



Earnest Ranch  
Name of Property

Garfield County, Colorado  
County and State

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property (Check as many as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	4	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		
		4	0
			Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
N/A

Number of contributing resources  
previously listed in the National Register  
N/A

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
DOMESTIC / single dwelling  
AGRICULTURE / animal facility  
AGRICULTURE / agricultural outbuilding

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
DOMESTIC / single dwelling  
DOMESTIC / hotel

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN  
MOVEMENTS / Bungalow  
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN  
MOVEMENTS / Other: Gable Roof Barn

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
foundation CONCRETE  
walls LOG  
roof ASPHALT  
other WEATHERBOARD

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Earnest Ranch  
Name of Property

Garfield County, Colorado  
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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more locations for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- AGRICULTURE
- ARCHITECTURE
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1919 - 1936

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all locations that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Significant Dates**

- 1919
- 1926

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

EARNEST, HUGH

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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

**Name of repository:**

Colorado Historical Society Library  
Frontier Historical Society, Glenwood Springs  
Denver Public Library

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**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 5.5 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>13</u>	<u>301060</u>	<u>4368000</u>	3	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	4	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
					see continuation sheet		

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Ron Sladek, President and Willa Soncarty, Researcher  
 organization Tatanka Historical Associates, Inc. date 28 November 1997  
 street & number P.O. Box 1909 telephone 970/229-9705  
 city or town Fort Collins state CO zip code 80522

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name James and Sharill Hawkins  
 street and number 6471 County Road 117 telephone 970/945-4004  
 city or town Glenwood Springs state CO zip code 81601

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section number 7 Page 1

Property EARNEST RANCH

GARFIELD COUNTY, COLORADO

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Background

The Earnest Ranch occupies a 5.5-acre site located along County Road 117 (Four Mile Creek Rd.), approximately seven miles south of Glenwood Springs. Situated in a hollow along Four Mile Creek, the ranch is surrounded by higher vacant and residential property to the north, wooded river bottom to the south, County Road 117 and a high cliff face rising to the east, and a modern residential neighborhood on higher ground to the west. When standing among the site buildings, the only other structures to be seen are several modern homes on the ridge above the site to the west, although these are largely blocked from view by foliage. The Earnest Ranch is occupied by four structures, including a ranch house, a barn, and two agricultural outbuildings. The only historic structure no longer present on the site is a chicken coop formerly located just west of the barn. It is not known when this small building disappeared from the property, although the foundation for the structure can still be found under a growth of grass and weeds.

In addition to the buildings, the ranch is also occupied by a crop field surrounding the barn, a non-historic spring-fed trout pond south of the house, a grassed yard and mature trees to the east, south and southwest of the house, Four Mile Creek (which bisects the property), a modern log footbridge crossing the creek, and a wooded hillside to the west of the buildings. Household water is still obtained from the ranch's original spring, located south of the property. In general, the Earnest Ranch exhibits a high degree of historic integrity, and its setting emphasizes a cultural landscape that is becoming rare in the area due to the tremendous development of the entire Roaring Fork Valley and its tributaries such as Four Mile Creek. Three of the four buildings found on the property are in excellent condition, with the barn being the only structure that has experienced some deterioration, discussed in further detail below.

General and Elevation Descriptions - Ranch House

The symmetrical 1-1/2 story ranch house, constructed in 1926, has a rectangular plan (32' x 41') and faces east toward the adjacent county road. The structure is essentially a log bungalow, resting on a foundation of poured concrete. The full basement contains massive timbers that support the center of the house. These timbers (an 8" x 15" x 30' beam, an 8" x 15" x 11' beam, and two 12" x 12" posts) were salvaged from a bridge abandoned by the Colorado Midland Railroad, which ran between Glenwood Springs and Sunlight, passing through the area just west of the ranch. The house's exterior walls consist of unpainted logs, square hewn on the interior sides with the outside left rounded and covered with bark, although the bark has fallen off most of these exposed surfaces over the years. The ends of the logs are square notched, and chinking consists of wood strips overlain with concrete.

