

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 04000220


Date Listed: 3/19/2004

Bones Brothers Ranch  
Property Name

Rosebud MT  
County State

N/A  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
Signature of the Keeper

3/19/04  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

**Location:**

The location box should read: *Along Hanging Woman Creek, west of Custer National Forest (3 miles southeast of Birney)*

**Period of Significance:**

The period of significance is revised to read: *1923-1964*.  
[This period best reflects the extant historic resources currently occupying the ranch and associated with the property's primary significance as a twentieth century dude ranching operation.]

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The Boundary Description is amended to refer to the U. S. G. S. Map and U.T.M. coordinates for more precise boundaries associated with the ranch lands.

These clarifications were confirmed with the MT SHPO office.

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**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior  
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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

## 1. Name of Property

historic name: Bones Brothers Ranch

other name/site number: Z. T. Cox Ranch

## 2. Location

street & number:

not for publication: na

vicinity: X

city/town: Birney

state: Montana

code: MT

county: Rosebud

code: 087

zip code: 59012

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination    request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant    nationally    statewide X locally.

Mark E. Faucher / SHPO  
Signature of certifying official/Title

February 2, 2004  
Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency or bureau

(    See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
       see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register  
       see continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register  
       see continuation sheet
- removed from the National Register  
       see continuation sheet
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

[Signature]

Date of Action

3/19/04

**5. Classification**

<b>Ownership of Property:</b>	Private	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<b>Category of Property:</b>	District		
		<u>22</u>	<u>5</u> building(s)
<b>Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:</b>	NA	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u> sites
		<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> structures
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<b>Name of related multiple property listing:</b>	NA	<u>30</u>	<u>5</u> TOTAL

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions:**

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
 DOMESTIC/secondary structure  
 AGRICULTURE/agricultural field  
 AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding  
 RECREATION AND CULTURE/hall  
 RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

**Current Functions:**

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
 DOMESTIC/secondary structure  
 AGRICULTURE/agricultural field  
 AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding  
 VACANT

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification:**

OTHER/Rustic

**Materials:**

foundation: STONE/sandstone; CONCRETE  
 walls: LOG, STONE, WOOD  
 roof: METAL; ASPHALT; STONE/scoria  
 other: METAL

**Narrative Description**

Located in the isolated ranching region of the Tongue River Valley in southeastern Montana, the Bones Brothers Ranch is situated at the confluence of Hanging Woman Creek and the East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek. The Tongue River Valley landscape is relatively unchanged since the late 1800s. The closest town to the ranch is Birney, Montana located three miles to the west on the Tongue River. Most of the ranch complex sits within the bottomlands or on a low terrace above either creek. Private expanses composed of rolling grasslands and timbered benches include hay fields and pastures historically associated with the ranch, and are considered contributing sites to the historic district.

The Bones Brothers Ranch built environment consists of a historic district of primarily log and log and stone buildings in several distinct groupings. The first group consists of four ranch family log residences all situated along the East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek. Two log houses stand in close proximity along the south side of the East Fork and a third is situated north of the East Fork near the barn. The fourth is a cottonwood log cabin located approximately one-quarter mile east of the ranch complex and north of the East Fork. Associated with the log residences are several contributing outbuildings of log, frame and concrete block construction. A noncontributing modern house sits on the bluff above the East Fork.

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The house has a full concrete basement although one or two fieldstone courses sit beneath the sill logs. The basement is accessed by an interior stairway from the kitchen and an exterior bulkhead at the east wall. At the north end of the east wall, a conglomerate concrete ramp flanked by stone walls on each side provides entry to a subterranean garage. The garage entrance is protected by a small projecting gable roof with ridgepole and purlins and logs across its gable end. The entrance has a screened door flanked on each side by a six-light window.

The roof structure of the building is supported by ridgepole and purlins and is clad with corrugated metal insulated with red scoria. Eaves extend over the walls and sawn log purlin and ridgepole ends are exposed. The soffit displays beveled shiplap. An interior three-pot stone chimney protrudes from the gable roof ridge, directly perpendicular to the projecting gable. A second interior field stone chimney protrudes from the northwest corner of the main gable.

Also formed of ridgepole and purlins, a projecting gable runs east/west from the main gable. The south wall of the projecting gable contains a large fixed central light flanked on each side by a narrow casement window. The exterior window displays half log casings, wood shutters with iron hardware, and a rolled awning. The opposing (north) wall of the projecting gable mirrors the south wall with the same window and window details. The end wall of the projecting gable holds a large fixed picture window centered on the wall with half log casings, wood shutters and an awning.

The main entrance to the house is on the south wall of the projecting gable and is approached from an open porch. This porch sits under the main gable roof where vertical posts support the roof at the southwest corner, and is twenty-two feet wide and sixteen feet deep. The porch has an open ceiling with exposed ridgepole and purlins. Beveled shiplap clads the ceiling and wood planking covers the floor. The east porch wall contains a door of vertical half logs and a six over one double-hung window with wood shutters. The main entrance on the north porch wall also has a door of vertical half logs. Both doors exhibit wrought iron hardware. The main entry is flanked on each side by large fixed windows. A green awning extends the length of the west porch opening. Wicker furniture completes the rustic appearance of the porch. The exposed log ends of an interior partition wall divide the west wall of the main gable. To the south of the division are two fixed windows. To the north of the partition is a single one-by-one-light casement window.

The north gable end of the house contains a centered three over one double-hung window. An enclosed log porch spans a portion of the north end wall. On either side of the porch on the north end wall of the main gable is a three over one double-hung window. The enclosed porch has a shed roof and a three over one double-hung window on each side wall. Extending from the porch is a wood frame mudroom covered with board and batten siding with the entry on the north end wall.

The east wall of the house contains original six-over-one double-hung windows of varying sizes across its length. A wood frame addition extends off the south end of this wall. This addition sits on a high concrete block foundation and is clad with horizontal boards framed with cornerboards. The east wall of the addition holds a paired six-over-one double-hung window.

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The south end wall of the main gable holds a paired six-over-one double-hung window and centered pair of six-over-one double-hung windows in its gable end. The remainder of the south wall is cutaway for the porch.

The front entrance off the porch opens into a rustic lodge-style living room. The exposed roof of the projecting gable exhibits substantial cross tie logs with vertical braces extending between the purlins. A large fireplace dominates the interior east wall directly opposite the picture window on the projecting gable end wall. The fireplace has a half log mantle and a firescreen adorned with a western scene. The fireplace is flanked on either side by built-in bookcases framed by log casings. A large elk head above the fireplace flanked by antelope heads on each side complements this interior wall. The picture window is also flanked with bookcases to either side. The living room has a beveled shiplap ceiling and hardwood flooring. On the north wall of the living room French doors open onto a formal dining room. A small study with a corner stone fireplace is reached from the dining room, again through French doors. Log walls and roof structures are exposed in both the dining room and the study.

The eastern portion of the house has finished walls and ceilings and displays none of the rustic elements found in the front part of the house. A doorway from the dining room accesses the kitchen and pantry and back entrance. To the north of the fireplace in the living room are two doorways. One door enters into the master bedroom that contains its own fireplace. The other door enters the children's room. The walls in this room are illustrated with wonderful scenes of little cowboys, Indians, cows and horses. All the paintings were drawn in 1935 by Jim Ryan, an artist from New York who stayed at the Quarter Circle U Ranch south of Birney. The children's room adjoins a small bath and small second bedroom, which in turn adjoins the kitchen. A hallway south of the living room fireplace accesses two formal bedrooms and a bath. The finished appearance of these bedrooms is in stark contrast to the rustic elements seen throughout the front part of the house.

**Ruth Starr Rose Cabin (Building No. 4; Photo No. 5)**

This log cabin originally stood at the 3X Bar Ranch up the East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek. According to Irv Alderson, Jr., an artist from Virginia named Ruth Starr Rose stayed in this cabin at the 3X Bar. Little Bones and his wife Frances moved this cabin to its present location in the 1940s after the Bones Brothers bought the 3X Bar.<sup>1</sup>

The one-story cabin stands within the fenced yard of Little Bones house and north of the house itself. This small one-room rectangular log cabin is built into a gentle slope above the East Fork. The cabin has a rough faced sandstone foundation with irregular courses that adjust accordingly to the slope. Of horizontal log construction, the cabin has round, peeled logs with wide cementitious daubing. The logs are saddle-notched at the corners with sawn logs ends projecting beyond the joint. Log diameters taper from bottom to top and a few logs have been spliced on the side walls.

<sup>1</sup> Irving Alderson Jr. Interview with Joan L. Brownell, June 27, 2003, Bones Brothers Ranch, Birney, MT. Ruth Starr Rose was a notable lithographer and silk screen printmaker whose works are in the collections of numerous Eastern museums.

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This simple cabin has a straight low-pitched gable roof clad with corrugated metal insulated by red scoria. The roof structure is formed by ridgepole and purlins that project beyond the end walls. A stovepipe protrudes from the north roof slope. A continuous vergeboard wraps around the eaves presenting a somewhat finished appearance. The north, south and east walls are all symmetrical with centered screened six-by-six-light hopper windows. The west end wall holds a wide Dutch door with accompanying screen door and is approached by three sandstone slab steps. The one-room interior has exposed log walls, exposed ridgepole and purlins, wood flooring and a whitewashed plank ceiling.

The cabin is a contributing building to the historic district. It was moved onto the ranch during its period of significance and retains its integrity within the ranch complex.

**Garage (Building No. 5; Photo No. 6)**

Russell Perry, a local builder, built this garage for Little Bones and his wife in the late 1920s for their automobiles.<sup>2</sup> The garage sits west of Little Bones house outside the fenced yard. This rectangular three bay garage is constructed of concrete block and has a concrete foundation and floor. The garage has a shed roof with exposed rafters, vertical log posts between the bays and is covered with corrugated metal. Three overhead wood garage doors fill the south wall. There is a wood door entry on the east side wall. The ceiling is covered with tongue and groove.

The garage is a contributing building to the historic district although it is not of log construction.

**Big Bones House (Building No. 6; Photo Nos. 7-8)**

This one-story log house sits between the East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek and an embankment to the north. The house faces south, and has a flagstone patio and walk built by Floyd Alderson. A narrow plank bridge crosses the East Fork to the house. Allen "Big Bones" Alderson and his family resided in this house. Big Bones presumably built this house before he married Dorothy Bentley (from Sheridan, Wyoming) in 1926. Little Bones married his wife Frances in this house in August 1928. Although primarily a family ranch home, Big Bones and his family, accepting one of the many sacrifices made for the success of the dude ranch business, would often move to the main lodge during the busy summer months and use this house for dudes.<sup>3</sup>

This T-shaped residence is composed of the original "T" shaped log portion, an enclosed porch and several small additions. A low sandstone foundation sits under the original log portion with concrete foundations under the additions. The house has a low-pitched gable roof supported by ridgepole and purlins with an intersecting gable that forms the "T" shape. The roof is clad with corrugated metal insulated with red scoria. An interior brick chimney protrudes from the west slope of the intersecting gable within the original log portion.

The porch, enclosed during the early 1950s, spans the entire façade (south) wall. It has an off-center wood double door entry. The door displays diagonal half logs on the lower panels and an upper glass panel. A raised

<sup>2</sup> Alderson Interview.

<sup>3</sup> *Sheridan Press*, July 13, 1966; July 9, 1993; Alderson Interview.

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wood block centered on each door exhibits the ranch 'TH' horse brand on one and the 'ZC' cattle brand on the other. The entrance is approached by sandstone steps. To the east of the entrance is a row of four, fixed, one-light-over-vent windows. To the west of the entrance is a single casement window.

The round, peeled horizontal log walls of the original log portion are exposed on the north (rear) wall. This north wall is dominated by an exterior field stone fireplace flanked on each side by a large fixed central light with narrow casement windows at either side. The windows have half log casings. The sawn ends of an interior log wall partition (between the kitchen and living room) are exposed east of the east window. Further east on this log wall is a window opening now boarded shut with log slabs. The northeast corner exhibits a vertical log post rather than notching.

The east gable end of the log portion of the house is filled with horizontal logs and also displays extended ridgepole and purlins. A wood-frame mud room addition with a gable roof spans the east end wall. This addition opens onto a partially enclosed back porch. The west wall of this porch abuts the enclosed façade porch.

The west wall of the house consists of the original log portion in the center of the wall flanked to the north and south by wood-frame additions. The exposed log wall holds several openings, including a large fixed central light with a narrow casement window on each side, a six light casement window and a two light casement window. A small, enclosed side entry also extends off the log wall portion.

The wood-frame additions constructed in the 1950s are clad with vertical wood panels. Both gable ends feature wide eaves with boxed purlin ends. Both the north and south addition have both single and double casement windows on their three walls.

A 1931 Burlington Northern Railroad travel brochure photograph shows the interior of this cabin with a roaring fire in the fireplace, exposed logs and Navaho rugs, "just to correct any mistaken idea you might have about these ranch homes being sod-houses, or dug-outs with dirt floors."<sup>4</sup> The living room retains its rustic appearance today. A large lichenated field stone fireplace framed on either side by large windows fills the north wall. The fireplace has a stone mantle, stone hearth and a recently installed fire insert. Exposed log walls with wide white daubing and exposed ridgepole and purlins with impressive tie logs lend stature to this room. The ceiling is covered with pine paneling. Both the west and east interior log walls have built-in bookcases. Passageways on either side of the west wall open to a long corridor. The north corridor accesses two bedrooms and connecting bath. The south corridor accesses a room with a corner sandstone fireplace and another bedroom. The kitchen is east of the living room and the dining/study is in the enclosed porch off the kitchen.

This log house is a contributing building to the historic district. A small recently built wood frame shed sits east of the house but is not of sufficient size or scale to be considered a contributing building.

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<sup>4</sup> Burlington Northern, "Dude Ranches in the Big Horn Mountains," circa 1931, pamphlet file, Wyoming Room, Sheridan County Public Library, Sheridan, WY.

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**Floyd's Cabin (Building No. 31; Photo Nos. 9-10)**

Floyd Alderson was the oldest Alderson brother, born in 1895 on Hanging Woman Creek. He left the ranch around 1915 and became an actor in B Westerns under the name of Wally Wales and later Hal Taliaferro. Floyd returned to the ranch in the early 1950s and built this cabin. He lived and worked on the ranch until his death in 1980.<sup>5</sup>

Floyd's cabin sits isolated north and above the East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek, approximately a quarter-mile upstream from the ranch complex. This cabin is constructed of gigantic cottonwood logs with some displaying burls. According to Irv Alderson, these logs were brought in from the Yellowstone River.<sup>6</sup> Some landscaping is evident immediately west of the house. A historic, low, sandstone retaining wall with a set of stone steps and walk leads to a more recent circular stone pit fireplace surrounded by a stone bench. A small rectangular one-seat outhouse/shed sits southwest of Floyd's cabin but is of insufficient size or scale to be considered a contributing building.

This one-story rectangular horizontal log gabled roof cabin faces west with an open porch across its front. The sill logs sit on a low sandstone foundation but the cabin has a full concrete basement. The cabin has a straight low-pitched gable roof supported by a substantial ridgepole and purlins. Metal roofing insulated with red scoria covers the roof, which extends beyond the log walls. A red sandstone three-pot chimney protrudes from the center of the roof ridge.

The massive cottonwood logs have circumferences ranging between 80 and 100 inches. Most of the logs have rough flat surfaces on two sides (top and bottom). The walls stand four logs high and are joined by saddle notching at the corners. The majority of the logs have sawn ends but a few exhibit irregular axed ends. Some logs exhibit splicing.

The west wall has an off-center entrance of a vertical board door. Fixed single unit windows flank the entry on each side, one to the south and two to the north. An open shed roof porch spans this wall and is supported by a row of substantial peeled log vertical posts. A flagstone patio covers the area under the porch roof.

The north and south end walls are symmetrical, each containing two single unit windows. One window is fixed while the other is a screened hopper window. The east wall is also symmetrical with a row of four single unit windows across the wall (including only one screened hopper window).

The interior consists of four rooms: the living room, galley kitchen, bedroom and bath. A sandstone fireplace dominates the living room and forms most of the interior wall. The living room has exposed log walls and a low ceiling with exposed ridgepole and purlins and finished with lodgepole rafters. A doorway to each side of the fireplace leads to the narrow galley kitchen on the west side and the bedroom on the east side.

This cabin is a contributing building to the historic district.

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<sup>5</sup> Buck Rainey, "The Saga of Floyd Taliaferro Alderson," *Western Film Collector* Vol. 11, No. 6, January 1975, 2-33.

