

COLORADO CULTURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY
Historic Architectural Component Form
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OAHP1404

Rev. 9/98

Use this form in conjunction with the *Management Data Form*. One of these forms should be completed for each building or structure. Include a photograph, sketch map, and a photocopy of the quad map showing building location.

I. IDENTIFICATION

1. Resource Number 5KW123 2. Temporary Resource Number: _____
3. Map ID Number / Feature Number or Code: Feature 4
4. Building or Structure Name: Railroad refrigerator car
5. Complex/Site Name: The railroad car is part of the Dawson Ranch Buildings Complex
6. Photograph Number(s): Roll1: Dawson Ranch Complex, negative 24

II. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

7. Complex/Building/Structure Type: Rolling Stock
8. Architectural Style: No Style
9. Building Support System: Metal
10. Dimensions: L 10 x W 4 = Square Feet 40
11. Number of Stories: 1
12. Building Plan (footprint, shape): rectangular plan
13. Landscaping or Special Setting Features:

The refrigerator car rests next to the barn and corral north of the family house. The house, associated agricultural buildings, and airplane landing strip, sit on former agricultural land within the boundaries of the recently established Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site. The Big Sandy Creek (Sand Creek) traverses the associated landholdings north of the ranch complex buildings. At one time some of the nearby acreage was cultivated but William F. Dawson replanted the areas with native grasses. The entire Dawson Ranch Building Complex is south of the village site where Colonel John Chivington and his troops attacked an encampment of Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples in the Sand Creek Massacre (5KW28) and has no association to that event. The Dawson Ranch Building Complex is in Section 30.

Outside of the physical boundary of this survey but within the boundaries of the former Dawson Ranch land holdings are ruins of the Thompson-Bohart Ranch/Dawson Family Line Camp and remains of the immense Chivington/Brandon Canal circa 1909 (5KW122.1). Both are also in Section 30. In Section 24 are potential remains of a sheep operation associated with an African American pioneer known as "Nigger Charlie." These sites are indicative of several of the contexts in Colorado Historical Society's *Colorado Southern Frontier Historic Context*. Sites and potential sites include examples of Early Farming and Ranching in Southeastern Colorado (1840-1890), The Years of Conflict (1850-1870), Open Range Ranching (1859-1900), and the Ethnic Diversity of Southeastern Colorado (1880-1945).

14. Associated Buildings, Features, or Objects - Describe material and function (map number / name):

The Dawson Ranch Building Complex contains 7 features which include the main house (Feature 1), a barn (Feature 2), a corral (Feature 3), a railway car (Feature 4), a motel cabin (Feature 5), an utility building (Feature 6), and an air landing strip (Feature 7)

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For the following categories include materials, techniques and styles in the description as appropriate:

- 15. Roof: Metal

- 16. Walls: Metal

- 17. Foundation/Basement: _____

- 18. Chimney(s): _____

- 19. Windows: _____
- 20. Doors: Flush doors on the west elevation

- 21. Porches: _____
- 22. General Architectural Description: This is a metal railroad refrigerator car which has been repainted silver. The refrigerator car has a set of flush doors on the west elevation and the original attached ladders on the west and south elevations. The ends are pressed steel and the sides are riveted sheet steel. The hand break which would have most likely been on the south elevation is missing.

III. FUNCTION

- 23. Current Use: Storage

- 24. Original Use: Railroad refrigerator car

- 25. Intermediate Use(s): _____

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IV. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

26. Architect: _____
27. Builder: Unknown
28. Date of construction: Actual _____ Assessor _____ Estimate 1940s
based on: Examples of refrigerator cars from Santa Fe Railway Rolling Stock Reference Series-Volume Two: Refrigerator Cars, Ice Bunker Cars 1884-1979 published by the Santa Fe Modelers Organization, Inc.
29. Modifications: Minor ___ Moderate X Major ___ Moved X Date 1970s
Describe Modifications: Hand brake removed and exterior of railcar repainted silver.
Additions and Date: _____
30. Associated Contexts and Historical Information: The Dawson Ranch Building Complex is associated with the context of Post World War II Farming and Ranching (1945–2000). The land upon which the house is located was homesteaded in 1907. The Levi and Florence Rutledge purchased all the sections that comprise the ranch holdings, combining them in 1949. They built the ranch residence between 1951 and 1952.
William F. Dawson purchased the ranch in 1963. In the 1970s he bought the railway car in La Junta, CO, which is on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad route and had it moved to its current location. These cars were built by the thousands in the 1940s. The increase in the use of trucks for carrying agricultural products following World War II made many of these cars obsolete. It was common for farmers and ranchers, like Mr. Dawson, to purchase decommissioned railway cars—usually to be used as storage—exemplifying an agricultural pattern of adaptive reuse of available resources.
The Dawson ranch operation was typical for Kiowa County. They ran 150 head of Hereford cattle—an average amount and common breed for Kiowa County¹— and kept one to four horses. The ranch was 1,465 acres, on the small size for a Kiowa County holding, but Dawson ran his cattle on other land that he leased and owned.²
The house and the later outbuildings, including the railway car moved to the site, have no relationship to the actual Sand Creek Massacre event. The railway car may be associated with the *Colorado Southern Frontier Historic Context of The Railroad Era (1870–1945)*. However because of modifications to the resource (removal of parts and painting) and the railroad car's lack of integrity in location and setting, it is not eligible for the National Register.

¹ Bruce Fickensher, Extension Agent for Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Office, telephone interview by recorder, 22 May 2005.

² Marci Miller, Deputy Assessor of Kiowa County, telephone interview by recorder, 22 May 2005. Note: In comparing the Dawson acreage to the 1997 Department of Agriculture Census the ranch is smaller than the average Kiowa County farm size of 2,696 acres. According to Miller he used his parents land as well.

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V. OTHER RECORDING INFORMATION

- 31. Specific References to the Structure/Building: Neidinger, Paul. "Architect's Field Report" as part of Preliminary Park Planning and Brief Condition Assessment of Existing Facilities
- 32. Archaeological Potential: Yes ___ No X Justify: William F. Dawson, a former owner who was the occupant of the ranch and the primary caretaker of the property for over 40 years, reported no buried material. The metal scrap pile and trash on the west side of the railway car was left by the Dawsons.
- 33. Recorder(s): Jacqui Ainlay-Conley
- 34. Date(s): June 30, 2005

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