

**Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey
Reconnaissance Survey Final Report**

of

Thomas County, Nebraska

prepared for

Nebraska State Historical Society

State Historic Preservation Office

by

Save America's Heritage

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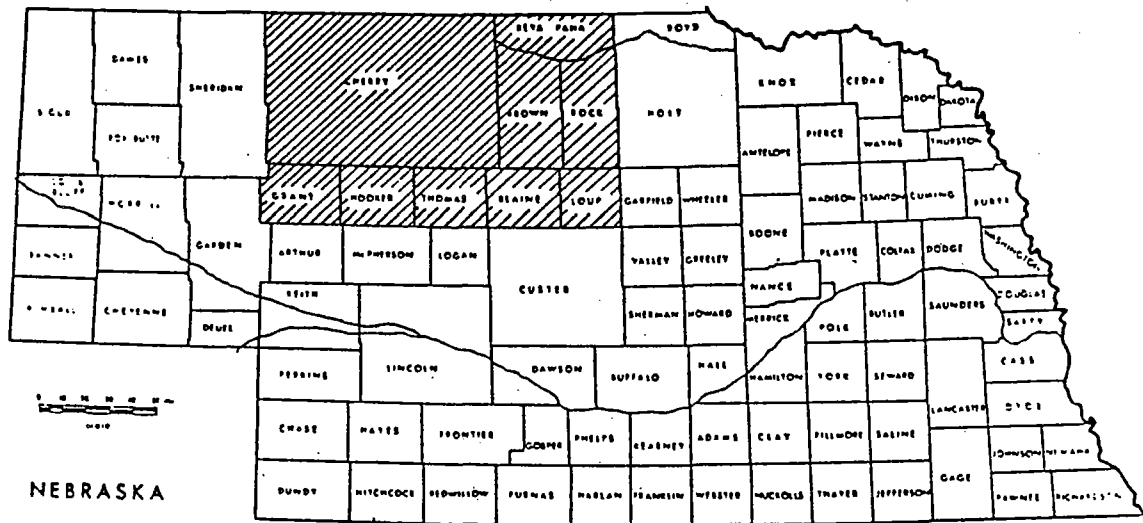
INTRODUCTION

In 1966, the National Historic Preservation Act was passed by the 89th United States Congress and subsequently signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. With this Act, the Secretary of the Interior was called upon to expand and maintain a national register of historic places and give maximum encouragement to state governments to develop statewide historic preservation programs of their own. The Act recognized that one of the prerequisites for an effective national preservation program was the identification of historic resources across the country through comprehensive statewide surveys. Thus, state historic preservation offices were made responsible under the National Historic Preservation Act for decisions concerning the preservation of historic properties in their states.

The manifestation of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act for Nebraska came in 1967 when state legislation directed the Nebraska State Historical Society to oversee the preservation of historical properties and conduct a comprehensive statewide historic survey. For this, the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NeHBS) was formed and is conducted by the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NeSHPO) as a part of the Nebraska State Historical Society. The NeHBS is an ongoing statewide study designed to identify and evaluate properties within a selected area to determine whether they may be of historic, architectural, archeological, or cultural significance. The NeSHPO serves as the central repository for the collected information and becomes the focal point for preservation planning decisions.

Starting with a limited survey of 125 sites, the NeHBS has now documented

approximately 37,000 properties and completed preliminary fieldwork in over two-thirds of Nebraska's 93 counties. The latest effort of the NeSHPO to document historic resources is the completion of the Northern Nebraska Sandhills Historic Building Survey.



Northern Nebraska Sandhills Survey Area

Save America's Heritage was selected by the NeSHPO and engaged in a contractual agreement to conduct the Northern Nebraska Sandhills Historic Buildings Survey. The survey consisted of the completed preliminary fieldwork in nine northern Nebraska counties: Grant, Cherry, Hooker, Thomas, Keya Paha, Brown, Rock, Blaine and Loup. Initiated in September, 1988, the survey was completed in May, 1989. With the completion of the nine-county project, the Northern Nebraska Sandhills was the second region of the state to be completed under the NeSHPO's plan for preliminary statewide reconnaissance coverage by

1991-92.

The primary objective of the survey was to provide a preliminary characterization of the extant historic resources in the northern Nebraska Sandhills region. The effort to document properties contributing to the context of Nebraska's historic architecture produces information which serves not only as a resource in preservation management, but also expresses a genuine concern for the history of the Great Plains built environment.

In addition to this, the historic buildings survey of the northern Sandhills region has produced information which serves not only as a tool for local and state preservation planning but also contributes knowledge to the contextual overview of Nebraska's historic architecture. With each historic building survey performed by the NeSHPO, additional information is added to a larger pool of data which allows a greater understanding of the historic resources extant throughout the state.

Another primary objective of the survey was the identification of a definitive group of historic properties potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Historic Buildings Survey of Thomas County has accomplished this goal by identifying a total of 29 historic properties considered potentially eligible for the NRHP. In addition to the completion of these primary goals, several of the survey's secondary goals were also satisfied. These include the identification of specific building types or construction methods which either related or were unique to the historic built environment of Nebraska, and the expansion of knowledge regarding ethnic settlement and building technologies.

Preservation Biases

It is Save America's Heritage belief that people, and the places in which they live, are the raw materials of history. A community, its inhabitants and its development through time are proper subjects for our contemplation, for it is through such studies that we gain a fuller comprehension of the present.

The public mention of a "historic building survey" often fails to produce a collective image or understanding. A strong social awareness towards preservation of our built environment does exist in the rehabilitation of aged urban districts for example, but the notion of recording historic structures as a preservation activity remains a generally obscure concept. Fortunately, this obscurity is due to a lack of awareness rather than a lack of genuine concern. Communicating the importance of this activity as a documentation of our Great Plains history cannot be stressed enough.

Furthermore, it is also the opinion of Save America's Heritage that such surveys are a necessary tool in the recording of Great Plains settlement. The numerical demise of Nebraska's rural architecture is directly linked to the decline of the rural-based population. In the year 1900, 76.3% of Nebraska's population was found in rural towns or on the farms. However, by 1980 the rural population has dropped nearly 40 percentage points to the current figure of 37.1% (see Table 1).

TABLE 1. LOCATIONAL PERCENTAGE OF NEBRASKA POPULATION, 1900-1980.

Selected Years	Population	Urban Percentage	Rural Percentage
1900	1,066,300	23.7	76.3
1910	1,192,214	26.1	73.9
1920	1,296,372	31.3	68.7
1930	1,377,963	35.3	64.7
1940	1,315,834	39.1	60.9
1950	1,325,510	46.9	53.1
1960	1,411,921	54.3	45.7
1970	1,485,333	61.5	38.5
1980	1,569,825	62.9	37.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1980.

The affect on the historic built environment has been devastating. The number of houses now exceeds the demand and the older, perhaps less functional and aesthetic buidings are not re-inhabited. The buildings then deteriorate and are either dismantled or collapse. Consequently, there exists an increasing decline in the "pool" of historic building resources. Compounding the demise of these rural resources is the current decline of the agricultural economy. The prospect of farming as a profitable future for the next generation is now less and less desirable. This, in turn, contributes to the decreasing rural population and re-inhabitation of existing historic buildings.

The enumeration of social changes affecting historic resources can be lengthy and complex. It is clear, however, that the result of these changes coupled with the diminishing effects of time substantiate the need for historic building surveys. It is through such surveys that we not only record the built settlement of Nebraska, but reach a fuller understanding of our present world.

HISTORIC OVERVIEW

..the hills, in that land endless dun-colored hills where chops and blowouts follow each other like waves of a wind-whipped sea..."

From Sandhills Sundays (1930)
by Mari Sandoz

Physical Description

Thomas County lies in the center of the Nebraska Sandhills region. It is bordered to the north by Cherry County, to the west by Hooker County, to the south by McPherson and Logan counties and to the east by Blaine County. It is 24 miles wide and 30 miles in length with 720 square miles.

The major waterways in the county are the Middle Loup, the Dismal and the North Loup Rivers. The Middle Loup River traverses the state from the northwestern corner to the south-central edge skirting the edge of the Nebraska National Forest at Halsey. The Dismal River flows from the south-central section of the county east and skirts the southern edge of the National Forest. The North Loup River just passes through northeastern edge of the county.

The Sand Hills region of Nebraska is noted for its hills and valleys and is composed of sandy loam soil. The valleys often contain lakes, ponds or marshes. The ever-changing rolling hills of the county and its sandy loam soil, in which a variety of native grasses grow, is ideally suited to the needs of grazing animals. The climate of Thomas County is one of harsh extremes with bitterly cold winters and long hot summers. The average annual temperature is 47 degrees and the wind velocity is generally high. The average annual rainfall is 20 inches.

In 1902 President Theodore Roosevelt set aside 90,000 acres in southeast

and central Thomas County for a National Forest. The purpose of the declaration was to establish an area in the region for the experimental growth of trees. University of Nebraska botanist Charles E. Bessey felt that the region, which had no native tree growth, would be ideal for experimental tree growth and the area was artificially planted with literally millions of trees. While the area has had recurrent problems with fire, it is still maintained as one of two Nebraska National Forests. From 1933 to 1940 two Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.) camps were in existence at the National Forest. The crews, which numbered from 65 to 75 men, built sand-clay roads, two large implement buildings and completed other construction. In the 1940's when the C.C.C. program ended, local labor was used to maintain the National Forest.

Original Inhabitants

The first people known to have roamed the area that includes the Sand Hills of Nebraska were those of the Folsom Culture. It existed between 15,000 to 10,000 years ago. Sites of the Folsom Culture people have been found at the head of the North Loup, Niobrara, Elkhorn, Platte and Republican Rivers in Nebraska. The Niobrara and North Loup Rivers are in the Sand Hills region of the state. The Yuma were the next people known to have inhabited the Sand Hills region. Yuma Culture overlapped the Folsom Culture and continued until around 5,000 years ago. The Old Signal Butte Culture came into existence about 5,000 years ago but these people were not known to have inhabited the Sand Hills region. Between 500 A.D. and 1,300 A.D. three Indian Cultures were found in the Sandhills: the Sterns Creek, the Mira Creek and the Woodland Cultures. From

1,300 A.D. to 1,600 A.D. the Upper Republican Culture is found throughout the state. Sites in the Sand Hills include one on the Loup River and on some of the Cherry County Lakes. From 1,600 A.D. to 1,800 A.D. the Dismal River Culture was found in the Sand Hills, located near the Middle Loup, North Loup and the Dismal Rivers and in general is found in the west and southwest portions of the state.

After 1800 A.D. the Pawnee and Sioux tribes claimed the land of the Sand Hills as hunting grounds. The two tribes disputed various tracts between themselves. The Pawnee claimed the drainage area of the Loup River as their hunting grounds and camped near the mouth of the river. The Sioux claimed lands east to the forks of the Platte and north to the mouth of the White River in South Dakota as their hunting grounds. Both tribes depended on the bison, which roamed the Sand Hills in vast numbers, as their primary source of food and raw material. Between 1854 and 1876 all the territories that the Sioux and the Pawnee claimed as their hunting ground had been acquired by the United States Government through a series of treaties. The final treaty of 1876 opened up the entire Sand Hills region to settlement.

Settlement of Nebraska

The area that was to become the State of Nebraska became a United States possession through the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. The first American exploration of the territory commenced on March 14, 1804 with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Prior to its opening as a Territory for settlement, Nebraska was part of the vast area of land set aside for all Native Americans by an Act

of Congress in 1834. Through a series of conflicts and treaties between the United States and the various Native American tribes of the region, the United States government was able to acquire this area and open it to general settlement by the pioneers. Nebraska Territory was established in 1854 and 13 years later, in 1867, gained statehood. The settlement of Nebraska generally moved across the state from the southeast to the northwest following the routes of the wagon trails, rivers and, later, the railroads. The development of the railroad was essential to the opening up of Nebraska lands to the tide of settlers.

From its initiation in 1854 until 1862, settlement of Nebraska Territory was generally done under the provisions of the Pre-Emption Act of 1841. This act allowed a settler to file for up to 160 acres for a fixed price, generally \$1.25 to \$2.50 per acre. Under this act, settlement was limited to the southeast portions of the state; Thomas County, like other Sand Hills counties, was not affected by this act.

The Homestead Act of 1862, which became effective January 1, 1863, allowed a settler to acquire between 40 to 160 acres without paying the standard fee per acre to the federal government. This act required that the homesteader remain on the land for 5 years and meet a specified minimum level of improvements. It was under this act that the first settlement of the Sand Hills occurred. In Thomas County the first homestead was filed in 1880. The homesteader was often faced with the problem of competition for land with the free-range ranchers who had been developing their enterprises without

impediment for the past decade. Various areas experienced rather marked disputes between ranchers and homesteaders.

In 1903 Moses P. Kinkaid, then Nebraska Congressman, introduced an act to Congress that would allow the homesteader to file for up to 640 acres of land as opposed to the usual 160 acres. This act specifically applied to the Sand Hills region of Nebraska. It recognized that the Sand Hills region did not lend itself to 160 acre farms or to the style of farming developed in other areas of Nebraska. The arid Sand Hills required that a greater land area be utilized to provide the means for successful agricultural and/or ranching endeavors. The Act proved to be a boon to the Sand Hills region bringing in its largest group of settlers to date. Various acts followed the Kinkaid Act which, combined with tolerable weather and good luck, brought about the permanent settlement and development of the Sand Hills Region and Thomas County.

The Kinkaid Act was one of the most important elements in the settlement of the Sand Hills region. From 1904 to 1920, the Kinkaid Act resulted in the peak population of the Sand Hills.

Due to the importance of the Homestead and Kinkaid Acts to the northern Sand Hills region, Save America's Heritage has included a more detailed analysis of their impact in the General Summary of Survey Results found in subsequent articles of this report.

The period between 1900 and 1930 was a prosperous one for the Sand Hills and the state in general. Improvements were made in transportation, education, agricultural and government. Populations across the state peaked throughout

this period with the exception of the eastern counties and those with major communities.

The decade of the Great Depression, the 1930's, was hard on the Sand Hills counties as well as for the state. Many of the "Kinkaiders" left the area at this time. While this was an opportunity for the ranchers to acquire more land, overall economic conditions were rough. The population in the Sand Hills was in steady decline from the 1930's until the 1960's when it stabilized.

County History

Thomas County was organized on March 13, 1887 and the first homestead claim was filed in 1880. The area that became Thomas County was part of the Sand Hills region used by early ranchers as open-range pasture. These cattlemen originally brought their herds north from Texas for sale to the federal government. The government had promised the Indians on South Dakota reservations beef cattle as a part of the 1876 treaty. The cattlemen soon discovered that the Sand Hills region was ideal for cattle production and numerous large free-range ranches were established throughout the Sand Hills.

The railroad was of vital importance to the permanent settlement of the county. By 1887 the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy had reached the settlement of Thedford and soon traversed the entire county from east to west. The settlement and organization of Thomas County did not progress rapidly until the railroad had established its line through the region. The three major communities in Thomas County, Thedford, Seneca and Halsey, are all located on the railroad line.

Settlement of Thomas County was slow with only 517 residents listed on the 1890 census. The period between 1890 and 1900 was one of drought and economic depression, yet the county's growth remained stable with over 100 new residents entering the area during that decade. The passage of the Kinkaid Act in 1904 and its subsequent enactment proved to be a boon for Thomas County which experienced its first major influx of settlers. By 1920 the county's population reached an all time high of 1,773 residents. "Kinkaiders" who came to the region in hopes of farming 640 acres of land or establishing ranches, were often unable to make a successful go of it and many left the region in the years following 1930. Some of those who remained bought up the vacated land and the large ranches of today began their formation. By 1970 the county reached its lowest population since the Kinkaid Act in 1904; there were 954 residents reported on the 1970 census. In 1980 the county reported a population of 973 residents.

Thomas County Towns

Five railroad stations were designated in Thomas County; Norway, Natick, Thedford, Seneca and Halsey. The latter three stations eventually became the major settlements in the county. Thedford is the county seat of Thomas County; a post office was established there on November, 13 1887. Today Thedford has a small modern post office. The original Thomas County court house was demolished in 1922 for construction of the court house now in use. The high school was established in 1914 and serves the entire high school aged student population of Thomas County. Thedford today is a small county seat, with a 1980

population of 313 people, serving the need of the ranching population. It is also the civil and social hub of the county. Services and business in Thedford include a bank, the post office, churches, the high school, a grocery store, restaurant/bar.

Seneca, which competed with Thedford for the county seat, was established in January of 1888 and was for several years the largest town in Thomas County. The town was the site of a railroad depot, yard, and roundhouse. The location of these railroad operations in the town brought Seneca a period of prosperity until the railroad pulled out of the town in the 1922. Seneca's peak population was in 1920 with 476 residents. During its more prosperous times, Seneca contained a lumber/implement dealership, hotels, banks, an automobile dealership, stores and services of various types, schools, churches and a post office.

Halsey was established in May, 1892 on the claim of Rebecca Rush who settled there in 1887. The community is located on the railroad and is the community closest to the Nebraska National Forest. The railroad station was discontinued in 1957. The peak population in Halsey occurred in 1950 with 160 residents.

Ethnic Groups and Population Trends

Thomas County has never had a large population. The 1920 census reported 1,773 residents in Thomas County which, to date, remains the largest population recorded in the county. Seventy-seven people were reported as foreign born in 1920. Immigrants from Germany and the British Isles made up the two largest

groups of immigrants who entered the county. Other ethnic groups reported in the 1920 census include Scandinavians, Central Europeans and Mexicans.

Between 1890 and 1950, a total of 153 German-born immigrants were reported in the county. There were eight in 1890, thirty in 1900, thirty nine in 1910, twenty one in 1920, twenty three in 1930, nineteen in 1940 and thirteen in 1950. For the same span of years there were 74 persons born in the British Isles with sixteen in 1890, ten in 1900, seventeen in 1910, ten in 1920, twelve in 1930, seven in 1940 and two in 1950. The remaining foreign-born population came from central and southern Europe and Canada.

Thomas County population trends follow a general Sand Hills pattern with high populations in the 1880's, low population from 1890 to 1900 and then expansion from 1900 to 1930. The population then declined after 1930. The era of the Great Depression (1930's) signaled the end of the "Kinkaid" boon period and the population in the county began a steady decline at that time. By 1980, Thomas County reported one of the lowest populations in the state with a total of 973 residents.

Sand Hills Cattle Ranching

Thomas County's primary industry is ranching with the majority of its land devoted to cattle grazing. A small percentage of the land is used for growing wild hay, a supplement for the livestock diet in the late winter and early spring. A very small percentage of the region's land is devoted to crop production. All of Thomas County falls into the Sandhills Range Livestock

Production region (NeSHPO, "Historic Contexts In Nebraska-Topical Listing", 1989, code 08.08).

Thomas County, with its small population, is home to large ranches which produce some of the best beef in the country. Purebred Herefords are raised in abundance. After the "Kinkaiders" began to leave the region, many of the individuals who remained bought up the abandoned homesteads and claims and the large ranches of today began their development. In 1940 there were 14 ranches with over 3,480 acres each. The Thedford Livestock Association, which was instrumental in getting the Kinkaid Act of 1904 passed, is still active today. Stock production is the lifeblood of the county with the business establishments of the various communities serving the needs of the county population.

Final Comments

The economy of Thomas County is almost wholly dependent upon the production of livestock, primarily cattle, for sale. The population of the county has remained small throughout the past century and is likely to remain so. Thedford, Halsey and Seneca remain the centers of social and economic life in the county with some of the cattle owners living in town and commuting to their ranches.

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GENERAL SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

Introduction

Any discussion which analyzes the quality or volume of the surveyed properties in Thomas County must include a summary of the environmental conditions which predominate the county. The results of the Historic Buildings Survey are directly linked to the natural environment which existed when the first permanent settlers constructed their domestic and agricultural shelters. The environmental conditions encountered by the settlers of the early 1880's have, in general, changed very little. Therefore, by examining the environmental conditions which exist today, one can gain a better understanding of the factors affecting the creation of the historic built environment in Thomas County.

Thomas County lies in the south-central portion of the Nebraska Sand Hills. The Sand Hills region is a vast and picturesque area of land which stretches across much of northwest and north-central Nebraska. Thomas County is comprised of this topographic type.

The Sand Hills have been appropriately named for they consist primarily of hilly dunes of sand stabilized by grassy covers. The beauty of this area, however, is often deceptive for the Sand Hills can be a harsh and overpowering environment for both human and animal habitation. The historic built environment of Thomas County can be viewed as a physical extension of the climatic and geographic conditions extant within the Sand Hills. The physical creation of human and animal shelters were controlled by the environment in

which those original builders lived. The number and survivability of the historically built properties were, and continue to be, at the mercy of the land and climate. Not only were the number of properties built during the settlement period relatively low, but many of these buildings have failed to survive the harsh climate of the Sand Hills. Of those buildings which did survive, many lack historic integrity due to alteration or deterioration.

In light of the environmental makeup of Thomas County, the numerical results of the survey were not anticipated to be staggering and indeed they were not. In fact, only 124 total properties were documented within the 720 square miles which constitute Thomas County. The breakdown of these 124 properties includes 241 contributing buildings, 5 contributing structures, 62 contributing objects, and 4 contributing sites.

Numerical Summary of Thomas County Reconnaissance Survey

THOMAS COUNTY	TOTAL PROPERTIES	CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS	CONTRIBUTING SITES	CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES	CONTRIBUTING OBJECTS
TM00: Rural	42 (2)	115 (2)	3	4	44
TM01: Halsey	18	33	0	0	3
TM04: Seneca	43 (12)	62 (17)	0	1	0
TM05: Thedford	21	31	1	0	15
TOTALS	124 (14)	241 (19)	4	5	62

Approximated Area of survey Coverage: 135 square miles (86,400 acres)

Numbers in parenthesis indicate previously surveyed properties.

Compounding the problem of limited resources is the fact that Thomas County was, historically, a very sparsely populated county. Indeed, the greatest population base existed between 1920 and 1930 when the totals reached a mere 1,773 people. In 1980 Thomas County was home to only 973 persons which

ranked it among the lowest of the 93 Nebraska counties for total population. This 1980 total translates to a sparse density of 1.4 persons per square mile.

Also indicative of the declining population base are the statistics recorded by the agricultural census of 1910, 1935, and 1982 which delineate the number of farms within Thomas County for each of these years. In 1910 there existed 1,100 operative farmsteads/ranches within the 720 square miles contained by the county. This translates to approximately one ranch for every one-half square miles of land in the county. The average farm size in Thomas County in this year was already 778 acres versus the statewide norm of only 297 acres. This indicates that the initial permanent settlement of Thomas County in terms of population and distribution was relatively small and dispersed. By 1935, these figures had changed significantly. At that time there were only 219 operating ranches (one for every 3.3 square miles) which represents a post-Depression drop of 80%. Likewise, by 1982 there were only 87 ranches left in Thomas County. This represents a 92% decline in the number of operating farmsteads within the 72-year period from 1910 to 1982. This is a devastating reduction--one that was clearly reflected in the low numerical results of the survey.

In light of the general trend towards the loss of historic buildings in the northern Sand Hills study area, Save America's Heritage has recommended twenty-nine properties in Thomas County as potentially eligible for National Register listing. These properties are significant not simply because they represent the last of many lost resources. They are also significant in reference to the framework of Historic Contexts established by the NeSHPO,

(NeSHPO Historic Contexts in Nebraska-Topical Listing, 1989). They represent some of the more important contexts involved with the settlement and agricultural development of Thomas County.

THOMAS COUNTY PRELIMINARY INVENTORY BY HISTORIC CONTEXT NUMERICAL SEQUENCE

NeHBS NUMBER	DATE	RESOURCE OR/ COMMON NAME	HISTORIC CONTEXT	CONTRIBUTING				PROPERTY TYPE
				Bldg.	Site	Struct.	Obj.	
TM04-5	c.1914	SENECA POST OFFICE	04.06	1	0	0	0	04.2.3
TM05-20	c.1910	FORMER COUNTY JAIL	04.07	1	0	0	0	04.3.2
TM04-6	c.1915	SENECA AUDITORIUM	07.07	1	0	0	0	07.1.2
TM00-17	c.1910	ABANDONED RANCH	08.08	5	0	2	2	08.1
TM01-13	c.1912	COMMERCIAL BUILDING	12.02	1	0	0	0	12.1
TM01-15	c.1912	COMMERCIAL BUILDING	12.02	1	0	0	0	12.1
TM01-16	c.1912	BESLEY & BOVEE BUILDING	12.02	1	0	0	0	12.1
TM04-1	1904	A.W. FRANK'S BUILDING	12.02	1	0	0	0	12.1
TM04-3	c.1910	J.M. TALBOT'S STORE	12.02	4	0	0	0	12.1
TM04-8	c.1915	COMMERCAIL BUILDING	12.02	1	0	0	0	12.1
TM04-18	c.1900	ABANDONED HOTEL	13.02	1	0	0	0	12.3.1
TM05-9	c.1914	JIM WEAVER HOTEL	13.02	1	0	0	0	12.3.1
TM01-017	c.1900	HARBAUGH HOTEL	13.02	3	0	0	2	
TM04-4	c.1925	GAS STATION	13.02	1	0	0	0	13.3.3.3
TM04-7	c.1910	BANK VAULT	15.05	1	0	0	0	15.1.1
TM04-9	c.1910	BANK VAULT	15.05	1	0	0	0	15.1.1
TM00-8	c.1912	CHARLES JOHNSON SOD HOUSE	16.01	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM00-9	1911	CLARK MOWERY SOD HOUSE	16.01	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM00-10	1908	JOSEPH ALBRIGHT SOD HOUSE	16.01	4	0	0	1	08.1
TM00-11	1911	FREDERICK JAMESON SOD HOUSE	16.01	4	0	0	0	16.5
TM00-24	1917	ARCHIE WARNER SOD HOUSE	16.01	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM00-41	1938	FIGARD SOD HSE	16.01	5	0	0	0	16
TM00-042	1916	W.D. PAUL SOD HOUSE	16.01	1	0	0	0	
TM01-12	c.1909	ABANDONED HOUSE	16.01	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-23	c.1907	ABANDONED HOUSE	16.01	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-28	c.1906	INMAN SOD HSE	16.01	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-31	c.1922	HOUSE	16.01	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-43	c.1910	HOUSE	16.01	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM05-15	c.1915	HOUSE	16.01	2	0	0	0	16.5

Most notable among the Preliminary Inventory properties are the group of eight sod houses located primarily in the rural environs of south-central Thomas County. These properties are significant as representatives of Kincaid Act homestead settlement and Sand Hills Range Livestock Production agriculture. These properties, as well as the other buildings considered eligible for National Register listing, are illustrated in the Preliminary Inventory which follows.

In general summary, the Historic Buildings Survey of Thomas County may be viewed as a direct physical extension of the environmental conditions of the Nebraska Sand Hills. The buildings recorded by the survey have been clearly impacted by the natural environment of the Sand Hills region. This environment has dictated the agricultural and economic practices which it will allow and has forces the builders of human and animal shelters to adapt accordingly.

Preliminary Inventory of the Thomas County Historic Buildings Survey

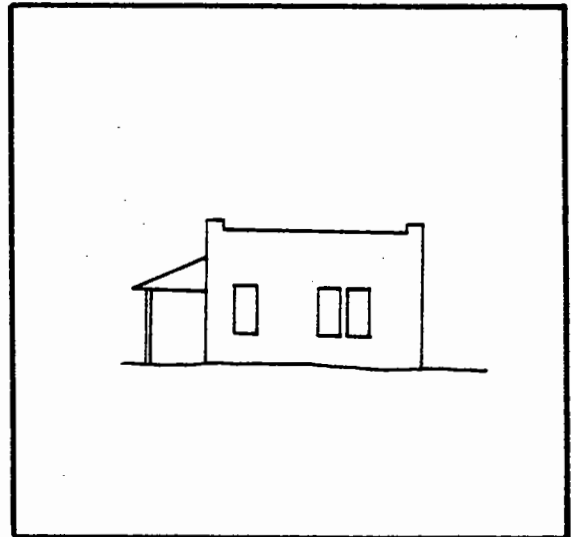
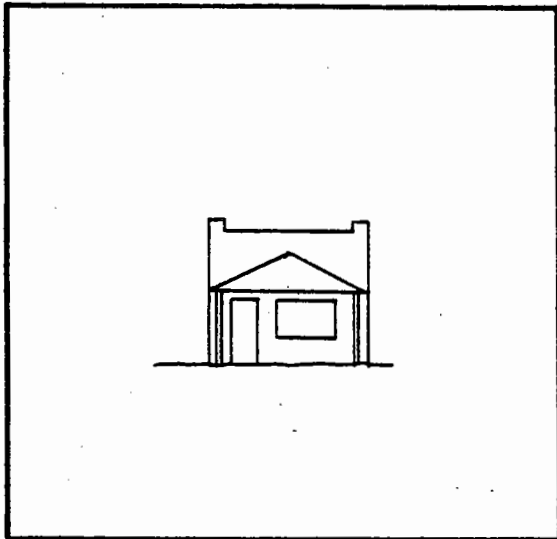
A Topical Discussion and Preliminary Inventory of Thomas County Historic Properties

The following discussion consists of a topical summary and Preliminary Inventory of the historic properties documented during the Thomas County Historic Buildings Survey. This discussion is arranged according to the Topical Listing of Historic Contexts authored by the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NeSHPO, 1989). It includes discussion only of those properties potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or those that contribute to the historic character of Thomas County. Included at the end of each summary is an illustrated inventory of properties which appear potentially eligible for National Register listing in reference to the Historic Context being discussed. Then, located at the end of the Preliminary Inventory, is a listing of properties which also contribute to the historic character of Thomas County but are of second priority with respect to National Register listing. These properties have been labeled "Second Priority Properties" and are included in the Inventory for purposes of defining those buildings that may lack the significance or integrity for NRHP listing but which help define the character of the historic built environment of Thomas County.

