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National Register of Historic Places  
Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

[ X ] New Submission      [ ] Amended Submission

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

Attached Dwellings of Omaha, Nebraska from 1880-1962

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

- Community Planning and the Development of Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962
- The Influence of Ethnic Heritage on Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962
- The Economics of Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962
- Architecture of Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962

**C. Form Prepared by**

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**D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register Criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature and title of certifying official

03-10-2014  
Date

Nebraska State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper

04-30-2014  
Date of Action

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## Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

	<b>Page Numbers</b>
<b>E. Statement of Historic Contexts</b> (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)	<b>1-35</b>
<b>F. Associated Property Types</b> (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)	<b>36-48</b>
<b>G. Geographical Data</b>	<b>49-49</b>
<b>H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods</b> (Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)	<b>50-52</b>
<b>I. Major Bibliographical References</b> (List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)	<b>53-55</b>

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for application 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. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 1

**E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS:**

**Introduction:**

All of the resources included in this study fall under the umbrella of Multiple Dwelling building type. This group of buildings forms a distinct subset however, due to the buildings' size and scale, and the economic forces and transportation patterns which created them. The buildings included in this study were constructed in Omaha before 1962 with the intention of being long-term, owner occupied multi-family dwellings.

Because definitions change over time and vary from place to place, it is important to clarify what is meant throughout this paper when various terms are used. The terms "row house", "duplex", "condominium", "twin house", etc. conjure specific images in the minds of readers. To avoid influencing the reader a neutral term was sought to cover those instances where all were referred to. Therefore, within this paper they are collectively referred to as attached dwellings.

An attached dwelling is defined as a one to three story single family dwelling that is joined to another by a party wall and which does not have another dwelling above or below it. On a Sanborn map, attached dwellings are identified by a series of boxes, each with a "D" in it, or a "D" with a number after it, where "D" on the Sanborn maps stands for dwelling. Plans for each unit may mirror one another or be unique. An attached dwelling may also be known as any of the types below.

A semi-detached dwelling is defined as a 2-unit row house or a duplex. Most often the plans for each unit form a mirror image of one another. The size of this type of building makes it unique. Furthermore, its history is tied to the development of transportation. It may also be called a mirror house, twin house, duplex or two-unit row house.

A row house is defined as a one to three story single family dwelling of simple rectangular massing that is joined to another by a party wall, which does not have another dwelling above or below it and is commonly sheltered by a flat roof concealed by a parapet. It appears as a series of units side-by-side along a street. Its most distinct feature is that additional units could easily be added onto this structure and not affect the overall appearance. The history of this type is tied to the growth of urban centers. A row house may also be known as a townhouse.

A duplex is defined as a one to three story two family dwelling of simple rectangular massing where each family's dwelling is separated vertically by a party wall. The two units are commonly sheltered by a hip roof, giving the appearance of a single family dwelling. A duplex may also be known as a mirror house, twin house or double house.

A condominium is defined as an individually owned set of rooms with-in a larger structure separated from other sets by party walls. Unlike row houses, a condominium unit cannot be easily separated from its adjacent units. From the exterior it may appear as a type of apartment building, but its ownership structure leaves it more often associated with attached dwellings.

In Omaha, over 1,600 attached dwellings were constructed between 1880 and 1962. Of these, almost 900 still exist today. They represent a unique account of how attached dwelling building types evolved in Midwestern cities, in congruence with city development.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section E Page 2**

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The development of attached dwellings in Omaha is best understood when viewed as a set of themes. They are generally significant in one of four areas:

1. Community Planning and Development
2. Ethnic heritage
3. Economics
4. Architecture

The following text will further discuss each of these historic contexts at both a National and Local level. Due to their nature, these themes have overlapping chronologies and geographies.

**Table of Contents for Historic Contexts:**

General Introduction to Historic Contexts

Community Planning and the Development of Attached Dwellings, 1880-1962

Introduction

Definitions

Precedents for Attached Dwelling Types, 1700-1850

Attached Dwellings in The Walkable City and the First Suburbs, 1850-1930

The Effects of the Automobile on Attached Dwellings, 1900-1940

The Effects of the Great Depression and WWII on Attached Dwellings, 1930-1945

Attached Dwellings after WWII, 1946-1962

Conclusion

Ethnic Heritage as Illustrated in Attached Dwellings, 1860-1962

Introduction

Mass Migration 1860-1920

Internal Migration 1920-1955

Humanitarian Migration

Conclusion

The Economics of Attached Dwellings, 1850-1960

The Architecture of Attached Dwellings, 1850-1960

Architectural Styles

Prominent Architects, Developers and Contractors Of Attached Dwellings, 1860-1962

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 3

**COMMUNITY PLANNING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ATTACHED DWELLINGS, 1880-1962**

**Introduction**

In Omaha, attached dwellings have a history of development reaching back to the population explosion of the 1880s. From that time on, the local geography, streetcar lines, and automobiles have influenced their footprint, appearance and placement within the city. Their development is a history grounded in styles, building techniques and social norms brought by immigrants from the Eastern United States as they moved west and brought by European immigrants as they settled this country. Over the years it has been influenced by many national trends in community planning, immigration, economics and architecture. Today, this rich history is embodied in buildings referred to as row houses, duplexes, town homes and condominiums.

**Precedents for Attached Dwelling Types, 1700-1850**

Attached Dwellings Nationally in the 1700s

Attached dwellings were some of the earliest residential building types in America. Colonists brought the tradition of row house construction with them from England to America. "Archeological evidence suggests some were built in colonial Virginia at Jamestown and pictorial evidence suggests they existed in early-to-mid-eighteenth-century Boston and Philadelphia."<sup>1</sup> Row houses were a natural choice during this period due to the residents' familiarity with their construction techniques and comfort with living in them. Subconsciously, the row houses evoked their past and provided something familiar in the new world.

It was not until the 1790s that high-style row houses were constructed in the United States. Early examples include Tontine Crescent, Boston, MA; Norris Row, Philadelphia, PA; and Wheat Row, Washington, D.C. (NRHP – 1973).<sup>2</sup> Constructed in a variety of architectural styles popular at the time these buildings indicate the growing stability and wealth of Eastern towns and cities. Although once common, relatively few examples are extant due to urban renewal.<sup>3</sup>

Semi-detached houses may have also come from England. Certainly by the late 1600s they were a known building type there. They may have been the result of housing two generations of the same family, of wealthy rural landowners providing tasteful yet economical housing for laborers, of developers speculating in new forms of urban development or as out-of-town residences for the wealthy.<sup>4</sup> In any case, they remained an unusual residential building type until the advent of the Industrial Revolution.

Attached Dwellings Nationally in the early 1800s

As America grew, most early towns were laid out with narrow lots on which row houses became a standard house form. "Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and into the early twentieth, row houses were built in cities and towns across the United States."<sup>5</sup> Due to cost, these were originally constructed of wood, but as density rose and fires became prevalent, construction switched to brick or masonry.<sup>6</sup>

On the exterior, row houses of this period appeared fairly homogeneous, while on the interior uses varied between the wealthy and working classes.<sup>7</sup> Behind the Federal and Georgian facades, wealthy owners organized their living spaces similarly in row houses and single family dwellings.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Belfoure and Hayward, *The Baltimore Rowhouse*, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Belfoure and Hayward, *The Baltimore Rowhouse*, 16-17.

<sup>3</sup> "The Little House That Could: Federal Rowhouses in New York," *Rowhouse Magazine*, Featured Houses, May 2009. <[http://www.rowhouse-magazine.com/featuredHomes/featuredStyle\\_fedRowhouseNY.html](http://www.rowhouse-magazine.com/featuredHomes/featuredStyle_fedRowhouseNY.html)>

<sup>4</sup> The English Semi-detached house, 26, 27, 30 and 32.

<sup>5</sup> *Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats*, p. 175.

<sup>6</sup> *Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats*, p. 186.

<sup>7</sup> *Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats*, p. 188.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 4

"The typical row house of the period worked on a basic plan. Row houses were two rooms deep, which allowed for every room to have windows and proper ventilation. Behind the house would be a garden and an additional structure. The first floor had public rooms, usually two parlors that could be either separated with doors or opened for more space. The family's bedrooms and private areas were on the second floor and the third floor, or attic, was for the household help. The parlors would be more elaborately decorated since that is where people entertained. The rest of the house was usually more modest. The first floor was raised above street level to allow for the basement to have small windows. Putting the kitchen and dining room in the basement kept kitchen smoke and smells from permeating the entire house. The backyard garden was accessible from the kitchen, very useful in a time before the supermarket."<sup>9</sup>

In working class row houses, the interior uses varied widely. In many, the side hall made it easy to let rooms to boarders.<sup>10</sup> In others, the lack of zoning laws during this period meant that there was no separation between commercial and residential areas; the first story was often a business and the proprietor lived above the shop.<sup>11</sup> As the economic situation of the working class owners varied, the front of the building could be easily altered since floors were generally constructed of joists that spanned from sidewall to sidewall.<sup>12</sup> The same building could be a business with the Owner's residence above one decade, a single family residence the next and a boarding house the third.<sup>13</sup>

**Attached Dwellings in the Walkable City and the First Suburbs, 1850-1930**

Attached Dwellings Nationally in the late 1800s; the Walkable City and the First Suburbs

As attached dwellings developed during the late 1800s, both the prosperity of the Victorian Era and mass production affected their development; "...the homes of urban families became less consistent, reflecting growing social stratification."<sup>14</sup> By the 1860s, Victorian design standards for all middle and upper-class homes had grown substantially. Pattern books popularized acceptable plans and architectural styles.<sup>15</sup> In addition to twin parlors, formal dining rooms, and entrance halls, a separate bedroom was now required for each child.<sup>16</sup>

To meet these requirements, row houses became deeper and taller.<sup>17</sup> To ensure light into the deeper structures, footprints of the buildings became more complicated, allowing light wells or side yards.<sup>18</sup> Front facades also became individualized; some in carefully designed and coordinated rows and others in incongruous styles as each owner asserted his ability to express his own taste.<sup>19</sup> Machines allowed cornice brackets, frieze panels, balconies, window hoods and other decorative elements to be mass produced for easy installation on any project.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 188.

<sup>9</sup> "The Little House That Could: Federal Rowhouses in New York," *Rowhouse Magazine*, Featured Houses, May 2009. <[http://www.rowhouse-magazine.com/featuredHomes/featuredStyle\\_fedRowhouseNY.html](http://www.rowhouse-magazine.com/featuredHomes/featuredStyle_fedRowhouseNY.html)>

<sup>10</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 188.

<sup>11</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 188.

<sup>12</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 189.

<sup>13</sup> See New York examples from this era at "The Federal Era Rowhouse in Lower Manhattan," May 2009. <<http://www.gvshp.org/13federals.pdf>>

<sup>14</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 189.

<sup>15</sup> The Baltimore Rowhouse, p. 55.

<sup>16</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 190-191.

<sup>17</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 191.

<sup>18</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 192.

<sup>19</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 191.

<sup>20</sup> The Baltimore Rowhouse, p. 54-55.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 5

Furthermore, during this same period in towns on the Eastern coast, trains began to connect outlying villages with larger cities. This produced a social stratification where the inner cities were left to the working class, the villages became commuter suburbs for the new middle class and the elite lived on estates surrounding the cities. In these commuter suburbs, duplexes became common. "In less crowded situations where land is not as expensive, semi-detached houses have a separate tradition as modest homes built to economize on construction costs rather than land."<sup>21</sup> Chestnut Hill and Powelton (both listed in the NRHP), both now suburbs of Philadelphia, exemplify the growing trend of semi-detached housing during this period.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the twin house or double house, where one family lived on one side of a party wall and a second, unrelated family lived in the mirror image on the other became an established residential dwelling type in suburban areas of many Eastern cities.

Omaha's Attached Dwellings, 1854-1900; the Walkable City

Omaha was founded in 1854 as row houses and semi-detached dwellings were becoming popular in Eastern cities and towns. In the early years, between Omaha's founding and the beginning of its population boom in 1880, geography was the most influential physical factor on the overall location attached dwellings, while its frontier nature dictated the size and finish of the structures. As a riverside town, the topography on this side of the river was divided into three terraces; a low, flat terrace directly along the river that was prone to spring floods, and two upper terraces that were out of the floodplain, but difficult to reach over the steep banks that ran parallel to the river. Crossing these terraces were two creeks that bordered the new town on the North and South. As a result Omaha's early development centered on the second terrace between the creeks and created a very walkable town, stretching approximately 10 blocks north and south, and 8 blocks east and west.

It is unclear exactly when construction of attached and semi-detached dwellings began in Omaha. Certainly by the late 1880s, they were a common building type, helping to address the needs of a burgeoning population. During the 1880s, the population of Omaha exploded, growing 360% in a single decade yet the infant streetcar system begun in 1869 did not reach beyond the city until 1890.<sup>23</sup> Together, these factors kept most residents concentrated into a walkable area. Furthermore, with no zoning laws to regulate their location, the earliest attached and semi-detached dwellings were spread throughout the young city like most other residential building types, although slight concentrations could be seen at the Northern, Eastern and Southern edges of the downtown area.<sup>24</sup> Their final size, shape and location were influenced more by the owner's interest in speculative housing than any other factor.

Although no building permits exist, educated judgments about the type of attached dwellings that were constructed in Omaha between 1854 (its founding) and 1887 (the city's first Sanborn Map) can be made based on the footprints illustrated on the 1887 Sanborn Maps. Of the 29 attached dwellings found in the 1887 Sanborns, one is extant; 1308-1310 Center Street, a one-and-one half story duplex whose size would have made it slightly unusual at the time it was constructed.<sup>25</sup> In comparison, the majority of the buildings shown on the 1887 Sanborn Maps (86%) were semi-detached dwellings which were commonly either one or two-story. The

<sup>21</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 200.

<sup>22</sup> Powelton Village Philadelphia Homepage, May 2009. <<http://www.poweltonvillage.org/significance.html>> and David R. Contosta, *Suburb in the City*, p. 63.

<sup>23</sup> In 1867 the Omaha Horse Railway Company was granted a 50-year franchise and began planning the city's first streetcar lines. By 1870, the streetcar zigzagged south and east from the corner of 21st and Cuming to the corner of 9th and Jones. Extensions in 1872-76 stretched the streetcar line north to 18th and Ohio, and south to 9th and Leavenworth. By 1889 the streetcar lines covered most of the major Omaha streets. From Richard Orr, *O&CB Streetcars of Omaha and Council Bluffs*, Omaha, NE: Richard Orr, 1996.

<sup>24</sup> See Figures 10-12 in Additional Documentation section.

<sup>25</sup> This building is currently a single family residence.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 6

remainder of the attached dwellings shown on the Sanborn Map (14%) were row houses, of which none was longer than three units. Combined, these indicate a tendency towards smaller, more modest buildings. Moreover, they illustrate a city where the average middle class residential buildings were constructed with an eye to economizing on construction cost.

Omaha's Attached Dwellings, 1890-1930; the First Suburbs

By the late 1880s, Omaha was starting to reach out to near-by villages, creating its first commuter suburbs linked to the center city by streetcar lines. In 1890, streetcar lines stretched through Omaha in all directions and connected the city to Dundee, South Omaha, Benson; reaching almost as far north as Fort Omaha at 30<sup>th</sup> and Sorenson Streets. During the 1890s and early 1900s, as streetcar schedules became more frequent, these villages at the end of popular routes and the streets which connected them to the downtown businesses began to develop from high-end single family residences to a mix of single family and multi-family residential types.

On the 1890 Sanborns, only portions of South Omaha are shown. Despite this it is possible to see how much the city had changed in just three short years. Of the 291 attached dwellings found in the 1890 Sanborns, 19 are extant. Some of the increase in attached dwellings shown on the maps is due to the fact that the Sanborn covered more area in 1890 than in 1887, but it is also due to substantial growth within the area already mapped.<sup>26</sup> Of the 29 buildings shown on the 1887 Sanborn, the majority (90%) survived this flurry of construction. The bulk of the attached dwellings at this time were two story (65%), indicating that attached dwellings were getting larger as well as more numerous. Although the majority of attached dwellings were still semi-detached dwellings (72%), a growing number were row houses with more than three units per row (9%). At the extreme, there was one 10 unit row house. The fact that almost every corner of the city had at least one attached dwelling unit illustrates how important the attached dwelling property type was to early Omaha. However, the concentration of attached dwellings had already shifted away from the railroad tracks on the Eastern side of town to the western edge of the downtown area; away from a walkable city to one interconnected by streetcar suburbs.<sup>27</sup>

Between 1890 and 1918 streetcars continued to strengthen the connection between Omaha and the surrounding towns. Between 1915 and 1917, the city of Omaha annexed four adjacent towns; Dundee, Florence, Benson and South Omaha which became commuter suburbs. Each is still known today as a distinct neighborhood within the now larger city.<sup>28</sup>

Annexation of Dundee, Florence, Benson and South Omaha is represented both in the rise of attached dwellings between the original site of Omaha and these areas, and in the rise in attached dwellings within each of these areas as they became popular suburbs of Omaha, connected to the downtown by streetcars

<sup>26</sup> See Figures 10-12 in Additional Documentation section.

<sup>27</sup> See Figures 10-12 in Additional Documentation section.

<sup>28</sup> Dundee was founded in 1880. Centered at 50<sup>th</sup> and Dodge, it began as a strictly residential neighborhood until the tornado of 1913 made it clear that having a neighborhood grocery store and other conveniences near-by would be an asset to the community. Although annexation was originally proposed in 1915, it was not completed until 1917 due to neighborhood resistance. Florence was originally the site of the Mormon Winter Quarters during the winter of 1846 as they moved from Illinois to Utah. Abandoned the following spring, the ghost town quickly revived and in 1852 became known as the site of the "Golden Gate" for the number of gold rushers who came across the Missouri on the North Mormon Ferry. As railroads were being laid, it was Omaha and not Florence who won the lobbying effort and Florence stagnated. It was annexed by Omaha in 1917 as part of Omaha's natural expansion along the river to the north. Benson, centered at 60<sup>th</sup> and Maple, was founded in 1887 by Erastus Benson, an investor, philanthropist and land speculator who bought the property from Edward Creighton. It was annexed by Omaha in 1917. South Omaha was established in 1884 by a land syndicate as a meat packing center. Growing quickly, by 1886 it was considered a city of the second class with a population of 1,500. By 1890, the city had grown exponentially – to 8,000 residents and was well established as a meat packing center.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section E Page 7**

and major streets.<sup>29</sup> Of these annexations, Dundee (West Omaha) and South Omaha are shown on the 1918 Sanborn Maps of Omaha. For buildings with known construction dates in West and South Omaha shown on the 1918 Sanborn maps, 70% (35 out of 50) of those shown on the West Omaha map and 100% (6 out of 6) of those shown on the South Omaha map were constructed before annexation.<sup>30</sup> Those in South Omaha were generally constructed between 1880 and 1890, while those in West Omaha were constructed between 1904 and annexation. This generally coincides with each area's founding and early treatment as suburbs of Omaha. Connecting the center of Omaha and each of the new suburbs, concentrations of attached dwellings can also be seen along 16<sup>th</sup> between Paul and Lake Streets, along Farnam between 20<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> Streets South and along South 24<sup>th</sup> Streets between "O" and "U" Streets illustrating the impact the streetcar had on spreading out the population and preventing a dense urban core like many Eastern cities.

Between 1890 and 1918, the number of attached dwellings almost doubled in Omaha. Of the 545 attached dwellings found in the 1918 Sanborn maps 110 are extant today. 92% of those shown on the 1890 Sanborn map survived and were illustrated on the 1918 map, indicating that most of the new growth was in-fill. Two-story semi-detached dwellings remained the most common type, while a steady proportion of attached dwellings continued to be row houses, with groupings four, five and six units long gaining in popularity.

Also clear in the 1918 Sanborn maps is the adaptable nature of attached dwellings in Omaha. For the first time, a substantial number of buildings previously noted as attached dwellings changed uses. Five units originally constructed as attached dwellings became boarding houses – including one which became a saloon and female boarding house (non-extant). Another three units were converted to single family dwellings, and one was used as a hospital.

**The Effects of the Automobile on Attached Dwellings, 1900-1940**

*Attached Dwellings Nationally, 1900-1940; the effects of the Automobile*

Across the United States, after 1900, as developers found apartments to be a more lucrative investment in urban centers characterized by high land values, row houses began moving to the outskirts of cities.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, they also began to reflect many design trends that were at work in single family homes of the period. Emphases on sunlight and air, and modern amenities meant that the newest buildings were set back from the street to allow for a front garden and a front porch, and the interior had electrical wiring and indoor plumbing.<sup>32</sup> At this same time, rather than individual lot development, there was a growing trend toward larger developments; some by entrepreneurs for sale or rent, and some by the federal government to house workers during WWI. Influenced by the Garden City Movement, larger developments began to include a variety of open spaces and formal arrangements.<sup>33</sup>

Also between 1900 and 1940, designers began trying to accommodate automobile storage in attached dwellings. In previously developed areas, most automobiles were parked on the street in front or in what little back yard there may have been.<sup>34</sup> In newer developments, driveways were often provided in front of dwellings for off-street parking, which took so many curb cuts that little garden space was left in front and on-

<sup>29</sup> See Figures 13-16 in Additional Documentation section.

<sup>30</sup> Construction dates were gathered for all extant buildings from the city assessor's records.

<sup>31</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 192.

<sup>32</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 193.

<sup>33</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 194.

<sup>34</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 196.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 8

street parking was eliminated.<sup>35</sup> The cleanest solution became to raise the main floor and park the automobile under the attached dwelling, predating the attached garage on single family homes by several decades.<sup>36</sup>

In Eastern cities where long row houses had been a common construction type, semi-detached houses became popular with developers in the 1910s and 1920s as an alternate way to deal with the automobile.<sup>37</sup> The semi-detached dwellings allowed driveways to be located on one side of the building and the front yard to be preserved.<sup>38</sup> A few looked like traditional masonry row houses, simply pulled apart. Most however were duplexes - completely framed and looking more like single family homes with the exception of two front doors.

During the 1920s there was also a growing cultural emphasis on single family homes. Drawing on eighteenth-century Jeffersonian agrarianism and Andrew Jackson Downing's house designs which credited the single family dwelling with American individualism, Republicanism and Christian domestic morality, government sponsored programs such as the "Own Your Own Home" campaign, the Better Homes in America Movement, the Architects' Small House Service Bureau, and the Home Modernization Bureau encouraged the ideal of personal ownership in a single family dwelling.<sup>39</sup> This meant that of the attached dwelling types, duplexes became especially appealing. They presented the image of a single family dwelling while maintaining affordability at a time when bank loans were still difficult for individuals to obtain.

Omaha's Attached Dwellings, 1900-1940; the effects of the Automobile

During this same period, the growing popularity of the automobile and the move to the suburbs was also seen in Omaha. Locally, the first automobile dealerships were listed in the 1904 Omaha city directory. By 1910, this number had grown to 31; and by 1920, there were 124 dealers, manufacturers and repair garages listed in Omaha. This immense growth spurt was due in part to automobile mass production, making the automobile affordable for a middle class family, and the promotion of the freedom the automobile provided.

Because Omaha's early streetcar system did so much to spread the city out, the automobile did not have a dramatic effect on the overall distribution of attached dwellings in Omaha. Rather, it compounded what the streetcar had begun, encouraging the development of attached dwellings in the border area between Omaha's downtown and the growing suburbs.<sup>40</sup>

Since building permits no longer exist and the Sanborn maps of Omaha did not have a symbol for automobile storage or garages until the 1934 series, little is known of when the first garages began to appear in conjunction with attached dwellings in Omaha. Certainly many of the outbuildings shown on the 1918 maps are too small to have stored an automobile, and some of the attached dwellings did not have outbuildings at all. Clearly by the 1930s however, as automobiles and automobile ownership became more common garages began to develop to serve attached dwellings.<sup>41</sup>

In some cases garages were placed at the back of the lot and in others they were attached to the structure; the attachments varied from beside, to under and between. Freestanding garages began showing up frequently with attached dwellings on the 1934 Sanborn maps and were the most common automobile storage

<sup>35</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 197.

<sup>36</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 197.

<sup>37</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 200.

<sup>38</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 200.

<sup>39</sup> Janet Hutchison, "Shaping and Enhancing Consumption" in From tenements to Taylor Homes, p. 81-83.

<sup>40</sup> See Figures 13-18 in Additional Documentation section.

<sup>41</sup> The 1934 Sanborn maps of Omaha only contain volumes 1 and 2, covering downtown Omaha, the near South and North Omaha.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 9

type from then on. Garages under attached dwellings are not illustrated on Sanborn maps. However, judging by extant examples, in the 1930s some attached dwellings in Omaha began experimenting with putting the automobile under the attached dwelling. In the early years, it was used by those where the topography made sense; where yards were above street grade and carving out a space for the automobile under the attached dwelling still allowed the dwelling to maintain its traditional relationship to the surrounding yard. Later, attached dwellings with garages underneath were used without consideration for the surrounding grade, resulting in units perched atop garages with long flights of stairs to the front door in the middle of a flat yard.

