

MAY 13 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

# 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 Steele, Herbert & Eliza, House

Other names/site number KHRI # 171-0000-00001

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

## 2. Location

Street & number West Scott Lake Drive (NE/4,SE/4,SW/4 S12-T16S-R33W)  not for publication


City or town Scott City  vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Scott Code 171 Zip code 67871

## 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

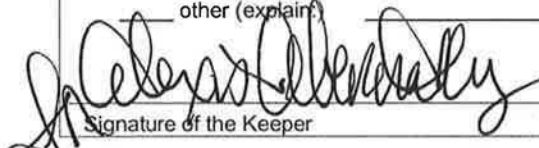
  
Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO Date 5-4-16

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) \_\_\_\_\_

  
Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action 6/23/16

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**5. Classification**

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

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

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

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

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

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
2	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Total</b>

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recreation & Culture: Museum

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: National Folk (Pyramidal Family)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone  
walls: Stone  
roof: Wood (shingles)  
other:

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## Narrative Description

### Summary

The Steele House is located in rural Scott County, Kansas (2010 population 4,936), approximately 13 miles north of Scott City. The nominated one-acre property is near the west bank of Ladder Creek, upstream from Lake Scott in Lake Scott State Park in the NE 1/4 of SE 1/4 of SW 1/4 of Section 12, Township 16 South Range 33 West. Though situated within the El Cuartelejo Archeological District National Historic Landmark, which is encompassed almost entirely by the state park, the Steele House is not considered a contributing resource to that district.<sup>1</sup> The nominated property includes a two-level stone house (completed ca. 1894), a stone springhouse (completed ca. 1894), and a decorative pond with stone bench (ca. 1934). A large barn and a chicken house, neither of which remain, were situated across the road west of the main house beyond the boundaries of this nomination. The remaining resources retain a high degree of integrity necessary to communicate their historic local significance with two of Scott County's most influential settlers.

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### Elaboration

#### Setting

The nominated property is situated on the west side of Ladder Creek (historically known as Beaver Creek and Punished Woman Creek), which runs through Ladder Creek Canyon in northern Scott County, about 13 miles north of Scott City and 2 miles west of US-83 Highway. The property is accessed by what was once a north-south unimproved county road and is now a paved state park road that passes within 30 feet of the west side of the house (*Figures 1 & 2*). The springhouse is located to the north of the main house, with the pond to the northeast of the house (*Figure 3*).

Ladder Creek originates in eastern Colorado and joins the Smoky Hill River in Logan County. By Kansas standards, Ladder Creek Canyon is deep and rugged. The creek cuts down through the Ogallala Formation and nearly horizontal beds of resistant sandstone and grit of this formation are clearly visible on the steep-walled bluffs lining the canyon. The Niobrara Formation forms the canyon floor. It is relatively flat and bordered by yucca, grass and shrub-covered slopes leading upward to the feet of the bluffs.

In 1930, Ladder Creek was dammed at the northern end of the canyon by the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission to create a lake that was originally called Lake McBride. The shorelines of the lake and the creek east of the Steele House are covered with tall grasses punctuated with stands of shrubs, cottonwood and willow trees. Based on early photographs, the house appears to have been surrounded early in its life on the south, east and north sides by trees and understory, and this setting persists to this day (*Figure 4*). Several springs emerge from the hillsides on either side of the house, as well as from other locations along Ladder Creek Canyon and in the side canyons and ravines. The canyon has a long history of intermittent human habitation. Sheltered by high bluffs and amply watered by the creek and natural springs, the land was an ideal location for a home, crops and livestock. The springs seep from the valley walls and floor near where the Ogallala formation and the Niobrara formation join.

#### Steele House, ca. 1894

#### Contributing Building

The limestone house faces west and is built into an east-facing slope so that the west elevation is one story and the east elevation is two stories. The house's square plan measures 30 feet long by 30 feet wide; the roof eaves are 25 feet above grade at the rear of the house. The house is topped by a wood-shingled deck-on-hip roof with boxed eaves. A central brick chimney identified in historic images no longer exists, but its location is noted at the roof peak by a cap.<sup>2</sup> A shed-roof porch covers a concrete stoop centered on the west elevation; a concrete sidewalk leads from the porch to West Scott Lake Drive, and brick pavers have been added to form a walkway around the north side of the house to the east elevation where they form a crude patio approximately 20' x 20' in size.

A stone foundation supports yellow-white limestone walls.<sup>3</sup> The exposed lower-level walls are constructed of random rubble with smooth coursed quoins at the building's corners. The junction between the lower and upper exterior walls is

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<sup>1</sup> The Steeles' association with El Cuartelejo will be discussed in Section 8.

<sup>2</sup> The date of the chimney removal is unknown but photographic evidence indicates the chimney was extant in 1939 but gone in 1962.

<sup>3</sup> The stones likely were hand-quarried from the surrounding bluffs. According to Rex Buchanan, Interim Director, Kansas Geological Survey, the primary stones are Smoky Hill (Niobrara) chalk, a form of limestone common in the canyon floor, and the

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articulated by a large water table comprised of a single row of large smooth-cut stones with canted faces below a single row of narrower smooth-cut rectangular stones that slightly protrudes from the façade. The row of canted stones also acts as a smooth transition between the thicker lower-level walls and the thinner upper-level walls. Moving up from the water table, the walls consist of two courses of smooth-cut rectangular stones, one course of rough-cut, contrasting stones; two courses of smooth-cut stones; one course of rough-cut contrasting stones, and five courses of smooth-cut stones.<sup>4</sup> Window and door lintels are simple flat stones that protrude from the building face. This protruding stone detail is also found at the topmost exposed stone on each corner of the house.

The main elevation faces west. This symmetrical façade has four bays; beginning at the north bay: 1/1 double-sash window, historic 2-light door, modern slab door, 2/2 double-sash window. The shed-roof porch connects to the roof and is centered on the elevation, sheltering the two entry doors and a portion of the north and south windows. The house originally had no porch, but one was added sometime prior to 1929, as it appears in a photo from that year (*Figure 5*). Survey photos from 1971 show a shed-roofed, wooden-floor porch with exposed rafter tails and wood supports (*Figure 6*). The porch was altered or replaced since that survey, as the current porch consists of a concrete slab with a shed roof supported by steel posts.

Photographic evidence shows that a lattice-work, vine-covered trellis, located a few yards west of the house, existed at the time the Steeles lived in the house and for a short time after their deaths, until at least the early 1930s (*Figure 7*). There are no records to indicate when it was built, its function or when it was removed.

The north and south elevations are similar. Each has two windows on the lower level. The north elevation has two 2/2 double-sash windows; whereas, the south elevation has three evenly-spaced 2/2 double-sash windows.

The east (rear) elevation is also symmetrical and contains three bays on each level. The lower level contains a single 1/1 double-sash window on the north, a modern slab door in the center, and a single 2/2 double-sash window at the south. Spaced evenly in the upper level are three windows; the north is a 1/1 double-sash window, and the center and south windows are 2/2 double-sash. The house has two front doors, a unique feature for the region.

The seven-room house features five upper-level rooms (a parlor and a family living area on the west side, each with a separate front door on the west and two bedrooms on the east side with a walk-in, windowed pantry between them) and two lower-level rooms (a summer kitchen on the east side and Eliza's work area on the west side) (*Figures 8 & 9*). Entering the house from the southern west-side entrance door, one walks into a family room which included a cook stove, table and sitting area. The southeast bedroom is accessed directly from the family room, as is the walk-in pantry adjacent to it. Next to the pantry doorway is the stairway leading downstairs. The pantry and stairway have no doors. From the northern west-side entrance, one walks into a parlor, and the parlor and family room are separated by a wall with a door. The northeast bedroom is accessible directly from the parlor. The parlor does not have direct access to the pantry or stairway leading downstairs. The northeast bedroom has a small, square viewing portal on its south wall that opens into the pantry. This feature was added after the house became a museum, so visitors could look into the northeast bedroom from the pantry without entering the bedroom. Continuing to the lower level, the stairway enters the east room. This room was used as a "summer" kitchen where Eliza would can and preserve a variety of fruits and vegetables for later use. This room has access to the outside through the east wall. The west basement room, which still houses an old loom believed to have belonged to Eliza, was Eliza's workroom and where the Steeles repaired tools and other smaller equipment used around the ranch. Since it is built into the hillside, this space remains cool in the summer.

Interior finishes are simple and are consistent throughout the dwelling. The interior walls of the upper level consist of plaster and single-beaded board wainscoting; the floors are wood. In the lower level, the perimeter walls are plaster or concrete over limestone while the wall separating the two rooms appears to be plastered. The lower level floor is concrete, which was placed in the 1980s when footings and jacks were added to support the upper level. The lower level ceiling is uncovered and shows the original joists. There are no original light fixtures in use.

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intervening layers of contrasting stone are probably Ogalalla, which outcrops around Ladder Creek Canyon [Rex Buchanan, email communication, July 22, 2015].

<sup>4</sup> These two horizontal bands of rock in the exterior walls stand out as unexpected aesthetic features of the house. Although ornamental in nature, they may also have served to help strengthen the walls, which are made of somewhat soft limestone chalk. Rock quoins may have served similar structural and ornamental purposes.



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### Alterations

The Scott City Professional and Business Women's Club rehabilitated the house ca. 1965. The work included restoring the few furnishings and the old loom in the lower-level workroom, plastering and spray-painting the lower level walls, putting down antique rugs, installing linoleum on some of the upper level floors and installing iron-barred doors on some interior doorways from an old bank building in Ness City. They cleaned the yard, planted perennials in the rock garden and put the roof back on the springhouse.<sup>5</sup> In the mid-1980s, the park received state funding to make some major renovations to the house that included a new roof, guttering and rebuilding the front porch, pouring concrete over the dirt floor on the lower level, rebuilding the stairs going to the lower level and installing footings and jacks to support the upper floor.<sup>6</sup> Otherwise, alterations to the house have been minimal. Beginning in the late 1990s, more improvements were made under the direction of LaVonne Kelch, a state park camp host at the time who, as a young girl, had lived nearby when the Steeles occupied the house. Using donated materials and labor, she removed the interior barred doors so visitors could access the entire house, installed steel exterior doors, added Plexiglas over the windows, repaired some foundation damage in the lower level, repainted some of the walls and added period furnishings.<sup>7</sup> In spite of the alterations and improvements, the Steele House remains faithful to its original character and architecture. It is maintained by dedicated volunteers with donations from museum visitors.

### **Springhouse ca. 1894**

### **Contributing Building**

A crude stone structure was built over a still-active natural spring located about 30 feet north of the main house. Also called the milk house, the exact date of construction is unknown, but the springhouse is contemporary with the Steele's house. The building faces southeast and is partially dug into a hill on its northwest side; it measures approximately eight feet square and six feet high at the front, sloping to about five feet high at the back. It consists of crudely constructed limestone walls supporting a simple rafter and wood plank roof. The rafters on each side are recessed into notches cut in the limestone walls. The flat, sloping roof is currently topped with corrugated metal that likely was added in 1965 by the Scott City Business and Professional Women's Club. The floor is soil and stone. A door is centered in the southeast elevation and is about five feet high and 28 inches wide. A two-foot square window is located on each side wall just above the dirt line.

### **Pond and Bench ca. 1934**

### **Contributing Site and Object**

A small decorative man-made pond is situated about 30 feet northeast and downhill from the springhouse. It was built ca. 1934 by Bond E. Hale, park superintendent, who started working at the park ca. 1932. He also built an elaborate rock garden on the north side of the house and the pond appears in a photograph taken of the rock garden when it was completed.<sup>8</sup> He was likely aided in building the rock garden and pond by the CCC as part of other park improvements they made incidental to repairing the lake dam in 1934.<sup>9</sup> It is about four feet deep, measures about ten feet across, and consists of limestone capped with concrete. The pond receives seepage from the springhouse spring as well as other springs in the hillside. On a small terrace west of the pond is a crude bench fashioned from large, flat pieces of rock from the surrounding bluffs, held together with concrete. This bench is considered a contributing object. The rock garden remains, although it is in disrepair.

### **Integrity**

The Steele property retains a high degree of integrity. It is situated in its original location and retains most of its significant, unique and recognizable design features along with original materials and workmanship. Since the house was built in 1894, the landscape surrounding it has matured through natural succession, but the setting still evokes a sense of place and one can easily envision how it relates to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century environment. Upon entering the house, a visitor can sense what it might have been like to live in that time period.

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<sup>5</sup> Letter from Irene Zane, Finance Chairman of the Scott City Business and Professional Women's Club to Verne Hart, Kansas State Park and Resources Authority, February 18, 1966.

<sup>6</sup> Rick Stevens, Park Ranger, quoted in "A Crusade to Preserve the Past," *The Scott County Record* 4 (06/25/1997): n.p.

<sup>7</sup> "Steele Home Reopens to the Public," *The Tri-County Advocate* (06/29/1999): 1.

<sup>8</sup> "Diamond Jubilee Anniversary Celebration of Scott State Park, 1934-1994," supplement to the *News Chronicle*, ca.1994.

<sup>9</sup> W.G. Strong, compiler, *Fifth Biennial Report of the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission* (Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1935), n.p.

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**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**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Exploration / Settlement  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

\_\_\_\_\_  
ca. 1894 to 1934  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_  
ca. 1894 to 1930  
\_\_\_\_\_  
1934  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steele, Herbert & Eliza

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
N/A

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steele, Herbert & Eliza (builders and designers)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Civilian Conservation Corps (pond builders)

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance covers the dates (circa 1894 to 1930) the Steeles lived at this house and includes the dates (1925 to 1934) when Lake Scott State Park was developed, opened and improved.

**Criteria Considerations (justification)**

N/A

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

### Summary

The Herbert & Eliza Steele House is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its local association with two of Scott County's first Euro-American settlers. Their willingness to share the beauty of their land with the general public led to the creation of Lake Scott State Park; their understanding of the important history within their land paved the way to the discovery of El Cuartelejo and the subsequent National Historic Landmark district. The Steele House is also nominated under Criterion C as an excellent example of the Pyramidal Folk house adapted for this site in Western Kansas. Their house, associated springhouse, and pond are the only remaining resources associated with the Steele farmstead and are currently used as a museum. The period of significance encompasses the dates the Steeles lived at the house (ca. 1894 to 1930) and extends to 1934 when the pond was constructed.

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### Elaboration

The Steele House is situated within a rich landscape containing physical remnants of several cultural groups and events important to the history of the United States. Before Euro-American settlement, the area was home to several Central Plains groups, dating to proto historic & early historic times. The 1964 El Cuartelejo National Historic Landmark – a concentration of remnants from these cultural groups – surrounds the Steele House (*Figure 10*) and was made possible by the Steeles' willingness to have their land investigated by archeologists beginning in the late 1890s.<sup>10</sup>

A gentle mound of soil and rocks north of their house drew the Steeles' curiosity, but stories vary on exactly what they found that sparked their interest.<sup>11</sup> Whatever his actual experience, in 1898 Herbert invited University of Kansas (KU) paleontologists S.W. Williston and H.T. Martin to excavate the mound.<sup>12</sup> The mound concealed the remains of a seven-room pueblo that archeologists believe is the location of the village of El Cuartelejo referred to in 17th century Spanish reports. El Cuartelejo was the name given to a Plains Apache village in the High Plains where Taos Indians fled in 1664 to escape Spanish rule. Later excavations throughout the canyon revealed evidence of other Indian habitation in the area, thus the creation of the National Historic Landmark district.

South of this district (and Lake Scott State Park) is the location of the September 1878 Battle of Punished Woman's Fork. The clash that took place here between the Cheyenne and the U.S. Army was a pivotal event during the larger Northern Cheyenne Exodus of 1878-1879.<sup>13</sup> This was also the last confrontation of the Plains Indian Wars in Kansas, making permanent settlement in the western part of the state possible.

### Euro-American Settlement of Scott County<sup>14</sup>

The land area of Scott County was defined by the Kansas legislature in March 1873, four years before the Battle of Punished Woman's Fork. The county is named in honor of General Winfield Scott (1786-1866), hero of the War of 1812 and the Black Hawk War, commander of U.S. forces in the Mexican-American War, and the first general-in-chief of the Union armies in the Civil War. Before 1886 there were not enough permanent residents for the county to have a formal government, so it was attached to Ford County for judicial purposes. The official 1880 U.S. census shows 43 residents in the county.

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<sup>10</sup> For a more detailed description and history of the El Cuartelejo Archeological District National Historic Landmark, see the nomination available at [http://www.kshs.org/resource/national\\_register/nominationsNRDB/Scott\\_EICuartejejoNR.pdf](http://www.kshs.org/resource/national_register/nominationsNRDB/Scott_EICuartejejoNR.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Some stories suggest Herbert found American Indian artifacts such as arrow points, beads and pottery shards around the mound, while others suggest he thought the mound formed the shape of a foundation or that he had seen ground squirrels bringing corn up from their burrows, rather than taking it below ground.

<sup>12</sup> There were no archeologists at KU at that time.

<sup>13</sup> In September 1878 a group of Northern Cheyenne, under the joint leadership of chiefs Dull Knife and Little Wolf, left Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma) to attempt a return to their homes in Montana. A detachment of U.S. Army soldiers pursued them in order to capture and return them to Oklahoma. The Cheyenne stopped in a narrow tributary of Ladder Creek, known today as Battle Canyon, where they prepared an ambush for the approaching soldiers. After a protracted gun battle during which both sides suffered casualties, the Cheyenne escaped and continued their flight north. The soldiers continued their pursuit until most Cheyenne were killed or captured. For more information, see the 2007 National Register nomination, available here:

[http://www.kshs.org/resource/national\\_register/nominationsNRDB/Scott\\_BattleofPunishedWomansForkNR\\_redacted.pdf](http://www.kshs.org/resource/national_register/nominationsNRDB/Scott_BattleofPunishedWomansForkNR_redacted.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Information in this section from Frank Blackmar, *Kansas: A Cyclopaedia of State History, Embracing Events, Institutions, Industries, Counties, Cities, Towns, Prominent Persons, Etc.*, Volume II (Chicago: Standard Publishing Co., 1912), 655-656.

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The first permanent Euro-American settlement in Scott County was in October 1884. Two Chicago women, Mrs. M. E. De Geer and her daughter, Mrs. Ida Eastman (later, Mrs. Frank H. Miller), wanted to establish a temperance community and settled in the center of the county, where Scott City was later established. The Scott City Town Company founded the town in September 1885. The county was formally organized on July 5, 1886 after a June census by Charles Reed, the governor's appointed enumerator, determined that the required number of people (1,500) lived there to qualify for county status. Scott City was named the county seat. The 1890 census revealed the population dropped to 1,262. By 1900, the population had declined to 1,098.

### The Steele Family & Farmstead<sup>15</sup>

Herbert L. & Eliza J. (Landon) Steele (*Figure 11*) were among the first permanent settlers in Scott County after its organization in 1886. Herbert was born in December 1859 in East Bloomfield, New York, the first of 11 children. His family found their way to central Kansas, where 1885 Kansas Census records indicate they were living in Dickinson County.<sup>16</sup> According to some writers, Herbert moved to Scott County in 1886 and in 1888 acquired land in Ladder Creek Canyon for his homestead. However, there are no records to substantiate this information. The earliest land acquisition found for him is for property in Logan County acquired in 1901.<sup>17</sup> A brief 1890 newspaper article alludes to Herbert mending time pieces in the area, so he must have lived in the region.<sup>18</sup> Conversely, a newspaper article announcing Herbert's death states that he came to Scott County in 1892.<sup>19</sup> In 1891, Herbert's father, Joel, and sister, Dora, each acquired land in southern Logan County just north of the Scott County line and north of Ladder Creek Canyon. There are no records to indicate exactly where in the region Herbert lived between his arrival in the Logan/Scott county area and his marriage to Eliza.

Eliza Landon was born in January 1858 in Jonesborough, Tennessee. According to U.S. Census records, the Landons lived in Missouri in 1880; land patent records indicate they were in Scott County by 1889.<sup>20</sup> Eliza's father, Samuel, owned a timber claim near the west end of Timber Canyon,<sup>21</sup> a side canyon of Ladder Creek Canyon located west of the Lake Scott dam. Before her marriage to Herbert, Eliza was a teacher, receiving her second grade teaching certificate in 1890.<sup>22</sup> The two were married in Scott City on August 20, 1892. On February 21, 1893, Eliza Landon was granted a claim to the north half of Section 17, Township 16 South, Range 33 West (north of her father's timber claim), but it is unknown where the couple lived between the time of their marriage and when they built their house.

The deed to the Steeles' land in Section 12, Township 16 South, Range 33 West was issued to Eliza in October 1893 for a sum of \$225. At first, the newlyweds lived in a simple dugout on this property, but they finished their new home in circa 1894. Eventually, Herbert and Eliza acquired more than 1,000 acres in Scott and Logan counties consisting of parcels located in Sections 8, 12, 13 and 17, Township 16 South, Ranges 32 and 33 West, most of which were previously owned by members of the Landon and Steele families.<sup>23</sup>

Beyond their initial purchases, the Steeles financed land acquisitions through cattle- and crop-raising, but gardening was their principal livelihood.<sup>24</sup> Fruits and vegetables harvested from their large orchard and garden were sold in Scott City either from a horse and buggy or spring wagon and team, as the couple never owned a motorized vehicle. The garden was located below the house, and the orchard was located south of the house, where the Lake Scott State Park maintenance facility is currently (*Figure 2*). Both were irrigated by the spring that cooled the springhouse. The orchard

<sup>15</sup> Unless otherwise noted, most of the information about the Steeles is from Maxine Steele Callender, "The Steele House," in *History of Early Scott County* (Scott City, Kans.: Scott County Historical Society, 1977), 233-236. Maxine was the Steeles' great-niece through Elba Steele.

<sup>16</sup> 1885 Kansas State Census, Roll: KS1885\_36, Line: 13.

<sup>17</sup> As part of the Homestead Act, Herbert received a land grant for 160 acres on August 12, 1901 located at S1/2 of SW1/4 and S1/2 of SE1/4 of S34 T15 R33W about 3.5 miles northwest of the Steele House. ([www.glorerecords.blm.gov](http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov))

<sup>18</sup> *Scott County News*, April 3, 1890, reprinted in *Scott City News Chronicle* (03/28/1970) in Kansas State Historical Society, Scott County Clippings, 1888-1999.

<sup>19</sup> "H.L. Steele Died Suddenly Wednesday," *News Chronicle* (09/26/1929) in Kansas State Historical Society, *Scott County Clippings*, 1888-1999.

<sup>20</sup> Certificate 5046, U.S. Government to George W. Landon [Eliza's brother], U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, *General Land Office Records*, 08/12/1889, digitized copy available from [www.glorerecords.blm.gov](http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov) (accessed 08/21/2015).

<sup>21</sup> South 1/2 of S17 T16S R33, granted April 17, 1891.

<sup>22</sup> *Sentinel-Herald* (08/21/1890) in Kansas State Historical Society, *Scott County Clippings*, 1888-1999.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, *General Land Office Records*, 08/12/1889, digitized copy available from [www.glorerecords.blm.gov](http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov) (accessed 08/21/2015).

<sup>24</sup> "Scott County State Park," *News Chronicle* (06/24/1937) in Kansas State Historical Society, *Scott County Clippings*, 1888-1999.

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was comprised of cherry, peach, apricot and apple trees planted from seeds brought from Missouri and eastern Kansas. Local grapes, plums and berries that grew along the banks of Ladder Creek were also harvested. The fruits and vegetables harvested by the Steeles were sold either whole or in cans, which Eliza prepared in the house's basement kitchen.

Because the Steeles never owned an automobile or truck, trips into town for business or delivery could sometimes be an overnight excursion. While Herbert was gone, Eliza and the couple's young son, Leslie LeRoy (Roy), handled farm and ranch chores; nephews Elba and Hyland Steele also helped. While traveling, Herbert always carried a .30-.30 rifle to shoot game or for protection against rattlesnakes, bobcats or wolves, which may have lived in the area at the time.<sup>25</sup> Of their 800 acres listed in the 1910-1911 Scott County Plat Book, 25 acres were alfalfa, 50 were in cultivation and 200 were unfit for cultivation.<sup>26</sup> The remainder likely was grassland used for cattle ranching or left fallow.

The Steeles built several outbuildings to support themselves and their agricultural endeavors. The small stone springhouse north of their house not only supplied their water but was also a cool place to store perishable food items. Across the road west of the house, a large barn was constructed to support the farm and ranch operations (*Figures 12 & 13*). It housed horses, milk cows, other livestock, hay, wagons and buggies. Like the house, the lower level was partially recessed into the hillside and the foundation and lower walls were constructed of hand-quarried stone; the upper walls and roof were wood.<sup>27</sup> North of the barn was a stone chicken house with wooden roof. It was also partially recessed into the hillside.<sup>28</sup>

Eliza tended to a variety of chores which included cooking, baking, churning butter, washing, ironing, sewing, weaving, milking the cows, and tending the garden and orchard. Unsold garden and ranch products were not wasted as she also made cheese, hominy, sauerkraut, jellies and jams. She also canned a variety of fruits and vegetables to place in the storage cellar. Eliza also spun wool from sheep that Herbert sheared, and she wove fabric for clothing, rugs and quilts. To supplement their income, Eliza sold some of her creations while Herbert repaired clocks, sewing machines and other small machinery.