The house has a steep hipped roof with asphalt shingles and exposed rafter ends. One brick interior chimney is found near the ridge on the south slope, while the other is an exterior north eave wall chimney for the main fireplace, constructed of uncoursed rubble made up of a variety of stone types. Four dormers are present, two of which are original and two of which were added sometime between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s. The two original hipped roof dormers are identical, and are found on the east and west slopes. The newer shed roof dormers are also identical, and are located on the house's north and south slopes. The walls on all of the dormers are finished with wood shingles. A shed roof log enclosed porch, also dating from the

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Property EARNEST RANCH

GARFIELD COUNTY, COLORADO

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (continued)

mid-1960s to mid-1970s, projects from the back of the house. Other changes to the ranch house dating from this period include the installation of several casement windows on the south elevation, and the installation of an interior hallway staircase to provide access to second floor bedrooms that were finished in the former attic space. During the summer of 1997, the interior of the ranch house was rehabilitated for modern use as a bed and breakfast. This work included restoration of the previously covered vertical grain fir floors in the dining room and living room, in addition to updating of the kitchen and bathroom. Other than painting, the remainder of the house's interior was left virtually unchanged and the living room, dining room and main floor bedrooms still appear much as they would have when the home was built. Overall, the ranch house is in excellent condition and the non-historic alterations have not significantly detracted from its overall historic integrity.

The east elevation of the ranch house contains the main entrance and front porch. First floor windows on this main facade include two 6/1 double hung sashes (only the lower sashes are movable), in wood frames with plain surrounds. The dormer contains a pair of 3/1 double hung sashes in wood frames with plain wood surrounds. The full facade porch is located under the principal roof, and is characterized by a concrete floor, a solid uncoursed sandstone balustrade capped by poured-in-place concrete, four squared wood posts supporting the roof, and tongue-in-groove paneling on the ceiling. The main entrance consists of an old wood slab door with four vertical beveled lights, and a modern metal storm door.

The west (rear) elevation of the ranch house includes an enclosed porch addition that envelops about two-thirds of the back of the original structure. The original rear house wall contains one 3/1 double hung sash and one 4/1 double hung sash, both of which are set in wood frames with plain surrounds. The porch addition contains eight 1/1 fixed windows in wood frames with plain surrounds. The hipped dormer contains a pair of single light wood casements with plain surrounds. The original structure also contains a ten light modern wood door from the porch into the kitchen, and an old five panel wood door into the basement, which is accessed down a short flight of concrete stairs that were located outdoors prior to construction of the enclosed porch. The enclosed porch is entered via a north-facing modern wood door that is 1970s rustic in appearance. The porch addition is characterized by a concrete floor, log construction, and a shed roof with exposed rafters. The log construction on the porch is similar to that found on the original house structure, but it is clearly a non-historic addition.

The north elevation of the ranch house includes two original 3-light awnings set in wood frames in the basement, four original 3/1 double hung sashes in wood frames with plain surrounds on the main floor, and two sets of paired wood casements that date from twenty to thirty years ago in the shed dormer.

The south elevation of the house includes two original 3-light awnings set in wood frames in the basement; two original 3/1 double hung sashes in wood frames with plain surrounds, one modern large fixed wood picture window with flanking casements, and one pair of modern casements on the main floor; four 1/1 fixed windows on the rear porch addition; and a set of three modern wood casements in the shed dormer.

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GARFIELD COUNTY, COLORADO

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (continued)

General and Elevation Descriptions - Barn

The second structure on the Earnest Ranch is a large red barn, constructed in 1919, and located approximately 105' directly north of the house. The south-facing barn is two stories in height, with a rectangular (40' x 52') plan, and is characterized as a gable roof barn with flanking sheds. The structure rests on a shallow stone foundation that was shored up on the north and east sides with rough poured concrete (including large chunks of native volcanic field stone) at some early date. Constructed primarily as a balloon frame structure, using a combination of new and scrap milled lumber, the barn is supported in several places by old railroad ties serving as posts and beams. As with the ranch house, these ties were also salvaged from the former Colorado Midland Railway line that was abandoned to the west of the ranch in 1918. The exterior of the barn is finished with horizontal drop siding that has been painted red, with white wood trim around all of the doors and windows. An early small shed roof addition constructed during the 1930s and finished with red horizontal siding extends from the southwest corner of the barn. The roof of the barn is finished with wood shingles, exposed purlins and rafter ends with fascia boards, and a hay hood on the south elevation. The hay loft still contains an old overhead hay carrier, suspended along a metal track just underneath the ridge beam. The barn is currently unused due to its deteriorated condition, although it exhibits a very high degree of historic integrity.

