

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register Listed, April 2, 2014

# 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. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name Truitt, James and Ella, House

Other names/site number KHRI # 133-0870-00306

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

## 2. Location

Street & number 305 North Steuben Avenue

N/A
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 not for publication

City or town Chanute

N/A
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 vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Neosho Code 133 Zip code 66720

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

### SEE FILE

Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO Date \_\_\_\_\_

Kansas State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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 \_\_\_\_\_

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>		<b>Total</b>

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: Single Dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Domestic: Single Dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late Victorian: Queen Anne  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

foundation: Stone  
walls: Wood: Weatherboard; Wood: Shingle  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof: Asphalt Composition  
other: Brick  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 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

The Truitt House is located at 305 North Steuben Avenue in Chanute, Neosho County, Kansas. The Queen Anne-style residence, built in 1887, is situated at the northwest corner of West Walnut Street and North Steuben Avenue on a large, tree-filled corner lot approximately three blocks north of the downtown and four blocks west of the historic Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad depot and public library. Chanute (population 9,119) is situated in the northwest part of Neosho County, at the junction of two railroads in the Neosho River valley. The city is ten miles south of Humboldt (Allen County) and 26 miles north of Parsons (Labette County).

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### Elaboration

The Truitt House was constructed in 1887 on 25 acres of land on the northwest outskirts of Chanute in 1887. The community grew in around the residence in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The house currently is situated on approximately one-third of an acre in a neighborhood of small late 20<sup>th</sup> century single family dwellings, many of which were built on the original Truitt land which became Truitt's 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> additions. Truitt's greenhouses were located across Walnut Street to the south, but this property was sold in 1970 for the construction of a high-rise apartment building. There are no surviving outbuildings associated with the property.

This Victorian-era farmhouse is a two-story balloon-frame structure with a full attic. The overall dimensions of the four-bay structure are approximately 55' x 35' (front to back). The building rests on a mortared stone foundation that extends three feet above grade. There is a full basement with concrete floors, with the exception of a dirt floor in the south bay that serves as a garden maintenance room that may be accessed from the interior and exterior. The building's exterior is clad in horizontal wood lap siding alternating with diamond shingles, fishscale shingles, and ribbed vertical siding. The windows are wood with one-over-one, double-hung sashes with wood screens. The gabled roof was wood shingles, but now has asphalt composition shingles. There are four brick chimneys for numerous wood heating stoves. Underground clay drainage tile follows perimeter of foundation base.

The front façade faces east and is comprised of three two-story bays (with an attic above), with a projecting center bay. The exterior of the north bay is wood lap siding. The center bay (gable) is wood lap siding alternating with fish scale and diamond shingle siding. The south bay includes the L-shaped front porch and a full-height, three-sided bay at the south end. The exterior of this bay is wood lap siding except where it alternates with diamond, fish scale and ribbed vertical siding. Each siding treatment is separated by a horizontal trim piece. There are wood-frame double-hung windows in one-over-one configuration in all three bays with a uniform 30" x 75" on the first story, (with exception of one 44" x 75" window on the north bay), and a uniform 30" x 71" on the second story, with 4" wide side and top facings, and 4" high crown header. A small louvered opening is located in the attic level of the center bay gable. All bays have above-ground wood-frame horizontal divided-pane basement windows recessed into the stone foundation with concrete sills and facings and are hinged at the top for interior swing opening for air circulation in the warmer months. Most of the original wood screens have been restored.

The north bay of the east (primary) façade includes a side porch. The porch flooring is 4" tongue-and-groove, and the ceiling is beadboard. A crawl space beneath the porch floor is semi-concealed by

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lattice panels, hinged for accessibility. A balustrade follows the outside perimeter and is constructed of 2" X 4" wood with turned balusters. The balustrade is attached to turned floor-to-ceiling posts at each end of porch and both sides of the stairway. Scrolled fret brackets are attached to each post on both sides as well as fascia above. The stair railings are the same motif as the porch deck railings, with the motif of the two balustrades the same as that of the large posts. This porch was in a state of near total deterioration, but was rebuilt to mimic the original and completed fall of 2013. (Located nearby alongside the drive is a concrete and pebble step-up slab made for Ella Truitt, a very short lady who had difficulty stepping up to the height of the running boards of the buggies.)

