



Register of Historic Kansas Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating individual properties and districts. The format is similar to the National Register of Historic Places form. 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. Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Cass Ranch – Plum Creek Rock Barn

Other names/site number KHRI 063-35

Name of related Multiple Property Listing Historic Agriculture Related Resources of Kansas

2. Location

street & number 2001 County Rd L not for publication

city or town Gove vicinity (Grinnell mailing address) vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Gove code _____ zip code 37738

3-4. Certification

I hereby certify that this property is listed in the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

Applicable State Register Criteria: A B C D

Patrick Zollner

Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO

11-18-21

Date

Kansas State Historical Society
State agency

Listed on November 13, 2021

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box)

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
1		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1		Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the State Register

n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE: animal facility / storage

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE: animal facility / storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Gable Roof Barn

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: STONE

walls: STONE

roof: METAL

other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the current physical appearance of the property.)

Summary Paragraph *(Briefly describe the overall characteristics of the property and its location, setting, and size.)*

The Plum Creek Rock Barn is a gable roof barn type as defined in the *Historic Agriculture Related Resources of Kansas* historic context. The large stone structure is made on local chalk-rock stone quarried nearby. There have been few alterations to the structure, but the most notable is the use of concrete masonry units on the north elevation, used to replace deteriorated stone and stabilize the structure. Overall, the building retains good historic integrity of location and setting on a historic farmstead. The materials, design, and workmanship are still evident in the resources. All of these elements combine to support the feeling and association of the historic barn and its historic function and use.

Elaboration *(Provide a detailed description of the building's exterior, interior, and any associated buildings on the property. Note any historic features, materials, and changes to the building/property.)*

**Setting**

The Cass Ranch and Plum Creek Rock Barn are located in southwest Gove County on a farmstead that dates back to 1886 in a rural area known as the Plum Creek Community. The surrounding terrain is a rugged mix of buffalo grass and yucca, with cottonwood trees springing up to line the creek bottoms. Plum Creek runs immediately to the south. Some familiar and famous-in-Kansas landmarks are very close; Monument Rocks are 7 miles to the south, and Little Jerusalem Badlands State Park is 20 miles to the west. The gracious, rolling prairie associated with these two locations is shared with the Plum Creek area.

On the Cass Ranch sits the original two-story limestone home, built in 1886. It's been added onto many times in its 125 years but is still used by the family today. About two football field lengths to the north stands a large limestone barn. A water tower, probably built at the same time as the barn, sits nearby. Before indoor plumbing was introduced in the house in 1955, the Cass family could take showers using the limestone water tower. Helen Cass's granddaughter, Mary Helen, remembers there were once grapes planted around the base of the tower. Although it's no longer standing, there was once a large limestone chicken house, approximately 12' by 20' as well as a salt house on the homestead.

Barn

The barn is approximately 30' by 50' and built of chalk rock stone, native to the area, and which was harvested from quarries just a few miles from the barn. There is a rock corral fence standing along with the barn but it is in need of some repair. The tall metal gable roof eaves are filled with vertical planks on both the west and east elevations. Arched doorways on both the west and east elevations make the building architecturally interesting. The arched openings are quoined and feature accent stones and sliding wooden barn doors. Cattle working corrals flank the west side of the structure. The lower half of the stone structure is made of larger and heavier rectangular pieces of stone; the upper half features small and thinner stones with quoining on the corners. The only other opening is a small square at the eave in the middle of the south elevation. There are two small arches evenly spaced on the south elevation infilled with stone pieces; previous window openings closed for support. A little more than half of the north elevation is constructed of concrete masonry units. The roof has much more deteriorated on this side, and there are missing pieces of stone near the CMUs at the eave.



On the interior, the barn is one large room. To the north, there are two grain bins to store grain or feed and another storage area with a gate. A large stall sits on the south, along with another storage area used for horse tack and two more stalls that can be used to house animals. The original grain bins are wooden and have doors. One pen is made of wood and very tall so that cattle cannot see out. The original hayloft still exists. The interior wood structure is evident throughout, and exposed rafters and beams are arranged in the stone walls.

There have been a few alterations made to the barn over the years for stability. The north wall has cinder blocks that were added in 1981 to reinforce and support the structure where the limestone was deteriorating. A limestone brace has been added on the east side. Also, in 1981, the original arched windows were enclosed with limestone when glass was broken out, and the additional stone helped support the structure. Overall, the gable roof barn retains good structure's architectural integrity, size, scale, massing, and original design, materials, and workmanship.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for State 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance

c1879-1971

Significant Dates

c1879

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Cass brothers

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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period begins in c1879 with the construction of the barn and continues until 1971 at the 50 year guide, as the barn continues to be used and function as an agricultural related property.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

n/a

Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph *(Provide a summary paragraph that notes under what criteria the property is nominated.)*

Constructed c1879, the Plum Creek Rock Barn is eligible for listing in the Register of Historic Kansas Places for its association with the agricultural history of Gove and Gove County. The barn is a good example of a gable roof barn, and has been in use for over 140 years. The structure meets the registration requirements for the *Historic Agriculture-Related Resources of Kansas*, historic context. Located on a large agricultural property, the rock barn retains its historic function, association, and character defining features such as the shape, materials, design, and workmanship.

