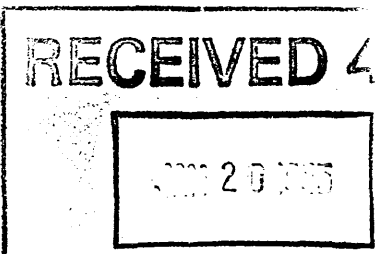


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in 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 Waterman, Wallace W., Sod House

other names/site number NeHBS #DU00-044

2. Location

street & number 9 miles N of Big Springs, Nebr., on Day Road not for publication [n/a]

city or town Big Springs vicinity [x]

state Nebraska code NE county Deuel code 049 zip code 69129

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.)

Michael Sommer  
Signature of certifying official

1/11/95  
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): \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the National Register

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of Keeper

2/17/95  
Date of Action

Waterman Sod House  
Name of Property

Deuel County, Nebraska  
County and State

**5. Classification**

<b>Ownership of Property</b> (Check as many boxes as apply)	<b>Category of Property</b> (Check only one box)	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b> (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	2		buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site			sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure			structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object			objects
		2		Total

<b>Name of related multiple property listing</b> (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)	<b>Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register</b>
N/A	0

**6. Function or Use**

<b>Historic Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions)	<b>Current Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions)
Domestic/single dwelling	Vacant/not in use
Domestic/secondary structure	

**7. Description**

<b>Architectural Classification</b> (Enter categories from instructions)	<b>Materials</b> (Enter categories from instructions)
Other/sod	foundation concrete
	walls concrete
	stone
	roof asphalt
	other wood

**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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1886-c1925

**Significant Dates**

1886  
c1925

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Waterman, Wallace W. (builder)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**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 of Additional Data:**

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

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Waterman Sod House  
Name of Property

Deuel County, Nebraska  
County and State

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### 10. Geographical Data

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Acreege of Property less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	13	745420	4563700	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.)

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### 11. Form Prepared By

---

name/title Carol Ahlgren, Architectural Historian; Joni Gilkerson, Architectural Historian

organization Nebraska State Historical Society date July 1994

street & number 1500 R Street 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

---

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

name Deuel County Historical Society, c/o Lester Becker, President

street & number 480 Hayward, Box 324 telephone (308) 874-2865

city or town Chappell state NE zip code 69129

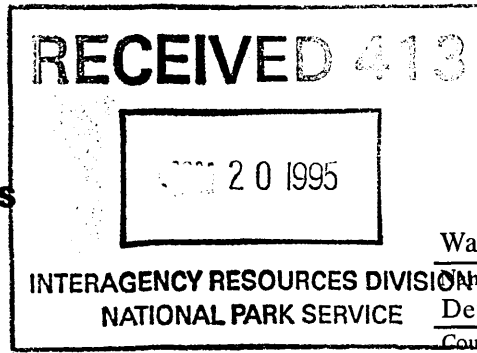
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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing 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**



Waterman Sod House

Name of Property

Deuel County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

**Description**

The Wallace W. Waterman sod house, constructed in 1886, is located in rural Deuel County in the Nebraska panhandle approximately 20 miles north of the Nebraska-Colorado border. The one and one-half story gable roof house is a well-preserved example of an original homestead era house, stabilized and expanded c.1925 for continued occupancy. At that time, the sod walls were covered with concrete. A cellar, frame entrance and second-story loft bedrooms were also added. The nomination consists of two contributing buildings: the house and a small frame c. 1925 outbuilding.

=====

The Wallace W. Waterman Sod House is located in rural Deuel County approximately nine miles north of Big Springs, a small town (1990 population: 495) near the Nebraska-Colorado border. The one and one-half story gable roof house represents an initial homestead house, built of sod. During its period of historic significance, the Waterman House was improved, ensuring continued occupancy. Completed c1925, these improvements included the addition of an enclosed porch entrance, a cellar and 2nd floor bedrooms. Additionally, at approximately the same time, the two-foot thick sod walls were covered with concrete. The north wall was also reinforced with limestone.

