

PH0660116

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 10 1978
DATE ENTERED MAY 22 1978

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

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Kay-El-Bar Ranch

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

N of Wickenburg on Rincon Rd.

CITY, TOWN

Wickenburg

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3

STATE

Arizona

CODE

04

COUNTY

Yavapai

CODE

025

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. William B. Leach

STREET & NUMBER

Box 98

CITY, TOWN

Wickenburg

STATE

Arizona 85358

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Yavapai County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Prescott

STATE

Arizona

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

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

The Kay-El-Bar lies in a natural amphitheater of desert hills on the West bank of the Hassayampa, a wide, meandering, intermittent stream lined with cottonwoods. The elevation at the ranch is 2076 feet.

R.H. Lowdermilk built the first structures here in January of 1910: a wooden cabin and a tent house "against the hill (N) across the wash near the original well where I had a windmill and small concrete tank up on the shoulder of the hill."

The one-room shingled cabin with covered porch has since been moved to the ranch yard and is used mainly to store geological specimens from the surrounding hills.

The next building was an adobe house constructed in May of 1914. The building, which faces South, is roughly square with a hipped roof and was used for many years as the ranch office. In 1919, a frame house was built North of the adobe but this has since been torn down.

Construction on the main Ranch building began in the summer of 1925 and opened for business in February of 1926. This T-shaped building has a row of rooms and baths for guests and a large living-dining room wing with a river rock fireplace and beams made from the 1st telephone poles in the area. The adobes were made in a pit next to the site. The building is basically sound but has some cracks from settling.

The last adobe house was built by Henry Warbasse for his family in 1927. In later years, it was used as a dining room. The walls of the adobe buildings are 12-18 inches thick.

Irregular-shaped lawns are maintained around the main buildings and the swimming pool. Driveways are dirt. Much of the area is shaded by large trees, including a wooden dance pavilion which was used for square dances and western music.

Remaining structures on the site are stables, corrals, and cabins and trailers for employees.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1909, 1916

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The history of the Kay-El-Bar reflects many of the major aspects of dude ranching in southern Arizona. It started as a working cattle ranch with occasional visits by friends of the owners. The combination of real Western ranch life and winter sunshine brought so many enthusiastic guests that it became a commercial venture. A crucial element in the success of such an enterprise was the personality of the host, in this case Romaine Lowdermilk, an accomplished performer and a man of considerable charm.

The architecture of the ranch was basically southwestern to contribute to the atmosphere which guests expected. The buildings of Kay-El-Bar were designed and built by the owners of adobes made on the site. This southwestern style spilled over onto neighboring towns. Wickenburg was one of many such communities emphasizing the western theme in its commercial architecture and in fact Wickenburg soon became the "Dude Ranch Capital of the World." That title was due to the Kay-El-Bar, which was one of the first dude ranch in the state, and a number of other highly successful guest ranches which proliferated in the area in the 1920s. This activity peaked in the late 1940s and declined sharply about 1970. Kay-El-Bar closed in 1973. The number of such ranches is now about 1/4 of what it was at the peak of their popularity.

Probably several factors combined to bring about the decline of the industry. In the early years, guests arrived by train and stayed weeks or even months. The trend now is toward the auto vacation with stops of only one or two days. A second factor is the change in Arizona itself. Much of the West is no longer very different from the rest of the country and guests come for sunshine rather than western atmosphere. They prefer a conventional resort setting with a lot of service. Many of the ranches tried to cater to these demands but found help too hard to get and too expensive. Inflation even doubled hay prices. Wickenburg has responded to some of these pressures by developing "tennis ranches" and by de-emphasizing the western theme and focusing attention on its colorful history.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Attached List.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 7

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,2	33,86,2,0	3,76,44,9,0	B	1,2	33,87,6,0	3,76,43,2,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,2	33,84,6,0	3,76,43,2,0	D	1,2	33,84,6,0	3,76,44,9,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at Point B where the dirt road meets the west bank of the Hassayampa River, proceeding due West 1000 feet to Point C, then North 500 feet to Point D, then due East 450 feet to Point A on the river bank, then southwesterly along the bank to the point of beginning.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marjorie H. Wilson National Register Contract Historian

ORGANIZATION

Natural & Cultural Resource

DATE

Arizona State Parks

Conservation Section

12/9/77

STREET & NUMBER

1688 West Adams

TELEPHONE

271-4174

CITY OR TOWN

Phoenix

STATE

Arizona

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

Cecathy H. Hall

TITLE

SHPO

DATE

1-4-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: Walter Cole

DATE

5-22-78

DATE

4-26-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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The site of the Kay-El-Bar was occupied for centuries by prehistoric peoples whose remains and artifacts have been discovered from time to time on the property. However, no formal excavation has been done nor have the artifacts been dated or classified. Evidence of permanent occupation by Modern Indians has not been found. The area was not settled during the Spanish and Mexican periods and after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, it became federal land.

