



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20240

March 21, 2011

Notice to file:

This property has been automatically listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This is due to the fact that the publication of our Federal Register Notice: "National Register of Historic Places: Pending Nominations and Other Actions" was delayed beyond our control to the point where the mandated 15 day public comment period ended after our required 45 day time frame to act on the nomination. If the 45<sup>th</sup> day falls on a weekend or Federal holiday, the property will be automatically listed the next business day. The nomination is technically adequate and meets the National Register criteria for evaluation, and thus, automatically listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Edson Beall

Historian

National Register of Historic Places

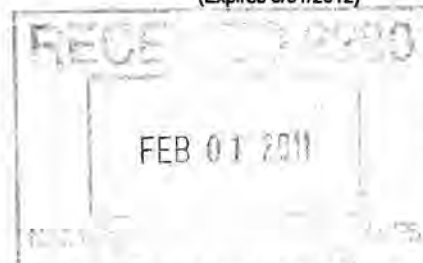
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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## 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. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Brenstrom Farmstead

other names/site number Brenstrom Farm, PP00-005

### 2. Location

street & number 10417 Westside Rd

X

not for publication

city or town Overton

vicinity

state Nebraska code NE county Phelps code 137 zip code 68863

### 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 statewide X local

*Michael J. Smith*  
Signature of certifying official/Title

*Jan. 21, 2011*  
Date

Nebraska State Historical Society  
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

### 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:)

*For Edison H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

*3-21-11*  
Date of Action

**Brenstrom Farmstead**

Name of Property

**Phelps, Nebraska**

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

☒ private  
☐ public - Local  
☐ public - State  
☐ public - Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box.)

☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
11	1	buildings
0	0	sites
2	0	structures
0	0	objects
13	1	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

NA

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

NA

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE: Animal Facility,

Agricultural Outbuildings, Storage

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

WORK IN PROGRESS

AGRICULTURE: Animal Facility (boarding)

DOMESTIC: Hotel (Bed-n-Breakfast)

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EARLY 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENT:

Craftsman

OTHER: Gambrel-Roofed "Open Loft" Barn

OTHER: Chicken House

OTHER: Transverse Crib Granary

OTHER: Farmstead Outbuildings, Windmill, Cellar

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stucco covered Brick, concrete

walls: Wood: cedar (Beveled siding, clapboard & shingles)

roof: Asphalt & cedar shingles, corrugated tin and steel metal

other: Steel truss tower

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**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

**Summary Paragraph**

The Brenstrom Farmstead is located in the Westside Township of rural Phelps County, Nebraska, approximately seven miles southwest of Overton or three miles southwest of the Overton I-80 exit. Phelps County is located in the south central plains region of Nebraska approximately one-half mile from the north fork of the South Platte River, 155 miles west of Lincoln and 55 miles north of the Kansas border.

Historically, the east-west Oregon-California Trail ran just north of the property, and the famous Plum Creek Massacre of the 1864 Indian Wars took place in an adjacent section to northwest. The farm is part of the local Swedish-American religious community, which was centered at Adullum Church, a prominent monument of Swedish-American National Romantic architecture.

The Brenstrom Farmstead remains as an exceptional, intact example of an early Phelps County farmstead. The nomination includes 11 contributing buildings: house, horse barn, milk barn, granary, old garage, machine shop, feed storage shed, chicken house, outhouse, brooder house and ice house, plus two contributing structures: the windmill and cellar. The 1966 garage is the one non-contributing building. Most of the buildings retain a good degree of structural integrity; however, repairs are needed. The current owner has already completed significant work on the house and barn to preserve the historic integrity of the property.

The property is bounded by agricultural fields to the west, north and east, along with windbreaks on the west and north sides, and Westside Road to the south. The nominated area encompasses five acres on which the farmstead resides. The lane enters the farmyard from the south, off Westside Road. The house is located to the left of the lane, while the horse barn is directly ahead to the north. The windmill and corncrib comprise the other most immediate features around the farmyard behind the house. These are the four most dominant features on the farm. The other outbuildings are clustered west of the house, circling north and around to the west and following the perimeter line of the windbreaks. This nomination includes the farmyard, its buildings, structure and windbreak. There are no associated tillable acres.

**Narrative Description**

The following list describes the 13 contributing resources and single non-contributing resource that make up the Brenstrom Farmstead.

**1. Brenstrom Farmhouse, c.1916;** contributing building (photos 1-4): The original house on the site was built in approximately 1890 by the first owner, E. A. Patrick. It was a one-and-one-half storey wood-frame dwelling with a front gable and a full-length, shed-roofed wing along the east. The front gable was symmetrical, with a center door flanked by windows, while bands of decorative shingles graced the upper gable. A hip-roofed front porch on the south was the same width as the front gabled portion of the dwelling. (See Supplementary Materials).

The farm was financed for purchase by the Brenstrom family in 1909 and then paid off in 1915. The wood-framed house was rebuilt in 1916 to its current size and configuration; some roof rafters bear the stencil, "W L Stickel Lumber / Overton." The rebuild utilized the old foundation along the east and south, with new brick foundations built along the north and west to accommodate the increased size. Currently, this house measures 26x35 feet, the long dimension running north-south.



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The historic Brenstrom house is a full one-and-one-half storey dwelling with living, dining, kitchen, bath, and the principal bedroom on the first floor and four bedrooms on the second floor (See Photo 3). A full length front porch graces the south façade. A small kitchen porch is located on the east and a mud porch is appended to the north wall (See Photos 1 and 4).

