

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	APR 28 1976
DATE ENTERED	10/15/66

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Freeman Homestead and Freeman School

AND/OR COMMON

Homestead National Monument of America *Use this*

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

RFD #3 (4 1/2 miles NW of Beatrice on Nebr. 4) NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Beatrice

VICINITY OF

First

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Nebraska

31

Gage

067

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES- RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES- UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*

Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

1709 Jackson Street

CITY, TOWN

Omaha

VICINITY OF

STATE

Nebraska

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

1709 Jackson Street

CITY, TOWN

Omaha

STATE

Nebraska

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

DATE

1967

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS National Park Service, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The bulk of Homestead National Monument of America comprises the original homestead claim of Daniel Freeman: S $\frac{1}{2}$ and NE $\frac{1}{4}$, and SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of NE $\frac{1}{4}$, of Section 26, T 4 R 5 E, Gage County, Nebraska, totaling about 160 acres. The Freeman School is a detached area of about 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ acres, located $\frac{1}{4}$ mile west of the monument headquarters on Nebr. 4, at the extreme southeast corner of Section 22, T 4 R 5 E.

The List of Classified Structures for Homestead National Monument includes the following structures:

HS-4 Palmer-Epard Cabin. Constructed ca. 1867, it is a 14'x16' cabin, made from local hardwood logs. One-and-a-half stories tall with an attic, the cabin has a single room with a dirt floor and a corner stair. Entry is by a single plank door. There are four windows, three of which are four pane over four pane double-hung and one being a four pane fixed sash. The cabin was moved several times before being placed on the present site in 1966 and restored, with new concrete footings added.

HS-7 Freeman School. Built in 1872, it is constructed of solid brick walls, three wythes thick (approx. 12"). Overall dimensions are 26'x20'x12' high. There is one classroom with an adjoining cloakroom, both with plastered interiors and wood flooring. The foundation is of uncoursed field-stone. It was restored in 1973-75 to its appearance of about 1902. This building is among one of the oldest one-room schoolhouses in Nebraska. It was a focus of controversy in 1890s as Daniel Freeman brought suit to halt Bible reading and religious services conducted during the schoolday by the teacher. This suit set a precedent in future actions concerning separation of religion and state. It is in excellent condition.

HS-8 Storage Shed. Part of the Freeman School complex, this is a white gabled one-story storage shed. It measures 10'7" to the gable ridge, 14'4" long, 12'3" wide, and 6'5" high at the eaves. It has a concrete block foundation on grade, clapboard siding, and a wood shingle roof. It is in fair condition.

HS-9 Girl's Privy. Part of the Freeman School complex, this building is 4'2"x5'2"x8'10" high. It has clapboard siding, wood sill foundation, two toilets, and a wood shingled, gable roof. It is in fair condition.

HS-10 Boy's Privy. Built by the WPA in the 1930s, this is a 4'2"x4'3" frame privy with a shed roof measuring 7'3" at its higher side. It has one toilet and a roof of corrugated iron. It forms part of the Freeman School complex. It is in deteriorated condition.

HS-11 Freeman School Pump. Constructed of cast iron, the pump is set on a concrete base. It is in deteriorated condition.

HS-12 Squatter's Cabin Site. A grassy plot in the woods, this was once the site of a one-room log hovel with a sod roof pierced by an iron stovepipe from a Charter Oak stove. The cabin provided shelter for the Freeman family until their permanent cabin was built. The cabin was originally built and owned by the squatter who lived on the land before Freeman filed a claim on the land.

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HS-13 Freeman Homestead Cabin Site. Originally this was a one-room log cabin of unsquared logs and one window. It exists now as the original site of the first home built by the Freeman family on their homestead, the cabin having disappeared long ago.

HS-14 Brick House Site. Historically, this was a two-story, four room house, measuring 26'x19'. The walls were of brick, three wythes thick, without any evidence of footings. The wall thickness averaged about 1½ feet. This was the home for the Freeman family from 1876-1916. Presently, only a grassy site remains.

HS-15 Agnes Freeman Cabin Site. This was a small frame cottage, built for Daniel Freeman's widow in 1916. Now it is merely a grassy plot.

HS-16 Freeman Graves. There are two headstones, 1' high each and one family marker, 5'x2'x1' thick. This marks the gravesite of Daniel Freeman (died 12-30-1908) and his wife Agnes Freeman (died 4-8-1931). The condition of the markers is excellent.

HS-17 D.A.R. Monument. This monument consists of a bronze plaque set on a stone base which was removed from the old state capital from Lincoln, Nebraska. The condition of the plaque is excellent.

HS-18 Osage Orange Fence Row. These are trees (osage orange, otherwise known as hedge apple or bois d'arc) planted in a row by Daniel Freeman on his homestead as a barrier. They are in good condition. Besides the fence row, a few trees planted by Freeman survive in the yards of the various house sites. The landscape has been carefully restored to the native grasses and woodlands found at the time of the area's first development.

