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Group Subleased Cherokee Land

The Cherokee Strip Livestock Association was organized at Caldwell, Kan., after cattlemen leasing Indian lands had held a couple of previous annual meetings. It was chartered under laws of Kansas and because Caldwell was a shipping point for trail herds from southern ranges, it was established as headquarters.

In July 1883, the association contracted to lease about 6 million acres of the Cherokee Outlet from the Cherokee Nation for \$100,000 per year for five years. It then sublet lands to individuals and firms.

Although association leaders denied the group had a Washington lobby, the organization soon became a power in public affairs, especially in regard to proposed opening of unassigned lands to settlers.

The Cherokees had not derived any income from their lands in the first 40 years they owned the Cherokee Outlet, but their action in leasing it for \$100,000 per year was criticized.

In 1888, negotiations for higher rentals were begun. A syndicate offered to buy the land from the Cherokees for \$3 per acre but this was turned down.

The Cherokee Council authorized a new lease with the association for \$150,000, but when the chief reported he had two higher bids, this was canceled and more negotiations were held. Eventually, the association lease was renewed for five years at \$200,000 per year.

The sale price offer of \$3 per acre would have amounted to \$480 per quarter section. Some of the better wheat land has sold for as much as \$480,000 per quarter since. Only rough range land would bring less than \$480 per acre in today's inflated land market.