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	6.	#2

## HARRIS, COLONEL JOHN, RESIDENCE

- 6. <u>Missouri: Guide to the "Show Me" State</u> (WPA Project) 1941 (state) New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc. Code: 29
- 7. Westport Planning Area, Comprehensive Plan (local) (Preliminary Draft) 1971 Kansas City, Missouri: City Development Department Code: 29

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7, #1

HARRIS, COLONEL JOHN, RESIDENCE

#### Chimneys

There are four chimneys, and several vent stacks. The front block has chimneys emerging at the apexes of its north and south gable end walls. The ell has one chimney on the north slope of its east-west ridge roof, and one chimney emerging at the apex of its west gable and wall.

The vents also occur on the ell.

The chimneys are ornamented with a brick belt course.

#### Openings

<u>Doorways and doors</u>. The front door occupies the third, or central, bay of the five-bay, east facade. A rear (west) door is similarly centered on the west facade of the front block. An unused north, side entry, formerly serving the side portico, occurs at the extreme east end of the ell's north wall. The south wall of the ell has one door on the first floor near its east end, and one door on the second floor near its west end. Previous doorways giving access to the ell porch, have been filled in with brick, and with cinder blocks.

The east and north doorways are similar in design, the east door being the more elaborate. Both entranceways have transoms, sidelights and stone lintels. Both doors are replacements of the originals. The east door especially has lost several enriching details in the pilasters and wood lintel which frame it.

<u>Windows</u>. Fenestration pattern is regular in five bays on the east facade. The south wall of the main block has only one window, centered on the eastern half of the first story. The north wall has one window on each story centered on the western half of the wall, and, in the rear ell, somewhat irregularly spaced, but with first and second story openings ranked together--the north doorway and three windows on the first story, and four windows on the second story. The west wall of the front block has three full bays, reflecting the arrangement on the east facade, at the south end of the wall. A single window occurs on the west wall of the ell. It is centered on the northern half of the second story wall. Windows are somewhat irregularly spaced on the ell's south wall, and several openings have been filled in with brick, and with cinder blocks.

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7. #2

### HARRIS, COLONEL JOHN, RESIDENCE

Lintels and sills are all stone on the east facade, and wood elsewhere, except on the west facade of the main block where the wood sills have been replaced in brick.

Windows throughout have 6-over-6-light, double-hung sash. Shutters occurring on the east facade only, are replacements bolted to the wall.

Roof. Both main block and ell have simple, ridge roofs, with ridges at right angles to each other. The ridges do not intersect, however, because the ell roof is lower than the front roof. Asphalt roofing is the present sheathing material.

A handsome, wood entablature (with diminished architrave and frieze) rims the walls of the front block with a partial return on the gable end walls where the raking cornice is of similar design. The rear ell has a simpler entablature on its north side. It is absent on the south side, and reduced to a simple board on the west gable end.

#### INTERIOR

#### Floor Plans

Basement. The basement under the front block is partially excavated. There is a full basement under the ell. It is about to be converted to a photographic dark room.

First floor. The front door opens into a 12' wide central stair hall with the former parlor to the south and the living room to the north. These three rooms comprise the main block at the first floor level. The ell presently contains four rooms, the original, large, central chamber being subdivided into two rooms by a partition.

Second floor. The second floor essentially duplicates the room arrangement of the first floor, except that the major portion of the ell is divided into three non-rectangular chambers by recent, diagonal, partition walls.

Loft. There is a low loft above the second story accessible through a trap door in the ell.

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7. #3

HARRIS, COLONEL JOHN, RISIDENCE

#### <u>Stairways</u>

The interior stairway is an open-well, "U" plan stairway with two small landings at the angles of the "U." Moderately ornamented balusters support a continuous, curved railing. The newel is typical of the mid-nineteenth century in Missouri. The shaft is polygonal in section, and tapers upward to a series of circular torus and scotia moldings, and a cushion-like knob.

The open string of the stair is ornamented in a circle and curve motif. The stairway is in need of structural tightening, as it is pulling away from the wall.

The former interior stair to the basement, located under the main stair above, is now sealed off, and the space above the treads filled with ductwork and plumbing up to the first floor level. A closet enclosed with wood paneling occupies the space above the floor.

A short, straight-run stair, giving access to the basement from the exterior, is located at the west end of the rear gallery.

