United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Nebraska-Kansas Public Land Survey Thematic Group (NeHBS # RH00-062)

and or common N/A

2. Location

street & number See Continuation Sheet

N/A not for publication

city, town N/A

N/A vicinity of

state N/A

code N/A

county N/A

code N/A

3. Classification

Category Ownership Status Present Use

___ district X public N/A occupied agriculture museum

___ building(s) X private ___ unoccupied commercial park

___ structure both ___ work in progress educational private residence

___ site Public Acquisition Accessible entertainment religious

___ object N/A in process X yes: restricted scientific

___ being considered X yes: unrestricted transportation

___ no military

4. Owner of Property

name See Continuation Sheet

street & number N/A

city, town N/A

N/A vicinity of

state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. See Continuation Sheet

street & number N/A

city, town N/A

state N/A

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey

has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date On-going

___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Nebraska State Historical Society

city, town Lincoln

state Nebraska
Each monument marks the actual point where several counties meet. Since the monuments are larger than a point, they lie in more than one county.

**RH00-062**
Vicinity of Rulo
- Nebraska code 031 counties Richardson code 147
- Kansas code 020 counties Brown code 013
  - Doniphan 043

**JP00-072**
Vicinity of Mahaska
- Kansas code 020 counties Republic code 157
  - Washington 201
- Nebraska code 031 counties Jefferson code 095
  - Thayer 169
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner of Property</th>
<th>Item number</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The actual survey monuments are part of the public domain, which is administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The land on which the monuments lie is owned by various public and private individuals.

**Department of the Interior**
Bureau of Land Management
Denver Federal Center-Building 50
6th Kipling Street
Denver, Colorado 80225

**RHOO-062**
HBJ Farms, Inc.
White Cloud, Kansas 66094

Leonard H. Fee and Pauline Fee
Rural Route
Hiawatha, Kansas 66434

**JFO0-072**
Leslie J. Cossaart
Rural Route
Mahaska, Kansas 66955

Walter M. and Frances Schnelle
618 Woodland Drive
Washington, Kansas 66968

Nebraska Board of Educational Lands & Funds
P.O. Box 94986
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4986
RH00-062
Register of Deeds
Richardson County Courthouse
Falls City, Nebraska 68355

Register of Deeds
Brown County Courthouse
Hiawatha, Kansas 66434

Register of Deeds
Doniphan County Courthouse
Troy, Kansas 66087

JFOO-072
Register of Deeds
Jefferson County Courthouse
Fairbury, Nebraska 68352

Register of Deeds
Thayer County Courthouse
Hebron, Nebraska 68370

Register of Deeds
Republic County Courthouse
Belleville, Kansas 66935

Register of Deeds
Washington County Courthouse
Washington, Kansas 66968
The cast iron monument marking the point of intersection of the 40° North latitude line and the bluff on the west bank of the Missouri River is six feet high and tapers from a 16" base to 7" at its top. Its north side is marked "Nebraska", the south "Kansas", the east "1854", and the west "40° N. Lat.". It is located by four witness stones 12" x 3", set 10 feet from the monument. The sandstone monument marking the point of intersection of the Sixth Principal Meridian and the 40° N latitude base line is 14" high with small stones anchoring the base. This is the extant portion of the original 48" x 15" x 6" monument. Also extant are two of the four witness stones set 10 feet from the monument. The stone to the south is sandstone and measures 21" x 11" x 2" and the one to the west is limestone, measuring 18" x 10" x 3". This is a thematic nomination that consists of two separate sites with a total of eight contributing objects (five and three each).

RH00:062 This monument is a hollow cast iron shaft 1" thick, weighing between 500 and 600 pounds. It is six feet high with a flange base 16" x 16". Directly above the base it is 11" x 11" tapering to 7" x 7" at the top which is beveled. The monument is marked on its four sides with raised cast upper case Roman letters that are 1 1/4" high. The north side reads "Nebraska", the south "Kansas", the west "40° N. Lat.", and the east "1854". A St. Louis company cast the monument in 1854. It was set in place on May 8, 1855, by Charles A. Manners, a U.S. Deputy Surveyor. Manner's field notes state that "said monument or cast iron post was erected by setting the same two feet in the ground with a flat stone well bedded underneath it for a foundation and the excavation around the post well rammed with earth and small stones...the sides of the monument facing the cardinal points". Manners also set four stones about 12 inches in width and 3 inches thick in the ground ("witness stones") about one foot deep and ten feet from the monument, one in each of the cardinal directions, which he connected by a trench ten inches deep. He marked four black oak trees, one in each of the four sections that meet at the monument, indicating the appropriate section, township and range for each.

In 1924, after having been toppled and set upright in an erroneous location, the monument was reset in a sturdier foundation. Leo M. Peterson set a cement base 14x30x30 inches on top of the original limestone base. At the exact point of intersection of the lines connecting the witness stones he set (14 inches deep in the cement base and resting upon the limestone) an iron
pipe three feet long and three inches in diameter, with a brass cap on the top marked "Kansas Initial Corner 1924" and "SC TIN", "R18E S36" and "R19E S31." He then placed the original cast iron shaft down over the iron survey pipe and secured it with two strap irons on four bolts set firmly in the cement base. This monument stands today in an excellent state of preservation. It is six and one-half miles southeast of Rulo, Nebraska, about 200 feet west of the road between Rulo and White Cloud, Kansas, and on top of the first bluff bank overlooking the Missouri River to the east. It stands on the point where the parallel of 40°N latitude (Kansas-Nebraska state line) intersects the top of the bluff on the west bank of the Missouri River, and marks the initial point of survey for Kansas and Nebraska.

JF00:072 This monument was set June 11, 1856, by Charles A. Manners in a flat area of prairie at the point where the Sixth Principal Meridian intersects the 40°N latitude base line (the point where present day Thayer and Jefferson Counties, Nebraska, and Washington and Republic Counties, Kansas, meet). Made from red sandstone, the monument measured 48"x15"x6" and was set to correspond with the cardinal points, with its flat sides facing north and south and its edges east and west. The north face was inscribed with the letter "N" and "TIN", while the south face read "K" and "TIS". The east side was inscribed with "R1E" and the west with "1856" and "R1W". Manners field notes state that the stone was set "2 ft in the ground and firmly fastened with smaller stones about its base". Following accepted procedure, Manners also set witness stones at a distance of ten feet from the monument in each of the cardinal directions. He describes them as follows:

"on the North Limestone 20x10x2
on the East Limestone 19x11x3
on the South Limestone 21x11x2
on the West Limestone 18x10x3"

Present day surveyors had taken the location of this monument for granted, although it was not visible above ground. It was unearthed in 1976 by the U.S. Geodetic Survey and then reburied, since it lies in the center of a county road. On October 25, 1986, 16 surveyors representing five states once again unearthed the monument. Buried in the ground was the bottom 14" of the sandstone marker with small stones about its base. Also found was the sandstone set ten feet to the south and the limestone set ten feet to the west. The upper approximately 34" of
the monument had apparently been broken off at a much earlier time. The top 8" had been found in a nearby ditch by the owner of adjacent property. Visible on that portion was "1856" and "RIW". The group of surveyors spearheading the project to locate the monument intend to excavate the adjacent area in the spring of 1987 hoping to locate the two remaining witness stones and the middle portion of the monument, with the goal of restoring it.
8. Significance

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
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<tr>
<td>X 1800-1899</td>
<td>commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X 1900-</td>
<td>communications</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Specific dates 1855, 1856 to 1937  Builder/Architect N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

These surveyors’ monuments and the witness stones that locate them are significant on the state level in the area of settlement for their role in the surveying of the public domain and resultant land transfer in five states. The cast iron monument located on a bluff above the Missouri River marks the initial point for survey in Nebraska and Kansas and was the reference point for survey in much of the first settled areas of these two states. The sandstone monument marks the intersection of the Sixth Principal Meridian and its base line (40° N latitude parallel) from which public lands were surveyed in all of Kansas and Nebraska and parts of Wyoming, Colorado and South Dakota. Since these monuments have been used, from the time they were set up to the present for public land surveys, their significance ranges from 1855-56 to the present. Historically, however, this period would end in 1937.

