

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUN 13 1975
DATE ENTERED	AUG 1 1975

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

 SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Strap Iron Corral

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

lower Cow Creek, five miles
Harder Ranch, north of Hooper

CITY, TOWN

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Washington

__ VICINITY OF

CODE
53

#5 - Honorable Thomas S. Foley

COUNTY

Adams

CODE

001

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY
 DISTRICT
 BUILDING(S)
 STRUCTURE
 SITE
 OBJECT

OWNERSHIP
 PUBLIC
 PRIVATE
 BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
 IN PROCESS
 BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS
 OCCUPIED
 UNOCCUPIED
 WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
 YES: RESTRICTED
 YES: UNRESTRICTED
 NO

PRESENT USE
 AGRICULTURE
 COMMERCIAL
 EDUCATIONAL
 ENTERTAINMENT
 GOVERNMENT
 INDUSTRIAL
 MILITARY
 MUSEUM
 PARK
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE
 RELIGIOUS
 SCIENTIFIC
 TRANSPORTATION
 OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

John W. Harder

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 146

CITY, TOWN

Ritzville

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Washington

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Adams County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

210 W. Broadway

CITY, TOWN

Ritzville

STATE

Washington

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Washington State Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

1974

__ FEDERAL STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

CITY, TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

On the Harder Ranch in the Palouse country of southeastern Washington is a circular corral made with heavy strap iron railing on locust tree posts. It is one mile east of the abandoned Mullan Road, a major supply route used by miners, stockmen, and settlers for a period of many years beginning in 1885. The corral is only accessible by travelling several miles of dirt roads through sparsely populated scablands. This is in a range area fenced with barbed wire. Other than bunchgrass there is almost no vegetation, and there are no signs of civilization visible for miles in all directions, with the exception of some fencing and a distant railroad trestle.

The corral is approximately 100 feet in diameter. It consists of upright split wooden posts and two inch by three-eighths inch strap iron with small holes for nailing at intervals of two feet. Along one edge the strap iron is worn or rounded in places -- confirming that it once served as a cap for the wooden tracks of a primitive railroad. The posts are sunk in the ground with a close, almost random spacing. Cut nails are spiked through the holes in the iron into the posts and clinched on the opposite side. All the strap iron is in twenty foot lengths and spaced vertically on the uprights about one foot apart. The posts are mostly gnarled and bent, extending to various heights beyond the top rail which is roughly six feet above the ground.

The corral has changed very little since it was built. Some new posts may have been added later to reinforce the structure, but it has never been altered substantially. The original posts show no obvious signs of decay.

A wooden loading chute has been built on at the gate outside the circular enclosure to aid in loading and unloading livestock on trucks. It is a minor intrusion, clearly separate and smaller than the corral itself.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Strap Iron Corral was built in the late 1870's by "Uncle Jim" Kennedy, an early Adams County rancher in the Cow Creek area of the lower Palouse Valley. Kennedy came west from Missouri during the gold rush in 1849. He brought with him his father's farewell gifts -- two yolk of oxen, a wagon, clothing and enough provisions to sustain him for two years. After prospecting from California to British Columbia, packing provision to miners in Idaho and driving sheep and cattle from Washington and Oregon to Montana, Kennedy settled on Cow Creek in 1877. For his ranch he chose a location a short distance from the Mullan Road. This was once a military road constructed between 1855 and 1862 -- before and during the Civil War. It was intended to connect Fort Walla Walla with Fort Benton providing a passable road between the headwaters of the Columbia and Missouri Rivers. The Mullan Road became a major supply route from Walla Walla to the mines in northeastern Washington and northern Idaho. In the 1870's it provided the principal access to that territory for a growing number of farmers and stockmen who would return along the same route to bring their crops and livestock to market in Walla Walla.

The first railroad in Washington Territory used for purposes other than portage was the Walla Walla and Columbia River Railroad, built between 1872 and 1875. This was the enterprise of a private corporation formed by Dr. Dorsey S. Baker and seventeen others. It was financed by an issue of capital stock totaling \$700,000. The railroad was to run about thirty miles from Wallula on the Columbia River to Walla Walla -- at that time the largest city in the territory. To economize on the trackage, Baker attempted to use four-by-six inch wooden rails instead of iron. Discovering that these wore out faster than new track could be laid, he ordered strap iron three-eighths of an inch thick and two inches wide to cap the wooden tracks. This worked well enough except that occasionally the iron would work loose and poke through the floor of a railroad car, endangering passengers and nearly stopping the train.

A small seven-and-one-half ton locomotive pulled the trains at a speed little faster than a brisk walk. Because the route passed through open range country, cattle were often encountered lying or standing on the tracks in the path of the oncoming train. The engine was never provided with a "cow catcher", so Baker trained a bull-terrier to ride the locomotive and watch for livestock. Upon spotting a cow the dog would run ahead of the train and snap and bark until the animal moved from the roadbed. He would then jump back on board and continue to ride until the next obstruction.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

McGregor, Alexander C. Pacific Northwest Quarterly, Volume 65, No. 3, July, 1964, Universtiy of Washington, p. 128.

Mitchell, Bruce. "By River, Trail and Rail", Wenatchee Daily World, 1968, p. 13.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one

*UTM OK
1+L*

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	1	4	1	3	3	5	0	5	1	8	8	3	4	0
ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

B

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

C

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

D

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Jacob E. Thomas, Historic Preservation Specialist

May 12, 1975

ORGANIZATION

Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 1128

TELEPHONE

(206) 753-4116

CITY OR TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Charles H. Odegaard

TITLE

Executive Director - Charles H. Odegaard

DATE

June 9, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Robert M. ...

DATE

8-1-75

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

W. ...

DATE

8-1-75

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

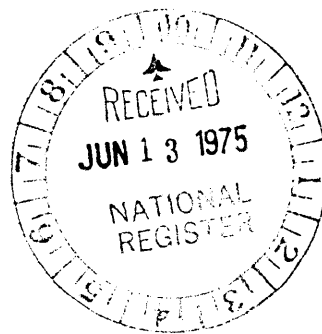
On October 14, 1873, the Walla Walla and Columbia River Railroad hauled 24 tons of wheat nine miles to Wallula, the first ever transported by rail in the Inland Empire.

The strap iron capped wooden tracks were replaced in 1875 with 1,000 tons of conventional iron rails. The used materials were then scrapped and sold. "Uncle Jim" Kennedy bought a considerable quantity of strap iron and transported it to Cow Creek by wagon over the Mullan Road on a return trip from Walla Walla, a distance of 60 miles. He built a unique enclosure from the salvaged material for use as a holding and branding pen. This was one of the first corrals on lower Cow Creek.

Kennedy died in 1917 in the town of Washtucna not far from his old ranch and corral.

The Strap Iron Corral has been in continual use since it was built without major repairs or modifications. It was constructed in an apparently haphazard fashion, while at the same time it is incredibly strong -- perhaps an interesting commentary of Kennedy's purpose in building it and his personal idiosyncrasies. Although the corral shows no concern whatever for craftsmanship, it would be tremendously difficult to cut through that fence. His choice of strap iron was in spite of the expense and difficulty in transporting it, and it may have been selected for security reasons.

The corral is an important, virtually unaltered structure representative of an early period in the Eastern Washington stockmen's industry. It is also built with the only known materials remaining from Washington Territory's first railroad.



The Ritzville Journal-Times, Adams County Pioneer Edition, Ritzville, September 15, 1949,
p. 31.

