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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Mortimer Cabin

Other names/site number: Walters Farm, Doop Farm

Name of related multiple property listing:

_____

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

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

2. Location

Street & number: 20247 Oakwood Drive

City or town: Bruce State: South Dakota County: Brookings County

Not For Publication: ☐   Vicinity: ☒

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

____national   __X__ statewide   ____local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

__X__ A   ____ B   __X__ C   ____ D

Jay D. Vogt   09-15-2017

Signature of certifying official/Title: Date

SD SHPO

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: Date

Title :   State or Federal agency/bureau
                                                        or Tribal Government

Mortimer Cabin _____   Brookings County, SD _____
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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

_____   06/26/17
Signature of the Keeper   Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: [ ]

Public – Local   [ ]

Public – State   [X]

Public – Federal   [ ]

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)   [X]

District   [ ]

Site   [ ]

Structure   [ ]

Object   [ ]

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Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	**0**	**Total**

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register __N/A____

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

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7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property:

STONE
WOOD: Log
WOOD: Shingle

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Samuel Mortimer cabin is a one-and-a-half story single-pen rectangular log building, roughly 17.5 ft. x 18.5 ft., which stands on a low gently-rolling ridge between Lake Tetonkaha and Mortimer Slough in Oakwood Lakes State Park.[1] It is oriented northwest-southeast and has a wood-frame front-gabled roof with an internal brick chimney near the ridge of its southwest slope. It is built on a fieldstone foundation wall and is partially banked into the hillside so that the lower halves of the walls on the southeast end of the building are fieldstone. The fieldstone is patched in places with a concrete overlay. The logs are roughly square-hewn, with crude square notching and visible adze marks. They are chinked with concrete. The foundation and logs directly above it are original. The roof is covered with cedar shingles that were replaced in the 1980s and feature a modern metal drip edge. The gables are covered with vertically-hung log siding.

The cabin has been somewhat modified since its original construction. Sources suggest that, over the years, its different occupants altered it to suit their needs:

> Each of the tenants changed the look of the cabin. Several windows were added. A wood floor was installed, and the original ceiling boarded up. There were partitions added on the ground floor to make several small rooms. The rock foundation was covered with cement. A loft was added on the top of the building, extending the height of the home by several feet.[2]

A lean-to addition (perhaps an icehouse) was removed at some point, likely before 1950. Later restoration crews working for the S.D. Department of Game, Fish and Parks tried to restore the cabin in an authentic way—"the crew tore off the ceiling to expose the rough beams that were there. They chiseled at the cement covering the rock foundation until they had uncovered the rock. They tore out the partitions on the main floor, leaving the cabin one large room."[3] Due in

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[1] Cabin measures 17' across front, 17'6" across back, 18'3" on NE (rear) side and 18'8" on SW side.

[2] Mary Haug, "'Ol Spot' Mortimer's Cabin Reminder of Simpler Times," *Brookings Register*, August 7, 1975, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.

[3] Ibid.

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part to these restoration efforts, the cabin has integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Its setting has changed over the years, with the development and later removal of military, manufacturing, and agricultural endeavors with associated infrastructure as well as the subsequent development of recreational infrastructure (see statement of significance for narrative history of the evolution of the property and its surroundings), but the cabin is now surrounded by a relatively undeveloped, rural area in a state park on the shores of Oakwood Lakes that is reminiscent of its setting during the period of significance, which was deciduous forested land. The Mortimer cabin continues to convey its historic associations.

Narrative Description

Exterior—Façade (Southeast Wall)

The sole entrance to the cabin is located in the middle of the southeast wall. The door jamb is framed, and is filled with a door of vertical rough pine boards that dates to the 1960s. Additional façade fenestration is limited to a wood-frame one-over-one fixed-sash window with plexiglass panes south of the entry and a wood-frame one-light fixed-sash window with a plexiglass pane in the gable.

Exterior—Southwest Wall

The southwest wall contains three window openings, each filled with a wood-frame one-over-one fixed-sash plexiglass window. The southern-most windows are set close together and are farther apart from the third window on the northern end.

Exterior—Northwest and Northeast Walls

The northwest and northeast log walls have no openings.

Interior—Plan and Details

The simple interior of the cabin features an open main floor with an enclosed stairwell in the east corner that leads to the open second floor, which was likely added early in its history. The stairwell was enclosed by the 1960s. A four-by-four post in the middle of the main floor supports the second-floor two-by-six joists. The main level is floored with rough pine planks, and the upper level is floored with one-by-six tongue-in-groove flooring. The brick chimney, originally internal, no longer descends into the interior, although a square chimney hole in the ceiling of the upper level remains.

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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.)

[x] 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.

[x] 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.)

[ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

[ ] B. Removed from its original location

[ ] C. A birthplace or grave

[ ] D. A cemetery

[ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

[ ] F. A commemorative property

[ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Exploration/settlement
Architecture

Period of Significance

c.1869-1886

Significant Dates

c.1869

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Built ca. 1869 by fur-trapper and lumberman Samuel Mortimer and his American Indian wife, whose name is unknown, the log-and-stone Mortimer cabin is significant for its association with the historical themes of exploration and settlement, as well as social, ethnic, and economic developments that accompanied the fur trade and subsequent non-Indian settlement in South Dakota. Built before the arrival of the railroad, the cabin is reportedly one of the oldest buildings still standing in the region, and as such is among the claim era resources identified in the South

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Dakota State Historic Preservation Office survey records as endangered "due to the majority of them having poor architectural integrity and for being functionally obsolete."[4] "Only a few cabins built by settlers in eastern South Dakota are still standing; fewer still remain on their original sites."[5]

The Mortimer cabin is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** at the state level for its significance in South Dakota **Exploration and Settlement,** and **Criterion C** at the state level as a rare extant example of early log cabin **Architecture**. The period of significance is 1869 to 1886**,** representing the years during which the Mortimer family occupied the cabin, beginning with the date of its construction.

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

Dakota Territory in the Early Nineteenth Century

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the region that became South Dakota teemed with activity related to the fur trade. Indigenous people who occupied the area as their homeland, especially those now referred to as Sioux, played a central role in the fur business. They were joined by non-Indian trappers and traders who lived, worked and often married among them. The period between 1815 and 1850 constituted the most active years of the fur trade: historians estimate that more than one hundred "trading posts [were] maintained at one time or another within the present confines of South Dakota."[6] Usually situated near waterways or other established sites of indigenous activity, these posts dotted the Plains from the Big Sioux River to the Black Hills. Many posts were located at indigenous village sites along the Missouri River corridor, often "at the mouths of its tributaries."[7] It was on the Missouri, near the mouth of the Teton or Bad River, that one could find the region's most important fur trading post, Fort Pierre. Missouri posts like Fort Pierre, as well as those on the James and the Big Sioux, dealt in a staggering volume of furs. In 1830 alone, "the shipments to St. Louis from the country above the Big Sioux included 26,000 buffalo robes, 25,000 pounds of beaver fur, 37,500 muskrat skins, 4,000 otter skins, and 150,000 deer skins."[8]

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[4] Chris B. Nelson, "Jerome and Jonetta Harvey Homestead Cabin NRHP Registration Form," 2008, 8; Chris B. Nelson, "Pap Madison Cabin NRHP Registration Form," 2007, 3.
[5] Steven D. Ruple, "Herman Luce Cabin NRHP Nomination Form," 1977, 3.
[6] Herbert S. Schell, *History of South Dakota*, Fourth Edition, Revised. (Pierre, S.D.: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2004), 50.
[7] Ibid., 49.
[8] Ibid., 50.

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During the height of the fur trade, American government officials began formally exploring the region, which was then claimed but not controlled by the United States. In the late 1830s, the U.S. commissioned Joseph Nicolas Nicollet, a French scientist and academic who counted geography among his areas of expertise, to survey and map the Northern Plains. In 1838, Nicollet and his assistants—chief among them John C. Fremont—"explored the prairie plateau of western Minnesota and eastern South Dakota."[9] Like other non-Indian explorers, the Nicollet party depended on indigenous people and their established trails as they moved, traveling in horse-drawn carts driven by fur-company employees. They created new maps and names along the way. Among the South Dakota places they christened were numerous lakes, like that Fremont named for a United States senator, Lake Preston, although it was later renamed Lake Tetonkaha, and the Preston name "was later given to the current Lake Preston."[10] On a return trip the following year, the Nicollet party "traversed some of the same ground covered the previous summer in eastern South Dakota," including Oakwood Lakes which was located on one of the principle American Indian trails in the region.[11] In subsequent years, the lakes area continued to attract activity. Indian leader Inkpaduta and his band reportedly "held council at Oakwood Lake before carrying out the Spirit Lake, Iowa raid in 1857."[12] A year later, in September, a party of nine trappers working for the American Fur Company, and including a man named Byron Pay, recorded traveling through the Oakwood area.[13]

As the Northern Plains fur trade waned, due to a combination of regional and global factors, pressure on the region's indigenous inhabitants intensified. Military occupation paved the way for non-Indian settlers' entry into the area, even though the territory was not officially opened to settlement until 1859. In the spring of 1857, townsite companies out of St. Paul, Minnesota and Dubuque, Iowa tried to establish four townsites, which they dubbed Sioux Falls, Sioux Falls City, Medary, and Flandreau. Indian people, including "Yanktonnais . . . compelled the abandonment of the Medary and Flandreau settlements" but the determined occupants of the new Sioux Falls communities—numbering about twenty-five people, including two women—erected defense fortifications and stayed.[14] The following year in 1858, the joint military and civilian

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[9] Ibid., 63.

[10] John Miller, "Early Settlements" n.d., 1, Oakwood Lakes State Park; Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 62–63.

[11] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 62–63. See Division of Parks & Recreation, "Oakwood Lakes State Park" (Division of Parks & Recreation, 1966), Oakwood Lakes State Park; "Old Indian Trails," n.d., Vertical File: Brookings County II, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.

[12] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book: In the Year of the South Dakota State Centennial.* (Brookings, S.D.: Brookings County History Book Committee, 1989), 34.

[13] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 28.

[14] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 71, 73-74.

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assaults on their territory convinced the Yankton Sioux to cede, via treaty, much of the South Dakota land between the Big Sioux and Missouri rivers.[15]

Within a couple years of the 1858 treaty, a handful of settlements dotted the southeastern part of South Dakota. Their population "excluding the government employees at the Yankton agency and the fur traders scattered throughout the region" totaled about 500 people[16]—a number far exceeded by the region's indigenous population. The Euro-American newcomers, many of them from Wisconsin and Minnesota, concentrated along the Missouri River in Yankton, Vermillion, Bon Homme, and Elk Point.[17] Many of these early residents continued to rely on trapping in what was one of the last bastions of the fur-trade because, in the 1860s, "the [Big] Sioux Valley contained more fur-bearing animals than any other part of the North American continent."[18] But in 1862, after violent conflicts between the Dakota Sioux and white residents of Minnesota affected the entire region, settlers abandoned all of the new towns in Dakota Territory except the fortified settlement at Yankton.[19]

In the aftermath of the 1862 Minnesota conflict, the U.S. Army swarmed into Dakota Territory.[20] This included temporary Army occupations at Oakwood Lakes. A breastworks was erected in 1862 in the southern region of the lakes. Some sources say the breastworks were actually built in 1857, abandoned, recoccupied in 1859, 1862-63, and lastly in 1865-66.[21] It was also reportedly used as an Indian Scout camp.[22]

At the same time, on the west edge of the Plains, prospectors combing Rocky Mountain drainages discovered rich gold deposits. Violent conflict with Northern Plains indigenous communities intensified as miners from around the globe rushed to the Rockies from all directions, followed by merchants and farmers who hoped to make money supplying them. Hordes of "Montana-bound emigrants crowding into Yankton hotels and spreading their tents

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[15] Ibid., 71.

[16] Ibid., 78.

[17] Ibid., 78-79.

[18] Donald Dean Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley: Medary, Sioux Falls, Dell Rapids, Flandreau, Brookings, Watertown* (Santa Fe, N.M.: [publisher not identified], 1967), 58.

[19] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 79.

[20] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book: In the Year of the South Dakota State Centennial.* (Brookings, South Dakota: Brookings County History Book Committee, 1989), 28, 34.; See William R. Marshall to Gen. H.H. Sibley, October 22, 1862, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.; Frank Crisler, "Oakwood Lakes Fort Built for Indian War That Never Came," *Arlington Sun*, June 18, 2015.; Ardith Deboer, John Miller, and Lorraine Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes" 1983, 2, Oakwood Lakes State Park.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

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over the townsite . . . brightened the prospects for the Dakota villages as outfitting points."[23]
Immigration to and through the region accelerated in 1865, when "Congress authorized the
construction of three wagon roads through Dakota."[24] The following year no fewer than thirty-
six steamboats chugged up the Missouri River toward Fort Benton. From Benton, the world's
innermost port, travelers proceeded overland to the booming gold fields.[25]

As Northern Plains indigenous peoples struggled to maintain their homes and families, non-
Indians increasingly encroached on the region. Steamboat traffic on the upper Missouri crested in
1867, when thirty-nine boats made for Fort Benton, as regional boosters pursued the prospect of
a transcontinental railroad through Dakota Territory. By then, "the domain west of Elk Point was
thickly dotted with new homes, and settlers were moving up the Big Sioux."[26] With the 1868
signing of the Fort Laramie treaty, which covered almost the whole of the Northern Plains, the
settler invasion of South Dakota gained steam. That same year, "completion of the Sioux City
and Pacific Railroad to Sioux City [Iowa] . . . gave the settlers in Union and Clay counties access
to eastern markets for their wheat" and suggested that South Dakota would soon have a railroad
itself.[27] Between 1867 and 1872 "four different companies were organized to promote railway
construction to Yankton, and five others to build lines from some specified river town into the
interior of the Territory. Connections were sought not only with lines expected to reach the Big
Sioux, but also with the Union Pacific in the south and the Northern Pacific in the north."[28] By
the dawn of the 1870s, "the line of settlement advanced rapidly up the James, Vermillion, and
Big Sioux rivers and across the intervening prairies once considered suitable only for stock-
raising. Homeseekers also advanced into Brookings, Hanson, Hutchinson, Lake, Moody, and
Turner counties."[29]

In 1873, boosters' dream of a Dakota railroad became a reality when the Dakota Southern began
operation between Sioux City and Yankton.[30] With the arrival of the railroad,

> The settlements along the Missouri entered a new state of development. Many
> lumberyards and implement stores spring up almost overnight in the railway towns along
> the Missouri. The assurance of a wider market led to expanded farming operations.
> Farms close to the railroad doubled in value. Dakota wheat commanded a favorable

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[23] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 80.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 82; Joel Overholser, *Fort Benton: World's Innermost Port*
(Fort Benton, Mont.: Falcon Press Publishing Co., 1987).
[26] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 109.
[27] Ibid., 109.
[28] Ibid., 110.
[29] Ibid., 109.
[30] Ibid., 113.

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market in the Mississippi Valley, as did the flour processed by commercial mills located at Elk Point, Vermillion, and Yankton.[31]

The surrounding countryside bustled as well, and in 1873 "because of the many land filings in the Big Sioux Valley, the land office at Vermilion was moved to Sioux Falls."[32] Once in "the Big Sioux Valley, many a settler turned fur-trapper during the winter months. Those who owned teams hired out their services to neighbors with land to be broken. Others found employment in the towns, where there was especially heavy demand for carpenters and blacksmiths."[33] More than a few worked building the railroad, for the railroad itself was the region's biggest employer.[34]

As new crops planted by early farmers filled eastbound trains, new residents crowded railcars arriving in the Dakota settlements.[35] So, too, did travelers headed for more distant destinations, like the many who rushed to the Black Hills of western South Dakota after 1874 when word spread of gold discoveries there. The invasion of the Black Hills contributed to what would be the final major conflict between the United States Army and Northern Plains Indians, a bloody 1876 battle on the banks of the Little Big Horn in present day Montana.[36] In the wake of that fight, the Battle of the Greasy Grass (a.k.a. the Battle of the Little Big Horn), the United States military undertook a Northern Plains troop surge that effectively precluded successful mass armed resistance by the region's indigenous tribes.

The Great Dakota Boom, 1878-1887

Coupled with ongoing railroad construction, military occupation of the northern Great Plains enabled wholesale settler colonization. The ten years between 1878 and 1887 witnessed unprecedented migration into the region, a phenomenon since known as "the Great Dakota Boom." Pulled by the "liberal land policies of the federal government" and by "the moist condition of the prairie in the early 1880s," and pushed by "severe depression in the east," people poured into Dakota Territory.[37] Before 1878, "agricultural settlement was still generally confined to the region south and east of a line running from the Yankton Reservation and the western part of Hutchinson County to the Minnesota border east of Brookings . . . by the middle of the 1880's

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[31] Ibid., 115.
[32] Ibid., 110.
[33] Ibid., 177.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., 115.
[36] Ibid., 128-129, 136.
[37] Scott Heidepriem, *Bring on the Pioneers! History of Hand County* (Miller, S.D.: Heidepriem, 1978), 13.

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settlers' shacks and little towns and villages had sprouted up throughout the entire region."[38] The "first outward manifestation of the Great Dakota Boom was a heavy influx of settlers out of Minnesota into the Big Sioux Valley."[39] In southeastern South Dakota, the 1870 non-Indian population of about 10,000 mushroomed to 81,781 by 1880, and to 248,569 five years later.[40]

The Great Dakota Boom reflected and reinforced the spread of railroads throughout the region. Railroads needed crops and customers for profit, and railway companies zealously promoted Dakota as their tracks pushed over the Plains.[41] Track-building and town-building went hand-in-hand. As the Dakota Central division of the Chicago & Northwestern built toward Dakota from Minnesota in the summer of 1878, "settlers began to stream into Brookings County and the eastern part of Kingsbury" before the rails even reached the border. By the fall of 1879, "the railroad was graded and ironed as far as Volga," and construction crews showed no signs of slowing down.[42] Ten years later, the new state of South Dakota boasted 2,500 miles of railroad.[43]

Railroads shaped not only the pace but the geography of non-Indian settlement in the Oakwood area and surrounding eastern Dakota region. Between 1878 and 1890, Sioux Falls benefitted from the arrival of no fewer than five rail lines. Its population increased five-fold and, with 10,177 residents, it surpassed Yankton as South Dakota's leading city.[44] Elsewhere, the arrival of the railroad led to the wholesale re-orientation of settlements. Numerous "railway towns received their first permanent residents from nearby hamlets that were doomed to extinction when railroad surveyors passed them by. Brookings, for instance, drew from Fountain and Medary."[45] In this way, "the railroads quickly defined a map of eastern South Dakota that looks much the same today."[46] This map reflected the fact that it was now "the rails rather than the resources deciding where towns would go."[47]

The spreading railways also sprouted brand new towns at regular intervals along their trunks. As tracks crisscrossed the country, "landseekers rapidly occupied the area within ten or twelve miles

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[38] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 158. "A small vanguard had already gone beyond the line of settlement, following the Big Sioux."
[39] Ibid, 161.
[40] Ibid, 159, 161.
[41] Ibid., 160.
[42] Ibid., 161.
[43] Ibid., 161.
[44] Ibid., 165.
[45] Ibid., 167.
[46] Crisler, "Before There Was Arlington . . ."
[47] Frank Crisler, "Oakwood Town Founded in 1877 by Veterans of Civil War," *Arlington Sun*, July 9, 2015.

