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## National Register of Historic Places received Inventory—Nomination Form date enter

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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

#### Site

7. Description

The Kelton house is located on a corner lot on a hill over looking the old United Methodist Church and the County Court House square in Hartville, Wright County, Missouri (see map and site plan). It is in a neighborhood of vernacular houses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Today it sits back 52 feet from Rolla Street, Highway 38, to the south and 42 feet from Church Street on the east.

#### Style

The house could be classified as Queen Anne, and described as a picturesque combination of elements, including beveled siding and various shingle patterns; a complex roof configuration, including mansards, and a variety of dormer types; bracketed cornices; and verandas with turned posts and spindelated cornices. The heavy plastic effects created by the roofs would likely be considered Eastlake, while the symmetry of the south facade, with its projecting center room topped by a high mansard gives a Second Empire feeling.

To insist on precision in this classification would, however, distort the concept of this particular building and also rural and small town late-Victorian architecture. The stylistic terminology and the elements they represent were not precise even in the pattern books and builders guides which were important in transmitting fashion at the time. These sources were used with even less precision.

The Kelton house represents a combination of stylistic features adapted to a number of pre-existing circumstances and influences. Included in these are an earlier structure incorporated in the finished home and a response to other residences in the community. This is not to say the builders were ignorant of style, to the contrary, they knew what they were about which was to build a fashionable house in terms of the last decade of the nineteenth century in Hartville, Missouri.

#### Exterior Description and Sequence of Construction

When we look at the Kelton house from the east, we see a unified two story mansarded frame house resting on coursed fieldstone foundations. Closer inspection reveals three distinct parts. There is the south end comprised of porches on either side of a single room below, and a two staged mansard above with dormers; a central section projects toward us with a single staged mansard and stained glass headed windows below and above; and finally, there is a northern single storied ell with a veranda.

Other exterior details are consistent with a three part sequence of construction, for instance, the triangular wall dormers above the two south verandas are abruptly interrupted by the south mansard. These

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet Kelton House

Item number

7

Page

remaining dormers echo three on the north side of the central block. This suggests the central block pre-existed the southern projection as well as the north ell.

Some interior investigation confirms what the exterior suggests. While the foundation looks uniform on the exterior, the central part forms a complete foundation with the south and north parts abutting it. The interior foundation walls of this central section are far more irregular as well. The north and south sections of the house have rough sawn floor joists on 16" centers, while the central section has widely and irregularly spaced log joists (bark still on, leveled on top). Photographs taken while the current owner was having parts of the building restored show that this central part of the house had a timber (mortise and tenon) frame while the north and south sections were balloon framed. Parts of this timber frame, of the north wall of the center sections, may still be seen from the attic above the ell. A photograph shows a  $3\frac{1}{4}$  x 8" hewn principle post and some of the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  x  $3\frac{1}{4}$  frame studs. outside walls of the central section of the house are thinner than those of the south and north sections because the studs in the timber frame were not so deep as the full dimensional rough sawn  $2 \times 4$ 's of the other frames. There are a few square nails present in these frame elements the ell attic as well.

#### Roof Framing Details

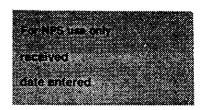
The attic space above the central section of the house contains a truss supporting the nearly flat portion of the mansard roof. This truss clearly is of a later date than the timber frame below. It is constructed of planed salvaged lumber, parts of which had been painted. This follows the pattern in the illustration. The construction details show a high level of craft.

In the attic space contained within the second stage of the mansard over the south section of the house, we see a quite different sort of framing. Here there is no truss; the steep pitch and small nearly level area of the final roof do not require one. Two by four rafters are irregularly spaced on approximately 24" centers and there is no bracing. The deck for the final roof is slightly raised above the top of the rafters. The nailers are irregular wide boards with splits. The construction shows a much lower level of craft, although the work is quite adequate for its purpose.

#### The Earlier Structure

While a number of questions are raised by this discussion of the sections of the Kelton house, some conclusions may be clearly drawn as

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Kelton House

Item number

7

Page 2

well. Moses Kelton is credited in the community with building the house in about 1895, and this is substantiated from other records. However, while he gave final form to all the house, he also incorporated within his new and fashionable house a timber frame structure which very likely had pre-existed the final house by some considerable time. From the dimensions of the foundation of that central section of the house with its log joists, we can see this vernacular timber frame structure was itself substantial for later nineteenth century homes in the area.

