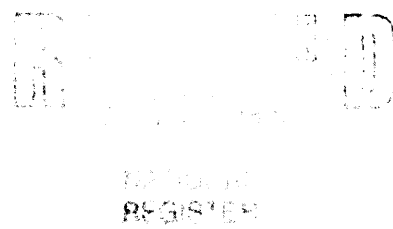


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic 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 Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic District

other names/site number Three Forks Ranch

2. Location

street & number State Highway 251A, 3 miles E. of Okay Not for publication

city or town Okay vicinity

state Oklahoma code OK county Wagoner code 145 zip code 74434

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. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Blake Wood August 3, 1992
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO
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 certifying 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

Delores Byrnes

**Entered in the
National Register**

Date of Action

9/9/92

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	
5	1	buildings
5	0	sites
3	1	structures
0	0	objects
13	2	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 _____
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE _____

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling _____
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions)

Prairie School _____
 Other: Concrete Barn _____

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE _____
 walls STONE: sandstone _____
 CONCRETE _____
 roof ASPHALT _____
 other _____

Narrative Description

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

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic District. Vicinity of Okay, Oklahoma. Wagoner County.

Summary

The Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic District, now the Three Forks Ranch Headquarters, is located three miles east of Okay, Oklahoma, off State Highway 251A, among the rolling hills of eastern Oklahoma near the Neosho River. Its pastures are characteristic of that part of Oklahoma, with plentiful grass, shade trees, and a scattering of farm ponds. The ranch headquarters and the barns, linked by a dirt road through the fields, are on a portion of the original fifty acres purchased from the Cherokees in 1908. The forty acres included within the district encompasses the original buildings and pasture land representative of the entire ranch. Rock Manor, a large, one-story Prairie School residence; three, small sandstone outbuildings; and a rock fence are the focal point of the ranch. The original ranch facilities were constructed of native Atoka sandstone which was quarried less than a mile from the ranch. The wood for the residence was cut and milled on the site. A large concrete barn was added in 1916. The ranch headquarters, including the house, several outbuildings, the rock fence, and the concrete barn continue to maintain a high degree of architectural integrity.

Rock Manor

Rock Manor, built in 1909-1910, is a one-story residence with an attic and draws its name from the Atoka sandstone that forms its eighteen-inch thick walls and porch columns. The sandstone was mined on the ranch from the Atoka formation, which ranges in color from dark brown at the surface, to light brown at greater depths. This color gradation was intentionally repeated, in reverse, in the construction of the Rock Manor, with the dark brown sandstone at the foundation level and progressively lighter shades on top. The light-colored stone is used for the porch columns.

The residence is designed in a vernacular Prairie Style. Its hipped roof, covering 3,500 square feet, is pierced by two, front-facing hip dormers. The roof is low in pitch and its covering is asphalt shingles. The wide eave overhang is boxed with wooden fascia and a tongue-in-groove wooden soffit. The cornice consists of wooden bed molding and a wide, wooden frieze board. Each dormer has white clapboard walls and two windows with three small panes over one large pane. Two, large, metal, natural draft ventilators (original) are located on the ridge of the main roof. The residence also has three brick chimneys. One chimney rises above the living room fireplace and is located on the center ridge of the roof; the other two chimneys are located on the slopes of the hipped roof. The two slope chimneys originally served four wood stoves in the dining room, kitchen and two of the bedrooms. The residence has a large, spacious attic, which was built for storage.

A wrap-around porch extends the full width of the front facade (south elevation) and approximately one-third of the west elevation. The porch is raised, with a concrete floor and steps. Short sandstone wing walls with concrete caps, surmounted by concrete horse heads, flank the steps. The porch roof is supported

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Continuation Sheet**

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Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic District. Vicinity of Okay, Oklahoma. Wagoner County.

by slightly tapered, sandstone columns with concrete capitals. Horizontal metal pipes (original), four inches in diameter, are used as porch rails and connect the rock porch columns. The ceiling of the porch is tongue-in-groove, painted white to match the rest of the woodwork.

The wooden windows are generally one-over-one double-hung and of various sizes. It is likely that they were framed on site to match the available openings. Two awning windows light the northwest corner of the house. The doors are all single, paneled, wooden doors with wooden screen doors and transoms to facilitate cooling in the summer. The oversized wooden front door has a single pane of glass and a transom above.

Interior

Much of the interior of the Rock Manor is original. The most notable feature is the large rock fireplace in the living room. The face of the fireplace is quarried sandstone with a simple wooden mantle. Above the mantle is a plaster wall. The concrete floor in that room has probably contributed to the long life of this ranch house -protecting it from stray sparks from the fireplace. There are wood floors in all the other rooms of the house. The ceilings are twelve feet in height and most rooms are detailed with picture molding. The walls and ceilings are plaster over wood lath and are original. Plaster is directly applied to the interior of the exterior rock walls

The doors have transoms and all of the door hardware is original solid brass with the exception of the front door lock. Built-in cabinets include a wooden, built-in gun cabinet in the sitting room and a wooden, built-in china cabinet in the dining room.

Not as visible, but nonetheless important, is the cooling system. "Open-close grills" near the ceiling send rising hot air into the attic where it is drawn outside by large, round ventilators located on the roof. This system was supplemented by opening or closing the transoms located over each of the doors.

Alterations/Additions

Rock Manor has a high degree of historical integrity. In 1959 the rear porch was enclosed. The western half was rocked in with the same Atoka sandstone and the columns were left intact and visible. Two small awning windows were inserted on the north and west elevations of the rock wall addition. White clapboard walls, similar to those in the dormers, screens, and a wood screen door were added between the columns of the eastern half of the rear porch. The enclosure is quite sympathetic to the original residence and does not affect the architectural integrity of the house.

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Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic District. Vicinity of Okay, Oklahoma. Wagoner County.