**The Effects of the Great Depression and WWII on Attached Dwellings, 1930-1945**

Attached Dwellings Nationally During the Great Depression and WWII, 1930-1945

Nationally, during the Great Depression and WWII the construction of residential units was due more to government programs than private developers. Banks simply would not loan money to individuals for home construction or small developments and most individuals did not have the capital themselves to invest in real estate ventures. Although some new attached dwelling developments were constructed with FHA loans, FHA loan guidelines favored single-family homes, "a preference that only became stricter in the late 1930s."<sup>42</sup>

Omaha's Attached Dwellings During the Great Depression and WWII, 1930-1945

In Omaha, after the incredible attached dwelling boom of the 1920s, construction of attached dwellings plummeted. Both extant examples and data gathered in a previously unpublished survey of row house building permit data indicate that there was some construction activity in Omaha, including attached dwellings, but that in general building activity was at its lowest since the depression of the 1890s. The low numbers did not stem creativity however, as previously described by the experiments with garage placement under the attached dwellings and illustrated by the use of new architectural styles such as Art Deco.<sup>43</sup>

During this period, the continued emphasis on the ideal of the single family home and the trend for government housing projects to include only apartment building complexes also became very apparent. From extant examples, it appears that construction of row houses and semi-detached dwellings with the appearance of row houses dropped to almost nothing between 1930 and 1945. It then went completely dormant through the end of this study, with no known examples of row houses, or row house-like semi-detached dwellings extant.

**Attached Dwellings After WWII, 1946-1962**

Attached Dwellings Nationally After WWII, 1946-1960

After WWII, the emphasis of American society and government sponsored loan programs on single family homes meant that at a national level the construction of all attached dwellings was cut back dramatically. "Between 1950 and 1970 their total number actually fell by 29 percent; far more were demolished than built."<sup>44</sup> Instead automobiles and a growing highway system opened up new areas of inexpensive land for homebuilding, leading to acres of suburbia.

Omaha's Attached Dwellings After WWII, 1946-1962

In Omaha, judging by extant examples construction of duplexes saw a modest increase after WWII. Numbers of newly constructed attached dwellings were similar to the actual numbers of attached dwellings developed in the first two decades of the twentieth century, but were most likely a significantly smaller proportion of the overall building construction numbers. Between the 1918 and 1962 Sanborn Maps, duplexes continued to spread throughout the city. By 1962, the largest concentrations of attached dwellings had developed in North

<sup>42</sup> The Baltimore Row House, p. 157.

<sup>43</sup> A further description of architectural styles will be covered in the section on architecture later in this paper.

<sup>44</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 175.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

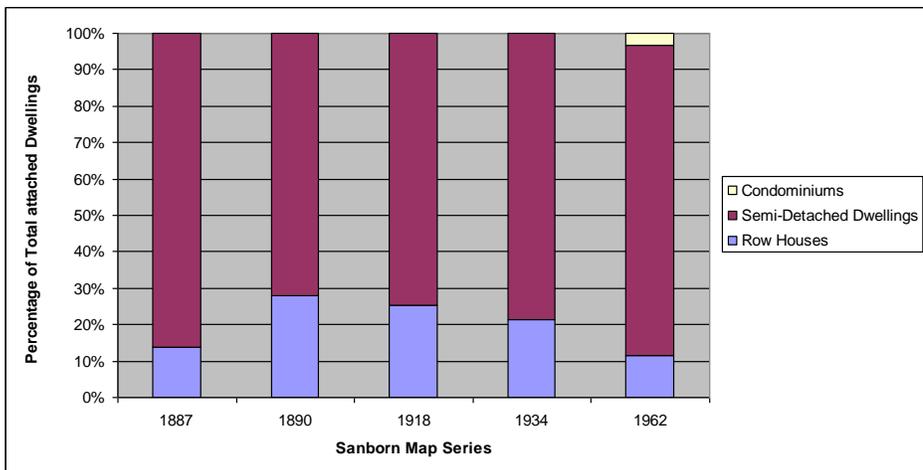
**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section E Page 10**

Omaha between 58<sup>th</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> streets, Wirt to Evans and in West Omaha between 42<sup>nd</sup> Street to 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Izard to Hamilton. In both Central and North Omaha, very few new attached dwellings were constructed between 1934 and 1962. Furthermore, many of the attached dwellings in Central and North Omaha were gone by 1962. Finally, South Omaha never developed heavy concentrations of attached dwellings like other parts of Omaha did. This may be due in part to the nature of the meat packing business where many people worked long, odd hours and maintaining a home was not possible. Instead, many lived at one of the numerous boarding houses or granny flats found in this section of the city.

The 1962 Sanborn also shows a rise in the number of one-story attached dwellings revealing that more modest and possibly ranch-style dwellings were being constructed. Additionally, 85% of the buildings shown on the Sanborn map were semi-detached dwellings, a percentage not seen since the 1887 Sanborn and a reminder of the disfavor of row houses during this period.



**Figure 1: Percentage of Various Types of Attached Dwellings shown on the Omaha Sanborn Maps**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 11

**The Development of Condominiums, 1950-1968**

*The Development of Condominiums Nationally, 1946-1960*

New on the 1962 Omaha Sanborn map were condominiums. Although their appearance is closely tied to apartment buildings and there were some experiments with co-operative home ownership in apartment buildings in New York in 1890, the ownership structure of condominiums is more closely related to that of row houses and has a history of development that stems from Latin America. Nationally, the idea of condominiums was generally set aside after 1890 and they remained relatively rare until the 1960s. "In 1948, Puerto Rican proponents began to drive to get FHA insurance for condominium mortgages, and, in 1961, Sec. 234 was set up to accommodate such ownership."<sup>45</sup>

With that in place, most states began passing enabling legislation that permitted condominium ownership, title guarantee and separate mortgaging. In 1967, Samuel Paul reported that, "this form of ownership is expected to account for a growing share of housing."<sup>46</sup> Early condominium projects were most often located in Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Florida, and California.

*The Development of Condominiums in Omaha, 1946-1960*

First constructed in Omaha in the early 1950s, condominiums represented 3% of the attached dwellings shown on the 1962 Sanborn maps. 20% of them were developed in formal courtyard arrangements, with 6 and 12 unit arrangements being the most common. Several utilized exterior corridors, while most maintained more traditional interior corridors. Early condominiums were scattered through Western Omaha, although later development became concentrated between 42<sup>nd</sup> street to 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Izard to Hamilton, contributing to the popularity of this location for attached dwellings as noted earlier.

**Attached Dwellings in Omaha Today**

Between 1962 and today as a result of housing developments and the development of the national Interstate Highway System in the late 1960s, large sections of Omaha's older neighborhoods were wiped out, creating barriers in historic neighborhoods and between the downtown area and its outer suburbs.<sup>47</sup> Significant numbers of attached dwellings were removed in pockets of Central Omaha and throughout North Omaha. In contrast, the newer areas such as Northwest Omaha remained steady, protected by their location further away from the Interstate Highway system and their relatively young age.

**Conclusion**

Of just over 1,600 attached dwellings constructed in Omaha between 1880 and 1962, 67% (roughly 880) are extant today, including 70% of all semi-detached dwellings constructed in Omaha, 45% of all row houses and 86% of all condominiums. Their ever expanding growth throughout Omaha and adaptation to its changing patterns of community development illustrates the continuous popularity of this housing type here in the Midwest. Altogether, they are a significant dwelling type in Omaha and are physical evidence of Omaha's transition from a walkable frontier town, to a prosperous, growing suburban city.

<sup>45</sup> Paul, Apartments their design and development, p. 42.

<sup>46</sup> Paul, Apartments their design and development, p. 42.

<sup>47</sup> See Figure 3 on page E18 and Figures 19-28 in Additional Documentation section.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 12

**ETHNIC HERITAGE AS ILLUSTRATED IN ATTACHED DWELLINGS 1860-1962**

**Introduction**

America has a rich history of ethnic diversity. Groups moved into the country from all directions, bringing with them a multitude of living patterns and building traditions. Immigration in the United States can be broken into five major periods:

1. Initial European settlement 1763-1815
2. Immigration and expansion 1815-1860
3. Mass migration 1860-1920
4. Internal migration 1920-1955
5. Post WWII migration 1950-1995.<sup>48 49</sup>

Since this study focuses on the development of attached dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska which did not become a state until 1867, discussions of the periods of initial European settlement 1763-1815 and immigration and expansion 1815-1860 will be omitted. Furthermore, due to the fluid nature of migrations, local components often start earlier or later than the larger national trend owing to a variety of local and regional influences.

Traditionally, ethnic groups settled first within distinct neighborhoods before dispersing into the larger population. In *The Settling of North America*, Helen Tanner refers to this as sequential migration and states that "at the turn of the century, 94 percent of migrants arriving in the U.S. joined family or friends."<sup>50</sup> In larger cities, this led to the formation of ethnic enclaves, commonly referred to as "Chinatown", "Little Italy", etc, while in rural areas the majority of a town's population may have been of a particular ethnic background, such as Dannebrog, Nebraska, founded by Danish settlers.

**U.S. Mass Migration 1860-1920**

Immigration from Europe was responsible for the majority of settlement in North America between 1860 and 1920. A growing European population faced increasingly scarce land resources. Additional conditions giving people reason to move elsewhere included famine, warfare, religious persecution and industrialization which took jobs from those who had previously produced goods in their homes. America offered job opportunities for skilled and unskilled labor and land on which to settle. Many did not immigrate permanently however. Between 30% and 40% of immigrants during this period returned to their native country after earning enough money to pay off debts back home.<sup>51</sup>

During the first half of this period, most immigrants came from Northern Europe, while during the second half they came from Eastern, Central and Southern Europe. Sizable groups included the Germans, Scandinavians, Jews and Italians. Germans comprised the largest immigrant group during the mass migration period and settled widely across the nation. Most settled in the Great Lakes States and within a triangle from Milwaukee, Wisconsin; St. Louis, Missouri; and Cincinnati, Ohio. They concentrated in cities such as Philadelphia, New York, Chicago and New Orleans, as well as frontier areas such as the Dakotas and central Texas.<sup>52</sup> The Germans

<sup>48</sup> *The Settling of North America*, p. 9.

<sup>49</sup> Within these five periods three major waves of immigration occurred; 7.5 million immigrants between 1820 and 1870, 23.5 million people from 1881-1920, and 18 million between 1965 and 1995 after quotas based on national origin were abolished. See The Center for Immigration Studies, "Three Decades of Mass Immigration: The Legacy of the 1965 Immigration Act," September 1995, accessed May 2009. <<http://www.cis.org/articles/1995/back395.html>>

<sup>50</sup> *The Settling of North America*, p. 106.

<sup>51</sup> The Center for Immigration Studies, "Three Decades of Mass Immigration: The Legacy of the 1965 Immigration Act," September 1995, accessed May 2009. <<http://www.cis.org/articles/1995/back395.html>> and *The Settling of North America*, p. 106.

<sup>52</sup> *Destination America*, p. 149.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 13

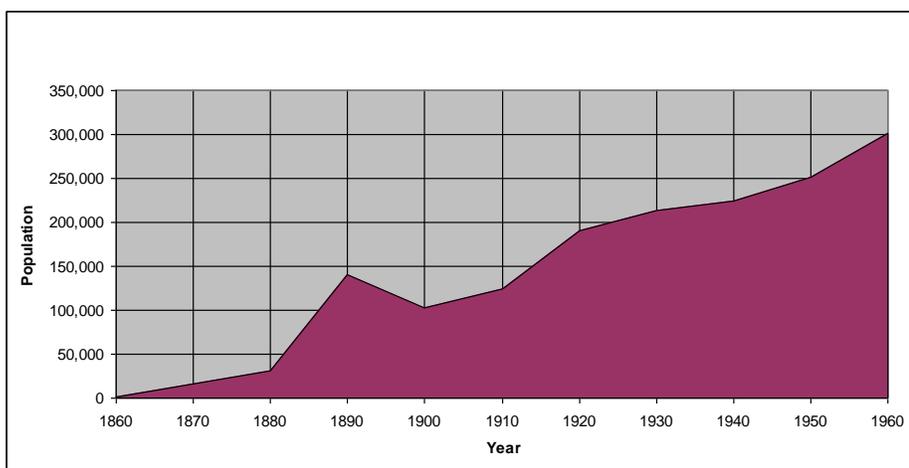
were followed in population by those of Scandinavian decent. Between 1880 and 1890 Scandinavian immigration soared as many young adults immigrated to work in cities in the Midwest as maidservants, artisans and laborers.<sup>53</sup> After Russia began anti-Jewish programs in 1882, whole families of Russian Jews began immigrating to the U.S. They were joined at this time by other Central and Eastern European ethnic groups. People of these ethnic groups brought unskilled labor. Most settled in cities such as Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago and Philadelphia.<sup>54</sup> Between 1900 and 1910 two million Italians immigrated to the U.S. Most were single men; approximately half of whom moved back after several years. In the Midwest, they made up about half of the railroad work force.<sup>55</sup>

A smaller, but still substantial segment of immigrants at this time were contract laborers from Asia. When the enslavement of African people ended, shiploads of Asians were brought to the Americas to work on the railroads. Within the U.S. most settled in California and Washington as well as other West Coast and Rocky Mountain states.<sup>56</sup>

The advent of WWI triggered restrictions on immigration in 1917, 1921 and 1924.<sup>57</sup> The limits were based on a percentage of the number of people from a particular country who were counted in the 1890 Federal Census. Since those from Asia, Central, Eastern and Southern Europe did not begin to come into this country in substantial numbers until after 1890, this effectively halted immigration for many of these ethnic groups.

**Omaha During the Mass Migration 1860-1920**

The effects of mass migration are most noticeable in Omaha from 1860 to 1920. The city grew at an unbelievable pace in its early years, doubling in size from 1870 to 1880, and more than quadrupling between 1880 and 1890. When the depression of the 1890s hit, Omaha was hit hard, losing almost one third of its population. It did attain that population again for another quarter-century.



**Figure 2: Omaha Population according to the U.S. Census 1860-1960**

<sup>53</sup> The Settling of North America, p. 118.

<sup>54</sup> The Settling of North America, p. 120 and Destination America, p. 83.

<sup>55</sup> The Settling of North America, p. 122.

<sup>56</sup> The Settling of North America, p. 104.

<sup>57</sup> "World Immigration: U.S. Immigration History," May 2009. <<http://www.visa2003.com/world-immigration/us-history.htm>>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 14

From 1860-1900 Omaha was home to a wide variety of immigrant populations. In addition to those recruited to work for the railroad and meat packing plants, jobbers and immigrants added to the city's diversity. Many immigrants who had planned to move further west could not or decided they did not want to travel on, causing Omaha's population to explode in the late nineteenth century.

As seen in an ethno-geographic study of Omaha's 1880 and 1900 censuses, some ethnic groups had a tendency to cluster in selected neighborhoods within the city. Analysis of the 1880 census data revealed that there were six major ethnic groups in Omaha; Germans, Irish, Swedish, English, Danish and Bohemian.<sup>58</sup> Germans were the largest ethnic group to settle in Nebraska and generally dispersed throughout Omaha. The strongest concentration of Germans in 1880 was between 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, Harney and Jones Streets, where German businesses, boarding houses and social venues could all be found.<sup>59</sup> The second largest ethnic group in Omaha was the Irish. They too settled in all parts of Omaha, but were found most commonly in an area along the western edge of the Union Pacific Shops and extended north along 16<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>60</sup> Swedish settlers were most likely to settle near 5<sup>th</sup> and William or 19<sup>th</sup> and Harney, but were also scattered throughout Omaha.<sup>61</sup> Czechs were the most concentrated of the six largest ethnic groups in Omaha in 1880. They clustered in three areas, one on William Street from 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> and extending North on 14<sup>th</sup> to Pacific, one at 3<sup>rd</sup> by the Burlington tracks, and one at 7<sup>th</sup> and Leavenworth. The English and Danish did not have strong ethnic enclaves in 1880 in Omaha.<sup>62</sup> Smaller ethnic groups at this time also had strong neighborhood concentrations of up to a block, such as the Italians, Hungarians and Chinese.<sup>63</sup>

By 1900, the ethno-geographic study of Omaha reported that there were two more significant ethnic groups; Canadians and Scots. The Germans had moved to the Southeast, concentrating in the areas of 4<sup>th</sup> and Cedar, 19<sup>th</sup> and Vinton, 16<sup>th</sup> and Kavan, 18<sup>th</sup> and Lincoln, and 27<sup>th</sup> and Arbor.<sup>64</sup> The Irish were fairly evenly distributed throughout the city, with the exception of the growth of their earlier enclave along the West side of the Union Pacific Shops and extending North along 16<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>65</sup> The Swedes were evenly spread through Omaha but had two small concentrations, one along S 21<sup>st</sup> between Dorcas and Bancroft, and one along Hamilton between 30<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> streets.<sup>66</sup> As in 1880 the Czechs were very concentrated into two large enclaves; one at 14<sup>th</sup> and William and the other at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Pine.<sup>67</sup> The first became the heart of the Czech enclave in Omaha and was known as Little Bohemia.<sup>68</sup> The Danish still had no strong enclaves, but several areas were considered more Danish, including 5<sup>th</sup> and William, 16<sup>th</sup> and D and between 24<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> and Cuming to Grant. Often, Danes and Swedes settled near one another.<sup>69</sup> Finally, although English, Scottish and Canadian ethnicities were well represented in Omaha, they tended to settle throughout the city and had no ethnic enclaves.<sup>70</sup>

Smaller groups had also developed their own strong enclaves by this time. Austrians tended to concentrate south of Center between 13<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.<sup>71</sup> Hungarians occupied that area between Center and Martha, and

<sup>58</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 63.

<sup>59</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 66.

<sup>60</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 69.

<sup>61</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 72.

<sup>62</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 75.

<sup>63</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 89.

<sup>64</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 113.

<sup>65</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 118.

<sup>66</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 122.

<sup>67</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 119.

<sup>68</sup> Harry B. Otis, *E Pluribus Omaha: Immigrants All* p. 163.

<sup>69</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 127.

<sup>70</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 130.

<sup>71</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 138.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 15

16<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Streets.<sup>72</sup> The Chinese enclave was located in the central business district at 13<sup>th</sup> and Dodge. Italian enclaves were centered at 10<sup>th</sup> and Davenport, and 20<sup>th</sup> and Pacific.<sup>73</sup> This corresponds to the early Calabresi area described in *The Italians of Omaha* which recorded such a history of flooding the group was moved to an area centered on 24<sup>th</sup> and Poppleton. This new area became known locally as Dago Hill.<sup>74</sup> Russians concentrated in three locations; along Dodge between 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, at 13<sup>th</sup> and Pacific, and at 24<sup>th</sup> and Martha.<sup>75</sup> Finally, the Poles had established a large neighborhood between Martha and Gold on S 27<sup>th</sup> Ave, and at 25<sup>th</sup> and Bancroft.<sup>76</sup>

The oldest Sanborn Map available for Omaha was completed in 1887. Overlaying the ethno-geographic study and the Sanborn Map of 1887 reveals that there were several areas which potentially contained physical evidence of the ethnic heritage of Omaha during this period. There were a number of attached dwellings that appear to have been tied to specific ethnic groups, including several in the area of Dodge and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets tied to the Irish enclave and several centered on William and 13<sup>th</sup> Street associated with the Czech enclave (all non-extant). A closer examination of the database may reveal more buildings which were outside of area mapped by the Sanborn. Further research on individual buildings within these neighborhoods would be necessary to determine if other examples exist.

In the first two decades of the twentieth century the meat packing companies routinely brought in migrants from other parts of the country to work in the plants and break strikes. This included a group of 200 Japanese in 1904 and numerous African Americans from the south.<sup>77</sup> Such business practices led to racial tensions between these new groups and the more established European immigrants, especially in the area of South Omaha where most of the meat packing activity was centered by this time.

Due perhaps to the long days required of the meat packing workers, their low wages or cultural values of the ethnic groups that found their homes in this area, attached dwellings were not common in the early years of South Omaha. Instead, boarding houses, hotels and so-called "Granny Flats", separate houses in the rear of a lot behind a larger front house were much more popular forms of housing in this area. It was not until after the Great Depression that a few attached dwellings developed in this area of town.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, the Greek population established an enclave in South Omaha centered on 26<sup>th</sup> and Q streets.<sup>78</sup> As was so common for South Omaha residents, much of the Greek population worked in the meat packing plants and on the railroad.<sup>79</sup>

From 1905 to 1914 there was a period of large scale immigration of Italians to Omaha as part of the mass migration to America described earlier.<sup>80</sup> The growth of local industry shifted smaller groups of Italians into areas where larger families were already well established, creating two enclaves; one in an area defined by

<sup>72</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 138.

<sup>73</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 142.

<sup>74</sup> *The Italians of Omaha*, p. 22.

<sup>75</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 146.

<sup>76</sup> An analysis of the changing spatial dimensions of ethnic neighborhoods in Omaha, NE, p. 146-147.

<sup>77</sup> 120 Japanese were recruited from the mines in Wyoming and Colorado to work in Omaha's meat packing plants. By 1910 there were 200 in Omaha, about half of whom worked for the Cudahy Packing Company. Most lived in boarding houses, typical of meat packing workers in South Omaha. See *E Pluribus Omaha; Immigrants All* by Harry B. Otis, p. 302.

<sup>78</sup> Wikipedia, "Greeks in Omaha Nebraska," May 2009. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greeks\\_in\\_Omaha,\\_Nebraska](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greeks_in_Omaha,_Nebraska)

<sup>79</sup> Harry B. Otis, *E Pluribus Omaha; Immigrants All* p. 154.

<sup>80</sup> *The Italians of Omaha*, p. 30.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 16

15<sup>th</sup> Street and the Omaha Belt Line RR to 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and Locust Street to Icard, and a second area commonly known as "Little Italy" roughly between the Missouri River and 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Leavenworth to Hickory.<sup>81 82</sup>

**U.S. Internal Migration 1920-1955**

In the aftermath of WWI, natural increase accounted for more population growth than immigration, even though people continued to immigrate to this country and fertility rates declined. The decline in immigration is accounted for by the national restrictions put into place on immigration in 1917, 1921 and 1924. Those who were able to immigrate tended to concentrate in urban areas rather than in rural areas.<sup>83</sup> Meanwhile, the natural increase in population is accounted for by a decrease in mortality. Between 1850 and 1920 germ theory revolutionized medicine by postulating and then proving that microscopic organisms cause disease. It was especially compatible with the ideas of hygiene and sanitation popularized in the late nineteenth century.<sup>84</sup> By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century indoor plumbing, sewer systems and Boards of Health had been established in most urban areas.<sup>85</sup>

Migration within the U.S. became the most common form of shifting ethnic concentrations during this era. The most significant was the move from rural areas to cities. For the first time in the U.S., the 1920 census reported that more people lived in cities than in rural areas.<sup>86</sup> The fall of the stock market in 1929 and the resulting depression dramatically reduced the population shift as many people moved to rural areas in order to obtain a subsistence standard of living. Once the economy began to improve most people who had previously left urban areas moved immediately back to the city.<sup>87</sup>

In 1916 the largest ethnic internal migration in U.S. history, known as the Great Migration, began. Over a span of fifty years, approximately 7 million African-Americans left the rural South and moved to the industrial cities of the North.<sup>88</sup> At the start of the migration people were encouraged to move away from the South due to the boll weevil infestation which destroyed the cotton crops many people had built their lives on. The migration movement continued as segregation made life difficult, especially in the South. WWI brought employment opportunities and many industries in the North began recruiting African-American labor. Through it all, many saw the possibility of better educational opportunities for their children. Between 1913 and 1919 alone, approximately 450,000 African-Americans left the South. Most settled in cities such as Indianapolis, Detroit, Cleveland, Kansas City, Pittsburgh and St. Louis.<sup>89</sup>

The second large ethnic internal migration during this period was due to the dustbowl and depression of the 1930s. Best known are the dust bowl refugees. Due to seven years of drought conditions and high rates of unemployment, approximately 300,000-400,000 people from Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas and Missouri pulled up stakes and moved to California.<sup>90 91</sup> Despite the images of migrant farm workers that are iconic of this period

<sup>81</sup> The Italians of Omaha, p. 35-36.

<sup>82</sup> See Overlay on Figure 13 in the Additional Documentation section.

<sup>83</sup> The Settling of North America, p. 146.

<sup>84</sup> Harvard University Library Open Collections Program, "Contagion; Historical Views of Diseases and Epidemics: Germ Theory," May 2009. <<http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/contagion/germtheory.html>>

<sup>85</sup> Harvard University Library Open Collections Program, "Contagion; Historical Views of Diseases and Epidemics: Public Health," May 2009. <<http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/contagion/publichealth.html>>

<sup>86</sup> The Settling of North America, p. 138.

<sup>87</sup> The Settling of North America, p. 139.

<sup>88</sup> James Grossman, "The Great Migration" posted on the Chicago History Museum's The Encyclopedia of Chicago, May 2009. <<http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/545.html>>

<sup>89</sup> The Settling of North America, p. 148.

<sup>90</sup> Robin A. Fanslow, "The Migrant Experience", American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, April 6, 1998, accessed May 2009. <<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/afctshhtml/tsme.html>>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 17

today, approximately half were blue-collar or less frequently white-collar workers who moved to cities.<sup>92</sup> Even lesser known are the Appalachian refugees who also moved due to the high rates of unemployment at this time. "Almost one third of the population of Kentucky and Tennessee moved into Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and California."<sup>93</sup>

As stated above, accelerating the population shift from rural to urban was the increase in production to meet the demands of WWII. Appalachian and African-Americans moved to the industrial cities of Ohio, Western Pennsylvania, and Eastern Michigan to work in plants that were converted from producing consumer products to those needed for the war effort. In many cases the new workers, including African-Americans, were able to achieve equal pay due to the high demand for laborers.

Altogether this period was a remarkable shifting of ethnic concentrations within the U.S.

**Omaha During the Internal Migration 1910-1950**

Between 1910 and 1920, the number of African Americans in Omaha doubled to more than 10,000 due to the Great Migration. Of the western cities that attracted African-Americans from the Great Migration only Los Angeles had a larger African-American population.<sup>94</sup> In the second decade of the twentieth century, African Americans began to concentrate their homes in the area locally known as the Near North Side between Cumings and Lake, 24<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Streets.<sup>95</sup>

In the 1920s, racial segregation became formalized through redlining and restrictive covenants, confining African Americans to North Omaha and a small enclave in South Omaha.<sup>96</sup> North Omaha became a thriving cultural area and was home to the Dreamland Ballroom and the Omaha Star newspaper. Additionally, it was home to a variety of political and social movements including the Hamitic League of the World,<sup>97</sup> early local chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People<sup>98</sup> and the National Urban League<sup>99</sup>.

In 1918, North Omaha was the most popular quadrant of the city for attached dwellings.<sup>100</sup> By 1934, their popularity in this area had leveled off and by 1962 their numbers in this area were declining. The Great

<sup>91</sup> James N. Gregory, "The Dust Bowl Migration," as published in eds. Gwendolyn Mink and Alice O'Connor, *Poverty in the United States: An Encyclopedia of History, Politics, and Policy*, (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), accessed May 2009.

<sup>92</sup> James N. Gregory, "The Dust Bowl Migration," as published in eds. Gwendolyn Mink and Alice O'Connor, *Poverty in the United States: An Encyclopedia of History, Politics, and Policy*, (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), accessed May 2009. <<http://faculty.washington.edu/gregoryj/dust%20bowl%20migration.htm>>

<sup>93</sup> The Settling of North America, p. 150.

<sup>94</sup> Academic Dictionaries and Encyclopedias, "African Americans in Omaha, Nebraska," May 2009.

<<http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enwiki/6742820>> ; Note: "This definition excludes cities in Texas with blacks, as the state population was 25 percent black, mostly enslaved, before the Civil War."

<sup>95</sup> Harry B. Otis, *E Pluribus Omaha; Immigrants All* p. 127.

<sup>96</sup> Academic Dictionaries and Encyclopedias, "African Americans in Omaha, Nebraska," May 2009.

<<http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enwiki/6742820>>

<sup>97</sup> Formed in Omaha in 1917 by George Wells Parker.

<sup>98</sup> The local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was active in Omaha from 1913-1939. Records are available at the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Records in Box I:G113,

<sup>99</sup> The local chapter of the National Urban League was the Omaha Urban League, formed in 1927. Copies of their records are available on microfilm at Creighton University. See Nebraska State Historical Society, Records search for the National Urban League, Omaha and Lincoln Nebraska, accessed May 2009. <<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/lib-arch/research/manuscripts/organize/urban-league.htm>>

<sup>100</sup> See Figure 3 on page E18.

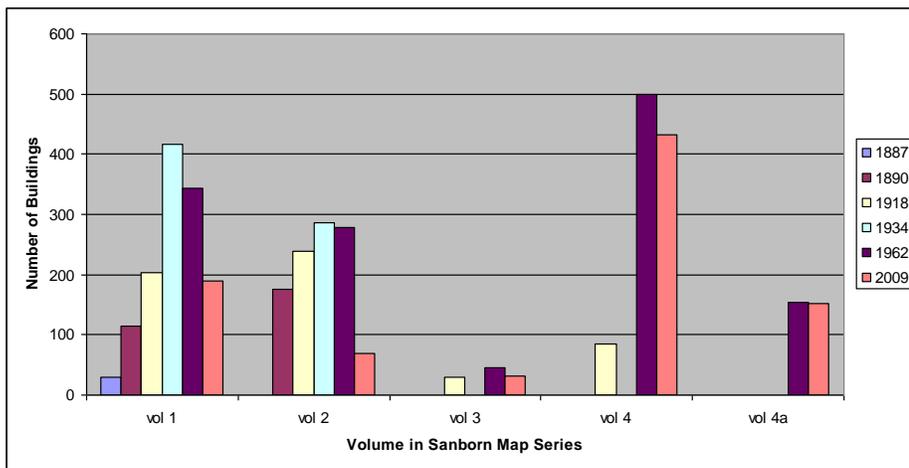
**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 18

Migration of African Americans is represented in part by attached dwellings designed in this area by and for African Americans such as Clarence Wigington who studied under Thomas Kimball and practiced in Omaha from 1911-1915 before moving to St Paul, Minnesota and becoming their city architect from the late 1920s to the 1940s.<sup>101</sup>



**Figure 3: Number of Attached Dwellings shown one each series of Sanborn Maps for Omaha, Nebraska; Vol 1 is Central/Downtown Omaha, Vol 2 is North Omaha, Vol 3 is South Omaha, Vol 4 and 4a are West Omaha. Note that Vol 3 and 4 were not included in the 1934 series.**

In a second facet of the Internal Migration period, after WWI Mexican Americans who had worked in the sugar beet fields in Western Nebraska in the summer were recruited to work in the meat packing plants as strike breakers.<sup>102</sup> By 1920 they had begun pushing out earlier ethnic enclaves and began establishing communities in South Omaha and Brown Park. By 1950 South Omaha became most strongly associated with Mexican Americans since many of them worked in the meat packing plants. It is unlikely that many attached dwellings will be representative of this type of migration however, since South Omaha was never a popular location for attached dwellings; having just 30 shown on the 1918 Sanborn Map and 45 in 1962.<sup>103</sup>

After continuing to grow and thrive in the locations established in 1900, many of Omaha's other long-standing ethnic neighborhoods lost population during the 1940s and 1950s. As the local economy changed from one based on jobbing and meat packing to one based on insurance and finance, many local residents became successful enough and/or assimilated enough to feel comfortable moving into more diverse neighborhoods. Others were displaced from their enclaves due to construction of the interstate and interstate by-passes around central Omaha. In both cases, some moved to the concentration of new development along Omaha's periphery, while others moved to other enclaves, causing a dilution of those enclaves.

**U.S. Humanitarian Migration**

Although humanitarian immigration begins close to the end of the period covered by this study and extends far beyond it, it is important to note that its roots go back far earlier. Humanitarian immigration actually started in 1933 when Hitler came to power. The U.S. allowed 102,000 German Jews into the country between 1933 and

<sup>101</sup> See page E35 for a list of attached dwellings designed by Clarence Westley Wigington.

<sup>102</sup> Omaha: The City and its Environs, p. 54.

<sup>103</sup> See Figure 3 on page E18.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

---

Section E Page 19

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1938.<sup>104</sup> Nonetheless with no formal policy, pressure continued to mount and in 1940 the Emergency Rescue Committee was formed to further assist this ethnic group. Building on this, in 1948 the Displaced Persons Act was passed formalizing the immigration of refugees. This was amended several times and influenced in the 1950s by the civil rights movement in this country.<sup>105</sup> The continued push for a more humanitarian approach to immigration culminated in 1965 with the passage of the Hart-Celler Act which ended the system of quotas based on country of origin and instead placed preferences on family reunification and employment. From 1965 to 1995, this act was responsible for the immigration of 18 million people to the U.S.<sup>106</sup>

### Omaha Humanitarian Migration

As mentioned in the discussion of the Mass Migration in Omaha, the city had a small number of Russians in the 1880s. According to *Omaha, A Guide to the City and Environs*, a number of Russian Jews came to Omaha after the Kieff Massacre. By 1930, the Russian Jews had developed two small settlements at 24<sup>th</sup> and Cuming, and at 22<sup>nd</sup> and Paul.<sup>107</sup> It is unclear at this time if refugees from WWII or other wars settled in Omaha in significant numbers to establish enclaves.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, Omaha has been home to a wide variety of immigrant groups who settled first in ethnic enclaves and then dispersed into the larger city. As each group came to the city, their housing choices reflect their different backgrounds, expectations and abilities. Attached dwellings are therefore one means to represent those immigrants who were able to establish neighborhoods which included a wide variety of businesses and housing types. These buildings are culturally emblematic of those that lived in them, those that owned them and those that designed and built them.

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<sup>104</sup> The Settling of North America, p. 156.

<sup>105</sup> The Settling of North America, p. 143.

<sup>106</sup> The Center for Immigration Studies, "Three Decades of Mass Immigration: The Legacy of the 1965 Immigration Act," September 1995, accessed May 2009. <<http://www.cis.org/articles/1995/back395.html>>

<sup>107</sup> *Omaha, A Guide to the City and Environs*, p. 53.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 20

**THE ECONOMICS OF ATTACHED DWELLINGS, 1880-1960**

**Introduction**

Funding the construction of attached dwellings straddles the line between funding a single family home and funding a larger construction project such as an apartment building due to the size of this building type. As pointed out by Comstock, semi-detached dwellings are particularly economical; one

“requires but one lot for its site, its cost is but very slightly in excess of a one-family house of equal size and greatly less than two one-family houses of equal capacity, to which should be included the cost of an additional lot in order to justly complete the comparison.”<sup>108</sup>

On the other hand, funding larger row house projects requires a commitment by all the owners ahead of time, or more commonly, a developer with the capital to fund the project until the individual units are sold. Furthermore, since these types of projects tend to house fewer people than apartment complexes or large suburban developments, consideration of the funding mechanisms necessary for these types of projects is often overlooked.

**The Economics of Attached Dwellings, 1880-1960**

City funding, tax credits, energy grants and other financial products commonly used in construction today were not available before 1930. Instead, most projects were funded through small mortgages at a local bank and secured by private developers. The size of a project was often determined by an individual's capital and assets available for collateral.

After WWI, mass production, the increase in industrialization, a new psychology of consumption and the renewed ability of the banks to lend money to private investors all led to a tide of prosperity which lasted throughout the roaring twenties.<sup>109</sup> As successful entrepreneurs gained capital and diversified their investments in the early twentieth century, one option was to invest in real estate.<sup>110</sup> Attached dwellings became a popular investment choice judging by the number of buildings that were constructed during this period in many cities across America.

With the Great Depression though, came a dramatic decrease in residential construction. By 1945, two million construction workers had lost their jobs as well as numerous architects.<sup>111</sup> Families were no longer able to afford their mortgage or rent.

To deal with the crisis, in 1934 the Federal Government created the Federal Housing Authority. Their mortgage insurance program guaranteed financial institutions against default when they adhered to certain guidelines for loaning money for rental housing as well as homes and housing subdivisions.<sup>112</sup> “Mortgage lending thus transformed into a virtually risk-free activity, making more and cheaper capital available for developers and

<sup>108</sup> Comstock, p. 6.

<sup>109</sup> Stanley K. Schultz, “The Politics of Prosperity: The 1920s,” University of Wisconsin, American History 102 Civil War to the Present, Lecture 15, 1999, accessed May 2009 <<http://us.history.wisc.edu/hist102/lectures/lecture15.html>> and Gale Cengage, 1920's Business and the Economy, “Construction and Building,” 1996. [eNotes.com](http://www.enotes.com), 2006, accessed May, 2009 <<http://www.enotes.com/1920-business-economy-american-decades/construction-building>>

<sup>110</sup> Gale Cengage, “Construction and Building,” 1920's Business and the Economy, 1996. [eNotes.com](http://www.enotes.com), 2006, accessed May, 2009 <<http://www.enotes.com/1920-business-economy-american-decades/construction-building>>

<sup>111</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “The Federal Housing Administration,” Sept 2, 2006, accessed May 2009. <<http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/fhahistory.cfm>>

<sup>112</sup> Historic Residential Subdivisions MPD 2003, p. E11.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 21

consumers."<sup>113</sup> Its effects were felt immediately. By the end of 1934 housing starts were up for the first time in eight years.<sup>114</sup> Many of these housing starts however, were likely single family detached homes favored by the new legislation. In 1940, when the U.S. Census began collecting housing data as part of the decennial census attached dwellings accounted for 7.6% of the U.S. housing stock.<sup>115</sup> It is likely that this number is less than it would have been in 1930.

To prepare for WWII, in 1941, the government authorized liberal mortgage insurance to developers who provided rental housing in areas designated critical for defense and defense production and passed the Lanham Act which provided separate funds for construction of permanent and temporary housing for national defense workers.<sup>116</sup> "House trailers, conventional houses or apartments were now planned and constructed in much larger groups than any built before the war."<sup>117</sup> Throughout the war, private developers who undertook these construction contracts gained experience in developing areas at an entirely new scale.

At almost the same time, the government passed the Emergency Price Control Act of 1942. The overall decline in the housing market during the depression combined with the sudden need to provide defense workers with housing at a reasonable rate put enormous pressure on existing housing stock. "In many urban areas, a rapid tightening of the housing market occurred, marked by overcrowding and rapid rent increases."<sup>118</sup> In many areas this price freeze discouraged any private investment in rental housing during the war by making the cost to income ratio too small to be deemed worth the effort.

After WWII, the relative prosperity of the era and the continued emphasis both socially and through government loan programs on single family housing meant the decline of attached dwellings through the 1960s. Decennial census data reveals that attached dwellings as a percentage of U.S. housing stock had dropped to a low of 2.9% by 1970.<sup>119</sup>

### The Economics of Attached Dwellings in Omaha, 1880-1960

In Omaha, with the great majority of attached dwellings being semi-detached, row house building permit data and survey data of known owners and builders indicate that funding for attached dwellings was mostly reliant upon individual investors. As with attached dwellings constructed nationally before 1930, this means that most projects were dependent on an individual's ability to take out a small mortgage from the bank and secure it with their own assets as collateral. Thus, in good times, it appears that attached dwellings have boomed; and in bad, suffered.

<sup>113</sup> Gail Radford, "Government and Housing During the Depression," in From Tenements to Taylor Homes, p. 107-108.

<sup>114</sup> Gail Radford, "Government and Housing During the Depression," in From Tenements to Taylor Homes, p. 108.

<sup>115</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division, Physical and Social Characteristics Branch, "Historic Census of Housing Tables, Units in Structure," Dec 16, 2005, accessed May 2009.

<<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/census/historic/units.html>>

<sup>116</sup> Historic Residential Subdivisions MPD 2003, Section E, p. 11 and a History of Housing in New York, Richard Plunz, p. 247.

<sup>117</sup> Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats, p. 255.

<sup>118</sup> <http://www.tenant.net/Community/history/hist03h.html>

<sup>119</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division, Physical and Social Characteristics Branch, "Historic Census of Housing Tables, Units in Structure," Dec 16, 2005, accessed May 2009.

<<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/census/historic/units.html>>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 22

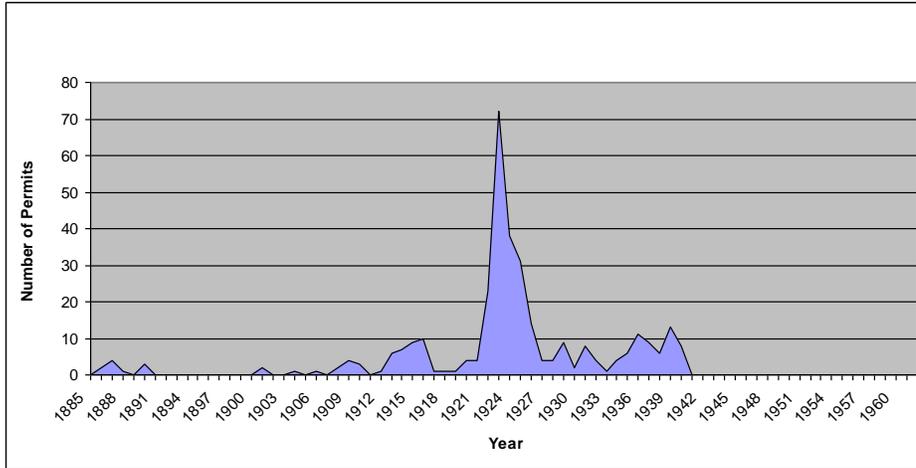


Figure 4: Row House Building Permits Per Year from 1885-1940; information was not collected by the Omaha City Planning Office for row house construction after 1940 before the building permits were lost; the graph was extended out so that it better aligns with the graph below for comparison.

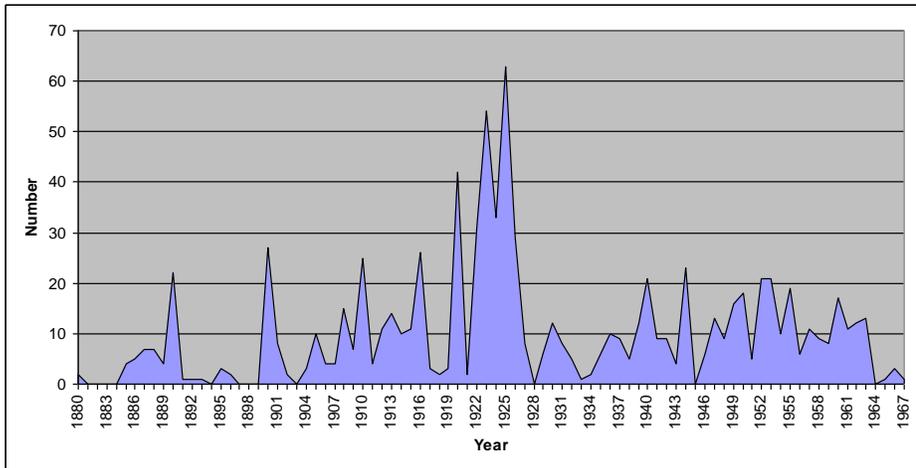


Figure 5: Extant Attached Dwellings per Year Constructed; Note that early booms in the construction of attached dwellings are likely under represented here; construction dates are missing for roughly 50% of all attached dwellings ever constructed and the younger the building, the more likely it is that the building is extant.

As was the case nationally, in Omaha between 1930 and 1960, the emphasis on single family homes and government housing apartment complexes continued to keep the focus away from attached dwellings as an intermediate solution and attached dwellings fell out of favor. In reviewing the charts above, the younger the building, the more likely it is to be extant since the neighborhood and city planning principals have not yet had a change to alter their focus too much and rezone the area for a different purpose. Additionally, the larger the population the greater the number of residential units required to house the population. As the chart on page E 13 of this paper shows, Omaha was growing during this period. However, after the roaring twenties, the number of attached dwellings constructed per year appears to have remained fairly constant and low between 1940 and 1960.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section E Page 23**

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Behind the construction of these buildings are many individuals. Unlike apartments or larger attached dwelling developments in other cities, Omaha's attached dwellings appear to have been constructed by and for a wide range of people, from individual investors, to small construction and real estate companies using them as investments. These individuals and the rise and fall of different types of investors are discussed further in the architectural portion of this paper.

**Conclusion**

Altogether, economics played a vital role in the construction of attached dwellings in Omaha. The construction of many attached dwellings in Omaha followed the boom and bust of the economy. Additionally, due to the small nature of most projects, many different people invested in or obtained work on the construction of attached dwellings thus spreading the economic effect of this construction over a larger portion of the population than other building types in which fewer people invested or were involved in the construction of.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

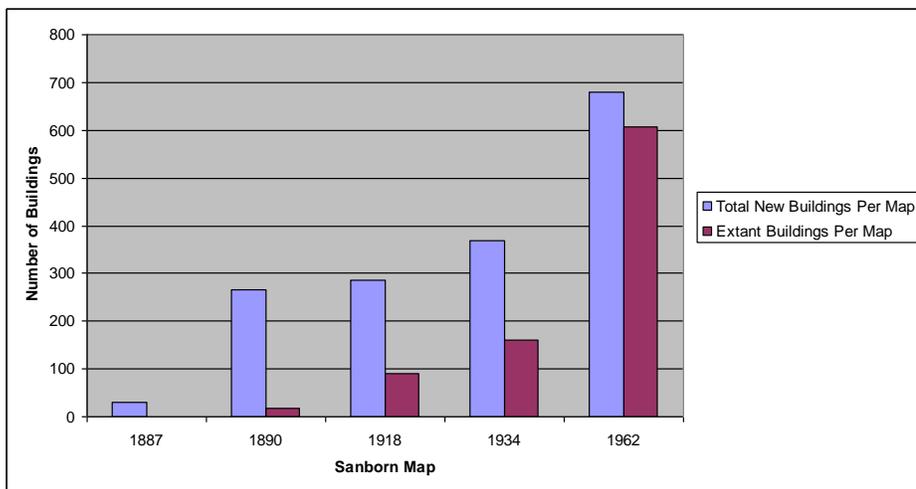
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 24

**THE ARCHITECTURE OF ATTACHED DWELLINGS**  
**Architectural Styles of Attached Dwellings, 1880-1960**

Today, just over 50% of all attached dwellings ever constructed in Omaha are extant. In general, the younger the building, the more likely it is to be extant. Because of this, it is difficult to draw too many conclusions about architectural styles prevalent before the middle of the nineteenth century. However, from notations on the Sanborn Maps of roofing types, published renderings of local designs and extant examples it appears that Omaha architects, builders and owners generally followed national stylistic trends.



**Figure 6: Difference between number of Attached Dwellings constructed per Sanborn Map series and the number extant in 2009**

In a survey of period articles in architectural magazines and books reviewing the development of attached dwellings, it is clear that at a national level, attached dwellings were designed in a range of architectural styles between 1880 and 1960. In general, the period of this study covers four general stylistic categories; late Victorian, late nineteenth and early twentieth century revivals, late nineteenth and early twentieth century American movements, and Modern Movements. Locally, as with most comprehensive studies, buildings in this survey include high-style, vernacular and regional variations of many of the most popular architectural styles.

Within the buildings classified as Late Victorian, styles include Eastlake, Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne and Richardsonian Romanesque. Popular during the late nineteenth century, these styles are evident in the extant buildings of Omaha's earliest attached dwellings. Local extant high-style examples include Hicks Terrace (1890) and the Georgia Apartments (1890).

The second category includes late nineteenth and early twentieth century revivals, which were most common in row house construction. Most of the surviving row houses constructed between 1900 and 1915 exemplify the Renaissance Revival style or its influence in vernacular forms. Row houses constructed between 1916 and 1927 exhibit the Spanish Colonial Revival and aesthetic styles of the third category. High style examples include those like the Renaissance Revival buildings at 408-410 S 24<sup>th</sup> St and 1208-1212 S 10<sup>th</sup> St, and the Spanish Colonial Revival building at 402-412 Harney.

The third category includes late nineteenth and early twentieth century American movements, such as the Prairie School, Arts and Crafts, American Foursquare and the Bungalow/Craftsman styles. Judging by surviving

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section E Page 25**

examples, these were popular in construction between 1916 and 1927. Many well executed examples exist, including examples such as the Prairie School style building at 4314-4316 Dodge, the Bungalow style buildings at 3018-3020 Lincoln Blvd and 2886-2888 Redick Ave, and the Craftsman building at 3551-3553 Davenport.

The fourth and final category is that of the Modern Movements, including Art Deco, Moderne, and the International Style. Because these styles were developed in the middle of the twentieth century, many of the attached dwellings constructed during this period still exist. Few high-style examples exist; instead, most extant examples were constructed in vernacular versions. During the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, popular Modern sub-styles included Minimal Traditional, Ranch and Split-level. High style examples include an Art Deco building at 300 S 49<sup>th</sup> Street and a Minimal Traditional building at 5018-5020 Cass.

**Prominent Architects, Developers And Contractors Of Attached Dwellings, 1860-1962**

Attached dwellings constructed between 1880 and 1960 were largely the responsibility of three groups of people working together as a team; owners, architects and builders. Owners brought vision and financing to the project and without them the project would not have occurred. They controlled the size of the project, the project budget and the amenities and spaces to be included. Architects transformed those objectives into plans and details that the contractor could build; balancing the cost of various features with the amenities desired for the project. Finally, the builders were able to construct the attached dwelling; influencing the final building by suggesting alternate materials and construction methods to be used and by their skill in executing the final design.

During the period from 1860-1930, the roles of these groups often overlapped and occasionally one person would fulfill multiple roles. By 1920, 16 States required architects to be registered in order to practice.<sup>120</sup> Required licensure for architects signaled the beginning of specialization in these roles. Thereafter it was more common to see separate individuals fulfill these roles. In Nebraska, licensure was not required until 1937.

Of the roughly 1,600 attached dwellings constructed in Omaha, architects, builders and owners are known for less than 10% of the buildings at this time. Furthermore, none are known for buildings after 1940. Together, this makes some types of judgments about the nature of attached dwellings difficult; such as how often the roles of architect and builder or builder and owner overlapped, differences between builder designed and architect designed buildings, and common architects, builders and owners for these property types.

According to *Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960* (MPDF 2003), in addition to private investors, there are several types of developers who have influenced the construction of attached dwellings. These include community builders, operative builders and merchant builders. They are defined as follows:

Private Investors

Private investors primarily made their money in other types of business and used attached dwellings as a means to earn passive income, at times to supplement their current income and at others as a means to save for retirement or old age. Most often they were upper class professionals; doctors, lawyers and established merchants. Occasionally, people in upper management in various industries were able to save enough to also invest in the manner. This type of developer has been common since the earliest times.

<sup>120</sup> The Architects' and Builders' Handbook, p. 1768.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

---

Section E Page 26

---

Community Builders 1900-1930

The term *community builder* was used in the early twentieth century to refer to developers who were real estate entrepreneurs utilizing large tracts of land developed according to a master plan.<sup>121</sup> Related to the city planning movement, these developers often used the professional expertise of site planners, landscape architects, architects and engineers. "As a result, their subdivisions tended to reflect the most up-to-date principles of design; many achieved high artistic quality and conveyed a strong unity of design."<sup>122</sup> They also tended to be active in their communities, advocating zoning and subdivision regulations. Those working at a national scale created developments which included single family homes, apartment buildings, boulevards, shopping centers and parks.

