# RESOURCE PROTECTION PLANNING PROCESS

**Study Unit: Ranching in Southwestern Oklahoma**
**Region: Seven**

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## INTRODUCTION

This study unit manual has been prepared by the Oklahoma Historic Preservation Survey, History Department, Oklahoma State University. The manual has been designed for those individuals and groups responsible for management decisions for historical resources in Oklahoma. The theme and geographical location follow the statewide system for organizing information on historic resources. Specifically, this manual focuses on ranching in region seven. Materials included are: (1) A narrative describing ranching activities in southwestern Oklahoma between 1866 and 1934; (2) Information about the most significant pre- and post-settlement ranches; (3) Maps, glossary and ranch characteristics; (4) A list of National Register Nominations; and (5) Criteria for evaluation of properties to be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

The information in this manual is the basis for those preparing operational plans and management units for the preservation and protection of historic resources. Funds for the research, preparation, and publication have been provided by (?)

For further information concerning the Resource Protection Planning Process contact the Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

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# RANCHING IN SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA

## Ranching on the Great Plains:

Cattle ranching played a major role in the historical development of southwestern Oklahoma, particularly in the period prior to white settlement (1865-1893). After settlement, agriculture replaced ranching as the primary economic activity in the region, but some large ranches remained in existence and cattlemen continued to exercise great political and social influence. The purpose of this study is to briefly describe the history of ranching in southwestern Oklahoma and to identify and locate specific indiviual ranches in the region which existed before 1930.

Before proceeding further, it would be useful to discuss the ranching industry in general terms. Walter Prescott Webb, the Texas historian, defines a ranch as "the houses and all the range of cattle, whether fenced or unfenced." Ranching is "the practice of raising cattle on a large scale, . . . and the owner of a ranch is a ranchman or cattleman. The cowboy is an employee whose business it is to handle the cattle." The ranch's headquarters and its employees were called an "outfit" (Webb, pp. 228-229). Webb notes that the availability of grass and water largely determined the location of a ranch. The rancher usually established his headquarters, which typically consisted of a ranch house, corrals, and living quarters for the men, along a good stream and grazed his cattle on both banks. In the early days of the range cattle industry in Oklahoma, ranchers either leased their land from the Indians or simply occupied it, asking permission from neither tribe nor government. These ranchers owned their cattle and equipment, but not the land on which their herds grazed. All cattlemen recognized the "range rights" of others, that is the right to one's water and the surrounding grassland.

In the years immediately following the Civil War, the size and importance of the cattle industry grew rapidly. The destruction of the buffalo and the

confinement to reservations of the Plains Indians made this possible. Texans had driven their cattle across the Indian Territory on their way to northern markets as early as 1849. Economic conditions in Texas after the Civil War encouraged the expansion of the range cattle industry. The War did not seriously affect the state of Texas and by 1865 its fertile grasslands supported huge herds of cattle. Texans quickly realized that while cattle might sell for only four dollars per head at home, they would bring up to forty dollars per head in the East where the growing populations of the major cities required a much larger food supply. Beginning in 1866, hundreds of thousands of the hardy Texas longhorn cattle poured across the Indian Territory, driven by ambitious Texans eager to take advantage of the situation. The objective was the railheads, located in the new "cow towns" in Kansas and Nebraska. From Abilene, Wichita, and Dodge City the cattle were shipped either to Chicago slaughterhouses or to ranges in Montana or the Dakotas for further fattening. Between 1866 and 1884, Texas cattlemen probably drove over six million head across Oklahoma.

Pre-settlement ranches fall into two major organizational categories. The first was the cattle company. This was not generally a corporation in the modern sense, but rather was a loose association of cattlemen, often from Texas, who joined together in order to pool their resources, lower costs, and attract Eastern capital investment. For example, the C. and A. Ranch was owned by the Cheyenne and Arapaho Cattle Company. A group of Texans organized the company in 1878 hoping to lease part of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Reservation as grazing land for their cattle. In 1883 its owners included R. W. Raymond and A. F. Childs, both of New York, and Calvin Hood, Edward Fenlon, and William E. Malaley, all of Kansas. The Day Land and Cattle Company in old Greer County was created to purchase and exploit Texas land warrants (Texas then claimed to own old Greer County). The second category of ranch organization was the

individually owned and operated ranch. Haney and Handy, Ikard and Harrold, L. Z. Eddleman, Jack Francis, and Dolph Pickelsimer all ran their cattle themselves or with a partner. With fewer capital resources their herds tended to be smaller, but they were responsible only to themselves, not to faraway stockholders.

Eastern and European capitalists invested heavily in the new industry. English and Scottish syndicates, such as the Cattle Ranch and Land Company and the Texas Land and Cattle Company in the Cherokee Outlet, owned some of the largest cattle companies. Scottish investors also owned the famous Prairie Cattle Company. It ran cattle in the Oklahoma Panhandle and was one of the largest such operations in the entire West. By 1882 Europeans had invested over $30,000,000 in ranching activites in the United States. The early 1880s was the period of greatest prosperity and ranchers and investors both accumulated great fortunes. The cattle industry paid average dividends of 25 percent per year. The range cattle industry ruled the Great Plains and at the heart of the Plains lay the Indian Territory, present-day Oklahoma. Four major cattle trails developed across the Territory; the Great Western, the Chisholm, the West Shawnee, and the East Shawnee Trails. The first two cut through the southwestern portion of the Territory.

At first cattlemen had no desire to permanently occupy any part of Oklahoma, which they viewed only as an obstacle to be overcome on the way to the railheads in Kansas. Traveling along the Great Western Trail a driver might tarry for a few days or even weeks and permit his cattle to rest and fatten themselves off the trail. But this was only for short periods and then the herd would move on. In fact, the Territory remained closed to white settlement, the last domain of the American Indian. Yet the open ranges, mild climate and availability of water made Oklahoma increasingly attractive to ranchers. It

seemed the perfect place to graze cattle. Its luscious grasses reached three to four feet high in some bottom lands. The area possessed both the very tall variety of grass called Big Blue Stem, and the two-foot high variety called Little Blue Stem. Most importantly, buffalo grass grew in great abundance. It was important because of its nutritiousness. Even when dried, buffalo grass was more nutritious for cattle than any other variety. By the mid-1870s the growing numbers of cattle had filled the available range land in Texas, Kansas, and elsewhere. Cattlemen were naturaly drawn to the vast empty lands of Oklahoma.

Even the United States government could not keep out the cattlemen. Gradually Washington began to lift some of its restrictions on settlement. The Interior Department consistently opposed this, particularly in regard to the leasing of Indian lands, but the War Department refused to allow the army to remove trespassing ranchers. An intragovernmental conflict resulted. Meanwhile, cattle poured into the Territory. Many tribes, eager to make a profit, willingly leased their lands to the cattlemen. With or without Indian consent, ranchers rapidly occupied the land.

Of all cattle, the Texas longhorn was most adaptable to the dry and rugged terrain of western Oklahoma. These creatures were remarkably hardy and well able to care for themselves. Their horns made ideal weapons with which to fend off the attacks of coyotes and other predators. They could go for long periods with little water. They were very well suited for the rough life on the trail.

The social structure on the early ranches was relatively simple, reflecting the essentially egalitarian society that existed in frontier areas such as Oklahoma. The ranch owner occupied the top position on the social scale. Cowboys were usually very loyal to their employers, most of whom had reputations for honesty and trustworthiness. Yet many cowboys resented the appearance of the large cattle companies with their distant and unseen owners.

Furthermore, as the wealth of individual owners increased over time the social gap between the rancher and his men widened, finally destroying the once democratic relationship betwen them. The foreman was immediately below the owner in authority and status. He supervised the day-to-day operations of the ranch. When driving the cattle to market he might also act as trail boss and ride at the head of the herd, choosing the best route for the cattle. Among the cowboys themselves social differences were not important; indeed, a feeling of brotherhood seemed to exist that provided a sense of equality and shared experience. Cowboys were usually very young men, in their late teens and twenties. Their work was rough and most drifted on to other occupations after ten or fifteen years in the saddle. Because women were few on the plains, cowboys were usually single men. A cowboy did not marry unless he acquired his own ranch or left the cattle industry.

Ranch work was a lonely business with few opportunities for socializing. This was particularly true during the winter months on the open range. Then the cowboys had little to occupy them because they allowed their cattle to roam freely and fend for themselves during that period. The busiest time in the life of ranch, before or after settlement, was during roundups. During the winter months storms often caused stampedes with the result that the cattle from a number of different outfits became thoroughly mixed together. The main purpose of the spring roundup was to separate these herds. This usually began on the ranges in northeastern New Mexico and moved eastward into Oklahoma. Twenty to twenty-five cowboys in an area would assemble and begin to "work the country," that is, they rounded up all the cattle on every range and each individual outfit cut out the cattle belonging to itself. All the ranches involved cooperated closely with one another. A second purpose of the spring roundup was to transfer the cattle to their southern ranges and brand the calves. Cattle were gathered for shipment to

market and new calves branded during the annual fall roundup. Calves always received their mother's brand. Those calves born during the summer months, between roundups, were the prime targets for rustlers because they carried no brand. Ranchers divided unbranded cattle equally among themselves after each roundup.

In the early days of the range cattle industry, ranchers allowed their herds to graze freely on the plains. There was, after all no one out there to stop them. As more and more settlers appeared on the range, the need for fences became great. The purpose was twofold; to keep one's own livestock at home and to keep out the livestock of others. Wood was too scarce on the nearly treeless plains to make all-wooden fences economically practicable. An alternative had to be found. Some people used rails, others hedgerows. The term "nesters" was derived from the time when fences were built of brush. None of these materials met the needs of Oklahoma ranchers.

Ranchers across the western United States soon discovered a more successful alternative. Michael Kelly of New York patented the first successful barbed wire in 1868. During the period of the fencing of the West (1868-1900) a large number of patents were made. Two classes of barbed wire soon became evident. The first, called "vicious," badly cut cattle that walked into it. The second was "obvious," meaning the barbs were large enough to be easily seen and avoided by the cattle. After a period of time cattle became accustomed to barbed wire and wary of it so that the wire used could safely be of a smaller type. Two of the very earliest types, the 2-point Baker and the 2-Point Glidden, remain most popular to this day.

Barbed wire was first used to build great drift fences, designed to keep cattle from wandering too far from their normal range. One such fence in Dewey County stretched for several miles west of present Vici, about three-quarters of a

mile north of U.S. Highway 60. Unfortunately, drift fences caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of cattle by blocking their flight from the blizzards of the 1880s. They were eventually replaced by fenced pastures with windmills. By the early 1880s, barbed wire criss-crossed the Great Plains.