Smoke house, root cellar, spring house, and fence

Three secondary buildings share the approximately 1.1 acre yard of the ranch headquarters. The smoke house is located a few yards northeast of Rock Manor, and the spring house and root cellar are to the southwest. A rock fence surrounds the residence and the three out buildings. All of the secondary buildings are of the same Atoka sandstone used on the main house. The rock walls of each of the outbuildings are two feet thick. The ceilings were constructed with four inches of concrete, sloped to allow for water run-off.

The smoke house (13' x 17') was built to serve as a storage shed for fresh meats and is equipped for the smoking of meats and fish. The root cellar (14' x 24') was used for storing fruits and vegetables in a cool atmosphere throughout the summer months and also served as the storm cellar. The spring house (14' x 16') provided cold spring water for drinking purposes and was an excellent place to keep perishables, such as eggs and milk. Each of these buildings were built in conjunction with the construction of the main house. These three buildings are not in use; however, they continue to maintain their original architectural integrity.

The headquarters yard is enclosed by a fence, also built in 1910. The fence posts are two feet square and eight feet tall. They are constructed of the same Atoka sandstone as Rock Manor and the other outbuildings. Wrought iron gates, two walk-through gates and one drive-through gate, were installed in 1970. The gates were constructed by the Cincinnati Iron Fence Company, Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1910 and are in keeping with the style and period of the ranch. The columns are connected with five strands of steel cable. Alterations include minor repairs to the columns, circa 1970, and relocating two of the columns, originally flanking the drive to accommodate large cars and pick-up trucks. The columns were carefully dismantled and rebuilt within several feet of their original location. These alterations have not affected the architectural integrity of the fence.

Cistern-Well/Windmill

The original cistern-well, a water pump, and a metal windmill are located several yards from the northeast corner of the Rock Manor. The pump is incorporated into the slab of concrete which covers the cistern. A metal windmill is located on top of the slab. The original cistern-well was hand dug and rock-lined and supplied all of the water for the household needs, except for drinking. It utilized rain runoff to supplement well water, which was pumped by the windmill into an overhead tank. The windmill furnished the water pressure required for bath and kitchen purposes. The overhead tank is no longer extant, but the cistern-well continues to be used to supply irrigation water for the yard and surrounding land. A television antenna has been erected on top of the windmill, however, it does not affect the integrity of the structure.

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Section number 7 Page 4

Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic District. Vicinity of Okay, Oklahoma. Wagoner County.

Sewage Disposal System

C. E. Daily also built a septic system which has been in continuous use for over 80 years. It was hand dug and rock-lined. This system, although not visible, is a contributing structure to the historic district. It continues to maintain its original structural integrity.

Concrete Barn

The concrete barn is a 14,000 square foot rectangular building with twin concrete silos located at the north end. The walls and foundation of the main barn are constructed of concrete. Inside the barn the stalls are constructed with metal pipe (original) approximately four inches in diameter. The original overhead feeding system also remains intact.

The front-gabled roof is covered with brown, composition shingles and a hayloft is centered on its ridge. The hayloft has a hipped roof with a cupola and open eaves. The sides of the hayloft are vented to allow air circulation through the hay.

The barn is lighted by twenty-six double-hung, 6/6 windows. Although the original wooden windows have been replaced with aluminum sashes, the original size and pattern have been maintained. The aluminum has been painted to lessen its visual effect. The majority of the doors are original. Three drive-in doors are present on the north, east, and west elevations and two cattle doors are on the south. An oversize, single metal door has been added to each elevation. Shed roofs, supported by square, wooden supports, extend along the east and west sides, providing shade and shelter from the weather.

The water for the barn was furnished by a large cistern-well adjacent to the barn. This cistern remains working and has been used continuously since 1916.

A corral is attached to the east side of the barn and is constructed of a variety of materials which have been added to over the years, including barb wire and wooden posts or metal posts and metal pipe. Although the metal pipe pens were added in 1974, it is possible that some of the barb wire fence is from a much earlier date.

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Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic District. Vicinity of Okay, Oklahoma. Wagoner County.

Alterations/Additions

The floors of the silos have been raised to the level of the barn floor with concrete, and conical, metal roofs were built in 1974 to enclose the open silos. Moreover, windows have been replaced and door openings have been added, as described above. These alterations do not affect the ability of the barn to convey its historical significance.

Ruins of 1910-1911 Barn

In 1945, the original barn, constructed of Atoka sandstone in 1910 and 1911, was destroyed by fire. The sandstone foundation has been removed. The original concrete silo built adjacent to the barn, however, remains standing. The round silo is constructed of poured concrete. Inside the concrete silo is the inscription: "W. W. Pay - Oct. 11, 1911."

Stock Ponds

Located within the boundaries of the Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic Districts are four, man-made stock ponds. The dates of construction for each of the ponds is unknown, however, they have been located on the property since at least the early 1960s and were probably all constructed between 1910 and ca. 1935.

Noncontributing resources

A metal barn and an open hay shed, constructed in 1970, are located northeast of the concrete barn and south of the ruins of the 1910-1911 barn. The metal barn is a large rectangular building with a concrete slab foundation. The open hay shed is a rectangular structure, open on the sides, with a metal, gable roof. Both the metal barn and the hay shed are somewhat set apart from the rest of the properties and do not detract from the integrity of the nominated district.

Alterations/Additions

Few alterations or additions have been made to the Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic District. These include the enclosure of part of the north porch of the Rock Manor, the addition of the gates to the rock fence, and the construction of the metal barn and open hay shed. The rock barn, built in 1910-1911, was destroyed by fire in 1945 and only the adjacent silo remains standing. While the foundation of the 1910-1911 barn is no longer visible, it is possible that further investigation might reveal additional information. The Rio Grand Ranch Headquarters Historic District continues to maintain a high degree of historical and architectural integrity.

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Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic District. Vicinity of Okay, Oklahoma. Wagoner County.

Contributing Buildings

1. Rock Manor (1909-1910)
2. Concrete Barn (1916)
3. Smoke House (ca. 1910)
4. Spring House (ca. 1910)
5. Root Cellar (ca. 1910)

Contributing Structures

1. Rock Fence (ca. 1910)
2. Cistern/Well/Windmill (ca. 1910)
3. Sewage Disposal System (ca. 1910)

Contributing Sites

1. Ruin of 1910-1911 Rock Barn and Concrete Silo
2. Farm Pond #1
3. Farm Pond #2
4. Farm Pond #3
5. Farm Pond #4

Noncontributing Buildings

1. Metal Barn (ca. 1970)

Noncontributing Structures

1. Hay Shed (ca. 1970)

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.)

- [x] 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.
[x] 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)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1909 - 1935

Significant Dates

1909 - 1910

1916

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

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 Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- [x] State Historic Preservation Office
[] Other State agency
[] Federal agency
[] Local government
[] University
[] Other

Name of repository:

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Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic District. Vicinity of Okay, Oklahoma. Wagoner County.

Summary

The Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic District is significant for its association with the breeding of registered purebred shorthorn cattle. It is also architecturally significant as a locally outstanding example of a twentieth-century ranch compound, including a locally significant example of a vernacular Prairie Style house, Rock Manor, and a locally significant concrete show barn. The tradition of breeding shorthorn cattle began with Charles E. Daily shortly after he purchased the ranch in 1908, and between 1915 and 1918 the ranch was nationally recognized as having one of the finest shorthorn herds in America. Rock Manor is a one-story residence built in 1909-1910 and constructed of Atoka sandstone with a hipped roof and a wrap-around rock porch. The concrete barn, built in 1916, was constructed as a show barn for shorthorn cattle. It covers 14,000 square feet and has twin concrete silos. The period of significance for the property extends from 1909, when the first building was erected, until 1935 when the property was sold and it was no longer used exclusively for cattle breeding.

Historical Background

In May of 1908, an Act of Congress permitted the sale of Cherokee lands. Formerly, non-Cherokees could only lease lands in what had been the Cherokee Nation. In August of that year, Charles E. Daily, a medical doctor and cattleman, purchased his first fifty acres in Indian Territory. The land was the beginning of the Rio Grande Ranch, now known as the Three Forks Ranch. The proposed historic district is within the original fifty-acre purchase. By the end of 1908 the ranch had grown to 285 acres and by November, 1915, it encompassed 2,572 acres. In the forties, the U. S. government condemned part of the ranch land for Fort Gibson Dam and Lake and for power lines from the dam. The remaining 1,999 acres became part of the Three Forks Ranch in 1967.

Dr. Charles E. Daily was a successful physician and an experienced cattleman when he bought the land for the Rio Grande Ranch. Born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1869, he moved with his parents to Lebanon, Indiana, while still an infant. His father, Americus Daily, who was also a cattleman, acquainted Charles with the breeding of superior cattle. Charles studied the various breeds and developments in the livestock industry at his father's ranch and, later, at Purdue University at Lafayette, Indiana. He left Purdue to study medicine. After graduating from the Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital in New York City, he went into practice in New York and later in Chicago. He then moved to Wagoner, Oklahoma, in February 1900, where he quickly established an extensive practice.

As soon as the law allowed, in 1908 Daily bought land to start his ranch and continued to acquire land until he held 285 acres at the end of the year. Over the next few years the doctor continued to add to the ranch and began construction of the ranch headquarters and a rock barn. The rock house, known as Rock Manor, and its support facilities were built in 1909-1910, and the rock barn in 1910-1911. Daily brought enough shorthorn cattle from his father's stock to establish his own herd and the breed produced good, marketable beef and breeding stock from its introduction in 1910 until 1935. In 1915 the death of his father prompted him to sell the ranch and return to Indiana, after just seven years of ownership.

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Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic District. Vicinity of Okay, Oklahoma. Wagoner County.

In November, 1915 the ranch was sold to Frank A. Gillespie. Gillespie was a prominent oil producer in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and owned several large cattle ranches throughout the state. He was born in Oil City, Pennsylvania, in 1869 and moved to Oklahoma in 1904. Gillespie was one of the pioneers of the Oklahoma oil business and was very successful; he earned an estimated \$30,000 a day from oil production in April, 1916. His hobby was raising purebred shorthorn cattle.

Gillespie expanded the Rio Grande Ranch holdings and the registered shorthorn herd. In 1916, he built the 14,000 square foot concrete barn as a showplace for his cattle. Starting the next year, Gillespie bought additional land in the bottoms, near the Grande River in Sections 18 and 19, Township 16 North, Range 20 East. All previous holdings were within Township 16 North, Range 19 East.

After two and one-half years, Gillespie sold the ranch to Clinton R. Strong, on 11 February 1918, and Strong continued to raise shorthorns. Exactly one year later Strong traded the ranch for railroad stock, and by 1920 the warranty deed passed to James W. Maney, once reputed to be the largest railroad contractor in Oklahoma.

James W. Maney was a contractor in Oklahoma City. Born in 1862 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he came to Oklahoma at the original opening in 1889. He was a civil engineer with the Southern Pacific Railroad at the age of nineteen and went into business for himself as a contractor five years later. Maney was a diverse investor and became involved in the milling and export industries, owned a controlling interest in an irrigation company in Oregon, and owned several farms and ranches in Oklahoma. The Rio Grande Ranch, with its purebred shorthorn cattle herd, proved to be a lucrative investment.

Robert Maney, James Maney's son, lived at the ranch in 1920-1921 and managed it with the help of three ranch hands. Two women lived in small wood-frame houses (demolished), to the northeast of the ranch headquarters. The women looked after the house where the four men lived, the Rock Manor. A telephone, the first in the area, was installed to provide efficient communication with Maney's numerous other enterprises.

James Maney made the best of his investment in the ranch. A producing oil well was drilled in Section 22 in July 1919, and gravel from the Grand River brought in an estimated \$10,000 in 1920 alone. By far the most important product of the ranch remained the shorthorn herd, descended from the original strain brought into Oklahoma by Daily and further developed by Gillespie. In 1920, a Rio Grand Ranch registered shorthorn cattle sale was held in Tulsa, bringing \$395 per head, a good price at the time.