<sup>6</sup> Alderson Interview.



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**Hank's Cabin (Building No. 21; Photo Nos. 11-12)**

Hank's cabin sits on the gently sloping terrace north of the East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek and west of the barn and corrals. Hank Bullen worked at the ranch off and on for over forty years. According to his obituary, Hank Bullen was born in Ireland and came to Wyoming when he was nineteen. However, everyone called him an Englishman who, according to Big Bones, came to the ranch "the spring we were starting, to help us break horses. He was going to stay two weeks and he's there yet [1966]. Presumably he built his cabin around 1923-1924.<sup>7</sup>

This one-story rectangular log cabin sits on a low single course sandstone foundation except under the south wall where there are several more courses. The cabin is of peeled, round horizontal log construction with cementitious daubing. Vertical quarter sawn log posts complete the corners rather than notching. The very low-pitched roof built of ridgepole and purlins is covered with corrugated metal insulated with red scoria. The roof extends beyond the log walls. There is an exterior field stone chimney on the north side wall. A brick chimney protrudes from the roof ridge.

The cabin faces south. It has a centered recessed porch under the gable roof framed by four vertical log posts. The entrance is flanked on each side by six-by-six double casement window. Vertical half logs form a horizontal band that stands at the same height of the windows on each side of the window. The impressive entrance consists of double door adorned by opposing diagonal half logs. The porch has a conglomerate concrete floor and an open ceiling with wood planking.

To either side of the recessed porch, the south wall of the cabin holds a six-by-six double casement window. The east wall of the cabin contains a four-by-four double casement window and a smaller four light window. The west wall has a six-by-six double casement window. All casement windows have wide white board casings and open inward.

A wood frame enclosed porch extends off the east end of the north wall. It has a shed roof and a stone slab floor. The porch has fixed glass units above a closed railing sided with half logs. A hand pump stands within the porch. A small wood frame bathroom addition projects off the north wall at its west end. This addition sits on a concrete foundation, is clad with quarter-round logs and has a shed roof. It holds a plywood door at the west side and a one-by-one slider on the north wall.

Suitable for a bachelor cowboy, the interior of this cabin contains a small kitchen, a study/dining room, a living room and a bedroom with a bath addition. Throughout the cabin, the log walls are exposed. The stone fireplace dominates the living room and is flanked to each side with built-in bookcases. The exposed ridgepole and purlins further accentuate the rustic flavor with added features as the potbelly stove.

This cabin is a contributing building of the historic district.

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<sup>7</sup> *Sheridan Press*, October 31, 1973; *Sheridan Press*, July 13, 1966. Hank Bullen was considered part of the family.

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**Hank's Outhouse and Garage (Building No. 22; Photo No. 13)**

This one-story, rectangular gabled roof log building is situated between Hank's cabin and a ranch road to the north. It appears to have been built in the early 1930s. It sits on a sandstone slab foundation highest under the west end wall. The roof is formed by ridgepole and purlins whose sawn log ends extend over the end walls. The low-pitched gable roof has extended eaves and is covered with corrugated metal insulated with red scoria. Of horizontal log construction, the building has peeled, round logs and vertical corner log posts instead of notching. Cementitious daubing fills the interstices. Planing of logs at openings results in a raised pronounced appearance. Openings on the west and south walls have half log casings.

The façade faces south and holds two large double doors accentuated by diagonal boards. This wall also holds a vertical plank door that opens into a coal bin and a boarded shut window opening. The west end wall sits on a high sandstone foundation and contains a slightly off-set tongue and groove replacement door flanked on each side by a four-light window. Sandstone slab steps approach the entry that opens into a one-hole outhouse that contains a library. The north wall holds a row of four-by-four sliding windows and the east wall has a single four-by-four slider. The windows on the east and north walls have wide, white board trim.

The west end of this building houses the outhouse and a coal bin. The double doors open into a large room with a concrete floor and board ceiling with exposed ridgepole and purlins. A wood door on the west interior wall of this room opens into a small room.

This log building is considered a contributing building to the historic district.

**Hank's Root Cellar (Building No. 23; Photo No. 14)**

This root cellar stands approximately twelve feet from the east wall of Hank's outhouse/garage. This cellar is visible in an early 1930s photograph. The small rectangular exterior entrance is of wood frame construction sided by horizontal quarter sawn logs and covered with a shed roof. A tongue and groove door opens onto the wooden steps that descend into a square sandstone cellar. A small wood vent protrudes from the cellar mound. According to Irv Alderson, Hank used this cellar primarily to store cases of liquor.<sup>8</sup>

Hank's root cellar is a contributing building to the historic district.

**Hank's Guest Cabin (Building No. 2; Photo No. 15)**

A late 1920s photograph shows this simple one room log cabin originally stood north of Hank Bullen's cabin. It once served as Hank's guest cabin. Today the cabin is isolated on a small bluff overlooking the East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek and east of the ranch complex. The cabin sits west of Irv Alderson's modern house and was moved in the late 1960s to serve as a playhouse for his daughters.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Photograph in possession of Bones Brothers Ranch, Birney, MT; Alderson Interview.

<sup>9</sup> Photograph in possession of Bones Brothers Ranch, Birney, MT; Alderson Interview.

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This one-story straight gable cabin is built of peeled, round horizontal logs joined by square notching at the corners. The sawn ends do not project beyond the joint, making a neat and precise corner. Planing of the logs at windows and corners give the logs a distinctive pronounced raised appearance.

The cabin sits on a high foundation of sandstone blocks and slabs, the highest under the west end wall. The cabin's low pitched gable roof is covered with corrugated metal insulated with red scoria. A brick chimney protrudes from the roof ridge near the west end wall. The roof, built of ridgepole and purlins, extends beyond the end walls. The gable roof also projects over an open porch supported by log posts. The porch has a closed log railing square notched at the porch corners. The porch has plank flooring and ceiling. The interior facade (east) wall contains a five panel wood door and a centered four-light window. The north and south walls hold centered screened four-light casement windows that open inward. All windows have wide white board trim, the same distinguishing feature also seen on Hank's cabin and outhouse/garage.

The one room interior has exposed log roof elements and exposed log walls. This log cabin is considered a contributing building to the historic district although it has been moved from its original location within the ranch complex, a common practice by ranches. The log cabin retains its historic appearance and character.

**Irv Alderson's House (Building No. 1; Photo No. 16)**

This fairly substantial house with attached garage sits east of the ranch complex on a bluff overlooking the East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek. Built in 1964 by Irving Alderson Jr. for his family, it is of wood frame construction and sits on a concrete block foundation. The gable roof has numerous projecting gables, wide eaves and is covered with gravels. The house is sided with wood paneling and has casement windows throughout. It has an enclosed porch and open front stone patio.

This house is a non-contributing building to the historic district.

**Group One Integrity**

All of the log houses with the exception of Big Bones house exhibit excellent integrity. Minor alterations of small wood frame additions and a few openings are apparent but unobtrusive. Most of the interiors of the buildings are basically intact since time of their construction. Big Bones' house has experienced the most alterations with the introduction of wood frame additions and the enclosed front porch. Despite these changes, the overall exterior and interior integrity of Big Bones' house is sufficient to convey its significance.

Two of the associated log buildings have been moved. The Ruth Starr Rose cabin was moved onto the ranch complex in the 1940s. Hank's guest cabin was moved within the ranch complex in the late 1960s. Regardless of their removal from their original location, both of these cabins are able convey their historic appearance and character.

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**Group Two**

Group Two consists of buildings directly related to the dude ranch business. It is divided into two units: the domestic unit and the agricultural unit.

**Domestic Dude Ranch Unit**

**Private Guest Cabins**

The Bones Brothers Ranch allowed certain individuals to construct private cabins on the ranch. An agreement would be reached where an individual or family would have a cabin built under the Bones Brothers supervision. The owners would use the cabin at their leisure but the ranch could house dudes in the cabin when the family was absent. The ranch would eventually buy the cabin for cost. Some of these cabin owners would stay at the ranch for long periods of time, becoming members of the ranch family. At one time, there were four private cabins at the ranch.<sup>10</sup>

**Carvalho Cabin (Building No. 10; Photo No. 17)**

By June 1931, the Bones Brothers Ranch had just completed a cabin with a front yard for the Carvalho family of Hartford, Connecticut. The 1932 Bones Brothers Ranch brochure includes a photograph of this cabin minus its projecting gable.<sup>11</sup> The rustic architectural style and details of this cabin indicates that it probably was architecturally designed rather than planned by a local contractor.

The Carvalho cabin today is shaded by several cottonwoods and lilac bushes grow along the south walls. The cabin faces east onto the open area that once served as the ranch arena. The cabin sits along the edge of the low terrace above the East Fork and barn complex. This one-story front gable log cabin sits on a low single course sandstone slab foundation faced with deteriorating concrete. Of horizontal log construction, the peeled, round logs are square notched at the corners and the log ends squared sawn and project slightly beyond the joint. The plate log is spliced on the north wall. Barbed wire stretched along the interstices is covered with cementitious daubing.

The cabin has a moderate pitched gable roof formed by ridgepole and purlins and covered with corrugated metal insulated with red scoria. Roof details include extended eaves and exposed three-quarter-round pole rafters with sawn ends. An interior field stone chimney protrudes from the ridgeline.

The gable roof projects over the front screened porch. The gable end has exposed ridgepole and purlins log ends and is filled with horizontal logs. Vertical log posts define the porch screen divisions. The exterior screen door displays rustic characteristics including half-log casings, log braces and topped by a transom with two log mullions. The porch railing is four horizontal logs high, with the bottom log notched into the corner of the cabin. The interior façade wall is symmetrical with a centered two-panel wood door flanked on each side by a

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<sup>10</sup> Information on private cabins is derived from several agreements between the Bones Brothers Ranch and private individuals plus ranch newsletters still in the possession of the Bones Brothers Ranch.

<sup>11</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch newsletter, June 15, 1931; Bones Brothers Ranch 1932 brochure, in possession of Bones Brothers Ranch. Unless otherwise noted, all newsletters and brochures are in the possession of the Bones Brothers Ranch.

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fixed central picture window with a narrow eight light casement on each side. The porch has a tongue and groove floor and beadboard ceiling. Hanging from the northeast corner of the porch is an iron nameplate that reads T. K. Carvalho below a silhouette of a leaning cowboy smoking a cigarette.

A projecting gabled roof wood frame addition extends off the south wall. This is a later 1930s addition to the main cabin. Ridgepole and purlins form the gable roof covered with corrugated metal. The addition is sided with horizontal quarter sawn logs and has vertical log corner posts. The east and west walls of the addition are symmetrical with an eight-by-eight light double casement window. It appears that awnings once graced all the windows of this building.

The north wall is also symmetrical with two eight-by-eight light double casement windows. A wood-frame gabled roof addition that houses a small kitchen and bathroom extends off the west end wall. A smaller wood-frame shed roof addition that houses the water heater and pump extends off the west wall of the first addition. A tall cobblestone chimney protrudes from its shed roof. There also appears to be a crawlspace under the larger addition.

The front room of the Carvalho cabin presents a wonderful rustic style interior. The cabin revolves around the recessed canted central fireplace. The fireplace contains embedded mineral samples, has a granite hearth, a decorative firescreen with a western scene and a log mantel. The Bones Brothers brands ZC and TH are burned into the log braces at each end of the mantel. The front room rustic décor includes both a built-in cabinet and built-in desk with wrought iron hardware. The windows have log casings. The room has hardwood floors, exposed log walls, exposed ridgepole and purlins and a lodgepole ceiling. An elk head hangs over the fireplace and a moose head over the door entrance.

A doorway on each side of the fireplace opens into a bedroom. The backwall of the fireplace is exposed in these bedrooms, resulting in a canted interior wall. Iron grates inset in the chimney provide heat to the rooms. The upper interior walls between the two bedrooms display decorative vertical half logs. The south bedroom contains a rustic wardrobe built into the slanted wall and other rustic furniture typical of the 1930s. The north bedroom is connected to the bath. A door on the living room south wall opens into the projecting gable addition that contains a single bedroom with a sink.

This log cabin is a contributing building to the historic district.

**Sheedy Cabin (Building No. 13; Photo Nos. 18-19)**

According to Irving Alderson, the Sheedy family from New York City built this cabin around 1938. In May 1946, the Bones Brothers Ranch newsletter reported that "Kay Sheedy and her handsome progeny are still here, postponing daily their return to the east . . . they've been here most of a year now . . ." <sup>12</sup> In an agreement dated June 1947 between the Bones Brothers Ranch and Bryan D. Sheedy, Mr. Sheedy agreed to sell his cabin to the Bones Brothers Ranch for \$5000.00. Mr. Sheedy would receive this amount "through the regular charge for

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<sup>12</sup> Alderson Interview; Bones Brothers Ranch newsletter, May 1, 1946.

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board and room for actual time spent at the ranch by him, his family, or his friends” under the discretion of the Bones Brothers Ranch.<sup>13</sup>

The Sheedy cabin sits west of the Carvalhos cabin along the edge of the terrace above Hanging Woman Creek. It is the northernmost of five log and stone buildings constructed along the terrace edge. This straight side gable rectangular building is of horizontal log construction at the upper level and stone construction at the lower level.

The round, peeled logs are saddle notched at the corners with extended log sawn ends. The logs taper in size from bottom to top. At the end walls, the horizontal logs extend into the gable ends. There is a low sandstone foundation under the front sill log. The low-pitched gable roof is covered with corrugated metal insulated with red scoria. The roof is formed by ridgepole and purlins with sawn ends that project over the log walls.

The façade (east) log wall holds two nine-by-nine light sliding windows and one set of paired nine-by-nine light sliding windows. Windows exhibit half log casings. A partial open porch covers the entry. The porch shed roof is supported by squared vertical beams (5x6's) with recently installed roofing materials. The porch has tongue and groove flooring. The façade entry is a vertical board double door with wrought iron hardware and framed by quarter-log casings.

The south log wall contains two nine-by-nine sliding windows and a small six light window. An exterior sandstone chimney stands at the center of the north log wall. A recent fixed single-light window flanks the chimney to the west. The west log wall contains two fixed-frame replacement windows and several sliding windows. The fixed units replace original porch screens.

The lower level of the cabin is built into the hillside and constructed of finished sandstone set in irregular courses that incorporate different dimensional stones. The height of the finished stone wall adjusts to the slope. The south wall contains a six-by-six and a nine-by-nine-light sliding window and a fixed nine-light window. The north wall has a six-light window. The west stone wall contains two garage bays with overhead wood garage doors fronted by a conglomerate concrete ramp. Sandstone slab steps approach a rear wood door. To the south of the door is a nine-by-nine-by-nine-light sliding window.

The upper level of this cabin contains a large living room with hardwood flooring. The sandstone fireplace centered on the north wall dominates the room. The fireplace has a half log mantel, a stone hearth and is flanked to each side by built-in bookshelves. The ceiling has exposed ridgepole and purlins with tie logs and braces. A door on the south interior log partition wall opens into a small hallway that accesses two bedrooms and a bath. An interior log partition wall on the west side of the living room holds two vertical tongue and groove doors. One door accesses the lower level stairs. A Dutch door opens into a modernized kitchen and a bedroom that once served as a screened porch. All interior doors exhibit wrought iron hardware. The lower level contains two large bedrooms, a bath and a two bay garage.

This log cabin is considered a contributing building to the historic district.

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<sup>13</sup> An agreement between Bones Brothers Ranch and Bryan D. Sheedy, June 1, 1947.

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### **Dude Cabins (Building No. 11; Photo No. 20)**

Two original dude cabins with a connecting bath compose this building. The earliest Bones Brothers Ranch brochure in 1928 shows these two cabins, presumably built between 1924 and 1928. By 1932, the cabins had been improved with porches and by the late 1940s baths had been added. The cabins face an open area that once served as the ranch arena. The cabins originally stood in a mature stand of cottonwoods, now replaced with junipers. Originally the ranch had six cabins of similar design to accommodate guests.<sup>14</sup>

This long, rectangular one-story building consists of two original dude log cabins joined by a wood frame addition. The building sits on a low sandstone foundation faced with concrete. The dude cabins are almost mirror images of each other. They are of horizontal log construction, with round, peeled logs, cementitious daubing and vertical corner boards instead of notching. The logs extend into the gable ends. The planing at the corners, doors and windows creates a distinctive effect where the logs appear more pronounced. The low-pitched gable roof is formed by ridgepole and purlins. The roof extends beyond the end walls and is covered with corrugated metal insulated with red scoria.

