

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 16 1979
DATE ENTERED NOV 23 1979

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

THE ALAMO RANCH HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON

THE MOFFAT RANCH HOUSE

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

20205 South Virginia Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Steamboat

X VICINITY OF Reno

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Nevada-at-large

STATE

Nevada

CODE
32

COUNTY CODE
Washoe 031

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

X PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

X WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

X PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

X YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Raul and Leslie Hernandez

STREET & NUMBER

20205 S. Virginia Rd.

CITY, TOWN

Steamboat

X VICINITY OF Reno

STATE

Nevada 89511

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Washoe County Assessor's Office

STREET & NUMBER

2910 Mill Street

CITY, TOWN

Reno

STATE
Nevada

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

none

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>12/78</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Alamo Ranch was 2,500 acres in size at the time it belonged to John Sparks, Governor of Nevada 1903-1908. At the time, the house and water-tower were moved in December of 1978, the "ranch" had decreased to 14.37 acres in size. During the years subsequent owners had sold off parcels of the ranch for various purposes.

For years, the ranch was the showplace of Washoe Valley with its elegant main house, well-kept out buildings, and landscaped grounds. A description of the site, located on south Virginia Street at Peckham Lane in Reno, just prior to the movement of the 14 room main house, will give an inkling of the site's former elegance. Directly behind the mansion was the sixty-foot frame water tower and indoor, second-floor swimming pool. The remains of a good-sized greenhouse skirted the fence to the south and the frame carriage house was on the north, about seventy-five feet from the main house. A frame duplex which had a workshop in the south end and a small residence in the north section was adjacent to the mansion on the northwest. The caretaker's residence was just to the north of the main house and west of the carriage house. It remains occupied, the only building inhabited on the property. There was a second frame residence just west of the caretaker's residence. Two hundred feet to the west of that residence were the stables. North-west of the carriage house and the above-mentioned small frame house was, a small concrete silo and tack house.

The grounds, once so extensively landscaped, had gone to weeds. Several of the original, massive cottonwood trees remained alive, but the fields to the west gave no indication that they had been intensively cultivated for many years. Everywhere the mass of the city encroached. The once-elegant sculptured white fence which marked the boundaries of the property on the south and the east was still up but in poor condition. Thus was the appearance of the ranch headquarters when the mansion and the water tower were moved in December of 1978 to a location some nine miles south on U.S. 395 to a 24.6 acre tract giving the structure the same orientation and the old cottonwood trees of the ranch site further north on U.S. 395. The mansion, undergoing restoration, is now described in detail:

General Site Description

The 1 and 1/2 story late nineteenth century home is situated on a rural plain at the base of rolling hills nine miles south of Reno. It is set back over 200 feet from Highway 395.

Plan:

The basic floor plan is rectangular; however, there are numerous off-sets and projections due to later additions. The main axis runs north-south.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) ranching
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1887/1978 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown/Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Alamo Ranch House is significant as the home of one of Nevada's most beloved governors, Governor John Sparks (1903-08), and later as the home of the distinguished cattle baron William H. Moffat. It is an elaborate ranch house, noteworthy for its diversity of architectural ornament.

John Sparks bought the property in 1887 and christened it "The Alamo". Although born in Mississippi, he spent his younger years in Texas and had high regard for the defenders of the Alamo. He began building his handsome "plantation style" mansion soon after purchasing the property. It was constructed on the site of one of the busiest crossroads of pioneer Nevada.

The house includes a number of architectural elements commonly found in a ranch house of this period: the bay window, the front porch, and the asymmetrical facade. Also incorporated into the structure were a variety of details derived from the Classical, Gothic and other popular styles, such as: the Doric columns; the Gothic arched openings and balustrade, and the French doors. The result is a structure rich in decorative detail, far more elaborate than the common ranch house.

In the mid 1890's, Sparks imported Hereford cattle from England and went into the breeding business. These were the first of that breed brought into Nevada; a breed that is now the backbone of the state's large cattle industry. In 1902, he became President of the American Hereford Cattle Breeding Association. Earlier, in 1900, he was elected to the Washoe County Commission and in November of 1902, he was elected Governor of Nevada.

Spark's Governorship was marked by much progressive legislation and at least a measure of controversy due to his calling for Federal troops in 1907 to deal with labor problems in Goldfield. Sparks was reportedly fond of entertaining and the Alamo Ranch was the political and social center of Washoe Valley for many years. He was scrupulously honest, personally likeable and is fondly remembered as one of Nevada's best Chief Executives.

After Spark's death, the property passed to the Farmers and Merchants Bank of Reno. That same year, 1908, Joe Miller of Austin purchased the property and sold off all but 320 acres. In September of 1909, Miller sold the buildings and the remaining acreage to Dr. George H. Thomas

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Myrtle T. Myles, Nevada's Governors from Territorial Days to the Present, 1861-1971
 Sparks, Nevada: Western Printing & Publishing Co., 1972, pp. 66-70
 Edna B. Patterson et.al., Nevada Northeast Frontier, Sparks, Nevada: Western Printing &
 Publishing Co., 1969, pp. 380-83.
 Walt Mulcahy, "Forgotten History Adds Luster to Noted Reno Area Landmark", Nevada State
Journal, February 9, 1964, p. 12.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.0

UTM REFERENCES

A | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 0 | | 4 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING
 C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING
 D | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The immediate area about the house and water tower is the only area included in the nomination. It begins at a point on the westerly right-of-way line of U.S. 395 at a certain north cornerpost on the entrance drive, thence proceeds 360' northwesterly 30' from and parallel to the north side of the house thence 90° southwesterly for 120' along the toe of a hill thence 90° southwesterly 285; to the right-of-way line of U.S. 395 thence northwesterly 150' along said line to the Point of Beginning.