Elaboration *(Provide a brief history of the property and justify why this property is locally significant.)*

History and Settlement of the Area

Plum Creek itself originates in the eastern part of Logan County and then enters Gove County. The creek enters Lewis Township at the northeast corner of Township 14, Range 30, goes across the northeast corner of T14-R30 in a southeasterly direction, on across Jerome Township, and empties into the Smoky Hill River due south of Gove City. It was a narrow creek cut deep by years of flash flooding; now that soil conservation is practiced, it rarely floods to bank full. The Plum Creek Community refers to the settlement on that strip of the creek that crosses Lewis Township. The Plum Creek Community is midway between the towns of Grinnell to the north and Healy to the south.

Settlers began arriving in Gove County in the late 1870s, with the earliest records pointing to settlement in the Plum Creek area beginning around 1885 in the eastern part of the community. Many homesteaders were from Sweden, England, or Germany, or other parts of the United States. Some names of settlers in that area include E.P. Norell, 1885; Hans Thoren, 1885; Bertha Anderson, 1885; Martha Lillia, 1886; and Swan Youngdahl, 1886. By the early 1900s, this was a thriving, densely settled community.¹

The homesteads were dugouts, which were dug out of a bank, faced with sod, stone, or lumber. Some homes were built of sod and some of native stone, which was plentiful in this area. Stone houses could be constructed with many hours of hard labor, money, and long trips to town for lumber. Many of the original houses are still standing.² The Coin schoolhouse was seven miles south of Orion on the section line and one mile east of the Cass home.³

¹ Tuttle, Mary T. and Albert B. "History and Heritage of Gove County, Kansas," 94

² Tuttle, Mary T. and Albert B. "History and Heritage of Gove County, Kansas," 94

³ Tuttle, Mary T. and Albert B. "History and Heritage of Gove County, Kansas," 95

The first census information on families settling in the area was from the 1900 Census, which included information on the Lewis Township in Gove County (Plum Creek Community is within the Lewis Township). According to the census, 110 people lived in the Lewis Township at that time.⁴ The way of life for all those settled in the area was agriculture. Livestock was the main industry during the 1880s. Farming was done basically for feed for the farm animals and flocks, but a few bushels of grain could sometimes be sold for cash or trade and would have been a welcome windfall.⁵

A notable fixture in the livestock industry in Gove County from 1882 – 1886 was the Smoky Hill Cattle Pool. Some cattlemen along the Smoky Hill River banded together to form the pool. They were organized in 1882 at Farnsworth in Lane County. Cattle Pools elected officers and adopted constitutions. Each member retained his own brand, but the cattle were pastured on a common range. All expenses for riders, drift fences, etc. were met by assessments on the members, according to the number of cattle each had in the pool. The territory claimed by the Smoky Hill Cattle Pool was 30 miles along the Smoky Hill River and twelve miles each way north and south from it. Cattle watered chiefly on the river, but watering places were maintained at the old Grinnell Springs on the Smoky Hill trail, Indian Spring on Indian Creek and at other places within the territory claimed by the pool. When organized, the pool represented about five thousand head of cattle. This number increased till it was estimated at fifteen thousand head in 1884.⁶ The Smoky Hill Cattle Pool illustrates how conducive the surrounding area is to raising cattle. Helen's son, Mary Helen's dad, Jim Cass, raised feed and wheat to feed cattle from the 1920s until his death in the 1980s.

Kansas Ranching History ⁷

By the end of the 1870s, Kansas farms had faced drought and plagues that devastated farmland across the state. It appeared that even diversifying crops and livestock would not rid Kansas farms of this devastation. "Between 1880 and 1890, the number of Kansas farms grew from 138,561 to 166,617, and the percentage of the state's land under cultivation expanded from 40.9 percent to 57.7 percent. ... Farmers continued to benefit from improvements in agricultural implements and built their knowledge from the growing scientific agricultural research."⁸ Though farming in eastern Kansas was less arid, western farms began to expand once cities developed irrigation systems and named "themselves 'Garden City' and 'Greensburg' in hopes of attracting

⁴ Peterson, Pehr J. "1900 Census of Lewis Township, Gove County Kansas." *Lewis Township 1900 Census*, 11 Jan. 2003, www.ksgenweb.org/gove/census/1900/lewis1900.html.

⁵ Tuttle, Mary T. and Albert B. "History and Heritage of Gove County, Kansas," 94.

⁶ Tuttle, Mary T. and Albert B. "History and Heritage of Gove County, Kansas," 18-19

⁷ Davis, Christy & Spencer Preservation. *Historic Agriculture-Related Resources of Kansas*. National Register of Historic Places multiple property documentation form.

