

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: Felthauser, Genevieve, HouseOther names/site number: LC13:D04-404

Name of related multiple property listing:

Nebraska Women in Trades

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

2. LocationStreet & number: 1740 High StreetCity or town: Lincoln State: NE County: LancasterNot For Publication: ☐

N/A

Vicinity: ☐

N/A

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☐ statewideX local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A☐ BX C☐ D

	/Director	06/23/2026
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	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	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.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Modernist

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: BRICK

Walls: BRICK

Roof: ASPHALT, SYNTHETICS: Rubber

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 Genevieve Felthauser House is located at 1740 High Street in the Indian Village neighborhood of Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska. The property contains two resources: a historic house with attached garage (contributing) and a nonoriginal storage shed at the northwest corner of the property (noncontributing). Completed in 1941, the historic building is a single-family residence developed by Lincoln-based builder and real estate developer Laura B. Wood. It is Modernist in style with painted brick exterior walls. It rises two stories above a full basement and has a low-pitched hipped roof. It has an original attached, one-story, two-car garage with a flat roof. The first story contains a living room, dining room, kitchen, and half bathroom, the second story contains three bedrooms and a full bathroom, and the basement contains a den and a bedroom. Major character-defining features include painted brick exterior walls with subtle Streamline Moderne details, a low-pitched hipped roof, glass block windows, an attached garage, and curved plaster interior walls.

The Genevieve Felthauser House is locally significant under the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) "Nebraska Women in Trades" under Criterion A in the area of Social History: Women's History and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a Modernist residence developed by woman builder Laura B. Wood. It meets all registration requirements of the MPDF as a building property type.¹ With limited alterations since its original construction, it retains integrity to convey its significance.

¹ Rebecca Wallisch, Rachel Alison, and Megan McDonald, "Nebraska Women in Trades," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Park Service, July 2025), F:53.

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Narrative Description

Setting and Site

The Genevieve Felthouser House (“the Felthouser House”) occupies the northwest corner parcel at High and South 18th Streets in the Indian Village neighborhood of Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska (see *Figures 1-3*). Located on the south side of the city in the area historically known as Southeast Lincoln, Indian Village is bounded by Van Dorn, 10th, and 20th Streets and Nebraska Parkway. The neighborhood sits approximately one-and-a-half miles south of the Nebraska State Capitol and two miles south of the O Street central commercial district, and the Country Club of Lincoln borders the neighborhood to the east. The neighborhood primarily contains suburban development dating from the 1920s to the 1950s. A small commercial node is located at the intersection of South 17th and Van Dorn Streets, and another small commercial area is located at the southwest perimeter of the neighborhood; both contain commercial and civic buildings dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The neighborhood also contains an elementary school and two churches.

Residential development, primarily single-family houses, fills the rest of the neighborhood. Houses throughout the neighborhood sit on narrow parcels with generally uniform setbacks from the streets. A majority of the houses in the neighborhood exhibit architectural styles popular in the early to mid-twentieth century, including Craftsman, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Minimal Traditional. Grassy lawns surround the houses, and most properties feature trees, bushes, and other plantings. Most blocks have sidewalks with grassy verges, and mature trees line many of the streets.

The Felthouser House’s primary (south) elevation faces High Street, which borders the parcel to the south, while South 18th Street borders the parcel to the east. Parcels with single-family houses border the parcel to the north and west. Single-family houses also occupy the northeast, southeast, and southwest corner parcels at High and South 18th Streets.

Typical of other houses in the neighborhood, the Felthouser House sits near the center of its parcel, with a setback of approximately forty-three feet from High Street. A sidewalk with a grassy verge extends along High Street, a sidewalk with a nonoriginal metal railing leads from High Street to the main entrance, and a wide driveway leads from South 18th Street to the original attached garage. A paved patio occupies a portion of the backyard at the northwest corner of the house. A small, nonoriginal storage shed (a noncontributing structure) sits at the northwest corner of the parcel. Nonoriginal chainlink and wooden fencing surrounds the backyard. A nonhistoric lamppost in the front yard illuminates the front sidewalk, a fire hydrant sits in the grassy verge at the southeast corner of the parcel, and utility poles with streetlamps and street signage line the parcel along South 18th Street. Grassy lawn with trees and plantings fills the rest of the parcel.

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Exterior

Structure

The Felthouser House was completed in 1941 as a single-family residence with an attached garage. The residential portion of the building has a rectangular plan and rises two stories above a full basement. It has a low-pitched hipped roof covered with asphalt shingles. The attached garage sits at the northeast corner of the residential portion. It has a square plan, rises one story, and has a flat roof covered with thermoplastic polyolefin (TPO). Although the garage is attached, there is no internal connection between the residential portion and the garage. The residential portion and garage are of wood-frame construction with painted, running-bond brick veneer cladding. The building is and was originally painted, creating smooth exterior walls typical of the Modern style.

Ornament is overall restrained, in keeping with its Modern design influence. The main decorative feature is brick band coursing between the first and second stories on all elevations of the residential portion of the building and matching band coursing at the top of the chimney, creating a subtle Streamline Moderne detail with a horizontal emphasis. The residential portion also features a simple flat fascia underneath flush eaves and rowlock brick windowsills. The attached garage is devoid of detail.

South (Primary) Elevation (*Photos 1-3*)

Three bays organize the south elevation. On the first story, from west to east, bay 1 projects slightly from the rest of the elevation and contains a glass block window. Bay 2 contains the primary entrance, consisting of a single-leaf wood door with diamond lites and a nonoriginal aluminum-frame storm door flanked by glass block sidelights. A concrete stoop with concrete steps and a nonoriginal metal railing spans bay 2. Bay 3 contains a bow window with a copper roof and five individual single-sash, single-lite windows; the overall bow window configuration is original, but the individual windows are nonoriginal vinyl replacements. On the second story, each bay contains a window opening with a nonoriginal, two-over-two vinyl replacement window; the opening in bay 2 is slightly off-center. A second-story balcony covers the slightly projecting first-story bay 1 and extends across bay 2, sheltering the primary entrance and creating an overall asymmetric front elevation. Brick band coursing between the first and second stories continues across the balcony's tall, solid brick walls, reinforcing the building's subtle Streamline Moderne detailing.

East Elevation (*Photo 3*)

Four bays organize the east elevation of the residential portion. On the first story, from south to north, bays 1 and 3 each contain a window opening with a nonoriginal, two-over-two vinyl replacement window, and bay 4 contains a window opening with a ganged pair of nonoriginal, two-over-two vinyl replacement windows. On the second story, bays 1 and 4 each contain a window opening with a nonoriginal, two-over-two vinyl replacement window. A brick chimney projects from bay 2 and extends above the roofline. It features corbeled shoulders

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between the first and second stories, decorative band coursing near the top, and two metal chimney caps. The attached garage projects approximately five feet from the east elevation of the residential portion. Its east elevation currently contains a single opening with a paneled wood garage door. Originally, the garage contained two individual garage door openings (see *Figure 8*); they were combined into a single opening at an unknown date.

North (Rear) Elevation (*Photo 4*)

Three bays organize the north elevation of the residential portion. On the first story, from east to west, the garage extends across bays 1 and 2; its north elevation is blank. Bay 3 contains a rear entrance to the kitchen, consisting of a single-leaf wood door with horizontal lites and a wood storm door. A concrete stoop spans bay 3, sheltered by a shed roof with a decorative metal corner column. On the second story, bay 1 contains a doorway with a wood door and nonoriginal aluminum storm door that leads to the flat roof of the garage. Bay 2 contains a window opening with a nonoriginal, two-over-two vinyl replacement window; it is slightly off-center. Bay 3 is blank.

West Elevation (*Photo 1*)

The west elevation of the garage contains a pedestrian entrance at the south end, sheltered by the shed roof, with a single-leaf wood door with horizontal lites. The rest of the elevation is blank.

Three bays organize the west elevation of the residential portion. On the first story, from north to south, bay 1 contains a window opening with a nonoriginal, two-over-two vinyl replacement window. Bay 2 contains a side entrance to an interior stairwell that leads to both the first story and the basement. The entrance contains a nonoriginal half-glazed steel door with a nonoriginal aluminum-frame storm door. Bay 3 contains two window openings, each containing a nonoriginal, two-over-two vinyl replacement window.

On the second story, bays 1 and 2 each contain a window opening with a nonoriginal, two-over-two vinyl replacement window. The opening in bay 2 corresponds with the interior stairwell and sits between the first and second stories. Bay 3 is blank.

Interior

Configuration

The interior retains its original layout (see *Figures 8-9*). The first story contains a living room (*Photos 6-7*), dining room (*Photos 6 & 8*), kitchen (*Photo 9*), and half-bathroom organized around a central double-loaded corridor (*Photos 5-6*). The main entrance on High Street opens to the central corridor. The half-bathroom is in the southwest corner, to the west of the main entrance. The living room is in the southeast corner, with a large opening between it and the central corridor. The dining room is in the northeast corner, with a similarly large opening between it and the living room, creating the feeling of open space while still retaining distinct rooms. The large kitchen is in the northwest corner, with smaller openings between it and the

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dining room as well as the central corridor. Switchback stairs at the middle of the west side of the house, between the half-bathroom and kitchen on the first story, provide access to the second story and basement.

The second story contains three bedrooms and a bathroom organized around a central double-loaded corridor. The stair opens onto the corridor, which provides access to all other spaces on the second story. Bedrooms are in the southeast, northeast, and northwest corners, while the bathroom is in the southwest corner.

The basement contains a den (*Photo 10*), a bedroom, and utility and storage space.

Finishes

The interior retains many original finishes. On the first and second stories, ceilings retain swirl-finish plaster. The kitchen has applied acoustic ceiling tile; it is unknown if it is original to the house. Walls retain flat plaster. Wallpaper originally covered nearly all walls throughout the house; walls are now painted. Many interior walls are curved throughout the house, and wide entryways between the first-story central corridor, living room, and dining room feature rounded side reveals, a unique feature reflective of Modern style (see *Photos 5-6*). The living room retains its fireplace with painted wood mantle, tile surround, and tile hearth. Wood trim is and was originally painted throughout; wood doors were originally unpainted and are now painted. Hardwood flooring remains in the living room, dining room, and second-story corridor and bedrooms. Nonoriginal vinyl tile covers the first-story corridor floors; it is unclear if hardwood remains extant and intact underneath. Nonoriginal vinyl also covers the kitchen floors and stairs to the side entrance and basement. Wood stairs to the second story remain. In the basement, ceilings retain swirl finish plaster, walls are composed of red hollow clay tile, and floors are nonoriginal vinyl. The basement den retains its fireplace with limestone surround.

Alterations

Overall, the Felthouser House has experienced very few alterations since its 1941 construction. Alterations that have occurred are typical of historic houses that have been updated over the years to meet the needs of their residents. The main exterior alterations are replacement windows and the combination of two garage door openings into one. The main interior alterations are largely limited to updated finishes, such as nonoriginal flooring material in the first-story corridor, kitchen, and basement.

MPDF Registration Requirements

The Felthouser House meets all registration requirements of the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) "Nebraska Women in Trades." Under the MPDF, it is eligible as a building property type. The MPDF uses the overarching National Park Service definition of a building as "a form of shelter principally constructed for human activity."² It specifies that building property types may be residential buildings that were "designed, built, developed,

² Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, "Nebraska Women in Trades," F:53.

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planned, created, decorated, or constructed by a woman or women.”³ The Felthausen House, as a residential building developed by woman builder and real estate developer Laura B. Wood, meets these registration requirements.

The MPDF specifies that properties nominated under Criterion A and/or C “must retain sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association,” and properties listed under Criterion C must retain integrity “such that they can convey the craftsmanship, skill, technological or engineering expertise of women in the building trades” and “retain sufficient character-defining features to convey their historical significance.”⁴ The Felthausen House retains its integrity through minimal alterations and retains character-defining features including its simple brick exterior with subtle Streamline Moderne accents, asymmetric façade, and curved plaster walls.

Additionally, as outlined in the registration requirements, the Felthausen House is located within the State of Nebraska, and it was developed and constructed within the period of significance of the MPDF (c. 1840-1975).⁵

Integrity

The Felthausen House occupies its original *location* at the corner of High and South 18th Streets. The Indian Village neighborhood, which largely developed from the 1920s to the 1950s as a predominantly residential suburban neighborhood, has experienced very little change or new construction since the mid-twentieth century; therefore, the Felthausen House retains integrity of *setting*. The building retains integrity of *design* and *materials*, including its original scale and massing, painted brick cladding, fenestration patterns, attached garage, and Modernist detailing such as exterior Streamline Moderne band coursing, glass block windows, curved interior walls, and overall restrained ornament. *Workmanship* is evident in the building’s painted brick cladding and curved interior walls. With these details, the Felthausen House is able to effectively communicate the *feeling* and *association* of an early 1940s Modernist house.

³ Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, “Nebraska Women in Trades,” F:53.

⁴ Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, “Nebraska Women in Trades,” F:51-52.

⁵ Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, “Nebraska Women in Trades,” F:52.

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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.)

SOCIAL HISTORY: Women's History

ARCHITECTURE

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Period of Significance

1941

Significant Dates

1941 (construction)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wood, Laura B. (builder)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Genevieve Felthouser House (“the Felthouser House”), located at 1740 High Street in the Indian Village neighborhood of Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska, is locally significant under the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) “Nebraska Women in Trades” under Criterion A in the area of Social History: Women’s History. The Felthouser House is significant as a residential property developed by Laura B. Wood, a woman who successfully operated within Lincoln’s heavily male-dominated residential real estate and development industry from the early 1920s through the mid-1940s. The property represents Wood’s professional role in shaping Lincoln’s residential landscape during a period when women’s participation in the building trades was severely limited.