The local school teacher, Adah Blanche Currah (1894-1994) stayed with the Steeles during the school terms and often helped with household chores. Adah was employed at a one-room school house (still extant) located about one mile south of the state park, and she walked or rode a horse to school, as did the pupils. Adah received her teaching certificate from Hays College in 1918 and stayed with the Steeles until her marriage in 1927.<sup>29</sup> Herbert and Eliza lived in the house they built until their deaths. Though the couple had three children, none survived their parents to inherit the property.<sup>30</sup>

### Early Tourism in Scott County

Between 1911 and 1917, a short-line railroad ran near and through the Steele property, bringing with it local tourists, who were welcomed by the Steeles. Though three major east-west railroads served western Kansas in the late 1890s, no north-south route through the western counties connected any of the major railroads.<sup>31</sup> That changed in the summer of 1911 when the 52-mile Scott City Northern (SCN) reached Winona (Logan County).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> By 1895, wolves had been extirpated from all but 10 Kansas counties, due in large part to explores, soldiers and settlers killing them on sight or with poison. The last apparent wolves were killed in the winter of 1938-1939. Kansas Mammal Atlas Online, Fort Hays State University, [http://webcat.fhsu.edu/ksfauna/mammals/index.asp?page=species&species\\_id=402-880&dots=yes&tributaries=yes&isAnura=&map=](http://webcat.fhsu.edu/ksfauna/mammals/index.asp?page=species&species_id=402-880&dots=yes&tributaries=yes&isAnura=&map=)

<sup>26</sup> *Plat Book of Scott County, Kansas* (Ashland, Kans.: Western Publishing Co., 1910-1911), 33.

<sup>27</sup> It is unclear when the barn was demolished. It had been slated for demolition and some of the materials used to build the CCC camp in late 1933 or early 1934; however, the barn was listed as still standing in 1957 in a historic structure survey [Nyle Miller, *A Survey of Historic Sites and Structures in Kansas* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1957), 56].

<sup>28</sup> The barn and chicken house no longer exist, but there remains a depression in the hillside corresponding with the barn's location.

<sup>29</sup> Marilyn Kendrick, Adah Currah's daughter-in-law, e-mail communication with author, January 5, 2016.

<sup>30</sup> A daughter was born in 1893 and died soon after birth. A son, Leslie Leroy "Roy" was born in 1894, and another daughter, Ethel Mildred, was born in 1899. Ethel died in 1902. Roy graduated from Scott City High School in 1914 and died in 1915 from a head injury sustained in a baseball game. The Steeles are buried in Pence Cemetery, a few miles west of the park.

<sup>31</sup> Three major railroads formed the framework for rail service in Scott County: Kansas Pacific Railroad (formerly known as the Union Pacific Eastern Division); Missouri Pacific Railway (MoPac); and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe (AT&SF).

<sup>32</sup> In 1907 construction began on the 37.3-mile Garden City, Gulf and Northern (GCGN) railroad between Garden City (Finney County) and Scott City. The first passenger train to Scott City ran on December 30, 1909 [Karen Walk, "Moving the Depot," transcribed and hosted on Wichita County Historical Society website [http://www.wichitacountymuseum.org/depot\\_move.htm](http://www.wichitacountymuseum.org/depot_move.htm) (accessed 02/2016)].

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The SCN line followed a route through Ladder Creek Canyon, on the opposite side of Ladder Creek from the Steele house. Bearing north-northwest, it crossed the creek north of the Steeles, passed between the Steele house and the El Cuartelejo ruins, then continued north along the west side of Ladder Creek (*Figures 1 & 2*).<sup>33</sup> About one mile south of Lake Scott State Park is an east-west ridge called the Devil's Backbone which had blocked direct north-south travel between Scott City and Ladder Creek Canyon. The SCN built a narrow cut through the Devil's Backbone just wide enough to accommodate the tracks, and in doing so, it provided access through the ridge for drivers who were willing to straddle the tracks with their automobiles (*Figure 14*). Herbert Steele took advantage of the cut in the Devil's Backbone to shorten the trip to Scott City.<sup>34</sup> The severe winter of 1911-1912 seriously impacted the ability of the SCN to operate, and it quickly fell into hard times.

In 1912 efforts were made to keep the trains running, and special excursion trains became popular. Col. J.G. Felts of Winona promoted the first overnight "picnic train" in June 1912 and called it "Picnic on the Beaver." Felts acted as guide and philosopher for the journey to the area that is now Lake Scott State Park.<sup>35</sup> The SCN was in receivership by January 1913, but it was resurrected by new owners in July 1913 and renamed the Colorado, Kansas and Oklahoma (CK&O). The CK&O made daily runs, except Sunday, between Scott City and Winona. Many Sundays, however, the CK&O ran picnic trains to scenic areas along Ladder Creek. The steam-powered train had a running schedule of 17 mph – stops included.<sup>36</sup> A 1915 CK&O timetable lists 10 scheduled stops between Winona and Scott City, including one at Christy, which appears to have been located just south of the current Lake Scott State Park boundary, in the vicinity of K-95 and Road 270. However, the train stopped frequently to pick up or drop off passengers and freight or fill its water tanks from Ladder Creek. The 52-mile trip between Winona and Scott City took about three hours.

By the time this railroad started running through Ladder Creek Canyon, the Steeles had acquired 800 of their eventual 1000s of acres. Cattle grazed freely on their property while the excursion trains made their frequent stops. Despite some cattle being hit by one of the trains,<sup>37</sup> the Steeles welcomed the visitors who came to enjoy the natural beauty and opportunities to hike, camp, picnic and fish. The Steeles became well-known for their hospitality, freely offering water from their springhouse to area guests, who were expected to ask permission to wander the Steeles' land. In spite of being annoyed at the occasional visitor who damaged the property or did not ask permission, they never closed access to the public.

Financial troubles began brewing in 1915, and the CK&O made its last scheduled run on November 1, 1917. Lagging ridership, poor support by other farmers and ranchers, and the rise of better automobiles all combined to bring the end of the railroad.<sup>38</sup> However, the automobile continued to enable visitors to the area.

### Lake Scott State Park

As the Steeles grew older, they sought out ways to protect and promote the land where they had settled in the 1890s. Archeological investigations continued throughout the canyon and at El Cuartelejo. In 1922 the Steeles, who were then in their 60s, deeded two acres of the historic El Cuartelejo site to the Kansas Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), so it could be preserved and shared with the public.<sup>39</sup> The restored foundation of the pueblo can be seen north of the Steele house, along with a monument erected by the DAR in 1925 (*Figure 15*).

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Banking on the success of the GCGN, work began in July 1910 to build an extension northward from Scott City. In 1911, the GCGN was sold to the AT&SF; however, the sale did not include the segment north of Scott City, so the promoters formed a new corporation to build the SCN.

<sup>33</sup> It is currently unknown how the railroad acquired the right-of-way in Ladder Creek and if it was a portion of the land owned by the Steeles, but On March 17, 1914, Herbert Steele purchased the section of land located at W1/2 of SE1/4 and E1/2 of SW1/4 of S13 T16 R33W, except 13.5 acres deeded to the Colorado, Kansas and Oklahoma (CK&O) railroad.

<sup>34</sup> LaVonne Kelch, personal interview with author, 2016. Previously, he followed undeveloped backroads eastward from Ladder Creek to the dirt road that became US-83 highway.

<sup>35</sup> Alma Johnson, "High Hopes Rode the Rails Briefly, CK&O Railway, 1911-1917," *Kanhistique* 8 (12/1987): 6.

<sup>36</sup> *Scott City News Chronicle*, no. 23 (1930): n.p.

<sup>37</sup> Johnson, "High Hopes Rode the Rails Briefly," 6.

<sup>38</sup> The CK&O was sold on December 21, 1917 to Joseph Hyman, Chicago, who was to junk the railroad for its steel which was to be used in the U.S. effort in World War I. However, a story in the Scott City News Chronicle on February 5, 1919 noted that the rails were to be loaded onto 100 cars and shipped to Shanghai, China to be used for railroad construction. A CK&O locomotive, "Old Betsey" remained on a short section of track about nine miles north of Scott City until at least the early 1940s. It was reportedly scrapped for steel during WWII. (*Scott City News Chronicle* 115, no. 20 date unknown).

<sup>39</sup> General Warranty Deed, Eliza J. Steele to the Daughters of American Revolution of Kansas, September 18, 1922.



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The Steeles were aware that their property was an ideal setting for a park, as they had long welcomed visitors to the Ladder Creek Canyon area to enjoy the scenery and El Cuartelejo (*Figure 16*). Prompted by the Steeles, H.D. McDonald, Grover E. McBride and Dr. S.S. McGinnis,<sup>40</sup> members of the newly-formed Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission (KFFGC, a forerunner of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism) toured Ladder Creek Canyon and the Steele farm in October 1925, to see if the area could be developed into a lake and park – something that Herbert and five other individuals later sponsored.<sup>41</sup> In 1927, the KFFGC began buying 1,280 acres for what became Scott County State Park.<sup>42</sup> In 1928, the Steeles sold 640 acres of property to the KFFGC for \$18 per acre with the stipulation they be allowed to continue living in their stone house rent-free for the remainders of their lives (*Figure 17*).<sup>43</sup> Herbert passed in September 1929. Eliza died in the stone springhouse in July 1930, one month after the opening of the park.

In August 1929, a contract was let to build the dam for the 100-acre Lake McBride (now known as Lake Scott), and it was completed in May 1930 at a cost of \$50,386. The lake was named in honor of Grover McBride, one of the men who advocated for its creation.<sup>44</sup> Two new residences for the park superintendent and an assistant, trees and various other improvements brought the total cost for the park to approximately \$100,000.<sup>45</sup> One of these improvements was likely the widening of the old railroad right-of-way through the Devil's Backbone for use as a road (*Figure 18*). Scott County State Park opened June 12, 1930 (*Figure 19*).

On Friday, August 4, 1933, an estimated 15-inch downpour between Sharon Springs, Kansas and Cheyenne Wells, Colorado sent a torrent of water eastward along Ladder Creek (*Figure 20*). Over the next two days, the floodwaters swept through Ladder Creek Canyon and resulted in one fatality. The flood destroyed about 100 feet of the Scott County State Park dam due to backwash from the spillway scouring the fill dirt from below the dam's concrete slabs, effectively draining the lake. About two miles of road leading into the park was washed out. Though much of the park was damaged, there is no mention in news reports of any damage to the Steele House. Following the flood, the KFFGC immediately requested a Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) camp be assigned to the park to repair the dam and damaged structures and replant trees.<sup>46</sup> By the week of August 13, 1933, work was underway by the county to repair the road leading into the state park.<sup>47</sup>

The dam repairs and other park improvements were completed in May 1934 at a cost of \$15,000 to the KFFGC. The CCC workers repaired the dam, provided 12 camping sites in various canyons, built rock gardens, constructed new drives, landscaped some areas and planted 2,500 pines and 1,500 cedar trees.<sup>48</sup> One of CCC's "rock garden" projects included the construction of the small pond to the northeast of the Steele House, under the supervision of Bond Hale, park superintendent (*Figure 21*).

### Steele House Architecture

Besides its association with the Steeles, the significance of the house is related to its design. The house's closest classification is a Pyramidal National Folk. According to architectural historian Virginia McAlester, "Massed-plan folk houses of rectangular shape are normally covered by side-gable roofs. Those with more nearly square plans [like the

<sup>40</sup> Callender, "The Steele House," 235.

<sup>41</sup> In addition to Herbert Steele, sponsors for the designation of Scott County State Park were G.E. McBride, R.D. Armstrong, D.S. Epley, Carl M. Starr and Dr. J.T. Keeling. *First Report of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission* (Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1926), 16.

<sup>42</sup> The Kansas Legislature officially renamed the park Scott State Park in 1965. In 1970, the legislature officially renamed park as Lake Scott State Park, the name by which it is currently known.

<sup>43</sup> General Warranty Deed, Eliza J. Steele to State of Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game, February 22, 1928, on file with the Scott County, Kansas Register of Deeds.

<sup>44</sup> Grover E. McBride (1884-1928), originally from Osborne, Kansas, was a Scott City pharmacist, community supporter and one of the strongest advocates for building the lake. In 1927, after the law enacting the lake, McBride and two other men were named by the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission to establish the park. He died in October 1928 before the lake was completed. After his passing, his family erected a monument to him on Point Lookout, a bluff on the east side of the lake, where it still stands. He is buried in Scott County Cemetery.