The windmill was essential for the ranching industry on the Great Plains. It pumped water from the ground for the use of both animals and humans. Six and a half million windmills were sold between 1880 and 1935. The advent of rural electrical power after 1935 sharply curtailed their use. The American Company of Chicago produced 80 percent of the world's supply of windmills. Historians contend that barbed wire and windmills together ended the great cattle drives by containing the herds within a limited area and assuring them of water in their own pastures.

Even after the construction of vast barbed wire fences, Oklahoma cattlemen still faced the problem of determining the ownership of stray cattle. The practice of branding solved the problem. Walter Prescott Webb states that cattle could be "identified by their brands just as automobiles are today identified by number plates." Almost any type of symbol could be used as a brand, though letters of the alphabet were most common. These may be plain, walking, tilting, flying, running, dragging, lazy, or crazy, depending on their position. Lines are also frequently used. A short line is called a bar, a longer line a rail, and a diagonal line a slash. Whole, half, or double diamonds often appear. The letter "O" is usually called a circle. When a half or quarter circle is placed at the top of a letter, that letter is called swinging; when placed at the bottom it is called rocking. Many cattlemen preferred very unique or complex brands because they were more difficult for rustlers to alter. Brands are still read from top to bottom or from left to right. Each rancher branded his cattle on a carefully specified location, though that could be on either the left or right side, on the shoulder, the

flank, or the hip. A rancher could legally place his brand on any portion of the cow, but most followed custom and branded on the left hip. Cattle also received other identifying marks. Using a knife or clippers, cowboys cut the cattle's ears in a distinctive manner. This made identification easier, especially when a cow's hair grew so as to cover the brand. Somewhat less common were wattles, a large piece of skin cut fom the jaw or neck so as to leave it hanging loose. A dewlap was similar, only the cut was made on the breast or brisket.

Pre-settlement Ranches in Southwestern Oklahoma:

It would now be useful to examine some of the factors and problems that confronted the range cattle industry in southwestern Oklahoma. Most of the area under consideration belonged by treaty to various tribes of Plains Indians. The Cheyenne and Arapaho Reservation included the present counties of Blaine, Dewey, Custer, Washita, Roger Mills, southern Ellis, and northern Beckham. The Wichitas and Caddoes resided in what is now northern Caddo County. Within the Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache Reservation lay Kiowa, southern Caddo, Comanche, Tillman, and Cotton Counties. "Old Greer County," in the far southwestern corner of Oklahoma, contained modern Jackson, Harmon, Greer, and southern Beckham Counties. This was the cultural and geographic situation in 1866 when the great cattle drives began.

At the end of the Civil War, the only permanent occupants of this region were the once ferocious Plains Indians. The slaughter of the great buffalo herds, their staple source of food and other necessities, brought an end to their traditional nomadic way of life and the Federal Government forced them onto reservations. Washington paternalistically supervised the activities of these tribes, most of which utterly refused to adopt an agrarian lifestyle. The Cheyennes, Arapahos, Kiowas, and Comanches were the most difficult to handle. The government placed substantial army units at Fort Reno in the Cheyenne and

Arapaho Reservation. These tribes were a source of great trouble and frustration to early cattlemen.

The Plains Indians remained potentially dangerous, in spite of their confinement to reservations. Fortunately, there were only 20,000 of them in all of western Oklahoma, an area the size of Ohio. Old Greer County was completely empty of inhabitants. The United States Government, through the Department of the Interior, was hostile to the cattlemen and would not allow them to lease Indian lands for pasture.

A food shortage finally tipped the balance in favor of the cattlemen. With the passing of the buffalo, the tribes had come to depend upon the government for food. When the Interior Department cut the beef ration, the Indian agents looked about for another source of meat for their hungry and undisciplined warriors. Several agencies looked to the cattlemen for help. In return for beef, the ranchers could lease grazing land. The Cheyenne and Arapaho Reservation provides the best example. Their Agent, John D. Miles, convinced his Indians to rent almost their entire reservation to a syndicate of seven cattlemen for ten years at two cents an acre per year. Three million of the 4,300,00 acres passed out of Indian control at a price of only $62,000 a year.

Miles' action brought the issue of leasing Indian lands to national attention. The Secretary of the Interior eventually decided not to recognize such agreements while at the same time allowing the cattlemen to remain on their leases and preventing those not party to the lease from grazing on reservation lands. The Secretary also reserved the right to order all ranchers off the reservation at any time. This decision caused much trouble. As the Oklahoma historian Edward Everett Dale noted ("The Ranchmen in Oklahoma," in Readings in Oklahoma History):

> Such a policy was little short of absurd. It invited ranchmen to enter the Indian Territory and intrigue with savage tribesmen. It placed a premium upon bribery and corruption and made of every agency employee a person to be flattered, cajoled, and, if possible, bribed by men with large interests at stake. Also, it could not be enforced. Men who had no agreements approved by the agent, but who were friendly with certain small bands of Indians, refused to remove, and their Indian friends, who were receiving more money from these ranchmen than their share of the lease money would amount to, refused to ratify the agreement made by their chiefs, and cut the fences and killed the cattle of the "approved lessees." The latter appealed to the agent for protection, demanding that men without leases be excluded; but the War Department, when called upon for troops, refused to furnish them on the ground that leases had not been approved by the Department of the Interior.

The situation on the reservation rapidly deteriorated. Cattlemen encouraged dissident Indian factions to molest rival herds. Other Indian groups began to demand tribute from ranchers. Finally, in 1885, President Grover Cleveland issued a proclamation ordering all cattle out of the reservation within a period of forty days. Though this affected at least 210,000 head, all had been removed by December. This action had tremendous repercussions. The reservation cattle added to the already over-crowded ranges of the Great Plains region and when the bitter winter of 1885-1886 hit, tens of thousands of cattle froze or starved to death. Hundreds of cattlemen went broke, investors in both Europe and America lost their money, and the cattle industry entered a long period of decline.

A similar situation prevailed on the other two reservations. On the Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache Reservation, the Kiowas consistently refused to accept their share of the lease money and opposed the concept of leasing tribal lands. The government held their money in trust for them for many years. The Wichitas asked only to be left in peace and made no trouble for the cattlemen.

The most significant outfit in southwestern Oklahoma during this period was the Cheyenne and Arapaho Cattle Company (usually called the "C. and A."). Organized by Texas cattlemen in 1878, the company's stockholders included

investors from New York City and Kansas. For $20,000 the C. and A. leased over one million acres of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Reservation, making it the largest ranching operation in Okahoma history. The exact boundaries of the C. and A. are uncertain, but Melvin Harrel, in the Chronicles of Oklahoma, has estimated their location. The western boundary was the Texas state line. The northern boundary was probably the southern limits of the Cherokee Outlet. The Washita River marked the C. and A.'s southern border. The eastern line was probably the Great Western Cattle Trail. The spread was so enormous that three headquarters were constructed. The main one lay at the mouth of Quartermaster Creek and the Washita River, about six miles northeast of present Hammon (on the present Lee and Hodge Ranch). The number of cowboys employed is unknown, although at the time the C. and A. folded in 1885 it supported approximately forty cowboys. At roundup time help from neighboring ranches would have greatly augmented this relatively small number.

The C. and A. Ranch was not a successful enterprise. By 1884 it had lost at least $100,000. The Interior Department, of course, did not recognize the legality of the C. and A. lease and rival cattlemen often would not recognize the company's boundaries. A rumor spread that stockholder Edward Fenlon of Leavenworth, Kansas, had bribed Agent Miles to approve the company's lease. Though not true, the story may have contributed to President Cleveland's decision to close the reservation. After the evacuation of its cattle from the reservation the Cheyenne and Arapaho Cattle Company ceased to exist.

Several cattlemen stayed in the Cheyenne and Arapaho Reservation after 1885, most because they held beef contracts with the Indian agencies. A number of enterprising Texans also managed to secure grazing land from the Federal

Government in western Oklahoma. One such was L. C. Smith of Archer City who, with Jim Patterson, founded the famous Bar X Ranch northwest of present Leedey.

The history of old Greer County is unique, since it was claimed by both Texas and Oklahoma Territory. Under the Adams-Onis Treaty of 1819, the Red River became the boundary between the United States and Spain's colonial possessions. When it became an independent nation, the Republic of Texas chose to interpret the treaty to mean the North Fork of the Red River. Not until March 16, 1896 did the United States Supreme Court decide against the Texans and award old Greer County to Oklahoma. This forced Texans living in the county to file claims on their own land in order to satisfy federal homestead laws. No run was ever held in old Greer County and the region filled with settlers gradually.

During the 1880s several cattlemen ran their herds in old Greer County. The area seemed ideal for range cattle operations. It was virtually empty of Indians and because the region was in dispute no claims could be filed on the land. Jim Haney and Ed Handy ranged their several thousand cattle in the far western end of the county, so as to be able to slip into Texas if the federal authorities should object to their presence. Mat Murphy, with 3,000 head, and John Powers, with 6,000 head, ranged with Haney and Handy. They all headquartered at Jaybuckle Springs north of Reed. "Cap" Ikard and Eph Harrold brought between 60,000 to 70,000 head into old Greer County, perhaps as early as October 1880. Their range covered fully half of old Greer County. Their headquarters lay near Granite (Granite now sits at the base of Headquarter Mountain, which derives its name from the fact that Ikard and Harrold headquartered nearby). Ikard and Harrold received $22.00 per head when they sold their cattle to the Francklyn Land and Cattle Company in 1885. Their herd was so huge that it took an entire year to round up all the cattle. The T. E. outfit, owned

by Pumphrey and Olive, also headquartered southeast of Granite.

In 1884 the Day Land and Cattle Company purchased the Haney and Handy cattle. Known as the "H-Bar-Y" Ranch, this group, led by "Doc" Day, held Texas warrants for 203,000 acres in 1885. Most of these they acquired through the purchase of veterans' certificates awarded by the State of Texas in 1881. Unfortunately, the Texas Supreme Court ruled in 1887 that these land grants did not apply to old Greer County which the State Legislature had previously reserved for education purposes and payment of the state's debt. The Day Company thereafter began to close out, a process that took until 1894.

