



819

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

Historic name Meeks, Cordell D., Sr., House

Other names/site number Trickett, Charles W., House; KHRI # 209-2820-00469

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

2. Location

Street & number 600 Oakland Avenue not for publication

City or town Kansas City vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Wyandotte Code 209 Zip code 66101

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
 national statewide local Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Patrick Zollner DSHPO 8-20-13
Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO Date

Kansas State Historical Society
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
 other (explain:)

Joe Edson Beall 10.9.13
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

October 17, 2013

Notice to file:

This property has been automatically entered in the National Register of Historic Places
on: October 9, 2013

This is due to the fact that there was a lapse in appropriations by Congress and our offices were closed from October 1-16, 2013. "Nominations will be included in the National Register within 45 days of receipt by the Keeper or designee unless the Keeper disapproves a nomination" (30CFR60.(r). If the 45th day falls on a weekend or Federal holiday, the property will be automatically listed the next business day.

The documentation is technically sufficient, professionally correct and meets the National Register criteria for evaluation. Thus, this property is automatically listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Meeks, Cordell, Sr., House
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: Single dwelling

Work in Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Prairie;
Neoclassical

foundation: Stone
walls: Brick; Wood; Asbestos
roof: Asphalt Shingle
other:

Meeks, Cordell, Sr., House
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

Narrative Description

Summary

Located at 600 Oakland Avenue in Kansas City, Kansas, the Meeks House was built in 1903 on the highest point of the neighborhood with an impressive view to the east of the Kansas City, Missouri skyline. The 2 ½ story house is situated at the northwest corner of the intersection of Oakland Avenue and 6th Street. It features a prominent porch with brick supports that wraps around the south- and east-facing elevations. The home has a rectangular form with a hipped roof and hipped dormers and exhibits elements of various late 19th and early 20th century styles including Prairie with Neoclassical and Queen Anne elements. The hill and surrounding property, which includes North 5th Street to North 7th Street Trafficway and Washington Boulevard to Freeman Avenue, has been called the Third Ward, in reference to its local council district, and also Turtle Hill, presumably in reference to Wyandot Indian tradition.¹

Elaboration

Exterior

The Meeks House is situated on hilltop within a corner lot that is enclosed on the south and east sides by stone and concrete retaining wall topped by a non-historic metal fence. The home's south elevation faces Oakland Avenue and the east elevation fronts 6th Street. There is a shared driveway accessed from Oakland Avenue that runs along the west side of the house. Historically, the property included an outbuilding at the north edge of the property. Concrete steps lead from the public sidewalk up to the lawn and another set of steps lead up to the front porch. The first story is brick and the second story is clad in asbestos – a later treatment that likely covered wood clapboard or shingle siding. A one-story porch wraps around the south (front) and part of the east (side) elevations. The porch has a circular footprint at the southeast corner. The porch ceiling is supported by brick pillars atop truncated stone bases.² The porch was rehabilitated in 2013 and includes a new wood floor and a balustrade. The main entrance to the house is centered on the south façade tucked beneath the sprawling front porch.

The home's form is American Foursquare, and its eclectic architecture can be classified as Prairie with Neoclassical and Queen Anne elements. The hipped roof is clad with asphalt shingles, and there are four hipped dormers – one on each elevation. The south-facing dormer has three eight-over-one double-hung wood windows, while the other dormers feature simpler one-over-one wood windows. Most windows throughout the house are double-hung wood sashes with wood surrounds.³ There is a projecting bay on the east (side) elevation. The west elevation features a tripartite Palladian window with Neoclassical embellishments that overlooks an interior staircase landing. The window is set within a slightly outward curving wall. There are two interior brick chimneys – one rising out of roof near the home's northeast corner and the other at the northwest corner.

Secondary entrances into the house can be found on the west side, where there is a basement-level door, and through the rear porch on the north side of the house. The rear porch is enclosed and is topped by a sleeping porch on the second story.

¹ "The Third Ward/Turtle Hill", Historic Resources Survey (Kansas City, KS: Unified Government, 1986-1987. Accessed online 10 August 2012 <<http://www.wycokck.org/assets/2125052c-458d-4985-901d-8ba772cc479c.pdf>>

² The author, Marlene Meeks Shelby, who lived in the home as a child, recalls that there were once lanterns affixed to the brick pillars.

³ The author recalls that at one time the upper sashes of the bedroom windows were of stained glass.

Meeks, Cordell, Sr., House
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

There are no extant outbuildings. The author recalls that the back yard was brick paved and there was a two-story barn behind the house, which is confirmed by Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (Figures 1 and 2). The second floor was an office.

Interior

The interior of the home retains a very high degree of integrity. Finishes include wood floors and trim and plaster walls and ceilings. Many original fixtures remain as do most doors and windows with their original hardware. Finished interior spaces include the first and second floors, the third-floor attic, and the basement. Meeks had the basement finished with a kitchen, two half-bathrooms, and a gas-burning fireplace when he purchased the home in 1949.

The primary entrance to the house is centered on the south façade tucked beneath the sprawling front porch. The entry is defined by an impressive door with a large oval-shaped beveled glass set within the heavy wood frame. The door opens into an **entry hall** partially enclosed on the east with a paneled wood base supporting two wood columns with ionic capitals. This impressive entry opens into the **living room** at the southeast corner. This room features a gas-burning fireplace with a light brown marble surround and wood mantelpiece centered on the east (exterior) wall. The wood mantel is framed with a pair of classical columns supported by a wood base, and a mirror is set within the mantel above the fireplace. Wall sconces are on either side of the fireplace. On the south wall of the living room is an original one-over-one, double-hung wood window looking out onto the front porch. On the north wall of the living room is a solid-oak pocket door leading into the dining room, which is situated at the northeast corner of the house. There is another solid-oak pocket door on the west wall of the dining room leading into the hallway.

The entry hall also leads to an open central hall at the end of which is a dramatic staircase to the second floor. The hall accesses the **study** or library, which is situated at the home's southwest corner. The doorway leading into the study is set at an angle, opposite the corner window that sits at the same angle. Much of the south, west and north walls of the study include built-in oak bookcases, and there is one-over-one window with a fixed half-window on either side at the southwest corner of the room. Below the half-windows are bookshelves. There is a gas-burning fireplace with a marble surround on the west wall. The wood mantelpiece is framed with two sets of classical columns – one above the other – and a mirror is set within the mantelpiece above the fireplace.

