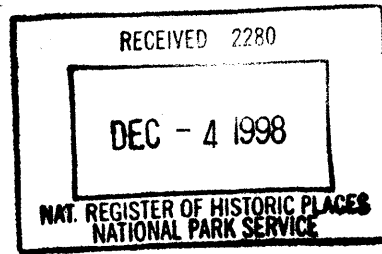


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



1560

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 Weber Mill

other names/site number Mormon Winter Quarters; NeHBS #DO09:0256-001

2. Location

street & number 9102 South 30th Street not for publication [ ]

city or town Omaha vicinity [ ]

state Nebraska code NE county Douglas code 055 zip code 68106

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): \_\_\_\_\_

Elson H. Beall

12/31/98

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

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

**Weber Mill**

Name of Property

**Douglas 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	
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**  
0

**6. Function or Use**

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

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

INDUSTRY:manufacturing facility

VACANT:not in use

**7. Description**

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

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

foundation concrete  
walls wood/tin  
roof tin  
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.)

Industry

---



---



---



---



---

**Period of Significance**

1856-1948

---



---

**Significant Dates**

1856

1913

1939

---

**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:

---

**Weber Mill**

Name of Property

**Douglas County, Nebraska**

County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property less than one

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	15	252220	4851000	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 Melissa A. Dirr, Architectural Historian

organization Nebraska State Historical Society date September 3, 1998

street & number 1500 R Street telephone 402.471.4408

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 Meigs

street & number 5510 Jackson Street telephone 402.551.1233

city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68106

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine 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, (16 U.S.C. 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

Weber Mill

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

---

The Weber Mill is located on an irregular shaped section of land at the intersection of 30th Street and I-680 in the north Omaha neighborhood of Florence. Annexed in 1917, Florence was once an independent city six miles north of Omaha. Commercial and industrial buildings including a fire station, water processing plant, restaurant, and the busy highway approach to the Mormon Bridge crossing the Missouri River into Iowa, are located nearby. The terrain slopes downhill to the Missouri River which is approximately one-quarter mile east of the mill.

In its present incarnation the mill consists of a two-story frame side gable building with an east/west orientation that houses an office and full basement work area. Attached to the north side gable end of this building is a 53-foot tall grain elevator with gambrel type roof clad in corrugated tin. The scales for weighing the grain run the length of the east side of the building and are sheltered by a full-length shed roof addition. Attached to the grain elevator by small square conveyor pipe and located on the west side is an elevated corncrib. Clad with wood the crib measures approximately six feet square and is raised above ground level by four legs. This grouping makes up the entirety of the mill.

The two-story side gable frame building rises from a concrete foundation and is clad with narrow clapboards. Fenestration consists of double hung six over six pane windows with three openings on each side and one under the gable end. Entry is accessed through a door on the shed addition on the east side. The main floor interior retains the office with desk dating from the early 1920s and grain sample displays. The full basement houses a work area with built-in benches and tool tables. Remaining spaces in this section of the building are open spans with a conveyor belt system along the west end wall used to transport bags of grain and feed from each level. Large hand hewn walnut support beams that originally used notch and peg construction are the sole physical remnants from the original Mormon Mill. The grain elevator has two large vertically divided storage bins with a conveyor system to access the grain. All milling equipment remains intact and functional.

The current appearance of the mill is a result of more than seventy years of the building's evolution. During its continuous use dating from 1856, the building was modernized to incorporate more efficient energy sources. Beginning with an overshot waterwheel it progressed through steam and then electricity. Its current configuration and location is the outcome of a historic move. As the result of a devastating rain and poor creek damming, the mill was submerged by fourteen feet of water in 1936 and repeatedly flooded thereafter. This flooding resulted in the building's move in 1939. Water damage effectively ruined a second two-story frame section of the building with a raised brick foundation. When this section of the building was intact the mill had an "L" shaped configuration with the 1913 elevator at the pivot. Since it had been converted to electricity and was no longer dependent on a water source for power its location along the old Mill Creek or any waterway was not critical. It

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Weber Mill

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 2

---

was moved approximately 400 yards northeast of its current location, just out of the flood plain. It remained on its original section of land and Mill creek has since been diverted underground so it is no longer visible. The mill was reconfigured as a result of the move. With the destruction of one of the gable end sections due to water damage, the remaining building had one two story gable end section, the grain elevator, and the corncrib. It currently has a linear arrangement with the elevator attached to the north end of the gable end building and the corncrib to the west.

