

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received MAR 29 1985

date entered APR 25 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Elinore Pruitt Stewart Homestead

and/or common Elinore and Clyde Stewart Homestead

2. Location

street & number N/A ___ not for publication

city, town McKinnon ___X___ vicinity of

state Wyoming code 56 county Sweetwater code 037

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Albert Wilde

street & number n/a (phone: 307-874-6152)

city, town McKinnon ___X___ vicinity of state Wyoming 82938

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sweetwater County Courthouse

street & number P.O. Box 730

city, town Green River state Wyoming

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wyoming Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984 ___ federal ___X___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Wyoming Recreation Commission

city, town 122 West 25th Street, Cheyenne state Wyoming

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____ n/a _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Elinore Pruitt Stewart Homestead house is a rather substantial log structure consisting of an original cabin (circa 1898) and north and south wing/additions (circa 1909). It faces the east and is built on a gently sloping hillside. The yard is littered with old wheels and rusting ranch equipment. The entire building is made of heavy, rough-hewn logs with double square notching. Much of the muddaubed chinking has deteriorated or disappeared. As Mrs. Stewart related it, "every log in my house is as straight as a pine can grow. . . . The logs are unhewn outside because I like the rough finish, but inside the walls are perfectly square and smooth. The cracks in the walls are snugly filled with 'dawbing' and then the walls are covered with heavy gray building-paper which makes the room very warm." Even the insides give the appearance, now, of being rough-hewn, however, and the gray building-paper is long gone.

The center portion of the homestead is square shaped with two stories and an intersecting gable roof, covered with shingles. The windows and doors have rough frame surrounds and no longer contain any glass. The lower half of the house's large chimney, made of flat, native stone, remains intact although the remainder has crumbled and lies scattered at the base of the chimney.

The south wing (left, in the photograph) is made up of two rooms. Part of this addition has a medium-pitched gable roof while the remainder of the addition's roof is "barely" gabled. Each room with an east wall has one door and one window, all with plain, frame surrounds. The south wall has two windows. According to Mrs. Stewart, this south wing with its two 15 x 15 rooms, was "my 'really' room and in it (were) my treasures."

The north wing (right, in the photo) is a one-room structure with a low-pitched gable roof constructed of logs and clapboard. Like the rest of the building it is made of rough-hewn logs with double-square notching. On the east side there is one double-hung (1/1) window and a door, both with rough frame surrounds. This room was the kitchen and a well is located just outside this part of the homestead.

The chicken coop and yard fence reflect the same construction techniques and condition as the house. The entire complex is in sad disrepair and is presently threatened by the continuing ravages of Wyoming weather and livestock which use the buildings for shelter. The site does however retain integrity of setting, location, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association and very effectively conveys a sense of time and place rapidly disappearing in a traditionally rural state heavily impacted by modern development.

Elinore Pruitt Stewart, Letters of a Woman Homesteader (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), pp. 138.

Ibid., p. 137.

(SEE ADDENDUM)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1898-1913

Builder/Architect Clyde Stewart

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Elinore Pruitt Stewart Homestead is an intact site retaining integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling and association. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of type period and method of turn-of-the-century homestead construction. As such it is a typical representative of the homesteading frontier, a significant and distinguishable force in the late 19th and early 20th century western settlement patterns. In addition the homestead is significant for its association with Elinore Pruitt Stewart who, typically, arrived in the west with the dream of becoming a landowner, although she eventually failed. Elinore Pruitt Stewart is also known for her book, Letters of a Woman Homesteader, which has become a minor classic of western literature and recently inspired the widely-acclaimed film, Heartland. Mrs. Pruitt Stewart is an exceptional representative of women homesteaders in the American West, and the outstanding contribution they made to western settlement.

(SEE ADDENDUM)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(SEE ADDENDUM)

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 5 1/2 acres

Quadrangle name McKinnon

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>5</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u>
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D	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>
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E	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u>
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F	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>
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G	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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H	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

(SEE ADDENDUM)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>n/a</u>	code	<u>n/a</u>	county	<u>n/a</u>	code	<u>n/a</u>
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state	<u>n/a</u>	code	<u>n/a</u>	county	<u>n/a</u>	code	<u>n/a</u>
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sherry Smith/Supply Assistant Professor & Field Historian

organization Department of History date March 22, 1984

street & number University of Wyoming telephone 307-766-4333

city or town Laramie state Wyoming

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Alvin J. Bastron

title Director and State Historic Preservation Officer date March 8, 1985

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Shelores Byer
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 4/25/85

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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The Burntfork valley is not large, being approximately four miles east and west and six miles north and south. It is in the very south west corner of Sweetwater County where the line of Sweetwater County, and Uinta County meet the Utah state line.

On the east is Phil Pico Mountain and Birch Creek. The south boundary is the Uinta Mountains, which are in Utah, and on the north west is Cedar Mountain. The west boundary roughly parallels Burntfork Creek which is the main source of water supply and drains from the Uinta Mountains.

The north side of the valley is generally open towards the town of Green River but the early route of travel was from the west from Fort Bridger area, past Lone Tree and down the Henrys Fork Creek bottoms. In the book, Letters of a Woman Homesteader, Mrs. Stewart describes trips in these different directions, especially her trip to Green River by wagon when she filed on her homestead.

The trapper and Mountain Men rendezvous of 1825 was held in the north end of the valley somewhere between Burntfork Creek and Henrys Fork and Birch Creek. Mrs. Stewart's homestead was nearly in the center of the valley with Burntfork post office and community proper, in the north west corner. The Burntfork Cemetery of pioneer burials is in the north end on a bench overlooking Henry's Fork Creek.

