**National Register of Historic Places**

**Inventory - Nomination Form**

1. **Name**
   - **Common:** Geodetic Center of the U.S. (preferred name)
   - **And/or Historic:** Meade's Ranch Triangulation Station; North American Datum

2. **Location**
   - **Street and Number:** SW 1/4, Sec. 34, T9S, R1W
   - **City or Town:** Meade's Ranch; 17 miles southeast of
   - **State:** Kansas
   - **County:** Osborne

3. **Classification**
   - **Category:** Site
   - **Ownership:** Private
   - **Status:** In Process
   - **Accessible to the Public:** Yes

4. **Owner of Property**
   - **Owner's Name:** Mrs. A. Josephine Robinson
   - **Street and Number:** 713 West Main
   - **City or Town:** Osborne
   - **State:** Kansas

5. **Location of Legal Description**
   - **Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, Etc.:** Register of Deeds
   - **Street and Number:** Osborne County Courthouse
   - **City or Town:** Osborne
   - **State:** Kansas

6. **Representation in Existing Surveys**
   - **Title of Survey:** Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration
   - **Date of Survey:** 1939
   - **Depository for Survey Records:** Records destroyed. A guide book, Kansas, was published in 1939.
The rolling terrain of a pasture some 17 miles southeast of Osborne contains the triangulation station commonly referred to as the geodetic center of the United States. Marking the exact spot is a circular concrete marker about 24 inches in diameter and not more than six inches above ground. A small bronze plate is located in the center of the concrete. The marker is located on a high point from which the rugged grassland appears to slope downward in all directions.

There are additional markers underground.

The site is not readily accessible; the only approach is by way of rough ranch trails.
A circular concrete marker no more than six inches high and two feet across is situated in an isolated pasture on what is known historically as Meades Ranch. A bronze disk embedded in the concrete contains a triangle. The dot in the center of that triangle is the geodetic center of the United States. Known officially as the Meades Ranch Triangulation Station, it was established in 1891 by the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey and was one of many such stations along two great arcs of triangulation. One arc extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific and the other from the Canadian to the Mexican border. These two arcs intersect in the Meades Ranch area.

In 1901 the Meades Ranch station at 39° 13' 26.686" north latitude and 98° 32' 30.506" west longitude was selected as the U. S. Standard datum, the fixed point to which all maps and land measures in this country are related. This station was chosen for several reasons. It was located approximately 40 miles south of the geographic center of the United States (near Lebanon in Smith county, Kansas) and at the juncture of two great arcs of triangulation. Also of importance was that checking by the Coast and Geodetic Survey indicated that the geodetic determination and the astronomical determination of this station were closer in agreement than for other stations being considered.

Geodetic survey officials from Canada and Mexico decided in 1913 that it would be advisable to fit the triangulation of their nations to that of the United States. As a result the entire North American continent has accepted the Meades Ranch station as the North American datum.

It is in relation to this spot in an Osborne county pasture that all property lines, all maps, and city, county, state and international boundaries in North America are established.
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Isley, Bliss, and W. M. Richards, Four Centuries in Kansas (Wichita, Ks., The McCormick-Mather Co., 1936), p. 221.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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APPROXIMATE ACRES OF Nominated PROPERTY: Less than one

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


11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Richard Pankratz, Planner
ORGANIZATION: Kansas State Historical Society
DATE: May 1, 1973
STREET AND NUMBER: 120 West Tenth Street
CITY OR TOWN: Topeka
STATE: Kansas 66612

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National [ ] State [ ] Local [ ]

Name: Nyle H. Miller
Date: June 12, 1973

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Director, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date: 