Operative Builders 1930-1940

In the 1930s a new group of builders emerged; operative builders. These builders were able to secure FHA-approved, private financing for the development of attached dwellings and apartments. "Depression-era economics and the demand for defense-related and veterans' housing which followed encouraged them to apply principles of mass production, standardization, and prefabrication to lower construction costs and increase production time."<sup>123</sup> Due to the national economic depression, they employed these principles on small scale projects.

Merchant Builders 1945-1960

"By greatly increasing the credit available to private builders... the 1948 Amendments to the National Housing Act provided the ideal conditions for the emergence of large-scale corporate builders, called *merchant builders*."<sup>124</sup> Due to the large post WWII demand for housing, merchant builders began to apply the principles of mass production, standardization and prefabrication on a large scale. Thus these builders greatly influenced the character of cities post-WWII.

In addition to different types of developers, there were architects and contractors who specialized in the design and construction of residential buildings and those who did not. Their innovation in planning and construction to solve programmatic and financial goals established by the developers, and awareness of what others in the construction industry were developing was often spread to other projects. Some of the individuals who designed and constructed attached dwellings were well known throughout their community, region and even nationally while others were not. In either case, some concentrated on residential construction and buildings attributed to them are numerous. Others worked on a limited number of residential buildings, either because they preferred to work on other building types or the opportunity only presented itself a minimal number of times.

Locally, developers, architects and contractors have all played significant roles in the development of attached dwellings in Omaha. The city has been fortunate to have all four types of developers as well as exceptional architects and contractors who specialized in residential buildings. Together they have adhered to national trends while at the same time they have given the attached dwellings of Omaha a unique Mid-western flavor.

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<sup>121</sup> Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States 1830-1960" MPD 2003, p. 8

<sup>122</sup> Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States 1830-1960" MPD 2003, p. 8

<sup>123</sup> Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States 1830-1960" MPD 2003, p. 9.

<sup>124</sup> Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States 1830-1960" MPD 2003, p. 9.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section E Page 27**

For buildings with known owners, architects and builders, following are brief biographies of selected individuals who worked in Omaha between 1880 and 1962 and who worked on five or more attached dwellings or whose reputations indicate that they significantly influenced residential building development in Omaha.

**Beck & Christensen Realty Co.**

**Developer and Contractor**

Alex U. Beck (1888-1950) and Chris Christensen began their careers in the construction field as bricklayers and by 1909 had formed a partnership working as Contractors. In 1914 the company officially branched into real estate. Their partnership lasted until 1918 upon Christensen's relocation to Pacific Junction, Iowa. Beck continued his career as an Omaha contractor until his death in 1950.

Known works include the following:

*Architect, Builder, and Owner*

Address	Site #	Date
3110-3112 S 15th St	DO09:0107-004	1912
1507-1509 Spring	DO09:0107-007	1912
1511-1513 Spring	DO09:0107-008	1912

*Owner*

Address	Site #	Date
3101-3103 S 16th St	DO09:0107-005	1912
3105-3107 S 16th St	DO09:0107-006	1912

**Carlston, E.A.**

**Developer**

Edward A. Carlston first worked in Omaha as a clerk for the Union Pacific Railroad in 1914. By 1918 he was advertising as an insurance agent and worked in that field until 1921. He may have left Omaha for a time since he was not listed in the Omaha City Directory again until 1925. It was during this year that he opened a real estate office in the World Herald Building. This office was closed by 1926 and Carlston was no longer listed in the city directories.

Known works include the following:

*Architect, Builder and Owner*

Address	Site #	Date
820-822 N 48th St	DO09:0437-007	1924
824-826 N 48th St	DO09:0437-008	1924
4804-4806 Burt	DO09:0437-001	1924
4813-4815 Cumming	DO09:0437-009	1924

*Builder and Owner*

Address	Site #	Date
5522-5524 Jackson	DO09:0430-007	1925

**Everett, R.**

**Architect and Contractor**

A native Nebraskan Richard M. Everett (1890-) arrived in Omaha in 1914. He began his career as an architect but by 1923 he founded the Everett Construction Company and is advertised as designing, superintending and

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section E Page 28**

building all kinds of structures. In 1925 Everett was working as a construction superintendent for the Nebraska Power Company until his death which current research indicates was prior to 1928.

Known works include the following:

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
105 S 50th St	DO09:0431-008	1923
107 S 50th St	DO09:0431-009	1923
109 S 50th St	DO09:0431-010	1923

**Findley and Shields**

**Architect**

William Elliott Findley (1849-1908) and Alexander Shields (1851-) partnered to form an architectural firm by 1889. Both men were natives of the eastern United States; Findley was born in Ohio and Shields in Pennsylvania. Shields had arrived in Omaha in 1887 while Findley arrived the following year. The company remained in business until 1893 when both men decided to practice independently. Shields is no longer listed in Omaha's city directories two years later, while Findley continued working in Omaha until his death in December of 1908.

Known individual works of William Elliott Findley include the following:

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
1701-1703 Park Ave	DO09:0201-009	1901
1705-1707 Park Ave	DO09:0201-010	1901
1306-1308 Park Ave	DO09:0203-018	1906

Known works of Findley and Shields include the following:

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
1001-1011 N 29th St	DO09:0215-005	1890
2214-20 Florence Blvd	DO09:0136-041	1889

**Henninger, F.A.**

**Architect**

With a successful and prolific career that spanned over 40 years, Frederick A. Henninger (1865-1944) helped shape the commercial, industrial and residential locales of Omaha. After attending the Chicago Art Institute for two years, working for a Lincoln, NE architect then a laborer at the Union Pacific shops, Henninger began his Omaha architectural career as a draftsman for F.C. Ledebink in 1895.

Henninger's career blossomed with the commission for the Dairy Building for the Omaha's Trans Mississippi Exposition in 1898. Shortly after, he was designing significant downtown office and major multi-family buildings, such as the A.I. Root Building (1904), Securities Building (1916) [DO09:123-075], Normandie Apartments (1898) [DO09:203-007], and Strehlow Terrace (1905-1909) [DO09:135-004] as well as residences for many of the city's elite. Henninger was possibly the most productive residential architect in Omaha history and was many times referred to during his most active period as "House-a-day-Henninger."

Speed and efficiency when designing a building, whether it was a commercial structure or single / multi family home enabled, Henninger to produce a substantial amount of highly detailed and thoughtful buildings. The number and quality of his commissions and built structures that dot the Omaha landscape attest to his legacy.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section E Page 29**

Known works include the following:

*Architect*

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
3521-3523 Hawthorne	DO09:0216-013	1913
3819-3823 Farnam	DO09:0319-039	1908
629-631 S 19th Ave	DO09:0122-051	1913
1415-1417 S 10th St	DO09:0117-154	1908

**Hiatt, J.L.**

**Developer**

Beginning his real estate and investment career with Hasting & Heyden in 1910, Jesse L. Hiatt (1886-) came to Nebraska from Iowa. By 1915 Hiatt was vice president and secretary of the Hiatt and Fairfield Co. with another real estate salesman, F.M. Fairfield. In 1920 Hiatt left his partnership with Fairfield and founded J.L. Hiatt and Company which operated in Omaha until closing in 1939.

Known works include the following:

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
4926-4928 California	DO09:0435-012	1923
4930-4932 California	DO09:0435-013	1923
609-611 N 50th St	DO09:0435-014	1923
5003 Chicago	DO09:0433-034	1923
314-316 N 50th St	DO09:0433-035	1923

**Holmstrom, Emil**

**Contractor**

Emil Holstrom, a native of Sweden, immigrated to the United States in 1902 and after first living in Red Oak, Iowa moved to Omaha, Nebraska in 1907. He began working in Omaha as a carpenter and worked for a number of different contractors until 1916. At that time he opened his own contracting company and focused on building homes throughout the city including a ten homes in the Country Club Historic District (DO09:).

Known works include the following:

*Owner and Builder*

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
3570-3572 Davenport	DO09:0212-019	1929

*Builder*

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
611-613 N 36th St	DO09:0214-018	1924
3022-3024 Marcy	DO09:0206-052	1923

*Architect and Builder*

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
617-619 N 36th St	DO09:0214-019	1923

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 30

**Kimball, T. R.**

**Architect**

Thomas Rogers Kimball (1862-1934) was one of Nebraska's premier architectural talents. He studied at the University of Nebraska for two years before going to Massachusetts, where he studied art in Boston and completed a three-year course in architecture at M.I.T. Further studies in art were conducted at the Ecole de Beaux-Arts in Paris. Following his education, he returned to Boston where he started the firm of Walker, Kimball and Best. He worked in Boston until 1891 when the firm established a branch office in Omaha. Until 1899 when he went into private practice, Kimball kept his partnership with Walker. He maintained his own practice until 1928 when he formed the firm of Kimball, Steele and Sandham.

Kimball was architect-in-chief with C. Howard Walker for the Trans-Mississippi Exposition in Omaha in 1898. He also acted as professional advisor to the Nebraska State Capitol Commission (1919-32) and is credited with composing that progressive competition. In 1909 he was elected a Fellow in the American Institute of Architects and served as A.I.A National President from 1918-20. Among the most notable of Kimball's buildings are the Omaha Public Library (NRHP 1978) and St. Cecilia's Cathedral (NRHP 1979) in Omaha and the Hall County Courthouse in Grand Island (NRHP 1977).

Known works by Kimball and Walker include the following:

Address	Site #	Date
1707 California St	DO09:0128-018	1894

Known individual works by Kimball include the following:

Address	Site #	Date
614 S 36 <sup>th</sup> St	DO09:0317-043	1913

**Kvenild, B.**

**Architect**

Birger Kvenild (1879-1953) was born in Trondhjem, Norway. He studied at Trondhjem's Technical College, where he graduated in 1901. After traveling throughout Europe, he immigrated to the United States in 1905. In 1913, he joined the Trønderlag of America Society, which serves the descendants of emigrants of the Trøndelag region of Norway.

Kvenild worked almost exclusively on single family dwellings in his early career. "Frankly eclectic, he regard(ed) the architect as an artist-craftsman who should supervise every detail of construction, including the engineering and contracting aspects."<sup>125</sup> He also served as the secretary and architect for the Omaha Planning Commission in 1916. Starting his own practice in 1931, Kvenild was active in Omaha until his death.

Known works include the following:

Address	Site #	Date
121-123 S 54th St	DO09:0432-002	1936

**McDonald, John & McDonald and Ogilvy**

**Architect**

The architectural practice of John McDonald and his son Alan spanned a total of nearly 70 years. The senior McDonald (1861-1956) established the firm of McDonald and Ogilvy in 1887 and by the turn of the century, the

<sup>125</sup> Kenneth Bjork, "Saga in Steel and Concrete," p. 414

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section E Page 31**

architect had developed his own successful practice, largely through residential commissions from the city's prominent upper-class families. After receiving an architectural degree from Harvard College in 1915, Alan McDonald (1891-1947) joined his father's Omaha practice and over the next 30 years, the McDonalds played a major role in shaping the city's architectural character.

The McDonald firm was deeply rooted in late 19th and early 20th century historical revivalism. The McDonalds produced what can be viewed as the city's most coherent group of Colonial Revival Buildings including the First Unitarian Church, the city's finest example of Georgian Revival architecture. Other important examples of the McDonald's work include the Joslyn Art Museum, the Faidley Building (non-extant), the George Joslyn House (NRHP 1972), Beth El Synagogue, the Bradford-Pettis House (NRHP 1983), and the Hill Hotel (NRHP 1988).

John McDonald's work and the work of McDonald and Ogilvy is significant as that of an early Omaha master architect and for its representation of late nineteenth and early twentieth century revival styles.

Known works by McDonald and Ogilvy include the following:

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
1142-1144 S 32nd St	DO09:0204-035	1888
1146 S 32nd St	DO09:0204-036	1888
1313-1315 S 32nd St	DO09:0204-098	1887
1317-1319 S 32nd St	DO09:0204-099	1887
1717-1721 Park Ave	DO09:0201-012	1887

Known works by John and Alan McDonald include the following:

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
134 N 38 <sup>th</sup> St	DO09:0321-041	1921
4015 Nicholas St	DO09:0325-035	1924

**Mendelssohn, Fisher and Lawrie  
Architect**

The firm of Mendelssohn, Fisher and Lawrie evolved from one of the city's earliest professional partnerships - Dufrene and Mendelssohn, formed in 1881. Dufrene had worked as an architect in Nebraska since 1867, first in partnership with T. B. Borst, and then alone during the 1870's. Mendelssohn, born in Berlin in 1842, studied in New York and practiced in Detroit prior to coming to Omaha. The 1884 Christian Specht building (NRHP 1977) is a product of the Dufrene and Mendelssohn partnership.

In 1885 Mendelssohn left Dufrene and entered into partnership with George Fisher. The firm operated as Mendelssohn and Fisher in 1885 and 1886 and then as Mendelssohn and Lawrie in 1887 when Fisher left the firm for a year and Harry Lawrie joined Mendelssohn. Fisher then rejoined the firm and the partnership of Mendelssohn, Fisher and Lawrie was formed.

Mendelssohn, Fisher and Lawrie was a prestigious firm which designed a variety of prominent buildings in Omaha's building boom of the 1880's and early 1890's. Mendelssohn left in 1893, and the partnership of Fisher and Lawrie continued until 1913. The partners were agile designers working in a variety of building types and styles. Their buildings include the Withnell-Barton House (non-extant), the Old University Library (Lincoln) (NRHP 1975), the Storz House (NRHP 1974) and Sacred Heart Church (NRHP 1983).

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section E Page 32**

Michigan-born George Fisher (1856-1931) graduated from the University of Michigan in 1880 with a degree in civil engineering. Harry Lawrie (ca. 1858-1935) had nine years of professional experience in Glasgow and Edinburgh, Scotland, before immigrating to Chicago in 1883 to enter the office of Burham and Root. He moved to Omaha in 1887.

Known works by Mendelssohn, Fisher and Lawrie include the following:

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
3003-3011 Pacific	DO09:0204-008	1890

Known works by Fisher and Lawrie include the following:

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
2616 Dewey Ave	DO09:0209-049	1904
4109 Iazard St	DO09:0325-030	1906
4113 Iazard St	DO09:0325-031	1906
4117 Iazard St	DO09:0325-032	1906

Known individual works by Fisher include the following:

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
714-716 N 18th St	DO09:0128-066	1887

**Rosenberry, C.W.  
Architect**

Known as a residential architect, Charles Walter Rosenberry (1892-1939) practiced in Omaha between 1923 and 1937. Rosenberry is noted for his work in the Country Club and Happy Hollow neighborhoods in Omaha designing over 50 houses in the two areas.<sup>126</sup>

Known works include the following:

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
305-307 N 38th St	DO09:0321-017	1925
213-217 S 48th St	DO09:0320-003	1924
2536-2570 N 16th St	DO09:0138-003	1924
108 S 49th Ave	DO09:0431-003	1927
4922-4924 California	DO09:0435-002	1926
5026-5028 Cass	DO09:0435-022	1939
5022-5024 Cass	DO09:0435-021	1939

**Skogman, N.J. & Son  
Contractor**

Nels Johan Skogman (1861-) immigrated to America from Sweden and arrived in Omaha in 1906. A carpenter by trade, Skogman began building homes shortly thereafter. By 1920 N.J. Skogman and Sons was advertising as general building contractors specializing in homes with 46 years of building experience. Each of his sons, Erick S., Jno H., Olaf E., Thure N., and Wiliam worked in the company as did his wife Johanna, and daughter Emilia. One of Nels sons, Erick, moved to Cedar Rapids, Iowa and the Skogman Homes construction company he started is actively building homes throughout the Midwest.

<sup>126</sup> Country Club Historic District NRN section 8 page 5

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section E Page 33**

Known works include the following:

*Architect, Builder and Owner*

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
4625-4627 Douglas	DO09:0320-014	1923
4629-4631 Douglas	DO09:0320-015	1923
4633-4635 Douglas	DO09:0320-016	1923
4632-4634 Farnam	DO09:0320-004	1923
4636-4638 Farnam	DO09:0320-005	1923
4640-4642 Farnam	DO09:0320-006	1924

*Builder and Owner*

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
4905-4905 1/2 Capitol	DO09:0433-020	1926
1007-1009 N 50th St	DO09:0437-014	1926

*Builder*

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
3511-3513 Cumming	DO09:0216-055	1923
3515-3517 Cumming	DO09:0216-056	1923
3551-3553 Davenport	DO09:0212-028	1923
1009-1011 S 35th Ave	DO09:0206-057	1926
1013-1015 S 35th Ave	DO09:0206-058	1926

**Somberg, Nathan  
Developer**

Nathan Somberg came to Omaha in 1913 and began working as a steward in the hotel business. After two years he opened a real estate office in the Omaha Bee Building and by 1924 had married Elizabeth A. Lana. He was listed in Jackson's 1918 directory of leading real estate agents, abstracters, loan companies and real estate attorneys. The publication was distributed throughout the United States and Canada. He was successful in the real estate business until his death around 1927.

Known works include the following:

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
4645-4647 Farnam	DO09:0320-008	1923
4649-4651 Farnam	DO09:0320-010	1923
4653-4655 Farnam	DO09:0320-012	1923
213-217 S 48th St	DO09:0320-003	1924
4644-4646 Farnam	DO09:0320-007	1925
4801 Chicago	DO09:0433-029	1923
4807 Chicago	DO09:0433-032	1923

**Thompson, Inga  
Architect, Contractor, and Developer**

Inga Thompson began working in Omaha as a cashier for the Oakland Motor Car Company in 1923. Her association with the real estate and construction company, Metcalfe Company can be traced as far back as 1926. Also working on the financial and book keeping side of the business, she was employed there until 1940. It was at this time that Theodore W. Metcalfe the president of Metcalfe Company, and Thompson started a

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section E Page 34**

new company, the Consolidated Credit Corporation in 1940. Metcalfe served as president and Thompson served as secretary/treasurer. Within five years Consolidated Credit Corporation had closed its doors and Inga became the secretary of Metcalfe Construction Company. After 1945, she is not listed in the city directories. Many of the properties she owned, designed or constructed are located in the Country Club Historic District which was developed by the Metcalfe Company.

Known works include the following:

Architect and Owner

Address	Site #	Date
2705-2707 N 56th St	DO09:0446-010	1936

Builder and Owner

Address	Site #	Date
2715-2717 N 56th St	DO09:0446-013	1935

Owner

Address	Site #	Date
5201 Corby	DO09:0446-008	1936
2714-2716 N 52nd St	DO09:0446-007	1936
2709-2711 N 56th St	DO09:0446-011	1936

**Traver Brothers Company  
Developer**

The Traver Brothers Company made a significant impact on the apartment housing market of Omaha through the number of units they built and managed. Charles Traver came to Omaha in 1906, working for a year as a painter, before becoming a real estate agent. In 1909, he expanded into construction as well; completing the St. Mary's apartments. In 1911, his brothers Edward and William, and Nellie Traver<sup>127</sup> joined him to form the Traver Brothers Company. The business operated in Omaha until 1932. Altogether, the Traver Brothers Company constructed and managed over 200 apartment units, on 11 properties. The Traver Brothers' work was generally concentrated in an area between 20<sup>th</sup> to 40<sup>th</sup> Streets and Dodge to Leavenworth streets. Their multi-family residential property types range from a street court row house development to 25 unit apartment buildings.

Known works include the following:

Address	Site #	Date
2536-2570 N 16th St	DO09:0138-003	1924
2532-2534 N 16th St	DO09:0138-004	1925

**Wigington, Clarence (C.A.P.)  
Architect**

Clarence Westley Wigington (1883-1967) was born in Kansas City and raised in Omaha. He had a talent for drawing at an early age and won first prize at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition in 1898. The first job in his career was as an intern for Thomas Kimball. As an intern for Thomas Kimball, in 1908 he had his first commission; a factory in Sheridan, Wyoming. He is listed as an architect in Omaha's city directories from 1911-1915. Wigington, moved to St. Paul, MN and in 1915, after a record score on an entrance exam he was hired by that

<sup>127</sup> Nellie Traver was the sister of the Traver brothers based on information in the 1910 U.S. Census of Omaha.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section E Page 35**

city as one of their architects. He was America's first African American municipal architect. For the next 34 years, he designed numerous buildings and facilities for education, tangible storage, or transportation. Many are Minnesota Historical Landmarks including the Highland Park Water Tower and the Roy Wilkins Auditorium. "Cap" Wigington died in 1967.<sup>128</sup>

Wigington's work is significant as the work of a master architect and for its association with the African American Community in Omaha.

Known works include the following:

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
1232 S 11 St	DO09:0117-031	1914
125 S 38 St	DO09:0319-031	1914
2502 Lake St	DO09:0223-002	1913
2510 Lake St	DO09:0223-019	1913

**Willis, Lloyd D.  
Architect**

A native of Illinois, Lloyd D. Willis (1877-) arrived and began practicing architecture in Omaha in 1909. He practiced throughout the region until enlisting in the military in 1917.

Known works include the following:

<i>Address</i>	<i>Site #</i>	<i>Date</i>
3913-3919 Farnam	DO09:0319-045	1912
3310-3312 Davenport	DO09:0212-027	1914

Clay County Courthouse, Vermillion SD (1912-1913) National Register

<sup>128</sup> "April 21; Clarence Westley Wigington," The African American Registry, 2005, accessed May 2009.  
<<http://www.aaregistry.com/detail.php?id=743>>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 36

**F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES:**

This section provides a description of the physical and associative characteristics of attached dwellings in Omaha, which include duplexes, row houses, and condominiums (collectively referred to as multi-family dwellings hereafter) and registration requirements for listing in the National Register. Apartments, tenements, and flats, other types of multi-family dwellings, are discussed in a separate Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) entitled *Apartments, Flats, and Tenements in Omaha, Nebraska from 1880-1962*. This section begins with an overview of the physical development patterns of multi-family dwellings in Omaha, then discusses the physical characteristics of identified subtypes before presenting important associative characteristics to consider. An analysis of historical Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps provided the basis for the subtypes, concentrations, and development patterns in these sections. Section F concludes with guidance on understanding how to apply the National Register Evaluation Criteria to determine the historical significance of a multi-family dwelling based on these characteristics and the registration requirements for listing in the National Register under this MPDF.

**DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS**

Multi-family dwellings were constructed as individual buildings, sometimes forming concentrations that reflected similar plans and design features. Multi-family dwellings were constructed alongside single-family residences, forming typical neighborhood patterns of development that included other property types such as churches, commercial buildings, meeting halls, and schools.

Construction of multi-family dwellings in Omaha in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries was generally concentrated in the city's urban core to provide residents access to goods, services, sources of employment, and transportation. The number of attached dwellings in Omaha was limited in 1887. However, by 1890, the density of attached dwellings had increased dramatically and stretched north of Farnam Street to Lake Street, east of North 30<sup>th</sup> Street, with concentrations anchored by major thoroughfares along Farnam Street and North 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Approximately five percent of the multi-family dwellings that remain in Omaha were constructed prior to 1900, the majority of these being row houses, and 53 percent of multi-family dwellings that remain date to the first two decades of the twentieth century. By 1918, a relatively high density of attached dwellings remained concentrated near the downtown core, located north and south of Farnam Street between North 30<sup>th</sup> Street and North 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Dense concentrations of attached dwellings were also located immediately adjacent to the Union Stockyards in South Omaha on both the east and south sides; the density of attached dwellings in the vicinity of the Union Stockyards was much higher than that of other multi-family dwellings during this period, such as tenements, flats, and apartment buildings. In addition, concentrations of attached dwellings were also located in an area west of the central business district and generally bound by Farnam Street, North 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Lake Street, and North 34<sup>th</sup> Street. Most examples of duplexes and row houses that remain in Omaha date to the 1920s and later.<sup>129</sup>

Construction slowed considerably during the 1930s until the beginning of World War II. By the mid-1930s the density of existing multi-family dwellings was relatively high just west of the downtown area, west of 16<sup>th</sup> Street, and within several blocks of Farnam Street. Construction of new multi-family dwellings during the Great Depression was limited and the hard economic times left many in search of economical places to live. As a result, multi-family dwellings remained a relatively popular form of housing in Omaha during this period. The distribution of attached dwellings stretched further north than before during this period, with concentrations surrounding Miller Park along North 30<sup>th</sup> Street. Only approximately seven percent of remaining multi-family

<sup>129</sup> Figures 10, 13-16 in the Additional Documentation section; Development patterns are based on an analysis of historic Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps and GIS shape files provided by the City of Omaha that display original streetcar lines throughout the city and a comparative analysis of parcels with attached dwellings using data compiled by Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture, P.C.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 37

dwellings were constructed during the Depression Era. This period of development is characterized by the construction of multi-family dwellings clustered in areas further from the downtown area.