The Felthouser House is also locally significant under the MPDF “Nebraska Women in Trades” under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent and rare local example of a Modernist single-family residence in the Indian Village neighborhood, which contains mostly Craftsman and period revival style homes. As one of only two known Modernist single-family houses developed by Wood, it is also a rare example her work in this style. Modernism in the United States developed over the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries as a rejection of traditional and period revival architectural styles through the use of simplified massing, horizontal emphasis, and restrained decorative expression.⁶ The Felthouser House clearly reflects these principles through its low-pitched hipped roof, smooth painted exterior brick walls, Streamline Moderne band coursing, and asymmetrical façade, all of which distinguish the house from the surrounding overwhelmingly traditional residential architecture throughout the Indian Village neighborhood and larger Southeast Lincoln area.

⁶ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America’s Domestic Architecture* (Alfred A Knopf, 2013), 581-582.

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The period of significance, 1941, corresponds with the date of construction, and thus Wood's association with the house.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Nebraska Women in Trades

The Genevieve Felthouser House ("the Felthouser House") is locally significant under the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) "Nebraska Women in Trades" for its association with Laura B. Wood, one of the relatively few women who achieved professional success in Nebraska's building trades during the early to mid-twentieth century. As the MPDF discusses, women have continually contributed to the built environment in what is now called Nebraska, from the construction of dwellings in Indigenous settlements to the creation of mosaics in the Nebraska State Capitol.⁷ However, misogynistic barriers have persistently limited women's participation in the building trades. While women's participation and representation in the building trades has grown over time, women remain underrepresented across many building trade professions even today.⁸ Therefore, the contributions of the relatively small number of women who have overcome substantial barriers to shape Nebraska's built environment are significant and worthy of recognition.⁹

Laura B. Wood was active as a builder and real estate developer in Lincoln from the early 1920s to her death in 1942. The MPDF highlights Wood as one of the relatively few women working in the building trades during this period, both in Lincoln and throughout Nebraska.¹⁰ Wood's career specifically represents *Context 5. Suffrage, Roaring Twenties, and Late Progressive Era (C. 1920-1930)* and *Context 6. The Dust Bowl, The New Deal, and WWII (C. 1930-1945)* within the MPDF, which document a gradual expansion of women's professional opportunities alongside persistent gender discrimination that constrained their participation in the building trades. As the MPDF outlines in *Context 5*, real estate in particular became a popular and "acceptable" pursuit for many middle- and upper-income women in Nebraska during the early decades of the twentieth century, particularly as the urban areas of Lincoln and Omaha experienced rapid population growth and residential development booms.¹¹ In *Context 6*, the MPDF states that women faced increasing pressure to remain in the home to reserve employment opportunities for men as the Great Depression seized the economy. During that time, women also lost employment at a faster rate than men. However, for many women, earning an income was a necessity for survival, and women continued to slowly make strides in the building trades.¹² As a woman working in the field of real estate development who developed more properties in the 1930s than she had in the 1920s, Wood exemplifies these contexts.

⁷ Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, "Nebraska Women in Trades," E:9, E:43.

⁸ Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, "Nebraska Women in Trades," E:47.

⁹ Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, "Nebraska Women in Trades," F:48.

¹⁰ Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, "Nebraska Women in Trades," E:30-31.

¹¹ Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, "Nebraska Women in Trades," E:22.

¹² Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, "Nebraska Women in Trades," E:32-33.

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The Felthouser House, which Wood developed in 1940-1941, provides a tangible expression of both Wood's career and the historic contexts explored in the MPDF. It embodies the themes of women's contributions to Nebraska's built environment and women's persistence in the face of gender discrimination, and therefore represents an appropriate resource through which to apply the analytical framework of the MPDF.

Historic Context

Development of the Indian Village Neighborhood

The City of Lincoln originated from the non-Indigenous settlement of Lancaster, which was initially established in 1856 on the traditional lands of the Otoe-Missouria (Jíwere–Ñút'achi Máya^a) following their forced removal and displacement in 1854.¹³ When Nebraska gained statehood in 1867, the state legislature elected to locate the new state capital at the site of Lancaster, chosen for its equal distance from the population centers of Omaha and Nebraska City and for its proximity to fertile agricultural land.¹⁴ Renamed Lincoln, the settlement steadily grew. From a population of thirty-four in 1867, Lincoln surpassed Nebraska City as the second-largest city in the state in 1875 with a population of 13,000, and the population ballooned to 55,000 during the 1880s.¹⁵ While the global recession of the 1890s caused the population to fall to 40,000 by the turn of the twentieth century, the population had again reached approximately 55,000 by the time Laura B. Wood began her real estate career in the early 1920s.¹⁶ From the 1920s into the 1940s, Wood and other real estate professionals responded to an increasing demand for residential development as Lincoln nearly doubled in size, reaching a population of just under 100,000 following World War II.¹⁷

The original 1867 plat of Lincoln, overlaid onto the initial Lancaster plat, followed a grid pattern bounded by A and U Streets to the south and north, respectively, and 1st and 17th Streets to the west and east, respectively.¹⁸ Situated in the center of the plat, O Street was designated as the central commercial corridor, while the Capitol Square sat to the south—bounded by H, K, 14th, and 16th Streets—and the university campus, platted before the University of Nebraska was founded, sat to the north—bounded by R, T, 10th, and 12th Streets.¹⁹ Additional plats were added in the following years, but the original plat easily accommodated Lincoln's early growth, and most development lay between the Capitol and the university as late as the 1880s.²⁰ As a population boom in the 1880s attracted real estate speculators and investors, new plats were added, including the Lakeside and Knob Hill subdivisions in the Irvingdale and Indian Village

¹³ James L. McKee, *Lincoln, The Prairie Capital: An Illustrated History* (J&L Lee Publishers, 1995), 11.

¹⁴ Bruce F. Pauley, *Portrait of a City: Lincoln, Nebraska at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (University of Nebraska Press, 2023), 5.

¹⁵ Pauley, *Portrait of a City*, 9.; McKee, *Lincoln, The Prairie Capital*, 65.

¹⁶ Ed Zimmer, *Walking the Near South Neighborhood: Volume 3* (Near South Neighborhood Association, 2020), 6.

¹⁷ Zimmer, *Walking the Near South Neighborhood: Volume 3*, 6.

¹⁸ Ed Zimmer, "Lincoln's Original Plat of 1867," *Lincoln Today*, December 31, 2014.

¹⁹ Zimmer, "Lincoln's Original Plat of 1867."

²⁰ Pauley, *Portrait of a City*, 9.; Eric David Hart, "Knob Hill: Synthesis of an Urban Landscape," Thesis, (University of Nebraska, 1988), 5.

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residential neighborhoods where Wood eventually developed multiple properties.²¹ However, the distance between these neighborhoods and the city center—two or more miles from the Capitol and three or more miles from the central commercial district—made commuting by foot or horse-drawn carriage impractical. Coupled with the economic depression of the 1890s and subsequent population loss in Lincoln, early development in these areas was initially slow to virtually nonexistent.²²

The construction of an electric streetcar system in Lincoln from the 1890s to the 1910s and the rise of automobile ownership beginning in the 1910s and 1920s helped facilitate development beyond the city center, while a dramatic population increase between the 1920s and 1950s spurred suburban development.²³ Development in the residential neighborhood of Indian Village began to increase during this period, with previously platted areas filling in and additional plats added. These included the Axtell Heights subdivision in 1910, which was expanded in 1917, and the Woodsvew subdivision in 1925, both in which Wood frequently developed properties.²⁴ Most of the Indian Village neighborhood developed between the 1920s and the 1950s, with the majority of homes constructed during the 1920s and 1930s, the period when Wood was most active as a builder.²⁵

Laura B. Wood

Early Life

Laura B. Wood, née Laura McFarland, was born in Woodsfield, Ohio, in 1874 to farmers Elizabeth and George McFarland.²⁶ By the early 1890s, the McFarlands had moved to Thayer County, Nebraska. Laura McFarland married George Ward in 1894, and their daughter Alta Mae Ward was born in 1895.²⁷ In the following years, Laura experienced several divorces and marriages before moving to Lincoln and marrying Christian Broderson, a Lincoln saloon owner, in 1901.²⁸ In 1903, Laura Broderson purchased a lot at 2627 R Street, on which she and Christian constructed a house in 1906 (extant).²⁹ It is unknown how much involvement Laura had in the design and development of this house. However, at a time when Nebraska law did not guarantee

²¹ Zimmer, *Walking the Near South Neighborhood: Volume 3*, 6.; “Lincoln Daily News,” *Lincoln Journal Star*, March 23, 1887.; Advertisement, *Lincoln Journal Star*, March 3, 1887.

²² Pauley, *Portrait of a City*, 31-32.; Ed Zimmer, *Walking the Near South Neighborhood: Volume 2* (Near South Neighborhood Association, 2020), 8.

²³ Pauley, *Portrait of a City*, 30, 35.

²⁴ “Axtell Heights,” *Lincoln Journal Star*, May 29, 1910.; “High, Dry and Sightly,” *Lincoln Journal Star*, May 15, 1910.; “Quiet Meeting of City Commission,” *Lincoln Star*, May 14, 1917.; “Introduce New Ordinances,” *Lincoln Star*, June 8, 1925.

²⁵ Hart, “Knob Hill: Synthesis of an Urban Landscape,” 15-16.; City of Lincoln Building Permits.; City of Lincoln GIS Data.; Sanborn Maps.

²⁶ “Laura B. Wood Taken By Death,” *Lincoln Star*, May 19, 1942.; “Mrs. Elizabeth McFarland,” *Lincoln Journal Star*, April 27, 1929.

²⁷ Nebraska Marriage Records, available at the Nebraska State Historical Society State Library and Archives.

²⁸ “Laura B. Wood Taken By Death,” *Lincoln Star*, May 19, 1942.; Nebraska Marriage Records, available at the Nebraska State Historical Society State Library and Archives.

²⁹ “Real Estate Transfers,” *Lincoln Star*, June 13, 1903.; “Building Permits,” *Lincoln Journal Star*, October 14, 1906.

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women the right to automatically inherit property from their deceased husbands unless there were no other surviving relatives, it is notable that Laura held the deed to the property, although Christian's name was listed on the building permit for the house.³⁰ According to one of her obituaries, Laura also started working in the millinery business around this time.³¹ However, as women's occupations were routinely omitted from census data until at least the mid-twentieth century, her millinery occupation was not listed in any city directories or the 1910 federal census.³²

The early to mid-1910s were a tumultuous period for Laura Broderson. In 1912, local newspapers announced the event of an early morning police raid on her home, during which Broderson, her daughter Alta Mae Ward, and several boarders in their home were taken into custody. Broderson was subsequently charged for "running a disorderly house" and "conducting a house for immoral purposes."³³ Charges against Broderson continued. In 1913, she was arrested and charged for selling liquor without a license, and later that year another police raid occurred.³⁴ She was again charged "as both owner and keeper of the premises . . . which it is alleged were used for the purposes of prostitution."³⁵ Newspapers reported that Broderson's neighbors, "many of them prominent," submitted affidavits testifying to "the general bad reputation of the house."³⁶ The details of these events are difficult to verify, but they illustrate the often harsh reality for many women in developing urban centers in the early twentieth century. Women often took on lodgers into their homes as a way of earning income; Broderson herself testified that she operated her home as a rooming house to support her family.³⁷ However, boarding houses stirred significant social anxiety related to class, gender, and morality, particularly amid the Progressive Era emphasis on social reform. While genuine brothels were also common in developing urban centers, boarding houses and the women operating them were often wrongfully targeted in the social crusade against immorality.³⁸

In early 1914, Broderson spent some time away from Lincoln, staying with friends in Galveston, Texas.³⁹ Newspapers later announced that she planned to move to Idaho, but she then fell ill and remained in Lincoln.⁴⁰ In early 1915, her husband Christian unexpectedly died.⁴¹ By 1916, Wray W. Wood, a traveling agent with the Minneapolis Threshing Machine Company,

³⁰ Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, "Nebraska Women in Trades," E:24-25.

³¹ "Mrs. Laura B. Wood Dies At Lincoln," *York News-Times* (York, Nebraska), May 19, 1942.

³² Nancy Folbre and Marjorie Abel, "Women's Work and Women's Households: Gender Bias in the U.S. Census," *Social Research* 56, no. 3 (Autumn 1989): 546-547.

³³ "Make Raid in East Lincoln," *Lincoln Journal Star*, February 16, 1912.; "Brought to Station," *Lincoln Star*, February 16, 1912.

³⁴ "Grand Jury Caused Arrest," *Lincoln Journal Star*, February 2, 1913.; "11 Indictments by the Grand Jury," *Lincoln Star*, February 2, 1913.; "Police Stage Three Raids," *Lincoln Star*, November 16, 1913.

³⁵ "Mrs. Broderson Up Against Albert Act," *Lincoln Star*, March 26, 1913.

³⁶ "Court Refuses to Grant Injunction," *Daily Star* (Lincoln, Nebraska), February 18, 1913.

³⁷ "Make Showings in Albert Law Cases," *Lincoln Star*, February 11, 1913.

³⁸ Richard Harris, "The End Justified the Means: Boarding and Rooming in a City of Homes, 1890-1951," *Journal of Social History* 26, no. 2 (Winter, 1992): 331.

³⁹ "In Society," *Lincoln Journal Star*, January 4, 1914.

⁴⁰ "In Society," *Lincoln Journal Star*, March 1, 1914.; "In Society," *Lincoln Journal Star*, November 15, 1914.

⁴¹ "Chris Broderson," *Lincoln Journal Star*, January 30, 1915.

