

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Sanley, Thomas, HouseOther names/site number: Wachs-Moseman House; BU05-136

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. LocationStreet & number: 149 S 5th StreetCity or town: David City State: Nebraska County: ButlerNot For Publication: ☐Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 A B X C D

	/Director	August 11, 2026
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
<u>Nebraska State Historical Society</u>		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☒

District

☐

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Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

☐

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

2

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

2

1

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single dwelling

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/
Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: BRICK

Walls: BRICK

Roof: TERRA COTTA

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Thomas Sanley House at 149 South 5th Street is on Block 7 of Miles 5th Addition to David City in Butler County, Nebraska. The residence is a one-and-a-half story brick Arts and Crafts Bungalow with detached garage. The property, consisting of two contributing buildings (residence and garage) and one non-contributing building (shed), embodies the distinctive characteristics of the style through its low-pitched clay tile gable roof, exposed rafter tails, use of natural materials, and built-in cabinetry. The house retains historic integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship with minor alterations including an updated kitchen and bathroom improvements. The house stands in its original setting with mature trees in the front yard and a large lot contributing to its feeling of the early 20th-century Craftsman period. It was designed and built by local contractor team of E.R. Watson and Forest Wilson.

Narrative Description

South Fifth Street is south of the downtown core of David City and approximately three blocks north of the National Register listed Depression Era city park and auditorium. The Sanley House is on a residential street and surrounded by other houses of similar size and scale. Thomas Sanley, a successful farmer, built the residence for his family and commissioned the team of E.R. Watson and Forest Wilson for its construction. The residence is in the middle of the block on South Fifth Street between Nebraska Street to the south and East A Street to the north. There are three houses on the block, with each possessing larger than usual lots.

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The residence is oriented to the east and situated on a lot that is entered via a concrete driveway located to the north of the house. This driveway provides access to the garage, which was built concurrently with the residence and is positioned behind the house along the western boundary of the property. A curved concrete walkway bisects the spacious front yard with large deciduous trees and lush foundation shrubbery. The main body of the residence is a story-and-a-half cross-gable rectangular plan. Masonry walls are laid in a common bond with header course every fifth or sixth row. Reddish-pink mortar joints with simple, slightly recessed raking extends across the masonry walls. A full-width front porch extends from the east facing main façade. Seven concrete steps flanked by brick knee walls access the porch that is recessed under the gable end.

Brick knee walls surround the porch supported by four square brick columns. The porch knee wall has a painted concrete cap. Each square brick column is defined by a painted concrete element with brick continuing up to the gable end after two setbacks, narrowing the column as it reaches its full height. At one of the brick setbacks the pattern changes from a common bond to a mix of soldier course and header courses at the corner, creating visual interest. The column continues with a second setback in the common bond to the roofline. Within the gable end is a band of four fixed, multi-light, square windows with a painted stone sill. The gable end roofline overhangs the brick wall face with exposed triangular brackets. The repetitive stepped geometry of the Ludowici tile roof adds visual texture to the façade. Shallow eyebrow vents are established in the brick porch wall at either side of the entry stair for porch drainage. A tile floor covers the porch. The main entry door is stained wood and glass with sidelights. Covering the entry door are wood painted storms and storm door painted dark green. Flanking either side of the door is a large single pane window with leaded glass transom. Wood trim around the house is painted dark green.

The north wall is a simple masonry expanse with two windows at the first floor, each with a large single lower pane and smaller rectangular upper pane. The western-most window has a leaded glass transom, while the southern-most window is a bedroom window with no leading. Each window has a painted stone sill. Tripartite double hung multi-light windows higher at the gable end also have a painted stone sill. Overhanging roof eaves are supported by triangular brackets painted green. Foundation plantings between the wall and the driveway cover the basement/foundation wall. Copper downspout at the east end of the wall drains roof runoff. A small attic vent is at the peak of the gable end.

The north wall at the back of the house, reveals the brick raised foundation that is visible here. It is capped by a soldier course of bricks acting as a beltcourse between the foundation wall and the main wall surface. Family spaces including the kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom are at the back of the floorplan. An entry door accesses the kitchen at the south end of the wall. A canted shed door hood supported by exaggerated triangular brackets and clad with the same Ludowici tile as the roof, shelters the red painted entry door. Fenestration is comprised of a large tripartite unit next to the door, single fixed units at the kitchen and bathroom areas, and another single double hung unit at the north end of the wall into the bedroom. These windows have been replaced. A kitchen opening south of the entry door is infilled with a dancing Kokopelli panel. A paired double window unit is in the gable end. Overhanging eaves with triangular brackets accent the roofline.

Raised brick foundation walls are visible on the south wall with the same soldier brick coursing acting as a beltcourse between the foundation and wall surface. There is a projecting

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window bay with a single window unit with leaded glass transom. The bay is sheltered by a canted shed window hood clad with the same Ludowici tile as the roof. Exposed rafter tails are visible. Two small windows are at the kitchen area with a tripartite, multi-light window at the gable end. Triangular brackets are at the overhanging gable end eaves.

The roof retains original Ludowici flat tile manufactured in Chicago in 1916. The roof needed repair and the current owners, Mark and Carol Moseman, had the roof tiles and original felt underlayment removed, installed new waterproof felt material, and re-laid the original tile. Some replacement tiles were required due to breakage and damage. Replacement tiles were largely laid at the back of the house where they are less noticeable than the age and patina of the original tiles.



Figure 1. Photo of broken tile from roof project showing the Ludowici manufacturer mark and the manufacturer date of 8-9-1916.

Interior details are where the qualities of the Arts and Craft movement sing. Interior doors have an inlaid geometric pattern set within the recessed door panel. Formal areas at the front of the house are comprised of an entry foyer at the center, a dining room to the south, and parlor to the north. Separating the entry foyer from the dining and parlor are wood columns and built-in bookcases with glass doors. Square columns with an applied wood peg and strap design references handmade joinery. The entry foyer retains its original mosaic tile floor in an off-white color, with floral band in greens and reds. Small rectangular tiles are laid in a herringbone pattern across the center of the floor with one-inch square tiles forming the wide colorful floral border.

