



# 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.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name Kesterson, John C., House  
Other names/site number JF04-045  
Name of related multiple property listing N/A  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & Number 907 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
City or town Fairbury State Nebraska County Jefferson  
Not for publication  Vicinity

## 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] SHPO/Director Date 5/22/19  
Signature of certifying official/Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nebraska 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 of 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] Date of Action 6-26-2019  
Signature of Keeper

Kesterson, John C., House  
**Name of Property**

Jefferson County, Nebraska  
**County and State**

**5. Classification**

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

- Private
- Public-local
- Public-state
- Public-federal

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

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	2	Buildings
_____	_____	Sites
_____	_____	Structures
_____	_____	Objects
1	2	Total
_____	_____	

**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.)

DOMESTIC/single-dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

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

LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

Principal exterior materials of the property: Limestone (foundation); Brick (façade); Asphalt Shingles (roof)

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**Name of Property****County and State****Description**

**Summary Paragraph** (Briefly describe the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

The John C. Kesterson House is a two-story, low-pitched roof Italianate home at the northeast corner of 4th and I Streets. It was originally constructed in 1879 and had an addition placed on the north façade in 1885. The red brick house sits atop a limestone foundation and has an asphalt shingle roof; the original design of the roof is still intact. The primary façade faces south toward brick-paved 4th Street and possesses an ornate first floor porch that wraps around the southern end of the west façade. Each opening – doors and windows – is topped with a decorative hood mold, painted white. The east façade contains a two-story bay window. The house is surrounded by a large yard with several mature trees and brick-paved sidewalks. A modern two-stall garage has been added to the property north of the house and is accessed via the alley. The interior of the house retains much of the original material including wood floors under carpeting, wood trim, hardwood doors, multiple sets of pocket doors, radiator heating units, plaster walls, wainscoting, and elaborate stained glass in the main entryway.

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable.)

Fairbury (2010 population: 1,392) is the county seat of Jefferson County in southeast Nebraska, approximately 70 miles southwest of Lincoln, the state capital. Fairbury is roughly located in the center of the county at the intersection of the east-west running US Highway 136 and the north-south aligned NE Highway 15. The John C. Kesterson House is four blocks east of downtown Fairbury, which includes the Fairbury Commercial Historic District (NPS #97000610) and the Jefferson County Courthouse (NPS #72000751).

**Site**

The John C. Kesterson House is situated on a half-acre lot at the northeast corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and I Streets, near downtown Fairbury. The primary façade faces south toward brick-paved 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The large lot contains mature trees adding to the property's stately appearance and brick sidewalks grace the parcel's south and west sides. The lot rests above street level on the south side, necessitating a set of four concrete steps, flanked by cast iron gargoyles, to provide access to the lot from 4<sup>th</sup> Street. A hitching post, made from the same material and presumably at the same time as the gargoyles, rests in the south yard along the brick sidewalk leading to the front porch. A second brick sidewalk leads from I Street to an entrance on the home's west façade. An elaborate five-bulb lamppost illuminates the west sidewalk, although the date of its construction is uncertain.

In the rear of the home is a modern, two-stall garage that is accessed from the north via the east-west alley that bisects the block. The concrete driveway extends to the west for additional parking. The front-gable garage is clad in aluminum siding and a low-pitch roof covered in asphalt shingles. A standard pedestrian entrance on the west end of the south façade. Small, one-by-one sliding windows adorn both the east and west facades toward the south end of the building; a third identical window is east of the door on the south façade. Due to its age, materials, and lack of identifiable architectural features the garage is a non-contributing building to the nomination. Southeast of the garage and directly east of the house sits a small hexagonal shed. Five of the six sides are covered in vertical wood plank siding, with the southernmost façade covered in aluminum siding identical to the garage. A large, outswing wood-plank door consumes the majority of the northern most side and a small entry, perhaps for animals, is located at the bottom of the southernmost side. The southwest façade contains a fixed, six-light wood window. The shed is a non-contributing building to the nomination as both the date of construction and the historic use of the shed is unknown.

**Exterior**

The John C. Kesterson House, an asymmetrical, two-story brick Italianate home, was constructed by its namesake in 1879, with a two-story wing added on the rear (north) in 1885. The brick façade is covered with a burgundy paint scheme from foundation to the eaves, with the segmented brick windows hoods accented in white. Stone window sills are painted white at the base of each opening. The home's cornice is wood painted white, with large eaves supported by ornate brackets in

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the corners and at each eave's mid-point. While the 1885 addition contains box gutters, the original 1879 portion is now wrapped with standard aluminum gutters, with downspouts intermittently located around the building's exterior. The downspouts are not present in survey photos of the property taken in 1976; however, their presence does not significantly detract from the historic appearance of the home. The entire home retains its historic wood windows which are covered with aluminum storm windows that match the original one-over-one window pattern. However, whereas the upper pane of the original windows is a segmented arch configuration, the aluminum storms are flat-top, with detailing in the arch. The low-pitch, hipped roof contains perpendicular ridges along the L-shaped configuration of the main body of the 1879 house. The 1885 addition has a single ridge which is hipped at the north end. All current roof lines match the historic layout and are covered in asphalt shingles. The brick follows a running bond pattern throughout the original home and the wing addition. A large brick chimney extends from the center of the 1885 addition.

The south façade is dominated by a one-story porch which has been altered slightly from its original construction. The aforementioned brick sidewalk leading from 4<sup>th</sup> Street connects to two poured concrete steps ascending to the porch. Over a brick foundation is a poured concrete L-shaped slab that wraps the south and west sides of the south wing of the home. Compared to a c1910 photograph of the home, the original porch was likely made of wood and sat lower to the ground before being replaced with the raised concrete version that exists today. The current porch also includes spindle work under the cornice and supported by ornate brackets added during the early 1990s. However, the original low-pitch roof configuration, wainscoting ceiling, chamfered support posts, and layout remain from the historic porch. Original ornate brackets, similar to those supporting the second story eaves, are present at each support post.

The primary entrance to the residence is located on the western end of this façade, illuminated by a historic, if not original, pendant light suspended from the ceiling above. The door is the original wood and glass door below a top-hinged two-panel transom from 1879, although a wrought iron gate was added on the door's exterior in the early 1990s. Two windows are evenly spaced apart to the entrance's east. The west wing of the home is visible from the south façade, including a window on the wing's south façade that is covered beneath the wrapped porch. Above each of the first story openings visible from the south façade – three windows and the primary entrance – are matching windows directly above on the second story. The windows are identical except those on the second story are slightly shorter than their partner below.