The front porch (main-entrance) is made of wood, has a rounded corner footprint and measures approximately 12' x 13'. The main entrance door, with an adjustable transom, is located on the south-facing wall of the center bay. Flooring is 4" tongue-and-groove boards. The crawl space beneath this porch floor is partially concealed with lattice panels, hinged to allow for storage. The ceiling is beadboard. There are two balustrades – one of the first story and another on the second story, each made of 2 x 4 poplar wood. Horizontal edges of the top railing are eased and inside faces of both top and bottom railings are routed to secure the vertical sticks and triangular-eyelet panels forming the overall design of the railing as it follows the outside perimeter of the porch. The balustrade is connected to large turned posts located at both sides of the stairway. Scrolled fret brackets are attached to both sides of the posts and the fascia above. The motif of fret brackets, posts, and railing has recently been reconstructed to the original appearance. The front porch steps are very wide and curved, and have been rebuilt to original specifications. Railing and newel posts have recently been rebuilt to original specifications. The second floor deck above is accessed from an interior 2<sup>nd</sup> floor landing. The second floor porch, (deck), has the same footprint of the porch below. A large steel suspension cable attached to the deck and building provides additional structural support to the deck. The deck surface is metal with a raised 10" W x 3" H lip along the outer perimeter, constructed as a base for the rail. Drainage of the deck is accomplished through a hole located next to the lip, and connecting to a down spout. Both the deck railing and the porch railing below are of the same general design, the only real difference being a subtle variance in the bracket motif between the balusters. A doorway leads from the deck to the interior second floor landing. Fascia, posts and fret brackets have all been restored or replaced to the original appearance. Overall, the condition of the wood siding and trim pieces is good, and they have been secured and preserved.

The south (side) elevation is comprised of a full-height, three-sided cant bay. There is a small louvered attic opening set within the peak of the gable. The first and second stories include the same window arrangement in the center portion of the bay – a pair of one-over-one windows. The exterior is wood lap siding, alternating with diamond, fish scale, and ribbed vertical siding, separated by horizontal trim pieces. Above ground at the basement level are two wood double-pane windows, recessed into the stone foundation, with concrete openings and sills, hinged at top of frame for a swing inward opening position.

The south bay on the west (rear) elevation includes three windows centered on the wall vertically, one each at the basement, first and second stories. The center bay on the west (rear) elevation is gabled and features a one-story, shed-roof, screen porch at the northwest corner. There are three first-story openings – two windows and a door, which is set within the porch. There are three second-story windows, and a single, full-sized, centered attic window within the peak of the gable. The windows are the same uniform specifications previously described. The basement windows are also same specifications. The basement is accessed from an opening centered in the foundation.

The north bay on the west (rear) elevation is a two stories and slightly projects from the main north bay. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps suggest this projecting north bay was first one story (as early as 1906), and was extended to two stories by 1924. There is some uncertainty at this point as to whether the first floor of this extension is really an addition or was built with the original structure, with the second floor room above being the addition. The back entrance, (kitchen) is located in this extension. A screened porch with wood steps located off the back entrance consists of wood tongue-and-groove flooring, a

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beadboard ceiling, and is screened on two full sides and on part of the third side next to the back door, on the offset. The porch roof is composition shingle. The porch appears to have been added or reconfigured at some point, evidenced by old footings and a concrete sidewalk running beneath. The porch has been repaired and restored. Exterior wood stairs and a balcony which once accessed former second-floor apartments have been removed and entrance door replaced with original window. There is one first-story window, consistent with previously described uniform dimensions. The one second-story window in this section is smaller than all other windows. The exterior treatment is wood lap siding. The stone foundation below shields crawlspace off the basement, and beneath the kitchen, where a cistern is located, once fed by downspout this side for family water supply.

The north elevation is gabled, with a full-size window centered within the gable at the attic level. Two windows of previously described uniform dimensions and one-over-one configuration are located on each of the first and second stories, with the same one-over-one configuration with two windows below on the first floor. The northwest corner bay has two smaller windows on the second story, and a single standard-size window on the first story. Adjacent to this window is a small transom window, presumably for air circulation in the kitchen. Three basement windows with same previously described specifications are located on this side. The exterior is wood lap siding.

