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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received MAR 19 1986
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See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name 26 Prop.

historic The Historic Resources of Rural Butte and Meade Counties, South Dakota (Partial Inventory: Historic and Architectural Properties)

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number See Individual Site Forms (Continuation Sheets) N/A not for publication

city, town ___ vicinity of

state SD code county Butte & Meade code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	X public	X occupied	X agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	X private	X unoccupied	X commercial	___ park
X structure	X both	___ work in progress	X educational	X private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	X religious
___ object	N/A in process	X yes: restricted	X government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	X yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	X transportation
		___ no	___ military	X other: Recreation

4. Owner of Property

name See Individual Site Forms (Continuation Sheets)

street & number

city, town ___ vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Butte County Courthouse; Meade County Courthouse, Register of Deeds

street & number 839 Fifth Street, Belle Fouche, SD; 425 Sherman, Sturgis, SD

city, town state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Rural Butte & Meade Co. Site Survey has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date Summer 1984 N/A federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records State Historical Preservation Center

city, town Vermillion state South Dakota

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
X excellent	___ deteriorated	X unaltered	X original site
X good	___ ruins	X altered	X moved date see individual site form (BU 38)
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The multiple resource nomination titled the Historic Resources of Rural Butte and Meade Counties (Partial Inventory: Historic and Architectural Properties) contains twenty-six individual sites. Roughly bounded by the Black Hills National Forest in the southwest, the Cheyenne River and the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in the east, the Moreau River and U.S. Highway 212 in the north and the states of Montana and Wyoming in the west, the properties are scattered throughout the approximately 5,700 square miles of the two counties. The nomination is composed of seven ranches, one churches, two commerical buildings, four houses, six bridges, four schools, one homestead, and one fairground. The adobe, concrete, log, sod, stone and frame structures which are represented exhibit a full range of building techniques associated with the turn-of-the-century settlement of the western part of South Dakota.

Settlement of the region began in the late 1870s subsequent to the discovery of gold in the Black Hills in 1874. After the boom created by the gold rush years ranchers found it necessary to move their herds farther into the open range areas north of the hills. A large proportion of the ranchers and homesteaders who pioneered the central western South Dakota frontier immigrated from the surrounding eastern and southern territories as these regions developed and lost their frontier status. Additionally, Scandinavian immigration to the United States was at a high point in the late 19th century and many Scandinavians emigrated to western South Dakota. Numerous Scandinavian immigrants settled in small communities throughout the region and had a pronounced effect on the architectural and social trends in the frontier area.

In the late 19th century the pioneers who settled the land in the extreme western part of South Dakota which later became Butte and Meade Counties were in the Great Plains physiographic area, a region which has remained relatively unchanged since its settlement. Characterized by gently rolling prairie, the area has steep, hilly areas in the breaks of the Belle Fourche, Cheyenne, and Moreau River valleys; rough, broken, pine covered areas at the northern edge of the Black Hills; and scattered buttes, ridges and small badland areas. Much of the land is covered with native grass used for range and hay with wheat, oats, barley, corn and alfalfa the principal cultivated crops. Numerous streams cross the terrain.

The present nomination is intended to aid the conservation of the character of the western part of the state and the built environment of the pioneers who settled it. This nomination is also an effort to preserve the last material vestiges of the pioneer spirit, which according to tradition, was the impetus behind the log and stone buildings erected on the frontier with the

(See Continuation Sheets)

assistance and cooperation of neighboring ranchers and farmers. Over 200 sites were located during the fieldwork with twenty-six sites deemed individually eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Architecture

Architecturally, the buildings can be divided into five major categories:

1. Log construction, generally temporary buildings put up by early settlers in the 1870s and 1880s, and a second phase ca. 1930 using Lincoln Log construction techniques.

2. Sod construction, inexpensive and temporary housing used by homesteaders in the 1870s through the 1910s.

3. Stone construction, utilizing locally available material, structures built in the 1880s through 1900 by early settlers, and from 1900 through 1930 by homesteaders.

4. Adobe construction, a most durable and inexpensive method using locally avaliable material, prevelant about 1900 through 1920.