**Figure 1: Stencil lettering on west entrance door.**

The west façade contains the west side of the south wing, the west façade of the west wing, and the west façade of the 1885 addition. The south wing contains a window on its west side covered by the porch on the first floor with a matching window directly above it. Though narrower than the south façade, the west façade of the west wing is nearly identical to the south façade of the south wing, with the exception of the large porch. Both façades contain a door on the viewer's left,

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with two windows on the first level evenly spaced to the viewer's right. The second story has matching windows over each of the first floor openings. A small covering with a hipped roof and supported by ornate brackets covers the west façade entrance. The original door, although a secondary entrance, is elaborately detailed and contains "J.C. KESTERSON" frosted on the glass window pane. At both corners of the façade are white downspouts, easily identifiable against the burgundy brick. The 1885 wing has six windows – three on the first floor and three on the second. The windows are of the same design as those on the 1879 home, but are slightly shorter to accommodate the north wing's overall shorter height. The north wing was originally designed as two stories except in its northwest corner where a small section is only a single story, topped with a hipped roof that is wrapped with decorative wrought iron railing. The railing was added in the early 1990s and is also present on the covering over the west façade's entrance; it was once atop the front porch but has been removed. This is the only façade on the property that has basement window wells, two of which are located south of the west entrance. The semi-circle wells are of the same limestone block used for the home's foundation and houses a fixed one-by-one wood window under a segmented, brick arch.

The north façade is very basic with only three window openings, two of which are on the first story. To the west is small, fixed one-by-one over the kitchen sink on the interior. To the east is a window identical to those on the rest of the addition except that it includes a stained glass pane in the lower light. The third window is on the eastern half of the north façade of the original home's second story. It has an identical window below it which would have been visible prior to the enclosure of the covered back porch, which will be discussed later in this section. From this façade two downspouts from the box gutters are visible. The first is in the northwest corner of the addition's two-story segment and is galvanized metal; the second is barely distinguishable as it is painted the color of the brick and runs from the second story roofline before emptying onto the one-story segment on the west end where a second box gutter downspout connects to the large aforementioned downspout descending from the second story. The home's electrical access and meter attach to the north façade. The north façade also contains a portion of the enclosed porch in the home's northeast corner. Just north of the house is an exterior entrance to a cellar under the 1885 addition believed to have been used as either canning storage or a summer kitchen.



RESIDENCE OF J. C. KESTERSON  
907 FOURTH STREET

Figure 2: John C. Kesterson House, c1910.<sup>1</sup>

The focal point of the east façade is a two story bay window that protrudes from the center of the 1879 home. The wood bay stands out from the home both physically and visually, as it is painted white against the backdrop of the burgundy brick. It contains two abbreviated walls on the north and south before it begins to angle into three façades facing the

<sup>1</sup> Ladies of the Episcopal Guild, *Fairbury, As Seen by the Camera: A Souvenir of Views*, (Fairbury, NE: Press of the Fairbury Journal, c1910), np.

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southeast, east, and northeast, respectively, each façade containing windows on the first and second story. Below the first story windows and along the north and south sections of the window are standard box detailing. On both sides of each window are hemispheres, centered at the meeting point of the window rails. Above both windows on each façade are two relief dodecagons that contain three profile dodecagons on top of each other, continually decreasing in size until the smallest two to appear as octagons. Triangles accent the angles on each of the segmented window arches. Each corner of the bay window is capped with a bracket supporting the extended eave, and an aluminum downspout descends along the bay window's southern terminus with the brick façade.

North of the bay is an enclosed porch in the home's northeast corner. The one story porch has horizontal wood plank siding under a low pitch hipped roof. The door is centered on the porch with a set of three aluminum storm windows the south and one to the north. The enclosed porch is not visible from the primary façade as its footprint is within the east and north boundaries of the historic part of the home, minimizing the negative impacts it has on the home's overall retention of historic integrity. Above the porch are second floor windows, mirroring the characteristics of the windows throughout the 1885 addition. A cellar entrance is located at the base of the east façade, just north of the bay, and is covered with a flat, metal door. To the bay's south is a set of upper and lower windows, as is consistent throughout the house.

**Interior**

The John C. Kesterson House contains an exceptional level of integrity in regards the retention of historic materials. Hardwood baseboards, trim surrounding both windows and doors, solid hardwood doors, and corner covers are present throughout the first and second floors. Burgundy carpet that was installed during 1991-2 covers the floors throughout the 1879 home – including in both restrooms. Floors in the 1885 addition are covered with a mixture of carpet, linoleum, and exposed concrete. Under the carpet the oak and pine wood flooring is present in good condition; the current owner intends on pulling up the carpet and restoring the floors in the near-future. The interior doors are original to the home with the large pocket doors consisting of eight panels, compared to the six-panel doors used for individual openings. Doors in the 1879 home are trimmed with uniform pieces forming a continuous frame, whereas doors in the 1885 addition are framed with post-and-header wood work. The front hallway, back hallway, stairwell, and upstairs hallway are uniform in the retention of four-foot high chair rail throughout each. Below the rail, wallpaper has been applied while the remainder of the home's walls retain their original plaster surface. The home is adorned with a number of period-appropriate light fixtures, though some were installed in 1991-2. Electricity first came to Fairbury in 1892 with the transition of street lights from oil to electricity. A power plant to provide electrical service to the community was built in 1895 making it possible that the Kesterson's enjoyed the new technology while in the home, however, none of the fixtures date from the nomination's Period of Significance.<sup>2</sup> Many of the rooms contain exposed pipes leading to radiator units and in a few places electrical conduit is exposed, as well. With the exception of the hallway wallpaper, the entire home retains historic plaster walls, although the ceilings were refinished at some point to include 'popcorn' texturing. The rehabilitation of the ceiling did not affect the height of the rooms, with those in the 1879 section retaining their eleven-and-a-half foot height. Ceiling heights in the 1885 addition are shorter at ten feet on the first floor and nine feet on the second floor.

A long hallway leads into the home from the front (south) entrance. Halfway down the hall an arched, stained-glass display piece is affixed below ornate spindle work in a grid pattern. The piece was taken from the First Christian Church in Fairbury and installed in the home at an unknown date.<sup>3</sup> This marks the third application of stain-glass on the home and the only use of it in an interior space. The hallway leads north past a large window on the west wall that overlooks the covered porch, before passing through a door leading into the sitting room which consumes the first floor of the home's west wing.