The façade of each cabin contains two door entries (panel wood doors with accompanying screen door) and two two-over-two double-hung windows. An interesting detail is a card suit symbol (diamond and spade at the north cabin and a club at the south cabin) carved into the logs adjacent to the doorways. All openings also have wide white board casings. A shed roof open porch extends across both cabins facades (east wall). The porches were installed in the early 1930s. Log posts support the porch roof, which is covered with corrugated metal with red scoria. Diagonal planks serve as flooring.

The west walls of each log cabin are symmetrical with two small one-over-one double-hung windows. The north and south walls exhibit an interesting detail where planing at the corners produces a curved pronounced raised log appearance. The connecting addition, built after World War II, has two small four-light windows on both its east and west wall. The addition is sided with horizontal rough-cut wood slabs.

The interior of each original dude cabin consists of two adjoining rooms, divided by a frame interior wall covered with tongue and groove. A five-panel wood door connects the two rooms. The interior log walls and ridgepole and purlins are exposed. Each room contains a closet against the interior frame wall. The connecting addition is divided into two bathrooms with toilet, sink and shower. Doors from each cabin access their individual bathroom.

This log building is a contributing building to the historic district.

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<sup>14</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch 1928, and 1932 brochure.

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### Recreation Hall (Building No. 9; Photo Nos. 21-22)

The Recreation Hall stands at the east side of the open area that once served as the arena for rodeos, and other activities like baseball games. This one-story rectangular log building is composed of the original ranch store/office built between 1924 and 1927 and the recreation hall (originally called the Amusement Hall) built in 1927. After the corral, the recreation hall served as the social center of the ranch.

The Bones Brothers Ranch contracted with local contractor Fawn Walthall to construct the hall. The Bones Brothers Ranch still has the original drawings of the floor plan, front façade elevation, roof connections of the building and a penciled sketch of the completed building. The contract contains very precise specifications for the building pertaining to all aspects of its construction. The Bones Brothers Ranch gave the contractor six weeks to complete the building.<sup>15</sup>

The northern portion of the building functioned as the ranch store and office and presumably was built between 1924 and 1927. Of horizontal log construction, this rectangular building sits on a high sandstone block foundation. The round, peeled logs are square notched and planed at the corners with no projecting ends, making a neat and precise corner. Wood strips fill the log interstices. The logs are planed at all openings, creating a distinctive pronounced raised log effect. The low-pitched gable roof runs east/west and is formed by ridgepole and purlins that are exposed at the gable ends. The roof extends beyond the log walls and is clad with corrugated metal insulated with red scoria.

The north wall of the store/office sits on a high stone foundation with a four-by-four-light sliding window in the foundation wall. The log wall exhibits the exposed log ends of an interior log partition wall (wall between store and office). There is also a two-panel wood door positioned near this interior wall (a side door to the store). Three two-by-two-light sliding windows cross the wall. All window and door openings throughout the building have wide white board casings.

The east wall of the store/office continues the high sandstone foundation and also has a four-by-four-light slider in its foundation wall. Wooden steps approach a two panel wood door on the east wall. A two-by-two-light slider flanks the door to the south. A shed-roofed, wood frame enclosure provides entry into a basement (not accessible).

The west end wall of the store/office is now fronted by the porch that originally extended the length of the entire building. Exposed log ends designate the store's original exterior side wall that now serves as the partition wall between the store and the recreation hall. The west end wall of the store is symmetrical with a centered entrance flanked on each side by two-by-two light sliding window placed high on the wall. The centered entry is a double door adorned with diagonal half logs and an accompanying screen door. Door details include half-log casings painted white and a letter drop adjacent to the door. Wood steps attached to the porch lead to the store entrance.

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<sup>15</sup> Contract between Fawn Walthall and Bones Brothers Ranch, May 1927, in possession of Bones Brothers Ranch.



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The north/south gable roof of the recreation hall intersects with the east/west gable of the store/office. The low-pitched gable roof formed of ridgepole and purlins is covered with corrugated metal insulated with red scoria. The horizontal log walls are peeled, round logs joined by square notching at the corners with no projecting ends. Cementitious daubing fills the interstices. The logs extend into the gable ends. The recreation hall sits on a sandstone foundation.

The façade of the recreation hall faces west onto the open area that once served as the arena. The west wall is covered by a continuous shed roof porch that extends the length of the wall. The porch roof is supported by vertical log posts symmetrically placed and connected by a single round post rail between the posts. The porch has a plank board floor set on wood posts and a ceiling with exposed rafters and ceiling boards. A portion of the porch floor has been removed. The recreation hall façade wall is symmetrical with a centered double door of diagonal half-logs (like the store front entry) flanked on each side by two nine-by-nine double casement windows. Attached wood steps lead to the entrance.

The south end wall of the recreation hall is nearly symmetrical with two nine-by-nine light double casement windows. The east wall is dominated by a centered field stone exterior chimney. The chimney is flanked on each side by a nine-by-nine light double casement window. A five-panel door is positioned at each end of the east wall. The southernmost door is approached by a sandstone slab step. The northernmost door opens onto a shed roof wood frame screened porch with partial plywood walls.

The interior of this building retains all of its original character and appearance. An early 1930s photograph shows the interior of the recreation hall with guest's playing cards, sitting by the fireplace or playing pool. The ranch would also hold dances and view movies in the hall. The recreation hall interior is a large open room with pine flooring, exposed ridgepole and purlins with tie logs and braces and a board ceiling. The interior walls have exposed round logs with wide white daubing. The chimney and the front entrance are positioned directly across each other on the opposing walls. The chimney exhibits rusticated sandstone with raised pointing and has a stone mantle and hearth. A tie log is embedded in the upper chimney portion. A few animal heads still decorate the walls of the recreation hall.

Another early 1930s photograph shows the interior of the store portion of this building. Items shown for sale included cowboy hats, Navaho rugs, boots, sundry supplies and Indian beadwork. The store today retains the original wood paneled counter that divides the room. The room is distinguished by a dropped log partition in the gable only (which the photograph shows was used to display items). On the back interior log wall of the storeroom is a built-in glass cabinet, an open closet and a doorway into the office. The office served as the post office, business office and housed the telephone.

The Recreation Hall is a contributing building to the historic district.

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**Help Bath House (Building No. 16; Photo Nos. 23-24)**

This log and stone building is clearly visible in an early 1930s overview photograph of the ranch. According to Irv Alderson, this served as the help bath house with the laundry in the lower level.<sup>16</sup> The bath house is the fourth of five buildings built in a row north to south along the terrace edge above Hanging Woman Creek.

This one-story rectangular, log bath house consists of two levels, the upper level constructed of horizontal logs and the lower level constructed of stone. The log portion has round, peeled logs. The logs are planed at the corners and joined by square notching with no projecting ends, resulting in a neat squared corner. Daubing between the logs exhibits mortar over barbed wire stretched in the interstices. The low pitched gable roof is formed by ridgepole and purlins of similar dimensions, has extended eaves and is covered with corrugated metal with red scoria. An exterior brick chimney stands at the north end wall and an exterior sandstone chimney stands at the south end wall. This chimney is adorned with embedded mineral samples.

The upper façade (east wall) is almost symmetrical with a centrally located entrance flanked on each side by four-by-four hopper windows that open inward. All façade openings have wide white wood casings. Both the north and south wall have side entries with the same casing. The north wall has a five-panel wood door with accompanying screen door approached by wood steps with a wood railing. The south wall also has the same type of door. The west log wall is symmetrical with two two-by-two-by-two-light sliding windows.

The lower stone level has a centered wood door. The entry is flanked to either side by a row of three horizontal two-light sliders with stone lintels placed high on the wall. The stone wall sits on a high stone foundation faced with concrete.

The upper level interior is finished with pressed board and plywood on walls and ceilings. The entrance opens into a small hall with cabinets across the back wall. An opening at the end of the hall on each wall allows access to the women's bath to the north and the men's bath to the south. By each entry are ten small drawers with individual locks. The north room contains a toilet, a sink and two showers (one dismantled). The south room contains two toilet stalls, two sinks, a dismantled shower and a private stall with a shower and toilet.

The lower level was not accessible but according to Irv Alderson, it served as the laundry and contains a small room that housed the furnace with the water heater. Long multiple clotheslines once stood to the west of this building. Originally the ranch provided laundry service to their guests for a nominal fee. For a short period, they sent the laundry to Birney and eventually they shipped guest laundry to Sheridan twice a week.<sup>17</sup>

This log bath house is considered a contributing building to the historic district.

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<sup>16</sup> Photograph in possession of Bones Brothers Ranch; Alderson Interview.

<sup>17</sup> Alderson Interview; Bones Brothers Ranch brochures, miscellaneous years available between 1928 and 1961.

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### Dude Bath House (Building No. 14; Photo Nos. 25-26)

This bath house served as the guest or dude bath house for the ranch. Bones Brothers Ranch contracted with Willis Karns on June 4, 1929 to build this building for \$450. The Bones Brothers Ranch still possesses the contract that includes a dimensional sketch of the building and detailed specifications. The Bones Brothers Ranch provided the materials and also room and board for the contractor and his helpers.<sup>18</sup>

This rectangular, low-pitched gable building is the second of five buildings that stand north to south along the edge of the terrace above Hanging Woman Creek. A lower stone level supports the upper level of horizontal log construction. The one-story log portion consists of round, peeled logs joined by square notching at the corners. The logs are planed at the corners and have no projecting ends, resulting in a precise neat corner. Cementitious daubing over barbed wire fills the interstices. The logs extend into the gable ends. The low-pitched gable roof is formed by ridgepole and purlins and is covered by corrugated metal insulated with red scoria.

A low stone foundation faced with concrete sits under the east (façade) wall. The facade holds three entrances, each being a five-panel wood door with an accompanying screen door. Four-light hopper windows in sets of one, two and three cross the façade wall. The south end wall holds a single four-light window while the north wall has no openings. The west wall fenestration is nearly symmetrical with a centered single-light hopper window flanked on each side by two sets of paired four-light hopper windows. All openings have wide white board casings.

The lower level rusticated sandstone walls display rough common bond courses. The west wall contains two tall doors of tongue and groove boards with stone lintels. Two sets of three four-light windows utilize the bottom log of the upper level as their lintel. A small retaining stone wall extends out from the southwest corner of the lower level.

The finished interior of the upper portion of this building consists of two rooms with a central hallway. The center entry opens into a small hallway with tongue and groove walls. Linen closets are set against the south interior wall. The stairway to the lower level is now boarded shut and inaccessible along the north interior hallway wall. An interior door at the end of the hallway enters a small room that accesses a five-panel wood door to either side. These doors open into the women's bath to the north (right) and the men's bath to the south (left). These rooms also have their own doors to the outside on the east façade wall. Both rooms have exposed whitewashed interior logs into the gables and the east log wall in the north room appears hewn with axe marks. The south room still contains evidences of the plumbing fixtures and three wood shower stalls while the north room has been stripped and is presently used as a workshop. The lower level once served as a utility area and has a dirt floor. A small adjoining room originally held water pumps.

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<sup>18</sup> Contract between Bones Brothers Ranch and Willis Karns, June 4, 1929, in possession of Bones Brothers Ranch.

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**Separator/Storage Shed (Building No. 15; Photo Nos. 27-28)**

This building is the third of five log buildings that stand in a row north to south along the terrace edge above Hanging Woman Creek. The building consists of an upper level of horizontal log construction and a lower level of concrete construction. According to Irv Alderson, the south end room of the log building housed the separator and had a concrete floor and drain while the north room was used for storage.<sup>19</sup> The separator room has been converted into a granary. The north portion of the building today stores washtubs, laundry bags and a wringer washing machine. Shelves line the west wall and the interior south wall.

The rectangular, side-gabled log upper level sits on a low concrete foundation under its façade (east) wall. The three-quarter-round peeled logs (sawn on the interior wall) are square-notched at the corners. The logs are planed at the corners and have no projecting end, resulting in a neat squared corner. Cementitious daubing fills the interstices. The building has a low-pitched gable roof formed by ridgepole and purlins. The roof extends beyond the end walls and the ridgepole and purlins are also very extended. The roof is covered with ribbed metal.

The façade (east) wall contains a slightly off-centered five-panel wood door flanked to the north by a four-by-four double casement window. A plywood door entry is situated at the south end of façade wall. The north and south end walls are symmetrical with a four-by-four double casement window centered on the walls. The west log wall has a four-by-four light double casement window and a four-light casement window across its length.

The lower level is divided into two sections. The north section is open on the north and west side with a concrete pier supporting the northwest corner of the log building. A dry-laid sandstone slab retaining wall extends along the side hill of the terrace below a ranch access road and continues under the east log wall. The south section of the lower level is constructed of formed concrete and concrete block. A wood double door covered by a small shed roof accesses a single bay garage.

The separator/storage shed is considered a contributing building to the historic district.

**Coal Shed (Building No. 17; Photo No. 29)**

This log and stone rectangular building is the fifth and southernmost building of five that stand along the edge of the terrace above Hanging Woman Creek. This building however runs east/west rather than north/south as the rest of the buildings. The building served multiple uses during the dude ranch years including a coal shed, a kindling shed and a storage shed for camping gear. It also housed a lighting plant at one time.<sup>20</sup>

This rectangular building has two levels: an upper log level and a lower stone level. The upper level has a low-pitched gable roof supported by ridgepole and purlins and covered with corrugated metal. The roof projects over the end walls and the ridgepole at the east gable end extends several feet.

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<sup>19</sup> Alderson Interview.

<sup>20</sup> Alderson Interview.

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Of horizontal log construction, the upper level has round, peeled logs that are saddle-notched at the corners with slightly extended sawn ends. The north log wall at ground level contains two shuttered openings while the south log wall has no openings. A four-light window is centered in each gable end. The upper level housed camping equipment for the ranch.

The lower portion is of sandstone in irregular courses with large squared stones at the corners. A small low sandstone retaining wall extends off the northeast corner of the building. The south stone wall holds three vertical plank doors. The interior is divided into three rooms by a stone wall and a rough cut slab wall. The west room holds the concrete framework for a now defunct light plant. As mentioned above, the other rooms were used for kindling and coal.

The coal shed is considered a contributing building of the historic district.

**Group Two  
Dude Ranch Agricultural Buildings**

**Barn (Building No. 25; Photo Nos. 30-32)**

This post and beam barn has been the focal point of the ranch since its construction in 1924 and is basically unchanged. As early as March 1923, the Bones Brothers Ranch approached Jack Baurus to construct a barn for their dude ranch business. However, they did not sign a contract with Baurus until May 1924. Mr. Baurus agreed "to quarry all rock for a building measuring 33 x35 x 8 feet high" with walls twenty inches thick. The ranch still retains the scaled floor plan and loft profile that shows the dimensions for the barn. It is assumed that Mr. Baurus built the entire barn.<sup>21</sup>

Built into a side hill, the barn has a concrete foundation topped by a rusticated sandstone block wall on all four sides. The sandstone wall at the front of the barn has been reinforced by an exterior concrete wall approximately twenty inches high west of the door and thirty-one inches high east of the door. The exterior concrete wall continues partially around the barn's east and west wall. The concrete protrudes from the wall to form a bench. Over the years, dudes scratched their names into the sandstone at the façade wall, probably while waiting for their horse.

The barn has a gambrel roof and is clad with asphalt shingles. Signage is placed high near the ridge on both roof slopes that reads ZC BONES TH, their two brands and ranch name. The roof eaves extend beyond the walls and rafters are exposed. Elbow brackets appear at the angles of the gambrel on both the north and south wall. A decorative iron weathervane of a cowboy with a horse stands on the roof ridge near the front of the barn.

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<sup>21</sup> Contract between Bone Brothers Ranch and Jack Baurus, May 1924, in possession of Bones Brothers Ranch. The name of the contractor was difficult to read and could possibly be Burns.

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The barn façade faces south and is symmetrical. A heavy plank Dutch door is centered on the wall with the upper half hinged at the top while the bottom opens as a double door. To either side of the barn door is a small deep sill window opening with stone lintels. The gambrel end has horizontal siding and contains three four-light openings, one centered in the apex and two lower and near the eaves.

The east and west stone walls are symmetrical with three deep sill window openings with four lights or less topped by sandstone lintels. The north barn wall has a hood at the apex but the remainder of the wall has been resided with vertical tongue and groove siding. An entrance is located slight off-center on the wall. The tongue and groove door entry is approached by wood steps. Original openings are still visible from the interior of the building.

The first floor interior of the barn is entirely whitewashed and has a heavy plank floor. The interior has a central corridor. To the east of the corridor are two open and one closed stall and on the west side are two closed stalls and a tack room with an enclosed feed room.