The house is an interesting variation on the common modern four-room farm house plan. The large living and dining rooms are located along the south, with public access through the south front door directly into the living room. The dining room opens to the living room through double pocket doors, allowing the whole south half of the house to be opened into one large room for major family and community events. The working farm kitchen is in the northeast corner of the house with direct access to the pantry, mud porch, kitchen porch, dining room, and center "hall." The main bedroom is in the northwest corner, while the original bathroom is situated between the bed and living rooms.

Woodwork throughout is pine, including the floors, except for the living and dining rooms, which are finished in oak, and the kitchen, which is covered with linoleum. Woodwork is simple, again, except for the living, dining, and kitchen, with plain neo-classical cornices above the doors and windows. Doors upstairs are four-panel inverted-cross designs, while downstairs they are two-panel. The living room features a built-in, paneled window seat in the rectangular bay window on the west.

The dining room displays the most elaborate woodwork and features Craftsman detailing (See photo 2). The room is finished with two-panel wainscoting throughout, topped with a plate rail supported by Craftsman bolsters. The room also has a built-in Craftsman style china cabinet with glass doors in the upper portion. This is backed in the kitchen with a simple built-in pine cabinet, also with glass doors above. The remainder of the kitchen cabinetry is paneled with beaded-board pine.

The center "hall" is of particular design interest, as it is a diminutive rectangular room in the middle of the house with six doors leading into six different spaces—the stairway, bathroom, kitchen, living room, dining room and bedroom. The bathroom and stairway doors feature borrow lights to illuminate the room during the daytime (the bathroom borrow light is opaque glass). The room's unique function is that of a plenum for the original gravity-fed furnace in the basement; there is one operable metal register in the ceiling of this room. This plenum allowed rooms to be selectively heated, based on use, throughout the day and night by simply opening and closing doors; these doors, then, also functioned as operable registers of the heating system.

In form and design the house is a noteworthy expression of Craftsman style design, both from a local perspective as well as statewide. The whole building mass is raised to a full one-and-one-half storey height and sheltered with broad gables. The front portion of the house features a side-facing gable roof, while a third gable extends to the rear of the house, in the manner of a wing. The walls are clad with narrow beveled siding from the basement up to the second story window sills, where the siding shifts to wide clapboards, articulating the walls in a manner reminiscent of Prairie Style design. The mass is further articulated with multiple protrusions, including the full frontal porch with broad gable, cantilevered bay windows at the front of each side wall, the shed-roofed kitchen porch, and the hip roofed mud porch on the north. Most prominently, the front façade features a wide wall dormer, sheltered with a shed roof, but to which have been appended twin gables.

Craftsman styling is taken to further refinement in the exterior detailing. Like many houses of this style, most prominently in the popular bungalows of the period, the eaves feature open rafters, while the gables are supported with diagonal braces. Trussed braces reminiscent of the Gothic also appear in the peaks of the Brenstrom gables, save for the low-pitched front porch. More noteworthy are the fascias that grace the ends of all gables and sheds on the house. These feature narrow linear decorative perforations along their length, and at the tips, where a two-pronged fork effect is achieved. The overall effect of the massing and detailing gives the house a decidedly romantic character that distinguishes the Brenstrom farmhouse from other local examples of the style.

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In October of 2009, the house was re-roofed to preserve the interior integrity of the structure. In the summer 2010, the exterior of the house underwent preservation by a professional historic preservation crew who operate under the Department of the Interior guidelines for the treatment of historic properties. All three porches were re-built to their current state, the exterior painted, and windows and doors repaired. Deteriorated original wood storm windows were replaced with aluminum storms at this time and the front porch was enclosed. This included inserting aluminum sashes in the openings above the kneewall of the porch and creating a new front entrance with sidelights, a glass door and the historic front screen door (See Photo 1).

**2. Horse Barn**, c. 1916; contributing building (photos 5 and 6): This is a very large, open loft or "western" barn measuring 40x45 feet. Built on a concrete foundation, it is situated at the north end of the entrance lane, just northeast of the house. The building is five bays deep north-south, with five bays of double stalls for teams of horses along the east side, and four bays of double stalls on the west; the fifth bay on the west is occupied by the internal granary, at the south corner. Animal doors are wide sliding barn doors, while pedestrian doors are Dutch in design. The interior of the loft and the stables along each side are modestly lit with barn sashes. The south gable wall also has small shuttered openings for loading grain into the interior bins. There is also a door to the hay loft above the east range of horse stalls.

The massive gambrel roof is supported by inclined composite lumber "columns" that reach from the head of the stalls up to the purlin at the break in the roof slope; diagonal braces extend from the columns to help support the purlins at mid-span. Similarly, diagonal braces extend from the front of the mangers to the side loft floors, to lend stability to the dividing walls of the stalls (See Photo 6). Some of the structural lumber is stenciled "W L Stickel Lumber / Overton." The barn is completely open to the roof (north to south) and flanked by a hay mow on each side above the stalls. The vertical-sliding, south hay mow door is still fully operational. It is sheltered by a triangular or "turkey-tail" hood, which also supports the exterior extension of the hay rail. Hay tackle is still mounted on the rail at the roof ridge and traverses the entire length of the barn. The barn is sheathed with clapboard except for the north wall, which has been covered with corrugated metal siding. The roof is also covered in corrugated metal.