Original wood floors remain in both the parlor and dining rooms. Leaded glass built-in cabinets cap a breakfront type cabinet with bombe style drawers and original tassel pulls. Cabinets under the drawers complete this built-in feature. Rounded columns are between the counter area and the leaded glass upper cabinets. All original wood trim around windows and doors remain in good condition across the first floor. Other finishing details in the front rooms include geometric hand painted stenciling in each room. The stenciling has been repainted in a new pattern, though stenciling was originally located in these rooms. Historically accurate light fixtures, decorative arts, and furnishings compliment the Arts and Crafts style of the residence.

Modernized living space at the back of the first floor includes a kitchen where a wall has been removed to increase the size and open the floor area. At the northwest corner of the first

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floor is a bedroom and bathroom, both of which retain original finishes. White octagonal tiles with two-tone blue florets and Greek key border covers the floor. Original bathtub and other fixtures have been retained. In the bedroom a closet has been converted to a shower.

At the center of the plan and in the back side of the house, a single stair accesses bedrooms on the second floor. Three bedrooms and another bathroom occupy this space. The bathroom has been modernized to accommodate new fixtures with a shower and sink in a separate room from the toilet room. Angled ceilings at the roof height illustrate the one-and-a-half story plan. Wood floors and doors and original trim are retained throughout the second level, along with the same doors as the first level.

The room over the front porch has a canted ceiling with four leaded glass windows and curved plaster walls. Among the unusual details special to this house on the second level are the exposed kerf cuts in the wood baseboard and trim and extremely narrow floor planking.

Site

Behind the house at the northwest corner of the lot is the detached garage. It matches the house in construction with the same brick and mortar and a pyramidal roof. The overhead door is painted green, and the roof has contemporary asphalt shingles. The pyramidal roof overhangs the body of the garage and has exposed rafter tails. A shed roof frame addition has been added to the south side of the garage.

In the backyard is a small frame garden shed of green painted vertical wood panels. It has a shallow gable roof that projects over the entry to form a small porch. The tiny porch has a simple balustrade with an entry door and single window.

The yard is fenced with a variety of fencing material from chain link at the back (west), wood privacy fence at the south, and wire looped picket or hoop and picket fence along the north boundary. Throughout the yard there is a portion of the owner's vast collection of agrarian art. Sculptures in a variety of mediums, wind features, and planters add contemporary context to the historic character of the building.

Integrity

Location and Setting

The residence remains on its original site and surroundings. It is within a residential neighborhood with other single-family properties nearby that are similar in size and scale and that vary in construction date.

Design, Materials, and Workmanship

The features of design, materials, and workmanship are present in the original floor plan, use of wood throughout, and craft details. Very narrow oak floors at the second level are unusual and not common place in residential construction. Exposed, visible kerf cuts on wood trim at the curved plaster walls express the hand-crafted manipulation of the materials. Mosaic tile flooring in the entry parlor emphasizes the geographic design that incorporates nature with the floral border and the skilled craft knowledge needed to install. Built-in wood cabinets with square

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columns and wood doors with thin contrasting inlay all emphasize the organic comfortable feel of the house.

Feeling and Association

The overall sense of the historic period is expressed throughout the residence in the presence of original building material and applied ornamentation. The size and scale of the intended design has been respected over the years with no additions or alterations to the exterior plan. Historic residential association remains with the location within an older neighborhood in David City with other nearby residences of similar size and scale.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1917

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Significant Dates

1917

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Watson, E. R.

Wilson, Forest

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

The Thomas Sanley House at 149 South 5th Street in David City, Butler County, Nebraska is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion C. It is locally significant in the area of architecture as an example of an Arts and Crafts Bungalow, as an example of a local master craftsman, and for its artistic merit. Constructed in 1917, the house represents a local adaptation of the Arts and Crafts style with specific design details implemented by its designer, Forest Wilson. Wilson, a young carpenter and draftsman, under the employ of contractor E.R. Watson, is credited with designing the house. It is a significant example of the style in the community of David City. The period of significance is 1917, the construction date.

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

Setting

David City is in Butler County in east-central Nebraska. County-wide landscape consists primarily of open plains with cropland and livestock pastures. The Platte River defines the northern boundary of Butler County and is the major watershed for this part of the state. Rolling hills in the northern part of the county are known as the Bohemian Alps because of the dominant Czech heritage. While the Platte River is the major landscape feature, several other waterways like the Big Blue River in the southern portion of the county supported several early townsites along drainages such as Skull Creek, Oak Creek, and Bone Creek.¹

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¹ Mead and Hunt, *Historic Resources of Butler County*, Nebraska State Historical Society, May 2017, 1-2.

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This area of Nebraska was home to the Pawnee Tribe prior to Euro-American settlement. Beginning in 1818, various treaties between the Pawnee and the American government eventually resulted in the cession of their territory, and ultimately their relocation to Oklahoma in 1875. In the 1840s, Congress commissioned an expedition led by John C. Fremont to survey the region, which encompassed Butler County's Platte River valley. The creation of westward routes such as the Mormon Trail and Ox-bow Trail helped increase the population, prompting the Territorial Legislature to set the boundaries of Butler County in 1856.²

Most early settlers established communities along the river valleys for the abundant natural resources they provided. In 1859, David Gardner established a farmstead in the north-central region of the county, which led to the founding of Savannah, the area's first county seat. The community grew as people arrived via a ferry crossing on the Platte River. The availability of farmland, combined with the arrival of the Union Pacific Railroad, further encouraged settlement. Between 1870 and 1876, the population of Butler County grew from 1,200 to approximately 4,600. This growth spurred legislation to relocate the county seat to a more central location in David City.³

David City

David City was founded in 1873 and named after William David, who owned the land on which the town was established. The largest immigrant community were Czech's who arrived from Bohemia and Moravia as well as other nearby states including Illinois and Wisconsin. David City grew around a courthouse square plan. The Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad and the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad extended rail spurs to the western edge of town, and the community flourished. The original and second-generation courthouses are both non-extant, the courthouse square configuration has been retained with a new courthouse constructed in 1964.⁴

David City is the largest city in the county and built the greatest number of churches, schools, and public amenities. Despite facing challenges during the Great Depression and World War II, the community continues to host notable Public Works projects. Among these are the Butler County Fairgrounds, which originally served as a Civilian Conservation Corps workers camp. David City's Memorial Park and Memorial Auditorium (BU05-069 and BU05-047), located at the southern end of the community, were constructed during this period and are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

149 South 5th Street

The residence at 149 South 5th Street was built in 1917 on land developed as David City grew to the south. The first recorded sale of the property was from Phoebe Miles who sold Block 7 in Miles 5th Addition to the town of David City for \$300 to A.L. Hughes.⁵ A residence was eventually constructed on the lot in the middle of the block facing east, between East A and

² Mead and Hunt, 1-2.