The center gable roof above the large hay loft contains no trusswork or other beams or tie rods to keep the walls from bowing. Constructed simply with a ridgepole and rafters, the otherwise unsupported gable roof has caused the upper side walls of the barn to bow out approximately three feet on either side. Ultimately this resulted in some early shifting, as evidenced by the old concrete supporting parts of the foundation, and has probably caused the flanking shed roofs to deteriorate as well. The west flanking shed roof has collapsed in recent years although its walls are still intact, and the east flanking shed roof is sagging. Shifting of the barn on its foundation is most evident on the east elevation. Other than the early shed addition mentioned above, the only other change noted on the barn was that it was first painted red with white trim during the summer of 1931, prior to which the structure was unpainted.

The south (primary) elevation of the barn contains a number of door and window openings. Windows on the main floor of the barn include a pair of two 6-light fixed windows set in white wood frames, one small boarded up window space, and one 4-light fixed window in a white wood frame on the shed addition. Windows in the hay loft include two 4-light fixed windows in white wood frames. Doors on the main floor of the barn include one sliding vertical plank door into the east flanking shed, one narrow swinging vertical plank door into the center crib, one swinging vertical plank Dutch door into the west-central portal, one swinging vertical plank Dutch door into the west flanking shed, and one swinging vertical plank door into the shed addition. The wood trim around all of the doors except for the sliding one is painted white. Doors into the hay loft include one swinging vertical wood plank door at floor level with white wood trim, and one large vertical plank loft door in the upper gable wall under the hay hood.

The north (rear) elevation contains a single door and a small number of window openings. Windows on the main floor of the barn include two small open spaces with white wood frames, and one pair of 6-light fixed windows with plain surrounds. Openings in the hay loft include two small open window spaces with white wood frames in the upper gable wall. The north elevation of the shed addition has an old metal 12-light

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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (continued)

fixed window with two flanking 4-light metal casements. The main floor of the barn is accessed via a wood ramp and a wood plank Dutch door with white wood surrounds. The hay loft door, at floor level, is a swinging wood plank door with white wood surrounds.

The east (side) elevation contains a single door and a small number of window openings. Windows on the east flanking shed include three 4-light fixed windows and one open window space, all with white wood frames. The door at the center of the shed wall is a vertical plank Dutch door with the upper portion missing. The west (side) elevation contains a single door and a small number of window openings. Windows on the west flanking shed include three open window spaces into the former milking room. One swinging vertical plank door is located at the center of the shed wall.

The interior of the barn contains two cribs in the center that were probably used for feed storage, horse stalls in the east flanking shed, small animal pens along the north wall, and a milking room with ten stanchions in the west flanking shed. A concrete waste trough is also present in the floor of the milking room. The southwest corner of the barn and the adjacent addition appear to have been used as tool and harness rooms. The hay loft is accessed via a plank ladder in the east flanking shed and consists of a large open floor with the hay carrier suspended above.

General and Elevation Descriptions - Milk House

The third building on the Earnest Ranch is a small log milk house, most likely constructed during the 1920s, and located 42' northwest of the house. This east-facing structure is one story in height, rectangular in plan (15' x 30'), and is characterized as a gabled agricultural outbuilding. Used as a milk house in earlier years, the structure is now a bed and breakfast room separate from the ranch house. Resting on a stone foundation, the milk house is constructed of unhewn logs with saddle notching. The north end of the building was expanded sometime between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s with a small addition that is finished on the exterior with horizontal plank siding. It appears that the milk house at one time had concrete chinking that has mostly fallen out. The gabled roof on this building is finished with asphalt shingles, exposed rafter ends with fascia boards, and an exposed log ridge beam and log purlins. Overall, the milk house is in excellent condition. The interior of the structure has been completely renovated in the last year and contains a bedroom, bathroom and kitchen. The log ridge beam and purlins are exposed in the interior, constituting the only remaining historic interior feature.