**3. Milk Barn**, c. 1916; contributing building (photo 7): The milk barn is a small wood frame, asymmetrical gable building. It rests on a concrete foundation and has a concrete floor designed for modern milking operations. It is clad with cedar shingles, except along the south where it has corrugated metal siding, and has a cedar shingle roof. Oriented east-west, the building has Dutch doors on the west and south exposures: the former off the farmyard, the latter into a loafing area. Mangers are located along the west interior, under the lower part of the roof, and are still fitted with wooden milking stanchions and grain troughs that swing up and out of the way.

**4. Granary**, c. 1916; contributing building (photo 7 and 8): The third largest building in the farmstead, the corn crib is a transverse-crib barn with a central drive running longitudinally north-south through the building. Double sliding doors secure the drive and the building is covered by a gambrel roof. Granaries run along either side of the drive. The corn cribs are located along the east side, with all walls finished with spaced-boards to accommodate air circulation. The west cribs store hulled grains in four separate bins; the exterior walls of the bins are covered with cedar shingles, as are the gable walls. Windows in the gables light the internal working platforms.

**5. Garage**, c. 1920s; contributing building (photo 8): The original garage is situated west of the granary and is a small wood frame building with a gable roof. It is clad, like most of the outbuildings, in cedar shingles. The south wall features a pedestrian door and two barn sash windows, while the vehicle door on the east is a newer metal roll-up door with lock. A later lean-to addition has been built along the north wall.

**6. Machine Shop**, c. 1920s; contributing building (photo 10): This is a long, low wood frame building situated along the west edge of the farmstead, oriented north-south. It has an asymmetrical gable roof. Walls are clad



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with cedar shingles and a corrugated metal roof has been placed over the original cedar shingle roof. The building opens to the east, along much of the east wall, through two large sliding doors.

**7. Feed Storage Shed**, c. 1920s; contributing building: This shed is a square, shed-roofed structure with a small footprint of approximately 5'x5' and is located immediately west of the chicken house. It is clad in horizontal wood siding. The roof slopes from north to south. It appears that it may have been used as a roosting structure for pigeons or game birds given the cutout on the north facing wall and a cross member that parallels the south wall (east/west) about two-and-half feet off the ground.

**8. Chicken House**, c. 1890s; contributing building (photo 9): The chicken house is a long, low wood frame building oriented east-west and clad with clapboards. It has an asymmetrical gable roof with the tall wall facing north. It was constructed in two episodes, following the same design. The south façade of the longer, east section is symmetrical, with Dutch doors at both ends and a continuous string of barn sash windows between the two doors; ventilator openings are situated at both ends of the series of windows, next to each door. The western section matches the eastern in details, including the windows and wall ventilators, but has only one door, at the west end. It also features a horizontal string of windows in the west gable wall. The two episodes are distinguished on the exterior principally in roofing materials, the west being cedar shingles, and the east being corrugated metal. The eastern section also features two metal roof ventilators.

**9. Outhouse**, c. 1890; contributing building: A small wood frame building with a single, vertical board door. It has a gable roof with cedar shingles. The walls are finished in shiplap siding with vertical corner pilasters.

**10. Brooder House**, c. 1889; contributing building: This diminutive wood frame, gable roofed building is located directly southwest of the chicken house. Three large windows are centered in the south wall, with barn sash in the gables. Walls are clad with vertical tongue-and-groove boards, while the original roof was cedar shingles.

**11. Ice House**, c. 1889; contributing building (photo 11): This is an earth-sheltered or basement building that is completely excavated into the ground, save for the wood frame gable roof set just above ground level. The roof rests on the concrete walls; the floor is also concrete. Gables are finished in vertical board-and-batten, and the roof was cedar shingled.

**12. Second garage**, c. 1966; non-contributing building (photo 12): This is a small wood frame building with a gable roof. The exterior is clad in asphalt shingles, as is the roof. The south wall features a pedestrian door and one barn sash window, while the vehicle door on the east is a newer metal roll-up door with lock. There is one additional barn sash window on the west wall.

**13. Cellar**, c. 1889; contributing structure (photo 14): This is an earth-shelter built underground with concrete walls, floor and vaulted ceiling. The ceiling extends above ground and is covered by earth and has concrete steps leading down to the structure. It sets northwest of the north mud porch to the between the house and newer garage.

**14. Windmill**, c. 1920s; contributing structure (photo 5): This is an Aermotor Co. (Chicago) windmill, which rests atop a trussed steel tower that replaced the original wooden windmill, which deteriorated over time.

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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.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

AGRICULTURE

**Period of Significance**

c. 1888 - 1956

**Significant Dates**

1909

1916

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

E. A. Patrick, Jonas Brenstrom and

William Brenstrom

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or 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.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance lasts from the farmstead's establishment by E.A. Patrick in 1888 through 1956, the year William Brenstrom retired from farming. This period encompassed the construction of all contributing resources on farmstead and its period of peak agricultural production under the Brenstrom's ownership. Important dates include 1909, the year Jonas Brenstrom acquired the mortgage to the property, and 1916, when the farmhouse was rebuilt.



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**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary): NA**

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Brenstrom Farmstead is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criteria A and C. Under Criterion A, the property is significance in the area of agriculture as an exceptionally intact farmstead that reflects local and regional farming in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Architecturally, the farmstead is significant as a collection of resources that includes several representative types of agricultural buildings, in addition to showcasing period design, materials and workmanship. The Brenstrom Farmhouse is particularly noteworthy as an exceptional example of the Craftsman Style as applied to a rural residence in Nebraska.

