

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Miles Ranch

Other names/site number RH00-423

2. Location

Street & number 63795 638 Avenue

Not for publication ☐

City or town Dawson

Vicinity ☒

State Nebraska Code NE County Richardson Code 147

Zip code

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 of certifying official

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 of Keeper

Date of Action

Miles Ranch
Name of Property

Richardson County, Nebraska
County and State

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	
<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	Buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Objects
<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Mail & freight transporting

AGRICULTURE: Ranching

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

OTHER: Posted Forebay Barn

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation Mortared Rubble

Walls WOOD-clapboard & board and batten

Roof METAL-steel, ASPHALT

Other _____

Narrative Description

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

The Miles Ranch contains some of the best examples of early rural buildings in the state. The ranch is located in Richardson County, approximately 3 miles to the south of the current town of Dawson, Nebraska (pop. 209), 15 miles west of the county seat of Falls City, Nebraska (pop. 4,671) and 6 miles north of the Nebraska-Kansas state border. Richardson County is located in the far southeastern corner of the state along the Missouri River and consists of a generally gently rolling topography broken by several small creeks and rivers. The ranch is sited on a southern facing slope overlooking the flood plain of the South Fork of the Nemaha River to the south. The surrounding area is mostly cropland with corn being the predominant crop.

House

The 2 story main house of the Miles Ranch was constructed in 1867-1868 on a slight rise overlooking the South Fork of the Nemaha River using mostly local materials. The foundation is constructed of rough cut quarried stone and mortar. The house generally follows the I-house typology with side gables and a symmetrical front façade of 5 bays. In this example of the I-house an original rear wing extends off to the north side of the house. The exterior is clad in horizontal clapboard siding with corner pilasters. The front façade is symmetrical with two windows flanking a central 2 story porch in the middle. The central porch covers doors to the first and second levels of the house. The first story of the porch had severe condition issues and is under reconstruction. Enough materials existed however, to allow for reconstruction of the porch with louvered sides that are being repaired and replicated. The second story portion is being maintained and rehabilitated. In the upper porch, several decorative features can be seen in the gable of the porch and the diamond latticework railing.

The western façade of the house possesses a first story porch entrance with similar decorative details as the front porch. An entrance into the basement is present at the southwest corner of the western façade. The rear gabled wing extends to the north and terminates with a more modern 20th century one story garage addition. A large single new garage door is present on the garage facing west. On the eastern façade of the rear wing is a two story porch gallery. In recent years these porches were enclosed, however they are being reopened as part of the property's rehabilitation. Two doors lead off of the two major first story rooms of the rear wing. On the second story a door leads into a room of the rear wing, while another door leads to the main block of the house.

The roof of the house is covered in modern asphalt shingles. On the main block of the house are opposing interior chimneys located at the gables along the center ridge of the roof. The rear wing however has an interior centrally located chimney.

Interior of the House

The main block of the house follows the traditional I-house floor plan with two generally square rooms flanking a central passageway. The front door leads into the central passageway with doorways immediately to the left and right, as well as an original stairway leading up to the second floor. Historically the end of the passageway room terminated in a door to the outside rear porch, however that entrance was enclosed to make room for a small non-historic bathroom. The first floor room to the east of the passageway currently exists as a kitchen with mid 20th century cupboards and counters. The room to the west of the central passageway room possesses a large door opening into one of the rear wing rooms. Based upon the floor boards it appears that this opening was originally designed to be a single door width. The trim details and framing suggests that the change in this doorway was very early and most likely during the period of significance. Wainscoting extends at the bottom of these two rooms. A servant's staircase leads up to the second floor while the basement stairway is positioned to the side. Additionally, in the rear wing room, doorways to the exterior are located on the east to the long eastern porch, and to the western facade where the small portico is located. The far northern room of the rear wing is believed to have been used for storage or as a kitchen historically based upon the original door hardware that allows it to swing both ways. The interior of this room also possesses a single door leading outside to the long porch on the east and a door leading into the garage. Woodwork surrounding the doors and windows throughout the entire house is painted. Although most of the original doors have been kept, the majority of the windows have been replaced, although some of the historic windows are located in storage. Additionally, all chimneys in the house appear to have been designed specifically for accepting wood or coal burning stoves.

The main entry to the second story is through the front passageway room with its finely crafted original stairway. Both second story rooms in the main block possess the same paneled wainscoting seen on the first floor. The rear wing has a large hallway which connects several small rooms without wainscoting. The servant's stairway also leads down from this hallway.