HISTORY

The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 opened vast amounts of the Public Domain for settlement. In Kansas, hundreds of Missourians, most of whom were pro-slavery, immediately staked claims just across the Kansas-Missouri border. While settlement proceeded somewhat slower in Nebraska, there was still an urgent need to locate and identify the land so that ownership could be easily transferred from the federal government to private individuals. Arrangements were quickly made for the region to be surveyed, starting at the Missouri River. On August 1, 1854, John Calhoun was appointed Surveyor General of Nebraska and Kansas. On August 26, 1854, the Commissioner of the General Land Office sent instructions to Calhoun to determine the location of the 40° N latitude parallel and to survey it west from the Missouri River. Captain Thomas J. Lee of the U.S. Topographical Engineers determined by astronomical observation the point of intersection of the 40° N parallel and the river. This point was to be the initial point for all survey in Nebraska and Kansas, and the 40° N parallel became the base line for surveys from the Sixth Principal Meridian (Sixth P.M.) as well as the boundary between Nebraska and Kansas. J.P. Johnson, a deputy surveyor set an oak post at the initial point on November 17, 1854, and proceeded to survey west 108 miles to the Sixth P.M.
The cast iron monument marking the initial point was ordered by Captain Lee when he returned to St. Louis, with the instructions that upon completion it be forwarded up river "with the least delay" so that Johnson could set it. Late in the year 1854 Lee returned to St. Joseph to discover that the monument had only just arrived there. He stored it with Messrs. Donnell, Saxton and Potee, advised the Surveyor General of the situation and suggested that the monument be planted the next year. In April, 1855, U.S. Deputy Surveyor Charles A. Manners was issued instructions to set the iron monument, which he did on May 8, 1855. Manners also set four witness stones and marked four black oak trees.

At this same time, Manners was instructed to examine Johnson's survey of the 40°N base line, which he found grossly in error. He resurveyed the entire 108 miles of the base line and marked its point of intersection with the Sixth P.M. on June 11, 1856. He set the sandstone monument and four witness stones which he connected with a 7" elevation of earth.

In 1924 Leo M. Petersen, a U.S. Surveyor from the Government Land Office was instructed to restore the initial corner of the Kansas and Nebraska Public Surveys. He discovered that the cast iron monument had been toppled from its original base and set upright 2 1/2 feet to the north. The excavation of the witness stones and faint surface indications of a rectangular trench verified this relocation. On June 28, 1924 Petersen set a cement base on top of the original limestone base. In the cement he set an iron pipe with a brass cap marking the location. He then placed the original cast iron shaft over the pipe and secured it. His work has held the monument in place to the present day.

The sandstone monument marking the Sixth P.M. was apparently broken off and covered by roadbed many years ago. It has been unearthed and covered over at least three times: in 1976 by the U.S. Geodetic Survey, in 1985 by Larry Goracke, appointed Jefferson County Surveyor, and in 1986 by a group of surveyors from five states sponsored by the Professional Surveyors Association of Nebraska. The surveyors unearthed the base and lower portion of the shaft and have located the top portion of the monument. Their goal is to locate the missing middle section and completely restore the monument.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet  Significance  Item number  8  Page 3

SIGNIFICANCE

These surveyors’ monuments and the witness stones which locate them are significant on the state level in the area of settlement for their role in the surveying of the public domain and resultant land transfer in five states. The period of significance begins with the setting of each monument. They were used by surveyors from that date on and are used today for the same purposes. Historically, the period of significance, by definition, would end in 1937.

Public lands date from the formation of the United States. The federal government acquired land through cession, treaty and purchase. Nearly two billion acres of land in 32 states (4/5 of the gross area of the U.S.) at one time or another have been part of the Public Domain. This land was transferred to private individuals by various types of land grants and through sale authorized by Public Land Laws.

Shortly after the formation of the United States, the federal government conceived an idea for a method to accumulate funds for its depleted treasury and to protect its western borders. It would sell land from its vast western (west of the Appalachians) holdings. To do so, the land had to be accurately located and described. In 1784, the Continental Congress appointed a committee to develop a plan to facilitate such transactions. The result was the 1785 Land Ordinance whose provisions determined the shape of land parcels, the numbering system for land division and the terms for purchase. A 1796 revision of this ordinance substantially reflects the system in use today.