In the process of building the c. 1895 Kelton house, this original structure was completely transformed. As we have seen, even the roof was either replaced or completely altered. The differences between the framing in the central section attic and that of the south section indicate that the house may have been rebuilt in stages. A photograph made when the house was being restored shows a mortice with the tenon still in place but with the horizontal framing member cut off. This indicates there may have been a change in first floor ceiling height as well. Finally the windows, doors, siding and millwork are consistent with the c. 1895 date. Corner details show the current siding was all attached at the same time.

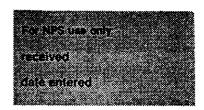
If we look at the plan of the timber framed central section of the Kelton house in the context of the numerous vernacular houses in the neighborhood, we may be able to develop an idea of what this earlier structure was like. The plan suggests a central passage I house or possibly some other substantial vernacular plan. The frame suggests two floors.

The neighborhood context contains a few double pen mirror image houses, but most of the neighborhood houses are of a central door type, either I or three pen types. The Methodist parsonage built just to the north of the Kelton house, on what was once the same property, is a large three pen house with central door. It is quite formal in detail for a vernacular home in the area. While, of course, there is little of the original structure left within the Kelton house, that such a substantial vernacular structure was incorporated into a fashionable late-Victorian home has interesting historical implication.

#### The Ell

Very likely at or near the same time the south and center sections of the house were given their final form, a two room single story ell with an east facing veranda was added to the north side of the center section. The exterior millwork of the ell conforms to the rest of the house. There are some steps up to the south and east porch between rock faced concrete block. These are certainly an addition as well.

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Kelton House

Item number

7

Page 3

#### Condition: Exterior

The exterior of the house is in excellent condition. The present owner has had the cedar shingle roofs restored; although a good deal of the original material remains and the elaborate original shingle patterns have been retained. This was possible because there was a photograph of the house likely dating from early in this century. Other repairs have been accomplished as well to bring the house to a high state of maintenance. At some point the southwest porch had been enclosed, and this has been removed. Concrete has been poured along the west wall of the ell where there is a drainage problem. The only exterior problem remaining to be solved is a drainage which is threatening the sill of the north end of the ell. At present the owner is working out a solution. Spindles have also been ordered to replace the rails and balustrades on the south porches.

#### Interior

The interior has been returned to excellent condition. All walls and ceilings were plaster over lath except in the ell where the original double-beaded tongue and groove paneling is used for walls and ceilings. Almost all the original interior wood work survives and is of high quality with finely detailed base moldings, chair rails, door and window frames, and bull's eye corners. All but one of the original doors in the south and center sections have transom lights. Nearly all hardware is original except for some door knobs, those that are missing are being replaced by ones of the appropriate period. All floors are pine boards. The walls are now papered and the wordwork largely finished dark in a manner consistant with the period of the house.

There is a particularly fine oval stair with turned newel post and spindles. This certainly dates from the 1890s construction and almost certainly was imported—as are, most likely, some finely patterned exterior doors. However, sources mentioned in Section 8 indicate much high quality millwork may have been produced locally.

Upstairs the interior walls have been set in from the exterior walls or the slope of the mansards. This has allowed space for the present owner to install sinks in niches, as the house now is used as a bed and breakfast. Thus the upstairs windows are all set out in niches as well.

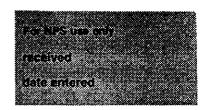
In the downstairs the ceiling height in the south room is 11' 8"; in the central rooms, 11' 4". In the downstairs the doors are all 78 x 32 inches, the stained glass trimmed windows  $81 \times 52$  inches and the 1-under-1 windows are 77 x 28 inches. Upstairs the ceiling height of the south room is 10' 4", the others are 10' 2". The doors upstairs exclusive of closets are 78 x 30 inches. The stained glass trimmed windows are 77 x 52 inches, and the 1-over-1 windows are 77 x 28 inches.

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#### **National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Kelton House

Item number

7

Page

#### Interior Modifications

A modern Pullman kitchen and bath have been installed in the ell. modern shower and lavatory have been installed upstairs, as well as the bowls in the rooms. The house has recently been plumbed, wired, and a heating and cooling system added as would be consistent with the modern functions as a bed and breakfast. All this work has been carefully done in keeping with the turn-of-the-century theme.