This move and reconfiguration was required to maintain the viability of the functioning mill and to save the entire building from demolition. Because it occurred during the historic period, before the established 50-year cut off date, the move does not affect the building's historic integrity. Therefore, the present building retains a high degree of historic integrity with its remaining working interior milling mechanisms and integrity of the exterior materials.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Weber Mill

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

---

The Weber Mill is located in the Florence neighborhood in north Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska. Under the continuous operation of the Weber Family for over 104 years it was considered to be the longest operating business in Nebraska. The property has significantly contributed to the milling industry and its changing technology from the last half of the 19th century to 1948, the established 50-year cut-off period. It is eligible under criterion A for this contribution.

Florence, Nebraska is located approximately six miles north of Omaha along the Missouri River. It was originally settled by Mormons as their Winter Quarters during their great migration of 1846-47. The tradition of a mill in this location began with the Mormons. Realizing the need for flour and lumber for their survival through the winter, a mill was considered a priority. Construction of a mill made of hand-hewn cottonwood and walnut was spearheaded and funded by Brigham Young. The mill provided the necessary flour for sustenance not only at Winter Quarters but also for the continuing journey to Salt Lake City. Mormons mostly abandoned Winter Quarters by 1848, and a fire consumed most of the log and sod buildings in 1850. Given the expense invested in their mill (nearly \$3000) most of its valuable features were carried on with them for construction of another mill at their new location. Nothing but the structural hulk of the building was left on Mill Creek after their departure.

"The Mormons... had a good mill with two run of burs and a saw on one of the streams. The frame is still standing." (Omaha Arrow, 9-29-1854). Alexander Hunter rebuilt a mill using this framework and by 1856 the newly platted town of Florence, named for the daughter of one member of the town company, once again had a functioning mill. Hunter was also a Mormon and operated the mill as a saw and corn mill for the growing town. However, the longest association with the mill and its significant contribution to industry and supplying the area with grain, came under the tenure of Jacob Weber and his family.

Jacob Weber came to this country with his wife Amalia from Germany in 1857. He was a baker by trade but quickly saw his business efforts in that field fail resulting in his employment as a hand at the mill. By 1860 the industrial census for Douglas County listed the water-powered mill in operation with six employees. It produced on average 65,000 board feet of lumber valued at \$2500. Weber was sole owner of the property as referenced in the 1870 industrial census and the mill was well established in business by this time. The mill was still efficiently powered by water producing 20 horsepower to run a circular saw. About 1874 a gristmill was incorporated into the operation, and by 1880 the industrial census indicated that flour, rather than lumber, had become the major product of Weber's mill. It was also at this time that steam was incorporated into the power source with one steam turbine producing 25 horsepower allowing for an output of 65 bushels a day. By 1888 the mill was entirely powered by steam, and it was converted to a roller mill system for flour.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Weber Mill

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 2

Established rail routes delivering mass produced pre-cut lumber and the availability of wood made the sawmill obsolete and the installation of the more modern roller system made flour production more efficient.

Weber operated his mill as a country or exchange mill, meaning that he catered to the local farmers and their needs. Farmers brought in wheat to be ground into flour for their own use, while the miller charged a toll for the services. This is prevalent in the southeastern portion of the state beginning in the territorial period of the 1850's and 1860s. This may be compared to a merchant mill that produced flour for commercial sale. After the turn of the century farming and crops were plentiful and successful. Demand for a feed mill was great as area farmers had mostly abandoned growing wheat for flour. So in 1913 the 53-foot tall grain elevator was added and the mill was converted to solely function as a feed mill. The elevator accommodated the storage and processing of the feed. Area farmers would drop their grain at the mill on their trips in to Omaha, at the time just six miles south of Florence, and pick-up the ground feed on their way back home, leaving a percentage of the crop to the mill for payment.

Jacob Weber continued his work at the mill until his death in 1923 at the age of 90. His son, Jacob, Jr. took over the operation and modernized again in 1923 converting the power source from steam to electricity. The depression years were quite difficult for the mill and hard times were compounded when Jacob, Jr. was found dead of a heart attack inside the mill in 1931. However, the mill operation stayed in the family and Lyman Weber, the grandson of Jacob, Sr. forged the operation ahead at the young age of 18.

