

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic San Bernardino Ranch

and or common John H. Slaughter Ranch

2. Location

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of Douglas

state Arizona code 04 county Cochise code 003

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: wildlife preserve

4. Owner of Property

name See continuation sheet

street & number \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cochise County Courthouse

street & number \_\_\_\_\_

city, town Bisbee state Arizona

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title \_\_\_\_\_ has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local \_\_\_\_\_

depository for survey records \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

# 7. Description

## Condition

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

## Check one

unaltered

altered

## Check one

original site

moved date \_\_\_\_\_

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

San Bernardino Ranch lies in the San Bernardino Valley, a lowland area of the Sonoran desert well-watered by natural springs. Due to the presence of a year around water supply, the San Bernardino Valley was the site of encampments by Indian tribes, Spanish, Mexican, and American military troops, missionaries, and immigrants into the 19th century. A prehistoric habitation site and a number of bedrock mortars have been located within the NHL boundaries. Evidences of the first permanent Anglo occupation of the valley, a fortified hacienda constructed in the 1820s by the original grantee of the San Bernardino Mexican land grant, can be found just south of the international border. The hacienda was probably constructed atop the remains of a Spanish fortification that was begun in the 1770s but was abandoned when increased danger from the Apaches threatened. The remaining archaeological and architectural resources within the landmark boundaries date primarily from the period of John Slaughter's cattle ranching operations on the land grant acreage between 1884 and 1922.

The original Mexican land grant of 1821 provided for a 100,000-acre ranch spanning both sides of the present U.S.-Mexico border and stretching from the Perilla and Pedregosa Mountains on the west to the Peloncillos and Guadalupe on the east and from the watershed of the San Simon Valley south to Pitaicachi Peak. Although Slaughter did not obtain the full amount of the original Mexican land grant, he was able, through leasing of public land and acquisition of nearby ranches, to gain control of approximately 100,000 acres of the San Bernardino Valley, including most of the springs and streams that fed the Rio San Bernardino. San Bernardino Ranch became the headquarters of a cattle empire that spanned both sides of the international border.

The ranchhouse compound, located about a quarter-mile north of the border, contains nearly all of the landmark's remaining architectural resources. The buildings constructed by the Slaughters include the ranchhouse, ice house, wash house, commissary/cook's house, water tank, car shed, and the nearby granary.

Construction of the ranchhouse probably began about 1893, following the 1887 earthquake that destroyed the earlier Slaughter buildings on the ranch. Its adobe construction type borrows from the Spanish-Mexican building tradition and its hipped rooflines and wide verandas recall the Southern plantation background of its owners. The house appears to have been built in two phases, with the initial phase consisting of six equal-sized rooms--three on either side of a central hall, and a short time later, the addition of a family dining/living room, kitchen, cowboy dining room, and bathroom. The nearby railroad stations at Benson and Wilcox allowed the Slaughters to obtain mail order items for the construction and furnishing of the ranchhouse, such as the California redwood found throughout the house, the turned porch columns, the diamond-paned living room window, and the dining room china cabinet. After the property was sold by the Slaughter family in 1937, later owners modified the house with the addition of roof ventilators and porch enclosures. The present owner has restored the house to the Slaughter period of occupation through historical research and physical evidence.

# 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 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) cattle ranching

Specific dates 1884-1922

Builder/Architect

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

San Bernardino Ranch was the center of a cattle-ranching empire that spanned up to 100,000 acres on both sides of the international boundary of the U.S. and Mexico from the 1880s to the 1920s. The San Bernardino Valley, a well-watered area occupying southern Arizona and northern Mexico, had long been the site of prehistoric occupations, military encampments, and Indian and immigrant trails. Located on the frontier of Spanish, Mexican, then American territory, the valley was subject to Apache depredations and had no permanent Anglo occupation until the 1820s when a Mexican soldier, Ignacio Perez, established a cattle ranch on a land grant embracing much of the valley. Perez abandoned the ranch in the 1830s because of the Apache danger and the valley was again vacant until John Horton Slaughter, a Texas cattle rancher, leased a portion of the Mexican land grant in 1884. Provided with a constant water supply through springs and wells, Slaughter was able to develop the ranch into a 100,000-acre empire that supplied beef, fruit, and vegetables to the surrounding settlements and military posts. Slaughter had previously operated the second-largest cattle ranch in the nearby San Pedro Valley. He gained a reputation as a respected lawman during two terms as sheriff of Cochise County, served a term as a representative to the Arizona Territorial legislature, and helped found the smelter town of Douglas in 1901. Slaughter's occupation and development of the San Bernardino Ranch took place during the era when the "wild West," particularly the Arizona Territory, was building stable, law-abiding communities, and freeing itself from the fear of attack by Indians, Mexican marauders, and the lawless element of frontier society. Slaughter's prowess as a lawman and his contributions to the settlement and security of southeast Arizona are well-chronicled in history. The San Bernardino Ranch, where Slaughter spent the last half of his life, illustrates his talents as a cattle rancher who successfully ran an immense operation on both sides of the border, a lawman who was able to create a secure situation for his family and employees in the often unstable border area, and an influential businessman who took an active part in local political, military, and commercial matters.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Ignacio Perez, son of a prominent Sonoran mine-owner and a soldier with the Mexican army during the war of independence, obtained a land grant of nearly 100,000 acres of the San Bernardino Valley from the Mexican government in 1821. Despite its agricultural and range potential provided by numerous springs, the valley had never been permanently occupied by Europeans because of the constant threat of Apache attack.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 205.88