Historic Context: Government (04)

The contextual topic of Government Systems encompasses the art or science of Established government as well as competition between interest groups for leadership of local, state, or national government. Historic buildings which may relate to this topic include most government-related structures necessary to the political operation of communities.

Three properties were documented under the context of Government by the Thomas County Historic Buildings Survey. These consist of two post offices (P.T. 04.2.3) and a former county jail (P.T. 04.3.2). Seneca's post office (TM04-005) and the former Thedford County Jail (TM05-020) were chosen as Potentially eligible for National Register listing and have been included in the Preliminary Inventory.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM04-005

DATE: c.1914

RESOURCE NAME: Seneca Post Office

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Government: (04.06)

PROPERTY TYPE: United States Post Office (04.2.3)

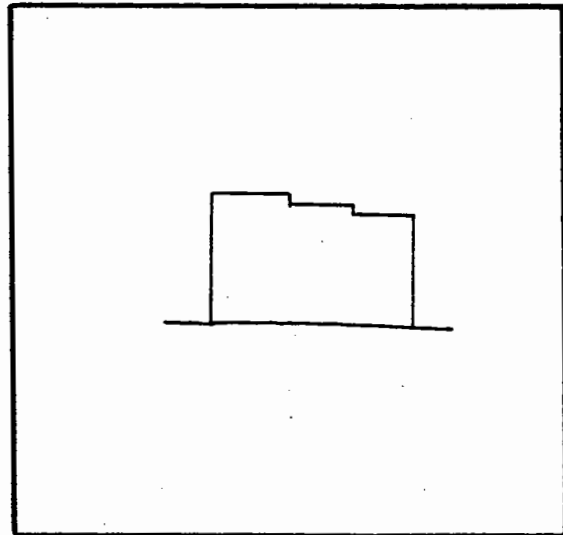
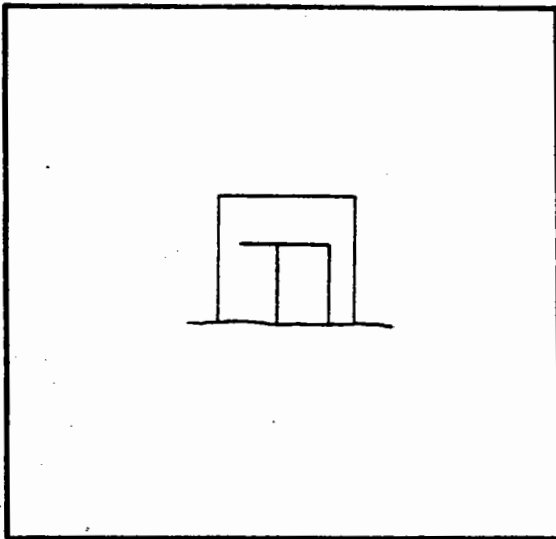
LOCATION: NEC Corona & West Ave, Seneca

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0

OBJECTS: 0

The one-story brick Seneca Post Office building was considered potentially significant for its role in the distribution of postal communications to northwest Thomas County during the early twentieth-century.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM05-020

DATE: c.1910

COMMON NAME: Former County Jail

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Government: (04.07)

PROPERTY TYPE: Jail (04.3.2)

LOCATION: SS Hwy 2 between Walnut & Oak, Thedford

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

The former County Jail was considered potentially eligible for National Register listing based on its association with the law enforcement system extant during the early twentieth-century settlement of Thomas County.

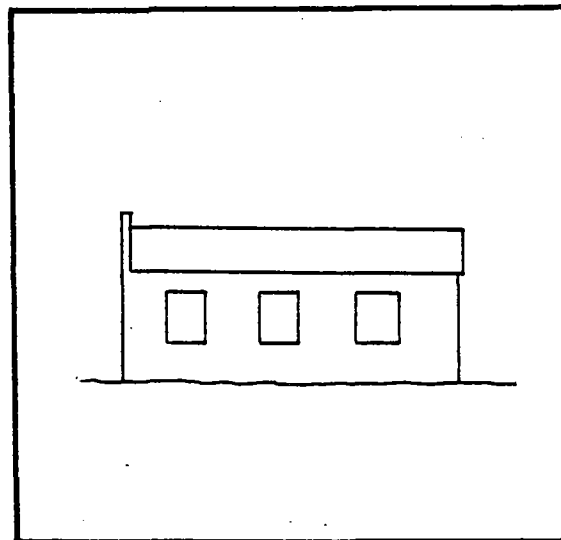
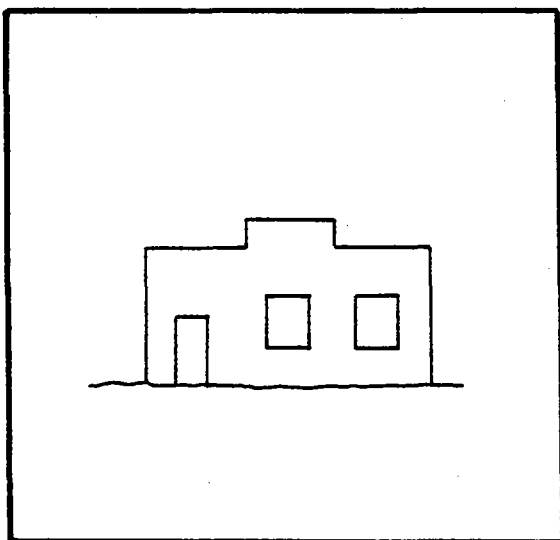
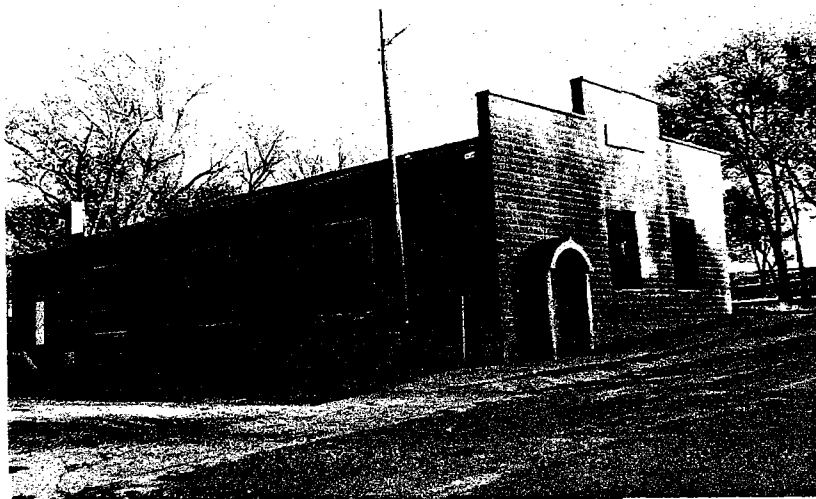
Historic Context: Diversion (07)

Diversion is the contextual title which encompasses all human activities relating to recreation, entertainment, sports and travel. Under this title, the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office has included such building types as theaters and opera houses as well as structures associated with parks, fairgrounds, and sporting grounds. The Historic Buildings Survey of Thomas County recorded a total of five properties with association to the Diversion Context.

Typically, the number of Diversion related properties documented in a reconnaissance survey are relatively low. This is attributed to the fact that unlike houses or commercial buildings, entertainment related buildings in smaller rural communities are not in great demand. These were most commonly either theaters or opera houses. Beyond that, it was not possible to financially support more than one of these activities in a community of one-thousand people or less. This is true even in current times where typically there exists only one movie house or theater in communities as large as three-thousand people.

Under this context, five Diversion properties were recorded on the reconnaissance level. Four consist of outdoor recreational sites with the fifth being an auditorium building in Seneca. Bessey National Forest provides the catalyst for two documented tree plantings (TM00-026 and TM00-034) as well as a third Diversion property which is the observation tower

(TM00-034). The Thedford City Park (TM05-021) is the fourth of the Diversion properties and was chosen for its cedar tree groves which were planted during the 1940's. The only building documented under this context for Thomas County is the Seneca Auditorium (TM04-006). This community building was considered potentially eligible to the National Register and is included in the following Preliminary Inventory.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM04-006

DATE: c.1915

RESOURCE NAME: Seneca Auditorium

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Diversion: (07.07)

PROPERTY TYPE: Auditorium (07.1.2)

LOCATION: SEC Coronal & West Ave, Seneca

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

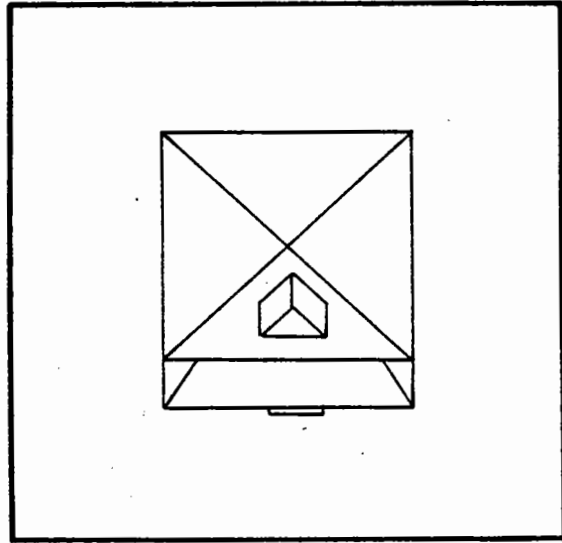
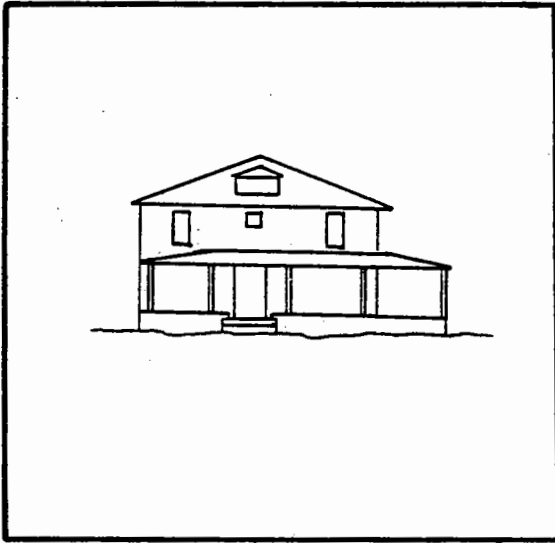
Despite NeSHPO staff denial in 1984 for the loss of the original second story and roof to a tornado in 1933, the Seneca Auditorium was included in the Preliminary Inventory as a significant example of the Sandhills "no-waste" mentality wherein the reuse or salvage of resource materials is necessary and logical.

Historic Context: Agriculture (08)

Thomas County lies in the geographic zone known as the Sand Hills. This area is unique to Nebraska and is composed of hilly land of low to high dunes, stabilized by grasses. The nature of this sandy region yields little in terms of crops. Instead, the Sand Hills region has become an area devoted to range livestock production. Most land has remained uncultivated and serves as grassland ranges for the cattle. The historic Buildings Survey of Thomas County recorded a total of twenty-two properties preliminarily associated with Sand Hills Range Livestock Production (08.08). Of the twenty-two properties surveyed, only one has been included in the Preliminary Inventory. While the total number of Sand Hills cattle ranching properties appears consistent with that of other counties in the study region, the general lack of historic integrity among the buildings excluded a significant number of properties from the Preliminary Inventory. It should be noted however, that several buildings assigned to the Historic Context of Settlement may, with future research, be cross-referenced to the Sand Hills Range Livestock context.

Despite the general lack of historic integrity, the ranches documented in the survey are collectively viewed as an important historic resource for the state of Nebraska. They reflect early settlement in the Sand Hill region and provide a vast economic contribution to the state. The majority of these ranches have seen the affects of changing times. Many of the original ranch

dwelling and outbuildings have been abandoned and have fallen into disrepair. More economical pre-fabricated outbuildings have begun to transform the historic fabric of these ranches. The ranch included in the Preliminary Inventory, TM00-017, contains five contributing buildings, two contributing structures and two contributing objects.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM00-017

DATE: c.1910

COMMON NAME: Ranch (Abandoned)

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Agriculture: (08.08)

PROPERTY TYPE: Ranch (08.1)

LOCATION: NW 1/4, NW 1/4, Sec. 3, T. 24 N., R. 28 W.

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 5 **STRUCTURES:** 2

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 2

Early twentieth-century Sand Hills Range Livestock property included in the Preliminary Inventory primarily for the presence of the large two-story frame ranch house/headquarters.

Historic Context: Commerce (12)

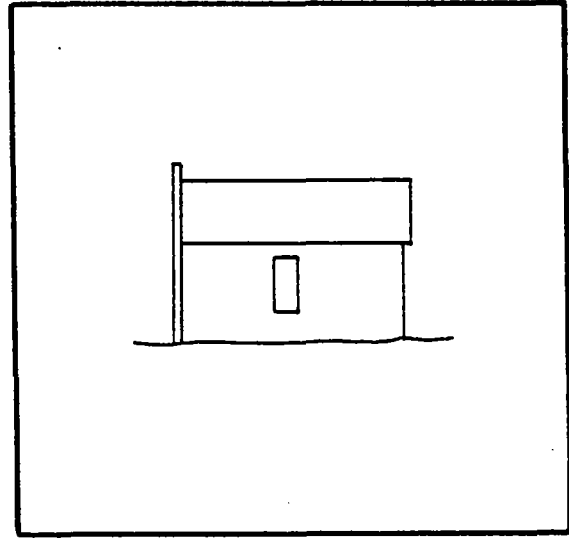
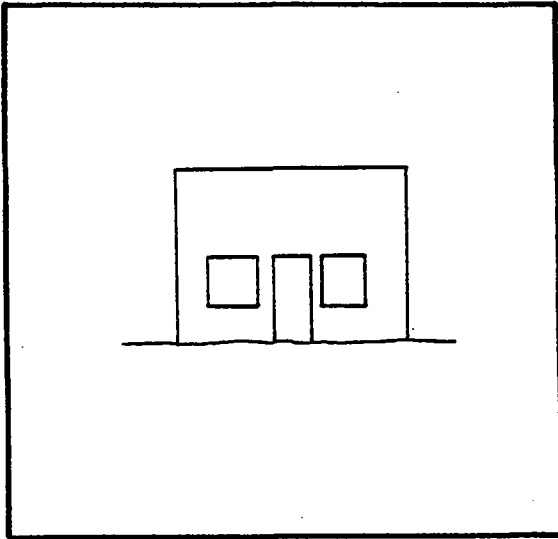
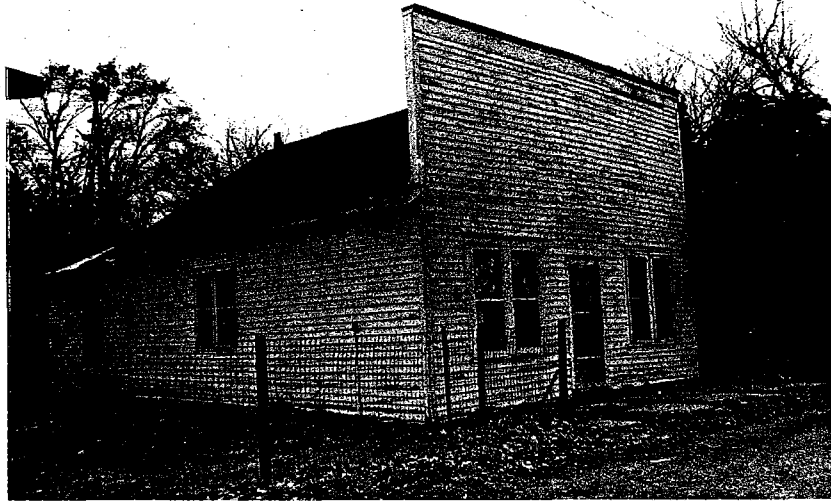
The context of Commerce is defined as the buying and selling of commodities, involving transportation from place to place. Considerations include wholesaling and retailing; trade and barter; monetary economy including finance, business organization, and mercantile business. Commerce encompasses a diverse range of businesses including dry goods stores, hotels, speciality stores, and department stores.

The reconnaissance survey of Thomas County recorded a total of eleven properties associated with the context of Commerce. Central business district commercial properties accounted for all eleven of the catalogued sites. These main street buildings can be categorized into one of two types. The first type consists of one and two-story false front buildings more commonly surviving in smaller rural communities. The characteristics of this type include a rectangular structure covered by a gable roof which is hidden by the exaggerated facade. The false-front helped to disguise the relatively low scale of the building by hiding the true size of the structure and thus conveying a greater sense of prominence. The primary era of construction in Thomas County for this type ranged from the early 1890's to approximately 1910.

The second numerically significant commercial building type documented by the survey was the masonry commercial block. These buildings are generally large-scale masonry buildings confined primarily to larger communities. This building type appears to have been employed between the years of 1900 and 1930,

and usually consisted of one and two-story masonry structures with one or two-part compositional facades. These buildings were often built on single 25-foot commercial lots or in double to triple-wide commercial blocks of 50 to 75 foot width.

Six properties in Thomas County have been selected as potentially eligible for National Register listing. These six properties have been illustrated in the following Preliminary Inventory of Commerce-related buildings.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM01-013

DATE: c.1910

COMMON NAME: Commercial Building

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Commerce: (12.02)

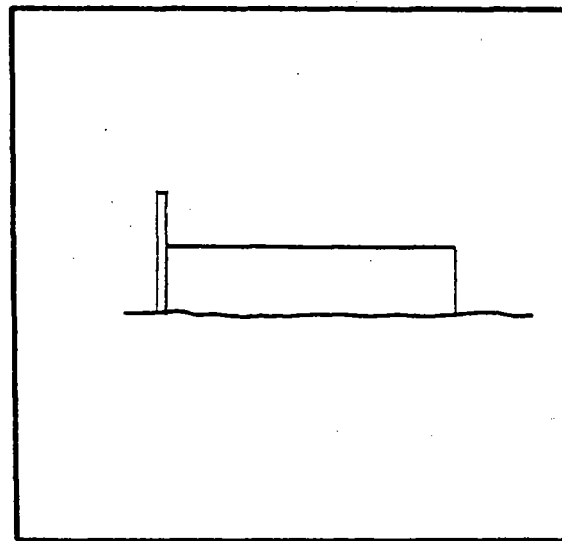
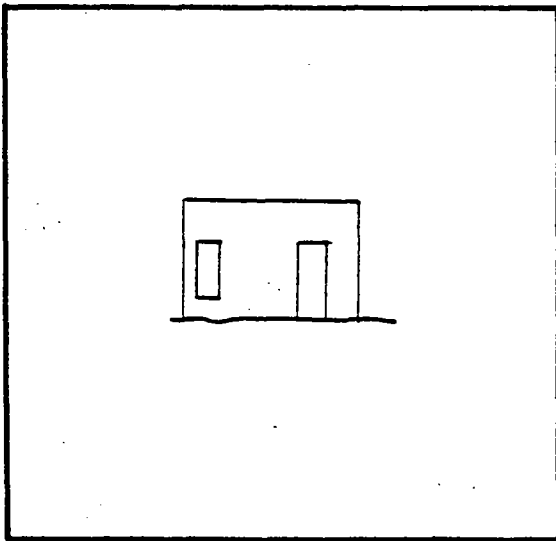
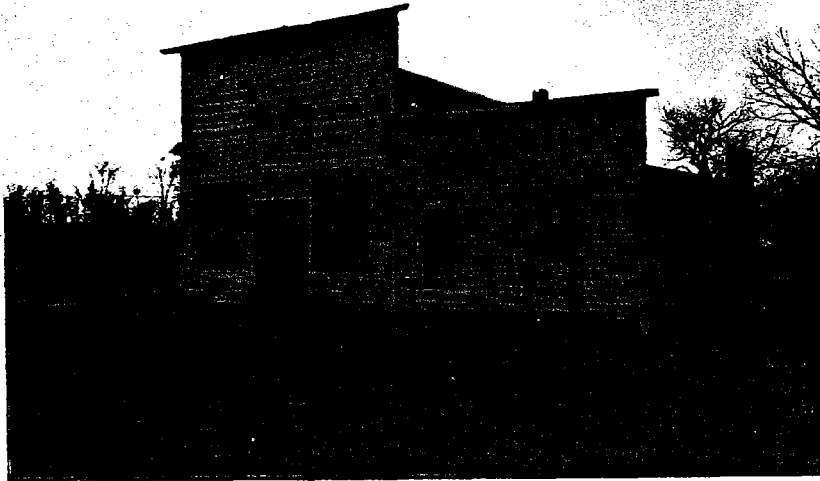
PROPERTY TYPE: Retail (12.1.1)

LOCATION: WS Main between Jewett & Bovee, Halsey

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

One-story frame commercial building included in the Preliminary Inventory as a well-preserved example of the false front compositional type and for association with early twentieth-century retail commerce in eastern Thomas County.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM01-015

DATE: c.1912

COMMON NAME: Commercial Building

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Commerce: (12.02)

PROPERTY TYPE: Retail (12.1.1)

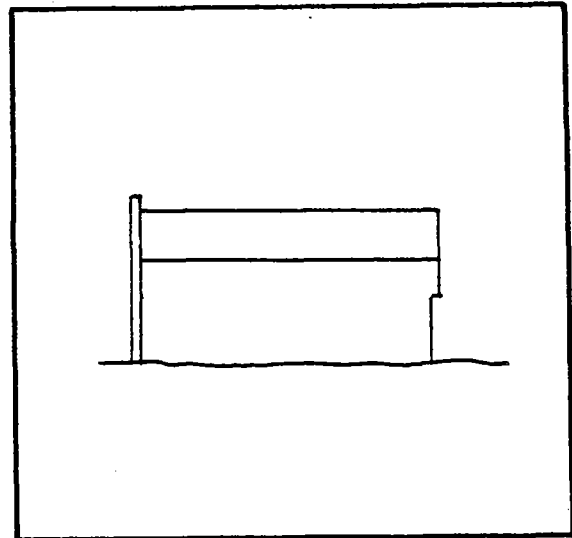
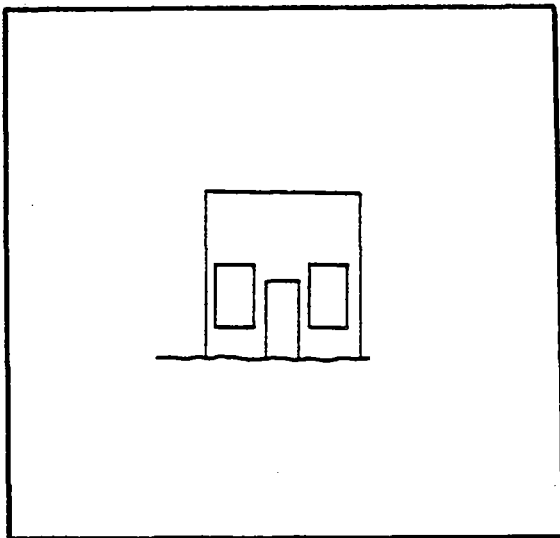
LOCATION: WS Main between Jewett & N. Burlington, Halsey

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0

OBJECTS: 0

Included in the Preliminary Inventory as a well-preserved example of an early twentieth-century false front compositional type building and for association with retail commercial activities during a period of settlement and growth in the Thomas County Sandhills.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM01-016

DATE: 1910

COMMON NAME: Besley & Bovee Building

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Commerce: (12.02)

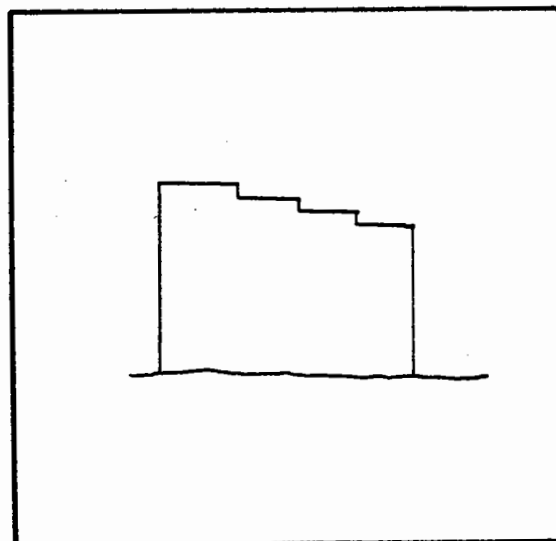
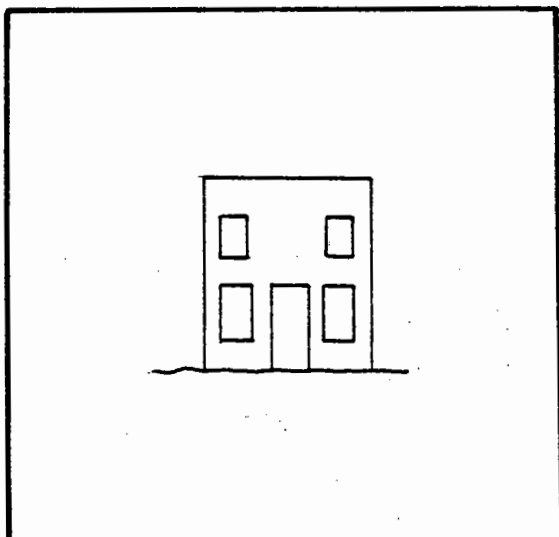
PROPERTY TYPE: Store (12.1.1)

LOCATION: WS Main between Jewett & N. Burlington, Halsey

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

Potential significance for this one-story frame commercial building is based upon its association with retail commerce activities in the early twentieth-century and for the use of the false front compositional type.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM04-001

DATE: c.1913

RESOURCE NAME: A.W. Franks Building

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Commerce: (12.02)

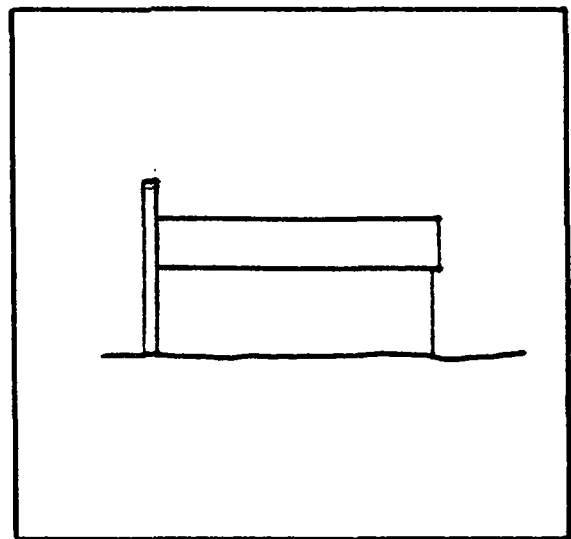
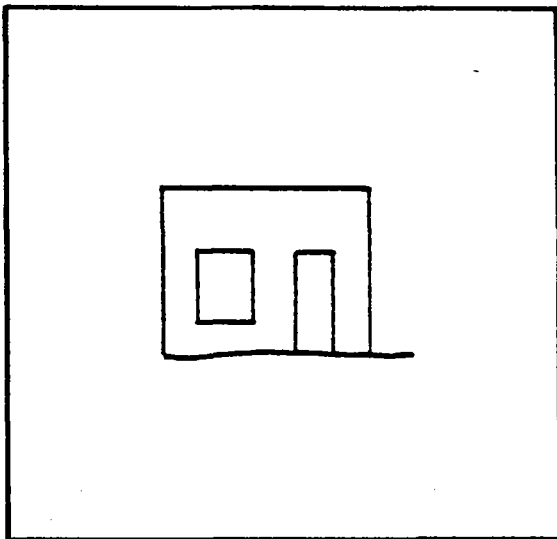
PROPERTY TYPE: Commercial Building (12.1.2)

LOCATION: SEC S. Railway & West Ave, Seneca

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

Two-story brick building included in the Preliminary Inventory as a significant example of a mixed-use commercial property type. This structure served as the home of A.W. Franks hardware, implement and mortuary businesses and also housed, at various times, the Seneca Post Office and Masonic Lodge meeting hall.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM04-003

DATE: 1888

RESOURCE NAME: J.M. (Mac) Talbot's Store

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Commerce: (12.02)

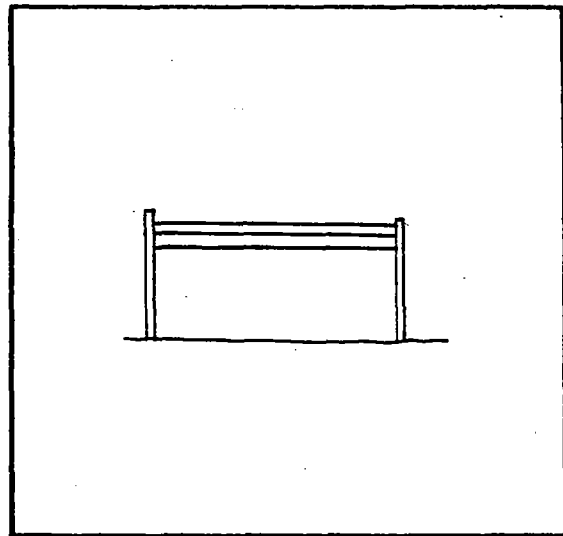
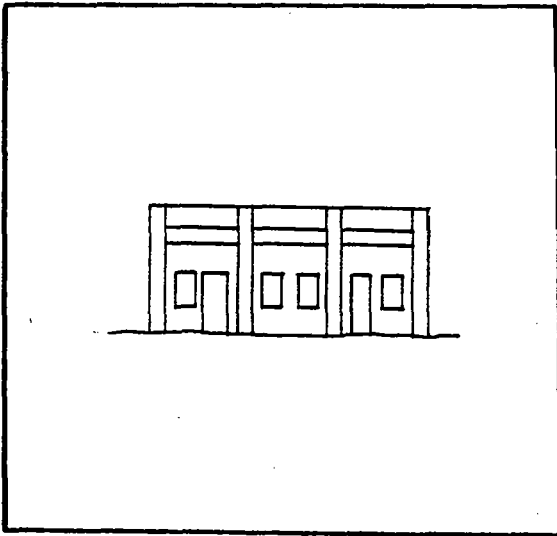
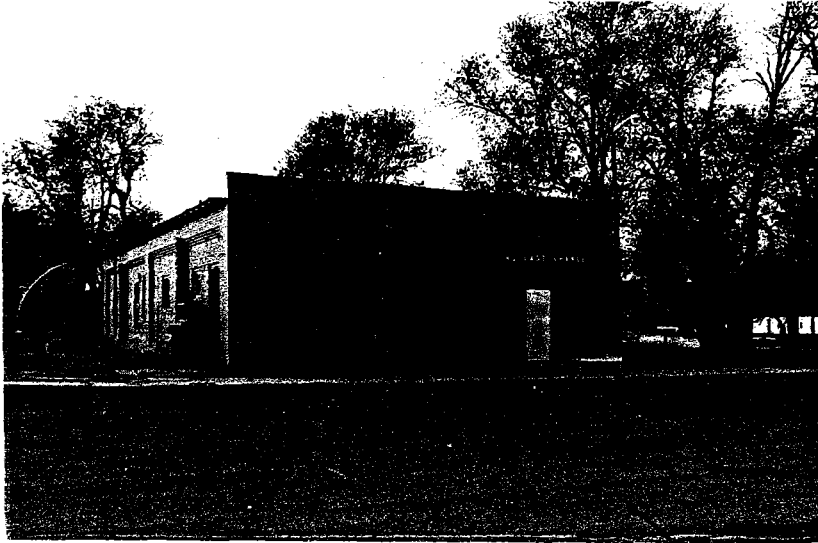
PROPERTY TYPE: Store (12.1.1)

LOCATION: ES West Ave between Corona & S. Railway, Seneca

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

Small scale one-story frame commercial building with pressed-tin siding. Included in the Preliminary Inventory for its purported construction during the establishment of the Seneca business district following the opening of the B. & N. railroad in 1888.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM04-008

DATE: c.1915

COMMON NAME: Commercial Building

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Commerce: (12.02)

PROPERTY TYPE: Store (12.1.1)

LOCATION: WS West Ave between S. Railway & Corona, Seneca

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

One-story brick commercial building included in the Preliminary Inventory for its association with the historic context of Retail Commerce and as a contributor to the historic character of the Seneca central business district.