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was rooming at the Broderson home, and Laura and Wray married in 1918.⁴² Shortly after marrying, they moved to Aberdeen, South Dakota, where Laura likely earned a degree from the teachers college at Northern Normal and Industrial School (now called Northern State University).⁴³ In 1928, Laura and Wray divorced, with Laura citing “extreme cruelty” as grounds for separation.⁴⁴

A Nebraska Women in Trades

Prior to their divorce, Laura and Wray Wood returned from Aberdeen to Lincoln in 1922, and Laura began her career in real estate soon after. As outlined in *Context 5. Suffrage, Roaring Twenties, and Late Progressive Era* in the “Nebraska Women in Trades” MPDF, real estate became a popular and “acceptable” pursuit for many middle- and upper-income women in Nebraska during the early decades of the twentieth century, particularly as the urban areas of Lincoln and Omaha experienced rapid population growth and residential development booms.⁴⁵ Following World War I, when many women had entered the workforce for the first time in traditionally male fields, many women continued to pursue careers despite societal pressure to once again retreat from the public sphere.⁴⁶ Women still remained scarce in the fields of architecture, design, and the building trades. Architecture in particular remained challenging for women to break into due to strict requirements for formal qualifications and the structural barriers women faced in accessing education and technical degrees.⁴⁷ However, a 1921 study on women’s employment noted a rise in the number of women entering the real estate industry, which demanded fewer formal qualifications. The study also noted that “real estate requires a smaller amount of capital than any other comparable business,” making it more accessible for women to pursue.⁴⁸ While Wood remained one of the very few women in Lincoln and throughout Nebraska working in the building trades throughout her career, her entry into real estate in the early 1920s thus reflected a broader movement of Nebraska women leveraging the field’s relative accessibility to establish professional careers and economic independence.

Throughout the 1920s, Wood actively purchased and rented or sold residential properties already developed by other (male) builders and developers. She also partnered with other (male) builders to develop properties herself. The earliest known property Wood developed was her own home and office at 2655 South 13th Street (extant), a 2½-story wood-frame Craftsman

⁴² *Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska, City Directory* (R.L. Polk & Co., 1916), 657.; “Mere Mention,” *Lincoln Journal Star*, May 16, 1928.

⁴³ Laura’s obituary states that she graduated from “South Dakota State College, Aberdeen.” South Dakota State College (now South Dakota State University) is in Brookings, South Dakota, 150 miles from Aberdeen, and no research suggests that Laura ever lived in or near Brookings. It is more likely that she attended the Northern Normal and Industrial School (now Northern State University) in Aberdeen; however, archival research into university records have thus far been inconclusive. 1920 United States Federal Census, Aberdeen, Brown, South Dakota.; “Laura B. Wood Taken By Death,” *Lincoln Star*, May 19, 1942.

⁴⁴ “Mere Mention,” *Lincoln Journal Star*, May 16, 1928.

⁴⁵ Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, “Nebraska Women in Trades,” E:22.

⁴⁶ Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, “Nebraska Women in Trades,” E:29.

⁴⁷ Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, “Nebraska Women in Trades,” E:21.

⁴⁸ Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, “Nebraska Women in Trades,” E:29.; Elizabeth Kemper Adams, *Women Professional Workers: A Study Made for the Women’s Educational and Industrial Union* (Macmillan Company, 1921), 277.

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house. In 1922, Wood obtained a building permit and worked with male builder F.P. Hillyer to develop the property, which served as Wood's home and office until her death in 1942.⁴⁹ Alta Mae Ward also lived with and worked for her mother's business from this location following her husband's death in 1933 until she moved to her son's home in California in 1954.⁵⁰ The house was designed with two separate front entrances, one to the residential portion of the home and one to the business office. At 2½-stories, it is one of the largest houses in the area, and like Wood's earlier home on R Street, it housed boarders in addition to Wood and later Ward, including some of Wood's employees.⁵¹

Like her own home, properties Wood developed during the early to mid-1920s are primarily on South 13th Street north of Van Dorn. Most are one-story wood-frame Craftsman bungalows, such as 2717 and 2741 South 13th Street (both extant). In 1927, Wood developed a property for her daughter, Alta Mae Ward, and her family, a two-story stone Tudor Revival at 1700 Pawnee Street (extant). For these properties developed during the early to mid-1920s, Wood primarily served as the property owner and mortgage holder, while her business partners, such as Henry M. Decker, Edwin Bergsten, and E.L. Lowell, were listed as the builders on building permits.⁵²

In the mid- to late 1920s, Wood began expanding her geographic reach to properties roughly clustered around South 16th Street, both north and south of Van Dorn Street, and she also began appearing as a builder alongside her business partners on building permits. Homes Wood developed in the late 1920s are larger, such as the two-story wood-frame Tudor Revival at 1665 Woodsvie Street (extant) and the two-story brick Colonial Revival at 1652 Woodsvie Street (extant).

As outlined in *Context 6. The Dust Bowl, the New Deal, and WWII* in the "Nebraska Women in Trades" MPDF, during the 1930s, women faced increasing pressure to remain in the home to reserve employment opportunities for men as the Great Depression seized the economy. During that time, women also lost employment at a faster rate than men. However, for many women, earning an income was a necessity for survival, and women continued to slowly make strides in the building trades.⁵³ Wood was one of these women, developing more properties in the 1930s than she had in the 1920s. Census and city directory data also began to list Wood's occupation: the 1930 federal census lists her occupation as "contractor" in the industry "houses," while city directories throughout the 1930s list her occupation both as "real estate" and "builder."⁵⁴ Throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, Wood continued partnering with other builders, primarily Edwin Bergsten, and they each appeared as builders on building permits fairly equally.⁵⁵ Wood also began building in the Axtell Heights subdivision to the east of South 17th Street and south of Van Dorn Street, with her developments roughly clustered around South 18th Street.

⁴⁹ Lincoln Building Permit No. 10205.

⁵⁰ *Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska, City Directory* (R.L. Polk & Co., 1934), 689.; *Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska, City Directory* (R.L. Polk & Co., 1951), 896.; "Alta Ward Dies in Downey, California," *Lincoln Journal Star*, January 17, 1955.

⁵¹ 1930 United States Federal Census, Lincoln, Lancaster, Nebraska.; Lincoln City Directories, various dates.

⁵² Lincoln Building Permits, various.

⁵³ Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, "Nebraska Women in Trades," E:32-33.

⁵⁴ 1930 United States Federal Census, Lincoln, Lancaster, Nebraska.; Lincoln City Directories, various dates.

⁵⁵ Lincoln Building Permits, various.

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Reflecting the realities of the Depression, most homes Wood developed throughout the 1930s and early 1940s are relatively simple and compact and rarely rise above one story. The vast majority are Minimal Traditional in style and fall within three subtypes: the Cape Cod side gable, such as 1800 Otoe Street (extant); the gable-and-wing, such as 1727 Otoe Street (extant); and the hip-roof, such as 1850 Dakota Street (extant). The Minimal Traditional style and its subtypes are reflected throughout the area, including in properties that Wood did not develop. However, Wood introduced a unique variation on the hip-roof subtype that only appears on properties she developed: a front facade, organized by three bays, that features blind arched wall dormers centered on each bay. Examples are 2769 South 16th Street (extant), 1840 Pawnee Street (extant), and 1740 Dakota Street (extant).

Outliers to the typical properties that Wood developed during the 1930s and early 1940s include the Felthouser House at 1740 High Street as well as 1730 Pawnee Street (extant). Both are two-story, Modernist style homes and the only known Modernist style houses Wood developed. Wood also developed one multifamily building during this period, a one-story, stone-clad, Minimal Traditional building at 1524 Burr Street (extant), constructed circa 1941. This is the only known multifamily building Wood developed, and it is one of only a handful of multifamily buildings in the area.

Notably, although racially restrictive covenants became widely used in real estate development during the early to mid-twentieth century, there is no evidence that Wood implemented such practices in her own developments. Racially restrictive covenants emerged in the United States as early as the nineteenth century but became common across the United States in the 1910s and 1920s, particularly as the Black population in urban areas began to rise. These covenants were legally enforceable agreements between developers, neighborhood associations, and property owners that prohibited the sale, occupancy, or lease of property to specific racial groups, particularly African Americans. Racially restrictive covenants stemmed from the racist, manufactured belief that racial segregation would protect property values, real estate profits, and neighborhood stability.⁵⁶ When the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) developed insured amortized mortgages to help promote homeownership during the Great Depression, it furthered the use of racially restrictive covenants through its underwriting manual for appraisers to assess risk. The manual stated, “If a neighborhood is to retain stability it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes.”⁵⁷ It instructed appraisers to award higher ratings where “protection against some adverse influences is obtained,” stating that “important among adverse influences . . . are infiltration of inharmonious racial or nationality groups.”⁵⁸ Racially restrictive covenants were widely used to provide the “protection” recommended by the FHA, resulting in increasingly segregated cities and towns across the United States.

Although Wood assisted clients in securing FHA mortgages and used FHA financing to construct some of her homes, there is no evidence that she implemented racially restrictive covenants as recommended, even as many of her contemporaries in Lincoln did. Prominent developers such as Harvey Rathbone, the Woods Brothers, and Howard Brown, all of whom

⁵⁶ Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (Liveright Publishing, 2017), 64-65, 77-79.

⁵⁷ Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, 65.

⁵⁸ Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, 64-65.

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were active in Southeast Lincoln during the same period as Wood, routinely incorporated such covenants into their developments. While Wood's motivations for declining to implement such covenants are unknown, her decision represents a further instance in which Wood diverged from prevailing norms.⁵⁹

Wood was a prolific self-promoter, and her advertisements further emphasize her deviation from traditional expectations of women. Particularly beginning in the 1930s, she regularly ran advertisements in local newspapers and city directories featuring her business and specific residential developments. In these advertisements, Wood often promoted herself as "Nebraska's Only Woman Builder" (see *Figure 11*).⁶⁰ While other women were actively involved in real estate development both in Lincoln and elsewhere in Nebraska during the 1930s and 1940s, such as Golda Suttie and Anna E. Julien (see *Context 6.3 Nebraska Women in Trades, C. 1930-1945* in the "Nebraska Women in Trades" MPDF for more information on these women), there were still relatively few, especially compared to the number of men in the field. Statistics published by the United States Census Bureau highlight this gender disparity in Lincoln. Of the 207 individuals identified as builders or building contractors, only one—Laura B. Wood—was a woman. Similarly, among real estate agents and officials, 261 were men, compared with only thirty-eight women. Among architects, all twenty listed were men, with zero women represented in the field.⁶¹ Many women who worked outside of the home during this period were also pressured into or justifiably felt the need to downplay the fact that they were working women, and often went by their initials or by their husband's name in their professional lives to avoid scrutiny.

Wood, on the other hand, proudly advertised herself as a working woman. This was likely an astute marketing tactic that took advantage of existing biases toward women in the building trades. During this period, publications often framed women architects, designers, and other building trade professionals as being uniquely suited to domestic design due to their gender. Rather than acknowledging their professional training or innovation, these articles frequently emphasized women's so-called innate understanding of the home, suggesting that their roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers naturally endowed them with special sensitivity to domestic needs. This perspective reinforced traditional gender roles, casting women as simply domestic specialists rather than as equal contributors to the broader field of architecture and design. Local newspapers echoed this language when writing about Wood. For example, one article explains that Wood's developments are "comfortable and attractive and have the added touches that mean convenience, touches that none but a woman will appreciate."⁶² While simultaneously limiting women's opportunities by confining their perceived expertise to the domestic sphere, this framing did offer some women a way into male-dominated professions. In the same vein, Wood appears to have chosen to use this framing to her advantage in promoting her developments and her business.

⁵⁹ Ed Zimmer, "Brownbilt Residential Historic District" National Register of Historic Places Form (National Park Service, 2012), 8:7.; Ed Zimmer, "Boulevards Historic District" National Register of Historic Places Form (National Park Service, 2008), 8:2-3.

⁶⁰ For examples, see "Nebraska's Only Woman Builder" [Ad], *Nebraska State Journal*, August 27, 1939.; "Find Peace Here" [Ad], *Nebraska State Journal*, April 19, 1942.

⁶¹ "1930 Census: Volume 4. Occupations, by States. Reports by States, Giving Statistics for Cities of 25,000 or More" (U.S. Census Bureau, 1933), 945.

⁶² "Meet Lincoln's Business and Professional Women," *Lincoln Star*, August 25, 1940.

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Wood continued working until her death in 1942.⁶³ Over the course of her career, Wood developed a comprehensive real estate development business. In addition to building homes on speculation and as rental properties, she offered lots and plans for sale to customers wishing to build their own homes, as well as interior decorating services, financing assistance and payment plans, and property management services.⁶⁴ By the end of her career, Wood employed a “competent staff of workers,” including other women, such as salespeople Louise Weld and Babe Ward. Wood’s daughter, Alta Mae Ward, and granddaughter, Halcyon Kester Bauman, also worked as salespeople for the business.⁶⁵

Following her death, Ward took over her mother’s business, first as the Laura B. Wood Agency and later as Ward Real Estate.⁶⁶ The properties Ward developed within Indian Village and throughout Southeast Lincoln largely follow the same simple and compact form as Wood’s throughout the 1930s and early 1940s. Newspaper notices for real estate transfers suggest that Ward’s daughter Halcyon Kester Bauman also continued to work for the business, as well.⁶⁷ Ward continued to live and work from 2655 South 13th Street (extant) until the mid-1950s. In 1954, she filed for bankruptcy and dissolved Ward Real Estate. She died the following year at her son’s home in Downey, California.⁶⁸

Modern Architecture

Development of the Modern Movement in the United States

Modern architecture in the United States emerged from an intersection of technological, artistic, cultural, and intellectual developments that took place across the United States and Western Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Beginning in the 1870s, increasing standardization and mass production, as well as rapid developments in building materials and construction technologies such as iron, steel, reinforced concrete, and dimensional lumber, dramatically expanded the possibilities of architectural design. The Arts and Crafts movement, which began in the United Kingdom in the 1880s and later spread to Western Europe and North America, advocated for handcraft and material honesty in reaction to the growing industrialization of art and architecture. By the turn of the twentieth century, these seemingly contradictory developments coalesced into new architectural forms that took advantage of new

⁶³ “Laura B. Wood Taken By Death,” *Lincoln Star*, May 19, 1942.