#### Adjacent Structure

There is a typical "smoke house" adjacent to the ell on the northwest which is in poor condition and which the owner plans to repair. Further to the northwest is a small shed on a concrete foundation of fairly recent construction.

#### Summary

The Kelton house began as a substantial vernacular timber frame house of two floors and likely a central passage I plan. In the mid 1890s this pre-existing structure was completely transformed and incorporated in what would have locally been a fashionable high Victorian house of over twice the original size. This 1890s house survived with only minor change until near the present when it was brought to a high level of maintenance and transformed with minimal modification into a bed and breakfast.

Abstract, Lots 2 and 3, Block 3, Hartville, Wright County, Missouri. Abstract #42116.

#### 8. Significance

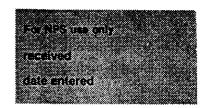
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#### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Kelton House is eligible for listing on the National Register according to Criteria A C in that it has both architectural and social significance. Under criterion C, it is architecturally significant because it is a fine example of a late-Victorian decorated home, one of very few in a town containing many more prosaic vernacular structures of its same period. This house takes on added architectural interest because incorporated within it is an older timber frame, and thus it represents a process of adaptation. Under

Criterion A, this house is socially significant because in its siting, scale and fashionable elaboration, relative to neighboring houses, it served as a vehicle for a social assertion. Its builder and subsequent owners, clearly individuals of some pretense or substance within the economic and social life of this small Ozark county seat, used it as a statement of position. That social statement made architecturally can still be understood because of the high level of integrity of the house in a context which still retains much of its turn-of-the-century vernacular character.

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Kelton House

Item number

8

Page

#### Historical and Physical Background

Hartville, the county seat of Wright, County, was established in 1841 on Woods Fork of the Gasconade River.1 The early history of the county is unclear because county records were at least partly destroyed twice in the nineteenth century—once when the courthouse was damaged during the Civil War and again when it burned in 1897.2 However, in its broad focus, that history was similar to that in other southwestern Missouri counties, as an example may illustrate.

The Regulators (Slickers) were vigilantes common in ante-bellum southern Missouri, who whipped their victims--sometimes to death. were active in Wright County in the late 1840s. A reading of local history, particularly that of the 1889 history of Wright County, with some understanding of southern Missouri history gives one the sense that in the late 1840s Wright County occasionaly took on the nature of two armed camps with the Slickers on one side and the county government with a posse under the sheriff on the other. 3 Although their specific definition is unclear, there were local issues which resulted in an undercurrent of conflict from the settlement of Wright County until they were given some resolution at the time of the Civil War. Although a significant battle in that war was fought at Hartville, the account of the war years in the 1889 history seems to suggest that it seemed almost a natural catastrophe like the tornados which also destroyed a good deal in the county during the nineteenth century, while much smaller but also much more local incidents were given a much larger human reality.4 The Civil War seems to have caused at least a great enough resolution of the underlying conflicts for Hartville to grow. The years from the Civil War until World War I were. in local terms at least, years of significant growth in population and economic development. After World War I thingsleveled and declined. 1895 county population was greater than the population today. the population was about 4,400, in 1888 it was estimated to be 15,000, in 1895 it was 20,000, and today it's around 16,200.5 The town of Hartville now has a population of about 600, the same as in 1900, and the amount of pre- and post- World War II construction together with that which is more recent clearly indicates the population of the town has been stable or declining for some time.6

Hartville is in rolling country and is mostly on the eastern slope of a hill which falls off to the Woods Fork of the Gasconade River where several mills were important in the nineteenth century. The county courthouse square is on this sloping ground a few blocks west of the river. The square is bounded on the east, the north and partly on the south by business and on the west by residences.

Moving up the hill to the west and north, we find the old Methodist Universalist Church building. This is the oldest church building in town

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet

Kelton House

Item number 8

Page 2

dating from 1880.8 It sits well back on a large corner site. Directly across the street from the church property to the west is the Kelton House. It is sited to look down on the courthouse and the north end of the business area, it is clearly visable from the north end of the town square.