All window glass has recently been re-glazed or replaced where broken or cracked. The foundation presently needs minor repointing. Wood siding needs to be re-attached in some areas where vines had grown up in and under siding. All four brick chimneys need repointing and one needs to be rebuilt. The roof was replaced in 1999 with 30 year Timberline shingles, at which time the metal roof guttering and ridges were replaced. All down-spouts have been repaired or replaced. The building was repainted in 1999.

At the northwest corner of the building, a downspout once fed into an internal passage supplying rainwater to a cistern below ground and beneath the kitchen. A well pump formerly ran up through floor in kitchen for water supply from the cistern directly into the home.

Notable exterior features include the large circular front porch with a second-story deck above and a wide staircase with newel posts and balustrades that are typical of late 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian-era residential architecture. A wood balustrade follows the outline of porch, with decorative scrolled brackets extending from posts up and under the fascia. The home's main entrance has an operable transom above, and is in good condition. The 3-sided cant bay on the south elevation, with its various alternating siding treatments, is a hallmark of the Queen Anne style. A concrete walkway circles the perimeter of the house, joining the much grander and wider concrete sidewalk leading from the front porch to the street; many of the stepping stones remain from the original gardens.

A barn once standing at the rear (west) side of the property was demolished in early 1950s to allow for subdivision of property for residential development.

### *Interior*

The interior floor plan features a front hall foyer from which one can access the various rooms on the first floor. The staircase to the second floor is situated along the north wall of the entry hall.

Specifically, the foyer provides access to the south parlor, the west study, and the central living room. The parlor features windows on the south, east, and west walls allowing for plenty of natural light. A pair of pocket doors on the north wall provide access to the study. There are windows on the west wall of the study and a fireplace on the north wall. A door to the left (west) of the fireplace provides passage to a music room and the kitchen. A pair of hinged doors on the east wall of the study accesses the living room along the east / front wall of the house. There is a fireplace in the northwest corner of the living room and windows on the east and north walls. Adjacent to the fireplace is a door leading into

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the formal dining room located at the northeast corner of the building. There is a door on the east wall providing access to the exterior off a secondary porch. There is an interior door on the west wall accessing a hallway to the kitchen and pantry. All ceilings on first floor are 9'-8" in height. All doors are raised four-panel walnut or maple with black cast steel knobs & hardware.

The windows are trimmed with 5" routed facings with bulls-eye detail at each end of upper casings. Sills are supported below by pediment-style detail. Doors, windows, and other millwork are stained dark and finished with heavy shellac. All floors are hardwood; most are 4" maple or oak excepting foyer, dining room and hallway from dining room to kitchen, which are 2" maple. All first floor rooms and some second floor rooms have chandeliers of different sizes and configurations which have been removed for cleaning and rewiring. Walls have been re-plastered (lathe and plastered) and wiring has all been replaced with 200 amp service in basement and 100 amp service in attic. Dedicated circuits were added for individual AC window units. Heating system is hot water with original boiler still in excellent running condition. Original fuel source was oil, then converted to coal, then converted to present natural gas.

An open staircase leads from the entry hall to the second floor, where five bedrooms are located off a central hallway. The five bedrooms include a spacious one in the south bay, two smaller ones in the center bay, and a master suite in the north bay. The master suite consists of two rooms, (probably once separate bedrooms for James Truitt and wife Ella), plus a third room on the west side of this bay. This room possibly was either added above the kitchen or was a sleeping porch that has since been closed in. The original bathroom is located on the west side of the center bay, accessed from the central hallway. Original fixtures remain intact. Structural evidence points to probability that the bathroom was converted from a portion of the middle west bedroom. A back stairway is located midway in the hallway and opens through a door into dining room below. A second bathroom was added in a closet located within the master suite, possible in the early 1940s, when the second floor was converted to two apartments. That bathroom has since been removed to allow for conversion of space into a laundry. No structural changes occurred with this conversion. Sometime in the 1960s the walls of three upstairs bedrooms were sheet rocked, and ceilings in those rooms, and ceiling in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor hall were sheet rocked and textured. Floors on this level are 4" oak wood, except for the bedroom on front side of center bay, which is 2" maple. A door to the attic is opposite the master bedroom entrance. The attic floor has wide plank floors throughout, with exception of south and west bays, which are 4" oak or maple wood.

