

NEVILLE-KANODE FARMSTEAD, RESIDENCE  
East side of U.S. Highway 81, 2.5 miles S. of state line  
Munden vicinity  
Republic County  
Kansas

HABS No. KS-76-A

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Midwest Support Office  
1709 Jackson Street  
Omaha, Nebraska 68102-2571

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

NEVILLE-KANODE FARMSTEAD, RESIDENCE

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- Location:** The Neville-Kanode Farmstead Residence is located on the east side of U.S. Highway 81, west of the Neville-Kanode Farmstead Well and northwest of the Neville-Kanode Farmstead Cellar. It is situated approximately 2.5 miles south of the Kansas-Nebraska border, in the northwest quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 13, Township 1 South, Range 3 West in Liberty Township, Munden vicinity, Republic County, Kansas. The nearest town in this county is Munden, but the farmstead lies closer to the community of Chester, Nebraska.
- Present Owners:** The Kansas Department of Transportation intends to acquire this property for the widening of U.S. Highway 81. However, the present ownership is not clearly documented. Mr. Randy Kniep and his wife acquired the property December 24, 1975 and then sold it to Rodger Leibsack on contract. That contract has not been recorded with the Register of Deeds, Republic County.
- Present Occupant:** Vacant
- Present Use:** Vacant and gutted residence
- Significance:** The Neville-Kanode Farmstead Residence has significant historical associations with the early settlement of Republic County during the 1870s and 1880s. The Residence housed the Neville family, whose brick making operation was significant as a typical example of local manufacturing. When the Neville House was constructed in 1885, Republic County was newly settled and prosperous. Although there is no direct confirmation, it appears likely that James L. Neville had a fine brick residence built in a conspicuous location, in part, to advertise his own product and his business success.
- Description:** The residence is a rectangular two-story building with a basement and attic. The front is oriented to the west, facing the highway. Overall dimensions are approximately 40' from east to west and 28' from north to south. The foundation is constructed of coursed, smooth-cut limestone blocks with a projecting stone water table. The basement was not fully excavated leaving only a dirt-floored cellar with low brick retaining walls on the sides and three brick piers aligned in a north-south row under the center of the building. There is a brick exterior cellar stairway entrance on the north side, flanked by brick retaining walls and accented by a segmental arch and keystone of limestone which is failing. The exterior wood batten door to the cellar has been removed and left near the entrance opening.
- The walls of the residence are brick masonry laid in common bond. The interior floors, partition walls, ceilings, and roof are wood frame with sawn joists, studs, and rafters. There are no existing porches although shadow lines on the west front and east rear walls indicate the positions of former porches shown in historic photographs. Four paired end chimneys originally corbeled, are in the north and south walls. These chimneys provided venting for free-standing heating and cooking stoves. The chimney tops have fallen down almost to the roof line.
- The main west facade has five bays symmetrically arranged with central entrances flanked by two windows on each side on both the first and second floors. The original front entrance door has been removed. On the second floor, there is a wood door with two lower raised panels and an upper arched opening covered with plywood. Both entrances are deeply recessed. There are three windows on each floor above the recessed cellar stairway entrance

in the north wall, two to the west and one to the east. The eight openings in the east wall are not symmetrically placed, nor do they align with the openings in the west facade. This wall has three windows and a rear entrance on the first floor and four windows on the second. The rear entrance, which is situated slightly south of the wall center, has a wood door that has been crudely repaired with modern materials. The south wall has four window bays above two windows lighting the cellar. The cellar windows, which have arched brick lintels, are fixed with the sills flush with grade. Most of the wood window frames and sashes are extremely deteriorated, but a number of one-over-one double-hung sashes remain. Masonry openings have segmental arched heads with ornamental raised brick hoodmolds and limestone, rough pointed lug sills with drafted margins. A small carved semi-circular-arched limestone plaque with "NEVILLE HOUSE 1885" is set in the west wall above and north of the second floor entrance. The house has a truncated hipped roof covered with deteriorated wood and composition shingles. Although most of the boxed eave cornice is missing on the west, north and south sides, the east side has a wide frieze board ornamented by paired brackets and a dentil molding.

