

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received FEB 12 1983  
date entered

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

1. Name

historic E. C. Houston House (NeHBS # BT06--26)  
and/or common Burt County Museum

2. Location

street & number 319 North 13th Street NA not for publication  
city, town Tekamah NA vicinity of  
state Nebraska code 031 county Burt code 021

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Burt County Museum  
street & number 319 North 13th Street  
city, town Tekamah NA vicinity of state Nebraska

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Burt County Courthouse  
street & number 100 North 13th Street  
city, town Tekamah state Nebraska

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date On-going  federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records Nebraska State Historical Society  
city, town Lincoln state Nebraska

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## 7. Description

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

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The E. C. Houston house is a two story wood frame structure designed in the Neo-Classical Revival Style of architecture. Built in 1904-05, the house was constructed for Mr. Houston by local builder Joseph Wixer. The house, which is reminiscent of the Queen Anne Style in its massing, incorporates characteristic Neo-Classical Revival details in its design including the colonaded porch, the balconied entry portico, dentilling along the cornice line and porch and roof-line balustrades. It is a prominent house in the Tekamah, Nebraska area, sited on one-half acre of land, which includes a twenty-four tree orchard. Structural and historical integrity has been preserved.

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The E. C. Houston-house is located in Tekamah, Nebraska (1980 population: 1,886), the county seat of Burt County. The city is situated approximately fifty-five miles northwest of Omaha, the state's largest city, and ninety miles northeast of Lincoln, the state's Capitol.

Mr. E. C. Houston had the house erected in 1904-05 by Joseph Wixer, local builder, to the design of an Omaha architect. The house is Neo-Classical Revival in style with its hipped roof, balustrated deck on the hip roof, cornices emphasized by decorative dentil moldings, portico with free-standing columns, full-width porches with classical columns, sidelights at the entrance, and original wrought iron balusters and balustrades on the exterior. The Neo-Classical Revival is clearly signified by bay, double hung, arched topped, oriel, and Palladian style windows. The house has a porte cochere, now converted into a garage.

The physical description is as follows: two-and-one half stories, raised over rusticated concrete block foundation, articulated rectangular (35' x 45') shape, wood frame structure, clapboard exterior walls, truncated hipped roof which has broad eaves enriched with dentilled cornice, and "widow's walk", and is penetrated by two internal chimneys and four dormer windows. The west (front) facade dormer is roofed with a central gable with return cornice returning to the base of the gable. The Palladian-style window opening has a keystone ornament. The central window has wooden tracery on the upper part. Wrought iron extends in front of the window having a balcony effect. Dormer windows on the south and north facades are also central gabled with returning eaves to the base of the gable. Round-arched window openings have wooden tracery on the uppermost part. Both have wrought iron balustrades on the exterior, giving a balcony effect. The east facade dormer is hip-roofed with a small square window opening.

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The first floor of the central hall interior has living room and kitchen on the south side, with the entry and dining room on the north side. The interior is significant for the excellent preservation of the oak woodwork, oak flooring, and oak paneling in the entry. The open well staircase is emphasized by classical columns, carved oak balustrades, oriel window with leaded tracery in the central window topped by a leaded fanlight window. The entry has two window seats, one parallel to the staircase, the other in the oriel window area. The dining room has etched glass windows and a three-sided bay window. The living room has a wood burning fireplace with oak mantle and a five-sided bay window, emphasized by two oak tuscan columns and a window seat. The kitchen, modernized in 1977, is large (14' x 16') with four double-hung windows on the south facade. From the kitchen are entries to the basement stairway, the second floor stairway, a pantry area leading to the dining room, and the porte cochere, since converted to a garage with an additional garage having been added on. The exterior of the first floor has a full length porch on the west (front) facade extending around to the south facade following the lines of the five-sided bay window. The porch is enriched with Classical columns and wooden balustrades. There is an enclosure on the front facade of the porch housing a bathroom. This area was enclosed in 1977.

The second floor has three bedrooms, a bath, and a reading/sitting area. On the front facade is a portico which supports a balcony with Corinthian columns and pilasters. The north facade has elongated double-hung windows with wrought iron railings topping the three-sided bay window below. The line of the first floor porch is duplicated on the second floor with a balcony enclosed by wrought iron balustrades with tear drop designs.

