

HOMESTEAD RECORDS

Homestead National Historical Park

www.nps.gov/home

The Homestead Act of 1862 had an immediate and enduring effect on the United States. It impacted agriculture, immigration, industrialization, Indigenous People, prairie ecosystems, and so much more. It also involved millions of families—whose records and documents can still be seen today.

What are Homestead Records?

Over the course of the Homestead Act's 123-year history, over two million individual homestead claims were made. Each and every one of these claims generated a written record known as a case file that was kept by the U.S. General Land Office. Today, many of these case files exist only as paper originals and are stored in the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

The complete collection of case files created under the Homestead Act contains over 30 million individual pieces of paper. These invaluable documents are vulnerable to natural deterioration, fire, and water damage.

What can I learn from these records?

Homestead case files are treasure troves of historical and genealogical information. They often contain information about a homesteader's date and place of birth; any spouse or children that lived on the homestead; naturalization information about immigrant homesteaders; notations or letters regarding military service; the types of crops planted on the homestead; the value and types of homes; other buildings constructed on the site; and more.

What work is being done with the records?

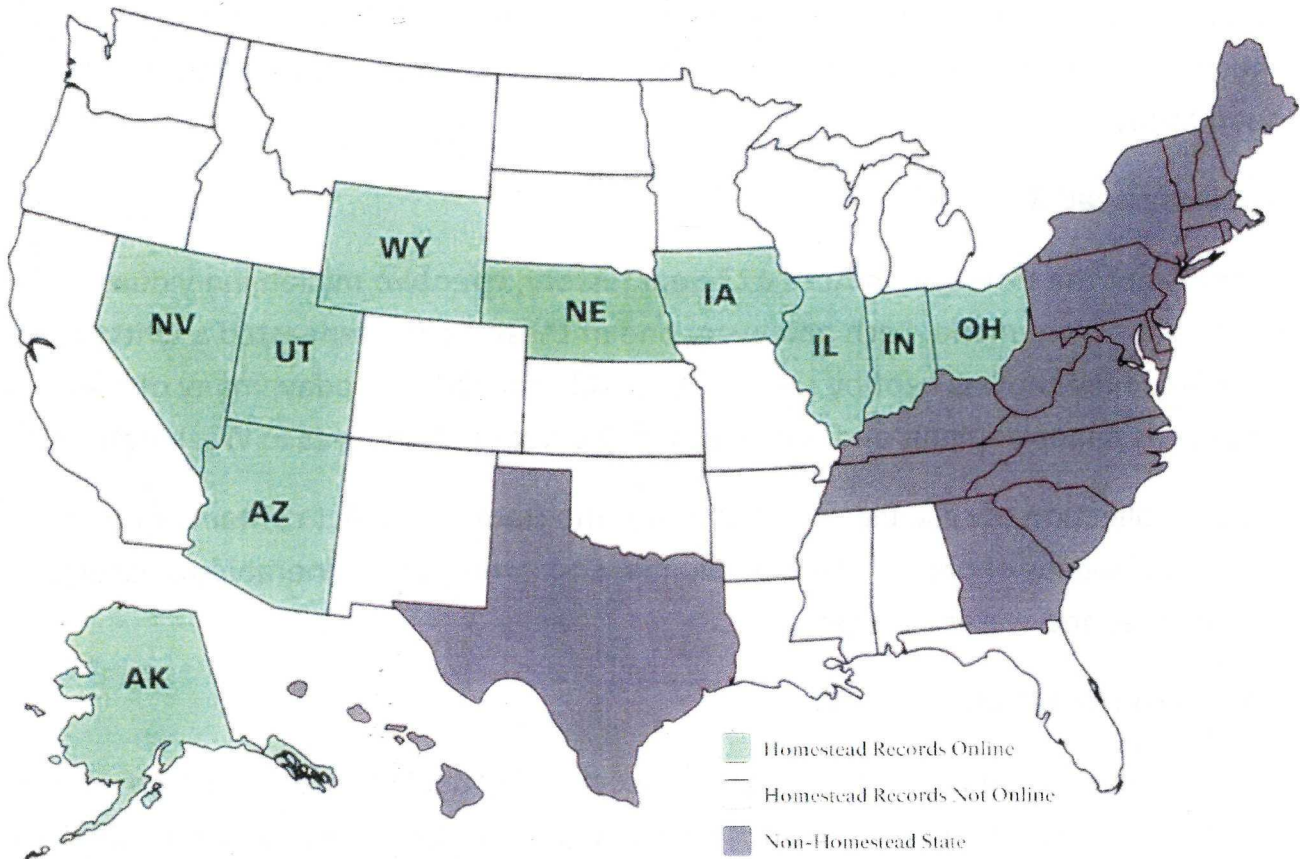
Since 1999, Homestead National Historical Park has been involved in a project that aims to digitize all 30 million documents of the Homestead case files collection. The Homestead Records Project seeks to digitize all the Homestead Records from nearly 200 land offices in all 30 homesteading states.

Homestead National Historical Park, the National Archives, Fold3.com, FamilySearch, Ancestry.com, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln have partnered to digitize all Homestead Land Entry Case Files housed at the National Archives.

To date, the records for ten states (Alaska, Arizona, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, Nevada, Ohio, Utah, and Wyoming) have been completely digitized and made available online. The remaining 20 Homesteading states will follow, but for now remain only available in hard copy at the National Archives.

The project's current status and available land offices can be found here:

<https://www.nps.gov/home/learn/historyculture/requesting-homestead-records.htm>



Additional Resources:

Homestead National Historical Park: <https://www.nps.gov/home/index.htm>

General Land Office Records Search: <https://glorerecords.blm.gov/default.aspx>

Family Search U.S. Bureau of Land Management Tract Books (free account required):

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2074276>

Ancestry.com Homestead Records (subscription required, free at Homestead):

<http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=60593>

Fold3 Nebraska Homestead Records (subscription required, free at Homestead):

https://www.fold3.com/title_650/homestead_records_ne#overview