The entry hall opens to the staircase at the base of which is a rather large open space that functioned as a **music nook**. This area includes a wood-burning fireplace along the west (exterior) wall. It has a wood mantelpiece with classical columns. There is a fixed window tucked above and to the right of the fireplace. At the base of the staircase is a closet with a built-in full-length mirror.

The dining room at the northeast corner of the house is a long, rectangular space with an impressive bay with three windows and a built-in window seat on the east wall. Wall sconces are on either side of the bay. **The kitchen** is accessed through a door at the northwest corner of the dining room. Originally, there was a pantry between the dining room and kitchen before Meeks changed it into a breakfast nook and then later a full bathroom. The kitchen, which has been modified over the years, is situated along the north side of the house and provides access to the rear porch and a narrow **secondary staircase** to the second floor. This staircase joins the home's main staircase at the mid-level landing.

The main staircase is open and features a heavy wood newel post, turned spindle banister, and wood steps. Thirteen steps lead to a landing along the west wall that is dramatically punctuated by a tripartite window with leaded glass set within a very slightly outward curving wall. The dogleg staircase then turns back east leading up to the second floor. The staircase opens into a large central space off of which all the second floor rooms can be accessed.

Meeks, Cordell, Sr., House

Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas

County and State

The second floor has **four bedrooms** – one at each corner of the house – with closets. Between the two bedrooms along the east side of the house is a small study or sewing room. It is accessed by multi-light French Doors. Between the two bedrooms along the north (rear) side of the house is a **bathroom**, which has been modernized. There is a second-floor **sleeping porch** that spans the entire north elevation of the house that is accessed through a door in the northeast bedroom. The sleeping porch has windows on the west, north, and east walls, providing fantastic views overlooking the city.

The second-floor central hall includes an opening for a laundry chute (which spans attic to basement) complete with a pulley to lift and lower things. The opening is adjacent to the staircase to the attic.

Immediately to the north of the staircase is a paneled wood door that leads to a small enclosed staircase to the **third-floor finished attic**. Much of the attic is comprised of one large open space that is finished with wood floors, plaster walls, and wood trim. Dormers – each with three windows – pierce all four walls.

Integrity

The one major alteration to the house is the application of asbestos siding, which was done during the mid-20th century at the direction of the property owner, Cordell Meeks, Sr. Under new ownership, the porch has recently undergone rehabilitation and vines and plantings have been removed from the exterior and base of the foundation. The interior retains an exceptionally high degree of integrity with only minimal changes to bathrooms, the kitchen, and the replacement of a few doors. The home's setting has been impacted by demolition, both in the immediate vicinity and within the surrounding blocks.

Meeks, Cordell, Sr., House
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)
Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

Politics / Government

Period of Significance

1949-1963

Significant Dates

1949, 1950-51

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Meeks, Cordell, Sr.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins with Meeks' purchase of the home in 1949 and ends in 1963 with the fifty-year cut-off date established by the National Park Service to provide sufficient passage of time to allow objective evaluation of the historic resource eligibility at the time of its listing.

Criteria Considerations (justification)

N/A

Cordell, Meeks, Sr. House
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Summary

Since its construction in 1903, the residence at 600 Oakland has been home to two distinguished Kansas City attorneys – first to Charles W. Trickett, a white Republican prohibitionist, and his family; and second to Cordell D. Meeks, Sr., a black Democrat county commissioner and district court judge, and his family. Trickett is perhaps best known professionally for his efforts as an assistant attorney general to enforce prohibition in the early 1900s. After his death, Trickett's family sold the house in 1949 to a young Meeks who would become a leader in local Democratic Party politics. Meetings of the Northeast Democrat Committeemen and Committeewomen's League were held in this home for years. The property is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B in the area of politics and government for its association with Meeks.

Elaboration

Neighborhood Context

The 1870 Heisler and McGee Wyandotte County map notes a handful of buildings in this area, and principal among them was Isaiah Walker's house. Walker, a Wyandot Indian and treasurer of the Wyandott City Company, which organized in December 1856 to plat and develop the town, served as an alderman on the first Wyandott City Council. The house at 600 Oakland was completed in 1903 (in what had been the front yard of Walker's house) and faced Oakland Avenue. The Walker house was then remodeled to face north toward Freeman Street.⁴ There is an impressive view to the east of the Kansas City, Missouri skyline from this hill. The hill and surrounding property, from North 5th Street to North 7th Street Trafficway and Washington Boulevard to Freeman Avenue, was called Turtle Hill, presumably in reference to Wyandot Indian tradition.⁵

Dudley Cornell purchased Turtle Hill from Walker in 1876 and subdivided the land for future development. The majority of residences in this area were built between the late 1870s and early 1910s. The area, occupied by upper-middle-class whites from the 1880s through the 1920s was known for its "social and architectural prominence." A special feature in the January 26, 1911 edition of the *Kansas City Kansan* noted dozens of area residences and their occupants – a who's who of Kansas City's legal, business, banking, and real estate community.⁶

In response to labor shortages in Kansas City's packing houses and renewed racial violence in the South, an influx of African Americans moved to Kansas City in the 1920s and 1930s. These new residents were largely restricted to older parts of town – namely northeast Kansas City. (Figures 5 & 6) The Turtle Hill area was zoned for apartments in the 1940s, causing many of the larger homes to be subdivided. In more recent

⁴ The Walker House was demolished on order of the City's codes inspector in 1959. "The Third Ward/Turtle Hill", Historic Resources Survey (Kansas City, KS: Unified Government, 1986-1987), 2. Accessed online 10 August 2012 <<http://www.wycokck.org/assets/2125052c-458d-4985-901d-8ba772cc479c.pdf>>

⁵ "The Third Ward/Turtle Hill", Historic Resources Survey, 1.

⁶ In addition to Charles Trickett at 600 Oakland Avenue, the feature included a few of his neighbors: US Assistant Attorney McCabe Moore at 612 Oakland, District Court Judge F.D. Hutchings at 624 Freeman Avenue, and attorney A. Lloyd Clotfelter at 647 Oakland, to name a few.

Cordell, Meeks, Sr. House

Wyandotte County, Kansas

Name of Property

County and State

decades, there has been considerable demolition in the neighborhood and along 5th Street, which is the commercial strip along the east edge of the neighborhood.