A wood ladder near the entrance reaches the haymow. The plank floor of the haymow sets on two-by-ten dimensional lumber cross joist and two-by-six joist. The gambrel roof is composed of two-by-four rafters and supported with laminated two-by-eights. The haymow has a small room (once used as a spare bedroom) in the southwest corner. Hay drops are aligned along both side walls.

The barn is a contributing building to the historic district.

**Tack Room (Saddle Shed) (Building No. 24; Photo Nos. 30, 33)**

Early 1930s photographs reveal that both the interior and exterior of the tack room (or saddle shed) has changed very little since its construction.<sup>22</sup> Presumably the tack room was built around 1924 when they built the barn for the dude ranch operation.

The tack room is a shed roof rectangular one-story building built into a slight slope. The low north wall consists of a three-foot high concrete wall. The shed roof is formed by large log purlins running east/west the length of the building with one center tie pole. These poles have sawn ends and extend slightly over the end walls. The roof is covered with corrugated metal insulated with red scoria. Narrow poles are attached to the roof eaves to hold the scoria in. The building is constructed of round, peeled horizontal logs of similar dimensions. The logs are joined at the corners by square notching with no projecting ends. The logs have been planed at the corners, resulting in a neat squared precise corner. Chinking is quarter-pole slats covered with cementitious daubing. The façade (south) wall is symmetrical with a recently installed centered wood double door flanked to either side by four-by-four light sliders. The west end wall also has a four-by-four light sliding window. All windows have faded white wide board trim.

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<sup>22</sup> Photographs in possession of Bones Brothers Ranch.

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The interior of the building houses the tack, saddle, bridles, etc and has a plank floor and ceiling. The tack room is a contributing building to the historic district.

**Hank's Barn (Building No. 29; Photo Nos. 34-35)**

According to Irv Alderson, this was Hank Bullen's barn and tack room. This rectangular, one-story log barn appears to be of an early 1930s construction. The barn, built into a slight slope, is situated within the feedlot east of the barn. Hank's barn consists of three sections, the original log barn with two wing extensions on either side. Of log construction, the barn stands ten logs high and rests on a low sandstone foundation. The peeled round logs have squared corner boards (no visible notching). Wide white cementitious daubing fills the interstices.

The log barn has a very low-pitched gable roof formed by ridgepole and purlins. The roof is covered with corrugated metal insulated with red scoria over planking. The façade (south) wall holds a vertical plank Dutch door flanked to the west by a window opening. East of the door are the exposed log ends of an interior log wall partition and another window opening. There is also a six-light window opening on the east end wall. All openings have wide white board trim.

Three-sided wood frame sheds extend from either end of the log barn. Each shed has feed bins across their back (north) walls. Log posts support the rafter roof across the open south wall. The west extension projects from the log barn at a slight angle. Vertical rough-cut lumber clads the north walls and rough cut board and batten covers the east wall of both sheds.

Hank's barn is a contributing building to the historic district.

**Shop (Building No. 8; Photo No. 36)**

This one-story rectangular log gabled roof shop is located along the edge of the terrace above the East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek. An early 1930s photograph reveals just a portion of the roof of this building behind the recreation hall. The building is of horizontal log construction with an attached frame garage.

The shop sits on a high sandstone foundation and has a full basement with sandstone walls. The logs are round, peeled and saddle notched at the corners with projecting sawn log ends. Logs extend into the gable ends and chinking consists of wood strips. Ridgepole and purlins form the gable roof and extend slightly over the end walls. The roof is covered with corrugated metal.

The façade (south) wall holds a wood panel door with upper glass panels. The lower door panel exhibits the ZC brand burned into the wood. A shed roof open porch supported by log posts covers a portion of the south wall. Attached wood steps access the porch plank floor. Exterior wood stairs flanked by sandstone side walls descend into the stone basement at the south wall. Double wood doors open into the basement.

The west end wall has a centered nine-by-nine sliding window. The north wall has an exterior sandstone chimney flanked to one side (east) by a nine-light window and to the west by a nine-by-nine light sliding

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window. Three three-light windows with deep sills (with center vent) and large stone lintels are positioned in the high sandstone foundation wall beneath the north side wall.

The interior upper floor has exposed ridgepole and purlins with one cross tie. The log walls are also exposed. The basement has a concrete floor and once housed an electric generator. Attached to the shop off its east wall is a three-sided wood frame garage open to the south. The east and north garage walls are clad by board and batten siding. The east wall holds a pair of eight-light windows.

The shop is a contributing building to the historic district.

**Horse Barn (Building No. 7; Photo No. 37)**

According to Irv Alderson, this building, located south of the East Fork, was built by Anne Turner as a private horse barn. Anne Turner stayed at the ranch in the 1940s and eventually bought the saloon in Birney. The ranch later used this barn for a chicken house or storeroom.<sup>23</sup>

This L-shaped horse barn, built into a side hill, has a sandstone foundation that adjusts to the slope and is highest under the west wall. Of wood-frame construction, the building is mostly clad with horizontal rounded log slabs over diagonal boards. It has a shed roof with exposed rafters and is covered with corrugated metal roofing.

The barn holds a vertical plank double door and a Dutch Door on its north wall and a vertical plank double door on its east wall of the "L." The south wall contains a row of four-light windows and two framed openings. A row of four-light windows spans the west wall. The north end wall holds a one-over-one fixed frame window.

Today, a chicken yard spans the east and north walls across the front of the barn. Covered by a pent roof and supported by log posts, the chicken yard is enclosed with chicken wire spread between the posts. There is a vertical board door at the east end of the chicken yard and the north end is covered with board siding.

The horse barn is a contributing building to the historic district.

**Roping Barn (Building No. 20; Photo No. 38)**

A Bones Brothers brochure in the early 1960s announced the "ranch has a large indoor arena where on rainy days you may ride or watch the cowboys practice calf roping and other rodeo events." Built around 1960 immediately east of Hanging Woman Creek, the roping barn originally was used to practice roping and train horses. It is now used for calving heifers.<sup>24</sup>

The roping barn is a metal Quonset and measures two hundred twenty-four feet by fifty feet. It is a wood frame building with metal siding and roofing, metal sliding doors at each end and a dirt floor. The metal roof has fiberglass panels to provide interior natural light.

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<sup>23</sup> Alderson Interview.

<sup>24</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch circa 1960 brochure; Alderson Interview.



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The roping barn is a contributing building to the historic district. It is the last building built on the ranch before they closed their dude ranch operation.

**Chicken House (Building No. 18; Photo No. 39)**

According to Irv Alderson, this deteriorating building was originally one of many ranch chicken houses.<sup>25</sup> The building stands on a sloping hillside south of the row of buildings along the terrace edge above Hanging Woman Creek. This building is of a combination of log and wood frame construction. It has a shed roof supported by three purlins covered with planking over the log portion and rafters over the frame portion. The north portion of the shed is horizontal log joined by saddle notching at the corners. The south portion of the building is frame and partially open across its front. The interior today contains a feed bin and stall.

This chicken house is considered a contributing building of the historic district.

**Horse Shed (Building No. 28; Photo No. 40)**

Located within the feedlot east of the barn and north of the East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek, this building consists of two sections that join at an angle in the northeast corner. One section is a rectangular three-sided concrete block shed that runs in an east/west direction. The shed has a low gable roof covered with corrugated metal. The south side is an open shed supported by vertical log posts and formed by purlins with cross ties. A concrete block feed room with an interior bin fills the east end of the shed.

The other section of this building is an open, long rectangular horse feeder shed that runs north/south, built around 1970. The feeder shed is divided into three parts that consist of a centered truck driveway with a raised roof flanked on each side by low gable roof wings. The low gable roofs are formed by purlins that span the length of the wings with supporting tie logs. The roofs are covered with corrugated metal insulated with red scoria and are supported by log posts. Extending the length of the wings on each side of the driveway is a central corridor to store hay with feed racks on both sides.

This building is a non-contributing building to the historic district.

**Scale House (Building No. 26; Photo No. 41)**

Built around 1970, this rectangular building is located north of the barn and tack room. It consists of two sections, the scale room and driveway, all under the same shed roof. The roof is covered with corrugated metal and has exposed rafter ends. The entire building is sided with horizontal pressed board.

The scale room has a concrete floor and foundation. The west wall holds a five panel wood door and a six by six light double casement window. The east interior wall has a five panel doors at each end of the wall and a centered six by six light double casement window. The scale room contains a "Fairbanks Morse" scale.

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<sup>25</sup> Alderson Interview.

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The enclosed driveway is supported by vertical posts and squared beams. Fiberglass panels on the east wall provide natural lighting. A sliding vertical tongue and groove wood door fills both end walls. Cattle are driven into this enclosure and weighed.

The scale house is a non-contributing building to the historic district.

**Stud barn (Building No. 30; Photo No. 42)**

According to Irv Alderson, this building is called a stud barn, a shelter for a stallion with hay and grain stored in the upper level.<sup>26</sup> Located on the east end of the feedlot, this two-story building is built into a side hill. The lower level consists of a single stall. Of concrete block construction, the lower level has a dirt floor, a feed rack and an overhead garage door at the south wall. Of wood frame construction, the upper level is clad with board and batten. It has a shed roof with exposed rafters. A door entry is located on the north wall and the south wall has two small openings. The upper level consists of a single room with a hay drop.

This hay shed was constructed after the period of significance and is a non-contributing building to the historic district.

**Machine Shed (Building No. 12; Photo No. 43)**

Built around 1980, this machine shed stands over a concrete tennis court erected for the dudes. This metal building measures forty feet by eighty feet, has metal siding and roofing and sliding metal doors at both ends. Irving Alderson said his mother was horrified when they built this shed.<sup>27</sup>

The machine shed is a non-contributing building to the historic district.

**Integrity of Group Two**

**Domestic Buildings**

The integrity of the domestic dude ranch buildings is excellent. Most of the buildings do not appear to be altered to any great extent. The Sheedy cabin has experienced the most alteration with the enclosure of the side porch and modification to the front porch but this has not overly affected its' historic appearance and character. Interiors of the buildings are relatively intact regardless of neglect or minor modifications. The wood frame additions for bath rooms all were constructed in the 1940s for the convenience of the guests.

**Agricultural Buildings**

The stone barn and the tack room appears almost exactly as they did since they were constructed in the 1920s. Other log buildings retain their overall historic appearance. The noncontributing agricultural buildings were constructed after the end of the dude ranch period in 1964. The noncontributing buildings are not overly intrusive.

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<sup>26</sup> Alderson Interview.

<sup>27</sup> Alderson Interview

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**Contributing Structures**

**Pole corral (Structure No. 33; Photo No. 30)**

The high pole circular corral with its pole gates in front of the barn appears the same today as it did in the late 1920s. The barn and corral were always the center of the activity at the ranch. Each morning the horses would be brought into the corral and roped for the day's riding. Hanging out around the corral to watch whatever was going on is one of the favorite pastimes of dudes everywhere.

The barn corral is a contributing structure to the historic district.

**Grain Bin (Structure No. 27; Photo Nos. 30, 34)**

This steel circular grain bin rests on planks set on sandstone slabs. A 1950s photograph shows a grain bin at this location behind the barn.

The grain bin is a contributing structure to the historic district.

**Contributing Sites**

**Cemetery (Map No. 19)**

The cemetery sits isolated on the foothill slope south of the ranch complex. It is enclosed by a nearly square granite stone wall that stands approximately four feet high. A simple iron gate near the center of the east wall opens into the cemetery.

The cemetery contains eight grave markers. The only marble monument is that of Byron D. Currie who died in October 1918. The other graves have low red head stones with a white marble insert. The original homesteader Zachary Taylor Cox (died 1927) and his wife, Mary Peachy Cox (died 1960) are buried here. The oldest burial is Mary Robert Cox's grandmother, Sarah Adams Taliaferro, who died in 1896, and who also was the grandmother of Emma Alderson, the mother of the three Alderson brothers. The cemetery also has headstones for Mrs. Cox's father and brother. There also is a single grave marker for three family members, identified only by initials.

**Arena (Map No. 36; Photo No. 44)**

This approximately two-acre open area on the gentle sloping terrace south and above the East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek served as the arena for the Bones Brothers Ranch. The ranch would hold rodeos in this arena on Sunday and in the afternoons have baseball games with neighboring ranches. At one time, they even had polo matches. The dude cabins stood to the west of the arena and the Recreation Hall to the east. At one time, the arena was surrounded by a pole fence and held a loading chute.

**Cultivated Field (Map No. 35)**

A forty-acre hay field is situated with the ranch complex proper in the East Fork of Hanging Woman bottom lands.

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**Garden Plot (Map No. 34)**

Located to the west of Hanging Woman Creek in the bottomlands is a twenty-acre plot that once held the garden for the ranch. Irving Alderson remembers, "we had a huge garden." For many years, they had a Japanese gardener named Tom Ito who grew everything. "These sandy bottoms will raise just about anything." They raised all kinds of melons, peas, lettuce, tomatoes, acres of potatoes, onions, carrots, rutabagas and parsnips. Most of the garden produce was stored in a large root cellar that has been removed. Ranch brochures advertised the fresh garden vegetables from the ranch garden. They use this field today for pasturage and allow the 4-H horse clubs to practice here.<sup>28</sup>

**Landing Field**

Situated approximately 4000 feet northwest of the ranch complex on a flat plateau or bench north of the East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek is an approximately 3000-foot landing field. A tattered windsock still stands at the east end of the field. This field was utilized extensively by the Bones Brothers Ranch for their families, guests and local ranchers. By the late 1940s, the Bones Brothers Ranch brochures announced "our own recognized landing field makes it convenient for private or chartered planes to come directly to the ranch."<sup>29</sup>

**Pastures and Hay Fields**

When the Bones Brothers Ranch was fully functional by 1930, the ranch encompassed approximately 4000 acres of private lands. These lands ranged from bottom hay lands to pastures on rocky hillsides and forested benches. The Bones Brothers Ranch could not survive as a working cattle ranch and dude ranch without these lands to provide winter feed and pasture. Most of the lands included in this contributing site consist of patented lands or deeded acres acquired by members of the Cox and Alderson families.

**District Integrity**

**Statement of Integrity**

The Bones Brothers Ranch retains a remarkable high degree of integrity of location and setting. There are no visible intrusions to the natural landscape in any directions. The hay lands and pastures basically exist today as they did in the late nineteenth century, affected only by the introduction of fences and water developments. Within the ranch complex, changes to vegetation have occurred naturally over time.

The Bones Brothers Ranch contains an amazing collection of log and log and stone buildings whose historic fabric has been retained for over 60-70 years. Alterations or modifications are few and with the exception of one ranch family residence, all reflect their historic appearance and character. Although none of original homestead buildings remain, the tradition of low-pitched gable roofed buildings formed by ridgepoles and purlins and built of horizontal round logs joined with square notching has persevered.

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<sup>28</sup> Alderson Interview.

<sup>29</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch brochure, circa late 1940s. The *Birney Mirror* also occasionally mentions arrival and departures from the landing field, in possession of Bones Brothers Ranch.

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Although a number of the dude buildings have been removed or destroyed, sufficient elements of the historic dude ranch survive that easily convey its historic design and function. The Bones Brothers Ranch unpretentious architecture conveys a timelessness that has persisted over the years. All the contributing buildings represent a simple vernacular rustic architectural style, with the larger cabins and houses illustrating slightly more elaborate detailing. Log buildings at the Bones Brothers Ranch display various distinctive elements, like the wide white wood casings, planing around openings, precise squared corners, the half log casings and the doors with diagonal half logs.

Noncontributing buildings are limited. The more recent agricultural buildings as the scale house, stud barn and horse shed are not overly intrusive and represent the natural progression of a working ranch. The location of the modern house separates it from the rest of the ranch complex. The metal building disturbs the domestic dude building cluster but is not overly intrusive.

