



Register of Historic Kansas Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating individual properties and districts. The format is similar to the National Register of Historic Places form. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets. Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Wilke, Fritz, House
 other names/site number 113-116

2. Location

street & number 105 N. Front Street not for publication
 city or town Inman vicinity
 state Kansas code KS county McPherson code 113 zip code 67546

3-4. Certification

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

SEE FILE

Signature of certifying official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the State Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & Culture: museum

Work in Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: National Folk

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Wood: Weatherboard

roof: Asphalt Shingles

other: N/A

Narrative Description

(Describe the current physical appearance of the property.)

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

The Wilke House is located at 105 North Front Street in downtown Inman, McPherson County, Kansas. It is a one-and-one-half-story balloon-frame building with a side-gable roof. It was relocated to this site – the Inman Museum complex – in December 2010 to save it from demolition. In its new location, the house faces southeast toward Front Street and the Inman Museum. It was formerly located near the intersection of Cimarron Road and old Highway 61 on a rural three-acre tract of land that also included two wood sheds and a chicken coop.¹ Highway 61 is being expanded to four lanes, which will cut through the old Wilke farmstead.

¹ For more information about the building’s original site, see: Paula Adams, “Activity III Report: Fritz Wilke Property McPherson County,” Topeka: Kansas Department of Transportation, 2002. On file with the Cultural Resources Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

Elaboration *(Provide a detailed description of the building's exterior, interior, and any associated buildings on the property. Note any historic features, materials, and changes to the building/property.)*

Exterior

The exterior is clad with horizontal wood drop siding that is attached directly to the stud framing. There are corner boards at each exterior corner of the building. All windows and doors feature wood pedimented trim with a centered diamond motif, casings, and sills. The side-gable roof has asphalt shingles over a layer of wood shingles.

In its original location, the house sat upon a very low stone foundation, which had settled and led to areas of rot along the bottom of the building. In its new location, the building rests upon a concrete block foundation. The building originally featured two stovepipe chimneys – one on each gable end. Prior to relocation, however, the building contained only one stovepipe piercing the gable roof. This was removed when the building was relocated to Inman.

The southeast-facing front elevation features a central entrance that includes an historic wood door with four horizontal panels and three fixed vertical panes of glass. There is a non-historic metal storm door on the exterior. On either side of the entrance is a 2/2 double-hung wood window. Directly above each first-story window is a fixed four-light wood window on the upper story. The two side elevations are symmetrical and identical to one another. Each side includes four 2/2 double-hung wood windows – two on each story.

The northwest-facing rear elevation has experienced the most alteration. A one-story, full-width addition was removed prior to the relocation of the building, and plans call for it to be replaced by a new, compatible addition. The outline of the gabled addition is evident on the exterior of the building. There are two windows on the upper story of this elevation. Both are fixed four-light wood windows, with the west window being temporarily covered. Unlike those on the other three elevations, these windows are not symmetrical, which could suggest the rear addition was original or at least planned when the house was constructed.

Interior (See Figure 1)

The interior is comprised of four rooms, with two on each floor. The main central entrance opens directly into the northeast room, which includes three windows and a partial built-in chimney flue that has a circular opening that would have connected to a metal stovepipe. Two of the windows flank the central flue on the northeast (side) wall. A former owner has speculated that the area along the northeast wall once served as a kitchen, but no evidence of a hearth has been found; wainscoting once existed in this area as evidenced by the markings on the plaster wall.² A doorway centered along the southwest wall with a four-panel wood door with porcelain doorknob connects the second room on the first floor. This room also has three windows and a partial built-in chimney flue. Two of the windows flank the central flue on the southwest wall. There is a small closet in the north corner next to the adjacent staircase. It is likely this closet was created when the staircase was reconfigured. Both first-floor rooms have plaster walls and beadboard paneled ceilings. The wood floors on the first level are covered with carpet.

A narrow straight-run central stairway connects the two levels. At some point, this staircase may have been reconfigured to its current appearance, which provides access to second floor through the rear addition.³ At the top of the staircase is an open closet tucked between the two bedrooms on either side of the stairs. The

² It is entirely possible that a small extension off the rear elevation served as the home's first kitchen. An original ell or an early addition could explain why the rear elevation is not symmetrical like the rest of the exterior.