Charles W. Trickett (1861-1948)

The city directory first lists Charles W. Trickett as living in the residence at 600 Oakland Avenue in 1904.⁷ He had purchased the land April 16th, 1903 from James and Edna Getty. At the time of his purchase, he was the junior partner in the law firm Keplinger and Trickett. In 1906, Kansas Attorney General C. C. Coleman selected him to be assistant attorney general, an office he held until 1913. According to historian William E. Connelley's 1918 history of Kansas,

The appointment in ordinary circumstances might have had no special significance. When Mr. Trickett consented to accept the office it was with the avowed determination and purpose of inaugurating a program of strict law enforcement and overturning the old regime under which Kansas City, Kansas, had been a wide open town with saloons flourishing in open violation of the state laws. The day he began his official duties opened the fight on the local liquor traffic. It was a war to the finish. Either the saloons had to go or the attorney general had to acknowledge complete defeat and get out of the town himself... He confiscated and burned upwards of \$5,000 worth of liquor and various other property connected with the traffic. Along with the saloons he made equal war on gambling and commercialized vice, and for nearly ten years he continued the fight and brought about the wholesome conditions which now prevail in the city.⁸

Trickett was affiliated with Republican Party politics. He worked in real estate and owned several properties in the neighborhood on nearby Freeman Avenue and throughout Kansas City, Kansas. He used the library in his home as an office where renters came to pay rent. The house was one of many "beautiful homes in Kansas City, Kansas" to be featured in a special insert to the *Kansas City Gazette Globe* on January 26, 1911. After Trickett's death in 1948,⁹ his daughter, Pearle Juhlin, sold the house to a young African American attorney Cordell D. Meeks, Sr. and his wife Cellastine in 1949.¹⁰

Cordell D. Meeks, Sr. (1914-1987)

The house at 600 Oakland Avenue was the dream home of Cordell D. Meeks, Sr., an attorney, leader in local Democratic Party politics, and the first African American judge elected to the District Court in the State of Kansas. He noted in his 1986 autobiography, "As a child I had lived for a short time in the 600 block of New Jersey. On afternoons and Saturdays when I walked to my afterschool job in the grocery store on 5th Street, I had to pass by a big house at 600 Oakland. To me the house looked like a beautiful castle. I would look up from Sixth Street and admire the architecture and day dream about living in it someday."¹¹

Meeks' family moved from Arkansas to the Armourdale neighborhood of Kansas City when he was a young boy. A few years later, in 1927, they moved to the Wyandotte district of Kansas City where he attended Northeast Junior High School – the only junior high school for African Americans in Kansas City – and later Sumner High School. He served as his class president and graduated in 1933.

⁷ *Kansas City, Kansas City Directory* (Kansas City, MO: Hoye Directory Co., 1904), 277.

⁸ William E. Connelley, *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans*, vol. 4 (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918), 1826-1827.

⁹ Trickett had been a widower since 1927. Both Lillie and Charles Trickett are buried at Highland Park Cemetery in Kansas City, Kansas.

¹⁰ Guarantee Abstract and Title Co. Inc., R-1028, (Kansas City, Kansas: April 19, 1949) Book 1273, 361.

¹¹ Cordell D. Meeks, *To Heaven Through Hell: An Autobiography of the First Black District Court Judge of Kansas*, (Kansas City, Kansas: Corcell Publishing Co. 1986), 81.

Cordell, Meeks, Sr. House

Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas

County and State

Upon his arrival in Lawrence in 1933, Meeks noted that "racial discrimination was rampant" on the campus of the University of Kansas. He and another freshman student approached the Dean of Men with their concerns, but were rebuffed. Meeks later recalled, "...the meeting with the Dean of Men convinced me of the fact that if I ever wanted to help change the deplorable unjust and discriminatory conditions which existed at the university and elsewhere, I would have to get inside the system which controlled it. So I decided to get inside. The meeting had not been in vain."¹²

Meeks graduated from the University of Kansas in 1937 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and a law degree in 1940. At the time of his graduation from law school, there were no large black law firms in the greater Kansas City area and the bar association in Wyandotte County was segregated. Meeks befriended a local black attorney Louis W. Johnson who took him in at the start of his career. He married Cellastine Brown of Topeka in late 1940. In 1947, he became an assistant District Attorney in the office of Harold Harding, for whom he had campaigned. That same year, Meeks helped establish the black-owned Douglass State Bank, which built upon the framework of the H.W. Sewing Sentinel Loan Company and served African Americans in Kansas City.¹³ Shortly thereafter, in the spring of 1948, Meeks was elected as Kansas' first black Democrat delegate to the National Convention, which was held in Philadelphia later that year. In 1950 he was elected to serve as the Wyandotte County Commissioner from the second district, a position he held for 24 years.

Meeks and his wife purchased the house at 600 Oakland Avenue from the Trickett estate in 1949. Their family was growing, and Meeks readied the home while his wife recuperated from giving birth to their fourth child. Prior to moving into the home, Meeks recalled, "I was busy getting the newly purchased home in shape. The floors had to be sanded in every room except the kitchen and baths. Every room had the paper steamed off the wall and ceiling and repapered. The woodwork was cleaned. The light fixtures were polished. New linoleum was laid on the kitchen and bath floors."¹⁴ At some point in the mid-20th century, Meeks updated the exterior of the house with asbestos siding.

In 1949, by which time he was in his third year as an Assistant District Attorney and served as an officer and attorney for the Douglass State Bank, Meeks was encouraged by friends and acquaintances to go into politics. Meeks' home would host many political and organizational meetings. "The first few meetings of the Northeast Democrat Committeemen and Committeewomen's League were held at the courthouse. When we found that some people in the opposition camp were dropping in on our meetings, I changed the meeting place to my third floor recreation room, at my home which became permanent headquarters. There we could have at least semiprivate meetings. The opposition were forced to get their information second hand and through hearsay."¹⁵ He went on to say, "Seeing that the people in the predominantly black Northeast area of the district were organized and not only willing to help themselves, but also in a position to help other candidates, we had little or no problem winning the support of the Democrat Central Committee."¹⁶

The home at 600 Oakland Avenue was used as "The Meeting Place" for committeemen and women during the 1950s and 1960s. The house was large enough to accommodate up to 80 people at a time in the attic or, in later years, the basement recreation rooms.

¹² Meeks, *To Heaven Through Hell*, 28.

¹³ When the bank closed in 1983, it was the 17th-largest black-owned bank in the United States. Eric N. Berg, *New York Times*, 5 September 1983. For more information on the Douglass State Bank see: "The Afro-American Community in Kansas City Kansas: A History" (City of Kansas City Kansas, 1982); H. W. Sewing, *An Autobiography of the Founder of the Douglass State Bank* (New York: Exposition Press, 1970).

