

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC PORTER FARM

AND/OR COMMON Porter Farm

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Located approximately two miles northwest of Terrell, Texas on farm  
---NOT FOR PUBLICATION route 986.

CITY, TOWN Terrell VICINITY OF CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE Texas CODE 48 COUNTY Kaufman CODE 257

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mr. William A. Porter

STREET & NUMBER Route 4, Box 26

CITY, TOWN Terrell VICINITY OF Texas 75160 STATE

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Registry of Deeds, Kaufman County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER Main Street

CITY, TOWN Terrell STATE Texas, 75160

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE None

DATE  
---FEDERAL ---STATE ---COUNTY ---LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Porter Farm sits on Texas Farm Road 986 in Kaufman County approximately two miles north of Terrell, Texas. Though the total acreage of the Porter farm exceeds 500, the extent of the agricultural demonstration occurred on seventy acres of the Porter property. These seventy acres are located on the west side of farm road 986 which severs a small portion of the northeast corner of the plat. (See aerial photographic map).

The seventy acres set aside for the demonstration are moderately rolling. The soil was a light sandy loam with clay base, which had been planted to cotton and corn for 28 years without commercial fertilizers. The general character and condition of the soil has not changed.

Under instructions from Dr. Knapp, Porter divided 37 acres into equal plats. Before planting, the land was disked, cross-disked and harrowed. Cotton seed was planted an inch deep in rows three and one half feet apart. The planter drill was followed by a roller which firmed the soil around the seed.

From May 1 to May 3 the plats were harrowed. Twelve days later they were cross-harrowed and cultivated. From May 15 to May 18 the cotton was chopped to an 18-inch spacing in the row and plowed every 12 days thereafter until August 1.

The results of Dr. Knapp's experiment were phenomenal. On the first plat, there had been 200 pounds per acre of fertilizer containing phosphorus, potash and cottonseed applied at planting. The yield on that field was 326.6 pounds of lint per acre. On an adjoining field, new to cultivation but handled just as Porter had always grown cotton, the yield was just 166.6 pounds of lint per acre. The second plat in the demonstration farm had been in cowpeas and corn the year before. Fertilized just as plat I, this plat showed the effect of the legumes by producing 414.4 pounds of lint per acre. The experiment was a success and the development of other cooperative demonstrations was rapid.

The son of Walter C. Porter, Mr. William Porter, still operates the original demonstration farm, though they plant little cotton. Instead they concentrate on vetch seed production with an interplanting of rye and oats.

Just across the highway stands the original Porter homestead. A one-story clapboard house with gabled roof, the house is still occupied by the Porter family. On this same side of the road, facing the original demonstration fields are three markers, the National Historic Landmark Plaque, a state marker, and a local marker which reads:

(see continuation sheet)

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1903

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Founder: Dr. Seaman A. Knapp

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Dr. Seaman A. Knapp, concerned for the plight of poor farmers, organized the first agricultural cooperative on February 26, 1903. It was in Texas on the Walter C. Porter farm near Terrell that the first demonstration took place. From this one demonstration the entire nation-wide Agricultural Extension Service has developed--for 60 years influencing agriculture and better rural living in Texas, the nation, and throughout the world.

Farm demonstration work spread rapidly across the country, becoming one of the great educational institutions of America. As the idea spread geographically becoming nation-wide with the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, the scope of the work also increased, extending beyond farming methods, to home economics and the betterment of rural life and culture. Boy's Corn Clubs, Ladies' Canning Societies, 4-H Clubs and intensified country fair activities all stem from the extension work begun on the Porter Farm.

The son of Walter C. Porter still operates the original demonstration farm two miles north of the city of Terrell on Farm Road 986. The original demonstration fields sit adjacent to this newly constructed road. The original farm house remains and is used by the Porter family.

