

DEC 27 1989

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "NA" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name: COLD SPRINGS RANCH HOUSE
other names/site number:

2. Location

street & number: U.S. Highway 12 West not for publication
city, town: Forsyth vicinity
state: Montana code: MT county: Rosebud code: 087 zip code: 59327

3. Classification

Ownership of Property		Category of Property		Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing		
<input type="checkbox"/> public - local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1			buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public - State	<input type="checkbox"/> site				sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public - Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure				structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object				objects
		1			Total
Name of related multiple property listing: none				Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0	

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Maude Shuff Date Dec. 21, 1989

State or federal agency and bureau Montana SHPC

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

Entered in the National Register

- I, hereby, certify that this property is:
[] entered in the National Register.
[] See continuation sheet.
[] determined eligible for the National Register. [] See continuation sheet.
[] determined not eligible for the National Register
[] removed from the National Register.
[] other. (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Rustic log

foundation: stone
walls: log
wood
roof: asphalt
other:

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

The Cold Springs ranch house is located on the north side of U.S. Highway 12 approximately three miles west-northwest of the community of Forsyth, Montana. Highway 12 is a two-lane, paved east-west route. The abandoned right-of-way of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad is immediately south of the highway. The ranch house and its associated outbuildings are located on a strip of relatively flat land between 300 and 600 feet in width; the highway marks the southern boundary of this strip, while the northern boundary is defined by a steep, irregular bluff approximately 100 feet high. The land is arid; native vegetation is limited to scattered grasses and brush. A number of large cottonwoods exist in the ranch house area; the trees, perhaps ninety years old, were planted to complement the settings of the site's original buildings. A modern wire fence encircles the area, and an unimproved dirt track provides vehicle access.

[XX] See continuation sheet

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The main ranch building (the subject of this nomination) is a 1 1/2 story residence constructed of peeled, hewn cottonwood logs. The logs are saddle-notched, stacked ten courses high. The walls thus created are as much as 14 inches thick in places. There is a hip roof, with single-bay hip-roofed dormers centered in each roof end. Each dormer holds a pair of wood-framed nine-light windows, hinged vertically. The building's roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles, replacing original wood shingles. The original foundation is of stone, although some areas of concrete have been added. There are two central brick chimneys. The primary facade faces south, and features a large inset front porch running the length of the building. The porch has a tongue-and-groove wood floor. Nine large evenly-spaced cottonwood logs, peeled but unhewn, support the roof over the porch. Smaller logs serve as decorative angle braces to these large pillars. A smaller inset rear porch of similar design (running approximately half the width of the building) is at the home's northwest corner. This porch, originally open, has been fully enclosed with vertical tongue-and-groove siding beneath a band of wood-framed one-over-one windows.

A hip-roofed two-car garage facility (non-historic) is attached to the northeast corner of the home. The garage is a wood-framed structure sided with clapboard. It has a concrete foundation. A small gabled breezeway area connects the garage to the primary residence. The roofing material of these additions matches that of the primary residence. The garage's construction date is undocumented; it does not appear in 1930's photographs of the home, and may date from perhaps the 1950's.

All fenestration in the building is wood-framed; except for the garage and rear porch areas, fenestration is original to the building. Larger windows are nine-over-nine double-hung, while most smaller windows are nine-light casement. Two cottage-style windows exist in the living room. Doors are of solid, built-up wood members, and are extremely heavy. The front entry door has a small window and massive, wrought-iron hinges. Window trim is painted white.

The building's interior largely retains its original configuration. The main level contains approximately 3,000 square feet of floor space, providing a living room, dining room, kitchen, bath and three bedrooms. A brick fireplace (with modern stove insert) graces the living room, and a smaller fireplace is in the master bedroom. A log-framed two-run stairway leads from the living room to the first floor; the stairway was originally open to the living room, but is now enclosed. Most original interior wall surfaces (plastered) survive. Most interior ceilings, however, have been lowered with modern materials and insulation, although the original ceilings reportedly survive beneath.

The second floor area consists primarily of two large sleeping rooms. These largely unfinished rooms have floors and walls of rough lumber.