The Bones Brothers Ranch is a wonderfully preserved ranch property that effortlessly reflects its history.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): B, G

Significant Person(s): na

Cultural Affiliation: na

Areas of Significance: EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT; AGRICULTURE; ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION; ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: 1889-1964

Significant Dates: 1889, 1923, 1964

Architect/Builder: Irving Alderson Jr.; Allen Alderson; Floyd Alderson; Fawn Walthall; Hank Bullen; Irving Alderson III; Willis Karns; Jack Baurus;

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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The Bones Brothers Ranch is significant under Criterion A for its historic association with the evolution of the livestock industry and land settlement of the Tongue River Valley and its tributaries in southeastern Montana. In 1896, Zachary T. Cox received his homestead patent for 160 acres at this present-day ranch location where he had resided since 1889. Therefore the genesis of the Bones Brothers Ranch or the former Z. T. Cox Ranch occurred after the "Hard Winter" of 1886-1887 during the transition from open range to fenced pastures. The ranch developed at the end of the open range boom period of the 1880s in eastern Montana where the large corporations overstocked and overgrazed the ranges. The winter of 1886-1887 devastated the existing herds and brought a new consciousness regarding ranching. The Z. T. Cox Ranch (Bones Brothers Ranch today) represents the beginnings of small cattle operations that incorporated summer and winter pastures and supplemental feed.

The Bones Brothers Ranch, in the 1890s and the first two decades of the twentieth century, acquired lands to support their cattle operation. Family members utilized various federal lands laws like the Homestead Act and the Desert Land Act to obtain patents to lands contiguous to Z. T. Cox's original homestead on Hanging Woman Creek. Z. T. Cox and his wife Mary Peachy had four boys of their own plus raised three nephews, the Alderson brothers. They eventually amassed over 8000 acres of which the ranch still mostly holds. After combining livestock ranching with a dude ranch operation for 40 years from the early 1920s to the early 1960s, the Bones Brothers Ranch returned again to solely a livestock operation.

The Bones Brothers Ranch gains additional significance under Criterion A for its historic association with the development of tourism and dude ranching in Montana. The Bones Brothers Ranch became a dude ranch in the early 1920s during the period when dude ranches in the West experienced a period of prosperity and played an important role in the local economy of the West. Influenced by their experience as wranglers at the famed Eaton Ranch in Wolf, Wyoming, the Alderson brothers (Big and Little Bones) with their two cousins, Percy and Edwin Cox, opened the ranch to dudes from the East around 1924. An original member of the Dude Ranch Association organized in 1926, the Bones Brothers Ranch exemplified the working ranch experience where dudes participated in typical day-to-day ranch activities plus special outings like round-ups. At the Bones Brothers Ranch, horseback riding was the primary attraction and the proximity to the Custer National Forest provided extensive territory for riding. At one time, the ranch could accommodate over 40 guests. The Bones Brothers Ranch became so successful that eventually they allowed only returning clients or "old-timers." The Bones Brothers Ranch provided dudes with the western experience they desired, fulfilling their romantic visions of the West with Cowboys and Indians, magnificent scenery, excitement and adventure.

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The Bones Brothers Ranch is significant under Criterion C as representative of vernacular rustic architecture, influenced by the locally accessible materials of log and stone. The numerous log and log and stone buildings on the ranch exhibit local craftsmanship and skilled workmanship. Most of the buildings at the Bones Brothers Ranch represent a simple unpretentious rustic style while a few illustrate a slightly more elaborate western rustic architectural style. Rustic architecture flourished during the early twentieth century at dude ranches designed to surround guests with the rustic western atmosphere they expected. The use of local native materials further reinforced the guests idealized wilderness perspective where the log cabin typified the western frontier tradition.

**History of Bones Brothers Ranch**

**Indians, Livestock and Land Settlement**

Archaeological evidence indicates that early peoples have occupied the southeastern region of present-day Montana for over 11,500 years. Throughout prehistory, the inhabitants of this region subsisted as semi-nomadic hunters and gatherers whose exploitation of plants and animals and methods used varied over time. During the last 4,000 years and up to historic time, dependence on bison dominated their lifeways.<sup>30</sup>

The Northern Cheyenne and the Crow Tribes profess a cultural and spiritual tie to the Tongue River. Intertribal conflict and expanding white settlement pushed the tribes westward. Both tribes migrated into the region from homelands further east, the Crows arriving first from the Upper Missouri and later bands of Cheyenne and Sioux from the Black Hills region.<sup>31</sup>

The Northern Cheyenne consider the Tongue River region as a sanctuary necessary to ensure their survival as a people. They hold a spiritual connection with the river, its water, and the springs and hills of the Tongue River Valley. Crow elders also recognize springs along Hanging Woman Creek with spiritual healing powers.<sup>32</sup>

The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 designated southeastern Montana, including the Tongue River Valley, as Crow Territory, encompassing all lands south of the Musselshell River between the Yellowstone River to the west, the Powder River to the east and as far south as the Wind River Mountains in Wyoming.<sup>33</sup> After the discovery of gold by non-Indians in southwestern Montana Territory in the early 1860s, hostilities between the Sioux and Cheyenne and whites moved to the Northwestern Plains, as gold seekers and emigrants crossed traditional buffalo hunting grounds. Eventually these conflicts necessitated the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 that closed the Bozeman Trail, the major transportation route across Wyoming and southeastern Montana and the military forts

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<sup>30</sup> Bill Tallbull and Sherri Deaver, "Potential Cultural Effects to the Northern Cheyenne from the Proposed Tongue River Railroad Extension," Interstate Commerce Commission, June 1991; Ethnoscience, "Inventory and Evaluation Report for Cultural Resources Within the Proposed Area of Effect of the Tongue River Dam Construction Project and Potential Irrigation Developments on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation," Mt. Dept of National Resources and Conservation, December 1992; Kate Hampton and Chere Juisto, "A Place Apart: Cultural Landscape of the Tongue River Valley," Presentation at Montana Historical Society, Helena, MT, October 2001.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Bill Tallbull and Sherri Deaver, "Potential Cultural Effects to the Northern Cheyenne; Theo Hugs, Interview with Joan L. Brownell, June 1922,

<sup>33</sup> Crow and Northern Cheyenne Treaties and agreements are available in Charles J. Kappler, compiled and edited, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties* 2 vols. (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office (GPO), 1904.

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built to protect the corridor.<sup>34</sup>

This same 1868 treaty also reduced the eastern boundary of Crow Territory to the divide between the Bighorn and Rosebud Rivers, thereby excluding the Tongue River region. The treaty reserved the Powder-Tongue River regions as “unceded” territory preserved as Indian hunting grounds and closed to white settlement and exploration. In the years following the 1868 treaty, tribes like the Northern Cheyenne continuously moved between the Powder and Big Horn Rivers to hunt buffalo and engage in battle with the Crows and Shoshone.<sup>35</sup>

Invasion of the Black Hills by gold seekers intensified Indian-white conflicts and led to the Sioux Wars of 1876-1877. In January 1877 at the Wolf Mountains Battlefield, just south of the mouth of Hanging Woman Creek, a pivotal battle occurred. The military defeated Sioux and Cheyenne warriors which resulted in their eventual confinement the following spring.<sup>36</sup>

Some of the Cheyenne remained at Fort Keogh (near Miles City) on the Yellowstone River where they served as army scouts under Colonel Nelson A. Miles. Under the auspices of the military, this group came to settle along the Rosebud and Tongue Rivers south of Fort Keogh by the early 1880s. In the fall of 1882, a contingent of Northern Cheyennes led by Black Wolf migrated from the Pine Ridge Agency in South Dakota to occupy lands on Hanging Woman Creek in the vicinity of the Bones Brothers Ranch.<sup>37</sup>

Upon recommendations from the Department of the Interior, President Chester A. Arthur, in an Executive Order of November 26, 1884, created the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation. The reservation boundaries included a segment of the Rosebud River but excluded the Tongue River Valley where some Northern Cheyennes had settled. Therefore Indians settlements on the Tongue River were left in question and “inaugurated a sixteen year campaign by white ranchers” to remove the Northern Cheyenne from the region. The Northern Cheyenne Reservation boundary was extended to the west side of the Tongue River by an Executive Order in March 1900.<sup>38</sup>

The settlement of Northern Cheyenne in the Tongue River Valley by the early 1880s and the creation of the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation coincided with the open range cattle boom in southeastern Montana. As early as 1880, a government livestock report on Montana had found the “best pasturage on the Tongue River”

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<sup>34</sup> For a general history of nineteenth century Montana, see Merrill G. Burlingame, *The Montana Frontier*, (Helena, MT: State Publishing Company, 1942); the authority on the Bozeman Trail is Susan Badger Doyle, *Journeys to the Land of Gold, 2 vols*, (Helena, MT, Reporter Printing & Supply, 1964).

<sup>35</sup> Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, Vol. 11: 1008-1011.

<sup>36</sup> Jeffrey V. Pearson, “National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Wolf Mountains Battlefield,” April 20, 2000, Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, MT.

<sup>37</sup> Orlen J. Svingen, *The Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation 1877-1900*, (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1993) 16-60. This is the definitive history of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation for this period.

<sup>38</sup> Svingen, *The Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation 1877-1900*, 45. In June 1886, the Department of the Interior attempted to rectify the situation by closing all entries to the Tongue River Valley between Stebbin Creek to the mouth of Hanging Woman Creek until the Indian homesteads were located. However, the Miles City land office apparently ignored this directive and continued to allow for land entries in this contested unsurveyed area. Again, see Svingen, 64-147.



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and reported that the Tongue River “all the way down from the Wyoming line, except where broken by the Wolf mountains, is taken up by ranches.” Livestock had just recently moved into this region that “as a rule is a rolling, bluffy country, descending to the north; the uplands clothed with bunch and buffalo grasses, the meadows strips with the bottom grasses.”<sup>39</sup>

The following year, General James Brisbin in his 1881 book entitled *The Beef Bonanza; or How to Get Rich on the Plains* declared that “Montana has undoubtedly the best grazing grounds in America . . . The Yellowstone, Big Horn, Tongue River and Powder River regions contain the maximum advantages to the cattle-grower.”<sup>40</sup>

These glowing reports combined with the 1882 arrival (and therefore access to eastern markets) of the Northern Pacific Railroad to Miles City stimulated the range cattle industry in southeastern Montana. An 1884 map of Custer County which encompassed much of southeastern Montana shows extensive stock ranges in the Tongue River country, both north and south of Hanging Woman Creek. Both large and small corporations moved their herds into eastern Montana where they yielded substantial profits.<sup>41</sup>

The open range boom in Montana was an era of unrestrained growth in the livestock industry augmented by a lucrative market and excessive foreign investments. All the land was public domain, “free land” and each ranch would lay claim to an “accustomed range” which other cattlemen would recognize and respect. By the fall of 1886, the ranges were overstocked and overgrazed and grass scarce due to a dry summer. The following winter, known as the “Hard Winter of 1886-1887,” devastated the range cattle industry.<sup>42</sup> The “Hard Winter” ended “large scale production and enormous profits were gone forever. In the future ranching was to be carried on in a more sane and conservative fashion.”<sup>43</sup> The “Hard Winter” forced cattlemen to recognize the importance of winter feed and water.

In the Tongue River region, the open range persisted at a lesser scale with fewer operating ranches. Two cattlemen on the Tongue River in the immediate area of the Bones Brothers Ranch survived the “Hard Winter” and emerged as the prominent stockgrowers in the region. George Brewster arrived from Massachusetts around 1882 and organized his Quarter Circle U Ranch south of present-day Birney. In 1886, Captain Joseph T. Brown from Mississippi drove 1000 head of longhorns from Texas and started his Three Circle Ranch north of Birney, known today as the Brown Cattle Company.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Clarence Gordon, “Report on Cattle, Sheep and Swine, supplementary to Livestock on Farms in 1880” in *Report of the Productions of Agriculture as returned at the Tenth Census*, Department of the Interior Census Office, (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1883), 70-71.

<sup>40</sup> James S. Brisbin, *The Beef Bonanza; or How to Get Rich on the Plains*, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippencott & Co., 1881), 90.

<sup>41</sup> See Robert S. Fletcher on the development of the eastern Montana cattle industry in “Organization of the Range Cattle Business in Eastern Montana” *Montana Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 265* (Bozeman, 1932); William B. Gaw, “Map of Southeastern Montana showing the Great Stock Ranges embraced in Custer County and the Extent of the Public Survey,” Custer County 1884.

<sup>42</sup> Robert S. Fletcher, “The End of the Open Range in Eastern Montana,” in *The Montana Past An Anthology*, ed., Michael P. Malone and Richard B. Roeder (Missoula, MT: University of Montana Press, 1969), 138-157.

<sup>43</sup> Everett Dale, *The Range Cattle Industry*, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960):114.

<sup>44</sup> Casaway, George M, “History of Livestock in Rosebud County, Montana,” unpublished manuscript, Box 62, Folder 10, Collection 2336, WPA Records, Merrill G. Burlingame Special Collections, Montana State University Libraries, Bozeman, MT.

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The 1884 Custer County map also identified the Zook and Alderson cattle ranch occupying land north of the confluence of Hanging Woman Creek and an unnamed creek (presumably the East Fork of Hanging Woman) and also on the west bank of the Tongue River opposite the mouth of Hanging Woman Creek. John Zook and Walter Alderson originally settled in 1882 on Lame Deer Creek near the location of the present-day town of Lame Deer. They moved over to the Tongue River in the spring of 1884, after some Northern Cheyennes burned their ranch. They dissolved their partnership after the "Hard Winter" and the Aldersons moved to Muddy Creek, southeast of Lame Deer.<sup>45</sup>

In the fall of 1886, the General Land Office (GLO) began the initial survey of lands within the Tongue River Valley. However, this survey consisted of only a fairly narrow corridor along the Tongue River. The survey for T6S R43E, the township where the Bones Brothers Ranch is located, commenced in October 1886. The surveyor found "the land along Hanging Woman Creek is fair agricultural land but the remainder of the township is hilly and broken adapted only for grazing purposes." He identified just two Indian cabins within the township and no permanent white settlers.<sup>46</sup>

The GLO did not survey the rest of the township until 1915. In 1915, the surveyor found that "the bottom land that lies along Hanging Woman Creek and East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek is of very good quality, capable of being farmed at a profit to the farmer, and will grow from two to three crops of alfalfa a season. The rest of the land is fair grazing land." The 1915 survey map identifies Z. T. Cox homestead in the southwest quarter of Section 20 and a vacant cabin of Z. T. Cox in the northwest quarter of Section 32, both on Hanging Woman Creek. Three other settlers are identified further up Hanging Woman Creek and several settlers on the East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek. The surveyor also commented that "Z. T. Cox is the postmaster and proprietor of the store and lives just across the street."<sup>47</sup>

Zachary T. Cox came to Montana from Tennessee to be the government farmer on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. Cox was a friend of Robert L. Upshaw, the first permanent Indian agent on the reservation and Cox possibly accompanied Upshaw when he arrived in early 1886. However, small-scale farming on the reservation was a futile effort and never successful which undoubtedly influenced Cox's decision to homestead on Hanging Woman Creek.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Nannie Alderson and Helen Huntington Smith, *A Bride Goes West*, reprint, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), 97-110; 163-64. It is possible that Z. T. Cox knew of his ranch location from Alderson. Walter Alderson was an uncle to the three Alderson boys.

<sup>46</sup> United States Surveyor General, General Land Office 1887 survey map and notes T6S R43E, microfiche on file, Records Room, Montana Bureau of Land Management State Office, Billings, MT.

<sup>47</sup> United States Surveyor General, General Land Office 1918 survey map and notes T6S R43E, microfiche on file, Records Room, Montana Bureau of Land Management State Office, Billings, MT. Z. T. Cox had a home in Birney but his son Percy was the postmaster.

<sup>48</sup> *Sheridan Enterprise*, July 3, 1927; Tom Weist, *A History of the Cheyenne People*, (Billings, MT: Montana Council for Indian Education, 1977): 107, 112, 121.

