NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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 any 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 Charles M. Prather Barn

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number NW corner of NW 30th St. and NW 60th Ave. _____ not for publication ___

city or town Kingman _____ vicinity X

state Kansas _____ code KS county Kingman _____ code 095 zip code 67068

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 9-10-02

Signature of certifying official Date

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

State or 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 commenting or other official Date

_____

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ 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): _____

_____ _____

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property: Contributing	Noncontributing	
X private	X building(s)	1		buildings
public-local	district			sites
public-State	site			structures
public-Federal	structure			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
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
AGRICULTURE/storage

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
AGRICULTURE/storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
OTHER/vernacular

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation CONCRETE
roof METAL: Iron
walls WOOD
METAL: Iron
other

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

See continuation sheet.

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.

_X_ 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.)

____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

____ B removed from its original location.

____ C a birthplace or a 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

Period of Significance
1938

Significant Dates
1938

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Charles M. Prather

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

9. Major Bibliographical References
(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:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other

Name of repository:
Kansas State Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	14	568030	4171430	3			
2				4			

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 Susan Jezak Ford

organization Citysearch Preservation date April 6, 2002

street & number 3628 Holmes St. telephone 816-531-2489

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64109

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

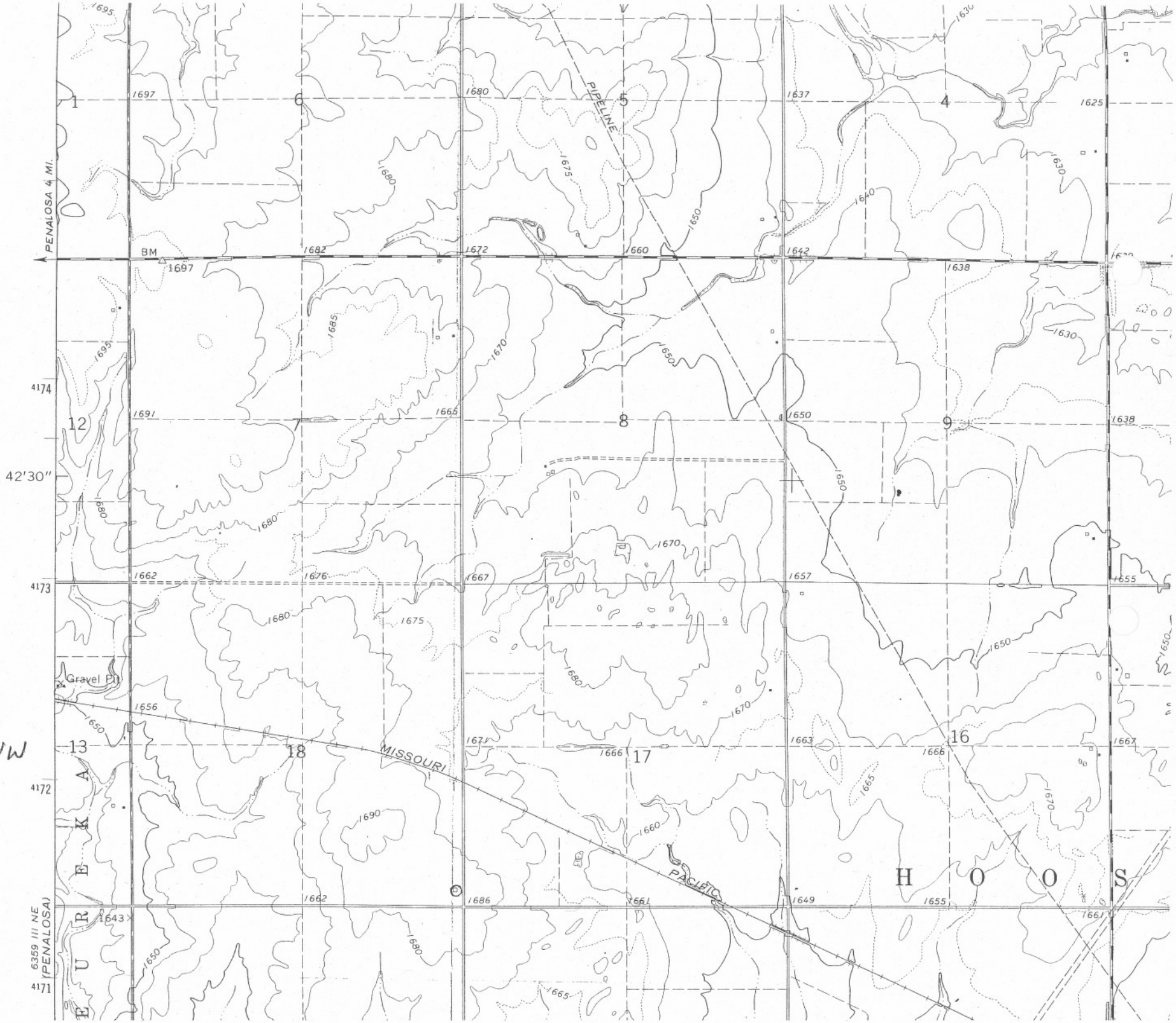
name Charles W. Prather

street & number 6423 Washington Street telephone 816-523-0517

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64113

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 the 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.0. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



KINGMAN NW
QUAD
PRATNER BARN
14-568030
417430

Section 7
Overview
The Charles Prather barn, circa 1938, is a simple, rectangular building with a gable roof. The barn is located on the southeast corner of a 160-acre tract—the southeast quarter in Section 18, Township 27, Range 18 in Hoosier Township of Kingman County, Kansas. It stands in a cultivated field of wheat, approximately ten miles northwest of the town of Kingman.