5. Wood-frame construction, popular between 1900 and 1930.

Historically, in frontier regions log houses were built as an expedient type of shelter by early settlers in timbered areas. The only timbered areas in western South Dakota, outside of the forested Black Hills, occur in river valleys and the foothills of the northern edge of the Black Hills in the Elk Creek valley region of southwestern Meade County. Because of the obvious locational factors, these areas were the first to be settled and have the greatest number of late nineteenth century log and stone structures.

The log buildings were identified as belonging to either a Scandinavian tradition or an Anglo-American tradition, arriving in western South Dakota through Scandinavian immigration or successive waves of western migration from the eastern United States. Western South Dakota folk architecture then, represents construction methods patterned on those of Scandinavian and eastern models, but adapted to western conditions.

Scandinavian influenced log construction represents the most durable and visually attractive log structures found in the western part of the state. They can be readily identified by the following characteristics: double verticle notch; purlins, the roof support located between the plate and the ridgepole; ridgepoles; logs extending into the gable; little or no chinking as logs were carefully fitted to make a tight joint.

The Anglo-American tradition, which by the turn-of-the-century is viewed to include all eastern United States traditions, ie. Pennsylvania German, British-American, Dutch-American and so forth, is the most common log construction technique encountered in western South Dakota. The logs are generally hewn and corner notched using dovetail and saddle notch techniqes. Chinks are commonly filled with slats, mortar or newspaper. Built by settlers from Europe and the eastern United States, these buildings do not exhibit the level of technical expertise of Scandinavian log construction.

Sod construction was employed by pioneers across the Great Plains from the earliest accounts because it was generally avaliable and inexpensive. A sod house could be put up with little expense other than the cost of windows, doors, and wooden shingles, if used instead of sod on the roof. Warm in winter and cool in summer, with their thick twelve to fourteen inch walls, sod houses were economical and derived popularity among early homesteaders who needed their capital to start farming and ranching operations. The ubiquitious sod house of the turn-of-the-century was frequently replaced when the railroad reached frontier regions and made milled lumber and brick readily available to homesteaders. Sod construction appears as late as the 1910s in western South Dakota with the last influx of homesteaders.

The avaliability of natural stone in western South Dakota contributed to the masonry tradition that developed in this part of the state. Sandstone was quarried at areas of natural outcropping in Meade County and was used for construction of massive houses and public buildings throughout the county, particularly in the towns of Belle Fourche and Sturgis and the surrounding hinterlands. The house at the Jacob and Elizabeth Roskob Ranch, built in 1900, is the only dressed sandstone structure in rural Meade County.

Throughout most of rural western South Dakota, fieldstone construction is the most common, with stones gathered on the site or from nearby areas where the houses and outbuildings were constructed. Four examples of fieldstone construction are included here. The Stevens House built ca. 1880, a one-and-one-half story house with sandstone quoins and classical details, is the finest example of this building technique known to exist in the western part of the

state. The original homestead house on the Stevens Ranch is also fieldstone construction. An excellent example of this technique, the L.L. Bartlett House is the only stone cube house in the vicinity. The Fishel barn has a fieldstone foundation, rarely found in outbuildings in the area.

By the first quarter of the twentieth century when adobe construction appears in western South Dakota, it had become an American building tradition with its roots in the Hispanic building technologies of the American Southwest. Attrative to early settlers because it was inexpensive and easy to make, adobe which could be maufactured on the construction site, was a logical alternative to other more expensive building materials which needed to be purchased, then hauled by team and wagon to the building site.

In rural western South Dakota wood-frame construction was a popular building technique in the latter years of the nineteenth century. Its prevalence increased with the introduction of the railroad after 1900 throughout the area. After 1900, in regions closest to railroad centers most houses and outbuildings were built of milled lumber.

The Bridges

Recorded according to standards established by the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) and the Historic American Engineerig Record (HAER) in the Guidelines for Inventories of Historic Buildings and Engineering and Industrial Structures, bridges were later evaluated for their potential eligiblity for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Of the 118 bridges that cross the rivers, creeks and canals of Butte County roads, the six bridges included in this nomination remain as the only representative examples of the Parker through truss bridge in western South Dakota. They were selected because they are significant to the history of bridge engineering and construction, and the economic and social history of certain communities throughout the county.

