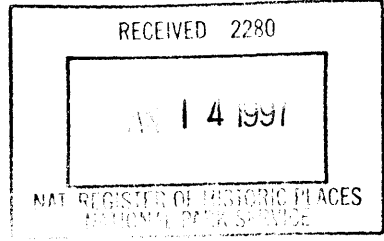


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction 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 an 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 Kennicott Cabin

other names/site number Comstock Cabin / 5CR45.1

### 2. Location

street & number 63161 Colorado Highway 69 [N/A] not for publication

city or town Westcliffe [X] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Custer code 027 zip code 81252

### 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] State Historic Preservation Officer January 10, 1997 Date

State Historic Preservation Office, Colorado Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].
- determined eligible for the  
National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].
- determined not eligible for the  
National Register.
- removed from the  
National Register
- other, explain  
See continuation sheet [ ].

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date 2-14-97

Kennicott Cabin  
**Name of Property**

Custer County, Colorado  
**County/State**

**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**  
(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
4	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not In Use  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Pioneer Log  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone  
walls Wood: log  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Wood: Shingle  
other  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Kennicott Cabin  
**Name of Property**

Custer County, Colorado  
**County/State**

## 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.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

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

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

### Bibliography

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

### 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  
# \_\_\_\_\_

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Exploration/Settlement

Architecture

### Periods of Significance

1869

### Significant Dates

1869

### Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Kennicott, Frank Langdon

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other:

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Kennicott Cabin  
Name of Property

Custer County, Colorado  
County/State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 4.36

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 455350 4225990  
Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

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

### Boundary Justification

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

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Irene Francis and Charles Proctor

organization San Isabel Foundation date 7-12-96

street & number P. O. Box 124 telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Westcliffe state Colorado zip code 81252

### 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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Gertrude Schooley

street & number 1403 West Berrendo Road telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Roswell state New Mexico zip code 82001

**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.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Kennicott Cabin  
Custer County, CO

Section number 7 Page 1

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**DESCRIPTION**

The Kennicott Cabin is located on the west side of highway 69, three miles north of the town of Westcliffe. The cabin is a two-story, rectangular plan, log construction with a side gabled roof covered with wood shingles. The nominated parcel of land includes the cabin, a privy, a large multi-room shed, and a corral. The property appears much as it did when first constructed and retains its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The cabin is constructed of round, peeled logs with a variety of simply executed corner joints that include dovetail, square, and saddle notching. Although the logs were left round, the interior surfaces were hewn flat. The roof, with its overhanging eaves and exposed rafters, is comprised of boards covered with wooden shingles. An inset brick chimney shaft straddles the ridge line near the north end and an external brick chimney with concrete base is attached to the south end. The windows are all wood frame with simple rough-sawn wood surrounds. The first floor windows are double hung sash with six-over-six lights. The upper story windows are nine-light casements with commercial hinges and home-made latches.

Entrance to the cabin is through two centrally located doors on the east facade. The doors--one is panelled and the other is glazed (4-light) and paneled--are the only openings on this facade. The north side of the cabin is punctuated by four windows. Directly above the two windows on the main level are two on the upper story. The gable end on this north side is faced with tar paper. The west side of the cabin contains only an offset window on the first floor. The south side of the cabin has a first floor window adjacent to the central exterior chimney. There are two windows on the second floor (one is covered by a sheet of plywood) flanking the brick chimney, which has been stabilized by two metal rods. The southern gabled end is faced with vertical boards.

Interior floors throughout the cabin are random lengths of pine in 4-1/2 to 6 inch widths. The flooring on the main level is covered with linoleum, some of which has worn away. Windows and doors have surrounds of plain milled wood and six-inch high boards form the baseboards. The doors are raised four-panel with white porcelain door knobs. Walls are covered with muslin and then several layers of wallpaper. Much of the wallpaper layers seem to be the types of patterns that were used from 1930 to 1960. The ceilings of the first floor are muslin with the addition of a heavy painted paper or oil cloth. Upstairs, the 38-inch wide muslin is tacked to the beams and fastened around the edges with what appears to be wallpaper paste. One upper-story room is without a ceiling and the attic is exposed. The chimney on the north end is free standing for a stove in the kitchen, while the chimney on the south end serves a brick fireplace with a wood chimneypiece in the living room.