Posted Forebay Barn

The posted forebay barn, constructed in 1861, is the best example of its type in the state. Traditionally barns of this type originally were constructed by the Pennsylvania Dutch and are commonly associated with that group. The design however, spread across the Midwest with the spread of the population out of the Mid-Atlantic where these barns were first seen. The posted forebay barn is one of the many types of banked barns. The axis of the barn is placed perpendicular to the slope leaving a basement area easily accessible to livestock below while farmers could drive wagons into the upper portion. Additionally, the forebay is created by recessing the lower entrance providing exterior shelter for the farmer or livestock. The foundation of the barn is constructed of finely crafted mortared stone of varying sizes. The edge of the forebay is supported by a series of wooden posts, leading to its name. Inside the barn on the livestock level is a stair leading up to the next level and numerous stanchions for livestock. The area above for the farmer was typically arranged in a tripartite design with a central drive accessed by a ramp, providing access to cribs on either side. In this example the tripartite designed is followed with the addition of a storage shed to the west. The barn is clad with board and batten siding fastened by cut nails onto hand hewn pegged and tenon timber framing. An original lean-to roof is constructed on the west side, presumably to aid in protection from the wind and for storage of wagons, while the main portion of the barn is side gabled. A later lean-to shed addition is located on the east side, which exists as a large open space, and is believed to have been constructed within the period of significance.

Other Contributing Buildings

The corn crib is believed to have been constructed c. 1890 within the period of significance. The gabled frame structure is a long building covered in lath for ventilation of the corn, with several doors for interior access. The building rests upon a stone foundation and is covered by a wood shingled roof with corrugated tin in spots. Although this building is in a state of disrepair, it maintains enough integrity to convey its significance during the later part of the ranch's heyday.

The privy is a simple c. 1890, small frame building to the east of the house. The exterior of the privy is clad in board and batten siding and possesses a wood shingled shed roof. The interior of the privy contains two hole seats for users. Though it may be small, privies such as this are a rare find and the building maintains superb integrity.

Non-contributing Buildings

South of the barn is a series of three small metal and wood modern buildings used as chicken coops and storage. All three buildings appear to date from the late 20th century and are well outside the period of significance. To the east of these buildings is chain link fencing that encloses a small area around several dog houses. The dog houses and fencing date to the late 20th century and do not appear to have been installed to be permanent.

The machine shed is a long frame building, clad with vertical boards, roofed with corrugated tin, and oriented north-south with the opening to the east. Based upon the design and presence of wire nails it is most likely that this was intentionally constructed as a machine shed sometime in the mid 20th century. The age and the character of this building place it outside the period of significance.

A frame garage building constructed on a concrete pad is located to the east of the machine shed. This garage building opens to the west with two large sliding doors. The exterior is clad in a combination of horizontal wood clapboards and vertically oriented corrugated metal sheeting, while the roof is covered in wood shingles. The building is estimated to date from the 1930s or 1940s, which places it well outside the period of significance.

Miles Ranch
Name of Property

Richardson 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce

Architecture

Agriculture

Settlement

Period of Significance

1857-1898

Significant Dates

1857

1861

1868

1871

1898

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

Stephen Boyd Miles

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance lasts from c. 1857, when Stephen Miles purchased the land through 1898 when he died. This period of significance includes the construction of all the ranch's contributing resources. This period also encompasses the period of Stephen Miles' active commercial life. The significant date of 1857 corresponds to the earliest known date of Stephen Miles' life in Nebraska Territory as he conducted his contracting business. The 1861 date marks the estimated beginning of construction on the main barn for the hub of his business. In 1871 it is reported that Stephen Miles left the contracting business in favor of new opportunities in cattle ranching and banking. The end date of the period of significance corresponds to Stephen Miles' death and an end to Miles Ranch's active operation.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary): NA

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Significance in the Area of Criterion A: Settlement, Commerce, and Agriculture

With the opening of Nebraska to settlement in 1854, Euro-Americans began settling along the western bank of the Missouri River. The counties along the river saw a large influx as masses slowly streamed into the territory. All sorts of businesses sprouted up to support these pioneers. In an effort to bring all of the conveniences to the new settlements the government sought to establish regular postal routes. During the 1850s numerous mail and freight companies vied for contracts to carry post and goods across the country and to new settlements on the frontier. Companies such as Overland Mail Company, Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company (aka the Pony Express), and others were formed to provide such mail service. Rather than the government operating mail service, contracts were let out to those willing to find the fastest and safest mail routes across the West. From contracts to carry the mail Stephen Miles earned money and land which he parlayed into investments in ranching and other businesses in the area. From these ventures Stephen Miles contributed significantly to the local pioneer economy.

After growing up in Pennsylvania, and working in mail contracting there, Stephen Miles was lured to the western mail contracting market and moved to Nebraska in the mid-1850s shortly after it was opened up to settlement in 1854. When Miles arrived in Richardson County, Nebraska there were very few people and only a few settlements along the Missouri River. In the summer of 1857, at the age of 35, Miles managed to gain the contract for delivering mail route 8911, the mail from Independence, Missouri to Salt Lake City. Miles' good fortune was the result of the "Utah War", when the mail contract was ended with the Brigham Young Express. When the route was contracted out again, Stephen Miles came in with the lowest bid of \$32,000 a year for monthly delivery to Salt Lake City, using 4 mule coaches. In comparison, a previous holder of the route, John Hockaday submitted a bid of \$62,000 a year for monthly service. For approximately half a year Miles held this route, but his low bid impacted his delivery abilities and subsequently his contract was cancelled. The route was contracted out again with John Hockaday providing weekly service from St. Joseph, Missouri to Salt Lake City for \$190,000 a year.