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

STATE	N/A	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE		CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Wilbur E. Wieprecht, Historian, HP&A
Heather Hallenberg, Intern, NTHP - Phillip I. Earl, Curator of Exhibits, NHS
 ORGANIZATION Historic Preservation & Archeology DATE Sept. 4, 1979
 STREET & NUMBER 201 So. Fall Street TELEPHONE 701 885-5138
 CITY OR TOWN Carson City STATE Nevada 89710

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 *Dyimi Rodman*
 TITLE Administrator (SHP0) DATE 8 October 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Carol D. Shell DATE 11/23-79
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST *Kristin J. O'Connell* DATE 11/23/79
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Foundation:

The original foundation of the home is no longer intact, and has been replaced by a low foundation of concrete block. A proposed landscaping project will conceal this present construction from view.

Facade:

Walls:

The structural system is wood frame. The exterior of the home is covered in shiplap siding.

Windows:

The windows are 1/1 and double-hung. The proportion of the window openings is two to one. The dormer windows are of a similar type and shape. Two, fluted, engaged columns with Doric capitals rise to support the returns of the small gable roofs of the dormers. A similar treatment is given to the larger dormer to the north. Double doors are set within a Gothic arched opening and give access to the upper porch area. The larger returns of this gable are supported by double, engaged columns. All of the windows have simple surrounds. Other distinguished window features include an angular bay window on the front or east facade and an elliptical bay window on the south facade.

Doors:

The primary entrance is located off center to the north. Two Doric, fluted pilasters support an overhead shelf entablature and denticulated cornice. The single door is paneled in a custom-made design. Other distinguishing door features include two sets of double French doors on the north facade. The individual lights are beveled and set within undulating custom-made mullions. The overhangs of the secondary entrances in the rear are bracketed.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

Facade: (continued)

Porch:

The north portion of the front facade is set behind a large veranda, part of which is enclosed by screening. Octagonal, fluted piers, mounted on square paneled bases, support the porch roof and its boxed, denticulated cornice. Engaged, fluted, polygonal piers serve as the responds. A heavy railing joins the supporting elements. The balustraded railing of the balcony above displays a Gothic-arched cutout pattern between the balusters. Although several of the structural and decorative elements of this porch are not presently in place, they do exist and will be restored.

Roof:

The steep pitched, gable roof was once covered with wood shingles. Plywood sheets are presently employed as temporary roofing. At one time an elegant, corbeled chimney straddled the ridge of the principal gable. The original chimney brick still exists and is stacked on the property.

Water Tower:

The relative placement of the tower and the home will approach that of the past. The lower division of the base of the tower is covered with flushboard siding. The upper division has decorative fishscale shingles and ocular windows. The bracketed walkway above, masks the transition between the four-sided base and the octagonal cupola. The low pitched roof of the cupola is topped by a finial.

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ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

for \$80,000. Two years later, in June of 1911, the property was purchased by William H. Moffat, a cattle rancher with large holdings in both Nevada and California, widely known throughout the west for his "Moffats Manteca Fed Beef."

The property remained in the Moffat ownership until 1962 when it was sold for a reported \$500,000 to Lincoln Fitzgerald, a prominent Reno casino and hotel owner. In 1978 the house and water tower were sold to Raul and Leslie Hernandez, the present owners. They moved the house and water tower to their new site in December of 1978 to insure their preservation.

Parcel C

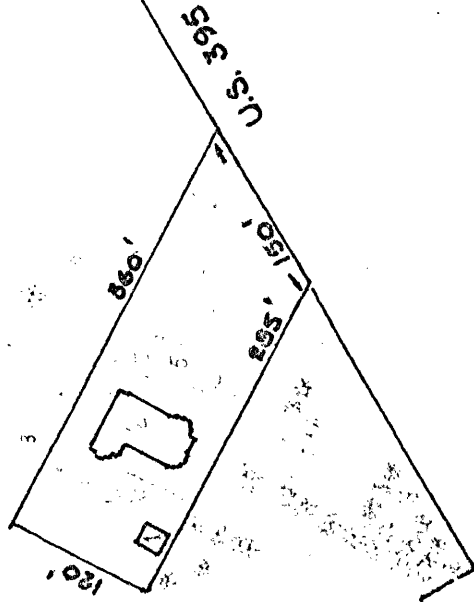
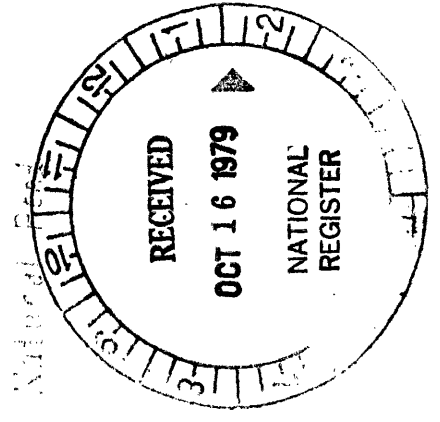
Parcel B

Parcel A



Scale 1" = 120'

1 Water Tower
2 Mansion
3 Pump house
4 Guest house
5 Pond
6 Natural Pond



ALAMO RANCH
20205 So. Virginia, Steamboat, NV.