³ It appears likely that the staircase always occupied this central part of the house. It remains unclear whether it featured a dog-legged plan or was always a straight-run staircase with access in the rear ell.

second story floors are tongue-and-groove three-quarter-inch pine and are in excellent condition. Until recently, these rooms had non-historic wood paneling on most of the walls and ceilings, which conform to the slope of the roof. The paneling was removed when the house was relocated. Each room features four windows: two 2/2 double-hung wood windows flanking the full-height interior chimney flue and one square four-light fixed sash window on each of the opposite walls. These smaller square windows are situated low on the wall just above the baseboard trim. The unadorned, painted wood window and door trim and baseboards are extant. Each room also has a four-panel wood door with what appears to be the original hardware. There are no closets in the upper rooms.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for State Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1881

Significant Dates

c. 1881

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Undetermined

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.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance is limited to circa 1881, the estimated date of construction.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

The Fritz Wilke House was removed from its original location in December 2010 to make way for the expansion of Highway 61. Section 106 review of this property prior to relocation determined it to be National Register-eligible. If not for the efforts of the Inman Museum, the house would have been destroyed.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

The Wilke House is nominated to the Register of Historic Kansas Places under Criterion C in the area of architecture. Built in circa 1881, it is an excellent representation of the National Folk tradition, which dominated house architecture in the late nineteenth-century post-railroad era. National Folk houses sometimes have stylistic detailing common to the period, but they are best classified by their materials, form, and plan.

The Wilke property was representative of a typical 160-acre German immigrant farmstead in Kansas during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Wilke's semi-subsistence farm appears to have remained small and diversified in relation to the growing farming and ranching operations of the period with no particular specialization in swine, poultry, dairy, beef cattle, or grain production. The property remained in the Wilke family until the 1970s. Although the farmstead is no longer extant, the house has been saved and relocated to the nearby community of Inman. The house is a good example of a one-and-a-half-story, balloon-frame farmhouse, with many intact original building features.

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

Regional and Cultural Context⁴

The first rural homesteads in McPherson County were claimed in the early 1870s. There was adequate water for stock and fertile soil that drained well, thus allowing for grain sources for stock raising. Native timber was scarce, but tillable prairie made up 99 percent of the mostly upland region. By the early 1880s, railroad lines were traversing the county to take the abundant production of winter wheat and broom corn to urban markets. The county lies upon the water shed between the Smoky Hill and Arkansas rivers but branches provide excellent drainage. These creek beds were often areas where rural German immigrants settled before the turn-of-the-century. This is also where Wilke settled.

Two waves of German settlement in Kansas occurred between the 1850s and the turn-of-the-century. The first push of German settlers was linked to events in Europe. There was an "American fever" that developed in the British Isles and Middle Rhine Valley in the 1850s.⁵ This coincided with 20 years of efforts in two German cities, Hamburg and Bremen, to promote emigration through improvement of their ports.⁶ This traffic, in turn, encouraged the early formation of protection organizations to provide information and to guard against unscrupulous travel agents and overseas land speculation. More Germans than any other Europeans came to America between 1850 and 1890.⁷ As many as 4.5 million Germans arrived in that period. Within the early period, many moved to Kansas Territory from the "German Belt" of Pennsylvania⁸ and many had oxen and financial resources to invest in their Kansas property. This first wave of German immigrants of the 1850s often settled along waterways and farmed the small, rich areas in creek bends.

The Homestead Act and the Pacific Railway Act, both passed in 1862, spurred the immigration pattern to the Midwest. Railroad and land agents linked with German assistance organizations to encourage settlement in

⁴ Much of this context is taken from: Paula Adams, "Activity III Report: Fritz Wilke Property McPherson County," Topeka: Kansas Department of Transportation, 2002. On file with the Cultural Resources Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

⁵ James Shortridge, "People of the New Frontier: Kansas Population Origins, 1865," *Kansas History* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 1991): 178.

⁶ Eleanor L. Turk, "Selling the Heartland: Agents, Agencies, Press, and Policies Promoting German Emigration to Kansas in the Nineteenth Century," *Kansas History* 12, no. 3 (Autumn 1989): 152.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 150, 151.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

Kansas. Networks of German immigrant aid societies supported German migration to the frontier with assistance organizations. For example, the 1872 New York German Society annual report provided a listing of lawyers for every county in Kansas and the lawyers' post office addresses. The German abolitionist, Charles F. Kob, founded the *Kansas Zeitung* (Kansas Newspaper) in Atchison and openly stated his motives in his publication as promoting Kansas as a Free State.⁹ While the Atchison settlement of German Catholics was very organized and concentrated relative to rural German Protestant counterparts,¹⁰ the promotional literature did not differentiate when marketing Kansas as a destination.

