

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received **MAR 29 1983**

date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic John Fenton Pratt Ranch

and/or common John Fenton Pratt Ranch

**2. Location** w of Studley on US 24

street & number One mile west of Studley on U.S. Highway 24 in SE 1/4 of SW 1/4 of S13, T85, R26W N/A not for publication

city, town Studley X vicinity of

state Kansas code 20 county Sheridan 67759 code 179

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant

**4. Owner of Property**

name State of Kansas

street & number State Capitol

city, town Topeka N/A vicinity of state Kansas 66612

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds

street & number Sheridan County Courthouse

city, town Hoxie state Kansas

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Kansas State Historical Society has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1971  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Dept., Kansas State Historical Society

city, town Topeka state Kansas

# 7. Description

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

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The John Fenton Pratt Ranch is located in northwestern Kansas along U.S. Highway 24 just west of Studley, in Sheridan county. The entire region is rural, the largest town in the county being Hoxie with a population of about 1,480. The state of Kansas recently acquired 23.2 acres of the original 160 acre Pratt Ranch as a state historic site. This acreage includes the house and surrounding outbuildings, pastureland and an active spring that was probably instrumental in that site being chosen for the ranch. The major buildings in the complex are built of locally quarried limestone. The complex is unusually complete and retains most of the features that were present at the turn of the century. The condition of the structures varies from excellent to fair.

The Pratt Ranch was originally a sheep operation, diversifying late in the 19th century. The house and shearing shed dominate the complex. Of all the buildings, the house sits closest to the highway. Its ridge line and those of all buildings except the shearing shed run east-west. The shearing shed is situated north of the house at the west end of the line of three major outbuildings. The south walls of these buildings are aligned, and a coursed, cut-stone wall connects them. A corral was constructed east of the shearing shed by additional stone walls that extend from the shearing shed's north wall and the west wall of the center building. The Pratt house and yard are separated from the outbuildings by a wire fence. The corner posts and gate posts are of molded concrete.

The single story U-shaped limestone house was built in three stages and measures 65 feet by 25 feet. Its hipped roof flares out somewhat at the eaves. It is covered with wood shingles. The house has four chimneys -- one at either end of the central original portion and one at the junctures of the original house and the projecting wings. The quoins at the corners of the house and at the window and door surrounds are of a local chalk rock of pink and yellow shades. This chalk is a variety of Cretaceous limestone and is common throughout central and western Kansas.

The wings that extend toward the highway measure approximately 13 feet by 15 feet. Each has a large three-sided bay window in its south face surmounted by a gable with a plain bargeboard. The pediments within the gables are filled with wood fish-scale shingles.

A veranda is located on the inside of the "U". Its balustrades are turned wooden members. Its floor was originally stone but has been replaced with poured concrete. The tongue-in-groove ceiling is beginning to pull away from the framing. The front entrances to the house are located in the east wall of the west wing and slightly off-center in the south wall of the main block. Both entries still have their old wooden screen doors with sunbursts and "ladders" made of wooden spindles. The south facing door has an oval glass in its upper section and a paneled lower half. The other door has two long vertical upper panels and two short lower vertical panels. There is also an entrance on the east side of the house into the kitchen. That entrance has a small screened-in porch that is collapsing. Its corner posts and balustrades are wooden.

Many of the windows contain stained glass. One window in the east wall is all stained glass. Two windows on the north wall contain stained glass transoms. A large oval window in the west wall of the east wing is also made of stained glass.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** c. 1880-1900

**Builder/Architect**

J.F. Pratt

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

In the late 1870's people were beginning to realize that the dry climate and abundant grasses of western Kansas made it prime sheep ranching territory. The John Fenton Pratt ranch was one of the earliest ranching operations in Sheridan county. The nearly unchanged condition of the ranch complex and the extensive written and photographic records left by J.F. Pratt make it one of the most valuable historic ranch sites in the state. The Pratts and their properties make up a significant portion of the history of Studley, an English settlement that they helped to found.

