

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS  
THEME XVIIa - AGRICULTURE AND THE FARMER'S FRONTIER

REPORT ON THE HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION OF  
THE NELSON PIONEER FARM  
NEAR OSKALOOSA, IOWA

Prepared by  
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Acting Resource Studies Advisor  
Midwest Regional Office  
National Park Service  
Omaha, Nebraska

December, 1964

## INTRODUCTION

On October 10, 1964, Mrs. Stillman Clark, 1303 - 9th Avenue East, Oskaloosa, Iowa, President of the Mahaska County Historical Society, wrote to the Hon. John Kyl, House of Representatives, Washington, D. C., mentioning the Nelson Pioneer Farm and recommending that it be considered as a Registered National Historic Landmark. On August 13 Congressman Kyl wrote to the Director asking for a National Park Service investigation of the site. On August 24 Assistant Director Thompson wrote Mr. Kyl that this study would be handled by the Midwest Regional Office.

In accordance with a suggestion contained in memorandum of August 21 from Chief Historian Porter, Washington Office, arrangements were made for an investigation of the site by Merrill J. Mattes, Acting Resource Studies Advisor.

The field investigation was made on September 25 in a one-day trip from Omaha to Oskaloosa. At that time, Mr. Mattes met with Mrs. Clark and several of her Board members at the Nelson Pioneer Farm, which is six miles northeast of Oskaloosa and accessible via U. S. Highway No. 63 and the "Glendale Road." At this meeting, there was opportunity for a leisurely discussion with the County Historical Society officials on the purpose and procedures relating to the National Survey, and there was then opportunity to make detailed inspection of the Farm.

The Mahaska County Historical Society and its officers deserve only the highest commendation for their enthusiastic efforts to conduct a program of site preservation, and their remarkable success in making the Farm a center for historical and cultural activities in Mahaska County.

#### HISTORY OF THE SITE

The Nelson Pioneer Farm, with its surviving structures, is one of the oldest in the southeast quarter of Iowa. Daniel Nelson and his wife, natives of Butler County, Ohio, migrated west in 1841, reaching Mahaska County in 1844. They acquired 150 acres of virgin farm land, which was augmented in 1847 by purchase of the north 160 acres, making a total farmstead of 310 acres. This land was farmed continuously by the Nelson family for 114 years, or until 1958, at which time Roy Nelson and his sister, Lillian, both died without issue.

Being public-spirited citizens, proud of their heritage, and members of long standing of the Mahaska County Historical Society, Roy and Lillian Nelson bequeathed the entire farm to the Historical Society, stipulating that the structures, particularly the brick home, be preserved intact as a memorial to the family. In addition to the donation of land, there was an endowment of \$100,000. Of this, \$60,000 has been set aside as an endowment fund, while \$46,000 has been earmarked for a museum.

The Farm is now a County Historic Site consisting of 310 acres. The farm portion is rented, and the income utilized for historical purposes. Forty acres are in native timber, which is to be retained as a wildlife refuge. Twelve acres, embracing the old structures and the new museum, are declared to be the "Museum Area," constituting the headquarters of the Society and the Farm site as a non-profit educational institution.

In addition to historic structures discussed in the following section, the building complex today includes a new cement-block structure, handsomely designed, which will constitute the museum and headquarters of the Mahaska County Historical Society, featuring exhibits which will relate primarily to Indians and to pioneering. The Society is proud of this museum as "the first rural pioneer cultural center in the state of Iowa."

#### HISTORICAL REMAINS

1. Daniel Nelson Home. This is the two-story, five-room brick house, in a fine wooded setting north of the road, which was built in 1853 for Daniel Nelson by Thomas Binns. Material used included native timber framing and bricks from a kiln on a nearby farm. The walls are up to a foot in thickness. The rooms are identified as living room, parlor, two upstairs bedrooms, and kitchen to the rear. Fireplaces are to be found in all the rooms but the east room upstairs. In addition, outbuildings include a summer kitchen and a woodshed.