#### Social and Architectural Significance

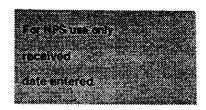
The Kelton house is and was surrounded by the single story, storyand-a-half, and two story vernacular houses which fill the area west and northwest of the square. Many of these houses date from when the Kelton house was completed or before. These houses are commonly of a central passage or three pen sort with five or seven bay facades organized around a central door. There are a few mirror image double pen houses as well. These vernacular houses are both larger and more elaborate than the normal southern Missouri small town or rural house of the nineteenth century. One has the sense we are seeing a response to the county seat location. The Kelton house as already described stands out from and above these already relatively substantial homes by reason of site, height, scale, and elaborate detail. Architecture was used in Hartville to make a social statement. The Kelton house is making its statement assertively in site, scale, design and detail. The house retains today a great integrity and so does its surroundings to the point that this statement within the special fabric of the community is still very clear.

#### Associative Significance

Moses Kelton came to Hartville from Springfield in 1895 to build a store on the square and a home for his family which included his wife, children and grandmother. His mother Maryline Kelton may have had some financial control because she bought the property and Moses acted as trustee for her when the property was sold in 1901. The house soon came to be the dramatic statement described and the store, which was frame and no longer exists, was also described as large. Moses Kelton was later described as a "big man who believed in building big," by a later occupant of the home. He certainly seems to have come to project himself into the economic life of the town then just arriving at its peak.

The house certainly still gives a sense of fashionably elegant overstatement, if somewhat outdated, in a context of the substantial vernacular. One wonders if Moses Kelton was ever really integrated with the community. In November of 1901, Maryline Kelton sold the property for \$2500--a considerable increase over the \$150 paid for the property in 1895--with Moses acting on her behalf, and the family left town. 12 However flamboyant in its context, the Kelton house had local precedent. Its mansard roofs were its dominant feature. The community's financially influential member, Erben Casador Steele had built his mansion sited high above the town on

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Kelton House

Item number

8

Page 3

the hill to the east of the river. 13 That mansion, built in 1890, was in a mansarded style. Certainly it stood long enough to establish a local sense of fashion. 14 Mr. Steele had come to town in 1869 and had in 1890 founded the Wright County Bank "entirely with his own personal assets. "15 His principal business was stock raising, and at one time he owned over 2,000 acres in the area. There are a few other high style homes in the community from the 1890s as well, although none were so assertive as the Kelton home.

After the Keltons sold the property, it was subject to a number of speculative transactions until it was acquired by Joe S. Lathrom in November of 1902.16 Joe was a member of an old Scotch-Irish family from the area who moved into Hartville to become recorder of deeds and then an officer of the Bank of Hartville.17

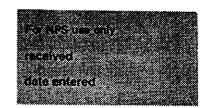
The Lathroms seem not to have made any major modifications to the house during the ten years of their occupancy. This is likely when the house really came to be considered part of the community.

In 1912 Roy E. Curtis acquired the house for himself and his bride of a year, Alvah. Roy was a farmer, businessman-speculator who was to become successful in the financial affairs of the community. Alvah (Carter) Curtis had been born in Hartville and for a time had lived just across the street from the Kelton house in which she and her husband were to live until sometime in the 1930s. 19 In 1938 Roy and Alvah moved to Lebanon, Missouri, where he became an officer in the Lebanon Finance Company. 20

From the late 1930s until close to the present there were a series of transactions involving the property which involved partners and family members and appeared to be largely financial in nature.21 Sometimes the owners seem to have occupied the house and sometimes not. In 1982 the current owners, Charles and Elizabeth Roberts, acquired the house and began the process of restoring it to function as a bed and breakfast.

In summary, Moses Kelton, an entrepreneur from outside Hartville, built his prominently sited and fashionable late-Victorian home as a social statement upon entering the commercial life of the town. In so doing he incorporated an existing structure, itself substantial, within his new house. He likely did this because he wanted that particular site. The fact that the old frame was retained and a great deal of salvage material was used also tells us something about the building practices of the time. The subsequent owners up through the early 1930s continue to be people of financial and social importance in the community, although the community slips from being a local trading center to a sleepy country county seat. The Kelton house thus remains relatively unchanged and a significant reminder of a time of much greater pretension.