¹⁴ Meeks, *To Heaven Through Hell*, 82.

¹⁵ Meeks, *To Heaven Through Hell*, 91.

¹⁶ Meeks, *To Heaven Through Hell*, 93.

Cordell, Meeks, Sr. House

Wyandotte County, Kansas

Name of Property

County and State

The highlights of Meeks' campaign for Wyandotte County Commissioner in 1950 was the endorsement of and visit by US Congressman William L. Dawson of Chicago, who had been sent to Kansas City by the Democratic National Committee in an effort to "bolster the party's fortune among black voters."¹⁷ (Figure 7) Meeks won and was sworn in as a Wyandotte County Commissioner from the second district in 1951. He was the district's second black commissioner behind his predecessor Republican Fred White. During his re-election campaign in 1954, he won the endorsement of Harry S. Truman.¹⁸ He was reelected to six consecutive four-year terms, and his fellow commissioners in 1965 elected him as chairman of the board, making him the first African American to head a county government in Kansas.¹⁹ During those 24 years, the Committeemen and Committeewomen met once a month at 600 Oakland Avenue, laboring up almost 100 steps to the third-floor recreation room to discuss strategies to help Cordell Meeks and other Democrats get the most votes.

Meeks later attributed the success of those committee meetings to the "Trojan Horse" approach he had learned in college – create change from the inside. "As early as my Freshman year at KU, I became convinced that the best, and most effective way to fight and eradicate the evils of racial discrimination is to get on the inside of the government and economic systems which control us. There is no better way to accomplish that feat than by using the voting strength of our race. For that reason I maintain that the Voting Rights Act is the most important of all the civil rights legislation enacted by Congress."²⁰

During his tenure as a county commissioner, Wyandotte County was the first in the state to abandon the paper ballots and purchase voting machines. The county was the first to install data processing and computer systems that were later shared with the City of Kansas City, Kansas and Community Junior College.²¹ The County built Kaw View Juvenile Detention Home in order to separate youthful offenders from the older ones in the county jail. A community center was built at Wyandotte County Park in Bonner Springs. The entire county park system was modernized and expanded so that it rated as one of the best in the nation. The county also built the Wyandot Mental Health Center and cooperated with the city in building the City-County Health Building.

Later in his tenure, he was elected as president of the Democrat Officeholders Association (1963), a member of the board of directors of the National Association of Counties (1968), and chairman of the Mid-America Regional Council (1971).²²

He took on an even bigger challenge in 1972 and ran a county-wide campaign – the first for a black person in Wyandotte County – for the Judge of the District Court. This position was a new one, created by the Kansas Supreme Court to deal with the growing caseload. According to news reports, Meeks garnered 30,125 votes and his opponent, Charles Burkin tallied 24,863.²³ This with the help of the Committeemen and Committeewomen and "The Meeting Place", Meeks became the first African American elected to the District Court in the State of Kansas, at which time he stepped down from his position as county commissioner. Meeks held that position until his retirement on January 1, 1981. He penned his autobiography *To Heaven Through Hell* in 1986, and he was honored with a plaque in front of the Wyandotte County Courthouse in 2005. Meeks died in 1987. Cellastine Meeks continued lived at 600 Oakland Avenue until May 2011.

¹⁷ Meeks, *To Heaven Through Hell*, 99.

¹⁸ Harry S. Truman, Kansas City, Missouri, to Cordell D. Meeks, Kansas City, Kansas, 18 October 1954. Copy in "Meeks House" file, Kansas State Historic Preservation Office.

¹⁹ Meeks, *To Heaven Through Hell*, 139.

²⁰ Meeks, *To Heaven Through Hell*, 97.

²¹ Cordell D. Meeks to Fellow Citizens of Wyandotte County, July 1972. Copy in "Meeks House" file, Kansas State Historic Preservation Office.

²² Meeks, *To Heaven Through Hell*, 148-149.

²³ "Meeks Sets Precedent in District Court Race," *Kansas City Kansan*, 8 November 1972.

Cordell, Meeks, Sr. House
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

The Meeks House Today

In 2012, the Meeks family sold the house to the Sewing Family Trust. Under the direction of Virginia Sewing, the home is being rehabilitated for continued use – either as a single-family home or other compatible use. Renovation has included repairing the wood porch floor and railing, removal of intrusive plantings along the home's foundation, repairs to the front door, removal of carpets to reveal historic wood floors, painting, window repairs, installation of once-missing light fixtures, bathroom and kitchen renovations, and the installation of a new HVAC system.

Summary

Since its construction in 1903, the residence has been home to two distinguished Kansas City attorneys – first to Charles W. Trickett, a white Republican prohibitionist, and his family; and second to Cordell D. Meeks, Sr., a black Democrat county commissioner and district court judge, and his family. Trickett is perhaps best known professionally for his efforts as an assistant attorney general to enforce prohibition in the early 1900s. After his death, Trickett's family sold the house to a young Meeks who would become a leader in local Democratic Party politics. Now a quarter century after Meeks, Sr.'s death, there are few left that can recall the meetings of the Committeemen and Committeewomen at the Meeks' house and the political work that took place there. The property is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for its association with Meeks.

Cordell, Meeks, Sr. House
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

- Connelley, William E. A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, vol. 4.* Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918.
- Guarantee Abstract and Title Co. Inc., R-1028, Book 1273,361 (Kansas City, Kansas: 19 April 1949.
- Kansas City, Kansas City Directory.* Kansas City, MO: Hoye Directory Co., 1904.
- Meeks, Cordell D. Sr. *To Heaven Through Hell: An Autobiography of the First Black District Court Judge of Kansas,* (Kansas City, Kansas: Corcell Publishers, 1986.
- Meeks, Cordell D. Sr. "Re-elect Meeks! County Commissioner, Second District." Kansas City, Kansas, 1951.
- Meeks, Cordell D., Sr. Cordell Meeks, Sr. Family Papers, 1935-2005, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, scrapbooks compiled by Cellastine Meeks, 1935,1940, 1971, 1976.
- "Meeks Sets Precedent in District Court Race." *Kansas City Kansan*, 8 November 1972.
- Sewing, H. W. *An Autobiography of the Founder of the Douglass State Bank.* New York: Exposition Press, 1970.
- Shelby, Marlene Meeks, Recollections of oldest daughter of Cordell Meeks, 9615 Overhill Road, Kansas City, MO 64134. June 1, 2012.
- "The Afro-American Community in Kansas City Kansas: A History." City of Kansas City Kansas, 1982. (KSHS Library)
- "The Third Ward/Turtle Hill," Historic Resources Survey. Kansas City, KS: Unified Government, 1986-1987. Accessed online 10 August 2012 <<http://www.wycokck.org/assets/2125052c-458d-4985-901d-8ba772cc479c.pdf>>