When Maney sold the ranch to the Yeoman Mutual Life Insurance Company in 1935, he ended the ranch's period of significance as a contributing source of purebred shorthorn cattle.

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Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic District. Vicinity of Okay, Oklahoma. Wagoner County.

Ranching Significance

The Rio Grande Ranch is significant for its association with the development of registered purebred shorthorn cattle in Oklahoma. The registered shorthorn breed, raised at the Rio Grande Ranch from 1910 until 1935, became popular in Oklahoma after H. C. Lookabaugh of Watonga established a purebred herd of registered shorthorn cattle in 1910. Mr. Lookabaugh remained the dean of shorthorn breeders in Oklahoma for many years; however, the Rio Grand Ranch also established both a national and regional reputation when F. A. Gillespie and Sons added to Daily's original shorthorn herd until it was surpassed by none in the nation.¹

After the Rio Grande Ranch was established, it continued to carry on the tradition of ranching which had been brought to the area in the 1830's by the Five Civilized Tribes. The Cherokees were accomplished cattlemen and large herds grazed in eastern Oklahoma long before allotment. But, once the open range, so well-suited to the communal living of the Cherokee, was broken up into small, individual tracts by allotment in 1908, white settlers, such as Charles E. Daily, quickly moved in to take advantage of the available land. The rich, grassy hills, abundant water, and established transportation to the Kansas cattle market, made the region prime cattle country. It was shortly after this change in ownership that purebred shorthorn cattle, new to eastern Oklahoma, were introduced to meet the demands of the changing livestock industry.

C. E. Daily, F. A. Gillespie, C. R. Strong, and James W. Maney are excellent examples of the new breed of cattle people who were educated and knowledgeable in animal husbandry and aware of the economic advantages to be obtained from upgrading their beef herds through the introduction of purebred cattle. While shorthorn cattle had been popular in the United States for almost one-hundred years, purebred shorthorn cattle were only introduced into Oklahoma by H. C. Lookabaugh in 1910. Lookabaugh and his successors played a leading role in improving the range herds in Oklahoma with their pure breeds.

F. A. Gillespie's success in the oil business offered him the opportunity to become an important figure in purebred shorthorn cattle breeding. Gillespie and Sons could afford to buy the the best bulls and cows available and they became known not only for their shorthorn herd, but for their barns and management practices.² At the 1917 International Livestock Show in Chicago, Gillespie and Sons' Maxwalton Commander was honored as the grand champion of the breed.³ In May of 1918, at the first Mid-Continent Live Stock Show in Tulsa, F. A. Gillespie and Sons took thirty-five of the eighty-two prizes awarded, including all championship prizes except one. Their influence was felt across Oklahoma when over one-half of the shorthorns were sold to farmers in the state. These buyers were not breeders like Maney and his predecessors, rather they were interested in raising shorthorns because it was a versatile breed that could be used either for raising and selling for cash or as a dairy herd.

¹ Sanders, Alvin H. Shorthorn Cattle: A Series of Historical Sketches, Memoirs and Records of the Breed and Development in the United States and Canada. Ca. 1918-1919. Chicago: Sanders Publishing Co.

² Ibid.

³ Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman. January 10, 1918.

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Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic District. Vicinity of Okay, Oklahoma. Wagoner County.

Gillespie sold the ranch several years later to C. R. Strong, a rancher from Clinton, Oklahoma, who was also in the shorthorn cattle business. Strong had already begun raising shorthorns, and his herd included top cows from H. C. Lookabaugh's Pleasant Valley Ranch near Watonga.

The ranch's fourth owner, J. W. Maney, continued the purebred shorthorn tradition. In 1920 Maney was selling both straight Scotch females and Scotch-topped cows and heifers. In a promotional brochure advertising the sale of some of Maney's herd, one of the bulls was noted as being "a persistent winner at ... International, American, Royal and state fairs."⁴

Architectural Significance

Rock Manor

The Rock Manor is an excellent vernacular example of the Prairie School of architecture and, together with the concrete barn and silo, is also architecturally significant as an outstanding example of an early twentieth-century ranch compound. The Rock Manor, its outbuildings, and the stone posts of the surrounding fence are all built of Atoka sandstone, a native stone mined on the ranch. According to the Oklahoma Historic Preservation Survey, stone construction was used in a small minority of ranch houses in the region. Wood was by far the most common material used, but stone was the more durable. Rock Manor is an excellent example of the vernacular Prairie style executed in stone. There are no other known examples of rural residences built with rock in Wagoner County.

The Prairie style of architecture was popular between 1900 and 1920. Examples of the style could be found in architectural pattern books, which were widely used in the Midwest. Characteristics of this style include a low-pitched hipped roof with wide, overhanging eaves; and one-story porches with massive porch supports. Front-facing dormers are typical of many of the vernacular examples of the style. The Rock Manor exhibits each of these architectural features.

Concrete Barn and Silos

The concrete barn, built by Frank A. Gillespie, is a well-constructed example of early twentieth-century state-of-the-art barn design. The use of concrete was introduced into the United States in the mid 1860's and well-received by engineers. By the turn of the century, domestic production of Portland cement was quickly rising and was used primarily for the construction of roads, sidewalks, and utility buildings. Concrete was used for barn construction as early as 1856, when Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, built one for his own use. Reinforced concrete was introduced shortly after. During the first decade of the century companies such as the Universal Atlas Cement Company published educational materials pertaining to the use of concrete. For example, in 1905 it published "Concrete

⁴ Brochure advertising sale of short horns by Maney Brothers at the Tulsa Fair Grounds. August 26, 1920. Private collection of George Cobb, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

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Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic District. Vicinity of Okay, Oklahoma. Wagoner County.