Following national trends to address housing shortages during and following World War II and the economic boom of the postwar period, construction of multi-family dwellings increased dramatically during this period. Approximately 12 percent of the remaining multi-family dwellings date to the 1940s, while 23 percent of Omaha's extant multi-family dwellings were constructed in the 1950s and early 1960s. Condominiums date to the 1950s and 1960s and are located primarily in an area bound by California Street, North 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Hamilton Street, and North 40<sup>th</sup> Street. Exceptions to these general patterns of development are found throughout the city based on the development of specific neighborhoods.<sup>130</sup>

Attached dwellings are spread throughout the city of Omaha, but concentrations are generally located west and southwest of the downtown area, primarily west of I-480, north of Woolworth Avenue, South of Hamilton Street, and east of North 52<sup>nd</sup> Street. This area was well-served by former streetcar lines with attached dwellings being only a few blocks from established routes. Examples located farther afield, within a few blocks of the intersection of Highway 64 and North 60<sup>th</sup> Street, are located near the end of a former streetcar line. Further discussion of attached dwelling groupings and potential historic districts is provided following the description and registration requirements for each attached dwelling subtype.<sup>131</sup>

### PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Multi-family dwellings comprise numerous property subtypes discussed in Section E, which generally exhibit similar overall physical characteristics of construction method and materials. As discussed below, attached dwellings subtypes are primarily distinguished by differences in period, plan (exterior and interior) and scale along with a range of stylistic elements and exterior features, including driveways, alleys, and garages. Individual buildings within subtypes are primarily distinguished by variations in plan (interior and exterior configuration), form, and scale, which are described below.

#### Duplexes

By the 1880s duplexes were a relatively common housing type in Omaha. Duplexes are one- to three-story residences containing two self-sufficient units that feature private kitchens and bathrooms. Each dwelling is separated by a party wall and no additional units are located above or below each unit, unlike other multi-family dwellings like apartments, flats, and tenements. The exterior appearance of the building is often symmetrical, with each unit serving as a mirror image of the other. However, different configurations and arrangements of building groupings exist and are discussed below. Some variations exist where the building may appear as a single-family dwelling in order to match the rhythm and repetition of buildings along the streetscape. Common physical characteristics include size and scale, consisting of one to three stories in height and similar scale to single-family homes; and plan, typically rectangular in form and exactly two interior self-sufficient living units that share a party wall. The exteriors typically featured modest ornamentation reflective of the range of popular single-family residential architecture of any given period.

#### Row Houses

Construction of row houses was underway in Omaha by the late nineteenth century. Row houses are similar to duplexes except they contain three or more interior self-sufficient living units, most often consisting of multiple

<sup>130</sup> This analysis and statistics are based on GIS shape files provided by the City of Omaha that display original streetcar lines throughout the city and a comparative analysis of parcels with attached dwellings using data compiled by Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture, P.C.;

<sup>131</sup> General trends in multi-family housing were based on a GIS analysis of parcel information compiled by Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture, P.C.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section F Page 38**

stories, joined by common party walls. Generally, the exterior of each dwelling unit is similar in appearance. Row houses are sometimes referred to as townhouses. Common physical features include size and scale, consisting of one to three stories in height; and design and plan, typically rectangular in form and three or more interior self-sufficient living units that share party walls. Units are most often placed side-by-side, serving as mirror images of one another. However, other variations exist where the building may appear as a single-family dwelling in order to match the rhythm, repetition, and forms represented along the streetscape. Stylistic features and some sort of ornamentation was typically added to exteriors that reflected the various styles of residential architecture popular during the period.

**Condominiums**

Condominiums were constructed in Omaha during the 1950s and 1960s. This subtype is the largest group of the attached dwellings and contains individually owned sets of rooms that are separated by party walls. Common physical characteristics of condominiums include: scale, consisting of one to three stories in height; exterior plan, typically rectangular with shared entrances and interior hallways for accessing individual living units (variations exist that include direct access to each unit from shared covered walkways); and interior plan, with multiple owner-occupied living units per floor.<sup>132</sup> Condominiums are generally more austere than other types of multi-family dwellings with only modest architectural details that may consist of decorative brickwork, entryways with decorative iron supports, projecting beams, concrete screens, and the use of stonework.

**Configurations**

Individual buildings within the subtypes discussed above will commonly reflect one of the configurations that further serve to distinguish an individual building through its exterior plan and form. Exterior plan configurations include:

- Traditional – constructed with an overall rectangular plan or variation similar to footprint of a single-family residence.
- Tandem – constructed on a lot in the center of the block (not corner lot) where units are entered from different sides of the residence. This configuration sometimes enables the dwelling to appear as a single-family residence along the streetscape.
- Corner – constructed on a corner lot facing intersecting streets; individual living units are accessed from each street.
- L court – constructed in an “L” shape that forms a courtyard in the front or rear of the building (typically row houses).
- U court – constructed in a “U” shape that forms a courtyard in the front or rear of the building (typically row houses).

The placement of individual multi-family dwellings within a complex may also reflect these configurations, such as several buildings constructed together to form a U court in which the buildings form a “U” shape around a centrally located shared outdoor area.

<sup>132</sup> The exterior appearance of condominiums and traditional apartment building, which are described in the MPDF titled *Apartments, Flats, and Tenements in Omaha, Nebraska from 1880-1962*, are very similar. Condominiums are distinguished from other multi-family dwellings primarily because they are owner-occupied.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 39

**Architectural features**

Physical characteristics also include architectural elements and decorative features reflective of popular styles and the work of architects, builders, and developers discussed in *The Architecture of Attached Dwellings, 1880-1960* in Section E. Architectural styles applied to multi-family dwellings include Italianate, various Victorian Era styles, commercial vernacular, Prairie, Craftsman, Period Revival styles (including Second Renaissance Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Colonial Revival, Tudor and Jacobethan Revival), Art Deco, Moderne, International, post-World War II minimal traditionalism, Ranch, and Split-levels. The scale of attached dwellings are more similar to single-family residences than other multi-family dwellings like apartments and flats. Most multi-family dwellings in Omaha display the application of minimal ornamentation and reflect modest influences of these styles. Architectural features are typically displayed on entryways, door surrounds, window surrounds, decorative brick panels or coursing, decorative porch supports, roof forms, and roofline features like cornices and parapets in various combinations that collectively convey an architectural style.

**ASSOCIATIVE CHARACTERISTICS**

The associated historic contexts discussed in Section E provide an overview of broad historical patterns and events that influenced the development and construction of multi-family dwellings nationally and in Omaha. In addition to these contexts, the development of individual multi-family dwellings may have been influenced by one or more associative characteristics below. These associative characteristics relate to the function, role, or cultural affiliation of a building, its geographical location, and its relationship to other related events. As such, associative characteristics assist in understanding the importance of multi-family dwellings within the context of residential development in the city.<sup>133</sup>

The themes and examples discussed below are not meant to be an exhaustive list, but serve to illustrate how events important in the history of the city may have influenced the development of multi-family dwellings. As site-specific research is completed on individual properties, additional associative characteristics to consider in evaluating the historical significance of this property type may emerge.

**The influence of transportation networks on residential development**

Residential development in Omaha was greatly influenced by roads and rail transportation. In the 1860s Omaha emerged as a transcontinental transportation center. Based in Omaha, the Union Pacific Railroad Company, once joined with the Central Pacific, created the first transcontinental railroad in the United States, which passed through Omaha. Within the city, the Omaha Horse and Railway Company established horse-drawn streetcar service in the late 1860s. Between 1884 and 1888, five new streetcar companies and one cable car company were established, which enhanced residential access along major thoroughfares to sources of employment and the provision of goods and services. Major thoroughfares along Farnam Street and North 16<sup>th</sup> Street anchored early residential development. In 1887 multi-family dwellings were located primarily in the city's urban core, which was bordered by railroads to the north, east, and south. Some of the earliest examples of multi-family dwellings are located within close proximity of the major transportation hubs, such as the Union Pacific Railroad Depot, near the intersection of Mason Street and South 9<sup>th</sup> Street. Streetcar lines increased access within the urban core and enabled access to areas further from the urban core. The expansion of transportation networks in the city influenced and facilitated the construction of multi-family

<sup>133</sup> Section E discusses *The Economics of Attached Dwellings, 1880-1960*, and the influences of transportation, commerce and industry on residential development are discussed in the *Associative Characteristics* portion of this section. Consideration of associated characteristics is provided to understand how these themes influenced the construction and development of multi-family dwellings in the city and may enhance their importance under one or more of the National Register areas of significance.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 40

dwellings, and provided access to places of work and the suburban development that emerged in the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>134</sup>

Residential development and the construction of multi-family dwellings gradually moved away from centers of industry and business in the downtown. As the established streetcar lines gave way to the widespread use and ownership of automobiles during early decades of the twentieth century, workers and professionals lived farther from work, which resulted in concentrations of multi-family dwellings that stretched to the west along Farnam Street to 50<sup>th</sup> Street and extended for several blocks along cross streets in each direction.<sup>135</sup>

In addition to the location of residential development, transportation also influenced the features found in multi-family dwellings, most notably garages. Garages were constructed to shelter automobiles are uncommon in early multi-family dwellings nearer to the downtown, but are a common feature on residential properties after the early decades of the twentieth century. Garages were constructed as either attached, detached, or integral features and are generally more prominent on attached dwellings than other types of multi-family dwellings like apartments or flats. Additional information about the impact of automobiles on multi-family dwellings is provided in the associated context, *The Effects of the Automobile on Attached Dwellings, 1900-1940*, included in Section E. The proximity and relationship of multi-family dwellings to transportation networks during the historic period may constitute an important associative characteristic that affected development patterns of this property type.

#### The influence of industrial growth on residential development

Industrial growth in Omaha during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provided sources of employment as the population of the city swelled. Early industries in Omaha were located in or adjacent to the urban core and railroad lines. For example, in the 1870s the Omaha & Grant Smelting and Refining Company, a large source of employment, was located immediately north of downtown, near the present-day intersection of Riverfront Drive and Interstate Highway 480. The Union Pacific Railroad Shops was another industrial complex and large source of employment, and was located northwest of downtown, near the intersection of Burt Street and North 12<sup>th</sup> Street. To provide workers with housing, multi-family dwellings radiated from commercial and industrial areas in or near the urban core and downtown, especially north and south of Farnam Street and east and west of North 16<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>136</sup>

The establishment of Omaha's livestock processing industry during the late nineteenth century also influenced patterns of residential growth by creating demand for housing in close proximity to the stockyards and meatpacking houses located in South Omaha, generally between L and O Streets along South 33<sup>rd</sup> Street. Centered on the Union Stockyards Company in South Omaha, meatpacking companies such as the Armour-Cudahy Packing Company, George Hammond Packing Company, Omaha Packing Company, and Swift & Company provided an important source of employment. As a result, residential growth generally occurred in close proximity and radiated outward from these processing centers.<sup>137</sup> The influence of industrial growth may assist in understanding the development of this property type.

<sup>134</sup> Lawrence H. Larsen and Barbara J. Cottrell, *The Gate City: A History of Omaha* (Boulder, Colo.: Pruett Publishing Company, 1982), 31; Figures 10-12 in Additional Documentation section.

<sup>135</sup> Larsen and Cottrell, 31; Figures 11-16 in Additional Documentation section.

<sup>136</sup> Figure 10-11 in Additional Documentation section.

<sup>137</sup> Wilson J. Warren, *Tied to the Great Packing Machine: The Midwest and Meatpacking* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2007), 12-15; Mead & Hunt, "Reconnaissance Survey of Portions of South Omaha," Nebraska Historic Building Survey report, prepared for City of Omaha and Nebraska State Historical Society, June 2005, 2-3.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 41

**The influence of city annexations on residential development**

The city of Omaha was incorporated in 1857 and was platted with a conventional grid layout that included 320 city blocks. As Omaha increased in size, it began to annex several small communities within Douglas County and along the periphery of the city. Large tracts of land were annexed to the city during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that resulted in existing concentrations of housing and centers of populations. For example, Benson, Florence, Dundee, and South Omaha were annexed by Omaha, and multi-family dwelling within these areas may reflect different features when compared to multi-family dwellings closer to the downtown. Therefore, annexation patterns may assist in understanding the development of this property type.<sup>138</sup>

**The influence of immigration on residential development**

Foreign immigration and domestic migration patterns greatly affected the ethnic makeup of neighborhoods and is described in the associated context, *The Influence of Ethnic Heritage on Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962*, which is included in Section E. Major influxes of ethnic groups occurred between 1870 and 1890 and in the early decades of the twentieth century. Many of these groups tended to cluster in select neighborhoods and established enclaves with a variety of services to provide social, religious, and business services. For example, Little Bohemia and Little Poland, located adjacent to the stockyards, included meeting halls, churches, and businesses to serve the community and maintain customs and cultural traditions. Multi-family dwellings within or near these urban enclaves may have been constructed to meet the needs of immigrant groups in much the same manner. The settlement patterns of immigrant groups may have affected the development of multi-family dwellings and represent an important associative characteristic.<sup>139</sup>

**The influence of World War II and postwar expansion on residential development**

World War II and the economic boom of the postwar period development resulted in extensive construction of shopping centers, businesses and industrial complexes, and large tracts of residential area, including multi-family dwellings, many planned and constructed by developers at a scale unseen during the prewar period. Between the onset of World War II and the 1970s, Omaha more than doubled in population, and subdivisions developed to the west and southwest to account for the increase. Postwar expansion in Omaha was stimulated by commercial sectors, such as insurance, and new industries that relocated to the city, such as the Continental Can Company, Allied Chemical and Dye Corporation, and Western Electric. Expanded military infrastructure also contributed to postwar growth, such as the relocation of the Strategic Air Command to Offutt Air force Base adjacent to the city limits to the southwest. Government investments in agriculture, irrigation projects, and the Interstate Highway system further enhanced residential growth during this period. For example, Congress authorized the Interstate Highway system in 1956 and the construction of Interstate Highway 80 provided jobs and provided greater access to and from the city. Understanding the effects of the postwar economic boom may assist in understanding the characteristics and development patterns of this property type.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>138</sup> Mead & Hunt, "Reconnaissance Survey of Selected Neighborhoods in Omaha, Nebraska," Nebraska Historic Building Survey report, prepared for City of Omaha and Nebraska State Historical Society, April 2002, 10-11.

<sup>139</sup> Warren, 55; Mead & Hunt, "Reconnaissance Survey of Portions of South Omaha," Nebraska Historic Building Survey report, prepared for City of Omaha and Nebraska State Historical Society, May 2008, 2-3.

<sup>140</sup> Larsen and Cottrell, 268; Mead & Hunt, "Reconnaissance Survey of Selected Neighborhoods in West-Central Omaha, Including Fairacres, Dillon's Fairacres, Mel-Air, and Others," Nebraska Historic Building Survey report, prepared for City of Omaha and Nebraska State Historical Society, July 2009, 3-4.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 42

**APPLICATION OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA**

Multi-family dwellings are evaluated for National Register eligibility under the four National Register Criteria for Evaluation (Criteria) listed below, based on the application of the National Register Bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. This section includes a discussion of the potential significance of multi-family dwellings under each National Register criterion, followed by a discussion of registration requirements for determining whether a property that possesses significance under one or more National Register areas of significance qualifies for listing in the National Register.

**Significance**

Criterion A: Event

Under this criterion, multi-family dwellings are most likely to possess significance for an association with an event or patterns of events in the associated historic contexts defined in Section B and described in Section E. To possess significance under Criterion A, properties are required to have a direct relationship with a historical event or trend in an important way; an indirect, mere, or inferential relationship is not adequate to support significance under this criterion. The associated historic contexts discussed below are related to a National Register area of significance with examples of how a multi-family dwelling may possess significance.

The associated historic contexts of *Community Planning and Development of Attached Dwellings, 1880-1962*, and *The Economics of Attached Dwellings, 1880-1960*, relate the National Register area of significance of *Community Planning and Development*. As a residential property type, similar to single-family residences, individual multi-family dwellings are not likely to have played a direct role in the development of the physical structure of the city in an important way nor are individual buildings likely to singularly represent the broad historical trends that influenced community development in Omaha. For example, a duplex constructed in 1920 and within a few blocks of a former major streetcar line was likely built at that location because of its access to employment, goods, and services. However, this duplex is one among many residential properties with this physical association and does not alone represent the physical development of the city in an important way as the association with the streetcar could apply to any multi-family dwelling or single-family residence along the former major streetcar line. A multi-family dwelling with a direct and important association to a formative period of urban development, as evidenced by public improvements made in response to providing housing for large numbers of residents, or a multi-family dwelling whose construction was made possible by an important government program, may qualify for its association with the design and physical development of the city or neighborhood. Section E and the *Associative Characteristics* section provides a discussion of the types of events and trends to consider when evaluating a multi-family dwelling under Criterion A. Under the National Register area of significance *Community Planning and Development*, it is more likely that a concentration of multi-family dwellings would better illustrate important patterns associated with the design and development of the physical structure of the city as a potential historic district (discussed below).

The associated historic context of *Ethnic Heritage As Illustrated in Attached Dwellings, 1860-1962* relates to local events and trends in the history of groups with common ethnic and racial identities under the National Register area of significance of *Ethnic Heritage*. It is important to understand that multi-family dwellings were typically constructed by one or more individual developers or by a commercial entity as an investment to be rented to tenants and were not typically constructed by the building's residents. As such, multi-family dwellings will not typically display physical characteristics representative of contributions of immigrant or ethnic groups. Therefore, making a direct link to an ethnic group based solely on physical characteristics of the building is difficult to establish. As a result, individual multi-family dwellings will not likely possess significance under *Ethnic Heritage* unless the building possesses a direct and important association to a historic event or pattern of

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 43

events. It is more likely that an individual multi-family dwelling will be one of many buildings that comprise an ethnic enclave as a potential historic district (discussed below).

Criterion B: Person

A property may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion B if the property possesses a strong association with a person significant in the history of the city, state, or nation. The specific contributions of the individual must be identified, and the associated property should best illustrate the person's important achievements within one or more of the associated historic contexts defined in Section B.

A person's important contribution to history is often associated with their occupation or activities outside their place of residence. As a result, the property that best illustrates their important contributions to history will have a direct association to their achievement and will rarely be residential. For example, the site of an important technological innovation or the first example of its implementation would better illustrate the significance of its developer and their contribution to the professional field rather than a residential property, unless the event occurred at that their home. In rare instances, such as an individual in which few, if any, remaining properties are able to convey an association with the life or achievement of that individual, a multi-family dwelling may possess significance under this criterion. As such, multi-family dwellings are unlikely to qualify for listing under this criterion.

Criterion C: Design/Construction

Under this criterion, multi-family dwellings are most likely to demonstrate significance under the associated context *The Architecture of Attached Dwellings*, which relates to the National Register area of significance of *Architecture*. To possess significance under Criterion C, a multi-family dwelling must meet at least one of the following requirements: (1) embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; (2) represent the work of a master; (3) possesses high artistic value; or (4) represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. A discussion of the requirements and how a multi-family dwelling may meet the requirements is provided below. The physical characteristics of multi-family dwellings are outlined above under *Physical Characteristics*, which will assist in identifying the distinguishing architectural features under this criterion.

*Distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction*

Architectural features common to multi-family dwellings are outlined above under *Physical characteristics*. As a residential property type, multi-family dwellings are a well-established and widespread property type comprising several subtypes that generally exhibit similar overall physical features. A multi-family dwelling can meet this requirement if it exhibits a distinctive combination of physical characteristics to be representative of the multi-family dwelling architecture, or exhibits an important phase of architectural development in Omaha.

To possess significance as a representative example of distinctive multi-family architecture in Omaha, a building should stand out when compared to others of its type within the area of the city the property is located. For example, a duplex may serve as a better example of its type if it includes distinguishing features such as a tandem configuration and exterior details, such as porches and stylistic ornamentation, while others in the area and of the same period do not. It may be necessary to complete a comparative property analysis to determine how characteristics, such as exterior plan configuration, form, and scale, serve to distinguish a multi-family dwelling from other examples in the city.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>141</sup> To complete a comparative property analysis, the *Additional Documentation* section of this MPDF provides maps showing the concentrations of multi-family dwellings in the city, graphs showing relative numbers of each subtype, and a list of properties within the types and subtypes.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 44

To possess significance as a representative of an important type of multi-family architecture in Omaha, the building should illustrate a pattern of features that had an impact on the design and construction of subsequent multi-family dwellings in the city.

*Represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic value*

Few multi-family dwellings in Omaha display features fully representative of high-style architecture under this requirement. Under this requirement, a multi-family dwelling may represent the work of master architect or builder through characteristics that are identifiable and indicative of his or her work. The associated context *Prominent Architects, Developers and Contractors of Attached Dwellings, 1860-1962*, in Section E, provides a list of prominent architects and builders along with biographical information and a list of known completed works in Omaha for consideration when evaluating multi-family dwellings under this requirement. A multi-family dwelling may possess importance under this requirement if it exhibits notable architectural design features associated with one of these individuals.

The influence of high-style architecture on multi-family dwellings in Omaha includes a variety of popular architectural styles of the period, which are described under the *Physical characteristics* section above. Following National Register guidance under these requirements, a multi-family dwelling will not likely qualify as having high artistic value unless it "...so fully articulates a particular concept of design that it expresses an aesthetic ideal" or if the multi-family dwelling is determined to "express aesthetic ideals or design concepts more fully than other properties of its type."<sup>142</sup> Most multi-family dwellings in Omaha display a modest application of stylistic features and do not represent examples of high-style architecture under this requirement. Ornamentation may be limited to entryways, door surrounds, window surrounds, decorative brick panels or coursing, decorative porch supports, and roofline features like cornices and parapets. As a result, for a multi-family dwelling to possess high artistic value under Criterion C, it should display a combination of stylistic features that collectively conveys the essence of a defined architectural style and more fully articulates the ideal of that style when compared to others of its type within the area of the city the property is located. For example, a brick row house of 3 units with some minimal decorative brickwork around windows and along the roofline but no other stylistic features does not convey the essence of a defined architectural style. However, a brick row house of a substantial size with eight units that features brick corbelling, cornices along the roofline, brick bay windows, arched windows with decorative brick window surrounds, brick coursing, and corner turrets with conical roofs and decorative dentil molding may be found to contain a combination of stylistic features necessary to convey the essence of Victorian Era residential architecture as applied to a row house.

Under this requirement of Criterion C, it may be necessary to complete a comparative property analysis to determine what combination of decorative features best represents a style when compared to others of its type.<sup>143</sup>

*Distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (historic districts)*

This requirement under Criterion C addresses cohesive concentrations of multi-family dwellings that possess significant linkages or continuity of buildings or structures that are united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development as a historic district. Concentrations of multi-family dwellings meeting this requirement under Criterion C will convey a "visual sense of the overall historic environment or be an arrangement of

<sup>142</sup> National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 20.

<sup>143</sup> To complete a comparative property analysis, the *Additional Documentation* section of this MPDF provides maps showing the concentrations of the multi-family dwelling in the city, graphs showing relative numbers of each subtype, and a list of properties within subtypes.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 45

historically or functionally related properties."<sup>144</sup> Following National Register guidance, a concentration of multi-family dwellings should also be associated with one or more of the associated historic contexts under at least one National Register area of significance applying Criterion A, B, C or D rather than merely illustrating a grouping of historically related buildings. In this way, a concentration of multi-family dwellings needs to collectively meet the same thresholds of significance as individual properties outlined under Criterion A, B, C, or D to be considered significant.

Research and analysis completed for this MPDF focused on multi-family dwellings; therefore, this guidance can only address concentrations of multi-family dwellings within the city as potential historic districts. Potential historic districts that contain multi-family dwellings and a variety of other property types must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Criterion D: Information Potential

Criterion D most often applies to archaeological properties. Multi-family dwellings offer few sources of unknown and retrieved sources of data to contribute to the understanding of history. As a result, this property type is unlikely to qualify for listing under this criterion.

Criteria Considerations

In some cases, National Register Criteria Considerations may apply to the eligibility of multi-family dwellings. The two *Criteria Considerations* that are most likely to apply are discussed below:

*Criterion Consideration B: Moved Properties*

Multi-family dwellings that were moved before their period of significance do not need to meet this consideration. Properties moved within the period of significance may be eligible for listing in the National Register if they retain the physical and associative characteristics that convey their significance. A property moved outside the period of significance under Criterion C retains significance if it maintains a comparable setting, orientation, and siting to its historic location. A multi-family dwelling significant under Criterion A only will rarely be eligible if moved outside the period of significance because this results in a loss of its historical association with important events. In rare cases, a moved property significant for its associative value will retain significance if relocated within close proximity to its original location; eligibility should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Groupings created by moving properties together will rarely be eligible for listing in the National Register because this creates a false sense of historic development.

*Criterion Consideration G: Properties Less than 50 Years Old*

In rare cases, this provision may recognize the continuing importance and use of multi-family dwellings in meeting housing needs in Omaha. A justification of exceptional significance is required for individual properties less than 50 years in age or with substantial physical alterations and for historic districts where less-than-50-year-old resources comprise the majority of the resources. In these cases, the date of construction and the date of major alteration(s) should be considered in deciding whether Criterion Consideration G needs to be applied and exceptional importance justified. All properties less than 50 years in age must exhibit exceptional importance and retain a high degree of historic integrity. The statement of significance must explicitly address how the property meets this requirement.

<sup>144</sup> National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 5.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section F Page 46**

*Level and period of significance*

Multi-family dwellings may be nominated under this MPDF at the local, state, or national level. Although constructed throughout the nation, no comprehensive survey or study of multi-family dwellings at the national level has yet been undertaken nor has a statewide study been undertaken in Nebraska. Therefore, most multi-family dwellings that qualify for listing in the National Register, whether individually or as a grouping, will possess importance at the local level because they reflect local development patterns and the architecture of Omaha.

The period of significance for multi-family dwellings nominated under this MPDF will depend on the National Register criteria under which significance is derived. Some periods of significance will be a single year (date of construction) and others will span many years, reflecting the length of time when the property was associated with important historical events, patterns, or people.

**REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

Multi-family dwellings in Omaha found to possess significance under one or more areas of significance listed above will generally qualify for listing in the National Register under this MPDF only if they exhibit integrity and convey significance under the applicable National Register Criteria. The associative and physical characteristics in which they derive significance should be stated in the evaluation and include a discussion on which aspects of integrity are most vital to demonstrate significance.

