

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

OCT 9 5 1990

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See Instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the Instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Buckeye Ranch House
other names/site number Buckeye Ranch

2. Location

street & number 10881 Highway 410 not for publication
city, town Naches vicinity
state Washington code WA county Yakima code 077 zip code 98937

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	—
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	—	—
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	—	<u>1</u>
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
			buildings
			sites
			structures
			objects
			Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
 See continuation sheet.

Paul E. Johnson
Signature of certifying official

Oct. 1, 1990
Date

Washington State Department of Community Development Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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.

- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Arlene Byers
Signature of the Keeper

entered in the
National Register

11/2/90
Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

other: gable-and wing vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concretewalls concreteroof metal

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Located on a 23 acre farm in the Nile Valley along the upper Naches River, the Buckeye Ranch house is a two story masonry structure that was the main residence of one of the region's pioneer farmsteads. Built in 1906-1908, the house is constructed of load-bearing concrete block walls with a metal pantile roof and a spacious two-tier veranda. Although the original 250 acre ranch has been reduced in size, and several of the outbuildings--including the historic barn--demolished, the house and its immediate grounds retain a high degree of integrity. The nominated property includes pastureland, four small scale frame outbuildings from the early 20th century, and a non-historic garage. (The outbuildings are not included in the resource court in item 3 because they are not substantial in size and scale.) The front lawn is ornamented with a variety of trees including oak, black walnut, and two buckeyes believed to have been brought as seedlings from Ohio at the turn of the century. Surrounded by open fields and set against the sage-covered foothills of Cleman Mountain, the Buckeye Ranch still strongly evokes its character from the early 20th century.

The Buckeye Ranch house is a two story, L-shaped structure composed of a front-facing gable wing and a perpendicular side gable wing, with a one story shed roof addition in the rear juncture. The overall dimensions of the structure are approximately 30 feet across the front (south) facade, and 30 feet along the south side elevation. The foundation and walls of the house are constructed entirely of concrete block and the house is sheltered by a gable roof with broad eaves. The eaves have exposed rafters and are trimmed with simple fascia boards. The gable ends are sheathed in horizontal wood siding, and the roof is covered with sheet metal "Spanish style" pantiles, with a metal ridge cap and finials, originally painted red to suggest terra cotta.

A broad two-story veranda, sheltered by the extended eaves of the gable roof, wraps around the facade and east side of the house. The first story of the veranda features a concrete floor, surrounded by a concrete block railing (laid in an open honeycomb pattern). The first story porch pillars are bevelled posts of cast concrete, with square wood capitals. The second story of the veranda features a wood floor, with turned wooden posts and decorative brackets supporting the eaves. The upper floor is encircled by a wooden railing with simple square balusters.

The concrete blocks that form the walls of the house measure about 10 inches thick and are laid in regular courses with beveled joints between the blocks. On the first story, the exterior plane of the blocks is rock-faced, with polished blocks serving as quoins at the corners. On the second story, the blocks have a polished finish, with rock faced quoins. The rear one-story shed, which originally was a cold room, has a rough faced concrete block lower wall, with upper walls covered in a cement finish.

Fenestration is composed mostly of double hung one-over-one wood sash windows, regularly disposed across both floors on all sides of the house, with heavy cast concrete lintels and sills. Two single leaf doors, with arched glazed panels, are located in the center of the left and right bays of the facade. The doors feature concrete lintels ornamented with the imprints of leaves. On the second story, single leaf doors with glazed panels are located directly above their first floor counterparts, and provide access to the balcony. Above these doors are concrete lintels including one in which the date "1908" is engraved. Two rusticated concrete block chimneys rise above the roof, one in the center of the front facing gable ridge, and the other at the north end of the side gable wing.

The most notable exterior alteration to the house is the west one story rounded bay, lighted by a row of double hung windows, which was added in 1940 by the son of the original owner immediately following her death. The addition was constructed of concrete block finished in a smooth cement finish. (It is possible that a change in the finish and fenestration of the original rear shed was made at this time also, although family records that discuss the bay do not mention other changes to the cold room.)

The original floor plan of the house, which has been largely preserved, features a front dining room and front parlor along the facade (both accessed through doors off the veranda), a rear parlor in the north wing, and three bedrooms upstairs (with

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access to the upper veranda). At the junction of the wings is the staircase and the one-story annex that includes the cold room and a storage room converted to a bathroom. Although finishes throughout the house have been changed, the parlor still features the original concrete block fireplace, and the dining room retains original tongue and groove wall and ceiling boards. The staircase features paneled oak, turned balusters and a square newel post. Most of the original paneled doors and golden oak window and door surrounds (with entablature hoods) still survive in good condition. Ancillary structures on the ranch include a small, wooden open-sided barn with shed roof and three smaller sheds (all constructed by the mid-20th century) and a noncontributing gabled, frame garage built in the 1970's that does not contribute to the significance of the property.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

 nationally statewide locallyApplicable National Register Criteria A B C DCriteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ArchitectureExploration/Settlement

Period of Significance

1908-1923

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Stevens, Winfield Scott

Architect/Builder

Not Known (see text)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Buckeye Ranch house is historically significant for its association with the first American settlers in the Nile Valley of the upper Naches River, and is an architecturally distinctive example of concrete block construction from the early 20th century. The house, which combines the traditional gable-and-wing form and spacious veranda of a vernacular farmhouse with modern machine-made materials, was the centerpiece of a prosperous ranch and orchard and a popular resting place for travellers, cattlemen, sheep herders, and Yakima Indians en route from the Naches valley to the Cascade mountains. Although the ranch has been diminished in size since mid-century, the house remains a good example of an unusual construction technique from the period, and an evocative reminder of an early Naches River farmstead.

