

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Crow Creek/Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District

Other names/site number Crow Creek Ranch, Gilchrist Ranch, Cole Ranch

2. Location

Street & Number 1065 Happy Jack Road Not for Publication

City or Town Cheyenne Vicinity X

State Wyoming Code WY County Laramie Code 021

Zip Code 82009

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Mary M. Hopkins Date June 8, 2009

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

☒ 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):

☐

☐

☐

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private

☐ public-local

☐ public-State

☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

☐ building(s)

☒ district

☐ site

☐ structure

☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

5

1

building(s)

3

sites

4

structures

objects

12

1

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	AGRICULTURE	Sub:	Animal facility
	AGRICULTURE		Irrigation facility
	AGRICULTURE		Agricultural outbuilding
	AGRICULTURE		Agricultural field
	DOMESTIC		Single dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	AGRICULTURE	Sub:	Animal facility
	AGRICULTURE		Irrigation facility
	AGRICULTURE		Agricultural outbuilding
	AGRICULTURE		Agricultural field
	DOMESTIC		Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER
Western Ranch

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	Stone
roof	Asphalt
walls	Stone
	Wood
	Stucco
other	

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
See Continuation Sheets

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*Crow Creek/Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District
Laramie County, Wyoming*

Crow Creek/Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District

The Crow Creek/Cole Ranch headquarters historic district is located on the north side of South Crow Creek in the Happy Valley area of southwestern Laramie County (T14N, 69W, NW ¼ Section 26). The 49-acre property located south of Happy Jack Road is adjacent to an area with some residential development. The ranch headquarters is situated between a ridge and the South Crow Creek. A gravel road follows the lower contours of the ridge at the edge of the creek bottom to the ranch property and terminates there. The road and buildings are oriented to the creek, which runs from the southwest to the northeast. For this description, northwest will be north and so on.

The ranch headquarters district consists of several components, including a large bank barn with a stone basement level, a stone two-room bunkhouse, a stone residence now clad with stucco, and a well constructed prior to 1890. A fenced corral located southeast of the barn and a metal quonset building were erected in 1950. An outhouse and root cellar, and the Gilchrist No. 1 irrigation ditch complete the set of buildings and structures. Also encompassed in the district are the hay meadow north of the creek, grazing land to the west of the buildings, and the bluff and grazing land to the north. A chicken house erected in 1982 replaced an earlier building; the chicken house post-dates the period of significance and is the only non-contributing resource.

Ranch Barn

This large bank barn with stone basement, constructed in 1890, is located on the south side of the gravel road on a hillside. The slope provides entrance to the upper level of the barn. Two drives of bermed earth edged with wood beams lead to driveway doors in the north wall. A lane turns off of the ranch road and leads down the slope and around the barn to its lower level and to the ranch yard between the house and the barn.

The bank barn has a nine-foot high stone basement foundation of roughly cut and coursed local stone. The structure, 92 feet long by 50 feet wide, is timber-framed and enclosed with board and batten sheathing on the upper level, including the gable face areas. The gable roof is clad with asphalt shingles. The roof eaves just clear the plane of the walls below. A wood-framed cupola, square in plan, has intersecting gable roofs and is terminated with a lightning rod.

On the basement level, the barn is framed with peeled, but un-shaped, pine posts that support pillow blocks. The main beams are hand-hewn and have squared scarf joints above the blocks. Transverse pine joists are hand hewn on two sides while the other sides are un-peeled.

The wall of the basement that faces south is pierced by eleven openings, four windows, six man doors, and one wider sliding door at the west end that gives access to the team stalls. Wood timber lintels support the single course of stone above the openings and milled lumber forms the sills. Girts adjacent to the lintels, visible on the interior, form a complete course of wood at this level. Wood nailing blocks set into the masonry and simple plank door and window frames complete the openings. Windows have four-light sash that slide into the adjacent masonry walls similar to a pocket door. Door openings are filled with a combination of vertical plank doors and divided doors, units with a frame around diagonal sheathing. There are two windows in the east end wall and three in the west end wall.

A row of team stalls for draft horses is positioned along the west end wall. A feed room is located in the northwest corner. A set of wood shelves is built into the stone wall opposite the stalls. A man door in the south wall opens to a feeding aisle. Narrow, steep wood steps to the tack room rise adjacent to the south wall from this area. Two rows of

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wood mangers and stanchions for milking cows are located east of the feeding aisle. The rest of the lower level is divided into loose pens. A feed rack stands along the east end wall.

The upper mow level is framed of hewn timbers, half-hewn timbers, and unpeeled poles and joined with mortise-and-tenon joints and wood pegs. The bent framing defines seven bays yet leaves the central half of the barn free of framing members. Pairs of bents with Z-bracing extend from the wall posts to posts that support the purlins. Angled bracing between the main exterior posts and the plate stabilize the exterior frame. Milled rafters, spliced at the interior post line, are notched to rest on hewn plates and support the braced ridgepole.

The upper level is one large open hay mow except for the west end bay which is separated by a wall from the rest of the space. A granary with studs-out framing and smooth horizontal tongue-and-groove sheathing on the interior walls occupies most of the bay. Four windows in the west wall of the granary have four-over-four double-hung wood sash. An exterior opening positioned near the center of the end wall is filled with a divided braced door. The stairs from the basement level rise into a tack room at the south end of the west bay. A pole serves as a plate and transverse poles support a raised mow area above the granary and tack room accessed by a ladder attached to the granary wall. The western set of vehicle doors open onto the second bay from the end, adjacent to the granary. A sliding man door is positioned at the south end of this bay. Four hay chutes positioned adjacent to framing posts are enclosed with posts and planking.

The eastern set of vehicle doors on the upper level give access to a drive edged with waist-high posts and rails that occupies the third bay from the east end of the barn. Its floor has wide smooth planks that are transverse to the length of the mow. A sliding man door at the south end of the drive replicates that of the west drive. Both sets of paired vehicle doors are braced paneled wood units that are nearly as high as the wall. The interior sides of the doors are vertical bead board; sheet metal covers portions of the exteriors. A small opening with a board and batten siding door is located in the east end wall.

The barn has excellent integrity in all aspects, but is in poor condition. The basement wall adjacent to the bank has collapsed and the upper level has shifted to the south and become unstable. A barn rehabilitation project begun in 2008 will address these structural problems and improve the condition of the barn without affecting its character-defining features.

Stone Bunkhouse

The 19-foot by 40-foot bunkhouse with 10-foot-high walls, constructed circa 1880, is located at the west edge of the house yard and separates the domestic portion of the ranch headquarters from animal raising and storage areas. The foundation and walls are cut and coursed local stone; small pieces of stone are fitted into the walls to maintain the coursing pattern. The building has two rooms, a northern one and a southern one, each entered by an outside door in the east wall; the rooms are connected on the interior by a door. The gable roof, covered with asphalt shingles, has a slight overhang; a gutter extends along the east eaves. The interior floor level of the south room is lower and the height of the exterior doors varies by one course of stone. A washstand or dry sink of beadboard is built into the north room adjacent to a beadboard cupboard. Steps lead from the south room to a cellar. The exterior doors are a four-paneled unit and a paneled and glazed one, which are set in openings topped with stone lintels and have plank thresholds. Windows in the other three walls have four-over-four double-hung wood sash. Long stones are set as the lintels and the sills for each of these openings.

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Tar ghost lines outline a gabled door hood above the south door. A wood trellis stands adjacent to the north end of the east wall. Several of the stones in the wall have images scratched into them. A stone on the rear wall has a dove figure holding a banner into which is carved "E L L" and a date that begins with 18, the last two numerals of which are illegible. A stone at the northwest corner features initials, "E L L." Other stones have incised brands and the initial J.

Like the barn, the bunkhouse has excellent integrity, but it exhibits structural problems that must be addressed. The stone used in the bunkhouse is showing signs of extreme weathering, a condition that occurred with the stone ranch house on this property. The stones in the north wall and the east wall, in which the entrance doors are located, have been damaged due to facing the prevailing wind. Many of the stones in the lower portions of these walls have been extensively eroded and the adjacent mortar is missing as well. A rehabilitation project to be undertaken in 2009 will stabilize the exterior stone walls.

Crow Creek Ranch House

The ranch house on this property was erected in 1879 of carefully cut and coursed sandstone; the house is located south of the barn and faces south toward South Crow Creek. The house originally had a T-form, with both wings 1½ stories in height. The front wing is 18 feet by 32 feet; the rear wing is approximately 14 feet square. A stone watertable course was originally approximately 1½ feet above grade. The finely cut and coursed masonry of the house contrasts with that of the bunkhouse and barn. The dwelling has intersecting gable roofs with overhanging eaves. Eave braces, a curved V-form above a horizontal member terminated with semi-circular forms, remain in place at two of the three main gable peaks. These braces and incised figures at the top of the window framing provide the only ornament for the house. Brick chimneys rise through the ridges of both roofs.