Under Criterion A, location, association, and setting are the most important aspects of integrity because they establish and convey the relationship of the property to historical patterns or events. Design, materials, and workmanship are the most important aspects of integrity to consider for properties eligible under Criterion C because they physically convey the architectural significance and distinctive nature of the property type necessary to convey significance.

A review of the seven aspects of integrity—location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association—and how to assess integrity for each aspect is provided in *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. However, for multi-family dwellings, buildings should retain overall integrity of the following nine types of characteristics within each type, subtype, or variation as applicable under the relevant National Register Evaluation Criteria.

- Form, plan, and scale – such as height, massing, and configuration, including courtyards and ventilation shafts that influenced the plan and form of the building.
- Exterior materials and cladding – generally brick, stucco, or clapboard (or replacement materials that are visually compatible with the original exterior materials).
- Fenestration pattern and window configuration – such as sashes and muntin types (or replacement materials that are visually compatible with the original).
- Entryways – such as the location, sizes and continued use of exterior entryways to gain access to individual units.
- Exterior design features – considerations may include porches, garages, driveways, pedestrian walkways, and landscaping (more relevant for considering multi-family dwellings under Criterion C).

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section F Page 47**

- Architectural features – consideration of the application of ornamental elements and stylistic features (more relevant for considering multi-family dwellings under Criterion C).
- Interior plan configuration – considerations include ability to understand historic function by illustrating the presence of multiple individual living units from cues such as interior hallways, stairways or other points of access to individual dwelling units (more relevant for considering condominiums under Criterion C).
- Spatial relationship to the street and historic character of the surrounding environment (more relevant for considering multi-family dwellings under Criterion A).
- Close physical proximity to and visual link to one or more associative characteristics (more relevant for considering multi-family dwellings under Criterion A).

Alterations completed within the period of significance generally will not diminish the historic integrity of the property and may have themselves achieved significance. The relative scarcity and lack of comparable properties should be used to determine the acceptable level of alteration while retaining integrity. For example, a larger degree of alteration may be acceptable for an uncommon property type, while few alterations may be acceptable for more common property types because other examples with higher degrees of integrity better represent the property type or convey the same historical or architectural significance.

Significant alterations occurring beyond the period of significance will diminish the overall integrity of a property and may disqualify it from National Register listing. Significant alterations may include, but are not limited to, large additions that alter the original massing of the building, structural changes, altered original fenestration patterns, replacement of exterior cladding, major changes to building facades, and removal of pivotal buildings or structures from within a complex. Multi-family dwellings no longer serving in their function should retain their overall interior plan of divided spaces characteristic of type or subtype. Similarly, changes to building mechanical, electrical, or plumbing systems are permissible if the building continues to retain the overall interior plan and exterior features characteristic of the type or subtype.

The loss of certain physical features is expected among multi-family dwellings due to the continued need to function as rental properties or from modifications for conversion into single-family units or adaptive reuse. Commonly altered features include modifications to entryways, stoops, and porches; interior ventilation and light shafts; interior layout; and other exterior features mentioned under *Physical Characteristics*. Changes are permissible to individual buildings provided the historic character is retained and the overall integrity of the categories listed above is maintained in a manner that enables the building to convey significance.

**Historic Districts**

Concentrations of multi-family dwellings related by design should collectively convey physical features that visually provide a sense of the historic character and/or link to associative characteristics within the defined period of significance under one or more National Register Evaluation criterion and area of significance. An individual multi-family dwelling may contribute to a potential historic district if it retains its overall plan, form, and scale. Due to continued use as rental properties, some loss of integrity to physical features common to the type or subtype, including architectural ornamentation, is expected. Changes may include alterations to entryways, stoops, and porches; interior ventilation and light shafts; interior layout; and other exterior features mentioned under *Physical characteristics*. These changes are permissible to individual buildings provided the concentration overall remains united by plan, form, and scale; retains its historic character; and continues to

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section F Page 48**

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function as a residential property. Noncontributing components include buildings not present during the period of significance and buildings that no longer possess integrity due to major alterations, additions, and loss of historic fabric to the degree to which the plan, form, or scale is no longer identifiable.

For example, individual multi-family dwellings whose construction was made possible by an important government program, such as the Federal Housing Authority, to address housing shortages brought about during or immediately following World War II may not meet the individual thresholds under Criterion A or Criterion C. However, groupings may qualify as a historic district if, collectively, they retain plan, form, and scale, and continue to serve a residential function.

A historic district is typically contained within a single geographic area and consists of contiguous properties. However, there may be rare occasions in which two or more significant and definable areas historically linked may now be separated by areas of unrelated properties but that comprise a discontinuous historic district. Potential discontinuous historic districts must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section G Page 49**

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**G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:**

The geographic area of this study encompasses the City of Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section H Page 50

**H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS:**

**Introduction:**

Lynn Meyer with the City of Omaha Planning Department initially gathered information on multi-family dwellings in Omaha in the late 1980s. At this time, the purpose of the study was to list several row houses and apartment buildings on the National Register of Historic Places and to begin gathering information for a MPD on these building types in Omaha. The material gathered included a review of building permits and city directory listings for known apartment, row house and duplex buildings up to 1935. A preliminary analysis of construction booms, size, scale and architectural styles was performed and typologies were drafted. While several buildings were nominated to the National Register using this material as a basis of information, the project slowed due to staff and budget cuts to what could be completed during volunteer hours.

Then, at about the same time that Mr. Meyer retired, the State of Nebraska passed legislation creating the Valuation Incentive Program. Administered through the Nebraska SHPO, the program freezes the assessed value of property which is listed on the National Register and undergoes a certified rehabilitation. Interest among Omaha property owners for these types of projects rose. In an effort to meet their needs, it was determined that Mr. Meyer's study should be completed and formalized.

Work to complete this MPD and a similar MPD entitled *Apartments, Flats and Tenements in Omaha, Nebraska from 1880-1962* were completed in two phases. The first phase was completed by Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture and included research and the development of the statement of historic contexts (Section E) and an analysis of multi-family dwellings. This work expanded and built upon the work of Mr. Meyer and resulted in a detailed analysis of the historical information; much of this information is based on Sanborn Maps synthesized in the figures and maps in the Additional Documentation section of this MPD. The summary of identification and evaluation methods completed during the first phase is outlined in the first four sections below. The last section below summarizes efforts by Mead & Hunt to review previous work to develop associated property types and registration requirements (Section F).

**Scope:**

After reviewing the material of the previous study and discussing its contents with the Nebraska SHPO a few changes in scope were made. It was decided to extend the end of the period studied to 1962, the year of the last available updated Sanborn Map for Omaha. It was agreed that this end date represented the end of a distinct period of significance. 1962 marks the end of the post war period of construction in Omaha and the beginning of urban renewal. Additionally, after talking to Professor Tom Hubka of the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee about the importance of non-extant buildings in understanding the context and significance of our remaining built environment, it was decided to include non-extant buildings in this study as well. Because so much of Omaha has been built over again and again, it was believed that looking at only those buildings still standing would not accurately portray the context in which some of these buildings were erected. Finally, in reviewing the proposed building types and the number of buildings included in the study, it was felt that the study should be separated into two; apartments and attached dwellings. The previous analysis indicated that these two major groups had different boom periods, were built for different types of owners, and were of a sufficiently different scale and proportion that they would be best explained separately.

**Identification:**

Between the previous study and this one, the city of Omaha had lost most of its building permit records. Sanborn Maps were then identified as the next most expeditious means of identifying attached dwellings.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section H Page 51**

Therefore, a thorough review of the available Sanborn Maps for Omaha was begun, reviewing all available years; 1887, 1890, 1918, 1934 and 1962.<sup>145</sup>

The reviews were completed chronologically, color coding black and white copies of the Sanborn Maps to highlight apartments, attached dwellings and buildings which had changed use. Each series was compared to the previous series to catch changes in use and rule out those that did not belong in the study. When the comparison for a series was complete (i.e., all the maps of 1887), those buildings highlighted as attached dwellings were verified as already being in or were added into the database.

Information entered into the database at this time included the address, pages on the Sanborn Map, number of dwelling units, number of stories, roofing type and cornice notes. Because two unit row houses are common in Omaha and look very similar to duplexes on Sanborn Maps, a theory developed that it may be possible to differentiate between row houses and duplexes by reviewing roof types. Those buildings marked with an "X" (shingled roof) or "☰" (metal, slate, tile or asbestos shingles) might be duplexes as shingled roofs generally require a pitch; those marked "☐" (composition roof) would be categorized as row houses, since composition roofs are typically installed on flat roofs. After gathering photographs from the Assessor's website on each extant property and categorizing it as a row house or duplex, roof types were reviewed and compared to the building's typology. It was concluded that this method did not work with any degree of accuracy for predicting which buildings were row houses and which were duplexes.

A second theory developed that it may be possible to differentiate between row houses and duplexes by reviewing cornice notes. Those buildings marked on the Sanborn maps with the symbol for wood or metal cornices were noted, as well as those noted as having a "French Roof". In comparing the building types of extant buildings with these notations, those listed as having either type of cornice or a "French Roof" were most likely to be row houses.

Furthermore, it was noted that any extant building consisting of three units or more was always a row house. In this way, typologies were established for many of the non-extant buildings.

Buildings highlighted on the Sanborn Maps as attached dwellings included any buildings illustrated as a series of boxes designated with "D"s for dwelling on the earliest date it was shown on the Sanborn maps. If a building was shown on the Sanborn Map at an earlier time, but with a use not included in this study, for example a store, it was not included in the database. If a building was in the synchronous apartment database as a named apartment building from the city directory or from the previous study, but clearly had an initial use as an attached dwelling, the information for that building was moved to this study and a reference kept to its changed status and name as an apartment.

Before entering information from the final 1962 series of Sanborn Maps into the database, attached dwellings on these maps were compared to the current assessor's online records. The Sanborn Maps were then annotated with the assessor's property identification number if the building was extant or noted as non-extant. For those that were extant, architectural style, Omaha property identification number and the assessor's date of construction were noted and added to the database.

<sup>145</sup> Note that volumes 3 & 4 are missing from the 1934 Sanborn Maps for Omaha, creating a gap in the information available for South Omaha (vol 3) and the near western suburbs of Omaha, including Dundee, Cathedral, Joslyn Castle, Happy Hollow, etc (vol 4).

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section H Page 52**

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**Verification:**

A final pass was made through the Sanborn Maps to analyze automobile garage types and changes in use over time. During this pass, the original information was checked again for accuracy.

When this list was completed, it was compared and consolidated with the database from the previous study by Mr. Meyer, adding architects, owners, builders and construction dates to the database.

**Future Research Considerations:**

A future review of the limited number of plans available on microfilm at the Omaha Planning office and the January 1<sup>st</sup> newspaper articles highlighting the year in review might further distinguish known architects, owners and builders, common architectural features, styles and other architectural information.

Additionally, analyzing ethnic data from the now available 1920 and 1930 decennial censuses and overlaying it with the 1918 and 1934 Sanborn Maps might further distinguish additional ethnic enclaves; revealing differences between construction styles and community planning patterns of different ethnic groups.

**Evaluation:**

Development of associated property types was based on a review of the work completed above coupled with extensive experience by Mead & Hunt completing surveys of much of the city. This discussion provides the development patterns and physical and associative characteristics that inform the application of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation to the multi-family dwellings addressed in this MPD. Importantly, this section provides for the consideration of the location, distinguishing features, and influence of a number of historical trends to determine significance. Registration requirements reflect how to evaluate the integrity of multi-family dwellings based on their types of characteristics, including historic districts.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

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Section I Page 53

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

**Section I Page 54**

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

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**Section I Page 55**

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional Documentation Page 56

This section of this MPDF provides figures that illustrate multi-family dwellings developed by Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture. Figures of individual multi-family dwellings shown on Sanborn Maps are provided as representative examples only and do not represent properties that meet the registration requirements of this MPDF, but serve to illustrate the property type discussion. Figures showing the distribution of multi-family dwellings provide notable areas of the city with concentrations of multi-family dwellings. Mead & Hunt, Inc., used this information to assist in developing the property type discussion and registration requirements. See Section H for a summary of the identification and evaluation methods used to develop the analysis of Sanborn Maps provided in this section.

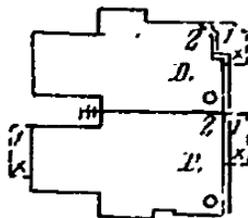


Figure 7: Example of a duplex at 1124-1126 S 31<sup>st</sup> St., Omaha, shown on 1918 Sanborn Map, p. 182.

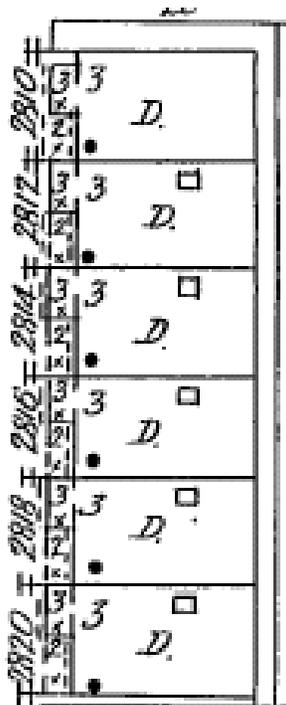


Figure 8: Example of a row house at 2810-2820 Half-Howard, Omaha, shown on 1890 Sanborn Map, p. 42.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section      Additional  
                 Documentation      Page    57

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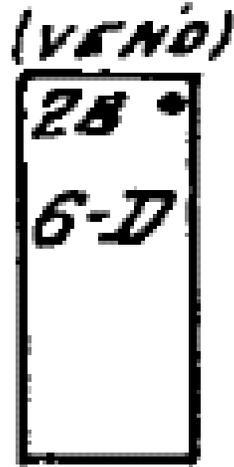


Figure 9: Example of a condominium at 5011 Poppleton, Omaha, shown on 1962 Sanborn Map, p. 464j.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional  
Documentation Page 58

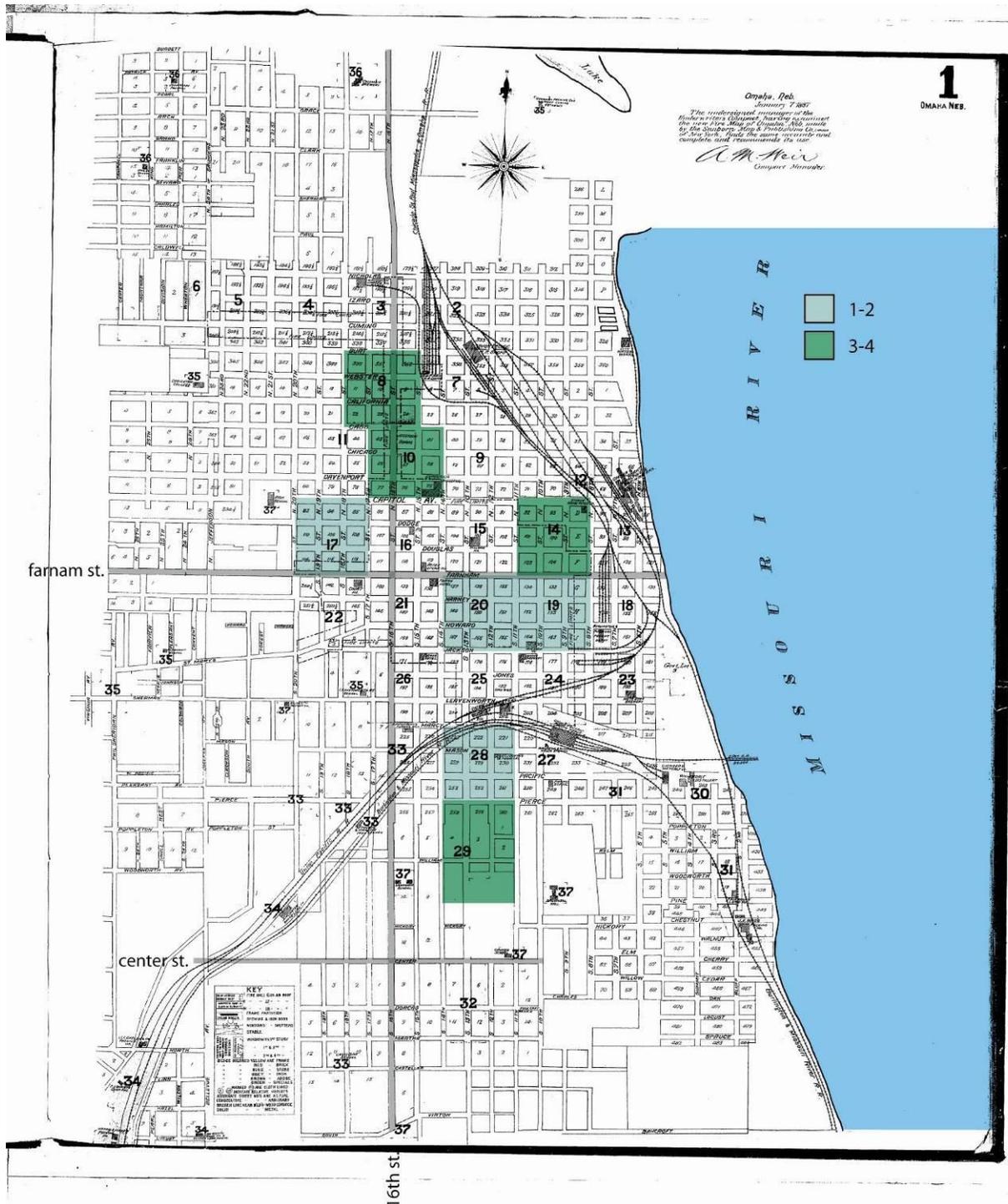


Figure 10: 1887 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 1 for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings on each page of this volume.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional  
Documentation Page 59

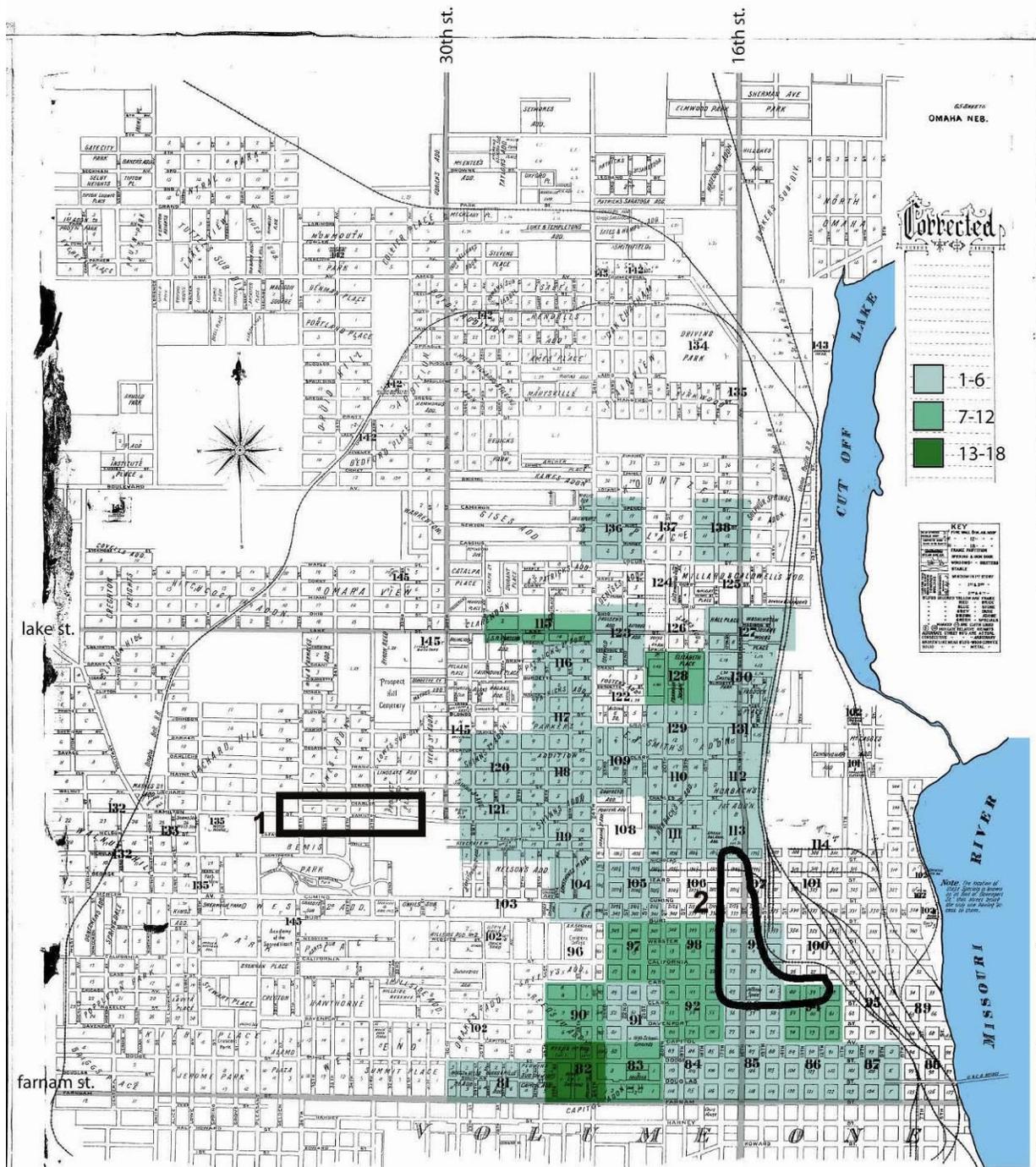


Figure 11: 1890 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 1 for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings on each page of this volume. Area 1 highlights the Swedish enclave in 1890. Area 2 highlights the Irish enclave in 1890.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional Documentation Page 60

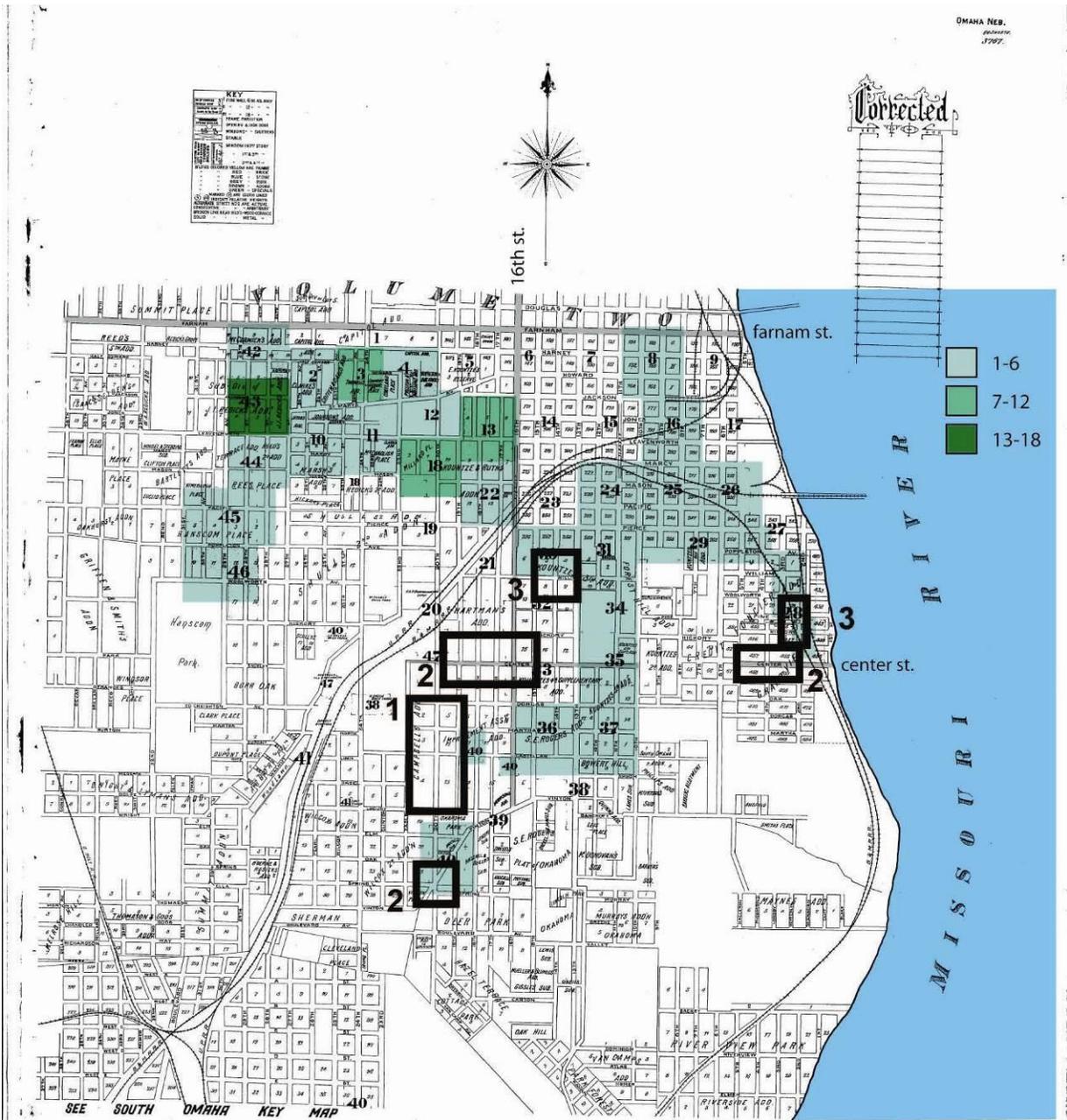


Figure 12: 1890 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 2 for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings on each page of this volume. Area 1 highlights the Swedish enclave in 1890. Area 2 highlights the German enclaves in 1890. Area 3 highlights the Czech enclaves in 1890.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional  
Documentation Page 61