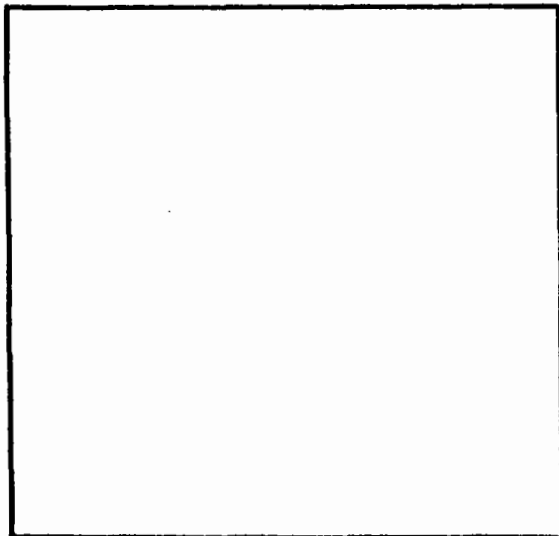
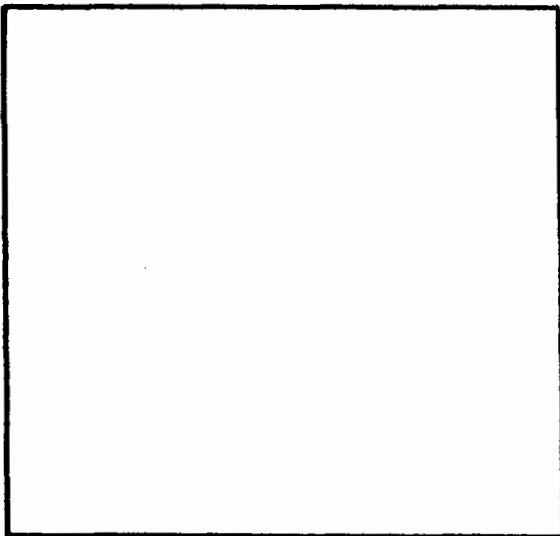
Historic Context: Transportation (13)

The context of Transportation involves the carrying, moving or conveying of material and people from one place to another. Considerations include transportation by land, water, and air: trails, roads, highways, interstates, rail; related service accommodations such as motels, service stations, and drive-ins.

Nine properties relating to the context of Transportation were documented by the Thomas County reconnaissance survey. Service accommodations comprise all nine of the documented properties and consist of one gas station (P.T. 13.3.3.3), one rest area (P.T. 13.3.3.2), a grouping of railroad cars consisting of 65 to 70 units (P.T. 13.5), five "Railroad Type" hotels (P.T. 12.3.1), and one motel (P.T. 12.3.2).

The ever changing methods of mass transportation are evident when looking at the transportation related properties documented in Thomas County. As the railroads became more shipping oriented and people turned toward the freedom of the mass-produced automobile, service accommodations relating to transportation also had to change. Of the five hotels included in the Thomas County survey, four no longer serve their original function and one remains abandoned. The documented gas station which was built circa 1928 has also been vacated.

Four properties have been selected for the Preliminary Inventory and are potentially eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. Following are photos and descriptions of these four properties.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM01-017

DATE: c.1912

COMMON NAME: Former Hotel

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Transportation: (13.03), (13.02)

PROPERTY TYPE: Hotel (12.3.1)

LOCATION: SWC Jewett & Forest, Halsey

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 3 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

One and one-half story frame building judged potentially significant as a well-preserved example of an early twentieth-century "railroad" type hotel/boarding house.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM04-018

DATE: c.1900

COMMON NAME: Hotel (Abandoned)

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Transportation: (13.03)

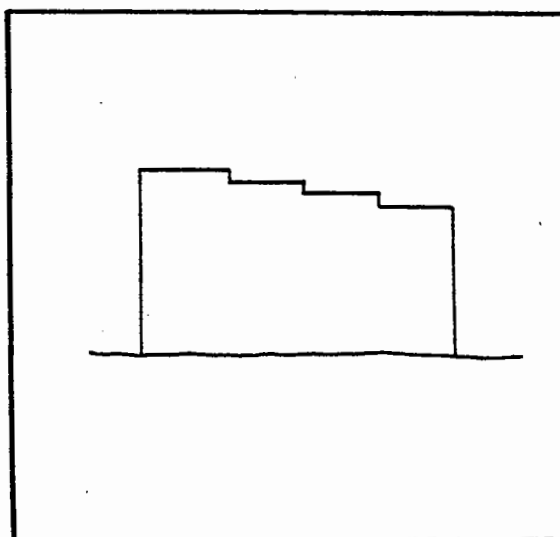
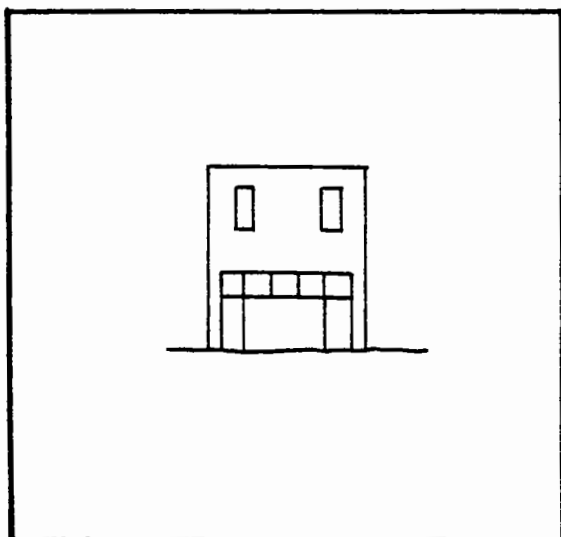
PROPERTY TYPE: Hotel (12.3.1)

LOCATION: WS Albany between S. Railway & Corona, Seneca

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

Despite alterations to historic integrity, this two-story frame building was considered potentially eligible as an example of a turn-of-the-century hotel/boarding house constructed as a result of rail transportation in Thomas County.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM05-009

DATE: c.1914

RESOURCE NAME: Jim Weaver Hotel & Restaurant

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Transportation: (13.03)

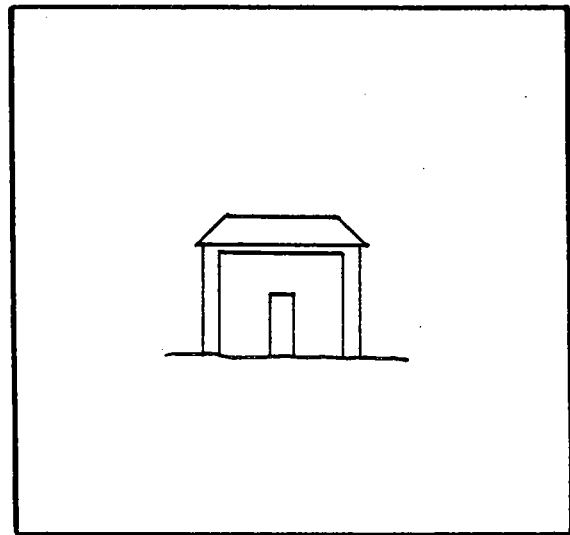
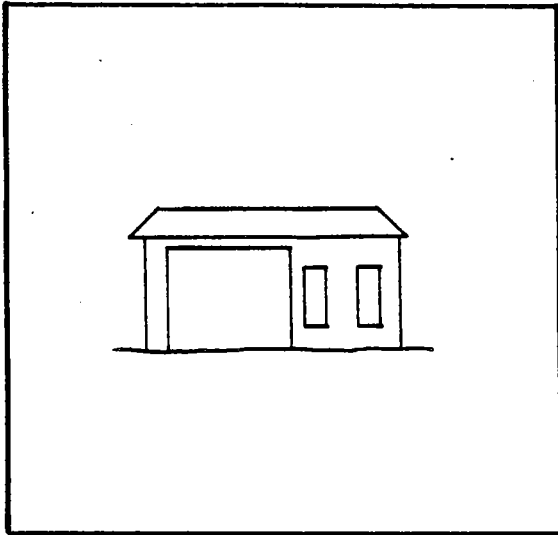
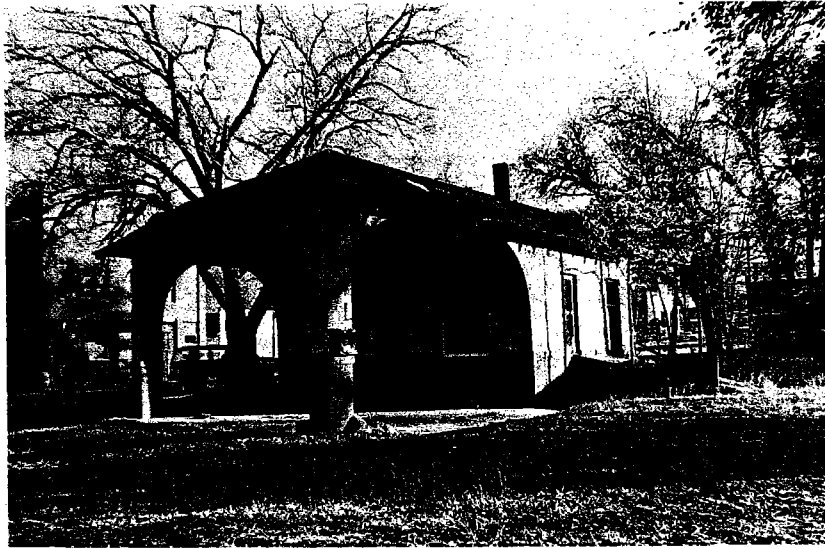
PROPERTY TYPE: Hotel (12.3.1)

LOCATION: ES Walnut between Railroad & Main, Thedford

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

Two-story brick building included in the Preliminary Inventory as a potentially significant hotel property type with association to the historic contexts of Transportation and Commerce. Also served as the temporary home (c.1916-1920) of the Modern Woodmen of America Lodge.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM04-004

DATE: c.1925

COMMON NAME: Frank Alton Gas Station

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Transportation: (13.02)

PROPERTY TYPE: Gas Station (13.3.3.3)

LOCATION: SWC S. Railway & West Ave, Seneca

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

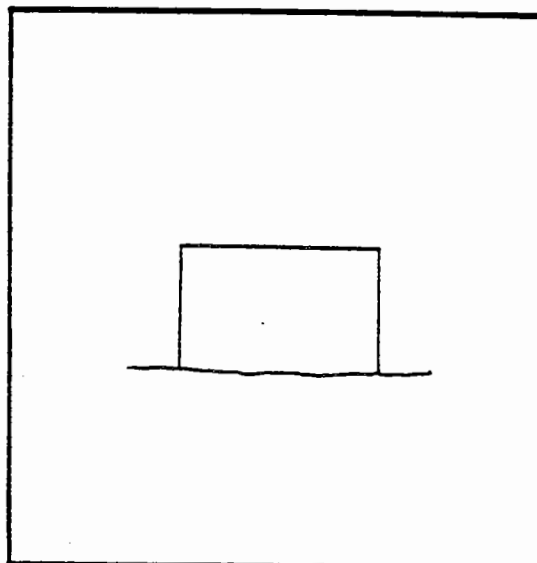
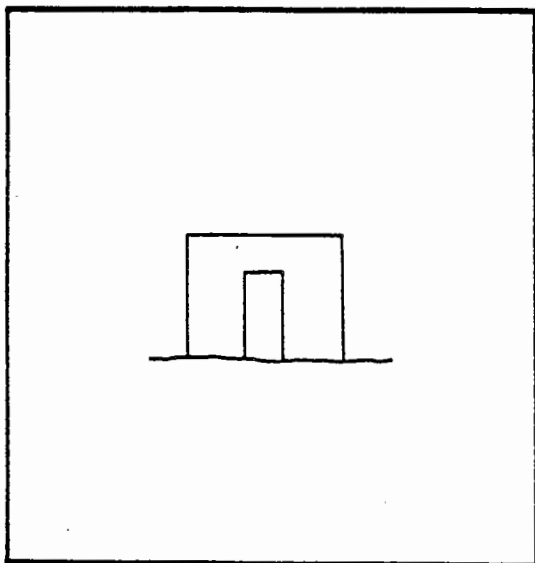
SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

Circa 1925 stucco gas station included in the Preliminary Inventory for association with the Historic Context of Road Transportation in Thomas County.

Historic Context: Service (15)

Primary support services provided or controlled by government, commonly viewed as necessities is the basis for topics and subtopics under the Historic Context of Service. In addition to public services such as health care or certain utilities, private professional services are also included under this context. Some examples include the professional practice of architecture, insurance, and banking.

Three properties were documented by the reconnaissance level survey of Thomas County. These consist of two bank vault buildings and one former bank. All three are located in the community of Seneca. The two bank vaults have been included in the Preliminary Inventory primarily as future research properties and are potentially significant for their association with early twentieth-century banking in Seneca.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM04-007

DATE: c.1920

COMMON NAME: Bank Vault

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Service: (15.05)

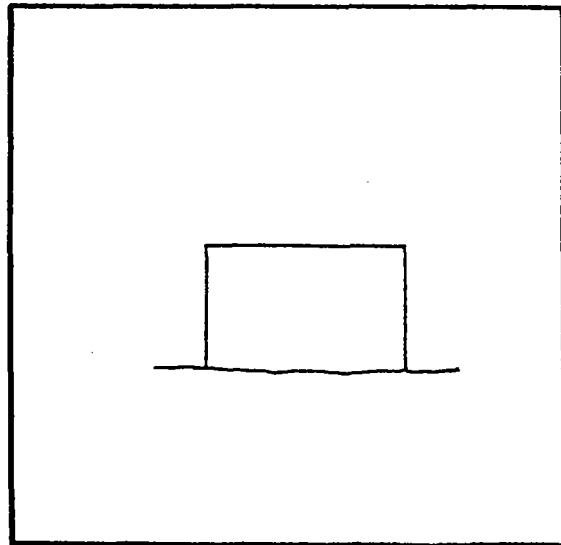
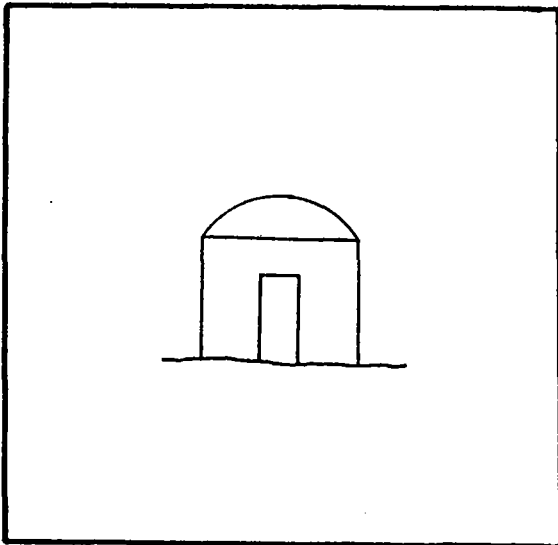
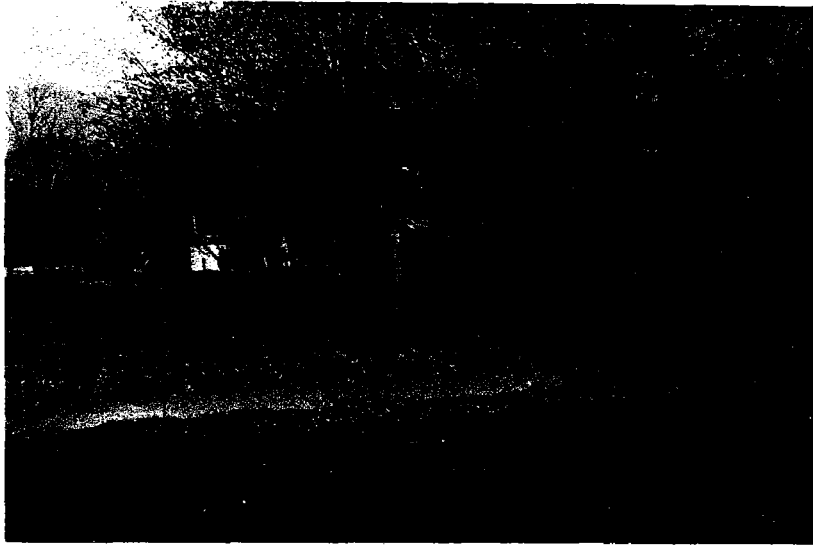
PROPERTY TYPE: Financial Services (15.1)

LOCATION: NWC West Ave & Corona, Seneca

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 0 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

One-story cement bank vault judged as a potentially significant building based on its association with early twentieth-century banking services in northwest Thomas County.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM04-009

DATE: c.1910

COMMON NAME: Bank Vault

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Service: (15.05)

PROPERTY TYPE: Financial Service (15.1)

LOCATION: ES West Ave between S. Railway & Corona, Seneca

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0

OBJECTS: 0

One-story cement bank vault with quansat-shaped roof included in the Preliminary Inventory for association with the Historic Context of Banking Services in Thomas County.

Historic Context: Settlement (16)

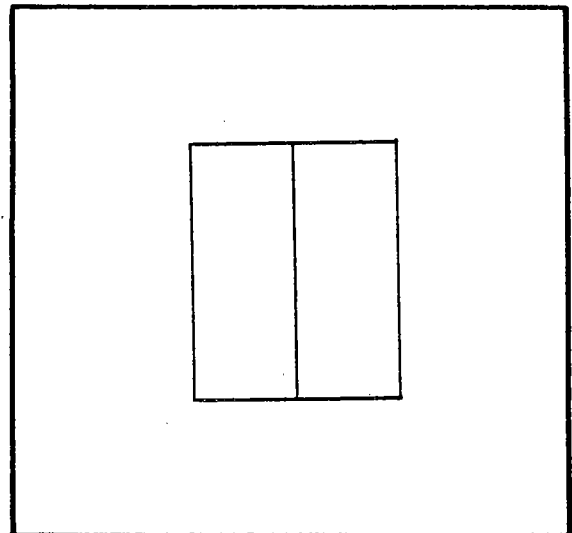
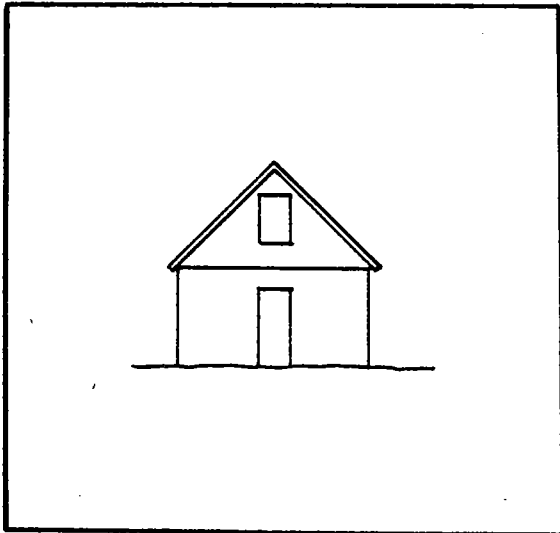
Settlement Systems is the broad contextual title encompassing the division, acquisition, and ownership of land. This theme contains all patterns generated through political, religious, or commercial activities to facilitate the establishment of cultural systems. Specific considerations include acquisition methods and use patterns of land as well as the spatial delineation of lands such as landscape architecture, hamlets, villages towns cities and rural systems.

Not surprisingly, this contextual theme contained the greatest number of documented historic properties within Thomas County. Of the 122 total properties documented in Thomas County, 69 or fifty-seven percent fall within the theme of Settlement Systems. This percentage appears consistent with that of other northern Sand Hills counties within the study area. The retention of historic integrity that these 69 properties displayed was obviously quite varied. In some instances, the integrity had been severely compromised through later alterations or additions, while in other cases buildings were recorded which were extremely similar to their original condition. Of the 69 recorded properties, 12 were selected as being potentially eligible to the National Register. The era of construction for these properties was quite diverse as well. Construction dates appear to range from the first more crude homestead dwellings of the 1880's to the Bungalow types of the 1920's.

The majority of the 69 settlement system properties recorded in Thomas County appeared in two basic manifestations: 1) the simple, unadorned

vernacular house, and 2) the Bungalow style house. The vernacular house type usually consisted of small scale rectangular or square-shaped frame structures covered with exterior stucco sheathings and protected by gable or hip roofs. This house type was generally constructed during the early settlement period of 1884 to 1914. The Bungalow style houses appeared in both front-gable and side-gable versions and were considerably larger in scale than the vernacular houses. The general period of construction for these buildings ranged from 1915 to 1930. Noticeably absent from the pool of settlement system properties of Thomas County were the so-called "High Style" houses. With the exception of the Bungalow style house, none of the properties recorded in Thomas County contained dwellings employing the popular architectural styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century such as Italianate, Shingle, Victorian, and Queen Anne.

Of particular interest among the Settlement properties are a group of eight sod houses recorded primarily in the rural environs of south-central Thomas County. These eight sod houses are considered potentially significant as representatives of Kinkaid Act homestead settlement with potential cross-reference to Sand Hills Range Livestock Production. Intensive survey on four of these houses was conducted by Save America's Heritage as part of an amendment to the Historic Buildings Survey of Thomas County. For a more specific discussion of the sod houses recorded in the northern Sand Hills survey region, see page 76.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM00-008

DATE: c.1912

RESOURCE NAME: Charles E. Johnson Sod House

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Settlement Systems: (16.01), (08)

PROPERTY TYPE: Single Family Dwelling (16.5.1)

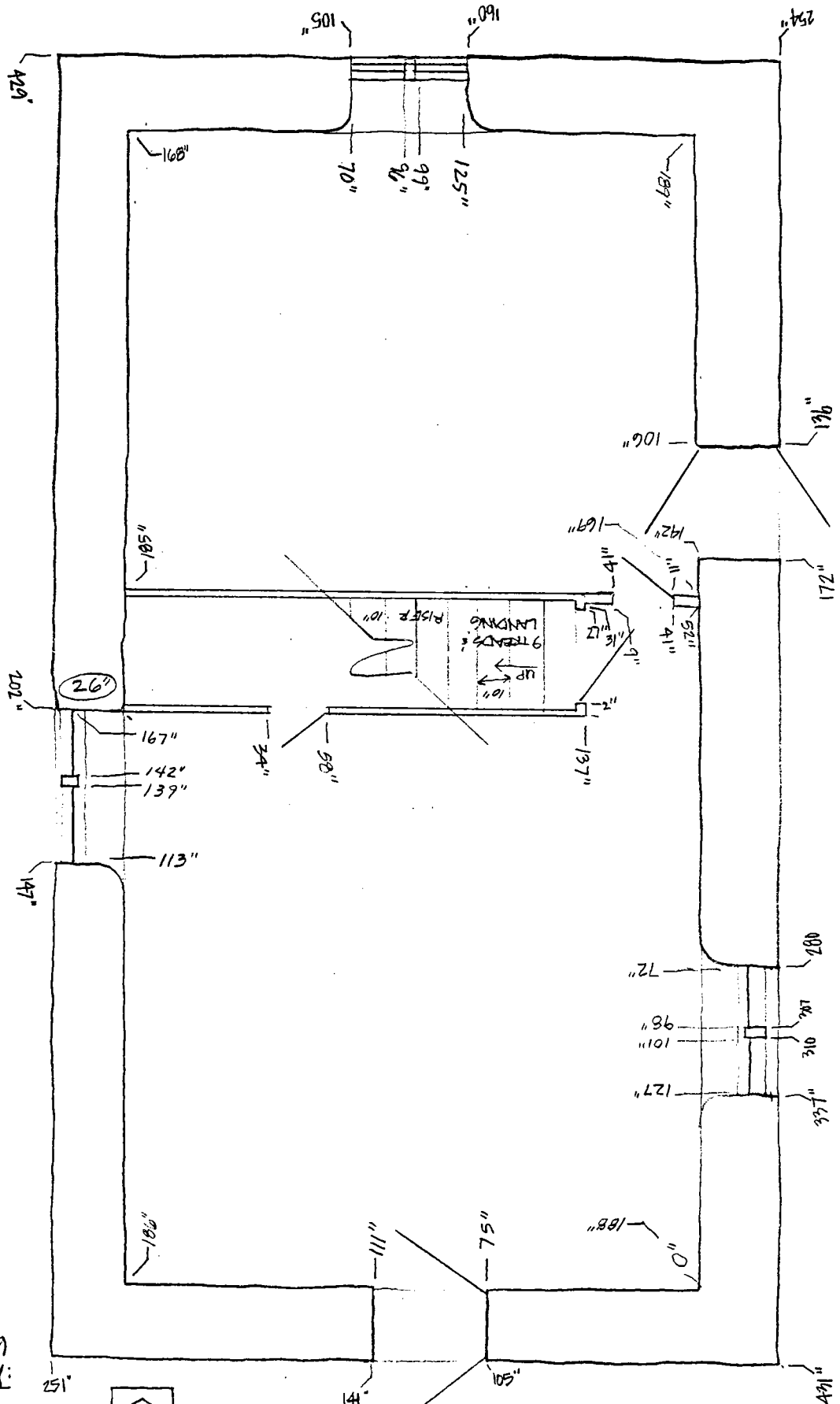
LOCATION: SW 1/4, SW 1/4, Sec. 12, T. 22 N., R. 29 W.