Bedrooms were heated by wood stoves and flue openings are still visible. Gas was later added for heat and light, and original gas light fixtures remain in some rooms. Doors are raised, four panel, some grained, some painted. Door hardware is black steel. Each bedroom has its own closet, with cedar ceiling. Window hardware is brass.

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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.)  
Property is:

- 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**

Architecture

Commerce

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1887-1914

**Significant Dates**

1887

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Truitt, James

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins with the construction of the house in 1887 and ends in 1914 when James Truitt died, thus ending his association with the property.

**Criteria Considerations (justification)**

N/A

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

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

### Summary

The James and Ella Truitt House, built 1887, is located at 305 North Steuben Avenue in Chanute, Neosho County, Kansas. The property is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its association with James Truitt, a locally significant nurseryman who operated Truitt & Sons Greenhouse and founded Chanute Nurseries. This Victorian-era Queen Anne residence also is nominated under Criterion C for its local significance in the area of architecture.

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### Elaboration

Neosho County was organized in November 1864, even as negotiations continued between the US government and the Osage Indians over their land in southern Kansas. The area had belonged to the Osages, who had already ceded lands in Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma in the early and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. It was not until September 29, 1865 that the Osages agreed to cede their lands in Neosho County.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Euro-American settlers began taking claims in this area in the late 1850s; Big Creek, Grant, and Canville townships witnessed the arrival of settlers in 1859.<sup>2</sup> After the county's organization in 1864, Osage City served as the county seat until elections in 1872 that established it at Erie, where it remains today.<sup>3</sup>

Chanute grew out of four rival adjoining towns in the early 1870s – Alliance, Tioga, New Chicago, and Chicago Junction. Two years of bitter debate about how to consolidate efforts and resources finally resulted in the creation of Chanute in 1873.<sup>4</sup> After a period of economic difficulty in 1873 and 1874, local commerce improved. By 1878, Kentucky resident and nurseryman James Truitt (born 1838, died 1914) saw an opportunity for success in Chanute. Truitt, his wife Ella (born 1842, died 1925), and children arrived in Chanute in late February 1878, which was noted in *The Chanute Times*: “Mr. James Truitt, and family arrived here this week from Quincy, Ky., and will take up their abode near this place. Mr. Truitt is an enthusiastic and highly successful fruit grower, and it will be recollected that he sent a fine sample of his apples for exhibition at the last meeting of our Horticultural Society at Humboldt. He has brought with him a car load of choice nursery stock, now at the depot...”<sup>5</sup>

Truitt was a well-established nurseryman in Kentucky and the surrounding region. The 1869 edition of the *American Horticultural Annual*, a “year-book of horticultural progress for the professional and amateur gardener, fruit-grower, and florist,” called Truitt “an enterprising young nurseryman,” whom it credited with introducing and propagating *Moore’s Extra*, a variety of apple found along the Ohio River.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Penny T. Linsenmayer, “Kansas Settlers on the Osage Diminished Reserve: A Study of Laura Ingalls Wilder’s Little House on the Prairie,” *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 24 (Autumn 2001): 169.

<sup>2</sup> William G. Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas, Neosho County, Part 10* (Chicago: Andreas Publishing Co., 1883), 826-827.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 836-837; Frank Blackmar, *Kansas: Cyclopedia of State History, vol. 1* (Chicago: Standard Publishing Co., 1912), 309-310.

<sup>5</sup> *Chanute (KS) Times*, 28 February 1878. This was also reported by: H. E. Van Deman, *The Gardner’s Monthly and Horticulturalist*, vol. XX, ed. Thomas Meehan (Philadelphia: Charles H. Marot, Publisher, 1878), 95. This account reported he “sent about ninety varieties of apples to compare with those of Kansas,” but that they did not compare favorably due to the “early gathering and long transit.”

<sup>6</sup> *American Horticultural Annual* (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1869), 62-63.

