RECONNAISSANCE-LEVEL SURVEY OF HARDING AND PERKINS COUNTIES, SOUTH DAKOTA

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Submitted to:
South Dakota State Historical Society
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Abstract

The Reconnaissance-Level Architectural Survey of Harding and Perkins Counties, South Dakota was conducted by Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, Inc. (JMT). The purpose of the project is to update the records of those properties previously surveyed more than five years ago and provide a comprehensive record of properties that are potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in Harding and Perkins Counties. Survey forms and a copy of this report will be on file at the South Dakota State Historical Society (SDSHS). The survey and report were conducted and prepared in accordance with the South Dakota Architectural Survey Manual, 2021 revised edition.

The survey was conducted under the direction of Mary Alfson Tinsman, Vice President, Cultural Resources for JMT. Fieldwork was conducted by JMT's Ms. Alfson Tinsman and Sara McLaughlin, Senior Architectural Historian. Ms. Alfson Tinsman and Ms. McLaughlin are both qualified as Architectural Historians under the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards (36 CFR 61). Fieldwork occurred between August 7 and August 11, 2023. The survey encompassed the whole of Harding County and Perkins County. Fieldwork focused on two goals. The first goal of the survey was to update the record of those properties in Harding and Perkins Counties that were previously surveyed more than five years ago. The second goal of the survey was to record previously unidentified resources that were potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP. Resources that have been surveyed within the last five years were not reevaluated as part of this project.

In Perkins County, a total of 363 historic properties had been previously recorded. Previously surveyed resources that were surveyed within the last five years were not revisited as part of this project. The reconnaissance survey therefore included a total of 151 previously recorded resources. Of the 151 previously recorded properties, four were mis-mapped and were therefore not resurveyed; 41 were inaccessible; 97 properties that were previously not eligible were confirmed as not eligible; 5 previously determined eligible were confirmed as eligible; 8 properties were previously listed and are confirmed as listed.

The survey resulted in the documentation of six newly recorded properties in Harding County of which two were determined not eligible by the SD SHPO, and four which are recommended potentially eligible for the National Register pending further investigation.

In Harding County, a total of 164 historic properties had been previously recorded. Previously surveyed resources that were surveyed within the last five years were not revisited as part of this project. The reconnaissance survey therefore included a total of 105 previously recorded resources. Of the 105 previously recorded properties, four were mis-mapped and were therefore not resurveyed; four were inaccessible; 61 properties that were previously not eligible were confirmed as not eligible; 11 previously determined eligible were confirmed as eligible; nine properties were previously listed and are confirmed as listed; one previously listed property was found to either no longer retain integrity and one previously listed is no longer eligible; and fourteen are unevaluated.

The survey also resulted in the documentation of nine newly recorded properties in Perkins County of which two were determined not eligible by the SD SHPO, and the remaining seven were determined to be eligible (requiring additional information for listing).

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Introduction

This report documents the results of a reconnaissance-level survey of Harding and Perkins Counties, South Dakota, conducted by Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson (JMT) for the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SD SHPO) of the South Dakota State Historical Society (SDSHS). The purpose of the project is to provide a comprehensive record of properties that are potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and to update the record of those properties previously surveyed in Harding and Perkins Counties. Survey forms and a copy of this report will be on file at SDSHS.

Harding County is located in northwest South Dakota, whose western boundary coincides with the eastern boundaries of Carter and Fallon Counties, Montana. Perkins County is located in northwest South Dakota adjacent to Harding County. Harding County, established March 5, 1881 and organized February 17, 1909, encompasses approximately 2,672 square miles and has a total area of 1,709,801 acres (Kane 2005; "Land and Water Area of Harding and Perkins Counties" 2023). Harding County has two towns, Buffalo and Camp Crook, and six unincorporated communities, Harding, Ladner, Ludlow, Ralph, Redig, Reva, with the town of Buffalo as the county seat. The town of Buffalo was founded in 1909 and incorporated in 1949 ("Geographic Names Information System" 1980). According to the 2020 Census, the county had a population of approximately 1,330 people, of which about 346 live in the town of Buffalo (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Perkins County, established November 3, 1908 and organized February 9, 1909, encompasses approximately 2,870 square miles and has a total area of 1,709,802 acres (Kane 2005; "Land and Water Area of Harding and Perkins Counties" 2023). Perkins County consists of fifty townships, one city, Lemmon, one town, Bison, and ten unincorporated communities: Chance, Lodgepole, Meadow, Prairie City, Shadehill, Sorum, Summerville, Usta, White Butte and Zeona. The town of Bison was established as the county seat in 1908 (Hellman 2005; Perkins County Assessor 2022). According to the 2020 Census, the county had a population of approximately 2,804 people, of which about 302 live in the town of Bison (*Bison Town, South Dakota - Census Bureau Profile*, 2022; *U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts*, 2022).

The reconnaissance-level survey, which covered all properties visible from the public road within the counties, was conducted by Mary Alfson Tinsman and Sara McLaughlin, both Architectural Historians at JMT. Fieldwork occurred between August 7th and August 11th, 2023. Ms. Alfson Tinsman and Ms. McLaughlin completed the archival research, data entry and analysis, and report preparation. The survey and report were conducted and prepared in accordance with the South Dakota Architectural Survey Manual (South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office 2021).