Alterations to the cabin have been minimal. The building received a new roof in the mid-1980s, with new wood shingles replacing the old ones. Historic photographs provide clues to another change that is no longer visible. An old photograph believed to date from 1899 shows a one-story, side-gabled, log cabin perpendicularly situated just off the southeast corner of the houses. The two buildings appear to

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Kennicott Cabin  
Custer County, CO

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be connected by a short breezeway creating an L-shaped plan. The exact date of this construction is not known. Oral tradition indicates that the smaller log structure served as a parlor and was burned to the ground. The date of its demise is not known either; however, another photograph estimated to have been taken in 1912 does not include the one-story building. These changes have made little impact on the historical integrity of the log cabin.

To the east of the cabin are the shed, privy, and corral. Although the exact dates of construction are not known, they are historic and are considered contributing elements to the property.

The shed gives the appearance of a series of buildings constructed together. This large, building, with its irregular plan and multiple shed roofs, is a post and beam construction with vertical board siding. The siding is saw mill slab and rough cut lumber of various dimensions. Hinges on the sheds are standard "store bought" hardware. The shed roofs of various heights and pitches are covered with green roofing paper. A central portion is open and hinge marks indicate where doors were at one time.

Located to the south of the shed is the privy. It has a rectangular plan, vertical board siding, and a shed roof covered with green roofing paper.

The surviving corral fences represent a variety of construction methods, including a double post framework enclosing a staggered series of horizontal poles. Some of the post and three-rail construction has been faced with slab lumber, possibly to serve as a wind break for the animals. Two of the gates have hand-forged hook-and-eye hinges and horizontal poles with mortise-and-tenon joints.

**Contributing resources:**

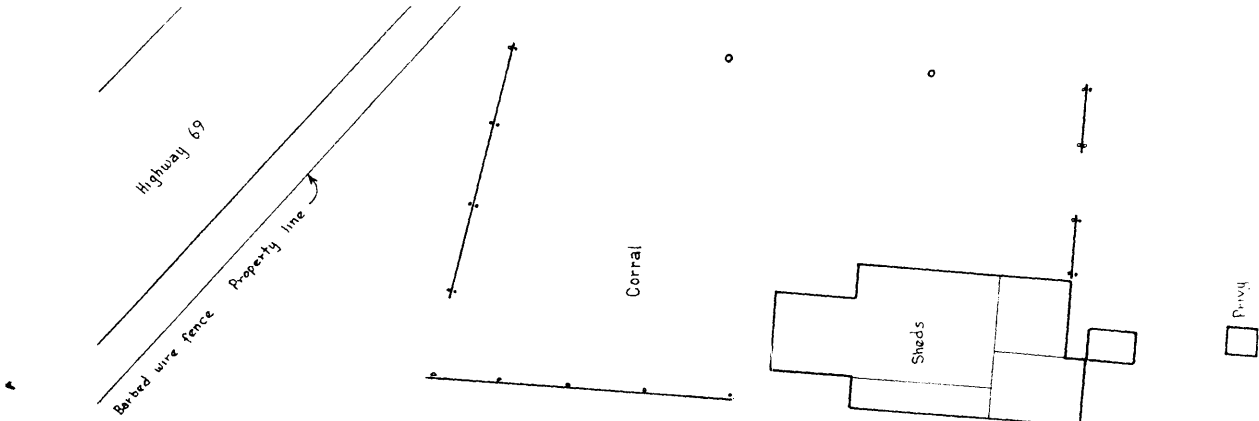
buildings (3) - house, privy, shed  
structure (1) - corral

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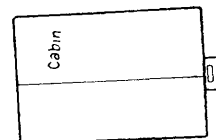
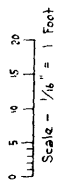
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Kennicott Cabin  
Custer County, CO

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Kennicott Cabin 5 CR 45.1  
Custer County Colorado







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Kennicott Cabin  
Custer County, CO

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

The Kennicott Cabin meets criterion A and C and is therefore eligible for listing in the National Register. The cabin is historically significant for its association with the early settlement of the Wet Mountain Valley. The building is also architecturally significant as a rare example of two-story log construction.

