

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic Ranching Properties in Northwestern Oklahomaand/or common Cherokee Outlet

2. Location

street & number Multiple Locations

___ not for publication

city, town

___ vicinity of

state

code

county

code

3. Classification

Category

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

Ownership

☐ public
☒ private
☐ both

Public Acquisition

☒ in process
☒ being considered

Status

☐ occupied
☒ unoccupied
☐ work in progress

Accessible
☐ yes: restricted
☒ yes: unrestricted
☐ no

Present Use

☐ agriculture
☐ commercial
☐ educational
☐ entertainment
☐ government
☐ industrial
☐ military☐ museum
☐ park
☐ private residence
☐ religious
☐ scientific
☐ transportation
☒ other: NOT IN USE

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Owners

street & number

city, town

___ vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. See Continuation Sheets

street & number

city, town

state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Oklahoma Comprehensive Surveyhas this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ☒ nodate 1984___ federal ☒ state ___ county ___ localdepository for survey records Oklahoma Historic Preservation Office-Historical Societycity, town Oklahoma Citystate Oklahoma

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	See Continuation Sheets	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

There are ten counties in northwestern Oklahoma, the area called the "Cherokee Outlet" during the late nineteenth century: Alfalfa, Ellis, Garfield, Grant, Harper, Kay, Major, Noble, Woods, and Woodward. Historically, the area belonged to the Cherokee Indian tribe and was granted to them by the United States government. The Outlet, also known as the Cherokee Strip, was opened to white settlement in the "run" of 1893.

Northwestern Oklahoma is predominantly arid and flat, although rocky and mountainous features are evident in the geography of Major and Woodward counties. The North Canadian and Cimarron Rivers cross the western portion of the Outlet; the Arkansas River forms the eastern boundary. Ranchers usually preferred to construct their headquarters on the banks of rivers because of the importance and scarcity of water. Thus the George Carr home in Ellis County is found near the Canadian River. The Plains environment determined the architectural style of ranch buildings, especially those built during the first years of settlement. If there were few trees the buildings might be constructed of native stone, brick, or possibly even sod. Homes located in wooded areas, such as a riverbank, would normally be wooden frame or log dwellings. The Carr house is constructed of logs taken from the banks of the nearby Canadian River.

Few physical resources remain from the Cherokee Outlet's open range ranches (before 1893). The reasons are not difficult to imagine. Ranching has not been significant in much of the Outlet since 1893 and through the years, time has taken its toll on resources that survived the 1893 run. More importantly are the type of resources left by the ranchers. Though some men ranched in the area for twenty years or more before settlement (e.g. Major Andrew Drumm), ranching there always had an uncertain future because of government hostility and intertribal conflicts among the Indians. Because of this uncertainty, ranchers were unwilling to put down permanent roots, to expend valuable capital resources on permanent dwellings when their lease might be revoked by tribe or government with little notice. Thus dugouts, soddies, or crude wooden shacks were more likely to characterize ranch buildings than anything else, and these were not built to stand more than a few years. Resources left by pre-settlement ranches tended to be destroyed by either the homesteaders or, more likely, by time and the elements.

Both of the buildings in this nomination were constructed after settlement of the area began and reflect the prosperity their builders found in Oklahoma. The Carr house is unusually large for a log dwelling, having two stories and several rooms. The Big V ranch house in Kay County is clearly the product of economic success, it is a large, two-story frame building. Most successful ranchers in this century have built homes of brick or have extensively remodeled older homes. However, neither of the buildings in this nomination have been altered. Both are in their original condition and are very well preserved. Architecturally both are essentially vernacular/functional in nature. They lie in rural isolated settings. The Big V ranch house is located less than ten miles from Ponca City; the Carr house is many miles from the nearest town. Both were the active headquarters of their respective ranches so it was necessary that they be located on the site of ranching operations.

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Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

A number of criteria were used in selecting ranches for inclusion: physical size, number of cattle, net income, prominence outside local area, owner (importance of him/her), number of years in operation (or still operating), and cultural/economic/political contributions of the individual ranch or rancher to the state or nation. Today, very few ranch houses belonging to ranches that meet these criteria remain in the region. This is a consequence of the impact of white settlement. During the 1890s settlers poured into Oklahoma and homesteaded on the range. The railroads and the oilmen soon followed the farmers and the nature of economic activity changed. It must have seemed to many ranchers that more powerful economic interests had pushed them aside. Diversification into agriculture did save some ranches. Such outfits as the Crouch Ranch or the Big V began to cultivate a wide variety of crops, such as wheat, corn, or alfalfa. Oklahoma again became a cattle producing state only after agricultural mechanization became common during the 1930s and 1940s. The replacement of horses and mules with machines made more feed available and provided the farmer/rancher with extra time he could profitably devote to livestock. Finally, under the New Deal, the Federal Government began to provide agriculturalists with capital for development, much of which they invested in land and cattle.