The sitting room was historically Kesterson's office and contains three windows: one on the south wall overlooking the covered porch and two on the west wall.<sup>4</sup> Between the two west windows is an iron radiator supplying heat to the room. The north wall is primarily consumed by a built-in bookcase that extends across two-thirds of the wall from the west. To the east of the bookcase is a small nook where Kesterson's desk likely sat during his ownership of the home. Large pocket doors consume the majority of the office's east wall, leading into what was historically the formal dining room. The room is

<sup>2</sup> "Neal, Darlene Frederick Remodel Kesterson," *Fairbury Journal-News*, June 12, 1992. Estaline Carpenter, *Friendly Fairbury: A History of Fairbury, Nebraska*, (Fairbury, NE: Jefferson County Historical Society, 1981), 12. "The New Power House..." *The Fairbury Gazette*, December 21, 1895.

<sup>3</sup> "Neal, Darlene Frederick Remodel Kesterson," *Fairbury Journal-News*, June 12, 1992.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

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roughly square with the exception of the bay that extends the room to the east beyond the main exterior wall. A large, custom radiator runs along all three of the interior walls below the windows in the bay. A standard door is in the room's northwest corner leading to the back hallway. The home's second set of pocket doors leads south from the dining room to the living room. This room contains three window openings: one on the west wall and two on the south wall overlooking the front porch. A large radiator is centered on the west wall, south of the east window. In the living room's southwest corner is a single door that connects the room with front hallway.

The single door in the northwest corner of the dining room enters in to the hallway that runs east-west along what is the back of the original home. On the west end of the hallway is a small room that has been converted to a half-bathroom. Opposite the half-bathroom and under the main stair well is the interior access point to the cellar. On the far end of the hallway is the exterior entrance from the west façade which leads immediately up a straight stairwell on the northern half of the hallway.

On the back hallway's north wall is an entrance from the original 1879 house to the 1885 addition. While the floors between the two segments are even, the floor covering material transitions from burgundy carpet to linoleum. There is a noticeable difference in ceiling height when entering the addition, dropping roughly a foot and a half to allow the overall short stature of the north wing. Two exposed, oak beams that run north-south across the ceiling are stained a dark brown. The oak wood treatment includes crown molding that is only present in the informal dining room of the 1885 addition. The informal dining room stretches the entire width of the addition with two windows on the west wall above an iron radiator. The east wall consists of a window on the south half with a door to the north that leads to the enclosed porch. It is currently a coat room/mud room, with an exposed concrete floor and a small laundry room to the north. The dining room's south wall is dominated by an oak and mirror wall that was added by previous owners in the early 1990s. The north wall is an enamel range that operated on either wood or gas and was added at the same time as the mirrored wall. West of the range on the north wall, an opening leads into the kitchen which has been moderately updated throughout the home's history with cupboards, appliances, and Berber carpeting. However, the original layout remains the same, including a small pantry on the kitchen's west end.

The stairwell in the back hallway retains a decorative dowel banister topped with a solid oak handrail. At the top of the stairs a doorway along the north wall leads into the second story of the 1885 addition. Two steps descend into the first room that roughly mirrors the dimensions of the informal dining room on the first floor. Two windows are located on both the east and west walls and an iron radiator is located in the northwest corner of the room. In the northeast corner a door opens to a small room that now serves as a large, walk-in closet. The room is the same size as the first floor kitchen, minus the pantry in the addition's northwest corner, and has a single window on both the east and west wall. This space potentially could have been used by the Kesterson's as a second study or dressing room.

South of the north bedroom and stairwell the decorative railing wraps back around to the east, creating an open hallway that leads to the second floor's bathroom – the only full-bathroom in the house. The compact bathroom contains a disconnected men's urinal and pedestal sink along the south wall, a radiator and a window on the west wall, and a toilet and claw foot bathtub (including shower attachment) along the north wall.

The first bedroom encountered moving south down the hallway is on the east side of the home and includes the bay that extends the full height of the east façade. A small radiator is located under the center window and a louvered closet door is on the room's north wall. The walk-in closet is of moderate size and includes a north facing window that overlooks the enclosed porch. Almost directly opposite the east bedroom is the west bedroom, occupying the same footprint as the first floor office. A tall radiator stands between the two west facing windows while a third window faces south, overlooking the covered front porch. A moderately-sized walk-in closet is in the room's southeast corner, covered by a louvered door and containing a window on its west wall. The hallway terminates at the south bedroom. Identical to the living room below, the room contains a radiator on its east wall, south of the east facing window near the room's northeast corner. The south wall includes two windows that overlook the front porch and yard of the Kesterson House. Similar to the other bedrooms in the 1879 section of the home, a louvered door in the room's southwest corner gives way to a walk-in closet that includes a window, in this case facing south over the home's main entrance. Each of the three bedrooms in the 1879 home have a top-hinged clerestory window over the door. This feature is missing over the door to what is now the restroom, whose

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wood work resembles that of the 1885 addition, providing a possible date of when that area was enclosed as a restroom although running water was not introduced to Fairbury until 1889.<sup>5</sup>

The second place the 1885 woodwork is present in the 1879 section of the home is surrounding the basement door located in the back hallway on the first floor. Immediately to the north of the stairwell interior, an exterior entrance to the basement was enclosed during the 1885 addition, suggesting that the 1879 home did not have interior access to the basement until 1885. Original wood stairs descend into the basement, deeply grooved from 140 years of use. The basement is unfinished, consisting of limestone walls, a large storage room, and a primitive shower. The main room which the stairs empty into, houses the boiler and hot water heater. The house is still heated by the boiler and, as previously described, radiators are located in each room. The 1885 basement was once connected to the original, but the hall connecting the two has since been blocked.

The John C. Kesterson House retains a high degree of all seven aspects of integrity. The home sits in its historic location just a few blocks east of downtown Fairbury and continues to be surrounded by other residential properties. The home's exterior and interior appearance has remained virtually unchanged since 1885, displaying the historic design, materials, workmanship, and feeling of the home's era and style. The Kesterson House continues to provide a strong association to the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century architectural style that it represents.

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<sup>5</sup> Carpenter, 12.



