NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

161-000-1981 OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name JAMES DIXON HOUSE

other names/site number MILITARY VIEW FARM

2. Location

street & number 8715 OLD HIGHWAY 77 ☐ not for publication

city or town MILFORD ☒ vicinity

state KANSAS code KS county GEARY code 061 zip code 66514

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard D Rankert 2-19-88
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other, (explain:)

JAMES DIXON HOUSE
Name of Property

GEARY COUNTY, KANSAS
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [x] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- [ ] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italinate

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: limestone
walls STONE: limestone
roof ASPHALT
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

JAMES DIXON HOUSE
Name of Property

GEARY COUNTY, KANSAS
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

Period of Significance

1881

Significant Dates

1881

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

JAMES DIXON

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibilography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository:
KANSAS STATE HISTOIRCAL SOCIETY

JAMES DIXON HOUSE
Name of Property

GEARY COUNTY, KANSAS
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property LESS THAN ONE ACRE

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	14	685940	4330900
2			
3			
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title FRANK DIXON

organization MILITARY VIEW FARM, INC. date

street & number 2205 N.W. JOHNSON telephone

city or town PORTLAND state OREGON zip code 97210

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name FRANK DIXON, MILITARY VIEW FARM, INC.

street & number 2205 N.W. JOHNSON telephone

city or town PORTLAND state OREGON zip code 97210

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

The James Dixon residence (1881) is located in the vicinity of Milford in Riley County, Kansas (pop. 465). The two-story, rusticated limestone block, Italianate-style house sits on a limestone block foundation and has a asphalt shingled, hipped roof. The square-plan house maintains an eastern facade orientation, with overall dimensions of 40 feet by 40 feet. The house stands on 31 acres as part of a 500 acre ranch. It remains in good condition with few modifications.

The house sits in the Flint Hills domain, an agricultural sub-region of the North American Plains. Centered in the middle of Kansas from north to south, the Flint Hills supports large cattle ranches and farms that had reached production peak in the 1880s. The house also borders the Fort Riley military reservation, hence the name Military View Farm. The front of the house overlooks the western portion of the fort.

Once part of approximately 2000 acres, the total acreage now encompasses 500. The home area contains 31 acres and originally had a smokehouse and a barn along with the house. The smoke house no longer exists. The barn still stands and is used. Other outbuildings have been added over the years. They include a well-house, garage, pole barn, two sheds, and chicken coop.

The two-story rusticated limestone house sits on a rusticated limestone foundation and has a hipped roof. The house faces the east and overlooks old Highway 77 and the Fort Riley military reservation.

A full-length porch dominates the front facade. Originally wooden, the porch now sports a concrete floor and no ceiling, thereby eliminating the balcony. The second story front porch and cupola were removed in the 1920s. An 1880s family picture on the porch provides details for future restoration of the porch.

Windows appear on each side of the house. The four front windows are tall and narrow with segmental arches. The side and back windows are tall and narrow without any ornamentation.

The interiors of the first and second floors, attic, and basement retain major portions of the original floor plan. The first floor contains a library, kitchen, dining room, and double parlor. A straight staircase in the hall leads up to the second floor where six bedrooms are located. A narrow staircase in the back room provides access to the attic. Stairs in the kitchen lead down to the basement. A narrow staircase connects the kitchen to a small bedroom in the back of the second floor.

double parlor lays on the south, beside each other. Next to the back parlor is the dining room and then the kitchen. The library sits between the kitchen and the front facade. They have been restored to their original grandeur and contain their original woodwork and hardware.

A closet underneath the stairs was renovated to a half bath during the first stages of restoration in 1993. The west wall was extended slightly into the library.

A straight stairway in the entry hall leads to the second story. The bedroom to the right of the stairs has been modified to be a master bedroom and laundry room.

Stairs from the kitchen lead to a divided basement. The floor is lined with stones. A stone wall divides the basement into two equal rooms, each with their own woodstove pipe connection.

A few changes not mentioned previously have occurred since construction. The house was originally lighted with oil lamps and heated with woodstoves. Electricity was installed in the late 1920s and forced air heating sometime later. Indoor plumbing was added in the 1940s.

Section 8

The James Dixon residence (1881) is being nominated to the National Register under criterion B for its association with James Dixon and under criterion C for its architectural significance as a late-nineteenth century farmhouse.

James Dixon and his family moved from a log cabin on the second homesite into the eleven-room house in November of 1880. The house cost $10,000 and was reported to be one of the finest in the county. In building such a house, James Dixon represented the growth occurring in the area. The county and state were changing from pioneer status to a settled area just as James Dixon had progressed from a rustic log cabin on 160 acres to a limestone mansion on 2,000 acres.