An enclosed stone entry porch projects from the center of the east facing façade of the house. The gable roof of the entrance also has a gable brace. The segmentally-arched door opening has a keystone inscribed with the date 1879 and a Gilchrist brand beneath it. A transom window above the door lights the porch. The windows flanking the porch and the other windows all have segmentally-arched openings. Stone sills and flush arched heads with flush keystones defined the openings, which by the 1940s were filled with square-headed two-over-two double-hung wood sash, which may have been the original sash. This sash, along with exterior storm windows, fill the window openings. The fenestration pattern on the rear wing has been obscured by additions.

Wood additions had been made to the house by the second quarter of the twentieth century. An open porch flanked the east side of the rear wing. A shed-roofed addition extending from the west side of the rear wing had walls enclosed with wood siding and corrugated sheet metal.

By the late 1940s, two concrete block additions had been completed. The larger wing extended to the west of the rear wing and replaced the earlier wood lean-to. The gable roof of this wing intersected the roof of the rear wing. The windows in the addition have multi-light metal sash; set in the north and south walls, the windows provide a well-lighted section close to the older portion of the house, which was presumably the kitchen. Smaller windows provided light for a bathroom and milk room. Exterior doors are located in the south wall and in the end wall of the addition, facing east. A smaller addition of the same materials, 14 feet by 11 feet, was positioned on the east side of the rear wing (replacing the open porch) and extends a few feet to shelter the end wall of the front wing. It has two picture window sized openings, one of which still has its multi-light metal sash. By 1982 a small enclosed entrance had been added to the north side of the house that faces the ranch yard. A second enclosed porch was added to shelter the

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entrance in the larger addition. An eight-foot square concrete patio was installed on the east side of the smaller concrete block addition. Stucco was applied to the exterior at some time after circa 1949 to protect the exterior stone from the weather, perhaps in 1963 when the value of the house increased in the assessor's records.

A fence of poles and planks set in wide X-shapes separates the house yard from the parking areas of the ranch yard. A mosaic-pattern stone sidewalk leads from the fence to the entrance into the circa 1949 addition. Concrete covers the area where there is a flush cover to a well and a raised cover of a cistern. A hand-pump is located nearby. A narrow concrete sidewalk edges the north edge of the house and extends around the corner on the east side to connect with the patio.

Photographs of the house indicate that all the vegetation currently around it post-dates the 1940s. A pair of lilac bushes flanks the small ca. 1949 wing and a long row of lilac bushes stands near the fence at the edge of the house yard. A group of deciduous trees, including an elm and some poplars, stand east of the house. Currently, a cherry tree stands near the enclosed stone porch and another one is near the south end of the bunkhouse. A fence encloses the lawn that extends from the house to near the Gilchrist No. 1 irrigation ditch. An irrigated hay field extends from the lawn south to the South Crow Creek where willows grow along the streambed.

The portion of the ranch house that has stone walls is perceived on the interior of the dwelling, clearly evident in the depth of two interior doorways. The front wing is divided into two rooms and the door to the enclosed stone porch is located in the west room. The walls of both rooms are clad with patterned fiberboard paneling and the floors are covered with wall-to-wall carpeting. The most significant change to the interior of the house is the removal of the east wall of the rear wing to create one large room that incorporates the lower level of the rear wing and the smaller circa 1949 addition. A beam in the ceiling marks the location of the wall that has been removed. This area has a hardwood floor and wood paneling that presumably dates to the circa 1949 or the early 1960s. A bathroom in the northwest corner has been recently updated. The room at the southwest corner, formerly a milk room, is now a pantry.

A quite steep enclosed wood staircase extends from the north end of the inner wall of the west front room to the upper level. A simple balustrade in the upper hall consists of square posts and rectangular balusters. A small bedroom is located beside the stair hall; angled walls echo the shape of the roof above and a door provides access to an under-the-eaves storage area. A larger bedroom with coved ceilings occupies the west side of the upper floor. A small door in the upstairs hall gives access to the attic area above the rear wing.

The integrity of the ranch house is good, though changes in design and materials have occurred during the period of significance. In summary, the ranch house consists of the original T-shaped stone dwelling and the circa 1949 additions. The stucco was added to the building circa 1963. Photographs of the ranch house document the deteriorated state of the sandstone of the exterior walls.

Quonset

A 21-foot by 48-foot quonset building was constructed in 1950. It was placed southwest of the barn on the opposite side of the lane. The building, with typical corrugated metal walls and roof and a pair of sliding doors at the east end, dates to the period of significance, and therefore is a contributing component of the property.

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Corral

The corral fencing that extends to the southeast of the barn consists of squared and pole posts. The horizontal members are a mixture of small poles and planks. The tax assessor's records indicate that a corral was constructed in 1950.

Gilchrist No. 1 Irrigation Ditch

An irrigation ditch constructed circa 1879 extends across the property south of the house lawn, roughly parallel to the creek. The ditch, which presumably has silted in to some extent, is approximately 10 inches wide and 10 inches deep, the width and depth of a shovel. The head gate for this ditch is not located on this property. A lateral distribution ditch extends from this one at the east edge of the house yard; it runs north and then east to expand the size of the irrigated hay meadow.

Outhouse

The outhouse is located on the west side of the bunkhouse. It has board and batten siding and a shed roof. The door opens to the east. The bench along the west wall has three openings.

Root Cellar

A root cellar is located north of the outhouse and west of the bunkhouse. An exhaust pipe extends from the mound of dirt. A small wood shed functions as the entrance to the cellar. Although the date of this structure has not been determined, it was constructed during the period of significance.

Well

A hand-dug well is located immediately north of the ranch house. The well, lined with uncut and roughly coursed local stone is now covered with a sheet-metal cap.

Irrigated Hay Meadow

An irrigated hay meadow extends from the Gilchrist No. 1 Irrigation Ditch to the South Crow Creek. This meadow retains its historical extended and boundaries. The swale of the original lane approaching the house is visible after the grass in the meadow has been cut and baled. The size of the hayfield was expanded with construction of a lateral distribution ditch that runs north on the east side of the house yard and then east, parallel to the main No. 1 ditch.

Grazing Lands/Bluff

Land near the ranch headquarters buildings that was not irrigated was used as grazing lands. This includes the area to the north that includes the bluff that shelters the headquarters and land to the west.

Integrity

The Crow Creek/Cole Ranch headquarters historic district consists of 12 contributing buildings, structures, and sites:

Barn	Corral
Bunkhouse	Quonset
Ranch house	Root cellar
Gilchrist #1 Irrigation Ditch	Outhouse
Irrigated Hay Meadow	Well
Bluff/Grazing land	Grazing land

Non contributing building: chicken house, due to age

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The historic district retains very good integrity with regards to having the buildings, structures, and sites necessary to convey the type of ranch development that began in circa 1880, as well as a ranch operation that extended to 1972. The bank barn and stone bunkhouse have excellent integrity with regards to design, materials, and workmanship. These aspects of integrity are not as strong in the ranch house, where mid-twentieth century additions and the protective coat of stucco obscure original materials. Nevertheless, the stone portion of the house is identifiable due to the thick exterior walls, dated keystone, and gable braces. The irrigation ditch on the property documents the need to have water rights on a property in this area. Both the hay meadows and the grazing lands reflect the nature of cattle ranching. The quonset, corral, root cellar, and outhouse, as well as the more recent chicken coop complete the necessary facilities on a working ranch.

The integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association are also excellent in terms of a ranch headquarters historic district. The buildings are in their original location tucked between the immediate setting of the ridge on the north and South Crow Creek; the willows along the stream are visible from the ranch yard. The Gilchrist No. 1 Irrigation Ditch and the lateral distribution ditch define the outer edge of the house yard on two sides. The irrigated hay meadow, where hay is cut and baled, and the grazing lands enhance the historic feeling and association of the property. The integrity of association is very good due to the presence of horses on the property that use the fenced corral. The broader setting and feeling of the historic district, as a working ranch property, is good. Rural residences have been built on the south side of South Crow Creek, most of which are over ½ mile away. Three closer homes on the north side of the creek do not dominate the views to and from the ranch headquarters. The views to the northwest and southwest are devoid of modern intrusions and maintain the rural nature of the setting.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes 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.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ 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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture

Architecture

Period of Significance

1879-1972

Significant Dates

1879, 1890, 1972

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

See Continuation Sheets

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Summary Paragraph

The Crow Creek/Cole Ranch Headquarters historic district is significant under Criterion A as illustrative of the broad pattern of cattle ranch development and agriculture in southeastern Wyoming. The period of significance begins in 1879, by which time the ranch had been developed and a stone house was built on it, and extends until 1972, the time when the Cole family sold the ranch. The development and ownership of the ranch reflects the pattern of ranch development and operation in Laramie County and the buildings in the ranch headquarters complex convey the nature of a ranch property over a long period of time. The Crow Creek Ranch barn on the property, built in 1890, is eligible under Criterion C as an outstanding example of a stone and timber-framed bank barn in Wyoming in the area of Architecture.