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Truitt was a member of the Ohio Pomological Society,<sup>7</sup> the Ohio State Horticultural Society,<sup>8</sup> and he regularly advertised his services in regional and trade publications throughout his career in Kentucky and Kansas. He was awarded several prizes at the 1873 Indiana State Fair and Exposition, including premiums in the categories “Best twenty-five varieties of apples,” “Best six varieties of apples,” “Best fifteen varieties of winter apples,” and “Best collection nursery stock.”<sup>9</sup>

Nine years after relocating to Chanute, the Truitt’s built their fine Queen Anne-style residence just northwest of the downtown. The family’s first home was in the vicinity of 823 South Central in Chanute.<sup>10</sup> The land Truitt later purchased where he built the nominated residence and developed his greenhouse had been a part of a patent filed by John Cooper April 1, 1872 that included 80 acres in the south half of the northeast quarter of Section 20, Township 27S, Range 18E.<sup>11</sup> Truitt developed his greenhouse across the street to the south of the residence and founded the Chanute Nurseries, which grew into one of the largest of its kinds in southeast Kansas. In 1893, Truitt took his sons, William and Walter, into partnership and the firm name became James Truitt & Sons. Eventually, another son Guy and daughter May would join the firm.<sup>12</sup> The firm came to own a packing and shipping plant at the head of North Lincoln adjacent to the railroad tracks and a propagating plant of 200 acres southwest of the city.

Truitt brought with him to Kansas numerous varieties of fruit trees and bushes and continued the successful business he had begun in Kentucky. Among the things he brought was a variety of strawberry that he had discovered “in an old abandoned field in Kentucky” and “it has been propagated and grown for several years under the name of “Truitt’s Surprise.”<sup>13</sup> A three-person committee of the State Horticultural Society reported in 1883 that Truitt had demonstrated the variety of strawberry “to be productive, hardy and vigorous, as grown at Chanute.”<sup>14</sup>

Truitt continued the pattern of regularly advertising his services in regional and trade publications that he had begun in Kentucky. Advertisements in the *Oklahoma Farmer* and *The American Florist* are just two examples.<sup>15</sup> Also, his business was certified to sell stock in several states (Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas – to name just a few), and he maintained memberships in various local, state, and national organizations and societies.<sup>16</sup> His stock was shipped all over the United States.

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<sup>7</sup> Ohio State Board of Agriculture, *Twenty-First Annual Report of the Ohio State Board of Agriculture, with an Abstract of the Proceedings of the County Agricultural Societies to the General Assembly of Ohio, For the Year 1866* (Columbus: L. D. Myers & Bro., State Printers, 1867), page 58 of appendix.

<sup>8</sup> Ohio State Board of Agriculture, *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Ohio State Board of Agriculture, with an Abstract of the Proceedings of the County Agricultural Societies to the General Assembly of Ohio, For the Year 1870* (Columbus: Nevins & Myers, State Printers, 1871), page 76 of appendix.

<sup>9</sup> Indiana State Board of Agriculture, *Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Indiana State Board of Agriculture, 1873, vol. XV* (Indianapolis: Sentinel Co. Printers, 1874), 127-128.

<sup>10</sup> “Business Sold By May Truitt,” Unknown newspaper publication, n.d. On file with nomination.

<sup>11</sup> John Cooper (Neosho County, Kansas), Osage Lands patent no. 1159; “Land Patent Search,” digital images, *General Land Office Records* (<http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/search/>; accessed 10 December 2013).

<sup>12</sup> William E. Connelley, “Guy Truitt” In *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansas, vol. 4* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1918), 2084-2085; Undated article in 1924 *Chanute Times* detailing James Truitt’s death and success (copy on file with National Register documentation).

<sup>13</sup> Kansas State Horticultural Society, *Kansas Horticultural Report for the Year 1883* (Topeka, KS: T.D. Thacher, State Printer, 1884), 12.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> *Oklahoma Farmer*, 13 July 1910, 15. Truitt placed an ad looking for a “reliable man to sell nursery stock.” “Fine Nursery Building,” *The American Florist*, 16 February 1907. This article promoted the business by describing its new building along the railroad tracks in Chanute.

<sup>16</sup> This included, but was not necessarily limited to, the Western Association of Nurserymen. *The National Nurseryman*, January 1906 (Rochester, NY), 236.