Bridges in the nomination date from the first quarter of the twentieth century when the homesteading era in western South Dakota was at its height and required the addition of new roads and bridges to the existing transportation networks. Although there are various forms of metal truss bridges represented in the area, only Pratt through truss bridges built by the Canton Bridge Company of Canton, Ohio are included in the nomination. Due to their economy, durablitiy, and versatility Pratt bridges were perhaps, the most popular bridges constructed during this period. These bridges are located along the Belle Fourche River and its northern tributaries in southern Butte County.

Other bridges that were not evaluated during the survey may prove to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register. With additional research, other bridges located during the survey, fine examples of Warren truss bridges may also be eligible in the future.

Survey Methodology

Properties included in the present multiple resource nomination were selected on the basis of a comprehensive historic sites survey of Butte and Meade Counties conducted during the summer of 1984. An interdisciplinary study, the survey included architectural and historical research, as well as recognition of historic archeological features. Summer fieldwork was conducted by Clark Greenlee, an architecture student at Kansas State University; John Rau, a graduate student in the History Department at the University of South Dakota; and Elisa Novick, Historic Sites Surveyor for the State Historical Preservation Center. Additional fieldwork was conducted in September by Carolyn Torma, Historical Survey Coordinator at the State Historical Preservation Center and Elisa Novick. The project personnel were trained at the State Historical Preservation Center which defined the survey and the National Register criteria.

All accessible roads in the two county area were travelled and historic sites were examined, and those meeting the criteria for survey were recorded. The sites included in the nomination were identified and recorded during the survey. The properties included in the present nomination were recorded with informant interviews, site maps, photographs, and archival and historical research.

The Butte and Meade Counties survey utilized U.S.G.S. maps, and 1965 and 1980 South Dakota Highway Department maps. Atlases and early U.S.G.S. maps were examined to locate areas of early settlement with potentially early sites. U.S. Census Records (1915-1935) were used to correlate data on settlement patterns in the survey area.

During the final phase of the survey all the data was reviewed and all surveyed historic resources were assessed for their eligiblitiy for inclusion in the National Register. Sites were selected on the basis of criteria for registration and for their relationship to historic themes. Criteria for the selection process included the architectural integrity, character and quality of a site and its association with significant historical events and persons.

A number of historic and architectural resources in Butte and Meade Counties are presently included in the National Register of Historic Places. In Butte County they include: the Belle Fourche Experiment Farm (22 December 1976), the Belle Fourche Dam (23 November 1977), the John Aaron Scotney House (3 January 1978), the Wide Awake Gracery Building (30 March 1978), the Belle Fourche Commercial District (17 April 1982), the Charles Bolles House (1 July 1982), the Gay, Thomas Haskins House (19 July 1982), and the William G. Kenaston House (23 February 1984). In Meade County the following sites are listed: the Fort Meade Historic District (22 May 1973), Bear Butte (19 June 1973), the Poker Alice Tubbs Residence (5 June 1975), the Sturgis Commerical Block (20 June 1975), the Annie Tallent House (28 May 1976), and the John G. Wenke House (28 May 1976). The Historic Survey of Belle Fourche and Sturgis was conducted by LeEllen Coucher during the summer of 1980.

Late 19th century and early 20th century adobe, log, stone, and sod structures were deemed the most significant of the resources, because of their age and relationship to the early settlers in the region, and most have been included in the nomination. Early 20th century wood frame structures constitute a large portion of the nomination. Only structures which were related to other buildings in the first category or were in an exceptional state of preservation have been included in the nomination. Another significant portion of the nomination is composed of a small number of unusually well preserved early 20th century Canton Bridge Company bridges heretofore unknown to exist in western South Dakota.

A number of historically significant sites which were located during the survey are not included in the present nomination due to extensive alterations or the deteriorated condition of the properties. Several of these sites represent the oldest continuously operating ranches in western South Dakota, over 100 years, and perhaps with sympatheic restoration they may be considered for eligiblity to the National Register of Historic Places at a later date.

