

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 Splitlog, Mathias, House
 Other name/site number 209-2820-2038

2. Location

Street & number 251 Orchard St. not for publication
 City or town Kansas City vicinity
 State Kansas Code KS County Wyandotte Code 209 Zip code 66101

3.,4. Certification

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

Christy Davis 9/17/05
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
 (Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed
 in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter Categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Queen Anne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Limestone

Walls: Brick veneer

Roof: Asphalt

Other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Criteria

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

- 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 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Exploration and Settlement

Commerce

Period of Significance

c. 1870-1888

Significant Dates

c. 1870

1888

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Splitlog, Mathias

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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:

see continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	5	3	5	9	7	1	0	4	3	2	9	8	8	0
Zone		Easting					Northing							

2

Zone		Easting					Northing							

3

Zone		Easting					Northing							

4

Zone		Easting					Northing							

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Edwin A. Rust, II

Organization _____ Date 8/15/2005

Street & number 1906 North 82nd St. Telephone 913-706-0658

City or town Kansas City State Kansas Zip code 66112

Property Owner

Name Edwin A. Rust, II and Sandra S. Rust

Street & number 1906 North 82nd St. Telephone 913-706-0658

City or town Kansas City State Kansas Zip code 66112

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Continuation Sheet

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Mathias Splitlog House
Wyandotte Co., Kansas

DESCRIPTION

Summary

The Mathias Splitlog residence (circa 1870) is located at 251 Orchard Street in the Strawberry Hill neighborhood of Kansas City, Kansas (pop. 147,000). The two-and-one-half story, brick veneer, Queen Anne-style house stands on a native limestone foundation. The building maintains a western façade exposure, standing on the east side of Orchard Street midway between Northrup and Tenny Avenues. The building has a staggered cruciform footprint and measures approximately fifty-five feet from east to west and thirty-six feet from north to south.

Elaboration

The front, or western, façade features a single-story wood-frame porch with a second-story walk-out door on its southern end, suggesting that there may have been a widow's walk or other access provided to the porch roof. The depiction of the structure on the Sanborn Fire Insurance map of 1907 shows the porch as single-story, L-shaped, and having a shingle roof. On the Sanborn map of 1931, the porch is shown as two-story with a composition roof and having its present rectangular shape. Old photographs of the house suggest that the roof was supported by attenuated Tuscan columns. These columns were painted white historically. The porch provides access to the oversized entry door. This door, measuring nearly eight feet tall and 40 inches wide, features a fixed glass window in its upper section and has a movable transom window above.

The west-facing gable on the front elevation features a sunburst motif inset at each corner with lap siding filling the center portion of the gable. The original windows in the gable have been replaced with shutter-style attic vents. In addition, a hip roof projects from the gable and covers the second-story bay projection below. Examination of the wood trim on the gable shows that the white painted finish has been maintained throughout the building's life.

Fenestration in the house consists primarily of 1/1 double-hung sash. The original windows featured arched-top glass in the upper sashes, and some of them remain in the house. Most windows have been replaced by conventional rectangular 1/1 double-hung units. The west façade features a bow-shaped stained-glass window above a tripartite window comprised of a large square fixed light flanked by narrow 1/1 double hung sashes. While this window is a relatively new replacement, it duplicates the fenestration depicted in old photographs of the house.

The unique roof assembly features mitered joints at the meeting points of all the rafters, and was constructed without using ridge beams. The main block of the house is covered by a pyramid-shaped roof which is penetrated by gabled extensions covering the north, west and south wings. The east wing features a hip-style roof. The skills of both architect and builder are evident in the thirty-two foot clear span of the main roof and twenty-four foot clear span above the east wing. The roof is currently covered with asphalt shingles.

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Mathias Splitlog House
Wyandotte Co., Kansas

A metal outbuilding stands to the southeast of the house. A similarly-sized building is first shown on the 1931 Sanborn map. This outbuilding appears to have been intended to be used as a garage and replaced a smaller wood-frame structure which was depicted on the 1907 Sanborn map. The building is of corrugated tinplate construction, used for both sidewalls and roof. The metal is badly deteriorated, and the building has a pronounced lean to the west.