This building was gutted and then abandoned, leaving the interior in very poor condition. Only remnants of the original features remain. It had a center-hall plan with a small entrance foyer. The two front rooms on the west were a parlor to the north and dining room to the south. The two rear rooms on the east consist of a large southeast room which was probably the kitchen and a smaller room in the northeast corner, possibly a bedroom. There may have been another small room between the kitchen and the corner room but that partition has been removed. Adjacent staircases to the second floor and to the basement are located just north of the entry hall. The second floor has a landing to the west beside the staircase and a central hall oriented north-south which originally opened to five or possibly six bedrooms. Most of these partitions have been removed. In the southwest, an attached ladder stair on the interior wall leads to the attic area. There is wood tongue and grooved flooring throughout the first floor and wood wainscoting in the dining room. The flooring has been removed from the second floor. Interior walls and ceilings were finished with lath and plaster or plaster on the outer masonry walls; most of this finish has been removed.

Remnants of the original interior features and trim include the fluted molding and the base and head blocks framing the front entrance opening. The foyer also is paneled. The southwest dining room wainscoting is ornamented with a central bead while the window moldings have only a beveled edge and plain headblocks. The northwest and northeast rooms have the most complete trim. In the northwest parlor, the window moldings are beaded and coved with ornamental base and head blocks. There is a wide beaded baseboard with an ornamental cap. A similar pattern without base blocks was repeated in the northeast room.

Located on a prominent ridge, the Neville house was a local landmark when it was constructed because of its size, color, and form. The form and style of the Neville house expressed the influence of the Italianate architectural style popular during the mid-nineteenth century. The style was particularly common in the expanding towns and cities of the Midwest and probably in Kewanee, Illinois, where James Neville resided before moving to Kansas in 1869. Although the Neville House was not constructed until 1885, the Italianate style was still associated with formal residential architecture in a community just emerging from frontier conditions. It is an example of the simple rectangular Italianate house type. The low hipped roof, central entrance and ornamentation, especially the bracketed eave cornice, are characteristic of the style.

The impression of a landmark persists despite the Neville house's deteriorated condition. Although the brick masonry walls are stable, the house is in very poor condition. The interior has been gutted, the roof is leaking, and the interior walls and floors are damaged and rotting. The residence, the principal surviving structure on the farmstead, is now surrounded by prairie grass which has overgrown the yard. A few trees including ornamental cedars north and east of the house still shelter the abandoned buildings. The entrance lane runs north of the house.

The stone plaque above the entrance in the front facade of this large brick house, inscribed "NEVILLE HOUSE 1885," recorded the property owner and construction date. The architect-builder of the house is unknown. Original design or construction drawings are not available. Since his skill probably was limited to manufacturing rather than masonry construction, it is unlikely that Neville built the 1885 house himself. The Neville house may have been built by John Fraser, who was first listed in Polk's 1884-85 *Kansas State Gazetteer and Business Directory* as a "mason & builder" in the nearby small community of Crainville. There is no evidence to substantiate a connection between Fraser and the Neville house other than his presence in the community during the period of the residence's construction (Polk 1884:373).

James Louis Neville and his wife, Mary Ellen Kanode Neville, were the original owners of the property and the first occupants of the 1885 brick residence. They lived in the house with their five daughters and two sons. Workers in the brick making operation occasionally boarded with the family, taking their meals in the house and sleeping in the attic during the manufacturing season.

Neville sold the main brick residence and most of the land (121 acres) to Peter Frederick Poppe in 1901. A historic photo shows the Poppe family ranged in front of the southeast corner of the Neville house. In March, 1909, the Poppe family, Peter, Dorothy and their three children, traded the farm for another further west in Norton County. Albert G. Burruss of Thayer County, Nebraska was the new owner of a tract of 240 acres including the brick residence and other improvements. Burruss may never have occupied the house. The following year, he sold the property to Edward Jungck. Jungck sold to George Leibsack in 1928. The Leibsack family occupied the property until the 1950s when U.S. Highway 81 was constructed. Soon after the construction, the Leibsacks sold to Maxwell and Huetta Derowitsch and moved to Oregon. This transaction included the south half of the northwest quarter and southwest quarter of Section 13. After the sale, the old Neville house was not occupied.