³ Mead and Hunt, 2.

⁴ Mead and Hunt, 9.

⁵ Butler County Courthouse, Deed Book 24, Page 256.

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Nebraska Streets. The property passed through several owners until Edwin Wunderlich sold it to Thomas Sanley for \$1,650 in 1916.⁶

Thomas Sanley was born in Ohio in 1855. He came to Nebraska in 1880 and purchased land in Butler County near Surprise, which became his first home site. He was a farmer and cattleman and was eventually among the largest landowners in the county. Sanley built his holdings across Butler County and traveled to Canada where he also purchased over 6000 acres to run cattle and plant crops.

Upon his retirement from farming, Sanley moved his family to David City on the partial lots in Block 7, where they were to “erect a bungalow on those lots early this spring.”⁷ To accommodate the construction, the Sanley’s moved the existing house to the back of the lot to live in while the new house was under construction. The old house was torn down after the new house was completed.⁸

Sanley hired local contractor E.R. Watson to construct the residence. In his employ was Forest Wilson. Wilson was described as a budding and skilled designer who studied all the “finer points of architectural work.” His estimates were regarded as highly accurate, and his blueprints provided comprehensive, detailed representations sufficient to clearly demonstrate the anticipated appearance of the building. Forest, and his brother Harry, worked together to furnish plans for new buildings in David City. One of which was the Thomas Sanley bungalow, “conceded by everybody to be a perfect piece of work, so far as blueprints and estimates are concerned, and when completed will be one of the finest in the county.” One newspaper account praised Wilson as not only a skilled craftsman, accurate estimator, detailed creator of drawings, but one who studied and achieved these skills independently and by paying close attention to business. Of Wilson, the paper stated, “he is morally and financially responsible for anything he binds himself to do.”⁹

The brick building Wilson planned for the Sanley’s had a tile roof and required extensive sheet metal work. The contract for that work was awarded to J. H. Still.¹⁰ The residence was completed with a detached garage at the back of the lot, wood floors throughout, and decorative mosaic tile at the main foyer. The use of brick for a residence at this time in David City was unusual. Sanborn Maps indicate very few other brick residences. The majority were frame construction with brick and other masonry buildings constructed mostly in the downtown area. Brick contributes to the sense of style of the house and illustrates the skill of the builder.

⁶ Butler County Courthouse, Deed Book 53, page 120. The lot is in the middle of the block and is described as the South 50 feet of the North ½ and the north 50 feet of the south ½ of fractional Block 7 in Miles 5th Addition to the Town of David City.

⁷ *The Banner-Press*. (David City, NE) Jan 13, 1916, 5.

⁸ “Building Operations To be Very Brisk Here This Spring.” *The Banner-Press*. (David City, NE) April 27, 1916, 1.

⁹ *The People’s Banner* (David City, NE) April 20, 1916, 1.

¹⁰ *The Hastings Daily Tribune*. (Hastings, NE) July 22, 1916, 6.

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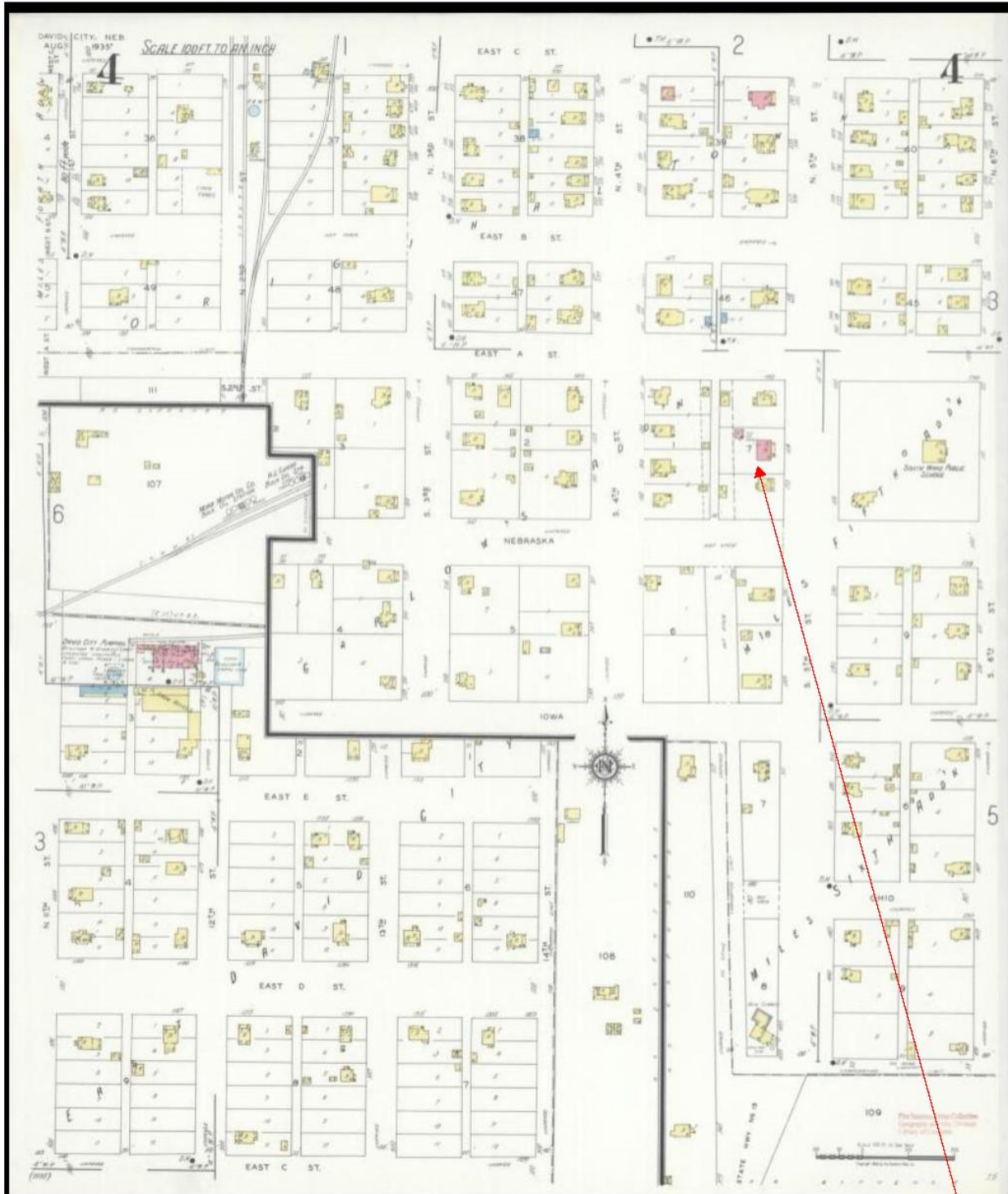


