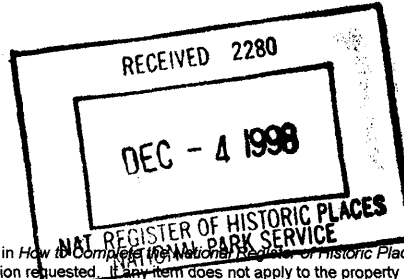


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



1565

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Thomas & Mary Williams Homestead

other names/site number NeHBS #LP00-024

2. Location

street & number P.O. Box 113

not for publication [ ]

city or town Taylor

vicinity [x]

state Nebraska

code NE

county Loup

code 115

zip code 68450

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this [x] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [x] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [x] locally. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Lawrence Sommer  
Signature of certifying official

11/10/98  
Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall 12/31/98

Beall  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**Thomas & Mary Williams Homestead**

Name of Property

**Loup County, Nebraska**

County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
7	2	buildings
		sites
3		structures
		objects
10	2	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
-0-

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instruction)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: animal facility, agriculture  
 outbuildings, storage  
 DOMESTIC/single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENC: animal facility, agriculture  
 outbuildings, storage  
 DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

foundation stone, concrete  
 walls wood, log  
 roof asphalt, wood shingle  
 other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

settlement  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1876-1948  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1876-1877, 1884, 1915  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Thomas Williams (builder)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location for Additional Data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** approximately 80 acres

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1.			3.		
2.			4.		

[] See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Carol Ahlgren, Architectural Historian

organization Nebraska State Historical Society date August 1998

street & number 1500 R Street, Box 82554 telephone (402) 471-4773

city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68501

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Linda Greer/Ellen Morice

street & number P.O. Box 481 telephone (602) 488-4706

city or town Cave Creek state AZ zip code 85327

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Thomas & Mary Williams Homestead

Name of Property

Loup County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

The Thomas and Mary Williams Homestead is located less than one half mile east of Taylor, a small Loup County town in the Nebraska Sandhills. The complex includes an 1877 log house, a 1915 frame house, and five additional contributing buildings which date from c.1900-1949: garage, hog house, privy, horse barn, cattle barn and three contributing structures: a windmill, water tank/windmill and the fence system. Two severely deteriorated outbuildings are considered to be non-contributing.

The Thomas and Mary Williams Homestead is located less than one mile east of Taylor, the Loup County seat in the Nebraska Sandhills (1990 population: 186). Loup County is located at the eastern edge of the Nebraska Sandhills, a vast area in the north central part of the state. Several Sandhill counties represent some of the least populated in the nation; the 1990 census reported a total of 683 residents in Loup County. The farmstead represents an 1876 homestead claim which retains its original acreage and log house. The farmstead is located  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile east of a gravel road that leads to Taylor.

The log house, barns, and other farm buildings are clearly visible from the public road. The complex of farm buildings is surrounded by agricultural fields that extend in all directions. The North Loup River, marked by trees along its banks, forms a visual boundary that extends in a south-easterly direction through the property. Beyond the river, the sandhills rise to the horizon.

The contributing resources are described below; numbers correspond with the key to the accompanying site plan. Photo numbers and view are indicated by arrows on the site plan.

**1) Log House (photos: 1,2,3,7)**

The one story log house was built by Thomas Williams in 1877. Constructed of red cedar logs obtained from an area canyon, the rectangular shaped house is oriented north-south with entrances on each of the gable ends. The building measures 16 by 30 feet and is one room deep. Originally the v-notched house featured a relatively flat board and sod roof. In c.1910 a wood shingled gable roof was added; the wood shingles have since been covered with asphalt. During the historic period a room at the south end was removed. The house exhibits good integrity. Changes such as removal of the south roof, the addition of the gable roof all occurred within the historic period. The house served as the main residence for the Williams family until 1915.

**2) Frame House (photo: 2)**

The two story frame house built in 1915-1916 is located approximately 30 feet southwest of the log house. The house features a combination hipped/gable roof with dormers on the west, north and south facades. A small shed roof addition is located on the east side of the house and the porch on the main (west facade) has been enclosed; these changes are historic.