Project Setting

Harding and Perkins Counties are rural, agricultural counties located in northwest South Dakota. The majority of both counties are sparsely developed with very low population density. In 2020, the population density of Harding County was 0.5 inhabitants per square mile (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). The town of Buffalo, the largest in the county, is about 0.55 square miles and had a
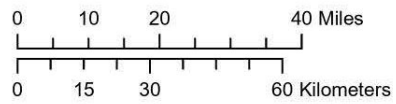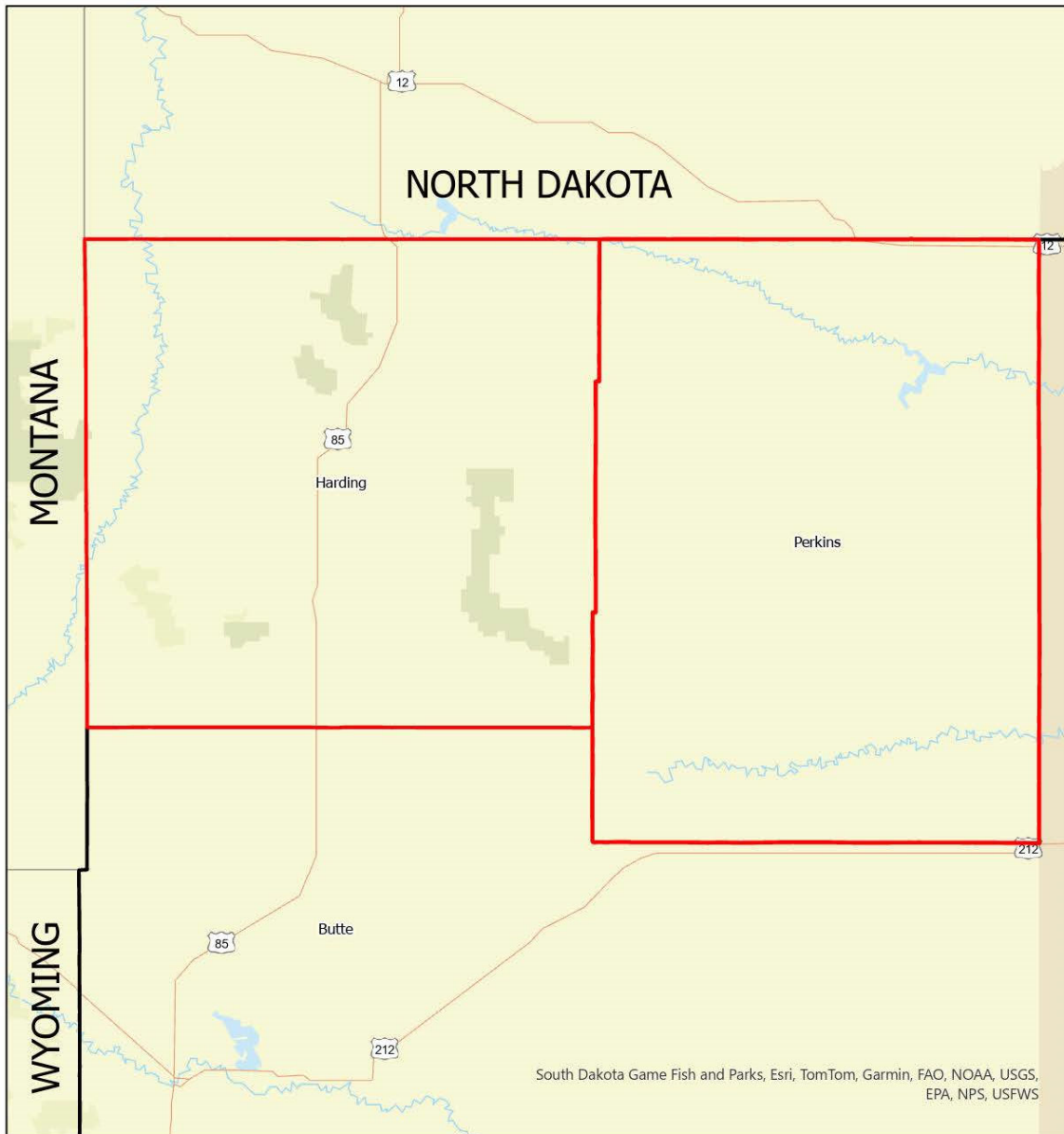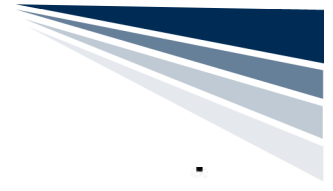
Counties of South Dakota
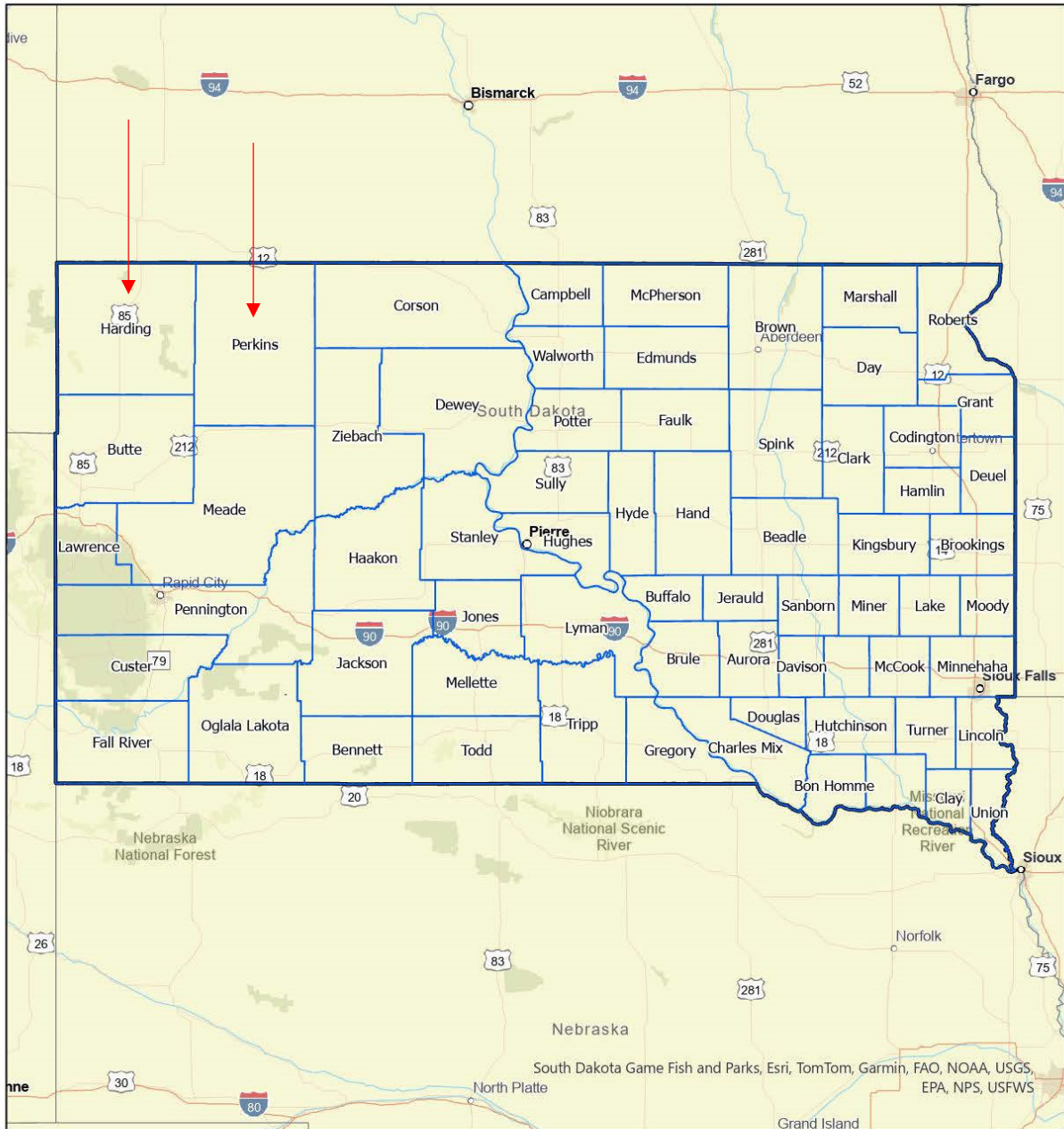
Harding and Perkins Counties

population density in 2020 of 624.55 persons per square mile (346 total population). The population density of Perkins County was 1 inhabitant per square mile ("U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Perkins County, South Dakota" 2022). The city of Lemmon, the largest in the county, is about 1.10 square miles and had a population density in 2020 of 1,056.47 persons per square mile (1,160 total population) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). The land in both counties is mostly privately-owned grassland, which has been and continues to be the primary land type in both counties.

Survey Methodology

## Surveyors and Survey Dates

The Harding and Perkins Counties reconnaissance survey was conducted by Mary Alfson Tinsman and Sara McLaughlin. Ms. Alfson Tinsman and Ms. McLaughlin are both qualified as Architectural Historians under the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards (36 CFR 61). Fieldwork occurred between August 7th and August 11th, 2023.

Survey Objectives

The reconnaissance survey for Harding and Perkins Counties was undertaken to accomplish two primary objectives. First, the survey updated all records for properties previously determined eligible and surveyed more than five years ago to ensure accuracy (including location data) and note any changes since the previous survey. Second, following the guidelines established in the South Dakota Historic Resources Survey Manual, each structure, bridge, and cemetery that appears to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places that had not been previously surveyed was recorded on a new South Dakota Historic Sites Structures Form. As a result of the survey, recommendations for additional research were developed and are included herein.

Sources

Background research for the reconnaissance survey of Harding and Perkins Counties began with an assessment of existing survey data. Information on previously surveyed or documented resources was downloaded from the South Dakota State Historical Society (SDSHS) Cultural Resource Geographic Research Information Display (CRGRID). Listed, eligible, or previously unevaluated resources with surveys older than five years were noted and resurveyed in the field. This included any building, structure, and cemetery previously documented in Harding and Perkins Counties. Copies of building survey reports for nearby counties were obtained for reference from the SDSHS. Archival research could not be conducted at the SDSHS, as they were closed for renovations, however research was conducted online and at the local library, and the sources found included historic maps and atlases (including USGS topographic maps), broad architectural surveys of South Dakota, and town and county centennial history publications. Research conducted at the SDSHS in prior years was also utilized. Historic contexts on file with the SDSHS were also reviewed for applicability.

