

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

AUG
SEP 16 1985

**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

WALTER CLIFF RANCH DISTRICT

AND/OR COMMON

WALTER CLIFF RANCH

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

7635 Old Highway 395

N/A NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Washoe Valley

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2

STATE

Nevada

VICINITY OF

CODE

32

COUNTY

Washoe

CODE

031

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY** DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT**OWNERSHIP** PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

N/A 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

Robert & Sandra Oglesby

STREET & NUMBER

7635 Old Highway 395

CITY, TOWN

Carson City,

N/A VICINITY OF

STATE

Nevada 89701

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Washoe County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

50 South Virginia Street

CITY, TOWN

Reno,

STATE

Nevada 89501

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Washoe Valley Ranch Survey

DATE

June 1985

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Nevada Division of Historic Preservation & Archeology

CITY, TOWN

Carson City,

STATE

Nevada 89710

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 type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Site

Washoe Valley is located east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains between the communities of Carson City and Reno. The Valley measures approximately 12 by 6 miles and includes Washoe and Little Washoe Lakes at its lowest point. The Valley is fertile and the lakes are fed by water from Franktown, Ophir, and Davis Creeks. The Walter Cliff Ranch District is located on the west side of Washoe Valley, approximately 6 miles north of Carson City. The 26.24 acre site is situated between Lakeview to the south and Franktown to the north. Although the original ranch encompassed 130 acres, the historic improvements center on the 26.24 acres under nomination. This 26.24 acre site retains its overall integrity from the 19th century. The remaining acreage has been subdivided and developed over the years.

The District includes two contributing structures and four non-contributing structures. The former includes a vernacular, Victorian period dwelling and root cellar residence, while the latter includes ranch support buildings. These support buildings are a bunk house, garage, and two sheds. All structures are wood-frame buildings painted red and trimmed in white. The partially wooded site is shaded by 100 year old cottonwoods, mature birches, and fruit trees. An orchard borders the buildings to the south and west, pasturage to the north and east. White washed, board and post fencing and stone walls further enhance the site. The site map displays the relationship of the six buildings.

1. Dwelling (c. 1870)

The one story, irregular-in-plan, main residence was built in three stages: the main section with a steep gabled roof; a southern section with a side gable intersecting the main mass; and two shed roof sections to the rear of the main mass. The principal block is of Vernacular design and is characteristic of regional Victorian period, domestic design in scale, massing, proportion, and interior plan.

The house is supported by a random coursed, rubble foundation. The main section of the dwelling is sheathed in wide shiplap decorated by cornerboards. Other sections are sided with butted horizontal boards, horizontal board-and-batten, or stucco. The stucco appears to cover original siding. The main section is topped with a steeply pitched, asphalt shingled, gabled roof finished with a boxed cornice and narrow frieze. The two shed roofs and the side gabled roof have been covered many times, the last with rolled asphalt. A brick chimney projects through the roof at the rear (west end) of the main mass.

The principal elevation, principal block (E) includes a large, L-shaped, concrete decked porch which sits on a coursed stone foundation. The shed roof of the porch has exposed rafters supported by log posts and simple knee braces. The front elevation windows (in the main section and the southern addition) are wood-framed, hinged, two or three part windows (divided vertically) with multi-light transoms above. Other windows in the building include wood-framed, double hung, two-over-two-light, six-over-six-light windows with plain surrounds and two-light, hinged, horizontal windows. Of the three doors, one is typical and original, a four panel, wooden door. A vertical, tongue and groove door, as a more recent addition, allows access to the bath which served the

(Please see continuation sheets attached.)

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 checked="" 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 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 | c.1873 | BUILDER/ARCHITECT | Unknown |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|---------|

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE Criteria: A, C.

Summary

The Walter Cliff Ranch is the only agricultural complex extant in Washoe Valley associated with supplying food stuffs to the Comstock Mining District. Walter and Elizabeth Cliff purchased the 130 acre parcel in 1874 and lived there for 30 years until they retired to Carson City. The Cliff's ranch produced fruit, vegetables, dairy products, and hay. (Criteria A.)

The Walter Cliff Ranch dwelling (1), root cellar (A), and improved acreage are representative of agricultural development in Washoe Valley during the late 19th century. The four remaining 20th century support structures associated with the complex are of simple, functional design and are compatible with the ranch's original design. The ranch house and five outbuildings are in a grove of mature trees with a mature orchard to the south and west. This ranch is reflective of middle class ranching life in the last four decades of the 19th century. The house is a vernacular example of ranch houses in rural Nevada during the Victorian era. (Criteria C.)

District

The majority of the proposed district is bounded by the present boundaries of Parcel #55-310-27, the core of the original 130 acre ranch. The district encompasses six buildings on a 26.24 acre parcel: two buildings date from the Comstock era, a vernacular Victorian house (c. 1873) and stone root cellar; and four non-contributing outbuildings date from the post-Comstock period.

Significance of Washoe Valley in the 19th Century

Washoe Valley, located in southern Washoe County, Nevada, was important to the historical development of northern Nevada. The Valley was the first area of settlement in Washoe County and developed as a major supplier of staple goods and services to the Comstock Mining District. The 19th century development of the Valley included lumber and ore refining mills as well as commercial and agricultural development. Little remains, except a handful of 19th century ranch buildings, Bowers Mansion (listed on the National Register) and the Franktown School.

The national significance of the Comstock Historic District was recognized in 1961 with the designation of the 14,700 acre Virginia City National Historic Landmark District. At its peak, the Comstock boasted a population of 30,000. The mining district was extensively developed and included hotels, opera houses, stores, fraternal organizations, churches, and schools. The high desert terrain of the Virginia City area, however,

(Please see continuation sheets attached.)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Angel, Myron, (ed.) Reproduction of Thompson & West's History of Nevada 1881.
Berkeley, Howell-North, 1958.
- Hummel, N.A., (ed.) General History and Resources of Washoe County, Nevada 1888.
Verdi, Nevada, Sagebrush Press, 1969.
- Ratay, Myra Sauer. Pioneers of the Ponderosa: How Washoe Valley Rescued the Comstock.
Sparks, Nevada, Western Printing & Publishing Company, 1973.
- Washoe County Assessment Records, 1872-1904.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 26.24 acres
UTM REFERENCES See continuation sheet.

A

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | |
| ZONE | EASTING | | | NORTHING | | | | | |

C

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B

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| | | | | | | | | | |
| ZONE | EASTING | | | NORTHING | | | | | |

D

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

26.24 acres of Parcel #55-310-27, Washoe County Assessor's Map. Southwest quarter, northeast quarter, Section 26, Township 16 North, Range 19 East, Document #626236.

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

| STATE | N/A | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|-----|------|--------|------|
| STATE | | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ana Beth Koval -- Revised by Kathryn M. Kuranda, HP&A, July 1985.

ORGANIZATION

Rainshadow Associates

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 352

CITY OR TOWN

Carson City,

DATE

May 16, 1985

TELEPHONE

(702) 849-1438

STATE

Nevada 89702

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

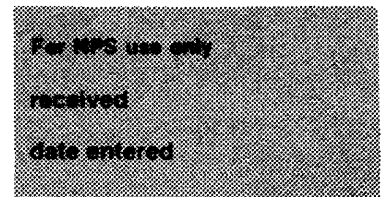
DATE

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet Description Item number 7. Page 1 of 1

bunk house. A dwelling for a middle class family, the house is simple in decoration and built with locally available materials. Notable original interior features are the plank floors in the living room and the southern bedroom.

A. Root Cellar with Residence Above (c. 1870)

The root cellar, recessed into the hill north of the main house, is in good condition. The cellar walls are constructed of randomly laid rubble and have a single opening, a wooden door in the east wall. The upper story is set back on the thick cellar walls forming a shelf around the perimeter of the building. The upper walls are covered in narrow V-groove horizontal wooden siding with cornerboards. There is one multi-over-one-light window with plain surrounds similar in style to the two in the east wall of the main house. The other windows are aluminum framed, sliding windows. The west side entrance to the upper story has a wooden door with one light, three steps of stone, and a gabled canopy supported by large Bungalow-styled brackets. The building has an asphalt shingled, slightly pitched, gabled roof finished with projecting rafter ends and a frieze.

B. Bunk House (c. 1940)

The bunk house (built c. 1940) is a one story, symmetrical dwelling sitting on stone footings in good condition. The siding is butted horizontal boards finished with cornerboards. The walls are pierced by one-over-one-light, double hung, wooden-framed windows. A slight overhang projects from the center of the east wall and covers a wooden door with one light. The building has a medium pitched, shed roof clad with rolled asphalt.

C. Garage (c. 1930)

The garage is one story, rectangular-in-plan (15' x 45') and in fair condition. The textured stucco siding is pierced by double hung, one-over-one-light, wooden-framed windows flanking a single door in the south half of the east wall. The north half of the east wall is pierced by three pairs of large, hinged, garage doors constructed of vertical, tongue and groove boards. The only other opening is a double hung, one-over-one-light, wooden-framed window on the south wall. All openings have simple, wide surrounds. The shed roof is covered with rolled asphalt, finished with exposed rafter ends, and pierced by two metal stove pipes.

D. Small Shed (c. 1930)

This small shed (10' x 15') is in fair condition. It is sided with a mixture of shiplap, board-and-batten, vertical boards, and corrugated metal. The east wall is pierced by a vertical board, hinged door. The shed roof is covered with corrugated metal.