Figure 2. 1935 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Yellow indicates frame buildings and pink indicates brick. The Sanley Residence is one of the few brick residences on this sheet and in David City from this period.

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As the house neared completion, Sanley purchased a Packard Twin Six from Lincoln and utilized the garage to its fullest.¹¹ The residence was featured in an article in the Omaha *Daily Bee* as, “A typical home in David City, Neb., that of Thomas Sanley.”¹² The Sanley Family enjoyed many visitors in the house and Mrs. Sanley was rarely alone when her husband made one of his many trips to Canada to manage their land holdings there. They raised their grandchild in the residence, who sadly died at the age of 11. Local history notes that the visitation with the child’s casket was held at the Sanley residence and children who attended the school that was across the street came to pay their respects.¹³

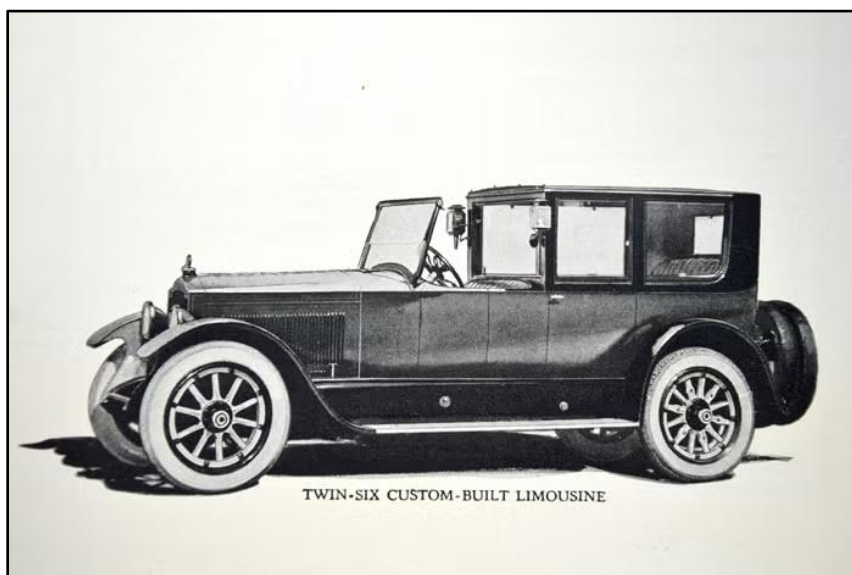


Figure 3. A 1917 Packard Twin-Six similar to what Sanley purchased.

Thomas Sanley passed away on December 31, 1944, at 91 years of age. He lived in the residence from the date of its construction to his death. His loss was noted in the community, and upon his death, the family sold the residence for the first time since its construction in 1917.¹⁴

¹¹ *Lincoln Journal Star*. (Lincoln, NE) Jun 17, 1917 10. The Packard Twin Six were large, heavy luxury cars. They were made from 1915-1923 and produced with a 12 cylinder engine (the Twin Six), the bodies were aluminum with white ash wood frames, and most were Packard Blue with cream yellow wheels. Each car weighed approximately 4000 pounds. Packard was in a class of its own at the time, with one of its competitors the Cadillac V-8 engine. The Cadillac was considered a full price-step below the Packard and was \$500-\$1000 less than the Packard whose starting cost began in the \$5,200 range, www.oldcarsweekly.com/features/the-packard-twin-six-mystique

¹² *Omaha Daily Bee* (Omaha, NE) March 8, 1925, 36.

¹³

¹⁴ “Death of Thomas Sanley.” *The People’s Banner* (David City, NE), Jan 6, 1944, 1.

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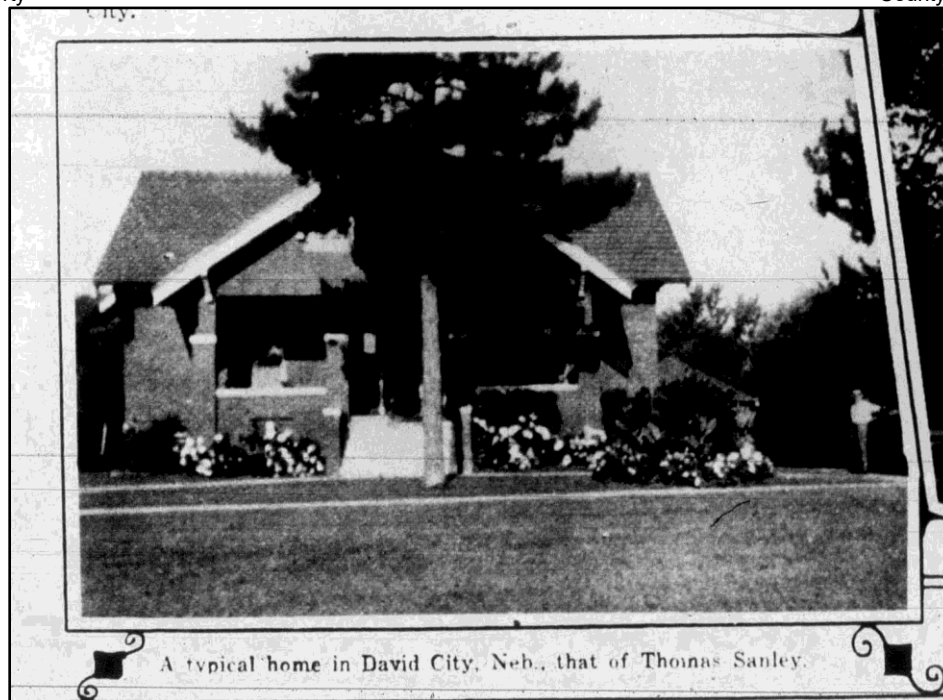


Figure 4. Image from the Omaha Daily Bee March 8, 1925 showing the Thomas Sanley House.