Harding County USGS 24K Topographic Maps
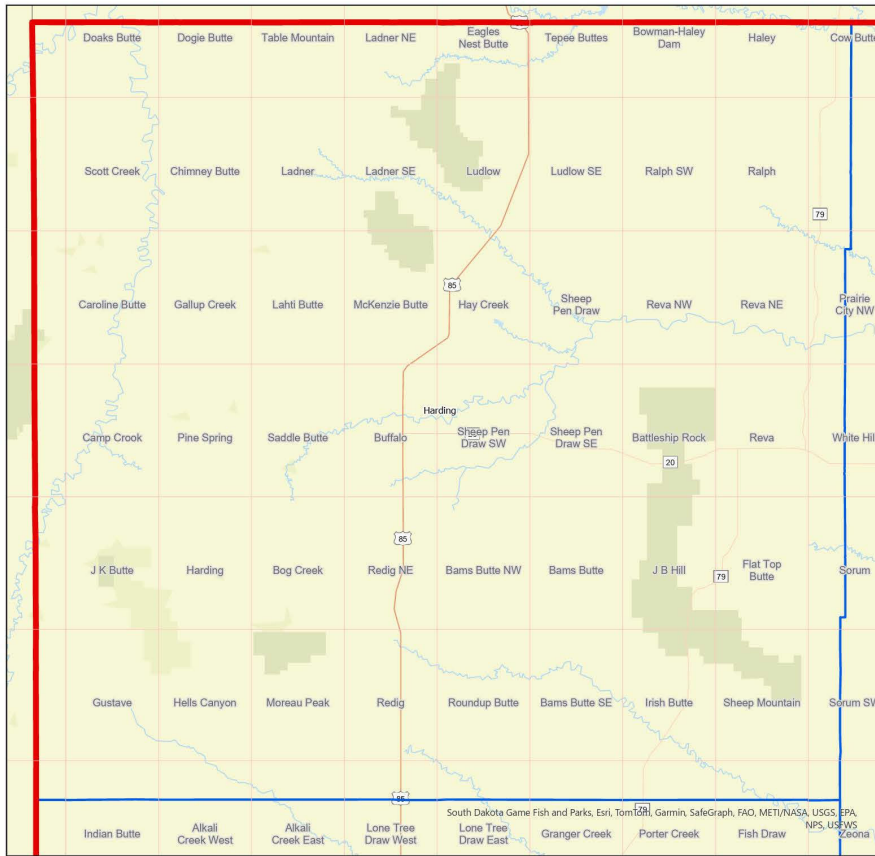
LEGEND
- Topo Boundaries
- County Boundary
- SD State Boundary
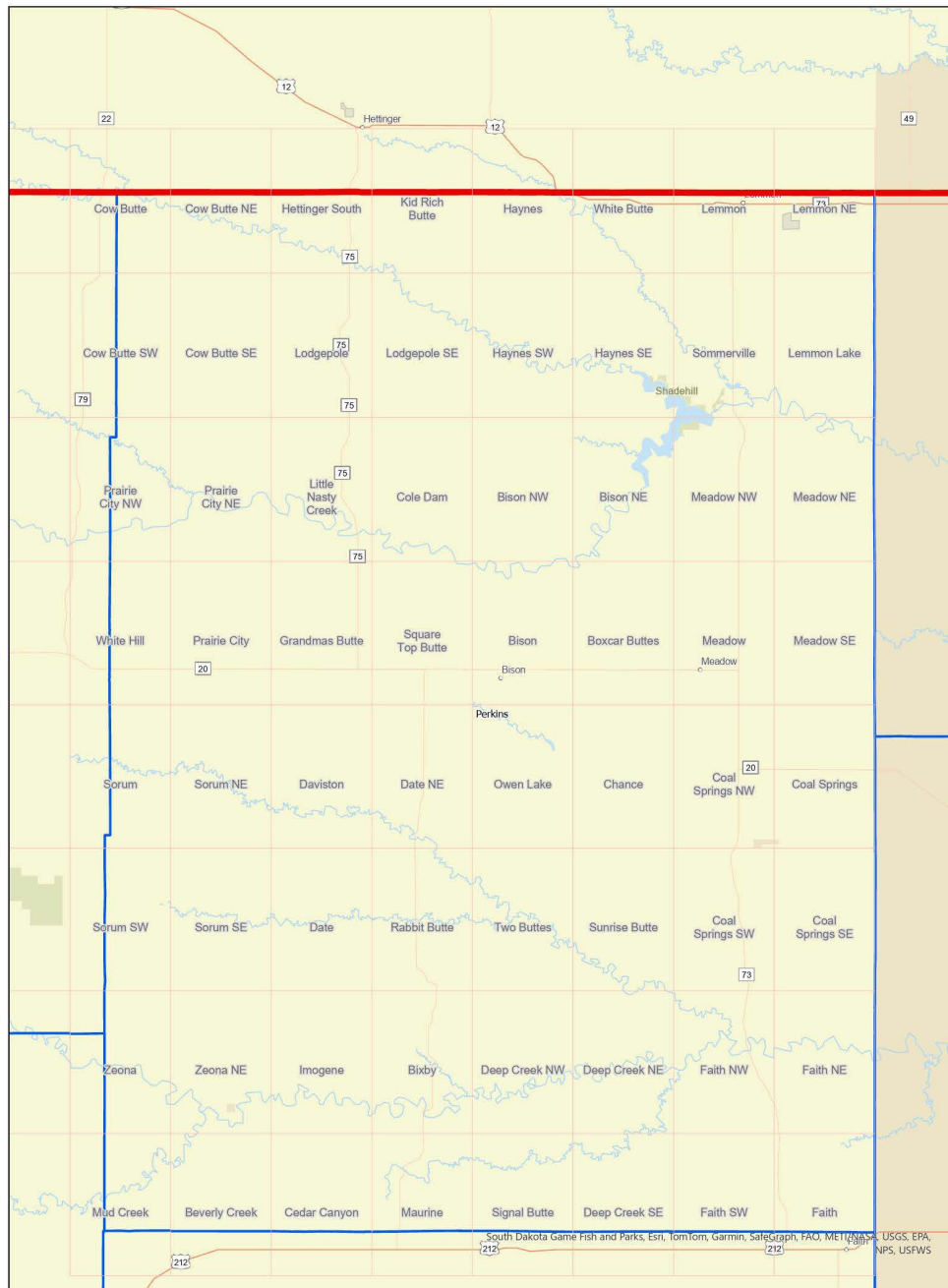
Perkins County USGS
24K Topographic Maps

LEGEND
☐ Topo Boundaries
☐ County Boundary
☐ SD State Boundary

Previously Surveyed

A total of 363 properties were previously recorded in Perkins County. The total 363 properties can be described as follows:

Previously Recorded Properties	
Perkins County	
Number of resources	Previous Survey Results
53	No Status
200	Not Eligible
62	National Register Eligible
23	National Register Listed
25	Unevaluated

A total of 212 of these properties were surveyed within the last five years and were not included in the fieldwork aspect of this survey.

A total of 164 properties were previously recorded in Harding County. The total 164 properties can be described as follows:

Previously Recorded Properties	
Harding County	
Number of resources	Previous Survey Results
8	No Status
104	Not Eligible
5	National Register Eligible
12	National Register Listed
35	Unevaluated

A total of 59 of these properties were surveyed within the last five years and were therefore not updated as part of this project.

Research Design

The reconnaissance survey of Harding and Perkins Counties was a two-part survey. First, all listed, eligible, not eligible, and previously unevaluated resources with a survey date older than five years were revisited. If necessary, the existing information was updated to ensure accuracy (including location data) and any new information was added to reflect changes or alterations from the previous survey. Second, previously unidentified resources older than 40 years that appeared eligible for the National Register were documented and uploaded to CRGRID.

To identify the properties that were newly surveyed, JMT referred to the 1970s editions of the USGS topographic maps covering Harding and Perkins Counties whenever possible. All properties identified on the maps and found in the field were assumed to be at least 40 years old at the time of the survey. If the 1970s maps were not available, the next newest available map was used. In some instances, the only available maps were from 2017. Regardless of date, each map was printed and all properties on the maps were highlighted then visited in the field. Every publicly accessible road in Harding and Perkins Counties were traveled. Some "minimum maintenance" public roads were impassable and were therefore not surveyed. Properties that retained integrity were evaluated using the National Register Criteria Bulletin, "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation" (National Park Service 1997). If the property met the eligibility requirements and could be considered potentially eligible for the National Register, it was documented on a South Dakota SHPO Historic Sites Survey Structure Form. The surveyor noted location information and building characteristics, drew a site plan, and photographed all buildings associated with the property as visible from the public right-of-way.

All potentially eligible properties surveyed in the field were reviewed collectively before the final inventory list was submitted to the SHPO for review and comment.

Background Information

Introduction

Harding and Perkins Counties are rural, agricultural areas in northwest South Dakota. Harding County borders both Carter and Fallon Counties in Montana to the west, Perkins County South Dakota to the east, Butte County South Dakota to the south, and Bowman and Adams Counties in North Dakota to the north. Perkins County borders Harding County to the west, Adams County in North Dakota in the north and Corson and Dewey Counties in South Dakota to the east and Meade County to the south in South Dakota. The land that would come to comprise Harding and Perkins Counties was initially part of the Dakota Territory, which the United States acquired in the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 (Robinson 1919). In 1852, the land of Harding and Perkins Counties was Nebraska territory until March 2, 1861, when Congress signed the Organic Act, which officially incorporated the Dakota territory as well as parts of Montana, Wyoming and Idaho (Ransom 1912; Thirty-Sixth U.S. Congress 1861). The first Dakota Territorial Legislature met March 17, 1862 and
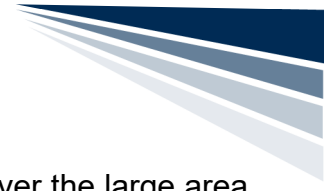
established Yankton as the territorial capital and delineated 18 counties to cover the large area (Trask 1862). Harding County was originally created March 5, 1881 and its boundaries spanned territory in present day northwestern South Dakota and part of present day North Dakota. In 1889, Harding County was absorbed into Butte County. In 1908, Harding County is recreated from Butte County with slightly larger boundaries from the original county (Long and Sinko 2018). Harding County was fully organized with the boundaries it currently maintains on February 26, 1909 and organized January 20, 1911. (Long and Sinko 2018; Kane 2005) Perkins County was originally created November 3, 1908 from the portion of Butte County east of Harding County and organized February 9, 1909 (Kane 2005). This late organization of counties was due in part to the Great Sioux Reservation located west of the Missouri, which existed until reservation lands were reduced and divided in 1890.

Early Settlement

Settlement began, however minimally, in present day South Dakota during the 1860s (Brooks and Jacon 1994). Euro-American settlement in what is now South Dakota started gaining momentum in the mid-late nineteenth century, catalyzed by multiple events including the passage of the Homestead Act of 1862 and the arrival of the railroads. Initial "permanent" settlements were primarily fur trading and supply centers like Yankton, South Dakota (Fricker 1993). As described in the *Homesteading and Agricultural Development Context* on file at the South Dakota SHPO:

> The Homestead Act of 1862 was the embodiment of the Republican ideal of an agricultural society founded upon small land holdings. Land was made available to any head of family or person over 21, who was a citizen of the U.S. or had filed a declaration to become one. Quarter sections of land were distributed free provided the property was lived and worked on for a period of five years. There was also an option to purchase the land after six months of residency for $1.25 an acre. Originally, the Homestead Act applied only to surveyed land but in 1880 it was expanded to include unsurveyed land (Brooks and Jacon 1994).

In 1887, the U.S. Government under President Grover Cleveland passed the Dawes Allotment Act, which permitted the federal government to break up tribal lands and allot acreage to the heads of households ("The Dawes Act (U.S. National Park Service)" 2021). The terms of this act included formulas for allotment that varied by whether the claimant was a head of household or an unmarried adult; heads of household were allotted 160-acre tracts of farming land and unmarried adults 80-acres of farming land ("Dawes General Allotment Act | History, Significance, & Facts | Britannica" 2022). For those who chose grazing land allotments, the acreage would be twice that of the farming allotments. The title to these lands would be held by the federal government for 25 years ("Fragmenting Tribal Lands: The Dawes Act of 1887 | WyoHistory.Org" 2018). Once tribal members had their allotments based on the stipulations above, the U.S. Government sold off the unallotted lands located within reservation boundaries to non-tribal members. The Dawes Act was in effect

until 1934 when the U.S. Congress repealed it in favor of the Indian Reorganization Act, or also known as the Wheller-Howard Act. Ultimately, the U.S. Government under the Dawes Act was responsible for removing approximately 90 million acres of tribal land from tribal hands ("Fragmenting Tribal Lands: The Dawes Act of 1887 | WyoHistory.Org" 2018).

