

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Henry Wohlers Sr. Homestead

Other names/site number "Dutch Henry" Wohlers Homestead / NeHBS#DW00-043

2. Location

Street & number _____ Not for publication [X]

City or town Crawford Vicinity []

State Nebraska Code NE County Dawes Code 045 Zip code 69339

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

/s/ Lawrence Sommer

Signature of certifying official

6/17/04

Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

see continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

see continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Henry Wohlers Sr. Homestead

Name of Property

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

Private

Public-local

Public-state

Public-federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

Building(s)

District

Site

Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

4

1

5

Buildings

Sites

Structures

Objects

Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC / single dwelling

AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE /

Agricultural outbuilding/animal facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC / single dwelling

AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE /

Agricultural outbuilding/animal facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN

MOVEMENTS / Prairie School

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation Concrete

Walls Brick and frame

Roof Asphalt and wood shingle

Other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** Removed from its original location.
- C** A birthplace or a grave.
- D** A cemetery.
- E** A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** A commemorative property.
- G** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE

EXPLORATION / SETTLEMENT

Period of Significance

ca. 1890 - 1914

Significant Dates

ca. 1890 – construction of brick house

1910 – construction of 2-story addition

1914 – construction of barn

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Charles Starks, Builder

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- Previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- Designated a National Historic Landmark
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location for additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Henry Wohlers Sr. Homestead

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 4

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	13	646058	4717211	3.			
2.				4.			
				[]	See continuation sheet		

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Eldon Wohlers / Property Owner & Stacy Stupka-Burda / National Register Coordinator
organization Private Individual / Nebraska State Historical Society date 04/20/04
street & number 100 Wohlers Drive / 1500 R St, PO Box 82554 telephone 308-665-2206 / 402-471-4770
city or town Crawford / Lincoln state NE zip code 69339 / 68501-2554

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title ***see continuation sheet***
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, (15 USC 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Henry Wohlers Sr. Homestead

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Introduction

The Henry Wohlers Sr. Homestead is a late 19th to early 20th century farm complex that is historically associated with a homestead of 160 acres. The farmyard is situated in the northwest portion of the quarter section on a high flat tableland just south of the area known as the Pine Ridge. Mixed grass and ponderosa pine trees characterize the vegetation of surrounding area. Moving away from the flat tableland area, the terrain becomes very rugged and heavily forested. The setting of the Henry Wohlers Sr. Homestead is rural. The nomination includes 4 contributing buildings: the house, a barn, a washhouse, and a chicken coop; and one contributing structure, a windmill. The buildings and landscape associated with the farm are in an excellent state of preservation.

Description

The Henry Wohlers Sr. Homestead is located in rural Dawes County, Nebraska. Dawes County is located in the northwestern portion of Nebraska and its northern boundary forms the border between Nebraska and South Dakota. While most of the county can be characterized as gently rolling to hilly, the area surrounding the nominated property ranges from nearly flat to steeply dissected drainage ways.¹ As the crow flies, the Henry Wohlers Sr. Homestead is located approximately 9 miles southwest of Crawford and is approximately 478 miles northwest of Lincoln, the state capital.

This farmstead faces south and when approaching it from the west, the large gambrel roof barn looms into sight. Constructed in 1914 using rough-sawed lumber from the surrounding ponderosa pines, the barn measures 56 x 80 feet and is 36 feet high at its peak. The barn is clad in horizontal board and batten siding and is painted bright red with white trim. The roof is covered with wooden shingles. The hay hood faces north or into the farmyard. The barn has room in its haymow for a hundred tons of hay.² Large double doors are present on the north, east and south sides, while a 16-foot wide shed designed to shelter cattle is located along the entire west side of the barn. Along the both the west and the east sides, four double hung two over two windows are evenly spaced across the length of the building. On the both the north and the south façades, four two over two double hung windows were placed evenly on either side of the double doors and the haymow. On the north façade, a fifth double hung two over two window was placed just west of the double doors at eye level. Four lightning rods are evenly spaced along the ridgeline of the barn. On the interior, most of livestock stalls have been retained and the hay chutes in the haymow are intact.

The house is situated north and just slightly east of the barn. Constructed ca. 1890, the small gable end brick house with a large two-story foursquare house added in 1910 is unusual. The brick portion of the house is quite simple and solid. Each gable end contains two double-hung one over one windows and one smaller two over two window. Window lintels and sills are constructed of brick. One lone double-hung one over one window was placed along the western façade, near the southern end. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

The two-story foursquare addition was placed along the eastern façade of the brick home and replaced an earlier one-story frame house. The hipped roof of the foursquare is covered with asphalt shingles and a large chimney is near the center of the roof. Four evenly spaced columns support the front porch, and two doors provide access to the main floor. A second story porch with a wooden balustrade was constructed across the entire width of the front porch accessed by a door on the second story. Evenly spaced double-hung one over one windows give light to the second floor rooms. A small shed addition was added to the rear of the house. The house is clad in narrow width steel siding.