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Z. T. Cox married Mary Peachy Roberts in 1887. Mary Peachy Roberts, called Aunt Mamie by the Alderson family, first came to Montana in 1886 from Mississippi to visit her cousin, the wife of Captain Joseph T. Brown of the Circle Three Ranch north of Birney. Aunt Mamie endured her first winter and decided to stay in Montana. She married Z. T. Cox in 1887. She became the first teacher at the Indian school in Lame Deer when it opened in 1888.<sup>49</sup>

According to his final homestead proof, Z. T. Cox settled at the confluence of Hanging Woman Creek and the East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek in August 1889. He filed on 160 acres at the present-day location of the Bones Brothers Ranch in February 1892 under the Homestead Act of 1862. Z. T. Cox received his final patent in January 1896. He was 46 years old and lived at the homestead with his wife and child, his wife's mother, grandmother and sister. His improvements included numerous ranch buildings, fencing and thirty acres under cultivation for the sixth year.<sup>50</sup>

Aunt Mamie remembered that they bought the land from a Cheyenne Indian named Lost Leg for \$25 even though he had no real claim to the land. They built the cabin in one day. The contractor came to Mr. Cox and said that he could "never get these logs up without cussing. And, I can't cuss when Mrs. Cox here. She will have to go away. So, he [Mr. Cox] sent me down on the creek where the bridge crosses over to Hank's. I sat there on the creek bank and listened to the cussing. It made the atmosphere blue."<sup>51</sup>

The land settlement of this township reflects the clustering of families in this isolated region and the importance of land acquisitions for a successful operation. Z. T. Cox extended his original homestead to the north and south when he obtained 80 acres in 1896 and 160 acres in 1919 under the 1820 land law that allowed for cash purchases of public lands. His wife Mary Peachy (Aunt Mamie) filed a Desert Land entry for 78 acres in 1906 but due to complications, did not receive her patent until 1921. She also obtained 80 acres by a cash purchase in 1923.<sup>52</sup>

Three of the four sons of Z. T. and Mamie Cox also helped increase the family's land holdings in the Hanging Woman drainage through various public land laws. Percy, the oldest son, acquired approximately 640 acres in 1926 when he took advantage of the 1909 Enlarged Homestead Act plus the 1916 Stock Raising Homestead Act. In 1934, Edwin "Ned" Cox acquired 649 acres under the 1916 Stock Raising Homestead Act. In 1928,

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<sup>49</sup> *Sheridan Press*, November 23, 1960; Nannie Alderson remembers meeting her at the Brown ranch and called her "most cheerful" after spending the winter snowed in at the ranch; Weist, *History of Cheyenne People*, 127.

<sup>50</sup> Zachary T. Cox, Certificate Patent Case File, Miles City Land Office, Homestead Final Certificate No. 348, Records of Bureau of Land Management, Record Group 49, National Archives, Washington, D. C. (hereafter referred to as Cox Case File). The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed heads of households, widows, and single persons over 21 years of age to apply for 160 acres. Patent for the land would be issued after five years of residence and cultivation.

<sup>51</sup> Mary Peachy Cox. Interview by Floyd Alderson, 1958, Oral History 141, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, MT.

<sup>52</sup> Bureau of Land Management General Land Office records T6S R43E, CDI microfiche on file, Records Room, Montana Bureau of Land Management State Office, Billings, MT; see also [www.glorerecords.blm.gov](http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov). The 1820 law allowed individuals to purchase lands outright. Under the Desert Land Act of 1877, individuals could file on unsurveyed lands up to a full section (640 acres) at the cost of \$1.24 per acre and with irrigation, receive a land patent in three years.

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Richard Cox also utilized the 1909 Enlarged Homestead Act and the 1916 Stock Raising Homestead Act and acquired a total of approximately 628 acres. Family members continued to acquire lands into the 1940s.<sup>53</sup>

Extended family members also settled in the immediate area. Directly west of Z. T. Cox's homestead, Louis A. "Lew" Alderson homesteaded on 160 acres on Hanging Woman Creek and received his patent in February 1899. Louis Alderson married Emma Roberts, the sister of Mary Peachy Cox. Their children, the three Alderson boys, were born on Hanging Woman Creek: Floyd in 1895, Allen in 1898 and Irving in 1900. Floyd Alderson provides a brief glimpse of his early life on Hanging Woman Creek.

I was born on November 13, 1895 and raised on Hanging Women Creek (Montana) at my Dad's homestead. I rode to school on the east fork 200 yards from where I now live. There were only a very few kids, so most of my friends were Cheyenne kids. Later the school was made up of all boys except for one girl. Grandmother had eleven grandsons and one granddaughter. I used to sit beside the road and watch the Sioux coming down the creek on the way to visit the Cheyennes each Fall – ponies, wagons, travoies, dogs, etc. They would camp on the creek under the cottonwoods and come up to our well for fresh water. Dad would trade with them and my first horse was a little gray mare he bought for \$5 and a package of Arbuckles Coffee. She bore me a bay colt called "Fleet" which lived to be 30 and all the kids learned to ride on him.<sup>54</sup>

Louis Alderson sold his 160 acres to his brother-in-law Z. T. Cox in March 1902. He moved his family to Sheridan, Wyoming where he opened a restaurant called the Manhattan Café. Unfortunately, his wife died in January 1907 after a brief bout with pneumonia. After her death, Louis Alderson left his three sons with Z. T. and Mary Peachy Cox on Hanging Woman Creek and moved out of the area.<sup>55</sup>

By this time, Z. T. and Mamie Cox had four boys of their own. Once again, Floyd reminisces.

Mother died the spring of 1907 and my two brothers and I came back to my uncle's ranch where we were raised by our aunt and uncle. I worked for uncle for fifty cents a day helping haul wood. In 1908 I went on the fall roundup – all 4-year old steers in those days, long-horns or a cross of long-horns.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid. Public land laws utilized include the 1909 Enlarged Homestead Act that allowed 320 acres to individuals on lands that could not be irrigated; the 1912 Homestead Act that reduced the period of residency from five to three years and the 1916 Stock Raising Homestead Law that allowed individuals to enter 640 acres on lands primarily valuable for grazing and cultivation of crops

<sup>54</sup> Buck Rainey, "The Saga of Floyd Taliaferro Alderson," *Western Film Collector*, Vol. 11, No. 6, (January 1975): 3; Floyd Alderson left Montana around 1915 and became an actor in B-Westerns in Hollywood, known first as Wally Wales and later as Hal Taliaferro. Floyd came back to the Bones Brothers Ranch in the 1950s and lived here until his death in February 1980.

<sup>55</sup> Deed Records, Book 3, Page 53, Office of Clerk and Recorder, Rosebud County Courthouse, Forsyth, MT; *Sheridan Post*, January 22, 1907; Rainey, "The Saga of Floyd Taliaferro Alderson," 3-4. Lew Alderson eventually returned to the Bones Brothers Ranch and worked as a cook until his death in August 1932.

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We had no string of horses so each cowboy would let me ride a gentle horse of his each day – and when the wagon boss died I got his string of gentle horses. I had no bed so slept with the horse wrangler and when he went back with the train load of beef he gave me his bed. The next spring I wrangled horses and the horse wrangler went to punching cows.<sup>56</sup>

Allen Alderson's childhood memories include helping with "all the regular ranch chores" and going to school. He played "stick horses, cowboys and Indians and went swimming." He went to grade school at Birney and high school in Billings.<sup>57</sup>

All three Alderson boys, Floyd, Allen and Irving,

when they got old enough to go to work which is about 12 or 13, they got a job with Captain Brown or Joe Brown to wrangle horses that is to get the cavy in the morning and then in the afternoon circle they would have them in again. They would haul water and cut firewood, be cook's helper and a wrangler. They would set up the rope corral and help the cook break camp. And, it was a pretty serious job for a kid that age . . .<sup>58</sup>

It was their experiences as young wranglers that led to their unusual sobriquet and the creation of the Bones Brothers Ranch.

### **Bones Brothers Dude Ranch 1924 – 1964.**

The Bones Brothers Ranch operated as a dude ranch for over 40 years. In order to present the development of the ranch over time, the following discussion will be presented similar to a ranch promotional brochure. "If you want to learn to be a cowboy, Bones Brothers, at Birney, will teach you. They are top hands and cattle is their business."<sup>59</sup>

### **Inception:**

The inception of the Bones Brothers Dude Ranch probably begins with their nicknames, given to them when they were young wranglers. Floyd, the oldest, was the first to work and he was "a little skinny" so the cowboys called him "Bones." Later, Allen Alderson started to work and "was the huskier a bigger framed boy" and they called him "Big Bones." When Irving Alderson came along, he "was the littlest one" and they called him "Little Bones."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Rainey, "The Saga of Floyd Taliaferro Alderson," 4.

<sup>57</sup> *Fanning the Embers*, "Allen R. Alderson" (Billings, MT: Gazette Printing, 1971), 2.

<sup>58</sup> Alderson Interview.

<sup>59</sup> Struthers Burt, *The Dairy of A Dude-Wrangler*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), 342.

<sup>60</sup> Alderson Interview. For the remainder of this nomination, the names Big Bones and Little Bones will be used since that is what they were commonly called.

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Big Bones and Little Bones worked as wranglers until the winter of 1919 changed the direction of their lives. Big Bones recalled that he was working for the Brown Cattle Company on the Three Circle Ranch. "The day before Thanksgiving was 50 degrees below zero, and it was the only time I ever saw cattle actually freeze to death." By spring "thousands of cattle were dead" and "there weren't many cows left to punch!"<sup>61</sup> The brothers decided that they were "going to have to make different powders. We don't ever want to go out on that roundup again. We're going to do something else."<sup>62</sup>

The following spring, Big Bones and Little Bones left the Tongue River country for the Eaton Ranch at Wolf, Wyoming. The Eaton Ranch, located at the foothills of the Big Horn Mountains, is considered one of the original and most successful dude ranches in the West. The Bones Brothers worked at the Eaton Ranch for "three of the best years of my life" where both Alderson boys found they "loved working with people as well as horses and cows."<sup>63</sup> Their positive experience at the Eaton Ranch combined with the successful rapid growth of dude ranch business in the Sheridan region in the early 1920s influenced the Bone Brothers to return to the Tongue River and start their own dude ranch.

The Alderson family generally attributes the name of the ranch to Mary Roberts Rinehart, a renowned mystery author who met the Bones Brothers at the Eaton Ranch. Ms. Rinehart reportedly told the brothers that they already had their trademark "your name, and beautiful country to ride in" so they might as well start their own dude business.<sup>64</sup>

Owners:

When Big Bones and Little Bones returned to the ranch on Hanging Woman Creek ready to start a dude ranch, they were not the only ones who had to make the decision. Z. T. Cox still owned the ranch although in the early 1920s he lived in a new house in Birney and owned the mercantile store. While the Bones Brothers worked at the Eaton Ranch, the three Cox brothers, Percy, Ned and Richard remained at the ranch on Hanging Woman. They had experienced the drought and depression from 1919 into the early 1920s and undoubtedly the prospect of a supplemental income must have seemed attractive to the Cox family. Preparations began quickly to transform the Cox Ranch into a dude ranch.

It is unknown when the Bones Brothers Ranch took in their first paying guests but for the purpose of nomination, 1924 has been chosen since they reportedly returned to the ranch in 1923. By 1924, presumably the main lodge and a few cabins would have been ready to accommodate guests. The barn was constructed in the summer of 1924. In the fall of 1925, Mary Hart Rinehart wrote of a roundup with the Bones Brothers so they were definitely operating by then.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>61</sup> *Sheridan Press*, July 13, 1966.

<sup>62</sup> Irving Alderson Jr., Presentation at Sheridan Historical Society, December 29, 1994, Sheridan, WY.

<sup>63</sup> *Sheridan Press*, July 13, 1966. Patty Eaton was their cousin, being their father's brother's daughter.

<sup>64</sup> Alderson Interview; Dan Abernathy, "Rider on a Wide Circle," *American Cowboy*, (July-August 1997), 56-59.

<sup>65</sup> *Sheridan Press*, July 13, 1966; Alderson Interview; Mary Roberts Rinehart, "Riding Circle on Hanging Woman Creek," *Saturday Evening Post*, October 17, 1925, 6-7, 66-79. Unfortunately, it is unclear whether the main lodge incorporated the original ranch house or was newly constructed for the dude ranch operation.

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In September 1927, Allen and Irving Alderson with Percy and Edwin "Ned" Cox formed a corporation "to engage in the business of operating a livestock ranch and a ranch-resort for the entertainment of paying guests..."<sup>66</sup> All four men served on the board of directors with J. J. Bentley of Sheridan, WY who provided financial assistance. Allen Alderson served as president, Percy Cox as vice-president, Irving Alderson as secretary and Edwin Cox as treasurer.<sup>67</sup>

In time, ownership of the ranch passed from Cox family members to the Bones Brother Ranch Corporation and eventually to the Alderson family. After the formation of the corporation and the death of her husband, Mary Peachy Cox transferred her ownership to the Bones Brother Ranch. Percy Cox sold out in 1931 and bought a ranch by Choteau, MT. Edwin "Ned" Cox lasted until around 1938 when he sold his interest to Big and Little Bones and bought his own place up Hanging Woman Creek. Big Bones and Little Bones continued their partnership until the early 1960s when Big Bones retired from the ranch and moved to Big Horn, Wyoming. After this, Irving Jr. and his brother Allen along with Little Bones and his wife, Frances operated the ranch. They closed the dude ranch business in 1964 but continued the Bones Brothers Ranch as a working cattle ranch. The ranch today is owned by Irving Alderson and his three daughters.<sup>68</sup>

Location:

The Bones Brothers Ranch is at an elevation of 3500 feet and located at the confluence of Hanging Woman Creek and the East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek, within the Tongue River watershed in southeastern Montana. The ranch today owns thousands of acres of private lands and has access to the Custer National Forest east of the ranch. By 1928, the ranch advertised that it encompassed approximately 4000 acres, mostly in the same township surrounding the ranch complex. The land patented by the various members of the Cox and Alderson families formed the nucleus of the Bones Brothers Ranch. The Bones Brothers Ranch proceeded to obtain land along the forks of Hanging Woman Creek. According to Irv Alderson, "In the 30s and 40s when money was in short supply, they had income from the dude business" and therefore able to purchase lands.<sup>69</sup> By 1940, the ranch held 4300 acres in T6S R43E. This included 250 acres of natural hay meadow, 30 acres of crop land with the remaining acres divided between seasonal pastures. By 1946, they owned a total of 6300 acres obtained through land purchases and by the end of 1948 controlled 9382 acres of deeded lands. In the 1950s and 1960s, they rounded this acreage to 10,000 acres for advertising purposes.<sup>70</sup> Today the ranch owns approximately 8500 acres that includes all private land along the East Fork and several sections south along Hanging Woman Creek.

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<sup>66</sup> Articles of Incorporation, "Bones Brothers Ranch, Inc." September 19, 1927, No. 74647, Miscellaneous Records, Rosebud County Courthouse, Forsyth, MT. They formed this corporation only a few months after the death of Z. T. Cox.

<sup>67</sup> "Annual Statement of Bones Brothers Ranch, Inc." February 11, 1928, Miscellaneous Records, No. 76163, Rosebud County Courthouse, Forsyth, MT. Mr. Bentley was Allen "Big Bones" Alderson's father-in-law.

<sup>68</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch newsletter, June 14, 1931; Cox Family genealogy at [www://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com](http://www://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com); Alderson Interview.

<sup>69</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch 1928 brochure; Bureau of Land Management GLO records, T6S R43E, microfiche on file, Records Room, Montana Bureau of Land Management State Office, Billings, MT; Alderson Interview.

<sup>70</sup> Grazing Permits, "Bones Brothers Ranch," Closed File, Ashland Ranger District, Custer National Forest, Ashland, MT; Bones Brothers Ranch Brochures, circa 1950, 1961.

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The Bones Brothers Ranch as a working cattle ranch historically depended on their proximity to the Custer National Forest whose boundaries are situated east of the ranch complex. Their grazing permit on the national forest provided pasture necessary for their cattle and horses. Their grazing allotment gave them access to thousands of acres of scenic countryside for the dudes to ride in. In 1929, the Custer National Forest permitted the Bones Brothers to leave their allotment “as common range upon which the Forest Service would offer no objection to roundups attended by Dudes.”<sup>71</sup> The Bones Brothers and the Forest Service honored this agreement into the 1950s. This agreement was important as it allowed the Bones Brothers to offer the dudes a round-up experience in an open range setting.

Horses and Cattle

“Cattle are our business and horses are our weakness. We believe that our outfit and our guests ride some of the best horses in all the West.”<sup>72</sup> The Bones Brothers were proud of their cavy and very particular on their tack and gear. They provided good, gentle horses and miles of open riding country. The Bones Brothers Ranch was a working cattle ranch, one that depended primarily on raising livestock, cattle and horses. Its appeal as a dude ranch resulted from the many ranch activities in which the dude participated. Wrangling horses or punching cattle was part of the charm of the ranch.

