Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries – complete applicable sections)

STATE: Kansas
COUNTY: Geary
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Christian Wetzel Cabin (preferred)

AND/OR HISTORIC: Louis Kettlass Cabin

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: NE 1/4, Sec. 8, T 12, R 6 E; In a state roadside park at the junction of I-70 and K-57

CITY OR TOWN: About two miles east of Junction City

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Dist # 2, Cong. Bill Roy

STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Kansas	20	Geary	061

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☒ Building ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object	☐ Public ☒ Private ☐ Both	Public Acquisition: ☐ In Process ☐ Being Considered	☒ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress	Yes: ☒ Restricted ☐ Unrestricted ☐ No

PRESENT USE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

☐ Agricultural	☐ Government	☐ Park	☐ Transportation	☐ Comments
☐ Commercial	☐ Industrial	☐ Private Residence	☐ Other *(Specify)*	
☐ Educational	☐ Military	☐ Religious		
☐ Entertainment	☒ Museum	☐ Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Kansas Lutheran Historical Society, Inc.

STREET AND NUMBER: 1422 South Water Street

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
Wichita	Kansas 67213	20

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Register of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER: Geary County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE
Junction City	Kansas 66441	20

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Survey of Historic Sites and Structures in Kansas

DATE OF SURVEY: 1957 ☐ Federal ☒ State ☐ County ☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Kansas State Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER: 120 West Tenth Street

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
Topeka	Kansas 66612	20

STATE:	COUNTY:	FOR NPS USE ONLY	
Kansas	Geary	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

Form 10-300a
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Kansas	
COUNTY	
Geary	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

4. Note: Although the building is owned by the Lutheran Historical Society, the land on which it stands is in a roadside park owned by the state of Kansas.

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☐ Excellent	☒ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Deteriorated	☐ Ruins	☐ Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	☒ Altered	☐ Unaltered		☒ Moved	☐ Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL *(if known)* PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Wetzel Cabin is a simple rectangular one-story log structure with a loft. The logs are split face and squared, with cement chinking between logs. The corners are interlocked with alternate logs projecting through the corner. A unique feature of this cabin is that it is divided into two sections by a central open passage completely through the structure. The roof joins both sections and the loft runs the length of the cabin. Entrance to the two sections is from the roofed passage. The simple gable roof is covered with hand split wood shingles and has a short projection at the gable and eaves. A simple field stone fireplace is located at the north end. The multipane double hung windows are set in simple rectangular openings. No special emphasis has been made around the window openings; logs of the wall serve as the lintels.

The present exterior appearance of the cabin is much like the original. But many changes were made over the years, including vertical siding over the logs, closing the "breezeway," addition of a lean-to along one side, and walnut flooring laid over loose-lying logs. When the cabin was relocated, the lean-to and the vertical siding were removed, and the logs were numbered and recorded before dismantling. The cabin was relocated on a concrete floor, logs which had to be replaced were obtained from another old cabin, lime mortar was replaced with concrete, windows and doors had to be replaced, and an additional window was cut on the west side of the north room and a window added to the north side of the loft. (The explanation offered for these additional windows was "for the sake of better lighting and especially to make the best possible use of the remaining materials of the original building." While these alterations are not historically justifiable, it is felt the changes have not seriously damaged the building's integrity.)

The interior of the cabin is arranged as it may have been at the time of the Wetzel occupancy.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- [ ] Pre-Columbian
- [ ] 16th Century
- [ ] 18th Century
- [ ] 20th Century
- [ ] 15th Century
- [ ] 17th Century
- [X] 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)*

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- [ ] Aboriginal
  - [ ] Prehistoric
  - [ ] Historic
- [ ] Agriculture
- [X] Architecture
- [ ] Art
- [ ] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [ ] Conservation
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Engineering
- [ ] Industry
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape Architecture
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Music
- [ ] Political
- [ ] Religion/Philosophy
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [ ] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Theater
- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Urban Planning
- [ ] Other *(Specify)*

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Christian Wetzel Cabin, which was built on the banks of Clark's creek southeast of Junction City in 1857, was constructed for Louis Kettlass by Isaac H. Loder at a cost of $225.00. After Kettlass died, Wetzel purchased the cabin on November 13, 1860, and his family moved into the house shortly thereafter.

The Wetzels lived in the cabin for approximately four years, and during that time the first services in Kansas of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod were held in their home. The Rev. F. Wingen Lange was sent as a missionary to the Clark's Creek settlement and preached his first sermon in the Wetzel cabin on August 13, 1861. He reportedly made his home in the upstairs room of the cabin until 1863.

