

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register Listed  
October 17, 2012

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Miller Farmstead

other names/site number KHRI # 165-43

## 2. Location

street & number 2913 HWY 4  not for publication

city or town La Crosse  vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Rush code 165 zip code 67520

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

    national          statewide        x   local

SEE FILE

Signature of certifying official

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Title

\_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature of commenting official

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Title

\_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

    entered in the National Register

    determined eligible for the National Register

    determined not eligible for the National Register

    removed from the National Register

    other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public – Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public – State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public – Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
7	8	buildings
0	0	district
1	0	site
4	0	structure
0	0	object
12	8	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Historic Agriculture-Related Resources of KS

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture/Subsistence: storage; agricultural

Agriculture/Subsistence: storage; agricultural

Outbuilding

outbuilding

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Domestic: Single Dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Vernacular

foundation: Stone: Limestone; Concrete

Other: Midwest Prairie Barn

walls: Wood; Metal; Vinyl; Stone

Other: Gable-roof Barn

roof: Metal

other:

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## Narrative Description

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### Summary

The Miller Farmstead is located four miles east of La Crosse, and one mile north and two west of Bison, Kansas. The homestead is on rolling land, and is located on the north side of the paved highway (K-4). Although the farmstead has many trees, the surrounding land is generally treeless. There is also a creek that runs through the land; this creek is between two and three miles long running north to south and eventually goes into the Walnut Creek.

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### Elaboration

The core of farmstead building and features are enclosed by rows of trees on the north, south, and west sides. At the south side of the property and parallel to Highway K-4, a line of evergreen trees that are kept trimmed provide a slight amount of privacy for the property. A few plantings of trees in a line running east to west on the north side of the main property, provided a wind break for the buildings on the farm.

Originally, the driveway was a direct path from south to north off of Highway K-4. This original driveway stirred up too much dust for the family so it was relocated to its current position leading into the east side yard between the house and the barn and terminating near the east side of the house and adjacent garage.

Currently there are two hand dug wells that are on the Miller property. The first is located just east of the house and was used for supplying the house with water. The other well is located in the corral and provided water for the livestock raised on the farm.

The farmstead includes 19 buildings and structures that encompass a period of construction ranging from 1881 to 1970, and the inventory of resources listed below is in order from oldest to newest.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Inventory of Resources*

1. *Hand-dug Well (built 1881 – contributing structure)*

The well to furnish the house with water was approximately 41 feet deep, and the water was pulled from the well with two wooden buckets attached to a rope. The well is lined with rock. It is adjacent to the east wall of the house, about six feet from the base of the windmill.

2. *Hand-dug Well (built 1881- contributing structure)*

The well in the draw east of the house in the corral was dug to provide water for the livestock. It is approximately 30 feet deep and a wooden windmill pumped the water into tanks for the livestock until 2010, when the old original windmill was taken down and a submersible electric pump was installed.

3. *Outhouse (built 1881 – contributing building)*

In relation to the house, the outhouse was located directly to the north, about 70 feet. The outhouse is horizontal clapboard siding and rests directly on the ground. This is the oldest structure still standing on the property. It is a wood-framed building that measures 4-feet by 4-feet. There are no windows on the building, but there is one door (inward swinging) on the east side. It has a gable roof that is shingled but is now covered in tin. This is a two-hole outhouse. Plumbing was installed in the residence in 1938, so the continual use of the outhouse came to an end around that time.

4. *Gas Shed (built between 1881-1883 – non-contributing building)*

The Gas Shed, formally known as the buggy shed. The dimensions of this shed are 14-feet by 12 ½-feet. It was first used to store the carriage used for traveling. The shed sits north of the house, about 70 feet, and directly east of the outhouse. It was moved to this location in 1912 from its original position on the farm - from south and east of where it sits now. Upon the purchase of their first car, the buggy shed was then converted into a gas shed that was used to store fuel and oil for work on the farm. It is a wood framed structure; the exterior of the shed right now is tin including the low gable roof. It rests upon a limestone foundation. The car that was owned was a 1912 Westcott. It is non-contributing because it was sided in tin after the period of significance.

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the information regarding the construction of buildings and time periods of certain events on the Miller Homestead were gathered from a video recording entitled "Milton: Life on a Kansas Timber Claim," that was researched and produced by Milton's son Everett Miller. Other information was gathered from photographs of the property in the early 1900s and from articles written by Clara Miller, the daughter of Frank X. Miller.