Unfortunately, Stephen Miles' major mail contract was cancelled by 1858, but that did not deter him from seeking other mail contracts and business ventures. As a mail contractor Miles was able to capitalize on the Congressional Act of March 3, 1855, which allowed any mail contractor to file a claim on land in order to build stage stations for replenishing supplies and getting fresh draft animals for the coaches. Miles filed and purchased several thousand acres of land for his enterprise over the following decade. The land he acquired was centered upon the ranch he established in 1857 south of modern Dawson, Nebraska. The Miles Ranch served as the central hub of Miles' operation. It was on his ranch that he established a post office named "Miles Ranch" on July 13, 1858, which was later discontinued on March 19, 1867. At his ranch he cared for thousands of mules, horses, and cattle which went toward supplying his coaches and workers. To support his ranching he constructed several barns and ranch hand/coach driver's quarters that are non-extant. The Miles Ranch slowly became one of the premier ranches in the region and contributed to Miles' future success as a mail contractor.

Settlement and development of Richardson County progressed during the early territorial days and by 1860 a total of 2,835 people had settled in the county. The following decade would see even more changes for the county. Throughout the 1860s Stephen Miles actively bought and sold land throughout southeastern Nebraska and northeastern Kansas. His acquisitions in real estate were bolstered by his postal contracts and ranching. During the 1860s Miles held the contracts for carrying mail and freight throughout Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas. For instance, in 1862, Miles held the contracts to carry post from Iowa Point, KS to Marysville, KS and from Atchison, KS to Randolph, KS. In Nebraska, he carried mail from Falls City to Pawnee City. From Missouri he ran a stage line and mail contract from Westport, Missouri to the Sac and Fox Agency in Kansas Territory. Additionally, he ran a mail line from St. Joseph, Missouri to Council Bluffs, Iowa. Although he accumulated a sizable fortune by engaging in the postal contract business he wisely decided to stop seeking contracts as the railroads slowly expanded. Even though the population of Richardson County had grown to 9,780 by 1870, the larger number of potential customers did not lead to more profits as the freight and mail delivery business was increasingly taken over by the westward progressing railroad network. The Burlington and Southwestern Railroad had constructed a line to Rulo by 1869 and within the next two years, the Atchison and Nebraska Railroad spanned the county. By 1871, Miles was completely out of mail contracting and devoted the remainder of his life to his ranch and local business investments.

The Civil War left large numbers of stray cattle to roam and breed on the southern plains. Large herds were for the taking and were rounded up by ranchers in the 1860s and 1870s. Eastern markets yearned for the cheap and plentiful beef from the plains, yet no direct rail lines were constructed by this time. The rancher's solution to get their cattle to market resulted in the legendary cattle drives. The establishment of cattle trails running from the southern plains north to rail heads in Kansas and Nebraska was just the first part of the journey for the cattle. The second part involved loading the cattle upon rail cars bound for Chicago and other processing centers in the east where they would be butchered for the dinner plates of the easterners. Although the railroad was making mail contracting less lucrative, Miles saw the opportunity presented in the newly constructed railways and threw himself into the cattle business.

From the 1870s to his death, Stephen Miles focused on expanding his ranch and investing in various banks. By this time Stephen Miles' son, Joseph Miles, was part of his father's business. Stephen Miles and his son reportedly made several trips to Texas where he previously held mail contracts and drove cattle back to Nebraska. Once the cattle were in Nebraska, Miles let them fatten on his ranch before loading them on rail cars and selling them in Chicago. Fattening cattle was not Miles' only business venture during this time.

Stephen Miles began investing in several banks during his later life. In 1872, in cooperation with William Nichols, Stephen Miles invested in and helped organize the Commercial Bank of St. Louis, which in 1899 merged with the State Bank of St. Louis. After gaining some experience in the banking industry Miles organized the First National Bank of Falls City in 1882 and served as its president until his death in 1898. The First National Bank of Falls City was officially opened on July 1, 1882 and continues to operate to this day. In 1884, Miles organized the Bank of Rulo, later re-named the State Bank of Rulo. Stephen Miles served as president of the State Bank of Rulo until his death in 1898. Returning back to his home in Pennsylvania in 1890, Miles organized the Miles National Bank of Delta, in Delta, Pennsylvania, where he was also the president. Within four years however, his son, Joseph Miles bought out his father's interest in the Pennsylvania bank. Undoubtedly the investment in banks in southeastern Nebraska during the 1880s had a major impact on the region which was suffering from a lack of banking options. With the creation of First National Bank of Falls City, in particular, the area gained a sense of prestige as it printed its own money.

The Miles Ranch is eligible at the local level for its role in the settlement, development of commerce and agriculture in southeastern Nebraska. The ranch served not only as the headquarters for Miles' mail and freight business, but later served as the home office for Miles' other economic ventures into ranching and banking. The impact of the commercial and agriculture activity shaped the character of this part of Nebraska in those early years of development.

