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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 Tom Sun Ranch

AND/OR COMMON Sun Ranch

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 6 miles west of Independence Rock on Wyoming Route 220

CITY, TOWN Independence Rock Alcova VICINITY OF 001
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE Wyoming CODE 56 COUNTY Natrona CODE 025

3 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 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: <u>ranching</u>

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Bernard Sun

STREET & NUMBER Sun Ranch

CITY, TOWN Alcova VICINITY OF STATE Wyoming

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, Registry of Deeds, ETC. Natrona County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN Casper STATE Wyoming

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic Sites Survey

DATE FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Historic Sites Survey

CITY, TOWN Washington STATE D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

Tom Sun, a trapper, established his ranch at Devils Gate, on the Oregon Trail, in the early 1870's. Below is a description of the Sun Ranch as it appeared in the Cheyenne Leader, for December 8, 1882:

"...It (The Tom Sun Ranch) is situated about sixty-five miles north of Rawlings, and to reach it one must travel for two days by wagon or on horse-back..."

"...Tom Sun, however, believes it (the range of mountains) was made to serve as the northern fence of his ranch, for at its foot he had laid off about fourteen square miles of land to call his own. He has run a barbwire fence from the eastern extremity of the range to a point seven miles westward, and thence at a right angle another fence runs to the mountain side. By a convenient turn in the course of the mountain it forms the fence on two sides of Tom's Ranch, having as well many coves and inlets, where cattle may be protected from the wind and snow of winter. The Sweetwater river flows directly through the ranch lands midway between the wire fence and the mountain foot. The meadow has a heavy growth of rich grass, at this season cured to the color of brown and yellow. If there is a tree on the ranch it is so small as to escape observation.

The buildings of Tom Sun's Ranch are all situated at the eastern end, not far from the mountain side. They would not be spoken of as "palatial mansions," but are "the finest in the country" on the Sweetwater range. The ordinary form of the log cabin has been followed in the main building, though planed boards, large windows, artistic effects in whitewash and deer-born decorations have assisted in giving it a style hardly to be expected in that far-off region. This larger building has in it five rooms--large, cheery and comfortable. The furniture is of good, factory-made articles, and about the floor are strewn as rugs the skins of wild animals. The outhouses are quite numerous, there being stables, a meat house, an ice house, a smith's shop and a chicken house. The herd belonging to this ranch numbers about 5,000. Tom is in two firms. The brand is a hub and three spokes for Sun and Johnson, and three balls is the brand of Sun and Company..."

The Tom Sun ranch has been continuously in the Sun family, and the present owner, a grandson of Tom Sun, runs about 3,000 head of Hereford cattle on it. A considerable number of the original buildings of the ranch have survived. The low-roofed ranchhouse includes the original log structure build by Sun in 1872, to which log additions have been added. Several outbuildings and corrals, believed to be original, are still standing. The setting of the ranch is almost unchanged from its appearance when Sun first staked his claim to the range.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
ranching |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1872

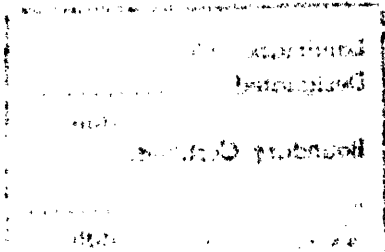
BUILDER/ARCHITECT Tom Sun

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Tom Sun ranch in the Sweetwater Valley of central Wyoming is one of the best preserved ranches dating to the period of the range cattle industry on the Plains. Because most early ranch buildings were of logs and wood hastily thrown together, and the owners and officials of the large cattle companies seldom lived on the ranch, few important early ranch structures have been preserved. During the seventies and eighties, the Sun ranch was typical of the medium-sized ranching operations in the cattle country. The Cheyenne Daily Leader remarked in 1882 that "the eastern person of inquiring turn of mind who writes to his friends out west to ask what a ranch is like would find his answer in a description of Tom Sun's."

Tom Sun was an excellent example of a frontiersman who became a pioneer cattleman. A French Canadian, who had been a mountain man and knew the Wyoming country thoroughly from his trapping days, Sun was highly respected in Wyoming. He was known for his integrity as well as for his ability to use a gun. He had tried prospecting in the early 1870's, on the sodium deposits near Casper, but his cabin was burned by the Indians, and Sun turned to ranching.

The site of the ranch is both historic and scenic, for Sun chose his range on the Oregon Trail, along the Sweetwater River near Devils Gate and Independence Rock, notable landmarks on the famous overland trail.



9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Mattison, Ray H., "Tom Sun Ranch," Historic Sites Survey report, 1959.
 Rollinson, John K., Wyoming Cattle Trails, 1948.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 4,160 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 3	3 2 0 0 1 0	4 7 0 0 0 6 0	B	1 3	3 2 0 0 7 0	4 7 0 2 8 1 0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1 3	3 1 0 2 0 0	4 7 0 0 3 7 0	D	1 3	3 1 0 2 3 0	4 7 0 2 1 0 0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See Continuation Sheet)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Stephen Lissandrello, Historian, Landmarks Review Project

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

DATE

1/5/76

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

STATE

D.C. 20240

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 designated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Boundary Certified:

DATE APRIL 17, 1976

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

11/24/78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Sun Ranch

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

The Tom Sun Ranch extends for many miles in all directions from the historic ranchhouse built in 1872. Sun Ranch cattle graze freely on land leased from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as well as the thousands of acres owned outright by the Sun family. The home range, however, is contained in the 4,160 acres included in the boundary. This range includes the ranch buildings, the Sweetwater River, and the mountain range which shelters it. It also includes part of the route of the Oregon Trail as it followed the Sweetwater and Devils Gate, a famous trail landmark. The site contains 3,240 acres owned by Sun, 640 acres owned by the state of Wyoming and 320 acres withdrawn by the BLM for historic preservation purposes in the Devils Gate area.

Boundary:

As shown on the accompanying USGS maps and beginning at the intersection of the eastern section line of section 25 with the north curb of State Highway 220, proceed west approximately 1 mile to a point, thence north approximately .3 of a mile to a point; thence west approximately .5 of a mile to a point; thence south approximately .6 of a mile to a point; thence west approximately 4.3 miles to the western section line of section 31; thence south along the western section line of section 31 approximately 1 mile to the Natrona County line; thence east along the Natrona County line approximately 6 miles to the eastern section line of section 36; thence north along the eastern section line of section 36 to the point of origin.