

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 15 1986

date entered SEP 11 1986

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

1. Name

historic Ainsworth House

and/or common Greet Ranch

Smithsonian Number: 48WA823

2. Location

street & number Spring Creek Road not for publication

city, town Big Trails vicinity of

state Wyoming code 056 county Washakie code 043

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" 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	n/a in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	n/a being considered	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. George Greet

street & number Box 3840

city, town Ten Sleep n/a vicinity of state Wyoming

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Washakie County Courthouse, County Clerk's Office

street & number Box 260

city, town Worland state Wyoming

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title not represented has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A n/a federal n/a state n/a county n/a local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state Wyoming

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 <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

"I kept on moving down the Big Horn and trapping as I went until I reached the junction of the Nowood...then I worked my way up the Nowood Valley... this valley pleased me more than any other place I had ever been. It was a game paradise. Buffalo roamed over the valley by the hundreds". Thus Frank S. Ainsworth recorded his first impressions of the Ten Sleep region in 1880 (in Kahin and Rufe, 1983:2). Ainsworth became one of the first to settle in the region by locating his homestead along Crooked Creek, a tributary of the Nowood River. The numerous bison trails leading over the nearby Bighorn Mountains gave a name, Big Trails, to the dispersed ranching community which Ainsworth played a role in founding. In 1884 Ainsworth placed a notched log frame on a squatters right claim along the Crooked Creek bank. In the late Spring of 1885 Ainsworth and his wife arrived on the property and settled down to founding the ranch. After living in a tent for a short period they constructed and lived in a log dugout. The depression of this home is still observable on the Crooked Creek bank. The next year a gable roofed, single story frame house of rough sawn boards was constructed. In subsequent years, the house was subject to several additions that included the construction of a substantial one and one-half story dove-tailed notched log cabin abutting the frame house. The Ainsworth house, representing one of the first permanent homes in the Bighorn Basin and local Big Trails area, embodies unique vernacular elements of construction which are detailed in local histories. In addition, the ranch epitomizes single owner-operator ranchsteads prevalent throughout Wyoming in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

(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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1886, 1890, 1911 **Builder/Architect** F.S. Ainsworth, R. Ainsworth

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

In the late 1880s significant change was underway in Wyoming's stockraising industry. After the disastrous blizzards (and devastating losses) of 1886-7, the need became apparent for more concentrated stock operations with smaller, less dispersed herds whose feed could be augmented by cultivated hay. "This awful calamity, coupled with the arrival of the homesteader, was the beginning of the end...for when small owners increased enough to crowd them (i.e. the large, open range, operations) they had to give way to the many" (quote of a Basin resident in Lindsey, 1930:133). Lindsey goes on to add, "The cattle barons saw their accustomed range invaded by small bands of cattle" and "fences lining the creeks on all sides" (ibid., p. 137). By 1905 then-Governor Brooks of Wyoming could say "Today our cattle are owned by 5000 different stockmen and farmers, instead of a few hundred outfits" (ibid., p. 159). The new opportunities presented to these small operators led to a second wave of ranch settlement in the Basin. The ascendancy of these stockmen changed the complexion of Bighorn Basin land use and stockraising patterns through the 1890s. In the Nowood River area rancher Frank Ainsworth of Big Trails typified the emerging pattern of stockraising in the region when he put up native hay during the fall of 1886, before the disastrous storms of winter. Ainsworth thereby saved a substantial portion of his stock from the devastation of winter. Between 1886-1893 the influx of settlers along the major Bighorn Basin water courses restricted the use of the open range. Commonly these settlers, like Ainsworth, mixed cattle raising with a modicum of agriculture and began a trend towards the establishment of small owner-operator homesteads. The existing material culture elements still found on the old Ainsworth ranch reflect this transitional epoch. The simple vernacular home set among the hay fields and adjacent to the deeply banked Crooked Creek drainage epitomizes the small owner-operator spreads that became prevalent at this time and continue into the present as viable adaptations to the natural environment. Ranchers like Ainsworth set the dominant pattern of land use for the stockraising community of Twentieth Century Wyoming.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Addendum

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.0 acres

Quadrangle name Big Trails 7.5

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

13	3113690	4851590
Zone	Easting	Northing

B

13	31137160	48516140
Zone	Easting	Northing

C

13	31138150	4851840
Zone	Easting	Northing

D

13	31138110	48515110
Zone	Easting	Northing

E

Zone	Easting	Northing

F

Zone	Easting	Northing

G

Zone	Easting	Northing

H

Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Addendum

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

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Hugh Roe Davidson

organization n/a date September 10, 1985

street & number 2240 Nelson #95 telephone (307) 755-5009

city or town Laramie 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 Robert W. Beuch

title SAPD date 9/11/86

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

for Alloreas Byers date 9-11-86
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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The location of the Ainsworth House lies approximately 300 meters south of the modern buildings of the Greet Ranch. Both the historic structures and the modern buildings lie within the NE 1/4 of Section 8, Township 44 N, Range 87 W, Washakie County, Wyoming. The site lies approximately 2 miles north of Big Trails (via Spring Creek Road) or approximately 23 miles south of Ten Sleep (via Wyoming 434 and Spring Creek Road). Access to the site is restricted as it lies within a working ranch.

