

Substantive Review

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received **OCT 12 1983**

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Dereemer Ranch Historic District

and/or common Dereemer Ranch Historic District

2. Location

street & number N/A E of Horse Creek not for publication

city, town Horse Creek Vic. vicinity of N/A

state Wyoming code 056 county Laramie code 021

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"/> 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 type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>n/a</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>n/a</u> 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:

4. Owner of Property

name Dereemer Livestock Company, Inc.

street & number Box 22

city, town Horse Creek vicinity of N/A state Wyoming 82061

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. City-County Building

street & number Carey Avenue

city, town Cheyenne state Wyoming 82001

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Wyoming Recreation Commission, 1920 Thomas Avenue

city, town Cheyenne state Wyoming 82002

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved

date William S. Dereemer homestead
moved 1933.

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Historic ranches in operation in 1983 do not for the most part derive their significance solely from their 19th century beginnings, or specific events, but rather from their association with the cattle ranching frontier, an historic period which widely influenced Wyoming's economic political and social development. Ranches established prior to, at the height of, or just after the "boom and bust" period of the cattle ranching frontier illustrate the historic character of that period and the ranching industry as it was conceived and developed. Having operated for close to 100 years these ranches provide a link between the specific historic period which nurtured their development and the present. Often the buildings themselves lack individual distinction and are utilitarian and vernacular in nature but as a complex of interrelated structures functionally dependent upon each other, they demonstrate authenticity and historic identity through physical characteristics such as setting, design, location, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. These characteristics are particularly important when considering the historic integrity of a ranch headquarters - for it is the sense of time and place, the association with the "bigger picture" of the cattle ranching frontier and its relationship to that overall theme which determines the site's historic integrity. The Dereemer Ranch is located approximately 30 miles northwest of Cheyenne, Wyoming where the high plains meet the Rocky Mountains, specifically in the foothills of the Laramie Range. The ranch is accessible from Cheyenne via paved State Highway 211, or as it is known locally, Horse Creek Road. Ranch buildings are situated two and one-half miles east of the Colorado and Southern Railroad (Burlington Northern) tracks, and just south of Horse Creek. Land surrounding this historic ranch remains unchanged by modern intrusions as the rural environs still communicate the rustic character of the high plains. Nine log and frame structures, dating from the late 19th to mid-twentieth century, serve as working ranch buildings today. Nine of the buildings within the ranch headquarters complex are simple, one story, log or frame structures. Rather utilitarian in character, the buildings at the Dereemer Ranch were constructed in response to a specific need without aid of architectural plans or drawings. Although a few of the ranch structures have additions, eight of the ten buildings are categorized as contributing structures within the complex. Two buildings, the barn and a shed, were constructed more recently and are designated as noncontributing buildings. The layout is typical of ranch headquarters with buildings grouped in a way to provide protected, open space, and minimal distances between service buildings and living quarters.

For purposes of the nomination, buildings are designated as contributing if they were constructed fifty or more years ago and have retained integrity. The boundaries include the log buildings and associated corrals as part of the functionally dependent interrelated complex of buildings, representative of ranch headquarters throughout the high plains region. The Dereemer ranch headquarters district has exceptional integrity because it, unlike many other operations still in business, remains predominantly unchanged with three original homestead cabins and numerous other original and early structures still in use. Modern ranching operations often include an assortment of buildings of various ages which demonstrate growth patterns and economic trends. The fact that the Dereemers have maintained and continue to use original structures, minimized new construction and have retained ownership for nearly a century, make their ranch headquarters an exceptional representative of the ranching industry in Wyoming and the high plains region.

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 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 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 ca. 1888–1915 **Builder/Architect** Dereemer family