The east (primary) elevation contains a set of four modern wood casements with plain wood surrounds. The entry consists of a modern 9-light wood panel door with a concrete pad outside. The west (rear) elevation consists of a set of four modern wood casements with plain wood surrounds. The north (side) elevation has a pair of modern wood casements with plain wood surrounds. Finally, the south (side) elevation contains a set of three modern wood casements with plain wood surrounds. None of these three secondary elevations contains doors, porches, or other features.



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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (continued)

General and Elevation Descriptions - Bunkhouse/Shed

The fourth structure on the Earnest Ranch is a small bunkhouse/shed, also constructed during the 1920s, and located 68' northwest of the log cabin. This east-facing structure is one story in height, with a rectangular plan (17' x 32'), and is characterized as a gabled agricultural outbuilding. The structure was used as a bunkhouse and storage shed during its early years, although it is used strictly for storage today. Constructed using balloon framing, the bunkhouse/shed rests on a limestone foundation that has been reinforced with concrete. Exterior walls are finished with horizontal shiplap siding that has been painted red. Trim around the east-facing window and doors is painted white. The roof on the structure is gabled and finished with asphalt shingles and exposed rafter ends. The bunkhouse/shed is in excellent condition, and the interior walls in the southern bunkhouse room are finished with old tongue-in-groove siding.

The east (primary) elevation contains one single-light fixed window with plain wood surrounds, a two-light vertical plank door, and a wood plank shed door reinforced with cross planks. The west (rear) elevation contains one small square fixed window set in a rough wood frame, and no doors or other features. The north (side) elevation has no windows, doors or other features. The south (side) elevation contains one horizontal fixed single-light window set in a rough wood frame, and no doors or other features.

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Property EARNEST RANCH

GARFIELD COUNTY, COLORADO

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Significance

The Earnest Ranch is historically significant under Criterion A due to its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. As a whole, the property serves as a good example of the development and difficult history of a mountain valley ranch (located at 6900' in elevation), constructed by hopeful and ambitious early-20th century migrants to the area. Due to its location and setting, the ranch is still a wonderful example of a pre-World War II cultural landscape that is rapidly disappearing from the larger Roaring Fork Valley, one of a handful of high altitude ranching areas in Colorado. Since it was first homesteaded in 1885, the ranch has effectively served as a rural residence and agricultural facility for a number of families. The story of the ranch and its existing buildings allows us to effectively tell the tale of settlement, mountain ranching, and the developing agricultural economy in Colorado through its periods of boom and bust. This particular property's period of significance, however, focuses upon the years from 1919 through 1936, when the ranch as it exists today was developed and occupied by the Earnest family.

The ranch structures are also architecturally significant under Criterion C due to their distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction. All of the buildings were constructed by the Earnest family, who hauled lumber and supplies to the site and erected the structures with a good deal of resourcefulness and skill. The buildings are good examples from the period and location in which they were built, both in terms of style and materials used. Although a small number of other log houses in Garfield County date from the same time period, field reconnaissance and review of the SHPO database indicate that few have been documented and none are known at this time to have been designed in a hipped roof bungalow style. Similarly, the barn on the Earnest Ranch is one of a shrinking number still in existence from the time period, and field reconnaissance and research revealed very few structures designed as gabled barns with flanking sheds (most are simple gable or gambrel roof structures). In addition, most area barns were constructed for horses rather than for dairy or multi-animal use.

The ranch house and former milk house continue to be used today as a bed-and-breakfast, the former bunkhouse/shed is used for storage, and the barn awaits rehabilitation for adaptive reuse. In the meantime, as it has for years, the picturesque Earnest barn continues to serve as the subject of numerous amateur and professional paintings and photographs, and practitioners of these arts are frequently seen documenting its beauty on the county road adjacent to the property.