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

The property, under criterion A, illustrates an exceptional, intact, historical farmstead of the south central Nebraska cash grain and livestock farming region. The farmstead is a rare and still salvageable collection of agricultural buildings that reflect farming in this region during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Characterized principally by the production of cash grains such as corn and wheat, farmers here also raised livestock, most prominently chickens and hogs, and to a lesser extent, some cattle. The Brenstrom Farmstead represents this farming system in its extant buildings, notably in the barn, granary and chicken houses. The remainder of the farmstead is illustrative of the subsistence farming that likewise typically supported family farming operations in the region.

The Brenstrom farmstead is eligible under criterion C for the completeness of its extant material culture and for the design characteristics that establish the farmstead as a unified whole. These characteristics include a preponderance of asymmetrical gable roofs and shingle style cladding on the lesser outbuildings—all oriented with their main eave walls facing south—plus the use of painted horizontal siding on the two major buildings, the house and barn. As a collection, the farmstead includes several agricultural buildings that are excellent representatives of their type. The chicken house, granary and large gambrel-roofed barn are particularly noteworthy examples.

The farmhouse is eligible under criterion C as a unique and exceptional example of the domestic Craftsman Style in Nebraska. A few other notable examples of the style exist in the Dawson-Buffalo-Kearney-Phelps County area, but all of these are in the more popular and common bungalow mode, and predominantly were built in the towns and cities, not in the rural area. The dwelling's distinctively-elaborated romantic character may also be significant in Swedish-American culture; a specific explanation is not currently available, except to note that Phelps and Kearney counties were home to significant Swedish National Romantic constructions at Adullum church and the Bethphage Mission, from the late 1920s into the 1930s. The unique Brenstrom design may be a reflection of Swedish taste. Regardless of its possible ethnic-influenced design, the Brenstrom Farmhouse is an exceptional farmhouse and would be considered individually eligible under Criterion C in most Nebraska settings.

**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

The Westside Township of Phelps County holds a significant place in the early history of settlement for this area of the Platte Valley. The Overland Trail, Oregon Trail and Pony Express all passed through the NW ¼ of section 14-8-20, from east to west. As many as 500 wagons passed through this area daily, headed West from Iowa, Illinois, Ohio and other older settled states. The area is also steeped in the more dramatic aspects

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of the history and legend of the American West. For instance, it is believed that the future "Buffalo Bill" Cody, at the age eleven, first fought Native Americans, possibly killing one, during an ambush east of the confluence of Plum Creek and the Platte River and very near the Brenstrom Farmstead.

The federal government held title to most of the land along the Platte River Valley until Phelps County was founded in Feb 11, 1873 by Cabel J. Dilworth and named in honor of Dilworth's father-in-law. Land was being offered, free, to homesteaders through the Homestead Act of 1862.

George B. Skinner used to run a wagon train along the Platte and told Dilworth that, "The only things to be raised in the Platte Valley were Indians and alkali and I would give a dollar for every ear of corn that could be raised west of Ft. Kearney." This idea was so strong among freighters that it influenced the Union Pacific railroad's point of connection and it was moved from Cozad to Kearney. Soil samples were sent to a Boston chemist who reported the soil to be very rich and capable of producing anything that would grow in this climate with the necessary amount of moisture, but this information fell on deaf ears.

The original farmstead was established around 1888, according to the Phelps County Assessor's records. The U.S. government granted E.A. Patrick the land in 1888. In 1889, he sold a portion of the land to G.S. Hardings. During Patrick's ownership a small house was built (c. 1898) that would eventually be incorporated into the Brenstrom House along with several out buildings to support farming activity and livestock, only a few of which survive. An old tinted photo depicts the original house structure and some of outbuilding placement (See Supplementary Materials).

While traces of the earlier owners are still present, the efforts of the Jonas Brenstrom family beginning in 1909 made the farmstead what it is today. As such, the Brenstrom farmstead represents the culture and values of a Swedish immigrant family and, more generally, the work ethic of the rural farmer. In about 1889, at the age of 50, Jonas Brenstrom left Degerfors, Vasterbotten, Sweden, a Lutheran parish in northern Sweden, with his wife, Margaret, and three children. Along with nearly 300,000 Swedish immigrants between 1887 and 1900, they came to make a new life in the United States. It is believed that they may have first stayed in Republican City, Harlan County, Nebraska. This information comes from an autograph book that belonged to their oldest daughter, Mary, with entries dated in the early 1890s.

According to family history, the Brenstrom family's first home in the Westside township was a sod house southwest of this farmstead along the canal that traverses the Platte Valley. Here the family toiled in farming to save money for their own piece of the American Dream. They attended the nearby Adullum Lutheran church where the family actively participated and served in its congregation for many years.

In 1909 Jonas obtained a mortgage on the Westside Road property from the current owner, Benjamin Eldridge. Eldridge sold the mortgage papers to Delia Perkins. Jonas paid off the \$6000 mortgage in 1915. The current home on the property was re-built in 1916 to accommodate their family: now four boys and three girls. The home was expanded to add three bedrooms, a dining room and bathroom.

According to personal interviews with former neighbors, the Brenstrom family had a very strong work ethic and a pension for perfection thus making the Brenstrom farm a showcase of the community. It is said the Brenstrom men prided themselves on being good horsemen and owning quality stock. They owned multiple teams of horses for working the land and never worked the same team two days in a row. This accounts for the large horse barn that holds eight teams and one buggy horse. That would have equaled two teams for each Brenstrom son (Carl, Oscar, Arthur, and William) to work the land. They were known as an honest, hard-working, kind and prosperous family.

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It was common knowledge among the Adullum congregation that the Brenstrom women would arrive at church early with their white gloves to check if proper cleaning had occurred in preparation for Sunday worship. This fastidious nature carried over to the Brenstrom household as 'no muddy boots' were allowed in the house and had to be left on the north mud porch or the east kitchen porch before entering. Cleanliness was next to Godliness and that is how they lived their life. This may account for the good condition of the interior, as no other family has lived in this home.

Given the size of the farm, the number of children, cattle, horses, chickens and crops this would account for a great amount of self-sufficiency. While the men tilled the soil for ultimate harvest, the daughters (Mary, Anna and Hulda) raised chickens and egg hens, grew a garden, and picked fruit from the orchard. They would then can whatever fruits and vegetables were not eaten in the summer and store their larder in the cellar adjacent to the northwest corner of the house.

The farm passed from Jonas, to Margaret, then passed to their various children and ultimately it was farmed and owned by William "Willie" Brenstrom, while his brothers went off to war or married. Hulda went to Denver to work as a domestic for the Wolfe family, then married Albin Carlson and moved just east of the Brenstrom Farmstead. Anna married and moved to Holdrege, while Mary stayed on at the farmstead with her brother, Willie, until her death.

When Willie retired from farming in 1956 he rented the ground to his neighbors, LaVern and Eleanor Holen. The Holens farmed the ground, grazed cattle in the pasture and used the barn for horses until approximately 1972. The oldest garage housed an antique car belonging to the Holens; otherwise the remaining out buildings ceased to be utilized except the newer garage for Willie's car, which he sold in 1975. Willie sold the farm to the Holens in 1975 and continued to live in the house until his death in 1976. The Holens continued to farm the ground until they each passed in 2006 and 2008. The farmstead and some of the agricultural ground was left to their daughter, Peg Holen.

**The Brenstrom Farmstead Today**

The nominated property remains an excellent example of an early 20th century rural Phelps County farmstead, including buildings and structures representative of both subsistence and commodity agriculture. The farmhouse has been unoccupied and the outbuildings vacant since Willie Brenstrom's death in 1976; however, they have maintained good to fair structural integrity and excellent historic integrity.

Peg Holen, the current owner, understands the importance of the farm's historical value and wants to preserve it for future generations. She would like to restore the farmstead and all buildings, including the windmill, to make it a functioning bed-and-breakfast with a horse motel and dog run. Holen also intends to create a place of community gatherings such as hay rack rides, BBQs, small receptions, children's activities, etc. This will help to make a financially viable venture and provide funding for the upkeep of the property.



**Brenstrom Farmstead**

Name of Property

**Phelps, Nebraska**

County and State

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Garey, L. F. Factors Determining Type-of-Farming Areas in Nebraska. Bulletin 299. Lincoln: University of Nebraska College of Agriculture, Experiment Station, May, 1936.

\_\_\_\_\_. Systems of Farming and Possible Alternatives in Nebraska. Bulletin 309. Lincoln: University of Nebraska College of Agriculture, Experiment Station, June, 1937.

McMurry, Sally. Families and Farmhouses in Nineteenth Century America: Vernacular Design and Social Change. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Murphy, David. Senior Research Architect, Nebraska State Historical Society. Personal communications with Peg Holen, October 18-November 1, 2010.

Save America's Heritage. Reconnaissance Survey Final Report of Buffalo County, Nebraska. Lincoln: Author, August 1, 1993.

Save America's Heritage. Reconnaissance Survey Final Report of Kearney County, Nebraska. Lincoln: Author, August 1, 1991.

Save America's Heritage. Reconnaissance Survey Final Report of Phelps County, Nebraska. Lincoln: Author, August 1, 1991.

Spafford, R. R. Farm Types in Nebraska, as Determined by Climatic, Soil, and Economic Factors. Research Bulletin 15. Lincoln: University of Nebraska agricultural Experiment Station, March 15, 1919.

U. S. West Research, Inc. Reconnaissance Survey Final Report of Hall County, Nebraska. LaCross, WI: Author, July 1995.

**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:**

☒ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☒ Other  
Name of repository: Brenstrom and Holen Family Collections

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): PP00-005

**Brenstrom Farmstead**

Name of Property

**Phelps, Nebraska**

County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Approx. 5 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	14	452265	4501529	3	14	452344	4501552
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	14	452344	4510529	4	14	452409	4501552
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
	Point 5.	452509	4501515		Point 7.	452384	4501399
	Point 6.	452384	4501552		Point 8.	452265	4501399

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

The nominated property includes approximately 5 acres and is bounded by agricultural fields to the west, north and east, along with windbreaks on the west and north sides, and Westside Road to the south. It is centered in the S $\frac{1}{2}$  of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 14, T8N, R20W, Phelps County, Nebraska (See Attached Site Plan).

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary included all of the resources that contribute to the Brenstrom Farmstead and is based on historic land use patterns (agricultural fields) and visual boundaries (windbreaks and road).

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Peggy Holen / Property Owner

organization \_\_\_\_\_

date 1 Nov 2010

street & number P O Box 252

telephone 308-987-2121

city or town Overton

state NE

zip code 68863

e-mail neloh@yahoo.com

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

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

- **Continuation Sheets**

**Brenstrom Farmstead**

Name of Property

**Phelps, Nebraska**

County and State

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

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Brenstrom Farmstead

**City or Vicinity:** Overton (vicinity)

**County:** Phelps

**State:** Nebraska

**Photographer:** Peggy Holen, Property Owner

**Date Photographed:** September 23, 2010 (Photo 1), November 18, 2010 (Photos 2 and 3)

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

**01 of 13.** Brenstrom Farmhouse, south facing façade and east elevation. Aspect: NW

**02 of 13.** Brenstrom Farmhouse, first story interior, dining room into kitchen. Aspect: NW

**03 of 13.** Brenstrom Farmhouse, second story interior hall and bedrooms. Aspect: N

**Photographer:** Jessie Nunn, NSHS

**Date Photographed:** July 7, 2010 (Photos 4-13)

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

**04 of 13.** Brenstrom Farmhouse, rear (north) elevation. Aspect: S

**05 of 13.** Horse Barn, east façade and west elevation, and Windmill. Aspect: NE

**06 of 13.** Horse Barn, interior hay loft and main story stalls and feeders. Aspect: NW

**07 of 13.** Granary (foreground) and Milk Barn. Aspect: N

**08 of 13.** Granary and Chicken House (foreground) and Garage. Aspect: W

**09 of 13.** Chicken House. Aspect: NW

**10 of 13.** Machine Shed. Aspect: NW

**11 of 13.** Ice House. Aspect: NE

**12 of 13.** Non-contributing Garage (c. 1965). Aspect: E

**13 of 13.** Cellar. Aspect: SE



**Brenstrom Farmstead**

Name of Property

**Phelps, Nebraska**

County and State

**SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS**

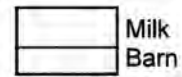


**Brenstrom Farmstead Historic Photographs (from Family Collection):** Brenstrom Farmstead, c. 1910 (top); Brenstorm Farmhouse after 1916 re-build (below, left); Barn with Brenstrom men and horses, c. 1920 (below, right).