Historical Background:

Winfield Scott Stevens was born in 1851 on his family's homestead in Highland County, Ohio. At 18, he worked in Pennsylvania lumber mills and later alongside his father on the family farm. In 1876, Stevens made his way west, holding temporary jobs in the lumber camps of Illinois and Wisconsin before arriving at Fort Laramie, Wyoming, where he hired on with a wagon train led by John Clark of Missouri and bound for Washington Territory. In 1877, the party arrived in Walla Walla, where both Stevens and Clark began farming. But in 1880, the men sold their land, and moved further west to the Naches Valley, where Stevens married John Clark's daughter Nancy.

Although Stevens initially settled on railroad land near Naches, he soon secured a 160-acre homestead in the Nile Valley along the upper Naches River. By 1887-88, Stevens had moved his family to a one-room log cabin at the remote site and began what was later described as "one of the finest farms in the region."

Located 30 miles northwest of Yakima and 15 miles northwest of Naches, the Nile Valley was nearly inaccessible in the 1880's, and unpopulated by Euro-Americans except for summer cattle camps. The wooded land that Stevens selected for his homesite was along the river at the base of Cleman Mountain, land that had long been used by Yakima Indians as a camp during seasonal trips to hunt, fish, and gather berries in the Cascade foothills.

To provide access to the area, Stevens spent several years building the first heavy road into the district (following existing Indian trails), clearing a route over the top of Horseshoe Bend, along Cleman Mountain, past Mud Lake, and into the Nile Valley.

In 1901, Stevens expanded his property, purchasing additional rangeland in the Nile Valley, and acquiring a large interest in 4,500 acres that stretched from Cleman Mountain to the Wenas River Valley. He soon owned a large herd of cattle and sheep; raised chickens and pigs; and grew numerous crops. According to directories from the early 20th century, Stevens' property was among the dozen most valuable ranches in the entire Naches Valley, and he was variously described in the first decades of the new century as sheep rancher, cattle rancher, and dairy farmer. At the turn of the century, Stevens dug a ditch off the Naches to irrigate part of his land, and soon devoted himself to developing a sizable apple orchard.

Stevens also assumed an important role in civic affairs. He was described as a community leader, helping later settlers establish their farms, and served on the Nile Valley Board of Education from its inception in 1891 until 1906. When telephone service came to the area, the government ran phone lines from the Forest Service and Reclamation Bureau stations at Bumping Lake to the ranch house.

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For many years, the Buckeye Ranch was the scene of considerable activity. Haying and cattle hands slept in tents on the property, and apple pickers and packing crews camped in the orchards east of the house. In addition, the ranch served as a "half-way house," serving free food to numerous travellers passing through the valley in the years before widespread automobile travel. The Buckeye Ranch was also a well-known resting place and campgrounds for the sheep herders and cattlemen of the district, and Yakima Indians continued to stop at the Stevens place during their seasonal trips through the valley until the 1920's.

When Stevens died in 1923, his goodwill was remembered on the front page of the Yakima newspaper, which noted that "strangers found a ready welcome at his door at all times," and his children recalled that a large contingent of Yakima Indians attended the services in Naches. Nancy Clark Stevens continued to live at the ranch after her husband's death, and carried on the tradition of hospitality. When she died in 1940, it was reported that "she retained always the pioneer virtue of being a friend to man in a house by side of the road."

Architectural Character:

When Stevens first settled on his ranch, he built a one-room log cabin from trees felled at the site. In 1889, however, the family moved to a one-and-one-half story plank house, with parlor and several bedrooms. (Both early houses were torn down about 1935.) But Stevens apparently envisioned something considerably grander, and in 1906 began planning what his granddaughter Nina Wood later described as "his dream home." "They designed what they wanted," she recalled, hiring two brothers in Naches to assist with construction. Although Nina wrote that the block was made in Naches and hauled to the site, Stevens' daughter Mary, who was about 20 when the house was built, recalled in 1956 that her father made the blocks himself at the ranch. In any event, construction was mostly complete in late 1907, and the family moved into the house in early 1908.

As an example of concrete block construction, the Buckeye Ranch house is both an early and a well-preserved expression of the technology. All the walls (except for the upper gable ends) are built of load-bearing block and the house also features a concrete porch, and cast concrete pillars, lintels, sills, and cold room. Finished with rock face on the lower levels and polished face on the upper walls, the blocks evoke the traditional craftsmanship and solidity of masonry construction. Interestingly, the roof too employs a modern material--sheet metal--to evoke the traditional craftsmanship of clay tiles.