Historic Contexts

Stock Raising in Laramie County, Wyoming

Laramie County occupies the southeast corner of Wyoming. The high plains of the eastern portion of the county near the Nebraska border extend to the foothills of the Laramie Mountains that peak in Albany County to the west. The Horse, Lodgepole, and Crow creeks drain the county, descending from the foothills. The southwestern portion of Laramie County was crossed by the Denver and Ft. Laramie wagon road on a generally north/south route during the late 1860s. At the time Laramie County was surveyed in 1870, the southwestern portion of the county was noted as having rolling areas and bluffs, yet well-watered due to the presence of Crow Creek and its branches. The western portion of the county in the foothills of the Laramie Mountains had quantities of granite and sandstone boulders. The soil was consistently described as second rate and covered with Buffalo Grass. Yet the survey notes predicted that this area would be settled before others with better soil due to the abundance of water flowing through the township and the nearness of wood and timber in the mountains.¹

Southeastern Wyoming Territory, and more specifically Laramie County and Cheyenne, became the center of the early cattle industry by 1870. Cattle ranching flourished from that time until the mid-1880s when European capital, particularly that from the British Isles, supported expansion of the industry. Only a few breeding herds were located in the Territory before 1870, though cattle were grazing on the plains during the 1860s. The presence of over 90,000 cattle along the North Platte and the Union Pacific rail line, as well as grazing on the Laramie Plains supports a Cheyenne newspaper's 1871 boast that "immense herds of cattle are ... on the rich grazing fields adjacent to Cheyenne." Forty-thousand head of cattle were grazing in Laramie County in 1874. Most herds were in the 500 to 700 head range, though some were significantly larger. The *Omaha Herald* considered Cheyenne the headquarters of the territory's "cattle kings" in 1875; at that time nineteen operations grazed more than 1,000 head of cattle on the open range and there were over 50 smaller outfits.²

The J. M. Carey & Bro. Ranch on Crow Creek and the Creighton & Co. Ranch on Horse Creek were some of the larger operations in Laramie County. The losses of cattle during the winter of 1871 and 1872 were dismissed as aberrations and many of the prominent residents of the territory invested in the Wyoming cattle business, including Governors Campbell and Thayer. The decade of the 1870s was a good period for the early ranchers as costs were low

¹ Field Notes and the General Description, Township 14N, Range 69 N (Government Land Office, 1870). Vol. 6, pp. 15, 47, 55-57. Electronic document, Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming, website, http://www.wy.blm.gov/cadastral/countyplats/laramie/fieldnotes/t14nr69w_c010fn.PDF, accessed June 30, 2008.

² T. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), p. 165; Horace W. Hewlett, *Territorial Wyoming and the Cattle Industry* (University of Wyoming, 1941), p. 102.

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and the Chicago stockyard prices were favorable. Yet ranchers worked to improve their herds and ranches. A. H. Swan and J. M. Carey introduced purebred Hereford cattle in 1878 and Herefords would have a large role in the local cattle industry. The endurance of the breed was tested by the severe winter of 1880-1881 and demonstrated that they were hardy, grew well, and had several other attributes that cattle breeders valued.³

Forty acres could generally support a cow and her calf on the range in Wyoming Territory. Ranchers ran cattle on government land during the earliest years without having to acquire much property. However, the need for access to water resulted in the concentration of land filings along creeks for ranch headquarters and the acquisition of water rights. Cattlemen acquired land through the various federal acts, mainly the Pre-emption Act of 1841, the Homestead Act of 1862, and the Desert Land Act of 1877. The expansion of cattle ranching between 1870 and the mid-1880s prompted cattlemen to find ways to acquire title to more land. The Union Pacific, which had completed its transcontinental railroad across Wyoming in 1869, was the recipient of some 4,580,000 acres of Wyoming land, odd-numbered sections in a 40-mile strip; the railroad began selling its land in 1884 and ranchers expanded their holdings.⁴

The Stock Association of Laramie County was established in 1873 and renamed the Wyoming Stock Growers Association in 1879. This prominent group located at the center of the early phase of the cattle industry in Cheyenne influenced a broad variety of issues related to the business. The Association's first interests were organizing roundups and registering brands while it monitored freight rates and legislation. The influx of cattle from Texas, the diseases that this stock brought into the territory, and the overall improved breeding of Wyoming cattle were concerns the Association addressed during the 1880s. After western fed Texas steers were dismissed in eastern markets as tough and of low value, Wyoming ranchers introduced Kentucky Shorthorn, Hereford, and Aberdeen Angus into the breeding stock and the result was Wyoming beef that brought good prices, but was more expensive to produce. John A. Campbell, governor of the territory, served as president of the Stock Association in 1871. During the mid-1880s, Andrew Gilchrist served as Vice President of the Association and was a member of the Brand Committee.⁵

Cattle herds were pushed north of the Cheyenne vicinity into other portions of the territory during the 1880s. The cattle industry estimated that 1,500,000 cattle grazed in Wyoming Territory during 1885 and 1886, the peak years of the Wyoming Territory cattle boom. After the devastating blizzards of the winter of 1886 and 1887, the cattle industry in Wyoming changed. It was decentralized as the number of herds increased while the size of the herds decreased. At the end of the 1880s, the cattle industry's percentage of the territory's wealth had dropped from more than three-fourths to less than one-half of the total.⁶

The high returns realized on cattle raising during the 1870s relied on the cattle "raising themselves" on the range with little or no supplemental feed. Nevertheless, the native grasses that grew adjacent to streams was cut as hay for winter use and used sparingly to feed cattle after severe winter storms. This hay was also sold in town to feed horses and therefore was a cash crop. John Hunton's ranching operation demonstrates how important hay became in cattle ranching. Hunton owned a ranch on the Chugwater Creek near a road and supplied wood, hay, and beef to the various

³ Larson, *History of Wyoming*, pp. 163-167; Writer's Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Wyoming, *Wyoming: A Guide to its History, Highways, and People* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), p. 100; Alvin H. Sanders, *The Story of the Herefords* (Chicago: The Breeder's Gazette, 1914), pp. 694, 699.

⁴ Larson, *History of Wyoming*, pp. 173-178.

⁵ Ibid, pp. 169-170; "Andrew Gilchrist, Stock Raiser;" hand-written document, Coutant Collection, Wyoming State Archives; Hewlett, pp. 110-111.

⁶ Larson, *History of Wyoming*, pp. 190-193.

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forts in the territory. He began fencing hay bottoms of his ranch in 1873, but to meet the demand for hay he cut grass on the Laramie Plains west of the Laramie Range and in the Red Buttes vicinity in 1875. His haying equipment included mowers, rakes, and a horse-powered hay press, with which he made 210-pound bales. Likewise, Andrew Gilchrist mowed 100 acres of grass to make hay in 1879. In order to improve the quality of hay production on his Crow Creek Ranch, Gilchrist purchased an Aruett seeder and alfalfa seed in 1887.⁷

The cattle ranches on the Cheyenne Plains included some of the oldest in the state. The pattern of ranch development in southeastern Wyoming, Laramie County (including what is now Platte County to the north) during the cattle boom was shaped by the acquisition of key parcels of land along creeks and water rights and the unrestricted use of the open range, government-owned land for cattle grazing. Ranch headquarters were typically located near the streams that cross the area, surrounded by irrigated hay meadows, which were used as pastures after the hay crop was made.⁸ A relatively small number of large operations of the "cattle kings" dominated in southeast Wyoming. The Swan Land & Cattle Company north of Cheyenne, the Warren Livestock Company spread southwest of Cheyenne, and the Wyoming Hereford Ranch east of town were perhaps the most prominent operations. Andrew Gilchrist's Crow Creek Ranch represents a somewhat large, but not the largest category of operation. Like the other ranch owners, Gilchrist established a ranch headquarters on a creek where he controlled water rights and used a combination of patented land, parcels he leased and later purchased from the Union Pacific Railroad, and government land to provide grazing for his herd that he improved with Hereford stock. He erected substantial ranch buildings and irrigated meadows to produce hay to sell as a cash crop and to feed his cattle.