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The Elinore Pruitt Stewart Homestead's significance revolves around two points: the long overlooked role of women homesteaders in the American West and the literary merits of Mrs. Stewart's book, Letters of a Woman Homesteader, a warm and lively chronicle of her ranch life in the southwest corner of Wyoming. This book, long considered a minor classic of western literature, recently inspired the film, Heartland, which received critical acclaim for its realistic portrayal of pioneer life and helped immortalize Mrs. Stewart's literary achievement.

Elinore Rupert Pruitt, a widowed laundress from Denver, came to Wyoming in the spring, 1909, to work as a housekeeper for Clyde Stewart. She brought with her a dream, common to many of her countrymen and women, to become a landowner. Within six weeks of her arrival, on April 23, 1909, Mrs. Pruitt filed a homestead entry on property located very close to Mr. Stewart's homestead. (Her property was located in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 24 and Mr. Stewart's property was located in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of that section, where he had already constructed a cabin.) One week after filing her homestead entry, on April 30, 1909, Mrs. Pruitt and Mr. Stewart applied for a marriage license. This sequence of events certainly suggests Mrs. Pruitt did not intend to remain a single woman homesteader. It also suggests that Pruitt and Stewart intended to take advantage of homestead laws which allowed single or widowed women to file on homesteads, but prohibited married women from doing so, in order to bolster their land-holdings. While this kind of arrangement violated the spirit of the homestead laws, it did not violate the letter of the laws and was certainly common enough practice on the frontier. After their marriage, the Stewarts built additions onto Mr. Stewart's cabin and it is this building which is the homestead featured in Letters of a Woman Homesteader. The homestead structure, then, was originally constructed by Clyde Stewart and became Mrs. Stewart's as well, only after her marriage.

Stewart's days as a "single woman homesteader" were clearly limited. Nevertheless, she made her experience as a woman homesteader one of the central themes of her book. Among her personal goals, she claimed, was to succeed, on her own, at homesteading; and although she admitted marrying hastily, she insisted her husband promised not to help her meet her homestead requirements. Mrs. Stewart, in fact, presented homesteading as a panacea for the poor, particularly poor women:

When I read of the hard time among the Denver poor, particularly the women, I feel like urging them every one to get out and file on land. . .any woman who can stand her own company can see the beauty of the sunset, loves growing things, and is willing to put in as much time and careful labor as she does over the washtub, will certainly succeed; will have independence, plenty to eat all the time, and a home of her own in the end.¹

¹Elinore Pruitt Stewart, Letters of a Woman Homesteader (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), pp. 214-215.

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Interestingly, although Clyde eventually patented his original homestead in 1926, Elinore relinquished hers in March, 1913. Unfortunately, the county records provide no clue concerning her reason for relinquishment, nor does Mrs. Stewart's own account. The book, first published in 1913, does not reveal the relinquishment--or even the possibility of relinquishment. The facts, then, seem to belie Mrs. Stewart's image as an independent woman homesteader.

In the end, however, Mrs. Stewart's importance lies less in the facts of her experience and more in her ability to express, through writing, the hopes and aspirations of other western women and men. She was a spirited woman who saw the West and its rugged land as a challenge: "I kept thinking how superior I was since I dared to take such an outing," she wrote about one of her camping trips, "when so many poor women down in Denver were bent on making their twenty cents per hour in order that they could spare a quarter to go to the show."² In her literature, and perhaps in her life too, she met many of the West's challenges in a way that mirrored other western women who took pride in their abilities to assume men's work when necessary, to drive teams, plan homestead improvements, give birth to children, go on camping trips, and still have the time to write about it.³

²Stewart, p. 32.

³See Sandra L. Myres, Westering Women and the Frontier Experience, 1800-1915, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press,) 1983, pp. 160-165, for information on western women's experiences. Myres disputes others' views that women in the West were alienated, disheartened and irrelevant to decision-making processes. Mrs. Stewart's experiences support Myres' theory.

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Primary Sources:

Elinore Pruitt Rupert Homestead Entry, Serial No. 01631, Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming State Office, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Patent Homestead Certificate No. 1117, filed by H. Clyde Stewart, Sweetwater County Clerk and Official Register of Deeds, Sweetwater County Courthouse, Green River, Wyoming.

Statement of Applicant for a Marriage License, H. Clyde Stewart and Elinore Pruitt Ruppert, 1909, Sweetwater County Clerk and Official Register of Deeds, Sweetwater County Courthouse, Green River, Wyoming.

Stewart, Elinore Pruitt, Letters of a Woman Homesteader, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982.

Secondary Sources:

Adams, Tori. "Elinore P. Stewart: Early Homesteader in Burntfork, "Uinta County Herald. February 18, 1983. p.7

Bauman, Paula Mae. "Single Woman Homesteaders in Wyoming, 1888-1930," unpublished ms., in possession of nomination author, Laramie, Wyoming.

Myres, Sandra L. Westering Women and the Frontier Experience, 1800-1915. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983.

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The Elinore Pruitt Stewart Homestead is located in the N $\frac{1}{2}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 24 T12N, R112W, Sweetwater County Wyoming. The boundaries for this site are provided by natural geographic features and a section line on the north because of the lack of other natural points to tie this boundary to and the need to limit inclusion of excess land. The northern boundary is defined by the section line between sections 24 and 13 this arbitrary boundary is tied to the other boundaries where the line joins a natural ridge which defines the rest of the site. (Please see map) This boundary adequately defines the site and protects and enhances its visual integrity of setting design location workmanship materials feeling and association. The boundary includes the original homestead buildings and yard fence, although the site has been abandoned and is in disrepair. The owner feels certain the buildings could be easily restored, protected and interpreted at minimal costs.

The site is approximately three miles North of the Utah State Line and approximately one mile south of state highway 414.