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of the railway," resulting in a burgeoning rural population.[48]   In the three years between 1877 and 1880, Brookings County's population grew from fewer than 250 to almost 5,000. By 1885, it totaled 8,288, and by 1890, the population was 10,132.[49]

Samuel Mortimer and Oakwood Lakes

As the fur trade society of the northern Great Plains gave way to agricultural settlement, "many of the white participants in the trade . . . elected to remain in the region."[50] Often these men had married indigenous women and formed families who were part of tribal communities. Using their knowledge of the region and its inhabitants, they worked as scouts and interpreters and facilitated non-Indian settlement in other ways.[51]

Among them was a man named Samuel Mortimer, who in about 1869 moved with "his Indian wife and her son, and possibly her brother" to the shores of Oakwood Lakes, then still a "trappers paradise."[52] Mortimer had been in the Dakota region since at least 1859, when he was recorded "as one of three men, along with a Dr. Caulkins and Dr. Whitness, who are named to a committee on Nov. 7, 1859, after a meeting in the house of James McHenry. . . held in Vermillion."[53] He may have also been:

> awarded a spot on the committee as a representative of Yankton, as a separate source has him living nine miles north of the city at the time, at 'Major Lyman's' trading house with Smutty Bear's camp . . . The committee was formed to draft a resolution to the U.S. Congress asking for permission to form a local government, primarily for the purpose of protection from the Indians, and to issue land titles.[54]

Mortimer was living at Fort Thompson just before his move to Oakwood Lakes.[55] Upon his arrival in the area, Mortimer built his cabin, "the first log cabin at the lakes,"[56] "between the two major lakes of the Oakwood chain."[57]

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[48] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 166.
[49] Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 44.
[50] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 64.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 30; Donald Dean Parker to Will G. Robinson, January 14, 1948, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives; "Oakwood Lakes Mortimer Cabin 3 Min. Narration" n.d., Oakwood Lakes State Park. Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*.
[53] Frank Crisler, "'Spot' Mortimer's House Still Stands, but Spot Is a Mystery," *Arlington Sun*, June 25, 2015.
[54] Crisler, "'Spot' Mortimer's House Still Stands, but Spot Is a Mystery."
[55] "An Indian-Fighter Story, Without Indians," *Arlington Sun*, June 25, 2015; Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 34.

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The trees needed to build these log cabins were part of what drew people to the lakes. Resource-rich, the Oakwood area had long been "a popular location for the Indian councils and camping grounds," as well as an area American Indians visited seasonally to make pemmican.[58] As newcomers pushed into South Dakota, "the first settlers in the area gravitated to places with timber and water." Oakwood especially drew them, for it had "the four necessities . . . water, timber, wild game and farmland."[59] Like Samuel Mortimer, other early lake area settlers built "cabins constructed from logs they cut down around the lake."[60] In 1871, the demand for logs led Mortimer to sell some timber, likely from land on the north side of the lake called "Mortimer's Woods," for $100 an acre. The buyer reportedly was given ten years to harvest trees, some of which were over three feet in diameter. [61] Oakwood "trees provided fuel for heat in the winter" as well. On the Plains, "they were a rare and valuable commodity . . . when neighbors came his way . . . he made a business of chopping down the oaks."[62]

Oakwood Lakes likely drew the Mortimers for its cultural as well as its natural amenities, for around the lakes at the time lived a mélange of Indian, Metis, and white people in which the mixed Mortimer family would have felt at home. An 1870 census of Brookings County noted 163 people, including 18 "whites" (12 of whom were immigrants, including 10 Norwegians) and 145 "Christian Sioux Indians." [63] The census failed to count the many more unconverted American Indians, and at the time, "there were plenty of Indians in that vicinity [Oak Lake] and the settlers were on friendly terms with them."[64] Among the early settlers there was "a German named Eppersaugh [a.k.a. Ebersold]" who arrived "in 1865 or 1866, marrying an Indian woman" as well as "a Mr. Goodard and Carl Poderson" [a.k.a. Mr. Goddard and Carl Pederson] who lived

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[56] John E Bergh, *A Short Historical Presentation on Some Early Settlements in Brookings Co.: Given at Dakota State College, Madison, Apr. 3-4, 1970* ([Place of publication not identified]: [publisher not identified], 1970), 6.

[57] Crisler, "'Spot' Mortimer's House Still Stands, but Spot Is a Mystery."

[58] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 35. See also Will G. Robinson to Donald Dean Parker, January 15, 1948, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.; W. W. Pay to R. F. Kerr, December 28, 1897, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.; Division of Parks & Recreation, "Oakwood Lakes State Park."

[59] Frank Crisler, "Before There Was Arlington . . .," *Arlington Sun*, June 23, 2004.

[60] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 34.

[61] Gustav O. Sandro, "History of Brookings County" (M.A. (History), University of South Dakota, 1936), 8, Brookings Public Library. "Oakwood Township" n.d., 4, Oakwood Lakes State Park.

[62] Frank Crisler, "Even 1000 Years Ago, People Lived at Oakwood Lakes," *Arlington Sun*, June 11, 2015.

[63] Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 35.

[64] Ibid., 21-22.

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there in the second half of the 1860s.[65] By 1870, settlers included "perhaps also Sven Pederson and two other Norwegians who, according to Nils Kollin, had arrived in 1869 and built a hut at Lake Oakwood and trapped in the winter."[66] This mixed society remained tied to the economy of the area. In Mortimer's case, his marriage may have "offered him protection from Indian attack [and] helped Mortimer to become acquainted with other Indians who helped him find choice furs and trapping areas."[67]

When the Mortimer family arrived in the area, they were accompanied by another mixed family, that of James Stoughton [a.k.a. Stoden] and his Indian wife.[68] The following summer, when Richard Pettrigrew (the future U.S. Senator) arrived to survey the Oakwood area, he noted only "two settlers living at Oakwood Lakes—Samuel Mortimer (known as "Old Spot") and James Stoughton."[69] That survey carved the land into conveyable parcels, facilitating its transfer from the recently acquired American "public domain" to private non-Indian parties. According to the Pettigrew's plat, the land beneath Mortimer's cabin was Lot 2 of Section 6 of the Oakwood Township (Township 111 North, Range 51 West). Lot 2 was surrounded by lakes and other land parcels, among them what is now known as Scout Island. Local historians John E. Bergh and Frank Crisler hold that Mortimer wanted the island land surveyed so he could own it. When "Mr. Pettigrew demanded a way to get to the Island to survey it," Old Spot Mortimer reportedly built him one. He is said to have "obliged with filling in with rock so he could cross" or, alternatively, to have built "a haphazard wooden bridge over a swampy area, to allow the surveyor to cross."[70] Pettigrew, for his part, transformed the island into Lot 7. As Pettigrew was completing his survey, Brookings County was created in 1871. At that time it included parts of current Moody, Lake, and Kingsbury counties in addition to all of the current Brookings County.[71] Early county proceedings reflected the region's mixed population and diverse county officials, with discussions likely occurring in English, Norwegian, and Sioux.[72]

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[65] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 28. Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 22. Chuck Cecil, *Fire the Anvils, Beat the Drums: The Story of Brookings County, 1860 to 1900* ([Volga, S.D.]: Brookings County Historical Society, 2008), 11.

[66] Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 35.

[67] Mary Haug, "'Ol Spot' Mortimer's Cabin Reminder of Simpler Times."

[68] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 30.

[69] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 34.

[70] Bergh, *A Short Historical Presentation on Some Early Settlements in Brookings Co.*, 6. Crisler, "'Spot' Mortimer's House Still Stands, but Spot Is a Mystery."

[71] Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 35.

[72] Ibid., 45.

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The influx of settlers in the first Dakota Boom inspired reorganization of local government, and in 1873 Brookings County acquired its present boundaries.[73] Among the county commissioners in the new Brookings County were "George W. Porter and Samuel Mortimer of Oakwood lakes," who assumed office in January of that year "and took their seats at [the 7th] meeting" of Brookings County commissioners. That July, at the ninth commissioners meeting, "Mortimer resigned and Byron E. Pay took his place."[74]

Mortimer's replacement by Pay on the commission in some sense served as a metaphor for broader shifts in the area. Byron Pay, who had been in the 1858 American Fur Company party that trapped around Oakwood Lakes, moved to the area from Mankato, Minnesota (via Medary), in 1873. The following year he sowed the locale's first wheat.[75] At the same time, Mortimer's Indian wife reportedly died and his "traplines were declining" and "the trees ran out."[76] In 1874, Mortimer moved away but retained ownership of the land at Oakwood Lakes. Sources differ as to his destination—some hold that he went to Yankton while others place him in Vermillion—but they agree that at his new home he re-married, this time to a "white" widow with three young children. Stoughton, too, left the Oakwood area in the mid-1870s.[77] By then the settlement at Oakwood was one of the region's three principal settlements, one of three destinations that enjoyed weekly mail service from Medary.[78] It remained a mixed community: in 1875, before they established their farm the newly-arrived Sutton family was assisted by "a band of Indian hunters and their families" living at Oakwood Lakes.[79]

In July 1877, Mortimer returned to his Oakwood Lakes cabin, bringing his new wife Catherine and her children with him. His return was well-timed, for Oakwood was on the verge of a population boom.[80] When he returned that summer, "he was one of 36 white settlers, most of whom lived just east of him" and the new non-Indian society was just beginning to establish

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[73] South Dakota Association of County Commissioners et al., "South Dakota Journal of County Government." *South Dakota Journal of County Government.*, April 1956, 87.

[74] Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 46.

[75] Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 69. Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 28, 35.

[76] Crisler, "'Spot' Mortimer's House Still Stands, but Spot Is a Mystery."; Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 83.

[77] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 34.

[78] Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 63. See also Donald Dean Parker, "Out of the Past," *Brookings Register*, August 11, 1975, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.

[79] Frank Crisler, "Sutton Family Was Among First Settlers, Learned from Natives," *Arlington Sun*, July 2, 2015.

[80] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 34; Trail Guide to South Dakota State Parks April 2006, www.SDparks.info.

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itself.[81] The year before, Brookings County included Oakwood Township (along with Preston, Laketon, and Winsor) in its newly-formed county school district No. 5, and public school instruction began in 1877, when Brookings County contained 250 residents.[82] At the same time, the Oakwood area got permission for an official road, which ran north-south about three-quarters of a mile east of Oakwood Lakes and connected to an existing county road.[83] Made in 1877, the first map of Brookings County showed one road to the Oakwood area set through Lake Village and northwest around the west side of Lake Poinsett. Another road led from Oakwood to the Lake Hendricks area.[84] A Fourth of July ceremony held in the summer of 1877 at Oakwood Lakes was attended by "20 people . . . one year later, there were over 400 people at the festivities."[85] Celebrants at that second gathering would have passed through the "tiny and primitive" town of Oakwood, which was officially platted in 1878. In the course of that same year, all the land around Oakwood was taken up.[86]

Byron Pay, who "ran a hotel and acted as a locating agent," was credited with Oakwood's founding, and the fledgling town flourished.[87] Oakwood soon had a total of "thirteen different business establishments including a flour mill and many log cabins and residences."[88] In addition to the fieldstone gristmill, businesses in bustling Oakwood included a large general store, a combination hardware/grocery store, a meat market, a drugstore and a feed store as well as a land office, a law office, and a real estate office. A resident blacksmith offered essential services, as did a judge. Public buildings included a schoolhouse and a log post office with a "straw covered dirt floor."[89] The town's stagecoach stop was served by stage lines that ran to Gary and Goodwin weekly and one that ran to Flandreau daily. Stage service also connected Oakwood to Sioux Falls.[90] Visitors who stepped off the coaches could lodge in the center of town at Pay's hotel, which "did a large business. Regular lodgers included the teacher, lawyer,

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[81] Crisler, "Before There Was Arlington . . ."
[82] Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 47.
[83] Ibid., 51.
[84] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 181.
[85] Haug, "'Ol Spot Mortimer's Cabin Reminder of Simpler Times."
[86] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 11; Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 28, 35.
[87] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 28, 35.
[88] "A Short History of Early Settlements, Cities, Towns and Trails in Brookings County" n.d., 4, Vertical File: Brookings County I, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.
[89] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 6; Bergh, *A Short Historical Presentation on Some Early Settlements in Brookings Co.*, 8; Poole, "Brookings County History," 20.
[90] Crisler, "Before There Was Arlington . . ."; Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 5; *Early Residents of Brookings County, South Dakota. Census Data for 1860-1870-1880* (Brookings, S.D.: County Historical Society, 1960), iv.

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mail carrier, etc. Every night found the place filled with transients—agents, landseekers, and visitors from back east."[91] By 1880, Oakwood, with 50 permanent residents, was the second largest town in Brookings County. Another 287 people lived nearby in the months-old Volga, but the majority of the county lived in rural jurisdictions: Brookings County's 1880 population totaled 4,959 people. [92]

One of those dispersed people was Samuel (as "Mortemer") whom the census showed with his wife Katherine, stepson John Wellet, stepdaughters Katherine and Eve S Wellet, as well as a German immigrant named August Schulze who was working as a farm laborer.[93] Financially speaking, the Mortimer family was likely quite comfortable, for Samuel did a thriving business after his 1877 return to the shores of Oakwood Lakes. Old Spot "began a new business selling rights to cut down the trees, and soon branched out, operating a lime kiln, turning limestone and scrap wood into quicklime, which was used to make plaster or mortar. That meant Spot Mortimer's island became a one-stop building supplies center, providing everything—wood and filler—to build a house."[94] The limestone kiln "he built and operated" was "located on the west side of Turtle Lake" and faced west. "Using wood for fuel, the kiln took at least four hours to complete the process of making lime. One of the uses for the product was putting on walls to bright up the interior. It was also used as a sort of cement."[95] Mortimer advertised his business in the area newspaper, the *Brookings County Press*. An 1879 ad read "Samuel Mortimer, Lime, Wood, By Cord or Load, Posts and Rails, Oakwood, Dakota."[96] Customers streamed in: "Mortimer played an important part in constructing houses, the mill, and many businesses."[97]

In addition to swelling Old Spot's business, the influx to the Oakwood Lakes region brought other changes in the neighborhood. As lands all around were taken up, Mortimer took steps to ensure title to his land was secured to his family. In July of 1878 he deeded his property—Lot 5 in S31 T112N R51W (Preston Township) and Lots 2-5 & 7 in S6 and Lot 5 in S5 of T111N R51W (Oakwood Township), totaling 168.34 acres—to Catherine Mortimer.[98] Just then, new

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[91] Mrs. Claude Parker, "Old Hotel Still Standing on Site of Pioneer Town at Oakwood Lake," 1938, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.

[92] *Early Residents of Brookings County, South Dakota. Census Data for 1860-1870-1880*, iv; Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 44.

[93] U.S. Census Bureau, Township 111, Range 51, Brookings County, Dakota Territory (June 7, 1880), 9A.

[94] Crisler, "'Spot' Mortimer's House Still Stands, but Spot Is a Mystery."

[95] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 4.

[96] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 35.

[97] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 4.

[98] Warranty Deed from Samuel Mortimer to Catherine Mortimer, 20 July 1878, Brookings County, South Dakota, Mortimer Cabin research file, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Pierre, SD.

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neighbors moved in. A man named A.D. Maxwell claimed land near Oakwood Lakes and, with lumber hauled from Canby, MN, built a shanty on it in 1878.[99] Meanwhile, Byron Pay sold his farm to George Henry, Sr.[100] The Henry family lived north of the old fort and had a son who recalled:

> [our] nearest neighbor . . . Samuel Mortimer . . . who had been an early day
> trapper and at one time married to an Indian woman. She died and he then married
> a white woman. They had three children, a boy and two girls. We visited them a
> good deal and 'old Spot' told us a lot about the early days. During the Indian
> uprising he was at Yankton and aided in building the stockade which was built
> there for protection. After the Indian trouble was over he returned to Oakwood
> Lakes and after the survey was made filed on his land. [101]

The Henrys arrived in Oakwood in 1878, and their recorded impressions suggest that Samuel remained connected to the area's indigenous communities. According to George Henry, Jr., "one Indian, Charlie Minneta [Minnetonka], was a frequent visitor at Mortimer's."[102] Minnetonka was a "famous character" known for his animated stories of past adventures.[103] He was remembered as "a wonder, a white man said to be raised by Indians, with an Indian wife."[104] One man who came to Oakwood as a teenager in the mid-1870s remembered "Old Spot" "as an Indian, although he did have a bunch of whiskers and drank pretty heavily."[105] In 1980, area newspapers wrote that Mortimer was "a man who had lived with the Indians since boyhood."[106]

The railroad line that ran through and produced Brookings continued westward. It ran several miles south of Oakwood, and thereby caused its demise. In 1879-1880, "Volga was the terminus during the winter . . . and served as a construction camp while grading and track-laying was continued in the direction of Huron. Three hotels and a railroad boarding house provided accommodations for the town's transient population which included some 300 railway workers

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[99] "A.D. Maxwell, Pioneer Business Man," n.d., Arlington Community Museum.

[100] *Early Residents of Brookings County, South Dakota. Census Data for 1860-1870-1880*, iv.

[101] Frank Crisler, "There Was (a Little) Gold in Them Thar Oakwood Lakes," *Arlington Sun*, July 16, 2015; George Henry, "Historical Sketches," *The Dakotah Traveler.* 1, no. 5 (November 1934): 28.

[102] Henry, "Historical Sketches," 33.

[103] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 3.

[104] Crisler, "Before There Was Arlington . . ."

[105] Ernest V. Sutton to Will G. Robinson, November 5, 1947, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.

[106] "O.T. Nelson Prepared An Excellent Summary of Arlington's Progress," *Arlington Sun*, June 25, 1980, Souvenir edition.

