NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

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 BLACKFEATHER FARM

other names/site number NELSON STUDEBAKER RILEY FARM

2. Location

street & number 8140 WEST 183rd STREET ☐ not for publication

city or town STILWELL ☐ vicinity

state KANSAS code KS county JOHNSON code 091 zip code 66085

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this XX 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 XX meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide XX locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard D. Pankratz D-SHPO, JULY 22, 1996
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:)

BLACKFEATHER FARM
Name of Property

JOHNSON COUNTY, KANSAS
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
6		buildings
4		sites
3		structures
1		objects
14		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; camp

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling; residence

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Bungalow/Craftsman

OTHER: Rustic

OTHER: Gable roofed rectangular

LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival; Dutch Colónial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: limestone

walls Stone: limestone

roof Asphalt

other Concrete; Metal: steel; Stone: limestone

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

BLACKFEATHER FARM

Name of Property

JOHNSON COUNTY

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.)

XX **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.

XX **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)

SOCIAL

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1928-1947

Significant Dates

1928, 1934, 1947

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

HARE AND HARE, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

TUTTLE-AYERS-WOODWARD, ENGINEERING

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:

XX State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
XX Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Name of repository: JOHNSON COUNTY MUSEUM OF HISTORY, KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BLACKFEATHER FARM
Name of Property

JOHNSON COUNTY, KANSAS
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 78.9 acres M/L

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	353600	4295760
2	15	354380	4295700
3	15	353600	4295340
4	15	354360	4295320

☐ 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 DALE NIMZ, HISTORIC PRSERVATION SURVEY MANAGER

organization JOHNSON COUNTY MUSEUM date

street & number 6305 LACKMAN ROAD telephone 913-631-6709

city or town SHAWNEE state KANSAS zip code 66217

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 CRISPAN RICHARDSON

street & number 8140 WEST 183rd STREET telephone 913-681-2355

city or town STILWELL state KANSAS zip code 66085

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.

OVERVIEW

Blackfeather Farm stands on the SW2, SW4, S30, T14S, R24E in Aubry Township, Johnson County, Kansas. The address is 8140 W. 183rd Street in Stilwell. The nominated property encompasses a 78.9 acre tract that includes the fourteen resources that comprise the district. The area is represented on the Stilwell Quadrangle as square A-B-C-D on the map that is included as part of the nomination. The 78.9 acre tract includes all of the property historically associated with the farm excepting 1.1 acres. The property is bounded by the south by W. 183rd Street, to the west by Antioch Road, and to the north and east by adjacent property lines.

The district is comprised of six buildings, three structures, four sites and one object. The property is entered at the southern end, the drive is announced by two native stone gate posts and a wrought iron fence. A long, picturesque gravel drive winds past the caretaker's bungalow, the barn and the chicken shed. A lane leads east past the barn to a pasture and some woodland, encompassing some forty acres. Stone walls intermittently line the drive as it passes through the rolling manicured lawn and clusters of trees. The main house stands near the center of the property, the drive terminates in a loop in front of the house. The land to the immediate north and west of the house drops off sharply. South of the house is a native stone summer cottage, springhouse, and natural spring overlook a small lake. Beyond the lake and across a clearing stands a forest that contains massive rock formations and the ruins of the dam and spillway for the original lake. The original lake stood where the clearing is now.

HOUSE

The Blackfeather Farmhouse is a well-preserved rustic example of the Dutch Colonial Revival Style with Craftsman influences that was constructed in 1928. The house's dramatic setting is a significant feature; the structure is built into a steep rocky ridge running north and south above a tributary valley of Wolf Creek.

This two-story rural residence has an ell-plan with the main block to the south and a service wing to the northeast. The main block is approximately 63 feet long from east to west and 30 feet wide from north to south. The service wing extends approximately 39 feet from north to south. With a one-story bay extending from the west wall, the service wing is approximately 32 feet wide from east to west. The main rectangular block has three bays with a projecting entry to the southwest and the service wing has three bays including two garage bays. A secondary entrance to the east is located between the main block and service wing. The west end of the structure extends from the basement in a rock-walled section with a patio on the flat roof. There is a one-story shed-roofed bay projecting from the west wall of the service wing and a small exterior utility room with hipped roof attached to the northwest corner.