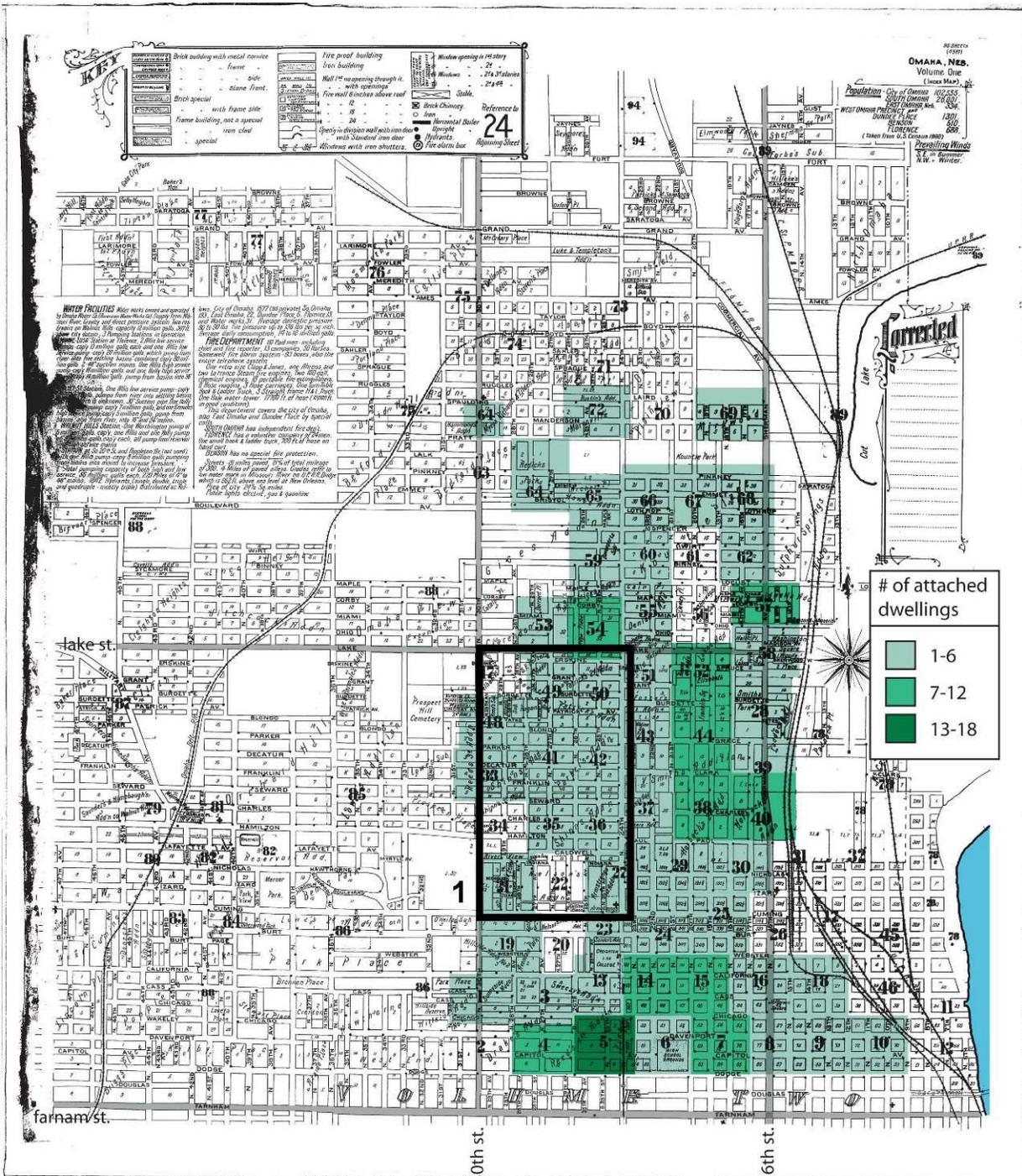


Figure 13: 1918 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 1 for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings on each page of this volume. Area 1 highlights the African American enclave after 1920.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional  
Documentation Page 62

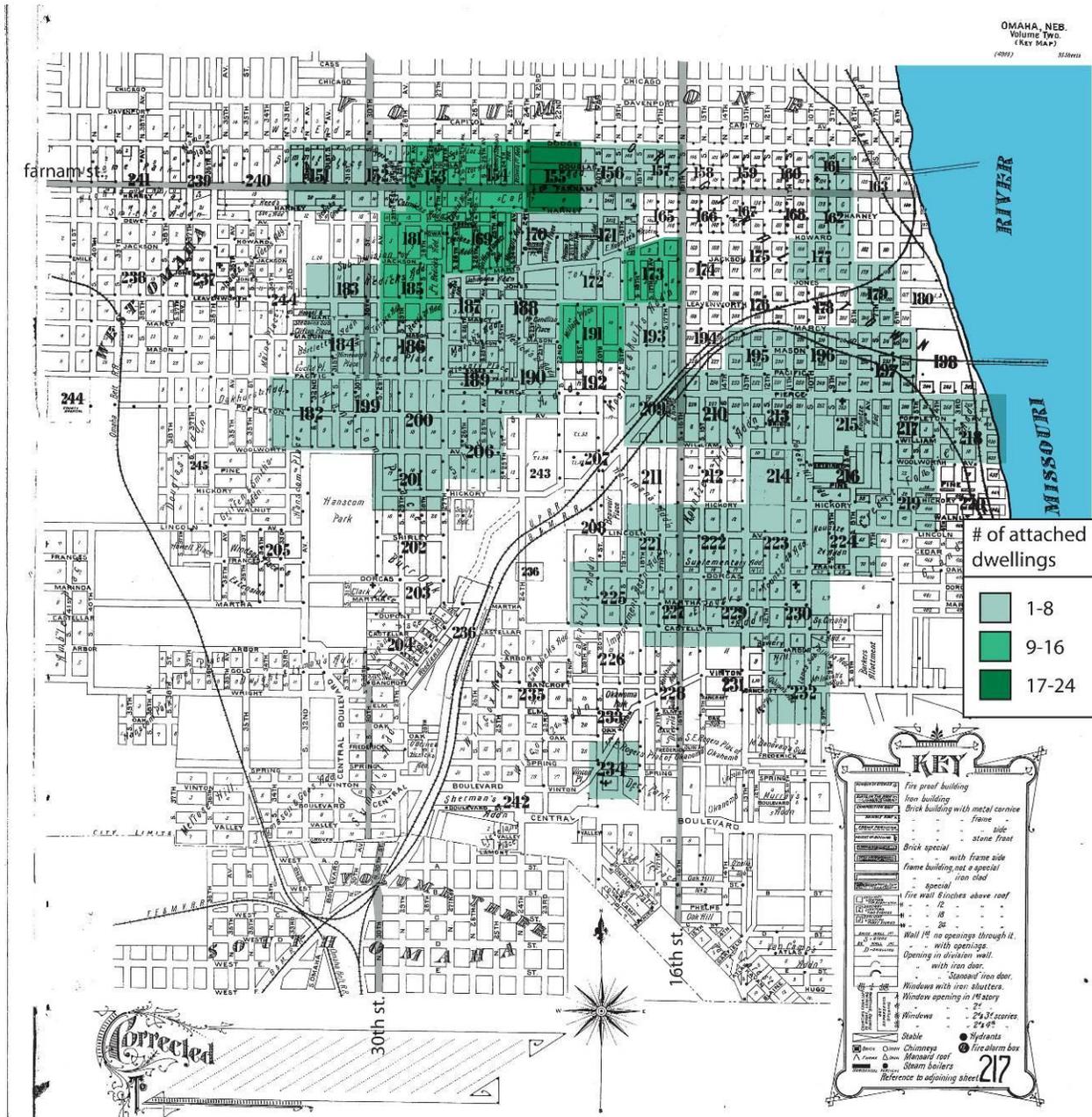


Figure 14: 1918 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 2 for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings on each page of this volume.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional Documentation Page 63

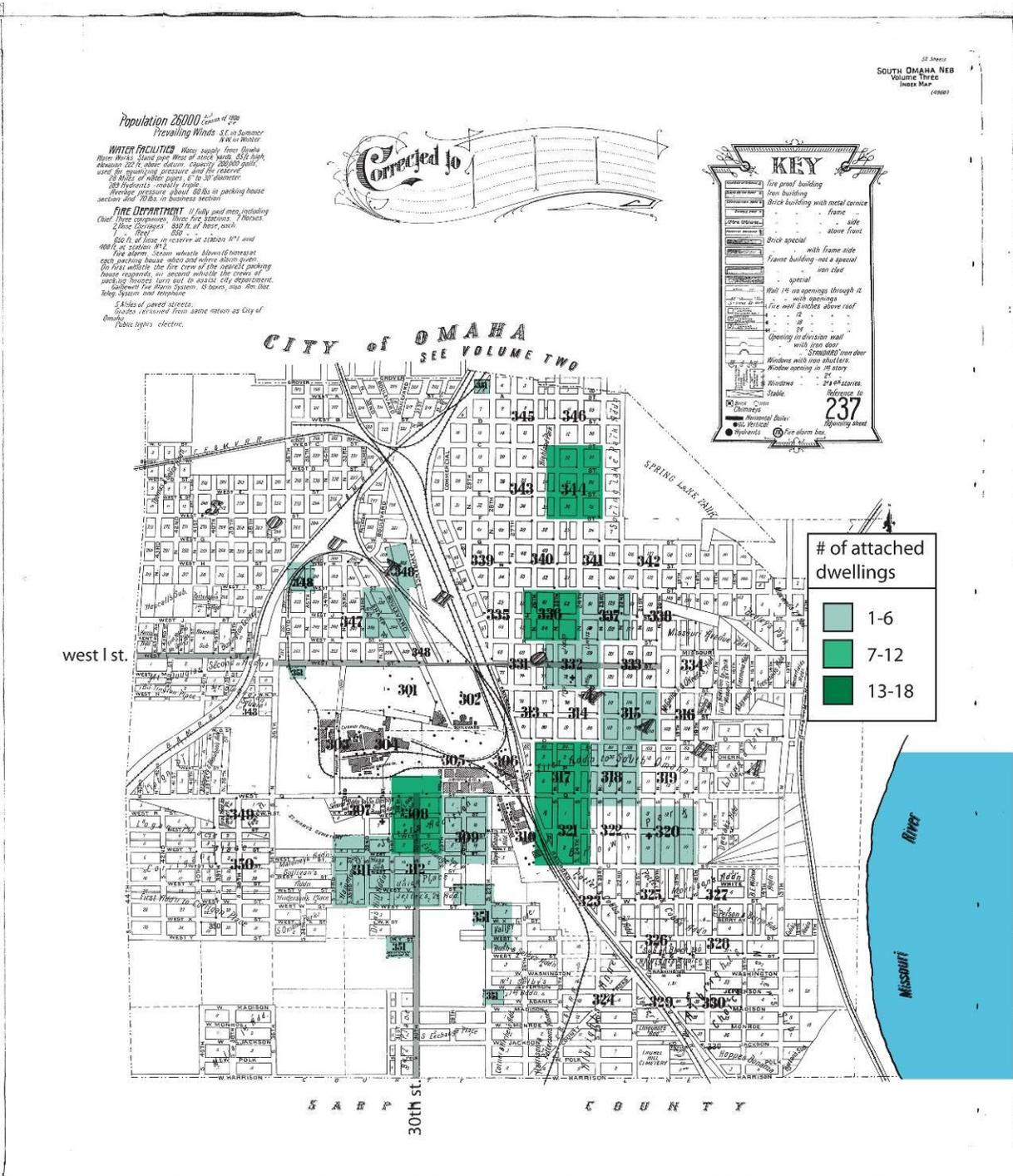


Figure 15: 1918 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 3 for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings on each page of this volume.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional Documentation Page 64

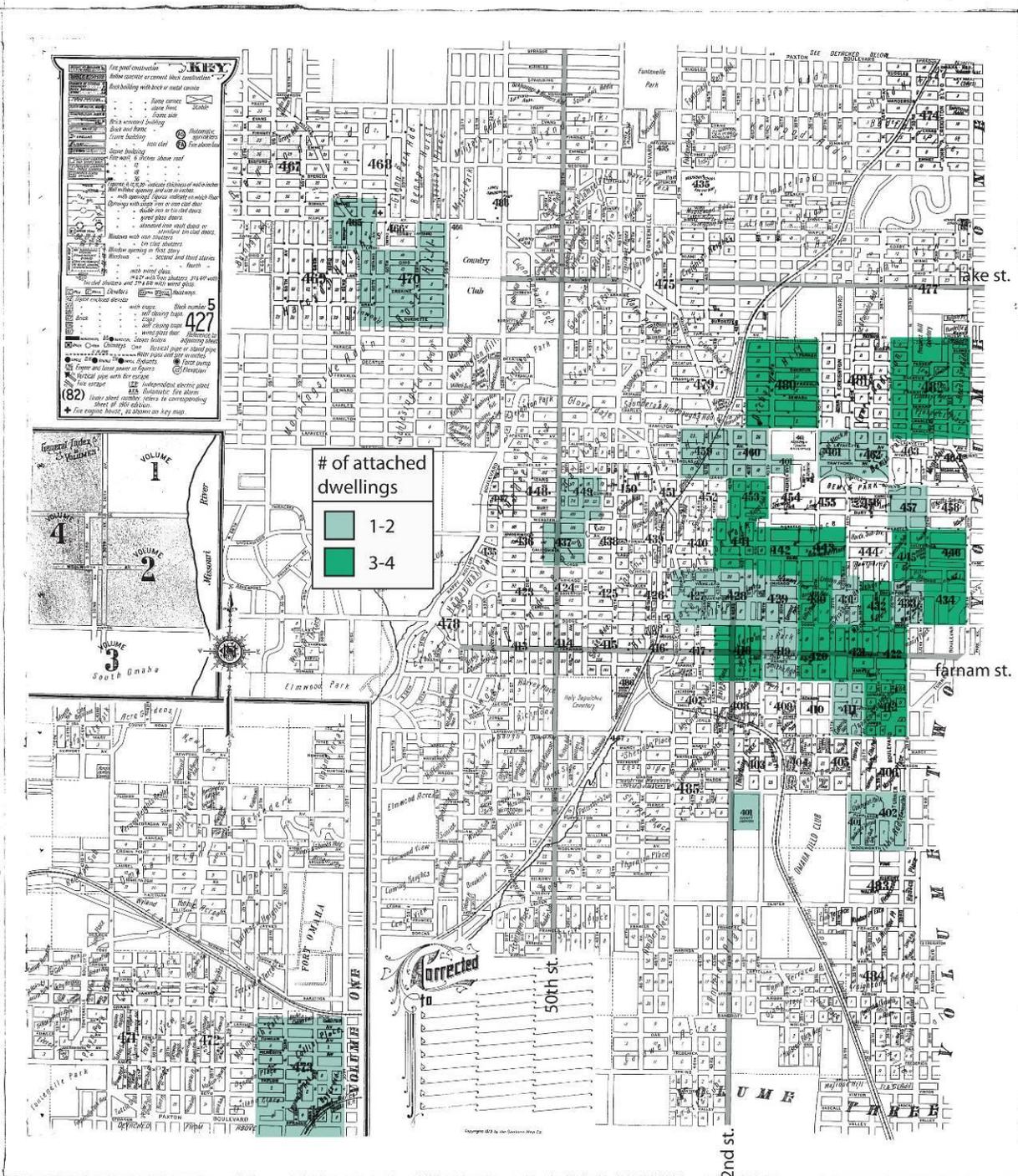


Figure 16: 1918 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 4 for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings on each page of this volume.





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional Documentation Page 67

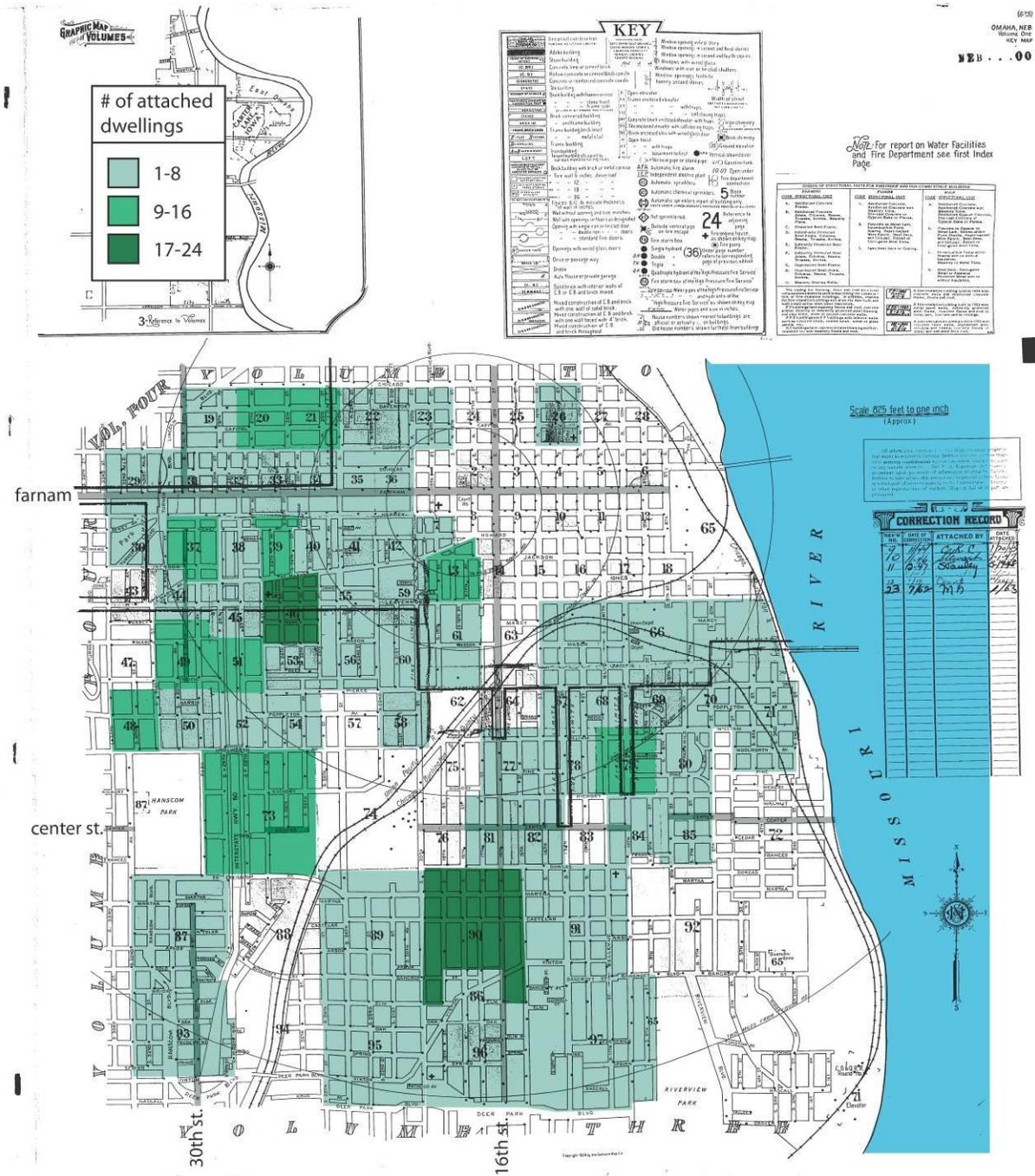


Figure 19: 1962 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 1 for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings on each page of this volume.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional Documentation Page 68

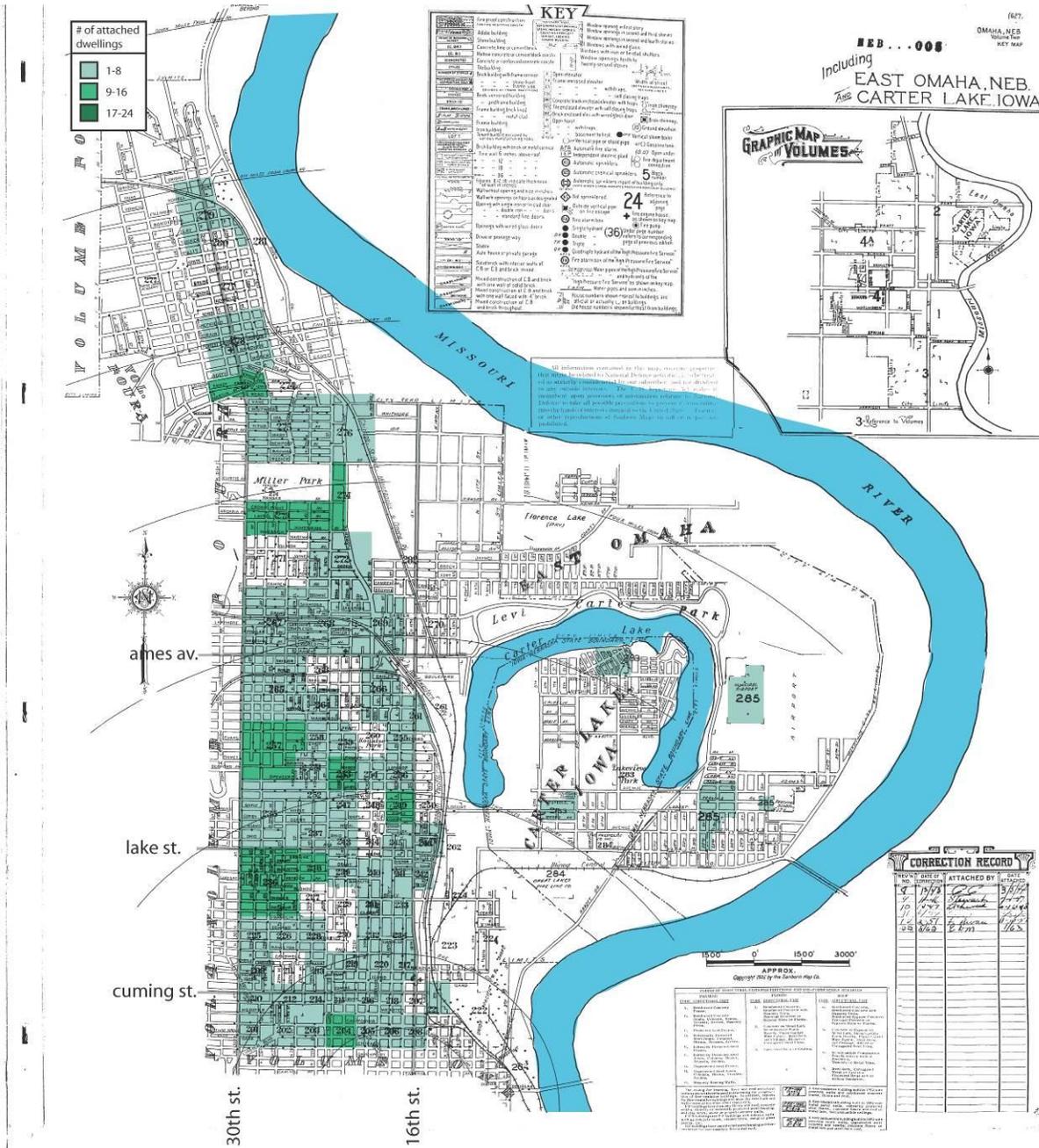


Figure 20: 1962 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 2 for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings on each page of this volume.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional Documentation Page 69