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An article in February 16, 1907 issue of *The American Florist* gives a glimpse at how well the business was doing after a quarter century in business:

One of the first large buildings to catch the eye of a passenger to Chanute, Kas., on the Santa Fe trains from the north, is that of the Chanute Nursery Co. (late James Truitt & Son), located at the north end of Lincoln avenue. The large letters of the sign gives out the information that it is being used by the Chanute Nursery. It is a monster building, being 225 feet long, from one street to the other, and almost half as wide. It has a frontage of 55 feet, but back a short distance it widens to 106 feet. It is the storage and packing room of the company and is the best building of its kind in this part of the country. Double and treble walls, with plenty of dead air space, make the place absolutely frost proof. Even the roof has the above features to insure absolute protection along this line. The extensive use of glass in the ventilators make the large room light, even without the use of windows in the sides. The increase of business made such a thing an absolute necessity, and although this was not as large as Mr. Truitt desired it was the only location available.

It is very doubtful if any of Chanute's industries does more to advertise the town, as trees are shipped from here to almost every state and territory in the Union. Every one of the company's numerous salesmen sell the trees and work only under the name of Chanute Nursery Company of Chanute, Kas.

The big farm of between 200 and 300 acres, located southwest of town, furnishes the trees which are put in the house when there is danger of frost and then these may be packed and shipped in refrigerator cars at any time. Not only has this branch of the business called for increased facilities, but the greenhouse space has been just about doubled the past season. Chanute is to be complimented on having such a progressive company, while Mr. Truitt and his sons are to be congratulated on the success which has come to them.

Truitt translated his success into community development. He was instrumental in expanding the boundaries of Chanute with the platting of three new additions to the City of Chanute, which developed into well-settled 20<sup>th</sup> century neighborhoods. The family and the business experienced a trying few years when Truitt's son Walter had to step away from managing the business because of an illness. This was followed by James Truitt's death in February 1914 after drowning in the Neosho River<sup>17</sup> and James' oldest son William's sudden death of a heart attack on March 6, 1914.<sup>18</sup> James' youngest son Guy took charge of the nursery and his sister May would manage the greenhouse.<sup>19</sup>

By 1920, the greenhouse, which sat across the street from the nominated Truitt residence, totaled 35,000 square feet of glass. The business owned a storage plant at 28 East Chestnut Street, where the office was located, and 120 cultivated acres two miles south of Chanute. At that time, the business' stock included "all manner of trees, fruits, bushes, shrubs, vegetables, flowers and plants," which is shipped "all over the United States."<sup>20</sup>

The business prospered through the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continued as a nursery, then a large cut-flower stock growing facility with a flower design division, and then, lastly, to a small downtown flower shop. The business closed in 1985 with the retirement of James Truitt's great-grandson Rex Truitt. During the century of business, many in the Truitt family contributed to the success of the nursery and greenhouse. The women of the family, notably James' wife Ella, his daughter May, and Rex's wife

<sup>17</sup> *Chanute Daily Tribune*, 28 January 1914.

<sup>18</sup> *Chanute Daily Tribune*, 6 March 1914. William E. Connelley, *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans*, vol. 4 (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1918), 2084-2085.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*; "Business Sold By May Truitt," Unknown newspaper publication, n.d. On file with nomination.

<sup>20</sup> Connelley, 2084-2085.

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Helen played roles in managing the business. Ella appears to have managed the family's real estate affairs as her signature only appears on many deeds. May managed the flower shop across the street to the south of the family home, and Helen succeeded May in managing the flower shop until it closed.

Though James Truitt died in 1914, his business grew and prospered under the leadership of his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. The reflection of his legacy remains in his 1887 Queen Anne residence and the platting of surrounding additions. And, his portrait still hangs among those of other community leaders in the Chanute Public Library.

### *Residence*

The Truitt family lived at 823 South Central during their first several years in Chanute. Once the business was well-established, the family began construction of a large Queen Anne residence in an undeveloped area northwest of the downtown. *The Chanute Times* noted the construction of the Truitt house in the September 8, 1887 edition:

Mr. Truitt is building a very large and fine house, near his present residence. It will be one of the largest houses in the city, and from present appearances, will be finished inside and out, with about the finest and best that can be put on it. Mr. T is one of our most intelligent, most enterprising and most industrious citizens, and he and his family will deserve the very house he is building.