Since the Newell Board of Education objected to their property being listed on the National Register, we are requesting a determination of eligibility for this site:

The Newell High School, Newell, Butte County, Site # BU-NL3

Number of Contributing structures in this nomination: 104
Number of Non-Contributing structures in this nomination: 62

8. Significance

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

Specific dates See Individual Site Forms **Builder/Architect** See Individual Site Forms (Continuation Sheets)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The historic and architectural resources of rural Butte and Meade Counties are important because they represent the built material culture of the last phase of westward expansion in the settlement of the northern Great Plains with respect to the development of the western South Dakota frontier which spans the period of 1874 through 1920. Significant in the areas of agriculture, architecture, commerce, education, engineering, exploration and settlement, industry, politics and government, religion, transportation and ethnic history the sites included in this nomination were selected on the basis of National Register criteria. The historic homesteads, ranches, bridges and other sites that comprise this multiple resource nomination include sites from the earliest settlement phase, 1876 through 1915, of the region. Sites selected for inclusion in this nomination exhibit various vernacular building traditions from other regions of the United States and Scandinavia; engineering technology employed in truss bridge construction by the Canton Bridge Company, an important Ohio based firm; to sites which exhibit American vernacular styles and were built after the region lost its frontier status and had been fully integrated into the national economy during the period between 1916 through 1930. This nomination documents the historical and economic development of western South Dakota, an area that may provide valuable information about frontier life, the evolution of ethnic and folk architecture, the assimilation of Scandinavian and European culture into rural communities, and mass produced material culture at the turn-of-the-century.

During the nineteenth century, the trans-Mississippi West was incorporated into the United States of America and became connected to the eastern market place through the completion of the transcontintental railroad. In western South Dakota the railroad; the Chicago, Milwaukee, Saint Paul and Pacific Railroad Company and the Chicago and North Western Transportation Company, complimented a vast network of public roads which connected the Territory to adjacent regions as well as Chicgo and major urban markets which facilitated trade and the development of commerce. As the population of the western half of the state increased so did the need for more efficent transportation and in addition to the railroads, more roads and bridges were built to meet the needs of the states rural inhabitants and the demands of a growing agriculture industry.

Livestock ranching and farming were the primary industries in the region and new transportation networks facilitated the movement of local cattle and sheep to Chicago, Kansas City and other urban stockyards and eastern markets. Approximately nintey percent of Butte County is open rangeland used for grazing and the remaining ten percent of the land is cropland. Historically, divided

(See Continuation Sheets)

nearly evenly between the dryfarmed cropland and irrigated cropland, winter wheat is the primary dryfarmed crop, and alfalfa, beans, and corn are the major irrigated crops. Sugar beets were an economically important crop in Butte County from 1906 through 1964, when the local processing plant in Belle Fourche closed. Cattle and sheep ranching continue to be the primary industries in the area. In Meade County about seventy-nine percent of the land is native grass used for range and hay for livestock ranching, the main agricultural enterprise. Winter wheat, oats, and alfalfa are the primary crops on the approximately fourteen percent of the land which is cropland. Spring wheat, corn, sorghum, barley, and rye are secondary crops. The remaining area is woodland, which comprises the northern portion of the Black Hills National Forest.

During the second half of the nineteenth century South Dakota passed through the Territorial period which ended in 1889 when the Fiftieth Congress passed the Enabling Act of February 22, 1889 which created the state of South Dakota. Settlement of the western half of South Dakota, the area of the state west of the Missouri River, which cuts through the center of the state ccreating two physiographical regions, began in earnest during the Great Dakota Boom, 1878 to 1886, after the wild gold rush years of 1874 through 1877.

Early Settlement and Historical Overview of Butte County

Butte County was created in 1881 and organized two years later in 1883, a result of a stormy legislative battle to determine the location of the new capital of the Dakota Territory. The county was named for the buttes, a geological feature which is a steep sided hill, that occur throughout much of the county. The many buttes served as landmarks to early pioneers in the area, who sometimes named nearby communities after the locally prominent features. Most recognized buttes in the county include Antelope, Castle Rock, Deer's Ears, Hay Stack, Mud and Owl.

Meeting in the Territorial capital of Yankton in January 1883, the Territorial Legislature held a special session to decide the fate of the Dakota Territory capital. A proposal submitted to the Territorial Legislature created a Capital Commission to solve the delimma of finding a permanent location for the Territorial capital. With the creation of the Commission it was also decided that the Territory should be reorganized with the creation of 59 new counties. Butte County was created at this session by an act of the Territorial Legislature which divided Lawerence and Mandan counties into two counties. The governor never signed the bill which created Butte County.