#### Flooring

Wide board pine floors occur in some rooms. Several sections of original flooring have been covered with newer wood flooring. There is some floor damage apparently caused by a structural shift.

#### Wall and Ceiling Finish

All wall surfaces are in good condition. Most are wall-papered. The second story ell has painted walls. The original lathe and plaster ceiling in this area is sprayed with rough plaster.

#### Trim

Doorways and windows are framed in a handsome, classic-revival molding. The most ornate rooms are the central entrance hall and the former parlor which have "eared" lintels, and pediments. Recessed wood paneling occurs below the pedimented windows in the former parlor, and in the former dining room. Windows and doors in this section also have paneled jambs.

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7, #4

#### HARRIS, COLONEL JOHN, RESIDENCE

Other downstairs rooms, and the south second floor chamber have a simpler version of the same trim, without projecting lintels and pediments or panels under the windows. The north section, second floor has been considerably reworked, in the past year, and framing members are of recent date.

Many of the doors, and sections of the trim throughout are replacements, but an effort was made to match the nineteenth century configuration, using the Historic American Buildings Survey drawings as a guide.<sup>2</sup>

#### Heating System

One fireplace in the first story, front north room retains a nineteenth century fireplace. Others have been removed. The house currently is heated by a forced air system using two gas furnaces. Ductwork serving both the heating and air conditioning systems is hung under the first floor, and concealed in the loft.

#### Lighting

No original fixtures survive.

#### ALTERATIONS

The house was built in two major sections--the front block first and the rear wing as estimated 20-25 years later.<sup>3</sup> The rear wing was apparently put on during the residency of Col. Kearney and about the same time the millwork in the front of the house was dressed up with the addition of more elaborate moldings over the original simple wood trim.<sup>4</sup> The bracket trim, and the now absent paneled pedestals for the posts, appear to have been added to the front porch about the same time.

A more recent alteration of the house, is its removal from the original site, approximately 1 block northeast of its present location, in 1922. Except for the inaccessibility of the north side entrance doorway, because of the nearness of West 40th Street and the elevation of land at that point, the house is well adapted to its new site. During the move the side portico at the north entrance was permanently removed.

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7. #5

### HARRIS, COLONEL JOHN, RESIDENCE

The nineteenth century form and material survive with a higher degree of integrity on the exterior, than on the interior. During Dr. Casebolt's ownership the entire rear gallery was enclosed with cinder block additions extending to the south and west beyond the original plan of the rear wing. These constructions were removed in the summer of 1970.<sup>5</sup> Gallery posts put in at that time do not match those illustrated in the H.A.B.S. drawings.

The interior has undergone refurbishment projects in remodelings and adaptive use, with the most notable departures from the original design on the second story wing. The first floor rooms and the entry hall of the front block, the most important areas of the building, retain a good proportion of nineteenth century fabric and feeling. In the entrance hall the H.A.B.S. drawings were followed in reconstructing millwork for the north, south and east doorways.<sup>6</sup>

#### SITE FEATURES

A brick walk connects the east front porch with the sidewalk. There is a graveled parking lot in the rear yard in the ell enclosure. A hand-hewn stone watering trough occupies the southern end of the narrow front yard. None of the outbuildings survive.

#### FOOTNOTES

- 1. Edward J. Wimmer, A. I. A., interviewed by M. Patricia Holmes, May 8, 1972.
- 2. <u>Ibid</u>. Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Harris House, 11 sheets, 5 photos, 1934.
- 3. Col. W. Edwin Basye, great-great-grandson of Col. Harris, interviewed by M. Patricia Holmes, May 8, 1972.
- 4. John A. Huffman, A. I. A., interviewed by M. Patricia Holmes, May 8, 1972. Huffman, restoration architect for the Wornall House in Kansas City (listed on the National Register of Historic Places), pointed out that the installation of original millwork preceded the plastering of walls at the Wornall House which is contemporary

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7. #6

### HARRIS, COLONEL JOHN, RESIDENCE

to the Harris house. Any millwork with plaster behind it is, thus, a later addition. The H.A.B.S. drawings of the Harris house reveal numerous examples of plaster behind millwork.