Although it may be assumed that prospectors and cattlemen roamed the area during the next 1/2 century, no permanent occupation is recorded until Romaine Householder Lowdermilk (1890-1970) squatted on the land in 1909.

Lowdermilk was born in Kansas where he was a schoolmate and close friend of Eugene C. Pulliam, later publisher of the Arizona Republic, Phoenix Gazette, and Indianapolis Star. He apparently went to Texas about 1907, where he learned to be a cowboy, and arrived in Arizona in 1909. Late that year he squatted on federal land 3 miles north of Wickenburg on the West bank of the Hassayampa and began to raise cattle. Eventually, he acquired a partner, Henry Warbasse, who had been a cowboy for the Chiricahua Cattle Company.

Lowdermilk, a young man with considerable energy and a variety of talents, found time in the next few years to write several dozen western short stories. As these were published, they attracted the attention of other Western writers, several of whom stopped by for a visit and enjoyed themselves so much they insisted on becoming regular paying guests. This fairly informal arrangement began about 1916 and succeeded so well that the partners decided to form a corporation and expand their guest facilities. Dude Ranching soon took so much of Lowdermilk's time that he had to give up writing stories.

In 1927, he sold out to Warbasse (who became the first president of the Arizona Dude Ranch Association formed in the late 1920s) and started a new ranch at Rimrock. This ranch was sold to the Eaton brothers, who are credited with originating western dude ranching on their place in South Dakota. Lowdermilk later owned guest ranches at Coyote Basin, Soda Springs, and Cave Creek. Several silent movies were made from his stories for which he wrote the screenplays, and many of them were filmed on one or the other of his ranches.

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Lowdermilk was also a widely known Western entertainer who sang, played the guitar, did rope tricks, was a radio star, and wrote some 200 songs. He retired from dude ranching when he sold his Cave Creek ranch in 1950.

Warbasse sold the Kay-El-Bar in 1935 and it had a succession of owners until it was purchased by the present owners in 1964. However, by then the boom days of dude ranching were over and in 1973 the Kay-El-Bar stopped taking guests and became a winter home for its owners.

Although the Kay-El-Bar and many of the other ranches have closed, some students suggest that at the peak of their popularity they created an image of Arizona for the rest of the country and even gave Arizona a self image. The ranches have declined but much of that influence remains and Romaine Lowdermilk, as an accomplished Western performer and writer had a great deal to do with creating that image.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

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Arizona Republic. October 22, 1939, March 1, 1953, June 24, 1970.

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Lowdermilk, R.H. Interview. July 26, 1938.

Lowdermilk, R.H. Letters, clippings, pamphlets, photos now in possession of Mrs. Leach.

