

Willow Springs Township

INTENSIVE SURVEY REPORT



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The Old German Baptist Brethren Church is still active in Willow Springs today. Their meeting place, constructed in the late nineteenth century, has been expanded over the years. KHRI. Photo by Susan Ford.

Like most places, Willow Springs Township is more than a collection of its parts. It's not just a grouping of buildings – or even a series of farmsteads. It is a community that has changed little in the past 165 years. But it is also a cultural landscape that is facing development pressures, uncertainties in landowner succession, and disconnection with its own heritage. It is the goal of this study to explore what makes this place a community and identify ways to preserve its unique heritage and character.

We began our intensive survey of Willow Springs with a public meeting on April 27, 2019. We presented our credentials, visited with property owners, and arranged for follow-up meetings. On May 16 and 17, we began meeting with property owners. They were very generous with their time–

giving us tours of farms, houses, and cemeteries; sharing family stories; and demonstrating their passion for their home places.

Throughout May and June, we returned to meet with Willow Springs residents. And by listening to them, we began to develop an unorthodox approach to our project. We learned early on that the individual buildings had been well documented through past projects – including historic surveys conducted by Susan Ford and Dale Nimz. The boxes had been checked – and the standard process had been used to evaluate the properties for eligibility for historic designation.

But the review of this documentation left us wondering. What made Willow Springs a community? How did these properties

fit into a broader historical context? How could this context help us understand the significance of this cultural landscape? And how could we help facilitate the preservation of this landscape regardless of whether or not individual buildings or farmsteads fit within the confines of preservation programs?

Through the process, we confirmed what we already knew. That preservation is different in rural communities. First and foremost, these are communities where little has changed over time. Rather than replacing buildings with new ones, resourceful farmers, often descendants of the original settlers, made incremental repairs and changes to their houses and barns. Like most rural communities, this was a place whose culture was built on a handshake. For 165 years, people have trusted that their neighbors espouse a certain set of values – a rural code. Your neighbors, who shared your Protestant farmer work ethic, would maintain their property as well as you did. And if your neighbors sold their land, they would likely sell to someone who would use the land in the same way it had been used for many generations – for grazing and planting.

It was nice that Lawrence and Baldwin City were nearby – but they had cultures of their own. Until the mid-twentieth century, no one could have anticipated that these places and their cultures would begin encroaching on yours. For some, the changes were welcome. Improved highways made it easier to get to town. And land sold for real estate development could bring more than ag land. As crop prices declined and technology created corporate farming, families could no longer rely solely on farming income. Besides,

through the GI Bill and other programs, a college education was suddenly within reach.

This study is intended to answer another set of questions. How do we protect this cultural landscape in a way that is feasible for rural property owners? Are there ways to address development pressures? How can we educate newcomers about the social contract required for sustaining a rural agricultural community? How can we facilitate smart growth without destroying the elements that define the making of Kansas as a free state?

What we learned by speaking with the residents of Willow Springs Township is that they take great pride in their heritage. Many have invested significant sums of money over time in the maintenance of their properties. Many of these projects are compatible with historic preservation principles. A good number of these property owners are in a period of transition – near retirement age. But even those who have spent decades thoughtfully preserving their historic structures are leery of government programs.

Individual properties and buildings within Willow Springs Township have been well documented in past studies, including reconnaissance surveys conducted by Dale Nimz and Susan Ford. After visiting with local property owners, we determined that more thorough photographic documentation would not be likely for properties where access was denied us. Where we were invited to meet with property owners, we were able to enhance photo documentation of individual buildings, as well as primary document

research, family histories, etc. This additional documentation was added to twenty-three survey records in the Kansas Historic Resources Inventory Database.

Architectural Historian Dennis Domer explored the vernacular landscape of Willow Springs Township. By the time of his work in the 1990s, he argued that this was a disappearing prairie landscape. His focus was on geography and the physical environment, where neighborhoods were defined by churches and relative distances from farmsteads to other physical manifestations of community. Domer argues that “Distance, religious

affiliation, ethnicity, intermarriage, a decentralized economic system, and territoriality separated these people into their respective groups well into the 20th Century.”¹

Whereas early studies have focused on the differences and separation of these neighborhoods, a review of the historical research reveals a more nuanced view of the township as a cohesive community whose shared

¹ Dennis Domer, “Commons on the Prairie,” M.A. Thesis, The George Washington University, 1990; Vernacular Architecture Forum : making urban and rural landscapes on the Prairie Plains : Lawrence, Kansas, May 22-25, 1996; field guide for May 23-24, 1996.



The Churchbaugh Barn was constructed ca. 1920, when farmers were flush with cash following World War I. KHRI.
Photo by Susan Ford.

of these neighborhoods, a review of the historical research reveals a more nuanced view of the township as a cohesive community whose shared values transcended neighborhoods and religious denominations. For instance, we learned that the decline in the number of congregations in Willow Springs had little to do with population decline (population has remained steady since the first decade of settlement) and what Domer calls the “dissolution of community” – and more to do with mergers among denominations as settlers became further removed from the cultures and traditions of their ancestor’s homelands and identified themselves simply as American farmers.

