

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

## SPRING HILL RANCH

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### 1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Spring Hill Ranch

Other Name/Site Number: Deer Park Place; Davis Ranch; Davis-Noland-Merrill Grain Company Ranch; Z Bar Ranch

### 2. LOCATION

Street & Number: North of Strong City on Kansas Highway 177

Not for publication:

City/Town: Strong City

Vicinity: X

State: Kansas County: Chase Code: 017

Zip Code:

### 3. CLASSIFICATION

#### Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local:     

Public-State:     

Public-Federal:     

#### Category of Property

Building(s):     

District: X

Site:     

Structure:     

Object:     

#### Number of Resources within Property

##### Contributing

8

2

4

14

##### Noncontributing

7 buildings

     sites

5 structures

     objects

12 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 2

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

Designated a  
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK on

**FEB 18 1997**

by the Secretary of the Interior

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**4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_\_ Entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_\_ Determined eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_\_ Determined not eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_\_ Removed from the National Register  
\_\_\_\_ Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

Historic:	DOMESTIC DOMESTIC AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURE LANDSCAPE EDUCATION	Sub:	single dwelling secondary structure agricultural field animal facility processing agricultural outbuilding storage natural feature school
Current:	DOMESTIC DOMESTIC AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURE LANDSCAPE RECREATION CULTURE	Sub:	single dwelling secondary structure agricultural field animal facility storage natural feature outdoor recreation museum

**7. DESCRIPTION**

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Late Victorian: Second Empire

## MATERIALS:

Foundation: Limestone  
Walls: Limestone  
Roof: Metal; Asphalt; Wood  
Other:

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**Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.***Summary*

The Spring Hill (Z Bar) Ranch is a 10,894 acre cattle ranch located two miles north of Strong City in Chase County, Kansas. The ranch is located in the Flint Hills of east-central Kansas and contains a vast expanse of tallgrass prairie. The rolling hills and rocky soils of the Flint Hills are today the most extensive remnant of virgin tallgrass prairie in North America.<sup>1</sup> Numerous natural springs, hence the name "Spring Hill," are found on the ranch, which also includes two permanent streams, Fox Creek and Palmer Creek. Included within the ranch is a virtually intact late nineteenth century ranch headquarters compound. The entire district contains eight contributing buildings, four contributing structures, and two contributing sites. The contributing buildings at the ranch headquarters are: the Spring Hill Ranch House (built 1881; listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971), barn (1881), springhouse/smokehouse, outhouse, icehouse, and poultry house/scratch house/equipment shed. The ranch house is an imposing three story, eleven-room building constructed in the Second Empire style, a rare architectural style in the region, and executed in native materials. The 6,480 square foot, 3-story barn is nearly as impressive as the house. At the time of its construction, it lacked two feet of being the largest barn in the state of Kansas. The 1-story limestone poultry house has an arched stone roof covered with sod, and has an attached scratch house and equipment shed. The stone smokehouse has a springhouse beneath, which is accessible from the ranch house via a below-grade tunnel. The outhouse and icehouse were constructed of limestone as well. Located approximately half a mile north of the ranch is the Lower Fox Creek School (built 1882; listed on National Register in 1974), also constructed of native limestone. At the southeast corner of the district, historically associated with the Barney Lantry ranch, is a contributing limestone chicken house. The contributing structures on the Spring Hill ranch are the several miles of stone fencing, a stone cistern, and two stone corrals. The several miles of dry-laid stone fence are counted as one contributing structure due to the extensive nature of the system. The contributing sites are the garden terraces in front of the ranch house and the ranch lands. The stone terraces feature elaborate steps leading to the house that are topped with an iron fence.

The ranch lands primarily consist of virgin tallgrass prairie, with 456.4 acres in brome grass and twenty ponds scattered throughout the property. There are seven non-contributing buildings: two metal sheds at the ranch headquarters, a metal barn near the Lantry ranch headquarters, two barns at the Lantry headquarters, and a stone garage and a caretaker's house at the Spring Hill ranch headquarters. The non-contributing structures include a stone bridge located on the former Lantry property, an earthen silage pit, and cement-stave silo – all historic but constructed after the period of significance; the modern Highway 177; and the sewage disposal ponds located in the southeastern portion of the property. All of the contributing buildings and structures have been well-maintained throughout their entire period of existence, and retain an exceptionally high level of integrity in location, setting, feeling, design, materials, and workmanship. The house, outbuildings, and fence are united by their common use of a single building material – the locally-quarried native limestone, and the district as a whole retains a strikingly historic sense of time and place. Although the ranch's boundaries have varied over the years with changing ownership, the ranch lands (contributing site) have retained a high level of integrity in all areas of consideration: location, setting, feeling, design, materials, workmanship, as well as association.

<sup>1</sup> The natural features of the Spring Hill Ranch have been preliminarily recommended for listing as a National Natural Landmark. "Special Resource Study: Z-Bar (Spring Hill) Ranch" (Midwest Region, National Park Service, March 1991), 8, 16-23.



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***Elaboration*****Landscape Features**

The Spring Hill Ranch is located in the Kansas Flint Hills, which lie in the heart of the eastern edge of the Great Plains regions of the United States. The ranch is located a few miles north of Strong City in Chase County. Kansas Highway 177, which is considered non-contributing although it approximates the location of the historic road, passes through the ranch and runs directly in front (east) of the ranch headquarters. The Flint Hills are a range of eastward facing, dissected escarpment of erosion-resistant limestones and more easily weathered shales which form a forty-three mile wide north/south band across eastern Kansas.<sup>2</sup> The resistant limestone beds form benches or ledges, while the intervening slopes have chert fragments strewn over the rocky soil.

**Ranch lands:** The landscape is dominated by vast expanses of native prairie rangelands with intermittent corridors of woodland along existing streams and drainageways. There are two permanent streams in the Spring Hill Ranch – Fox Creek, a tributary of the Cottonwood River, runs north/south in the southeastern portion of the ranch, and Palmer Creek, a branch of Fox Creek which runs east/west across the northern portion of the property. There are several natural springs within the ranch boundaries, many of which have been dammed as water sources for cattle.

The uplands in the ranch are dominated by tallgrass or true prairie species, including big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), little bluestem (*Andropogon scoparius*), and Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*). All of the lands west of Highway 177 are virgin prairie as are those east of the creek. The lowlands in the ranch, east of the highway from the ranch headquarters to the creek, were historically cultivated in the past by Stephen Jones. The 1887 Atlas noted that Jones had a five-acre orchard, two hundred acres in timber, and five hundred acres in “tame grass.”<sup>3</sup> Today in the lowland areas occasional patches of cultivated land, used primarily for the winter feed for livestock, can be seen. The cultivated lands now pastures of smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), total 456.4 acres. The gallery forests along Fox and Palmer Creeks are dominated by burr oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) and hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*).

**Stone Fences:** In addition to the ranch lands, other historic landscape features which contribute to the district include the thousands of lineal feet of dry-laid stone fence. Constructed of limestone taken mostly on-site, the fences divide the rangeland into pastures to control the cattle grazing practices on the ranch. It is estimated that nearly thirty miles of stone fence were erected for Stephen Jones’ ranch operations; Barney Lantrey had nearly as many miles on his ranch lands. In the 1920s and 1930s, as local roads throughout the country began to be paved, the demand for crushed stone for surfacing material persuaded many landowners to sacrifice their stone walls.<sup>4</sup> The fences on the Spring Hill Ranch did not escape this demand for paving materials. However, virtually all of the fencing remains in some fashion, although in many areas it has been reduced in height to only a foot. In places where the stone fence has been reduced in height, barbed wire fencing serves to enclose grazing pastures. The barbed wire is supported by both modern metal posts and historic wood posts. The limestone fences are a visibly distinct feature in the relatively barren landscape, and can readily be seen in aerial photographs.

Dirt roads, whose tracks are also visible in aerial photographs, connect the various pastures and lead to key water sources. One such site in the southwest section of the ranch (in Township 19 South, Range 8 East,

<sup>2</sup> “Special Resource Study,” 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Official State Atlas of Kansas* reprinted 1982 (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1887).

<sup>4</sup> Allen G. Noble, *Wood, Brick & Stone: The North American Settlement Landscape*, vol. 2, *Barns and Farm Structures* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 119.

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Section 7) contains a stone springhouse, wood and barbed wire holding pens, and the ruins of an historic stone building.<sup>5</sup> Possibly a bunkhouse for range hands, the small building appears to have two rooms. One room, approximately 16' x 24', is located on a northeast ridge facing down a slope to a spring. The walls on this portion of the house are 4 feet tall in some sections, and are constructed of limestone with the same color and composition as the main house. A smaller room of grey limestone is attached on the south side, and is in a more deteriorated condition. A square stone springhouse (unknown construction date) is located at the head of the small spring-fed stream. A concrete watering trough (1952) is attached to the spring house, and has metal rails to prevent cattle from walking through the trough.

Not included in the resource count are approximately thirty abandoned gas wells and associated pipelines. These are scattered throughout the ranch, particularly in the northern half, and are barely visible. A historic stone bridge located on land formerly belonging to Barney Lantry is counted as non-contributing due to its unknown construction date.<sup>6</sup> Nearby are the remains of wooden stock pens which were located at the spur end of the A. T. & S. F. Railroad. A silage pit located southwest of the ranch headquarters is also counted as non-contributing due to an unknown construction date. Also known as a trench or horizontal silo, it became popular in the Great Plains during the shift towards the utilization of grass ensilage.<sup>7</sup> The silage pit on the Spring Hill ranch consists of two trenches formed by three parallel mounds of dirt, with the open end of the pit facing south.

The rangelands of the Spring Hill Ranch have retained a very high degree of integrity in all areas of consideration, and together with the rest of the Flint Hills, are a part of the most extensive remnant of virgin tallgrass prairie in North America. The tallgrass prairie has been used for seasonal livestock grazing for over a century. In the cultivated acreage on the ranch, some of the plant species have changed over the years, but its use has not. Thus in the area's location, design, setting, feeling, association, workmanship, and for the most part, materials, the natural and man-made features of the cultural landscape on the Spring Hill Ranch have retained their historic integrity.

**Spring Hill Ranch Headquarters**

The headquarters for the Spring Hill Ranch is located on the eastern edge of Section 31, Township 18 South, Range 8 East, approximately 4 miles south of the north property boundary and 2.3 miles north of St. Anthony's Cemetery. The arrangement and distribution of buildings at the headquarters compound is typical of farmsteads in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It features a distributed system of buildings, in which the buildings are far enough apart to avoid stable odors in the house, reduced fire risk, and better sanitary conditions exist when compared to a concentrated system. The overall configuration of the compound buildings follows a patterned response based upon a number of influences. In this instance, the Spring Hill Ranch headquarters is a variant of a "Linear Multi-Unit Farm Arrangement" as described by Carter and Foster (1941).<sup>8</sup> Here the main agricultural buildings are arranged along an interior roadway on the south side of the main ranch house, while the buildings servicing the house are naturally located closer to the residence.

The ranch house is nearer to the public road than any other building in order to show the house to the best advantage, and has the preferred east-facing front. The house is approximately 200 feet from Highway 177. This distance affords a large lawn which slopes down to the highway, and placed the house away from the dust of the road.

<sup>5</sup> These ruins are not counted separately from the contributing range lands, but do add significantly to the historic sense of time and place.

<sup>6</sup> An Atlas from 1887 shows a road over Fox Creek in nearly the same location, but the scale of the map prevents a more definitive conclusion. *Official State Atlas of Kansas*, rev. ed. (1982, repr., Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1887).

<sup>7</sup> Noble, *Wood, Brick & Stone*, 79.

<sup>8</sup> Deane G. Carter and W. A. Foster, *Farm Buildings* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1941), 163.

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**Terraces:** The sloping lawn is terraced down to the roadway, with low stone retaining walls of varying rubble, roughly squared, and ashlar masonry construction. There are five retaining walls forming the terraces. The uppermost wall extends north and south of the ranch house. It is approximately three feet high on the south, and five feet on the north. Stone steps immediately adjacent to both sides of the house lead from the front yard to the rear. The retaining wall extending north of the house past the springhouse/smokehouse is random range quarry-faced limestone, while the retaining wall extending south to the entry drive is roughly squared rubble masonry with a quarry-faced coping with finished top plane. The next terrace is approximately twenty-two feet east of the front elevation of the house, and extends in a shallow U-shape approximately sixteen feet north and south of the house. This low retaining wall is coursed ashlar with quarry-faced limestone on its south end, and a dry-laid rubble wall with quarry-faced coping on the north. The next terrace to the east is also a dry-laid rubble wall with quarry-faced coping, and is a U-shape which connects with the terrace wall to the west. A circular stone base for a fountain remains on this terrace. The low base has smooth dressed curved coping, with regularly spaced flat circular pedestals for flower pots. The next wall east is taller and has an historic decorative filigree iron fencing above. The masonry construction of this approximately 3½ foot high wall is broken range ashlar with quarry-faced stone for the length of the terraces immediately to the west, and extends to the south as a dry-laid rubble wall. The easternmost retaining wall is approximately 2½ feet high, and is constructed of random rubble containing a mixture of roughly squared and diagonal stones. This wall also has quarry-faced coping with a finished top plane. Leading to the front door in the center of the terraces are stone steps. The easternmost steps are flanked by stone pillars with pyramidal tops, while the steps at the iron gate are semi-circular and are flanked with flat-topped pillars. Originally planted with lilacs and roses (no longer extant), there are several mature evergreen trees on the terraces.

**Ranch house:** The ranch house was built in 1881 for Stephen Jones on a bluff overlooking the Fox Creek valley. This striking limestone building is set within the bluff, and presents three stories on the front (east) elevation and two stories to the rear. It is a unique example of the Second Empire style with its symmetrical facade featuring a projecting central pavilion and diagonally-placed projecting pavilions at both ends. The ends of all the pavilions are accented with square-cut quoins that are brush hammered. The remaining wall surface is quarry-faced coursed ashlar except for the keystones above the segmentally arched window and door openings, which are also brush hammered.

The diagonal end pavilions each have a one-story tripartite bay with paneled balustrade above. Between these two bays, a one-story low-pitched shed roof porch extends across the full length of the facade. The porch roof is interrupted at the central bay with a taller, more projecting pavilion porch which has a paneled balustrade for the balcony above supported by two classically inspired stone columns. The central porch supports have grooved piers on the lower half, and simple tapering round columns on the upper half. The supports on the remainder of the front porch are chamfered and rest on short stone piers which are integrated with a low stone balustrade. Simple spandrels and brackets support a stone dentil frieze band.

The tall, narrow first story windows are 1-over-1-over-1, while those on the second story are 1 x 1, double-hung. The dormer windows are 2 x 2, double-hung sash. The first and second story windows are segmentally arched with keystones above and a bracketed lugsill beneath. The large double entry doors also have a segmentally arched top with keystone, and are flanked by two classical pilasters of brush hammer dressed stone. The tall paneled wood doors have arched glazing at the top. The standing seam metal mansard roof has steeply-pitched straight lower slopes and a flat top. The pavilions each have a separate mansard roof which projects slightly above and outward from the main roof. The curbs of both the top and bottom of the lower slopes have molded cornices. Beneath the lower cornice are paired decorative brackets on a scalloped stone frieze band. Dormer windows on the lower slope of the mansard roof have steeply pitched gable roofs with flared eaves supported by

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brackets. The central pavilion has a paneled architrave on the lower mansard slope with "A.D. 1881" and a centered medallion with the initial "J" carved out of wood and covered with metal.

There are two interior chimneys – one on the southwest roof slope and one centered in the north end of the house. The rear of the house is asymmetrical, and features a large projecting wing on the north end. Set within the "L" formed by this wing and the main portion of the house is a small wood frame porch which has been enclosed (date unknown). The entrance to the rear of the house is from this porch. Extending from the rear wing is the flat-roofed stone root cellar. The top has been covered with concrete, but original skylights remain. These skylights are metal grates with small circles of colored glass providing light to the root cellar below. Entry to the root cellar is from the basement level of the house.

There are three floors of living space in the ranch house, with an additional service floor located between the first and second floor. A central hall with stairs is on the three main floors. On the first floor it is flanked by two parlors. The north parlor served as a sitting room, and the south as a music room. Both rooms feature limestone fireplaces with faux marble finish, and bay alcoves reached by an arched opening. The second floor contains the dining room and butler's pantry in the northwest wing, and a living room and former office in the main portion of the house. The butler's pantry today has a modern kitchen. The office and dining room formerly had doors leading to the outside, but today lead into the enclosed back porch. There are three rooms on the third floor believed to have served as bedrooms and a smaller room which is presently a bathroom. The service floor, located mid-way between the first and second floor, is accessed by both the main staircase and a rear staircase adjacent to the butler's pantry. The original kitchen was located here, and cooks were able to easily access both the root cellar and springhouse from the kitchen.

Immediately west of the original kitchen is the root cellar, approximately eighty percent of which is below grade. The interior walls and barrel vault roof are constructed of quarry-faced coursed limestone. The floor is presently covered with concrete, as is the exterior above grade roof. Two skylights have metal grates with circular colored glass panes. Leading north from the original kitchen to the below-grade springhouse is a twenty-seven foot long tunnel. Partly below grade, this tunnel was also constructed of limestone and has a barrel vault roof. The interior walls of the tunnel have been stuccoed but the original limestone construction is evident on the exterior.<sup>9</sup>

The walls in the living space of the ranch house are plaster, and eight rooms and three halls in the house feature varied molded plaster cornices. Several of the main rooms have plaster ceiling medallions as well. The elaborate stairway newel post and stair balustrade are walnut; the remaining woodwork in the house is grained pine, with burlled panels in the window surrounds and doors. The floors on the third story are the original wide pine; narrower oak floor boards have been laid on the original floors on the first and second stories.

The ranch house was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971, and was one of the earliest listings in the state. The house underwent a certified rehabilitation in 1984-1985. Only a few minor alterations have been made to the house since its construction in 1881. As noted, the rear porch has been enclosed; the butler's pantry has been changed to a modern kitchen; and the historic kitchen has been divided into a utility room and bathroom. On the exterior, the house is only missing its original iron cresting on the upper curb of the mansard roof. Thus the building is virtually intact on both the exterior and interior, and exhibits an extremely high degree of integrity in all areas of consideration.

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<sup>9</sup> Although significant, both the root cellar and tunnel are not counted as separate resources as they are attached to other buildings.

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**Barn:** The next building in both prominence and proximity to the road at the Spring Hill Ranch headquarters is the main barn. It is a possible variant of a German bank barn, which were constructed into a hillside. Stables are generally on the ground level, and threshing floors on the highest, reached by sloped ramps.<sup>10</sup> The three-story coursed rubble stone barn, approximately 110 x 60 feet, has corners and fenestrations accentuated with squared quarry-face quoins. At the time of its construction in 1881, the 6,480 square foot barn lacked two feet from being the largest barn in the state. Its hipped gable roof is presently covered with composition shingles; originally, it took over five thousand pounds of tin to cover the roof.

The barn was built into a south-facing hill, so that the ground level on the south is accessible from the south corral. The second level of the barn is at grade on the north, and the third level is accessible from the north by two sod and wood ramps supported by large tapering stone piers. The ramps lead up into two large hipped gable dormers with double-wood doors. Centered between these two dormers is another hipped gable dormer with three 4 x 4 double-hung windows: one on each of the dormer walls. All three dormer walls are sheathed with wood shingles. At the second story (ground level on the north) are two sets of double wood doors between the ramps. A smaller gable dormer with end window is centered on the south-facing gable slope of the main roof. Two clapboard gable roof cupolas are atop the ridge line; both have vents on the gable ends and two double-hung windows on the north/south walls. On the first level, there are two large entry doors on the east and one large and two smaller doors on the south. On the west end, there is one large entry at the second level. All of the entries have deeply recessed wood doors, squared quoin surrounds, and keystones in the segmentally arched openings. The majority of windows on the south and east elevations are 4 x 4 double-hung, and have dressed stone lugsills and lintels.

The first floor contains original stalls used for horses, milk cows, and pigs. There are two main sets of stalls on the north and south ends of the barn, separated by tack and other utility rooms near the center. Massive hewn beams support the second floor and form the ends of each stall. The second floor, a large open area divided only by massive supports, was used to store farm equipment. It is presently used as a visitors' center and reception area which has involved very minor alterations. The third floor was used to store grain and possibly for threshing. In the 1950s, the Z Bar Cattle installed a granary bin in the center of the third floor. Originally, there was a large windmill – "the largest in the state" – attached to the barn.<sup>11</sup> Its thirty foot wing span had power sufficient for a pair of corn burrs, a corn sheller, a hay chopper, a root-cutter, and an oil-cake crusher. However, the vibrations generated from the windmill caused damage to the barn, and the windmill was removed after only about a year of use.<sup>12</sup> The barn has extremely high integrity in all areas: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

**Stone corrals:** Attached to the south and west sides of the barn are two original stone corrals, constructed ca. 1881. The south corral is nearly a square, and is enclosed on three sides by a dry-laid coursed rubble limestone fence. Within the south corral is a cement-stave silo (c. 1910 and considered non-contributing), a concrete base for another silo, a stone cattle loading ramp, and board wood fence chutes. The west corral is rectangular and is also enclosed with a dry-laid coursed rubble limestone fence. On the north side of the corral, this fence serves as a retaining wall, as the corral is set below grade of the hill. Stone steps lead from the upper level of the hill down into the corral. Board wood fencing forms chutes to facilitate movement of stock into the barn or other

<sup>10</sup> The study of German bank barns and their variants has been focused primarily on the East Coast, such as Dornbusch and Heyl's study of eleven variants in Pennsylvania. In Noble, *Wood, Brick & Stone*, 22-35. A thorough study of Midwestern or Great Plains variants has not been undertaken.

<sup>11</sup> "Special Resource Study," Appendix D, 7.

<sup>12</sup> Lonnie Clark, Lora Duguid, and Amanda Farrell, "The Z Bar Story," (paper for Vernacular Architecture 644 class, University of Kansas, May 8, 1995).

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corrals. Concrete troughs and a covered metal shed in the northwest corner are used by present-day cattle operations. The fences for both corrals have been capped with concrete. The corrals retain a very high degree of integrity in all areas, with only minor alterations to material (concrete coping).

**Poultry house/scratch house/fuel storage:** An unusual group of connected buildings is located across the drive just north of the main barn.<sup>13</sup> Set within yet another south-facing hillside is a stone poultry house, scratch house, and two equipment sheds. The rectangular poultry house (c. 1881) is constructed of coursed rubble, and has a barrel arched stone roof covered with sod. The deeply recessed fenestrations have squared quarry-faced quoins, as do the corners of the building. There is a wood door on the east end, two wood doors and two 4 x 4, double-hung windows on the south, and another entry leading into the scratch house on the west. The scratch house has a shed roof, a stone wall on the north, and wood clapboard on its remaining sides. There are two large openings on the south. Attached to the west of the scratch house is a gable roof shed with rear (north) stone wall set within the hillside. The westernmost addition is free-standing, and has a shed roof and metal siding. The poultry house/scratch house retains a very high degree of integrity in location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Design has only been altered by additions, which although historic, do not date from the period of significance.

Set diagonally from the northeast corner of the poultry house is a stone garage.<sup>14</sup> Set within the hillside, this gable roof building of quarry-faced ashlar limestone has two wood garage doors and shiplap siding in the gable end. A small retaining wall connects the garage to the poultry house.

**Springhouse/smokehouse:** An unusual combination springhouse/smokehouse (c. 1881) is located approximately thirty feet north of the main ranch house. This square building is two stories and is quarry-faced ashlar. The lower portion of the building is the springhouse and is almost fully excavated into the east-facing hillside. The upper story served as the smokehouse, and has a pyramidal hip roof with wood shingles and vented cupola above. The entry to the springhouse is accessed from the main house via a below grade tunnel.<sup>15</sup> The tunnel also has an exterior door on its east wall. Although most springhouses are located at the spring source, the spring water here was piped downhill from the west a short distance. It then entered the springhouse on the southwest corner where it flowed into a stone U-shaped trough on three sides of the floor. The smokehouse has a recessed entry on the west with double wood doors, dressed stone lintel, and stone steps leading to the door. Circular flue openings set within a square dressed stone are on the other three sides of the smokehouse. The springhouse/smokehouse is in excellent condition and has a very high degree of integrity in all areas.

**Outhouse:** Constructed very similar to the springhouse/smokehouse, the outhouse building, located to the northwest of the main house complex, is another very unusual historic resource at the ranch headquarters.<sup>16</sup> This elaborate outhouse is also constructed of quarry-faced ashlar with a distinct sill course, and has a pyramidal hip wood shingle roof with vented cupola. All fenestrations are segmentally arched with a dressed keystone: the

<sup>13</sup> These are counted as one historic resource as at least one of the buildings can be considered ancillary (the scratch house), and construction dates and uses for the other portions are unknown.

<sup>14</sup> Counted as non-contributing due to its unknown construction date, the building nonetheless is compatible with the other buildings at the headquarters.

<sup>15</sup> It is believed that the tunnel was constructed after the springhouse/smokehouse; hence this is counted as a separate resource, not as an ancillary addition to the main ranch house. Additionally, this very unusual building clearly has a separate and distinct function from the residence.

<sup>16</sup> Most outhouses/privies were poorly constructed, generally taller than wide or deep, and were almost always of wood frame construction so that they could be moved away from the pit for periodic cleaning. In Noble, *Wood, Brick & Stone*, 86-87.