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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 a grave.
- D** A cemetery.  
A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- E** A commemorative property.
- G** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1878-1885  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

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

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

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

**Cultural Affiliation**

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

**Architect/Builder**

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

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

The John C. Kesterson House is a two-story Italianate home named after a successful horse-breeder, freighter, and prominent early Fairbury businessman. The home was built just seven years after Fairbury was incorporated and is representative of the predominate architectural style during the settlement of Fairbury – the Italianate – popular among prominent citizens during the mid- to late-nineteenth century. It exhibits the distinctive characteristics of an Italianate home and retains a high degree of all seven aspects of integrity. The Period of Significance is 1879-1885, selected based on

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the date of original construction and the date of the addition of the north wing of the home. It is nominated at the local level of significance.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The town of Fairbury was platted in 1869 as a future stop on the St. Joseph and Denver City Railroad. By 1870 the town boasted 370 occupants and was incorporated in January 1872. That year the St. Joseph and Denver City Railroad (which would be acquired by Union Pacific) established Fairbury as a southeast Nebraska shipping center. Railroad construction continued as the Omaha & Republican Railroad Company, under the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad, built a line through Jefferson County in 1880-1. It was along this line that a small, rural depot was built in 1882 that would bear the name of John C. Kesterson.<sup>6</sup>

John C. Kesterson was born in Ray County, Missouri in 1847 and by 1865 was running freight for his father, James, from Nebraska City to Cottonwood Springs, Colorado. The following year he was assistant wagon master for Kesterson and Catterson hauling government freight from Nebraska City to Laramie, Wyoming. Nebraska City remained his base of operations until 1873 when he settled in Fairbury, marrying Susie Caroline Purdy in 1876. John and Susie, the daughter of a wealthy businessman and prominent local politician, built their large Italianate home in 1879 and started a family shortly thereafter, welcoming a son, Lon, in 1881, and a daughter, Marie, in 1886.<sup>7</sup>

Kesterson was successfully involved in a number of business ventures upon arriving in Fairbury. In 1880, Kesterson owned a large warehouse valued at \$8,000. Though that building was destroyed by fire, Kesterson was undeterred, investing another \$5,000 in dry goods in 1885. He was an investor in establishing the Fairbury Creamery, served as Fairbury's postmaster and was president of the Fairbury Iron Works & Windmill Company. In 1889 he was elected president of the Fairbury Board of Trade.<sup>8</sup>

A small collection of people gathered four miles southwest of Fairbury at what was known as Kesterson. Named in John's honor, the village of Kesterson boasted ten inhabitants in 1890. Though none of the village residents were Kestersons,<sup>9</sup> Kesterson Bros. Clothing, owned by John's brothers, David and William, and John's horse breeding operation, Kesterson & Follet, are listed in the Business Directory.<sup>10</sup> Two months after the post office was organized, a depot on the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad depot was nearing completion. While not a resident of that place, Kesterson owned 280

<sup>6</sup> "Fairbury Commercial Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office, June 20, 1997. Charles Dawson, *Pioneer Tales of the Oregon Trail and of Jefferson County*, (Topeka, KS: Crane & Company, 1912), 316. James Denney, "Kesterson Depot: Jefferson County, Nebraska," <http://genealogytrails.com/neb/jefferson/places/kesterson.html>, accessed February 8, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Christine Walters, "The Kesterson History: From Virginia to Nebraska," <http://genealogytrails.com/neb/jefferson/thekestersonhistory.htm>, accessed January 15, 2019. W.W. Watson, "Early History of Jefferson County Overland Route," in *Proceedings and Collection of the Nebraska State Historical Society, Second Series, Vol. V.*, (Lincoln, NE: Jacob North & Company, 1902), 219-20. Dawson, 326. Christine Walters, "The Kesterson History: From Virginia to Nebraska," <http://genealogytrails.com/neb/jefferson/thekestersonhistory.htm>, accessed January 15, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> A.T. Andreas, ed., *History of the State of Nebraska*, Vol. II, (Chicago, IL: The Western Historical Company, 1882), 997. "Fairbury," *The Nebraska State Journal*, January 23, 1885. "Mere Mention," *The Nebraska State Journal*, June 1, 1882. "Nominations Confirmed," *Fremont Tri-Weekly Tribune*, January 12, 1895. "Jefferson Pioneer Dies," *The Lincoln Star*, December 27, 1909. "Three Ribs Broken," *The Nebraska State Journal*, December 27, 1889.

<sup>9</sup> Elton A. Perkey, *Perkey's Nebraska Place Names*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1995), 102. James Denney, "Kesterson Depot: Jefferson County, Nebraska," <http://genealogytrails.com/neb/jefferson/places/kesterson.html>, accessed February 8, 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Christine Walters, "The Kesterson History: From Virginia to Nebraska," <http://genealogytrails.com/neb/jefferson/thekestersonhistory.htm>, accessed January 15, 2019. Note: Walters states the company as "Kesterson & Tolleth." However, multiple newspaper accounts confirm it was "Kesterson & Follet." The Business Directory possibly erred in recording the business's name, or Ms. Walters made an error in transcription during her research.

Kesterson, John C., House

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acres just south of the depot in 1900, and with his horse breeding operation nearby, it is probable Kesterson owned the area where the depot was erected in 1883; land ownership records of 1882-3 are not available.<sup>11</sup>

Establishing dray freighting of passengers and goods between Fairbury and the Kesterson depot was just one of John's many business enterprises. He was heavily involved in horse breeding and racing throughout his life, unsuccessfully offering \$5,000 for a horse in 1888 and owning "the fastest horse in Nebraska" in 1890. By 1893, Kesterson was president of the Nebraska Association of Trotting and Pacing Horse Breeders, owning multiple race horses that entered in events throughout eastern Nebraska.<sup>12</sup>



**Figure 3: Kesterson Depot, located at the Rock Island Railroad Depot in Fairbury, 2018 (courtesy of home owner's private collection).**

Although he was involved in a number of business enterprises, horse breeding and farming were Kesterson's primary means of financial stability. His land holdings, where he raised hogs and cattle in addition to horses, were large enough to be considered a 'ranch' by the local press. In 1900 he owned nearly two-thousand acres in Jefferson County. West of Fairbury Kesterson dug fish ponds and constructed an ice house. After both Susie and John passed in 1909, the Kesterson's western lands were sold off to be developed as a golf course.<sup>13</sup>

Although Kesterson was involved in the early commercial development of Fairbury and was financially successful, the historical record does not demonstrate that his role was individually significant to make the John C. Kesterson House eligible under Criterion B: Significant Person. However, the home does retain a high level of integrity from its original construction and is a fine example of Italianate architecture. Based on information from the survey files of the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office, this is one of only three Italianate homes in Fairbury. One of which is a single-story frame

<sup>11</sup> *The Nebraska State Journal*, June 8, 1883. "Antelope Precinct," *Plat Book of Jefferson County, Nebraska*, (Northwest Publishing Company, 1900), 25.