In honor of the wishes of the property owners of Willow Springs Township, this report focuses on the “why” and the “how.” In other words, why is Willow Springs Township significant, and how can we develop and employ creative tools to preserve the heritage of this place?

This report includes a detailed historical context, a summary of our findings, and our recommendations for preserving the character of Willow Springs Township.

HISTORIC CONTEXT



Note: *This Historic Context could be used as historic context for future nominations. We have focused on the earliest history of the Township because many of the properties we evaluated are from this early time period and it clearly defined the culture of the community moving forward.*

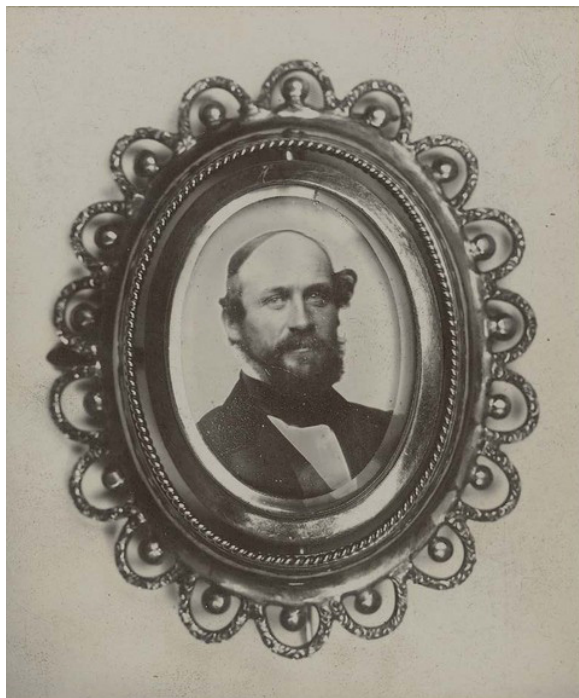
If you read the biographies of the white pioneers of Willow Springs Township, you'll see references to some of the most defining moments in the state's early history. These were people who were grateful to have conquered the ravages of bushwhackers, confederate forces, and grasshoppers. In short order, the survivors transcended their disparate religious and cultural origins to build an agricultural community on the shared values of moral certitude, hard work, and self-reliance.

The indelible events between the Kansas Nebraska Act (1854) and the end of the Civil War (1865) often overshadow an earlier time - when those who would meet on the battlefield over slavery first

crossed paths. In the decade before the Kansas Nebraska Act and the founding of Lawrence, they blazed west along an ancient trade route they redubbed the Santa Fe Trail (1821-1866). Six years before Kansas became a territory, F. X. Aubrey, a French Canadian freighter, recorded his encounters with other explorers who would later meet at the ballot box or battlefield. In Council Grove, Aubrey met proslavery politician Joseph Lane on his way to serve as Governor of Oregon. He met General Sterling Price at Pawnee Fork near Fort Larned. And at Willow Springs, a watering stop on the trail, he met Charles Robinson, a Massachusetts-born adventurer who forded the prairies and mountains to California and Santa Fe in the aftermath of the Mexican-American War.¹

In 1854, Charles Robinson had only been back in his home state of Massachusetts for three years. But this staunch abolitionist could not resist the call to work for the free-state cause in Kansas Territory. He

¹ "Latest News from Santa Fe," *Boon's Lick Times* (Fayette, Missouri), 30 Sep 1848, 2.



Charles Robinson was one of the many figures in territorial history who were introduced to Kansas - and Willow Springs - in the 1840s on the Santa Fe Trail. *Kansas Historical Society.*

returned to Kansas, where he established the headquarters of the New England Emigrant Aid Company in Lawrence and would eventually serve as the new state's first governor.²

Although Robinson and other early Douglas County settlers had explored the western frontier, most of the predominantly urban free-state settlers, were ill-prepared for frontier life. In particular, they lacked the farming experience essential to survival in sparsely populated rural America. Subsidized by New England merchants, free-state colonists, who had travelled by steam ship from St. Louis to Kansas City, located their cities, including Lawrence, along what they believed would be the next great trade route: the Kansas River. (They were sorely disappointed after a few

steamboats ran aground).

Navigable rivers were essential for those New Englanders envisioning a city upon a hill - but not for the subsistence farmers who came to populate the region surrounding Lawrence, including Willow Springs Township. Still, in these volatile times in the powder keg that was early Douglas County, farmers would need more than the standard yeoman's work ethic. In choosing to live near a high-profile abolitionist stronghold, they would be placing their lives on the line. And so, Willow Springs attracted conscientious farmers who measured success in cultivated acres and nonviolent resistance. Many of them came from two particular groups: Brethren and Methodists.

The founding of Douglas County coincided with the westward expansion of Wesleyan Methodism. In the 1840s, a group of northern Methodists took action to advance social reforms including abolitionism, pacifism, women's rights, and temperance. They were active in the Underground Railroad, hosted the Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls in 1848, and played a major role in nineteenth-century political life. As early as the 1780s, the Methodist Church had adopted the stance that slavery was counter to "the laws of God, man, and nature." But Southern congregants continued to use their interpretation of scripture to justify the "peculiar institution."³

By the 1840s, the Methodist church was irreconcilably divided over the slavery. And by the time of the Kansas-Nebraska

² "Charles Robinson," *Kansaspedia*, Kshs.org.

³ For more information about the United Methodist Church, see their website umc.org.

Act, northern Methodists were inextricably tied to the newly formed Republican Party and the admission of Kansas to the Union as a free state. In 1858, Kansas pioneers in Palmyra Township, the township adjacent to Willow Springs, established the state's first university, a Methodist institution named after New England Methodist scholar Bishop Osmon Cleander Baker. Soon, abolitionist Methodists would be taking credit for the 1860 election of Republican President Abraham Lincoln. And Lincoln appears to have validated this claim. It is said that Lincoln was so grateful for the support of Methodists that he donated \$100 towards the construction of Baker University's Parmenter Hall. It was the only donation he ever gave to an institution of higher learning.⁴

⁴ Brian D. Lawrence, "The relationship between the Methodist church, slavery and politics, 1784-1844" (2018). Rowan University Thesis; "Lincoln Played Part in Early Baker University," *Topeka Capital*, 10 February 1936. "Honest Abe Lincoln was generous, too," *Press and Sun-Bulletin* (Binghamton, New York), 7 October 1977. This folkloric donation was documented by Ray Firestone and Virginia Markham during the restoration of Baker's Parmenter Hall in the 1970s. They found a ledger showing a \$100 donation from the sitting U. S. President: "An entry dated Feb. 8, 1864, reads: 'Cash Acct. - Donation to College - Pres. Lincoln - 100.00.' The story goes that the contribution was solicited by William H. Schofield, an agent for the university, who waited three days

In the abolitionist movement, Methodists (particularly northern Methodists) followed the lead of other protestant reformers, particularly the Quakers and Anabaptists, pacifists who sought refuge from religious persecution in Europe. Among those who came to Kansas early were congregants of the Church of the Brethren, folks of German/Dutch descent who settled in Pennsylvania for generations before making their way to Kansas via the Old Northwest (Indiana, Illinois, Ohio). Brethren culture espouses "malice toward none" and simple living, eschewing classes and divisions. Like the Methodists, Brethren took an early stand against slavery, adopting the following edict at its annual meeting in 1782: "It has been unanimously considered that it cannot be permitted in any wise by the church, that a member should or could purchase negroes, or keep them as slaves." In 1812, they took a harder stand: "Concerning the slave trade and slaveholding; It was considered that it is a

to see Lincoln." Schofield was an Methodist industrialist who was the financial agent for Baker.



Known as a free-state stronghold, Willow Springs was included in this flyer advertising a "Mass Free State Convention" in July 1857. *Kansas Historical Society.*

simple living, eschewing classes and divisions. Like the Methodists, Brethren took an early stand against slavery, adopting the following edict at its annual meeting in 1782: “It has been unanimously considered that it cannot be permitted in any wise by the church, that a member should or could purchase negroes, or keep them as slaves.” In 1812, they took a harder stand: “Concerning the slave trade and slaveholding; It was considered that it is a most grievous evil, and should be abolished as soon as possible.”¹

Given their devotion to social reform and their agricultural prowess, it is no surprise that Brethren made their way to southern Douglas County. They were on the front lines of the free-state cause in a place that needed farmers. Under the leadership of Jacob Ulrich, a group of colonists from Indiana established the territory’s first Brethren Church on the Cottonwood River twenty miles south of Council Grove. In early 1857, believing that the border violence had subsided, the colonists followed the Santa Fe Trail back east to Hickory Point, eight miles south of Lawrence. “This is a pleasant and fertile country,” Ulrich wrote in the widely distributed Brethren newspaper, “the climate mild and good for a prairie country and it is hoped that peace, one of the greatest comforts and blessings of this world, is once more restored in Kansas.” In Willow Springs, they would join like-



minded farmers, like James Skaggs, who “lost everything except the clothes he had on and bedding” and had been held for nine days by border ruffians during the border war because of his “abolition sentiments.” By 1860, there were

40-50 Brethren families in Kansas. At Hickory Point in Willow Springs Township, they bore the names Ulrich, Rothrock, Studebaker, Keeny, Markley, Hoover and Kinzie.²

The Methodists, the Brethren, and all who came to Willow Springs Township yearned for peace and the prosperity that could only come from hard work. But life in Willow Springs Township was about to get even harder. By 1860, the population of Willow Springs Township had reached 933 – and the industrious farmers had cultivated 7402 acres of land. With the help of 239 oxen, 365 milk cows, and 556 other cattle, they were not only growing their own food, but also producing enough excess (100,000 bushels of corn) to sell and trade. Then the drought, the worst ever recorded on the prairie, came. With no water for their livestock or crops, Kansans faced famine. It was only with relief from their eastern friends and family who understood that the failure of Kansas farmers could mean the failure of the free-state cause, that these farm families survived.³

The Civil War further tested the farm

² 1860 U. S. Census.

³ Ibid. “The German Element,” *The Weekly News-Democrat* (Emporia, Kansas), 19 October 1861.

¹ For more on the history and doctrine of the Brethren Church, see brethren.org.