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4 x 4, double-hung windows on both east and west provided light, and the deeply recessed wood door was on the south. Inside are two holes for adults, and a lower hole for children. The building is in very good condition and has a very high degree of integrity.

**Icehouse:** Located immediately west of the main house, the 20 x 20' square icehouse (c. 1881) is constructed of coursed rubble with square cut quoins at the corners. It has a pyramidal hip roof with wood shingles; a platform at the peak formerly contained a cupola. There is a sliding double wood door on the south which is probably not original. A semi-circular opening with radiating dressed stone voussoirs is on the east elevation. The building is in good condition, and retains a very high degree of integrity in all areas except design, which in spite of a few alterations, still has a good degree of integrity.

**Cistern:** Immediately east of the icehouse is a large stone cistern. Although the top has been covered with sod, it retains a quarry-face ashlar limestone wall on the east. A semi-circular opening (now closed), identical to that on the icehouse, is directly east. The cistern retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, materials, workmanship, and to some degree, of design.

West of the icehouse is a non-contributing metal Quonset hut. Another non-contributing metal shed is northwest of the barn; north of this is a non-contributing ranch hands/guest house. These buildings may be over fifty years in age, but were not present during the period of significance.

**Lower Fox Creek Schoolhouse**

Located on a hill approximately half a mile north of the ranch headquarters, the Lower Fox Creek Schoolhouse was constructed in 1882 on land donated by Stephen Jones, with the stipulation that ownership would revert back to the ranch owner if it was no longer used as a school. Constructed by stone mason David Rettiger, who built the ranch house and the Chase County Courthouse, this one room school house with gable roof has coursed rubble limestone walls. The corners and fenestrations have square cut, rough pointed dressed quoins. On the front-facing (east) gable end, there are two front doors flanking a centered window. The doors and window on this wall have semi-circular arches with dressed stone voussiors and keystones. The wood doors are paneled with an arched transom, and the windows are 4 x 4, double-hung sash. A circular stone medallion in the gable peak has the date "1882." There are three windows on both the north and south elevations, each 4 x 4, double-hung sash with stone lugsills and brush hammered stone pedimented lintels. A cupola with pyramidal roof is atop the ridge line. The schoolhouse was restored by a local group of garden clubs in the 1970s; the roof has been replaced and a chimney removed. The interior has pine woodwork and floors. The plaster walls have a band of black chalkboard extending across three sides. The schoolhouse has a very high degree of integrity in all areas, particularly on the exterior, and is in good condition. Stone steps leading up the slope from the road and a stone wall are in deteriorated condition. A simple board & batten outhouse with gable roof is located northwest to the rear of the schoolhouse.

**Lantry Poultry House**

The present boundaries of the Spring Hill Ranch are similar to those after it was purchased by Barney Lantry. Lantry's farm was southeast of the Spring Hill Ranch headquarters, near the north edge of Strong City. Lantry's house is not included within the boundaries of the proposed historic district, but three historic agricultural buildings are included in the resource count. Two barns were not constructed during the period of significance, but the stone chicken house is believed to have been constructed at the time of Lantry's house. This one-story rectangular building of coursed rubble limestone has a metal gable roof. There are two tall, narrow 6 x 6, double-hung windows on the west and an identical window on the east. Windows on the south are under the roof eaves, and are nearly square. The Lantry Poultry House is in good condition, and is believed to have retained integrity in materials, feeling, location, setting, and association based upon available knowledge. East

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of the poultry house is a one-story clay tile tack building, and southwest is a two-story board and batten barn. A two-story metal barn approximately a quarter mile north of the Lantry farm is counted as non-contributing due to its unknown construction date.

A number of associated resource types have been identified in studies of enclosed cattle grazing.<sup>17</sup> These include: homestead or farm, ranch, cattle barn, calving shed, bullpen, ranch house, feed storage, windmill, cistern, water trough, corral and fencing, loading ramp and chute, open shed, pole barn, feed lot, and site. Although not all of these are counted as separate resources, the Spring Hill Ranch includes virtually all of these in addition to several resource types typically associated with farmsteads, such as an icehouse, smokehouse/springhouse, and poultry house. Not only is the breadth of historic resource types well represented at the Spring Hill Ranch, but the level of integrity and quality of design and materials are extremely high.

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<sup>17</sup> Lou Ann Speulda, "Oregon's Agricultural Development: A Historic Context 1811-1940," (adapted from the Washington State Agriculture Studies Unit 1985) (Salem, OR: State Historic Preservation Office, 1989), 16 appendix C.



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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide:    Locally:   

Applicable National

Register Criteria: A X B    C X D   

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions): A    B    C    D    E    F    G   

NHL Criteria: 1

NHL Theme(s):

- I. Peopling Places
  - 3. Migration from outside and within
- V. Developing the American Economy
  - 1. Extraction and production
  - 2. Distribution and consumption
- VII. Transforming the Environment
  - 1. Manipulating the environment and its resources

Areas of Significance: Agriculture, Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1878-1904

Significant Dates: 1878, 1880-1881, 1888

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: David Rettiger, contractor

Historic Contexts: X. Westward Expansion of the British Colonies and the United States, 1763-1898  
G. The Cattlemen's Empire  
3. Ranches

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**State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.*****Summary***

The Spring Hill Farm and Stock Ranch is nationally significant under National Historic Landmark (NHL) Criterion 1 and is associated with the history of the cattle industry. The Spring Hill Farm and Stock Ranch outstandingly represents the transition from the open range to the enclosed holdings of the large cattle companies in the 1880s. This facet of the national theme of the Cattlemen's Empire is not represented by any other property in this part of the southern plains. The enclosure and consolidation of ranches during the late nineteenth century was accompanied by the improvement of range cattle through purebred breeding programs and, in the Flint Hills region, a distinctive practice of fattening southwestern cattle on the bluestem pastures during the summer before shipping them to market in the fall. The contributing buildings, structures, and site collectively compose an entity, a late nineteenth century enclosed cattle ranch and headquarters, which outstandingly illustrate a way of life on the southern plains of the United States. The period of significance extends from the first purchases of ranch land by Stephen Jones in 1878 and extends through 1904, when the ranch lands began to be sold off by Bernard "Barney" Lantry's sons.

***Elaboration*****Brief History of the Western Range Cattle Industry**

Texas was the original home of ranching on a large scale in the United States, and from its vast herds were drawn most of the cattle for the first stocking of the central and northern plains. When Texas was admitted to the Union as a state, it retained the ownership and control of all unoccupied lands within its borders. Even though the state carried out a liberal policy in the disposal of land, most cattle raisers grazed their livestock largely upon the public lands. Men of small means coming to this region were advised not to buy land, but to invest all of their capital in cattle and depend upon the open range for pasturage. As the industry began to show profits, it grew rapidly in the late 1840s and 1850s. The expense of raising cattle was slight because the stock lived the year round on the open range.<sup>18</sup> This was the economic opportunity that attracted young Stephen F. Jones and his family to the state.

The chief problem which cattle raisers of Texas had to face was that of a market. Cattle were either driven to New Orleans or shipped from Galveston. Some were even driven as far as Chicago and other northern markets. However, the movement of southern cattle northward brought on epidemics of Texas fever among the native cattle in Missouri and Illinois; by 1858 the drives generally had been checked.<sup>19</sup> In later years, the problem of Texas fever would also affect the pattern of holding and marketing range cattle raised on the western plains.

Since few Texas cattle were consumed during the four years of the Civil War, returning soldiers from the defeated Confederate armies found their home ranges overflowing with fat, mature cattle for which there seemed to be no market. So, as the leading historian of open-range ranching pronounced, "to the north lay markets, to the north Texans must go with the only movable property left to them, their great herds of cattle."<sup>20</sup> Not until 1867, however, when Joseph McCoy established a shipping point at Abilene, Kansas, on the Kansas Pacific Railroad, did the cattle drives north from Texas become widely successful with thousands of cattle sent yearly to market. By 1868 cattle buyers gathered in force at Abilene. Many were from cornbelt states, but some

<sup>18</sup> Edward Everett Dale, *The Range Cattle Industry: Ranching on the Great Plains from 1865 to 1925* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1930), 3, 5.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 6, 8.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 11, 14.

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were from Colorado, Montana, and Utah. The group included a number of Indian beef contractors seeking to buy herds with which to fill their contracts for feeding the Native Americans of the western and northern reservations.<sup>21</sup>

That same year Stephen F. Jones – who later built the Spring Hill Farm and Stock Ranch – and his brothers moved their stock raising operation from Texas to southeastern Colorado. The three Jones brothers followed the path of earlier cattle drives westward from Texas to New Mexico and then north to Colorado. Other branches of this western route extended to Arizona and on to California. The drive in this direction began in 1866 to supply beef to army posts and miners and later the drive went on to stock the northern ranges. By 1874, for example, the Arkansas River valley for a hundred miles east of Pueblo in southeastern Colorado, had nearly all been occupied by ranchers.<sup>22</sup> By the late 1870s then, the ranchers of Texas and the range cattle industry occupied a great region reaching from the Rio Grande to the Canadian border and from the edge of agricultural settlement on the east to the Rocky Mountains and far beyond.<sup>23</sup> The Jones brothers were a part of this great movement.

Charles Goodnight was a leader of this movement and he had laid out the western route from Texas to New Mexico, Colorado and on to Wyoming; the J. A. Ranch in the Palo Duro Canyon of Texas that he established in 1879 is a National Historic Landmark. Both Goodnight and Stephen Jones invested the profits gained from stockraising in the open range in enclosed ranches and improved cattle. The J. A. Ranch was much larger (700,000 acres) than the Spring Hill Ranch in part because the two ranches fulfilled different functions in the more specialized cattle industry that evolved in the 1880s. During those critical years, cattle from Texas and the western territory began to move to the rich bluestem pasture region of Kansas for grass-fattening before going on to the markets and packinghouses of the Midwest.

Other ranches that have been recognized for their national significance are associated with the extension of cattle ranching to Montana, Wyoming, and Arizona. The Grant-Kohrs Ranch, Deer Lodge, Montana (designated as an NHL in 1960), was established in 1853 with cattle from emigrant wagon trains and then after 1866 stocked with western range cattle. The Tom Sun Ranch in the Sweetwater Valley of Wyoming (designated an NHL in 1960) was an early range cattle operation established in 1872. The Sierra Bonita Ranch in Arizona (designated an NHL in 1964), also established in 1872, was the pioneer ranch in that territory. While the early history of these owner-operated ranches was associated with the initial boom in the range cattle industry, comparison with two other properties illustrates a significant historical and geographical void in the inventory of National Historic Landmark ranches that would be filled by the designation of the Spring Hill Ranch.

Beginning in the Indian Territory that is now Oklahoma, Colonel George Washington Miller built the 101 Ranch (100,000 acres) into what was called the largest diversified farm and cattle ranch in the United States after 1892. Although the ranch was particularly significant for its association with the remarkable Black cowboy, Bill Pickett, the complementary operations of farming and stockraising were similar to the type of ranching possible on the Spring Hill Ranch because of the greater rainfall and better soils of the eastern plains. These ranches and the Henry Frawley Ranch in western South Dakota (established 1890, 4,750 acres) represented the more intensive and complex system that developed on enclosed ranches during the cattle industry's mature stage after open-range ranching had run its course.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 41

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 51-52, 72.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 56.