First floor walls are constructed of irregularly coursed rock-faced stone quarried on the property. Both the second floor gable ends and roof dormers are sheathed with wood shingles. Exterior decorative elements include the rustic stone walls and a prominent stone end chimney. There is a fascia board between the first and second floors and another outlining the gable ends. The house has a gambrel roof.

The main entrance is placed asymmetrically in a semicircular bay with a modified gable roof. First floor windows in the side walls and the windows in the end walls have 6/1 double-hung sash. The main wooden entrance door and rear door next to the garage are glazed with twelve lights. The chimney is centered in the west wall. In the second floor of the main south facade, there are three shed dormers each with banks of three nine-light casement sashes. A single shed dormer with similar windows in the east wall lights the service rooms above the garage. The kitchen facing north in the corner of the ell has large paired windows set in a stuccoed wood-frame panel.

INTERIOR

Both the first and second floors of the main block have a similar interior plan. It is defined by a large parlor or living room to the west and a central hall extending to the east with rooms on each side. The stair to the second floor is located opposite the main projecting entrance. On the south side of the first floor hallway, there is a dining room, a corner bedroom, and a bathroom at the end of the hall. North of the hallway, the kitchen is flanked by a closet and a larger room which originally was a pantry. On the second floor, there are two bedrooms south of the corridor, a bathroom and closet to the north, and another bathroom at the end of the corridor. In the service wing on the second floor, there are closets, two bedrooms facing east, and a stairway from the garage below.

Inside the entrance bay, the rough stone walls are exposed, but the other interior walls are covered with lath and plaster. The two parlors are the most elaborate rooms in the house. On the first floor, there is a fireplace with a rustic stone segmental arched opening in the center of the west wall. Suspended in the center of the dining room, there is a circular hammered-iron chandelier. Decorative woodwork includes built-in bookshelves in the parlor, unornamented stained moldings with a raised outer molding, crown molding at the ceiling of the parlor and dining room, and a square recessed-panel newel post and short stair rail leading to the second floor. The stair landing on the second floor has square spindles, a hand rail and square posts.

In the second floor living room, the fireplace has a brick segmental arched opening and brick hearth. The living room walls are sheathed with vertical tongue and grooved paneling and there are built-in bookshelves in the corners of the room. There are original solid wood doors with five raised panels throughout the building. The building has a hot water heating system with cast iron radiators.

Because the house is built into a rocky ridge, it has only a crawl space under most of the building. A small basement is located under the living room. It has a concrete floor and ceiling. Extending to the west, there is a furnace room and utility room under the patio. Each of these rooms has a exterior entrance.

ALTERATIONS

While there have been alterations, this building generally has a high degree of architectural integrity. Originally, there were paired glazed French doors on either side of the west exterior chimney that opened from the first floor living room to a patio. These doors have been replaced by a large fixed window and a sliding glass door. A bank of three large fixed windows to the southwest have modern glazing. One of three original garage bays to the northeast has been enclosed and converted to an "office." There are aluminum storm windows on the first floor windows and the second-floor windows in the gable ends. Narrow oak flooring on the first floor has been covered with carpet and the first floor ceilings have been covered with square tile. The wooden moldings on the second story have been painted and the wooden floors covered with carpet.

South of the main house, there is a rectangular children's play house built into the bluff. The playhouse also is constructed of rock-faced stone. It has a low gable roof, a south-facing entrance and a projecting chimney to the east. To the southwest, at the base of the bluff, there are two rough stone conical structures sheltering a spring and pumphouse. Although the Riley house is the most prominent structure on Blackfeather Farm, there is an earlier wood-frame residence, barn, and henhouse to the south. When the Riley house was built, a dam was constructed to create a 8.2 acre lake in the valley below. The earthen dam and concrete floodgates remain, but the structure has not held water for many years.

INVENTORY

Listed properties are keyed to site plan shown on Section number 11, Page 1 of this nomination

1. Gate posts (c. 1928) Two native limestone gate posts mark the entrance to the property. These measure approximately five feet high by three feet on each of the four sides. Wrought iron fences extend from each post.

2. Drive (c. 1928) The property is entered at the southern end from W. 183rd Street. The drive is announced by two native stone gate posts and a wrought iron fence. Stone walls intermittently line the drive as it passes through the rolling manicured lawn and clusters of trees. The long, picturesque gravel drive winds past the caretaker's bungalow, the barn and the chicken shed. The drive terminates at the center of the property in a loop in front of the house.