The interior of the house features an inglenook fireplace in the open foyer. This fireplace, like the dining room fireplace, features a glazed tile hearth and painted mantel. The mantels on both fireplaces are believed to have originally been finished with stain and varnish. A pair of 8-light French doors open into the large living room. The living room fireplace has an imported tile hearth and an oversized mirrored mantel which retains its original stained oak finish. The living room is separated from the dining room by a pair of pocket doors measuring over seven feet wide and nearly nine feet tall.

The foyer staircase leads to a center hallway with access to a sitting room, three bedrooms and the stairway leading to the partially floored attic. The upstairs bath is located at the east end of the hallway, along with a small room that provides access to the servant's stair to the lower level.

The basement contains the former coal bin and central furnace as well as an abandoned water cistern. Entry to the basement is by an exterior stair located outside the east foundation wall. The basement lies under the east wing of the building, with a crawl space under the remainder of the house.

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Section number 8 Page 1

Mathias Splitlog House
Wyandotte Co., Kansas

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Mathias Splitlog House is being nominated to the Register of Historic Kansas Places under Criterion C as an early example of a brick veneer-constructed, late 19th century Queen Anne-style house. The house is also known for its association with Mathias Splitlog, a distinguished early settler of the original town of Wyandotte, now Kansas City, Kansas. The house is located at the center of the property allotted to Splitlog in a 1855 treaty between the United States and the Wyandot Indians then residing in Kansas Territory. This property is not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places at this time for two reasons: One, the construction history of this house is somewhat cloudy, and it is doubtful that Splitlog resided in the house as it appears today. Two, the house is in an advanced state of deterioration and has suffered some alterations to the front façade, namely the covering of the second-story projecting bay with vinyl siding. Once restored, it is probable that the house would qualify for National Register listing under Criterion C.

History

Any recounting of Splitlog's life and accomplishments must necessarily begin with a discussion of the Wyandot relocation from their homelands in Upper Sandusky, Ohio. A treaty between the Wyandot and the United States, negotiated in 1842, provided for the cessation of tribal ownership of over 114,000 acres of land in the Wyandot (River Huron, Michigan) and Grand (Upper Sandusky, Ohio) Reserves in exchange for 148,000 acres at an unspecified location in what was then called "Indian Country", a portion of the current states of Oklahoma and Kansas. The Wyandot left Ohio in the winter of 1842-1843 hoping that rather than accepting the government lands provided for in the 1842 treaty, they would be able to complete negotiations begun in 1839 with the Shawnee to purchase a portion of the Shawnee reservation lands located south of the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri rivers.

Upon their arrival at the Town of Kansas, the Wyandot established a campsite on a strip of government-owned land located between the Missouri state line and the Kansas River. The Wyandot were unable to reach an agreement with the Shawnee and instead agreed to purchase thirty-six sections of land in the Delaware reserves, located just to the north of the Shawnee lands. In addition to the thirty-six sections purchased, the Wyandot received an additional three sections of land as a gift from the Delaware.

It was during this period of uncertainty that the young Mathias Splitlog first showed the business acumen that he would display throughout his life. Having arrived at Westport landing with only fifty cents in his pocket, Splitlog convinced an older member of the tribe to loan him the price of an ax. With the ax, Splitlog cut cordwood to supply the steamboats that plied the Missouri river and tied up at the nearby Westport Landing (now Kansas City, Missouri River Market district). After paying back the price of the ax, Splitlog quickly earned enough money to purchase a horse. Within only a few years, the old indian, timber and horsepower would all come together and influence the rest of Splitlog's accomplishments.