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as well as the settlers who were flocking into the region in ever-increasing numbers."[107] When
the rails of the Brookings-Watertown branch line of the Northwestern running north out of Volga
were laid a couple miles east of Oakwood in 1881-1883, the trackside town of Bruce sprang up.
By the middle of the 1880s, "almost all of the buildings and businesses [in Oakwood] had been
moved, many to Bruce and Volga."[108] The dying town enjoyed a brief revival in 1883-1884,
when word of gold discoveries at the lakes spread; for a short time, "people came by the
hundreds."[109] Byron Pay's hotel, "which had been on the verge of closing . . . suddenly boomed,
as did other merchants who managed to make it through the lean years after 1879, when the
trains came and most of the people left."[110] But profitable mining quickly proved elusive, and
the associated influx fleeting. Soon, "only the old stone mill . . . and the hotel were left."[111]
Oakwood "became a ghost town." The post office closed in 1894, and "with the closing of the
post office and the general abandonment of the town [Pay's hotel] became just an ordinary
farmhouse." [112]

Later History of the Mortimer Cabin

Oakwood's demise, and the broader population explosion that attended it, must have convinced
Samuel Mortimer that it was time to move. In 1885, the Mortimers advertised their Oakwood
Lakes property for sale in the *Volga Tribune*, calling the cabin "a large dwelling house":

> a splendid farm for sale adjoining Oakwood Lake containing 168 acres, 75 of which is
> under cultivation and over half of the whole is timber. Said farm has a large dwelling
> house, well finished and all necessary out-buildings and two good wells. Said farm is
> well adapted to stock or grain and has never yielded less than 20 bushels to the acre. For
> particulars, call and see owner on the premises or address her at Oakwood Post Office.
> Catherine Mortimer.[113]

The following August, Soloman Walters purchased the 168.34 acre Mortimer place for
$1,800.[114] The Mortimers may have remained in the area for a while after this sale. There is
little indication of what subsequently happened to "Old Spot" Mortimer and his family. His wife

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[107] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 162.

[108] Crisler, "Oakwood Town Founded in 1877 by Veterans of Civil War."

[109] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 9.

[110] Crisler, "There was (a little) Gold in Them Thar Oakwood Lakes."

[111] Parker, "Old Hotel Still Standing on Site of Pioneer Town at Oakwood Lake."

[112] Ibid.

[113] Crisler, "'Spot' Mortimer's House Still Stands, but Spot Is a Mystery."; Deboer, Miller, and
Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 4.

[114] Waranty Deed from Samuel and Catherine Mortimer to Soloman Waters, 11 October 1886,
Brookings County, South Dakota, Mortimer Cabin research file, South Dakota State Historic
Preservation Office, Pierre, SD.

Catherine died in 1908 in Kearney, Nebraska, and her eldest son John "Doc" Wellet died in 1958 and was buried in Sheridan, Wyoming.[115]

Soloman Walters bought the Mortimer place, including the extant cabin and the other infrastructure, but resided in Bruce. Walters had arrived in the Oakwood area with his wife and baby son in 1878. Born on a farmstead in Sweden in 1844, Walters had previously lived in Manitoba, Canada, and in Minnesota, where he worked as a stone mason. In 1878, the Walters family took up land "near the Big Sioux River, three miles south of what is now the town of Bruce." That first year they wintered in Sioux Falls, where they shared a duplex with the family of surveyor Pettigrew.[116] In 1883, Walters expanded his activities in the area when he "opened a general store" in Bruce. From his base in Bruce, Walters "bought wheat, dealt in lumber and took a deep interest in community affairs." His business affairs soon included a thriving real estate business, the holdings of which included the former Mortimer farm, which was often occupied and operated by tenants.[117] In 1884, the Walters family built a home in Bruce where they would live until Soloman and his wife died.[118]

The difficulties of the 1920s and '30s affected the Oakwood area much as they did the rest of South Dakota. In 1934, the Walters family lost the Mortimer farm to foreclosure.[119] They had held onto the farm through ups and downs since buying it in 1886. After first establishing himself in Bruce in the 1880s, Soloman Walters had gone on to serve as county commissioner then as a legislator in the South Dakota House of Representatives. Along the way, he successfully amassed significant real estate holdings in the area. But at the turn of the century, cancer struck Soloman and, despite traveling to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota for treatment, he died in 1901. He was just 56 years old, and his widow Matilda was left with eight children, the youngest being 11 months old. She lived in the family home in Bruce until her death in 1941.[120]

Matilda and her children inherited Soloman's substantial holdings, and after his estate was settled in 1905 they owned undivided shares of the real estate, which included the Mortimer

[115] Crisler, "'Spot' Mortimer's House Still Stands, but Spot Is a Mystery."
[116] *Early Residents of Brookings County, South Dakota. Census Data for 1860-1870-1880*, 114; Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 665–66.
[117] Poole, "Brookings County History," 19.
[118] The Walters' home was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 (#78002539). "Obituary: Soloman Walters," n.d., Oakwood Lakes State Park.
[119] Sheriff's Deed, 9 November 1935, Brookings County, South Dakota, Mortimer Cabin research file, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Pierre, SD.
[120] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 665–66. "Obituary: Soloman Walters." "Death's Harvest: The Grim Reaper Gathers the Ripened Fruit and Cuts Down the Flower of Youth: Soloman Walters," n.d., Oakwood Lakes State Park.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 10-900   OMB No. 1024-0018

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place as well as adjacent lands and other parcels.[121] They consolidated these parcels into the Sol
Walters Realty Co., and different members of the Walters family held title to the Mortimer
place—which was conveyed with adjacent lands totaling about 330 acres—over the years.[122]
The documentary record contains little evidence to suggest the family often, if ever, occupied the
Mortimer farm. Rather, "much of the time the land, including building site, was rented out.
Several area families recall parents and grandparents living in the house."[123] Among the tenants
on the farm were Niels and Emma Jensen. "They worked for a farmer and were able to live in the
[Mortimer] cabin." It was their "first home in America." Although they moved away—buying a
farm west of Aurora—they returned years later to show their Oakwood Lakes home to their
granddaughter.[124]

Despite its status as a rental, during the Walters family tenure, the Mortimer place was
transformed. One winter shortly after purchasing the place, Walters moved a house he'd built on
Section 36 of Laketon township "across the frozen lake and set [it] down about 12 feet away
from the Mortimer log house which had by now been covered with siding for its
preservation."[125] The Walters family subsequently constructed "many buildings . . . including
two large barns."[126] They built "the old cement silo on this farm and the silo erected about two
miles south . . . about 1920." These stone silos were still standing in 1983.[127] But these
investments failed to stave off financial troubles in the 1930s, when "crops were so poor that the
owners lost the land as was common during those years throughout this area."[128]

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[121] Final Decree in the estate of Soloman Walters, 15 May 1905, Brookings County, South
Dakota, Mortimer Cabin research file, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Pierre,
SD.
[122] Deed from William H. Walters and Grace A. Walters to Sol Walters Realty, 12 June 1905,
Brookings County, South Dakota; Deed from Sol Walters Realty Company to William H.
Walters, 8 April 1915; Deed from William H. Walters and Grace J. Walters, 28 April 1915,
Brookings County, South Dakota; Deed from Sol Walters Realty Company to Vern A. Walters,
29 November 1920, Brookings County, South Dakota; Deed from Sol Walters Realty Company
to Clifton Walters, 8 May 1928, Brookings County, South Dakota; Deed from Clifton Walters to
Sol Walters Realty Company, 26 December 1928, Brookings County; South Dakota, Sheriff's
Deed, 9 November 1935, Brookings County, South Dakota; Mortimer Cabin research file, South
Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Pierre, SD.
[123] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 4.
[124] "Mortimer's Cabin," *South Dakota Magazine*, July 2011, Oakwood Lakes State Park.
[125] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 4.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.

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Although the family lost the Mortimer farm, Matilda Walters managed to hang on to the family home in Bruce until her death in 1941.[129] She left behind a large family that cherished memories of visiting their grandmother and their family's farm. Granddaughters recalled how they "enjoyed so many picnics at Oakwood Lakes," and loved to visit "to the old site of the family farm where we spent many happy hours. We especially enjoyed playing in and on top of the old log cabin with its attached ice house."[130] The Walters family apparently let other community members enjoy their property as well. During the 1920s and 30s the "Boy Scouts of America, in an echo of the GAR reunions, came to Oakwood Lakes . . . and held summer camps on the island that Spot Mortimer once owned."[131] These gatherings were no small affair. In the summer of 1929, the *Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader* featured an article about the camp at which "650 lads of Sioux Falls district enjoy [the] wonder of nature each year."[132] But in the 1930s, which were so "hard on the farmers in the area, the Boy Scouts encampments ended."[133]

After the Union Central Life Insurance Company foreclosed on the Mortimer/Walters farm in 1934, it was sold to Omar Doops and his family. The Doops may have already occupied the farm as tenants—one source dates their tenure from 1930—and they would own and occupy it for about 10 years.[134] During the time they lived there, the handsome farm boasted numerous substantial buildings, including a frame farmhouse, two substantial barns, a silo, and a series of additional agricultural and domestic outbuildings.

The large Doop family had been in the Bruce area off and on since 1913, when Chan and Ida (Young) Doop arrived in town with 8 children, among them 21-year-old (Calvin) Omar.[135] Shortly after their arrival, Omar Doop met Gertrude Gurdis "when she was working in the lunch room in the Bruce Hotel. They were married in 1916 and moved to Minnesota for a few years. When they returned to the Bruce area, they lived on the south Lake Oakwood farm [of Omar's parents] until the house burned down there in 1924. Then they moved south of Bruce four miles, and the Doop children attended the Renshaw School. The next move took them to the farm where the Mortimer cabin is located."[136] By the time they settled at the Mortimer place, the

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[129] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 665–66.
[130] Bruce Centennial Committee, *Bruce, South Dakota, 1883-1983.*, 323. Ibid., 320. The farm, they wrote, "is now in Oakwood State Park."
[131] Crisler, "There Was (a Little) Gold in Them Thar Oakwood Lakes."
[132] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 13.
[133] Crisler, "There Was (a Little) Gold in Them Thar Oakwood Lakes."
[134] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 4. Paul Tande, "Oakwood Lakes Farm, Omar and Gertrude Doop's Farm, 1930-1946 (Drawn from Sketches Prepared by Gilmer Doop)," August 30, 2009, Oakwood Lakes State Park.
[135] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 397.
[136] Ibid., 397–98.

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Doops had 13 children, ranging in age from an infant to a 17-year-old. With so many kids, as daughter Dorothy Doop recalled:

> [we] didn't get to town a lot when we were young. Still we were a big enough family to have a lot of fun by ourselves. We looked forward to hunting seasons so we could take turns opening the gate for hunters. There was usually a small 'tip' for whoever opened the gate. Our house didn't have a yard fence around it and the pigs would come right up to the steps and root around. . .The Mortimer Cabin was just north of our house and was our "playhouse." We didn't realize its historical significance at all then. It was just an "old house." I have spent many hours playing in that cabin. . . I recall the barn dances at our place… We didn't have much money for entertainment but we had the lake. There was swimming in the summer, skating in the winter, and walking on the "rubber ice" in the spring. [137]

Later History of Oakwood Lakes

With much of regional economic and social activity centered in the busy railroad towns, the Oakwood Lakes area became "a great resort for pleasure seekers."[138] Prominent among the recreational activities at the lakes during this period were the annual encampments of the Grand Army of the Republic, or the "old soldiers' encampments" as they were locally known.[139] Begun by Civil War veterans Byron Pay and Arthur Mitchell in the mid-1880s, official encampments occurred annually for about ten years. Unofficially, they endured much longer, with local newspapers "reporting reunions of the Civil War veterans at Oakwood Lakes well into the [20th] century."[140] At these reunions, held "yearly at Lake Oakwood about ½ mile north of the old mill on the George Henry farm" "anywhere from one hundred to three hundred fifty Civil War veterans registered every year, and large numbers of others attended this gathering."[141] Attendees stayed in "tents [that] were rented at $2 per week, and entertainment and food were featured."[142] Other area residents also recreated on and around the lakes. "During the 80's and 90's religious groups held their encampments on these same grounds, several hundred attending each day, and sometimes lasting a week."[143] People from Arlington reportedly traveled to the

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[137] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 397-98.

[138] Abbie Carpenter, "History of Oakwood Township," n.d., Vertical File: Brookings County II, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.

[139] Parker, "Old Hotel Still Standing on Site of Pioneer Town at Oakwood Lake."

[140] Crisler, "Oakwood Town Founded in 1877 by Veterans of Civil War."

[141] Bergh, *A Short Historical Presentation on Some Early Settlements in Brookings Co.*, 9.

[142] Crisler, "Oakwood Town Founded in 1877 by Veterans of Civil War."

[143] Bergh, *A Short Historical Presentation on Some Early Settlements in Brookings Co.*, 10.

Mortimer Cabin   Brookings County, SD
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Oakwood Lakes for fishing so often that they wore a substantial trail across the prairie. Locals knew it as "the Mitchell Trail."[144]

The post-war period, and the attendant expansion of state government and government-owned lands, proved transformative for the Oakwood Lakes area.   In August of 1945, the State of South Dakota purchased the Mortimer/Walters/Doop place (consisting of 329 acres).[145]   The purchase was part of a larger effort to accumulate Oakwood acreage, and by mid-November, the state had purchased a total of about 810 acres "for a cost of $51,241.60" in the area, of which 153 was set aside for use as a park.[146] About a month later, the state legislature approved eight areas for designation as state parks, including the Oakwood Lakes land.[147]

The Doops, meanwhile, moved to the "Storm" farm six miles west of Bruce. They then moved to a farm one mile south and one-half mile west of Bruce where they lived until they retired.[148] Omar died in 1978, at the age of 86.[149] By this time there wasn't much left of the town of Oakwood, but Byron Pay's hotel still stood. It had long since ceased serving travelers, for "with the closing of the post office and the general abandonment of the town if became just an ordinary farmhouse."[150] The Oakwood hotel was demolished in 1958 or '59, and with it the last vestiges of the town itself.[151]

For its part, the state set about developing its Oakwood Lakes property for recreational purposes. In the early 1960s, the South Dakota Division of Parks and Recreation undertook major planning efforts for the Oakwood park. It assessed likely park users—noting that in 1963, 235,500 people lived in the closest fifteen counties—and inventoried common park recreational uses. And it formulated a plan for further recreational development and the construction of park infrastructure. The plan noted that "the abandoned farms have to be removed because of their unsightly condition" but provided for the retention of some cultural resources.[152] The main priority in this realm was the "renovation of [the] Old Spot Mortimer Log House."[153] At the

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[144] "Oakwood Township," 5.

[145] Deed from Union Central Life Insurance Company to State of South Dakota, 11 September 1945, Brookings County, South Dakota; Deed from C. Omer Doop and Gertrude Doop to State of South Dakota, 22 August 1945; Mortimer Cabin research file, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Pierre, SD.

[146] "History of Oakwood Lakes State Park" n.d., 2, Oakwood Lakes State Park.

[147] Crisler, "There Was (a Little) Gold in Them Thar Oakwood Lakes."

[148] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 397–98.

[149] Ibid.

[150] Parker, "Old Hotel Still Standing on Site of Pioneer Town at Oakwood Lake."

[151] Benjamin F. Haas, "Brookings County Pioneer Recollections" n.d., 7, Vertical File: Brookings County I, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.

[152] Division of Parks & Recreation, "Oakwood Lakes State Park."

[153] Ibid.

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time, planners noted that "the logs are native Oak from the lake areas. Those that are under ground are rotting."[154]

Park planners also developed cultural resources related to the mid-nineteenth-century military fortifications at Oakwood. Noting that "the original log barracks [at the breastworks] was demolished in the 1930's," they welcomed the relocation of a nearby log cabin to the approximate original site of the barracks.[155] This cabin was relocated to the park ca. 1970. It "was built in 1876 by Hans Rovig and originally stood two miles south of Brookings. It was used as the first Norwegian school in the area before it was closed and the students were enrolled in 'American' schools."[156] By then, observers could write that "since the G. F. & Parks service took over the lakes and surrounding area, extensive improvements have been made, such as picnic accommodations, trailer facilities, roads and trees."[157] In conjunction with broader developments in the realms of recreation and travel, these "improvements" and others like them helped attract people to parks like Oakwood. In 1970, in a testament to its importance in regional history and its pride of place in the state park system cultural resource realm, an article in a Volga newspaper about increased park use featured a picture of the Mortimer cabin.[158]

Log Cabins in South Dakota

Perhaps no other structure symbolizes the expansion and settlement of the United States better than the log cabin. Though not native to the North American continent, log cabins have been present ever since Finnish and Swedish setters introduced horizontal log construction to the colony at New Sweden on the shores of Upper Delaware Bay in 1638.[159] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, German colonists from eastern and central Europe brought and dispersed their own techniques for log construction to the colonies, which where also passed down to the Scotch-Irish in Pennsylvania.[160] At the same time this was occurring in the eastern part of the continent, log construction techniques from Russia were also entering Alaska and parts of

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[154] Ibid.

[155] Ibid.

[156] Crisler, "Before There Was Arlington . . ."

[157] Bergh, *A Short Historical Presentation on Some Early Settlements in Brookings Co.*, 8.

[158] "Marked Increase Noted in Use of State Parks," *Volga Tribune*, September 17, 1970, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.

[159] United States Department of the Interior. *The Preservation of Historic Architecture: The U.S. Government's Official Guidelines for Preserving Historic Homes*. (Guildford, CT: Lyons Press, 2004), 286.

[160] Ibid.

Mortimer Cabin   Brookings County, SD
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Canada.[161] Log construction eventually spread to the interior of the continent as settlement pushed inward.

Fur traders, many of French or French-Canadian background, built the first log cabins in what would become South Dakota. Jean Baptiste Trudeau built a post in 1794 to overwinter in present-day Charles Mix County.[162] Registre Loisel's post, built in 1796 near the big bend in the Missouri River, was a large timber house with four rooms.[163] Joseph LaFramboise built his post, which was a cabin of dead trees pulled from the Missouri River, on the Fort Pierre plain in 1817.[164] Fur traders built log cabins throughout the era, which ended in the 1860s.

As the fur trade wound down, permanent Euro-American settlement began. The Black Hills of western South Dakota, with an ample supply of Ponderosa Pine, predictably saw a profusion of log cabins as miners and settlers poured in during the late 1870s. However, log cabins were also built in eastern South Dakota along rivers and lakes where trees were present. Though supply often necessitated the use of inferior wood, like cottonwood, superior trees like oak were also used.

Log cabins were built throughout the settlement period, which ended around 1910 in South Dakota. The proliferation of sawmills, pre-fabrication of building supplies, and the extension of the railroad fundamentally changed the state's building stock after this period. Affordable, dimensional lumber and the ability to deliver it almost anywhere effectively ended log construction in the state.

