

013 0124-0013
10/2/1981

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received JUN 13 1983
date entered JUL 27 1983

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

1. Name

historic Owl Blacksmith Shop

and/or common Lee Cotter's Blacksmith Shop

2. Location

street & number 208 West Rainey N/A not for publication

city, town Weatherford vicinity of ~~Wagon Wheel District~~

state Oklahoma code 40 county Custer code 039

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Lee Cotter

street & number 212 West Rainey

city, town Weatherford vicinity of state Oklahoma 73096

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the County Clerk

street & number Custer County Courthouse

city, town Arapaho state Oklahoma

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Oklahoma Comprehensive Survey has this property been determined eligible? es no

date 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records Oklahoma Historical Society

city, town Oklahoma City state Oklahoma

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input 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 original building housing the Cotter blacksmith shop was built ^{WOOD} sometime before 1913, the year the Cotter family bought it. A simple frame affair (Photo No. 1) with concrete floor and ^{PITCHED} ~~hipped~~ roof, it measured 25 x 50 feet. Thirty years later a 15 x 50-foot lean-to was added to its west wall and the traditional false front on the original structure was given a token extension to include it. In circa 1949 the entire building has been "veneered" with sheets of corrugated iron.

The changes, however, are more apparent than real. And this is especially true of the interior. Here the open rafters remain (Photo No. 5), as do the unfinished walls and organized clutter of the traditional blacksmith shop. In place are the original anvil, coal-fired forge, jointer, and jack hammer, Welding equipment (Photo No. 6) shows that Lee Cotter has not turned his back on advances made in the practice of his trade. But the shop itself indicates that neither has he turned his back on the tools and techniques with which he learned that trade.

The metal covering the exterior does not significantly detract from the historic character of the structure. It has been in place for almost 40 years.

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates circa 1913-1983 **Builder/Architect** N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Owl/Lee Cotter Blacksmith Shop is significant for two reasons. As a father/son enterprise it has carried on for 70 years with no important change either in the nature of the business itself or in the appearance of the physical plant in which it has operated. Additionally, the shop represents an authentic cultural tie with the past ... an uninterrupted, 70-plus-year-old plying of a skilled trade, once so all-important as to be found almost everywhere, but now, thanks to changing commercial conditions, fast approaching the status of a lost art.

Lee Cotter Sr. bought the Owl shop in 1913, just 15 years after Weatherford was established. How long the "Attabury Boys" had operated it before 1913 is not known; conceivably it could have been since 1898. Lee Cotter Jr. learned blacksmithing from his father and has run the shop since his father's death. Throw-away plowshares, portable welding trucks, and other developments have greatly reduced the demand for blacksmiths, of course. (Cotter can remember when his father would have as many as 400 plowshares lined up for repair ... at 25 cents a share.) But Cotter has adapted his skills to the changing needs of the community. "If Lee Cotter can't fix something," they say in Custer County, "it can't be fixed."

Cotter lives near by, continues his trade in the same false-fronted frame shop his father took over in 1913. The building is little changed, outside or in. Still in place and in service to the community are the original forge, jack hammer, anvil, and other tools of the trade ... along with the skills of the blacksmithing trade, passed along from father to son. Blacksmith shop and blacksmithing, building and trade ... Lee Cotter preserves a tie with the past that embraces the greater part of the 85-year existence of the Weatherford community itself.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Ray, Dee Ann, "They say if Lee Cotter . . ." Clinton (Ok.) Daily News, May 31, 1981.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Weatherford

Quadrangle scale 15 minute

UMT References

A

1	4	5	2	6	3	3	0	3	9	3	1	0	7	5
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 22-23, Block 79, original townsite of Weatherford.

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 Kent Ruth - Deputy

organization Oklahoma Historical Society date January 1983

street & number Historical Building telephone 405/884-5456

city or town Oklahoma City 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. Metcalf 5/31/83

title date

For NPS use only

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

fr Beth Groover date 1/27/83
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration