

Kan. Cong. Dist. No. 5

Joe Skubitz
Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Kansas	
COUNTY: Cowley	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Chesbro Ranch

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Magnolia Ranch (preferred name)

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: NW 1/4, NW 1/4, SE 1/4, Sec. 31, T 33 S, R 5 E; 5 miles south of
Winfield on US-77, 1.5 miles east, .5 mile south, .5 mile east, .4 mile south,
CITY OR TOWN: .7 mile southeast, 1.5 miles east, .3 mile south on rural roads.
Winfield vicinity

STATE Kansas	CODE 67156	COUNTY: Cowley	CODE 035
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mr. and Mrs. Kent Chesbro

STREET AND NUMBER:
Rural Route 3

CITY OR TOWN:
Winfield

STATE:
Kansas

CODE:
67156

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Register of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:
Cowley County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:
Winfield

STATE:
Kansas

CODE:
67156

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
NONE

DATE OF SURVEY:
 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Winfield

STATE:
Kansas

CODE:
67156

035-0000-004

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Magnolia Ranch house located in rural Cowley county near Winfield is a two and one-half story early Renaissance style structure with a full basement. The building is a rectangle with small appurtenances on two sides and measures approximately 50 feet long and 30 feet wide. The exterior walls are constructed of stone laid in a random ashlar pattern. The coarse facing of the stone gives a massive appearance to the building. Standing seam metal roofing covers the hip roof, and the overhang is supported by widely spaced pairs of brackets with double brackets at the corners. Two large observation towers which occur at the center of the roof admit light into the attic. A number of chimneys with stone caps protrude from the roof.

Window openings in the building are simple rectangles with double hung sash windows. The stone sills and lintels are ornamental in shape and provide a decorative touch to the building. The lintels are cut stone and extend partially down each side of the window openings. The south front entrance occurs at a large porch which has wood columns and decorative wood arches.

There are five large rooms in the basement, each with large arched doorways and walls two feet thick. On the main floor are six large rooms, a pantry and two entrance halls--one containing a large ornate stairway and the other opening into the kitchen and the dining room. Ceilings are at least 10 feet high. The dining room has a large bay window on the south, and the dining room, parlor and the former office of Colonel Greene each have a fireplace. On the second floor a long hall runs the length of the house. Three large bedrooms are placed on each side of the hallway, and additionally a bathroom, dumbwaiter shaft and storage room are located on this floor. The attic is a large room on the third floor and has the two observation towers or cupolas.

Included in the ranch complex are three small stone buildings west of the residence which were used as an ice house, a smoke house and an outhouse. Northeast of the house are two large buildings of rubble stone construction, the shorter one a barn and the longer used as stables.

A large frame porch which once wrapped around the east and portions of the north and south facades has been removed. The center window on the second floor of the east facade has been walled up and now contains a stone with the construction date "1883" in raised numerals. Some modifications have also been made to the two large barns to adapt them for modern agricultural usages.

The area of the Magnolia Ranch complex proposed for National Register nomination consists of the six to seven acres in which the house, two barns and three small outbuildings are situated.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1883

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Western settlement</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The land in south central Cowley county where the Magnolia Ranch is now situated was first claimed in the late 1860's by three brothers--Pete, Bill and Lem Cook. John Keck, the next owner of the property, lived there only two years before selling the land to Col. Arthur H. Greene of New York City, who had been an officer in the Union army. Greene, a wealthy coffee broker prior to the Civil War, lost a leg in the war and afterwards sold his business and moved to Kansas. He established a large ranch and farm operation 12 miles south ^{east} ~~west~~ of Winfield and engaged the Vermilia family to farm and keep house for him. It was this family which planted the Magnolia trees that gave the ranch its name.

In 1883 Greene had a 23-room house, outbuildings and a corral built from stone quarried about two miles northwest of the ranch. An area newspaper, the Arkansas City Democrat, reported on October 23, 1883, that "Allen and Braggins have been awarded the contract to paint the \$30,000 residence on the Magnolia farm in Pleasant Valley township." The house, which was said to have been the finest in the vicinity, was probably completed a short time later. The ranch itself was reportedly one of the best equipped in the state, Greene having imported English draft horses and Galloway cattle. The ranch also became known for its lavish parties when Greene and a nephew who lived with the wealthy old bachelor began entertaining regularly, with guests from numerous Kansas communities and as far as New York.

After the Vermilias left, Greene hired various other personnel to manage the ranch. In the spring of 1900 the Linn family became the overseers and shortly thereafter Greene and Linn started raising chickens in addition to cattle and horses. A young Dutch immigrant, John Templar, was also an employee for a time; he later married one of the Linn daughters, and their son George, who was the only child ever born in the ranch house, is now a U. S. district judge for Kansas.

Colonel Greene sold the Magnolia Ranch to R. D. McKowen of Atlanta, Illinois, a "magnetic healer," in the early 1900's and moved to California. The McKowens did not live on the ranch except for a brief time during the summer of 1904. Mr. and Mrs.

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8. Kent Chesbro, the present owners, rented the farm from the McKowen estate from 1945 until 1960 when they purchased the property.

The Magnolia Ranch buildings are one of the few remaining rural complexes of historic stone buildings in Kansas which continue to serve their original use. The residence is an excellent example of early Renaissance architecture exhibiting many of the traits of the Vernacular style. The magnificent house together with the accompanying outbuildings make this one of the more important rural architectural complexes in the state.

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- The new owners of the Magnolia Ranch are Jim and Mary McFarland,
Rural Route 3, Winfield.