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By 1877 the ranch cattle industry had grown to such an extent that Scotch and English investors began to inquire about possible profits in ranching on the Great Plains. The price of cattle and beef rose steadily after 1880; the fact that prices remained at a high level resulted in enormous profits, especially for the men who produced young cattle at a relatively low price like Stephen F. Jones. This market enabled Jones and his brothers to sell their range operation in Colorado and reinvest in Chase County, Kansas. The year of 1884 marked the peak of prosperity for the range cattle business and the open ranges were seriously overstocked. In the terrible winter of 1886-87, deep snows and heavy winds were followed by intense cold. Cattle on the plains died by the thousands and many of the British and eastern men engaged in ranching were completely discouraged and quit the business. After this disaster, cattlemen began to reduce their herds and change their methods. In addition to contributing to the tendency to reduce the size of herds and ranches, the contraction in the business for almost ten years led to better care of animals and improved quality at the same time. Although profits improved in the late 1890s, the days of extremely large scale operations and enormous profits were gone forever.<sup>24</sup>

**Significance of the Flint Hills Area to Enclosed Ranching**

The area of native bluestem pasture known as the Flint Hills of Kansas is the largest remnant prairie in the United States (nearly five million acres). In the center of the region, Chase County has a higher proportion of agricultural land in native pasture (about 83%) than any other bluestem county. Areas of large pastures are located in the north, northwestern, and southeastern part of the county.<sup>25</sup>

From a cattleman's viewpoint, therefore, H. R. Hilton, a manager and partner in one of the early large ranches established in Chase County, argued in 1928 that the Flint Hills region was misnamed because the lime rock and bluestem pastures actually were the outstanding characteristics of this 55 by 130 mile tract. In his opinion, this unique block of pasture combined "more advantages for the breeding and feeding of livestock than are to be found elsewhere in the United States west of the Mississippi River."<sup>26</sup> According to historian James C. Malin, the term "Flint Hills" occurred only occasionally in the early accounts of settlement and differentiated the grazing on the hills themselves from the farming lands of the bottoms and the upland prairies. During the early twentieth century, the term was more generally used, especially by those from outside the area, but Malin, like Hilton, supported the use of the name, "Bluestem Pasture Region," adopted by the Kansas State Board of Agriculture in 1929.<sup>27</sup>

Although the bluestem-covered hills of Chase County had served as open range since the 1850s, Stephen F. Jones was one of the leaders of a new and decisive trend toward enclosed ranching. During the decade of the 1870s, there were four types of agricultural activity represented in the Bluestem region: general subsistence farming on a small scale, raising corn to be fed to livestock on a commercial basis, the breeding of fine stock, and the maturing and grazing of transient cattle. During the 1880s, the number of small farmers declined. Livestock raising that emphasized fine cattle and the improvement of herds flourished in a boom generated by new men and money from the Southwest and Colorado, the East, and even Canada, England, and Scotland. In the process of assembling land for these extensive operations, free range in the Flint Hills quickly disappeared. In 1882 nearly all the pasture land in Chase County was unfenced and open free range, on which the adjoining valley farmers could pasture their livestock at will. Within two years, practically all of this grassland was enclosed by fences. The same rapid change took place in all of the adjoining seven counties within the bluestem

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 78, 80, 91, 94, 97-101.

<sup>25</sup> Walter Kollmorgen and David Simonett, "Grazing Operations in the Flint Hills," *Annals, Association of American Geographers* 55 (1965): 260, 262, 264.

<sup>26</sup> H. R. Hilton, "The Bluestem Limestone Pastures of Kansas," *Twenty-Sixth Biennial Report Kansas Board of Agriculture* (Topeka: Kansas State Printing, 1929), 191.

<sup>27</sup> James C. Malin, "An Introduction to the History of the Bluestem-Pasture Region of Kansas: A Study in Adaptation to Geographical Environment," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (1942): 7-8.

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area.<sup>28</sup> Stephen Jones, purchasing land in 1878 and completing this ranch headquarters in 1881, was at the forefront of this transition. While board and stone fences had been built around the earlier pastures and fields, nationwide it was the use of barbed wire which made enclosure possible. The use of wire began slowly about 1879 and 1880, was widespread by 1883, and fencing was essentially completed by 1885.

The next phase in the livestock economy of the Bluestem region was introduced by the extension of railroads and quarantines against Texas cattle and Texas fever. In a series of laws culminating in 1885, Kansas prohibited the movement of Texas cattle into eastern and central Kansas. Cattle from Colorado and the far Southwest, however, were still allowed. But after the cattle tick was identified as the transmitting agent in 1889 and control techniques such as dipping were developed in the 1890s, a gradual increase in the pasturing of transient cattle directly from Texas added to the supply from Colorado and the far Southwest.<sup>29</sup> Historian Charles Wood, in his study of the Kansas beef industry, concluded that the railroads helped to establish the Flint Hills as a distinct area during the eighties and nineties by facilitating the shipment of cattle. Both the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe and Missouri, Kansas, Texas Railroads allowed owners of cattle to pay the rates for a single long haul from the point of origin to the final destination at a slaughtering point rather than the higher charges that would have resulted from the short hauls that actually occurred. Railroads crossed the Bluestem pasture region, particularly the Santa Fe, and connected the southwest with the major markets for beef cattle such as Kansas City, Omaha, and Chicago. As Malin pointed out to document the significance of the bluestem region, the number of Southwestern beef cattle handled annually by rail through Kansas in 1897 was six to eight times as great as during the Texas-drive period, and the number of transient cattle in the bluestem region alone in the late 1920s was four to five times larger than the aggregate totals for the wild years at Abilene, Ellsworth, and Dodge City. For that reason, Malin insisted that the bluestem-pasture business was not a local industry only, but "a vital intersectional link in the national economic system." To the extent that the Kansas bluestem contributed to the growth and economic well-being of several large Midwestern cities, as well as to the essential meat supplies of the nation, the history of the Flint Hills areas was also regional and national history.<sup>30</sup>

The financial aspect of the cattle business limited the number of small stock farms and ranches. It required a large investment with a slow turnover and heavy risks. Since enclosure then, the main features of the bluestem region have been large stock operations and large pastures which involved investment beyond the means of the traditional family-owned farm. In the twentieth century, urban investors – grain and livestock commission men, doctors, lawyers, and bankers – were represented in the business as owners or majority partners. Contrary to the popular notion that the Flint Hills remained grassland because of the region's rocky soil and topography, the fact that relatively small areas of upland are cultivated resulted from a combination of historical, sociological, economic, and accidental circumstances. Areas of tillable soil were left in grass because they were largely absentee-owned and operated on a simple summer grazing system under which steers were marketed in the late summer and early fall.<sup>31</sup> The fundamental stages in the development of the livestock industry and the economic realities of the Bluestem pasture region were evident in the history of the Spring Hill Ranch. The Jones and Lantry families helped establish that pattern in the nineteenth century.

### **Purebred Cattle in the Flint Hills**

The bluestem-pasture region has had several significant functions in the cattle industry. The most distinct has been as a grass-fattening area between the cattle-growing ranges of the southwestern plains and the central markets for grass-fattened cattle, or the feedlots of the cornbelt. Since the late nineteenth century, the region has been the largest such commercial grazing area for transient cattle in the United States. Other functions were

<sup>28</sup> Hilton, "Bluestem Limestone Pastures," 189, 191.

<sup>29</sup> Malin, "Bluestem-Pasture Region," 16-17.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 23; Kollmorgen and Simonett, "Grazing Operations," 274.

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feedlot finishing and the maturing of young cattle. In addition, the bluestem region served as a breeding area for thoroughbred livestock.<sup>32</sup> A few of the registered cattle breeders in Kansas recognized the value of these lime-enriched pastures. Hilton suggested an expansion of breeding in the Bluestem pasture region because it had unexcelled advantages for young and growing stock, due to its climate, comparatively dry winters, lime-filled grass to eat and lime water to drink. It also had grains and fodders for winter use, all rich in the needed elements that insure good hoofs, teeth, bones and muscle and a healthy, vigorous growth.<sup>33</sup>

Both the grazing of transient cattle and the improvement of range cattle by purebred breeding were discussed by historian Charles Wood in his study of the Kansas beef industry. Besides grazing transient cattle, a few stockmen in the Flint Hills kept breeding herds; several were purebred cattle used for the production of improved breeding stock for the range. According to Wood, "one of the most important contributions that Kansas cattlemen of the late nineteenth century made to the western beef business was in the area of upbreeding." This was an integral part of the transition from open range to enclosed ranches. Since they were more valuable, improved stock deserved more winter feeding and water close at hand, and required supervision during the calving period to minimize the risk of losses. This was possible only on a well-managed ranch. After the turn of the century, improving livestock was the only way to boost production without enlarging landholdings. As Wood concluded, "it became increasingly important that as much beef as possible be acquired from each animal, and that the cattle produce this beef with a minimum of feed."<sup>34</sup> Throughout the twentieth century, Kansas continued to be very significant in the production of purebred cattle.

### **History of Spring Hill Farm and Stock Ranch**

In 1849, shortly after Texas joined the United States, Stephen F. Jones, a twenty-three year old newlywed, moved to Van Zandt County, Texas where he began ranching. Stephen was the oldest of three brothers born in Tennessee. In 1869 Stephen, Peyton, and Jim Jones decided to take part of their cattle herd to the open range of eastern Colorado. They established the headquarters of their J. J. Ranch in Smith Canyon south of Las Animas, Colorado in 1871.<sup>35</sup> When the Santa Fe Railroad was completed to eastern Colorado, it ran through Chase County, Kansas and connected the Colorado range with the cattle market in Kansas City. The rail line was undoubtedly one of the key factors when the Jones brothers looked towards expanding their cattle operations.

In the years of settlement after the Civil War, western stockmen recognized that "the grasses growing from this soil [of Chase County and the Flint Hills generally] are superior in their quality for fattening stock, and the sheltered sides of the bluffs, the nooks at the head of the valleys with the abounding timber... make this a peculiarly good country for the raising and fattening of cattle."<sup>36</sup> One of the first to act on this assessment was Stephen Jones. He came to Chase County in August, 1878 and brought approximately two thousand head of "fine Colorado cattle" with him when he arrived in Kansas. As the *Chase County Courant* of August 23, 1878 reported, the Colorado cattle unloaded at Cottonwood station by Mr. Jones were "the first of an installment of 10,000 that are to be brought to Chase County from that state."<sup>37</sup>

The Spring Hill Ranch was intended to serve as an intermediate stop to fatten Colorado range cattle from the J.

<sup>32</sup> Malin, "Bluestem-Pasture Region," 6.

<sup>33</sup> Hilton, "Bluestem Limestone Pastures," 192-193.

<sup>34</sup> Wood, *Kansas Beef Industry*, 6, 9. For Wood's conclusions on the importance of upbreeding in the nineteenth century and twentieth century, see p. 25 and p. 98, respectively.

<sup>35</sup> Statements referring to the Jones family history in Texas and southern Colorado are based on the genealogy and local history research of Mrs. Julia Hobbs. Page references are not available at this time.

<sup>36</sup> Snell, "History of the Z-Bar Ranch," 2.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

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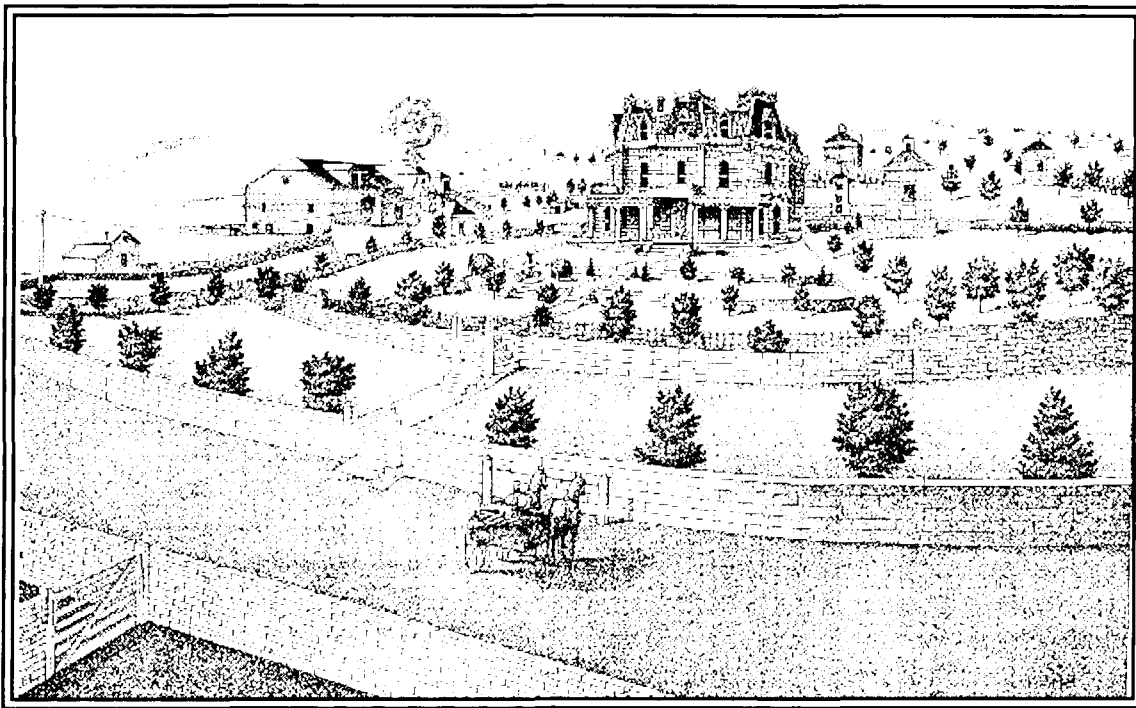
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J. Ranch for the Kansas City market. But after just four years, the brothers sold the J. J. ranch to the well-capitalized Prairie Land and Cattle Company which had been formed by the Scottish American Mortgage Company. The Prairie Cattle Company was one of the largest corporate ranching enterprises in the West with its operations largely located in Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. By 1885 the company was said to own nearly 150,000 head of cattle and to have paid heavy dividends.<sup>38</sup>

On August 28, 1878, Stephen Jones bought a 160-acre farm a mile west and two miles north of Strong City. The property consisted mostly of bottom land on either side of Fox Creek. This became the nucleus of the Spring Hill Farm and Stock Ranch. Jones purchased acreage adjoining the original property in lots as small as forty acres and larger than a thousand. He eventually purchased seven thousand acres.<sup>39</sup>



An 1887 lithograph of the "Spring Hill Farm and Stock Ranch"

On September 19, 1878 the *Chase County Leader* reported that Jones had started building a residence on the property and referred to him as the "cattle man from Colorado." Two years later, Jones began building the impressive stone house and ranch headquarters that now stands on the hill overlooking Fox Creek.<sup>40</sup> In 1881 Jones completed his elaborate Second Empire mansion, large three story barn, and numerous outbuildings, all of native limestone. The cost of the buildings was reputed to have been \$40,000, of which \$20,000 to \$25,000 was spent on the house. The twenty men employed to complete the buildings created such an aura of activity that local legend has it that travelers who passed by the construction thought they had reached nearby Strong City.<sup>41</sup> The contractor for the project was David Rettiger, co-owner of Finslie, Rettiger & Company which had "probably the finest quarries in the state."<sup>42</sup> Rettiger was also the contractor for the Lower Fox Creek Schoolhouse, completed in 1882 on land donated by Jones, and for the Chase County Courthouse, as well as for

<sup>38</sup> Hickey, *Ghost Settlement*, 127; Dale, *Range Cattle Industry*, 97.