<sup>45</sup> *Scott City News Chronicle* (06/24/1937): n.p.

<sup>46</sup> *Fifth Biennial Report of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission* (Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1935), n.p. Only a few foundations currently remain of the camp.

<sup>47</sup> *The News Chronicle* (08/17/1933): n.p. This work was done by the Emergency Relief Organization.

<sup>48</sup> *Fifth Biennial Report of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission* (Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1935), n.p. Much information about the CCC camp is found in Scott City's *News Chronicle* from between August and November 1933. The CCC's impact on Lake Scott State Park was extensive, but as this nomination is for the Steele House, this narrative focuses on the CCC's impact at the Steele House only.

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Steele House], in contrast, are commonly built with pyramidal (equilateral hipped) roofs, which require more complex roof framing but need fewer long-spanning rafters, and thus are less expensive to build.”<sup>49</sup> Between 1905 and 1930, a two-story version of the Pyramidal Folk became a common urban form known now as the American Foursquare.<sup>50</sup> With its two-level design, the Steele House was built well before the American Foursquare became a popular residential form in western Kansas.

One of the house’s interesting features is its stacked split-level design. Unlike the split-levels of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, this six-room house is vertically stacked, with both levels opening to ground level on opposite sides of the house. Survey information for Scott County’s early residential architecture is scant, so a comparison to other known buildings in the area is unavailable at this time.<sup>51</sup> However, a similar stacked design is found near Eskridge in Wabaunsee County (approximately 310 miles east of the Steele House) and near Atchison in Atchison County in the northeast portion of the state (approximately 375 miles to the northeast). All three houses are set in rural areas with drastic topographic changes and an abundance of stone (*Figure 22*). The Steele House is the only known house of its design in Scott County.

The compact massed floor plan takes full advantage of its site. The lowest level contains two rooms used by the Steeles for cooking and working. The west room formerly had a clay pipe irrigation system and water wheel. Though most of the water wheel system’s components are gone, a small wheel and miscellaneous equipment in this room may be the remains of the system. The upper level’s symmetrical plan features four main rooms: two bedrooms separated by a narrow pantry, a parlor, and a living room. Both the parlor and the living room are each accessed by an exterior door in the west elevation – a common feature of earlier hall-and-parlor folk forms.

## Conclusion

Herbert died in 1929, having never seen the lake he helped create. Shortly after his death, Scott County residents embarked on a campaign to build a monument to honor the Steeles as early pioneers. Efforts to raise the needed \$4,000 began in January 1930, and the county’s school children and many other residents contributed. On June 12, 1930, residents held a celebration of the new lake and park at which they unveiled the new monument, which still stands on the bluff overlooking their former house.<sup>52</sup> Eliza died the following month. After Eliza Steele passed, maintenance of the Steele House fell to the state park staff. It was quickly put to use as a museum, a function it continues sporadically to this day.<sup>53</sup> The Steele House remains much as it did when built in the 1890s, continuing as a testament to two of the most influential people in Scott County’s early history.

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<sup>49</sup> Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 146.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> The Kansas Historic Resources Inventory, the SHPO’s survey database, has five single-family dwellings identified in the entire county; only one is constructed of stone. [www.kshs.org/khri](http://www.kshs.org/khri) (accessed 08/24/2015).

<sup>52</sup> The monument consists of a four-ton, five-foot high Colorado granite boulder resting on a two-foot high concrete base, and it can be seen for miles on approaching the park.

<sup>53</sup> Callender, “The Steele House,” 236. The house was restored and refurnished by the Scott City Business and Professional Women. Because the park had little money to devote to maintaining the building, it has fallen to volunteers to help with upkeep and improvements. For several years, the house had to be closed to the public due to theft and vandalism and it was repaired and reopened with help of volunteers and a fund-raising drive [Rod Haxton, “Living History,” *Scott County Record* (07/14/2011):n.p.]

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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**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  
El Quartejejo Museum

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

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 1

**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 38.673331      -100.918570      3      \_\_\_\_\_  
Latitude:                      Longitude:                      Latitude:                      Longitude:

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

The one-acre site surrounding the Steele House is located within a larger 146-acre parcel that is a portion of Lake Scott State Par and is in the NE1/4, SE1/4,SW1/4 of Section 12, Township 16 South, Range 33 West in rural Scott County, Kansas. The nominated polygonal boundary surrounds the Steele House is arbitrarily drawn to encompass the house, springhouse, and pond, generally centered on the house. The northwest boundary is the east edge of West Scott Lake Drive; the northeast boundary follows a perpendicular line between West Scott Lake Drive and Ladder Creek; the east boundary follows the west bank of Ladder Creek; the southwest boundary is a perpendicular line drawn from West Scott Lake Drive to the edge of the tree canopy directly south of the house; the southeast boundary connects the tree canopy with the eastern boundary.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

This boundary is completely located within the 1964 El Cuartelejo National Historic Landmark district and Lake Scott State Park. It represents the nucleus of the remaining farmstead established by the Steeles. While the remainder of the Park should be evaluated for its National Register eligibility especially related to the CCC, the purpose of this nomination is to highlight the location from which the Steeles conducted their lives as early settlers, influenced the creation of the Park, and promoted the preservation of El Cuartelejo.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Ron Kaufman with Amanda Loughlin (KSHS)  
organization Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism      date Spring 2016  
street & number 1020 S. Kansas Ave.,      telephone 785-296-2281  
city or town Topeka      state KS      zip code 66612  
e-mail ron.kaufman@ksoutdoors.com

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

name State of Kansas – Wildlife, Parks & Tourism  
street & number 512 E 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue      telephone 620-672-5911  
city or town Pratt      state KS      zip code 67124

**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.

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### Additional Documentation

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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: Steele, Herbert & Eliza, House

City or Vicinity: Scott City vicinity

County: Scott State: Kansas

Photographer: Ron Kaufman

Date  
Photographed: Varies (note: all photos represent current conditions at site)

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

- 01 of 25:** West elevation, showing proximity to roadway (07/2010).
- 02 of 25:** View to the east from the house, showing proximity to Ladder Creek (11/2010).
- 03 of 25:** Brick walkway and remnants of rock garden to north of house, looking west (11/2010).
- 04 of 25:** Look south toward east elevation, showing brick walkways (11/2010).
- 05 of 25:** Looking southwest toward house. Pond is in foreground; springhouse is in background at right, with the bench in between (11/2010).
- 06 of 25:** West elevation (07/2014).
- 07 of 25:** Looking southeast at north elevation (11/2010).
- 08 of 25:** East elevation (11/2010).
- 09 of 25:** Looking southwest at east and north elevations (11/2010).
- 10 of 25:** South elevation, looking northwest (11/2010).
- 11 of 25:** Looking northwest at south and east elevations (11/2010).
- 12 of 25:** Upper level, living room, looking east; south bedroom is through the door (6/2015).
- 13 of 25:** Upper level, living room, looking north. Parlor is through door at left; pantry is through door at right; stair is to left of pantry (6/2015).
- 14 of 25:** Upper level, southeast bedroom, looking east (6/2015).
- 15 of 25:** Upper level, southeast bedroom, looking west (6/2015).
- 16 of 25:** Upper level, pantry, looking east (6/2015).
- 17 of 25:** Upper level, parlor, looking northeast; door in wall accesses north bedroom (6/2015).
- 18 of 25:** Upper level, parlor, looking southwest. Door in wall leads to kitchen; south front door visible next to desk (6/2015).
- 19 of 25:** Upper level, northeast bedroom, looking east. (6/2015).
- 20 of 25:** Lower level, kitchen, looking south. Access to workroom is through door at left (6/2015).
- 21 of 25:** Lower level, kitchen, looking north (6/2015).
- 22 of 25:** Lower level, workroom, looking north (6/2015).
- 23 of 25:** Lower level, workroom, looking south; part of water wheel visible in background (6/2015).
- 24 of 25:** Springhouse, east elevation (11/2010).
- 25 of 25:** Springhouse, looking north from house (11/2010).

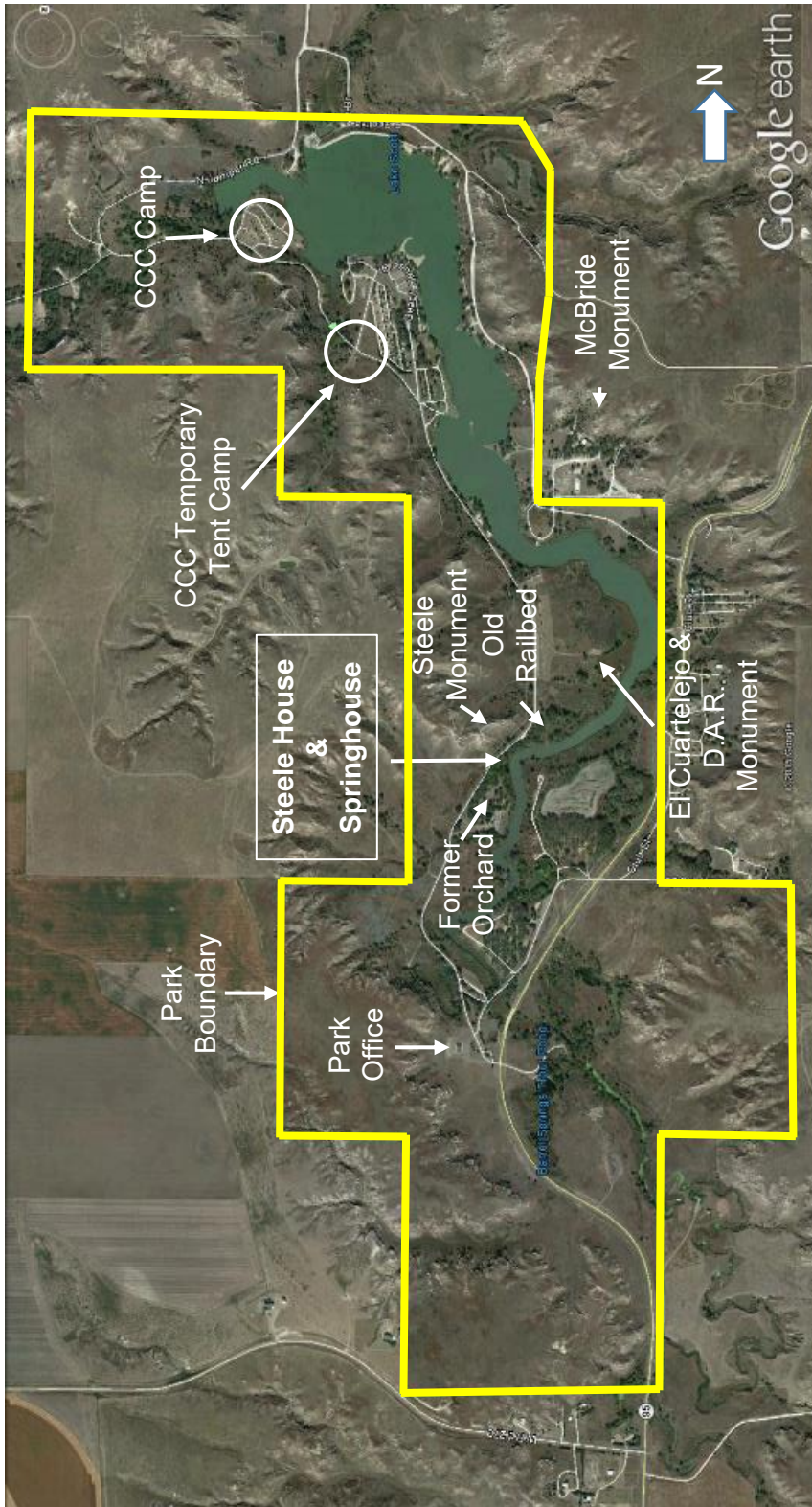
#### Figures

Include GIS maps, figures, scanned images below.

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**Figure 1.** Aerial image showing the boundary of Lake Scott State Park. No Scale.