The Bones Brothers Ranch mixed its dude business and commercial endeavors. For example, Little Bones “would go all around the country and buy horses. If they were sixteen hands and had the right confirmation, he sold them to the remount. If they were good thoroughbred horses, they had a clientele of Eastern people that would buy hunter jumpers. A lot of horses that didn’t fit into those categories were dude horses.” They also had studs for remounts, range horses and draft horses, kept twenty permanent brood mares and raised their own draft horses for hay and wagons. The ranch also kept a string of bucking horses, used for the ranch rodeo every Sunday.<sup>73</sup>

During the early 1940s, the ranch had at one time 250 horses they supplied to the Army remount station. Generally they held approximately 150 horses in any one year. The cattle operation fluctuated with the markets and availability. During the 1930s they averaged between 75 and 150 head of cattle. During the 1940s and 1950s, they maintained a herd between 300 and 350 with occasional reductions.<sup>74</sup>

Round-ups

“This is one of the few sections of the country where West remains West, where ranges are open, and where ROUND-UPS are as exciting and colorful as they were in those earlier days.”<sup>75</sup>

Round-ups became the signature event for the Bones Brother Ranch. Every year the ranch offered the spring or

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<sup>71</sup> Memorandum, Alva A. Simpson, November 4, 1929, “Bones Brothers Ranch” Closed File, Ashland Ranger District, Custer National Forest, Ashland, MT.

<sup>72</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch 1932 brochure.

<sup>73</sup> Alderson Interview.

<sup>74</sup> Grazing Permits, “Bones Brothers Ranch,” Closed File, Ashland Ranger District, Custer National Forest, Ashland, MT.

<sup>75</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch brochure, circa 1948.



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fall round-up for the dude to experience. Irv Alderson remembers “we would pull a wagon up there, a bed wagon and a cook, a chuck wagon and camp up there and round-up this area . . . We camped up there for a week or ten days and branded this whole area. Dudes got to go along which was really exciting for them.” The round-ups were conducted twice a year, in the spring around June 15th and in the fall around October 15. The June round-up branded calves and in the fall, cattle were rounded up for market or moved to their winter pasture.<sup>76</sup>

In 1925, Mary Robert Rinehart, with two female companions, accompanied the Bones Brothers Ranch cowboys, lead by Little Bones, on their fall round-up and enjoyed every minute of it. Her enthusiastic article entitled “Riding Circle on Hanging Woman Creek” in the *Saturday Evening Post* in October 1925 declared the cowboy life is not passing but still alive. Presumably, the article must have brought some welcome attention to the newly created Bones Brothers Ranch.<sup>77</sup> The round-up satisfied many easterners desire to truly experience the West. The Bones Brothers Ranch greatest asset was the perpetuation of the traditions of early cattle ranching.

Entertainment

“Horseback riding, needless to say, is the foremost activity – as horses have always been the most important factor in ranch life.”<sup>78</sup> Irv Alderson Jr. remembers that as a kid his first jobs were to wrangle and saddle horses, and take dude on rides. They would bring the horses into the corrals every morning and then rope the horses for the dudes. Every evening they would take the horses back to pasture. Each dude was given a horse and saddle on their arrival and this was their horse for the length of their stay at the ranch. The Bones Brothers prided themselves on their horses.<sup>79</sup>

The ranch offered numerous different rides during the day or the dude could help wrangle horses or gather cows. One of the favorite trips was an evening ride to Poker Jim Butte, where they would have a cookout and then return to the ranch. There was also the “mosquito fleet” where children would ride without their parents.<sup>80</sup> Activities for the dudes varied and none were regimented. Dudes could ride, fish, or go swimming in the Tongue River. “People had a good time here. It wasn’t sophisticated form of entertainment.”<sup>81</sup> Sometimes the ranch would hire a band and have a dance in the recreation hall. Dudes played deck tennis and badminton and the ranch had trap shooting for a brief time. In the fall, they would arrange hunting trips but this doesn’t appear to have been a major emphasis.<sup>82</sup>

Every Sunday morning in their own arena, they would have a rodeo for the dudes and the cowboys would ride bucking horses. For a year or so in the 1930s, the arena served as a polo practice field. Often on Sunday

<sup>76</sup> Alderson Interview.

<sup>77</sup> Rinehart, “Riding Circle on Hanging Woman Creek.” This same article is also in her book, *Nomad’s Land* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1926).

<sup>78</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch 1931 brochure.

<sup>79</sup> Alderson Interview.

<sup>80</sup> Alderson Interview

<sup>81</sup> Alderson Interview.

<sup>82</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch brochures provide information on the type of activities offered at the ranch.

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afternoons, the ranch hands would have baseball games, hardball and later softball. Baseball was a favorite form of recreation where neighboring ranches would come and play the Bones Brothers team. Occasionally the Indians working at the ranch after a baseball game would have an Indian dance and sing.<sup>83</sup>

The ranch also took the dudes to special events in the region. Every year they would travel to the Crow Fair at Crow Agency on the Little Bighorn River. They would also attend the Ashland Rodeo and the Sheridan Rodeo. On these trips, they would set up a "regular round-up camp where their dudes would eat and sleep."<sup>84</sup>

The ranch also provided accommodations in more isolated locations for the dudes. At the head of Odell Creek northeast of the ranch complex in the Custer National Forest was the Horse Camp, a homestead they acquired in the late 1920s. The Horse Camp could accommodate twelve dudes and was generally used by family groups. The Horse Camp also for a short time held a girls summer camp. The ranch also briefly leased a place in the Big Horn Mountains but this was not successful due to the distance from the main ranch.<sup>85</sup>

General Information<sup>86</sup>

It is unknown how many guests or dudes the ranch accepted in their early years. By the mid-1930s, they had room for 40 guests. This number gradually decreased over the years and in 1958 they only accepted 20 guests. They also requested an "exchange of recommendations" since "you must do everything you can to preserve the congeniality of such a small crowd." By 1958 the ranch only accepted those who had been at the ranch or friends recommended by them. The ranch never accepted transient traffic.

Originally the ranch stayed open to guests all year long. During the depression years in the 1930s, they remained open for eight months out of the year from April to November. Eventually the ranch accepted guests for six months only from May to October.

A week at the ranch was all inclusive, providing room and board, a horse and a saddle and corral service for the week. Extra expenses included the trip to the ranch on arrival (return was free) and laundry. In 1928, weekly rates began at \$50 for July and August, \$40 for June and September and \$30 for the rest of the year. By the end of 1950, the rates had reached \$105 per week.

<sup>83</sup> Alderson Interview; Bones Brothers Ranch brochures.

<sup>84</sup> *Sheridan Press*, July 13, 1966.

<sup>85</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch brochures; Alderson Interview.

<sup>86</sup> The following information is compiled from available Bones Brothers Ranch brochures, railroad travel brochures and *The Dude Rancher*, the magazine of the Dude Ranch Association, Dude Ranch Association Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY.

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Philosophy

According to Big Bones, the ranch was

sort of an automatic people separator. All we had to offer were lots of good horses and great riding country. No swimming pools, mountains, towns, highways or railroads.

Those that came were likely to be good sports and genuine people. They wanted ranch life. The dudes helped with the cattle, haying and went on round-ups. We were open year-around. Most came in summer, but there were usually people there during the winter, and some lived there year-around.<sup>87</sup>

From the early days, the ranch brochures described the ranch as “just a typical western outfit, comfortable and hospitable, without the slightest pretense. . . . It is just the kind of place for a person who likes a healthy, unpretentious outdoor life.”<sup>88</sup> Both Big Bones and Little Bones had the “winning personalities” so necessary for a successful dude business. On top of that they were handsome, polite and blessed with gracious manners and winning smiles.”<sup>89</sup>

Will James, the famed cowboy author, said it best.

Well, it’s a good thing that folks who come as guests to a dude ranch have all the say as to where they want to stay. There’s many mighty fine dude ranches in many parts of the West, and most of ‘em are just exactly that, dude ranches. The comforts are all there, and good western feeling and scenery but the good old cow outfit’s way of living and doing things is pretty well missing. Few of ‘em ever keep any more stock than what’s needed to keep the guests’ mounted

. . . but for anybody who wants to be guests on a regular and good little cow outfit, where they’ll see the rounding-up of many cattle, the branding, regular range riding, horse breaking and all that goes with sure enough cowboy’s work I know of a place that’s located in Southern Montana that would sure fit it. The Bones Brothers’ Ranch is it.

The owners are born Montana cowboys, as you’ll see, rough and reckless in roping and riding, but tame in talking, and with them and the other good cowboys that’s on the job, the many horses, plum gentle or plum wild, herds of cattle, wide

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<sup>87</sup> *Sheridan Press*, July 13, 1966.

<sup>88</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch 1928 Brochure. A visit to the ranch today attests that western hospitality survives at the Bones Brothers Ranch.

<sup>89</sup> Bucky King, *The Dude Connection*, (Laramie, WY: Jelm Mountain Press, 1983), 84.

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open country, fishing, hunting, bronco-busting, always something doing, good grub and fine, comfortable cabins to rest, talk, or gather in, --Well, you just drop in at the Bones Brothers' Ranch.<sup>90</sup>

Dude Ranching

Dude ranching "was a primary reason for the growth of the tourist industry in the West, along with railroads and national parks."<sup>91</sup> In the late nineteenth century, western ranches often accommodated early travelers from the eastern United States or Europe. The original dude ranch is generally attributed to Howard Eaton and his brothers, who came from Pittsburgh to a cattle ranch at Medora, North Dakota. Visitors from the East encouraged them to accept payment for the services they were providing to guests and beginning in 1882, the ranch received paying guests. In 1904, the Eaton's moved their ranch to the foothills of the Big Horn Mountains west of Sheridan, Wyoming and established the first true dude ranch in the West.<sup>92</sup> The Bones Brothers experience at the Eaton Ranch from 1919 to 1922 influenced their decision to establish a dude ranch on Hanging Woman Creek.

The dude ranch industry evolved gradually during the first two decades of the twentieth century from an individual, informal, undeveloped tourist activity into a significant industry important to local economy. The romanticism of the West and wilderness combined with the desire to enjoy the outdoors and live close to nature, increased the demand for dude ranches. Originally dudes were defined as guests to whom the owner furnished food, lodging and a saddle horse. By the 1920s, there were two types of dude ranches: the working cattle ranch like the Bones Brothers Ranch and the mountain ranch designed primarily for guests, in a remote scenic location where horses were the only livestock. The success of a working dude ranch depended on an informal atmosphere that stressed western hospitality and provided a western experience for the whole family that included horses, ranch work and "hearty" food.<sup>93</sup>

In the 1920s, dude ranches experienced a "golden age of dude ranching." After World War I, many easterners looked for a western experience for their vacation and many working ranches opened their doors to dudes to compensate for the early 1920s economic depression. In September 1926, dude ranchers from the Yellowstone region in Wyoming and Montana came to Bozeman, Montana and created the Dude Ranchers' Association (DRA) where 26 dude ranches became charter members. This meeting, sponsored by the Northern Pacific Railroad, resulted in a mutually beneficial partnership with the railroad, where free advertising of dude ranches by the railroads hopefully led to increased passenger traffic. The establishment of the DRA gave legitimacy to the industry and supported cooperation between the ranches on various subjects, like promotional activities. By 1927, there were 47 DRA members and by 1929, 91 dude ranches held a membership in the association. Allen

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<sup>90</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch brochure, circa 1931.

<sup>91</sup> Lawrence R. Borne, "Dude Ranching in the Rockies," *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, 38 (July 1988): 15; for a history of dude ranching in the Rocky Mountain West, see Lawrence R. Borne, *Dude Ranching A Complete History* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983). One of the first studies on the dude ranching industry was Charles G. Roundy, "The Origins and Early Development of Dude Ranching in Wyoming," *Annals of Wyoming*, 45 (Spring 1973): 5-25.

<sup>92</sup> Borne, *Dude Ranching*, 19-22, 30-31, 45-46; Roundy, "Origins and Early Development of Dude Ranching," 8-17.

<sup>93</sup> Borne, *Dude Ranching*, 38-39, 91-108, Roundy, "Origins and Early Development of Dude Ranching," 13-15.

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“Big Bones” Alderson served as a director of the DRA for almost 30 years.<sup>94</sup>

During the economic depression of the 1930s, most dude ranches struggled but survived and in 1938 Montana had 38 members of the DRA. Tourism in the West changed after World War II. Affected by increased mobility available due to better roads and automobiles, the dynamics of travel changed and dude ranches lost in the transition. By the 1960s, dude ranches “had been relegated to a position of economic insignificance.”<sup>95</sup> Today, dude ranches are experiencing a resurgence in popularity.

In Montana and Wyoming, early dude ranches concentrated in the Greater Yellowstone National Park region. Dick Randall established the first dude ranch at the OTO Ranch north of Gardiner, Montana near the north entrance of Yellowstone National Park. Originally a hunting guide, Randall began to take paying guests in 1905. The second dude ranch in Montana, the Pete Karst Ranch, opened around 1907 in the Gallatin Canyon northwest of the Park. Numerous ranches opened west of Cody, Wyoming along the Shoshone River to the park entrance.

The years that Big Bones and Little Bones worked at the Eaton Ranch marked the beginning of the golden age of dude ranching. By 1920, the Sheridan-Big Horn area numbered twenty dude ranches. Encouraged by the success of others, the Bones Brothers returned to the Tongue River to start their dude ranch on Hanging Woman Creek.

After the Bone Brothers started their dude ranch in the early 1920s, other ranches along the Tongue River and in the vicinity of Birney began accepting guests. The majority of dude ranches on the Tongue River were historic cattle ranches that after several years of drought and depression saw the benefits of augmenting their income by accepting dudes. Although the Quarter Circle U Ranch south of Birney briefly advertised the ranch for guests in the fall and winter of 1915, they seriously opened to dudes around 1928 and continued until around 1943, helping the ranch through the depression. The Three Circle Ranch north of Birney started a dude ranch operation in 1926 and continued to around 1945. Both of these ranches were large stock ranches that encompassed thousands of acres with both cattle and horses.<sup>96</sup>

In 1943, six dude ranches operated in the area around Birney. They included the Bone Brothers Ranch, the Quarter Circle U Ranch, the R Bar Ranch of G. C. Woodward (directly west of the Bones Brothers), the Three Circle Ranch of Joseph Brown, the 4D Ranch of Mrs. A. Brown and the FL Ranch by A. Brown Jr. Three of these ranches were part of the Brown Cattle Company. By 1957, the Bones Brothers Ranch remained the only dude ranch in the area.<sup>97</sup>

The clustering of all these dude ranches around the town of Birney unquestionably made an impact upon the

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<sup>94</sup> Borne, *Dude Ranching*, 49-60. 75-86; *The Dude Rancher*, 1932-1965.

<sup>95</sup> Roundy, “Origins and Development of Dude Ranching,” 22.

<sup>96</sup> *The Teepee Book*, August and September 1915; *The Dude Rancher*, various years.

<sup>97</sup> *Billings Gazette*, May 24, 1943; Montana Highway Commission, “Montana Dude and Guest Ranches, 1957, vertical file, Montana Room, Parmly Billings Library, Billings, MT.

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local economy, bringing outside money to an otherwise isolated community. The local saloon and dance hall brought dudes from all the ranches into town on a Saturday night. The ranches also brought business to the outlying towns, especially Sheridan, Wyoming, being the most accessible to the ranches.

The Bones Brothers Ranch lasted as a dude ranch for over 40 years, an amazing feat for Big Bones and Little Bones and their families to accomplish in the isolated region of the Tongue River Valley.

**The Built Environment (Criterion C)**

When Z. T. Cox made his final proof in 1896 for his homestead, he listed the following improvements to his land: Log house with five rooms that measured 50x20 with a 30 x20 addition, two stables, a shed, carriage house, chicken house, two cellars and a well.<sup>98</sup> L. A. Huffman, who photodocumented eastern Montana in the late nineteenth century, photographed the Z. T. Cox Ranch in 1899. The photograph shows two one-story low pitched gabled roof horizontal log buildings (a house and a barn) and several log outbuildings. Although these early buildings no longer stand, the vernacular log style perpetuates in the architecture of the Bones Brothers Ranch.<sup>99</sup>

When Big Bones and Little Bones returned to the Cox Ranch in 1923 (soon to be renamed the Bones Brothers Ranch), they undoubtedly began a building expansion to make the ranch suitable for dudes. Unfortunately it is not known what buildings stood at the ranch at that time. The main ranch house existed by the fall of 1925, when Ms. Rinehart arrived after a long ride from the Eaton ranch to “the ranch house, and a hot and cold shower, and supper.”<sup>100</sup>

Most of the buildings on the ranch are built of ponderosa pine. The ranch had its own sawmill up on Timber Creek, east of the ranch complex where “they stayed up there and cut the logs and hauled them down here and peeled them down here. All these logs were peeled . . . They cut them in the winter and skidded the logs out with teams in the snow.” The stone for the buildings were also quarried locally but the location is no longer known.<sup>101</sup>

Big Bones and Little Bones were obviously not carpenters since several contracts have survived between the Bones Brothers Ranch and local contractors to construct the various dude ranch buildings. However, the Bones Brothers, after working at the Eaton Ranch, undoubtedly envisioned the type of buildings required and guided what was eventually built.