All of the barn's timbers are of creosote-treated lumber. The frame of the barn is built of 4"x 4" wall studs and 2" x 8" rafter joists. Studs measuring 4"x 6" border each side of the aisle, supporting the upper framework of 4" x 8" stringers to brace the rafters. Horizontal timbers measuring 12" x 18" are placed above the sliding doors on the north and south sides. Exterior walls are sided with 2" x 6" tongue-in-groove siding, clad in galvanized iron. The entire floor of the barn and footing are concrete with piers rising 8" to 10" above the floor level under all walls. The entire barn, including the floor and foundation, is in excellent condition. The gable roof of the barn is covered with corrugated galvanized iron. All materials are original.

The Prather barn was assembled during the Depression of discarded railroad refrigerator cars or other railroad structures. The entire wood frame building is covered in galvanized iron and measures 52 feet wide by 60½ feet long. The interior walls and exterior wood siding originally served as flooring for the railroad cars; bridge timbers support the floor of the loft. The frame timbers are treated with creosote and most of the metal siding consists of individual panels joined by rolled standing seams, creating vertically ridged siding. This metal siding originally covered the roofs of the railroad cars.

The main entrance to the barn faces south and the roof ridge line, approximately 40 feet above the ground, runs north to south. The barn is freshly painted red with white doors and white window openings on the north and south sides.

The barn contains several small cast iron locking doors on the exterior and interior that operate as portals to the interior storage bins. These doors, originally located on the roofs of the refrigerator cars to lower blocks inside, open by swinging upward on hinges. Each contains a latch and handle riveted to the bottom central portion of the door. Most of these doors are faired over with tin on the interior, except for one on the west side of the barn in the southwest corner.

South Façade
The barn's main façade presents a gabled elevation, approached by a dirt drive. The two-and-a-half-story building contains a double set of sliding metal doors in the center of the first story. A single door is located to the far left of the first story and a double hay door is located in the peak of the gable, protected by a hay hood

overhang. Single windows, now faired over with tin and measuring 18" square, are located on either side of the hay hood doors and near the roofline on either side of the second story. An additional single window is located between the single door and the sliding double doors in the first story.

Three small hinged doors are located on this façade—one just above and one on either side of the sliding doors. The two side hinged doors are topped by small metal awnings. The siding in the upper gable of the south façade is flat; the remainder consists of ridged siding.

West Façade
The west side of the Prather barn consists of a single entry door in the center of the façade, surrounded on either side by three hinged iron doors that access interior grain bins. Each of these iron doors is topped by a small metal awning. The siding on this façade is ridged below the level of the awnings and is smooth above the awnings.

North Façade
The gabled north façade of the barn contains a double set of sliding metal doors in the center of the first story. An iron hinged door is located on either side of the track for the sliding doors. Pairs of single windows, faired over with tin and measuring 18" square, are located near the roofline at the second story and in the gable.