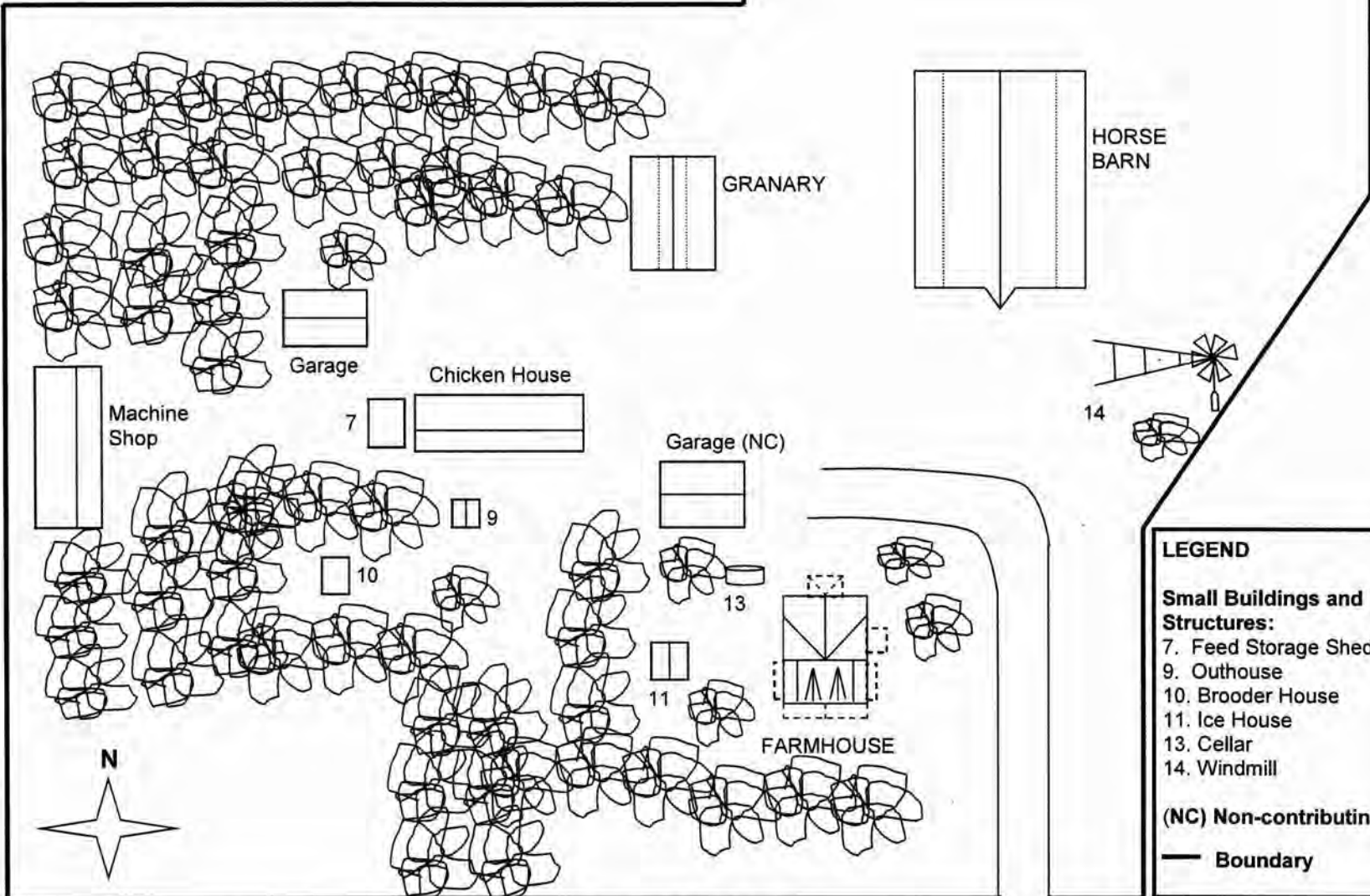


# BRENSTROM FARMSTEAD (PP00-005)

Site Plan (not to scale)



Milk  
Barn



GRANARY

HORSE  
BARN

Garage

Chicken House

Machine  
Shop

Garage (NC)

FARMHOUSE

## LEGEND

### Small Buildings and Structures:

- 7. Feed Storage Shed
- 9. Outhouse
- 10. Brooder House
- 11. Ice House
- 13. Cellar
- 14. Windmill

(NC) Non-contributing

— Boundary

WESTSIDE ROAD (gravel)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Brenstrom Farmstead  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEBRASKA, Phelps

DATE RECEIVED: 2/01/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/09/11  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/24/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/19/11  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000104

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 3-21-11 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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

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





Brenstrom Farmstead  
10417 Westside Rd., Overton Vicinity  
Phelps County, Nebraska  
Photo 1 of 13

NetRS #: PP00-005

NE-Phelps County-Brenstrom Farmstead-0001





Brenstrom Farmstead  
10417 Westside Rd., Overton vicinity  
Phelps County, Nebraska  
Photo 2 of 13

NEHRSI #: PP00-005

NE-Phelps County-Brenstrom Farmstead-0002



Brenstrom Farmstead  
10417 Westside Rd., Overton Vicinity  
Phelps County, Nebraska  
Photo 3 of 13

NEHRSI #: PP00-005

NE-PhelpsCounty-BrenstromFarmstead-0003





Bronstrom Farmstead  
10471 Westside Rd., Overton vicinity  
Phelps County, Nebraska  
photo 21 of 13

NeHRSI #: PP00-005

NE-Phelps County-Bronstrom Farmstead-2004



Brenstrom Farmstead  
10471 Westside Rd, Overton vicinity  
Phelps County, Nebraska  
photo 5 of 13

NEHRSI #: P00-005

NE Phelps County Brenstrom Farmstead-0005





Brenstrom Farmstead  
10471 Westside Rd., Overton vicinity  
Phelps County, Nebraska  
photo 6 of 13

NetHSI #: PP00-005

NE-Phelps County-Brenstrom County-0006



Brenstrom Farmstead  
10471 Westside Rd., Overton vicinity  
Phelps County, Nebraska  
photo 7 of 13

NEHRSI #: PP00-005

NE-Phelps County - Brenstrom Farmstead 0007





Brenstrom Farmstead  
10471 Westside Rd., Overton vicinity  
Phelps County, Nebraska  
Photo 8 of 13

NeHKS1 #: PP00-005

NE-Phelps County-Brenstrom Farmstead-0208



Brenstrom Farmstead  
10471 Westside Rd., Overton vicinity  
Phelps County, Nebraska  
Photo 9 of 13

NEHRSI #: PP00-005

NE-PhelpsCounty-BrenstromFarmstead\_0009





Brenstrom Farmstead

10471 Westside Rd., Oreston vicinity

Phelps County, Nebraska

Photo 10 of 13

NEHRSI #: PP00-005

NE-Phelps County - Brenstrom Farmstead - 0010



Brenstrom Farmstead  
10471 Westside Rd., Overton vicinity  
Phelps County, Nebraska  
Photo 11 of 13

NEHRSI #: PPOO-005

NE-PhelpsCounty-BrenstromFarmstead-0011





Brenstrom Farmstead  
10471 Westside Rd., Overton vicinity  
Phelps County, Nebraska  
Photo 12 of 13

NEHRS1 # : PP00-005

NE-Phelps County-Brenstrom Farmstead 0012



Brenstrom Farmstead  
10471 Westside Rd., Overton vicinity  
Phelps County, Nebraska  
Photo 13 of 13