When acquired by the Society, the building was in good condition, after a century of loving care by the Nelson family; however, a great deal is needed to put the building in a state of true restoration, including interior furnishings. This project is going forward, and the work of restoration is about 75 percent complete. A composition roof detracts from the effectiveness of the restoration; this, of course, can be remedied eventually through the provision of a shingle or shake roof. A good percentage of the furnishings were provided by the Nelson family.

2. The Nelson Barn. To the north of the above-mentioned home, across the road, is a barn of substantial dimensions, built in 1856 by the proprietor from native timber right on his own property. The framing and most of the siding and roofing purport to be original materials. The skill of native carpentry is clearly evident. Features of the barn include east and west lofts, stairs, and a connecting catwalk.

The barn is to be used by the Society for the display of farm objects, particularly those associated with the farming activity. An impressive collection has already been assembled, and a program is going forward for further acquisition and for conditioning of specimens.

3. Log Cabin. The third historic structure, which completes the complement of historic buildings, is a log cabin to the east of the barn. The original Nelson double cabin stood here, but has

long since disappeared. The substituted cabin is a transplanted 1867 log cabin of pioneer Benjamin Littler, which stood in 1962 in the vicinity of Bussey, Iowa. As restored by the Society and with a gradual program for restoration of furnishings, this is an excellent display pertaining to the period of 1844 to 1853, prior to the Nelsons' occupation of the brick home.

It is planned that, surrounding the structure, there will be an orchard and flower and vegetable gardens reflecting produce of the period. A rail fence adjoining this cabin purports to be over 100 years old.

4. Proposed Restorations. In addition to the above three existing structures, the Mahaska County Historical Society plans the following: a blacksmith shop and carriage shed; a children's farm; and an Indian village "honoring the Ioway Indians and their noted Chief, Mahaska." In addition to this, it is contemplated that the modern museum, in addition to static exhibits, will contain facilities for handicrafts and other pioneer skills, to be practiced by schoolchildren and Americans hobbyists.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Interview on September 25, 1964, with Mrs. Stillman Clark and associated officers of the Mahaska County Historical Society.

Data sheet on the Nelson Pioneer Farm provided by the Mahaska County Historical Society.

## BOGGSVILLE, COLORADO

Location. About  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles southeast of Las Animas, Colorado.

Ownership. Private ownership. It is understood that the State Historical Society of Colorado plans to acquire this site.

Significance: Boggsville, Colorado is the site of the first successful experiments in irrigation in Colorado and perhaps east of the Rocky Mountains. It was at Boggsville in 1867 that Thomas O. Boggs, John W. Prowers, Robert Bent and several others constructed a seven mile canal, known as the Tarbox Ditch, on the Purgatoire, a branch of the Arkansas River. The canal irrigated some 1,000 acres on the farms of Boggs, Prowers and Bent. The experiment proved a success. Boggs succeeded in selling much of his crops, produce and livestock to the nearby Fort Lyon established at its present location in 1867.

Present status. Only two significant structures remain in Boggsville. One of these is the adobe home of Thomas O. Boggs which was built in 1866. It appears to have undergone few alterations. The second building is a section of a two-story house of 24 rooms, which belonged to John W. Prowers, who was a prominent cattleman, businessman and politician in Eastern Colorado.

References. C. W. Ward, Boggsville, Cradle of the Colorado Cattle Industry (n.p., 1957)



Thomas O. Boggs house erected in the early 1860's at the town of Boggsville, Colorado. It was here that Boggs and others made their first successful experiments in irrigation in Colorado.

Photo by Mattison  
October 1957





A portion of the John Prowers home, built in the 1860's at Boggsville, Colorado. This structure is built of adobe and covered with plaster. Camera pointing to the southwest.