The special election held in Lawerence County to assess the residents attitude toward the potential division of the county was overwhelmingly in favor of the creation of Butte County. Land values sky rocketed as speculators bought and sold land in anticipation of the boom a new county seat would create in the regional economy.

Minnesela was designated as the new Butte County seat by Territorial Governor N.L. Ordway in 1883. Established in 1882 Minnesela, situated on a bluff about three miles from the junction of the Redwater and Belle Fourche Rivers, was at the time of its creation the only town in Butte County. In May 1882 the townsite was laid out in a gridiron plan over eighty acres by A.L. Ault of Deadwood. Edward M. Bowman, a Deadwood lawyer; Azby A. Choteau, a member of the Territorial Legislature and local rancher; and David T. Harrison, rancher and early settler in the region founded the town. Shortly after its founding, Minnesela had a post office, flour mill, hotel, general store and hardware store with approximately one dozen families worshipping at the Methodist and Catholic churches and attending school.

On July 11, 1883 the County Commissioners were appointed by Governor Ordway and met later that month in Minnesela. The county was divided into four road districts. The Superintendent of Public Instruction, Peter Miller organized the county into four school districts in August and in the fall of 1883 five teaching certificates were issued in the county. Prior to that time school had been held in a plank shack only during the summer months. The three Butte County schools included in the nomination, the Fruitdale School (ca. 1920, BU-5F), the Langdon School (ca. 1929, BU-30), and the Newell School (1922, BU-NL3), span a short nine year period in the development of the county, but their designs represent three very different variations on architectural styles popular for rural schools in South Dakota between 1915 and 1930.

As early as 1884 there was discussion by the railroad companies of laying tracks in west central South Dakota. Many Butte County residents believed that the railroad would go through Minnesela, however the railroad encountered problems acquiring land around Minnesela and the town was bypassed for a townsite the railroad purchased upriver about three miles at the forks of the Belle Fouche and Redwater Rivers.

The new townsite was at DeMores, the location of an old stage station, established in 1884 by the Marquis de Mores as a stop on his ill-fated Medora-Deadwood stage line. At that time DeMores, a major stop on the long stage ride from the Black Hills to Medora, the nearest connection on the Northern Pacific Railroad in upper Dakota Territory, consisted of a huge barn for the stage line

and a few claim shacks and huts used by local hunters and trappers. By 1886 the line had ceased the 215 mile run between Medora and Deadwood.

Early in 1890 the Pioneer Town Site Company was selling lots in preparation for the boom town the railroad would create and Belle Fourche became a bustling cow town almost overnight when the Chicago and North Western Railway reached the new townsite on August 14, 1890. As with most towns bypassed by the iron horse as it pushed across the frontier, Minnesela was all but deserted by 1894. Belle Fourche organized and built a new two story building which it offered to the county as an enticement to move the county seat. This move sealed the fate of both Belle Fourche, which prospered as a government center and became one of the largest cattle shipping centers in the West and Minnesela which became a ghost town.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century a number of small towns developed throughout Butte County with most serving as post offices and service centers for the local homesteaders and ranchers. After 1920, the peak of the homesteading boom in Butte county, many homesteaders sold out upon reciept of patent to the larger ranchers who stayed, many of these towns continued to serve only as post offices. By the mid-twentieth century many of these early towns ceased to exist with their buildings being sold and moved to outlying ranches or other communities many miles distant. At the time of the 1984 survey seven towns remained in Butte County.

In addition to Belle Fourche, Newell, Nisland, Fruitdale, Vale, Hoover and Castle Rock remain as towns or communities in Butte County. Newell, population 638 (1983), the second largest town in the county was founded in 1910 by F.H. Newell, engineer on the Belle Fourche Irrigation Project which was headquartered there. For many years it was an important trade center on the Chicago and Northwestern Railway. The present nomination includes the Newell High School (BU-NL3), the only English Vernacular Revival structure encountered during the original survey.

The area along Horse Creek, which flows in a southeasterly direction into the Belle Fourche River, about four miles west of Newell was settled at the turn-of-the-century. An excellent example of bridge building technology, the Stonelake Bridge (BU-38) built in 1910, the only Pony truss lattice bridge in the region, crosses Horse Creek. The Nicholas A. Viken Ranch (BU-37) represents the only adobe barn in the nomination and is a Norwegian-American adaptation of an American vernacular tradition. Located along Horse Creek, the Carl Frederick Gardner Homestead (BU-36) includes an excellent example of a German vernacular log structure (ca. 1882).