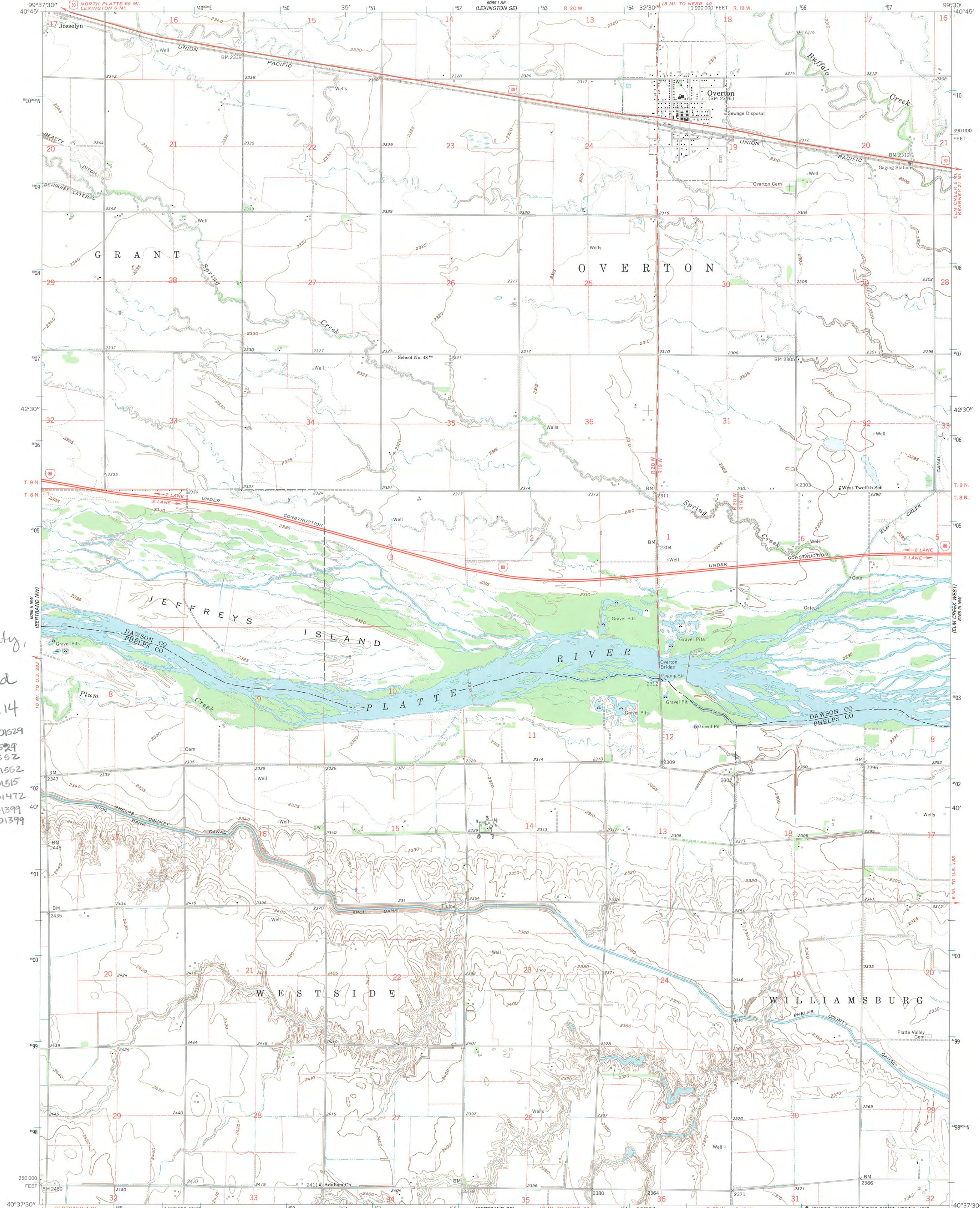
NEHR81 #: PP00-005

NE-Phelps County-Brenstrom Farmstead-0013



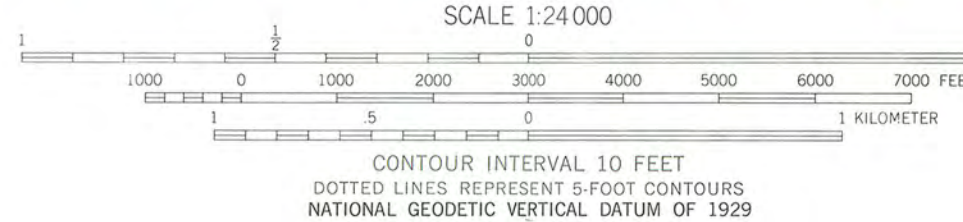
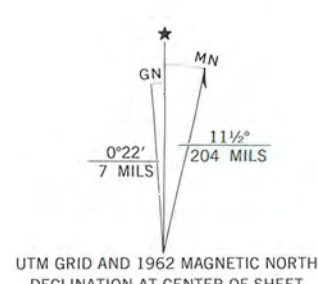
UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

OVERTON QUADRANGLE  
NEBRASKA  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Brenstrom  
Farmstead,  
Phelps County,  
Nebraska,  
Overton Quad  
[P000-005]  
UTMS: Zone 14  
1.E452245,N4501529  
2.E452344,N451529  
3.E452344,N451562  
4.E452409,N4501562  
5.E452409,N4501515  
6.E452384,N4501472  
7.E452384,N4501399  
8.E452265,N4501399

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
as part of the Department of the Interior program  
for the development of the Missouri River Basin  
Control by USGS and USC&GS  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial  
photographs taken 1951 and planetable surveys 1962  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Nebraska coordinate system, south zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 14, shown in blue  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983,  
move the projection lines 4 meters north and  
33 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225  
OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



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

OVERTON, NEBR.  
N4037.5-W9930.7.5

1962

DMA 6085 II NE-SERIES V875



*Nebraska*  
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



January 25, 2011

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

RE: Brenstrom Farmstead  
Rural Phelps County, Nebraska

Dear Mr. Loether:

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

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

Sincerely,

L. Robert Puschendorf  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosure

1500 R Street  
PO Box 82554  
Lincoln, NE 68501-2554  
p: (800) 833-6747  
(402) 471-3270  
f: (402) 471-3100  
[www.nebraskahistory.org](http://www.nebraskahistory.org)