During the 1970s, Derowitsch twice thought he had found buyers for the house and its surrounding six-acre tract. Plans for converting the landmark building into a restaurant were initiated. A local contractor replaced broken windows and gutted the building interior before work was halted. Only a month after buying the property on December 24, 1975, Eric Hedval and his wife sold it to Randy Kniep and his wife who live in Republic County. Reportedly, the Knieps are selling the house on contract to Rodger Leibsack of Oregon whose father George owned the property in the early 1950s. However, the contract has not been recorded with the Register of Deeds, Republic County. The Kansas Department of Transportation intends to acquire the property in order to widen U.S. Highway 81.

Sources:

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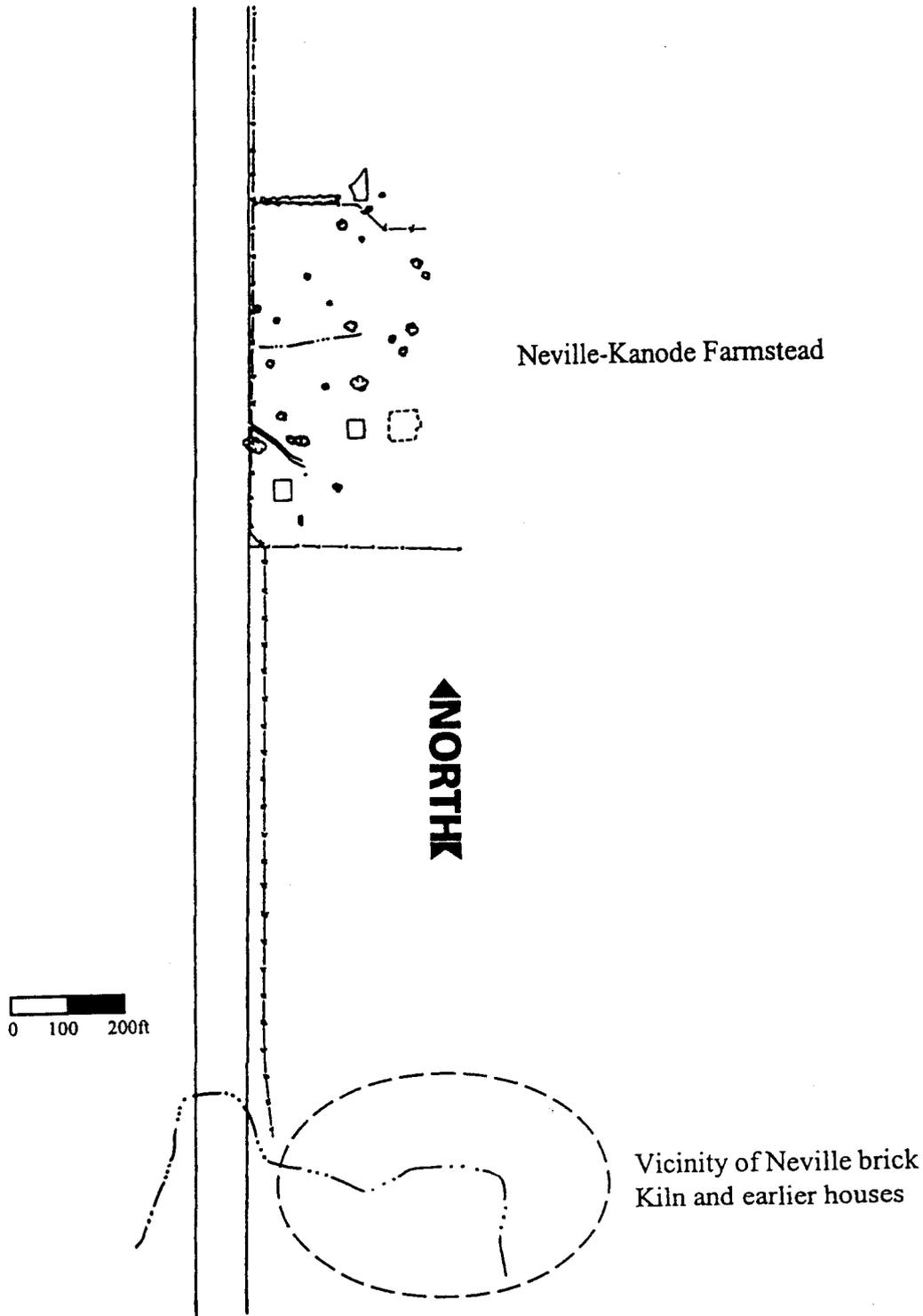
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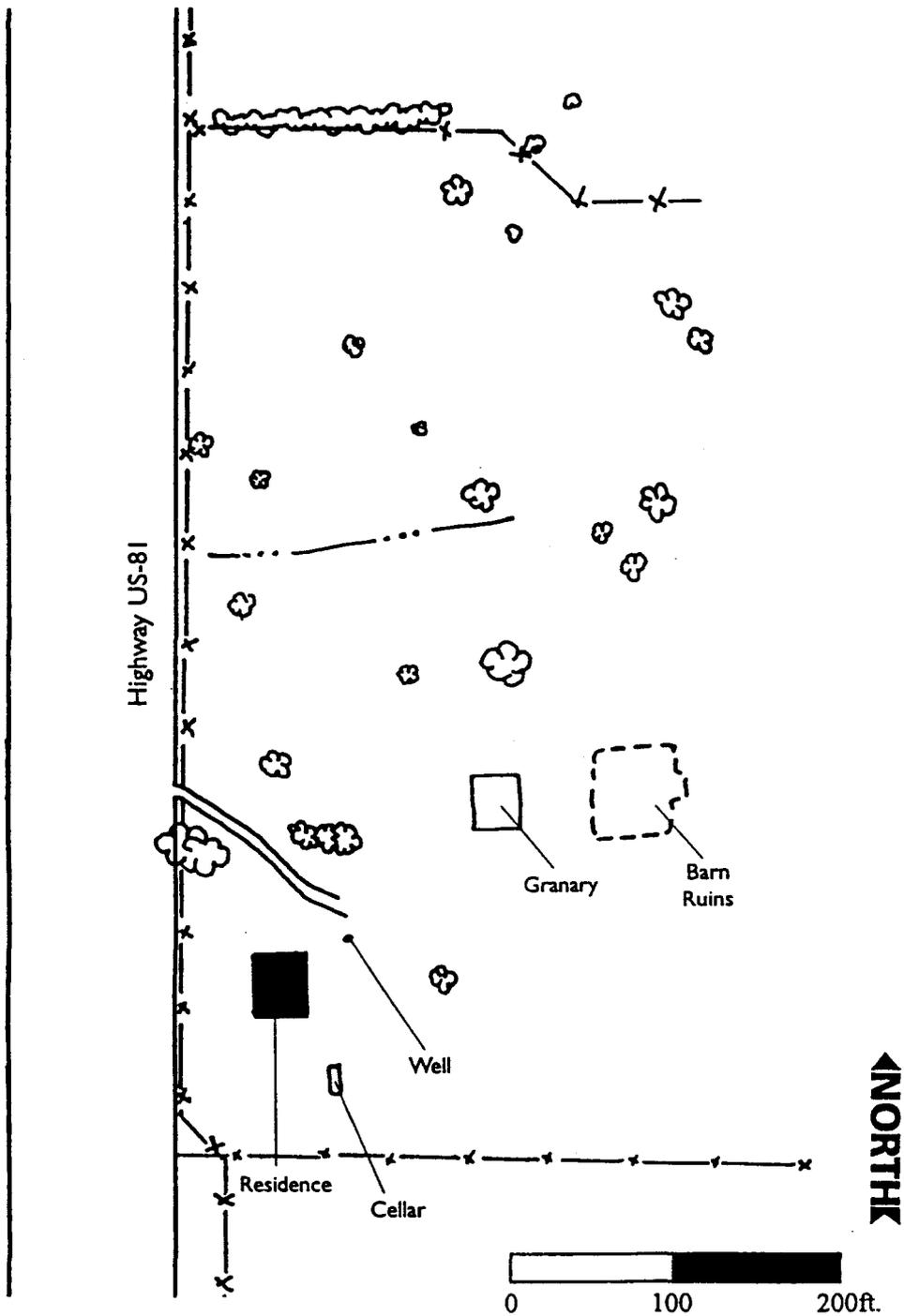
Polk, R.L. *Kansas State Gazetteer and Business Directory. Including a Complete Business Directory of Kansas City, MO. 1884-5*. Vol. IV. (Detroit: R.L. Polk & Co. and A.C. Danser, 1884).

