United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms

Type all entries	s—complete applicable s	ections		
1. Nam	1 e			
historic Firs	t Soil Conservation	District Dedicatio	n Site	
and/or common	Claude Bess Farm			, ,
2. Loca	ation			
street & number	2 miles west and l	1/2 miles north of	Eufaula; North of	airport not for publication
city, town Eufa	iula wc.	_X vicinity of	congressional district	002
state Oklahom	na cod e	e 40 county	McIntosh	code 091
3. Clas	sification			
Category district building(s) structureX site object	Ownership public X private both Public Acquisition 10 in process Po being considered	Status X occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted X yes: unrestricted no	Present Use _X_ agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation other:
4. Owr	ner of Prope	rtv		
Clauda	Bess, Jr.			
name Claude				
street & number	W. of City			
city, town Eu	ıfaula	_X_ vicinity of	state	0klahoma
5. Loca	ation of Leg	al Descripti	on	
courthouse, regi	istry of deeds, etc. Count	y Clerk's Office		
street & number	McIntosh County C	ourthouse		
city, town Euf	aula		state	0klahoma
6. Rep	resentation	in Existing	Surveys	
				\ /
title 0klahon	na Comprehensive Sur	vey has this pro	pperty been determined ele	egible? yes no
date 1980			federal <u>x</u> stat	e county local
depository for s	urvey records Oklahoma	Historical Society	, Preservation Offi	ce
city, town 0k	clahoma City		state	0klahoma

7. Description

Condition X excellent deteriorate good ruins fair unexposed	altered	Check one X original site moved date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

A comparison of the two aerial photographs (one in 1938 before the project began and one in 1967) provide evidence of the changes in soil conservation practices. Within the 40 acre section of the original 160 acre farm (outlined in the photographs), considerable erosion had occurred by 1938 (gullies visible on western half of site) but with use of conservation practices the area has been converted to pastureland. This section of land which rises less than ten feet within the 40 acres, consists of two soil types (Carrytown silt loam and Karma loamy fine sand), which should have never been cultivated. Visible on the southern half of the nominated site, the contour terraces (which curve from west to north) have been sodded with bermuda grass plantings. Cupped within the terraces on the northeastern edge is a tree (post) lot which is still intact. Designed to provide erosion control, livestock protection, and fence posts, the post lot was planted with catalpa, black locust, and osage oranges in rows running east southeast. This large stand of trees (approximately 1.5 acres) has recently provided cover for volunteer growth of winged elms and persimmons. On the north side of the post lot is a pond, constructed as a later conservation measure to supply water for the the livestock. As the aerial photographs show, the gullies caused by severe erosion and improper land use have been eliminated by the use of conservation practices (terraces, sodding, post lot, and pond), which have helped conserve the soil and water while increasing the land's agricultural usefulness.

> > ground Alon Steel Sweet Bank

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899 X 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoricX agriculture architecture art commerce communications		landscape architecture law literature military music t philosophy _X_ politics/government	e religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1938	Builder/Architect /	I_{P_f}	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The nominated site is the dedication grounds and demonstration site for the first soil conservation district in the United States, the McIntosh County Soil Conservation District. The 40 acre dedication site, selected as a tangible representative of the district (which includes the southern half of McIntosh County), marked the beginning of the history of extensive soil conservation on privately owned farms in the United States.

During the 1930s, much of Oklahoma, like much of central United States, experienced the worst drought on record accompanied by a series of dust storms which drove home the consequences of the misuse of farmland. McIntosh County reflected problems common in the Dust Bowl: over-extension of agriculture onto land unable to support cultivation (In McIntosh County during the worst year, 1929, over 117,000 acres were in cultivation as compared to 61,000 of the same land in 1980.), massive erosion, loss of topsoil (the county had lost an average of 6" of topsoil), and the resulting loss of productivity. Only through the combined efforts of federal programs (Works Progress Administration, Soil Conservation Service), state laws (creating the Soil Conservation Districts), and private landowners in the soil conservation districts could this trend be reversed to return private farmland to productivity. As a side benefit, these early efforts provided jobs in an area desperate for relief not only from the drought but from the depression as well.

The McIntosh County Soil Conservation District represented the first concentrated effort in the United States which sought to conserve soil and water, regaining productivity and use of some of the most acutely eroded land in the state. As the first district to be organized, it provided a model for other projects across the state and the nation. Even though the site is less than fifty years old, it represents early conservation efforts in the United States (early for the history of soil conservation), and was the forerunner for other districts across the nation, which have significantly affected the status of agriculture in the United States.