However, there were exceptions. Log cabins continued to be built on American Indian reservations well into the twentieth century. A 1956 housing survey indicated 60-62% of all houses on the Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, and Standing Rock reservations were log constructed.[165] Log structures were also constructed statewide in the 1920s-1940s as Rustic architecture enjoyed a limited popularity. This was notably true for log structures built under New Deal programs.

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[161] C.A. Weslager, *The Log Cabin in America: From Pioneer Days to the Present*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 322-323.
[162] C.B. Nelson, *Notes on the Fur Trade*. (2010), 138.
[163] Ibid., 105.
[164] Ibid., 32.
[165] Godfrey, 44, 60, 69.

Log Cabin Architecture

The earliest log cabins built in South Dakota are best classified as folk architecture. The fur traders who built them didn't rely on builders' plans or architectural trends, instead using techniques passed down from generation to generation. People from various regions of the country built log cabins representing their own traditions, resulting in many vernacular differences.

One of the most recognizable construction differences is the type of notching used to join the walls at the corners. Notching techniques, including saddle, V, dovetailing, square, half, and double, were common. All of these had variations as well with different levels of complication. For example, a full dovetail was a very complicated method that created a strong box corner. A square notch was a simple form, but did not have the interlocking qualities of other methods. Simpler notching methods could be supplemented with nails, when available and affordable to the builder. If nails were added, though, they were often added later to supplement a failing joint.

Another construction difference is the shape of the logs. Logs could be left round or hewn roughly square. Hewn logs required more work in shaping, but fit tighter against each other requiring less chinking. Other techniques, such as cutting grooves into the log's upper surface for a flush fit with the lower log, were also used. The skill of the builder, his/her traditional background, and the long-term expectations of the cabin could dictate log shape. Hewn log cabins required more skill with an axe and additional time prepping the logs, but resulted in a cabin that needed less chinking and maintenance. Cabins built with round logs could be erected quicker, but required more chinking and periodic maintenance. If a builder's expectation was to only occupy the cabin for a short period of time, building with round logs and simple joints was a reasonable option.

Windows were also rare on early cabins. A few window openings, covered with cloth or shuttered with wood, might have been present originally on some cabins, but many window openings were added at a later date. The majority of cabins were occupied as homes for a relatively short period of time, just long enough until more permanent, substantial homes could be built. Cabins that remained a settler's primary residence were often improved with glass windows and better doors as materials and money became available.

Samuel Mortimer's cabin is an excellent example of an early, settlement-era log cabin in South Dakota. Its fieldstone foundation, hewn logs, and square notch joints convey significance of a period and method of construction that is rare in the state, particularly the eastern side. Changes

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that have occurred to the cabin, including the addition of windows and the loft, have attained significance and are common modifications.

There is no data on the number of extent log structures remaining in the state. Examples are found primarily in the Black Hills, on American Indian reservations west of the Missouri River, and in western counties where settlement occurred until around 1910. Claim-era resources across the state are increasingly rare due to their poor condition and for their becoming functionally obsolete. Log cabins in eastern South Dakota are particularly uncommon because timber existed only along streams and lakes during the homestead years. Other historical factors also impact their scarcity. Eastern South Dakota was more productive agriculturally, which afforded many homesteaders the ability to build more substantial residences, at which time original cabins were sold or not maintained as vigorously. The availability of milled lumber, distributed on established wagon roads and the railroad, facilitated these improvements throughout the settlement period. In the twentieth century, changes in farming practices accelerated the loss of homesteading resources. As farms became larger, the number of occupied farm yards decreased, leading to the abandonment of historic structures. The development of a monoculture focused on row crops also impacted farm yard outbuildings. Structures once used to house animals, fowl, machinery, and other related purposes were no longer needed, and thus removed or neglected into deterioration. Many homestead-era resources that were repurposed on the farm over the years have met this fate.

Few comparable structures to the Mortimer Cabin remain in eastern South Dakota. Cuthbert "Old Papineau" DuCharme's cabin (1857) is located in the Geddes Historic District in Charles Mix County. The cabin, purported to be one of the oldest structures in South Dakota, was moved to Geddes from its original location along the Missouri River. It has been partially covered in wood siding. The Herman Luce Cabin (1871) near Madison, Lake County, is also a hand-hewn log cabin listed in the National Register. Finally, the Brown Earth Presbyterian Church (1877) near Milbank is a log, hand-hewn National Register-listed church.

Three nineteenth-century log cabins in the Black Hills in the western part of the state are also listed in the National Register - the Pearson Cabin (c.1876), Golden Summit Mine Foreman's Cabin (c.1883), and Harvey Homestead Cabin (1899). The Pap Madison Cabin (1876) was listed in the National Register, but removed due to its relocation. It is likely that other National Register-eligible cabins exist in the Black Hills, but a comprehensive survey and context has not been undertaken.

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Name of Property   County and State

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Name of Property   County and State

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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 # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:
__X_ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
__X_ Other
          Name of repository: SDSHS Archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): __BK00002362_____

_____

10. Geographical Data

 Acreage of Property approx. 5 acres

UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

[ ] NAD 1927   or   [x] NAD 1983

    SEE CONTINTUATION SHEET 7.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is a polygon of connected UTM points (see maps on continuation sheets).

Mortimer Cabin   Brookings County, SD
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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses the cabin and its immediate setting (five acres) on a small
peninsula that extends into the Mortimer Slough portion of Oakwood Lakes. The boundary
includes a small, relatively undeveloped parcel of land that was part of Samuel Mortimer's
original claim. This wooded area north of Oakwood Beach Road retains integrity of setting.
The paved Oakwood Beach Road creates a break, separating the tip of the wooded peninsula
to the north from the more developed state park setting to the south. Also, near the
southeastern portion of the boundary are modern park facilities where Oakwood Beach Road
and Oakwood Park Drive intersect, creating another break. Water primarily borders the
northeastern, northern, northwestern, and western sections of the peninsula. The boundary
selected has the integrity and the ability to convey the settlement and architectural
significance of the cabin.

11. Form Prepared By

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organization: WGM Group, Inc. / South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office
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e-mail: Dhagen@wgmgroup.com / ChrisB.Nelson@state.sd.us
telephone: (406) 728-4611 / (605) 773-3458
date: July 2017

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's
  location.

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous
  resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels
(minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs
to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to
the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer,

photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log
Name of Property: Mortimer Cabin
City or Vicinity: Bruce
County: Brookings County
State: South Dakota
Photographer: Delia Hagen
Date Photographed: September 2015

SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0001: View to North.

Mortimer Cabin   Brookings County, SD
Name of Property   County and State

SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0002: View to North.

SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0003: View to North West.

Mortimer Cabin   Brookings County, SD
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SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0004: View to North.

SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0005: View to East.

Mortimer Cabin   Brookings County, SD
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SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0006: View to W (cabin obscured by lilac).

SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0007: Log notching detail, South corner, view to North.

Mortimer Cabin   Brookings County, SD
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SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0008: Entry, view to North West.

SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0009: Interior, from entry, view to North

Mortimer Cabin   Brookings County, SD
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SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_00010: Interior, from entry, view to West.

SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_00011: Interior, view to South.

Mortimer Cabin   Brookings County, SD
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SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_00012: Interior, entry, view to South East.

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Continuation Sheet

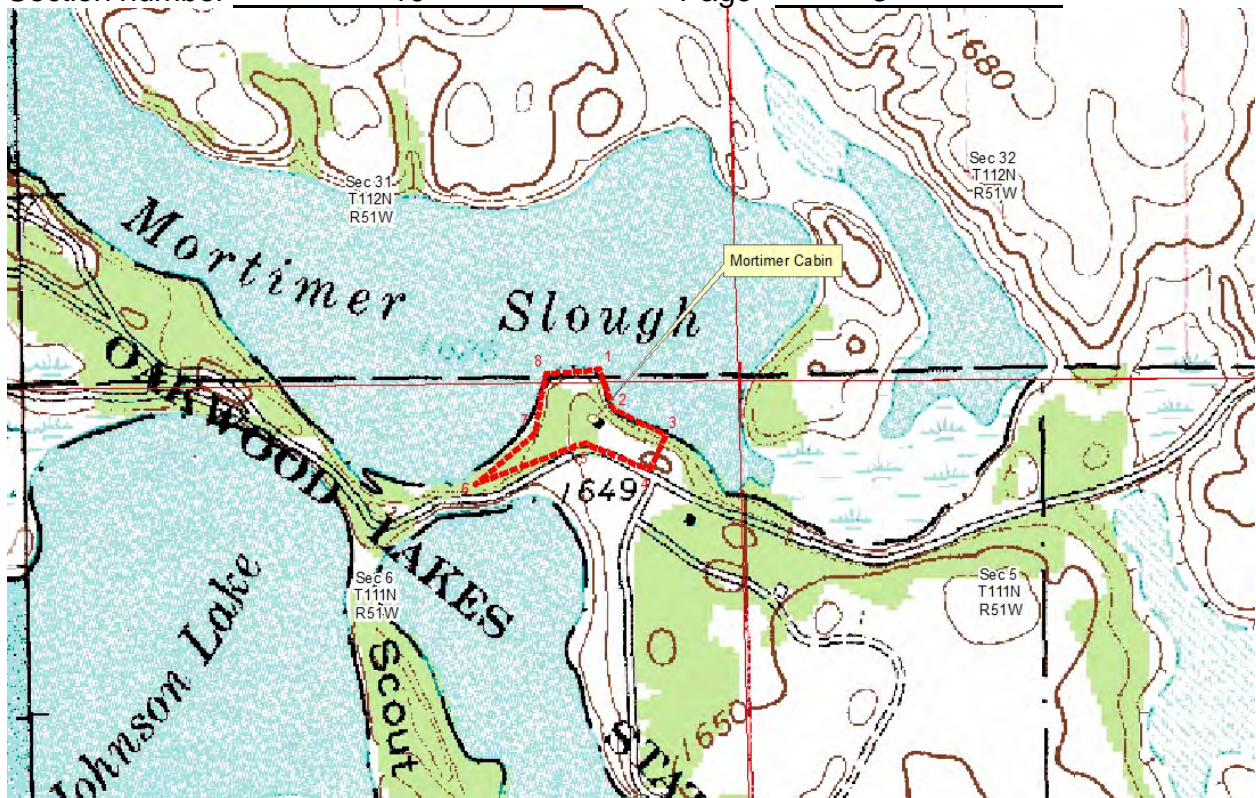Section number _____10_____   Page _____1_____

SD_BrookingsCounty_MortimerCabin: NE1/4, NE1/4, T111N, R51W, S6; Produced in ArcMap 31 July 2017.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number _____10_____   Page _____2_____

SD_BrookingsCounty_MortimerCabin: NE1/4, NE1/4, T111N, R51W, S6; Produced in ArcMap 31 July 2017.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
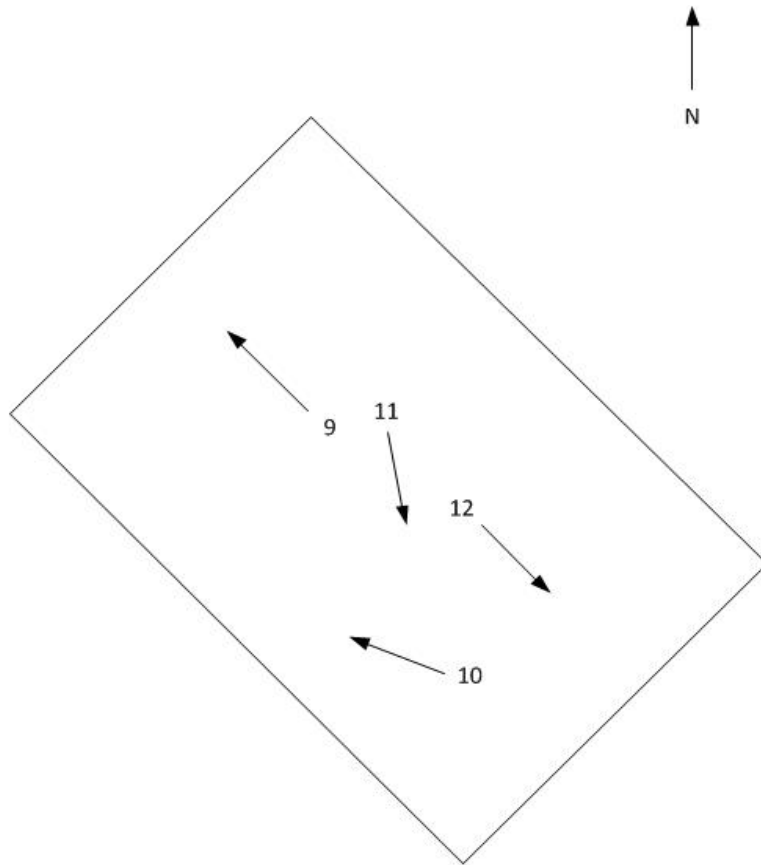# Continuation Sheet

Section number _____10_____   Page ____3____

SD_BrookingsCounty_MortimerCabin: NE1/4, NE1/4, T111N, R51W, S6; 2017. USGS 7.5 Quadrangle 1:6,000. Produced in ArcMap 31 July 2017.

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Section number _____10_____   Page _____4_____

SD_BrookingsCounty_MortimerCabin: NE1/4, NE1/4, T111N, R51W, S6; 2017. USGS 7.5 Quadrangle
1:20,000. Produced in ArcMap 31 July 2017.

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Section number _____10_____   Page _____5_____

Photo Log of Exterior Photos

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Section number _____10_____   Page _____6_____

N

9   11

12

10

Mortimer Cabin
Interior Photo Key

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Continuation Sheet

Section number _____10_____   Page _____7_____

UTMs

Z = 14

1. E = 659893   N = 4924477
2. E = 659914   N = 4924427
3. E = 659985   N = 4924388
4. E = 659963   N = 4924338
5. E = 659871   N = 4924371
6. E = 659720   N = 4924320
7. E = 659801   N = 4924395
8. E = 659817   N = 4924476

'OL SPOT MORTIMER'S CABIN

This log cabin stands on the original site where it was constructed in 1869 by Samuel "Ol Spot" Mortimer.

Mortimer, a shoemaker from New York, came to Dakota Territory after hearing stories of the rich fur trade in the Big Sioux Valley. In 1869, he found his way to Oakwood Lakes and discovered a trapper's paradise. Otter, beaver, mink, muskrat and fox were abundant. Mortimer built this cabin and lived here for the next five years.

By 1874, Mortimer experienced declining harvests from his traplines. Turning his attention to the area's valuable timber, he built a sawmill and played an important role in providing the lumber for building houses and area businesses.

After the death of his wife, Mortimer left Oakwood Lakes and moved to Yankton, Dakota Territory. It was there he re-married, and soon returned to the cabin with his new wife and her children. They later made plans to sell the land. A warranty deed, dated October 20, 1886, records the sale of 1,200 acres of Mortimer land for $1,800 to Solomon Walters.

Today, Mortimer's Oakwood Lakes homestead site stands as a reminder of the early settlers who ventured bravely into the new Dakota frontier.

ERECTED BY MOVED OPEN SCANDINAVIAN IMMIGRANT CEMETERS MOVED, CRALED AND RASMUSSEN BY DESCENDENTS OF C.N. LARSEN

National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Mortimer Cabin

Multiple Name:

State & County: SOUTH DAKOTA, Brookings

Date Received: 9/19/2017	Date of Pending List: 7/18/2017	Date of 16th Day: 8/2/2017	Date of 45th Day: 11/3/2017	Date of Weekly List: 10/27/2017

Reference number: SG100001397

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

___X___ Accept _____ Return _____ Reject __10/26/2017__ Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:
Rare cabin for early South Dakota settlement. The documentation of changes to the cabin itself (apart from the log construction) remains to be better documented. However, given the nature of this vernacular architecture and its varied uses, only expensive research such as dendrochronolgy or paint analysis, would likely provide any definitive documentation.
The nomination is being returned to enlarge the boundary which was submitted as the footprint of the cabin. "The nomination noted the following: Its setting has changed over the years, with the
development and later removal of military, manufacturing, and agricultural endeavors with associated infrastructure as well as the subsequent development of recreational infrastructure
(see statement of significance for narrative history of the evolution of the property and its surroundings), but the cabin is now surrounded by a relatively undeveloped, rural area in a state
park on the shores of Oakwood Lakes that is reminiscent of its setting during the period of significance, which was deciduous forested land. The Mortimer cabin continues to convey its historic associations." With the agreement of the SHPO, the nomination is being returned to include a portion of the surrounding park property that reflects the cabin's historic setting.

Recommendation/ Criteria
At the suggestion of NPS, the boundary was enlarged to include a proper historic setting for the cabin.,

Reviewer   Roger Reed   Discipline   Historian

Telephone   (202)354-2278   Date

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No   see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.
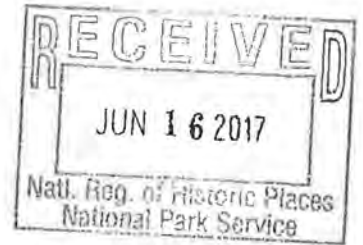
12 June 2017

Keeper of National Register
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington DC 20240

Dear Keeper:

Please find enclosed seven National Register of Historic Places nominations including: *Stadum-Green House, First Presbyterian Church, Arthur and Ellen Colgan House, American Legion Community Hall, Mortimer Cabin, Port and Helen McWhorter House,* and *C.W. Parker Carousel No.825.*

Please email chrisb.nelson@state.sd.us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Chris B. Nelson
Historic Preservation Specialist

OMB No. 1024-0018

RECEIVED

JUN 1 6 2017

National Park Service

SG-1397

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Mortimer Cabin
Other names/site number: Walters Farm, Doop Farm
Name of related multiple property listing:

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

2. Location

Street & number: 202_ Oakwood Drive
City or town: Bruce State: South Dakota County: Brookings County
Not For Publication: [ ] Vicinity: [X]

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national __X__ statewide ___ local
Applicable National Register Criteria:

__X__ A ___ B __X__ C ___ D

Jay D. Vogt	05-24-2017
Signature of certifying official/Title: SD SHPO	Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: Date

Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

~~Returned~~

Mortimer Cabin   Brookings County, SD
Name of Property   County and State

---

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

_____

Signature of the Keeper   Date of Action

---

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: [ ]

Public – Local   [ ]

Public – State   [X]

Public – Federal   [ ]

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)   [X]

District   [ ]

Site   [ ]

Structure   [ ]

Object   [ ]

Mortimer Cabin   Brookings County, SD
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Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	**0**	**Total**

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register __N/A__

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6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

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7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property:

STONE
WOOD: Log
WOOD: Shingle

3

Mortimer Cabin   Brookings County, SD
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Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe
contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that
briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style,
method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has
historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Samuel Mortimer cabin is a one-and-a-half story single-pen rectangular log building,
roughly 17.5 ft. x 18.5 ft., which stands on a low gently-rolling ridge between Lake Tetonkaha
and Mortimer Slough in Oakwood Lakes State Park.[1] It is oriented northwest-southeast and has
a wood-frame front-gabled roof with an internal brick chimney near the ridge of its southwest
slope. It is built on a fieldstone foundation wall and is partially banked into the hillside so that
the lower halves of the walls on the southeast end of the building are fieldstone. The fieldstone
is patched in places with a concrete parge. The logs are roughly square-hewn, with crude
square notching and visible adze marks. They are chinked with concrete. The foundation and
logs directly above it are original. The roof is covered with cedar shingles that were replaced in
the 1980s and feature a modern metal drip edge. The gables are covered with vertically-hung log
siding.