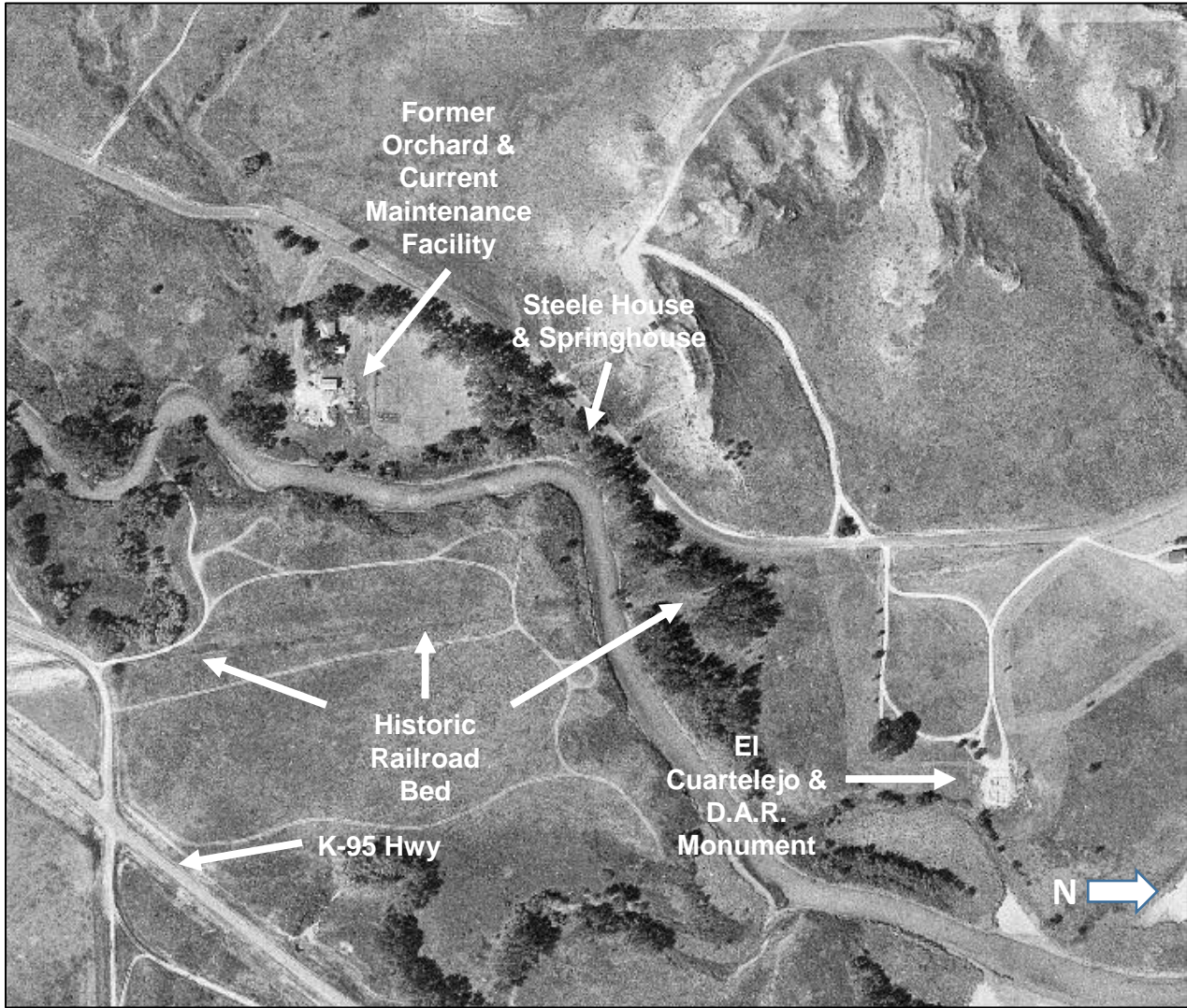




Steele, Herbert & Eliza, House  
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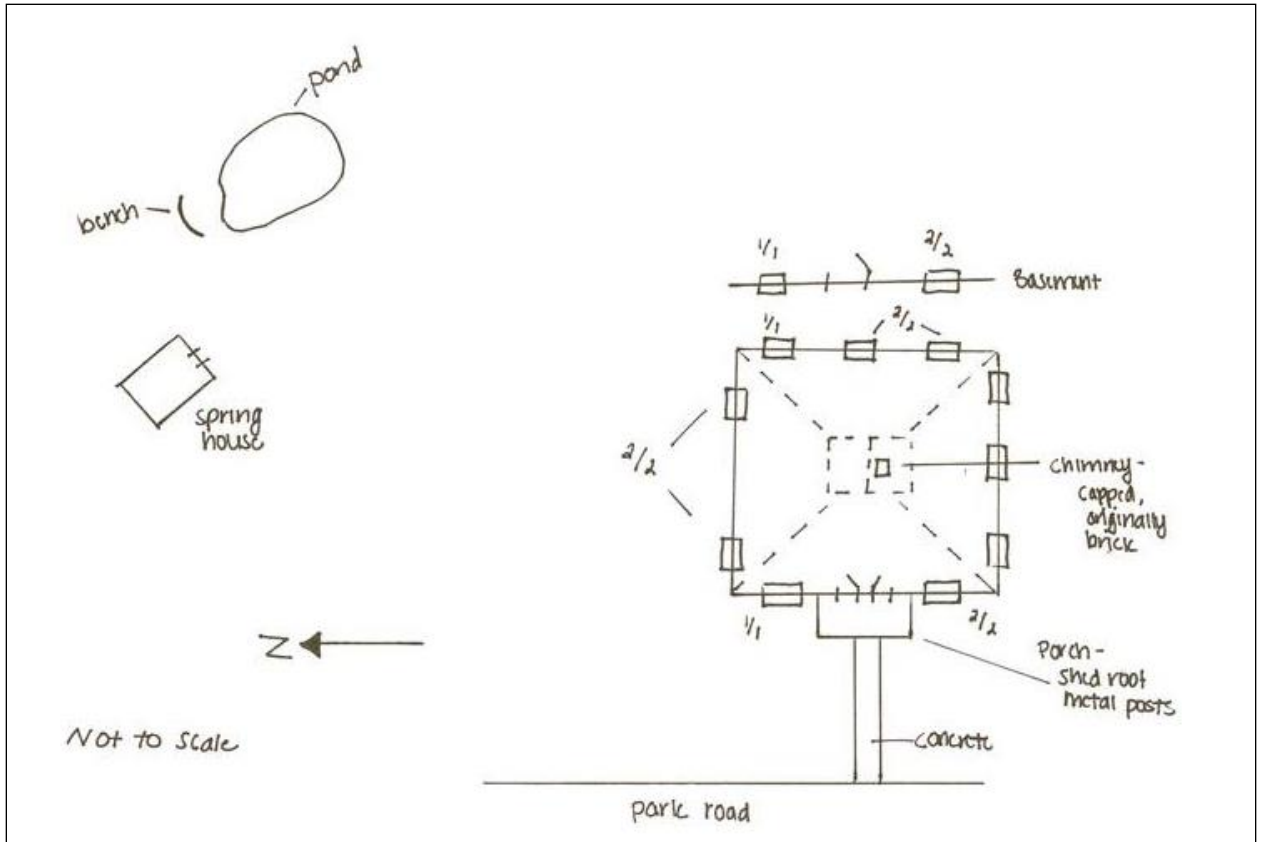
**Figure 2.** October 5, 1971 Kansas Department of Transportation Aerial, showing the location of the nominated property in relation to the historic railroad bed, El Cuartelejo, & DAR Monument. No scale.



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**Figure 3.** Sketch Site Plan, showing house, springhouse, and pond. 2009. KSHS.



Steele, Herbert & Eliza, House  
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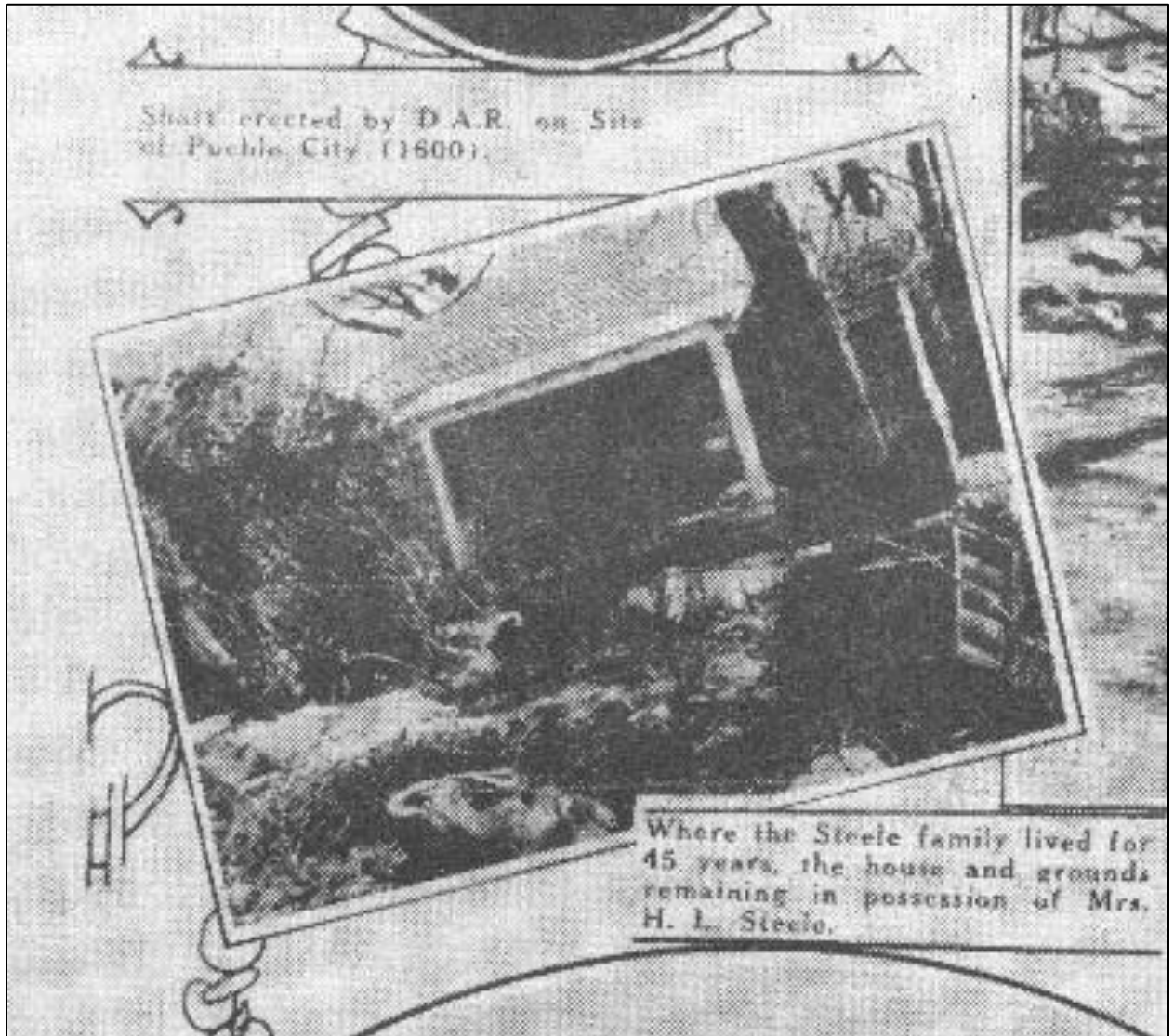
**Figure 4.** Herbert and Eliza Steele (standing) and Paul Beckley (seated), ca. 1913.  
Photo Courtesy El Quarlelejo Museum, Scott City, KS.



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**Figure 5.** Steele House, ca. 1929, note presence of a porch attached to the front of the house. Original source unknown. Published by *The Wichita Sunday Eagle*, June 22, 1930 and reproduced in "Diamond Jubilee Anniversary Celebration, Scott State Park, 1934-1994," Supplement to the *News Chronicle*, date unknown.