⁸ Davis, Christy & Spencer Preservation. *Historic Agriculture-Related Resources of Kansas*. National Register of Historic Places multiple property documentation form. page 15-16

investors and farmers.”⁹ Farmers and ranchers relied heavily on deep wells, windmills, and irrigation systems to support their lands.

Land that was not farmed was used for ranching and greatly expanded after the Civil War. “Between 1860 and 1880, the number of cattle in the state had ballooned from 93,000 to 1.5 million.”¹⁰

During the 1880s, ranchers employed new techniques for feeding their stock in winter. These included the first use of silage, a system for preserving fodder through partial fermentation. A USDA study found that only 99 farmers nationwide had silos in 1882. By the end of the decade, many farmers and ranchers had adopted the practice. Others came to rely more heavily on hay, which could be easily stored for the first time using the first mass-produced mechanized hay presses, first available to a broad market in the 1880s.¹¹

The next two decades would bring a transition for farmers and ranchers with new technologies and machinery that would change the ways they farmed. More natural disasters struck the state and put many farms and ranches in hard times, but at the start of the 20th century, things changed that would allow some farmers to recoop and make improvements to their properties.

Plum Creek Stone Barn – Cass Ranch

The livestock industry prevalent in the area would have been the driving force in the construction of the Plum Creek Barn. The barn was constructed to be a cattle barn to aid in the Cass family's cattle ranching operation. It would have been a place of shelter for cattle and other livestock on the unforgiving prairie. Homesteaders and a long line of cattle ranchers have actively used the barn for many decades to aid in their cattle ranching operations. Within the barn, there were four stanchions for milking, and four pens, places for grain and horse tack, and the barn was used for calving in inclement weather. The hayloft was used to stack square bales for keeping cattle fed in the winter.

The barn, and attached limestone windbreak that is partially standing, were necessary for the Cass family's livelihood on the rugged western Kansas prairie. Without a place of shelter for the livestock when milking or calving, it would have been very bleak trying to live and keep animals alive in the dead of winter. The barn has been in use since its construction and was recently (2020) retired as a cattle barn due to concerns about its stability with cattle rubbing against its sides. All in all, it has been used for over a century.

The limestone archways of the entrances, and the limestone construction of the barn and water tower, represent a handsome and unique method of construction rarely extant. It's an example of what life was like on the prairie at the turn of the twentieth century. Many can't fathom what it's like to haul water from a water tower to cook or take a bath; or to walk down to a barn and gather cows up to milk them for that morning's breakfast.

⁹ Davis, Christy & Spencer Preservation. *Historic Agriculture-Related Resources of Kansas*. National Register of Historic Places multiple property documentation form. page 16

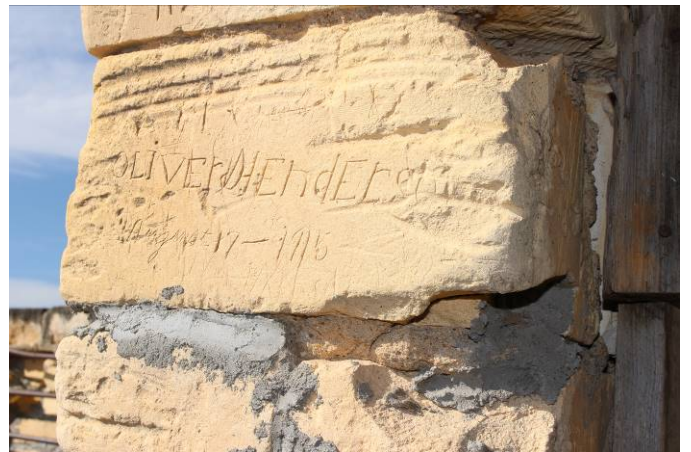
¹⁰ Davis, Christy & Spencer Preservation. *Historic Agriculture-Related Resources of Kansas*. National Register of Historic Places multiple property documentation form. page 16

¹¹ Davis, Christy & Spencer Preservation. *Historic Agriculture-Related Resources of Kansas*. National Register of Historic Places multiple property documentation form. page 17

Hiking around the Cass Ranch will transport one back in time to how a farming and ranching family on the western Kansas prairie would have lived in the late 1800s.

A brief story from Helen Cass:

A woman slings a milkmaid's yoke over her shoulders and begins the short walk down to the family's cattle barn. A soft summer wind blows through the branches of three lone Mulberry trees just a short distance from the house. As she walks, the sun is rising over the glowing pasture to the east. The only sounds are of the branches rustling and the chirping of birds in the evergreen windbreak just north of the barn. As she approaches the barn, the woman tugs the heavy wooden barn door on its rusty iron track and steps inside the cool, dark building. Without a sound, two fighting rattlesnakes fall onto the woman's neck. Screaming, she flings the milkmaid's yoke to the ground along with the fighting rattlesnakes and runs all the way back to the house. And that was the last time Helen Cass ever milked the cows at the Plum Creek Barn.