At the time the home was built, the population of Chanute had grown to over 2,500 and was described in the March 4, 1887 *Chanute Blade* as "The Great Railroad Center of Southern Kansas." The Truitt family included James (age 52), Ella (age 45), William (age 22), May (age 16), Walter (age 14), Guy (age 11), though William was no longer living with the family.<sup>21</sup> The land across the street to the south of the residence was the location of the Truitts' greenhouse, but it was sold and torn down in 1971 to become a high-rise apartment building.

James' wife Ella remained in the house after his death in 1914. She died in 1925, leaving the house to her daughter May Truitt. The house then passed to May's nephew Rex Truitt and his wife Helen, who are the parents of the current owner, Janice Truitt Young-Miller (James Truitt's great-great-granddaughter). It has remained in the Truitt family since it was constructed.

The residence is an excellent example of late 19<sup>th</sup> century Queen Anne-style architecture. The two-and-a-half story residence exhibits the hallmarks of the style including an irregular plan, a complex cross-gable roof, variations in exterior wall texture, multiple porches, multiple chimneys, and Eastlake-inspired spindlework within the porches.

The Queen Anne style was popular in the United States and Kansas from 1880 to 1910. It is especially common in Kansas as the state experienced considerable growth in population and residential building during this period. The style, which was popularized in the United States at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, allowed for a broad interpretation, and included small cottages and grand mansions – both urban and rural. The style reached its peak in Kansas at the height of railroad development through the state, allowing for the quick delivery of mass-produced materials and ornament.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> 1885 Kansas Census. Ancestry.com. *Kansas State Census Collection, 1855-1925*[database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2009.

<sup>22</sup> Martha Hagedorn-Krass, "The Queen Anne: The Queen of Late-nineteenth and Early-twentieth Century Style," In *Kansas Preservation* vol. 26, no. 5 (September/October 2004): 13; Virginia and Lee McAlister, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 263-268.

Truitt, James and Ella, House

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The Truitt House is one of Chanute's finer examples of the Queen Anne style, and it retains very high integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Of course, its setting has evolved in the mid- and late 20<sup>th</sup> from less of a rural setting to a developed single-family residential neighborhood.

Truitt, James and Ella, House  
Name of Property

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Truitt, James and Ella, House  
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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: Kansas Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):   N/A  

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property**   Less than one  

**Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.**

(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>  37.684647  </u>	<u>  -95.456855  </u>	3	_____	_____
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:

2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

Tract described as: Allen's Addition (Chanute), beginning at the SE/C LT 5 BLK 4 OF A 32 W 138.29' N 168' E 140.29' S 168' TO POB INCL PT OF BLK 1 OF \*T84.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The nominated property includes the property currently associated with the Truitt House.

Truitt, James and Ella, House  
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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Janice Truitt Young-Miller  
organization N/A date \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number 1235 W 62<sup>nd</sup> Street telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64113  
e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

---

### Property Owner: (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

---

name Janice Truitt Young-Miller  
street & number Same as above telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each digital image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger.

#### Photograph Log

Name of Property: Truitt, James and Ella, House  
City or Vicinity: Chanute  
County: Neosho State: Kansas  
Photographer: Martin, Sarah  
Date Photographed: August 27, 2013

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

- 1 of 12: East (primary) elevation, camera facing W
- 2 of 12: East (primary) elevation, showing secondary porch that enters into dining room (at northeast corner of house), camera facing SW
- 3 of 12: Northwest corner of house, showing rear porch and entrance, camera facing SE
- 4 of 12: South (side) elevation, camera facing N
- 5 of 12: Primary entrance and porch at southeast corner of building, camera facing NW
- 6 of 12: Second story porch detail, camera facing N

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- 7 of 12: Interior, main entrance and staircase up to second floor, camera facing E
- 8 of 12: Interior, parlor just inside entrance hall, camera facing NE
- 9 of 12: Interior, study, showing fireplace on north wall, camera facing NE
- 10 of 12: Interior, living room/music room, camera facing E
- 11 of 12: Interior, dining room, showing cabinet on west wall, camera facing NW
- 12 of 12: Interior, second floor hall, camera facing E