Following Sanley's death and prior to the house selling, it was briefly occupied by Norman Horacek who operated his insurance office there in 1945.¹⁵

John Wachs of Omaha purchased the property from the Sanley Family in 1947. Wachs and his family moved to David City and purchased the former White Implement Company building as an investment. He, his wife, and two daughters occupied the house, and he operated the former White Implement Exchange with his father-in-law Don Havlu.¹⁶ The Wachs' occupied the residence until 1965, when it was sold at a courthouse sale. His wife died of a sudden heart attack in 1960 at the age of 48, and within a year Wach's suffered a serious car accident. In 1965 he sold his interest in the implement company and the residence and moved to Mory's Haven in Columbus, in frail health. He passed away in 1971 at the age of 71.¹⁷

The house changed hands several times again until in 1992 when Mark and Carol Moseman, the current property owners, purchased the building. It is under their care and stewardship that it remains today.

Builders

Egbert Richard (E.R.) Watson

¹⁵ The Banner-Press (David City, NE) March 1, 1945, 1. Horacek's insurance office was housed there while he was deployed during World War II. His secretary ran the business from the home.

¹⁶ "Buys Airplane for Use in Company Business." The Banner-Press. (David City, NE) April 24, 1947, 1.; "New Owners of Implement Business." Sept 4, 1947, 1.

¹⁷ The Banner-Press (David City, NE), February 25, 1965, 9.; November 25, 1965, 9.; June 17, 1971, 1.

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E.R. Watson was a contractor in David City who was a distinctive character, known for his building prowess as well as his size, which is mentioned in several articles about him. He employed Forest Wilson as a carpenter beginning around 1912.¹⁸ Watson fostered Wilson's skill and passion for building, though their time working together was somewhat brief, as Watson formed his own company with his brother and was advertising for work by 1918.

Watson suffered three major falls during his construction career, which likely led to his decision to shift from active contracting to associated activities like selling heating units. He fell once into a cellar, once from a ladder, and again from the second floor to the basement from a ladder. These falls all caused serious injury to Watson including broken bones, bruises, and internal injuries resulting in limited mobility. Contemporary articles note how difficult his recovery was because of his size.¹⁹ By 1920, Watson shifted his expertise to selling Sun Oil Burner heating equipment and was appointed, along with W.F. Howe to supervise paving the streets in David City.²⁰ Watson died in 1930 from chronic illnesses from his multiple accidents.

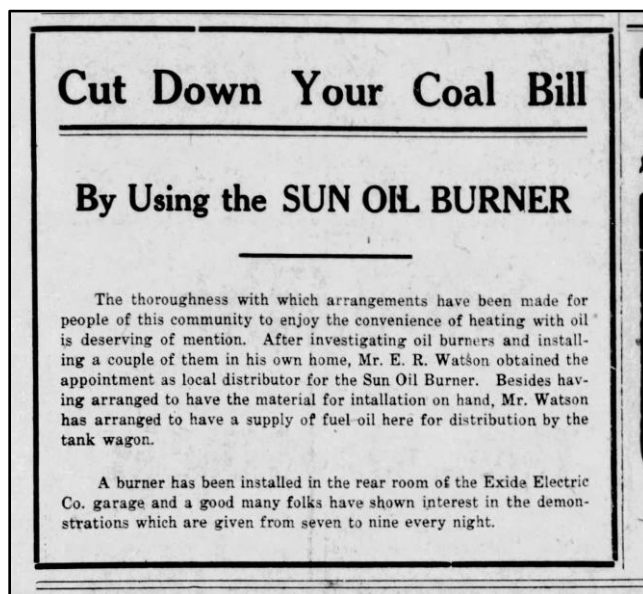


Figure 5. Advertisement *The People's Banner* David City, NE August 9, 1923.

Wilson Brothers Construction/Wilson Construction

Brothers Harry and Forest Wilson began Wilson Brothers Construction Company by 1918, when advertisements appeared in local papers for their services.²¹ Forest had been working with E.R. Watson in 1912, and following Watson's injuries and his shift away from contracting, opened his own company with his brother. Small projects came their way after

¹⁸ *The Banner-Press* (David City, NE) Nov 7, 1912, 5.

¹⁹ "A Serious Fall." *The Peoples Banner* (David City, NE) May 29, 1913, 3.; "E.R. Watson Hurt." *The People's Banner* (David City, NE) Sep. 17, 1914, 1.; "E.R. Watson Has Third Fall." *The Banner-Press* (David City, NE) Oct 26, 1916, 1.

²⁰ *The People's Banner* (David City, NE) march 25, 1920, 2.; August 9, 1923, 7. "Death of E.R. Watson." Oct 30, 1930, 1.

²¹ "Floor Surfacing" *The People's Banner* (David City, NE), Feb 14, 1918, 7.

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completing the Sanley residence, but their reputation for hard work, accurate estimates and quality craftsmanship quickly grew their business. Their early projects ranged from commercial building renovations to public building projects such as seating and bathrooms at the Butler County fairgrounds. Soon, they were awarded larger scale contracts and throughout the 1920s were responsible for buildings such as the Walling Garage in David City, the Dorchester School, the Chevy Garage in Seward, and the Methodist Episcopal Church in Garrison, among others.²² The brothers built other residences in David City during the 1920s, some of which were wood-frame bungalows, but have not been identified. Only peripheral reference is made to these properties, and it is unclear where in town they are located.