<sup>39</sup> Snell, "History of Z-Bar Ranch," 4-5.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 3, 6.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 7.

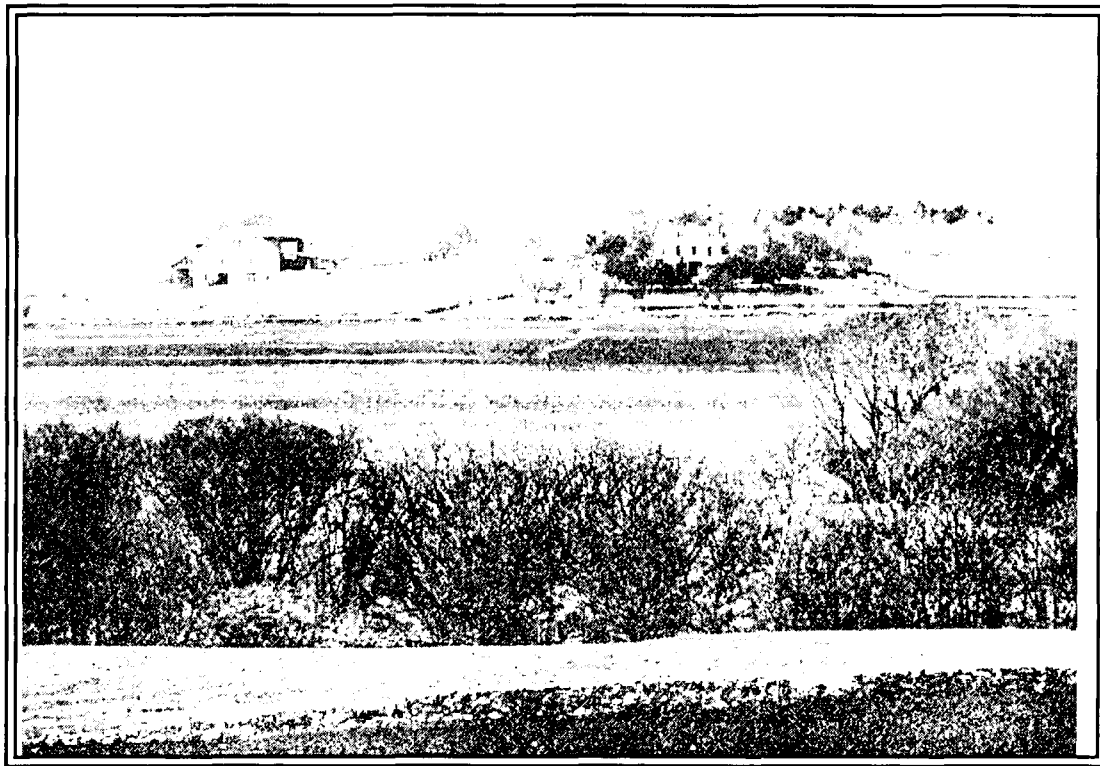
<sup>42</sup> Strong City (Kan.) *Independent*, 2 November 1881, quoted in Snell, "History of Z-Bar Ranch," 6.

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Historic view looking west across Fox Creek at the Spring Hill ranch headquarters.

other prominent buildings such as the Montezuma Hotel in Las Vegas, New Mexico.<sup>43</sup> Although the designer/architect for Jones' impressive Second Empire ranch house is unknown, the residence bears a striking resemblance to the Chase County Courthouse, which was designed by prominent Kansas architect John G. Haskell. Many of the workmen for the courthouse were employed by Jones, including L. P. Jenson, "one of the best carpenters in the state."

Although the coverage by newspapers indicated that local residents were impressed with the activity resulting from Jones' decision to shift operations to Chase County, few probably realized that his movement would lead others to begin a regional trend in ranching on the southern plains. As local historian Joseph Hickey noted, after Jones moved to the region, "other large ranchers and cattlemen began to flock to Chase County, and a short time later several large cattle businesses and real estate corporations did the same." In the early 1880s, for example, the Western Land and Cattle Company became a dominant operation in the county, and together with the Eastern Kansas Land and Loan Company of Atchison, "it helped initiate the large-scale practice of grass-fattening Texas steers, a system that within a decade or so altered every aspect of Chase County's economic and social life."<sup>44</sup>

Led by the example set by men such as Stephen Jones, in November 1882 the Western Company purchased about ninety five thousand acres of land directly west of the Spring Hill Ranch on Diamond Creek in northwest Chase County. Enclosure of the grassland in fenced pastures was practiced on a larger scale by the Western Cattle Company, but the reorganization and intensification of the early settlement pattern of stockraising that combined grazing on the high prairies with fattening cattle and hogs on the grain raised in the fertile creek-bottom fields, was led by ranchers such as Stephen Jones. Jones was also committed to the improvement of

<sup>43</sup> Snell, "History of Z-Bar Ranch," 6, 8.

<sup>44</sup> Hickey, *Ghost Settlement*, 116, 122.



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livestock by purebred breeding. At this time, there was a strong demand from western ranchers and cattle companies on the open range for breeding stock to improve their herds. Jones specialized in Hereford, Shorthorn, and Galloway stock as well as Hambletonian thoroughbred and graded studs. An 1883 account presented the following description of Jones' ranch. "All his land is enclosed with stone fence. He has about 300 acres under cultivation. His principal business is raising stock. He has in his herd thoroughbred Hereford, Galloway, and Durham stock to a considerable number. His hogs are of the Berkshire and Poland China breeds. He also raises some horses and sheep. He has the best improved farm in Chase County."<sup>45</sup> According to a contemporary reporter who visited Spring Hill Ranch in 1885, "Mr. Jones evidently intends to reach perfection in horses as well as in cattle. A large herd of very fine English Berkshire hogs are also worthy of note... No one in the State will be found who is more interested in the improvement of live stock, and contributes more cheerfully to that end."<sup>46</sup>

The 1885 Kansas decennial census recorded the extent of Jones' farming operations in addition to ranching. By this date, his seven thousand acres were all under fence. Of this, ninety-six hundred rods were stone, three hundred and twenty rods were wood, and nine hundred and sixty rods of fence was wire. At the time of the enumeration, he had four hundred cattle, two-hundred swine, thirty horses, four mules, and eight milch cows. Ten acres were in winter wheat, thirty acres in rye, two hundred and twenty-five acres were corn, twenty-five acres of oats, a half acre each of Irish and sweet potatoes, thirty acres sorghum, and one hundred acres were in tame grasses. His orchard included two hundred and one apple trees, sixty peach, one hundred and six plum, thirty-one cherry, and eight pear trees. The peach, plum, and cherry trees were producing by this date, but most of the apple trees were too young to bear fruit. One quarter acre was planted in raspberries, another quarter to blackberries, and one to grapes.<sup>47</sup>

After the sale of the Colorado ranch in 1882, Stephen Jones bought an interest in the lumber and hardware business of Hildebrand Brothers in Strong City. One year later he and his brother, Peyton, established the Strong City National Bank. On February 13, 1888 Jones and his wife, Louisa, sold the Spring Hill Ranch to Bernard "Barney" Lantry for \$95,000. Included were all the improvements and land except for a strip eight feet wide and 3¼ miles long off the west side of sections 19, 30, 31, and lots 8, 21, and 22 in section 18, and two acres which Jones had donated to school district number 14 in 1882. The sale involved sixth-eight hundred acres. Also in 1888, the National Bank was liquidated and Peyton Jones opened a new private bank in Strong City. Stephen and Louisa Jones moved to Kansas City but returned to Strong City by 1895.<sup>48</sup>

Even though Jones sold the main part of the Spring Hill Ranch to Barney Lantry on February 13, 1888, the property continued as an exemplary stockraising operation. Lantry made his fortune as a railroad construction contractor, but developed other business interests later. He began buying land in Chase County in 1877 and eventually owned some fifteen thousand acres. In 1883 Lantry was described as raising many cattle, sheep, and hogs, "paying special attention to the breeding of fine stock" on his Deer Park Place stock farm. The *Chase County Leader* reported on December 17, 1885 that "the Barney Lantry farm west of Strong City is one of the finest in Kansas." Lantry raised Herefords, Short Horns, and Polled Angus thoroughbred and graded cattle on his ranch. By 1887, just before he purchased the additional acreage of the Spring Hill Ranch, Lantry owned

<sup>45</sup> A. T. Andreas and W. G. Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago: A.T. Andreas, 1883), 1361.

<sup>46</sup> Snell, "History of Z-Bar Ranch," 8.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>48</sup> Register of Deeds, Chase County, Kansas Deed Book 27, 210-212. Cited in Snell, "History of Z-Bar Ranch," 9.

Unless otherwise noted, the chronology of property ownership and name changes for the Spring Hill Farm and Stock Ranch is based on original research in deed records by Joseph W. Snell. Full citations are listed in "History of Z-Bar Ranch." Details of the business operations of the Jones brothers and Stephen Jones' return to Strong City are based on genealogical and local history research by Mrs. Julia Hobbs. Page references are not available at this time.

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fifty-eight hundred acres. Of that, ten were in orchard, one-hundred and fifty were in timber, and twenty-five in tame grass and the remainder was a stock farm. The value of his ranch was estimated at \$175,000.<sup>49</sup> Barney Lantry died in 1895 and his sons inherited the Spring Hill Ranch property.

When Henry Lantry died in 1904, the family began to dispose of its land in Chase County. On March 1, Charles J. Lantry, in whose name the land was recorded, sold 9,682 acres, including the old Spring Hill property, to C. C. Patten of Reading in Lyon County, Kansas. The purchase price was over \$180,000. The remaining land was sold in 1905 to F. W. Freeman of Topeka, Kansas. After five years, Patten and his wife sold one thousand and eighty acres, including the stone buildings of the Spring Hill Ranch headquarters, to Otto Benninghoven on March 15, 1909. Mr. Benninghoven died before the land was paid for, but his widow, Flora, and her sons, Curt, Fritz, and Rhein, were able to pay off their mortgage on May 1, 1917.<sup>50</sup>

Along with the Benninghovens, other Chase County farmers and ranchers benefitted from the doubling of cattle prices between 1910 and 1920. Because of a recession in the early 1920s, the mortgaged indebtedness for Kansas farmers and ranchers peaked in 1924. After the stock market crash in 1929, meat consumption declined as early as 1930 and cattle prices dropped to a low in 1933. The demand for meat and a corresponding increase in cattle prices began to rise again in the late 1930s but did not reach the 1919 and 1928 levels until 1942.<sup>51</sup> Just prior to the depression and drought of the 1930s, the average prices of grassland advanced to \$50 and \$60 per acre and then fell back to \$20 to \$30. During the depression much land changed ownership, usually in the direction of owners of nonfarm capital.<sup>52</sup>

From the depression to the 1970s, the upward trend of land prices in Chase County along with the inherent risks of ranching combined to channel the ownership of bluestem pastureland into nonfarm hands. Because capital investment is so essential, much of the ranching activity in the Bluestem pasture region has management and financial ties with operators in Texas and the Southwest. Modern ownership patterns of grassland in the region have been determined by nonfarm capital coming from such distant places as Boston, San Diego, and San Antonio, and more importantly from nearby cities in Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma.<sup>53</sup>

Taking advantage of the depressed land values, George H. Davis, a Kansas City, Missouri, grain dealer, began to reassemble the Spring Hill/Deer Park Place ranches in 1935. First he purchased 10,000 acres from Lester and Beulah Urschel on January 2, and then he bought the one thousand and eighty acres from Flora Benninghoven with the old Spring Hill Ranch buildings on April 2. In these transactions, Davis acquired approximately the same land that had been included in the original Jones and Lantry ranches.