The period from 1890 through World War I was a productive time for ranchers with smaller herds that were kept in fenced pastures and who raised alfalfa and hay for winter feed. The Gilchrist sale of a portion of his ranch land and the Cole purchase a few years later of a ranch that could support a family reflects the trend of ranches changing hands after the initial boom period and being somewhat smaller in scale. The Coles utilized the buildings that Gilchrist had erected and continued to raise respected Hereford cattle and harvest the hay in the irrigated meadows on the ranch. Cole and other ranchers had to compete for grazing areas with their counterparts who raised sheep. The United States Forest Service, established in 1905, assumed control of summer grazing land in National Forests and became an important partner to both cattle and sheep raisers, who leased grazing land. Ranchers and farmers in Wyoming enjoyed high prices for record yields during the years of World War I. The number of cattle on the state's ranches doubled between January 1913 and January 1919 and the value of that stock nearly tripled.⁹

Economic depression and hard times on the ranch followed the boom years for cattle ranching during World War I. From 1919 into the 1930s, cattle prices and weather conditions were challenges for ranchers since low prices, surplus cattle, and decreased meat consumption prevailed. Large cattle operations continued to give way to more family-owned and operated ranches, like that of Cole ranch, that could supply smaller herds with supplemental feeding through exceptionally dry years. The number of cattle on Wyoming ranches in 1925 was only approximately 60 percent of the number in 1919; the value of the cattle dropped to less than a third of that of 1919. The Taylor Grazing

⁷ Horace W. Hewlett, *Territorial Wyoming and the Cattle Industry*, University of Wyoming, 1941, pp. 106-107; T. A. Larson, "Ranching in Wyoming," in Judith Hancock Sandoval, *Historic Ranches of Wyoming* (Casper: Nicolaysen Art Museum, 1986), p. 6; Andrew Gilchrist Journal, Vol. 1.

⁸ Byron Hunter and H. W. Pearson, *Type of Farming and Ranching Areas in Wyoming*, Bulletin No. 228. (Laramie: University of Wyoming Agricultural Experiment Station and United States Department of Agriculture, 1938), p. 115.

⁹ Rheba Massey, "Ranching Context," (Cheyenne: Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, 1992), p. 2; Larson, *History of Wyoming*, p. 396.

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Act of 1934 changed further the role of public land in cattle ranching. This statute eliminated homesteading except in conjunction with reclamation projects and established 16 million acres of public grazing land in Wyoming. Ranchers acquired permits to graze cattle, horses, and sheep on this land and by 1939 some 1,500 permits and licenses were issued in Wyoming. Stockmen participated in range management through service on advisory boards and worked to avoid overgrazing.¹⁰

The type of ranching conducted on the Cheyenne Plains during most of the twentieth century, which comprised approximately 40 percent of Laramie County, is best characterized as stock ranching. The acreage of pasture land on stock farms greatly exceeds the acreage used for raising crops, which were hay and feed grains associated with beef cattle production. By the 1930s most of the grazing lands in Laramie County were privately owned and fenced, though ranchers likely leased public grazing land. Ranch headquarters were typically located near streams, surrounded by irrigated hay meadows, which were used as pastures after the hay crop was made. Ranchers sold nearly all steers as feeders once two to three years old. This type of operation predominated in the western half of Laramie County from the time when there were 121 ranches in the county in 1880, when Gilchrist was establishing the Crow Creek Ranch, and then throughout most of the time the Cole family operated its ranch. Jesse Cole was one of the 570 ranch owners in Laramie County in 1900. Slightly more than half of the ranches on the Cheyenne Plains ranged in size from 1,000 to 5,000 acres at that time; Jesse Cole owned 3,680 acres of land in 1904, placing his property near the upper end of the most common size of ranch. The number of farms and ranches in Laramie County was just over 900 in 1925, rose to a peak of 1,106 in 1935 and dropped to 836 in 1945.¹¹

Wyoming cattle ranchers entered a period of prosperity again during the late 1930s, particularly after the wet year of 1938 restored somewhat the condition of the range. Beef cattle prices were above parity in 1939 and cattlemen enjoyed sounder financial positions and were poised to increase production significantly during World War II. The number of cattle on Wyoming ranches increased to over one million, comparable to the peak years from 1916 to 1919. Nearly 50,000 of these cattle were located in Laramie County at the beginning of the war. The number increased to 66,000 in 1946 and in only two counties were there more cattle at that time. The heaviest concentration of cattle and calves in 1940 in Laramie County was located north of Happy Jack Road, east of the foothills in the vicinity of the Crow Creek/Cole Ranch. The hay crop remained dominated by wild hay while alfalfa hay accounted for only a small portion of the crop. Cash receipts for livestock in Wyoming nearly doubled between 1939 and 1945 as prices rose rapidly until checked by price ceilings set by the federal government. Wyoming ranchers resented the federal cap set on fat cattle prices since rises in costs outstripped the wartime price increases, even as they continued to increase production. Cattle ranchers thrived during the war, despite labor shortages, and many were able to pay off debt, consolidate their land holdings, and acquire tractors and trucks that they could not afford during the 1930s. The number of ranches and farms in Wyoming began to decrease between 1940 and 1945, a trend that continued through the following decades.¹²

The post World War II period included good years and bad ones for cattle ranchers. The more than 35 million acres in the state devoted to livestock grazing remained fairly constant as many other factors changed. The rural population

¹⁰ Larson, *History of Wyoming*, pp. 410, 430; Massey, p. 3.

¹¹ Hunter and Pearson, p. 113; U. S. Department of Agriculture and Wyoming Department of Agriculture, *Wyoming Agricultural Statistics*, No. 2. (Cheyenne, 1924), p. 8 and *Wyoming Agriculture Bulletin* No. 14 (Cheyenne, 1946), p. 9; Map of Laramie County, Wyoming, 1904. Wyoming State Archives collection.

¹² T. A. Larson, *Wyoming's War Years, 1941-1945* (Reprint edition: Cheyenne: Wyoming Historical Foundation, 1993. First edition, Stanford University Press, 1954), pp. 222-236, 240; *History of Wyoming*, pp. 487-489.

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decreased significantly and the number of farms and ranches decreased by half between 1940 and 1977; the 1960 census was the first to record more Wyoming residents living in urban areas than rural ones. The average size of agricultural operations more than doubled to 4,500 acres during that time. In 1969, 3,000 smaller ranch and farm properties were in this size category. A trend to convert ranch land to other uses, including recreation and housing subdivisions, got underway. Nevertheless, receipts for cattle sales accounted for 60 percent of agricultural income in the state between 1950 and 1965. Higher cattle prices during the Korean War contributed to this statistic, though the drought of 1953 to 1955 affected operations during the same time period. The number of cattle in the state continued to be above one million during the post war years.¹³

By the time that the Jesse A. Cole family sold some 4,500 acres of ranch property in 1972, the stock ranch still represented a common size of operation in Wyoming. By the 1970s, stock ranching was experiencing some additional challenges. The approximately 8,500 ranch and farm units in Wyoming at that time were collectively the state's largest employer and livestock dominated the source of income on the ranches. The average size of ranches increased due to the consolidation of operations. The early 1970s were a period of distress for ranchers and farmers. Net farm income in the state decreased by half from 1973 to 1974; it decreased significantly again during 1975. Ranchers avoided bankruptcy through outside income from oil and gas leases and rising land values. The legislature granted tax exemptions and the Bureau of Land Management deferred scheduled lease fee increases.¹⁴

Stock Ranching with a Dairy Production Component

Dairy production has been a minor part of Wyoming ranching and farming, except for the Star Valley vicinity in the western portion of the state and some other irrigated valleys. During the 1920s, a period of enthusiasm for dairying in Wyoming, the total number of milk cows rose from 42,000 in 1919 to 49,000 in 1925. However, the number of purebred dairy stock remained quite small, approximately 1,000 head. More than half of the cows milked in Wyoming remained dual-purpose stock rather than dairy cattle. The number of dairy cattle peaked in Wyoming during the 1930s.¹⁵

However, farm and ranch operations close to the major cities in the state, Casper and Cheyenne where there was a fluid milk market, could incorporate a dairy component as a means of diversification. Laramie County agriculture, consequently, had a dairy component and there were just over 5,000 head of dairy cattle in the county in 1939; at that time only two other counties had more. The heavy demand for milk during World War II caused milk shortages in Cheyenne, Casper, and the Big Horn Basin vicinities in 1942. Dairy stock increased a few thousand head during the early years of the war. Dairywomen were caught between price ceilings set during the war and increasing costs and some quit the business. Dairywomen in the Cheyenne area benefited from a 17 percent increase in prices in July 1943 and a later subsidy, and hence enjoyed a more favorable position than their counterparts elsewhere in the state. Jesse A. Cole was one of the ranchers located near enough to Cheyenne that he could sell fluid milk and incorporated a small

¹³ Larson, *Wyoming's War Years*, p. 240 and *History of Wyoming*, pp. 523-524.

¹⁴ Larson, *Wyoming's War Years*, p. 240 and *History of Wyoming*, pp. 523-528; Massey, p. 4; Erwin, Vol. 3., p. 355; Carl E. Olson, William E. Morgan and Raymond A. Marquardt, *Wyoming Agriculture: Past, Present and Future, An Economic Sector Study*. (Laramie: University of Wyoming, 1971), pp. 1-3.

¹⁵ Hunter and Pearson, pp. 70-73, 80-81; U. S. Department of Agriculture and Wyoming Department of Agriculture, *Wyoming Agricultural Statistics*. No. 2 (Cheyenne, 1924), pp. 40-44.