Abraham Pratt came from Ripon, England, in 1878 and settled near present-day Studley. He constructed a dug-out and returned to England. In 1879 he was back in Sheridan county and was soon joined by his sons Tom and John Fenton, a half-brother, James Kirk, and Charles and James Foster. All of these men became sheep ranchers in the vicinity of present-day Studley. The community of Skelton was in existence as early as 1885, when Abraham Pratt was serving as post master. In 1896 the name was changed to Studley.

John Fenton Pratt, commonly called Fenton, established his ranch in the southwest quarter of section 13 shortly after arriving in Sheridan county in 1879. His first substantial building was an approximately 31 feet by 16 feet stone house with a sod roof. This structure presently forms the central portion of the house. Historic photographs indicate that the sod roof was replaced by a wood shingled gable one. John Fenton was an amateur photographer and recorded many aspects of ranch life and of the surrounding countryside, thus providing us with a record of the evolution of the ranch.

In December of 1888 Jennie Place arrived in Lenora, Kansas, from England and was immediately married to John Fenton whom she had known since childhood. Their first daughter, Hilda, was born on October 2, 1889. Fenton's journals indicate that the interior of the new west wing of the house was finished in October, 1890.

The entire complex continued to grow and change over the years. The large stone shearing shed was built in November, 1891. Before the east wing of the house was constructed, the complex of ranch buildings to the north was completed. At that time the complex consisted of the long stone shed at the west end, the two smaller rectangular buildings in the middle, and a fourth stone shed similar to the west sheep shed, but not as long. The roofline of this easternmost building was parallel to that of the shearing shed, thus forming a "U" of the outbuildings. This last building no longer stands.

By 1891 the yard of the house was enclosed with a picket fence. The date of construction for the east wing of the house has not been determined but it probably was completed between 1890 and 1900. One can conclude from the photographic evidence that the veranda balustrades were all replaced when the addition was built. The earlier scrolled brackets and jigsaw posts were replaced with more substantial-looking turned members.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Pratt, John Fenton. Farm journals, 1890-1906. John Fenton Pratt collection. Micro-film, Kansas State Historical Society.

Twell, Norman. The British Settlement at Studley. unpub. 1953

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 23.2 acres

Quadrangle name Studley

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	4	3	9	8	7	4	0	4	3	5	6	8	4	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B 

1	4	3	9	9	0	4	0	4	3	5	6	8	4	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

C 

1	4	3	9	9	0	4	0	4	3	5	6	5	6	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

D 

1	4	3	9	8	7	4	0	4	3	5	6	5	4	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

E 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

F 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

G 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

H 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

**Verbal boundary description and justification** All of the NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of S13, T85, R26W, except that portion lying south of the center line of US Highway 24. This land is part of the original homestead and conveys the historic character and uses of the property

### 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 Nora Pat Small, Architectural Historian

organization Historic Preservation Department

date February 28, 1983

street & number 120 West 10th

telephone 913/296-5294

city or town Topeka

state Kansas 66612

## 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 [Signature]

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date March 8, 1983

### For NPS use only

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

[Signature]  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date

4/28/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The original part of the house presently consists of one large room and one smaller room. (The original and subsequent uses of the rooms are not known. Any reference to room function is therefore based on its most recent use.) The large room, entered through the main front door, is dominated by a fireplace with an elaborate wood mantelpiece. The mantelpiece extends well up on the wall, covering most of the flue. The firebox is surrounded by pink, green and white mottled ceramic tiles. It is closed with an elaborate iron grate and door. The room has a pressed metal ceiling with a deep cove. An egg and dart picture rail runs around the entire room. The window and door trim is wood and has egg and dart cornices. The wooden baseboard is molded. Paneled sliding doors separate this room from the rooms on either side of it. The smaller room to the west is detailed in a similar manner, but does not have a picture rail.

The second part of the house to be completed was the west wing. The front room in this wing has a pressed ceiling with a cove. The woodwork around the door and windows and the baseboards is plain. The room behind this also has a pressed metal ceiling with a cove. The window and door surrounds, baseboard and picture rail are undecorated.

The last phase of construction was the east wing of the house. It contains, from back to front, the kitchen, bathroom and a bedroom. The doors in the hall separating these rooms have egg and dart molding. The molded baseboard is identical in all three rooms and the hall. The front room has egg and dart cornices on the windows and door. The ceiling is papered. The wooden casement opening for the oval stained glass window is the depth of the wall.