Historian:

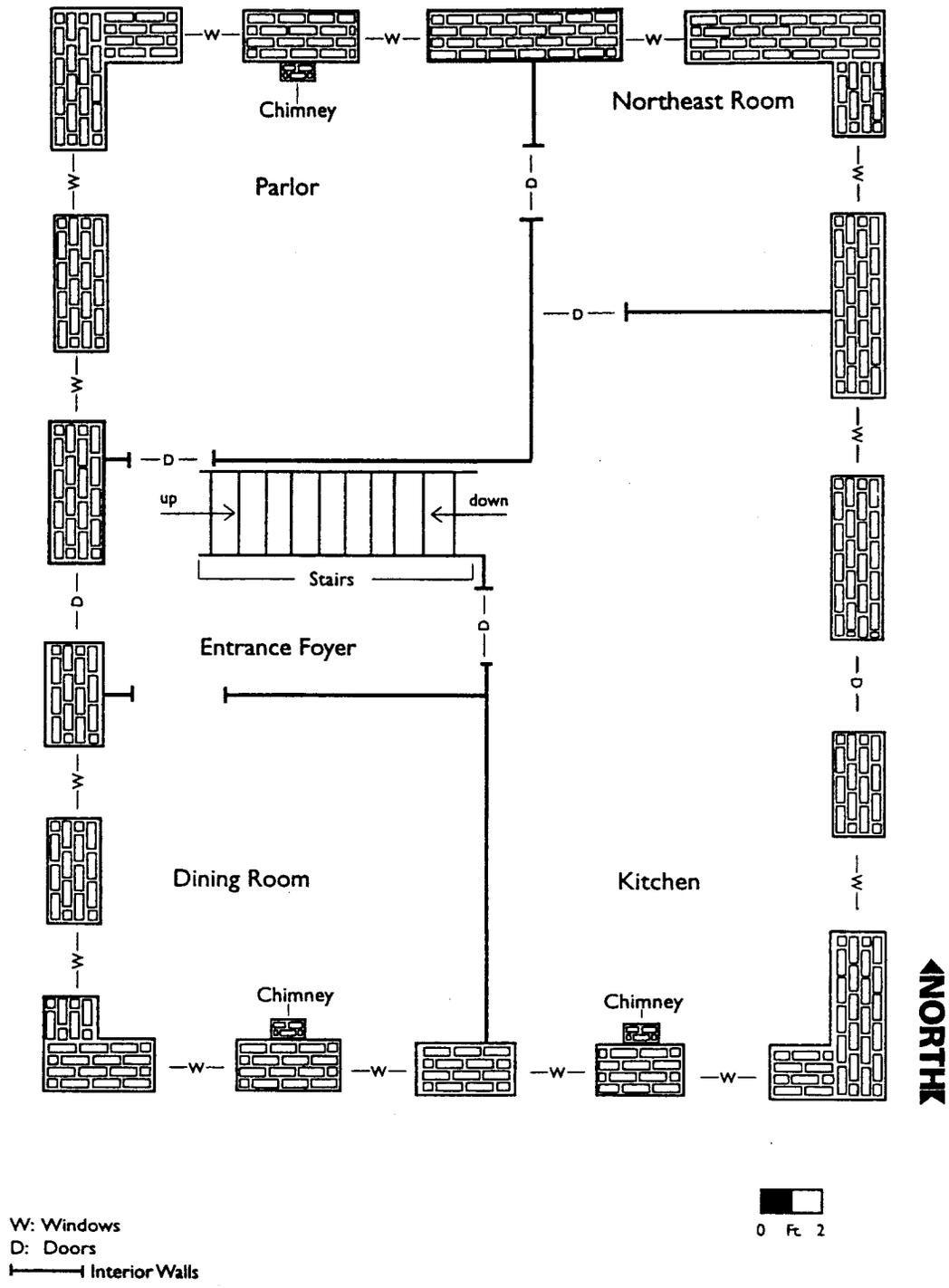
Sheryll L. White was the historian for the Neville-Kanode Farmstead project. White conducted the basic research and interviews and prepared the reports from which the historical information was taken. Dale E. Nimz prepared the historical context section and drafted the HABS documentation. Marsha K. King compiled and prepared the HABS document.