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

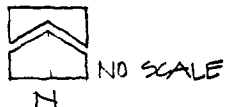
SITES: 0

OBJECTS: 0

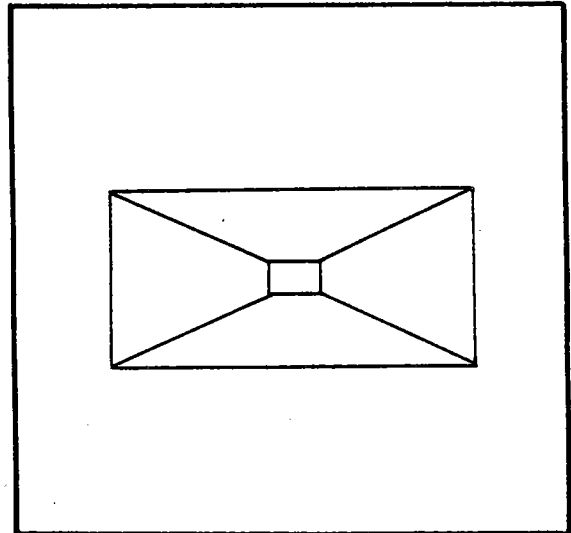
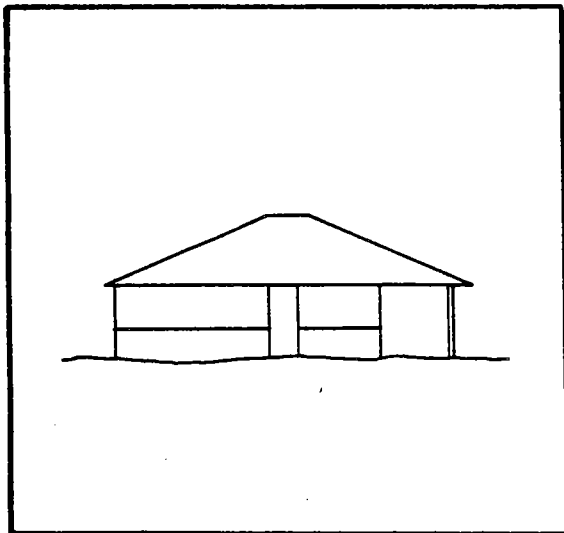
One of eight sod houses recorded in Thomas County, the Johnson House is an exceptionally well-preserved example of sod "brick" construction technology and is significant for its association with Kinkaid Act homestead settlement.



MAY 7, 1989
 DRAWN BY:
 J. KAY
 D. ANTHONIE



TM00-8: CHARLES JOHNSON
 SOD HOUSE, 1912.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM00-009

DATE: 1911

RESOURCE NAME: Samuel Clarkson Mowery Sod House

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Settlement: (16.01), (08)

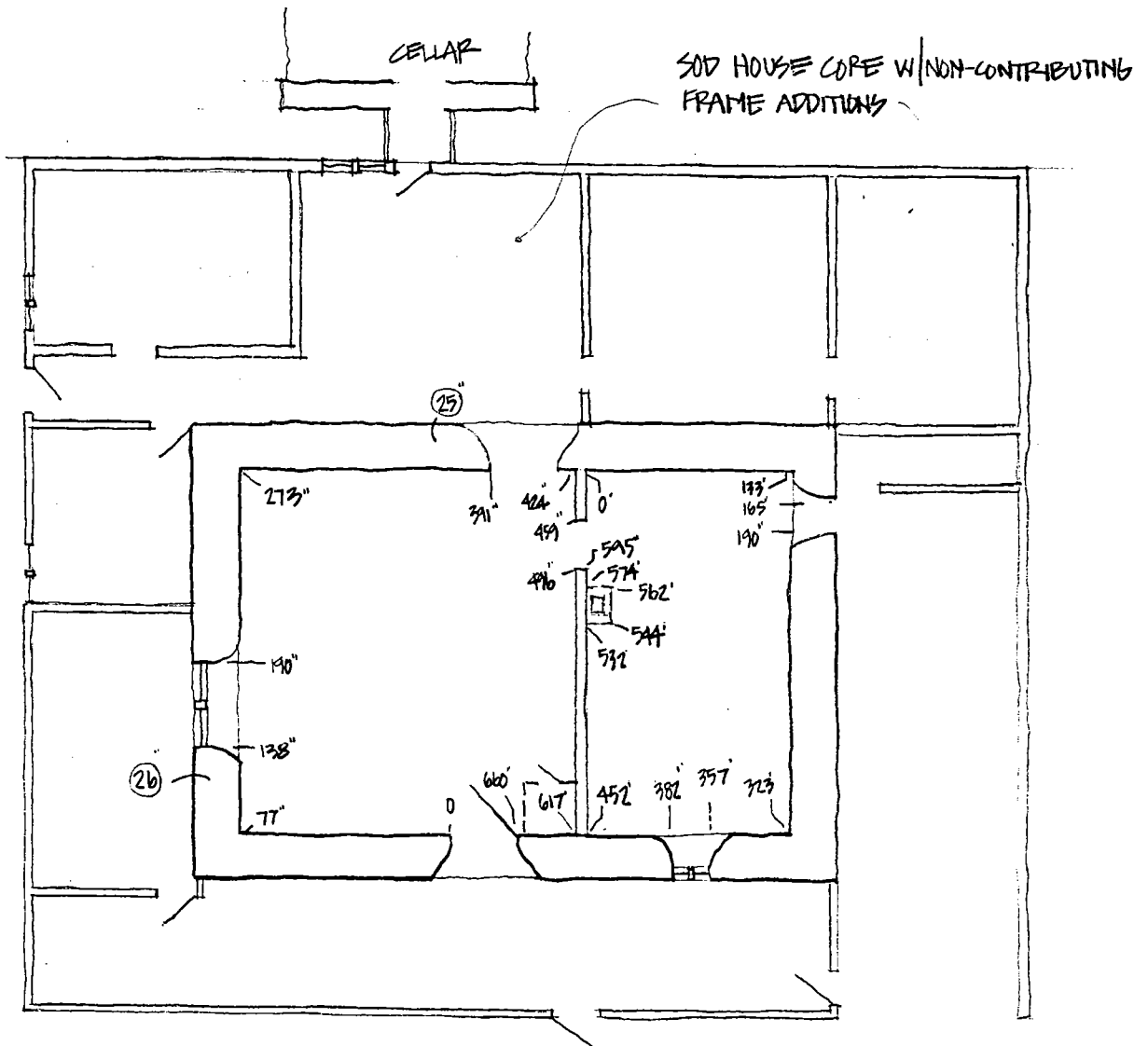
PROPERTY TYPE: Single Family Dwelling (16.5.1)

LOCATION: NW 1/4, NE 1/4, Sec. 23, T. 22 N., R. 29 W.

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

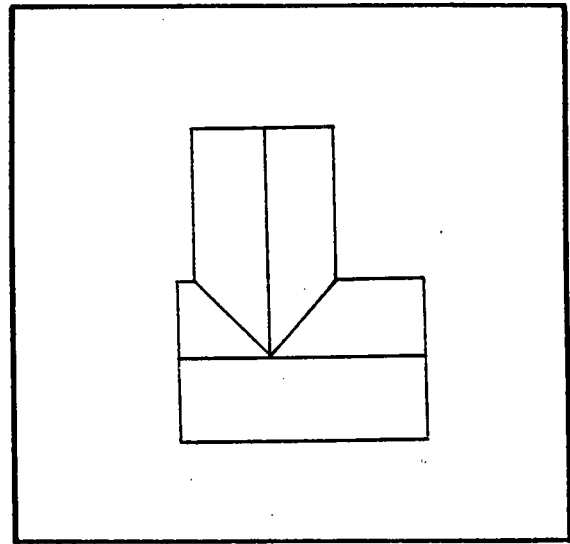
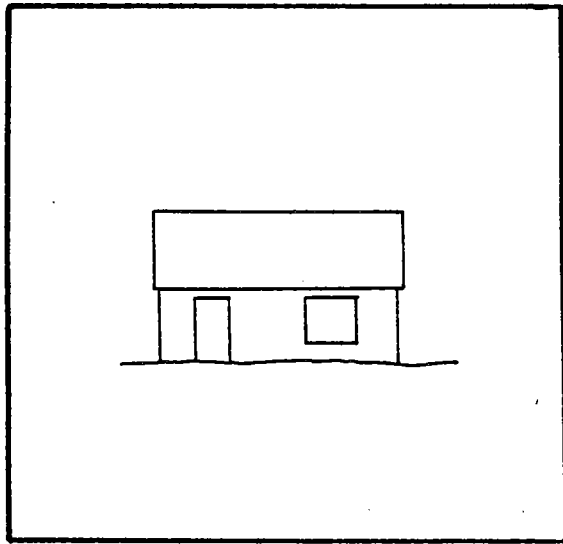
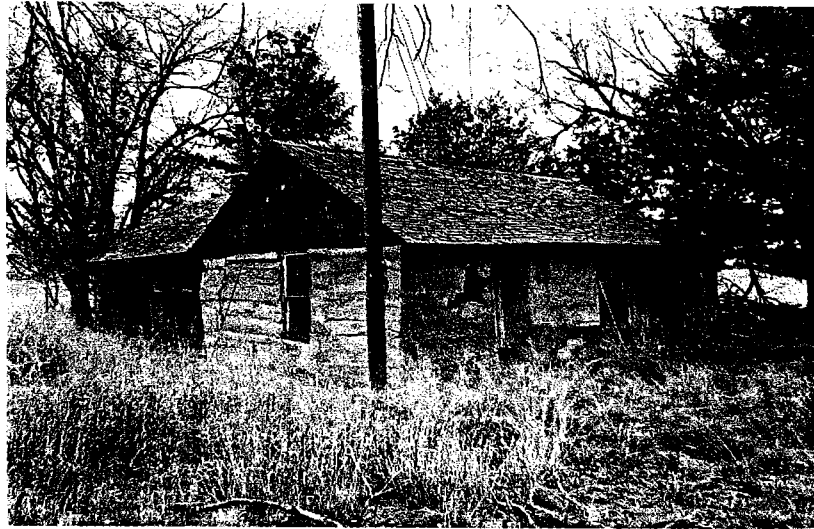
The Clark Mowery Sod House is significant for its association with Kinkaid Act homestead settlement and as an excellent example of the sod "brick" building method used by rural sandhills settlers in the early twentieth-century.



NO SCALE

N

TM00-9: CLARK MOWERY SOD HOUSE
 1911, RURAL THOMAS CO.
 DRAWN: MAY 9, 1989
 BY: J. KAY
 D. ANTHONY



NeHBS NUMBER: TM00-010

DATE: 1908

RESOURCE NAME: Joseph Albright Sod House

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Settlement: (16.01), (08)

PROPERTY TYPE: Ranch (08.1)

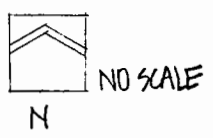
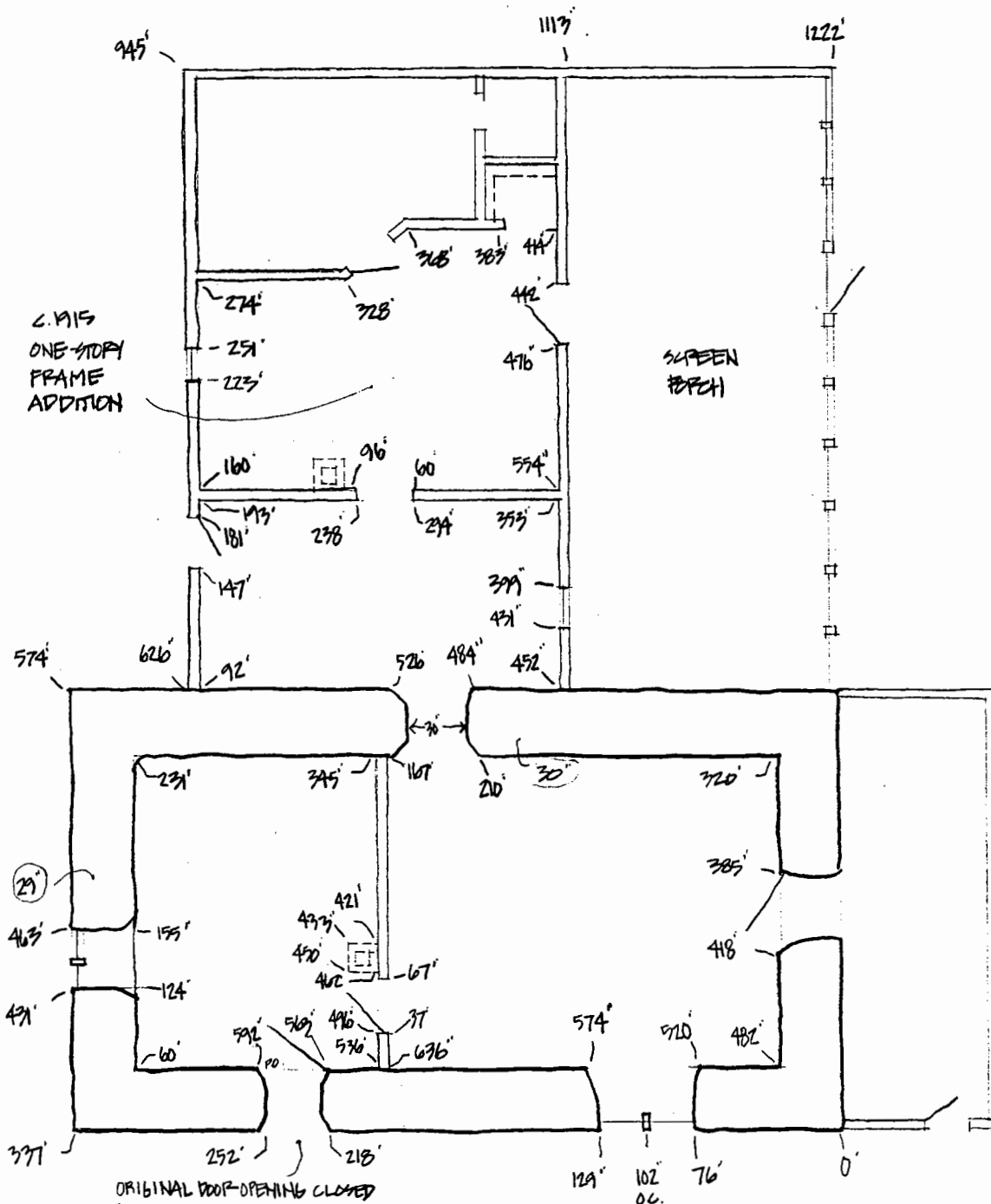
LOCATION: NW 1/4, NE 1/4, Sec. 25, T. 22 N., R. 29 W.

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 6 **STRUCTURES:** 0

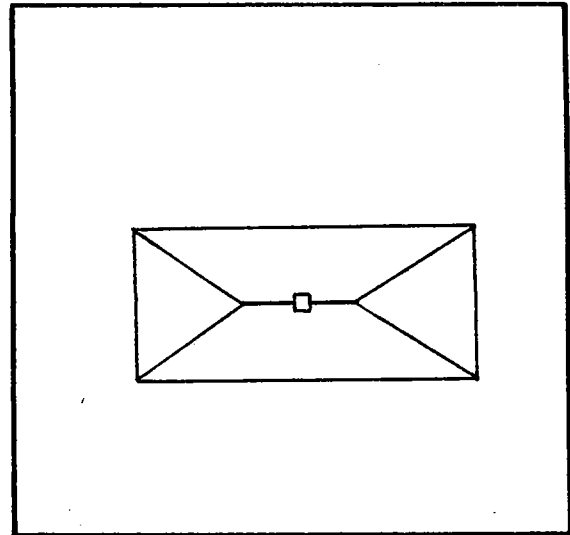
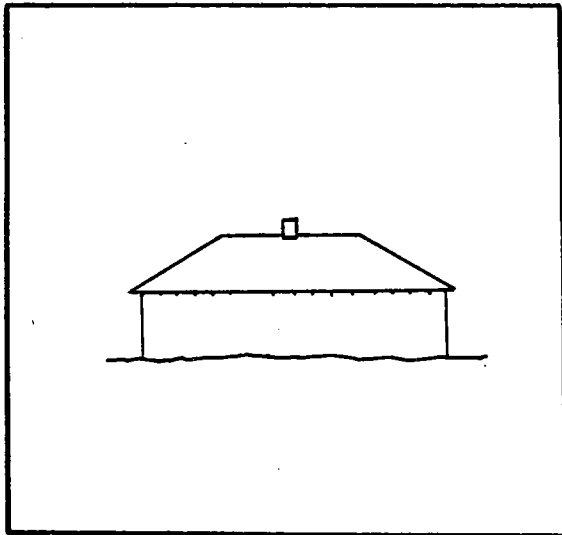
SITES: 0

OBJECTS: 0

The Joseph Albright Sod House is significant for its association with Kinkaid Act homestead settlement and as a contributor to the proposed Thomas County Sod Houses Multiple Property Nomination.



TM00-10: JOSEPH ALBRIGHT
 500 HOUSE, C. 1910
 MAY 10, 1989
 DRAWN BY: JKAY
 D. ANTIONE



NeHBS NUMBER: TM00-011

DATE: 1911

RESOURCE NAME: Frederick W. Jameson Sod House

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Settlement: (16.01), (08)

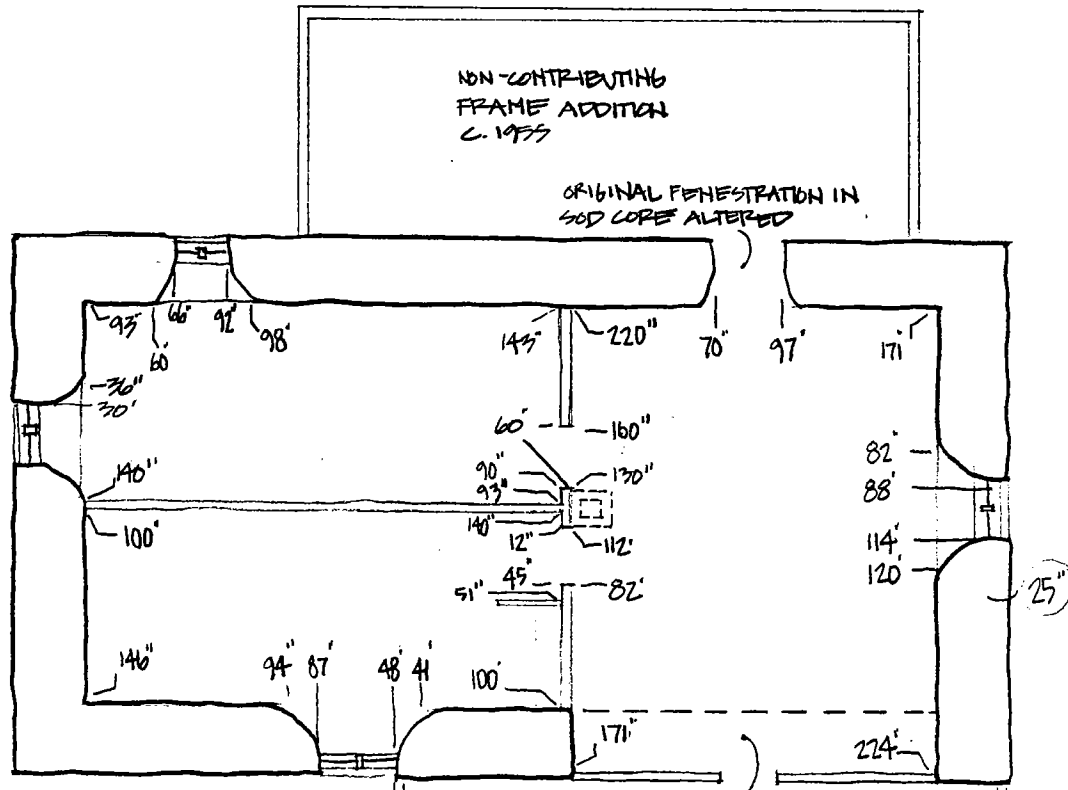
PROPERTY TYPE: Ranch (08.1)

LOCATION: NW 1/4, NE 1/4, Sec. 9, T. 21 N., R. 29 W.

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 4 **STRUCTURES:** 0

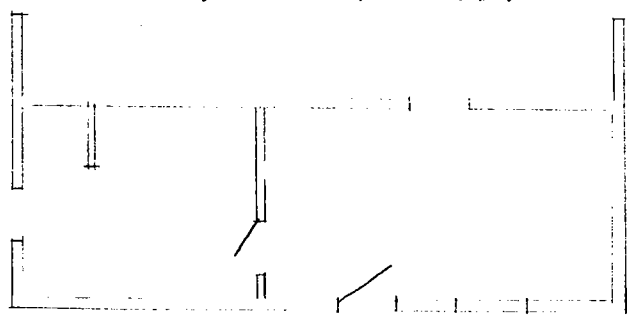
SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

One of eight sod houses recorded in Thomas County, the Jameson House is an excellent example of the sod "brick" building method used by rural sandhills settlers in the early twentieth-century and is significant for association with Kinkaid Act homestead settlement.

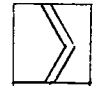


PORTION OF ORIGINAL EAST WALL OF SOD HOUSE NON-EXTANT

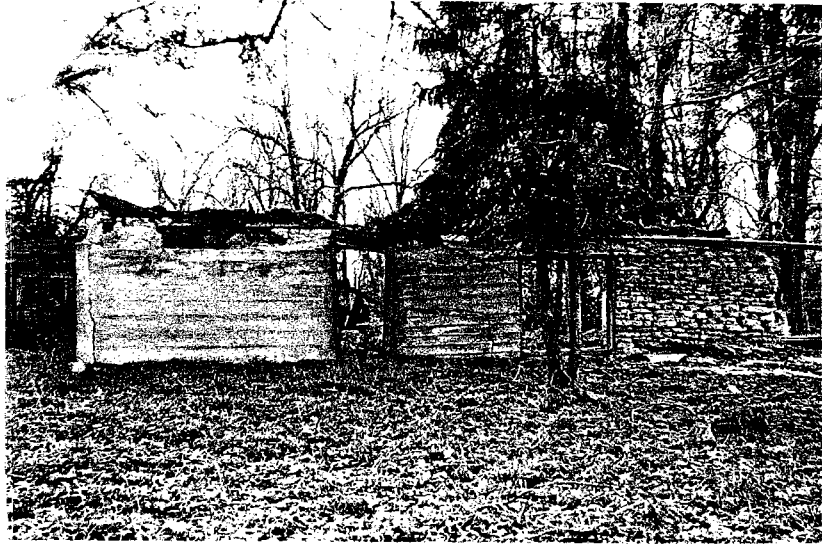
NON-CONTRIBUTING FRAME ADDITION C. 1955



N
NO SCALE



TMDO-11: FREDERICK JAMESON
SOD HOUSE
C. 1911
DRAWN: MAY 17, 1989
J. KAY, D. ANTHONY



NeHBS NUMBER: TM00-024

DATE: 1917

RESOURCE NAME: Archie Warner Sod House

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Settlement: (16.01), (08)

PROPERTY TYPE: Single Family Dwelling (16.5.1)

LOCATION: SE 1/4, NW 1/4, Sec. 22, T.21 N., R. 28 W.

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 2 **STRUCTURES:** 0
SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

Due to its current deteriorated condition, the Warner Sod House is included in the Preliminary Inventory under the National Register Criterion D as a property likely to yield information important to the history of Thomas County.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM00-041

DATE: 1938

RESOURCE NAME: Figard Sod House

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Settlement: (16.01), (08)

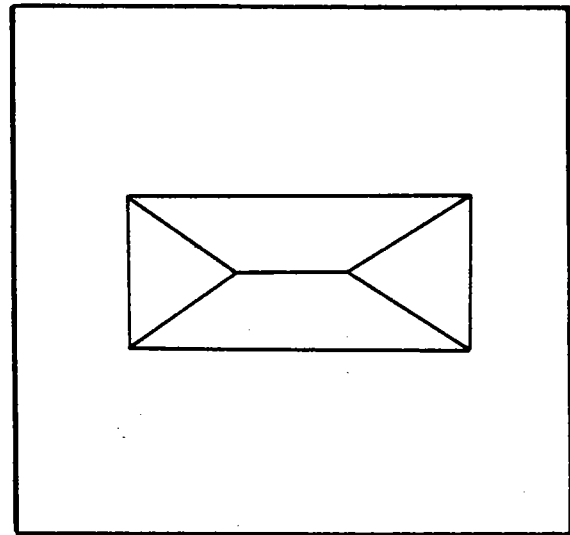
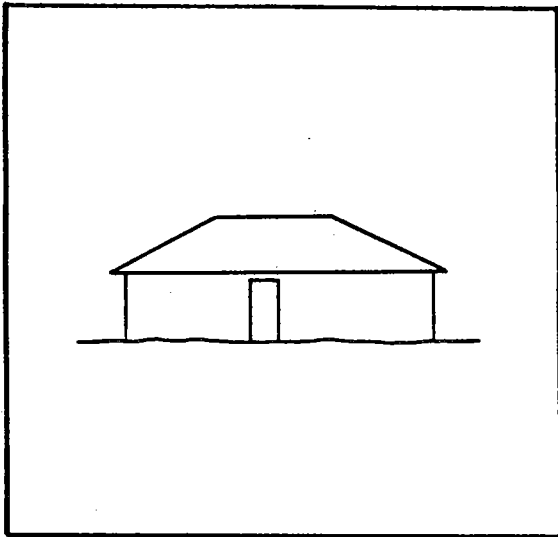
PROPERTY TYPE: Single Family Dwelling (16.5.1)

LOCATION: SW 1/4, NE 1/4, Sec. 23, T.21 N., R.28 W.

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 5 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

Despite its current state of deterioration, the Figard Sod House is significant as an example of the "second generation" (1935-45) sod house building phase evident in the northern sandhills study region.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM00-042

DATE: 1916

RESOURCE NAME: W.D. Paul Sod House

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Settlement: (16.01)

PROPERTY TYPE: Single Family Dwelling (16.5.1)

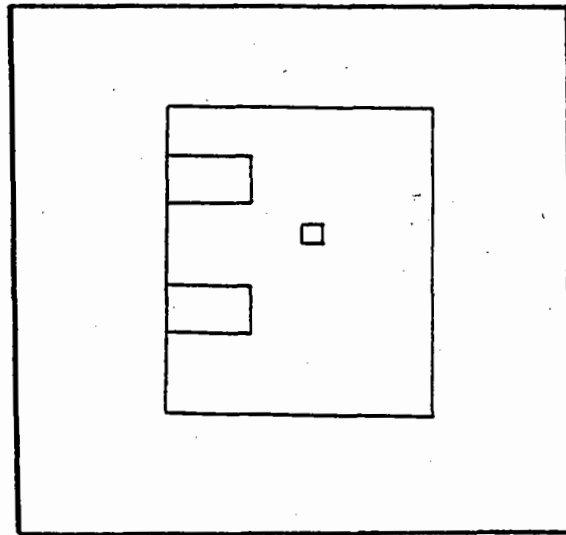
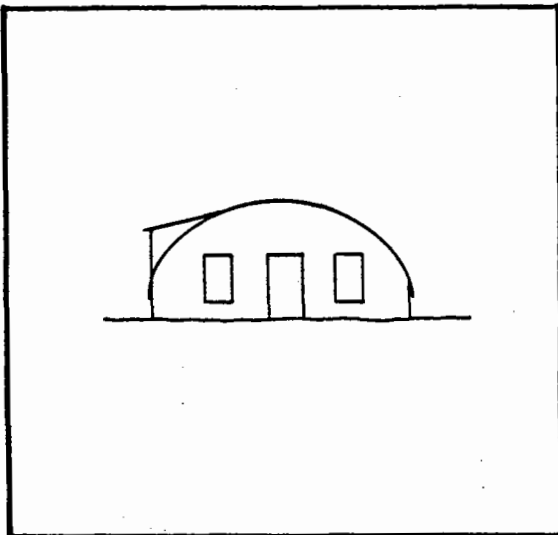
LOCATION: NW 1/4, SW 1/4, Sec. 24, T. 21 N., R. 28 W.

