

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED FEB 13 1980

DATE ENTERED MAR 28 1980

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

~~Red Cross~~/Cross Land and Fruit Company Orchards/Ranch ^{and}

AND/OR COMMON

Cross Ranch/Cross Orchards

LOCATION

NE of Grand Junction

STREET & NUMBER

3079 F Road (County Road)

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Grand Junction

see

VICINITY OF

4

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Colorado

08

Mesa

077

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER: Pending
Museum acquisition

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Bray & Company Realtors

STREET & NUMBER

1015 North 7th Street

CITY, TOWN

Grand Junction

VICINITY OF

STATE

Colorado

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE.

Mesa County Clerk's Office

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Mesa County Government Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

540 Road

CITY, TOWN

Grand Junction

STATE

Colorado

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites

(39/05/0020)

DATE

Ongoing

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS

Colorado Historical Society, 1300 Broadway

CITY, TOWN

Denver

STATE

Colorado 80203

7 DESCRIPTION

(A) Barn (B) Bunkhouse (C) House

CONDITION

(C) EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 (A) GOOD RUINS
 (B) FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

(A) & (C) UNALTERED
 (B) ALTERED

CHECK ONE

X ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Cross Orchards site is an excellent, compact reflection of the fruit production heritage of the Grand Valley region during the first two decades of the 20th century. With a large barn, workers' bunkhouse, small dwelling, and apple orchard, it retains an integrity rare and rapidly disappearing in this section of Colorado. The Cross site lies one mile east of Grand Junction and one mile west of Clifton, between 30 and 31 Roads (Mesa County roads) to the west and east, respectively, and between E and F Roads (Mesa County roads) to the south and north. Its northern 350' border fronts F Road to the north, with private homes and orchards beyond; to the east and south is subdivision development; and to the west is a private home and 10-acre pasture.

Once part of a 243-acre tract, the 4.4 acre site is that portion nominated to the National Register because: (1) it contains the core operational headquarters area and structures of the Red Cross Land and Fruit Company; (2) it is the last remaining portion with historical integrity--the rest has become private land and subdivision; (3) it is the only segment available for preservation. In overall configuration, the site is arranged in linear fashion, extending back from the main road (F Road) with a side driveway in typical Grand Valley configuration (see Illustration I).

Barn

The most significant architectural aspect of the Cross Ranch is the size, structural integrity and rarity of the barn. It was unusual for even stockmen in Western Colorado to have barns at all, except at higher elevations. Winters were relatively mild for stock, dry for open hay storage, and few dairy herds existed. Even though fruit production was the primary foundation of Grand Valley development, few fruit growers required more than a small to moderate sized outbuilding for processing operations, as the average orchard was around ten acres. The Cross Ranch encompassed 243 acres and the barn measures 70' wide by 75' long by 30' high.

The basic design of the Cross barn is simple, practical and popular in nature. Overall it represents a typical nationwide style using light duty materials and construction, as was common for its day (c. 1910). However, the Cross barn was modified for specialized, large scale fruit processing during the "heyday" of fruit culture in the Grand Valley. In overall function the barn is divided for two distinct usages. The loading porch, platform and part of the loft directly served the commercial needs of the company, while the remaining features served the auxiliary support needs of the people who worked the ranch, i.e., typical general farming pursuits.

Physical Appearance

A. Fruit packing floor

The area of most intensive periodic commercial use was the central grading and packing floor, or "platform," measuring 40' by 60' (see Illustration II). From ground level it is a slightly raised (approximately 3'), large working area formerly housing the processing equipment and furniture. The platform flooring is composed of 1-3/4" by 5" tongue and groove running east-west over 1 1/2" by 9" floor joists on 24" centers, with cross ("X") supports between. Ceiling (loft

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floor above) support posts are 5½" by 7" running 10' apart E-W, and 13' apart N-S. Diagonal bracings help support horizontal beams running E-W, which are composites of three 1-3/4" by 9½" boards nailed together. Composite summer beams and replacement posts were used throughout the barn.

The entire north side of the platform was left open for easy unloading, access and natural light/ventilation. This side forms a loading dock arrangement with the adjacent covered porch area, with access via a 30" wide, 3-step stairway descending about 3' at the N.E. corner of the platform.

Another stairway in the S.E. corner leads to the loft above. It is composed of 14 treads 3½' wide and rising 9'8". All exterior walls of the nailed frame barn are 1-3/4" by 5½" studs on 24" centers with ½" by 5" horizontal shiplap siding applied to the exterior surface, except the wall separating the platform from the adjacent stable to the east. It is made of lighter studding measuring 1-3/4" by 3½". This east wall of the platform also contains three vertical openings 41" high cut between studs. All walls of the packing area were painted white for increased visibility, and there is a 26" by 31" hatch through the floor in the north central section of the platform.

The south wall of the packing room contains, from east to west, the following features: the loft stairway mentioned above; a 5' x 7' high doorway with sliding door leading down to the adjacent stable area via one 4' wide step; three windows of double hung, 4 pane sash directly overlooking the basement entrance ramp; 2 horizontally mounted 8 pane windows to the adjacent chicken coop area; and, finally, the platform entrance to that chicken coop with a 34" by 82" conventional interior 4-panel door, and three step, 3½' wide stairway leading down to the coop floor.

The west, or last of the three packing floor walls, has a large central fruit loading doorway measuring 9' by 8' high with two exterior sliding door closure units. Flanking this large opening is a smaller loading door to the south (left) measuring 7' by 7½' high with single sliding door closure. Three windows of double hung, 4 pane sash flank the central doorway on its north (right) side.

B. Loading Porch

The loading porch extends the entire 75' length of the barn's north side, adjoining the packing floor and stall section of the stable. It is 15' wide and is enclosed at both east and west ends. There is one 4 pane window through its east wall providing visual balance to the barn's east facade. Porch rafters are 1-3/4" by 5½" set on 24" centers. 5" by 5" posts sit on 2' by 2' concrete pilings and

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are set approximately 18' apart along the barn's north edge. The porch is completely open along its north side and is only walled on its south side at the stable which contains a large "Dutch" door mentioned below.

C. Stable area

Adjoining the packing floor at ground level is a separate livestock area serving limited Cross Ranch needs. It is basically a 15' wide "L" shape room extending along the east and south sides of the barn from the north porch to the southern central basement entrance.

The east leg or portion is 55' long. Its eastern exterior wall construction is described above, and it has an additional interior protective wall of random dimensioned horizontal boards skirting the east and north sides 5' in height. A harness rail with pegs is attached to the east wall directly above the skirting, and above that are three horizontally sliding 4 pane windows for light and ventilation. Set directly in the center of the barn's eastern facade, and opposed at either end of the stable (north and south corners), are large divided "Dutch" stable doors. Along the stable's west wall, separating it from the packing room, are 9 (originally) horse and mule stalls with separation walls sloping from 7' to 5' in height and standing approximately 8' apart. Tall box-like feed chutes descend from the loft above to feed boxes in each stall. Each 2' square chute services two stalls. Stall flooring is heavier 1½" by 11" boarding, while other stable flooring measures 1" by 5" tongue and groove.

The south section of the stable area is again 15' wide and 50' long including the S.E. corner it shares with the stable area. Running in-line N-S with the stalls are four cow milking stanchions with feed boxes. Heavy duty flooring is also present here. Just west of the stanchions along the south wall are two animal pens measuring 9' by 8' and 9' by 11'. They are adjoining with 8½' high solid walls of horizontal boarding. Wire screening extends above the walls to the sloping shed roof to provide insect protection. Both pens have doorways with 12" high sills.

D. Chicken coop

Also along the south side of the barn, and separated from the stable area by the basement entrance ramp, is the chicken coop which measures 15' by 27'. It is reached via the platform doorway mentioned above, or through a plywood door in its southwest corner. The outside walls have been insulated with straw held between studs with chicken wire. The south wall has three windows of double hung 4 pane variety, and there is a similar window in the west wall to the right of the plywood door. A closet of unknown use is located in the S.E. corner, has a door,

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and measures 1½' by 6'. Coop flooring is ¾" by 3" tongue and groove. Several chicken roosts are scattered about.

E. Loft

The second story loft lies directly above the east stall area and the entire packing floor, thus measuring 40' by 75' (see Illustration III). It was used for animal feed storage, and fruit box construction and storage. Flooring is ¾" by 3" tongue and groove resting on 1½" by 9" joists on 12" centers.

Two rows of 5" by 5" posts run E-W forming a central aisle of about 14'. Posts are set approximately 10' apart. They support composite roof purlins with the assistance of diagonal bracings. Irregularly placed light horizontal braces join the purlins above perpendicularly. There are no traditional bents formed in the construction of this light frame barn. The roof itself is composed of 1-¾" by 3½" rafters on 24" centers covered by ¾" by 6" board lathing and cedar shingles. Rafters run N-S from eave to purlins, then another section continues to the peak to form one continuous slope.

The east wall of the loft has a central loading doorway measuring 5' by 5'3" high with double door closure. Two double hung 4 pane window units are set above the door with a loading beam near the roof peak extending about 3' beyond the exterior and 9' inside. The west wall is identical to the opposing east wall except that it contains only one window unit on each side of the loading door, both positioned far from the door. North and south walls measure 6½' in height and hold six 8 pane horizontally mounted windows each.

The stairwell is cut 4' wide and 9' long and is equipped with a protective railing. A cistern vent rises along the south wall through the stairwell and was constructed by nailing (square cut nails - found throughout the barn) 24" shiplap boards across two studs to form a box. A 38" by 41" hatch with hinged lid is located at the top of the stairs and directly north. Five feed chute openings with covers run N-S in this east end area. Ventilating roof cupolas (2) are rectangular 4' by 5' boxes straddling the peak with N-S louvered sides and gable roofs with wide eaves. A 3' by 4' opening was cut in the middle of the north wall at floor level for access to the loading porch.

F. Basement and cistern

The barn basement and adjacent water storage cistern lie directly below the packing floor (see Illustration IV). It was used for winter animal quarters and perhaps for some fruit related uses. Basement access is provided by an 11' wide

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inclined cement slab driveway which descends for about 20' at about a 6 degree angle. This covered entryway is positioned roughly in the middle of the barn's south side so that the basement area lies to the left (west). It measures 40' square, with a poured concrete floor and 12" concrete walls 8' in height. Two 3 pane horizontal windows at the top of the north and west walls open above outside grade level for basement lighting and ventilation. A similar window on the south wall looks into the chicken coop. A large sliding door measuring 11'8" by 7'3" high provides basement entry closure. 5" by 7" posts, diagonal braces, and composite summer beams support the packing floor above, with above posts going through the floor boards to rest on the basement summer beams. This arrangement of structural support is the same for each level. Basement posts vary in E-W distance from one another and rest on the concrete floor. In the N.E. corner is a concrete watering trough measuring 3½' by 9' by 27" high. It is fed by a pipe and valve connection to the adjacent cistern.

The water cistern measures 20' by 40' and lies directly east of the basement. Their common wall has a reinforced 2' thick base about 5' high. It has 12" square vents on its north and south sides plus the roof vent mentioned above. North and south roof gutters feed runoff to the cistern which presently contains about 3' of water.

In addition to basement and cistern walls, a continuous poured concrete foundation extends around the barn perimeter providing support to stable, chicken coop, and loading porch walls. However, the east loading porch wall and the south chicken coop wall have shifted away from their foundations.

Condition

The overall structural integrity of the barn is remarkable for its rather light construction and 70 year past. This is in part due to a relatively arid environment. The shifted walls mentioned above and the slight roof sag are the only evidence of major deterioration. Minor structural and cosmetic repairs would include realignment of certain posts and joists; window glass replacement; securing of loose and missing boards; roofing, painting, and general cleaning.

Bunkhouse

The bunkhouse is a long narrow building running E-W and parallel to the barn approximately 55' away to the north. It measures 26' wide, 72' long and 15½' high. An asymmetrical gable roofline is formed by a 45 degree north pitch and a longer 30 degree southern slope. The roof is covered with cedar shingles, has a 12" eave on all sides with 9" fascia board trim which begins the shiplap siding. Flooring is 3/4" by 3½"

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tongue and groove throughout, and joists are 1½" by 5¼" resting on earth. It is basically a 2 by 4 frame structure.

The bunkhouse is presently separated into three adjoining living units or apartments. It is said to have been one elongated kitchen-dining hall combination serving ranch labor in 1919. Apartment units from east to west are described as follows:

Unit 1

The extreme east end of the bunkhouse is divided into two rooms and appears from wall evidence to have been an addition. A north entryway leads into an 11½' by 15' living room with a vertical double hung, 2 pane-per-sash window near the door in the north wall. A similar window looks out the east or end wall. The living room contains a small bracketed chimney hanging on its south wall which also serves the adjacent kitchen. A doorway in the living room leads to a 11½' by 15' bedroom to the west which contains a horizontally sliding set of three 1 pane windows measuring a total of 8' by 2½' high facing north.

The south room in the bunkhouse extension has an entry door and window combination similar to that of the living room. It is, however, located in the building's east end. The south wall contains a 6' by 2' high 2 sash sliding window. Evidence indicates that this room was a kitchen measuring 9½' by 11½'. A doorway (perhaps original entryway to building) leads into an adjacent western bedroom measuring 9½' by 15½'. An outside door with nearby double hung 4 pane window is in the south wall, a doorway joins both bedrooms, and there is a closet addition in the N.E. corner of this second described bedroom.

Unit 2

The second adjoining apartment proceeding westward is entered via a northern doorway into the large living room measuring 15' by 17'. Again a vertical double hung 2-pane-per sash window occupies the entry door wall. A bedroom measuring 11' by 15' lies to the east of this living room, and appears to be a converted garage, as indicated by a filled-in 7½' by 7' double door opening seen on the building's exterior at this location. Also its east and south walls are boarded with exterior shiplap.

To the south of the living room is an elongated kitchen measuring 9' by 17½'. To its east is a small room 5½' deep with an exit and single pane window. The kitchen contains a horizontal sliding window of the same description as that in the north bedroom of Unit 1. There is a doorway in the kitchen of Unit 2 leading to the third apartment.

Unit 3

The far western apartment is entered from the north as in the other two. Again, there

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is a tall narrow window near the doorway as described above. This living room measures 12' by 13', has a bracketed chimney on its east wall, and is the only room in the building to have walls and ceiling finished in varnished plywood paneling (others have plasterboard or cardboard surfaces). The adjoining bedroom to the south is connected by a doorway to Unit 2 as described above, has a southern entry or back door flanked by two single pane windows, and has a closet addition in its N.W. corner. Two narrow west end rooms form a kitchen with north and south windows, and a utility room with cement floor, west exit and window. An exterior chimney measuring 17" square serves this kitchen.

Interior and exterior irregularities/inconsistencies make building modifications difficult to determine.

Condition

The building's understructure is badly deteriorated, causing settlement throughout. It is also in a state of general disrepair.

Other Outbuildings

Outhouse

A shed roofed, shiplap sided outhouse measuring 4' square sits 23' beyond the S.W. corner of the bunkhouse. It has a cement floor and a square diagonally-set cement stool with a wood seat and ventilation shaft which rises behind the seat to form a "T", thus venting through the south and west walls at about 4' from the floor. Wooden box floor vents also exit through wall ports.

Garage

An "L" shaped cluster of outbuildings lie directly east of the barn beginning with the garage, which is 83' from the barn's east facade.

The garage (formerly a granary) measures 14' by 26' by 11½' high and is oriented N-S. Its south end contains the major opening measuring 10' by 7½' high. No door exists. In the middle of the west wall, directly opposite the barn's central stable door, is a vertical board door measuring 30" by 82", with a 4 pane sliding window to its left side. A similar window can be found in the north end of the garage. A filled-in doorway measuring 3½' by 6½' high can be seen on the exterior of the east wall. The floor is poured cement slab, the shed roof has been replaced with corrugated sheet metal, and there is a 5' high horizontal board skirting part way around the interior walls similar to that found in the stable. The south end of the garage is presently leaning east about 6". Roof eaves measure 12" on all sides.

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Metal granary

Directly east and 5' behind the garage is a modern cylindrical sheet metal granary with conical top. It is a "Columbian Red Top Bin" measuring 14' in diameter and 14' high.

Wood granary

7½' south of the metal granary is a rectangular frame granary with shed roof and interior sided walls of horizontal 1-¾" by 5" tongue and groove boards. It is bisected to form two cribs measuring 10½' by 12' and 10½' by 9½'. Two entry doorways 70" in height open on either side of the dividing wall. Floors are ¾" by 7" tongue and groove boards. The maximum height of the corrugated metal shed roof is 11' in front, with a 12" eave extension.

Animal shelter

A low gable roofed shed provided shelter for the ranch's Percheron stallion in 1919. It measures 22' by 34' by 8½' high and is located 32' from the S.E. corner of the barn. It was crudely constructed with railroad tie posts in earth, log eave purlins, and vertical board siding of random width. Similar boards running from peak to eave provide roofing. The eastern third of the structure measuring 9' wide is fully enclosed with two doorways east and west. The adjacent two-thirds was the stable area with completely open south side. The roof of this outbuilding has partially collapsed.

Corrals

Various sized animal corrals, enclosures or pens have been constructed south and east of the barn, between it and the above shelter. Such fences are composed of horizontal poles and boards nailed to railroad tie posts.

Ranch House

The original two-story ranch house was razed in 1942 to make room for a new, but smaller house which was subsequently completed on the same location in 1944. The first is reported to have been a large square structure typical of those built during its period (ca. 1909). Surprisingly, its replacement is also architecturally compatible with that period.

The present ranch house was built in 1944 and is basically an "L" floor plan. Its overall dimensions measure 30' by 37' by 17½' high. Exterior siding is asbestos simulated shakes over a diagonal subwall, roofing is composition shingle, and there is a full poured concrete basement. The kitchen ell projects eastward toward the driveway

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or front, and has a steep gable angle of about 45 degrees. The larger main rectangular section is oriented N-S with end gables of about 30 degrees. Covered porches flank both sides of the kitchen ell facing front. The front porch is formed at the junction of the kitchen and living room, thus locating it in the N.E. corner of the building. It measures 6½' by 15' and has a low 2½' wall around its east and north sides with a three tread concrete set of steps.

A divided front "Dutch" door flanked by two double hung single pane windows leads into the living room which occupies the N. E. quarter of the main section. This room measures 17' by 18', has an exposed 2½' wide oak floor (oak flooring over subflooring over 1½" by 9½" joists throughout), and a side-by-side combination of three double hung windows identical to those flanking the entryway. Together these three windows measure 8' by 5' tall and face north.

Doorways off the living room give access to two bedrooms along the west side of the house, measuring 11' by 11' and 11' by 15'. They both contain two windows as described on their exterior walls, exposed oak floorings, and built-in closets separating the two rooms. To the south and adjacent to the S.W. bedroom is a bathroom measuring 6' by 12', with built-in drawers and shelves along its east side. A smaller double hung window faces south.

The kitchen is entered from a doorway in the S. E. corner of the living room. It has a food preparation area (sink, counters, cupboards, stove) on its west side measuring 9' by 7', and a dining area east measuring 9' by 13' with cupboards. Two side-by-side windows view eastward, while another window and door open onto an enclosed projecting southern porch measuring 7½' by 9'. A third kitchen doorway leads down to the basement, with yet another exit at the stairway landing slightly below. Ceilings on the main floor are all 8' standard height, above which is an attic with access only through small vertical 12" by 30" windows in its north and south gable end walls.

The basement is divided by walled partitions which appear to be reused wainscoting, wall and ceiling boards from the old house. Much material from the larger original house, which occupied the same location, is reported to have been reused in the new house. The west half of the basement is one large room measuring 14' by 29', with seven narrow single pane windows around its top perimeter. On the north side adjacent to the large room is a food storage room measuring 10' by 14'. And in the basement's S. E. corner is a coal storage room of 7' by 9' with a three pane window measuring 1½' by 3'. A converted coal furnace and central brick chimney measuring 17" by 22" occupy the center of the basement.

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Outdoors, a 11' by 15' cement block cool storage house with low gable roof sits off the S.W. corner of the house. In addition, a 15' deep, 12' diameter concrete cistern lies just outside the southern stair landing exit. It provides water for domestic use.

Condition

The ranch house is architecturally excellent.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1909-1924 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Red Cross Land & Fruit Company

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cross Orchards, or Cross Ranch, site is of essential historical significance to Grand Junction, Mesa County, and the Grand Valley, as it is one of the few--as well as the most important remaining--vestiges of the early 20th century fruit-production locations which provided the basis for economic and social development in this area. The present 4.4 acre site represents the last but central remnant of an orchard holding which once totalled 243 acres. Threatened by an in-process subdivision development, it is being actively sought for acquisition and preservation by the Museum of Western Colorado and the Mesa County Board of Commissioners. This site:

- (1) Represents an integral combination of factors fundamental to economic and social growth in this region;
- (2) Contains, in terms of architectural features, a large fruit production/animal barn, constructed in 1910, workers' bunkhouse, present in 1919 (date of construction probably ca. 1910), and small wood frame house, built in 1944 on the site of and with materials from the original house structure built ca. 1910, in addition to other minor outbuildings (see Architectural Description, above);¹
- (3) Represents apparently the largest fruit production orchard in this area, even during the boom period of Grand Valley fruit production--243 acres, while a statistical survey published in 1917 indicated 8.8 acres as the average orchard size;²
- (4) Is representative of the emphasis upon fruit production which helped build the area, with concentration on pears and apples, although peaches were also grown;
- (5) Witnesses the influence of eastern capital investment in western land and economic pursuits during the early 20th century;
- (6) Represents, in this growing urban area, a preserved, living, compact, integral example of a former way of life which will soon be gone.

The background of the Cross Orchard is typical of many sites in this region, in terms of development and present possible fate. The portion containing the nominated site was originally owned by Josias Allen, who in 1893 sold it to the Alta Land and Water Company, with headquarters in Grand Junction.³ This company was formed to construct irrigation ditches and conduct related business in an area which was in need of adequate water supplies and becoming increasingly better known for quality fruit production--a context in which the Cross Orchards area would soon be established.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately 4.4

QUADRANGLE NAME Clifton Quadrangle

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,2 | 7,1,7 | 8,6,0 | 4,3 | 2,9 | 7,0,0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B [] | [] | [] | [] | [] | []
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C [] | [] | [] | [] | [] | []

D [] | [] | [] | [] | [] | []

E [] | [] | [] | [] | [] | []

F [] | [] | [] | [] | [] | []

G [] | [] | [] | [] | [] | []

H [] | [] | [] | [] | [] | []

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet

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

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Dr. John R. Brumgardt, Director
Wayne Randolph, Curator of History

ORGANIZATION Museum of Western Colorado

DATE August 21, 1979

STREET & NUMBER 248 South 4th Street

TELEPHONE (303) 242-0971

CITY OR TOWN Grand Junction

STATE Colorado

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 Arthur C. Townsend Feb. 6. 1980

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. Ray Luce
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 3/28/80

ATTEST: William H. Ballou
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 3.19.80

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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The promise of the Mesa County region as a prime producer of fruits was recognized by the late 1880s, and an horticultural society was established in Grand Junction in 1889. Recognition was primarily regional until the turn of the century, but thereafter became national in scope. In 1905 the Orchard Bulletin, published by Stark Brothers, emphasizing Colorado's potential in peaches, apples, and pears was distributed throughout the United States. During 1909 the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce sponsored a pictorial narrative of Grand Valley fruit production which was shown for a week in Madison Square Garden (New York City) in October, 1910, and was also shown in the city schools there. The Grand Valley was heavily publicized at the Chicago Land Show in November, 1910, through literature, lectures, and a speech by the Secretary of the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce to a gathering of fruit growers from 37 states. Grand Valley fruit, meanwhile, was gaining increased attention. By 1907 fruits from this area were shipped to 30 states and Mexico, Canada, England and Australia.⁴ In 1908, 14 varieties of apples were sent to Cornell University for an annual exhibit and won the sweepstakes prize and blue ribbon; two years later (1910) a carload of Grand Junction apples won first prize at the National Apple Show, in Denver; and in 1919 Grand Valley apples took first prize at the International Apple Shippers' Convention in Cleveland.⁵

National attention and increased production stimulated prosperity in the Grand Valley during the early years of the 20th century, and apples appeared to be the potentially most lucrative crop, with pears and peaches following. In 1909 one William Frey, of nearby Clifton, boasted one apple tree which yielded 60 bushels and an 18-acre orchard which produced 7000 bushels. By 1910 bearing peach and apple orchards sold at \$750-\$1500 per acre, and Mesa County into the 1920s led the state in production of apples, peaches, and pears.⁶

It was during this period of growth and early success that Eastern capital was attracted to Western Colorado. In 1896 Isabel K. Cross, of Massachusetts, purchased the acreage which would become the Cross Orchards from the Alta Land and Water Company for \$7000.⁷ Nine years later (1905) she offered stock in her Colorado land-holdings in a document notarized by Albert F. Buffum, Notary Public of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, and in 1909 she conveyed her holdings to the Red Cross Land and Fruit Company.

The Red Cross Land and Fruit Company was incorporated under the laws of Colorado in Denver on October 4, 1909, by Walter B. Cross, Orville L. Dines, and Peter H. Holme. The Board of Directors consisted of Cross, Dines, Holme, Richard Holme, Jr., and L. E. Rowland. Headquartered in Denver and capitalized at \$250,000, the corporation planned to have a 20-year life, "to own, hold, enjoy and improve, real and personal property of all kinds," and "to raise, buy, sell, or otherwise deal in any and all kinds of fruit, vegetables and farm products; to build, own, and operate canning,

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The barn on the site of the Cross Orchards is one of the most unusual in the area and one of the most important in the region. Its size, structural integrity, and rarity are exceptional. It was unusual for even stockmen in Western Colorado to have barns at all, except at higher elevations. In the Grand Valley area, few fruitgrowers required more than a small or moderate sized building for their operations, but the Cross Ranch encompassed 243 acres, and thus this firm built the largest structure in the area. The most important area in the barn was the fruitpacking floor; related to this are loading porch, platform, and loft; they all served directly the purpose of the barn in the fruit industry. The barn also housed cows, draft animals, and equipment as need be, and so provided this secondary function of support for the prime fruitgrowing purpose.

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cold storage, evaporating, preserving and vinegar plants and factories, and generally to carry on a fruit and orchard business, . . ."⁸ That the enterprise was Eastern-oriented was indicated by the provision that "The meetings of the Board of Directors may be held in the City of Boston, and State of Massachusetts, and elsewhere outside the State of Colorado at such other place or places and at such time or times as the said Directors may determine."⁹

The first years of corporation activity at the subject site appear to have been a time of preparation. Annual reports submitted to the State of Colorado reflect indebtedness which doubtless related in part to the purchase and planting of new trees, equipment, erection of structures, and related expenses.¹⁰ In 1917 the first mention of production appears:

The Company owns over 200 acres of land in Mesa County, near Grand Junction, Colorado, nearly all of which is set to fruit trees, including peach, pear and apple trees; it also does some general farming; the land is irrigated land. The fruit trees are all in bearing, and this last year produced a large crop . . . The property is well improved with ranch house, barn, packing houses, etc.¹¹

The original house was reportedly a two-storied structure graced by four giant cottonwoods (which still stand by the present house). Water for the house came from a concrete cistern, which is still in use, and a wood stave silo (now gone) stood about 60 feet east of the barn. Although the orchards contained peach trees (about 60 acres--reportedly removed by 1919), major emphasis was placed on the production of apples (Jonathan, Gayno, Winesap, Rome Beauty) and Bartlett pears (about 60 total acres).¹² One recently-interviewed individual, indeed, who knew the place as a child, remembers only the apples. Hired hands ate and slept on portable cots in the bunkhouse--which also served as a cookhouse--and many also slept during temperate weather on the loading dock of the barn--which was then generally referred to as the "packing shed."¹³ Here, in the loft area, hay was stored, and packing boxes were made and stored. Sorting, packing, and shipping activities took place on the lower, main floor. During winter, apples were packed in the basement and heated bricks were used to keep workers warm--most hired help was local.

The basement of the barn was used as a stock shelter during winter, and a 75,000 gallon cistern--still present--was used both for washing apples and providing water, through a smaller trough, for the animals. In 1919 the Cross operation employed one team of mules, for disc cultivation and creasing the orchards, and three teams of horses. Other animals included milk cows, chickens, and hogs. Some food crops were planted--according to one interviewee, 60 acres were planted to alfalfa--but the major portion, corn and alfalfa, was used for stock feed.¹⁴

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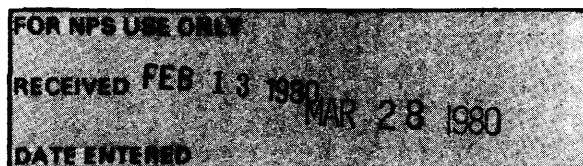
Optimism seems to have been the mood during the early period of the Cross Orchards, and the owners had reason to feel thus. The soil on the site apparently was of the best sandy loam in the region, and the place was considered by some the "showplace" of the valley. Corporation officers, however, remained for the most part away from the operation, and hence it was operated with absentee concern. Local persons, such as Charles M. Maddux, W. F. Fletcher, and W. W. Willard were hired to live at the orchard site and manage the property. In general, the owners gave the place little personal attention. Walter B. Cross, President of the corporation from 1909 to 1920, maintained his residence at the Shirley Hotel, in Denver, and most of the officers also lived in the capitol city.¹⁵ Among them were such persons as Orville Dines and Peter H. Holme, Denver attorney and later on the Board of Directors of the Colorado State Historical Society. Some, interestingly enough, maintained residences and businesses in Massachusetts. Walter Bradford, for example, lived in Brockton; George E. Keith--President of the corporation in 1921--was from Campello; and Fred B. Rice maintained both residence and business in Boston.¹⁶

Walter Cross is remembered in basically pejorative terms by living area residents whose relationship with him was normally indirect. Oral history interviews elicit memories of an absentee landlord who visited the orchard on occasion, rode a horse with an English saddle, and sometimes drank to excess.¹⁷ Considering that most of the interviewees were children at the time of contact it is possible that these notions stemmed from a feeling of antipathy among the local populace at the time towards a New England interloper whose acreage far exceeded their own, and possibly from problems relating to the ranch itself. The failure to control pests among the Cross groves resulted in infestation of surrounding orchards. And it appears that the Cross organization sometimes paid its workers higher salaries than other farmers/horticulturists in this area could afford. According to one newspaper report, printed at the time of dissolution of the Cross holdings, "there has been trouble, as the managers in some instances paid larger wages than other growers in the neighborhood, and it created dissatisfaction on the part of labor."¹⁸ The Cross corporation, in any case, appears to have been observed with distrust and some dislike among contemporary area residents.

The Cross Orchards' emphasis upon apples and pears was reflective of concentration throughout Western Colorado and the entire state during the early 1900s.¹⁹ This was due as much to locational circumstance as intention, as the geographic location of the orchards was unsuited to peach production (unlike that in Palisade and Orchard Mesa, only a few miles away). In 1909 Mesa County led the state in total apple production with 980,273 bushels; and into the early 1920s the number of mature apple trees in this county far outnumbered peaches and pears, as shown below:²⁰

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	<u>1919</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>1923</u>
Apples	269,747	(same)	477,800	(same)
Peaches	164,092		242,200	
Pears	98,397		115,525	

But although apple and pear production rose into the 1920s, profit from these ventures decreased with the persistent damage and threat of the codling moth, woolly aphid, and water seepage due to inadequate drainage.²¹ The first was the most formidable challenge. Peach trees were not affected by this pest, but apples and pears were, seriously, and the presence of the codling moth spelled doom for the Cross Orchards. By 1910 the local Fruit Growers Institute prohibited the shipment of wormy apples out of the state--hence, if production per se remained high, damaged fruit comprised an increasingly higher percentage of all grown. Lead-arsenate was the best-known defense against the moth. This, however, and the inefficient means of application then available, proved "not good enough," and the apple and pear industries were seriously damaged.²²

The codling moth had appeared in the Grand Valley by 1894 and growers tried various means to defeat it. The office of County Horticulturist was established in Mesa County in 1897 in part to assist growers with this problem, but to little avail. Long, dry summers and excellent breeding conditions favored the moth, and the increasing expense of battling the pest made apple/pear production less profitable.²³ Growers were forced to spray up to eleven times per year; and by 1919 pest districts were created and growers were required by law to spray regularly. Between 1915 and 1927 the cost of spraying increased 365%, and growers fell increasingly into debt.²⁴ According to "A Fruit Survey of Mesa County," published in 1917, the cost per 200-gallon tank of lead-arsenate spray was \$2.05, with the average cost per acre at \$3.40; and the average cost per acre, per season, was \$40. Production cost for apples, according to these statistics, was therefore 61.2¢ per bushel and that for pears 60.5¢ per bushel, while that for peaches was only 31.2¢ per bushel. According to a horticulturist who worked in the Cross Orchards in 1919, spray costs were actually higher. A 200-gallon tank of lead-arsenate spray, according to this source, would cover but about 20 trees, while each acre held at least 40 trees. In any case, however, the future of apples and pears on a large-scale basis was clear.²⁵

Financial difficulties consistently troubled the Cross Orchards, as indicated by growing indebtedness reflected in the annual reports for the early 1920s.²⁶ In March, 1923, therefore, six years before the projected end of the life of the corporation, the land was sold for taxes. Separated into fifteen tracts and assessed at \$51,590, the 243 acres brought a total price of \$50,068.²⁷ This sale was of significant interest to the surrounding community, particularly with regard to the degree of area pest

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infestation caused by difficulties in the Cross orchards, as reflected in a newspaper announcement of March 31, 1923. According to this report, headlined by the words, "BUYERS OF CROSS LANDS ALREADY GET VERY BUSY - Plans for Cleaning Up the Trees and Caring for the Pruning and Spraying Began the Day After Purchase,"

The sale of the Cross holdings will be of great benefit to the fruit industry of that section in several ways; it has been almost impossible to keep the tract in the best possible shape, as is the case with all large holdings, and there have been more or less worms grown there, which have assisted in populating other orchards. With the tract cut into a dozen holdings it will be more easily handled,

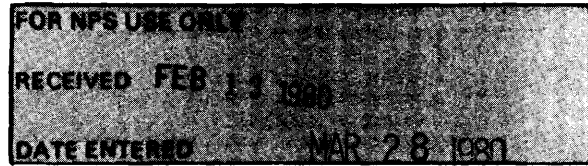
The site currently being nominated to the National Register was acquired by Jefferson Payne, a local owner, and was subsequently owned by Earl H. and Helen N. Andis (who removed the original house and replaced it with that which now stands), Everett L. and Ada M. Corlett (1952), and, in 1977, Bray and Company, Realtors--the present owners.

The Cross Orchards site, in sum, represents a vital variety of factors integral to the history of growth and economic development in this region: fruit production; eastern investment; fruit industry involvements; and, presently, subdivision development. Architecturally, it contains excellent examples of structures utilized in the early fruit industry--and, moreover, the barn is of outstanding value for it was the largest of its kind in this area. In terms of typical and atypical matters, then, the Cross Orchards site is of basic historical significance to the development of the Grand Valley region.

The present situation of the site is cause for real concern. A subdivision, sponsored by Bray and Company, Realtors, is currently in process on the surrounding land, and plans exist to place new homes on the nominated site. Indeed, until quite recently (late June, 1979), the site was scheduled for destruction to clear the way for housing construction. At the request of the Museum of Western Colorado and the Mesa County Board of Commissioners, Mr. Robert Bray has agreed to halt development there temporarily, pending action to place the site on the National Register and purchase it with assistance from private donations and possible National Historical Preservation Act grant funds. Mr. Bray has offered to donate 50% of the market value of the property (\$169,000) against matching monies. At present, then, the future of the site is in question. A staff person from the Museum is living in the house there to provide security against vandalism during our fund-raising effort. We hope to be successful in this enterprise and to preserve the site as a living history interpretive area. In this way, we can keep the Cross Orchards as a vital, continuing witness to the fruit industry in this region which was so fundamental to development here and of which it was so significant a part.

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Grand Junction, Co.
 - b. Ada Corlett, June 25, 1979, Fruita, Co.
 - c. Oscar Janes, June 25, 1979, Clifton, Co.

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 - g. Madge Davis, June 26, 1979, Clifton, Co.
 - h. Velma Budin, June 26, 1979, Grand Junction, Co.
 - i. Olive Groves, June 27, 1979, Clifton, Co.
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 - c. 1916-1917 (Colorado City, Co.: R. L. Polk, 1916).
 - d. 1918-1919 (Salt Lake City: R. L. Polk, 1918).
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Verbal Boundary
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The Cross Orchards site lies in the $W\frac{1}{2}$, $NW\frac{1}{4}$, $NE\frac{1}{4}$, $NE\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 9, T15S, R12E, Ute Meridian, Mesa County, Co. Beginning at the n/w point of the site--7.5/10 mile due East of the junction of F Road and 30 Road, on the South border of F Road--(1) go due South 513.45' to s/w point of site, then (2) go due East 100', then (3) go n/e, on 30° angle, 50', then (4) go due East 200' to s/e corner of site, then (5) go due North 487.5' to south border of F Road (n/e corner of site), then (6) go due West 350' to point of beginning.