Photo by Mattison  
October 1957

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE <b>Colorado</b>	2. THEME. IF AN HISTORIC SITE WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. <b>XVIII Agriculture</b>
3. NAME(S) OF SITE <b>San Luis People's Ditch</b>	4. APPROX. ACREAGE
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, range, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) <b>Adjacent to the south side of the town of San Luis, Colorado</b>	
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) <b>Mr. Dillford D. Vaughn, San Luis, Colorado</b>	
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)	

The San Luis People's Ditch is the oldest continuous irrigation project in Colorado and east of the Rocky Mountains. Although several other irrigation projects were started, such as the John Hatcher Ditch now Trinidad, they were of short duration.

Although an attempt was made earlier, one of the first permanent settlements in Colorado was that made in 1851 at San Luis de la Culebra, now known as San Luis.

Soon after the San Luis was established, the settlers dug an irrigation ditch to assure the production of food for the inhabitants. Many of the descendants of the original settlers still live in San Luis. The irrigation ditch dug in 1851 is still flowing. The State Historical Society of Colorado has placed a marker at the site.

The San Luis People's Ditch, original construction April 10, 1852, is listed as having priority No. 1 as the oldest in Colorado, in the Adjudication Decree, granted by the Court in Costilla County. The State Engineer's Office lists the following ditches in the order of their priority:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Creek</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Priority</u>
San Luis People's Ditch	Culebra & Dry Seco	April 10, 1852	1
San Pedro Ditch	" "	April, 1852	2
Acquia Madre Ditch	Costilla	1853	3
Montez Ditch	Rito Seco	August, 1853	4
Vallejos Ditch	Vallejos	March, 1854	5
Manzamarlo Ditch	Costilla	April, 1854	6

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)
- Colorado Water Conservation Board, Denver, and Colorado Agricultural and Mechanical College, Fort Collins, A Hundred Years of Irrigation in Colorado, 1952.

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.)

10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION <b>Satisfactory</b>	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) <b>Grazing</b>	<b>September, 1962</b>
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) <b>(Sgd) Ray H. Mattison</b>	15. TITLE <b>Historian</b>	<b>June 28, 1963</b>	

\* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10½ SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)

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SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

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STATE

Colorado

NAME(S) OF SITE

San Luis People's Ditch



Monument located at the site of the first continuous irrigation project in Colorado, 1852. Camera pointing to the east. Photograph by Mattison, September, 1962.

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## NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE <b>Iowa</b>	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. <b>Theme XVIIa "Agriculture"</b>
3. NAME(S) OF SITE <b>James B. Weaver Home</b>	4. APPROX. ACREAGE
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) <b>Weaver Road, Route #3, Bloomfield, Iowa</b>	
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) <b>Dr. Edwin O. Gilfillan, Weaver Road, Route #3, Bloomfield, Iowa</b>	
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)	

Erected in 1865, this structure was for many years, until 1889, the home of James Baird Weaver, farm leader, several times Congressman from Iowa, and also the Greenbacker candidate for President in 1880, and the Populist nominee for President in 1892.

Weaver was born in Dayton, Ohio, on June 12, 1833, the fifth of 13 children. When he was two years of age, his parents moved to Cassopolis, Michigan. Eight years later, the family moved to Davis County, Iowa. There young Weaver grew to manhood. When his father was elected to a minor county office, the family moved to Bloomfield where young Weaver had the advantage of better schools. After serving as mail carrier for several years, he, in 1853, went to California. Returning to Iowa, he worked in a store at Bonaparte. In 1855, he entered the Cincinnati Law School from which he was graduated the following year. He at once started the practice of law in Bloomfield and became absorbed in politics. He became active in Republican circles.

When the Civil War broke out, Weaver volunteered and was made a First Lieutenant in the 2nd Iowa Infantry. He distinguished himself at Fort Donelson, at Shiloh and Corinth, and was soon promoted to the rank of Colonel. Near the end of the war, he was brevetted Brigadier General.

Following his return to Iowa in 1864, he launched on his political career. He held several state offices until 1873. From that time, he appears to have alienated the Republican leaders. A devout Methodist and an ardent prohibitionist, he was incorruptible. He denounced the extortions of politically important railways and other corporations. He also objected to the stand of his party on the money question. Despite the opposition of his party, Weaver

(CONTINUED)

## 8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)

Hicks, John D., "James Baird Weaver," Dictionary of American Biography, XIX (New York, 1946), 568-570.