Significance in Criterion B: Stephen B. Miles

Stephen Boyd Miles is significant in the early commerce and development of ranching in southeastern Nebraska. From government contracts, Miles acquired large tracts of land, which he later used for his ranching and banking business. Much of the settlement in the region of southeastern Nebraska can be tied to the contributions and activities of Stephen B. Miles.

Stephen Boyd Miles was born and raised in York County, Pennsylvania and took employment in mail contracting. The mail delivery business in the 1800s was not completed by the public sector alone. Mail routes were contracted out to individuals and companies, especially in the western states that were being newly opened for settlement. The vastness of the west had yet to be fully explored. With the increased settlement of the Pacific Coast and inter-mountain region, during the 1840s and 1850s, came an increased need in joining the country together with a fast means of communication. Travel by sea was often seen as the fastest and safest way to reaching the Pacific Coast, but only because secure routes across the nation had not yet been created. The early mail contractors hired by the US government faced many hardships and several deaths in 1840s and 1850s. As trails became established and the need for faster regular service increased, the government hired contractors to carry post across the country in a matter of weeks rather than months.

Among the settlers arriving in Nebraska Territory in the mid 1850s was Stephen Miles and his family from the East where he held mail contracts in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Miles was lured west by the promise of land and larger contracts. Under the Congressional Act of March 3, 1855, any contractor carrying mail west of the Mississippi was entitled to file for 640 acres. Due to turmoil with the mail service and the "Utah War", the contract from Independence, Missouri to Salt Lake City, Utah, previously held by the Brigham Young Express, was awarded to Stephen Miles at the beginning of 1858. Unfortunately, however, the contract bid of \$32,000 was far too low to sustain the mail route and subsequently was

cancelled by the beginning of 1858. Despite this setback, Miles continued to receive mail contracts for shorter routes. The majority of his mail contracts in the following decade centered on northeastern Kansas and southeastern Nebraska. It was from these mail contracts and the ability to file for land on which mail relay stations were established that Miles was able to accumulate several thousand acres of land in Nebraska and Kansas.

The Miles Ranch was the headquarters for Miles' ventures. Starting on July 13, 1858 Miles operated a post office station from his ranch until it was discontinued on March 19, 1867. Throughout the late 1850s to the late 1860s Miles engaged heavily in the postal contract business. His postal contracts covered Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri and Texas. While engaging in postal contracts, Miles accumulated a large amount of money which he would later re-invest in his ranching business and banking investments.

Stephen Miles was also very interested in politics. As the proprietor of a mail and freight contracting business, Miles quickly became an important and well thought of man in the region. His status is evidenced by his 1859 selection as one of the members from the territory sent to meet with a Kansas territorial delegation in LeCompton, Kansas about the creation of a new state with the Platte River as its northern border and the Kaw (Kansas) River as the southern border. The discussion of the new state was eventually torn by the issue of slavery and the meeting disbanded. Although he was referred to as "Colonel" later in life, Stephen Miles did not serve in the Civil War. In 1876, Miles served as co-vice president of the Democratic State Convention in Omaha. For a brief time in the 1870s Stephen Miles owned the Democrat leaning *Falls City Press*. Even though Stephen Miles never entered the political arena, he maintained an interest in Democratic Party politics throughout his life.

By 1871, Stephen Miles was out of the postal contract business completely and instead was devoting his time to developing his ranch. At its peak the ranch consisted of several thousand acres. Rather than focusing his ranch on draft animals for the stage coach industry, Miles switched to cattle. Thousands of head of cattle were brought to the Miles Ranch. Stephen Miles and his son, Joseph, made several trips to Texas and drove cattle north to the ranch. Once on the ranch, they were fattened and transported by rail to Chicago for sale at Union Stockyards.

In addition to his ranching pursuits Miles also began a career in the banking industry. He invested in and helped organize the Commercial Bank of St. Louis in 1872. Once Miles had some experience in the banking industry he organized the First National Bank of Falls City in 1882 and served as its president until his death in 1898. The First National Bank of Falls City was officially opened on July 1, 1882 and continues to operate to this day. In 1884, Miles organized the Bank of Rulo, later re-named the State Bank of Rulo. Stephen Miles served as president of the State Bank of Rulo until his death in 1898. Briefly returning back to his home in Pennsylvania in 1890, Miles organized the Miles National Bank of Delta, in Delta, Pennsylvania, where he was also the president. Within four years however, his son Joseph Miles bought out his stake in the Pennsylvania bank.

By the time of Stephen Miles' death in 1898, his net worth was estimated in the millions. Not only was he rich but also well-regarded in his remembrances.

"Mr. Miles was a man of great business ability and accumulated much of this world's goods, and left a fortune gained by hard effort, much of it literally dug in the sweat of his brow from the virgin soil of a new country." – The Holt County Sentinel, Oregon, Missouri, November 11, 1898, pg1.