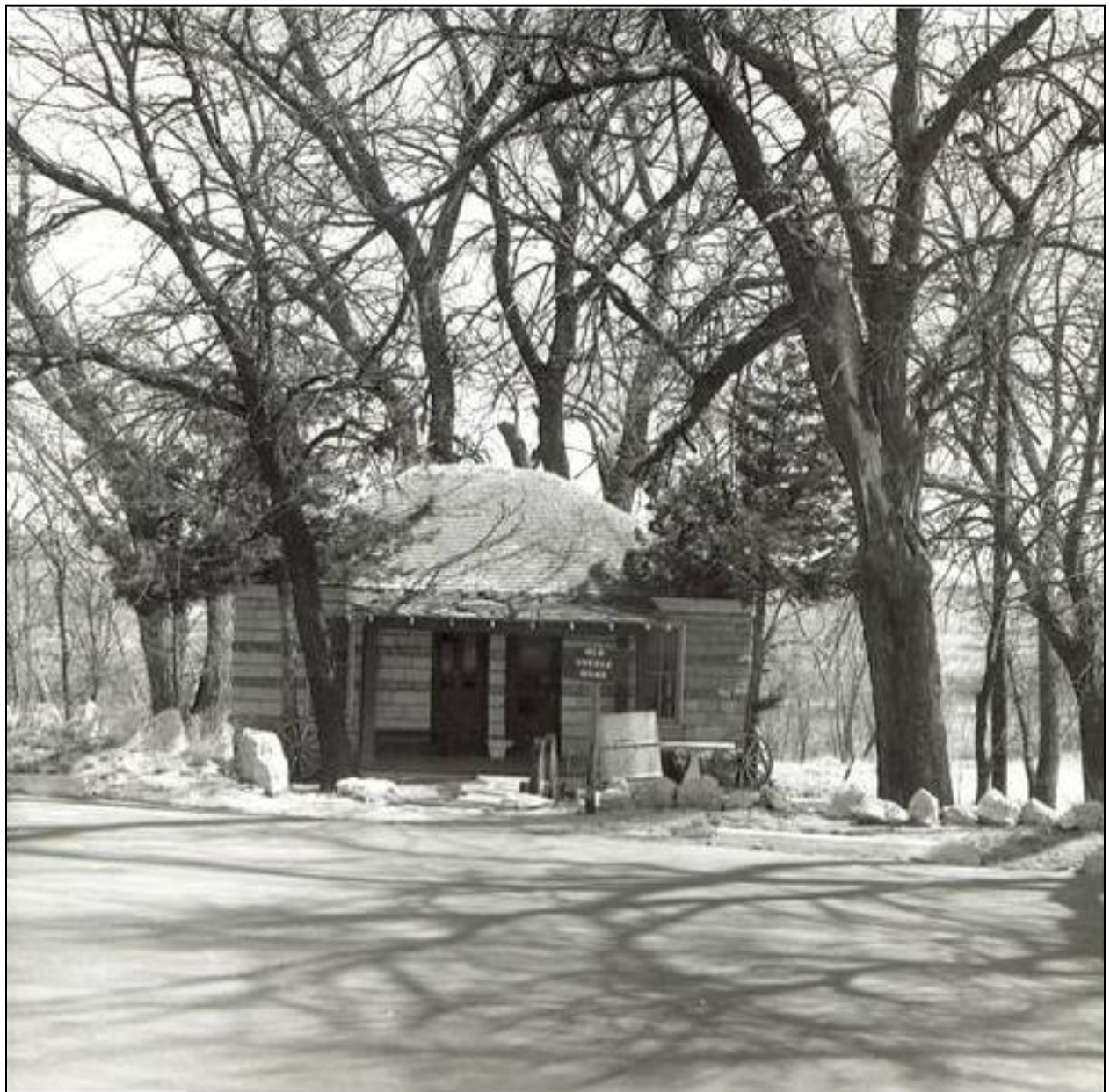




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**Figure 6.** Steele House. West elevation. April 1971. KSHS. Note lack of chimney.



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**Figure 7.** William Andrew Teague, wife, and child visiting the Steele House, photographer and date unknown. Note the wooden porch on front of the structure and lattice entry that had an interior seat on each side. Source: Letter and photo sent to former state park supervisor Rick Stevens from Francis Teague, daughter of William Andrew Teague, October 6, 1988, kept in Lake Scott State Park files

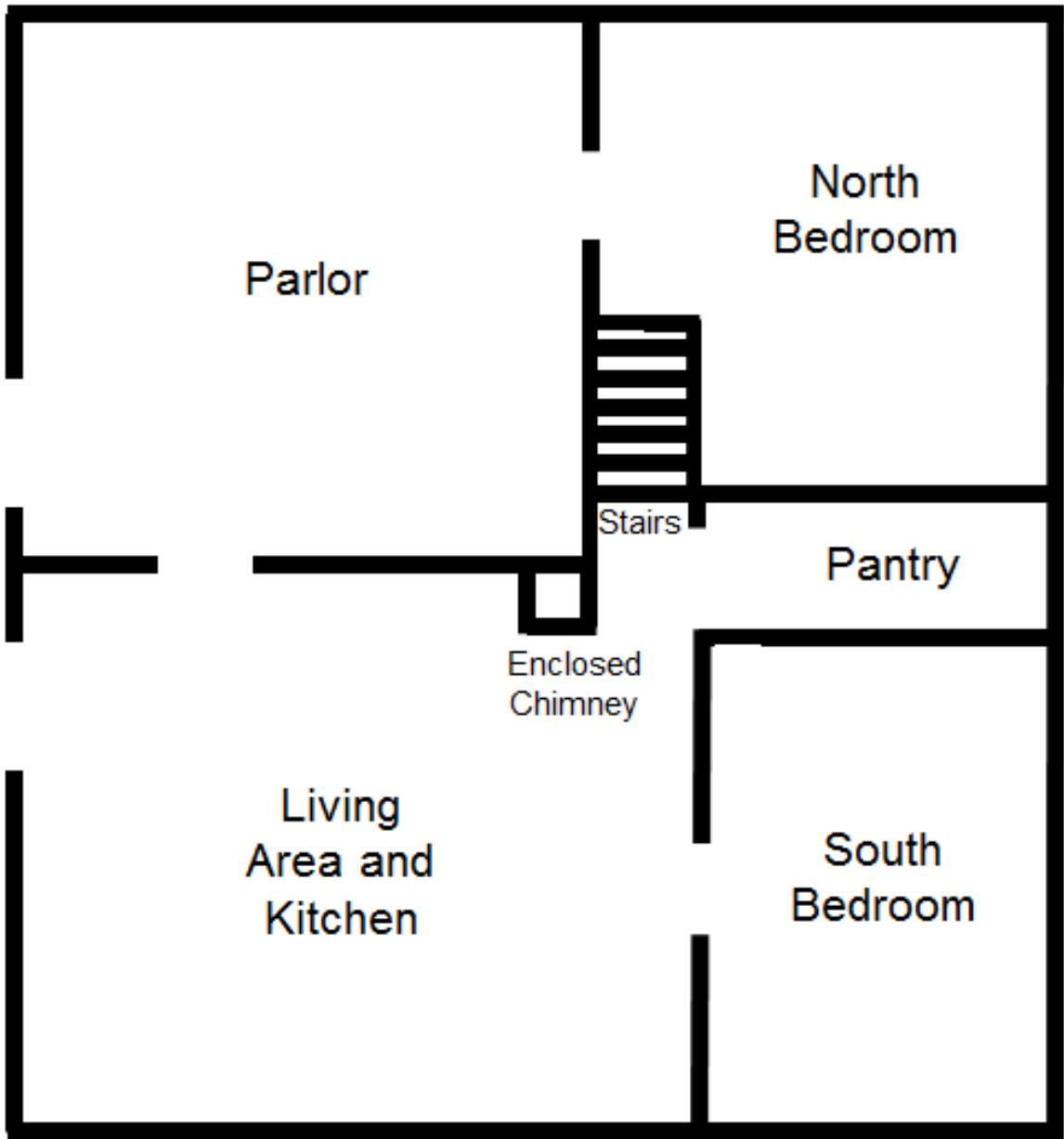




Steele, Herbert & Eliza, House  
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**Figure 8.** Steele House. Sketch Upper Level Floor Plan.  
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism diagram. Not to scale.

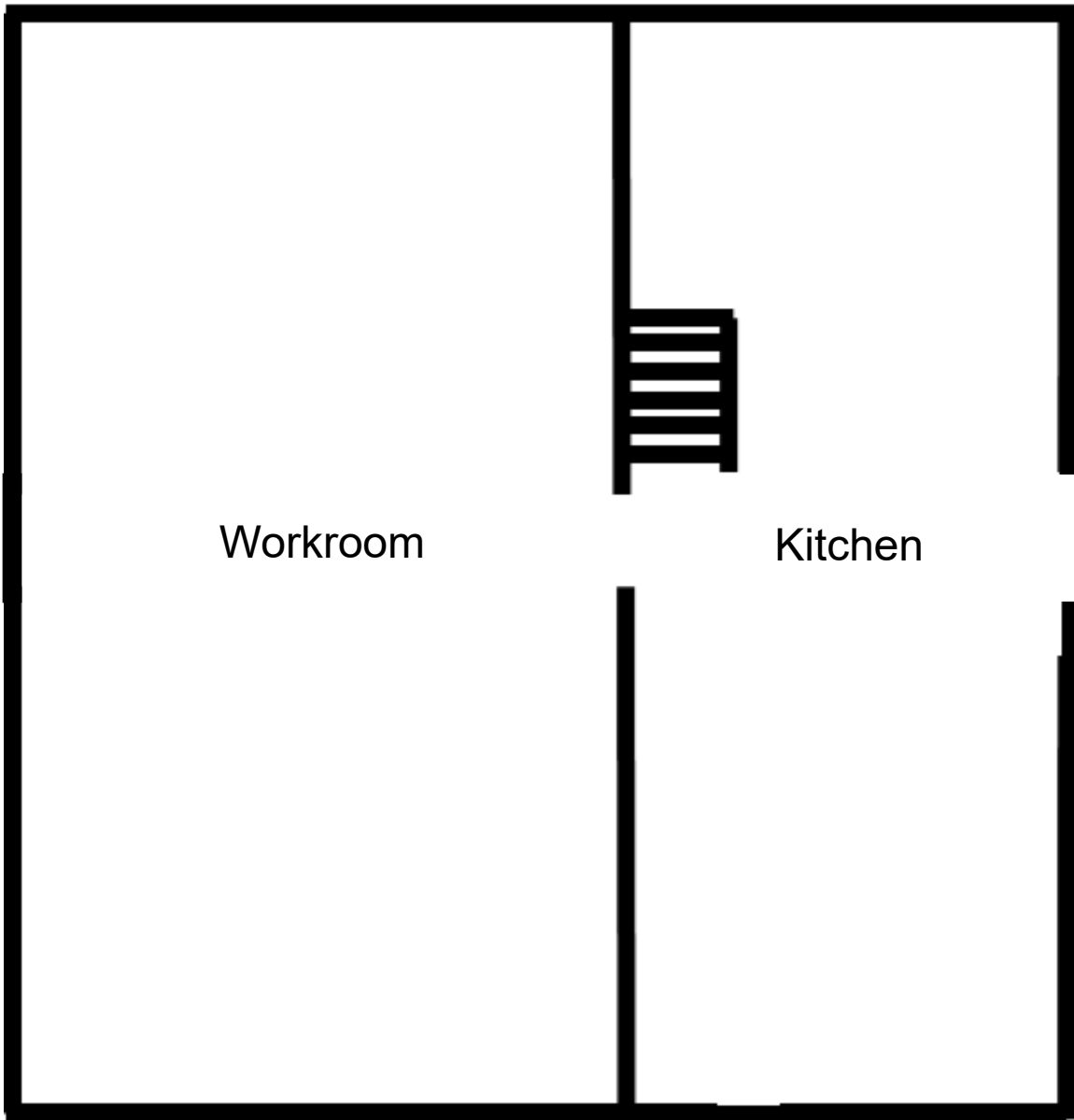


North  
↑

Steele, Herbert & Eliza, House  
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**Figure 9.** Steele House. Sketch Lower Level Floor Plan.  
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism diagram. Not to scale.