Hicks, John D., The Populist Revolt (Lincoln, 1961).

## 9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.)

10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION <b>Good</b>	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) <b>Residence</b>	13. DATE OF VISIT <b>7/63</b>
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) <b>(Sgd) Ray H. Mattison</b>	15. TITLE <b>Historian</b>	16. DATE <b>8/63</b>	

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STATE

Iowa

NAME(S) OF SITE

James B. Weaver Home

was very popular and it was only by sharp political trickery that they prevented him from receiving the Republican nomination for Congress in 1874 and for governor a year later. As the result of this lack of support from his party, Weaver swung to the "independents" or "Greenbackers." As a Greenbacker, Weaver won a seat in Congress in 1878, ran for President in 1880, was defeated for Congress in 1882, but won in 1884 and 1886.

When later the Farmers Alliance succeeded the Greenbackers as the chief exponents of soft money, Weaver became identified with that party and took a leading part in transforming it to the Populist organization. In 1889, he moved from Bloomfield to Des Moines, where he was editor of the Farmers Tribune. With little opposition, he received the Populist nomination for President in 1892. Although Weaver's defeat was inevitable, he received a popular vote of over a million and 22 votes in the electoral college. Professor J. D. Hicks characterized him as follows:

Less versatile than the eccentric Donnelly,  
James B. Weaver of Iowa inspired far greater  
confidence among those who, while thoroughly  
deploring existing conditions, were fearful  
of anything that savored of extreme radicalism...<sup>1</sup>

When the Populists fused with the Democrats, Weaver gave his support to the soft money forces in that party. In 1896, he supported the nomination of William J. Bryan for the Presidency. Fusion sounded the death knell to the Populist, and Weaver, with the other Populist leaders, found himself without a future. About 1900, he moved to Colfax, Iowa, where he spent the last years of his life. Here the people chose him for their mayor. In July, 1858, he married Clara Vinson, a school teacher, who had come to Iowa from Ohio; they were the parents of five girls and two boys. Weaver died February 6, 1912.

THE WEAVER HOME: The Weaver Home in Bloomfield is a two-story brick structure. It has undergone few apparent exterior changes except that the original front porch has been removed and a frame sun room has been added on the southeast corner. In 1915, the Weaver Home was acquired by the Davis County Chautauqua Association. Now occupied by the owner, the building has undergone only minor interior alterations. The Rebecca Lodge, an affiliate of the I. O. O. F., which was founded in Bloomfield, Iowa, has plans to acquire the Weaver Home for a Rebecca Museum.

<sup>1</sup>John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt (Lincoln, 1961), p. 164.



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STATE

Iowa

NAME(S) OF SITE

James B. Weaver Home



Erected in 1865, this structure was the home of James B. Weaver, "Greenbacker," and Populist candidate for President. Camera pointing to the northeast. Photo by Mattison 7/63