Construction About the Home and on the Farm." Periodicals, such as the Farm Cement News and the Universal Farmer, were also available to the public and continued to be popular throughout the first quarter of the century.

The concrete barn contains what was then the latest technology in cattle husbandry. The overhead feeding system, still intact and in working order, is one example of the quality equipment installed in the barn. Constructed as a showplace for the ranch's purebred shorthorn cattle, the barn is an important contributing resource of the proposed ranch district.

In Oklahoma Farmer-Stockmen it was noted that in 1913 over 10,000 silos had been erected that year in Oklahoma, more than the total built in all the years previous. However, it is apparent from other articles from the 1910s that the use of silos was still questioned by many farmers and the type of silos appropriate for Oklahoma had yet to be determined. It was during this time that the concrete barn was built at the Rio Grande Ranch.

One concrete silo, built in 1911, and the two concrete silos, built in conjunction with the barn in 1916, are important contributing resources to the historic district. Construction methods for building silos were widely distributed by cement manufacturers and, later, agricultural extension services. Shortly after the turn of the century, engineers were convinced that concrete silos were superior to any other type of silo construction. The easily constructed wood forms were inexpensive and required a minimum of labor. Concrete silos and concrete block silos were both very popular methods of construction during the early part of the century. The solid concrete silos attached to the concrete barn, and the concrete silo constructed in 1911, continue to maintain a high degree of integrity.

Although several ranches and their built resources are recorded in the region on the Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory, none are in Wagoner County, and only one, the Pawnee Bill Ranch in Pawnee County, is on the National Register of Historic Places. Ranches such as the Rio Grande played a key role in the settlement of eastern Oklahoma and the improvement of the cattle industry. This ranch, in particular, embodies the evolution of the post-allotment ranches as sources of quality cattle and, for men like Gillespie and Maney, as viable investment properties. The buildings are of superior quality, both aesthetically and technically. They were built to last and their sturdy appearance evokes a sense of permanence and rugged optimism.

The Rio Grande Ranch Headquarters Historic District provides a view of what ranch life was like in eastern Oklahoma during the post-allotment period and continues to maintain a high degree of architectural integrity.

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Vertical files from the collection of George Cox, owner.

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UTM References (continued)

5.	15 295 950	3969 430
6.	15 296 080	3969 360

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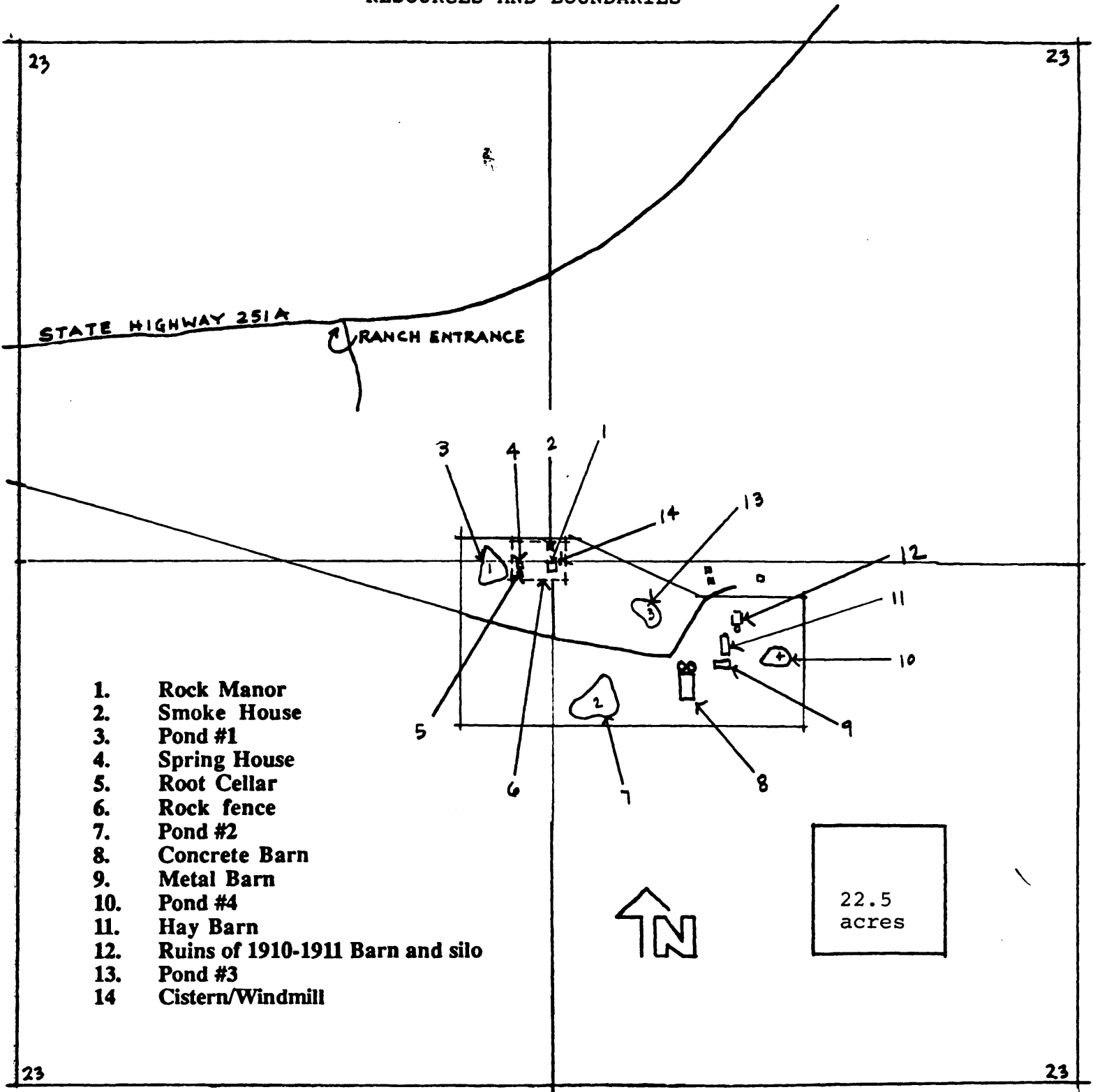
Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the outer northeast corner of the headquarters enclosure proceed west approximately 470' to the northwest corner. Turn south and proceed 600' to the southwest corner, then proceed east approximately 800'. Turn north and proceed 400'. Then proceed west to the west edge of the road and proceed northwest to the starting point.