James Thomas Dixon was born in 1827 on Eagle Island, Ireland. His father, Thomas was a postmaster who immigrated to Fairmont, Virginia in 1849. James was the oldest of five boys and one girl. As a young man he found work as a stone cutter in the United States. He helped build the Rappahannock Canal, a dam across the James River, bridges for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and

the Kentucky Statehouse in Nashville, Kentucky.

By 1854 the Dixon family had relocated to Union County, Illinois where after the death of his parents, James Dixon used his savings to relocate to the Kansas Territory. In early 1854 James Dixon had traveled through Missouri and the northeastern Kansas Territory, buying cattle in Missouri for $10 a head and selling it in Kansas for $30-$40 a head. In 1854 he deposited $1000 in the Pagens and Bachens Bank, and $2000 in the Clarks Bank both located in St. Louis. Years later he reflected in his personal notes that while in St. Louis he was viewed with suspicion. "Those were storm-brewing days and the excitement incidental to the passage in the United States Senate of the Kansas and Nebraska bill which was introduced by Stephen A. Douglas was running high and everyone from Kansas was looked upon with suspicion."

The Dixon brothers searching for a likely western center of commerce paused at a trading post that was later incorporated as Kansas City. Pushing further west into the unsettled Kansas Territory with two oxen teams and wagons, the Dixon brothers established some of the first preemption claims on the Smokey Hill River in area adjacent to the newly sited Fort Riley Military Reservation and the proposed Territorial Capital of Pawnee.

James Dixon had kept $1200 cash and used it to buy short horned cattle from a Catholic missionary, Father Dornen at St. Marys, Kansas in the fall of 1855. He bought his first bull from Missouri traders for $50, later speculating the bull was worth considerably more; and that "they stole him from some rich farmer in Missouri." He continued to earn cash reserves when he built the second stone structure in Pawnee. Situated next to the Territorial Capital Building, it was built for the Ft. Riley post sutler, Robert Wilson and John T. Price. James Dixon also was hired to grade the steamboat landing for Pawnee.

After living on his claim at Three Mile Creek a year, he traveled back to Illinois to retrieve his family. They survived the winter of 1856/57 when little clothing and shelter was to be had. Provisions were scarce and obtaining them meant a four to six week trip to Leavenworth. Many other settlers became disheartened and returned to the East.

In 1854 James Dixon and his brothers unintentionally became involved in a national controversy surrounding the Pawnee Territorial Capital by siting their land claims on a 160-acre parcel that James Reeder, the first Territorial Governor wanted for his future home. Major William R. Montgomery was one of the principals of the Pawnee Townsite Association and commander of Fort Riley. To

accommodate Governor Reeder, Major Montgomery demanded that James Dixon either sell his land for $1000 or vacate the site. In a meeting with James Dixon, Major Montgomery threatened to forcibly evict the Dixons and destroy their home. James Dixon repeatedly refused to sell his land.

Major Montgomery exercising his power as the Ft. Riley Reservation commander ordered his subordinate Captain Nathaniel Lyon to destroy the Dixons' buildings and physically remove the Dixon families from the land. The hand written order read:

"I. The Dixons having obtruded upon and built a hut on the military reserve of this post, in disregard of repeated notice and orders to the contrary, will now be put off by force. Accordingly, Lieutenant Hunter, with a fatigue party, will proceed to said hut, put out whatever effects may be in it, and take the hut down.
II. Captain N. Lyon will proceed to the same place with an armed party, take such precautions, and give such orders in the case, as he may find requisite to protect the Lieutenant and his party, and expel said Dixons from the reserve.
III. Assistant Surgeon Hammond will accompany this command.
By order of Brevet. Lieut. Col. Montgomery.
Orders, No. 23 Headquarters, Fort Riley, K.T. March 3d, 1855"

In 1855 the Dixons were evicted from successive homesteads twice but each time, James and his family returned to the site that they insisted was legally theirs to settle. In the first episode while James Dixon was away on business, soldiers used two oxen to pull the Dixon log house down. The women and children were forcibly ejected. Seven months later again while James Dixon was absent, Ft. Riley troops tore down the house and once more terrorized the woman and children. In desperation James Dixon dug a whole in the ground and used it as a temporary home.