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Section number 8 Page 2

Mathias Splitlog House
Wyandotte Co., Kansas

Splitlog built what is believed to have been the first horse-powered sawmill and gristmill in the county. By 1852, he had constructed steam-powered mills and was a major supplier of wood and grain products to other early settlers. He shared a small cabin with the old Indian, Henry Jacques, and was instrumental in establishing a ferry across the Kansas River. He later built a home near the area of what is now Barnett Avenue and Thompson (formerly Dugarro) Street, overlooking his mills and the ferry. As he became more prosperous, he married Eliza Barnett, Henry Jacques' grandniece, and continued to expand his businesses.

The Wyandot continued to make improvements to their lands, building houses, churches, even a school. They established a burial ground, Huron Cemetery, a National Register listed site still at the center of downtown Kansas City, Kansas today. As their social organization developed, there arose a desire to establish a local government and provide for the private ownership of property. This represented a significant change in traditional belief, and corresponded with increasing interest in opening up the Kansas Territory to white settlers.

Westward expansion was placing significant pressure on the Missouri border, and the speculators were eager to acquire land in the newly developing territory. In order to do so, the land needed to be broken up and placed under individual ownership. On January 31, 1855 a treaty was signed by which the Wyandot relinquished the lands bought from the Delaware in 1843. The primary objective of the treaty was to enable the United States to subdivide the land, previously held in common, and convey the subdivided parcels to the individual members of the tribe. The treaty also provided tribal members the opportunity to receive United States citizenship.

Under the terms of the treaty, allotments were made to both heads of household and single people. Size of the allotments depended upon the number of family members, with some adjustments being made to compensate for the perceived economic value of the land. In addition, locations of the allotments were selected so as to include, as nearly as possible, any homes or other improvements already built. The allotment that Splitlog received consisted of two hundred eighty-eight acres of land, bounded on the east by the Kansas River and extending into the town of Wyandotte on the north and past the settlement of Armstrong on the south. The area today includes much of downtown Kansas City, the historic and new City Halls; the historic Saint Mary's Church and the Strawberry Hill neighborhood.

Splitlog continued to develop his own business interests as the new city blossomed, fueled by funds brought in by eastern land speculators. By 1860, he began to sell his land to the townsite developers. He had excellent business instincts, and sold the land in relatively small parcels as the town developed toward the south. A devout Catholic, Splitlog sold his most desirable parcel, situated on a hilltop, to Father Anton Kuhls for the construction of old Saint Mary's Church. He later sold his river bottom flatlands to the railroads that were being extended into Kansas territory. Prior to the railroads' arrival, Splitlog had capitalized on the value of his river bottom holdings by building and operating a steamboat between Wyandotte and Atchison, transporting supplies to settlers in that river town.

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Mathias Splitlog House
Wyandotte Co., Kansas

Splitlog was a mechanical genius and self-educated engineer. It was reported that the controls of his boat were so complex that only Splitlog, himself, could operate the engine. During the Civil War, Splitlog agreed to transport soldiers down river to Lexington, Missouri. Upon their arrival in that city, the soldiers, along with Splitlog, were surrounded by General Price's forces and eventually surrendered. Legend holds that Splitlog escaped his captors and ran the forty miles back to Kansas City in less than eight hours. The captured steamboat was eventually returned to Splitlog, but was apparently never again used by him to haul cargo.

Throughout the war and in the years following, Splitlog continued selling his land. By 1870, his family had grown to include his wife and six children. Around that time he built a fine new brick home, the subject of this nomination, across the street from Holy Family church, then housed in a home just to the east of its present location. The new home was situated so as to afford Splitlog a view of his grist and saw mills and served as his last residence in Kansas. He retained ownership of the property and maintained business ties to his adopted hometown even after relocating with his family to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma).

After living only a few years in his new home, Splitlog's love of Native American culture led him to rejoin other tribal members who had settled on part of the Seneca reservation in what is now northeastern Oklahoma. These Wyandot had begun moving to Indian Territory in 1857, having felt disenfranchised and homeless during the years immediately following their arrival in Kansas Territory. Despite his commercial successes in the Kansas City area, Splitlog moved his family and his business operations to Indian Territory in 1874. He retained ownership of the home and surrounding 12 acres of land until selling it to the Orchard Place Company in 1888. An examination of the interior structure suggests that the present east and west wings, which give the house its Victorian appearance, are additions to the original house. Taken separately, the main block of the house appears Italianate in form, suggesting an earlier construction date than the Victorian form visible today.

