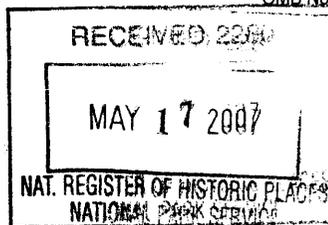


6

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A) Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

#### 1. Name of Property

Historic name Cather Farm  
Other name/site number 123-0000-0217

#### 2. Location

Street & number 4 mi. N. of Jct. of Hwys. 15 & 24  not for publication  
City or town Beloit  vicinity  
State Kansas Code KS County Mitchell Code 123 Zip code 67420

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Patricia Zolner DSHPO 5/4/07  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official /Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall 6-27-07  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Cather Farm  
Name of Property

Mitchell Co., Kansas  
County and State

**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	
3		buildings
_____		sites
_____		structures
_____		objects
3	0	total

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

N/A

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

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

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Agriculture/Subsistence: storage

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

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Agriculture/Subsistence: storage

**7. Description**

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

Other: Plain Traditional

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Limestone

Walls: Weatherboard

Roof: Wood shingle

Other:

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Cather Farm  
Name of Property

Mitchell Co., Kansas  
County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register)

- 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 likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

### Narrative Statement of Significance

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

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture

Architecture

### Period of Significance

1884 - 1956

### Significant Dates

1884

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Unknown

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Cather Farm  
Name of Property

Mitchell Co., Kansas  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 160

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1  
Zone 1 4 Easting 5 7 6 0 1 0 Northing 4 3 7 7 5 9 0

2  
Zone 1 4 Easting 5 7 6 8 0 0 Northing 4 3 7 7 5 9 0

3  
Zone 1 4 Easting 5 7 6 7 7 0 Northing 4 3 7 6 8 2 0

4  
Zone 1 4 Easting 5 7 6 0 1 0 Northing 4 3 7 6 8 3 0

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/title Robert Donald Cather; Edited by KSHS staff  
Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Date January 26, 2005  
Street & number PO Box 355 Telephone 785-738-9934  
City or town Beloit State KS Zip code 67420

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

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

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

Name Robert Donald Cather  
Street & number PO Box 355 Telephone 785-738-9934  
City or town Beloit State KS Zip code 67420

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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Cather Farm  
Mitchell Co., Kansas

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**Description**

**Summary**

Located five miles north of Beloit, Kansas in the Solomon River valley of north central Kansas, the Cather Farm consists of 160 acres of farmland, a single-story, wood-frame house erected in 1884 and added onto in 1901, a late 19<sup>th</sup> century barn, and a wood-frame garage constructed in 1919. The weatherboard-clad house rests upon a limestone foundation and is covered by a wood-shingled, flat-decked hipped roof with an intersecting cross-hipped roof on the rear of the house. There is one interior brick chimney. The house features a classical dentil cornice with triangular knee brackets. The windows feature wide wood casings and decorative, scrolled wood lintels. The single-leaf entrance on the west elevation is protected by a wood-shingled shed roof supported by two large triangular knee brackets. The south elevation contains a centrally placed, single-leaf entrance with transom accessed by a flat-decked porch with limestone piers. Historic photographs reveal that no columns or roof were ever present on this elevation. The house and outbuildings were rehabilitated in 2000 and are in excellent condition.

**Historic Condition**

The property has been known as the Cather Farm since acquired by Iowa and Elsie Cather, in May 1885. They purchased the 160 acres from Charity Blazier who had purchased it in 1883 from James Shackelford, the original 1883 homesteader. The farm has remained in the Cather family. The farm buildings are located on the SW corner of the quarter and set in a grove of trees. State highway 14 passes along the west side of the property.

The original single-story, three-room house was built in 1884. It was constructed over a full basement (accessed from an outside cellar door) and measured 17' x 24'. Both the foundation and basement walls are built of locally mined limestone blocks that were also used for the foundations or construction of many area building and fence posts. The farmhouse interior was divided into three rooms. Drinking water was piped into a cistern using a Yankee gutter system, which still functions today.

An addition in 1901, including the extension of the basement, increased the farmhouse dimension to 26' x 33' and interior rooms to six. A cement slab was poured the length of the farmhouse's east side around the same time. The cistern collection is under the slab with the opening covered by the tin pump on its cast iron base. The extended basement was used for coal storage. Until 2000, a black and chrome coal-fired stove heated the interior. The horizontal storm door-covered steps to the basement are also cut out of the slab.