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Wilson in her treatise on log cabin construction notes that log cabins in the United State have generally been described as side-gabled with a fireplace centered along a gabled wall. This description is valid for cabins constructed in much of the eastern part of this country. Cabin technology in America can be traced to the interaction of two different cultural groups, the Pennsylvania Dutch (from Germany and Switzerland) and the Scotch-Irish. Eventually the building methods of these two groups became the dominant construction method for all of the Eastern United States. These cabins from the Mid Atlantic region would spread to the midwest and eventually typify the "American log cabin." Characteristics included side facing gables (the door in a wall running parallel to the ridgepole), dimensions of front and rear walls exceeding those of the side walls, and an external chimney in the center of one gable end. The Kennicott Cabin is an example of this type of construction. Kennicott's roots in Illinois could explain his reliance on this building form.

While the Kennicott Cabin reflects the eastern building tradition, it is not typical of the log construction found in the Western United States. The typical western log cabin is a front-gabled building with the doorway moved from under eaves to the gabled end. There is often no chimney, as the fireplace is replaced by a stove and the most distinctive feature is the forward extension of the gabled roof to form a covered porch or work area.

Not only is the cabin's use of east coast antecedents unusual; the building's two-story height is also uncharacteristic. Two-story log houses are rarely found in Colorado. Their scarcity has also been noted in a national context, with McAlester classifying them as "uncommon."

A distinction is usually made between log *houses* and log *cabins*. A cabin has walls of timbers that have been left round and are joined by overlapping saddle notches. These walls are difficult to chink and for this reason cabins were generally considered to be temporary shelter. Cabins are usually one room and not more than one or one-and-a-half story. A log house has walls of square-hewn logs joined by carefully hewn corner notching. Although Kennicott built his home with the logs left round, the interior surfaces were hewn and then covered with muslin and wallpaper. With its interior finishing and the two-story height, Kennicott's home is best classified as a log house.

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Kennicott Cabin  
Custer County, CO

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One of the geologically oldest ranges in the state, the Wet Mountains were once hunting ground of the Ute Indians and were crossed in 1806 by Zebulon Pike and his company. The valley, drained by Grape Creek which flows into the Arkansas River near Salida, was used by Hispanic shepherds from the Upper Huerfano. Most of the place names of this area are English, as the Spanish did not colonize the valley to any extent. The first permanent settlers to the Wet Mountain Valley arrived in 1869. Along with Elisha Horn, John Taylor and William Vorhis, two brothers also came. Frank and George Kennicott, both suffering from tuberculosis, had been told of "a wonderful, high, unspoiled valley in southern Colorado." Upon their arrival, they each took up 160 acres. Their health improved and they started a drayage business and began speculating in cattle.

In 1870, people began to arrive in significant numbers. A committee appointed by a group of Germans living in the Chicago area selected the Wet Mountain Valley as a site for colonization. That year, approximately 230 colonists came to take up homesteads. Most of the newcomers were laborers and artisans, not farmers. Early crops were failures and money and supplies ran low. By April 1871, newspapers reported the venture a failure due to poor leadership and financial mismanagement. Many of these settlers drifted away to Canon City, Pueblo, and Denver. Some remained in the valley with descendants eventually settling in Westcliffe. That same year, a number of Mormon families from Utah settled on land adjacent to that taken up by the Germans.

It is believed that between 1869 and 1870, Frank constructed the two story log cabin. In 1871, Frank and George Kennicott returned to Illinois, where they both found wives. Frank married Mary Thorpe and brought his new bride back to the ranch. In August 1872, a daughter, Mary Louise Thorpe Kennicott, was born in the two-story log cabin. Three days later, the mother died of childbed fever and was the first person buried in the Ula Cemetery. (There are seven generations of the Kennicott family buried in the cemetery.) Frank's mother-in-law took the baby girl back east.