⁶⁴ “Laura B. Wood” [Ad], *Hickman Enterprise* (Hickman, Nebraska), June 30, 1939.; “Nebraska’s Only Woman Builder” [Ad], *Lincoln Star*, August 27, 1939.; “Meet Lincoln’s Business and Professional Women,” *Lincoln Star*, August 25, 1940.

⁶⁵ It is unknown if Babe Ward is related to Laura’s first husband, George Ward. “Nebraska’s Only Woman Builder” [Ad], *Lincoln Star*, August 27, 1939.; “Announcing Grand Opening Today” [Ad], *Lincoln Star*, May 29, 1938.; “Do You Know These People...” [Ad], *Lincoln Star*, May 11, 1941.

⁶⁶ *Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska, City Directory* (R.L. Polk & Co., 1945), 674.; *Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska, City Directory* (R.L. Polk & Co., 1953), 733.

⁶⁷ “Mortgages,” *Daily Reporter* (Lincoln, Nebraska), June 15, 1944.; “Real Estate Transfers,” *Lincoln Journal Star*, November 3, 1946.

⁶⁸ *Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska, City Directory* (R.L. Polk & Co., 1945), 674.; *Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska, City Directory* (R.L. Polk & Co., 1951), 896.; “Alta Ward Dies in Downey, California,” *Lincoln Journal Star*, January 17, 1955.

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building technologies and rejected historical precedent while also seeking authenticity in function, structure, and material expression.⁶⁹

Working within this environment, architects such as Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright created some of the earliest precursors to Modernism in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sullivan embraced steel-frame and curtain wall technology to create a new tall building type and a distinctive architectural vocabulary. Freed from the limitations of load-bearing masonry, his designs broke with historical styles, emphasizing simplified, vertical forms with expressive, organic ornament. His design philosophy that “form ever follows function” later became a foundational principle of architectural Modernism.⁷⁰ Wright, who studied and worked under Sullivan early in his career, also strove to create a style unique to the United States that did not reflect European aesthetics or the past. Influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, Sullivan’s approach to form and ornament, and traditional Japanese art and architecture, Wright created an architectural language characterized by strong horizontal lines, restrained, organic ornament, the use of natural materials, and integration with the surrounding landscape. Wright became a founding member of the Prairie School of architecture, which, alongside Sullivan’s Chicago School, eventually played a significant role in shaping the development of Modernism in the United States.⁷¹

Despite the innovations of the Chicago and Prairie Schools, European and European Revival styles continued to dominate architectural expression in the United States throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁷² In particular, Classicism remained widely regarded as a means of conveying political and cultural stability and legitimacy. An increasing number of United States architects pursued training at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, reinforcing the influence of traditional European design traditions. The 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago further strengthened the prominence of Classicism in United States architecture. Nearly all of the structures at the Exposition featured gleaming white Neoclassical designs, with the notable exception of Sullivan’s polychromatic Transportation Building.⁷³ Sullivan later criticized the Exposition’s pervasive Neoclassicism as a “contagion,” stating that it had delayed the advancement of modern architecture in the United States by at least half a century.⁷⁴

While architectural practice in the United States remained largely anchored in historical tradition, Modernism gained momentum in Western Europe throughout the early twentieth century as European designers developed a growing interest in using new materials and technologies.⁷⁵ While traveling in Germany in 1910, Wright published a portfolio of his studio’s work; many renderings in the *Wasmuth Portfolio*, as it came to be called, were produced by

⁶⁹ Virginia H. Adams, “Mid-Twentieth Century Modern Residences in Connecticut,” National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Park Service, 2010), E:5-6.

⁷⁰ Adams, “Mid-Twentieth Century Modern Residences in Connecticut,” E:6.

⁷¹ William Morgan, Radek Kurzaj, and Ned Pratt, *Abrams Guide to American House Styles*, ed. Richard Olsen (Abrams, 2004), 284.

⁷² Morgan, Kurzaj, and Pratt, *Abrams Guide to American House Styles*, 6-7.

⁷³ John Milnes Baker, *American House Styles: A Concise Guide* (W.W. Norton & Company, 1994), 13.

⁷⁴ Louis H. Sullivan, *The Autobiography of an Idea* (Press of The American Institute of Architects, Inc., 1924), 324-325.

⁷⁵ Baker, *American House Styles*, 140.

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Marion Lucy (née Mahony) Griffin, a woman employed in his architectural practice.⁷⁶ Although Wright's work had exerted limited influence on designers beyond the Prairie School in the United States, it became highly influential in Europe. The publication was widely shared, particularly among young German and Dutch designers. They adopted characteristics typical of Wright's designs, such as low-pitched and flat roofs, cantilevers, strong horizontal lines, and continuous bands of windows, and combined them with their own functional design sensibilities.⁷⁷

Modernism in Europe expanded in the 1920s as architects and designers responded to the social and cultural devastation left by the First World War.⁷⁸ The movement sought not only to physically rebuild, but also to redefine society and culture in the wake of trauma.⁷⁹ The Bauhaus school, founded in 1919 in Germany by architect Walter Gropius, became one of the most influential forces of European Modernism through the mid-twentieth-century. It offered a collaborative environment where art, architecture, and design were integrated to solve social problems, such as the demand for new infrastructure and housing, and attracted many of Europe's leading avant-garde artists and intellectuals, including Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier. Building on ideals that had developed prior to the war, the Bauhaus emphasized a full-scale rejection of historical precedent in favor of functional design and radically unadorned forms and promoted the idea that mass production and artistic expression were not antithetical. It took Sullivan's "form ever follows function" philosophy to its extreme, creating a minimalist, utilitarian style of Modernism eventually known as the International Style.⁸⁰

Modernism also continued to develop during the 1920s in the United States. However, Art Deco, rather than the International Style, emerged as the most prevalent Modern style, particularly following the 1925 International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris. Although Art Deco embraced new materials, technologies, and modern forms, it differed significantly from the International Style in its overt celebration of ornamentation. In the United States, Art Deco ornament drew from a variety of sources, including geometric abstraction, machine imagery, and Indigenous art.⁸¹ While the style did not achieve the widespread dominance of European Revivals, it was popular for commercial, civic, and multifamily residential buildings throughout the 1920s. It was rarely used for single-family residential architecture; examples are largely concentrated in California and Florida. Following the onset of the Great Depression, Art Deco gave way to a more restrained variant of the style, Streamline Moderne, as well as the increasingly popular International Style.⁸²

The International Style did not begin to gain traction in the United States until the 1930s. In 1932, architectural historian H.R. Hitchcock and architect Philip Johnson, both from the United States, organized an exhibit of Modern architecture at the Museum of Modern Art in New

⁷⁶ Jennifer Gray, "A Powerful Brand: Marion Mahony's Original Form of Graphic Representation," *Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation*, February 14, 2022, <https://franklloydwright.org/a-powerful-brand-marion-mahony/>.

⁷⁷ Baker, *American House Styles*, 13.

⁷⁸ Baker, *American House Styles*, 138.

⁷⁹ Baker, *American House Styles*, 140.

⁸⁰ Adams, "Mid-Twentieth Century Modern Residences in Connecticut," E:7.; Morgan, Kurzaj, and Pratt, *Abrams Guide to American House Styles*, 350-351.

⁸¹ Morgan, Kurzaj, and Pratt, *Abrams Guide to American House Styles*, 341-342.

⁸² McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses*, 581.; Baker, *American House Styles*, 140.; Morgan, Kurzaj, and Pratt, *Abrams Guide to American House Styles*, 342.

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York. The exhibit featured the work of both European and American architects and coined the phrase “International Style,” named for the style’s universality. The exhibit and corresponding book, *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922*, was widely attended and disseminated, leading to an increased interest in the International Style within the United States.⁸³ However, the most significant catalyst for the rise of the International Style in the United States was the closure of the Bauhaus in 1933 due to pressure from the rising Nazi Party and its Gestapo, which labeled the school’s Modern styles as “un-German.” Following its closure, many of its teachers and students fled the oppression of Nazi Germany, creating a significant emigration of Modern thinkers. By the late 1930s, hundreds of European artists, architects, engineers, and designers had arrived in the United States.⁸⁴ Some of the most influential Bauhaus leaders accepted positions at prestigious universities; as a result, architectural education and practice in the United States underwent a decisive transformation, shifting away from the traditional Beaux-Arts model toward the principles of the Bauhaus and International Style. In 1937, Gropius became director of the newly founded Graduate School of Design at Harvard University. That same year, László Moholy-Nagy founded the Illinois Institute of Design in Chicago, which became known as the New Bauhaus. The following year, Mies van der Rohe joined the Armour Institute of Technology, later called the Illinois Institute of Technology, also in Chicago.⁸⁵

Although Modernism grew in popularity in the United States during the mid-twentieth century, the International Style was never widely adopted for single-family residential architecture. Most houses of this style in the United States are closely linked to European Bauhaus emigrants and their direct followers. As a result, most International Style houses are largely concentrated on the East Coast, in Chicago and the surrounding metropolitan area, and parts of California and Florida, where educational institutions and professional networks associated with Modernism were most firmly established.⁸⁶ While the majority of architectural styles in the United States either originated abroad or were heavily influenced by international precedents, from the many European revival styles to Wright’s Prairie Style, which drew extensively on traditional Japanese architectural styles, many regarded the International Style as too foreign and difficult to assimilate into the domestic architectural landscape.⁸⁷

Throughout the mid-twentieth century, speculative real estate developers and builders, particularly those focused on single-family housing such as Wood, largely avoided Modern styles. Instead, they prioritized prevailing market preferences, whether actual or anticipated, favoring familiar and reliable European Revival styles.⁸⁸ Additionally, the Federal Housing Administration’s (FHA) mortgage insurance program shaped the types of houses that could be widely constructed in new, federally backed developments. The FHA regarded neighborhoods with too many Modern houses as a financial risk; consequently, lenders tended to support more conservative European Revival and Minimal Traditional styles. These styles were viewed as more acceptable to the average homebuyer and therefore represented a safer investment than

⁸³ Morgan, Kurzaj, and Pratt, *Abrams Guide to American House Styles*, 350.; Baker, *American House Styles*, 17.

⁸⁴ Morgan, Kurzaj, and Pratt, *Abrams Guide to American House Styles*, 350-351.; Adams, “Mid-Twentieth Century Modern Residences in Connecticut,” E:8.

⁸⁵ Adams, “Mid-Twentieth Century Modern Residences in Connecticut,” E:8-9.

⁸⁶ Morgan, Kurzaj, and Pratt, *Abrams Guide to American House Styles*, 351.; Adams, “Mid-Twentieth Century Modern Residences in Connecticut,” E:5.

⁸⁷ Morgan, Kurzaj, and Pratt, *Abrams Guide to American House Styles*, 7, 351.

⁸⁸ Baker, *American House Styles*, 146-147.

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more “radical” Modern styles.⁸⁹ As a result, the vast majority of mid-twentieth-century single-family developments represent various revival and referential styles.⁹⁰ Additionally, the few houses that do express Modernism within these developments are typically Modernist, more tempered or restrained in expression.⁹¹

By the 1960s, the appeal of mid-twentieth-century Modern architecture began to wane with evolving design preferences. By the early 1970s and into the early 1980s, architectural trends increasingly favored expressionist and historically referential approaches as Postmodernism and Deconstructivism rose in prominence. However, in residential design, typical single-family homes still reflected historicist or revival influences.⁹²

Women in the Modern Movement

As the Modern Movement grew in the United States throughout the mid-twentieth century, women continued to encounter persistent structural barriers to establishing professional architectural careers, as documented in the “Nebraska Women in Trades” MPDF. These barriers, which were rooted in gendered educational access, exclusionary hiring practices, and entrenched professional hierarchies, were particularly pronounced within the Modern Movement. Despite its progressive rhetoric, leadership remained largely dominated by White men, and opportunities for women to meaningfully participate remained severely limited as Modernism continued to develop.⁹³

Frank Lloyd Wright’s practice was a notable exception. Wright’s studio, as well as the Taliesin Fellowship, which Wright and Olgivanna Lloyd Wright established in 1932, provided rare opportunities for women to engage in architectural training and practice. A number of women who worked in Wright’s studio or participated in the Fellowship later pursued careers as architects, artists, interior designers, and architectural educators. However, these women were outliers whose opportunities were contingent upon Wright’s endorsement rather than an indication of broadening professional access. Additionally, the relative scarcity of scholarly attention to their work underscores the ongoing marginalization of women’s contributions within the architectural field.⁹⁴

The careers of individual women associated with Wright illustrate both their exceptionalism and the limitations women faced during this period. Marion Lucy (née Mahony) Griffin was significant as Wright’s first employee and one of the first women in the world to become a licensed architect. As a draftsperson and artist, Mahoney played a central role in shaping Wright’s early visual language, and her distinctive renderings for the *Wasmuth Portfolio* are credited with contributing to its widespread success throughout Europe. However, despite the centrality of her work to Wright’s widespread reputation, her authorship has historically been subordinated within the dominant historical narrative.⁹⁵ Elizabeth (Betty) Bauer Mock Kassler,

⁸⁹ McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses*, 549.

⁹⁰ Morgan, Kurzaj, and Pratt, *Abrams Guide to American House Styles*, 7.

⁹¹ Baker, *American House Styles*, 138.

⁹² Morgan, Kurzaj, and Pratt, *Abrams Guide to American House Styles*, 341.

⁹³ Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, “Nebraska Women in Trades,” F:48.

⁹⁴ Indira Berndtson, “The Groundbreaking Women of the Oak Park and Taliesin Studios,” *Frank Lloyd Wright Quarterly*, Spring 2021, 14, 16.

⁹⁵ Gray, “A Powerful Brand: Marion Mahony’s Original Form of Graphic Representation.”

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one of the earliest women to join the Taliesin Fellowship in 1932, went on to hold prominent academic and curatorial positions, including Acting Curator of Architecture for the Museum of Modern Art, Assistant Professor of Architecture at the University of Oklahoma, and Research Associate at Princeton's School of Architecture and Planning.⁹⁶ Cornelia Brierly Berndtson, who studied architecture at Carnegie Tech as one of only five women in the program, joined the Taliesin Fellowship in 1934 and played a key role in developing the Broadacre City models. Although she later practiced architecture in Pittsburgh during the 1940s and 1950s, much of her work was attributed to her architect husband, reflecting the broader systemic pattern in which women's contributions were rendered invisible or subsumed under male authorship well into the mid-twentieth century and beyond.⁹⁷

Beyond the relatively exceptional context of Wright's studio and the Taliesin Fellowship, women remained exceedingly scarce in the building trades during the early to mid-twentieth century, particularly within the Modern Movement. While a number of women did succeed in overcoming these constraints, their presence constituted notable exceptions rather than evidence of broader professional inclusion. Eleanor Raymond was a pioneering woman in the early United States Modern Movement; her 1931 Raymond House in Belmont, Massachusetts, is recognized as one of the earliest Modernist houses in New England (no longer extant). Other notable women throughout the mid-twentieth century include Jean Bodman Fletcher and Sarah Pillsbury Harkness, both founding members of The Architects Collaborative (TAC), established in 1945 by Walter Gropius and a group of former students in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Fletcher and Harkness studied at the Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture under Gropius. In Chicago, Natalie de Blois and Gertrude Lempp Kerbis developed notable careers in the Modern Movement. De Blois, trained at Columbia University, joined Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) in 1944 and became the firm's first woman senior designer. While at SOM, De Blois contributed to major projects such as Lever House (extant, NRHP 1983) and the Union Carbide Building (no longer extant), both in New York. Kerbis studied at the University of Illinois, the Harvard Graduate School of Design with Gropius, and the Illinois Institute of Technology with Mies van der Rohe. She joined SOM in 1954 and later joined C.F. Murphy Associates in 1959 before establishing her own practice in 1967. Kerbis contributed to the Mitchell Hall building at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs (extant) and the Rotunda Building at the Chicago O'Hare International Airport (extant). She later engaged in professional advocacy through organizations such as Chicago Women in Architecture.⁹⁸

The careers of these women, as well as Wood's career, do not suggest a widespread integration of women into the building trades during the mid-twentieth century. Rather, they underscore the extent to which women's participation in the Modern Movement and the building trades in general was exceptional and frequently unrecognized. The prominence of these women should therefore be interpreted not as evidence of inclusivity, but as a reflection of their extraordinary persistence in overcoming systemic barriers that remained firmly in place well into the later twentieth century, and in many respects, continue to shape the profession today.

⁹⁶ Berndtson, "The Groundbreaking Women of the Oak Park and Taliesin Studios," 16.

⁹⁷ Berndtson, "The Groundbreaking Women of the Oak Park and Taliesin Studios," 15.

⁹⁸ Adams, "Mid-Twentieth Century Modern Residences in Connecticut," E:16.

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Criterion A: Social History: Women's History

The Genevieve Felthouser House ("the Felthouser House") is locally significant under the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) "Nebraska Women in Trades" under Criterion A in the area of Social History: Women's History. The Felthouser House is significant for its association with Laura B. Wood, a woman who achieved notable professional success within the local residential real estate development industry, which remained overwhelmingly male-dominated throughout her career. Active from the early 1920s through the early 1940s, Wood worked within a professional environment that systemically limited women's participation and proudly marketed herself as "Nebraska's Only Woman Builder." As one of dozens of residential properties that Wood developed in the Indian Village neighborhood and greater Southeast Lincoln area, the Felthouser House represents her contributions to Lincoln's built environment and her remarkable persistence in the face of significant barriers that women faced in the building trades.

The Felthouser House is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Social History: Women's History as a significant representation of Wood's exceptional career. As one of dozens of properties Wood developed in the Indian Village neighborhood between the early 1920s and early 1940s, it illustrates her significant influence on the city's residential landscape during a period when women across the United States, including in Nebraska and in Lincoln, struggled to work in the building trades due to gender discrimination. Developed near the end of her twenty-year career, the Felthouser House demonstrates the longevity of Wood's business and her entrepreneurial skill, technical knowledge, and ability to navigate financing, design, and construction.

Wood received a building permit to construct a residence at 1740 High Street on October 15, 1940 (see *Figure 6*), and construction was complete by April 1941.⁹⁹ Like many of Wood's developments, the house was constructed on speculation, a development approach in which property is constructed without a secured buyer with the expectation that demand will exist upon completion. The house was advertised for sale in the April 24, 1941, edition of the *Lincoln Journal Star*.¹⁰⁰ It sold three days later to Genevieve Felthouser, a widow from Lincoln, who moved into the house with her two daughters, Janet and Juanita.¹⁰¹

Even after the house sold, Wood continued to showcase it in newspaper advertisements, evidence of her pride in its design (see *Figures 7-8*). A large advertisement in the May 11, 1941, edition of the *Lincoln Star* features a photograph of the building, floor plans, and a lengthy written description of its appearance and features (see *Figure 8*).¹⁰² Among other attributes, the advertisement promotes the house as embodying "everything Modernist a housewife could dream of" and describes the kitchen as "the delight of women who dislike tiny rooms with little elbow room to do their cooking."¹⁰³ This type of gendered marketing was not unique to Wood's

⁹⁹ Building Permit No. 33506, City of Lincoln Planning & Development Services Archives.; "Open 2-6 P.M.," *Lincoln Journal Star*, April 24, 1941.

¹⁰⁰ "Open 2-6 P.M.," *Lincoln Journal Star*, April 24, 1941.

¹⁰¹ "Cramping Eliminated in This Spacious Two-Story Brick House," *Lincoln Star*, May 11, 1941.; "Personals," *Lincoln Star*, August 17, 1940.; "Personals," *Lincoln Star*, May 16, 1941.

¹⁰² "Cramping Eliminated in This Spacious Two-Story Brick House," *Lincoln Star*, May 11, 1941.

¹⁰³ "Cramping Eliminated in This Spacious Two-Story Brick House," *Lincoln Star*, May 11, 1941.

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advertisements. Throughout the early to mid-twentieth century, marketers routinely targeted women as housewives in promoting commodities associated with the domestic sphere, from household appliances to the house itself, reinforcing prevailing social norms that positioned women primarily within the home and defined their roles primarily as wives, mothers, and housekeepers.¹⁰⁴

The advertisement also highlights the spacious living and storage spaces of the house, insulated ceilings and walls, and modern mechanical system complete with air conditioning, a relatively new residential amenity at the time.¹⁰⁵ Wallpaper, paint color, flooring, and furniture are also featured; since Wood's firm provided interior decorating services, it is likely that the firm was responsible for the design of the house's interior.¹⁰⁶

Wood developed the Felthouser House near the end of her career; it was completed and sold almost one year before her death in May 1942.¹⁰⁷ Genevieve Felthouser lived in the house until 1946, when she sold it to Lillian and Oliver De Mars.¹⁰⁸ The De Marses lived in the house from 1946 until 1951, when they sold it to James Workman.¹⁰⁹ James Workman sold the house in 1954 to Charla and Phillip Dunning, who sold the house in 1957 to Olive and Charles Salem.¹¹⁰ Descendants of the Salem family live in the house as of 2026.

Criterion C: Architecture

The Genevieve Felthouser House ("the Felthouser House") is locally significant under the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) "Nebraska Women in Trades" under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The Felthouser House is significant as an excellent and rare local example of a Modernist single-family residence in the Indian Village neighborhood, which is overwhelmingly characterized by Craftsman and period revival style architecture. As one of only two known Modernist single-family houses Wood developed, it is also a rare example of her work in this style. Modernism in the United States developed over the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries as a deliberate departure of historically derived architectural traditions. Character defining features of the style include simplified massing, horizontal emphasis, and restrained decorative expression.¹¹¹ The Felthouser House clearly reflects the Modernist style. Its plain, rectangular plan and low-pitched hipped roof reflect simple massing, while its smooth, painted brick walls with simple Streamline Moderne band coursing reflects restrained detail with a horizontal emphasis. These features distinguish the Felthouser House from both the surrounding neighborhood and Wood's broader body of work, both of which largely adhere to traditional architectural styles.

¹⁰⁴ Bonnie J. Fox, "Selling the Mechanized Household: 70 Years of Ads in Ladies Home Journal," *Gender and Society* 4, no. 1 (March 1990): 28-29.

¹⁰⁵ "Cramping Eliminated in This Spacious Two-Story Brick House," *Lincoln Star*, May 11, 1941.

¹⁰⁶ "Cramping Eliminated in This Spacious Two-Story Brick House," *Lincoln Star*, May 11, 1941.

¹⁰⁷ "Laura B. Wood Taken By Death," *Lincoln Star*, May 19, 1942.

¹⁰⁸ "Real Estate Transfers," *Lincoln Star*, August 7, 1946.

¹⁰⁹ "Realty Statistics," *Lincoln Journal Star*, July 18, 1951.

¹¹⁰ "Real Estate Transfers," *Lincoln Star*, September 24, 1954.; "Real Estate Transfers," *Daily Reporter* (Lincoln, NE), September 6, 1957.

¹¹¹ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture* (Alfred A Knopf, 2013), 581-582.

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The Felthausen House is significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent and rare local example of Modernist architecture within the Indian Village neighborhood of Lincoln, Nebraska. The building clearly expresses character-defining features of Modern style through its construction, materials, and restrained detailing. Its frame construction with a non-structural masonry veneer reflects the Modern emphasis on efficient, economical building methods. The painted masonry exterior creates the appearance of a smooth, monolithic surface typical of Modern buildings that minimizes visual texture and emphasizes the Modern aesthetic of clean, minimal lines. Exterior ornamentation is intentionally limited, with Streamline Moderne brick band coursing serving as the sole decorative element, reflecting the Modern preference for simplicity and horizontality. A low-pitched roof further emphasizes horizontal lines, and the asymmetrical façade reflects the Modern rejection of traditional symmetry. Additional Modern features include glass block windows and curved plaster interior walls.

Simultaneously, the Felthausen House demonstrates a purposefully moderated application of Modern principles. Its overall rectangular, two-story massing does not represent a radical break from earlier residential forms or its contemporaneous, two-story European Revival neighbors. Its interior plan is also reminiscent of traditional plans, with central, double-loaded corridors and rooms organized according to traditional spatial divisions, rather than an open floor plan more commonly associated with high-style Modern architecture.

It remains unclear precisely why Wood chose to construct a Modernist house at 1740 High Street, as little documentation survives to explain her motivations. She developed only one other known Modernist house in the Indian Village neighborhood, 1730 Pawnee Street, constructed in 1939 (see “Comparative Analysis” below and *Figures 12-14*).

In contrast to the surrounding houses, which overwhelmingly reflect Period Revival and Minimal Traditional styles, the Felthausen House stands out as distinctly Modern. However, as a single-family residence built on speculation with FHA financing and located far from the intellectual centers of the Modern Movement, the building represents an intentionally distilled expression of Modern design. Its Modernist architectural expression is subdued and intentionally calibrated to satisfy FHA standards and speculative market considerations.

Comparative Analysis

Wood and other real estate developers who built properties largely on speculation in Indian Village and Southeast Lincoln aimed for broad appeal and market success by aligning their developments with popular, mainly traditional architectural styles and design trends. Developed primarily between the 1920s and 1950s, the most commonly represented styles in the area are Craftsman, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, French Eclectic, and Minimal Traditional.

As a result, the Felthausen House is one of only a few Modernist buildings within Indian Village. Another example is an additional single-family residence developed by Wood at 1730 Pawnee Street (extant, see *Figures 12-14*). Constructed in 1939, it has similar massing and details to the Felthausen House. It rises two stories tall and features a low-pitched hipped roof, painted brick exterior walls with Streamline Moderne band coursing, an asymmetric façade, and an attached garage. An additional example is the single-family residence at 1690 Sioux Street (extant, see *Figure 15*). Developed by Thomas D. Morrissey in 1939, it has a much smaller

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footprint than either the Felthouser House or 1730 Pawnee Street, but it also has many features characteristic of the Modernist style, including a flat roof, smooth stucco exterior walls, and an asymmetric façade.¹¹²

The only other examples of Modernist architecture within Indian Village are three multifamily properties, all of which were built in 1938 and developed by Sweeney & Company, a prolific real estate development company that worked in Southeast Lincoln in the early to mid-twentieth century. The building at 1869 Dakota Street (extant, see *Figure 16*) rises two stories and features a flat roof, red brick and cast stone cladding with Streamline Moderne band coursing, corner and glass block windows, and an asymmetric façade.¹¹³ The two neighboring buildings at 1704 Dakota Street and 3022 South 17th Street (extant, see *Figures 17-18*) both rise two stories and feature flat roofs, cast stone cladding with minimal ornament, and corner windows.¹¹⁴

Thus, the Felthouser House is one of only six Modernist residential designs in the Indian Village neighborhood, and one of only three single-family homes in the style. It stands as a rare and significant example of Modernist design expression in the area, a risky proposition for speculative real estate developers at the time. Throughout her life, Wood consistently defied prevailing societal expectations for women, and her Modernist design of the Felthouser House reflects this challenge to established norms.

