

PH# 364452

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED AUG 11 1976

DATE ENTERED

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

**\*\*** Brown, W. P., Mansion (preferred name)

AND/OR COMMON

The Brown Mansion

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

South Walnut and Eldridge Streets

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Coffeyville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

No. 5, Joe Skubit

STATE

Kansas 67337

\_\_ VICINITY OF

CODE

20

COUNTY

Montgomery

CODE

125

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

\_\_DISTRICT

\_\_PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

\_\_AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

\_\_UNOCCUPIED

\_\_COMMERCIAL

\_\_PARK

\_\_STRUCTURE

\_\_BOTH

\_\_WORK IN PROGRESS

\_\_EDUCATIONAL

\_\_PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

\_\_ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_RELIGIOUS

\_\_OBJECT

\_\_IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

\_\_GOVERNMENT

\_\_SCIENTIFIC

\_\_BEING CONSIDERED

\_\_YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_INDUSTRIAL

\_\_TRANSPORTATION

\_\_NO

\_\_MILITARY

\_\_OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Coffeyville Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 562

CITY, TOWN

Coffeyville

STATE

Kansas

\_\_ VICINITY OF

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Montgomery County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Independence

STATE

Kansas

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1970

\_\_FEDERAL STATE \_\_COUNTY \_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Kansas State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

STATE

Kansas 66610

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT                       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD                                 RUINS  
 FAIR                                  UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

---

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Brown Mansion was constructed on the highest point of W. P. Brown's vast estate just south of Coffeyville. Though much of the property has been sold, the home still holds a commanding position over the surrounding area.

The mansion is one of the largest residences in the area. It has bold proportions and measures 132 feet long by 58 feet wide and is 34 feet high. The house was designed by Wilder and Wight in the Georgian Revival style, and is reminiscent of a southern plantation house. A modified Tuscan order with dentils has been used. The cornice has been crowned with a solid balustrade that has raised panels above each column. The house has two full stories, a ballroom in the attic, and a basement. The exterior walls are brick which has been covered with cement stucco and painted white. The roof, which is hipped, was originally tile but has been replaced with red asphalt shingles. The exterior of the mansion is much as it was originally.

The main entrance is located under a centrally placed, two story porte cochere on the north facade. The columns of the porte cochere have been raised on plinths. Directly above the main doorway, which has sidelight windows, is an oriel window which lights the interior stairway. The bays have been marked on this facade with Tuscan pilasters. There is a rounded bay window on the first story to the east of the porte cochere. A secondary entrance to the first story, which has been covered over, is located to the east of the bay window. It was recessed and a set of stairs leading to it still remains. A one story wing which served as a kitchen projects forward on the eastern end of this facade and has three windows across the north facade. There is a chimney with a rounded cap rising from the east of this wing. Window openings are rectangular and have been simply decorated with a sill. The windows are plate glass and have wood frames with a double-hung sash.

Both the west and south facades have a wide, two story veranda supported on Tuscan columns. The veranda has been elevated slightly off the ground. A balustrade infilled with lattice work runs between the columns on the second story of the veranda. The west facade has five bays with a flight of steps two bays wide which has been placed off-center. There are doors opening out to the veranda on both stories. A chimney with a rounded cap has been centered on the bay second from the north.

The south facade has nine bays and continues the veranda from the west facade across its entire breadth. There is a set of stairs leading to ground level at the middle bay. A French door with bay sidelights has been centered on the first story facade. To either side of the door is a bay window which has also been repeated on the second story. The eastern-most bay has been glassed in on the first floor for a solarium.

A one story pavilion extends from the building on the southern and eastern facades. The depth of the veranda has been continued, but the roof here is carried on square Tuscan pillars. This veranda has a rounded projection to the south. The veranda continues across the entire breadth of the east facade on the second story, but the supporting columns are squared. The veranda continues halfway across the facade of the one story pavilion, then the building juts forward continuing the line established by the columns. There is an entrance and two windows on this wall.

The mansion has sixteen rooms; those on the main floor include the living room, parlor, music room, library, conservatory, dining room, billiard room, entry hall, kitchen and maid quarters. There are five bedrooms and three full baths on the second floor. The attic story, which has a vaulted ceiling and is lighted by dormer windows, served as a ballroom and gymnasium. There is access from this room to a porch above the porte cochere. The basement housed the butler's quarters, laundry, heating system,

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1904 - 1906

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Wilder and Wight

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The W. P. Brown Mansion at Coffeyville was built in 1904-1906 from plans prepared by the architectural firm of Edward T. Wilder and Thomas Wight of Kansas City, Mo. Designed for one of the area's pioneer oil and gas entrepreneurs, it was architecturally the grandest house ever built in Coffeyville and perhaps in all of southeast Kansas.

A tremendous industrial and economic boom had developed in southeast Kansas around the turn of the century. Extensive mineral resources had been located and the discovery of natural gas and its exploitation by men like Brown brought a new prosperity and an influx of people to the area.