Boundary Justification

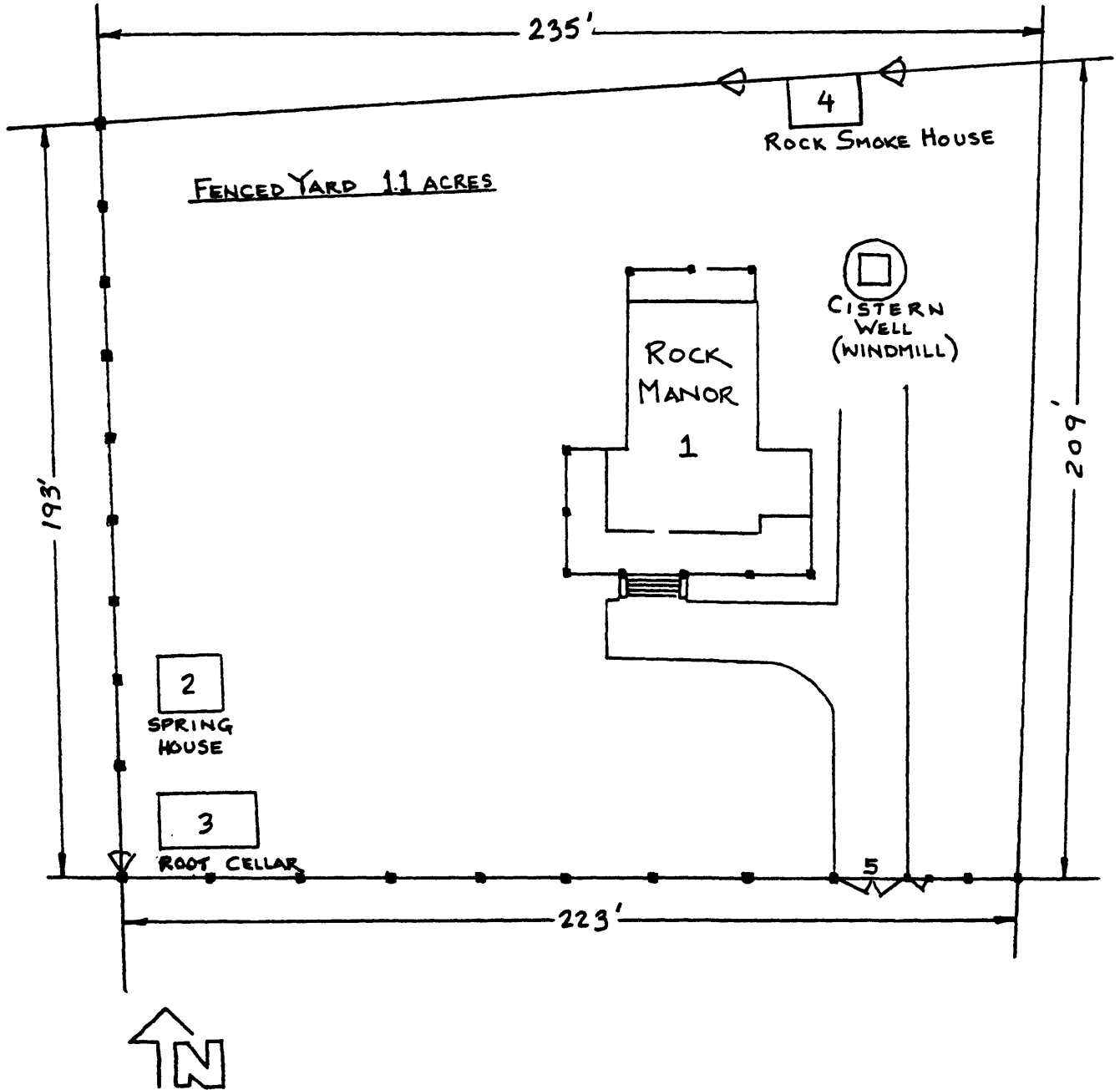
The boundary includes the ranch headquarters, barns, and a portion of the pasture lands that lies between the two areas. All the original construction on the ranch is contained within the boundary and sufficient land to maintain a visual continuity between the headquarters and barn areas. The area and the houses to the northeast of the boundary are excluded because of loss of integrity through numerous alterations.

SKETCH MAP 2
 RIO GRANDE RANCH DISTRICT
 RESOURCES AND BOUNDARIES



- 1. Rock Manor
- 2. Smoke House
- 3. Pond #1
- 4. Spring House
- 5. Root Cellar
- 6. Rock fence
- 7. Pond #2
- 8. Concrete Barn
- 9. Metal Barn
- 10. Pond #4
- 11. Hay Barn
- 12. Ruins of 1910-1911 Barn and silo
- 13. Pond #3
- 14. Cistern/Windmill

SITE PLAN
RIO GRANDE RANCH DISTRICT
RANCH HEADQUARTERS
1"=40'