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dairy herd into his stock ranch operation during the 1940s and 1950s. At that time, between 11,000 and 13,000 farms and ranches throughout Wyoming sold milk, cream, or milk cows.¹⁶

Barns in Southeast Wyoming

The barns that stand in the landscape in southeast Wyoming exhibit variety in shape, size, and building materials. Many of the early barns were built of logs brought down from the nearby mountain slopes. Of the barns that remain in use, perhaps the most common form in southeast Wyoming is the gable-front Prairie barn, which provides a loft for hay storage and has shed-roofed loafing sheds attached to the main barn to shelter cattle. Barns with larger hay mows and with the gambrel and gothic arched roofs are found in the limited areas of Wyoming where there are extensive hay meadows or dairy cattle. Loafing sheds, which provide shelter but no loft areas, are also very common.

Stone barns represent a small subset of barns in southeastern Wyoming. Most of them were erected by 1895 in locations where local sandstone could be used, and often there was a stone house on the property as well. The known remaining stone barns are distinctly different, though they share the use of local stone as the primary building material. Henry Bath upgraded the buildings on his ranch established on the Laramie Plains in Albany County in 1869 by constructing a stone house and barn in 1895. At that time a low, one-story stone barn was built and covered by a low-pitched gambrel roof. A limited number of square windows are positioned just under the eaves and a wide door is located in the end wall. Cheyenne businessman Erasmus Nagle had another set of stone buildings, a house (1881) and barn (1882), erected on one of the ranch properties of the extensive Swan Company land holdings, a site east of Sybille Creek, in Platte County. The gable-roofed barn has a limited number of doors and windows in the ground story and the stone walls extend to enclose a mow area. A stone barn of similar size and a loft area covered with a gable roof with a flat section on top, from which a vent rises, was erected on a ranch just southeast of Cheyenne, the Organ Ranch known in more recent years as the Loomis ranch. This circa 1885 barn is thought to have been built by Mr. Rabou, a stonemason. One of the stone barns in addition to the Crow Creek ranch one in southeast Wyoming is a bank barn. This building was constructed of local stone and slate on the Stone Wall Ranch in Carbon County. This modest barn, erected circa 1880, has a roughly coursed masonry basement and upper walls clad with board and batten siding.¹⁷

Architect George R. Rainsford designed and constructed a large stone horse barn on his Diamond Ranch in Platte County; it represents a related type of stone barn. This special-purpose barn, erected during the early 1880s to house the owner's breeding horses, was constructed of local stone, as were the more modest examples.¹⁸

The barn that Andrew Gilchrist erected on his Crow Creek Ranch in 1890 was much larger than the stone barns or bank barns described above except the Diamond Ranch Barn. The combination of the banked location, stone basement, and tall timber-framed upper story for hay storage is somewhat unusual in Wyoming. The size of the barn

¹⁶ Michael Cassity notes the rise in dairying near Casper in *Stock-Raising, Ranching and Homesteading in the Powder River Basin Historic Context Study*. Prepared for the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, 2007. Larson, *The War Years*, pp. 238-239; U. S. Department of Agriculture and Wyoming Department of Agriculture, *Wyoming Dairy Statistics, 1924-1957* (Cheyenne, 1958), p. 7.

¹⁷ Sandoval, pp. 48, 51; G. Todd Greenhalgh, *Bath Ranch National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form* (Cheyenne, 1984); Eleanore Wagner Field and Robert B. St. Clair, *From Hardware to Cattle, The Arp and Hammond Story* (Cheyenne: Fleetwood Publications, 2005), pp. 62, 113; Hugh R. Davidson, *Stone Wall Ranch National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form* (Cheyenne, 1985).

¹⁸ Sheila Bricher-Wade and Bonnie Raille, *Diamond Ranch National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form Addendum* (Cheyenne, 1984).

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is comparable to only the largest horse barns in the area. For instance, the Alsop Horse Barn, thought to have been built in 1887 in adjacent Albany County, is a stacked log structure also 50 feet wide and over 100 feet long.¹⁹

Ranch History

The Crow Creek Ranch Era, 1877-1892

Andrew Gilchrist and his family assembled a large ranch property in Township 14N Range 69W in southwestern Laramie County during the late 1870s and 1880s known as the Crow Creek Ranch. Section 26 of the original property included a water supply, the South Crow Creek, and Gilchrist patented 160 acres in the section in 1881 where he had established a ranch headquarters between one of the most prominent ridges in the vicinity and South Crow Creek. Both Andrew and his wife, Mary Gilchrist purchased nearby land and David Gilchrist, Andrew's brother, filed on Section 14 under the Desert Land Act. During this same time, Andrew Gilchrist initiated the purchase of an additional fourteen sections of land from the Union Pacific Railroad.²⁰

Andrew Gilchrist, a native of Scotland and son of a prominent cattle breeder, immigrated to the United States in 1865. After attending a business college in Hartford, he worked for the Cheney Brothers silk manufacturers in Connecticut. Gilchrist was a leader of the colony that located in Greeley, CO, where he stayed until 1877. He then drove a large herd of cattle to the Crow Creek area and established a cattle ranch, which was known as the Crow Creek Ranch. Gilchrist became known as a prominent Wyoming rancher, one of the largest landowners and a supporter of improving cattle breeding through the use of Hereford stock. His business interests expanded from the ranch and he held a large interest in the Stockgrowers National Bank, of which he served as a director. Gilchrist was one of the founders of the Wyoming Development Company and is credited with conceiving and implementing the plan to irrigate the extensive acreage the company purchased 80 miles north of Cheyenne near Wheatland. Gilchrist invested in other ranch operations in Wyoming, including the Swan and Belvoir ranches. Gilchrist was a leader of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association during the ranching boom of the 1880s. After becoming a naturalized citizen in 1880, Gilchrist served several terms in the Wyoming Legislative Assembly where he looked after stock growers' interests. Gilchrist died in 1894 at the age of fifty.²¹

In 1879, Gilchrist ran over 1,000 head of cattle on the 160-acre Crow Creek ranch property in Section 26 (and, no doubt, on additional land that he controlled). Cattle dominated the ranch operation though Gilchrist had ten milk cows as well. One-hundred acres of the ranch were mown for hay. As was common, the Gilchrists raised some of their own food. Two tilled acres produced buckwheat and potatoes. Hogs and chickens completed the livestock on the ranch. At that time Andrew and Mary Gilchrist, David Gilchrist, and Catherine Gilchrist, Andrew and David's widowed mother, are listed in the population census on the ranch; four non-family laborers also resided on the property. During the early 1880s Gilchrist raised some wheat. After harvesting 40 bushels an acre in 1881, he planned to plant 100 acres in wheat in 1882. Gilchrist acquired the purebred Hereford bull, Bobbie Burns, which was bred by A. H. Swan while still headquartered in Iowa.²²

¹⁹ Sandoval, p. 36.

²⁰ Deed indexes, Laramie County Courthouse.

²¹ *Progressive Men of the State of Wyoming* (Chicago: A. W. Bowen & Co., 1903), pp. 355-357; Robert C. Morris, *Collections of the Wyoming Historical Society* (Cheyenne, WY: 1897), Vol. 1 (unpaginated); "Andrew Gilchrist, Stock Raiser."

²² 1880 Agricultural Census and Population Census; *Cheyenne Daily Sun* 8 August 1881, p. 4; *The American Hereford Record and Hereford Herd Book* (The Breeders' Live Stock Association, Vols. I and II, re-published by Columbia, MO: The American Hereford Cattle Breeders' Association, 1899), p. 488.

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By 1887, Crow Creek Ranch consisted of 2,080 acres of meadowlands and 8,455 acres of pasturelands, over 9,000 acres of which were railroad lands, and an additional 440 acres. At that time there were over 730 head of cattle on the ranch, as well as nearly 70 horses and mules. William Stevenson was the ranch foreman and lived there with his wife, Martha, and the ranch hands in the bunkhouse, which included David Gilchrist and three or four others. Gilchrist formally claimed water rights as the owner of Gilchrist Ditch No. 1 in 1886.²³

An illustration of the ranch property from the 1880s depicts both the property and the Hereford cattle raised on it (see page 21). The stone house stood close to the Gilchrist Ditch No. 1. A road approached the property from the southeast and crossed the irrigation ditch. A long, low one-story barn with the proportions of a loafing shed is north of the house, closer to the ridge; the animals in the corrals on the house side of the barn suggest that it accommodated both horses and cattle. Several small buildings completed the ranch complex. Gilchrist's two brands and three Herefords occupy the foreground of the view, indicating their importance.²⁴

After 1883, Andrew and Mary Gilchrist lived in Cheyenne in a house they built at the northwest corner of Hill (Capitol) Avenue and 23rd Streets. Beginning in 1888, William Stevenson rented the Crow Creek Ranch from Andrew Gilchrist. During the spring and summer of 1890 a new barn was built at the Crow Creek Ranch. Lumber was purchased in Cheyenne, and local vendors provided hardware and paint. Gilchrist paid William Stevenson for finishing construction on the upper part of the new barn – either outright or as a reimbursement – and Stevenson was reimbursed for the wages and board of “sundry men” during the construction period. Gilchrist's records indicate that the barn cost \$3,239.05 to construct.²⁵