The shearing shed is the largest outbuilding, measuring 28 feet by 109 feet. It is a simple stone structure, with the interior open to the rafters. The gable roof is covered with wood shingles and peeling corrugated metal. The west wall has fallen away near the southwest and northwest corners. The east wall has fallen at the north corner and on both sides of the entrance bay. There are entrances at both ends of the shed. Because of the severely deteriorated condition of this structure, it is not known whether it can be repaired or will have to be completely reconstructed.

The next building in line is a stone one, 52 feet by 21 feet, with a hipped roof. A small (approximately 18 feet by 10 feet) frame lean-to was built onto the back. The roof is currently covered with corrugated metal. A ventilator is situated on the ridge line in the center of the structure. There are two large barn doors in the south wall, two windows in the east wall and one window facing the west. The historic function of this building has not yet been determined but it may have been a stable, a blacksmith shop, and a workshop at various times.

The third stone outbuilding sits at the east end of the line of structures. It measures 29 feet by 23 feet. Its hipped roof is covered with wooden shingles. The east and west walls both have one window located near the eave line. Access is gained through two sliding wooden doors measuring three feet wide and seven feet wide. The historic function of this building has not yet been determined, but it was apparently used as a chicken house most recently.

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Another structure associated with the farmstead is the granary. It is a small slope-roofed frame structure located north of the center stone building. The roof and three sides of the granary are covered with corrugated metal.

Two auxiliary structures remain. The privy has been moved at least twice and is now located in the area between the center stone building and the granary. It is a frame two-seater with a partition wall between the two holes.

A bath house is located just northeast of the main house. It has a wood-shingled hipped roof with a central chalk chimney. The walls of the 10 by 12 foot structure are laid up in coursed cut limestone. The corner quoins and window and door surrounds are all of the native chalk. The bath house contains a pressed metal ceiling. A stove pipe hole remains but the stove has been removed. On the south side of the building are stone steps leading down to the full-sized cellar. A picket fence extends to the east for a short distance from the north-east corner of the bath house.

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Fenton and Jennie's second daughter, Elsie, was born in 1894. She is shown as a young woman, apparently some time in the 1920's, standing by a new fence that replaced the picket one around the yard. This fence remains today.

Fenton Pratt's journals began in 1890. Until his father's death in 1901 he recorded purchases such as lumber and hardware from Abraham. He also recorded who worked for him and how much they were paid. He noted purchases from the Montgomery Ward catalogue and how many pounds of wool were shipped to whom and when.

Some of the notations in Fenton's journals are those that deal with tree orders. Fenton and his brother Tom, as well as the other English settlers, ordered hundreds of a wide variety of trees and bushes throughout the last decade of the 19th century. In addition to detailed orders the journals also contain diagrams of Pratt's orchards. These were apparently located south of the present U.S. Highway 24. No groves as such remain on the acreage owned by the State.

In August of 1901 Abraham died. By that time, Fenton's journals indicate that he was becoming very involved in the financing business. His letterhead around 1900 read "John Fenton Pratt Loans and Discounts/Collections made". The ranch was apparently becoming more diversified at this time.

Fenton died in 1937. His wife Jennie and unmarried daughter Hilda continued to live on the homestead. Jennie died in 1959. Hilda lived at the place until a few years prior to her death in 1980, a little over a century since her grandfather had come to the vicinity as a pioneer. Ranch records were kept until Hilda's death.

This complex of buildings is one of the most complete and unaltered small-scale nineteenth century operations left in Kansas. For this reason, the Pratt ranch is of extreme architectural significance in Kansas. The single-story plan of the house is rare and may have some direct relationship to English house-types. The extent to which the entire complex reflects local adaptations of English forms is currently unknown, but the integrity of the site will allow for comparative studies.

In 1982 the state acquired the Pratt ranch and turned it over to the State Historical Society to administer. The Society plans to use the site as a living history ranch. Historic interpretation and demonstration of specific ranching activities are the broad goals.

THIS STATEMENT IS BASED ON CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.