5. *House (built 1881; additions circa 1890, 1900 and 1963 - non-contributing building)*

The initial phase of construction of the house began in 1880 and finished in 1881. This original two-story part of the house is constructed of limestone that was quarried locally – just two miles west and one-and-a-half miles south of the property. The original section of the home measures 28-feet by 36-feet and contains four rooms, two on the main floor and two upstairs. Below the main floor is a basement that measures the same as the stone part of the house. The original two-over-two double-hung wood windows are intact throughout this original stone section. In 1885, a wood frame kitchen measuring 10-feet by 15.5-feet was added onto the east side of the house. Between 1900 and 1903, construction began on a second addition to the house. This wood-frame addition, measuring 24.5-feet by 30-feet, was built onto the west part of the original stone house, and provided six extra rooms and a second stairway to the upper floor; under the stairs is the first and only closet in the entire house. The windows in this addition are also original two-over-two double-hung wood sashes, which is the same as those on the earlier stone part of the house. In 1963, a third addition measuring 13-feet by 10-feet was added onto the wood-frame kitchen on the east side to make room for a dining area. Windows in this addition are one-over-one double-hung windows. All additions to the house are wood-frame and currently clad with a secondary vinyl. There are seven total bedrooms, four bedrooms upstairs and the remaining two bedrooms on the main floor. It is non-contributing because much of the house was sided in vinyl after the period of significance. Should the vinyl be removed, the status of the house can be re-evaluated.

6. *First Barn (built 1885 – contributing building)*

The first barn is located in its original location to the east of the shop. The first barn's dimensions are 35-feet by 23-feet. This one-story wood-frame building features a gable roof, lapped wood siding, and a lean-to along the east elevation. It sits atop a limestone foundation. One window, located on the south side of the building where the milking parlor was, is constructed into the barn, it has a solid piece of wood that creates a sliding window in order to let air and light into the barn. A door is located on the south side to feed the cattle and a door on the east side to drive the cattle in from the 100-acre pasture located north of the home. Grain storage was the first use of the barn in order to feed the cattle. The north half of the barn was used primarily for storage. The lean-to on the east elevation is where a majority of the milking of the cattle was done. There is a sliding door, 2-feet by 3-feet, that was used to put the calves inside the northeast part of the barn from outside. Further north of this door is a Dutch door which allows the calves to have fresh air and sunlight, but keeps them contained in the barn. Inside of this barn, the only thing is a manger to feed the cattle with a dirt floor.

7. *Horse Barn (built 1902 – contributing building)*

A horse barn was built in order to care for the working horses on the farm. The dimensions of this barn are 38-feet by 33-feet, with an east lean-to that measures 20-feet by 33-feet. An estimated 15-20 horses were used for farm work that utilized this barn. The wood-frame barn is clad with tin as it has been for many years and features a broad, sweeping gable roof that is common among Midwest Prairie-style barns that are generally as wide or wider than they are tall. It has horizontal massing and gable-end entrances. The center aisle of the barn still contains the original horse stables with a dirt floor and the north and south facing original wood sliding doors are still operational. There is a small hay door on the south side of the barn, and a larger hay door on the north side that contains a hay fork used to lift the hay up towards it. The foundation is limestone on the west portion of the barn, and the east lean-to that was added later has a dirt foundation.

8. *Cow Feed Storage Shed (built 1907, moved in 1937- contributing building)*

This building was built to store the grain for the cattle. It is located directly south of the silo. This building is wood-framed with a cement floor and foundation. There is a partition inside of the building that divides it in two forming a north room and a south room. Two doors are located on the east side of the building, one going into each of the rooms. Dimensions of this building are 24-feet by 12-feet. There is a shed roof covered with tin. This building was originally located one-and-a-half miles west of its current location on another farm which used it as a chicken house and was moved in 1937. It was moved to this location during the period of significance.

9. *Granary (1910 – non-contributing building)*

The granary, which is now an antique shed, has dimensions of 29 feet by 15 feet. This building is constructed of wood, and is covered with tin. It is located immediately to the east of the implement shed and to the northwest of the house. There are two windows located on the building, one on the north side and one on the south side. The entrance to the grainy is located on the east elevation of the building toward the south wall. This one-story building has a limestone foundation and a gabled tin roof. It is non-contributing because it was sided in tin after the period of significance.