E. Large Shed (c. 1930)

This 20' x 25' shed appears to have been built in two different sections and is in deteriorating condition. The western half is covered with board-and-batten siding, the eastern half with vertical boards. The southern wall of each half is pierced by large, hinged, double doors. The two sections are topped with rolled asphalt, shed roofs which peak at the common wall.

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Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8. Page 1 of 2

necessitated the importation of agricultural and forest products. Conversely, silver ore had to be transported for processing to valleys with large, permanent bodies of water.

In contrast, mile high Washoe Valley is noted for its fertile ranch land. The Valley has been known for its fruits, vegetables, grain, and pasturage from the 1860's and 1870's to the 20th century. Washoe Valley played a vital role in the Comstock silver rush by feeding the miners who streamed into the area. The mountain roads from Washoe City climb 1200 feet to Virginia City and were lined with teams of horses hauling wagons of produce from the Valley.

Other Washoe Valley Ranches

Of the many ranches and farms in 19th century Washoe Valley, only eight include remnants from that period: the Walter Cliff Ranch, the Winters Ranch, the Samuel Cliff Ranch (brother of Walter), the Lewers Ranch, the Heidenreich Ranch, the Lathrop Ranch, the Imelli Ranch, and the Pedroli Ranch. Some ranch houses and outbuildings burned or were otherwise destroyed, some property has been subdivided and the buildings removed, while still others were abandoned or altered along the way in favor of more modern dwellings.

Of the eight ranches, only the Winters Ranch House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Theodore Winters and his brother purchased the property in 1857 and began construction on the house and numerous outbuildings. Winters raised race horses and built the ranch around that business. The Winters Ranch House, an elaborate two-and-one-half story, Carpenter Gothic mansion represents affluent ranching: it appeared on the tax rolls in 1890 at \$41,355 assessed value while the middle class ranches in Washoe Valley were assessed from \$1,500 to \$4,000. The Walter Cliff Ranch was then valued at \$1,765.

The seven remaining ranches are more characteristic of the majority of those settled in the 19th century. These operations integrated cash crop cultivation with cattle grazing. These ranches were family owned and operated. The Samuel Cliff Ranch, the Lewers Ranch, the Heidenreich Ranch, Dan Wheeler's Cheese Factory (Lathrop Ranch), and the Pedroli Ranch all include some 19th century outbuildings; however, none retain their overall design integrity.

Significance of the Walter Cliff Ranch

The Walter Cliff Ranch retains its overall integrity from the 19th century. The ranch occupies 26.24 acres of the original 130 acre ranch. The house and five outbuildings sit in a grove of mature trees with an orchard to the south and west.

The original rectangular-in-plan, steeply pitched gable roofed section with shed roofed back kitchen addition retains its original vernacular Victorian massing, scale, form, and floor plan. The side gable section of the structure may have been the first addition to the house. Two shed roofed additions to the rear of the building are typical of the way a building would "grow" in rural Nevada. Also, typical of the Victorian era is the L-shaped open porch. There have been some alterations to the building: the porch posts have been replaced and the rear of the building has been stuccoed. These alterations are reversible.

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Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8. Page 2 of 2

The Walter Cliff Ranch is significant as an example of a ranch associated with the Comstock Mining District.

Walter, his wife, Elizabeth, and Walter's younger brother, Samuel, came to the United States from England in 1869. Walter and Elizabeth lived in Washoe Valley with Walter's uncle, Richard D. Alvy, before settling into their own place. In 1874, Cliff purchased the Washoe Valley site from Matthew McGarth, who had owned the land since 1872. In the 1873 assessment records, the property was listed with "improvements". In 1874, Walter Cliff's assessment records included 130 acres with improvements, personal property, furniture, horses, a wagon, cows, and calves. The property was assessed at \$525. The size of the ranch changed from 120 to 131 acres through the Cliff ownership. The assessment varies widely making it impossible to document exactly when the additions to the house were made and when the outbuildings were built. During the Cliff years, the assessment high was \$2,080 in 1887 and decreased to \$675 in 1896.

Under the Cliff ownership, the ranch produced fruit, vegetables, and hay. The Cliffs also had a dairy herd and produced milk and other dairy products. Walter Cliff drove a team of horses hauling a wagon up the grade to Virginia City to sell their produce. After the Comstock mining peak, they also sold produce in Carson City, Washoe City, and Reno. In 1904, the Cliffs sold the ranch and retired to Carson City.

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Continuation sheet Geographical Data

Item number 10.

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WALTER CLIFF RANCH DISTRICT
WASHOE VALLEY, NEVADA
UTM REFERENCES

- A. 11-257510-4345430
 - B. 11-257520-4345280
 - C. 11-257310-4345300
 - D. 11-257290-4345140
 - E. 11-257110-4345160
 - F. 11-257130-4345130
 - G. 11-257145-4345500
-