

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Colorado
COUNTY: Douglas
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE OCT 29 1975

1. NAME

COMMON: Bear Canon Agricultural District
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: East U.S. Hwy 150; North U.S. Hwy 67; West ridge line; South			
CITY OR TOWN: N/A		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Jarre Creek	
STATE Colorado	CODE 08	COUNTY: Douglas	CODE 035

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY <small>(Check One)</small>	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE <small>(Check One or More as Appropriate)</small>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other <small>(Specify)</small>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

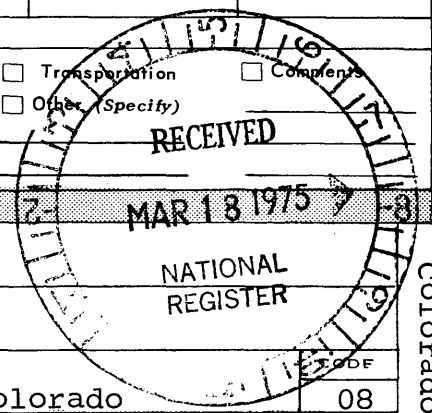
OWNER'S NAME: Mixed Private			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE: Colorado	CODE: 08

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Douglas County Courthouse			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Castle Rock		STATE: Colorado	CODE: 08

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: State Inventory			
DATE OF SURVEY: 1974 <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: State Historical Society			
STREET AND NUMBER: 200 Fourteenth Avenue			
CITY OR TOWN: Denver		STATE: Colorado	CODE: 08



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Colorado
COUNTY: Douglas
ENTRY NUMBER: PH0261599
DATE: OCT 29 1975
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins
	(Check One)		(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Plum Creek Valley is formed by the rolling ridges that descend from the famous hogbacks that introduced the Rocky Mountains to the plains of the mid-west. Geologically, most of the valley is part of the Monument Ridge formation. Deciduous trees and prairie grasses are abundant. The area is thus transitional from the mountains and the foothills to the plains. The particular settlement district is 2½ miles in length and ½ mile in width. The district is bounded on the east by the highway 105 and on the west by the high ridge line that follows the river and forms the natural boundary of the river valley. The north is bounded by the junction of highways 105 and 67. The southern end is an arbitrary line drawn mostly parallel to the Jarre Creek Road. Within this area is a district remarkable for the high degree of preservation of the integrity of the older structures, with only minor intrusions, and the continued operation of family holdings.

- 1-The Beaman Ranch House: is a charming gabled two-story affair with clapboard siding. It has a cross-shaped floor plan. The windows are large and rectangular, double sashed and double hung. The surrounds and lintels are flat and plain. The crowning feature is the verandah which extends across the eastern or front facade. A false pedimented gable surmounts the main entry and the front door then has a triangular shaped lintel. The porch posts are embellished with elaborate brackets.
- 2-The Clay Homestead: is set back into the valley. A gambrel roofed barn introduces the ranch and a two story clapboard ranch house that is fairly simple, yet inviting, remains as well. (see explanation)
- 3-The Cramer Homestead: still retains the first generation log cabin built on a sturdy rock foundation as well as a later barn built around the turn of the century. Both are still in use. The cabin has a stone and block addition, while the barn now boasts a cement silo. The barn is the more architecturally interesting of the two with its whimsy of bellcast cupolas. It is vertical board and batten construction.
- 4-Curtis Ranch: a two story, gabled, clapboard ranch house. Its main attraction being a verandah extending across the main facade and partially around the two side facades, it is generally very plain and functional looking. The only ornate design is perhaps in the old-fashioned picket fence.
- 5-Oaklands School House: is a very tiny one room elementary school. It is rectangular, gabled, and clapboard. A brick chimney sits to the far rear of the roof, large plank shutters protect the windows. A large buckboard seat still presides over the empty play area.
- 6-St. Philip's-in-the-Field: previously listed on the National Register.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7-Allis Ranch and Bear Canon Post Office: is dominated by the three story board and batten barn. It is topped by a precarious looking hipped cupola. Next to the barn are two old homestead continued on page 2

Physical Appearance

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cabins now used for storage. The main house that served also as a post office was recently re-sided with tar paper to prevent further deterioration of the logs. The porch was also enclosed at this time. The house is gabled and simple in design. The entry to the post office was through the porch and mail was kept in the lean to added for that purpose. The rest of the structure housed the Allis family as it still does.

- 1 - Beaman Ranch: main house (orange), non-descript 1930-40's, barn (yellow) to rear and hidden by growth.
- 2 - Clay Homestead: barn (orange¹) and house (orange²) with clustered nearby - 3 compatible looking modern structures (yellow)
- 3 - Cramer Homestead: cabin (orange¹) and barn (orange²) sit in glen to north and east of 1930-40 style collection ranching buildings (yellow)...house, barn, garage. Separated visually by growth.
- 4 - Curtis Ranch: Main house (orange) to front flanked by ranch utility type buildings added through various generations (yellow)
- 5 - Oaklands School House (orange) sits on knoll alone
- 6 - St. Philip's - see earlier nomination (orange)
- 7 - Allis Ranch and Bear Canon Post Office: main house (orange¹) somewhat altered, flanked by barn (yellow) 1920's and log ranching structures - houses (orange²) and barn and smithy (orange³)



SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1860-1910

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Plum Creek Valley, traditionally known as the Bear Canon District is significant to Colorado heritage as a part of the agricultural theme of development. It is unique in its pattern of settlement from Europe, as a living example of the culture of a ranching community, and as a ranching district still operating under much the same direction and sociological patterns as it began with although it is only 45 minutes from Denver. It is significant not only for its story of agriculture on the high plains but for its ranching architecture, and its social and cultural patterns of life.

The area along the front range which is characterized by valleys formed by the hollows between the mountains and the hogbacks, by rolling plains, and by high plateaus is nowhere more richly beautiful than the area known as Monument Ridge. This is a corridor of land that stretches from Colorado Springs to just slightly south and west of Denver. It is a land of red sandstone monuments blazing against soft and subtle forest greens, and brought together by the changing landscape of prairie and plain. Although a desirable environment for settlement, it traditionally was not part of any tribal lands. Utes, Arapahoes and Cheyennes used the area as camping grounds while following the game herds. Colorow, a Ute chief and classified by the United States Army as a renegade, made the area home for his band but he was the exception to the rule.

The white man came to Denver and with him the iron horse. Although the confluence of the Platte and Cherry Creek was the least ecologically desirable area for settlement, the white man established his town there for convenience to the gold fields. In the early 1860's the Denver and Rio Grande railroad, under the direction of General Palmer and Bell was formed and the line expanded southward. The first station out of Denver was established at Plum Creek, now known as Sedalia. To finance the new line British investors engaged in eloquent and expansive advertisements of the settlement possibilities in the Plum Creek region, soon to be known as the Bear Canon District.

Englishmen began to settle the valley as a result. They were a fairly homogeneous group, literate, deeply religious, and committed to building a new agricultural community free of gentry privileges. Families generally began habitation in the area with crude log and sod homes. Clapboard and finished wood continued on page 2

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Most information gained by the private papers of the people now in the hands of their descedants, the present owners.

"Annuls of West Plum Creek", J. P. Curtis 1922 (unpublushed)
 Douglas County Library Archives, papers collections.
 Records of the United States Post Office Appointments Calendars.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	39°	26	05.70	105°	58	38.5528			
NE	39°	26	05.70	105°	56	43.25			
SE	39°	21	28.05	105°	58	38.55			
SW	39°	21	28.05	105°	56	43.25			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Cynthia Emrick

ORGANIZATION: State Historical Society DATE: 9-12-74

STREET AND NUMBER:
 200 14th Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Denver STATE: Colorado CODE: 08

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Cynthia L. Emrick

Title Acting SHPO

Date 3-3-75

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Acting
[Signature]
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 10/29/75

ATTEST:
[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date OCT 24 1975

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Statement of Significance

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for building was expensive and hard to come by. However, the first such buildings in the new community were the schools and the church. These public buildings were built by the hands of all the residents, on land given for the purpose by individual owners, and maintained under a rotating duty system. Clergy and "school marms" were hired from the east by regular donations from the community. A system of five grammar schools were set up in the valley from the start.

As the families built up the ranches over the years they put up frame and clapboard houses of a simple Victorian style with many influences from England visible. Particularly in the Bear Canon District families tended to retain their identity to modern times. Homes were handed down generation after generation. The schools continued to retain a high place in the community's regard. Whenever a prairie fire to improve grazing lands would get out of control and damage or destroy a school building or other community structure the responsible rancher would replace the structure and make necessary repairs from his own pocket.

The Bear Canon district comprised a tightly-knit community of about half a dozen families. The community was and is still dominated by the Curtis family. They provided land and money for the school and the church. The name of their ranch, Oaklands, is the appellation given to school, post office and other community property in the area. A good way to get acquainted with the history of the community is through the history of the families that created it.