George Davis was president of Davis-Noland Merrill Grain Company in Kansas City, Missouri. The property in Chase County became known as the Davis Ranch though he transferred title to the grain company on January 30, 1935. When Davis died in 1955, the name was changed to the Davis-Noland-Merrill Grain Company Ranch and the ranch was operated under this name until August 25, 1975, when the company changed its name to the Z-Bar Cattle Company and the ranch became the Z-Bar Ranch. The ranch was put into a trust managed by Boatmen's First National Bank of Kansas City on November 26, 1986.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Snell, "History of Z-Bar Ranch," 9-11.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>51</sup> Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 73, 134, 140, 145; Wood, *Kansas Beef*, 1976-198.

<sup>52</sup> Kollmergen and Simonett, "Grazing Operations," 289.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 289-290.

<sup>54</sup> Snell, "History of the Z-Bar Ranch," 10-12.

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Historic view looking west towards the Lower Fox Creek Schoolhouse

The ownership of the Lower Fox Creek Schoolhouse and the land associated with it reverted back to the ranch in 1930 when the school closed. It had opened on September 1, 1882 with Dora Peer as the first teacher. The average enrollment was nineteen students. After its closing in 1930, the land owner used the building for hay storage. In 1968, fourteen Garden clubs in the mid-east district of Kansas began restoring the school. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. The "Spring Hill Farm and Stock Ranch House" had previously been listed on the National Register in 1971, and was one of the first listings in the state of Kansas.

In July 1988, the National Audubon Society acquired an option to purchase the Z Bar (Spring Hill) Ranch. That option expired in July 1990 and was not renewed. The Society's suggestion that the property be purchased and designated as a unit of the National Park System generated substantial local interest, however, in 1989 a group of Chase County citizens formed the Flint Hills National Monument Committee. In August 1989, at the request of the Kansas Congressional delegation, the National Park Service conducted a special resource study to evaluate the ranch property as a potential addition to the National Park System. Recommendations were included within the resulting report that the Spring Hill (Z Bar) Ranch may be eligible for both National Historic Landmark designation and National Natural Landmark designation.<sup>25</sup>

With the encouragement of the Kansas Congressional delegation, the National Park Trust purchased the Spring Hill Ranch in June 1994. Legislation has been introduced in Congress that would designate the ranch as a unit of the National Park System. The unique public private partnership pending in Congress aims to ensure that the ranch will be preserved principally through private ownership. At the same time, the ranch would receive the national recognition it deserves.

### **Comparison of Spring Hill to NHH and Area Ranches**

As a specialized operation of medium size, the Spring Hill Farm and Stock Ranch was an innovative example of practices that later characterized both larger and smaller ranches in the Bluestem Pasture region. A reconnaissance survey of ranches in this area resulted in the listing of three ranches to the National Register of Historic Places. Two of these are in Chase County — the Whitney Ranch, first established by the Western Land

<sup>25</sup> "Special Resource Study," Summary

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and Cattle Company in 1882, and the Pioneer Bluffs Ranch established by Charles Rogler in 1864 and developed by his son, Henry, in the early twentieth century. The third is the Leithoff-Powers Ranch in Geary County. Of these, only the Whitney Ranch is comparable in its operations.

In 1882, not long after Stephen Jones built the headquarters of the Spring Hill ranch, the Western Land and Cattle Company began construction of ranch buildings and extensive fencing on a seventy-five thousand acre tract of land purchased from the Santa Fe Railroad. With an additional 20,000 acres purchased from the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad, the Company occupied most of the northwest corner of Chase County. Known as the 101 Ranch, the property lay astride Diamond Creek; directly to the east the Spring Hill Ranch was located on Fox Creek and both tributaries fed into the Cottonwood River.<sup>56</sup> After 1894 the 101 Ranch often was referred to as the Whitney Ranch after its manager, Sidney E. Whitney. On a larger scale, this ranch followed much the same system as the Spring Hill Ranch combining the grazing of transient cattle, improvement of range cattle, and some farming.

Such an operation was reflected in the buildings and organization of the ranch headquarters which resembled the Spring Hill example. There was a large stone ranch house sited on a hill overlooking Diamond Creek, but the adjacent washhouse and privy were constructed of wood unlike the more permanent stone outbuildings at Spring Hill. The Whitney Ranch once had a large bunkhouse for cowboys and farm hands, but that has been demolished. Like the Spring Hill Ranch, the Whitney ranch once had a two-story stone barn, but the structure burned about 1900 and was rebuilt as a smaller one-story structure. At the same time, the Cattle Company began to sell off its holdings in Chase County. Three major parts of the vast 101 Ranch were sold, respectively, to Whitney, L. J. Lips, and Joab Mulvane; smaller segments went to neighboring ranchers.<sup>57</sup> This devolution into smaller units of production paralleled the breakup of the Spring Hill Ranch by Barney Lantry's sons in 1904. While the Whitney Ranch is a significant property, its headquarters lack the completeness of building inventory found at Spring Hill. Additionally, no other ranch remains in Kansas which compares with the elaborate construction of not only the main residence at Spring Hill, but also of the large barn and extensive outbuildings.

The operation of Pioneer Bluffs Ranch in southeast Chase County also reflected a pattern of economic reorganization that affected the Spring Hill Ranch. The Pioneer Bluffs Ranch was developed by Charles Rogler beginning in 1864. Unlike Stephen Jones and Barney Lantry, Rogler started with a homestead of relatively modest size and gradually acquired land. When he died in 1888, the ranch included eighteen hundred acres. By the time his estate was divided among the five Rogler children in 1900, it had grown to four thousand and twenty acres. A son, Henry, purchased the original quarter section with the ranch buildings from his sister in 1902; and his stock farm eventually included 2,720 acres. The Rogler ranch was roughly similar in size to the remnant of the Spring Hill Ranch operated by Otto and Flora Benninghoven during the period from 1909 to 1935.

The plan and buildings of the Pioneer Bluffs Ranch were generally similar to those of the Spring Hill Ranch, but the details indicate changes in ranching over time and the difference between more well-capitalized ranchers and smaller family-owned operations. The Rogler ranch was located between Crocker Creek and the bluffs. Beginning in 1908, Henry Rogler moved the house and barn constructed in 1872 northeast of their original sites and built a new house. He then built a large gambrel-roofed barn in 1915 that was typical of the type promoted by the agricultural extension service of the Kansas State Agricultural College.<sup>58</sup> Thus the Rogler ranch

<sup>56</sup> Kollmorgen and Simonett, "Grazing Operations," 260.

<sup>57</sup> Michele Risdal, "Whitney Ranch Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, March 13, 1995).

<sup>58</sup> Martha Hagedorn-Krass, "Pioneer Bluffs Ranch Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination

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buildings represented the popular architectural forms of the early twentieth century period, but continued the functions of the farm and stock ranch established earlier in the 1870s and 1880s.

The Leithoff-Powers Ranch was also known as the Deer Horn Ranch. Lebrecht Louis Leithoff and his wife Henrietta purchased eighty acres in 1873; by 1885, 673 contiguous acres were held at this location. A son, Charles Leithoff, sold the property to Pomeroy Powers in 1905 who acquired additional acreage and operated the ranch. His son operated a large cattle operation, and in 1915, 1,710 acres were associated with the ranch.<sup>59</sup> The historic buildings on the Leithoff-Powers Ranch are built of both limestone and wood, and represent traditional vernacular forms associated with their functions.

Nationwide, several ranches have been designated as National Historic Landmarks. A brief summary of their area of significance and associated historic resources follows:

- Frawley Ranch (South Dakota) The 4,750 acre ranch resulted from the acquisition of several unsuccessful homesteads. Ill-suited for traditional 160-acre homestead farming, Henry J. Frawley purchased the lands for grazing during the 1890s through the first decade of the twentieth century. There are numerous historic resources associated with the ranch, including the remains of seventeen homesteads and other buildings associated with the homesteading period.<sup>60</sup>
- Grant-Kohrs Ranch (Montana) John Grant, the original owner of the ranch, is credited with founding the range cattle industry in Montana. John Grant sold the ranch to Conrad Kohrs in 1866, known as the most famous cattleman of the Northwest. The ranch is part of the National Park System. A frame house from 1862 remains, as do other historic structures including log cabins and corrals.<sup>61</sup>
- J. A. Ranch (Texas) Owned by Irishman John G. Adair, the J. A. Ranch was managed by Charles Goodnight, a significant pioneer cattlemen and later scientific breeder of range cattle in the West. After blazing several important cattle trails, he directed the JA enterprise between 1879 and 1889 when it encompassed seven hundred thousand acres. He developed outstanding cattle by mixing Hereford bulls with his Texas longhorns. Foreseeing the end of the open range, he ended his connection with the J. A. Ranch in 1889. Resources include the main ranch house, bunk house, Post Office, corral, stables, and two ranch hands houses.<sup>62</sup>
- King Ranch (Texas) The King Ranch was founded in 1852 by Richard King, who purchased a Spanish land grant of seventy five thousand acres. The ranch grew until the mid-twentieth century to include 1,225,000 acres; it is now the largest ranch in the nation. The present ranch house dates from 1912, but the site does retain a commissary building from the nineteenth century.<sup>63</sup>
- Los Alamos Ranch House (California) The golden era of private ranching in Mexican California began with

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Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, July 16, 1990).

<sup>59</sup> Martha Hagedorn-Krass and Michele Risdal, "Leithoff-Powers Ranch Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, April 7, 1995).

<sup>60</sup> Scott Gerloff, "Frawley Historic Ranch," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, July 1974).

<sup>61</sup> Ray Mattison, "John A. Grant-Conrad Kohrs Ranch," (National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, National Park Service, August 10, 1959).

<sup>62</sup> S. Mendinghall, "J. A. Ranch," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, November 7, 1978).

<sup>63</sup> Robert M. Utley, "King Ranch," (National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, National Park Service, December 15, 1958).

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the secularization of mission property in the mid-1830s. Private ranchos were large tracts of land which were simple, self-sustaining economic units. Los Alamos Rancho was granted to Jose Antonio de la Guerra y Carrillo in 1839, and consisted of 48,803 acres. An adobe hacienda remains from the Mexican period of California settlement.<sup>64</sup>

- 101 Ranch Historic District (Oklahoma) The 101 Ranch was established by Colonel George Washington Miller in 1879. After he was forced to relocate from the Cherokee Strip in 1892, he moved to the present site and leased one hundred thousand acres. He then built the largest diversified farm and cattle ranch in the United States, famous for its farm crops, oil wells, livestock, manufactured products, and its wild west show which featured Bill Pickett, a prominent African-American cowboy who invented the art of "bull-dogging." Twelve buildings, all constructed after the turn of the century, are associated with the district.<sup>65</sup>

- San Bernardino Ranch (Arizona) The two hundred eighty-eight acre district represents the original Mexican land grant ranch from 1821 which provided for a one hundred thousand acre ranch which spanned both sides of the present United States-Mexico border. The ranch supplied beef, fruit, and vegetables to the surrounding settlements, military posts, and Indian agencies. The ranch house, icehouse, wash house, commissary/bunkhouse, water tank, garage, and nearby granary are the extant resources.<sup>66</sup>

- Sierra Bonita Ranch (Arizona) Colonel Henry Hooker founded the Sierra Bonita Ranch in 1872, which was the first Anglo-American ranch in Arizona. It was founded to feed the military posts, Indian agencies, and mining camps in the territory, which was the basis for the Arizona cattle industry. With the importation of Hereford graded stock in the 1880s, Hooker fenced portions of his land and planted some crops. The contributing resources include the hacienda ranch house, adobe and plank corrals, barn, and adobe bunkhouse.<sup>67</sup>

- Tom Sun Ranch (Wyoming) Tom Sun established his ranch at Devils Gate on the Oregon Trail in the early 1870s. Typical of a mid-sized ranch of the open range period, Sun utilized the mountain ranges to serve as the "northern fence" of his ranch, also incorporating barbed wire fence to stake out approximately fourteen square miles. Several log outbuildings, corrals, and the ranch house, remain.<sup>68</sup>

- Swan Land and Cattle Company Headquarters (Wyoming) 5,614 acres remain of the more than one million acres owned at one time by the Swan Lake and Cattle Company, a prominent company organized in Scotland. The company is representative of the many foreign concerns that flourished during the Cattlemen's Empire in the West. Four buildings remain: a general store, manager's house, office building, and barn.<sup>69</sup>

- Warner's Ranch (California) Also associated with the sub-theme *California Trails and Settlement of California*, Warner's ranch served first as a camping spot for overland emigrants on the Gila River trail, then as a trading post/store for the gold seekers of 1849, then later as a stage station on the Butterfield Southern

<sup>64</sup> Charles W. Snell, "Rancho Los Alamos," (National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, National Park Service, November 7, 1963).