"Stephen B. Miles, one of the largest landowners in the county at his death and one of the wealthiest men in the state, was the man who first carried United States mail into Richardson county, and it was he who organized the first bank in the county." – History of Richardson County, Nebraska by Lewis Edwards 1917 pg 250

After Stephen Miles' death his children contested the will left by their father. The issue of contention centered on a discrepancy between when and where Stephen Miles penned his last will. The principal beneficiary of the "Rulo will" was his oldest son, Joseph Miles, but another "St. Louis will" was reported which split the estate among the children. For roughly a decade the children fought over the estate with the case going to the Nebraska Supreme Court several times. In the end the will was not broken, with Stephen Miles' son, Joseph coming out as the primary beneficiary of tens of thousands of dollars and approximately 2,400 acres of land that constituted the Miles Ranch.

Significance in Criterion C: Architecture

The Miles Ranch represents one of the finest collections of mid to late 1800s agricultural buildings in the state. The main house and the barn in particular are believed to be the two oldest buildings on the ranch and also are two of the oldest buildings in the state.

Main House

It is unknown if the current house represents the only house to have ever existed on the Miles Ranch. For about a decade Miles operated the ranch but the building where he lived is unknown. It is presumed that it was a much less substantial building which was demolished for construction of the current house or possibly was re-purposed by the ranch hands for housing. The main house of the Miles Ranch was constructed between 1867 and 1868, which makes the house an early example of a Nebraska residence. The larger timbers were most likely hewn from nearby trees, but the majority of the lumber is reported to have come from Rulo. Shipping records assist in dating the building as Stephen Miles purchased supplies from St. Louis for the construction of his home. As he finished his house, he purchased 5 bales of carpet and 2 rolls of oil cloth which were shipped to Rulo, Nebraska in October 1868 aboard the steamboat *Mountaineer*.

A review of Nebraska's Historic Resources Inventory shows less than 50 known extant residential buildings in the state dating from 1850 to 1870 with only 19 of those being listed. The Miles Ranch is set apart by the fact that the main house is of such an age and has managed to maintain its integrity and the integrity of associated ranch buildings. The majority of known extant buildings dating from the 1850s and 1860s are residential and urban in character. Although there are some integrity issues mentioned in the narrative description with changed windows, bathrooms, and an attached garage, the overall integrity of the Miles Ranch house is excellent given its age and comparing it to others from the period.

The tradition of I-house residences has been extensively documented across the Midwest. The Miles Ranch house, while not a perfect example of I-house construction, does belong within the typological family of the I-house. The I-house as a building type represents an evolution and adaptation of European precedents. Typically, the Anglo-American I-house is a side gabled, 2 story, single pile house, with a symmetrical façade of 3 or 5 bays. Depending on the location, I-houses usually have either a central chimney, which is most commonly found in New England contexts, or chimneys located on either gable end, which is usually found in Mid-Atlantic and Southern contexts. Although numerous examples of the I-house can be seen throughout Nebraska, the vast majority of these display characteristics usually attributed to later, Continental European influence, typically reaching 1 ½ stories and extensively using smaller gables on the front facade.

The Miles Ranch house represents the older Anglo-American influenced I-house. The chimneys located on the gable ends and the full 2 story symmetrical façade points to the house being constructed from an Anglo-American Mid-Atlantic tradition that was highly influenced by the Greek Revival style with its emphasis on symmetry. The corner pilasters and interior decorative woodwork and doors additionally point to some influence from a mid 1800s Greek Revival style. The rear wing of the house appears to have been constructed at the same time as the front portion of the house and it is this wing which separates this house from being a pure example of an I-house. However, it should be noted that original rear wings are not uncommon in I-houses. Beneath its fine trim, wainscoting, and decorative railings, the house is timber framed and joined by pegs and tenons, which would have been typical of a frame house for this area and time. The Miles Ranch main house represents a superlative example of a rare property type and despite its few integrity issues, it maintains its character defining features making it significant at the state level for architecture.

Posted Forebay Barn

While the Miles Ranch main house is an excellent example of architecture from the 1860s, the fact that it is associated with an even older barn that maintains its integrity sets these buildings apart from others in the state. Out of the roughly 50 examples of residences from the 1850s and 1860s in the state roughly half of those represent rural residences, and none of them possess a barn of such age and integrity. Based upon what is known in the Nebraska Historic Resources Inventory it is believed that the Miles Ranch forebay barn is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, barn in the state.

When Stephen Miles arrived in Nebraska with the intention of constructing a barn for his ranch he drew upon his understanding of what a barn should look like and how it should function, which he learned from growing up in Pennsylvania. The result of his experience in the east was a posted forebay barn constructed in the west. Forebay barns are relatively rare in Nebraska. The barn on the Miles Ranch, reportedly constructed in 1861, is constructed using peg

and tenon hand hewed timber framing with board and batten cladding attached with cut nails. The hand hewed timbers were a necessity as a saw mill would not be located in the county until some years later. The timbers and stone most likely were locally acquired out of convenience. The barn exhibits superb craftsmanship not only in the hewing of the timbers but also in the quarrying and squaring of the stone.

