

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PHO 686298

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 19 1978
DATE ENTERED DEC 6 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC L.C. Ranch Headquarters
AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER aff. U.S. 260
State Road 211 (Alternate Highway 180) NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CITY, TOWN Gila VICINITY OF 2 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
STATE NM CODE 35 COUNTY Grant CODE 017 OK

CLASSIFICATION

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

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Arthur L. Ocheltree ✓
STREET & NUMBER L.C. Ranch
CITY, TOWN Gila VICINITY OF STATE New Mexico 88038

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Grant County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN Silver City, STATE New Mexico

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties
DATE 10/14/76 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS New Mexico Historic Preservation Program
CITY, TOWN Santa Fe STATE NM

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In 1880 Tom Lyons and Angus Campbell sold their mining and foundry interests in the Silver City area and bought the Nogales or White House Ranch, 10 miles north of Gila. In 1890 the ranch headquarters was moved 10 miles south to the town of Gila with Lyons directing the ranching operation, Campbell concentrating on the irrigation and farming operation.

The ranch headquarters was established at what is said to have been the site of an old Spanish estancia. One of the buildings of the estancia, built, it is said, in 1848, was used by Tom Lyons as his residence and the center of his operation.

The original adobe house was U-shaped and enclosed a patio. The main entrance to this part of the house was apparently a Zagan which Lyons closed with double doors. This section of the house consisted of ten rooms, lined up along the three sides of the U. The roof was flat with vigas exposed in the interior, the ends of the vigas exposed outside.

Soon after 1890, Lyons expanded the house with the addition of a fifteen room L which enclosed a second patio and gave the house its present E shape. The addition was generally "Victorian" in style. The rooms were much larger than in the older part of the house and were elegantly furnished. The Lyons entertained lavishly, many of their guests were nationally known, and the house reflected their lifestyle.

An interesting feature in Lyons' bedroom is a trapdoor under the bed, which was supposedly intended to provide protection for Lyons whose life was threatened by the open range, water-rights, and sod-buster struggles precipitated by the vast range. (Lyons was shot and killed in El Paso in 1917).

The addition was built of adobe like the older part of the house. Tradition had it that the adobe bricks were acquired by dismantling the abandoned Fort West nearby. Windows in the addition were larger, ceilings were higher, rooms were larger, door heights were greater. The entire house was covered with a pitched roof and a portal extended along the front of the house, running the entire length of 187 feet.

Ross Calvin described the house at the height of the ranch's success in River of the Sun:

The house itself was a symbol of lavishness. Built in the shape of an E from sun-dried bricks, it conformed in everything save size to the ordinary plan for ranch houses. But its size was immense...One-storied, thick walled, straight-sided, the great ranch house at Gila conformed to the traditional type, even to the covered porch (portal) which ran along its southern side. But this portal was so extensive as to suggest the cloister of a monastery.

In front of it stood a hedge in whose shadow ran an acequia where on summer evening water dimpled and rippled on its way to refresh the rose bushes. The north side of the house gave upon the patio, open toward the Gila a little distance away and the dark blue scarp of the Mogollon Mountains in the distance. The prospect was superb, the situation free from bleakness in winter, sheltered from excessive heat in summer.

Northeast of the house were a saddle house with a cellar below, a barn and a ten-room bunkhouse. Across a road to the south of the house were a company store and post office. A small room attached to the company store is supposed to have been a jail. A short distance down the road east of the house was the old foreman's house.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILT 1890-present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Tom Lyons

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The L.C. completely overshadowed all other ranching operations in Southwest New Mexico. It was one of the truly great ranches of the West--at its height in the 1890's controlling a million-acre range carrying 60,000 head. Tom Lyons, baron of the upper Gila, carved a kingdom out of mountain, plain and desert, and left for posterity a ranch house and headquarters complex that overshadows all other surviving historic ranch establishments in the Southwest.

Tom Lyons was born in England and raised in Kenosha, Wisconsin, where he worked in a foundry. He came to New Mexico in 1878 or 1879 and went into the mining business with Angus Campbell, a Silver City prospector. In 1880 the partners sold their "Cosette" mine and Silver City foundry interests and embarked in the cattle business. They bought the Nogales or White House Ranch, ten miles north of Gila, and immediately began to monopolize water rights in the vicinity.

Within ten years the L.C. claimed all the range from the mouth of Duck Creek (a tributary of the Gila) to above Mule Springs, on both sides of the Gila, and every waterhole and meadow within a day's ride. This great domain was their possession either directly or through their men.

In 1890 the ranch headquarters was moved ten miles south to the town of Gila. Here Lyons began construction of the great adobe ranch house that survives today.