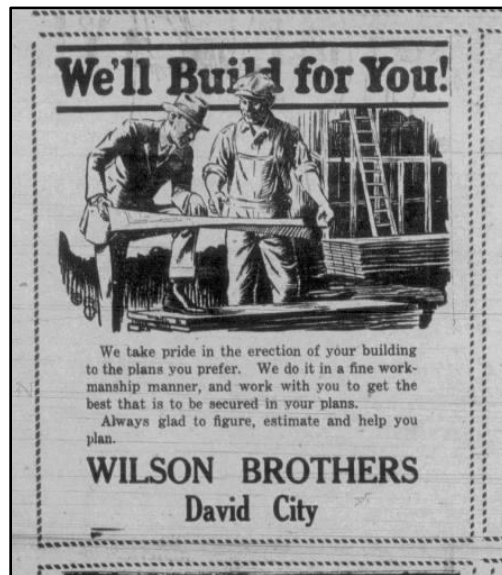


Figure 6. Wilson Brothers Advertisement, *The People's Banner* April 9, 1925.

Wilson Brothers were retained for several large building contracts in Ashland, Nebraska. Here they built at least one large residence, a double brick commercial building, and the Soldiers Memorial Building for the Nebraska National Guard on the rifle range. The Memorial building is located on the Platte River and has a large auditorium and stage and screened-in veranda. They also remodeled the Farmers and Merchants Bank and Hotel building in Ashland.²³ Completing these projects successfully required the brothers to travel and spend lengthy amounts of time away from their home in David City. These demands were not amenable to both brothers, and in February 1930, they dissolved their partnership. Forest continued in business as Wilson Construction Company and focused on larger projects across the area. Harry preferred his local work and stayed in David City working on smaller local projects.²⁴

Wilson Construction Company was awarded contracts across the region and in 1932, Forest moved the company office to the Terminal Building in Lincoln.²⁵ He continued to work locally and during the 1930s constructed many publicly funded projects including repairing the

²² *The Peoples Banner* (David City, NE) May 17, 1928, 5.; August 29, 1929, 9.

²³ "Have Contracts at Ashland" *The Banner-Press* (David City, NE) Jun 13, 1929, 1.

²⁴ "Notice of Partnership Dissolution." *The Banner-Press* (David City, NE) Feb 27, 1930, 1.

²⁵ *The Banner-Press*. (David City, NE) Oct 6, 1932, 5.

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Butler County Courthouse using Civil Works Administration (CWA) labor.²⁶ Forest built the addition to the David City Ford garage that added a 50x60 foot space to accommodate a new repair shop, paint shop, and wash and grease rack at the rear of the building. The addition offered additional space to display new cars and trucks. Tom Bierlie owned the building, and Joe Bors owned the garage.²⁷

Comparative, contemporary residential properties constructed by Wilson are more difficult to identify. Local papers would document the company growth, commercial buildings, and houses under construction, but did not provide locational information. However, there are three notable houses constructed in the 1930s that have been confirmed and illustrate the growth and development of Wilson as a builder. They are larger in scale, but all built of brick, utilizing his masonry skills. They include the Zinecker Home at 1280 North 6th Street, the Klosterman Home on 1091 North Fifth Street, and the Dean Hewit Home at 823 North Fourth Street. There are no other Arts and Crafts influenced brick bungalows from the period in David City.



Figure 7. 1280 North Sixth Street, David City, 1936

This residence built for Harold Zinnecker family is a French chateau style that was whitewashed brick with French blue shutters, as described after construction. Interior floorplan and decorations were described in detail and included soft green wallpaper and drapes with brown upholstered furniture that complimented the rose Italian marble fireplace. The residence had wood floors, built-in bookshelves and 12-pane windows. Elsewhere in the house, yellow wallpaper with red draperies were in the dining room with a modern appointed kitchen. Linoleum tile floors were installed in the kitchen and bathrooms with a knotty pine basement.

²⁶ *The Banner-Press*. (David City, NE) Mar 1, 1934 1.

²⁷ "Improving Building." *The Banner-Press*. (David City, NE) May 9, 1935, 1.

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Forest Wilson was the builder, with heating and plumbing by M.D. Murphy, and landscaping by Nebraska Nurseries Company in Lincoln.²⁸



Figure 8. 1091 North Fifth Street, David City, 1937

H.F. Klosterman moved into his new family residence in April 1937. The new residence is designed in the English Colonial style with a connecting two-car garage. Wood floors and painted trim were throughout the house. Walls were papered and light fixtures harmonized with the color scheme of each room. Built-in bookshelves and cabinetry were throughout the first floor, with a modern kitchen. Linoleum floors in brown tones with a blue border were laid in the kitchen. A large cedar closet was finished in the attic. Decorating was done by Tom Campbell, Frank Blackstone and Edward Engler.²⁹

²⁸ "New Home Completed in Northeast David City: Zinnecker Family Now Occupying Fine Modern Residence." *The Banner-Press* (David City, NE) Nov 12, 1936, 1.

²⁹ "Occupying New Home on North Fifth Street; H.F. Klosterman and Family Have Fine Modern Residence." *The Banner-Press* (David City, NE) April 29, 1937, 1.

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Figure 9. 823 N 4th Street, 1938

The Dean Hewit Home was considered modern in “every respect.” The two-story brick residence was noted as a fine replica of American colonial architecture. It was constructed with light gray brick and blue shutters with a slate roof that emphasized the warm blue and green tones. An older family home was on the site and Wilson utilized some materials from the old house in the new construction. Among the modern features of the house were its concrete and hollow tile fireproof construction, rock-wool insulation, weather stripping, and double glazing for “complete air conditioning.” A gas fired boiler operated an air conditioner that sent filtered and humidified forced air to all the rooms except for the bathrooms and kitchen, which were heated by hot water radiation. Some notable interior decoration included the cloak room, powder room and kitchen bathroom which have marble windowsills, pink ceilings, green linoleum floor and black and white window drapes with crystal ball fringe. The kitchen was notable with modern features, a breakfast nook set upholstered in ivory leather tufted with Chinese red to match the red table tops and red and white drapes. The color scheme was red, white, and blue and implemented with a blue ceiling, white walls, red linoleum wainscot and linoleum floor coverings in two shades of blue scattered with large red and white polka dots. A lengthy article continues to describe all of the interior features, colors, and decoration. The house was designed by Noel Wallace, an Omaha architect, constructed by Forest Wilson, and the Orchard and Wilhelm Company of Omaha did the interior decorating.³⁰

The Hewit’s (senior) built another house with Forest Wilson as their contractor in 1949-1950. The local paper referred to the residence as the first ranch-type house in David City, It was on the north part of the Hewit farm, located on the south side of town.