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

Cordell, Meeks, Sr. House
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.
(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>39.120748</u>	<u>-94.624768</u>	3	_____	_____
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)
Cornell's Subdivision, Block 1, the East 15' of Lot 21, all of Lots 22 and 23 – Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)
The boundary includes the property historically associated with the house.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marlene Meeks Shelby

organization _____ date _____

street & number 9615 Overhill Road telephone _____

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64134

e-mail _____

Property Owner: (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Sewing Family Trust (Attn: Virginia Sewing)

street & number 10333 Garnett telephone _____

city or town Overland Park state KS zip code 66214

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Cordell, Meeks, Sr. House
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each digital image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to a sketch map or aerial map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Meeks, Cordell, Sr., House

City or Vicinity: 600 Oakland Avenue

County: Wyandotte State: KS

Photographer: Sarah Martin, unless otherwise noted

Date Photographed: 24 April 2013, unless otherwise noted

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 14 Meeks House, camera facing NW (photographed by Katrina Ringler, 5 August 2013)
- 2 of 14 Meeks House, camera facing N (before porch renovation completed)
- 3 of 14 Meeks House, east (side) elevation, camera facing W
- 4 of 14 Meeks House, north (rear) elevation, camera facing SE
- 5 of 14 Meeks House, west (side) elevation, camera facing SSE
- 6 of 14 Meeks House, west (side) elevation, showing second-floor window, camera facing E
- 7 of 14 Meeks House, west (side) elevation, showing first floor windows, camera facing E
- 8 of 14 Meeks House interior, front entryway
- 9 of 14 Meeks House interior, front entryway and central hall
- 10 of 14 Meeks House interior, fireplace in living room along east wall
- 11 of 14 Meeks House interior, study/library
- 12 of 14 Meeks House interior, staircase to second floor
- 13 of 14 Meeks House interior, dining room
- 14 of 14 Meeks House interior, third floor finished attic space

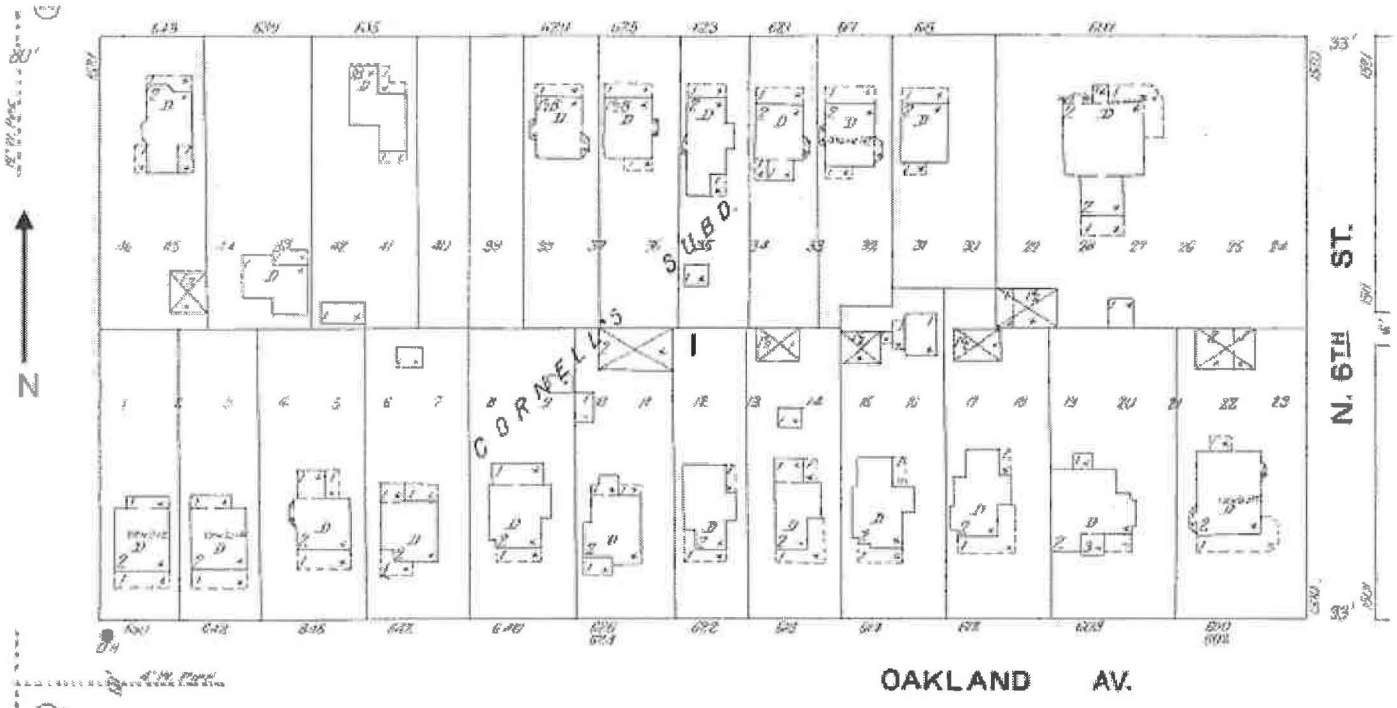
Figures

Include GIS maps, figures, scanned images below.

Cordell, Meeks, Sr. House
Name of Property

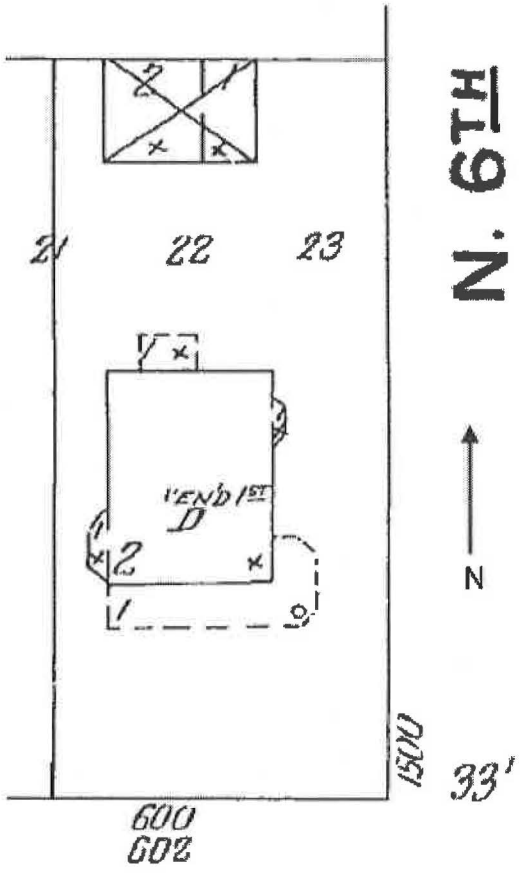
Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 1: 1907 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (page 30). Top image shows 600 Oakland Avenue at lower right corner. Bottom image shows close-up of 600 Oakland Avenue.