The only nonhistoric or nonnatural intrusions within the monument consist of the following: and L-shaped visitor center/museum/headquarters complex and landscaping at the extreme north edge; a nearby maintenance yard; three employee housing units; and Nebr. 4. Since the developments exist along the fringes, and are integral to the protection and public enjoyment of the area, they do not seriously affect the area's integrity. Only Nebr. 4 is visible from the interior of the monument.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1863

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Homestead National Monument of America was authorized by Public Law 74-480, signed on March 19, 1936, so that, as the authorizing legislation states, the land "may be maintained as an appropriate monument to retain for posterity a proper memorial emblematical of the hardships and the pioneer life through which the early settlers passed in the settlement, cultivation, and civilization of the great West." Homestead is representative of, and memorial to, the spread of the American population across the continent. It commemorates the purposes and history of the Homestead Act and other measures that encouraged the population of the United States by small freeholders. It preserves within its boundaries a representative sample of the land the pioneer farmers faced and brought under cultivation. It evokes both the advance and the passing of the frontier that marked the growth of American agrarian culture for some four centuries.

The land comprising the monument is one of the first 160-acre claims entered and subsequently patented under the Homestead Act of 1862, a landmark piece of legislation intended to further the ideal that the public domain should pass into the hands of small farmers. In fact, it is the homestead most prominently promoted over the last century as being the very first. However, the existence of separate record books for each land office means that the conflicting claims of who filed the "first" homestead application cannot be resolved. Daniel Freeman, who filed here, held patent No. 1, in volume 1, page 1 of the record books of the Brownville, Nebr., Land Office, since he was the first applicant at that office and his entry took effect on January 1, 1863, when the law came into force. Similar claims have been made for Mahlon Gore of Vermillion, SD, and a few others. There were 30 entries made at various land offices on January 1, 1863.

Between 1867 and 1936, the Freeman family put the land to cultivation and grazing, and constructed several fences, houses, outbuildings, and other structures. By 1936, few, if any, of those structures survived. Since 1940, the National Park Service has endeavored to restore the land within the park to its natural appearance when Freeman filed his claim. That biological restoration is nearly complete; the park again consists of about 90 acres of prairie grassland bordered by heavy woods along Cub Creek. A few trees survive within the grassland, remaining from those planted by the Freemans around various of their houses. A century-old fence row of osage orange (hedge apple, bois d'arc) also cuts across the grassland.

In a small detached area ¼ mile from the monument headquarters is the Freeman School, the best surviving example of a one-room school in Nebraska. It was built by Freeman and his neighbors together in 1872 and remained open until 1967. This tangible symbol of the roots of American public education was also the focus, in the late 1890s, of noteworthy civil liberties case in which Freeman sued successfully to halt religious instruction in the school.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Brown, Lenard E. The Palmer-Epard Cabin, Homestead National Monument of America, Beatrice, Nebraska: Historic Structure Report, Part II, Historical Data Section. National Park Service, June 1968.
- Brown, Lenard E. Palmer-Epard Cabin, Homestead National Monument: Furnishing Study. National Park Service, June 1968.
- Pope, Charles S., Architect, and Lenard E. Brown, Historian. Historic Structure Report Part II: Palmer-Epard Cabin, Homestead National Monument. National Park Service, December 1969.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 194.57
 UTM REFERENCES

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	continued			
6A	14	68,390,0	44	6,220,0	1A	14	68,430,0	44	6,220,0
6C	14	68,430,0	44	6,180,0	6C	14	68,470,0	44	6,180,0
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION									
8A	14	68,470,0	44	6,140,0	8A	14	68,350,0	44	6,140,0
8B	14	68,350,0	44	6,180,0	9A	14	68,390,0	44	6,180,0
8C	14	68,340,0	44	6,230,0	9B	14	68,350,0	44	6,230,0
8D	14	68,350,0	44	6,220,0	9C	14	68,340,0	44	6,220,0

Freeman School

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: David Arbogast, Thomas Busch, Richard Ortega Historical Architects
 ORGANIZATION: National Park Service
 DATE: 12/19/75
 STREET & NUMBER: 1709 Jackson Street TELEPHONE: 402-221-3423
 CITY OR TOWN: Omaha STATE: Nebraska

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES NO NONE

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION SIGNATURE

TITLE: Deputy Assistant Secretary

DATE: APR 23 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE
ATTEST: <u>[Signature]</u>	DATE: <u>10-20-74</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

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Homestead National Monument of America
FRD #3 (4-1/2 miles NW of Beatrice on Nebraska 4)
Beatrice, Gage County, Nebraska

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

The historically associated and significant objects in the Monument's collection consist of photographs, writings, and household objects associated with the Daniel Freeman family, an architectural item, a few school aids and furnishings, and a treasurer's ledger associated with the Freeman School.