The second wave of German settlement occurred around 1870, Kansas' peak year for German immigration. It is believed the Wilke family would have been a part of this second wave of immigrants, who were largely encouraged through railroad promotional agents as they passed through eastern cities headed for the promise of lush farm ground in the west. Coincidentally, the Rock Island Railroad came through McPherson County in the latter part of the 1880s, cutting through Fritz Wilke's 160 acres and helping to establish the town of Inman as a stop along the way.

Wilke Family History

Fritz (or Fred) and Mary (or Marie) Wilke purchased 160 acres in Groveland Township, McPherson County, Kansas from John and Leah Ann Newland on July 13, 1881.¹¹ A building is noted on the 1884 Groveland Township, McPherson County Atlas in the vicinity of the where the house was. The 1885 Kansas Population Census notes that Fritz Wilke was 44 and was born in about 1841. At that time, Fritz resided in this house with his wife Mary, age 36, and children Gustave, age 15, Anna, age 12, Arthur (later shown as Otto), age 7, Henry, age 3, and Edith (later shown as Ida) Wilke, age 1. Population censuses note that the Fritz Wilke family came directly to Kansas from Germany. Children Henry and Edith were born in Kansas and the remainder of the family was born in Germany.

Table 1 provides a brief snapshot of Fritz Wilke's farmstead in 1885 and again in 1895. It follows the pattern of a typical late nineteenth century subsistence farm in that it included just 160 acres in 1885 and was diversified with no particular specialization in swine, poultry, dairy, beef cattle, or grain production. By the turn of the twentieth century and into the mid-twentieth century, enhanced shipping and storage methods had created a broader market for farm products, which began the shift of the farm economy from subsistence to cash crops.¹²

Inman City Cemetery records note that Fritz died in 1901 at age 60. He and his wife Mary, who died in 1902, are both interred in the Inman Cemetery alongside other family members. The 1903 McPherson County Plat Map lists Fritz' estate as owning the farmstead (See Figure 2). The property remained in the Wilke family until the 1970s. Although the farmstead is no longer extant, the house has been saved and relocated to the nearby community of Inman.

Architecture

With the expansion of the railroads in the mid-nineteenth century, a National Folk tradition developed using new building techniques and materials. Architectural historians Virginia and Lee McAlester note that as "transportation and communication improved, each [building] shape became distributed beyond its area of traditional dominance."¹³ National Folk houses sometimes have stylistic detailing common to the period, but they are best classified by their materials, form, and plan. The McAlesters outline six general variations of the style including the I-house, which most closely defines the Wilke House. The I-house, they contend, "became

⁹ Ibid., 150.

¹⁰ Ibid., 155.

¹¹ Property Deed. Register of Deeds, McPherson County Courthouse.

¹² Brenda Spencer and Christy Davis, "Historic Agriculture Related Resources of Kansas" National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form (Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, 2007), E-10 – E-18.

¹³ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 90.

a popular folk form over much of the eastern half of the country” and were “particularly favored as modest folk dwellings in the Midwestern states.”¹⁴

Similarly, in his book *Homes in the Heartland*, architectural historian Fred W. Peterson offers a typology for balloon-frame farmhouses in the Upper Midwest of which there are a “bewildering variety.” He acknowledges that there is no universally accepted method of classifying vernacular buildings, and that this is often done on a local and regional level. His typology is based on the basic shape of a structure and its floor plan. Although his study does not include Kansas, his conclusions are based on rural areas that developed during the same period - the late nineteenth century. The Wilke House could be classified as the simplest of structures that functioned “primarily as shelter for the basic needs of eating and sleeping.” – or Peterson’s Type 1 house.¹⁵ Simple farmhouses, such as the Wilke House, seldom featured surface decoration or architectural features like towers or turrets, and thus are best classified by their form and plan. Surface decoration on the Wilke House is limited primarily to the pedimented windows and doors. Peterson suggests this type of farmhouse “was frequently the kind of affordable structure built when circumstances permitted the family to move from the temporary subsistence shelter to a more permanent dwelling,” and is “but one step beyond the original claim shanty or sod house.”¹⁶ In the case of the Wilke family, they were emigrating from Germany to Kansas and needed an affordable house with farmland.

