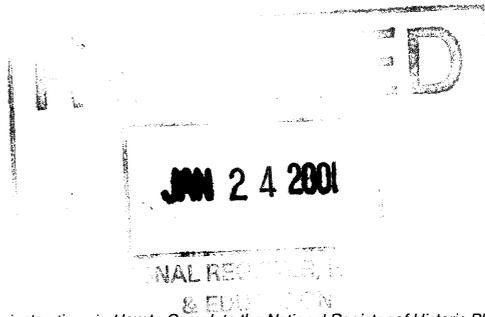


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



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# 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 Old Ithaca Grain Elevator

Other names/site number SD05-003

## 2. Location

Street & number One block s. of 4<sup>th</sup> st. on the n. side of the RR tracks

Not for publication

City or town Ithaca

Vicinity

State Nebraska

Code NE

County Saunders

Code 155

Zip code 68033

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]  
Signature of certifying official

1/17/01  
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): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] 2/23/01

[Signature]  
Signature of Keeper

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

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
- Public-local
- Public-state
- Public-federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
1		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**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: storage

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation STONE:Limestone

Walls WOOD

Roof WOOD

Other METAL:Tin

**Narrative Description**

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

Old Ithaca Grain Elevator  
Name of Property

Saunders County, Nebraska  
County and State

## 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.)

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCE

### Period of Significance

c.1890-1941

### Significant Dates

c.1890

1941

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

N/A

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Old Ithaca Grain Elevator  
Name of Property

Saunders County, Nebraska  
County and State

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of property** Less than one acre.

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

	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>		<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>
1.	14	706520	4558940	3.			
2.				4.			

### 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.)

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Greg Miller, Preservation Historian  
organization Nebraska State Historical Society date December 2000  
street & number P.O. Box 82554 telephone (402) 471-4787  
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68501

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## Additional Documentation

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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.)

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## Property Owner

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

name/title Ken and Roma Smith  
street & number 1233 N. Birch Street telephone (402) 443-3678  
city or town Wahoo state NE zip code 68066-1125

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, (15 USC 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Old Ithaca Grain Elevator**

Name of Property

**Saunders County, Nebraska**

County and State

**Section 7 Page 1**

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The Old Ithaca Grain Elevator, located in Ithaca, Saunders County, Nebraska, was built circa 1890. The rectangular building has a small attached office on the northeast façade. Atop the main body's cross-gable roof is a smaller cross-gabled headhouse. The building retains good integrity on both the interior and exterior. The nomination consists of one contributing property.

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The Old Ithaca Grain Elevator is located at the southern edge of town next to the railroad bed of the former Omaha and North Platte Railroad line. Constructed in circa 1890 this building served as a grain storage facility until 1941 when it ceased operations.

This utilitarian building is approximately 60 feet high with a 40 by 80 foot base. The foundation is limestone. The elevator itself uses a stud or frame construction, sometimes called "balloon" construction. Using this method, horizontal wood bands, placed every four feet, vertically secure the perimeter, and the bins are interlaced with a maze of tie rods extending through the bands to provide support.

On the east and west end of the first floor are wide entrances that could accommodate wagons carrying grain. After entering, the wagons would then dump the grain into the receiving pit located under the first floor. Stacked grain bins surrounded this area and rose to the top of the main structure with its cross-gabled roof. Sitting atop the roof was the headhouse which contained the pulleys and scales (non-extant) necessary to deliver the grain to the chute bin (located on the south side) from which the grain was emptied into railroad cars. A pedestrian entrance is located on the south side of the main building. The addition attached office has an entrance on the north side.

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Old Ithaca Grain Elevator

Name of Property

Saunders County, Nebraska

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**Section 8 Page 1**

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The Old Ithaca Grain Elevator is located in Ithaca, Saunders County, Nebraska, a small community about 20 miles northeast of Lincoln. Built circa 1890 the elevator is eligible at the local level under Criterion A for its association with agriculture and commerce. It also eligible under Criterion C for its association with engineering; specifically the design and operation of equipment that allowed the elevator to perform the function for which it was designed. The period of significance begins circa 1890 the approximate date of construction, to 1941 when the elevator ceased operations. The nomination consists of one contributing property.

Looming well above the flat horizon of Nebraska, grain elevators identified and continue to identify commercial centers, agricultural settlements, and market points. These structures have their roots in commercial agriculture.

As farmers in Nebraska moved from subsistence farming to producing for a market economy it became necessary to move from storing grain almost exclusively on the farm in silos and cribs to moving it to market. Initially, they shipped grain to customers in bags. This method kept the grain intact and identifiable all the way to the mill where its was unloaded (as it had been loaded) by hand. Especially for mass, long distance distribution, however, such a system was both cumbersome and inefficient.

As yields continued to increase and farmers became increasingly reliant on selling their grain on the commercial market to ensure prosperity, the ability to store and transport their produce more efficiently became a priority. Historically, these two problems were solved in rapid succession in Nebraska. First, the railroad came to eastern Nebraska in the 1860s. The railroad would provide the means of transportation to carry large amounts of grain to markets, both local and more distant. Next, the construction of grain elevators began to occur. In fact, because grain was in such demand, and elevators were necessary to receive, weigh, store, and transfer this commodity, initially the railroad often financed country elevators. However, this practice was restricted in the 1870s by government regulation.