In 1892, Gilchrist sold a significant portion of the Crow Creek Ranch to M. S. Cowles, F. J. Tygard, and M. G. Manly. Cowles and his associates transferred the land, which included portions of Sections 24, 25, 26, 27, and 35, to the Interstate Land & Business Company within a few months, in 1893. Gilchrist completed payments to the Union Pacific Railroad in 1893 on fourteen sections of land near Middle Crow Creek. This property was part of the 12,226-acre Crow Creek Ranch where in 1893 Gilchrist had a stone house built on Section 23; this property was known as the Gilchrist Ranch and was owned by Mrs. Gilchrist until her death in 1932.²⁶

The Cole Ranch Era, 1897-1972

Jesse Cole acquired the Interstate Land & Business Company property in 1897. This transaction included much of Section 26 and the water rights. Three generations of Coles owned and operated the Cole Ranch between 1897 and 1972. The property passed to Silas Cole in 1917 after Jesse Cole's death in 1915. Silas' widow Marie conveyed some property to Jesse Alfred Cole in 1947. Jesse A. Cole sold over 4,500 acres to the Happy Jack Corporation in 1972.²⁷

Jesse Cole operated a farm in Missouri before deciding to move west to establish a stock-raising business on a larger scale. Jesse and Emma Cole, and their son, Silas, and Emma's son, Orin Sampson, settled on the former Crow Creek

²³ “Andrew Gilchrist, Stock Raiser,” Andrew Gilchrist Journal, Vol. 1; Laramie County Deeds, Book 38, pp. 45-46. Gilchrist's journals, which cover the period of 1884 through 1893, are in the Wyoming State Archives.

²⁴ Undated view of property captioned “Ranch Property of Andrew Gilchrist, Laramie Co., Wyoming,” Wyoming State Archives.

²⁵ Andrew Gilchrist Journal, Vol. 3, pp. 34-55, 81; Morris.

²⁶ Deed indexes, Laramie County Courthouse; Andrew Gilchrist Journal, Vol. 3, p. 312.

²⁷ Deed indexes, Laramie County Courthouse.

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ranch. Cole added to his major purchase and owned over 3,500 acres in 1904; Jesse and then Silas continued to add to the ranch land through the early 1920s and amassed a property of 4,800 acres. After his father's death, Silas, who grew up on the family ranch, took over the operation just before serving in World War I. One of his first improvements was the installation of a Delco plant and electricity. Silas Cole was a stock breeder and developed a respected herd of Hereford cattle. His cattle were known in the feedlots of Iowa and his calves were consistently high sellers in the Omaha stockyards during the 1930s. Family photographs document hay making on the ranch. Anne Marie McFarland Cole, Silas' widow, operated the ranch with her son, Jesse, after her husband's death in 1941.²⁸

The ranch house was improved during the late 1940s during the time Marie Cole and her sons ran the ranch: Jesse A. Cole lived on the ranch with his mother. Two concrete block additions to the ranch house were completed during that time and some time after that the entire house was covered with stucco. The ranch headquarters was improved in 1950 with the addition of a quonset building and new corral fencing. During this last period of Cole tenure on the ranch, the family milked 45 to 50 head of dairy cows, and added rows of stanchions to the basement of the barn for this purpose. The Jesse A. Cole family sold some 4,500 acres of land to the Happy Jack Corporation in 1972.²⁹

Edward and Nina Pelequin owned a 57-acre property that included the ranch headquarters for 30 years, from 1977 to 2007. The Pelequins used the property as a hobby ranch on which they ran a small number of cattle, demonstrating a new pattern of use for ranch lands near Cheyenne. The current owners acquired the property in 2007.

Historical Significance

Summary

The Crow Creek/Cole Ranch Headquarters historic district, with its distinctive buildings, irrigation ditch, grazing lands, and irrigated hay meadow, represents cattle ranching in southeastern Wyoming during a long period of significance, the period between 1879 and 1972. The property, developed by Andrew Gilchrist as the Crow Creek Ranch during the early cattle bonanza years of the 1870s, represents both that era as well as the Cole family ranching operation, which was characteristic of stock raising in Laramie County. Thus the period of significance extends until 1972 when the ranch property was subdivided for hobby ranch and residential use. The historic district is eligible under Criterion A as representative of agriculture and cattle ranching. The 1890 bank barn is eligible under Criterion C as a noteworthy example of a bank barn with stone basement and upper level designed for hay storage.

Criterion A

The development of the Crow Creek Ranch by Andrew Gilchrist, an immigrant rancher with an interest in cattle breeding, is typical of the establishment of early, large ranches during the 1870s in Wyoming. Gilchrist was one of a large number of ranchers who moved north to the Cheyenne area from Colorado. These men, many of which were immigrants from the British Isles, had the connections, capital, and willingness to invest speculatively in large ranch properties. Gilchrist owned the Crow Creek Ranch for only a short period of time, from ca. 1879 to 1892, though his family kept extensive adjacent ranch land for some time. He made sure that strong water rights were established for his properties from South Crow Creek and its various branches and introduced purebred Hereford stock. The brief ownership of the ranch by Cowles and his associates and by the Interstate Land and Business Company indicates that investors were interested in the property during the 1890s before it was acquired by the Cole family.

²⁸ Sharon Lass Field, ed. *History of Cheyenne, Wyoming, Laramie County*, Vol. 2 (Dallas: Curtis Media Corporation, 1989), pp. 38-39; *Progressive Men of the State of Wyoming*, pp.785-786; Edward Clark (Silas Cole's grandson) interview, Cheyenne, January 8, 2009.

²⁹ Laramie County Assessor's records; Deed indexes, Laramie County Courthouse.

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The era during which the Cole family owned and operated the ranch is illustrative of the many instances in Wyoming where families have a long association with a ranch property. Three generations of Coles ranched and the property was known as the Cole Ranch much longer than it was the Crow Creek Ranch. The Cole Ranch represents the most common ranch size in Wyoming during the changing economic conditions of the twentieth century. Silas Cole, a prominent stockman, influenced the price of calves in the Omaha markets. After his death the family diversified into dairy production, taking advantage of the ranch's proximity to Cheyenne. The Coles made modest improvements to the buildings and ranch headquarters as they weathered the ups and downs of the ranching economy in Wyoming.

The ranch headquarters at the Crow Creek/Cole Ranch has a strong association with the Gilchrist ownership period, but also reflects changes made by the Cole family. The stone ranch house with the date stone of 1879 represents Andrew Gilchrist's considerable resources during the early years of the property's development. The use of stone to build the bunk house indicates the continued investment in the facilities of the ranch, which culminated with the construction of a new barn in 1890. The stone-lined well dates from these first years of occupancy. Gilchrist Ditch No. 1 just beyond the house yard also dates from the initial ranch development period and indicates the original relationship between the ranch headquarters and the essential sources of water. The irrigated meadow between the ditch and the South Crow Creek has provided hay since that era as well.

These ranch buildings share some characteristics with other buildings of their types built during the early ranch development years in Wyoming. Henry Bath built a stone house comparable to the Gilchrist on his ranch in nearby Albany County in 1875. Barn design and construction was quite varied in Wyoming. Some ranchers had separate horse and cattle barns; barns on smaller properties were likely to be of log construction during the nineteenth century. The Crow Creek ranch barn with such a large hay mow was constructed to serve on a ranch with extensive irrigated meadowlands from which hay could be cut.

The long Cole tenure on the property is evident in the additions made to the ranch house and the application of stucco. The quonset building constructed in 1950 and the corral fencing from the same era dates from the third generation of the Cole family to operate the property.³⁰ A root cellar of unknown date with ca. 1960s improvements, a well, an outhouse, irrigation ditches, corral and modern chicken house complete the group of ranch headquarters buildings. The historic district with these buildings, structures, grazing lands, and hay meadow represent ranches of the period between 1879 and 1972. Only the replacement chicken house was added to the site outside of the period of significance.

The integrity of the historic district is more than sufficient to convey the nature of ranching from the late nineteenth century into the 1970s. Nearly all of the changes to the property have taken place during the period of significance. The aspects of historical integrity are good to excellent, particularly with setting, feeling, and association.

Criterion C

The Crow Creek Ranch barn erected in 1890 is one of the largest and most sophisticated of its type in southeastern Wyoming. The basement level, constructed of roughly cut and coursed local stone, provided team horse stalls and loose pens. The upper level was framed with hand-hewn timbers, joined with pegged mortise-and-tenon joints.

³⁰ Laramie County Assessor's Office, Rural Property Record Card, 1065 Happy Jack Road, and photographs kept as the record of this property.

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Designed for the handling and storage of hay, two drives enter the loft from the upper bank. The design of the bents kept the center half of the barn nearly free of uprights and braces. Four hay chutes delivered hay to the basement level. One end of the upper level was devoted to a small tack room and large granary.