Of the 91 previously surveyed barns in Richardson county, only 4 are typologically considered a posted forebay, like at Miles Ranch, with 10 additional barns being classified as pent roofed – posted forebays, a variant of the forebay type. The primary barn of the Miles Ranch is one of the four traditional posted forebay barns known in Richardson County. This type of side gabled, banked barn features a 3-bay ramped entry into the middle bay and usually raises from the threshing floor one to one and a half stories in height. The foundation is typically of rubble or quarried stone. The forebay portion is created by the overhanging barn structure and is supported by substantial posts. The lower forebay portion of the barn was used for housing and feeding horse, mules, and cattle, while the upper portion was used for the storage of feed for the animals, which could be passed below through various points in the barn. Nationally, this type of barn is typically associated with the Pennsylvania Dutch in Pennsylvania, however this barn type was not exclusively used by this ethnic group. As a variety of settlers from various ethnic groups settled in Pennsylvania, traditional construction ideas were shared and adapted. It was his history of growing up among these barn types that most likely inspired Stephen Miles to construct a posted forebay barn.

Generally, a posted forebay barn or its variant, a pent roofed-posted forebay, is considered a rare property type in Nebraska on a whole. Roughly a hundred of these barns are known to exist currently as documented in the state inventory. Almost all of the examples known in Nebraska can be found in the southeastern region of the state and along the Missouri River in areas with hills and a local source of stone for the foundation. In Richardson County, the prevalence of forebay barns can be attributed in part to the influx of settlers from the mid-Atlantic and New England regions, and in particular to those from the Pennsylvania Colony. Although many of the barns of the type have been lost over time or severely altered, the Miles Ranch forebay maintains a substantial level of integrity.

Other Contributing Buildings

Even though the house and barn are the largest buildings on the Miles Ranch, they are not the only ones. Some of the other contributing buildings include the corn crib and the privy. The corn crib is believed to have been constructed c. 1890 toward the end of Stephen Miles' life. The building is a long series of bays with open horizontal lath siding for ventilation. Increasingly, corn cribs from the 1800s are being torn down and the existence of this one on the Miles Ranch contributes significantly to the ranch's history and story. The other contributing building is the two seat privy, which is also estimated to date to c. 1890. Privies are becoming exceptionally rare as they are difficult to re-purpose. The Miles Ranch privy is located downwind to the east of the house, where a privy is assumed to have always existed. Its presence on the ranch helps to convey an element of the past that is often ignored.

Although archeological testing has not been performed on the site there may be potential for contributing sites. It is known that the Miles Ranch had numerous ranch hands and housing for the hands, which oral history suggests is located somewhere to the north of the main house and barn. The exact location of the housing is unknown and is not visible on the surface. Other buildings to support an operation of such size were also undoubtedly located on the ranch as well, but the exact nature and location of these buildings is unknown. Outside of the boundaries for the Miles Ranch nomination are buildings that are believed to have been associated with the ranch's period of ownership under Joseph Miles. These surrounding areas may also include older archeological deposits related to the creation and zenith of the Miles Ranch under Stephen Miles.

The Miles Ranch is significant at the local level under Criterion A: Commerce for its role as the center of a mail contracting company in the mid to late 1800s and for Agriculture as the hub of an early ranch that spanned thousands of acres, at the local level under Criterion B for its association with Stephen Miles, a Nebraska pioneer, and at the state level under Criterion C for the rare architecture and high integrity of the buildings from such an early era. From its establishment by Stephen Miles in 1857, the Miles Ranch served as the central hub of Stephen Miles' many operations. Even though he eventually got out of the mail contracting business, Miles continued to have an impact on the region's economy through the establishment and investment in several businesses and his ranch. Although the main house and barn have seen a few alterations, these changes are so minor that they do not diminish the overall sense of character. No other property better represents the early ranching and business hub for Stephen Miles' many business ventures in the region.

Miles Ranch
Name of Property

Richardson County, Nebraska
County and State

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

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.)

Andreas, A.T. *History of the State of Nebraska*, Chicago, IL: The Western Historical Company, 1882.

Edwards, Lewis. *History of Richardson County, Nebraska*. Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Company. 1917.

Hafen, Leroy. *The Overland Mail 1859-1869*. Cleveland: Arthur Clark Company. 1926.

Nebraska State Historical Society Archives, RG1233 Manuscript Collection

Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office, Nebraska State Historic Resources Survey and Inventory Files (NeHSRI).

Noble, Allen G. and Richard K. Cleek. *The Old Barn Book: A Field Guide to North American Barns & Other Farm Structures* [Second Paperback Edition], New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997.

Olson, James C. and Ronald C. Naugle. *History of Nebraska* [Third Edition], Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.

Rapp, William. *Postal History of Nebraska Part 2*, Crete, Nebraska: JB Publishing. 1985.

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: _____

Miles Ranch
Name of Property

Richardson County, Nebraska
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 6 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	15	256131	4441573	3.			
2.				4.			

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

The boundary of the nomination includes all of the property of Lot 1 and 2 of this subdivided section.