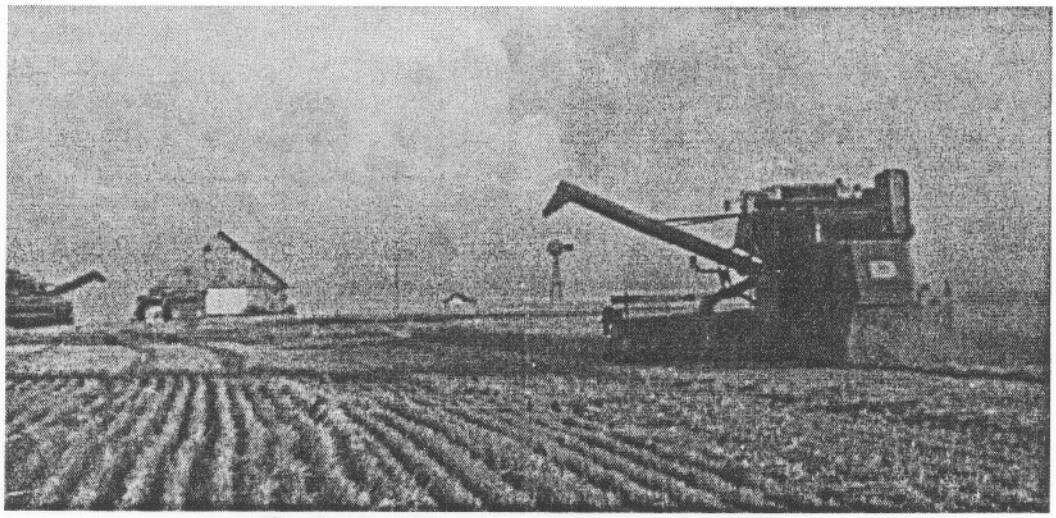
East Façade
The east side of the Prather barn contains five evenly spaced iron hinged doors that provide access to interior granaries. Each door is topped by a small metal awning. The siding on this façade is ridged below the level of the awnings and smooth above the awnings.

Interior
The interior of the Prather Barn contains a transverse crib floor plan, consisting of an aisle measuring 20 feet wide that runs north-south, flanked on either side by granary bays. The barn contains five bays on the east and seven on the west. The bays are divided by solid wood walls with no openings. Each set of bays has a common interior wooden wall running the length of the building. The interior walls are constructed of tongue and groove 2"` x 6" lumber and each crib is topped by a solid wood ceiling that creates the floor for the second story. Each granary can hold more than 1000 bushels of wheat. The cribs were originally accessed through the hinged iron doors on the exterior or interior of the barn.

Each granary bay contains a single doorway that may be closed off by inserting lengths of lumber into the opening from the ground upward as the granary is filled with grain. Above each doorway is a cast iron hinged doorway to allow the granary to be filled to the very top. The five doorways on the east side of the barn are

framed with metal. These doorways are numbered 1 through 5 beginning at the south and moving north. The numbers are hand painted in white and most numbers are painted on the iron red hinged door. The doorways on the west side are numbered beginning with 6 on the north. The first three doorways are numbered 6, 7, and 8. The next doorway is an unframed door with no accompanying hinged door above it. The number "11" is painted on the wall to the immediate north of this doorway. Continuing to the south, the next doorways have metal frames topped by hinged iron doors and are numbered 9 and 10. The last doorway is unframed, with the number "12" painted on the wall to the immediate north.

The Prather Barn continues to serve as a storage facility for hay and machinery. The owner spent $6000 in 1996 for repairs and maintenance and painting the exterior. The barn is in excellent condition.



The Prather Barn during harvest in the 1960s

Section 8
Overview
The Prather Barn is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, for its Architecture. The barn is an excellent example of vernacular design, planned and built by its original owner and local workers. The barn's materials are unique in their ingenuity, salvaged from railroad yards in Wichita and assembled in the present location to create a one-of-a-kind structure that remains in near-original condition.