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## NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE <b>Iowa</b>		2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. <b>XVIIa - Agriculture and the Farmers' Frontier</b>	
3. NAME(S) OF SITE <b>Nelson Pioneer Farm</b>		4. APPROX. ACREAGE <b>310 acres</b>	
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) <b>Mahaska County, 6 miles northeast of Oskaloosa via U.S. 63 and the "Glendale Road"</b>			
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) <b>Mahaska County Historical Society</b>			
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant) <b>The Nelson Farm near Oskaloosa is one of the oldest farms in Southeast Iowa under one-family ownership. The original 150 acres, purchased by Daniel Nelson in 1844, was augmented in 1847 by an additional 160 acres. The Nelson family farmed this land for 114 years, or until 1958, when Roy Nelson and his sister, Lillian, died without heirs and bequeathed the property in its entirety to the Mahaska County Historical Society.</b>			
<p>The historic site is notable (a) because of the relatively high degree of integrity of surviving structures, and (b) the fact that it is now in the sympathetic hands of an exceptionally well-endowed and enlightened County Historical Society, under the leadership of Mrs. Stillman Clark.</p> <p>Historic structures are as follows:</p> <p>(1) Daniel Nelson Home. This two-story, five-room house was built in 1853 of native timbers and bricks from a nearby farm kiln. Among features are four fireplaces, kitchen, family living room, and upstairs bedrooms. Detached features include summer kitchen and woodshed. Well preserved through the years, the building is being fully restored by the Historical Society, including interior furniture (including Nelson family originals) and furnishings. As of the date of this report, the project is about 75 percent complete.</p> <p>(2) Barn. North of the house is a large white barn with lofts, stairs, and catwalks, excellently preserved. It was built in 1856 by Daniel Nelson of timbers right on his farm. All framing and most of the exterior is represented as original. It is intended that this barn will house pioneer farm exhibits, and a good collection has already been made.</p> <p>(3) A log cabin east of the barn is not the Daniel Nelson original, but the <u>transplanted 1867 cabin of pioneer Benjamin Littler, who lived near Bussey, Iowa. It</u></p>			
8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works) <b>Data supplied orally by officials of the Mahaska County Historical Society; also, by data sheet on Nelson Pioneer Farm supplied by the Society.</b>			
9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.) <b>Report of December, 1964, by Merrill J. Mattes, which is supplemental to the theme study XVIIa, "Agriculture and the Farmers' Frontier."</b>			
10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION <b>Excellent</b>	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) <b>County Historic Site &amp; museum</b>	13. DATE OF VISIT <b>9/25/64</b>
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) <b>(Sgd) Merrill J. Mattes</b>	15. TITLE <b>Acting Resource Studies Advisor</b>	16. DATE <b>12/17/64</b>	

\* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

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STATE	NAME(S) OF SITE
Iowa	Nelson Pioneer Farm

is an excellent specimen, which is being appropriately furnished.

The Mahaska County Historical Society has also nearly completed, just west of the barn, a fine modern cement-block two-level museum building which will serve as their society headquarters and museum, containing exhibits relating primarily to Indians and pioneer life. Plans also include reconstruction of a typical blacksmith shop and carriage shed, a "children's farm," and perhaps "an Indian village honoring the Ioway nation and its noted Chief Mahaska."





**NELSON PIONEER FARM  
Oakaloosa, Iowa**

**Nelson Brick Home, 1853.  
Front and side elevations.**

**Photo by H. J. Mattes**

**September, 1964**



**NELSON PIONEER FARM  
Oskaloosa, Iowa**

**Nelson Brick Home, 1853.  
Rear and side elevations.**

**Photo by M. J. Mattes      September, 1964**



**NELSON PIONEER FARM  
Oakalocca, Iowa**

**Nelson Barn, 1856.**

**Photo by H. J. Matten**

**September, 1964**



NELSON PIONEER FARM  
Onkalosa, Iowa

Typical Log Cabin, 1867.

Photo by M. J. Mattes

September, 1964



**NELSON PIONEER FARM  
Oskaloosa, Iowa**

**Photo showing relationship of (left to right)  
Nelson Barn, Nelson Brick Home, and new Mahaska  
County Historical Society structure. The  
relocated Log Cabin is to the left of the Barn.**

**Photo by M. J. Mattes**

**September, 1964**

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## NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE <b>Iowa</b>	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. <b>XVIIa "Agriculture"</b>
3. NAME(S) OF SITE <b>Seaman A. Knapp - James Wilson Home</b>	4. APPROX. ACREAGE
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) <b>campus of Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa</b>	
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) <b>James H. Hilton, President, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa</b>	
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)	

Completed in 1861, this building was the home of Seaman Asahel Knapp, noted agriculturist and teacher, from 1880 to 1885, and of James ("Tama Jim") Wilson, agriculturist and Secretary of Agriculture, from 1891 to 1896. Iowa State College was the first of the land-grant institutions to be formally authorized.