Construction aimed directly at the development of a dude ranch began as early as the winter of 1923. Of the early buildings, only the barn construction can be documented. The ranch made inquiries to a local contractor about construction of a stone barn in the winter of 1923. However, it was not until May 1924 that they finally

<sup>98</sup> Cox Case File.

<sup>99</sup> L. A. Huffman photograph “Cox Cattle Ranch. Hanging Woman Creek Near Tongue River 1899” in Mark H. Brown and W. R. Felton, *Before Barbed Wire L. A. Huffman, Photographer on Horseback*, (New York: Bramhall, 1964), 59.

<sup>100</sup> Rinehart, “Riding the Circle on Hanging Woman Creek,” 66.

<sup>101</sup> Alderson Interview.

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contracted with Jack Baurus to quarry the stone for a 33 x 35 x 8 feet barn with 20 inch thick walls. It is presumed that the entire barn and hay loft were completed that spring.<sup>102</sup>

The first Bones Brothers Ranch brochure printed in 1928 reveals the improvements made for the dude ranch operation.

. . . ranch buildings are of log, substantial and commodious. The main ranch house includes a large living room, dining room, writing room, kitchen and large porches, with a limited number of sleeping rooms available for those who do not prefer the greater privacy of the cabins. The cabins are neatly and cheerfully furnished. The bath house, equipped with bath tubs and showers, is close at hand, with hot and cold running water at all hours. The ranch store carries a stock of toilet articles, tobacco, and every day necessities and is located in a separate log building which also houses the ranch office and a large amusement hall used for dancing and entertainment. The saddle room, barn and corrals are located nearby and are usually the center of attraction.<sup>103</sup>

A photograph of the main house in the brochure shows a gabled roofed log building with projecting gables and dormers. The brochure also includes a photograph of two small dude cabins with gable roofs. These cabins exhibit some of the stylistic elements that characterize the dude buildings throughout the ranch. These details include wide white board casings around doors and windows. Other features are low gable roofs formed by ridgepole and purlins, round horizontal logs, and metal roof insulated with red scoria.

In 1927, the Bones Brothers Ranch signed a six-week contract with local contractor Fawn Walthall to construct the Recreation Hall. This contract contains detailed specifications for the building, from type of notching to height of walls. The hall was to be connected to the pre-existing log store. Drawings of the floor plan, west wall elevation and a sketch of the completed building accompanied the contract. The Bones Brothers Ranch was responsible for providing the materials.<sup>104</sup>

The entire building exhibits the same wide white board trim as the dude cabins. The intersecting roofs are low pitched gables with ridgepole and purlins. The corners have square notching with no projecting ends, presenting a neat, precise squared corner. These details appear on numerous other buildings throughout the ranch complex. This simple vernacular rustic style reflects the simple, unpretentious nature of the entire ranch.

A third contract available is between the Bones Brothers and another local contractor Willis Karns for a bath house, constructed in 1929. A hand-drawn sketch shows the specified dimensions, openings and interior

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<sup>102</sup> Agreement between Bones Brothers Ranch and Jack Baurus, May 1, 1924, in possession of Bones Brothers Ranch. As previously stated, the name of the contractor was difficult to read and could be Burns. Attempts made to obtain information on the local contractors have been unsuccessful to date.

<sup>103</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch 1928 brochure.

<sup>104</sup> Contract between Bones Brothers Ranch and Fawn Walthall, May 9, 1927, in possession of Bones Brothers Ranch.

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partitions. This building also illustrates the same log construction and stylistic elements found throughout the ranch.<sup>105</sup>

A circa 1929 overview photograph of the ranch taken by a Northern Pacific photographer shows the extensive development for the dude ranch operation. There are five cabins visible, the main house, a bath house and a second log building. Several agricultural buildings stand in the foreground and Hank's cabin and the barn are in the background.<sup>106</sup>

Another circa 1929 overview by the same photographer looks northeast at the Recreation Hall, an ice house (no longer standing) and the barn and tack room across the East Fork of Hanging Woman Creek. This photograph also shows extensive pole corral and fence system and a bucking corral in the open arena area in front of the Recreation Hall.<sup>107</sup>

A pre-1933 pen and ink drawing of the ranch by an artistic guest complements these overview photographs by providing a whimsical view of the layout of the ranch. The sketch shows the cluster of dude cabins, the main house and outbuildings, numerous roads and walks, a swimming hole and a large garden behind the main house. It identifies most of the agricultural buildings and illustrates the corral system. The sketch presents a personalized picture of the dude ranch filled with daily activities.<sup>108</sup>

Most of the existing historic ranch buildings today originate from the building expansion that occurred between 1923 and 1930. All of the buildings from that period retain the simple log cabin vernacular architecture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Most buildings exhibit western construction techniques with horizontal logs joined with square notching with no projecting ends. The majority of roofs are all low pitched gables resting on ridgepole and purlins spanning the length of the building. Even the shed roof tack room retains most of these characteristics. The stone walls of the lower level of the buildings along the terrace edge above Hanging Woman Creek are all individually distinctive but shaped from the same local sandstone. Log buildings generally display either half log casings or wide white board casing.

After 1930, the only log or log and stone buildings constructed included Little Bones house in 1933 or private cabins like the Carvalho Cabin in 1931 and the Sheedy Cabin in 1938. Certain individuals were allowed to construct private cabins under special agreements with the Bones Brothers. The owners could use the cabins but the ranch could also use them for dudes when the cabin was vacant. Eventually the cabin would be sold to the ranch at cost.

These log buildings were all heavily influenced by the rustic architectural style that became very popular in the 1930s. The Carvalho cabin and possibly Little Bones house especially appears professionally designed but

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<sup>105</sup> Agreement between Bones Brothers Ranch and Willis Karns, June 4, 1929, in possession of Bones Brothers Ranch.

<sup>106</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch 1930 brochure.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> This sketch by an unknown artist is in the possession of the Bones Brothers Ranch.



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presumably built by local contractors. Attention to details, both interior and exterior, appears on these buildings. Interior furnishings also reflect the rustic style. However, again, the buildings maintain a simple appearance and character and are not overly extravagant.

In 1931, the obvious success of the dude business allowed for improvements to the buildings. The interior of the main house was changed, enlarging the living room and adding an “enormous fireplace.” The cabins received new roofs, new daubing, painting, some porches and all new furnishings. Other changes included a new hitching post in front of store, new ditches for irrigation, new corral gates, new road entrance and new pole fence surrounding the ranch.<sup>109</sup>

By the 1940s, the Bones Brothers ranch could offer cabins in “various sizes and capacity.” Some had electricity, generated by a light plant. The bath houses were “modern and complete.” The May 1946 ranch newsletter indicated they were “putting some more convenient touches” on the old cabins like wiring for electricity and installing plumbing.<sup>110</sup> Electricity reached the ranch by the early 1950s.

When Irving Alderson Jr. and his brother Allen switched to a cow/calf operation, they either sold, removed or tore down many of the dude buildings, including the cow barn “because we got tired of milking cows;” and the ice house since “we had electric ice boxes.” Four out of six dude cabins have also been removed. One cabin that originally stood north of Hank’s cabin now stands on the top of the bluff over the East Fork. They sold two of the private cabins which were moved elsewhere. A large root cellar was destroyed and a chicken house torn down.<sup>111</sup>

The Bones Brothers Ranch architecture represents a simple vernacular rustic style rather than a more elaborate rustic architecture. The use of local materials like ponderosa pine logs and quarried sandstone closely identifies these buildings with their source. The architecture at the Bones Brothers Ranch naturally blends into the landscape and harmonizes perfectly with the natural setting. The visual qualities of these buildings have been preserved by the Alderson family and reflect a sense of time and place, allowing the viewer to envision the ranch as it existed historically.

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<sup>109</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch newsletter, June 15, 1931.

<sup>110</sup> Bones Brothers Ranch newsletter, May 1, 1946.

<sup>111</sup> Alderson Interview.

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**Bones Brothers Ranch**

Name of Property

**Rosebud County, MT**

County and State

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

See continuation sheet

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property:** approximately 4000 acres

**UTM References:** See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Bones Brothers Ranch boundaries encompass lands in T6S R43E: full sections include Section 20, 21, 28, 29, and partial sections in Section 17, 31, 32, 33. The topography of the lands within these boundaries is varied, ranging from bottom lands along Hanging Woman to rolling grasslands to timbered benches to steep hills and ridges. Most of the area has been left undeveloped by industry or agriculture.

**Boundary Justification**

The Bones Brothers Ranch boundaries encompass approximately 4000 acres historically part of the ranch holdings by 1934 when the ranch was fully operational as a dude ranch. Both the Cox and Alderson families patented most of these lands by public land laws while less than 640 acres was obtained by direct purchases. The outlying hay fields and pastures incorporated within the Bones Brothers Ranch boundaries were the critical element to the success of the ranch as a working ranch and a dude ranch operation. These lands allowed for winter pasture and supplemental feed necessary to maintain the livestock over the winter months and therefore the ultimate survival of the ranch.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name: Joan L. Brownell

date: August 2003

organization:

telephone: (406) 254-2601

street/ number: 3203 Country Club Circle

city or town: Billings state: MT

zip code: 59102

**Property Owner**

name/title: Jeannie and Mary Alderson, Natalie Alderson Moog and Irving Alderson, Jr.

street & number:

telephone:

city or town: Birney state: MT

zip code: 59102

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<b>UTM References:</b>	<b>Zone 13</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>
	A	382813	5019619
	B	384024	5019600
	C	383988	5017975
	D	385616	5017959
	E	385529	5013507
	F	384313	5013541
	G	384308	5013158
	H	383903	5013163
	I	383922	5013945
	J	383540	5013974
	K	383544	5014769
	L	382712	5014764
	M	382687	5013136
	N	382646	5013155
	O	380688	5013990
	P	382302	5013970
	Q	382426	5017987
	R	383228	5017982
	S	383227	5018779
	T	382809	5018796



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Photographs

Bones Brothers Ranch  
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Photographs

Photographer: Joan L. Brownell

Date: June 2003

Negatives: Joan L. Brownell, Billings, MT.

<u>Photo Number</u>	<u>Description</u>
1.	Overview of ranch complex, view to west
2.	Little Bones House, south and west elevations
3.	Little Bones House, north and west elevations
4.	Little Bones House, children's bedroom wall
5.	Ruth Starr Rose Cabin, south and west elevations
6.	Garage, south elevation
7.	Big Bones House, south and east elevations
8.	Big Bones House, north log wall
9.	Floyd's Cabin, south and west elevations
10.	Floyd's Cabin, south and east elevations
11.	Hank's Cabin, south and east elevations
12.	Hank's Cabin, porch, south elevation
13.	Hank's Outhouse and Garage, south and west elevations
14.	Hank's Root cellar, south and west elevations
15.	Hank's Guest Cabin, south and east elevations
16.	Irv Alderson's House, south and east elevations
17.	Carvalho Cabin, north and east elevations
18.	Sheedy Cabin, south and east elevations
19.	Sheedy Cabin, south and west elevations
20.	Dude Cabins, south and east elevations
21.	Recreation Hall, north and west elevations
22.	Recreation Hall, interior
23.	Help Bath House, south and east elevations
24.	Help Bath House, south and west elevations
25.	Dude Bath House, south and east elevations
26.	Dude Bath House, north and west elevations
27.	Separator/Storage Shed in foreground, north and east elevations, help bath house and coal shed in background
28.	Separator/Storage Shed, south and west elevations
29.	Coal House, south and west elevations
30.	Barn and Tack Room, south and west elevations
31.	Barn, south and west elevations
32.	Barn, north and east elevations

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- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 33. | Tack Room, south and west elevations     |
| 34. | Overview of feed lot, looking southwest  |
| 35. | Hank's Barn, south and east elevations   |
| 36. | Shop, north and west elevations          |
| 37. | Horse Barn, north and east elevations    |
| 38. | Roping Barn, south and east elevations   |
| 39. | Chicken House, south and west elevations |
| 40. | Horse Shed, north and east elevations    |
| 41. | Scale House, south and west elevations   |
| 42. | Stud Barn, south and west elevations     |
| 43. | Machine Shed, south and west elevations  |
| 44. | Arena, view to north                     |

36 Landing Field  
Approximately 4000 Feet Northwest

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

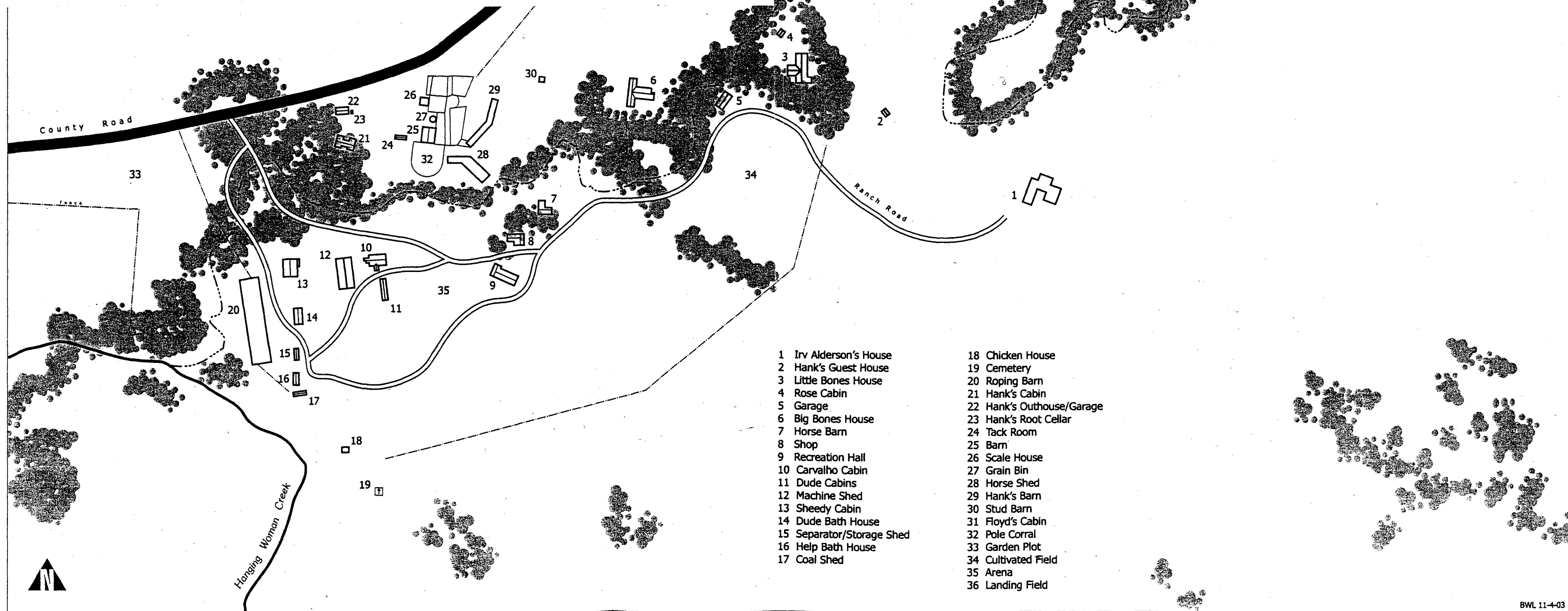
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Site Map

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|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Irv Alderson's House    | 18 Chicken House          |
| 2 Hank's Guest House      | 19 Cemetery               |
| 3 Little Bones House      | 20 Roping Barn            |
| 4 Rose Cabin              | 21 Hank's Cabin           |
| 5 Garage                  | 22 Hank's Outhouse/Garage |
| 6 Big Bones House         | 23 Hank's Root Cellar     |
| 7 Horse Barn              | 24 Tack Room              |
| 8 Shop                    | 25 Barn                   |
| 9 Recreation Hall         | 26 Scale House            |
| 10 Carvalho Cabin         | 27 Grain Bin              |
| 11 Dude Cabins            | 28 Horse Shed             |
| 12 Machine Shed           | 29 Hank's Barn            |
| 13 Sheedy Cabin           | 30 Stud Barn              |
| 14 Dude Bath House        | 31 Floyd's Cabin          |
| 15 Separator/Storage Shed | 32 Pole Corral            |
| 16 Help Bath House        | 33 Garden Plot            |
| 17 Coal Shed              | 34 Cultivated Field       |
|                           | 35 Arena                  |
|                           | 36 Landing Field          |



## Bones Brothers Ranch

1" = 250'

BWL 11-4-03