

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JAN 26 1984

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Deer Creek General Merchandise Store

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number South Main St, N/A not for publication

city, town Deer Creek N/A vicinity of

state Oklahoma code 40 county Grant code 053

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" 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	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. James Lehman

street & number Box 67

city, town Deer Creek N/A vicinity of state OK 74636

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number Grant County Courthouse

city, town Medford state OK 73759

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1983  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society

city, town Oklahoma City state OK 73105

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## 7. Description

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

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

The Deer Creek Mercantile Store is a 40' X 110' Plains Commercial structure. Completed in 1910, the one-story, flat roofed building is situated at the north end of a commercial block in the downtown area of Deer Creek. The south wall is shared with another commercial building. The red brick exterior walls follow the common bond design, with a header course every seventh row. The building has a flat roof with parapet walls on the front, north, and south sides.

The facade or east side of the building has four sets of wooden framed display windows. Each has two window lights above. There are two recessed double doors on the front of the building with window lights on either side. Door frames are covered by frames following the outer lines of the frontage.

On the north side towards the rear there are three 1/1 sash windows. The wooden framed windows have arches above them constructed from two rows of header bricks. There are two rear entrance wooden doors also on this side.

The rear or west side of the building has no windows or doors. On the south side there are four windows with similar design to those on the north side.

Two straight stack red brick chimneys are located on the north and south sides. The building has a few decorative elements such as the recessive brick work on the front where the original paint signs of the mercantile can be found and the brick dentils along the north side of the building. A wooden advertising sign runs the full length of the front and extends over the sidewalk with the support of metal poles which could easily be removed to restore the original appearance of the nominated property's facade.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Ethnicity

**Specific dates** 1910 - Present      **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Deer Creek General Store is historically significant because (1) it is one of the oldest commercial buildings in Grant County and the only remaining one of its type in north central Oklahoma having housed a general merchandise store since the time of its construction in 1910 and (2) the ownership and management of the building has been associated with the same Russian-German Mennonite family for over 73 years.

Shortly after the 1893 Land Run into Oklahoma Territory, several Russian-German Mennonites from the area of Moundridge and Halstead, Kansas settled in the Deer Creek vicinity, a rich wheat producing area in north central Oklahoma. In the spring of 1898, the town of Deer Creek was laid out adjoining the farms of the Russian-German Mennonite homesteaders. Jacob Dester, one of the Kansas Russian-German Mennonites, established in 1901 one of the first businesses in the new town of Deer Creek. His general merchandise store served the growing needs of the adjacent farming community. In 1902, Dester hired Reuben Lehman, a Russian-German Mennonite from Missouri, to help operate the store. Lehman, who was hired at \$40 per month, bought the general store from Dester in 1908, and two years later, he built the nominated property on Main Street to house his newly-acquired business.

Lehman quickly gained the respect of the surrounding farming communities in Grant County. His reputation as a merchant was well-known among the Russian-German wheat farmers because he paid more for their produce than the other stores in the vicinity and the farmers were able to exchange their goods for merchandise or due bills. The due bills were the store's own metal coins which could be exchanged for merchandise at a later date.

Lehman's General Store stocked a variety of goods including pickles, dry beans, flour, vinegar, seasonal fruit and kerosene; all necessary staples for the farming households of the area. Chewing tobacco and playing cards were also sold until an itinerant minister convinced Lehman that they were harmful to the moral standing of the local populace. Lehman immediately had all questionable merchandise taken to a side alley and burned.

Lehman continued to operate the store until 1955 when he turned the management over to his son James and wife. The second-generation Lehman manages the store in much the same fashion as his father by stocking a variety of goods in the general store tradition reminiscent of the era in which the nominated property was constructed.

For over 73 years the Deer Creek General Merchandise store has played a vital role in the commercial history of Grant County and is the only remaining example of an ethnic-owned business which has retained its original function in north central Oklahoma.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

- (1) History of Grant County Families, Vol. I, Published by Grant County Historical Society, 1980.
- (2) Kent Ruth, Oklahoma Travel Handbook. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977.
- (3) Douglas Hale, The Germans From Russia In Oklahoma. Norman: University of Oklahoma

# 10. Geographical Data

Press, 1980.

Acreege of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Deer Creek, OK

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000 7.5"

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>4</u>	<u>6</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>4</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	B							
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing				
C				D							
E				F							
G				H							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 1-2, Block 2, Original Townsite of Deer Creek, OK

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

state	code	county	code
<u>N/A</u>			

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nicola Perkins directed by Dr. George O. Carney.

organization Department of Geography date November, 1983

street & number Oklahoma State University telephone 405-624-6250

city or town Stillwater state OK 74078

# 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 Cemetcaly 1-23-84

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

For NPS use only

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

Beth Grossena date 3/8/84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration