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NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS FORM 10-900 (Rev. 8-86) OMB No. 1024-0018 [SD-SHPO # ECA-OH-597-1/89]
[use paper with at least 25% cotton rag content, use NLQ or LQ printer]

United States Department of the Interior -- National Park Service
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES -- REGISTRATION FORM

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 "NA" 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 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Stearns, William, Ranch
other name/ site number: CU-EM-1

2. Location

street & number: E. of Elk Mountain, off Custer County 769 /NA/ not for publication
city, town: Custer /XX/ vicinity
state: SOUTH DAKOTA code: SD county: Custer code: SD 033 zip code: 57730

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property:		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
/XX/ private	/ / building(s)	<u>10</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
/ / public-local	/XX/ district	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
/ / public-state	/ / site	<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	structures
/ / public-federal	/ / structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
	/ / object	<u>11</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Ranches of Southwestern Custer County, SD

Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National
Register: 0

11. Form Prepared by

name/title: Rebecca Sample Bernstein, Preservation Consultant
organization: Custer County Board of Commissioner date: January 17, 1990
street & number: 420 Mt. Rushmore Road telephone: 605-673-4815
city or town: Custer state: SOUTH DAKOTA zip code: 57730

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property name

, Custer County
county

, SOUTH DAKOTA
state

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.

[Signature] _____ 5/12/90 _____
Signature of certifying official Date

S. D. H. SHOO _____
State or Federal agency or 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 or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register	<u>Mark L. Baker</u>	Entered in the National Register	<u>5 July 1990</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> see continuation sheet determined eligible for the National Register	_____		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> see continuation sheet determined not eligible for the National Register	_____		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain) _____	_____		_____
_____	_____		_____
_____	<u><i>[Signature]</i></u>		_____
	Signature of the Keeper		Date

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, Custer
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state

6. Function or Use (enter categories from instructions)

Historic functions:

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling
AGRICULTURE/Storage
AGRICULTURE/Animal Facility
AGRICULTURE/Agricultural Outbuilding

Current Functions:

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling
AGRICULTURE/Storage
AGRICULTURE/Animal Facility
AGRICULTURE/Agricultural Outbuilding

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

(enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials:

(enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete, Wood
walls Stucco
Wood
roof Asphalt, Wood
other Metal

Describe present and historic physical appearance: /XX/ see continuation sheet

8. Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in

relation to other properties: / / / / /XX/
nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria /XX/ A / /B / /C / /D

Criteria Considerations / /A / /B / /C / /D / /E / /F / /G

Areas of Significance (enter from instructions)

Exploration/Settlement

Period of Significance
circa 1905-1920

Significant Dates
NA

Significant Person
NA

Cultural Affiliation
NA

Architect/Builder
Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations,
and periods of significance noted above /XX/ see continuation sheet

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The William Stearns Ranch is located east of Elk Mountain off Custer County Road 769. It occupies a grassy surface between a pine covered knoll and a rock canyon. The buildings are randomly arranged with the main house dominating the district.

List of Resources:

1. House: (Contributing), c. 1905; Oriented to the east, the house is a two-story, wood frame, rectangular pen dwelling with a one-story shed roofed entrance. Wall surfaces are covered with stucco. A gable roof with overhanging eaves is covered with wood shingles on the north slope, and with asphalt paper on the south slope. The shed roof is clad with wood boards and tin. The house rests on a concrete foundation. Fenestration is generally balanced from floor to floor and consists mostly of double-hung wood sash windows and a few smaller fixed-sash windows. The main entrance is located in the shed-roofed addition on the east. A secondary door is located between the two first floor windows, and opens to the living room on the south elevation.

The main block of the house displays a single-width double-pile configuration on both floors. The shed roof entrance area adds a small room at the front of the house on the first floor. Stairs leading to the second floor are located on the north side of the main block east room. On the main floor, the east room is the kitchen, and the west room is a living room. There are two bedrooms on the upper level.

The house and the root cellar are separated from the other buildings, including the privy, by a post and wire fence.

2. Barn: (Contributing), c. 1905 - 1920; The wood frame barn is clad with vertical boards and rests on a wood sill. It is capped by a shed roof covered with wood and asphalt paper.

3. Shed: (Contributing), c. 1905 - 1920; The first shed, a simple pen rectangular building, rises from a wood sill. While the bottom half of the shed is built of logs with saddle corner notching, the top half is of frame construction clad with vertical and horizontal boards. It is capped by a gable roof also covered with wood boards.

4. Root Cellar: (Contributing), c. 1905 - 1920; The root cellar is a simple dugout with a wooden door.

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5. Privy: (Contributing), c. 1905 - 1920; The privy is a rectangular pen building that rises from a wood sill and is covered with a shed roof of horizontal board construction.

6. Shed: (Contributing), c. 1905 - 1920; The second shed is a wood frame structure that rises from a wood sill and is capped by a shed roof.