Quadrangle name College Peaks, AZ

Quadrangle scale 15'

UTM References

*664000 E 3460000 N*

A 

1	2	6	6	3	5	0	0	3	4	6	7	6	7	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B 

1	2	6	6	4	6	5	0	3	4	6	7	6	7	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

C 

1	2	6	6	4	6	2	5	3	4	6	8	4	5	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

D 

1	2	6	6	3	7	5	0	3	4	6	8	4	5	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

E 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

F 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

G 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

H 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ann E. Huston, Historian

organization National Park Service, Western Region date February 1986

street & number 450 Golden Gate Ave., Box 36063 telephone (415) 556-7741

city or town San Francisco, state California 94102

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

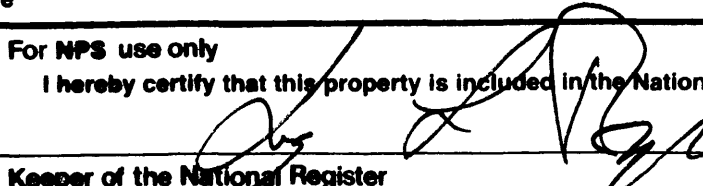
national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

For NPS use only  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register



date 9/30/86

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Johnson Historical Museum of the Southwest  
P.O. Box 1897  
Sun City, Arizona 85372

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2  
P.O. Box 1306  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

International Boundary and Water Commission, U.S. Section  
The Commons, Building C, Suite 310  
4171 North Mesa  
El Paso, Texas 79902  
(Administers a 60-foot strip along the United States side of the  
international border)

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Ranged along the north and west sides of the house are the remaining ranch buildings. To the west of the kitchen porch are two small stone buildings. The southernmost, with a hipped roof and ventilator, was the ice house. The other, to the north, with a gable roof, was the wash house. Just north and east of the wash house is a two-room adobe building with hipped roof which served as a commissary and cook's house. Farther to the east stands a stone car shed with a gable roof built by Slaughter when he purchased his first car. The picket fence that enclosed this compound during the Slaughter era has been reconstructed by the present owner. On a slight rise behind the wash house and ice house is a water tower mounted on a high stone base. Just north of the compound is a hip-roofed stone granary building.

The commissary/cook's house was probably constructed at about the same time as the ranchhouse. Slaughter built the commissary as a convenience for his employees, as Bisbee and Tombstone, the closest towns, were 45 and 65 miles away until the establishment of Douglas in 1901. The commissary was frequented by ranchhands and their families and by local Mexicans and Indians. The room on the east side of the building was used as the cook's residence. The remaining buildings were probably constructed after 1900. A bunkhouse, privy, and chicken coop also stood within or near ranchhouse compound during the Slaughter era, but are no longer extant.

East of the ranchhouse compound is a large pond built by Slaughter for water storage. The pond is located in a natural wash that Slaughter dammed for water retention. Slaughter's stone dam has been restored and slightly raised.

Several corrals, loading chutes, and dip vats near the eastern boundary of the landmark are remnants of Slaughter's cattle ranching operations. The corrals are made of mesquite held together by two strands of wire at top and bottom.

Several structures in the vicinity of the compound were built by later owners--a barn on the site of the original Slaughter barn, a blacksmith shop that replaced the Slaughters', and the pumphouse near the granary--and do not contribute to the landmark's significance.

Archaeological resources associated with the Slaughter ranch include the remains of an adobe schoolhouse, a residence occupied by the Howell's--John Slaughter's in-laws, and a Chinese dwelling.