Conclusion

As stated in the Registration Requirements for the “Nebraska Women in Trades” MPDF:

Women historically, and currently, face substantial barriers breaking into fields considered the dominion of men, including architecture, engineering, and the building trades. As a result, women who successfully created careers in the building trades to a degree where their contributions were recognized in newspapers, trade publications, magazines, or in other media are, by virtue of their relative rarity, likely to be significant within the broader history of the building trades.¹¹⁵

Laura B. Wood was a prolific businesswoman who successfully navigated the male-dominated field of building and real estate development in Lincoln, Nebraska. As one local newspaper article noted, “Laura B. Wood needs no introduction to Nebraska people.”¹¹⁶ She placed her mark on the built landscape of Lincoln during a time when relatively few women were able to enter the building trades. After a series of failed marriages to at times unreliable or abusive spouses, run-ins with law enforcement, and with limited avenues for “acceptably” earning a living, the career of Laura B. Wood is a tribute to the challenges women faced in securing

¹¹² “Building Permits,” *Daily Reporter* (Lincoln, NE), March 16, 1939.

¹¹³ “First Showing” [Ad], *Lincoln Journal Star*, July 24, 1938.

¹¹⁴ “Apartments—Unfurnished,” *Lincoln Star*, January 1, 1939.; “Building Permits,” *Lincoln Star*, September 18, 1937.; Building Permit No. 26818, City of Lincoln Planning & Development Services Archives.; Building Permit No. 27891, City of Lincoln Planning & Development Services Archives.

¹¹⁵ Wallisch, Alison, and McDonald, “Nebraska Women in Trades,” F:48.

¹¹⁶ “Meet Lincoln’s Business and Professional Women,” *Lincoln Star*, August 25, 1940.

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financial stability for themselves in an era when working women were often viewed with skepticism or derision.

Under the “Nebraska Women in Trades” MPDF, the Genevieve Felthausen House is significant under Criterion A in the area of Social History: Women’s History for its association with the exceptional career of Laura B. Wood. As one of numerous properties she developed in Southeast Lincoln between the early 1920s and early 1940s, the Felthausen House reflects her significant influence on the city’s residential landscape at a time when women confronted persistent and systemic gender discrimination in the building trades. The Felthausen House is also significant under the MPDF under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent and rare local example of Modernist design. Wood’s Modernist design stands as a tangible demonstration of her challenge to conventional architectural styles and reflects her consistent defiance of societal expectations for women.

This nomination and associated MPDF (Nebraska Women in Trades) was initiated by the Planning and Development Services Department of the City of Lincoln, Nebraska, with partial support from an Underrepresented Communities Grant (NPS Grant #P24AP00201) from the Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

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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 one acre

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: 40.781198

Longitude: -96.695849

Verbal Boundary Description

The National Register of Historic Places boundary of the Genevieve Felthausen House contains approximately 0.13 acres and corresponds with Lincoln, Lancaster County,

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Nebraska tax parcel 09-01-117-012-000. The legal description for this parcel is: "AXTELL HEIGHTS, BLOCK 7, Lot 12, & S1/2 VAC ALLEY ADJ."

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the parcel historically and currently associated with the subject property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Rachel Alison, Architectural Historian; developed from a draft NRHD prepared by Stephanie Rouse, City of Lincoln Transportation Planner, and Stacey Hageman, City of Lincoln Historic Preservation Planner
organization: Post Oak Preservation Solutions
street & number: 2506 Little John Lane
city or town: Austin state: TX zip code: 78704
e-mail: rachel@postoakpreservation.com
telephone: 210-580-6329
date: February 6, 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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Photographs

Photo Log

Name of Property: Felthausen, Genevieve, House

City or Vicinity: Lincoln

County: Lancaster

State: NE

Photographer: Jill Ebers Dolberg, City of Lincoln Historic Preservation Planner

Date Photographed: October 2025 (exterior) and December 2025 (interior)

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

- 1 of 10.** NE_Lancaster_FelthausenGenevieveHouse_0001. South (primary) and west elevations, view northeast.
- 2 of 10.** NE_Lancaster_FelthausenGenevieveHouse_0002. South (primary) elevation, view north.
- 3 of 10.** NE_Lancaster_FelthausenGenevieveHouse_0003. South (primary) and east elevations, view northwest.
- 4 of 10.** NE_Lancaster_FelthausenGenevieveHouse_0004. North elevation, view south.
- 5 of 10.** NE_Lancaster_FelthausenGenevieveHouse_0005. Front entry, view south.
- 6 of 10.** NE_Lancaster_FelthausenGenevieveHouse_0006. Front entry, living room, and dining room, view northwest.
- 7 of 10.** NE_Lancaster_FelthausenGenevieveHouse_0007. Living room, view south.
- 8 of 10.** NE_Lancaster_FelthausenGenevieveHouse_0008. Dining room, view northeast.
- 9 of 10.** NE_Lancaster_FelthausenGenevieveHouse_0009. Kitchen, view northwest.
- 10 of 10.** NE_Lancaster_FelthausenGenevieveHouse_0010. Basement den, view north.

Figure Log

- 1 of 20.** USGS map. Red flag points to the Genevieve Felthausen House.
- 2 of 20.** Contextual map of the Genevieve Felthausen House within the city of Lincoln. Red flag points to the Felthausen House. Source: Base map from Google Earth, image capture April 2024, accessed February 1, 2026.
- 3 of 20.** Contextual map of the Genevieve Felthausen House within the Indian Village neighborhood in Southeast Lincoln. Dashed line outlines the Indian Village neighborhood. Red flag points to the Felthausen House. Source: Base map from Google Earth, image capture April 2024, accessed February 1, 2026.
- 4 of 20.** Site and boundary map. Dashed line represents the historic boundary, current tax parcel boundary, and the National Register of Historic Places boundary. Source: Base map from Google Earth, image capture April 2024, accessed February 1, 2026.

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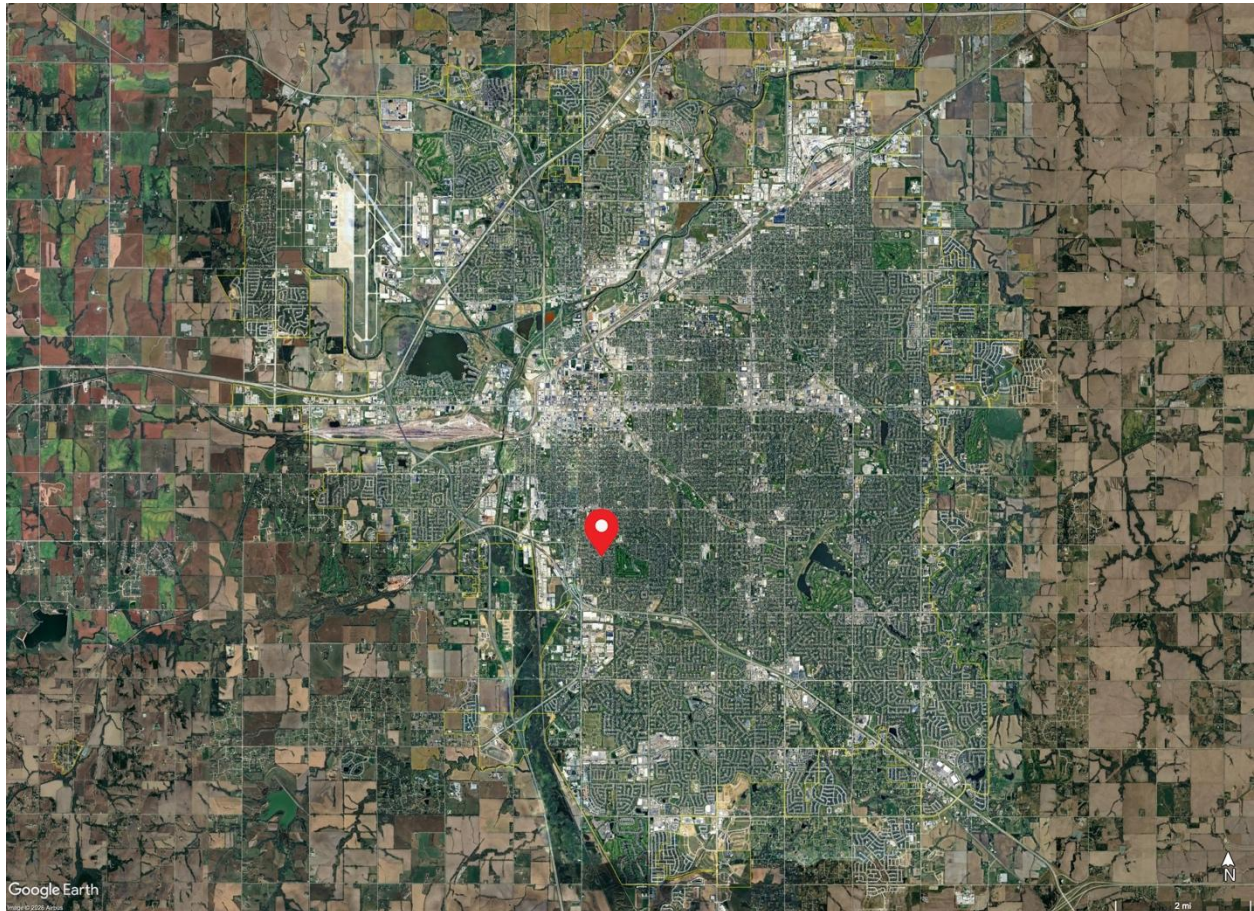
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- 5 of 20.** 1928 aerial of the Indian Village and Irvingdale neighborhoods. Star indicates the future location of the Genevieve Felthouser House. Source: Lincoln Planning Department Photo Archives.
- 6 of 20.** Building permit record for the Genevieve Felthouser House showing Laura B. Wood as the initial builder. Source: City of Lincoln Planning & Development Services Archives.
- 7 of 20.** Newspaper advertisement featuring the Genevieve Felthouser House. Source: “Sold...” [Ad], *Lincoln Journal Star*, May 4, 1941.
- 8 of 20.** Newspaper advertisement featuring the Genevieve Felthouser House. Source: “Cramping Eliminated in This Spacious Two-Story Brick House” [Ad], *Lincoln Star*, May 11, 1941.
- 9 of 20.** Enlarged plans of the first story (top) and second story (bottom) from the newspaper advertisement in *Figure 8*. These plans also reflect the current layout of the building. Source: “Cramping Eliminated in This Spacious Two-Story Brick House” [Ad], *Lincoln Star*, May 11, 1941.
- 10 of 20.** Entry from a newspaper article highlighting various women professionals in Lincoln. Source: “Meet Lincoln’s Business and Professional Women,” *Lincoln Journal Star*, August 25, 1940.
- 11 of 20.** Newspaper advertisement featuring photographs of Laura B. Wood and her employees. Source: “Do You Know These People...” [Ad], *Lincoln Star*, May 11, 1941.
- 12 of 20.** 1730 Pawnee Street. Aside from the Genevieve Felthouser House, this is the only other known Modernist house Wood developed in Southeast Lincoln. Source: Photograph by Post Oak Preservation Solutions, March 2025.
- 13 of 20.** Laura B. Wood promoting herself as “Nebraska’s Only Woman Builder” in a newspaper advertisement. 1730 Pawnee Street (top) is one of the houses featured. Source: “Nebraska’s Only Woman Builder” [Ad], *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star*, August 27, 1939.
- 14 of 20.** Circa 1939 photograph of Laura B. Wood standing in front of 1730 Pawnee Street. Source: Personal collection of Mike Brienzo.
- 15 of 20.** 1690 Sioux Street. Source: Google Street view, image capture March 2025, accessed February 2, 2026.
- 16 of 20.** 1869 Dakota Street. Source: Google Street view, image capture March 2025, accessed February 2, 2026.
- 17 of 20.** 1704 Dakota Street. Source: Google Street view, image capture March 2025, accessed February 2, 2026.
- 18 of 20.** 3022 South 17th Street. Source: Google Street view, image capture March 2025, accessed February 2, 2026.
- 19 of 20.** Exterior photo map. Source: Base map from Google Earth, image capture April 2024, accessed February 1, 2026.
- 20 of 20.** First story photo map. Source: Plans from “Cramping Eliminated in This Spacious Two-Story Brick House” [Ad], *Lincoln Star*, May 11, 1941.