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Initially, the railroad brought people to Laramie County and the prospect of economic advancement in agriculture kept them in Wyoming. Stockraising and farming became the backbone of Laramie County's economy during its developing years of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although Laramie County saw the fortunes of cattle barons prosper in the 1870's and the first half of the 1880's, owners of large ranches had to withstand many financial setbacks in the late 1880's. Settlers on small and medium sized ranches became an important component of the county's agricultural scene from the late 1880's to the 1920's. In 1888, Charles A. Dereemer was one of the early settlers on a small ranch in the Horse Creek region of Laramie County. Dereemer successfully utilized the prairie grasses around Horse Creek to transform his ranch into a successful operation. Many of the county's early ranchers on small tracks of land failed, yet Dereemer was able to contribute to the agricultural and economic growth of northwest Laramie County. The Dereemer Ranch complex is an exceptional representative example of a small ranch that developed in response to the burgeoning agriculture/industry of the county. The log and frame buildings within the complex, constructed in response to specific needs of the owners, embody the distinctive characteristics of a type period and method of construction typical of high plains ranching and at the same time retain a level of integrity increasingly difficult to find. Additionally, it is directly associated with the cattle ranching frontier which has made significant contributions to the broad patterns of Wyoming western and American history.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE ADDENDUM

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approximately 18 acres

Quadrangle name Horse Creek, Wyoming

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	3	4	8	8	9	2	0	4	5	8	4	6	5	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

1	3	4	8	9	0	9	0	4	5	8	4	6	5	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

1	3	4	8	9	0	9	0	4	5	8	4	3	1	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

1	3	4	8	8	9	2	0	4	5	8	4	3	1	0
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 Item #10

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 William S. Dereemer

organization N/A

date March, 1983

street & number 3421 Central

telephone 307-634-8606

city or town Cheyenne

state Wyoming 82001

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 J. Baston

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9/28/83

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

Bruce Lee May
Keeper of the National Register

date 11/25/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Contributing:

1888 Homestead - The original homestead cabin measures 14' x 14' but numerous sympathetic additions made the irregularly shaped building larger. The log and frame homestead is a one story, one room log structure with a low pitched gable dirt roof. The original structure is now surrounded by frame additions, some with a tarpaper exterior that have gable and flat roofs. Interior floors consist of frame and concrete. The enclosed, south-facing porch today serves as the main entrance, although two doors are located on the east face. Windows are of various sizes and sash.

Barn and Corrals - The barn, built in 1888-89, is a rectangular, one-story log structure measuring 36' x 90' and facing east. It has a dirt floor and is capped by a low-pitched, dirt roof. The barn interior contains three divisions: a small horse barn on the north, a milking parlor in the middle, and a large stable on the south. Entrances face east and south and on the west face are four wood, horizontal sliding sash windows. The log corrals, located east and south of the barn and attached to it, are as old as the barn itself. The north corrals measure approximately 60' x 45'; the east corrals are approximately 30' x 45'; and the south corrals are approximately 70' x 90'.

Chicken House-Blacksmith Shop - This structure is a combination of two, rectangular, one story buildings facing east, with overall dimensions of 36' x 12'. Built about 1891, the two buildings are of different construction. The north portion, or chicken house, is log with a dirt roof that is still watertight. It contains one room and entrance is gained by a single door on the east. Three, fixed pane windows are located on the east face and one, horizontal, sliding-sash window is on the north face. The building's first use was that of a chicken house, but it later became a trapper's workshop. The blacksmith shop is constructed of vertical slab siding. The entire east face is open and the roof, which once was dirt, collapsed and has been removed. The structure contains one room with a dirt floor and blacksmith equipment.

Bunk House - Built in 1896, the bunk house is a one story, rectangular log building measuring 18' x 16'. The one room cabin has a slightly sloped, dirt roof and a pine floor. Entrance is made via a single door on the south face. The cabin's only window is double-hung and also located on the east face. On the west face is a tiny hole that can be opened for cross-ventilation.

Root Cellar - Built in 1908, the root cellar is a one room, underground structure, 20' x 20' in size. Its roof is log covered with earth and the floor and steps are cement. Entrance is gained from the south through a covered entry and there is one window in the protective entry.

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Garage - The garage is a one story, rectangular log structure which was attached to the north end of the Dereemer barn in 1910. It is 30' x 36' in size and contains one room with a dirt floor. The low-pitched, gable roof is covered by dirt on its west end and tin on its east end. The main entrance to the structure is on the east and a small door on the south elevation leads to the corrals. The north elevation contains one horizontal, sliding-sash window.

Emma Dereemer Smith Homestead Building - This house, built in 1911, is a one story, frame structure measuring 14' x 24'. The building proper contains two rooms and is capped by a gable roof and a one story addition with a flat roof is attached to the north elevation. The building proper and addition each have an entrance on the east. The former displays one double-hung window on the north elevation and one on the south, and the addition contains one double-hung window on the north elevation.

William S. Dereemer Homestead - This building is a one room, one story frame structure measuring 20' x 20' and faces east. A small addition covered with corrugated metal siding has been constructed on the rear of the building. It has a sloping tarpaper roof. When it was built in 1915 the homestead was located two miles southwest, but was moved to its present location in 1933. A single door entrance is located on the east face and a small garage is attached to the west elevation. A vehicle entrance is on the south, and a single entrance is located on the east. A double-hung window is located on the south elevation of the homestead, and one, fixed-pane window is located on each of the north elevations of the garage and homestead.

Non-Contributing:

Barn - A large 1½ story metal barn constructed in 1950 is one of two more recent additions to the ranch. The main portion of the structure has a gable roof and a large single story structure has been built on the rear of the building.

Shed with Sheep Wagon Attachment - A small log shed constructed around 1940 has a flat roof and irregular fenestration. A sheep wagon has been attached to the log shed and is utilized for storage.

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ADDENDUM Item #8 Significance

Wyoming is typical of the development of the western cattle ranching industry which had its beginnings in the vast open ranges of Texas. After the Civil War, as the railroads began moving west they met huge herds moving north to rich northern grasslands which offered superior grazing. Transporting beeves to market had long been a major consideration and Wyoming's cattle industry would become solidly established only after completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. Southern Wyoming quickly became the focus of the territory's ranching endeavors with stockmen powerful enough by 1875 to force the passage of legislation which made railroads liable for killed or injured stock.

There were four principle acts under which private individuals might obtain title to public lands. The Preemption Act of 1841 allowed squatting on public land and first option to purchase up to 160 acres for \$1.25 an acre or \$2.50 an acre with a Railroad Land Grant. The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed qualified applicants to gain title to 160 acres of unappropriated public lands by living on and improving it for 5 years, or he could purchase for \$1.25 an acre after six months. The Timber Cultural Act of 1873 gave title for 160 acres if the applicant could plant and keep growing for 8 years 40 acres of trees. The Desert Land Act of 1877 allowed applicants to purchase up to 640 acres of land unsuitable for cultivation without irrigation at 25¢ per acre and an additional \$1.00 per acre after 3 years, irrigation of the property was also a requirement of this act.

Experts estimate that no less than 40 acres of grazing land per cow is essential on the high plains with 5,000 acres as the rough figure required for a successful ranching operation. Even if a rancher were able to meet all the requirements of the various acts and combine his privileges, he could only gain title to 1,120 acres of land, thus the practice began of locating headquarters on patented land along streams and rivers and using the open range for grazing. In an area with average rainfall well below 20 inches per year, the men who controlled the water controlled the range. It was this system which soon led to incorporation of strict regulations and control of the public domain by the more powerful ranchers.

Cattle ranching like most other early western industries followed a pattern of boom or bust. The boom was dominated by investment capital, much of it from the east and Europe. Widely publicized accounts of huge profits attracted speculators into the industry. In a very short time much of the northern plains region was occupied by massive

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herds owned by large corporate cattle companies. The largest were often under absentee or multiple ownership and controlled by managers who had little or no direct contact with the owners. Managers and ranchers soon learned they would have to cooperate to protect themselves from disease, theft and settlement on "their" domain. In Wyoming a powerful association known as the Wyoming Stock Growers Association was formed to protect the economic and political interests of its members. The large membership and closely knit organization of this group insured it success in becoming the official spokesman for the cattle business. The Association began to prescribe the laws and social mores, they became active in territorial politics and quickly dominated the political scene. The leading men in the territory were active members and the Association inevitably became very powerful in lawmaking and political leadership.

The cattle boom lasted little more than a decade. Greed and ignorance of what the land could support, led owners and stockholders to demand more and more cattle onto their ranges. A drought in 1886 left grass and water in short supply and cattle in poor shape for one of the worst winters in history. The speculative bubble burst when the heavy snow of 1886-87 covered the grass and unrelenting cold froze creeks and streams solid. Hundreds of thousands of head of cattle died, thousands more were emaciated, hundreds of ranchers were ruined. The storm also exposed book count herds, herd counts based on estimated figures and projections rather than actual counts, and a wide variety of poor and shady management practices some stockmen had been engaging in to satisfy investors' demands. Many ranchers were totally ruined and left the country. Those who stayed faced serious problems. The industry had declined drastically, eastern markets were flooded with poor quality beeves and continued overstocking would keep beef prices down for more than a decade. Foreign and eastern capitol was harder to come by and credit grew ever more costly, the Federal government was becoming adamant about the removal of fences from the public domain. In time, better management practices grew out of the lessons learned form the bust, but in the interim, the adversity, decline of profits and the increased influx of smaller operators combined to make large corporate ranchers more determined to protect their interests.

The modern picture of the ranching frontier is at best terribly exaggerated and at worst, has so shrouded the truth in legend so as to make it nearly impossible to uncover the facts. Artists, authors and movie directors have worked hard to make the cowboy the west's best known and least understood creature. Seldom are we reminded that the cowboy was a laborer on horseback who worked from sunup to sundown for

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thirty dollars a month and sometimes bunkhouse privileges. The cowboys were tough and crude and they tamed a frontier, not by being gentlemen, but by combining rough western humor, stoicism and individualism as protection from ever present dangers such as boredom, severe weather and loneliness. The cowboys were immortalized as brave adventurers but they were heroes because they endured what others could not.

The cattle industry of the late 20th century is directly descended from those pioneer ranchers, cowboys and managers, entrepreneurs and barons who accepted great risks to gain profits which usually fell short of what was anticipated. A few became wealthy, many failed. The great majority just managed to make a living, contributing to the ever increasing knowledge about breeding stock, winter feeding and disease control, they developed new techniques and methods which are the basis of modern cattle ranching, an industry that has supported Wyoming's economy before statehood.

The Dereemer Ranch was founded when Charles A. Dereemer took up a preemption claim on 640 acres of land in Laramie County. The year was 1888, one year after the fateful 1886-87 drought and blizzard which dramatically altered cattle ranching, two years before Wyoming statehood, and Charles was 28 years old at the time. He had been brought to Wyoming from Camden, Ohio by his mother in March, 1871 when he was only eleven years old. Shortly after their arrival Charles' mother, Mrs. Emma Maria (Armstrong) Dereemer married Daniel Stanton Lathan, a brother of her sister's husband, G.O. "Dick" Lathan. Dan Lathan was a hunter and trapper and fought for the South during the Civil War.

In the fall of 1871 the Keel Brothers, driving a herd of cattle from Texas to Nevada, wintered near Diamond, forty-eight miles north of Cheyenne; Dan Lathan served as range foreman for the outfit that winter. The following year the Lathans moved to Cheyenne where Charles attended Central School. In the summer of 1873 Charles Dereemer herded sheep, and in 1874 the Lathan family moved to a ranch in the Horse Creek hills. At that time Charles was considered old enough to be of some real use so he was given a team. Twice a week he hauled deer, elk and antelope to Cheyenne. The meat was sold to butcher shops owned by Dan Alman and Con Walraven.

The spring roundup of 1876 was the beginning of a cowboy career that lasted until 1888 when Charles married and settled down on a homestead. The first cabin Dereemer constructed for his new wife burned before it was used so he quickly constructed another home. Twelve years as a cowboy netted him the expertise necessary to transform a prairie homestead into a working ranch where he and his wife, Ida Jane Mosher, brought up six children. The land in the Horse Creek area remained unfenced and Dereemer took advantage of the grazing possibilities. Originally the Dereemer family raised cattle and horses but later added sheep in the thirties. Although the depression years were difficult for the family, they managed to keep the ranch intact. Today, the ranch is still owned and worked by the Dereemers and some of the family still live in the Horse Creek area.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Dereemer, William S. Cheyenne, Wyoming. Interviewed by Phil Roberts, January 8, 1980.

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Larson, T.A. History of Wyoming. 2nd edition, revised. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978.

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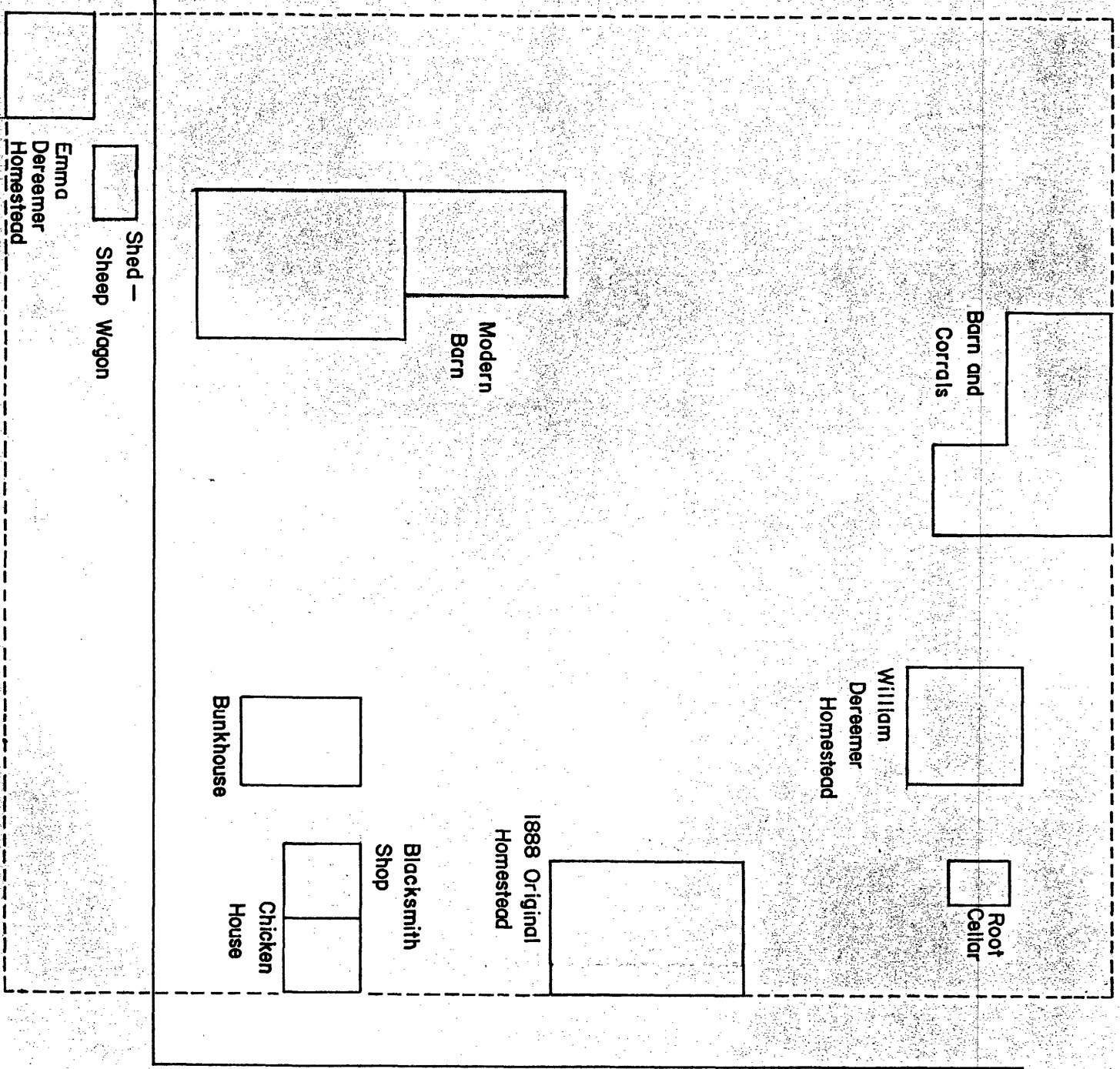
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Dereemer ranch is located in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 28, Township 17N, Range 69 West in Wyoming. Approximately 18 acres are included within the nomination's boundaries. The historic structures are placed in a relatively flat area close to the foothills. Due to the lack of topographical or other natural features, the boundary lines are based on existing buildings within the district. To include the modern buildings at the ranch, the northern wall of the 1888 homestead acts as a northern boundary and extends in a straight line from Point A to Point B. The east wall of the Emma Dereemer Smith homestead extends in a straight line and provides the last boundary from Point B to Point C. The south wall of the same Emma D. Smith homestead acts as the southern boundary and extends in a straight line for Point C to Point D. The west wall of the barn-garage complex acts as a reference point for the western boundary and extends in a straight line from Point D to Point A.



DEREEMER RANCH

NOT TO SCALE