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Kelton House

Item number

8

Page 4

#### Significance of the Earlier Structure

The Kelton house certainly derives almost all its architectural significance from the c. 1895 construction. Its social significance largely develops from that construction in the context of Hartville during the time from construction until the 1930s. However, as was explained in the description section, parts of the structure predated the 1890s structure, still some attention should be paid to it, particularly because it helps us interpret the 1895 building.

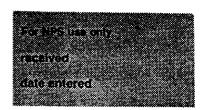
To arrive at even a tentative construction date for this earlier structure requires some analysis as no courthouse records survive from so early, and the abstract makes no mention of it. An 1866 reconstruction of the town plat discussed in the 1889 history does not mention Lot 3 at all, while Lot 2 was indicated as owned by J. W. Rider. This corresponds to the abstract.<sup>22</sup> The house is located on Lot 3, and the abstract indicates it was owned by the county. In 1872 Napoleon Garner acquired Lot 3 for \$55 and Lot 2 the following year for \$60.23 He may have built or been planning to build on the property by 1875 when he used the land as well as other property to secure a loan for \$591.84.24 He lost the property through default the following year and it was acquired by John Crockett and wife the following year for \$60.5 They used it to secure a \$200 loan--more than enough to build a house at the time. 26 In 1881 the land was sold to James Beaumont, county assessor, for \$165 to cover debts of John Crokett, deceased.27 In 1882 the trustees of the Methodist Church acquired the property from Beaumont (himself a Methodist) for \$150.28 It is likely that a house had been constructed on the property already by this time as this price, as well as the \$165 paid to Crockett's estate is too high for two unimproved lots at the time.

It seems likely that the original structure was constructed in the mid-1870s by Crockett, or possibly Garner, and that the Methodist Church acquired the house with the land to use as a parsonage for their new church just to the south. The 1889 history states that even then the records of the church prior to 1886 could not be found, and they certainly are not available now, but that same history states that in 1888 the church owned "one church building and one parsonage" valued at \$1900.29

Today a nicely detailed three pen vernacular parsonage, already described, stands immediately north of the Kelton house on what was the north halves of Lots 2 and 3. This structure is certainly of a latter type (balloon frame) and date then the timber frame part of the Kelton house.

It seems very reasonable to conclude, without absolute certainty however, that the church used the forerunner to the Kelton house as a

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Kelton House

Item number 8

Page :

parsonage in the 1880s, and that it was the parsonage in the 1889 history. Sometime after they built a new one to the north; and in 1895, the church (as indicated by the abstract) sold the south halves of Lots 2 and 3 together with a timber frame house to Maryline Kelton for \$150.

Certainly there was other property available, and so the Keltons' choice of this site with a structure already present is interesting. No other available site had such a presence relative to the square and business district of Hartville. Thus the choice added force to the architectural-social statement the Keltons made with their home. It also allowed them to incorporate an earlier structure within their new and fashionable home.

#### NOTES

1History of Laclede, Camden, Dallas, Webster, Wright, Texas, Pulaski, Phelps and Dent Counties, Missouri, (Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889) reprint 1974, p. 370.

 $^2{\rm Emogene}$  Fuge, "Historic Hartville," unpublished manuscript for a talk given to the Donelson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, N.D., p. 3.

3<u>History</u>, pp. 367-9.

<sup>4</sup>History, p. 358.

<sup>5</sup>History, p. 359, historic figures. Official Manual, Missouri 1983-4, Kenneth M. Johnson, ed., p. 1200, for 1980 census figures.

<sup>6</sup>Howard L. Conard, Editor, <u>Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri</u>, (New York and St. Louis: Southern history Company, Haldeman, and Conard and Co., 1901) Vol. III p. 199. The current figure is the estimate used by the town.

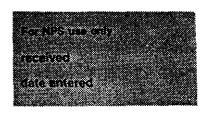
7<u>History</u>, p. 409.

<sup>8</sup>Cornerstone.

<sup>9</sup>Abstract, South half Lots 2 and 3, Block 3, Hartville, Wright County, Missouri, Abstract #42116. Title number 2278, and Alvah Curtis, "Letter to C. R. Roberts," May, 1982.