Because the mill was originally water powered its location near a run-off creek to the Missouri River was significant. However, in order to harness power for electricity and to clear the way for a new bridge the city began constructing a series of small earthen dams for the Metropolitan Utilities District. By this time Florence had been annexed into the city of Omaha and this was considered an excellent location for the city water processing plant. These dams resulted in regular flooding at the mill with any significant rainfall. The building withstood a 1932 flood, a 1937 hailstorm, and also in 1937, 14 feet of water that inundated the mill. The Webers sued the city for the careless construction of the dams and upon the successful completion of the suit and a settlement of \$8000 the mill was moved 400 feet outside the floodplain, but remained within the original property. The move included the scale, the two-story frame gable roof building and the attached elevator, which had to be partially dismantled. This new location protected the mill from further water damage.

Lyman Weber was called to serve in the armed forces during World War II and closed the mill from 1943-1945. He resumed work immediately upon his return and continued to operate the business until 1964 when it was sold to Ernest and Ruthie Harpster. The



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Weber Mill

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 3

Harpsters put up another fight and successfully saved the mill from destruction during construction of the interstate system. Currently the building resides within the legal right-of-way property of the Nebraska Department of Roads. Commerce at the mill ceased in 1990 and it was vacant until its recent purchase in 1998. Under new ownership, the mill will be revived and renovated for a current use.

Throughout its existence the Weber Mill has contributed to industry and commercial development first in Florence and continuing in Omaha and Douglas County. Its early years as a flourmill and its continued operation as a feed mill represent the longest span of operation in the state. The first United States territorial census of 1860 reported 19 flourmills operating in the Nebraska territory. By 1880 this same census listed 177 flourmills. The milling industry jumped before the turn of the century with 260 mills in business during 1900. At this height there were twenty mills operating in Douglas County. However, the turn of the century saw consolidation and growth of larger mill companies and the decline of the small mill. Between 1909 and 1925 the number of mills in Nebraska was cut almost in half from 203 to 110 while annual flour production grew from 2.3 to 2.9 million barrels. By the early 1980s there were only six active mills in the state. Today, two other mills in Nebraska are listed on the National Register that may be comparable; however neither are as old as the Weber Mill, nor functioned as long. Neligh Mills (NRHP 1968) is located in Antelope County along a creek and is made of brick while the Champion Mill (NRHP 1988) dates from 1892 and is located in Chase County.

Throughout its history the Weber Mill has contributed to the earliest commerce in the state as well as the Omaha area, and helped spur the continued commercial development of the town of Florence. It is significant under criterion A and possesses statewide significance.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Weber Mill

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 9 Page 1

---

**Bibliography**

Bennett, Richard Edmond. *The Mormons at the Missouri, 1846-1852*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman and London, 1987.

Buecker, Thomas R. *Water Powered Flour Mills in Nebraska*. 1983, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, NE.

The Chase Mill and Pioneer Mills and Milling.

Industrial Census for Douglas County, Nebraska 1860-1880.

*Newspapers*

*Omaha World Herald*, June 1939 "Built 93 Years Ago, Grist Mill Here Is Demolished."

*The Trans-Mississippian*. "The First Flour Mills in Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas." Vol. 1 no. 7, Nov. 1897.

Clippings and Quotes, *Omaha Arrow*. Sept. 29, 1854

*Florence Fontenelle*, Mar. 30, 1923. Obituary of Jacob Weber

"Weber Mill Dedication Will Be Held Saturday" *North Omaha Sun*, April 25, 1968.

"Weber mill a reincarnation" *Benson Sun*, Omaha, Sept. 9, 1976.

*Miscellaneous*

Personal correspondence and remembrances, Lyman Weber, January, 1968.

Golden Wedding of Jacob Weber, January 1906, from Obituary scrapbooks.

Carlson, Gayle F. "Nebraska State Historical Society Highway Salvage Archeology Report," May 1969.

Nebraska State Historical Society, Historic Buildings survey site files.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Weber Mill

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 10 Page 1

---

**Boundary Description:**

The Weber Mill resides on the north 90 feet of the east 100 feet of block 125 in the city of Florence, now a part of the city of Omaha in Douglas County, Nebraska.

**Boundary Justification:**

Because this property resides within the right-of-way of Interstate-680 the property associated with building is simply that on which it resides a simple plot of approximately 90 x 100 feet.