

Glimpses into the rich history of America and its early settlers are provided by photographs and records from past centuries. As important as preserving photographic records of life in the 1800's is the preservation of homesteading records of land ownership of early settlers. . .



The Homestead Act of 1862 led to over two million land claims in the U.S. The records of these claims exist only as paper originals stored in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. These valuable documents remain vulnerable to natural deterioration, fire, and water damage. Together in partnership the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Homestead National Monument of America hope to better protect and preserve these records and make them easily accessible for public viewing.

This partnership already has secured funding to initiate a pilot project focusing on the Broken Bow, Nebraska, land office. The Broken Bow project is the first of its kind and a test for what researchers and historians hope will become the fulfillment of a grander vision—the microfilming and presentation of homestead records from all of Nebraska's land offices and, eventually, the 30 million documents of homestead records from all 30 of America's homesteading states. All will be housed at Homestead National Monument of America, where they will be available to all who wish to know more about the history of U.S. land holdings and those who pursued the dream of land ownership.

More is needed to make the goal of microfilming and indexing the entire homestead records collection. To learn about this important preservation/access project, please contact the National Park Service at 402-223-3514 or visit www.nps.gov/home.



"Dixie Queens," 1912, Roy Andrews.
Courtesy of Special Collections and University Archives,
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