The range-cattle industry in Oklahoma failed for a number or reasons. In 1885 President Grover Cleveland ordered all cattlemen and their herds out of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Reservation. Thus 210,000 head poured onto ranges north of Oklahoma. This left those ranges overstocked; too many cattle competed for limited supplies of grass. The cattle began to exhaust their food supply about the time that the bitterly cold winter of 1886-1887 struck the Great Plains. From Oklahoma north into Canada cattle starved or froze in the thousands in terrible blizzards. Every rancher in the region lost at least 50% of his herds; some lost up 90%. This bankrupted hundreds of cattlemen. Because most were in debt to stockholders, banks, or other individuals, cattlemen dumped their surviving cattle on the market. These creatures were sickly and half starved; they produced an inferior quality meat that flooded the market and forced the price of beef to collapse. Cattlemen again lost millions of dollars. The range cattle industry never recovered from the disaster. When settlers arrived, in Oklahoma as elsewhere, they occupied and then cultivated the open range, making necessary a fundamental change in the nature of ranching; the substitution of closed pastures for the open range. Thus homesteaders killed an already stricken industry. Although settlers were clearly the major catalyst for such a change, this

substitution would probably have been made anyway. Eastern consumers no longer demanded greater and greater quantities of beef; instead, they wanted a better quality beef. Open range ranching left the cattle too exposed to the elements to produce quality beef and the longhorn, so admirably suited to trail life, provided meat that was tough and unappetizing. High grade registered cattle could produce much better meat, but required that more care and attention be given to individual cows, something that was possible only in closed and closely regulated pastures. The range cattle industry seems to have been doomed from every side.

Prior to 1906, Jefferson, Stephens, and Grady counties formed the western end of the Chickasaw Nation. The Chickasaws, one of the Five Civilized Tribes, originally inhabited western Tennessee, northwestern Mississippi and northeastern Alabama. During the early nineteenth century they ceded most of their land to the United States Government. By 1830 they were limited to northwestern Mississippi. White settlers strongly favored removal of all eastern tribes to lands west of the Mississippi River. At the urging of President Andrew Jackson, whose lack of sympathy for any Indian tribe was notorious, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act of 1830. It gave Jackson the power to negotiate the removal of all Indians from the states and territories and provided for their financial compensation and re-settlement in unorganized western lands. In 1832 the Chickasaw tribe signed the Pontotoc Treaty. It allowed the Federal Government to sell the tribal lands; the proceeds were to go to the tribe.

The Government settled the approximately 6,000 Chickasaws in present south central Oklahoma and only after much difficulty did they re-establish their social and political structures. The land on which they settled originally belonged by treaty to the Choctaw Nation, but in 1855 the Chickasaws and Choctaws negotiated a treaty with the United States government that recognized a separate Chickasaw Nation, situated between the Choctaws in the east and the Plains

Indians to the west. In 1856 the Chickasaws adopted their own consitution and established their new capital at Tishomingo. The Chickasaws sided with the Confederacy during the Civil War. After the War the tribe gained a reputation as successful farmers. Ranching also became an important economic activity. Several members of the tribe recognized that great profits might be made from cattle and so developed their own herds and drove them along the Chisholm Trail to the Kansas shipping points. Texans also leased grazing land from the Chickasaws as they had from the Plains tribes.

On May 2, 1890 the United States Congress passed the Organic Act that divided the Indian Territory into two parts; the Indian Territory in the east, and the Oklahoma Territory in the west. All of southwestern Oklahoma became part of the latter, with the exception of eastern Grady, Stephens, and Jefferson counties which Congress included in the Indian Territory. Oklahoma Territory originally included the Unassigned Lands, the Cherokee Outlet, and the Panhandle, or "No Man's Land." The Indian reservations in the southwest joined Oklahoma Territory when Congress allowed white settlement to begin in each. This Territory, with its capital at Guthrie, operated for seventeen years. In 1907 Congress consolidated the Oklahoma and Indian Territories to create the present state of Oklahoma.

Post-settlement Ranches in Southwestern Oklahoma:

President Cleveland's 1885 proclamation marked the turning point in the history of Oklahoma ranching. The nature of the occupation changed substantially after settlement, as may be seen in a comparison of the dominant characteristics of the ranching industry before and then after settlement. Huge cattle syndicates and companies characterized the early period of the 1870s. Both the Bar X Cattle Company and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Cattle Company were owned by investors, most of whom never saw Oklahoma. Management of the ranch was

usually entrusted to hired foremen. Ranches were never larger than in the 1880s. At its most extensive the Bar X held about 65,000 acres with about 8,000 head of cattle. Most of these early ranches grew to great size by either renting land (such as from the Indians), or from buying out earlier and smaller outfits that did not survive. This is ironic as most of the great ranches were themselves later divided into small farms. Finally, herds grazed the open range, unencumbered by boundary lines and fences.

Post settlement ranches exhibited quite different sets of characteristics. After 1885, in southwestern Oklahoma, small ranches operated by individuals became more common. The influx of settlers decreased the size of pastures and these became bounded by barbed wire. In 1900, for example, the Bar X included no more than 320 acres. The end of the open range may actually have helped the cattle industry because greater attention could then be given to individual cows, allowing the breeding of high grade registered cattle.

Ranching did continue in southwestern Oklahoma after 1885. Small ranchers, in particular, found no difficulty in reaching agreement with local Indians, despite the Government's official policy. Many remained after the run of April 19, 1892, filing claims on their land for the first time. Tnis was more difficult on the Wichita and Caddo Reservation and the Comanche, Kiowa and Apache Reservation, which were opened by the more uncertain method of lottery in 1901 (the Big Pasture, a 480,000 acre area in western Cotton and eastern Tillman counties, was opened by the acceptance of sealed bids in 1906, the last portion of Oklahoma to be made available for settlement). Settlement did not occur in much of the western portion of the area until after 1900 and large-scale ranching survived there for a somewhat longer period than elsewhere. Smaller ranches continued to exist, though the region became predominantly agricultural. Those areas unsuited for agriculture in any form, such as the canyon country in

western Blaine County, fell into the hands of cattle ranchers. Many Indian allotments were in these areas and several ranchers increased their holdings by first leasing (and later purchasing) these allotments. The Cronkhite Ranch in Blaine County and the Chain Ranch in Dewey County are examples.

The railroads followed quickly in the wake of the homesteaders, and along the new rail lines towns grew up. Within almost every town could be found grain elevators, mills, stores, and banks. Almost every rancher was then within easy riding distance of a town and within a few days of a railroad. This made the long cattle drives unnecessary. Instead of trailing their herds to the railheads in Kansas, cattlemen simply drove them to the nearest town on a rail line. Before 1900, for example, the Bar X Ranch drove its cattle to Abilene or Dodge City, an operation that required much of the summer. Then the railroad reached Woodward, forty miles distant and later Leedey, fifteen miles away. Cattle drives to Woodward lasted only four days and those to Leedey less than two (most herds moved at a rate of ten to twelve miles per day). Thus the railroad saved the rancher much time, spared the cattle the substantial weight loss that always occurred during long periods on the trail, and therefore brought greater profits to the rancher. Much of his money the rancher spent in town, benefitting the entire community. After a good year or two the rancher might decide to replace his "soddy" or his log cabin with a two or three room frame house; the lumber and labor for which he might buy in town. Once again the community benefitted from the rancher's success.

Families did not accompany the early cattlemen to Oklahoma. Ranch life in the 1870s and 1880s was too risky and transient for a rancher to bring his family with him. As white settlement spread in the 1890s, cattlemen finally began to bring their wives and children into the Territory. The family was an important addition to a ranch. A man's wife, in particular, contributed much to the success

of his ranch. She assumed responsibility for domestic life, such as washing and ironing clothes, cooking for and feeding both her own family and the hired hands, and tending the vegetable garden. She might also actively participate in business, keeping the ranch records or balancing the books. Psychologically the family's presence helped ease the lonliness of rural life and contributed to the development of a strong cultural and social life. George W. Carr of Ellis County turned his home into a community center by hosting frequent dances, picnics, and other gatherings. L. Z. Eddleman brought a piano to the Cross S Ranch south of Olustee for his wife's enjoyment. At the Bar X Ranch west of Leedey, Jim Patterson's bride completely remodeled their log home, plastering the interior walls and hanging curtains in the windows. Children on all ranches provided labor that was usually reliable and always free.

Many large ranches did not accept their fate passively. Indeed, the conflict between farmers and ranchers is now an important part of the popular folklore of early Oklahoma history. The Bar X again provides an excellent example. This ranch prospered even after the area was opened to settlement in 1892. The ranch's cowboys seem to have done everything possible to keep settlers away but with little success. In his article on the ranch in the Chronicles of Oklahoma, Nat A. Taylor notes that the "nesters," as settlers were called, tended to locate along springs, creeks or watering holes which naturally hampered ranching operations. Conflict developed between the cattlemen and the settlers and arson, murder, and cattle stealing became common events as each tried to drive the other off the land. As long as "free grass" (open range) was legal the ranchers could survive. This required the farmers to fence off their crops or risk having them eaten by the freely roaming cattle. Few could afford to do this and many farmers failed after a few years. After the homesteaders held a clear majority in the area they forced passage of "herd laws" which held ranchers liable for any damage done to farmers'

crops by the ranchers' cattle. This brought an end to the free range era and sealed the fate of most large ranches in the Oklahoma Territory.

Many large ranches in western Oklahoma continued to operate until settlement occurred. Then, in order to maintain their hold on the land, the ranchers required their hands to stake their own claims and even furnished them with building material for cabins. This permitted the cattlemen to control enough land to run cattle until they were able to sell out. Many smaller herds started when ranchers paid wages by giving cattle to their cowboys (the average wage was $120 per month). Thus, when the great ranches collapsed, the former cowhands often began ranching on a smaller scale. Frequently, their former employers also loaned them money or sold them land or the old ranch buildings. Even these smaller ranches were subdivided as conditions became increasingly unfavorable for the industry. Again, farming became the most important economic activity and farmers generally regarded cattle raising as subsidiary to agriculture. It has also been estimated that in western Oklahoma, 1,600 acres were needed to support 100 cows. This required a much larger economic unit than the 160 acre homestead. Infact, 160 acres was barely enough to support a farmer and his family. Many farmers, especially during the "Dust Bowl" days of the 1930s, failed to survive and sold their small holdings to larger farms or even ranches.