In June, 1864, the cabin was sold to Samuel E. Turner for $750.00, and until 1925 it was used as a residence by various families. The Kansas District Lutheran Laymen's League decided to restore the structure in 1955. It was moved to a new location at the K-57 and I-70 interchange east of Junction City and was established as a Lutheran historical site and museum.

Although the structure also has significance to the religious heritage of Kansas, it is being nominated to the Register as a building of architectural importance. As far as log cabin architecture is concerned, the Wetzel Cabin is unique. Most cabins are simple rectangular structures, but it features a central open passage completely through the building. As far as can be determined, this was an unusual type of log cabin construction for Kansas. The state-wide survey has not yet located any other cabins of comparable design.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"First Lutheran Service in State in '55'," Topeka Capital-Journal, October 25, 1959.

"Historical Marker Dedication Sunday," Alma Signal-Enterprise, June 2, 1955.

"Kansas Lutherans Plan for a Centennial Observance," Topeka Capital-Journal, October 18, 1959.

Kull, Ron, "Lutheran Church Sets Centennial," Topeka Capital, July 16, 1961.

Lieske, H. William, Log Cabin Memorial (Great Bend, Kansas Lutheran Historical Society, Inc., 1955).

"Log Cabin Restored Near Junction City," Topeka Capital, May 29, 1955.

"Park Will Feature Pioneer Log Church," Topeka Capital, February 25, 1955.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"

OR

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
39 °	01 '	45"	96 °	47 '	08 "

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than one

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Richard Pankratz, Planner

ORGANIZATION: Kansas State Historical Society

DATE: August 21, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER: 120 West Tenth Street

CITY OR TOWN: Topeka

STATE: Kansas 66612

CODE: 20

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☒

Name Nyle H. Miller

Nyle H. Miller

Title Executive Secretary

Kansas State Historical Society

Date August 22, 1973

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

Wetzel Log Cabin Church
Relocation Proposal (1)

Location

The cabin is now located in a roadside park on the south side of I-70 off exit 300, east of Junction City at the interchange of K-57 and I-70. A trailer park encroaches along the western side of the site, very close to the back of the cabin. The new location of the cabin will be at the Spring Valley School site three miles west of Junction City. The .7 acre site is located on the southeast corner of Highway 18 and Spring Valley Road in the NW ¼, S. 10, T. 12 s., R. 5 E. Both sites are in the vicinity of Junction City, Geary County (code 061), Kansas (code KS). Zip code 66441.

Procedures for move and the new location, its setting, and proposed orientation

In November of 2000, the Kansas SHPO's Architect met with members of the Kansas Lutheran Historical Society to discuss restoration and repairs that were needed at the cabin. At that meeting both repairing in place or disassembling and rebuilding the cabin were options that were considered. The concrete slab on which the structure presently sits has cracked extensively, and because the building lacks a footing, the log walls are heaving with the frost cycles. Replacement of some of the original logs with unsuitable materials (railroad ties etc.) would also be required.

The building will be moved as complete unit, although the brick chimney will be taken down. Doors and windows will be removed for the move, and their openings braced with iron rods. These features will be put back at the new location. The house will be hydraulically jacked up and steel bars placed under it to support it. A trailer will be backed underneath the house and it will be slowly lowered onto the bed.

The six-mile route follows county roads and will not require any power or telephone lines to be taken down. Great care has been taken to prepare the new site. Several gates marking the property have been removed. The house will be placed on one-foot wide concrete foundation. The house will stand at the southern end of the property.

Twenty-three walnut logs will be cut down to 10" members at a saw mill and then hewn by hand with a broad axe. The experienced craftsman will use an antique broad axe to hewn one inch off of the walnut logs, resulting in an eight-inch wide member. The logs will replaced the non-original railroad ties that have been used to repair the cabin over the years. The logs will be hand notched to fit and traditional lime chinking will be used to fill the spaces between the logs.

Wetzel Log Cabin Church
Relocation Proposal (2)

The chimney will be rebuilt, and a fieldstone fireplace will be constructed. The windows and doors will be replaced and a cement floor will be poured. At a later date, the floor will be covered with log planks.

The new setting for the Wetzel Cabin borders the GCHS's Spring Valley Heritage Site, which was originally the Spring Valley school grounds. This site contains the stone one-room school building, a frame shed/pony barn and two outhouses, all original to the site. Another one-room period hewn-log cabin, originally located on Lyons Creek in southern Geary County, has been reconstructed on the eastern edge of the school ground. The Wetzel cabin church will be located on a tract of land directly to the south of the school ground, but down in a little depression. A sparse tree line runs along the incline between the two properties and a fairly good-sized tree obstructs the sight-line between both the school house and the cabin and the proposed location for the Wetzel "church.

