

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 16 1984
date entered SEP 28 1984

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Diamond Ranch

and/or common Diamond Ranch

2. Location

street & number 10 miles northwest N.W. of Chugwater — not for publication

city, town Chugwater vic. — vicinity of

state Wyoming code 056 county Platte code 031

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: recreation

4. Owner of Property

name John Braunschweig

street & number P.O. Box 235

city, town Chugwater — vicinity of state Wyoming 82210

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Platte County Clerk

street & number County Courthouse

city, town Wheatland state Wyoming 82210

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wyoming Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Wyoming Recreation Commission

city, town Cheyenne state Wyoming

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Diamond Ranch is located 10 miles northeast of Chugwater on Richeau creek. It sits in a low area surrounded by high eroded, rocky ridges covered with prairie grasses. Many of the original buildings still stand and nearby pastures and meadows are presently used as a KOA campground. The original stone ranch buildings are protected from visual intrusion from the surrounding campground by natural geographical features and original plantings which support retention of integrity of feeling and association along with integrity of design, setting, location, workmanship and materials. Natural vegetation and geographic protection of the site make possible nomination of only the historic properties by providing a well defined boundary for this functionally dependent and related complex of native stone buildings which are excellent examples of rustic vernacular ranch construction and feature delightful Victorian elements provided by the Architect George D. Rainsford. Rainsford, the original owner of the Diamond, was an unusual cattle baron important in Wyoming's territorial history. Although the interiors have been altered for use as part of the campground operation, building exteriors remain intact providing visitors with a rare opportunity to experience first hand the feeling and association of an authentic 19th Century working ranch. All buildings contribute and were built ca. 1878.

See Addendum

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> invention				

Specific dates 1878- 1934 **Builder/Architect** George Rainsford

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The historical and architectural significance of the Diamond Ranch sets it apart from any other ranch in the state of Wyoming. The owner architect, George D. Rainsford, is representative of the many eastern & foreign stockgrowers who came west in the late 1870's to invest their fortunes in the high plains cattle industry making significant contributions to economic, political and social patterns which affected the broad patterns of Wyoming history. Rainsford was also unique in this group because of his simultaneous architectural contributions both at his own ranch and for his 1880's designs in the city of Cheyenne. In addition, Rainsford set the standard for fine horsebreeding not only in Wyoming but on an international scale, a factor which still influences Wyoming's horse ranching industry. When the "Diamond Horses" were sold between 1907 and 1910 many went to the Officers' Equestrian School at Fort Riley, Kansas but several carloads went to England, France and even Japan. The native stone buildings are still utilized as part of a large family owned stock ranch and the original diamond brand, first registered by Rainsford, remains in use on the present stock, an unusual phenomena because brands usually remained with the original owners and were transferred from ranch to ranch as the individual moved around. The present use of the Diamond as a campground and guest ranch ties it to another important pattern that has long been an important factor in Wyoming's development: tourism and recreation. It is readily accessible to visitors simply wishing to view a bit of the past as well as to those wishing to live for a time in that past.

See Addendum

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE ADDENDUM

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 3 3/4 acres

Quadrangle name McDonald Ranch, WY

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>3</u>	<u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u> <u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>3</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>1</u> <u>3</u>	<u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u> <u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>1</u> <u>3</u>	<u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE ADDENDUM

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>
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state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sheila Bricher-Wade, National Register Historian
Bonnie Raille--Intern Historian

organization Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office

street & number 1920 Thomes telephone 777-6179

city or town Cheyenne state Wyoming

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 Alvin F. Bastron

title Alvin F. Bastron, State Historic Preservation Officer date 8/11/84

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Beth Grosvenor
 Keeper of the National Register

date 9/28/84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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RESTROOMS/SHOWERS

This building is located at the extreme northeast corner of the complex and probably functioned as a storage barn during the ranch's early period. It is a one story rectangular gabled structure of rock face native stone. It has a corrugated tin roof and small square 6 light fixed windows with plain surrounds. The building is built into the side of a hill with a double front door protected by a flat roof porch with post supports. Aside from rectangular shingles in the gable ends there is no ornamentation.

BUNKHOUSE

The bunkhouse is a rectangular gabled two story building of rock face native stone just south of the shower/restroom facility. It too is built into the hillside with one story projecting above the grade on the east end. This side has a central wooden door flanked by small square 6 light windows. The west end of the building is two stories above the grade projecting slightly out of the hillside. There is another wooden door on this end and again small square 6 light fixed windows. Windows along the sides of the building are rectangular and fixed with 6 x 8 lights.