3. House (c. 1928) The two-story Dutch Colonial Revival house is made of irregularly laid native limestone. The second level gambrel faces and dormers are faced with shingles. A massive native limestone chimney rises up the western gambrel wall. The facade maintains a southern orientation. Irregularly laid native limestone is used for a series of walls that enclose patios and gardens directly adjacent to the house.

4. Stone walls (c. 1928) Native limestone walls intermittently line the drive as it passes through the rolling manicured lawn and clusters of trees. Native limestone is used for a series of walls that enclose patios and gardens directly adjacent to the house.

5. Lake (c. 1947) A one-acre lake stands south of the house, below a steep grade.

6. Summer cottage (c. 1928) South of the main house, there is a rectangular summer cottage built into the bluff. The cottage is constructed of native limestone. It has a low gable roof, a south-facing entrance and a projecting chimney to the east.

7. Springhouse (c. 1947) At the base of the bluff, there are two rough stone conical structures sheltering a spring and pumphouse. These structures overlook the small lake.

8. Natural spring * The spring is exposed by an L-shaped hole in the rock bluff.

9. Original lake basin (c. 1928- 1930) The original lake stood below the house to the west, in a clearing to the immediate east of a creek. When the Riley house was built, a dam was constructed to create a 8.2 acre lake in the valley below.

10. Rock formations * Beyond the original lake basin, across the creek and into the forest stand massive natural rock formations.

11. Dam gates/spillway (c. 1928- 1930) The dam gates and spillway stand in the forest near the western boundary of the property. While the earthen dam and concrete floodgates remain, the structure has not held water for many years.

12. Barn (c. 1930) A board-and-batten, gable roofed structure with a lean-to addition on the east side. Six-pane windows fenestrate the gable facades and western elevation. The barn maintains a southern facade orientation.

13. Bungalow (c. 1918) A small, clapboard bungalow with a jerkinheaded roof. One-over-one windows fenestrate each elevation. A center chimney projects from the roof. The bungalow claims a southern facade orientation.

14. Chicken shed (c. 1930) A gable roofed, hollow clay tile structure sited between the barn and bungalow with a northern facade orientation.

SIGNIFICANCE

Blackfeather Farm is located at 8140 W. 183rd, Stilwell vicinity, Aubry Township, Johnson County, is significant under criteria A and C as a "suburban rooftop" country retreat for Nelson Studebaker Riley and corporate oil company owners. The farm contains several rustic style structures including a main house that was built in the Dutch Colonial Revival style with Craftsman influences. The house was constructed in 1928 as a country house and rural retreat for a well-to-do resident of Kansas City, Missouri. It is distinguished from other rural residences by its rock-faced stone construction, the site-specific orientation in a dramatic naturalistic setting, and the informal plan.

Blackfeather Farm is comprised of six buildings, three structures, four sites and one object. The property is entered at the southern end, the drive is announced by two native stone gate posts and a wrought iron fence. A long, picturesque gravel drive winds past the caretaker's bungalow, the barn and the chicken shed. A lane leads east past the barn to a pasture and some woodland, encompassing some forty acres. Stone walls intermittently line the drive as it passes through the rolling manicured lawn and clusters of trees. The main house stands near the center of the property, the drive terminates in a loop in front of the house. The land to the immediate north and west of the house drops off sharply. South of the house is a native stone summer cottage, springhouse, and natural spring overlook a small lake. Beyond the lake and across a clearing stands a forest that contains massive rock formations and the ruins of the dam and spillway for the original lake. The original lake stood where the clearing is now.

Nelson S. Riley acquired the property known as Blackfeather Farm on December 10, 1927 from local oilman A.R. Jones. The residence was constructed in 1928 probably after Riley granted an easement February 7, 1928 for construction of an electricity transmission line across the property. Architectural drawings for the house have not been found, but the existing building outline was shown in a landscape plan dated August 20, 1928 that was prepared by the notable firm, Hare and Hare. Another plan dated November 8, 1927 for the proposed lake below the house was prepared for Riley by the Tuttle-Ayers-Woodward engineering firm. Both drawings survive in the possession of the current owner.

The Riley residence was representative of a developing pattern among Kansas City's elite. As The Independent, a society newspaper, commented July 11, 1931, "Kansas City is getting very country-estate-minded of late. It's becoming far more the vogue for the affluent to open a nearby country residence in the summer, than to hide themselves off to a California or Atlantic seaboard resort." One of the country residences mentioned in the list of metropolitan area retreats was Nelson Studebaker Riley's "Blackfeather Farm" at Stilwell, Kansas.

Riley's career and personal life seemed to reach a peak of success with the acquisition of Blackfeather Farm and then declined dramatically after 1930. Nelson Studebaker Riley was president of the Motor Car Dealers' Association of Kansas City in 1923 when he was portrayed in an article entitled "Who's Who in Kansas City." His mother was Mary Studebaker, daughter of Peter E. Studebaker, one of the three founders of the Studebaker Brothers' Manufacturing Company. Nelson Riley graduated from Yale University and received a law degree from Columbia University Law School. In the article, he commented that his ambition for Kansas City was "to see Kansas City absolutely clean politically and the possessor of the reputation of being the best run city in the country."

Nelson Riley came to Kansas City in 1909 as assistant manager of the vehicle branch of the Studebaker Company. He went to Washington in the summer of 1917 as assistant director of the war trade board. After briefly serving in the army, Nelson joined his brother, Franklin Studebaker Riley, in 1919 to form the Studebaker-Riley Company. Their agency in Kansas City was the Midwest headquarters for the distribution of Studebaker cars. Nelson was president and Franklin was vice-president of the company. According to the Kansas City Times, when the brothers sold the agency to the Armacost Automobile Company and retired from the auto business in 1930, it marked "the severance of the last members of the Studebaker family from the business established more than 80 years before."

Nelson Riley was still single in 1923 at the age of 41. He lived at 1047 W. 53rd in the prestigious Sunset Hills district which surrounding three sides of the Kansas City Country Club. Sunset Hills was J.C. Nichols' "first truly elite subdivision." Nichols began planning this development in 1907 with the advice of pioneer landscape architect, George Kessler. Nichols filed the plat for Sunset Hills in 1909 and developed the plant-filled picturesque residential environment over the next two years. As a series of landscape drawings prepared in 1925 for Riley's Kansas City residence suggest, Nelson Riley was actively interested in picturesque design and this was more fully expressed in the design of his country home.

About the same time Riley acquired Blackfeather Farm, he married, but the union did not endure. In the 1929 city directory, Riley's Kansas City residence was listed and Blackfeather Farm, Stanley, Kansas, was proudly added. In the 1930 entry, a spouse, Kathryn, was listed with Riley while the farm was not mentioned. Possibly, Nelson and Kathryn were unhappy with their country residence or their wealth was lost in the deepening Depression because they deeded the property to the Fidelity National Bank and Trust Company October 27, 1931. Kathryn lived with Nelson for the next three years and in 1933 a son, Nelson Studebaker Riley, Jr., was listed in the directory. Then the family apparently disintegrated; in 1934 Nelson moved from his home in Sunset Hills to 5049

Wornall Road. Kathryn Riley had a separate address and no son was recorded. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Nelson Riley was listed as a lawyer sharing an office with his brother.

The Fidelity Trust Company sold the property in rural Johnson County in 1932 to Jeanette Moss and Francis Leffingwell. A second significant period in the building's history began when Jeanette and her husband Celsus Moss sold the property December 27, 1934 to the Black Feather Club and Recreation Corporation. Fishing and shooting were the club's recreational attractions. In 1934 J.C. Sheperd was president of the Black Feather Club. The club signed an installment contract for deed to purchase the property from the Mosses. The property served as a country resort for executives of the Sheffield Steel Company and their guests.

That use also was representative of a trend in the area. One of the most prominent figures in modern Kansas City area history, J.C. Nichols, purchased an 80-acre tract adjoining Blackfeather Farm March 21, 1936. The property was used as a country "lodge" until Nichols' death. Eventually, the Nichols heirs deeded the property to the Kansas City Council of Girl Scouts for a camp November 23, 1956. When the balloon payment on Blackfeather Farm came due December 1, 1939, the contract was converted to a mortgage on the property held by the Sheffield Steel Company. Eventually, the Black Feather recreational corporation assigned title to Sheffield Steel December 22, 1942. At the time, John W. Anderson was president and J.W. Flynn was secretary of the club. Sheffield Steel then deeded the property to Anderson as trustee.

According to the Kansas City Star, Sheffield Steel traced its origin to the establishment in 1880 of the Kansas City Bolt & Nut Company in the Blue Valley industrial district. The company developed a process in 1920 for making steel from scrap that became a standard in the steel industry. As production expanded, the company incorporated in 1925 as the Sheffield Steel Corporation. Sheffield constructed the first wire mill between the Mississippi and the Rockies in 1928. The company built its business on the ability to turn out a great variety of products to serve its market area, "the midlands and the southwest."

The Sheffield Corporation was acquired in 1930 by Armco, a major steel producer based in Ohio. In 1931 R.L. Gray became president of the division in Kansas. Gray was involved in the operation of the Black Feather Club. He led the Sheffield company until 1954 when he was promoted to executive vice-president of Armco and then to corporate president in 1956. The Sheffield designation was terminated in 1964 when Armco announced the administrative consolidation of the Sheffield and Armco steel divisions.

When the Black Feather property was sold to Thomas and Ruth Richardson September 29, 1947, the Kansas City Star reported that the farm had been used for several years as a recreation site for employees and guests of the Sheffield Steel Corporation. Richardson, the owner of a shoe store located on the Country Club Plaza, purchased the property for his own residence. The property has been owned by the Richardson family since that time.

Many years before the Nelson S. Riley house was constructed, the land itself was associated with the local history of the Shawnee Indians in Kansas. The original land patent (Shawnee #155) dated March 13, 1885 was awarded to To wah pea and her heirs. She selected the SE1/4 NW1/4 and SW1/4 of section 30, township 14, range 25 as her individual allotment.

Individual allotments were the final result of the gradual reduction of the Shawnee Indian reservation in Kansas established in 1825. A treaty negotiated in 1854 opened the territory to white settlement. When Johnson County was organized, most of the Shawnee agreed to select individual tracts of 200 acres, but the Black Bob band preferred to hold their land in common. The Black Bob tract included the land in Oxford Township that was eventually allocated to To wah pea and later was purchased by Nelson Riley. During the Civil War, this border area was threatened by raiders from both sides and most of the Shawnee moved away.

White settlers moved onto the land as soon as the war ended and disputes over ownership continued for the next twenty years. In October, 1868, Joseph and Johnson Blackfeather along with others in the Black Bob band signed a letter of protest to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. They said, "we seek protection for our families and for our lands." By 1869, the assessor of Aubry Township, William Brady, reported that there was not a single quarter section of the Indian lands lying in Oxford Township not settled and improved. In 1886 the Kansas legislature settled the claims on terms that favored the white settlers, but the Blackfeather family name continued to be associated with the property.

According to the present owner, the other house on Blackfeather Farm was constructed for John Laughlin. Laughlin purchased the 80-acre tract from George and Etta Kentch January 15, 1903. His widow, Annie, sold the property to O.H. and Louis Anes June 6, 1921. The Ines sold the farm to the A.R. Jones Oil and Operating Company April 6, 1926.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Although the Nelson S. Riley house is an unusual example, the building does express some of the defining principles of the Craftsman style. The Craftsman idea was broad enough to include "farmhouses, suburban houses, mountain cabins and semi-detached city houses... The important

thing was suitability-suitability of occupants to house and of house to surroundings." To achieve the goal of the Craftsman style in a rural home for a well-to-do metropolitan businessman and his new wife, the design, materials, and features of the Riley house combined influences from the popular architecture of the early twentieth century.

The Craftsman style was associated with the bungalow house type, but the Riley house was not an ordinary bungalow. It does have design characteristics commonly attributed to that building type. As a country home, the house at Blackfeather Farm demonstrated how the bungalow could serve as the vacation home of the rich. According to Clay Lancaster, the bungalow building type can be recognized "by its form, which is low, overshadowed by the roof, restrained in the manner of style, subdued in color, and blended with its setting." Like the common bungalow, the Riley house was constructed low to the ground with the entire second story sheltered by a broad gambrel roof. The house was subdued in color and blended with the scenic location. In The Bungalow Book, Charles E. White stated that an architectural advantage of the bungalow is "the possibility it offers in the way of charming picturesque design." The design of the Riley house was self-consciously picturesque and borrowed features from other popular styles of the period such as the gambrel roof from the Dutch Colonial style and an entrance lobby from the Tudor Revival.