The interior floor plan of the house is very simple. The westernmost front entry opens into the former kitchen area, which now serves as a living room. Stairs to access the second story are located near the rear of this room. Immediately to the

¹ *Soil Survey of Dawes County, Nebraska*. United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service with the University of Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division. 1977.

² *The Chadron Record*, Wednesday April 24, 1982. Interview with John Wohlers.

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left or west are two doors that lead into the older brick portion of the home and two bedrooms. The kitchen was remodeled into its current location at the eastern end of the house at which time the second front door was added. Three bedrooms are located on the second floor. Wooden baseboards and trim are intact throughout the house.

A small gabled washhouse is located behind the house. The entrance to the summer kitchen is on the east facing gable end. Each façade contains one double-hung two over two window. The washhouse is clad with wood siding and an asphalt roof to match the foursquare house.

A small south facing chicken coop, clad with asphalt siding, is located northeast of the house. The chicken coop has a shed style roof and three two over two fixed windows.

A metal windmill located between the barn and the house is considered contributing.

Taken as a collection of farm related resources, the integrity of the Henry Wohlers Sr. Homestead is excellent. Alterations consistent with changing lifestyles have occurred to the 1910 addition. The integrity of brick portion of the house, itself an addition, is strong as is the integrity of the 1914 barn.

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The Henry Wohlers Sr. Homestead is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for agriculture. Henry Wohlers Sr. or "Dutch Henry" as he was known established his homestead in Dawes County in 1885. This farmstead is associated with the broad pattern of agricultural development in Dawes County, and illustrates a typical story of a homesteader in that county. The period of significance for this farmstead is ca.1890 – 1914, beginning with an approximate construction date of the brick portion of the house, ending the year the last building was constructed.

Heinrich Gerhard Wohlers, aka as Dutch Henry, was born in Germany on January 10, 1839. He married Helene Marie Stulken in 1867 and together they had nine children. After his wife and an infant son died in 1882, Henry decided to leave Germany for the United States of America. After staying with relatives in Iowa for a time, Henry traveled back to Germany to sell his farm. He returned to Iowa accompanied by four sons and two daughters.

The idea of free land under the provisions of the Homestead Act of 1862 was enough incentive for many early settlers to venture west. In the summer of 1884, Henry traveled west by train to literally, the end of the line, which was then Valentine, Nebraska. Perhaps Henry was encouraged during his trip by an 1880 publication of *Sketches of the Physical Geography and Geology of Nebraska*. Railroads distributed this publication to their passengers and to prospective settlers in order to encourage settlement of the west. In this publication Professor Samuel Aughey made the now famous statement, "Rainfall follows the plow."³

From Valentine, Henry walked with a friend to an area known as the "tableland" in what is now Dawes County, Nebraska a distance of approximately 150 miles. According to family members, Henry selected his homestead in a timbered area believing the timber would be useful when constructing buildings. After selecting his homestead site, Wohlers went back to Iowa. The following year, he returned to Dawes County with one of his sons. He and his son lived in a dugout for a couple of years. In 1886, the remaining Wohlers' children arrived in Dawes County staying with neighbors until a house was built. According to family records, Henry constructed a frame house ca. 1886 and sometime around the turn of the century, added a one story brick house (see supplemental photo 1). Henry was granted U.S. citizenship on June 24, 1890.⁴ After settling in Dawes County, Henry ranched, raised stock, and he was once described as "probably the most prominent German in the county."⁵ In 1906, Henry sold his homestead to his son Friedrich (Fred) and his daughter-in-law Mary. Henry died three years later in 1909.

In 1910, in response to a growing family, Fred and his wife removed the older frame portion of the house and replaced it with large two-story frame house. This Prairie Box addition, sometimes also referred to as an American Foursquare, was a style made popular by pattern books published throughout the Midwest.⁶ At the time the two-story addition was made, the gabled frame portion of the house was moved to the rear of the property and used as a wood shed.⁷ This house turned-wood-shed is no longer extant.

By 1914, Fred began work on the barn included as a contributing building in this nomination. True to Henry's earlier vision, all of the rough lumber used in construction of the barn was collected from the homestead. According to John Wohlers, approximately 60,000 board feet of native lumber went into the barn.⁸ Fred purchased other supplies necessary to construct the barn from Morison Lumber Company located in nearby Crawford.⁹ A master carpenter named Charles Starks built the barn with the help of neighbors and employees but without a blueprint.

³ Samuel Aughey, *Sketches of the Physical Geography and Geology of Nebraska*.1880. Taken from Nebraskastudies.org, visited on April 25, 2004.

⁴ United States of America Certificate of Citizenship, State of Nebraska, County of Dawes. Granted to Henry Wohlers, June 24, 1890. On file, NeSHPO.

⁵ History of Dawes County.

⁶ McAlester, Virginia and Lee, *A Field Guide to American Houses*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. 2000.

⁷ Eldon Wohlers, personal communication. April 2004.