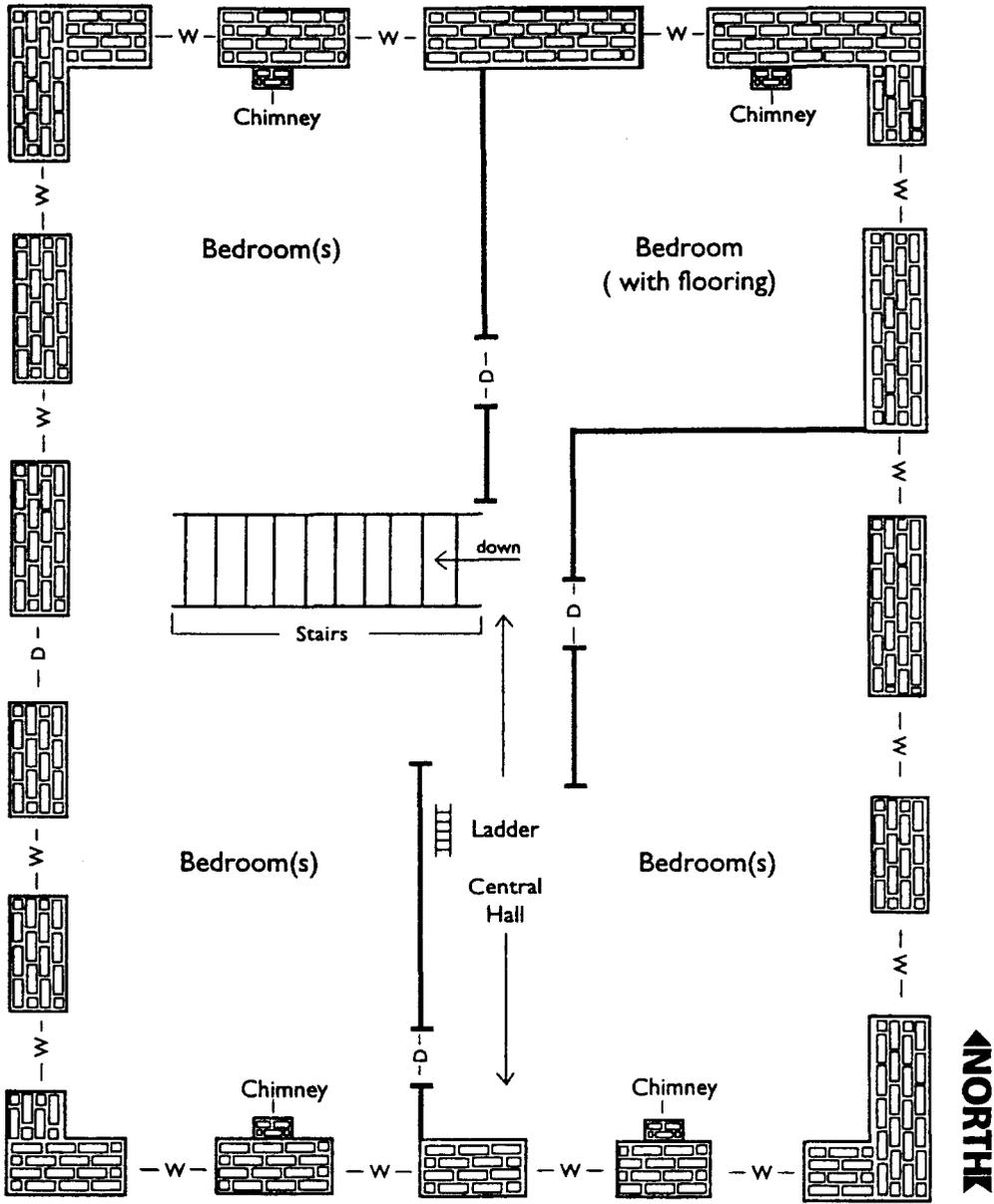
SITE PLAN OF THE NEVILLE-KANODE FARMSTEAD, SHOWING RELATIONSHIP TO THE VICINITY OF NEVILLE BRICK KILNS AND EARLIER RESIDENCES ON ROSE CREEK.



SITE PLAN SHOWING LOCATION OF THE NEVILLE-KANODE FARMSTEAD,  
RESIDENCE.



FLOOR PLAN OF THE NEVILLE-KANODE FARMSTEAD, RESIDENCE,  
FIRST STORY.



W: Windows  
 D: Doors  
 — Interior Walls

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FLOOR PLAN OF THE NEVILLE-KANODE FARMSTEAD, RESIDENCE,  
 SECOND STORY.