1-The Beamans: The house was originally built by John Craig in the late 1860's. Craig was the founder of Round-up Corral. This townsite was platted, in 1866. The settlement drifted closer to the Plum Station on the Denver Rio Grande railroad and the resulting town became known as Sedalia. The Beamans bought the house from Craig when he relocated in Sedalia. Today the ranch is noted for the fine Arabian horses, as developed by the Beamans.

2-Henry Clay: He was prominent in the founding of Sedalia, also an accomplished land promoter for the railroad, for which he received his homestead section.

3-Louis Cramer: He arrived in 1870 at the age of 3 and grew up in Douglas county working with his father in the threshing business. He later became one of the most prominent and wealthy ranchers and stock raisers in the valley. He married into the Jarre family.

4-Curtis: (Oaklands), Henry Harper Curtis immigrated from England to Plum Creek in 1871 to settle on a 160 acre homestead. He began the dairy industry of the area. The Oaklands ranch was enlarged over the years and a school, church, and other community services were provided for on Oaklands property and finances. The family has ever been one of the leading influences in the county and especially in the district.

5-Oakland School House: is a small one room elementary school established in 1872. In 1899 it was formally organized into the

Statement of Significance

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county school district, as district # 22. It was a living example of the high regard that the settlers had of education, themselves having come from educated families in England and Wales. It still sees occasional use by the community.

6-St. Philip-in-the-Field and the Bear Canon Cemetery: previously listed on the National Register 4-11-73, another example of the strong sense of community, integral to the area even now.

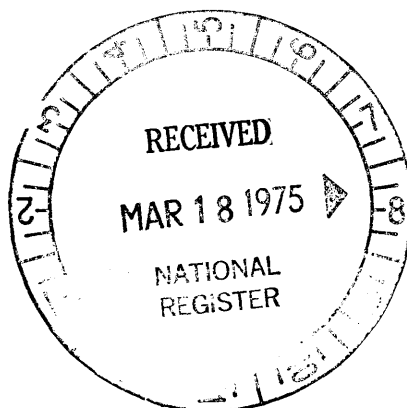
7-Allis Ranch and Bear Canon Post Office: this ranch house served as the official headquarters of the post office for the area. Established in 1863 it is one of the earliest such in the state. In the 1870's it was formalized into route # 34 with weekly service by hack. During the period the post office also served as the precinct courthouse under Marcus James. The house now has been re-sided.

The Allis family has served the community as county officials of one type or another since their arrival in the district.

Located on the ranch is a collection of log buildings dating from the 1870's which were built by the Allis family to accomodate twin maiden sisters who came from the East because they were tubercular and it was thought the climate would be helpful. They became leaders in the various social bees held by the Plum Creek ladies.

In summary it might be noted that several important facts have come to light during the research done for the district.

The settlers who came to the valley, were therefore, a fairly homogeneous group. They were also literate and deeply concerned with the educational and religious life of their families in this new land. Their immediate acts as a community were the construction of numerous schools in the valley, the construction of a church and cemetery grounds, and the importation of teachers and ministers. The structures were built by all hands and land and money donations were frequent and generous. Second and third generations of families still run the original ranches and very few modern structures have been introduced, an amazing situation since these are working ranches very near Denver!



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Colorado	
COUNTY Douglas	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 001 2 0 1975	DATE

(Number all entries)

The Bear Canon District exemplifies the coordination of geography and society in forming a logical whole. It is bounded by the natural outlines of the valley floor carved out by the creek. It is integrated by the various agricultural uses that prosper in the valley. Each of the families living in the valley have always had close ties to one another by marriage, social gatherings, and by hardship. They have shared the common tasks of threshing and harvesting, as well as cattle driving, school building and fund raising. Today, there still exists a network of backroads whereby the valley inhabitants conduct most of their local travel for social visits and business dealings. A great common bond exists among the people and the share-and-share-alike tradition of the valley is very much the rule of thumb in the present days. Each of the ranches up and down the valley have all worked to compliment rather than compete with one another. Where one is in horses, another is in wheat, and a third in cattle and dairy. The economic fortunes and burdens are shared by all and the valley operated politically as a whole. The most recent example is the concerted way in which the people of the valley have bombarded their political representatives with letters and newsletters regarding development pressures.



Ridge

Jackson Creek Rd.

1/2 mile

US Hwy 67

US Hwy 105

Ridge

2 1/4 miles