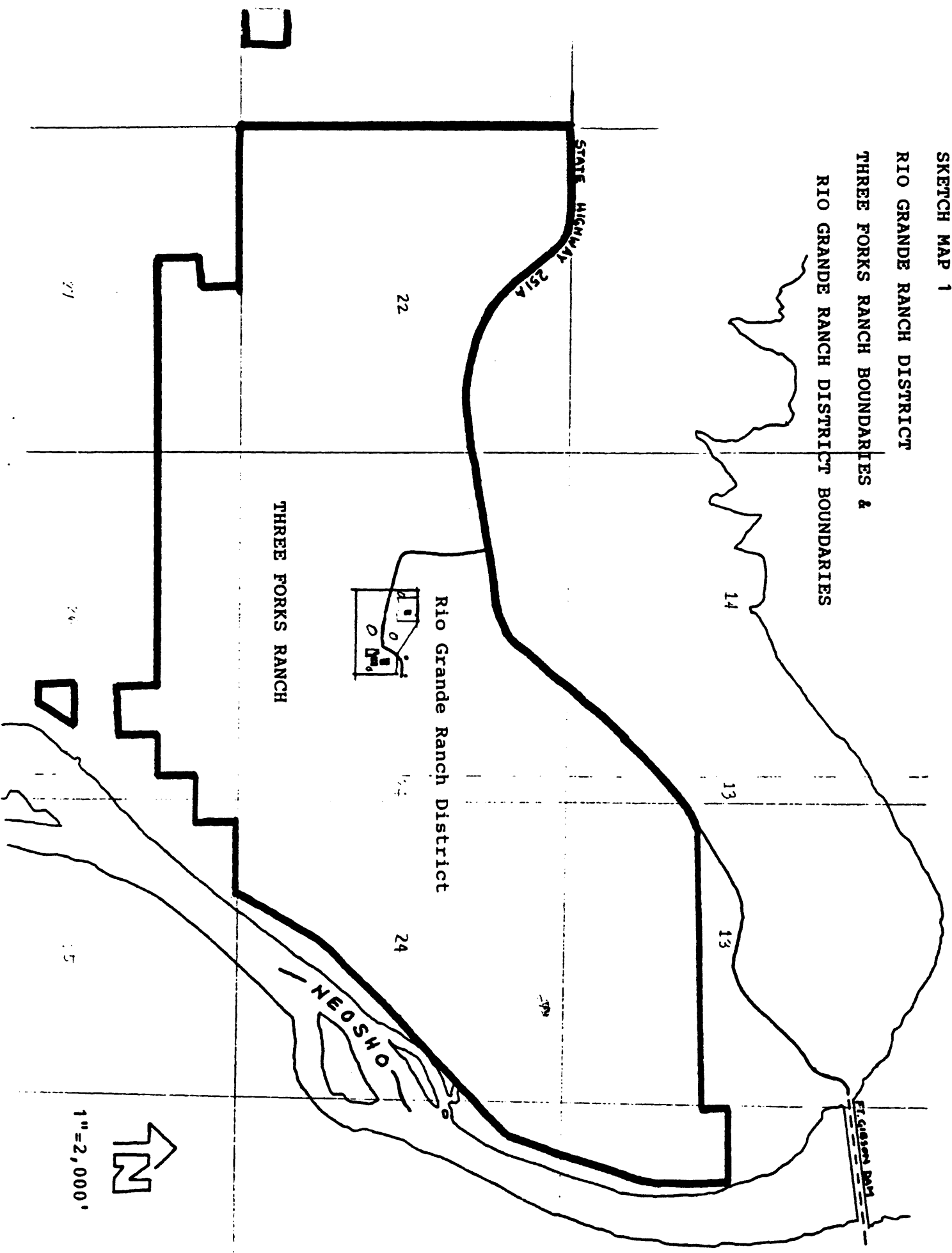


SKETCH MAP 1

RIO GRANDE RANCH DISTRICT

THREE FORKS RANCH BOUNDARIES &

RIO GRANDE RANCH DISTRICT BOUNDARIES



STATE HIGHWAY 251A

FT. GIBSON DAM

Rio Grande Ranch District

THREE FORKS RANCH



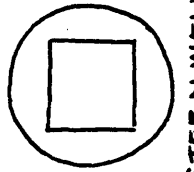
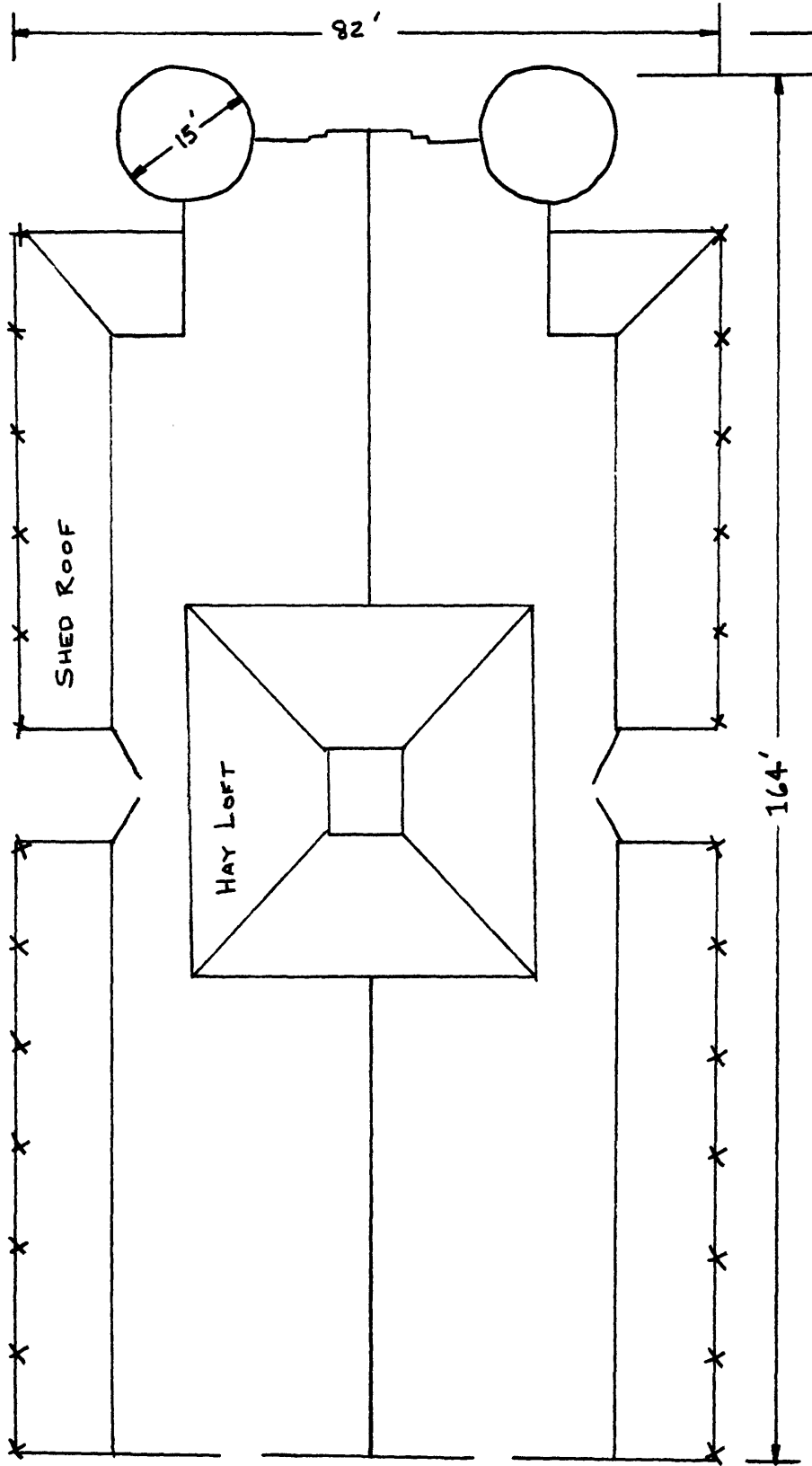
1" = 2,000'