Boundary Justification

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

The boundary for the nomination is selected based upon the current property lines and includes the main buildings that formed the heart of the ranch during the period of significance.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patrick Haynes, Survey & Inventory Coordinator

organization Nebraska State Historical Society

date Sept 9, 2012

street & number 1500 R Street

telephone 402-471-4770

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.

Name of Property: Miles Ranch

City or Vicinity: Dawson (vicinity)

County: Richardson

State: Nebraska

Photographer: Patrick Haynes, Nebraska State Historical Society

Date Photographed: October 14, 2011

Photographs:

01 of 12. Southern (front) and western facades, House, Aspect: NE

02 of 12. Northern and eastern facades, House, Aspect: SW

Miles Ranch

Name of Property

Richardson County, Nebraska

County and State

- 03 of 12. Current Kitchen, House, Aspect: NE
- 04 of 12. First floor room to west, House, Aspect: W
- 05 of 12. Second floor room to east, House, Aspect: N
- 06 of 12. Main stairway looking down to first floor, House, Aspect: S
- 07 of 12. North and east facades, Posted forebay barn, Aspect: S
- 08 of 12. Southern façade, Posted forebay barn, Aspect: N
- 09 of 12. Posted forebay barn interior, Aspect: S
- 10 of 12. Corn Crib eastern and northern facades, Aspect: SW
- 11 of 12. Corn Crib and non-contributing garage and machine shed to rear, Aspect: W
- 12 of 12. Privy, Aspect: N

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 Paulo Bruxellas, ownerstreet & number 1207 N. 207th Cir.

telephone _____

city or town Elkhornstate NEzip code 68002

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
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Miles Ranch
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEBRASKA, Richardson

DATE RECEIVED: 11/02/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/04/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/19/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/19/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12001075

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 12.19.12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Miles Ranch

Dawson vicinity

Richardson County, Nebraska

NE-Richardson County-Miles Ranch-001

Ne HRSI # RH00-423

Photo 1 of 12

Southern (front) and western facades, House, Aspect: NE



Miles Ranch

Dawson vicinity

Richardson County, Nebraska

NeHRSI # RH00-423

NE- Richardson County- Miles Ranch-002

Photo 2 of 12

Northern and eastern facades, House, Aspect: SW



Miles Ranch

Dawson Vicinity

Richardson County, Nebraska

Ne HRSI # RH00-423

NE- Richardson County- Miles Ranch - 003

Photo 3 of 12

Current Kitchen, House, Aspect: NE



Miles Ranch

Dawson vicinity

Richardson County, Nebraska

NeHRSI# RH00-423

NE-Richardson County - Miles Ranch - 004

Photo 4 of 12

First floor room to west, House, Aspect: W



Miles Ranch

Dawson vicinity

Richardson County, Nebraska

NeHRSI# RH00-423

NE-Richardson County-Miles Ranch-005

Photo 5 of 12

Second floor room to east, House, Aspect: S



Miles Ranch

Dawson vicinity

Richardson County, Nebraska

Ne#RSI # RH00-423

NE-Richardson County - Miles Ranch - 006

Photo 6 of 12

Main stairway looking down to first floor, House, Aspect: S



Miles Ranch

Dawson vicinity

Richardson County, Nebraska

Ne #RSI # RH00-423

NE- Richardson County- Miles Ranch. 007

Photo 7 of 12

North and east facades, Posted forebay barn, Aspect: S



Miles Ranch

Dawson vicinity

Richardson County, Nebraska

NeHRSI # RH00-423

NE- Richardson County - Miles Ranch - 008

Photo 8 of 12

Southern facade, Posted forebay barn, Aspect: N



Miles Ranch

Dawson vicinity

Richardson County, Nebraska

NeHRSI # RH00-423

NE, Richardson County - Miles Ranch - 009

Photo 9 of 12

Posted forebay barn interior, Aspect: SW



Miles Ranch

Dawson vicinity

Richardson County, Nebraska

Ne HRSI # RH00-423

NE - Richardson County - Miles Ranch - 010

Photo 10 of 12

Corn Crib eastern and northern facades, Aspect: SW



Miles Ranch

Dawson vicinity

Richardson County, Nebraska

NeHRSI # RH00-423

NE - Richardson County - Miles Ranch - 011

Photo 11 of 12

Corn Crib and non-contributing garage and machine shed to rear, Aspect: W



Miles Ranch

Dawson vicinity

Richardson County, Nebraska

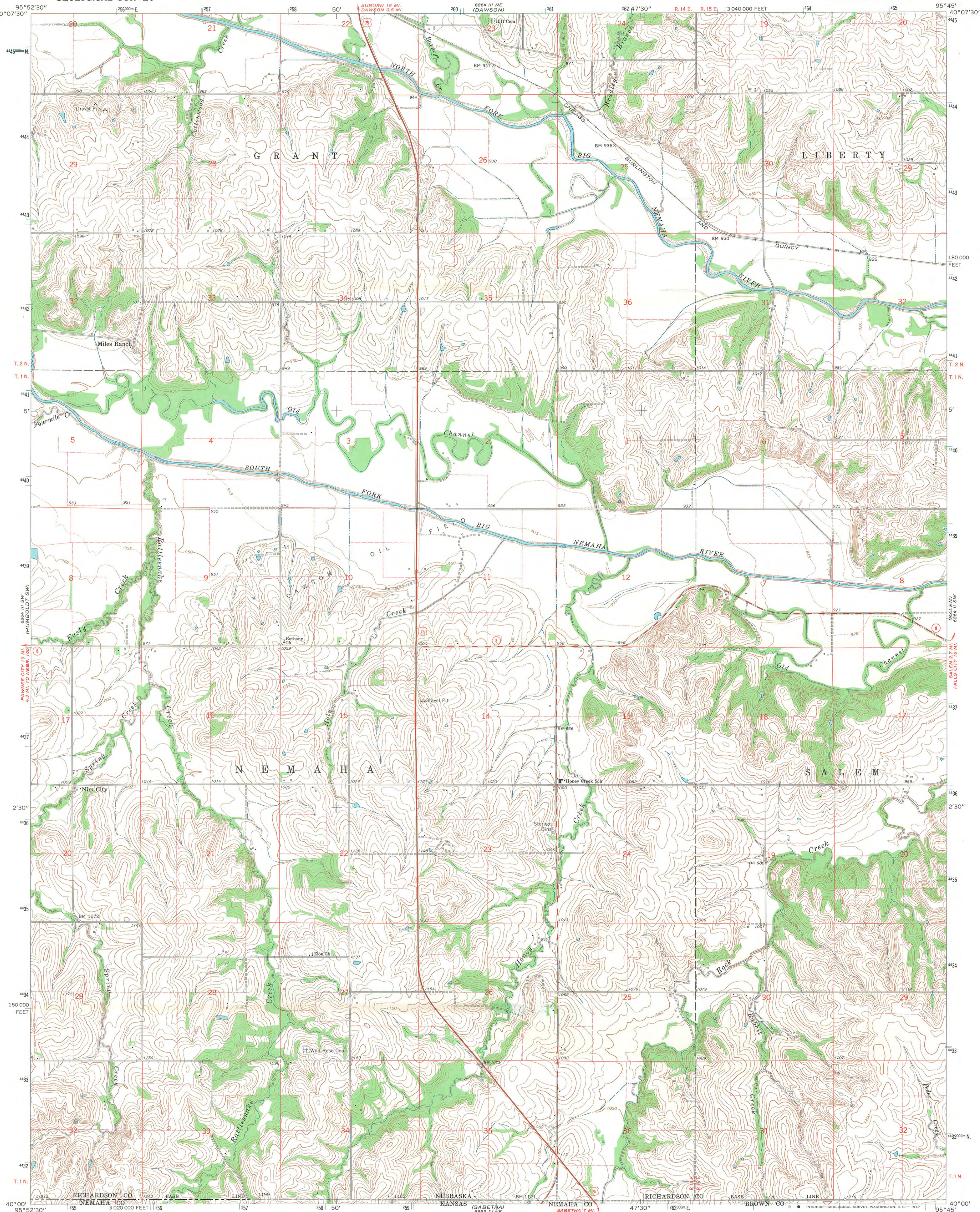
NeHRSI# RH00-423

NE. Richardson County - Miles Ranch - 012

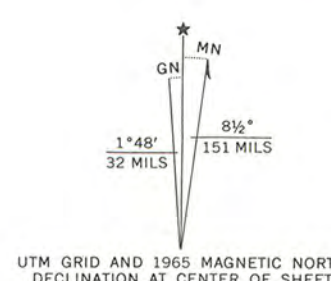
Photo 12 of 12

Privy, Aspect: N

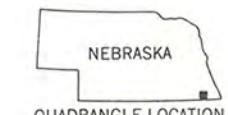
Miles Ranch
Zone 15
Easting:
256131
Northing:
4441573



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey as part of the Department of the Interior program for the development of the Missouri River Basin Control by USGS and USC&S
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1963. Field checked 1965
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum 10,000-foot grid based on Nebraska coordinate system, south zone 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



SCALE 1:24,000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
AND BY THE STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, LAWRENCE, KANSAS 66044
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
U.S. Route ——— State Route ———

HUMBOLDT SE, NEBR.-KANS.
SE/4 HUMBOLDT 15' QUADRANGLE
N4000—W9545/7.5



October 25, 2012

J. Paul Loether
National Register—National Historic Landmarks Programs
National Park Service
1201 "I" Street NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

RE: Miles Ranch
Richardson County, Nebraska

Dear Mr. Loether:

Please find enclosed the National Register of Historic Places nomination form for the above resource. This form has met all notification and other requirements as established in 36 CFR 60.

If you have any questions concerning this nomination, please let me know.

Sincerely,


L. Robert Puschendorf
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosure

1500 R Street
PO Box 82554
Lincoln, NE 68501-2554
p: (800) 833-6747
(402) 471-3270
f: (402) 471-3100
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