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Thomas & Mary Williams Homestead

Name of Property

Loup County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 2

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**3) Windmill**

A 50 foot, c.1910 angle iron windmill is located approximately 15 feet southeast of the frame house.

**4) Outhouse**

The small frame gable roof c.1920 outhouse which measures 5 ½ by 6 ½ feet is located 40 feet south of the log house.

**5) Horse Barn (photo:4)**

The large frame c.1900 horse barn is located at the south edge of the complex of buildings. The building features a pitched gable roof with asphalt shingles. The east facade has a hay rack on the gable end and a mow door.

**6) Cattle barn/machine shed (photo:5)**

The tin sided banked cattle barn/machine shed is located east of the horse barn. The building, constructed in 1949, is frame with metal siding. The lower level opens to the east with entrances for livestock on the east and south facades. The main level was used for machinery storage.

**7) Water tank/windmill (photo:5)**

A second angle iron windmill with a small tin sided water tank is located north of the barns.

**8) Hog house (photo:6)**

A frame c.1920 monitor roof hog house is located at the north edge of the property.

**9) Garage (photo: 3)**

The frame one stall c.1915 garage is located north east of the log house.

**10) Fence system (photos:3,4,6)**

The fence system includes woven wire surrounding the frame house as well as various wooden fences separating the houses from the farm buildings.

Two collapsed and severely deteriorated frame buildings are located north of the horse barn. The buildings are scheduled for removal and are considered non-contributing.

The Thomas and Mary Williams farmstead is owned by two of their descendants who use the property as a secondary residence. Although the farmland to the north and east was levelled for irrigation during the 1930's, the property retains its integrity of setting. The current owners lease the land which is still agricultural.

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Thomas & Mary Williams Homestead

Name of Property

Loup County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

The Thomas and Mary Williams Homestead, located in rural Loup County, Nebraska is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion A at the local level for its association with settlement. The property is significant as a rare example of an 1870's Nebraska Sandhills homestead which retains its original 1877 log house. The period of significance, 1876-1948, encompasses the date of the homestead filing through the final year in which the 50 year age criteria is met.

In the 1870's, Loup County was part of the vast north central Nebraska Sandhills referred to as Sioux County. Located at the eastern edge of the sandhills, Loup County was surveyed by the federal government in 1870-71. Following the 1876 treaty with the Sioux, the area was opened for settlement under the provisions of the 1862 Homestead Act. Like many of the settlers who filed homestead claims in the area, Thomas Williams was a Civil War veteran.

Williams and his wife were both Welsh natives who immigrated to America as minors, and were raised in Pennsylvania. Thomas had enlisted in the Union army in 1861; a year later he and Mary (Lewis) were wed. In 1865, they moved to Missouri; nine years later they continued west to York County Nebraska. In 1876 they moved to the Nebraska sandhills where Williams filed a homestead claim for 160 acres east of present day Taylor in Section 26 bordering the North Loup River.

Similar to other early settlers, the Williams family lived in a dugout while they constructed a more permanent dwelling; a log cabin which was completed in 1877. Available historic accounts and photographs of the area indicate a prevalence of sod construction in the area during the 1876-c1890 initial settlement period. Frame construction was relatively common while log buildings, although more rare were also constructed during this period. The available historic documentation therefore, indicates that while sod construction was predominant, settlers had a choice of building materials.

In January 1884, Thomas Williams received final proof for his homestead claim in Loup County. The application included testimony of Williams and two of his neighbors who served as "witnesses." The two men reported that Williams had fulfilled the claim requirements: continual residency, cultivation of land, and construction of buildings. The log house was described as "16 by 50 feet, of cedar logs with 4 doors and 8 windows. . .habitable during all seasons of the year". The witnesses also stated that Williams had at least 80 acres under cultivation, and had built a "dugout and log stable" and a corral. (U.S. Land Office, Certificate #4591, June 13, 1888.)

A year before Williams received his homestead proof, Loup County was officially organized with its present day boundaries. In 1890 the first census for the county reported a total population 1,662. During the economic depression and drought years that followed the county's population

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Continuation SheetThomas & Mary Williams Homestead

Name of Property

Loup County, Nebraska

County and State

## Section 8 Page 2

would decline to 1,305 by the turn of the century. Following the passage of the Kinkaid Act in 1902, the population would increase. Limited to Nebraska sandhill counties, the Kinkaid Act made 620 acres available for homestead claims. The second settlement period resulted in Loup County's peak population of 2,188 in 1910. Since that time the population has continued to decline to 683 as reported in the 1990 census.

In 1909, one of the first official histories of western Nebraska which included Loup County was published. At the time, the log house still served as the main residence of the Williams family. Throughout the years Williams had expanded his farmstead to over 260 acres and added buildings such as a garage, chicken coop, and horse barn. The history reported that Thomas Williams had experienced "all the hardships that came to the average pioneer, [and] lived in a dugout for the first year." The log house, it continued, "now stands in good shape and [is] more highly prized than any fine building on his farm." (Compendium, 1909, p 776)

In 1915, Williams built a one and a half story frame house approximately 34 feet southwest of the log cabin. According to Williams' descendants, the house was occupied but not entirely finished when he died in August, 1915. His obituary mentioned the log house which was "in a fine state of preservation. . .cherished as a priceless legacy by the entire family." (*The Taylor Clarion* 9-9-1915) After completion of the frame dwelling, the log house continued to serve as an outbuilding on the farmstead. According to available historic photographs and family accounts the original low-pitched roof was replaced with a more steeply pitched gable roof. A room at the east end was removed, reducing the building's length from 50 to 30 feet.

Given this farm's location along the Loup River, there is potential for archeological features within the boundaries of this site. Family lore suggests a Native American presence along the river banks within the historic period. This supposition should be considered before any significant ground disturbing activity on the site be undertaken.

To date, the on-going Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NeHBS) has not identified any other settlement era houses in the eastern Nebraska Sandhills. Although nine sod houses were documented in adjacent Blaine County, they date from the Kinkaid era. The Williams homestead therefore, is a rare example of an 1870's Nebraska Sandhills homestead which retains its original dwelling.



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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet**

Thomas & Mary Williams Homestead

Name of Property

Loup County, Nebraska

County and State

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**Bibliography**

*Compendium of History, Reminiscence and Biography of Western Nebraska*, part 2. Chicago, IL: Alden Publishing Company, 1909.

*Loup County, 1883-1983*. Taylor, NE: Loup County Centennial Committee, 1984.

Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NeHBS) files. Lincoln, NE: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1500 R Street.

Switzer, Colleen. *The Settlement of Loup and Blaine Counties*. Broken Bow, NE: Purcell's Inc., 1977.

U.S. General Land Office, Land Entry Files. *Homestead, Pre-emption, and Commutation Proof*. Certificate no. 4591, June 13, 1888. Washington, D.C: National Archives and Records Administration.

