

CLASSIFIED STRUCTURE FIELD INVENTORY REPORT  
(Attach 4" x 5" Black and White Photograph)

2474333

REGION RMRO PARK/AREA NAME GLACIER NATIONAL PARK PARK NUMBER 1430

STRUCTURE NAME J.K. MILLER HOMESTEAD STRUCTURE NUMBER HS-1382

LOCATION OF STRUCTURE NORTH FORK STUDY AREA PARK LOCATION CODE GLAC

NATIONAL REGISTER \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: (A) (B) (C) (D)

NPS LEGAL INTEREST NPS Ownership. MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

Check all of the following categories for which NPS has treatment responsibility:

Stabilization() Cyclic Maintenance() Routine Maintenance() Approved Ultimate Treatment

(ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION USE ONLY)

APPROVED ULTIMATE TREATMENT OR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN, CULTURAL COMPONENT DESIGNATION

Preservation (PP)	Restoration (RR)	Reconstruction (CC)
Adaptive Preservation (AP)	Adaptive Restoration (AR)	Adaptive Reconstruction (AC)
Neglect (NG)	Remove (RM)	No Approved Treatment (NO)

Approval Document \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Document Date:  / /

Estimated Treatment Costs \_\_\_\_\_

Stabilization: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Date:  / /  
Approved Treatment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Date:  / /

Level of Estimate: (A) (B) (C)  
Estimator: (Region) (DSC) (A&E)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Date of Construction: 1909-1910 Date of Alterations: none  
Architect/Designer: J.K. Miller Historical Theme(s): Homesteading  
History of Structure: \_\_\_\_\_

---SEE ATTACHED SITE FORM---

Evaluation of Structure: Historic Theme Contributing X Non-Contributing \_\_\_\_\_  
National Register Criteria: AX B CX D (Include integrity statement)

---SEE ATTACHED SITE FORM---

Bibliography: \_\_\_\_\_  
---SEE ATTACHED SITE FORM---

Representation in Other Surveys: None.

If structure has been removed, how? n/a Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Report prepared by: Patricia L. Bick, Historian Date: 10/01/86

Condition:  
Documentation:  
Significance:  
Internal Impacts:  
External Impacts:

LOCATION: Section 32 State MONTANA  
 Township 36N County FLATHEAD  
 Range 21W

USE: *CURRENT INTERIOR USE (NPS 28 CODE)* \_\_\_\_\_  
 Original Use HOMESTEAD  
 Intermediate Uses HOMESTEAD  
*PERIOD OF CONSTRUCTION (NPS 28 CODE)* \_\_\_\_\_

OWNERSHIP: Present Owner: NPS  
 Original Owner: J.K. Miller  
 Intermediate Owner(s): see attached

DRAWING NO. n/a  
 NEGATIVE NO. Roll NF#1, frames #16-26

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**\*\*\*PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION\*\*\***

TYPE OF STRUCTURE (NPS 28 CODE): \_\_\_\_\_

CHIMNEYS:

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER (STYLE):

SITE (INCLUDE ORIENTATION OF STRUCTURE):

PORCHES:

---SEE ATTACHED SITE FORM---

OVERALL BUILDING PLAN (FOOTPRINT):

WINDOWS:

OVERALL DIMENSIONS:

COMPOSITION (NPS 28 CODE): \_\_\_\_\_

DOORS:

STORIES:

FOUNDATION:

ADDITIONS:

WALLS: ---SEE ATTACHED SITE FORM---

INTERIOR PLAN:

ROOF:

INTERIOR FINISHES:

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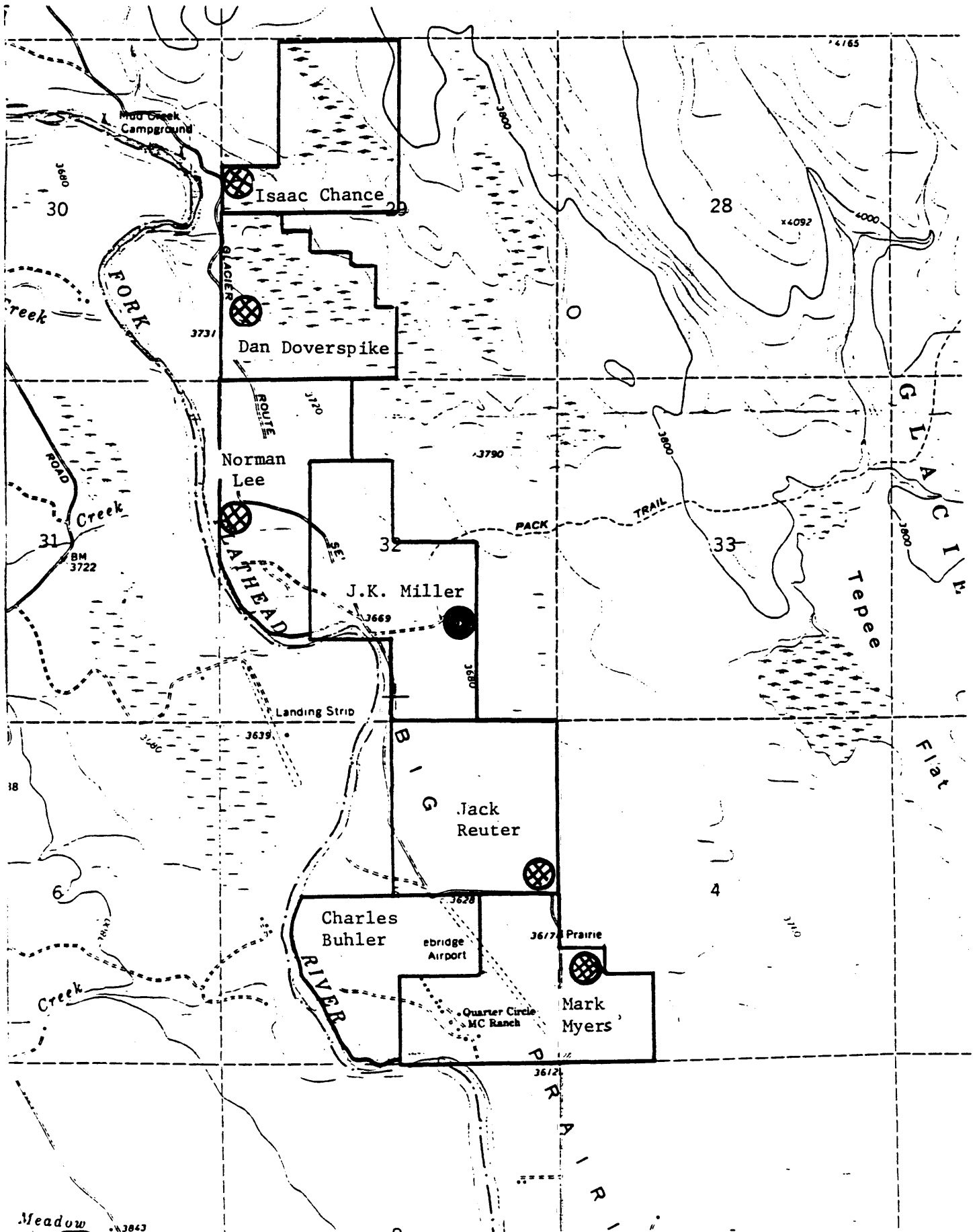


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SIGNIFICANT ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES (INCLUDING INTERIOR AND SETTING) FOR PARK PLANNING PURPOSES:

---SEE ATTACHED SITE FORM---





Meadow 3843

Historic Name: J.K. MILLER HOMESTEAD

HS-1382

Location: T36N; R21W; SE 1/4, NW 1/4, SE 1/4, Section 32.

Acreage: Approximately 7 acres.

UTM Reference: 11/5412500/696000

Ownership: National Park Service

Access: Located approximately 4 miles north of the Polebridge Ranger Station and 1/4 mile to the east of Glacier Route 7, along an abandoned road. The homestead complex is situated upon an approximately 100-foot ridge.

Evaluation of Significance and Architectural Integrity: The J.K. Miller Homestead is a well preserved historic homestead complex, despite its abandonment since the 1930s. The property is of local significance and meets Criteria A and C for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Miller, a judge from Columbia Falls and investor in the North Fork oil wells, possessed sufficient capital at the time of settlement to hire local homesteaders to develop his country property at the north end of Big Prairie. He maintained residency during the summers and raised horses<sup>1</sup> and root crops for market. After retirement, the Millers lived at their homestead on the North Fork year-round well into the 1930s.<sup>2</sup>

Miller's homestead buildings exhibit the characteristic of local construction patterns and use of locally procured materials. The design of the primary residence, built in 1909, is more akin to the second generation of construction on the North Fork (see Charlie Schoenberger and Johnnie Walsh Homesteads), and the large scale, fine detailing, and considerable number of windows, which were all unusual features during the first years of settlement, reflect Miller's relatively greater wealth at the time. The residence had a number of other unique features, such as transom glass set above the large front windows and sawn lumber used for floor joists, floorboards, and roof planking. Although these are common architectural features of the period, the Miller House is the only initial homestead residence on the North Fork to incorporate cottage windows and a large amount of sawn lumber in construction. The sawn lumber was purchased as salvage from the Butte Oil Company's defunct oil rig and sawmill at Kintla Lake. The large, dovetail notched, log privy at the site is notable for its craftsmanship and good preservation. Perhaps the most outstanding structure at the site is the 34- by 34-foot log barn, which was constructed without the use of any dimensioned lumber. The local craftsmanship exhibited by this structure lends it a high degree of architectural significance.

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<sup>1</sup>DeSanto, Jerry, "Drilling at Kintla Lake: Montana's First Oil Well," Montana, The Magazine of Western History, Winter 1985.

<sup>2</sup>Polebridge Ranger Station Log, 1932.

Historical Information: After residing for a time in Alaska, J.K. Miller established his law practice and was one of the earliest pioneer settlers of Columbia Falls.<sup>3</sup> He built one of the city's first brick business blocks in the early 1890s, before the Great Northern Railroad had reached the upper Flathead. All glass and hardware for the structure had to be freighted across the Blackfeet Indian Reservation by horse and wagon.<sup>4</sup>

Miller was one of the early promoters of the North Fork area at the turn of the century and was familiar with the country.<sup>5</sup> His daughter Mary married the North Fork packer and tour guide Josiah Rogers about 1907. Mary died after her first winter on her husband's Camas Creek homestead, en route to the hospital on the rough North Fork Road, in June 1908.<sup>6</sup> J.K. Miller and his wife took up his homestead claim on the ridge overlooking Big Prairie in June of the next year. The house was finished during that summer.

J.K. Miller lived on the homestead during the summer months and returned to Columbia Falls for the winters, because, as Miller stated in his testimony for proof, "of the high snow and the distance of 36 miles to the nearest railroad or post office."<sup>7</sup> In 1911, he reported harvesting 15 tons of root vegetables, and 20 tons of hay, with an orchard of 227 apple trees and 25 cherry trees nearing production.<sup>8</sup> Two apple trees yet exist at the Miller homesite.<sup>9</sup>

Miller enjoyed the life of a gentleman farmer on the North Fork. As an advocate for North Fork development and an able lawyer, Miller was able to assist other North Fork ranchers in their dealings with the Glacier National Park administrators and by lobbying the Flathead County Commissioners for road and bridge improvements.

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<sup>3</sup>Stout, Tom, Montana, Its History and Biography, American Historical Society, Chicago and New York, 1921, Vol. II, pp. 157-158.

<sup>4</sup>Columbian, March 3, 1893.

<sup>5</sup>1901 report on Mineral prospects.

<sup>6</sup>Columbian, June 27, 1908.

<sup>7</sup>National Archives, Case file #541201, Testimony of Claimant.

<sup>8</sup>National Archives, Case file #541201.

<sup>9</sup> Jerry DeSanto, personal communication, November 25, 1986.

Chain of Title:

J.K. Miller: final certificate 1914  
Robert W. Miller: 1921  
Glacier National Oil Syndicate: 1921  
Allen Nelson-Gardner Company: 1926  
M. and J. Lamb: 1926  
J. Arthur Lamb: 1931  
J.E. McFarland: 1945  
John S. McFarland: 1947  
Mary D. McFarland: 1958  
U.S. Government: 1967

Physical Description: Set on an edge of a 100-foot-high bench overlooking Big Prairie and the North Fork River to the west, the J.K. Miller homestead site consists of three standing structures and the collapsed remains of two others. The property is overgrown with high grasses and numerous saplings, making ground visibility poor. Approximately 300 feet to the north of the residence is a small spring-fed stream. The boundary for this property is drawn along the base of the ridge to the west, up the small creek to the north and along the 3720-foot elevation line. From the point of beginning at the SW corner of the SE 1/4, NW 1/4, SE 1/4 of section 32; T36N; R21W, thence approximately 450 feet west-southwest, thence 600 feet north-northwest, thence 500 feet east-northeast, thence 700 feet south-southeast to the point of beginning.

1. LOG RESIDENCE (constructed 1909). Contributing.

The 1 1/2-story residence is built of large (14-15 inches average diameter) unpeeled logs with square corner-notching and sawn butt ends. The gabled roof features long log purlins creating wide verges at the gable ends. The gable ends are infilled with trimmed logs secured by each purlin. The roof is 1-inch-thick rough-sawn timber. A stovepipe pierces the north end near the ridge line. The chinking is mud and quarter pole. The facade is symmetrically organized with a central door (door missing) flanked by large windows. Window framing stops indicate that double-hung windows were used with transoms above. Smaller scale 2-light casement windows were used on the second story. One small casement window pierces both the north and south elevations. The east elevation of the building has a second 4-panel door on the first floor and a wider (likely double-hung) window on the second. All windows, except one, are missing.

2. LOG PRIVY (constructed ca. 1910). Contributing.

This well-constructed, hand-hewn log, 2-hole privy measures 7 by 8 feet and is located about 100 feet to the east of the residence. The privy features 1/2 dovetail corner timbering.

The roof is gabled with log purlins extending over the facade for a substantial 3-foot overhang. Hand-split shakes (2 1/2 feet long) cover the roof. The privy has one small window and shelving on the interior. A considerable amount of early 20th-century trash litters the area.

3. LOG BARN (constructed ca.1910). Contributing.

This remarkable two-story log barn measures 34 by 34 feet and features double saddle-notched corner timbering, with quarter pole inserts and no evidence of chinking. Some butt ends are left with axe marks, some are sawn. The upper floor of the barn is constructed with log joists and pole flooring. A pole ladder climbs from the exterior wall to the hayloft. Animal pens on the lower level were also constructed with poles. The top eight or ten logs of the gable ends have fallen into the center of the building. The roof is finished with log purlins with split shakes (approximately 2 1/2 feet long) attached to the purlins with no sub-sheathing. The building is constructed of log and pole, except for the two rough-sawn board doors.

4. COLLAPSED GARAGE (constructed ca. 1930). Non-contributing.

Located about 30 feet north of the residence, this collapsed, frame, rough-sawn timber garage may have measured approximately 12 by 15 feet, although it is difficult to tell. A few pieces of wood in the heap are charred, indicating a possible reason for the structure's demise.

5. LOG ROOT CELLAR (constructed ca. 1910). Contributing.

The gabled, shake-covered roof of the 12- by 15-foot, log root cellar and a portion of the walls have collapsed into the structure. The root cellar was built with the side of the fairly steep slope above Big Prairie and is oriented toward the west. Typical double-wall construction was used with full dovetail corner timbering.

Form Prepared by: Patricia L. Bick, Historian, October 1986.