Captain Nathaniel Lyon knew Major Montgomerys' true reasons for evicting the Dixons and was outraged by his superior's abuse of governmental power. Captain Lyon documented his orders and preferred court-martial chargers against his commander, Major Montgomery. When Major Ogden, the second commander of Fort Riley arrived to replace Major Montgomery, he encouraged the Dixon brothers to file a formal complaint. James Dixon sent his brother, Thomas to Platt City, Missouri to present General Atchison, then acting Vice President of the United States with a complaint against Major Montgomery. As a result, President Pierce ordered Generals Churchill and Clark to Fort Riley to conduct an investigation. They determined that the Dixons had been the subject of unlawful eviction. The President was urged to both preserve Pawnee as the territorial capital and allow the

Dixon claims by drawing the Fort Riley boundaries along the original lines set out before Major Montgomery attempted to manipulate them to obtain an advantage over the Dixon.

However, Secretary of War Jefferson Davis wanted to eliminate Pawnee which was known as a free state stronghold. Secretary Davis overruled the investigation findings of Generals Churchill and Clark on May 5, 1855 and recommended that the boundaries be extended to include the Pawnee town site as well as the Dixon homestead. Franklin Pierce approved Davis' recommendation immediately by Presidential Order dated May 5, 1855.

A court-martial board was conveyed at Fort Leavenworth on July 20, 1855. Colonel Robert E. Lee, acting as Judge Advocate took testimony of James and Thomas Dixon, the accused Major Montgomery and most of the principals of Pawnee Town Site Association. Captain Lyon provided damaging testimony. Major Montgomery was cashiered and forced to resign from the military. The complete handwritten trial transcript is preserved in the National Archives.

In 1861 Nathaniel Lyon was appointed Commander of the Army of the West. General Lyon reportedly approved payment of a $10,000 damage claim to his old friend, James Dixon as compensation for the misdeeds of the government at Pawnee. Soon after, Lyon became the first general officer killed in battle in the Civil War while leading the 1st Kansas Infantry at Wilson's Creek, Missouri on August 10, 1861.The claim remains unsatisfied

After leaving the original homestead in 1856, James Dixon relocated near the present site of the existing home. He purchased a two-story log cabin on the northwestern edge of the new Fort Riley reservation boundary on Seven Mile Creek. He married Bridget Barrett of Wheeling, Virginia in 1857. They raised a family of three sons and nine daughters. James became one of the first wealthy farmers in Riley and Davis Counties while his brother Thomas operated a general store, feed lot and grain elevator in Junction City. Their descendants eventually owned stockyards in Kansas City, Missouri.

James Dixon began construction of a large stone residence in the 1870's. Built at a cost of $10,000, the square native stone house was located on a hilltop overlooking Fort Riley, Junction City and his farm. Native limestone was cut within 500 yards of the building site. As James Dixon was an experienced stone cutter and builder, he is likely to have personally designed the house and supervised all phases of construction. The residence named "Military View" was completed in November 1880.

The surrounding communities celebrated the event on the first Friday of January 1881 as reported in the Junction City Tribune under the headline, "Grand House Warming Ball":

"Mr. James Dixon who is an old settler in Kansas, a large farmer and a successful stock raiser, has just finished a large stone residence, on his prairie farm some five miles north of the city. The building is 40x40 feet in size containing three stories and a basement. It is one of the finest and best arranged mansions in the county, capped with a handsome observatory, affording extensive views in all directions over the wide and undulating country, including Junction City and other points

In honor of the completion of their new residence, Mr. and Mrs. Dixon gave a grand invitation ball on last Friday evening. It proved to be one of the most pleasant and successful events of the season. About one hundred and fifty laddies were present, from Chapman, Ogden, Milford and Junction City. The string band of Junction City, Prof. Reeves leader, furnished the music. The happy throng 'tipped the fantastic toe to the soul stirring noted of the violin, and threaded the mazes of the midnight dance,' until about one o'clock a.m. when the guests were invited into the basement, which was brilliantly lighted and pleasantly warmed; and in which were spread tables, 'long and wide and richly loaded.' The arrangements were perfect, and all the dishes and preparations were gotten up in the highest style of culinary art by Mrs. Dixon who is a most accomplished cook and housekeeper.

The grand supper was attacked in platoons of forty at a time, ladies and gentleman charging in couples in the most beautiful and courageous manner, until all were satisfied. After supper the hours were chased with flying feet and jolly faces, until the sun came to the rescue, sending his shafts of light through the glazed windows, among the crowd of merry dancers.

One hundred and fifty faces will smile and as many hearts will feel happy, hereafter, in consequence of the pleasant memories of the grand ball of last Friday evening; and Mr. and Mrs. Dixon will doubtless feel a score of summers and winters younger in consequence of the jolly visitation they invited and indured.

Too much credit cannot be given to the Misses Dixon for the elegant and graceful manner in which they welcomed and entertained their guests."

By the time James Dixon built the limestone house, its Italianate style had lost dominance in American architecture. The 1873 financial panic and depression in the United States halted further construction until late in the decade. By that time though, tastes had changed to other styles.

The Dixon residence remains a prime example of the Italianate style. It has the customary features such as two stories, square-shaped low-pitched hipped roof, tall narrow windows, and porch. The house used to have a balcony and cupula. Plans have been made to rebuild them as funds allow.

Full restoration began in 1993 and was mostly completed in 1994. The owners, direct descendants of James Dixon, used pictures and oral and written history for the basis of restoration. The process

was simplified by having the house remain in the family since its construction and by few changes being made through the years.

The census data validates the opinion of the Junction City Tribune that James Dixon was a highly successful Kansas farmer. According to the 1870 census, the James Dixon farm consisted of 640 acres, 16 horses, 12 milk cows, two hogs with a value of $10,000. By 1885, the Military View Farm had increased to 1200 acres with a value of $25,00. In 1885, $1,100 in wages were paid. There were 170 acres of wheat, 20 acres of rye, 130 acres of corn and 60 acres of oats under cultivation. Two hundred tons of prairie grass were cut. Livestock was valued at $1,100. The farm had 12 horses and two dogs. There were 400 apple trees, 25 pear trees, 20 peach trees and 12 cherry trees.

In 1895 Miltary View Farm had grown to over 2000 acres with 1420 fenced acres and 800 acres under cultivation. The farm had several wells, springs and Dixon Creek. The farm had livestock worth $35,500 which included 195 cattle, 50 hogs, 13 horses and five milk cows. Two hundred and fifty tons of prairie grass were cut. There were 250 acres of corn, 80 acres of wheat, and 75 acres of oats under cultivation.The farm produced 360 pounds of butter. The orchards included 150 apple bearing trees, 50 peach trees and ten cherry trees.

James Dixon was a founding member of the Kansas Central Agricultural Society.He won many prizes including the first prize for wheat at the fourth annual fair of the Kansas Central Agricultural Society in 1879.

The house contained a large library reflecting James Dixon's interest in classical literature, law, science and geography. Issues of The Scientific American received by mail in the 1880's were read and each copy was saved for future reference. Religious books and literature as well as art work reflected the family's devout Irish Catholic heritage. The family bible is a massive volume covered in red felt and nearly a foot thick. Original photos abound, many taken by noted photographer Robert Pennel. A large photo album captures the Dixon family and friends living a refined country life at the end of the nineteenth century. Original oil paintings created by her daughter hung with elaborate wooden frames in Mrs. Dixon's parlor. Fashionable clothes were created by daughter Mame who later became a professional dressmaker and shop owner in Junction City. A private tutor was kept at the Dixon home for the children. Picnics were a favorite pastime. Vacations were taken at the Hot Springs in Arkansas.

James Dixon's younger sons, James and Frank were educated at St. Marys College. His eldest son

John left the farm and traveled through the far west and was last seen in the Yukon Territory, Alaska in 1904. His eldest daughters, Margaret and Mame Dixon inherited the farm by an elaborate trust after their father died in 1898 and their mother in 1903.

Anna Dixon, the sixth daughter of James and Bridget Dixon, taught grade school for more than fifty years beginning in 1890 as the first teacher assigned to the new Middle Seven Mile School in Riley County, Kansas. Begining in 1905, Anna Dixon taught in the Junction City School system continuously for forty years. She attended Kansas State University, University of Colorado and University of California at Berkeley in furtherance of her teaching credentials. She returned to live at the house from 1946 until her death in 1961.
From its construction in 1879 until 1993, the James Dixon house had been continuously occupied by his descendants. Household contents were kept by the family. Many antiques have been restored to their original condition, including the elaborate library ceiling lamp that is raised and lowered by chains and now hangs from the original ornamental ceiling hook. Records of the farm and ranch operations, photographs, and correspondence provide valuable information of day-to-day farming. From these, an account can be reconstructed of 1880s and 1890s life in Kansas.

Family farming was continued by James T. Dixon II and James T. Dixon III until 1988 when Richard Dixon, brother of James T. Dixon III assumed management responsibility with Frank James Dixon, a fourth generation Dixon. Richard Dixon died in 1996 leaving his sister, Sarah as the last of James Dixon's surviving grandchildren. The consolidated Miliary View Farm is presently a 510-acre Kansas Family Farm Corporation. Shareholders are restricted by the Articles of Incorporation to decendants of the James T. Dixon and presently include Diane Milord of Kansas City, KS; Kathleen Watson of Wichita, KS; Paul Hibberd of Danville, KY; Gregory Hibberd of Glen Ellyn, IL; Michael Hibberd of Hometown, IL; Ruth Hibberd of Decatur, IL; Daniel Dixon of Elmhurst, IL and Frank James Dixon of Portland, OR.

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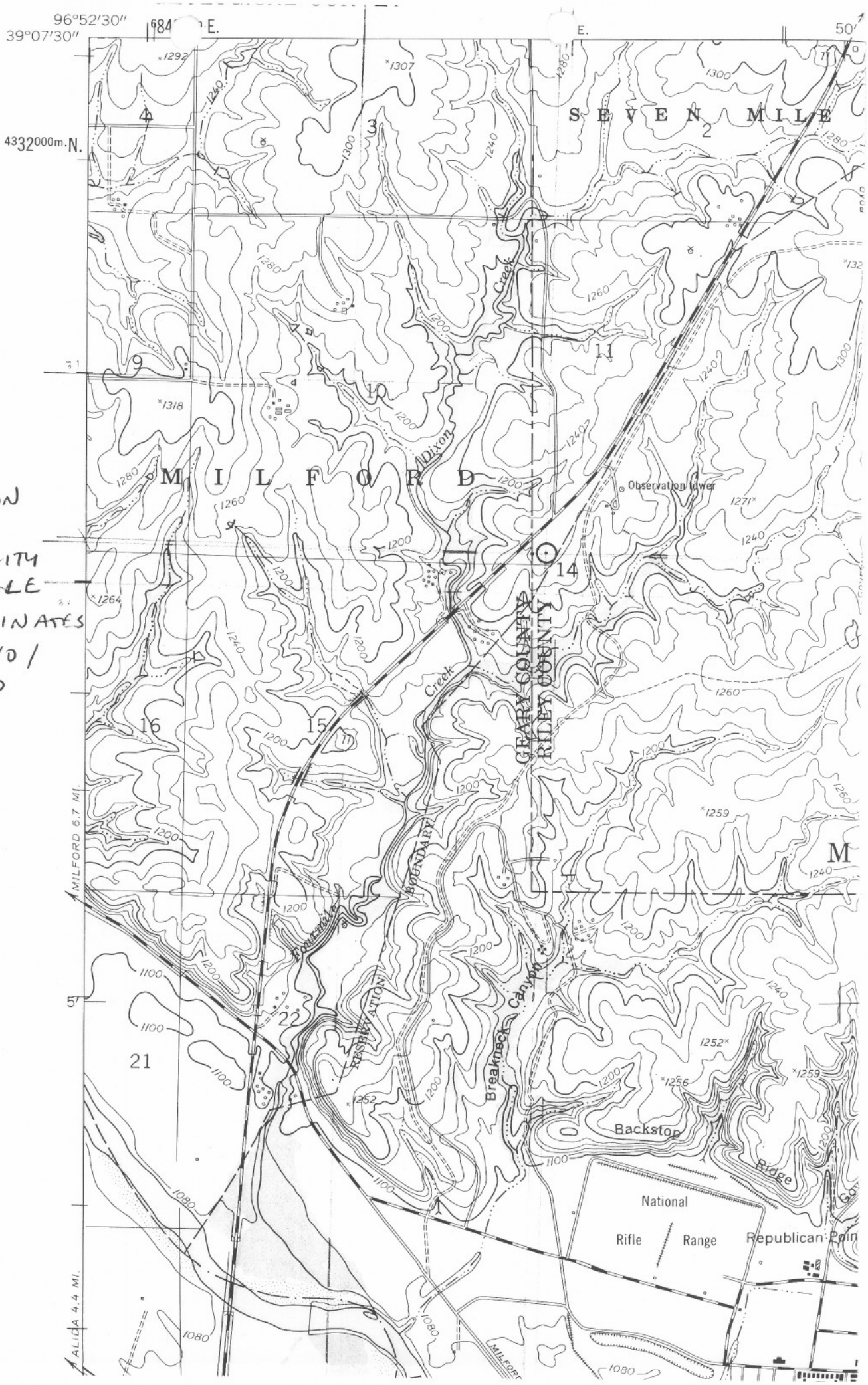
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property stands on a tract of land in lot five, SW4,SW4,SW4,SW4, S.11, T.11S,R.5E in Geary County, Kansas. The nominated property is bounded to the northwest by Old Highway 77 and on all other sides by the larger acreage that it is a part of.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property stands on thirty-one acres as part of a five hundred acre ranch. The house is contained on the part of original one hundred and sixty acre land claim established by James Dixon.

JAMES DIXON
HOUSE
JUNCTION CITY
QUADRANGLE
UTM COORDINATES
14 / 685940 /
4330900