UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

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

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER
RFD #3 (4½ miles NW of Beatrice on Nebr. 4)
CITY, TOWN
Beatrice
STATE
Nebraska

3 CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY
DISTRICT
BUILDING
STRUCTURE
SITE
OBJECT
X
PRIVATE
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
IN PROCESS
OWNERSHIP
PUBLIC
PRIVATE
BOTH

STATUS
OCCUPIED
UNOCCUPIED
WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
YES: RESTRICTED
YES: UNRESTRICTED
NO

PRESENT USE
AGRICULTURE
COMMERCIAL
ARCHITECTURAL
EDUCATIONAL
ENTERTAINMENT
GOVERNMENT
INDUSTRIAL
MILITARY
PRIVATE RESIDENCE
RELIGIOUS
SCIENTIFIC
TRANSPORTATION
OTHER

4 AGENCY
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS, if applicable
Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service
STREET & NUMBER
1709 Jackson Street
CITY, TOWN
Omaha
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
X
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
☑ EXCELLENT
☑ GOOD
☐ FAIR
☑ DETERIORATED

CHECK ONE
☑ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED
☑ LUNA

DESCRIPTION

The bulk of Homestead National Monument of America comprises the original homestead claim of Daniel Freeman: SE$ and NE$ of NW$ of Section 26, T4 R5E, Gage County, Nebraska, totaling about 160 acres. The Freeman School is a detached area of about 1$

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

HS-4 Palmer-Eppard 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 uncut fieldstone. 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 Girls' 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 Boys' 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.

(Continued on Form No. 10-300a)
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 1¾ 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'xl' 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
PREHISTORIC
1400-1499
1500-1599
1600-1699
1700-1799
1800-1899
1900-

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW
ARCHAEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
ARCHAEOLOGY-HISTORIC
AGRICULTURE
ARCHITECTURE
ART
COMMERCE
COMMUNICATIONS
COMMUNITY PLANNING
CONSERVATION
EDUCATION
ENGINEERING
EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
INDUSTRY
INVENTION
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
LAW
LITERATURE
MUSIC
PHILOSOPHY
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
RELIGION
SCIENCE
SCULPTURE
SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
THEATER
TRANSPORTATION
OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES 1863

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 Mahion 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 ½ 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.
### Major Bibliographical References


### Geographical Data

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<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Code</th>
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### Form Prepared By

Architect: Thomas Busch, Richard Ortega
Historical Architects
Organizations:
National Park Service
1712 Jackson Street
402-34-23
State: Nebraska

### Certification of Nomination

State Historic Preservation Officer Recommendation:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NONE</th>
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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 the nomination and to notify the National—State—Local Federal, State, and Local Governmental Agencies.

Federal: Assistant Secretary
State: 
Local: 

NPS USE ONLY

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

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<td>APR 23 1976</td>
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Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Attest:

Keeper of the National Register

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<td>10-23-74</td>
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

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.
### Name

**Historic**  
**And/or Common:** Palmer-Epard Cabin

### Location

**City, Town:** Beatrice  
**County:** Gage  
**State:** Nebraska

### Photo Reference

**Photo Credit:** David A. Clary  
**Date of Photo:** August, 1975  
**Negative Filed At:** Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

### Identification

Describe view, direction, etc. if district. Give building name & street.  
View of front (north) elevation
### Name

**Historic**

**And/or Common**

Freeman School

### Location

- **City/Town**: Beatrice
- **X Vicinity Of**: 
- **County**: Gage
- **State**: Nebraska

### Photo Reference

- **Photo Credit**: David A. Clary
- **Date of Photo**: August, 1975
- **Negative Filed At**: Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

### Identification

**Describe View, Direction, etc. If District, Give Building Name & Street**

View of front (south) elevation
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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