Historical Background

In 1917, Hugh and Ella Earnest moved into an 1885 homestead cabin (located southwest of the current ranch house and now gone) on the 336-acre Four Mile Creek property that they rented from its absentee owner, Glenwood Springs grocer and butcher Peter Kirchen. Prior to arriving in the area, the Earnests were occupied as cattle ranchers in the area of Lusk, Wyoming. Determined to make this the new family home, they arranged to purchase the property from Kirchen two years later. In January of 1919, Hugh Earnest signed an indenture in which he agreed to pay Peter Kirchen a total of \$8000.00 on an installment plan for the ranch property on Four Mile Creek. Kirchen continued to own the property under the purchase

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NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

agreement which he financed, and the Earnests immediately began to improve the site. Launching their enterprise shortly before the agricultural economy in the state began its long decline into the Depression, the Earnests could not have known that the odds of success would soon be stacked against them. Farm income in Colorado dropped dramatically in 1921 due to faltering markets and foreign competition. Before long, cattle ranchers and farmers throughout the state found themselves struggling to repay earlier loan obligations with shrinking incomes.

Shortly after they signed the purchase agreement, the Earnests began to construct the barn found on the property today, locating it a few hundred yards northeast of their homestead cabin in a flat-lying area across Four Mile Creek. Together with his sons, Chester and Ralph, Hugh Earnest hauled the lumber in and scavenged a small number of railroad ties from the Colorado Midland Railroad track just west of the ranch to be used as posts and beams (the rail line closed in 1918). On the site they erected a gabled barn with flanking sheds, using a balloon frame structure supported by an odd assortment of logs and heavy timbers. This style of barn is not well documented but has its origins in 19th-century America, and is found in scattered locations predominantly in the western United States.

With the barn completed, the family began to raise dairy cattle, poultry and swine, and took an avid interest in horses. They registered their brand (3-) with the State Board of Stock Inspection Commissioners in 1920. Hay was grown in ranch property meadows, and the Earnests appeared to be doing fairly well in their new home. What may have helped them through the period of general agricultural decline were their milk cows, since the dairy industry experienced tremendous statewide growth throughout the 1920s. The west flanking shed of the barn with its ten stanchions, and the log milk house west of the ranch house, indicate that the Earnests were producing enough milk to market to the creamery in Glenwood Springs.

In 1926, the family decided that it was time to move out of the old homestead cabin, which was little more than a shack, and began to construct the log bungalow ranch house found there today. Again, the logs and other supplies were hauled to the site by the Earnests, and the resourceful family scavenged large timbers from a nearby abandoned Colorado Midland Railroad bridge for their basement posts and beams. It is not known what they used as a model for the design of the house, however plans and instructions for log construction were available in contemporary publications such as Camps, Log Cabins, Lodges and Clubhouses (1925), and plans for bungalows were readily available in the numerous design books and magazine articles published on the subject after 1905. No matter where they obtained the experience or knowledge in log construction, the Earnests constructed a modest but beautiful bungalow home during the style's peak of popularity.

The use of log construction was ideal for remote wooded locations in the United States through the late-1800s, eventually coinciding with the beginning of the bungalow style around 1880. Popular early 20th-century magazines discussing the bungalow style argued that the ideal residence should be constructed using natural materials that would help the structure blend into its setting. With its combined living room and dining room, built-in dining room cabinets, natural fir flooring, large open front porch, 3/1-4/1-6/1 double hung windows, exterior chimney made of stone, simple horizontal lines and low profile, and overall rustic exterior utilizing local materials, the Earnest bungalow is a good example of the style (with a unique and somewhat rare hipped roof) applied to its Rocky Mountain setting.

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NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

In addition to the house and barn, the Earnests also constructed a chicken coop (now gone), as well as the log milk house and bunkhouse/shed still found on the property today. In January 1929, Hugh Earnest signed another indenture to Peter Kirchen on the property, this time for a total of \$10,000, and in August 1930 the 1919 indenture for \$8000 was released. The Earnests continued to operate their ranch for a number of years, although with increasing financial difficulty, and the worsening economy brought on by the widespread Depression led Peter Kirchen to finally foreclose on the loan in 1936 and reacquire the property through a public trustee's sale.