Although log structures were commonly built in the foothill and riverine areas of the region during the early settlement period, few remain intact at the present time. Because most of these log buildings were the first structures built by early settlers, they were oftentimes hastily constructed, small one room structures, with dirt floors and few windows. Most log structures were replaced as soon as possible with stone or frame structures.

Nisland with a population of 216 (1983) is the third largest town in Butte county. Founded in 1909 when the Chicago and North Western Railway was winding its way through the Belle Fourche River valley, Nisland was named for an early pioneer, Nis Sorenson, a native of Denmark, who homesteaded in the area in 1882. Sorenson sold his farm in 1908 and the town was platted on the old farm site. Located in Nisland, the Butte County Fairgrounds (BU-44), the only recreational site in the nomination has served the community as a major center of agricultural information exchange for over sixty years. The only known octagonal barn in the survey area is located at the Fairgrounds. Located on the southern edge of Nisland, the Nisland Bridge (BU-26) crosses the Belle Fourche River, and for many years provided the town with easy access to roads that connected the town with the Black Hills and the trading centers located there.

Founded in 1909 by Henry Melvin Stearns, Fruitdale (population 88, 1983) is located about one-and-one-half miles from the southern edge of the Belle Fourche Reservoir in a lush area of the Belle Fourche River valley. Established on the Stearns ranch, Fruitdale was named for the wide variety of fruit trees at the Fruitdale Apiary which H.M. Stearns started on the ranch in 1905. Fruitdale, of all the communities surveyed probably retains the greatest number of intact original structures. Although there are several distinguished structures in Fruitdale, only three structures were determined eligible for inclusion in the present nomination. The Johnston House (1909, BU-7F), an excellent example of a midwestern bungalow, is the only original bungalow in the survey area and the nomination. The Fruitdale School (BU-6F), the only school to serve the educational needs of the community, is one of the best surviving examples of a rectangular pen rural school in western South Dakota. The Fruitdale Store (1915, BU-5F) one of two commercial structures included in the nomination, is the only known commerical co-operative structure still standing in Butte county. Built by the Canton Bridge Company in 1913, the Fruitdale Bridge (BU-22) spans the Belle Fourche River, and has historically provided the only access to the town from the south.

Hoover, the only sevice center on a 70 mile stretch of South Dakota Highway 79, was founded in 1905 and named for, John Willoughby Hoover, a prominent rancher in the Moreau River valley. The Alexander Hoover House (ca. 1909, BU-17B) and the Hoover Store (1902, BU-17A), both wood-frame structures in excellent condition are all that remain of the once thriving town.

The population of Butte County was at a low figure of 1,575 in 1895. As time passed and the county developed the population continued to increase with a figure of 2,907 in 1900; 3,975 in 1905; 4,993 in 1910; 5,894 in 1915; 6,819 in 1920; 6,438 in 1925; 8,589 in 1930; and a peak of 8,703 in 1935. At present; the population has declined to approximately 7,825 (1970).

Early Settlement and Historical Overview of Meade County

Meade County was created from a portion of adjacent Lawerence County in 1889 and organized later that year. Named for Fort Meade, a military post about one-and-one-half miles east of Sturgis, the Meade County seat, the county has a land area of approximately 3,491 square miles. In 1872 Ft. Meade was named in honor of General George G. Meade, Commander of the Army of the Potomac for the Union Army, and the commanding officer of the Union Army at the Battle of Gettysburg during the Civil War. The post served as headquarters for cavalry units throughout much of its history.

Sturgis, the county seat, situated between the Black Hills and the outlying foothills, is about twelve miles north of Deadwood and thirty miles northwest of Rapid City. In June, 1876 settlers first moved to the present site of Sturgis, although the town was not founded until two years later by General Samuel D. Sturgis and the officers of the 7th Cavalry under the command of General George A. Custer, who were headquartered at Ft. Meade at that time. Shortly thereafter Sturgis was platted on 80 acres of land and incorporated under the Territorial laws in June, 1888. At that time Sturgis was the principal supply town for Ft. Meade and the western half of the Sioux Reservation which opened for settlement in 1889. Situated on a major highway about nine miles northeast of Sturgis, the Jacob and Elizabeth Raskob Ranch (MD-87) is representative of a western South Dakota turn-of-the-century ranch with a large sandstone house which is the finest example of rural Romanesque Revival architecture in the region.