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0

OBJECTS: 0

The Paul Sod House is significant as an excellent example of the sod "brick" building method employed extensively by the rural sandhills settlers of the early twentieth-century. The Paul House also contributes to the proposed Thomas County Sod House Multiple Property Nomination.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM01-012

DATE: c.1909

COMMON NAME: House (Abandoned)

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Settlement: (16.01)

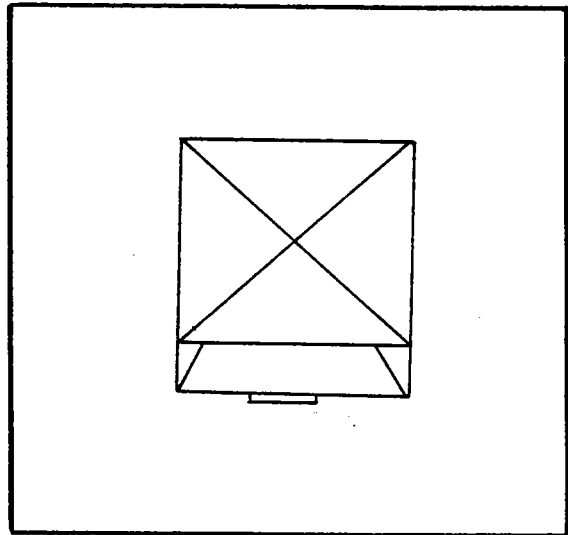
PROPERTY TYPE: Single Family Dwelling (16.5.1)

LOCATION: WS Pearl between Jewett & Bovee, Halsey

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

This frame and stucco quansat-roof building is included in the Preliminary Inventory as a future research property. Due to the unique characteristics of the dwelling, further research on the property should be performed to determine its potential significance.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM04-023

DATE: c.1907

COMMON NAME: House (Abandoned)

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Settlement: (16.01)

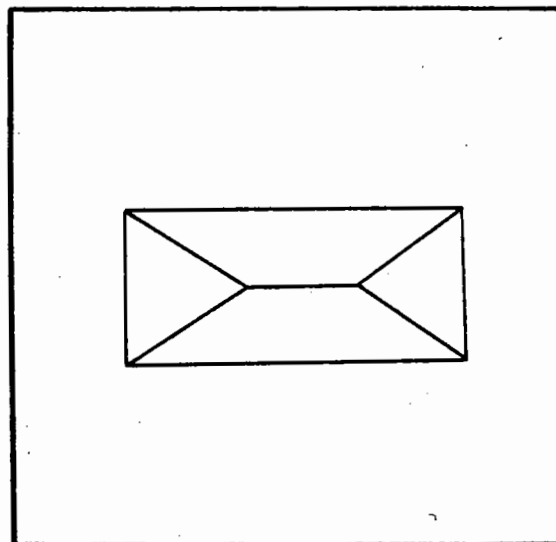
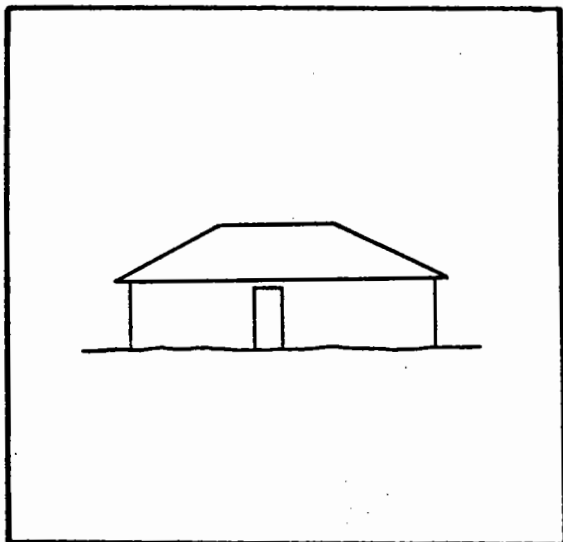
PROPERTY TYPE: Single Family Dwelling (16.5.1)

LOCATION: WS East Ave between Corona & Delmar, Seneca

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

This two-story frame house was included in the Preliminary Inventory for possible association with a significant person and for its potential relation with the Hotel/Boarding House property types documented in Seneca.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM04-028

DATE: 1906

RESOURCE NAME: Inman Sod House

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Settlement: (16.01)

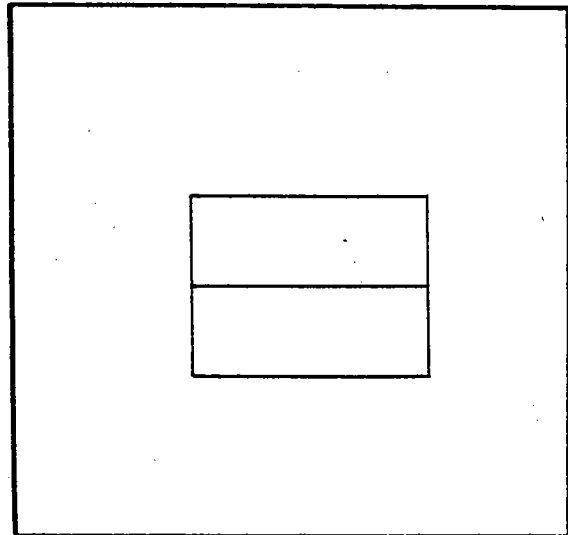
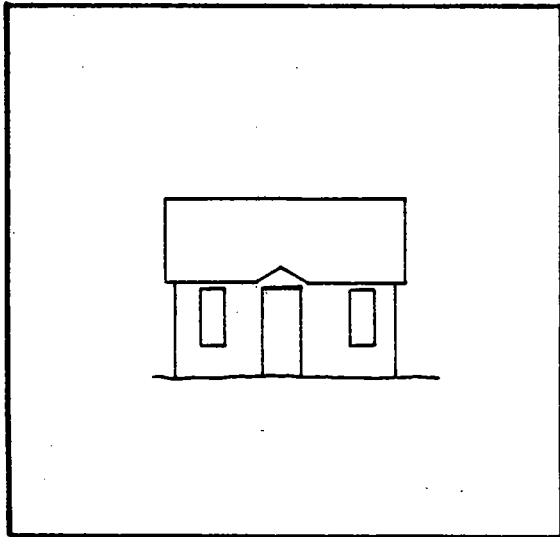
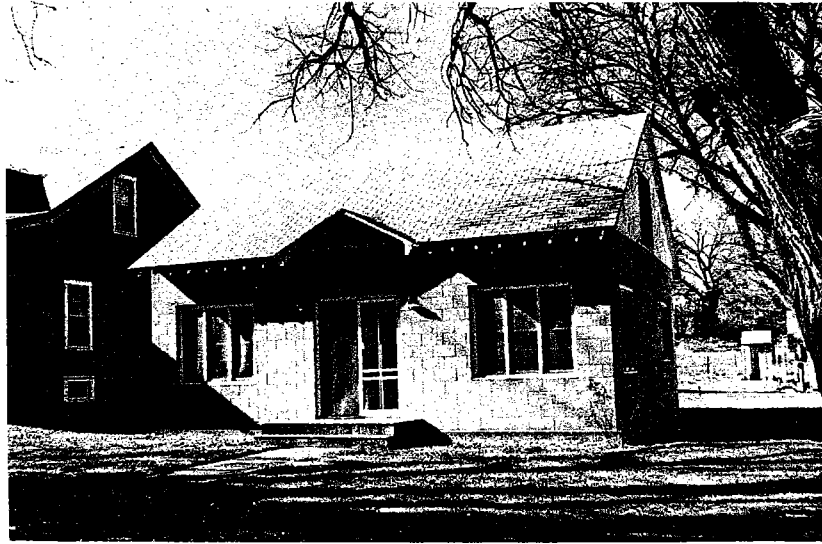
PROPERTY TYPE: Single Family Dwelling (16.5.1)

LOCATION: ES Adrian between Corona & Delmar, Seneca

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

The Inman Sod House is significant as an exceptionally well-preserved example of the sod "brick" building methods used by the early twentieth-century settlers of the northern sandhills region.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM04-031

DATE: c.1922

COMMON NAME: House

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Settlement: (16.01)

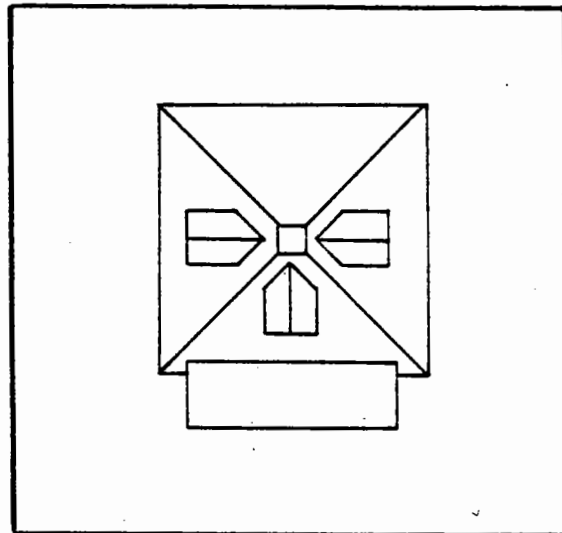
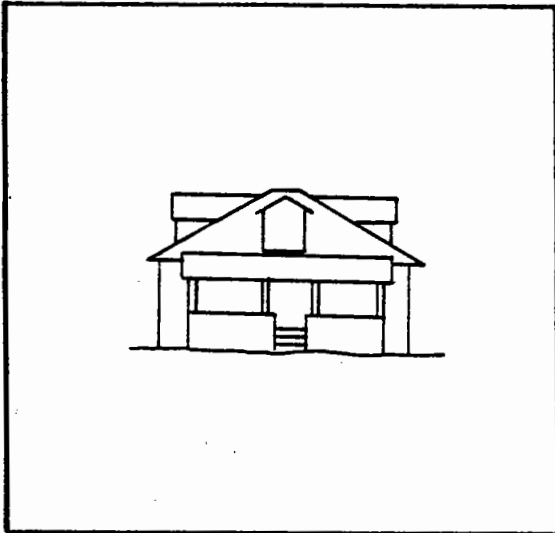
PROPERTY TYPE: Single Family Dwelling (16.5.1)

LOCATION: WS Adrian between Corona & Delmar, Seneca

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 1 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

This one-story gable roof house was included in the Preliminary Inventory primarily for the locally unique use of blonde-tile masonry construction.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM04-043

DATE: c.1910

COMMON NAME: House

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Settlement: (16.01)

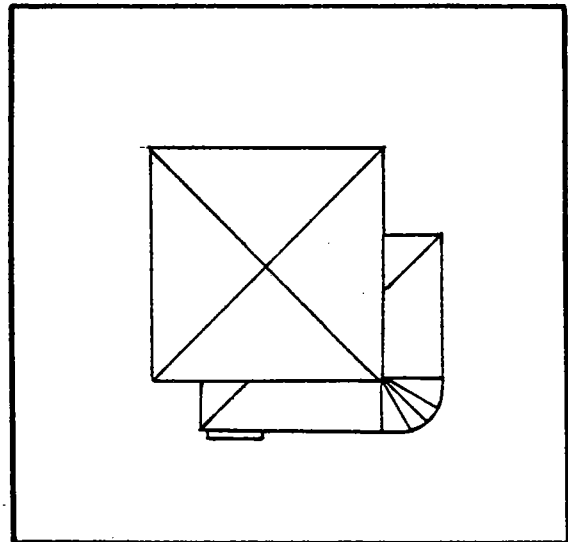
PROPERTY TYPE: Single Family Dwelling (16.5.1)

LOCATION: See Plat Map, Seneca

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 2 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0 **OBJECTS:** 0

This one-story hip roof house was judged potentially significant for a possible association with a locally significant person and for the use of cement-block masonry wall construction.



NeHBS NUMBER: TM05-015

DATE: c.1915

COMMON NAME: House

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Settlement: (16.01)

PROPERTY TYPE: Single Family Dwelling (16.5.1)

LOCATION: NS Main between Locust & Ash, Thedford

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: 2 **STRUCTURES:** 0

SITES: 0

OBJECTS: 0

Circa 1915 frame house included in the Preliminary Inventory as a surprisingly rare local example of the otherwise popular two-story square house. Further significance possible through association with significant persons.

 THOMAS COUNTY SECOND PRIORITY PROPERTIES BY HISTORIC CONTEXT NUMERIC SEQUENCE

NeHBS NUMBER	DATE	RESOURCE/COMMON NAME	HISTORIC CONTEXT	CONTRIBUTING				PROPERTY TYPE
				Bldg.	Site	Struct.	Obj.	
TM00-18	c.1900	ABAN. POST OFFICE	04	1	0	0	0	04.2.3
TM05-21	c.1935	THEDFORD CITY PARK	07	3	1	0	15	07.5.1
TM00-032	c.1915	RODOCKER RANCH	08	7	0	1	3	08.1
TM00-32.2	c.1915	HOUSE	08	1	0	0	0	08.1
TM00-33	c.1918	USGS: RYMAN RANCH	08	3	0	0	2	08.1
TM01-14	c.1929	STOCKADE MOTEL	12	2	0	0	0	12.3.2
TM01-3	c.1910	ABAN. HOUSE	16	2	0	0	1	16.5
TM01-6	c.1917	HOUSE	16	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-29	c.1923	HOUSE	16	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-33	c.1910	HOUSE	16	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-38	c.1907	HOUSE	16	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-39	c.1918	HOUSE	16	1	0	0	0	16.5

A Supratype Summary of Thomas County House Types

It is no surprise that domestic buildings are the most frequently recorded resource in reconnaissance level surveys. The Thomas County survey was no exception producing a total of 90 residential resources. This total represents 40.7% of the 204 contributing buildings and structures within the study area. The preservation of this building type can be attributed to the continuing social need for shelter and the predominant location of houses in extant communities where the opportunity for occupancy is greater. The recording of residential buildings in the Thomas County survey included not only occupied resources, but abandoned as well. In addition, all houses that were surveyed as part of a church site or farmstead were included in the aforementioned totals.

In consideration of the large abundance of these resources and in an attempt to avoid "stylistic" designations, the method of Core Supratype Analysis (as developed by the Midwest Vernacular Architecture Committee, D. Murphy: 1985) has been implemented. The supratype analysis eliminated the objective labeling of domestic buildings according to "style" and imposes instead, an objective description based on the primary external mass of the house. To best define the components of the method, an excerpt from the South Bottoms Historic District National Register Nomination (D. Murphy: 1987, 1-4) is included below.

The supratype is a categorization based exclusively on the external massing of houses, similar to that first developed by Kniffen (1936) under the ruberick of "type." The term "supratype" is

applied here to distinguish it from the more current methods of type analysis which are based on form, that is, on external massing and internal space, such as that developed by Glassie (1975).

Core supratypes are defined by combinations of five massing elements as applied to the core structure of houses. Core structure is defined as the predominant mass element which cannot be further subdivided (Figure 2). In general, core refers to that portion of a house which is exclusive of wings and porches. The mass elements which compose the core include its shape, relative size, wall height, roof type, and its orientation on the site.

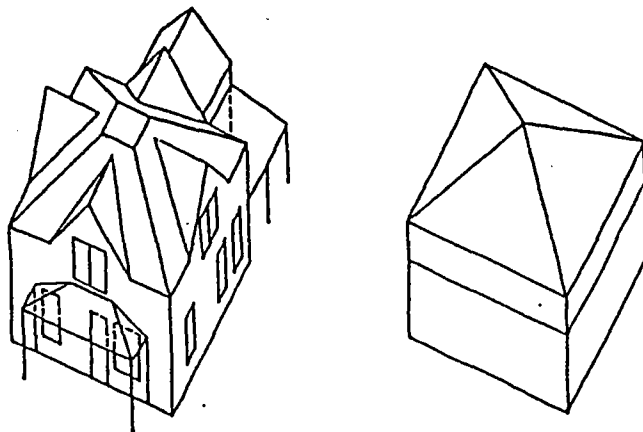


Fig. 2. The core structure derived from the house (after Murphy).

Shape designations for core structures are geometric, based on the ground-level outline of the core. Designations include square (S), rectangular (R), tee-shaped (T), ell-shaped (L), cross-shaped (X), U-shaped (U), polygonal (P), H-shaped (H), courtyard (C), irregular (I), and circular (O).

The horizontal size of the core is related to a need to distinguish large houses from small ones. Size, in the supertype method, refers to horizontal dimension and is applied only to the narrowest dimension of the core, or to its width. While actual dimensions are recorded, houses are sorted based upon "units" of measurement which approximate the number of rooms a given width normally could contain (e.g., one, with hall, two rooms, etc.). Units of width in the South Bottoms Historic District are defined as 0.5 (less than 14 ft.), 1.0 (14-19 ft.), 1.5 (20-29 ft.), 2.0 (30-39 ft.), and 2.5 (40 ft. or greater).

The second measurement of size involves the height of the core. We designate this dimension in terms of stories, even though it is based exclusively on the height of the external wall, not on the

amount; of usable internal space. The measurement is based on the facade wall, the top of which is expressed by the eave line (Figure 3). Thus attics, the space beneath a sloping roof, are not considered in determinations of height.

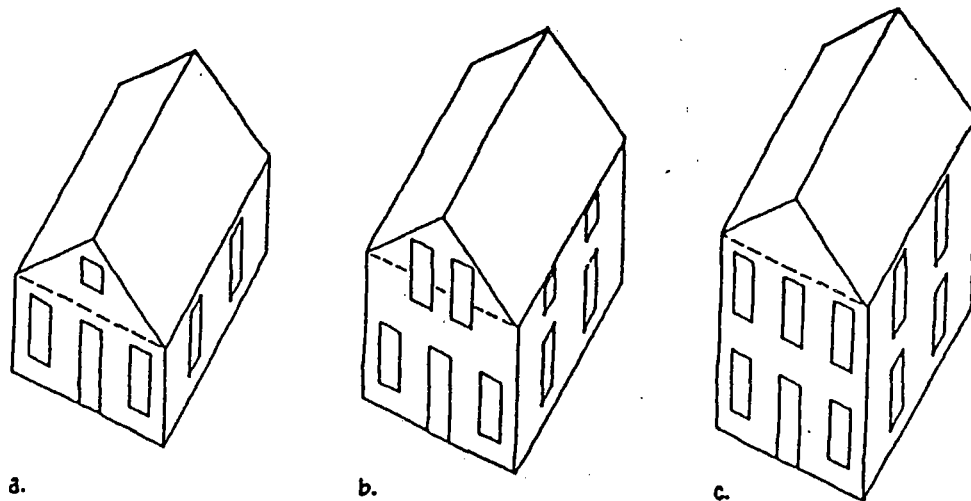


Fig. 3. Wall height guidelines illustrated, note the eave line:
a) one story, b) one-and-one-half story, c) two story
(after Murphy).

The fourth massing element is roof type. These are so well known that they need little explanation. The supratypal method utilizes only four generic types for simplicity, subsuming under these all the variants (Figure 4). The four types include flat (F), shed (S), hipped (H, including pyramidal and mansard), and gabled (G, including gambrel and gerkinhead).

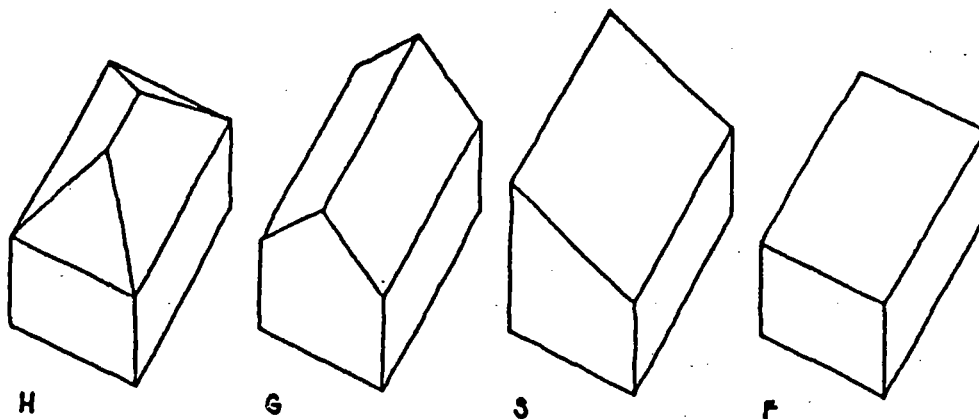


Fig. 4. Generic roof types: H: hipped; G: gable; S: shed; F: flat
(after Murphy).

The last aspect of mass used in describing core supratypes involves the orientation of the core on the site, relative to its facade. Facade is defined as that wall which is the architectural front of the house, facing the road or the street, which is usually but not always more highly decorated. Facades also usually but not always incorporate the main entrance. Orientation is expressed in latitudinal (La), longitudinal (Lo), and non-applicable (Na) terms. There are several core shapes for which orientation is not applicable. Since only two shapes, the square (S) and the rectangular (R), are statistically significant in South Bottoms, orientation will be discussed only for those two here.

For rectangular shapes, if the narrow (gable) end faces the street, the axis of its roof is perpendicular to the street. Its orientation is then termed longitudinal (Lo). If the eave side faces the street, its roof ridge runs parallel to the street and its orientation is described as latitudinal (La). Orientation is always applicable for rectangular cores.

For square shapes (S), where both the front and side dimensions are equal, we would normally consider orientation to be non-applicable (Na). This is true for squares with hipped or pyramidal roofs. However, if the square core is sheltered by a gable roof, the ridge provides an illusion of orientation as though it were rectangular in shape. Therefore, square shapes with gable roofs have orientation recorded in the same fashion as that of rectangular cores.

In summary, core supratypes are external massing categorizations applied to the core structure of houses. Core structure is the predominant mass element which cannot be further subdivided (that portion of the house exclusive of subordinate wings and porches). Five massing aspects of the core are used to derive the supertype---its shape, relative size, height, roof type, and orientation. Particular combinations of these aspects are designated numerically (S.#). (D. Murphy: South Bottoms Historic District National Register Nomination, 1987, 1-4).

Thomas County House Types

The use of the Core Supertype analysis in the reconnaissance level survey proved beneficial in that it created an objective process of interpretation for the recording of historic residences. The residential properties documented by the Thomas County survey are represented by 36 different supratypes. A

numerical designation has been assigned to each of these 36 types (e.g., S.1, S.2, S.3, etc.). A master list of the 36 individual types is included in this report as Appendix 3.

While 36 various supratypes may seem like a varied lot for 90 total resources, a somewhat more narrow group actually represents the majority of the documented properties. In fact, 10 supratype categories account for sixty-percent of all supratype entries. Furthermore, thirty-nine percent of all Thomas County houses fit into one of only seven supratype categories. The supratype recording of historic houses has produced a large volume of data which can be analyzed in an infinite number of ways. However, in an attempt to present a concise and useful summary of the supratype data, Save America's Heritage has focused on the answers to two basic questions. These are:

1. What were the numerically significant supratypes of the entire county?
2. What were the numerically significant supratypes of town location verses those of rural location?

To answer these questions, a numerical analysis of the 36 supratypes was performed to derive a minimum level of significance. With a survey total of only 90 houses, this minimum level was established at 8.5% necessitating a representation of 8 or more houses. Of the 36 supratypes generated by the Thomas County survey, two individual types exceed the 8.5% level and are summarized in the following discussion.



Supratype 12

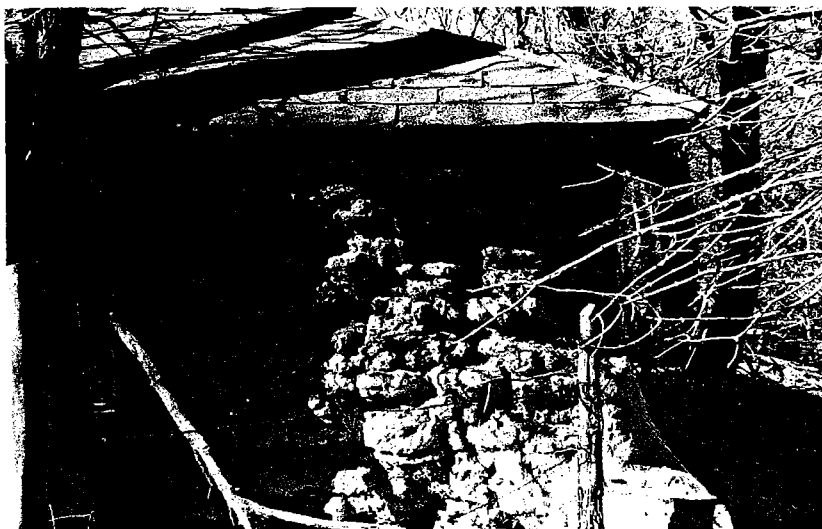
Supratype No. 12; R, 1.5u, 1.0s, G, Lo. Among the 36 supratypes present in Thomas County, Supratype No. 12 was the most frequently recorded house form representing 10% of the 90 surveyed houses. The essential characteristics of this type consist of a rectangular-shaped core with the narrowest dimension ranging from 20 to 29 feet, a height of one-story, and a gable roof running in a longitudinal orientation. This house type appears to have been started in the early settlement years of the 1880's and was carried into the 1920's where it was more commonly adorned with "craftsman" decorative motifs. The strong representation of this house type is due mostly to its predominant use in rural locations. In fact, this type appeared in 13.5% of the 37 houses recorded in rural Thomas County and was only documented in 7.5% of the 53 buildings recorded in the three Thomas County towns.



Supratype 16

Supratype No. 16; R, 1.5u, 1.0s, H, Lo. Supratype No. 16 was the second most frequently recorded house type in Thomas County (8.9%) and differs only slightly from the aforementioned Supratype #12. Both the S.16 and S.12 have an identical rectangular core mass of one-story height and one and one-half unit gable ends ranging from 20 to 29 feet. In addition, both types are placed in a longitudinal relationship to the street. The only difference between these two types is found in the roof form. The more popular S.12 is covered with a gable roof while the S.16 is capped with a hip roof form. Unlike S.12 however, this type was predominantly constructed in town locations. Of the 53 houses found in the towns of Thomas County, 11.3% consisted of the S.16 house shape. Conversely, this type represented an insignificant 2.7% of the 32 rural-based houses.

Important Themes of the Thomas County Historic Buildings Survey

SOD HOUSES OF THE NORTHERN NEBRASKA SAND HILLS STUDY REGION

TM00-042: W.D. Paul Sod House, 1916.

The northern Nebraska Sand Hills Historic Buildings Survey was, in many respects, a highly successful project. The reconnaissance level survey of the nine county region recorded a staggering total of 1,524 properties which included 4,287 buildings, structures, sites and objects.

As with most historic buildings surveys, the properties recorded in the northern Sand Hills survey displayed various levels of significance.

While the majority of the buildings recorded by the survey were successful in meeting the historic integrity criteria required for reconnaissance level documentation (see Appendix 2: Research Design), they generally did not carry a substantial amount of significance. However, in contrast to this are those buildings which not only retain their historic integrity, but possess qualities

which enhance their significance as historic resources.

One such group of resources in the northern Sand Hills region that may possess a greater level of significance are those buildings associated with sod "brick" construction. Twenty-seven properties containing sod buildings were recorded by the northern Nebraska Sand Hills Historic Buildings Survey. This includes nine in Blaine County, eight in Thomas County, seven in Cherry County, two in Hooker County, and one in Loup County, (see Sod House Inventory, p. 83). These buildings were considered particularly significant as representatives of Homestead/Kinkaid Act settlement and Sand Hills Range Livestock Production agriculture. The majority (21) of the sod houses have been preliminarily associated with Homestead and Kinkaid Act settlement. These houses consist of massive sod "brick" walls measuring up to twenty-four inches in thickness. The sod used for the construction of the houses was cut with a plow in the bottomland areas where the soil was of higher quality. The sod plow would flip over one strip of sod approximately eighteen to twenty-four inches wide which would then be cut into desired "brick" size lengths. These bricks were then stacked in alternating fashion with the grass-side down. The walls were typically covered with an exterior stucco wash. In some cases however, the exposed sod wall received no protective covering, (TM00-042, BL00-027). These sod houses have a distinctly low and bulky appearance and are often identifiable by their lack of plumb walls and corners. The exterior wall height of the soddies was considerably shorter than that of frame structures and little, if any, fenestration was included on the north walls of the buildings. The houses typically contained rectangular two-room plans with a

narrow side dimension of twenty feet or less, (Supertype: R,1.5,1.0,H,Lo). The general era of construction for the Homestead/Kinkaid Act sod houses ranged from approximately 1900 to as late as 1917. However, exceptions to this were found in a sub-group of four sod houses constructed between the years of 1930 and 1945. These "second generation" sod houses were constructed as an inexpensive form of shelter during the difficult economic conditions wrought by the Depression.