⁸ *The Chadron Record*, Wednesday April 24, 1982. Interview with John Wohlers.

⁹ As evidenced by receipts held by the Wohlers family and made available to NeSHPO staff. Copies on file, NeSHPO.

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Interestingly, Wohlers family wisdom indicates that the barn was constructed squarely on the divide between the White River drainage to the north and the Niobrara River drainage to the south. Therefore, in theory, if a raindrop was to fall on the center ridgeline of the barn, half of the raindrop would travel north and into the White River, and half of the raindrop would travel south into the Niobrara River.

In 1947, Fred sold the homestead to his son John and his Marguerite. John and Marguerite lived there until John's death in 1999. Marguerite and her children maintain ownership of the property in 2004.

In its current configuration, the house located on the Henry Wohlers Sr. Homestead does not represent one identifiable architectural style. Based on its current physical appearance and family history, the house was constructed in three major episodes. The first frame house is no longer extant. The Henry Wohlers Sr. Homestead does not embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction necessary to nominate this property under Criterion C. Rather, the buildings located on the homestead illustrate the story of a successful and growing agricultural family in the northwestern portion of Nebraska.

The dugout constructed by Wohlers upon initial settlement of his homestead is no longer visible in the hillside. Likewise, evidence of associated outbuildings that are no longer extant (such as a privy) were not noted during the site visit. It is likely that archeological deposits are present at this homestead. However, no archeological investigations were conducted and the nature of the potential archeological deposits was not evaluated. At this writing, whether or not these potential archeological deposits are likely to yield important information in history is unknown. Therefore, this property cannot be nominated under Criterion D.

The property owner request for listing came to the NeSHPO requesting National Register listing of only the barn. Through discussions with the Eldon Wohlers, the area considered eligible for listing was increased to include the house and additional outbuildings. Due to staffing constraints, the physical integrity of the original 160-acre homestead was not evaluated for National Register eligibility and may in fact, also be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Henry Wohlers Sr. Homestead is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of settlement and exploration and agriculture. This homestead is associated with the broad pattern of agricultural development and settlement in Dawes County. At a time when as many as three out of five people left the land due to the hardships they experienced,¹⁰ Henry Wohlers Sr. and his descendants made theirs a successful homestead. The homestead is an excellent collection of buildings representative of a historically significant pattern of agricultural development one of ranching and raising stock in Dawes County. The farmhouse and associated outbuildings retain a significant amount of physical integrity. The rural setting is intact and strengthens the feeling and association of a 19th and early 20th century farmstead.

¹⁰ *Soil Survey of Dawes County, Nebraska*. United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service with the University of Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division. 1977.

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Bibliography

Aughey Samuel

1880 *Sketches of the Physical Geography and Geology of Nebraska*. Excerpt from nebraskastudies.org, visited on April 25, 2004.

The Chadron Record, Wednesday April 24, 1982. Interview with John Wohlers.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee

2000 *A Field Guide to American Houses*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

United States Department of Agriculture

1977 Soil Survey of Dawes County, Nebraska. Soil Conservation Service with the University of Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division.

United States of America Certificate of Citizenship, State of Nebraska, County of Dawes.

Granted to Henry Wohlers, June 24, 1890. On file, NeSHPO.

History of Dawes County.

Eldon Wohlers, personal communication. April 2004.

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of this history property consists of the flat tableland of the farmyard ending generally at the 4440 foot topographical line as indicated on a 7.5' U.S.G.S. quadrangle map to the west, north and east. The southern boundary is formed by Squaw Creek Road. This boundary includes the associated farmyard and corrals.

Boundary Justification

As described above, the boundaries of this historic property include those buildings, structures and land historically associated with the operations of the farmyard itself.

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Photographs

The following information pertains to the following 8 photographs:

Henry Wohlers Sr. Homestead
Dawes County, Nebraska
Photographer: Bill Callahan, NeSHPO
November 2003
Negatives in the collection of the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office

Photograph	Description of Photograph	View
1 of 8	Overview of the Henry Wohlers Sr. Homestead	NE
2 of 8	View of the barn constructed by Fred Wohlers	WSW
3 of 8	View of the barn constructed by Fred Wohlers; the house is visible to the right	N
4 of 8	View of the house, south façade	NNW
5 of 8	View of the house, south façade	NNE
6 of 8	View of the house, north and west façades; summer kitchen is to the left	SE
7 of 8	View of the house, north and east façades; barn and windmill are visible to left	SW
8 of 8	View of chicken coop	NE

Supplemental Photos

Photograph	Description of Photograph	View
1 of 1	1906 view of the Henry Wohlers Sr. family and house. Note one story frame portion to right; one story brick addition to left. Fred and his wife Mary are second and third from the left respectively. Henry Wohlers Sr. is seated to right of path and is holding John Wohlers.	N

Photo 1 of 8



Photo 2 of 8



Photo 3 of 8



Photo 4 of 8



Photo 5 of 8



Photo 6 of 8



Photo 7 of 8



Photo 8 of 8