Brown had come to Independence, Kansas, as a boy of thirteen with his parents. While still a teenager he had gone into the lumber business for himself; after five years he moved to Cherryvale and was a grain merchant for two years. Then in 1885 he moved to Coffeyville where he established a lumber company that became one of the most extensive enterprises in the area. Among Brown's other business interests were a number of commercial buildings in Coffeyville, the local telephone exchange, a natatorium, agricultural land, a local implement manufacturing company and a wide variety of investments.

In 1891 Brown and three others put down the first gas well in the area. Brown was quick to see the potential of the gas industry; he bought out the others and set up a gas distributing system for Coffeyville. He was associated with many oil and gas ventures around Coffeyville and eventually sold out with huge profits in 1905. One year later he sold his lumber business.

From all accounts Brown was a very private person as far as his personal life and family affairs were concerned. Contemporary newspapers offered only sketchy accounts of the family's activities, and their reports of the house construction were infrequent and brief.

As early as 1897 Brown was reportedly considering the construction of a new house, but the mansion was not started until the summer of 1904. Newspaper references in 1905 indicate that the house was up by July and was being plastered in November. In April, 1906, plumbers were installing fixtures and in May, Starkweather and Vivers, tanners, were doing copper furnace work. A newspaper report on a city council meeting in August, 1906, revealed that the city had to expend \$165 to add a new transformer to handle all the electric lights in the Brown Mansion. And in September it was noted that South Walnut, on which Brown's residence was located, had been paved past his house. A large labor force worked on the house but most of the names aren't presently known. One of the carpenters was identified as T. A. Montgomery.

Local accounts for many years had associated the name of architect Stanford White of the New York Firm of McKim, Mead and White with the design of the house, but no mention of an architect's name could be found in contemporary newspapers. Late in 1975 a worn set of plans was found in an out-of-the-way closet in the house. The lower

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Baxter, Katherine, editor, Notable Kansas Citians of 1915-1916-1917-1918 (Kansas City, Mo., Kellogg-Baxter Printing Co., 1925), pp. 23, 24.

Connelley, William E., A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans (Chicago, Lewis Publishing Co., 1918), vol. IV, p. 1879.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 18

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>1,4</u>	<u>2,6,7</u> <u>5,6,0</u>	<u>4,1</u> <u>0,0</u> <u>2,6,0</u>	B	<u>1,4</u>	<u>2,6,7</u> <u>6,5,0</u>	<u>4,0</u> <u>9,9</u> <u>9,6,0</u>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	<u>1,4</u>	<u>2,6,7</u> <u>3,3,0</u>	<u>4,0</u> <u>9,9</u> <u>9,7,0</u>	D	<u>1,4</u>	<u>2,6,7</u> <u>3,4,0</u>	<u>4,1</u> <u>0,0</u> <u>2,6,0</u>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Richard Pankratz, Director, Historic Sites Survey  
Cornelia Wyma, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Kansas State Historical Society DATE July 9, 1976

STREET & NUMBER 120 West 10th Street TELEPHONE 913-296-3251

CITY OR TOWN Topeka STATE Kansas 66612

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL      STATE X LOCAL     

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE *Nyle H. Miller* DATE August 2, 1976

TITLE Executive Director, Kansas State Historical Society

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
Acting DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE <u>12/12/96</u>
ATTEST:	DATE <u>12/6/76</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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DEC 12 1976

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Brown, W. P., Mansion

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE 1

7 DESCRIPTION

walk-in ice box and storage space. All four floors are served by a hand-pulled elevator. The mansion has nine fireplaces, each of a different design, but only one is wood-burning as the others were plumbed for natural gas in the early 1900's. Many of the rooms have both gas and electric chandeliers.

Many of the original furnishings which were purchased from Marshall Field of Chicago, and Sloans of New York, among other places, still remain in the house. Leaded Tiffany glass accents the main doorway and there is a signed Tiffany chandelier in the dining room. The Browns added solid wood paneling in the library and remodeled the kitchen in the 1930's, but otherwise few changes have been made.

Several other auxiliary structures or their foundations still remain on the grounds, which now consist of about 18 acres. A frame playhouse with a cedar shake exterior and a tiled, hipped roof is located 95 feet northeast of the kitchen wing. A three-stall, concrete block garage is also located to the northeast of the kitchen wing. A stucco caretaker's house with a tile roof is located approximately 100 feet east-southeast of the mansion. There is a storage shed to the south of this house. An L-shaped building that may have been used as a sheep barn is located to the southeast of the mansion. Farther to the east are the foundations of three more barns which were probably used for cattle and horses. A small tack shed is located near these foundations. Near the southern property line are the foundations of a greenhouse. There is a rock quarry next to the Verdigris River which runs along the eastern property line.