HORSE BARN/DINING ROOM-DANCE HALL COMPLEX

This is an unusual massive irregular plan complex of connected buildings with two large well protected open areas, likely very useful during long winters when purebreds needed to be exercised and in the unpredictable spring when mares were in foal. It is constructed of native stone and is generally 1½ to 2½ stories with 1½ story wings. Roofs are hipped and gabled creating an interesting, typically Rainsford appearance. The front features two very large seemingly detached rectangular barns. The one on the east features an usual stylized arched gable end with square shingles and traditional double barn door. Windows are square, and fixed with 4 lights and are evenly spaced and numerous along the sides of the building. The barn on the west is 2½ stories with a single metal door. Again windows are evenly spaced along the sides of the building, fixed and have 4 lights. The east side features two large hipped double door dormers.

The enclosed open space between the front barns has a rectangular gabled barn at the back. The front of this barn is part of the east side of the east front barn and serves as the dining room and dance hall. The extreme north end of this building is A-frame, set into the hillside. The severe pitch, exaggerated lines of the roofs set into the grade construction, give it a squatty appearance, another characteristic that is typical of Rainsford. Again windows are fixed with 4 lights and are evenly spaced.

The second open space is enclosed by a stone wall approximately three feet high on the west side and the east side of Rainsford's ranch house. The west side of the

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west barn features a pair of large double door hipped dormers with shingle exterior. The wing providing the north wall of the enclosure features a massive central gabled dormer with shingle exterior, double paired windows and double barn doors beneath. This feature is repeated on the north side of the wing. Once again windows are fixed, 4 light and evenly spaced. There are rectangular hipped wings projecting from the north end of this complex with shingles and evenly spaced windows. Doors are functionally placed with central diamond windows.

All buildings are constructed of rock face native stone with simplified ornamentation, a Rainsford trademark. Windows have wooden sills and plain surrounds. Roofs are steeply pitched corrugated metal and chimneys have been removed.

RANCH HOUSE

The ranch house is a two story irregularly planned house. The roof line is exemplary of Rainsford's love of combining roof shapes. It features one each of a gabled, hipped, shed and flat roof - all exaggerated and intersecting to create an interesting line, somewhat difficult to describe verbally. The upper part of the front gable features stucco and shingles and the gable entry is enclosed with a formidable stylized barn door. Windows are fixed with 6 lights and wooden sills and are evenly spaced. Eaves are exposed but void of ornament. There is an L-shaped wing projecting from the west side of the house which creates another protected area in between. The wing is gabled, with clapboard and shingle exterior with evenly spaced double hung windows. The wing has a full L-shaped porch with hipped roof and square supports and likely served as living quarters for training school attendants. There is a large yard on the south end of the protected area by a windbreak of cottonwoods, chockcherries, varieties of pine, elm and a few rare maples which extends along the west, east and south sides. Traditional flowers are planted at the base of the wind break featuring such Victorian favorites as hollyhocks, daisys, marygolds, cosmos, and horseradish (preferred for its exotic looking leaves). The yard also features a few well placed shade trees. These features provide a respite from the dry summer heat of the high plains unrelenting Wyoming wind.

The wind break extends several hundred feet to the east providing important defense of the entire complex from visual intrusion from the campground and recreation area to the south of the wind break.

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The location of the Diamond Ranch, about ten miles west of Chugwater, Wyoming, was selected by horsebreeder and architect George R. Rainsford in 1878. Rainsford rode over the prairie on horseback seeking the appropriate climate, forage, water supply and terrain for his intended "Diamond Horse" ranch before deciding on the southern Platte County acreage.

A New York native and the son of a banker, Rainsford was educated in Europe then practiced architecture in New York City with the firm of W.A. Bates. An equestrian at heart, Rainsford startled the eastern horse world at Madison Square Garden in 1883 when a horse bred at the Diamond, Spartan, took the stallion prize. The Wyoming breeding venture, apparently financed by his parents, brought international fame to the Diamond Ranch and the pure bred Morgans fathered by Spartan.

The ranch took its name from the small diamond brand Rainsford used on the left jaw of his horses. Temporary camps and buildings were set up at the ranch site in 1880 and in 1882. A herd of thirty broodmares was shipped west by train. By 1885 when Spartan and his pure bred sisters were shipped to New York, Rainsford had designed a ranch comparable to none in Wyoming.

Separate quarters for mares and studs reflected Rainsford's interest in his stock. The huge barns as well as the covered training school were constructed by a neighboring Swedish stone mason from native rock and cedar shingles. Rainsford's own house was a modest four room stone structure, since he seldom entertained at the ranch and was never married. His architectural style developed out of an attempt to adopt his eastern training to a western way of life.

The ranch developed slowly as land was acquired and fenced with specially produced barbless wire. Formal gardens and an elaborate carriage house created a New England country farm appearance. Rainsford received his first patent for 160 acres in 1891 but large portions of the ranch were simply part of the public domain, a common practice in the Cattle Boom era. An 1885 legal statute prohibiting fencing of the public domain drove Rainsford into several fabled fits of temper when between 1905 and 1907 he was forced to tear down his fences and pay incredible fines.

Like the cattle barons, Rainsford seemed to prefer an eastern way of life and maintained a Cheyenne townhouse of his own design. He continued to practice architecture, designing some thirty homes in Cheyenne including the famed Cheyenne Club. Photography was another of his hobbies and his scenes of both ranch life and life in town reflect the every day existence of cowboy Cheyenne's opulent western society.

The annual crop of Diamond Ranch foals was close to fifty in 1888. The "Diamond Horses" were notable for their bloodlines, appearance and performance. The teams of two, four or six were hardened in the west then shipped to New York by rail to be "city broke." Their docked tails and excellent manner brought profits as high as \$1,000 a head when good horses could be obtained for \$200 or less.

The Diamond Ranch was also known for its heavy horses, particularly Clydesdales. Budweiser Brewing contracted for Rainsford's stock every year, which might account for the fact that the eighteenth ammendment, prohibiting alcohol, aroused his ire as the fencing law had a few years before.

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In 1900 there were approximately 3000 horses on the ranch but by 1920 only about 200 of the better mares remained. The financial setbacks which accompanied the fencing and liquor laws and the changing nature of the stock raising business in the west contributed to Rainsford's decision to sell the majority of his herd to the Army and retire from ranching.

Former Mayor Paul Raborg, Rainsford's ranch manager, acquired the property, buildings and the remaining horses in 1922. Polo ponies and entertaining were the Major's chief interests. Ranch facilities including the main house and help quarters were enlarged to accommodate guests and a larger staff. Raborg used the ranch as a play thing, seldom taking the advice of his more knowledgeable employees, constructing huge silos for storing crops of sunflower seeds as feed for his herd of dairy cattle. The idea failed but his "monuments of ignorance" still stand. When Raborg and his wife Maud separated in 1929, her parents, the Obermans, took over the ranch and Raborg returned to New York as Rainsford had before him.

Mrs. Dora Mae Oberman became the sole owner of the 27,000 acre ranch when her husband died in 1937. When she died in 1956, the 64,000 acre ranch was sold to Hugh and Rissa McDonald who had homesteaded property adjacent to the Diamond Ranch prior to the turn of the century. The McDonalds also purchased the neighboring Ned Foss Ranch where the town of Diamond was established in 1887 when the railroad passed north from Cheyenne. The Foss Ranch was the home of Wyoming's celebrated bucking horse Steamboat. The combined ranch holdings of the McDonald family included some 75,000 acres in 1962.

The Diamond buildings were leased to the Methodist Church as a summer youth camp from the late 1950's until 1965. When Hugh and Rissa died in 1966, the property passed to their daughter Ruth and her husband John Braunschweig. The Diamond headquarters were remodeled in 1968 to accommodate a guest ranch complete with the first KOA Ranch Camp sites in the nation. The exterior remains much the same as when constructed for Rainsford, making the Diamond one of the most unique guest ranches in Wyoming. The main barn contains a restaurant and dance floor and the oversized stud stalls are used as sleeping rooms. The combination working-guest ranch allows visitors to view Wyoming's past and to become absorbed within it.

In addition, two of the oldest registered brands in Wyoming, Ruth's grandfather's DXI and Rainsford's diamond, are still used by the Braunschweig's. A dude string, pure-bred Arabians and cattle provide an income for the ranch and contribute to the integrity of the ranch environment. The Diamond Ranch headquarters continue to reflect a period in Wyoming history typified by Victorian elegance, fine horses and unique personalities.

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PHOTOS

George D. Rainsford Photo files, (Wyoming State Archives, Museums and Historical
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The boundary for the Diamond Ranch complex closely defines the site and protects it from visual intrusions. The boundary lines are primarily designated by natural or geographic features with arbitrary lines utilized only to exclude excess land area and for intrusions. The northeast corner of the site, point A, is located at the top of a ridge which serves as a natural barrier, visually protecting the original complex from modern campground structures. The boundary then extends in a southerly direction along the inside edge of a windbreak consisting of trees and bushes which again visually protect the original complex from campground facilities to the east. The boundary follows the windbreak to Richeau Creek, point B. The boundary is then defined by the eastern bank of the creek and proceeds in a westerly direction to an arbitrary point approximately seventy-five yards beyond the most western extensions of the barns and corrals, point C. This point is also defined by the joining point of a loop drive behind the ranch complex utilized for camper parking. The boundary then proceeds north to the top of the ridge, point D, and then follows the ridge along the south side of the 'high' road to the point of beginning. These boundaries include the eleven original ranch buildings which remain on the ranch while retaining the integrity of setting, feeling and association by visually barring modern structures and uses not traditionally associated with ranching. The structures included within the boundaries are all contributing and eligible for tax act rehabilitation while other modern buildings on the ranch are not.

River

River

DIAMOND RANCH

HOUSE

STONE WALL

N →

CAMPGROUND

BARN COMPLEX

STONE WALL 4' HIGH

SHOWER

POOL

BUNKHOUSE