Meanwhile, the search for mineral was also bringing prospectors into the region. The mining boom near Rosita created a demand for a new county. Named in honor of General George A. Custer, Custer County was created in 1877 from what had been part of Fremont County. The town of Silver Cliff was founded in 1878 due to the discovery of silver ores not far from the Rosita gold mines. The silver mining in the vicinity of Rosita and Silver Cliff brought several thousand prospectors into the region by the end of the decade and soon attracted the interest of railroad builders. The town of Westcliffe was founded when the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad brought its narrow gauge line up Grape Creek from Canon City. The town was the product of General William Jackson Palmer and his partner, Dr. William Bell. Incorporated in 1887, Westcliffe became the main hub for the Wet Mountain Valley's farming and ranching community.

Frank received his homestead patent in 1878 and in 1882, he again returned east to marry. His second wife was Mary Azuba Smith. A daughter, Eugenia, was born in 1883 and another daughter, Anna Townsend, was born in 1887. In 1892, Frank brought the Freer Ranch adjoining his homestead and moved his family there. Eugenia was an invalid and never married, but Anna Townsend went to

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Custer County, CO

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Stanford where she met and married Edwin Rogers in 1912. They had four children, one of whom is now the current owner of the property.

Mary Louise Thorpe, Frank's daughter from his first wife, visited her father in the valley and other Kennicotts in Delta, Colorado. She married Lou Comstock and returned to the log cabin. In 1903, son Walter was born and in 1905, another son, John, was born. Lou became ill forcing the family to move to Arizona and New Mexico. After his death, Mary Louise and her two boys moved back to the cabin. With her father's help, she started an apiary and ran a business selling honey.

By World War II, John Comstock and Edwin Rogers were running the ranch as Comstock and Rogers Cattle Company. John and his brother, Walter, never married and continued to live in the old log house until they died in 1990.

(ed. HLW)

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Dodds, Joanne West. Custer County: Mountains, Mines and Ranches. Colorado: (Sponsored by Colorado Endowment for the Humanities) by the author, 1992.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.

Pearce, Sarah J. and Wilson, Merrill A. A Guide To Colorado Architecture. Denver: The State Historical Society of Colorado, 1983.

Schooley, Gertrude. Learn to Labor and to Wait: 1899 Diary of Anna Kennicott, Age 11. Westcliffe, Colorado: Crestone Graphics, 1993.

----- letter dated 26 March 1988 to Christine Pfaff of the Colorado Historical Society on file in the Centennial Farms files of the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado.

Wilson, Mary. Log Cabin Studies, Cultural Resource Report No. 9, USDA Forest Service, Intermountain Region, Ogden, Utah, 1984.

Workers of the Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Colorado, compilers. Colorado: A Guide to the Highest State. New York: Hastings House, 1941.

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The property is located within the north half of the northwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section 35, Township 21 South, Range 73 West, of the 6th P.M. The nomination boundary is a triangle formed by the junction of Highway 69, Swift Creek, and Lohstroh Highline Ditch. From the junction of the Lohstroh Ditch and State Highway 69, measure 800 feet northwest. From the same junction, measure 800 feet west-north-west (in a straight line) along the Lohstroh Ditch and Swift Creek. Connect these two points with a line of 500 feet. The enclosed triangle, which includes the cabin and the two outbuildings, is approximately 4.36 acres. The boundary is indicated on the scaled sketch map.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