Ulrich led a group of German Baptists to Kansas. They were the first farmers who supplied the free-state community of Lawrence. *Kansas Historical Society.*

families of Willow Springs, whose distance from Lawrence was no guarantee of protection. Some compromised their pacifist beliefs and joined the state militia. But their views on slavery were well known by Missouri Ruffians who had driven abolitionists from Missouri into Kansas in the years leading up to the war. After their infamous sacking of Lawrence in 1863, William Quantrill and his men wreaked havoc on rural Douglas County. They destroyed the town of Brooklyn in nearby Palmyra Township (a hub for the Wesleyans) and set fire to homes and buildings on area farms.⁴ Among their

⁴ "Not Far Away, a Town that Never Recovered," *Lawrence Journal-World*, 18 August 2013.

targets were Methodist Minister Hugh Fisher (Lawrence), an early financial agent for Baker University, Jacob Ulrich and Abraham Rothrock. Although their sons and son-in-law managed to rescue Jacob Ulrich and his wife, the bushwhackers set their farmstead ablaze. While attempting to reason with the guerrillas and protect his family, Abraham Rothrock was shot. Like Ulrich's, Rothrock's property was destroyed; but he managed to survive gunshot wounds to his head, neck, shoulders and chin. The raiders destroyed the property of James Gleason, a Methodist who farmed 160 acres near Pleasant Grove. The property of another Methodist, I. L. Baker who farmed near Media, was spared only "by the timely arrival of troops under Lane."⁵

The people whose culture was born of persecution survived the war. And their perseverance would be rewarded with peace and the simple farm life they had sought for generations. By 1870, Willow Springs boasted a population of 1163, divided among 214 families. All but fourteen of these households were farm families – with services from one lawyer, two doctors and two clergy.⁶ And the original settlers were joined by other like-minded farmers. In 1872, the German Evangelical Church – a denomination established as a "German translation of the Methodist Discipline and Articles of Faith,"⁷ built a building at Worden on land donated by Pennsylvania native farmer Henry Fager. Over time, three of the township's principal denominations – United Brethren, German Evangelical, and Methodist – would come

⁵ "I. L. Baker," Cutler, *History of Kansas*, (Andreas: Chicago, 1883).

⁶ 1870 U. S. Census.

⁷ Don W. Holter, *The Lure of Kansas: The Story of Evangelicals and United Brethren 1853 - 1968* (Baldwin City, Kansas: Kansas West Commission on Archives and History, 1990), 11.

to worship under the same roof. In 1946, the Evangelicals and the United Brethren joined to become the Evangelical United Brethren Church. Then, in 1968, the Evangelical United Brethren merged with the Methodists to form the United Methodist Church.⁸

St. John's Evangelical Church (now United Church of Christ) also has historical ties to the area's many German settlers. The church was established in 1868 as St. John's Evangelical Church. The Evangelical Synod of North America, which was established by German Evangelical pastors in Missouri in 1841, traced its roots to the 1817 unification of Lutheran and Reformed Churches in Germany. Over time, this sect, as those mentioned above, merged with others, including Congregational Churches, to become the United Church of Christ in 1957.⁹

It is important to note that early settlers were not all of German descent. Survey properties included stately homes owned by immigrants from France and Ireland. Auguste Jacot came to the United States from France with his parents in 1844, and came to Kansas in 1857. In 1863, Jacot entered the restaurant and confectionery business in Leavenworth. Given the timing of his move, it is possible that Jacot's farm was affected by Quantrill's Raid in 1863. He

⁸ See <https://wordenumc.com/about-us>. Accessed online 29 June 2019.

⁹ For more on the history and doctrine of the United Church of Christ, see their website at ucc.org.



A photo of Suzanah Flory and her husband. Suzanah was a daughter of Willow Springs pioneer Jacob Ulrich. Photo appeared in a 2000 article about the Ulrich Family (see inventory record).

returned to Willow Springs in 1871 to operate a fruit farm. In his early days in Kansas, Jacot identified as a Unitarian. Thomas McQuillon, an Irish immigrant, settled in Willow Springs in 1856. After his death in 1894, he was buried at Mt. Calvary Cemetery, a Catholic Cemetery in Baldwin City.¹⁰

Although Willow Springs residents attended different churches as they

¹⁰ "Obituary," *Baldwin Republican*, 6 November 1908, 1. For additional news articles, please see KHRI inventory record for Jacot House.

assimilated to life on the plains, it is important to understand that they shared a common set of beliefs and culture. Most had been born in America, but could trace their heritage to reformed Protestants from Germany or Britain with a history of persecution. They opposed slavery, espoused a Protestant work ethic, prioritized faith and social justice, and built communities on trust versus loyalty to laws or oaths. These were industrious and resourceful farmers who conducted business by handshakes with their neighbors.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Willow Springs Township maintained its distinction from nearby Lawrence as a community of farmers. The population

had changed little by 1880 when there 1226 people distributed among 243 families, with only 20 heads of household listing something other than farming as their principal occupation. There were farmers – but there were also four physicians, five carpenters, three stonemasons, a millwright, wagonmaker, harnessmaker, nurseryman, minister, blacksmith, gardener and stagemaker. There was only one storekeeper – and he was also a farmer. This meant that most had to travel to nearby Baldwin City or Lawrence to trade and, perhaps more importantly, to bank.¹¹

By the 1890s, many of these farmers had abandoned their loyalty to an increasingly urban and corporate Republican Party. They began to organize in Willow Springs

¹¹ 1880 U. S. Census.