Between 1937 and 1948, the Ed Koenig family rented the ranch from Peter Kirchen. The Koenigs had a dairy herd, and presumably sold their milk products to the creamery in Glenwood Springs. Peter Kirchen, ever hopeful of making a profit on the ranch, was disappointed again as the Koenigs were unable to make the ranch financially viable. Finally, in 1949 the entire property, except for one acre retained by the Kirchen family, was sold for \$10,000 to Emery and Beulah Arbaney, who continued to operate a dairy farm there for a number of years.

The Earnest Ranch represents the difficulties and successes of agricultural production, specifically revolving around livestock and dairy farming in a mountain valley during the period from 1919 through 1936 when the property was developed and occupied by the Earnest family. In light of the high country farming and ranching theme in the *Colorado Mountains Historical Context* (Steven F. Mehls, 1984), the efforts of Hugh and Ella Earnest to turn the Four Mile Creek ranch into a profitable enterprise are historically instructive. These early occupants of the ranch were attempting to farm, raise livestock, and produce dairy products in a high altitude setting with a short growing season and variable market conditions. As Mehls states, mountain area farming and ranching reached a peak around 1910, followed by a long slide into depression that was only broken by higher demand during the World War I years. The barn on the Earnest ranch was constructed in the wake of the World War I boom, while the house was constructed during the agricultural depression that was impacting both the region and the nation as a whole. Even so, the Earnests appear to have been doing fairly well during the early years of this depression, and their optimism, creativity, and resourcefulness are certainly apparent in the buildings they constructed on the ranch they were in the process of purchasing.

Perhaps most significantly, the Earnest family attempted to turn their ranch into a successful venture at a time when they were increasingly plagued by ongoing economic difficulties beyond their control, primarily the cycles of agricultural boom and bust, and by the everyday financial hurdles encountered in agricultural enterprises of all sorts. Peter Kirchen was evidently content living in Glenwood Springs and financing the efforts of the Earnests, while they improved the property and made installment payments for its ultimate purchase. Ultimately, however, the Earnests were overcome by the same financial failure in 1936 that had already claimed numerous ranch and farm operations throughout the state. The greatest and most enduring success on the Earnest Ranch was the construction of the ranchstead, which evokes an era that has passed in Colorado history and speaks of the creativity of the Earnest family as they attempted to build a successful agricultural future for themselves along Four Mile Creek.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Parcel B, Amended Traul Exemption Plat, Recorded 8 December 1994 as Reception No. 471910, Garfield County, Colorado.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property's boundaries were selected due to the fact that they include all of the historically significant architectural features that were central to the Earnest ranch during the period of significance, along with the adjacent wooded slopes and the vacant field surrounding the barn that are historically associated with the property and convey the property's historic setting.

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PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information applies to all photographs submitted with this registration form:

Name of property:	Earnest Ranch
City, county and state:	Garfield County, Colorado
Photographer:	Ron Sladek
Date of photograph:	19 November 1997
Location of negative:	Tatanka Historical Associates Inc. P.O. Box 1909 Fort Collins, CO 80522

- Photograph #1: View of the east and south elevations of the Earnest Ranch house, with the main entrance at center. View to the southwest.
- Photograph #2: View of the west and north elevations of the Earnest Ranch house, with the rear porch addition to the right of center. View to the southeast.
- Photograph #3: View of the east and south elevations of the bunkhouse/shed structure located northwest of the ranch house. View to the northwest.
- Photograph #4: View of the north and west elevations of the bunkhouse/shed structure located northwest of the ranch house. View to the southeast.
- Photograph #5: View of the south and east elevations of the Earnest Ranch barn located north of the house. View to the northwest.
- Photograph #6: View of the south elevation of the Earnest Ranch barn. View to the northeast.
- Photograph #7: View of the north and west elevations of the Earnest Ranch barn. View to the southeast.
- Photograph #8: View of the former milk shed located northwest of the house, with the original part of the structure to the right of center. View to the southeast.



