

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED DEC 9 1976

DATE ENTERED NOV 9 1977

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

**** CLOVER CLIFF RANCH HOUSE**

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Four miles southwest of Elmdale, just off US-50
NW $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 7, T 20 S, R 7 E

CITY, TOWN

Elmdale

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
No. 5, Joe Skubitz

STATE

Kansas

CODE
20

COUNTY
Chase

CODE
017

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Katheryn B. Prather Heirs Trust

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Chase County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Cottonwood Falls

STATE

Kansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic Sites Survey

DATE

.1975

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Kansas State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

STATE

Kansas

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The main house of the Clover Cliff Ranch is sited on the top of a long, sloping incline. It is an irregularly shaped two story stone building that was constructed in two phases. The oldest part of the house has become a wing which extends to the north. The newer part of the house, which was built in 1883, has an east-west orientation with the main facade facing south. The stone work on the 1883 addition is squared rock-face with dressed quoins, while that of the original house is squared rubble. Before the replacement of the south porch the design of the house showed more of the influence of the Italian Villa style.

The main entrance is centered on the south facade. A wood door with a leaded glass window is set in a segmental arched frame with a leaded glass transom and sidelights. The building projects forward to the west of the door. There are two evenly spaced windows on each story of this projection. Another window has been placed on the second story over the main doorway, and there are two windows on each story to the east of the door. The windows have been set in a vermiculated quoin opening and capped with a carved stone lintel. These lintels have carved keystones and corbels. An oval stone plaque inscribed with the name "Clover Cliff" and the date of construction "1883" has been set to the east of the window above the door. The wood entablature which crowns the building has modillions and intricately molded brackets. The frieze is a repeating pattern of two raised panels separated by a modified ballflower set between the ends of the brackets. Originally the house had a one story wood porch with a flat roof accented by metal cresting that ran east from the projection across the south facade. This has been replaced by an elevated one story veranda with a flat roof supported by stone pillars which extends further to the south than the original and wraps around the east side of the building. The wood entablature of the veranda is a close replica, on a smaller scale, of the building's entablature. The house has a metal truncated hip roof with metal cresting around the ridge. Two chimney stacks rise from the flat ridge of the roof.

There are two windows on each story of the 1883 addition on the east facade. A narrow, one story stone addition runs the length of the original building that extends to the north. The original building has a flat roof with a narrow stone band entablature.

A one story addition with a pitched roof has been attached to the north facade of the original building. A narrow, one story wood frame addition with a shed roof has also been built on the west facade of the original house.

There are several small, stone out buildings to the north of the main house. The barn to the south of the house which appears in early photographs no longer remains.

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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Western Settlement

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The imposing two-story stone ranch house southwest of Elmdale was built in 1883 by Jacob Ramer Blackshere.

J.R. Blackshere was born in 1834 in what was then Marion county, Virginia, but West Virginia after 1863. In 1857 he opened a dry goods store in Mannington, Virginia. Three years later he came to Chase county, Kansas and preempted and purchased 960 acres, made improvements and stocked some cattle. In the spring of 1861 he returned to Virginia (West Virginia) and evidently remained there until 1866 when he disposed of his business and returned to Chase county.

Blackshere was regarded as a pioneer and experimenter in agricultural practices. He was the first to introduce Galloway cattle into that section of the state. He also introduced grain sorghums into Chase county as a dependable grain crop. In 1875 he purchased one and one-half bushels of alfalfa seed from San Francisco through the Emporia, Kansas firm of J. M. Griffith and Bro. for \$32.25. Although this marked the introduction of the crop to Chase county, there had been some scattered test plots elsewhere in the state. However, they appear to have been shortlived; it was Blackshere's planting that brought about the first continuous alfalfa growing in Kansas. At one time Blackshere had 1,200 acres in alfalfa out of his total holdings of close to 5,000 acres. He was said to have made a fortune from the sale of alfalfa seed. Blackshere also recognized the value of the native bluestem grasses of the Kansas Flint Hills for the rapid and economical fattening of cattle.

The old part of the ranch house was reportedly built in the 1860's. It was in 1883 that the large front portion was added. Construction evidently began in July, and a September 6 Cottonwood Falls newspaper reported that ten stone masons were working on the house and pushing for an early completion.

Blackshere was interested in public affairs and was for many years chairman of the Democratic County Central Committee. He served as county commissioner in 1874 and 1875 but otherwise refused to run for office, preferring to devote his time to the management of his Clover Cliff Ranch. He was also one of the organizers and directors of the Chase County Bank at Cottonwood Falls. In 1873, he helped organize the Agricultural Society of Chase County and was elected vice-president.

He died from typhoid fever at his home on November 10, 1894. After his death the property stayed in the family for another 17 years; apparently his wife's death in February, 1911, led to the sale of the property. A son, Earl Blackshere, managed the ranch from 1894 until its sale December 14, 1911, to H.L. Prather of

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Chase County Courant (Cottonwood Falls), March 15, 29, June 7, July 12, August 9, September 6, November 1, 1883.

Chase County Historical Sketches, Volume II (n.p., Chase County Historical Society, 1948), pp. 391, 393.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 4	7 0, 1 3, 5, 0	4, 2 4, 4 9, 6, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES.

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Richard Pankratz, Director, Historic Sites Survey
Cornelia Wyma, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Kansas State Historical Society

DATE October 4, 1976

STREET & NUMBER 120 West Tenth

TELEPHONE 913-296-3251

CITY OR TOWN Topeka

STATE Kansas

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

Nyle H. Miller

TITLE Executive Director, Kansas State Historical Society

DATE December 1, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST: *Charles H. ...*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
DATE 11/9/77

DATE 11-4-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

4.

Mr. Ivan O. Poe
Attorney at Law
1020 Union National Building
Broadway and Douglas
Wichita, Kansas 67202

Mr. Allan H. Poe
11700 Claychester Street
St. Louis, Missouri 63131

Mr. Harold P. Poe
2002 Manor Drive
Dodge City, Kansas 67801

Clover Cliff Ranch House

Form 10-300a
(Dec. 1968)

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Kansas	
COUNTY	
Chase	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	NOV 9 1977

(Number all entries)

7. Additional descriptive material requested by the National Register office:

The original house at Clover Cliff ranch was a one-room stone structure built from field stones found on the property. The room was heated by a large open fireplace. This room now forms the north end of the house.

A kitchen, dining room and upstairs bedroom were added to the south of the original room in 1865-1866. The rooms still serve these same functions.

More bedrooms on the second floor and sitting rooms on the first story were added to the house in 1883. In this addition was placed a serpentine staircase of walnut and maple.

The roof was resurfaced in 1917 with an alloy of copper, lead and tin. The metal cresting which is original to the 1883 addition was left undisturbed at the time.

No major changes have been made to the interior except to take small portions of existing rooms and convert them to bathrooms as that type of plumbing became available.



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8.

Madison, Kansas. When the Prathers acquired the property, they added the large front porch and a back porch. Ownership of the property is now held by the Katheryn B. Prather Heirs' Trust.

J.R. Blackshere was a pioneer agricultural innovator; his successful raising of alfalfa showed the way for a crop that has become a mainstay of the state's agricultural economy. The Clover Cliff Ranch House is a good example of the sophistication of the local stone masons and of a prosperous rancher's house. It reflects a style of living which played an important part in the development of the Kansas Flint Hills.

9.

Connelley, William E., editor, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans (Chicago, Lewis Publishing Co., 1918) p. 1300.

"Death of J.R. Blackshere," Chase County Courant (Cottonwood Falls), November 15, 1894.

Graham, I.D., "Jacob Ramer Blackshere: A Pioneer in Crop Introduction and Improvement of Livestock," Thirty-fourth Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture (Topeka, State Printer, 1945), pp. 96-99.

History of the State of Kansas (Chicago, A.T. Andreas, 1883), p. 1363.

"Jacob Ramer Blackshere," Chase County Historical Sketches, Vol. I (Chase County Historical Society, 1940), pp. 145-148, 363, 368.

"Old Houses," Kansas Farmer (Topeka), April 20, 1946.

"Raised First Alfalfa," Topeka State Journal, January 12, 1907.