Due to its proximity to the Black Hills and prime location, the Elk Creek Valley area was one of the first regions in the county to be settled. From the time that General Crook was camped in the area on his way to the Black Hills in the 1870s the valley enjoyed a reputation as one of the finest hunting grounds

in the Territory, as elk, deer, and ducks were plentiful. In 1889 the town of Elk Creek was founded when the Homestake Mining Company of Lead, about 20 miles to the south, built a narrow gauge railroad into the valley to begin a logging operation. A logging camp sprang up at the terminus of the railroad which in addition to shipping lumber, was important in transporting the local agricultural produce to markets. The logging camp developed into a thriving town with a population of over 300, however when the railroad moved down the line to the new sawmill and logging camp at Nemo, Elk Creek became a ghost town.

The present nomination includes two properties in the Elk Creek valley which probably date from the late 1870s and 1880s respectively. Located along the southern bank of Elk Creek, the John and Coralin Evans Ranch (MD-28) represents two building traditions. The first, log construction reportedly dates to 1876, the second an early rural cube house with Italinate details was built in 1910. The Stevens Ranch (MD-29), also located along the southern bank of Elk Creek, includes a stone homestead house which predates the one-and-one-half story stone house built in 1880 which replaced it. This house represents one of the finest pieces of masonry work in the entire region.

Founded near the juncture of Black Hawk Creek and Box Elder Creek, the community of Black Hawk was established by Swedish immigrants in the early 1880s. Originally named Box Elder, the land surrounding the community was homesteaded by Swedish immigrants, who brought with them from Sweden, a Scandianavian verncualuar architecture, which represents some of the finest examples of log construction in western South Dakota. The Ole and Carrie Johnson Ranch (MD-31) has two excellent Scandinavian log structures which date to the early 1880s. The Black Hawk Elementary School (MD-8), perhaps the finest example of a rural cube school in the western part of the state, served the educational and social needs of the community for sixty-seven years until its closing in 1984. In addition, the Black Hawk Elementary School was built by Zach Holmes, a prominent Rapid City architect and builder, one of the few rural sites designed and built by a known individual.

The second largest town in the county, Faith (population 586, 1979) was established in 1910 when the Chicago, Milwalkee and St. Paul Railway reached northeatern Meade County. For many years Faith was the terminus of the Cheyenne branch of the railway. In 1911 the town had a population of 400 with two newspapers, several hotels, three banks and many assorted service oriented businesses. The surrounding land was quickly taken up by homesteaders. By 1914, land around Faith sold for ten to fifteen dollars an acre, the population had leved off at 400 and there were approximately 58 business operating in

town. Of the churches that served the early settlers in the community the Bethel Lutheran Church (MD-F1), included in the nomination, remains as it was built in 1925 by Norwegian immigrants.

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century numerous inland stores and post offices were scattered through the county. Many of these areas became small communities that served a large surrounding region as the frontier was settled by homesteaders, land seekers and speculators.

Homesteading much of central Meade County around many of these small towns homesteaders utilized the native building materials avaliable on the prairie. The Joseph Baker House (MD-85) was built of sod from the site and is a superb example of northern Great Plains vernacular architecture. The L.L. Bartlett House (MD-58), a cube house, was built of fieldstone gathered at the site. Built of logs hauled to the site from the Black Hills, the original house at the Elias B. Olsen Ranch (MD-21) is one of the oldest surviving examples of log architecture in the county.

The population of Meade County was already 3,553 in 1895 as the county was covered with homestead shacks on nearly every quarter. By 1900 the population reached 4,907 continuing an upward trend until it peaked at 12,640 in 1910, the boom period of homesteading days on the northern plains. After the severe drought of 1910 and 1911 many homesteaders and ranchers were forced to leave the county, although population remained at a high due to the stimulation provided by World War I and the advent of power machinery which had a profound ettect on rural agriculture throughout the state. As many homesteaders sold out, the population dropped to 8,724 in 1915 but continued an upward trend until 1930 when the population again peaked at 11,482. The drought years and the Depressions of the 1930s had an effect on the population of Meade County as it dropped to 10,941 by 1935. At present the population is approximately 16,618 (1973).