5. Wimmer interview.

6. Ibid.

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The Colonel John Harris Residence, constructed ca. 1855, and moved one block in 1922, îs important as a rare survivor within Kansas City, Mîssourî, of the Greek revival style, pre-Civil War, 5-bay, 2-story, brick residence. The house is in a good state of preservation, and has been recognized by the Historic American Buildings Survey, în a measured drawing project of 1934. The original owner-builder, Col. John Harris was proprietor of early Westport's (part of Kansas City, Missouri) most popular hotel--The Harris House hotel.

Dr. George Ehrlich, Professor of Art History and Chairman of the Department of Art and Art History, University of Missouri--Kansas City, offers the following commentary on the Harris Residence:

Kansas City has only a small number of Greek Revival period houses still standing. While the Harris House [residence] is not pretentious, it is quite representative of the Greek Revival as it was transmitted through Kentucky and modified by local conditions. It helps identify Westport's past as few other buildings can in that neighborhood. Along with the few other ante bellum houses in the community it established an urban style, in contrast to the farm style, Greek Revival house that marked the first architectural period of Kansas City.<sup>7</sup>

#### ORIGINAL AND SUBSEQUENT OWNERS

#### <u>Colonel John Harris</u>

The original owner-builder was Colonel John Harris, a Westport, Missouri, pioneer. Harris, born December 4, 1795, was a member of a large, successful family from Virginia and Kentucky.<sup>8</sup> In 1832 he migrated from Kentucky to Westport with his wife, the former Henrietta Simpson, whom he married July 20, 1819.<sup>9</sup>

TATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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8. #1

### HARRIS, COLONEL JOHN, RESIDENCE

At Westport the Harrises purchased a 100 acre farm and constructed a log residence on the property.<sup>10</sup> At the time of purchase the property was outside Westport, but as the town grew, Harris' farm was incorporated into the residential section.

Harris became known as "Colonel Harris" because of his participation in the skirmishes during 1838-1839 in the Mormon War, between citizens of Missouri and the Mormons.<sup>11</sup>

In Westport Harris became best known for the commercial property,a log hotel, the McGee Tavern, which he acquired in 1847 from A. B. H. McGee. This property soon renamed the "Harris House," was located at 430 Westport Avenue and Penn Street. The log structure was destroyed by fire that same year, but was promptly rebuilt in brick. It was a popular way station on the Santa Fe Trail serving pioneers, trappers, traders and travelers. Harris was proprietor during 1847-1864.12 The inn was razed in 1922.13

The principal hotel of Westport was called the Harris House hotel and was kept by Mr. John Harris. This hotel. . .was the center of town. It stood on the corner of Main street and Main Cross street, now Westport avenue and Penn [Pennsylvania] street. It was famed far and wide for its generous hospitality and southern cooking; every traveler of note who was not privately entertained stayed at the Harris House hotel, as well as the outfitters, the wagon masters and government sutlers and factors: General Fremont, Senator Benton, Washington Irving and Horace Greeley are known to have stayed there....General Fremont left his wife at the Harris House hotel for months at a time, while he made his expeditions in the far west.

There were no dances given at this hotel, as Mrs. Harris did not approve; she brought up her large family of daughters "by hand"--taught them to hem and embroider fine cambric and to be discreet and modest after the fashion of gentlewomen....14

During their years of proprietorship, prior to building their brick residence, the Harris family members resided at the hotel.

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8. #2

### HARRIS, COLONEL JOHN, RESIDENCE

The family's brick home, known as the Colonel John Harris Residence, was built ca. 1855 in Westport, at the intersection of Westport Road and Main Street<sup>15</sup> on a portion of the farm purchased in 1832. By the time the house was constructed, Harris was 60 years old, and most of their eight children (seven daughters and one son) had married and moved away from the parental home.

The Colonel lived at the brick residence for approximately 14 years before his death in 1874 at the age of 79. Thereafter one of the daughters and her husband, Colonel Charles E. Kearney, shared the house with the widowed Mrs. Harris. Upon the widow's death in 1881,<sup>16</sup> the Kearneys assumed ownership.

#### Other Owners

Colonel Charles E. Kearney earned his title in the Mexican was in Texas where he had immigrated, as a young man, from his native Ireland. In Westport he engaged in western trading expeditions, and became president of the Cameron Branch of the Burlington Railway and was instrumental in having built the Hannibal Bridge, the first bridge to cross the Missouri River at Kansas City.<sup>17</sup> The Kearneys had six children<sup>18</sup> which may account for the later date of the ell wing.