A formal, terraced garden was located to the south of the mansion. The site here slopes downward and the garden was arranged on a series of planting beds divided by four brick retaining walls that were covered with stucco. An axis has been set up by a series of steps which lead to a round reflecting pool at the final terrace. This axis does not seem to align with any particular architectural feature of the mansion. The axis has been vertically defined by three series of seven-foot tall coupled Tuscan pillars. Each pair was originally spanned with double wood beams. The southern-most retaining wall curves behind the reflecting pool. The original plantings are unknown, but an early photograph shows vines growing rather freely on the retaining walls and pillars. There is an underground cellar to the east of the formal garden. It has three pairs of stuccoed brick pillars which supported a framework that was covered by vines to form a roof. There are also the remains of a boxwood garden to the east of the mansion between the kitchen wing and the caretaker's house.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Brown, W. P., Mansion

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8 SIGNIFICANCE

right hand corner was torn but the following legend was discernible: "Wilder and W..., Dwight Buil..." Local researchers eventually identified the firm as Wilder and Wight, Dwight Building, Kansas City, Mo. Both Edward T. Wilder and Thomas Wight had worked for and studied with the McKim, Mead and White firm--Wilder for five years and Wight for ten years. In 1904 they formed a partnership in Kansas City. The Brown Mansion was one of their first major commissions and is said to exhibit some of the characteristics of the New York firm's work, and that together with the men's past associations with the firm and the similarity of the names of White and Wight may account for the local stories.

Wilder and Wight were in practice until 1912 when Wilder retired. Wight's younger brother Edward, also formerly with McKim, Mead and White, then became a partner. Wilder and Wight and the successor firm Wight and Wight were responsible for designing many buildings in the Kansas City area.

The W. P. Brown Mansion was the home of the Browns until their deaths in 1934. The property then passed to their daughter, Violet Kohler, and was her home until she sold it to the Coffeyville Historical Society in April, 1973, for \$50,000--\$5,000 down and \$500 a month. The balance was cancelled by her death in November, 1973.

The Coffeyville Historical Society has refurbished the exterior and cleaned up the grounds. The interior had been kept in its original condition and very little work was required to open it to the public as a museum. Plans are being formulated to return the landscaping of the grounds and the formal garden to as much like the original as possible.

W. P. Brown was a significant force in the pioneer development of the gas and oil fields of southeast Kansas. His mansion is an important architectural manifestation of the great wealth available through the exploitation of the area's natural resources at the turn of the century. It is also interesting as an early work of the architectural firm of Wilder and Wight. The building is a break from the Victorian tradition and introduces a style, the Georgian Revival, to southeast Kansas in a very grand manner.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Brown, W. P., Mansion

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Coffeyville at 100, A History of Coffeyville (Coffeyville, Kan., Coffeyville Journal Press, 1969), pp. 22, 32, 33, 35, 38, 40, 41.

Coffeyville Journal, June 12, 1896; Aug. 28, Dec. 4, 1899; Jan. 5, 1900; Jan. 4, 1902; June 3, 16, 1904; July 5, Aug. 15, Nov. 13, 1905; Apr. 6, 12, May 16, July 18, Aug. 11, 20, Sept. 8, 1906; Apr. 20, 1952; Apr. 10, 12, May 13, June 15, Sept. 30, Nov. 18, 19, 22, 28, Dec. 3, 1973; Feb. 10, Mar. 17, 20, 31, July 16, 24, Dec. 8, 1974; Apr. 29, 1975; Mar. 14, 1976.

Coffeyville, Kansas, Centennial Souvenir Historical Booklet, June 26 to July 1, 1961 (n.p., 1961).

Drake, C. C., Who's Who in Coffeyville, Kansas and Vicinity (Coffeyville, Coffeyville Journal Press, 1943), p. 40.

Kansas City Star, Apr. 26, 1931; Sept. 7, 1949.

Kansas City Times, Apr. 11, 1973.

Mitchell, Giles Carroll, There Is No Limit: Architecture and Sculpture in Kansas City (Kansas City, Brown-White Co., 1934), pp. 119, 120.

Moore, Charles, "Office Roll of McKim, Mead and White," Life and Times of Charles Follen McKim (New York, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929), p. 333.

Wichita Eagle and Beacon, Apr. 22, 1973.

Withey, Henry F., and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) (Los Angeles, New Age Publishing Co., 1956), p. 658.

Information was also taken from a nomination form prepared by Ralph A. Rauch of Coffeyville as a project for a Boy Scout merit badge.

Brown, W. P., Mansion, Coffeyville, Kansas  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Kansas	
COUNTY	
Montgomery	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

10.

Note: The UTM Reference for this property should be Zone 15.

Boundary description: Beginning at the southeast corner of the intersection of South Walnut and Eldredge streets, the boundary runs due east approximately 750 feet to the west bank of the Verdigris river, then southeasterly along the river bank for about 1000 feet, then due west approximately 1130 feet back to South Walnut street, and then north adjacent to Walnut street to the point of origin.