Born in Essex County, New York, December 16, 1833, Seaman A. Knapp made nationally significant contributions to agriculture, primarily in the South. He entered Union College, Schenectady, in 1852, graduating with honors in 1856. For ten years, he taught school. In 1866, Knapp met with a serious accident which crippled him for several years. Moving to Benton County, Iowa, he bought a small farm at Big Grove. He served as Methodist pastor at Vinton, Iowa, and for five years as superintendent for the state school for the blind at Cedar Rapids. He then returned to his farm. In 1872, he had begun to publish the Western Stock Journal and Farmer. On his own farm, he used improved seed and brought in better livestock. He was one of the organizers and the first president of the Iowa Improved Stock Breeders' Association.

In 1879, Knapp was selected as professor of agriculture and manager of the farm at Iowa State College. From 1884-1886, he was president of the college. He drafted the first experiment station bill, a bill which opened the way for the passage of the Hatch Act in 1887.

Knapp's greatest contribution to agriculture, however, was in the South. In 1886, he took charge of a large colonization experiment in Louisiana. To interest the native population in agriculture, he offered very favorable terms to farmers from northern states who would settle, one to a township, and demonstrate what could be accomplished by good farming. The plan was so successful that thousands of farmers were attracted to the region and the local people improved their practices. Knapp had great influence in the development of the rice industry of the Southwest.

## 8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)

Barnett, Claribel R., "Seaman Asahel Knapp," Dictionary of American Biography, X (New York, 1946) 452.  
Canada, J. W., "Dr. Seaman A. Knapp," (La Porte, Texas, 1957).  
Ross, Earle D., The Land Grant Idea at Iowa State College, (Ames, 1958)

## 9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.)

## Bibliography (cont'd)

Schmidt, Louis B., "James Wilson," Ibid., XX:330.

10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION <b>Good</b>	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) <b>Residence</b>	13. DATE OF VISIT <b>7/25/63</b>
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) <b>(Sgd) Ray H. Mattison</b>	15. TITLE <b>Historian</b>	16. DATE <b>7/29/63</b>	

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STATE	NAME(S) OF SITE
Iowa	Seaman A. Knapp - James Wilson Home

The Rice Growers' Association was organized and he served as its president.

When James Wilson (see below) became Secretary of Agriculture, Knapp was appointed special agent for the promotion of farming in the southern states. He was sent to China, Japan, and the Philippines to investigate rice varieties, its production and milling. His findings resulted in a great expansion in the rice industry. When in 1903, the Mexican boll weevil appeared in Texas, Knapp contributed much to the education of cotton farmers in combatting that insect. Knapp also inaugurated the Farmers Cooperative Demonstration Work in the U. S. Department of Agriculture, which was designed to place object lessons before the farm masses. Under his direction before his death, hundreds of experienced agents were employed throughout the South to assist in this work. Knapp died in April, 1911, and was buried in Ames.

\* \* \* \* \*

Born in Ayrshire, Scotland, August 16, 1836, James Wilson emigrated with his family to America in 1851. The family first settled in Connecticut, moving in 1855 to a farm at Tama County, Iowa. Young Wilson early chose farming as his life work. After holding a number of local and state offices, he served three terms in Congress, after which he returned home and engaged in farming for seven years.

In 1891, he was appointed professor of agriculture and head of the experiment station at Iowa State College, where, with the assistance of Charles F. Curtis, who succeeded him as dean of agriculture, he placed agricultural instruction on both a practical and scientific basis.

In 1897, Wilson began his 16 years as U. S. Secretary of Agriculture, under Presidents McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and Taft, the longest term of service of any secretary of this department. Under Wilson's direction, the activities of the Department of Agriculture were extended in many fields. Experiment stations were established throughout the United States. Farm demonstration work was begun in the South, and Cooperative extension work in home economics and agriculture was begun. An army of experts were employed to conduct research in agriculture and obtain information all over the world for the promotion of agriculture. Legislation relating to insect pests, plant and animal diseases, forestry, conservation, irrigation, roadbuilding and agricultural education was enacted.

Following his retirement in 1913, Wilson returned to Tama County.

