

Bert W. Leavitt House
(Veterans Administration Medical Center Building #20)
600 South 70th Street
Lincoln
Lancaster County
Nebraska

HABS No. NE-41-A

HABS
NEB,
55-LINC,
8-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historical American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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8-

BERT W. LEAVITT HOUSE **HABS No. NE41A**
(Veterans Administration Medical Center Building #20)

Location: 600 South 70th Street
 Lot 30 of Northwest quarter of 27-10-7

Present Owner: Veterans Administration

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: Vacant

Statement of
Significance: The house was constructed by Bert W. Leavitt (1869-1916) between 1910 and 1911 as his personal residence. Mr. Leavitt had successful careers in education and agriculture. At the time of his death he was a candidate for Lancaster County Treasurer. The house is an example of the American Foursquare plan. The structure is unusual in its use of ornamental concrete block and clay tiles as the roofing material for a rural site.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

Date of Erection: Between 1910 and 1916

Original and subsequent owners:

1907 Armelia S. (Leavitt) Reddick
 to
 Bert W. Leavitt
 Recorded in Book 142, Page 218

1919 Faythe K. Leavitt (widow of Bert W.
 Leavitt)
 to
 Benjamin F. Davis
 Recorded in Book 213, Page 149

1929 Benjamin F. Davis
 to
 The United States of America
 March 27, 1929
 Recorded in Book 281, Page 156

B. Historical Context:

The house was erected as a farm house several miles outside of Lincoln for Bert W. Leavitt. Construction occurred between 1910 and Mr. Leavitt's death in 1916. According to the Leavitt family genealogy assembled by Gertrude (Leavitt) Dietz, Bert's brother Carl Leavitt recalled visiting an earlier farmhouse on the site in 1910. No record of the architect, contractor, sub-contractors or suppliers is known to exist.

The house has served as a residence from the date of construction until 11-15-1980 the when it was vacated.

Biographical Information - Bert W. Leavitt. (1869 to 1916)

Mr. Leavitt was born in Goodhue County, Minnesota and moved to the Lincoln area in 1874 with his parents. Mr. Leavitt was a school teacher as a young man before settling on farming. At the time of his death he was a candidate for Lancaster County Treasurer.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Information

1. Architectural Character: The house is a typical American Foursquare farm home constructed of ornamental concrete block with clay tile as the roofing material. It's main level is approximately four feet above grade. The second floor contained the sleeping area. An unfinished attic with dormers to the north, east and west are an integral part of the design. The basement is unfinished.

2. Condition of Fabric: Exterior walls and roofs are in good condition. However, the interior has been vandalized with most of the salvageable items stolen or destroyed.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Foundations: Ornamental concrete block

2. Wall: Ornamental concrete block

3. Structural System: Wood framing

4. Porches: A 10' porch exists along the north front and a portion of the east side. It's foundation and columns are masonry. It's structural system is wood. A 7' x 12' rear porch exists on the south near the east corner. It's foundation is masonry. All other structural components are wood.

5. Chimneys: Two chimneys exist. The fireplace flue exists along the west side near the north corner. The second chimney exists near the center of the south elevation approximately 8' from the south wall.

6. Openings: Only solid doors exist at present. The original doors have been removed by vandals.

7. Windows: Double hung windows exist except at the sidelights of the fireplace. These are fixed sash windows.

8. Roof-Shape and Covering: The house has a hip roof with red clay tile.

Eaves: Fascia and soffits are constructed of wood, and extend approximately 18" beyond the building face.

Dormers: The east and west dormers contain two double hung windows. The north dormer is five sided with one double hung window in each of the three outer faces. All dormers are clad in clay tile except for wood at fascia and soffits.

C. Description Of Interior:

1. Floor Plans: (see attached)

2. Stairways: One half flight of open stairway exists at the entry. Newel posts, spindles and rails have been removed by vandals. The stair is accessible from the dining room and continues to second floor in an enclosed space. A stair to the basement exists under the main stair and a stair to the attic exists adjacent to the stair from first floor.

3. Flooring: Except the kitchen and bathroom which have ceramic mosaic tile, wood floors exist throughout. The ceramic tile floors are badly deteriorated due to vandals and lack of heat.

4. Wall and Ceiling Finishes: All walls are plaster on lath with a painted surface.

5. Openings-Doors: Most interior panel doors still exist, however some have been removed or damaged by vandals.

6. Decorative Features and Trim: Most straight running trim exists. All decorative features have been removed by vandals.

7. Hardware: Only a few pieces of hardware exist due to vandals. Design is simple in nature.

8. Mechanical: Heating: Forced air systems

Lighting: Vandals have removed all but a few fixtures.