Plans call for the cabin's relocation call for it to be placed on the site far enough away from the other period buildings to give the feeling of frontier Kansas, and it would be positioned with the same directional orientation as when it was constructed originally.

No additional parking will be required for the cabin. The rural character of the site will not be negatively impacted by the relocation of the cabin. At some point in the future a stone sidewalk leading up to the cabin may be laid.

Reasons for the move, the appropriateness of the new setting and orientation, and the effect the move and the new location will have on the significance and integrity of the property

The historical Wetzel Log Cabin Church is presently located at the interchange of K-57 and I-70, immediately east of Junction City, Kansas. The building is now owned by the Geary County Historical Society, but is located on land owned by the Kansas Department of Transportation. This location is the third site for this 1850s vintage structure. It was originally built on a homestead along Clarks Creek in rural Davis (Geary) County, Kansas, and it was in this location that the first Lutheran church service in Kansas was conducted in the little log home. In 1955 it was moved to a roadside park along U.S. Hwy 40 and restored by the Lutheran Historical Society. In 1958 it was relocated to the present site, which is owned by the Kansas Department of Transportation, when the construction of Interstate 70 took the roadside park. In its present location the

Wetzel Log Cabin Church
Relocation Proposal (3)

structure has been subject to vandalism and break-ins and over the years development has changed the neighborhood considerably. A trailer park now encroaches along the back side of the site very close to the cabin.

It has been difficult for the Lutheran Historical Society to maintain and protect the cabin at the roadside location and for several years efforts have been made to transfer the structure to the Geary County Historical Society, with the objective of having the cabin moved nearer the GCHS museums. This transfer occurred on the 31st of January 2003. Part of the understanding that preceded the transfer was that the cabin would be relocated to the GCHS's rural Spring Valley Heritage Site and placed on adjacent land that had been donated for this purpose by descendants of a member of the original Lutheran parish. It was felt by all that this rural location would reflect more accurately the original setting and environment of the cabin, as well as generate greater visitation and use. It will also be easier to protect and maintain the structure and minimize vandalism when we own the property where it is located.

The Spring Valley site, three miles west of Junction City is a popular destination for school groups, tours and local visitors and the history and interpretation of the log cabin church would be an added attraction here. Though this would be the fourth move for this historic little building, it is believed it will be its salvation in terms of protection, preservation, restoration, and public access. At its present location the structure is totally out of context. There is no historical association with the site or the neighborhood, especially as it has developed. The cabin was originally built in the early months of 1857 on the banks of Clarks Creek, approximately 4 miles south of its present location. Some of the trees and timber that lined the banks of the stream were cut down to build the cabin, which faced the road that ran to east of it. Later the route of the road was changed so that it ran along the west or back of the house, which had no windows on that side.

Russell Bradley, who was born in the cabin in 1874 described in a letter the environs of the homestead during the time his mother lived in the cabin. (From 1865 to 1888) "When we lived there, there was a wide porch the full length of the east side…Mother made a very pretty east yard and she had a lot of trees, mostly box elder and cherry and a gooseberry hedge around the yard…There was a very good well—the best water on Clarks Creek—on the west side. Travelers used to stop and water their horses there and have a drink of that good water."

Wetzel Log Cabin Church
Relocation Proposal (4)

In contrast to the present site which is bounded on the north by I-70, on the west by a trailer park and propane tanks, and on the east by a frontage road, the proposed new site, though approximately 6 miles further west in the county, has an abundance of trees and foliage in a rural setting and is not far from a nearby creek bed. Spring Valley Road runs along the western boundary. This new rural site is much more in keeping with the neighborhood and the environment in which the cabin was first located.

The Kansas SHPO archeologist has surveyed the new location and verified that the site does not possess historical or archeological significance that would be adversely impacted by the relocation of the Wetzel Cabin to the site.

How the property will meet the special requirements for criteria consideration B after the move