The house was built by Wallace W. Waterman who came to Nebraska from Pennsylvania and filed homestead papers on the northwest quarter of Section 18, Township 14, Range 41. Waterman's descendants occupied the house until 1989; a few years later the family donated the house and approximately one acre, including the frame outbuilding, to the Deuel County Historical Society (see site plan).

Landscaping around the house is minimal, limited to a few trees and lilac bushes. East of the house and driveway are several frame outbuildings and a privy. Although part of the original Waterman property, the buildings were not included in the donation of land to the Deuel County Historical Society and are therefore not part of the current nomination.

Located in the Nebraska panhandle in the High Plains region of the state, the former Waterman homestead is surrounded by agricultural fields. With the exception of several metal buildings to the west along the county road, there are no other buildings in the vicinity. At the time of its construction, however, the sod house was part of a small settlement known as "Day" which had a post office from 1890-1903.

According to available information, the Waterman house was at the southern edge of the settlement which was located on both sides of the county road. At the turn of the century, Day consisted of four houses: two sod, one frame, and one stone; and a handful of businesses such as a livery, post office-store, blacksmith shop, Methodist Church, and a school. With the exception of the Waterman property, no visual evidence remains of the settlement.

The original portion of the house measures 25 by 29 feet. Fenestration consists of double hung windows with two-over-two pane arrangement, with units recessed and flush with the interior walls. At an undetermined date, the interior was divided into three rooms: a kitchen, living room, and bed room.

During the c. 1925 changes to the house, a frame shed-roofed enclosed porch, measuring 10 by 16 feet was added to the south facade. A cellar was dug beneath the kitchen, with a stairway providing access from the porch area. Interior modifications were made including the conversion of the loft space into two

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Waterman Sod House

Name of Property

Deuel County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7, 8 Page 2

**Description (continued)**

bedrooms and the addition of a narrow stairway to provide access. A small window is located in each gable end. During the interior alterations, plumbing was not added; the family obtained water from the hand pump in the kitchen (see photo # 3). The exterior sod walls were covered with concrete during the c.1925 remodeling. On the north facade, limestone was also used as in-fill where portions of the sod had deteriorated (see photo # 2).

The small frame outbuilding located between the house and the county road to the west was constructed c.1925. The gable roof frame building, which measures approximately 12 by 10 feet, was purportedly used as a cream station for the settlement of Day. The building retains its original frame siding and fenestration.

The Waterman house was occupied by family members until 1989. In 1993, it was donated to the Deuel County Historical Society with the stipulation that it be used for historical purposes; the society plans to stabilize and preserve the building. Surrounded by vast treeless fields in the High Plains region of Nebraska, the Waterman sod house conveys a strong sense of its historic origins.

**Statement of Significance**

The Wallace W. Waterman Sod House is significant on the local level under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a good example of an original homestead era sod house that was later stabilized for long-term use. Located in the High Plains region of western Nebraska, the house exhibits good interior and exterior integrity. The period of significance, 1886-c.1925 is derived from the original construction date (1886) through significant later additions (c.1925).

=====

The Wallace W. Waterman Sod House, located in rural Deuel County, Nebraska, is a well-preserved example of an original sod house in the High Plains region of the state. The use of sod construction was prevalent and even dominant in many areas of the Great Plains during the 1880's and 1890's. In Nebraska, occupancy and construction of sod houses continued into the 20th century (Guilliford, 1986; NeHBS survey files).

Continued occupancy of sod houses, however, required interior and exterior improvements such as new roofs, floors, interior plaster and stabilization and protection of the exterior walls with a covering of stucco, cement, concrete, or clapboard. Without the application of covering material, sod walls eventually deteriorate from exposure to the elements. The majority of extant sod houses, therefore, have necessarily been altered from their original appearance by the application of exterior stucco, concrete, or clapboard (Turner, 1975; NeHBS survey files).