10Abstract

### National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Kelton House

Item number 8

Page 6

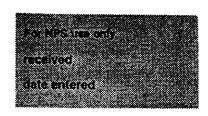
- 11Curtis, "Letter".
- 12Abstract, and Curtis, "Letter".
- 13Robert Howe Steele, "The Steele Family: From Blackwater to Hartville," unpublished manuscript dated Dec. 25, 1969, p. 3.
  - <sup>14</sup>Steele.
  - 15Steele, p. 2 of section on generation III.
  - 16Abstract.
- 17"Bicentennial Feature; Lathrons Migrated from Kentucky," Mansfield Missor and Wright County Republican, April 8, 1976.
- 18Alvah (Mrs. Roy E.) Curtis, "Letter to the Editor," Mansfield Mirror and Wright County Republican, Feb., 19, 1976, and Abstract.
  - $^{19}$ Curtis, "Letter to the Editor".
  - 20Conversation with Charles Roberts August, 1984.
  - 21Abstract and conversation with Roberts.
  - 22Abstract, and History, p. 409.
  - 23Abstract, History, p. 411.
  - 24Abstract.
  - 25Abstract.
- $26 \underline{Abstract}$ , A copy of the costs from a subscription list for the Hartville Christian Church, 1898, shows they built the church building for under \$700.
  - 27Abstract.
  - 28Abstract.
  - 29 History, p. 406.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets, 9.

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10. Geographic	cal Data		
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11. Form Prepa	ared By		
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organization Southwest Mi	ssouri State	e Universitydate N	November 6, 1985
street & number 743 S. Fr	emont	teleph	one 862-8571
city or town Springfield		state	Missouri
12. State Histo	ric Pres	ervation Of	ficer Certification
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665), i hereby nominate this proper according to the criteria and proced	ty for inclusion in the dures set forth by the	he National Régister and	
State Historic Preservation Officer		Director Departme	nt of Natural, Resources, and
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For NPS use only I hereby certify that this prop	erty is included in t	he National Register	date
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## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Kelton House

Item number

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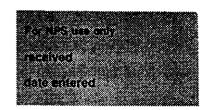
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## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Kelton House

Item number 10

Page 1

#### Verbal Boundary

South half of lots 2 and 3, Block 3 (except the west 60 feet thereof) and south 20 feet of the north half of lots 2 and 3, Block 3 (except the west 86 feet of said south 20 feet). This on the northwest corner of Church and Rolla (Missouri 38) Streets. This is the land owned by Charles Roberts and it contains the house, outbuildings, and surrounding landscaping.

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Kelton House

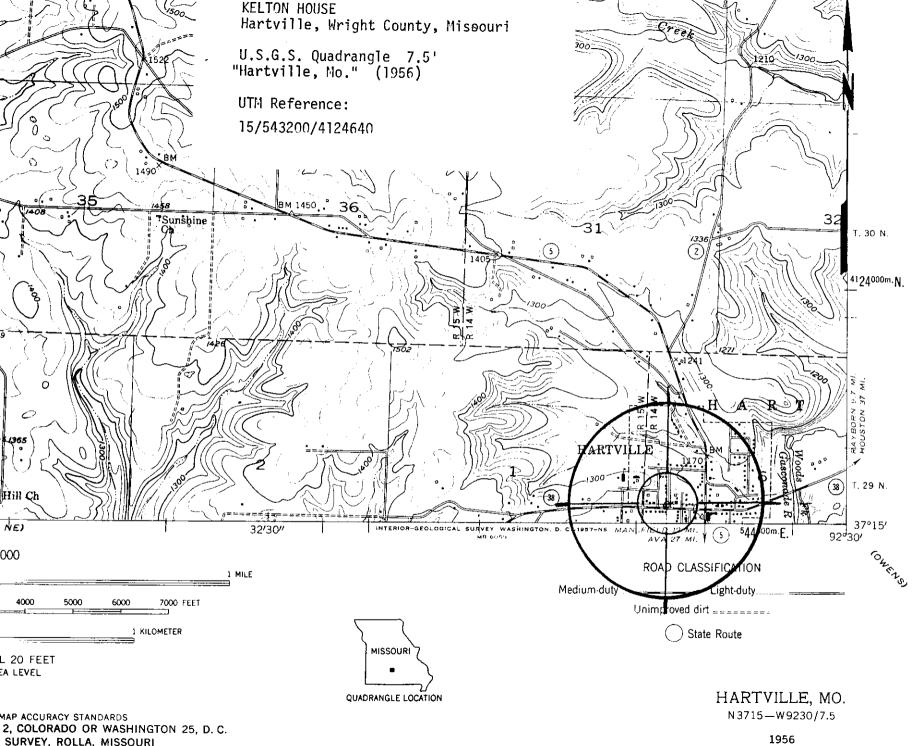
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11