The dedication took place on December 2, 1939 with nationally known dignitaries and state officials in attendance. The ceremonies were aired over national radio and filmed by newsreel cameras with 4000 people in attendance. The highlight of the ceremonies took place at the nominated site (at the time a private farm operated by J. H. Rumsey and owned by W. Butenschoen, one of the first directors of the district), where many of the conservation techniques were demonstrated by W.P.A workers: pasture sodding, gully control, terracing, tree planting, fertilizing, and road protection.

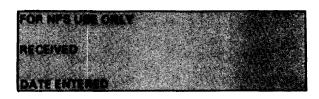
Today, many of the efforts are still visible, especially the bermuda grass sod plantings, the tree lot, and the terracing. Since the owners of the farm have had a continued interest in soil conservation (The current owner has also served on the district's board of directors.), more recent efforts at conservation are evident in

9. Major Bib	liographical	Reference	es	
Drake, Laurence, et. a Knobel, E. W. and Brer 1933, No. 11. Washi	nsi <mark>ng, O. H. <u>Soil S</u></mark>			
'Nation's No. 1 W.P.A. Oklahoma.), November		Be Dedicated Her	e Saturday" <u>Indian</u>	Journal (Eufaula
10. Geograp	hical Data			
Acreage of nominated proper	ty 40 acres			7.5
Quadrangle name Eufaula UMT References	, OKTAHOIIIA		Quadrangle scale	7.5
A 1 5 2 6 2 2 9 0 Zone Easting	3 9 1 0 3 1 0 Northing	B 1 5 2 Zone Ea	6 2 2 8 0 3 9 0 9 Sting Northing	م 3 و
C 1.5 26,1900 E	[3 p p p p 4 p]	D [1.5] 2 F H	6 1 9 1 0 3 9 1 0 	<u>3 ρ ρ</u>
Verbal boundary descript of SE 1/4 of Sec. 28 9, go north 1 mile an point of beginning.	TlONRIGE; From a p d west 1/4 mile on From point of begin	oint I mile west dirt section lin ning, go west l/	of U.S. highway 69 e road, then go nor 4 mile, north 1/4 m	on State highway th 1/8 mile to the
List all states and countie	es for properties overla	pping state or count	y boundaries	
state NA	code	county	code	
state	code	county	code	· ·
11. Form Pre	pared By	:		
name/title Karen Curths				· _
organization Oklahoma.His	toric Preservation	Survey date	August, 1980	
street & number Oklahoma	 State University	teleph	one (405) 624-5678	
city or town Stillwater		• •	0klahoma	
12. State His	storic Prese	rvation Of	ficer Certifi	cation
The evaluated significance of	this property within the sta	ate is:		
national	state	local	•	•
As the designated State Histo 665), I hereby nominate this p according to the criteria and p	ric Preservation Officer for roperty for inclusion in the	the National Historic F National Register and	certify that it has been eva	
State Historic Preservation Of	ficer signature CSW	Letcalt	5-26-82	e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e
itle	:		date	~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
For HCRS use only				
I hereby certify that this	property is included in the	National Register		
			date 9/2/82	<u> </u>
Keeper of the National Regis	ster ,			· .
Attest:			date	
Chief of Registration				

Form No. 10-300a (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET

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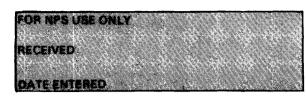
Significance

a pond and the original efforts have been preserved, also reflecting the continued development in soil conservation practices. The contrast in the aerial photographs of the land in 1938 (before the deomonstration) and in 1967, shows the erosion gullies and crop planting techniques which have been altered to remove the gullies, terrace the land, add a post lot and a pond, and put it into less intensive and more suitable use as pastureland.

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Major Bibliographical References

Interviews:

Claude Bess (current owner), Eufaula, July 1, 1980.

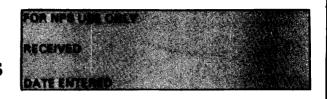
Mr. & Mrs. J. H. Rumsey, Eufaula (farmers of nomination site at time of ceremonies), July 1, 1980.

Sam Viles (District Conservationist, Soil Conservation Service, Eufaula), July-August, 1980.

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1

Verbal boundary description and justification

and south 1/4 mile to point of beginning.