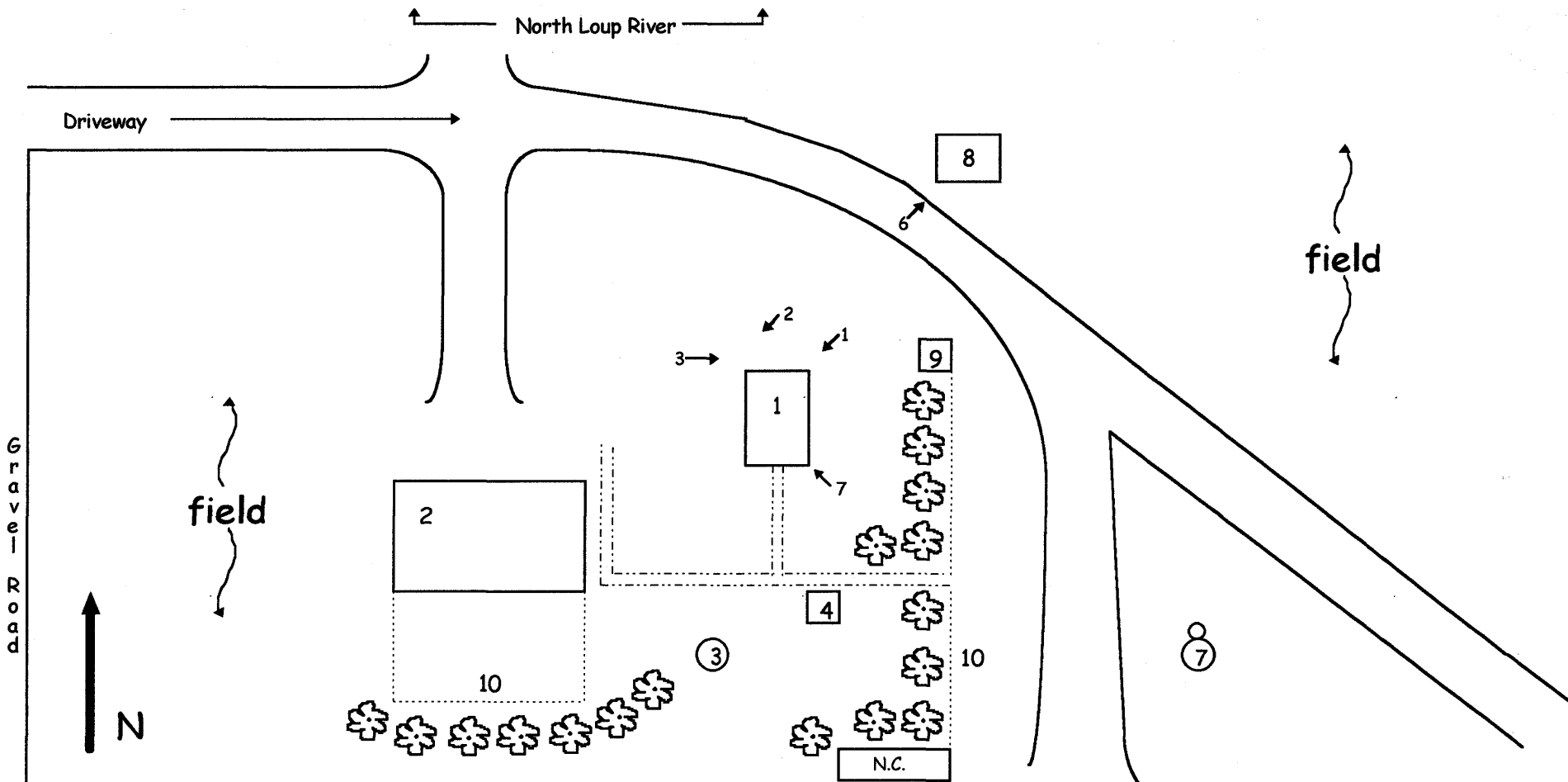
Newspaper: *The Taylor Clarion*, Taylor, NE. Sept 9, 1915; March 8, 1928.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated area consists of the northeast  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the southeast  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the west  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the northwest  $\frac{1}{4}$  and the southeast  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the northwest  $\frac{1}{4}$ , lots 3 and 4 of Section 26 Township 21 North Range 18 West of the 6<sup>th</sup> Principle Meridian in Loup County, Nebraska.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary encompasses the tract of land which contains the buildings historically associated with the farmstead.



**Thomas & Mary Williams Homestead**

NEHBS #LP00-024

- |               |                        |
|---------------|------------------------|
| 1. Log House  | 6. Cattle Barn         |
| 2. House      | 7. Windmill/Water Tank |
| 3. Windmill   | 8. Hog House           |
| 4. Outhouse   | 9. Garage              |
| 5. Horse Barn | 10. Fence.....         |
- (N.C. non-contributing)