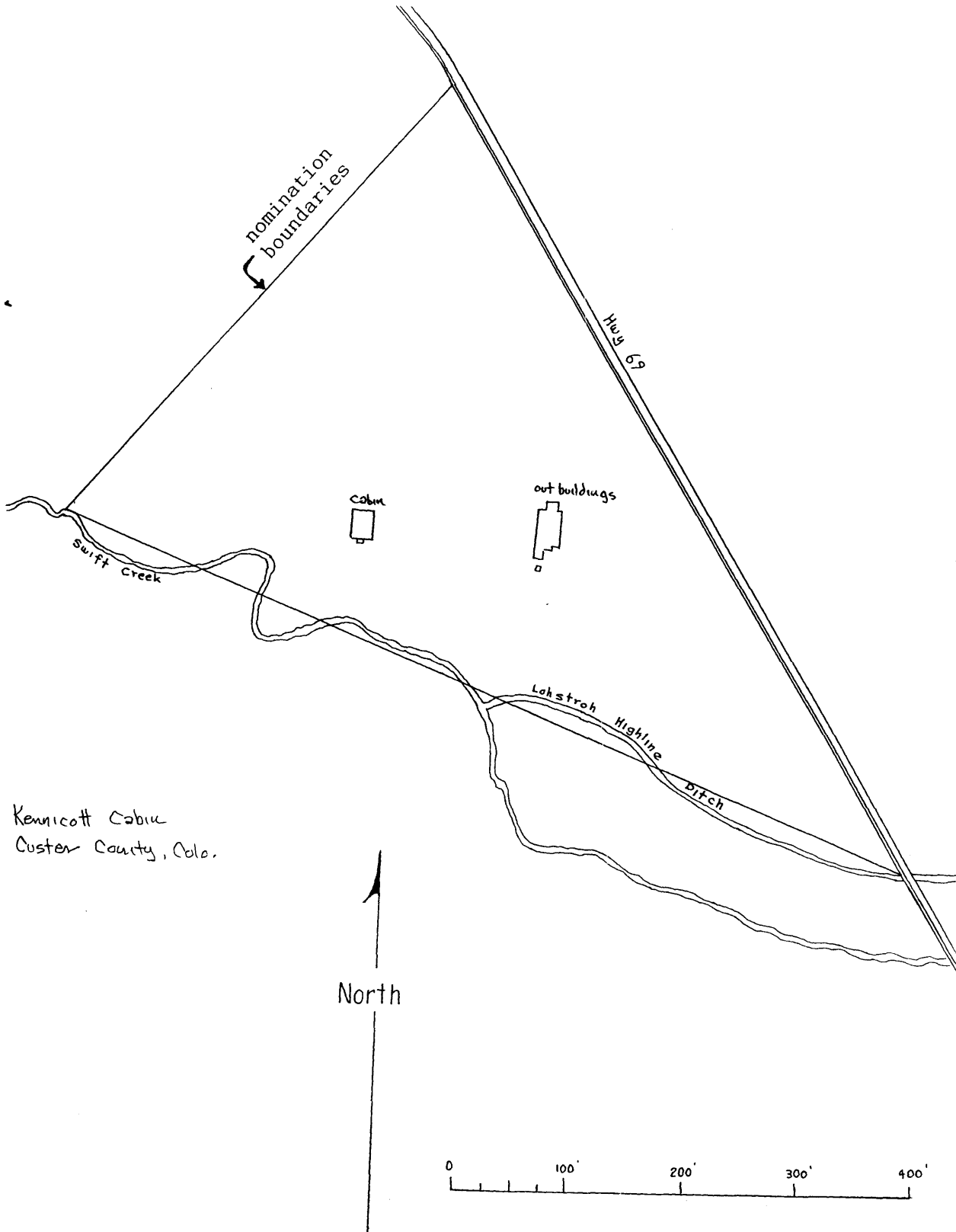
The boundary was drawn to include the homestead cabin, its outbuildings, and the surrounding land historically associated with the property, and to exclude the vast expanse of land and the adjoining, later ranch complex.