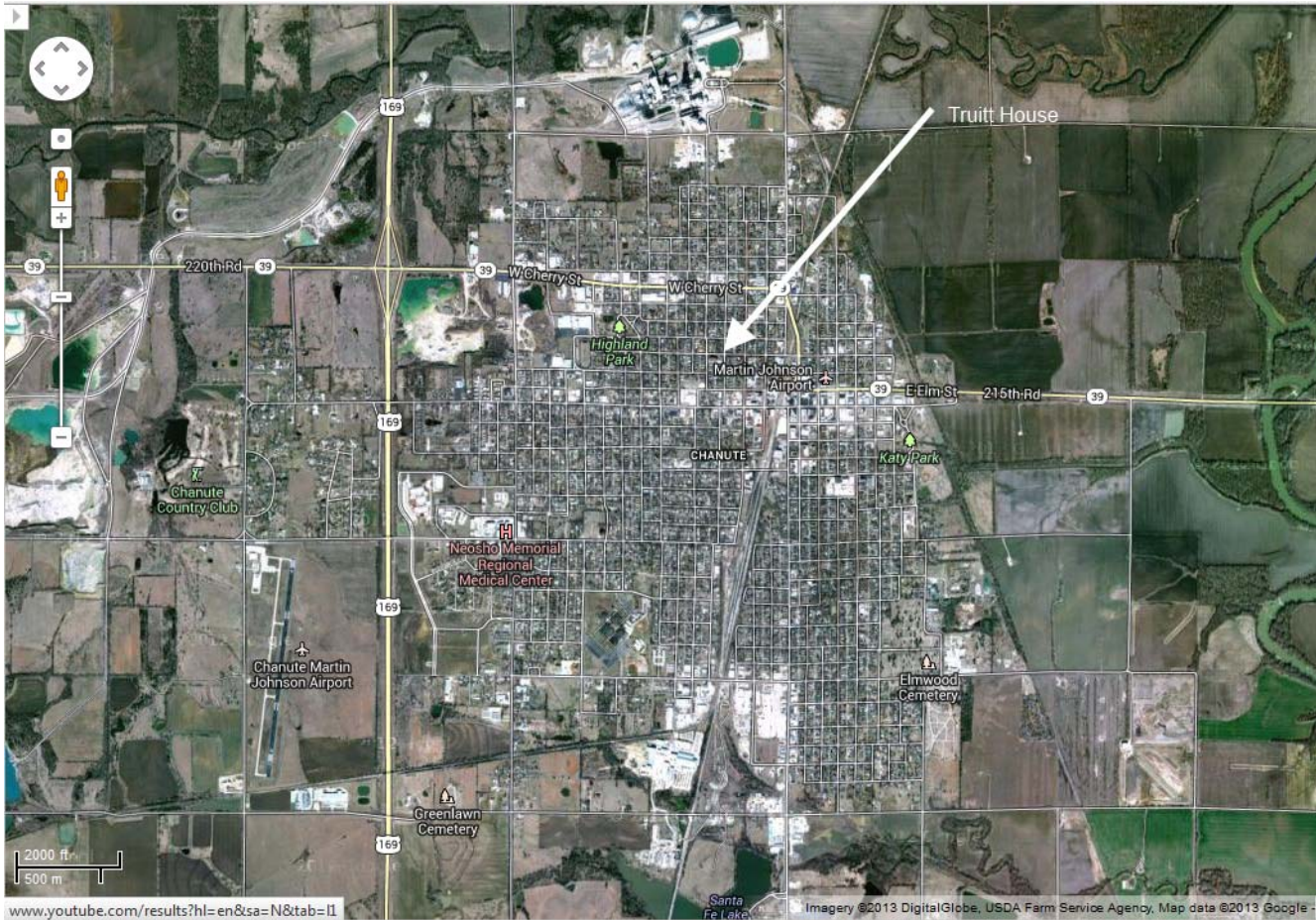
### **Figures**

Include GIS maps, figures, scanned images below.

Truitt, James and Ella, House  
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**Figure 1: Contextual Aerial Image, Google.com (2013)**



Truitt House  
305 North Steuben Avenue  
Chanute, Neosho County, KS  
Latitude / Longitude: 37.684647 / -95.456855  
Datum: WGS84

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Name of Property

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County and State

**Figure 2: Aerial Image, Google.com (2013)**



Truitt House  
305 North Steuben Avenue  
Chanute, Neosho County, KS  
Latitude / Longitude: 37.684647 / -95.456855  
Datum: WGS84