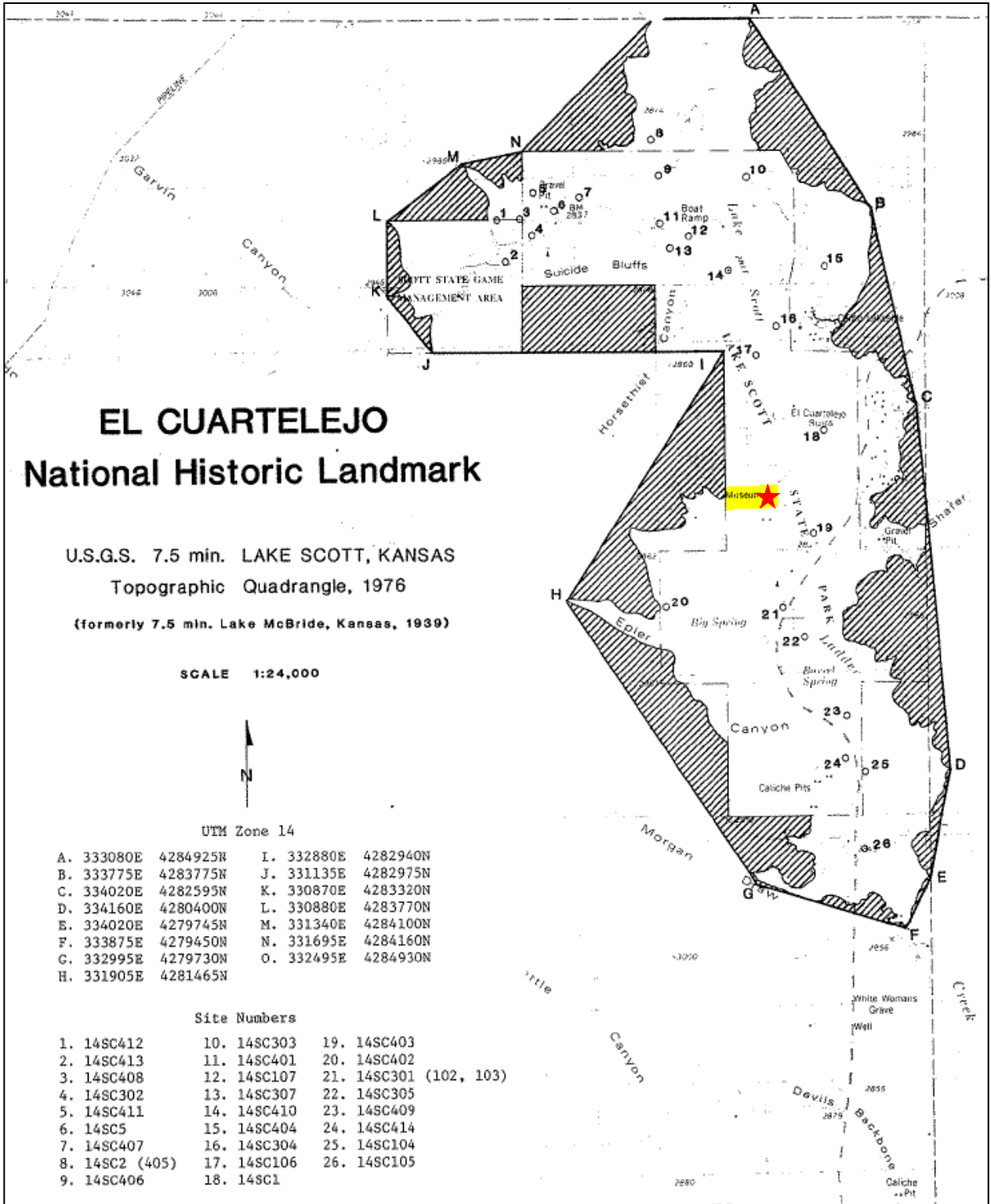


North  
↑

Steele, Herbert & Eliza, House  
 Name of Property

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**Figure 10.** El Cuartelejo National Historic Landmark Boundaries.  
 The Steele House is denoted by the star. Source: El Cuartelejo NHL Nomination.



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**Figure 11.** Herbert, Eliza and Roy Steele, ca. 1898.  
Photo Courtesy El Quartejejo Museum, Scott City, KS



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**Figure 12 (below).** Steele Barn, ca. 1930, photographer unknown, view looking south.



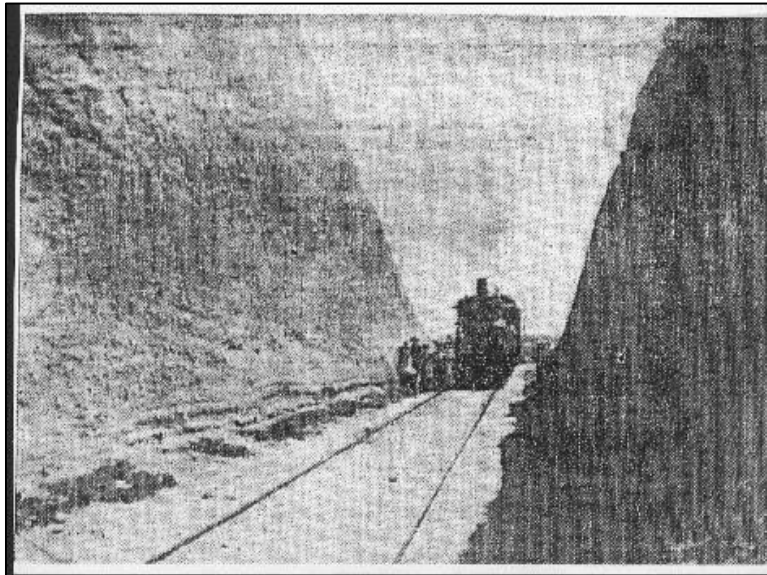
**Figure 13 (below).** Steele house and barn, 1939, view south from Steele monument. From Nebraska State Historical Society. KSHS Archeology office print no. 14SC1-547.



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**Figure 14.** Old newspaper photo of a steam engine and passengers in the railroad cut in the Devil's Backbone located south of Lake Scott State Park. Photo ca. 1912, photographer unknown. Scanned from clipping at El Quarteletejo Museum, Scott City, KS.





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**Figure 15.** Eliza and Herbert Steele at the DAR monument, El Cuartelejo ruins, ca. 1925. Original source unknown. Published by *The Wichita Sunday Eagle*, June 22, 1930 and reproduced in "Diamond Jubilee Anniversary Celebration, Scott State Park, 1934-1994," Supp to the *News Chronicle*, date unknown (c1994). Scanned from a reproduction at El Cuartelejo Museum, Scott City, Kansas



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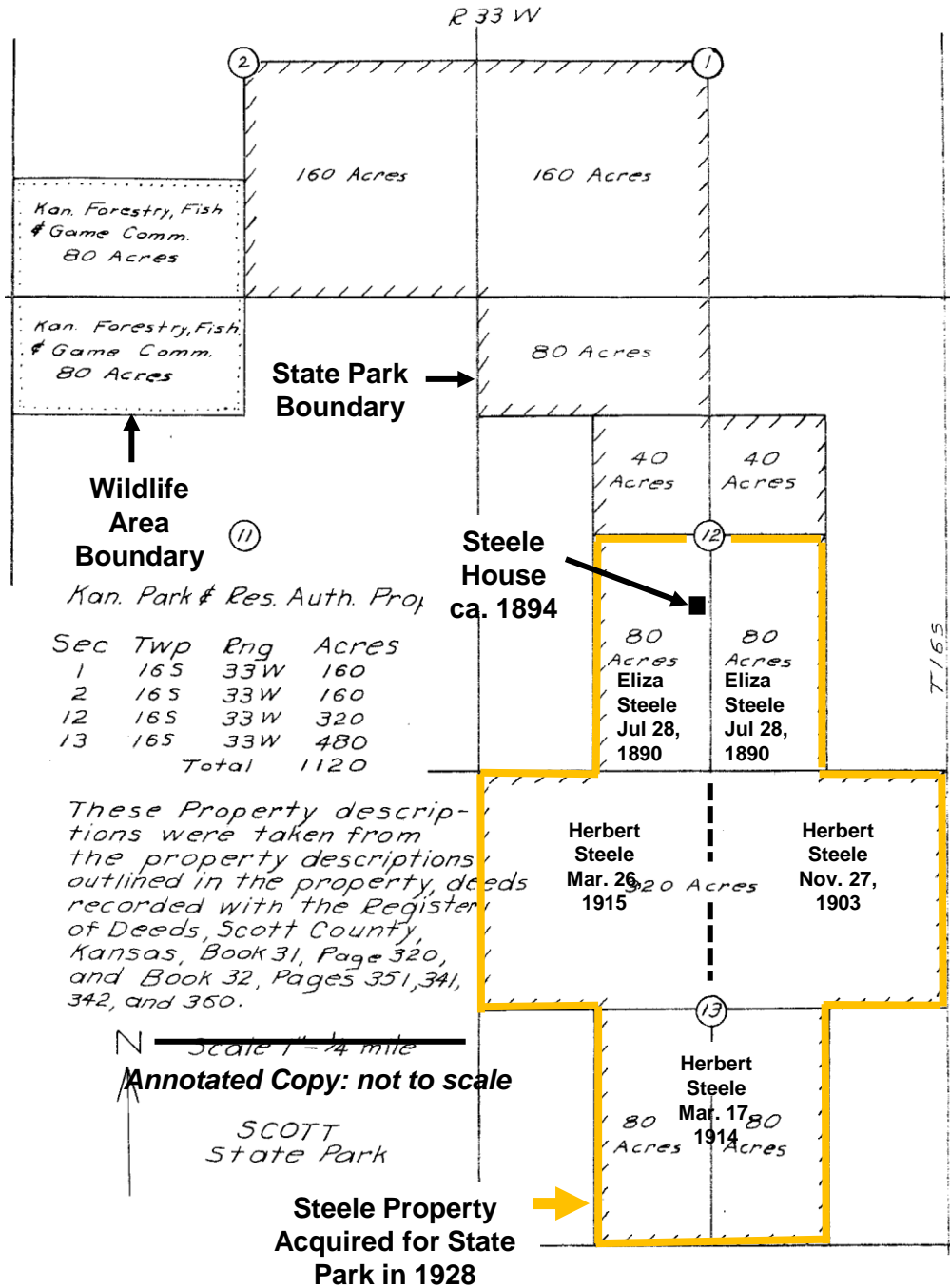
**Figure 16.** Panorama Photo (scanned in two parts) of Steele Property, ca. 1925.  
Source: El Quartejejo Museum, Scott City, KS.



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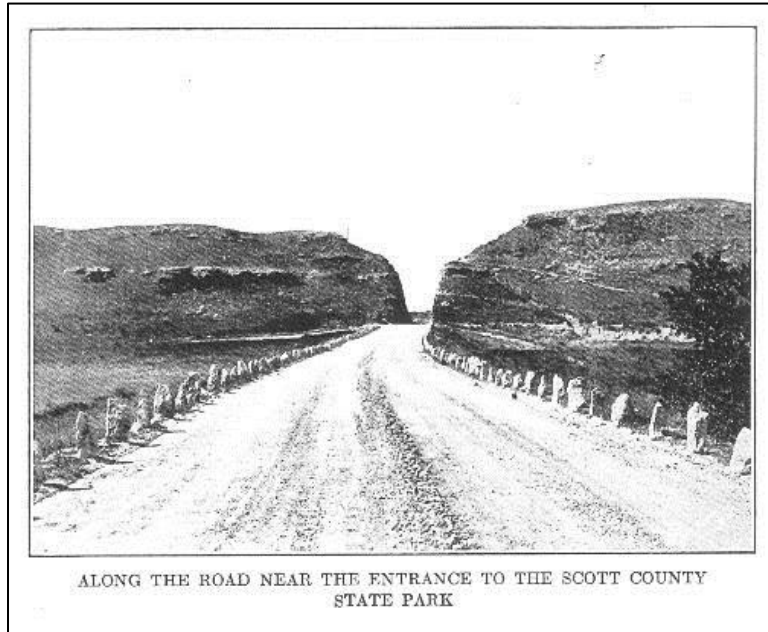
**Figure 17.** Lake Scott State Park Boundaries, showing the amount of land acquired from the Steeles. Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism diagram



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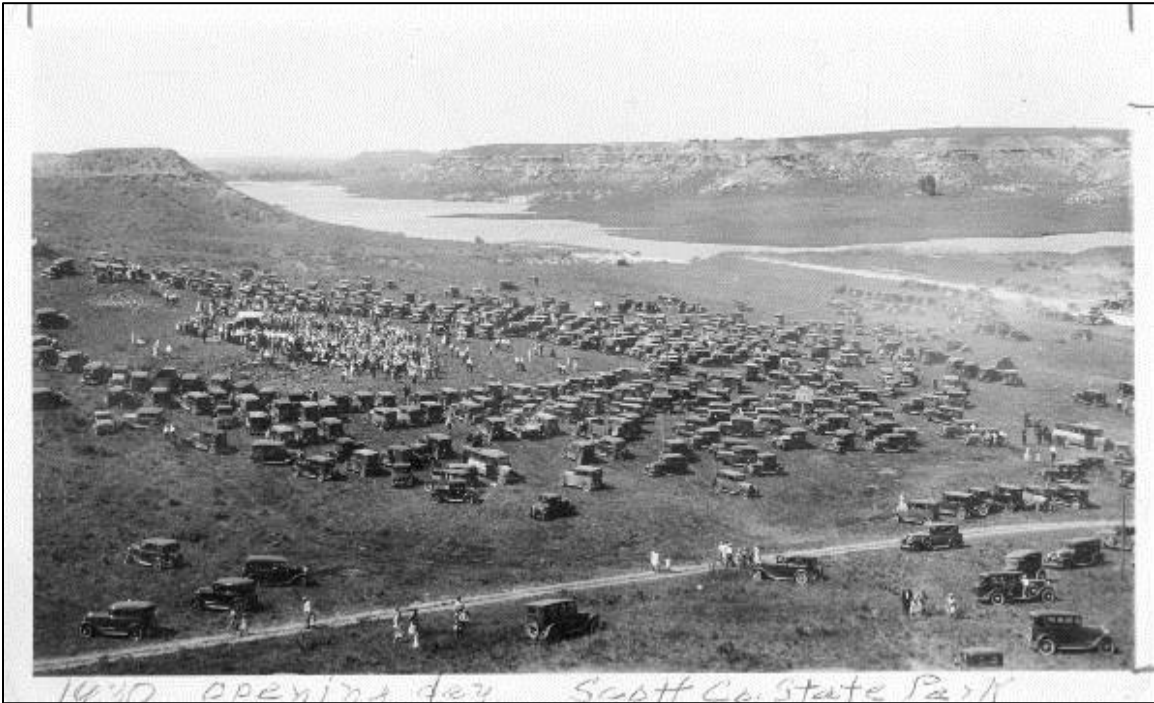
**Figure 18 .** View of road south of state park built on former railroad bed passing through a widened cut in the Devil's Backbone. Photo ca. 1930, photographer unknown. From *Fifth Biennial Report of the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission*, 1935.