The Jardon Barn was constructed ca. 1920, the end of a period of agricultural dominance, when prices for ag commodities peaked. Undated historic photo. KHRI.

Township by the early 1870s – and their voices gained resonance during times of drought and recession when prairie farmers struggled to make ends meet.¹² Organized in St. Louis in 1892, the Populist Party was designed to represent the common man, especially farmers, against those whom they believed were taking more than their fair share of the profits – railroads, bankers, and the politicians that protected corporate interests. Among those active in the Populist Movement was William A. Pardee. Pardee had settled a 160-acre farm in Cass County Missouri in 1857; but fled to Kansas “on account of the danger incident to border warfare.” By 1899,

¹² “Willow Springs Items,” *Western Home Journal* (Lawrence, Kansas), 7 March 1872.

Pardee had parlayed the \$2 he brought with him to Kansas into a 260-acre farm in Willow Springs.¹³

During World War I, the fortitude of the community’s peace churches was tested for the first time. Statewide, twenty-five conscientious objectors from the Church of the Brethren and Old German Baptist Brethren were sent to the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth for refusing to serve in combat roles.¹⁴ But farmers of all stripes were given farm furloughs because they were needed to

¹³ “William A. Pardee,” *Portrait and Biographical Record of Leavenworth, Douglas, and Franklin Counties* (Chapman Publishing Co: Chicago), 1899.

¹⁴ Diane Mason, “The Brethren in World War I,” *The Messenger* (Church of the Brethren Magazine), 2017 June 1.



The Willow Springs Hotel served as a stop along the trail road, a local store, a post office, and the home of Edward Van Hoesen. It was built in 1868 and destroyed by fire in ca. 1910. KHRI. From the record on the Willow Springs DAR Marker.

feed the country and the world.

After record-high crop prices during the War, the farm economy suffered throughout the 1920s and 1930s, with the township's population dropping from 1034 in 1920 to 881 in 1940.¹⁵ Although the population of Willow Springs Township would remain steady (hovering at about 10,000) in the years following World War 2, efforts to increase production during war-time labor shortages had irreversible impacts on rural farming communities. More tractors meant fewer farmers on larger farms.

Meantime, however, the population of Douglas County as a whole grew exponentially, with most of the growth owing to the increased population of Lawrence. Between 1940 and 1990, the population of Douglas County more than tripled, from 25,171 to 81,798. In the same period, the county's urban population grew from 14,390 to 71,722 – from 57% of the county's population to 88%. The balance between urban and rural has technically leveled off since then – at about 89% urban in 2010.¹⁶ But in the past few

decades, the population of rural Douglas County has come to reflect an increasingly suburban environment, with outer-ring housing developments encroaching on open lands in places like Willow Springs. And improvements to main arteries, like Highways 56 and 59, have facilitated low-density housing developments in open spaces.

Will real estate development consume the state's best farmland? It is hard to say. At present, there is a trend toward smaller niche farms and organic farms coupled with a trend toward more efficient smaller homes. We may be experiencing a unique window of time when we can stem the suburban march, protect the financial future of current landowners, preserve the open lands that contributed to the success of the free-state cause, and provide economic opportunities for a new generation of farmers and rural pioneers. Below are findings and recommendations to assist in these aims.

¹⁵ 1920 U. S. Census; 1940 U. S. Census.

¹⁶ KU Institute for Policy and Social Research, "Kansas County Profiles: Douglas County," 2017.

FINDINGS

AGRICULTURE-RELATED RESOURCES

The majority of the buildings evaluated in Willow-Springs Township are agriculture-related. Therefore, their eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places has been evaluated based on the eligibility requirements identified in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) "Historic Agriculture-Related Resources of Kansas" (Spencer and Davis, 2007). In order to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, a property must generally be at least fifty years old and retain historic integrity, measured by the National Park Service using the following seven qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. In addition, a property must meet one of four additional criteria: A) historical significance, B) association with a significant person, C) architectural significance, or D) significance for its ability to yield information about the past. The registration requirements for agriculture-related resources, including farmsteads, are outlined in detail in the MPDF. Below are some pertinent excerpts:

1. General

Barns, Corncribs and Granaries Barns, Corncribs and Granaries may be listed alone – or as part of a farmstead (if included in a collection of associated buildings which constitute a Farmstead as defined in this MPS provided they meet the requirements set forth below). These

buildings may be listed under Criterion C as examples of their building type, and/or Criterion A in the area of Agriculture.

2. Farmsteads

Farmsteads, collections of farm buildings where a majority are historic, are eligible for listing on the national register under Criterion A for their association with Agriculture and/or C in the area of Architecture. A farmstead is composed of a collection of farm buildings, generally including a barn, associated Secondary Farm Structures and Features, and, sometimes, a farmhouse.