Cordell, Meeks, Sr. House
Name of Property

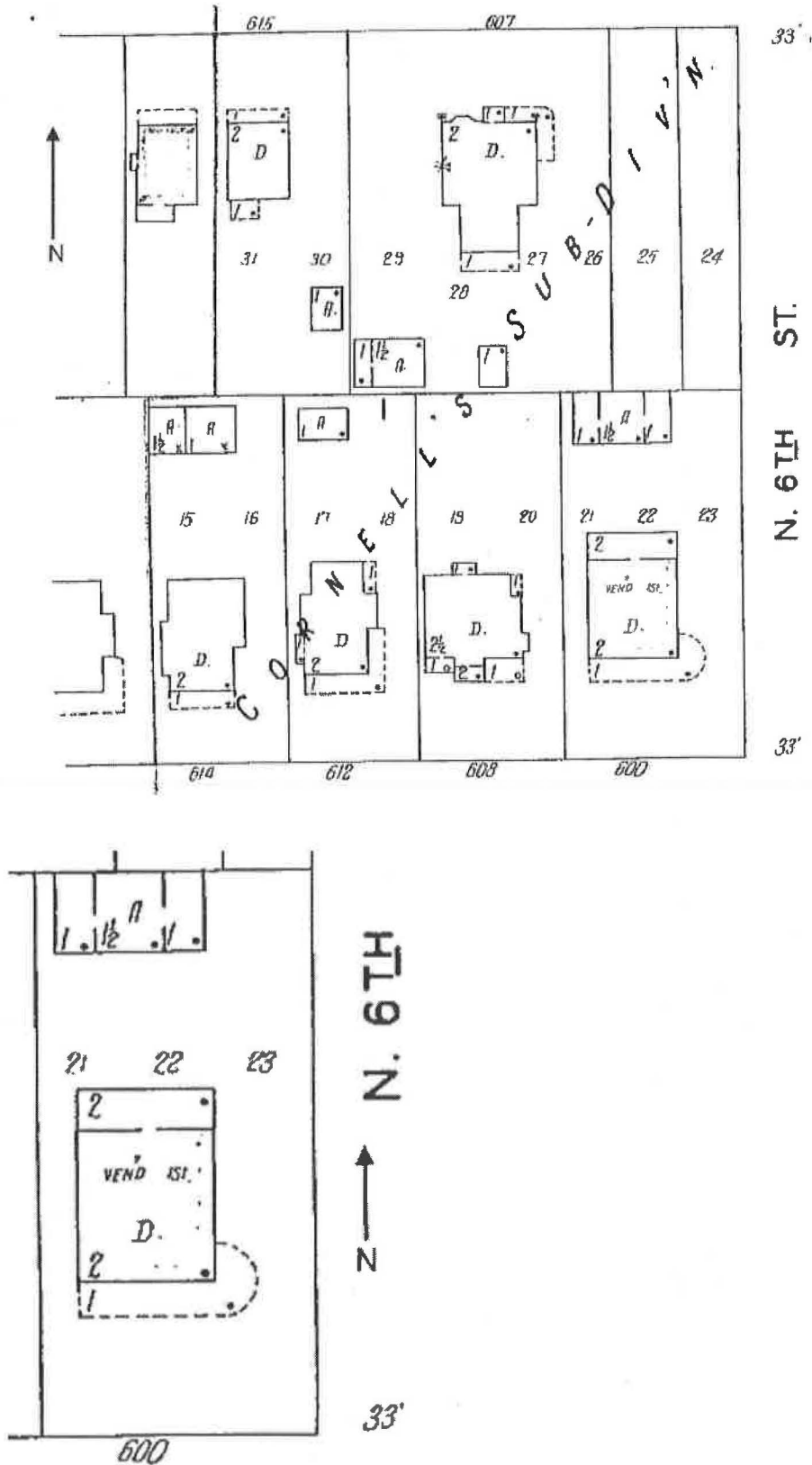
Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State