Nestled among a grove of tall cottonwoods on the west bank of the Crooked Creek drainage, the Ainsworth house, one of the first permanent habitations established in the Bighorn Basin. The house sits unoccupied and substantially unaltered from its original condition. The house consists of two separate, but abutting buildings. The smaller of the two buildings, constructed in 1886, is a single story wood clad and framed structure. Roughly rectangular in outline, this structure incorporates horizontally lain rough sawn boards over the wood frame and a common rafter, gabled roof. Outside of the frame cladding there still remain portions of additional wall extensions. This extension, added after the winter of 1887-8, established posts at the corners of the frame structure which held large square hewn logs against the framed wall. Dirt was placed in between these logs and the outside frame wall for insulation. The one room frame structure constructed in 1886 had not been sufficiently warm and the additional cladding proved sufficient for a number of years following. The interior portion of the house includes a wood floor underlain by a small root cellar (filled in at present), remains of wallpaper on the wood clad wall, front and rear doors, and a single window. A third doorway lies on the frame structure's southern wall and leads into the adjoining log structure. The roof, constructed of planed boards, has seriously deteriorated.

Ajoining the frame structure is a substantial one and one-half story log house. This structure abuts the southern elevation of the frame construction. This structure was constructed in two phases. The first story was added to the side of the frame construct in 1890. This addition was a two room affair with a sill log foundation and hewn log cladding. A single gun portal was incorporated into the northwestern corner of the log house wall, an unnecessary precaution as things worked out. The logs were dove-tailed, notched, and chinked with small poles and gypsum on the eastern side and with mud on the western side of the two room cabin. The gypsum used was obtained from nearby beds that exist in conjunction with the area's red rock formations. The eastern room had two windows which now have been expanded to doorways in order to accommodate storage. The room originally served as the main living area of the house. The western

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room was used for storage. The structure was of an unusual height, tall enough to be more than one story but too short to be a full second story. A ladder provided access to the "half" story of the hosue which served as an attic. The second phase of construction on this structure was initiated in 1911. This "half" story was finished by extending its height with clapboards and a stairway (no longer in evidence) was added for the newly expanded upper rooms. The west room (previously used for storage) was given a window which at some later date was expanded into a doorway. The southern elevation of the structure features a doorway on the second story (for future additions) and the gabled roof, now metal clad, incorporates two gabled dormers with fixed windows.

The structures are now both used for storage by the property's owners, Mr. and Mrs. George Greet. The elements are having a deleterious effect on the frame structure as the roof deteriorates. The overall soundness of the structures does, however, preserve an important example of how locally available materials and vernacular modes of construction were combined to produce unique house forms on the frontier. As was often true in many instances on the frontier, the ingenuity of the local people in adapting to new circumstances was tested; thus new forms of architecture incorporating old elements with elements seldom preexisting were formed. The Ainsworth House uniquely reflects these frontier adaptations.

The Ainsworth House is unusual in having an account of its construction history available within a local history compiled by Mrs. Grace Ainsworth of College Place, Washington. The history, entitled, The Wilds of Wyoming, has been privately printed in a very limited edition. The present owners of the property, Mr. and Mrs. George Greet, provided a copy of this work during an interview. Portions of the description of the Ainsworth House are drawn from this account.

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Frank S. Ainsworth was an Iowa native (b. 1857) who first worked as a freighter to come West. Living a short time in Denver Ainsworth later turned to hunting and trapping in Colorado as a livelihood, primarily residing in the Virginia Dale and upper Yampa River regions. After a brief stint in the Black Hills gold rush of 1876, Ainsworth returned to Colorado and from there, in 1879, traveled northward to the Bighorn Basin. After trapping for several years he decided to settle down in 1884. In January of 1885 he traveled to Iowa, married Lucy Ann Albee, and returned to his claimed Crooked Creek homestead to begin ranching. Ainsworth used his muley saw to construct the unusual cabin in which he and his family resided throughout their lives. Ainsworth has been credited to be the first Bighorn Basin rancher to cultivate the native hay of the region, an adaptation that enabled him to weather the extreme storms of 1886-7. In addition Ainsworth worked as a local carpenter, planted the first large scale garden in the region, and helped in establishing the Big Trails Community Church.

The history of the Ainsworth house, ranch and early Big Trails community has been detailed in a privately published history written by Mrs. Grace Ainsworth of College Place, Washington. Entitled, The Wilds of Wyoming, this work unfortunately enjoys only limited distribution. The present owners of the property, Mr. and Mrs. George Greet, kindly allowed access of their copy for this nomination.

The historic context in which the Ainsworth ranch was founded is important in understanding its significance. As the Rocky Mountain stockraising system expanded in the 1870s and early 1880s, the search for untrammelled grazing lands became acute. The Bighorn Basin, offering a vast expanse of unexploited rangelands, was the scene of a cattle boom between 1879-1884 (Lindsey, 1930:98); Wadsen, 1973:104). The untapped grazing lands quickly came under the ownership of large, open range based cattle concerns. Until the disastrous winter storms of 1886-7 destroyed the open range adaptation, the controlling interests of the Bighorn Basin severely restricted settlement in the Basin. Cowboys employed by these large operations could not often resist the temptation to begin their own spreads, sometimes at the expense of their previous employers (Lindsey, 1930:115; Wadsen, 1973:112). As the years passed, the pressures against the open range operators increased. Predators, harsh climate, rustlers and the influx of small stock runners who often combined stock raising with a little farming to help their stock through winter, finally defeated the large scale operators. Although some large scale cattle operations consolidated their holdings to continue operating, the "composition" of the Basin economy changed dramatically. The Ainsworth House and its setting recalls this important transitional epoch. This ranchstead embodies the change in man-environment relations that took place at this time. The house also reflects the unique pattern of vernacular styles that households found necessary to incorporate in isolated frontier conditions.

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Typical of the Victorian Frontier (1870-1890) was the use of locally available building materials in vernacular forms of architecture. Typically early cabins established on the frontier mirrored many of the traits embodied in the Ainsworth House. These simple utilitarian structures usually had a small amount of square footage (in this case the frame structure is 18 sq. ft.), were generally unadorned, rose one and one-half stories, exhibited rough plank siding over a simple braced or balloon frame and could be easily added to (Stoehe, 1975:28-34). Typically a log cabin preceded the construction of a framed addition, usually because frame additions necessitated sawn lumber. In the case of the Ainsworth residence the exact opposite took place, the frame structure, deemed insufficient for winter conditions, was augmented by a substantially stronger log house reminiscent of a log cabin. The frame structure underwent extreme modification with large, square cut logs buttressing the apparently feeble frame cladding. It is therefore interesting to note that the Ainsworth House embodies not only the first permanent domestic structure in the area but also a unique pattern of construction that has survived the vagaries of time.

The Ainsworth House lies within the Nowood River drainage basin. The local community of Big Trails was primarily associated with the general "Ten Sleep Country" referred to by local resident Ted Frison, who said it comprised "a number of valleys over a distance of more than sixty miles from north to south (from Ten Sleep)..". (Frison, n.d.). The interrelatedness of the big Trails community and Ten Sleep is one based on contiguity. Big Trails lies just 21 miles south of Ten Sleep along a well established road. The conflicts over range use within the Ten Sleep region, as a whole, did have some effect on the Big Trails vicinity. The infamous Ten Sleep Raid of 1909 in which three sheepmen lost their lives in a dispute over grazing rights took place not far from the Big Trails, but did not substantially alter the peaceful relations within the immediate Big Trails area. Sheep had been grazed in conjunction with cattle in the region for some time; seemingly the relative popularity of each depended more on market conditions than traditional lifeways. The Big Trails area has been, and continues to be, removed from the main currents of history; it is an isolated ranch community that has not dramatically changed since its beginnings in the late 1880s. Thus, the Ainsworth House lies within a context that continues to function in much the same pattern as it always has, enhancing its quality as a representative sample of Wyoming material culture.

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Ten Sleep Wyoming by Mr. Ted Frison, undated article in the possession of
Mrs. Marcella Chamberlain of Ten Sleep, Wyoming.

Personal Communication

Marcella Chamberlain
Mike and Diane Goedde
Mr. and Mrs. George Greet

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The boundaries of the Ainsworth House nomination include the two abutting historic structures making up the house and the surrounding cottonwoods and vegetation lending the site significant visual quality and excludes all non compatible intrusions on the site's integrity.

The boundary begins at point A, the intersection of a hay field irrigation ditch, supplying water to fields immediately west of the house, and an unimproved dirt road providing access to ranch property south and east of the historic buildings. This point lies 250m southwest of the modern Greet Ranch main house occupied by the present owners. This main ranch house and surrounding buildings are excluded from the nomination due to their recent age.

From this point (designated point A) the boundary trends northeastward along the south bank of the irrigation ditch for a distance of 60m and incorporates a stand of trees running parallel to the ditch into the site boundary. These trees provide an important visual element to the property's visual integrity. The boundary goes from this point (B) to the southeast. The boundary runs on this southeast line towards Crooked Creek for 120m. Intersecting the drainage of the creek at point C the boundary then follows the drainage southwestward an additional 120 m to point D. From this point the boundary follows the unimproved dirt road fronting the historic building for 150m to intersect point A. Although the unimproved road provides only an arbitrary boundary at best alternative points of reference are lacking due to the heavily impacted nature of the adjacent hay agriculture taking place immediately west of the site. The entire property under nomination thus encompasses a total of 2.0 acres.