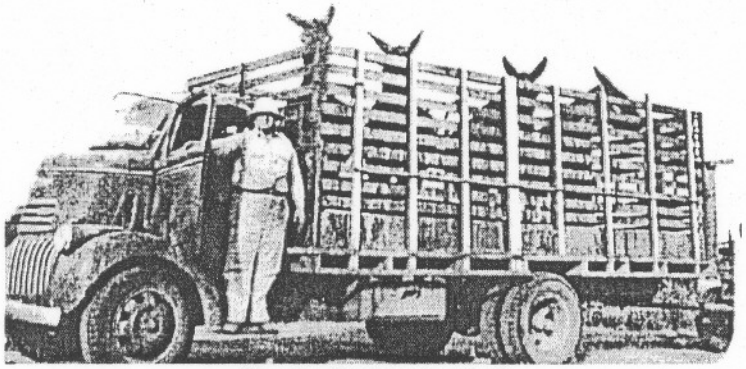
History
The Prather Barn was built during the Great Depression without plans by Charles M. Prather and a group of local carpenters. The barn was once part of an active farmstead that included a house, machine shed, barns for draft horses and saddle horses, a granary, chicken house, milk house, windmill, corrals and silo. Other buildings on the farmstead were either destroyed by a tornado in the early 1940s, fell to neglect or were eventually moved from the site.

Charles M. Prather came to Kingman County from Golden, Missouri in 1897 at the age of 15. Friends of his family were moving to Kingman and offered to take him along. Because he had finished grammar school and was ready to work and support himself, he joined the westward group traveling in covered wagons. Upon arriving in Kansas, Prather worked as a day laborer for several area farmers, often sleeping in their barns at night.

Prather caught the interest of Josephine L. McCartney when he was the high bidder on her pie at a Hoosier Township box supper. They were married in 1903. Josephine's parents had homesteaded 160 acres in Kingman County; this farm eventually grew to 800 acres. Josephine inherited 160 acres that became part of the Prather farms upon the death of her parents. Prather changed his focus from day labor to the business of horse and mule trading, concentrating on creating matched teams. Area banks gradually increased his lines of credit and he proved to be a reliable customer, always paying his debts in a timely manner. He began renting land from neighboring farmers and eventually purchased his own property. The acreage the Prather barn sits on today was purchased in 1917 for $12,000.

The Prather family moved from the farm to Kingman in 1920, the year young Charles was born. In 1921, Charles M. entered the livestock business with Noah Cheatum. Their enterprise brought Hereford calves from the Southwest to Kingman County, grazed them on wheat pasture in the fall and then put them into the partners' own feedlots before they boarded trains for the Wichita and Kansas City markets. This partnership dissolved in 1930, a victim of the 1929 stock market crash.

The Depression brought the Prather family, which now included the parents, Charles W. and Lucille L., back to the farm in 1929. Day-to-day life on the farm included raising chickens, cows, pigs, horses and a garden, plus the enterprise of selling butter, cream and eggs for the purchase of flour, beans and groceries every Saturday in Kingman. The barn's current owner, Charles W. Prather, recalls going to town right after lunch every Saturday to shop, visit friends, get haircuts, go to the movies, get ice cream cones, eat dinner at the Ross Café and then return home after dark. The family moved back to Kingman three years later, when Charles was ready to attend high school.



Charlie Prather in 1943

The farmstead continued to serve as a hub for the Prather acreage. The house was used for meals and sleeping quarters, especially during planting and harvest time. The family prospered and by the time the Prather barn was built, the farm had grown to approximately 1000 acres of cultivated land and 400 acres of pasture.

Barn construction all but stopped during between the onset of the Great Depression and the end of World War II. The shortage of cash and later wartime demand for raw materials brought barn construction to a stop for 20 years.[1] Kingman County fared somewhat better during the Depression than other areas of the Midwest. This was due to government support for wheat farmers and fewer dust storms during the 1930s.[2] Kingman County farmers were still short on cash, however, and many men were anxious to work. When Prather heard that materials from discarded railroad cars were available, he saw his opportunity. Badly needing a new barn, he collected the materials and brought them to Hoosier Township.

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[1] Allen G. Noble and Hubert G.H. Wilhelm. *Barns of the Midwest*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1995, 214.
[2] Fred Hurd. *A History of Kingman County, 1871-1969*, North Newton, KS: Mennonite Press, 1970, 161-162.

No written account exists of the construction of the Prather barn. Property taxes on the acreage increased between 1939 and 1940, so the estimated date of construction is 1938. The current owner recalls being away at the University of Kansas during the construction, and painting the building during the summer; these events fall within this time frame. According to the owner, the building was constructed by local carpenters without any architectural plans.