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A trapdoor in the rear porch area accesses a rough wooden stairwell to the small cellar area. The cellar has a dirt floor; its walls are of rough stone.

Several primitive outbuildings exist to the north and west of the ranch house. None of these buildings appear in 1930's photographs of the ranch house, and they are not included in this nomination. Current outbuildings at the site include a partially-open, shed-roofed equipment shed, and three small gable-roofed outbuildings, now abandoned, which may have once served as workshops or farm hand housing. The latter three buildings lack substantial foundations and appear to have been moved to the site. All outbuildings are constructed of lumber.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
 nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register criteria: A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions) Period of Significance Significant Dates

Architecture
Agriculture

1908-1939

1908

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

n/a

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Cold Springs Ranch House meets criteria "a" and "c" for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The building is significant as the principal residence and headquarters site of Rosebud County's largest late 19th/early 20th century cattle and sheep ranching operation. This ranch once controlled some 15,000 acres of grazing land in northern Rosebud County; as such, it was a substantial force in the region's early history. The home is architecturally significant, as well; it was one of the largest most elegant ranch homes in early 20th century eastern Montana. Its highly rustic cottonwood-log exterior "fits" its environment quite well and shows evidence of extremely careful craftsmanship. Most of the home's original exterior character remains in evidence today, preserving its status as one of Montana's finest large ranch homes.

Historical Significance

The first substantial numbers of white settlers arrived in the future area of Rosebud County, Montana, soon after Custer's 1876 defeat in the Battle of the Little Big Horn and the increased American military presence which followed. Cold Springs Ranch was reportedly founded in 1877 as a part of this initial migration. A man named Murphy was supposedly the first squatter on the site; within a year or two, though, William Talbot began ranching at the site. Sources variously credit either Murphy or Talbot with constructing the ranch's first buildings (ca. 1877). Talbot's completed facility, located approximately 100 feet west of the current home, served both as the headquarters for his small ranch and as a stop for the stage line which operated along the north bank of the Yellowstone River between approximately 1877 and 1882.

See continuation sheet

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The combined ranch house/stage stop building was a small log facility built at the base of a steep bluff. Local fears of a possible Indian uprising resulted in the construction of the site's most memorable feature: a "tunnel" from the ranch house to the top of the bluff, where a small log blockhouse was situated. The fortification is remembered by T.W. King, a former stage driver, in the following 1934 reminiscence:

There was a ditch from the house at the bottom of the hill to the fort on the top of the hill. It was about 4 feet deep and covered over with poles and dirt. I went up through the ditch once. I remember I carried a lantern to see my way up. In the early days the fort was called the Block House. It was the only one of its kind on the stage line from Bozeman to Miles City that I remember of.

The tunnel followed a small ravine located just behind the ~~house~~. The blockhouse was located immediately at the top of the ravine; it was perhaps six feet square, built of saddle-notched logs with small rifle slits. Ruins of both the tunnel and blockhouse survived into the 1930's.

Operation of the stage line ended after completion of the parallel Northern Pacific Railroad in 1882-83, but Talbot continued to develop Cold Springs as a major sheep ranching operation. Talbot received formal title to the land from the federal government in 1885, and added additional land in the years that followed. Subsequent owners (Thomas Barry and brothers Ezra and Thomas Gould) continued to expand the ranch.

Cold Springs reached the peak of its size and prominence during the first decade of the twentieth century under the ownership of brothers John and William Rea. The pair acquired the ranch in 1903 and organized it as the Rea Brothers' Sheep Company. Under the Rea brothers, the ranch house complex anchored a sheep grazing empire of some 15,000 acres stretching north and east into the arid, rolling hills. Ranch herds grazed on a large amount of federal land, as well. It was easily the largest ranch in northern Rosebud County, and the Rea brothers became both wealthy and influential local citizens. Their prominence is demonstrated by the fact that their carriage was invited to be the first to use the county's new Yellowstone River bridge in 1905.

The Rea brothers initially utilized the log 1877 ranch house, expanded somewhat but still relatively small and primitive. They soon, however, began construction of a new, far larger home befitting the prominence of the ranch and its owners. Although undocumented, long-time residents tell of the building's construction taking "years" and of ranch hands scouring the terrain for miles around to find perfectly-matched cottonwood logs for the new edifice. The new home was finally finished early in 1908; its completion was recorded by the following article in the January, 16, 1908 Forsyth Times:

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Rea Brothers have just completed a log house at the Cold Springs Ranch that is remarkable for its comforts and roominess. The structure is 40 x 73, one and a half story, and is built about a hundred feet from the famous old house which has been occupied by owners of the ranch for years. Fire places, a gas lighting plant, and many other conveniences are features of the new building, and Rea Brothers now have a domicile more suited to their elaborate and well known hospitality.

The new home was known locally as the "mansion." The completed facility was later recalled by Elizabeth Stepper, an area resident, as follows:

[The house was erected] using all native timber found on Short Creek, notched and hewn in true western style but furnished most elegantly with rugs and furniture of the day for they were eastern people. The house was purported to have cost \$15,000.00 Their holdings were enormous, being credited with 240,000 head of sheep on the place at one time. They ranged nearly to the Missouri breaks.

The Rea brothers' ranching empire survived only briefly, however. The region's hard winter of 1911 reportedly destroyed the ranch's viability, and soon vast tracts of the ranch were being sold off to dryland farmers. In 1915 the Rea's equipment was auctioned off, and the following year the house itself was sold at a sheriff's sale. The ranch house saw a long succession of owners in the following years, most of whom continued either cattle or sheep ranching activities. The ranch's acreage was sharply reduced from its peak years, however. During the 1930's the ranch was owned by the Theo. Hamm Brewing Company. Later, a feedlot operation was attempted on ranch land just south of the home. The home remains in use today; it and its remaining acreage are leased to a local ranch family. The 1877 stage stop building, and other historic ranch outbuildings, were all razed between the 1930's and 1960's.

Architectural Significance

The Cold Springs ranch house is a landmark example of rustic western architecture. In a time when local farm and ranch residences normally utilized clapboard siding and Colonial Revival or Craftsman detailing to emulate urban residences, the Cold Spring ranch owners made a conscious effort to erect a home reflective of the site's wilderness environment and frontier past. The result was a rustic yet graceful home displaying an unusually high level of craftsmanship and detail. The carefully-matched, smooth-hewn logs reflect careful workmanship, and the smooth roofline and 73-foot-long veranda suggest an atmosphere of both grandeur and grace.

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The building's massive proportions are best defined by the nine huge support pillars running the length of the veranda. Their unhewn, tree-like appearance is highly rustic, providing a striking appearance to the primary facade. The primitive feeling thus suggested is reinforced by smaller details, including the massive wrought-iron door hinges and log-framed interior stairway.

Homes of this scale were uncommon in turn-of-the-century Rosebud County, and especially unusual in rural areas. The scale of this building, combined with its high level of craftsmanship and unique styling, results in a home of exceptional local design significance.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)
has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings
Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre.

UTM References

A	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	D	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary's point of beginning is 50 feet south and 50 feet west of the southwest corner of the building, approximately 125 feet north of the intersection of U.S. Highway 12 and the farm lane leading to the ranch. From the point of beginning, the boundary runs 150 feet north, 175 feet east, 150 feet south, and 175 feet west.

See Continuation Sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the nominated building and its immediate grounds. It excludes nearby, noncontributing buildings to the north and west, and the modern highway to the south.

See Continuation Sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mark A. Hufstetler

organization _____

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Major Bibliographical References:

Forsyth Times, January 16, 1908.

Forsyth Times-Journal, April 1, 1915; June 20, 1929.

Montana Historic Preservation Plan. Helena: Montana Fish and Game Commission, 1975, p. 113.

Records of the Rosebud County Clerk & Recorder, Forsyth, Montana.

They Came and Stayed: Rosebud County History. Forsyth, Montana: Rosebud County History Committee, 1977.

Typescript reminiscence of Elizabeth Stepper, 1957; collection of June MacConnel, Forsyth, Montana.

Typescript reminiscence of T. W. King, 1934; on display at the Rosebud County Museum, Forsyth, Montana.