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Cather Farm  
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A south-facing door opens out to a 10' x 24' unenclosed porch that is attached to the house by joists notched into the limestone foundation. The porch extends the full length of the south wall foundation. The south end of the porch is held in place by joists notched into four 16" x 16", five-foot high limestone piers. Four limestone steps access the porch.

A western elevation entrance opens onto a 4' x 8' covered porch and looks toward State Highway 14. Poured cement steps rise to this porch that is pinned to the house with davits in the limestone foundation, and the west end rests on two 16" x 16" three-foot high limestone piers.

There are two structures in addition to the farmhouse, located on the southwest corner of the quarter section. Sometime soon after the property was acquired, a 10' x 26' wooden frame granary was expanded into a 26' x 34' two-story barn. While the exact date of the barn expansion is unknown, the original granary was constructed with square nails and the barn addition with round nails. Round nails came into use around 1885. The newest structure is an automobile garage built by Gilbert Cather in 1919--the date was imprinted in the original cement slab.

Early in the 1940s, both the barn and garage were lined with lumber so they could be used to store grain. There were two railroads servicing this farming community with one grain elevator. Harvest season necessitated two or three trains each day to take the grain to market. During World War II, the trains were allocated elsewhere. Many farmers retrofitted their outbuildings to provide grain storage until they could get their crops to market.

In summary, the early twentieth century improvements to the property are the 1901 enlargement of the farmhouse, its basement and the 1919 construction of an automobile garage.

### Current Condition and Renovation Efforts

In 2000, restoration started on all buildings so they would meet the modern building codes. On the outside of all buildings, trees had grown up as no one lived in the area for 40 years. The damage caused by this overgrowth and root system was evaluated. A new cedar roof was installed along with rebuilding the red brick chimney. It was found that the foundation had been pushed inward in several places by the tree roots. It was also noted that the sill plates had rotted away in several places where moisture had run down the inside of the walls from the gutter, which had failed. The stone foundation was rebuilt and all rotten wood was replaced with new pressure-treated lumber.

All the four-over-four double-hung windows were replaced by thermopane windows of the same type. Energy-efficient doors were installed although the south door had to have additional work on the door jam, as it was fenestrated with a rectangular transom window that was used for ventilation on the original building. Any rotten, warped, cracked or missing cedar-siding boards were removed and

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Cather Farm  
Mitchell Co., Kansas

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replaced with new cedar siding of the same dimension. This was also true on any broken, rotten or missing trim around the windows.

The original interior wall covering of horsehair plaster was removed and urethane insulation was sprayed onto the exterior wall voids. This not only gave the walls more stability, but also increased the thermal efficiency of the building. At that time all the old rubber, cotton wrapped electrical wire was removed along with the old switches and breakers. The building was rewired to the National Electric Code.

New plumbing was installed to the standards of the Uniform Plumbing Code. Rural water, of the pressure type, was piped into the building. Here-to-fore only cistern water and an outhouse were used. A hand-dug well supplied water for the livestock. Finally, radiant heating tubes were installed in the floor where heat and domestic hot water are supplied from a single propane-fired hot water heater.

The outside and inside of the house has retained its original footprint since 1901. This house is one of the few old structures in the area that have not been torn down and replaced by newer construction. As noted earlier, in 2000, the renovation started in earnest. Tree growth around the building had caused failure to the roof, foundation, siding and window façade where the limb movement had caused the damage. Where it could be salvaged, the old siding and window trim was reinstalled. The local lumberyard found sufficient duplicate cedar siding to replace that which was broken or damaged. The house has been repainted its original color of green with white trim.

The granary was enlarged to the current barn/granary sometime after 1885 when the nails changed from square to round. Very little has changed on the barn except a new standing seam metal roof in 2000. In 2002, a new limestone foundation and electricity were installed. Water has also been plumbed to the area. The barn has been repainted to its original color of red with white trim.

The garage also had renovation. The first item of business was to cut away the trees, strip the roof and apply new cedar shingles. A new concrete floor was poured and new sliding doors were made and installed using the original track and rollers. The structure was wired for electricity.