Several other acts promoted additional settlement and resulted in the destruction of Native American reservations throughout the western United States and northwestern South Dakota. These acts were meant to entice settlers into developing land that was difficult to develop. In South Dakota, these acts included the Timber Culture Act of 1873, the Desert Land Act of 1877, the Timber and Stone Act of 1878, the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909, the Stock Raising Homestead Act of 1914, and the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 (Brooks and Jacon 1994). These acts typically granted land in 160, 320 and 640-acre tracts (Brooks and Jacon 1994; "Dawes General Allotment Act | History, Significance, & Facts | Britannica" 2022; "The Dawes Act (U.S. National Park Service)" 2021).

Railways and the Great Dakota Boom

According to the *Homesteading and Agricultural Development Context*, South Dakota acquired most of its population during one of two Dakota booms: the Great Dakota Boom of 1878-1887 and the Second Dakota Boom of 1902-1915. Many of the individuals who arrived during 1902-1915 filled non-reservation land west of the Missouri River. This land was ideal for ranching (Brooks and Jacon 1994). "Three-fourths of all land west of the Missouri River was used for grazing, although less than half of it was privately owned" (National Park Service 2007).

Between 1878 to 1887, a large amount of land east of the Missouri River was settled and railroad advancement progressed into the western portion of the state due to financing from mining companies and forging agreements with the Sioux to build railway infrastructure across their lands (Witt et al. 2013). The Black Hills Gold Rush in the 1870s also led to thousands clamoring for the opportunity to discover the precious resource. The economic upheaval caused by the Panic of 1873 only increased public fervor and interest in exploration. On June 8th, 1974, Lieutenant Army Colonel George Custer received orders from the military commander of the Dakota Territory, General Alfred Terry, to explore the Black Hills with the 7th Calvary (PBS 2022). Gold prospectors accompanied the 7th Calvary along the 345 mile journey southwest to the Black Hills and gold was first discovered in French Creek (PBS 2022; "The Black Hills News-Letter 25 Jun 1877, Page 5" 1877; Witt et al. 2013). Although the federal acts which promoted settlement helped make it possible to own property, much of the statewide boom can be attributed to the development of the railroad industry. Described in South Dakota's Railroads: An Historic Context:

> "The railroad was by far the most important component of [the] transportation matrix. Since the construction of the state's first railway lines in the 1870s, South Dakota's railroads have played a predominant role in the economic and social history of the state. In most regions of South Dakota, the construction of a railroad was the signal for Euro-American settlement to begin, and the routing of a railway line directly correlated with local settlement patterns. Often, the railway companies influenced the settlement

process still further by actively recruiting homesteaders to South Dakota, and by platting townsites to serve as community centers for the new arrivals" (Hufstetler & Bedeau, 2007).

In the western part of the state, much of the land was and remains untouched grassland and not accessible by railroad. The Official South Dakota Rail Map prepared by the Office of Air, Rail and Transit in 2015 shows the Burlington Northern/ Santa Fe line that stops at Lemmon, Petrel, ND and White Butte before heading north into Terry, Montana is the only rail line in either Harding or Perkins Counties ("Official South Dakota Rail Map" 2015).

The Great Dakota Bust

South Dakota became a state in 1889. In that same year, the U.S. government reduced the reservation boundaries of Lakota lands west of the Missouri River and the Great Sioux Reservation was divided into five smaller reservations (Cheyenne River, Lower Brule, Pine Ridge, Rosebud and Standing Rock) (South Dakota State Historical Society 2022). The remaining land was opened for settlers to create homesteads, town development, and railroads. After the initial land rush that took place from 1878-1887, settlement in the area slowed due to numerous issues. It took a great deal of time for the land west of the Missouri River to be surveyed into townships and sections due to a lack of transportation infrastructure. While the surveying of this land was underway, this area was struck by severe drought beginning in 1886 and continuing until 1889 (Hamburg 1975). From 1893 to 1899, the difficulties of settlers were exacerbated by an economic depression which put a halt any railroad development across the state (Hamburg 1975).

In the late 1880s, a series of droughts strained farming operations throughout the state. Until then, most South Dakota farms were producing primarily wheat. West of the Missouri river, much of the land was used for ranching or not suitable for agricultural purposes. At this time, most South Dakota farms were continuing to produce primarily wheat and corn, although barley and oats had increased yields since 1890 (Department of Commerce 1910). The 1910 Census notes the soil in this area, present day Harding and Perkins counties, consisted of sandy loams, loams, clay loams, and heavy clays of which only a few valleys were suited to farming (Department of Commerce 1910).

Railroad companies in South Dakota also experienced substantial obstacles during this time. Climate and economic hardships profoundly discouraged expansion campaigns. During the 1880s, 71,000 miles of rail were constructed while financiers simultaneously tried to dramatically reduce rates for consumers and speculation skyrocketed, eventually leading to the bankruptcy of many railroad companies (Gross 2007). "The Panic of 1893 had caused the financial ruin of many of America's major railways; by 1895 one-quarter of the nation's railway capitalization was in bankruptcy" (Hufstetler and Bedeau, 2007). South Dakota's dominant railroad companies, the Milwaukee and the North Western, soon came under the control of well-known financiers such as

William Rockefeller and Henry Flagler (Hufstetler and Bedeau 2007). Rockefeller and Flager purchased the Milwaukee Railroad while the Vanderbilts purchased the North Western.

Early Twentieth-Century Growth and Decline

South Dakota entered a Second Dakota Boom from 1902-1915 that was categorized by a period of stable economic and climate conditions. The majority of West River, a portion of which included Harding and Perkins counties, was settled during the first decade of the 20th century. This boom generally refers to the agricultural, ranching and railroad boom in the West River. The sale of lands, belonging to the Great Sioux Reservation, by the U.S. Government under the Dawes of Act 1887 resulted in lands not assigned to specific tribal families to be labeled as "surplus lands to be sold". The Sioux Treaty of 1889 created five entities out of the Great Sioux Reservation: Lower Brule, Rosebud, Pine Ridge, Cheyenne River, and Standing Rock reservations (South Dakota State Historical Society 2022). Between 1904 and 1913, an additional four million acres of "surplus lands" were opened to homesteading (Brooks and Jacon 1994). At this time, white settlements in all of Perkins County and the northern part of Meade County as well as the eastern portion of Butte County was increasing. The area beyond the 102nd parallel, which encompasses most of, if not all of, Harding and Perkins counties, was not accessible to settlement in 1890 and did not gain accessibility until the Second Dakota Boom (Brooks and Jacon 1994).

Severe drought from 1910-1911 once again affected South Dakota and many settlers who had begun to move into the western regions of the state left. Those who remained had to accept the climate variation that would accompany this region and adapt with diversified commodities, crop rotation and dairying (Brooks and Jacon 1994). The population of Harding County was slightly affected by this drought, as its population between 1910 and 1920 decreased by approximately 6.5% from 4,228 to 3,953 (Department of Commerce 1920). However, the population of Perkins County was significantly affected by this drought, as its population between 1910 and 1920 decreased by approximately 29.6% from 11,348 to 7,993 (Department of Commerce 1920). Counties in the eastern half of South Dakota did not see the same exodus as those west of the Missouri River. Newspapers in the West River area would use various appeals that invoked and perpetuated the myth that not giving up during hardship would reap reward (Brooks and Jacon 1994). Agricultural education organizations, including those created by railroad companies, disseminated information to encourage people to stay, offering new and alternative farming techniques to combat severe climate conditions. Trains made stops along their routes in small towns to speak to agricultural researchers and read literature starting in 1905 and peaking in 1913-1915 (22). The stops in small towns also allowed farmers to talk to experts and to receive informational pamphlets. A series of state and federal aid programs were introduced, like the Belle Fourche Irrigation Project, but their success was limited (21-22). In both Harding and Perkins Counties, the drought years of 1910 and 1911 combined with the disinterest of the railroads to build lines into the county significantly impacted the development of the area (Nelson 1986). Residents of both counties additionally fought against the negative impacts of space and sustained isolation from neighbors for prolonged periods of time.

Due to the country's involvement in World War I, South Dakota farmers experienced a brief period of success when the demand for food and production increased exponentially during the 1910s. Beef exports increased by 126 percent, pork by 207 percent and wheat by 418 percent (Brooks and Jacon 1994). To meet demands created by the wartime economy, farmers required more land and land prices sharply rose (25). This rise was much more pronounced in the southeast, east central and northeast areas of the state which saw an average land price increase of 163% from 1910 to 1920. The northwest region, including modern day Harding and Perkins counties, experienced an average land price increase of 10% (Janssen 1988). Increased demand for transportation of these goods meant railroad companies and their profits boomed, even amidst new federal regulations to control service and competition among rail lines (Hufstetler and Bedeau 2007).