To be eligible for listing as a Farmstead, a property must have at least four associated historic agriculture-related structures, including a barn and at least three other structures. One of these three associated structures may be a farmhouse. However, a farmhouse is not essential to a farmstead. For instance, a Farmstead may consist of an intact barn and three or more other Agriculture-related structures, such as a granary, smokehouse and poultry house. Features, such as windmills and fences, may be contributors to a Farmstead, they may not be included in the count toward Farmstead status. For instance, a barn, poultry house and fence alone do not constitute a Farmstead for purposes of this MPS. Although listing associated farmland is not a requirement for listing farmsteads, the inclusion of associated farmland in Farmstead nominations is encouraged.

3. Barns

Additions, which are common, will not generally affect the overall integrity of barns and other outbuildings and structures provided they do not greatly affect a building's proportions. Because certain features are essential in defining the character of barns, these features must be retained. For instance, hay doors and hay hoods are essential in interpreting a barn's hay storage function in barns with no interior drives for unloading hay. These features should be intact and visible from the barn's exterior in order for a barn to be eligible for individual listing. In addition, a barn's main entrance, generally centered on the gable end or broad side and accessed by a sliding door, must be extant. Other features, including primary windows, must also remain uncovered. Many barns, for instance, are marked by repetitive window openings. The implied line of these windows is important to conveying the barn's overall design. Most barn interiors feature a center aisle flanked by stalls, mangers, stanchions and stallion pens. Changes to these interior features will not affect a building's national register eligibility provided the overall plan configuration is retained and the haymow is intact.

For more than a century, farmers and property owners have been fire-proofing, protecting, and extending the life of their barns and outbuildings through the application of new materials. Few roofs, for instance, are still clad with wood shingles. Likewise, original wood siding has often been covered with other materials, including corrugated metal and steel. Because roof repairs are necessary to maintaining a barn's structural integrity, most roofing materials are acceptable

provided they do not affect the overall roof form or result in removal of key features, such as the hay hood. Roofing applications that "box in" exposed rafter tails and other details are discouraged. Historic corrugated siding and pressed-metal siding are historic materials whose application is acceptable applications to barns, outbuildings, grain elevators and mills. The application of contemporary or substitute materials is discouraged.

Changes that can affect integrity of feeling include the addition of curbs, parking lots, and manicured lawns that can be added to farms or barns that are surrounded by suburban development or found in barns that are no longer part of a working farm. Although original use is not a requirement for listing, farm buildings that retain their agricultural use and/or remain in a rural setting are more apt to retain integrity of feeling.

4. Farmhouses

Although stand-alone farmhouses may be eligible for individual listing for their architectural significance or association with a significant person, they may not be individually listed under this MPS. Farmhouses may be listed as part of a Farmstead provided they are at least fifty years old and retain historic integrity. Many farmers expanded their farmhouses over time. Additions will not generally negatively affect a farmhouse's contributing status provided they are proportional to the building's overall mass. In accordance with the Kansas SHPO's substitute siding policy, farmhouses with secondary non-historic siding are not eligible as parts of Farmsteads.



The Ulrich Barn is an example of a barn that is no longer in use and merits preservation. The first photo shows the barn in 2000 (*KHRI, Photo by Susan Ford*). The second shows it in 2019 (*Photo by Kristy Johnson*). This barn was built to replace the one that was destroyed in Quantrill's Raid in 1863.



The McQuillion House was built as early as 1856 when Thomas McQuillion first settled in Willow Springs Township. The centered gable, reminiscent of vernacular Gothic Revival houses, was likely added in ca. 1870. *Photo by Christy Davis.*



The Jacot House is one of many in the township that have been lovingly restored by their owners. The first photo shows a historic view from the late nineteenth century (*from owner*). The second shows the house in 1969 before it was restored (*KHRI, Photo by Thomas Novak*). The third shows the house as it appears today (*Photo by Kristy Johnson*).



FINDINGS:

Ulrich House and Barn

In past studies, this property was determined eligible for state register listing only because the stone home was coated with stucco in 1946 and the roofline was modified in a 1992 remodel. Although the barn was destroyed in Quantrill's Raid (1863), the shell of the stone house remained. Following the raid, the barn was rebuilt. And the house was re-roofed. Despite these changes affecting the architectural integrity of the house, we believe that the property's strong ties to the free-state movement merit a new evaluation for National Register eligibility by the SHPO. The current owner, who added dormers to the roofline and restored the home's interior in 1992, is not interested in listing at this time.

Jacot House

Auguste Jacot came to the United States from France with his parents in 1844, and came to Kansas in 1857. From 1863 to 1871, Jacot was in the restaurant and confectionery business in Leavenworth. Given the timing of his move, it is possible that Jacot's farm was affected by Quantrill's Raid in 1863. He returned to Douglas County in 1871 to operate a fruit farm. The Jacot House has been lovingly restored by its current owners. The house has been determined eligible for listing for its architectural significance. We believe it is also eligible for listing for its association with Auguste Jacot. However, the current owner is not interested in listing at this time.