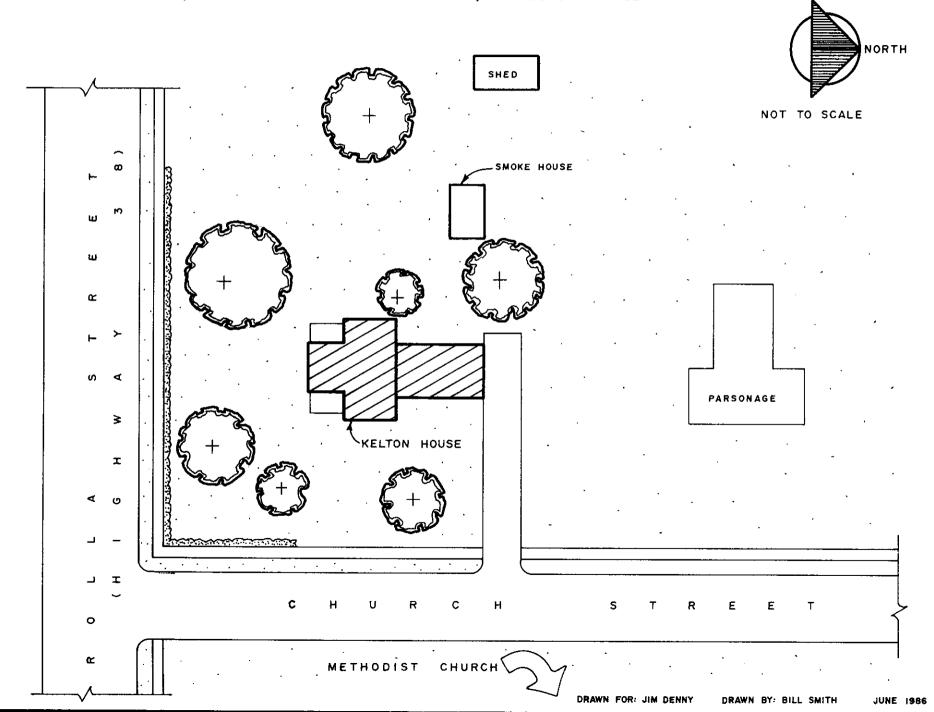
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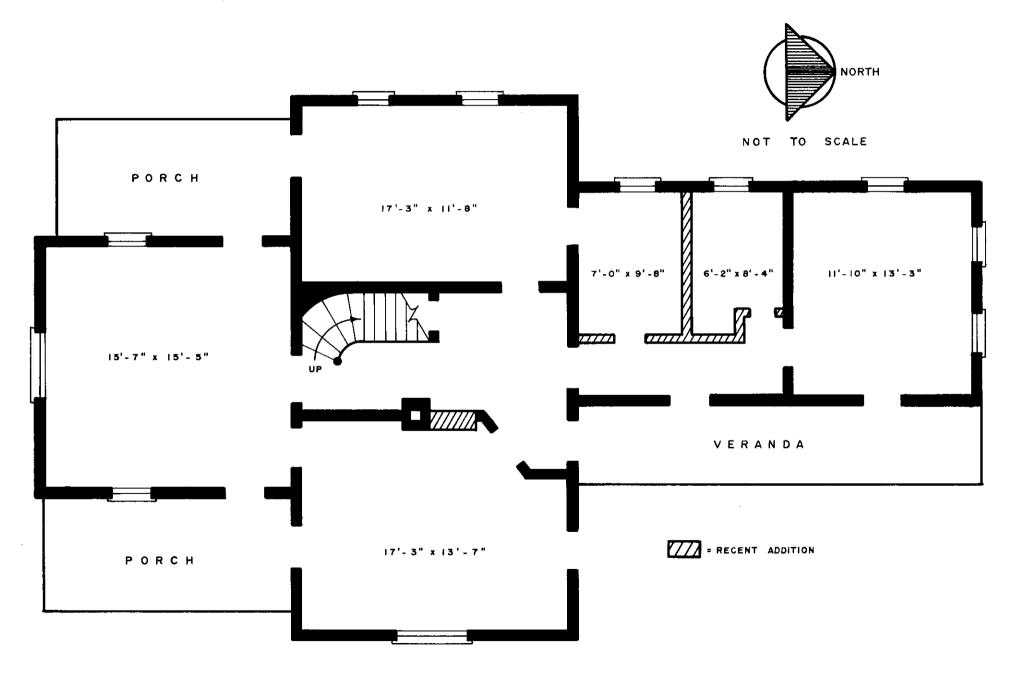
James M. Denny
 Chief, Survey and Registration
 and State Contact Person
 Department of Natural Resources
 Historic Preservation Program
 9th Floor, Jefferson Building
 P. O. Box 176
 Jefferson City, Missour 65102
 Date: August 18, 1986