When World War I ended, the agricultural industry in Europe again became self-sufficient. Farm prices in the United States plummeted and the state of South Dakota and the rural Midwest entered a significant farming and economic depression almost a decade before the rest of the country (Witt et al., 2013). The federal rural aid programs, such as the Weeks Act of 1911 and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, that had started had failed. By 1924, South Dakota held "the highest per-capita state debt in the nation" (Brooks & Jacon, 1994). The credit obligations and investments made by farmers to meet the demands of wartime, including machinery and land purchases, could not be met and many banks foreclosed mortgages. By 1925, 174 of South Dakota's banks had failed. Larger farms absorbed smaller farms and farm tenancy rates increased. The population of Harding County reached its peak of 4,228 in 1910 and by 1930 had fallen to 3,589 while the population of Perkins County also reached its peak of 11,348 in 1910 and by 1920 had fallen to 7,993 (Department of Commerce, 1910). Both counties experienced a steady decline from 1910 onwards, a trend which continued for both counties into the present (Department of Commerce 1910).

Despite this depression, some farms grew and expanded into areas that were previously determined substandard for cultivation. The introduction of two machines, the tractor and the combine, made it possible for farmers to move more efficiently through and cultivate fields. Shorter harvest periods "created the needs for more storage and distribution facilities such a grain elevators and railroad cars", and "the high cost of the combine led operators to plant a variety of crops, so the machine was useful over a range of harvest times" (Brooks and Jacon 1994). The development of the combine resulted in a larger number of acres farmed by fewer, larger farms.

The agricultural industry experienced prolonged suffering through the 1930s and Great Depression. Drought, dust storms, grasshopper plagues, harsh winters and acute economic conditions left South Dakota with major revenue and population loss. The state experienced a 7 percent population drop at the time of the census - the greatest in the nation - and many who

remained in the region relocated to urban areas (Brooks and Jacon 1994). In 1933, many federal aid programs, like the Agricultural Adjustment Act and Farm Credit Act, began targeting the revitalization of rural agricultural areas. The purpose of these acts was to gradually control and increase farm prices and establish a credit program to stabilize the agricultural industry. Additional acts passed in the 1930s established conservation programs such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Soil Conservation Service that aimed to rehabilitate and resettle farms off of marginally productive lands (Brooks and Jacon 1994; U.S. Department of Agriculture 2022). A one-time cattle buying program in 1934 sought to dampen the effects of a drought that had been particularly devastating to areas west of the Missouri River (28). The Rural Electrification Administration, established in 1935, increased the number of farms with electricity from 4 percent in 1939 to 69 percent in 1950 (29).

With the proliferation of the automobile beginning in the 1920s, the railroad industry suffered greatly. Farmers' reliance on rail transportation diminished as they were able to utilize the burgeoning trucking industry by transporting their own goods and lower production meant less need for freight transport. Furthermore, as rural populations declined and automobiles became affordable, the demand for passenger service sharply declined. This trend continued through the 20th century, even as the agricultural industry regained strength (Hufstetler and Bedeau 2007). The Federal Highway Aid Highway Act of 1956 resulted in the construction of an Interstate Highway system of 41,000 miles ("National Interstate and Defense Highways Act (1956)" 2021). The South Dakota Department of Transportation shows that the only state maintained roads in Harding and Perkins counties today are SD-20 which runs east to west, and US-85, SD-79, SD-75 and SD-73 all of which run roughly north to south, for 2,891 square miles ("South Dakota 511" 2023).

Mid-Twentieth Century to Today

During World War II, South Dakota farms and railroad companies experienced the boom of the wartime economy reminiscent of the effects of World War I. Subsequently, South Dakota went through a similar bust after wartime demands diminished and agricultural prices dropped. This unpredictable industry continued to widen the gap between small and large farms. "Faced with increasing operating costs and competition from operators who were farming ever larger tracts of land with increasingly efficient machines, many smaller farmers left the business" (Brooks and Jacon 1994). While the average size of South Dakota farms continued to grow, the number of farms continuously declined from 1935 to the late twentieth century (30).

Farms were consolidating in tandem with the railroads. The transition from steam to diesel locomotives after World War II allowed railroads to operate more efficiently. This new system required less maintenance, less fuel, and allowed trains to travel farther between stops. This improved efficiency and allowed companies to remove now outdated or underused infrastructure, including coal towers and water tanks, and to consolidate roundhouses and service facilities.

Additionally, many small-town stations and depots were closed as passenger and freight demands shrank. The railway telegraph became a thing of the past with the increased use of the telephone and radio. A shrinking rural population and the closure of rural stations meant the permanent demise of many of the small railroad towns (Hufstetler and Bedeau 2007).

With decreasing demand, the railroads' branch lines became unprofitable. During the 1960s, hundreds of miles of track were abandoned and removed. The Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroads, entered bankruptcy for the third time and proposed abandoning all its rails in South Dakota. "By 1980, 60% of South Dakota's rail mileage had been abandoned, gravely reducing transportation options for the state's struggling communities" (Hufstetler and Bedeau 2007). The state established the South Dakota Rail Authority in an effort to maintain a basic statewide rail network to curtail further abandonment. The authority subsequently purchased 1,254 miles of track and rail facilities primarily from the Milwaukee Railroad. Several small private railroads were later established and operated short lines on former large lines like the Milwaukee, North Western, and Great Northern tracks, with relatively low operating costs (Hufstetler and Bedeau 2007).

Harding County History

Early Settlement

Harding County is in the northwest region of South Dakota, bordered by Montana to the west and North Dakota to the north. It is the northwesternmost county in South Dakota. Most of the county features prairie and agricultural land along with river valleys and formations, such as buttes, capped with white sandstone and pine trees (Nelson 1986). Perkins County lies to the east and Butte County to the south.

Early settlement history of Harding County is limited and very similar to the bordering Perkins County. Exploration of the area began in the 1810s when fur traders, the Astorians, passed through the county on their way to the Pacific Northwest (Morris 2022; National Park Service 1985). Settlers began to utilize this land near rivers and streams for ranching in the 1870s. While there is some evidence of Scandinavian settlers coming to northwest South Dakota in the late 19th century, the patterns were scarce as compared to neighboring counties and counties east of the Missouri River (FamilySearch 2016; National Park Service 1985).

Named after John A. Harding, speaker of the Dakota Territorial Legislature, Harding County was established on March 5, 1881. However, it was not yet officially organized. After several years of boundary alterations, the county was abolished on November 8, 1898 and the land given to neighboring Butte County. Thirteen years later, Harding County would be officially established with its present day boundaries (Kane 2005).

Buffalo

The town of Buffalo was named for an abundance of the animal, "the last great herd of which was slaughtered a few miles west of the present site of the town" (Ehrensperger 1940). Residents of newly settled counties west of the Missouri River, including Harding County, "demanded county governments and the convenience of nearby, centrally located county seats in which to transact their business" (Nelson 1986). Buffalo was chosen as the county seat in 1910 over the more substantially developed Camp Crook due to its "central location" (Nelson 1986).

Camp Crook

Incorporated in 1910, Camp Crook is the only town west of the Little Missouri River in South Dakota. Originally called "Wickamville", the name was changed to Camp Crook after General George Crook, a United States Army Officer (Ehrensperger 1940). Despite developing faster than Buffalo, Camp Crook was bypassed for the county seat, and never developed larger than it's size in the early twentieth-century (Nelson 1986). As of the 2020 census, the population of Camp Crook was 60.

Perkins County History

Early Settlement

Perkins County is located in the northwest region of South Dakota, bordered by Harding County to the west, North Dakota to the north, Meade County South Dakota to the south, and Corson and Ziebach Counties, South Dakota, to the east. Most of the county features prairie and agricultural land marked by river valleys surrounding the North and South Fork Grand Rivers and the Moreau River. It is the second largest county in South Dakota.

Early settlement history of Perkins County can be traced back to the 1810s when fur traders, the Astorians, passed through the county on their way to the Pacific Northwest (Morris 2022; National Park Service 1985). Numerous rushes for gold and the potential for successful mining operations in surrounding states and the northern plains of South Dakota led to government protection of supply lines to and from these locations. By 1870, settlers and their families had encroached upon lands belonging to the Lakota territory, including lands in modern day Perkins County, with the intention to establish farming and grazing operations (Nelson 1986).

Named after lawyer and state senator Henry E. Perkins, Perkins County was established on November 3, 1908 and officially organized on February 9, 1909 from parts of Harding and Butte Counties (Ehrensperger 1940). The county became populated during the Second Dakota Boom from approximately 1898-1915 ("Perkins County" 2023).

Bison

According to workers of the Writers' Program for the Works Projects Administration, the town of Bison was named after the discovery of "a large pile of bison skulls and bones in the vicinity" was made by early settler George Carr (Ehrensperger 1940).

Residents of Perkins County chose Bison as their county seat over the city of Lemmon for the same reason residents of Harding County chose Buffalo as their county seat- a central location in 1908 (Nelson 1986). At the time, the town of Bison consisted of "four sod houses, a combination store and post office". This lack of infrastructure and development in relation to the larger city of Lemmon led appointed officials to refuse a move to Bison to conduct local government affairs. This refusal to relocate led to the intervention of a judge who forced their move and eventually contentious feelings about the county seat choice subsided (Nelson 1986). As of the 2020 census, the population of Bison was 302.