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**Figure 19 .** Scott County State Park Opening Day, June 12 ,1930.  
Photo Courtesy El Quarlelejo Museum, Scott City, KS



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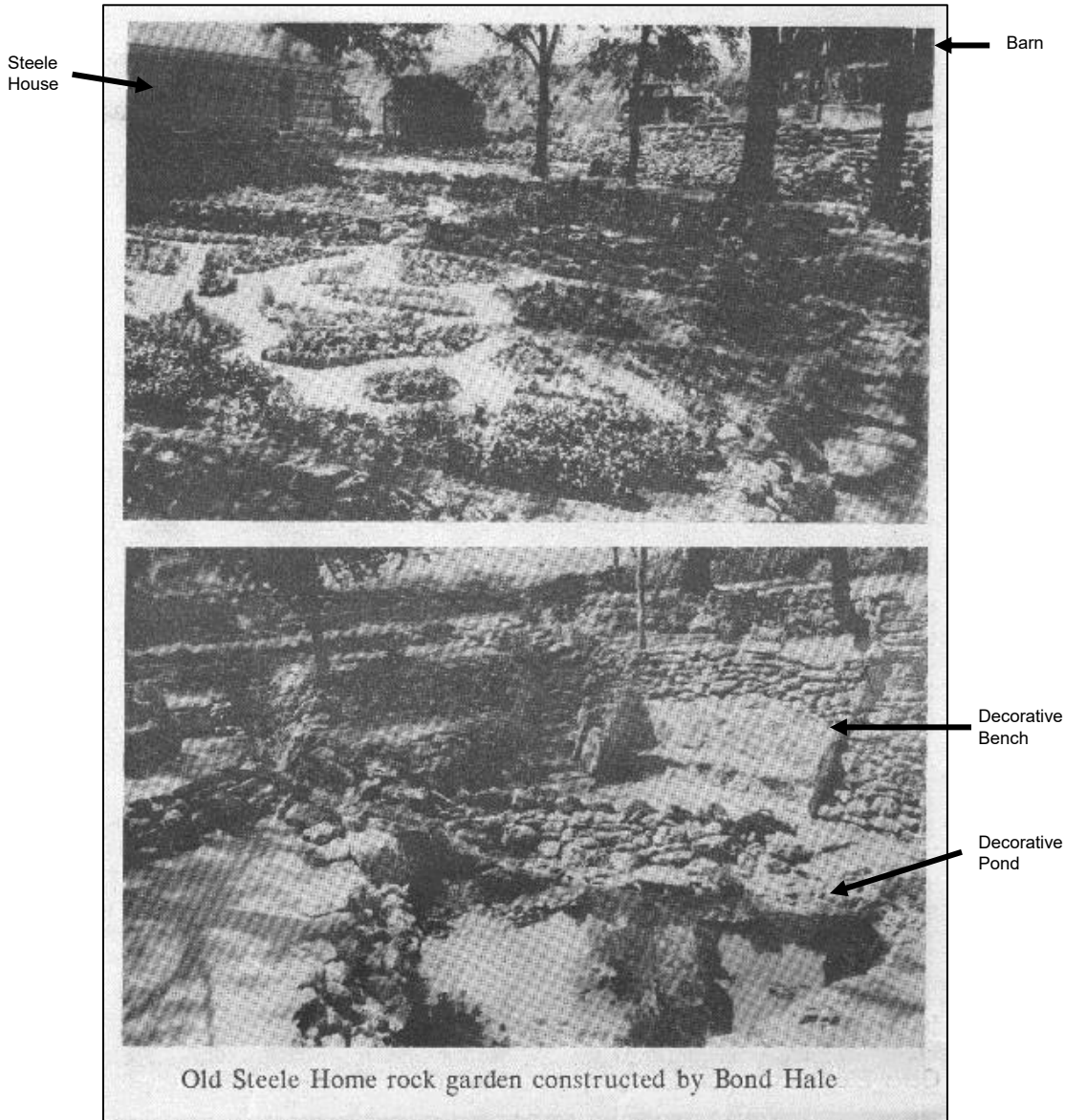
**Figure 20.** Ladder Creek Canyon Flood, exact location not recorded, August 6, 1933.  
Photographer: Snowden Dwight Flora. Source: Flora 394, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Western  
History Collections, Flora Collection.



Steele, Herbert & Eliza, House  
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**Figure 21.** Steele House Rock Garden and Pond, ca. 1934. Source: "Diamond Jubilee Anniversary Celebration, Scott State Park, 1934-1994," Supp to the *News Chronicle*, date unknown (c1994).





Steele, Herbert & Eliza, House  
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**Figure 22.** Houses in rural Wabaunsee County (top) & Atchison County, Kansas (bottom).



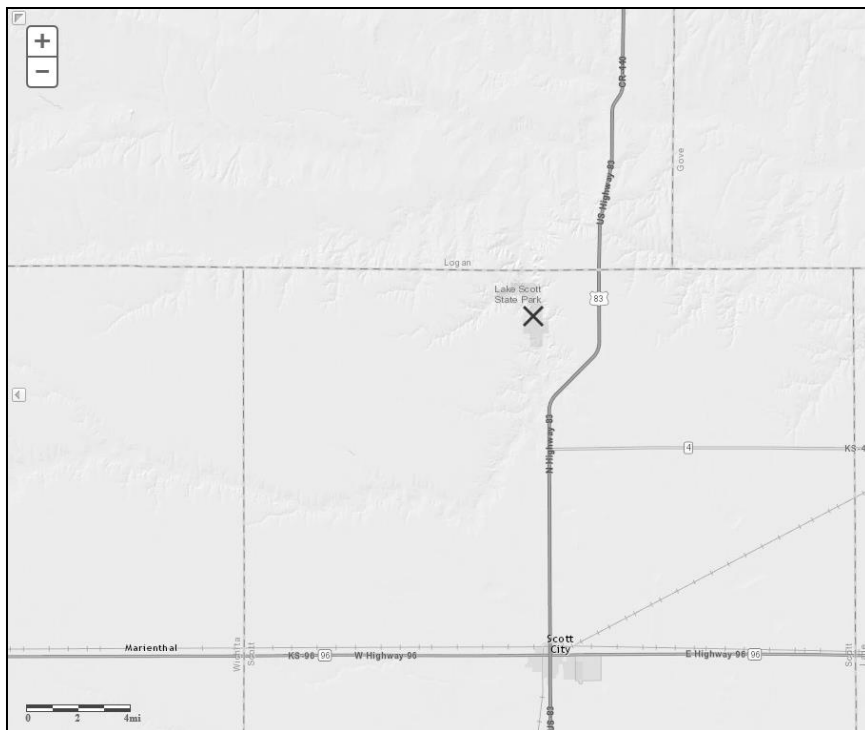
Main entrance to house is on the right (not pictured).



Steele, Herbert & Eliza, House  
Name of Property

Scott County, Kansas  
County and State

**Boundary Map.** The nominated one-acre site is depicted by the outlined shape.  
Contextual map shown below with X marking location of house.







STEELE  
HOME  
MUSEUM













































THANK  
YOU





WATCH  
YOUR  
STEP

HOME  
COMFORT











OPEN KETTLE RENDERING  
SUN FLOWER BRAND  
BUTZER  
SALINA, KANSAS









FAITH HOPE  
AND CHARITY

































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Steele, Herbert and Eliza, House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: KANSAS, Scott

DATE RECEIVED: 5/13/16      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/02/16  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/17/16      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/28/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000406

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  6/23/16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

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.



Office of the Secretary  
1020 S Kansas Ave., Suite 200  
Topeka, KS 66612-1327

Phone: (785) 296-2281  
Fax: 785-296-6953  
www.kdwp.state.ks.us

Robin Jennison, Secretary

Sam Brownback, Governor

March 21, 2016

Jennie Chinn, Executive Director,  
Kansas Historical Society, and the  
Historic Sites Board of Review  
6425 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.,  
Topeka, KS 66615

RECEIVED  
MAR 24 2016  
CULTURAL RESOURCES

Dear Jennie and the Board:

It is my pleasure to offer my complete support for nominating the Herbert and Eliza Steele House at Lake Scott State Park to the National Register of Historic Places.

As you consider the application, you will come to understand the importance of the Steeles not only to the early history of Scott County, but also to the founding of Scott County State Park, which later became Lake Scott State Park. The Steeles were well-known to residents of Scott County and other nearby counties because of the beauty of their land in Ladder Creek Canyon and their hospitality in welcoming visitors to their park-like property. Well before they sold their land to the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission for a future lake and park, their property was a popular respite for hiking, fishing, picnicking and camping. The bountiful springs that fed Ladder Creek also nourished the trees and grasses and quenched the thirst of visitors.

The home still stands today as a testament to the Steeles' skill and perseverance in building such a solid structure that is as beautiful as it is practical. And, the Steeles' contribution to honoring the solemn history of the canyon by calling attention to the site of El Cuartelejo is widely recognized by those who study Native American cultures.

It is for these and many other reasons that I wholeheartedly encourage the Historic Sites Board of Review to nominate the Steele House to the National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

Robin Jennison,  
Secretary

c: Amanda Loughlin, KSHS National Register Coordinator





RECEIVED 2280

MAY 13 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
phone: 785-272-6631  
fax: 785-272-8682  
cultural\_resources@kshs.org

6425 SW 6th Avenue  
Topeka KS 66615

Sam Brownback, Governor  
Jennie Chinn, Executive Director

May 9, 2016

Paul Loether, National Register Chief  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280)  
Washington, DC 20005

Re: National Register documents

Dear Mr. Loether:

Please find enclosed the following National Register documents:

- **Doniphan County Waddell Truss Bridge; Doniphan County, Kansas (amendment)**
  - Enclosed: Physical, signed copy of the amendment; 1 CD (disk #1) with a PDF of the amendment; 1 CD (disk #2) with photographs
  - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the amendment.
  
- **John A. Martin Grade School; Atchison, Atchison County, Kansas (new nomination)**
  - Enclosed: Physical, signed copy of the nomination's first page; 1 CD (disk #1) with a PDF of the nomination; 1 CD (disk #2) with photographs
  - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.
  
- **Oak Grove School, St. Paul vicinity; Neosho County, Kansas (new nomination)**
  - Enclosed: Physical, signed copy of the nomination's first page; 1 CD (disk #1) with a PDF of the nomination; 1 CD (disk #2) with photographs
  - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.
  
- **Colorado-Derby Building; Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas (new nomination)**
  - Enclosed: Physical, signed copy of the nomination's first page; 1 CD (disk #1) with a PDF of the nomination, a copy of the Part 1 denial, and two letters of support; 1 CD (disk #2) with photographs
  - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.

- **Steele, Herbert & Eliza, House; Scott City vicinity, Scott County, Kansas (new nomination)**
  - Enclosed: Physical, signed copy of the nomination's first page; 1 CD (disk #1) with a PDF of the nomination, .KMZ file, and a letter of support; 1 CD (disk #2) with photographs
  - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination
  
- **Iowa Tribe Community Building; Iowa Tribe of Kansas & Nebraska Reservation, White Cloud vicinity, Brown County, Kansas (new nomination)**
  - Enclosed: Physical, signed copy of the nomination's first page; 1 CD (disk #1) with a PDF of the nomination and a .KML file; 1 CD (disk #2) with photographs
  - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination
  - Please note: This nomination is being submitted by the Kansas SHPO on behalf of Lance Foster, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Iowa Tribe of Kansas & Nebraska. Mr. Foster signed the first page as the certifying official; Patrick Zollner, Deputy Kansas SHPO, signed the first page as the commenting official.

If you have any questions about these enclosed items, please contact me at 785-272-8681 ext. 216 or [aloughlin@kshs.org](mailto:aloughlin@kshs.org).

Sincerely,



Amanda K. Loughlin  
National Register Coordinator

Enclosures

cc: Lance Foster