The location and size of the barn makes it visible for several miles in all directions. During World War II, flight crews from the Naval Air Force base in Hutchinson used it as a landmark on practice runs.

Charles M. Prather died in 1952 and upon the death of Josephine Prather in 1962, the land was split between Charles W. and Lucille, the couple's two children. Charles currently owns the quarter with the barn.

Preservation activities on the barn in 1996 included repairs to the roof, windows and overall maintenance. The entire exterior was also painted at that time. The barn is currently used by the great-grandsons of Charles M. Prather, who farm the original acreage. The rest of the farmstead buildings are no longer extant, but the Prather barn has survived and continues to be maintained due to its capacity to store vast quantities of hay, alfalfa and machinery. The grain bins on either side of the main aisle can each hold 1000 bushels of grain, although they are no longer used for this purpose. The loft can hold 500 tons of baled hay.

Architecture

The Prather barn is an outstanding example of rural vernacular architecture in both form and construction. "Simple forms represent simple realities," stated architectural historian Dell Upton and historian John Michael Vlach in *Common Places*.[3] The Prather barn was the response of a simple form for the reality of a need. Charles Prather was a farmer in need of a barn; the Depression made conventional construction an impossibility. When materials and workers became available, the barn became a reality.

The very functional transverse crib form is one found across the Midwest, with likely roots in the Upland South and areas influenced by Germanic settlement.[4] The form of the transverse frame crib barn consists of three bays with a central aisle that runs parallel to the ridge of the roof. The aisle is accessed through central doorways at either gable end, with storage cribs located on either side of the aisle. A loft may or may not be present in this design; the Prather barn contains a full second-story hay mow. The interior design of this form as seen in the Prather barn allows for the maximum storage of grain and hay. The customized small hinged doors on the

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[3] Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach. *Common Places: Reading in American Vernacular Architecture*, Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1986, xiv.
[4] Noble and Wilhelm, 74.

exterior and interior of the Prather barn allow access to the interior granaries. The straightforward exterior allows for entry into and through the building, while protecting the contents in a waterproof shell.

The Prather barn is unquestionably unique in its materials. "Vernacular builders use whatever materials are available and whatever skill they possess. As a result, techniques of construction vary widely not only with the task at hand but with the locale."[5] The Prather barn is singular in its construction and an outstanding example of vernacular architecture. If other Depression-era barns built of discarded railroad cars exist, they are extremely rare. The challenge of piecing together the remnant railroad parts into a functional building resulted not only in a serviceable farm structure, but also an example of folk architecture. Relocation of the individual pieces into an integrated barn provided an extremely sturdy, well-designed structure that is nearly impervious to the elements of western Kansas. Each portion of the barn is assembled in a unique way, making it unlikely that a barn of this type will ever be built again.

The Prather barn is one of a kind and it retains its integrity. Its history, design and construction make it an extremely significant contribution to the Kansas landscape and eligible to the National Register of Historic Places.

[5] Upton and Vlach, xvii.

Section 9
Sources

Information assembled by Charles W. Prather, 1997-2002.

Fred Hurd. *A History of Kingman County, 1871-1969*, North Newton, KS: Mennonite Press, 1970.

Allen G. Noble and Hubert G.H. Wilhelm. *Barns of the Midwest*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1995.

Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach. *Common Places: Reading in American Vernacular Architecture*, Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1986.

The Kingman Journal:
"Charles Prather Funeral Today" 30 September 1952, p. 1.
"Final Rites Held For Mrs. Prather" 2 October 1962, p. 1.

The Leader-Courier:
"C.M. Prather Dies Saturday" 2 October 1952, p.1.

Section 10
Verbal Boundary Description
The SE4, SE4, SE4, SE4 of Section 18, Township 27, Range 8 in Kingman County, Kansas. The barn stands in the middle of a field on the Prather farm.

Boundary Justification
The boundary includes the acreage historically associated with the Charles M. Prather barn.

Section 11
Additional Documentation: Photographs

Photographer: Randy Thies
Date: March 2002
Location of negative: Kansas State Historical Society
Views:
1/5 Northeast view, south facade, west elevation
2/5 Southwest view, north elevation, east elevation
3/5 Detail, north end of west wall
4/5 Interior view, west wall
5/5 Interior view, north view