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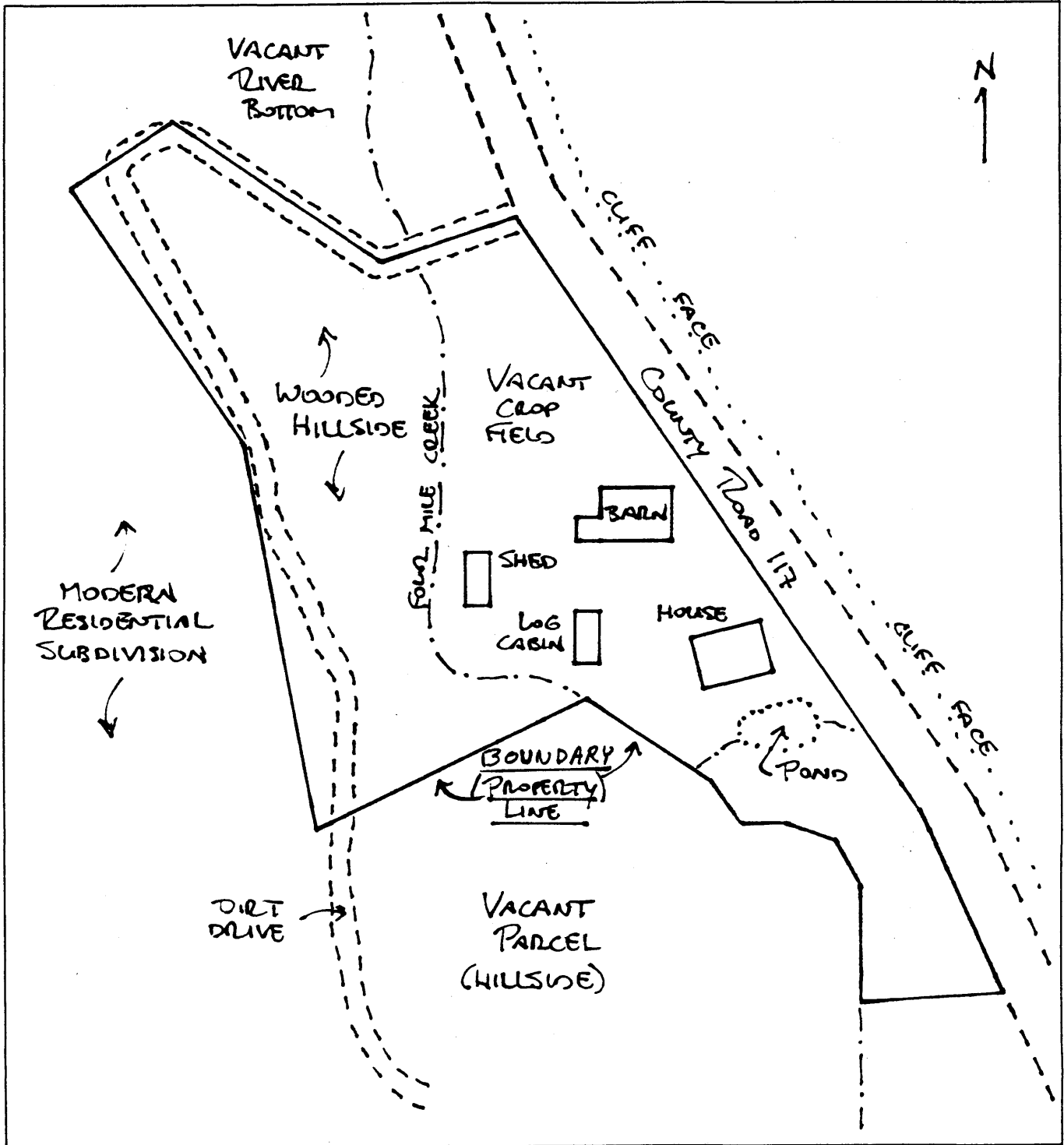
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Property     EARNEST RANCH    

    GARFIELD COUNTY, COLORADO    

PROPERTY DRAWING (not to scale)