<sup>65</sup> Marcia M. Greenlee, "101 Ranch Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, September 27, 1974).

<sup>66</sup> Ann E. Huston, "San Bernardino Ranch," (draft, n.d.) National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, National Park Service.

<sup>67</sup> Marilyn Larew, "Sierra Bonita Ranch," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, September 8, 1983).

<sup>68</sup> Stephen Lissandrello, "Tom Sun Ranch," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, November 24, 1978).

<sup>69</sup> Stephen Lissandrello, "Swan Land and Cattle Company Headquarters," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, April 3, 1978).

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Overland mail route. It contains the remains of two original adobe buildings.<sup>70</sup>

A review of these existing National Historic Landmarks ranches associated with the Cattlemen's Empire reveals not only a geographic gap in the listed resources, but a lack of representatives from the period of enclosed ranching as well. Although some of the existing NHL-designated ranches eventually employed enclosed cattle ranching operations and/or practiced controlled breeding practices of livestock, none were established solely with the intent of fattening range cattle on enclosed pastures prior to shipping to market. Utilizing a variety of fencing materials, the enclosed ranches in the West helped transform the expanding cattle industry, often considered the initial base of western settlement, from a primitive frontier activity into a modern industry.<sup>71</sup> As significant capital investment was required, small-scale operations were forced out and free-range cattle operations either adapted or were also forced out. The quality of stock improved, not only because enclosed pastures relied on dependable water sources, but also because the cost of such facilities required that more attention be spent in maintaining the best animals. Fencing allowed animals to be segregated, which not only resulted in better management of rangelands and reduced the risk of overgrazing, but also prevented indiscriminate breeding. The quality of the stock could be controlled by the rancher and not by the whims of nature. Lastly, in supplying meat for a national market (as opposed to a local or regional market as the majority of existing NHL listed ranches) Stephen Jones, and later Barney Lantry, participated in a key facet of this nation's economic and developmental history.

The ranch house is one of the most impressive buildings in the region. Rivaling the nearby courthouse in materials, scale, and design, the elaborate three-story Second Empire mansion is a unique combination of a sophisticated architectural style with local vernacular building traditions. The immense three-story limestone barn and comparatively elaborate outbuildings at the Spring Hill ranch headquarters are indicative of a new era of settlement on the Great Plains. Only well-capitalized operations could establish such an extensive compound in a relatively short span of time. The use of native limestone serves to further emphasize the cohesiveness of a composite group of ranch buildings that function together as a single unit.

<sup>70</sup> Charles W. Snell, "Warner's Ranch," (National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, National Park Service, October 21, 1963).

<sup>71</sup> Noble, *Wood, Brick & Stone*, 128.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☒ Previously Listed in the National Register.
- ☐ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- ☐ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- ☐ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
- ☐ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☒ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other (Specify Repository): Z-Bar Ranch

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreage of Property: 10,894 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	14	712206	4263747
B		714818	4257318
C		718064	4255459
D		718104	4253836
E		714574	4252632
F		716612	4253683
G		709529	4263677

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The boundary of Spring Hill Ranch is shown as the solid line on the accompanying USGS map of the "Strong City Quadrangle."

**Boundary Justification:**

The boundary includes all acreage and ranch lands presently associated with the Z Bar (Spring Hill) Ranch, the Spring Hill Ranch headquarters, and the agricultural buildings of the Lantry Ranch (Deer Park Place). The boundary closely approximates the ranch holdings during the ownership of Barney Lantry. The present day boundary is the result of the re-amalgamation by George H. Davis, beginning in 1935, of the Spring Hill/Deer Park Place Ranches.

**SPRING HILL RANCH**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

**Page 32**

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

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Dale Nimz, Historical Research Assistant

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Telephone: 816-792-1275

Date: March 5, 1996

Edited by: Patty Henry  
National Park Service  
National Historic Landmarks Program  
1849 C St., N.W. (2280)  
Washington, DC 20240

Telephone: (202) 354-2216

DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK  
February 18, 1997



Ranch headquarters; Spring Hill Ranch  
Chase County, Kansas

Brad Finch

2-17-96

National Park Trust; 1776 Massachusetts Ave., NW; Washington, D.C.  
West

1





SPRING HILL RANCH  
Chase County, Kansas  
Ranch headquarters, east facade  
Photo: Brad Finch, 2/96







Ranch house & terraces; Spring Hill Ranch

Chase County, Kansas

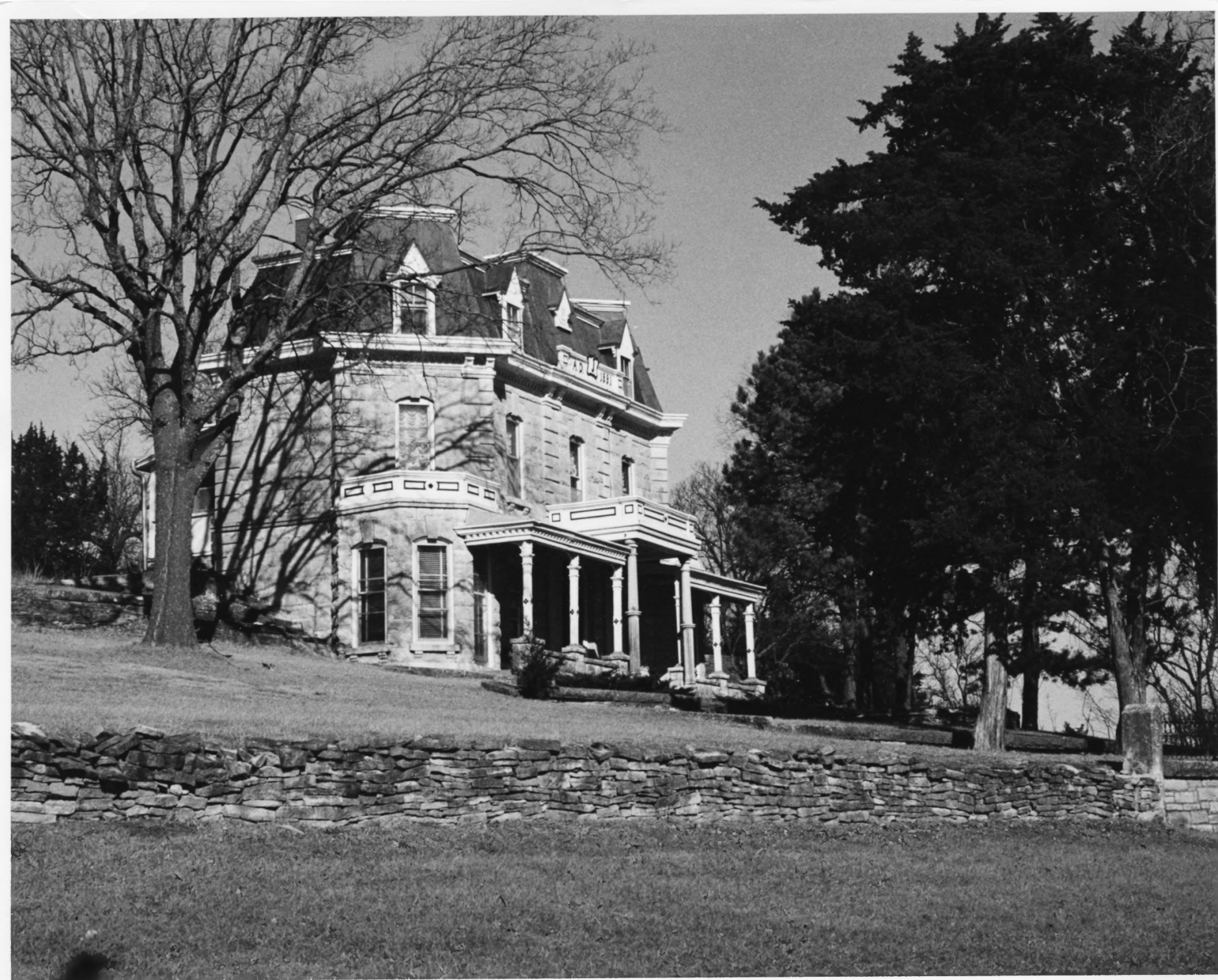
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2-17-96

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West

3



Ranch house, Spring Hill Ranch

Chase County, Kansas

Brad Finch

2-17-96

National Park Trust, 1776 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC

Northwest



**SPRING HILL RANCH**  
Chase County, Kansas  
Smoke house & ranch house,  
west facade  
Photo: Brad Finch, 2/96





Entry hall & main staircase/ranch house; Spring Hill Ranch

Chase County, Kansas

Brad Finch

2-17-96

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West

6



SPRING HILL RANCH  
Chase County, Kansas  
Ranch house, south parlor  
Photo: Brad Finch, 2/96



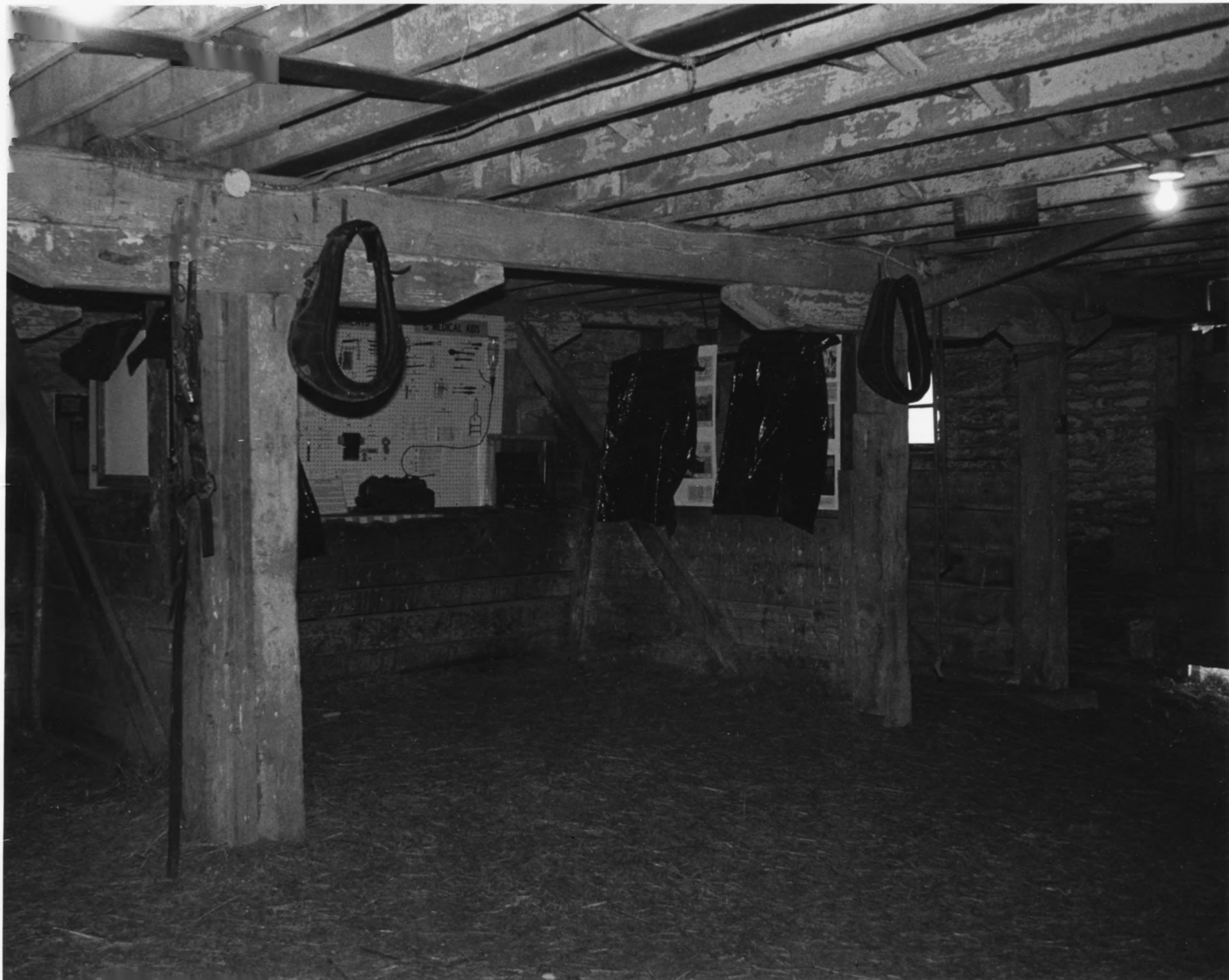


SPRING HILL RANCH  
Chase County, Kansas  
Barn, north and east facades  
Photo: Brad Finch, 2/96





SPRING HILL RANCH  
Chase County, Kansas  
Barn, south and east facades  
Photo: Brad Finch, 2/96



