Form 10-300 (Rev. 6-72)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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IT OF THE INTERIOR SERVICE	STATE: Kansas
HISTORIC PLACES	COUNTY: Franklin
NATION FORM	FOR NPS USE ONLY

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM		FOR NPS USE ONLY						
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Historic Sit	es Survey						NOV 2	
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DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RE	CORDS:							
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CONDITION	☐ Excellent	▼ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Dete	eriorated	Ruins	Unexposed
CONDITION		(Check O	1e)			(Che	eck One)
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The James Ransom house is a large irregularly shaped two-story frame residence with a full basement and a full attic designed as a third floor. The house faces east and on the east facade features a circular porch with a conical roof. There is a carriage porch to the north and a handsome carriage house at the rear.

This white frame Victorian house has an unusual array of ornamental millwork, and patterned shingles are used for siding on the exterior above the first floor. The house rests on a raised base of rough hewn limestone laid in uniform horizontal courses and has distinctive belt lines at the floor lines.

The roof form is basically intersecting gables with the front gable having a mock hip shape. The roof form at the front also leads directly into the conical roof of the second floor circular balcony above the main entry. The first floor circular porch roof, which is designed to accent the entry, includes a large pediment displaying the house number directly over the front steps. The circular porch wraps around the north side of the house, leading to the hipped roof carriage porch. The second floor balcony, which helps accent the curved porch, is reminiscent in character of English country houses. The roof shingles are wood.

The windows are simple rectangles of varied sizes, and the trim is basic and simple. The attic windows are trimmed with brackets which meet the roof overhang and have the characteristics of cornice brackets. Both the porch and balcony roofs are supported by turned frame columns with brackets.

The two-story stable at the rear measures 30 by 50 feet and, like the house has shingle siding above the first floor. The roof is basically a gable roof, however the ends form a mock hip similar to the front gable of the house. The east side has twin windowless dormers.

Accenting the roof is a cupola with a curved hip roof form.

The exteriors of both the house and carriage house are believed to be basically unaltered. The present owners are now in the process of restoring them and have started with the carriage house, which has been painted its original gold and rust colors.



SIGNIFICANCE			
PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	16th Century	☐ 18th Century	20th Century
☐ 15th Century	☐ 17th Century	X 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable	le and Known) 1889.	-1890	
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Che	ck One or More as Approp	riate)	
Abor iginal	Education	Political	Urban Planning
☐ Prehistoric	Engineering	Religion/Phi-	Other (Specify)
☐ Historic	Industry	losophy	
☐ Agriculture	Invention	Science	17118
XX Architecture	Landscape	Sculpture	
☐ Art	Architecture	Social/Human-	10 X DECENTED TA
Commerce	Literature	itarian	KECE, 191
☐ Communications	Military	☐ Theater	0/08
☐ Conservation	☐ Music	Transportation	MATIONAL
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE			NATION REGISTER

The James H. Ransom house was built around 1889-1890 dor one of Franklin county's most active and successful businessmen and investors.

Ransom was a native New Yorker who taught school in Illinois and worked in the Pennsylvania oil fields before moving to Kansas in 1868. He was not a man who remained long in one place and the history of his business activities in Kansas shows a wide-ranging career.

Upon his arrival in the state he operated a dairy farm for one year at Burlington (Coffey county) and then moved to the Clinton area (Douglas county) where he had a flour and saw mill and also farmed. After six years he moved to nearby Lawrence and opened a wholesale and retail coal business. Earlier he had purchased two coal mines at Carbondale (Osage county). In 1878 he moved to Williamsburg in Franklin county and that county was to remain his permanent home. He bought and operated the mines of the Williamsburg Coal Company. One year later he opened new mines three miles east of Williamsburg and established the town of Ransomville at the site. In addition to his mining operations, he started a general store in the town and his daughter Myra was the town's first postmaster. In 1886 he moved to Ottawa and started a coal business and later an ice company.

In the 1890's Ransom's business interests were concentrated more on construction and less on coal mining. He recognized that the thin vein of coal in eastern Kansas could not be profitably mined in competition with the deeper veins of southeastern Kansas. The contracting firm of Ransom and Cook was well-known for its construction activities, particularly for building railroads. His farming and associated interests, such as dairying, a creamery, and livestock breeding, continued throughout his life.

In spite of his many business involvements, Ransom was able to serve two terms in the Kansas House of Representatives, from 1905 to 1909, and earlier he was on the Ottawa city coupeil.

Around 1889-1890 he built a large Victorian house in Ottawa. One of the showplaces of the community at the time, the house was his residence until 1901, when his first wife died. In that same year he sold (or gave) the house to his daughter Myra and her husband B. D. Bennett. His Ottawa business interests were also disposed of to Bennett and he returned to Ransomville. The Bennetts occupied the house

## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Connelley, W. E., History of Kansas and Kansans, Part II (Chicago: Standard Publishing Company, 1912), pp. 1046, 1047.

History of the State of Kansas (Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1883), p. 621.

Leavenworth Appeal and Tribune, February 10, 1880.

Legislative Handbook, 1905 (Topeka: Crane and Company, 1905), p. 188.

Portraft and Biographical Record of Leavenworth, Douglas and Franklin

Counties (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Co., 1899), pp. 310, 311.

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forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:  National State Local Name  Name  Nyle H. Miller  Title Executive Director, Kansas  State Historical Society  State Historical Society  Name  Name  Name  Name  Nyle H. Miller  Keeper of The National Register	1	1			MAY I							
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Form 10-300a (Dec. 1968)

## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Kansas	
COUNTY	
Franklir	1
FOR NPS USE O	NLY
ENTINY NUMBEROT	DATE

(Number all entries)

9.

8. for many years and were active in Ottawa's business and civic affairs. The house apparently remained in the Bennett family until 1949.

James Ransom was a prominent and successful businessman. His many and varied business pursuits and his frequent changes of location make him a typical entrepreneur of an era when Kansas was a young, developing state. He was set apart perhaps by the degree of success which he attained.

The Ransom house has been termed the best example of Victorian residential architecture in Ottawa. The large house together with its carriage house presents a cohesive unit significant for its distinctive 1890's architectural features and significant for its first occupant, James Ransom, and his contributions to the economic development of the area.

Reflections of Franklin County and Chautauqua Days (Ottawa, Kansas, n.p., 1961), p. 32.

Topeka Daily Capital, May, 1906.