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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Palmer-Epard Cabin

2 LOCATION

CITY/TOWN

Beatrice

VICINITY OF

COUNTY Gage

STATE Nebraska

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT David A. Clary

DATE OF PHOTO August, 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

View of front (north) elevation

PHOTO NO

22



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PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Freeman School

2 LOCATION

CITY/TOWN Beatrice

VICINITY OF

COUNTY Gage

STATE Nebraska

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT David A. Clary

DATE OF PHOTO August, 1975

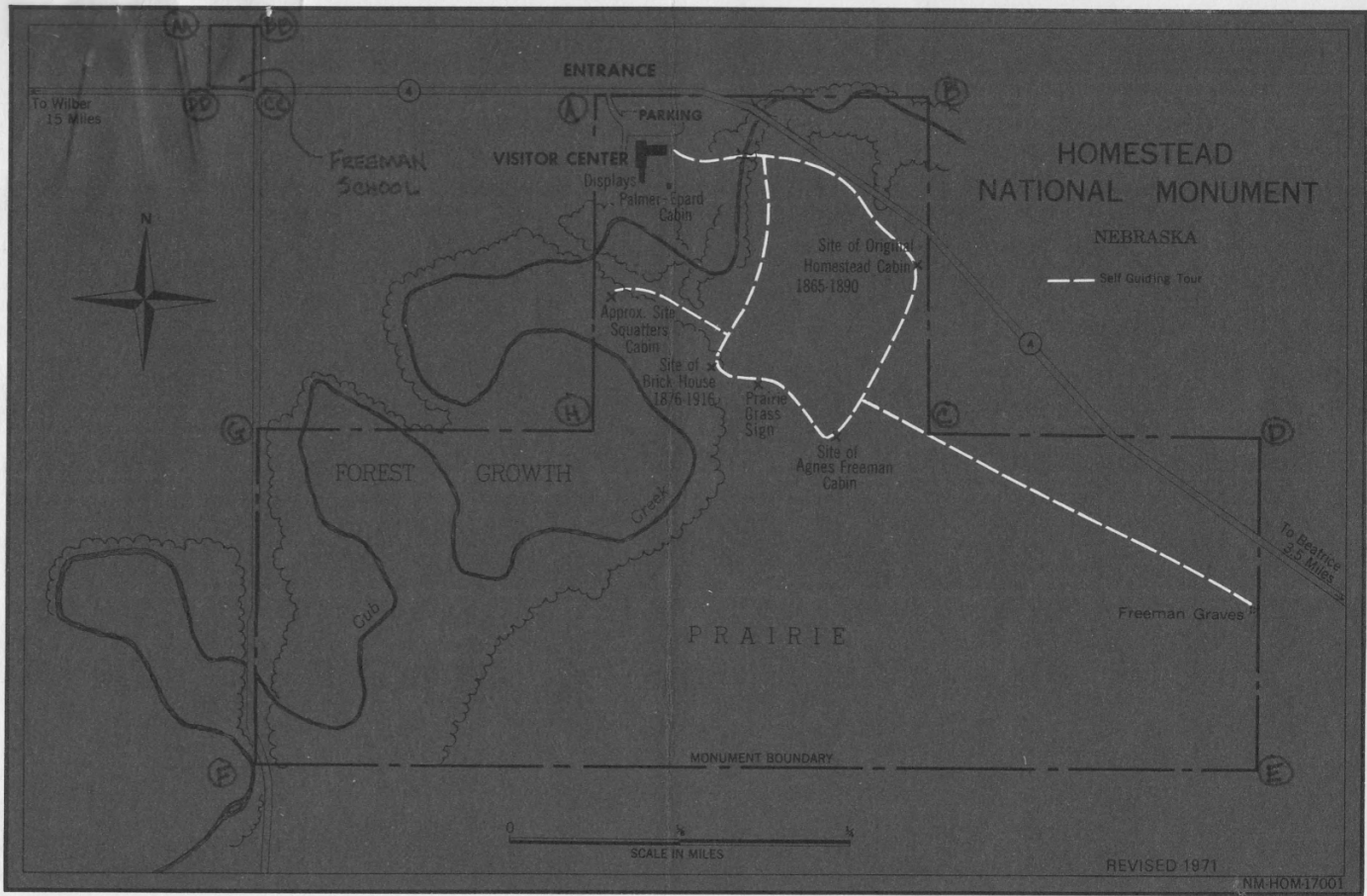
NEGATIVE FILED AT Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW DIRECTION ETC IF DISTRICT GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO. 272

View of front (south) elevation



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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME

HISTORIC Freeman Homestead and Freeman School

AND/OR COMMON

Homestead National Monument of America

2 LOCATION

CITY/TOWN Beatrice

VICINITY OF

COUNTY Gage

STATE Nebraska

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE Park pamphlet

SCALE None

DATE None

4 REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

- 1 PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
- 2 NORTH ARROW
- 3 UTM REFERENCES