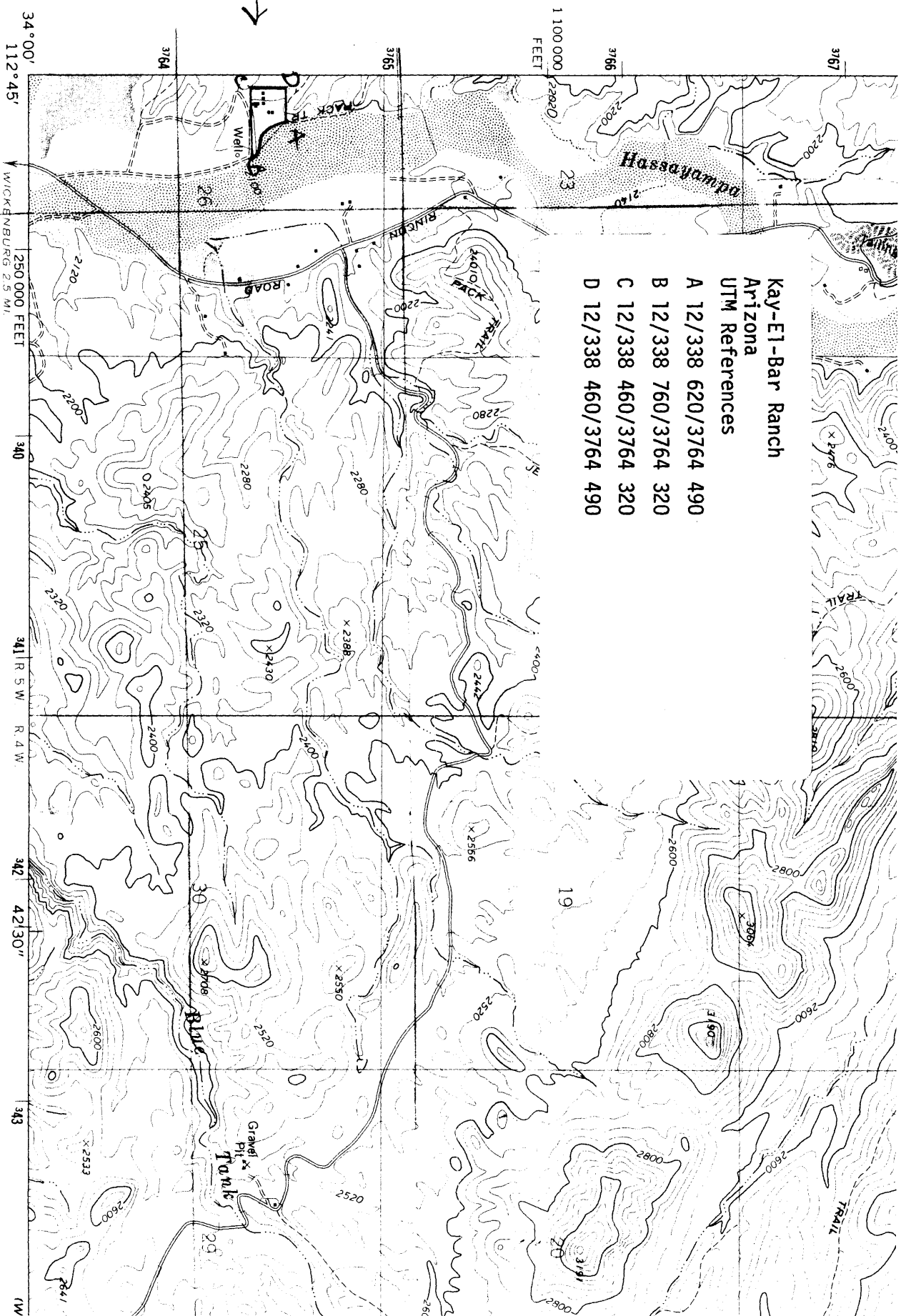
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Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Arizona, 1976.

Prescott Journal-Miner. March 19, 1922.

White, John I. Git Along Little Dogies. 1975

Kay-E1-Bar Ranch
 Arizona
 UTM References

A	12/338	620/3764	490
B	12/338	760/3764	320
C	12/338	460/3764	320
D	12/338	460/3764	490



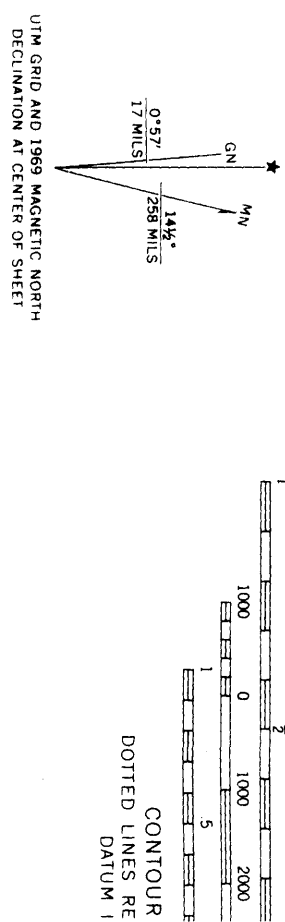
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1968. Field checked 1969

Polycomic projection. 1927 North American datum
 10,000-foot grid based on Arizona coordinate system, central zone
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
 zone 12, shown in blue

Fire red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines



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