9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form)

Davis, Christy & Spencer Preservation. *Historic Agriculture-Related Resources of Kansas*. National Register of Historic Places multiple property documentation form.

Tuttle, Mary T. and Albert B. *History and Heritage of Gove County, Kansas*. (Quinter, Kansas): Gove Co. Bicentennial Commission and Gove Co. Historical Association, 1979.

Peterson, Pehr J. "1900 Census of Lewis Township, Gove County Kansas." *Lewis Township 1900 Census*, 11 Jan. 2003, www.ksgenweb.org/gove/census/1900/lewis1900.html

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one

Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.
(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 38.860640 -100.724988 2 _____ _____
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The Plum Creek Rock Barn is located on the historic Cass Ranch at 2001 County Rd L, in Grinnell, Kansas in Section 02, Township 14, Range 31. Its sits on a 158+ acre parcel, but the boundary is limited to a buffer of 10' around the 30' x 50' footprint of the barn.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary is limited to a buffer zone around the footprint of the barn as the rest of the property does not retain enough integrity to be eligible for listing.

Cass Ranch – Plum Creek Rock Barn
Name of Property

Gove, Gove County
City and County

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jordan Dreiling
organization _____ date Spring 2021
street & number _____ telephone 620-397-1625
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____
e-mail jordan@jsd-design.com

Property Owner:

name Jason Munk, Munk Ranch
street & number 1896 County Rd L telephone _____
city or town Grinnell state KS zip code 67738

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Figures:

- Figure 1: Property Map
- Figure 2: Topo Map
- Figure 3: Overview – 2 miles
- Figure 4: Overview – 10 miles
- Figure 5: Photo map

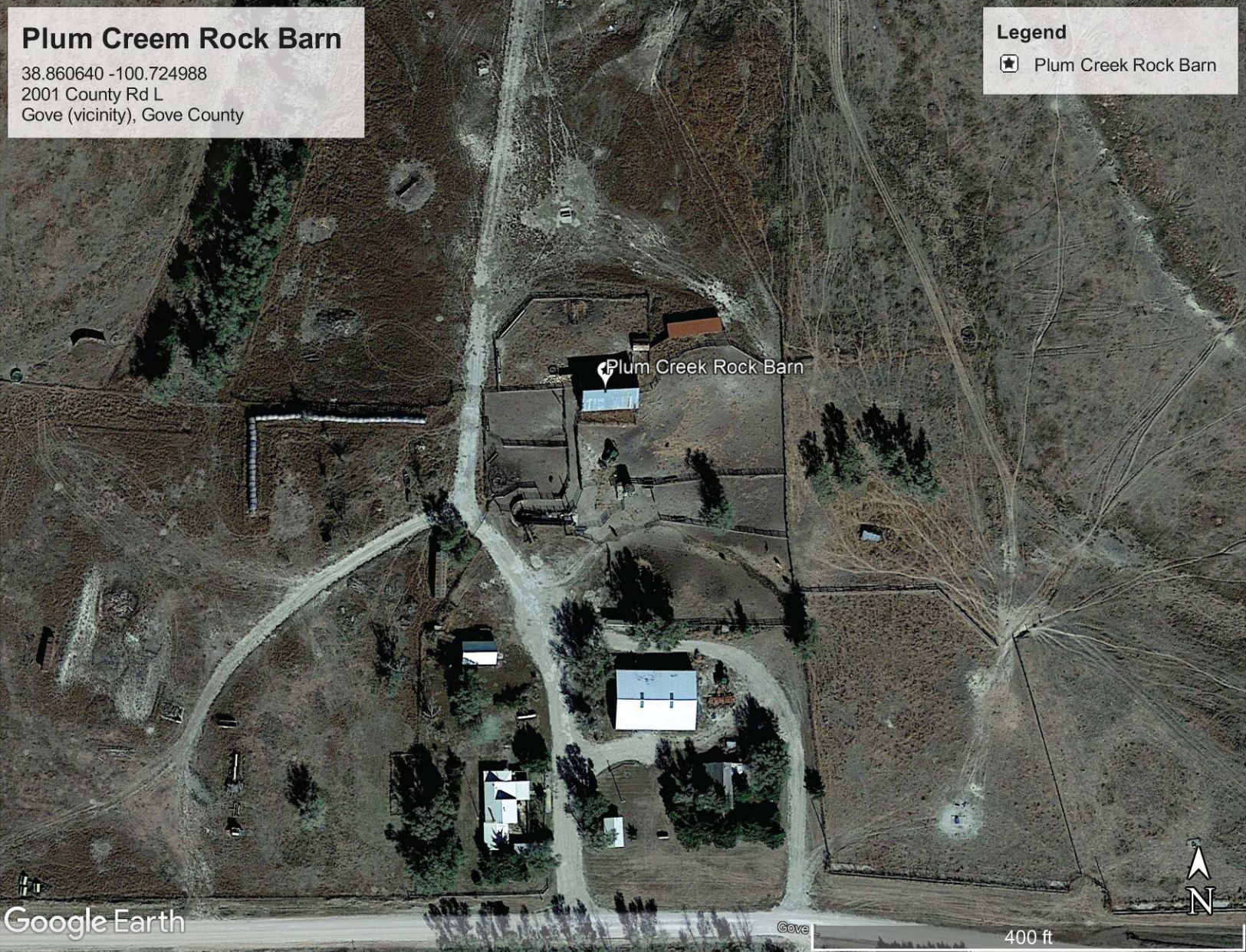


Figure 1:

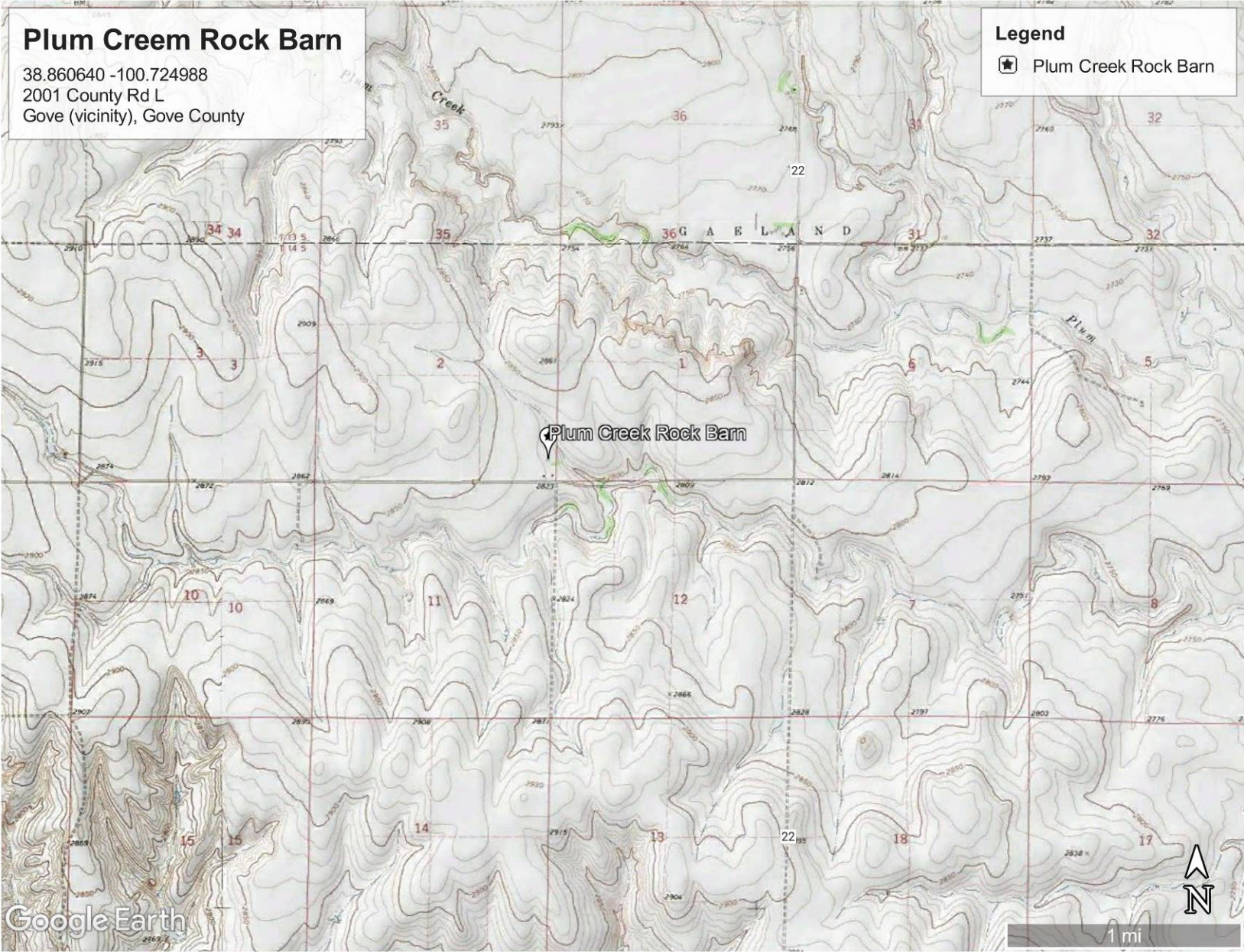


Figure 2:

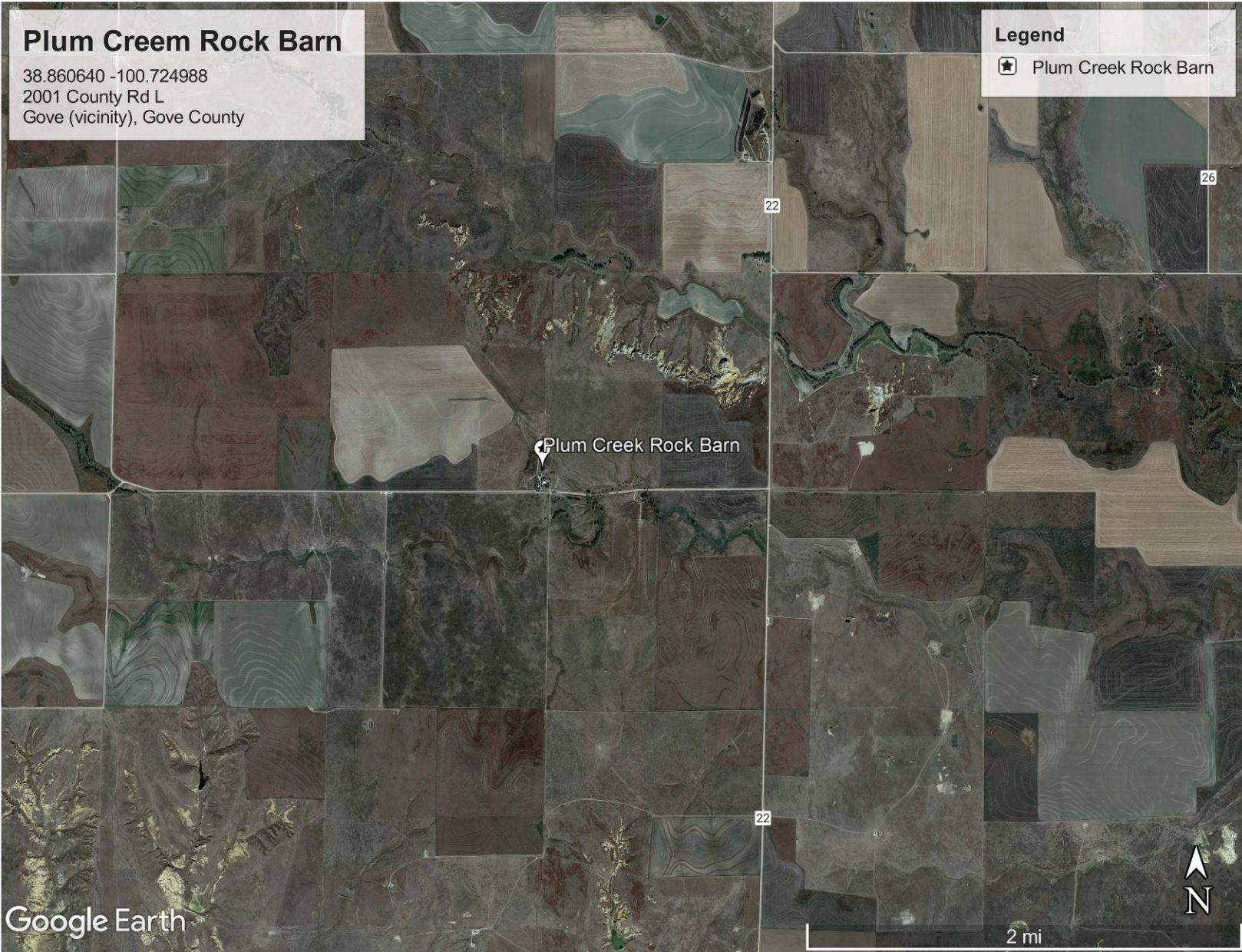


Figure 3:

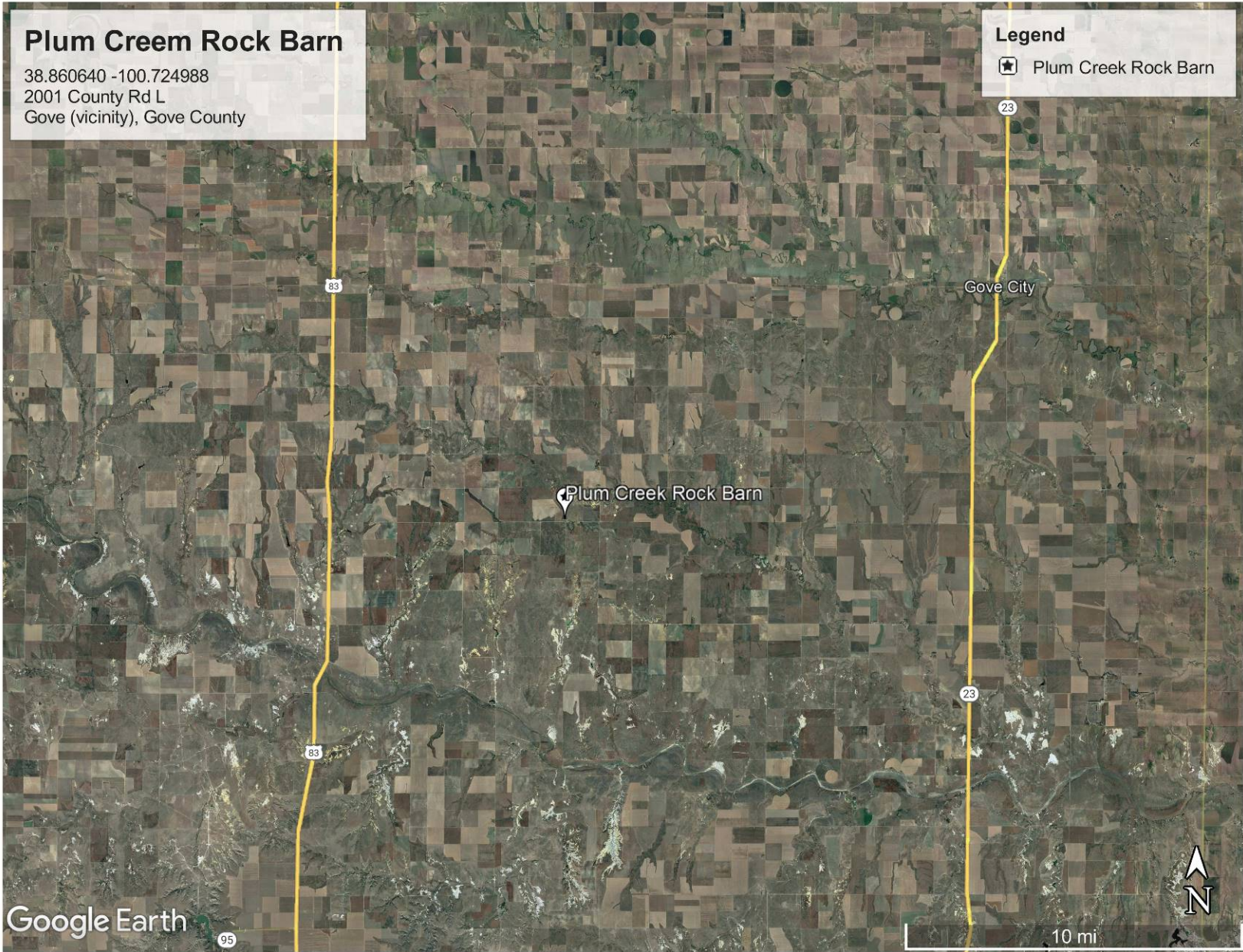


Figure 4:

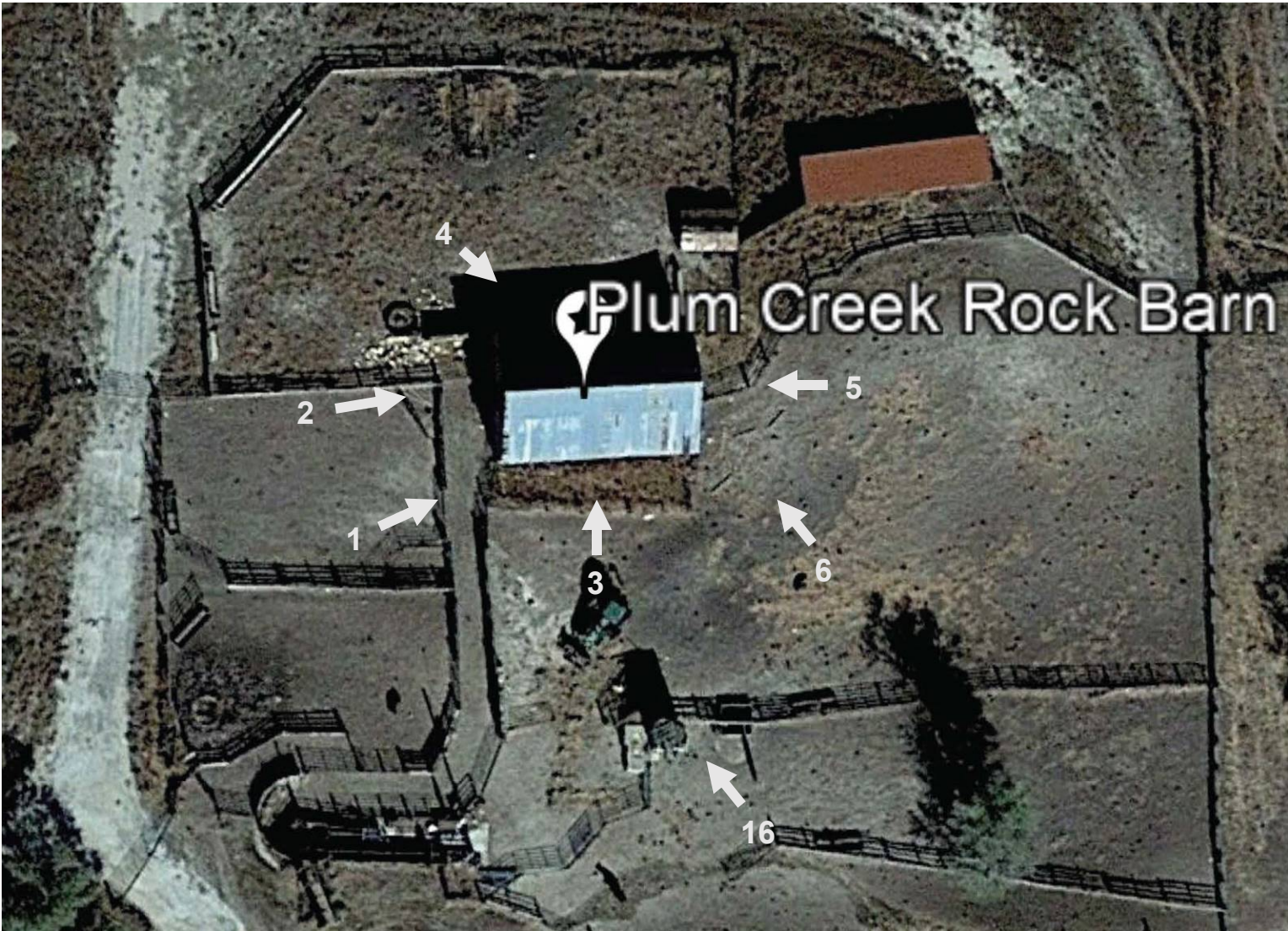


Figure 5:

Name of Property: Cass Ranch – Plum Creek Rock Barn
City or Vicinity: Gove (Grinnell Vicinity)
County: Gove State: KS
Photographer: Jamee Fiore, KS-SHPO
Date Photographed: October 2021

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include a description of view indicating the direction of camera:

Photo Number	View	Description
1	NE	West and south facades
2	E	West façade
3	N	South façade
4	SE	North and west facades
5	W	East façade
6	NW	South and east facades
7	E	Close up of the west elevation arched door
8	--	Interior overview
9	--	Interior, opening to upper level
10	--	Interior stalls
11	--	Interior stalls
12	--	Interior, upper level
13	--	Interior, upper level
14	--	Close up of markings on stone
15	--	Close up of the arched stone
16	NW	Overview of the water tower and barn



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12



Photo 13

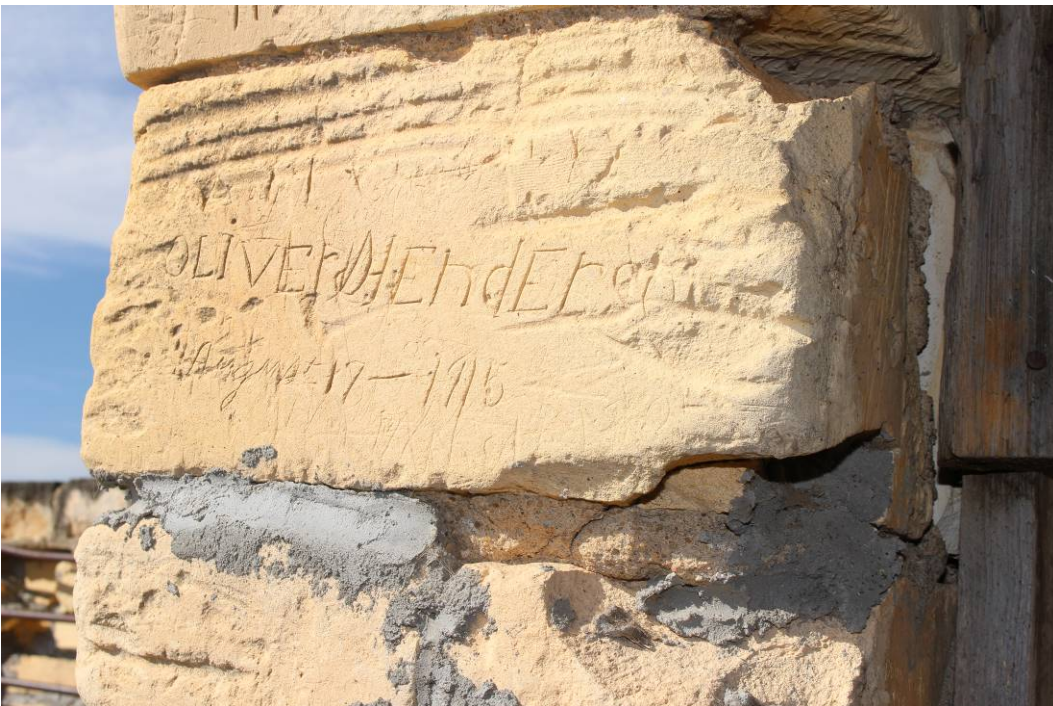


Photo 14



Photo 15



Photo 16