Hay was cut and sold from the Crow Creek Ranch before the bank barn was constructed, though the design of the barn leaves no doubt that hay storage was an important function. The cutting of native grass hay and raising of alfalfa hay was common on ranches during the late nineteenth century. The barn on the Crow Creek/Cole Ranch is the largest of the known barns constructed of local stone. It exhibits exceptional workmanship in masonry and barn framing with pegged, mortise-and-tenon joined hand-hewn timbers. The integrity of the barn is excellent in all areas, though the condition of the masonry portion of the building is poor.

Criterion Consideration G

The continued use of the Crow Creek/Cole Ranch as a family ranch until 1972 provides the logical end for the period of significance. The historic district achieved its historical significance during a long period prior to fifty years ago. Though last major physical changes were made to the property during the 1950s, the use, association, and history of the Cole Ranch continued until the time it was sold. The last thirteen years of Cole ownership and use complete the period of significance, even though they occurred more recently than fifty years ago.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

See Continuation Sheet

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: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 49 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	13	491,872	4,556,127	3	13	492,172	4,556,265
2	13	492,171	4,556,130	4	13	492,468	4,556,424

☒ See continuation sheet.

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

See Continuation Sheet.

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

See Continuation Sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title	Betsy H. Bradley	Date	January 12, 2009
Organization	Wyoming SHPO	Telephone	307 777-8594
Street & number	2301 Central Avenue	State	WY
City or town	Cheyenne	Zip code	82002

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet-Additional Documentation

Section 9 Page 18

Crow Creek/Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District
Laramie County, Wyoming

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet-Additional Documentation**

Section 9 Page 19

*Crow Creek/Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District
Laramie County, Wyoming*

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United States Department of the Interior
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Section 10 Page 20

*Crow Creek/Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District
Laramie County, Wyoming*

Additional UTM Points

	Zone	Easting	Northing
5.	13	492,478	4,555,866
6.	13	491,876	4,555,745

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of this historic district includes the ranch headquarters and is defined by geographic features, section lines, and transportation routes. The boundary begins at the west edge of the original property line, Section 26 (UTM 1), and follows a straight line east to the junction of the driveway and the lane (UTM 2). At this point, the boundary cuts north to the top of a tall ridge (UTM 3). The boundary follows the contours of the ridge north to the quarter section line (UTM 4), which then serves as the east boundary until it reaches the creek (UTM 5). The South Crow Creek edges the irrigated hay fields and bounds the headquarters on the south, until reaching the edge of Section 26 (UTM 6). The west edge of Section 26 forms the western edge of the boundary and terminates at the first UTM point.

Boundary Justification

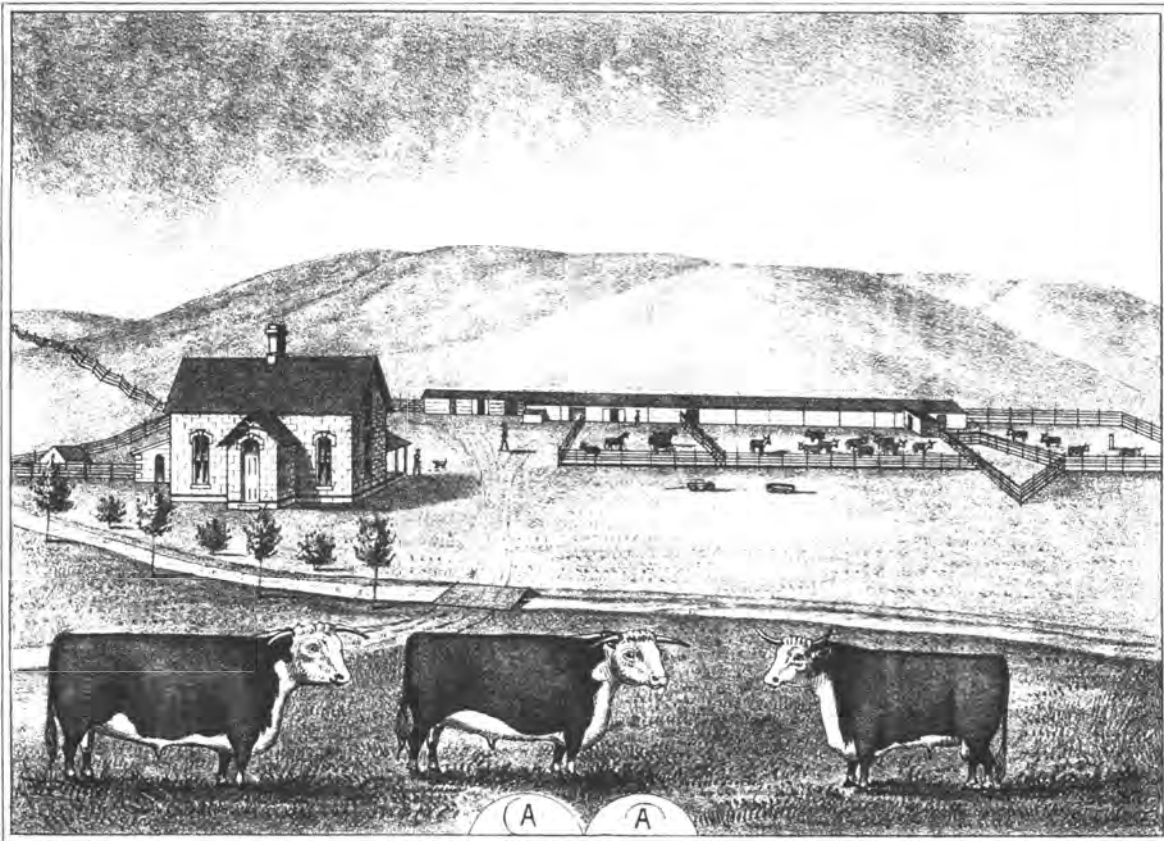
The boundary for the Crow Creek/Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District encompasses the buildings, structures, and sites that comprise the property and important geographic features. The grazing lands and irrigated hay field that surrounds the cluster of ranch headquarters buildings and structures were integral to the operation of the ranch during its period of significance. The ridge, as a prominent geographical feature and a windbreak for the ranch headquarters marks the property's location in the broader South Crow Creek drainage. The area north of the gravel road leading to the ranch headquarters has been used as a home pasture and encompasses the ridge area. Quarter section lines on the east and west relate to the boundaries of the land patented by Andrew Gilchrist in 1881 and conform to modern property boundaries.

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places
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Section 10 Page 21

*Crow Creek/Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District
Laramie County, Wyoming*



RANCH PROPERTY OF ANDREW GILCHRIST, LARAMIE CO. WYOMING

View of Crow Creek Ranch, 1880s.

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
Crow Creek/Cole Ranch Headquarters
Laramie County, Wyoming

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)