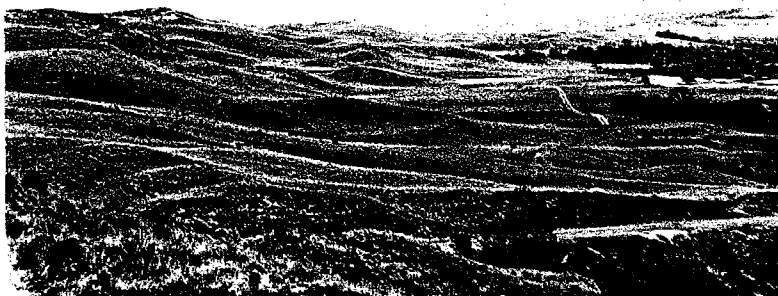
The physical condition of the sod houses recorded by the survey was quite varied. Surprisingly few (8) of the houses were in extremely deteriorated condition with less than four walls standing. The remaining nineteen houses ranged in condition from unoccupied and deteriorated to well-maintained residences for local ranch labor.

As part of an amendment to the reconnaissance survey of the region, Save America's Heritage was instructed to perform intensive level survey of four of the sod houses in south-central Thomas County. The intensive survey of these buildings included on-site field documentation, deed research, and locally written county history research. The data generated by the intensive survey of the sod houses serves as the basis for planning decisions regarding the future study of sod houses in the northern Nebraska Sand Hills region.

SOD HOUSE INVENTORY FOR THE NORTHERN NEBRASKA HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY

BLAINE COUNTY	DATE	RESOURCE/Common Name	HISTORIC CONTEXT
BL00-005	c.1930	Lister clay house	16.01
BL00-018	c.1906	William Gladson Sod House	16.01
BL00-023	c.1905	Sod House	16.01
BL00-027	c.1905	Sod House	16.01
BL00-029	1940	Dean Hersh Sod House	16.01
BL00-033	c.1940	Fred Hartley Sod House	16.01
BL00-034	c.1901	William Harris Sod House	16.01
BL00-036	c.1903	Buck Minister/Blakeley Sod House	16.01
BL00-041	c.1907	Lawrence Thompson Sod House	16.01
THOMAS COUNTY			
TM00-008	1912	Charles Johnson Sod House	16.01
TM00-009	1911	Clark Mowery Sod House	16.01
TM00-010	1908	Joseph Albright Sod House	16.01
TM00-011	1911	Frederick Jameson Sod House	16.01
TM00-024	1917	Archie Warner Sod House	16.01
TM00-041	1938	Figard Sod House	16.01
TM00-042	1916	W.D. Paul Sod House	16.01
TM04-028	c.1906	Inman Sod House	16.01
CHERRY COUNTY			
CE00-128	c.1908	Dr. Rollin Roth Sod House	16.01
CE00-188	c.1900	George Adam Sod House	16.01
CE00-197	c.1900	Spade Ranch Cow Camp Sod House	108.08
CE00-201	c.1885	Geisler Sod House	16.01
CE00-207	c.1885	N-Bar Ranch Sod House	108.08
CE00-216	c.1905	Sod House	16.01
CE00-221	1908	Carpenter Sod House	16.01
HOOKER COUNTY			
H000-004	c.1930	Sod Houses	16.01
H000-021	c.1915	Sod House	16.01
LOUP COUNTY			
LP00-003	c.1885	Sod House	16.01

SAND HILLS RANGE LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION



Introduction

Nebraska is a state of great diversity. Diversities exist among its people, its lands, its topography and, of more immediate concern to this discussion, its agriculture. The agricultural diversity of the state of Nebraska has been forged through one hundred years of adaptation and evolution in a land once labeled the "Great American Desert". Since that time, the "desert" waste of Nebraska has been transformed into some of the most productive farm and ranch land in the United States.

The pattern for the diverse agricultural setting in Nebraska was primarily established between 1870 and 1930. The study of the various agricultural practises in Nebraska was first addressed in the 1930's by scientists from the University of Nebraska College of Agriculture. Their efforts focused upon the

definition of "system-of-farming areas" and were published in Research Bulletins issued by the College of Agriculture Experiment Station. The two specific bulletins which focus on the definition of the types-of-farming areas are Research Bulletin Number 244, Types of Farming in Nebraska, by Harold Hedges and F.F. Elliott (May 1930), and Research Bulletin Number 299, Factors determining Type of farming Areas in Nebraska, by L.F. Garey (May 1936). The conclusions derived by these authors regarding the spatial distribution of the farming areas has generally held true to the present day as evidenced by the conclusions of James Williams and Doug Murfield in their Agricultural Atlas of Nebraska, (University of Nebraska Press, 1977).

The term type-of-farming is used to describe a group of farms which are similar in size and enterprise combination. In this way, a group of farms having the same kind, quantity, and proportion of crops and livestock may be said to be following the same type of farming (Hedges and Elliott, pp. 3). Likewise, the term type-of-farming area, refers to an area within which there is a high degree of uniformity in the agricultural production and in the physical and economic conditions under which production takes place (Hedges and Elliott, p. 3).

The boundaries of the type areas defined by the above-mentioned authors do not conform to the county boundaries imposed by state government. Instead, Figure 5 shows a more accurate division of the state into nine regions which are distinct from each other in the nature of their cropping and livestock systems (Hedges and Elliott, p. 21). These nine regions have been designated

as type-of-farming areas and have been individually labeled with titles indicating both predominant agriculture and geography.

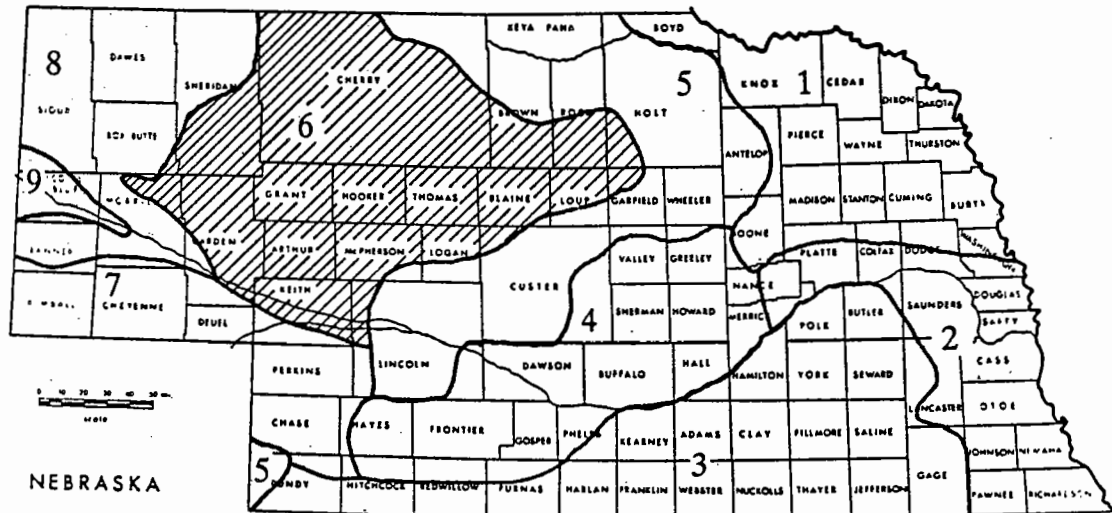


Fig. 5. Type-of-Farming regions for the state of Nebraska.

The nine areas defined by Hedges and Elliott are; 1). the Northeast Nebraska Intensive Livestock Production Area, 2). the Southeastern General Farming Area, 3). the Southern Cash Grain and Livestock Area, 4). the Central Corn and Livestock Area, 5). the Central Hay and Livestock Area, 6). the Sand Hill Cattle Ranching Area, 7). the Southwestern Wheat Area, 8). the High Plains Small Grain and Grazing Area, 9). the Irrigated Area.

No sharply defined boundary lines can be drawn between the areas. In most cases, the transition from one area to another is gradual. The differences lie mainly in the dominant enterprises and their relative importance in the

farming systems (Hedges and Elliott, p. 22).

As evidenced by the map illustrated in Figure number 5, the type-of-farming area which blankets the northern Nebraska Sand Hills Historic Buildings Survey area has been defined as the Sand Hills Cattle Ranching Area. The historical development of the Sand Hills cattle ranching industry is marked by a long and often colorful set of events and people. However, the historical summary of the Sand Hills Cattle Ranching industry has been deferred to a later point in an effort to focus upon the fundamental definition of this farming-type and the resulting set of historic buildings associated with its production.

Sand Hills Cattle Ranching Area

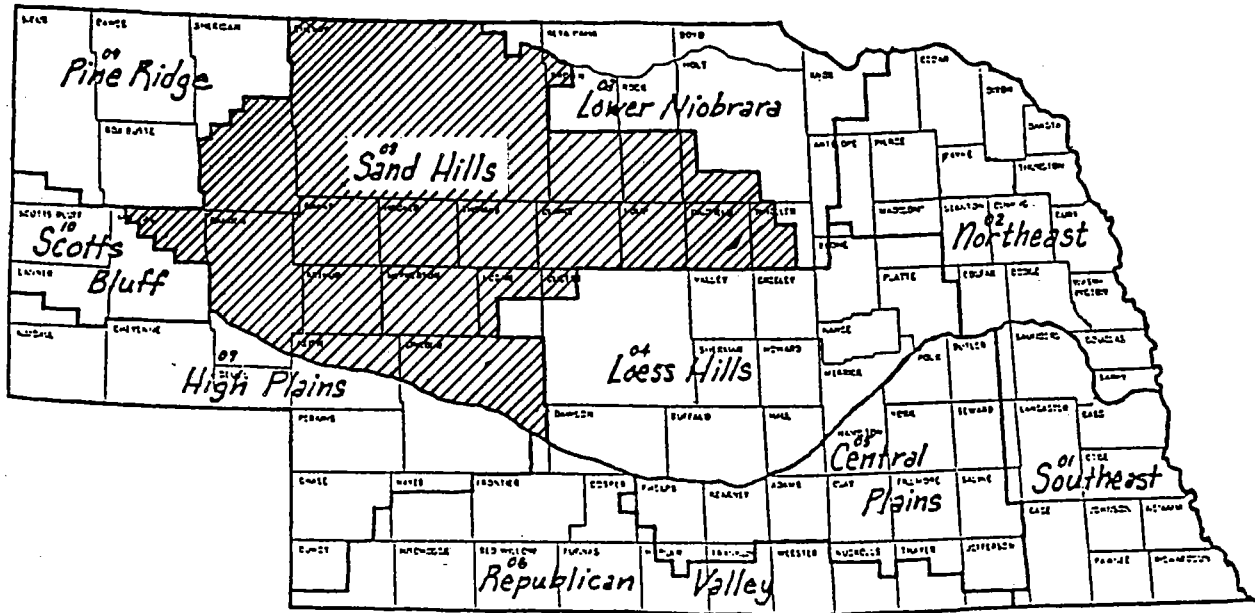


Fig. 6. The Sand Hills Cattle Ranching Area of Nebraska.

The Sand Hills Cattle Ranching area is located in the north-central and northwest portions of the state, (Figure 6). This area extends northward from the Platte River Valley of western Nebraska to the South Dakota border and varies in width from 100 to 200 miles. One of the fundamental characteristics of this area is the extremely large proportion of land devoted to the grazing of cattle. True to its name, the Sand Hills Cattle Ranching Area includes the

Sand Hills region of Nebraska which is the largest soil and topographic region in the state (Garey 1936, p.27). In fact, Nebraska's Sand Hills cover approximately one-fourth of the state and comprise the most extensive dune formation in the western hemisphere (Madson 1978, p.493). The Sand Hills country is characterized by low-lying dunes of sand covered by native grasses suitable for the grazing of cattle. There is little surface drainage due to the porous nature of the sandy soil. The vast dunes of the Sand hills lie above large aquifers which, in certain areas, reach a depth of one-thousand feet. Between the porous hills are numerous basins which sometimes widen into larger valleys. In many of these valleys the high water table has risen above the surface of the land and formed marshes, ponds, and lakes. The effect of the high water table is most evident in the presence of the 13,000 lakes scattered on the landscape of the north and west regions of the Sand Hills (Madson 1978, p. 499).

The soils of the Sand Hills region are exceptionally fine in texture and extremely susceptible to blowing. For this reason, it is the goal of the cattle producers to maintain the native grass covers which prevent "blow-outs" of the dune tops and provide the necessary supplements for grazing. Due to the presence of the sandy soils, the Sand Hills Cattle Ranching Area is not conducive to the production of cultivated crops. In 1936, only eight-percent of the area was deemed suitable for cultivation (Garey 1936, p.49). Only four percent of the entire region was classified as containing good soils and much of those areas were located along the river and streambeds (Garey 1936, p.49).

Given such environmental conditions it is easy to understand why the land

is utilized principally for the grazing of cattle. With more than seventy-five percent of the land in pasture and the majority of the remaining lands utilized for hay production, the cattle enterprise is the logical choice as the farming type in this region (Hedges and Elliott, p.27). Hay, in combination with limited amounts of other grains provides the winter feed necessary for breeding herds. Since the grasses of the Sand Hills are not primarily suitable for the production of grass-fat cattle, these breeding herds are maintained and the young cattle from the area are typically sent to the corn belt region prior to final shipment to market (Hedges and Elliott, p.59).

The Sand Hills Cattle Ranching Area, therefore, is essentially a cattle-raising area. The economic base is almost entirely from the sale of cattle with a small proportion coming from crop and dairy products. To illustrate the exclusivity of the Sand Hills as a cattle-raising region, data assembled by Hedges and Elliott showing the utilization of land area in the region from 1899 to 1928 has been illustrated below in Table 2.

Table 2: Utilization of Land in the Sand Hills Cattle Ranching Area, 1899-1928.

Land Utilization	1899	1909	1919	1924	1928
Cultivated Area	.5%	2.0%	3.9%	4.1%	4.2%
Wild Hay	3.9%	8.3%	10.5%	10.5%	11.0%
Pastures	11.3%	42.2%	63.2%	66.4%	80.3%
Land not in farms	84.3%	47.5%	22.4%	19.0%	4.5%

In reviewing this table, we see that the predominant trend among ranches in the Sand Hills was the increase of pasture land for the grazing of cattle. In fact, with the exception of the High Plains Small Grain and Grazing Area, by 1928 all other areas in the state had at least a double-digit split between cultivated acres and pastured lands. The only region to display a dominance in a singular agricultural type (in this case cattle) was the Sand Hills Cattle Ranching Area. Therefore, comparatively speaking, no other single agricultural type is as important to its respective region as the cattle industry is to the Sand Hills Ranching Area.

Property Types of the Sand Hills Cattle Ranching Area

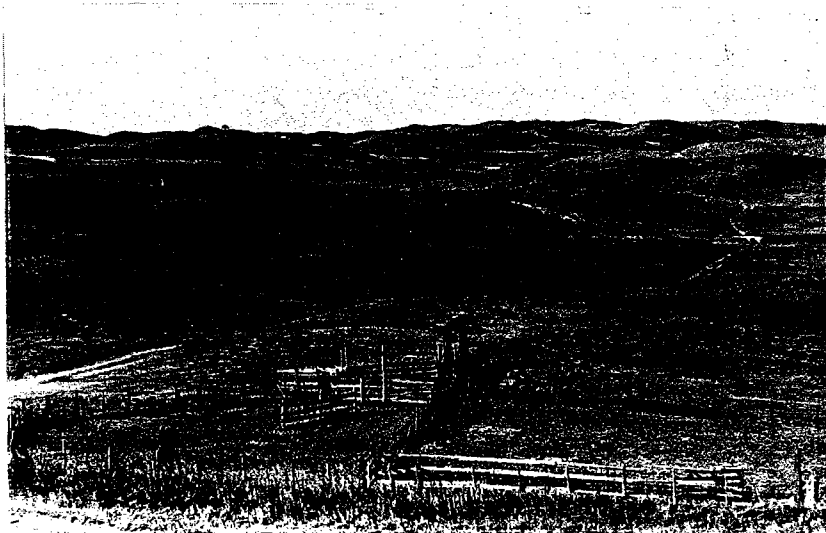
In the property type discussions previously generated for the NeSHPO regarding ethnic-related contexts, the buildings of discussion were organized according to the separation of Old World and New World traditions. Unfortunately, the study of buildings associated with the Sand Hills Cattle Ranching do not lend themselves to this conceptual separation. While it is acknowledged that the design and arrangement of farm buildings elsewhere in Nebraska may have been influenced considerably by cultural traditions, the buildings of the Sand Hills Cattle Ranching Area are generally void of a significant ethnic influence. This is in part due to the minimal influx of foreign-born immigrants as well as the overall lack of a population base capable of transferring ethnically-associated building characteristics. Even if the potential for variances in cultural design were a valid concept in the Sand Hills Ranching Area, all cattle production requires a basic group of

animal and human-related structures. The compulsory provision of food, shelter, and land was required regardless of ethnic influences. Based on this attitude, the following property type discussion will simply focus upon the basic structures associated with sand hills cattle ranching.

The sand hills ranching system requires a variety of buildings and skills necessary for the successful management of significant numbers of cattle. Ranches which have retained their pre-mechanization buildings will have a variety of structures important to the reconnaissance level survey. The buildings found on the Sand Hills cattle ranches are similar in some respects to those found on the Intensive Livestock Production farms of northeast Nebraska. The buildings, structures and objects of common reference are; cattle barns, cattle loafing sheds, implement sheds, cattle fencing systems, windmills, windbreaks and the occasional small-scale corn crib. In addition to these animal-related structures, a set of domestic oriented buildings are also found in each of these regions: the ranch or farm house, wash houses, privies, cellars, milk houses, smoke houses, gardens, and chicken houses.

However, it is more significant at this time to note the additional set of buildings found exclusive to the Nebraska Sand Hills Cattle Ranching Area. All of the buildings mentioned in this category were constructed to either satisfy the management needs of the cattle themselves or to shelter the activities of the ranch hands employed in handling the herds. The buildings associated with the labor force include; bunkhouses for sleeping quarters, saddle sheds for the storage of riding equipment, cookhouses to prepare large group meals, and commissaries for the serving of those meals.

The specific structures or objects created exclusively for the handling of cattle include; dipping stations for the cleaning and health maintenance of cattle, vaccination/branding stanchions for the immunization and identification of stock, breaking pens for the implementation of working stock, sorting pens for the management and separation of bulls, calves and heifers, holding corrals usually located in outlying pasture land, and loading chutes for the eventual shipping of sale-bound cattle.



In addition to the fact that there exists a unique set of structures exclusive to Sand Hills cattle ranching, it is also important to note that the visual characteristics of a Sand Hills ranch are also unique in comparison with other type-of-farming areas in Nebraska. The overpowering presence of the Sand Hills landscape immediately imparts a mentality of no-nonsense survival tempered by intriguing beauty. The most visually and emotionally accurate description of a Sand Hills ranch read by the author to date is found in John Madson's adventure

to the Abbott Ranch in west-central Cherry County (National Geographic, Oct., 1978).

From the main highway the road back to the ranch is nine tough miles of ruts and sand traps. The farther you go, the more you wonder where you made the wrong turn. Suddenly, around the shoulder of a high ridge, there is ranch headquarters. The main house, in a grove of cottonwoods and box elders, is 67 years old, high-ceilinged and spacious. Nearby stand the bunkhouse and cookhouse, and set into the side of the ridge is a combination butcher shop, creamery, and commissary that can feed the ranch crew for two months if blizzards close the road.

Across the ranch yard, a blacksmith forge and machine shop are equipped to serve either horse or tractor. Beyond the pens, corrals, loading chutes, and dipping tanks lies a broad, sheltered valley with herds of wintering cattle. There is a certain quality about a working ranch like this; it is a window into yesterday, with something unchanged since before the ranges were fenced.

And it is indeed true that the appearance of a Sand Hills ranch nestled among billowing hills imparts an ageless "old west" quality. A quality perhaps derived in part from its early beginnings as an outgrowth of the Texas cattle industry.

HISTORY OF SAND HILLS CATTLE RANCHING

The Texas Cattle Industry

Despite the fact that small herds of cattle were ranged on the road ranches of the Platte Valley before the Civil War, the large scale post-war range cattle industry had its origins in the state of Texas, (Olson, pp.185). This fact was brought forth in Edward Everett Dale's comments in The Range Cattle

Industry (Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1930):

Any history of the cattle industry in the west must begin with Texas since that state was the original home of ranching on a large scale in the United States, and from its vast herds were drawn most of the cattle for the first stocking of the central and northern plains (Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1930).

Unfortunately, while it was not difficult to raise cattle in Texas, it was difficult in finding markets of a local proximity in which to sell the Texas raised longhorns. Prior to the Civil War, this problem was solved by driving the cattle great distances to the southeastern ports of New Orleans and Galveston or the northern ports of Chicago and Cincinnati. However, the advent of the Civil War during the early 1860's disrupted the cattle industry by cutting off the established markets of the 1840's and 1850's, (Olson, pp.185). With these markets no longer available, the population of cattle in the state of Texas swelled and included not only those stock in managed herds but also large numbers of wild cattle as well. In the years immediately following the conclusion of the Civil War (1865-70), the Texas cattle industry resumed the tradition of the long cattle drive. This time however, the destination of the drives was generally not the previously-mentioned port cities to the southeast and north but rather to the shipping points along the westward moving rails of the Kansas Pacific and Union Pacific railroads (Olson, p.186). This change in destinations resulted in the development of ranches in the northern plains bringing the cattle nearer the shipping and market areas.

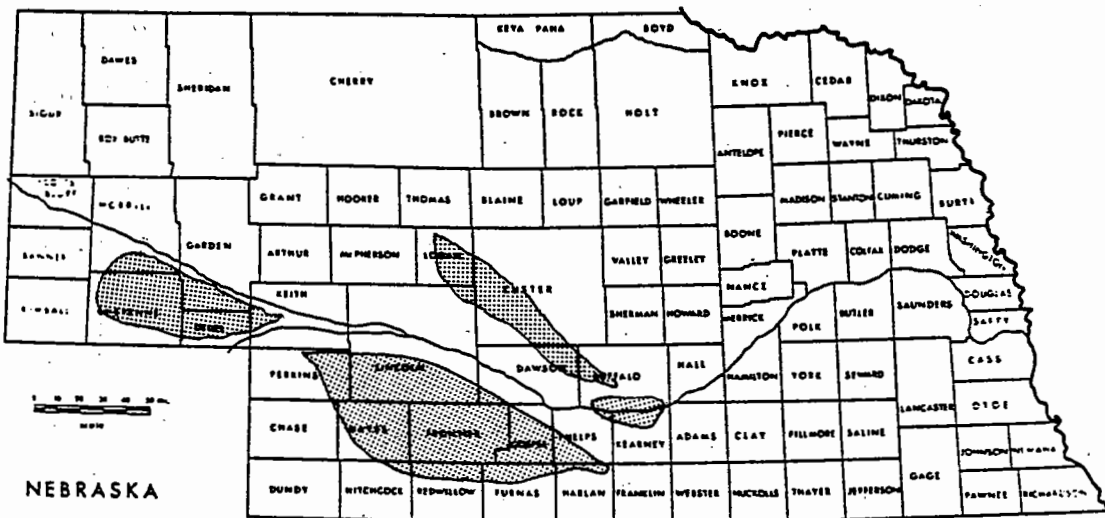
The Development of Railroad Cattle Shipping in Nebraska

Despite the post-war advent of new shipping locations on the plains north of Texas, a relatively low percentage of the cattle were driven as far north as Nebraska (15,000 of 260,000 in 1866). Of the cattle which were driven to Nebraska, the majority were purchased by the United States government to feed the Native American Indians located on Nebraska reservations. The largest percentage of cattle driven north from Texas were destined for Abilene, Kansas to be shipped eastward on the Kansas Pacific rail lines. However, in the winter of 1869, officials from the Union Pacific Railroad began to interest themselves in the prospect of shipping cattle from points along their rail lines in Nebraska (Olson, p.186). By the summer of 1870 the Union Pacific had finalized its plans and had joined in competition with the Kansas Pacific Railroad in the cattle shipping industry. The early shipping points of the Union Pacific in Nebraska were Schuyler (1870), Kearney (1871-73), and finally Ogallala (1873-c.1885). While the existence of Schuyler and Kearney as cattle shipping points was short-lived, Ogallala became a primary shipping point and was subsequently labeled the "Cowboy Capital" of Nebraska. In 1875, over 60,000 Texas cattle were driven into Ogallala and from 1876 to the middle 1880's, the number of Texas cattle brought into Ogallala on an annual basis was over 100,000 (Olson, p.187).

The days of the northbound cattle drives from Texas came to an end in the middle 1880's as settlement in northwest Kansas and southwest Nebraska created competition for land and invoked herd laws to stem the flow of Texas cattle

into recently settled Nebraska lands. By this time however, the cattle industry brought up the trails from Texas had firmly established itself in the environs of western Nebraska and eastern Wyoming.

The Nebraska Range 1865-1876



The beef cattle industry originally established in Nebraska was located in four primary areas: the lower panhandle region between the North and South Platte rivers; the region between the Platte and Republican rivers; the Platte Valley adjacent to Kearney; and the valley of the South Loup River (Olson, p.188). These four regions shared several factors necessary for the establishment of cattle operations. Each of the areas were near the terminals of the Texas trails on the Union Pacific, they were protected by U.S. military forts, they had access to the local markets of the Indian reservations, and they contained

good pasture land, (Olson, pp.188). After the rangelands in these initial areas were occupied, the cattle industry spread into the settled portions of the state. As the drought and grasshopper years of the middle 1870's forced many settlers off the land in the upper Elkhorn (Holt County) and Republican River valleys (Furnas, Red Willow, and Hitchcock counties) the cattle moved into these areas and expanded the boundaries of their industry (Olson, p.188).

However, the northern Sand Hills region of Nebraska remained extremely uninviting to the early cattlemen of Nebraska. With the exception of the cattle sent into the Sand Hills ranges from ranches on the south and east fringes of the region (John Bratt & Co. Ranch 1870-72; Keystone Cattle Co. and the B-Bar Bosler Bros. 1875; Cody-North Ranch 1877), the interior of the Sand Hills area was a source of mystery and fear to the cattlemen of Nebraska until the late 1870's (Aeschbacher, 1946, p.209). This is attributed to both the misconception of the Sand Hills as inadequate grazing land and to the fear of the Sioux Indian nation who controlled the Sand Hills until their 1876 secession to the U.S. Government. The Sioux nation claim to the Sand Hills area stemmed primarily from a treaty signed in 1868 which confirmed the Sioux claim to all land north of the North Platte River (Aeschbacher, 1946, p.205). As the whites followed the Oregon Trail and Union Pacific railroad through Nebraska, they avoided the Sand Hills territory of the Sioux nation. Consequently, there is no record of any permanent white settlement in the Sand Hills prior to 1875 (Aeschbacher, 1946, p.206). In that year, the U.S. Government paid the Sioux \$25,000 for an 11,000 square mile strip of the Sand Hills which extended northward from the fork of the Platte River to within

twenty miles of the Niobrara River in what is now Cherry County. Then in 1876, after a year of conflict and bloodshed with the U.S. Government, the Sioux ceded the remainder of the territory north to the boundary of the state (Aeschbacher, 1946, p.206).

Despite the 1875-76 acquisition of the Sand Hills territory by the U.S. Government, the early cattlemen of Nebraska were still hesitant to penetrate the unknown interior of the rugged Sand Hills. This remained true until the spring of 1879 when two separate experiences forced the cattlemen to reconsider.

The first of these incidents occurred when Frank North of the Cody-North Ranch decided to take a herd of cattle straight north through the hills from the roundup on his southern range to his home range on the Dismal River. In years prior to this, North had avoided the Sand Hills by circling around the southeastern edge of the territory. In doing so, however, he had more than doubled the seventy mile direct route which he embarked upon in 1879. After going about thirty-five miles through supposedly dry country, North came upon a lake around which were approximately seven-hundred head of cattle in much better condition than those he had gathered on his roundup (Aeschbacher, 1946 p. 211). At about the same time, the Newman Brothers of the N-Bar Ranch located in the northwest fringe of the Sand Hills experienced a similar discovery. The Newmans considered the Sand Hills a graveyard for cattle and therefore established "line-rider" ranches along the edge of the hills to prevent the cattle from drifting into undesirable land. However, a blizzard in March of 1879 drove approximately six-thousand head of cattle past the line-riders

and into the hills. In April of the same year, the Newman's decided to make an attempt to save the cattle by sending a roundup into the hills. After working five weeks, the crew brought back not six-thousand, but eight-thousand cattle that wore the Newman brand, and an additional one-thousand head of unbranded cattle that were apparently descendents of animals that had drifted into the Sand Hills in previous years, (Aeschbacher, 1946, p.211).

If these two incidents were not enough to convince the cattlemen to reconsider, the winter of 1880-81 provided the final incentive. During the severe blizzards of that season, thousands of cattle ranged on the Platte Valley perished in the storms. Meanwhile, the Cody-North Ranch isolated in the southern Sand Hills lost relatively few cattle (Aeschbacher, 1946, p. 212). After this, the ranchers realized the Sand Hills region was not only suitable as cattle country, but in many respects was superior to the previously utilized rangelands.

