

PH0356107

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUN 7 1976  
DATE ENTERED MAY 12 1977

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Ewing-Snell Ranch House

AND/OR COMMON

Sorenson Ranch

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER S of Bighorn  
Northeast of Montana-Wyoming State line, south of Barry's Landing in  
Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area — NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Lovell, (Wyoming)

VICINITY OF

STATE

Montana

CODE

30

COUNTY

Carbon

CODE

009

**CLASSIFICATION**

| CATEGORY  | OWNERSHIP                                  | STATUS  | PRESENT USE  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED        | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM                       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE           | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED                 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE              | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH              | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS           | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE                   | <b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>                  | <b>ACCESSIBLE</b>                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT                 | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC                    |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED  | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED          | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION                |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> NO                         | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:                          |

**AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 25287

CITY, TOWN

Denver

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Colorado 80225

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Carbon County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Red Lodge

STATE

Montana

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

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

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The ranch site contains the Ewing house; two rear sheds and a privy, a shop (the Dryhead School house); the Snell chicken house (barn); a pole corral east of the house; a root cellar; and an irrigation system including an impounding pond, a headgate, and a ditch. The Erastus T. Ewing grave is located approximately one-fourth mile north of the house; and an unfinished ceramic block root cellar is located south of the pond.

Built between 1896 and 1898 by Erastus Ewing adjacent to Layout Creek and on a bench above the west wall of Bighorn Canyon, the house is a one-story, hipped roof structure. Completed in an L-plan of lap-joint, round log construction, it has a front gable end. In filling the angle, a modern shed roofed porch, sheltering separate entrances to the kitchen and living room, overlooks the front yard, partially enclosed with iron fencing from a Cincinnati manufacturer. A shed roofed side porch opens into the kitchen wing having a small, rear bedroom and a bathroom. The two north bedrooms open into the vertical knotty pine sheathed living room. A modern fireplace at the rear wall extends into a massive exterior brick chimney. Typically, two-over-two-light sash fill the window openings. The roof is covered with roll roofing.

In 1975 the house was adaptively restored. At the exterior deteriorated sill logs were removed and replaced with concrete, as done previously; the front living room plate glass window was removed and restored with a pair of double hung sash; the east bedroom doorway was restored; the roof covering was replaced; the plain board trim was repaired and repainted; and the building was rechinked. On the interior the bathroom was remodeled, new flooring was laid, and the carsiding ceiling was replaced with plasterboard. It is anticipated that the structure will continue to function as a seasonal ranger quarters and will be maintained as such, since the structure is functionally located within the Recreation Area.

The deteriorated shop, built of notched and lapped log construction, was adapted in the 1940's for a schoolhouse. The low gabled roof, supported on log ribs (purlins) on minimal log trappings was originally earth and gravel over boards. Butting poles have been removed to accommodate roll roofing, a temporary preservation measure installed in 1975 when the front wall was stabilized. The one-room structure with a wooden floor system, is sited amid heavy overgrowth.

The Snell chicken house ruin, of lapped and notched log construction with a pitched sod roof over vigas is deteriorated beyond practical preservation. Built into a hillside, the rear of the structure is rotted and the roof has partially collapsed creating a safety hazard. The structure has no remaining functional use.

Located behind the main house and of modern construction are two sheds, one a gabled roof, novelty-sided frame structure and the other of corrugated metal, and a privy. Above the pond, partially drained to discourage beaver activity, is the old root cellar, with a partially collapsed log roof and a deteriorated stairway leading to a below-grade doorway. This root cellar, of a typical type, is a safety hazard and has no functional use. To the south of the pond a modern root cellar, constructed of ceramic tile blocks, remains unfinished and roofless. Additionally, the pole corral, circular plan, is in fair condition. The grave site is enclosed by a deteriorated picket fence. The headgate and irrigation system are in a functioning condition.

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It is anticipated that the house, having been recently renovated will continue to function as a seasonal ranger quarters and office and that the shop (schoolhouse) will function as an auxiliary building. Both will be subject to annual cyclic maintenance. Since the ranch will not be interpreted as an historic site open to the public, the deteriorated and surplus structures may be eventually removed to clear the site.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1896 - 1968

BUILDER/~~ARCHITECT~~ Erastus T. Ewing

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Ewing Ranch is typical of subsistence ranching between the 1890's and the 1940's in the "Dryhead Country", located north of Crooked Creek and bounded on the east by the Bighorn Canyon and on the west by the Pryor Mountains. Drawn by the expectation of striking gold, Erastus Tyler Ewing settled on this last frontier in Montana. He, like others, soon experienced failure and was obliged to turn to ranching which here survived, through successive owners, until acquired as part of the National Recreation Area in 1968. The preservation of these remnants of the Ewing Ranch affords a link with the past through its functional use within the Recreation Area.

Within six years of the 1891 Crow cession of 1,800,000 acres off the western end of the reservation, which included the Dryhead Country, the first settlers entered the forbidding and arid region. Gold had been discovered in the late 1880's in the Bighorn Mountains to the east, but by the mid 1890's the strike had played out and the prospectors turned their attention to other areas, particularly to the rugged canyons of the Pryors leading down to Bighorn Canyon. Thus Ewing, of whom little is known, entered the Dryhead Country in 1896; unlike most of the others, he stayed. On Layout Creek he built a log house for his family and other improvements. In 1898 the Ewing house was designated as a post office with mail service coming from Lovell, Wyoming, thirty-one miles to the southwest. The post office, then operated by Ewing's son, was closed in 1906. However, for several years on county and state maps, a dot located Ewing, Montana. The Ewing Ranch purchased by Clint Hough from Erastus R. Ewing in 1911, was sold to Philip Snell in 1918. In 1945-47 the ranch shop was used as the Dryhead School, accommodating the dwindling families of the region. The Snell heirs sold the ranch to Newell J. Sorenson in 1964, who sold 640 acres in 1968 to the Bureau of Reclamation in conjunction with the construction of Yellowtail Dam. The site is now administered as part of the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area by the National Park Service.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bearss, E. C., Historic Structure Report, Historical Data Section and Historic Resource Study, Ewing (Snell), and ML Ranches, and Hillsboro, National Park Service, Denver, Colorado, 1974.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A 

|      |           |             |
|------|-----------|-------------|
| 12   | 71,53,6,0 | 49,9,57,0,0 |
| ZONE | EASTING   | NORTHING    |

B 

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

C 

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

D 

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

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|       |      |        |      |
|       |      |        |      |

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Rodd L. Wheaton, Historical Architect

01/12/76

ORGANIZATION

DATE

National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

P. O. Box 25287

(303) 234-2764

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Denver,

Colorado 80225

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

Paul Holiday  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is  National  State  Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE JUN 3 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY Deputy Assistant Secretary

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

DATE 5/12/77

ATTEST:

Charles Adams  
KEEPER OF THE RECORDS

DATE 5-10-77