Lyons was the moving force behind the cattle end of the business. By 1885 he had interested Eastern capital in his ranching operation and that year organized the Lyons and Campbell Ranch and Cattle Company with capital of \$1,500,000. Lyons and Campbell owned two-thirds of the shares. This firm was incorporated under laws of New Jersey, with its head office in New York City. Lyons established commission houses in Denver and Los Angeles, and in the latter place he operated his own slaughter house. His idea was to breed cattle on the L.C., ship them from Silver City to leased finishing pastures at Denver and Los Angeles, then slaughter the cattle himself and market the beef. Thus he would control his beef from the breeding pasture to the finished product. Though this grandiose project was apparently short-lived, it shows the thrust Tom Lyons brought to the business.

The ranch employed 100 wagons, 750 riding horses, 400 work horses, 75 cowboys in season, and three to six chuckwagons. The farming operation employed 100 Mexican families, most of them imported from Chihuahua. At its greatest extent, the L.C. range stretched east-west from Silver City to the Arizona line, and north-south from Mule Creek to the lower reaches of the Animas Valley, Lyons' general store at Gila employed six clerks and sold everything from Studebaker wagons to sewing machines. Though the analogy is false, for the entire operation depended on the marketing of beef to outside buyers, the notion is irresistible to compare Tom Lyons' great domain to a self-sustaining feudal principality.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY about 5

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	2
ZONE	EASTING

7	2	6	1	5	0
NORTHING					

3	6	4	9	7	5	0
NORTHING						

B

ZONE	EASTING

NORTHING					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the intersection of State Road 211 and the Fort West Irrigation Ditch proceed south along the west side of the ditch to the intersection with the L.C. Ranch acequia; proceed west along the north edge of the acequia to the intersection with a north-south line 200 feet to the west of the western-most corner of the ranch house; proceed north along this line to the intersection with State Road 211; proceed east along the south edge of the highway to the starting point.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ellen Threinen, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

New Mexico Historic Preservation Program

DATE

September 20, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 1629

TELEPHONE

(505) 827-2108

CITY OR TOWN

Santa Fe,

STATE

New Mexico

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Thomas W. Merlan

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

10-11-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12-6-78

KEEPER OF

DATE

12-4-78

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7,8 & 9 PAGE 2

7. Present and Original Physical Appearance: (continued)

Even before Lyons' death in 1917, the L.C. began losing money and with the loss of the driving force behind the operation, the ranch was gradually sold off until only the 5-acre headquarters complex remained. The house and the surrounding buildings have passed through a succession of owners including a communal group whose plans for establishing a guest ranch in the 1940's were not successful. The present owners of the headquarters have been working for several years to preserve the house and restore it to its original grandeur.

8. Significance (continued)

Lyons' every act as proprietor encouraged this notion. He and Mrs. Lyons were people of culture and their ranch headquarters with well-stocked library, music, and lavish entertainments became a mecca for the famous and wealthy. Historical photos in Mrs. Foster's possession show that the ranch house was beautifully furnished with tasteful importations from all over the world. Lyons built a large hunting lodge, reached only by pack trail, high in the mountains on the Gila headwaters. Furnished with a grand piano, among other luxuries, this eyrie entertained hunting parties of forty to sixty persons. Bear and elk were the favorite game; and when hunting palled, unexcelled fishing took its place. William Goodrich was a guest here, and Theodore Roosevelt accepted an invitation but had to cancel at the last moment for reasons of state.

Lyons' entertainments and expansive way of life attracted money from wealthy stockholders in the L.C., but the pace was too terrific and the L.C. went in the red. With Lyons' death in 1917 in El Paso, the establishment lost its driving force and was gradually sold off until only the five-acre headquarters complex remained.

9. REFERENCES:

Interviews with Mr. and Mrs. L.E. Foster of Silver City and Mr. Steve Villarreal of Pinos Altos; documentary synopsis provided by Mr. Lamar Moore of Winslow, Arizona, and including citations from the following sources: G.L. Brooks Papers; the following newspapers from the period 1878 to 1895 - Deming Headlight; Colfax County Stockman, Springer, N.M., N.M. News and Press; White Oaks Golden Era; Socorro Times and Bullion; Stock Grower, Las Vegas, N.M.; Southwest Sentinel, Silver City; and others; Tax Assessment Rolls, State Records Center, Santa Fe; William French, Some Recollections of a Western Ranchman (New York, n.d.); Frank M. King, Pioneer Western Empire Builders (Pasadena, 1946); Ross Calvin, River of the Sun (Albuquerque, 1946). New Mexico Register of Cultural Properties Form A (revised) for L.C. Ranch Headquarters, prepared by Sylvia Cook, October 14, 1976.