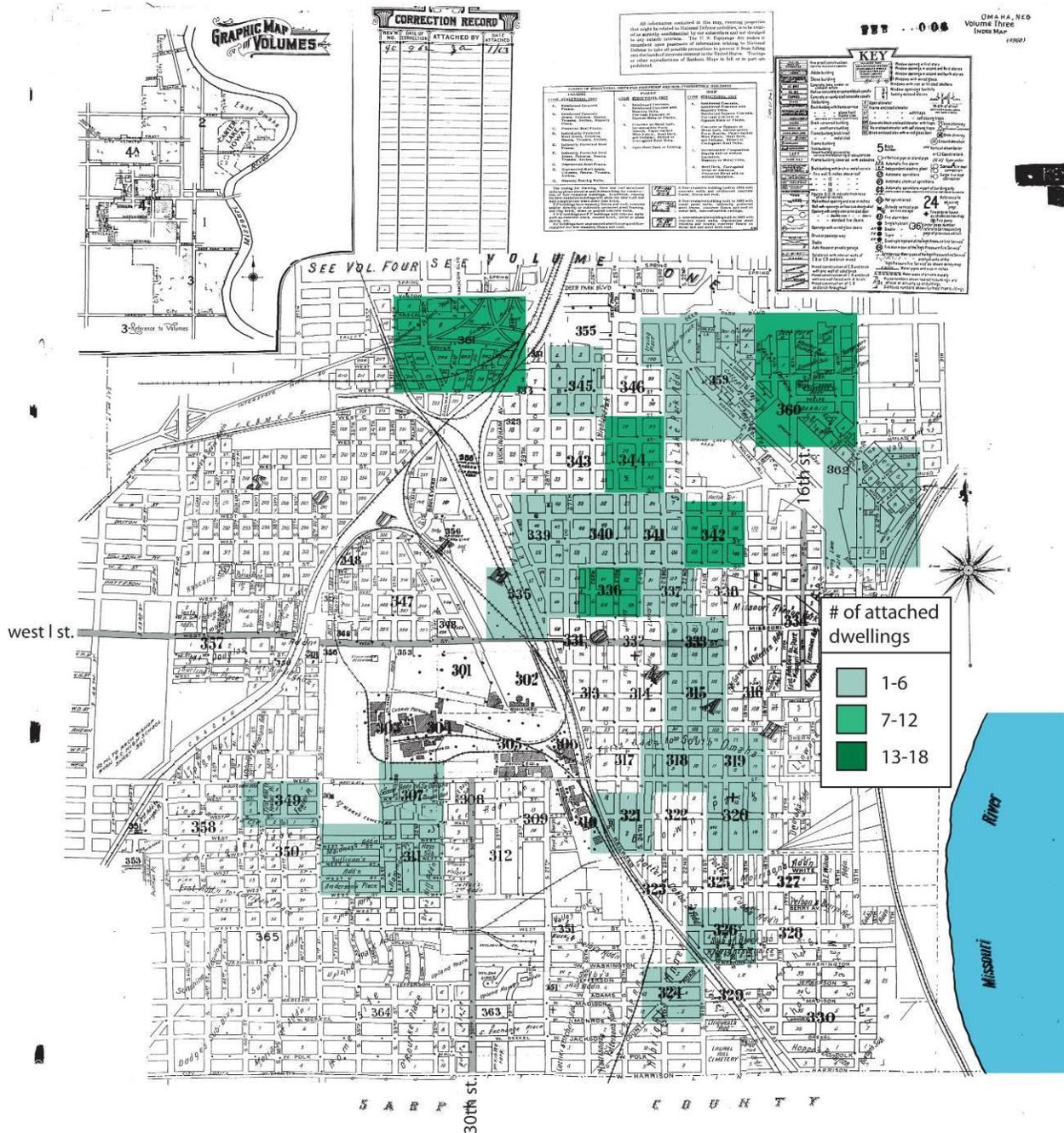


Figure 21: 1962 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 3 for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings on each page of this volume.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional  
Documentation Page 70

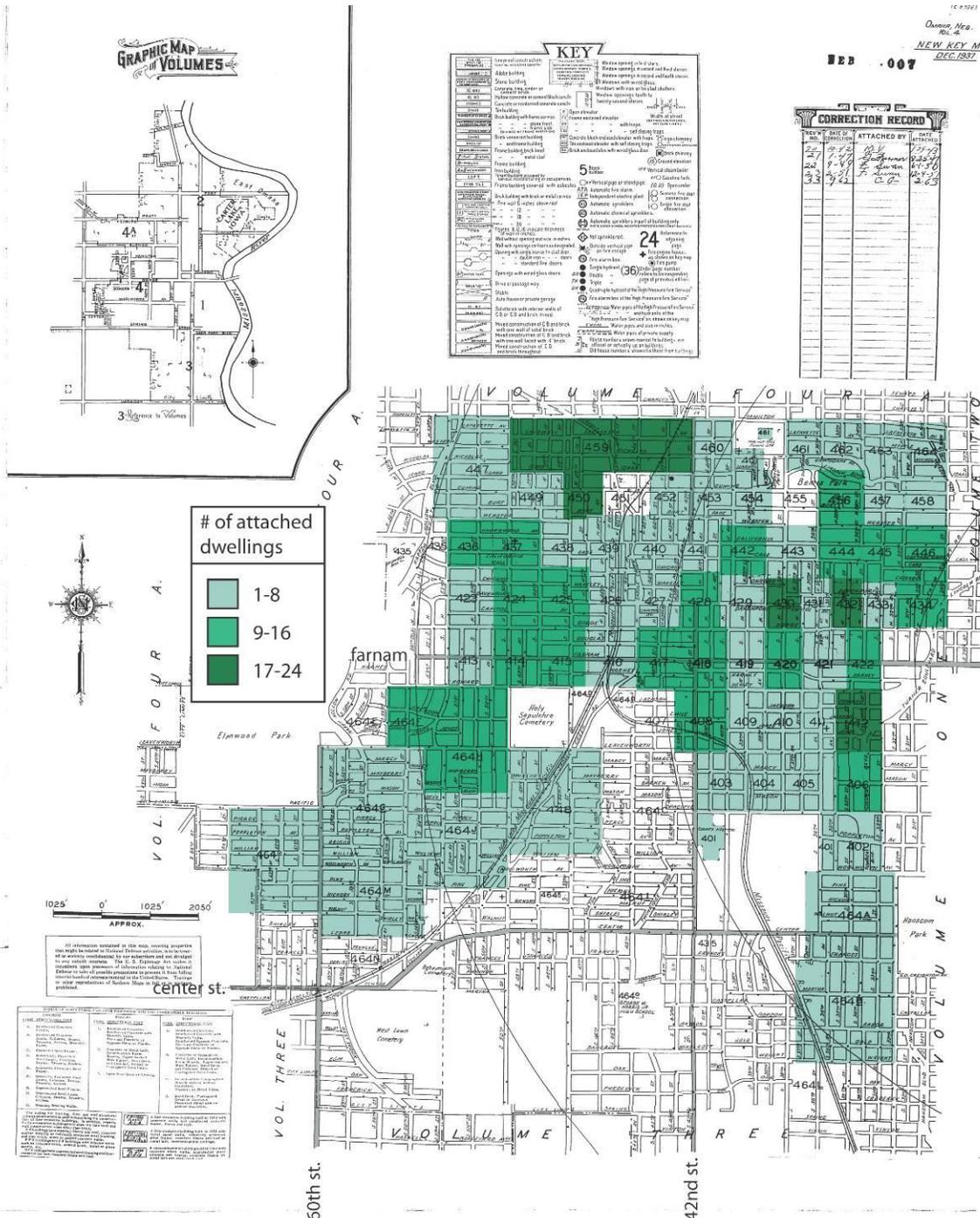


Figure 22: 1962 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 4 for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings on each page of this volume.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional Documentation Page 71

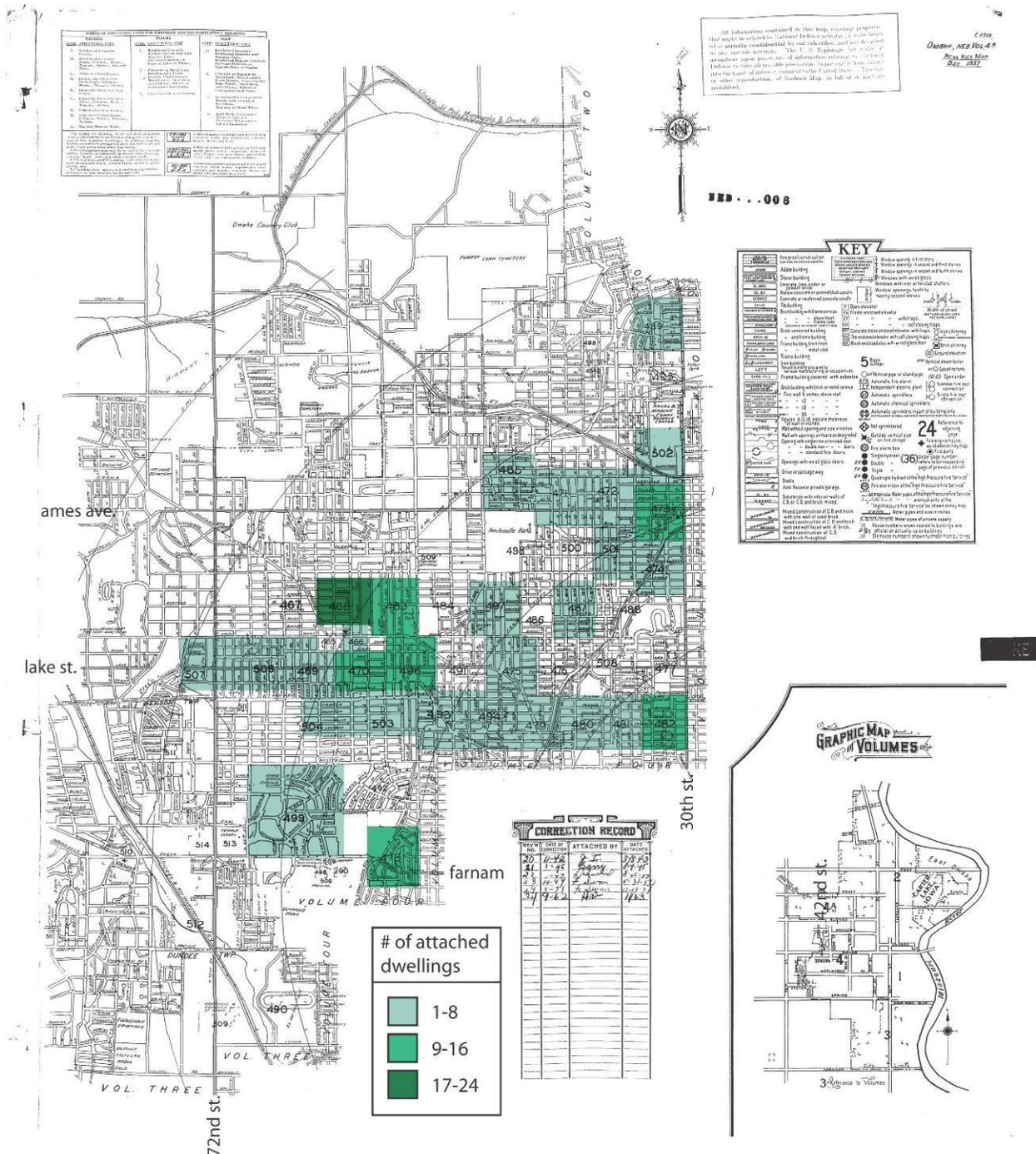


Figure 23: 1962 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 4a for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings on each page of this volume.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional Documentation Page 72

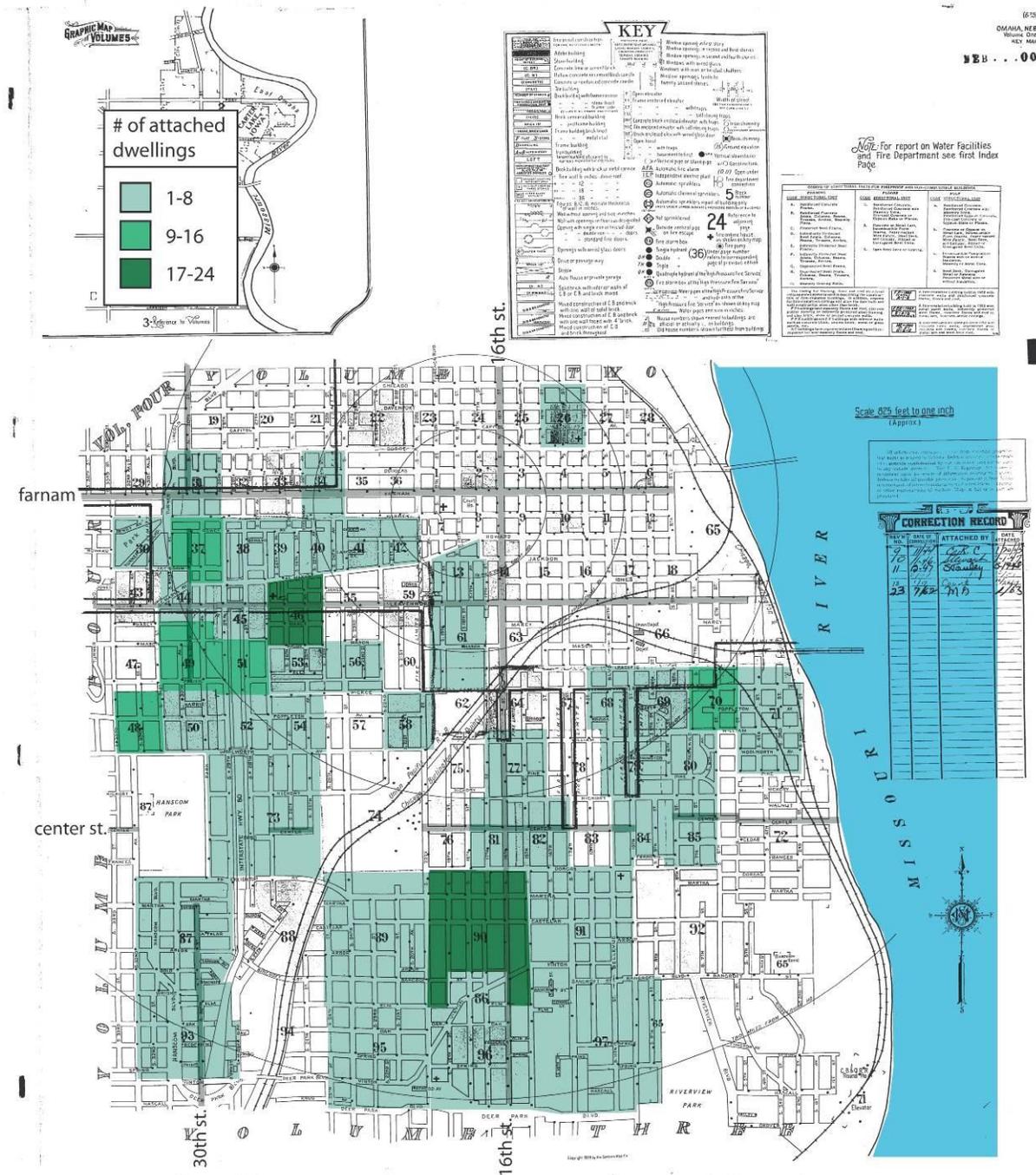


Figure 24: 2009 update to 1962 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 1 for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings extant on each page of this volume.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional Documentation Page 73

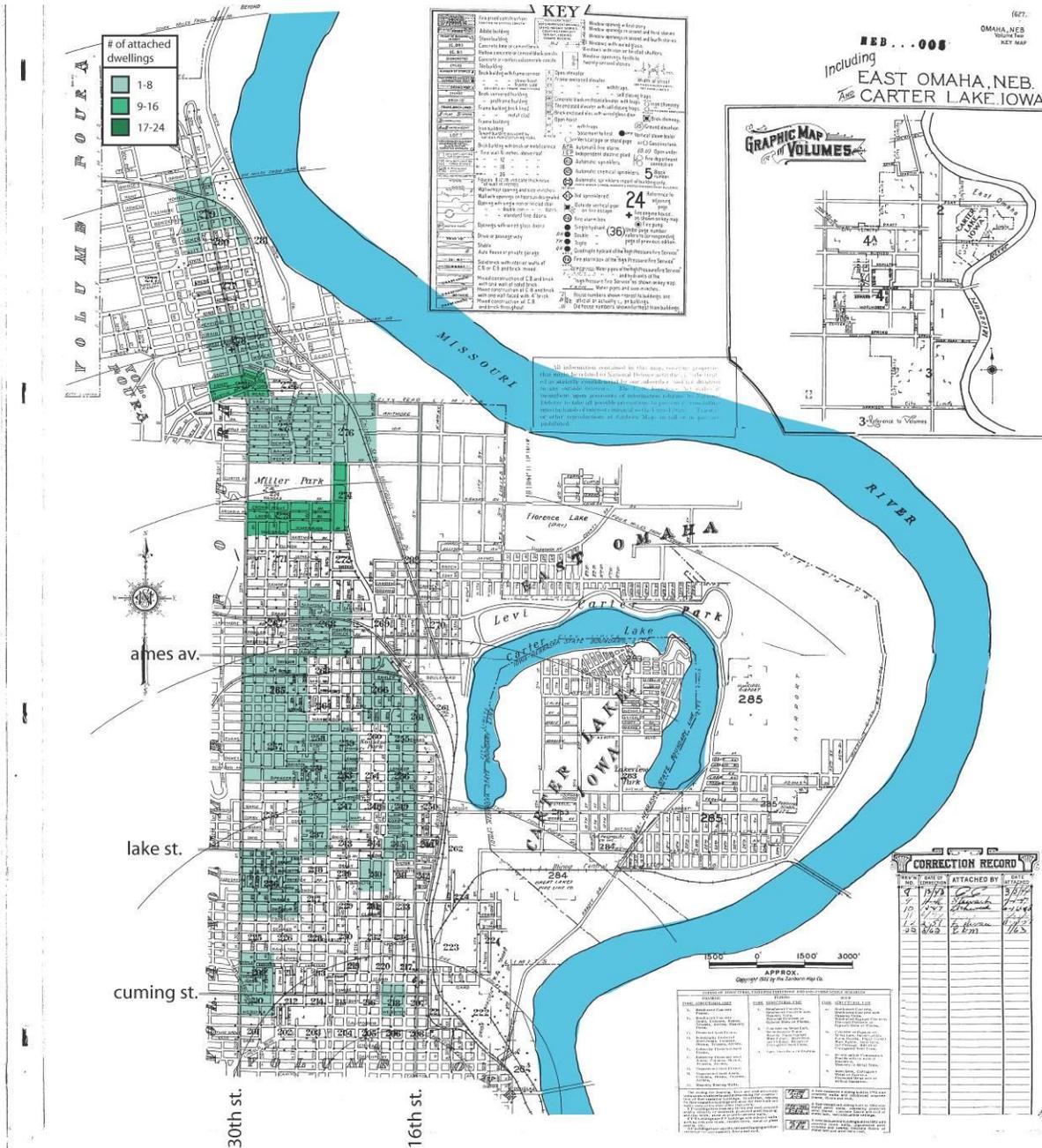


Figure 25: 2009 update to 1962 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 2 for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings extant on each page of this volume.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional Documentation Page 74



Figure 26: 2009 update to 1962 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 3 for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings extant on each page of this volume.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional Documentation Page 75

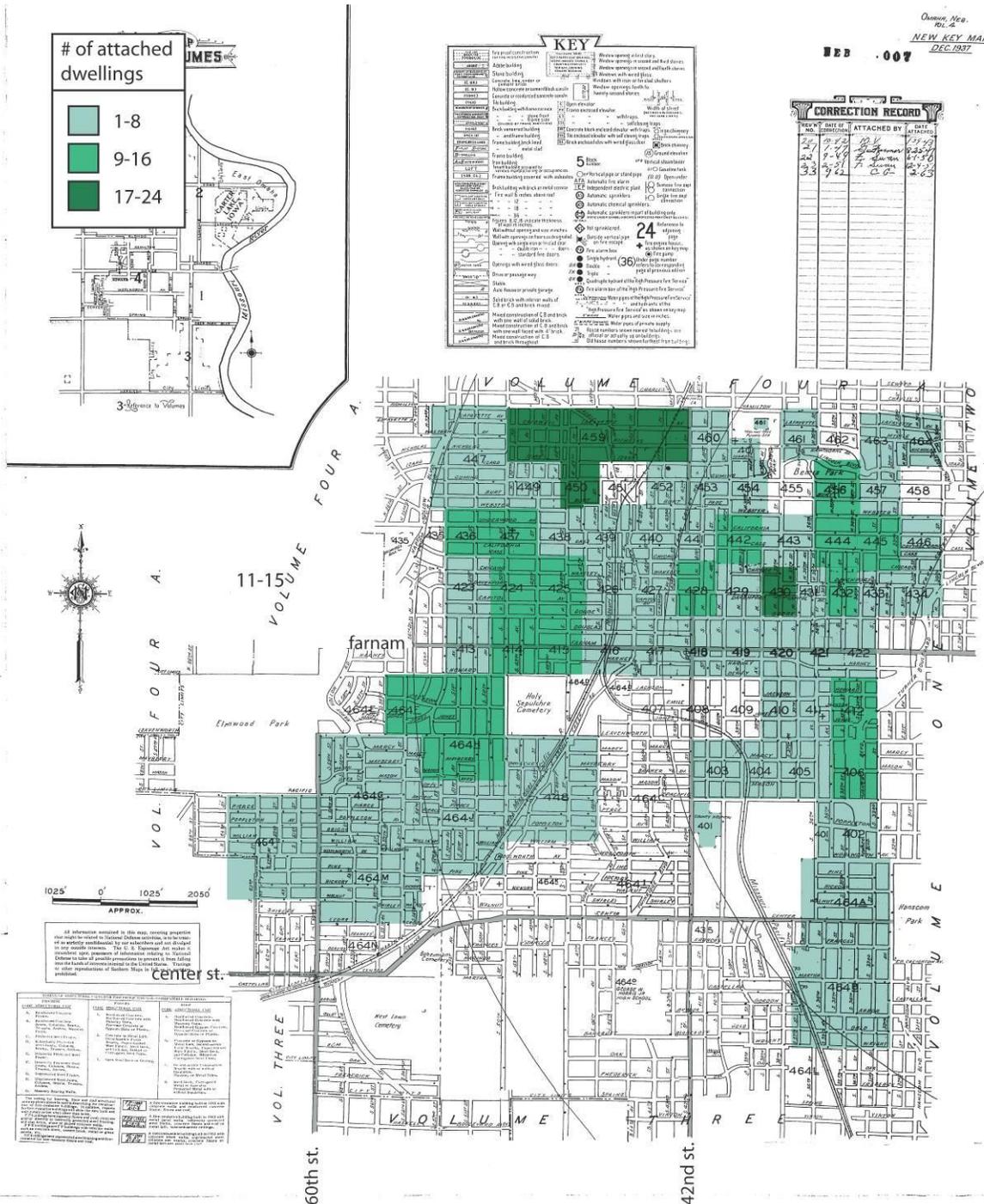


Figure 27: 2009 update to 1962 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 4 for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings extant on each page of this volume.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section Additional Documentation Page 76

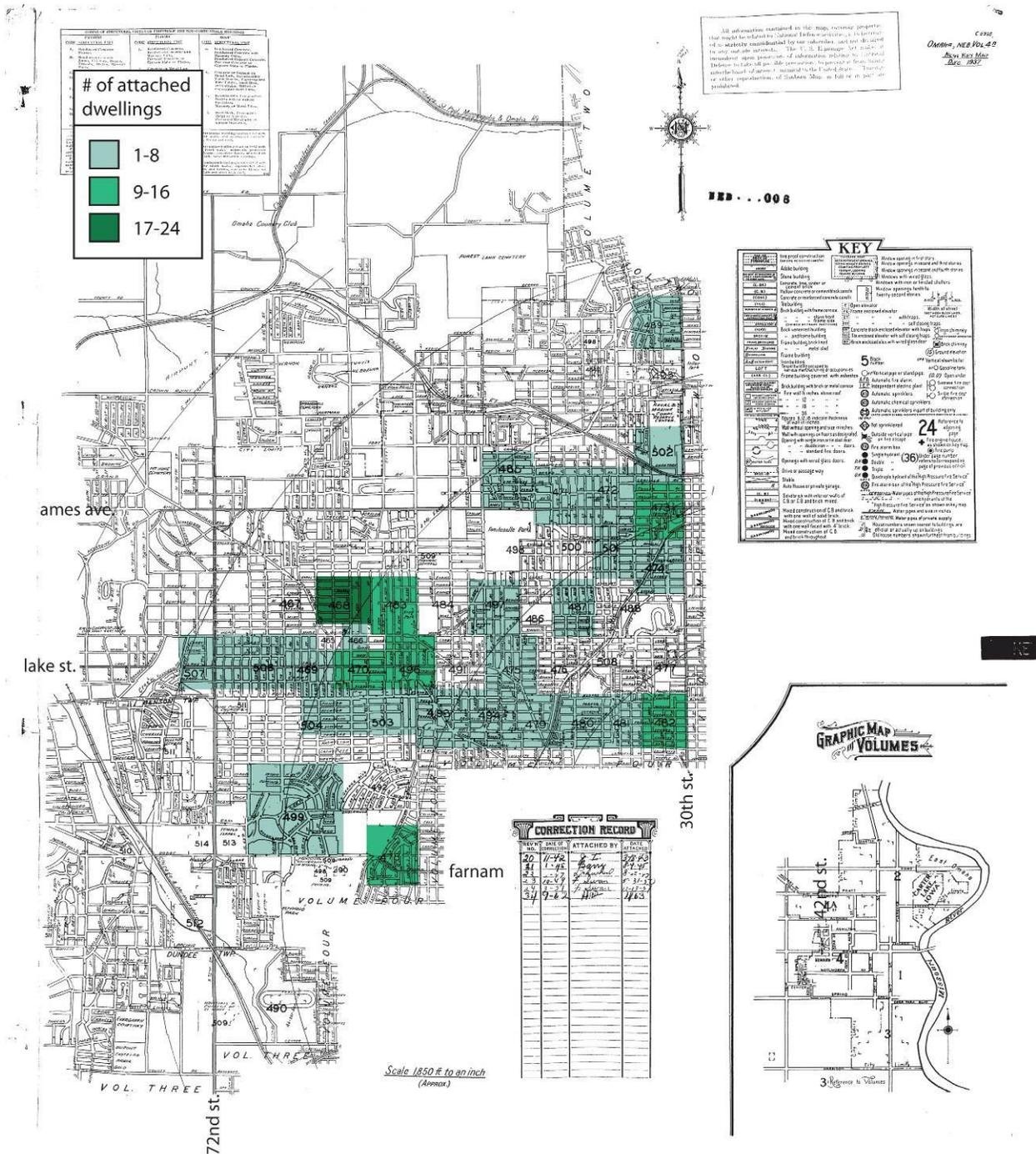


Figure 28: 2009 update to 1962 Sanborn Overview Map of Volume 4a for Omaha Nebraska illustrating the number of attached dwellings extant on each page of this volume.