<sup>12</sup> "Mere Mention," *The Nebraska State Journal*, September 22, 1888. "The State Press," *The Nebraska State Journal*, October 1, 1890. "The Nebraska Breeders Meet," *Omaha Daily Bee*, July 23, 1893. "Entries for the Breeders' Meet" *Omaha Daily Bee*, September 2, 1894. "A Gathering of Horsemen," *The Nebraska State Journal*, January 19, 1887.

<sup>13</sup> "Patrons' Directory of Jefferson County, NE," *Plat Book of Jefferson County, Nebraska*, (Northwest Publishing Company, 1900), 52. "General State Notes," *McCook Weekly Tribune*, November 6, 1884. "Fairbury News: A Mad Steer Shot – More Infected – Other Notes," *Lincoln Evening Call*, June 2, 1890. "Fairbury Precinct," *Plat Book of Jefferson County, Nebraska*, (Northwest Publishing Company, 1900), 30. "Jefferson Pioneer Dies," *The Lincoln Star*, December 27, 1909. "Golf Club at Fairbury," *Omaha Daily Bee*, November 12, 1913.

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house, making the Kesterson House and a property at 721 4<sup>th</sup> Street (JF04-046) the only brick, two-story resources that display classic Italianate architectural characteristics.

The Italianate style dominated American architecture between 1850 and 1880, overshadowing the Gothic Revival style that remained popular until 1860. Largely due to its versatility, the Italianate style was easily applied to single-family homes, apartments, row houses, and commercial buildings. The style's popularity coincided with much of the settlement of the Midwest, specifically Nebraska, in the years immediately following the Civil War. With the introduction of pattern books and the increased availability of goods via a booming railroad network, Italianate homes were very popular among the prominent early settlers of Nebraska's towns.<sup>14</sup>

The John C. Kesterson House is an example of the asymmetrical subtype of Italianate homes, which accounts for roughly twenty percent of all Italianates. Typical of asymmetrical Italianates, the Kesterson House is arranged in an L-shape and is without a tower, as certain variants of Italianates have.<sup>15</sup> The 1879 original footprint of the Kesterson House follows this pattern, with the main wing of the home extending to the south, and a second wing protruding to the west – the two wings intersect in the property's northeast corner. The original, asymmetrical design of the 1879 home is not diminished by the 1885 addition to the north.

Consistent with the asymmetrical Italianate design, the Kesterson House is covered with a low-pitched, cross-hipped roof.<sup>16</sup> The roof pitch and design were carried over from the original home to the addition, as the north wing also contains a hipped roof. The home is set back considerably from the street, yet the roof on the two-story Italianate is hardly visible from the public view shed, barely peeking up over the wide, overhanging eaves, which are a common feature of Italianate homes.

Within all Italianate designs, several aspects serve as points of elaboration, the first of these being windows. Italianate window sashes generally contained one- or two-light openings, as reflected in the Kesterson House's one-over-one original windows. While preceding home styles, most notable Gothic Revival, experimented with curved, arched, or rounded windows, Italianate was the first style to commonly use non-rectangular windows throughout the entire house.<sup>17</sup> While today this feature is obscured from the exterior of the Kesterson House by aluminum storm windows, the Kesterson House had and retains its segmented arched windows as captured in a c1910 image (Figure 2). The window openings were generally capped with an elaborate hood. In this home's case, the segmented arch is constructed out of brick, contains a focal keystone in its center, and is painted white to contrast against the burgundy painted brick façade. The windows on the Kesterson House are tall and narrow, consistent with typical features of Italianate homes.

Decorative support brackets are a hallmark of Italianate buildings.<sup>18</sup> The amount of brackets and the spacing between each generally falls into one of two camps: either evenly spaced singularly under the eave, or pairs of brackets spaced under the eave with large gaps of exposed fascia board. The Kesterson House falls into the latter category, with brackets spaced along the eave in pairs. The 1885 addition has smaller eaves and does not contain any decorative brackets. However, this does not take away from the original design, materials, and workmanship of the home as the eaves and brackets from the original remain as the addition's roof connects into the original building below the eave.

Italianate homes generally contain restrained, single story porches, the most common of which are small entry porches. These porches do not have to be braced by columns, but can be supported by brackets, as is the case over the west entrance of the Kesterson house. Full-width, wrap around porches are not uncommon on Italianates, however, many of these are due to later additions or expansions.<sup>19</sup> It is unclear if the single-story, full-width porch is original to the 1879 Kesterson home or was added later, perhaps in 1885 along with the rear addition. Since the John C. Kesterson House was built at the tail-end of the Italianate's run as the predominate domestic housing style in the country, it is possible that

<sup>14</sup> Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 286, 302.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

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Kesterson adopted the full-width porch into the design for his Fairbury home from Italianates that were built sooner and had large porches added after initial construction. While the wooden porch that is visible in the c1910 image (Figure 2) has been raised and replaced with concrete, the square, beveled edged porch supports remain from the porch's original construction.

Doorways on Italianate homes were the first to regularly feature large window panes in the door, rather than a solid door with sidelights. The shape of the door openings and the use of a decorative hood match that of the windows, creating a near-uniform appearance of all the openings on the façade.<sup>20</sup> The south (primary) and the west (secondary) entrance to the Kesterson house follow this pattern. The south entrance has a large pane that consumes roughly three-quarters of the door, while the pane in the west entrance is approximately half the door's surface area. Both of these doors are topped with segmented arch transoms, mimicking the window shape, and decorative hoods. The east entrance to the 1885 addition (now within the framed-in back porch) also follows the Italianate pattern of embellishment. It contains a large pane in the upper-half of the door under a two-light transom that, due to the lower ceilings in the 1885 addition, is smaller than the transoms over the south and west façades.