McQuillon House and McCarthy Barn

According to the 1859 Kansas Territorial Census, Thomas McQuillon (also spelled McQuillin, McQuillion), an Irish native born in 1817, settled in Willow Springs in 1856. He was allotted a quarter section of land in 1860. After his death in 1894, he was buried at Mt. Calvary Cemetery in Baldwin City. The house's centered gable gives it an appearance of a ca. 1870s vernacular house with an understated Gothic Revival detail. However, we believe the house was likely built by 1870, when McQuillon's real estate was valued at \$5000. Perhaps it was a side-gabled stone home built in the 1850s or 1860s with the wood-shingled center gable added in ca. 1870. The house is on the same property with a barn identified as the McCarthy Barn. As part of this survey, we have added interior photographs of the barn. With its timber framing and wood pegs, the barn likely dates to the McQuillon occupation of the house. We believe both the house and barn are eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places - or as a farmstead.

Gilges Barn

Churchbaugh Barn (+Churchbaugh Barn 2)

Deay Barn

Dyer Barn

Flora Barn

Flora Barn (2)

CEMETERIES

There are five cemeteries included in the survey of Willow Springs Township: St. John's (1870), Sutton (1860), Bethel-Harbour (1876), and Pleasant Hill (1854). Cemeteries are not generally considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places – unless they meet special requirements. The registration requirements for cemeteries and burial places are outlined in the National Register Bulletin entitled “Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places.” Below are some pertinent excerpts:

CRITERIA CONSIDERATION D: CEMETERIES

A cemetery is eligible if it derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events.

Examples of cemeteries that likely would meet Criteria Consideration D requirements if adequately documented:

- *A historic cemetery containing the graves of a number of persons of outstanding importance whose activities determined the course of events in local, State, or national history; or those whose activities were especially important in reflecting significant cultural currents of the time.*
- *A cemetery possessing important historic associations from a community's early period of settlement, or which reflects important aspects of community history.*
- *A cemetery that embodies the principles of an aesthetic movement or tradition of design and monumentation through its overall plan and landscaping, its gravemarkers and funerary sculpture, or its buildings and structures.*
- *A cemetery that is associated through its burials with a single important historical event such as a pivotal military battle.*
- *A cemetery that embodies the folkways, burial customs, or artistic traditions of an ethnic or cultural group whose impact on the community or region was significant but is not well documented in other resources.*

Cemeteries and gravesites with ties to the Santa Fe Trail may be eligible for eligibility under the MPDF “Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail.” Below are the registration requirements for trail graves and cemeteries:

Criteria Consideration D must be met in the case of cemeteries. Individual grave sites will be considered for potential eligibility if no other appropriate resource exists that is directly associated with the individual's productive life or if it contributes to a larger district. Likewise, a cemetery's eligibility will be considered if it derives its primary significance from graves of persons integral to the trail's history or from its association with historic trail-related events.⁷⁵⁸ For a grave to be individually eligible under Criterion A in the areas of transportation and/or military, it must have been placed during a period when the Santa Fe Trail was active in the area and must date to the period 1821-1880.

The grave must be in direct proximity to a verified trail route. The gravesite is eligible for its link to trail-related activities and not ancillary events more connected to local area development.

FINDINGS:

St. John's Cemetery (1870)

St. John's Cemetery (Friedhof) was established just two years after the founding of St. John's Evangelical Church. It is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as part of a complex including the church and parsonage. Because of its exclusive use by the German Evangelical community, as reflected in design elements, it may also be eligible as a cemetery that "embodies the folkways, burial customs, or artistic tradition of an ethnic or cultural group ..."

Sutton Cemetery (1860)

Among those buried in this cemetery are James Skaggs (1833-1912), who moved to

Willow Springs township in 1857 and was held prisoner by Border Ruffians for nine days because of his abolitionist beliefs. It was likely the death and burial of Skaggs that attracted attention to this nearly abandoned cemetery. In 1912, the property transferred from the Methodist Episcopal Church to an association that was granted a state charter. Because of early burials tied to the Santa Fe Trail, as well as burials of persons who contributed to the free-state cause, it may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.¹

Bethel-Harbour (1876)

At this time, there is not sufficient documentation to determine this cemetery eligible for historic designation.

Pleasant Hill (1854)

At this time, there is not sufficient documentation to determine this cemetery eligible for historic designation.

¹ Skaggs Obituary, *Lawrence Daily Journal-World*, 21 September 1912; also 13 December 1912.



Because of its exclusive use by the German Evangelical community, St. John's Friedhof (cemetery) may be eligible for listing as a cemetery that 'embodies the folkways, burial customs, or artistic tradition of an ethnic or cultural group.' *Photo by Christy Davis.*



ROAD-RELATED RESOURCES

Road-related resources – hotels, service stations, etc. – are evaluated for eligibility based upon the registration requirements in the MPDF entitled “Roadside Kansas” (2011). Only one property included in this survey project, Dyer’s Cabins, falls into the category of road-related resources.

Dyer’s Cabins

Dyer’s Cabins meets the registration requirements for the “Motor Court/Motel” Property Type identified in the MPDF and is therefore eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

https://www.kshs.org/resource/national_register/MPS/RoadsideKansasMPDF.pdf



Dyer Cabins was built in the 1930s as a Motor Court/Motel. Properties like this that back up against a creek or river are not as common in Kansas as they are in Missouri. This one is relatively unchanged from its original construction and appears to be eligible for listing. *Photo by Christy Davis, 2019.*

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

As defined by the National Park Service, “A **cultural landscape** is defined as ‘a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.’

There are four general types of cultural landscapes, not mutually exclusive: historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes.”