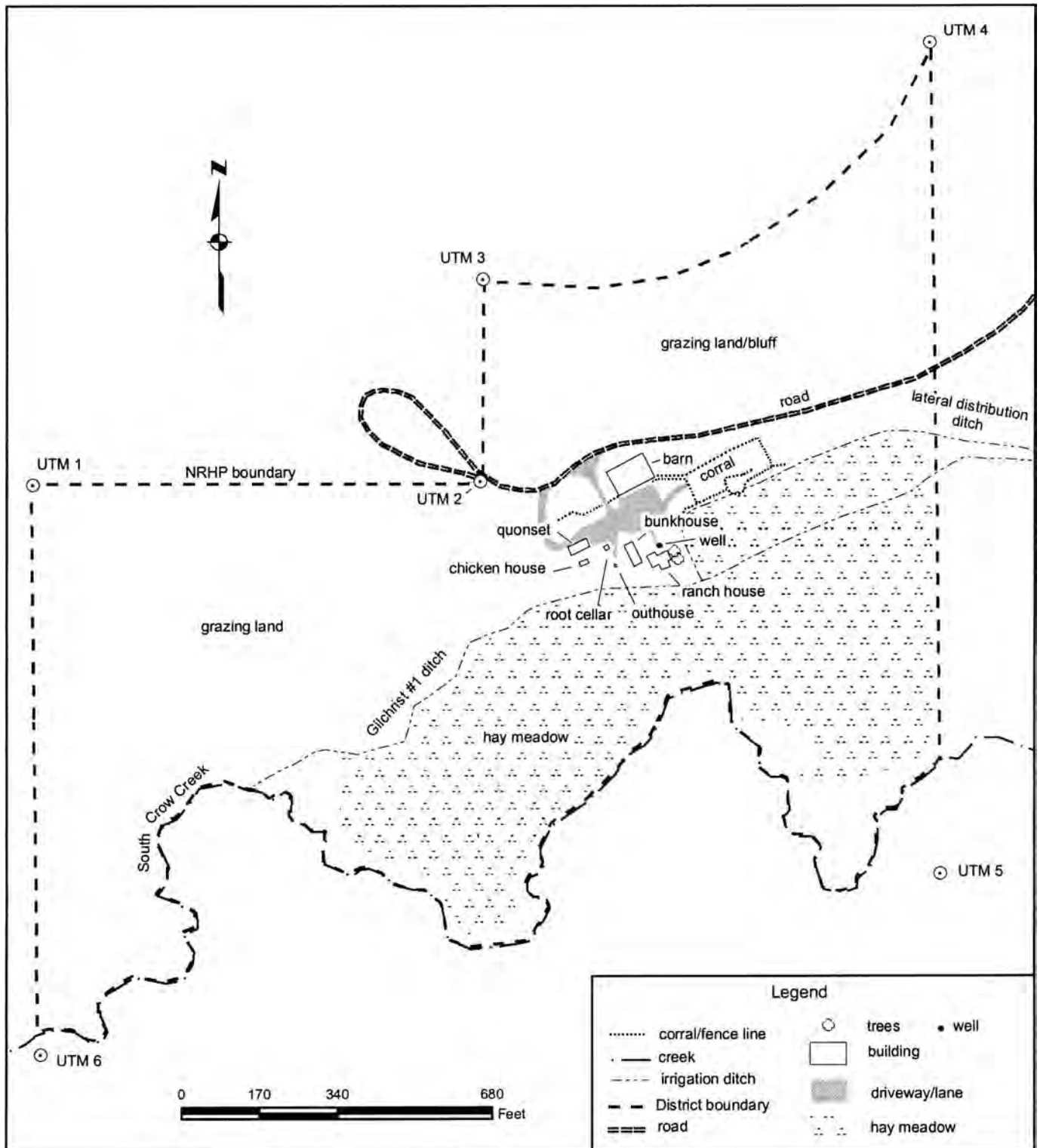
Property Owner

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

Name	Keith Cowie and Kathy Quinn		
Organization		Telephone	307 771-3666
Street & number	1065 Happy Jack Road		
City or town	Cheyenne	State	WY Zip code 82009

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.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to range from approximately 18 hours to 36 hours depending on several factors including, but not limited to, how much documentation may already exist on the type of property being nominated and whether the property is being nominated as part of a Multiple Property Documentation Form. In most cases, it is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form to meet minimum National Register documentation requirements. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.



Sketch map of the Crow Creek / Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District, Laramie County, Wyoming.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Crow Creek-Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District
Laramie Co., Wyoming

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 09000565

Property Name: Crow-Creek—Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District

County: Laramie State: Wyoming

Multiple Name:
N/A

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

 July 17, 2009
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8: Significance

Criteria Consideration G is, hereby, dropped because that portion of the period of significance extending from 1959 to 1972 is justified as an integral part of the historic operations and associations of the historic ranch headquarters. Although the historic ranch continued under the same ownership during this time, no new construction or alterations to the headquarters complex or its setting occurred during the less-than-fifty-year period.

The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Crow Creek--Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: WYOMING, Laramie

DATE RECEIVED: 6/09/09 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/26/09
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/11/09 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/23/09
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 09000565

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

___ACCEPT___ RETURN ___REJECT___ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS: Forty-nine-acre headquarters reflects almost an entire century of cattle-raising in southwestern Laramie Co. (1879 to 1972). The period of significance extends to the logical cut-off point when the third generation of Coles sold the property and cattle-raising for profit ended. Although this late date is acceptable given history of property, the components that are contributing date to the 1950s or earlier. Architecturally, the centerpiece of the property is a great bank barn with stone basement, constructed in 1890; this barn of hand-hewn timbers joined with pegged mortise-and-tenon joints is one of the largest and most finely crafted barns in southeastern Wyoming. Property includes only one noncontributing

RECOM./CRITERIA: Accept A+C

REVIEWER: LM Clelland DISCIPLINE: History

TELEPHONE: _____ DATE: 7/14/09

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR (Y)N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

Excellent discussion of historic context is noted.

Resource - an 1882 chicken house



7-7-08

Crow Creek / Coal Ranch Headquarters Historic District, Bunkhouse

Located at 1065 Happy Jack Road, west of Cheyenne, Wyoming
Laramie County

View is Southeast looking at the (NW) end + (SW) side of the
bunkhouse

Photographer: Richard Collier



7-7-08

Crow Creek / Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District, Overview
Located at 1065 Happy Jack Road, West of Cheyenne, Wyo.

Laramie County

View is South looking at Ranch Headquarters

Photographer: Richard Collier



7-7-08

Crow Creek / Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District, Quonset Hut (shop)

Located at 1065 Happy Jack Road, west of Cheyenne, Wyoming

Laramie County

View is South looking at the (NE) front + (NW) side of the bldg.

Photographer: Richard Collier



7-7-08

Crow Creek / Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District, Barn
Located at 1065 Happy Jack Road, west of Cheyenne, Wyoming
Laramie County

View is NNE looking at (SW) end + (SE) rear of the barn
Photographer: Richard Collier



7-7-08

Crow Creek/Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District, Barn, Bunkhouse,
Located at 1065 Happy Jack Road, Cheyenne, Wyoming Ranch House

Laramie County

View is East

Photographer: Richard Collier



7-7-08

Crow Creek / Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District, Barn
Located at 1065 Happy Jack Road, West of Cheyenne, Wyoming
Laramie County

View is NNW looking at (SE) rear of the barn

Photographer: Richard Collier



7-7-08

Crow Creek/Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District, Barn Interior
Located at 1065 Happy Jack Road, West of Cheyenne, Wyoming
Laramie County
View is SW looking at (SW) End of Barn
Photographer: Richard Collier



7-7-08

Crow Creek / Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District, Ranch House & Well

Located at 1065 Happy Jack Road, west of Cheyenne, Wyoming

Laramie County

View is South looking at water well & (NW) rear of the House

Photographer: Richard Collier



7-7-08

Crow Creek / Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District, Bunkhouse
Located at 1065 Happy Jack Road, West of Cheyenne, Wyoming

Laramie County

View is SW looking at the (NE) front of the Bunkhouse
Photographer: Richard Collier



7-7-08

Crow Creek / Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District, Ranch House
Located at 1065 Happy Jack Road, West of Cheyenne, Wyoming
Laramie County

View is North looking at the (SE) front of the ranch house
Photographer: Richard Collier



Crow Creek/Cole Ranch Headquarters
Historic District
Laramie County, Wyoming
UTM References

1. 13/491872 E/4556127 N
2. 13/492171 E/4556130 N
3. 13/492172 E/4556265 N
4. 13/492468 E/4556424 N
5. 13/492478 E/455866 N
6. 13/491876 E/4555745 N

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial

photographs taken 1956. Field checked 1962

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum

10,000-foot grid based on Wyoming coordinate system, east zone

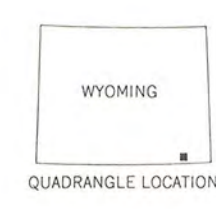
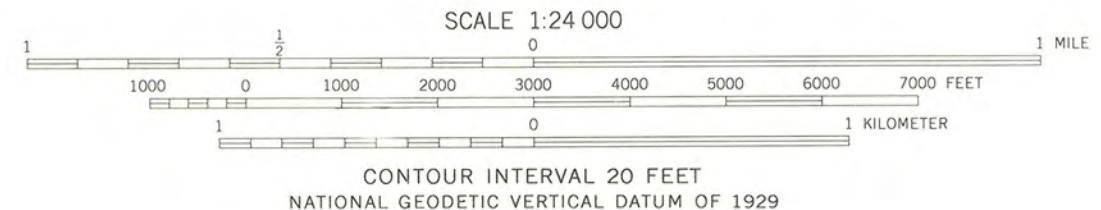
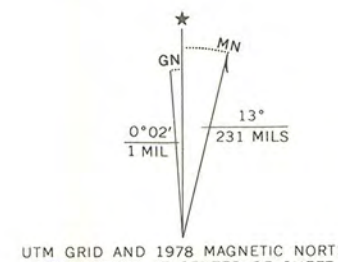
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,

zone 13, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken

1976. Map edited 1978. This information not field checked



SILVER CROWN, WYO.

N4107.5 W10500/7.5

1962

PHOTOREVISED 1978

AMS 4966 II NE-SERIES V874

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ARTS. PARKS. HISTORY.

Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources

State Historic Preservation Office
Barrett Building, 3rd Floor
2301 Central Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002
Phone: (307) 777-7697
Fax: (307) 777-6421
<http://wyoshpo.state.wy.us>



8 June 2009

Janet Matthews
Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 Eye St., NW
8th Floor (MS 2280)
Washington, DC 20005

Re: Submission of the Crow Creek/Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District
Nomination

Dear Ms. Matthews:

The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office is submitting the Crow Creek/Cole Ranch Headquarters Historic District nomination for your review, which the State Review Board accepted and Mary Hopkins, the Wyoming Interim State Historic Preservation Officer, signed.

Please contact me at 307-777-7828 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kara Hahn

National Register Program Coordinator
Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office
2301 Central Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002
307-777-7828



Dave Freudenthal, Governor
Milward Simpson, Director