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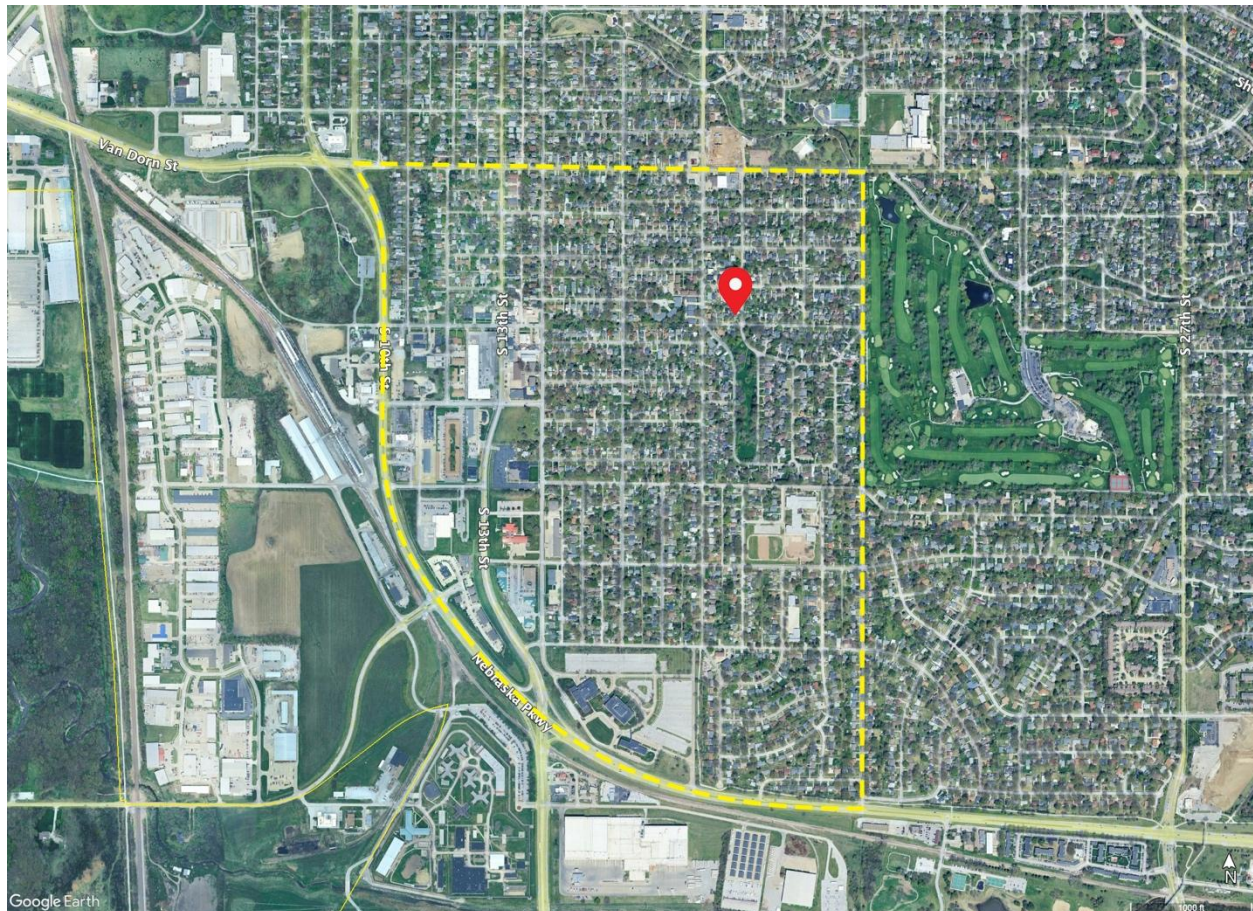
Figure 2. Contextual map of the Genevieve Felthouser House within the city of Lincoln. Red flag points to the Felthouser House. Source: Base map from Google Earth, image capture April 2024, accessed February 1, 2026.



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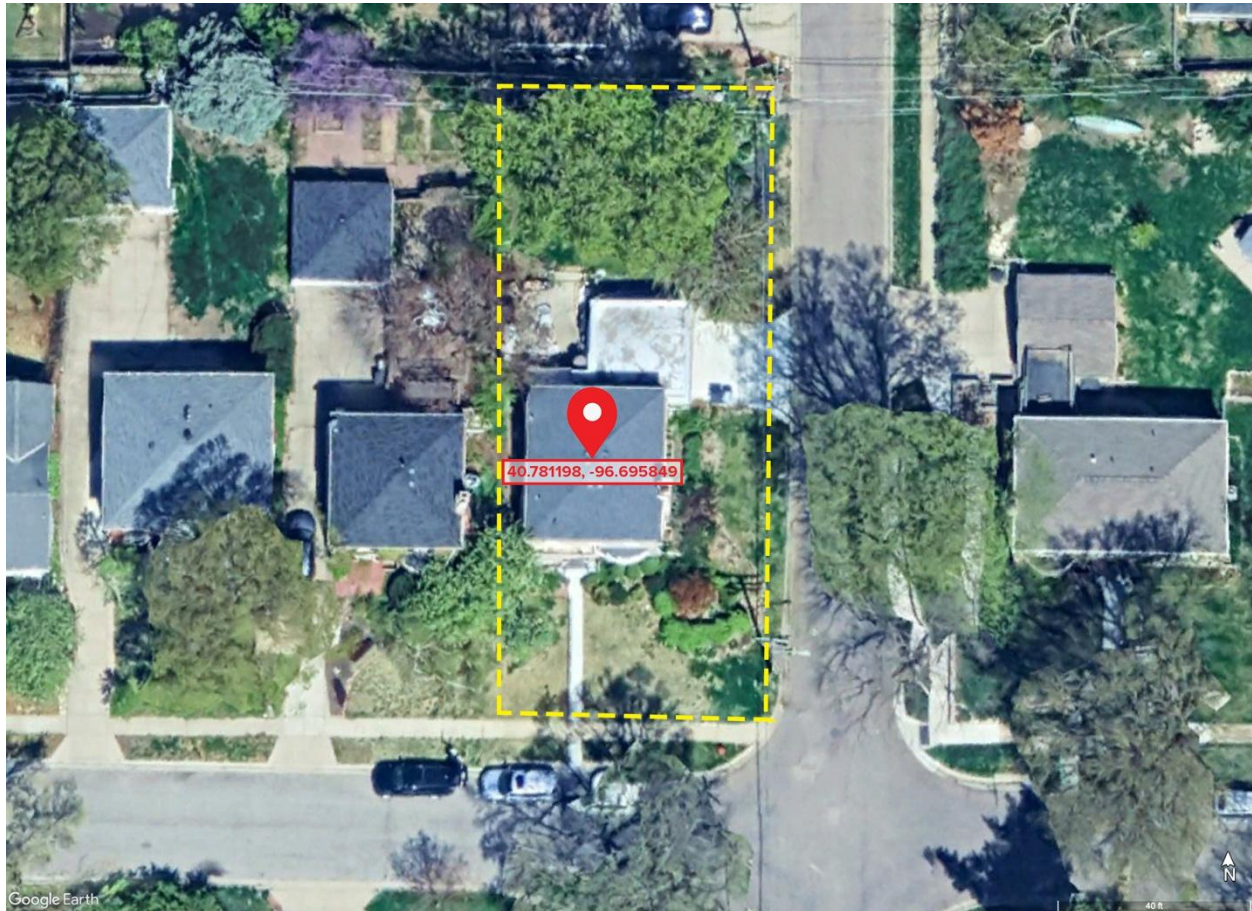
Figure 3. Contextual map of the Genevieve Felthouser House within the Indian Village neighborhood in Southeast Lincoln. Dashed line outlines the Indian Village neighborhood. Red flag points to the Felthouser House. Source: Base map from Google Earth, image capture April 2024, accessed February 1, 2026.



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Figure 4. Site and boundary map. Dashed line represents the historic boundary, current tax parcel boundary, and the National Register of Historic Places boundary. Source: Base map from Google Earth, image capture April 2024, accessed February 1, 2026.



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Figure 5. 1928 aerial of the Indian Village and Irvingdale neighborhoods. Star indicates the future location of the Genevieve Felthauser House. Source: Lincoln Planning Department Photo Archives.



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Figure 6. Building permit record for the Genevieve Felthausen House showing Laura B. Wood as the initial builder. Source: City of Lincoln Planning & Development Services Archives.

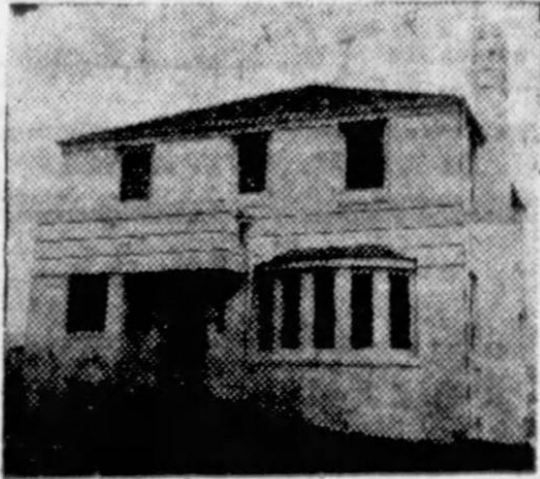
DATE	PERMIT NO.	NAME	TYPE OF PERMIT	WORK DONE	DATE FINALED
10-15-40	33506	Laura B. Woods	B		
7-12-66	92985	Charlie Salene	B	Leaving Res.	
	3171	2nd. Addition	P		12-40
1740 High Street					PLAN #

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Figure 7. Newspaper advertisement featuring the Genevieve Felthouser House. Source: "Sold..." [Ad], *Lincoln Journal Star*, May 4, 1941.

Sold ..



1740 High

This beautiful 6 room modernistic brick home, only recently completed, was sold to Mrs. Genevieve Felthouser and family last Sunday. This wonderful home consists of everything modernistic that a housewife could dream of: 3 cheery bedrooms, large living room with wood burning fireplace, well lighted dining room, exceptionally large modern kitchen, party room with fireplace. Every room has rounded corners and the home is insulated, air conditioned and weather stripped. Mrs. Wood says "This is by far the loveliest home I have ever built."

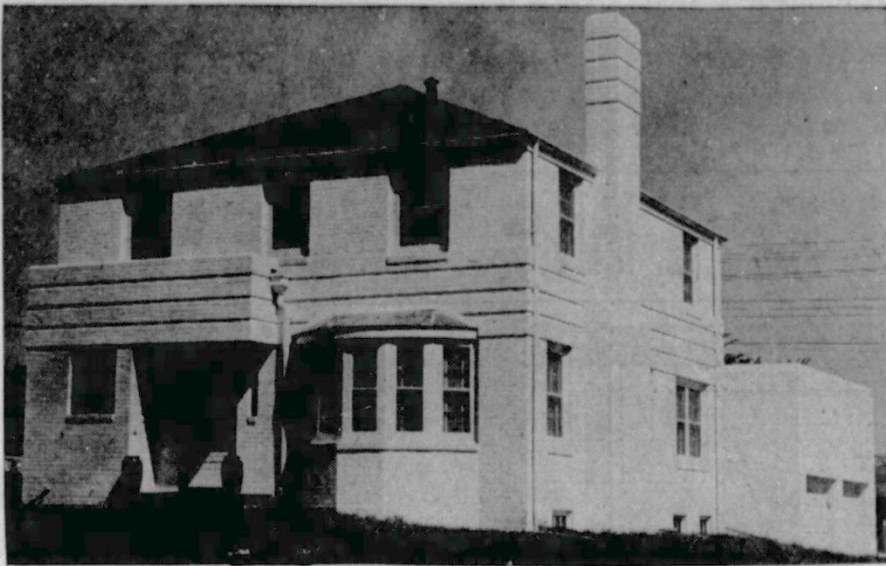
Laura B. Wood, Builder
Office 2655 So. 13 3-6050

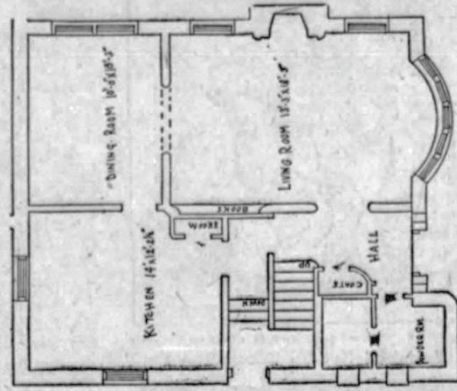
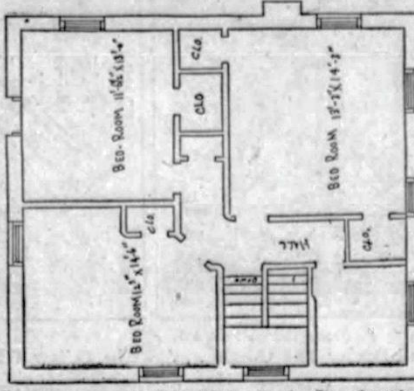
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Figure 8. Newspaper advertisement featuring the Genevieve Felthouser House. Source: "Cramping Eliminated in This Spacious Two-Story Brick House" [Ad], *Lincoln Star*, May 11, 1941.

Cramping eliminated in this spacious two-story brick house



PLENTY OF ROOM to move about is the feature of this home at 1740 High street. Its gleaming white brick with bay window in the front presents an attractive exterior. The interior continues the impression of massiveness. Note the spaciousness of the 14x12 kitchen and the large bedrooms on the second floor. Closets are equally large.

Room where room is needed is the keynote of the new home purchased by Mrs. Genevieve Felthouser at 1740 High st., in South Lincoln. Throughout the rooms are large and emphasize comfortable living.

The commodious two story building is of brick veneer construction painted white. The roof is of blue asphalt shingles which match two large blue urns set beside the red flagstone walk. Altogether, it cost \$8,000.

The house is insulated with loose filled spun glass in the ceilings and one inch composition board in the sidewalls. It is heated by a forced warm air gas furnace which also serves as an air conditioner in the summer by circulating the cool basement air thru the house after filtering.

Just off the front hallway is a small powder room with a half bath. The powder room is distinctive with its front of glass blocks and bright orange-red wallpaper.

The living room is exceptionally light with its deep bay window of five units on the south and two other large windows on the east. A baby grand piano and dark furnishings keep the room from appearing empty or glaring.

There is fireplace of brown glazed tile set in a white mantel that breaks up one of the long walls. The drapes are of a neutral color with a bright, large figure. The rug is light blue figured.

Washable Wallpaper.
All wallpaper used in the house is washable. In the living room, hallway and dining room a light paper with vertical stripe has been used. All corners in the house have been rounded.

The kitchen is the delight of women who dislike tiny rooms with little elbow room to do their cooking. While it is modern in all the furnishings, it is reminiscent of the old farm kitchens with its wide expanse of cupboards and cabinets and plenty of room for a large table in one corner.

The kitchen is beautiful as well, with its blending of colors. The walls are painted with a pink semi-gloss wall paint. The pink marble linoleum is trimmed with a bright mahogany which has also been used for the counter tops. The cabinets are all white with red lining, while red figured oiled silk curtains are used at the two large windows.