In 1898 William Rockhill Nelson, founder of <u>The Kansas City</u> [Missouri] <u>Star</u>, purchased the property and gave it to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas W. Johnston, both editors of The Star, as a wedding present.<sup>19</sup>

In 1921 the widow of Johnston (the former Maude St. Aubert Leavens) sold the house to Elmer Williams, a realtor and builder, for \$40,000. Williams leased the land for business purposes, and at this time the house entered a time of severe preservation crisis because of the changing character of the neighborhood--from primarily residential to primarily commercial use. In 1922 the Harris Home Association acquired the house and moved it one block to a new location on Harris' original tract.<sup>20</sup>

The house was opened for visitors as a historic house museum at its present address, 4000 Baltimore Avenue, on December 31, 1922.21

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8. #3

#### HARRIS, COLONEL JOHN, RESIDENCE

The burden of maintenance and supervision of the house began to prove too much for the Harris Home Association by the late 1920's at which time an offer was made to the Kansas City Board of Education to assume indebtedness of \$14,200 on the house. The offer was turned down.

In 1942 Dr. M. B. Casebolt purchased the house and land under foreclosure proceedings. He converted the building to a doctor's and dentist's office on the first floor, and to residential space on the second floor. Various partitions were inserted and additions put on the rear wing, to accommodate this new function.

Dr. Casebolt died in 1964, and the residence entered another period of doubtful survival. In May, 1970 David L. Biersmith, President of Crestwood Medical Ltd., 3954 Central, Kansas City, Missouri, purchased the house.

#### PRESENT STATUS

During the summer, 1970, Biersmith undertook an extensive renovation project at the Harris Residence involving, in a limited capacity, the services of American Business Interiors; Akens and Associates, interior decorators, and Edward John Wimmer, A. I. A., architect. In the project non-original partitions and floor surfaces (in some areas) were removed. Portions of original moldings which had been removed in previous remodeling work, were replaced with new work. In the interior first floor hallway and parlor the 1934 H.A.B.S. drawings which illustrate the nineteenth century moldings, were closely followed.

The building now functions as a commercial rental property housing a law firm, an advertising agency and a photography studio.

The building is presently in good repair. More work is needed to bring back the nineteenth century character to the rear gallery, to the front porch, and to the landscaping. In March, 1972, Biersmith announced that he is seeking a buyer for the property who is sympathetic to continuing the preservation and economically feasible adaptive use program.22

The building is included within the Westport Planning Area for which the City of Kansas City, Missouri has developed a preliminary comprehensive plan. The plan recognizes the building as a key structure in the history of Westport, designates it as a local landmark, and recommends its preservation.  $^{\rm 23}$ 

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8. #4

### HARRIS, COLONEL JOHN, RESIDENCE

The survey of Missouri's sites of historical and architectural significance is based on the selection of sites as they relate to theme studies in Missouri history as outlined in Missouri's "Comprehensive Statewide Historic Preservation Plan." The Colonel John Harris Residence is therefore being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places because it is a rare local survival of Greek revival style, pre-Civil War, 5-bay, 2-story, brick residential architecture.

### FOOTNOTES

- 7. Dr. George Ehrlich, Letter to the State Historical Survey and Planning Office, September 9, 1971.
- 8. W. Harris Miller, <u>History and Genealogies of the Families of Miller</u>, <u>Woods, Harris, Wallace, Maupin, Oldham, Kavanaugh, and Brown</u> (Richmond, Ky., 1907), Part III, pp. 251-347.
- 9. Anne Walker Burns, <u>Record of Marriages of Madison County, Kentucky</u>, <u>1785-1851</u> (n. pub., n.d.), p. 48.
- William A. Goff and Adrienne T. Christopher, "The Harris House Story, As Related by Frank C. Wornall in 1950," <u>Westport Historical</u> <u>Society Quarterly</u>, VI, June 1970, p. 25.
- 11. Louis O. Honig, Westport, <u>Gateway to the Early West</u> (Subscriber's ed., Kansas City [?], Mo.: 1950), p. 48. Floyd C. Shoemaker, <u>Missouri and Missourians</u> (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1943) Vol. I, pp. 456-466.
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- 13. The Kansas City [Missouri] Star, June 13, 1926.
- 14. Whitney, 1908, Vol. I, p. 651.
- 15. Honig, 1950, p. 50.
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#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

### INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

Missouri COUNTY Jackson

(Continuation Sheet)

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FOR NPS USE ONLY

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### HARRIS, COLONEL JOHN, RESIDENCE

- 17. Whitney, 1908, Vol. II, p. 251. Goff and Christopher, 1970, p. 25.
- 18. Whitney, 1908, Vol. II, pp. 249-251.
- 19. Goff and Christopher, 1970, p. 26. <u>The Kansas City</u> [Missouri] <u>Star</u>, August 23, 1970, Section E, p. 1.
- Goff and Christopher, 1970, p. 26. <u>The Kansas City</u> [Missouri] <u>Journal</u>, April 2, 1922. <u>The Kansas City</u> [Missouri] <u>Star</u>, December 27, 1922.
- 21. The Kansas City [Missouri] Times, January 2, 1923.
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- Westport Planning Area, Comprehensive Plan, 1971, Preliminary Draft (Kansas City, Missouri: City Development Department, 1971), pp. 75-83.

MAJOR	BIBLIOGR	APHIC	AL RE	FEREN	ICES		<u>.</u>						
1. E	Basye, Co Informat	ol. W ion r	I. Ed recei	win, ved i	great n inte	-great erview	:-g b	irandso by M. P	n of C atrici	ol. Joh a Holme	nn Harr es, May	is. 8,19	072.
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As the designated State Liaison Officer for the Na- tional 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							I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.						
forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is: National							Chiel, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation						
Name		Jos	eph v	Jaeger	r, Jr.			Date			<u></u>		
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# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STATE Missouri

COUNTY

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### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

#### FOR NPS USE ONLY 3

Jackson

DATE

	(Continuation Sheet)	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
(Number all er	ntries)		
9.	#1 HARRIS, COLONEL JOHN, RES	IDENCE	
4.	Ehrlich, George, PhD. Letter to the State Planning Office, September 9, 1971.	Historical Survey a	nd
5.	Goff, William A., and Adrienne T. Christoph Story, As Related by Frank C. Wornall in 19 <u>Historical Society Quarterly</u> , VI, June, 197	er. "The Harris Ho 50," <u>Westport</u> [Miss 0, pp. 25-30.	use ouri]
6.	Historic American Buildings Survey, Library D.C. 20540. Ref. Harris House, Kansas City Missouri, 11 sheets, 5 photographs, 1934.	′ of Congress, Washi ′, Jackson County,	ngton,
7.	Honig, Louis O. <u>Westport, Gateway to the E</u> ed., Kansas City [?], Mo.: n.pub., 1950.	<u>arly West</u> . Subscri	ber's
8.	Huffman, John A., A. I. A. Information rec Patricia Holmes, May 8, 1972.	eived in interview	by M.
9.	The Kansas City [Missouri] Journal, April 2	, 1922.	
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12.	August 23, 1970, Section E, p. 1.		
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.14.	The Kansas City [Missouri] Times, January 2	, 1923.	
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17.	Westport Planning Area, Comprehensive Plan, Kansas City, Missouri: City Development De	<u>1971</u> . Preliminary partment, 1971.	Draft.
18.	Whitney, Carrie Westlake, <u>Kansas City, Miss Its People 1808-1908</u> . Chicago: The S. J. 1908, Vol. I.	<u>ouri; Its History</u> Clarke Publishing C	<u>and</u> 0.,
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#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STATE Missouri

#### COUNTY

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

#### FOR NPS USE ONLY ENTRY NUMBER

Jackson

DATE

	(Continuation Sheet)	
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### HARRIS, COLONEL JOHN, RESIDENCE

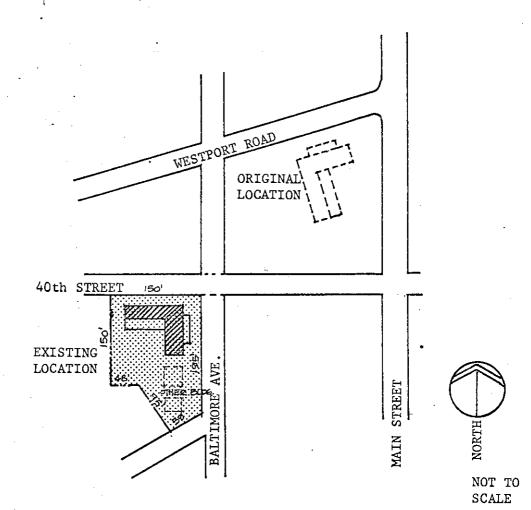
19. Wimmer, Edward J., A. I. A. Information received in interview by M. Patricia Holmes, May 8, 1972.