10. *Small Machine Shed (built 1912 – non-contributing building)*

Originally used to store grain wagons and buggies, this building is located east and slightly north of the house. This is a wood-framed building that is covered in tin. This building has a gable roof that is also tin. There are three doors on the west side that measure 8 feet long, 9 feet tall, and there are two 8-foot doors on the east side and one 10-foot door, also 9 feet tall. There is a partition on the south side of the building that runs east and west that separates the shop from the storage area. This 12-foot-wide shop area has a concrete floor, there is one window on the east wall of this shop, and one

window on the south side of the shop. There is one standard entry door on the south side of the building that enters the shop along with one of the three doors on the west side that allows a vehicle into the shop.

11. *Granary (built 1915 – non-contributing building)*

This building was built to store grain and is located northeast of the house. This is a wood-framed building that has been completely covered in tin when it was built in 1915 including the gable roof. There is a limestone foundation. The dimensions of this building are 28-feet by 15-feet. There is a partition that runs through the center, north to south, which allows for 1500 bushel on each side. The wood floor inside the building is raised above the ground. There are a total of two doors, the first door is located on the south half of the west side, and the second door is located on the east side. There is only one window on the building, located on the south side near the top of the building.

12. *Chicken House (built 1920 – contributing building)*

There are two chicken houses on the property. Chickens were among the first type of livestock raised on the farmstead. The first chicken house faces south, measures 26-feet by 12-feet, is made of red clay tile bricks, and has a tin shed roof with a 16-inch drop from the front to the back. It has one window on the west elevation and six windows and a door on the south elevation. The interior is divided into two spaces: the west side of the chicken house that has a dirt floor was for scratching, and has dimensions of 8-feet by 12-feet; the east side is where the nests were located and where the hens laid their eggs.

13. *Silo (built 1924 – contributing structure)*

The silo was built to store silage for the cattle. It is located east and slightly south from the house. The silo is constructed of concrete staves, and is reinforced with steel bands that wrap completely around the silo and are around 16 inches apart and start from the ground and go the height of the silo. The silo begins 5 feet into the ground a diameter of 14 feet, and measures 50 feet from the ground to the top, totaling 55 feet. It holds 225 tons of silage. There is a shack with a gable roof that is attached the east side of the silo – the same side as the chute – which has a silage wagon that was filled with silage and ran down a track to fill the troughs for the cattle.

14. *Chicken House (built 1928; moved to farm in 1956 – non-contributing building)*

This second chicken house was moved onto the farm in 1956 from 9 miles north and ½ mile west of Otis, Kansas. There was a need for a second chicken house to house more chickens and sell more eggs. This chicken house is located directly east of the first chicken house about 20 feet. The one-story building is wood-framed with wood lap siding and measures 14 feet by 20 feet. It has a gable roof which is shingled but covered with tin. There are a total of 7 windows – 6 on the south side and 1 on the west side. The door is located on the east side. There is a grain bin in the northeast corner that measures 3 feet by 5 feet. The window on the west side was also used as an opening for the chickens to exit the chicken house and scratch in the middle of the two chicken houses. There was a fence in between the two chicken houses for the chickens to go back and forth. Although the building was moved to this location, it was done so within the period of significance. It is non-contributing due to the application of metal siding after the period of significance.

15. *Cellar/Storm Shelter (built 1929 – contributing building)*

This underground storm shelter is located directly south of the residence and can be recognized by the small earthen mound atop the shelter roof and a short vent pipe emerging from the ground. The shelter is accessed through a cellar door in the ground. The interior is a single room and is made of tile.

16. *Metal Grain Bin (built 1935 – contributing structure)*

This is a round metal granary with a conical roof. This structure is 9 feet high and 13.5 feet in diameter. There is one door through which to put the wheat and it holds 1000 bushels. This structure is located northwest of the house next to the 1910 granary.

17. *Open cow shed (built 1940 – non-contributing building)*

This open cow shed is wood framed. This structure is located directly north of the barn. It has an opened front and three sides. This structure also has a pitched roof and the building has tin exterior siding. The dimensions of this building are 13 feet by 21 feet. It is non-contributing due to the application of metal siding after the period of significance.

18. *Three Lane Garage (built 1948 – contributing building)*

This building was intended for automobile storage. There are three 8 foot sliding doors on the east side of the building. The building is constructed of tile blocks and the dimensions are 30 feet by 24 feet. It has a pitched hip roof that was originally shingled but has since been covered in tin in 1999. This structure has a concrete floor with a concrete foundation. There is a ceiling in the garage which also has an attic above.

