

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name WALL-RATZLAFF HOUSE  
other names/site number 155-0650-0001

### 2. Location

street & number 103 NORTH MAPLE  not for publication  
city, town BUHLER  vicinity  
state KANSAS code KS county RENO code 155 zip code 67522

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u>          </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>          </u> objects
			<u>          </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

Ramon Powers STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER MARCH 10, 1992  
Signature of certifying official Date  
KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

*Entered in the National Register*  
4/30/92  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
DOMESTIC; single dwelling

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
DOMESTIC; single dwelling

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)LATE VICTORIAN; Queen Anne  
LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS;  
Colonial revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete block  
walls Wood; weatherboard, shingle  
roof Asphalt  
other 

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Wall-Ratzlaff House (c. 1898-1900) is located at 103 North Maple in Buhler, Reno County, Kansas (pop. 1,188). The Wall-Ratzlaff House is a vernacular interpretation of the Colonial Revival and Folk Victorian styles. The two-story, frame building stands on a concrete block foundation. An asphalt shingled, truncated, hipped roof covers the main portion of the building; an asphalt shingled, gabled roof covers the facade's one bay ell. The building maintains an eastern facade orientation, with overall measurements of forty feet from north to south and thirty-eight feet from east to west.

Narrow clapboards cover the main body of the building. Decorative diagonal sheathing is found on the frieze below the eaves. Fishscale shingling covers the gables. Corner posts delineate each planar termination. Large, scrolled wooden brackets support the building's wide eaves.

A one story porch spans the eastern elevation, large scrolled wooden brackets support the porch's eaves; narrow, turned columns support the porch's roof. Two doors provide entry to the building from the front porch. Additional access is achieved from a rear entry.

The building's fenestration is comprised primarily of single, 2/1 double hung sash. Projecting wooden cornices punctuated by attenuated corner blocks accentuate each window surround. Exceptions include the pairing of two, 2/1 double hung sash on the center bay of the second level of the building's facade, and the single paned picture window surmounted by a transom that pierces the first level of the northern bay of the building's facade. Additionally, each of the three roof gables is pierced by a clear glass fanlight.

The building's interior displays a center hall floorplan. A steep staircase meets the front door almost immediately. Its treatment is classically inspired, with turned balusters and a panelled newel post with an urn-like cap. The balusters are incised with a floral motif. Grained panelled doors and surrounds distinguish the

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
ARCHITECTURE	1898-1900	1898-1900
COMMERCE	1898-1907	1898-1907

	Cultural Affiliation
	N/A

Significant Person  
WALL, JOHN J.

Architect/Builder  
UNKNOWN

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Wall-Ratzlaff House (c. 1898-1900) is being nominated to the National Register under criterion B for its historical association with John J. Wall (1862-1916), the co-owner of the Buhler Mill and Elevator Company, and under criterion C for its architectural significance as a vernacular interpretation of the Colonial Revival and Folk Victorian styles.

Buhler was established in 1888 by Russian Mennonites, most of whom had immigrated to the United States in 1874 and 1878. The Kansas Midland Railroad reached Buhler in 1889. The town was not incorporated until 1913 and existed as an agricultural crossroads until the early 1900s. In 1908, Buhler's first church was constructed, and by 1913 the town's population had reached 350.

The Buhler Mill and Elevator Company was established in 1892 by Welk and Wiens, at the site of the present plant. The business was suspended in 1895 and John J. Wall was appointed receiver of the bankrupt establishment. Wall and Herman Rolgalsky purchased the business in 1897 and under their management the Buhler Mill and Elevator Company became the town's largest employer.

"John J. Wall was born in Altonau, Molotschna, Russia, on April 9, 1862. His parents came to Kansas in 1874. Here, as in Russia, his father took up the farming occupation. In his early youth, John helped his father on the farm. When he became of age, he asked his father for a loan of \$100 so he could purchase a threshing machine; he continued in this business for seventeen years. Then he bought a water mill in Dickinson county; however, after two years, he sold the mill and returned to Buhler. Wall had a very real talent for business and in 1897, he and Herman Rolgalsky, who had been associated with Wiens and Welk, bought the mill. It was a successful venture, with Wall serving as manager

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET.

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property LESS THAN ONE ACRE

UTM References

A 

1	4
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6	0	7	8	8	0
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4	2	2	1	2	6	0
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Zone      Easting                      Northing

B 

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Zone      Easting                      Northing

C 

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Zone      Easting                      Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

THE NOMINATED PROPERTY IS LOCATED ON LOTS 17 AND 18, BLOCK 18, BUHLER CITY, RENO COUNTY, KANSAS. THE PROPERTY IS BOUNDED BY NORTH MAPLE TO THE EAST, FIRST AVENUE TO THE SOUTH, SECOND AVENUE TO THE NORTH, AND AN ALLEY TO THE WEST.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

THE BOUNDARY CONTAINS ALL PROPERTY HISTORICALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE WALL-RATZLAFF HOUSE.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title MARTHA HAGEDORN-KRASS, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

organization KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY date MARCH 10, 1992

street & number 120 WEST 10th telephone 913-296-5264

city or town TOPEKA state KANSAS zip code 66612

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interior treatment for many of the doors on the first level and second levels. Incised corner and base blocks portraying wheat shafts decorate the door and window surrounds. Painted glass transoms surmount each main door on the second level, each transom is painted with a different flower. A full attic is accessible from the second floor hall.