7, 8, and 9. Attached Sheds: (Contributing), c. 1905 - 1920; The attached group of three sheds feature wood and rock combination sills, frame construction covered with wood boards and metal, and wood clad shed roofs.

10. Shed: (Contributing), c. 1905 - 1920; The third shed has a shape like a large privy but seems to have served as a storage facility. It rests on a wood sill, is covered in horizontal boards, and is capped by a tin-covered shed roof.

11. Garage: (Contributing), c. 1920; The garage was built at the end of the Stearns' ownership. The wood frame building rises from a wood sill and is capped by a tin-covered gable roof.

The district has witnessed little change in recent times.

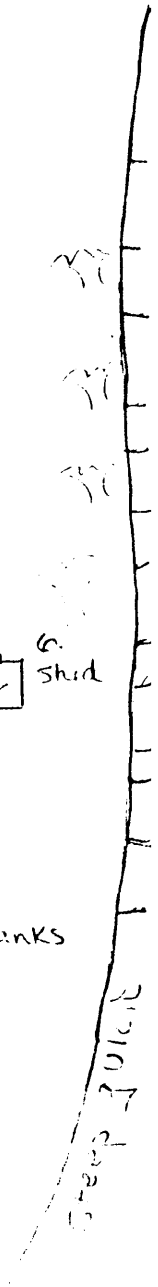
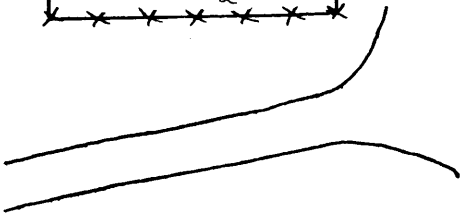
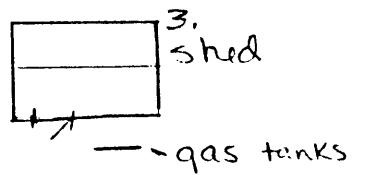
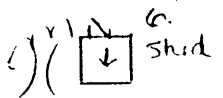
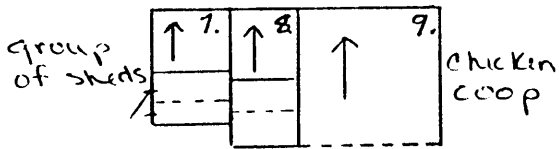
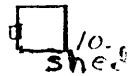
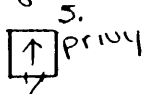
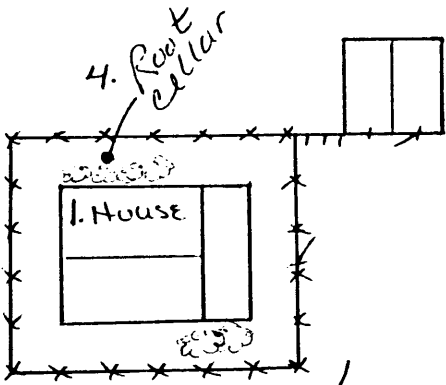
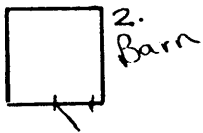
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STEARNS RANCH SITE MAP ON REVERSE SIDE

Site Plan (Complete Inventory of Structures and Features) with North Arrow



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Under Criterion A of the National Register Criteria, the William Stearns Ranch is significant in the area of Exploration/Settlement, because it represents the development of the legal homestead rancher in the southwestern corner of Custer County, South Dakota. In particular, this ranch represents one of the earliest methods of land acquisition known as "squatting." Homestead ranchers were the first generation of settlers to make good and to continue to live on a homestead claim in this semiarid part of Custer County. The homestead rancher who lived on his/her property, as did the Stearns family, represents a shift from the owners and workers of large cattle companies of the open range period who frequently lived in town.

Under the South Dakota State Historical Preservation Plan the nominated property relates to the historic contexts labeled: IV. Permanent Rural and Urban Settlement, A. Claim Era; and IV. C. Permanent Farm and Ranch Development. This property relates to the local historic context and property type labeled: "Ranches of Southwestern Custer County, South Dakota."

The Stearns Ranch was established in circa 1905 by William Stearns who came to South Dakota from Chadron, Nebraska, to raise Percheron (work) horses. Stearns had already used his homesteading rights in Nebraska, so he "squatted" on the ranch in Custer County. "Squatting" is living on a parcel of land without filing a claim. The house was clearly intended to be a permanent home, and the family lived there until 1920 when the Federal Government removed them. At the time Stearns first settled in Custer County, squatting was not unusual. However, by 1920, the Homestead Acts had been amended making ranching and horse raising more feasible, and squatting was no longer tolerated.

Fred Hines received a patent to the land in 1925, but he did not live there long and does not seem to have been a rancher. In 1934, the property was sold to Bert Tony, who was an immigrant rancher from Switzerland. Ten years later, Tony sold the property to Arthur Montgomery. About 1951, the Montgomerys sold the property to Beverly (male) and Geraldine Woodford, who in 1953 sold it to Harold and Loretta Mahnke. The Mahnke family did not live at the ranch but used it only to winter cattle. Vernon Simmons bought the property in 1963. Simmons used this land as extra range for cattle, and occasionally stayed at the ranch.

The period of significance of the nominated property extends from its date of founding and construction of the oldest extant contributing resources in 1905 to 1920, when the Stearns family vacated the ranch.

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property name

, Custer
county

, SOUTH DAKOTA
state

9. Major Bibliographical References

/XX/ see continuation sheet

Previous documentation by 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:

- /XX/ State historic preservation office
- / / Other State agency
- / / Federal agency
- / / Local government
- / / University
- / / Other

Specify repository:

South Dakota Historical Preservation Center

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property:

UTM References:

A =	/	/	/	/	/	/	B =	/	/	/	/	/	/
C =	/	/	/	/	/	/	D =	/	/	/	/	/	/
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		

Quad:

Scale:

/XX/ see continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description:

/XX/ see continuation sheet

Boundary Justification:

/XX/ see continuation sheet

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Brown, Mabel. "Not Much Doing at Dewey." Bits and Pieces, Your Own Western History Magazine. Vol 3, no.10., 1967.

Kraenzel, Carl Frederick. The Great Plains in Transition. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955.

Lee, Bob, and Dick Williams. The Last Grass Frontier, The South Dakota Stock Grower Heritage. Sturgis, South Dakota: Black Hills Publishers, Inc., 1964.

Schell, Herbert Samuel. History of South Dakota. 3rd. ed., rev.: Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975.

Sundstrom, Jessie Y., ed. Custer County History to 1976. Custer, South Dakota: Custer County Historical Society, (printed by Rapid City, South Dakota, Printing, Inc.), 1977.

Personal and Telephone Interviews by Rebecca Sample Bernstein, Summer/Fall, 1988:

Harry Mann, Newcastle, Wyoming
Kenneth Montgomery, Sundance, Wyoming
Hoyt Nicholas, Custer, South Dakota
Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Simmons, Newcastle, Wyoming
William Stearns, Newcastle, Wyoming
Jessie Sundstrom, Custer South Dakota

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 3.5 acres.

UTM REFERENCES: Since the appropriate U.S.G.S. quad map does not have UTM marks for calculating the UTM references of the nominated property, those references have been calculated in longitude and latitude.

References: 103 degrees 59 minutes 28 seconds longitude/
43 degrees 40 minutes 10 seconds latitude.

Jewel Cave NW Quad. (1955), scale: 1:24000.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The nominated property is bounded by a set of imaginary lines that intersect to form a rectangle around the ranch district. The northern boundary line lies 20 meters north of the northernmost wall of the Barn (resource # 2) and runs parallel to that wall. The eastern boundary line lies 60 meters east of the easternmost wall of the Barn and runs parallel to that wall. The southern boundary line lies 40 meters south of the southernmost wall of the House (resource # 1) and runs parallel to that wall. The western boundary line lies 30 meters west of the westernmost wall of the House and runs parallel to that wall. The ranch is located in the Northeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 27, Township 4 South, Range 1 East, (Black Hills Meridian) in Custer County, South Dakota.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: The boundary lines of the nominated property are set to include all features of the ranch complex, but to exclude pasture land and any public roadways.

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1.

William Stearns Ranch
Custer Vicinity, Custer County, South Dakota
by Rebecca Sample Bernstein
June 1988
Neg: State Historical Preservation Center
House (resource no. 1), south and east elevations,
camera facing northwest
Photo No. 1

2.

William Stearns Ranch
Custer Vicinity, Custer County, South Dakota
by Rebecca Sample Bernstein
June 1988
Neg: State Historical Preservation Center
Garage (resource no. 9), south and east elevations,
camera facing northwest
Photo No. 2

3.

William Stearns Ranch
Custer Vicinity, Custer County, South Dakota
by Rebecca Sample Bernstein
June 1988
Neg: State Historical Preservation Center
Root cellar (resource no. 4), east elevations, camera facing west
Photo No. 3

4.

William Stearns Ranch
Custer Vicinity, Custer County, South Dakota
by Rebecca Sample Bernstein
June 1988
Neg: State Historical Preservation Center
Attached sheds (resource nos. 7, 8, and 9),
south and west elevations, camera facing northeast
Photo No. 4

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5.
William Stearns Ranch
Custer Vicinity, Custer County, South Dakota
by Rebecca Sample Bernstein
June 1988
Neg: State Historical Preservation Center
Shed (resource no. 3), south and west elevations,
camera facing northeast
Photo No. 5

6.
William Stearns Ranch
Custer Vicinity, Custer County, South Dakota
by Rebecca Sample Bernstein
June 1988
Neg: State Historical Preservation Center
Privy (resource no. 5), south and west elevations,
camera facing northeast
Photo No. 6