Remains of the adobe schoolhouse (site no. SB-3), which was used earlier as the Slaughters' residence while the ranchhouse was being completed, are located just east of the pond. The ground has been differentially disturbed by construction, road grading, and placing and removal of a large trailer house, however, the site is in fair condition and retains sufficient integrity to be an important research source. The remains are of a masonry-foundation adobe-wall building that was approximately 16 to 17 feet square. A few

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temporally diagnostic artifacts are associated with the building. Additional adobe building remains may be present to the west and south of the identified ruin.

Remains of the Howell House (site no. SB-15), built in the 1890s by Jimmy Howell (John Slaughter's wife's brother) for himself and his mother, are about a mile southeast of the ranchhouse compound. Remains of three structures have been identified, including two concrete-mortared basalt fieldstone foundations measuring 37 ft. by 39. ft. and 41 ft. by 55 ft., of which the larger was the Howell residence. Artifacts dating to an early twentieth-century occupation are associated with the site.

A house foundation and artifacts associated with a Chinese residence on the Slaughter ranch are located southeast of the ranchhouse compound, about 65 feet north of the boundary. The site consists of a partial basalt fieldstone foundation, a large rock pile, and a large quantity of trash. A portion of the site has been damaged by bulldozer activity. This site is unique in that it is the only site within the NHL boundaries containing evidence of John Slaughter's Chinese laborers. Numerous fragments of Chinese ceramics representing rice bowls, rice wine bottles, ginger or soy sauce jars, and a Chinese milk glass gaming counter are associate the site with occupation dates of 1905-1915.

A feature not directly related to the Slaughter family or cattle ranching, but associated with protection of the ranch and the security of American settlements in the border area in the early 20th century, is the U.S. military encampment site located on a mesa across the pond from the ranchhouse compound. The encampment was an outpost from the Douglas fort, established in the early 1910s to provide protection to American citizens and property during the Mexican Revolution. The mesatop outpost was surrounded by a rock perimeter wall containing fortified positions for gun emplacements or observation points. The encampment consisted mostly of a tent city with a more substantial commissary building and some rock shelters. Remnants of the encampment consist of a walled enclosure (perhaps a corral), a number of rock foundations, and two rock-lined walks. Portions of the stone wall enclosure were removed by later owners to construct the new pumphouse and compound enclosure wall. The outpost saw its greatest activity during the 1910s. After 1918 it was used primarily for practice marches and target shooting and was abandoned in 1933.

A number of additional archeological sites related to the Slaughter occupation of the San Bernardino Ranch have been identified, but do not appear to have sufficient integrity or significance to be contributing elements of the landmark.

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Properties Contributing to the Significance of the National Historic Landmark

Ranchhouse  
Commissary/Cook's house  
Ice House  
Wash House  
Car Shed  
Water Tower  
Granary  
Masonry Dam

Corrals, loading chutes, and dip vats

Military outpost site (SB-1)  
Schoolhouse site (SB-3)  
Howell house site (SB-15)  
Chinese house site (SB-12)

Properties not listed above may be considered non-contributing to the NHL.



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A Spanish garrison established an outpost in the 1770s just south of the presentday international border, cleared a site on a rise 20-30 feet above the valley floor, and began construction of a fortification. The soldiers abandoned the site before completing construction of the fort, because the garrison was too isolated for effective defense against the Apaches.

It was probably on the site of the abandoned fortification that Perez constructed his hacienda, hoping to create a buffer between Sonora and the Apaches. The hacienda occupied two acres and was built on a courtyard plan surrounded by an adobe fortification wall. Perez started ranching operations with 4,000 head of cattle brought from Tumacacori in 1821. Unable to defend his property from Apache depredations, Perez abandoned the ranch in the mid-1830s. Only sand- and brush-covered mounds now remain to show the location of the hacienda. The land grant property remained unoccupied until John Slaughter obtained a lease to it in 1884.

John Slaughter, born in Louisiana in 1841, was a Texas cattleman who moved west to Arizona in the late 1870s. After the Civil War, many Texas cattle ranchers were attracted to the Arizona Territory by the opportunities for supplying beef to the ever-increasing numbers of military posts, Indian agencies, mining camps, and railroad construction crews. Slaughter undertook various commercial and ranching enterprises in southern Arizona, and by 1881 he had the second-largest cattle ranch in the San Pedro Valley.

In 1884 Slaughter purchased a 99-year lease on 65,000 acres of the San Bernardino land grant. The Slaughter family remained in Tombstone so that Slaughter's two children (from his first marriage) could attend school. The Howells, his wife's parents, lived on the ranch property and managed the cattle operations there for Slaughter. In 1887 a major earthquake destroyed all of the Slaughter's buildings on the ranch--two adobe houses, stables, a milkhouse, and a smokehouse. The location of these early Slaughter buildings is unknown. Sometime after the earthquake, Slaughter began construction of the present ranchhouse. John and Viola Slaughter moved to the ranch permanently in 1891, following the expiration of Slaughter's second term as Cochise County sheriff. They lived in a three-room adobe building east of the ranchhouse site until their house was completed, about 1893.