Consequently, by the middle 1880's, the Sand Hills had developed into an important region for the beef cattle industry. This development was forged however, not by the hands of the big cattle companies previously mentioned, but by the recent influx of small scale operations. The big ranch companies never seriously invaded the area, and none actually moved their headquarters into the prosperous hills. Instead, they remained near the shipping points of the Union Pacific railroad and only ventured into the Sand Hills during their semi-annual roundups (Aeschbacher, 1946, p. 213). Because these large companies did not pursue the establishment of their headquarters within the Sand Hills, the opportunity for the small operators to move in and establish their own

ranches was presented. Initially these new ranches consisted of modest land holdings and small cattle herds. By the year 1900, however, these small single-family ranches had grown into large organizations which controlled thousands of acres of Sand Hill grazing land (Olson, p. 191). This era of growth was aided by the extension of the Burlington Railroad through the interior of the Sand Hills in the years 1887-88 (Olson, p. 190).

The availability of rail shipping provided the "new" ranchers with access to markets in the east and enabled their once small holdings to expand rapidly. Some of the large companies of the southern plains states such as the Spade and 101 Ranches as well as the British-owned UBI ranch had established holdings in the Sand Hills.

Initially, the ranchers of the early 1880's simply ran their cattle on public domain. They selected the best piece of land they could find and simply located as squatters without paying either taxes or rent (Aeschbacher, 1946, p. 219). The range was considered "open" only in theory. The cattlemen, through mutual agreements and friendly local governments, were able to control the influx of homestead settlers through friendly persuasion and strong-armed harassment. Then in 1885, the cause of the homesteaders was strengthened by federal legislation which prohibited any enclosure of the public domain (Olson, p. 192). This of course, was worrisome news for the ranchers of the Sand Hills who had fenced large tracts of public land in an effort to deter the incoming homesteaders. Coincident to this legislation was the growing sentiment in the eastern states that the "open" lands should not be an administrative expense to the government but rather privately owned land subject to taxation

(Aeschbacher, 1946, p .219). In order to respond to this sentiment, the ranchers of the Sand Hills proposed plans whereby the present user of the property would have the first opportunity to buy or lease the land they were currently using for range and thereby protect the large investments made in fencing the public land (Aeschbacher, p .219). However, two serious blows were dealt to the ranchers in the early twentieth-century which affected the cattle industry until the Depression years of the 1920's.

The first of these setbacks came with the administration of President Theodore Roosevelt in 1901. Under the direction of Roosevelt, the U.S. Government embarked on an effort to enforce the heretofore ignored illegal fence law of 1885. For example, in one case, Roosevelt ordered actions against two of the ruling officers of the Nebraska Land and Feeding Company: Bartlett Richards and William Comstock. The Nebraska Land and Feeding Company operated the Spade, Bar C, and Overton Ranches which comprised over 212,000 acres of illegally fenced government land (Olson, p. 193). The men were eventually convicted and incarcerated in the Adams County Jail of Hastings, Nebraska.

The second setback suffered by the ranchers in their effort to sustain their illegally fenced lands occurred in 1904 and proved to be a substantially more powerful blow. Their hopes for a purchase or lease law were permanently shattered by the 1904 passage of the Kinkaid Act. This act increased the size of the homestead in the Sand Hills from the previously inadequate one-quarter section (160 acres) to an entire 640-acre section. The settlers, known as "Kinkaiders" could receive patents for their lands after residence of five

years and proof that they had placed improvements of \$1.25 per acre upon the land claimed. When the Sand Hills were opened to the Kinkaiders, the population of the region boomed. The eastern portion of the Sand Hills were the first area to witness the influx of Kinkaiders (Aeschbacher, 1946, p. 220). While the majority of the claims in the eastern area of the Sand Hills occurred in the years immediately following 1904, the western portion of the Sand Hills was not settled by Kinkaiders for another ten years (Aeschbacher, 1946, p.220). The greater portion of this western area consisted of a tract of the North Platte Forest Reserve which was not available for claiming until 1913. Following the passage of the Kinkaid Act in 1904, the Sand Hills went through a 10 to 20 year period of ill-fated farming efforts. The sandy soils of the region were not suitable for cultivation and any attempts to sustain annual crops resulted in rapid erosion and eventual "blow-outs" of proposed farmland. The Depression of the 1920's forced many of those who had taken Homestead claims under the Kinkaid Act to sell their land to the cattlemen. For those who did hold on, the combined drought and depression of the 1930's signalled an end to their dreams as well. By this time, the pattern of the present-day cattle ranching industry was fairly well established. Any lingering misconceptions that farming would displace cattle-raising in the Sand Hills region had been firmly dismissed. The vast expanses of the Sand Hills had, in an indirect fashion, returned into the hands of the cattle-raising industry and the balance of the fragile grass covered dunes was once again restored.

THE IMPACT OF THE KINKAID AND HOMESTEAD ACTS IN THE NORTHERN NEBRASKA SAND HILLS



The Homestead Act, and more importantly the Kinkaid Act, had a significant impact on the settlement of the Sand Hills region. Under the patronage of these acts, the population of the Sand Hills region increased tremendously. The influx of settlers spawned an era of economic prosperity which witnessed the construction of a significant number of rural buildings. In order to satisfy the requirements of their claim, the homesteaders and more significantly the Kinkaiders, were required to reside on their claims therefore necessitating the construction of buildings for human and animal occupancy. It is these buildings which are of particular interest to the survey results based on their relation to this important period of settlement. Based on the contributions these acts made to the historic built environment of the northern

Sand Hills region it was considered necessary to discuss their provisions and subsequent impact.

During the first two decades of the settlement of Nebraska (1855-1875), the Sand Hills region was left largely unsettled and remained part of Nebraska's unorganized territory. The entire region was known as Sioux country and official business was conducted through Cheyenne County. By the late 1870's and early 1880's, the Sand Hills area was beginning to experience its first influx of settlers. The period of initial settlement that followed (1880 to 1890), was one of generally good conditions and settlement increased at a steady rate. It was during this period that the first impact of the Homestead Act of 1862 was felt in the northern Nebraska Sand Hills region. While the eastern counties of the northern Sand Hills study area (Keya Paha, Brown, Rock, Blaine, Loup) had experienced homestead claims in the 1870's, the first claims filed in the western counties (Cherry, Grant, Hooker, Thomas) occurred between the years of 1880 and 1886.

The Homestead Act of 1862 provided for up to one-quarter section of "free" land (160 acres) to heads of families who had paid the \$10.00 filing fee and resided or cultivated the land for five consecutive years. Supplemental to the Homestead Act was the Timber Culture Act approved by Congress in 1873. It provided that a homesteader could acquire any additional one-quarter section by planting 40 acres with trees and caring for them for ten years.

Prior to the influx of homesteaders into the Sand Hills, a portion of the region was occupied by large cattle companies using the public domain of the open range for the grazing of cattle. When the homesteaders began to stake their claims, the open range land used by the cattle companies was subdivided

into smaller properties of 160 to 320 acre holdings (Olson, p. 192). The majority of homesteaders, in compliance of the Act, began to cultivate the land of the northern Sand Hills. However, this proved to be an ill-fated decision due to the high susceptibility of the sand-based soil to erosion. Once the grass covered mantle was tilled under for cultivation large "blow-outs" resulted and the land which had been cultivated was rendered useless. By the end of the 1880's, the perception of the Sand Hills as an inadequate region for cultivation had been realized (Tubbs, p. 117).

In the 1890's, faced with drouth, grasshopper plagues and economic depression, many settlers returned east or moved further west and the area experienced its first loss in population. Because of the events this decade, the ultimate impact of the Homestead Act in the northern Sand Hills was relatively short-lived and uneventful. This however, is in marked contrast to the impact of the Act in Nebraska as a whole.

Under the impetus of the Homestead Act and other land promotions, settlers poured into the state literally by the thousands. The population of Nebraska increased from 452,402 in 1880 to 1,058,910 in 1890, a total increase of 134% (Olson, p. 195). Also during the decade of the prosperous 1880's, twenty-six counties were organized throughout the state leaving only four counties as yet unorganized. While a great deal of credit must be given to settlement that resulted from the arrival of the railroads, it was through the Homestead Act and related federal legislation that much of Nebraska's rural lands were settled (Olson, p. 157).

Despite the statewide success of the Homestead Act, the only successful use made of the law in the Sand Hills was by cattlemen who used it to secure

stream fronts and water holes. In fact, a great deal of the Sand Hills area had never been homesteaded and was used only for open grazing (Tubbs, p. 118). The condition of the homesteaders in the Sand Hills region during the 1870's convinced much of the population that the settlement of the area under the existing Homestead or Timber Claim Acts was not satisfactory. The land which the settlers could obtain was not sufficient for sustaining a livelihood in the Sand Hills region. Even in the areas of the Sand Hills where cultivation of crops was possible, 160 to 320 acres was simply not an adequate amount for a single-family property. The original intent of the Homestead Act was to distribute the land in humid areas east of the 100th meridian but it made no provisions for increasing the size of the claim for those areas with insufficient rainfall of inadequate soils (Reynolds, p. 20). The desperate plight of the homesteader in the Sand Hills region gradually gained the support of regional and national politicians. In fact, prior to the drouth-stricken 1890's, the Public Lands Commission of 1879 recommended a homestead on grazing lands of four square miles. Cattlemen, however, were naturally satisfied with existing conditions and the four section recommendation was never accepted.

However, the idea of an enlarged homestead as a means of settling the Sand Hills was revived by T.A. Fort of North Platte following the drouth of 1890 (Tubbs, p. 118). Fort proposed a homestead of two square miles (2,560 acres) with a requirement of five years residence and annual improvements on the land (Tubbs, p. 118). By 1900, Fort had interested the recently elected Congressman William Neville in his new proposal. In 1901, Neville introduced a bill to provide a two-square mile homestead but the proposal never advanced pass the committee stage (Tubbs, p. 118).

One year later, in 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt called attention to the inadequacy of the quarter-section homestead in the arid western lands. Although Roosevelt made no specific proposals, the road was paved for congressional action. The leadership for this action was assumed by Moses P. Kinkaid of O'Neill, Nebraska who had defeated Neville in the 1902 race for the sixth district congressional seat. In April 1904, Kinkaid introduced a bill to the House of Representatives which would eventually change the settlement history of much of Western Nebraska. The intent of the bill was to "amend the homestead laws as to certain unappropriated and unreserved lands in Nebraska," (Reynold, p. 21).

The bill, as presented to the committee on Public Lands, requested a homestead of 1,280 acres in thirty-seven Nebraska counties to be acquired by a residence of five years and improvements of \$1.25 per acre for each acre claimed. The committee amended the bill to 640 acres and recommended it to the house on April 13, 1904, stating that the increased size of the homestead would compensate the homesteader on quantity of land for what it lacked in quality and productiveness (Reynolds p. 22). The report by the committee emphasized that, from 1875 to 1904, the land to which the bill applied had been rejected by homesteaders who had settled only on the quarter sections of land good enough to support cultivation. This pattern had left open for settlement the semi-arid grazing lands incapable of supporting a profitable farm on only 160 acre tracts of land (Reynolds page 22). The report also stated that, in numerous cases, the homesteaders who did file claims on the unsuitable areas had only done so with the intent of selling the land to the cattlemen once their claim was fulfilled. A committee was appointed to work out the

differences between the two bills and, after approval of both houses, the Kinkaid Act was signed by President Roosevelt on April 28, 1904.

The final form of the bill provided that the homestead unit should not exceed 640 acres and that any lands which were irrigable should not be open to entry (Reynolds p. 23). Homesteaders in the territory who had occupied lands already under entry were allowed to claim adjoining lands up to the 640 acre total and have their existing house serve as the residence for the additional land (Reynolds p. 23). The additional land was then given final proof five years after the filing date.

Evolution of the Family Ranch

"After the new house was built, my grandfather's house was torn down...it used to sit where that concrete shop is now," (Tim Ganser interview, November 1988). This casual description given by one of the ranchers concerning his original family homestead, exemplifies the evolution of the family ranch. From original homesteaders to present day ranchers, the family ranch has not been ignorant to change. Over the years original homesteads have either expanded as a result of prosperous growth or dwindled to the point of raw survival as a result of changing times. It is the first of these scenarios in which we wish to explore further. As acknowledged, the physical components of the family ranch which combine to comprise one unit have evolved from a series of technological advances.

Population growth to the sandhills region saw a major increase during the teens as a result of the Kinkaid Act. Under this act settlers could claim up to 640 acres of land where previously only a maximum of 160 acres was obtainable. Thousands of acres owned by the government were granted over to eager settlers. Mari Sandoz described these people in Sandhill Sundays, (1930):

"...perhaps a potential settler should realize from the start that homesteading was not for the timid, and as soon as a man could say "I'm looking for me a piece of government land-" he was among friends. He and any family he had were welcome to eat at our table and sleep in our beds even if we children were moved to the floor. This was naturally all agreed beyond the twenty-five dollar locating and surveying fee Old Jules charged whenever the settler managed to get the money. Often the family stayed with us until their house was up."

After the acreage was located and property markers were established, the homesteader began the task of breaking the virgin ground. Farming was the original intention but the sandy composition of the land would soon prove otherwise. Simultaneous to the turning of the land came the construction of a dwelling. Making do with material at hand, many of the early shelters were built out of sod or in the earth itself. Lumber was also available via the railroad. Other buildings essential to the ranch practice such as an outhouse, barn, and other outbuildings, soon followed. These structures were most always constructed of lumber.

As the family ranch continued operation, there began a transfer of responsibility from one generation to the next. Children became apprentices to the practices of ranch operation for in time, they would assume responsibility. This transfer of control creates the second generation family ranch.

The Kinkaid Act becomes a historic document representing a stage in early settlement. By this time, methods for ranching have been established. There also exists a house, and the other necessary outbuildings. Changes made to the ranch will build upon what already exists. Additions to the house take place as the family continues to increase. Technological advances in farm machinery require buildings to house them. It is in this period that we see the physical fabric of the ranch expand with refinement in experimental operation.

As the third generation assumes responsibility for the family ranch, changes in building functions begin to shift. Because of modern conveniences such as indoor plumbing and electricity, the original house has become



unfavorable as the main dwelling. A new main house is built with the former house left for the grandparents to live. Eventually, the original house either falls in disrepair, is used for scrap materials, or becomes an outbuilding to house livestock or grain. Sheathing material such as stucco and tin also find practical use in the protection of deteriorated outbuildings in need of repair. One by one the original frame homestead buildings begin to fall. The once important large gambrel roofed barn finds minor use as a part-time garage. The two tall silos flanking it threaten to collapse. But behind the barn is a complex of new pre-fabricated with gleaming metal roofs (J.B. Jackson, 1984).

Prefabricated buildings designed and manufactured by large companies from far away places find their way into the ranch landscape. The symbiotic relationship once held by the buildings and the settlers who created them becomes blurred. Even the family house each one unique to its environment

slowly disappears in favor of the more economical, more temporary, more impersonal trailer house.

In the course of roughly 100 years, the evolution of the family ranch in Nebraska's sandhills region has experienced major change. Today's vision of the ranch landscape is expressed in pictures of large frame houses and gambrel roofed barns. Will tomorrow's ranch landscape consist of trailer homes and Behlen buildings?

Catalogue Houses

The homesteader got most of his items through mail order catalogues, including, sometimes, his wife, if one could call the matrimonial papers, the heart-and-hand publications, catalogues. They did describe the offerings rather fully but with, perhaps, a little less honesty than Montgomery Ward or Sears Roebuck.

Sandhill Sundays (1930) by Mari Sandoz

Before the days of modern transportation, the physical landscape of many regions influenced and dictated the type of architecture executed. The Sand Hills region of Nebraska offered very little in terms of native building materials for homesteaders. They made do with materials at hand which consisted of a few trees for lumber and plenty of sod for "bricks". The sod house came to represent a common house type known to the plains. Landscape historian J.B. Jackson, described the limitations of materials in the built environment in his book Discovering The Vernacular Landscape, "...In the West... new houses are either of the prefabricated, mail-order variety or made of concrete block for lack of inexpensive lumber," (1984).

Soon after early settlement, the newly established railway system began shipping merchandise to once isolated places. The availability of lumber increased and it soon became the dominant building material. Construction on the plains was at its peak.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries were ripe for entrepreneurs who sold architectural plans as well as the houses themselves. The Hodgeson Company, Alladin Homes, Montgomery Ward, and Sears and Roebuck all had their start in the prefabricated housing business between 1895 and 1910. Sears however, was the largest: its sales reached 30,000 houses by 1925 and nearly

50,000 by 1930, more than any other mail order Company (Stevenson and Jandl 1986).



House No. 2024 was available from Sears and Roebuck Co. (1916-1917), from Houses by Mail. Stevenson and Jandl, 1986.

Although catalogue houses were available anywhere the railroad went, popularity of these houses was concentrated in the midwest. Nebraska, and more specifically the sand hills region were not excluded from this 20th century phenomena. Stevenson and Jandl (1986) have identified 20 Sears mail-order houses constructed in Nebraska according to the records from the Sears archives. Documentation of houses includes style, location, and date of construction. Unfortunately, the Sears Company did not keep extensive records on every house sold. Further, numerous house plans were sold without the pre-cut lumber package. In these instances, it is even harder to estimate how many of these houses were actually built and even more difficult to locate. To further complicate matters, it is very difficult to identify a catalogue house just by viewing the exterior. Sears offered a wide selection of the most

sought-after styles. They also welcomed alterations to existing plans as well as custom designed houses.

Save America's Heritage recognizes the importance of catalogue houses to the history of Nebraska. Through the thirty years of catalogue house production, catalogue house companies, especially Sears, has set impressive records of houses sold. Unpretentiously, these houses have been integrated into the architectural landscape and are symbols of innovation in the modern housing industry. The sheer number which were estimated to have been built testifies to the popularity of catalogue homes and reflects twentieth-century attitudes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

Throughout the duration of the Thomas County survey, random observations were recorded in an effort to later construct recommendations for future work. The general impressions recorded by the survey team were then combined with a post-survey analysis of documented historic properties. The resulting recommendations were conceptualized by Save America's Heritage to fit the "tools" of preservation and documentation available to the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office. These tools consist of Multiple Property, Historic District, and individual nominations to the National Register of Historic Places as well as intensive survey relating to Historic Context Reports.

The following suggestions are separated into two categories and are presented as follows: 1) NeSHPO National Register Follow-Up, and 2) Potential Historic Context Studies.

National Register Recommendations

The first of the two categories, the NeSHPO National Register Follow-Up, is a basic summary of the potential National Register of Historic Places listing activities associated with the Thomas County survey.

Save America's Heritage strongly suggests the drafting of nominations for all properties judged by NeSHPO staff as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The drafting of these nominations may occur in two basic forms. First, as Multiple Property nominations for all properties

which relate to Historic Contexts developed by the NeSHPO, or as individual nominations of the 29 properties listed in the Preliminary Inventory of Thomas County historic properties. The properties which appear in the Preliminary Inventory are those which appear potentially eligible for the National Register and should be acted upon immediately following the submittal of this report.

Potential Historic Context Studies/Multiple Property Nominations

The following priority for future work recommended by Save America's Heritage is presented at this point as the topics which appears to have the greatest potential for development into Historic Context Reports. The bases for these suggestions were derived from pre-survey research, agricultural analyses, and reconnaissance survey observations.

1. Sand Hills Range Livestock Production (08.08)

Despite the lack of a substantial number of potentially eligible properties, it is Save America's Heritage recommendation that the Sand Hills Range Livestock Production (08.08) Historic Context Report be developed by the NeSHPO. The development of this context will undoubtedly be of great importance to the northern Nebraska Sand Hills region and will include the entirety of Thomas County. Although the Preliminary Inventory for this context contains only one property, the further delineation of contributing versus non-contributing characteristics of Sand Hills ranch buildings would aid in the judgement of eligibility. For a more detailed discussion of this topic,

please refer to the article on Sand Hills Range Livestock Production (SHRLP) found on page 80. In addition, a Preliminary Inventory of those properties potentially significant for their association with SHRLP agriculture is found on page 30.

2. Sod Houses of Thomas County

Save America's Heritage also recommends the intensive study of all extant sod houses recorded by the Thomas County Historic Buildings Survey. These sod houses exist in various stages of deterioration and their eminent demise is in the near future. The eight sod houses recorded by the survey are examined in greater detail in the discussion of Sod Houses of the northern Nebraska Sand Hills found on page 76. These houses may also carry significance for their possible association with Sand Hills Range Livestock Production (08.08) and/or Kinkaid Act Settlement (16.01). Therefore, these properties should be intensively surveyed for development of a Historic Context Report and potential National Register nomination.

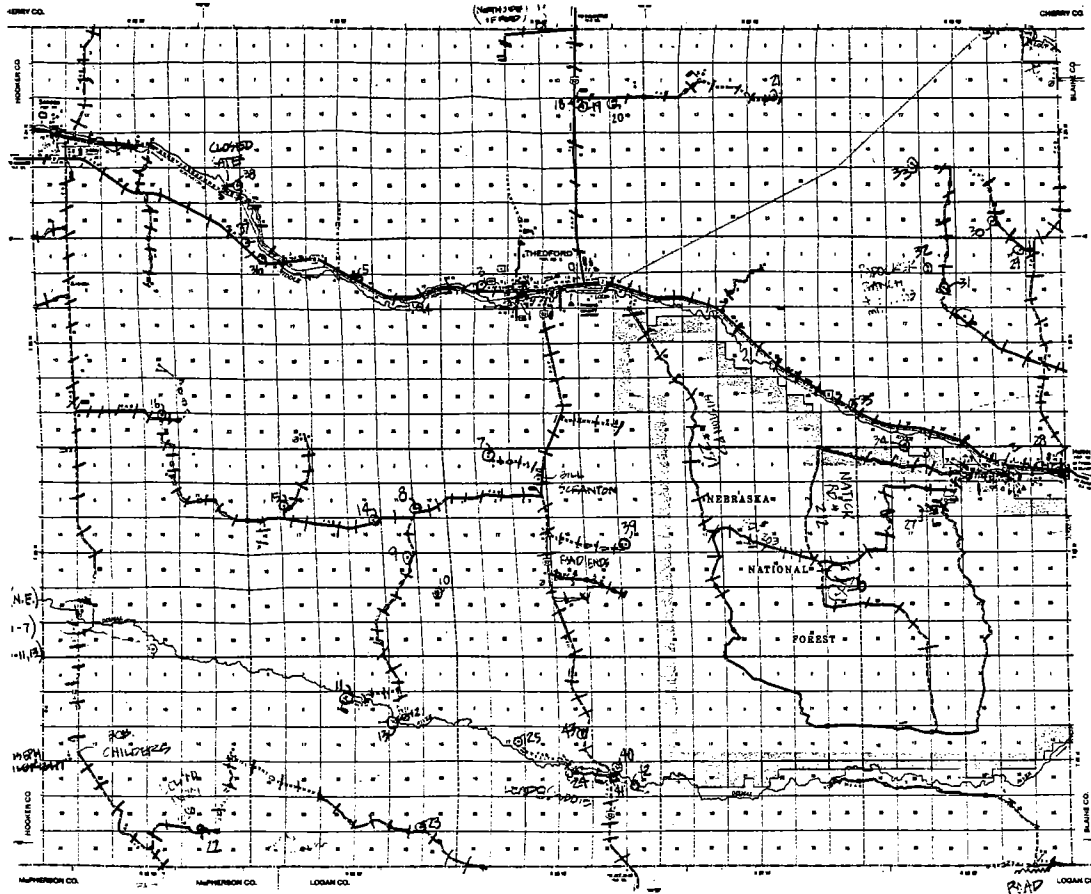
The primary reason for the inability to pinpoint these properties is the heretofore unanswered question regarding the original practices of the first property owners. Were the owners of the Thomas County soddies engaging in a significant scale of cattle production or were they more dependent upon cultivated crops for their livelihoods? In addition, were these sod house dwellers indeed "Kinkaiders" or had they obtained their land under other pretenses?

3. Kinkaid Act Settlement in Thomas County

The third and final recommendation for future research in Thomas County is the examination of the properties related to Kinkaid Act Settlement. This subject has been touched upon in the recommendations discussed above and is one of the possible areas of significance for the rural sod house properties recorded by the survey. For a discussion of the impact of the Kinkaid Act in the northern Nebraska Sand Hills , please refer to the discussion found on page 100.

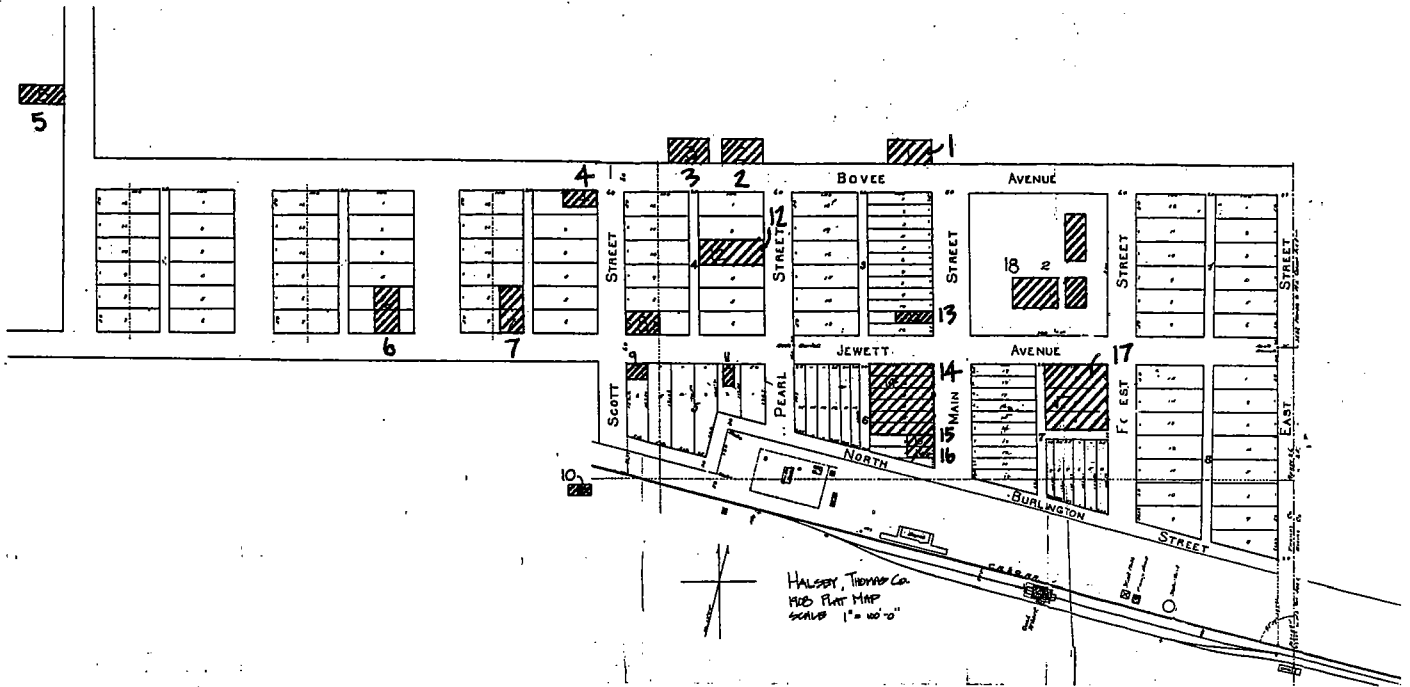
APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Thomas County Historic Buildings Survey Inventory



NeHBS NUMBER	DATE	RESOURCE/Common NAME	HISTORIC CONTEXT	CONTRIBUTING				PROPERTY TYPE
				BLDGs.	SITES	STRUCTS.	OBJECTS	
TM00-3	c.1925	RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	3	0	0	0	08.1
TM00-4	c.1915	RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	4	0	0	1	08.1
TM00-5	c.1900	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5, 08.1
TM00-6	c.1915	RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	6	0	0	1	08.1
TM00-7	c.1915	RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	2	0	0	1	08.1
TM00-8	1912	CHARLES JOHNSON SOD HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM00-9	1911	CLARK MOWERY SOD HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM00-10	1907	JOSEPH ALBRIGHT SOD HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	4	0	0	1	08.1
TM00-11	1911	FREDERICK JAMESON SOD HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	4	0	0	0	16.5
TM00-12	c.1900	ABANDONED HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM00-13	c.1910	HOMESTEAD	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	6	0	0	2	16.5
TM00-14	c.1910	ABANDONED HOMESTEAD	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	6	0	0	3	16.5
TM00-15	c.1910	MADRON RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	9	0	0	4	08.1

