

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Register of Historic Kansas Places

Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Houston, Philip, House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 350 Kansas Ave.

☐ not for publication

city or town Rexford,

☐ vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Thomas

code 193 zip code 67753

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ 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 ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title

10/24/05
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

☐ removed from the National
Register.

☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Houston, Philip, House
Name of Property

Thomas County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☒ object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>One House</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u>One Hitching Post</u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>Two</u>	<u> </u> Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

-0-

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic "Work in Progress"

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Weatherboard

roof Shingle

other Porches

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Houston, Philip, House
Name of Property

Thomas County, KS
County and State

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.

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce & Agriculture

Period of Significance

1906-1958

Significant Dates

1906 Construction of the house/residency

1911 Addition to the house

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Houston, Philip Sherman

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Bullder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

Prairie Museum of Art & History, Colby, KS

Thomas County, KS
County and State

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

name/title Mrs. Joan Dingwerth

organization The Shpheer's Staff, Inc. date January 22, 2003

street & number 14 Twin Springs Dr telephone 817 467 2133

city or town Arlington state TX zip code 76016

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name The Shepherd's Staff, Inc.

street & number Box 70 telephone 785 687 2565

city or town Rexford state KS zip code 67753

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. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing

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The Philip S. Houston House was built in 1906 in Thomas County, town of Gem, Kansas. It is a two story Victorian/Queen Ann style house, situated on the corner of two main streets of town. Its prominence reflects the importance of its original owner, Mr. Philip Sherman Houston. The typical circular porch with its Scamozzi capitals atop five round columns, and banister with turned spindles, graces the South Main entrance. Two small screened porches on the East and West elevations offer additional entrances. Additional features of elaborate spindlework exterior ornamentation and exceptional windows of stained, etched and beveled glass conform to the Queen Ann style.ⁱ Its overall impression is asymmetrical with bay windows on the East and West and the extension of a large section on the North East facade.

The house sits on a concrete foundation that rises two feet above ground. The entire house is sided with 4" wooden clapboards. The two bays each have three windows. The window on the East bay has a fanlight of beveled glass on the upper section. On approaching the Front door, one is greeted by an etched glass door, a stained glass window from the Living Room to the left and a multi-paned window to the right. This diamond shaped multi-paned window treatment is repeated in four other windows around the House, one allowing light on the stairway landing. Additional windows are one over one.

There are six dormers giving the house a varied steep roof line. Steep cross-gabled roofs are typical of a Queen Anne home.ⁱⁱⁱ On the South elevation, there is a recessed upstairs balcony with turned balustrade overlooking the prominent front porch, complete with gingerbread - all elements are typical of Queen Anne style.ⁱⁱ

Other decorative elements include bargeboards on the South, East and West gables with finials at their tips, and a pediment over the front entrance porch with decorative detail. Lacy gingerbread graces the apex of the roof on the South, East and West gables.

On entering the house, one is met with a prominent paneled stairway to the second floor. On the left, pocketed, panel doors open to the South Parlor, with another door opening to the Dining Room. Dividing the Parlor from the Living Room is an ornate spindle archway. A second set of pocket doors open into the dining Room. Features of the dining Room include a bay window and a paneled wall cupboard with a pass through section to the kitchen. Adjacent to the Living Room is a bedroom and a hall way that leads to a bathroom and a large bedroom with an adjacent guest closet. All rooms on the first floor have ten foot tall ceilings and hardwood floors.

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The plaster walls and ceilings are covered with vintage wallpaper. Each doorway is capped with detailed egg and spoon trim. Corner trim boards are throughout the house. All woodwork is finished with original varnish. The original steam heat registers are in each room of the house.

There are several original Victorian light fixtures through out the house, one pictured in the bedroom photograph submitted.

The only alterations to the house were made in the 1910's, when a large bedroom, guest closet and bathroom were added by Mr. Houston. This was done in the same style as the rest of the house. The fixtures in the upstairs bath room were removed at that time as there was a problem with enough water pressure from the windmill, the house being so tall. A small porch on the North East corner, with a flat roof, was removed from the House in the early 70; according to Mrs. Neville.

The house has not been occupied since 1973, but is in remarkable condition. One upstairs bed room sustained water damage to a previous roof leak and another bedroom needs to be repapered. The house needs exterior painting and the colors of light yellow, gold, blue and maroon will be used in order to mirror the colors in the stained glass window on the South elevation. This was typical basis color choices in Queen Annes across the country.^{iv} Its original colors were light brown with white and black trim, though at some point the whole house was painted white.

Also needed are a new electrical system, and heating and air conditioning. The original curved porcelain lavatory, toilet and claw foot bathtub will remain in the first floor rest room when the house is replumbed. The Scamozzi capitals of the five round front porch columns were partially missing but reproductions have been found. The missing North East porch with it's flat roof will also be replaced. None of these restorations will detract from the historical integrity of the property. The House had remained in ownership by the Houston family from 1906 to 2002.