19. *Implement Shed (1970 – non-contributing building)*

This shed is constructed of large poles (telephone poles) and is wrapped with tin and is also the largest building on the property. The Implement shed is located northwest of the house and west of the antique shed/three car garage. There are two 18 feet by 11.5 feet sliding doors on the south side of the building. Another door is located on the northwest side of the building that measures the same as the front. There is a standard entrance door on the east side of the building with a window and a small window on the south side of the building. There is a concrete driveway to the sliding doors. The dimensions of this building are 42 feet by 80 feet. 90 percent of the floor is dirt, whereas 10 percent is concrete. There is a gable roof on this building and it has an open attic. In order to get light into the north part of the shed there are a total of three fiberglass panels, one on the west side and one on the east side and the last is on the north side. These fiberglass panels are 3 feet by 10 feet. It is non-contributing because it was built after the period of significance.

20. *Site (contributing)*

The property retains its historic access from the public highway and driveway leading into the core of the farmstead and out the north side into the pastures. The north side of the farmstead is lined with trees as it was historically. The clustered arrangement of historic farm buildings creates a close-knit central core that is easily accessed on foot and by farm vehicles.

*A Note about Construction Materials and Integrity*

One of the more unique aspects of the Miller Farmstead is the number of buildings and structures that remain – 19 in all. No buildings have been torn down or removed in the property's history, and the farmstead reflects an array of exterior construction materials including stone, wood, hollow clay tile, metal and vinyl. The property retains a strong sense of place as a working farmstead that developed over three generations of use.

Specifically, the farmstead retains its integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association. The property's integrity of materials and workmanship has suffered somewhat due to the application of secondary siding on many of the buildings – primarily metal siding applied beginning in the early/middle 20<sup>th</sup> century (both corrugated metal and pressed metal resembling bricks). According to the "Historic Agriculture-Related Resources of Kansas" MPDF, Kansas farmers "commonly applied corrugated metal to their barns and other buildings in the early twentieth century" because "the material was cheap, long-lasting, low maintenance, fire-resistant and easy to install."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Brenda Spencer, "Historic Agriculture-Related Resources of Kansas" National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form (Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, 2007), E-42.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture

Exploration/Settlement

**Period of Significance**

1881-1962

**Significant Dates**

1881

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Undetermined

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins with the establishment of the farmstead and the construction of the earliest buildings in 1881 and extends to 1962 – fifty years ago.

**Criteria Considerations (justification)**

N/A

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

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### Summary

The Miller Farmstead is situated on Kansas Highway 4, four miles east of La Crosse, Kansas, on the north side of the road. There are 4.23 acres included in the nominated area. Frank Xaverius Miller arrived in Rush County in 1876 and established his original homestead 2.5 miles east of La Crosse. To encourage people to build homes and to plant trees on the treeless plains of Kansas, the federal government passed the Homestead Act of 1862 and the Timber Claim Act of 1863. These acts gave a homesteader 160 acres of land and another 160 acres if they would plant 10 acres of trees. Frank claimed a Timber Claim on 160 acres of land – where this nominated property is situated. It was on the Timber Claim land that Frank and his wife Emma decided to build their house and farmstead. It developed into a subsistence farm with livestock and grain being produced.

This farmstead, which is now owned by Frank and Emma's grandson Virgel Miller and his wife Kathryn, is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the settlement of Rush County and local agricultural history. It is nominated as part of the "Historic Agriculture-Related Resources of Kansas" multiple property nomination and is an example of the Farmstead Property Type outlined in the multiple property documentation form. This property type must have at least four associated historic agriculture-related resources, including a barn and at least three other resources and a majority of resources must be historic.

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### Elaboration

Frank X. Miller was only 17 years old and living in Austria when he decided to seek his fortune in the United States. His father was a musician and played several musical instruments and composed music. Frank had studied music and also learned the shoemaking trade, so he thought he could make a living here. His father paid his passage over and told him he could come back if he didn't like it, but he would have to pay his own fare. He arrived in New York City on June 27, 1867. He lived in New York City for about a year, where he worked in a coffee shop. From there, he went to Watertown, Wisconsin, for three years and worked on a farm. The next six years he spent in Missouri, where he rented and farmed some land with an old friend. While in Missouri, he met some people from Kansas who told him about getting land free by homesteading it.<sup>3</sup>

Two acts of the federal government that helped settlers obtain free land were the Homestead Act of 1862 and the Timber Claim Act of 1873. The first allowed an adult to obtain 160 acres of land by living on the land for five years, improving it and not abandoning it for more than six months in any year. The second offered another 160 acres for planting 40 acres of trees on that second acreage, but in 1878 the minimum tree-growing requirement was reduced to 10 acres.<sup>4</sup> He then decided to go to Kansas. Frank Miller bought two mules and a covered wagon and arrived in Rush County Kansas in 1876. He settled 2.5 miles east of La Crosse, Kansas, on land he claimed for a homestead. The intention to meet these conditions had to be registered with the Federal Land Office. Frank X. Miller declared his intentions on both his homestead and later his timber claim at WaKeeney, Kansas. He said he never realized there would be no homes on the land or lumber to build them with, so he made a dugout to live in and a sod barn for his mules and began "batching it." There were no trees on the prairie when the first settlers arrived. Limestone rocks were quarried for building some houses and for fence posts. The next spring, he plowed a few acres of buffalo grass and planted corn for his mules. The following year, he broke up 28 acres and planted wheat.

Rush County was formally organized in 1874 by then Kansas Governor Thomas Osborn, who stated that a memorial signed by forty householder residents representing 600 bona fide inhabitants had been received. He also declared Rush Center the temporary county seat thus starting a county seat war between La Crosse and Rush Center that lasted for 15 years before La Crosse was named county seat. Frank homesteaded in the same year as the first settlers, Mr. and Mrs. Denman Stubbs, who homesteaded in La Crosse. La Crosse was founded 1876 but grew very slowly. It was not an organized city until 1886.

In 1877, Frank X. Miller's future wife, Emma Seuser, came from Lowell, Wisconsin, to Rush County with her parents and siblings, and settled on a farm three miles southeast of Frank's homestead. She filed a homestead claim for 160 acres of land south of Sand Creek. Her brother, Ferdinand Seuser, homesteaded a quarter of land two miles north of the Seusers'

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<sup>3</sup> *LaCrosse Republican*, 23 February 1933 (Frank Miller obituary).

<sup>4</sup> Howard P. Lamar, ed., "Timber Culture Act (1873)", In *The New Encyclopedia of the American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 1114-1115.

home on the southwest quarter of Section 29, Township 17 South, Range 17 West of 6<sup>th</sup> P.M. Frank met and got to know Emma when he would go to the Seusers' farm to get his drinking water. Before Emma and Frank decided to marry, Emma and her brother, Ferdinand, traded quarters of land so her land would be closer to Frank's homestead and Ferdinand's would be closer to the creek. This transaction was between brother and sister, and was never entered in the county records but is recorded by Milton Miller in notes he had written for the family and is included in the slide and tape presentation by Everett Miller reflecting *Milton: Life on a Kansas Timber Claim*.

Frank and Emma were married on March 30, 1881. She could not have two homesteads, so she gave her land to Frank, and he claimed it as a timber claim by planting 10 acres of locust, mulberry and black locust trees, which the government provided. Since there was more and better water on that land, they decided to build their new home and farmstead at that location 1.5 miles east of his original homestead. A sod house 14 feet by 20 feet with two windows and one door was constructed for Frank and Emma to live in while the stone house was being built.

Among the first things to do in establishing a new farmstead was locating water. Two wells were hand dug. The well to furnish the house water was approximately 41 feet deep, and the water was pulled from the well with two wooden buckets attached to a rope. The one in the draw east of the house to provide water for the livestock was approximately 30 feet deep and a wooden windmill pumped the water into tanks for the livestock until 2010, when the old original windmill was taken down and a submersible electric pump was installed.

The core of the farmstead is the 130-year-old stone and frame house. All lumber and supplies used in building the house had to be purchased in Hays, Larned or Great Bend. All three towns were near government forts and required a two-day trip by horse and wagon. The stone was quarried within five miles of the building site and was laid up by neighbors and family members. Frank X. Miller added six other buildings to the farmstead, including a buggy shed east of the house, the first barn and granary east of the buggy shed, a large 16-horse barn southeast of the first barn and a granary northwest of the house, another granary northeast of the house and a large implement shed on site of the buggy shed, which was moved to its present location north of the house.

Frank used only horses to farm with. When he built his barn, it was a "16-horse barn." Crops that Frank raised on his farm included wheat, corn and oats that provided food for his family and animals. As a typical farm wife, Emma had a garden, and she canned and preserved vegetables and fruit. Potatoes and apples were stored in the storm shelter for winter use. There was no electricity when Frank and Emma lived on the farm, so some food was stored in the well buckets to keep it cool during the hot summers.

Frank and Emma raised five children on the farm: Amanda Miller Schneider (b. 1883 d. 1973); Max F. Miller (b. 1884 d. 1981); Clara E. Miller (b. 1890 d. 1976); Edward F. Miller (b. 1893 d. 1934); and Milton R. Miller (b. 1896 d. 1986). Frank and Emma retired after living 37 years on the farmstead and moved to LaCrosse, Kansas, in 1917. Frank died in February 1933, and Emma died in May 1947.<sup>5</sup>

Milton Miller and his two brothers, Max and Edward, stayed on the farm. While Milton was in the army from 1916 to 1918, Max and Ed took care of the farm. Later, they both married and moved to farms of their own. Max and his wife moved to the original Frank X. Miller homestead 2.5 miles east of LaCrosse.<sup>6</sup>

In 1920, Milton married a neighbor girl, Rachel Beltz, and they lived on the farm and inherited it when Frank died in 1933. They used horses until 1921, when they bought their first combine. The horses had trouble pulling the combine, so in 1922, they bought their first tractor. Many more acres could be farmed with tractors than horses. Different tools were invented for use by tractors. Milton and his wife added five more buildings to the farmstead: a clay tile chicken house east of the buggy shed, a 1,000-bushel metal grain bin west of the outhouse, a 50-foot upright cement stave silo southwest of the barn, a feed room south of the upright silo and a three-lane garage. The silo, feed room and 70 feet of wooden feed bunks enabled Milton to add to his cattle herd. Different crops were planted and raised for storage in the silo. He added a 60-foot by 80-foot concrete slab east of the silo and south of the barn around the feed bunks. He dug and enclosed a pit silo to the west side of the barn. He also added a 33-foot by 20-foot lean-to to the east side of the big barn. It was a room for the milk cows and calves in bad weather. It had four windows on the south side, one window on the north side and an 8-foot by 10-foot gate on the east side. He added electric milking machines and an electric cream separator in the barn, and he and his wife sold milk to the cheese plant in Larned and milk, cream and homemade cottage cheese to individuals. The farmer's wife usually received her spending money for groceries and other items she needed from the sale of milk,

<sup>5</sup> *Rush County News*, 22 May 1947 (Emma Miller obituary). *LaCrosse Republican*, 23 February 1933 (Frank Miller obituary).

<sup>6</sup> Their grandson, Kirk Miller, and his family now live there.

cream and eggs produced on the farm. Milton supplemented his farm income by renting farmland on shares from landowners who couldn't farm it themselves. Milton modernized the house by adding electricity and natural gas as they became available and piped water into the house. Milton also added an underground storm shelter south of the house in 1929. They raised five children on the farm: Elila Miller Glasco (b. 1921); Virgel Miller (b. 1923); Darlene Miller Burke (b. 1931); Everett Miller (b. 1936); and Ramona Miller Opincar (b. 1939). In 1942, Highway 4 was widened and paved. In 1953, Milton and Rachel built a new house in LaCrosse and moved after 33 years on the farm. Milton and Rachel Miller deeded the farmstead and the 160 acres it is on to Virgel and Kathryn in 1976.

The third generation of Millers to live on the Miller farmstead is Milton's son, Virgel, and his wife, Kathryn Jones Miller, who were married in 1953. Kathryn was raised on a farm in northeast Rush County. She was an elementary school teacher when she married and came to a community where married women stayed home. Milton continued to farm the land for seven years so Virgel had several occupations, including custom farming for other farmers, renting cropland on shares, working as a self-employed salesman, as a rental manager of his own rentals in nearby cities, and as a life insurance salesman. In addition to having a cattle herd, selling milk to individual customers and the cheese plant in Hoisington, Virgel farmed the Miller land until 1994, when he rented the cropland to a nearby neighbor. The continued use of the farmland for three generations was depleting the nutrients from the soil, so more fertilizer was needed to restore them. More emphasis was placed upon conserving the soil from wind and water erosion, so more terracing and no-tilling of the soil was practiced.