The third floor houses space where parties and dances were once held. It now houses museum pieces as does the rest of the structure.

The property is currently owned by the Burt County Museum. Forty-five years of progress in collecting artifacts of the area are preserved here. The Burt County Museum took possession in the Spring of 1985.

# 8. Significance

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

**Specific dates** 1904–1905 **Builder/Architect** Joseph Wixer/Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Architecturally significant on the local level, the E. C. Houston house, constructed in 1904–05, represents a fine product of the Neo-Classical Revival Style of architecture in Nebraska. The house is characteristic of the Queen Anne Style in its massing but is readily identified as Neo-Classical by the detailing found in the porches, door and window openings and cornices. The house was built for prominent businessman E. C. Houston, owner and founder of the Houston Lumber Company in Tekamah, and who also served as Vice President of the First National Bank of Tekamah for over twenty years. The period of significance is derived from the original construction date of the house (1904–05).

The E. C. Houston house is architecturally significant on a local level, as a well-preserved example of the Neo-Classical Revival Style of architecture. The style was popular for domestic building in America during the first part of the 20th century, and gained popularity in Nebraska after the turn of the century. Dwellings are characterized by square or rectangular plans usually two stories in height, front facades with symmetrically balanced windows and center door, bay windows, and cornices with dentils/modillions (McAlester, 1984, pp. 343–346). Along with these identifying features, the E. C. Houston house also shows a prominent verandah on the west and south facades, with a wooden balustrade on first and original wrought iron balustrade on second. The dormer balconies and "widow's walk" also incorporate wrought iron railings. The second story front (west) facade displays a balconied entry portico supported by classical columns. In the reconnaissance level Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey performed in 1977 (Burt County), a variety of high style architecture was identified in Tekamah, including styles such as the Italianate, Queen Anne and Georgian Revival. The E. C. Houston house achieves significance on a local level as a grand example of the Neo-Classical Revival Style and as the only example which incorporates a prominent two sided verandah with a two tiered balustrade of wood and wrought iron on first and second floors, respectively. The dwelling stands as a landmark in town due not only to its architectural merit but also because of its prominent location (oversized corner lot) and the surrounding landscape design.

Mr. E. C. (Emsley Clinton) Houston, a Tekamah businessman and civic leader, built his home at 319 North 13th Street in 1904–05. Mr. Houston lived in the house until his death in early March, 1940. He died at the age of 79. Three generations of Houstons lived in the house. After E. C. Houston's death, his son Richard and family took possession, followed by Richard's son, Jack and family. The Houston family had possession until 1950. The house had three other owners, always remaining as a single family dwelling. On March 9, 1985, the Burt County Museum took possession.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Tekamah, Nebraska

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>4</u>	<u>7</u> <u>3</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u>	B					
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing		
C				D					
E				F					
G				H					

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property is described as lots 3 and 4 of block 62, Tekamah, Burt County, Nebraska, including all historically related real estate.

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

state NA code NA county NA code NA

state NA code NA county NA code NA

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jean E. Enstrom, Intern/Technical Editor and Additions, Joni Gilkerson, Architectural Historian

organization Nebraska State Historical Society/ University of Nebraska-Lincoln date November 22, 1985

street & number 1500 "R" Street telephone (402) 471-4767

city or town Lincoln state Nebraska

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature James A. Hanson

title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society date February 4, 1986

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

Jayne M. McPherson Entered in the National Register date 3/13/86  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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Born in Bloomington, Indiana on January 8, 1861, Mr. Houston attended the University of Indiana and arrived in Tekamah, Nebraska at the age of twenty. Taking a job as a clerk at the Thomas Darst Lumber Yard, he was in their employment for four years. He then established the Houston Lumber Company, which he owned and managed for thirty-five years, with a branch office at Herman for twenty years.

In 1893 he was elected mayor of Tekamah and his administration was pointed as one of the best the city had ever had. Mr. Houston served as a State Senator from the sixth district in 1919. He was a presidential elector in 1920 and was a candidate for Congress from the third district in 1924.

Mr. Houston, throughout his years in Tekamah, served as a member of a number of local and county boards. He became associated with the First National Bank of Tekamah in 1919 and served as Vice President until his death in 1940.

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