Lemon

The city of Lemmon is located along the northernmost border of South Dakota and North Dakota in Perkins County, much of the land being situated north of U.S. Highway 12. During the homestead boom in 1906, the town was settled and founded by George Edward "Dad" Lemmon, co-founder of the Lake, Tomb & Lemmon Cattle Company and South Dakota Stock Growers Association (Hollenbeck 2011). Development of the town was swift, as described in Controlled Recklessness: Ed Lemmon and the Open Range:

> "Lemmon became the first town established- in either North or South Dakota- in the vicinity west of the Standing Rock reservation. As a result, 'a great many would-be businessmen who wanted to get in on the ground floor in the anticipated boom" asked Ed for permission to build on his land, adjacent to the tracts he had sold to the Milwaukee Railroad' (Sanderson 2015).

Lemmon's ambitions of establishing a dual-county seat town between Butte County, South Dakota and Hettinger County, North Dakota were dashed when Governor John Burke of North Dakota split Hettinger County into northern and southern portions rather than east and west (Sanderson 2015). However, it became the most economically prosperous area in Perkins County and today is home to a third of the county's population ("Perkins County" 2023; Sanderson 2015).
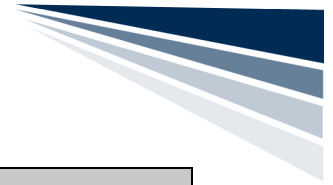
Survey Results

Property visibility from the public right-of-way prevented in depth photography or assessment of most of the resources found in the two counties, especially in Harding County, which is more rural and underdeveloped. Many resources were noted to be inaccessible during this survey.

In Perkins County, a total of 363 historic properties had been previously recorded. Previously surveyed resources that were surveyed within the last five years were not revisited as part of this project. The reconnaissance survey therefore included a total of 151 previously recorded resources. Of the 151 previously recorded properties, four were mis-mapped and were therefore not resurveyed; 41 were inaccessible; 97 properties that were previously not eligible were confirmed as not eligible; 5 previously determined eligible were confirmed as eligible; 8 properties were previously listed and are confirmed as listed.

The survey also resulted in the documentation of nine newly recorded properties in Perkins County of which two were determined not eligible by the SD SHPO, and the remaining seven were determined to be eligible (requiring additional information for listing).
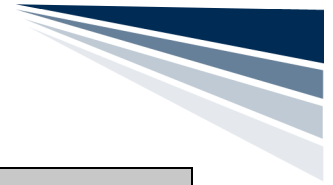
In Harding County, a total of 164 historic properties had been previously recorded. Previously surveyed resources that were surveyed within the last five years were not revisited as part of this project. The reconnaissance survey therefore included a total of 105 previously recorded resources. Of the 105 previously recorded properties, four were mis-mapped and were therefore not resurveyed; four were inaccessible; 61 properties that were previously not eligible were confirmed as not eligible; 11 previously determined eligible were confirmed as eligible; nine properties were previously listed and are confirmed as listed; one previously listed property was found to either no longer retain integrity and one previously listed is no longer eligible; and fourteen are unevaluated.

The survey resulted in the documentation of six newly recorded properties in Harding County of which two were determined not eligible by the SD SHPO, and four which are recommended potentially eligible for the National Register pending further investigation.
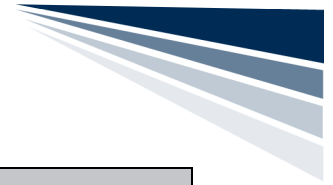
Newly Recorded Properties			
Recommended for Further Investigation for the National Register			
Harding County			
SHPO ID No.	Resource Name	Resource Location	Survey Results
HN00000197	Dwelling	Corner of 2nd St. and Crook St., Camp Crook	Unevaluated
HN00000198	Municipal Building	2nd Street and Miller Street, Camp Crook	Unevaluated
HN00000200	Garage/Auditorium	2nd Street and Park Avenue, Camp Crook	Unevaluated
HN00000202	Dwelling	Intersection of Lanesboro Road and Vessey Loop, Ludlow	Unevaluated

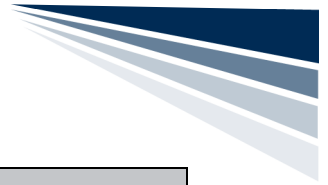| Newly Recorded Properties			
Recommended Eligible for the National Register			
Perkins County			
SHPO ID No.	Resource Name	Resource Location	Survey Results
PE00000151	Dwelling	6th Street West and 4th Avenue West, Lemmon	National Register Eligible
PE00000152	Dwelling	4th Street West near 6th Avenue West, Lemmon	National Register Eligible
PE00000153	Dwelling	2nd Avenue West and 2nd Street West, Lemmon	National Register Eligible
PE00000154	Barn	163rd Avenue and 113th Street, Lodgepole	National Register Eligible
PE01000001	Farm Property	Divide Road, Lodgepole	National Register Eligible
PE00000155	Dakotah Bank	Main Avenue and 4th Street East, Lemmon	National Register Eligible
PE00000157	Calvary Lutheran Church	303 2nd Ave, Lemmon	National Register Eligible

	Previously Recorded Properties Listed in the National Register		
	Harding County		
SHPO ID No.	Resource Name	Resource Location	Survey Results
HN00000145	Stokes, Oliver O. House	Harding	Eligible
HN00000144	Shevling, L. W., Ranch	897	Eligible
HN00000143	Peace Valley Evangelical Church and Cemetery (Church Record)	RR	Eligible
HN00000143	Peace Valley Evangelical Church and Cemetery	RR	Eligible
HN00000146	Vessey School	Vessey Road	Eligible
HN00000136	Giannonatti Ranch	Ludlow area	Eligible
HN00000133	Ashcroft, Thomas Ranch	Ludlow area	Eligible
HN00000134	Blake Ranch House	Gustave Area	Eligible

	Previously Recorded Properties Listed in the National Register		
	Perkins County		
SHPO ID No.	**Resource Name**	**Resource Location**	**Survey Results**
PE00000011	Duck Creek Lutheran Church (Church Record)	RR	Eligible
PE00000020	Beckon, Donald Ranch	Zeona area	Eligible
PE00000059	Sorum Cooperative Store	Main Street	Eligible
PE00000061	Lemmon Chamber of Commerce	Lemmon	Eligible
PE00000063	G.E. Lemmon House	507 Third Avenue West	Eligible
PE00000076	Farm, John House	186 Avenue	Eligible
PE00000043	Petrified Wood Park & Muesum	500 Main Avenue	Eligible
PE00000046	Anna Carr Homestead	Bison	Not Eligible
PE00000029	Sprink Creek School	RR	Not Eligible
PE00000058	Sorum Hotel	Main Street	Eligible

Previously Recorded Properties Recommended Eligible for the National Register			
Harding County			
SHPO ID No.	**Resource Name**	**Resource Location**	**Survey Results**
HN00000041	Harding County Fairgrounds	Camp Crook	Eligible
HN00000052	Ladner Church	Ladner	Eligible
HN00000024	Cave Hills Lutheran Church and Cemetery (Church Record)	RR	Eligible
HN00400001	Farmstead (Barn)	Unknown (Rural Route), Ralph area	Inaccessible
HN00400002	Farmstead (Chicken Coop)	Unknown (Rural Route), Ralph area	Inaccessible

Previously Recorded Properties Recommended Eligible for the National Register			
Perkins County			
SHPO ID No.	Resource Name	Resource Location	Survey Results
PE00000048	Schilling House	209 Sixth Avenue West	Eligible
PE00000001	Lemmon Post Office	310 First Avenue West	Eligible
PE00000035	McTighe Ranch	RR	Barn is eligible; remaining buildings are unevaluated
PE00000064	Christen House	501 Fourth Avenue West	Eligible
PE00000065	Johnson House	402 Fourth Avenue West	Eligible
PE00000074	School	RR	Eligible
PE00000081	Usta Store	15050 SD-73	Eligible
PE00000088	Lodgepole Lutheran Church & Cemetery (Church Record)	RR	Eligible
PE00000088	Lodgepole Lutheran Church & Cemetery (Cemtery Record)	RR	Eligible
PE00000090	Swanson School	RR	Eligible
PE00000040	Shadehill School	RR	Eligible

Conclusions and Recommendations

As a result of the reconnaissance survey of Harding and Perkins Counties, JMT recommends that any resources newly recommended as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or any farms or ranches located too far from the right-of-way be more closely evaluated through field visits with on-site access. Field visits with on-site access to each property would allow for more detailed evaluations. Further historical research, an analysis of current and historical mapping and intensive-level survey would be required before these resources could be listed in the National Register.

JMT also recommends that Camp Crook and associated resources be more closely evaluated as a potential historic district or Multiple Property Listing (MPL). Additional historical research and intensive level surveys would be required before these resources could be listed in the National Register.