Typical of extant Nebraska sod houses, the Waterman dwelling was improved and stabilized by the addition of a new roof and covering of the original sod walls. The c.1925 improvements included a cellar, loft story bedrooms, and a frame shed-roof entrance porch. The family chose to improve and expand the sod house although other building material including stone and lumber were available locally. Limestone from the North Platte river valley, in fact, was used to reinforce the north wall. All of the exterior walls were covered with concrete and whitewashed.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Waterman Sod House

Name of Property

Deuel County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8, 9, 10 Page 3

### Statement of Significance (continued)

To date, the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NeHBS) has identified 15 sod houses in the High Plains region of the state, including the Waterman house. The survey data, which dates from the 1970's to the present, indicates that of the 14 additional sod houses, only one (LN00-017) still retains its exterior sod walls. The house, located in rural Lincoln County, was most recently surveyed in 1979. At that time the interior was severely deteriorated and the building's current condition is unknown.

The remaining 13 sod houses in the High Plains region, excluding the Waterman house, feature exterior wall coverings such as stucco, cement, and concrete or a combination of concrete and stone. Nine have been converted to other uses such as garages, storage sheds, or are unoccupied and in varying states of deterioration. Four were still used as residences at the time of survey, but also exhibited varying degrees of integrity and their current (1994) status is unknown.

The Waterman sod house, which will be preserved by the Deuel County Historical Society, remains as a locally significant example of an original homestead era sod house, in the High Plains region in the state, stabilized and improved for continued occupancy.

### Bibliography

Deuel County Historical Society, Deuel County History. Des Moines, IA: Hansen Printing Co., 1984.

Guilliford, Andrew, "Earth Architecture of the Prairie Pioneer." The Midwest Review, Vol. VIII, Spring 1986, pp. 1-23.

History Highlights. Big Springs NE: Big Springs Enterprize, 1972.

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

Turner, Tim, "Sod Houses in Nebraska." APT (Journal of the Association for Preservation Technology) Vol. VII No. 4, 1975.

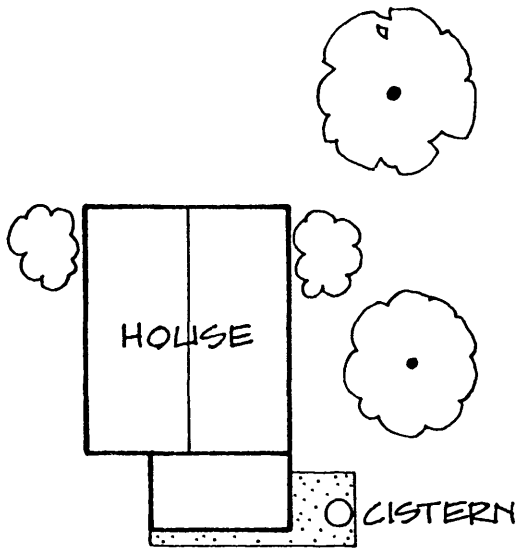
### Verbal Boundary Description

The property is described as a parcel of land located in the Northwest Quarter of Section 18, Township 14 North, Range 41 West of the 6th Principal Meridian in Deuel County, Nebraska, described as follows: beginning at a point on the West line of Section 18 at a distance North 0°03'40", West 3990.95 feet from the Southwest corner of Section 18; thence along said West line North 0°03'40" West 160.0 feet; thence North 89°56'20" 178.0 feet; thence South 0°03'40", East 160.0 feet; thence South 89°56'20", West 178.0 feet to the point of beginning, containing 0.46 acre when including 0.12 acre within the road right-of-way; together with an easement for access over a 30 feet by 30 feet by 42 feet triangular shaped parcel, the Southwest corner of which is 33 feet East of the Northwest corner of the above described parcel.

### Boundary Justification

The nomination includes the parcel of land historically associated with the house which has been deeded to the Deuel County Historical Society.

COUNTY (DAY) ROAD



WALLACE W. WATERMAN SOD  
HOUSE (NEHBS #DU00-044)  
RURAL DEVEL  
COUNTY, NEBRASKA  
SITE PLAN - NO SCALE  
DRAWN BY D. DARLING  
JULY 1994