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- 2. Jenkins, Paul. Battle of Westport. Kansas City, Mo: Hudson Publishing Co., 1906.
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- Native Sons of Kansas City, Missouri. "Westport, Missouri Scrap-4. book," Missouri Valley Room, Kansas City, Missouri, Public Library.

### SITE LOCATION PLAN

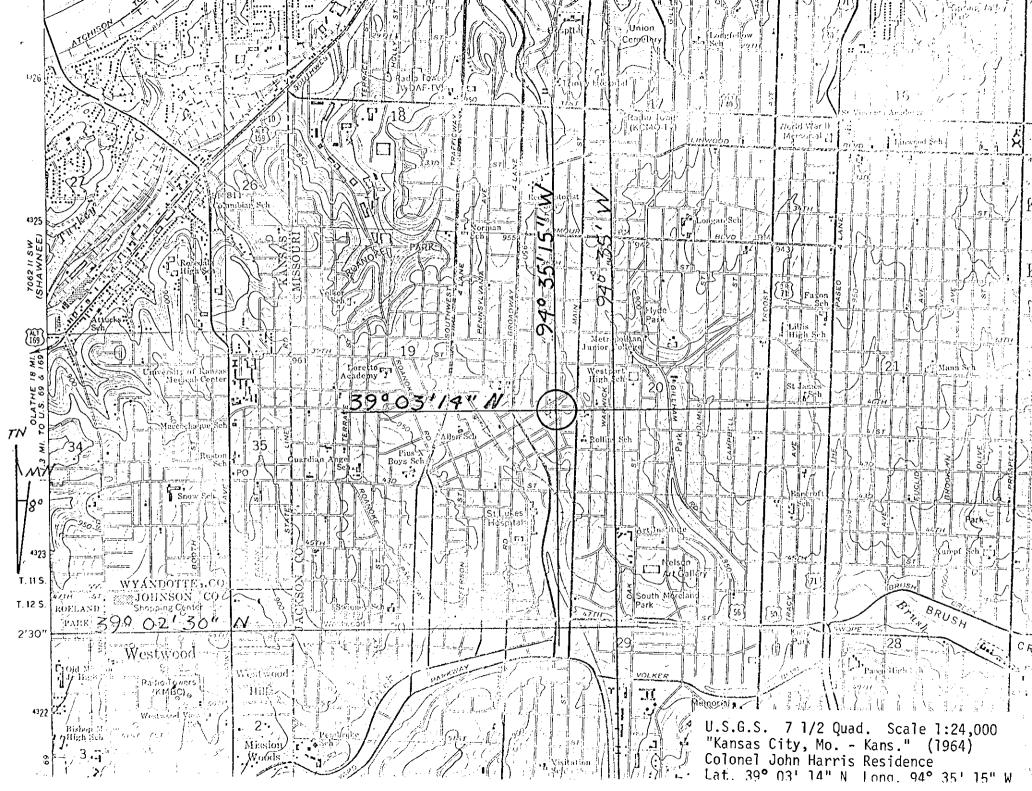
HARRIS HOME, KANSAS CITY



Lat. 39<sup>0</sup>03'1**4**" Long. 94<sup>0</sup>35'15"



DENOTES AREA BEING NOMINATED TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



### Photo Log:

Name of Property:	Harris, John, House	
City or Vicinity:	Kansas City	
County: Jackson	County	State: MO
Photographer:	MP Holmes	
Date Photographed:	Jan. 1972	

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

1 of 7. From NE.

- 2 of 7. House from SE.

- 3 of 7. SW to NE.
  4 of 7. Down stairway from 2<sup>nd</sup> landing.
  5 of 7. Front doorway from W.
  6 of 7. 1907 remodeling, NE corner, view from NE looking SW.
- 7 of 7. E façade, view looking NW.