The house has experienced some changes since its construction. In 1953 a new foundation was built for the house out of concrete blocks and the southern porch was enclosed for a kitchen. Additionally, the house has lost its two chimneys, which stood equidistant on the plane of the truncated hipped roof. The now white house exhibited at least three colors at one time, a light base coat, with darker colors employed for trim and decorative shingles. The one-story, frame, gable roofed summer kitchen has been moved from its original location, west of the house, to the north side of the house. All original wooden and metal fencing has been removed, but for the gate to the south of the house.

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and Rolgalsky as miller. The mill was partially rebuilt in 1900, including a set of steel tanks and two additional rollers, thus increasing the capacity to 75 barrels. Due to the increase in trade, he employed a nephew, Jacob C. Regier, as bookkeeper. In 1906, the principals decided to form the Wall-Rolgalsky Milling company in McPherson, Kansas- a prosperous concern to this day. To raise the money needed, they incorporated the Buhler Mill and Elevator Company, and sold the greater part of the stock although retaining an interest in the parent company. Wall was president of the Buhler Mill and Elevator Company..." (Regier, 1953, p. 82)

The Wall-Ratzlaff House was constructed by John J. Wall between 1898 and 1900 on lots 17 and 18, Block 18 in the City of Buhler, just north of the Buhler Mill. Wall purchased the lots in 1895 for \$650 from Cornelius and Elizabeth Enns. Wall and his family moved to McPherson in 1907, selling the house and lots 15, 16, 17, and 18 in Block 18 to John and Jacobine Harms for \$2300. The Harmses sold the property the following year to Peter Franz for \$4750, doubling their investment. In 1912 the property was sold to Heinrich P. Ratzlaff (1849- 1914) and his wife Margaretha (1851- 1933) for \$3000. The Ratzlaff family lived in the house from 1912 and retains ownership of the property today.

"Heinrich and Margaretha Ratzlaff came to the United States from the Molotschna Colony in the Russian Ukraine through Hamburg, Germany, as part of the Mennonite migration. They were passengers on the SS Cimbria in 1874. Heinrich was 25 years of age when he and Margaretha made the journey...they had four children all of whom were deceased before they left Russia. Heinrich was a farmer and brought with him Turkey Red seed wheat. They came to Newton from New York along with the accompanying Mennonites that came to Kansas as a result of the inducements of the Santa Fe Railroad: good land, similar to that of the Ukraine, at low prices and no compulsory military service. He started farming when he arrived and was a farmer all his life until he purchased the Wall-Ratzlaff House in 1912." (Villarreal, 1991)

Ratzlaff purchased a quarter section of land in Marion County in 1889, and farmed this until 1895, when he sold the property and purchased a three-quarter section in Harvey County, six miles east and three miles south of Buhler. Ratzlaff and his descendants farmed this land until 1988, when it was sold.

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Heinrich and Margaretha reared seven children in America: Henry, Peter, Jacob, John, Herman, Margaret, and Anna. Heinrich was a deacon in the Mennonite Brethren Church in Buhler. His sons, Herman and Jacob, worked at the Buhler Mill and Elevator Company.

After Heinrich retired and moved to Buhler, his son John continued to operate the Harvey County farm until 1947 or 1948. Herman F. Ratzlaff, the youngest son, worked in the mill and moved with his parents to Buhler. Herman lived in the house from 1912 until his death in 1974. He brought his bride, Minnie Seachris, to live with the family in 1935. Herman purchased the house from his siblings in 1946. Lovenia Ratzlaff Villarreal, Herman and Minnie's only child, inherited the house after her mother's death in 1990. Lovenia is in the process of restoring and furnishing the house to reflect the 1900 period in Buhler.

The Wall-Ratzlaff House is architecturally significant as a vernacular interpretation of the Colonial Revival and Folk Victorian styles. The house is characterized by its truncated hipped roof that is broken by projecting gables. These gables give the house its Colonial Revival connection through the cornice returns that distinguish them and the fanlights that pierce each face. However, each gable is sheathed with fishscale shingling, which is a hallmark of Victorian design. The house is classified as an example of the Folk Victorian because it is a vernacular integration of Victorian approaches to house design. Large, wooden scrolled brackets support the wide eaves. A one story porch spans the eastern elevation, large scrolled wooden brackets support the porch's eaves; narrow, turned columns support the porch's roof. The center hall floorplan is directly influenced by the Colonial Revival style, as is much of the interior woodwork. The Ratzlaff House stands as a stylistic derivative and in that aspect represents part of the architectural history of Kansas and gains its architectural significance from that representation.

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Heibert, Rhonda. A Centennial History of Buhler, Kansas. (Newton, KS: Mennonite Press, 1988).

Regier, Louis R. and Harold M. "The Buhler Mill and Elevator Company," Mennonite Life, V. VIII, No. 2 (April, 1953).

Villarreal, Lovenia Ratzlaff. Letter to Martha Hagedorn-Krass, 7 December 1988.

Villareal, Louvenia Ratzlaff. Letter to Martha Hagedorn-Krass, 2 October 1989.

Villarreal, Lovenia Ratzlaff. "Ratzlaff House." (November, 1991).