Splitlog wasted no time establishing an "empire" in his new home. After building a house for himself and his family, he built both a sawmill and a gristmill. He set up a general store and established a ferry on a nearby river. He built factories to produce furniture, wagons, and coffins, all made with wood grown on his timberland. Splitlog continued building a town, naming it Cayuga Springs in honor of his former tribe and a boat that he had operated on Lake Michigan while a young man. The town grew to include a school founded by Splitlog; the teacher's salary paid by tuition subscriptions from the parents of the students.

As his fortune grew – by this time the press referred to Splitlog as "the Millionaire Indian" – Splitlog became aware of the mining industry beginning to develop in southwest Missouri. Convinced by a group of speculators that there was a rich gold vein located just across the border, Splitlog bought land and built a 50 mile long railroad south from Neosho to the newly platted town of Splitlog, Missouri. He had hopes to extend the road west to the town of Cayuga Springs. When the mines turned out to have been "salted," Splitlog realized he had been swindled, and eventually he returned to Kansas City to negotiate the sale of his Splitlog Railroad to the Kansas City Southern Railway Company.

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Mathias Splitlog House
Wyandotte Co., Kansas

In his last years, Splitlog was named a Chief of the Seneca nation. He became an advocate for Indian rights, working on behalf of the Seneca and Wyandot nations. He traveled to both Kansas City and Washington, D. C. to speak in favor of fair treatment for his fellow Native Americans. In January 1897, while on one such trip to Washington, Splitlog fell ill and died. He was returned to his home and buried next to his beloved wife in the cemetery adjoining the newly completed mission church building.

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Mathias Splitlog House
Wyandotte Co., Kansas

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Gowans, Alan: The Comfortable House: North American Suburban Architecture 1890 – 1930. Cambridge, Mass. And London, England: The MIT Press, 1986

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Hancks, Larry K.: Roots – The Historic and Architectural Heritage of Kansas City, Kansas. Kansas City, Kansas: the City of Kansas City, Kansas, 1976

Husted, James D., President (for) The Orchard Place Land Company; “Orchard Place, Wyandotte County, Kansas.” Subdivision plat dated May 15, 1888

McAlester, Virginia and Lee: A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1984

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Splitlog, Mathias: Warranty Deed to Orchard Place Land Company. Kansas City, Kansas, 1888

Taylor, Loren L.: The Consolidated Ethnic History of Wyandotte County. Kansas City, KS: Kansas City, Kansas Ethnic Council, 2000.

United State of America: Patent Grant to Mathias Splitlog. Washington, D.C., 1859

United Stated Decennial Census – 1860 Series: M653 Roll: 352 Page: 869

United Stated Decennial Census – 1870 Series: M593 Roll: 443 Page: 602

Primary location of additional data

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Mathias Splitlog House
Wyandotte Co., Kansas

Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Ks.

Mid-Continent Public Library, Independence, MO.

Wyandotte County Historical Society and Museum, Bonner Springs, KS.

Wyandotte County Register of Deeds, Wyandotte County, Courthouse, Kansas City, KS.