The John C. Kesterson House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C: Architecture. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Italianate architectural type and retains a high degree of all seven aspects of integrity. Significance at the local level, the property's Period of Significance begins in 1879 when the original home was constructed, and ends in 1885 with the addition of the north wing.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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<http://genealogytrails.com/neb/jefferson/thekestersonhistory.htm>, accessed January 15, 2019.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 284.

Kesterson, John C., House

Jefferson County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

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Watson, W.W., "Early History of Jefferson County Overland Route," in *Proceedings and Collection of the Nebraska State Historical Society, Second Series, Vol. V.*, Lincoln, NE: Jacob North & Company, 1902.

**Newspaper Articles**

- "A Gathering of Horsemen," *The Nebraska State Journal*, January 19, 1887.
- "Entries for the Breeders' Meet" *Omaha Daily Bee*, September 2, 1894.
- "Fairbury," *The Nebraska State Journal*, January 23, 1885.
- "Fairbury News: A Mad Steer Shot – More Infected – Other Notes," *Lincoln Evening Call*, June 2, 1890.
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- "Three Ribs Broken," *The Nebraska State Journal*, December 27, 1889.
- (Untitled), *The Nebraska State Journal*, June 8, 1883.

**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) \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): JF04-045

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than 1 USGS Quadrangle Fairbury, NE 2017

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

- |    |          |                  |           |                   |
|----|----------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1. | Latitude | <u>40.135447</u> | Longitude | <u>-97.173886</u> |
| 2. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |
| 3. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |
| 4. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The proposed boundary for the John C. Kesterson House is bounded on the south by 4<sup>th</sup> Street, on the west by I Street, and on the north by a paved alley. The east boundary runs along the adjacent property line, with the Kesterson property extending east behind the adjacent parcel in the northeast corner of the parcel to accommodate the non-contributing shed and garage.

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**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The proposed boundary includes the entire parcel that the John C. Kesterson House currently sits on. The house historically sat on a bigger parcel incorporating four lots. The lot to the east has been sold off for residential development.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

---

name/title Jonni Hemphill / Property Owner  
organization N/A date March 31, 2019  
street & number 907 4<sup>th</sup> Street telephone 402-450-8278  
city or town Fairbury state NE zip code 68352  
email oopscjonni@yahoo.com

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**Additional Documentation**

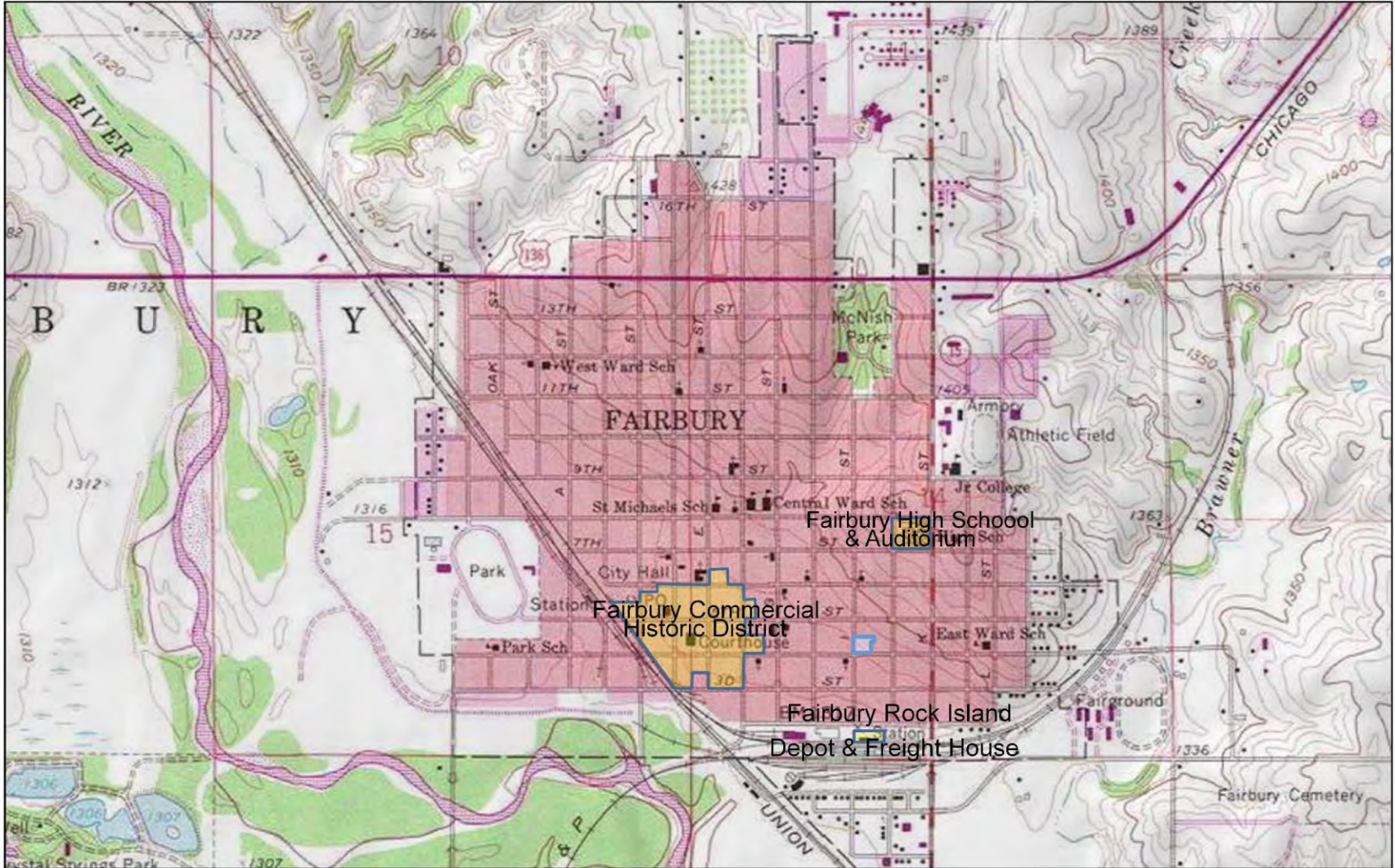
Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO for any additional items.)