After white settlement became an established fact, Oklahoma ranchers accepted the inevitable and eventually became integrated into nearby communites. Some ranchers even became the focus for the social/cultural life of their areas. Charley Beavers and Will Edwards constructed a small schoolhouse for the young children who lived in their vicinity and also did much to encourage the development of a sense of community among their rural neighbors near Addington. Other ranchers preferred to increase their economic standing through community involvement. Charles B. Campbell, founder of the 7 B.C. Ranch,

helped organize and manage Grady County's first bank. The Cronkhite family of Blaine County established a successful cement plant near deposits of very pure gypsum on their ranch. Some ranchers found success in public service. E. J. Murphy, who ranched west of Clinton, served in the Territorial Legislature as senator and on the Board of Regents of Oklahoma A. and M. College (now Oklahoma State University). Dave Jester established a post office on his ranch and served as postmaster. The ranching environment provided the background for a number of prominent Oklahomans, such as Edward Everett Dale, for many years the dean of Oklahoma historians, and Augusta Metcalfe, an artist whose paintings have been nationally recognized. Ranches also gave their names to several places in Oklahoma. In Harmon County the small community of Teacross (no longer in existence) derived its name from the T-Cross Ranch. Jester, Oklahoma, took its name from its founder, rancher Dave Jester. Granite in Greer County lies today at the base of Headquarter Mountain, reflecting the fact that Ikard and Harrold headquartered on the spot. Clearly the ranching industry remained closely tied to the development of southwestern Oklahoma even after the appearance of homesteaders.

By the time white settlement took place in the rest of western Oklahoma, the Chickasaw Nation realized that its days were numbered. Indeed, white settlers had been occupying Chickasaw land since the end of the Civil War. In 1893 40,000 non-Indians lived in the Chickasaw Nation in spite of an annual tax. These whites heavily outnumbered the Chickasaws and caused tremendous social and economic difficulties. In particular the whites disregarded Chickasaw national law and behaved as if the land belonged to themselves and not to the tribe. The Chickasaws also encountered official hostility in the form of Federal demands that Oklahoma Indians formally organize a common territorial government at the expense of tribal sovereignty. Most tribes strongly opposed

this excuse for further white exploitation of their land. In the 1880s the Government adopted the assimilation program. The Indians, it was argued, would benefit from integration into mainstream American society, but this required rejection of communal land ownership in favor of placing individual Indian on their own homesteads. To achieve this goal, Congress created the Dawes Commission in 1894 and empowered it to negotiate with Oklahoma tribes for the dissolution of tribal governments and the individual allotment of Indian land. Only with great reluctance did the Chickasaws accept this arrangement. Formal tribal liquidation took place in 1906, the year before Oklahoma statehood. The Chickasaws preserved their group identify during the Twentieth Century, perhaps because an informal tribal government continued to function.

The ranching era in southwestern Oklahoma history was relatively brief; 1875-1895 are the accepted dates. From 1895 to 1907 settlers flooded the region and divided the land into small farms. After the farmer came the railroads and then the oilmen. It seemed that the rancher had been squeezed out by more powerful economic interests. Those ranches that did survive and prosper in the new state owed much of their success to diversification into agriculture. Such outfits as the Cross S, Bar X, or Chain Ranch began to cultivate a variety of crops, such as wheat, alfalfa, or cotton. The cattle consumed some of the crops, the rest was sold on the market. Not until mechanization in agriculture became common did Oklahoma again become a cattle country. When machines replaced horses and mules the feed once used for beasts of burden could be more profitably devoted to cattle. As a result of the New Deal, the Federal Government began providing capital for development (e.g. the purchasing of land and cattle).

Conclusion:

Preparation of this study has revealed significant gaps in available data. Exact boundaries of specific ranches are very difficult to determine. This is especially true for the very early ranches, those dating from the period of the open range. Even delineation of post-settlement ranch boundaries requires considerable research in county courthouses and abstract offices. Of course, if the ranch still exists the researcher can simply ask the present owner for such information. A large number of books have been published dealing with ranching in the United States in general and Oklahoma in particular. Few of these provide detailed information on specific ranches. County histories provide information concerning individual ranchers and their families, but few deal with the operation of their ranches, that is, they do not mention even such basic factors as number of cattle, size, location, etc.

These gaps can and should be filled. Extensive field work may be necessary to do so, especially in court houses and through oral history. The Western History Collection at the University of Oklahoma in Norman and the Oklahoma Historical Society in Oklahoma City both contain valuable resources such as newspaper files or the Indian-Pioneer Papers. A massive amount of information on Oklahoma's ranches undoubtedly exists. The next step is to locate and fully analyze that data.

It is important that this be done because the cattle industry has played a significant role in the historical development of Oklahoma. The ranchers who entered Oklahoma in the 1870s and 1880s were the first white men to prosper economically in the region. The knowledge they spread about Oklahoma proved very attractive to potential settlers and the "boomer" movement was born. Had the cattlemen not entered the area first, white settlement, and later statehood, would probably not have occurred until ten or even twenty years later than they did. The ranching industry also created an image of Oklahoma that has endured in

the popular mind to this day. To millions, Oklahoma is, to borrow Edward Everett Dale's phrase, "cow country," a land of cowboys. Even the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical "Oklahoma," from which the state song is derived, reflects the almost legendary "farmer-cowman" feud. Finally, because of their wealth, prestige, and political power, exercised through such agencies as the Cattlemen's Association, Oklahoma's ranchers continue to exert great influence on the development of the state. Clearly, the continued study of Oklahoma's cattle industry is of great significance in understanding our state.

Individual Ranches:

The following is a list of the major ranches in southwestern Oklahoma containing basic data on each ranch. The amount of information available varies from ranch to ranch, but included herein are such essential facts as location, dates, size, founder, existing resources, and a very brief history of each. In preparing this list, the writers followed Walter Prescott Webb's definition of a ranch with the qualification that the outfit run at least one hundred head of cattle or, if the size of the herd is not known, its range be large enough to support that number (i.e. a minimum of 1,600 acres). A number of criteria were used in selecting ranches for inclusion: physical size, number of head of cattle, net income, prominence outside local area, owner (importance of he/she), number of years in operation (or still in operation), and cultural/economic/political contributions of the individual ranch to the state or nation.

## PRE-SETTLEMENT RANCHES

### Bar X Ranch

Location: Northeastern Roger Mills County
(vicinity of Leedy)
Legal description: Sec 17 (SW-1/4), T17N, R21W.

Dates: 1890 to present (most prominent in 1890s)

Size: 65,000 acres, 8,000 head in 1890s.
3,000 acres, 500-800 head in 1983.

Founder: L. C. Smith and Jim Patterson.

Existing resources: Log house built in 1892.
Condition of resources: deteriorated

History: This famous old ranch originally belonged to the Bar X Company of Young County, Texas. After settlement, stockholder L. C. Smith sold the ranch to a man named Watkins. Jim Patterson, one of the original trail drivers, bought out Watkins after he filed a claim on a quarter section of land south of Flying V Creek. In 1900 Patterson sold the Bar X to Walter B. Massey who sold the property to George Harrel shortly after World War I. The ranch remains in the Harrel family to this day. The Bar X is one of the oldest continually operating ranches in southwestern Oklahoma.

## Cross S. Ranch

Location: Southwestern Jackson County (vicinity of Olustee)
Legal description: Sec. 7 (NE-1/4, SW-1/4), T1S, R21W.

Dates: 1881-1904 (most prominent, 1881-1886).

Size: 21 square miles; 4,000 head of cattle.

Founder: L. Z. Eddleman.

Existing resources: Two-story stone ranch house built in 1892.
Condition of resources: fair

History: Eddleman leased much of the land which made up the ranch. The Cross S raised both longhorn and shorthorn cattle. The ranch also introduced barbed wire to the region. After 1890 Eddleman concentrated on breeding horses and raising crops.

## C. and A. Cattle Ranch

Location: Northwestern Custer County (vicinity of Hammon)
Legal description: Sec. 15 (SE-1/4, SW-1/4), T14N, R20W.

Dates: 1882-1885

Size: 3,000,000 acres; 210,000 head of cattle.

Founder: Cheyenne and Arapaho Cattle Company.

Existing resources: Site only. Site is listed on National Register of Historic Places.
Condition of resources: good

History: This was the largest ranching operation in Oklahoma history. The company leased land from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. It was not a successful enterprise and by 1884 had lost $100,000. As a result of it activities, President Cleveland closed the reservation to all cattlemen in 1885.

## Francis Ranch

Location: Northern Harmon County (vicinity of Vinson)
Legal description: Sec. 9 (SW-1/4), T5N, R25W.

Dates: 1889 to present

Size: 3,240 acres; 300 head of cattle

Founder: John Henry "Jack" Francis

Existing resources: Frame ranch house built in 1910
Condition of resources: good

History: This ranch is still operated by Francis' descendants. In addition to ranching, Francis cultivated wheat, cotton, and alfalfa.

## Haney-Handy-Powers-Murphy Ranch

Location: Western Greer County (vicinity of Jester)
Legal description: Sec. 26 (SE-1/4), T6N, R24W

Dates: 1880-1884

Size: Unknown--open range; 15,000-20,000 head of cattle

Founder: Jim Haney, Ed Handy, John Powers, and Mat Murphy

Existing resources: Site only

History: Jim Haney and Ed Handy ranged their several thousand head in the far western end of Old Greer County, then claimed by both Texas and Oklahoma Territory, so as to be able to slip into Texas if the federal authorities should object to their presence. Mat Murphy, with 3,000 head, and John Powers, with 6,000 head, ranged with Haney and Handy. They all headquartered at Jaybuckle Springs.

## Hughes Ranch

Location: Eastern Harmon County (vicinity of Gould)
Legal description: Sec. 27 (NW-1/4, NW-1/4, SE-1/4), T3N, R24W.

Dates: 1888-1913

Founder: Ex Hughes

Existing resources: Site only

History: Hughes kept a herd of registered Herefords; he also raised horses and hogs. He built a large, two-story white frame house (demolished in 1979).

## Ikard and Harold Ranch

Location: Eastern Greer County (vicinity of Granite)
Legal description: Sec 23 (SE-1/4, SE-1/4), T6N, R21W.

Dates: 1880-1885

Size: Unknown--open range; 60,000-70,000 head of cattle.

Founder: Ikard and Harrold

Existing resources: Site only

History: "Cap" Ikard and Eph Harrold brought their herd into Old Greer County in 1880 or 1881. Their range covered about half of present Greer County. They located their headquarters near present Granite.

## Left Hand Ranch

Location: Eastern Blaine County (vicinity of Greenfield)
Legal description: Sec. 32 (SW-1/4, SE-1/4), T15N, R10W.

Dates: 1860s to 1911

Size: Unknown

Founder: Left Hand

Existing resources: Two-story frame house
Condition of resources: deteriorated

History: Left Hand was principal chief of the Arapahoes from 1889 until 1900. In 1890 the U.S. Government alloted him 160 acres on a site he had occupied for many years. He was noted for the high grade of cattle he raised. His house overlooks the gravesite of Jesse Chisholm. The house and the gravesite are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Pickelsimer Ranch

Location: Southwestern Custer County (vicinity of Hammon)
Legal description: Sec. 27 (NE-1/4, SW-1/4), T12N, R20W.