Stalls/barn; Spring Hill Ranch

Chase County, Kansas

Brad Finch

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Northeast

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Barn & west corral; Spring Hill Ranch  
Chase County, Kansas

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Northeast

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SPRING HILL RANCH  
Chase County, Kansas  
West corral  
Photo: Brad Finch, 2/96





(from left to right) Equipment sheds/scratch house/Poultry house, garage; Spring Hill Ranch  
Chase County, Kansas

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Northwest

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Ice house; Spring Hill Ranch

Chase County, Kansas

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North

14





Ice house, cistern; Spring Hill Ranch

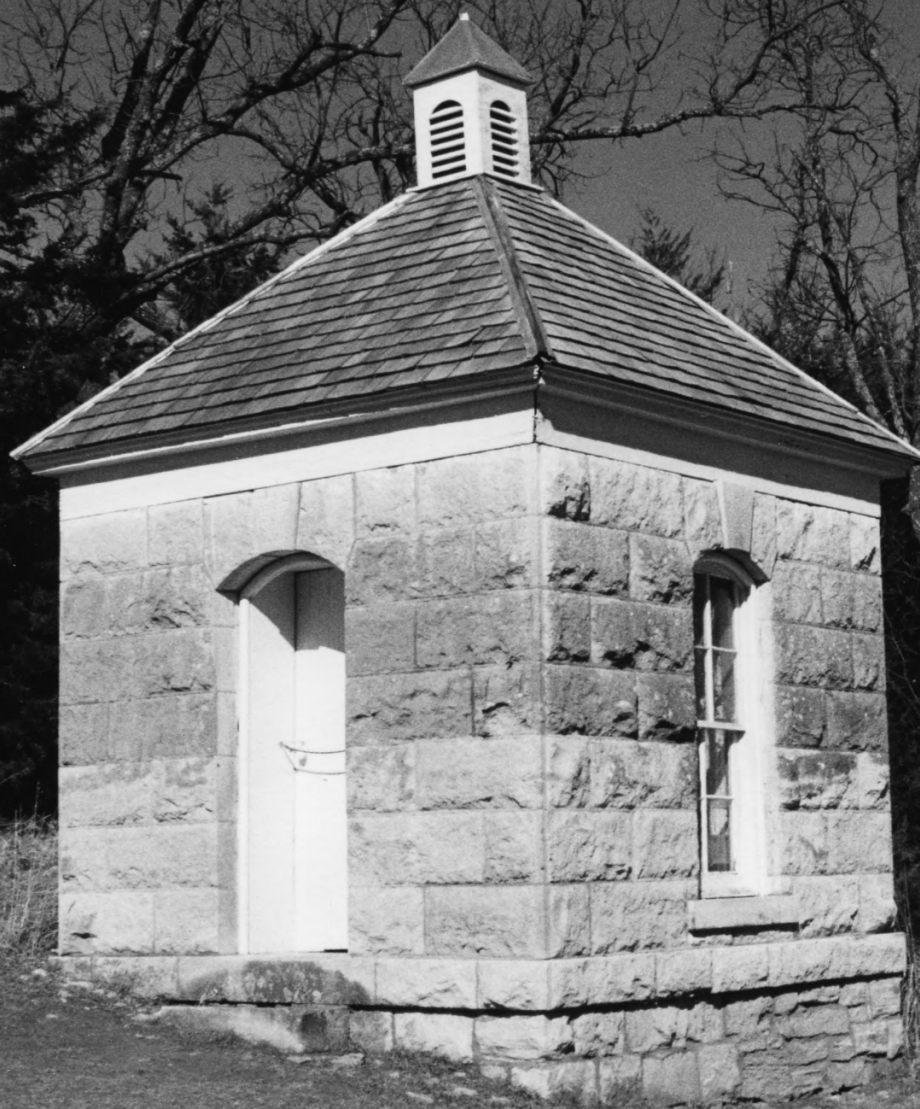
Chase County, Kansas

Brad Finch

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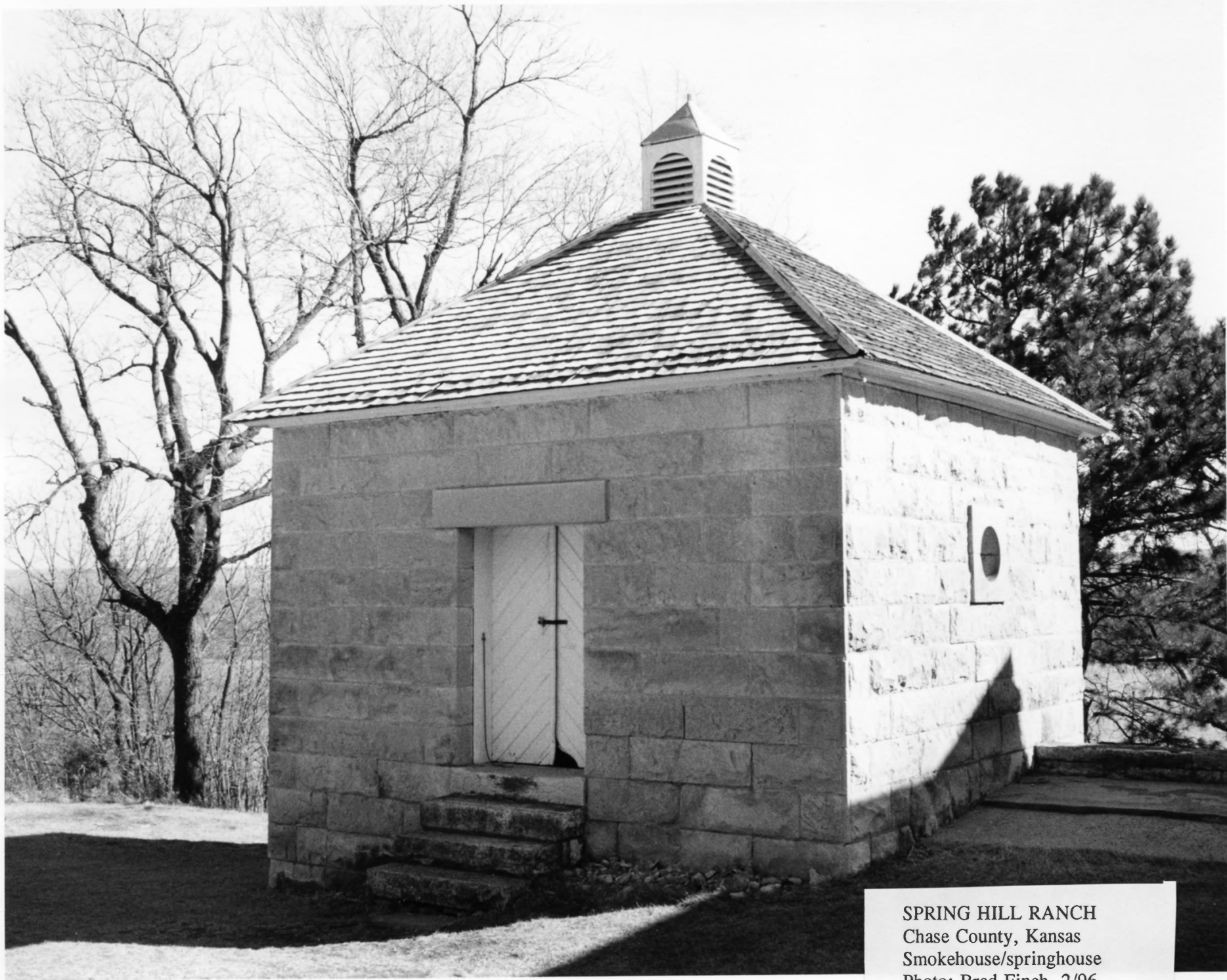
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Northwest

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SPRING HILL RANCH  
Chase County, Kansas  
Outhouse  
Photo: Brad Finch, 2/96





SPRING HILL RANCH  
Chase County, Kansas  
Smokehouse/springhouse  
Photo: Brad Finch, 2/96







Stone fence; Spring Hill Ranch  
Chase County, Kansas  
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North

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Ranch lands; Spring Hill Ranch  
Chase County, Kansas

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East

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Stone fence & Fox Creek bottoms; Spring Hill Ranch

Chase County, Kansas

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East

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**SPRING HILL RANCH**  
Chase County, Kansas  
Ranch lands and headquarters,  
looking northeast  
Photo: Brad Finch, 2/96





SPRING HILL RANCH  
Chase County, Kansas  
Ranch lands, looking west  
Photo: Brad Finch, 2/96





Ranch lands; Spring Hill Ranch  
Chase County, Kansas  
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Southwest

23



Springhouse & ruins, Spring Hill Ranch

Crawe County, Kansas

Brad Finch

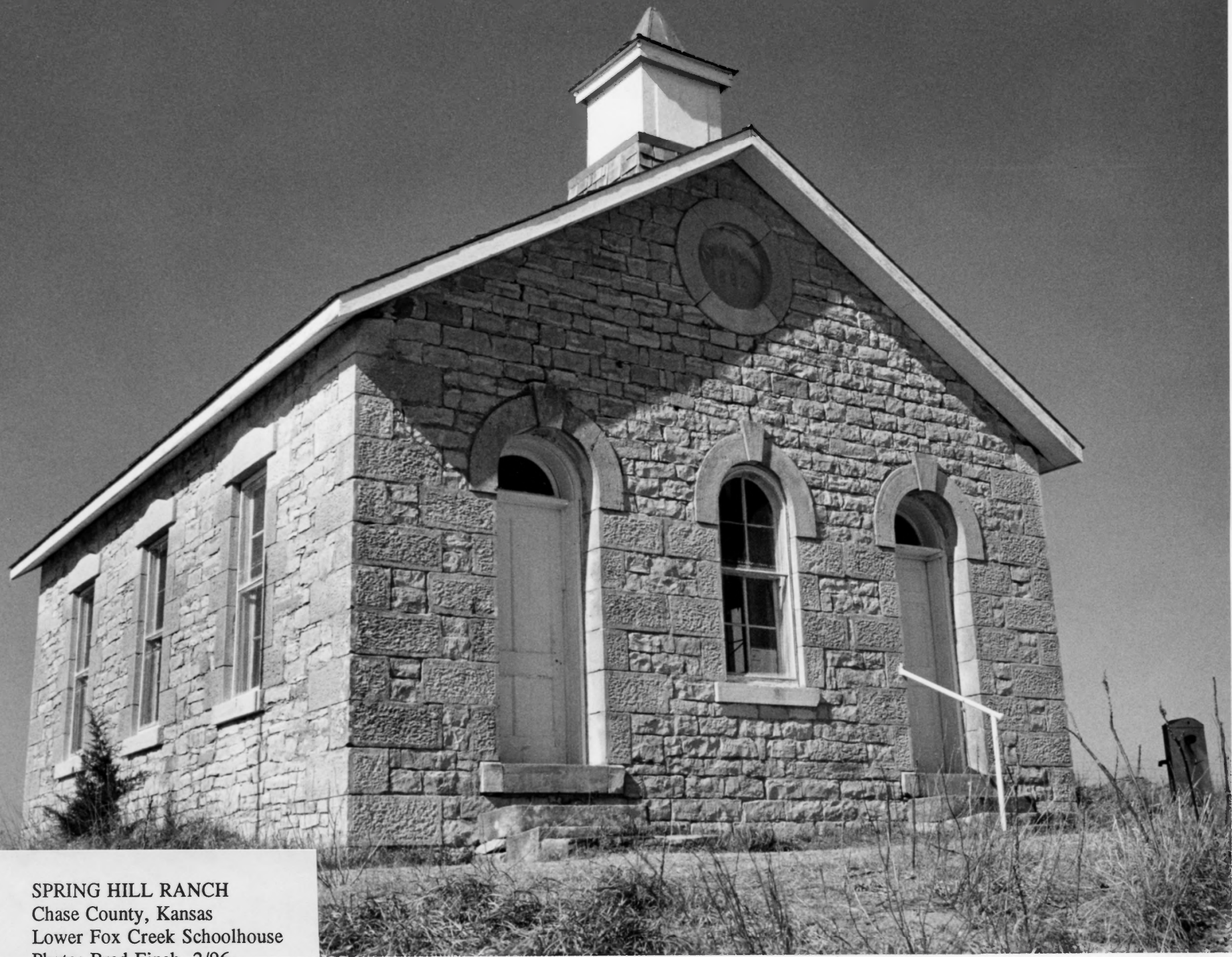
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Southwest

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SPRING HILL RANCH  
Chase County, Kansas  
Lower Fox Creek Schoolhouse  
Photo: Brad Finch, 2/96





Ranch lands, stone fence, Lower Fox Creek School outhouse; Spring Hill Ranch  
Chase County, Kansas

Brad Finch

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Southwest

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Lantry Poultry house; Spring Hill Ranch  
Chase County, Kansas  
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