

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE <b>Texas</b>	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. <b>Theme IV, Westward Expansion</b>	4. APPROX. ACREAGE -
3. NAME(S) OF SITE <b>King Ranch</b>	Subtheme: <b>"The Cattlemen's Empire"</b>	
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) <b>Nueces, Kenedy, Kleberg, and Willacy Counties, Headquarters at Kingsville</b>		
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) <b>King Ranch, Inc., Kingsville, Texas</b>		

7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)

The mammoth and historic King Ranch ranks as one of the most outstanding, and certainly the best known, of all cattle enterprises in the history of the Southwestern cattle frontier. It was founded in 1852 by Richard King, who purchased a Spanish land grant of 75,000 acres on Santa Gertrudis Creek. From 1860-1868 he operated in partnership with Mifflin Kenedy. Upon King's death in 1885, Robert J. Kleberg was selected by Mrs. King to manage the ranch. When he retired in 1933, his son, Robert J. Kleberg, Jr., took over the operation. After the death of Mrs. King in 1935, the ranch passed to control of King Ranch, Inc. The King herd grew from Longhorn stock imported from Mexico. Beginning in 1893, Shorthorns and Herefords were introduced. ~~Brahm~~ cattle were later brought in and, bred with Shorthorns, produced the famous Santa Gertrudis cattle. The ranch grew progressively from the original 75,000 acres as King and, later, Kleberg added more and more acreage. By mid-20th century it included 1,225,000 acres covering most of four south Texas counties, and, the largest ranch in the United States, is still an operating business, with headquarters at Kingsville.

Although business offices of the King Ranch are at Kingsville, the original headquarters area is still located two miles west of town. The first ranch house burned in 1911. The present sprawling white brick mansion and most of the surrounding structures date from 1912, although the old commissary building, dating from the 19th century, still survives. Although it does not encourage visitation by tourists, the company has laid out a 12 mile loop tour to accommodate visitors. It has numbered posts keyed to a self-guiding trail leaflet. Located in Nueces County, Texas, the ranch is the largest in the state.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)

Tom Lea, The King Ranch, 2 v. (Boston, 1957). Frank Goodwyn, Life on the King Ranch (1951).

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.)

None

10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION <b>Good</b>	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) <b>Ranch</b>	13. DATE OF VISIT <b>Oct. 24, 1958</b>
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) <i>Robert M. Utley</i>	15. TITLE <b>Historian</b>	16. DATE <b>Dec. 15, 1958</b>	

\* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)