White claimed that the bungalow type could used "with equal success on the prairie lot, at the seashore, in the hills or on mountain sites." That point was illustrated in the siting of the Riley residence on its rocky ridge with a remarkable view to the west. By adapting the house to a distinctive site, the designer followed the contemporary instructions of C.E. Schermerhorn to carefully choose the site for a bungalow considering "healthfulness, location, command of view, shade, soil, facilities for drainage, and for water supply." These principles were evident in the design of the Nelson Riley residence.

Another characteristic of both the Craftsman style and bungalow type was emphasized by Schermerhorn's direction to carefully choose the building material, "keeping in mind that the bungalow should fit the site and surroundings." A similar axiom of the Craftsman style stated that "the sense of unity with the surroundings was maintained at least partly by using locally available construction materials." These characteristics were expressed in the Riley house through the use of stone quarried from the ridge where the house was built and emphasized in the irregular rough masonry laid in random courses with deeply raked mortar joints. The extensive landscaping at Blackfeather Farm also was designed to integrate the house with the site for a calculated aesthetic effect.

REFERENCES

Books

Comstock, William Phillips, comp. Bungalows, Camps, and Mountain Houses 2nd ed. (New York: William T. Comstock Co., 1915). reprint AIA Press, 1990.

Lancaster, Clay. The American Bungalow, 1880-1930 (New York: Abbeville Press, 1985).

Stickley, Gustav, ed. Craftsman Bungalows: 59 Homes from the Craftsman (New York: Dover Publications, 1988).

Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981).

Winter, Robert. The California Bungalow (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1980).

Worley, William S. J.C. Nichols and the Shaping of Kansas City (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1990).

County records

Johnson County Register of Deeds, Olathe Kansas.

Deed book 87:57. Patent deed record March 13, 1885. To wah pea and her heirs, Shawnee #155.
Deed book 73:420. McAlpine to Fuson, December 26, 1894.
Deed book 74:231. Gilmore, trustee to Kentch, April 23, 1896.
Deed book 85:590. Kentch to Laughlin, January 15, 1903.
Deed book 123:359 Laughlin to Anes, June 6, 1921.
Deed book 136:561 Anes to Jones Oil Co., April 6, 1926.
Deed book 142:65 Jones Oil Co. to Riley, December 10, 1927.
Deed book 150:386 Riley to Fidelity National Bank, October 27, 1931.
Deed book 154:436 Fidelity National Bank to Moss and Leffingwell, November 10, 1932.
Deed book 154:483 Moss and Leffingwell to Moss, February 24, 1933.
Deed book 170:609 Moss to Black Feather Corporation, December 27, 1934.
Deed book 186:365 Black Feather Club to Sheffield Steel Corporation, December 22, 1942.
Deed book 225:115 Anderson, trustee to Richardson, September 29, 1947.

Deed book 952:364 Richardson to Plaza Bank & Trust, January 18, 1974.
Mortgage record book 103:340 Moss to Black Feather Club, December 11, 1934.
Deed book 194:173 Kay to J. C. Nichols, March 21, 1936.
Deed book 396::276 Miller Nichols to K.C. Council of Girl Scouts, November 23, 1956.
Deed book 396:278 J.C. Nichols, Jr. to K.C. Council of Girl Scouts, November 23, 1956.

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"Sketch plan for the Development of the grounds around the country home of Mr. & Mrs. Nelson S. Riley, Blackfeather Farm," August 30, 1928.

"Planting plan for Mr. & Mrs. N.S. Riley, Blackfeather Farm, Johnson County, Kansas," October, 1928.

"Preliminary plan for property of Mr. N.S. Riley, Sunset Hill District," March 31, 1925.

"Plan for grading and drive," Mr. Nelson S. Riley, April, 1925.

"Planting plan for drive" Mr. Nelson S. Riley, Kansas City Missouri, August 1925.

Hare and Hare, Landscape architects: Collection. Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Kansas City. Folder 11-29 RH-RO-misc. ca. 1916-1948.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Blackfeather Farm stands on the SW2, SW4, S30, T14S, R24E in Aubry Township, Johnson County, Kansas. The nominated property encompasses a 78.9 acre tract that includes fourteen resources. The area is represented on the Stilwell Quadrangle map that is included as part of the nomination by the square A-B-C-D. The property is bounded by the south by W. 183rd Street, to the west by Antioch Road, and to the north and east by adjacent property lines.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Blackfeather Farm is located on a 78.9 acre tract that includes the fourteen resources that comprise the district. The 78.9 acre tract includes all of the property historically associated with the farm excepting 1.1 acres.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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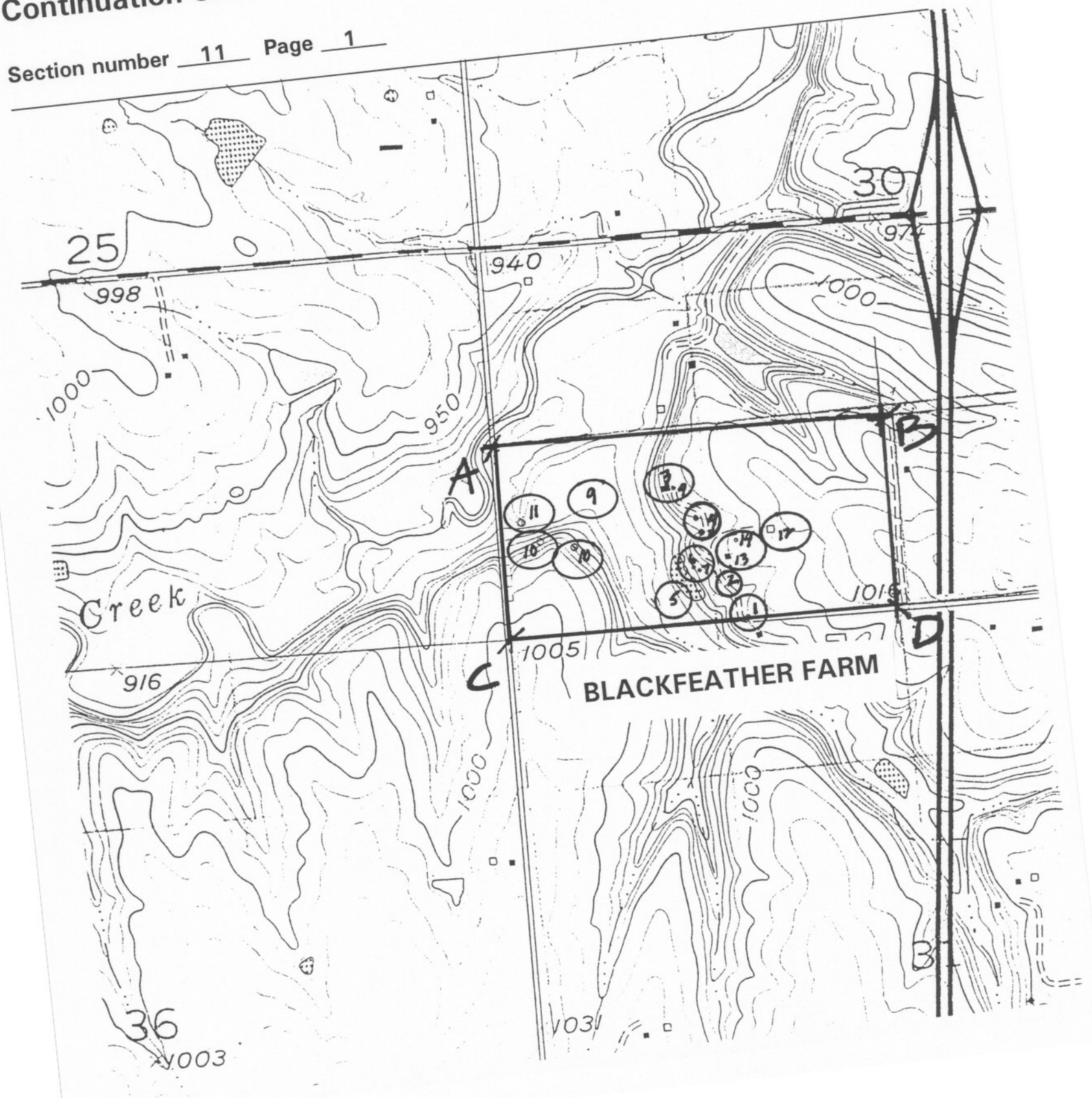

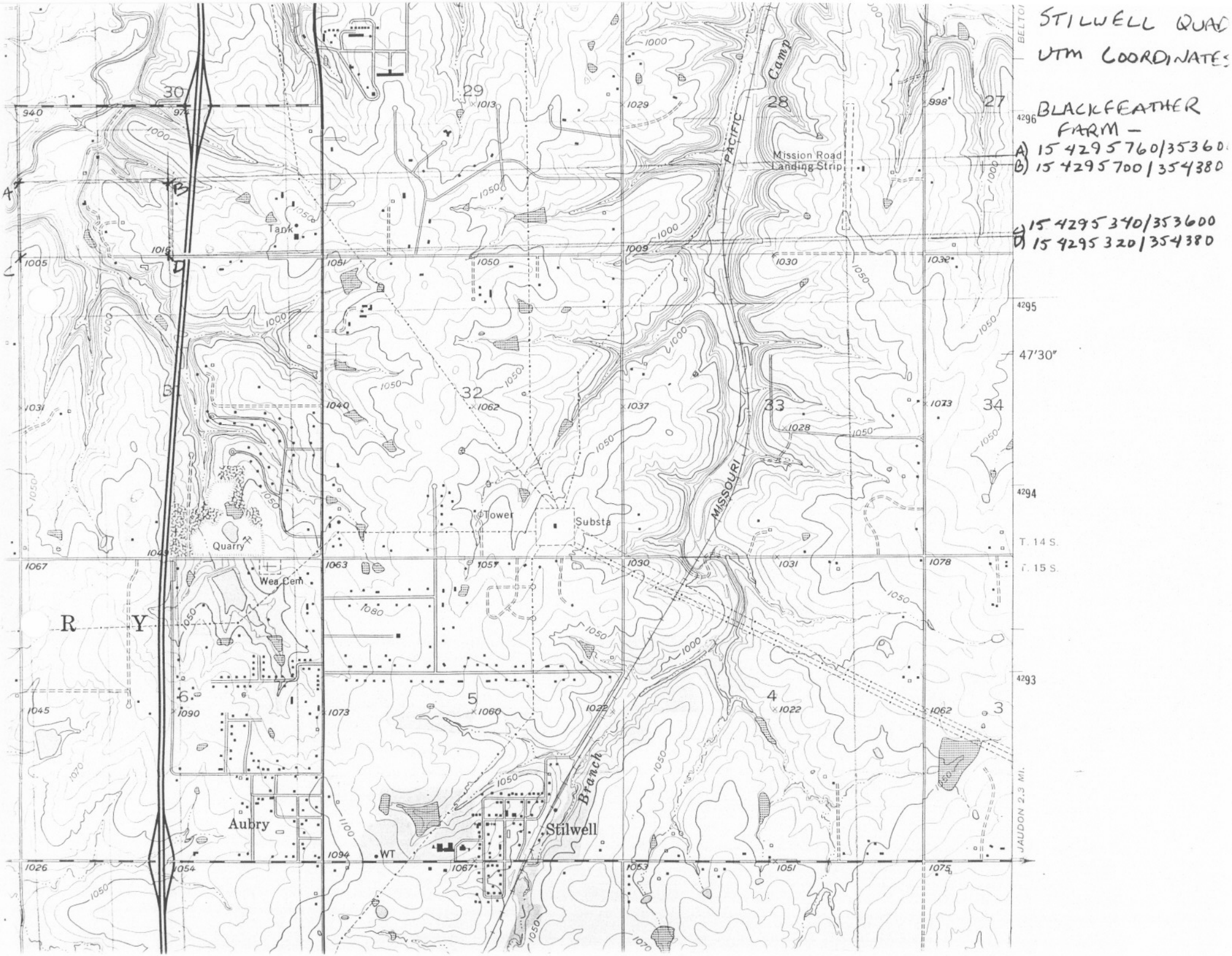
STILWELL QUAD
UTM COORDINATES
BLACKFEATHER FARM –
A) 15 4295760/353600
B) 15 4295700/354380
C) 15 4295340/353600
D) 15 4295320/354380
Mission Road Landing Strip
PACIFIC
Camp
MISSOURI
Branch
Tank
Tower
Substa
Quarry
Wea Cem
Aubry
Stilwell
WT
R
Y
T. 14 S.
T. 15 S.
47'30"
JAUDON 2.3 MI.
BELTON
4296
4295
4294
4293
30
29
28
27
31
32
33
34
6
5
4
3