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Mathias Splitlog House
Wyandotte Co., Kansas

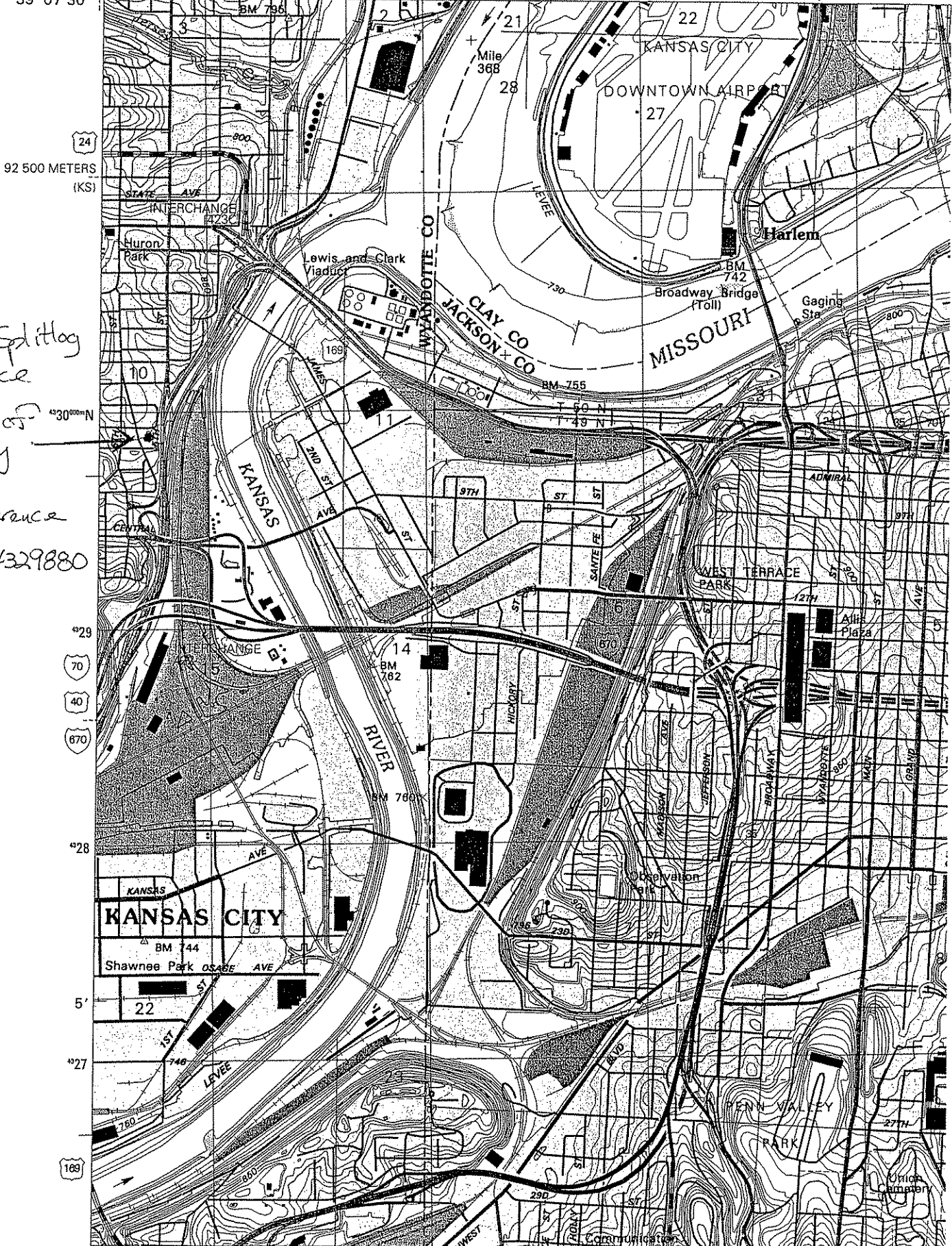
Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 23 and 24, Block 3, Orchard Place, a subdivision in the City of Kansas City, Wyandotte Co., Kansas

Boundary Justification

The boundaries selected have been associated with the house since filling of the Orchard Place subdivision plat in 1888. This structure is believed to have been built approximately twenty years prior to the platting of the subdivision, and lot boundary lines were set so as to place the structure on two adjacent lots.

94°37'30" 39°07'30" 60°00"E 692 500 METERS (KS) R 25 E R 33W 62 169 63 35' 9



Mathias Spittlog
residence
Center of
property
UTM Reference
15 359710 4329880