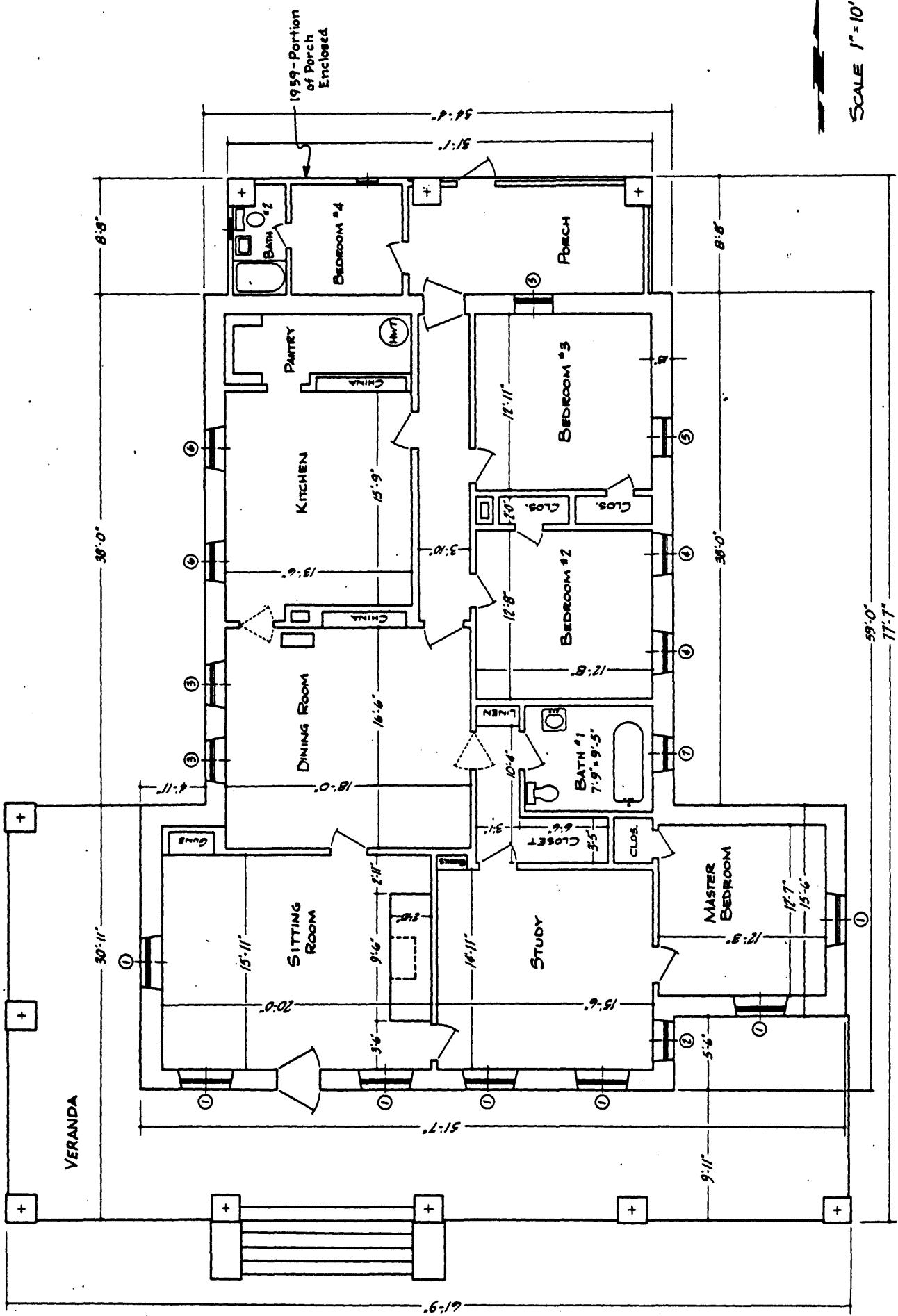
ROOF PLAN

RIO GRANDE RANCH DISTRICT

CONCRETE BARN



CISTERN WELL



SCALE 1"=10'

C-SEC. 23-T16 N-R 19 E
Wagner Co., Okla.

GEORGE H. COBB - THREE FORKS RANCH
ROCK MANOR HOUSE BUILT 1909-1910
NATIVE ROCK, 12' CEILINGS, 18" WALLS