These residences illustrate Wilson’s growth as a contractor and businessman as they were constructed for some of David City’s wealthier citizens. His first foray into design and construction at the Sanley House lays the groundwork for the design and implementation of

³⁰ “Very Attractive New Residence Home of the Dean M. Hewit Family.” *The Banner-Press* (David City, NE) Jan 27, 1938, 1. Dr. Dean Hewit contributed to this residence for his son, also Dean Hewit. The senior Hewits built a house 12 years later with Wilson as their contractor.

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modern material and style that is shown in the later residences. Each represents a different architectural style, with the Sanley's illustrating the Arts and Crafts and showcasing the budding builder's talent and skill with a well-designed and detailed residence. These details are evident in the willingness of the client, in this case Thomas Sanley, to use materials such as the Ludowici tile roof, mosaic tile floor, and stenciled plasterwork. Each of these elements plays a crucial role in highlighting the style manifested in the final building product.

In 1943, Forest accepted employment at the Lincoln Air Base as their construction foreman³¹ Two years later, in 1945, Wilson sold his personal David City residence at 389 Ninth Street for \$4200.³² He had planned at one point to tear down the small house on the lot and build a new house for himself, salvaging lumber for the new construction, but that never occurred. He retired from the construction business in 1964, though he retained an active interest and helped in supervising some projects. Forest's nephew David, continued as the new owner of Wilson Construction. Forest passed away at the age of 76 at his residence in Lincoln. He operated Wilson Construction Company in David City for 30 years and in Lincoln for 20 years.³³

Criterion C: Architecture

Arts and Crafts

The Thomas Sanley residence is a local example of the Arts and Crafts Style in David City. Features like the low-sloping roof with overhanging eaves, recessed full-width front porch, heavy square brick columns, and interior finishes and plan express a local adaptation of the style. The Arts and Crafts movement began as a social reform in late nineteenth century England. Rebelling against mass production, sterilization, and brutality of the Industrial Revolution, many sought a return to humanizing the ideals of design and craftsmanship. Beautiful and useful handmade objects and structures were valued. Reformers like William Morris and John Ruskin influenced design aesthetics with their patterns, prints, and furniture. In America, the movement was adopted in both aesthetic design and architecture in the early nineteen hundreds.

California Brothers Charles and Henry Greene established the residential architectural style popularized as the Craftsman style of the Arts and Crafts movement with their bungalow designs that incorporated features from Shakers, Spanish Missions, and Japanese influences. Elements of their designs and of the movement could be applied to residential properties, big and small, and the style became among the most prolific house-types constructed across the country.³⁴

A return to handmade quality, organic beauty, earthy colors, and functional honest design in furniture, architecture, and decorative arts was dominated in America by Gustav Stickley.³⁵

³¹ *The Banner-Press* (David City, NE) July 15, 1943, 5.

³² *The Banner-Press* (David City, NE) Nov 29, 1945, 5.

³³ "Forest D. Wilson, 76, Former DC Businessman, Dies Sunday in Lincoln." *The Banner-Press* (David City, NE) Nov 16, 1967, 1.

³⁴ Teresa Grimes. *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement*, Survey LA Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey, June 2016, 1-2.

³⁵ Richard H. Engeman. "Wooden Beams and Railroad Ties: The History of Oregon's Built Environment: Revival Styles and Highway Alignment, 1890-1940-Country Life and Bungalow" Oregon History project, 2014. Accessed at www.oregonhistoryproject.org/narratives ; Massey, James, and Shirley Maxwell. *Arts & Crafts Design in America: A State-by-State Guide*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998, 7.

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Stickley, a furniture manufacturer in New York state, founded *The Craftsman* magazine. He was an enthusiastic entrepreneur who played a key role in popularizing Craftsman and bungalow style houses, making them the top choice among middle-class Americans in the early twentieth century. Stickley offered his readers plans for simple yet substantial houses and urged them to build them with their own hands, using local materials. *The Craftsman* was one among many magazines that readers could turn to for information about architecture and interior design. The *Ladies Home Journal* with a circulation of around 1-million readers influenced more people than Stickley's journal did. House-plan books and catalogues for bungalows and Arts and Crafts homes were widespread.³⁶

As a young man studying the finer points of design, it is possible that Forest Wilson referenced some aspect of these pattern book designs and implemented their features in this residence.

The Sanley house exemplifies superior craftsmanship, meticulously finished materials, and distinctive artistic features characteristic of the Arts and Crafts movement. The honest use of materials and form created this singular example of the bungalow style in the community. Quality of artistry can be seen in specialized areas such as the woodwork, masonry, built-in cabinetry, tile work, and stenciling. The distinctive exterior has a low-pitched gable roof with wide overhanging eaves. The use of natural materials and fine craftsmanship featured small-paned windows or leaded glass, both illustrated in the Sanley residence. The open porch, recessed beneath the roofline, provided a comfortable and private outdoor area that facilitated a seamless transition to the interior space and strengthened the connection with the natural environment.

The Thomas Sanley residence is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture. It represents an important example of an Arts and Crafts Era bungalow and remains a notable, early example of a brick residence in David City. It possesses distinctive features of the style such as the low-pitched roof with wide eaves and exposed rafters, a recessed porch, Ludowici tile roof, and brick exterior. The interior workmanship reflects high quality craftsmanship in the built-in cabinetry, exposed kerf cut wood trim, natural woodwork, and use of decorative tile and stenciling.

The residence exemplifies the work of a local master under Criterion C. Designer and builder Forest Wilson demonstrated his distinctive design expertise through the unique physical characteristics of this building. The structure represents an early stage of Wilson's career, as documented in local newspaper reports, and showcases Arts and Crafts bungalow features from his particular perspective. This property is notable for its superior craftsmanship relative to comparable residences in David City, being among the limited brick houses constructed during this era and preserving characteristic design elements including column woodwork, exposed kerf cut trim, Ludowici tile roofing, and a mosaic entry tile floor.