The House was moved eight miles, within Thomas County, from Gem to Rexford in May of 2002. The daughter of P.S. Houston, Mrs. Maxine Neville, offered to donate the House to Shepherd's Staff as an alternative to her demolishing the house. This is the last remaining structure associated with her prominent father and our non profit organization

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felt it is a significant cultural resource that should be preserved and agreed to pay for its relocation . The move was accomplished by Ball and Sons, utilizing state of the art, hydraulic equipment. Every care was given to prevent damage to the house and this was accomplished without incident. The move was thoroughly documented by photographs and video.

The house originally set on a level lot, facing the South. On the West side of the house was a street and on the South side of the house was a street in the center of town. Great care has been taken to orient the House in the same directions and the same distance from the bordering streets in the center of Rexford. The same railroad tracks traverse the two adjacent towns, and the house is still in close proximity to the town's church, as it was in Gem. The original hitching post which contributes to the historical context has also been moved to the exact orientation to the house that it formally held. The two towns shared cultural context and were established in the same time frame. Therefore the relocation of the house he built and occupied has minimal affect to the historical and architectural integrity of the property.

In the next section, the significance of Mr. Houston will be described . Because of his State wide significance and influence, his "community" was all of Thomas County , not just the town of Gem. Not only did his extensive farming, ranching and real estate endeavors throughout North West Kansas sustain this, he also had significant relationships with close relatives and friends in Rexford.

ⁱ UVM.edu/~vhnet/histarch/haaso6.html

ⁱⁱ www.realtyadvocates.com/house/queenann.html

ⁱⁱⁱ www.realtor.org/rmomag.nsf/pages/arch21

^{iv} Daughters of Painted Ladies by Elizabeth and Michael Larsen

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The Houston House (1906) is being nominated to the Register under criteria B and C for its historical association with Philip Sherman Houston and for its architectural significance as an example of the Queen Anne style.

From 1879 when the first brave settlers arrived in the area, until 1884, there were scant families homesteading in Thomas County. They faced hot and dry weather and in the winters, often blizzards. Yet in 1885, it was "the year the settlement came in", building soddies and claiming sections of land. (A History of Gem, Kansas, Bill James and Marge Brown) Rexford, Gem and Colby were being incorporated at this time.

Philip Houston's father, John Houston, was born in Union county, Tennessee. He "enlisted on the side of the Union in the Civil War, fighting in the battles of Shiloh, Antietam, Chancellorsville, Chickamauga and in the Atlanta campaign. After moving from Union County in 1880, he brought his family West. He established his home in Thomas County in 1886."ⁱ John. became a prominent farmer and stock raiser, and was included in the Patrons Reference Directory of Thomas County, Standard Atlas of Thomas County, KS. ^v

Philip Houston's grandfather, William Henry Houston, was also born in Union County, Tennessee in 1807. He was the youngest brother of General Samuel Houston, the great Texas general and statesman. ⁱⁱ

It was in 1886 that Philip Houston came to Thomas County in a covered wagon, with his parents, two brothers and a sister. Philip was born in Union County, Tennessee April 27, 1875. He spent his first twenty one years on his father's farm on Section 30, S Range 31W, Township 7 in Thomas County. ^v This section was three miles east, one mile south, and one-half mile east of Gem. ⁱⁱⁱ

On May 18, 1898 Philip married Caroline Lutgen, whose parents, Athenus and Sarah, had homesteaded south of Rexford. The Lutgens were prominent Rexford citizens. Philip and Caroline had five children, John Ross, Glen, Twila, Wanda, Ariel and Maxine. ⁱⁱⁱ

"In 1906, Philip Houston took over the supervision of some 7,500 acres of ranches and farm land in Thomas County. He became an extensive Hereford cattle raiser and feeder, having from 700 to 800 head on his pastures. He did much to promote the fine Hereford stock. He also raised and sold horses and mules.

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He was engaged in the real estate business, and operated the Gem State Bank which was established in 1905. He built elevators in Gem, Halford, Levant and Goodland. He was a director in the Kansas Central Indemnity Company at Hutchinson and in the Capital Livestock Insurance Company in Topeka. He was also treasurer of the Hopper Oil and Gas Company of Decatur County." (A History of Gem, Kansas) He is pictured on page 91 , Portrait Department of the Standard Atlas of Thomas County,KS.

The Gem State Bank was established in 1905, to care for the growth of agriculture in Thomas County during the early 1900's. "As a result there was a heavy demand for loans so banks grew and prospered... It continued to prosper with the increase in farm activity brought about by World War I." (A History of Gem, p 52) Mr. Houston was a co-founder and became the President in 1911..