The method for land location is called the rectangular survey system (sometimes referred to as the “township and range” system). Survey begins at the "initial point", which is the intersection of a principal meridian (a true meridian) and a base line, (run at right angles to the p.m.) of which there are 31 in the contiguous U.S. and five in Alaska. (see map) Six-mile-square townships are laid out and numbered north and south of the base line. A line or column of townships is called a range and they are numbered east or west of the principal meridian. Each township is divided into one-mile-square sections (640 acres) numbered from 1 to 36. The sections can be further subdivided and thus described and identified. Field and fence lines and road networks follow this rectangular system of land division, resulting in the now familiar pattern of squares, rectangles and right angles of the rural landscape.
In surveying public lands, monuments are set with the intention of establishing a permanent marking of the lines and fixing the corner positions so that the location of the surveyed lands may always be definitely known. Witness stones are set to verify exact location of the monuments. Once monuments have been set and the survey accepted, they cannot be changed, even if technical error is later identified. These surveys are called cadastral surveys and are "the foundation upon which rests title to all land that is now, or was once, part of the Public Domain of the United States" (Cazier, p.107).

In Nebraska and Kansas survey was begun in 1854 with the determination of the 40° N latitude line (which became the base line for the Sixth P.M.) and its intersection with the Missouri River. This point, marked by the cast iron monument in Richardson, Doniphan and Brown counties, is the initial point for survey in Nebraska and Kansas, and was the reference point for land survey in much of the first settled areas of these two states. The 40° N line was run only 108 miles west to the Sixth Principal Meridian because of apprehensions of Indian interruption and because it was thought that settlement would not occur any further west. In fact the survey instructions do not include the Sixth P.M. They state:

At some future time, when necessary, it is proposed to start a principal meridian, extending on the north of such base to the Missouri river in Nebraska, and on the south of the same to the southern boundary of Kansas, which is the 37th parallel of north latitude. Although the public surveys will count from the principal meridian precisely as if the same were surveyed, the labor of such meridian survey will be now omitted, and that labor will be directed to insure practical results of more immediate importance. (Committee, p. 4)

In 1858-59, however, the line was extended west to the Rocky Mountains. This base line and the corresponding Sixth Principal Meridian, marked by the sandstone monument in Thayer, Jefferson, Washington, and Republic counties, serve as the reference points for survey of public lands in all of Kansas and Nebraska, and approximately 95% of Wyoming, 75% of Colorado and 15% of South Dakota. (see map) These two monuments not only represent the larger survey system that made possible the rapid settlement of the western United States, but are also actual monuments, marking major points of reference, that have been used every day since they were set by public land surveyors in a five state area.
9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data See Continuation Sheet

Acreage of nominated property  N/A
Quadrangle name  N/A  Quadrangle scale  N/A

UTM References

A
Zone
Easting
Northing

B
Zone
Easting
Northing

C
E
G

Verbal boundary description and justification
N/A

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

state  N/A code  county  code

state  N/A code  county  code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title  See Continuation Sheet

organization  N/A date  N/A

street & number  N/A telephone  N/A

city or town  N/A state  N/A

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  X  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration


Committee on Social Science Studies, University of Kansas Publications. Territorial Kansas. Lawrence: The University of Kansas Press, 1954.

Lee, Captain Thomas J. Report upon the determination of the intersection of the Parallel of 40 N. Lat. with the Missouri River. Washington, December 23rd, 1854.

Manners, Charles A. Field notes, May 8, 1855; June 11, 1855; June 14, 1855.


"'This must be the place' was right and significant marker was found." Lincoln Sunday Journal-Star, March 24, 1985, p. 2B.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet Geographic Data Item number 10 Page 1

RH00-062
Acreage of nominated property less than one
Quadrangle name Big Lake, MO-Nebr. Quadrangle scale 1:24,000
UTM Reference
Zone 15, Easting 300925, Northing 4430000

Verbal boundary description and justification
The area to be nominated is a square measuring 14.14 feet per side, totaling 200 square feet. This area will include the monument and the four witness stones. It is determined by the location of the witness stones, which are 10 feet from the monument in each of the cardinal directions. The square is created by connecting the four stones. This follows the trench line that was dug in 1855. The result is a triangular parcel of land in each section that measures 10′ x 10′ x 14.14′ and totals 50 square feet (see figure below). The triangular parcel is in the extreme corner of each of the following:

SE 1/4 of SE 1/4 of SE 1/4 of Sec. 36 R18E T1N
SE 1/4 of SW 1/4 of Sec. 31 R19E T1N
NE 1/4 of NE 1/4 of NE 1/4 of Sec. 1 R18E T1S
NW 1/4 of NW 1/4 of NW 1/4 of Sec. 6 R19E T1S

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Code</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
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<td>Richardson code 147</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Doniphan 043</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

--- Nomination Boundary

Township line
Witness stone
Monument
1" = 13.3′
JF00-072

Acreage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Reynolds, Nebr.-Kans.