In particular, the agricultural landscape in Willow Springs Township may meet the definition of a **Historic Vernacular Landscape**, “a landscape that evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped that landscape.

Through social or cultural attitudes of an individual, family or a community, the landscape reflects the physical, biological, and cultural character of those everyday lives. Function plays a significant role in vernacular landscapes. They can be a single property such as a farm or a collection of properties such as a district of historic farms along a river valley. Examples include rural villages, industrial complexes, and agricultural landscapes.”

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/culturallandscapes/understand-cl.htm>
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/culturallandscapes/cltimeline5.htm>
https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb30/nrb30_2.htm

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Open Spaces

Because of the Cultural and Historic Significance of this Rural Vernacular Landscape, Douglas County should explore tools, such as zoning and conservation easement programs, for conservation. However, such tools should only be employed in tandem with incentives. The county should review programs in other counties throughout the nation to serve as a model for an open spaces program. There are links to such programs in the appendices to this report.

2. Prairie Landscape

Original white settlers understood Willow Springs as a Prairie Landscape. This was further identified in Dennis Domer's scholarship. Although much of the tallgrass prairie landscape is no longer extant in Willow Springs, there remains a substantial cattle industry that relies in part on a few remaining patches of native prairie grass. Wherever possible, these areas of rich grasslands should be maintained for grazing.

3. Barn Tool Kit

A statewide survey of historic agriculture-related properties, which included more than 300 barns, resulted in a disappointing finding: that many of the state's remaining historic barns are in deteriorated condition. This is not for lack of interest in these structures. The challenge is that it is hard to justify maintaining a structure that is no longer being used as part of an operating farm. Recognizing the threat to barns nationwide, the National Trust

for Historic Preservation partnered with *Successful Farming* magazine to create the Barn Again! Program in 1987. Since then, states and counties nationwide have been working to identify their historic barns and provide technical assistance to barn owners. We encourage Douglas County to identify ways to educate barn owners about the significance of barn structures and pursue the development of a toolkit that provides guidance about basic maintenance. For inspiration, see the following link: <http://barnalliance.org/resources/old-barn-in-disrepair/>

4. Funding for Barns

In Kansas, properties, including barns that are listed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places or National Register of Historic Places qualify for the state's Heritage Trust Fund grant program. Many barns statewide have qualified for funding for roofs, windows, and structural repairs. Designated Kansas barns also qualify for state historic tax credits and, if still part of a farm operation or other income-producing use, may qualify for federal historic tax credits.

There are two challenges to the above programs. First, they require property owners to list their buildings and prepare formal grant and funding applications to compete for limited funding. Second, they are reimbursement programs that require money upfront and only provide reimbursement for a percentage of qualified expenditures. The best way to save historic barns now, especially in areas where property owners are reticent

to designate them, is to cut the red tape. There are programs in other counties throughout the nation that have been successful in protecting beloved barns from demolition. Among the leaders in barn preservation at the county level is King County Washington with its Barn Again! Historic Barn Preservation Program. See <https://kingcounty.gov/services/home-property/historic-preservation.aspx>

Based on our research and experience, we recommend the following for a successful barn preservation funding program:

1. Any barn built before World War 2 should qualify for funding.
2. Even if funding is competitive, the application process should be simple.
3. Funding rounds should be avoided if possible. A committee should have a budget and be given the authority to allocate funds throughout the year as needed.

4. Funding amounts should be significant enough to encourage applications and ensure preservation. (For example, roof repair or other “building envelope” projects might require \$50,000 or more)
5. Funding should focus on work that will protect the barn’s structural integrity. For instance, qualified work could include structural repairs, roof repairs or replacement, and repairs to siding or building envelope.

We understand that the county has limited funding available for historic preservation programs. We encourage the county to explore funding through CDBG and USDA. See the links below:

<https://www.usda.gov/topics/farming/grants-and-loans>

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/wa/farmerrancher/?cid=nrcs144p2_036285

CONCLUSION

Willow Springs Township is a rich Cultural Landscape shaped by the free-state movement. Although much of the built environment, demographics, and appearance have remained relatively intact for 165 years, this landscape is in danger of being lost. It is our finding that the preservation of

this unique landscape cannot wait for a conventional preservation approach. Instead, we encourage Douglas County to pursue policies that protect these rural communities through protections for open spaces, toolkits for building owners, and funding for threatened buildings such as barns.

APPENDICES

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/easements/acep/>

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ks/programs/easements/acep/>

<https://shenandoahcountyva.us/land-conservation/conservation-easement-programs/>

<https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/tnr/cep>

[https://www.fauquiercounty.gov/government/departments-a-g/community-development/
planning/long-range-planning/conservation-easements](https://www.fauquiercounty.gov/government/departments-a-g/community-development/planning/long-range-planning/conservation-easements)

<https://www.bouldercounty.org/open-space/management/conservation-easements/>

<https://www.landtrustalliance.org/consultant/boulder-county-parks-open-space>

<https://www.landtrustalliance.org/why- conserve-land>

<https://conservationtools.org/guides/147-why-preserve-farmland>

<https://www.planning.org/knowledgebase/farmlandprotection/>

Newspaper Articles and other Primary-Document Research