Reflecting the early prosperity of Thomas County, it was in 1906, that Philip Houston built his Queen Anne Victorian home for his wife and two children, John Ross and Glenn. Ariel, Wanda and Maxine were born in the house later .Reflecting Philip's prominence, it was the largest house in the town, situated on the Main Street. It was the horse and wagon days and thirty to 40 wagon loads of wheat was hauled in a day to the elevator in Gem. A hitching post was prominent at the front of the Houston House to accommodate his guests. That original hitching post stands in front of the Houston House today.

In 1909 Philip partnered with Mr. W.O. Eaton to form the Eaton- Houston Land Company, selling land in Thomas, Sheridan, Logan, Decatur and Rawlins counties., again giving leadership to Northwest Kansas^{iv}

The March 16, 1911 record blizzard, was followed in 1913 by the "Blown Area", nine miles wide and twenty miles long from Colby to Rexford. This was the cause of many farmers to begin to leave the area.

His daughter, Maxine Houston Neville, reported in a taped interview that her father was approached by the Republican committee to run for Congress and another time to run for Governor of the State, but declined each time, preferring to attend to his large family and his many business enterprises.

Mrs. Neville also discussed Philip's close friendship with Ben Foster, a Rexford citizen who held vast acreage (50,000) as a Hereford cattle raiser, visiting him often in Rexford as a fellow cattle raiser. As Mrs. Houston's uncle Dr. B.J. Patterson, was a prominent

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physician in Rexford, the Houston family spent much time visiting relatives and shopping in that then thriving community.

"Philip Houston exhibited his social responsibility as he was a member and treasurer of the Baptist church, and was affiliated with St Thomas Lodge No 306, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, Sunlight Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and Rexford Camp of the Modern Woodmen of America. He was a member of the Kansas Bankers Association and the American Bankers Association."¹ He was truly an influential citizen of the county and state at large.

Hardships of the times fell upon Thomas County and the Nation in the early Thirties caused by the decrease in the farmers' prosperity and the Great Depression. "This same year there was the worst dust storm in history, followed by swarms of grasshoppers devouring the meager crops. Many, many farmers left in despair. On August 24, 1932, the Mr. Houston's bank was closed by order of it's Board of Directors.

1941 brought rain and a record crop to those were able to keep their land (Land of the Windmills), including the Houstons.

"P.S., as he was known throughout the county and state, never tired of paying tribute to this land he so loved and to the stamina and foresightedness of those who helped develop it into the great wheat belt it has become..

As his health failed he was forced to retire from active civic participation. However he never ceased to continue in his chosen fields of stock raising and farming and to maintain a keen interest in the happenings of his adopted state and in the progress of Thomas county in particular." (The Colby Free Press-Tribune, Colby, Kansas)

Mr. Houston died in 1958, leaving the Houston House to his wife Carolyn. She resided in the House until her death in 1970 and then their son Glen lived there until his death in 1973. After that the House was cared for by daughters Twilla and Maxine, although it was unoccupied. In 1921, Mrs. Neville chose to donate the House to the Shepherd's Staff, Inc, a non profit organization rather than to dismantle it.

Now appropriately situated in Rexford, KS, the Houston House retains its architectural beauty and integrity, reflecting the wealth of by- gone days and the state wide significance of its owner, Mr. Philip Sherman Houston.

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- i A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, written and compiled by William E. Connelley, Secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka. Lewis Publishing Co., 1919, c1918 5v
- ii E-mail genealogy records from David Houston Chester, Feb.8, 2003
- iii A History of Gem, Kansas, by Bill James and Marge Brown
- iv Booklet of Eaton & Houston Land Company
- v. Directory Standard Atlas of Thomas County

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Bibliography

A History of Gem, Kansas by Bill James and Marge Brown (Colby, Kansas: Prairie Printers, Inc) pp 117-121

Standard Atlas of Thomas County, Kansas

Land of the Windmills (Colby Kansas: Thomas County Historical Society, 1976) pp 8-13

Golden Heritage of Thomas county, Kansas

Colby Free Press, September 29, 1958

Taped interview with Mrs. Maxine Houston Neville, October 16, 2002 by Joan Dingwerth

Interview with Lois Houston Chester, January 15, 2003 by Joan Dingwerth

E mail genealogy record of David Chester, Tuesday, January 14, 2003

Thomas County Register of Deeds

Prairie Museum of Art & History, Colby, Kansas -- Houston Family files

Daughters of Painted Ladies, by Elizabeth Pomada and Michael Larsen

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on lots 13,14,15,16 Block 5 in Rexford, Kansas. The property is bounded to the East by Main Street, to the South by Kansas Street to the North and East by adjacent property lines.

Boundary Justification

The Houston House was originally sited on lots 16,17,18,19, Block 14 Gem, Kansas