UTM Reference
Zone 14, Easting 639228, Northing 4429040

Verbal boundary description and justification

The area to be nominated is a square measuring 14.14 feet per side, totaling 200 square feet. This area will include the monument and the two extant witness stones. It is determined by the location of the four original witness stones, which were set 10 feet from the monument in each of the cardinal directions. The square is created by connecting the location of the four stones. This follows the trench line that was dug in 1856. The result is a triangular parcel of land in each section that measures 10'x10'x14.14' and totals 50 square feet (see figure below).

The triangular parcel is in the extreme corner of each of the following:
SE¼ of SE¼ of SE¼ Sec. 36 R1W T1N
SW¼ of SW¼ of SW¼ Sec. 31 R1E T1N
NE¼ of NE¼ of NE¼ Sec. 1 R1W T1S
NW¼ of NW¼ of NW¼ Sec. 6 R1E T1S

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

JF00-072

Kansas code 020 counties Republic code 157
Nebraska code 031 counties Washington 201
Jefferson code 095 Thayer 169
Kathleen Fimple, Preservation Historian
Nebraska State Historical Society
P.O. Box 82554
Lincoln, Nebraska

December, 1986
(402) 471-4769

William L. Rynearson and Jack C. Fitch, Past Presidents
Professional Surveyor's Association of Nebraska
P.O. Box B
Columbus, Nebraska

(402) 563-5762
The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

- [ ] national
- [x] state
- [ ] local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature: Richard O. Patrick

Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: 5/18/87
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey as part of the Department of the Interior program for the development of the Missouri River Basin.

Control by USGS and USC&GS.

Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods.

Polyconic projection.
10,000-foot grid based on Nebraska coordinate system, south zone 14, shown in blue.
1927 North American Datum.

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 3 meters north and
27 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks.

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked.

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled from
aerial photographs taken 1978 and other source data.
This information not field checked. Map edited 1980.
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA


Projection: Missouri coordinate system, west zone
(transverse Mercator)
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Missouri coordinate system, west zone and Nebraska coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 4 meters north and 22 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Areas covered by dashed light-blue pattern are subject to controlled inundation
MAP

Area surveyed from 6TH P.M.
(Excepting Wind River and Ute Meridians)
Photo #1 of 4

NEBRASKA - KANSAS PUBLIC LAND SURVEY THEMATIC
RURAL RICHARDSON COUNTY, NEBRASKA,
BROWN AND DONIPHAN COUNTIES, KANSAS
NeHBS # RH00-062

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT- DENVER SERVICE CENTER
OCTOBER, 1986 (D033)
VIEW LOOKING DOWN ON MONUMENT IN EXCAVATED SITE.

Photo #2 of 4

NEBRASKA - KANSAS PUBLIC LAND SURVEY THEMATIC
RURAL RICHARDSON COUNTY, NEBRASKA,
BROWN AND DONIPHAN COUNTIES, KANSAS
NeHBS # RH00-062

RICHARD E. JENSEN
NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MAY, 1984 (8405/3:13)
VIEW LOOKING NORTHEAST

Photo #3 of 4

NEBRASKA - KANSAS PUBLIC LAND SURVEY THEMATIC
RURAL RICHARDSON COUNTY, NEBRASKA,
BROWN AND DONIPHAN COUNTIES, KANSAS
NeHBS # RH00-062

RICHARD E. JENSEN
NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MAY, 1984 (8405/3:11)
VIEW LOOKING SOUTHWEST

Photo #4 of 4

NEBRASKA - KANSAS PUBLIC LAND SURVEY THEMATIC
RURAL RICHARDSON COUNTY, NEBRASKA,
BROWN AND DONIPHAN COUNTIES, KANSAS
NeHBS # RH00-062

RICHARD E. JENSEN
NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MAY, 1984 (8405/3:12)
VIEW LOOKING WEST