Dates: 1890-1940

Size: Several hundred head of cattle in 1890s

Founder: Dolph Pickelsimer

Existing resources: Headquarters site now covered by gas well

History: This ranch was not very successful and most years Pickelsimer barely managed to survive. Before settlement, the ranch's cattle ranged over a wide area; after settlement Pickelsimer was restricted to the immediate vicinity of his headquarters. The famous outlaw Red Buck (George Waightman) was killed outside of Pickelsimer's dugout in 1896.

## Price Ranch

Location: Grady County (vicinity of Addington)
Legal description: none available

Dates: 1886-?

Size: Unknown

Founder: J. S. Price

Existing resources: Unknown

History: J. S. Price passed the ranch on to his son Henry in 1917. Henry Price built the ranch into a very successful operation, raising a large herd of White Face Herefords.

## 7 B.C. Ranch

Location: Grady County (vicinity of Minco)
Legal description: none available

Dates: ca. 1880-ca. 1920

Size: Unknown

Founder: Charles B. Campbell

Existing resources: Unknown

History: Campbell was a member of a prominent Chickasaw family. He located his ranch, the 7 B.C., about one mile north of Minco. Campbell moved his family to Minco in 1890 where he became involved in financial activity and helped organize and manage Grady County's first bank. He gained international fame as the breeder of excellent polo horses.

## T-Cross Ranch

Location: North central Harmon County
Legal description: Sec. 11, T4N, R25W.

Dates: 1884-1893

Size: Unknown--open range; 3,000 head of cattle

Founder: Teniston and Kimberlin

Existing resources: Site only

History: The ranch's cattle ranged along the Salt Fork west of Fish Creek mouth, and south to the headwaters of Turkey Creek. Cowboys included Bill Hughes, John Gault, Bob Brown and John and Joe C. Thompson. The ranch gave its name to the town of Teacross, which no longer exists.

## Todd Ranch

Location: Blaine County (along Spring Creek)
Legal description: none available

Dates: ca. 1865-1900

Size: 27 sections

Founder: Austin H. Todd

Existing resources: Cemetery
Condition of resources: good

History: The ranch lay southeast of Okeene. Todd, a white man, married a Cheyenne woman and received permission to establish a ranch in the 1860s. He kept the United States army cavalry units stationed at Cantonment and Fort Reno supplied with fresh horses. After settlement the ranch lost money and the family sold it to farmers.

## POST-SETTLEMENT RANCHES

### Allee Ranch

Location: Southwestern Roger Mills County (vicinity of Hammon)
Legal description: Sec. 16 (SE-1/4), T13N, R21W.

Dates: 1892-present

Size: Unknown

Founder: A. F. "Frank" Allee

Existing resources: Frame house built before 1913
Condition of resources: good

History: Allee homesteaded on the site in 1892 and built a sizable ranch. In 1946 he granted his land to his son, B. F. "Bob" Allee who further increased the ranch's holdings. It is presently known as the A Cross (A+) Ranch.

### Chain Ranch

Location: Eastern Dewey County (vicinity of Seiling)
Legal description: Sec. 2 (SW-1/4, SE-1/4), T18N, R15W

Dates: 1894 to present

Size: 5,000 acres; 500 head of cattle.

Founder: Oscar Chain

Existing resources: Brick ranch house built in 1907
Condition of resources: excellent

History: Chain founded the ranch with land he acquired during the run. He leased much land from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians which the family did not purchase until after Oscar Chain's death in 1954. Leonard Chain, Oscar's son, devoted his time and energy to agriculture and the ranch became an important farming operation. Leonard and his son, Ralph Chain, continue to own and operate this old ranch.

## Corson-Metcalfe Ranch

Location: Northwestern Roger Mills County (vicinity of Crawford)
Legal description: Sec. 20 (NW-1/4), T15N, R25W

Dates: 1893 to present

Size: 300 head of cattle

Founder: Edward Corson

Existing resources: Several buildings dating from 1950s
Condition of resources: excellent

History: Edward and Mary Corson settled on the site in 1893, leasing much of their range from a cattle company, which charged seventeen cents per head per month. Though never large, the ranch raised a fine herd of Herefords. The Corson's daughter, Augusta Metcalfe, became a nationally known artist, though she continued to reside on the ranch until her death. The ranch is now in the hands of her son, Howard Metcalfe.

## Cronkhite Ranch

Location: Central Blaine County (vicinity of Watonga)
Legal description: Sec. 23 (SE-1/4, NW-1/4), T17N, R12W.

Dates: 1901 to present

Size: 10,000 acres

Founder: Will Cronkhite

Existing resources: Stone ranch house built in 1906
Condition of resources: good

History: The Cronkhite family came to Oklahoma Territory in 1897. Four years later Will Cronkhite settled on the family's "Upper Ranch," and leased the surrounding Indian allotments. The Cronkhites also established a successful cement mill near deposits of very pure gypsum on their property. In 1918 Will Cronkhite sold the ranch to his son, J. B., who passed it on to his son Kelly. The Cronkhite Ranch continues in operation today. The ranch house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Dunn Ranch

Location: North Central Roger Mills County (vicinity of Roll)
Legal Description: Sec. 26 (NE-1/4, SE-1/4), T16N, R24W.

Dates: 1893-1939

Size: 3,000 head of cattle

Founder: John W. Dunn, Sr.

Existing Resources: Frame ranch house built in 1917
Condition of resources: fair

History: Dunn began ranching in western Oklahoma in 1893 after a lengthy career as a trail driver. He ranched on the present headquarters site for eight years. In 1901 he became foreman of the Springer Ranch in New Mexico, a position he held until 1910, when he returned to Oklahoma and resumed ranching on his own land. At his death the ranch was divided between his son and daughter.

## E. B. Ranch

Location: Grady County (vicinity of Addington)
Legal description: Sec. 23 (SE-1/4, NW-1/4), T17N, R12W

Dates: 1897-1930

Size: 10,000 acres

Founder: Charles A. "Charley" Beavers and Will Edwards

Existing resources: unknown

History: This ranch was created by Beavers and Edwards with a purely oral agreement sealed by a handshake. No legal papers were ever signed, yet the ranch existed without serious disagreement between the owners for 33 years and became known throughout much of Oklahoma. Beavers and Edwards encouraged the development of a community spirit among rural people in their area. The ranch specialized in raising White Face Herefords.

## Jester Ranch

Location: Northwestern Greer County (site of Jester community)
Legal description: Sec. 12 (NW-1/4, SW-1/4), T6N, R24W.

Dates: 1890-1952

Size: 5 sections; 300 head of cattle

Founder: David Corey Jester

Existing resources: Original two-room frame ranch house
Condition of resources: deteriorated

History: D. C. "Uncle Dave" Jester founded the community of Jester in 1890 and became its first postmaster. He also farmed, ranched, and owned the local general store. He provided the lumber for the first bridge built across the Red River. Jester died in 1952. His great grandchildren now own the land.

## Murphy Ranch

Location: Southern Custer County (vicinity of Clinton)
Legal description: Sec. 21 (NW-1/4, NE-1/4), T12N, R18W

Dates: 1900-1929

Size: 4,500 acres; 1,000 head of cattle

Founder: E. J. Murphy

Existing resources: Three-story brick house built in 1910
Condition of resources: excellent

History: Murphy settled in Custer County in 1900 and served as a territorial senator before statehood. He raised stallions and sheep in addition to cattle (mainly Herefords). At Murphy's death in 1929, the ranch was divided between his children, Curtis "Goat" Murphy and Grace Murphy Hunt. The ranch, called Valley View Ranch, is now owned by Mrs. Helen Maley, Mrs. Hunt's daughter.

## Green Ussery Ranch

Location: Northwestern Dewey County (vicinity of Vici)
Legal description: Sec. 15 (NW-1/4, NW-1/4), T19N, R20W

Dates: 1896-1935

Size: 40 sections

Founder: John Green Ussery

Existing resources: Log cabin dating from 1890s (extensively remodeled and modernized).
Condition of resources: excellent

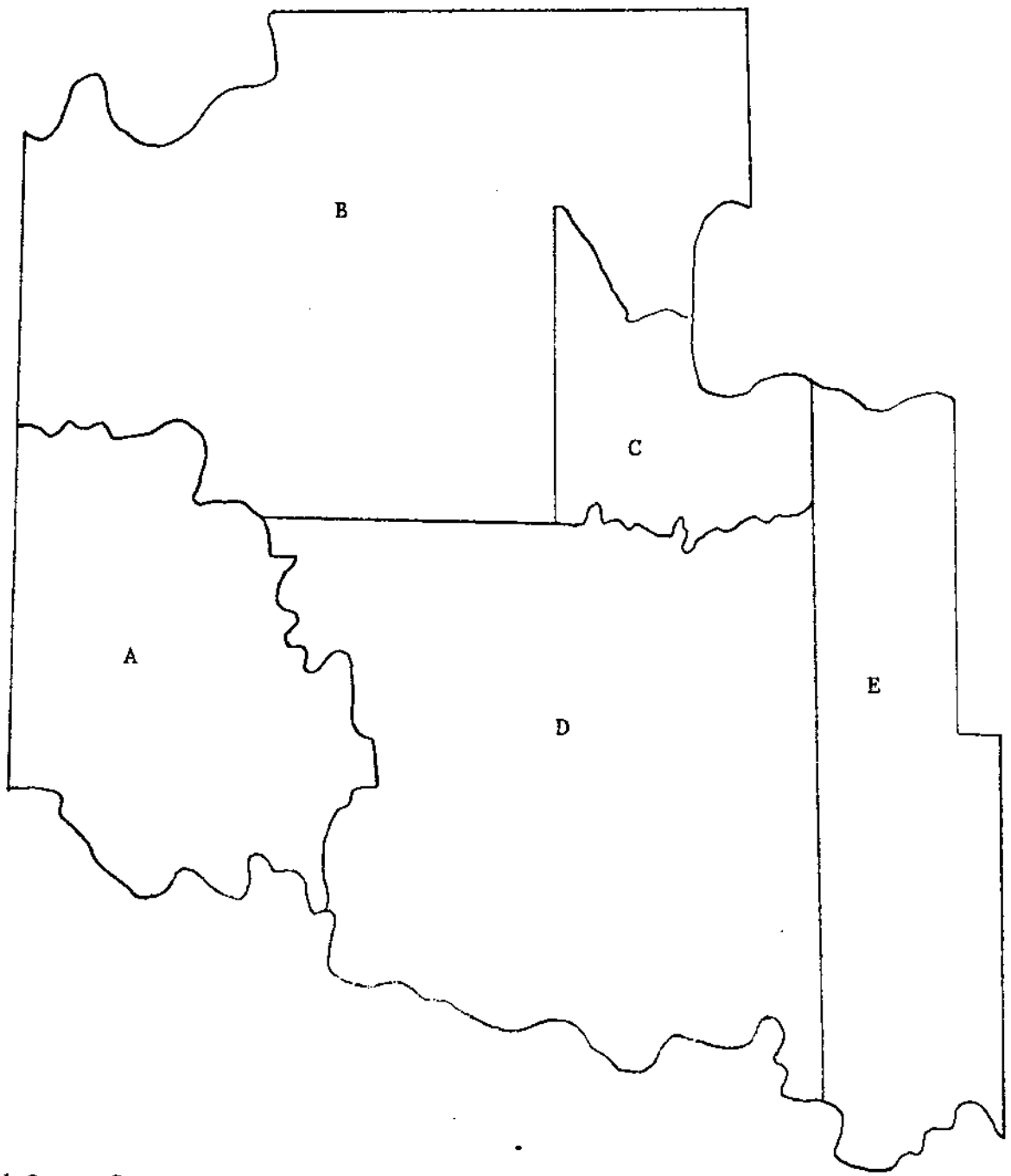
History: Green Ussery established the ranch in 1896. He bought or leased from homesteaders a total of 40 sections of land. His property ran along the line between Woodward and Dewey Counties and from there south and east. He located his headquarters on Trail Creek near Vici. Green Ussery died in 1935.