The dining room, which is connected to the living room by a large open doorway, has an exceptionally wide window at the one end, with drapes and rug the same as in the living room. The furnishings are of maple.

Three Large Bedrooms.
The second floor provides ample room for three large bedrooms. The master bedroom is on the southeast. It boasts three large windows and two closets. The green figured paper contrasts well with the rich mahogany furnishings.

Oak floors have been used in all rooms except the kitchen and bath. All doors in the house are of a single panel of blond birch left in its natural color. The rest of the woodwork is painted white.

The northeast bedroom has a blue figured paper. A door opens out onto a roof porch above the double garage. The northwest bedroom has a salmon colored panel paper.

The main bath on the second floor has a tub set in a recess by the window with purple tile a short space above it. The floor is covered with blocks of gray marble linoleum with a black border. The walls are painted, white on the lower portion and light blue above.

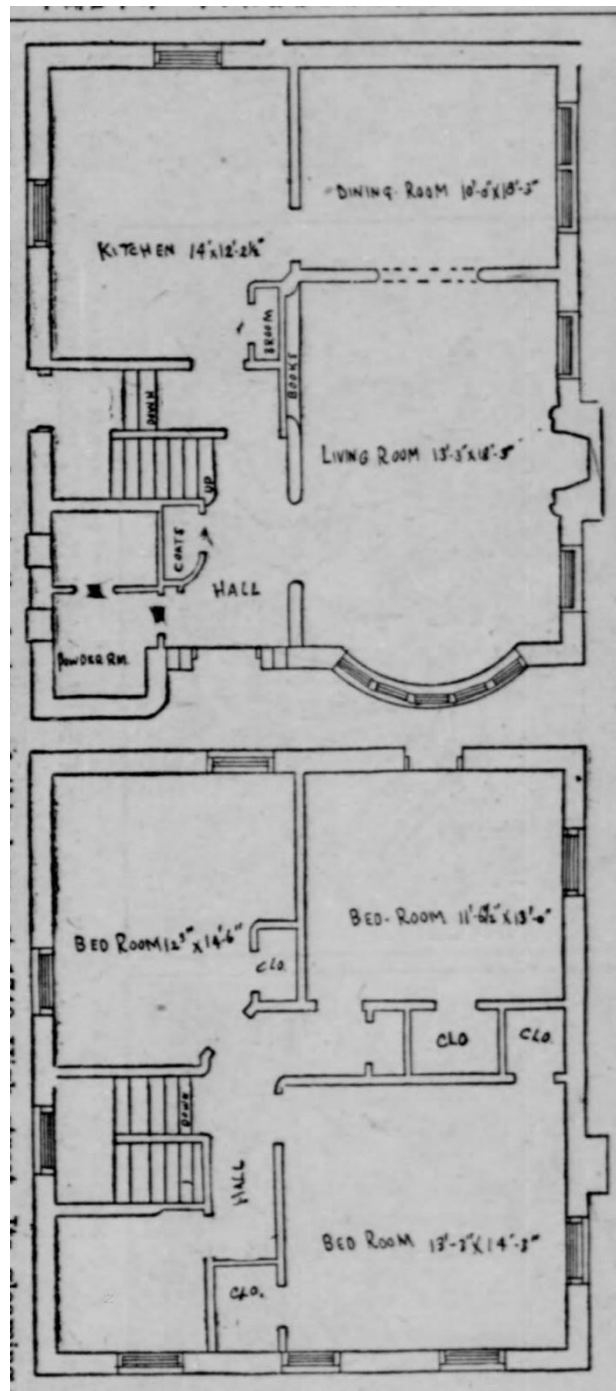
The basement, which has walls of red hollow-wall brick, has a rumpus room with fireplace of limestone. The ceiling is plastered with a rough swirl finish.

There is an extra bedroom in the basement which may serve as a maid's room. The furnace and laundry room are combined in one with a shower in one corner. For all the odds and ends that a family will collect, there is a large store-room in the remaining part of the basement.

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Figure 9. Enlarged plans of the first story (top) and second story (bottom) from the newspaper advertisement in *Figure 8*. These plans also reflect the current layout of the building. Source: “Cramping Eliminated in This Spacious Two-Story Brick House” [Ad], *Lincoln Star*, May 11, 1941.



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Figure 10. Entry from a newspaper article highlighting various women professionals in Lincoln. Source: "Meet Lincoln's Business and Professional Women," *Lincoln Journal Star*, August 25, 1940.

Nebraska's Only Woman Builder

After 21 years in the Real Estate business in Lincoln Laura B. Wood needs no introduction to Nebraska people. Known as Nebraska's only woman builder she has built more than 260 houses, 15 of these since March 1st of this year. Her specialty is "Economy Homes for Home Owners." Her work in addition embraces a complete rental and sale service. Mrs. Wood and her competent staff of workers will help you with your home building, from plans and lot to blue prints and financing. Mrs. Wood invites the public to visit any of the homes she has under construction at the present time, especially those at 1800 High and 1841 Pawnee, which are near completion. You'll notice that the homes are comfortable and attractive and have the added touches that mean convenience, touches that none but a woman will appreciate. She carries a large listing of homes, lots, buildings and apartments and offers property management service. Visit her office at 2655 So. 13th.

A black and white portrait of Laura B. Wood, a woman with short dark hair and round glasses, wearing a patterned blouse. The portrait is positioned on the right side of the newspaper clipping.

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Figure 11. Newspaper advertisement featuring photographs of Laura B. Wood and her employees. Source: "Do You Know These People..." [Ad], *Lincoln Star*, May 11, 1941.



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Figure 12. 1730 Pawnee Street. Aside from the Genevieve Felthausen House, this is the only other known Modernist house Wood developed in Southeast Lincoln. Source: Photograph by Post Oak Preservation Solutions, March 2025.



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Figure 13. Laura B. Wood promoting herself as “Nebraska’s Only Woman Builder” in a newspaper advertisement. 1730 Pawnee Street (top) is one of the houses featured. Source: “Nebraska’s Only Woman Builder”[Ad], *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star*, August 27, 1939.

Nebraska's Only Woman Builder

Completing Her 11th NEW HOME This Year

The New MODEL Home OPEN ALL DAY



1730 PAWNEE ST.

This is by far the loveliest home I have constructed this year. Located in a growing community, it is truly comfortable and modernistic in every respect. The house is of brick construction, is air conditioned, insulated and weather stripped. The attached garage is fireproof and has a sun deck on its roof. The living room is 20x14 feet with a Belgium marble fireplace, and the cheery dining room is of ample size. The kitchen is of latest design, having many CURTICE built-in cupboards covered with linoleum, an electric draw fan, and inlaid linoleum with a cove base on the floor. Upstairs the two bedrooms are large and airy, and include large closet spaces. The bath is at the top of the stairs and is appointed to suit the most fastidious housewife. The basement is of FARRENWALL CONSTRUCTION, has a large recreation room with fireplace. The furnace and laundry room contain an automatic gas furnace, shower and toilet. The house is entirely equipped with CURTICE SILENTITE Pre-Fit windows, with ever-locked basement windows. The doors are New London Slab Blond Woodwork. There are 7 closets in the house. Truly built for comfort and appearance, it is for sale at a price and on terms that will astound you. See it today.

NOT FOR SALE!

These Homes Built by LAURA B. WOOD and Occupied by Satisfied Owners.



2757 SO. 16TH

Mr. H. A. White, the proud owner of this dandy home, says, "We like our home extremely well. It is really comfortable and economical."



2769 SO. 16TH

Mr. Merle Hatch, who purchased this home at 2769 So. 16th, says, "We are well satisfied. In fact we couldn't be better pleased with a home."

Open For Inspection

See These from 2 to 9 Today.

3795 "A" St.—New 5 rms. home. 2 stall garage. All latest building features.

2721 Garfield—2 story home, owners leaving city.

Also Many Rentals and Lots.

LAURA B. WOOD

BUILDER

2655 So. 13 3-6050

Now Under Construction

1509 Burr and 1529 Burr St.

Here are two dandy five room English type brick bungalows that will be completed in a few weeks. These homes will feature all the latest features of quality building, and will be completely insulated, weather stripped, and air-conditioned. Each will have an attached garage, and will be equipped throughout with CURTICE SILENTITE Pre-Fit windows.

Buy one of these dandy homes NOW and we will decorate it to suit you. See Laura B. Wood, let her show you how you can purchase one of these homes with payments less than rent.

We have all the facilities to build YOUR home; lots, blueprints, financing, etc. Ask us about building on our easy payment plan.

Completed and Sold This Year

2757 So. 16
1501 Burr
1825 Pawnee
2769 So. 16th
1828 Pawnee
4128 Randolph
3155 So. 25th
1840 Pawnee
1730 Pawnee

Some of the Outstanding Features of Laura B. Wood's Home Building

CURTIS SILENTITE Pre-Fit windows and frames, easy of action and far superior to ordinary usage. Also CURTIS overhead garage doors—easy of action, space savers, and an addition to the appearance of any home. Also CURTICE Regency Woodwork.

For long life and quality construction, Laura B. Wood recommends FARRENWALL CONSTRUCTED BASEMENTS in all her new homes.

Quality Venetian blinds installed by THE MID-WEST VENETIAN BLIND CO.

Builder's hardware of superior quality supplied by ROBECK SUPPLY STORE.

Long life masonry and concrete work by E. C. WESTCOTT, sub-contractor.

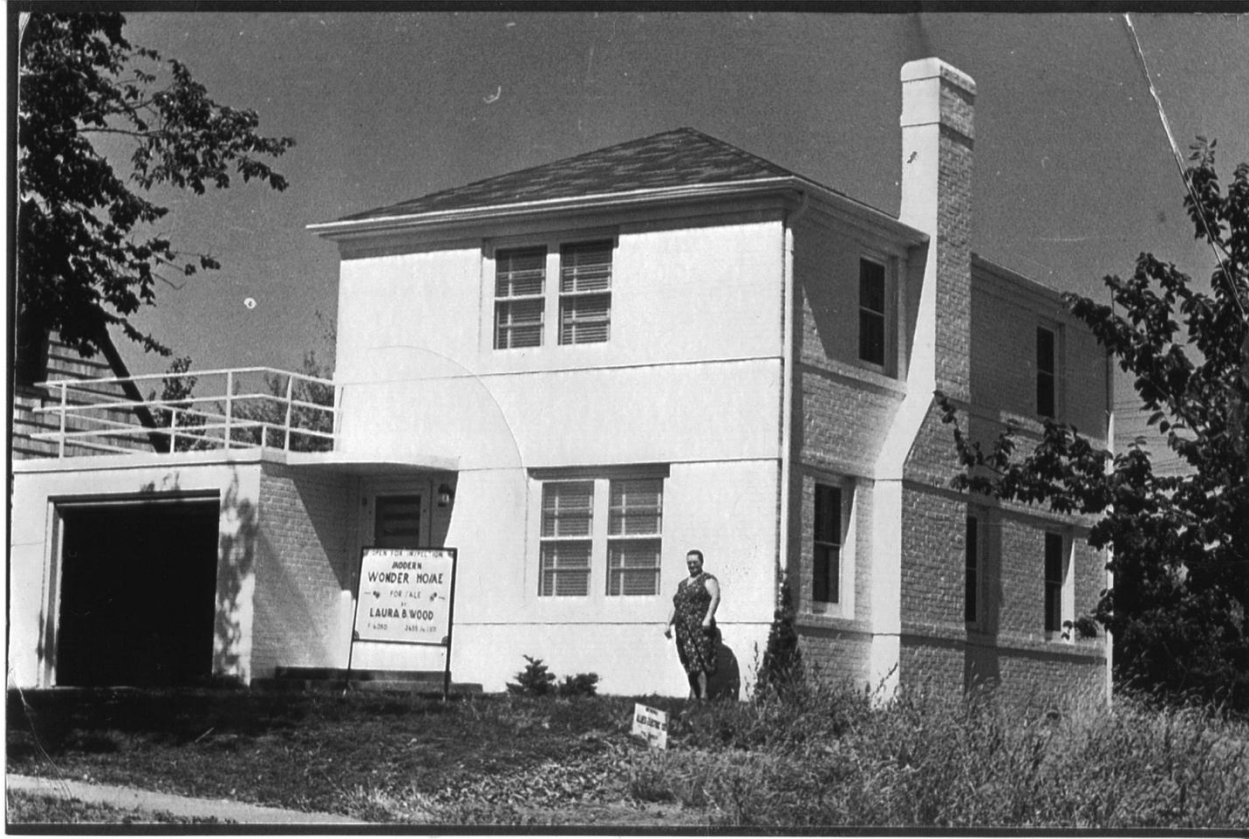
Master painting and paper hanging by T. J. VALENTINE.

Beautiful Architecture by E. J. KRIZ.

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Figure 14. Circa 1939 photograph of Laura B. Wood standing in front of 1730 Pawnee Street.
Source: Personal collection of Mike Brienzo.



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Figure 15. 1690 Sioux Street. Source: Google Street view, image capture March 2025, accessed February 2, 2026.



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Figure 16. 1869 Dakota Street. Source: Google Street view, image capture March 2025, accessed February 2, 2026.



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Figure 17. 1704 Dakota Street. Source: Google Street view, image capture March 2025,
accessed February 2, 2026.



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Figure 18. 3022 South 17th Street. Source: Google Street view, image capture March 2025, accessed February 2, 2026.



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Figure 19. Exterior photo map. Source: Base map from Google Earth, image capture April 2024, accessed February 1, 2026.



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Figure 20. First story photo map. Source: Plans from “Cramping Eliminated in This Spacious Two-Story Brick House” [Ad], *Lincoln Star*, May 11, 1941.