## HISTORY

In 1903, farmers and businessmen in Kaufman County, like others over the state, were searching for methods to stop the spread of the cotton boll weevil, which was threatening to ruin their one-crop farming economy. They heard about a man, Dr. Seaman A. Knapp, special agent of the United States Department of Agriculture and former President of Iowa Agricultural College, who had been successful in helping rice farmers in Southwest Louisiana to overcome problems in rice growing. When the people of Terrell invited Dr. Knapp to visit their county early in 1903, he came and talked with them about farming methods that might stop the boll weevil. His idea was for one farmer to conduct a demonstration for the entire community, planting and growing the crop according to methods Knapp would recommend. Selected by his fellow citizens, Porter agreed to use his farm for this demonstration and businessmen of the county placed \$1,000 in the bank to cover losses which Porter might suffer. Not a dollar of this fund was needed. When final accounting took place, Porter found the new methods netted him more cotton per acre than ever before.

Because the boll weevil was rapidly becoming a national concern, the Department of Agriculture adopted the methods used on the Porter farm and the

(continued)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Bailey, Joseph C., Seaman A. Knapp, Schoolmaster of American Agriculture, (New York, 1945)  
 "Golden Anniversary of the Farm Demonstration," Texas A & M College, 1953.  
 Knapp, Seaman A., "The Work of the Community Demonstration Farm at Terrell, Texas,"  
 Bulletin No. 51, Bureau of Plant Industry, (Washington, D.C. 1905).  
 Martin, O.B. The Demonstration Work, Dr. Seaman A. Knapp's Contribution to Civilization,  
 (San Antonio, 1941).

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 70

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,4	75,5	2,4,0	B	6	3,0	2,8,0	B	1,4	75,5	6,4,0	3,6	2,9	8,4,0	
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,4	75,5	3,6,0	D	1,4	75,4	9,2,0					3,6	2,9	9,6,0	

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Joseph Scott Mendinghall, Historian

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Historic Sites Survey

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1100 L Street, N.W.

(202) 523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Washington

D.C. 20240

# 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

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 1/23/79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST W. Labovich

DATE 1/15/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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HERE THE FIRST  
FARM DEMONSTRATION  
WAS ESTABLISHED JOINTLY BY  
Seaman A. Knapp  
Mr. and Mrs. Walter C. Porter  
The People of Terrell  
THIS DEMONSTRATION OF SCIENTIFIC  
AGRICULTURE ON THE LAND WAS  
THE BEGINNING OF THE  
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE,  
NOW KNOWN AROUND THE WORLD

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Secretary of Agriculture authorized Dr. Knapp immediately to establish other demonstrations on Texas farms. By 1904 Dr. Knapp found it necessary to open an office for the "Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work" in Houston and employed 35 agents.

Farm demonstration work spread rapidly across the country, becoming one of the great educational institutions in America. As the idea spread, becoming national in scope with the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, the program took on various alternate forms leading to the total improvement of farm life. Boy's Corn Clubs, Ladies' Canning Societies, 4-H Clubs, and intensified county fair activities all stem from the extension work begun on the Porter farm.

In the seventy years since the first farm demonstration work began, the Agricultural Extension Service has touched the lives of millions of farm families, helping them to make the best of their land and crops, animals and labor, capital and climate. It teams up the farmer and scientist, meets the farmer and his family in their own situation, and helps them to apply the findings of research within the pattern of their own resources.

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From a point approximately 2800 feet south of the intersection of Poetry Road (Route 986) and Route 537, proceed in a northeasterly direction along the north curb of Route 986, continuing in a straight line along the former route, to its intersection with Route 537 if extended, thence proceed in a northwesterly direction approximately 2000 feet, thence proceed in a southerly direction 1500 feet, thence southeasterly 1675 feet, thence southeasterly to the point of origin. This area contains the seventy original acres on which Dr. Knapp and Walter Porter conducted their demonstration experiment. The farm house is within this historic boundary. There is a tomato warehouse which sits within the boundary. This building does not add to the national significance of the historic landmark. Also, a portion of the property has been severed by the recent construction of Poetry Road. This does not, however, greatly impair the landmark, as the demonstration farm remains active.