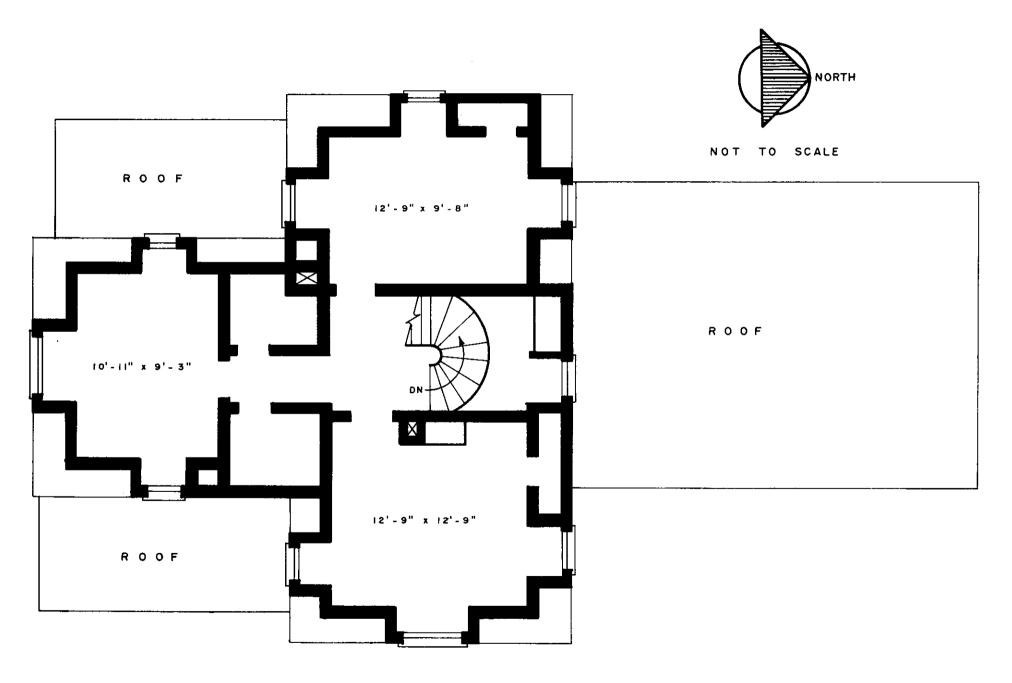
Telephone: 314/751-5376

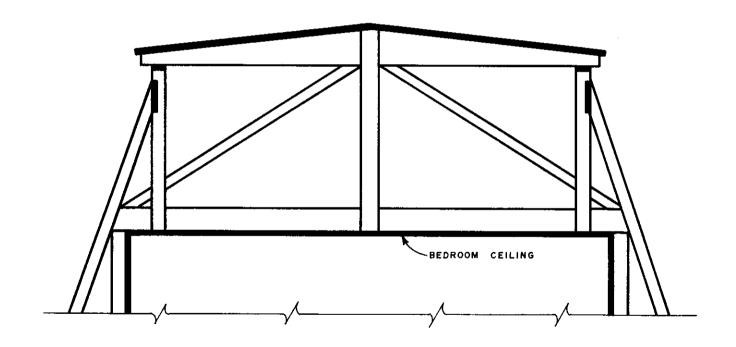


SURVEY, ROLLA, MISSOURI SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST









NOT TO SCALE





