Virgel added two buildings to the farmstead. The first was a chicken laying house that was moved from 9.5 miles north of Otis, Kansas, and set directly east of the tile chicken house. The other is the largest building on the farmstead site – an 80-foot by 42-foot metal implement shed northwest of the house. In 1963, Virgel enlarged the kitchen by adding 13 feet to the original kitchen. The area 50 feet east of the kitchen was leveled and a two-tier 56-foot long limestone retaining wall was built. A large native stone patio was added north of the original stone house. In 1982, white horizontal vinyl siding was added to the frame part of the house. In 1999, green channel metal roofs were added to the house and the three-lane garage.

Virgel and Kathryn raised three girls on the farm: Kay Miller Boyd and Renee Miller Nicholson (b. 1957), and Teresa Miller (b. 1960). After 35 years on the farm, Virgel and Kathryn moved to LaCrosse, Kansas, in 1988. In 2001, the Kansas Farm Bureau named the Miller Farmstead a "Century Farm" in recognition of more than 100 years of family farm ownership.<sup>7</sup> Every one of the named buildings is still standing today; they're used for storage.

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<sup>7</sup> Kansas Farm Bureau website, "Farm Bureau Century Farm," accessed online 5 June 2012 <http://www.kfb.org/centuryfarm/default.htm>.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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http://www.kfb.org/centuryfarm/default.htm.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been Requested)

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: **Kansas Historical Society**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):   N/A  

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property**   4.23 acres    
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)



Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Miller Farmstead  
City or Vicinity: LaCrosse  
County/State: Rush County, Kansas  
Photographer: Sarah Martin  
Date of Photos: 25 April 2012

See figure 4 for sketch plan and photo directions.

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 14 Date stone above door to residence with the inscription "1881 Miller"
- 2 of 14 South elevation of residence (resource #5), facing NW
- 3 of 14 Underground cellar/storm shelter (resource #15), facing W
- 4 of 14 Northeast corner of granary (resource #9), facing SW
- 5 of 14 East (front) elevation of outhouse, facing NW
- 6 of 14 Chicken house (resource #12), facing NE
- 7 of 14 Chicken house (resource #14), facing N
- 8 of 14 Garage (resource #18), facing W
- 9 of 14 Sidewalk leading from garage to residence, facing S
- 10 of 14 First barn (resource #6), facing NE
- 11 of 14 Gate looking into grazing area north of horse barn, facing E
- 12 of 14 Concrete silo (resource #13), facing W
- 13 of 14 South elevation of horse barn (resource #7), facing N
- 14 of 14 Cow feed storage shed (resource #8), facing SE

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**Property Owner:**  
(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

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name Virgel & Kathryn Miller  
street & number PO Box 474 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town LaCrosse state Kansas zip code 67548

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**Figure 1: Aerial Image (Winter 1949-1950)**