The cabin has been somewhat modified since its original construction. Sources suggest that, over
the years, its different occupants altered it to suit their needs:

> Each of the tenants changed the look of the cabin. Several windows were added.
> A wood floor was installed, and the original ceiling boarded up. There were
> partitions added on the ground floor to make several small rooms. The rock
> foundation was covered with cement. A loft was added on the top of the building,
> extending the height of the home by several feet.[2]

A lean-to addition (perhaps an icehouse) was removed at some point, likely before 1950. Later
restoration crews working for the S.D. Department of Game, Fish and Parks tried to restore the
cabin in an authentic way—"the crew tore off the ceiling to expose the rough beams that were
there. They chiseled at the cement covering the rock foundation until they had uncovered the
rock. They tore out the partitions on the main floor, leaving the cabin one large room."[3] Due in

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[1] Cabin measures 17' across front, 17'6" across back, 18'3" on NE (rear) side and 18'8" on SW
side.

[2] Mary Haug, "'Ol Spot' Mortimer's Cabin Reminder of Simpler Times," *Brookings Register*,
August 7, 1975, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.

[3] Ibid.

Mortimer Cabin   Brookings County, SD
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part to these restoration efforts, the cabin has integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Its setting has changed over the years, with the development and later removal of military, manufacturing, and agricultural endeavors with associated infrastructure as well as the subsequent development of recreational infrastructure (see statement of significance for narrative history of the evolution of the property and its surroundings), but the cabin is now surrounded by a relatively undeveloped, rural area in a state park on the shores of Oakwood Lakes that is reminiscent of its setting during the period of significance, which was deciduous forested land. The Mortimer cabin continues to convey its historic associations.

Narrative Description

Exterior—Façade (Southeast Wall)

The sole entrance to the cabin is located in the middle of the southeast wall. The door jamb is framed, and is filled with a door of vertical rough pine boards that dates to the 1960s. Additional façade fenestration is limited to a wood-frame one-over-one fixed-sash window with plexiglass panes south of the entry and a wood-frame one-light fixed-sash window with a plexiglass pane in the gable.

Exterior—Southwest Wall

The southwest wall contains three window openings, each filled with a wood-frame one-over-one fixed-sash plexiglass window. The southern-most windows are set close together and are farther apart from the third window on the northern end.

Exterior—Northwest and Northeast Walls

The northwest and northeast log walls have no openings.

Interior—Plan and Details

The simple interior of the cabin features an open main floor with an enclosed stairwell in the east corner that leads to the open second floor, which was likely added early in its history. The stairwell was enclosed by the 1960s. A four-by-four post in the middle of the main floor supports the second-floor two-by-six joists. The main level is floored with rough pine planks, and the upper level is floored with one-by-six tongue-in-groove flooring. The brick chimney, originally internal, no longer descends into the interior, although a square chimney hole in the ceiling of the upper level remains.

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_____

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.)

| x | 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. |

| x | 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.)

| | A. | Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes |

| | B. | Removed from its original location |

| | C. | A birthplace or grave |

| | D. | A cemetery |

| | E. | A reconstructed building, object, or structure |

| | F. | A commemorative property |

| | G. | Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years |

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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Exploration/settlement
Architecture

Period of Significance

c.1869-1886

Significant Dates

c.1869

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes
level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any
applicable criteria considerations.)

Built ca. 1869 by fur-trapper and lumberman Samuel Mortimer and his American Indian wife,
whose name is unknown, the log-and-stone Mortimer cabin is significant for its association with
the historical themes of exploration and settlement, as well as social, ethnic, and economic
developments that accompanied the fur trade and subsequent non-Indian settlement in South
Dakota. Built before the arrival of the railroad, the cabin is reportedly one of the oldest buildings
still standing in the region, and as such is among the claim era resources identified in the South

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Dakota State Historic Preservation Office survey records as endangered "due to the majority of them having poor architectural integrity and for being functionally obsolete."[4] "Only a few cabins built by settlers in eastern South Dakota are still standing; fewer still remain on their original sites."[5]

The Mortimer cabin is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** at the state level for its significance in South Dakota **Exploration and Settlement,** and **Criterion C** at the state level as a rare extant example of early log cabin **Architecture**. The period of significance is 1869 to 1886**,** representing the years during which the Mortimer family occupied the cabin, beginning with the date of its construction.

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

Dakota Territory in the Early Nineteenth Century

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the region that became South Dakota teemed with activity related to the fur trade. Indigenous people who occupied the area as their homeland, especially those now referred to as Sioux, played a central role in the fur business. They were joined by non-Indian trappers and traders, who lived, worked and often married among them. The period between 1815 and 1850 constituted the most active years of the fur trade: historians estimate that more than one hundred "trading posts [were] maintained at one time or another within the present confines of South Dakota."[6] Usually situated near waterways or other established sites of indigenous activity, these posts dotted the Plains from the Big Sioux River to the Black Hills. Many posts were located at indigenous village sites along the Missouri River corridor, often "at the mouths of its tributaries."[7] It was on the Missouri, near the mouth of the Teton or Bad River, that one could find the region's most important fur trading post, Fort Pierre. Missouri posts like Fort Pierre, as well as those on the James and the Big Sioux, dealt in a staggering volume of furs. In 1830 alone, "the shipments to St. Louis from the country above the Big Sioux included 26,000 buffalo robes, 25,000 pounds of beaver fur, 37,500 muskrat skins, 4,000 otter skins, and 150,000 deer skins."[8]

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[4] Chris B. Nelson, "Jerome and Jonetta Harvey Homestead Cabin NRHP Registration Form," 2008, 8; Chris B. Nelson, "Pap Madison Cabin NRHP Registration Form," 2007, 3.

[5] Steven D. Ruple, "Herman Luce Cabin NRHP Nomination Form," 1977, 3.

[6] Herbert S. Schell, *History of South Dakota*, Fourth Edition, Revised. (Pierre, S.D.: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2004), 50.

[7] Ibid., 49.

[8] Ibid., 50.

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During the height of the fur trade, American government officials began formally exploring the region, which was then claimed but not controlled by the United States. In the late 1830s, the U.S. commissioned Joseph Nicolas Nicollet, a French scientist and academic who counted geography among his areas of expertise, to survey and map the Northern Plains. In 1838, Nicollet and his assistants—chief among them John C. Fremont—"explored the prairie plateau of western Minnesota and eastern South Dakota."[9] Like other non-Indian explorers, the Nicollet party depended on indigenous people and their established trails as they moved, traveling in horse-drawn carts driven by fur-company employees. They created new maps and names along the way. Among the South Dakota places they christened were numerous lakes, like that Fremont named for a United States senator, Lake Preston, although it was later renamed Lake Tetonkaha, and the Preston name "was later given to the current Lake Preston."[10] On a return trip the following year, the Nicollet party "traversed some of the same ground covered the previous summer in eastern South Dakota," including Oakwood Lakes which was located on one of the principle American Indian trails in the region.[11] In subsequent years, the lakes area continued to attract activity. Indian leader Inkpaduta and his band reportedly "held council at Oakwood Lake before carrying out the Spirit Lake, Iowa raid in 1857."[12] A year later, in September, a party of nine trappers working for the American Fur Company, and including a man named Byron Pay, recorded traveling through the Oakwood area.[13]

As the Northern Plains fur trade waned, due to a combination of regional and global factors, pressure on the region's indigenous inhabitants intensified. Military occupation paved the way for non-Indian settlers' entry into the area, even though the territory was not officially opened to settlement until 1859. In the spring of 1857, townsite companies out of St. Paul, Minnesota and Dubuque, Iowa tried to establish four townsites, which they dubbed Sioux Falls, Sioux Falls City, Medary, and Flandreau. Indian people, including "Yanktonais," compelled the abandonment of the Medary and Flandreau settlements" but the determined occupants of the new Sioux Falls communities—numbering about twenty-five people, including two women—erected defense fortifications and stayed.[14] The following year in 1858, the joint military and civilian

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[9] Ibid., 63.

[10] John Miller, "Early Settlements" n.d., 1, Oakwood Lakes State Park; Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 62–63.

[11] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 62–63. See Division of Parks & Recreation, "Oakwood Lakes State Park" (Division of Parks & Recreation, 1966), Oakwood Lakes State Park; "Old Indian Trails," n.d., Vertical File: Brookings County II, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.

[12] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book: In the Year of the South Dakota State Centennial.* (Brookings, S.D.: Brookings County History Book Committee, 1989), 34.

[13] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 28.

[14] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 71, 73-74.

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assaults on their territory convinced the Yankton Sioux to cede, via treaty, much of the South
Dakota land between the Big Sioux and Missouri rivers.[15]

Within a couple years of the 1858 treaty, a handful of settlements dotted the southeastern part of
South Dakota. Their population "excluding the government employees at the Yankton agency
and the fur traders scattered throughout the region" totaled about 500 people[16]—a number far
exceeded by the region's indigenous population. The Euro-American newcomers, many of them
from Wisconsin and Minnesota, concentrated along the Missouri River in Yankton, Vermillion,
Bon Homme, and Elk Point.[17] Many of these early residents continued to rely on trapping in
what was one of the last bastions of the fur-trade because, in the 1860s, "the [Big] Sioux Valley
contained more fur-bearing animals than any other part of the North American continent."[18] But
in 1862, after violent conflicts between the Dakota Sioux and white residents of Minnesota
affected the entire region, settlers abandoned all of the new towns in Dakota Territory except the
fortified settlement at Yankton.[19]

In the aftermath of the 1862 Minnesota conflict, the U.S. Army swarmed into Dakota Territory.[20]
This included temporary Army occupation at Oakwood Lakes. A breastworks was erected in
1862 in the southern region of the lakes. Some sources say the breastworks were actually built in
1857, abandoned, recoccupied in 1859, 1862-63, and lastly in 1865-66.[21] It was also reportedly
used as an Indian Scout camp.[22]

At the same time, on the west edge of the Plains, prospectors combing Rocky Mountain
drainages discovered rich gold deposits. Violent conflict with Northern Plains indigenous
communities intensified as miners from around the globe rushed to the Rockies from all
directions, followed by merchants and farmers who hoped to make money supplying them.
Hordes of "Montana-bound emigrants crowding into Yankton hotels and spreading their tents

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[15] Ibid., 71.

[16] Ibid., 78.

[17] Ibid., 78-79.

[18] Donald Dean Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley: Medary, Sioux Falls, Dell
Rapids, Flandreau, Brookings, Watertown* (Santa Fe, N.M.: [publisher not identified], 1967), 58.
[19] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 79.

[20] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book: In the Year of
the South Dakota State Centennial.* (Brookings, South Dakota: Brookings County History Book
Committee, 1989), 28, 34.; See William R. Marshall to Gen. H.H. Sibley, October 22, 1862,
Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.; Frank Crisler,
"Oakwood Lakes Fort Built for Indian War That Never Came," *Arlington Sun*, June 18, 2015.;
Ardith Deboer, John Miller, and Lorraine Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes"
1983, 2, Oakwood Lakes State Park.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

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over the townsite . . . brightened the prospects for the Dakota villages as outfitting points."[23] Immigration to and through the region accelerated in 1865, when "Congress authorized the construction of three wagon roads through Dakota."[24] The following year no fewer than thirty-six steamboats chugged up the Missouri River toward Fort Benton. From Benton, the world's innermost port, travelers proceeded overland to the booming gold fields.[25]

As Northern Plains indigenous peoples struggled to maintain their homes and families, non-Indians increasingly encroached on the region. Steamboat traffic on the upper Missouri crested in 1867, when thirty-nine boats made for Fort Benton, as regional boosters pursued the prospect of a transcontinental railroad through Dakota Territory. By then, "the domain west of Elk Point was thickly dotted with new homes, and settlers were moving up the Big Sioux."[26] With the 1868 signing of the Fort Laramie treaty, which covered almost the whole of the Northern Plains, the settler invasion of South Dakota gained steam. That same year, "completion of the Sioux City and Pacific Railroad to Sioux City [Iowa] . . . gave the settlers in Union and Clay counties access to eastern markets for their wheat and suggested that South Dakota would soon have a railroad itself.[27] Between 1867 and 1870 "four different companies were organized to promote railway construction to Yankton, and five others to build lines from some specified river town into the interior of the Territory. Connections were sought not only with lines expected to reach the Big Sioux, but also with the Union Pacific in the south and the Northern Pacific in the north."[28] By the dawn of the 1870s, "the line of settlement advanced rapidly up the James, Vermillion, and Big Sioux rivers and across the intervening prairies once considered suitable only for stock-raising. Homeseekers also advanced into Brookings, Hanson, Hutchinson, Lake, Moody, and Turner counties."[29]

In 1873, boosters' dream of a Dakota railroad became a reality when the Dakota Southern began operation between Sioux City and Yankton.[30] With the arrival of the railroad,

> The settlements along the Missouri entered a new state of development. Many
> lumberyards and implement stores spring up almost overnight in the railway towns along
> the Missouri. The assurance of a wider market led to expanded farming operations.
> Farms close to the railroad doubled in value. Dakota wheat commanded a favorable

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[23] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 80.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 82; Joel Overholser, *Fort Benton: World's Innermost Port* (Fort Benton, Mont.: Falcon Press Publishing Co., 1987).

[26] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 109.

[27] Ibid., 109.

[28] Ibid., 110.

[29] Ibid., 109.

[30] Ibid., 113.

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market in the Mississippi Valley, as did the flour processed by commercial mills located at Elk Point, Vermillion, and Yankton.[31]

The surrounding countryside bustled as well, and in 1873 "because of the many land filings in the Big Sioux Valley, the land office at Vermilion was moved to Sioux Falls."[32] Once in "the Big Sioux Valley, many a settler turned fur-trapper during the winter months. Those who owned teams hired out their services to neighbors with land to be broken. Others found employment in the towns, where there was especially heavy demand for carpenters and blacksmiths."[33] More than a few worked building the railroad, for the railroad itself was the region's biggest employer.[34]

As new crops planted by early farmers filled eastbound trains, new residents crowded railcars arriving in the Dakota settlement.[35] So, too, did travelers headed for more distant destinations, like the many who rushed to the Black Hills of western South Dakota after 1874 when word spread of gold discoveries there. The invasion of the Black Hills contributed to what would be the final major conflict between the United States Army and Northern Plains Indians, a bloody 1876 battle on the banks of the Little Big Horn in present day Montana.[36] In the wake of that fight, the Battle of the Greasy Grass (a.k.a. the Battle of the Little Big Horn), the United States military undertook a Northern Plains troop surge that effectively precluded successful mass armed resistance by the region's indigenous tribes.

The Great Dakota Boom, 1878-1887

Coupled with ongoing railroad construction, military occupation of the northern Great Plains enabled wholesale settler colonization. The ten years between 1878 and 1887 witnessed unprecedented migration into the region, a phenomenon since known as "the Great Dakota Boom." Pulled by the "liberal land policies of the federal government" and by "the moist condition of the prairie in the early 1880s," and pushed by "severe depression in the east," people poured into Dakota Territory.[37] Before 1878, "agricultural settlement was still generally confined to the region south and east of a line running from the Yankton Reservation and the western part of Hutchinson County to the Minnesota border east of Brookings . . . by the middle of the 1880's

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[31] Ibid., 115.

[32] Ibid., 110.

[33] Ibid., 177.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., 115.

[36] Ibid., 128-129, 136.

[37] Scott Heidepriem, *Bring on the Pioneers! History of Hand County* (Miller, S.D.: Heidepriem, 1978), 13.

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settlers' shacks and little towns and villages had sprouted up throughout the entire region."[38]
The "first outward manifestation of the Great Dakota Boom was a heavy influx of settlers out of
Minnesota into the Big Sioux Valley."[39] In southeastern South Dakota, the 1870 non-Indian
population of about 10,000 mushroomed to 81,781 by 1880, and to 248,569 five years later.[40]

The Great Dakota Boom reflected and reinforced the spread of railroads throughout the region.
Railroads needed crops and customers for profit, and railway companies zealously promoted
Dakota as their tracks pushed over the Plains.[41] Track-building and town-building went hand-in-
hand. As the Dakota Central division of the Chicago & Northwestern built toward Dakota from
Minnesota in the summer of 1878, "settlers began to stream into Brookings County and the
eastern part of Kingsbury" before the rails even reached the border. By the fall of 1879, "the
railroad was graded and ironed as far as Volga," and construction crews showed no signs of
slowing down.[42] Ten years later, the new state of South Dakota boasted 2,500 miles of
railroad.[43]

Railroads shaped not only the pace but the geography of non-Indian settlement in the Oakwood
area and surrounding eastern Dakota region. Between 1878 and 1890, Sioux Falls benefitted
from the arrival of no fewer than five rail lines. Its population increased five-fold and, with
10,177 residents, it surpassed Yankton as South Dakota's leading city.[44] Elsewhere, the arrival of
the railroad led to the wholesale re-orientation of settlements. Numerous "railway towns received
their first permanent residents from nearby hamlets that were doomed to extinction when railroad
surveyors passed them by. Brookings, for instance, grew from Fountain and Medary."[45] In this
way, "the railroads quickly defined a map of eastern South Dakota that looks much the same
today."[46] This map reflected the fact that it was now "the rail rather than the resources deciding
where towns would go."[47]

The spreading railways also sprouted brand new towns at regular intervals along their trunks. As
tracks crisscrossed the country, "landseekers rapidly occupied the area within ten or twelve miles

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[38] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 158. "A small vanguard had already gone beyond the line of
settlement, following the Big Sioux."
[39] Ibid, 161.
[40] Ibid, 159, 161.
[41] Ibid., 160.
[42] Ibid., 161.
[43] Ibid., 161.
[44] Ibid., 165.
[45] Ibid., 167.
[46] Crisler, "Before There Was Arlington . . ."
[47] Frank Crisler, "Oakwood Town Founded in 1877 by Veterans of Civil War," *Arlington Sun*,
July 9, 2015.