The portion of the San Bernardino land grant leased, and later purchased, by Slaughter lay 1/3 in the United States and 2/3 in Mexico. In 1891, a U.S. claims court investigated the transfer of the Mexican land grant and left Slaughter with only 2,300 acres on the U.S. side of the border. Slaughter eventually acquired control of approximately 100,000 acres spanning the border through purchase of neighboring homesteads and lease of public land. Slaughter developed artesian wells on the eastern portion of the ranch which made possible the cultivation of about 500 acres, farmed mostly by tenant farmers and Chinese gardeners. He constructed the remainder of the buildings in the ranchhouse compound and built a large pond nearby for water storage.

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About 150 people, including Mexican and Yaqui cowboys and Chinese laborers, lived on the ranch in small houses scattered on both sides of the border. The Chinese settlement south of the border grew truck farm produce which the farmers sold in Bisbee and Douglas. Viola Slaughter introduced Chinese cooks into the ranch kitchen.

Although the Slaughter children continued their education in California and the Midwest after the family moved to the ranch, there were a number of school-age children in the vicinity--children of ranch-hands and the foster-children taken in by the Slaughters. In 1902 the Cochise County Board of Supervisors established the Slaughter School District at the San Bernardino Ranch. The number of pupils was probably fewer than twenty at any one time. The adobe building occupied by the Slaughters during construction of the ranchhouse served as the schoolhouse.

The early 1900s were the most prosperous of the ranch. Greater protection was afforded ranchers in Southern Arizona by the Arizona Rangers, and the establishment of Douglas formed a ready market for cattle and produce as well as a source of goods and supplies. There were always people staying at the ranch--relatives, friends, military, lawmen, health-seekers, and paying boarders. In addition, the Slaughters took in a number of foster children from broken or impoverished homes in the vicinity. Food supplies for the ranch came from many sources. Range cattle supplied meat and milk, and there was always a garden, a strawberry patch, a vineyard, and orchards with apples, apricots, figs, and other fruits. The ice house and spring house contained large quantities of canned and perishable foodstuffs.

The Mexican Revolution, which began in 1910, tested Slaughter's skills in managing the portion of his ranch south of the border. Pancho Villa's raids in Sonora and Chihuahua were a constant source of concern for Americans living near the border. The U.S. cavalry maintained a garrison at Douglas for twenty-three years and established an outpost on the San Bernardino Ranch in the early 1910s. The strength of the outpost varied from 10-man detachments to perhaps 600 during the "Pancho Villa scare" of 1915-1916. Citizens of Douglas and the American soldiers stationed on the border to protect American lives and property during the revolution witnessed the battle for Agua Prieta, opposite the border from Douglas. Villa's army at one time entered the San Bernardino Valley and acquired supplies from San Bernardino Ranch on the south side of the border. The San Bernardino outpost occupied a hilltop fortification on a mesa across the pond from the ranchhouse compound. The encampment was little more than a tent city surrounded by a rock fortification, and saw minor use after 1918. In 1933 the outpost was abandoned.

In May of 1921 Jesse Fisher, Viola's cousin and the ranch foreman, was murdered at the ranch. Shortly thereafter, the Slaughters moved from the ranch to Douglas. Slaughter was eighty years old by this time and had turned over most of the ranch operations to his foreman and tenants. John Horton

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Slaughter died in 1922 and the ranch was then leased to various tenants until it was sold to Marion Williams in 1937.

In 1982 the Johnson Historical Museum of the Southwest purchased the property for the creation of a ranch museum. The ranchhouse has been restored to the period when the Slaughters occupied it and is open to the public.

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Doyle, Gerald A. and Associates. "Johnson Historical Museum of the Southwest at San Bernardino Ranch: Preliminary Analysis of Historic Photographs of John Slaughter's Ranch House Compound," October 1982 (In National Park Service landmark file, San Francisco).

Larew, Marilyn. Draft National Historic Landmark form, dated 1978 (In National Park Service landmark file, San Francisco).

Stone, Lyle and James E. Ayres. "A Description and Evaluation of Archaeological Resources, San Bernardino Ranch National Historic Landmark, Cochise County, Arizona," August 1982 (In National Park Service landmark file, San Francisco).

Wells, Reba N. Draft historical report of the San Bernardino Ranch, 1983. (Located at Johnson Historical Ranch office in Sun City, Arizona).

\_\_\_\_\_. Various articles in The Cochise Quarterly, Vol. XX, No. 4, Winter 1985.