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Custer County, CO

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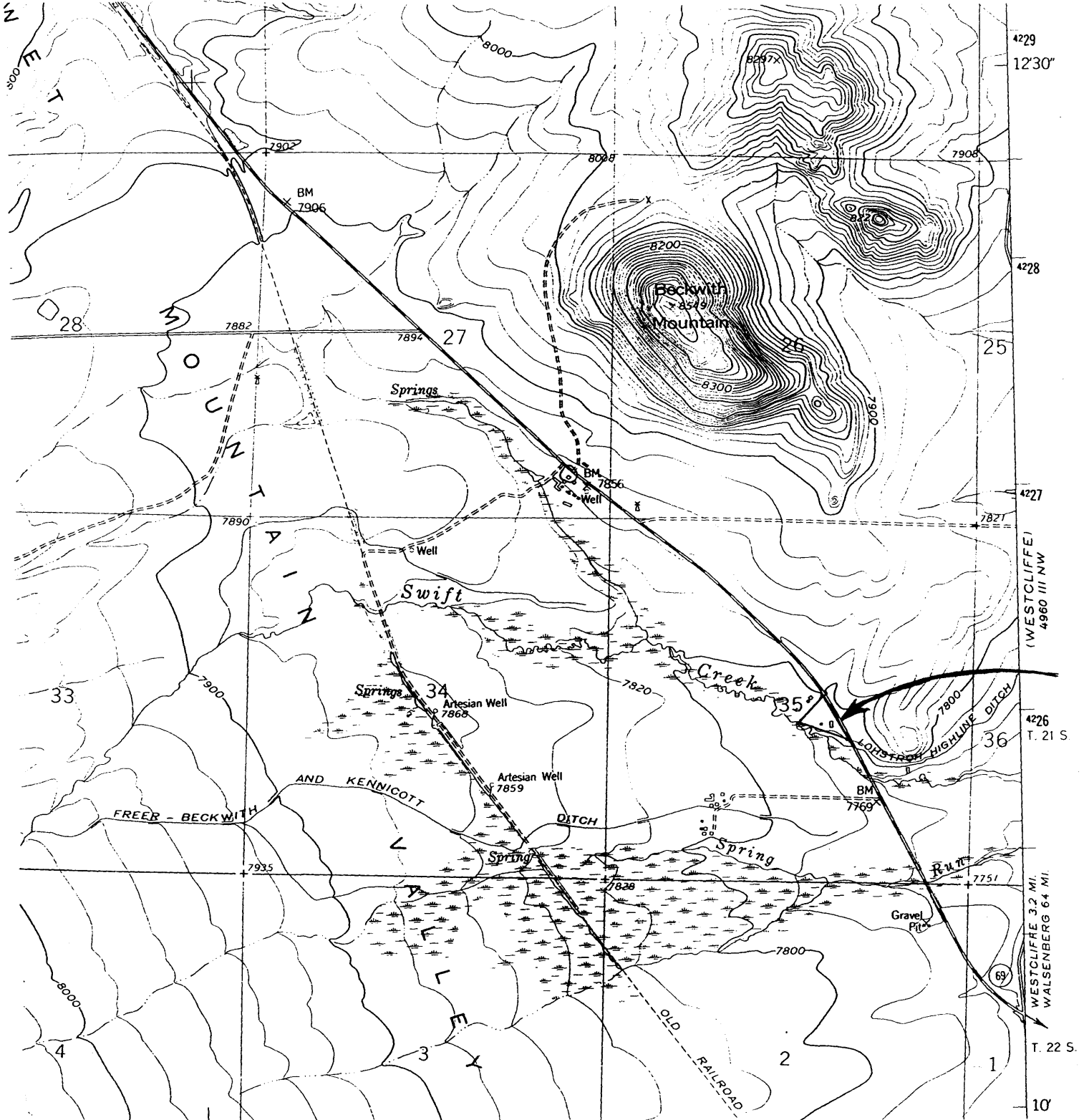
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U.S.G.S. map - Beckwith Mountain Quadrangle



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Custer County, CO

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PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information is the same for all photographs:

name of property: Kennicott Cabin  
county and state: Custer County, Colorado  
photographer: Charles C. Proctor  
date of photograph: July 1996  
location of negatives: San Isabel Foundation, PO Box 124, Westcliffe

<u>photograph</u>	<u>description</u>
#1	general view of cabin from the northeast corner; camera facing southwest
#2	east side of cabin; camera facing west
#3	south side of cabin; camera facing north
#4	north side of cabin; camera facing south
#5	west side of cabin; camera facing east
#6	west side of shed and privy; camera facing east
#7	closeup of notching on northeast corner of cabin; camera facing southwest