## RANCH CHARACTERISTICS

| | Pre-settlement | Post-settlement |
|---|---|---|
| OWNERSHIP | Large cattle companies; owners (investors) lived outside Oklahoma, seldom resided on the ranch. | Individual ranchers; owners lived in Oklahoma resided on the ranch. |
| MANAGEMENT | Owners usually hired foremen to operate the ranch; owners might never set foot in Oklahoma. | Owners normally operated the ranch themselves, though often with help of family or hired hands. |
| SIZE | Very large; thousands of acres in extent. | Small in size before 1930, several hundred acres constituted a large ranch. |
| LOCATION | Existed in all parts of Southwestern Oklahoma. | Most ranches established in far western and far eastern areas of Southwestern Oklahoma, though agriculture became the predominate economic activity. |
| RANGE | Open range; cattle grazed over wide areas without restriction. | Cattle restricted to grazing small pastures bounded by barbed wire fences. |
| CATTLE | Longhorn variety, hardy, and able to withstand exposure to the open range environment. | High grade registered cattle became common because smaller pastures enabled ranchers to devote greater care and attention to individual cows. |
| PROPERTY<br><br>small piece ranch | Cattlemen owned little property on the open range; usually became less common. that. The rest of the range land was leased or simply occupied. Headquarters generally temporary. | Ranchers owned most or all of their; land leasing large amounts of land only a along a river, if Permanent headquarters. |

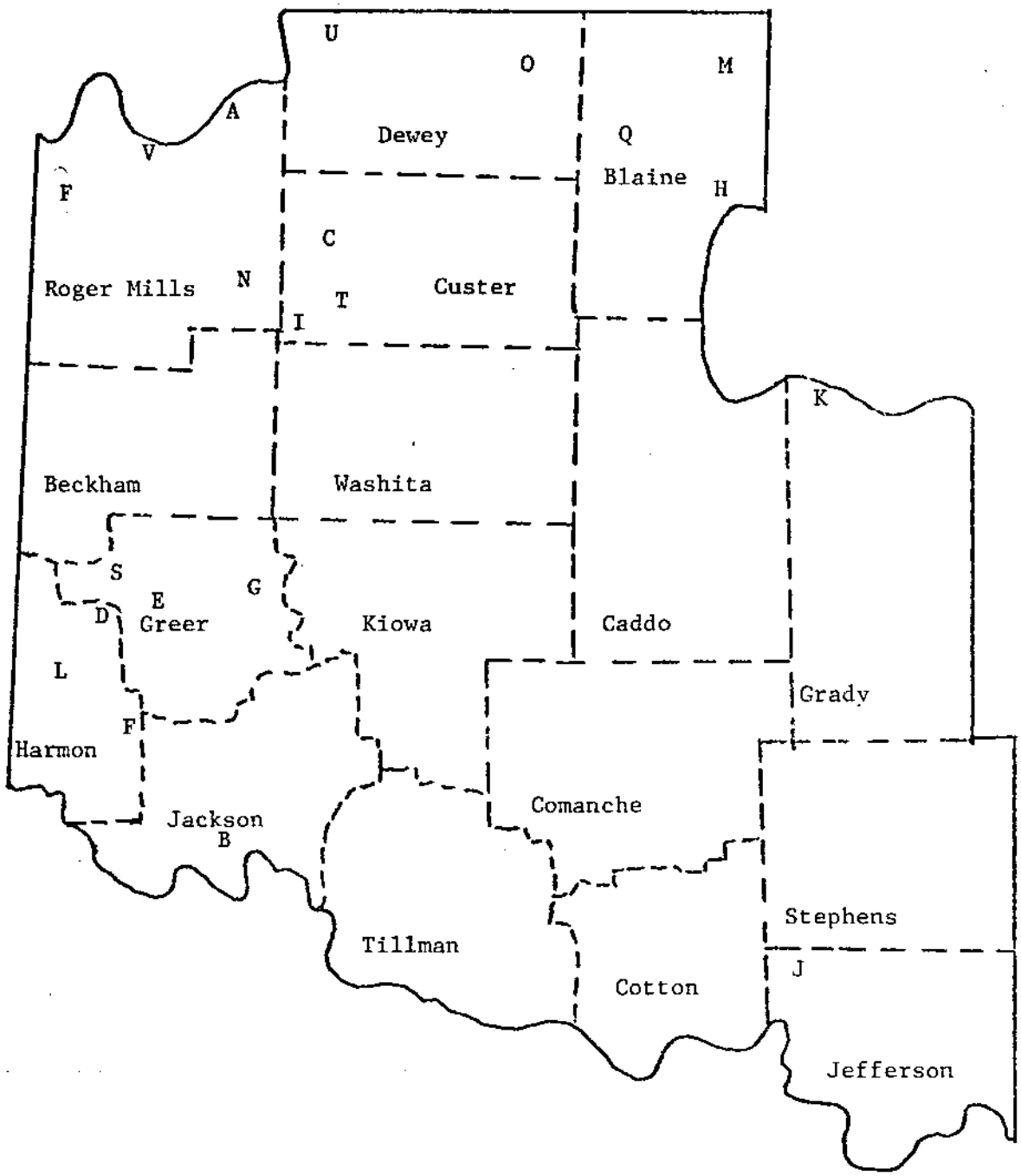
| | Pre-settlement | Post-settlement |
|---|---|---|
| EMPLOYMENT | Ranchers employed men to work the ranch - usually 10-15 per ranch. | Smaller ranches and mechanization enabled the rancher and one or two hand (often family members) to do most of the work. Roundups required extra help. |
| TRANSPORTATION | Cattle driven on the hoof to the nearest railroad; ranchers rode horseback. | Cattle driven by truck to shipping points; ranchers still use horses, but the pick-up truck is major mode of transportation. |
| SOCIAL LIFE | Ranches very isolated little chance for social contact, except with other ranchers or cowboys. | Ranches now within vicinitiy of some community, though it may be a small one. Ranchers become integratd into nearby communities and participate in a social/cultural life. |

SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA IN 1866




A. Old Greer County
B. Cheyenne and Arapaho Reservation
C. Wichita and Caddo Reservation
D. Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache Reservation
E. Chickasaw Nation

RANCH HEADQUARTERS




RANCHES:

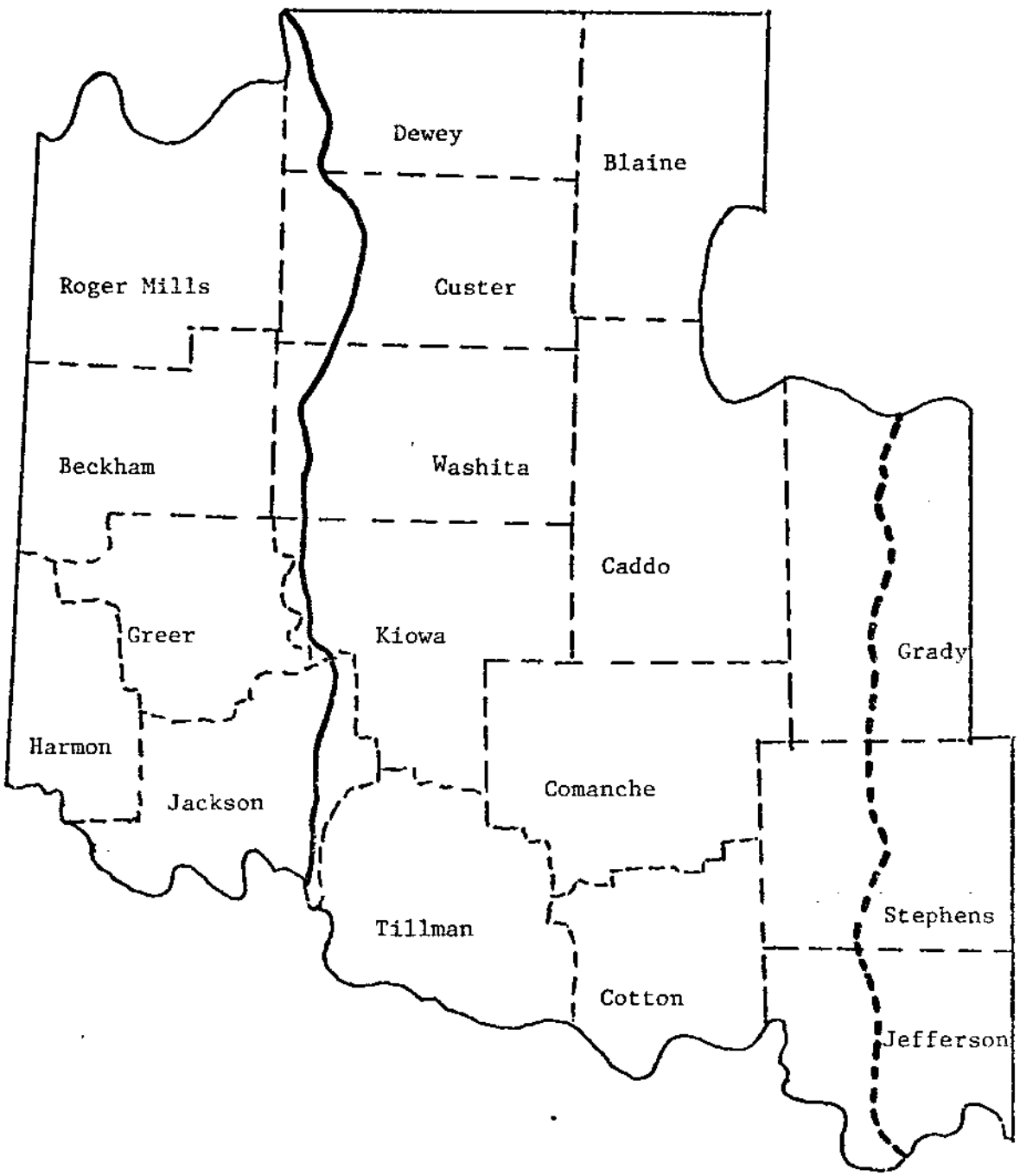
Pre-settlement -

A. Bar X
B. Cross S
C. C and A.
D. Francis
E. Haney-Handy
F. Hughes
G. Ikard-Harrold
H. Left Hand
I. Pickelsimer
J. Price
K. 7 B. C.
L. T-Cross
M. Todd