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Cather Farm  
Mitchell Co., Kansas

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## Statement of Significance

### Summary

The Cather Farm is being nominated under Criterion A with local significance in the area of AGRICULTURE for its depiction of the farming practices a 160 acre Kansas farmstead that remained largely unchanged until restored in 2000 and under Criterion C with local significance in the area of ARCHITECTURE as a vernacular building form with applied Classical Revival detailing.

### History

This property is located five miles north of Beloit, Kansas, which is the county seat of Mitchell County. It is located in the Solomon River valley in north central Kansas. The beauty of the valley is enhanced by the surrounding Smoky Hills in the land of the Kansas Post Rock. Many properties in the area, including this one, had springs, which became stopping places for Indians, soldiers, buffalo hunters and settlers on their way westward. In 1910, an earthquake caused the springs to dry up and the Cathers had to hand-dig two wells to service the property.

This property was homesteaded in 1883 by James Shackleford. He sold the land to Charity Blazier later that same year. In 1885, Elsie and Iowa Cather were married in Ohio. They were presented a wagon and two draft horses as their wedding gift. They loaded all of their belongings and traveled to Kansas where family lived and bought the property from Blazier. Their children were born on the property and raised to respect the land. Iowa was a Civil War pensioner who served in the 3rd Ohio Infantry, Company C. In the Beloit community he served as a member of the school board. Iowa and Elsie Cather called this property home the remainder of their lives, and the farm is currently owned by their grandson, Robert Donald Cather. The farm is registered as a Century Farm with the Farm Bureau.

The farm ground has been continually farmed since it was homesteaded in 1883. Iowa Cather initially farmed with a one-bottom, walk-behind plow, but later purchased a two-bottom, sulky plow. After plowing, the ground was smoothed with a harrow and hard "Russian Red" (Turkey Red) winter wheat planted with either a four foot wide walk-behind drill or an eight feet wide drill with a seat pulled by two horses. The wheat was bound, shocked, and thrashed in a threshing machine. The grain was then bagged in two-bushel sacks and hauled to the market in a horse-drawn wagon. Wheat was the primary crop; however, Iowa Cather also planted broomcorn and small grain for the domestic animals consumption.

By 1900, some 3 million acres of wheat were grown in Kansas. The earliest wheat production in Kansas was reported at the Shawnee Methodist Mission in 1839. The early settlers preferred planting corn, which was well suited to the fertile, newly broken lands in the eastern third of the state. In fact, corn

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Cather Farm  
Mitchell Co., Kansas

was the principal crop planted in Kansas at the time, and was not surpassed by wheat in acreage planted until 1914. Although soft winter and spring wheat varieties from the Eastern states were first utilized, the impetus behind Kansas' rise as the leading wheat-producing state in the nation lay in the adoption of the Turkey Red hard winter wheat. Mennonite immigrants from Russia brought the variety with them to south-central Kansas in the 1870s. The planting acreage of this wheat spread slowly, however, due in part to the difficulty of milling the hard wheat on traditional stone mills. The invention of the steel roller mill, first established in Kansas in 1882, and the discovery of the excellent winter hardiness of the Turkey Red variety during the severe winters of the 1890s spurred the widespread adoption of the variety throughout the southern Great Plains.

Mechanization arrived on the Cather Farm in the early 1900s when Iowa Cather's son Gilbert purchased a Hart Parr steam engine that pulled a seven-bottom plow. This combination required a two-man crew, one to operate the steam engine and one to set and raise the plows individually. In the 1920s, a Case gasoline tractor pulling a three-bottom 14" plow replaced the large steam engine. The number of acres that could be planted in a day were increased by the use of the tractor pulling two 8' drills linked parallel. Harvest efficiency increased (and labor needs decreased) when the Cathers purchased a pull-type Case combine with a 14' header. The combine cut, threshed, and cleaned the grain in one operation. The grain was still hauled to the elevator in Beloit in a standard horse drawn wagon (30" wide by 34" high by 10' length), but by the late 1920s, a Model T truck had taken over this chore.