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of the railway," resulting in a burgeoning rural population.[48]   In the three years between 1877 and 1880, Brookings County's population grew from fewer than 250 to almost 5,000. By 1885, it totaled 8,288, and by 1890, the population was 10,132.[49]

Samuel Mortimer and Oakwood Lakes

As the fur trade society of the northern Great Plains gave way to agricultural settlement, "many of the white participants in the trade . . . elected to remain in the region."[50] Often these men had married indigenous women and formed families who were part of tribal communities. Using their knowledge of the region and its inhabitants, they worked as scouts and interpreters and facilitated non-Indian settlement in other ways.[51]

Among them was a man named Samuel Mortimer, who in about 1869 moved with "his Indian wife and her son, and possibly her brother" to the shores of Oakwood Lakes, then still a "trappers paradise."[52] Mortimer had been in the Dakota region since at least 1859, when he was recorded "as one of three men, along with a Dr. Caulkins and Dr. Whitness, who are named to a committee on Nov. 7, 1859, after a meeting in the house of James McHenry. . . held in Vermillion."[53] He may have also been

> awarded a spot on the committee as a representative of Yankton, as a separate source has
> him living nine miles north of the city at the time, at 'Major Lyman's' trading house with
> Smutty Bear's camp . . . The committee was formed to draft a resolution to the U.S.
> Congress asking for permission to form a local government, primarily for the purpose of
> protection from the Indians, and to issue land titles.[54]

Mortimer was living at Fort Thompson just before his move to Oakwood Lakes.[55] Upon his arrival in the area, Mortimer built his cabin, "the first log cabin at the lakes,"[56] "between the two major lakes of the Oakwood chain."[57]

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[48] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 166.

[49] Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 44.

[50] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 64.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 30; Donald Dean Parker to Will G. Robinson, January 14, 1948, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives; "Oakwood Lakes Mortimer Cabin 3 Min. Narration" n.d., Oakwood Lakes State Park. Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*.

[53] Frank Crisler, "'Spot' Mortimer's House Still Stands, but Spot Is a Mystery," *Arlington Sun*, June 25, 2015.

[54] Crisler, "'Spot' Mortimer's House Still Stands, but Spot Is a Mystery."

[55] "An Indian-Fighter Story, Without Indians," *Arlington Sun*, June 25, 2015; Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 34.

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The trees needed to build these log cabins were part of what drew people to the lakes. Resource-rich, the Oakwood area had long been "a popular location for the Indian councils and camping grounds," as well as an area American Indians visited seasonally to make pemmican.[58] As newcomers pushed into South Dakota, "the first settlers in the area gravitated to places with timber and water." Oakwood especially drew them, for it had "the four necessities . . . water, timber, wild game and farmland."[59] Like Samuel Mortimer, other early lake area settlers built "cabins constructed from logs they cut down around the lake."[60] In 1871, the demand for logs led Mortimer to sell some timber, likely from land on the north side of the lake called "Mortimer's Woods," for $100 an acre. The buyer reportedly was given ten years to harvest trees, some of which were over three feet in diameter. [61] Oakwood "trees provided fuel for heat in the winter" as well. On the Plains, "they were a rare and valuable commodity . . . when neighbors came his way . . . he made a business of chopping down the oaks."[62]

Oakwood Lakes likely drew the Mortimers for its cultural as well as its natural amenities, for around the lakes at the time lived a mélange of Indian, Metis, and white people in which the mixed Mortimer family would have felt at home. An 1870 census of Brookings County noted 163 people, including 18 "whites" (12 of whom were immigrants, including 10 Norwegians) and 145 "Christian Sioux Indians." [63] The census failed to count the many more unconverted American Indians, and at the time, "there were plenty of Indians in that vicinity [Oak Lake] and the settlers were on friendly terms with them."[64] Among the early settlers there was "a German named Eppersaugh [a.k.a. Ebersold]" who arrived "in 1865 or 1866, marrying an Indian woman" as well as "a Mr. Goodard and Carl Poderson" [a.k.a. Mr. Goddard and Carl Pederson] who lived

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[56] John E Bergh, *A Short Historical Presentation on Some Early Settlements in Brookings Co.: Given at Dakota State College, Madison, Apr. 3-4, 1970* ([Place of publication not identified]: [publisher not identified], 1970), 6.

[57] Crisler, "'Spot' Mortimer's House Still Stands, but Spot Is a Mystery."

[58] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 35. See also Will G. Robinson to Donald Dean Parker, January 15, 1948, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.; W. W. Pay to R. F. Kerr, December 28, 1897, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.; Division of Parks & Recreation, "Oakwood Lakes State Park."

[59] Frank Crisler, "Before There Was Arlington . . .," *Arlington Sun*, June 23, 2004.

[60] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 34.

[61] Gustav O. Sandro, "History of Brookings County" (M.A. (History), University of South Dakota, 1936), 8, Brookings Public Library. "Oakwood Township" n.d., 4, Oakwood Lakes State Park.

[62] Frank Crisler, "Even 1000 Years Ago, People Lived at Oakwood Lakes," *Arlington Sun*, June 11, 2015.

[63] Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 35.

[64] Ibid., 21-22.

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there in the second half of the 1860s.[65] By 1870, settlers included "perhaps also Sven Pederson and two other Norwegians who, according to Nils Kollin, had arrived in 1869 and built a hut at Lake Oakwood and trapped in the winter."[66] This mixed society remained tied to the economy of the area. In Mortimer's case, his marriage may have "offered him protection from Indian attack [and] helped Mortimer to become acquainted with other Indians who helped him find choice furs and trapping areas."[67]

When the Mortimer family arrived in the area, they were accompanied by another mixed family, that of James Stoughton [a.k.a. Stoden] and his Indian wife. [68] The following summer, when Richard Pettigrew (the future U.S. Senator) arrived to survey the Oakwood area, he noted only "two settlers living at Oakwood Lakes—Samuel Mortimer (known as "Old Spot") and James Stoughton." [69] That survey carved the land into conveyable parcels, facilitating its transfer from the recently acquired American "public domain" to private non-Indian parties. According to the Pettigrew's plat, the land beneath Mortimer's cabin was Lot 2 of Section 6 of the Oakwood Township (Township 111 North, Range 51 West). Lot 2 was surrounded by lakes and other land parcels, among them what is now known as Scout Island. Local historians John E. Bergh and Frank Crisler hold that Mortimer wanted the island land surveyed so he could own it. When "Mr. Pettigrew demanded a way to get to the Island to survey it," Old Spot Mortimer reportedly built him one. He is said to have "obliged with filling in with rock so he could cross" or, alternatively, to have built "a haphazard wooden bridge over a swampy area, to allow the surveyor to cross." [70] Pettigrew, for his part, transformed the island into Lot 7. As Pettigrew was completing his survey, Brookings County was created in 1871. At that time it included parts of current Moody, Lake, and Kingsbury counties in addition to all of the current Brookings County.[71] Early county proceedings reflected the region's mixed population and diverse county officials, with discussions likely occurring in English, Norwegian, and Sioux.[72]

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[65] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 28. Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 22. Chuck Cecil, *Fire the Anvils, Beat the Drums: The Story of Brookings County, 1860 to 1900* ([Volga, S.D.]: Brookings County Historical Society, 2008), 11.

[66] Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 35.

[67] Mary Haug, "'Ol Spot' Mortimer's Cabin Reminder of Simpler Times."

[68] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 30.

[69] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 34.

[70] Bergh, *A Short Historical Presentation on Some Early Settlements in Brookings Co.*, 6. Crisler, "'Spot' Mortimer's House Still Stands, but Spot Is a Mystery."

[71] Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 35.

[72] Ibid., 45.

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The influx of settlers in the first Dakota Boom inspired reorganization of local government, and in 1873 Brookings County acquired its present boundaries.[73] Among the county commissioners in the new Brookings County were "George W. Porter and Samuel Mortimer of Oakwood lakes," who assumed office in January of that year "and took their seats at [the 7th] meeting" of Brookings County commissioners. That July, at the ninth commissioners meeting, "Mortimer resigned and Byron E. Pay took his place."[74]

Mortimer's replacement by Pay on the commission in some sense served as a metaphor for broader shifts in the area. Byron Pay, who had been in the 1858 American Fur Company party that trapped around Oakwood Lakes, moved to the area from Mankato, Minnesota (via Medary), in 1873. The following year he sowed the locale's first wheat.[75] At the same time, Mortimer's Indian wife reportedly died and his "traplines were declining" and "the trees ran out."[76] In 1874, Mortimer moved away but retained ownership of the land at Oakwood Lakes. Sources differ as to his destination—some held that he went to Yankton while others place him in Vermillion—but they agree that at his new home he re-married, this time to a "white" widow with three young children. Stoughton, too, left the Oakwood area in the mid-1870s.[77] By then the settlement at Oakwood was one of the region's three principal settlements, one of three destinations that enjoyed weekly mail service from Medary.[78] It remained a mixed community: in 1875, before they established their farm the newly-arrived Sutton family was assisted by "a band of Indian hunters and their families" living at Oakwood Lakes.[79]

In July 1877, Mortimer returned to his Oakwood Lakes cabin, bringing his new wife Catherine and her children with him. His return was well-timed, for Oakwood was on the verge of a population boom.[80] When he returned that summer, "he was one of 36 white settlers, most of whom lived just east of him" and the new non-Indian society was just beginning to establish

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[73] South Dakota Association of County Commissioners et al., "South Dakota Journal of County Government.," *South Dakota Journal of County Government.*, April 1956, 87.

[74] Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 46.

[75] Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 69. Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 28, 35.

[76] Crisler, "'Spot' Mortimer's House Still Stands, but Spot Is a Mystery."; Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 83.

[77] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 34.

[78] Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 63. See also Donald Dean Parker, "Out of the Past," *Brookings Register*, August 11, 1975, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.

[79] Frank Crisler, "Sutton Family Was Among First Settlers, Learned from Natives," *Arlington Sun*, July 2, 2015.

[80] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 34; Trail Guide to South Dakota State Parks April 2006, www.SDparks.info.

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itself.[81] The year before, Brookings County included Oakwood Township (along with Preston, Laketon, and Winsor) in its newly-formed county school district No. 5, and public school instruction began in 1877, when Brookings County contained 250 residents.[82] At the same time, the Oakwood area got permission for an official road, which ran north-south about three-quarters of a mile east of Oakwood Lakes and connected to an existing county road.[83] Made in 1877, the first map of Brookings County showed one road to the Oakwood area set through Lake Village and northwest around the west side of Lake Poinsett. Another road led from Oakwood to the Lake Hendricks area.[84] A Fourth of July ceremony held in the summer of 1877 at Oakwood Lakes was attended by "20 people . . . one year later, there were over 400 people at the festivities."[85] Celebrants at that second gathering would have passed through the "tiny and primitive" town of Oakwood, which was officially platted in 1878. In the course of that same year, all the land around Oakwood was taken up.[86]

Byron Pay, who "ran a hotel and acted as a locating agent," was credited with Oakwood's founding, and the fledgling town flourished.[87] Oakwood soon had a total of "thirteen different business establishments including a flour mill and many log cabins and residences."[88] In addition to the fieldstone gristmill, businesses in bustling Oakwood included a large general store, a combination hardware/grocery store, a meat market, a drugstore and a feed store as well as a land office, a law office, and a real estate office. A resident blacksmith offered essential services, as did a judge. Public buildings included a schoolhouse and a log post office with a "straw covered dirt floor."[89] The town's stagecoach stop was served by stage lines that ran to Gary and Goodwin weekly and one that ran to Flandreau daily. Stage service also connected Oakwood to Sioux Falls.[90] Visitors who stepped off the coach would lodge in the center of town at Pay's hotel, which "did a large business. Regular lodgers included the teacher, lawyer,

[81] Crisler, "Before There Was Arlington . . ."
[82] Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 47.
[83] Ibid., 51.
[84] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 181.
[85] Haug, "'Ol Spot Mortimer's Cabin Reminder of Simpler Times."
[86] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 11; Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 28, 35.
[87] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 28, 35.
[88] "A Short History of Early Settlements, Cities, Towns and Trails in Brookings County" n.d., 4, Vertical File: Brookings County I, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.
[89] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 6; Bergh, *A Short Historical Presentation on Some Early Settlements in Brookings Co.*, 8; Poole, "Brookings County History," 20.
[90] Crisler, "Before There Was Arlington . . ."; Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 5; *Early Residents of Brookings County, South Dakota. Census Data for 1860-1870-1880* (Brookings, S.D.: County Historical Society, 1960), iv.

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mail carrier, etc. Every night found the place filled with transients—agents, landseekers, and visitors from back east."[91] By 1880, Oakwood, with 50 permanent residents, was the second largest town in Brookings County. Another 287 people lived nearby in the months-old Volga, but the majority of the county lived in rural jurisdictions: Brookings County's 1880 population totaled 4,959 people. [92]

One of those dispersed people was Samuel (as "Mortemer") whom the census showed with his wife Katherine, stepson John Wellet, stepdaughters Katherine and Eve S Wellet, as well as a German immigrant named August Schulze who was working as a farm laborer.[93] Financially speaking, the Mortimer family was likely quite comfortable, for Samuel did a thriving business after his 1877 return to the shores of Oakwood Lakes. Old Spot "began a new business selling rights to cut down the trees, and soon branched out, operating a lime kiln, turning limestone and scrap wood into quicklime, which was used to make plaster or mortar. That meant Spot Mortimer's island became a one-stop building supplies center, providing everything—wood and filler—to build a house."[94] The limestone kiln "he built and operated" was "located on the west side of Turtle Lake" and faced west. "Using wood for fuel, the kiln took at least four hours to complete the process of making lime. One of the uses for the product was putting on walls to bright up the interior. It was also used as a sort of cement."[95] Mortimer advertised his business in the area newspaper, the *Brookings County Press*. An 1879 ad read "Samuel Mortimer, Lime, Wood, By Cord or Load, Posts and Rails, Oakwood, Dakota."[96] Customers streamed in: "Mortimer played an important part in constructing homes, the mill, and many businesses."[97]

In addition to swelling Old Spot's business, the influx to the Oakwood Lakes region brought other changes in the neighborhood. As lands all around were taken up, Mortimer took steps to ensure title to his land was secured to his family. In July of 1878 he deeded his property—Lot 5 in S31 T112N R51W (Preston Township) and Lots 2-5 & 7 in S6 and Lot 1 in S5 of T111N R51W (Oakwood Township), totaling 168.34 acres—to Catherine Mortimer.[98] Just then, new

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[91] Mrs. Claude Parker, "Old Hotel Still Standing on Site of Pioneer Town at Oakwood Lake," 1938, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.

[92] *Early Residents of Brookings County, South Dakota. Census Data for 1860-1870-1880*, iv; Parker, *Pioneering in the Upper Big Sioux Valley*, 44.

[93] U.S. Census Bureau, Township 111, Range 51, Brookings County, Dakota Territory (June 7, 1880), 9A.

[94] Crisler, "'Spot' Mortimer's House Still Stands, but Spot Is a Mystery."

[95] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 4.

[96] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 35.

[97] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 4.

[98] Warranty Deed from Samuel Mortimer to Catherine Mortimer, 20 July 1878, Brookings County, South Dakota, Mortimer Cabin research file, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Pierre, SD.

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neighbors moved in. A man named A.D. Maxwell claimed land near Oakwood Lakes and, with
lumber hauled from Canby, MN, built a shanty on it in 1878.[99] Meanwhile, Byron Pay sold his
farm to George Henry, Sr.[100] The Henry family lived north of the old fort and had a son who
recalled:

> [our] nearest neighbor . . . Samuel Mortimer . . . who had been an early day
> trapper and at one time married to an Indian woman. She died and he then married
> a white woman. They had three children, a boy and two girls. We visited them a
> good deal and 'old Spot' told us a lot about the early days. During the Indian
> uprising he was at Yankton and aided in building the stockade which was built
> there for protection. After the Indian trouble was over he returned to Oakwood
> Lakes and after the survey was made filed on his land. [101]

The Henrys arrived in Oakwood in 1878, and their recorded impressions suggest that Samuel
remained connected to the area's indigenous communities. According to George Henry, Jr., "one
Indian, Charlie Minneta [Minnetonka] was a frequent visitor at Mortimer's."[102] Minnetonka was
a "famous character" known for his animated stories of past adventures.[103] He was remembered
as "a wonder, a white man said to be raised by Indians, with an Indian wife."[104] One man who
came to Oakwood as a teenager in the mid-1870s remembered "Old Spot" "as an Indian,
although he did have a bunch of whiskers and drank pretty heavily."[105] In 1980, area newspapers
wrote that Mortimer was "a man who had lived with the Indians since boyhood."[106]

The railroad line that ran through and produced Brookings continued westward. It ran several
miles south of Oakwood, and thereby caused its demise. In 1879-1880, "Volga was the terminus
during the winter . . . and served as a construction camp while grading and track-laying was
continued in the direction of Huron. Three hotels and a railroad boarding house provided
accommodations for the town's transient population which included some 300 railway workers

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[99] "A.D. Maxwell, Pioneer Business Man," n.d., Arlington Community Museum.

[100] *Early Residents of Brookings County, South Dakota. Census Data for 1860-1870-1880*, iv.

[101] Frank Crisler, "There Was (a Little) Gold in Them Thar Oakwood Lakes," *Arlington Sun*,
July 16, 2015; George Henry, "Historical Sketches," *The Dakotah Traveler.* 1, no. 5 (November
1934): 28.

[102] Henry, "Historical Sketches," 33.

[103] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 3.

[104] Crisler, "Before There Was Arlington . . ."

[105] Ernest V. Sutton to Will G. Robinson, November 5, 1947, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes,
South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.

[106] "O.T. Nelson Prepared An Excellent Summary of Arlington's Progress," *Arlington Sun*, June
25, 1980, Souvenir edition.