Summary

The Wilke property was representative of a typical 160-acre German immigrant farmstead in Kansas during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Wilke’s semi-subsistence farm appears to have remained small and diversified in relation to the growing farming and ranching operations of the period. The property remained in the Wilke family until the 1970s. Although the farmstead is no longer extant, the house has been saved and relocated to the nearby community of Inman. The house is a good example of a c.1881 one-and-a-half-story, balloon-frame farmhouse, with many intact original building features.

¹⁴ McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 96.

¹⁵ Fred W. Peterson, *Homes in the Heartland: Balloon Frame Farmhouses of the Upper Midwest, 1850-1920* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 27.

¹⁶ Peterson, *Homes in the Heartland*, 62-63.

Table 1: Agricultural Statistics: Fritz Wilke Farmstead, 1885 and 1895 – State Agriculture Censuses

Agriculture Statistic Measured	1885	1895
Acreage	160	313
Unimproved acreage	120	160
Fenced acreage	40	153
Cash value of farm	4,000	5,000
Farm implement/machinery value	0	60
Fence in rods: stone	0	0
Fence in rods: rail	0	0
Fence in rods: board	0	0
Fence in rods: hedge	400	300
Fence in rods: wire	160	80
Acres of winter wheat	50	100
Acres of rye	0	0
Acres of spring wheat	0	0
Acres of corn	40	80
Acres of barley	0	0
Acres of oats	10	10
Acres of buckwheat	0	0
Acres of Irish potatoes	1/2	1/2
Acres of sweet potatoes	0	0
Bushels of corn on hand	500	0
Bushels of wheat on hand	150	0
Acres of other tame grasses	3	0
Tons of prairie hay	3	0
LBS of butter made	150	200
Number of horses	5	4
Number of asses and mules	0	2
Number of milk cows	4	6
Number of other cattle	6	1
Number of swine	0	10
Apple trees	50	50
Peach trees	50	50
Cherry trees	4	20

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Archival Records and published documents

Decennial Census of Kansas 1885-1905. Groveland Township, McPherson County, Kansas. (Worster, Ohio: Bell and Howell, 1979-1993).

Range Index Books from the McPherson County Register of Deeds. Section 34, Township 20 South Range 4 West.

1884 Historical Atlas of McPherson County. Quincy, IL: J. P. Edwards, 1884.

1903 Plat Book of McPherson County. Minneapolis, MN: Northwind Publishing Co., 1903. Accessed at: www.kansasmemory.org.

1921 Standard Atlas of McPherson County, Kansas. Chicago, IL: George A. Ogle, 1921.

1928 Plat Book of McPherson County, Kansas. Rockford, IL: W. W. Hixson & Co., 1928.

Secondary Sources

Adams, Paula. *Activity III Report: Fritz Wilke Property McPherson County.* Topeka: Kansas Department of Transportation, 2002. On file with the Cultural Resources Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002.

Peterson, Fred W. *Homes in the Heartland: Balloon Frame Farmhouses of the Upper Midwest, 1850-1920.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992.

Shortridge, James R. "People of the New Frontier: Kansas Population Origins, 1865." *Kansas History* 14 (Autumn 1991): 162-185.

Spencer, Brenda, and Christy Davis. "Agriculture-Related Resources of Kansas" National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form. Topeka, KS: Kansas Historical Society, 2008. Accessed online at: http://www.kshs.org/resource/national_register/MPS/HistoricAgricultureRelatedResourcesofKSDRAFT_mps.pdf

Tombstone Census of McPherson County, Kansas.

Turk, Eleanor. "Selling the Heartland: Agents, Agencies, Press and Policies Promoting German Emigration to Kansas in the Nineteenth Century." *Kansas History* 12 (Autumn 1989): 150-159.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been Requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: **Kansas Historical Society**

Photographs:

Please check with SHPO staff before completing photographs.

Name of Property: Fritz Wilke House
City or Vicinity: Inman
County: McPherson State: KS
Photographer: Sarah Martin
Date Photographed: March 17, 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 11: Front (southeast-facing) elevation and side (southwest-facing) elevation, facing N
- 2 of 11: Front (southeast-facing) elevation and side (northeast-facing) elevation, facing W
- 3 of 11: Rear (northwest-facing) elevation and side (northeast-facing) elevation, facing S
- 4 of 11: Rear (northwest-facing) elevation and side (southwest-facing) elevation, facing E
- 5 of 11: Close-up of new foundation at south corner
- 6 of 11: Close-up of second-floor window on side (southwest-facing) elevation
- 7 of 11: Interior, first floor, NE room, facing SW
- 8 of 11: Interior, first floor, NE room, facing SE
- 9 of 11: Interior, first floor, SW room, facing E
- 10 of 11: Neighborhood context, showing side (southwest-facing) elevation, facing NE
- 11 of 11: Neighborhood context, showing side (northeast-facing) elevation, facing SW