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Appendix A – Newly Identified Potentially Eligible Properties – Harding County
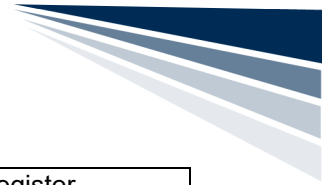
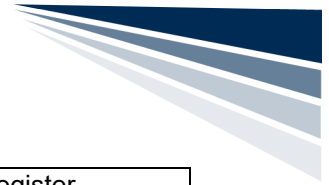| SHPO ID	Resource Name	Address	National Register Evaluation
HN00000197	Dwelling	Corner of 2nd St. and Crook St., Camp Crook	Unevaluated

South East Elevation
307°NW (T) ◉ 45°33'0"N, 103°58'39"W ±9ft ▲ 3130ft

East Elevation
275°W (T) ◉ 45°33'0"N, 103°58'40"W ±9ft ▲ 3129ft
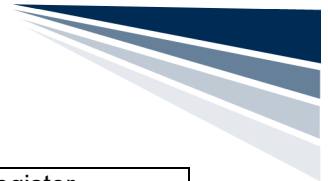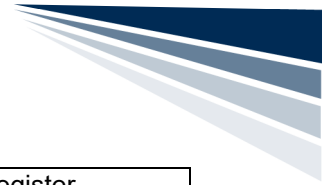
SHPO ID	Resource Name	Address	National Register Evaluation
HN00000198	Municipal Building	2nd Street and Miller Street, Camp Crook	Unevaluated

North East Elevation
☼ 248°SW (T) ◉ 45°33'0"N, 103°58'35"W ±42ft ▲ 3127ft

North East Elevation
☼ 241°SW (T) ◉ 45°33'0"N, 103°58'34"W ±13ft ▲ 3128ft

SHPO ID	Resource Name	Address	National Register Evaluation
HN00000200	Garage/Auditorium	2nd Street and Park Avenue, Camp Crook	Unevaluated

North East Elevation
234°SW (T) ◉ 45°33'0"N, 103°58'23"W ±9ft ▲ 3123ft

East Elevation
273°W (T) ◉ 45°33'0"N, 103°58'25"W ±9ft ▲ 3124ft
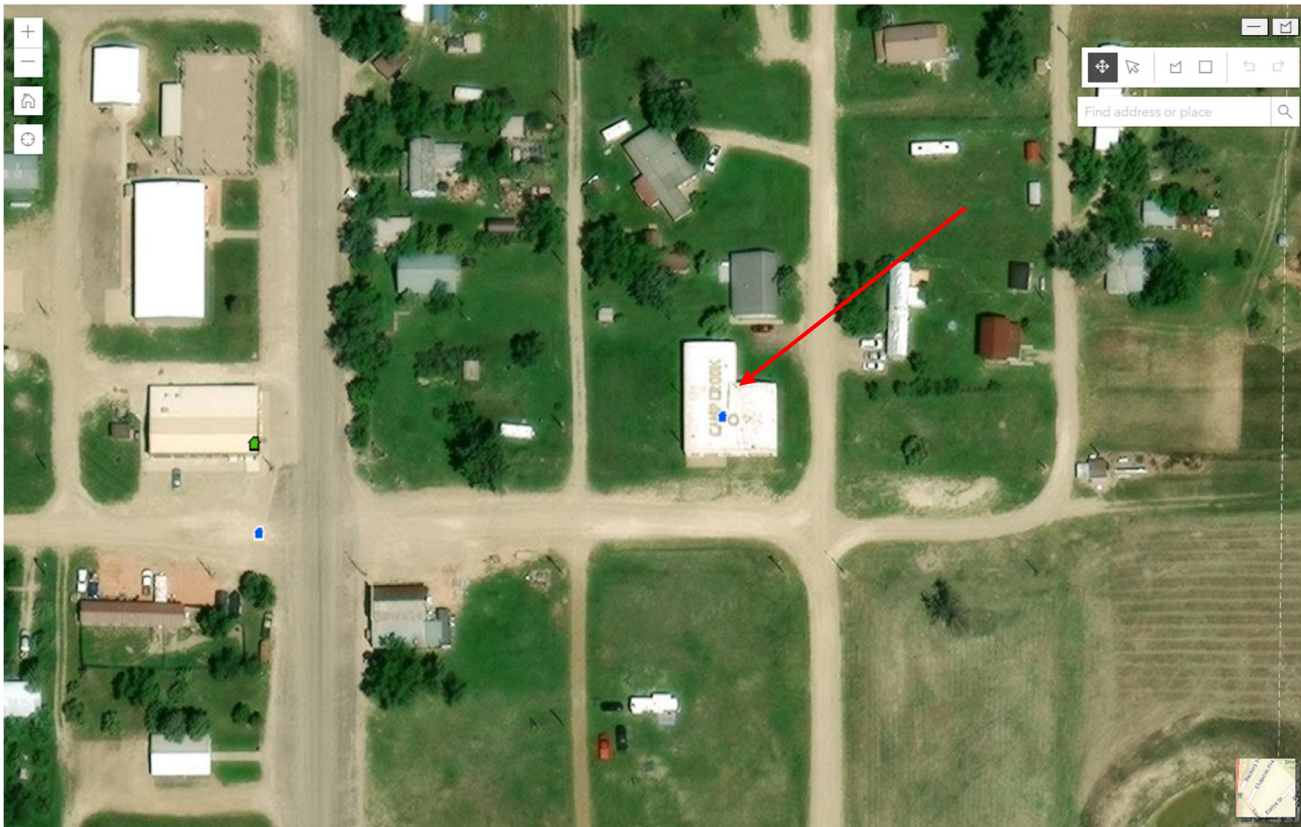
SHPO ID	Resource Name	Address	National Register Evaluation
HN00000202	Dwelling	Intersection of Lanesboro Road and Vessey Loop, Ludlow	Unevaluated

South East Elevation
⊗ 332°NW (T) ◉ 45°51'49"N, 103°15'10"W ±6ft ▲ 2920ft

North West Elevation
⊗ 149°SE (T) ◉ 45°51'49"N, 103°15'9"W ±26ft ▲ 2923ft

# Appendix B – Newly Identified Potentially Eligible Properties – Perkins County
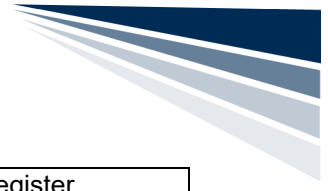
SHPO ID	Resource Name	Address	National Register Evaluation
PE00000151	Dwelling	6th Street West and 4th Avenue West, Lemmon	National Register Eligible

