrysler's achievements occurred in various parts of the country, it is his boyhood home in Ellis which has been preserved by local citizens and officers of the Chrysler Corporation. It is this house which today offers the major tangible link to the life of Walter Chrysler.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Basye, Ruby, "Ellis Makes Museum of Chrysler Home," Hutchinson News, October 26, 1958.
 "Built His Fortune with Brains and Skilled Hands," Kansas City Star Magazine, July 27, 1924, pp. 9, 10, 21.
 Chrysler, Walter P., Life of an American Workman (New York, Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1950).
 Dale, Kittie, "Chrysler Home Opens for 15th Season," Ellis Review, May 1, 1969.
 Fesler, Myrtle D., Pioneers of Western Kansas (New York, Carlton Press, 1962), pp. 175-178.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		38 56 11	99 33 37	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: One acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Richard Pankratz, Planner

ORGANIZATION: Kansas State Historical Society DATE: September 8, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: 120 West Tenth street

CITY OR TOWN: Topeka STATE: Kansas CODE: 20

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Nyle H. Miller
 Nyle H. Miller

Title Executive Secretary, Kansas State Historical Society

Date September 20, 1971

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST: _____

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

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COUNTY	
Ellis	
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(Number all entries)

9. Getz, Carl H., "From Engine Wiper to Automobile President," The Santa Fe Magazine, v. 19, no. 1 (December, 1924), p. 45.
- Schuyler, Robert L., editor, Dictionary of American Biography, v. 22, supp. 2 (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), pp. 103, 104.
- Watson, John, "Dedication of Walter Chrysler Home as Museum Realization of Ambition," Wichita Morning Eagle, August 29, 1955.