Concrete blocks were manufactured as early as the 1860's, but the material was not used widely in house construction until the first decade of the 20th century when the homebuilding industry promoted the material as a durable but inexpensive substitute for traditional masonry. Creating the appearance of stone, the material was considerably lighter, and its uniform size and physical qualities were ideal for house construction. Blocks could be finished in a variety of textures, from very rough to highly polished, and--best of all--the block could be manufactured almost anywhere using a relatively small machine and local materials.

The introduction of concrete block machines, particularly after 1910, led to the widespread use of the material. Concrete block machines ranged in price from \$20-\$80, were portable, and were promoted by Sears, Roebuck and other mail-order merchants. The machines featured cast-iron molds into which a dry cement mixture (including a coarse stone aggregate for strength) was combined with a small amount of water, hand tamped until hardened, and removed on pallets to air cure for seven to ten days. The blocks were then laid with cement mortar in traditional masonry fashion.

The first concrete block manufacturer listed in Washington State business directories was a Seattle firm known as the Miracle Concrete Block Company, which first appeared in the 1905 volume; by 1906, a second firm, in Spokane, joined the ranks. By 1909, over 25 firms across the state were listed in directories.

Nationally, too, the promotion of concrete block seems to have gained popularity about 1907, when the first edition of a special Sears catalog devoted to concrete block machines was published. In ensuing years, Sears took a leading role promoting the machines and the material, often pitching sales to farmers unable to secure or afford stone work. Sears included a small one-story concrete block house in its first house plan catalog (1908), and Gustav Stickley illustrated a concrete cottage in a 1909 issue of The Craftsman magazine. The earliest catalogs devoted solely to concrete block houses (as identified by Alan Gowans in a survey of catalogs from the period) include Radford's Cement Houses and How to Build Them (1909); Concrete Houses and Cottages (1909), published by the Atlas Portland Cement Company; Maurice Sloan's The Concrete Home (1912); and Morrill Moulded Concrete Houses (1917). By the later date, such catalogs were more common.

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In the late 1920's and 1930's, mass production of concrete block had largely superceded hand-operated machines. The result was a cheaper block, without the variety of finishes, and therefore commonly covered with stucco to simulate monolithic construction. The era of concrete block as an "imitation stone" (as it was often known in the early years) was at a close.

Viewed in this perspective, it is clear that the Buckeye Ranch house is an early example of a new technology, of particular interest given its remote location. Other examples in Washington dating from the same period and listed in the National Register are located in urban areas, including the Meyer House in Olympia (1910) and the Lumber Exchange Building in South Bend (1907).

The Buckeye Ranch house is also of interest because of the extent of the concrete used in its construction. Throughout the period, concrete block was commonly reserved for foundations, porches, or lower stories. Fewer houses were built entirely of the material, and here again the Stevens house is of interest, particularly because of its varied finishes and variety of concrete elements, like columns and sills.

The integrity of the house is well preserved, and even changes to the structure since 1908 (notably the side bay added in 1940) have been constructed of concrete. A smaller concrete block cottage located down the road probably was also built by the Stevens family, but it is a far less imposing or well preserved example of the style.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Gossett, Gretta. Beyond the Bend. (Fairfield: Ye Galleon Press, 1974).

"Pioneer Line of W.S. Stevens, Pioneer of Washington, 1877," Family Records of Washington Pioneers Prior to 1891, Volume 28, pp. 84-92, (Olympia, 1957).

J. Randall Cotton, "Ornamental Concrete Block Houses," Old House Journal, October, 1984.

"On Final Trail," Yakima Morning Herald, November 9, 1923, p. 1.

Lyman, W.D., Illustrated History of Yakima Valley, S. J. Clarke, 1919, p. 628.

Wood, Nina. "Buckeye Ranch," Unpublished manuscript in Yakima Valley Museum Archives.

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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

Acreage of property approximately 2 acres
USGS Nite, Washington 7.5 (Scale 1:24,000)

UTM References

A	<u>10</u>	<u>661130</u>	<u>5184740</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	Zone	Easting	Northing
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C	Zone	Easting	Northing
---	------	---------	----------

D	Zone	Easting	Northing
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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is a rectangular parcel described thusly: Beginning at the northeast corner of the intersection of Buckeye Lane and the Old Naches Highway, proceed north parallel to the east edge of the private drive extension of Buckeye Lane approximately 300 feet; then proceed west parallel to the rear elevation of the ranch house approximately 200 feet; then proceed south to the north edge of Old Naches Highway; then proceed east along the north edge of Old Naches Highway to the point of beginning, said parcel located in the southeast quadrant of the southeast quadrant of Section 12, Township 15 North, Range 15 East, Yakima County, Washington.

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Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the Buckeye Ranch House, ancillary structures, and surrounding lawn, but does not include the larger ranch lands, which have been reduced substantially in size since the period of historic significance, with the original barn demolished.

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11. Form Prepared By

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date May 1, 1990
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