During the 1930s and 1940s, the Cather Farm followed the gradual national trend toward larger equipment with the purchase in 1939 of a John Deere "D" tractor capable of pulling a four bottom 16" Case plow. Planting was accomplished by three grain drills hooked parallel covering an impressive 28 feet (two 8' drills and one 12'). The wheat was carried away using a 1939 International truck. In the 1950s, the Cathers acquired their first self-propelled combine, which further simplified the harvest and increased efficiency by eliminating the operator on the pull-type combine. The 1950s also saw the introduction of modern petroleum-derived fertilizers on the Cather Farm to enhance crop yield.

The Cather Farm is also significant for its depiction of a vernacular building form with applied decorative detailing. The present appearance dates to 1901 when the rear section was added to the original 26' X 17' house. The resulting combination of a three-room house with a flat decked, hipped roof with an intersecting rear cross-hipped roof is most distinctive. In fact, the original three-room configuration is also unusual for the period. For example, the nearest example featured in *Homes in the Heartland: Balloon Frame Farmhouses of the Upper Midwest, 1850-1920*, labeled "Type 8" is essentially a one-story example of the Foursquare and has four rooms with a pyramidal roof. The earliest photograph of the house, taken c. 1914, shows the house as it appears today with the exception of the knee-bracket supported, Craftsman-style shed roof over the west-facing entrance on the 1901 addition. This porch was added shortly thereafter as evidenced by an undated photograph featuring a young Gilbert Cather sitting on the steps of the Craftsman-style porch. It is unknown whether the

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applied decoration was original or the result of the 1901 renovation; however, the distinctive scrolled-design window lintel casing is applied to both sections. Interestingly, the classical dentil course and open triangular knee brackets are not seen on the 1901 portion in the aforementioned photograph of the Craftsman porch, but are clearly present on the main section in the c. 1914 photograph and are seen in later photographs of the addition. The lumber and materials for the 1901 addition are documented by original receipts from the Beloit Lumber Company. It is unclear if the decorative elements (window casing, dentils, and brackets) are present on these receipts, but were likely purchased units. During the renovation of 2000, lumber labeled “Montgomery Wards” was discovered, further adding to the intrigue. Lastly, the open porch anchored by four limestone piers extending above the porch floor is confirmed to be original by the c. 1914 photograph. This unusual for the period of construction and predates the modern elevated deck trend by at least fifty years. Taken together, the interesting vernacular building form adorned with decorative elements rarely seen on rural houses of this type is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C.

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### Bibliography

*Beloit Call* (formerly *The Mirror*, *The Gazette*, *The Beloit Index*, the *Beloit Record*, *The Beloit Courier*)

Beloit Area Chamber of Commerce

Mitchell County Directory 1907

Mitchell County Museum Curator

Peterson, Fred W. *Homes in the Heartland: Balloon Frame Farmhouses of the Upper Midwest, 1850-1920*. University Press of Kansas: Lawrence, Kansas, 1992.

*The Rise of the Wheat State: A History of Kansas Agriculture, 1861 – 1986*. Edited by George E. Ham and Robin Higham. Sunflower University Press: Manhattan, Kansas, 1987.

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Mitchell Co., Kansas

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## Verbal Boundary Description

SW ¼ of Section 9, Township 6, Range 7, West of the 6<sup>th</sup> PM, in Mitchell Co.

## Boundary Justification

This boundary includes all of the property historically associated with the farm.

## Photographs

The following information is consistent for all photographs:

1. Cather Farm
2. Mitchell Co., Kansas
3. Photograph by Brenda Spencer
4. July 17, 2005
5. Negative on file at KSHS

The following information is specific to each photograph:

<u>Photo #</u>	<u>Description of View [indicates camera angle]</u>
1.	Entry to site; overview of house and garage [east]
2.	Overview of site from south (house on left, garage in foreground, barn in background [north])
3.	Overview of site from north (barn in foreground, house in center, garage on left in background [south])
4.	Front (west) façade of house [southeast]
5.	South façade of house [north]
6.	South and east facades of house [northwest]
7.	North façade of house [south]
8.	Window and front porch detail, west façade of house [southeast]
9.	Interior of house, front room/parlor on northwest corner [southwest]
10.	Interior of house, front room/parlor on northwest corner [northeast]
11.	Interior of house, bedroom on northeast corner [north]
12.	Interior of house, kitchen on southwest corner [south]
13.	Interior of house, utility/bath (former pantry & kitchen) on east [south]
14.	South and east façade of barn [northwest]
15.	North and west facades of garage [southeast]