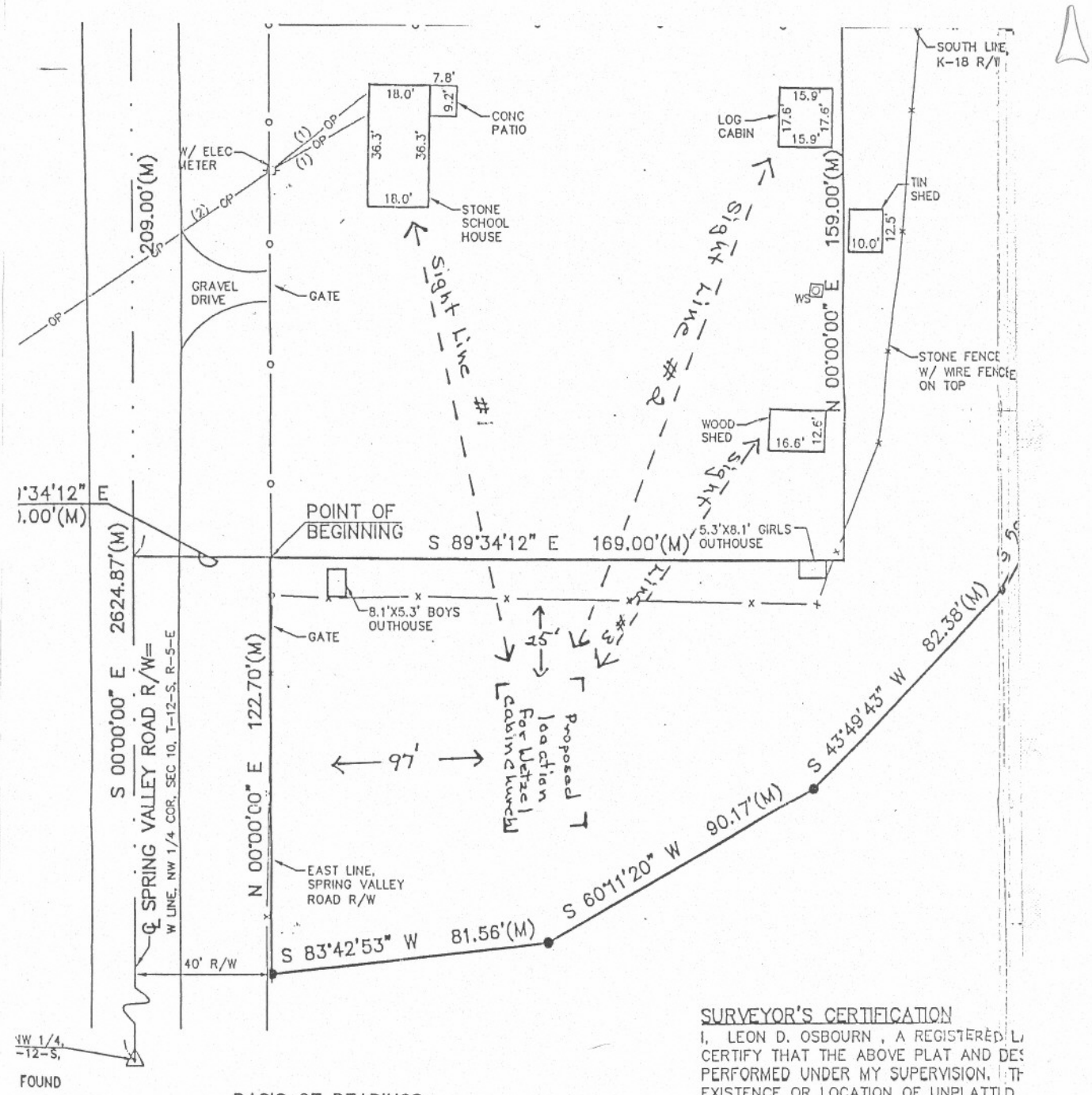
The Wetzel Log Cabin Church originally stood near Clarks Creek, about 5 miles south of I-70 on what is now Highway 57. The cabin was constructed in 1857 for Louis Kettlass who lived in the cabin until his death in 1860. Christian Wetzel then purchased the cabin and lived there with his family for four years. While the Wetzels lived in the cabin, it was the first meeting place for the state's first congregation of the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church.

By the time the Wetzel Cabin was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973, it had been moved at least twice – first in 1955 to a roadside park along U. S. Highway 40, then in 1958 when the construction of I-70 called for the removal of the roadside park – and possibly once more between 1958 and 1973. Ordinarily, the National Park Service does not list on the National Register structures that have been moved from their original sites. However, the cabin was listed for its architectural significance as a dogtrot cabin, an unusual building type in Kansas.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 11 Page 1



BASIS OF BEARINGS:
BASIS OF BEARINGS FOR THIS SURVEY IS AN ASSUMED S 00°00'00" E ALONG THE WEST LINE OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER

SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATION
I, LEON D. OSBOURN , A REGISTERED L
CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE PLAT AND DES
PERFORMED UNDER MY SUPERVISION. TH
EXISTENCE OR LOCATION OF UNPLATTED
DATE OF SURVEY: MAY 23, 2002
ERROR OF CLOSURE: 1:24,819