Still the railroad maintained a vested interest in the storage and movement of grain. To attract investors, railroads offered incentives such as nominal lease rates, no time limit for loading and unloading cars, and special rate arrangements. On the basis of volume of grain received these elevators, known as line operators, were particularly important.

The first storage elevators in Nebraska were wooden structures that were often covered with tin or asbestos to prevent fire. Eventually, the use of wood for construction started to give way to other materials. By 1900, steel bins began to appear as did structures composed of glazed, clay tile. But tile and even steel were not used as widely as concrete. First appearing on the Plains in 1900, the popularity of concrete elevators spread rapidly. Although they cost more to build these structures were cheaper to insure, and eventually had a larger capacity. Other advantages they enjoyed over wooden structures was that they were less susceptible to insect and rodent infestation, and they did not depreciate in value as rapidly. Also, while wooden elevators had an estimated useful life of 40 years, they were seldom viable for more than 15 years usually because of their susceptibility to fire. In contrast concrete elevators had a much longer actual life-span. In combination, these factors eventually led to the demise of the wooden elevators.

It is within this context the historical significance of the Old Ithaca Grain Elevator is realized. The known history of the elevator makes it significant. Preceding the elevator's construction the Omaha and North Platte Railroad came through Ithaca in 1886. Additional deed research indicates the land on which the building sits was then leased from the Omaha and North Platte Railroad. Although information on the exact date of the elevator's construction is sketchy a Mechanics Lien provides some useful details. According to the document work was done on the elevator in July 1890 and names John McInerney as the owner. It is not clear if this was part of the original construction. However, the two aforementioned deed records do indicate the elevator was constructed in approximately 1890 as a line operator.

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Old Ithaca Grain Elevator  
Name of Property

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Section 8 Page 2

Therefore, it is significant at the local level under Criterion A as a good example of a late-nineteenth century tin sided wood structure that as a line operator stored and moved large amounts of grain via the railroad. Adding to its significance and importance, however, is the fact that it still exists.

As previously stated, the estimated 40 year life-span for wood constructed elevators was often much shorter. While fire often brought about their demise other causes also resulted in abandonment and purposeful demolition. This type of vanishing resource is a casualty of change. Since the Great Depression, the small family farm has gradually vanished, replaced by larger, technologically advanced operations that are more productive and profitable. They in turn, created greater demands for more storage.

Country grain elevators with limited capacity and relatively slow speed could not meet these demands. One large concrete facility, strategically located along the tracks could replace eight to 15 old wood elevators. In many cases, grain companies chose to demolish the old structure rather than selling it to the community or a local farmer. Yet, this elevator in Ithaca remains standing, virtually intact, as a representative example that marks a significant change in Nebraska's agricultural history.

The Old Ithaca Grain Elevator is also eligible at the local level under Criterion C for its association with engineering and specifically the operation of equipment and machinery within the structure. Although not a functioning elevator, the building contains all of the mechanical systems required for its operation.

The inner workings of the country grain elevator involved only a few integral parts. These included the scale, receiving pit, bucket elevator, drive, distributor, spouting, and bins, all of which exist at the Old Ithaca Grain Elevator. The farmers dumped their crop into the receiving pit, a vertical belt-and-bucket conveyor then lifted the grain to a headhouse from which it was spouted to a series of walled bins for bulk storage. At the bottom of the bins were openings out of which the grain emptied by gravity, to be shoveled or conveyed along a trough to the receiving pit where it would be lifted again, but this time to chutes connected to waiting railroad cars.

The earliest elevators, including the one in Ithaca, were powered by teams of horses, but steam- and gas-powered engines soon replaced the horses, and in the early 1900s, electric motors began to replace the engines. Still, the actual mechanical operation was so simple, it adapted easily to these types of changes which contributed to their decades of continual use.

The disappearance of country grain elevators marks an end of an era. These structures, unique to North America, are amazing buildings. They were designed for function and simplicity, without unnecessary decoration. They were engineered to endure the pressures of stored grain, while protecting the harvest. The Old Ithaca Grain Elevator is an excellent example of this dwindling resource. Eligible at the local level under Criteria A and C the building retains a high degree of historic integrity.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Old Ithaca Grain Elevator

Name of Property

Saunders County, Nebraska

County and State

**Section 9-10 Page 1**

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**Bibliography**

Carney, George O. "Grain Storage and Processing Facilities in Western Oklahoma, 1889-1950." Multiple Property Document. Oklahoma City, OK.: Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, 1993.

Saunders County Deed Record Books

Selyem, Barbara Krupp. "The Legacy of Country Grain Elevators." *Old Time Elevators* July/August 2000.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

A tract of ground the south line of which is west of the north line of Tract L extended to the point where the Burlington Northern Railroad Right of Way narrows from 300 feet to 150 feet, northerly on that line a distance of 150 feet, thence southeasterly along the centerline of the Burlington Northern Railroad 460 feet to a point on the west line of Tract L extended north, thence southeasterly along the west line of Tract L extended north to the point of beginning in Ithaca, Saunders County, Nebraska.

**Boundary Description**

The boundary contains that parcel of land which has historically been associated with the property.