Kesterson, John C., House

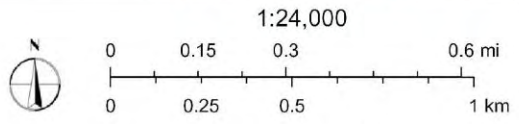
Jefferson County, Nebraska

# John C. Kesterson House, 907 4th Street, Fairbury, Jefferson County, NE



3/15/2019, 2:42:28 PM

-  John C. Kesterson House
-  National Register Listed Properties



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David L. Calase  
North



Name of Property Kesterson, John C., House

County and State Jefferson County, Nebraska

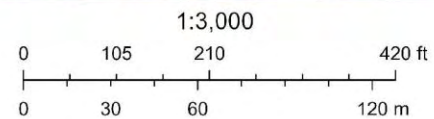
# John C. Kesterson House, 907 4th Street, Fairbury, Jefferson County, NE



3/15/2019, 2:46:41 PM



John C. Kesterson House



Esri, HERE, Garmin, © OpenStreetMap contributors, Esri, HERE, Garmin, ©

David L. Calase  
North

Kesterson, John C., House  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, Nebraska  
County and State

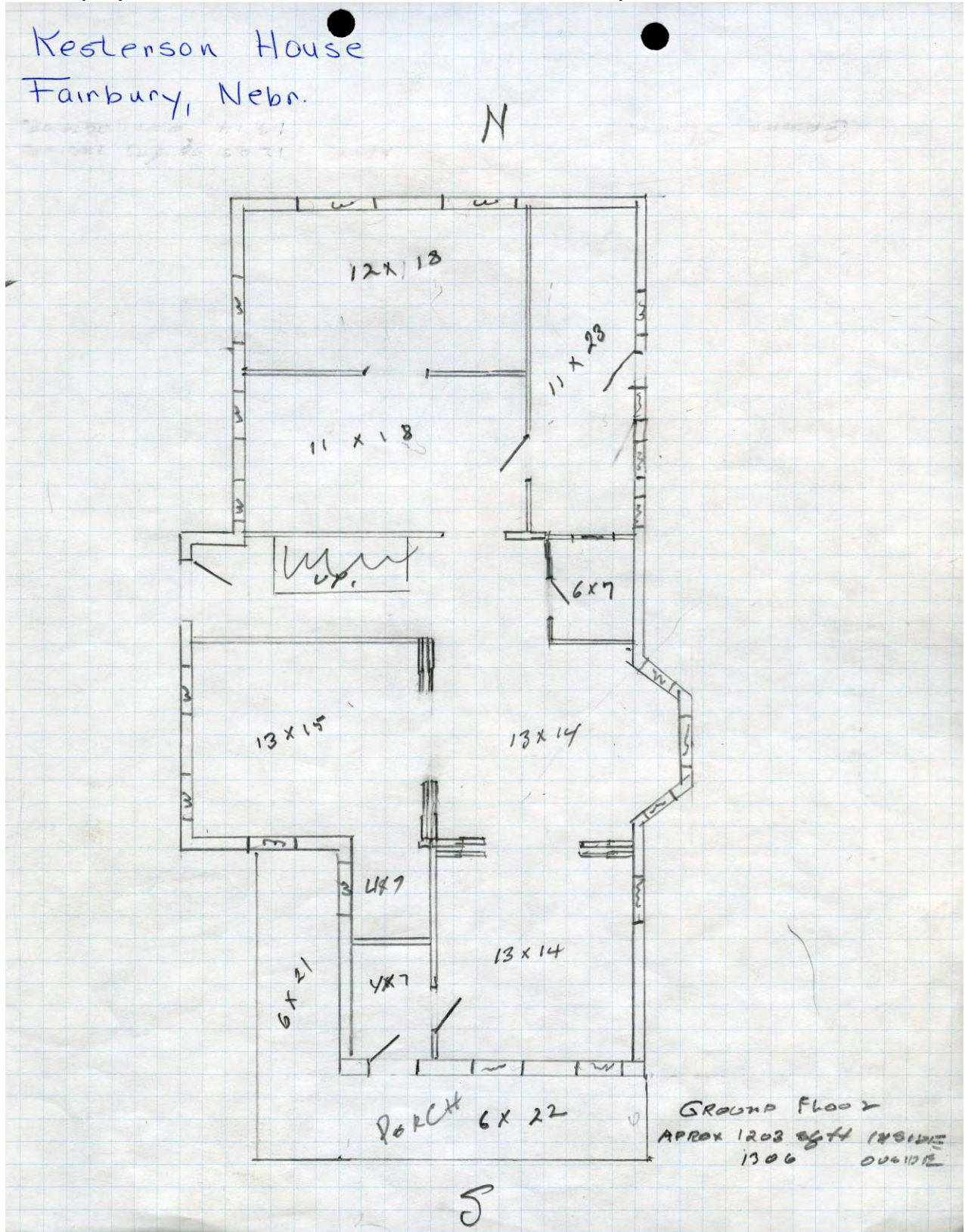


Figure 3: John C. Kesterson House, Floor plan, first floor, preparer unknown (NeSHPO site files, JF04-045).

Kesterson, John C., House  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, Nebraska  
County and State