**Figure 2: Aerial Image (2012, Google.com)**

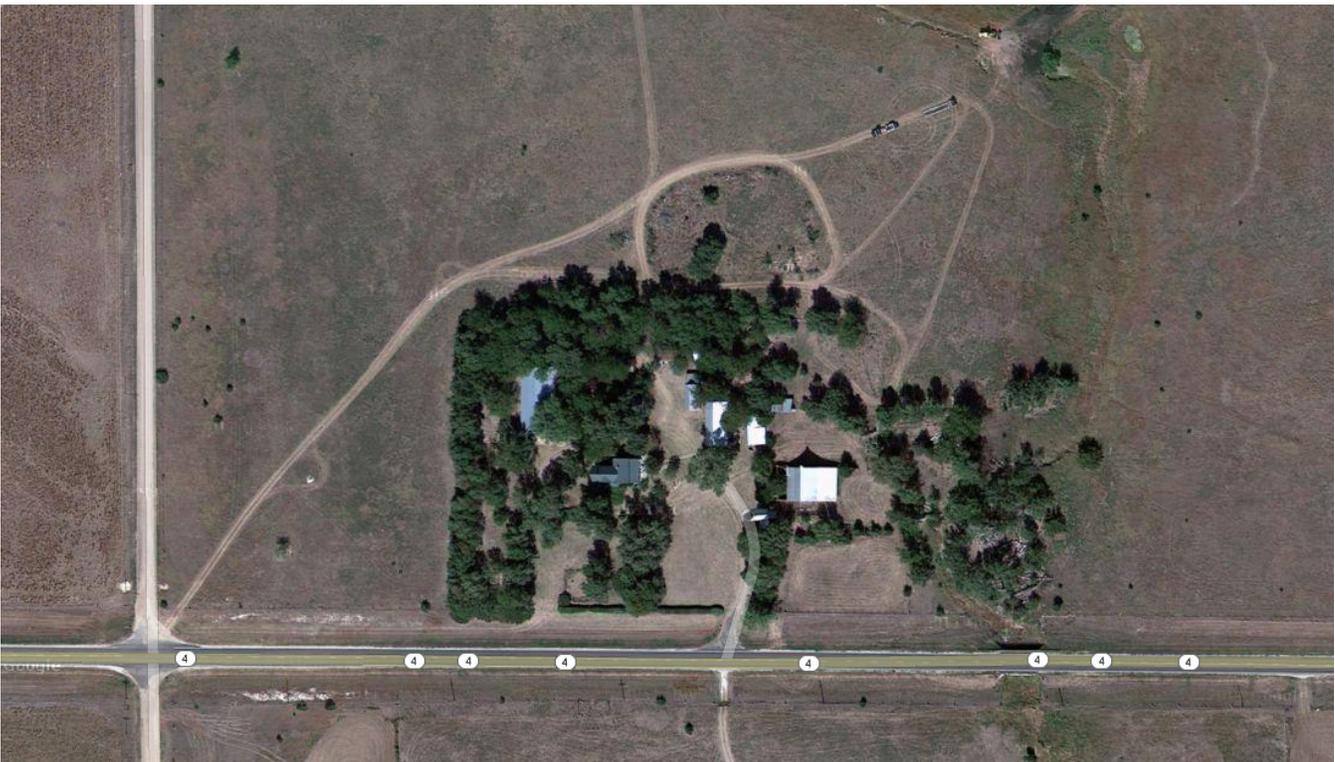


Figure 3: Lone Star Township (Plat Book, Rush County, Kansas. Minneapolis, MN: North West Publishing Co., 1901, page 17. Courtesy of Kansasmemory.org)

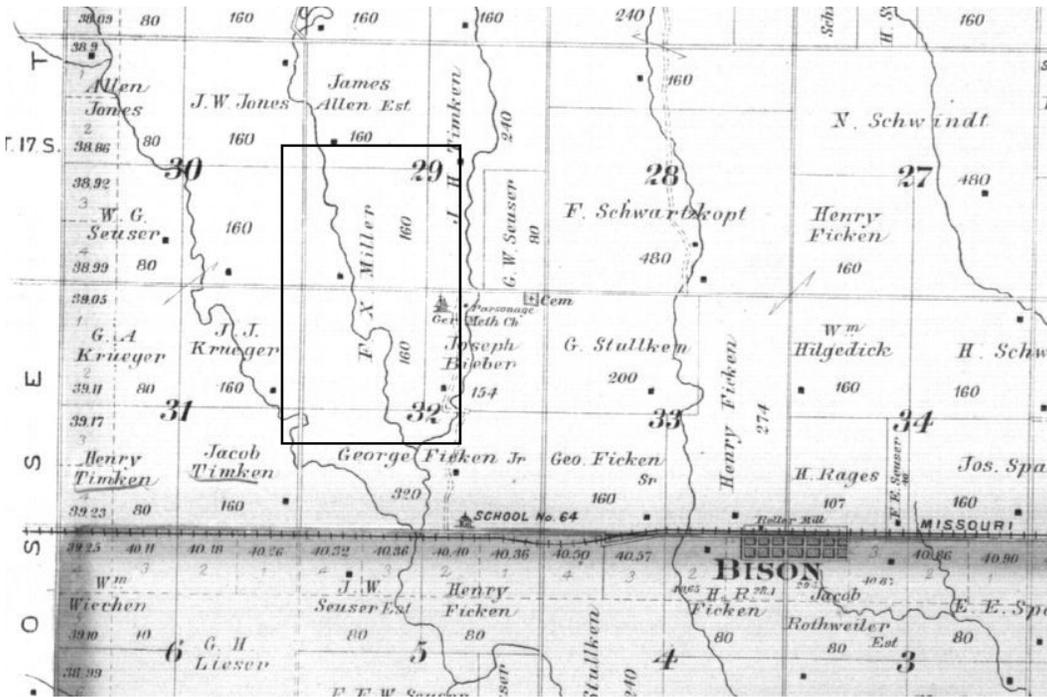


Figure 4: Site Plan and Photo Directions.