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as well as the settlers who were flocking into the region in ever-increasing numbers."[107] When the rails of the Brookings-Watertown branch line of the Northwestern running north out of Volga were laid a couple miles east of Oakwood in 1881-1883, the trackside town of Bruce sprang up. By the middle of the 1880s, "almost all of the buildings and businesses [in Oakwood] had been moved, many to Bruce and Volga."[108] The dying town enjoyed a brief revival in 1883-1884, when word of gold discoveries at the lakes spread; for a short time, "people came by the hundreds."[109] Byron Pay's hotel, "which had been on the verge of closing . . . suddenly boomed, as did other merchants who managed to make it through the lean years after 1879, when the trains came and most of the people left."[110] But profitable mining quickly proved elusive, and the associated influx fleeting. Soon, "only the old stone mill . . . and the hotel were left."[111] Oakwood "became a ghost town." The post office closed in 1894, and "with the closing of the post office and the general abandonment of the town [Pay's hotel] became just an ordinary farmhouse." [112]

Later History of the Mortimer Cabin

Oakwood's demise, and the broader population explosion that attended it, must have convinced Samuel Mortimer that it was time to move. In 1885, the Mortimers advertised their Oakwood Lakes property for sale in the *Volga Tribune*, calling the cabin "a large dwelling house":

> a splendid farm for sale adjoining Oakwood Lake containing 168 acres, 75 of which is under cultivation and over half of the whole is timber. Said farm has a large dwelling house, well finished and all necessary out-buildings and two good wells. Said farm is well adapted to stock or grain and has never yielded less than 20 bushels to the acre. For particulars, call and see owner on the premises or address her at Oakwood Post Office. Catherine Mortimer.[113]

The following August, Soloman Walters purchased the 168.34 acre Mortimer place for $1,800.[114] The Mortimers may have remained in the area for a while after this sale. There is little indication of what subsequently happened to "Old Spot" Mortimer and his family. His wife

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[107] Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 162.

[108] Crisler, "Oakwood Town Founded in 1877 by Veterans of Civil War."

[109] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 9.

[110] Crisler, "There was (a little) Gold in Them Thar Oakwood Lakes."

[111] Parker, "Old Hotel Still Standing on Site of Pioneer Town at Oakwood Lake."

[112] Ibid.

[113] Crisler, "'Spot' Mortimer's House Still Stands, but Spot Is a Mystery."; Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 4.

[114] Waranty Deed from Samuel and Catherine Mortimer to Soloman Waters, 11 October 1886, Brookings County, South Dakota, Mortimer Cabin research file, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Pierre, SD.

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Catherine died in 1908 in Kearney, Nebraska, and her eldest son John "Doc" Wellet died in 1958 and was buried in Sheridan, Wyoming.[115]

Soloman Walters bought the Mortimer place, including the extant cabin and the other infrastructure, but resided in Bruce. Walters had arrived in the Oakwood area with his wife and baby son in 1878. Born on a farmstead in Sweden in 1844, Walters had previously lived in Manitoba, Canada, and in Minnesota, where he worked as a stone mason. In 1878, the Walters family took up land "near the Big Sioux River, three miles south of what is now the town of Bruce." That first year they wintered in Sioux Falls, where they shared a duplex with the family of surveyor Pettigrew. [116] In 1883, Walters expanded his activities in the area when he "opened a general store" in Bruce. From his base in Bruce, Walters "bought wheat, dealt in lumber and took a deep interest in community affairs." His business affairs soon included a thriving real estate business, the holdings of which included the former Mortimer farm, which was often occupied and operated by tenants.[117] In 1884, the Walters family built a home in Bruce where they would live until Soloman and his wife died.[118]

The difficulties of the 1920s and '30s affected the Oakwood area much as they did the rest of South Dakota. In 1934, the Walters family lost the Mortimer farm to foreclosure.[119] They had held onto the farm through ups and downs since buying it in 1886. After first establishing himself in Bruce in the 1880s, Soloman Walters had gone on to serve as county commissioner then as a legislator in the South Dakota House of Representatives. Along the way, he successfully amassed significant real estate holdings in the area. But at the turn of the century, cancer struck Soloman and, despite traveling to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota for treatment, he died in 1901. He was just 56 years old, and his widow Matilda was left with eight children, the youngest being 11 months old. She lived in the family home in Bruce until her death in 1941.[120]

Matilda and her children inherited Soloman's substantial holdings, and after his estate was settled in 1905 they owned undivided shares of the real estate, which included the Mortimer

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[115] Crisler, "'Spot' Mortimer's House Still Stands, but Spot Is a Mystery."

[116] *Early Residents of Brookings County, South Dakota. Census Data for 1860-1870-1880*, 114; Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 665–66.

[117] Poole, "Brookings County History," 19.

[118] The Walters' home was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 (#78002539). "Obituary: Soloman Walters," n.d., Oakwood Lakes State Park.

[119] Sheriff's Deed, 9 November 1935, Brookings County, South Dakota, Mortimer Cabin research file, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Pierre, SD.

[120] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 665–66. "Obituary: Soloman Walters." "Death's Harvest: The Grim Reaper Gathers the Ripened Fruit and Cuts Down the Flower of Youth: Soloman Walters," n.d., Oakwood Lakes State Park.

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place as well as adjacent lands and other parcels.[121] They consolidated these parcels into the Sol Walters Realty Co., and different members of the Walters family held title to the Mortimer place—which was conveyed with adjacent lands totaling about 330 acres—over the years.[122] The documentary record contains little evidence to suggest the family often, if ever, occupied the Mortimer farm. Rather, "much of the time the land, including building site, was rented out. Several area families recall parents and grandparents living in the house."[123] Among the tenants on the farm were Niels and Emma Jensen. "They worked for a farmer and were able to live in the [Mortimer] cabin." It was their "first home in America." Although they moved away—buying a farm west of Aurora—they returned years later to show their Oakwood Lakes home to their granddaughter.[124]

Despite its status as a rental, during the Walters family tenure, the Mortimer place was transformed. One winter shortly after purchasing the place, Walters moved a house he'd built on Section 36 of Laketon township "across the frozen lake and set [it] down about 12 feet away from the Mortimer log house which had by now been covered with siding for its preservation."[125] The Walters family subsequently constructed "many buildings . . . including two large barns."[126] They built "the old cement silo on this farm and the silo erected about two miles south . . . about 1920." These stone silos were still standing in 1983.[127] But these investments failed to stave off financial trouble in the 1930s, when "crops were so poor that the owners lost the land as was common during those years throughout this area."[128]

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[121] Final Decree in the estate of Soloman Walters, 15 May 1905, Brookings County, South Dakota, Mortimer Cabin research file, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Pierre, SD.

[122] Deed from William H. Walters and Grace A. Walters to Sol Walters Realty, 12 June 1905, Brookings County, South Dakota; Deed from Sol Walters Realty Company to William H. Walters, 8 April 1915; Deed from William H. Walters and Grace J. Walters, 28 April 1915, Brookings County, South Dakota; Deed from Sol Walters Realty Company to Vern A. Walters, 29 November 1920, Brookings County, South Dakota; Deed from Sol Walters Realty Company to Clifton Walters, 8 May 1928, Brookings County, South Dakota; Deed from Clifton Walters to Sol Walters Realty Company, 26 December 1928, Brookings County; South Dakota, Sheriff's Deed, 9 November 1935, Brookings County, South Dakota; Mortimer Cabin research file, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Pierre, SD.

[123] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 4.

[124] "Mortimer's Cabin," *South Dakota Magazine*, July 2011, Oakwood Lakes State Park.

[125] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 4.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid.

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Although the family lost the Mortimer farm, Matilda Walters managed to hang on to the family home in Bruce until her death in 1941.[129] She left behind a large family that cherished memories of visiting their grandmother and their family's farm. Granddaughters recalled how they "enjoyed so many picnics at Oakwood Lakes," and loved to visit "to the old site of the family farm where we spent many happy hours. We especially enjoyed playing in and on top of the old log cabin with its attached ice house."[130] The Walters family apparently let other community members enjoy their property as well. During the 1920s and 30s the "Boy Scouts of America, in an echo of the GAR reunions, came to Oakwood Lakes . . . and held summer camps on the island that Spot Mortimer once owned."[131] These gatherings were no small affair. In the summer of 1929, the *Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader* featured an article about the camp at which "650 lads of Sioux Falls district enjoy the wonder of nature each year."[132] But in the 1930s, which were so "hard on the farmers in the area, the Boy Scouts encampments ended."[133]

After the Union Central Life Insurance Company foreclosed on the Mortimer/Walters farm in 1934, it was sold to Omar Doop and his family. The Doops may have already occupied the farm as tenants—one source dates their tenure from 1930—and they would own and occupy it for about 10 years.[134] During the time they lived there, the handsome farm boasted numerous substantial buildings, including a frame farmhouse, two substantial barns, a silo, and a series of additional agricultural and domestic outbuildings.

The large Doop family had been in the Bruce area off and on since 1913, when Chan and Ida (Young) Doop arrived in town with 8 children, among them 21-year-old (Calvin) Omar.[135] Shortly after their arrival, Omar Doop met Gertrude Gurds "when she was working in the lunch room in the Bruce Hotel. They were married in 1916 and moved to Minnesota for a few years. When they returned to the Bruce area, they lived on the south Lake Oakwood farm [of Omar's parents] until the house burned down there in 1924. Then they moved south of Bruce four miles, and the Doop children attended the Renshaw School. The next move took them to the farm where the Mortimer cabin is located."[136] By the time they settled at the Mortimer place, the

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[129] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 665–66.

[130] Bruce Centennial Committee, *Bruce, South Dakota, 1883-1983.*, 323. Ibid., 320. The farm, they wrote, "is now in Oakwood State Park."

[131] Crisler, "There Was (a Little) Gold in Them Thar Oakwood Lakes."

[132] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 13.

[133] Crisler, "There Was (a Little) Gold in Them Thar Oakwood Lakes."

[134] Deboer, Miller, and Rasmussen, "Oakwood Town and Oakwood Lakes," 4. Paul Tande, "Oakwood Lakes Farm, Omar and Gertrude Doop's Farm, 1930-1946 (Drawn from Sketches Prepared by Gilmer Doop)," August 30, 2009, Oakwood Lakes State Park.

[135] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 397.

[136] Ibid., 397–98.

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Doops had 13 children, ranging in age from an infant to a 17-year-old. With so many kids, as daughter Dorothy Doop recalled:

> [we] didn't get to town a lot when we were young. Still we were a big enough family to have a lot of fun by ourselves. We looked forward to hunting seasons so we could take turns opening the gate for hunters. There was usually a small 'tip' for whoever opened the gate. Our house didn't have a yard fence around it and the pigs would come right up to the steps and root around. . .The Mortimer Cabin was just north of our house and was our "playhouse." We didn't realize its historical significance at all then. It was just an "old house." I have spent many hours playing in that cabin. . . I recall the barn dances at our place… We didn't have much money for entertainment but we had the lake. There was swimming in the summer, skating in the winter, and walking on the "rubber ice" in the spring. [137]

Later History of Oakwood Lakes

With much of regional economic and social activity centered in the busy railroad towns, the Oakwood Lakes area became "a great resort for pleasure seekers."[138] Prominent among the recreational activities at the lakes during this period were the annual encampments of the Grand Army of the Republic, or the "old soldiers' encampments" as they were locally known.[139] Begun by Civil War veterans Byron Pay and Arthur Mitchell in the mid-1880s, official encampments occurred annually for about ten years. Unofficially, they endured much longer, with local newspapers "reporting reunions of the Civil War veterans at Oakwood Lakes well into the [20ᵗʰ] century."[140] At these reunions, held "yearly at Lake Oakwood about ½ mile north of the old mill on the George Henry farm" "anywhere from one hundred to three hundred fifty Civil War veterans registered every year, and large numbers of others attended this gathering."[141] Attendees stayed in "tents [that] were rented at $2 per week, and entertainment and food were featured."[142] Other area residents also recreated on and around the lakes. "During the 80's and 90's religious groups held their encampments on these same grounds, several hundred attending each day, and sometimes lasting a week."[143] People from Arlington reportedly traveled to the

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[137] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 397-98.

[138] Abbie Carpenter, "History of Oakwood Township," n.d., Vertical File: Brookings County II, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.

[139] Parker, "Old Hotel Still Standing on Site of Pioneer Town at Oakwood Lake."

[140] Crisler, "Oakwood Town Founded in 1877 by Veterans of Civil War."

[141] Bergh, *A Short Historical Presentation on Some Early Settlements in Brookings Co.*, 9.

[142] Crisler, "Oakwood Town Founded in 1877 by Veterans of Civil War."

[143] Bergh, *A Short Historical Presentation on Some Early Settlements in Brookings Co.*, 10.

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Oakwood Lakes for fishing so often that they wore a substantial trail across the prairie. Locals knew it as "the Mitchell Trail."[144]

The post-war period, and the attendant expansion of state government and government-owned lands, proved transformative for the Oakwood Lakes area. In August of 1945, the State of South Dakota purchased the Mortimer/Walters/Doop place (consisting of 329 acres).[145] The purchase was part of a larger effort to accumulate Oakwood acreage, and by mid-November, the state had purchased a total of about 810 acres "for a cost of $51,241.60" in the area, of which 153 was set aside for use as a park.[146] About a month later, the state legislature approved eight areas for designation as state parks, including the Oakwood Lakes land.[147]

The Doops, meanwhile, moved to the "Storm" farm six miles west of Bruce. They then moved to a farm one mile south and one half mile west of Bruce where they lived until they retired.[148] Omar died in 1978, at the age of 86.[149] By this time there wasn't much left of the town of Oakwood, but Byron Pay's hotel still stood. It had long since ceased serving travelers, for "with the closing of the post office and the general abandonment of the town if became just an ordinary farmhouse."[150] The Oakwood Hotel was demolished in 1958 or '59, and with it the last vestiges of the town itself.[151]

For its part, the state set about developing its Oakwood Lakes property for recreational purposes. In the early 1960s, the South Dakota Division of Parks and Recreation undertook major planning efforts for the Oakwood park. It assessed likely park users—noting that in 1963, 235,500 people lived in the closest fifteen counties—and inventoried common park recreational uses. And it formulated a plan for further recreational development and the construction of park infrastructure. The plan noted that "the abandoned farms have to be removed because of their unsightly condition" but provided for the retention of some cultural resources.[152] The main priority in this realm was the "renovation of [the] Old Spot Mortimer Log House."[153] At the

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[144] "Oakwood Township," 5.

[145] Deed from Union Central Life Insurance Company to State of South Dakota, 11 September 1945, Brookings County, South Dakota; Deed from C. Omer Doop and Gertrude Doop to State of South Dakota, 22 August 1945; Mortimer Cabin research file, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Pierre, SD.

[146] "History of Oakwood Lakes State Park" n.d., 2, Oakwood Lakes State Park.

[147] Crisler, "There Was (a Little) Gold in Them Thar Oakwood Lakes."

[148] Brookings County History Book Committee, *Brookings County History Book*, 397–98.

[149] Ibid.

[150] Parker, "Old Hotel Still Standing on Site of Pioneer Town at Oakwood Lake."

[151] Benjamin F. Haas, "Brookings County Pioneer Recollections" n.d., 7, Vertical File: Brookings County I, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.

[152] Division of Parks & Recreation, "Oakwood Lakes State Park."

[153] Ibid.

time, planners noted that "the logs are native Oak from the lake areas. Those that are under ground are rotting."[154]

Park planners also developed cultural resources related to the mid-nineteenth-century military fortifications at Oakwood. Noting that "the original log barracks [at the breastworks] was demolished in the 1930's," they welcomed the relocation of a nearby log cabin to the approximate original site of the barracks.[155] This cabin was relocated to the park ca. 1970. It "was built in 1876 by Hans Rovig and originally stood two miles south of Brookings. It was used as the first Norwegian school in the area before it was closed and the students were enrolled in 'American' schools."[156] By then, observers could write that "since the G. F. & Parks service took over the lakes and surrounding area, extensive improvements have been made, such as picnic accommodations, trailer facilities, roads and trees."[157] In conjunction with broader developments in the realms of recreation and travel, these "improvements" and others like them helped attract people to parks like Oakwood. In 1970, in a testament to its importance in regional history and its pride of place in the state park system cultural resource realm, an article in a Volga newspaper about increased park use featured a picture of the Mortimer cabin.[158]

Log Cabins in South Dakota

Perhaps no other structure symbolizes the expansion and settlement of the United States better than the log cabin. Though not native to the North American continent, log cabins have been present ever since Finnish and Swedish setters introduced horizontal log construction to the colony at New Sweden on the shores of Upper Delaware Bay in 1638.[159] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, German colonists from eastern and central Europe brought and dispersed their own techniques for log construction to the colonies, which were also passed down to the Scotch-Irish in Pennsylvania.[160] At the same time this was occurring in the eastern part of the continent, log construction techniques from Russia were also entering Alaska and parts of

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[154] Ibid.

[155] Ibid.

[156] Crisler, "Before There Was Arlington . . ."

[157] Bergh, *A Short Historical Presentation on Some Early Settlements in Brookings Co.*, 8.

[158] "Marked Increase Noted in Use of State Parks," *Volga Tribune*, September 17, 1970, Vertical File: Oakwood Lakes, South Dakota Historical Society State Archives.

[159] United States Department of the Interior. *The Preservation of Historic Architecture: The U.S. Government's Official Guidelines for Preserving Historic Homes*. (Guildford, CT: Lyons Press, 2004), 286.

[160] Ibid.

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Canada.[161] Log construction eventually spread to the interior of the continent as settlement pushed inward.

Fur traders, many of French or French-Canadian background, built the first log cabins in what would become South Dakota. Jean Baptiste Trudeau built a post in 1794 to overwinter in present-day Charles Mix County.[162] Registre Loisel's post, built in 1796 near the big bend in the Missouri River, was a large timber house with four rooms.[163] Joseph LaFramboise built his post, which was a cabin of dead trees pulled from the Missouri River, on the Fort Pierre plain in 1817.[164] Fur traders built log cabins throughout the era, which ended in the 1860s.

As the fur trade wound down, permanent Euro-American settlement began. The Black Hills of western South Dakota, with an ample supply of Ponderosa Pine, predictably saw a profusion of log cabins as miners and settlers poured in during the late 1870s. However, log cabins were also built in eastern South Dakota along rivers and lakes where trees were present. Though supply often necessitated the use of inferior wood, like cottonwood, superior trees like oak were also used.

Log cabins were built throughout the settlement period, which ended around 1910 in South Dakota. The proliferation of sawmills, pre-fabrication of building supplies, and the extension of the railroad fundamentally changed the state's building stock after this period. Affordable, dimensional lumber and the ability to deliver it almost anywhere effectively ended log construction in the state.

However, there were exceptions. Log cabins continued to be built on American Indian reservations well into the twentieth century. A 1956 housing survey indicated 60-62% of all houses on the Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, and Standing Rock reservations were log constructed.[165] Log structures were also constructed statewide in the 1920s-1940s as Rustic architecture enjoyed a limited popularity. This was notably true for log structures built under New Deal programs.

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[161] C.A. Weslager, *The Log Cabin in America: From Pioneer Days to the Present*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 322-323.
[162] C.B. Nelson, *Notes on the Fur Trade*. (2010), 138.
[163] Ibid., 105.
[164] Ibid., 32.
[165] Godfrey, 44, 60, 69.