351–399 Sixth St W Lemmon SD

⊙ 223°SW (T) ◉ 45°56'20"N, 102°9'54"W ±9ft ▲ 2576ft

House
Your Watermark - See Settings
PC8
13 Aug 2023, 11:00:48

511 Fourth Ave W Lemmon SD

⊙ 263°W (T) ◉ 45°56'20"N, 102°9'55"W ±29ft ▲ 2576ft

House
Your Watermark - See Settings
PC8
13 Aug 2023, 11:01:04

SHPO ID	Resource Name	Address	National Register Evaluation
PE00000152	Dwelling	4th Street West near 6th Avenue West, Lemmon	National Register Eligible
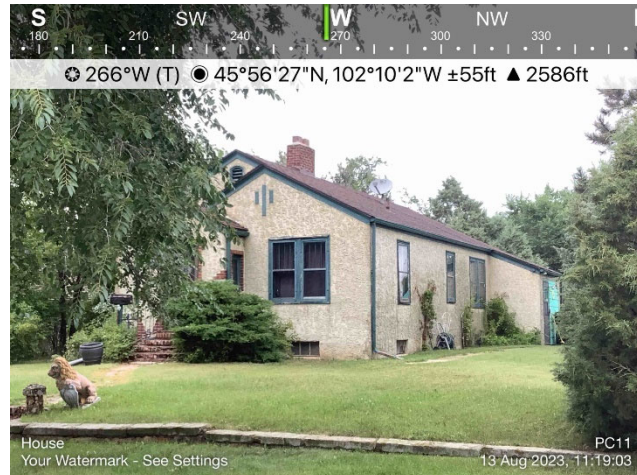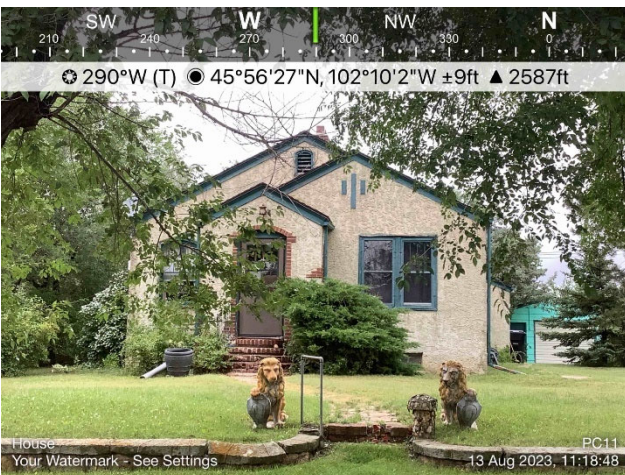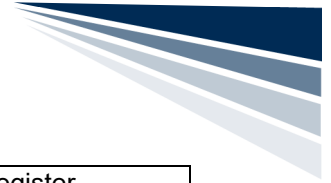
SHPO ID	Resource Name	Address	National Register Evaluation
PE00000153	Dwelling	2nd Avenue West and 2nd Street West, Lemmon	National Register Eligible
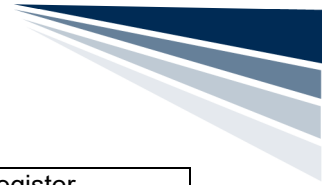
SHPO ID	Resource Name	Address	National Register Evaluation
PE00000154	Barn	163rd Avenue and 113th Street, Lodgepole	National Register Eligible
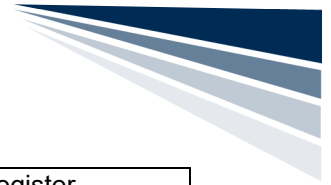
SHPO ID	Resource Name	Address	National Register Evaluation
PE01000001	Farm Property	Divide Road, Lodgepole	National Register Eligible
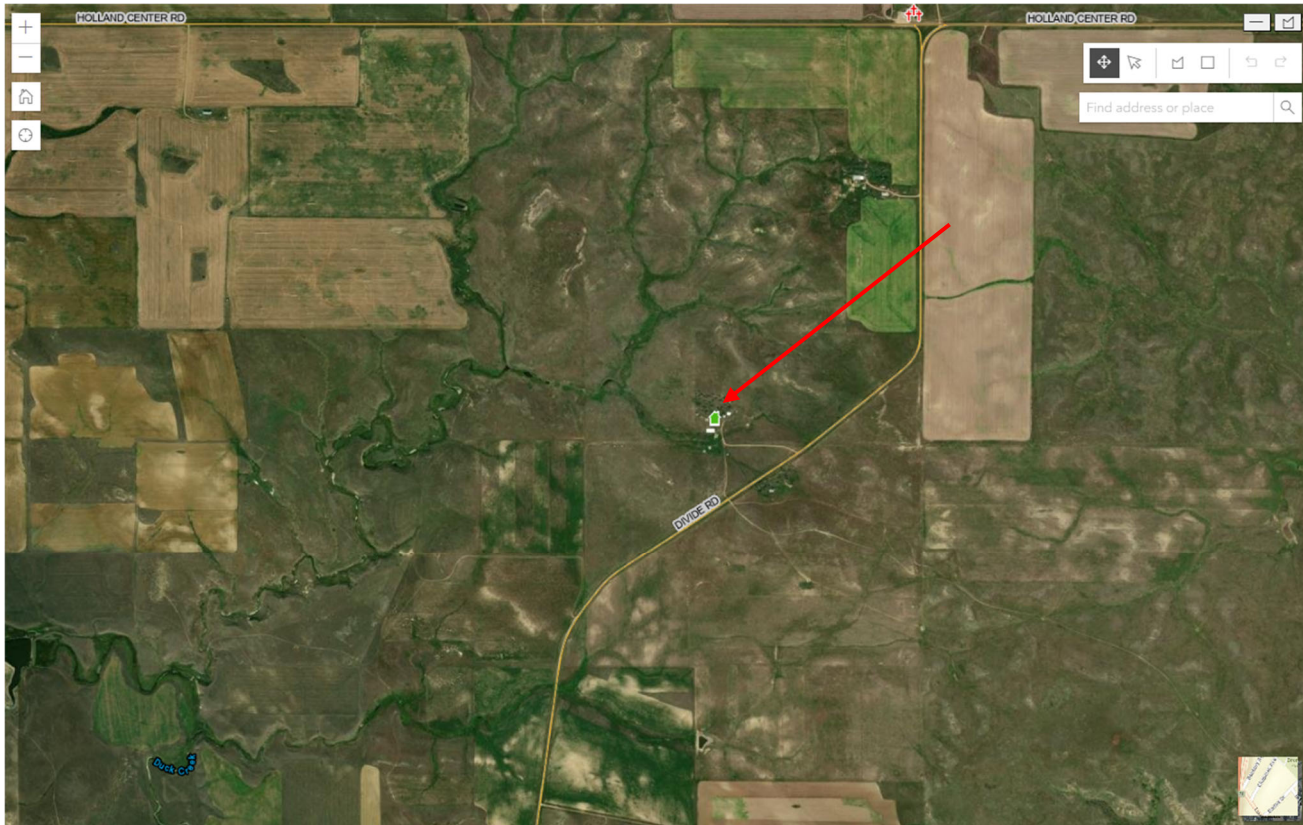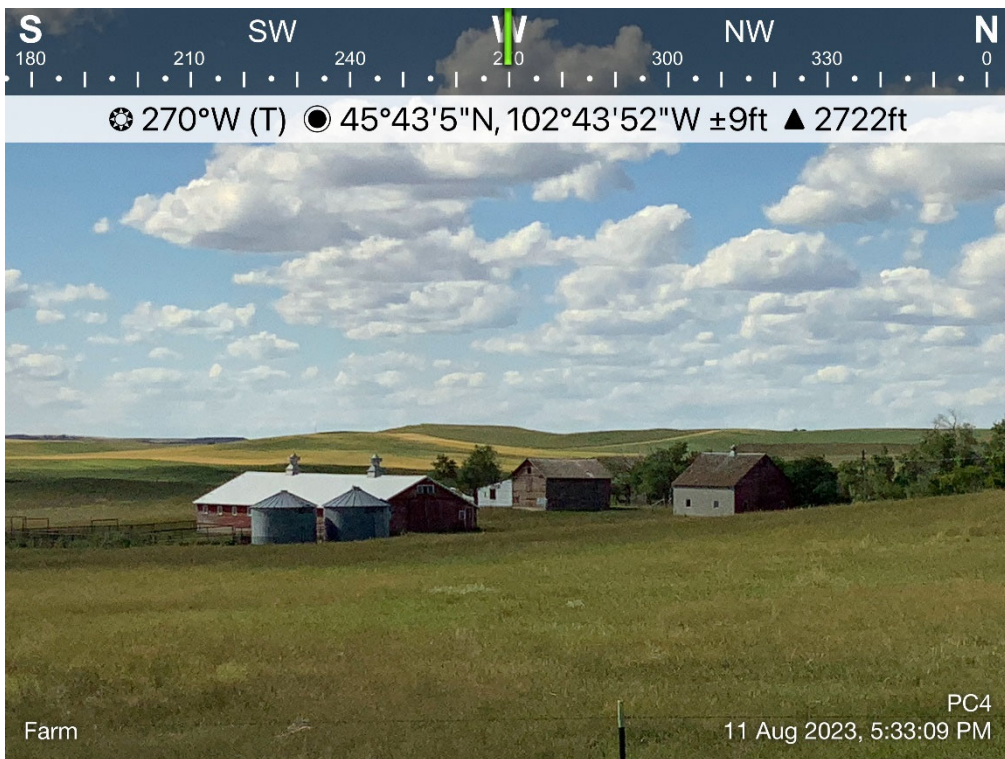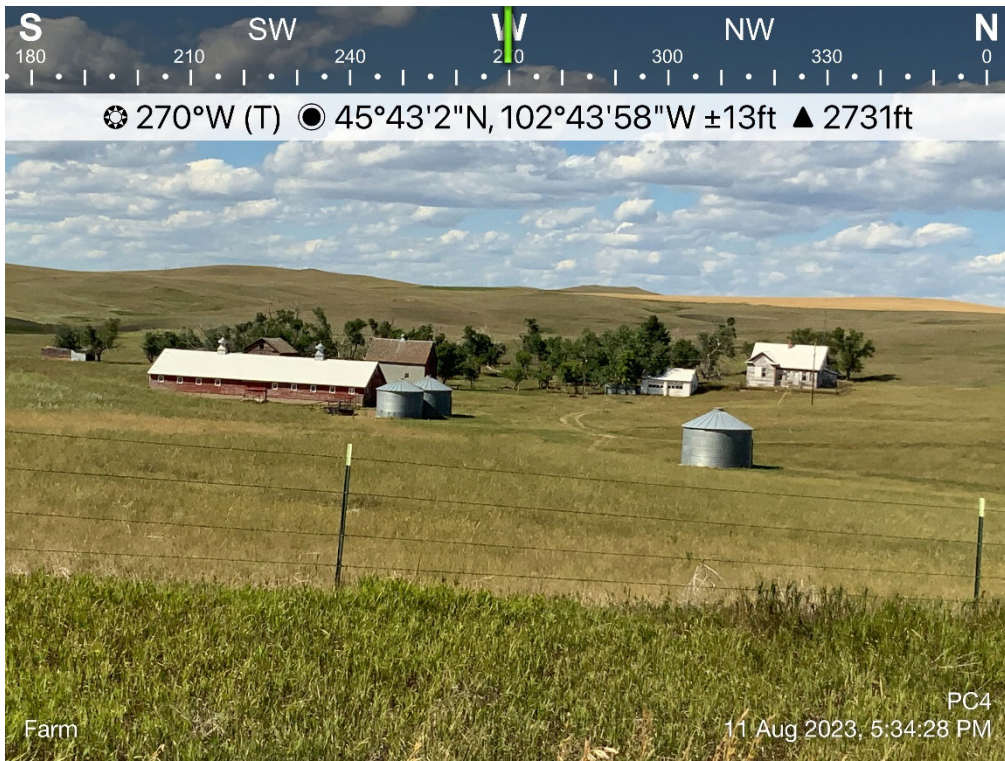
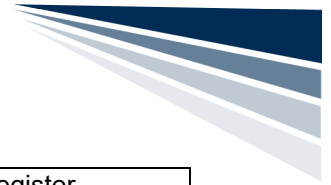| SHPO ID	Resource Name	Address	National Register Evaluation
PE00000155	Dakotah Bank	Main Avenue and 4th Street East, Lemmon	National Register Eligible

1–53 Fourth St E Lemmon SD
237°SW (T)   45°56'27"N, 102°9'33"W ±6ft   2567ft

1–53 Fourth St W Lemmon SD
42°NE (T)   45°56'27"N, 102°9'36"W ±16ft   2570ft

SHPO ID	Resource Name	Address	National Register Evaluation
PE00000157	Calvary Lutheran Church	303 2nd Ave, Lemmon	National Register Eligible