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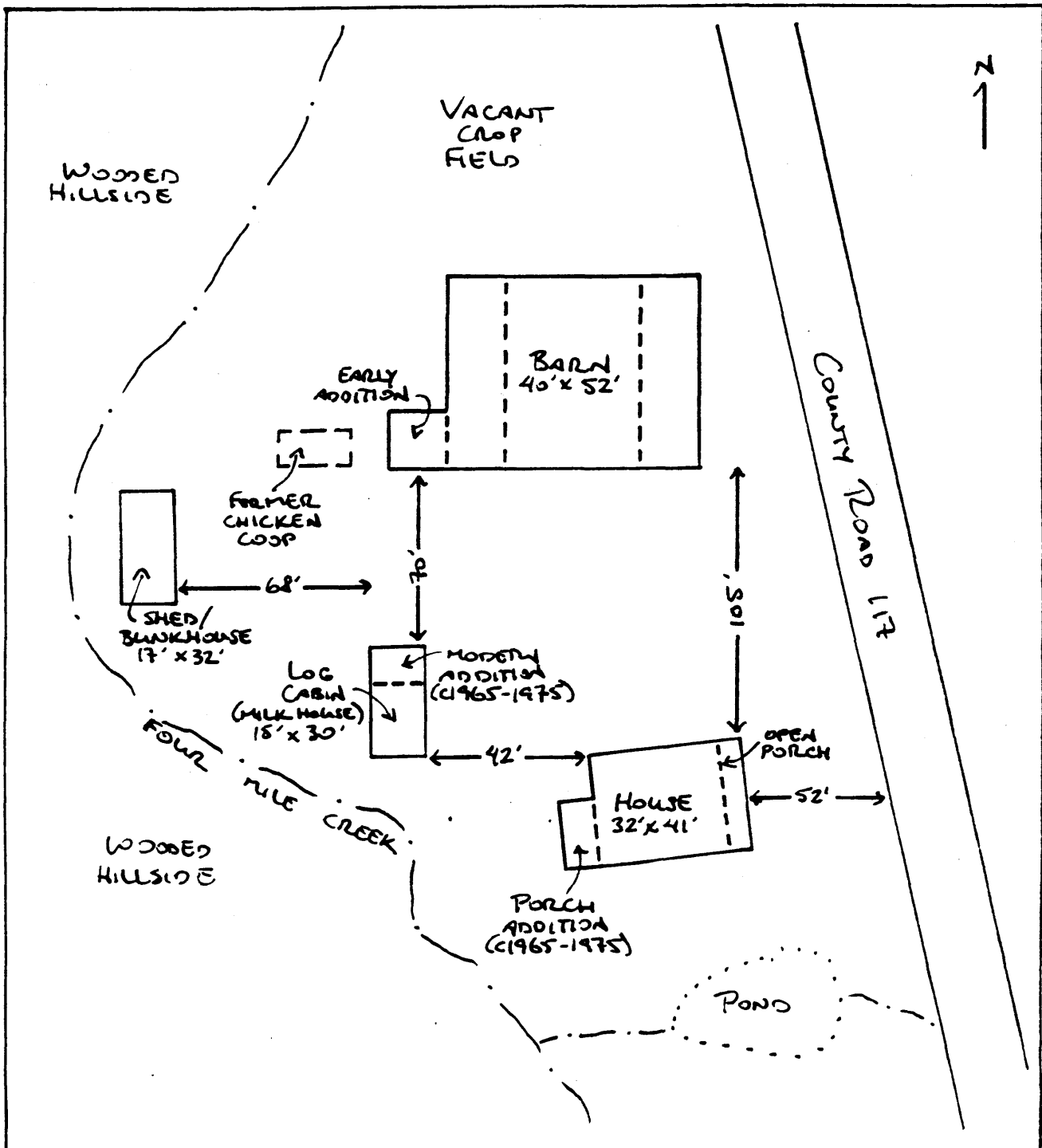
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RANCHSTEAD DRAWING (not to scale)



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USGS MAP  
CATTLE CREEK, COLORADO