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Log Cabin Architecture

The earliest log cabins built in South Dakota are best classified as folk architecture. The fur
traders who built them didn't rely on builders' plans or architectural trends, instead using
techniques passed down from generation to generation. People from various regions of the
country built log cabins representing their own traditions, resulting in many vernacular
differences.

One of the most recognizable construction differences is the type of notching used to join the
walls at the corners. Notching techniques, including saddle, V, dovetailing, square, half, and
double, were common. All of these had variations as well with different levels of complication.
For example, a full dovetail was a very complicated method that created a strong box corner. A
square notch was a simple type, but did not have the interlocking qualities of other methods.
Simpler notching methods could be supplemented with nails, when available and affordable to
the builder. If nails were added though, they were often added later to supplement a failing
joint.

Another construction difference is the shape of the logs. Logs could be left round or hewn
roughly square. Hewn logs required more work in shaping, but fit tighter against each other
requiring less chinking. Other techniques, such as cutting grooves into the log's upper surface
for a flush fit with the lower log, were also used. The skill of the builder, his/her traditional
background, and the long-term expectations of the cabin could dictate log shape. Hewn log
cabins required more skill with an axe and additional time prepping the logs, but resulted in a
cabin that needed less chinking and maintenance. Cabins built with round logs could be erected
quicker, but required more chinking and periodic maintenance. If a builder's expectation was to
only occupy the cabin for a short period of time, building with round logs and simple joints was
a reasonable option.

Windows were also rare on early cabins. A few window openings, covered with cloth or
shuttered with wood, might have been present originally on some cabins, but many window
openings were added at a later date. The majority of cabins were occupied as homes for a
relatively short period of time, just long enough until more permanent, substantial homes could
be built. Cabins that remained a settler's primary residence were often improved with glass
windows and better doors as materials and money became available.

Samuel Mortimer's cabin is an excellent example of an early, settlement-era log cabin in South
Dakota. Its fieldstone foundation, hewn logs, and square notch joints convey significance of a
period and method of construction that is rare in the state, particularly the eastern side. Changes

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that have occurred to the cabin, including the addition of windows and the loft, have attained significance and are common modifications.

There is no data on the number of extent log structures remaining in the state. Examples are found primarily in the Black Hills, on American Indian reservations west of the Missouri River, and in western counties where settlement occurred until around 1910. Claim-era resources across the state are increasingly rare due to their poor condition and for their becoming functionally obsolete. Log cabins in eastern South Dakota are particularly uncommon because timber existed only along streams and lakes during the homestead years. Other historical factors also impact their scarcity. Eastern South Dakota was more productive agriculturally, which afforded many homesteaders the ability to build more substantial residences, at which time original cabins were sold or not maintained as vigorously. The availability of milled lumber, distributed on established wagon roads and the railroad, facilitated these improvements throughout the settlement period. In the twentieth century, changes in farming practices accelerated the loss of homesteading resources. As farms became larger, the number of occupied farm yards decreased, leading to the abandonment of historic structures. The development of a monoculture focused on row crops also impacted farm yard outbuildings. Structures once used to house animals, fowl, machinery, and other related purposes were no longer needed, and thus removed or neglected into deterioration. Many homestead-era resources that were repurposed on the farm over the years have met this fate.

Few comparable structures to the Mortimer Cabin remain in eastern South Dakota. Cuthbert "Old Papineau" DuCharme's cabin (1857) is located in the Geddes Historic District in Charles Mix County. The cabin, purported to be one of the oldest structures in South Dakota, was moved to Geddes from its original location along the Missouri River. It has been partially covered in wood siding. The Herman Luce Cabin (1871) near Madison, Lake County, is also a hand-hewn log cabin listed in the National Register. Finally, the Brown Earth Presbyterian Church (1877) near Milbank is a log, hand-hewn National Register-listed church.

Three nineteenth-century log cabins in the Black Hills in the western part of the state are also listed in the National Register - the Pearson Cabin (c.1876), Golden Summit Mine Foreman's Cabin (c.1883), and Harvey Homestead Cabin (1899). The Pap Madison Cabin (1876) was listed in the National Register, but removed due to its relocation. It is likely that other National Register-eligible cabins exist in the Black Hills, but a comprehensive survey and context has not been undertaken.

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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 # _____
_____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:
__X_ State Historic Preservation Office
_____ Other State agency
_____ Federal agency
_____ Local government
_____ University
__X_ Other
       Name of repository: SDSHS Archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): __BK00002362_____

_____

10. Geographical Data

 Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927   or   ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone:14   Easting: 659890.0000   Northing: 4924411.0000

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

A rectangle, centered on the UTM above, that surrounds the cabin only (see attached site map).

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses the entire resource, but excludes the lands historically associated
with the resource because they no longer retain integrity.

11. Form Prepared By

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date: May 2016

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's
  location.

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous
  resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels
(minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs
to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to
the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer,
photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on
every photograph.

Photo Log
Name of Property: Mortimer Cabin
City or Vicinity: Bruce
County: Brookings County
State: South Dakota
Photographer: Delia Hagen
Date Photographed: September 2015

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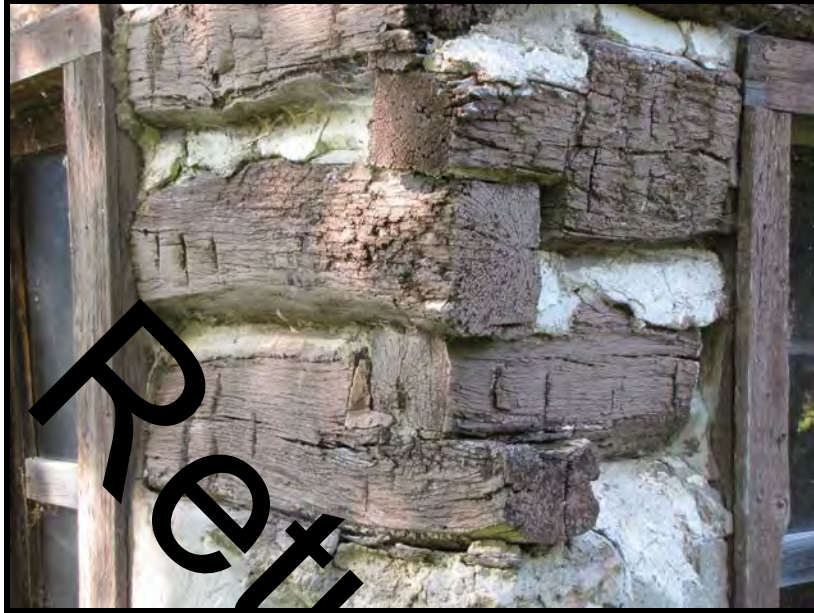SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0001: View to North.

SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0002: View to North.

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SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0003: View to North West.

SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0004: View to North.

SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0005: View to East.

SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0006: View to W (cabin obscured by lilac).

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SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0007: Log notching detail, South corner, view to North.

SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0008: Entry, view to North West.

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SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_0009: Interior, from entry, view to North West

SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_00010: Interior, from entry, view to West.

Mortimer Cabin
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Brookings County, SD
County and State

SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_00011: Interior, view to South.

SD_Brookings County_Mortimer Cabin_00012: Interior, entry, view to South East.

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Mortimer Cabin   Brookings County, SD
Name of Property   County and State

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington,

Returned

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

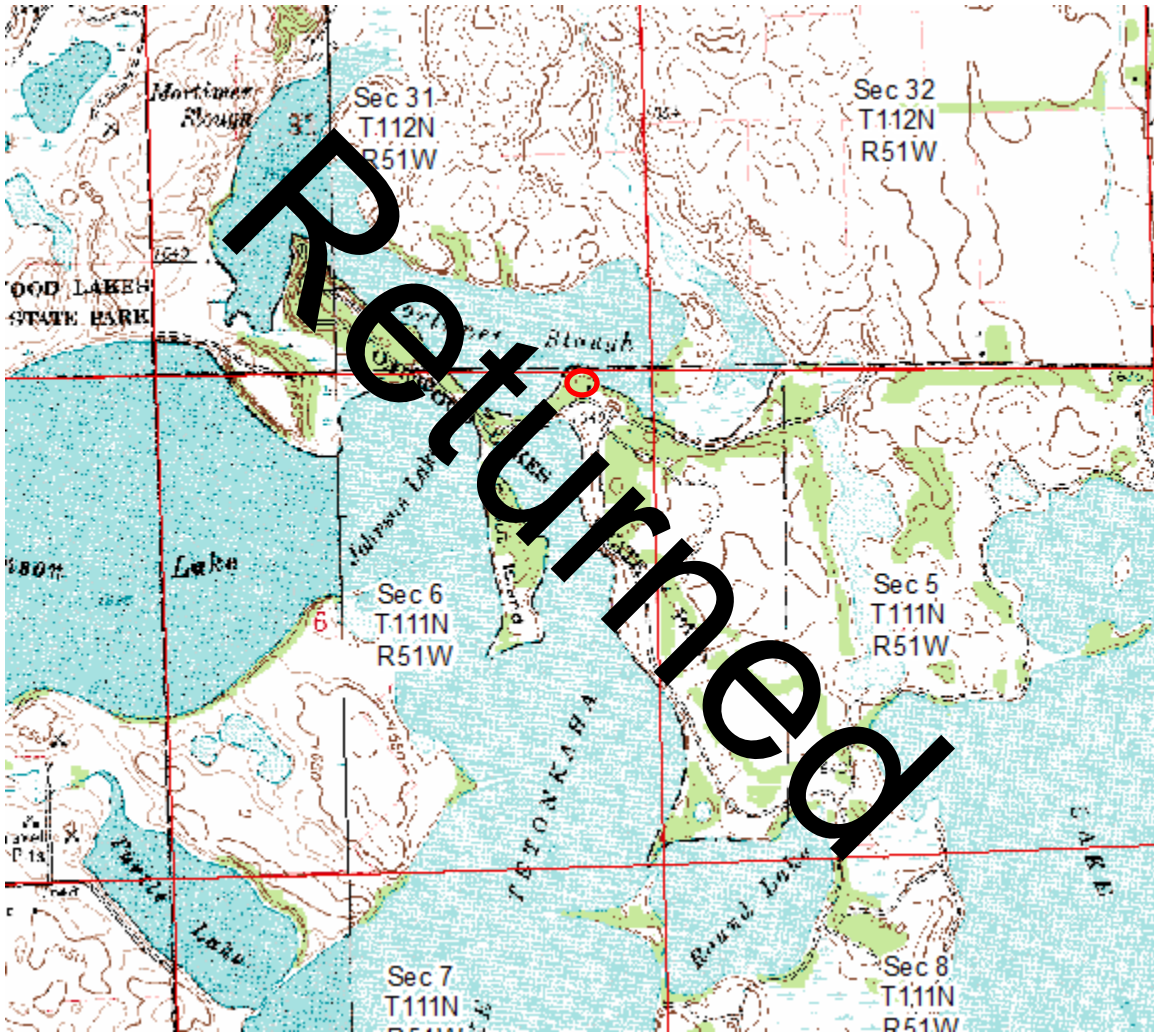Section number _____ 10 _____   Page _____ 1 _____

SD_BrookingsCounty_MortimerCabin: NE1/4, NE1/4, T111N, R51W, S6; UTM Z=14 E=659890
N=4924411. Produced in ArcMap 5 April 2017.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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SD_BrookingsCounty_MortimerCabin: NE1/4, NE1/4, T111N, R51W, S6; UTM Z=14 E=659890
N=4924411. Produced in ArcMap 5 April 2017.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

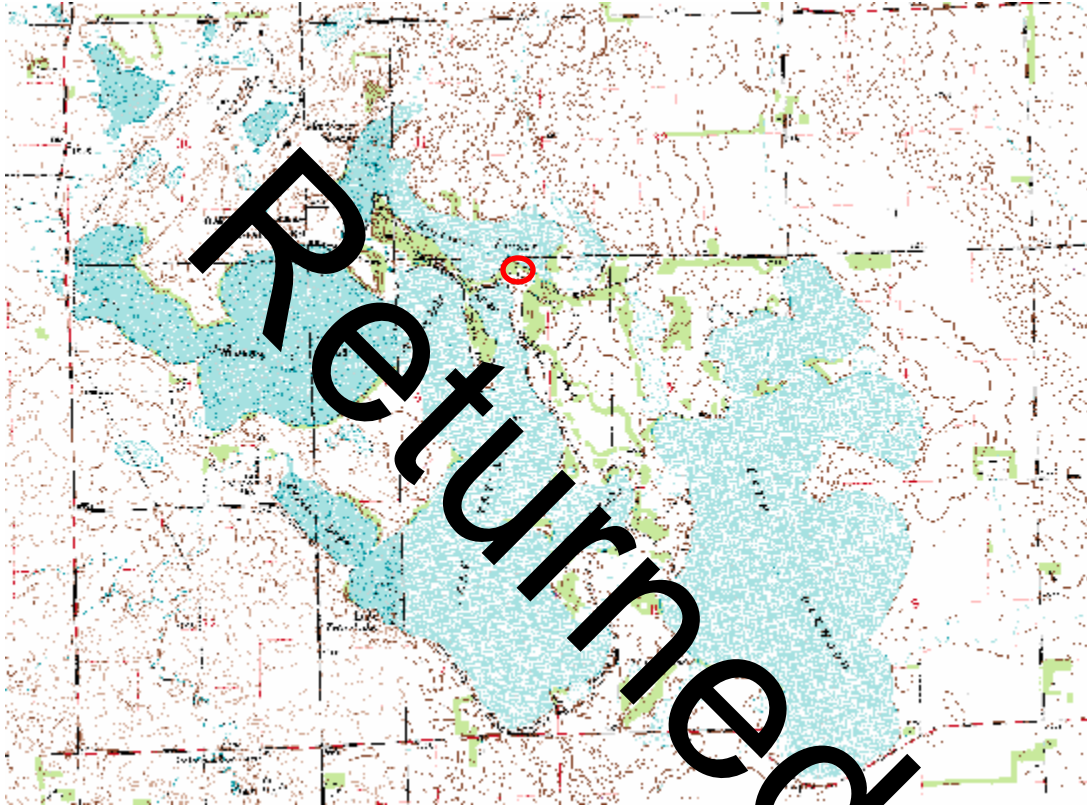Section number _____10_____   Page _____3_____

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N=4924411. USGS 7.5 Quadrangle 1:25,000. Produced in ArcMap 5 April 2017.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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SD_BrookingsCounty_MortimerCabin: NE1/4, NE1/4, T111N, R51W, SD. UTM Z=14 E=659890
N=4924411. USGS 7.5 Quadrangle 1:50,000. Produced in ArcMap 5 April 2017.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
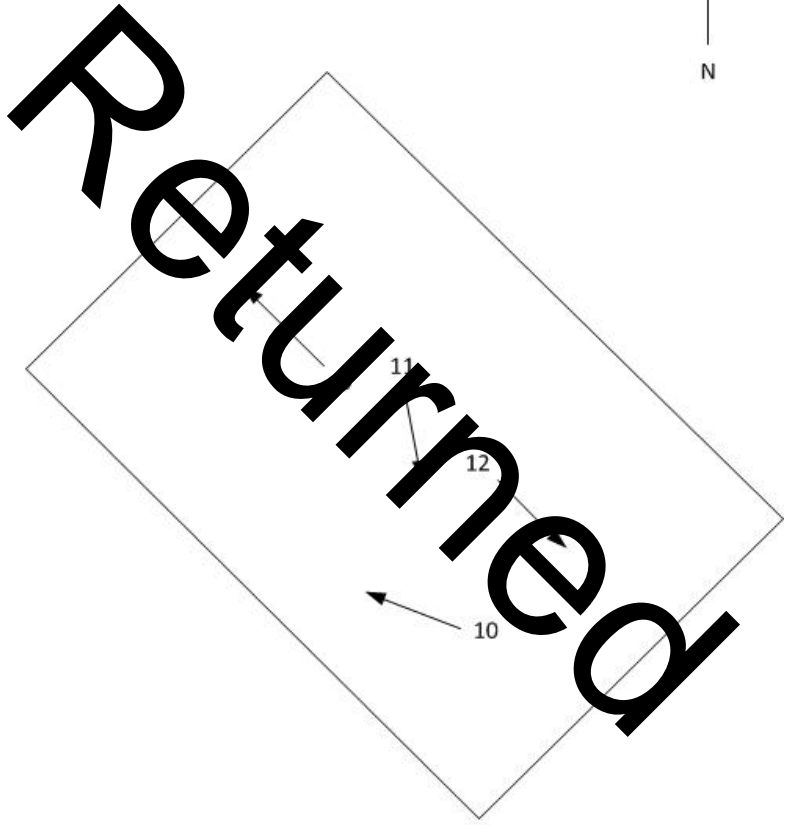## Continuation Sheet

Section number _____10_____   Page _____5_____

Photo Log of Exterior Photos

NPS Form 10-900-a   OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Mortimer Cabin
Interior Photo Key

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Comments
Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: Mortimer Cabin

Property Location: 20247 Oakwood Drive, Bruce, Brookings County, SD

Reference Number: SG1000013497

Date of Return: 7/31/2017

Reason for Return: The nomination is being returned to enlarge the boundary which was submitted as the footprint of the cabin. The nomination noted the following regarding this property: "Its setting has changed over the years, with the development and later removal of military, manufacturing, and agricultural endeavors with associated infrastructure as well as the subsequent development of recreational infrastructure (see statement of significance for narrative history of the evolution of the property and its surroundings), but the cabin is now surrounded by a relatively undeveloped, rural area in a state park on the shores of Oakwood Lakes that is reminiscent of its setting during the period of significance, which was deciduous forested land. The Mortimer cabin continues to convey its historic associations." With the agreement of the SHPO, the nomination is being returned to include a small portion of the surrounding park property to reflect the cabin's historic setting. The appropriate expanded boundary is left to the discretion on the SHPO.

Summary of Significance The cabin has a long history of use documented in the nomination and is a rare early surviving property type.

Nomination Issues None.

We look forward to receiving a new submission that addresses the points discussed. If you have any questions, please call Roger Reed at 202-354-2278 or send an email to roger_reed@nps.gov

Roger Reed, Historian
National Register of Historic Places

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SEP 1 8 2017

NAT REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

15 September 2017

Keeper of National Register
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington DC 20240

Dear Keeper:

Please find enclosed a National Register amendment for the *Spearfish Historic Commercial District* NR Ref#75001718. Also enclosed is a nomination for the *Mortimer Cabin*. Please contact chrisb.nelson@state.sd.us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Chris B. Nelson
Historic Preservation Specialist