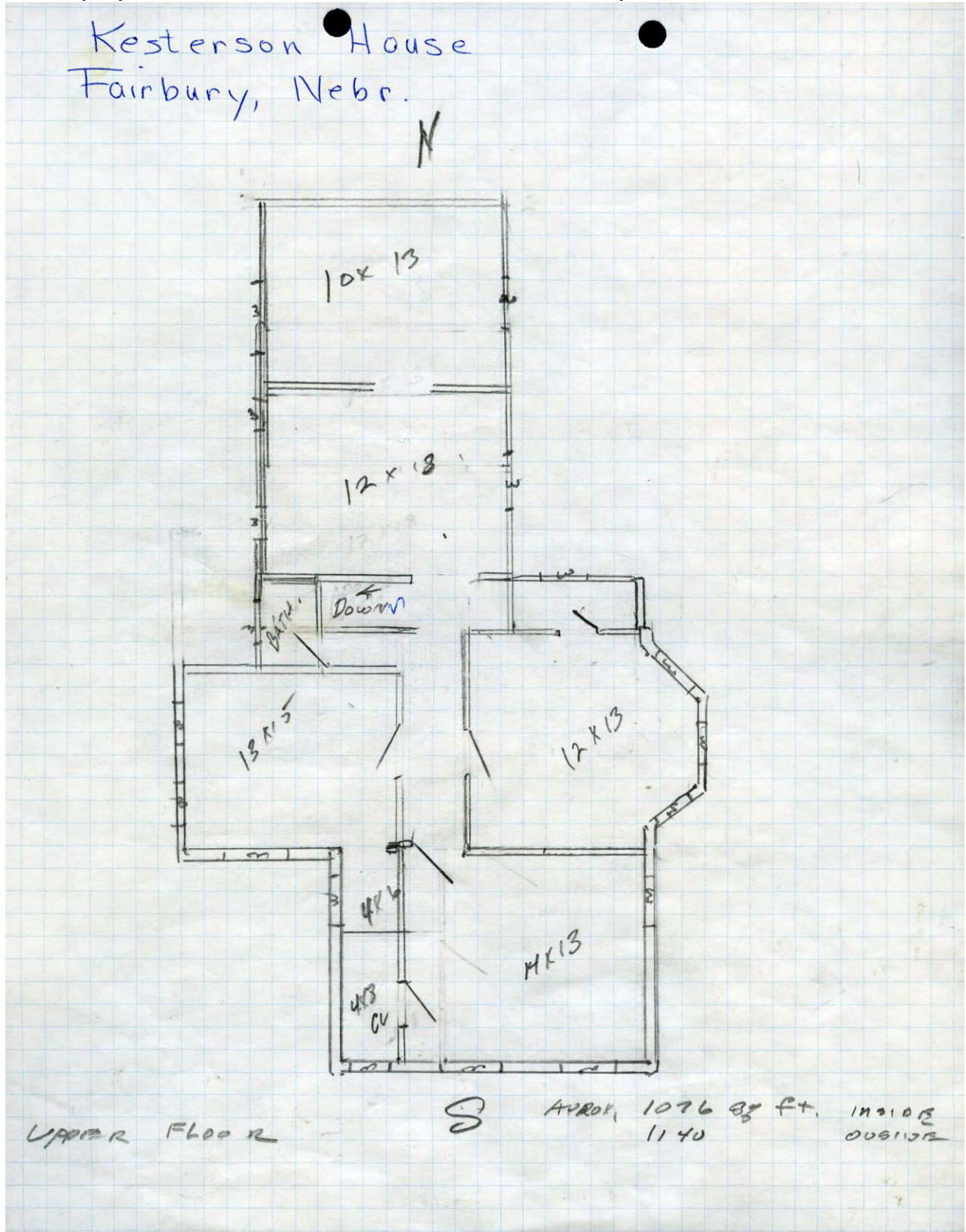


Figure 4: John C. Kesterson House, Floor plan, second floor, preparer unknown; this plan does not accurately represent the 1885 addition, which the northern half is not as wide as the southern half, (NeSHPO site files, JF04-045).

Kesterson, John C., House  
**Name of Property**

Jefferson County, Nebraska  
**County and State**

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch 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.

### Photo Log

Name of Property Kesterson, John C., House  
City or Vicinity Fairbury County Jefferson State Nebraska  
Photographer David L. Calease / NeSHPO Date Photographed January 23, 2019

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

**Image 1: John C. Kesterson House, exterior, south façade; view north.**

**Image 2: John C. Kesterson House, exterior, south and west façades with yard; view northeast.**

**Image 3: John C. Kesterson House, exterior, west façade; view east.**

**Image 4: John C. Kesterson House, exterior, north and east façades; view south.**

**Image 5: John C. Kesterson House, exterior, south and east façades; view northwest.**

**Image 6: John C. Kesterson House, interior, main hall leading to office; view north.**

**Image 7: John C. Kesterson House, interior, office; view west.**

**Image 8: John C. Kesterson House, interior, 1879 dining as view from office; view east.**

**Image 9: John C. Kesterson House, interior, 1885 dining room; view northeast.**

**Image 10: John C. Kesterson House, interior, 1885 kitchen with pantry; view west.**

**Image 11: John C. Kesterson House, interior, rear hallway with stairwell and east entrance; view west.**

**Image 12: John C. Kesterson House, interior, 1885 bedroom; note steps down from 1879 house; view east.**

**Image 13: John C. Kesterson House, interior, 1879 east bedroom with bay window; view east.**

**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.



















The Hemphill Home  
Est. 2017

Our Love Story  
11-07-2016  
03-24-2017  
07-29-2017  
Mrs. Mrs.  
Hemphill





THE  
ROOT CELLAR  
POTATOES • RADISHES • ONIONS • TURNIPS





God gave me you



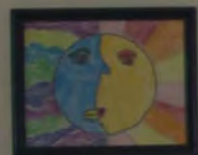
Mr. & Mrs.



We decided on forever







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Kesterson, John C., House

Multiple Name: \_\_\_\_\_

State & County: NEBRASKA, Jefferson

Date Received: 5/24/2019      Date of Pending List: 6/11/2019      Date of 16th Day: 6/26/2019      Date of 45th Day: 7/8/2019      Date of Weekly List: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference number: SG100004142

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review: \_\_\_\_\_

X Accept       Return       Reject      6/26/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: An excellent example of the italianate style, well preserved and with few (and relatively minor) alterations. Home of one the the town's prominent businessmen, the home reflects his status in the community. It is one of only a handful of brick homes from the 19th century, and easily the most ornate and "high style."

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept / C

Reviewer Jim Gabbert      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

May 22, 2019

Jim Gabbert  
NPS-National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street, NW  
Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, DC 20240



Re: John C. Kesterson House, Fairbury, Jefferson County, NE

Dear Mr. Gabbert,

Enclosed is the complete nomination packet for the John C. Kesterson House, in Grand Island, Hall County, Nebraska. The enclosed contents are as follows:

- The signed first page of the John C. Kesterson House nomination;
- One (1) archival disc with the true and correct copy of the nomination for the John C. Kesterson House to the National Register of Historic Places in PDF format; and
- One (1) archival disc with the photographs for the John C. Kesterson House nomination.

If you have any questions regarding the submitted materials, feel free to contact me at the phone number or email address below.

Sincerely,



David L. Calease  
National Register Coordinator  
Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office

Phone: 402-471-4775  
[david.calease@nebraska.gov](mailto:david.calease@nebraska.gov)

Enclosures (3): Signed National Register nomination cover sheet  
1 disc with Nomination  
1 disc with National Register Photographs

1500 R Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508-1651  
P: 402.471.3270  
P: 800.833.6747  
F: 402.471.3100  
[history.nebraska.gov](http://history.nebraska.gov)