Figure 1: Plan

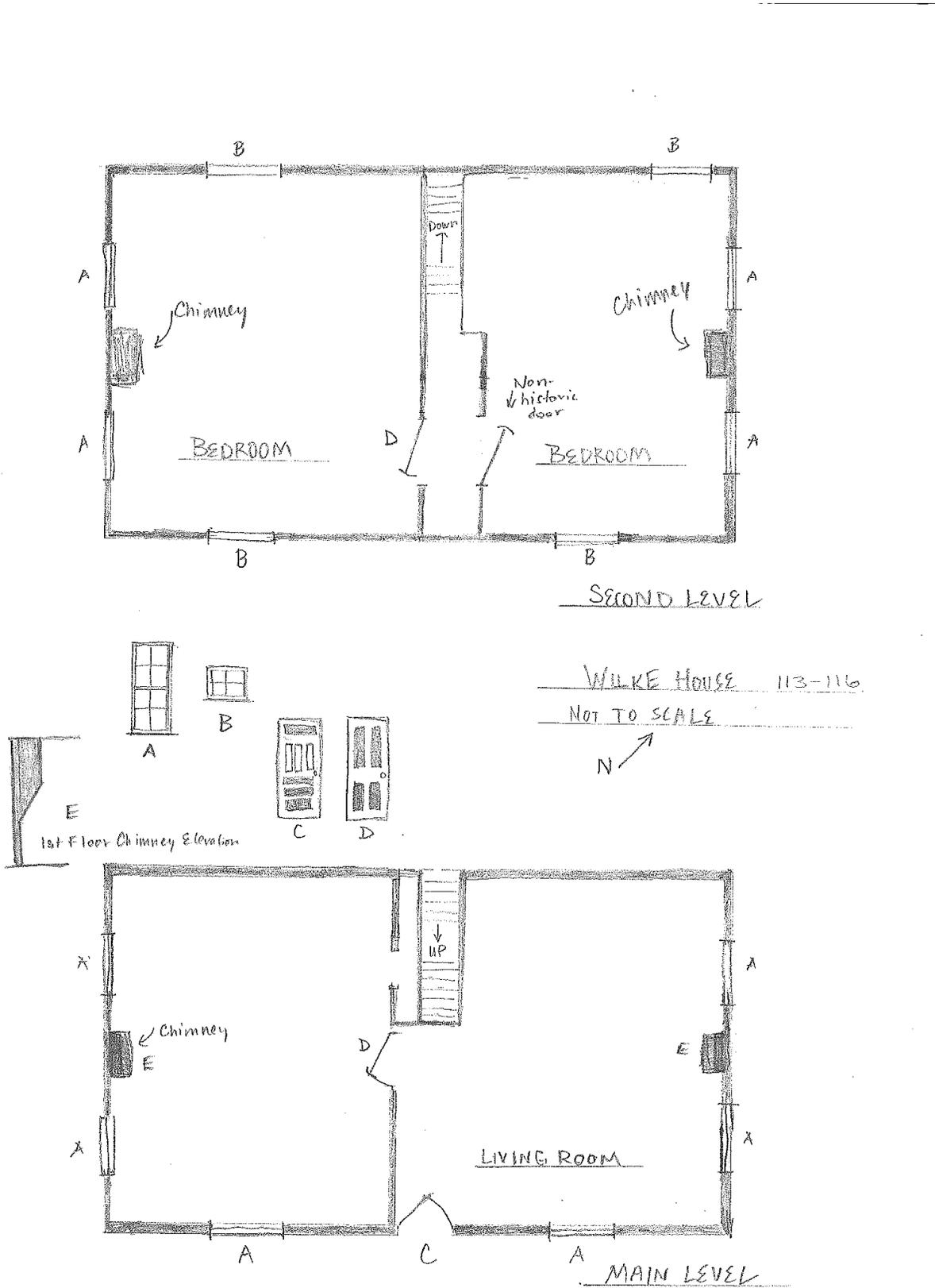


Figure 2: 1903 Plat Book of McPherson County. Minneapolis, MN: Northwind Publishing Co., 1903. Courtesy: Kansasmemory.org.

