

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received MAR 19 1988  
date entered APR 21 1988

Continuation sheet Olsen Ranch Item number MD-21 Page 1

SITE MD-21

NAME Elias B. Olsen Ranch

LOCATION MC Road 6 about 4.75 miles southwest of Elm Springs, Belle Fourche-Cheyenne Valleys Unorganized Territory, Meade County (093), South Dakota (046)

OWNER Martin and Judith Olsen  
Elm Springs, South Dakota 57736

CLASSIFICATION Buildings, private, NA acquisition, unoccupied, restricted access, private residence, agriculture

DESCRIPTION Excellent condition, altered (very slightly), original site

The Elias B. Olsen ranch is located about five miles southeast of Elm Springs on the open flat grassy prairie. Although the present residence (contributing) was built in two major phases, it is painted white, has red trim and the roof is covered with red composition shingles. The original one-story log house was built c. 1890 by Elias B. Olsen and a one-and-one-half story gabled roof wing was added to the west side of the house in 1911. A one story shed roof addition was added to the north side of the original house and a shed roof screen porch was added to the south side.

The front elevation has a four window bay window on the ground floor and the gable end has a pair of single pane double-hung windows. The porch consists of five screeded panels and one door with two windows, with one door in the south elevation of the original house. The west elevation has two ground-floor windows and a pair of single pane double-hung windows in the dormer. The north elevation has four ground floor windows and one window in the gable. The west elevation has a dormer in the west facade of the 1911 wing and a door in the ground floor addition with a ground floor window in the original house. With the exception of one picture window, all the windows are single pane, double-hung. The roof line is pierced by one red brick chimney and lightning rods occur on the ridge of the 1911 wing.

Several outbuildings complete the site with two particularly significant structures, a gambrel-roof, plank truss barn (contributing) west of the house, and a log bunk house (contributing) which stands north of the house. The barn is shiplap painted red with a row of five-four lite windows in the north and south elevations. The drive through door and the second-story hay door are in

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Olsen Ranch Item number MD-21 Page 2

the east gable end of the barn with two four lite windows on either side directly below the upper rafters. Wood shingles cover the roof.

The bunk house (contributing) is Lincoln log construction with a wood shingled gabled roof and a screened shed roof porch on the east side. Built around 1930 of pine logs from the Black Hills, both gable ends have windows, a pair of four-over-one light windows with verticle muntins is centered below the gable of the south end. The screened porch on the front has panels of screen on the north and south with the door flanked by three panels of screens on either side. A red brick chimney rises through the gable on the north end of the bunk house.

A wood-frame barn (contributing) with a gable roof, and flanking shed roof additions on the axial sides is located northeast of the house. It is painted white and has an addition on the east side that is covered in corrugated metal. The barn is used as a machine shop.

South of the barn is a wood-frame outhouse (contributing). It has a gable roof covered in cedar shingles and is painted white.

A rectangular pen outbuilding (contributing) is located south of the outhouse. It is wood-frame, with a moderately pitched gabled-roof which is covered in corrugated metal. A red brick chimney rises through the center of the ridge line.

A root cellar (contributing) is located east of the house. It is a partial subterranean structure.

A white wood-frame outbuilding (contributing) with a pyramidal roof covered in cedar shingles is situated northeast of the root cellar. A pyramidal roofed decorative ventaltor is situated at the center of the roof.

Enclosed in a fenced yard is a wood-frame rabbit hutch (contributing). It is located east of the outbuilding.

West of the bunk house is a corrugated metal outbuilding (non-contributing). It has a shed roof which is also covered in corrugated metal.

A wood-frame garage (contributing) is located southeast of the corrugated metal outbuilding. It has a moderately pitched gable roof covered in composition shingles. A gas pump is located off the southeast corner of the garage.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Olsen Ranch

Item number

MD-21

Page

3

A wood-frame chicken coop (contributing) is located east of the garage. The front facade has one door and a row of four-over-four, double-hung windows. The roof is covered in composition shingles.

Three modern outbuildings (non-contributing) are located at the eastern side of the site north and east of the rabbit hutch.

The site is well maintained and the outbuildings which exhibit the growth of the farm over time contribute to the historic character of the site.

SIGNIFICANCE 1800-1899, 1900-present, settlement, vernacular architecture

DATES: 1890, 1911, 1930

BUILDER: Elias B. Olsen, Unknown

The Elias B. Olsen ranch is significant because it typifies the kind of farms that existed in the survey area at the turn-of-the-century. Martin Olsen, who is the present owner of the farm, states that the original log house was erected in 1890 by his father, Elias B. Olsen.

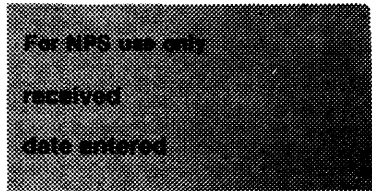
The site is unusual because it represents three distinct building phases and is in an excellent state of preservation. The house is the only residence encountered in the survey that incorporated the original log homestead shack into the modern house. The Olsen house is distinctive with its dormer-like gable, whose end is flush with the underlying wall, large bay window and one-story front porch.

The sole example of Lincoln log construction encountered during the survey is located here as is one partial subterranean outbuilding which are also rare in the survey area. Lincoln log construction is the most recent form of log construction found in South Dakota and is easily identified by the use of round logs which have been stripped of their bark. In most cases, no chinking is necessary, because the logs are placed flush with saddle notching, as in the bunk house, or square notching.

Noteworthy for its diversity of vernacular architectural styles, the Elias B. Olsen homestead also exhibits a full complement of outbuildings which are traditionally associated with turn-of-the-century northern Great Plains farms and ranches.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Olsen Ranch Item number MD-21 Page 4

QUADRANGLE NAME Elm Springs, South Dakota

UTM REFERENCE 14/693060/4906060

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

ACREAGE 8 acres

PHOTO REFERENCE NUMBER

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The site is bounded by a set of intersecting imaginary lines. Bounded on the north by an imaginary line which extends ten feet from the north wall of the gabled roof barn which intersects an imaginary line ten feet east of the northeasternmost outbuilding which intersects an imaginary line which runs parallel to the north edge of Meade County Road, twenty feet north of that road to a line that is located ten feet from the western wall of the gambrel roof barn. The site is located in the SE quarter of the SW quarter of Section 20, Township 4 north, Range 13 east in Meade County.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

E. B. OLSEN RANCH

SITE MD-21

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

5