~~After investigating and reporting upon agricultural conditions in Great Britain~~

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS  
SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplement Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name, and the word (cont'd), as, 6. Description and Importance (cont'd) . . .

STATE

Iowa

NAME(S) OF SITE

Seaman A. Knapp - James Wilson Home

in conjunction with Henry C. Wallace, Wilson spent the remainder of his life in retirement. He died August 26, 1920.

THE KNAPP-WILSON HOME: Located on the Iowa State University campus, the house occupied by Knapp and Wilson now serves as the residence for the Dean of Agriculture. This two-story brick structure, now covered with cement, has apparently undergone some exterior and interior alterations.



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STATE	NAME(S) OF SITE
Iowa	Seaman A. Knapp - James Wilson Home



Located on the campus of Iowa State University, this structure, completed in 1861, was the home of Seaman A. Knapp, noted agriculturist and teacher, and of James Wilson, agriculturist, and later Secretary of Agriculture from 1891-1896. Camera pointing to the north, northeast. Photo by Mattison, July 1963.

UNITED STATES  
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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE <b>Minnesota</b>	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. <b>(The Farmer's Theme XV, "Westward Expansion, 1830-1898." Frontier)</b>
3. NAME(S) OF SITE <b>Gibbs House</b>	4. APPROX. ACREAGE
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) <b>Larpentour and Cleveland Avenues, St. Paul, Minnesota</b>	
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) <b>Owned and administered by Ramsey County Historical Society, St. Paul</b>	
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)	

Significance: Typical Midwest farmhouse of the 1850's and 1860's.

The east wing building was built by Heman Gibbs, an early settler of St. Paul in 1854. The west wing was added in 1857.

Remains: This building has been restored with some of the original furnishings by the Ramsey County Historical Society. It now serves as the museum for that organization.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.)

10. PHOTOGRAPHS * ATTACHED: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) <b>Museum</b>	13. DATE OF VISIT <b>June 1959</b>
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) <b>(SGN) RAY H. MATTISON</b>	15. TITLE <b>Historian</b>	16. DATE <b>Sept 11, 1959</b>	

\* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)



Farmhouse built in 1854, in St. Paul, Minnesota, by Heman Gibbs with additions added in 1867. This structure was typical of many of the farmhouses in the Midwest at that time. Camera pointing to the northeast.

Photo by Mattison  
June 1959

SITE OF EXCEPTIONAL VALUE

GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER NATIONAL MONUMENT

Location. Near Diamond, Missouri.

Significance. George Washington Carver National Monument is the birthplace of George Washington Carver and commemorates the achievements of this scientific leader. Born in slavery, Carver became one of the recognized scientists in agriculture and earned world wide fame. For 47 years he served at the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute for Negroes in Alabama. Carver made significant contributions toward balanced economy in that region. He also made important contributions in the utilization of plant products for plastics and other uses.

Remains. This monument consists of 210 acres which contain a large portion of the old Diamond Grove Plantation. All of the existing buildings were erected about 1916. The monument also includes the traditional birthplace log cabin site and the dwelling of Moses Carver who was George Washington Carver's owner.

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE <u>Montana</u>	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. (The Farmer's Theme XV, "Westward Expansion, 1830-1898." Frontier)
3. NAME(S) OF SITE <u>Fort Owen</u>	4. APPROX. ACREAGE
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) <u>About 1 mile northwest of Stevensville, Montana</u>	
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) <u>State of Montana. It is currently being excavated and developed as a State Park.</u>	
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)	

Significance: Fort Owen, near Stevensville, Montana, was the site of the first successful farming operations in Montana and probably in the Rocky Mountains. Father Pierre De Smet and six companions came to the area in 1841 and established St. Mary's Mission among the Flathead Indians. They brought along with them oxen, wagons, carts and plows. In the following year the Jesuits planted a garden near the Mission which produced some vegetables and wheat. In 1846 St. Mary's Mission farm is reported to have produced 7,000 bushels of wheat, between 4,000 and 5,000 bushels of potatoes and various kinds of vegetables. The stock consisted of 40 head of cattle, horses and other animals.