The property demonstrates significant artistic value under Criterion C at the local level. It qualifies in this area because it clearly embodies the concepts and design principles of the Arts and Crafts style, reflecting Forest Wilson's chosen aesthetic. This is evident not only in specific features such as the mosaic tile flooring, painted wall stencils, selection of materials, and craftsmanship throughout the construction, but also in the overall integration of these elements, which together create a cohesive design theme.

³⁶ Engeman, 10-11.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 _____

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Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 41.249344 Longitude: -97.129099

2. Latitude: Longitude:

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

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

The nominated property is located at 30 15 3 David City Center 100' Block 7 & 1/2 Vac Co Rd Miles 5th Add of David City, Burt County, Nebraska.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses an urban lot containing the house, detached garage, and garden shed associated with the house.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Melissa Dirr Gengler and Elizabeth Chase

organization: Historic Resources Group, Inc.

street & number: 2840 Calvert Street

city or town: Lincoln state: NE zip code: 68502

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e-mail: melissa@hrg-nebraska.com
telephone: 402-770-5877
date: May 15, 2026

Additional Documentation

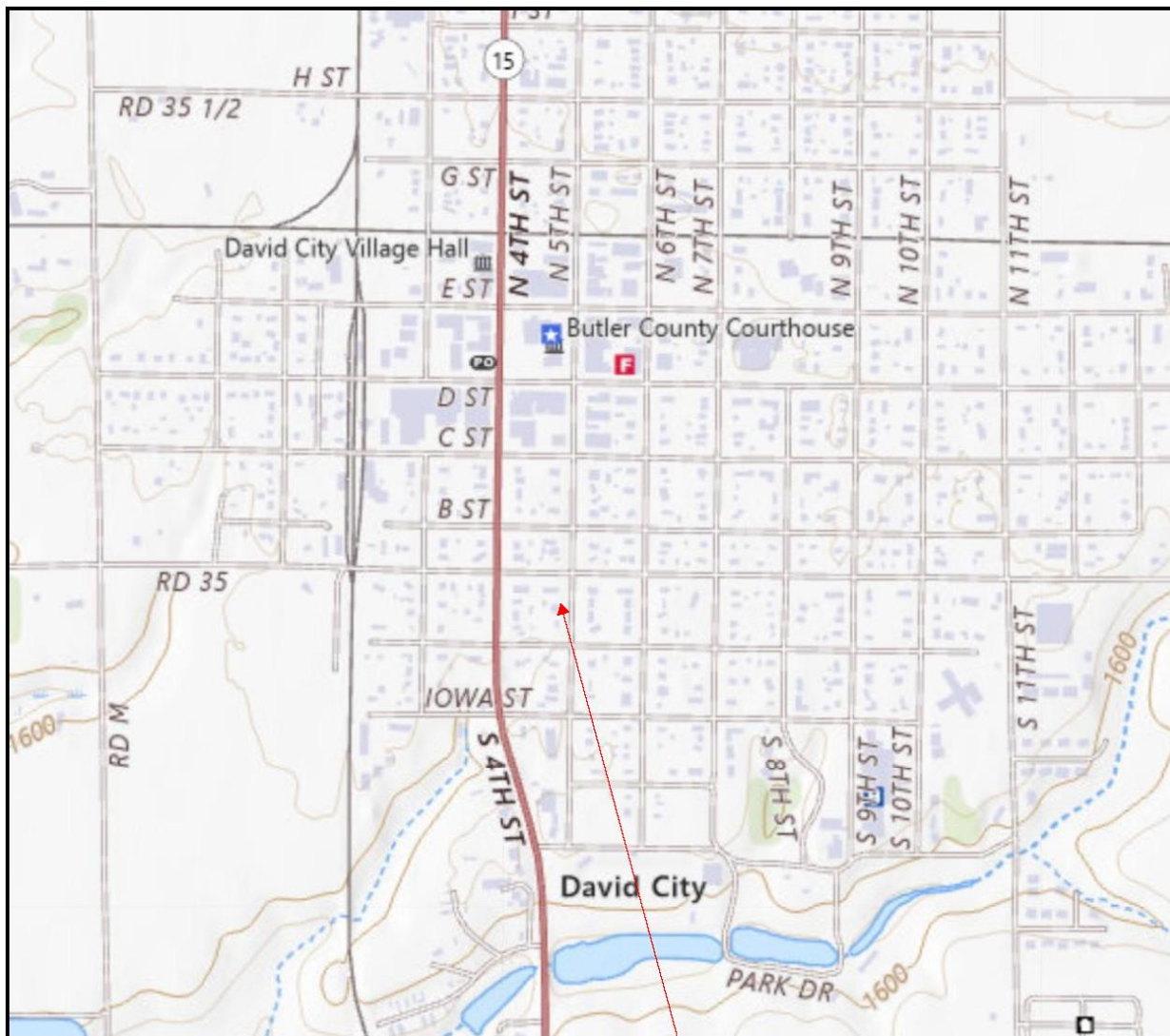
Submit the following items with the completed form:

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



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Map 2. David City West, USGS Topographical Map, 2021.

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

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Photo Log

Name of Property: Sanley, Thomas, House

City or Vicinity: David City

County: Butler

State: NE

Photographer: Melissa Dirr Gengler and Elizabeth Chase

Date Photographed: August 13, 2025 (Photos 13–14); September 25, 2025 (Photos 01–12, 15–20)

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

1. Exterior view looking southwest
2. Main east facing façade, looking west.
3. Corner view showing east and north walls, looking southwest.
4. Front porch detail, looking northwest.
5. Back and side walls, looking northeast.
6. Back wall and yard looking east.
7. Side, south facing wall, looking north.
8. Side, north facing wall, looking southwest.
9. Garage, looking west.
10. Backyard shed looking northwest.
11. Porch detail looking west.
12. Porch deck looking south
13. Entry parlor showing tile floor, stenciling, and woodwork, looking west.
14. Front parlor looking north.
15. Entry parlor floor detail, looking west.
16. Dining room built-in detail, looking northwest.
17. Looking south from front parlor, through to dining room.
18. Kitchen and casual dining area looking south.
19. First floor bathroom looking west, showing tub and tile floor.
20. First floor bathroom looking east, showing water closet.

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Map 3. Photo Key, Exterior.

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

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Tier 1 – 60-100 hours

Tier 2 – 120 hours

Tier 3 – 230 hours

Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.