NeHBS NUMBER	DATE	RESOURCE/COMMON NAME	HISTORIC CONTEXT	CONTRIBUTING				PROPERTY TYPE
				BLDGS.	SITES	STRUCTS.	OBJECTS	
TM00-16	c.1915	RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	10	0	0	4	08.1
TM00-17	c.1910	ABANDONED RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	5	0	2	2	08.1
TM00-18	c.1900	ABANDONED POST OFFICE	GOVERNMENT (04)	1	0	0	0	04.2.3
TM00-19	c.1905	ABANDONED SCHOOLHOUSE	EDUCATION (06)	1	0	0	0	06.3.1
TM00-20	c.1910	G. NUTTER RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	2	0	0	2	08.1
TM00-21	c.1910	ATKINSON RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	2	0	0	3	08.1
TM00-22	c.1905	PEACEFUL PLAINS SCHOOL	EDUCATION (06)	1	0	0	0	06.3.1
TM00-23	c.1920	RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	2	0	0	2	08.1
TM00-24	c.1905	WARNER SOD HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM00-25	c.1910	RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	1	0	0	1	08.1
TM00-26	c.1935	BESSEY TREE PLANTING	DIVERSION (07)	0	1	0	0	07.5.1
TM00-27	c.1920	OBSERVATION TOWER	DIVERSION (07)	0	0	1	0	07.5.1.2
TM00-28	c.1928	HOUSE	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	3	0	0	1	08.1
TM00-29	c.1920	A.L. RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	0	0	0	0	08.1
TM00-30	c.1910	BUSSARD RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	3	0	0	1	08.1
TM00-31	c.1920	RANCH	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM00-32	c.1915	RODOKER RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	7	0	1	3	08.1
TM00-33	c.1918	USGS: RYMAN RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	3	0	0	2	08.1
TM00-34	c.1965	BESSEY TREE PLANTING	DIVERSION (07)	0	1	0	0	07.5
TM00-35	c.1920	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	1	16.5
TM00-36	c.1920	ABANDONED RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	4	0	0	2	08.1
TM00-37	c.1915	ABANDONED SCHOOLHOUSE	EDUCATION (06)	1	0	0	0	06.3.1
TM00-38	c.1905	ABANDONED RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	4	0	0	1	08.1
TM00-39	c.1919	RANCH	AGRICULTURE (08.08)	5	0	0	2	16.5, 08.1
TM00-40	c.1948	REST AREA	TRANSPORTATION (13.3)	0	1	0	4	13.3.3.2
TM00-41	c.1910	FORMER HOMESTEAD	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	5	0	0	0	16
TM00-42	c.1906	HOMESTEAD	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5



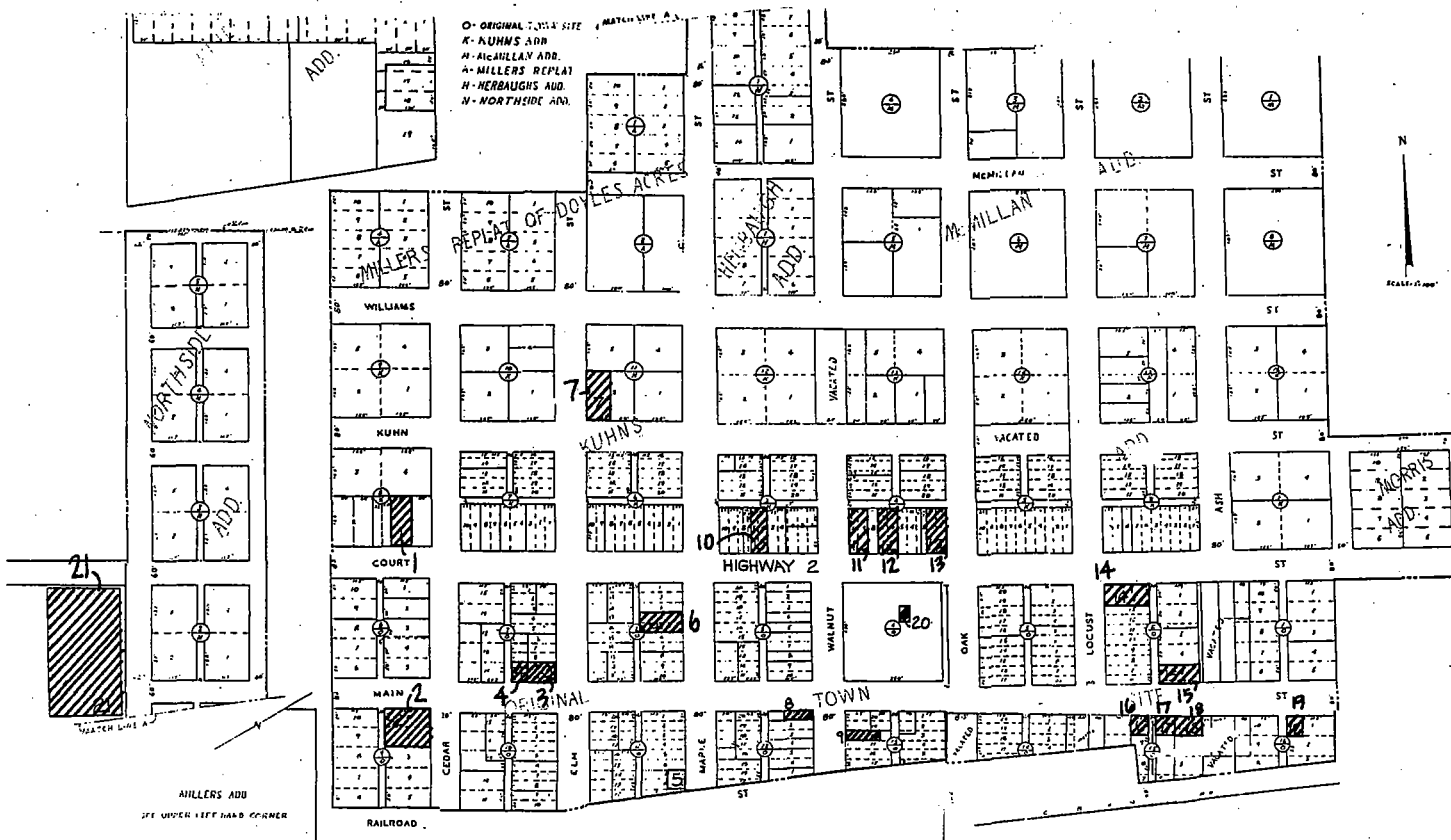
TM01: HALSEY, THOMAS COUNTY INVENTORY

NeHBS NUMBER	DATE	RESOURCE/COMMON NAME	HISTORIC CONTEXT	CONTRIBUTING			PROPERTY TYPE	
				Bldg.	Site	Struct.		
TM01-1	c.1910	HOUSE	16	4	0	0	0	16.5
TM01-2	c.1906	ABAN. HOUSE	16	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM01-3	c.1910	ABAN. HOUSE	16	2	0	0	1	16.5
TM01-4	c.1912	HOUSE	16	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM01-5	c.1910	HOUSE	16	3	0	0	0	16.5
TM01-6	c.1917	HOUSE	16	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM01-7	c.1912	HOUSE	16	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM01-8	c.1927	HOUSE	16	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM01-9	c.1910	HOUSE	16	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM01-10	c.1918	HOUSE	16	3	0	0	0	16.5
TM01-11	c.1900	ABAN. HOUSE	16	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM01-12	c.1909	ABAN. HOUSE	16	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM01-13	c.1912	COMMERCIAL BLDG.	12	1	0	0	0	12.1
TM01-14	c.1929	STOCKADE MOTEL	12	2	0	0	0	12.3.2
TM01-15	c.1912	COMMERCIAL BLDG.	12	1	0	0	0	12.1
TM01-16	c.1912	COMMERCIAL BLDG.	12	1	0	0	0	12.1
TM01-17	c.1912	FORMER HOTEL	12	3	0	0	2	12.3.1
TM01-18	c.1920	PUBLIC SCHOOL	06	3	0	0	0	06.3

TM04: SENECA, THOMAS COUNTY INVENTORY

TM04-1 through TM04-12 previously surveyed by NeSHPO

NeHBS NUMBER	DATE	RESOURCE/Common NAME	HISTORIC CONTEXT	CONTRIBUTING				PROPERTY TYPE
				BLDGS.	SITES	STRUCTS.	OBJECTS	
TM04-11								
TM04-12								
TM04-13	c.1913	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-14	1909	FIRST CONG. CHURCH	RELIGION (02)	1	0	0	0	02.4.1
TM04-15	c.1910	ABANDONED HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-16	c.1917	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-17	c.1910	ABANDONED HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-18	c.1900	ABANDONED HOTEL	COMMERCE (12)	1	0	0	0	12.3.1
TM04-19	c.1915	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-20	c.1915	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-21	c.1915	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-22	c.1915	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-23	c.1907	ABANDONED HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-24	c.1918	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	1	0	16.5
TM04-25	c.1910	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	3	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-26	c.1890	ABANDONED HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-27	c.1925	TILE GUESTHOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-28	c.1906	INMAN SOD HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-29	c.1923	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-30	c.1927	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-34	c.1922	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-32	c.1900	CARRIAGE BARN	TRANSPORTATION (13)	1	0	0	0	
TM04-33	c.1910	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-34	c.1910	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-35								
TM04-36	c.1910	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-37	c.1915	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-38	c.1907	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-39	c.1918	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-40	c.1910	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-41	c.1935	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-42	c.1915	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM04-43	c.1910	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5



TM05: THEDFORD INVENTORY, THOMAS COUNTY.

NeHBS NUMBER	DATE	RESOURCE/Common NAME	HISTORIC CONTEXT	CONTRIBUTING				PROPERTY TYPE
				Bldg.	Sites	Struct.	Obj.	
TM05-1	c.1915	COMMERCIAL BUILDING	COMMERCE (12)	1	0	0	0	12.1
TM05-2	c.1925	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM05-3	c.1913	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM05-4	c.1912	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM05-5	c.1910	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM05-6	c.1910	ABANDONED HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM05-7	c.1915	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM05-8	c.?	FORMER BANK	SERVICES (15)	1	0	0	0	15.1.1
TM05-9	c.1914	COWPOKE HOTEL	COMMERCE (12)	1	0	0	0	12.3.1
TM05-10	c.1910	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM05-11	c.1910	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM05-12	c.?	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM05-13	c.1929	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM05-14	c.1915	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM05-15	c.1915	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM05-16	c.1910	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	1	0	0	0	16.5
TM05-17	c.1914	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM05-18	c.1916	HOUSE	SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS (16)	2	0	0	0	16.5
TM05-19	c.1911	ST. THOMAS CHURCH	RELIGION (02)	1	0	0	0	02.1.4
TM05-20	c.1920	FORMER COUNTY JAIL	GOVERNMENT (04)	1	0	0	0	04.3.2
TM05-21	c.1935	THEDFORD CITY PARK	DIVERSION (07)	3	1	0	15	07.5.1
TM05-22	c.1950	THOMAS COUNTY COURTHOUSE	GOVERNMENT (04)	1	0	0	0	

APPENDIX 2:**RECONNAISSANCE RESEARCH DESIGN****1. Introduction**

It is the intention of this paper to contribute two important functions towards the execution of the Reconnaissance Survey of Thomas County. First, it will provide Save America's Heritage (SAVE) survey team with the guidelines by which the survey will be performed and secondly, it establishes a means of communicating these guidelines to the NeHBS Survey Coordinator for critique and refinement.

The format of this Research Design will be to discuss first the "non-mechanical" aspects of the survey, followed by a discussion of the tasks considered more "mechanical" in nature. The primary purpose of the "mechanical" discussion is to define the documentation process used in the recording of historic properties while the "non-mechanical" discussion will consist of the survey objectives and limitations.

2. Objectives Of Reconnaissance Survey

After completing a preliminary outline of the objectives associated with a reconnaissance survey, it became apparent that there was an obvious division between those objectives which were qualitative in nature and those that were quantitative. This division has organized the reconnaissance objectives into the two listings that follow.

Qualitative Objectives:

The most obvious objective in a reconnaissance survey is the concept of providing a preliminary characterization of the historic resources extant in a particular geographic area. Beyond this are several other objectives which enhance both the data collected by the survey and the need for the survey itself. First among these additional objectives is the concept of establishing the setting of Nebraska's historic architecture. Each historic building survey performed will generate information which contributes to a statewide knowledge and builds a background with which future survey information can be evaluated.

Secondly, it is the objective of the historic building survey to identify specific properties or geographic areas which, in the event of an intensive survey, would contribute useful information to the above mentioned setting. Further qualitative objectives include: the possible identification of specific building types, the identification of construction methods which may relate to or are unique to the context of Nebraska's historic architecture, the identification of sites worthy of National Register listing, and the expansion of knowledge relative to a specific geographic area within the state context such as ethnic settlement, building technologies and architectural image.

Outline of Qualitative Objectives:

1. To create a community awareness and interest in Historic Preservation and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).
2. The documentation of several significant properties potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as

individual, multiple property, or historic district nominations.

3. To document information pertinent to the NeSHPO Topical Listing of Historic Contexts and associated property types.
4. To complete a comprehensive, conscientious survey which will generate information useful to the planning process and future surveys.
5. The collation of survey data for planning intensive survey work.
6. To record information useful to the local planning decisions of the county when assessing projects affecting historic properties. (Section 106) etc.
7. To record any potential links between a particular ethnic settlement and its associated property types within the survey area.
8. To promote historic preservation through the identification and publication of the historic properties located within the county.
9. To identify properties whose owners may be eligible for various kinds of federal, state, and local assistance in the event the owner pursues the preservation, restoration, or rehabilitation of their historic building(s).

Quantitative Objectives:

- A. The recording of an estimated 100 properties in Thomas County at the completion of the survey.
- B. The covering of approximately 80,000 acres (125 square miles) in Thomas County. In addition, each street of the three towns will be surveyed using reconnaissance survey methods.
- C. Identification of at least 15 properties worthy of nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.
- D. Identification of at least one possible Historic District or Multiple Property nomination worthy of National Register pursuit.
- E. Evaluating by the following hierarchy those sites for: a) high potential for significance, b) suspicious buildings--those buildings that may be of significance, c) no potential in

comparison to others, d) those sites not likely to yield any information.

3. Methods of Reconnaissance Survey.

The "mechanical" aspect of reconnaissance historic building surveys will focus primarily upon the documentation process and corresponding methods used in the recording of historic resources. The recording technique is considered of prime importance and it is the attitude of Save America's Heritage to strive for a conscientious effort and accurate method while recording historic resources. To best communicate our intentions, the following discussion on survey methods has been organized into three groups. These are: 1) pre-field research, 2) pre-field activities, and 3) field activities.

Pre-Field Research

Following the selection of the survey geographic boundaries by the NeSHPO, the pre-field research is begun and focuses primarily on the performance of archival research. The main purpose of archival research is to identify the nature of the survey area settlement by culture, geographic location, and time frame. In addition, the archival research should attempt to identify potential themes of architectural, cultural, and historical significance within the survey area, should they exist. While it is acknowledged that the extent and availability of research information varies according to the events and background of the area, the following references will be investigated prior to the reconnaissance survey: locally written county histories, county histories written within a statewide history, existing survey data in the NeSHPO site.

files including survey forms, the files of the NSHS photographic collections, centennial publications on community and church histories, archival maps and atlases, newspaper articles concerning a community's built environment, and literature published by local or county historical groups. The majority of these types of publications can be found in the libraries of state and county historical societies. A bibliography of all sources referenced should be maintained and, along with photocopied information, added to the site files. These general data files are organized according to specific counties, local communities, and individual sites. The files are used prior to reconnaissance survey to familiarize the surveyors with the survey area and are consulted again in the field during the survey. Added to the general files are all forms of public correspondence received up to the point the survey is begun.

Due to the absence of an existing Historic Overview report, extensive preparation becomes necessary to satisfactorily develop the concepts of the report. The content of the Historic Overview is considered a prime source of pre-survey information. Therefore, the following is an outline of the methodology to be employed by SAVE's personnel during the composition of the county Historic Overview.

Each Historic Overview report will identify important patterns, events, persons, or cultural values pertaining to the county. It is anticipated that the information within the Historic Overview will aid in the identification of property types associated with each individual theme. In the preparation of the Historic Overview, the following will be considered:

- A. Trends in area settlement and development.

- B. Aesthetic and artistic values embodied in architecture, construction technology, or craftsmanship.
- C. Research values or problems relevant to the county, social and physical sciences and humanities, and cultural interests of local communities.
- D. Intangible cultural values of ethnic groups and native American people.

Pre-Field Activities:

The topic of pre-field activities are considered separate from pre-field research on the basis of their more publicly extroverted nature. Save America's Heritage will begin the pre-field activities with the distribution of notices announcing the survey and its intentions to all the general public. This will be done by placing general notices in established commercial and non-commercial facilities of the communities, such as the United States Post Office, grocery stores, coffee shops, etc. Reinforcing this is the dispersal of press releases to all active newspapers existing in the county. The intent of the release is to inform the public of the survey programs and to solicit their input in the identification of historic resources. In addition to this, communication will be established with the local historians and historical societies detaining our intent and welcoming their possible input. Included in this communication will be information concerning pertinent Historic Contexts and the time frame of the survey. The final task of pre-field activity will be the precautionary attempts to eliminate public suspicion. The justifiable suspicion aroused by survey activities will potentially be eliminated through the listing of survey vehicles and personnel with local police departments and county sheriff patrols.

Field Activities—General:

The first step prior to embarking on the survey would be the assembling of the necessary documents used during the recording of historic properties. This includes town plat maps, USGS 7 1/2 minute topographical maps, county road maps, site files and the preparation of the Historic Overview. The recording of the historic properties will be conducted during the reconnaissance survey and will consist of a four step process: 1) identifying structures, 2) mapping locations, 3) recording of SQLE information and 4) photographic documentation. Any supplemental field notes derived from observations or public communications will also be added.

The reconnaissance photography would consist of two photographs per site from opposite 45 degree angles using a wide angle perspective correcting lens. In certain cases, additional photographs of the more significant buildings will be recorded showing environmental setting, architectural details, or construction methods. Descriptions of each site will be recorded as required by the SQLE data entry established by the NeSHPO. For domestic buildings, the supratypological analysis developed by The Midwest Vernacular Architecture Committee will be used in the description process. Photographic field notes will also be kept concerning the aspect of the image, exposure number, and corresponding roll number. In addition to the recording of the information listed above, further research will be conducted on those sites which are considered to have greater significance.

A primary concept in the documentation of historic buildings is the

recognition that different building types may require different recording techniques. Therefore, it is necessary for the surveyor to define the specific types of information most relevant to the property type being recorded.

4. Reconnaissance Survey Biases

Integrity:

To be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a property must possess integrity. Integrity is the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic period. If a property retains the physical characteristics it possessed in the past then it has the capacity to convey association with historical patterns or persons, architectural design, or information about a culture or people. Consequently, the determination of integrity is considered a most important field activity.

For reconnaissance-level documentation, two very basic questions must first be asked. These are:

1. Is the building at least 50 years old?
2. Does it retain its original integrity?

The answer to question number one is usually quite objective, however, the determination of integrity requires some discussion.

It must first be recognized that the degree of integrity exhibited by historic buildings can vary greatly. The principal investigator must first ask, "Does this property reflect its historic character or has it been altered by the application of contemporary building materials and technologies?" In most

instances, the house is the first building scrutinized, especially in the case of town surveys where they represent the majority of extant buildings. However, the importance of "house integrity" is diminished when dealing with buildings located in rural settings. For most cases in Nebraska, this means a farmstead. With the added significance of agriculture related buildings such as hay, horse and livestock barns, granaries, corn cribs, and elevators, a limited amount of alteration to the house should not prevent the site from being documented. In the case where a farmstead contains a large collection of historic farm buildings but a severely altered house, the site will be documented as a farmstead with a noncontributing house. A final case may exist where a single, highly significant, farm related building is located within an otherwise altered farmstead. In this event, Save America's Heritage will document the individual building designating a site number solely to the specific building, structure, or object.

Integrity also appears to play an important role in the field documentation of commercial buildings. Traditionally, buildings used for commerce have been adaptively reused by subsequent generations. These buildings are positioned along a primary local thoroughfare or even a regionally important highway, thus lending appeal to present-day retailers seeking new locations. Often the buildings are physically altered to accommodate new functions and therefore suffer a loss of integrity. With this in mind, only those buildings exhibiting the visual characteristics of their historic period will be documented.

In summary, the determination of integrity will be based upon the historic retention of the following physical characteristics.

- Materials:** Does the building retain the original materials from its period of historic importance.
- Location:** Is the building placed in its original location or has it been moved?
- Design:** Does the building reflect the design aesthetics of its historic period?
- Setting:** Does the building reflect a historic sense of place? Does the historic image and feel still exist?
- Function:** Does the building represent its historic use?

Characteristics of Rural Integrity:

With the concept of Rural Historic Districts added to the National Register process, the principal investigator is forced to develop new visual sensitivities which are sympathetic to the qualities of rural settings. New methods of survey and research must be added to our understanding of both the built and natural environment and the historic relationship between them.

With this in mind, Save America's Heritage will attempt, without contractual obligation, to observe the following characteristics of potential significance to rural historic enclaves:

- * The condition and presence of features, natural and built, which relate to a historic period of importance.
- * The ability of a rural environment to reflect a sense of a past time or place.
- * Potential unifying factors which may link rural properties together.
- * The overall patterns of landscape spatial organization (land forms, natural features, material components).
- * Land-use categories and activities (farming, ranching, recreation).
- * Response to natural features (landform affect on material components).
- * Boundaries (cultural, political, or natural).

- * Cluster arrangements (position of material elements within landscape setting).
- * Ecological context.
- * Integrity: Loss of natural features that were historically integral to the rural setting and intrusion of non-contributing features.

5. Anticipated Property Types.

Save America's Heritage anticipates the identification of historic properties in each of the following thirteen categories.

Religion: Churches, church schools, parsonages, and convents

Aesthetic Systems: decorative Arts, sculpture, paintings.

Government: Courthouses, Post Offices, Town Halls.

Association: Fraternal, service and social organizations.

Education: Schools, libraries, museums.

Diversion: Park grounds, theaters, recreational facilities.

Agriculture: hay/horse barns, cattle barns, hog barns, cattle fences, cellars, cob houses, orchards, windmills, windbreaks, pump systems, cattle loafing sheds, hog loafing sheds, farrowing houses, corn cribs, wash houses, summer kitchen, chicken houses, brooder houses, machine shops, implement sheds, granaries, silos, elevators, and stock tank systems.

Processing Industries: Meat packing, dairy, poultry.

Commerce: stores, hotels, elevators.

Transportation: Gas stations, rail depots, motels, auto showrooms.

Communications: Telephone, newspaper, and publishing houses.

Services: Professional, financial and health buildings.

Settlement Systems: Houses, apartments and boarding houses.

6. Evaluation Process and Criteria

Process of Evaluation:

Two primary reasons exist for the evaluation of the resources documented by the Historic Building Survey. The first is the identification of properties worthy of nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, and the second is the designation of those properties to be preserved by local planning processes. The National Register criterion A, B, C, and D as translated by the Historic Context Reports shall be the basis for evaluation.

The Preliminary Inventory is the primary reference list of all properties within Thomas County that are potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Therefore, its primary purpose is to define the entire "pool" of historic resources which appear potentially eligible for listing.

The Preliminary inventory also fulfills additional roles which include its use as a guide for suggesting future work in the study area and the identification of building types which are no longer extant or never existed within the study area. The analysis of the inventoried data may also provide the NeSHPO with answers to the following questions:

1. What percentage of the total number of properties surveyed were worthy of intensive survey on the basis of their association to an identified historic theme or to a preliminarily identified Historic Context?
 2. What percentage of the total number of properties surveyed were worthy of intensive survey as non-historic context sites?
 3. What percentage of those properties noted during the field survey as potentially significant were actually found to be significant?
- Save America's Heritage originally viewed the assembling of the

Preliminary Inventory as a two-step process consisting of survey and review. However, as outlined below, a refined methodology has evolved from previous survey experience which now involves several levels of evaluation. What has emerged is a more in-depth compilation of potential NRHP sites using a variety of historic and contemporary resources.

1. Initial base list of potentially eligible properties derived from review of reconnaissance survey documentation.
2. Review of contact sheets and property descriptions performed to add or delete base-list properties.
3. Review all published county, church, and centennial histories, with particular emphasis on historic building citations concerning the base-list properties.
4. Contact local historical societies for input on histories of base-list properties.
5. Second base-list review with application of criterion to derive final lists of sites which:
 - a) are strongly recommended for NRHP listing, and b) may not be strongly recommended for listing but contribute to the character of the historic built environment.

Criteria For Evaluation:

If the ultimate goal of the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey is indeed the identification of properties worthy of National Register listing, then the definitions and criteria established by the NRHP become the primary concepts by which the significance of a historic property is evaluated.

The National Register defines a historic property as a district, site, building, structure, or object significant in American history, architecture, engineering, archeology, and culture. A historic context is a broad pattern of historical development in a community or its region, that may be represented by

historic resources. The use of historic contexts provides a mechanism for translating the broad National Register criteria into locally meaningful terms. For example, the National Register criteria allow any property that is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past to be regarded as eligible for listing, but it is the historic contexts of the area that define who such people were (p. 55, National Register Bulletin, No. 24, V. 5, Department of the interior). With this in mind, the National Register criteria translated into local meaning by the Historic Context Reports are as follows:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

APPENDIX 3: THOMAS COUNTY SUPRATYPE MASTER LIST

S. TYPE NUMBER	HSE. SH.	HSE SZ.	HSE. HT.	HSE. RF.	HSE OR.	% TM	#
S.1	L	1.0	1.5	G	LA	1.1	1
S.2	R	.5	1.0	G	LA	2.2	2
S.3	R	.5	1.0	G	LO	4.4	4
S.4	R	1.0	1.0	G	LA	6.7	6
S.5	R	1.0	1.0	G	LO	6.7	6
S.6	R	1.0	1.0	Gj	LO	1.1	1
S.7	R	1.0	1.0	H	LA	2.2	2
S.8	R	1.0	1.0	H	LO	5.6	5
S.9	R	1.0	1.5	G	LA	2.2	2
S.10	R	1.0	1.5	G	LO	1.1	1
S.11	R	1.5	1.0	G	LA	6.7	6
S.12	R	1.5	1.0	G	LO	10.00	9
S.13	R	1.5	1.0	Gj	LA	1.1	1
S.14	R	1.5	1.0	Gj	LO	2.2	2
S.15	R	1.5	1.0	H	LA	2.2	2
S.16	R	1.5	1.0	H	LO	8.9	8
S.17	R	1.5	1.0	Ht	LA	1.1	1
S.18	R	1.5	1.0	Q	LO	1.1	1
S.19	R	1.5	1.5	G	LA	2.2	2
S.20	R	1.5	1.5	G	LO	3.3	3
S.21	R	1.5	2.0	G	LO	1.1	1
S.22	R	2.0	1.0	H	LA	2.2	2
S.23	R	2.0	1.0	H	LO	2.2	2
S.24	R	2.0	1.5	G	LO	1.1	1
S.24	R	2.0	1.5	Gj	LO	1.1	1
S.25	R	2.0	2.0	H	LO	1.1	1
S.26	S	1.5	1.0	H	NO	2.2	2
S.28	S	1.5	1.0	Hf	NO	1.1	1
S.29	S	1.5	1.0	Ht	NO	4.4	4
S.30	S	1.5	1.5	Hm	NO	1.1	1
S.31	S	2.0	1.0	H	NO	2.2	2
S.32	S	2.0	1.0	Ht	NO	1.1	1
S.33	S	2.0	1.5	H	NO	1.1	1
S.34	S	2.0	2.0	H	NO	3.3	3
S.35	S	2.0	2.0	Ht	NO	2.2	2
S.36	T	.5	1.0	G	LO	1.1	1

APPENDIX 4:**Index of Abbreviations**

The following index attempts to explain the abbreviations used by the survey team while recording historic buildings in the nine county area of the northern Nebraska Sand Hills survey project. These abbreviations were developed as a means of expediting the survey recording process. The need for abbreviations was especially necessary in the recording of rural-based historic properties. In these cases, every effort was made to note each building, structure and object which contributed to the historic character of the property. Many of the abbreviations were developed by the NeSHPO during their former surveys of historic buildings throughout Nebraska. The remaining group of abbreviations were developed by Save America's Heritage with the approval of the NeSHPO.

Fr.	= Frame	Addn.	= Addition
Br.	= Brick	Cent.	= Central
Conc. Blk.	= Concrete Block	Enc.	= Enclosed
Frmhse.	= Farmhouse	Att.	= Attached
Frmstd.	= Farmstead	Perpend.	= Perpendicular
Hse.	= House	Symm.	= Symmetrical
S.K.	= Summer Kitchen	Lg.	= Large
Ckn. Hse.	= Chicken House	G.W.D.	= Gable Wall Dormer
Gar.	= Garage	Gab.	= Gable
Gran.	= Granary	Drmr.	= Dormer
D.T. Gran.	= Drive-thru Granary	Aban.	= Abandoned
D.T. Crib	= Drive-thru Crib	Det.	= Deteriorated
L.S.	= Loafing Shed	Outbldg.	= Outbuilding

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