Post-settlement -

N. Allee
O. Chain
P. Corson-Metcalfe
Q. Cronkhite
R. E. B.
S. Jester
T. Murphy
U. Green-Ussery
V. Dunn

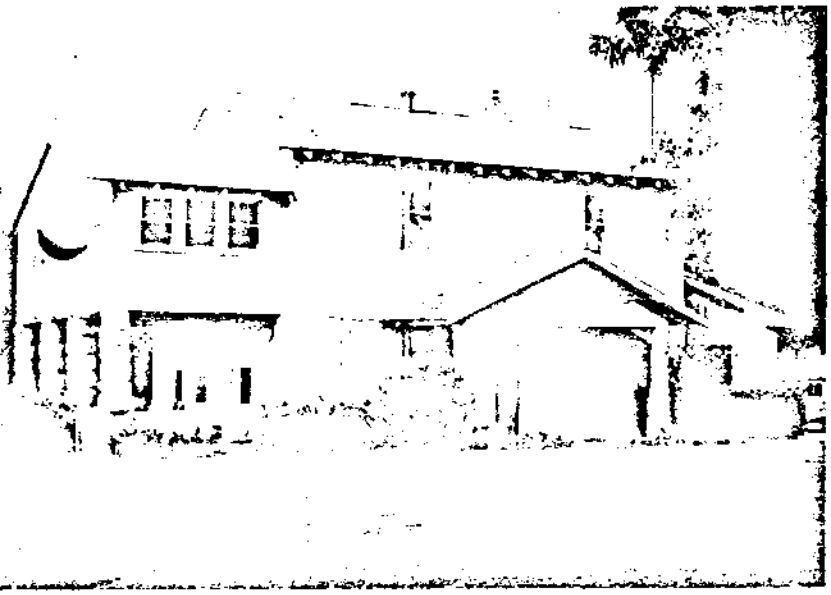
CATTLE TRAILS - SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA




Cattle Trails:

_____ = Great Western

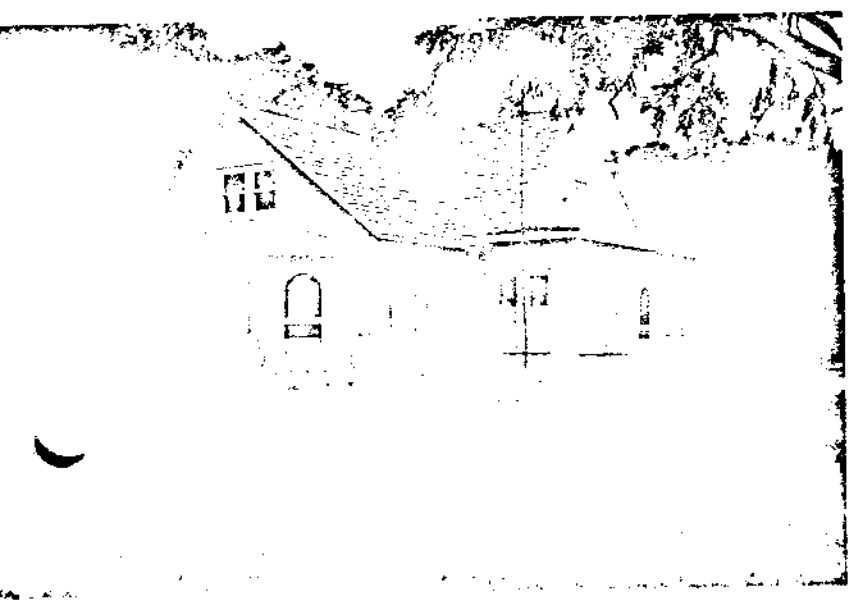
- - - - - - - - - = Chisholm



Cronkhite Ranch House
Blaine County
1906



Left Hand's Ranch House
Blaine County
ca. 1885



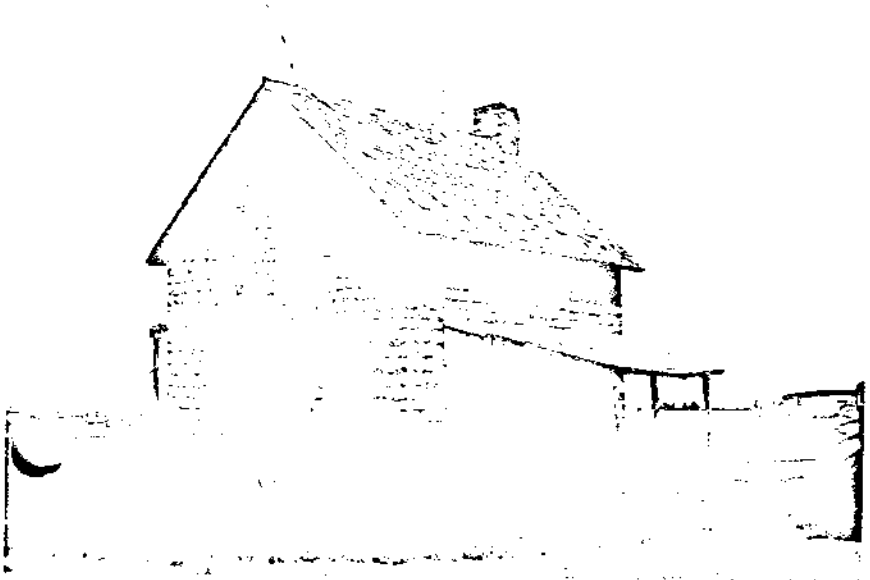
Oscar Chain Ranch House
Dewey County
1907



Bar X Ranch House
Roger Mills County
1892



F. J. Murphy Ranch House
Custer County
1910



Cross S. Ranch House
Jackson County
1892

# GLOSSARY

1. AGRICULTURE - Farming: the cultivation of the soil and the production of crops for consumption.

2. BARBED WIRE - Fencing wire containing sharpened spikes. Barbed wire fences were essential on the plains where the lack of trees precluded all-wooden fences. Without the spikes, or barbs, cattle would rub against the wire and eventually pull up the fence posts. There were two types of barbed wire on the plains: (1) "Vicious" had smaller barbs that could seriously damage cattle. (2) "Obvious" was so-called because the barbs were large enough to be easily seen and avoided by cattle. Most ranchers used the latter until their cattle became accustomed to the fences and learned to avoid them. The smaller type of wire could then safely be used.

3. BRAND - Symbol denoting ownership, burned into the hide of a cow. During the open range era, when cattle wandered freely over wide areas, the brand served to identify the owner. Each rancher created his own distinct brand, preferably one that cattle rustlers could not easily alter.

4. BUNKHOUSE - The living quarters of the cowboys on a ranch. This building was normally separate from the main ranch house. On prosperous ranches the owner probably provided some rudimentary furniture, such as bunks, mattresses, and perhaps a table and chairs. On other ranches the cowboys might be expected to sleep on the bunkhouse floor.

5. CATTLE DRIVES - The driving of large numbers of cattle along already marked trails from their home ranges to the nearest railhead for shipment elsewhere. The average trail herd contained about 3,000 head. The trail boss rode at the head of the drive and chose the best route for the cattle. The number of cowboys involved varied; usually there was one for every 300 head. A cook driving the chuckwagon provided meals on the trail.

6. CATTLEMAN - An owner of cattle; a rancher.

7. CATTLE TRAILS - Carefully marked routes along which cattlemen drove their cattle to market. The most famous and most frequently used stretched from Texas up to Kansas crossing present-day Oklahoma. The West Shawnee Trail and the East Shawnee Trail crossed eastern Oklahoma. The Great Western Trail (also known as the Texas or Dodge City Trail) passed through the western portion of southwestern Oklahoma (Jackson, Kiowa, Washita, Custer, and Dewey Counties), while the Chisholm Trail passed through the eastern portion (Jefferson, Stephens, and Grady Counties). Between 1866 and 1884 Texas cattlemen probably drove over six million head across Oklahoma.

8. CHISHOLM TRAIL - Cattle trail that crossed central Oklahoma in the late nineteenth century. It was named for Jesse Chisholm, a wealthy, half-breed Cherokee trader who blazed part of the trail in the early 1860s. The trail gained prominence in 1867 when Joseph G. McCoy established his stockyards in Abilene, Kansas, and urged Texas cattlemen to drive their herds due north instead of northeast to markets in Missouri. Its route through southwestern Oklahoma was as follows: It crossed into Oklahoma at the Red River Station; thence it proceeded

northward; it passed six miles east of present-day Waurika, three miles east of Addington, two miles east of modern Duncan, a mile east of Rush Springs; it crossed the Washita River at Rock Crossing, about three miles east of Chickasha; it then passed by Amber and west through Tuttle, crossing the South Canadian River at Bond Crossing, about six miles northeast of Minco. In length the entire Chisholm Trail measured about 700 miles, from south of Austin, Texas to Abilene, Kansas.

9 CHUCK WAGON - Wooden four-wheeled wagon that carried food and cooking utensils for the cowboys' use while trailing cattle. At its rear was the chuck box, a cabinet that contained shelves and drawers and served as a pantry. Its wooden cover swung down onto legs and served as a table on which, the cook prepared meals. The chuckwagon usually carried enough supplies for a month on the open range. It also carried the cowboys' bedding and personal belongings.

10. CORRAL - A fenced enclosure in which horses were branded or broken. Public corrals were sometimes found on the cattle trails; placing their herd in such a pen allowed the cowboys to rest at night without fear that the cattle would wander away or stampede.