Cordell, Meeks, Sr. House
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

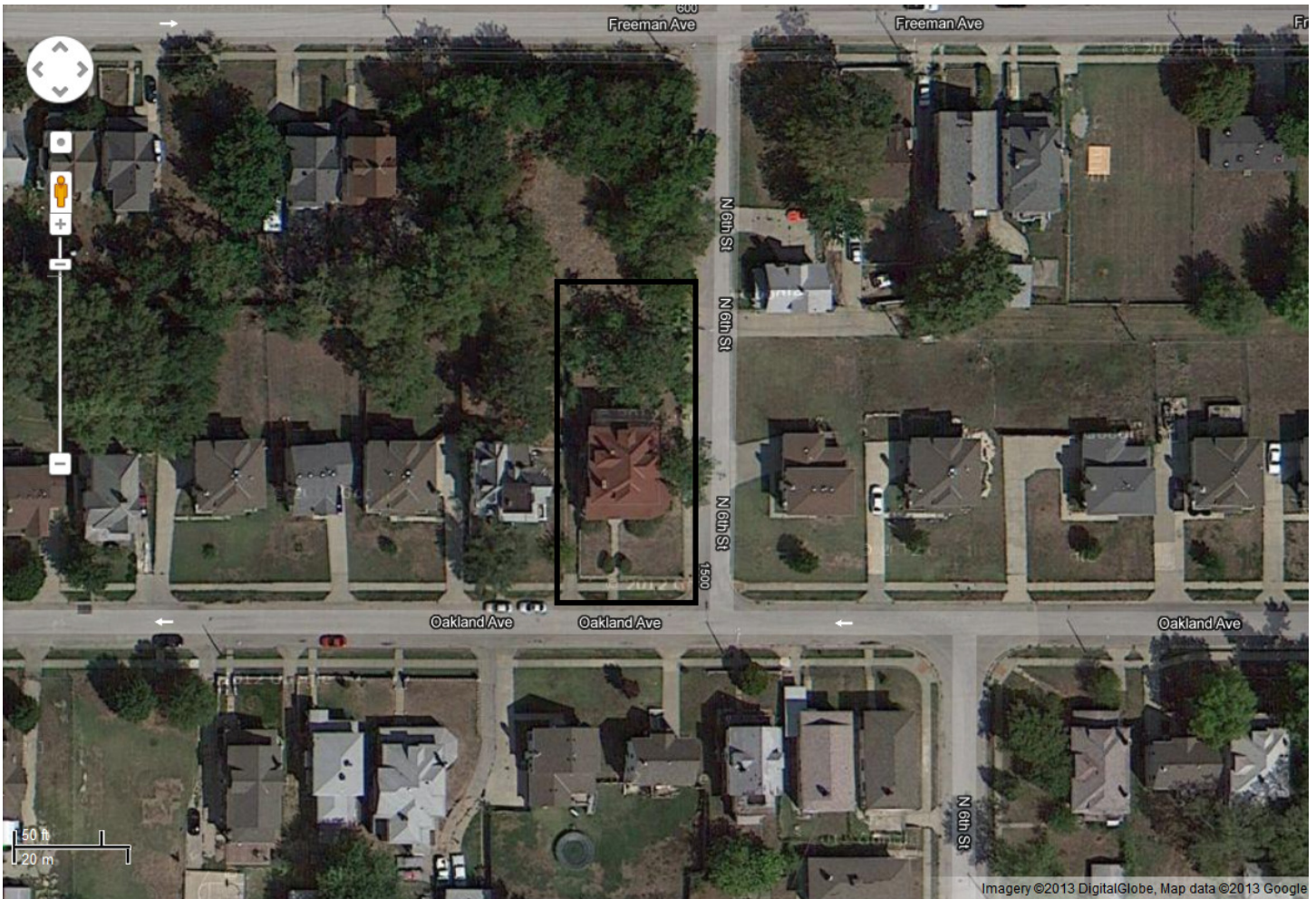
Figure 2: 1931-updated 1957 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (page 57). Top image shows 600 Oakland Avenue at lower right corner. Bottom image shows close-up of 600 Oakland Avenue.



Cordell, Meeks, Sr. House
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 3: Aerial Image



Google.com Aerial Image (2013).
600 Oakland Avenue
Kansas City, Wyandotte County, KS
Latitude / Longitude: 39.120748 / -94.624768
Datum WGS84

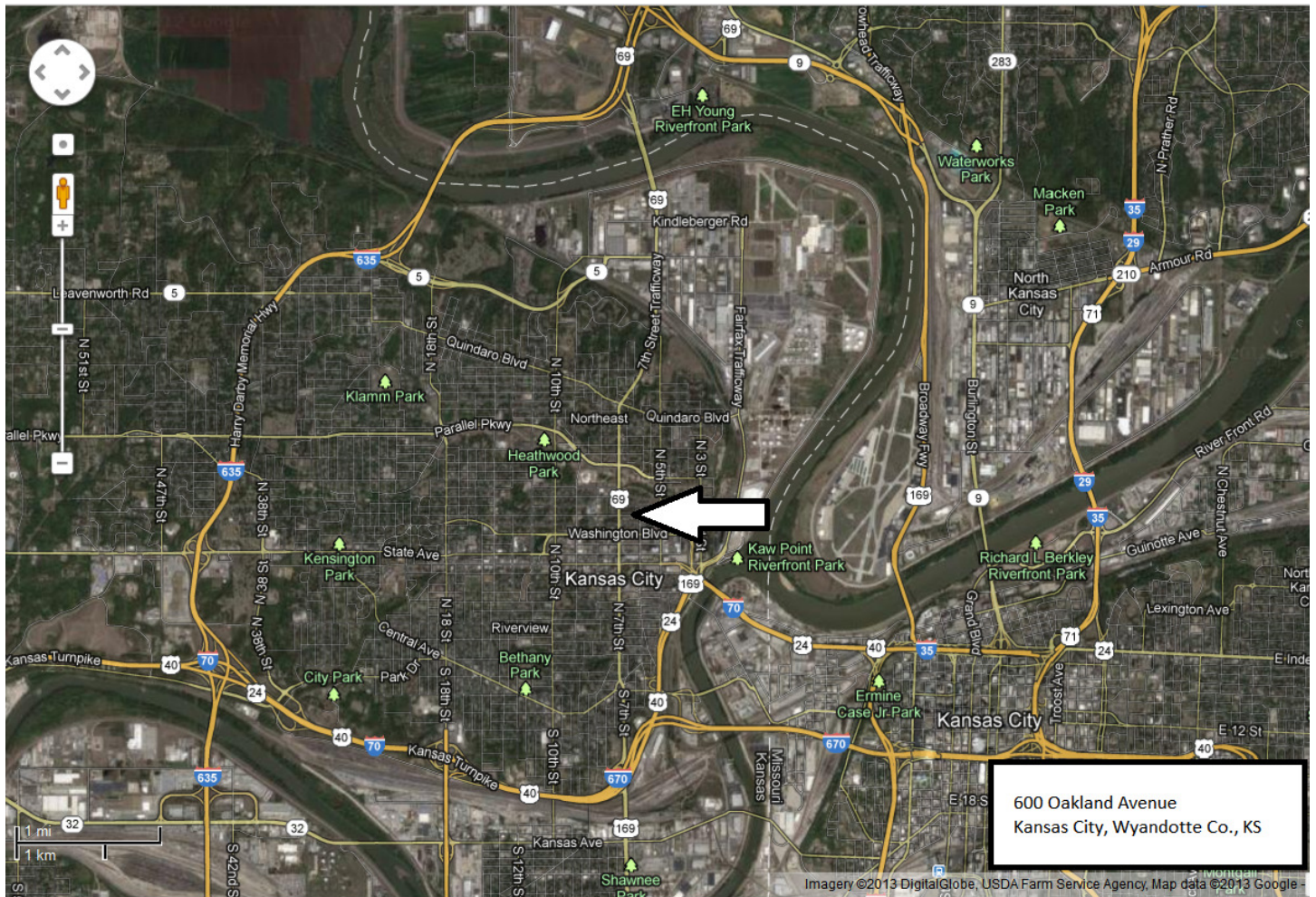
Cordell, Meeks, Sr. House

Wyandotte County, Kansas

Name of Property

County and State

Figure 4: Contextual Map

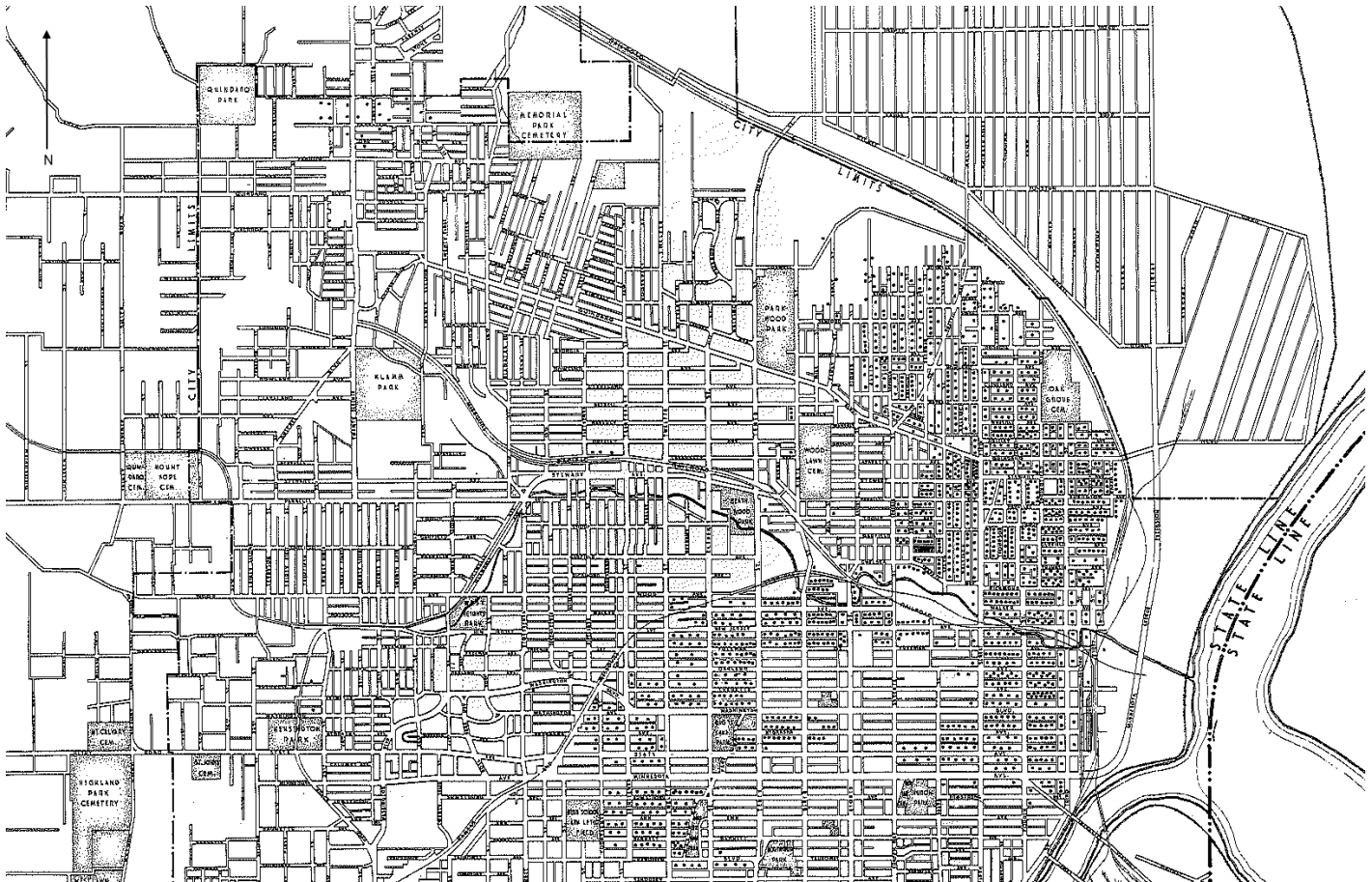


Google.com Aerial Image (2013).
600 Oakland Avenue
Kansas City, Wyandotte County, KS
Latitude / Longitude: 39.120748 / -94.624768
Datum WGS84

Cordell, Meeks, Sr. House
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 5: Distribution of African American Population in Kansas City, Kansas, 1936. One dot equals three families.



African American families were concentrated in the city's northeast neighborhoods.

Source: "The Afro-American Community in Kansas City Kansas: A History." City of Kansas City Kansas, 1982. (KSHS Library)

Cordell, Meeks, Sr. House
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 6: Distribution of African American Population in Kansas City, Kansas, 1947. One dot equals ten people.



African American families were concentrated in the city's northeast neighborhoods.

Source: "The Afro-American Community in Kansas City Kansas: A History." City of Kansas City Kansas, 1982. (KSHS Library)

Cordell, Meeks, Sr. House
Name of Property

Wyandotte County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 7: Meeks Family Photograph



Left to Right: William (Admiral) Sims; John Keith, former Vice Chairman of Democrat Central Committee; Mrs. Rebecca Vinson; US Congressman William L. Dawson (of Chicago); Cordell D. Meeks, Sr.

This gathering is in the dining room of the Meeks House and they are sitting in the east bay window area.



N 6TH STREET
OAKLAND AV

ONE WAY













Protection
1
877-760-9111









Protection 1









UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Meeks, Cordell D. Sr., House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: KANSAS, Wyandotte

DATE RECEIVED: 8/23/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/19/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/04/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/09/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000819

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 10-9-13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

Kansas Historical Society

Sam Brownback, Governor
Jennie Chinn, Executive Director

August 20, 2013

Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, N. W.
8th Floor (MS 2280)
Washington, DC 20005



Dear Ms. Shull:

We are pleased to submit for your consideration the following National Register documents:

- Westwood Hills Historic District – Johnson County (new nomination)
- New Lancaster General Store – Miami County (new nomination)
- New Lancaster Grange Hall, No. 223 – Miami County (new nomination)
- St. John the Divine Catholic Church – Wyandotte County (new nomination)
- Cordell D. Meeks, Sr. House – Wyandotte County (new nomination)
- Gustave Kubach House – Dickinson County (new nomination)
- Lawrence's Downtown Historic District – Douglas County (NR Amendment)

Enclosed are copies of each signed document and two disks per nomination with photograph, nomination, and mapping files. The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copies of the nominations.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. I may be reached at 785-272-8681 ext. 216 or smartin@kshs.org.

Sincerely yours,



Sarah J. Martin
National Register Coordinator

Enclosures