In 1850, Major John Owen came to the valley and leased the Mission property. He also established Fort Owen. For a decade his fort was the center of farming operations and trade for the region. It was not until 1866 that the Jesuits returned to the vicinity.

Remains: A small portion of Fort Owen has been restored. However, most of the remains of the Mission property has disappeared. Some excavation of this site has been undertaken. It is understood that further excavation is planned.

## 8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)

Merrill G. Burlingame, The Montana Frontier, (Helena, 1942) Page 333; George F. Weisel ed., Men and Trade on the Northwest Frontier as Shown by the Fort Owen Ledger, (Missoula, 1955) xiii - xxxix

## 9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.)

10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION <u>Good</u>	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) <u>State Park</u>	13. DATE OF VISIT <u>July 1959</u>
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) <u>(SGD) RAY H. MATTISON</u>	15. TITLE <u>Historian</u>	16. DATE <u>September 2, 1959</u>	

\* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)



Restored portion of Fort Owen near Stevensville, Montana.  
It was near here that the whiteman, under the leadership of  
Father De Smet in the early 1840's, made his beginnings in  
agriculture in the region.

Photo by Everhart  
June 1958

## SITE OF EXCEPTIONAL VALUE

### HOMESTEAD NATIONAL MONUMENT

Location. Near Beatrice, Nebraska.

Significance. Homestead National Monument is the site of the first claim under the Homestead Act of 1862. This area also commemorates the land policy which accelerated the settlement of the plains area of the United States. This site was purportedly filed on by Daniel Freeman shortly after midnight on January 1, 1861. His entry was listed as No. 1 in the local land office and was granted Patent No. 1, dated September 1, 1869 by the United States Office.

The Homestead Monument played an important role in hastening the settlement of large segments of the United States. By this act any head of a family or person 21 years of age or over, who was a United States citizen or who had declared an intention to become one, could enter a claim for 160 acres of the public domain. The settler was required to reside on the land five years before he became the owner. The Homestead Act was subsequently modified to permit persons to take more than 160 acres in the drier sections of the plains where that amount was not an adequate farm unit. Public lands were withdrawn from homesteading except in special cases. In 1935 the chief states in which settlement was hastened by homesteading were Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana.

The principal feature of Homestead National Monument is the pioneer homestead log cabin erected in 1867, which was moved to the monument from a neighboring township. Native grasses have also been restored to the area.

## ANALYSIS OF SITES

Agriculture has been the most important single industry during the second half of the 19th century in the region east of the 98th meridian comprising Region Two of the National Park Service. Despite the fact, little has been done to preserve historic sites associated with the story of the Farmers' Frontier. Numerous "first houses" and pioneer structures have been preserved by cities and towns throughout the Region. Many of these are used as museums. However, in practically every instance, these are memorials designed to emphasize pioneer life rather than interpret the story of the Farmers' Frontier.

During the 20th century, the agricultural frontier has greatly changed. Mechanization and improvements in agricultural techniques have all combined to revolutionize farming. Throughout the entire agricultural belt, it would be difficult to find a farmstead which bears any great semblance to the typical farm unit of the latter part of the 19th century. Actually, the various aspects of the farming frontier are too many and too complicated to be interpreted in a single area or in several areas.

Although the agricultural heritage played an important part in the history of the Great Plains states, little attempt has been made in preserving sites associated with this subtheme. The National Grange has preserved the Minnesota home of one of its founders, Oliver H. Kelley. Colorado has plans for developing the remains of Boggsville where early successful experiments were made in irrigation. Montana is reconstructing Fort Owen, near which the first attempts at farming



by the white men was undertaken in that state. The National Park Service has two areas which interprets various aspects of the story of the Farmers' Frontier. Homestead National Monument, in Nebraska, tells the story of the homestead movement and its impact on the development of the Trans-Mississippi West. George Washington Carver National Monument memorializes George Washington Carver, who made significant scientific contributions in agriculture, particularly in the development of plastics.

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS  
(Area)

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