11. COWBOY - A ranch employee who worked on horseback and tended the horses and cattle. He seldom owned his horse, though he provided his own saddle and clothing. He was an expert with a rope, or lariat, essential in controlling cattle. He refused to do manual labor, such as milking a cow. The cowboy's busiest time was during a roundup. He also "rode fence," looking for breaks, and made certain the herd had a sufficient water supply.

12. COW TOWNS - Towns that grew up along the cattle trails, at the railheads, or anywhere that ranching was the major industry. The most famous cow towns were located at shipping points, where a cattle trail met a railroad line. One of the earliest was Abilene, Kansas; another was Dodge City, Kansas. With so many high-spirited men passing through them, cow towns usually had reputations for lawlessness and wild living.

13. DEWLAP - An identifying mark on a cow denoting owership. The rancher cut a large piece of skin on the breast or brisket so as to leave the skin hanging as a flap. He created his own own distinctive dewlap, further differentiating his own cattle from his neighbors.

14. DRIFT FENCE - Very long fences built to prevent cattle from drifting too far from the main range, especially during blizzards.

15. DROVER - A person who drives cattle to market.

16. EARMARK - An identifying mark on a cow indicating its owner. Using a knife or clippers, cowboys cut the cattle's ears in a distinctive manner. This made identification easier, especially when a cow's hair grew so as to cover the brand.

17. FARM - A piece of land used for cultivation of crops.

18. FOREMAN - A ranch employee who supervised the day-to-day operations of the ranch. He was the immediate superior of the ordinary cowboys.

19. GREAT WESTERN TRAIL - Cattle trail that crossed western Oklahoma in the late nineteenth century. It developed in response to irate farmers in central Texas who objected to the passage of cattle over their farm land while en route to the Chisholm Trail. It also avoided the 50 cent per head tax imposed on cattle by the Five Civilized Tribes in Eastern Oklahoma. Its route through southwestern Oklahoma was as follows: It entered Oklahoma via Doan's Crossing; it then headed in a northerly direction; it passed two miles west of Hess and went between Altus and Headrick, crossing the North Fork of the Red River north of Warren; it crossed the Wichita Mountains and passed three and a half miles northeast of Granite, it then skirted modern Chanute and crossed the Washita River at Rock Crossing; the trail then went through the Gyp Hills, crossed the South Canadian River just south of Camargo, and left the area three miles west of Vici. The Great Western Trail, also called the Texas Trail, began near San Antonio, Texas and ended at Dodge City, Kansas, a distance of 600 miles.

20. HERD - A group of several cattle. Ranchers called a herd of steers a "beef herd" and a herd of cows a "cow herd."

21. LINE CAMP - A secondary ranch headquarters on the open range. It served as a base for line riders who rode out each day to watch the cattle and prevent them from wandering off the home range.

22. LONGHORNS - A breed of cattle; derives its name from its huge set of horns, often reaching a spread of six feet. They proved most adaptable to the dry and rugged terrain of western Oklahoma. These creatures were remarkably hardy and well able to care for themselves. Their horns made ideal weapons with which to fend off the attacks of coyotes and other predators. They could go for long periods with little water and were very well suited for the rough life on the open range. After 1900 ranchers no longer bred the longhorn, preferring breeds from the East such as Herefords and Angus. A herd of longhorns is preserved in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge.

23. OPEN RANGE - Empty, unclaimed, or unfenced land in Oklahoma and the Great Plains on which ranchers grazed their cattle. The cattlemen leased or simply occupied the land and allowed their herds to graze without restriction. Cattle from several ranches usually mixed together, requiring biannual roundups to separate the herds.

24. OUTFIT - A ranch and its cowboys.

25. RANCH - An economic unit involved in the production of livestock.

26. RANCHER - The owner of a ranch; a person who raises and sells cattle or other livestock.

27. RANCH HOUSE - The residence of a rancher. An unmarried rancher probably built a one-room shack. If married with a family he probably built a two or three room house or something even larger. Ranchers who lived in wooded areas usually built frame or log houses. Otherwise ranchers used whatever materials were available, such as sod or stone. Ranch houses were usually constructed near rivers or streams.

28. RANGE RIGHTS - In open range ranching; the rancher's right to water his cattle freely and graze them on the grasslands surrounding his headquarters.

29. ROUNDUP - Herding cattle together for branding or shipment elsewhere. Ranchers on the open range held roundups twice each year, in the spring and fall. In the spring roundup the cattle, having intermingled during the winter months, were separated and returned to their owners. In the fall cattle were collected for shipment to market. At both roundups calves received their brands. Roundups are still held on large ranches.

30. RUSTLER - A person who steals cattle or horses.

31. WATTLE - An identifying mark on a cow signifying its ownership. A large piece of skin was cut from the jaw or neck so as to leave it hanging loose. Each rancher developed his own distinctive wattle so as to further distinguish his cattle form those of his neighbors.

32. WINDMILL - On the Plains; a tall, wooden, scaffold-like structure surmounted by a wheel of sails and powered by the action of wind upon the sails. On ranches it is usually used to pump water from the ground. In very dry areas windmills provide cattle with their only source of water. They became necessary on the Great Plains after barbed wire fences appeared, preventing cattle from reaching natural watering holes.

33. WRANGLER - A person on a ranch who cares for the horses. On trail drives the wrangler handled the spare horses used as remounts and kept the horses from drifting away at night. The wrangler was often a young man in his early teens who hoped to become a cowboy.

## National Register Nomination and Criteria

National Register of Historic Places Nominations have been prepared in 1984 by the Oklahoma Historic Preservation Survey, History Department, Oklahoma State University for the following ranch headquarter properties:

1. Bar X Ranch House (vicinity of Leedey, Oklahoma)
2. Chain Ranch House (vicinity of Seiling, Oklahoma)
3. Cross S Ranch House (vicinity of Olustee, Oklahoma)
4. Murphy Ranch House (vicinity of Clinton, Oklahoma)

The following ranch properties are already listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

1. Cronkhite Ranch House (vicinity of Watonga, Oklahoma)
2. Left Hand Ranch House (vicinity of Greenfield, Oklahoma)

The following criteria for determining the eligibility of properties for the National Register of Historic Places have been taken from How to Complete National Register Forms (Washington, D. C. : Government Printing Office, 1977), p.6, the "Criteria for Evaluation."

Criteria for Evaluation:

The following criteria are designed to guide the states, Federal agencies, and the Secretary of the Interior in evaluating potential entries (other than areas of the National Park System and National Historic Landmarks) for the National Register.

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildngs, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that posses high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

D. that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the National Register. However, such properties will qualify if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

A. a religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or

B. a building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or

C. a birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his productive life; or

D. a cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or

E. a reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or

F. a property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance; or

G. a property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

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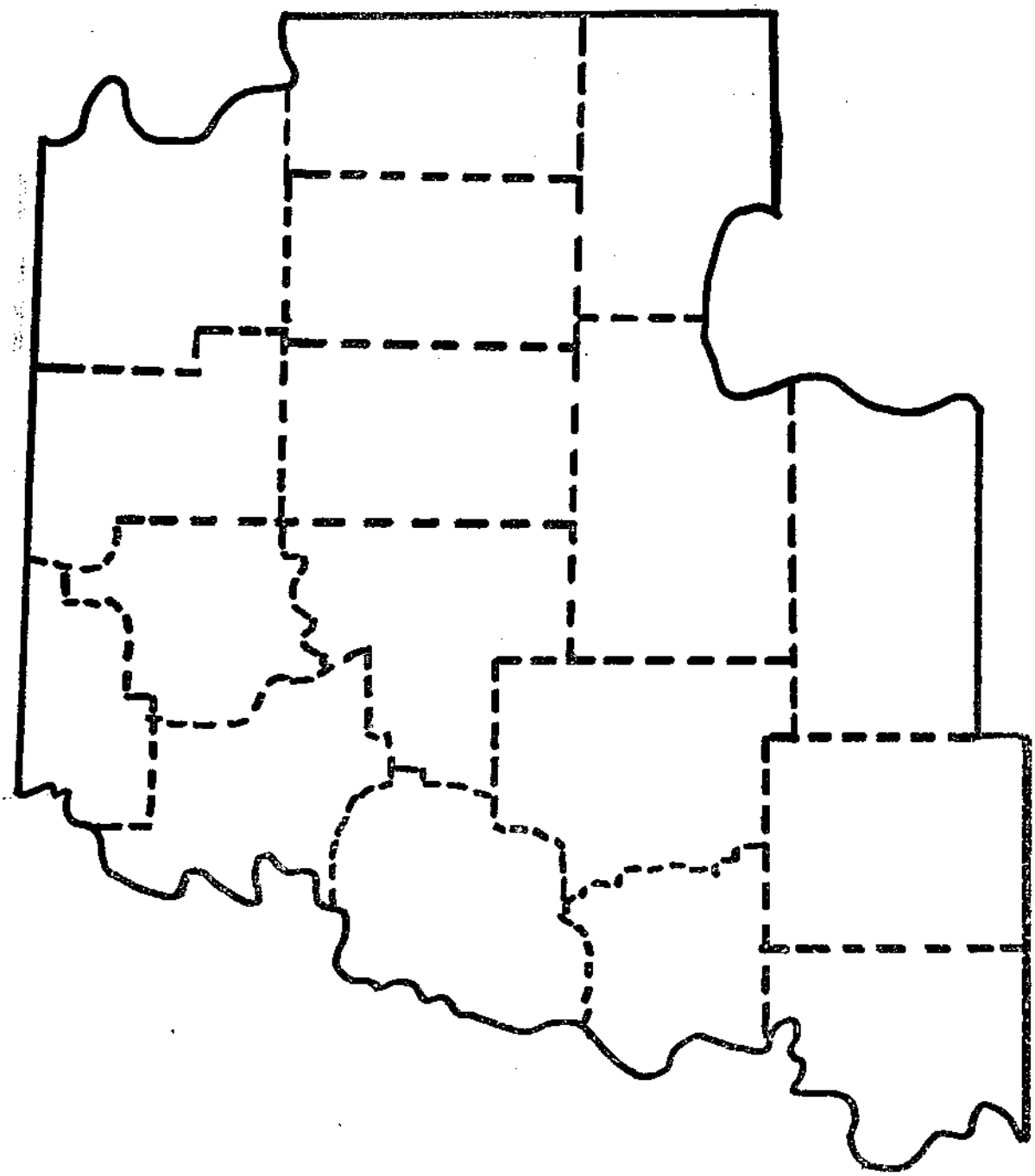
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RESOURCE PROTECTION PLANNING PROCESS

Study unit: Ranching in Southwestern Oklahoma
Region: Seven



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