Plumbing: Fixtures have been removed by vandals.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: The structure is at the brow of a rise in the overall terrain. The house faces north and over looks the drainage area of Dead Mans Run.

2. Historic Landscape Design: It does not appear that a landscape design was created. However a 40" Mulberry tree exists approximately 15' south of the structure. A row of pine trees exist with an average diameter of 15" across the front (north).

3. Out Buildings: A 23' X 18' wood frame garage exists south of the house. It appears typical of 1920's style garage detailing, doors and windows. The roof is hipped with a slope approximately the same as the house. The roof covering is green mineral surfaced tar paper.

Part III Source of Information:

This is one portion of the historical / architectural record of the Bert W. Leavitt house prepared for the Veteran's Administration that also includes photodocumentation. This record conforms with the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior.

Interviews: Ed Zimmer, Historic Preservation Planner, City of Lincoln

Bibliography-Primary and Unpublished Sources:

Ed Zimmer's notes of interviews with Gertrude (Leavitt) Die
Leavitt Family Genealogy, by Gertrude (Leavitt) Dietz

Secondary and Published Sources:

Lincoln and Lancaster County, Ed. A./J. Sawyers, 1916

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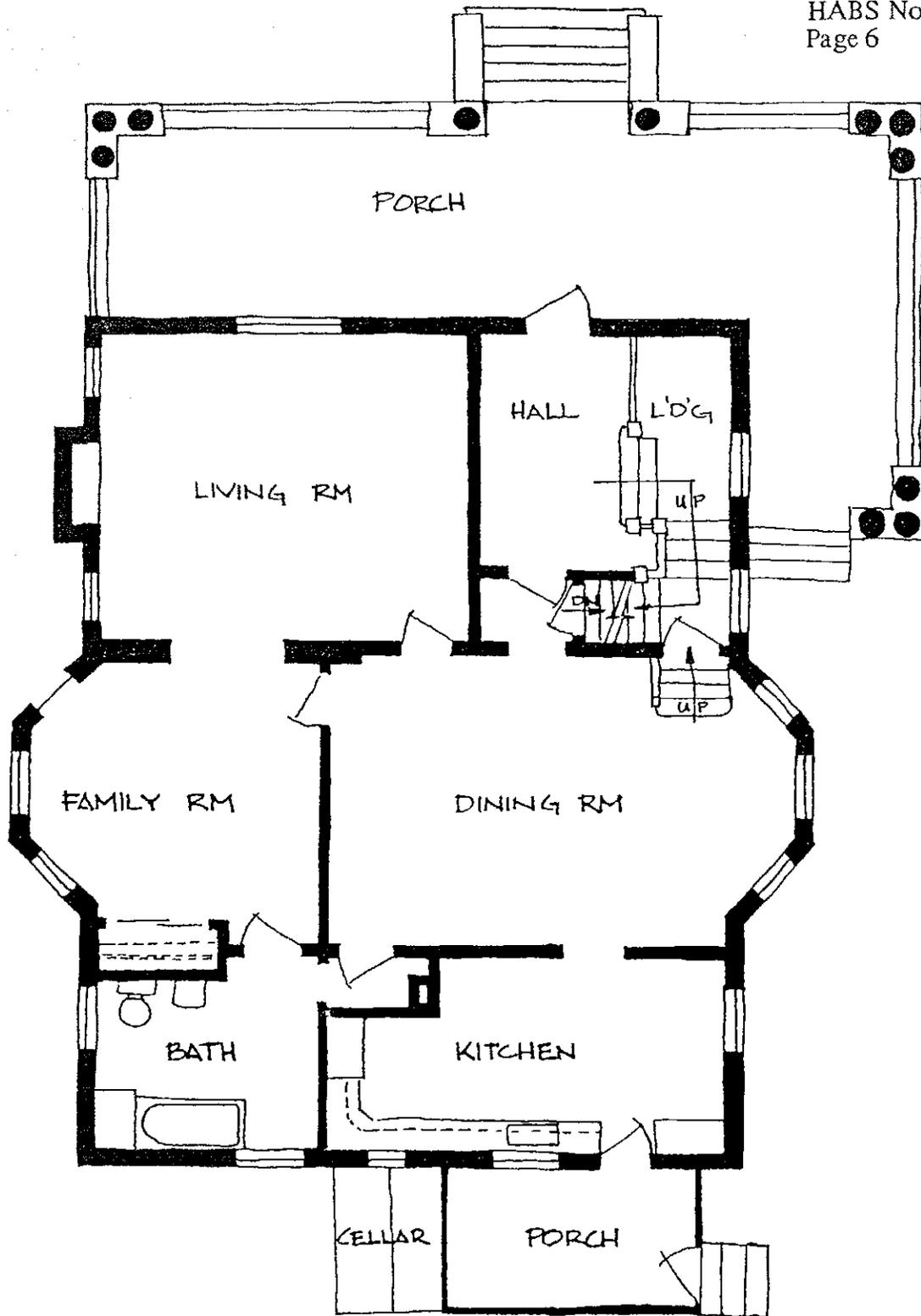
Bibliography-Primary and Unpublished Sources:

Ed Zimmer's notes of interviews with Gertrude (Leavitt) Dietz
Leavitt Family Genealogy, by Gertrude (Leavitt) Dietz

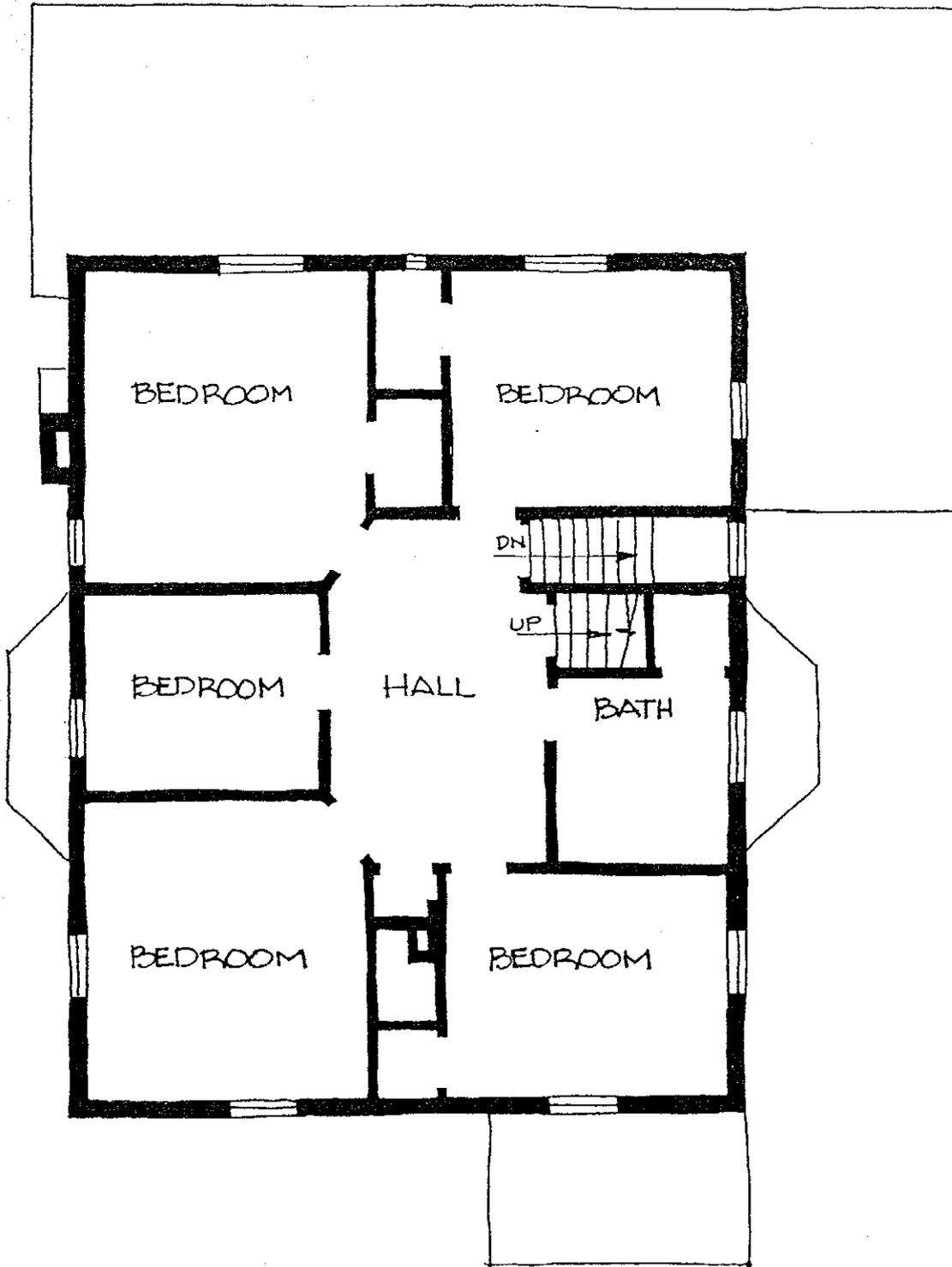
Secondary and Published Sources:

Lincoln and Lancaster County, Ed. A.J. Sawyers, 1916
Lincoln Star 8-24-1916

Prepared by: Jerry L. Berggren
Architect
Berggren & Woll Architects
February 8, 1989



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1/8" = 1' ————— 0'



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$ ————— 0''