Documentation of the Sites

The properties included in this nomination are scattered throughout an approximately 5,700 square mile area that constitutes Butte and Meade Counties. Located on unpaved county roads, most site locations, as stated in the following inventory, are described by their distance and direction from major United States and South Dakota highways or rural communities and towns, as available, when not located on named roads. Each site in the nomination is referred to by its historic name, with the exception of those sites where the original owner was not located.

All of the nominated properties are noteworthy in the areas of significance previously mentioned and their state of preservation. Each nominated property is accompanied by a site plan which delineates the exact area to be nominated. Although each site has a verbal boundary, most boundaries follow the physical features, the creekbeds, wind shelter belts, roads, and fence lines on the properties. Where physical features are unavaliable, a boundary is selected in relation to the structure or property which is being nominated.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- See Continuation Sheets -

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property See Individual Site Forms (Continuation Sheets)

Quadrangle name _____ **Quadrangle scale** _____

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Individual Site Forms (Continuation Sheets)

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elisa Novick

organization State Historical Preservation Center **date** January 2, 1986

street & number P.O. Box 417 **telephone** 605/677-5314

city or town Vermillion **state** South Dakota

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 [signature]

title SHPO South Dakota **date** 3/12/86

For NPS use only

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

[signature] **date** 4/30/86

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: See Continuation Sheet for listings **date**

Chief of Registration

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NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
Expires 10-31-87

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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received 3/19/86
date entered

Continuation sheet | Item number | Page

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Rural Butte and Meade Counties Multiple Resource Area
State SOUTH DAKOTA

COVER Beth Grosvenor 4/30/86

Nomination/Type of Review			Date/Signature
1. Belle Fourche River Bridge	[illegible]	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
		Attest	
2. Fishel Ranch	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Delores Byers 6/6/86
		Attest	
3. Olson Bridge	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
		Attest	
4. Fruitdale Bridge	[illegible]	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
		Attest	
5. Fruitdale School	[illegible]	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
		Attest	
6. Fruitdale Store	Substantive Review	Keeper	Beth Grosvenor 4/30/86
		Attest	
7. Johnston, William, House	[illegible]	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
		Attest	
8. Hoover Store	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
		Attest	
9. Hoover, Alexander, House	[illegible]	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
		Attest	
10. Gartner, Carl Friederick, Homestead	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
		Attest	

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(3-82)

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Rural Butte and Meade Counties Multiple Resource Area
State SOUTH DAKOTA

Nomination/Type of Review		Date/Signature
11. Stonelake Bridge	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
	Attest	
12. Viken, Nicholas Augustus, Homestead	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
	Attest	
13. Butte-Lawrence County Fairgrounds	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
	Attest	
14. Langdon School	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
	Attest	
15. Nisland Bridge Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
	Attest	
16. Vale Cut Off Belle Fourche River Bridge Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
	Attest	
17. Johnson, Ole and Carrie, Ranch Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
	Attest	
18. Black Hawk Elementary School	Keeper	Beth Grosvenor 4/30/86
	Attest	
19. Olsen, Elias B., Ranch	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
	Attest	
20. Bethel Lutheran Church	for Keeper	Delores Byers 4/30/86
	Attest	

NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation sheet | Item number | Page

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Rural Butte and Meade Counties Multiple Resource Area
State SOUTH DAKOTA

Nomination/Type of Review		Date/Signature
21. Baker, Joseph, House	for Keeper	Helen Byers 4/30/86
	Attest	
22. Evans, John and Coralin, Ranch	for Keeper	Helen Byers 4/30/86
	Attest	
23. Stevens Ranch	for Keeper	Helen Byers 4/30/86
	Attest	
24. Bartlett, L. L., House	for Keeper	Helen Byers 4/30/86
	Attest	
25. Raskob, Jacob and Elizabeth, Ranch	for Keeper	Helen Byers 4/30/86
	Attest	
26. Newell High School	for Keeper	Helen Byers 5/1/86
	Attest	
27.	Keeper	
	Attest	
28.	Keeper	
	Attest	
29.	Keeper	
	Attest	
30.	Keeper	
	Attest	