The survey was conducted by history graduate students at Oklahoma State University during the summer of 1983. Methodology included field and document research.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Ranching

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The buildings in this nomination are significant because they are the most important remaining early ranch houses constructed in northwestern Oklahoma in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The two buildings represent an important period in the historical development of Oklahoma and the Great Plains region. The first white men to enjoy economic success in Oklahoma were the ranchers who entered the territory in the 1870s and 1880s. The information they spread about the region attracted the attention of potential settlers and the Oklahoma "boomer" movement was born. The "boomers" pressured the federal government into opening Oklahoma to white settlement. Thus the activities of the cattlemen, described below, may have increased the likelihood that Oklahoma would one day achieve statehood.

Between 1865 and 1890 cattlemen from Texas drove millions of cattle through Oklahoma en route to Kansas railheads and shipment to Eastern slaughter houses. The cattle trails that crossed northwestern Oklahoma were the Great Western, the Chisholm, and the West Shawnee. Although drovers did not originally intend to permanently occupy the area, they quickly recognized that its mild climate and rich grasslands were ideal for grazing their large herds prior to shipment. Northwestern Oklahoma was then known as the Cherokee Outlet (or Cherokee Strip) having been granted by the federal government to the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokees did not object when cattlemen began to graze large numbers of cattle in the Outlet; instead the tribe placed a tax on the cattle in order to raise revenue. In 1883 the cattlemen organized the Cherokee Strip Live Stock Association to legitimize their occupation of the area. The Association represented over 100 cattlemen who owned over 300,000 head of cattle. The Cherokees agreed to lease the Outlet to Association members for \$100,000 a year for five years. The ranchers treated the Cherokees well and respected their rights, but in 1890 the federal government forced the tribe to cede the Outlet in preparation for opening the area to white settlement. President Benjamin Harrison ordered all cattlemen out of the Outlet at that point.

The appearance of homesteaders after the 1893 run virtually ended the ranching industry in western Oklahoma. A few ranches were established during the post-settlement period, but most were confined to the western portion of the Outlet, such as George Carr's T-Bar Ranch, or at the far western edge of the Outlet, where W. H. Vanselow's Big V Ranch was located. The nature of ranching also changed. Pre-settlement ranches were huge, encompassing thousands of acres. Many were owned by large cattle companies, ran thousands of head, and leased their land from Indians. Cattle grazed openly on the range. Post-settlement ranches were relatively small and owned by individuals. Their cattle grazed in pastures bounded by barbed wire fences. However, agriculture was the predominant economic activity in northwestern Oklahoma after 1893. Even ranchers diversified into agricultural production. The two ranch houses in this nomination represent post-settlement ranches which produced both cattle and farm products. These houses and their date of construction are:

KAY COUNTY: Big V. Ranch House
ELLIS COUNTY George Carr Ranch house

DATE: ca. 1903
DATE: ca. 1895

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property See Continuation Sheets

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheets

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

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Charles Brooks Supervised by Dr. Mary Ann Anders

organization Oklahoma Historic Preservation Survey date 1984

street & number 502 Math Sciences (O.S.U.) telephone (405) 624-8344

city or town Stillwater, state Oklahoma

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ 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 C. E. Metcalfe date 7-2-84

title _____

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

C. E. Metcalfe

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory--Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Ranching Properties in Northwestern Oklahoma Thematic Resources
State Ellis and Kay Counties, Oklahoma

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. Big V Ranch House

Substantive Review

Keeper

Attest

Beth Grosvenor 8/23/84

2. Carr, George, Ranch House

Substantive Review

Keeper

Attest

Beth Grosvenor 9/10/85

3.

Keeper

Attest

4.

Keeper

Attest

5.

Keeper

Attest

6.

Keeper

Attest

7.

Keeper

Attest

8.

Keeper

Attest

9.

Keeper

Attest

10.

Keeper

Attest